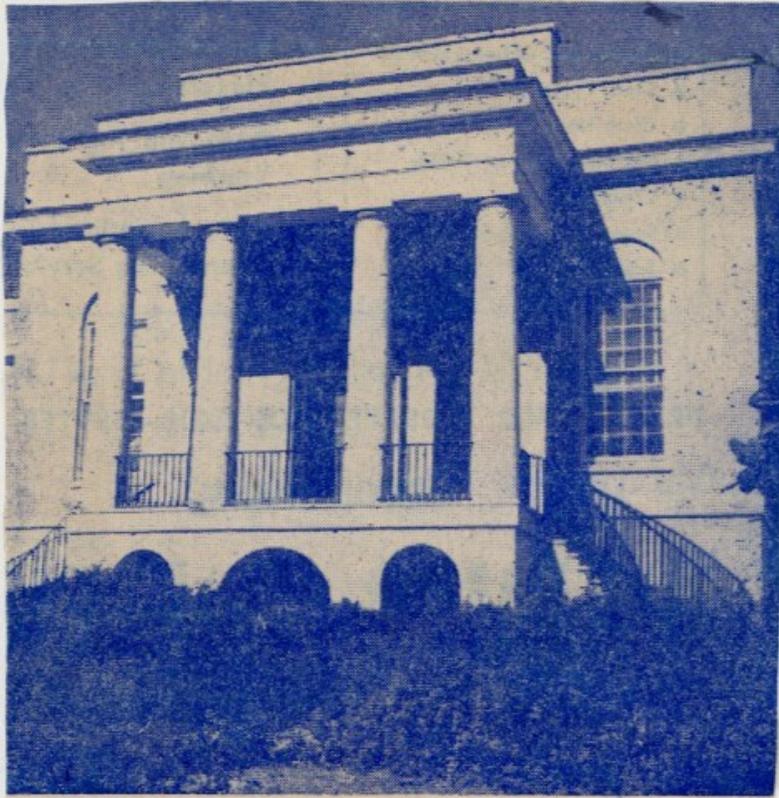


WALTERBORO

Colleton
County Seat



Washington Street Is Main Thoroughfare In Walterboro



Colleton County Courthouse Built In 19th Century



New Library At Walterboro Erected At Cost Of \$100,000

WALTERBORO

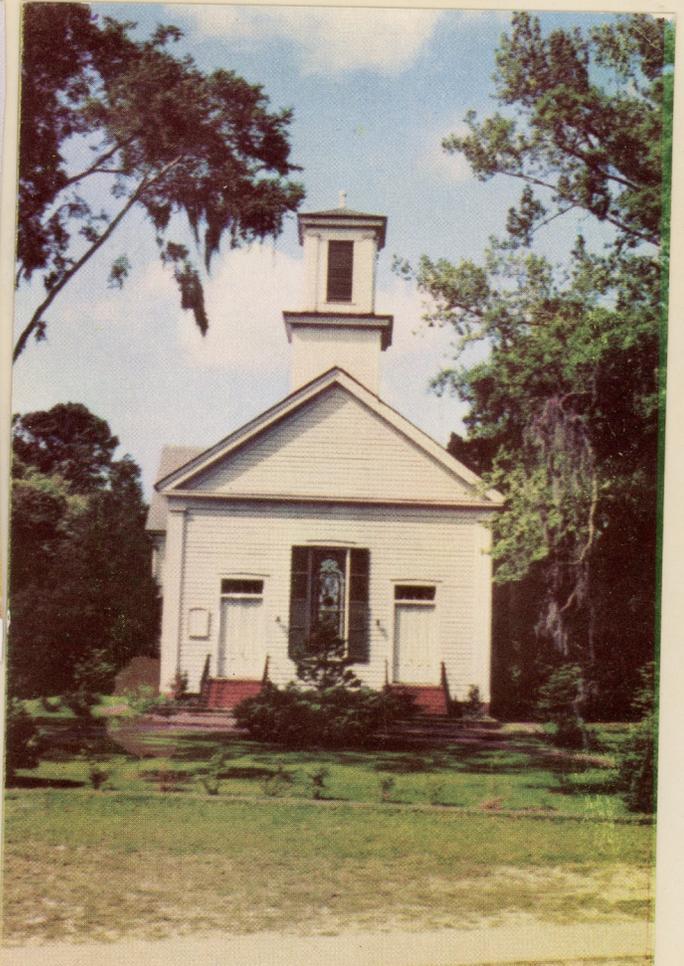
"The City of Hospitality"

