

Look Up,

Charleston

(Battery)



A Walking Tour of Charleston - the Battery...

The nascent city of Charles Town was enclosed by a protective wall from 1690 to 1720 which extended down to today's Water Street. Water Street itself was Vanderhorst Creek which was later filled in. Outside the wall, at the entrance to the harbor, an earth wall was held together with sticks and topped with grass along the water. Wooden boards were laid across the wall and guns aimed out across the mouth of the harbor.

In 1787, after the British had departed the city, work was begun to improve the wall. Bricks used as ballast in ships were piled into the wall. By 1820 a granite wall was completed. At this time the city's richest merchants and bankers began building Charleston's finest mansions with views of the water. The open space at the tip was used as a public park beginning in 1837.

After the Civil War began on Fort Sumter in the Charleston Harbor on April 12, 1861 the bombardment of the Battery ensued. Only one house, at the corner of Atlantic Street and East Battery was destroyed. Eventually the park became known as White Point Gardens because of the piles of bleached oyster shells on the point.

This walking tour will visit Charleston's oldest and finest homes in the Battery below Broad Street, an area that is virtually completely residential...

**1. White Point Gardens
Charleston Harbor**

The point where the Ashley and Cooper rivers empty into the Atlantic Ocean was first used as a public garden in 1837. With the outbreak of the Civil War, it became a fortification for the city. At the corner of Murray Boulevard and East Battery Street is the Confederate Defenders of Charleston monument. Hermon Atkins MacNeil created this homage to the Confederate soldiers who served in the defense of Charleston during the Civil War.

**WALK WEST ALONG SOUTH
BATTERY STREET.**

**2. Villa Margherita
4 South Battery**

Designed in 1895 by Frederick P. Dinkelberg, famous as principal architect for the Flatiron Building in New York City, as a family residence this Beaux Arts structure actually served many decades as a luxury hotel. After a stint as base for the United Seaman's Service in World War II, the house eventually returned to use as a single-family residence.

**3. Colonel William Washington House
8 South Battery**

Thomas Savage built this house sometime before 1770 and, with its many additions and alterations, is the only pre-Revolutionary dwelling on the Battery. It was sold in 1785 to Colonel William Washington, cousin of George Washington and hero of the battles of Cowpens and Eutaw Springs.

**4. Stevens-Lather House
20 South Battery**

Samuel Stevens, a mercantile agent, built the original house on this property in 1843. After the Civil War, Colonel Richard Lathers, a native of Ireland who came to South Carolina with his family at just six months of age and later made his fortune in New York, returned to help rebuild South Carolina and set up his base in this house. Among other alterations he added a fish-scaled

slate mansard roof with an arched tripartite dormer projection. Disillusioned at the continued ill will between North and South, he sold the house after four years and returned to New York.

**5. Nathaniel Russell Middleton House
22 South Battery**

An 18th-century tenement was cleared so Nathaniel Russell Middleton, president of the College of Charleston, could build this three-and-a-half-story stuccoed brick house in the mid-1850s.

**6. Colonel John A.S. Ashe House
26 South Battery**

John Algernon Sydney Ashe, a wealthy planter, banker and politician, inherited this lot as a young man in 1828, plus \$10,000 to build a house. He didn't get around to construction until he was in his fifties over 20 years later. Edward C. Jones created a smart Italianate design, one of the few surviving in the city that pre-dates the Civil War. The front facade highlights many of the best features of this early Victorian style with arched wooden loggias, double-bracketed cornices and surmounting roof balustrades.

**7. John Ashe House
32 South Battery**

This enduring three-story masonry house retains its original 18th-century cupola from its construction during the Revolution. Other possible original details include nine-over-nine double-sash windows and the front doorway. The Tuscan-columned, double-tiered piazza with french doors and the Italianate balustrades are most likely mid-19th century additions.

TURN RIGHT ON LEGARE STREET.

