

Overview of the City of Charleston Public Burial Ground (1794-1807)

PRESERVATION
ESTD SOCIETY 1920
of CHARLESTON

106 Coming Street & Portion of 99 St. Philip Street
Site of Proposed College of Charleston Student Housing

This narrative summarizes the historical documentation gathered to date regarding the former public burial ground at 106 Coming Street. All sources are cited and exhibits are provided below. This document will be updated as additional research is compiled.

“Potters’ Fields” and the Purpose of Public Cemeteries

In a 2021 *Charleston Time Machine* podcast episode, Dr. Nic Butler revealed the locations and histories of the City of Charleston’s “forgotten” public cemeteries that have been obscured by redevelopment. These burial sites are among the largest, oldest, and most densely populated in the city.¹ Those interred in these so-called “potters’ fields” were people who could not afford or access other cemeteries, including poor adults, children, and enslaved people. The so-called “Strangers and Negroe Burying Ground,” encompassing 106 Coming Street and surrounding parcels, was the first public burial ground authorized by the City of Charleston after its incorporation in 1783.

Timeline: “Strangers and Negroe Burying Ground”

- In February 1792, the City purchased “a piece of land beyond the bounds of the city, for a burying place for strangers and negroes, lying within Coming Vanderhorst and Boundary streets” (Figure 9).
- Burials commenced in 1794 (Figure 8). The location of this cemetery is confirmed in plats from 1798 and 1799 and consists of approximately 3.4 acres (Figures 4-6).
- From its operation from 1794-1807, the “Strangers and Negro Burying Ground” was the only public burial ground in the City of Charleston.
- In 1800, the City’s Committee on Contracts authorized construction of a 7-foot wooden fence around the burial ground (Figure 10).
- In July 1801, City Council passed an ordinance creating greater oversight of the public cemetery, establishing a Superintendent overseer, segregating the burial ground by race, creating regulations on burial size, and establishing fees and processes for registering burials (Figure 11).
- Burials in this public cemetery were discontinued by an act of City Council in 1807, and a new public burial ground established further northwest on the block now bounded by Ashley, Bee, President, and Doughty streets, much of which is part of the MUSC campus (Figure 15).

Historical records document that those interred at “Strangers and Negroe Burying Ground” during this time included enslaved Africans, free people of color, “strangers” or travelers, paupers, people who died at the City’s notorious Work House, white adults from the City’s Poor House, and white children who died at the Charleston Orphan House (Figure 8).

¹ Butler, Nic, *Charleston Time Machine*, “The Forgotten Dead: Charleston’s Public Cemeteries,” 1672-1794 (April 30, 2021), cpl.org/charleston-time-machine/forgotten-dead-charlestons-public-cemeteries-1794-2021.

Enslaved Africans are documented to have been buried in this public burial ground, including some who died during the voyage to Charleston, or upon arrival (Figure 13). The final years of the trans-Atlantic slave trade led to a massive influx of captive Africans to the port of Charleston.² The practice of importing enslaved Africans to the United States was outlawed nationwide on January 1, 1808, pursuant to a compromise incorporated in the U.S. Constitution that allowed the slave trade to continue for 20 years after ratification.³

The City of Charleston collected fees for use and visitation of this public cemetery. Bodies received from the Orphan House, Poor House, or Marine Hospital were to be interred free of charge, but all other parties were required to pay a fee to the Superintendent for the right to use the public cemetery (Figure 11). In 1802, the cost for burying a white person was \$1, while the cost to bury a person of color, whether enslaved or free, was 75 cents. Visitors were charged 6.25 cents (Figure 12).

While there are no known records of those buried at the site, Butler estimates that the available land and burial plot sizes designated in the 1801 ordinance would result in approximately 4,600 persons laid to rest on this site.⁴ However, this number could be higher if multiple bodies were buried in single plots.

A Burial Ground with National Significance

Many similarities can be drawn between Charleston's Public Burial Ground and New York City's African Burial Ground, a federally-designated National Historic Landmark, and National Monument with up to an estimated 15,000, freed and enslaved men, women, and children of African descent buried on a 6.6-acre parcel from the middle 1630s to 1795.⁵ While this cemetery is believed to have been in operation for almost a century, Charleston's Public Burial Ground only operated at this location for 13 years between 1794 and 1807, yet thousands are believed to be interred here.

Due to loss of historical records and centuries of redevelopment, the full history of this burial ground has been largely unknown. Research is ongoing and there is much left to learn about those interred at 106 Coming Street. Based on what historical research has revealed to date, this site's significance should be evaluated for federal designation, similar to the determination made for the African Burial Ground in New York City, given its potential to add to our nation's collective understanding of this era in our history.

² Butler, Nic, *Charleston Time Machine*, "The Story of Gadsden's Wharf" (Feb. 2, 2018), ccpl.org/charleston-time-machine/story-gadsdens-wharf; Butler, Nic, *Charleston Time Machine*, "The End of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade" (Jan. 26, 2018), ccpl.org/charleston-time-machine/end-trans-atlantic-slave-trade.

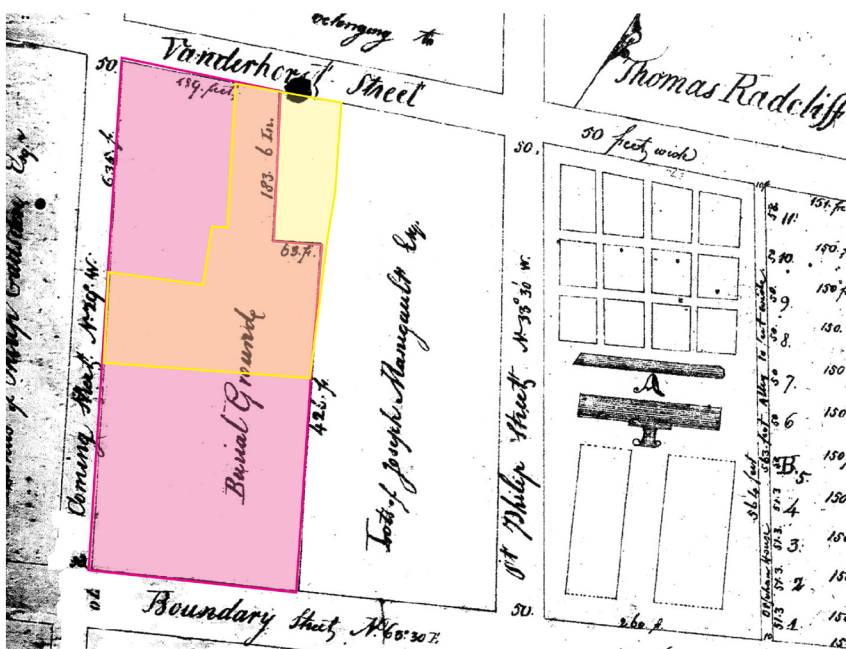
³ Butler, Nic, *Charleston Time Machine*, "The End of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade" (Jan. 26, 2018); "The Story of Gadsden's Wharf" (Feb. 2, 2018); U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Section 9, Clause 1.

⁴ Butler, Nic, *Charleston Time Machine*, "The Forgotten Dead: Charleston's Public Cemeteries," 1672-1794 (April 30, 2021).

⁵ "The African Burial Ground." U.S. General Services Administration, gsa.gov/about-us/gsa-regions/region-2-northeast-and-caribbean/about-region-2/african-burial-ground.



106 Coming Street & Portion of 99 St. Philip Street
Site of Proposed Student Housing



1799 Charleston City Plat Book, CP 2, #12
Public Burial Ground

Figure 1.

106 Coming Street and a portion of 99 St. Philip Street



Figure 2.

YWCA Building, 1960s

Courtesy of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture and Lowcountry Digital Library

This mid-century modern building was constructed on top of a public burial ground. The building was approved for demolition by the BAR-Large in 2025. The site is proposed to be redeveloped as student housing by the College of Charleston.

THE SILENCE OF THE DEAD: GIVING CHARLESTON CEMETERIES A VOICE

Strangers & Negroe Burying Ground

Block bounded by Vanderhorst, Coming, Calhoun and Pitt streets

TMS: 4601603002, 4601603004, 4601603005, 4601603006, 4601603007, 4601603008, 4601603009, 4601603017, 4601603018, 4601603024, 4601603025, 4601603026, 4601603027, 4601603028, 4601603125, 4601603126, 4601603145, 4601603146, 4601603148, 4601603149, 4601603151, 4601603155, 4601603158, 4601603160, 4601603162, 4601603166, 4601603168, 4601603169, 4601603173, 4601603178, 4601603180, 4601603181, 4601603183, 4601603187, 4601603188, 4601603189, 4601603190, 4601603191, 4601603195, 4601603202, 4601603203

UTM (Zone 17, NAD 27): E599330 N3627820

An article in the August 24, 1799 *Charleston City Gazette* reported that this burial ground was acquired by the City from John Poaug in February 1792 "for a burying place for strangers and negroes, lying within Coming, Vanderhorst and Boundary Streets and the land of Mr. Joseph Manigault" Several 1798 plats show the burial grounds extending eastward to St. Philips Street, while the 1799 Purcell survey shows the boundaries recounted by the news article. Additional research is necessary to verify the legal boundaries (the tax map numbers listed above reflect the entire block). By 1807 the Charleston City Council announced that all burials would cease in this burial ground by August 1808 and "all interments will take place at the Burial Ground in Cannonsborough."

