NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received OCT 13 1983

date entered

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 John L. Hart House

and/or common Hart-Mills Cottage

2. Location

street & number Home Avenue — NA not for publication

city, town Hartsville — NA vicinity of

state South Carolina code 045 county Darlington code 031

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	X unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	NA in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	NA being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	X other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Hartsville Heritage Foundation

street & number Post Office Box 212

city, town Hartsville — NA vicinity of — state South Carolina 29550

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Darlington County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Darlington — state South Carolina 29550

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina — has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date 1981 — ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia — state South Carolina 29211

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	___ original site
___ good	___ ruins	X altered	X moved date November 1981
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John L. Hart House is a small, one-and-one-half-story, frame dwelling located on a residential street adjacent to the central business district of the town of Hartsville, South Carolina. According to strong local tradition not contradicted by surviving documentary evidence, the building was constructed ca. 1850 as the home of John Lide Hart. There is no question that the house as originally built was antebellum and stood on land owned by Hart. Alterations and additions to the original building in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries changed its appearance without destroying the basic configuration. In 1981-1982, the building was moved to a neighboring site only fifty-five feet away from its original location, and under the direction of one of the state's most experienced historical architects and the guidance of the State Historic Preservation Office, was restored to an earlier appearance, based on the physical evidence of the surviving historic fabric, the available graphic documentation, and knowledge of other nineteenth century houses in the area.

Additional Information:

Exterior: The John Hart House is a one-and-one-half-story residence with a hewn timber frame and weatherboard siding. The house sits on a brick pier foundation and has a gable roof with wooden shingles. The facade (south elevation) is sheltered by a shed-roofed porch with chamfered porch posts and a wooden balustrade. The single central door has a four-light transom. Single nine-over-nine, double-hung sash windows flank the doorway. A central chimney with a corbeled cap and stucco necking band pierces the center of the roof ridge. The west elevation has a single nine-over-nine window on the first story of the earliest portion of the house, with two six-over-six windows on the second story beneath the gable end. A shed-roofed addition to the rear has an additional nine-over-nine window and an exterior brick chimney on this elevation. The east elevation has similar fenestration to the west elevation in its original section, and a single window and door in the shed-roofed rear addition. The rear (north) elevation of the Hart House has a central doorway flanked by single nine-over-nine windows.

Interior: The Hart House has a central-chimney plan with single square rooms on the east and west sides. The central doorway opens into a small foyer in front of the chimney. A single-run staircase behind the chimney provides access to the second floor. A two-room addition on the rear, which predates 1900, has an additional chimney. The second story of the house has two small rooms on either side of the chimney stack. There are no fireplaces on the second story.

The interior of the house underwent many changes during its years of active occupancy so that little physical evidence remains of its original appearance. Some of the split-lath plastering which appears to be original to the house is being preserved. Restoration of the remainder is proceeding in accordance with local memory and knowledge of similar houses in the area.

Restoration: Since, as will be seen from the statement of significance, the John Lide Hart House was the property, or residence, of many persons important to the town's history-- from its antebellum beginnings to its acquisition by the First Baptist Church in 1974 and then by the Hartsville Heritage Foundation in 1981-- the decision was made to restore the house to an appearance near to the central time of its existence. This decision, which removed incompatible twentieth-century additions, retains a compatible nineteenth-century addition and enables the onlooker to visualize the probable appearance of the house as it

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	X other (specify) local history
		___ invention		

Specific dates ca. 1850 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John L. Hart House, situated on Home Avenue in Hartsville, fifty-five feet from its original location, nearby the First Baptist Church and in the transitional area where public and commercial buildings give way to residences, is strongly associated by citizens of the town with the events and persons that have given Hartsville its unique characteristics. This universally held feeling of the citizens is supported by the documentary evidence.

Hartsville is characterized by its post-Civil War development through the energies of the Coker family and families associated with them in the development of a variety of imaginative business enterprises. It is outstanding among South Carolina towns in exemplifying post-Civil War and twentieth-century growth and economic prosperity by means of local effort rather than by the importation of outside capital. Such enterprises as the SONOCO Products Company (now with factories worldwide), the Coker Pedigreed Farms (a National Historic Landmark), the J. L. Coker Company, and other similar businesses gave opportunity to local residents and attracted some of the brightest minds in the state to locate here. As will be seen from the "additional information," a number of them were owners or residents of the John L. Hart House. In fact, so many Hartsville families lived in it as newly-weds, it was said around town that "You aren't legally married unless you have lived in the Hart House!" John L. Hart's antebellum attempts to establish a carriage factory in the vicinity of his house, although not successful, were a harbinger of the later successful Hartsville enterprises. As one of the founders of the First Baptist Church, he not only helped to start the most dominant denomination in Hartsville, but prefigured the philanthropic activities-- such as the founding of Coker College-- for which the Cokers and their associates are noted. This combination of successful business enterprises and pleasant cultural activities characterizes the town.

