



November-December 2019

# ZOOM in on america

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## VISIT CHARLESTON



## SOUTH CAROLINA

The oldest and largest city in South Carolina is also one of the state's main tourist attractions. The strong, flamboyant colors brought out and enhanced by the vibrant southern sun, match the deep blueness of the sky and water, creating a photogenic background to cobblestone streets, palm trees, and colorful facades of historic buildings. It is a mixture of these factors, along with the warmth and kindness of Charleston's citizens that have earned the city the reputation of a friendly, almost idyllic, travel destination. The fact that the city has preserved its historic charm adds to its uniqueness, in the comparatively young country of the United States.

In this issue: Charleston

Zoom in on America

## Where Is the “South’s Best City”?

Sometimes referred to as the “South’s Best City”, Charleston lies close to the geographical midpoint of South Carolina’s coastline, at the junction of the Ashley, Wando and Cooper Rivers. It is the county seat of Charleston County, with a population of about 130,000.

The accumulation of waterways in and around Charleston is responsible for numerous islands, isles and peninsulas on which the city is located. The city proper consists of six distinct districts: Downtown, also called “The Peninsula”, which is Charleston’s center city, separated by the Ashley River to the west and the Cooper River to the east, West Ashley – the residential area to the west of Downtown, James Island – a popular residential area between Downtown and the town of Folly Beach, where the McLeod Plantation is located, Johns Island – located in the far western limits of the city, Cainhoy Peninsula – on the eastern end of city limits and Daniel Island, a residential area to the north of Downtown.

There are also other islands, such as Sullivan’s Island, which boasts beautiful, centuries-old homes and the historic Fort Moultrie, where battles were fought during both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Renowned author Edgar Allan Poe spent thirteen months stationed at Fort Moultrie while serving in the U.S. Army and his short story “The Gold Bug” takes place there. The Isle of Palms with its famous beautiful beach also offers views of the marsh and intracoastal waterway.

The two southernmost Charleston area barrier islands are Kiawah and Seabrook. Here, tourists and residents alike marvel at the canopy of intertwined live oak trees, which can be enjoyed on breathtaking drives throughout the islands. Both islands are highly renowned for their beautiful beaches and inviting amenities.



*The Dock Street Theatre, with scaffolding on facade, at Church and Queen Streets in Charleston, S.C., is seen on January 20, 1937 as restoration nears completion. Phillips Episcopal Church, founded in 1620, is seen in background. Photo: AP Images*

# Charleston and South Carolina - A Short History

In the 16th century Spanish and French explorers who came to the area found many small Native American tribes inhabiting the land. The Cherokees and the Catawbas were the largest of them.

In 1670, the first permanent English settlement was established near present day Charleston. It was named Charles Towne in honor of King Charles II of England. It was initially located at Albemarle Point on the west bank of the Ashley River, which is now called Charles Towne Landing. This location was abandoned after a decade and the settlement moved to the city's present site.

In 1710, the colony was divided into South Carolina and North Carolina. Settlers from the British Isles, France, and other parts of Europe built plantations in the coastal low country, growing profitable crops of rice and indigo. At that time, the city played an important role in the slave trade. African slaves were made to provide labor and helped Charleston become an important center of commerce.

By the time of the American Revolution (1775–1783), South Carolina was one of the richest colonies in America. The present spelling of the city's name - Charleston - was adopted in 1783 when it was incorporated as a city at the close of the Revolutionary War. In 1788, South Carolina

became the 8th state to be admitted to the union. Both the city and the state prospered and cotton became the major crop. The city Columbia, which was more centrally located than Charleston, became the state's new capital.