"The old Vardell house stood near the corner of Vanderhorst and Coming streets and was built for himself by my grandfather Vardell, being the first house erected on the square now bounded by Vanderhorst, St. Philip's, Coming and Boundary (Calhoun) streets. . . . The house was built on the site of the old city Potter's field and the bones of many British soldiers were buried there. I remember that one of my childish amusements was to dig for these bones"

"The Committee on City Lands Submit the Following Report, on the Present State of the Lands," *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, August 24, 1799, pg. 2.

"Council Chamber, July 28, 1807," *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, August 1, 1807, pg. 3.
The State (Columbia, SC), September 3, 1922, pg. 11

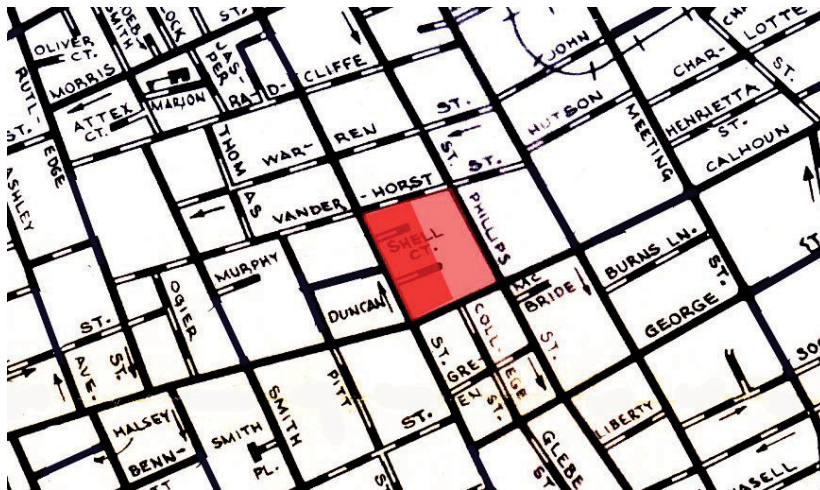


Figure 3.

"Strangers and Negroe Burying Ground," pg. 220

Courtesy of Chicora Foundation's "Silence of the Dead," 2010.

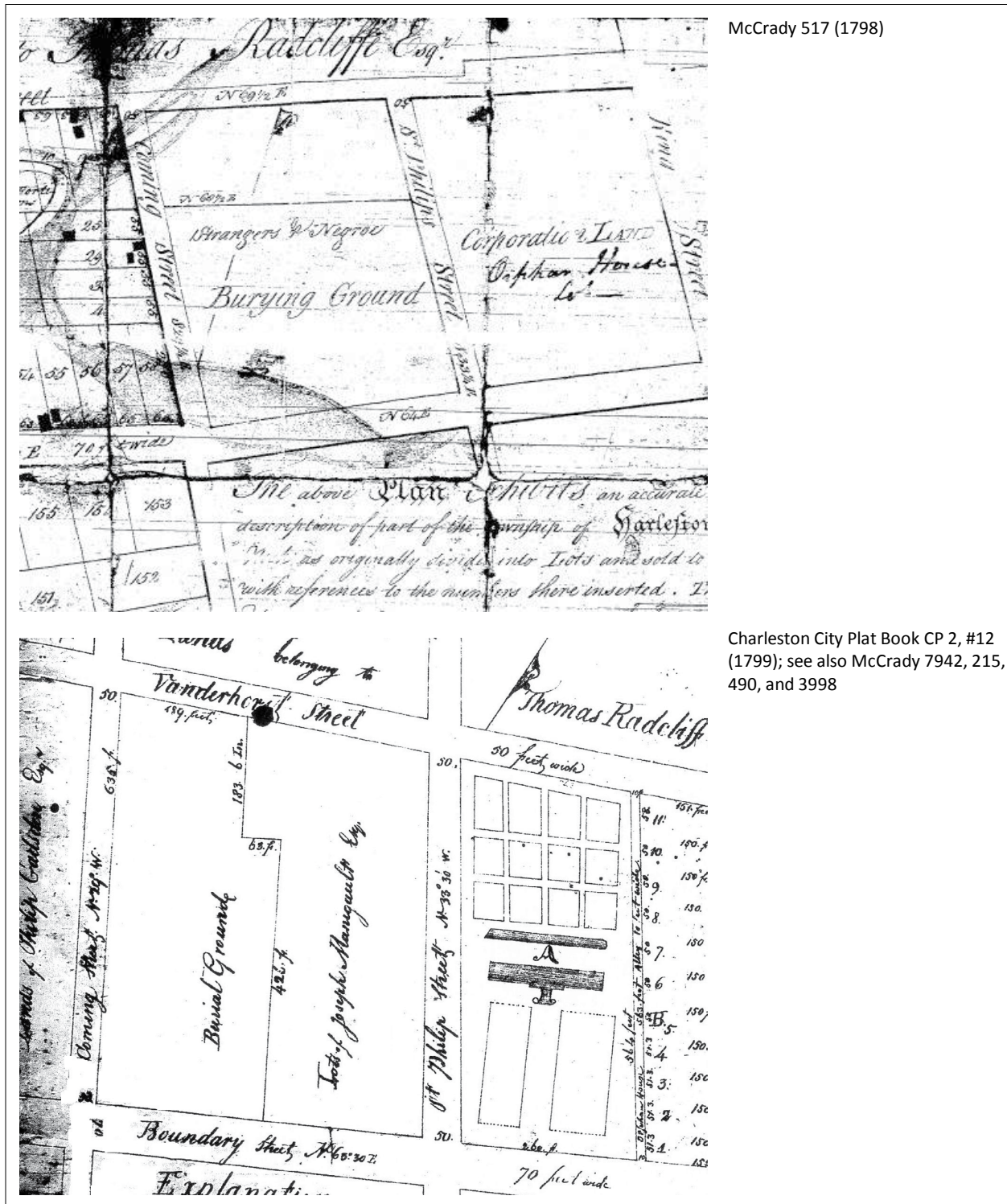


Figure 4.

“Strangers and Negroe Burying Ground,” pg. 221

Courtesy of Chicora Foundation’s “Silence of the Dead,” 2010.



Figure 5.

1798 McCrady Plat 517

Courtesy of Charleston County Public Library

This historic plat shows the cemetery, called out as “Strangers & Negroe Burying Ground,” on the entire block bounded by St. Philip Street, Boundary Street (Calhoun), Coming Street, and Vanderhorst Street. However, research reveals that this was likely a surveyor error, and that only the left half of the block was used as the burial ground.



