

Wards of Charleston, 1783–1960

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

13 August 1783: S.C. General Assembly passes “An Act to Incorporate Charleston,” establishing 13 wards.¹

- Ward 1: From Wilkins’s Fort, east side of Church Street, to the south side of Tradd Street, easterly to the Bay.
- Ward 2: North side of Tradd Street to the south side of Queen Street, easterly.
- Ward 3: From the north side of Queen Street to the south side of Ellery Street, easterly.
- Ward 4: North side of Ellery Street up to Meeting Street, and along the same to the west end of Quince Street, and along Quince Street through Anson Street to Boundary Street, easterly.
- Ward 5: South end of King Street to the south side of Tradd Street, easterly to Church Street.
- Ward 6: From Tradd Street along King Street, to the south side of Broad to Church Street, easterly.
- Ward 7: North side of Broad Street along King Street to the south side of Queen Street, easterly to Church Street.
- Ward 8: North side of Queen Street along King Street, south of Hasell Street, easterly to join ward three.
- Ward 9: From Hasell Street along King Street to Boundary Street, and to join the ward number four.
- Ward 10: South end of Legare Street, including the west end of Tradd Street, easterly to King Street.
- Ward 11: North side of Tradd Street to the west end of Broad Street, easterly to King Street.
- Ward 12: North side of Broad Street to the west end of Ellery Street, easterly to King Street.
- Ward 13: North side of Ellery Street, west, to Boundary Street, easterly to King Street.

15 March 1789: S.C. General Assembly passes an act establishing a tobacco inspection station in Charleston, which enlarges the bounds of the city to include the public lands bounded by Hutson Street, Meeting Street, Boundary Street, and St. Philip Street.²

31 January 1805: Charleston City Council passes “An Ordinance to ascertain and define anew the Wards of the City of Charleston, and for other purposes therein mentioned.”³

- Ward 1: Bounded east by Cooper River, south by Ashley River, west by Church Street, north by Tradd Street.
- Ward 2: Bounded east by Cooper River, south by Tradd Street, west by Church Street, north by Queen Street.
- Ward 3: Bounded east by Cooper River, south by Queen Street, west by Church and Anson Streets, north by Hasell Street.
- Ward 4: Bounded east by Cooper River, south by Hasell Street, west by Anson Street, north by Boundary Street.
- Ward 5: Bounded east by Church Street, south by Ashley River, west by King Street, north by Tradd Street.
- Ward 6: Bounded east by Church Street, south by Tradd Street, west by King Street, north by Queen Street.
- Ward 7: Bounded east by Church and Anson Streets, south by Queen Street, west by King Street, north by Hasell Street.
- Ward 8: Bounded east by Anson Street, south by Hasell Street, west by King Street, north by Boundary Street.
- Ward 9: Bounded east by King Street, south by Ashley River, west by Ashley River, north by Tradd Street.
- Ward 10: Bounded east by King Street, south by Tradd Street, west by Ashley River, north by King Street.
- Ward 11: Bounded east by King Street, south by Queen Street, west by Ashley River, north by Beaufain Street.
- Ward 12: Bounded east by King Street, south by Beaufain Street, west by Coming Street, north by Boundary Street.
- Ward 13: Bounded east by Coming Street, south by Beaufain Street, west by Ashley River, north by Boundary Street.

19 December 1809: S.C. General Assembly passes “An Act to alter and amend ‘An Act to Incorporate Charleston,’ by an equal division of Wards,” ordering the city divided into four wards by the first of August and to review the divisions every seven years.⁴

23 July 1810: City Council passes “An Ordinance for carrying into effect an Act of the Legislature, under date the 19th of December, 1809, directing that the whole of the City of Charleston be divided into Four Divisions or Wards.”⁵

- Ward 1: Bounded by Cooper River, South Bay and Ashley River, west by center of Meeting St., north by center of Queen St.
- Ward 2: Bounded east by center of Meeting Street, south and west by Ashley River, north by center of Queen Street.
- Ward 3: Bounded east by Cooper River, south by center of Queen St., west by center of Meeting St., north by Boundary-St.
- Ward 4: Bounded east by center of Meeting Street, south by center of Queen Street, west by Ashley river, north by Cumming’s Creek, Boundary, Vanderhorst, and Hudson Streets.

