IN SEARCH OF THE WALLED CITY:
Archaeology of the Tradd Street Redan and Lower Market Site

THE REDAN
This angular structure, known as a redan, was part of the main line of colonial fortifications that faced Charleston Harbor. This line of brick fortifications was begun along the east side of the Bay Street in the 1690s. Based on European fortification design principles of the day, the angled walls of the redan allowed the five or six cannon mounted within to fire at a wider range of potential targets, and thus better protect the curtain wall and the city from naval assault. When it was built three hundred years ago, the Cooper River washed the redan’s brick walls at high tide. Since that time, the mud flats on the east side of East Bay Street have been built up with silt, ballast stones, trash, and other materials.

By 1784 or 1785, when the redan at the east end of Tradd Street was finally removed, an extensive wharf stood between it and the channel of the Cooper River. This extension of Tradd Street is now known as South Adger’s Wharf.

THE LOWER MARKET, 1751-1799
A major fire in November 1740, which burned nearly half of Charleston, destroyed the Exchange and Court Room that had recently been built at the east end of Tradd Street. The site sat vacant for several years, except for the presence of the brick redan at the foot of Tradd Street.

In 1759 the S.C. legislature approved the building of a new market on a growing wharf on the east side of the brick redan, and construction continued into 1751. From the 1750s onward, the structure was known as the “Lower Market,” to differentiate it from the Beef Market (the site of present City Hall), and provisions of all kinds were sold here, but not slaves. According to a resolution of Charleston City Council in late 1785, after the old brick redan was finally removed, the Lower Market was enlarged, however, it was still too small to accommodate Charleston’s growing market needs, and the site was becoming too congested by the post-Revolutionary expansion of the wharves. In an effort to consolidate the city’s market activities in the new Market Street, this market was closed in 1799, and the city sold the property in early 1800.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS ON THIS SITE are being coordinated by the Mayor’s Walled City Task Force and Historic Charleston Foundation. The archaeological investigations are intended to uncover some important components of the 18th century Walled City of Charleston. We are hopeful that we can locate, map, and study the remains of the redan and the lower market that were located on the site.

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MURDER AT THE LOWER MARKET
On Friday the 13th of August, 1790, Jerry, a slave butcher belonging to one Mrs. Washington, exchanged several blows with another slave, Cudjoe, belonging to one Mrs. Clifford. In the course of their brawl, Jerry plunged a knife into Cudjoe’s chest, and he expired almost immediately. Jerry was quickly taken into custody by several constables and confined at the Work House (where misbehaving and runaway slaves were held). After a brief trial on Saturday at a court of magistrates (two magistrates and five freeholders), Jerry was hanged at noon on Monday, the 16th of August 1790.