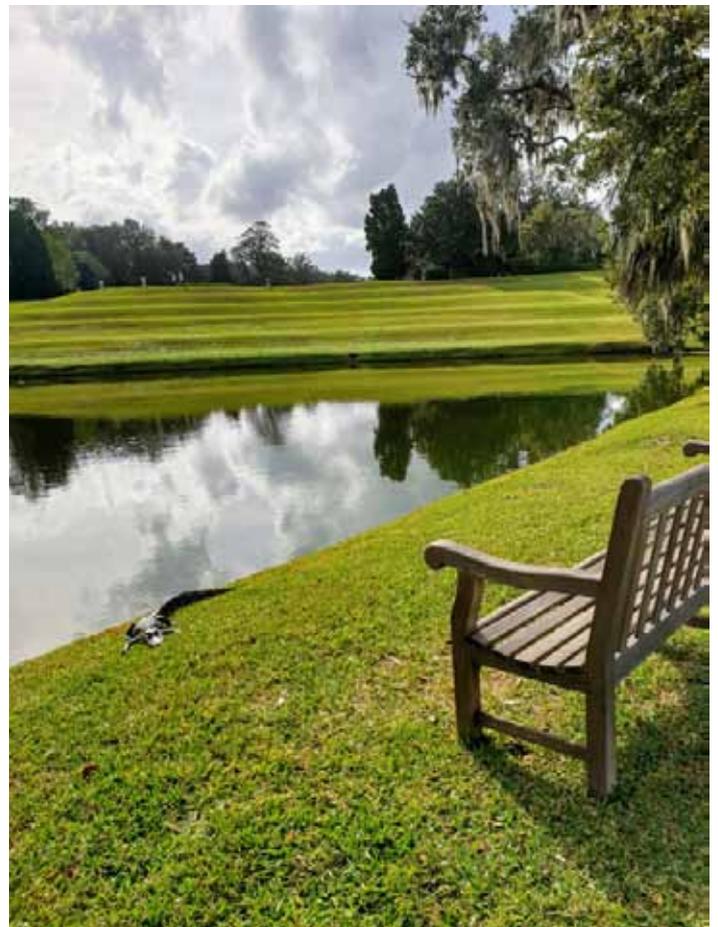
In 1860, tensions between the federal government and the state, which had been simmering for quite some time over tariff disputes, escalated. On December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the union as the first of the Southern states and on April 12, 1861, Confederate troops fired the first shots on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. This was the beginning of the American Civil War. As a result of the war, South Carolina was devastated, plantations were burnt and about one fifth of the white male population was lost.

The beginning of the 20th century brought economic recovery. The growth of the textile industry was a revitalizing factor and in recent years, tourism has become a major industry. For black South Carolinians, the second half of the 20th century brought tremendous changes, especially in the 1960s with the legal end to discrimination and segregation.



*Photo Anna Lukasik*

## Charleston in the Photographs of Anna Lukasik





## The Charleston - Bouncing to that Rhythm

"The Charleston" is a jazz composition that was written to accompany the Charleston dance. It was composed in 1923, with lyrics by Cecil Mack and music by James P. Johnson, who first introduced the stride piano method of playing. Elizabeth Welch sang "The Charleston" in *Runnin' Wild*, the Broadway production that showcased black music and performers. The song and dance sparked a craze that is a mainstay of American popular culture.

The Charleston is a dance named for the harbor city of Charleston, South Carolina, as it was originally a black folk dance known throughout the American South and especially associated with the city of Charleston.

This social jazz dance was extremely popular in the 1920s. It can be danced solo, with a partner, or in a group. Its simple, flexible basic steps, make it easy to concentrate on styling and improvisation.

Charleston music is in quick 4/4 time with syncopated rhythms. The dance is characterized by its toes-in, heels-out twisting steps. It uses swaying arms and the fast movement of the feet.

The craze reached its height in 1926 and then had revivals in the 1950s and 1960s.



Actress Joan Crawford is seen dancing the Charleston in the lead role in "Our Dancing Daughters" in Hollywood, California, in 1928. Photo: AP Images

November-December  
2019  
TRIVIA QUESTION

What ocean does Charleston lie on?

Send the answer  
(with your home address) to:  
KrakowAIRC@state.gov

The 4th, the 7th and 13th  
sender of the correct answer  
will be awarded with a book  
prize.

Deadline January 31, 2020

September-October  
Answer:

An outdoor cinema

The winners are:

Maya from Gliwice, Ewa from  
Wroclaw and Agnieszka from  
Krakow

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

The prizes will be sent to you  
by mail.



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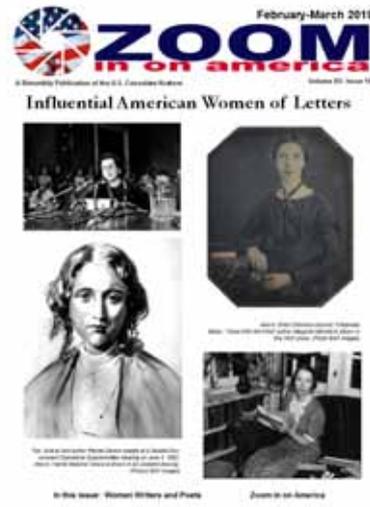
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January



February-March



April-May



Summer



September-October



November-December

**CONTEST**

Which 2019 Zoom cover do you like best? Send your answer to [krakowairc@state.gov](mailto:krakowairc@state.gov)  
Great photo albums are awaiting the first five emailers. Please include your home address.



*Photos on pp. 1 and 8: Anna Lukasik*