

Florentha Reed Horsey

Born Burlington, Mass. 23 of November 1794

Died Charleston, SC 22 July 1875

Wife of Thomas Jones Horsey

Mother of Thomas M. Horsey

Grandmother of Emily Horsey Cater

Passage To More Than India

O Thou transcendent!
Nameless--the fibre and the breath!
Light of the light--shedding forth universes--the centre of them!
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving!
Thou moral, spiritual fountain! affection's source! thou reservoir!
Thou pulse! thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,
That, circling, moving in order, safe, harmonious,
Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space!
How should I think--how breathe a single breath--how speak--if, out of
myself,
I could not launch, to those, superior universes?

Passage--immediate passage! the blood burns in my veins!
Away, O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers--haul out--shake out every sail!
Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough!
Have we not grovelled here long enough, eating and drinking like mere
brutes?
Have we not darkened and dazed ourselves with books long enough?

Sail forth! steer for the deep waters only!
Reckless, O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me;
For we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!
O farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail.

Walt Whitman

My dear great-grandchildren,

Isn't it strange how life never turns out like you thought it would? When I was a little girl I wanted to be like my Momma. I imagined someday I would marry a boy from my village, we would live in a house just down the road, and while my husband plowed in the fields of Burlington, Mass. I would play with our baby. If Shakespeare were right that the world is a stage and we are the actors, then I surely knew exactly where my stage was and precisely what lines I should memorize.

Who would have ever guessed someone like Thomas Jones Horsey would enter my life? How could I have known that my love for him would lead me to play my roles in strange lands among unfamiliar faces and customs and with no script to guide me for the lines I must think and say?

Burlington, Mass. was only a few miles northwest of Boston, but it was more than a thousand miles north of Charleston, SC.

My brother James Reed had moved to Charleston, become a merchant there, and during the summer of 1811 he had invited his friend Thomas Jones Horsey to join him on a return trip to Burlington to visit our family. Thomas Jones Horsey had never been to the Boston area, and like most other nineteen-year old boys, he relished the idea of tackling a new adventure. It apparently was not difficult for Thomas Jones Horsey to convince his mother Elizabeth Newbold that a trip to Burlington was a grand idea.

The Congregational Church in Boston shared many beliefs with the Independent Circular Church in Charleston that the Horseys attended. Elizabeth Newbold Horsey approved of Thomas Jones Horsey's pending visit to New England, and she encouraged him to hear the Rev. Dr. Waldo Emerson preach at the First Congregational Church in Boston. She even reminded her son not to forget to take a walk through the grounds of the seventy year old Harvard College.

Life had not been easy for Elizabeth Newbold Horsey. Thomas Horsey, her husband, had been a prosperous tinsmith in Charleston before his death in 1803, and Elizabeth Newbold also had lost the three little girls born to her between the births of her first and last sons. Samuel Jones Horsey, her younger son, was twelve years old in the summer of 1811, and Elizabeth knew he would be her constant companion while Thomas Jones Horsey was in New England.

Years later Thomas Jones Horsey would tell me of the countless adventures that wonderful summer he visited Boston and Burlington with my brother James Reed. However, the adventures experienced on the ship that sailed from Charleston to Boston, the sights they saw in Boston, the

new friends they met--all these were minor compared to the adventure that began when Thomas Jones Horsey met me.

I was the sister nearest in age to my brother now home from Charleston. I adored my older brother, and I had missed him terribly after he left Burlington. Our village was very small, there was not much to capture the imagination of a sixteen year old girl, and to me, the local boys were duller than mud.

The day my brother walked into our house with Thomas Jones Horsey changed my life forever. You cannot imagine how handsome and dashing I thought this stranger was--his quick smile, his laugh that was more like a chuckle, and his gracious manners were more than anyone in my family could resist. We all immediately fell in love with Thomas Jones Horsey .

My brother began to teased me about primping. I had never been a very pretty girl, but my parents had taught me that my mind was more valuable to me than my looks. After meeting this stranger from Charleston it bothered me that I was not as pretty as I wanted to be. I was tall and thin like my father James, and my straight brown hair I parted in the middle and pulled back into a bun like the one worn by my mother Alice. My parents always thought sparrow-brown was my best color. As for me, I secretly preferred red, but never in a hundred years would a girl like me have worn such a "forward" color in Burlington, Mass.. Nevertheless, I was sixteen, I was in love, and I spent that entire summer hoping Thomas Jones Horsey would see me as someone other than the younger sister of his best friend.

He did. Years later Thomas Jones Horsey would tell people how I captured his attention the minute he saw me. He said I the smartest girl he had ever met, that he had never known anyone who read as much as I did, and that my "dignity" was my most attractive asset.

On the nineteenth of September, 1811 my wish came true when Thomas Jones Horsey and I were married by the Rev. Mr. Marret in the very same room in which I had been born. I wore a dress made by my Momma, and carried the lace handkerchief that my grandmother had made for my mother. Mama and Papa, my grandparents, my brother James, and many aunts and uncles gathered in front room for the ceremony, and never before had I felt so surrounded with love and attention. I had never before felt so special or so much in love.

