United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form  
See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic McCormick Multiple Resource Area (Partial Inventory: Architectural, Historical and Historic Archaeological Sites)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Town Limits of McCormick, South Carolina N/A not for publication

city, town McCormick N/A vicinity of

state South Carolina code 045 county McCormick code 065

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership: see individual forms

street & number

city, town ___________ vicinity of ___________ state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. McCormick County Courthouse

street & number Highway 28

city, town McCormick state South Carolina 29835

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title South Carolina Inventory of Historic Places

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date 1984-1985

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29211
7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The McCormick Multiple Resource Area nomination contains eight properties: seven individual buildings and one archaeological site located within the city limits of McCormick, South Carolina. These properties are associated with the growth and development of the community between 1852 and 1923. Included are properties which illustrate the architectural, historical, and archaeological significance of the area from the 1850s with the Dorn Mine through the 1920s and McCormick's role as a transportation and commercial center and county seat.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The town of McCormick is the county seat of McCormick County, which is located on the western border of South Carolina. McCormick was originally located in Abbeville County prior to the formation of McCormick County in 1916. The area encompassed by and surrounding McCormick is characterized by flat, sandy terrain with extensive pine forests. Much of the county is part of the Sumter National Forest, with the Clarks Hill Reservoir forming the western boundary of the county. Timber products and small scale agriculture provide the basis of the county's economy. McCormick County is the least populated county in South Carolina, with a population of approximately 7,800. McCormick itself contained 1,725 persons in 1980. McCormick serves primarily as a supply center for the county, with several small factories also providing employment. U.S. highways connect the town with Columbia to the east and Augusta, Georgia, to the south.

In 1850 the land that would later contain the town of McCormick was leased to William Dorn, who prospected the area for gold. This area is part of the western Piedmont gold fields, and gold was mined in this section of the state during the early to mid-1800s. In 1852 Dorn found a large vein of gold (1). In 1869 Cyrus McCormick, prominent 19th century inventor and industrialist, purchased the lands in the possession of Dorn, and continued mining efforts until the late 1870s (2). After many years of unsuccessful gold mining, McCormick decided to sell his land and promote its development.

By 1882 McCormick had purchased stock in both the Greenwood and Augusta Railroad and the Savannah Valley Railroad (3). Through his influence these two railroads were built to join each other on his land. In 1882 McCormick's surveyors platted a community which was given his name. During the 1880s McCormick gradually divested himself of his land, and the community of McCormick increased rapidly in population. McCormick became a rail center for the surrounding area and was a shipping point for timber and cotton.

From the 1880s to the 1920s McCormick was a leading rail center of this section of the state, with a population of 1,200 by 1917 (4). A three-block commercial area (composed of one-to three-story brick buildings) grew next to the railroad lines. Two fires in 1910 destroyed much of the commercial area,
but the businessmen of the community erected new buildings soon after. Residential areas also grew to the north and east of the commercial area and contained primarily one-story vernacular frame homes on large lots. In 1916 McCormick County was formed from parts of three adjacent counties and McCormick was made the county seat (5).

Since the 1920s McCormick has grown very slowly. The commercial area continues to be made up primarily of early 20th century buildings, although alterations to several of the buildings in recent years have been significant. The residential areas appear to contain an equal mix of pre-1930 homes and homes erected after 1930. While there are a number of simple, frame, late 19th and early 20th century homes scattered throughout the residential area, there is no definable concentration which meets National Register historic district criteria.

Within both the commercial and the residential areas there are properties which have particular architectural and historical significance in McCormick. Included in the nomination are one governmental, three commercial and three residential properties which are the most important intact buildings in the community. These properties have been selected for their architectural characteristics, associations with prominent residents, and/or role in the history of the community.

These properties were all constructed between 1889 and 1924 and represent various vernacular forms of the period. The McCormick Train Station was built ca. 1911 and is a good example of the vernacular gable roof station found throughout the state. The Henderson House, built ca. 1889, is one of the most significant older homes in the community and is a vernacular cottage with a dual-pitched mansard roof. The Sturkey House, built ca. 1895, is an ell plan frame house with Queen Anne details. Classical detailing is found in the Farmer's Bank, Hotel Keturah, Dorn House and McCormick County Courthouse, all of which were built between 1910 and 1923.

