

Useful Materials for Historic Property Research In the City of Charleston and the Lowcountry

The Charleston Archive, Charleston County Public Library

Compiled by Nicholas Butler, Ph.D., Manager, and Kathleen Gray, 2008

Available in the South Carolina Room at the Charleston County Public Library

I. Miscellaneous Materials

Vertical Files

Collections of newspaper clippings and ephemera, dating chiefly from the 1930s onward. Subdivided into Charleston County, South Carolina, and Biography files. Topics of interest include individual building files (listed by street address), churches, hotels, and businesses. Indices available at the SC Room desk. Patrons must show a library card or ID to use files.

Bayliss Photograph Collection, 1979–1988

A collection of original photos of Charleston buildings (including some interiors). Photos and printed index available at the S.C. Room desk. Additional Bayliss photos are at the South Carolina Historical Society.

City Directories, 1782–present

Available in printed volumes and on microform. Lists residents and businesses for the City of Charleston. Increasingly more information available as years progress, including residence, employer, race, and spouse. Cross-reference street listings available in the 1840 directory (on microfiche) and from 1890 onward.

Map Collection, 1670s–1990s

Reproductions of various maps of city, county, lowcountry, and state. Located in map cabinet. Chronological finding aid available. See also current Charleston tax maps for information pertaining to building date. Current tax books on center table, also available at www.charlestoncounty.org.

Records of the Historic Preservation Planner, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, 1970–1981.

Consists chiefly of the research materials collected for the publication of *Historic Preservation Plan: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Region*. Also contains non-survey regional materials, topical and miscellaneous files. Also known as the Elias Ball Bull Papers.

Wills / Inventories/ Miscellaneous Records

100+ volumes of typed transcriptions made by the C.W.A. and W.P.A. in the 1930s. Some volumes have been retired due to condition—use microfilm copy. Original documents held at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia.

Wills of Charleston County, 1671–1868

Inventories, Wills, and Miscellaneous Records of Charleston County, 1687–1785

II. Books

Baldwin, Agnes Leland. *Marsh Granting Practices in South Carolina*. Summerville, S.C.: Committee for Preservation of Privately Owned Marshlands, 1976. (SCR 347.2 B)

Provides an overview of the manner in which marsh lands ownership progressed from the Proprietary Era to 1975. Includes illustrations and pertinent statutes.

- Barbot, Louis J., ed. *An Alphabetical Index to all Conveyances, Leases, Mortgages, &c. Executed by and to the City Council of Charleston from 1783 to 1877 Recorded in the Office of the Register of Mesne Conveyance for Charleston County*. Charleston, S.C.: News and Courier Job Presses, 1877. (SCR 929.375791 Alphabet)
Contains three separate indices: property transactions from the city to individuals, property transactions from individuals to the city, and mortgages to the city. Each is arranged alphabetically by the last name of the individual with whom the city was conducting business.
- Bates, Susan Baldwin and Harriott Cheves Leland, eds. *Proprietary Records of South Carolina, Volume One: Abstracts of the Records of the Secretary of the Province, 1675–1695*. Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2005. (SCR 929.3757 Propriet)
Includes abstracts of wills, Proprietary land grants for Charles Town lots, and contractual land records.
- Bates, Susan Baldwin and Harriott Cheves Leland, eds. *Proprietary Records of South Carolina, Volume Two: Abstracts of the Records of the Register of the Province, 1675–1696*. Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2006. (SCR 929.3757 Propriet)
Includes information such as Proprietary indentures, letters of attorney, and records for deeds and grants in Charles Town and the surrounding Lowcountry.
- Bates, Susan Baldwin and Harriott Cheves Leland, eds. *Proprietary Records of South Carolina, Volume Three: Abstracts of the Records of the Surveyor General of the Province, Charles Towne, 1678–1698*. Charleston, S. C.: History Press, 2007. (SCR 929.3757 Propriet)
Includes physical descriptions of lots within Charles Towne, names and occupations of settlers, and histories of over 100 lots. Includes color illustrations and maps.
- Beaty, John. A [sic] *Historic Architectural Resources Survey of the Upper Peninsula Charleston, South Carolina*. Charleston, S.C.: Brockington & Associates, 2004. (SCR 975.7915 Historic)
Contains information about historic neighborhoods and specific buildings in the Upper Peninsula. Provides an historic overview of the area, supplemented with copious maps, plats, and photographs.
- Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Regional Planning Council. *Historic Preservation Plan: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Region*. Charleston, S.C.: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Planning Council, 1972. (SCR 363.6909757 Berkeley)
Contains three sections: an overview of the B-C-D Region's history and preservation efforts; an inventory of historical places in the tri-county region; an analysis of preservation planning programs and associated goals and objectives.
- Bull, Elias. *Historic Preservation Inventory, Berkeley County*. Charleston, S.C.: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, 1979. (SCR 975.793 Bull)
Contains only the Berkeley County section of the *Historic Preservation Plan: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Region* (see previous entry), updated and expanded.
- Burton, Milby. *Charleston Streets*. Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Museum, 19XX. (SCR 388.411 Charlest)
A copy of an unpublished typescript at the Charleston Museum. Outlines the history of most streets in downtown Charleston, including name origins, associated or alternative street names, and occasionally diagrams. Extensive citations to RMC documents, ordinances, statutes, City Yearbooks, newspapers, and various commission minutes.
- Butler, Nicholas Michael, ed. *The City of Charleston's Executive Relief Committee for the Earthquake of 1886: Money Vouchers for Work Done, September 1886 through June 1887*. Charleston, S.C.: Charleston County Public Library, 2007.
Vouchers issued by the Executive Relief Committee to citizens for work completed on individual buildings damaged in the earthquake of 1886. Include detailed information about specific portions of building damaged, property owner, amount of money given for repairs, and contractor employed. Separate vouchers issued for plasterwork. Original material in CCPL The Charleston Archive.