There had been a few nagging thoughts to cope with before my marriage. My age was younger than that of most brides in Burlington. Needless to say, if Thomas Jones Horsey lived in my home town we could have enjoyed a longer courtship and a later marriage. However,

Charleston was waiting for Thomas Jones Horsey, and I was not about to allow him to leave me behind. I fretted about leaving my parents just at the time I could have helped them with duties and responsibilities at home. How, I wondered, would they manage without me? I coped with that concern by saying the only thing worse than my leaving them would be to stay and risk becoming a spinster--or even worse, marrying a man who preferred an old-fashioned wife with old fashioned common sense. Thomas Jones Horsey seemed to admire my independence, spunk, and budding self-confidence.

The one thing I did not worry about, but should have, was the move from Burlington to Charleston. As I said earlier, my parents had taught me what to expect from a life lived along lines similar to theirs. They had no way to prepare me for the new life I was starting with Thomas Jones Horsey in a part of the country I had never before seen.

On our wedding day my strength came from the love of my family, the love I felt for Thomas Jones Horsey, and my confidence in myself. Those three assets would be the foundation on which I would build my life in Charleston.

What a blessing it was that our honeymoon journey to Charleston delayed my full transition from daughter to wife. Unlike most new brides, who found themselves immediately performing the household duties of their mothers, I had the luxury of being the courted center of attention while I reshaped my life to meet the expectations of my new husband.

Aboard ship there was so much Thomas Jones Horsey could explain to me--his journey north with my brother made him feel like a seasoned sailor, and my natural curiosity resulted in hundreds of questions for him to answer. He seemed delighted that I had not taken to my bed with seasickness as everyone at home had predicted for a first time sea voyager. Oh, yes, I felt terribly nauseated at times, but no more often than my new husband did, and together we laughed about who could go the longest without morning sickness.

As I have told you, I fell in love with Thomas Jones Horsey the first time I eyed him standing beside my brother in my parents' front hallway. It was on our trip from my home to his home that he and I became best friends. Our courtship had been brief, and we had been surrounded by family and friends at all times. But there on that ship, as we sailed south past New York, Philadelphia, Richmond, and on to Charleston, we learned to depend on each other for companionship, mental stimulation, and laughter. I learned that, unlike New Englanders, Southerners did not hesitate to reveal their emotions; and what had been my typical aloofness around boys

was now replaced with shipboard pillow fights, leg races around the decks, and evenings spent laughing and talking beneath the billowing sails of our ship.

Ours was quite a journey, and when I stepped off the ship in Charleston and met Thomas' mother Elizabeth Newbold and his younger brother Samuel Jones Horsey, I was pregnant with the first of my thirteen babies.

The city I was to call my home had a population then of over 20,000 people with more than half that number being Negro slaves. Charleston had, however, slipped to fifth in size in the country, behind New York (more than 60,000), Philadelphia (more than 40,000), Baltimore (more than 27,000), and Boston (more than 25,000).

It was during my first months in Charleston that I formed many first impressions. Most of those impressions stayed with me long after Charleston truly felt like "home".

Nothing was more important to the typical Charleston planter than family and ancestry. The emphasis was placed on family connections, landed wealth, flawless manners, friendships and conspicuous leisure. I would come to believe the planters' dissolute life style influenced Charleston far in excess of their representation in the powerful circles in City Hall.

Seasonal festivities with more gaiety than I had ever seen in New England were a way of life for many people in Charleston. Parties were arranged for my husband and me to welcome me into the community, but I felt little identification with the young people I met. The younger gentlemen appeared to depend on inheritance rather than personal growth to provide a desired life style, and the daughters of planters seemed to have perfected the art of idleness. Reading books was not high on many lists!

The exclusiveness of the elite created indelible class lines, and no one was left wondering in which class a family belonged. The upper classes enjoyed gambling, drinking, partying, and arguing. It seemed that the folks belonging to the lower classes just wanted to make enough money to be mistakenly treated as members of a higher class.

Arguments often times led to duels. "To fight a duel in the New England states would, under almost any circumstances, be disgraceful. To refuse a challenge, to tolerate even an insinuation derogatory to personal honor, would be considered equally so in the South" was the observation of another traveller from the North.

Drinking whiskey ruined the lives of many a man, but yellow fever

and malaria were the major killers, and John C. Calhoun said the prevalence of the fever in Charleston was simply "a curse for their intemperance and debaucheries".

Charleston indeed was a cosmopolitan port city. The ships passing through the harbor brought with them foreign strangers armed with intellectual viewpoints of the world, strutting different styles of dress, and reflecting peculiar customs. The individuality of a person in Charleston did not raise as many eyebrows as it might have in other sections of South Carolina. It was a glamorous city with strange ways, but I was determined to adjust and grow within its boundaries.

Upon my arrival Elizabeth Newbold Horsey and I began a friendship and mutual dependency that would last until her death seven years later in 1819. She introduced me to her friends at the Circular Church on Meeting Street as well as those who attended the church on Archdale Street. Many of the women were Northerners by birth or had married men from the North. My fear of being a duck out of water did not materialize. The women were supportive and understanding of my "differentness", and I began to feel at home.

My upbringing in New England prepared me for facing realities, but I balked at the reality of not always remaining the center of my husband's daily life. Once we were settled into the house of my husband's mother and brother, Thomas Jones Horsey's new preoccupation with business aroused my temper and resentment. As her mother had instructed her years earlier, Elizabeth Newbold Horsey taught me that, if I wanted a successful marriage, only submission on my part would make it work.

Elizabeth Newbold Horsey was nobody's dummy, but she told me to watch carefully the first moments when my will came into conflict with the will of my husband. I was to learn to respect his wishes if not his opinions; I was to be self-controlled even if it was hypocrisy, and I was to smile through adversity and illness. Most of all, I was taught to dwell on my own faults rather than those of my husband. And so, because of my deep love and affection for my husband, I began a marriage in which I suppressed my wishes and did everything for my husband that my strength allowed.

