

**Historic Financial Ledgers of the J. B. White Fund
Managed by the Community Foundation of the CSRA
Gifted to the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System's Special Collections**

AUGUSTA, Ga. (September 15, 2023) — The Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System announces a gift of historic importance from the Community Foundation of the CSRA. The gift consists of three ledgers spanning the years 1923–1981 that detail the financial and philanthropic legacy of early twentieth-century Augusta entrepreneur J. B. White. White’s department store on Broad Street stood as a fixture of commerce and retail excellence for much of the mid- to late-19th century and into the 20th century.



Original J.B. White's at 738 Broad Street, ca. 1900s, Fitz-Symms Photography Studio, Augusta Museum of History

Born on October 12, 1849, in Milford County, Donegal, Ireland, James Bryce White immigrated to New York from Belfast, Ireland, shortly after the Civil War and made his way to Augusta around 1868. He worked as a dry goods clerk for several years, gaining a reputation among Augusta merchants and community leaders as a brilliant businessman. When he decided in 1874 to open J. B. White & Co. on what is now the 700 block of Broad Street, he had no trouble finding business partners. His mercantile store boomed and expanded for over thirty years. White’s success as an entrepreneur became a model for other merchants throughout the region.

After his death, the *Augusta Chronicle* reported that J. B. White had bequeathed \$400,000 to the city to be spent for the public good. In the months following the announcement, Augusta City Council appointed a committee of local officials to devise a plan for the money. So, in 1918, the Augusta City Council, per the committee’s suggestion, allotted \$200,000 for two new YMCA buildings: one downtown on Broad St. and one that was in the "West End" (Mill District) of the city at the corner of Broad and Crawford Streets. Five years later, the remaining funds were placed in an endowment to be managed by a group of trustees selected by the city council, named the J.B. White Foundation.

For 100 years, the J.B. White Foundation has been a source of charitable giving within the Augusta community, early on providing thousands of educational scholarships to students in need, and for many years offering substantial financial support to Shiloh Orphanage and the Tuttle-Newton Home, formerly the Augusta Orphan Society. In 2012, the Community Foundation of the CSRA became stewards of the fund and continues to honor J. B. White’s wish to provide for the public good. To that end, the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System will ensure public access to the historical records of the J. B. White Foundation once they’ve been processed and digitized. The records are of value to both historians and genealogists alike, opening a window into the early philanthropic activities of Augusta’s business class and adding primary source material to the historical records of Shiloh Orphanage and the Tuttle-Newton Home. Family history researchers will find the records especially beneficial if they have ancestors who lived in the Augusta area, as the records contain the names of local individuals who were awarded educational scholarships.

Local historian Corey Rogers of the Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History notes:

"I am excited to see the Community Foundation of the CSRA and the Augusta Public Library System partner to preserve an important piece of our local history. Once digitized, these ledgers will serve as a major resource for historians throughout the River Region."

To view the financial ledgers of the J.B. White Foundation, please call the Georgia Room of the Augusta Public Library at 706-821-1511 or send your request to genealogy@arcpls.org.

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Best,

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