- Charleston City Council. *List of the Tax Payers of the City of Charleston for 1858*. Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Co., [1859]. (SCR 929.3 List)
- Charleston City Council. *List of the Tax Payers of the City of Charleston for 1859*. Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Co., 1860. (SCR 929.3 List)
- These two volumes include alphabetical lists of all tax paying citizens in Charleston and their taxable belongings. Addresses are not included, but real estate values are provided.
- Charleston County (S.C.), Register of Mesne Conveyance Office. *An Index to Deeds of the Province and State of South Carolina, 1719–1785, and of Charleston District, 1785–1800*. Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1977. (SCR 929.3757 Index)
- Indexes names of buyers/sellers for all South Carolina deeds from the end of the Proprietary era until individual counties took over record keeping. Useful in combination with the deed abstracts published by Langley and Holcombe (see below).
- City of Charleston. *Exhibits Showing Receipts and Disbursements and the Applications for Relief, with the Awards and Refusals of the Executive Relief Committee*. Charleston, S.C.: Lucas, Richardson, & Co, 1887. (SCR 975.7915 Charlest)
- Listing of individuals applying for and receiving aid for the repair of buildings following the earthquake of 1886. Includes building owner, assessed value of property, amount applied for, and amount allowed. Listed alphabetically by applicant. No street addressed listed.
- Draine, Tony. *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants in South Carolina*. Columbia, S.C.: Congaree Publishing, 1986. (SCR 975.7 Drain)
- Lists land parcels (location and acreage) granted to individuals in exchange for three years' service in the standing militia. Records compiled from "Grants to Revolutionary Soldiers."
- Draine, Tony. *South Carolina Tax List, 1733–1742*. Columbia, S.C.: Congaree Publications, 1986. (SCR 929.3 Draine)
- Lists individuals' assessed property taxes in colonial S.C. Includes acreage, location, and assessment year.
- Esker, Katie-Prince Ward. *South Carolina Memorials, Volume 1: 1731–1776: Abstracts of Selected Land Records From a Collection in the Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina*. Cottonport: Polyanthus, 1973. (SCR 929.3757 Esk)
- Memorials: abstracts of title to land held. Often contain description of land parcels (including size and location) and chain of ownership, sometimes back to the 1670s. This volume includes only a sampling of the surviving memorials.
- Feiss, Carl and Russell Wright. *Historic Architecture Inventory, 1972–73, Peninsula City, Charleston, South Carolina*. [s.l., s.n.] 1974?. (SCR 711.4 Historic)
- Book contains Preliminary Survey Ratings for buildings within peninsular Charleston. Buildings are assigned one of four ratings categories; listed by category and street address. Corresponding maps available in the map cabinet, City of Charleston maps #95–#95(8). Individual architectural inventory sheets located in buildings files by street address (originals located at the Board of Architectural Review).
- Fick, Sarah. *Charleston County Historical and Architectural Survey: Survey Report*. Charleston, S.C.: Preservation Consultants, Inc., 1992. (SCR 975.791 Charles)
- Report of the survey, conducted as part of the Statewide Survey of Historic Places. Includes an evaluation of survey data, building typologies, recommendations, historical background of survey area, bibliography, and compiled inventory.
- Hicks, Theresa M. *South Carolina Quitrents, 1772–1773–1774*. Columbia, S.C.: Peppercorn Publications, Inc., 1998. (SCR 929.3757 Hicks)
- Early tax records of South Carolina. Lists name of taxpayer, acreage and location of property, and miscellaneous information such as date of grant.

