

DARRAH HALL

POTATO HOUSE

SALES HOUSE

BUTLER BUILDING

FRISSEL HALL

CANNERY

LATHERS

COPE

MUSEUM

ST. HELENA
BRICK CHURCH

THE SHED

PINE COTTAGE

ROUTE 45

HAMPTON HOUSE

MARTIN LUTHER KING HIGHWAY

BENEZET HOUSE

ORCHARD

CEDAR COTTAGE

CAFETERIA

JASMINE COTTAGE

ARNETT HOUSE

LEARNING CTR

GANTT COTTAGE

**PENN CENTER
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Penn Center, Inc.

This is your guide to the 15 historic buildings, and structures on Penn Center Campus.

START at Frissell Memorial Community House. The Frissell Memorial Community house was built in 1925. It is on the site of Penn's first school House which was erected in 1865 from three pre-fabricated units. The units were sent by the Philadelphia Freedmen's Society at the request of Laura Towne, who served as Penn's first principal along with Ellen Murray. This functioned as the Penn School from 1865-1904 when it was replaced by a permanent structure 75 yards away.

The Frissell Community House was named in honor of Dr. Hollis Burke Frissell who, in the early part of the century, served for sixteen years as Chairman of Penn's Board of Trustees. As President of Hampton Institute in Virginia, Dr. Frissell spearheaded Penn's transformation from an academic institution to the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School (a "normal" school was the designation used at the time for student-teacher training). The bronze bas-relief plaque on the exterior east wall facing the main highway is identical to one donated to Hampton Institute to honor Dr. Frissell's contributions to education and technical training of people everywhere without ethnic considerations.

Frissell Community House was, at one time, used as a library as well as kitchen and dining room for day students. This auditorium has been the scene of diverse happenings such as plays, parties, socials, and community sings. It has been a meeting place for community classes, councils, the St. Helena Credit union, midwives' classes, Graduate Club, Better Homes Committee, County Teachers Association, Parent Teacher Conferences, and many other functions. It continues to be a gathering place for social activities, spiritual nourishment, and public information meetings for the St. Helena Community.

Go to Butler Building

Butler Building, constructed in 1931 by Penn students, was named in honor of Miss Frances Butler who arrived at Penn in 1904 to teach but died one month after her arrival. This edifice originally housed the home economics department, the graduates' meeting room, the boy's clubhouse, exhibits, and the band room. During the 1960's, conscientious objectors who had been sent to work at Penn in lieu of serving in the Vietnam War were housed on the second floor.

This Building is now the site of the Laura Towne Library. It houses unique artifacts and documents related to the history of Penn, Sea Island life and the culture of this geographic location. It has become a valuable resource to scholars, historians and researchers.

As you exit Butler, you are on the walkway which connected to the first and second stories of **FOUNDERS HALL**. Founders Hall was built in 1904 to replace the first school house on Penn Campus and served as classrooms until 1953 when the last class graduated. Founders Hall was demolished in 1956 but lives on in the memories of its students all across America.

Go to Lathers

The Lathers Memorial Dormitory, built in 1922, was a memorial to Agnes Lathers, one of the early teachers at Penn. It was originally a dormitory for male students and teachers. After the school closed, it became and later provided space for the Beaufort-Jasper Comprehensive Health Services which has since moved to a larger quarter near St. Mary's on the mainland. This building is now used as the administrative building.

On the campus center, across from Lathers, Darrah Hall was located until 1966 when it was moved to its present location behind the Potato House. The cement foundations of the furnace room are still visible. Between Darrah Hall and Cope building was the **CHEROKEE COTTAGE**, built in 1907. It housed teachers and student workers, was the farm superintendent's office, and was the business office till shortly before it was demolished.

In a curved area which extended from Lathers, around in front of Butler, and down past Camp Lincoln was an **IMAGINARY LINE** which the boys were not permitted to cross to the north, nor the girls to the south. Fortunately for the boys, their outhouse, the foundations of which are still

visible behind Lathers, was on the "right" side of the line. Also next to Lathers was a military barracks, erected in 1940, and called the **TOMATO PACKING HOUSE**. Here the St. Helena Cooperative Society collected, packed, and distributed tomatoes grown by islanders.

Go to Sales House

The Sales House was constructed about 1916 as a milk house. It supplied milk to both the school and to Islanders. The original Alden Sales House built around 1900 located next to Frissell, eventually housed the **THRIFT SHOP** where islanders could obtain reasonably priced second-hand clothing. In 1937, a second Alden Sales House was built by students, also close to Frissell, to replace the original. Neither building now remains. On that second building, the porch was known as the "needable porch." Any day that "a barrel done come", the older people came to the "needable porch" at the Sales house. These barrels, many sent down from cities up north, enabled some children to remain in school... the contents were sold for a nominal amount, and were not given away except in emergency cases. The third Sales Houses (this Milk House) probably owes its name as much to its use as a thrift shop, as it does to its namesake, Alden Sales.