The purchase of the Hart property by Caleb Coker for his son, Major James Lide Coker, was really the start of the Hartsville which had been foreshadowed by Hart's activities. In telling the history of the John L. Hart House, and showing the house to their children and visitors, Hartsvillians are conscious of being better able to explain themselves and the place where they live.

Additional Information:

Structural evidence uncovered during the recent restoration supports the local tradition that the John L. Hart House was constructed ca. 1850 by John L. Hart,[1] and helps substantiate that the house is indeed what it has been accepted as being by Hartsvillians-- the first home built within the original boundaries of the town of Hartsville. John Hart, son of Thomas and Hannah Hart, was born in 1825, probably at his father's homeplace, the Thomas Hart House (ca. 1825).[2] According to Thomas Hart's grandson, Thomas Law, what was then called Hartsville ran from the post office at Thomas Hart's house, along the public road three miles east to Snake Branch.[3] In 1850 John Hart purchased 491 acres, which had previously belonged to Thomas Hart, from Thomas Law, his brother-in-law. John Hart cleared this property and built a small carriage shop. This enterprise grew into a productive

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .15 acres

Quadrangle name Hartsville North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	585155	3804120	B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the John L. Hart House is shown as the black line on the accompanying Darlington County Tax Map #56-6 drawn to a scale of 100 feet to the inch. The property includes the Hart House and excludes any other properties.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	NA	code	county	NA	code
state	NA	code	county	NA	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles E. Lee; Suzanne Pickens Wylie; John E. Wells; Wilkins Byrd; Aiken, S.C.; Hartsville Heritage Foundation

organization South Carolina Department of Archives and History

date August 30, 1983

street & number 1430 Senate Street

telephone (803) 758-5816

city or town Columbia

state South Carolina 29211

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

title Charles E. Lee
State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 22, 1983

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

for Delores Byers

Keeper of the National Register

date 11/10/83

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

Description (Continued):

was originally built. The successive inhabitants of the house through the years would undoubtedly recognize it as it stands today.

The house was moved approximately fifty-five feet in 1981-1982 to a new brick-pier foundation. The original framing and other original fabric that remained were saved. The early twentieth-century additions on the north and south elevations were removed. The late nineteenth-century addition on the north, which early illustrations of the building show, was retained. The original window openings were re-used and nine-over-nine sash windows were made. Justification for the porch, built on the facade, was based on the surviving framing joints of the house and on similar porches of other nineteenth-century houses of the region. The chimney was rebuilt. The weatherboarding, in poor condition and not original in many places, was removed and duplicated by new weatherboarding. The rear chimney was rebuilt in accordance with its pre-move configuration. Some twentieth-century partition walls and fixtures of the interior were removed.

The work was based on the surviving original fabric, including the hewn timber framing; on graphic depictions of the house, including a ca. 1900 photograph and Sanborn Insurance maps from 1910, 1915, and 1924; and on the evidence of other small nineteenth-century residences of the region.

Significance(Continued):

carriage and buggy factory, store, grist mill and sawmill, located on and near what is now Home Avenue in Hartsville. John L. Hart built his own residence here as well as homes for his operatives. It is believed that the house known as the John L. Hart House was his residence.[4]

In 1854 John Hart sold his business to pay some outstanding debts and moved to Darlington. Hart entered into several business ventures before the Civil War. When the war began, he enlisted and served as a lieutenant with the Twenty-First Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers. He was killed in action near Petersburg, Virginia, on May 16, 1864.[5]

John Hart was very active in the Baptist Church, first at Sweet Gum, then at New Providence, and then in Hartsville.[6] According to tradition, Hart donated the land for the First Baptist Church in Hartsville, helped found the church, and held Sunday School services and other meetings in his home adjacent to the church property until the first sanctuary was completed.[7] Hart continued his church work with the Darlington Baptist Church, where he was a deacon and superintendent of the black Sunday school. During his army service, he participated in the conversion of 100 soldiers and was involved with a very successful revival meeting among the troops on James Island.[8]

Caleb Coker of Society Hill purchased Hart's property in 1854, along with other adjoining acreage, for his son Major James Lide Coker. Indirectly, this may have been one of the most significant events in the history of Hartsville. In 1858 when James L. Coker returned from his studies at Harvard, his father gave him half of the Hart property. Apparently Coker planted the property, interrupted by service in the Confederate Army. Around 1866, he opened a store in one of the old storehouses left from John Hart's business. He called the store J. L. Coker and Company, and it eventually became the parent company of the Coker family empire. Major Coker was responsible for the first railroad into Hartsville and was the major benefactor of Welsh Neck High School and Coker College, which was named in his honor. Although it is unlikely that Major Coker ever lived in the John Hart House, he did own the house from 1858-1918, and it is the only residence left in Hartsville associated with him.[9]