Like most young women of my generation, I worried also about the critical nature of childbirth I was expected to endure before long. I had been in the room when neighbors delivered, I had paid the traditional "sitting up" visit to new mothers, and I knew all too well the intimate details of birth. As was the custom, I was confined to my room weeks before I was due to deliver, and the empty hours gave me considerable

time to dread all the uncertainties ahead of me.

My first born child arrived just after three o'clock in the afternoon. That day--the eleventh day of July in 1812-- was one of the hottest days I had experienced since arriving in Charleston. I was attended by Elizabeth Newbold Horsey, the woman who had become more my mother than my mother-in-law, her servant Flosie, and a barking dog at the foot of my bed. The room was hotter than any baker's oven, and I howled and screamed at the indignities and pain my body was inflicting upon me.

I was twenty years old when my baby was born that July 11th. Thomas and I named her Elizabeth for her grandmother. Confined to my bed chamber for a month, that room became something of a reception room as neighboring women came to congratulate me. My mother-in-law went to considerable trouble to ensure that my bed and my clothes were as white as snow at all times and that sweets and tea were on hand for the "guests" who tended to show up at all hours of the day for a 'sitting up" visit. When nightfall came I wondered which of us was more exhausted.

My precious baby lived for almost two years. She died on March 30, 1814--the day before I gave birth to my second child, a daughter we named Elizabeth Susan Reed.

It is my belief that no hell on earth is comparable to the agony of burying a child in the dark, damp earth of a church cemetery. Only a day before I noticed her fever, my baby had been a laughing, crying, inquisitive bundle of playful energy. It stormed the day after my baby was laid in her cold bed at the church grave yard. The change was too horrible between my loving arms and that drizzling rain. How much easier it would have been if I could have watched God's angels come and gently carry her precious body through the clouds to a peaceful Heavenly home. But to leave her here! That day in March when the flowers were beginning to bud in Charleston was the first of many times I would be called on to stand firm in my belief in God when all evidence was to the contrary.

No newly born daughter could replace the one we had just buried, but tending to little Elizabeth Susan Reed taught me that staying busy while grieving was simpler in the long run than wringing my hands in despair. Susan Elizabeth was the apple of her father's eye, and he successfully transformed all his sorrow for our first Elizabeth into love for our second born Elizabeth. She was her father's child for the remainder of her life.

My third child and first born son was born on yet another hot day in July. John Reed was born in 1816, and I named him for my father. He was an easy to manage child, very friendly, more like his father than like me, and John was the one I would grow to depend on for comfort and assurance

in my later years.

It was on the fourteenth of February in 1818 that my fourth child and second son was born in Charleston. Thomas Jones Horsey and I agreed that his name should be Thomas M.--after his father and grandfather. No two children could have been more different than my first two sons. Within hours of Thomas M. Horsey's birth I knew he would grow up to be his own man someday. He was restless, very curious, and never seemed to drift into peaceful sleep. He fought inactivity every day of his life, he alone asked more questions than did the other children combined, and he carried with him an air of expectancy at all times. Thomas M. was born hungry, and he spent his life seeking satisfaction for that hunger. I adored my son for he reminded me of myself.

A year after the birth of Thomas M. Horsey I lost my greatest ally when Elizabeth Newbold Horsey died. I cried outright, my head throbbed and I could not imagine how any of us would manage without her. It was Nov. 6, 1819 when Thomas Jones Horsey and Samuel Jones Horsey buried their mother--my best friend-- beside their father in the cemetery at the Independent (Circular) Church on Meeting Street.

My husband and I could not bear to return to the house we had shared with his mother, and since I was expecting another baby within days-- and we were overflowing the house as it was-- Thomas Jones Horsey decided it was time to move to a larger house closer to town. His brother Samuel Jones Horsey, a printer, lived with us. My brother recently had returned to Charleston from Burlington, he and my husband became merchants in town--Reed and Horsey, 308 King Street.

Our move into town enabled me to see more of our new friends Caroline and Samuel Gilman. Early in 1819 The Rev. Dr. Samuel Gilman had accepted a call to replace the Rev. Anthony M. Forster as minister of the Unitarian or Second Independent Church on Archdale Street in Charleston. After a few months of probationary service, he was confirmed and installed in the pastorate. During those months he also married his wife Caroline. What a wonderful friendship Caroline Gilman and I formed--a friendship that would last for many years.

The Gilmans were from New England--Samuel Gilman had been born in Gloucester, Mass. February 16, 1791. My husband had been born in Charleston on October 20 of that same year. Both men had been born into families of wealthy merchants; however, by a streak of bad luck Samuel Gilman's father had lost his fortune, and at an early age Samuel Gilman became a member of the household of the Rev. Samuel Peabody in Atkinson, New Hampshire.

It was in 1807 that Samuel Gilman had entered Harvard College and after graduation he accepted a position in an office at the university. It was from that position that he accepted the call to the church in Charleston .

Caroline Gilman and I found our friendship easy, comfortable and one that was based on the fact that, while we both were New Englanders by birth, we were proud to be living in Charleston. During our friendship and her marriage, Caroline Gilman gave birth to seven children, published several books, and eventually was recognized as an outstanding woman of South Carolina.

