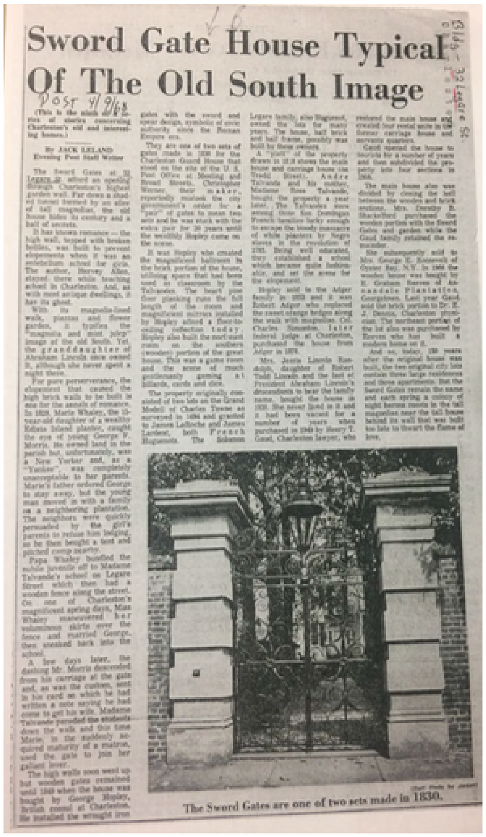
LOCAL PRESS THROUGH THE YEARS

THE SWORDGATE HOUSE



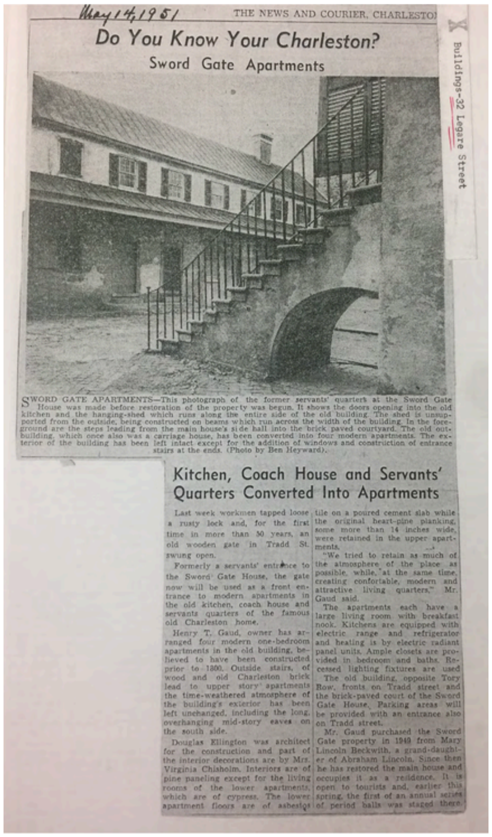
Sword Gate House Typical Of The Old South Image

Post 4/9/68

By JACK LELAND
Evening Post Staff Writer

The Sword Gates are one of two sets made in 1830.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1968



May 14, 1951

THE NEWS AND COURIER, CHARLESTON

Buildings-32 Legare Street

Do You Know Your Charleston?

Sword Gate Apartments

SWORD GATE APARTMENTS—This photograph of the former servants' quarters at the Sword Gate House was made before restoration of the property was begun. It shows the doors opening into the old kitchen and the hanging-shed which runs along the entire side of the old building. The shed is unsupported from the outside, being constructed on beams which run across the width of the building. In the foreground are the steps leading from the main house's side hall into the brick paved courtyard. The old outbuilding, which once also was a carriage house, has been converted into four modern apartments. The exterior of the building has been left intact except for the addition of windows and construction of entrance stairs at the ends. (Photo by Ben Heyward).

Kitchen, Coach House and Servants' Quarters Converted Into Apartments

Last week workmen tapped loose a rusty lock and, for the first time in more than 30 years, an old wooden gate in Tradd St. swung open.

Formerly a servants' entrance to the Sword Gate House, the gate now will be used as a front entrance to modern apartments in the old kitchen, coach house and servants quarters of the famous old Charleston home.

Henry T. Gaud, owner has arranged four modern one-bedroom apartments in the old building, believed to have been constructed prior to 1800. Outside stairs, of wood and old Charleston brick lead to upper story apartments the time-weathered atmosphere of the building's exterior has been left unchanged, including the long, overhanging mid-story eaves on the south side.

Douglas Ellington was architect for the construction and part of the interior decorations are by Mrs. Virginia Chisholm. Interiors are of pine paneling except for the living rooms of the lower apartments, which are of cypress. The lower apartment floors are of asbestos tile on a poured cement slab while the original heart-pine planking, some more than 14 inches wide, were retained in the upper apartments.

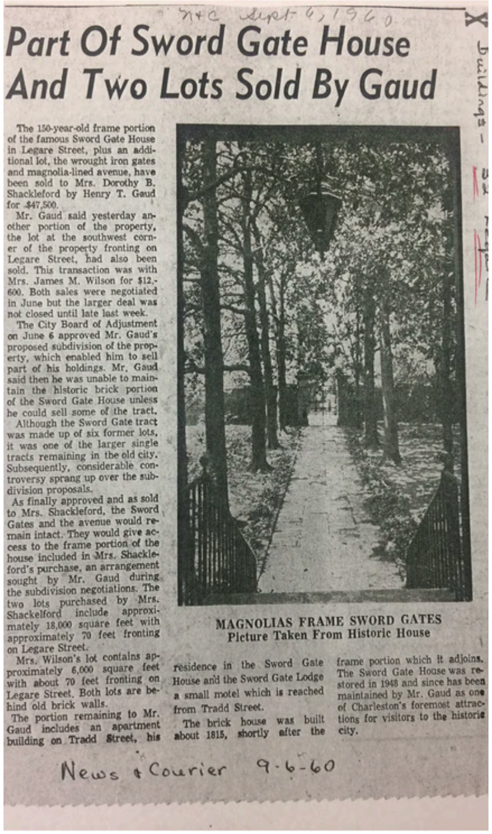
"We tried to retain as much of the atmosphere of the place as possible, while, at the same time, creating confortable, modern and attractive living quarters," Mr. Gaud said.

The apartments each have a large living room with breakfast nook. Kitchens are equipped with electric range and refrigerator and heating is by electric radiant panel units. Ample closets are provided in bedroom and baths. Recessed lighting fixtures are used

The old building, opposite Tory Row, fronts on Tradd street and the brick-paved court of the Sword Gate House. Parking areas will be provided with an entrance also on Tradd street.

Mr. Gaud purchased the Sword Gate property in 1949 from Mary Lincoln Beckwith, a grand-daughter of Abraham Lincoln. Since then he has restored the main house and occupies it as a residence. It is open to tourists and, earlier this spring, the first of an annual series of period balls was staged there.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1951



N+C Sept. 6, 1960

Buildings - 32 Legare

Part Of Sword Gate House And Two Lots Sold By Gaud

The 150-year-old frame portion of the famous Sword Gate House in Legare Street, plus an additional lot, the wrought iron gates and magnolia-lined avenue, have been sold to Mrs. Dorothy B. Shackleford by Henry T. Gaud for $47,500.

Mr. Gaud said yesterday another portion of the property, the lot at the southwest corner of the property fronting on Legare Street, had also been sold. This transaction was with Mrs. James M. Wilson for $12,600. Both sales were negotiated in June but the larger deal was not closed until late last week.

The City Board of Adjustment on June 6 approved Mr. Gaud's proposed subdivision of the property, which enabled him to sell part of his holdings. Mr. Gaud said then he was unable to maintain the historic brick portion of the Sword Gate House unless he could sell some of the tract.

Although the Sword Gate tract was made up of six former lots, it was one of the larger single tracts remaining in the old city. Subsequently, considerable controversy sprang up over the subdivision proposals.

As finally approved and as sold to Mrs. Shackleford, the Sword Gates and the avenue would remain intact. They would give access to the frame portion of the house included in Mrs. Shackleford's purchase, an arrangement sought by Mr. Gaud during the subdivision negotiations. The two lots purchased by Mrs. Shackelford include approximately 18,000 square feet with approximately 70 feet fronting on Legare Street.

Mrs. Wilson's lot contains approximately 6,000 square feet with about 70 feet fronting on Legare Street. Both lots are behind old brick walls.

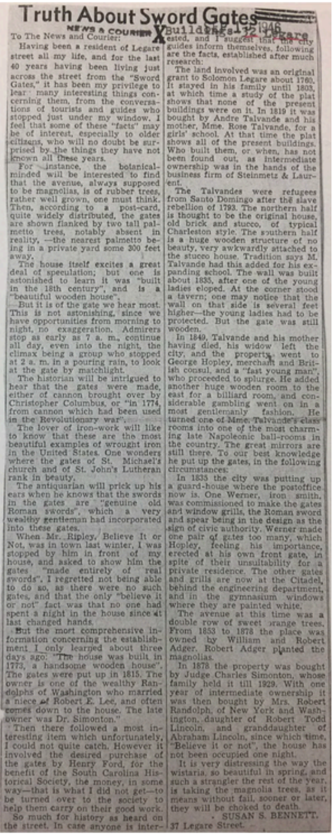
The portion remaining to Mr. Gaud includes an apartment building on Tradd Street, his residence in the Sword Gate House and the Sword Gate Lodge a small motel which is reached from Tradd Street.

The brick house was built about 1815, shortly after the frame portion which it adjoins. The Sword Gate House was restored in 1948 and since has been maintained by Mr. Gaud as one of Charleston's foremost attractions for visitors to the historic city.

MAGNOLIAS FRAME SWORD GATES
Picture Taken From Historic House

News & Courier 9-6-60

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1960



Truth About Sword Gates

NEWS & COURIER

Buildings-32 Legare

1946

To The News and Courier:

Having been a resident of Legare street all my life, and for the last 40 years having been living just across the street from the "Sword Gates," it has been my privilege to lear many interesting things concerning them, from the conversations of tourists and guides who stopped just under my window. I feel that some of these "facts" may be of interest, especially to older citizens, who will no doubt be surprised by the things they have not known all these years.

For instance, the botanical-minded will be interested to find that the avenue, always supposed to be magnolias, is of rubber trees, rather well grown, one must think. Then, according to a post-card, quite widely distributed, the gates are shown flanked by two tall palmetto trees, notably absent in reality, —the nearest palmetto being in a private yard some 300 feet away.

The house itself excites a great deal of speculation; but one is astonished to learn it was "built in the 18th century", and is a "beautiful wooden house".

But it is of the gate we hear most. This is not astonishing, since we have opportunities from morning to night, no exaggeration. Admirers stop as early as 7 a. m., continue all day, even into the night, the climax being a group who stopped at 2 a. m. in a pouring rain, to look at the gate by matchlight.

The historian will be intrigued to hear that the gates were made, either of cannon brought over by Christopher Columbus, or "in 1774, from cannon which had been used in the Revolutionary war".

The lover of iron-work will like to know that these are the most beautiful examples of wrought iron in the United States. One wonders where the gates of St. Michael's church and of St. John's Lutheran rank in beauty.

The antiquarian will prick up his ears when he knows that the swords in the gates are "genuine old Roman swords", which a very wealthy gentleman had incorporated into these gates.

When Mr. Ripley, Believe It or Not, was in town last winter, I was stopped by him in front of my house, and asked to show him the gates "made entirely of real swords". I regretted not being able to do so, as there were no such gates, and that the only "believe it or not" fact was that no one had spent a night in the house since it last changed hands.

But the most comprehensive information concerning the establishment I only learned about three days ago: "The house was built in 1773, a handsome wooden house". The gates were put up in 1815. The owner is one of the wealthy Randolphs of Washington who married a niece of Robert E. Lee, and often comes down to the house. The late owner was Dr. Simonton."

Then there followed a most interesting item which unfortunately, I could not quite catch. However it involved the desired purchase of the gates by Henry Ford, for the benefit of the South Carolina Historical Society, the money, in some way—that is what I did not get—to be turned over to the society to help them carry on their good work.

So much for history as heard on the street. In case anyone is interested, and I suggest that the city guides inform themselves, following are the facts, established after much research:

The land involved was an original grant to Solomon Legare about 1760. It stayed in his family until 1803, at which time a study of the plat shows that none of the present buildings were on it. In 1819 it was bought by Andre Talvande and his mother, Mme. Rose Talvande, for a girls' school. At that time the plat shows all of the present buildings. Who built them, or when, has not been found out, as intermediate ownership was in the hands of the business firm of Steinmetz & Laurent.

The Talvandes were refugees from Santo Domingo after the slave rebellion of 1793. The northern half is thought to be the original house, old brick and stucco, of typical Charleston style. The southern half is a huge wooden structure of no beauty, very awkwardly attached to the stucco house. Tradition says M. Talvande had this added for his expanding school. The wall was built about 1835, after one of the young ladies eloped. At the corner stood a tavern; one may notice that the wall on that side is several feet higher—the young ladies had to be protected. But the gate was still wooden.

