NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bluffton Historic District

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by May River, Huger Cove, & Bridge St. not for publication ___
city or town Bluffton vicinity ___
state South Carolina code SC county Beaufort code 013
zip code 29910

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 5/16/96
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain): _____

Edson N. Beall 6·21·96
Entered in the National Register
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
- ___ public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ___ building(s)
- X district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
46	17	buildings
2		sites
		structures
		objects
48	17	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
DOMESTIC	Single Dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE	Department Store
LANDSCAPE	Natural Feature
INDUSTRY	Manufacturing Facility
RELIGION	Religious Facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
DOMESTIC	Single Dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE	Specialty Store
LANDSCAPE	Natural Feature
INDUSTRY	Manufacturing Facility
RELIGION	Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Late Victorian; Queen Anne;
Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals;
Colonial Revival; Late 19th & Early
20th Century American Movements;
Bungalow/Craftsman; No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Brick; Concrete
roof	Metal; Asphalt
walls	Weatherboard; Synthetics; Asbestos; Shingle; Brick; Concrete
other	Wood; Brick; Shingle

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ___ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ___ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
____ **B** removed from its original location.
____ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
____ **D** a cemetery.
____ **E** a reconstructed building, object,or structure.
____ **F** a commemorative property.
____ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance
1815-1945

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data
X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 94.6 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	513000	3566460	4	17	513~~180~~240	3565880
2	17	513300	3565~~500~~720	5	17	512~~140~~235	3566~~180~~30
3	17	513~~200~~170	3565~~760~~580	6	17	512~~800~~80	3566~~500~~430

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer D. Brown

organization _____ date 1 March 1995

street & number 105 Ramona Road, Apt. 258 telephone (706) 549-6933

city or town Athens state GA zip code 30605

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Bluffton Historic District lies along the May River in the southern part of Beaufort County, South Carolina, in the Town of Bluffton. The district contains 46 buildings and two landscape features that contribute to the district's historic character and 17 buildings that do not contribute. One building, the Church of the Cross, was listed on the National Register in 1975. The district includes both residential and commercial buildings dating from around 1815 to 1945; however, the majority were built between 1880 and 1930, a period of great growth and development in Bluffton's history.

The historic buildings in the district are largely vernacular in nature, but some houses demonstrate elements of the Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival styles. Most of the buildings are one- to two-story frame structures with brick pier foundations and full-width, one-story porches. Most of the houses are small in scale; exteriors are commonly weatherboard, and decorative features are minimal.

Bluffton was founded in the early nineteenth century by area rice and cotton planters seeking a healthy place for their families to vacation. The town was sited on a high bluff to take advantage of the cool, clean breezes off the May River. Thus the earliest houses were built facing the river and near the freshwater coves. Streets were formally laid out in the 1830s or 1840s, and development concentrated along Bridge and Calhoun Streets, the town's two major thoroughfares.[1]

In 1863 the Town of Bluffton was burned by federal troops from Hilton Head Island.[2] While some antebellum structures remain and are included in the district, most of the buildings were built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Except for a small number of modern infill buildings and secondary structures, the district appears today much as it did in the 1930s and 1940s.

The district is characterized by dense vegetation and a large number of towering live oak trees. Palmetto trees are common as well, particularly along Calhoun Street. The district's two contributing landscape features, Heyward and Huger Coves, originate as freshwater springs in the heart of town and drain toward the May River. They provide scenic vistas of the river and, along with a third cove west of the district, define the character of the town. A 1913 surveyor's map shows a bridge crossing Huger Cove on Bridge Street and one crossing Heyward Cove on Water Street.[3] Footbridges also spanned the coves during this period, although none of them have survived to the present.

The general character of the district is "Domestic," although there are also buildings representing the "Commerce/Trade," "Religion," and "Industry/Processing" functions. The coves represent the "Landscape--natural feature" category. Building types represented include houses, barns, churches, kitchens, stores, and factories.

The condition of buildings in the district is generally good, although several properties are vacant and threatened by neglect. Additions have been made to many of the buildings, and some have been altered with synthetic siding and other similar changes.

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[1]Nellie Hasell Fripp, "Bluffton and the Okatie," Bluffton, S.C., 1951, 7-8. (Typewritten.)

