FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received MAY 27 1980
date entered JUN 26 1980

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Browntown

and/or common Browntown

2. Location

street & number S.C. Highway 341 approximately halfway between Lake City and Johnsonville N/A not for publication

city, town Johnsonville X vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state South Carolina code 045 county Florence code 041

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Marvin Wendall Brown

street & number Road 40

city, town Hemingway X vicinity of state South Carolina 29554

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Florence City-County Complex

street & number Irby Street

city, town Florence state South Carolina 29501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1978 ___ 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
___ excellent	X deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date _____
X fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located between Lake City and Johnsonville in rural Florence County, Browntown is an integrated complex of buildings constructed between the early nineteenth century and mid-twentieth century by members of the Brown family. Moses Brown and his descendants were self-sufficient farmers and operators of several agricultural industries. The area nominated contains the eleven extant Browntown buildings, including the cotton gin building, three residences, the school, a tobacco barn, and several outbuildings, covering approximately twenty-six acres. The property today is still in the hands of the Brown family; the fields are still cultivated.

The eleven buildings on the nominated property are:

1. Cotton Gin Building (early nineteenth century): a two-and-one-half story building, constructed of heart pine, designed to house the Brown's cotton gin and to provide for the transmission of horse-power to run the gin. The open first story houses a vertical axle, constructed of hickory and oak, with radiating wooden spokes to which horses or mules could be hitched. The animals would trudge through a circular path turning the axle and the large wooden gear at the top of the axle. The wooden teeth of this gear engage a smaller gear. Wheels attached to the axle of the smaller gear turned belts, which were connected to the cotton gin on the second floor. The building is constructed of hewn, braced timber with weatherboard sheathing. All of the main timber framing uses pegged mortise-and-tenon joints. The gable roof is covered with wooden shingles. The axle and gears of the ginning machinery are still operable, and the cotton gin is still in place, although it is not connected to the machinery.

2. Smokehouse (early nineteenth century): a one-story log building with a gabled roof extending forward over the entrance. The hewn logs of the walls have full dovetail joints. The logs are laid with open spacing between in order to facilitate the curing process of meats. The roof of the smokehouse is covered with wood shingles. One corner of this building is severely deteriorated.

3. Brown Family Residence (later nineteenth century): a two-story frame house with weatherboard siding and a gable roof. The house has been used for storage for years, but the central staircase, the balustrade, and some of the interior wainscoting are intact. Some of the windows have been closed over, but the sash is preserved inside the house. A scalloped frieze along the roofline is the prime decorative measure.

4. Schoolhouse (ca. 1900): a one-story frame building, sheathed in weatherboard, with a gable roof and a L-shaped plan. This building, originally used as a school house, was later renovated as a residence.

5. Tobacco Barn (mid-twentieth century): a two-story building of frame construction, covered with tar paper. The barn has a one-story porch and a gable roof. The gas-fired flue system is used to cure tobacco.

6. Early Cabin (mid-nineteenth century): a one-story frame building with a gable roof. The heavy timber frame is covered with weatherboard siding. One-half of the roof retains its wooden shingles; the other half is covered with sheet metal. A small shed was added to one side when the building was converted to storage facilities.

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	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	X engineering	___ music	___ theater
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates early 19th-mid 20th **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Browntown, located between Lake City and Johnsonville in rural Florence County, South Carolina, is a unique collection of buildings reflecting the self-sufficient way of life practiced by several generations of the Brown family during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moses Brown and his son and grandsons were self-sufficient farmers who operated their own brick kiln, grist mill, lumber mill, cotton gin, retail and wholesale mercantile business, and school. The property nominated contains the eleven remaining Browntown buildings, including the cotton gin building, three residences, the school, a tobacco barn, and several outbuildings. Architecturally, these buildings, which include examples of both log and frame construction, reflect the building technologies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, the cotton gin building, which was built on the site, is significant in the field of engineering.

Additional Information

The origin of Browntown can be traced to 1768-69 and three royal grants to Moses Brown.[1] Moses' son Robert and Robert's sons were most responsible for the growth and development of Browntown by expanding the original land grants to more than 10,000 acres.[2] Browntown was an example of the extended family farming operations prevalent during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Browns made use of the land, timber, and water resources to provide food, shelter, and an income for their families. To take the ultimate advantage of the natural resources the family constructed a brick kiln, a grist mill, a cotton gin, and a lumber mill. In addition Browntown had a school for family members and retail and wholesale businesses.[3] The operations were so successful that surplus products were available for sale to surrounding residents.[4] The Browns were able to incorporate the ideas of the industrial age with those of the agricultural age to establish an efficient, well run, and economically viable business.