In 1849, Talvande and his mother having died, his widow left the city, and the property went to George Hopley, merchant and British consul, and a "fast young man", who proceeded to splurge. He added another huge wooden room to the east for a billiard room, and considerable gambling went on in a most gentlemanly fashion. He turned one of Mme. Talvande's class rooms into one of the most charming late Napoleonic ball-rooms in the country. The great mirrors are still there. To our best knowledge he put up the gates, in the following circumstances:

In 1835 the city was putting up a guard-house where the postoffice now is. One Werner, iron smith, was commissioned to make the gates and window grills, the Roman sword and spear being in the design as the sign of civic authority. Werner made one pair of gates too many, which Hopley, feeling his importance, erected at his own front gate, in spite of their unsuitability for a private residence. The other gates and grills are now at the Citadel, behind the engineering department, and in the gymnasium windows where they are painted white.

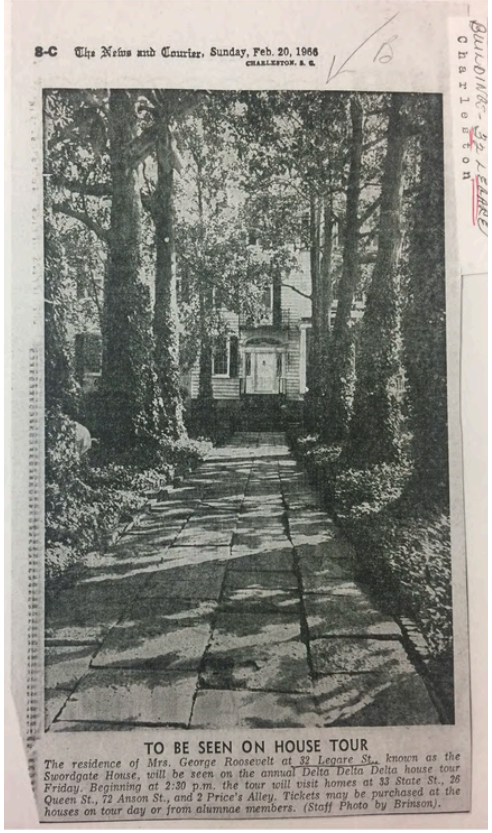
The avenue at this time was a double row of sweet orange trees. From 1853 to 1878 the place was owned by William and Robert Adger. Robert Adger planted the magnolias.

In 1878 the property was bought by Judge Charles Simonton, whose family held it till 1929. With one year of intermediate ownership it was then bought by Mrs. Robert Randolph, of New York and Washington, daughter of Robert Todd Lincoln, and granddaughter of Abraham Lincoln, since which time, "Believe it or not", the house has not been occupied one night.

It is very distressing the way the wistaria, so beautiful in spring, and such a strangler the rest of the year, is taking the magnolia trees, as it means without fail, sooner or later, they will be choked to death.

SUSAN S. BENNETT.
37 Legare Street.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1946



8-C The News and Courier, Sunday, Feb. 20, 1966
CHARLESTON, S. C.

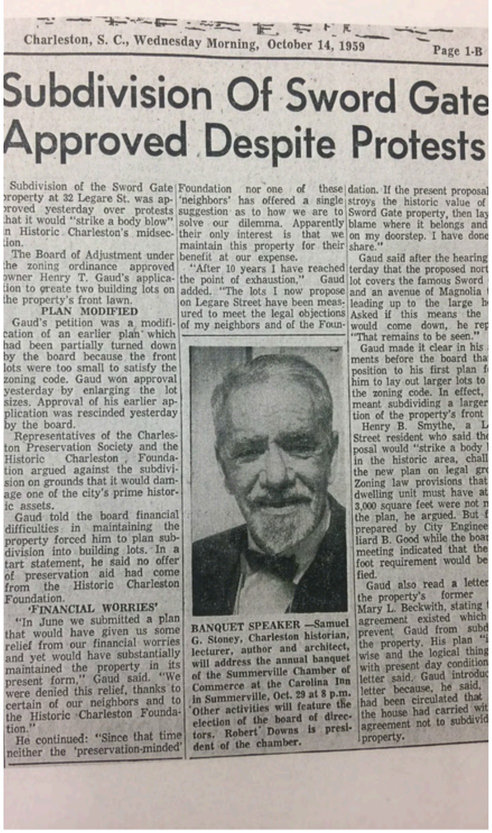
BUILDINGS - 32 LEGARE

Charleston

TO BE SEEN ON HOUSE TOUR

The residence of Mrs. George Roosevelt at 32 Legare St., known as the Swordgate House, will be seen on the annual Delta Delta Delta house tour Friday. Beginning at 2:30 p.m. the tour will visit homes at 33 State St., 26 Queen St., 72 Anson St., and 2 Price's Alley. Tickets may be purchased at the houses on tour day or from alumnae members. (Staff Photo by Brinson).

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1966



Charleston, S. C., Wednesday Morning, October 14, 1959 Page 1-B

Subdivision Of Sword Gate Approved Despite Protests

Subdivision of the Sword Gate property at 32 Legare St. was approved yesterday over protests that it would "strike a body blow" in Historic Charleston's midsection.

The Board of Adjustment under the zoning ordinance approved owner Henry T. Gaud's application to create two building lots on the property's front lawn.

PLAN MODIFIED

Gaud's petition was a modification of an earlier plan which had been partially turned down by the board because the front lots were too small to satisfy the zoning code. Gaud won approval yesterday by enlarging the lot sizes. Approval of his earlier application was rescinded yesterday by the board.

Representatives of the Charleston Preservation Society and the Historic Charleston Foundation argued against the subdivision on grounds that it would damage one of the city's prime historic assets.

Gaud told the board financial difficulties in maintaining the property forced him to plan subdivision into building lots. In a tart statement, he said no offer of preservation aid had come from the Historic Charleston Foundation.

'FINANCIAL WORRIES'

"In June we submitted a plan that would have given us some relief from our financial worries and yet would have substantially maintained the property in its present form," Gaud said. "We were denied this relief, thanks to certain of our neighbors and to the Historic Charleston Foundation."

He continued: "Since that time neither the 'preservation-minded' Foundation nor one of these 'neighbors' has offered a single suggestion as to how we are to solve our dilemma. Apparently their only interest is that we maintain this property for their benefit at our expense.

"After 10 years I have reached the point of exhaustion," Gaud added. "The lots I now propose on Legare Street have been measured to meet the legal objections of my neighbors and of the Foundation. If the present proposal
stroys the historic value of
Sword Gate property, then lay
blame where it belongs and
on my doorstep. I have done
share."

Gaud said after the hearing
terday that the proposed nort
lot covers the famous Sword
and an avenue of Magnolia
leading up to the large h
Asked if this means the
would come down, he rep
"That remains to be seen."

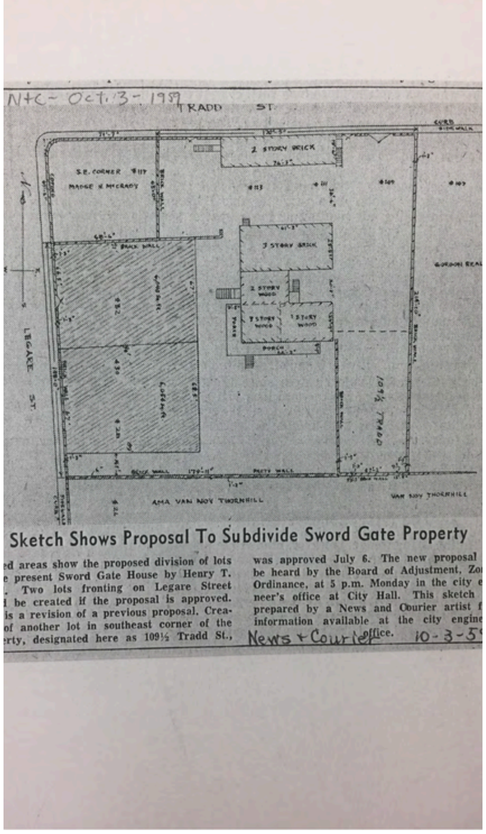
Gaud made it clear in his
ments before the board tha
position to his first plan f
him to lay out larger lots to
the zoning code. In effect,
meant subdividing a larger
tion of the property's front

Henry B. Smythe, a L
Street resident who said the
posal would "strike a body
in the historic area, chall
the new plan on legal gr
Zoning law provisions that
dwelling unit must have at
3,000 square feet were not n
the plan, he argued. But f
prepared by City Enginee
liard B. Good while the boar
meeting indicated that the
foot requirement would be
fied.

Gaud also read a letter
the property's former
Mary L. Beckwith, stating
agreement existed which
prevent Gaud from subd
the property. His plan "i
wise and the logical thing
with present day condition
letter said. Gaud introduc
letter because, he said,
had been circulated that
the house had carried wit
agreement not to subdivid
property.

BANQUET SPEAKER —Samuel G. Stoney, Charleston historian, lecturer, author and architect, will address the annual banquet of the Summerville Chamber of Commerce at the Carolina Inn in Summerville, Oct. 29 at 8 p.m. Other activities will feature the election of the board of directors. Robert Downs is president of the chamber.

SOURCE UNKNOWN, 1959



TRADD ST.
LEGARE ST.
CURB
SIDEWALK
2 STORY BRICK
S.E. CORNER #117
MADGE K. McCRADY
#113
#111
#109
#107
3 STORY BRICK
2 STORY WOOD
3 STORY WOOD
PORCH
BRICK WALL
PARTY WALL
GORDON REAL
109½ TRADD
#32
#30
#28
#26
AMA VAN NOY THORNHILL
VAN NOY THORNHILL

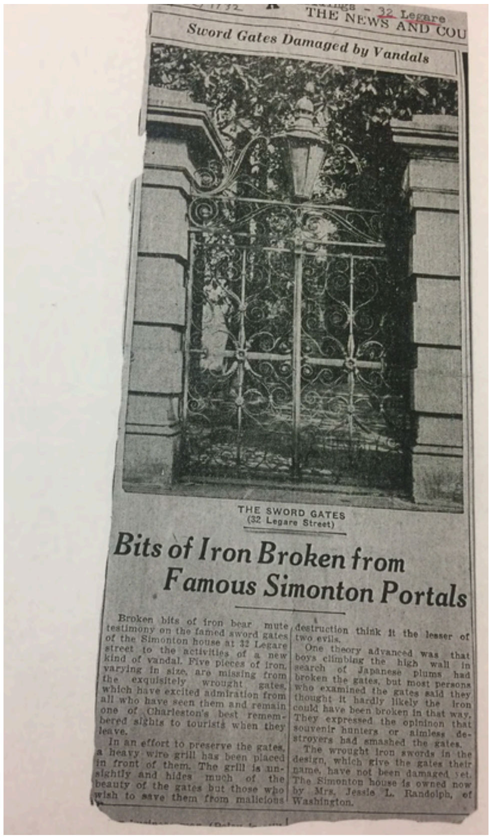
N+C- Oct. 3 - 1959

Sketch Shows Proposal To Subdivide Sword Gate Property

ed areas show the proposed division of lots e present Sword Gate House by Henry T. . Two lots fronting on Legare Street d be created if the proposal is approved. is a revision of a previous proposal. Creaof another lot in southeast corner of the erty, designated here as 109½ Tradd St., was approved July 6. The new proposal be heard by the Board of Adjustment, Zo Ordinance, at 5 p.m. Monday in the city e neer's office at City Hall. This sketch prepared by a News and Courier artist f information available at the city engine office.

News + Courier 10-3-5

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1959



1932 X ings - 32 Legare

THE NEWS AND COU

Sword Gates Damaged by Vandals

THE SWORD GATES
(32 Legare Street)

Bits of Iron Broken from Famous Simonton Portals

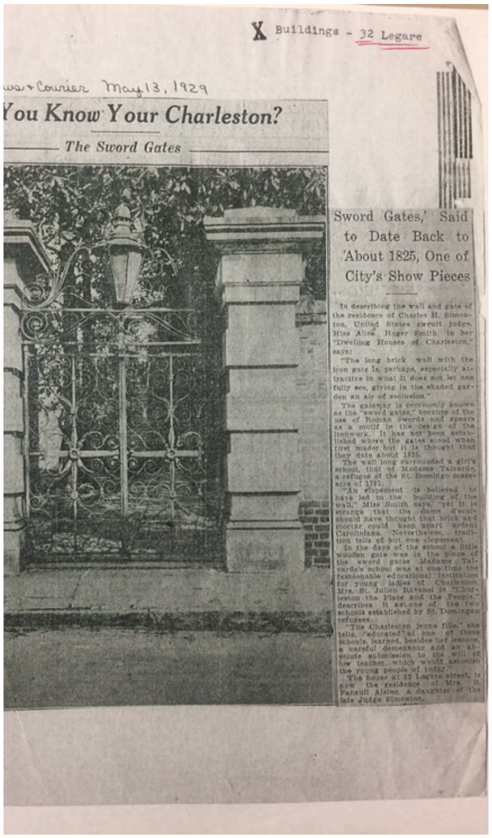
Broken bits of iron bear mute testimony on the famed sword gates of the Simonton house at 32 Legare street to the activities of a new kind of vandal. Five pieces of iron, varying in size, are missing from the exquisitely wrought gates, which have excited admiration from all who have seen them and remain one of Charleston's best remembered sights to tourists when they leave.

