

**The History of 1914 Central Avenue:
A Circa 1930s Moultrieville Beach Cottage**



Moultrieville, Sullivan's Island, South Carolina

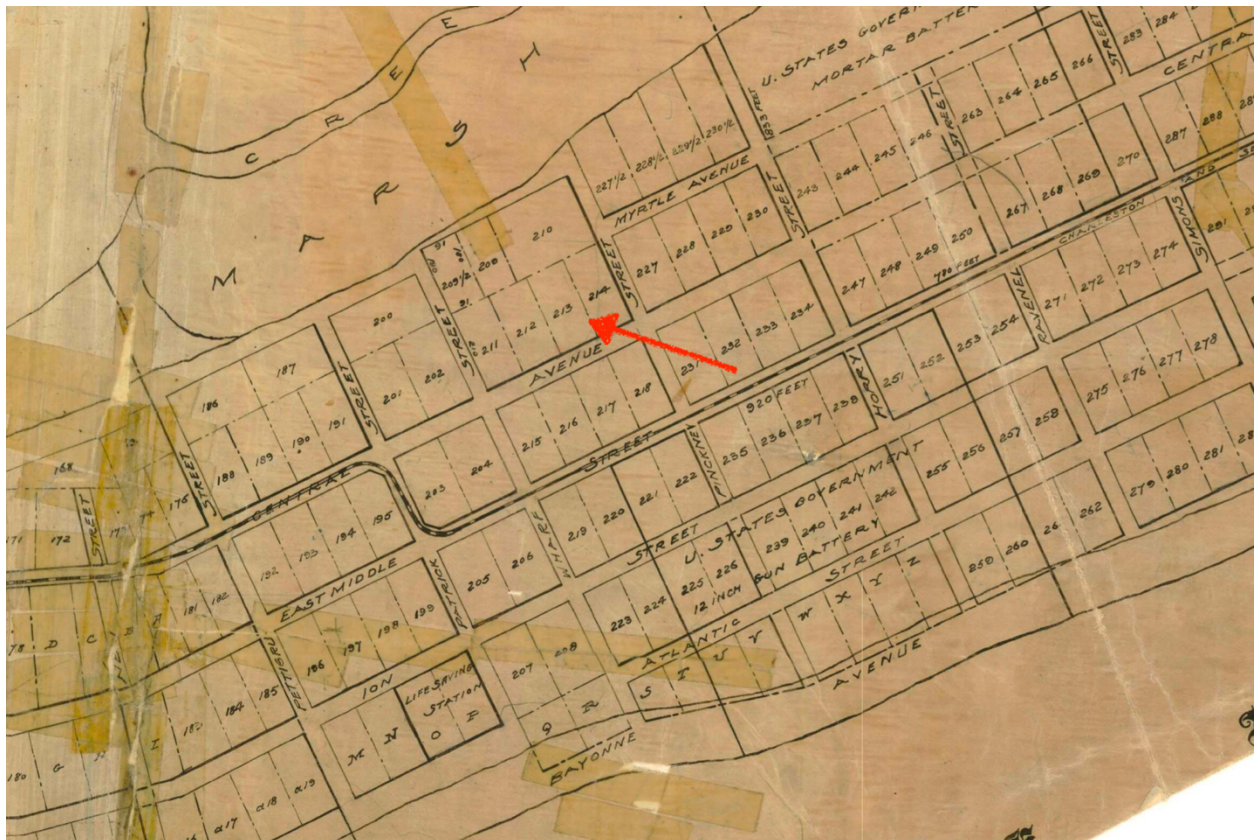
Butler Preservation LC

February 2025

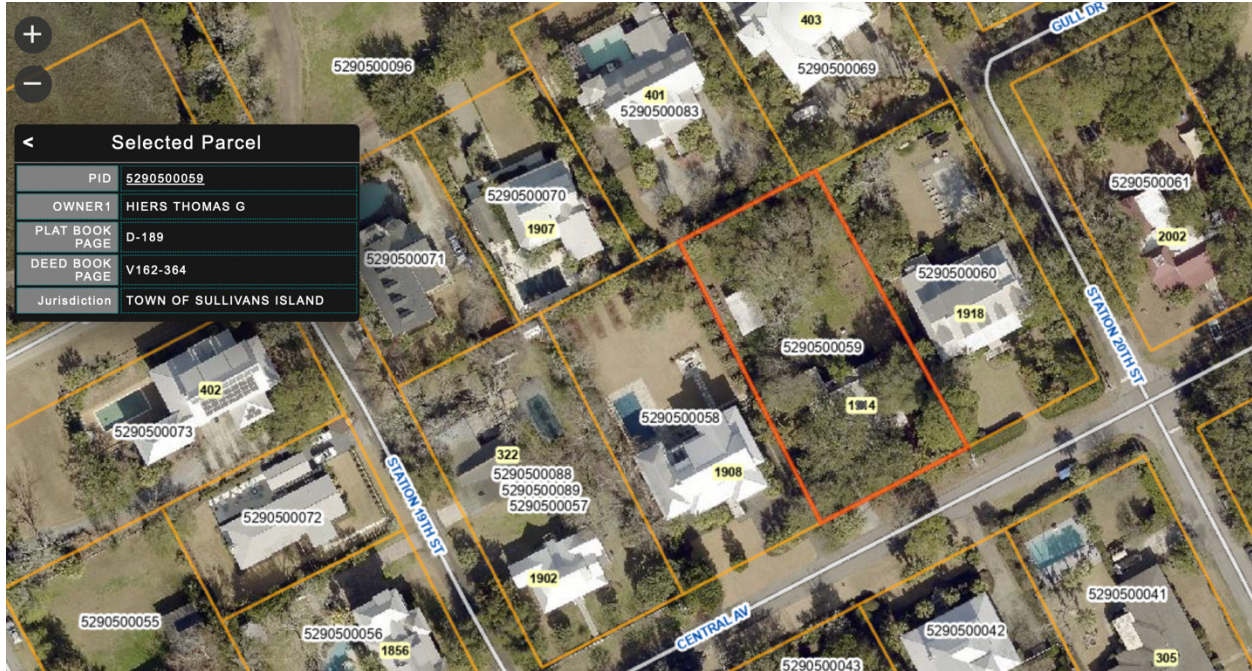
Introduction:

1914 Central Avenue is located between Station 19 (originally Wharf Street) and Station 20 (originally Pinckney Street) on lot 213 on the 1902 Moultrieville subdivision plan. The lot dimensions measure 105 feet along Central Avenue by 210 feet in depth. The property lies outside Atlanticville and Moultrieville National Register historic districts. The parcel had a previous street address, 1908 Central Avenue, which appears in records from the Liebenrood family's era of ownership.

