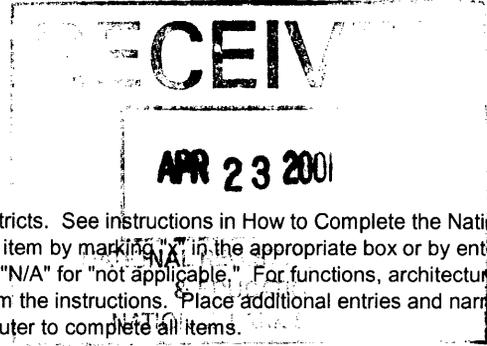


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

606



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 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 Bank of Hampton
other names/site number Town of Hampton Museum and Visitors' Center

2. Location

street & number 15 Elm Street, East not for publication
city or town Hampton vicinity _____
state South Carolina code SC county Hampton code 047 zip code 29924

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 4/19/01
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and 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 Edson H. Beall 5/30/01
 See continuation sheet. Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
 determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain): _____

Bank of Hampton
Name of Property

Hampton County, South Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	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
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: COMMERCE

Subcategory: Financial Institution

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: RECREATION/CULTURE

Subcategory: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Late Victorian: Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Composition

other _____

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

Bank of Hampton
Name of Property

Hampton County, South Carolina
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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)

- 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.
- 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 in 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)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1892-1926

Significant Dates

1892
1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Fontaine, Vincent Joseph

Narrative Statement of Significance

Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository:
S.C. Dept. of Archives & History

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Bank of Hampton
name of property

Hampton County, South Carolina
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Description

The Bank of Hampton is a two-story Italianate-influenced brick building completed in 1892. It is a good example of the architectural design popular for business and commercial structures in small-town South Carolina during the late nineteenth century. The corner building fronts on Elm Street, facing Hampton's courthouse square, and extends along First Street, parallel to Lee Avenue, Hampton's Main Street. This was an ideal location to serve downtown interests: bank customers used the first floor while attorneys occupied office space on the second floor.

Constructed of brick laid in common bond, the Bank of Hampton building features segmental arches over door and window openings, and low flat parapets at the side elevations. The principal Elm Street facade is surmounted by a stepped brick parapet with sign panel above an entablature with a sawtooth-patterned cornice. Raised brickwork simulating pilasters ornaments the outer bays of the front and rear elevations. Flanked by windows with single-light transoms, the center entry with cast-iron sill has a double door of glass and paneled wood that opens to the main bank lobby. There is a single door at the rear (north) bay of the First Street elevation.

The interior retains its historic layout and significant original fabric. The ground floor has beaded wood ceilings, "put on with panel and diagonal" in accordance with V. J. Fontaine's proposal,¹ and heart-pine flooring. The painted metal door and safe with hand-painted panels are still in place at the original walk-in vault room.

The First Street entry opens to the stair that runs up the rear wall of the building. It retains its historic treads and base, and a short balustrade with newel post at the upper level. The second floor is laid out with a side hall accessing the office rooms. The corridor and all the offices have windows and fireplaces, with connecting doors at each partition wall providing flexible spaces to suit the attorneys working here.

The Bank of Hampton building was converted for use as the Town of Hampton Museum (Hampton Museum and Visitors' Center) in 1988-89. Exterior work included replacing windows with vinyl sash having 2/2 configuration similar to the original. Interior work was limited to installing a modern HVAC system and sheetrocking the plaster walls. Secondary ceilings were dropped to accommodate ductwork, but the significant Cashier's Room ceiling was not affected. The work maintained the historic appearance and plan of the buildings, and the changes have not destroyed the Bank of Hampton's sense of time and place as an important part of turn-of-the-century Hampton.

¹ V. J. Fontaine, "Will Complete the Bank Building as per diagrams 25 X 45 outmeasure" (n.d., Hampton Museum files).

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Bank of Hampton
name of property

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Statement of Significance

Completed in 1892, the Bank of Hampton is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE for its association with the commercial development of the town of Hampton. It is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE for its design as one of the principal commercial buildings in Hampton, the county seat of Hampton County.

The Bank of Hampton was organized in 1891 by several prominent citizens: lumberman W. F. Cummings, Hampton County Clerk of Court (later County Treasurer) R. E. Causey, attorney W. S. Tillinghast, and newspaper publisher Miles B. McSweeny (Governor of South Carolina from 1899-1903). Purchasing a lot across from the County Courthouse, they engaged architect/builder Vincent J. Fontaine to construct a prominent edifice for the new bank. Fontaine completed the building at a cost of \$3,058.20.² The county seat provided a reliable tenant base of lawyers for the upstairs offices, allowing the bankers to develop a grander building than sole use as a small-town financial institution might have supported.

Hampton was not a mainline rail junction like those at Allendale, Fairfax and Yemassee, although the Hampton & Branchville Railroad (also established in 1891) connected here with the Port Royal and Augusta Railroad. Establishment of the Bank of Hampton was an important factor in securing the town's position as a regional center. By 1905 a statewide business directory described Hampton not only as the county seat, but also "a banking town."³ In 1907 a second bank opened on Lee Avenue, but the Bank of Hampton operated successfully until the general economic downturn forced it closed in 1926.⁴ In 1929 the building was purchased from its receivers by the competing business, The Loan and Exchange Bank.

From the 1930s to the 1960s the building was operated as rental commercial space, still with law offices upstairs. In 1987 heirs of the Bowden/Mauldin Estates, owners of the building, gave it to the Town of Hampton. In 1989 it was opened as the Town of Hampton Museum. The Hampton Museum & Visitors' Center now maintains a small ground-floor office and museum exhibits on both floors of the building.