In an effort to preserve the gates, a heavy wire grill has been placed in front of them. The grill is unsightly and hides much of the beauty of the gates but those who wish to save them from malicious destruction think it the lesser of two evils.

One theory advanced was that boys climbing the high wall in search of Japanese plums had broken the gates, but most persons who examined the gates said they thought it hardly likely the iron could have been broken in that way. They expressed the opininon that souvenir hunters or aimless destroyers had smashed the gates.

The wrought iron swords in the design, which give the gates their name, have not been damaged yet. The Simonton house is owned now by Mrs. Jessie L. Randolph, of Washington.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1932



X Buildings - 32 Legare

ws + Courier May 13, 1929

You Know Your Charleston?

The Sword Gates

'Sword Gates,' Said to Date Back to About 1825, One of City's Show Pieces

In describing the wall and gate of the residence of Charles H. Simonton, United States circuit judge, Miss Alice Huger Smith in her "Dwelling Houses of Charleston," says:

"The long brick wall with the iron gate is, perhaps, especially attractive in what it does not let one fully see, giving in the shaded garden an air of seclusion."

The gateway is commonly known as the "sword gates," because of the use of Roman swords and spears as a motif in the design of the ironwork. It has not been established where the gates stood when first made, but it is thought that they date about 1825.

The wall long surrounded a girl's school, that of Madame Talvande, a refugee of the St. Domingo massacre of 1793.

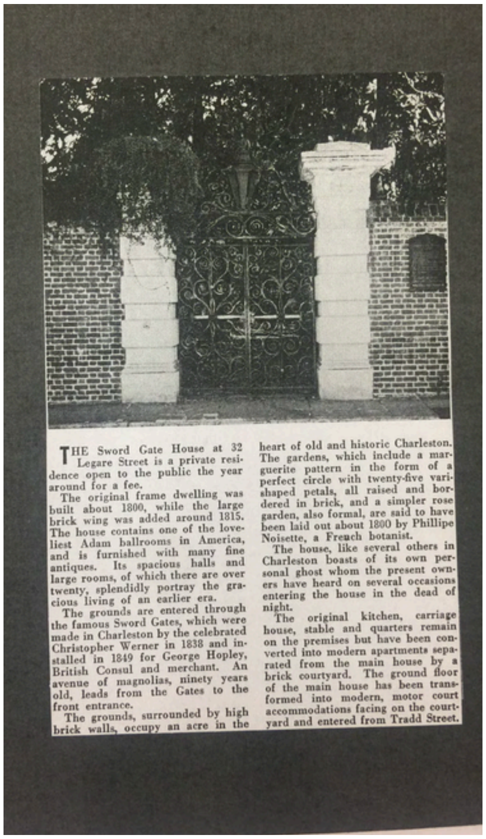
"An elopement is believed to have led to the building of the wall," Miss Smith says, "yet it is strange that the dame d'ecole should have thought that brick and mortar could keep apart ardent Carolinians. Nevertheless, tradition tells of but one elopement."

In the days of the school a little wooden gate was in the place of the sword gates. Madame Talvande's school was at one time the fashionable educational institution for young ladies of Charleston. Mrs. St. Julien Ravenel in "Charleston the Place and the People," describes it as one of the two schools established by St. Domingan refugees:

"The Charleston jeune fille," she tells, "educated" at one of these schools, learned, besides her lessons, a careful demeanour and an absolute submission to the will of her teacher, which would astonish the young people of today."

The house at 32 Legare street, is now the residence of Mrs. B. Faneuil Alston, a daughter of the late Judge Simonton.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1929



THE Sword Gate House at 32 Legare Street is a private residence open to the public the year around for a fee.

The original frame dwelling was built about 1800, while the large brick wing was added around 1815. The house contains one of the loveliest Adam ballrooms in America, and is furnished with many fine antiques. Its spacious halls and large rooms, of which there are over twenty, splendidly portray the gracious living of an earlier era.

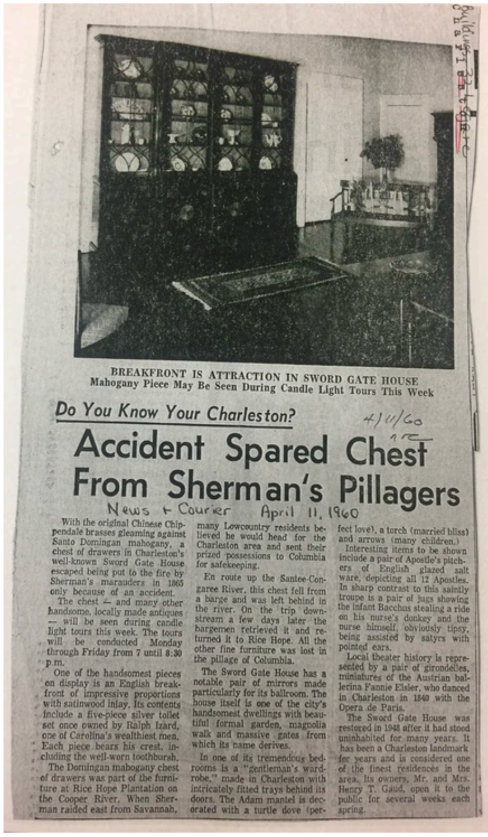
The grounds are entered through the famous Sword Gates, which were made in Charleston by the celebrated Christopher Werner in 1838 and installed in 1849 for George Hopley, British Consul and merchant. An avenue of magnolias, ninety years old, leads from the Gates to the front entrance.

The grounds, surrounded by high brick walls, occupy an acre in the heart of old and historic Charleston. The gardens, which include a marguerite pattern in the form of a perfect circle with twenty-five varishaped petals, all raised and bordered in brick, and a simpler rose garden, also formal, are said to have been laid out about 1800 by Phillipe Noisette, a French botanist.

The house, like several others in Charleston boasts of its own personal ghost whom the present owners have heard on several occasions entering the house in the dead of night.

The original kitchen, carriage house, stable and quarters remain on the premises but have been converted into modern apartments separated from the main house by a brick courtyard. The ground floor of the main house has been transformed into modern, motor court accommodations facing on the courtyard and entered from Tradd Street.

SOURCE & DATE UNKNOWN



BREAKFRONT IS ATTRACTION IN SWORD GATE HOUSE
Mahogany Piece May Be Seen During Candle Light Tours This Week

Do You Know Your Charleston?

4/11/60

Accident Spared Chest From Sherman's Pillagers

News + Courier April 11, 1960

With the original Chinese Chippendale brasses gleaming against Santo Domingan mahogany, a chest of drawers in Charleston's well-known Sword Gate House escaped being put to the fire by Sherman's marauders in 1865 only because of an accident.

The chest — and many other handsome, locally made antiques — will be seen during candle light tours this week. The tours will be conducted Monday through Friday from 7 until 8:30 p.m.

One of the handsomest pieces on display is an English breakfront of impressive proportions with satinwood inlay. Its contents include a five-piece silver toilet set once owned by Ralph Izard, one of Carolina's wealthiest men. Each piece bears his crest, including the well-worn toothbursh.

The Domingan mahogany chest of drawers was part of the furniture at Rice Hope Plantation on the Cooper River. When Sherman raided east from Savannah, many Lowcountry residents believed he would head for the Charleston area and sent their prized possessions to Columbia for safekeeping.

En route up the Santee-Congaree River, this chest fell from a barge and was left behind in the river. On the trip downstream a few days later the bargemen retrieved it and returned it to Rice Hope. All the other fine furniture was lost in the pillage of Columbia.

The Sword Gate House has a notable pair of mirrors made particularly for its ballroom. The house itself is one of the city's handsomest dwellings with beautiful formal garden, magnolia walk and massive gates from which its name derives.

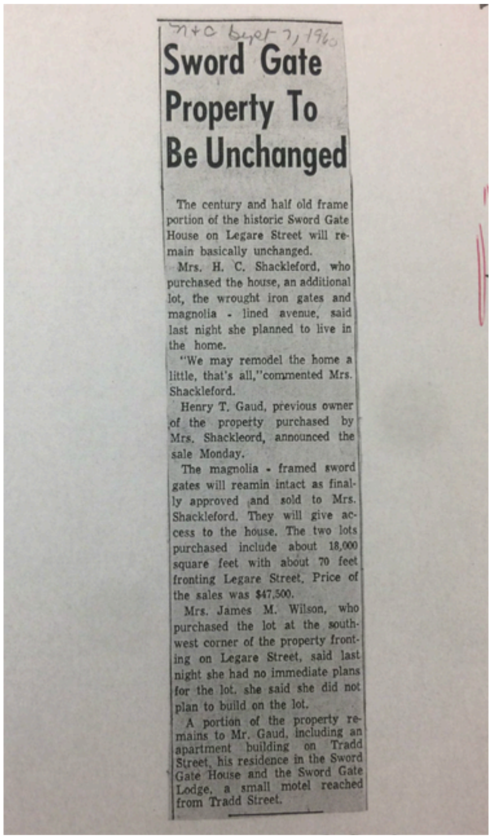
In one of its tremendous bedrooms is a "gentleman's wardrobe," made in Charleston with intricately fitted trays behind its doors. The Adam mantel is decorated with a turtle dove (perfect love), a torch (married bliss) and arrows (many children.)

Interesting items to be shown include a pair of Apostle's pitchers of English glazed salt ware, depicting all 12 Apostles. In sharp contrast to this saintly troupe is a pair of jugs showing the infant Bacchus stealing a ride on his nurse's donkey and the nurse himself, obviously tipsy, being assisted by satyrs with pointed ears.

Local theater history is represented by a pair of girondelles, mininatures of the Austrian ballerina Fannie Elsler, who danced in Charleston in 1840 with the Opera de Paris.

The Sword Gate House was restored in 1948 after it had stood uninhabited for many years. It has been a Charleston landmark for years and is considered one of the finest residences in the area. Its owners, Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Gaud, open it to the public for several weeks each spring.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1960



N+C Sept 7, 1960

Sword Gate Property To Be Unchanged

The century and half old frame portion of the historic Sword Gate House on Legare Street will remain basically unchanged.

Mrs. H. C. Shackleford, who purchased the house, an additional lot, the wrought iron gates and magnolia - lined avenue, said last night she planned to live in the home.

"We may remodel the home a little, that's all,"commented Mrs. Shackleford.

Henry T. Gaud, previous owner of the property purchased by Mrs. Shackleord, announced the sale Monday.

The magnolia - framed sword gates will reamin intact as finally approved and sold to Mrs. Shackleford. They will give access to the house. The two lots purchased include about 18,000 square feet with about 70 feet fronting Legare Street. Price of the sales was $47,500.

Mrs. James M. Wilson, who purchased the lot at the southwest corner of the property fronting on Legare Street, said last night she had no immediate plans for the lot. she said she did not plan to build on the lot.

A portion of the property remains to Mr. Gaud, including an apartment building on Tradd Street, his residence in the Sword Gate House and the Sword Gate Lodge, a small motel reached from Tradd Street.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1960

Sword Gate House Is Now Open To Public

For the first time in its romantic history, the Sword Gate house, at 32 Legare street, is open to the public. Visitors, as well as Charlestonians, who formerly peered through the intricately wrought gates, up the shadowy walk to the mysteriously looming mansion, now may enter the historic property.

Since 1694, the property on which the Sword Gate house stands has been a part of Charleston's recorded history. Its story is that of the personalities who have lived, loved and died there.

James LaRoche and James Lardant, fleeing with other French Huguenots from religious persecution in their native France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, found their way to Charles Town in the colony of South Carolina to become the first recorded owners of the Sword Gates property.

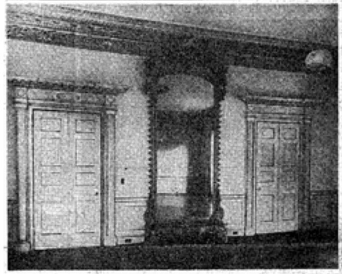
In 1740, Solomon Legare, another Huguenot refugee and by that time a wealthy merchant in Charleston, bought the property and lived there until 1760. Solomon Legare, II, in 1773, bequeathed the family home to his widow and three sons, Daniel, Thomas and Solomon, III. In 1803 the property was siezed by the master in equity.