[2]W. Hunter Saussy, "A Short History of the Bluffton, S.C. Area," in *No. II, A Longer Short History of Bluffton, South Carolina and Its Environs*, The Bluffton Historical Preservation Society (Hilton Head Island, S.C.: 1988), 9.

[3]Surveyor's Map of Bluffton, 1913, Bluffton Town Hall, Bluffton, S.C.

Bridge Street, Verdier Cove to Wharf Street

1. Guerrard's Bluff, Bridge Street: Built in 1936, this house is unique as the only historic brick structure in Bluffton. Built in the Colonial Revival style, the two-story structure has a lateral gable, raised seam metal roof and two exterior brick chimneys. A one-story porch with deck stretches across the river facade, with a Chinese Chippendale railing along the porch roofline. A one-story wood frame addition was made to the rear of the building in 1985. The house stands on the site of two earlier houses: the first was burned during the Civil War, and the fate of the second is unknown. Two outbuildings remain from the second of these houses. One, a small cottage with additions, is believed to date from 1880 and was once the office of Dr. Jacob Guerrard, a Bluffton dentist. A barn also remains from this era. Another small cottage, built around 1937 as servant's quarters, stands near the barn.[4]

2. Hancock House, Bridge Street: This one-story frame structure was built around 1940 with a lateral gable roof and exposed rafters. The original exterior has been covered with synthetic siding.

3. Milford, Bridge Street: Built around 1920, this one-story, frame, board-and-batten dwelling has a raised seam metal, gable-on-hip roof and exposed rafters. A full width, integrated roof porch stretches across the river facade. The foundation is brick pier, and there is one exterior brick chimney. A small historic gable addition on the rear also has board-and-batten siding and brick pier foundation.

4. Bridge Street: This one-story, frame, weatherboard dwelling with exposed rafters was built around 1930. It has a side gable roof and a full-facade, shed roof porch. A gable addition was made to the east facade of the house.

5. Austin House, Bridge Street: Built around 1930, this one-story frame house has a weatherboard exterior and a raised seam metal gable roof. A one-story, full-facade porch stretches across the river facade of the building. The foundation is brick, as are the two chimneys. Two symmetrical gable additions on the rear appear historic.

6. Bridge Street: This frame, one-story, gable roof dwelling was built around 1940 with one interior brick chimney. A small gable addition projects from the rear of the house and has a screen porch projecting from the east side.

7. Garvey Houses, Bridge Street: The original house on this property was owned by Isaac Garvey, the first African-American to own land along the May River in Bluffton. This early one-and-a-half-story, frame weatherboard structure is still standing, though it is in deteriorated condition. The original one-story porch is no longer extant. The house dates from 1865 and has a lateral gable, raised seam metal roof. The other house on this lot was built by Garvey's son in the early twentieth century. This frame, one-story building has a square floor plan and a hipped, raised seam metal roof. The west end of the river facade porch has been enclosed. The building has been covered with synthetic siding, and a small shed

[4]Interview with Betsy Caldwell, Bluffton, S.C., Aug 1994.

roof addition was made to the rear. Both of these buildings are significant due to their associations with African-American history in Bluffton.[5]

Bridge Street, Wharf Street to Huger Cove

8. Bridge Street: This one-story, frame weatherboard dwelling was built in 1922. It has a lateral gable, raised seam metal roof with exposed rafters and one exterior brick chimney. A full-facade, shed roof porch extends along the front of the building. An addition has been made to the rear.

9. Bluffton Oyster Company, Bridge Street: The only industrial site within the Bluffton Historic District, this one-story, front gable, raised seam metal roof building was constructed around 1940 on the same site as previous oyster factories. The concrete block, masonry construction factory has a wood dock on the river, and a synthetic siding addition exists on the river facade. The front has been covered in stucco with seashells. The oyster factory represents the last vestige of an important industry in the town.

10. Bridge Street: Built around 1940, this one-story, raised seam metal, gable roof dwelling has a partial width, shed roof porch. The frame building has a weatherboard exterior and a brick pier foundation. An addition projects from the north facade.