The block of Central Avenue where the house is located was owned by architect and builder John Devereux, who constructed his island mansion, the Devereux house after buying the land in 1870. During the Devereuxes' ownership, the surrounding area of Moultrieville was subdivided into building lots, as noted above. The current house was constructed circa 1933, after Mary Liebenrood purchased the property from the estate of Helen Devereux as a vacant parcel. The building first appears visually on the *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* in 1938. Charles and Mary Liebenrood's daughter Agatha Liebenrood Lowe inherited the house in 1963, and thus Central Avenue remained in the Liebenrood/Lowe family until 1971, when they sold it to the Bogart family. Thomas G. Hiers, the current owner, purchased the house in 1979 and undertook several additions to the house circa 1992.



1914 Central Avenue, lot 213, on the 1902 Moultrieville Plat (book D, pg. 189).



1914 Central Avenue parcel in Charleston County GIS.

Architectural Description and Alterations

1914 Central Avenue is a wood frame cottage with a low-pitched gable roof. The house is clad in flush, shiplap-like, horizontal wood siding with a rounded profile on the edge of each piece, and vertically oriented wooden siding in the gable end of the façade. It is elevated roughly two foot off the ground with masonry piers and has a continuous skirting around the crawl space comprised of mid twentieth century cinderblock units (these are not standard dimension CMUs but rather a thinner cinderblock measuring roughly four inches in width). The historic core of the house has a rectangular plan with the gable roof running perpendicular to Central Avenue.

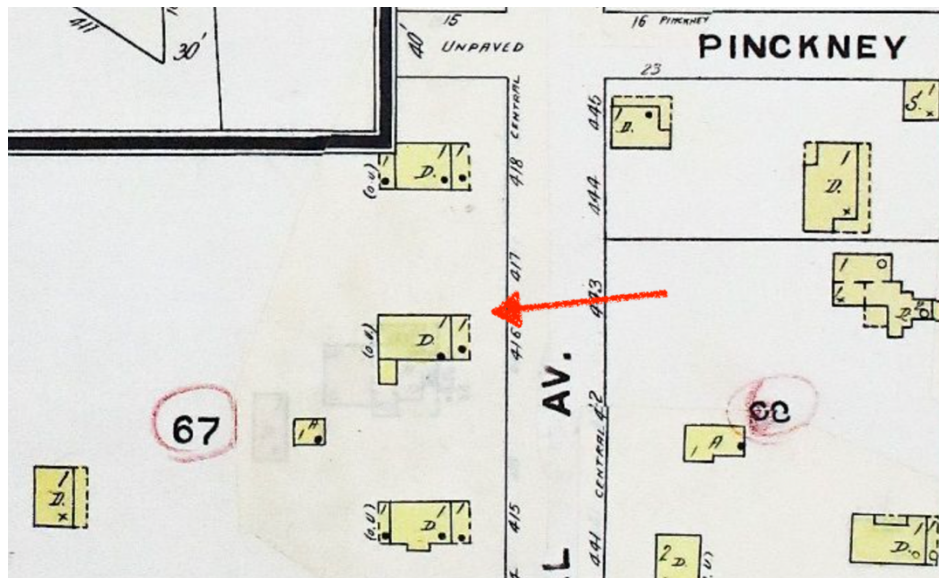


Perspective view of the façade.

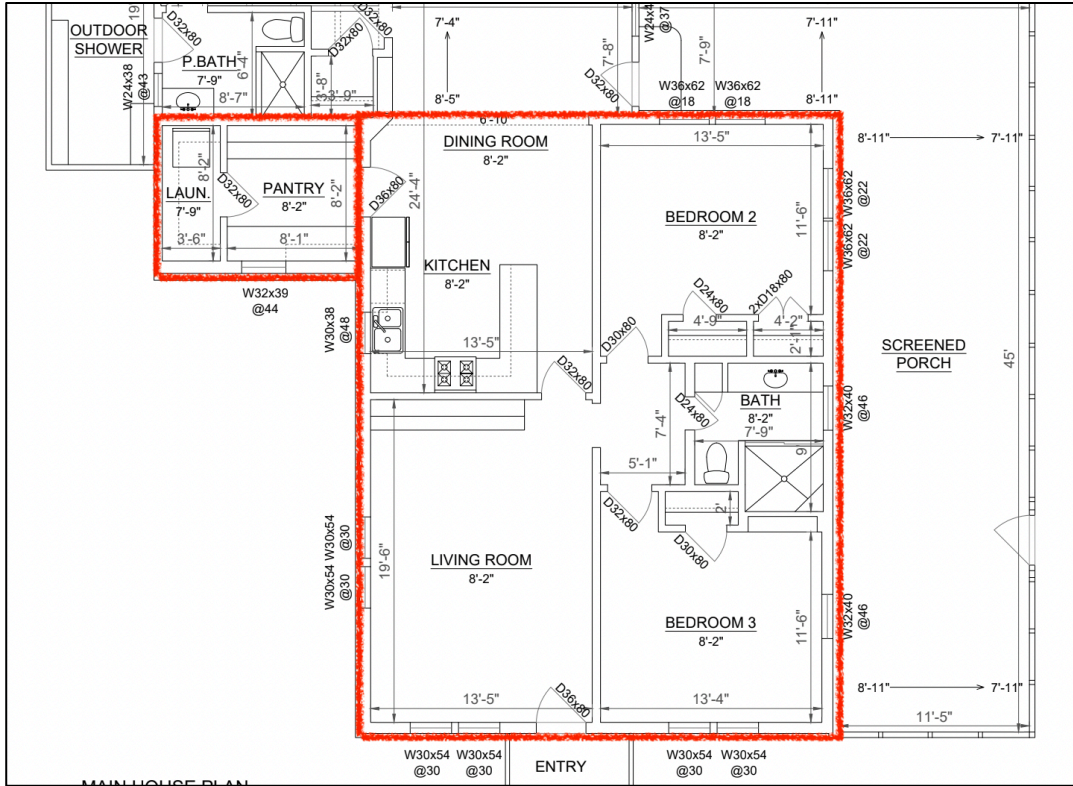


Close up of the painted cinderblock foundation skirting that runs continuously around the portions of the house that predate 1992.

By 1938, the rectangular plan cottage had a small bay projecting from the west elevation of the house, creating an overall ell plan. The bay measured approximately nine feet by twelve feet and was probably constructed to facilitate indoor plumbing in the cottage. This bay appears to be an addition, based on the wall thickness between the kitchen and office/pantry. The wall is approximately seven inches thick, as are the other exterior walls of the house, which the interior partition walls are approximately five inches in width (2 by 4 framing and plaster/sheetrock). The bay is still present but has been absorbed into later additions that occurred in the 1990s. It does not have any historic fabric remaining, aside from some diagonal subfloor that is under modern plywood and 1970s linoleum flooring. The ell bay had a low pitched gable roof that tied into gable roof over the principal mass of the house. The earlier roofline is visible below a longer shed roofline over the 1992 rear bedroom addition, via an attic access panel. The roof of the ell had been re-sheathed with plywood and re-clad with asphalt shingles at an unknown date.



1938 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* showing the house. A one story front porch that ran along the entire façade was later replaced with a smaller porch or stoop with a gable roof (constructed after Hurricane Hugo).



The red outline shows the floor plan of the house in 1938, depicted on a 2025 as-built drawing.