My fifth baby was born November 22, 1819, and because he was a boy we immediately honored our friendship with the Gilmans by naming him Samuel Gilman Horsey. My baby boy lived for eighteen months, but on May 13, 1821 we once again kissed an infant's cold cheek before sorrowfully burying him beside our first baby Elizabeth in the Circular Church cemetery.

Despite our losses, my husband's business ventures as a merchant prospered, and I continued to have babies. My first babies had been welcomed for they brought maternal fulfillment and renewed my husband's interest in me. Later pregnancies I faced with misgivings. True, I yearned for a family, but if only I could limit or at least space my childbearing. Abstinence was the major means of birth control during my lifetime. After the birth of Thomas M. Horsey I suggested to my husband that, while I believed breast-feeding a baby would prevent conception, I needed to arrange an absence from our marriage bed that would enable me postpone another pregnancy. It was decided that I would go to a resort to recuperate after months of breast-feeding our newest infant. Time away from home would give me the opportunity to regain my strength and to avoid another pregnancy.

No, this method of birth control was not something I discovered without advice. One of the many advantages for a woman living in a city rather than in the country is the opportunity to be exposed to new and progressive ideas shared by neighbors. Through my relationships with other woman in Charleston I had learned the wisdom of relying on their intelligence and experiences, as well as my own, when seeking solutions to a problem.

Florentha Horsey was born October 10, 1821 and she was given my name. Florantha certainly was not the prettiest of names, but secretly, I enjoyed having a name that was unique in Charleston society.

Daughter Caroline Horsey we named for Caroline Gilman. She was

born the 23 of January, 1824. Have you noticed that since the birth of John Reed Horsey I had learned also to avoid giving birth in July's unbearable summer heat?

Susan Horsey was born December 18, 1824 at our house on Cumberland Street, and on the 10th of March, 1828 I gave birth to a baby boy we named Samuel Gilman II.

Juliana arrived March 7, 1830 while we lived on Beaufain Street, and she was followed by Charles William on February 14, 1832.

My husband was very generous, and he had been prosperous enough to enable me to keep servants to help with my sprawling brood of youngsters. Naturally, the children required my attention, but it was from the food preparation and housework that I prayed for deliverance. Food was so perishable; nothing lasted, and I feared food poisoning as much as the fevers that sweep through Charleston. The older children always giggled when I asked their papa to taste the milk before allowing the little ones to drink it. John and Thomas M. remembered the time the milk was so bad that their papa spit it out and declared it "high time that the cook learned to throw away spoiled milk".

Well, our kitchen maid wasn't all that bright. Because of my many confinements I had attempted to turn over to her all the kitchen chores. I had demonstrated the importance of boiling the sweetmeats, patiently had showed her how to set my dinner table, and frequently had reminded her to use only the oldest kitchen cloths for her clean-up work. Unfortunately, she burned the green beans with relentless regularity, broke several pieces of Mother Elizabeth Newball Horsey's best china in the wash tub, and stubbornly refused to refrain from using the prized quilted kettle holders and dishcloths that had been given to me by an aunt as a wedding present.

The "daily dog-trot routine of domestic activities" was enough to drive any woman to despair. There was so much work to be done. Seasonal wardrobe adjustments for my many children proved almost overwhelming. Not only did I clothe my family, I made and mended the servants clothing as well. Because so many hems had to be moved up or down as well as seams in and out, I was eternally grateful that my mother had insisted I become an accomplished needlewoman.

White was the fashionable color for linens, bed covers, and children's clothes. Can you imagine what it was like for me to keep white things spotlessly clean? Soap had to be made, rain water collected, dirty clothes scrubbed, and damp but clean clothes on the clothes line protected from thundershowers. I always believed all clothes and bed linens should

be completely dried before being worn or put onto a bed. As a mother I knew that to sleep on a damp sheet or to wear a damp garment guaranteed a bad cold by morning--and chills and colds could be fatal in our day and time. I worried constantly about keeping my loved ones dry and warm in the winter.

Washing and ironing the cotton and linen clothes for all the children required the full-time attention of yet another servant. Despite the heat and humidity of Charleston's summers I was proud to say that the Horsey children always wore fresh clothes and smelled as clean as I could scrub them. Of course, it was not only the children's clothes that required attention. Many a summer day my husband Thomas Jones Horsey would walk home for a one o'clock dinner and change his clothes before returning to work at the bank. Oh, dear, have I been so busy describing my life that I've neglected to tell you that Thomas Jones Horsey was no longer a merchant on King Street. He had become a teller and officer at the Planters' and Merchants' Bank in Charleston. (And you know how fussy bankers can be about their shirts and collars!)

My husband realized how confining my life had become with our large family and he encouraged me to feel free to return to New England for a visit. The problem was that between the months of confinement before and after the birth of a baby, the nagging fear that I unexpectedly might be pregnant as I left Charleston for an extended period, and the fact that I usually *was* pregnant, made it difficult for me to escape the demands of my life in Charleston.

November 7, 1835 on the corner of Anson and Society Streets my son Frederick Horsey was born. It was at this house, a year later in July, 1836, that my husband's brother Samuel Jones Horsey died. The weather was hot, it poured rain all day, and we received our friends and acquaintances in our front parlor after 5 o'clock in the afternoon for the funeral.

My brother-in-law Samuel Jones Horsey had been a part of my life since the day I had arrived in Charleston as a new bride. The children and I missed him terribly, and Thomas Jones Horsey had lost the last member of his original family. Little did I realize what other family tragedies lay ahead for all of us.

