

*Architect J. A. Wood was already known for designing luxury hotels, churches and residences by the time Timothy Mahoney approached him to construct a house at 1709 Reynolds Street in Brunswick. Born June 11, 1837 in Bethel, N.Y., Wood began his career in 1863 in Poughkeepsie. He developed a reputation for a certain style of architecture, particularly the Moorish design seen in many of his buildings. He had a scathing distaste for the Queen Anne style as was evident in a letter he addressed to the editor of The Thomasville Times in 1886: "Dear Sir — Please correct the statement in Saturday's Times that the 'Piney Woods Hotel is built in the Queen Anne style.' Neither the Piney Woods nor any other hotel that I have ever designed is in that beastly style, which is at best no style at all ... ."*



*A*cross from Brunswick's historic courthouse, through the live oak trees that adorn Magnolia Square, sits a house at 1709 Reynolds Street, lovingly tended after more than a century.

Pass through its ornamental gate, stroll up the walk and open its doors to bright, relaxing color tones, and you'll instantly feel you've stepped into a beach cottage. As you gaze upon the décor of antique furniture and genteel ladies in paintings framed upon the walls, you will think you've stepped back in time. And when you are greeted by its owners, Mark and Yvonne Buss, you are made to feel as though you have come home.

This is exactly the atmosphere the Busses were hoping for — a Victorian home on the coast they can share with friends and family. A place where friends can visit and relax, throw down their luggage and not be afraid to touch anything.

"We don't want it to feel too stuffy," Yvonne says of the design and layout of the home. And indeed, it is a place to kick off your sandals and sit by one of the large French doors open to the summer breeze, sipping iced tea.

In 2004 the Busses purchased the Victorian, still referred to as the Mahoney-McGarvey House. The home stood empty for 18 months before Yvonne discovered it on the Internet when searching for historic homes.

"As soon as the picture came up, I thought, 'My gosh! What a darling little Victorian cottage.' It was so cute," Yvonne relates. When they visited the house in person, the three-story, 5,426 square foot home turned out to be more than just a little cottage. By the time the Busses were finished with renovations, the house included 10 rooms, three bathrooms, a small morning room and a butler's pantry.

Nearly all the hardwood floors in the home are original. The shiny floors, made of heart pine wood an inch and a quarter thick, create an elegant scene in the long hallways. The ceiling medallions are also original and each one is unique. The one in the drawing room has a seashell design, perfect for the Busses' coastal layout. The only remaining original light fixture hangs in the parlor from a medallion design of corn, wheat, birds and apples. The 400 pound sliding doors that separate the parlor and library are also original to the home.

"You won't find this much original work in a lot of homes," Mark explains. "There haven't been that many people that have lived here, which is why the house has survived."

The house was built for Timothy Mahoney, a railway engineer. He commissioned architect J.A. Wood to