Go to Cannery

What is now known as the cannery was originally built as dairy barn/milking parlor in 1946. It housed a pure-bred dairy herd that had been developed from the stock Francis Cope, a Philadelphia Quaker, had brought to Penn during its formative years. The building was converted in the early 1980's to a cooperative tomato canning facility for the use of local farmers. It functioned in that capacity for several years. The cannery was upgraded in the 1980's and used by Coastal Canning to process Conch (pronounced conk), a delectable local shellfish. The Cannery is currently not in use. The silos in front of the Cannery were built by students who mixed and poured every inch of the concrete by hand. These silos were, at one time, used to mix and store the livestock feed.

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Go to the Potato House

The Potato House, built in 1938, was used to stack sweet potatoes for curing. The Potato House is now fenced in and used for the storage of farm machinery. Just to the right of the fence is a concrete trench that was a cattle dip. It was used by the local farmers to rid their stock of the lethal Texas tick. The trench was deep enough that the cattle, when driven into it, were initially completely covered with the dip solution. The odor was said to be less than pleasant.

Go to Darrah Hall

Darrah Hall is the oldest building on campus having been built in 1903. The original Darrah Hall was built in 1882 as a memorial to Sophia Towne Darrah, the sister of Laura Towne, and was located on "The Green," at the intersection of highway 21 and Martin Luther King Drive (Lands End Road). In 1893, during the great hurricane, the building was used as a refuge for the local people. Later that year, the building burned to the ground. The building you see before you was originally located in the center of Penn's campus and was used as a gymnasium and, later, as a tomato packing house. While it was on "The Green," and after it was rebuilt on the campus, it was also the site of Temperance Meetings, the Farmers Fair (to introduce and promote new agricultural methods), Community Sings, and the Mystery Play, a story of the birth of Christ written by Grace House, an early teacher and principal, and performed by Penn Students and faculty. Eventually, Darrah was moved to its present site. The basketball scoreboard can still be seen. Today, Darrah is used to house groups for meetings, wedding receptions etc.

As you pass by the farm buildings on the right, on your way to Pine Grove Cottage, note the large open field. This once held the bus shed, an auto mechanic shop and a barn. Towards your left, behind Cope Building, were a drive-on scale and a fire house.

Go to Pine Grove Cottage

Pine Grove Cottage was built in 1921 by Penn students under the direction of Mr. Benjamin Boyd, the Carpentry Instructor at Penn from 1919 to 1948. It originally housed the school superintendent. Today, it is used to house guests of Penn Center.

Go to Cope Building

The COPE INDUSTRIAL SHOP was built in 1912 to house the harness-making, wheelwrighting, blacksmith, basketry, carpentry and cobbling classes. Cope Shop is named for Francis Cope, a Philadelphia Quaker who served as trustee for many years. Cope was dedicated on Penn's 50th anniversary, an event which was heightened by remarks from ex-slaves and Civil War heroes. One of these was General Robert Smalls, who by then had served in the South Carolina State Legislature, and the United States Congress.

Rededicated in April 1999, the Cope Shop now houses the York W. Bailey Museum. Dr. York W. Bailey was a Penn School graduate who returned to St. Helena after receiving his medical doctorate at Howard University. The museum houses unique artifacts and documents related to the history of Penn and Sea Island life.

Go to Cedar Cottage

Cedar Cottage was built in 1907 to house Penn's single female teachers, the nurse's office, and dispensary. It is named after the abundant trees that once graced St. Helena Island. Prior to the 1959 hurricane, it is said that most buildings on the Penn campus could hardly be seen for the profusion of trees of all types. The early teachers were prolific planters. In 1951, using Cedar Cottage, Penn established the first children's nursery/day care project in Beaufort County.

Go to Jasmine Cottage

Jasmine Cottage, built in 1911 by the carpentry students, was named for the Yellow Jasmine Flower found in abundance on St. Helena Island. It was built to house teachers. It won the \$50.00 Third Prize in the 1922 National Better Homes Campaign.

The Gantt Cottage

The original GANTT COTTAGE was named after the ex-slave Hastings Gantt who donated the original tract for Penn school to Laura Towne. It was destroyed by fire around 1940. This house, built by students, is a replacement. Mr. Gantt was a businessman and politician. He served in the South Carolina Legislature as a representative from Beaufort during the Reconstruction period. He was an inspiration to landowners and land-

toilers alike. It is fitting that this building is now used as an office for the Neighborhood Legal Assistance.

During the 1960's, Dr. Martin Luther King stayed at Gantt. Penn Center was one of the few places in the South where bi-racial groups could meet. The great Civil Rights "March on Washington" took place here as well. Dr. King found this campus a pleasant, suitable location to visit, rest, and work.

Go to Arnett

Arnett House is named in honor of Dr. Trevor Arnett, one-time President of the General Education Board and friend of Penn School. It was built in 1937 by Islanders and students. Arnett, which can accommodate 24 people, was used as housing for student teachers from South Carolina State University working in the county schools. It is currently used for conference guests.