Fleeing the fury of the negro slave uprising in Santo Domingo, Andre Talvande and his mother, Madame Talvande, found refuge in Charleston in 1793. Pressed for funds, Madame Talvande opened a fashionable and exclusive seminary for young ladies in Meeting street. In 1819, they purchased the Sword Gates property and transferred their school there.

SOURCE UNKOWN, 1959

X Buildings - 32 Legare

THE CHARLESTON EVENIN



RESTORATION COMPLETE—Intricate woodwork and symmetry of proportion go far to make the ballroom of the Sword Gate house live up to its reputation of being one of the most beautiful rooms in America. The room has been restored to its former appearance by the new owner of the Legare street residence. The doors, located at the west end of the room, follow the general scheme of the cornice and are outlined in gold paint. They are also interesting in that they are hung from old hinges which lift the door slightly and automatically close it after it has been opened.

Sword Gates to Open for Visitors

Legare St. Mansion May Be Inspected During Centennial

By WARREN RIPLEY

Thousands of tourists visit Charleston annually and few pass through without at least a glance at the internationally famous sword gates and the mysterious mansion that lies beyond them.

Probably not one in a thousand knows the legend that says that were it not for a surreptitious romance and the misinterpretation of a word, the wrought-iron gates might be prosaic wooden affairs and the high brick wall that holds them non-existent.

The gates have been closed for the last 10 years, but next week, September 26, the first day of the Brahman Centennial, they will be thrown open and remain open to permit public inspection of the home and grounds which either have been, or are in the process of being, restored to their original beauty.

The premises of 32 Legare street, comprise the original lots granted to James LaRoche and James Lardent recorded upon the "plat" known as the "Grand Model" of Charleston as projected in 1694.

Through the years the property passed through various hands and in 1819 was purchased by Andre Talvande.

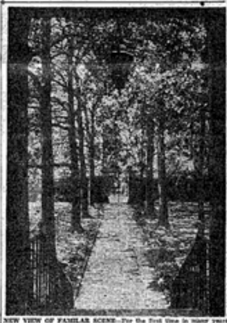
The Talvandes landed here after the Santo Domingo massacre of white planters in 1793. They were cultivated, educated, and broke when they arrived and quite naturally drifted into the teaching profession.

Andre bought the house, which shows on an 1818 "plat", for his mother's fashionable girl's school.

In 1829 so the story goes, Miss Maria Whaley, daughter of the prominent and wealthy Edisto rice planter, Colonel Joseph Whaley, made an unfortunate choice of suitors — she picked a Yankee. [illegible] owned land in St. Paul's parish, but he was none the less a New Yorker which, apparently made him undesirable for Miss Whaley in her father's eyes.

The irate planter, the legend says, tried to keep Morris away from the plantation. But Morris, a stubborn lad, moved in with the neighbors.

The colonel stopped that. He persuaded his friends to refuse Morris lodging.



NEW VIEW OF FAMILAR SCENE—For the first time in many years tourists and Charlestonians alike will be able to see the other side of the famous sword gates at 32 Legare street. The residence, long vacant and closed to the public, has been restored by Henry T. Good who purchased the property last April. It will be used as a show place for tourists.

Buildings - 32 Legare

SOURCE AND DATE UNKNOWN

Dec 16 2002

32 Legare St. returned to splendor

ROBERT BEHRE

Architecture

The Sword Gates at 32 Legare St. remain as impressive as ever, but the mansion standing behind them has undergone a dramatic renovation that has created a stunning new entrance hall and has reassembled almost all of the original compound once owned by the family that gave the street its name.

The new owners agreed to extensive historical research that served as a blueprint for returning the house and grounds to their original splendor. The research will serve as an important record of the changes at a time when many of the city's grand homes are being altered faster than preservationists can keep up with.

The work:

- Recombined three properties that once made up the original house, including the house, a part that recently served as an inn and a former kitchen house along Tradd Street that later was divided into several apartments.
- Reopened a formerly enclosed second-floor piazza visible from Legare Street.
- Rebuilt the link between the 1790 southwestern section and the early 19th-century brick section in a period style with craftsmanship that appears equal to the best of what was being done in the 18th century.
- Opened a passageway through to Tradd Street, giving pedestrians a chance to look in.
- Added a garage where a greenhouse once stood, an addition that stores cars and masks the home's air conditioning units.
- Imported a greenhouse from England and assembled it off Tradd Street, near the property's eastern boundary line.
- Extensively documented the work, including photographs taken twice a week during construction. Some of those photographs and other research served as the basis for a 35-page, lavishly illustrated paperback book penned by local historian Sarah Fick. While not for sale, the book is available at local libraries and traces the property's history from 1700 to today.

By 1704, Solomon Legare, a Huguenot, owned the property and

See GATE, Page 6B

FROM 1B

Sword Gates' mansion renovated

GATE from Page 1B

hundreds more acres in and around Charleston. His family remained there for about a century and by 1779, the north-south street where they lived was referred to in legal documents as "Legare Street."

While the Legare's family history is deep, none of their buildings remain. In 1803, Jacob Steinmetz and Paul Lorent, two bachelor merchants, real-estate investors and builders, bought two Tradd Street houses at auction. They kept a section dating to 1790 but removed most of the house and its garden.

By 1819, the use changed dramatically from a bachelors' entertainment showplace to a girls' private school when Andrew Talvande bought the property and moved his family business there.

Their new mansion had a façade oriented to Legare and a side wing mostly hidden from Tradd by a long two-story service building with a central carriageway — a carriageway that was reopened during the recent work.

"The plan of the house is curious enough, but it is even more so when we consider that three separate residence complexes were lost to make way for it," Fick

serve these houses for future generations, and we want to document what we saw, so in the future someone can go behind us and say 'OK, this is what was done,' " Marks says.

"The houses are turning over so fast now. Sometimes, kitchens are being ripped out every two or three years. It's hard to keep up with the change," he adds.

"We are seeing so much change in Charleston now — it's happening so fast that the preservation community can't keep up with it. The new homeowners don't know, and they need to be told that this is a good thing to do or something that needs to be done. The more we know, the better off we are."

Entering the Sword Gates house from Legare Street is a big change. This section of the house, known as the hyphen, has been reworked extensively over the years. Where the main door once opened into a wall that shielded the entryway from a kitchen, the door now opens into a grand stair hall with a Palladian window with details that echo the main door.

"We had the opportunity to recreate a significant missing piece of the puzzle, the stair hall, one that had been lost," says architect Glenn Keyes. "While we didn't

"We actually had our hands on all the plaster work in the house. All the cornices — it was an enormous amount of ornamental plaster work for us," Marks says. "We got to do some of the nicest stuff in the house, and it was a whole lot of fun."

The other dramatic change, one that anyone can notice, is along Tradd Street, where the kitchen house has been recombined with the property and its carriageway reopened. Also, the gates along Tradd were rebuilt in a much more decorative fashion based on a 1907 painting of one of the gates.

The new owner, Betsy Dingman, says when she first looked at the Sword Gates house, she felt an unusual attraction toward it. Her husband Michael persuaded her to look at other Charleston area houses, but she never found the same feeling.

As it turns out, she wasn't the first in her family to feel that way.

Her grandfather, architect and artist Harold Tatum, did a dry point on paper image of its Tradd Street gate after he moved to the Lowcountry in 1934. She didn't know about the picture until Marks discovered it at the Gibbes Museum of Art as the work was drawing to a close.

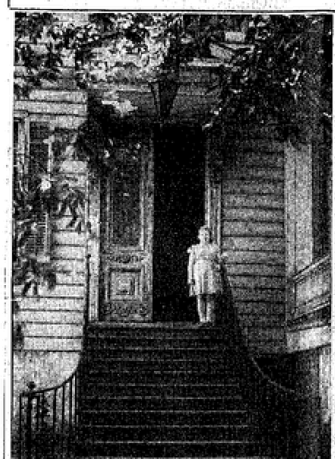
SOURCE UNKNOWN, 2002

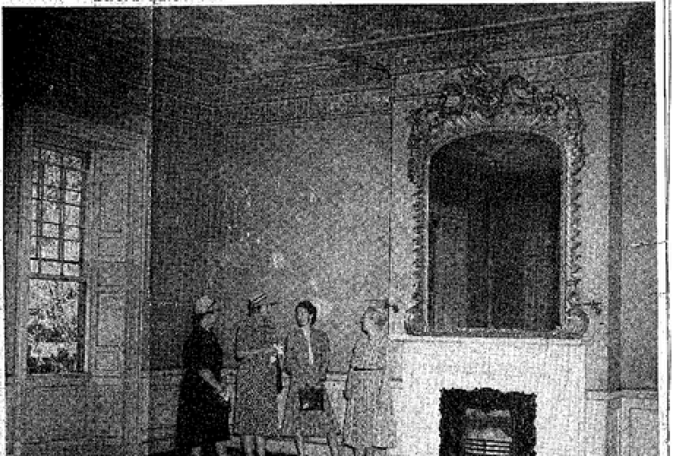
THE NEWS AND COURIER, CHARLESTON, S. C., MONDAY MORNING, MAY 12, 1941

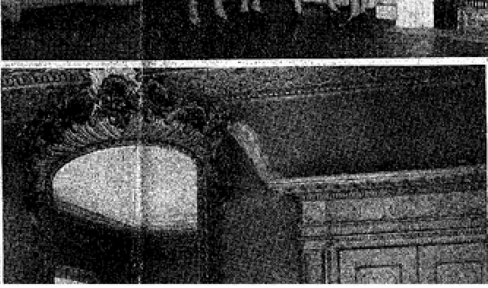
X Buildings - 32 Legare

DO YOU KNOW YOUR CHARLESTON?

Sword Gate House







TIME-STAINED BUT STILL HANDSOME, the ball-room of the Sword Gate house at 32 Legare street is illustrated in the pictures at the right. This room was decorated about 1850 in Napoleonic style with marble mantel, fine mirrors and gold-and-white trimmings. It formerly was a class-room in Madame Talvande's school. In the top picture are Mrs. M. M. Mewborne, Mrs. Clyde Bizzell, Mrs. Benjamin Wright and Mrs. John Bennett, author of the accompanying article. Above is shown the main entrance, facing Legare street. (Staff Photos by Peck.)

Built as Seminary by French Refugee, Later Decorated by Sporty Merchant, House Seen by Public for First Time

The "Sword-Gate House" at 32 Legare street manifestly gets its title from its famous wrought-iron gates.

Certainly the most noted gates in Charleston, possibly the most widely known gates in America, the sword gates have been photographed by a thousand tourists, drawn, painted, measured, etched,

In 1760, at his death, he bequeathed the house, etc., to Solomon,II, speaking of it as having been bought from George and Daniel Bell. These lands were but a part of Solomon Legare's holdings. He owned in addition a large tract on the northeastern side of the town, all the town holdings, how-

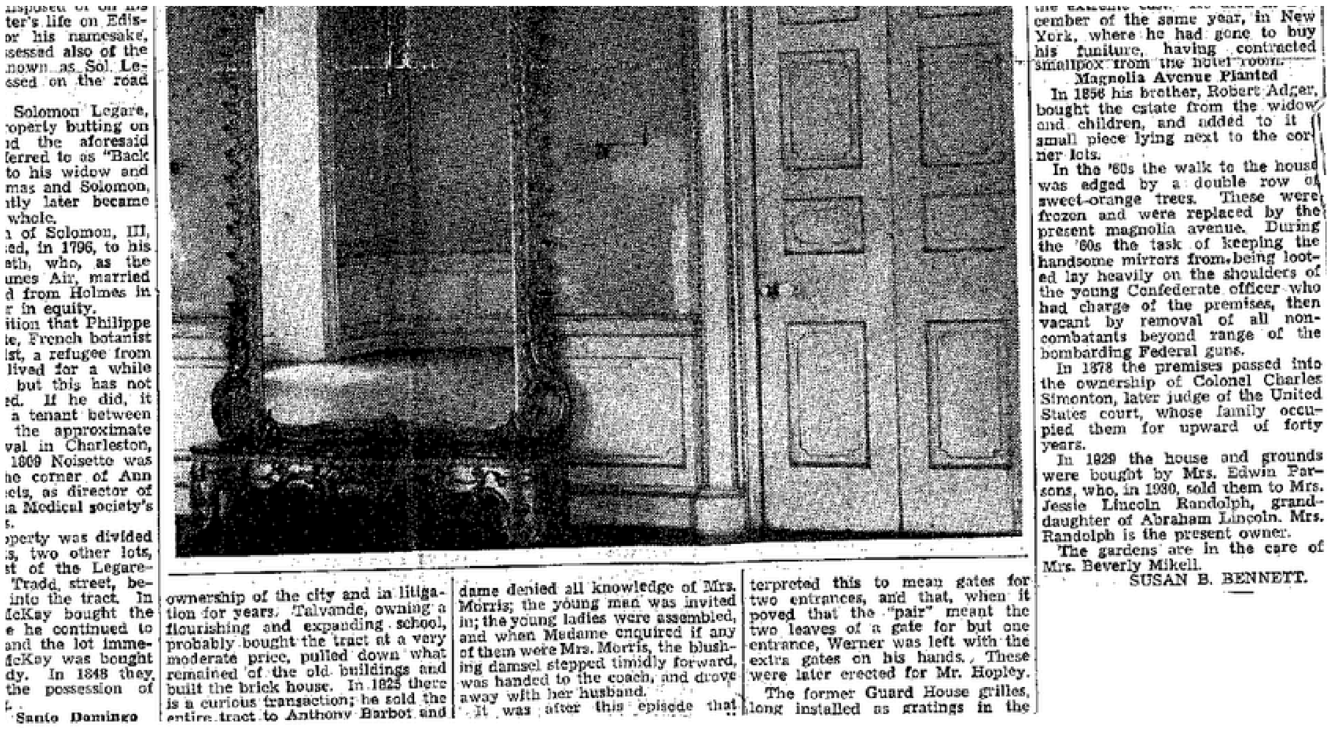
Marion square, are now in the windows of the Citadel Alumni hall, and the gates behind the Citadel engineering department.