² V. J. Fontaine to W. T. Cummings, Statement and Receipt, March 1893 (Hampton Museum files).

³ South Carolina State Gazetteer and Business Directory. Period 1905-1910, p. 345.

⁴ The Hampton County Guardian, September 1926.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Additional Historical Information

Hampton County was created from the northern part of Beaufort County. The county seat was established near Hoover's Station, a stop on the Port Royal and Augusta Railroad (later the Charleston & Western Carolina), a line opened in 1874 to provide a rail link from Port Royal Harbor to Augusta, Georgia.⁵ Within four miles of Hoover's Station were two established towns, Crockettville to the north and Varnville, also a railroad stop, to the east. The new County Commissioners chose neither town to be the county seat. Instead they selected a site on the Deloach Tract, south of Hoover's Station, for Hampton Courthouse. Josephine A. Hoover conveyed nine acres of land to the Commissioners for \$5, in order that they would "locate the county seat of Hampton County in Deloach."⁶

General Wade Hampton laid the cornerstone of the Hampton County courthouse in 1878. A town began to take shape, laid out in a grid around the courthouse square bounded by Elm Street (Highway 278), Jackson Avenue, First Street West and First Street East. The town of "Hampton Courthouse" (later shortened to Hampton) was incorporated in 1879, the same year the county's first newspaper, *The Hampton Guardian*, began publication.⁷

Hampton grew quickly. Although in 1883 the nearby towns of Brunson and Varnville each had more businesses, there were already eight stores and 300 residents in Hampton - a town that had not existed five years earlier.⁸ By 1890 the "thriving little village" was home to two sawmills, thirteen general merchandise dealers, a dentist, a physician, and an undertaker. Other business choices seem indicative of professional life in a county seat. General store owner W. H. Prentiss doubled as the trial judge. Hampton boasted two hotels, a livery stable, and six lawyers - one for every fifty citizens. By contrast, Brunson had three lawyers, and Varnville only one.⁹ Hampton's active legal scene ensured a clientele for upstairs offices in the new bank building.

Hampton was not a main line railroad junction, but in 1891 it became the terminus of the Hampton & Branchville Railroad, which linked northern Hampton and Colleton counties to the Port Royal and Augusta Railroad. By 1905 the town's population had doubled to approximately 600. There were eight general merchandise dealers, a grocer, a meat market, two jewelers, a barber, a dentist, and two physicians. The legal profession was well-represented by seven lawyers, one of them billing himself as "attorney and counsellor at law," and a magistrate. Hampton had become the area's legal center. Brunson (population 350) and Allendale (population 1,100) each had a magistrate but no lawyers. There were no lawyers in Varnville, Estill, Fairfax, or Yemassee.¹⁰

⁵ Gerhard Spieler, "A Brief History of the Town of Port Royal, S.C.: From 1562 to Modern Times" (unpublished MS, 1992).

⁶ Hampton County RMC.

⁷ National Register nomination, Hampton County Courthouse, listed 10/10/78.

⁸ State Board of Agriculture of South Carolina, South Carolina. Resources and Population. Institutions and Industries (Charleston, 1883).

⁹ State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1890-91, p. 254.

¹⁰ South Carolina State Gazetteer and Business Directory. Period 1905-1910.

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Vincent Joseph Fontaine

The Bank of Hampton was designed and constructed by Vincent Joseph Fontaine, a French immigrant who was married to a local woman and lived in Hampton County. Born ca. 1850, Fontaine studied architecture in Italy before moving to Lowcountry South Carolina in the early 1870s. Becoming a property owner, he was connected to several of the area's established families through his marriage to Amanda Loadholt. Several houses in Brunson, Estill and Hampton are known to have been designed and built by Fontaine during the 1880s.¹¹

¹¹ Julia Youmans, "The Brunson Builder, Vincent Joseph Fontaine" (*Caroliniana Columns*, Fall 1997).

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Bibliography

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- The Hampton County Tricentennial Commission. Both Sides of the Swamp: Hampton County. Hampton: Hampton County Historical Society, 1970.
- Hampton Museum and Visitors' Center Vertical Files.
- South Carolina State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1890-91.
- South Carolina State Gazetteer and Business Directory. Period 1905-1910.
- Spieler, Gerhard. "A Brief History of the Town of Port Royal, S.C.: From 1562 to Modern Times." Unpublished MS, 1992.
- State Board of Agriculture of South Carolina, South Carolina. Resources and Population. Institutions and Industries. Charleston, 1883.
- Youmans, Julia. "The Brunson Builder, Vincent Joseph Fontaine." *Caroliniana Columns*, Fall 1997.

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is shown on the Hampton County Tax Assessor's Map as Block 32, Parcel 2.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the building and the entire parcel.

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Bank of Hampton
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Section photographs Page 6

Photographs

Location of Original Negatives: State Historic Preservation Office
South Carolina Department of Archives and History

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Name of photographer: Sarah Fick
Historic Preservation Consultants, Inc.

Date of photographs: September 2000

- | Photo | View |
|-------|---|
| 1. | Elm Street Facade and west elevation, facing northeast. |
| 2. | Principal Elm Street entry, facing north. |
| 3. | Rear (north) elevation, facing south. |
| 4. | Bank interior facing south. |
| 5. | Ceiling detail, bank interior, facing south. |
| 6. | Original vault room and safe, facing west. |
| 7. | Stair, view facing east from second level. |
| 8. | Second level side hall, view facing south. |
| 9. | Second level office, view facing west. |