Architecture: The buildings of Browntown are representative of the building technologies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The early twentieth century smokehouse, which has full dovetail joints in its log walls is an exceptional example of log construction. The cotton gin building is representative of the heavy timber braced-frame construction with hewn posts, girts, joists, and rafters joined with pegged mortise-and-tenon joints. The mid-nineteenth century cabin on the complex is also of braced-frame construction. Wooden shingle roofs are intact on several of the Browntown buildings. High quality craftsmanship is evident in the details of the joinery.

Engineering: The cotton gin building at Browntown retains the original draft animal-powered wooden machinery built to power the cotton gin. The vertical axle, the primary wheel with its wooden gear teeth, the secondary gear, and the secondary axle are still

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 104

Quadrangle name Hyman, S.C. **Quadrangle scale** 1:62500

UMT References See continuation sheet.

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary of Browntown is shown as the heavy red line on the accompanying Florence County Tax Map #298, drawn at a scale of 1 inch = 400 feet. This boundary includes all significant buildings and structures.

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

state	N/A	**code**	**county**	N/A	**code**
state	N/A	**code**	**county**	N/A	**code**

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Elaine Eaddy; Suzanne P. Wylie and John Wells, S.C. Department of Archives and History

organization Three Rivers Historical Society **date** October 20, 1981

street & number **telephone**

city or town Hemingway **state** South Carolina 29554

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national X state ___ 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Charles E. Lee 5/14/82

Charles E. Lee

title State Historic Preservation Officer **date**

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register **date** 6/24/82

for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: **date**

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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date entered JUN 2 8 1982

7. Tenant House (early twentieth century): a small, one-story frame building with a gable roof. The building has two rooms and a porch across its facade. The gable roof is covered with composition shingles.

8. Storage Outbuilding (early twentieth century): a small, one-story frame building, used to store small farming implements.

9. Outbuilding (late nineteenth century): a small, gable-roofed, frame building near the smokehouse with a shed-roofed addition to one side. The building is used for storage.

10. Outbuilding (twentieth century): a small frame building used for tool storage.

11. Outhouse (late nineteenth century): a small frame sanitation facility.

The buildings at Browntown are grouped in two complexes, one group adjacent to the road and the other across the fields around the cotton gin building. The rustic character of the frame buildings, the weathered wood, and the plowed fields establish a distinct rural character which unifies all the complex.

Surroundings: Browntown is surrounded by numerous small farming concerns, with vernacular farmhouses and tobacco barns abounding.

in working condition, although they are not now connected to the cotton gin in the second story of the building. The machinery, which was built on the site, represents an intelligent and competent adaptation of traditional technology and materials to solve a complex problem. [5]

Although there has been no formal archeological investigation of the area included in the Browntown nomination, it is believed likely that such a search would prove fruitful. Documentary and physical evidence of additional structures as well as knowledge of long term occupation support this theory.

Bibliography

Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Index to Plats Prior to 1776. Vols. 5, 9, 10.

Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Land Grants, Vols. 5, 10, 67.

Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Royal Grants Prior to 1776, Vols. 5, 16, 18.

Eaddy, Elaine Y. "Browntown - Early Industry on Lynches River." Hemingway, S.C., ca. 1979. (Mimeographed.)

Eaddy, Elaine Y. "Browntown: Early Industry on the Lynches River." South Carolina Historical Magazine 80 (July 1979): 236-241.

