

College of Charleston Libraries

The College has constructed three separate buildings to house its library collections, and all three survive. The first building, the Edward Emerson Towell Library dedicated in 1856, is one of the oldest standing library buildings any American college or university. The Towell Library housed most of the College's books until the 1972 dedication of the Robert Scott Small Library. The College outgrew the Robert Scott Small Library in a relatively short three decades. The 2005 dedication of the Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library brought the College's libraries into the 21st century.



The original library building (now the **Edward Emerson Towell Library**), constructed while the College was a municipal institution, was primarily funded through an appropriation by the State of South Carolina. The building, designed by George E. Walker, was constructed between 1855 and 1856. A 1926 renovation of the basement increased the Library's maximum capacity to approximately 25,000 books. Nearly 20,000 additional books were stored in various locations. The College's institutional membership in the Charleston Library Society gave its students and faculty access to another expansive collection.

The library collections of the College grew slowly until the construction of the original library. In 1770, planter John McKenzie bequeathed 1,200 volumes, and two years later the College published its first catalog. About 100 of McKenzie's volumes survive, unfortunately, fire destroyed the rest. By 1836, the College owned about 3,000 books, most of which were acquired during the presidencies of Jasper Adams (1825-1826 and 1828-1836).

Lingard A. Frampton's 1853 contribution of 3,873 volumes of "standard works" resulted the city of Charleston and the state of South Carolina's joint funding of the first free standing library. In 1854, the College published a catalog of the scholarly library of the Rev. James Warley Miles: 606 titles chiefly in the area of linguistics. Judge Mitchell King's 1865 bequeathing of approximately 3,500 volumes added to the College's rare book collections, particularly books in Greek and Latin. By 1865, the College Library had approximately 12,000 books, nearly all of which have survived. These volumes form the core of rare books in Special Collections.

In 1976, the College renamed the original library for Edward Emerson Towell, Academic Dean during the years 1958-1964 and 1968-1970.



The Robert Scott Small Library was funded primarily by a legislative appropriation soon after the College became a State institution in 1970. Simons, Lapham, Mitchall & Small designed the building, with construction completed in 1972. Robert Scott Small, a nationally prominent textile manufacturer and a 1936 graduate of the College, provided the largest private donation. In 1975, added wings increased the size of the Library from 38,000 to 77,000 square feet. The two new wings were named for Henry Dick and Wendell Mitchell Levy, both of whom contributed major collections of books on ornithology.

During the years that Theodore Sanders Stern's presidency (1968-1979), the student body increased from about 500 to 5,000, and slowly grew to its present size of about 10,000. By 2005, the Robert Scott Small Library housed approximately 450,000 books. The building's current use is predominantly office space, and renovation plans aim to turn it into a classroom building in the near future.

The Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library opened to students on the first day of spring semester, January 17, 2005. The building is three stories high and 145,000 sq ft – approximately the size of three stacked football fields.

The Addlestone library provides seating for 1,400 patrons at tables, carrels, and lounge chairs, as well as 16 study rooms and two teaching labs. Students enjoy access to 270 computers, 1,700 data ports and wireless access throughout the building, as well as the wood paneled exhibit spaces for rare books (such as Audubon's Birds of America). The building also houses a café and the Center for Student Learning.



The adjacent Rivers Green provides the second largest green space on campus (second only to the Cistern) and links the library to the historic center of campus and to Bull Street houses.

The building was designed for a bimodal - print and electronic- environment. The College continues to acquire printed materials, while simultaneously increasing the amount of electronic information available from our catalog and databases.

Current book capacity is 1 million volumes on both traditional and mobile shelving. With addition of supplementary movable book stacks, the library can triple the size of its collection.



Wireless access is ubiquitous in the Addlestone Library and on Rivers Green. The Library has 300 computers for students use– including laptops which can be moved throughout the building. In addition, there are hundreds of data ports for personal laptops.

Enwright Associates of Greenville SC in association with Michael Cohen of FHCM in Boston designed the building, Hitt Contracting were the General Contractors and Charleston-based Design Works served as landscape design firm. The Henry Brown wing is named in honor of the state senator who led efforts to secure state funding. The building is named in honor of philanthropists Marlene and Nathan Addlestone.

Standing resolutely over Rivers Green, adjacent to Addlestone Library, is the African-American Cemetery Memorial, erected in 2008. The two columns of stone are engraved with the history of this site and its importance to the College of Charleston and to the local community. The significance of this location dates back to 1794, when the Brown Fellowship Society purchased this land.



The Society consisted of free men of color in a time when most of the African-American population in Charleston was enslaved. It was the oldest and most prestigious

free black organization that aimed to promote “charity and benevolence” among its members and also the community.

These men joined together to form a fraternal organization and also a credit union for members. When a member of the Society passed away, the men supported the widow and family by conducting the burial in the cemetery on this site. The Humane Brotherhood was founded in 1843 and had many of the same functions. It was also composed of free black men who were successful working members of Charleston society.

The Brotherhood buried members in this location, and it is possible the cemetery was also used by two local churches, Plymouth Congregational and Bethel Methodist. The monument that stands today acknowledges the history, altruism and community involvement of the organizations who buried their members on this plot of land. The memorial honors those members who were buried, but also the organizations that contributed to the rich history of Charleston’s African-American community.