



Municipal Website History Page

Brief History 10 Sections: Text Only

As of April 07, 2013

Town of Mount Pleasant Historical Commission
"A Brief History" text-only version (images removed)

American Indian Era

Shell Middens and Shell Rings

Shell middens and shell rings are American Indian sites found along the South Carolina coast including East of the Cooper River that date back 3,000 to 4,000 years. Shell middens, largely comprised of shell, animal bone, and pottery, are ancient garbage that accumulated as people lived in the area and took advantage of local shellfish resources. Some middens contain post holes, other structural remains, and large pits used for steaming shellfish. Archaeologists believe shell rings are structures deliberately constructed for ceremonial purposes or as public monuments.

Wando Indian Pottery

Around 1,200 years ago, American Indians living along the Wando River made distinctive pottery using limestone and clay from the river banks. This type of pottery is found only in the Wando River Basin and is distinguished by the presence of limestone used to temper the clay and make it more pliable. Wando pottery was often decorated with impressed and stamped designs.

Wando and Seewee Indians

Moll's 1715 map of Carolina shows the Sampa Indians located on land between the Cooper and Wando rivers, and the Wando Indians and Sewel Indian Fort on the east branch of the Wando River. On the map, this branch is labeled Wampancheonee Creek. Archaeologists have yet to locate the Sewel Indian Fort site. The Sewel (Seewee) Indians occupied the East Cooper area when the first Europeans arrived in 1680. Today, some of the street names in old Mount Pleasant reflect this earlier American Indian heritage. [View Moll's Map \(c. 1715\)](#)

Colonial Era

First European Settlers

Mount Pleasant's first European settlers arrived on July 6, 1680, under the leadership of Captain Florentia O'Sullivan. He came to Carolina a decade earlier as one of the first English settlers in the colony. O'Sullivan was granted 2,340 acres of land that included not only the island that bears his name, but also the land that was to become the village of Mount Pleasant. On the earliest known map of this area, it was called "Old Woman's Point" and "North Point." In 1696, 51 new settlers called Congregationalists arrived. Each family was allotted several hundred acres on land situated between the Wando River, Awendaw Creek, and the Atlantic Ocean. One decade later, this area was named Christ Church Parish. View [1696 Mortiers Map](#).

Christ Church Parish

The South Carolina Commons House of Assembly passed the Act of 1704 and the Church Act of 1706 that created 10 administrative parishes in Colonial Carolina. For insight into the political atmosphere in that moment read "[A Narrative...of An Assembly...January The 2d, 1705/6](#)". Christ Church Parish was one of the 10 parishes created by the legislature.

Spanish and French Attacks

In the month of August, 1706, the Province of Carolina withstood several attacks by the Spanish and French. At a place called "Abcaw," the Carolinians defeated French invaders. Abcaw, located between Shem Creek and the Wando River, became Hobcaw Plantation and later, Shipyard Plantation. It took that name because a prosperous shipbuilding business arose from the plantation's abundance of good timber and deep

water access. Lands adjacent to Hobcaw Point were owned by various families through time. Many of these families operated ferryboat businesses. View [1704 Crisp Map](#).

Christ Church Parish Center

In 1708, a small wooden structure that served as the Parish administrative center and place of worship was built at today's intersection of Long Point Road and U.S. Highway 17 North. This structure was accidentally destroyed by a fire in 1725 and replaced within two years. In 1782, retreating British troops burned the church, however, residents rebuilt it six years later. Near the end of the Civil War, the church interior was burned but the walls remained structurally sound. The brick Vestry House was built in 1751, burned, restored in 1939 and then, refurbished after Hurricane Hugo. It has served as an office, guardhouse, classroom, and meeting place. The 26-acre church property also has a cemetery with graves dating back to the mid-1700s, and an 1862 Confederate earthwork built by neighboring plantation slaves that zigzags across the property.

Hibben's Ferry

By 1721, there were 400 colonists (107 families) and 637 enslaved people living in Christ Church Parish. Plantation owners were focused on farming and stock husbandry. Most large plantations and settlements were situated along the Wando and Cooper rivers. These riverine locations made transportation of people, resources, and products more expedient. Plantations were largely self-sufficient, connected by a small network of roads, and planters viewed Charleston as their metropolitan base. In 1770, Andrew Hibben bought land on the south side of Shem Creek from Jacob Motte. Hibben obtained a ferry charter and opened Hibben's Ferry - the first ferryboat service to connect Haddrell's Point, the area between Shem Creek and the cove at the end of Pitt Street, to Charleston. Later, Haddrell's Point was called the village of Mount Pleasant, but people often used the old name. Georgetown Road, the area's major roadway, ran to the Ferry House and functioned as part of the main travel-mail route to the North.

