

Your support empowers the Foundation to uncover the stories waiting to be told through archaeological research; present a more comprehensive history of the diverse people who contributed to Charleston's historically significant cultural, social and economic fabric; and advance our house museums as places of enlightenment, healing and conciliation.

This year we:

- **Committed to amplifying the contributions of African Americans and other marginalized communities to Charleston's history.** We believe that historic preservation has a role in bridging the divides in our community and serving as a platform to educate, to illuminate, to have the difficult conversations and to celebrate everyone's contributions to Charleston's culture. Programming in development will soon bring this initiative to light.
- **Confronted the social unrest** in the city over the summer through *Promiseland*, a provocative art installation at the Aiken-Rhett House by local artist Fletcher Williams that used the picket fence as a meditation on racial inequality and the American Dream. A generous donor underwrote free weekend admission for local residents to explore this timely exhibition.
- **Continued archaeological research** in the Nathaniel Russell Kitchen House to tell, for the first time, more complete stories of the 18 enslaved people who lived and labored on the property. An incredible array of artifacts is shedding new light on their everyday lives and the lives of the Russell family. A fragment of the floorcloth discovered under the floor boards is the **ONLY** extant 19th-century floorcloth ever found, and the scholarly research community is overwhelmed by this find. Additional discoveries include a hidden crystal, likely a West African spiritual object, a fragment of a reading primer, kitchen utensils and much more. So many stories are waiting to be told!
- **Launched a forensic investigation** into foodways at the Russell House through culinary remnants (seeds, fruit pits and bones found during the archaeological dig). Applying a technique pioneered at Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia, the Penn Museum's archaeobotanist Dr. Chantel White and her team will spend the next few years scientifically reconstructing what was grown, prepared and eaten at the site over time.
- **Acquired an exceptional Recamier**, c. 1805, once in the collection of William Randolph Hearst and attributed to acclaimed furniture maker Samuel Field McIntire (1780-1819) of Salem, MA. The sofa survives as one of only four extant examples of its form with carving attributed to the McIntire shop tradition. After conservation and a period-appropriate re-upholstering, this beautiful sofa will be installed in the Oval Drawing Room of the Nathaniel Russell House.

Fletcher Williams' provocative exhibit, Promiseland, broadened visitors perspectives on the American dream as it relates to race.

[View the 2019 Annual Report at HistoricCharleston.org/AnnualReport2019](https://HistoricCharleston.org/AnnualReport2019)

2020 Impact Report

Education

Your support allows the Foundation to serve as a “go-to” resource for teachers, students, community leaders, history and preservation scholars, residents and visitors seeking knowledge by imparting the lessons of Charleston's history and culture. When social distancing restrictions necessitated online learning opportunities, the Foundation was swift to respond with curated online programming for teachers and the broader Charleston community.

This year we:

- **Captured powerful stories from Charleston's Johns Island community** through a series of oral history films called *Tangled Roots*. These intimate, and sometimes painful short films, look into the experiences, memories and personal stories of several civic leaders, revealing priorities based in faith, family and community, and illuminating a resilient spirit of activism with a focus on egalitarianism. New generations will view these oral histories inside classrooms to learn more about the history and importance of Johns Island from those who lived the experience.
- **Introduced a virtual classroom** for grades 1 – 12 in response to COVID-19 to provide educators (and parents!) with South Carolina standards-based content, vetted by area educators. The lessons address topics ranging from identifying the differences in life, technology, culture and economy in the mid-1800s versus today to slavery, colonization, the American Revolution and the Civil Rights movement.
- **Served our community with online educational programming** when COVID-19 forced stay-at-home learning. Topics included recent archaeological finds at the Nathaniel Russell Kitchen House, to a tour of Mosquito Beach, an historic African-American recreational area that flourished during the Segregation Era, highlights from HCF's Archives, virtual history scavenger hunts via the HCF app, and a celebration of the Charleston suffragists.
- **Facilitated 384 research requests** to advance scholarly study of local preservation and architecture.
- **Made history come alive** for almost 4,500 school children through field trips and virtual learning experiences, and expanded our reach through a new partnership with *Streamable Learning*, which delivers online content throughout the country.

Above: Edisto River by Mac Ball, principal of Waggonner & Ball and member of the Dutch Dialogues team. Right: J. Herman Blake, an esteemed Johns Island resident and Civil Rights leader.



This has been a challenging year for us all.

