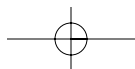
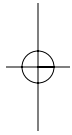
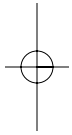


The Majesty of Charleston







The Majesty of



Charleston

Photography and Text by
Peter Beney



PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY
Gretna 2005



Copyright © 1993, 2005
By Peter Beney
All rights reserved

First edition, September 1993
Second edition, February 2005

The word "Pelican" and the depiction of a pelican are trademarks of Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., and are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Beney, Peter.

The majesty of Charleston / photography and text by Peter Beney.
p. cm.

ISBN 9781589802704 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Charleston (S.C.)—Pictorial works. I. Title.

F279.C443B46 2005
975.7'915—dc22

2004022436

Photo on p. 2: The City Hall Council Chamber at 80 Broad Street dates from 1801 and opened as the First Bank of the United States. In 1818 the city of Charleston purchased it to use as their city hall. The council chamber has many historic paintings, busts, and art objects on display and is open to the public. Twice a month the mayor and council meet here sitting at the original black-walnut desks.

Photo on p. 6: Fountain in Waterfront Park.

Photo on p. 8: Basketwork typical of Charleston.

Printed in Korea

Published by Pelican Publishing Company, Inc.
1000 Burmaster Street, Gretna, Louisiana 70053

To Gena Louise

Acknowledgments

Many people helped me with the production of this updated book. In particular I would like to thank the curators and administrators of Charleston's museum houses, plantation owners and their administrators, restaurant and inn managers, college administrators, and especially the owners of all the private homes featured. They all gave graciously of their time and made many helpful recommendations. In addition, I extend my appreciation to the Friends of the Hunley for generously supplying photographs. Also my thanks to Gena Louise for her input and text corrections; Moakler Processing Service of Atlanta for their flawless E6 film processing; Frank McGuire for his interest, suggestions, and helpful introductions; W. Chris Phelps, of Charleston Walks, for his invaluable advice and guidance; Tim Pollard for his photographic assistance; and Jan Arrington for her text formatting on the original book.



Contents

Acknowledgments	5
Introduction	9
Boone Hall Plantation	14
Magnolia Plantation and Gardens	16
Audubon Swamp Gardens	19
Drayton Hall	20
Middleton Place	22
Eliza's House—Middleton Place	25
Charleston Museum and Apothecary Shop	26
Heyward-Washington House	27
Joseph Manigault House	30
Aiken-Rhett House	33
Nathaniel Russell House	37
Edmonston-Alston House	40
Calhoun Mansion	43
Old Exchange Building and Provost Dungeon	47
Powder Magazine	49
Thomas Elfe House	50
Dock Street Theatre	52
Pink House and William Rhett House	53
French Triplet Houses and Rainbow Row	54
St. Michael's Episcopal Church	55
First (Scots) Presbyterian Church	56
DuBose Heyward House	57
Miles Brewton House	58
Market Hall	59
Fireproof Building	60
Old Citadel and Sword Gates	61
Hibernian Hall, U.S. Customs House, and White Point Gardens	62
East Battery, Longitude Lane, Confederate War Memorial, and South Battery	63
Magnolia Cemetery and Old Santee Canal State Park	64
Rutledge House Inn	65
Ashley Hall	67
College of Charleston	69
William Blacklock House	71
St. Philip's Episcopal Church	73

St. Philip's Churchyard	74
Church Street Houses	75
Circular Congregational Church	76
Beth Elohim Temple	77
Unitarian Church	78
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church	79
French Protestant Huguenot Church	80
First Baptist Church	81
William Bull House	82
Thomas Lamboll House	84
Thirty-six Meeting Street	86
Executive Headquarters House	88
Charleston County Courthouse	89
The Citadel	90
John Drayton House	91
Daniel Elliott Huger House	93
Daniel Ravenel House	95
Palmer House	97
William Pinckney Shingler House	99
Fort Sumter National Monument and Liberty Square	100
Gibbes Museum of Art	101
Friends of the <i>Hunley</i> —Warren Lasch Conservation Center	102
Map of Charleston	104



Introduction

Fashioned by three hundred years of rich history, Charleston resembles a prized, bejeweled pendant set in a necklace formed by the Ashley and Cooper Rivers.