Local Economy

At different times during the colonial era, the local economy was based on shipbuilding, naval stores production, indigo, cotton and some rice agriculture, and raising cattle. Early on, planters fenced in agricultural land and emulated the American Indian model of maize and bean agriculture. They allowed cattle and hogs to roam in savannahs and marshes around their plantations. With time, multicultural agricultural practices emerged that sustained the local population while also producing surplus for the Atlantic economy (1). In addition, brick making supplemented agricultural output and was a significant Lowcountry industry from 1740 to 1860.

Revolutionary Era

Colonel William Moultrie

Haddrell's Point played a leading role in the first major military battle and victory of the Revolutionary War, and many plantation owners were involved. British forces were determined to take Charleston and

hoped to establish a base of operations on Sullivan’s Island. A small Patriot army of 453 men under the command of Colonel William Moultrie held off the mighty British Royal Navy, while Colonel William Thomson and his forces stopped 3,000 British troops from crossing Breach Inlet and attacking the fort from the land side. The success of the American forces on this single day, June 28, 1776, was a major boost for the Patriot cause.

Turn of Affairs

On July 23, 1776, Dr. Benjamin Rush, an influential patriot of Philadelphia, wrote to American General Charles Lee: “Dear General, It would take a volume to tell you how many clever things were said of you and the brave troops under your command after hearing of your late victory. It has given a wonderful turn to our affairs. The loss of Canada had sunk the spirits of many people who now begin to think our cause is not desperate and that we shall yet triumph over the enemies.” It was announced in the paper on Aug. 2, 1776, that Fort Sullivan was renamed Fort Moultrie retroactive to the victorious battle. George Washington visited the site 10 years later, on May 5, 1791, and noted in his journal that “scarcely a trace [was] left” of Fort Moultrie.

Carolina Day Celebration

Today, South Carolina residents celebrate [Carolina Day](#) in recognition of the role this naval battle played in energizing the Revolutionary War. With the exception of this battle, Christ Church Parish saw little action, yet the area had been secured. According to the original version of Clinton’s 1780 map titled, *A Sketch of the Operations before Charleston, the Capital of South Carolina*, Remley’s Point had fortifications that connected two inlets north and south. This map shows earthworks at the water’s edge, interior encampments, and trenches guarding the rear. The area included a shipyard, powder magazine, and a prisoner detention center. Clinton’s map also details several small plantations and agricultural fields. [View Clinton's map \(1780\)](#).

British Headquarters

In early 1780, the City of Charleston was under siege. In April, British General Cornwallis crossed the Cooper River with approximately 2,500 troops and took possession of Haddrell’s Point. It is believed that the British headquartered at Jacob Motte’s home, on Mount Pleasant Plantation, now known as the Hibben House. Charleston surrendered to the British on May 12, 1780. After the Americans were victorious and the new nation was established, the first United States Census of Population was taken in 1790. At that time, African Americans comprised over 75 percent of the Christ Church Parish population.

Antebellum Era

Jonathan Lucas Shipwrecks

Mechanical Rice Mills

In the early 1780s, Jonathan Lucas sailed from England. During his travels, Lucas shipwrecked along the Carolina coast. Settling here, he invented a mechanical rice mill process to separate the husk and bran layers from the rice kernel. This new water-powered mechanical process was far more efficient than the laborious task of hand-threshing rice.

Revolutionized the Industry

This area had long been a profitable center for rice cultivation, yet Lucas’ mechanical mills increased productivity and revolutionized the industry. Charleston became the center of the rice-milling business. In 1793, Lucas purchased 471 acres, on Haddrell’s Point, which included the old Greenwich Mill on Shem Creek. This property strategically sits at the mouth of the Charleston Harbor. Lucas built a home, overlooking the mill pond, from which he operated his mill design and construction business. He re-fit the old Greenwich Mill to house a sawmill and rice mill that drew power from the creek tides. At the end of the Civil War, the buildings were burned down by confederate troops as the enemy approached Charleston. Today, traces of the mill foundation and holding pond are visible at low tide. In 1835, Lucas’ son, William, purchased and platted 180 acres between the Greenwich Mill and the Ferry Tract to create the village of

Lucasville.