The dirt road between Arnett and Benezet trailing off into the east is known to former Penn students as "Memory Lane." The name derived from the many activities, some sanctioned, some self-inspired, which took place there, and the trees which were planted "in memory" of persons dear to Penn.

Go to Benezet

A Frenchman, Anthony Benezet, who stood for freedom in the mid- and late- 1870's, would be proud to know that this building, erected in 1905, was named after him. He would also approve of the fact that the female teachers and female boarding students were housed here. The mandatory nightly chapel service held in the ground floor lobby was, however, open to both male and female students. This location was the focal point of home economics training for female students, each of whom were required to reside in Benezet before they graduated.

Go to Bell Tower

Most large campuses have a tower somewhere that shows up on their "nostalgic" and "heritage of tradition" pictures and letterheads. This is usually a steeple-like clock tower or mountain-stone watchtower, covered with ivy and revered with hallowed memory by alumni who used it as a landmark, meeting place and T-shirt emblem. Well, Penn Center has two towers, each equally important to Penn's history. The first, next to Benezet, is the Bell Tower which contained the brass bell that was proudly mounted on the new school belfry in 1865. Laura Towne had requested that the bell be patterned after Philadelphia's famed Liberty Bell, which it was, and it bears the inscription "Proclaim Liberty." The bell was moved to Founders Hall in 1904, and to its own belfry when that building was demolished. The bell was a symbol of Penn's lasting service to the community, and appears now as the logo on the Penn Literature. It is currently on display in the York W. Bailey Museum.

The other tower, to your left, is the water tower which although perhaps not as beautiful as some of the ivy-league towers, was much more significant to Penn's development. It brought life-giving water to Penn's demonstration farms and contributed to the availability of everyday sanitation facilities before services were introduced to the remainder of St. Helena Island. This once again, established Penn as the place where the community kept pace with the world around it.

Go to Emory S. Campbell Dining Hall

Guests of the Conference Center are provided meals featuring a variety of local Gullah-style foods in the Emory S. Campbell Dining Hall. Originally built as a laundry in 1917, it was converted to its present use in the 1940's. The dining hall was expanded in 1960 and renovated in 1999 to meet building code standards. It now accommodates up to 100 people in the main dining area and 35 people on a small porch area. The dining hall was named in honor of Emory S. Campbell, Executive Director of Penn Center from 1980 until 2001.

Go to The Dennis O. & Katherine F. Green Learning Center

The Dennis O. & Katherine F. Green Learning Center was originally The Lands End "Rosenwald" School, built in the late 1920's through the efforts of parents, residents, government agencies and the Rosenwald Fund Committee. Mr. Julius Rosenwald was a Jewish immigrant and colleague of Booker T. Washington. The Rosenwald School was moved to its current site, adjacent to the Penn Center Historic Landmark District in 1998. The move and renovation of the building was funded by Dennis O. and Katherine F. Green. The Learning Center is utilized by the children of the Program for Academic & Cultural Enrichment (PACE). In 2002, a daycare program to serve the needs of pre-school age children was established.

Go to Hampton House

Hampton House was built in 1904 and named after Hampton Institute an industrial school for black students in Hampton, Virginia. It was built with space for two teachers and two rooms for trustees or other visitors.

The Misses Rosa Cooley and Grace House, early principals lived there and entertained many notables of the day. A visit to Penn School, then was a major excursion that usually entailed at least an overnight stay. The house is presently used to accommodate up to 13 guests overnight.

Go to Orchard

Orchard Cottage was built in 1942 as a teachers' residence. Today it is utilized as a print shop which is an entrepreneurship of the Teen Institute.

Go to Brick Church

Although not part of Penn's Campus, the BRICK CHURCH on the northeast border has always fulfilled a significant role in Penn's history. In 1855, slaves constructed the church and its pews for their masters. Seven years later, the builders, who until then had only been allowed to stand in a cramped balcony during services, took over the church as their own. Laura Towne and Ellen Murray, the founders of Penn School, and later Charlotte Forten, the first African American teacher at Penn School, held classes at the church after moving from Oaks Plantation house in 1862 until the school house was built.

As you cross Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard heading to Frissell, pause for a moment by the Laura M. Towne Memorial Fountain facing the highway in the little cemetery on the south side of Brick Church. This concrete fountain, where members of the church once watered their horses and oxen, is a tribute to the memory of Penn's founder and her philosophy, to create something where nothing existed before. If you have any questions as to whether or not she succeeded, look about you... but let your gaze not halt at the horizon.

Return to Frissell

This concludes your tour of the historic buildings and structures in Penn's Historic Landmark District. We thank you for coming to visit with us and hope that you will return home to share the rich history of the Sea Islands with others.

RETURN HOME, BUT KEEP A PIECE OF WHAT YOU
HAVE SEEN TODAY IN YOUR HEART.

COME BACK TO SEE US AGAIN.