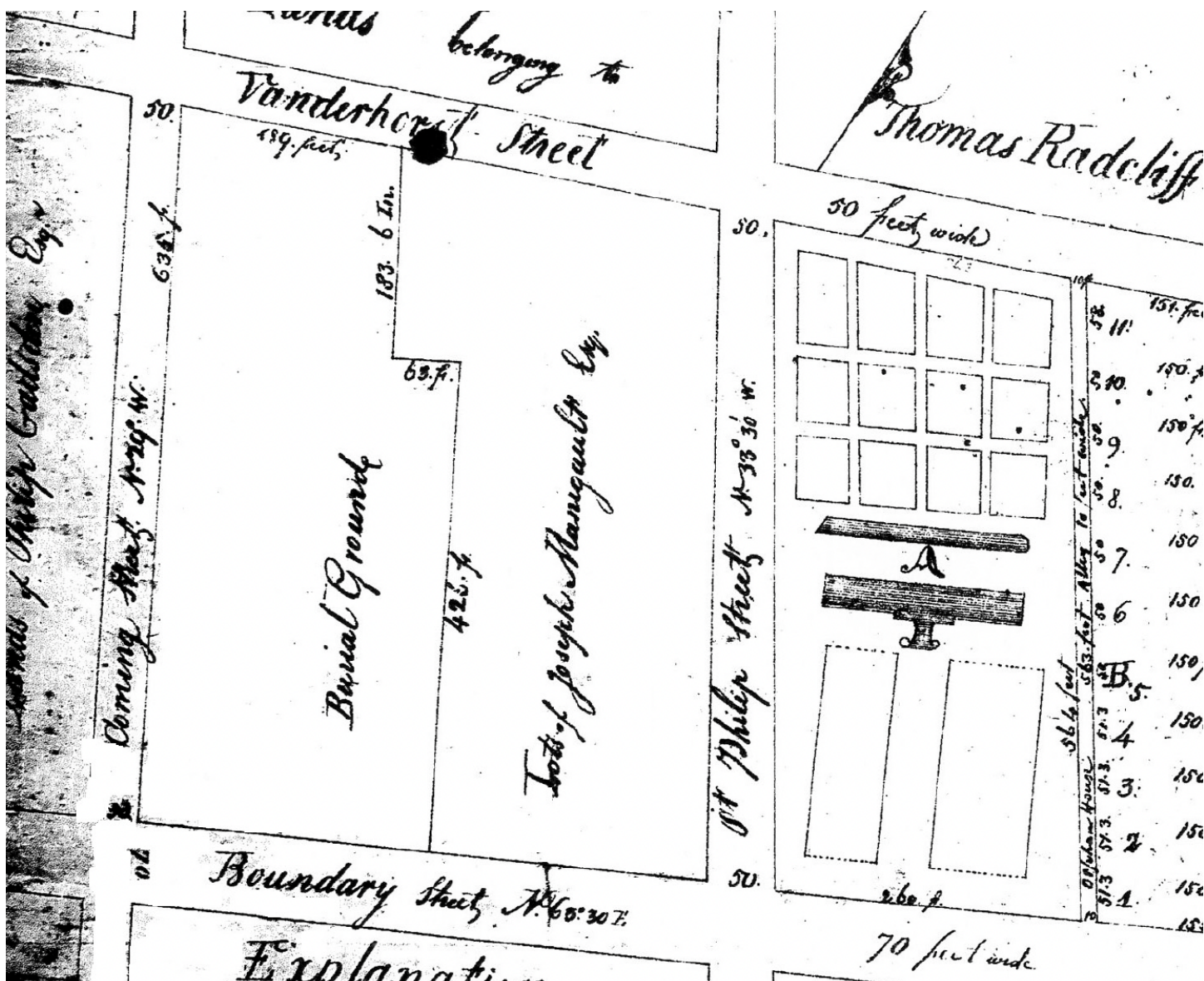


Figure 6.

1799 Charleston City Plat Book, CP 2, #12

See also McCrady 7942, 215, 490, and 3998

Courtesy of Chicora Foundation's "Silence of the Dead," 2010.

This plat from 1799 shows a portion of this block called out as "Burial Ground," with the eastern half of the lot labeled as "Lots of Joseph Manigault, Esq." This survey is likely the most accurate depiction of the burial ground's dimensions.

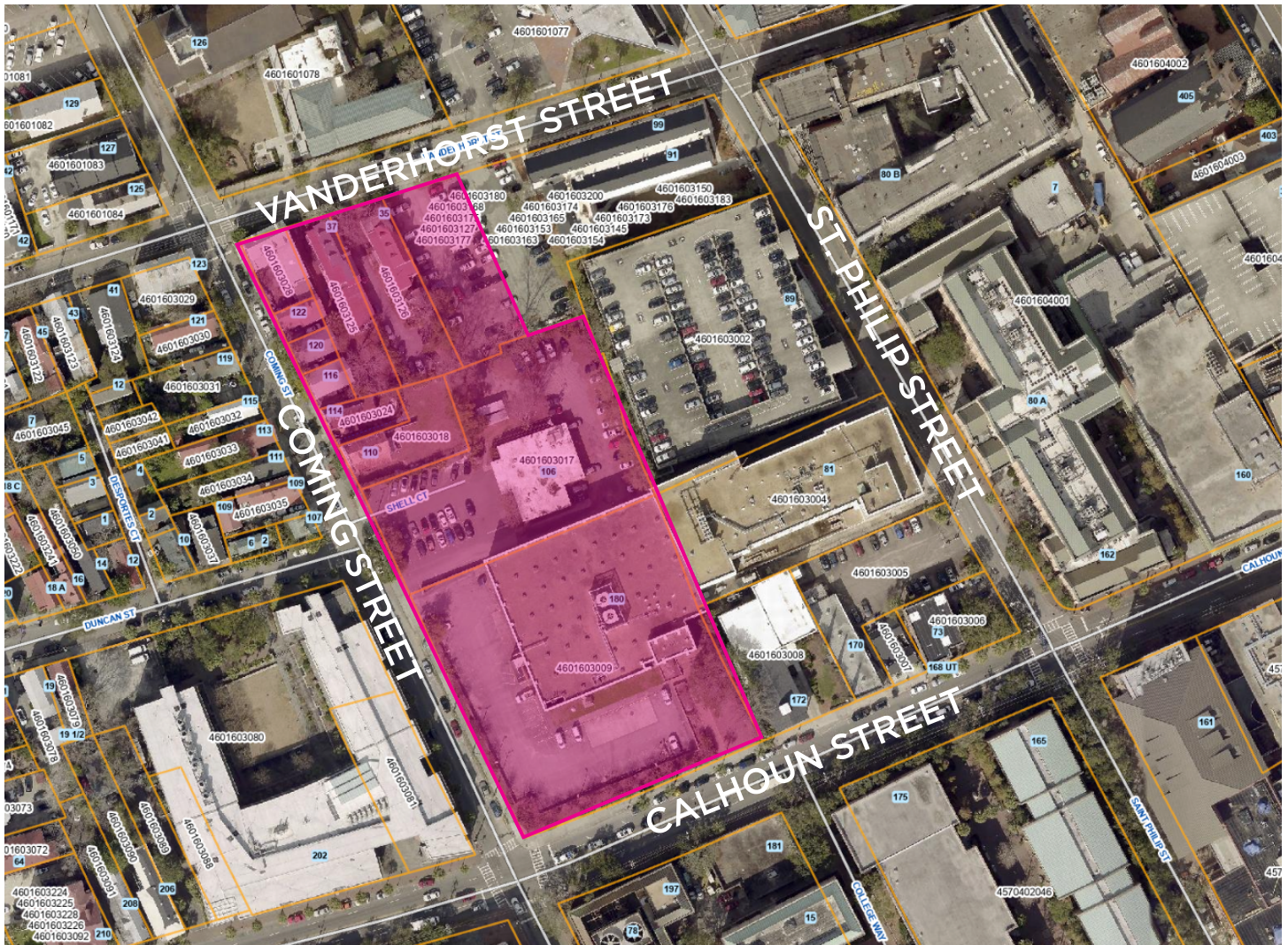


Figure 7.

2025 Tax Parcel Map Charleston County Tax Assessor's Office

This parcel map shows the present-day block with an approximate outline of the documented historic burial ground boundaries. Many buildings have been constructed upon this block in the footprint of the cemetery, including the AT&T building (owned by the College of Charleston), and historic houses on the northwest corner of the block.