**8. Sword Gate House
32 Legare Street**

The citywide famous wrought-iron gates fronting the property on Legare Street bear an elaborate sword and spear design that are actually a mistake by ironworker Christopher Werner. The three-story house dates to the early 1800s.

9. Charles Elliott House
22 Legare Street

Charles Elliott, a wealthy planter, built this city house in 1764 using thick masonry fire walls. The house retains its 18th-century pedimented window hoods and dormers but boasts Greek Revival piazzas.

TURN RIGHT ON TRADD STREET.
TURN LEFT ON MEETING STREET.

10. Branford-Horry House
59 Meeting Street

The Branford-Horry House was built for William Branford, a wealthy planter, in 1765-67 and is rated one of Charleston's finest examples of a three-story brick double house. In 1801 it was purchased by Thomas Horry, who had married Branford's daughter. His son, Elias Horry, president of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company, inherited the house and altered the facade with the construction of two-story Regency-style porches extending over the sidewalk. The house was owned by the Horry family until 1853.

11. John Poyas House
69 Meeting Street

The Federal-style John Poyas House was completed in 1800; it is distinguished by its unusual height. The house has more windows facing north than is usually found. These may have been added after the earthquake of 1886.

12. South Carolina Society Hall
72 Meeting Street

The South Carolina Society was first organized in 1737, mainly by French Huguenot businessmen and artisans. It was originally named "The Two Bit Club," as members agreed to weekly dues of two bits, or 15 pence, to the relief of a French Huguenot tavern owner. Later the benevolent association established schools for orphans and indigent children.

Built in 1804, the Hall was designed by Charlestonian Gabriel Manigault, a gentleman architect who introduced the Adamesque style

to the city after studying in Europe. Manigault's design for the Society's headquarters, of which he was a member, consisted of a two-story brick building on a very high basement, covered with stucco. The first floor contained three rooms used for billiards, a small school the society operated, and quarters for the schoolmaster. A large meeting room and ballroom occupied the second floor. In 1825, the portico with Doric and Ionic columns was added.

TURN RIGHT ON ST. MICHAEL'S ALLEY. TURN RIGHT ON CHURCH STREET.

13. Alexander Christie House
92 Church Street

The Alexander Christie House was built in 1805 and renovated in 1908.

14. Peter Leger House
90 Church Street

The main body of this house dates to 1760.

15. Cabbage Row
89-91 Church Street

The three-story, gray stucco tenement dates to 1750, the name came when residents began displaying vegetables for sale on the windowsills. In 1924, DuBose Heyward used the tenement as a model for "Catfish Row" in the novel *Porgy* that spawned the George Gershwin opera *Porgy and Bess*.

16. Heyward-Washington House
87 Church Street

Rice planter Daniel Heyward purchased the site in 1770 and his son, Thomas, began construction of this house a year later. He razed the single house that had been here since 1740 but retained the former two-story kitchen and one-story stable that are still in the rear courtyard.

TURN RIGHT ON TRADD STREET.

17. William Vanderhorst House
54 Tradd Street

Constructed around 1740 by William Vanderhorst, this three-story stuccoed masonry structure is considered one of the earliest examples of a Charleston single house. A notable aspect of the building is the absence of a piazza, a development found in single houses of a later period. Distinguished residents include Thomas W. Bacot, Charleston's fifth postmaster.

18. George Ducat House
60 Tradd Street

This house was constructed from brick and Bermuda stone for George Ducat, a shipbuilder.

TURN LEFT ON MEETING STREET.

19. James Simmons House
37 Meeting Street

James Simmons built this house around 1760 following a formal Georgian, center-hall plan. It was occupied by the British during the Revolution who did heavy damage before moving on. Over the years it was heavily altered, including a pair of projecting bays flanking an ornate iron balcony added in the 1840s. During the Civil War the house became headquarters for General Pierre G.T. Beauregard, the commander of the Confederate forces in Charleston. When it sold in 2009, the Simmons House established a new price record on the Charleston peninsula - \$7.375 million.

