

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum 1314 Broad Street Camden, SC 29020



Preserving the past for the future

Volume 15 - Number 1

May 2014

Remember when ...

Meter postcards were all the rage in downtown Camden

BY KATHERINE H. RICHARDSON
Archives Director

In the 1950s Camden had parking meters downtown. Downtown Camden was the shopping district back then and parking was at a premium. Broad Street in the business district had angled parking to accommodate the crowds of shoppers and diners downtown.

The patrolmen downtown were vigilant about expired parking meters. Remember, Highway 1 (DeKalb Street) was the major artery for travel from northern states to Florida so Camden was a tourist mecca back then. North/south travelers stopped here to eat a meal, do some shopping, or spend the night.

Our city leaders were cognizant that tourism was good for Camden, so Camden made the decision to be good for tourists.

Mayor E. C. Rhame (mayor from 1957 to 1964) and city council worked in conjunction with the Camden police to make the visitors feel welcomed to our city, and apparently everyone else in town did too. How do we know this?

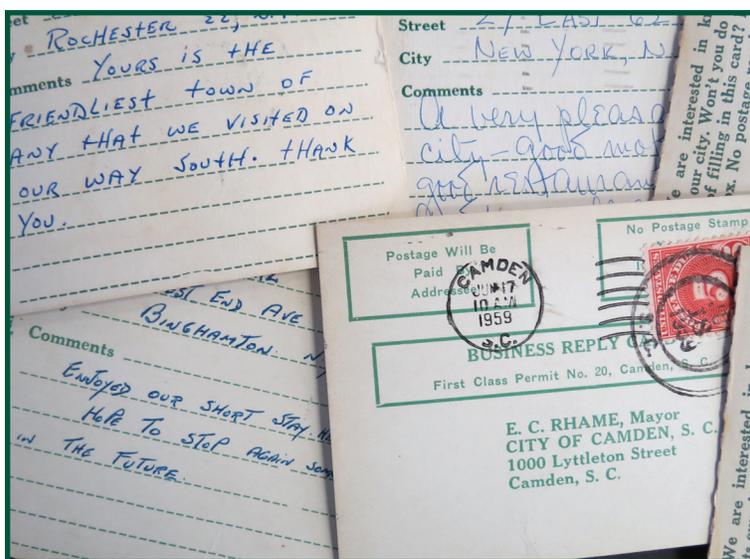
The visitors sent Mayor Rhame postcards telling the city leaders of their experience in visiting Camden. At the Archives we have a collection of the return stub postcards handed out to Camden's visitors by the downtown policemen.

This is how it worked. A two-part postcard was placed under the windshield wiper of parked cars with out-of-state license plates. Some were actually handed to visitors by the policeman on the street in the business district.

The left part of the card must have said something like, "Welcome to Camden." One side of the left part contained a printed tour of Camden. This part was retained by the visitor. The right hand part was a return postcard to the mayor with lines for a written message. The city paid the return postage.

The decision to give out-of-town visitors free parking appeared in city council minutes on June 9, 1958. Apparently the city was host to numerous conventions. The council wanted to print stickers that read "Convention Guest, Camden, S C."

The city manager determined in that meeting that there would not be enough time to print them for the next convention – the



A collage of old parking meter cards from visitors to downtown Camden in the 1950s reveals interesting comments regarding the city's hospitality and charm. Camden received a lot of positive publicity from this promotional effort.

Continued on page 3

Camden Archives Calendar of Events

Now through June 20 – Exhibit: "Robert Mills' South Carolina" and "Robert Mills: Designs for Democracy," an additional traveling exhibit from the South Carolina State Museum, in the Whiteley Room. Free and open to the public.

Ongoing -- Exhibit: The Ross E. Beard Collection. This popular exhibit expands with new pieces! Free and open to the public.

Opens July 7 and continues through January 9, 2015 – Exhibit: "In the Heart of the Pines: Camden During the Hotel Era, 1884-1941." Free and open to the public.