Jean O'Keeffe



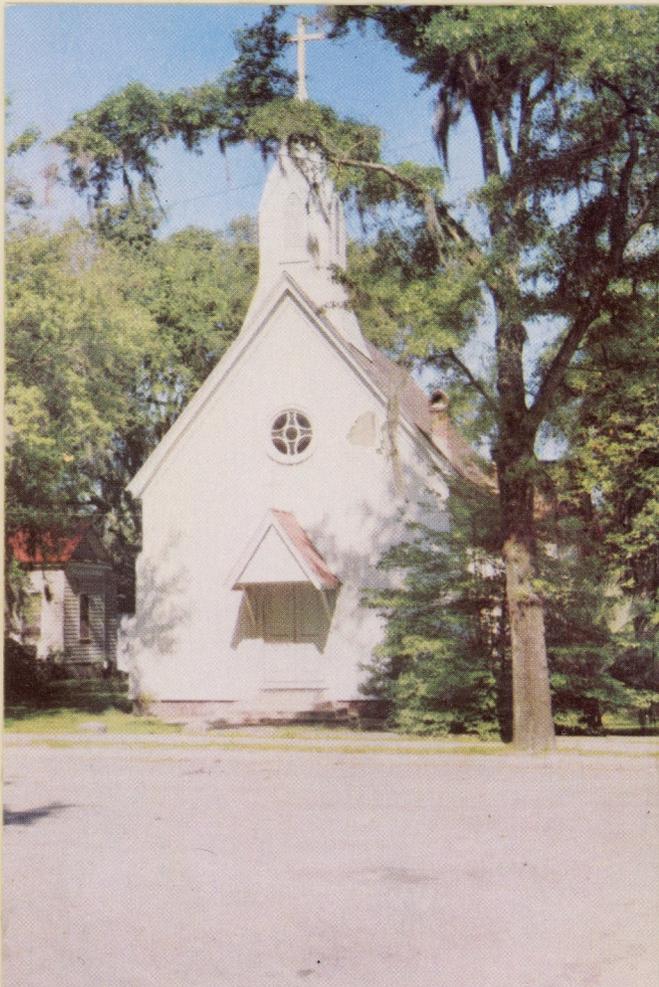
COLLETON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
WALTERBORO, S. C.

Kodachrome



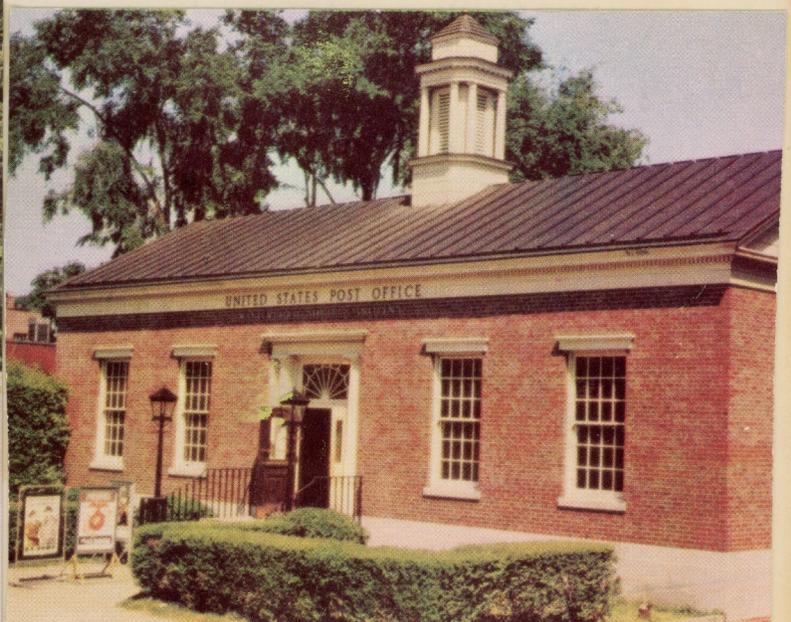
BETHEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN WALTERBORO, S. C.