Perspective view of the ell bay, which has vinyl windows and horizontal wood siding.



Left: modern plywood and circa 1970s linoleum flooring in the ell bay, which is now an office and pantry. Right: the framing and diagonal sheathing of the ell bay, photographed from a vent on the western elevation.



Images the end wall of the house, which has evidence of later repairs. The original back exterior wall of the house can be seen (painted grey and white) and the gable roof over the earlier iteration of the side ell.



The shed roofed bedroom addition on the rear of the house, the framing of which aligns with the western exterior wall of the ell bay.



Rear wall of the bedroom addition.

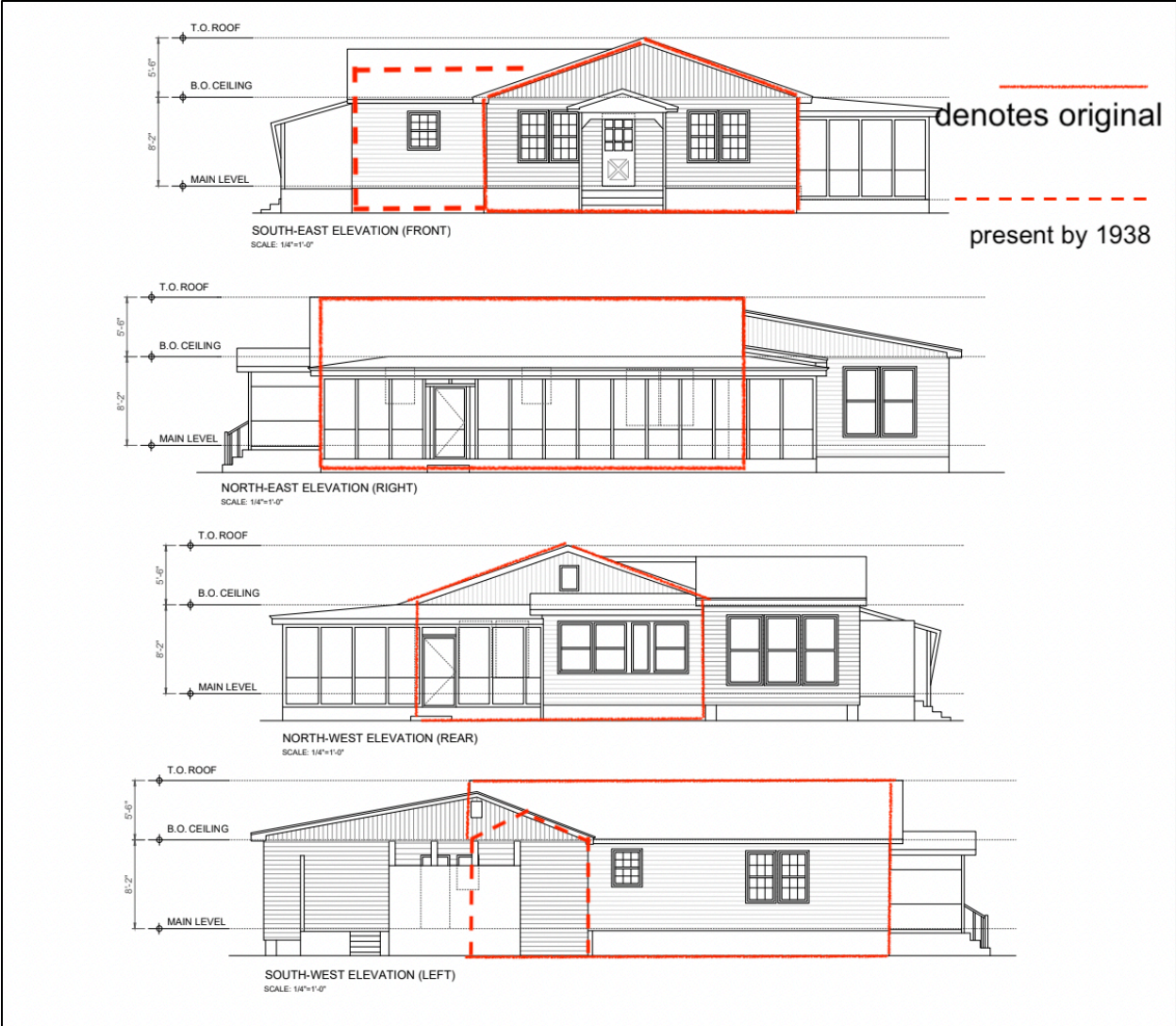
Other alterations include modern wiring, plumbing, and HVAC; a large wrap around porch constructed with treated dimensional lumber; a front porch framed with modern dimensional lumber; vinyl windows and vinyl/wood sash hybrid windows; a new front door; and asphalt single roof cladding.

Current owner Thomas G. Hiers purchased the house in 1979 and completed several alterations during his ownership: the screen porch on the east and part of the rear elevation; removing a portion of the rear exterior wall of the house to extend the kitchen; and a bedroom addition to the rear of the house/north of the 1938 projecting bay.

Summary timeline of alterations:

- By 1938: ell bay projecting from the west side of the house
- Circa 1950s: cinderblock foundation skirting installed
- Circa 1980s: kitchen expansion
- 1992: bedroom addition, front porch framing¹
- Post 1992: side porch added

¹ Date provided by Dr. Heirs



Drawings with original floorplan denoted.



Front porch, which replaced an earlier shed roofed porch that extended along the entire façade.