Also included in the nomination is the Dorn Mine, an important archaeological site. The Dorn Mine is a site which includes the original horizontal trench excavated in the 1850s by William Dorn. This site also includes various vertical pits and horizontal shafts which date from between the 1850s to 1870s. This area has not been mined for more than a century, but the community of McCormick has removed surface vegetation to expose this mining site and holds an annual gold mine celebration each year. An archaeological survey in 1984 found this area to retain its integrity of site and to possess substantial interpretive value. The New York Mine, North American Mine and manganese mine areas to the northeast of the Dorn Mine were found to be ill defined and to no longer retain integrity of site and location. Based on available information these areas do not appear to meet National Register criteria.
SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The McCormick Multiple Resource Area nomination is based on a survey of the architectural, historical archaeological, and historical resources of the community, conducted in 1984 and 1985. The survey was carried out by Thomason and Associates, an historic preservation consulting firm located in Nashville, Tennessee. One historian, two architectural historians and one archaeologist were involved with the project. The survey involved extensive research into the history of the Dorn Mine and development of the McCormick community. Sources included newspaper accounts; Sanborn Insurance Maps; Abbeville, Edgefield and McCormick County records; and published histories. Interviews were also held with knowledgeable local citizens.

Physical descriptions were written, and photographic documentation was made of each property that met the survey criteria within the town limits of McCormick. The archaeological survey examined gold and manganese mining sites in the north and west sections of McCormick. This survey concerned itself only with the analysis of historic sites associated with the mining industry and did no analysis of pre-historic archaeological sites. Using South Carolina survey criteria, 137 buildings and four extensive archaeological sites were recorded. Of these, seven buildings and one archaeological site were determined to meet the National Register criteria.
8. Significance

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Specific dates: ca. 1852 - ca. 1923  
Builder/Architect: N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The McCormick Multiple Resource Area nomination includes seven individual buildings and one archaeological site associated with the Dorn Mine and growth and development of McCormick between ca. 1852 and ca. 1923. These properties reflect the area's heritage as a center of gold mining in the state as well as its role as a trading center and county seat. McCormick was developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and much of its visual character dates from this period. These years also saw McCormick's greatest period of prosperity and growth. Together with Dorn's Flour and Grist Mill (listed on the National Register in 1976), these properties represent the most significant buildings and sites in McCormick.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During the 1830s and 1840s small scale gold mining occurred at several areas in South Carolina. This gold was part of a geologic belt containing gold deposits which stretched from North Carolina across the Piedmont into north Georgia. Many times these gold deposits were located directly beneath the surface of the ground and were readily accessible to pick and shovel excavation. The majority of these early mines contained only small quantities of gold, and mining was often a difficult and uneconomical process.

One of the most productive of the 19th century South Carolina gold mines was the Dorn Mine (see individual inventory form). William Dorn, an Edgefield County farmer who became obsessed with gold prospecting in the 1840s, spent many years examining and testing sites in Edgefield and Abbeville counties. In 1850, Dorn became convinced that a rich vein was located on land owned by his neighbor, Dr. John Wardlaw Hearst (6'). Hearst agreed to allow Dorn to look for gold on his land, and Dorn spent the next year prospecting in the area.

In February of 1852 Dorn discovered the second richest vein of gold in South Carolina's history (7). Only the Hallie Mine in Lancaster County produced more gold than the Dorn Mine. The vein was located just below the surface, and Dorn excavated a horizontal trench over 200 feet in length over the next few years. Dorn utilized slave labor to excavate the site and transport the ore to a nearby mill, where the gold was extracted. Adjacent to the trench, vertical pits and horizontal shafts were also excavated. During the early years of production the Dorn Mine yielded over a half million dollars in gold, and Dorn became a prominent figure in the area. Dorn continued to operate the mine during the 1850s and was elected to the state legislature in 1856. By 1860 the mines had produced over $900,000 worth of gold (8).
Although the Dorn Mine was productive during the 1850s, the rich vein had been exhausted by 1860. The mine operation ceased during the Civil War and did not resume until 1866. Dorn appears to have realized that the best years of the mine were over, and he readily agreed to lease the mining area in 1867. From 1867 to 1869 several different companies prospected to the north of the Dorn mine but did not locate any rich vein comparable to the original 1852 strike. In 1869 a group led by Cyrus McCormick, northern inventor and industrialist, felt that a rich strike was still possible and purchased the land from Dorn (9).

Cyrus McCormick was already wealthy and famous in America by 1869 for his invention of the automatic wheat reaper, which was in widespread use in the Midwest. McCormick had invested in gold mines in Georgia and Arizona and felt that the Dorn Mine had potential for future profits. Throughout the 1870s McCormick employed several different managers and superintendents to prospect and operate the mine. Despite spending over two hundred thousand dollars, McCormick's company was unable to locate any rich vein similar to the original vein mined by Dorn in the 1850s (10). By 1880 McCormick had become convinced that his venture in the mine was a failure and examined ways he could reap some profit out of his South Carolina lands.