20. Bull House
35 Meeting Street

The earliest portions of this much-altered house date to 1720, built by the first lieutenant governor of the Royal Colony of South Carolina. William Bull II, Royal Governor of South Carolina Province in the 1760s and 1770s, also lived in the three-and-half-story stuccoed brick dwelling.

21. Daniel Elliott Huger House
34 Meeting Street

Lord William Campbell, South Carolina's last Royal Governor, lived in this house, built in 1760, in 1775. Shortly after the Revolution it came into the possession of the Huger (pronounced "U—Gee") family, members of which still own it. Hugers have been prominent in South Carolina for generations. The Huger House is a good example of the unique Charleston "double house." A flight of stone steps leads from the street to the elevated first floor, through which runs a large center hall, to the back door that opens onto a garden. The three-story piazza on the south side is a recent addition.

22. Young-Motte House
30 Meeting Street

Thomas Young started a masonry single house in 1770 on a lot that extended back to Church Street. Before he finished the house he sold it to Colonel Isaac Motte, an officer in the Royal Americans. The Greek Revival pedimented gable and tripartite window are later 19th century alterations.

23. William Mason Smith House
26 Meeting Street

Dating to 1821, the William Mason Smith House is attributed to English architect Willaim Jay who contributed several masterpieces to Savannah but whose activities in Charleston are less well known. Here he outfitted this Regency-style home with three different types of piazza columns.

24. Thomas Heyward House
18 Meeting Street

The Thomas Heyward House, built for the signer of the Declaration of Independence in 1803, is considered one of the most beautiful Charleston single houses with magnificent mantles, inlaid mahogany doors, exquisite plaster ceiling medallions, and crown moldings. The facade features detailed brickwork in quoins and window headers.

25. Calhoun Mansion
16 Meeting Street

The Calhoun Mansion, a baronial Italianate manor house completed in 1876, was called by the *Charleston News and Courier* the “handsomest and most complete private residence in the south.” George Walter Williams, a local businessman who made his fortune importing sugar and molasses from the West Indies, spent \$200,000 to build the largest house in city at 24,000 square feet. William P. Russell designed 14-foot ceilings, ornate plaster and wood moldings, elaborate chandeliers, and a music room with a 45-foot covered glass skylight. The “Calhoun” is Patrick Calhoun, a grandson of John C. Calhoun, who married one of the Williams daughters.

26. John Edwards House
15 Meeting House

John Edwards, a prominent politician and American patriot who was imprisoned by the British and exiled to St. Augustine for his role in the Revolution, built a typical Charleston double house circa 1770. It is unusual, however, for its cypress siding cut to look like stone.

27. 11 Meeting Street

This 1850 pink Italianate house is covered with stucco scored to look like stone, which was a cheaper alternative to actually importing stone to the building site.

28. Josiah Smith House
7 Meeting Street

Josiah Smith, the descendent of one of Charleston’s oldest Congregationalist families and one of the city’s wealthiest merchants and bankers, built this Revolutionary-era house out of brick, which was actually cheaper than wood at the time. To placate his wife, he had the brick covered with the more fashionable clapboards. It features a Georgian facade with demi-lune portico and south-facing piazza.

29. Carrington-Carr House
2 Meeting Street

This house replaced a structure that was destroyed in the 1886 earthquake. Waring Carrington, a Charleston jeweler, supposedly used a \$75,000 wedding gift to build this Queen Anne-style house on one of the most desirable properties in the city in 1892. The curving veranda slides gracefully around one end in a manner reminiscent of an early river boat.

30. George Robertson House
1 Meeting Street

The George Robertson House, one of city’s largest side hall plans, rose in 1846 on the site of a mansion that James Hoban, architect of the White House, had built for Senator Ralph Izard.

TURN LEFT ON SOUTH BATTERY
AND TURN LEFT ON CHURCH
STREET.

31. Young-Johnson House
35 Church Street

Thomas Young bought this property in 1770 and built an early example of the Charleston single house, three stories in brick. The house gained notoriety after Joseph Johnson, president of the Second Bank of the United States and leader of the South Carolina Unionist Party during the nullification debate, bought it.