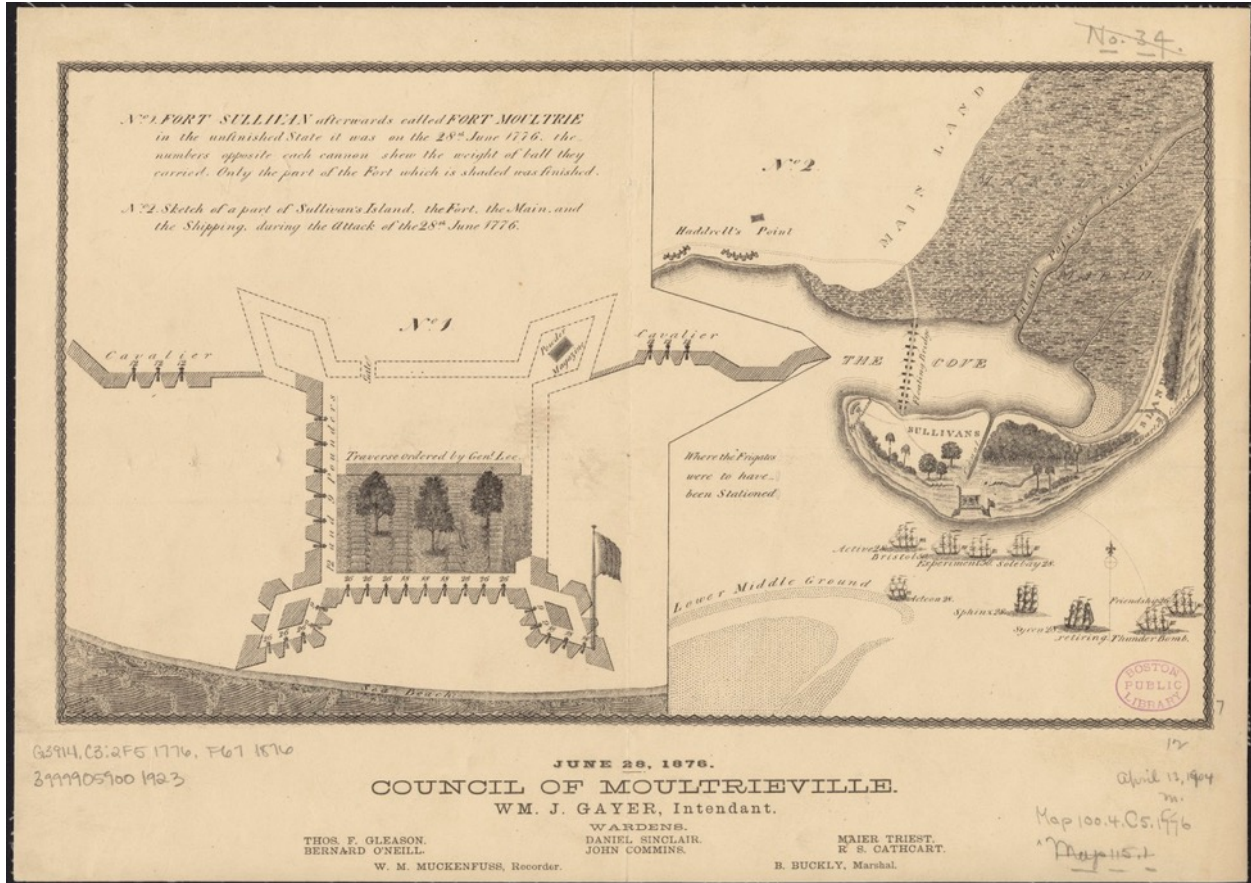
Perspective views of the wrap around side screened porch, which is framed with treated dimensional lumber.



The kitchen extension, constructed in 1992, as seen from the kitchen, looking north. The sheetrock covered lintel with uplighting indicates the original exterior rear wall of the house.

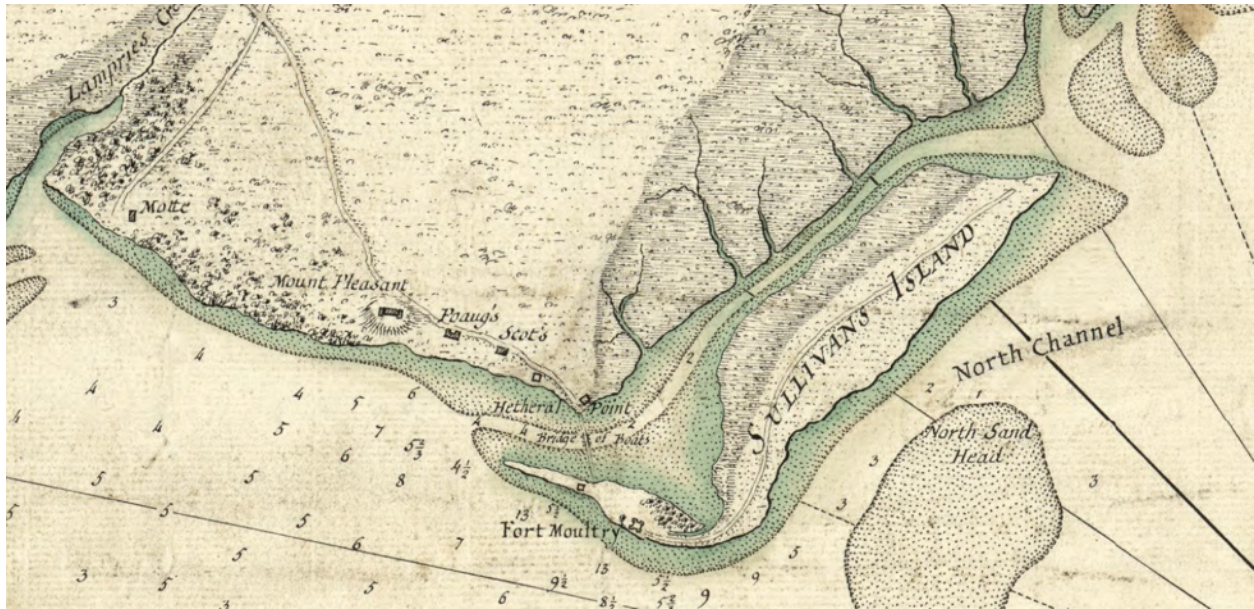
Early History of Sullivan's Island

Sullivan's Island is a beach community with a long and important history as a first line of coastal defense from the American Revolution to World War Two. The island is most famous for the Battle of Sullivan's Island, June 28, 1776, which was the first decisive patriot victory of the Revolutionary War. General William Moultrie famously repelled the British Royal Navy with a simple palmetto log and earthen fortification, at the site of Fort Moultrie today.



"No. 1 Fort Sullivan afterwards called Fort Moultrie in the unfinished state it was on the 28th June 1776." Surveyed in 1776. Leventhal Map Collection.

Traditionally, most of the houses on the island were seasonal residences for Charlestonians, although with the ease of modern transportation to and from the island by bridge, it has become more densely built and has many year-round residents today. As late as the 1960s, the Army Corps of Engineers noted that, "Sullivan's Island and Isle of Palms are summer beach resorts, and all beach frontage is privately owned. Neither has any industry, and the majority of the working population of these communities commute to jobs in Charleston." At that time, the population was just 1,358 residents.



A circa 1780 map showing “Fort Moultrie on Sullivan’s Island”, before Moultrieville was established and residents began to construct homes there. Library of Congress.

The island played a longstanding role not only in coastal defenses but in maritime lifesaving, which is most visible today in the names of the Station streets across Sullivan’s. The United States Lifesaving Service, forerunner to the Coast Guard, was established on Sullivan’s Island in 1894 to protect beachgoers and residents from drowning, and boats and ships from other maritime disasters such as storms or getting caught by sandbars.

Early History of Moultrieville

1914 Central Avenue is in Moultrieville, a small village on the island that was established around 1791, chartered or incorporated in 1817, and extended easterly and subdivided further in 1902. John Drayton in his 1802 publication *History of South Carolina* described the town as follows:

“six miles below Charleston, a settlement has been effected on Sullivan’s island, called Moultrieville, after Major General William Moultrie, its first commencement was about the year 1791, when the legislature passed a resolution permitting people to build there, on half acre lots; subject, however to the condition of their being removed whenever demanded. . . it contains at present near two hundred dwelling houses, besides kitchens and out officers. This place is little resorted to in during the winter and spring; but in the summer, and autumn, numbers of people reside there, for pleasure or health, and packet boats are playing at all hours, between it and Charleston.