[Lucasville Plat. 1850s](#)

First Village

Jonathon Scott was the first to develop a village in Christ Church Parish. Scott owned 100 acres adjacent to Jacob Motte's Mount Pleasant Plantation from which he laid out the village of Greenwich in 1766. He platted 50 acres of English style town lots on the waterfront and the remaining 50 acres served as a common area. Scott named the waterfront roadway Bay Street, and the other roads were named after English royalty and the prime minister: King, Queen, and Pitt streets.

Villages of Mount Pleasant and Greenwich

The village of Mount Pleasant was laid out by James Hibben, son of Andrew Hibben. James Hibben was a prominent businessman, who served as a state senator from 1800 to 1815. He owned the waterfront property on the opposite side of Motte's estate. In 1803, Hibben purchased Motte's Mount Pleasant Plantation and hired John Diamond to survey the parcel. Diamond platted 35 lots and five streets: Beach, Bennett, Whilden, Boundary, and Venning. Hibben died on Jan. 4, 1835, and is buried beside his wife in Cook's Old Field Cemetery on Rifle Range Road. [Hibben's Ferry Plat \(1828\)](#)

From Villages to Town

Three years later on Dec. 20, 1837, the village of Greenwich merged with the village of Mount Pleasant and was incorporated by an act of the S. C. General Assembly. In 1858, the town's borders were extended to include Hilliardsville, the adjacent village to the southeast laid out by Charles Jugnot and Oliver Hilliard in 1847. [Hilliardsville](#) included a picnic ground with a stand of live oaks called Hort's Grove, now known as Alhambra Park. In the mid-1800s Mount Pleasant was still a summer resort for Charleston residents and a commercial and residential hub for outlying plantation families.

[Town of Mount Pleasant Acts of Incorporation \(1883\)](#)

[1838 Plat of The Town of Mount Pleasant \(SCHS\)](#)

The Civil War Era

Secession Convention: First Secession Resolution Public Meeting

On September 24, 1860, a public meeting was held in Mount Pleasant at Ronkins Long Room on Ferry Street. Participants produced 11 resolutions. The 10th and 11th resolutions were determinations to leave the United States should Abraham Lincoln be elected president: "Resolved that in the opinion of this meeting, the election of Mr. Lincoln to the office of President of the United States is in itself sufficient cause for war;" and "Resolved that in the event of Mr. Lincoln's election South Carolina should make every effort to meet one or more of the other southern states in convention to determine the best mode of dissolving the connection with the present union." It is believed that Mount Pleasant produced the state's first secession resolution.

Charleston Secession Convention

The state secession convention met two months later in Charleston on December 20, 1860, and seven Southern states soon formed the Confederate States of America. At the advent of the Civil War, the Mount Pleasant mortar battery and an adjacent floating battery between Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island were instrumental in the defense of the harbor and in attacks on the Union's Fort Sumter. As the war progressed, the town was further protected by an additional battery in the village and a line of fortifications from Elliot's Creek at Boone Hall Plantation to Copahoe Sound. This was part of the outer defenses of Charleston. On August 11, 1982, Fort Palmetto was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

[Palmetto State Song, 1860](#)

["Raising the Flag," Frank Leslie's Illustrated News, Dec. 27, 1860](#)

["Secession Movement," The Illustrated London News, Feb. 2, 1861](#)

[South Carolina: A Patriotic Ode, 1861](#)

[Damaged Wall Fort Sumter, drawing, 1861](#)

Fort Palmetto

Fort Palmetto was the easternmost position in the Christ Church Parish line of defense. Commanding Hamlin Sound and Dewee's Creek, it was designed to deny Union naval support of any attack on Charleston from the northeastern side. The Christ Church line was laid out by Robert E. Lee and constructed in late 1861. The importance of Fort Palmetto may be measured by the fact that the position mounted one 9-inch gun and two rifled 32-pounders at capture, while the remainder of the line was unarmed. The fort is a three-gun battery approximately 160 feet long and 80 feet deep. Although a simple open battery, Fort Palmetto has unusually high relief with a parapet approximately 15 feet in height and a magazine approximately 25 feet above the surrounding terrain. These elevations provided better visibility over Hamlin Sound in addition to presenting a more formidable appearance.

