UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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
Liberty Hill Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
A village located on S. C. Highway #97,
20 miles N. of Camden

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Liberty Hill

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#5

STATE
South Carolina

CODE
045

COUNTY
Kershaw

CODE
055

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
X DISTRICT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS
X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE
X AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Multiple ownership -- see continuation sheet

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
Kershaw County Courthouse

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

Broad Street

CITY, TOWN
Camden

STATE
South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE
1973 (update)

__FEDERAL__ STATE__ COUNTY__ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN
Columbia

STATE
South Carolina
Liberty Hill is a small rural community located upon a plateau in Kershaw County, South Carolina. It consists primarily of mid-19th Century and early 20th Century residences, but also has a post office, small store, and a late 19th Century church. The majority of the houses are located upon large tracts of land, set back from the road.

Buildings and structures contributing to the character of the district include:

1. James Belton Cureton House: 1½ story, clapboard. Said to be one of oldest structures in Liberty Hill (although it has been moved and rebuilt). One-story piazza extending across the front; simple balustrades and columns.


9. Cool Spring (Ingleside): (ca. 1830s). Two-story clapboard structure with double piazzas, lower level of which extends length of the lower level and down each side. Pediment caps the upper piazza. Both stories have double front doors with transom and sidelights.
SIGNIFICANCE

A small rural community located on a high plateau in Kershaw County, South Carolina, Liberty Hill visually and historically reflects both the life-style and the architecture of the pre-Civil War period as well as that of the later turn-of-the-century. The town's history begins as early as ca. 1813 when, according to town lore, Peter Garlick's store (location unknown) was a gathering place for surrounding farmers. Soon, impressive structures were built by planters in the area. Remaining from the 1830s are Cool Spring and the Joseph Cunningham House. The majority of the town's antebellum buildings, however, were built ca. 1840-1850. During this period Liberty Hill was a very wealthy community. According to the biography, written by his son, of Reverend John Gardiner Richards, who became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in 1858:

the community was one of the wealthiest in the entire state. It was a community of large farmers and every land owner was wealthy and owned many slaves. Mr. Richards used to say in late life he had traveled a great deal and had extensive experience, but he had never seen such real elegance as was at Liberty Hill, when he came there in 1858.1

However, the final days of the War Between the States ended that prosperity. An account written by an eye-witness records the destruction which occurred as Union forces and foragers marched through Liberty Hill in February 1865:

What an awful feeling to come so close to hundreds of Yankees who are burning and destroying everything on the face of the land! ... We are starving here; having nothing left to eat but sorghum molasses and black shorts bread.2

(continued)


MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approximately 434 acres

UTM REFERENCES: Liberty Hill Quad 1:24,000

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A [1,7] [51,8] [7,0] [3,8] [1,5] [4,0]
B [1,7] [51,8] [4,2] [3,8] [1,3] [0,6]
C [1,7] [51,7] [4,8] [3,8] [1,3] [0,6]
D [1,7] [51,7] [4,8] [3,8] [1,5] [4,0]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE
Historic Preservation Staff

ORGANIZATION
S.C. Department of Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER
1430 Senate Street

CITY OR TOWN
Columbia

STATE
South Carolina

DATE
May 12, 1977

TELEPHONE
(803) 758-5816

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, State Historic Preservation Officer
DATE 8/18/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DATE 11/18/78

ATTEST:
DATE 11-1-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
1. James B. Cureton House
   Mrs. T.P. McCrae
   Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

2. Hay House
   Mrs. Clara Kaylor
   Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

3. Joseph Cunningham House
   Misses Betty and Margaret Richards
   Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

4. Small 20th Century House
   Norman Richards Estate
   c/o Mrs. Don Smith
   Cameron, S. C. 29030

5. Post Office
   U.S. Postal Service
   United States Government

6. Norman S. Richards House
   Ms. Righton Richards
   Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

7. Henry Brown House
   Mr. John DeLoach, Sr.
   1305 Lyttleton Street
   Camden, S.C. 29020

8. Alfred Cureton House
   Mr. John DeLoach, Jr.
   1801 Lyttleton Street
   Camden, S.C. 29020

9. Clapboard structure
   Johnnie James
   R.F.D. # 5
   Great Falls, S.C. 29055

10. John Brown House
    Robert Jones Estate
    c/o Ms. Jenny Jones
    Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