Apparently Major Coker rented the John Hart House, and several of his employees as well as young married couples occupied the house. Many of its tenants became some of Hartsville's leading citizens. Mr. and Mrs. Leonce Vaughan lived in the house from 1887-1890. Mr. Vaughan worked for Major Coker and was later president of the Bank of Hartsville. Mr. Vaughan was also active in the First Baptist Church. Mr. and Mrs. William R. Erwin lived in the house ca. 1890-1901; Mr. Erwin worked for Major Coker keeping the store and managing the farm. Their daughter, Carrie Lee Erwin Kalber, one of Hartsville's best loved and most respected citizens, was born in the house in 1894. Mrs. Kalber was active in the Red Cross, served on the board of trustees of Coker College and the Hartsville School Board and was instrumental in beginning the school lunch program in Hartsville in 1941.[10]

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Jordan lived in the John Hart House for a short time just after their marriage in 1901. Mr. Jordan was later vice-president of the Hartsville Oil Mill. The house was also the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Ellis, Sr. from ca. 1902-1917. Mr. Ellis managed the Coker Farms. Major Coker's granddaughter acquired the house after his death

Significance (Continued):

in 1918; she apparently continued to let the house. Her brother, Edgar Lawton, and his family lived in the John Hart House from ca. 1925 until 1934. Mr. Lawton was a trustee and member of the executive board of Coker College, vice-president of both Coker Pedigreed Seed Company and the J.L. Coker Company, and a past chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Public Works. He also served as president and chairman of the board of the Hartsville Oil Mill and Palmetto Oil Company. He was past president of the South Carolina Cotton Seed Products Association and of the National Cotton Seed Products Association and a director of the Bank of Hartsville and SONOCO Products Company. In 1983 Mr. Lawton was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Coker College.[11]

In 1934 Dr. James E. Mills purchased the house when he moved to Hartsville to work as chief chemist for SONOCO Products Company. Dr. Mills was a nationally known chemist who achieved notice for his work with molecular attraction, paper and paper conversion, heats of vaporization of liquids, and boll weevil investigation, among others. After Dr. Mills's death in 1950, his wife Mary, herself a published poetess, continued to live in the house until 1973.[12]

The First Baptist Church acquired the house in 1974 and held it until 1981 when the Hartsville Heritage Foundation acquired the house.

Bibliography

Atlanta, Georgia. Personal Files of Mrs. R. Tyre Jones. Advertisement of sale of property belonging to John L. Hart.

Coker, J. L. Hartsville - Its Early Settlers. n.p.: n.p., 1911.

Confederate Baptist, August 24, 1864.

Darlington (S.C.) Flag, March 26, 1851.

Darlington, South Carolina. Darlington County Courthouse, Darlington County Deed Book R.

Hartsville Heritage Foundation, comp. Biographical sketches of owners and residents of the John L. Hart House. Hartsville, South Carolina, 1983. [Typewritten.]

Marion (S.C.) Star, January 31, 1854.

Rudisill, Horace. "Captain John L. Hart and the Captain John L. Hart House." 1979. [Typewritten.]

Works Progress Administration. "Minutes, New Providence Baptist Church, 1800-1931." 1939. [Typewritten.]

Footnotes

[1] Hartsville Heritage Foundation, comp., Biographical sketches of owners and residents of the John L. Hart House, Hartsville, South Carolina, 1983. [Typewritten.]

[2] J. L. Coker, Hartsville - Its Early Settlers (n.p.: n.p., 1911), pp. 4-5, 7.

[3] Ibid., p. 16.

[4] Darlington County Deed Book R, pp. 396-397, Darlington County Courthouse, Darlington, South Carolina; Coker, pp. 5, 26; Biographical sketches; Darlington (S.C.) Flag, March 26, 1851; Marion (S.C.) Star, January 31, 1854; Advertisement of sale of property belonging to John L. Hart, Personal Files of Mrs. R. Tyre Jones, Atlanta, Georgia.

[5] Coker, pp. 5, 7-8, 25; Confederate Baptist, August 24, 1864; Horace Rudisill, "Captain John L. Hart and the Captain John L. Hart House," 1979.[Typewritten.]

[6] Rudisill; Confederate Baptist; Works Progress Administration, "Minutes, New Providence Baptist Church, 1800-1932," 1939. [Typewritten]; Coker, p. 50; Biographical sketches.

[7] Biographical sketches; Coker, p. 5.

[8] Confederate Baptist; Coker, p. 5.

[9] Biographical sketches; Coker, p. 25.

[10] Biographical sketches.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.