



Historic Preservation Month - 2020

History - Virtually

Typically this newsletter is produced in May for Historic Preservation Month, shortly after the Board of Historic Review and staff have returned from the annual South Carolina Historic Preservation Conference in Columbia. This event, sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Archives & History, is held each April and inspires attendees with preservation topics ranging from techniques and learning opportunities to successful community efforts.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of the conference, so staff is taking a look at new avenues for bringing you preservation content.

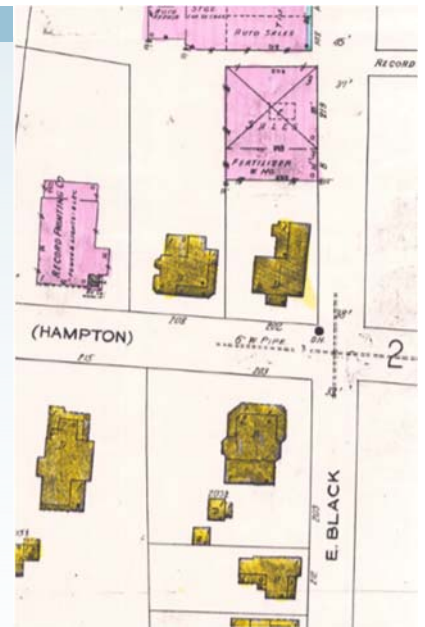
The SCDAH preservation conference has been moved to Friday, September 25, and is open to the public. Topics scheduled for this year include Restoring Doors & Windows, Preserving Family Treasures, Women of Charleston’s Preservation Movement, and Meet Me at the Rocket: A History of The State Fair.

Space is limited, so refer to the South Carolina Department of Archives & History website, scdah.sc.gov, for registration information.

The SCDAH website has a number of useful online tools for researchers, including a list of the state’s historic markers, National Register listing for South Carolina historic properties, and online access to state archive documents and SC State Government Website Archives. You can also assist the archives by becoming a Virtual Volunteer (scdah.sc.gov/virtual-volunteers). This program provides an opportunity for volunteers to help catalog and index scanned Colonial South Carolina wills for genealogical research.

The South Carolina State Library (statelibrary.sc.gov) has a number of documents and an extensive collection of digitized newspapers, starting with the

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps like the one above were produced in the 19th & 20th centuries to provide information to fire insurance companies of their liabilities. Today these maps are valuable to many researchers, showing size, shape, construction materials, and addresses as well as showing any changes to the original building.

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Historic Rock Hill

HRH is currently looking for volunteers to help identify and catalog its collection. If you are interested, please contact Lindsay Stuber, Programs Director, 803-329-1020, or check out historicrockhill.com.

History - Virtually (cont)

1783 edition of *The Chronicle of Liberty, or the Republican Intelligencer* up to the current issue of *The State*. Browsing through the collection is easy, using keywords, date ranges, or even specific dates. Online access is available to all South Carolina residents simply by applying for a library card.

The Library of Congress (loc.gov) has millions of digitized items, including books, music, maps, prints, manuscripts, sound recordings, and more, available for the public. Recently, in celebration of the 220th anniversary of its founding, the LOC launched the LOC Collections app for iPhones and iPads, with an Android version to be released later this year. The app allows

users to browse all the Library of Congress' digitized collection, curate their own collections of items, and share those collections with others.

The newspaper collection division of the Library of Congress is *Chronicling America* (chroniclingamerica.loc.gov), and includes digitized newspapers from all 50 states and Puerto Rico, dating from 1789 to 1963. Browsing through the collection can be done by state, year, keyword, and date range.

If you're looking to explore historic sites, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (savingplaces.org) has a number of virtual tours available online at savingplaces.org/historic-sites. Many of the popular and most

“How will we know it's us without our past?” John Steinbeck, [Grapes of Wrath](#)

City of Rock Hill website

The City of Rock Hill has a dedicated website devoted specifically to historic preservation at cityofrockhill.com/historic. In addition to the Certificate of Appropriateness process and *Historic Design Guidelines* for the City's designated historic properties, there are a number of articles available for a variety of topics, including:

- [Sanborn map research](#)
- [Old House Restoration Guide](#)
- [The Craftsman Blog](#)
- [Manual for Owners of Historic Buildings](#)
- [Unsticking a Stuck Window](#)
- [Save, Repair, or Replace?](#)
- [5 Tips to Make Your Historic Interior More Comfortable](#)

visited sites such as Montpelier in Orange, VA, the Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria, VA, and Drayton Hall in Charleston, SC, are showcased on the website along with virtual tours of those sites not open to the public.

The Nina Simone Childhood Home located in Tyron, NC, showcases this musician/singer and activist's early years prior to becoming a well-known and influential advocate for civil and social justice through music. Although Simone, born Eunice Waymon, grew up in the 1930s Depression-era South, her musical genius was discovered at an early age, setting her on a path of success in the music industry.

Villa Lewaro, Irvington, NY, built in 1918, was the showcase home of Madam C J Walker, America's first female millionaire. Born in Delta, LA, in 1867, Sarah Breedlove developed a line of beauty and hair products for black women. While the product lines were successful, Breedlove's talent lay in training over 23,000 sales agents and workers to sell the products and serve a customer base that spanned the United States, Central America, and the Caribbean, during the early part of the 20th century. This beautiful home, which has retained much of its architectural integrity, stands as a testament to the remarkable success of this business pioneer.