11. Colcock-Teel House, Colcock Street: Historic, non-contributing frame residence.

12. Colcock Street: Non-historic, non-contributing brick ranch house.

13. Cypress Bluff, Colcock Street: This one-story frame riverfront home was built around 1890. The weatherboard building has a side gable roof and two interior brick chimneys. A shed roof porch stretches across the river facade; the west end of the porch has been enclosed. Several additions have also been made to the rear of the building. During the early twentieth century, a popular restaurant and dance hall was run in the building.[6] A secondary, non-historic, non-contributing frame dwelling also stands at the rear of this lot.

14. Colcock Street: Non-historic, non-contributing frame residence.

West Side of Calhoun Street, S.C. Highway 46 to Lawrence Street

15. Planters Mercantile, Calhoun Street: This two-story, frame commercial structure has a low-pitch, hipped roof and exposed rafters. Built around 1890, it has double doors and display windows on the front facade. A concrete block addition on the south facade of the building appears historic. The zero lotline

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[5]Mary Ellen Johnson, "Preservation Resources and History in Bluffton," Beaufort, S.C., 1980, 12. (Typewritten.)

[6]Bluffton Historical Preservation Society, *No. II, A Longer Short History of Bluffton, South Carolina, and Its Environs* (Hilton Head Island, S.C.: 1988).

and placement at the corner of a residential lot along the town's main street reflect a typical pattern for commercial buildings in the district.[7]

16. Patz Brothers' House, Calhoun Street: This two-story duplex was built in 1892 by Abraham and Moses Patz, who also built and ran the Planters Mercantile building next door. The house has a pressed metal shingle, pyramidal roof and weatherboard siding. A full facade, two-story porch with turned posts, balustrade, and gingerbread decoration stretches across the front facade. There are six interior end brick chimneys. The floor plan is mirrored on each side of the duplex. The interior wall separating the two sides of the house has been partially removed to accommodate the building's current use as a single family dwelling.

17. Carson Cottage, Calhoun Street: Built around 1890, this one-story frame building has a square core shape and a pyramidal, raised seam metal roof. The house is predominantly weatherboard siding, although the south facade has board-and-batten siding. A one-story porch wraps around the front facade and right elevation and has turned posts and balusters. There are several additions to the side and rear.

18. D. Hasell Heyward, Sr., House, Calhoun Street: This L-shape, frame weatherboard structure was built in 1914 and has a cross-gable roof. The one-story building has a facade-width porch with hip roof and turned balusters; it may be a replacement or later addition. There are also two additions to the rear of the building.

19. Calhoun Street: This L-shaped frame dwelling with cross-gable roof was built around 1920. It has a facade width porch with shed roof. The siding is asbestos shingle, and the foundation is stuccoed masonry.

Lawrence Street, Boundary Street to DuBois Lane

20. Lawrence Street: Built around 1930, this one story frame, gable roof house has board-and-batten siding and exposed rafters. The front porch was originally full but has been enclosed on the east end. There is also an addition to the rear of the building. A non-historic, non-contributing secondary dwelling stands to the west of this house on the same lot.

21. John A. Seabrook House, Lawrence Street: Built around 1840, this one-and-one-half-story, frame weatherboard house has a raised basement with brick pier foundation. The building has a gable roof with gable dormers on the north and south facades, and there are two interior brick chimneys. A facade width porch on the front has a shed roof and wood posts and balustrade. The dwelling is built on the central hall plan and has a historic addition on the northeast corner with exposed rafters.

West Side of Calhoun Street, Bridge Street to Water Street

22. Peeples' Store, Calhoun Street: This one-and-a-half-story frame commercial building was built in 1904 with a front gable roof and weatherboard exterior. One-story wings with shed roofs stand on either

[7]Johnson, 43.

side of the central gable section. A one-story, partial width porch with freestanding posts adorns thefront facade. Like the Planter's Mercantile building up the street, Peeples' Store was built at the corner of a residential lot along Bluffton's main street.

