District # 3
Congressman William Jennings Bryan Dorn

Theme # 7
America at Work

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE: South Carolina
COUNTY: Oconee
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER | DATE
DEC 31 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: Seneca Historic District
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Corner Poplar and South First Street to corner of South First and Oak; South on Oak to South Second; East on (See Continuation Sheet)
CITY OR TOWN: Seneca
STATE: South Carolina | CODE: 045 | COUNTY: Oconee | CODE: 073

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
[X] District [ ] Building [ ] Site [ ] Structure [ ] Object	[X] Public [X] Private [ ] Both	Public Acquisition: [ ] In Process [ ] Being Considered	[X] Occupied [ ] Unoccupied [ ] Preservation work in progress	Yes: [X] Restricted [X] Unrestricted [ ] No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

[ ] Agricultural [ ] Government [ ] Park [ ] Transportation [ ] Comments
[ ] Commercial [ ] Industrial [X] Private Residence [ ] Other (Specify)
[ ] Educational [ ] Military [X] Religious
[ ] Entertainment [X] Museum [ ] Scientific

RECEIVED JUN 11 1974 NATIONAL REGISTER

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Miscellaneous
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Seneca | STATE: South Carolina | CODE: 045

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Oconee County Courthouse
STREET AND NUMBER: Main Street
CITY OR TOWN: Walhalla | STATE: South Carolina | CODE: 045

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina
DATE OF SURVEY: 1973 [ ] Federal [X] State [ ] County [ ] Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: South Carolina Department of Archives and History
STREET AND NUMBER: 1430 Senate Street
CITY OR TOWN: Columbia | STATE: South Carolina | CODE: 045

FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER | DATE
DEC 31 1974

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	[X] Excellent	[X] Good	[X] Fair	[X] Deteriorated	[ ] Ruins	[ ] Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	[X] Altered	[X] Unaltered		[X] Moved	[X] Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Seneca is a relatively young town having celebrated its centennial in 1973. A century ago this town was a wilderness area on the Blue Ridge Railroad line. With the advent of the Richmond Air Line Railroad at that point which is now Seneca, a few men saw an opportunity for developing a new town at the junction. These men purchased the necessary land and marked the lots. The first auction sale on the land was held in August, 1873. The town that developed was called Seneca City, named for a tribe of Indians who lived nearby.

As a railroad junction, Seneca was a transfer point for freight shipped to and received from every section of the country. The line for the Blue Ridge, however, was never completed because the War Between the States halted construction.

Although a young town of approximately 6,500 inhabitants, Seneca is a community concerned with preserving its past.

Historic properties in Seneca include:

Area A: South First Street from corner of Oak to Poplar and return.

1--Seneca Presbyterian Church, founded 1875; present structure 1917. (corner of South First Street and Oak. Present zoning CP, proposed zoning CP.) This church is a beautifully preserved example of the period of Presbyterian Church architecture so designed that the Pulpit above and behind the Communion Table became a focal point in the center of the congregation which was most frequently seated in a semi-circle. This arrangement stresses unity and participation on the part of the congregation. The architecture is a direct and straightforward example of the traditional classicism which flourished prior the First World War.

211 South First Street (South Side)

2--Lunny Museum, founded 1906 probable date. (211 South First Street (South Side)). Present zoning CP, proposed zoning CP. Mr. W.J. Lunny purchased the property in 1906 and presumably built the house in the same year. There is a superficial resemblance to the California "Bungalow", popular at that time, because of the large central dormer window, the brown shingles and the wide "verandas". Diamond panes in the upper sash of the four windows of the dormer add a romantic English touch. However, the porch roof is supported by sophisticated Roman Doric columns below a well proportioned entablature with a delicate dentil molding below the cornice and the frontal gable is properly proportioned for a pediment. The building is now operated as an historic museum by the Oconee County Historical Society. The Lunnys came to Seneca and established Lunney's Drug Store in 1886.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [x] 19th Century
- [x] 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1873-present

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- Aboriginal
  - [ ] Prehistoric
  - [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [x] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other *(Specify)* _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Seneca's historic district contains a variety of architectural designs which blend together to produce a cohesive and homogeneous unit. Included in this setting are examples of late 19th century domestic architecture, pre World War I dwellings, houses of the mid 1920s, and Baptist Church architecture of the first half of the 20th century.

Seneca's district is an excellent example of the growth and development of a community. Many of the structures nominated belonged to the leading families of early Seneca.

The proposal of a Seneca Historic District is based on recommendations and analysis of the town by Professor Vernon S. Hodges, professor of architectural history at Clemson University. Mr. Hodges is a cum laude graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Design and has been in his present capacity for ten years, following eight years teaching at the University of Florida and twelve years with the U.S. Government, primarily in housing. He is a member of the S.C. Chapter, AIA; member of the National Preservation Committee of the Society of Architectural Historians and is consultant to the Pendleton District Historical and Recreational Commission. He is co-author with Dr. H.N. Cooledge of Outlines for History of Architecture and co-author with Dean Harlan McClure of South Carolina Architecture, 1670-1970.