After twenty-seven years of child-bearing and at the age of forty - five years I gave birth to my last baby. We named her Mary Louisa; she was born November 7, 1839 in our house on Boundary (Calhoun) Street. Over the years I had learned to accept my astonishing fertility, but my trepidation about the uncertainties of childbirth did not diminish with my frequent pregnancies. With each new confinement I despairingly believed that death

was hovering over our doorstep waiting to snare me or my newborn baby. When I realized the event of birth was at hand, I was seized with such brooding anxiety and depression that I wept without ceasing for days. Nothing could lift my anxiety-ridden spirits. Given the choice I would not have had thirteen children. Nothing in my life surprised me more than the fact that I survived all those childbirths.

As had become my custom, I retired to Morris Island for rest and recuperation after the birth of my last baby. Several of the older children went with me. Elizabeth Susan Reed Horsey was 26 years old by then, and she and her husband of two years, John Schnierle, joined me. Son John Reed Horsey was 24, and he and his brother Thomas M. Horsey, 22, remained in Charleston with their father. Florantha, 19; Caroline, 16; Susan, 15; Juliana, 10; Frederick, 5; and baby Mary Louisa, eight months old, came with me. Samuel Gilman Horsey, 12 and Charles Horsey, 10, wanted to remain in Charleston with his father and older brothers, and I agreed reluctantly. The girls--Florentha, Caroline, and Susan-- helped me tend to their youngest brother and the baby. I took with me only one servant, Sally. Sally was about my age, and she had nursed every one of my children.

The children expressed concern for my health and tended to my every need as I regained my strength. By nature, I was a positive person and I assured them I came from hearty stock and had every intention of living to a ripe old age. Teasingly, I asked them who would tend to them if anything happened to me. Fiercely protective of my brood, my family was my life, and I was determined to draw on my Yankee stubbornness to get back on my feet as soon as possible.

It is funny how a morning can start off just like all other mornings and before the day is over an unexpected event can transform the remainder of one's life. Such was the morning of July 4, 1840. The sun was bearing down relentlessly by the time my daughter Caroline touched my shoulder and playfully asked if I intended to sleep all day. Feeling refreshed after a peaceful night's sleep, I enjoyed a hearty breakfast of fresh fish, grits and hard rolls with tea. My old body was growing stronger every day, and I looked forward to returning to Charleston and resuming my responsibilities in the household. Setting my house in order after the confusion of my delivery and confinement would be my first goal; in fact, I dreaded to see the condition of my kitchen and the disarray of dishes in the cupboard after my summer absence.

Just as I gathered my wondering thoughts together and finished dressing, my daughter Florantha ran up the walk to tell me eight year old

Charles and his father had just come to the island to join us. John Reed, Thomas M. and Samuel Gilman were not far behind. My watch said it was eleven o'clock.

With bare feet and a light heart I walked the short distance to the dock to greet my husband. Thomas Jones Horsey and I had shared our lives for so many years that only when we were together did life seem normal. Our love and devotion to each other had grown stronger with the trials of daily life, and when apart, I found myself missing the sound of his chuckle, the smell of his pipe, and pressure of his hand on mine when we said our daily prayers.

Together with the children and Thomas Jones Horsey, I settled into a rocking chair on the grass near the water to catch up with the news from Charleston. After describing several amusing incidents at the bank, my husband said he was happy to report that he had bought for us a handsome and complete set of china dishes from a French ship docked in the harbor. I would have new platters, plates, cups and saucers, bowls and casseroles! Thomas Jones Horsey then began to chuckle, and finally he admitted that the set was complete except for one broken casserole. It seems that just to make fun, my husband had slipped one of the pots over his head. His stunt made a great hit with our grown sons, but after the fun was over, my husband discovered he could not get the headpiece off. John and Thomas M. struggled valiantly to free their father, but finally it was Thomas M. who solved the problem of the stuck pot. Picking up a hammer, he gave the side a strong whack, and the china broke into several pieces. Like a clown, Thomas Jones Horsey demonstrated for us how he staggered around the room, groggy from the blow, but delighted to be free. I laughed until tears ran down my face, and little Charles rolled in the grass holding his sides at the vision of his papa stuck in a pot.

It was a very hot day. The summer heat reminded me of that hot afternoon back in 1812 when my mother-in-law helped me as I gave birth to my first little Elizabeth. So long ago, so many babies since then. We were a large and loving family, and before long the conversation turned from the broken china pot to the approaching wedding of our daughter Caroline. In a few months Caroline intended to walk down the aisle of the Unitarian Church to marry that young John C. Walker, and I intended to be sitting in the front pew.

Between noon and one o'clock we were joined by Mr. Henry Humphries, another visitor to the island. The mid-day heat was pressing down, Charles had become restless, and I was tired by the social exchanges. Mr. Humphries suggested to my husband that they do a little

fishing in the creek, and Charles began to beg to go as only an eight year old boy knows how to beg. The last thing I remember is Thomas Jones Horsey's chuckle as he reassured our son that it was about time a boy born in one of the country's largest seaports learned how to catch a fish in its waters.

The remainder of the day I blotted from my life forever. There were many newspaper write-ups about what happened, and I accepted the reality of the events. It is just that I cannot-- or will not--it is that I refuse-- to place that afternoon in my precious storehouse of memories. Some pains simply are too great to be dwelt upon. What I do remember of the day is the laughter of my husband.

