



Researching Charleston Historic District Structures: Publications and Websites

Here is a list of books, other printed materials, and websites that may be useful sources of information on Charleston's architecture, historic buildings, and landmarks. Many include photographs and drawings.

Books & Other Publications:

- Bates, Susan Baldwin and Harriott Cheves Leland. *Proprietary Records of South Carolina, Volumes 1-3*. Land records (abstracts of grants, wills, other miscellaneous records) for the period 1675-1719.
- Bostick, Douglas W. *On the Eve of the Charleston Renaissance: The George W. Johnson Photographs*
- Brenner, Betty and Francis J. *The Old Codgers' Charleston Address Book, 1990-1999*. Information compiled from City Directories, etc., by street address; goes up through K.
- Building/property files. Organized by street address, they may contain a variety of sources including SC Architectural Inventory documentation and newspaper articles, photographs, and deed research. Available at various locations including the SC Room at the Charleston County Public Library, SC Historical Society, Charleston Library Society, and Historic Charleston Foundations Archives.
- Burton, Milby. *Units of Charleston a/k/a Charleston Streets*. Unpublished manuscript that explores the origins of street names and the various names they have had over time. Available at the SC Room at the Charleston County Public Library and Historic Charleston Foundation Archives.
- Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance. *Index to Deeds of the Province and State of South Carolina*
- Charleston Tourism Commission. *Information for Guides of Historic Charleston*. Brief house/building histories from a number of sources, by street address. Also contains information on the founding and history of Charles Town; how the city grew; suburbs and sections; Charleston parks, historic colleges, and harbor forts; Black Charlestonians; botanical guide notes; Charleston architecture; historic preservation in Charleston; protective covenants and easements; and markers.

- Curtis, Elizabeth Gibbons. *Gateways and Doorways of Charleston, South Carolina in the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Centuries*
- Deas, Alston. *The Early Ironwork of Charleston*
- Earthquake Information, including *Report of Committee on Condition of Buildings After the Earthquake, with a List of Buildings that Should Come Down*” (a house-by-house assessment of damage from the 1886 Earthquake). Original at SC Historical Society; copies at SC Room and Historic Charleston Foundation Archives. (See also Websites, below.)
- Foster, Mary Preston. *Charleston: A Historic Walking Tour*
- Hart, Emma. *Building Charleston: Town and Society in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World*
- Hudgins, Carter L., et al., eds. *The Vernacular Architecture of Charleston and the Lowcountry, 1670-1990: A Field Guide*
- Hash, C. Patton. *Charleston: Alone Among the Cities*
- Holcomb, Brent H. *South Carolina Deed Abstracts* (a continuation of the abstracts prepared under Clara A. Langley)
- Langley, Clara A. *South Carolina Abstracts, 1719-1772*
- Light, Sally. *House Histories: A Guide to Tracing the Genealogy of Your Home*
- Lincoln, F.S. *Charleston: Photographic Studies*
- Mazyck, Arthur. *Guide to Charleston Illustrated*. Also available online at University of Michigan’s “Making of America” website, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>.
- *Post & Courier (News & Courier)*. “Do You Know Your Charleston” articles. For many years, this was a regular feature that focused on a particular house, building, or street, and provided historical information and often a photograph. Back issues of the newspaper are on microfilm available at the Charleston County Public Library and College of Charleston Library. Also, photocopies of articles may be filed in the building/property files that are maintained at many local repositories.
- Poston, Jonathan. *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City’s Architecture*
- Preservation Society of Charleston. *Preservation Progress* (periodical)
- Ravenel, Beatrice St. Julien. *Architects of Charleston*
- Severens, Kenneth. *Charleston: Antebellum Architecture and Civic Destiny*

- Simons, Albert, and Samuel Lapham Jr., eds., *Charleston, South Carolina* (vol. 1 of the Octagon Library of Early American Architecture, reprinted as *The Early Architecture of Charleston*)
- Simons, Albert and W. H. Johnson Thomas, *An Architectural Guide to Charleston, South Carolina, 1700-1900* (in manuscript form)
- Smith, Alice Ravenel Huger, and D.C. Huger Smith. *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina*
- South Carolina Historical Society. *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*. Index and bound versions available at SC Historical Society and SC Room at Charleston County Public Library.
- Steele, John Carson Hay. *Charleston Then and Now: Contemporary Photographs by Robert Pinckney Rhett (1990s), James Moore Rhett III (1970s)*
- Stoney, Samuel Gaillard. *This is Charleston: An Architectural Survey of a Unique American City*
- Stockton, Robert. *The Great Shock: The Effects of the 1886 on the Built Environment of Charleston, South Carolina*
- Waddell, Gene. *Charleston Architecture, 1670-1860*

There are many other books available at area libraries, many of which would likely be available via interlibrary loan if you do not live in Charleston.