The first permanent settlers came to this region from England by way of Barbados. Under the command of William Sayle, they faced the perils of the Atlantic Ocean and finally made landfall off the Carolina coast in 1670. Guided upriver by friendly Kiawah Indians, they established a settlement which they called Charles Towne Landing. Land was allocated by the Lord Proprietors and plantations were started by families whose wealth and power eventually grew throughout the low-country. In the spring of 1680, the colonists relocated to Oyster Point, a peninsula between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. Surveyor-General Maurice Mathews planned the "Grand Modell": a walled town with wide streets, spaces for churches, public buildings, and one hundred wooden dwellings. From this humble beginning Charleston was established.

Shortly afterwards, French Huguenots arrived under the leadership of Rene Petit. These Protestants were fleeing persecution after the revocation of the Edict of Nante in France. They emigrated with the blessing of King Charles II of England, who subsidized their passage. Charles let it be known their skills producing oils, making wine, weaving, making bricks, and farming would benefit his colony. The 1690s brought hurricanes, a smallpox epidemic, fire and yellow fever, all of which killed many colonists.

During the eighteenth century the province fought off Indians, French, Spanish, and pirates, who looted and sunk their supply ships. William Rhett pursued the pirates and brought them back to Charles Towne for justice. Forty-six pirates were hanged, including their notorious leader "Gentleman Pirate" Stede Bonnet. This execution is unprecedented in American history.

Religious freedom attracted many diverse religious groups to the Carolina province. Huguenots came in large numbers, settling low-country plantations, and Episcopalians established their religion as early as 1670. Congregationalists and Presbyterians were united in 1690, and Scottish Presbyterians separated and formed the Scots Kirk. Jews, Lutherans, and Methodists also practiced their faiths unimpeded. By 1786, Roman Catholic Mass had been celebrated in the city.

In 1720 settlers repudiated the Lord Proprietor's rule and pledged allegiance to the King of England, thus becoming a Royal Colony. Ten years later Charles Towne entered its "Golden Age": years of extensive shipping and trade, reinforced by a rice and indigo culture. This made the port one of the world's richest. Elegant mansions began to appear and urban dwellings swelled the city. The first printing press was set up and in 1734 the Carolinas' first newspaper, the *Gazette*, was published.

A great fire destroyed three hundred buildings in 1740. Most of the southeastern section of the city was lost. It was then decided to build houses with spaces between them for safety. This saw the birth of the Charleston single house. These detached houses were constructed with their narrow ends on the street. Only one room wide and two or three rooms deep, a narrow side

yard provided a firebreak. Grander double houses, constructed on larger lots, had two rooms facing the street, usually divided by a front entrance and hallway. These building concepts dominated house design in Charleston for three hundred years. Early houses were renovated to keep pace with fashions, and as a result we now see Palladian, Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Rococo, and Victorian styles in the city's architecture. Sometimes several periods are mixed within the same building.

Evidence of locally made bricks can be seen in even the earliest buildings. Referred to as either low country or Cooper River brick or Charleston gray brick, they were used in construction from about 1690. Particularly fine examples are Boone Hall Plantation's "Slave Street" and other outbuildings constructed from early bricks made by slaves. Many brick houses were later covered in stucco to hide damage from repeated hurricanes and especially after the 1886 earthquake, which caused widespread devastation. Evidence of cracks could be hidden, but the telltale reinforcing bolts show the extent of the damage.

As prosperity grew in the province, homes became more opulent and many successful planters, merchants, and bankers constructed their townhouses with imaginative flamboyance. Influenced by changing architecture in England, prominent citizens built grand mansions with courtyards, carriage houses, servants' quarters, and gardens. *London Magazine* wrote of Charles Towne in 1762, "Here the rich people have handsome equipages; the merchants are opulent and well bred; the people are thriving and extensive, in dress and life; so that everything conspires to make this town the politest, as it is one of the richest in America."