According to an article on the second page of the *Charleston Courier* on July 7, 1840 here is what happened:

"It falls our lot to record the circumstances attendant on a most lamentable accident, that occurred at Morris Island, about eight miles from this city, on Saturday last, the 4th, involving the loss of three lives, by drowning.

Mr. Thomas J. Horsey, for several years past a Teller in the Planters' and Merchants' Bank, started from town for the island, to visit his family, who had taken up their abode there for a few weeks, with the view of restoring the health of Mrs. Horsey. Mr. Horsey had with him his son, named Charles, a little more than eight years of age, and arrived at the island about eleven o'clock, AM.

Between 12 and one o'clock it was proposed by a young gentleman named Henry H. Humphries, who was also on a visit to the island, that they should go on a fishing expedition, in the creek, which was ascended to by Mr. Horsey; and they, with the little boy went down to the wharf, holsted and made fast the main sail of a small boat, called the Rosalie, lying at the wharf, alongside of and made fast to a larger boat, by lines from stem to stern. The three then got on board, and let go the bow fast; the boat thus loosened, swung off into the middle of the creek, the wind blowing fresh from the NE. and the tide running strong in the opposite direction-- this counteracting influence of wind and tide, upset the boat leeward, and the three got on the windward side, where they hung for a moment, until the boat, which was heavily ballasted with iron, and hampered by the line which still attached her by the stern to the large boat at the wharf, began to sink under them. Mr. Horsey then took his son in his arms, and attempted to swim. Mr. Humphries, who was also swimming, perceived Mr. Horsey was failing in his attempts to save his child, went to him, and relieved him of his burden, but alas! too late, as he sunk immediately after. This

exertion so far fatigued Mr. Humphries that he in a few minutes after was also exhausted and went down--all three to a watery grave. There was a gentleman and a small boy on the wharf, and several gentlemen on another wharf, but a few rods distant, all of whom hastened to afford assistance by getting out boats, and proceeding to the spot. Within fifteen or twenty minutes, the body of Mr. Horsey was recovered, and signs of life perceived. For three hours the most unremitting exertions were made to restore vitality, but without success. It was supposed by some medical gentlemen present, that he had ruptured a blood vessel in his exertions to save his child, as blood issued from his mouth, while they were engaged in endeavoring to resuscitate him.

The body of Mr. Humphries was found between 6 and 7 o'clock, the same evening, within a short distance of the place where the accident occurred, and on the succeeding afternoon, the corpse of Charles, the son of Mr. Horsey, was thrown upon the front beach, having floated out of the creek.

The body of Mr. Horsey was brought to town early on Sunday morning, and at 4 P.M. in the afternoon interred in the cemetery of the Second Independent Archdale street, attended by a numerous and sorrowing concourse of friends and acquaintances. Mr. Humphries was also buried the same afternoon, and yesterday the remains of the son of Mr. Horsey were placed in the same grave with those of his father's.

This disastrous occurrence created a deep feeling of melancholy among the citizens. Mr. Horsey was a man respected in the community. Bland and courteous in his deportment--honest and industrious in his calling--kind and indulgent to his family--he well deserved, and undoubtedly possessed the confidence of all who knew him, and his loss will be severely felt by the institution in which he was an officer, and the circle in which he moved. To his family, a widowed wife and 10 surviving children this bereavement is irreparable.

Mr. Humphries was the son of a shipmaster of this port, who perished at sea some years since. his widowed mother has been thus suddenly deprived of an affectionate son, and her only child, to whom she looked as a support and consolation in her declining years.

Both gentlemen were good swimmers--the creek wherein they drowned was only 60 to 70 feet in width, and it is supposed by all that they both lost their lives in their humane and praiseworthy exertions to save the boy."

There were depths in my soul into which I had never ventured, and I was surprised to find how much strength I found there. I had never lived a

day in my entire life without the safety net of my husband, and the wild winds of change and sorrow threatened to blow me off the very foundation on which I had built my life. It was like someone trying to light a lantern during a hurricane--the fire would be blown out each time it was lighted, and even if it had burned, it would not have illuminated the darkness of the storm.

With time, I allowed my children to help me light the lonely path. They cajoled, coaxed, pampered, praised, and even fussed at me while we came to terms with our grief and loss. They had lives to continue and so did I. Things were what they were, and I was determined to practice wise management of the remaining years of my life. My children had lost their father; I was determined they would not lose me as well.

On October 18, 1840, three months after the death of her father, my daughter Caroline was married by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Gilman to John C. Walker.

In June of 1844 my son Thomas M. Horsey married a young woman from our church--Emily S. Fisher, the daughter of the shipmaster Samuel Fisher. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Gilman married them in the church on Archdale Street, and I hoped young Emily was ready for the life I expected her to find with my son. His yearnings for financial recognition combined with his natural self-confidence and darkly handsome appearance foretold of a life marked with risk-taking and gambles. Thomas M. Horsey embraced life, challenged it to thwart his ambitions and goals, and was prepared to cope with the consequences of his lot in life. As I said before, of all my children, he reminded me most of myself.

It was in October of the following year--October 16, 1845 to be exact--that daughter Susan married John T. Lindsey in the church on Archdale Street with the Rev. Dr. Samuel Gilman officiating.

1849 was the year that I bought the house at 155 East Bay Street in Charleston. I took with me only one servant--Sally. If I had lived in Boston most likely I would not have owned slaves. But I lived in Charleston, and my husband had bought Sally for me years earlier as our family expanded. Our other servants were sold to neighbors, and the money safely deposited in the bank.