[Fort Palmetto on the National Register](#)

CSS H.L. Hunley

The town also served as the secret training ground for the nine-man crew of the Confederate submarine CSS H. L. *Hunley*. On February 17, 1864, this small vessel was launched from Breach Inlet with the mission to attack and sink the USS *Housatonic*, a 12-cannon steam-powered war sloop on Union blockade duty. CSS *Hunley* sunk the USS *Housatonic*. Shortly thereafter, CSS *Hunley* and its crew sunk to the bottom of the harbor where the submarine and occupants remained undiscovered for over 100 years. The CSS *Hunley* was raised in August 2000.

U. S. Naval Historical Center: [H.L. Hunley](#)

Mount Pleasant Surrenders to Union Troops

On February 26, 1865, Henry Slade Tew wrote a letter to his daughter Emily Jenkins Tew describing the surrender and occupation of the Town of Mount Pleasant. Tew was a storekeeper and leading citizen who was elected mayor on Friday, February 17, as Union troops readied to occupy the city. He described the surrender: "About 12 o'clock Saturday three barges landed from the fleet and as I had been elected Intendant by the people on Friday, in that official capacity attended by some of the citizens I surrendered the town submitting to the military authority of the U.S. and was promised protection to persons and private property."

After the Civil War

Life Redefined

Residents Return

During the Civil War, Union shelling drove most residents to the relative safety of the upstate. Once the war was over people returned to Mount Pleasant to reestablish their lives. Churches forced to close during the bombardment of Charleston Harbor began to reopen. In February 1866, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church reopened as the only church available for services. People of various faiths met there for public worship.

African-American Communities

Mount Pleasant residents radically redefined life both economically and socially. It was an era of experimentation and new ideas. The area's slave labor plantation system was eradicated and new African-American communities were established. Some freedmen took up farming for themselves.

Scanlonville

Established after the Civil War, [Scanlonville](#) enjoys a rich heritage spanning over one hundred years. With the end of slavery, many former slaves began to establish their own farms and businesses. The development of Scanlonville was one such enterprise. In 1868, freedman-carpenter Robert Scanlon purchased the 614-acre Remley Plantation that was bordered by Charleston Harbor and the Wando River. Scanlon founded the Charleston Land Company and 100 African-American men paid \$10 per share to purchase large tracts of land. By 1870, former slaves who desired to own land could purchase farm or town lots in Scanlonville. The Town of Mount Pleasant annexed Scanlonville on December 14, 1982. [Remley's Point Plat \(1870\)](#)

Riverside Beach

Just west of Scanlonville was Riverside Beach, the oldest, largest, and most popular of five African-American beaches in Charleston County. By 1930, Riverside Beach had a dance pavilion, athletics field, bathhouse, playground, and a boardwalk. Riverside Pavilion was the only venue where black Charlestonians could see musical legends such as Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, B.B. King and Ivory Joe Hunter. Music performances at the pavilion spawned juke joints in Scanlonville and eventually a hotel called White's Paradise – frequented by James Brown. By 1975, Charleston County assumed operation of the Riverside property and eventually sold it to a company that developed a gated community on the land.

Late 19th Century

Borders Expand

In 1872, Mount Pleasant expanded its borders to include the Shem Creek settlement called Lucasville and Hibben's Ferry Tract. Two years later, the town council carried a motion to assist with railroad construction but the rail line was never built. The absence of a rail connection limited local industrial development. The area's economy was centered on commercial farming. These large farms employed many African-American laborers who also grew their own produce to supplement incomes. The town maintained its reputation as a pleasure resort destination. Visitors could enjoy beautiful Alhambra Park and Alhambra Hall, take a trolley over to the Isle of Palms, climb aboard an excursion boat around the harbor, or stay in one of many cottages available for rent throughout the village.

Berkeley County Courthouse

The Town of Mount Pleasant was initially situated in Charleston County but became the Berkeley County seat when Charleston County was divided in 1883. This led to important preparations including the construction of the Berkeley County Court House located at the intersection of Pitt and King streets, now known as the Darby Building. The town already had 4 miles of shell-paved roads, nine shops, a brick and tile factory, a sawmill, and 783 residents. In 1895, Mount Pleasant was annexed back to Charleston County, and both counties refused to pay the overdue bill for bricks used to build the courthouse. Over 100 years later, historian Petrona Royall McIver expressed modern sentiment over the town's shifting locale when she remarked that Mount Pleasant was "shuttled back and forth by the powers that be."

