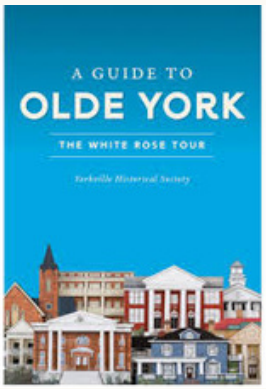
Other Historic Places to Visit in Downtown York







Downtown York, SC, is home to the York Downtown Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes more than 180 contributing structures from the 19th and 20th centuries.

As you explore downtown, take time to admire the historic architecture and discover the stories that bring York's rich history to life.

Historical information in this guide was drawn from *A Guide to Olde York: The White Rose Tour,* published by the Yorkville Historical Society in 2020.

South Congress Street:

3 South Congress St. - Wilson House
Built 1827 - 1828

The Wilson House was designed by Robert Mills, best known for designing the Washington Monument and the U.S. Treasury Building. It originally served as York's jail until 1855.

The building was later sold to William A. Latta, who remodeled the interior. The first floor became retail and office space, while the upper floors served as living quarters for his daughter, Annie Latta Wilson. Annie was married to Colonel William B. Wilson, one of the founders of the Church of the Good Shepherd at 108 East Liberty Street.

Today, the Wilson House continues to serve as office space.

7 South Congress St. - The Latta House
Built 1824 - 1828

The home was built by Thomas B. Hoover, who also built the Wilson House next door. It was constructed for Robert Latta, a wealthy York store owner, cotton merchant, and peddler.

7 South Congress St. - The Latta House Continued

After the house was completed, Robert and his wife, Eliza, traveled to Europe to purchase furnishings and chandeliers for their new home. A few of those furniture pieces, along with a chandelier, remain in the house today.

Latta's descendants lived in the home for more than a century. The Latta House has also housed a number of businesses over the years. Today, it is a wedding chapel and event venue.

27 South Congress St. - Rose's Hotel
Built 1852

Rose's Hotel, owned by William Edward Rose, opened in 1853. Newspapers in Charleston and Columbia described it as one of the most palatial hotels in the Up-Country.

During the Civil War, the hotel housed wealthy refugees from Charleston. In 1865, Confederate Secretary of War John C. Breckinridge addressed the citizens of York from its second-floor balcony. During Reconstruction, Union troops used the hotel as their headquarters.

Today, the former hotel is known as the Rose Apartments.

<u>North Congress Street:</u>
1 North Congress St.
Built 1839

Constructed by John S. Bratton and George Steele, this building was originally known as the Bratton Building. It occupies one-quarter of the market lot shown on the 1786 Yorkville Village Plan.

From 1868 to 1871, the third floor served as a meeting place for the Ku Klux Klan. In the late 1800s, it also housed a Masonic lodge. The second floor contained attorney and insurance offices, while the first floor operated as a dry goods store.

In 1911, W. M. McConnell opened McConnell's Dry Goods, later known as McConnell's Department Store. The business remained in operation until 1964.

27 & 29 North Congress St. — The Sylvia Theater and Coleman's Trading Post Former Shandon Hotel
Built 1906; theater conversion 1935

In 1906, George H. O'Leary built the Shandon Hotel on two lots where an 1888 fire had destroyed a pair of wood-frame buildings. The hotel occupied the second floor, with Feinstein's Department Store and Mrs. S. L. Steele's millinery shop below.
In 1935, Tom Flemming purchased the left half of the building and transformed it into a movie theater. Renovations included resurfacing the exterior, removing the second floor, and installing a large screen and modern projection equipment. Moviegoers enjoyed films such as Gone with the Wind. The theater closed in 1968 and was restored and reopened in 2001 by Paul Finnican.

The right half continued to serve as retail space. After the hotel closed during the Great Depression, the upstairs rooms became residential apartments. In 1945, Porter and Emma Coleman opened Coleman's Trading Post, which remained family-owned and operated at the time this guide was created.

70 North Congress St. - York ARP Church
Built 1913

The church was organized in 1853, and a wood-frame meeting house was built in 1855 behind the site of the present-day church.

As the congregation grew and the church acquired additional land, a new church building was constructed in 1913. That building continues to stand today.

<u>East Liberty Street:</u>
229 East Liberty St. - Rose Hill Cemetery
Established 1820

Located on the site of York's first church, the Independent Presbyterian Church, the cemetery is the final resting place of more than 330 veterans whose service spans the Revolutionary War through the 20th century.

301 East Liberty St. & 8 - 10 Hunter St. - Wright Funeral Home
Established 1908 - 1914

Wright Funeral Home is York's oldest family-owned business and one of the oldest African American businesses in South Carolina.

Established in 1914 by Isaac Wright Jr., a mason and craftsman, the business grew from his work making caskets in the early 1900s. Isaac became one of the first licensed African American undertakers in the state.

In 1908, Isaac built his family's home at 10 Hunter Street. In 1914, he built Wright Funeral Home at 8 Hunter Street, also known as 301 East Liberty Street. With help from his father, Isaac Wright, Isaac Wright Jr. constructed both the family home and the funeral home by hand.

<u>West Liberty Street:</u>
10 West Liberty St. - First Presbyterian Church
Built 1862

The church was organized in 1842. Robert Walker, a well-known South Carolina architect from Charleston, designed the building in 1846. Construction began in 1860 at a cost of $10,400.

Major structural restoration was completed in 2016.

<u>Kings Mountain Street:</u>
236 Kings Mountain St. - Kings Mountain Military School and the Episcopal Church Home for Children (York Place)
Built 1854 - 1939

Asbury Coward and Micah Jenkins, two graduates of The Citadel in Charleston, established Kings Mountain Military School. It became a leading preparatory school in the Southeast before closing during the Civil War.

In 1909, the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina relocated its orphanage from Charleston to the property in York, naming it the Episcopal Church Home for Children. Later known as York Place, the orphanage operated until 1973, when it became a treatment center for children with mental illness. The facility closed in 2015.

A chapel was constructed on the property in 1939 and dedicated to Harriet Huger Porcher, whose husband played a key role in raising funds for the church.