Sally now was aging as I did, but I could not have managed without her help. On the few occasions that she sassied me, I laughingly threatened not to pay the yearly \$3.00 taxes due on her as my property and how would she like that? I believe that Sally loved me as she did my children. Punishment of slaves? The department of ladies in Charleston would not have allowed whippings, and they were servants to me, not slaves.

In addition to the younger children, sons John Reed Horsey, Thomas M. Horsey and his wife Emily, and son Samuel Gilman Horsey II lived with me in the house at 155 East Bay Street. The three older boys paid board, and with the resources I had inherited from my husband, I lived a comfortable life in that house until shortly before the War broke out.

On the 20th of November, 1851 my daughter Juliana Horsey married Oliver Farnum, and on the 9th of September, 1854 Samuel Gilman Horsey II married Miranda Skidmore. The Rev. Dr. Gilman said the Horsey children had just about worn out his marrying book!

My youngest son Frederick was the only one of my children not to be married by the Rev. Dr. Gilman. Dr. Gilman had died in February of 1858 while visiting his son-in-law, the Rev. C.J. Bowen in Plymouth County, Mass.

Frederick Horsey and his bride Sophia Marshall were married by the Rev. Mr. Womkler on the 10th of January, 1860, and yes, I was there. By 1860 I was 65 years old, I had been a widow for twenty years, and I still was reassuring my family I intended to be around another twenty years.

My daughters Florentha and Mary Louisa Horsey never married. Mary Louisa operated a boarding house on the corner of King and Vanderhorst Streets in Charleston, and Florentha lived with her sister Juliana Horsey Farnum at Caw Caw Plantation in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

Now I realize you are wondering how I felt about my adopted state leading the South into a war against the region of my birth. By 1861 I had called Charleston "home" for almost fifty years. I understood my neighbors' concerns, I owned a slave, and I identified with preserving the right to our unique way of life.

Still, I was not a native of South Carolina as my husband had been. The Horsey family had been in Charleston since the mid-1750's, and I suspected that in 1726 it was Thomas Jones Horsey's grandfather, Lieut. General Samuel Horsey, that sought the appointment as governor of all the British forces in South Carolina. As a transplanted Yankee, my point of view was tempered with love for my native state.

From where I sat in Charleston it appeared to me that the North and South should prefer to tolerate each other's imperfections, emotions, and differences to the stagnation of existing without each other. Of course there were misunderstandings and irritations between the two parts of the country, but did we not share common origins, language, manners, government, and civil laws? Since the seventeenth century the worn channels of communication between the North and South had provided a strong bond that could be depended upon for strength and durability.

Each night I prayed to God to enlighten, direct, and unite our legislators and families. I prayed for the preservation of our union. Through the united influences of Webster, Calhoun, and Clay, I felt certain a peaceful solution could be found to our differences. Unable to imagine the horror of my nephews in New England firing a rifle at my children I did not permit myself to doubt that a solution would be found to settle the difficulties.

In 1861 the war began that pitted brother and cousin against brother and cousin. I remained in my adopted state and defended our right to protect ourselves from northern aggression.

Your loving grandmother,



Florentha Reed Horsey

It was on another unbearably hot July morning in 1875 --July 22 to be exact--that Florentha Reed Horsey died at the age of eighty years. Her body was laid to rest beside her beloved husband Thomas Jones Horsey in the Unitarian Church yard on Archdale Street in Charleston.

Her son Thomas M. Horsey remarked to his wife Emily Fisher that as a young woman his mother had unfurled the sails of her ship and with dignity, courage and intelligence had allowed the breezes of heaven to blow her to her destination. Her adventure had lasted for eighty years.

O my brave Soul!

O farther, farther sail!

O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?

O farther, farther, farther sail.

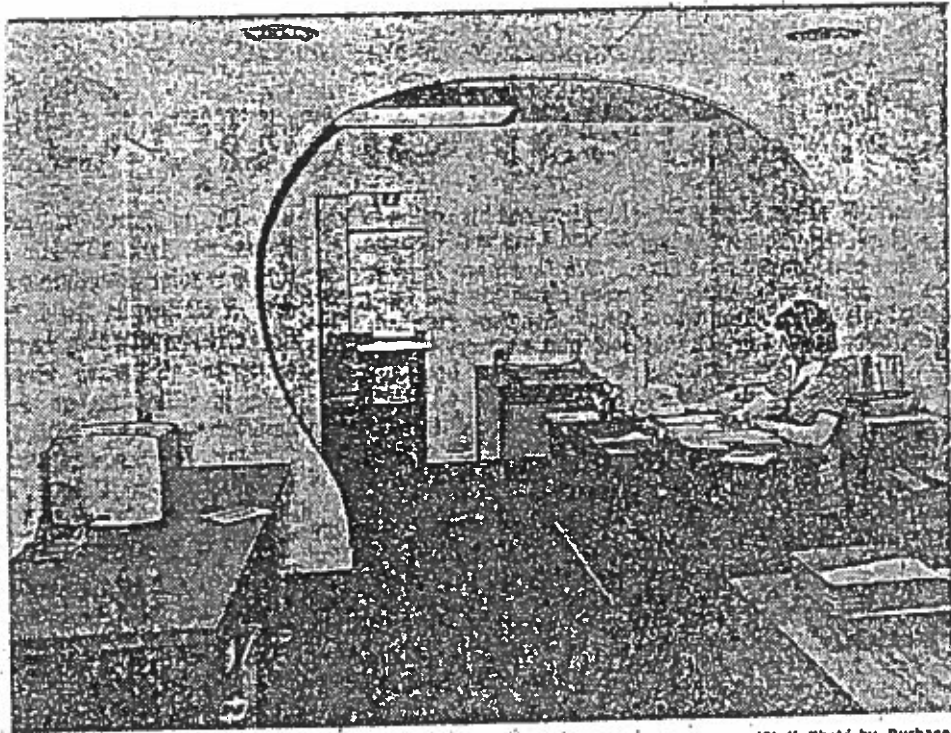


PHOTO BY BURBAGE
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(Staff Photo by Burbage)