1886 Earthquake

On August 31, 1886, a massive earthquake rattled the Charleston area and Mount Pleasant residents ran out of their houses seeking open places to escape harm. Astonishingly, there was no loss of life in Mount Pleasant during this earthquake. People set up tent camps and makeshift shelters. According to Carl McKinley of the *News and Courier*, "Immediately after the great shock on Tuesday night, a strong odor, remarkable for the presence of sulphur [sic] bases, permeated the atmosphere, and was perceptible

throughout the night.” Unlike the City of Charleston, Mount Pleasant suffered very little property damage. No houses were thrown down although its residents were equally terrified by the event. One explanation for the difference is that fewer bricks were used in the construction of Mount Pleasant buildings. The town recovered from this natural disaster within a few years.

Model Town

On September 4, 1889, the *News and Courier* published an article reporting on the town’s state of affairs: “The health of Mount Pleasant has been unprecedentedly fine for the past year. The Town Council expends about \$2,000 on the streets and other necessary improvements, and the money is so judiciously applied that Mount Pleasant, in regard to general appearance, is one of the model towns of the State.”

Dr. Dupre's Quilt

In 1994, historian Mary-Julia Royall wrote that a group of ladies belonging to the Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church and other denominations, called the "Earnest Workers," crafted this crazy quilt for town physician Dr. Dupre. Presented to their beloved doctor in 1895, this quilt was made of 30 handcrafted squares—each initialed by the woman behind its creation—and given as a gift of appreciation for his lifetime of outstanding service as a physician and community leader. Dr. Dupre aptly named his quilt "Daisy" because for him, the flower represented the "synonym of these latter days of all that is nice and perfect."

Dr. Dupre's quilt was refurbished by the Mount Pleasant Historical Commission for the town's citizens in the mid-1990s. To learn more about Dr. Dupre, his quilt, and to view images including pictures of each individual square, please open the [commission research file](#) (takes a minute to load).

Early 20th Century

Old Village

Mount Pleasant experienced little economic expansion or population growth in the first few decades of the twentieth century. In the early 1900s, Elise Tiencken Farmer lived at 216 Bennett Street in the Old Village. In Betty Lee Johnson’s published newspaper series of oral histories "As I Remember It: An Oral History of the East Cooper Area," Farmer described early twentieth century village life: “We raised our own food right there in the village. We kept cows and chickens and we had a big vegetable garden we had a spring in our yard that fed our well. This was also connected to a large storage tank that furnished water for seven families. The tank has been gone for a long time but the stand it was on is still at the Bennett Street house. In hot weather, we’d cool watermelons in that tank.” Local residents raised cotton, peas, beans, rice (in small ponds), sugar cane, hogs, turtles, and chickens for food. In the same publication, Julia Brown Horlback remembered raising beans, okra, corn, potatoes, and flowers as well as making baskets for sale at the Charleston market that ran from Meeting Street to East Bay Street.

1911 Hurricane

The twentieth century began and ended with hurricanes. One storm landed ashore 11 years after the century’s turn and the other hit 11 years before the era closed. In 1911, the severe hurricane destroyed crops, farmland, and fishing facilities. According to the stories recorded by Johnson, the storm raised water to hip level, brought down trees, blew down houses, and destroyed Friendship AME Church. Elise Tiencken Farmer recalled:

I remember the hurricane of 1911. There were many people from the islands and Charleston stranded here and the local people took them into their homes. We had a lot of people staying with us. One of them was Mrs. Condon, of the department store Condons. When she returned to Charleston she sent me a pretty sewing basket as a thank you gift. My father got stranded in Charleston and my mother was sick with worry about him. He had to spend the night in the Custom House.

Julia Welch Hamlin farmed 800 acres on Snee Farm Plantation with her husband Osgood Darby Hamlin,

and she recalled losing their first crop of Sea Island Cotton “to the big storm.” The Hamlins were not on the plantation during the hurricane. Hamlin retold her story:

I remember the hurricane of 1911 very well. We were spending the summer at the Hamlin Beach House, which was right by the ferry wharf. No one stayed on the plantations in the summer because of the mosquitoes. People also said the water was bad and so was the country air, so everyone had beach homes where they spent the summer months. We had screens at Snee Farm, so this was the last summer I spent in town. It really was just so much trouble to pack up and move into town every summer. That day there was a large excursion here from Augusta, Georgia. They arrived from the island, all 19 trains of them, just in time to catch the 5 pm ferry. The wind started blowing, and it got so rough that the boat was turning around and around as they just couldn't handle it. We watched from the house as they threw out chains and ropes and finally dragged the boat back to the wharf. The top had blown off the boat and the people were scared to death before they got it tied up again, but they had to remain on the boat as a large section of the wharf was gone. There were two men killed that day, the ticket taker and a man who had been a passenger on the boat who had gone to get his wife's purse.