Kodachrome by J. H. Lindenkohl
104-D-9



ST. JUDE'S, "THE OLD EPISCOPAL CHURCH"
WALTERBORO, S. C.

104-D-8

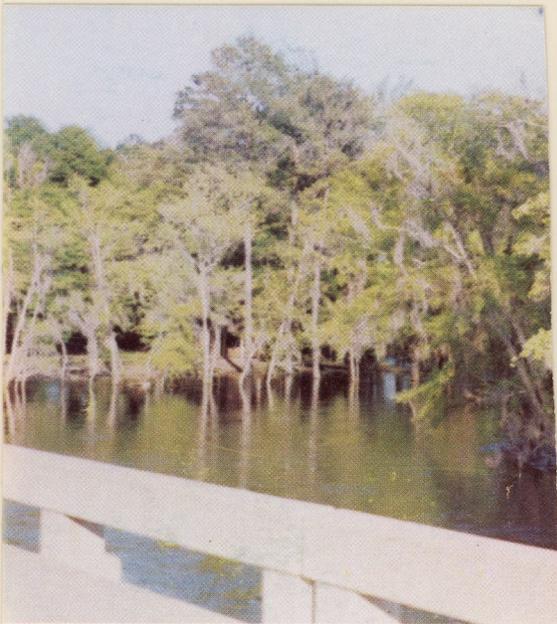


UNITED STATES POST OFFICE (Where Uncle Sammy sells the stamps)
WALTERBORO, SOUTH CAROLINA

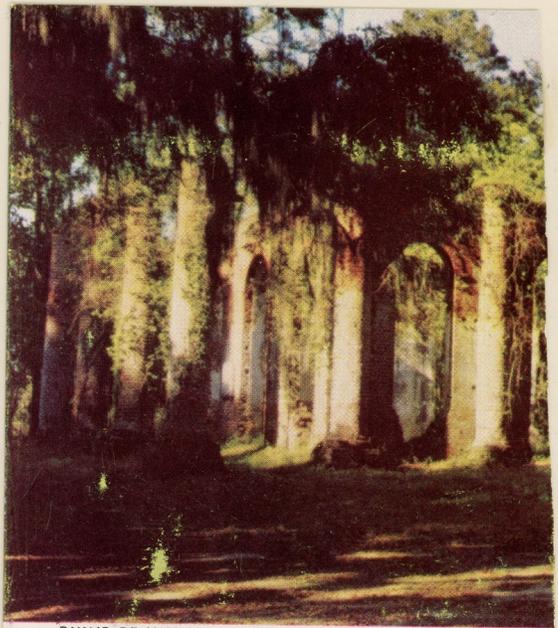


WALTERBORO CITY HALL,
WALTERBORO, S. C.

Kodachrome by J. H. Lindenkohl
104-D-10



A MOTORIST'S VIEW OF THE COMBAHEE RIVER,
WALTERBORO, SOUTH CAROLINA



RUINS OF HISTORIC SHELDON CHURCH
NEAR WALTERBORO, S. C.

WALTERBORO

"The City of Hospitality"

Among the older towns of South Carolina and those richer in local and even historic interest is Walterboro, the county seat of old Colleton. ("Old" is used because Colleton was one of the three original counties into which South Carolina was divided in the days of the lords proprietors.) In the early life of Colleton County, most of the inhabitants lived on large plantations.

During and after the Revolutionary War two brothers, Major Paul Walter and Jacob Walter, had extensive plantations in the low country, but they spent their summers in Jacksonboro, the nearest village.

Major Paul Walter had eleven children, and while passing the summer in this unhealthy section, lost all of them from malaria except the young Mary, a sickly baby. The father felt that to save her life he must make a move at once, and as Jacob's family was menaced by the same malady, the two brothers agreed to search together for a more healthful summer home.

Accordingly, they got on their horses and rode eighteen miles to the Northwest until they reached a place that suited them. This was the site of the present town of Walterboro and the brothers were delighted with it. Before them

what was later known as Hickory Valley extended with its trees filling the hollow and climbing the hill, and the luxuriant low country growth on every hand was in full glory.

The Walters hastily erected houses for the first summer, and by the next summer of 1784 others joined them. Walterboro became a permanent settlement, and was regarded as a health resort recommended by physicians from other communities.

Walterboro was first named Ireland Creek. Two citizens, Paul Walter and the other named Smith, each insisted that the town be named for him. They ended the dispute by a tree-felling contest in which Smith was vanquished.