The next decade saw increasing resentment against the mother country. In 1773, a cargo of tea was taken from ships in the harbor and stored in the Exchange Building's basement to prevent paying British Government taxes. Unlike the Boston Tea Party, Charleston's tea was kept dry and later sold to help fund the Revolution. Revolutionary feeling ran high, and in 1775 Lord William Campbell, the last royal governor, fled the city in the dead of night, taking the great seal of the Province with him. Thus ended royal government in South Carolina. The British Parliament declared the colonies in rebellion, and in 1776 the provincial congress assembled in the Exchange Building and adopted a constitution establishing the first independent government in America. Among those present were Arthur Middleton, Thomas Lynch Jr., Thomas Heyward Jr., and Edward Rutledge. All four were local figures who signed the Declaration of Independence.

With the advent of war, a British fleet of 270 guns attacked but failed to take Fort Moultrie. Two years later, in 1778, the British attacked again overland from Savannah, Georgia. Charleston held but surrounding lands were torched. John Rutledge became governor and commander-in-chief of American Revolutionary forces "to do for public good" and acquired the nickname "Dictator John." In February 1780 British general Sir Henry Clinton attacked by land and sea, seizing control of the harbor and taking John's Island with eleven thousand men. On May 12, 1780, local commander General Benjamin Lincoln surrendered his American force of five thousand men and Charles Towne was occupied.

Many prominent leaders were arrested and exiled to St. Augustine, Florida. As resistance grew, Francis Marion, "The Swamp Fox," harassed the British in

the interior while Governor Rutledge kept revolutionary feelings alive. One autumn night in 1782 the cry rang out in the city streets, "Half-past twelve of a stormy night, and Cornwallis has surrendered." One year later, unable to control the rebellious province, the British left Charles Towne and a triumphant American army marched in.

In 1783, Charles Towne changed its name to Charleston and a city government was established. In May of 1788 delegates met in the Exchange Building for the Ratification Convention attended by many local dignitaries. South Carolina became the eighth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

The next ten years saw Charleston decline. Fire spread and when water was unavailable, firemen sometimes resorted to gunpowder to stop the flames. As a result, thousands were left homeless. Even the Huguenot Church was a casualty. Some good things did happen, however. George Washington visited the city in 1791 and was welcomed with great pomp on his Southern tour. About the same time an important event took place that dramatically affected the city's architectural future. Dominican French Roman Catholic settlers evacuated Haiti due to slave uprisings. They brought their idea of galleries with them to Charleston and these became the famous piazzas seen on many houses in and around the city. Strategically placed and accompanied by tall windows and high ceilings, the piazza made life more bearable in the humid summer climate. Attracted by the prospect of cooler temperatures, plantation families vacated to the city in summer. "King Cotton," the plantations' new cash crop, created a newfound prosperity and with the opening of the new Santee Canal, Charleston reestablished itself as a port, shipping huge cargoes to the north and Europe. Wealthy planters and merchants built new, elegant townhouses in the latest architectural styles and population figures rose to more than twenty thousand.

During this affluent period, as many as 130 cabinet makers plied their trade in and around Charleston. Charleston-made furniture became much sought-after for its quality craftsmanship. Mahogany from the West Indies and local cedar woods were used in house construction and furniture-making. A mahogany mill was built and other rarer woods, such as walnut, came from upcountry. Most famous of these Charleston cabinet makers was Thomas Elfe. Identified by distinctive signature patterns, his furniture is on display in many local museum houses today. Fortunately, many of his records and accounts have also survived.