32. Dr. Vincent Le Seigneur House
38 Church Street

Dr. Vincent Le Seigneur, a native of Normandy and refugee from Santo Domingo, purchased this property in 1814 and completed this masonry house circa 1819. Alterations didn’t take place for almost a century.

33. George Eveleigh House, 1743,
39 Church Street

George Eveleigh was a prosperous deerskin trader in Charles Town when he purchased a lot across Vanderhorst Creek, just outside the former city wall line. The creek was filled and is today

Water Street; the mooring posts out front date to that time. He built his house back from the street in 1743; it has seen many alterations through the years.

34. Albert W. Todd House
41 Church Street

This Colonial Revival house dates to 1909 and was designed to fit its attenuated lot. The garage entrance goes through the base of the chimney.

35. Julius Lee House
53 Church Street

The masonry single house here dates to 1881 and is a typical example of a Charleston single house with a pilastered, closed-gable end and Tuscan-themed piazzas.

36. James Veree House
56-58-60 Church Street

This trio of wood frame houses was built in 1767 by Charleston master carpenter James Veree, a French Huguenot.

37. Thomas Rose House
59 Church Street

This early Georgian house is said to be haunted by the ghost of Dr. Joseph Brown Ladd who was mortally wounded in a duel in 1786.

38. First Baptist Church
61 Church Street

First Baptist Church, often referred to as the “Mother Church of Southern Baptists,” is the oldest Baptist Church in the South. The church was designed by Robert Mills and dedicated in 1822. Robert Mills considered the First Baptist Church to be “the best specimen of correct taste in architecture of all the modern buildings in this city.” Mills described the building as “purely Greek in its style,” although it is more accurately described as a Georgian Composition.

39. Capers-Motte House
69 Church Street

Built in 1750 by Richard Capers, this Georgian double house was one of city’s largest pre-Revolution houses. It is notable because the windows are the same size on both the first and second floors.

40. Robert Brewton House
71 Church Street

The Robert Brewton House, first built in 1721, has been cited as city’s oldest but it may have been rebuilt after a 1740 fire.

TURN RIGHT ON TRADD STREET
AND TURN RIGHT ON EAST BAY
STREET THAT BECOMES EAST
BATTERY.

41. George Chisholm House
39 East Battery

The George Chisolm House was built in 1810 and is a two and one-half story frame dwelling on a raised basement. The entrance was formerly in the far right bay of the front.

42. Porcher-Simonds House
29 East Battery

The Porcher-Simonds House was built circa 1856 by Francis J. Porcher and enlarged and re-modeled in the early 1890s by John C. Simonds. Porcher was a cotton broker and after the Civil War was president of the Atlantic Phosphate Company. He was delegate to the South Carolina Secession convention in 1860. Simonds, who purchased the house in 1894, was a native of Abbeville where his father, Andre Simonds, was a banker. The family moved to Charleston in 1865 and the elder Simonds organized the First National Bank. The younger Simonds was educated at Exeter and Yale and succeeded his father as president of the First National Bank. He sold the institution to the Peoples Bank in 1926; the Simonds family sold the house in 1943. The house is depicted in an 1865 photograph as an Italianate style dwelling of two stories on a high basement with a pedimented center pavillion and

masked piazza. Simonds remodeled the house in the Italian Renaissance Revival style popular in the 1890s, adding two front piazzas, one square and one semi-circular and a semi-oval wing on the south side of the house.

43. Drayton House
25 East Battery

This Victorian mansion was built in 1885 by Charles H. Drayton, who mined phosphate deposits at his family plantation, Drayton Hall, on the Ashley River. Medieval European and Chinese architectural influences are combined in this structure, designed by Charleston architect W.B.W. Howe. When constructed, the building's white bricks with black mortar were exposed. Subsequently, the house was stuccoed.