This Colleton County seat was born of necessity. By its own location and by the sheer pride of its own importance it grew to the town it is today.

Its people began with nothing but a high sand ridge, free from malaria. Plantation men seeking a home free from the scourges of lower-land malaria outbreaks settled it first in 1783.

It was ideally located in the center of the county. Its people were full of the pride of their new settlement, and as quickly as they settled it they began pulling it up by its own bootstraps.

Within a few years they had made it the county seat, outdistancing in progress the former county seat - and once state capitol - nearby Jacksonboro.

As county seat Walterboro became the natural center of trade in this fertile country. Farmers looked to it for all their needs. Money passed from hand to hand in

a continuous circle - from farmer to merchant to banker and back to farmer. That was about all that was needed to sustain the town - that continuous passing of maoney.

Walterboro never has taken the matter of education lightly. Schools followed close on the town's settlement. Even before the planters moved to Walterboro as a permanent settlement rather than as a summer resort, a school existed at Jacksonboro, then the county seat.

As far as can be learned from early records, the first school was the Walterboro Academy organized by the Reverend J. B. Van Dyck, a graduate of Princeton. He moved to Walterboro and opened the male academy on his own responsibility. Of his work in preparing youth for college it was said:

"None have entered college who have not entered well-prepared and who did not afterward attain an honorable standing."

The name Walterboro Academy was used until the school was made a graded school. Later it was known as the Walterboro Grammar School. Today it is the Walterboro Elementary School.

The first automobile in Walterboro and in Colleton County appreared in 1907 when Dr. Charles H. EsDorn brought the first gas-burner to the town, creating a riot on the part of the hay-burners tied to ~~neighboring~~ neighboring trees and hitching racks.

A curious mob gathered around the machine peering intently, questioning the daring driver, joking of the length of life, and one or two equally daring spirits accepting

his offer of a ride down Main Street. The horses, horror stricken at the sight of this powerful monster, leaped and pawed and tugged at their lines, struggling to get away.

The little city grew and developed, and some of its most important buildings were built. The Walterboro Library, 127 Wichman Street, was built in 1820 when the Walterboro Library Society was founded. The little white frame building has a gable roof and a fanlighted entrance flanked by pedimented windows.

The Colleton County Courthouse, corner of Hampton and Jeffries Streets, said to have been designed by Robert Mills, was considerably altered in 1939 by a coating of stucco, and enlarged by the addition of two large wings. The original portico, with its four plain unfluted Greek Doric columns, rests on a high arched basement and is flanked by curved stairs. Here in 1828 the first public Nullification Meeting in the state was held.

Klein's Drug Store, 121 Washington Street, established in 1845, is operated by what is believed to be the oldest firm in the state with its original name.

The Lucas Residence, Washington Street, with 21 rooms, is constructed of white frame on a high foundation. The piazza roof is supported by six square tapering columns.

As time went by, taverns turned into hotels, the stage-coach to passenger trains, and Indian trails to wide roads which in time became concrete highways linking North and South, East and West.

Electricity supplanted kerosene lamps and the lamplighter

became a legendary figure. Automobiles became more popular than horses with the construction of better roads. Walterboro, the summer resort of the eighteenth century, became the tourist town of the nineteenth century. But war came, changing a quiet town to one teeming with activities. Far from being a boom town of war days only, those who came to make it a temporary home either stayed or came back - and induced others to come too.

There became an immediate need for Walterboro to stretch out and extend her boundaries from Hickory Valley, the scene of the first settlement, beyond Court Hill, the center of business activities. Young men did more than dream dreams; they sprang into action. A corn field became Mayfield Terrace; a partial forest became Forest Hills; the airport site became the inspiration for Airport Heights. Highways became communities with further developments of Colleton Terrace and Colonial Heights, built along these roads. There were only 4,000 people in the area in 1940; but by 1950 there were more than 4,616 within the city and 4,500 in these immediately adjacent areas. It has become the shopping center of the entire county of 28,000.

Agricultural practices in the county have improved tremendously in the past few years and farmers are making more money. Corn, cotton and tobacco bring more than ever to the farming people. They sell more than three million dollars in agricultural products each year.

