



# SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## **Records of the Rotary Club of Charleston, 1921-2005 SCHS# 0398.00**

**Description:** 8 linear feet (8 boxes)

**Biographical/Historical Note:** The Rotary Club of Charleston was founded February 3, 1920 through the efforts of T. Wilbur "Buddy" Thornhill and Louis C. Fischer. Admitted to membership in Rotary International, the service organization founded by Paul Harris in 1905, the Rotary Club of Charleston met weekly with the goal of improving the quality of life in Charleston. Projects of the Club have included selling stock for the Francis Marion Hotel, improving streets and roads, organizing the Boy Scout Council and supporting scouting in Charleston, beautification of Marion Square and Wragg Square (or Mall) in the 1940s and 1990s, and numerous other projects in the Charleston area as well as abroad. The Club also served as a "father" organization in the founding of seven other area Rotary clubs including chapters in Beaufort, Summerville, and St. Andrews. Notable individuals who have served as speakers for weekly Rotary meetings in Charleston include founder of Rotary International Paul Harris, Amelia Earhart, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, Lady Astor, U.S. Senators Fritz Hollings and Strom Thurmond among others.

**Scope and Content:** This collection includes financial records, reports, programs and publications produced by the Rotary Club of Charleston between 1921 and 2005.

Correspondence (1993) contains correspondence regarding the establishment of the office of Historian for the Rotary Club.

Financial records, dating 1992-1998 consist of correspondence and reports about the organization's general finances as well as relating to the Charleston Rotary Fund, a non-profit endowment to which Rotary members voluntarily contributed. Financial reports compiled by independent auditors Schleeter, Monsen, and Debacker, C.P.A. detail the annual revenues and expenses of the Rotary Club operating fund (1992-1995, and 1997-2003).

International Organization materials relate to Rotary International and include promotional materials about the organization and semiannual reports from the Rotary Club of Charleston to Rotary International. Semiannual reports (1996-2004) include membership information for new and continuing members and brief financial information for the Chapter.

Membership materials include directories of members and policy manuals for District 777 (eastern South Carolina) of Rotary International. Directories include lists of officers, members, and meeting times and places for all Rotary chapters in District 777. Also present is a roster (c. 1966) for the Rotary Club of Charleston. Disbound from a ringed binder, the roster includes an information page for each member, arranged in order entrance into the Chapter.

Newspaper clippings (1937-2005) contain information about Club presidents, activities, service projects and speakers.

Programs commemorate meetings and conferences of the Rotary Club, including the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rotary Club of Charleston in 1970 and District 777 conferences (1965, 1983-1995).

Publications make up the bulk of the collection; they are divided into three groups, histories, *Keyway*, and *Rotary Ragout*. Histories consist of notes, drafts, and other materials related to histories written about the Rotary Club of Charleston between 1965 and 2005. These include both published works such as *Service Above Self: A History of the Rotary Club of Charleston 1920-2004* (2005), and unpublished organizational guides such as "Golden Hours of Rotary in Charleston, SC 1920-1970". Summaries include overview of Rotary Club history as well as drafts of year-by-year digests used in published histories. Also included in Publications are editions of *Keyway* (or *Key-Way*) the club's weekly bulletin dating (with some gaps) from 1942-2005. Most editions of *Keyway* are bound by year and arranged from June to July (of the next year). Also included in Publications is the *Rotary Ragout* a typescript weekly bulletin issued in 1921 and 1922.

**Search Terms:**

Fischer, Louis C.  
Thornhill, Theodore Wilbur, 1892-1978.  
Rotary Club (Charleston, S.C.)  
Rotary International.  
Clubs -- South Carolina -- Charleston.  
Urban beautification -- South Carolina -- Charleston.  
Charleston (S.C.) -- Social life and customs.  
Marion Square (Charleston, S.C.)

**Outline:**

398.01 (C) 01	Correspondence
398.01 (F) 01	Financial Records
389.01(F) 01.01	Charleston Rotary Fund
398.01 (F) 01.02	Reports
398.01 (I) 01	International Organization Records
398.01 (I) 01.01	General
398.01 (I) 01.02	Reports
398.01 (M) 01	Membership Records

398.01 (M) 01.01	Directories and Policy Manuals
398.01 (M) 01.02	Roster
398.01 (N) 01	Newspaper Clippings
398.01 (P) 01	Programs
398.01 (P) 01.01	Anniversary
398.01 (P) 01.02	Conferences
398.01 (P) 02	Publications
398.01 (P) 02. 01.01-.03	Histories
398.01 (P) 02. 02	<i>Keyway</i>
398.01 (P) 02. 03	<i>Rotary Ragout</i>

**Container List:**

**Box 1:**

398.01 (C) 01	Correspondence, 1993, n.d.
398.01 (F) 01	Financial Records:
389.01(F) 01.01	Charleston Rotary Fund, 1993-1998
398.01 (F) 01.02	Reports, 1992-2003
398.01 (I) 01	International Organization:
398.01 (I) 01.01	General, 1945, 1982-1985
398.01 (I) 01.02	Reports, Semiannual:
	1996-1999
	2000-2004
398.01 (M) 01	Membership:
398.01 (M) 01.01	Directories and Policy Manuals:
	1977-1983 / 1984
	1984 / 1985 – 1991
398.01 (M) 01.02	Roster c. 1966

**Box 2:**

398.01 (N) 01	Newspaper Clippings, 1937-2005
398.01 (P) 01	Programs:
398.01 (P) 01.01	Anniversary 1970, 1980
398.01 (P) 01.02	Conferences, 1965, 1983-1986
398.01 (P) 02	Publications:
398.01 (P) 02. 01	Histories:
389.01 (P) 02.01.01	<i>Golden Hours of Rotary in Charleston, SC 1920-1970, Drafts (2)</i>
398.01 (P) 02.01.02	<i>Service Above Self: A History of the Rotary Club of Charleston 1920-2004:</i>
	Manuscript, 2005
398.01 (P) 02.01.02.01	Publication Materials and
398.01 (P) 02.01.02.02	Drafts 2004-2005

**Box 3:**

398.01 (P) 02.01.03      Summaries:  
398.01 (P) 02.01.03.01      General, 1920-2002  
398.01 (P) 02.01.03.02      Year-by-Year Digests:  
1920-1965 (2)  
1920-1986

**Box 4:**

398.01 (P) 02. 02      *Keyway:*  
1942-1947 (Bound) (2)  
1950- 1958 (4)  
1961-1962 (Bound)

**Box 5:**

1964-1978, June (7)

**Box 6:**

1978, July – 1988, June (10)

**Box 7:**

1992-2002, June (7)

**Box 8:**

2002, July -2003, May  
2003, July-2005, July (2)  
Biographies  
398.01 (P) 02. 03      *Rotary Ragout:*  
1921  
1922