Moultrieville, Mount Pleasant, and Charleston on the *Mill's Atlas of Charleston District, 1825*.

Most of the buildings on the western end of the island (where Moultrieville is located and where development was the densest) were destroyed during the American Civil War. Catherine Fitzgerald writes, "Taking part in the opening shots of the Civil War on April 12, 1861, Confederate gunners at Fort Moultrie and three other batteries on Sullivan's Island participated in the bombardment of Fort Sumter." The National Register for Moultrieville notes that by the 1870s, the area was again covered with houses, and development increased with improved transportation.



Bombardment of Fort Sumter, 1865. Library of Congress.

Sullivan's Island was linked to Mount Pleasant, also a small resort town at that time, by a series of privately owned ferries that operated from the early nineteenth into the early twentieth century. A steam ferry was established in 1845, sparking growth in both communities. Historian Nic Butler explains, "Thanks to the company's corporate structure and its use of the latest steam-powered watercraft, the Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island Ferry Company ruled the Cooper River for half a century, from October of 1845 to the summer of 1898. During this era, the steam ferry service radically changed the concept of commuting between Charleston and Mount Pleasant, including the neighboring farms in Christ Church Parish. The passage was quicker, easier, and more regular than it had ever been before. In the last generations before the advent of the automobile, the steam ferry boat was directly responsible for Mount Pleasant's first boom time."



The Sullivan's Island trolley and its mule team.

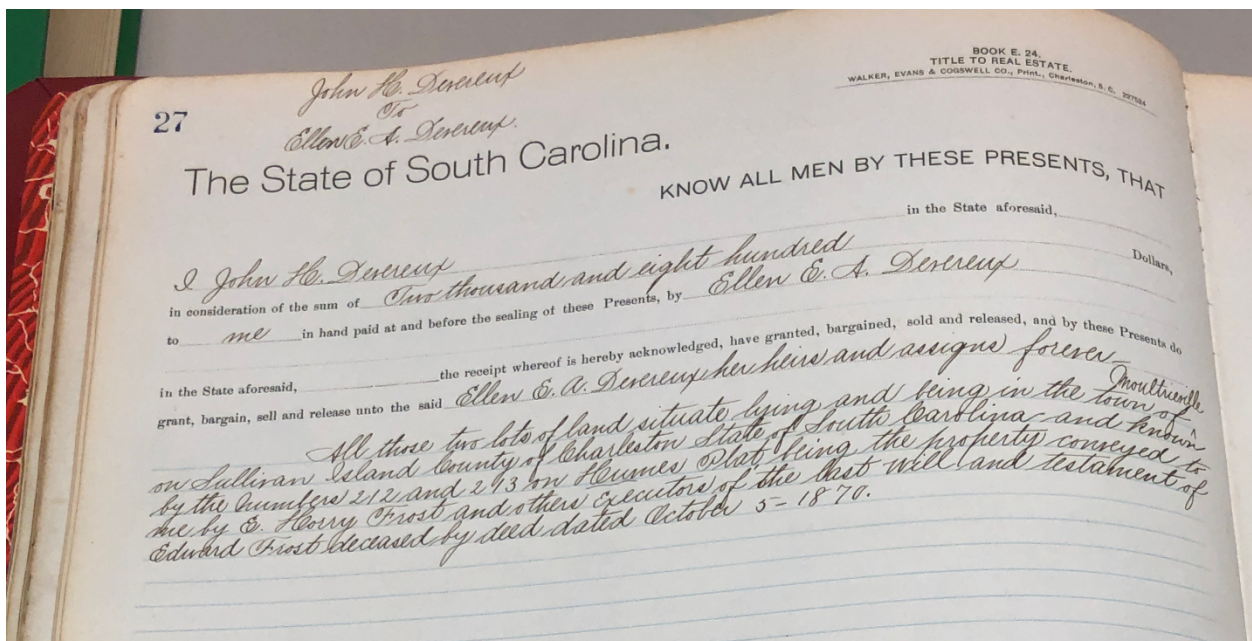
Trolleys are also important in Sullivan's Island development. The National Register notes that Seashore Railroad Company built a bridge, "between Mt. Pleasant and Sullivan's Island, across Cove Inlet, and across Breach Inlet between Sullivan's Island and the Isle of Palms. Early in the trolley line's history it was also possible to bypass Mt. Pleasant by taking a ferry from Charleston directly to Sullivan's Island, where It was met by a horse or mule trolley. The last trip of a mule trolley was in July 1898." There was historically a ferry landing on the western end of Moultrieville, and a bridge ramp toward Mount Pleasant, near the intersection of today's Conquest Street and Station 9 Street.

Following the opening of the trolley line, civil engineer H. Hamble was hired to create a subdivision plat for the large swath of land east of Fort Moultrie and abutting the Federal Reserve and other military-owned installations, titled "Moultrieville, Sullivan's Island" in April

1902. The subdivision had over 325 lots intended for residential development, including lot 213 (1914 Central).

Early History of the 1914 Central Avenue Site

At the time of his death, **Edward Frost** (1801-1868), a Yale graduate, U.S. District Attorney, State Representative, and judge, owned a large parcel from which 1914 Central would later be created.² His estate sold the property, described only as “all those buildings situate on Sullivans Island” to **John Henry Devereux** in October 1870.³



The parcel that contains 1914 Central Avenue became part of John Henry Devereux’s (1840-1920) large summer estate. The mansion, which was constructed by Devereux in 1875, was located on the block on the north side of the street⁴ and was approached through entry gates and a large front lawn that included 1914 Central Avenue. The grand Victorian house was one of the largest on the island.⁵ The gatehouse survives and has been restored. There are two cast stone pillars in the front yard of 1914 Central that may relate to the lost mansion.⁶ Devereux was

² Findagrave.com, Frost entry. Headstone, St. Philip’s Cemetery Charleston.