It was Mr. Hopley who had Mme. Talvande's class-room transformed into the lovely Napoleonic ballroom which one sees today, with its marble mantel, fine mirrors and gold-and-white ornamentation. He also added the enormous southeast room, finished in grained oak, which was used as billiard room in his day, and later as a dining room.

Mr. Hopley was considered by our local Victorian Mrs. Grundy to be a fast young man, and his parties doubtful. The attendant gentlemen played hunt-the-slipper with the ladies, and there was more than a little gambling among the gentlemen.

In August, 1853, the property was bought from Hopley by Mr. William Adger, who added to it the strip at

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1941



isposed of on his
ter's life on Edis-
or his namesake,
sessed also of the
nown as Sol. Le-
essed on the road

Solomon Legare,
operly butting on
d the aforesaid
ferred to as "Back
to his widow and
mas and Solomon,
ntly later became
whole.
a of Solomon, III,
ed, in 1796, to his
eth, who, as the
umes Air, married
d from Holmes in
r in equity.
ition that Philippe
te, French botanist
ist, a refugee from
lived for a while
but this has not
ed. If he did, it
a tenant between
the approximate
val in Charleston,
1809 Noisette was
he corner of Ann
els, as director of
a Medical society's
s.
operty was divided
s, two other lots,
st of the Legare-
Tradd street, be-
into the tract. In
cKay bought the
e he continued to
and the lot imme-
cKay was bought
dy. In 1848 they,
the possession of

Santo Domingo

ownership of the city and in litigation for years. Talvande, owning a flourishing and expanding school, probably bought the tract at a very moderate price, pulled down what remained of the old buildings and built the brick house. In 1825 there is a curious transaction; he sold the entire tract to Anthony Barbot and

dame denied all knowledge of Mrs. Morris; the young man was invited in; the young ladies were assembled, and when Madame enquired if any of them were Mrs. Morris, the blushing damsel stepped timidly forward, was handed to the coach, and drove away with her husband.

It was after this episode that

terpreted this to mean gates for two entrances, and that, when it poved that the "pair" meant the two leaves of a gate for but one entrance, Werner was left with the extra gates on his hands. These were later erected for Mr. Hopley.

The former Guard House grilles, long installed as gratings in the

cember of the same year, in New York, where he had gone to buy his funiture, having contracted smallpox from the hotel room.

Magnolia Avenue Planted

In 1856 his brother, Robert Adger, bought the estate from the widow and children, and added to it small piece lying next to the corner lots.

In the '60s the walk to the house was edged by a double row of sweet-orange trees. These were frozen and were replaced by the present magnolia avenue. During the '60s the task of keeping the handsome mirrors from being looted lay heavily on the shoulders of the young Confederate officer who had charge of the premises, then vacant by removal of all non-combatants beyond range of the bombarding Federal guns.

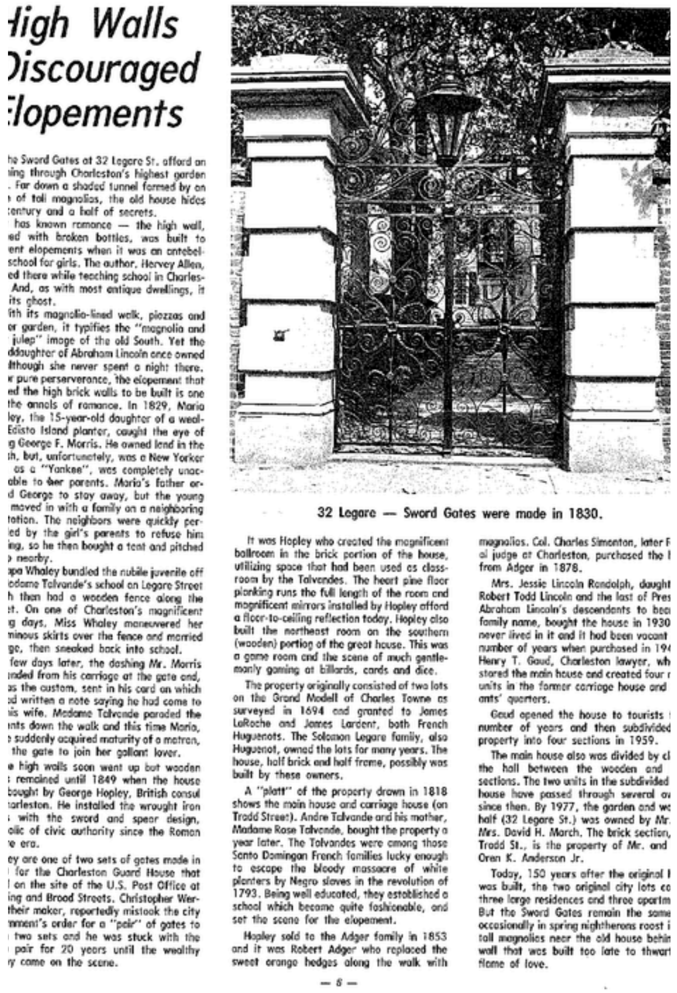
In 1878 the premises passed into the ownership of Colonel Charles Simonton, later judge of the United States court, whose family occupied them for upward of forty years.

In 1929 the house and grounds were bought by Mrs. Edwin Parsons, who, in 1930, sold them to Mrs. Jessie Lincoln Randolph, granddaughter of Abraham Lincoln. Mrs. Randolph is the present owner.

The gardens are in the care of Mrs. Beverly Mikell.

SUSAN B. BENNETT.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1941



igh Walls iscouraged lopements

he Sword Gates at 32 Legare St. afford an
ing through Charleston's highest garden
. Far down a shaded tunnel formed by an
of tall magnolias, the old house hides
century and a half of secrets.
has known romance — the high wall,
ed with broken bottles, was built to
ent elopements when it was an antebel-
school for girls. The author, Hervey Allen,
ed there while teaching school in Charles-
And, as with most antique dwellings, it
its ghost.
ith its magnolia-lined walk, piazzas and
er garden, it typifies the "magnolia and
julep" image of the old South. Yet the
daughter of Abraham Lincoln once owned
lthough she never spent a night there.
r pure perserverance, the elopement that
ed the high brick walls to be built is one
the annals of romance. In 1829, Maria
ley, the 15-year-old daughter of a weal-
Edisto Island planter, caught the eye of
g George F. Morris. He owned land in the
h, but, unfortunately, was a New Yorker
as a "Yankee", was completely unac-
able to her parents. *Maria's* father or-
d George to stay away, but the young
moved in with a family on a neighboring
tation. The neighbors were quickly per-
ed by the girl's parents to refuse him
ing, so he then bought a tent and pitched
nearby.
pa Whaley bundled the nubile juvenile off
adame Talvande's school on Legare Street
h then had a wooden fence along the
t. On one of Charleston's magnificent
g days. Miss Whaley maneuvered her
minous skirts over the fence and married
ge, then sneaked back into school.
few days later, the dashing *Mr. Morris*
nded from his carriage at the gate and,
as the custom, sent in his card on which
d written a note saying he had come to
is wife. *Madame* Talvande paraded the
nts down the walk and this time Maria,
suddenly acquired maturity of a matron,
the gate to join her gallant lover.
e high walls soon went up but wooden
remained until 1849 when the house
bought by George Hopley, British consul
arleston. He installed the wrought iron
with the sword and spear design,
olic of civic authority since the Roman
e era.
ey are one of two sets of gates made in
for the Charleston Guard House that
on the site of the U.S. Post Office at
ing and Broad Streets. Christopher Wer-
their maker, reportedly mistook the city
nment's order for a "pair" of gates to
two sets and he was stuck with the
pair for 20 years until the wealthy
y came on the scene.

32 Legare — Sword Gates were made in 1830.

It was Hopley who created the magnificent ballroom in the brick portion of the house, utilizing space that had been used as classroom by the Talvandes. The heart pine floor planking runs the full length of the room and magnificent mirrors installed by Hopley afford a floor-to-ceiling reflection today. Hopley also built the northeast room on the southern (wooden) portion of the great house. This was a game room and the scene of much gentlemanly gaming at billiards, cards and dice.

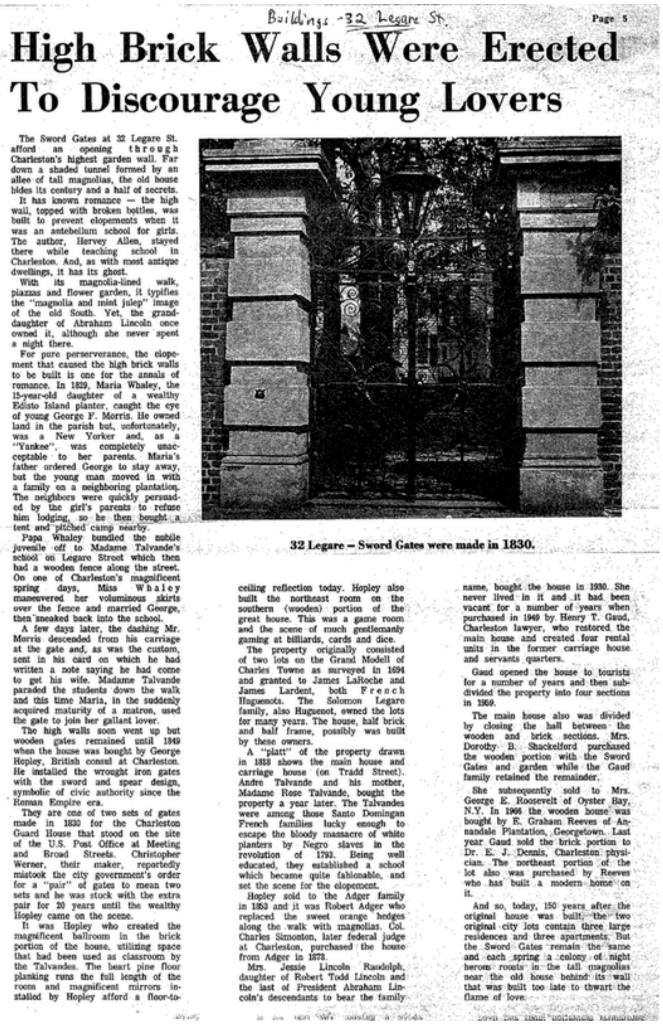
The property originally consisted of two lots on the Grand Modell of Charles Towne as surveyed in 1694 and granted to James LaRoche and James Lardent, both French Huguenots. The Solomon Legare family, also Huguenot, owned the lots for many years. The house, half brick and half frame, possibly was built by these owners.

A "platt" of the property drawn in 1818 shows the main house and carriage house (on Tradd Street). Andre Talvande and his mother, *Madame* Rose Talvande, bought the property a year later. The Talvandes were among those Santo Domingan French families lucky enough to escape the bloody massacre of white planters by Negro slaves in the revolution of 1793. Being well educated, they established a school which became quite fashionable, and set the scene for the elopement.

Hopley sold to the Adger family in 1853 and it was Robert Adger who replaced the sweet orange hedges along the walk with

magnolias. Col. Charles Simonton, later F
al judge at Charleston, purchased the
from Adger in 1878.
Mrs. Jessie Lincoln Randolph, daught
Robert Todd Lincoln and the last of Pres
Abraham Lincoln's descendants to bea
family name, bought the house in 1930
never lived in it and it had been vacant
number of years when purchased in 194
Henry T. Gaud, Charleston lawyer, wh
stored the main house and created four
units in the former carriage house and
ants' quarters.
Gaud opened the house to tourists
number of years and then subdivided
property into four sections in 1959.
The main house also was divided by cl
the hall between the wooden and
sections. The two units in the subdivided
house have passed through several ow
since then. By 1977, the garden and wo
half (32 Legare St.) was owned by *Mr.*
Mrs. David H. *March*. The brick section,
Tradd St., is the property of *Mr.* and
Oren K. Anderson Jr.
Today, 150 years after the original
was built, the two original city lots co
three large residences and three apartm
But the Sword Gates remain the same
occasionally in spring nightherons roost i
tall magnolias near the old house behin
wall that was built too late to thwart
flame of love.