January 23, 2015 through June 30, 2015 – Exhibit: "100 Years: Camden's Carnegie Library." Come help us celebrate the centennial of the building of Camden's Carnegie Library – you know it now as the Camden Archives and Museum! Free and open to the public.

August 1, 2015 through October 31, 2015 – Exhibit: "The American Revolutionary War in South Carolina," a traveling exhibit from the South Carolina State Museum. The Revolutionary War action in Camden is prominently featured in this exhibit. Free and open to the public.

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Camden Archives and Museum**

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Drawing of Camden Archives and Museum by
Camden Architect Henry D. Boykin

Photographs courtesy of
Camden Archives and Museum
Katherine H. Richardson

Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum is a membership organization concerned with supporting programs, protecting a continually growing collection, and expanding the facility. The purpose of the Archives and Museum is to collect, organize, preserve, and make items of historical interest related to Camden and the surrounding areas available to the public.

The Camden Archives and Museum newsletter is published twice a year.

Editor

Ed Garrison

Writers this issue

Katherine H. Richardson
Rickie A. Good

Story ideas, suggestions, and comments are welcomed and encouraged.

Camden Archives and Museum
1314 Broad Street
Camden, SC 29020
(803) 425-6050
www.camdenarchives.org

Museum Hours

Monday-Friday 8 am - 5 pm
Saturdays 10 am - 4 pm

Free admission

From the Chairman

Dear Friends:

The first quarter of 2014 has been a great one for your Archives.

We continue to see rising numbers of visitors

The SC Federation of Museums professionals had their annual meeting in Camden. It was hosted by Katherine Richardson and her staff. Attendance was outstanding.

One of your fellow patrons was kind enough to donate the Sarah K. Von Tresckow papers that are the basis of the construction of the Archives building. (More on this later as we begin to make plans for the building's 100 years celebration.)

Best of all, your contributions helped fund the construction of new cabinetry to expand the Ross Beard collection. This addition further enhances this fantastic display.

Thank you for taking a moment to renew your membership in the Friends and please stop by to see what you have made possible!

Best regards,
Steve Van Horn



New exhibit cases in the museum gallery will help expand not only the display of the Ross Beard gun collection, but also give the Archives increased capacity to show off more of its collection. The cases are made possible by funds from the Friends and the Schlosberg Fund.

New exhibit cases in the museum gallery

Thanks to the Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum and the Schlosberg Fund, new exhibit cases have been installed in the middle section of the museum gallery.

The new cases give the Archives about 154.8 cubic feet of additional exhibit space behind glass on each side of the new cases. Built to the exact specifications of the original cases, the new ones were constructed by Keith Gibson and his team.

Ross Beard will expand his exhibit on the eastern side of the cases and the museum collection will be showcased in the western portion. The glass shelves and lighting will be installed by the time you are reading this newsletter.

Stop by and take a peek at what goes into the new cases!

Clarification on Thiel hunting habit donation

In our last newsletter, we credited the donation of Judy Firestone Thiel's hunting habit to Lisa Towell. Towell brought the habit to us, but it was actually donated by Mrs. George Spencer of Requestrian. Thank you for your donation!

Remember when –

Continued from page 1

World War I Veterans Convention. Sometime between this meeting and December 14, 1959, the use of the card came about.

And in December 1959, the city of Camden made the headlines in “American City and County Magazine,” a nationally distributed magazine founded in 1909. The article entitled “Camden, S. C. Puts Its Welcome in Writing.”

The article read, “Rarely, these days, does an out-of-state motorist park his car anywhere in Camden, S. C. – even for a few minutes – that he is not startled upon his return by a very official looking “parking ticket” attached to his windshield wiper. He finds, however, that instead of a summons to pay a parking fine or to spend the night as a “guest” in the city jail, the eye-catching tag is a direct line of communications with Camden’s Mayor E. C. Rhame who fostered the idea as a welcoming device – with several incidental advantages.”

The article points out that the card welcomed them to park in an unrestricted parking area “as long as they wished.” The printed tour of Camden was on the reverse side and the visitor was told to seek information from City Hall or the Chamber of Commerce.

This was a novel idea for a way to reach visitors who may never have contact with city officials and the article praised Camden’s leadership for coming up with the approach.