Reception Area Divided By Free-Form Opening

Antebellum Building Restored For Business

News & Courier By ROBERT P. STOCKTON
 3-14-73 11A: 3-5 Staff Reporter

The antebellum commercial building at 155 East Bay St., built by a wealthy French citizen of Charleston, has been restored by architect Read Barnes.

Barnes has remodeled the two top floors of the structure as his own offices. The ground floor, formerly a tavern has also been renovated as rental office space.

The restoration involved removal of modern brick veneer from the ground floor facade and replacement of the two former entrances with French doors.

The rear wall of the

building, which had been weakened by water damage due to a leaking roof, had to be rebuilt, Barnes said.

Barnes divided the two upper floors, originally used for storage space, into a reception room, conference room and his own and his draftsman's offices.

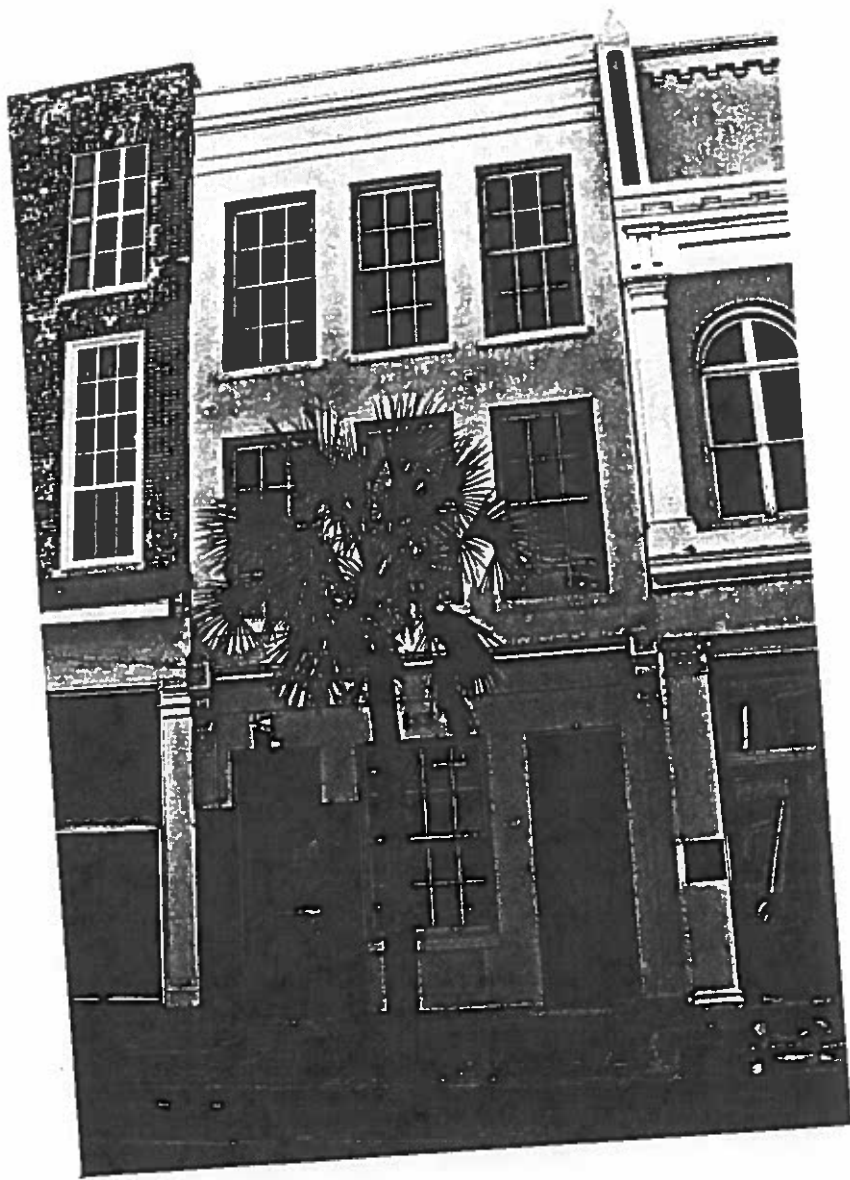
The building was built by Etienne Poincignon, a native of France, probably in the 1850s.

It replaced a more narrow, two-story brick building which appears on a plat drawn in 1801 and last mentioned in a deed of conveyance in 1848.

The earlier building may have burned or may have been demolished by Poincignon so that he could increase the value of his investment by constructing the larger building.

Barnes, an experienced observer of Charleston architecture, said the structure has "all the earmarks of the early 1850s."

The builder, Poincignon, was a member of a French family which came to Charleston after the Napoleonic Wars, in the early 19th Century, according to realtor Louis Storen, a descendant.



Resources for Florentha Reed Horsey

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