³ Appendix 1

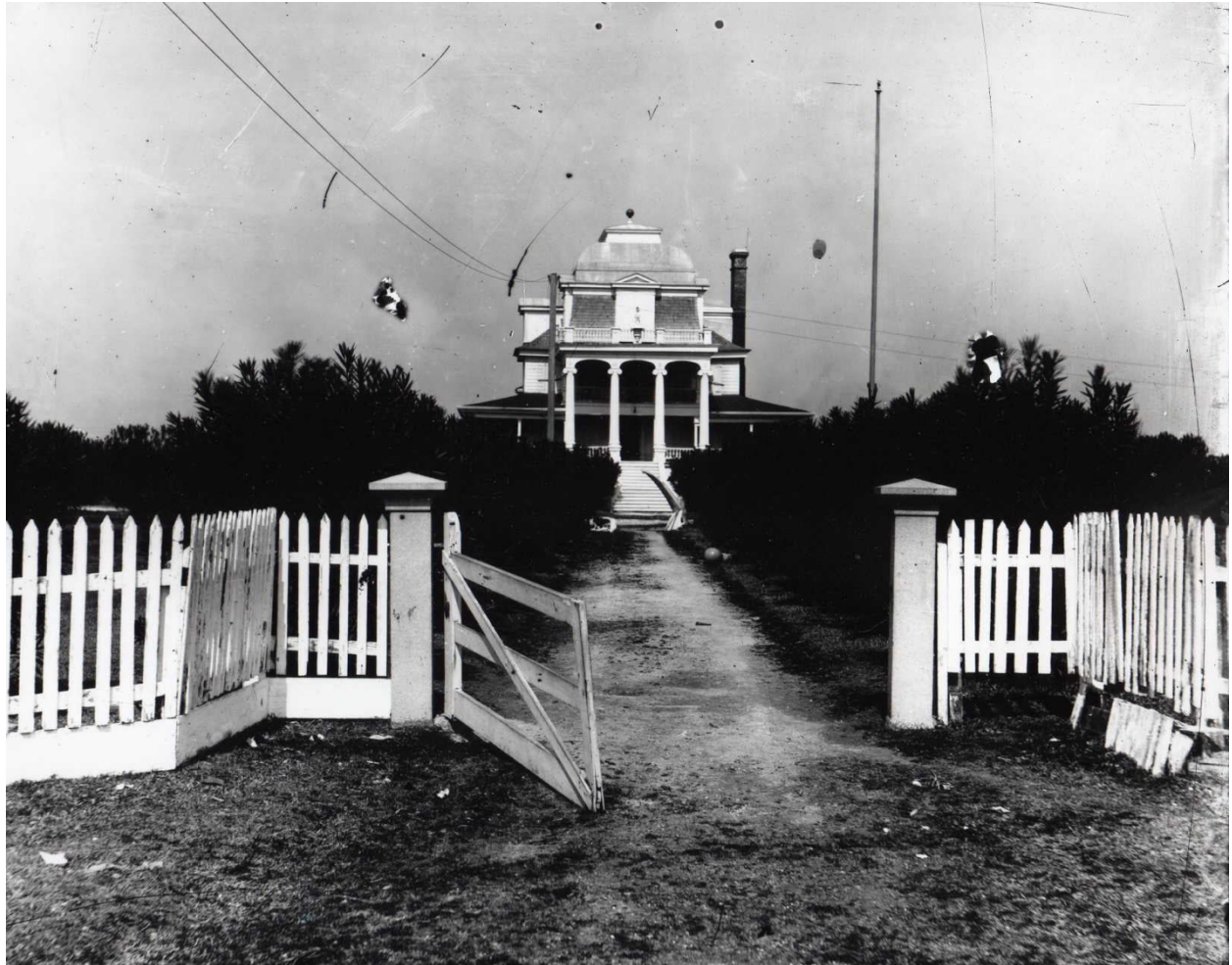
⁴ Secondary sources list the mansion’s address as today’s 1914 Middle Street, which is an error.

⁵ Wells, John E.; Dalton, Robert E. (1992). *The South Carolina architects, 1885–1935: a biographical dictionary*. Richmond, Virginia: New South Architectural Press. p. 262.

⁶ Information from Thomas Hiers, 13 February 2025.

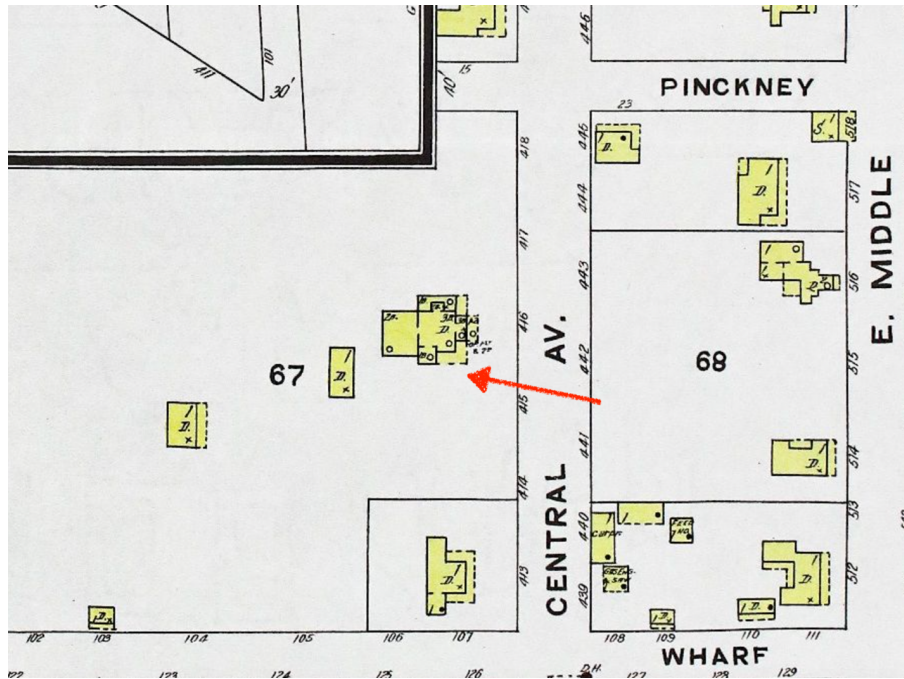
a captain in the Confederate Army and was an architect and builder before and after the American Civil War.

He designed St Matthew's German Lutheran Church in Charleston, Stella Maris Church on Sullivan's Island, and Charleston's Post Office is attributed to him. He and his wife Agatha "Eulalie" Brand Devereux had at least two children who survived to adulthood, John Henry Jr. (who died in 1907) and Ellen Devereux (1866-1931) who received the Central Avenue house from her father.



A circa 1920s photo of the Devereux Mansion from Historic Charleston Foundation's archives. The house was located just north of future 1914 Central.⁷

⁷ HCF circa dates the image to the 1930s. The stone columns depicted are not the ones currently at 1914 Central Avenue.



Devereux Mansion in 1924 before it was demolished, and before 1914 Central was built next door.

