

Moses C. Levy House
301 East Bay Street
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

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HABS No. SC-~~207~~

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An Addendum to
House
301 East Bay Street
Charleston, South Carolina
in HABS Catalog Supplement (1959)

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

301 EAST BAY STREET
Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina

HABS
S.C.
10 CHAR.
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Owner: Mrs. Margaret Hartman
22 Parrott Street, Brooklyn, New York

Date of erection:

Present condition: Fair

Description:

Brick, Flemish bond; rectangular plan; slate roof.

Prepared by Junior Architect James L. Burnett, Jr.

Approved: JLW 4/10/41

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. SC-207

99

MOSES C. LEVY HOUSE

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An Addendum to
House
301 East Bay Street
Charleston, South Carolina
in HABS Catalog Supplement (1959)

Address: 301 East Bay Street, Charleston, Charleston County,
South Carolina

Present Owners: Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hartmann, 143 Broad Street,
Charleston, South Carolina

Present Occupants: Various tenants

Present Use: Apartment house

Statement of Significance: An early nineteenth-century town house with rich
architectural detail

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The land was originally a part of Laurens Square, which appears to have been owned previous to 1811 by Henry Laurens; on June 7, 1811, it was deeded to Moses C. Levy, the consideration being \$2330.35. The house was probably built for Moses C. Levy; his will, dated April 1, 1837, gave the property to his son, Jacob C. Levy. On July 18, 1849, it was conveyed to his son, Samuel Yates Levy. Samuel Yates Levy to James Adger, July 19, 1849--consideration, \$11,000. James D. Adger to John B. Adger, July 30, 1849--consideration, \$5.00. John B. Adger to James Adger, January 6, 1853--consideration, \$12,000. James Adger to Thomas L. Ogier, Trustee, April 6, 1853--consideration, \$14,000. Thomas L. Ogier, Trustee, to James Adger, mortgage, April 6, 1853--consideration, \$9,000; on February 15, 1855, assigned to S.W.R.R. Bank; satisfied by cashier of S.W.R.R. Bank on February 26, 1855. Thomas L. Ogier, Trustee, and Sarah M. Grayson to Thomas J. Lockwood, June 5, 1863. Thomas J. Lockwood died (intestate) March 1874, leaving a widow and three minor children. The interest of Robert H. Lockwood was conveyed to Anna M. Lockwood on April 8, 1893, by an agreement between them and also William L. Lockwood; she was to have the use of the property until her death, after which it was to return to the granter--she made a

will, however, on August 18, 1897. William L. and Thomas J. Lockwood sued Daniel B. Gilliland, Executor, in May 1898. In 1901 the Court of Common Pleas, Charleston County, South Carolina, allowed the property to be sold while the suit was pending. It was purchased by Henry Behrmann from T. J. Lockwood, William L. Lockwood and D. B. Gilliland, Executor for Anna M. Lockwood. [Abstract of Title in possession of Henry Hartmann, 143 Broad Street, Charleston, S. C., dated February 19, 1901]

Inherited by Margaret Hartmann (Mrs. Henry Hartmann).
[Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Hartmann, June 16, 1962]

2. Date of erection: Probably within a few years after 1811.
[Interpretation of data in the abstract of title, and character of the architectural details of the building]
 3. Original plans: A central hall with one room on each side, and piazza extending along the length and across one end. Detached service building. [From observation]
 4. Notes on alterations and additions: At an undetermined date, probably not later than the middle of the nineteenth century, a three-story rear wing was erected, filling in between the main house and the service building. Within the last few years, a room has been built into the east end of the piazza on the first floor, and partitions added to divide some rooms for apartment use. The service building has been renovated completely on the interior, and divided into apartments. [From observation, and interview with Henry Hartmann]
- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: The Adger family owned Adger's Wharf, which for many years was of importance to Charleston shipping. [Interview with Henry Hartmann; newspaper clippings from the News and Courier, Charleston, S. C.] John B. Adger was a noted theologian and missionary; Adger College, which flourished at Walhalla, South Carolina, from 1877 to 1889, was named for him. [South Carolina, A Guide to the Palmetto State (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 445]

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A town house with well-preserved, elaborate, wood interior details of Adam style.
2. Condition of fabric: The structure appears sound and the finish is well maintained.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Main house, about 30' x 50', with rear wings about 20', 65', and 20' long, respectively. Three-story main house and adjoining wing, with two-story wings extending further. The east end is on the street, but the house really faces a side yard to the south.
2. Foundations: Brick, 20" thick, on stepped brick footings. The foundations extend about 3' above grade, as a low basement (low relatively, in Charleston), projecting slightly beyond the plane of the walls above.
3. Wall construction: Brick bearing walls. The bricks are a large type locally referred to as "English." They are fairly dark, dull red in color, with spots of brown due to oxidation of iron in the material. They are laid in Flemish bond, four courses being a little over one foot high.