44. Edmondston-Alston House
21 East Battery

This Regency style house was built between 1817 and 1828 by Charles Edmondston, a native of the Shetland Islands who made a fortune as a merchant and wharf-owner. It was purchased in 1838 by Charles Alston, a wealthy planter, who added features in the Greek Revival style such as the third level of the piazza and the roof parapet with his family coat of arms. The present cast iron balcony replaced an earlier one which was knocked down in the 1886 earthquake.

45. Julius Visanka House
19 East Battery

This property and that of 21 East Battery were the site of Lyttelton's Bastion, built in 1757 and renamed Fort Darrell during the Revolution. Fort Mechanic, named for the mechanics of the city who gave their labor to build it in 1794 when a French naval invasion (which never came) was expected, was also built on this site. Subsequently the Holmes House, a notable Adamesque mansion, was built at present-day 19 East Battery. The present yellow brick mansion was built in 1920 for Julius M. Visanka and was designed by architect Albert Simons. The architecture is based on that of Italian villas. When built, it was one of the most expensive houses in Charleston.

46. William Ravenel House
13 East Battery

William Ravenel, a wealthy shipping merchant (brother and partner of John Ravenel who built 5 East Battery), built this house in the 1840s. The builder solved the problem of erecting a large house on a narrow lot by running the porte-cochere under his drawing room. Only the arcaded base remains of the front portico, the giant order Tower of the Wind columns of which were shaken down in the 1886 earthquake and never replaced. After a hurricane in the 1950s, one of the massive capitals was found under an uprooted tree; apparently it had been driven deep into the soil by the force of its fall. The drawing room extends the width of the house and is perhaps the largest in the city.

47. William Roper House
9 East Battery

Built circa 1838 by Robert William Roper, this is an outstanding example of Greek Revival architecture. The three-story brick structure has massive Ionic columns on an arcaded base. The initials in the front door are those of Rudolph Siegling, subsequent owner, who was the publisher of the *News and Courier*. He bought the house in 1877 and his heirs retained it until 1929. A 500-pound piece of cannon has been in the attic since 1865, when the evacuating Confederates blew up the gun in the Battery.

48. John Ravenel House
5 East Battery

The three-story stuccoed brick house was built between 1847 and 1849 by John Ravenel. Ravenel, who was completely of Huguenot descent and a member of the planting aristocracy, sold his patrimonial acres to become a merchant, and built up one of the city's leading shipping houses. He was also president of the South Carolina Rail Road and was instrumental in developing the Northeastern Rail Road. This house was also the home of his son, St. Julien Ravenel, the noted scientist who designed and built the Civil War semi-submersible torpedo boat, the *Lucy*, and was a leader in the development of phosphate fertilizer after the Civil War.

The house, built in the Italianate style popular in Charleston in the antebellum period, was extensively rebuilt after suffering severe damage in the 1886 earthquake. The property remained in the hands of John Ravenel's descendants until 1953, when it was sold.

49. Louis Desaussure House
1 East Battery

This three story stuccoed brick mansion was built by Louis D. DeSaussure between 1858 and 1861. The house was damaged in February 1865, during the Confederate evacuation of the city, when a large gun at the corner of East Battery and South Battery was blown up. A fragment of the gun, it was said, was thrown upon the roof and lodged in the upper part of the house, where it was found when the house was repaired. It was damaged severely again in the earthquake of 1886, after which the house was rehabilitated and remodeled by Bernard O'Neill, who added the iron balconies, new windows and door enframements, and an elaborate cornice and a roof balustrade which has since been removed. DeSaussure, the builder, was an auctioneer who sold everything from ships to slaves. He retained the property until 1888, when O'Neill acquired it. O'Neill was a prosperous wholesale grocer who had immigrated from Ireland about 1840. He was the grandfather of the famous local artist Elizabeth O'Neill Verner. The O'Neill family retained the house until 1926, when it was sold to Mrs. Robert E. Lee, III, wife of the grandson of the Confederate general. Currently, the house is divided into three residences.

YOU HAVE NOW RETURNED TO
YOUR STARTING POINT IN WHITE
POINT GARDENS.