SOURCE AND DATE UNKNOWN



Buildings - 32 Legare St.

High Brick Walls Were Erected To Discourage Young Lovers

The Sword Gates at 32 Legare St. afford an opening through Charleston's highest garden wall. Far down a shaded tunnel formed by an allee of tall magnolias, the old house hides its century and a half of secrets.

It has known romance — the high wall, topped with broken bottles, was built to prevent elopements when it was an antebellum school for girls. The author, Hervey Allen, stayed there while teaching school in Charleston. And, as with most antique dwellings, it has its ghost.

With its magnolia-lined walk, piazzas and flower garden, it typifies the "magnolia and mint julep" image of the old South. Yet, the granddaughter of Abraham Lincoln once owned it, although she never spent a night there.

For pure perserverance, the elopement that caused the high brick walls to be built is one for the annals of romance. In 1829, Maria Whaley, the 15-year-old daughter of a wealthy Edisto Island planter, caught the eye of young George F. Morris. He owned land in the parish but, unfortunately, was a New Yorker and, as a "Yankee", was completely unacceptable to her parents. Maria's father ordered George to stay away, but the young man moved in with a family on a neighboring plantation. The neighbors were quickly persuaded by the girl's parents to refuse him lodging, so he then bought a tent and pitched camp nearby.

Papa Whaley bundled the nubile juvenile off to Madame Talvande's school on Legare Street which then had a wooden fence along the street. On one of Charleston's magnificent spring days, Miss Whaley maneuvered her voluminous skirts over the fence and married George, then sneaked back into the school.

A few days later, the dashing Mr. Morris descended from his carriage at the gate and, as was the custom, sent in his card on which he had written a note saying he had come to get his wife. Madame Talvande paraded the students down the walk and this time Maria, in the suddenly acquired maturity of a matron, used the gate to join her gallant lover.

The high walls soon went up but wooden gates remained until 1849 when the house was bought by George Hopley, British consul at Charleston. He installed the wrought iron gates with the sword and spear design, symbolic of civic authority since the Roman Empire era.

They are one of two sets of gates made in 1830 for the Charleston Guard House that stood on the site of the U.S. Post Office at Meeting and Broad Streets. Christopher Werner, their maker, reportedly mistook the city government's order for a "pair" of gates to mean two sets and he was stuck with the extra pair for 20 years until the wealthy Hopley came on the scene.

It was Hopley who created the magnificent ballroom in the brick portion of the house, utilizing space that had been used as classroom by the Talvandes. The heart pine floor planking runs the full length of the room and magnificent mirrors installed by Hopley afford a floor-to-ceiling reflection today. Hopley also built the northeast room on the southern (wooden) portion of the great house. This was a game room and the scene of much gentlemanly gaming at billiards, cards and dice.

32 Legare – Sword Gates were made in 1830.

The property originally consisted of two lots on the Grand Modell of Charles Towne as surveyed in 1694 and granted to James LaRoche and James Lardent, both French Huguenots. The Solomon Legare family, also Huguenot, owned the lots for many years. The house, half brick and half frame, possibly was built by these owners.

A "platt" of the property drawn in 1818 shows the main house and carriage house (on Tradd Street). Andre Talvande and his mother, Madame Rose Talvande, bought the property a year later. The Talvandes were among those Santo Domingan French families lucky enough to escape the bloody massacre of white planters by Negro slaves in the revolution of 1793. Being well educated, they established a school which became quite fahionable, and set the scene for the elopement.

Hopley sold to the Adger family in 1853 and it was Robert Adger who replaced the sweet orange hedges along the walk with magnolias. Col. Charles Simonton, later federal judge at Charleston, purchased the house from Adger in 1878.

Mrs. Jessie Lincoln Randolph, daughter of Robert Todd Lincoln and the last of President Abraham Lincoln's descendants to bear the family name, bought the house in 1930. She never lived in it and it had been vacant for a number of years when purchased in 1949 by Henry T. Gaud, Charleston lawyer, who restored the main house and created four rental units in the former carriage house and servants quarters.

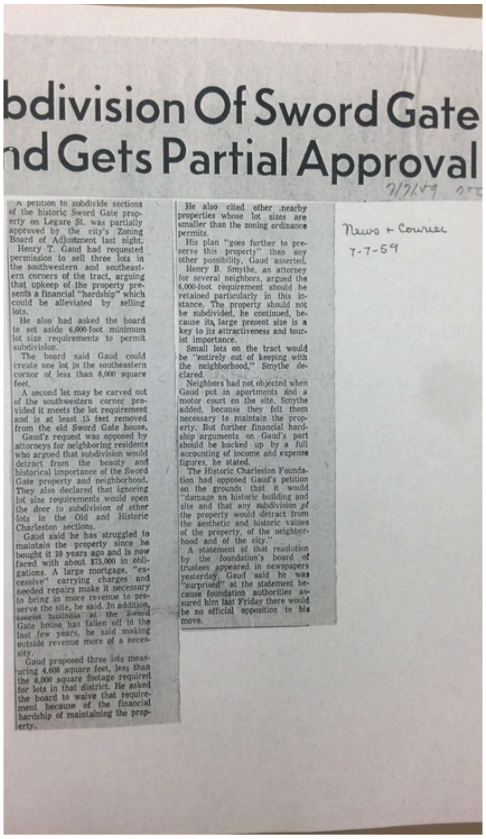
Gaud opened the house to tourists for a number of years and then subdivided the property into four sections in 1969.

The main house also was divided by closing the hall between the wooden and brick sections. Mrs. Dorothy B. Shackelford purchased the wooden portion with the Sword Gates and garden while the Gaud family retained the remainder.

She subsequently sold to Mrs. George E. Roosevelt of Oyster Bay, N.Y. In 1966 the wooden house was bought by E. Graham Reeves of Annandale Plantation, Georgetown. Last year Gaud sold the brick portion to Dr. E. J. Dennis, Charleston physician. The northeast portion of the lot also was purchased by Reeves who has built a modern home on it.

And so, today, 150 years after the original house was built, the two original city lots contain three large residences and three apartments. But the Sword Gates remain the same and each spring a colony of night herons roosts in the tall magnolias near the old house behind its wall that was built too late to thwart the flame of love.

SOURCE AND DATE UNKNOWN



bdivision Of Sword Gate nd Gets Partial Approval

7/7/59

News + Courier
7-7-59

A petition to subdivide sections of the historic Sword Gate property on Legare St. was partially approved by the city's Zoning Board of Adjustment last night.

Henry T. Gaud had requested permission to sell three lots in the southwestern and southeastern corners of the tract, arguing that upkeep of the property presents a financial "hardship" which could be alleviated by selling lots.

He also had asked the board to set aside 6,000-foot minimum lot size requirements to permit subdivision.

The board said Gaud could create one lot in the southeastern cornor of less than 6,000 square feet.

A second lot may be carved out of the southwestern corner provided it meets the lot requirement and is at least 15 feet removed from the old Sword Gate house.

Gaud's request was opposed by attorneys for neighboring residents who argued that subdivision would detract from the beauty and historical importance of the Sword Gate property and neighborhood. They also declared that ignoring lot size requirements would open the door to subdivision of other lots in the Old and Historic Charleston sections.

Gaud said he has struggled to maintain the property since he bought it 10 years ago and is now faced with about $75,000 in obligations. A large mortgage, "excessive" carrying charges and needed repairs make it necessary to bring in more revenue to preserve the site, he said. In addition, tourist business at the Sword Gate house has fallen off in the last few years, he said making outside revenue more of a necessity.

Gaud proposed three lots measuring 4,608 square feet, less than the 6,000 square footage required for lots in that district. He asked the board to waive that requirement because of the financial hardship of maintaining the property.

He also cited other nearby properties whose lot sizes are smaller than the zoning ordinance permits.

His plan "goes further to preserve this property" than any other possibility, Gaud asserted.

Henry B. Smythe, an attorney for several neighbors, argued the 6,000-foot requirement should be retained particularly in this instance. The property should not be subdivided, he continued, because its large present size is a key to its attractiveness and tourist importance.

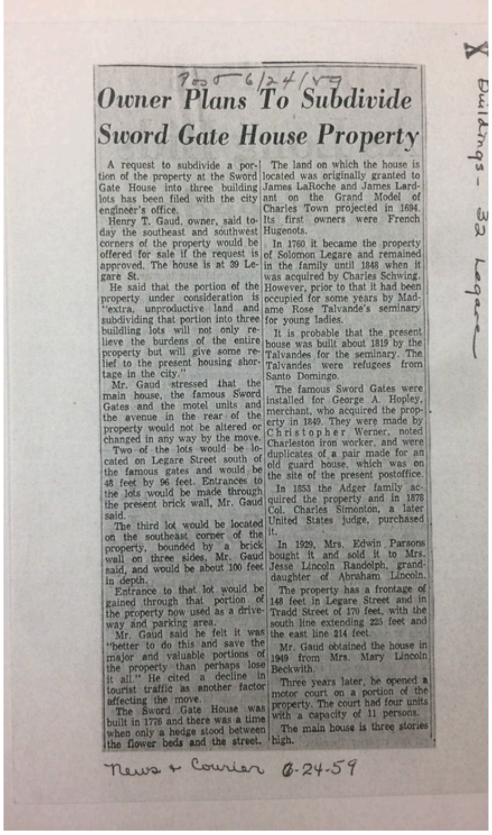
Small lots on the tract would be "entirely out of keeping with the neighborhood," Smythe declared.

Neighbors had not objected when Gaud put in apartments and a motor court on the site, Smythe added, because they felt them necessary to maintain the property. But further financial hardship arguments on Gaud's part should be backed up by a full accounting of income and expense figures, he stated.

The Historic Charleston Foundation had opposed Gaud's petition on the grounds that it would "damage an historic building and site and that any subdivision of the property would detract from the aesthetic and historic values of the property, of the neighborhood and of the city."

A statement of that resolution by the foundation's board of trustees appeared in newspapers yesterday. Gaud said he was "surprised" at the statement because foundation authorities assured him last Friday there would be no official opposition to his move.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1959



6/24/59

Owner Plans To Subdivide Sword Gate House Property

A request to subdivide a portion of the property at the Sword Gate House into three building lots has been filed with the city engineer's office.

Henry T. Gaud, owner, said today the southeast and southwest corners of the property would be offered for sale if the request is approved. The house is at 39 Legare St.

He said that the portion of the property under consideration is "extra, unproductive land and subdividing that portion into three buildling lots will not only relieve the burdens of the entire property but will give some relief to the present housing shortage in the city."

Mr. Gaud stressed that the main house, the famous Sword Gates and the motel units and the avenue in the rear of the property would not be altered or changed in any way by the move.

Two of the lots would be located on Legare Street south of the famous gates and would be 48 feet by 96 feet. Entrances to the lots would be made through the present brick wall, Mr. Gaud said.

The third lot would be located on the southeast corner of the property, bounded by a brick wall on three sides, Mr. Gaud said, and would be about 100 feet in depth.

Entrance to that lot would be gained through that portion of the property now used as a driveway and parking area.

Mr. Gaud said he felt it was "better to do this and save the major and valuable portions of the property than perhaps lose it all." He cited a decline in tourist traffic as another factor affecting the move.

The Sword Gate House was built in 1776 and there was a time when only a hedge stood between the flower beds and the street.

The land on which the house is located was originally granted to James LaRoche and James Lardant on the Grand Model of Charles Town projected in 1694. Its first owners were French Hugenots.

In 1760 it became the property of Solomon Legare and remained in the family until 1848 when it was acquired by Charles Schwing. However, prior to that it had been occupied for some years by Madame Rose Talvande's seminary for young ladies.

It is probable that the present house was built about 1819 by the Talvandes for the seminary. The Talvandes were refugees from Santo Domingo.

The famous Sword Gates were installed for George A. Hopley, merchant, who acquired the property in 1849. They were made by Christopher Werner, noted Charleston iron worker, and were duplicates of a pair made for an old guard house, which was on the site of the present postoffice.

In 1853 the Adger family acquired the property and in 1878 Col. Charles Simonton, a later United States judge, purchased it.

In 1929, Mrs. Edwin Parsons bought it and sold it to Mrs. Jesse Lincoln Randolph, granddaughter of Abraham Lincoln.

The property has a frontage of 148 feet in Legare Street and in Tradd Street of 170 feet, with the south line extending 225 feet and the east line 214 feet.

Mr. Gaud obtained the house in 1949 from Mrs. Mary Lincoln Beckwith.