The spandrels between stories have been repaired and tie rods have been used to stabilize walls, presumably after the earthquake of 1886. There is no apparent settlement.

String courses on the east end mark the second and third floor levels; they consist of three courses, projecting slightly, with a fourth course at the top, projecting over the others. These courses stop about one foot from the corners.

4. Porches: There is a two-story wood Charleston piazza along the south side, returning along part of the west end-- six bays in all. The eastern two bays of the first story are now enclosed with a modern clapboard wall. Columns are slender Roman Doric, apparently solid. The upper order has a thin entablature with modillions in the cornice. An internal cornice extends around the piazza. The one at the second story has modillions; the one at the first story has modillions and dentils, delicate in scale. The ceilings are paneled in the typical Charleston manner with long moulded panels. The railing along the second floor is a replacement; the one on the first floor was removed in recent years. Flooring is of narrow tongue and grooved boards. The east end of the piazza, on the first floor, is closed by a brick wall in which was located the entrance from the street. A narrow two-story porch continues along the three-story wing at the west end of the house.
5. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys are flush with the north wall, located so as to center on the rooms. They have hoods with flat tops.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

- (1) Entrance from the street: This is a wooden frontispiece set onto the brick wall at the east end of the piazza. It is approached by four steps with stone treads, rounded nosing, and brick risers. The threshold is one step higher. There is a pilaster with simple mouldings for base and capital at each jamb; the faces are decorated with gouge work in a double inverted crescent motive. In the frieze are two horizontal elliptical fan motifs in relief, and a nearly circular one in the block over each pilaster. The whole entablature breaks around the pilasters and continues across a narrow pier outside the pilasters. The opening is now closed up with a plain piece of plywood.
- (2) Entrances from the piazza: On the first and second stories are simple central entrances. Each has wooden architrave trim inside the masonry opening, and a rectangular transom with a fan light over the door.

- b. Windows and shutters: There are three bays across the end and five bays along the front. Masonry openings are rectangular, with a flat brick arch 1-1/2 bricks high, and simple wood casings inside. Sash are double hung, with six lights over six lights on the third story and nine lights over nine lights on the other stories. Shutter pintles are in place, but no shutters.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Hip roof with standing seam metal covering. Roofs were formerly covered with slates, but hurricane damage in recent years necessitated their replacement, as in general throughout the city.
- b. Cornice: The house cornice is of three corbelled brick courses, the middle one being laid diagonally.

8. Description of the three-story wing at the west end: This is three bays long, of the same height as the main portion of the house, but with a low parapet and flat roof. The bricks are smaller in size and lighter in color--rather pink. Openings have granite lintels.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: Each floor of the main part of the house has a central hall, with stairway, and a room on each

side with a projecting fireplace centered on the north wall. Along the south side of the first two stories is a piazza. There has been some modern partitioning in addition.

2. Stairway: This is in two flights of eleven risers each, between the first and second floors, returning from a wide landing. There is an open string, with scrolled brackets under the projecting treads. There are three thin rectangular balusters to each tread; the rail is simple but has fine ramping curves, and a spiral at the lower end. The stair to the third floor is similar. The wing at the west end once contained a small stairway.
3. Flooring: Floor boards are typically of longleaf yellow pine averaging 5" in width. First-floor joists are 3" x 12", 25" on centers. Framing around hearth has pegged mortise and tenon joints.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are typically of plaster on split lath, painted, with paneled wood wainscoting and wood cornices.
5. Interior trim:
 - a. Drawing room (east room on second floor):
 - (1) Window trim: This is all of wood; there is a moulded and reeded architrave with a carved guilloche band in the center. The reveal, which extends to the floor, is faced at the jambs and soffit with small panels. On the field of each panel is planted a narrow moulding, with scallops at the corners. Paneling below the window stool matches the wainscot.
 - (2) Door trim is similar to that of the windows but without paneling in reveals, which are thin because partitions are frame. The door between this room and the hall is said to be the only original one remaining. It has six moulded panels, with raised fields scalloped at the corners. On the hall side, this door has a narrow moulding planted on the field of each panel, with scallops at the corners. The two cast-iron butts appear original.
 - (3) A wooden wainscot extends around the room, paneled. In each panel the field is raised, with scalloped corners. Along the dado rail is a carved guilloche.