- Holcomb, Brent. *Petitions for Land From the South Carolina Council Journals*. 7 vols. Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 1996–1998. (SCR 929.3757 Holcomb)
Abstracts of petitions submitted by individuals to His Majesty’s Council requesting free land. Seven volumes cover the period 1734/5 to 1775.
- Holcomb, Brent. *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1773–1778: Books F–4 through X–4*. Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 1993. (SCR 929.3757 Holcomb)
A continuation of the abstracts started by Clara Langley (see below).
- Holcomb, Brent. *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1776–1783: Books Y–4 through H–5*. Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 1994. (SCR 929.3 Holco)
A continuation of the abstracts started by Clara Langley (see below).
- Holcomb, Brent. *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1783–1788: Books I–5 through Z–5*. Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 1996. (SCR 929.3 Holco)
A continuation of the abstracts started by Clara Langley (see below).
- Holcomb, Brent. *South Carolina's Royal Grants*. 2 vols. Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 2006.
Indexed abstracts of land grants to individuals during South Carolina’s Royal era, 1732–1775.
- Jackson Ronald Vern. *Index to South Carolina Land Grants, 1784–1800*. Bountiful, UT: Accelerated Indexing Systems, 1977. (SCR 929.3757 Jackson)
Indexes land grants held at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Includes only names of landowners, volume and page number of document, class of grant, and year of issuance. No property descriptions.
- Langley, Clara A. *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1719–1772*. 4 vols. Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1983. (SCR 929.3 Langl)
Provides a brief synopsis of the real property deeds held by the Charleston County RMC, including names, dates, and details of the property as described in the original record. Some deeds recite a chain of title. Proper names and place names are indexed.
- McInnis, Maurie Dee. *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. (SCR 305.52 McInnis)
Provides an overview and detailed analysis of architectural trends in Charleston during the antebellum era 1820–1860. Includes copious illustrations and references.
- Motes, Jesse Hogan. *South Carolina Memorials: Abstracts of Land Titles*. Greenville, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1996. (SCR 929.3757 Motes)
Includes abstracts of memorials for land (throughout the state) exhibited during the period 1774–1776.
- Poston, Jonathan. *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997. (SCR 720.9757915 Poston)
Provides an overview of the city’s architecture, broken down into nine geographic areas. Provides information about specific buildings as well as neighborhoods. Includes photographs and illustrations.
- Ravenel, Beatrice St. Julien. *Architects of Charleston*. Charleston, S.C: Carolina Art Association, 1945 (reprinted 1964; reprinted by USC Press, 1992). (SCR 720.9757 Ravenel)
Provides biographical and career information about the most prominent architects in Charelston from the 18th to the early 20th century. Discusses specific prominent buildings. Illustrated and indexed.
- Salley, A. S., Jr., ed. *Warrants for Lands in South Carolina, 1672–1711*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1973. (SCR 975.7 S)
Warrant: a document issued from the governor to the surveyor general ordering a plat and “return of survey” for a particular tract of land. Provides a literal translation of warrant books covering 1672–1711. Fully indexed.

