

Records of the Trustees of the William Enston Home, 1882–1995

The Charleston Archive, Charleston County Public Library

Compiled by Nicholas Butler, Ph.D., Manager, 2007

Collation 9 linear feet

Description: This collection contains the records of the Trustees of the William Enston Home from 1882 to 1995. The included materials include applications, correspondence, ephemera, financial records, minutes, publications, and superintendents' reports.

Historical Note: The William Enston Home, located at 900 King Street in Charleston, South Carolina, may be one of the oldest examples of public housing for the elderly in the American south. The 1859 will of William Enston endowed the City of Charleston with the bulk of his estate to establish a "hospital for old and infirm persons . . . to make old age comfortable." The full bequest did not become available, however, until the death of Mrs. Hannah Enston and the will's annuitants.

William Enston died in 1860, just prior to the beginning of the Civil War. By the war's close in 1865, his original \$1 million estate had been reduced by half. His vision for the Home included a campus of at least eight-acres with two-story brick cottages, patterned after a similar institution in his native Canterbury, England. Enston's will stipulated that applicants for admission must be poor, mentally stable, "decent," of "good, honest character," and at least forty-five years of age, except in the case of severe infirmity.

By 1882 Charleston Mayor William A. Courtenay was eager to initialize plans for the institution, and secured a settlement between the City and Mrs. Enston and the surviving annuitants. A stipulation of the settlement was the appointment of a twelve-member Board of Trustees—six selected by the City and six by Mrs. Enston—to oversee the planning and implementation of the home. The Trustees envisioned a "model village" consisting of forty cottages with streets paved in Belgian block and bearing names derived from Enston's native England.

Groundbreaking of the William Enston Home, located on the site of the former Storen farm in the northern part of the Charleston peninsula, began in 1887. The compound was completed in 1889 and consisted of nineteen homes, an engine house, a water tower, and a Memorial Hall. An elaborate entrance gate was added in 1893. Five additional cottages, similar in style to the originals, were constructed in 1927. An infirmary was erected in 1933 with funds provided by Miss Harriet Dawson in memory of her brother, John L. Dawson, M.D.

The Enston Home served the elderly poor of Charleston for over 100 years. In 1994, the city sold the property to the Charleston Housing Authority (CHA), now known as the Department of Housing and Community Development. The CHA renovated the buildings in 1996 and constructed thirteen new units in 1997. The institution continues to serve the elderly poor as well as low-to-moderate income singles and families, who pay a nominal rent based on a sliding scale. Some housing is set aside for the mentally disabled and for those needing transitional housing. The buildings underwent renovations again in 2006.

Records of the Trustees of the William Enston Home, 1882–1995

Collection Outline

NOTE: This collection represents a union of records formerly housed by two institutions: the South Carolina Historical Society (SCHS) and the City of Charleston Records Management Division. The collection identification numbers (i.e., 210.01) used here refer to the SCHS classification system under which the materials were formerly cataloged.

Series:

- I. Applications / 210.01 (A)
 - a. 1899–1906 BOX 1
 - b. 1907–1911 BOX 2
 - c. Blank application form BOX 2
 - d. Applications for leave of absence, 1932–1948 (bound volume) BOX 2

- II. Correspondence / 210.01 (C)
 - a. 1883–1890 BOX 2
 - b. 1891–1984 BOX 3
 - c. Bound correspondence: letterpress copybook, 1883–1889 BOX 4
 - d. Bound correspondence: letterpress copybook, 1889–1897 BOX 4
 - e. Bound correspondence: Annuitants Fund letterpress copybook, 1883–1890 BOX 4
 - f. Bound correspondence: Annuitants Fund letterpress copybook, 1890–1904 BOX 4

- III. Ephemera BOX 4

- IV. Financial Records / 210.01 (F)
 - a. Annual Statements, 1953–1956 BOX 5
 - b. Bank books, 1889–1935 / 210.01 (F) 02
 - c. Cash book, 1882–1900 / 210.01 (F) 04
 - d. Cash Book of the Trustees of the Enston Home, 1882–1887 (one volume)
 - e. Cash Book of the Trustees of the Enston Home, 1887–1889 (one volume)
 - f. Check stub books, 1882–1889 / 210.01 (F) 03
 - g. Check or voucher stub books, 1889–1908 / 210.01 (F) 03 (OVERSIZED)
 - h. Enston Donation: Bonds and Mortgages, 1882–1887 (one volume)
 - i. Enston Donation: Insurance and Rents, 1882–1887 (one volume)
 - j. Insurance Policies, 1874–1887
 - k. Miscellaneous, 1894–1935 BOX 6
 - l. Miscellaneous, [n.d.]
 - m. Payroll, 1888–1889 (incomplete)

n. Receipt book, Trustees of the William Enston Home Annuitant Fund, 1882–1904 (OVERSIZED)	BOX 6
o. Receipt Roll of Hired Men, 1883–1887 (incomplete)	
p. Report of Audit, 1964–1970 (incomplete)	
q. Vouchers	
1882–1889	BOX 7
1891, 1896	BOX 8
1896–1908	BOX 9
1909–1910	BOX 10
1913–1933	BOX 11
1933–1936	BOX 12
1937	BOX 13
V. Information Forms, 1910–1950 / 210.01 (I)	BOX 14
VI. Minute Books: 1882–1976 / 210.01 (M) 01	
a. Rough Copy Minutes (1882–1895)	BOX 14
b. Fair Copy Minutes (1882–1976)	
No. 1 1882–1889	BOX 15
No. 2 1889–1896	BOX 15
No. 3 1896–1907	BOX 16
No. 4 1908–1924	BOX 16
No. 5 1925–1938	BOX 17
No. 7 1955–1974	BOX 18
No. 8 1974–1976	
VII. Miscellaneous Records: 1842–1995 / 210.01 (M) 02	BOX 19
a. Death Records, 1889–1896	
b. Infirmary, admission/discharge records 1947–1953	
c. Legal, 1884–1995	
d. Miscellaneous, 1842–1905	
e. Miscellaneous, n.d.	
f. Publications, 1882–1938	
g. Register, 1888–94	
h. Transcription of inmate information from the records 1887–1939	
i. Will of William Enston	
VIII. Publications, 1882–1938	BOX 20
IX. Superintendents' Reports: 1890–1936 / 210.01 (R)	BOX 20