11. Cool Spring (Ingleside)
    Mr. Howard Berry
    Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

12. Dixon House
    W.E. Cunningham Estate
    c/o M.B. Cunningham
    132 Holly Drive
    Hartsville, S.C. 29550

13. Matheson House
    Mrs. John Croxton, Sr.
    Kershaw, S.C. 29067

14. J.H. Clements House
    Mrs. J.H. Clements
    Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

15. Second Presbyterian Church
    Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

15a. cement block structure
    Second Presbyterian Church
    Liberty Hill, S.C.

16-18 First Presbyterian Church
    Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074

19. R.J. Wardlaw House
    Mr. R.J. Wardlaw
    Liberty Hill, S.C. 29074
20. R. J. Wardlaw Store  
   Mr. R.J. Wardlaw  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

21. R.C. Jones House  
   Mrs. Carolyn Richards  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

22. Presbyterian Manse  
   Mr. Jim Kaylor  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

23. Dr. James P. Richards Estate  
   Ms. Lizzie Richards  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

24. 20th Century Structure  
   Mrs. W.C. Wardlaw  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

25. Dr. Robert Johnson's Office  
   Mrs. W.C. Wardlaw  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

26. 20th Century Structure  
   Mrs. David Knotts  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.

27. Look-Out Tower  
   U.S. Forestry Service  
   c/o Mrs. David Knotts  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

28. 20th Century Structure  
   Mr. R.J. Wardlaw  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

29. 20th Century Structure  
   Mr. Jimmy Wardlaw  
   1713 Brook Drive  
   Camden, S.C.  29020

30. 20th Century Structure  
   Mr. Jimmy Wardlaw  
   1713 Brook Drive  
   Camden, S.C.  29020

31. C.D. Cunningham Estate  
   c/o Mrs. Frank Eskridge  
   718 Kershaw Street  
   Cheraw, S.C.  29520

32. Grange Hall  
   Mr. W.J. Higgins  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

33. McDow House  
   Mr. Jesse W. Sublett  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

34. Selwyn Cunningham House  
   Mr. David Singleton  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074

35. The Columns  
   Mr. John A. Thompson  
   Liberty Hill, S.C.  29074
12. Original William Dixon House: Small, one-story clapboard structure with porch. An early 19th Century structure, it has been moved and rebuilt (extensively altered). In poor condition.

13. Matheson House: (ca. 1853). One-story raised cottage. A small portico, capped by pediment features four columns extending to ground. Structure has recently been renovated, and basement level, which originally had not been completed, was made into apartments. Two separate, single door entrances, each having transom.


16. First Presbyterian Church cemetery

17. First Presbyterian Church: (1880). Features a small open belfry and wooden siding which is laid in a "novelty" pattern.


22. Presbyterian Manse: (ca. 1850). Greek Revival cottage, similar to other cottages in Liberty Hill. Features small portico with four fluted columns supporting a pediment. 1 1/2 stories. Has double door with transom and sidelights and flanking 9/9 windows with sidelights.

23. Dr. James P. Richards House: (ca. 1897). Replaced an earlier structure which burned. One-story clapboard structure with porches.

25. Dr. Robert Johnson's office: (ca. 1847). Small, one-room clapboard structure. Built as an office for Dr. Robert Johnson. Featuring a porch supported by two non-original columns, it has a fireplace, two windows, and a single entrance door with transom.

31. C. D. Cunningham Estate: Original house burned during War Between the States. Present structure consists of original cook's and carriage driver's houses, joined together with several additions (ca. 1925). Remaining from original estate is tree-lined drive and stone wall.

(continued)
32. The Grange Hall: late 19th Century structure used for meetings of the local chapter of the National Fraternal Farmers Association. Now a private residence.

33. McDow House: (ca. 1856). Greek Revival raised cottage. 1½ stories. Has basement of four rooms. 1928 wing on north side contains kitchen and breakfast area. Avenue of oaks and elms leads to structure.