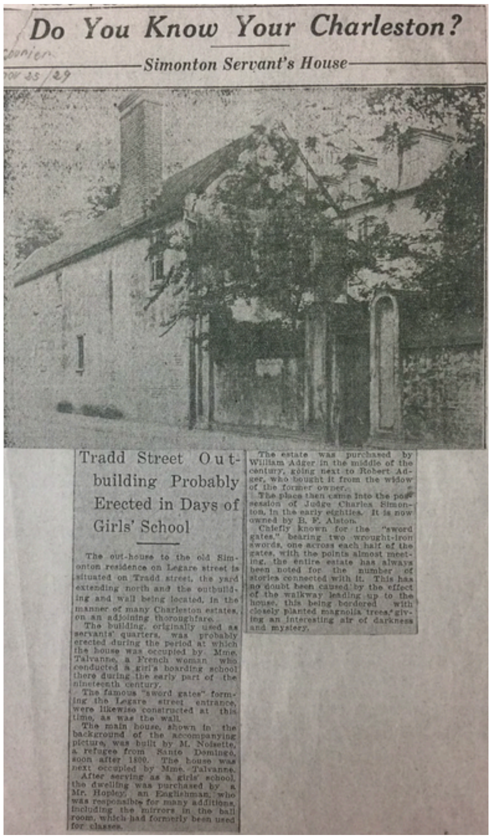
Three years later, he opened a motor court on a portion of the property. The court had four units with a capacity of 11 persons.

The main house is three stories high.

News + Courier 6-24-59

X Buildings - 32 Legare

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1959



Do You Know Your Charleston?

Courier
Nov 25/29

Simonton Servant's House

Tradd Street Outbuilding Probably Erected in Days of Girls' School

The out-house to the old Simonton residence on Legare street is situated on Tradd street, the yard extending north and the outbuilding and wall being located, in the manner of many Charleston estates, on an adjoining thoroughfare.

The building, originally used as servants' quarters, was probably erected during the period at which the house was occupied by Mme. Talvanne, a French woman who conducted a girl's boarding school there during the early part of the nineteenth century.

The famous "sword gates" forming the Legare street entrance, were likewise constructed at this time, as was the wall.

The main house, shown in the background of the accompanying picture, was built by M. Noisette, a refugee from Santo Domingo, soon after 1800. The house was next occupied by Mme. Talvanne.

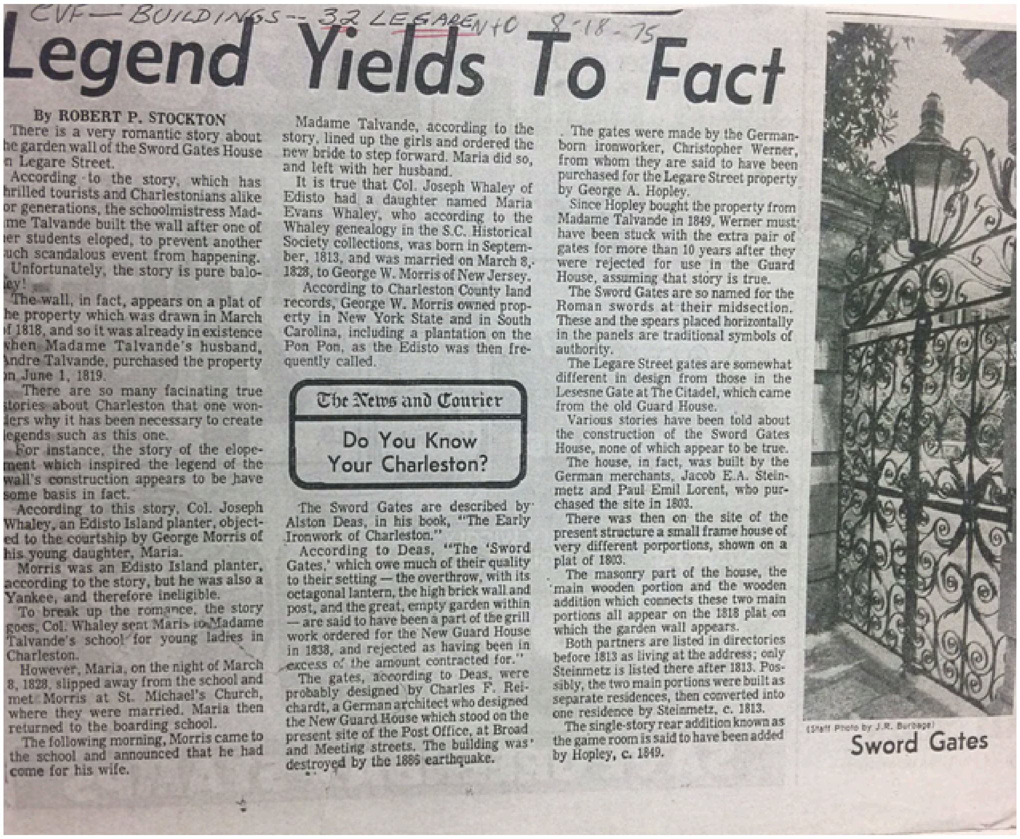
After serving as a girls' school, the dwelling was purchased by a Mr. Hopley, an Englishman, who was responsible for many additions, including the mirrors in the ball room, which had formerly been used for classes.

The estate was purchased by William Adger in the middle of the century, going next to Robert Adger, who bought it from the widow of the former owner.

The place then came into the possession of Judge Charles Simonton, in the early eighties. It is now owned by B. F. Alston.

Chiefly known for the "sword gates," bearing two wrought-iron swords, one across each half of the gates, with the points almost meeting, the entire estate has always been noted for the number of stories connected with it. This has no doubt been caused by the effect of the walkway leading up to the house, this being bordered with closely planted magnolia trees, giving an interesting air of darkness and mystery.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1929



CVF — BUILDINGS -- 32 LEGARE N+C 8-18-75

Legend Yields To Fact

By ROBERT P. STOCKTON

There is a very romantic story about the garden wall of the Sword Gates House on Legare Street.

According to the story, which has thrilled tourists and Charlestonians alike for generations, the schoolmistress Madame Talvande built the wall after one of her students eloped, to prevent another such scandalous event from happening.

Unfortunately, the story is pure baloney!

The wall, in fact, appears on a plat of the property which was drawn in March of 1818, and so it was already in existence when Madame Talvande's husband, Andre Talvande, purchased the property on June 1, 1819.

There are so many facinating true stories about Charleston that one wonders why it has been necessary to create legends such as this one.

For instance, the story of the elopement which inspired the legend of the wall's construction appears to be have some basis in fact.

According to this story, Col. Joseph Whaley, an Edisto Island planter, objected to the courtship by George Morris of his young daughter, Maria.

Morris was an Edisto Island planter, according to the story, but he was also a Yankee, and therefore ineligible.

To break up the romance, the story goes, Col. Whaley sent Maria to Madame Talvande's school for young ladies in Charleston.

However, Maria, on the night of March 8, 1828, slipped away from the school and met Morris at St. Michael's Church, where they were married. Maria then returned to the boarding school.

The following morning, Morris came to the school and announced that he had come for his wife.

Madame Talvande, according to the story, lined up the girls and ordered the new bride to step forward. Maria did so, and left with her husband.

It is true that Col. Joseph Whaley of Edisto had a daughter named Maria Evans Whaley, who according to the Whaley genealogy in the S.C. Historical Society collections, was born in September, 1813, and was married on March 8, 1828, to George W. Morris of New Jersey.

According to Charleston County land records, George W. Morris owned property in New York State and in South Carolina, including a plantation on the Pon Pon, as the Edisto was then frequently called.

The News and Courier

Do You Know Your Charleston?

The Sword Gates are described by Alston Deas, in his book, "The Early Ironwork of Charleston."

According to Deas, "The 'Sword Gates,' which owe much of their quality to their setting — the overthrow, with its octagonal lantern, the high brick wall and post, and the great, empty garden within — are said to have been a part of the grill work ordered for the New Guard House in 1838, and rejected as having been in excess of the amount contracted for."

The gates, according to Deas, were probably designed by Charles F. Reichardt, a German architect who designed the New Guard House which stood on the present site of the Post Office, at Broad and Meeting streets. The building was destroyed by the 1886 earthquake.

The gates were made by the German-born ironworker, Christopher Werner, from whom they are said to have been purchased for the Legare Street property by George A. Hopley.

Since Hopley bought the property from Madame Talvande in 1849, Werner must have been stuck with the extra pair of gates for more than 10 years after they were rejected for use in the Guard House, assuming that story is true.

The Sword Gates are so named for the Roman swords at their midsection. These and the spears placed horizontally in the panels are traditional symbols of authority.

The Legare Street gates are somewhat different in design from those in the Lesesne Gate at The Citadel, which came from the old Guard House.

Various stories have been told about the construction of the Sword Gates House, none of which appear to be true.

The house, in fact, was built by the German merchants, Jacob E.A. Steinmetz and Paul Emil Lorent, who purchased the site in 1803.

There was then on the site of the present structure a small frame house of very different porportions, shown on a plat of 1803.

The masonry part of the house, the main wooden portion and the wooden addition which connects these two main portions all appear on the 1818 plat on which the garden wall appears.

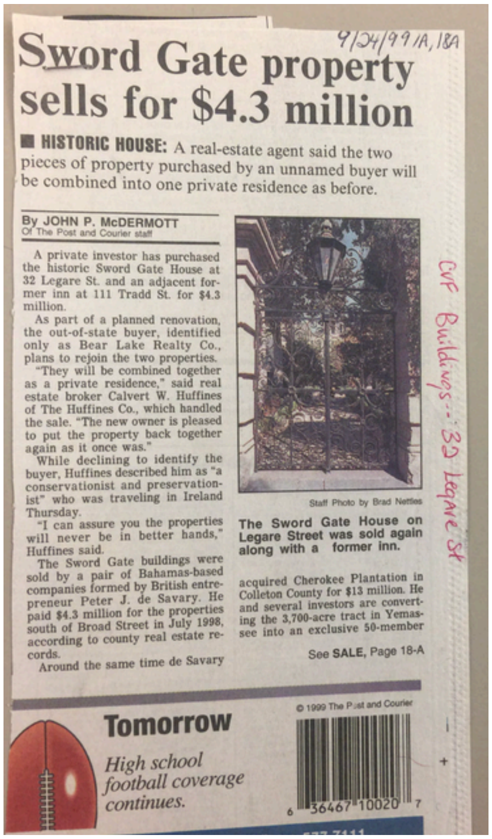
Both partners are listed in directories before 1813 as living at the address; only Steinmetz is listed there after 1813. Possibly, the two main portions were built as separate residences, then converted into one residence by Steinmetz, c. 1813.

The single-story rear addition known as the game room is said to have been added by Hopley, c. 1849.

(Staff Photo by J.R. Burbage)

Sword Gates

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1975



9/24/99 1A, 18A

Sword Gate property sells for $4.3 million

HISTORIC HOUSE: A real-estate agent said the two pieces of property purchased by an unnamed buyer will be combined into one private residence as before.

By JOHN P. McDERMOTT
Of The Post and Courier staff

A private investor has purchased the historic Sword Gate House at 32 Legare St. and an adjacent former inn at 111 Tradd St. for $4.3 million.

As part of a planned renovation, the out-of-state buyer, identified only as Bear Lake Realty Co., plans to rejoin the two properties.

"They will be combined together as a private residence," said real estate broker Calvert W. Huffines of The Huffines Co., which handled the sale. "The new owner is pleased to put the property back together again as it once was."

While declining to identify the buyer, Huffines described him as "a conservationist and preservationist" who was traveling in Ireland Thursday.

"I can assure you the properties will never be in better hands," Huffines said.

The Sword Gate buildings were sold by a pair of Bahamas-based companies formed by British entrepreneur Peter J. de Savary. He paid $4.3 million for the properties south of Broad Street in July 1998, according to county real estate records.

Around the same time de Savary acquired Cherokee Plantation in Colleton County for $13 million. He and several investors are converting the 3,700-acre tract in Yemassee into an exclusive 50-member

See SALE, Page 18-A

Staff Photo by Brad Nettles

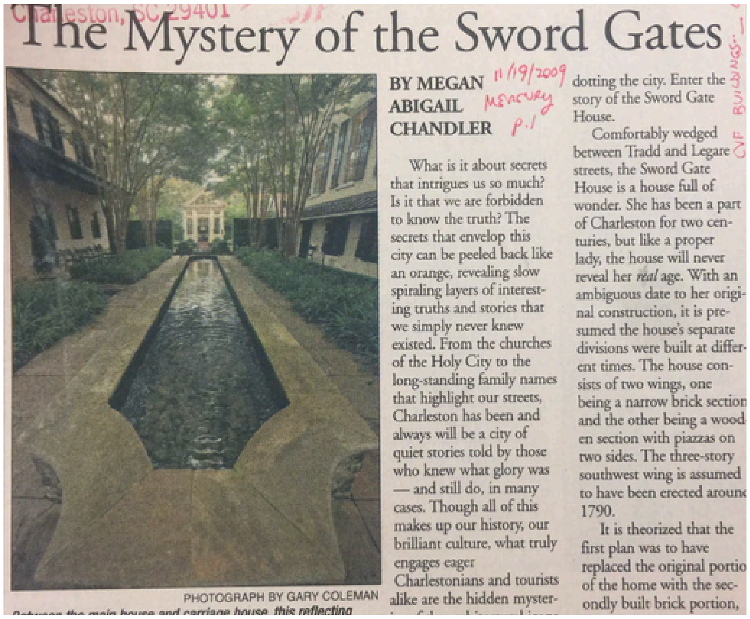
The Sword Gate House on Legare Street was sold again along with a former inn.