The return cards speak for themselves!

“Mighty fine town.”

“The friendliest little town in the South!”

“Your police force is the most courteous I have ever met – I travel 10 states.”

“We enjoyed a pleasant evening in your town – a good motel, a good dinner, and a good movie and the historical tour was very interesting.”

“I was stationed at Southern Aviation during the war. Married a Camden girl – naturally every time I come back I leave quite a few dollars behind.”

“Everyone hospitable & friendly to tourists. Indicates a local pride & desire to be remembered as a ‘nice’ town.”



Downtown Camden circa 1950 when it was bustling with shoppers and tourists, who were greeted with parking meter cards welcoming them to the city.

“ the most pleasant people (even the policemen).”

“... you created a desire to return some day and you can bet I will.”

“We think your hospitality to visitors is overwhelming!”

A great many of the return cards noted how “clean” Camden was. Many visitors remarked on how nice the Mona Lisa Motel, the Park View Motel, and the Sarsfield Hotel were and how good the food was in Camden’s various restaurants of the day - a snapshot of Camden in the late 1950s and 1960s.

As Camden focuses on ways to increase tourism in 2014, this collection at the Archives might give us some clues from the past!

Friends sponsoring SC PRT grant application for marketing

The S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism awarded a tourism advertising grant to the city of Camden last year to promote the Ross E. Beard Collection at the Archives.

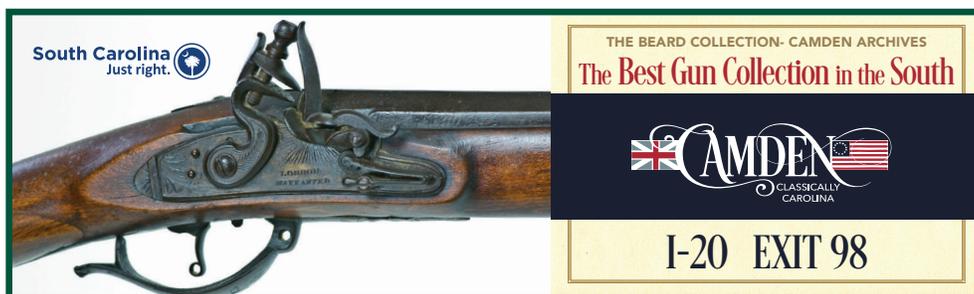
As the supporting non-profit organization for the Archives, the Friends applied for a 2014 tourism advertising grant to continue the marketing of the Beard collection. The application was due March 31 and we will hear in May if a grant is awarded.

The grant is designed to “expand the economic benefits of tourism across the state by providing competitive, matching grant funds to qualified tourism marketing partners for direct tourism advertising expenditures,” says Archives director Katherine Richardson.

The 2013 grant paid for six billboards advertising the collection on interstate highways around the state. The billboards feature a flintlock

and Camden’s new “Classically Carolina” logo. The exhibit was also featured in ads in “AAA Go” and “Southern Living” magazines.

These entire advertising avenues increased visitation at the Archives and Museum, says Richardson. “Our visitation increased from 5,861 in 2012 to 7,401 in 2013.”



A billboard featuring the Archives’ Ross E. Beard Collection can currently be found on major highways around the state. Efforts to get another grant from the state Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism will help expand promotion of the Archives and downtown Camden.

magazine ads. “Let’s hope the application is successful in helping us spread the word about the Archives to other parts of the country,” says Richardson.

If the 2014 grant is awarded, it will purchase an Integrated Marketing Package through WCSC, a Charleston television station. The package will include television spots, digital pencil pushdowns, Facebook shout outs, banner ads, and mobile apps.

The grant would continue the billboard campaign and

Focus on the Collection

Maps and more maps, letters and books pour in to Archives

By **RICKIE GOOD**
Curator of Collections

In the last several months, the Archives received several significant collections – one from the city of Camden’s planning department, one from Ms. Charlotte B. Alexander and one from Mrs. Margaret Mays.