23. Peeples' House, Calhoun Street: This one-story frame house was built by J.M. Peeples, who also owned and ran the store next door. Built around 1900, the house has a gable roof and weatherboard exterior, with a one-story shed roof porch on the front facade. This dwelling has been abandoned for some time and is in deteriorated condition. At the rear corner of the property, behind the store, is a barn that also belonged to the Peeples. It is a one-story, gable roof frame structure with weatherboard walls.

24. Calhoun Street: Non-historic, non-contributing brick ranch house.

25. Calhoun Street: Non-historic, non-contributing commercial structure.

West Side of Calhoun Street, Bridge Street to May River

26. Fripp-Lowden House, Calhoun Street: This L-shape, cross-gable, one-story frame dwelling was built around 1910. It has a facade-width, shed roof porch with columns and balustrade. The exterior is weatherboard, and there are small additions to the rear. A store once stood at the corner of the lot but was demolished in 1980 after being damaged by an automobile.[8]

27. Seven Oaks, Calhoun Street: Built around 1850, this two story, frame weatherboard house has a two-story porch with tiers that wraps around the front facade and south elevation. A single door on each floor has transom and sidelights. The house appears to have a central hall plan. An addition was made to the rear of the house around the turn of the century; it currently has asbestos siding. A second, synthetic siding addition was made to the rear around 1980. During the early twentieth century, Seven Oaks was operated as a boarding house for visitors to Bluffton.[9]

28. Church of the Cross, Calhoun Street: The only building within the district already on the National Register, this church was completed in 1857 and is in the carpenter's gothic style. It is cruciform-shaped and has a steep cross-gable roof. The windows and doors have pointed arches, and there is an apse on the west end. The north transept has a gabled pavilion and open belltower. The exterior was altered in 1892 and again in 1900, when the chancel was remodeled and the narthex added. The interior was altered in 1946 with the enlargement of the narthex, but the church still has early box-type pews. A parish house was built in 1960 in a style compatible with the church and was included in the original National Register designation. The Church of the Cross was designed by Edward Brickell White, the same architect who designed the Huguenot Church in Charleston, a National Historic Landmark.[10]

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[8]Johnson, 43.

[9]Ibid.

[10]National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form: Church of the Cross, 29 May 1975, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Water Street, Huger Cove to Heyward Cove

29. Allen-Lockwood House, Water Street: This one-story, gable roof frame building was built around 1850. It has a one-story, shed roof porch across the front facade. There are two exterior brick chimneys and a brick pier foundation. Asbestos siding was added during the mid-twentieth century. A historic addition exists on the rear of the house.

30. Water Street: Non-historic, non-contributing residence.

31. Water Street: Non-historic, non-contributing residence.

32. Water Street: Non-historic, non-contributing residence.

33. Huger-Gordon House, Water Street: This one-and-a-half story, frame dwelling is the oldest still standing in town, dating from around 1815. It has a gable roof with dormers and weatherboard siding. A one-story, facade-width porch with shed roof and chamfered posts adorns the river facade. Two interior chimneys are brick, and the foundation is brick pier with pierced brick wall fill. The porch on the north facade was enclosed in the 1970s; at the same time, an addition was made to the west side, including a carport. The original front porch balustrade has been removed and was recently replaced with a temporary wooden balustrade. The central dormer on the river facade has been altered to contain French doors with transom.

34. Pope Carriage House, Water Street: Built around 1850, this two-story frame dwelling was originally an outbuilding to a larger house that burned during the Civil War. The weatherboard, gable roof building has a two-story porch that wraps around the river facade and left elevation and has wood posts and balustrade. The kitchen building has been joined to the main house and there is a historic addition to the west end; the east end of the second floor porch has been enclosed.

35. Whitney Cottage, Water Street: This one-story, frame weatherboard dwelling was built around 1910. It has a gable-on-hip roof and a one-story, partial-facade, shed roof porch with columns. An addition has been made to the south facade. The cottage originally provided rooms for visitors to the Lawton House, a boarding house that was demolished in the 1960s or 1970s and replaced with a modern dwelling (#36, below).[11]

36. Water Street: Non-historic, non-contributing brick ranch house.

37. Water Street: Non-historic, non-contributing two-story residence.

East Side of Calhoun Street, Water Street to Bridge Street

38. Bluffton United Methodist Church, Calhoun Street: Non-historic, non-contributing brick religious facility.

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[11]Interview with Alice Heyward, Bluffton, S.C., 10 Aug 1994.