- Severens, Kenneth. *Charleston Antebellum Architecture and Civic Destiny*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988. (SCR 720.9757 Severens)
Discusses the development of Charleston's civic architecture from 1710–1861. Examines architectural trends and specific public buildings.
- Smith, Alice Ravenel Huger. *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina*. 1917 (reprinted, New York: Diadem, 1974). (SCR 728.09757 Smith)
Examines Charleston's architectural growth using numerous examples of specific dwelling houses. Extensively illustrated.
- Smith, Henry A. M. *The Historical Writings of Henry A.M. Smith. Vol. I: The Baronies of South Carolina; Vol. II: Cities and Towns of Early South Carolina; Vol. III: Rivers and Regions of Early South Carolina*. Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Co., 1988. (SCR 975.7 Smith)
Contains detailed geographical information about colonial South Carolina. Vol. 2 contains information about specific land grants and lots within the city of Charleston. Illustrated and indexed.
- Stockton, Robert P. *The Great Shock: The Effects of the 1886 Earthquake on the Built Environment of Charleston, South Carolina*. Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1986. (SCR 551.22 Stockt)
Describes the extent and nature of the damage to the city's buildings, including selected specific structures and neighborhoods.
- Stockton, Robert P. *Information for Guides of Historic Charleston*. Charleston, S.C.: Tourism Commission, 1985. (SCR 975.7915 Informat)
An overview of the history of the city intended for tour guides. Architectural history is emphasized, and divided into neighborhoods. Provides citations for original information sources.
- Stoney, Samuel Gaillard. *This is Charleston: A Survey of the Architectural Heritage of a Unique American City Undertaken by the Charleston Civic Services Committee*. Charleston, S.C.: Carolina Art Association, 1944 (reprinted 1964, 1970, 1976). (SCR 720.9757 Stoney)
Survey of Charleston's architecture that classifies specific buildings based on varying degrees of historic import. Includes numerous photographs. Indexed.
- Waddell, Gene. *Charleston Architecture, 1670–1860*. Charleston, S.C.: Wyrick & Co., 2003. (SCR 720.9757915 Waddell)
Two-volume set that discusses the design and construction of Charleston buildings from 1670–1860. Covers trends, styles, and specific buildings. Extensively illustrated and indexed.
- Watson, Alan D. *The Quitrent System in Royal South Carolina*. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1993. (SCR 975.702 Watson)
A detailed investigation of the real estate tax system during the entire colonial period, with an emphasis on South Carolina's Royal period, 1729–1775. Also includes discussions of land warrants and memorials.

III. Microform Materials

- Charleston City Engineer's Plat Book, 1671–1951.
6 reels of microfilm (including index). Bound manuscript index available on center table in S.C. Room.
Original materials in CCPL The Charleston Archive.
- Charleston County Auditor's Ward Books. Other Title: State Assessor's Book, City; 1867 Auditor's Real Property, 1869–1870; Real Property, A–B, 1869.
1 reel of microfilm. Contents:
State Assessors Book, 1867: alphabetical by owner; includes location of property (no street number) and assessed value; pages at end out of sequence
Charleston County Auditor, Real Property, A–B, 1869: alphabetical by owner; lists personal property, not real property

Charleston County Auditor, Real Property, A–S, 1869: alphabetical by owner; lists street, lot number, value of lot, number of buildings, value of buildings, total property value
Charleston County Auditor, Real Property, 1870: 6th and 7th districts only; includes real estate not in cities, towns, and villages

Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance: Plat Books
6 reels of microfilm (including indices). Printed index available in binder on top of microfilm cabinet.

Charleston County Renunciation of Dower, 1740–1787.
Renunciation of Dower: a document relinquishing a woman’s right to her portion of her husband’s property; required for sale of property. Contains descriptions of property to be sold. Divided into five sections, 1–4 each indexed.

Charleston District Commissioner of Locations Plat Book, 1832–1883, 1839–1841
1 reel of microfilm containing a collection of plats of tracts of lands, not buildings. Similar to memorial books.

City of Charleston Assessor’s Ward Book, 1852–1902.
5 reels of microfilm. Street by street listing of properties that includes street number, number of buildings on premises and type of construction, owners, dimensions of property and assessed value. Original of 1852–56 ward book in CCPL The Charleston Archive.