34. Selwyn Cunningham House: Greek Revival raised cottage. Said to have originally been school house. Similar to other raised cottages in Liberty Hill, especially double sash windows with mullions. Entrance features double door with sidelights and transom.

35. The Columns: (ca. 1850-1854). 2½ story Greek Revival clapboard structure set upon raised basement. Features one-story portico with Doric columns and simple balustrades. One double sash window with mullion and shutters in gable end of roof. Other windows are also double sash with mullion and shutters. Interior features semicircular staircase.

Additional structures not contributing to character of historic district:

4. Small 20th century house, clapboard
9. Small clapboard structure, very poor condition
15a. Cement block structure (intrusion)
18. First Presbyterian Church Building: one-story white clapboard. 20th Century.
24. Ca. 1950 modern brick house
26. Small ca. 1950 house
27. Look-out tower
28. Ca. 1940 house
29. Ca. 1941 house, clapboard
30. One-story house, asbestos shingles
According to a later account (1878), the town experienced a "period of darkness, of gloom, of despondency" after the war. Nevertheless, Liberty Hill did eventually reassert itself. In 1880 a new Presbyterian Church was built and between 1895 and 1910 the town witnessed a surge of new construction.

Since that time, a number of outstanding South Carolinians have claimed Liberty Hill as their home. Both Governor John G. Richards (1864-1941) and United States Congressman James P. Richards (1894— ) were natives of Liberty Hill. "The Columns" was the family home of Dr. Patterson Wardlaw--Dean of the University of South Carolina's School of Education and for whom the school is now named.

Architecture: Liberty Hill appears to have changed very little since the beginning of the 20th Century. Some new construction has taken place, but the community basically remains a blend of mid-19th and early 20th Century residential architecture. There are several imposing Greek Revival structures, including "the Columns" (35), Cool Spring (11), and the John Brown House (10). There are also several Greek Revival cottages, such as the Matheson (13), Selwyn Cunningham (34), and McDow (33) Houses. (A feature common to many of these structures is double sash windows with mullions and shutters.) Liberty Hill's Presbyterian Church (17) is an excellent example of 1880s architecture, its siding being laid in a "novelty" pattern, while the Joseph Cunningham House (3) is one of the earliest structures (ca. 1830) and one of the most imposing. The later, turn-of-the-century residences are primarily one-story, simple clapboard cottages.

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3 South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, S. C., Richards Family Papers, Church History, p. 12.


Sublett, Lila Cureton. "Liberty Hill Tour of Historic Homes." November 17, 1972. (mimeographed)


"Dedication of the New Presbyterian Church at Liberty Hill." *Kershaw Gazette.* June 24, 1880.

Columbia, South Carolina. South Caroliniana Library. Richards Family Papers, 1854-1924.

South Carolina Department of Archives and History. *Census of 1850, Kershaw District,* pp. 90-91; *Agriculture Census of 1850, Kershaw District,* p. [6].

South Carolina Department of Archives and History. *Kershaw County Wills, Vol. 3-A,* pp. 129-144.
The boundaries of the nominated property begin at a point on Highway 522, approximately 2300' east of its intersection with Highway 97; thence proceed approximately 257' to the north; thence proceed approximately 3052' to the west; thence proceed approximately 1800' to the south; thence approximately 660' to the southwest; thence approximately 1650' to the south-southwest; thence proceed approximately 1825' to the south; thence approximately 600' to the southwest; thence approximately 500' to the southeast; thence proceed approximately 1850' in a southerly direction; thence proceed approximately 2237' to the east; thence approximately 2400' in a northeasterly direction; thence approximately 2310' in a northwardly direction; thence approximately 82' in a westerly direction; thence approximately 2062' to the north; thence approximately 917' in a northwardly direction to Highway 522; thence proceed east approximately 1500' along Highway 522 to the point of beginning. These boundaries have been delineated on the Liberty Hill U.S. Topographic Map. Property lines have been followed when practical, but the boundaries have been drawn to primarily include those properties which give the district its character.