39. Graves House, Calhoun Street: Built in 1908, this one-and-a-half story, frame weatherboard structure has a cross gable roof with decorative wood shingles in the gables; it exhibits some Queen Anne influence. A shed roof, one-story porch wraps around the front facade and right elevation and has columns and balustrade. The door has both transom and sidelights.

Boundary Street, Water Street to Green Street

40. Boundary Street: Non-historic, non-contributing brick residence.

41. Boundary Street: Non-historic, non-contributing brick ranch house.

42. Boundary Street: This one-story, frame, front gable bungalow has synthetic siding and exposed rafters. It was built around 1930 and has an engaged roof porch with supports on pedestals and an apron wall. A small addition exists on the south facade.

43. Boundary Street: Built around 1920, this one-story, frame, front gable bungalow has exposed rafters and knee braces. The original siding was cypress weatherboard, although it has been covered with aluminum siding. An engaged roof porch stretches across the front facade and has an apron wall. There is an addition dating from the late 1950s on the south side.

44. Pine House, Boundary Street: Built in 1904, this one-and-a-half story frame dwelling has a wood shingle exterior and a lateral gable roof. Porches exist on north and south facades, and there are gable dormers on the north facade. Several outbuildings in deteriorated condition stand on the property, including a water tower and two sheds.

45. Heyward House, Boundary Street: This one-and-a-half-story, gable roof, frame weatherboard house dates from around 1840. The roof is pressed tin shingle, and there are three gable dormers on both the east and west facades. The two exterior end chimneys are brick, and the foundation is brick pier. A full-width porch on the front facade has wooden posts and horizontal railings, with a raised seam metal, shed roof. A historic addition has been made to the northwest corner of the building; another addition across the rear has a shed roof and screen porch. There are two significant outbuildings on the property, a one-story weatherboard slave cabin with wood stump foundation and a one-story frame kitchen building.

Bridge Street, Boundary Street to Heyward Cove

46. The Rate, Bridge Street: This one-story, concrete block commercial structure was probably built around 1940. It has a front gable roof with exposed rafters and large display windows. The front facade has a stepped parapet wall, and a faded mural remains on the east facade. The building is located at the corner of a residential lot, resembling the pattern established by the earlier commercial structures on Calhoun Street.

47. Bridge Street: Non-historic, non-contributing brick commercial building.

48. Fripp House, Bridge Street: Built around 1835, this two-story frame weatherboard house has a gable roof and four exterior brick chimneys. The raised basement has been finished as living space. A

one-story, shed roof porch stretches across the front facade with wood posts and balustrade; a second story sleeping porch with front gable roof sits atop the original porch. Additions made to the rear are historic; a non-historic sunroom has also been added to the basement level. A historic frame outbuilding, possibly a slave house, stands at the rear of the property, and a non-historic, two-story garage with living space has been built on the west side of the property.

49. Card House, Bridge Street: Built around 1825, this two-story frame weatherboard building has a gable roof and one interior brick chimney. A two-story, shed roof porch stretches across the main block of the house. The house evolved from a two-story gable core built in the 1820s, with the shed roof side rooms added by the 1830s and the rear added around 1875. A glass side porch and additional living space was added around 1970 to the rear of the building. A gable roof stoop with wood lattice sides is also a later addition.

Pritchard Street, Bridge Street to May River

50. The Bluff, Pritchard Street, c. 1880: This one-story frame house in the central hall plan has a weatherboard exterior and a pyramidal asphalt roof. The one interior and two exterior chimneys are brick, and the foundation is brick pier with a pierced brick wall infill. A one-story porch covers the river facade of the house; it has a shed roof and simple wood posts and balustrade. The east end of the porch has been enclosed to create a sun room. Several small-scale additions have also been made to the rear facade. A historic garage and shed exist at the rear of the property. The main house was originally a two-story building, but the second story was swept away in the Hurricane of 1893 and was never rebuilt.[12]

51. Rowell or Walker Cottage, Pritchard Street: Built around 1910, this small, one-story frame weatherboard house has a partial facade, shed roof porch with wood posts. There is an addition to the rear. The building has been abandoned for some time and is in poor repair.

