

Dr. David Ramsey House
92 Broad Street
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS
SC
10-CHAR,
63-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of South Carolina

Historic American Buildings Survey

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THE DR. RAMSAY HOUSE
92 Broad Street
Charleston, South Carolina

Owner: Mrs. R.P.Tucker.

Date of Erection: Between 1750 and 1775 (text); before 1775 (card).

Architect and Builder: No record.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: Three.

Materials of Construction: Wood.

Other Existing Records: See text.

Additional Data: See following pages.

THE DR. RAMSAY HOUSE
92 BROAD STREET
CHARLESTON, S. C.

SURVEY NO. 13-1

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No. 92 Broad Street, Charleston, is generally known as the Dr. Ramsay House. It is so called because it was the home for many years of Dr. David Ramsay; one of the leading members of the medical profession of South Carolina, as well as one of the first historians of the State.

This house, however, was not built by him, as he was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1749, received the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Princeton in 1765, at the age of sixteen, studied medicine and received the degree of Bachelor of Physics from Princeton in 1772 and moved to Charleston in 1773, where he rapidly rose to eminence in his profession. He was one of the earliest advocates of American Independence, belonged to the legislature of South Carolina, and after the Revolution was for several years a member of the Continental Congress, being president pro tem of the same during the absence of John Hancock.

His historical works cover various histories of the State and the Revolution in South Carolina, and various works on medicine and health, and a life of Washington. His writings in general were done during the period of 1800-1835.

In certain articles written about him, his name has been spelt "Ramsey" but on the title page of the original

edition of his "History of South Carolina", published in 1809, his name is printed "Ramsay", which is without doubt the correct spelling.

Presumably he purchased this house already built, and did not construct the same, as the character of the building antedates the Revolution. No exact date can be given to the house as no newspaper comment is apt to be given to the construction of a private home, except in exceptional circumstances, and therefore builder and architect remain unknown. The walls of many of its rooms, paneled for their full height, together with the character of the weatherboarding, seem to place this house somewhere in the quarter century of 1750-1775. Exactly where in that span of years it was constructed cannot be stated, unless the title deeds when searched may yield some clue. Mr. John Bennett, the author, of Charleston, has stated that in the course of other research he has found evidence that this building was the headquarters of the junior officers of the British forces which occupied Charleston in 1780, when taken by Clinton. This must not be confused with the known fact that the Miles Brewton House in lower King Street was British headquarters. The Miles Brewton House was the official headquarters of the occupying forces and the commanding officer's residence. No. 92 Broad Street was the quarters of the lieutenants, cornets, etc., as naturally with a large force of men it would be impossible for all officers to be lodged under one roof.

The building has been somewhat altered and changed during the course of approximately 175 years; modern improvements have resulted in the attachment of various projections on the rear, to serve as bathrooms, kitchens, etc. for the upper floors. The ground floor has had certain of its rooms divided by modern partitions, without regard to the paneled walls, in order that small offices might be formed. This was due to the fact that with the passage of years this section of Broad Street has changed its character from residential occupancy to retail trade and doctors' offices.

A tin roof has taken the place of the original roofing and a three-story piazza has been projected over the sidewalk. This appears to be a later addition and in the opinion of the writer was probably added during the first quarter of the 19th century, as it was at that time that similar additions to the South Carolina Hall and 59 Meeting Street were added, which would indicate that this was the fashion of the time -- a fashion that was afterwards forbidden by city ordinance on the grounds that street sidewalks were public and not private property. This assumption has some support in the fact that when the squad was measuring the building they discovered written on one of the roof rafters, at the southwest corner of the building, the words "Anno Domini 1816", written in chalk. This might possibly indicate the date of this extension, although it

may have been written by some idle carpenter repairing the roof at some other time, as naturally many assumptions may be made from the fragmentary evidence, which may not be correct.

This building is now owned by Mrs. Robert P. Tucker, of Charleston, and has been occupied for the last ten years by Mr. DeWitt W. King, for residence and office.

Sources of Material:

South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719-1776 by Edward McCrady, The Macmillan Co., publisher, 1899

History of South Carolina, by David Ramsay, 1809

Data by Dist. Officer

Approved:

James L. Hoffman

District Officer #13

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS..

Revised 1936 by H.C.F.

Addendum to:

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PHOTOGRAPHS
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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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