In 1880 McCormick decided to sell off his land and to do so in the most economical way possible. McCormick purchased stock in two new railroads, the Greenwood and Augusta and the Savannah Valley. McCormick used his influence to ensure that the two railroads made a junction near the center of his land at the Dorn Mine site (11). At this rail junction McCormick commissioned a surveyor to lay out town lots for sale at what he hoped would be a thriving rail center. In this fashion he hoped to receive a return on his investment through land sales.

On January 10, 1882, the town of McCormick was officially platted into 300 lots and an auction of town lots was held (2). Several dozen lots were sold in the first few months and the community was incorporated on April 1st of that year. The layout of the community was typical for the period, with 30x100 foot lots on a grid pattern parallel to the railroad tracks. The first building erected in McCormick was a train station to serve passengers and shipping clients of the Greenwood and Augusta Railroad (13). By 1883 McCormick contained a commercial area facing the railroad and a residential area along Pine, Oak and Walnut Streets. A fire in 1883 destroyed much of the commercial area but it was quickly rebuilt. The McCormick family continued to show an interest in the community, donating lots for churches and schools and loaning money to businessmen. Cyrus McCormick died in 1884, but his wife, Nettie McCormick, continued ownership of land in and around McCormick and was personally interested in the community's development.

During the late 19th and early 20th century McCormick quickly grew into a community with over 1,000 persons (14). A thriving commercial area of one-to two-story frame and brick buildings faced Main Street and supplied dry goods,
hardware and farm implements to the surrounding area. McCormick boasted two banks, the Farmer's Bank and the Bank of McCormick. In 1899 a steam-powered mill was constructed on the west end of Main Street to process oil from cotton seeds (15). The mill was later known as Dorn's Flour and Grist Mill (NR, 1976) and was one of the main industries in the community.

To the north of Main Street there evolved a residential area containing several dozen frame residences. Most of these residences were vernacular cottages with Queen Anne details and were one to two stories in height. The most notable of these is the Henderson House, (see individual inventory form), a vernacular cottage with an unusual dual-pitched mansard roof, built ca. 1889. This house has retained its original character and is one of the oldest homes in the community. Another notable home is the Sturkey House (see individual inventory form), which was built ca. 1895 by M.L.B. Sturkey, a prominent businessman of McCormick. The residential area also contains the major churches of the community, the earliest of which were the McCormick Baptist and Methodist churches.

On February 27, 1910, a fire destroyed much of the commercial area facing Main Street and a second fire on April 15, 1910, also destroyed several buildings. Despite these losses the prosperity of the community was such that a new row of brick commercial buildings was immediately built (16). This commercial row is still standing, although several of the buildings have been altered by the application of metal siding. The best intact example of commercial architecture in McCormick is the old Farmer's Bank building (see individual inventory form), constructed ca. 1911 with classical detailing. The bank retains its original vault and staircase on the interior.

In addition to commercial buildings facing Main Street, McCormick also contained two hotels to serve travelers. The first was the McCormick Hotel, which was built ca. 1884 (17). This hotel is still in operation although the exterior was greatly altered in 1949. The best remaining hotel is the Keturah (see individual inventory form), constructed ca. 1910. The Keturah is a two-and-one-half-story brick building with classical detailing. This building has recently been restored and is to be an arts center for the community.

In 1916 the community of McCormick had grown to the point that many residents felt that a new county should be formed with McCormick as the county seat. The campaign for forming a new county began in 1895 when a delegation from McCormick addressed the state constitutional convention (18). There was opposition to the formation of a new county by many residents of this section of the state. After several more attempts and legal battles McCormick County was formed in 1916. Parts of Abbeville, Greenwood and Edgefield Counties were taken to form McCormick County, and in 1923 the Neo-Classical style courthouse (see individual inventory form), was completed in McCormick.
The Dorn family has remained prominent in the community. William Dorn's brother, James Dorn, had two grandsons who were important in McCormick commerce and politics. Joseph Jennings Dorn and Martin Gary Dorn were both active in cotton farming, and in 1917 they purchased and expanded the large cotton seed oil mill built in 1899. Joseph Jennings Dorn constructed a large two-story brick house on Gold Street ca. 1917 (see individual inventory form), which is McCormick's best example of early 20th century residential architecture. Both Joseph Jennings Dorn and Martin Gary Dorn were members of the state senate from McCormick County in the 1930s. Gary Dorn was elected to the senate to serve out Joseph Jennings Dorn's term after his death in 1936.