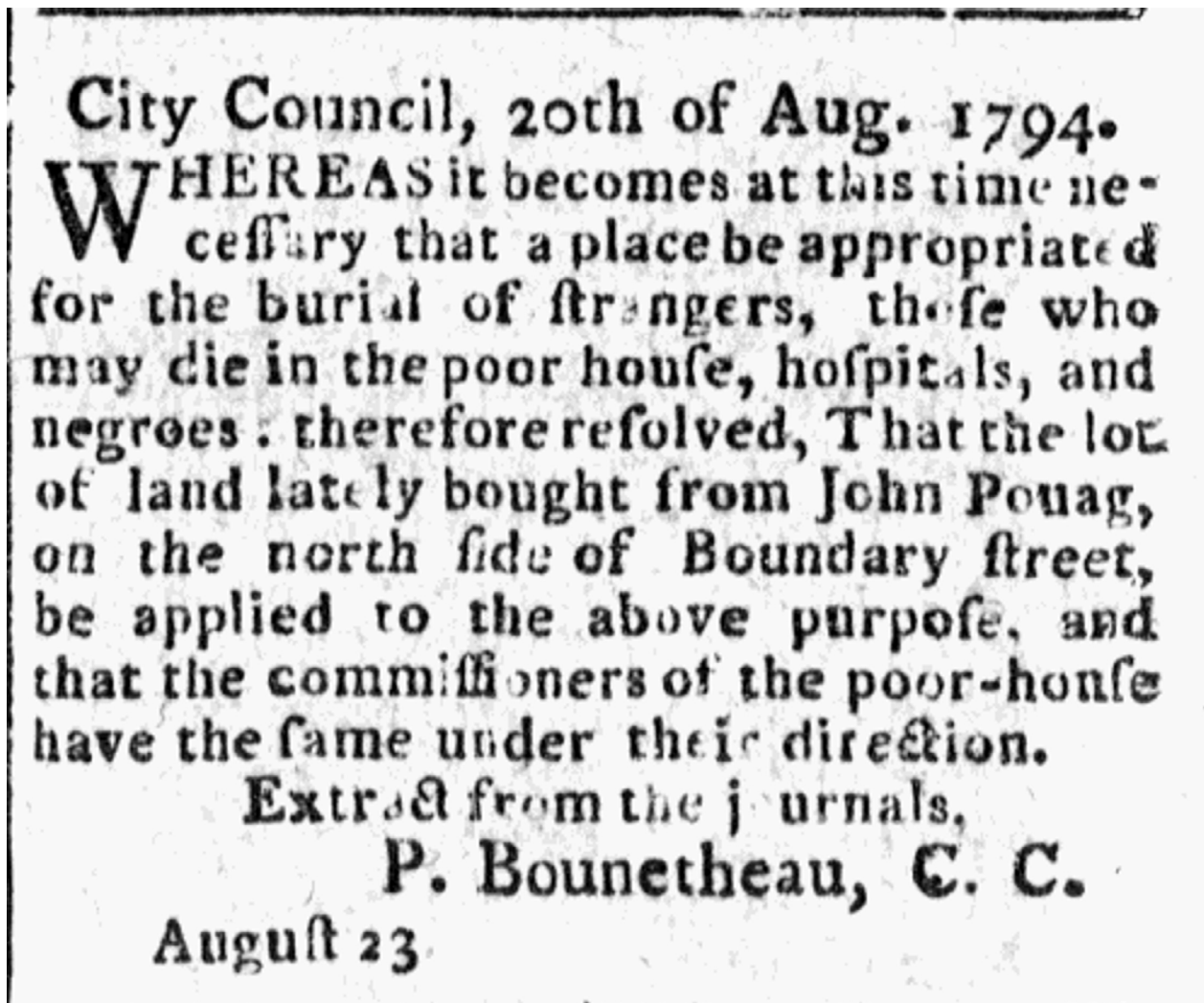


Figure 8.

August 29, 1794

The City Gazette and Daily Advertiser

City Council adopted a resolution to create a public burial ground for “strangers, those who may die in the Poor House, hospitals, and negroes” on the land that was purchased in 1792 by the City of Charleston from John Poaug.

In February, 1792, the city purchased from Mr. John Poaug, a piece of land beyond the bounds of the city, for a burying-place for strangers and negroes, lying within Coming, Vanderhorst and Boundary-streets, and land of Mr. Joseph Manigault, and measuring, by Mr. Purcell's survey, in February last, 189 feet on Vanderhorst-street, 252 feet on Boundary-street, about 609 feet on Mr. Manigault's lots, and 635 feet on Coming-street.

WILLIAM ALLEN DEAS.
THOMAS RHETT SMITH.
WILLIAM TURPIN.
JOHN C. FOLKER.
JAMES LOWNDES.

By order of Council.
G. M. BOUNETHEAU, C. C.
August 9, 1799.

Figure 9.

August 24, 1799

City Gazette and Daily Advertiser

This article indicates that the City of Charleston purchased the parcel of land that would become the public burial ground for "strangers and negroes" in February 1792.

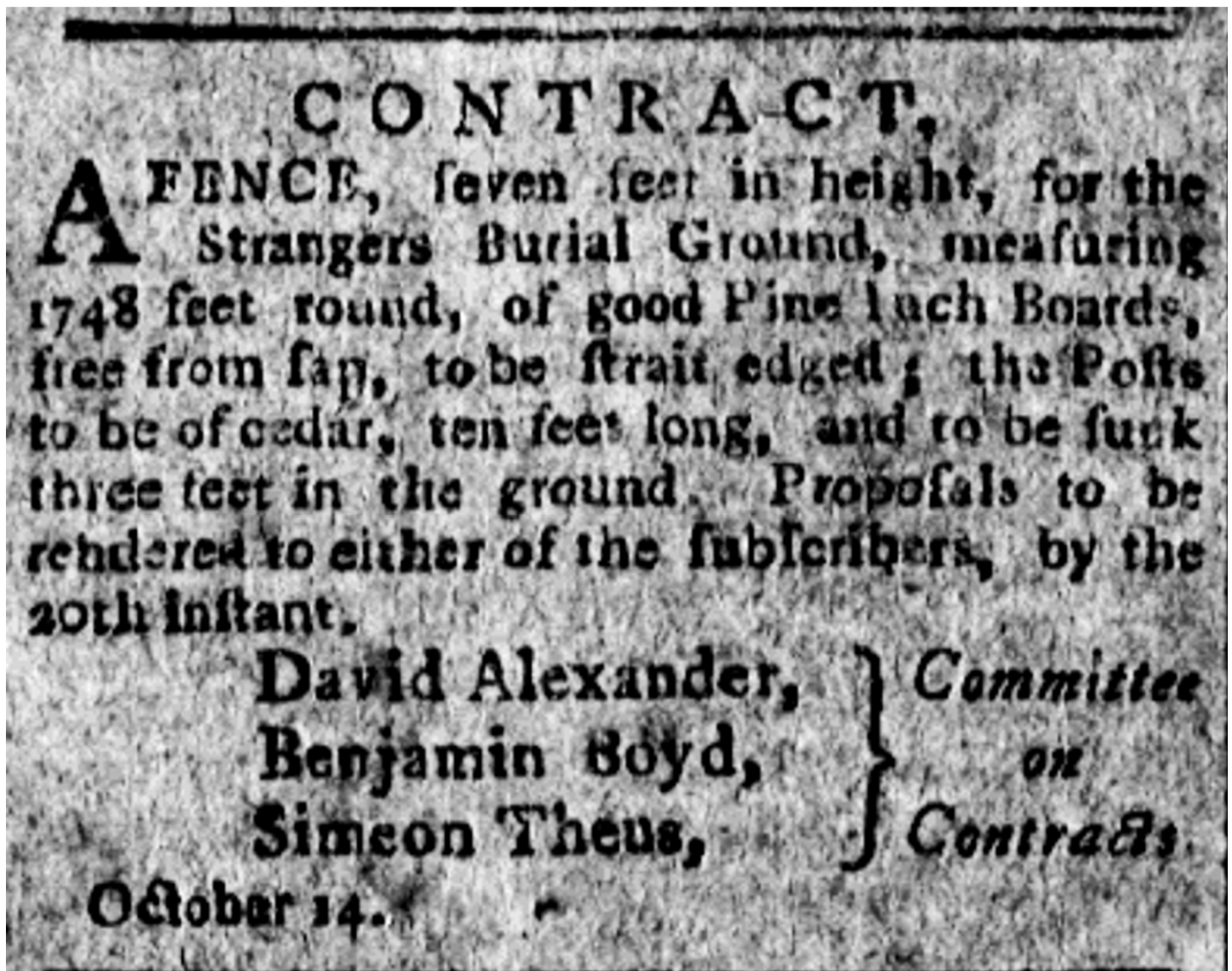


Figure 10.