In December, the planning department decided to clean out some old maps, plats, and blueprints. City arborist Liz Gilland happened to see some of these documents and suggested they be brought to the Archives to see if we might want them for our collection.

Having just finished cataloging around 500 maps, I stood in stunned silence while practicing deep breathing exercises to get over the shock of seeing four huge boxes full of documents deposited in the workroom. After the rest of our staff finished laughing, I decided these documents might just fit within our collections policy.

This collection of more than 300 documents will be an invaluable source of information about the growth of our city. The documents date from the 1930s to the 2000s with the majority of the maps and plats dated from 1950s-1980s.

They show proposed subdivisions, numerous aerial views of the city, easements obtained by the city for new utilities, blueprints for road work, city buildings, and the hospital, and general maps of the city.

Taken as a whole, this collection shows the growth of Camden

One of the “prettiest” documents is a colored 1952 drawing of the proposed Hampton Square (Park). It shows both existing trees and proposed plantings, paths, and a proposed outdoor theater.

from a small town center surrounded with large acreage lots to today’s Camden with an expanded business center circled with beautiful (and well-planned) neighborhoods.

One of the “prettiest” documents is a colored 1952 drawing of the proposed Hampton Square (Park). It shows both existing trees and proposed plantings, paths, and a proposed outdoor theater.

One of the more “unwieldy” documents is a c1986 blueprint showing the widening of DeKalb Street. This blueprint contains nine sheets that have information on the businesses, owners, drainage, medians, and other goodies on DeKalb Street from west of Mill Street to its junction with S.C. 34.

One of the most “interesting” maps is an aerial photograph of the city. After requesting opinions from many long-time residents of Camden, we believe this photograph to date between 1947 (after the demolition of Kirkwood Inn) and before the early 1960s (the demolition of Court Inn).

It was fascinating to pore over this map looking for familiar landmarks and either not find them or to see them looking so different from the present day.

Our staff’s most useful landmark when trying to orient ourselves to these maps is to find the Archives. Monument Square is one of the few areas that has remained the same since the construction of the library building...which is a perfect transition to another collection that just came into the Archives!

In February, Ms. Charlotte B. Alexander donated a collection of letters to and from Sarah von Tresckow that related to the building of the Camden Library. These letters document the process that Mrs. von Tresckow undertook to secure funding from the Carnegie Foundation for the erection of a public library building.

She worked tirelessly with the city, with an architectural firm, with the Carnegie Foundation, and with other libraries around the state to provide Camden with a first-rate facility. After funding was secured and the plans approved, von Tresckow continued to plan on how to run the library in the best manner possible.

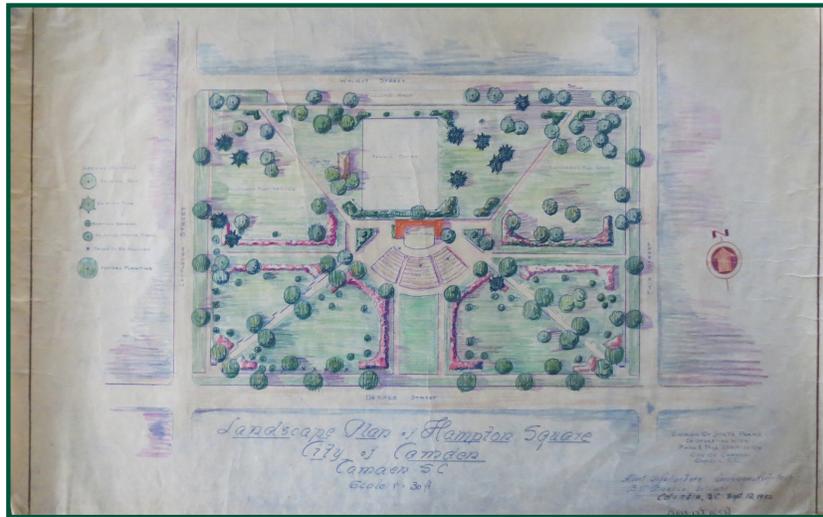
She was instrumental in writing the original by-laws, ordered books and supplies, and spoke with professional librarians about the most proper cataloging system. The city of Camden owes a great debt to this public spirited lady – and the Archives is very happy to have this collection on the eve of the 100th anniversary of our Carnegie Library.