Using virtual processes to access information allows us to learn more about the world around us when we don't have the means to make the physical journey. Let's use this as an opportunity to make plans to explore more fully those places we'd like to see in person.



*City Hall on Hampton Street, 1939
(Evening Herald)*



City Hall, 1971 (City of Rock Hill archives)



City Hall, 2020 (City of Rock Hill)

City Hall History

The original offices of the City of Rock Hill were located in offices above storefronts on East Main Street. Contractor A D Holler completed the first dedicated City Hall building, which was located on Hampton Street, in 1906.

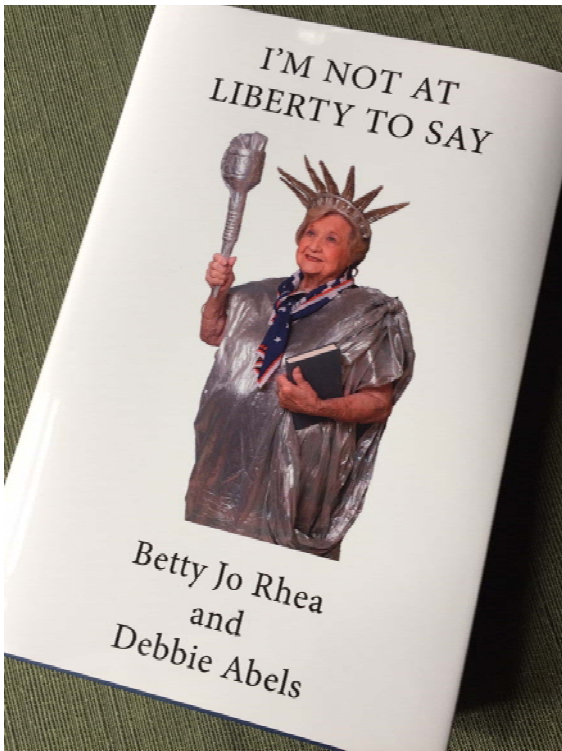
This building housed not only the administrative offices of the City Manager and other employees, it also was home to both the police and fire departments as well as stables for the horses used to draw the fire trucks.

These two departments were relocated to facilities on White Street in 1937 when the Hampton Street building was remodeled and the Chamber of Commerce opened offices on the second floor.

In the mid-1960s, it was determined that a new facility was in order and the properties across East Black Street were redeveloped to open the most recent building.

The new, modern City Hall opened for business on June 9, 1969. Costing at around \$1 million, the new building was able to house computer equipment, the local Civil Defense department, and Emergency Operations Center (911).

The building was expanded to its current configuration in 1988, with the addition of centrally-located Council Chambers meeting room, an additional administrative wing, and enclosing of the arches to form additional office space. Today, this building is the main hub for City Council and City Management; Planning & Development; Parks, Recreation and Tourism; and Customer Service, as well as other key departments.



I'm Not at Liberty to Say...

But Betty Jo Rhea is anything but quiet. The former Mayor Rhea recently released her autobiography, *I'm Not at Liberty to Say (...But I'll Tell You as Much as I Can)*, written with former publisher of The Herald newspaper, Debbie Abels.

Born Elizabeth Josephine Dunlap and raised in Rock Hill to James Otho and Carolina Elizabeth Sides Dunlap, Rhea's book begins with a short history of her family background, going back as far as her Scottish Dunlap ancestors moving to the York County area in the mid-1700s. Her paternal grandparents were raised in the York and Chester County area, and her parents eventually met in her mother's birthplace of Philadelphia, where her father was attending Pennsylvania Medical School. But ever the storyteller, Rhea moves quickly into the stories recalled of her own youth, growing up on Wilson Street and Cherry Road, attending Winthrop, and meeting (and marrying) James Copeland Rhea II, better known as Jimmy.

Rhea's twenty-plus year service to Rock Hill began in 1971 with the Rock Hill Parks and Recreation Commission. By 1978, she decided to run for Council—and won the seat despite the odds. In 1985, she again took the bull by the horns and ran for the mayor's seat against two-time mayor, J Emmett Jerome, ultimately winning and becoming the first female to hold the top office.

Rock Hill went through many changes during Rhea's time in office, including the loss of the textile industry to foreign investments, public outcry on various beautification and public arts projects, and the construction of Cherry Park. But under her leadership, Mayor Rhea was able to help bring about positive change with Empowering the Vision, which gave the City a direction for the designation and protection of historic buildings, integration of arts and local history into the public school program, transportation and road improvement strategies, and encouraging worldwide industries to settle in Rock Hill.

Although Rhea stepped down from the political arena in 1997, she remains in the public eye, hosting **The City Minute** on local channel CN2, and she frequently attends a number of events, always with a twinkle in her eye and wearing one of her trademark scarves.

Board of Historic Review

The Rock Hill Board of Historic Review was established in 1989 with the charge to assist in the preservation of the City of Rock Hill's valuable historic buildings. The seven members of the Board are appointed by City Council and serve three-year terms.

The Board is assisted by the Zoning Division of the Planning & Development Department. Janice E Miller, Historic Preservation Specialist, serves as the Board's liaison and can be reached at 803-817-5129, or janice.millercityofrockhill.com.

