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IN THIS ELEGANT VOLUME, photographers Steve Gross and Susan Daley take you on an intimate tour of some of the finest historic homes, gardens, churches, and plantations of the old city of Charleston and its surrounding Lowcountry.

Their luminescent photographs reveal an insider's look at the definitive architecture and landscape of the region, ranging from private gardens hidden behind wrought-iron gates to some of America's first landscaped garden vistas.

From colonial-era French Quarter homes to Federal and Greek Revival townhouses and antebellum plantation houses, the selection, featuring old private family homes to museum showplaces, make this an essential book for visitors, architects, preservationists, and armchair travelers.





THE *Old City*

TWICE OCCUPIED BY INVADING ARMIES, the historic city of Charleston has survived bombardment, fires, epidemics, floods, hurricanes, and a major earthquake in 1886.

The port city, sited on a peninsula between two rivers, was from its beginnings in 1670 vulnerable to attack from sea and land. Initially called Charles Town for the British king who granted its charter to his eight followers known as the Lords Proprietors, the early colony was built within a wall that defended against Indians, French, Spanish, and pirates.

In the oldest part of the town, close to the harbor, warehouses lined the wharfs and streets, and artisans and suppliers such as coopers, rope makers, and chandlers kept shops and taverns on cobblestoned streets and alleys. This historic district, now called the French Quarter, was named for the French Huguenot exiles who built European-style row houses with shops or counting houses on their first floors and living quarters above.

By the 1730s colonial Charleston was said to have reached a “Golden Age” which lasted to the 1820s. Much mercantile wealth had been created, starting from humble beginnings in the deerskin trade. Fortunes were further amassed with the successful cultivation of indigo, rice, and Sea Island cotton on plantations worked by slaves in the surrounding environs of the Lowcountry.

With these profits, scores of fine townhouses in the Georgian, Adam, and Federal styles were built in Charleston. Planters enjoyed the city’s winter social season and escaped to town when the summer “miasma,” bringing fever and disease, was rampant in the swampy countryside. Many of these houses, with their elaborate interior architectural detailing and high wide piazzas built to catch prevailing sea breezes, still remain. After the Civil War, genteel poverty helped to conserve many historic homes and buildings. Houses were passed down in the old families; continuity and kinship with the past was revered.

Beginning in 1920, houses were also protected from change with the creation of the Preservation Society of Charleston, the oldest community-based historic preservation organization in America. Ordinances were enacted to protect structures of historic and aesthetic significance, ensuring the remarkably rich and enduring architectural legacy of Charleston and the Lowcountry.

The “Pink House” on Chalmers Street was a tavern in colonial days; in the 1920s it served as an art gallery. Constructed of coral Bermuda stone with a tiled gambrel roof, it is one of the oldest houses in Charleston.



MULBERRY PLANTATION

Named for the mulberry trees on which silk worms feed, Mulberry began in the early 1700s with hopes of becoming a silk-producing plantation. However, the plantation was more successful in growing indigo and rice, with rice being cultivated from colonial days into the early twentieth century.

Built circa 1714 by Thomas Broughton, an Indian trader and one-time Royal Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina, the house was located on what was then the frontier and set high upon a bluff overlooking the Cooper River. A mélange of styles, the house is architecturally eclectic and unique. It has been called everything from Jacobean to French Huguenot to Dutch-to-early Georgian, and is evidence of the colonial syncretism of the time.

Constructed of English bond brickwork, Mulberry has a quaint "jerkin-head" gambrel roof and four small pavilions, or flankers, at each corner of the house.

The lower garden has a gate with mulberry finials and a reflecting pool that was part of the garden plan laid out by Lourel Briggs.

each with a bell-shaped cupola and weather vanes atop them. These pseudo-military flankers serve as reminders of the fact that the house once served as a fortified stronghold during the Yamasee War.

After the abolition of slavery, the house became abandoned by 1909. In 1915, it was purchased by avid duck hunter Clarence Chapman from New York as a winter retreat. Chapman selected the English architect Charles Braddon to restore the house and also hired Lourel Briggs to design the grounds as a series of connecting gardens on three separate levels. From the high point of the house, several paths meander down a slope to a camellia garden and walkways extend to the river and an old canal.

Privately owned, the house is the third oldest plantation house in South Carolina and has easements placed by the Historic Charleston Foundation in order to preserve the property.



In the living room, tall windows are formally dressed. The grandfather clock, Chippendale credenza and other furnishings of the house have been passed down owner-to-owner since the Chapman's time.

The dining room was remodeled with late eighteenth century woodwork as the prosperity of the plantation increased.

A portrait of Thomas Broughton's grandson, Alexander, is by Jeremiah Theus, a painter who lived in Charleston from 1740 and traveled to nearby plantations to fulfill commissions. It hangs above an English wine cabinet.

The entrance from the front portico opens directly into what was once a large "dining hall." The secretary dates from the 1770s and holds ephemera illustrating the history of the house.



Photographers STEVE GROSS and SUSAN DALEY specialize in photographing interiors and the architecture of the changing American landscape. They are the coauthors of ten previous books on the various styles of American homes and design, including *Creole Houses*, *Old Florida* and most recently *Farmhouse Revival*. Their work has been published extensively in magazines around the world and is in private collections including the Smithsonian Institution.