Timber is the largest single industry. More than 25,000 cords a year go for pulpwood alone. Seventy percent of the entire county is covered in timber that feeds the

sawmills of Colleton County and the pulpwood mills of Charleston.

Cattle is a coming enterprise here. The county now ranks tenth in the state in cattle production on the lush, flat pasture lands that surround Walterboro.

Retail trade since World War II has become almost fantastic in its rise. Stores all along Washinton Street and intersecting streets have expanded and remodeled. Practically any product that can be found in Charleston or Columbia can be found in Walterboro stores. The people of the county like the choice here as do those from surrounding counties. Retail trade is one of Walterboro's biggest attractions. Shoppers come into town on four major highways, - U.S. Highways 15 and 17 and State Highways 63 and 64.

The highways also bring tourists here - one of Walterboro's major sources of income. Twenty-eight motels and a hotel with accommodations for about 1,000 visitors vie for shares of the traveling public's expenditures of at least \$10 each during their stay in Walterboro.

Then there are the industrial plants of the county. An estimate indicates at least forty manufacturing plants in Colleton that employ 1,000 persons. Major ones are a dress plant, a basket manufacturing plant, a laminated plywood box and container plant, an asbestos drier-felt factory, a motor freight terminal point, two rice processing plants, six dairy farms, a tire recapping company and a fruit and canned goods wholesale company. All these bring money into Walterboro.

Now the city finds itself at a cross roads, a saturation point for business. The old continuous circle of money passing from one hand to another and back to the first hand again isn't satisfactory anymore. There's need of additional outside money. The big five - agriculture, timber, industry, retail trade, and tourists - aren't enough. Each one must expand if Walterboro is to continue to expand its progressive belt. The city has been working toward expansion by having its Chamber of Commerce study each of the five major themes to which Walterboro may hinge its progress.

The town sees good prospects in each. Ten highways' signs are inviting travelers to try highways which lead through Walterboro.

Industrial surveys are under way in the county which will show industry what Colleton has to offer. It has a large group of willing workers - many of whom already commute daily to out-of-county jobs and who would stay at home to work if more industries were located here.

When you live in Walterboro, you can take your pick of fresh or salt water fishing. The Combahee, Ashepoo, and Edisto Rivers, all within fifteen miles of the town, abound with large-mouthed bass, bream, and red-breast. It's only 41 miles to charter boat docks on the Atlantic Ocean. A fresh water fishing license costs a resident of South Carolina \$1.10 a year. No license is needed for salt water sports fishing.

Colleton County offers some of the best deer hunting in the country. The deer season is from August 15 through

January 1. Each hunter is allowed a bag limit of five bucks. Colleton County also offers excellent quail, turkey, duck, dove and marsh hen hunting. The annual hunting license costs a resident \$3.10.

The Walterboro Country Club has a 9-hole golf course, with grass greens. It is open to the public for a green fee of \$1.50 per day. The annual membership is \$40. "Hackers" and club champs alike will find this course a test of their skill and sportsmanship.

Edisto Beach, 49 miles from Walterboro, on the Atlantic Ocean, is a popular swimming resort for local residents. You can rent a cottage, or if you are going for the day, a bath house and picnic facilities are available at Edisto Beach State Park. A swimming pool in Walterboro, with facilities, was completed in the summer of 1956.

There are other recreational facilities, including two lighted tennis courts at the fair grounds, one downtown theater and one drive-in theater.

The general climate of the area is conducive to the enjoyment of the outdoor recreation facilities and to the enjoyment of the general beauty of the low-land countryside. The mean annual temperature is 65.7 degrees. Average monthly temperatures range from a low of 49.7 degrees in December to a high of 80.5 degrees in August. Even during the coldest months, the average home requires heat only for a few hours in the morning and during the evening. The average annual rainfall is 48.92 inches.

For weekend trips the North Carolina mountains are a

six-hours' drive (250 miles) to the northwest and Florida is seven-hours' drive to the south.

Walterboro labels itself the City of Hospitality in its goodwill program to outsiders. Retired persons find it's so and are increasing here, and that's another attraction the town is pushing - mild climate for retirement.

Agriculture is showing an increasing pace here. In a populous northwestern area of the county white and negro farm extension agents are carrying out a program of improvement. As one of six South Carolina experimental counties in community development, Colleton is pushing improved farm and home practices and overall community cooperation.