October 15, 1800

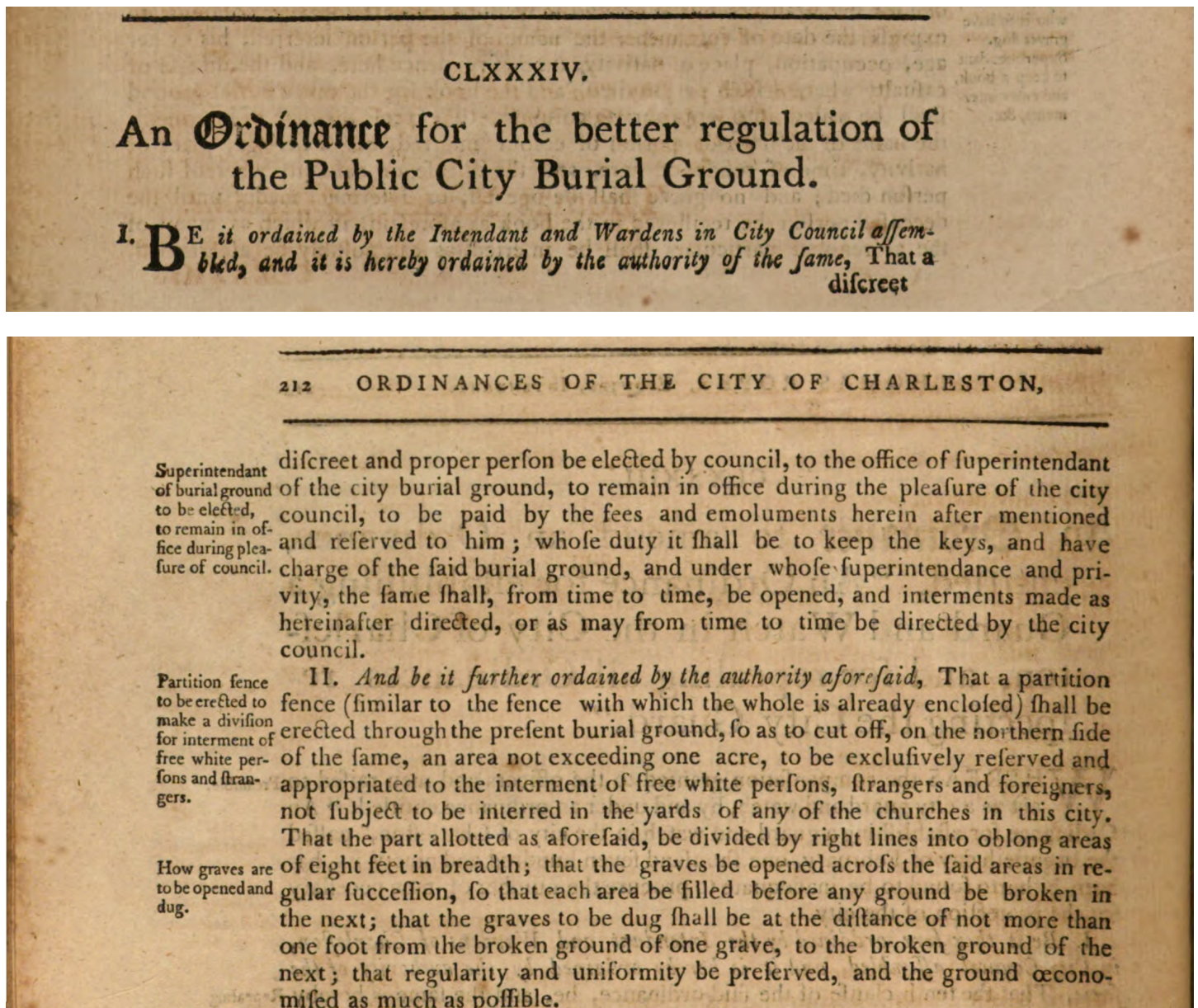
City Gazette and Daily Advertiser

The public burial ground was referred to in many different ways, including “Strangers Burial Ground.” This article describes a proposed wooden (pine and cedar) fence that was ultimately built around the burial ground.

Figure 11.

July 2, 1801

Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, pg 211-214

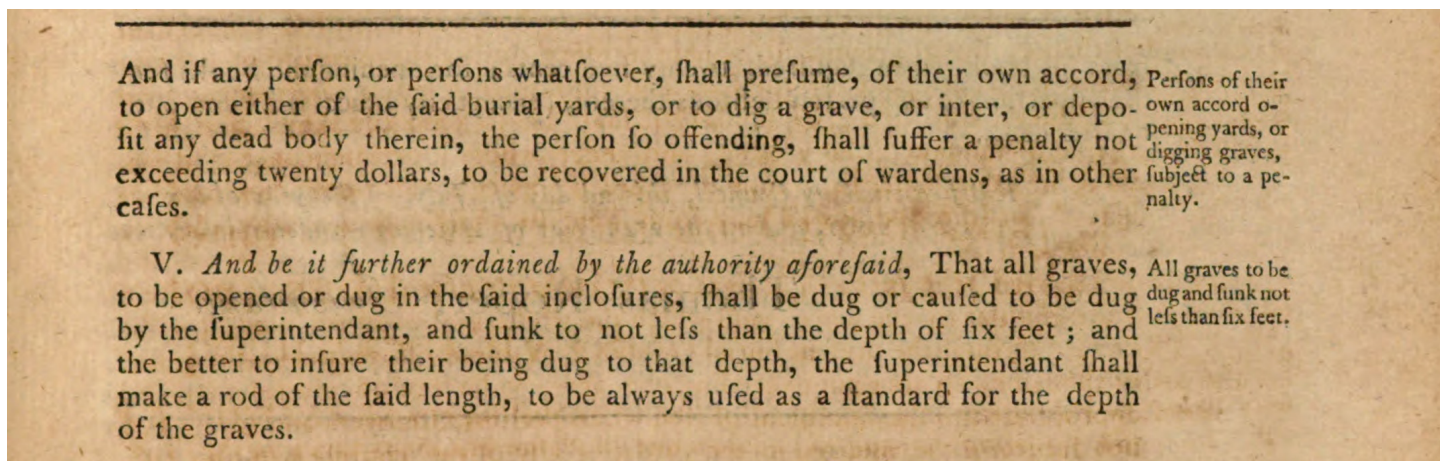
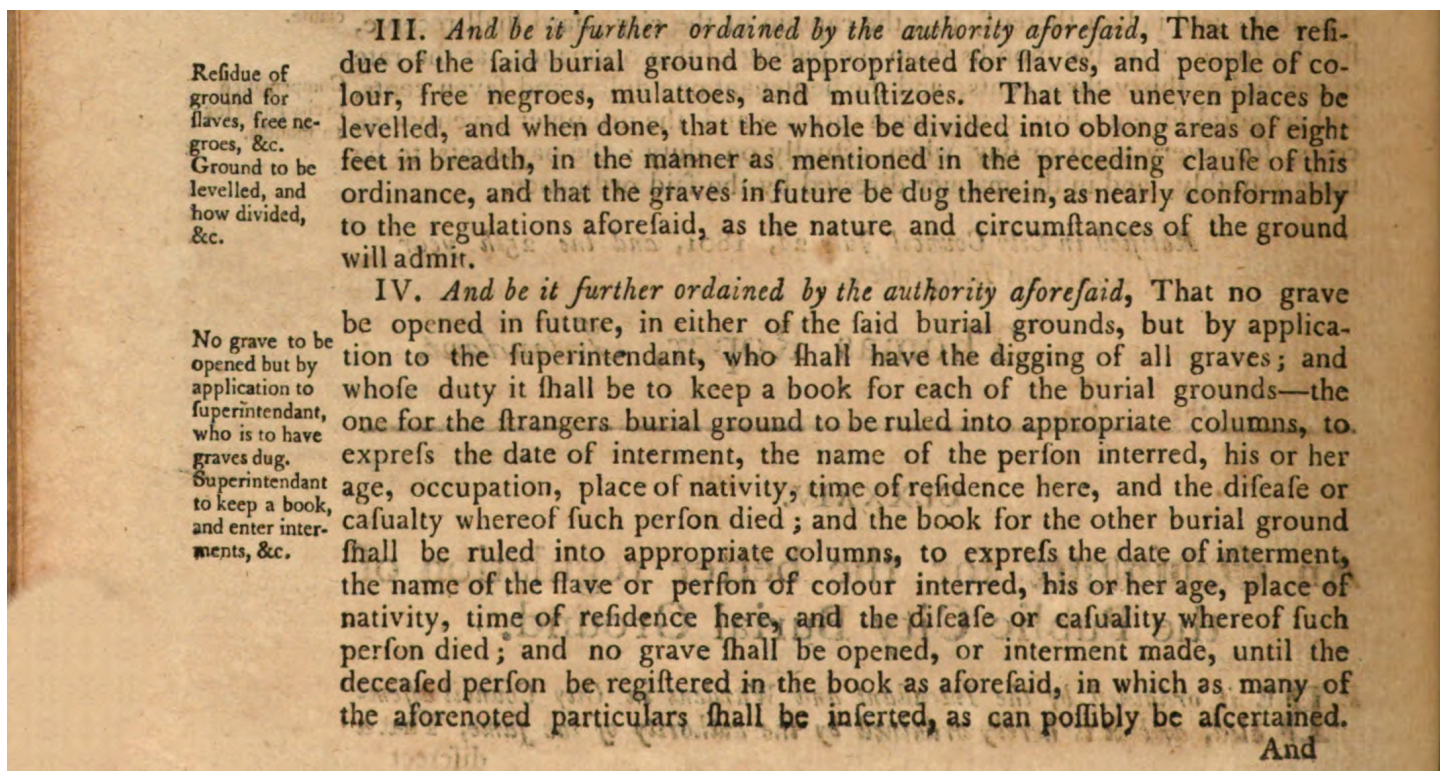


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Figure 11 (continued).

July 2, 1801

Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, pg 211-214



Continued on next page.

Figure 11 (continued).