23 July 1817: Charleston City Council passes an ordinance confirming the existing boundaries of the four wards.⁶

21 December 1822: S.C. General Assembly passes “An Act to define the boundary line between the City of Charleston and Charleston Neck; and for other purposes therein mentioned.” Accordingly, the city limit is defined: “Fifty feet on Boundary-street, from the south line of the said street to the north, shall constitute the breadth of the said street; from the market square [at the east end of Boundary Street], the north line or side of the said street called Boundary-street, as above designated, to form the line from the said market square to Meeting-street, from thence through the centre of Meeting to Hutson-street; through the centre

of Hutson-street to King-street; through the centre of King-street to Vanderhorst-street; through the centre of Vanderhorst-street to St. Philip's-street continued; through the centre of St. Philip's-street to the north side of Boundary street, as described above; thence westwardly to the centre of Cumming's creek; thence to the channel of this creek to the channel of the Ashley river."⁷

28 July 1831: Charleston City Council passes "An Ordinance to lay out the Wards of the City." This ordinance confirms and continues the existing boundaries of the wards established in 1810.⁸

2 July 1838: Charleston City Council passes "An Ordinance to continue in force 'An Ordinance to lay out the Wards of the City,'" which re-confirms the ward boundaries that were established in 1810 and continued in 1831.⁹

19 December 1849: S. C. General Assembly passes "An Act to extend Limits of the City of Charleston," which confirms the city's annexation of "all that part of St. Philip's Parish, lying between the present limits of the city, and a line to be drawn due west from Cooper River to Ashley River, by the junction of Meeting and King Street, [to] be divided into four Wards."¹⁰

19 October 1850: Charleston City Council passes "An Ordinance to enlarge certain Boards and Departments, and to extend and adapt certain Laws and Regulations to that part of the Parish of St. Philip which has been recently incorporated with the city of Charleston, and for other purposes." This ordinance changes the name of Boundary Street to Calhoun Street and designates the land south of that street the "lower wards" and the land to the north the "upper wards."¹¹ Although this ordinance does not articulate the boundaries of the four new upper wards, descriptions of their boundaries can be found elsewhere. For example, *Hooper's Directory, Trade Index and Shipper's Guide, For Charleston, S.C. 1874-'75*, defines the city wards as follows:

- Ward 1: Bounded by north side of Queen, south by Ashley River, east by Cooper River, and west side of Meeting.
- Ward 2: Bounded by north side of Queen, east side of Meeting, and south and west by Ashley River.
- Ward 3: Bounded by north side of Calhoun, south side of Queen, east by Cooper River, and west side of Meeting.
- Ward 4: Bounded by north side of Calhoun, south side of Queen, east side of Meeting, and west by Ashley River.
- Ward 5: Bounded by north side of Woolfe and Amherst, south side of Calhoun, east by Cooper River, and west side of King.
- Ward 6: Bounded by north side of Cannon, south side of Calhoun, east side of King, and west by Ashley River.
- Ward 7: Bounded north by City Boundary, south side of Woolfe and Amherst, east by Cooper River, and west side of King.
- Ward 8: Bounded north by City Boundary, south side of Cannon, east side of King, and west by Ashley River.

21 December 1882: S. C. General Assembly passes "An Act to divide the City of Charleston into Twelve Wards, and Making Provisions for the Election of the Mayor and Aldermen of said City."¹² These divisions remained in effect until 1960, when Charleston began annexing land beyond the peninsula, thereby greatly expanding the boundaries of the city.

- Ward 1: South of Broad Street and east of King Street.
- Ward 2: South of Broad Street and west of King Street.
- Ward 3: North of Broad Street, south of Hasell Street, and east of King Street.
- Ward 4: North of Broad Street, south of Wentworth Street, and west of King Street.
- Ward 5: North of Hasell Street, south of Calhoun Street, and east of King Street.
- Ward 6: North of Wentworth Street, south of Calhoun Street, and west of King Street.
- Ward 7: North of Calhoun Street, south of Mary Street, and east of King Street.
- Ward 8: North of Calhoun Street, south of Radcliffe and Bee Streets, and west of King Street.
- Ward 9: North of Mary Street to the City Boundary, east of Nassau Street up to Amherst Street, east of Hanover Street
- Ward 10: North of Mary Street, west of Nassau Street up to its intersection with Amherst Street, and from Amherst Street west of Hanover Street to the City Boundary, and east of King Street.
- Ward 11: West of King Street, east of Rutledge Avenue, and north of Radcliffe Street to the City Boundary.
- Ward 12: North of Bee Street to the City Boundary, and west of Rutledge Avenue.

1960: The city begins annexing land beyond the peninsula, and the city's representative districts enter a new era of flux.

References

¹ *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, Vol. 7 (1840), 7: 97–101.

² *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, Vol. 5 (1839), 118.

³ *Digest of the Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, passed between 24 September 1804, and 1 September 1807* (1807): 335–37.

⁴ *Statutes at Large*, 7: 126.

⁵ *A Digest of the Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, from the Year 1783 to October 1844* (1844), 293.

⁶ *Digest of the Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, from the year 1783 to July 1818* (1818), 236–37.

⁷ *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, Vol. 6 (1839), 193–94.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 293–94.

⁹ *A Digest of the Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston, from the Year 1783 to October 1844* (1844), 294.

¹⁰ *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, Vol. 11 (1873), 564–65.

¹¹ *Ordinances of the City of Charleston, from the 19th of August 1844, to the 14th of September 1854* (1854), 95–98.

¹² *Charleston Year Book, 1882*, 313–15.