Walterboro people are showing a stronger interest than ever in their civic affairs, in rural and farming activities, in their mayor-council form of government and in the affairs of surrounding towns and communities - those like Ruffin, Williams, Smoaks, Lodge, and Cottageville. Civic and fraternal organizations represented in Walterboro include American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Book Club, Elks Club, Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Star, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Masons, Parent-Teacher groups, Rotary Club, Shrine, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, Civitan and the Walterboro Civic Club. In addition, each section of town has a garden club, with a central Council of Garden Clubs.

Our town has separate schools for white and colored students. The schools are approved by the State Department of Education. College preparatory and vocational courses are offered by the high school. Vocational courses offered

are commercial subjects, home economics, agriculture, carpentry and automobile mechanics. School bus transportation covers most of the area surrounding Walterboro, and is available without cost to students who live more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from school. All of the schools serve hot lunches for 25¢, and they are rated Class A according to Federal Government specifications for school lunches. The closest accredited colleges are located in Charleston, Hartsville, and Columbia, South Carolina. For pre-school children, there is a private kindergarten - day school.

A new 63-bed hospital, approved by the American Medical Association and the American Hospital Association, was opened July 17, 1952. Construction of a 39-bed addition was completed during 1953. There are fourteen medical doctors, four dentists, two optometrists, and two chiropractors in private practice. Two Naval hospitals within fifty miles of Walterboro have beds that are allotted to veterans. The local County Health Department operates well-baby, pre-natal, venereal disease, fluoroscopic and X-ray clinics and carries on immunization, crippled children, and cancer control programs.

The churches in Walterboro are Baptist, Catholic, Christian, Church of God, Episcopal, Jewish, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian.

All these things are marks of progress. They are indications that once again Walterboro is making a concentrated effort to pull itself up by its own bootstraps. With its meandering streets and its homes set back in spacious grounds

with fine old trees, Walterboro has seemed a quiet low country village, but is at last on the way, being one of the towns that the Atlantic Coastal highway links together.

Walterboro, even in these days, is redolent of the past. That is its charm, though it has taken on characteristics of a modern city. There are times, especially when spring flings everywhere its misty green and gold and a glamor is in the air that the old town seems to dream over its memories.

Editor Fred W. Hill of Hamburg, Iowa, who stopped in Walterboro for three days wrote this of his visit:

"It was the high spot of our trip so far, and we doubt if we will ever match it. For real southern hospitality, or any other kind, we hardly see how it can be matched. We know we have never been so royally taken care of any place in our several trips over the country. We have enjoyed southern hospitality on all sides, but at Walterboro it was ultra plus!"

Walterboro offers a challenge to every newcomer, and its increasing population is evidence enough that many are accepting the challenge and are becoming enthusiastic champions of Walterboro - "The City of Hospitality."