July 2, 1801

Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, pg 211-214

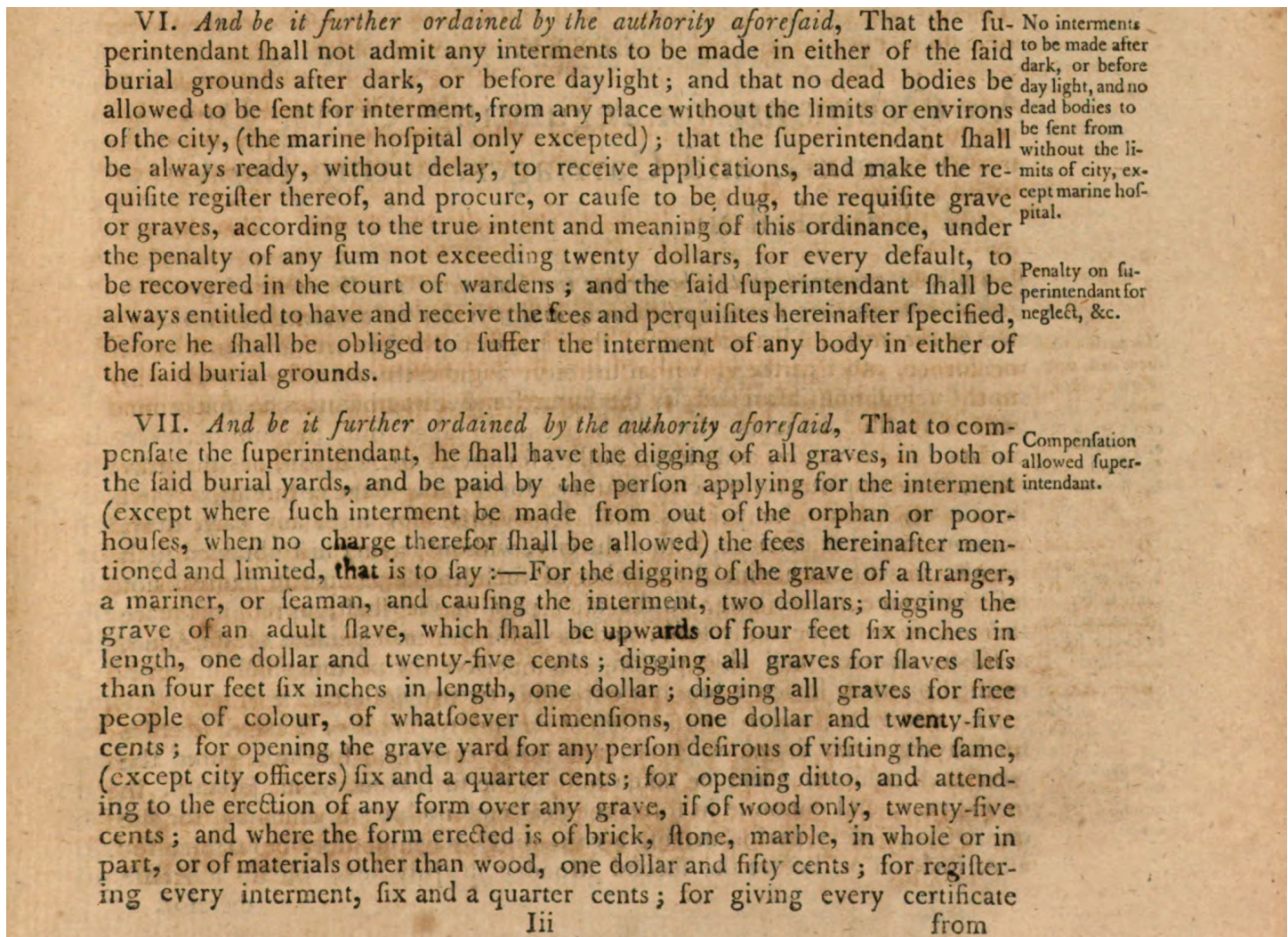
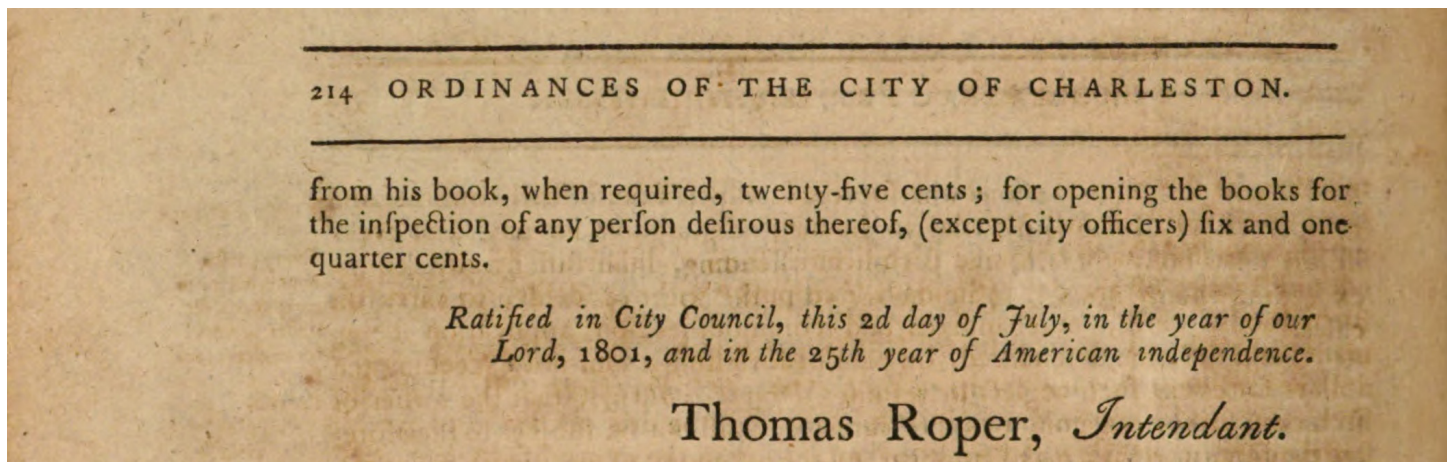


Figure 11 (continued).

July 2, 1801

Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, pg 211-214

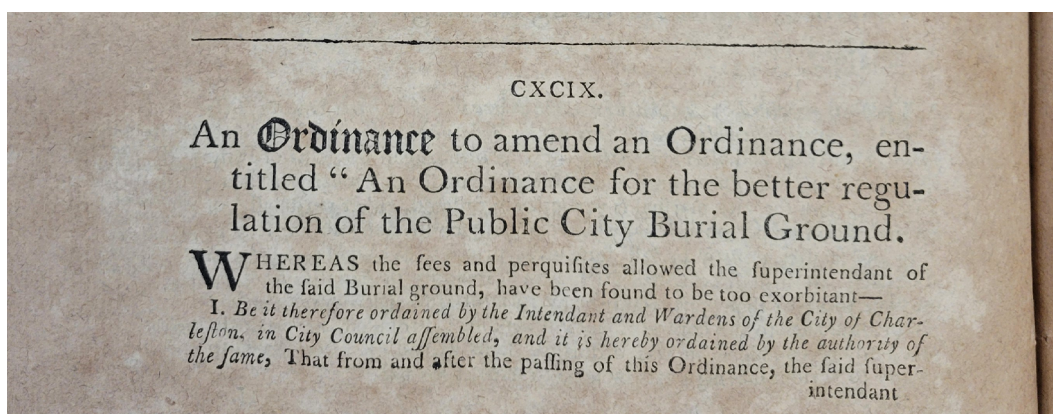


This ordinance from 1801 created greater oversight of the public cemetery, establishing a Superintendent overseer, segregating the burial ground by race, regulating how long, wide, and deep burials should be, and determining fees and processes for registering burials. Bodies received from the city Orphan House, Poor House, or Marine Hospital were to be interred free of charge, but all other parties were required to pay a fee to the superintendent for the right to use the public cemetery. These fees were broken down by race and stature (how tall a person was).

Figure 12.

August 18, 1802 (Amendment to July 2, 1801 Ordinance)

Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, pg 242-243



This amendment to the earlier July 2, 1801, ordinance established slightly less "exorbitant" fees for interment and visitation to the public burial ground. It also provided that the superintendent would be subject to an annual review and re-election every October.

JOHN WARD, ESQUIRE, INTENDANT. 243

intendant, as a compensation for his services, shall receive the following fees and perquisites (except where the interment be made from the Poor Orphan-Houses, when no charge therefor shall be allowed) viz.

	dolls.	cts.	Compensation allowed superintendant.
For the digging of the grave of a stranger, mariner, or seaman, and causing the interment,	1	0	
Digging the grave of a free person of colour, or slave,	0	75	
For the opening the grave yard for any person desirous of visiting the same, (except City Officers)	0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	
For opening ditto, and attending to the erection of any form over a grave, if of wood,		25	
For ditto, ditto, if of other materials than wood,	1	0	
For registering every interment,	0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	
For giving every certificate from his book, when required, (except City Officers)	0	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	
For opening the books for the inspection of any person desirous thereof, (except City Officers)	0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the said superintendant shall be annually elected on the third Monday in October, or if no council should meet on that day, on the first meeting of council thereafter.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That so much of an Ordinance entitled "an Ordinance for the better regulation of the public City Burial-Ground," as is repugnant hereto, be, and the same is hereby repealed.

Ratified in City Council this eighteenth day of August, one thousand eight-hundred and two, and in the twenty-seventh year of American independence.

John Ward, Intendant.

\$1 was charged for digging a grave for a white person. 75 cents were charged for digging a grave for a person of color, whether enslaved or free.

A wooden memorial marker placed at the burial site cost 25 cents. Materials other than wood cost \$1.

Visitors were charged 6.25 cents.