Rifle Range Road

In 1917, a U.S. Navy rifle range was built on 100 acres along Rifle Range Road occupying the site of a former South Carolina National Guard firing range. This facility accommodated 600 men who trained for two-week sessions. Thousands of men were equipped at this facility during the World War I period. Later this site was used by the National Guard, Army Reserves, and Citadel Cadets.

To learn more about town growth and development in this period read the [Town Council Meeting Minutes](#) (1900-1913).

Traction Trolley Service

From the 1890s through the 1920s, a traction trolley service brought jobs to the men of Mount Pleasant. They became trolley motormen and conductors. At that time, the Isle of Palms was considered the “Atlantic City of the South” and people came from North Carolina and Georgia to catch the Mount Pleasant Ferry docked at Cumberland Street in Charleston. Once in Mount Pleasant, they boarded the trolley to reach Sullivan's Island and the Isle of Palms. In 1926, the Cove Inlet Bridge opened and automobiles traveled between Mount Pleasant and both islands. Within a few years, the traction trolley was no longer a convenient form of transportation and the company shuttered.

Cooper River Bridge

As a child in the 1930s, Dave MacNeal lived on Live Oak Drive in the Old Village. He described the area in Johnson's "As I Remember It." MacNeal lived right next to the Mount Pleasant Boat Building Company and it was the only thing on Shem Creek in those days. He remembered that the trolley bridge was the only land route between the Isle of Palms and Mount Pleasant. The Cooper River Bridge opened in 1929 providing the first direct roadway between Mount Pleasant and the City of Charleston. Shortly thereafter, the local steam ferries ceased operations. In 1930, Captain C. Magwood was the first fisherman to bring ocean shrimp into Mount Pleasant. The shrimping business grew into an important Charleston Harbor industry centered at Shem Creek.

Public Water

In 1933, the town initiated plans to build a public waterworks. The result was a distribution system of wells, mains, storage tanks, fire hydrants, 175 water meters, and a pumping station that provided 160,000 gallons of water per day. On Oct. 17, 1935, a dedication was held at Alhambra Park with a dance at the Mount Pleasant Yacht Club. Four years later waterworks operated at a profit with over 240 customers. A wastewater system was added in 1942, and later, two treatment plants. Mount Pleasant set an example for rural coastal communities by building its waterworks system.

Mid-Late 20th Century

Town Spreading

On the Move

Dave MacNeal left Mount Pleasant in 1942, to serve in the U.S. Navy. He returned five years later to a town on the move: “When I finally came home to Mount Pleasant in 1947, she really started changing. There was a building boom on and the old town was spreading, just like she is today (1977). Until then there had been very little change from the way she was in the 30s. Before I knew it the little town around Pitt Street was all gone.”

African-American Women

Industrious Entrepreneurs

In the 1940s, industrious African-American women were shucking oysters, drying moss, growing flowers, making baskets, and selling these products to tourists. Multiple generations of women from families that occupied a 10-square-mile area made baskets together. These baskets were sold outside town limits at simple roadside stands along a 5-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 17. At the time, the total population of Christ Church Parish was 5,165, of which 3,540 were African Americans. The majority of residents were truck farmers or laborers on large farms producing agricultural products for market.

Population Explosion

Improved Services

World War II increased the military presence in the Charleston area, adding residents to the suburbs and bolstering the regional economy. The U.S. Post Office began delivering letters to Mount Pleasant homes on August 18, 1953. With improved services came moderate growth.

Year of Expansion

Then, in 1970, the Snee Farm subdivision was annexed thereby expanding the town limits. In that same year, the town’s population exploded and the quaint village atmosphere became a distant memory. According to historian Amy McCandless, “The expansion of the port of Charleston, the growth of Lowcountry tourism, the construction of a second Cooper River bridge, and the advent of new highways contributed to a tremendous expansion of population” and she continued, “The profile of town residents became increasingly white, professional and conservative.”