A third collection received this year came from Mrs. Margaret Mays. One of the items she donated was a scrapbook kept by Mrs. Elizabeth Capers Zemp. She titled this scrapbook, “Record kept by John D. Kennedy Chapter U.D.C. of Camden SC of boys of members of the Chapter who are in the army 1918.”

This record included handwritten biographical information and newspaper clippings of many of the Kershaw County boys who served during World War I. Mrs. Zemp also kept clippings of two Camden girls who served in the Red Cross in Europe.

This book followed many of the boys, and girls, up through 1923 with information on marriages, births, and deaths. It is a remarkable find and will be an invaluable tool for genealogists.

The staff is very thankful the book was protected over the decades and is now part of our permanent collection.



This landscape drawing of Hampton Square was recently brought to the Archives with boxes of other city-related maps and charts from the Camden planning department. Notice the proposed amphitheater in the center of the park.



Archives hosts state conference for museum professionals

From March 12-14, the Archives was very excited to host the 2014 South Carolina Federation of Museums annual conference. Approximately 100 museum professionals, volunteers and enthusiasts journeyed to Camden to enjoy our “Classically Carolina” city.

Everyone was thrilled with the warm welcome extended by Camden. Conference attendees loved the downtown restaurants and shops – especially Books on Broad. We have heard from many of our colleagues that they are planning to come back and spend more time in such a great place.

The conference began on Wednesday with a tour of the city. Katharine Brown made an excellent tour guide for our all-day excursion. Books on Broad got our day started with their delicious coffee and tea and Catherine French with the Steeplechase Museum gave us an insider’s view of horseracing.



Books on Broad proprietors Laurie Slade Funderburk and her husband Bill assist a couple of museum professionals who attended the state Federation of Museums conference held in March.



The Archives hosted the 2014 S.C. Federation of Museums conference in mid-March. Museum professionals from around the state convened in Camden and spent several days touring historic sites and in educational sessions. Here they are shown on the steps outside Bloomsbury, one of the many stops during their stay.

Ben and Pam Schreiner shared their beautiful home and gardens and Dr. Bruce and Katherine Brown gave us a great tour of Bloomsbury. Bethesda Presbyterian Church, the Bonds Conway House and Historic Camden all provided their own unique views of our city.

We ended Wednesday with a bang out at Old McCaskill’s Farm. The Friends of the Camden Archives hosted a delicious reception; the baby animals were a big hit, as were Mayor Tony Scully and City Manager Mel Pearson who welcomed everyone to Camden.

The “work” began on Thursday with conference sessions downtown and lunch at the Robert Mills Courthouse. A silent auction and reception at the Steeplechase Museum rounded out the day.

Friday morning had additional sessions and we ended the conference with lunch at TenEleven Galleria on Broad Street. At the end of the conference, several of our visitors decided to stick around and do some shopping. Others were already making plans to come back for a more leisurely visit.

The Archives wants to thank everyone for making Camden such a wonderful town!!

Robert Mills exhibit expands

The Robert Mills exhibit which opened in the Whiteley Room in January expanded in April to include a second phase of materials from a traveling exhibit sponsored by the South Carolina State Museum.

Entitled “Robert Mills: Designs for Democracy,” the new additions give visitors an in-depth understanding of how Mills’ architecture became symbolic of democracy in the emerging young nation in which he lived and worked.

The original phase, which continues on display, concentrates on Mills’ South Carolina work. The images of most of his South Carolina architecture are featured, as well as the Atlas of the State of South Carolina.

The exhibit is a visual representation of Mills’ industrious career, particularly when one considers he was also producing works in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D. C. and other places.

(The Robert Mills exhibit will continue on exhibit until June 20. It is free and open to the public.)



The ongoing exhibit featuring Robert Mills expands in May to include new pieces from a traveling exhibit from the South Carolina State Museum.