52. Pritchard House, Pritchard Street: Built around 1890, this one-story frame house has a central hall plan and is sited facing the May River. It has a raised seam metal, lateral gable roof, two interior brick chimneys, and weatherboard siding. The gables are decorated with wood shingles. The foundation is stuccoed masonry. A one-story porch extends along the river facade and has turned posts and balusters as well as sawn work along the cornice. The only apparent alteration, a short passage connecting the kitchen building to the house, appears historic. A small three-room visitor's cottage stands on the river side of the property, a remnant of the days when the house functioned as a boarding house for visitors to town. The ruins of a barn or garage sit at the rear of the property.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bluffton Historic District spans the years 1815 to 1945 and includes both residential and commercial architecture and two natural landscape features. Historic contexts represented within the Bluffton Historic District include: the Antebellum Resort Era (1815-1860), Civil War and Reconstruction

[12]Interview with Alice Heyward, Bluffton, S.C., 10 Aug 1994.

(1860-1880), and Commercial Growth and Decline (1880-1945). The size and scale of the architecture, the paucity of antebellum resources, and the distinctive mixture of residential and commercial structures all reflect these historic contexts within the district. The Bluffton Historic District meets Criterion A due to its significance as a commercial center in Southern Beaufort County between 1880 and 1930, and it meets Criterion C due to the cohesiveness and clear identity of the architecture comprising the district.

Historical Narrative

The Southern part of Beaufort County was not settled by Europeans until after 1718, when the Yemassee Indians were driven out of the area and the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas divided the land. The Devil's Elbow Barony, which included the future site of Bluffton, was largely uncultivated and unsettled until after the Revolutionary War.[13]

Bluffton was founded in the early nineteenth century by area planters as a resort community, a place for their families to escape the unhealthy conditions found on rice and cotton plantations. The high bluff and cool breezes from the river, combined with easy accessibility by water, made the present site of Bluffton an ideal location for planters' families to spend their summers. The first houses were built in the early 1800s and were generally small in size and scale. The streets were formally laid out in the 1830s or 1840s, with Calhoun and Bridge Streets as the principle thoroughfares.[14] The town was incorporated in 1852, and by 1860 there were around sixty buildings in Bluffton, including several stores, churches, and a Masonic Lodge.[15]

After the outbreak of the Civil War, the town was largely abandoned due to the presence of federal forces on nearby Sea Islands. Bluffton was a base for Confederate scouts, however, and on June 4, 1863, the town was burned by federal troops from Hilton Head Island. Over two-thirds of the buildings in town were destroyed in the attack. Rebuilding came slowly after the war, as most Southerners could no longer afford the expense of maintaining vacation houses.[16]

Transportation to and from Bluffton was always dependent upon the May River due to the poor condition of roads and the distance to the nearest railroad station (16 miles). As a result, a steamship landing had been built at the foot of Calhoun Street in the early 1850s, and the end of Reconstruction brought about the restoration of steamboat service from Savannah to Bluffton three times a week.[17] The steamships brought visitors to town, thus reviving the tourism industry and spawning a number of local boarding houses, including Seven Oaks and the Pritchard House.

The steamboats also brought dry goods and other merchandise to stores in Bluffton, which grew considerably in number after the Civil War. As many as five to seven general merchandise stores operated in town at the height of the commercial era, selling goods to villagers, visitors, and farmers in the

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[13]Saussy, 6.

[14]Fripp, 7-8.

[15]Saussy, 8.

[16]Ibid., 9.