City of Charleston Block Plats (“Lamblé Plats”), 1882–1883
1 reel of microfilm (and duplicate reel). Detailed plats of city blocks, including property dimensions; divided by ward. Table of contents at beginning of reel. Also includes miscellaneous plats, n.d. Original materials in CCPL The Charleston Archive.

Charleston County Inventories, Appraisals, and Sales, 1783–1867
7 reels of microfilm. Contains inventories of goods and property of deceased individuals, appraised values of personal property, and information pertaining to estate sales. Also includes the Charleston County Cash Book, 1843–1870, which records disbursement of cash from the sale of the estate of deceased.

Charleston County Wills and Estate Papers, 1840–1950
114 reels of microfilm containing wills, estate papers, and letters of administration. Index available at Charleston County Probate Office and online at www.charlestoncounty.org.

Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).
20 sheets of microfiche. Historical data and photographs of specific Charleston buildings. Listed according to HABS location number. Guide available in South Carolina Room.

Materials on the Charleston Earthquake of 1886
1 reel of microfilm. Contains *Report of Committee on Condition of Buildings after the Earthquake, with a List of Buildings that Should Come Down*, which assesses damage done to individual buildings in the earthquake of 1886. Includes street address, Sanborn map number, owner names, construction materials, building dimensions, condition of building, and recommended repairs. Street index precedes text. Original available at the South Carolina Historical Society.

Memorials of Seventeenth-and Eighteenth-Century South Carolina Land Titles,
12 reels of microfilm (with indices) covering the years 1731–1778. Location and name index available within the online catalog of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History at www.archivesindex.sc.gov.

Plat Collection of John McCrady, ca. 1680–1929.
15 reels of microfilm containing 8,213 plats spanning the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Originals at Charleston County RMC. Location and name index available within the online catalog of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History at www.archivesindex.sc.gov.

Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of South Carolina, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1856–1870.

44 reels of correspondence relating to Freedmen's issues, as well as petitions to reclaim confiscated and abandoned property. Accompanied by contemporary indices.

Records of the Commissioners of Streets and Lamps and the Board of Commissioners for Opening and Widening of Streets, Lanes, and Alleys, 1806–1866

1 reel of microfilm detailing the administration of the two commissions responsible for the maintenance and planning of Charleston's streets. Journal of the Board of Commissioners for Opening and Widening of Streets, etc. includes plats illustrating proposed changes to streets that sometimes impact individual properties.

Royal Grants (Colonial Land Grants), 1732–1775

27 reels of microfilm containing the full text of the materials abstracted by Brent Holcomb (see above). Original materials held at the S.C. Department of Archives and History www.archivesindex.sc.gov.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (For Charleston: 1884, 1888, 1902, [1929], 1944, 1951, 1955).

7 reels of microfilm. Detailed maps of the city of Charleston drawn to scale, created to assist fire insurance companies. Include street numbers, lot dimensions, building placement (including ancillary buildings), construction materials, and use of building. Index page precedes maps. Also available online through CCPL's research databases at www.ccpl.org.

South Carolina Map & Muniment Collection: Miscellaneous Maps and Plats, 1591–1982

7 reels of microfilm (including index) of plats in the collections of the S.C. Historical Society. Materials are also indexed in their online catalog, www.southcarolinahistoricalociety.org/research/searchcatalogue.htm.

South Carolina State Plats: Charleston Series (Secretary of State, Office of the Surveyor General), 1784–1860

17 reels of microfilm containing plats of properties throughout the lowcountry. Plats show tracts of land, not buildings. Original materials held at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia. Location and name index available within the online catalog of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History at www.archivesindex.sc.gov.

United States Census Records

Enumeration of individuals taken by the Federal Government every 10 years from 1790 to 1930 (1940–2000 not yet available to the public). Specific street addresses listed from 1880 onward. Useful for determining who resided at a given address at the time of the census. Not searchable by street; must first locate appropriate ward and then scroll through to find street name (usually written vertically in first column, with street number in second column). Available on microfilm or through www.ancestry.com (available within the library only).

United States City Ward Maps

1 reel of microfilm (and duplicate reel). Alphabetical by city; contains maps of wards with locations of public buildings. Charleston ward maps for 1844, 185?, 1869/70, 1883.