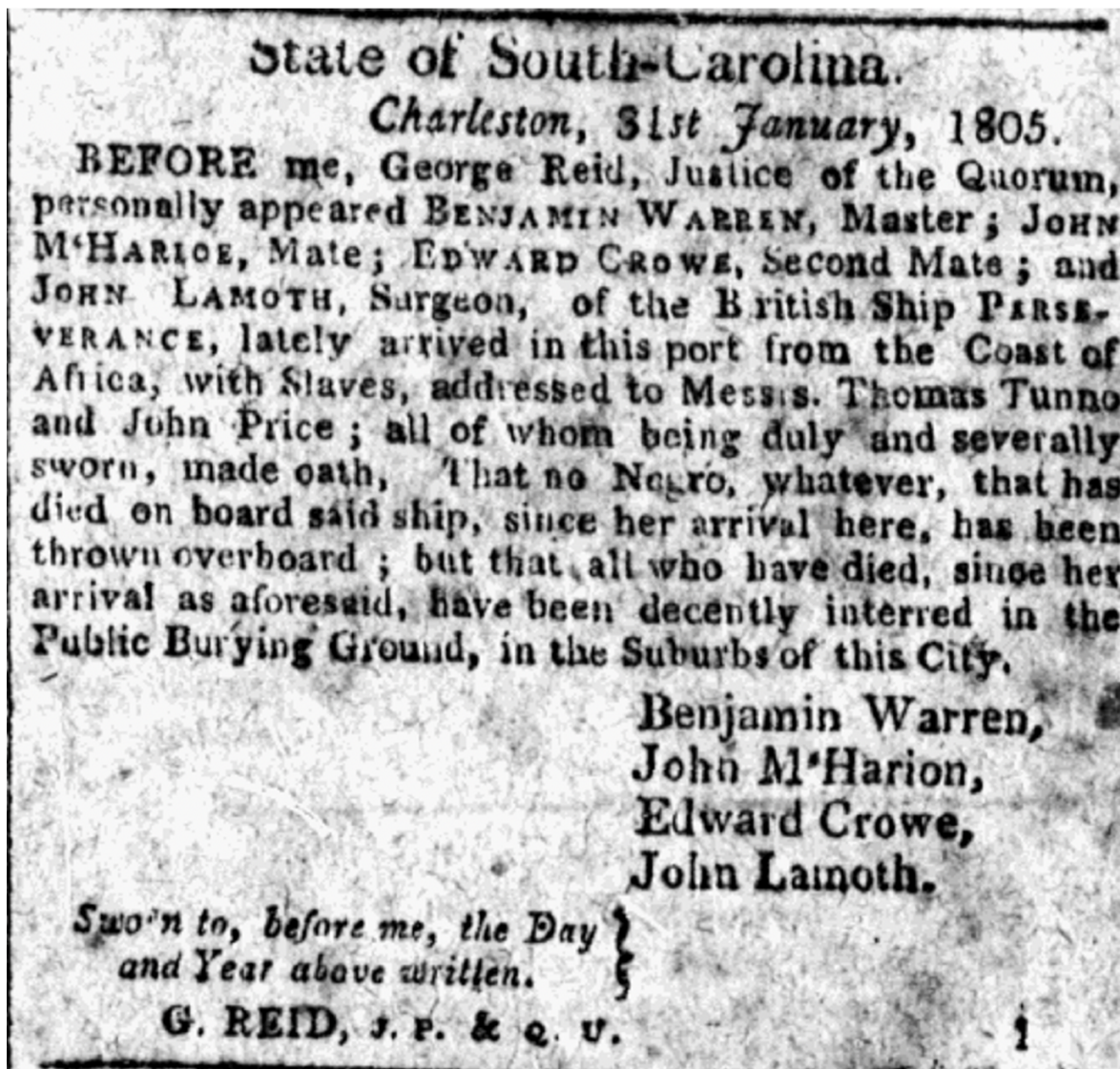


Figure 13.

February 2, 1805

City Gazette and Daily Advertiser

This article points to the practice of throwing overboard the bodies of Africans who were kidnapped and enslaved, but did not survive the journey to North America. This practice was made illegal within the Charleston city limits due to public health concerns, and "decent" burials for enslaved Africans were required to take place in the City's public burial ground, which at that time, was located on the 106 Coming Street block.

To the Editors of the Courier.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM very happy to perceive that your correspondent "*Charlestonian*," is open to conviction, and willing to yield when he finds his ground untenable. Hence, I flatter myself that he will also concur with me in the remaining points, on which he appears to want a further explanation.

He asserts, that "I was incorrect in saying that the City Council hath not the exclusive province of any part of Boundary-street westwardly of St. Philip's-street;" and that "I have surely forgotten the *Burial Ground*." I beg leave to assure him, that I was well and fully aware of the Burial Ground; and I do still maintain, that "it is not the exclusive province of the City Council, to attend to the improvement and repairs" of any part of Boundary-street to the west of St. Philip's-street, and not even of that part where the Burial Ground is situated.— This Burial Ground forms only a portion of the square between St. Philip and Coming-streets, and the remainder of the land, lying to the east of the Burial Ground, and to the west of St. Philip-street, belongs to one or more individuals. If, therefore, that space of Boundary-street, to which the Burial Ground is attached, should be made up from St. Philip-street to Coming-street, the proprietor or proprietors of the land adjoining the Burial Ground ought not only to be consulted, but to contribute their share towards the expence. For it would scarcely be worth while to make a thoroughfare along the Burial Ground, without continuing it an eastern direction as far as St. Philip-street; besides which, a partial elevation would soon prove a nuisance, by obstructing the water course and causing a stagnated pool. Unless, consequently, the other party concerned in the designated improvement of the

aforesaid part of Boundary-street, but not subject to the jurisdiction of the City Council, should consent, and defray a proportionate share of the expence, all the costs and charges of the work, if it were undertaken by order of the Corporation, would fall upon the citizens of Charleston, who might justly complain of being taxed for the improvement of property beyond the limits of the city. This representation of the subject will prove that I was correct in my former statement.

But "*Charlestonian*" intimates, that Boundary-street might be extended from river to river, by making up only that moiety which is within the limits of the city. It is exceedingly doubtful whether such an half measure, and the heavy expence incurred thereby, would give general satisfaction to the community; at least, I am certain that the proprietors of lots and buildings on S. Bay & New East-bay-street, would be highly dissatisfied, if the necessary repairs of the streets should be neglected, and a preference granted to Boundary-street, which hath a claim on the City Council, not so much on the score of immediate necessity, as of convenience. I forbear to comment further on the scheme of doing the work by halves, because "*Charlestonian*" hath himself avowed, that it ought to be done on both sides, and at the joint expence of both parties, who are interested therein.

I hope that the writer will not confine his exertions to mere suggestions of what should be done, but that he will persevere in the accomplishment of his object, by prevailing on the inhabitants of *Minyekborough, Wraggsborough, Gunnsborough*, and the *Neck*, to forward the work, and to defray the expence proportionably. That his efforts may be crowned with complete success, is the wish of

A CITIZEN OF CHARLESTON.

Figure 14.

April 11, 1807

Charleston Courier

This Letter to the Editor indicates the continued development of this area of Charleston, near Boundary Street and St. Philip Street, during this period. At the time, parcels located to the east of the cemetery on this block were privately owned.

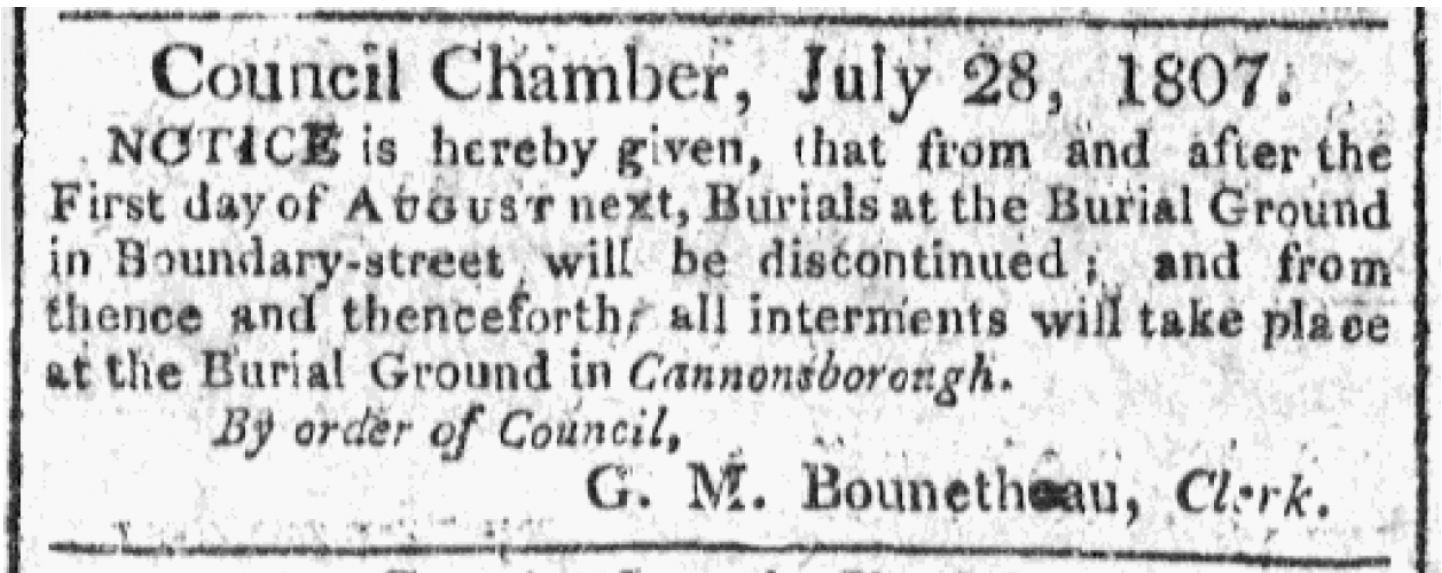


Figure 15.