2014 Friends of the Camden Archives & Museum

This newsletter and other activities in support of the Archives and Museum are made possible by the generous contributions of the following people and organizations:

BENEFACTOR

\$500 and up

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\$45-99

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\$25-44

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SC Society of DAC
(Daughters of
American Colonists)

HONORARIUMS

In honor of Meta Beard

Carol and Alex Beard

In honor of Camden Archives and Museum

Julian B. Culvern

In honor of Camden Archives and Museum

SC Society of Daughters of
the American Colonists

In honor of Ellen and John Stephenson

Carol and Alex Beard

MEMORIALS

In memory of

Don and Betty Buhrmaster

Betsy Buhrmaster Copper

In memory of

John and Virginia Davidson

Douglas Davidson and
Charlsie Cantey

In memory of

John Deloach

Thomas D. Ancrum and
Louise Ancrum Steffens

In memory of

Herbert Henry Farris, Jr.

Charlsie Cantey and
Douglas Davidson

In memory of

Tony M. Kelly

Max Kelly

In memory of

Josephine Smith Lawhon

Donna Lawhon Trapp

In memory of

Major General (Ret)

Thomas R. Olsen

James and Helen Futrell

In memory of

Robert Barnwell Rhett

Elizabeth Rhett

In memory of

Henry (Harry) Savage III

Mr. and Mrs. Robert
M. Kennedy IV

*Names of donors, memorials
and honorariums are current
through April 8*

Why you should join Friends of the Archives

With a mission of “Preserving the past for the future,” the Camden Archives and Museum is a treasure chest of Kershaw County history. In its beautiful expanded facility, it offers visitors an opportunity to explore a wealth of artifacts, displays, documents, records and various other historical research materials.

What happens at the Archives?

With funding from the City of Camden and support from the Friends of the Archives organization, the Archives staff collects, preserves and makes accessible items of importance to the history of the area. Artifacts in the museum represent a diverse collection of items relating to cultural heritage.

The Camden Archives and Museum is recognized throughout South Carolina and the Southeast as having one of the best research libraries for genealogical research. It houses a diverse collection of books, microfilm, maps, files, periodicals and general reference materials which will aid visitors in their research for ancestry.

What is found in the Archives?

The Archives also has a growing collection of photographs and is also the repository for a number of city-related records, including city minutes, early ordinance and many other miscellaneous records. Census records, publications, cemetery surveys, local newspapers, vertical files and SC Death Certificates from 1915-1952 are also available for research. The S.C. Daughters of the American Revolution Library and the S.C. Society Colonial Dames XVII Century Library are housed in the Archives building.

More information about the Archives and its collections can be found on its website at “<http://www.camdenarchives.org>” Features there include a list of records available for further research, a Kershaw County time line, local history books and other documents available for review, and an explanation of research services offered by the Archives staff.

How can you help?

You can support the efforts of the Archives by joining the Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum. This organization began in 1998 to encourage and manage monetary donations for the betterment of the Archives and Museum.

Since 1999 the Friends group has raised in excess of \$750,000. Most of these funds were used to help finance construction and renovation projects. The Archives has many other needs which exceed available funding. Your donation to the organization will help provide for those needs.

“Friends of the Archives is a great group of folks who recognize the value and importance of maintaining, in most cases, the irreplaceable. Additionally, we all know that our membership is the only way to maintain the level of stewardship to which the core founders of the Friends aspired,” says Stephen Van Horn, president of the Friends of the Archives.

How do you join Friends of the Archives?

You can join “Friends” using the application on page 8 of this newsletter. You can also remember donations to the Archives through honorariums or memorials. Your support will make a difference and help promote the Archives’ mission of “preserving the past for the future.”

As a member of Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum, you will receive our twice a year newsletter as a benefit of your tax deductible donation. Please consider joining by submitting the form on page 8 with your donation. An updated list of donors will be published in the year-end newsletter. Thank you for your consideration and support!

Camden Archives and Museum
1314 Broad Street
Camden, SC 29020

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Please make checks payable to *Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum*.

Mail checks along with this form to Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum, 1314 Broad Street, Camden, SC 29020. Your contribution is tax deductible. Thank you!