[17]"History of the Town of Bluffton," The State (Columbia, S.C.), 16 August 1912.

surrounding areas. Planters Mercantile and Peeples' Store are among the last reminders of this period of commercial growth and prosperity, in which Bluffton dominated the Southern Beaufort County market.[18]

Oystering accompanied commerce and tourism as a significant industry in Bluffton for many years. The May River's fertile waters produce fine oysters that have been harvested and processed since the town was first settled. A number of oyster factories have operated in Bluffton, including the current Bluffton Oyster Company processing plant.[19]

As a result of the growing population and commercial importance of the town, Bluffton was incorporated again in 1903 with greater corporate limits. The population at time of incorporation was 350.[20] Bluffton's population continued to grow during the first part of the twentieth century, until improved roads and bridges in the area and the Great Depression combined to make riverboat travel obsolete, thus ending the commercial growth that had depended on it. Thus Bluffton's importance in the area as a commercial center diminished from 1930 to 1945, and it would not increase again until the development of Hilton Head Island as a resort community.[21]

Areas of Significance

The Bluffton Historic District is architecturally significant for its coherent collection of vernacular residential and commercial architecture, which effectively shows the evolution of the town from an antebellum resort community to a thriving commercial center. The district is also important in the area of commerce due to its prominence as a commercial center for Southern Beaufort County during the early twentieth century. Thus the district meets Criterion A because of its commercial importance to the area and Criterion C because of the architectural importance of its buildings.

The architecture of the Bluffton Historic District represents a wide range of time periods, yet is surprisingly consistent in terms of form, scale, and materials. Most of the buildings are small in scale, having been built as vacation homes rather than permanent residences. This has resulted in additions and alterations to most of the buildings to create more living space and accommodate modern lifestyles. Nevertheless, the typical form is still apparent within the district: many buildings are built on the central hall plan, and virtually all have spacious front verandas and minimal decorative details. Wood is the dominant exterior material, while brick is preferred for foundations and chimneys. The consistency of the architecture over time is remarkable given the broad time period represented.

The Bluffton Historic District is also important for its close association with the commercial history of Southern Beaufort County during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Bluffton's tradesmen dominated the local market for dry goods and agricultural commodities due to the ease of transportation on the May River and the proximity of Savannah, the nearest commercial center. The commercial buildings included within the district reflect most clearly the importance of commerce to the

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[18]Saussy, 10.

[19]Fripp.

[20]Petition to Municipal Commission of Bluffton, S.C., 26 March 1903, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

[21]Saussy, 11.

town, although the concentration of properties along the major thoroughfares (Bridge and Calhoun Streets) also attests to this role.

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Surveyor's Map of Bluffton, South Carolina, 1913.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Bluffton Historic District is shown on the accompanying map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses the greatest concentration of contiguous historic resources in the Town of Bluffton. The areas selected include the oldest part of the town, along the May River and along Calhoun Street. Heyward and Huger Coves were included in the district due to their significance in defining the character and landscape of the district and the town.

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property:	Bluffton Historic District
Location of Property:	Bluffton Beaufort County, S.C.
Name of Photographer:	Jennifer D. Brown
Date of Photographs:	April 1995
Location of Negatives:	S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Card House, Bridge St., South facade
2. Fripp House, Bridge St., South facade
3. Heyward House, Boundary St., East facade
4. Graves House, Calhoun St., South & West facades
5. Seabrook House, Lawrence St., South facade
6. Seven Oaks, Calhoun St., East facade
7. Allen-Lockwood House, Water St., South facade
8. Isaac Garvey House, Bridge St., South & East facades
9. Lawrence St., South & East facades
10. Bridge St., View Northwest with Carson Cottage in foreground
11. Boundary St., View Northwest of bungalows
12. Patz Brothers' House, Calhoun St., East facade
13. Planters Mercantile, Calhoun St., East facade
14. Peeples' Store, Calhoun St., East facade
15. Bluffton Oyster Company, Bridge St., North & West facades
16. Boundary St., View South from Bridge St.
17. Heyward Cove, View South from Bridge St.
18. Huger Cove, View South from Bridge St.
19. Bridge St., View West toward bridge over Huger Cove
20. Calhoun St., View South from Lawrence St.
21. Huger Cove, View South from Lawrence St.
22. Non-contributing building, Calhoun St., East facade
23. Non-contributing building, Water St., East facade
24. Huger-Gordon House, Water St.
25. Guerrard's Bluff, Bridge St.
26. Milford, Bridge St.
27. Bridge St., Parcel 192
28. Pritchard House, Pritchard St.
29. Pope Carriage House, Water St.
30. The Bluff, Pritchard St.