As HCF adapted to new operational realities forced by COVID-19, our commitment as a champion of Charleston's historic authenticity, livability and cultural character did not waiver. The staff doubled down – navigating, pivoting and remaining flexible to accommodate ever-changing circumstances. Your support allowed the Foundation to actively engage on your behalf in protecting the public process, monitoring new development and keeping an understandably distracted public informed and engaged on issues that will have significant long term effects on Charleston. Our advocacy work has become more important, and more relevant, than ever.

This year we:

- **Led the community discourse** on the Army Corps' 3 x 3 Study for a Perimeter Protection system for the peninsula. The proposed wall, which would be the most substantial infrastructure investment in Charleston's history, is being considered to minimize the impact of coastal storm surge on the peninsula. The Corps' plan is a good start, yet does not comprehensively address tidal flooding, stormwater, recreational functionality and aesthetics. We led the effort to bring the Dutch Dialogues consultant team back to analyze the proposal and make recommendations to the city for a preferred solution that both protects the city and reflects the character and desires of the community. HCF will continue to monitor this initiative closely to ensure any perimeter protection is not only effective, yet also compatible with Charleston's cultural landscape.
- **Lobbied to ensure that the Dutch Dialogues recommendations** were formally adopted by City Council. These recommendations provide an overarching framework for the City's resiliency planning and design and will be used to inform all City policy moving forward, such as the updated Stormwater Manual and the re-write of the comprehensive plan.
- **Initiated legal action in Federal court** to defend our easements program, which ensures that historic properties are protected in perpetuity. Last fall, the owners of 24 North Market Street challenged the legality of an easement held on the property, leading the Foundation to file suit in Federal court. This challenge has the potential to negatively impact preservation easement programs throughout the country.
- **Called for a fresh approach** to this year's re-write of Charleston's 10-year comprehensive plan. The Foundation advocated for a complete refresh of the Century V Plan in consideration of significant new environmental and social challenges facing the city. Currently in the development phase, the plan's framework will be rooted in a "water first" resiliency strategy with additional emphasis on housing affordability and livability.
- **Took a stand to protect property rights** and Gullah Geechee culture by supporting an alternative to the County's plan to widen Highway 41 through the historic Phillips community, a 150-year-old African American settlement community.
- **Protected the public process** during this COVID-19 period by ensuring that the City had proper protocols in place and reliable

technology for conducting virtual meetings of entitlement boards, such as the Board of Architectural Review, Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. HCF helped the City work through logistical issues and testing of the technology used for these meetings.

- **Pressed the City to refine and clarify** the newly updated Accommodations Ordinance to strengthen the Board of Zoning Appeals' (BZA) authority so that the process prevents an overconcentration of hotels in certain areas of the city. At the first major test of the new ordinance, a hotel project was denied. To defend the process and the city's authority when the decision was appealed, we engaged legal expertise and filed a formal petition in support of the BZA, successfully preventing another full-service hotel on Mary Street and providing strong precedent for future applications.
- **Called for community dialogue on the monuments issue**, asking City Council to pause in the removal of the John C. Calhoun monument base and column until a strategic plan for addressing other Charleston monuments is developed, informed by generous public engagement and objective evaluation.
- **Successfully defended the public process**, with our community partners, through litigation in the SC Supreme Court, which reaffirmed legal standing for preservation, environmental and neighborhood groups in our challenge to the new cruise terminal proposed for Union Pier. Our main argument
- asserted that the public must have the opportunity to provide input to help guide any major infrastructure project that affects the community.
- **Rallied the community** in an effort to preserve the iconic twin smokestacks which punctuate the skyline in the Eastside neighborhood.
- **Lobbied at the federal level** for the successful passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, resulting in the single largest federal investment in preservation of historic and cultural resources for public lands in our generation.
- **Trailblazed an innovative model** melding historic preservation with permanent affordable housing. A vernacular 1950s house, donated to the Palmetto Community Land Trust (PCLT), a program we established with the City of Charleston, was moved to a nearby lot in the Maryville neighborhood using HCF grant funding from The 1772 Foundation. The house is now part of the PCLT's permanent affordable housing portfolio.
- **Effectively negotiated** with the Laurel Island development team to influence plans to develop this 196-acre site, one of the largest developments ever undertaken on the peninsula. Concerns over workforce housing, greenspace, ensuring high quality design and protection of cultural resources at the site continue to be addressed and refined in the on-going discussions.



Standard Oil Refinery ruins on Laurel Island.
Credit: Vanessa Kauffman