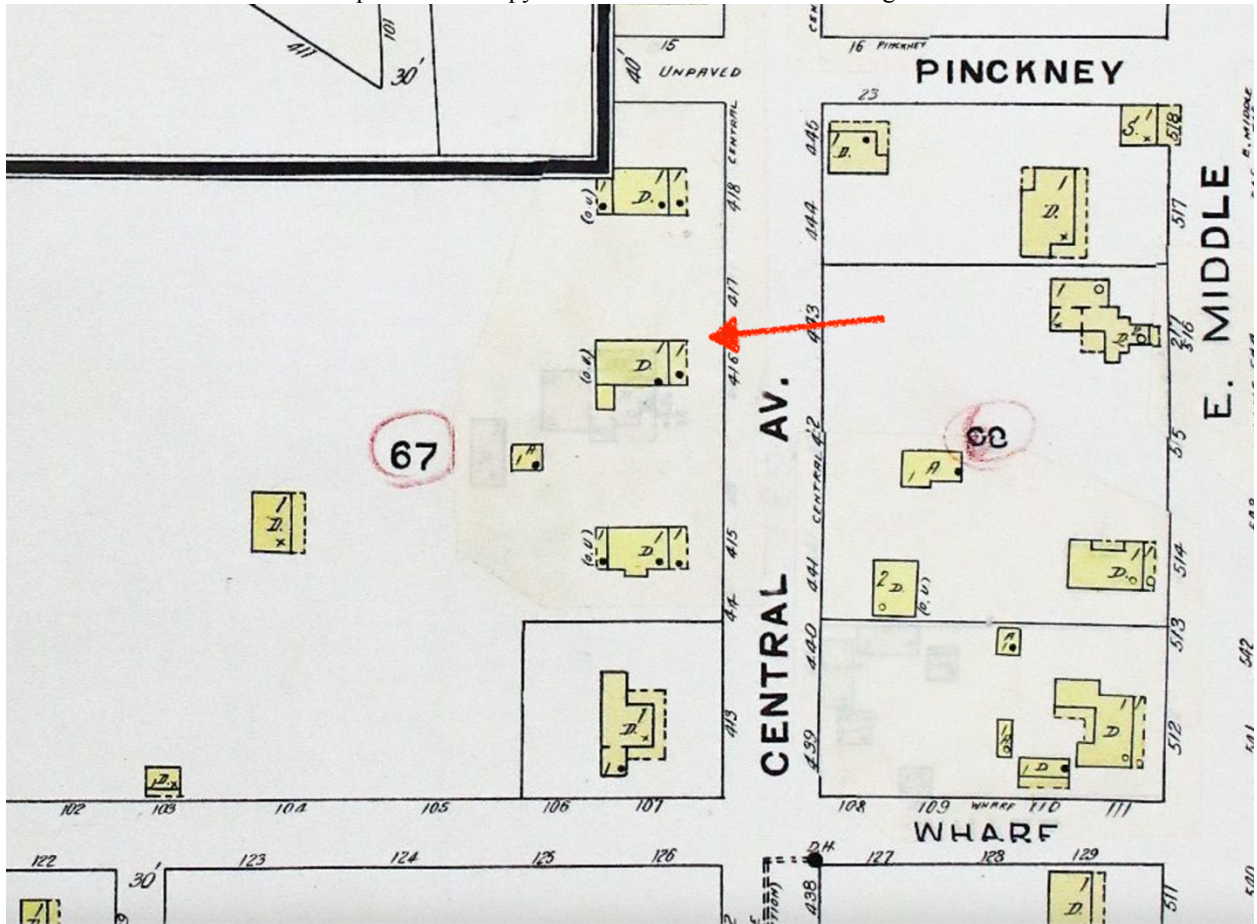
The History of 1914 Central Avenue

The Moultrieville subdivision and expansion occurred during the Devereux family's ownership. John H. Devereux conveyed two of the new Moultrieville lots, 212 and 213, to his daughter **Ellen A. Devereux** in July 1902. Ellen died testate in October 1931 and her estate sold the lots to Mary G. Liebenood in September 1933. No buildings were mentioned in the deed, indicating that 1914 Central Avenue had not yet been constructed.⁸ Though no building permits survive for Sullivan's Island prior to Hurricane Hugo (1989), the house was constructed between 1933 and 1938 by the Leibenoods.

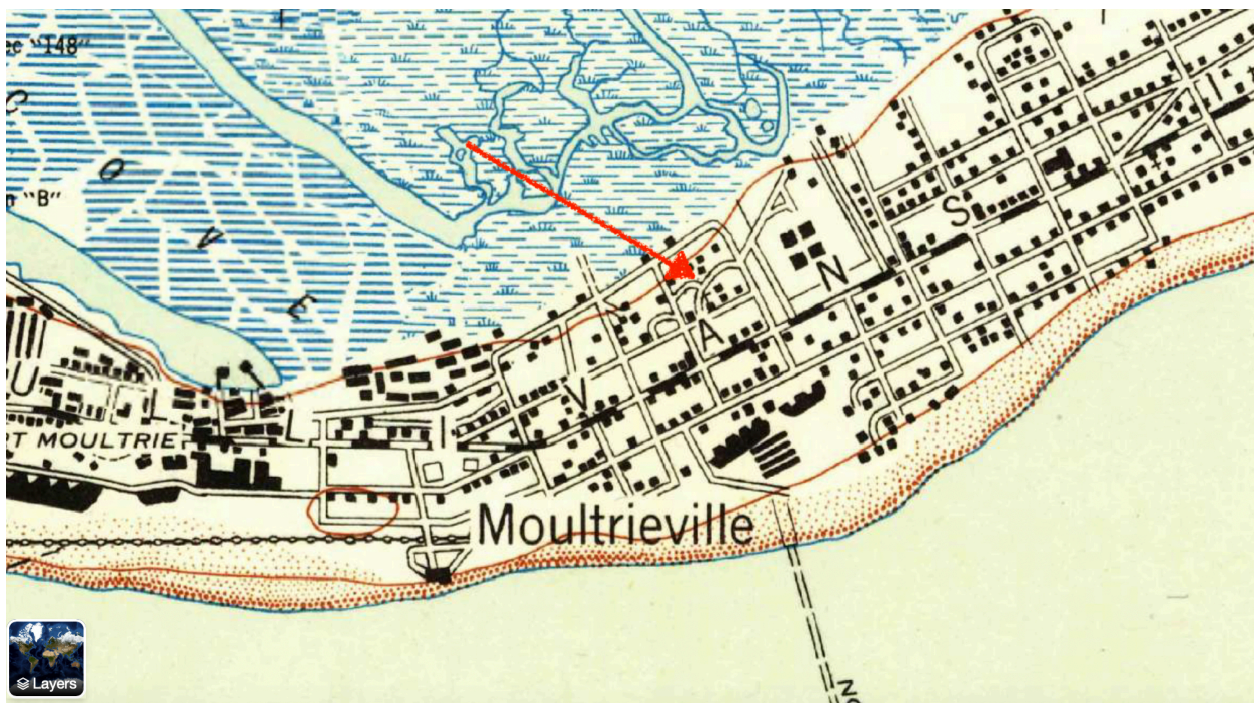


⁸ Appendix 1

Close up of a 1908 copy of the Moultrieville Plat showing lot 213.



1938 Sanborn Map showing the house.



1943 USGS Topographic Map showing the approximate location of the Central Avenue block including the house.

Mary Leibenrood (1885-1961) and Charles E. Leibenrood, an electrician, lived most of the year on Dunneman Street in downtown Charleston as their principal residence and used Central Avenue on Moultrviell lot 213 as a summer residence or beach house.⁹ Neighboring lot 212 was acquired by Agatha Leibenrood Lowe in June 1939.¹⁰ The Liebenroods undertook routine maintenance to the house during their long ownership. The couple had two daughters, Margaret Liebenrood Lear (who died in 1938) and Agatha Leibenrood Lowe (1914-1982), who would receive 1914 Central Avenue.

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING

MEDICAL CERTIFICATION

N.B. - WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK - THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Do not use ink that is likely to bleed. Relatives, physicians should state CAUSE OF DEATH in plain terms, as the cause of death may be properly classified. Exact statement of OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY is very important.