To find others, try searching on the following subjects:

Architecture -- South Carolina -- Charleston
 Architecture -- Conservation and restoration -- South Carolina -- Charleston
 Charleston (S.C.) -- Buildings, structures, etc.
 Historic buildings -- South Carolina -- Charleston
 Historic buildings -- Conservation and restoration -- South Carolina -- Charleston
 Dwellings -- South Carolina -- Charleston
 Vernacular architecture -- South Carolina -- Charleston
 Historic sites -- South Carolina -- Charleston

When you do find informative books, be sure to check their bibliographies for additional resources.

Other archives and library resources include:

- Booklets, Guidebooks, Pamphlets: Many libraries and archives have smaller publications such as tourist guidebooks and souvenir booklets in their collections. These smaller publications may contain descriptions and photographs of Charleston buildings and landmarks.

- **Archaeological Reports:** Archaeological investigations of many of the most significant buildings and sites in Charleston have been conducted. These reports may be found in area libraries and other institutions, and can usually be found in a library catalog through a search of the name of the building (or plantation) or by searching on the following subjects:

Charleston (S.C.) -- Antiquities

Excavations (Archaeology) -- South Carolina – Charleston

Internet Resources:

Some of these are local websites and searching for information will be straightforward. For resources with a national scope, you will need to phrase your search terms to include geographic location (i.e., Charleston, SC).

- Charleston County, www.charlestoncounty.org/

Under the Online Services tab, click on the relevant link to view maps and to search deeds, mortgages, property, and probate records. Also note the links to the Archival Room and Plat Gallery, where scans of several McCrady and other plats may be accessed online.

- Charleston County Public Library, www.ccpl.org

The Charleston Multimedia Project, www.ccpl.org. Click on Services, click on SC History & Genealogy, click on Charleston Multimedia Project). Online exploration of Charleston's heritage via the Guidebook (street-by-street, building-by-building guide to the Historic District); Topics (brief, illustrated subject essays about the city's history, architecture, and culture); Timeline (a chronology of noteworthy events); and Tours (descriptions of landmark buildings and structures).

Sanborn Maps: Click on Resources, then Research Databases, then History & Geography, then Digital Sanborn Maps, then Home Access, which will enable you to access the maps remotely (note that you must have a library card for remote access).

The Charleston Archive (f/k/a Special Collections), www.ccpl.org. Under Services/South Carolina History & Genealogy/The Charleston Archive. Collections include a wealth of original public records from The City of Charleston and Charleston County. Of note, "Records of the Historic Preservation Planner, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, 1970-1981" (a/k/a Elias Ball Bull Papers); photos from this collection are digitized on the Lowcountry Digital Library. See also "The Charleston History Advocate" [blog], www.charlestonarchive.org. Of note, "Translating Old Street Addresses in Charleston" and "A Brief History of Charleston Street Numbers."

- City of Charleston, www.charlestoncity.info/home/default.aspx

Departments and regulatory boards (BAR, Zoning, etc.), GIS Maps.

- Clemson University Libraries, www.lib.clemson.edu/

Access to *Harper's Weekly*, craftsmen database, MESDA, historic newspapers, 19th Century Masterfile, Sanborn Maps, etc. (Many of these require a student I.D. and password.)

- College of Charleston Library, www.cofc.edu/~library/index.html

Access to various databases such as JSTOR, America's Historical Newspapers, Early American Imprints, and BCIN (Bibliographic Database of the Conservation Information Network). (Requires a student I.D. and password.)

- Historic Charleston Foundation, www.historiccharleston.org

Use the search bar for best results. See Hot Issues, Newsroom, Archives & Research, Charleston History (Mapping Charleston).

- History of South Carolina Slide Collection, www.knowitall.org/schistory/

Searchable collection of various images of South Carolina.

- Internet Archive, www.archive.org

Access to a huge collection of digitized and searchable books.

- Library of Congress, www.loc.gov

American Memory, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>. A gateway to the LC's digitized historical American resources. See especially the Maps, Architecture/Landscape, and Cities/Towns collections. Note that the Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) collection of architectural and engineering documentation is located under Architecture/Landscape.

Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>. Allows you to search and view newspaper pages from 1860-1922 and find information about American newspapers published between 1690-present.

Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html. Search the LOC Prints & Photographs Division's 14 million photos, prints, drawings, and architectural records, including many digital images available for download.

19th Century in Print, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/moahtml/ncphome.html>. Searchable databases of 19th century American books and periodicals.

Map Collections, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html>

- Lowcountry Digital Library, <http://lowcountrydigital.library.cofc.edu/>

Collections of several Charleston institutions have been digitized, including photographs of buildings and other information. Search for the building's name and/or address. *See especially* Historic Charleston Foundation's collections.

- National Park Service, www.cr.nps.gov/

National Register Sites in SC, www.nationalregister.sc.gov/charleston/nrcharleston.htm. National Register nomination forms and photographs; provides detailed architectural histories. Once you've identified a house you'd like to research, see if it's listed on the National Register.

National Register Publications, Bulletins and Brochures, www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications. Of note, #39 "Researching a Historic Property."

Colonials and Patriots, Survey of Historic Buildings, www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/colonials-patriots/site.htm. An illustrated survey of historic sites and buildings, including many in Charleston.

National Historic Landmarks Program, www.cr.nps.gov/nhl/. Nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior for their exceptional value or quality in illustrating/interpreting the heritage of the U.S.

HABS, HALS, HAER, www.nps.gov/history/hdp/. Includes photographs and architectural drawings of thousands of historic buildings around the country.

- National Portrait Gallery, www.npg.si.edu/

Portraits of prominent men and women from American history.

- Saint Louis University Earthquake Center, "The 1886 Charleston, South Carolina, Earthquake," http://www.eas.slu.edu/Earthquake_Center/1886EQ/

- Scottish Rite Center's Charleston Streets: www.scottishritecalifornia.org/charleston_street's.htm.

Provides the histories behind names of the streets of Charleston.

- South Carolina Department of Archives and History, <http://scdah.sc.gov/>

South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, <http://shpo.sc.gov/>. Links to several SHPO programs and services and to other preservation-related sites. Of note, "Survey of Historic Properties," <http://shpo.sc.gov/properties/survey/>, which gives access to survey documentation of thousands of historic buildings, structures, sites, etc.

On-Line Records Index, <http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/>. From the index page, click on Search Page to search various collections like McCrady plats,

- University of Michigan, “Making of America,” <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>
Includes several important Charleston resources such as the *Guide to Charleston Illustrated*
- University of North Carolina, Documenting the American South, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/>. Search the collection for “Charleston South Carolina” for the 1861 Census
- University of South Carolina Libraries, www.sc.edu/library/, for access to photographs at South Caroliniana Library, USC’s Digital Collections for Sanborn maps, and University Libraries Map Library.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, www.sc.edu/library/digital/collections/sanborn.html.

Visual Materials, www.sc.edu/library/socar/visual.html, to search for photos, architectural drawings, blueprints, etc.

- Yale University, “The Avalon Project,” <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/>

Transcriptions of documents in law, history, and diplomacy.

Journal Databases: There is a variety of online research/journal databases that are available through area public, and college libraries, e.g., JSTOR, Harper’s Weekly, MESDA, 19th Century Masterfile, and many more. If your library’s catalog organizes the database by major/minor or by subject, look for databases for Architecture and/or Historic Preservation. JSTOR and the Bibliographic Database of the Conservation Information Network (BCIN) are particularly useful.

Maps

In addition to the map resources that can be found in the above research websites, other online sites for maps include:

- “Halsey Map,” Preservation Society Website: <http://www.halseymap.com/Flash/map.asp>

Map of Charleston compiled and delineated by Alfred O. Halsey illustrates Charleston from its founding, development, and experiencing of natural disasters.

- “Mapping Charleston,” Historic Charleston Foundation website: www.historiccharleston.org/experience/charleston_maps.html

Illustrates how the shape of the Charleston peninsula has changed since 1670, the path of Charleston’s great fires, HCF’s covenant and easement properties, building development in Charleston, and the development of the Old and Historic District

- Morris+Baily Industrial Design’s Charleston Illustrated: A Historic District Architectural Map: www.charlestonillustrated.com/maps.htm

A compilation of maps: The Development of Charleston, Panoramic Mapping, and Antique Maps of Charleston.

- SciWay (SC Information Highway), *www. www.sciway.net/hist/maps/mapscharleston.html*
- University of Georgia Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library Historical Maps collection, *http://www.libs.uga.edu/hargrett/maps/index.html*
- University of Texas, *www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historic_us_cities.html*

See Perry Castañeda Map Collection for links to a variety of map resources.