August 1, 1807

City Gazette and Daily Advertiser

In July 1807, an announcement was made that burials in the “Burial Ground in Boundary Street” would be discontinued on August 1, 1807, and interments would now be made in the “Burial Ground in Cannonsborough,” which was located on the block bounded by Thomas [now Ashley], Bee, President, and Doughty streets, from August 1807 until November 1841. This block has been developed by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

Publick Notice.

HAVING experienced very considerable inconvenience and trouble in the discharge of my duty, as Superintendent of the City Burial-Ground, the following clauses of an Ordinance for the regulation of the same, are published for general information.

Nathaniel G. Welsh, Superintendent.

April 21.

"Sec. 8. And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That no interment on the aforesaid burying ground, shall be made, either after dark, or before day-light, or without the privy of the said Superintendent, but that he shall superintend all interments on the said ground, agreeably to such directions, as are herein contained, or as shall from time to time be given him by the City Council, respecting the same. And every white person, or free person of colour, making or attempting to make or to procure any interment on the said burying-ground at Cannonsborough, without the privy of the said Superintendent, shall by him be reported to the Intendant of the city, who shall give the necessary directions with regard to the prosecution of any such offender; and every slave committing, or attempting to commit, a similar offence, shall be apprehended and committed to the work-house, by the said Superintendent, who shall forthwith give notice thereof to the Intendant of the city, and pursue his directions, relative to the prosecution of any such slave."

"Sec. 10. And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the said Superintendent shall, as a compensation for his services, receive the following fees and perquisites, which shall be paid him by the person or persons, respectively, to him applying, and at the time of making such application, viz.

	Dolls.	Cts
For digging a grave for, and making the interment of, a white person, and for registering the same,	1	6½
For digging a grave for, and making the interment of, a negro or person of colour, whether bond or free, and for registering the same,	0	81½
For opening the grave yard at the instance of any person desirous of visiting the same,	0	6½
For opening the grave-yard, and attending to the erection of a wooden form over a grave,	0	25
For opening the grave-yard, and attending to the erection of a form, being of other materials than wood,	1	
For every certificate from either of his books, to be given and signed by him when required,	0	12½
For opening the books for the inspection of any person desirous of making search therein,	0	6½

"Sec. 11. And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That whenever application is made to the said Superintendent for the interment of any person on the aforesaid city burial-ground at Cannonsborough, who died beyond the limits of the city of Charleston, the person or persons applying for such interment, shall pay to him, besides his own fees, and at the time of paying the said fees two dollars to the use of the city, which sum he shall invariably demand and receive, and the amount of which sums he shall pay over to the City Treasurer, every three months. And it shall be his duty to keep a cash-book, in which he shall from day to day note all sums thus received for the city, as well as all fees and perquisites by him received and to cast up at the end of every month, the aggregate amount, by him collected and received aforesaid."

Figure 16.

April 27, 1808

Charleston Courier

A schedule of fees similar to those described at the Coming Street public burial ground was published in the newspaper following its closure pertaining to burials that were taking place at the newly opened public burial ground on the present-day MUSC property on the block bounded by Ashley, Bee, President, and Doughty streets.

Area Has 'Seen Better Days'

(EDITOR'S NOTE: First in a series of articles on the dwelling houses of Radcliffeboro.)

By W.H.J. THOMAS

The house of good quality that "has seen better days" is no oddity in Charleston.

It is difficult to go through any neighborhood in the area above Broad Street and not find examples of really substantial homes built in the 18th and 19th centuries that faced better fortune in an earlier time.

Many are just isolated dwellings that once served as something resembling country houses, but others are spread along streets or through areas now deserted of that degree of fashion that once distinguished them.

A neighborhood, with many good houses and a partially soiled face, that formerly had seen those "better days" is the old area of Radcliffeboro in midtown Charleston. Bounded on the west by Smith Street, on the east by King, on the south by Vanderhorst, on the north by Radcliffe, and containing within its boundary the full stretch of Warren and Thomas streets, with short

sections of Coming and St. Philip Streets, it was an area developed by Thomas Radcliffe. Toward the end of the 18th century it was farm land beyond the city limits.

We may trace the drift of the area over the last hundred years by following in old city directories the names of residents along these several streets. We find that after the 20th century has gotten well along many of the old families are gone and a different

Do You Know Your Charleston?

ferent element occupies many of the good, early 19th century dwellings.

It is also possible to get a solid idea of Radcliffeboro through the papers of the late Judge Joseph Travis Walsh who spent much of his childhood on Vanderhorst Street. Judge Walsh, born on January 26, 1835, in a house to the rear of the James Adger home on Mary Street, left an autobiographical sketch, still unpublished, in which he writes of families and homes of this section. It was during this period

of his childhood and somewhat earlier that so many of the fine houses of Radcliffeboro were built. Judge Walsh lived with his mother's family, the Vardells, following the death of his father. The judge writes that the "old Vardell house stood near the corner of Vanderhorst and Coming streets, and was built by Grandfather Vardell, being the first house erected on the square now bounded by Vanderhorst, St. Philip, Coming and Boundary (Calhoun) streets."

His account tells us that the area had been the site of a potter's field where the bones of many British soldiers were found. He writes that on one occasion he dug up in his grandfather's yard the skull and helmet of a British dragoon.

The substantial number of good houses that still stand in the district may be noted by the attention given Radcliffeboro by the architectural survey — "This is Charleston"—published by the Carolina Art Association. More than 25 buildings, including the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Luke and St. Paul (built 1811-1816) and St.

Mark's Episcopal Church, are listed in the volume in one classification or another.

Their conditions contrast sharply. As with other Charleston sections—also once fashionable—it is the shift into poverty that both preserves as well as destroys the houses of the neighborhood. Because of this we find in Radcliffeboro today a number of houses drastically altered while others appear to be untouched.

The neat, two-story Antebellum house at 8 Vanderhorst is well kept up while the huge dwelling at the northeast corner of Smith and Vanderhorst has been so changed as an apartment house that one must do some searching to find the old house at all. The house at 64 Vanderhorst, a fine brick dwelling with broad piazzas, is little changed from its former self while nearby houses have been permitted to run down.

This is also true on the other streets of the borough, where we find an interesting display of several styles of building through which one may chart the development of the early suburb.

This variety includes 57 Radcliffe (also known as 25 Thomas St.), a two-story house dating from 1816 when the borough was rural, its chief interest being its resemblance to numerous houses in the West Indies. It formerly had a porch that extended out over the sidewalk. It has belonged to the Wilson, the MacMananon and the Mahlstedt families.

At 89 Warren St. stands the massive house built in 1823-1829 by Chancellor Benjamin Faneuil Dunkin, with its octagonal bays and long porches.

The large house at 6 Thomas St. also embraces this variety. Built in 1832 by James Legare, it is also known as the Robert Barnwell Rhett House and was the home of the Hancok family for a number of years.

A handsome and unobtrusive dwelling which shows what Radcliffeboro may offer is the most Revolutionary house at 13 Thomas. Typical of the homes that have seen a more prosperous time, the building's exterior design is nicely balanced by window placement, a pediment at the roof on the south side, and a particularly handsome porch.



EARLY SUBURB DEVELOPED BY THOMAS RADCLIFFE
13 Thomas St. is one of numerous fine dwellings. (Staff Photo by Evans)

were built. Judge Walsh lived with his mother's family, the Vardells, following the death of his father. The judge writes that the "old Vardell house stood near the corner of Vanderhorst and Coming streets, and was built by Grandfather Vardell, being the first house erected on the square now bounded by Vanderhorst, St. Philip, Coming and Boundary (Calhoun) streets."

His account tells us that the area had been the site of a potter's field where the bones of many British soldiers were found. He writes that on one occasion he dug up in his grandfather's yard the skull and helmet of a British dragoon.

Judge Joseph Travis Walsh, whose "Grandfather Vardell" built one of the historic houses constructed on the northwest corner of the block, where the public burial ground was located, near the corner of Coming and Vanderhorst, recounted uncovering skeletal remains and the helmet of a "British dragoon" from the Revolutionary War. While the 1770s predated the City's ownership and operation of this block as a public burial ground, it is possible that burials took place on this land before it was established as an official cemetery. More research would be needed to investigate this claim.

Figure 17.

December 9, 1968

The News and Courier