**1. NAME**

**COMMON:** Bleak Hall Plantation Outbuildings

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**

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**2. LOCATION**

On SC Hwy 174, .75 miles south from Edisto Island Post Office; turn left on dirt road and continue 1.3 miles; turn left and continue 1.75 miles; turn left, outbuildings 100 yds. down dirt road.

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Edisto Island vicinity

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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
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<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
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**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**

- Agricultural
- Government
- Park
- Private Residence
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

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**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**OWNER'S NAME:** John Meyer

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Bleak Hall Plantation

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Edisto Island vicinity

**STATE:** South Carolina

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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**

Register of Mesne Conveyance

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Charleston County Courthouse

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Charleston

**STATE:** South Carolina

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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE OF SURVEY:** South Carolina Preliminary Survey of Historic Places

**DATE OF SURVEY:** 1969

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

1430 Senate Street

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Columbia

**STATE:** South Carolina
Just prior to his marriage in 1798, Daniel Townsend began construction of Bleak Hall Plantation on Edisto Island. Today three outbuildings, probably constructed in the 1840s by Daniel Townsend's son, John Townsend, are all that remain of the plantation.

The most prominent of these three outbuildings is the ice house, a rectangular wooden story-and-a-half building erected close to the ground on a partial basement of tabby construction. The southern and northern facades are identical, with flush boarding through the first floor and clapboard in the gable. Two vertical-plank doors, one at ground level and one in the gable, are flanked by a permanent wooden ladder. The lower door is flanked by two narrow, vertical-plank shutters covering paneless windows which extend above the lower door level. Two barge boards of circular design, one the reverse of the other, adorn the eaves of the high gable roof, which is covered with cypress shingles and slightly flared at the bottom. The barge boards are connected at regular intervals with short wooden strips. At the gable peaks and at the peak of the dormer are three-level wooden spires which extend through the roof and terminate in pendants.

The western and eastern facades consist of flush-boarded walls with mock intersecting tracery windows and a mock door of the same design. Boarding within the mock bays is vertical. Exposed rafters just below the eaves accent a dentil-designed board extending across the facade. A high triangular dormer with two pointed windows of twelve lights each is centrally located in the roof. Directly in front of the dormer windows is a small balcony with supports in a double diamond design. The design of the dormer barge boards repeats that of the gables proper.

The ice house is pegged and the walls insulated with sawdust. The partial basement consists of three walls of tabby construction with charcoal insulation. The interior ceiling has a beaded design. A new floor was installed around 1965.

A second outbuilding, a rectangular equipment shed, is of tabby construction with a high wooden gable roof covered with cypress shingles. Modern sliding doors have been placed under the gable of the southern facade. On the northern facade, a permanent wooden ladder extends from the ground to the large vertical-plank door in the clapboard gable. The gable eaves are covered with barge boards with downward sloping dentil design, and boards with serrated decoration extend beneath the eaves of the eastern and western facades. At each gable peak is a three-level wooden spire that extends through the roof and terminates in a pendant.

The third outbuilding, a cubicle of tabby construction, was probably used as a smokehouse. The single entrance is a vertical-plank door. The slightly bellcast hipped roof is covered with cypress shingles and topped by a three-level wooden spire. Below the eaves all around the structure is a board with large serrated dentil decoration.
**Agricultural Significance:** John Townsend was born at Bleak Hall in October of 1799, the first son of Daniel Townsend and Hepzibah Jenkins. Inheriting Bleak Hall from his father, John Townsend became well known as an advanced agriculturalist. He was one of the largest planters of sea island cotton in the state and won many prizes for its quality and length. Bleak Hall cotton was highly valued in Belgium and France for making lace. Not only the cotton, but the Bleak Hall gardens were renowned. John Townsend employed a Japanese gardener to lay out and care for the elaborate and exotic gardens. Remains of these gardens surround the outbuildings in this nomination.

**Architectural Significance:** Though the main house of Bleak Hall Plantation was destroyed by fire, the three remaining outbuildings are excellent representatives of the gothic revival architecture utilized in the construction of this plantation. Particularly noteworthy is the structure and design of the perfectly preserved ice house with its mock tracery windows and door and the high gabled roof with triangular dormer.

**Political Significance:** John Townsend was known not only as an agriculturalist, but also as a political leader. He served in the South Carolina House of Representatives from 1822 to 1826 and 1828 to 1832, and the South Carolina Senate from 1850 to 1858. He was a delegate to the Secession Convention of 1860-62, and signed the Ordinance of Secession which ushered in the Civil War. John Townsend also served as magistrate, commissioner of roads, commissioner of free schools, justice of the peace, and justice of quorum. He died at Bleak Hall in 1881 and was buried in Edisto Island Presbyterian Churchyard.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
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OR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Longitude</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>W 80° 14' 03.1&quot;</td>
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</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE: CODE COUNTY CODE
STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE
STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE
STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Wright Caughman Historical Preservation Assistant

ORGANIZATION: South Carolina Department of Archives & History

DATE: May 9, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 1430 Senate Street P. O. Box 11,188 Capitol Station 29211

CITY OR TOWN: State CODE
Columbia South Carolina 45

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is: National [ ] State [ ] Local [ ]

Name: [Signature]
Title: Director, S.C. Department of Archives and History
Date: May 24, 1972

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

Robertson Uffrey
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 3/7/73

ATTEST: [Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 3/5/73