Registration Dist. No. <u>912</u>		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		Vital Statistics - State Board of Health		61 014258	
Registrar's No. <u>64459</u>		South Carolina		State File No.			
1. PLACE OF DEATH a. COUNTY <u>Charleston</u>		2. USUAL RESIDENCE (Where deceased lived. If institution: Residence before admission) a. STATE <u>S. C.</u> b. COUNTY <u>Charleston</u>		3. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION <u>Charleston</u>			
b. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION <u>Sullivan's Island</u>		c. LENGTH OF STAY IN 1b		d. STREET ADDRESS <u>56 Dunneman Avenue</u>			
4. NAME OF HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION <u>1908 Central Avenue</u>		e. IS RESIDENCE INSIDE CITY LIMITS? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		f. IS RESIDENCE ON A FARM? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
5. NAME OF DECEASED (Type or print) First Middle Last <u>Mary Gertrude O'Grady Liebenrood</u>		4. DATE OF DEATH Month Day Year <u>Oct. 7, 1961</u>		6. DATE OF BIRTH 8. DATE OF BIRTH <u>6/14/1885</u>		9. AGE (In years last birthday) <u>76</u>	
5. SEX <u>Female</u>		6. COLOR OR RACE <u>White</u>		7. MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> NEVER MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> WIDOWED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DIVORCED <input type="checkbox"/>		10. USUAL OCCUPATION (Give kind of work done during most of working life, even if retired) <u>AT HOME</u>	
10a. USUAL OCCUPATION (Give kind of work done during most of working life, even if retired) <u>AT HOME</u>		10b. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY		11. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) <u>Charleston, S. C.</u>		12. CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY? <u>USA</u>	
13a. FATHER'S NAME: <u>John Joseph O'Grady</u>		13b. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME: <u>Ellen Frances Holland</u>		14. HUSBAND OR WIFE'S NAME: <u>Charles E. Liebenrood</u>			
15. WAS DECEASED EVER IN U. S. ARMED FORCES? (Yes, no, or unknown) (If yes, give war or dates of service) <u>NO</u>		16. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. <u>NONE</u>		17. INFORMANT <u>Daughter:</u> <u>Mrs. Otis Lowe--Sullivan's Island, SC</u>		Address	
18. CAUSE OF DEATH (Enter only one cause per line for (a), (b), and (c).) PART I. DEATH WAS CAUSED BY: IMMEDIATE CAUSE (a) <u>Cerebral Stomach</u>		DUE TO (b)		DUE TO (c)		19. WAS AUTOPSY PERFORMED? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
PART II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO THE TERMINAL DISEASE CONDITION GIVEN IN PART I(a)						INTERVAL BETWEEN ONSET AND DEATH <u>12 mos</u>	
20a. ACCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> SUICIDE <input type="checkbox"/> HOMICIDE <input type="checkbox"/>		20b. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED. (Enter nature of injury in Part I or Part II of item 18.) <u>151X</u>					
20c. TIME OF INJURY Hour Month, Day, Year a. m. p. m.		20d. PLACE OF INJURY (e. g., in or about home, farm, factory, street, office bldg., etc.)		20e. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION County State			
20f. INJURY OCCURRED While at Work <input type="checkbox"/> Not While at Work <input type="checkbox"/>							
21. I attended the deceased from <u>10/1/59</u> to <u>10/7/61</u> and last saw her <u>alive</u> on <u>10/7/61</u>		22. SIGNATURE (Name or title) <u>[Signature]</u>		23. ADDRESS <u>[Signature]</u>		23c. DATE SIGNED <u>10/25/61</u>	
24. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE <u>John McAllister, Inc. - Chas. S. C.</u>		25. DATE RECD. BY LOCAL REG. <u>OCT 25 1961</u>		26. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE <u>Leon Banov, M.D., Registrar</u>			
25. DATE RECD. BY LOCAL REG. <u>OCT 25 1961</u>		26. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE <u>Leon Banov, M.D., Registrar</u>					

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE - Public Health Service Form No. VS-5

Mary Liebenrood's death certificate shows her dying at 1908 Central Avenue (an earlier number for 1914 Central).

⁹ The Dunneman Street address appears in the 1940 and 1950 census and *City Directories* from that era.

¹⁰ Appendix 1

Mary's estate transferred "All that lot piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon, knots as lot 213 in Sullivans Island Township" (1914 Central) to the Lowe family in October 1963. The Lowes used Central Avenue as their primary residence. Otis Lowe (b. 1868), a retired Army technical sergeant and served in World War I and II, died in 1968 and was buried at Stella Maris, leaving behind his widow, **Agnes "Agatha" Leibenrood Lowe**, and two sons, James Lawrence Lowe and Clyde Eugene Lowe.¹¹ The Lowes sold the house to Peggy Bogard in 1971, who sold to Thomas Hiers, Ph.D. in December 1979.¹² Hiers was the director of the Charleston Area Mental Health Center before his retirement and was involved in Sullivan's Island politics prior to his retirement.¹³

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¹¹ *News and Courier*, 5 June 1969.

¹² Appendix 1

¹³ *News and Courier*, 8 August 1991

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Site visit conducted 13 February 2025.

On site interview with owner Dr. Thomas Hiers. 13 February 2025.

Appendix: Chain of Title

Deed book P15, pg. 439

Estate of Frost to John Devereux

5 October 1870

- All those buildings situate on Sullivans Island known as the property of the Estate of Edward Frost.

E23, pg. 27

John H. Devereux to Ellen A. Devereux

22 July 1902

- All those two lots of land being in the town of Moultrieville on Sullivans Island known as lots 212 and 213, being the property conveyed to me by E. Horry Frost, executor of the land will and testament of Edward Frost by deed dated October 5, 1870.

X36, pg. 115

Ellen Devereux estate to Mary G. Leibenrood

September 1933

- Ellen Devereux died October 1931
- All those lots of land situate lying and being on Central Avenue Sullivans Island, together with all buildings thereon, and known on a plan of Sullivans Island as lots 212 and 213.

P77, pg. 411

Mary Libenrood estate to Lowes

October 1963

- Whereas Mary Lieberwood died testate on the 7th October 1961
- All that lot piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon, knots as lot 213 in Sullivans Island Township
- Lying next to the property of Agatha Liebenrood Lowe, acquired by deed D41, pg. 455. Recorded June 1939.

X97, pg. 397

James Lawrence Lowe and Clyde Eugene Lowe to Peggy Bogart

9 November 1971

E121, pg. 109

Bogart to Bogart

12 December 1979

- Town Council of Sullivans conveys fee simple to Peggy Bogart

E121, pg. 97

Peggy Bogart to Thomas Heirs and J.M. Rainwater Jr.

12 December 1979

- Lot and buildings known as 213 on the plat by H. Gamble, April 1902, book D, pg. 189. Measuring 105 by 210. Bounding north on lot 210, west on lot 212, south on Central Avenue, and east by lot 214.

V162, pg. 364

Hiers to Hiers

25 February 1987