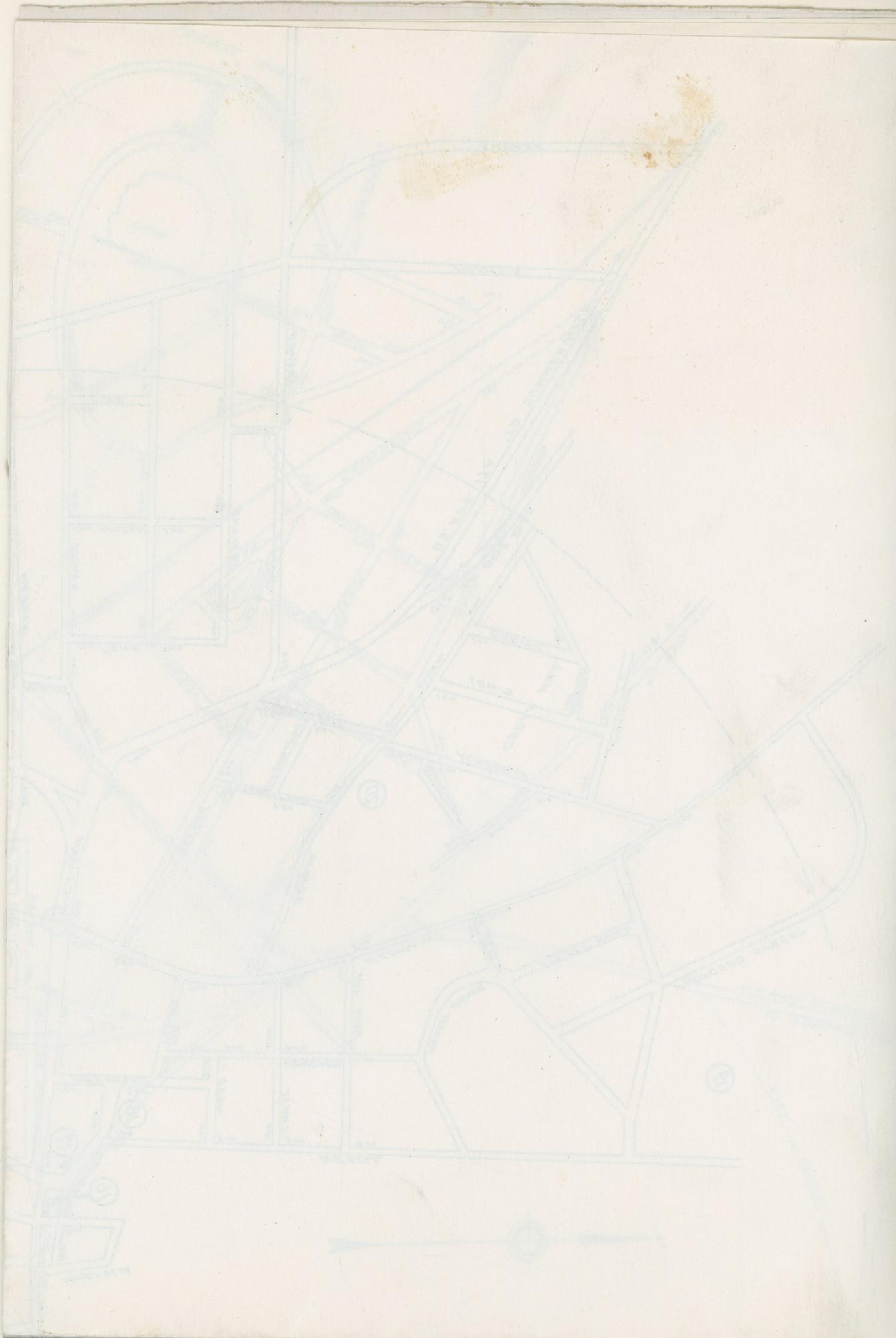
SOURCES

Colleton County Library

Walterboro Chamber of Commerce

The News and Courier, Charleston, South Carolina

Jean O'Keeffe



WALTERBORO

Colleton County Seat Scrapbook

This item from the Colleton County Memorial Library Archives is one of several student projects that were originally preserved in the library's Vertical File. Now a part of the historical archives, they can be enjoyed as a wonderful time capsule of the town as it existed for these students, their family and their community.



Item Name: Walterboro: Colleton County Seat Scrapbook

Made By: Jean O'Keeffe (1936 - 2020)

Approximate Date: 1956/1957

This scrapbook was created by a young local woman named Jean O'Keeffe, likely while she was attending Wesleyan University in 1956 or 1957. O'Keeffe was the daughter of Edwin and Reba O'Keeffe. Her family moved to Walterboro from Brooklyn, New York sometime after 1935. She is featured in several issues of Walterboro High School's "The Lair" yearbooks including the 1952 and 1953 editions (available at colletonyearbooks.colletongenealogysociety.org). The image (right) is from the 1953 WHS "The Lair" which was digitized by the Colleton Genealogy Society.

After high school Jean O'Keeffe attended Wesleyan University from which she graduated in 1958, at some point during which she created the scrapbook which would end up in the Vertical File of the new library. She married at least twice, first to James Gray Henderson and then to Joseph Bacon Fraser. She passed away in Hilton Head, South Carolina in 2020.

Item Description: The scrapbook consists of 14 typewritten pages bound in a cardboard cover, tied together with grey yarn. It features images of the town cut out of local newspapers as well as cropped postcards of the town and county. A large fold out map of Walterboro, produced by the local Chamber of Commerce in the mid-1950s is pasted on the inside of the back cover. O'Keeffe mentions the Colleton County Library, the Walterboro Chamber of Commerce and Charleston's "The News and Courier" as her sources of information for the report which gives an overview of town as it existed in the mid-1950's.

Digitization & Research by: Reference Librarian Elizabeth Laney, January 2022.