Latitude-Longitude

A.	33° 48' 12"	79° 37' 47"
B.	33° 47' 46"	79° 37' 37"
C.	33° 47' 44"	79° 37' 47"
D.	33° 48' 10"	79° 38' 3"

Footnotes

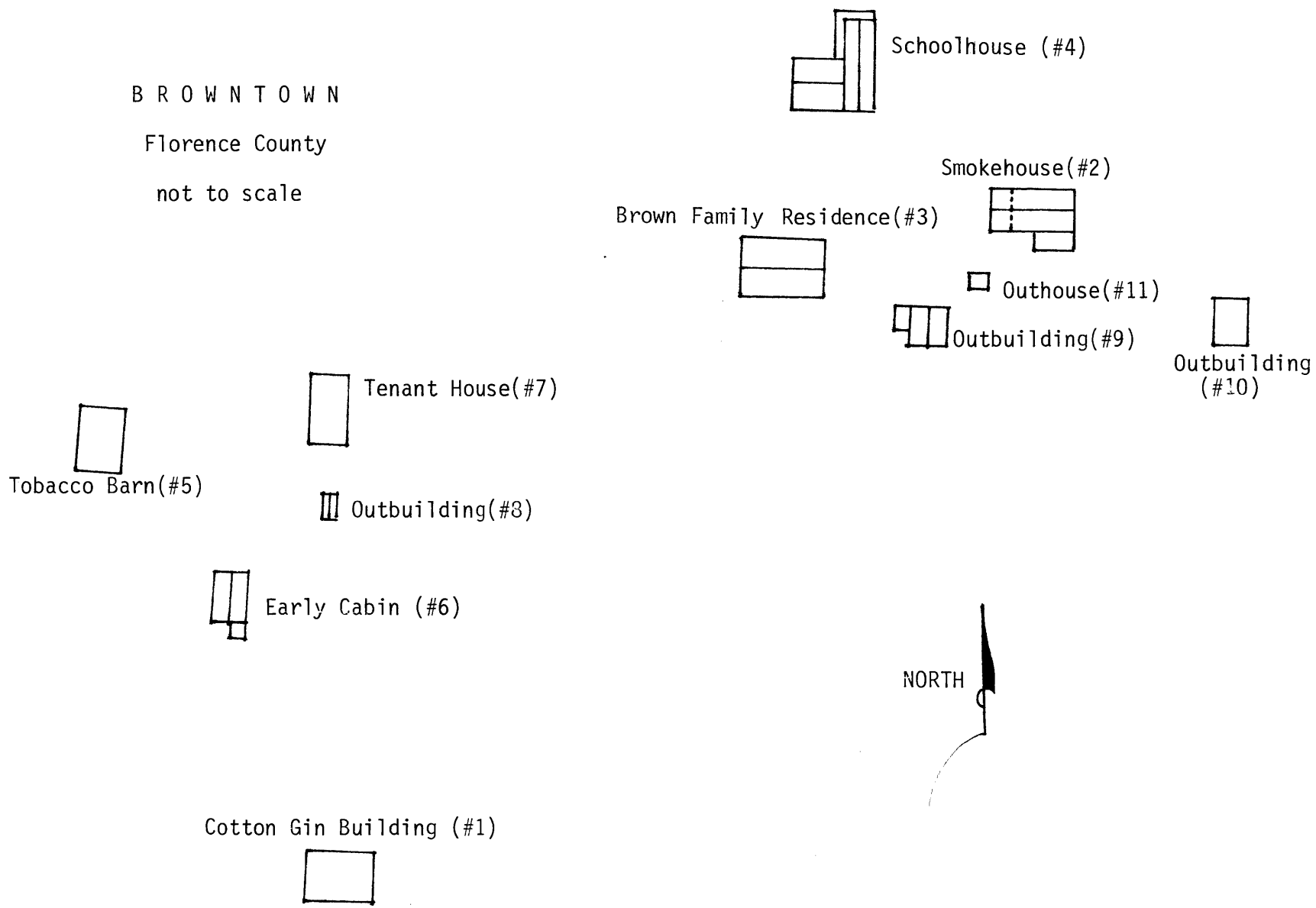
[1]Index to Plats Prior to 1776, Vol. 5, p. 349, 6 October 1753; Vol. 9, p. 161, 27 May 1857; Vol. 10, p. 239, 9 December 1768; Royal Grants Prior to 1776, Vol. 18, p. 586, 31 October 1769; Vol. 18, p. 222; Vol. 5, p. 373; Vol. 16, p. 353, 29 April 1768, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

[2]Land Grants, Vol. 67, p. 161, 27 May 1857; Vol. 10, p. 239, 9 December 1768; Vol. 5, p. 349, 6 October 1753, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

[3]Interview with Julian D. Brown cited in Elaine Y. Eaddy, "Browntown - Early Industry on Lynches River," Hemingway, S.C., ca. 1979. (Mimeographed.)

[4]Elaine Y. Eaddy, "Browntown: Early Industry on the Lynches River," South Carolina Historical Magazine 80 (July 1979): 237, 238.

[5]Ibid., p. 239.


Highway 341
B R O W N T O W N
Florence County
not to scale
Schoolhouse (#4)
Smokehouse(#2)
Brown Family Residence(#3)
Outhouse(#11)
Outbuilding(#9)
Outbuilding (#10)
Tenant House(#7)
Tobacco Barn(#5)
Outbuilding(#8)
Early Cabin (#6)
NORTH
Cotton Gin Building (#1)