CVF Buildings -- 32 Legare St

© 1999 The Post and Courier

Tomorrow
High school football coverage continues.

THE POST AND COURIER, 1999



Charleston, SC 29401

The Mystery of the Sword Gates

BY MEGAN ABIGAIL CHANDLER

11/19/2009 Mercury p.1

OF BUILDINGS –

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY COLEMAN

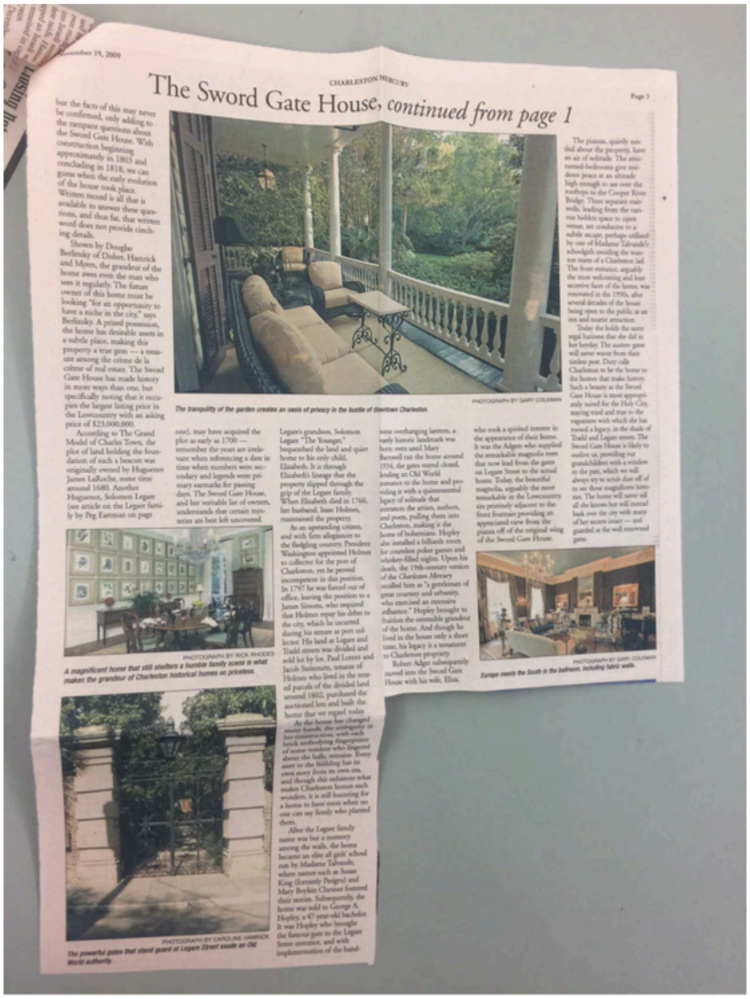
Between the main house and carriage house, this reflecting

What is it about secrets that intrigues us so much? Is it that we are forbidden to know the truth? The secrets that envelop this city can be peeled back like an orange, revealing slow spiraling layers of interesting truths and stories that we simply never knew existed. From the churches of the Holy City to the long-standing family names that highlight our streets, Charleston has been and always will be a city of quiet stories told by those who knew what glory was — and still do, in many cases. Though all of this makes up our history, our brilliant culture, what truly engages eager Charlestonians and tourists alike are the hidden myster- dotting the city. Enter the story of the Sword Gate House.

Comfortably wedged between Tradd and Legare streets, the Sword Gate House is a house full of wonder. She has been a part of Charleston for two centuries, but like a proper lady, the house will never reveal her *real* age. With an ambiguous date to her original construction, it is presumed the house's separate divisions were built at different times. The house consists of two wings, one being a narrow brick section and the other being a wooden section with piazzas on two sides. The three-story southwest wing is assumed to have been erected around 1790.

It is theorized that the first plan was to have replaced the original portio of the home with the secondly built brick portion,

CHARLESTON MERCURY, 2009



November 19, 2009

CHARLESTON MERCURY

Page 3

The Sword Gate House, *continued from page 1*

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY COLEMAN

The tranquility of the garden creates an oasis of privacy in the bustle of downtown Charleston.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK RHODES

A magnificent home that still shelters a humble family scene is what makes the grandeur of Charleston historical homes so priceless.

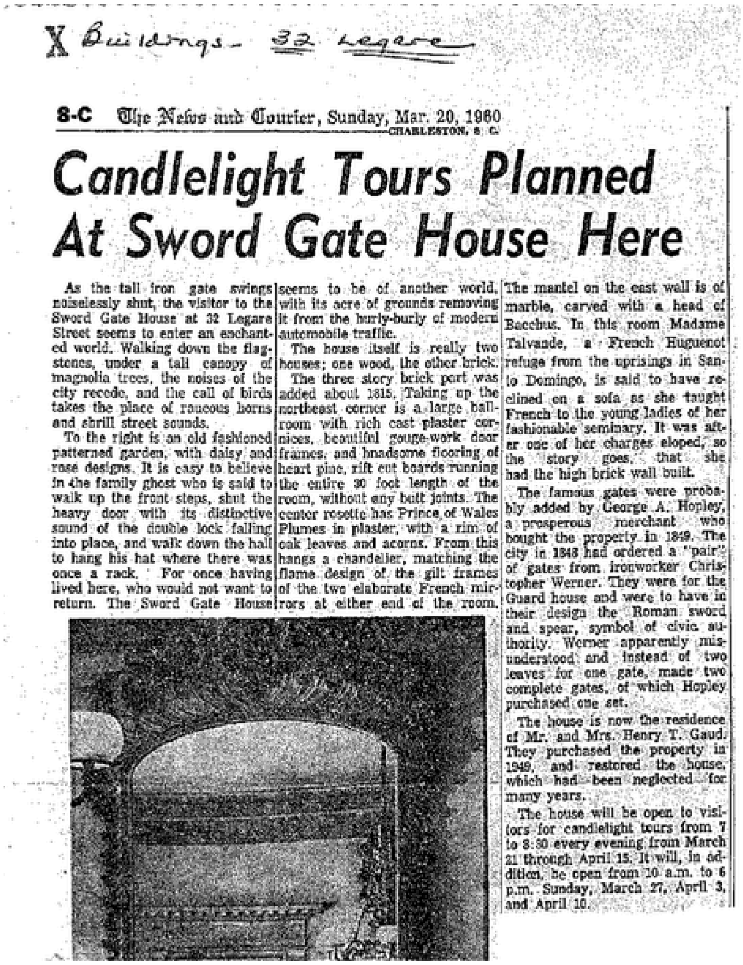
PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY COLEMAN

Europe meets the South in the ballroom, including fabric walls.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE HAMRICK

The powerful gates that stand guard at Legare Street exude an Old World authority.

CHARLESTON MERCURY, 2009



X Buildings - 32 Legare

8-C The News and Courier, Sunday, Mar. 20, 1960
CHARLESTON, S. C.

Candlelight Tours Planned At Sword Gate House Here

As the tall iron gate swings noiselessly shut, the visitor to the Sword Gate House at 32 Legare Street seems to enter an enchanted world. Walking down the flagstones, under a tall canopy of magnolia trees, the noises of the city recede, and the call of birds takes the place of raucous horns and shrill street sounds.

To the right is an old fashioned patterned garden, with daisy and rose designs. It is easy to believe in the family ghost who is said to walk up the front steps, shut the heavy door with its distinctive sound of the double lock falling into place, and walk down the hall to hang his hat where there was once a rack. For once having lived here, who would not want to return. The Sword Gate House seems to be of another world, with its acre of grounds removing it from the hurly-burly of modern automobile traffic.

The house itself is really two houses; one wood, the other brick.

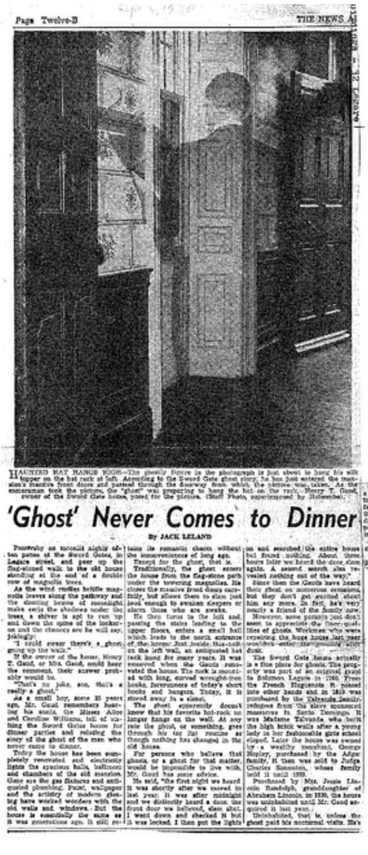
The three story brick port was added about 1815. Taking up the northeast corner is a large ballroom with rich cast plaster cornices, beautiful gouge-work door frames, and hnadsome flooring of heart pine, rift cut boards running the entire 30 foot length of the room, without any butt joints. The center rosette has Prince of Wales Plumes in plaster, with a rim of oak leaves and acorns. From this hangs a chandelier, matching the flame design of the gilt frames of the two elaborate French mirrors at either end of the room. The mantel on the east wall is of marble, carved with a head of Bacchus. In this room Madame Talvande, a French Huguenot refuge from the uprisings in Santo Domingo, is said to have reclined on a sofa as she taught French to the young ladies of her fashionable seminary. It was after one of her charges eloped, so the story goes, that she had the high brick wall built.

The famous gates were probably added by George A. Hopley, a prosperous merchant who bought the property in 1849. The city in 1848 had ordered a "pair" of gates from ironworker Christopher Werner. They were for the Guard house and were to have in their design the Roman sword and spear, symbol of civic authority. Werner apparently misunderstood and instead of two leaves for one gate, made two complete gates, of which Hopley purchased one set.

The house is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Gaud. They purchased the property in 1949, and restored the house, which had been neglected for many years.

The house will be open to visitors for candlelight tours from 7 to 8:30 every evening from March 21 through April 15. It will, in addition, be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, March 27, April 3, and April 10.

THE NEWS AND COURIER, 1960



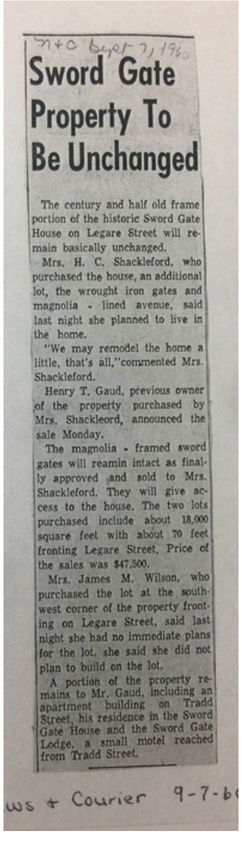
Page Twelve-B

THE NEWS A

'Ghost' Never Comes to Dinner

By JACK LELAND

THE NEWS AND COURIER,
DATE UNKNOWN



N+C Sept 7, 1960

Sword Gate Property To Be Unchanged

The century and half old frame portion of the historic Sword Gate House on Legare Street will remain basically unchanged.

Mrs. H. C. Shackleford, who purchased the house, an additional lot, the wrought iron gates and magnolia - lined avenue, said last night she planned to live in the home.

"We may remodel the home a little, that's all," commented Mrs. Shackleford.

Henry T. Gaud, previous owner of the property purchased by Mrs. Shackleord, announced the sale Monday.

The magnolia - framed sword gates will reamin intact as finally approved and sold to Mrs. Shackleford. They will give access to the house. The two lots purchased include about 18,000 square feet with about 70 feet fronting Legare Street. Price of the sales was $47,500.

Mrs. James M. Wilson, who purchased the lot at the southwest corner of the property fronting on Legare Street, said last night she had no immediate plans for the lot. she said she did not plan to build on the lot.

A portion of the property remains to Mr. Gaud, including an apartment building on Tradd Street, his residence in the Sword Gate House and the Sword Gate Lodge, a small motel reached from Tradd Street.

ws + Courier 9-7-6

THE NEWS AND
COURIER, 1960