

City of Charleston Hurricane Hugo Records, 1989-2004

Descriptive Summary

Title and Dates

Hurricane Hugo Records, 1989-2004 (bulk: 1989-1997)

Creators

Howard R. Chapman, P.E., City of Charleston Hurricane Recovery Coordinator, 1989

Jamie Sue Bennett, City of Charleston Director of Disaster Recovery, 1990-1994

Quantity

10 cubic ft.

Forms of Material

Correspondence, reports, manuals, contracts, ordinances, resolutions, newspaper articles, photographs, videocassettes, slides, DVDs, plats, maps

Processed by

Rebecca Schultz, 2019

Location

07-A-001 to 07-A-010

Abstract

The City of Charleston Hurricane Hugo Records, 1989-2004, consist of documents created in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo's impact on the South Carolina Lowcountry. The collection contains correspondence, reports, manuals, legislative records, contracts, plats, maps, photographs, slides, and audiovisual material. These records document municipal recovery efforts to one of the worst natural disasters to affect the City of Charleston in modern history.

Background

Hurricane Hugo made landfall off the coast of Charleston on September 22, 1989, as a Category 4 storm on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. With top winds of 140 miles per hour and a storm surge of nearly twenty feet, Hugo slammed into the South Carolina coast with an intensity that rivaled few storms before it. Although lacking experience with a disaster of this magnitude, City officials quickly organized to address the immediate necessity of emergency repairs and roadway clearing. They had no way of knowing at that time the massive amounts of labor, money, and time that would ultimately go into restoring Charleston to its pre-hurricane state.

In the storm's direct aftermath, Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., appointed Howard R. Chapman, Director of Traffic and Transportation, to act as the City's Hurricane Recovery Coordinator. Mayor Riley also

established a Hurricane Recovery Task Force composed of key members of the public with the added support of City staff. The Task Force focused on five main recovery factors: business and industry, housing, infrastructure and public facilities, insurance and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding, and social services.

The reality of the massive recovery effort required to restore City parks, monuments, and facilities, along with the need for City offices to resume normal duties, eventually necessitated the establishment of an official Disaster Recovery Office. After a nationwide search, Mayor Riley appointed Emergency Management Specialist, Jamie “Sue” Bennett as the Director of Disaster Recovery. Sue Bennett’s experience with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency made her the ideal candidate for guiding the City through the arduous task of documenting disaster-related damage in order to gain desperately needed federal assistance. In October 1990, she took the helms of what ultimately became a years-long effort to restore the City of Charleston to its former glory.

Scope and Content Note

The strenuous demands involved with the recovery from Hurricane Hugo, along with the overwhelming amount of documentation necessary to gain federal financial assistance, hindered the creation of a unified, coherent collection of Hurricane Hugo records. The sudden decision to close the Disaster Recovery office in 1994, likewise, prevented any systematic effort to organize the office’s records in a meaningful manner. The staff of Records Management created the existing collection retrospectively. Please note that the collection’s current organization is rudimentary and may contain some overlap of records or misfiling.

The collection falls into five series: Initial Response, Policy, Correspondence, Recovery Efforts, and Audio-Visual Material. The Initial Response Series contains documents created in the immediate aftermath of the storm along with minutes, reports, and studies, which focus on the emergency response period of recovery. The Policy Series includes records pertaining to both internal City policies and FEMA or South Carolina State Public Assistance Program (SPAP) policies. The Correspondence Series contains FEMA, general, master, reading, and recovery-related files. The Recovery Efforts Series contains files related to property, debris removal, FEMA documentation and appeals, and financial audits. The Audio-Visual Series contains photographs, slides, and multimedia files. Please note that while many photographs are located under the Audio-Visual Series, photographs are also located throughout the entire collection.

Related Material

Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the Plans and Studies Collection, 1895-2009, for additional reports related to Hurricane Hugo. Also, see the Traffic and Transportation Records for additional Hugo-related photographs.

Acronyms

DSR – Disaster Survey Report

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

SPAP – South Carolina State Public Assistance Program

Series List

Series I: Initial Response Files, 1989-1996

Subseries I: Immediate Aftermath and Initial Recovery Efforts

Subseries II: Committee and Team Meetings

Subseries III: Reports and Studies

Series II: Policy Files, 1989-1996

Series III: Correspondence, 1989-1998

Subseries I: FEMA Correspondence

Subseries II: General Correspondence

Subseries III: Master Correspondence

Subseries IV: Read Files

Subseries V: Recovery-related Correspondence

Series IV: Recovery Efforts, 1989-2004

Subseries V: Property Files, 1989-1994

Subseries VI: Debris Removal, 1989-1996

Subseries VI: Disaster Survey Reports (DSRs) and FEMA Documentation, 1989-1996

Subseries VII: FEMA Appeal, 1990-1997

Subseries VIII: Audit Files, 1989-2004

Series V: Audio-Visual Materials

Folder List

Box Folder

Box	Folder	
		<i>Initial Response Files, 1989-1996</i>
1	1-11	Initial Response and Recovery Efforts, 1989-1991
	12-15	Committee and Team Meetings, 1989-1991
	16-23	Reports and Studies, 1989-1996
		<i>Policy Files, 1989-1996</i>
	24-28	Policy Files, 1989-1996
2	1-8	Policy Files, 1989-1996
		<i>Correspondence, 1989-1998</i>
	9-17	FEMA Correspondence, 1989-1994
	18-19	General Correspondence, 1989-1998
3	1-2	General Correspondence, 1989-1998
	3-7	Master Correspondence, 1990-1991
	8-14	Reading File Correspondence, 1990-1994
4	1-7	Reading File Correspondence, 1990-1994
	8-23	Recovery-related Correspondence, 1989-1994
		<i>Recovery Efforts, 1989-2004</i>
		<i>Property Files, 1989-1994</i>
5	1-33	Property Files, 1989-1994
6	1-13	Property Files, 1989-1994
		<i>Debris Removal, 1989-1996</i>
	14-20	Debris Removal, 1989-1996
7	1-12	Debris Removal, 1989-1996
		<i>Disaster Survey Reports (DSRs) and FEMA Documentation, 1989-1996</i>
	13-19	DSRs, 1989-1996
8	1-20	DSRs, 1989-1996
9	1-11	DSRs, 1989-1996
	12-13	FEMA Appeal, ca. 1990-1997
10	1-7	FEMA Appeal, ca. 1990-1997
		<i>Audit Files, 1989-2004</i>
	8-11	Audit Files, 1989-2004
		<i>Audio-Visual Materials</i>
	12	DVDs, ca. 1989-1990
	13	Slides, ca. 1989
	14	Videocassettes, ca. 1989-1990
	15-20	Photographs, ca. 1989-1990