- (4) A wooden cornice and frieze extend around the room. The cornice has modillions, rope moulding, and ornate dentils. In the frieze are swags and rosettes in gouge work. The whole is extremely decorative, with carving and drilling.
- (5) Fireplace: There are wooden beads in the form of a rope moulding at the corners of the chimney breast. Corinthianesque pilasters carry a three-piece entablature greatly ornamented in relief and with gouge work. The mantel shelf is thin; the mouldings below have pierced decoration, rope mouldings, and ornate dentils. On the frieze are fan motifs in relief. The architrave is decorated with gouge work. In the opening is a cast-iron fire frame.
- (6) General: All woodwork is painted and is in excellent condition in most places. Along the frieze are remains of the bell-pull hardware. The distance from the floor to the bottom of the room cornice is 10'-2"; the cornice and frieze are about 12" high.
- b. West room on second floor: Woodwork in this room includes cornice, door and window trim, wainscot and mantel. The cornice has ornate dentils, and gouge work swags in the frieze. An architrave frames door and window openings; the window recess extends only to the top of the wainscot. Doors are six-panel. The wainscot is paneled and has a gouge work swag along the dado rail. The mantel has reeded Doric pilasters carrying a three-piece entablature which breaks out over the pilasters. The architrave is decorated with gouge work. There is a center block in the frieze, decorated with a gouge work swag; blocks over the pilasters have gouge work rosettes. There are ornate dentils in the cornice.
- c. West room on first floor: This is similar in character to the room above it, with slight differences in detailing of the wood work. The frieze of the room cornice has diagonal reeding, and the door and window trim is reeded. The mantel is of a simple type frequently found in Greek Revival interiors, with pilasters, frieze and shelf of black marble.
- d. Stair hall: The detail is quite similar at the first and second floor levels. In the front portion is a wood cornice with crocket-like modillions and carved soffit between them; the frieze is reeded. Door trim

is of reeded architraves, with pierced decoration around the outer moulding. There is a wood paneled wainscot, which follows the ramp of the stairway; it has similar pierced decoration along the base and dado rail mouldings. Over the front portion the first and second story ceilings have ornamental plasterwork. The lower one is a large rosette, the upper one a round panel of Adam character.

6. Hardware: Doors are hung on two cast-iron butts, typically; apparently no original locks remain. Bell-pull hardware remains in several rooms.
7. Heating was originally by means of fireplaces.
8. Basement: There is minimum head room in the earth-floored basement. It is reached from a steep stairway under the piazza. There are remains of an old brick cistern under the added west wing. Another cistern was recently removed from the yard just to the south of it.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This house occupies an interior lot with 50' frontage on East Bay Street, 190' along the north lot line and 166' along the south lot line [Plan of Laurens Square, recorded in R. M. C. Office Book L., No. 7, p. 477]. The house is parallel to the north and south lot lines but at an angle to the street.

Within recent years East Bay Street has been extended and connected to become a busy arterial thoroughfare but old maps show that throughout the nineteenth century it was not a continuous street. This was originally a quiet residential neighborhood. East of the street the area is now primarily industrial but to the west it remains residential with some business. An automobile service station adjoins this property to the south.

2. Enclosures: There is a small trapezoidal yard at the end on the street, with two square stucco posts at the entrance and two at the south side driveway entrance; these have corbel caps surmounted by low pyramids. There is a smaller post at the northeast corner. A wrought-iron fence with a gate separates this small yard from the sidewalk; it appears probable that there was a service entrance to the basement here originally.

Brick walls enclose the lot along the north and south lines; the one at the south is stuccoed, marked off to imitate stone jointing.

3. Outbuildings:

- a. Former slave quarters: This adjoins the west wing of the house and extends about 65' beyond it, along the north lot line. It is of brick, two stories in height, with gable roof, and one room in width. The exterior remains virtually unchanged except for painting the brick but the interior has been converted into modern apartments. According to Mr. Hartmann the interior was formerly very simple; it had a fireplace, now bricked up, with an oven, now removed.

Window openings have segmental arches, the arch consisting of one soldier course, with wood casings and wood sill inside the masonry opening. Sash are double hung, six lights over six lights.

- b. Former carriage house: This extends about 20' from the west end of the former slave quarters. It is of brick and has been considerably altered inside and outside, to convert it into a modern apartment.
- c. Brick necessary house: At the northwest corner of the lot are partial remains of a small brick necessary; two walls.
4. Landscaping: No indication of any landscape treatment remains, but within the memory of old inhabitants the yard is said to have been paved with brick. A few bricks are to be seen in the ground.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
July 1962

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
1845 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240