The early 1800s was a time of deceptive ease, but during these complacent days cotton lands became exhausted and the future of rice was also uncertain. The port declined, as did the city of Charleston. The "Great Panic" of 1837 saw prices plummet and fortunes lost. Economic depression set in, affecting planters, merchants, and shippers alike. Nevertheless, Charleston recovered slowly after this and by 1839 the first high school was built and a railroad to Columbia was completed. Charleston rated just behind Richmond and New Orleans in manufacturing and by 1850 a good public school system was in place as well.

"At 1:15 o'clock on December 20, 1860, unanimously the Ordinance of Secession was passed," read the *Charleston Gazette* news-sheet. This ordinance led to war between the states. The Secession Conference arrived in town the next year, and Citadel cadets prevented the Federal ship *Star of the West* from relieving Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Here the first shots of

the Civil War rang out. General Beauregard prepared the Confederate defense of the city and a three-year Union blockade followed. On December 11, 1861, a great "hurricane fire" swept the city, destroying everything in its path. Charleston was besieged by both man and nature.

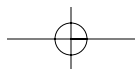
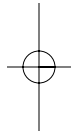
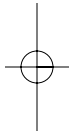
The following year, the *H.L. Hunley*, the world's first submarine to successfully engage in battle, sank a federal frigate, and the newly invented semi-submersible torpedo boat *David* harassed federal blockade shipping, thus preventing a frontal attack of Charleston from the harbor. A federal bombardment followed in August 1863 and continued for more than fifty days. Meanwhile, Sherman's troops ransacked and torched plantations in outlying districts. In February 1865, city lines to the interior were cut and the Confederates evacuated, while victorious Union soldiers marched into a barren city. In May of that same year an earthquake killed one hundred people and many homes were derelict.

Following the Civil War, Charlestonians were too poor to remodel their homes. As a result, buildings retained their distinctive old charm and tradition. During this period, the local saying "too poor to paint, too proud to whitewash" materialized. Recovery came when Charleston was chosen to be a major naval base. Remarkable industrial and commercial progress followed. After decades of poverty and peeling paint, a city cleanup began. Preservationists fought to prevent indiscriminate demolition and moves were made to save important buildings. On October 13, 1931, the city council adopted a proposal outlining 144 acres as an Historic District, which formed the nation's first Historic City Government Ordinance. In 1947, the Historic Charleston Foundation was formed. They bought the Nathaniel Russell House and also saved slum neighborhoods, restoring more than sixty homes. In 1968, they began commercial restoration projects and cosponsored the Broad Street beautification program. The restoration of boutiques, restaurants, and inns on King Street continues as an ongoing project and this area, including Charleston Place, now draws thousands of visitors every year.

Hurricane Hugo hit the South Carolina coast in 1989, causing widespread destruction. Most of Charleston lost its roofs, many houses were flooded with water, and damage from wind and rain lashing through broken windows spoiled decor and furnishings. The damage was significant, especially to property facing open water. But Charlestonians are familiar with disaster and boast "despite disease, fire, flood, war, an earthquake, recession and hurricanes, our city has survived." They picked up, repaired and repainted.

This jewel of a city still sparkles.

The Majesty of Charleston



Boone Hall Plantation

Mount Pleasant

Maj. John Boone accompanied the "First Fleet" of settlers from England in 1681 and received this land as a grant from the Lords Proprietors. Boone Hall began growing rice, but later became a prosperous cotton plantation covering seventeen thousand acres. The locally famous Cooper River gray bricks were made here and all the utility buildings, walls, paths, and the present mansion are constructed from them. A working plantation for three hundred years, Boone Hall established pecan groves in 1904 and still produces a commercial crop.

The earlier house was replaced by this antebellum Georgian mansion in 1935 and is constructed entirely of plantation-made bricks in a beautiful garden setting.





In 1743, Capt. Thomas Boone laid out this long oak-lined drive leading to the house. This avenue together with a smokehouse and slave cabins are listed in the Register of Historic Places.



"Slave Street" (ca. 1743). Nine brick-built slave cabins, unique in the United States.

Unusual garden walls made from old plantation bricks.