Mining has continued to occur sporadically in the community. In the 1890s some testing occurred in some of the old mining areas, and in the 1930s a new area was mined by the North American Mining Company (9). This company spent several years digging shafts and pits northwest of Virginia Street before closing their operation. Manganese, which is used in steel processing, was also mined in this area during the 19th century. Production of this mineral was not as extensive as the gold excavations. This mining area is composed of large open pits and tailings to the northeast of the gold mine sites. The last large scale mining of manganese occurred in the 1940s, and the site is now overgrown and obscured.

After 1930 McCormick's steady growth came to a halt until recent years. The commercial area has seen very few new buildings constructed during past decades and is still composed of early 20th century buildings, although several have been altered. In the residential area, many of the older buildings remain, but the large lots on which they sit have been gradually subdivided, and many new homes are interspersed throughout the older areas. McCormick still retains a number of Victorian buildings and interest in restoration of both the mining areas and of historic buildings continues to grow in the community.

Archaeology - Historic:

The Dorn Mine represents one of the best remaining examples of a 19th century gold mine operation in South Carolina. Struck in 1852, the mine produced the second largest amount of gold in the state's history. Between 1852 and 1860 almost one million dollars was extracted from the mine before the vein was exhausted. The Dorn Mine has retained its integrity as an historic archaeological site and is of major state and local significance. The site consists of intact horizontal tunnels and shaft and vertical pits. The original 1852 excavation is also visible. Other gold mining areas known as the New York and North American mines and the manganese mining site are also of significance to the legacy of McCormick, but these areas do not retain their integrity of site due to mining and testing into the mid-20th century. The development of McCormick in the late 19th century was due partly to the mining operations of William Dorn and Cyrus McCormick. The integrity and interpretive value of the Dorn Mine site is an important resource of the community.
Architecture:

McCormick's architecture is composed of vernacular building forms found after 1880. McCormick was a planned community with its lots laid out on a grid pattern typical of community planning of the period. These early homes were simple frame residences built with detailing influenced by the Queen Anne, Eastlake and Italianate styles. Two of the most significant of these early homes are the Henderson House and the Sturkey House. The Henderson House is a two-story vernacular frame cottage with a dual pitched mansard roof. The Sturkey House is a one-story vernacular cottage with Queen Anne detailing. The residential area contains over fifty frame structures built between 1889 and 1930, but the equal number of post-1930 homes in the area negates its integrity as a district.

The commercial area of McCormick dates primarily from the early 20th century. The Hotel Keturah, built ca. 1910, is a substantial two-and-one-half-story brick hotel with Colonial Revival detailing. The Keturah faces Main Street and the railroad, as do most of the commercial buildings on the opposite side of the tracks. The McCormick Train Station is a good example of the vernacular frame stations built in the early 1900s with a gable roof and wide eaves. The commercial row along Main Street was rebuilt in 1910 and 1911 following major fires. The best remaining example from this row is the two-story Farmer's Bank building, which has not been altered and displays its classical detailing. This block and adjacent properties may be eligible as a district if the added metal facades in the area are removed.

After the first quarter of the 20th century McCormick grew at a slow pace, with few major buildings constructed. The most notable residence of this period is the Joseph Jennings Dorn House, built ca. 1917 on Gold Street. The two-story brick residence was designed in the Colonial Revival style and is the most imposing residence in the community. In 1916 McCormick was made the county seat of the newly formed McCormick County, and plans were made for a courthouse, which was completed in 1923. This courthouse was designed in the Neo-Classical style and has not been altered.

Commerce

The commercial area of McCormick developed in the late 19th century and served as the center of commerce for the surrounding region. Cotton shipping played an important role in the early history of the community. In 1899 a cotton seed oil mill was built to process oil from cotton seeds, and this was one of McCormick's main industries for many years. In addition to the cotton industry, McCormick was also important as a trading center for the region. Its commercial row on Main Street contained over a dozen stores in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, supplying area farmers and residents with hardware goods, clothing, groceries and many other items. McCormick County's earliest banks, the Farmer's Bank and Bank of McCormick, were also located along
these commercial blocks. This commercial row continues to be the main shopping area of the county.

**Industry**

McCormick has been the center of mining efforts for many years. In 1852 the land was the site of a major gold strike. This gold was first mined by William Dorn and it proved to be the second most productive gold mine in South Carolina. The site of the Dorn mine is characterized by large trenches, pits and shafts. This site has not been greatly altered and retains substantial integrity and interpretive value. Other areas northeast of the original mine area were excavated and tested by a company owned by inventor and industrialist Cyrus McCormick. In the 1930s additional gold mining occurred, but neither these excavations nor those by McCormick proved successful. However, McCormick’s involvement with the mines was an important factor in the creation of the town. In addition to gold mining, manganese was also mined. Some manganese mining took place in the late 19th century but the major excavations occurred between 1942 and 1944.