21st Century Dawns

Momentous Growth

Major Regional Development

The last few decades of the twentieth century proved to be a period of momentous growth and municipal advancement for the Town of Mount Pleasant. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, population was: 6,155 in 1970; 13,838 in 1980; 30,108 in 1990; and 47,900 in 2000. The construction of Interstate 526 decreased the travel time from the East Cooper area to Interstate 26 and North Charleston. This new roadway stimulated major regional development. The town annexed Brickyard Plantation subdivision in 1989, and Charleston National, Dunes West, and Park West subdivisions in 1990. These North end residential developments based on the “live, work, play” concept attracted families from all over the country. More residents meant new schools, health care facilities, fire stations, added police to prevent crime, parks, and a variety of recreational amenities and services. Several shopping centers such as Wando Crossing, Towne Centre, Belle Hall, and Seaside Farms were built.

Hurricane Hugo

September 21, 1989

In mid-September 1989, 150,000 residents evacuated the area before the arrival of Hurricane Hugo to

the South Carolina coast. On September 21, 1989, Hugo made landfall at the Isle of Palms as a category 4 hurricane. The destructive storm delivered 135 mph winds, a 5 foot wall of water, a 20-foot storm surge, and 3000 tornadoes (vortices). At that time, it was considered the deadliest hurricane in American history and the damage in South Carolina was estimated at \$4.2 billion. In the *Moultrie News* commemorative issue published on September 23, 2009, Tamara Zoti shared her memories of this hurricane. Zoti evacuated with her mother to Dorchester County. Upon returning, they found downed lights and poles, collapsed buildings, windows blown out, trees blown over at the roots, and roadways blocked by mud and trees. Her mother's house lay underneath two neighbors' homes. This pile of rubble reached the top of a nearby power pole that had a pontoon boat wrapped around it. It was three months before the Zotis could sort through the remains of their house and locate a car and truck left behind.

Transformative Event

Storm Winds

Mount Pleasant Fire Chief Herb Williams recalled the power of winds during Hurricane Hugo: "When daylight came, the world seemed to have come to an end. Power lines were down everywhere and it looked like someone had dropped a bomb in the middle of Mount Pleasant." The town's debris pile was 20 feet tall, 50 feet wide, and one half mile long and took several months to burn. Hurricane Hugo upended the way people viewed hurricane-preparedness. This storm placed the region on the map resulting in a fast transformation that forever changed the local way of life. On the South Carolina coast, Hurricane Hugo was the single most transformative event of the twentieth century.

20th Century Closes

Urban Community

Attracted by the city's reputation as an urban coastal destination with real community spirit, large numbers of young professionals and families relocated to Mount Pleasant. At the same time, city officials promoted housing for workers and senior citizens. As the century closed, Mount Pleasant's diverse populace worked together to resolve important issues in creative ways; traditional strategies met fresh forward-thinking ideas. Political transformation paved the way for real change leading to: the I'ON neighborhood development; greater recreational opportunities; a push for open government; comprehensive zoning; public transportation; and a senior center. Mount Pleasant had developed into an affluent, professional and urban community.

[Mount Pleasant 2012 Demographics Report](#)

[Information for Visitors](#)

[I'ON Village Highlights](#)

21st Century Dawns

Growth and Preservation

As the population increased, service oriented businesses, banks, restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, small to mid-size retail, high technology, and research industry moved in. Conversely, some of the town's "sleepy era businesses" such as small manufacturing, mom and pop stores, local galleries, and commercial fishing, crabbing, and shrimping began to decline. Area leaders took great strides to preserve and promote the town's historic buildings, shrimp industry, and sweetgrass basket makers.

Modern Transportation Plan

Mount Pleasant implemented a transportation plan incorporating impact fees, stringent traffic analysis, and a residential permit allocation system. As a part of that plan, the town upgraded and widened roadways such as U.S. Highway 17, Johnnie Dodds and Coleman boulevards. Transportation corridors such as the Isle of Palms Connector and Hungryneck Boulevard were built to accommodate changing traffic patterns for a coastal community on the rise. In 2005, the mammoth and picturesque Arthur Ravenel Bridge replaced the two aging bridges that spanned the Cooper River.

All-America City

Those who live and work in Mount Pleasant promote and enjoy a genuine sense of community: people get along. They meet serious challenges with cutting-edge and grass-roots strategies based upon civic engagement and cooperation between public, private, and nonprofit sectors. In 2010, Mount Pleasant, the fourth largest city in South Carolina, had 67,843 residents and won a national competition to be named an All- America City.

Mount Pleasant



2010