**Politics and Government**

McCormick County was created in 1916 from parts of Greenwood, Abbeville and Edgefield Counties with the town of McCormick designated as the county seat. County court first met in the Brown-Andrews Building on Main Street until the present courthouse was completed in 1923. The Brown-Andrews building still stands but has been altered. Since its completion the courthouse has been used as offices for court records and judiciary. The courthouse has not been substantially altered since its construction.

**Transportation**

One of McCormick’s earliest structures was a railroad station built by the Greenwood and Augusta railroad in 1882. This railroad intersected with the Savannah Valley Railroad at McCormick and the town became a transportation center for this region of the state. The shipment of cotton from McCormick was a major part of the town’s economy. The present station was erected ca. 1911 by the Charleston and Western Carolina railroad. This station served passengers and shipping clients until recent years.

**CURRENT PRESERVATION PROJECTS**

McCormick contains many citizens with an interest in preserving the community’s unique legacy. In the late 1970s efforts were made to restore the Dorn Mill (NR) into a working steam mill. Grants for the initial phase of restoration resulted in the building’s stabilization, but the project is presently on hold. Also in the 1970s an annual festival known as "Gold Rush Days,"
which highlighted the community's legacy as a gold mining center was begun. The Dorn Mine area is open for visitors during this time. The city has also promoted the exterior renovation of homes through "Operation Facelift".

The Hotel Keturah has been restored by former owner O.S. Sexton and there are plans to utilize the building as a community arts center. Mr. Sexton has also restored the Jennings Dorn House on Gold Street and is presently attempting to purchase and restore the train station. Interest in restoration of older homes in the residential section also appears to be on the increase.

There is a great deal of interest in the preservation and interpretation of the Dorn Mine site. Many citizens would like to see the site protected and developed for tourism, possibly as a city or state park. There is also interest in the continued restoration of the Dorn Mill, located near the mine. It is hoped that these sites can be developed to promote the historic legacy of the community.
FOOTNOTES


3 Ibid., pp. 182-83.


7 Pardee, pp. 117-19.

8 Lieber, pp. 73-91.

9 Hutchinson, p. 169.

10 Ibid., p. 181.

11 Ibid., p. 183.

12 Ibid., p. 185.

13 Ibid., p. 183.


15 LaForge, "Dorn's Flour and Grist Mill" National Register Nomination, p.2.

16 Greenwood Index (Greenwood S. C.), 25 May 1911.


20 Ibid.

21 Interview with Miriam Patterson, McCormick, S.C., 15 October 1984.

22 Hutchinson, p. 183.


24 Hutchinson, p. 181.


27 Greenwood Index (Greenwood, S. C.), 25 May 1911.


29 Greenwood Index (Greenwood, S. C.), 2 March 1910.


32 Greenwood Index (Greenwood, S. C.), 25 May 1911.

33 "McCormick, South Carolina," McCormick Messenger.

34 Hutchinson, pp. 182-83.


37 Ibid.

38 Wall Plaque, McCormick County Courthouse, McCormick, South Carolina, 1923.
9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property [See individual inventory forms]

Quadrangle name [McCormick, S.C.]

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References [See individual forms]

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Verbal boundary description and justification
[See individual inventory forms]

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Philip Thomason, Architectural Historian

organization Thomason and Associates, Consultants
date March 7, 1985

street & number 1700 Hayes Street, Suite 202

telephone 615-320-5732

city or town Nashville

state Tennessee

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

[ ] national [ ] state [X] local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Charles E. Lee

date 10/23/85

title State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature] date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

[Signature] date

Chief of Registration
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group  

Name                  McCormick Multiple Resource Area  
State                 McCormick County, SOUTH CAROLINA

Nomination/Type of Review

1. Dorn Gold Mine  
   Entered in the National Register  
   Keeper  
   Attest

2. Dorn, Joseph Jennings, House  
   Entered in the National Register  
   Keeper  
   Attest

3. Farmer's Bank  
   Entered in the National Register  
   Keeper  
   Attest

4. Henderson, Otway, House  
   Entered in the National Register  
   Keeper  
   Attest

5. Hotel Keturah  
   Entered in the National Register  
   Keeper  
   Attest

6. McCormick County Courthouse  
   Entered in the National Register  
   Keeper  
   Attest

7. McCormick Train Station  
   Entered in the National Register  
   Keeper  
   Attest

8. Sturkey, M.L.B., House  
   Entered in the National Register  
   Keeper  
   Attest

9.  
   Keeper  
   Attest

10.  
    Keeper  
    Attest