Rationale for Seneca as an historic district is explained in the following statement of Professor Hodges:

> "The town of Seneca, South Carolina, is preparing to celebrate its centennial this year. This offers a unique opportunity for preservationists to record the architectural development of Seneca as representing the immediate past century. Regrettably for historical accuracy, preservationists in the past have been much more concerned with buildings of greater age than the mid-nineteenth century; therefore, they have neglected those of our immediate past heritage. For the most part late 19th century buildings have been discarded, ignored, positively disguised, or destroyed.
>
> The town of Seneca has, in a very close compact area, which will

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Field, Nora Nimmons. Seneca Echoes. Seneca: The Journal Company, 1954.

Doyle, Mary Cherry. Historic Oconee in South Carolina. Pendleton District and Recreational Commission, 1967.

The Journal and Tribune. Oconee Centennial Issue, Seneca, 1968.

Nimmons, Carol, "Seneca Celebrates a Century of Progress," Sandlapper 6: 24-26.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

CORNER	LATITUDE Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	34 °	41 '	01"	82 °	57 '	38 "
NE	34 °	41 '	01"	82 °	57 '	05 "
SE	33 °	40 '	44"	82 °	57 '	05 "
SW	33 °	40 '	44"	82 °	57 '	38 "

OR

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

LATITUDE Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
°	'	"	°	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: ca. 30 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

RECEIVED JUN 11 1974 NATIONAL REGISTER

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Mary Ann Eaddy, Historic Preservation Division; Hurley E. Badders, Director, PDHRC, Seneca Centennial Committee

ORGANIZATION: South Carolina Department of Archives and History

DATE: Jan. 22, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER: 1430 Senate Street

CITY OR TOWN: Columbia

STATE: South Carolina

CODE: 045

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: Charles E. Lee

Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: May 21, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

A R Mackensen

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: DEC 31 1974

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: DEC 31 1974

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
South Carolina	
COUNTY	
Oconee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

Seneca Historic District

2. Location

From the C.N. Gignilliat House on the corner of South First and Poplar Streets to the Chapter House on the corner of Oak and South First; South on Oak to South Second; South on corner of Fairplay and South Second; East at corner of Fairplay and South Third; North at corner of South Third and Townville to South First Street. Also included in the district is the block of Fairplay in which the R.L. Nimmons, Jr. House is located. (The locker plant on that block is not included in the district.) Included is the block of South Second in which the Hines House is located.

Back property lines determine exact boundaries of the district.

OSt 12-27-74

Seneca Historic District
7. Description (cont.) (a)

215 South First Street

3--Austin Harper House, original construction 1896-1897, present appearance c. 1925, entrance porch later. (215 South First Street. Present zoning CP, proposed zoning CP.) The house is of interest in comparison to its neighbors: Specifically the Marett house to the west and the Gignilliat house across the street which retain their original appearance. The present austere appearance is the result of modernization at a period when the scroll-saw decoration, the so-called "gingerbread" of the late Victorian era was in disfavor. Porches, blinds, and all surface decorations were removed in an attempt to give a "New England Colonial" appearance to the house. The basic height and solidity of the original house retains a severe dignity.

301 South First Street

4--Marett-James House, built by H.J.Gignilliat in 1898. (301 South First Street. Present zoning R-15, proposed zoning CP.) The original builder is said to have satisfied a romantic desire to build a house of seven gables. Certainly these gables give the building its interesting and individual character. The upper gables contain semi-circular or wide rectangular windows and are given further interest by alternate rows of dentil shaped shingles. The central gable, virtually a pediment, over the entrance porch is dignified by a sunburst design. Rather unexpectedly the porch roof is supported by Roman Doric columns. Compare with the contemporary Sue Gignilliat house across the street.

305 South First Street

5--"Old Stringer House", presumed date of origin 1898, moved to present site ca. 1905, present appearance ca. 1960. (305 South First Street, Present zoning R-15, proposed zoning CP.) Although the present appearance, resulting from the recent application of aluminum siding and imitation wrought iron porch supports is nondescript, the basic simplicity of the original structure makes it possible to fit into an environment which has remained current from the 1890s to the present.

311 South First Street

6--Homer Ballenger House, actual construction date 1927. (311 South First Street. Present zoning R-15, proposed zoning CP.) This house is interesting as an example of the lag in design progress often noted in small towns and rural areas. Though actually constructed in 1927 its appearance with dark brick and a flat gabled porch embraced by a parallel flat gable to the roof bespeak the decade W.W.I. It is not surprising for an owner to build a house which copies one he admired a decade earlier.

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

RECEIVED
JUN 1 1 1974
NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE: South Carolina
COUNTY: Oconee
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER | DATE
DEC 3 1 1974

Seneca Historic District
7. Description (cont.) (b)

315 South First Street

7--Mrs. G.W. Gignilliat House, built 1928. (315 South First Street. Present zoning R-15, proposed zoning CP.) A rather simple brick cottage of 1928 was enlarged by an addition in 1954 at a different level. Unfortunately a door to the newer part competes with the original door and suggests dual occupancy.

South First Street

8--C.N. Gignilliat House, built 1922. (South First Street. Present zoning R-15, proposed zoning CP.) Imposing two story, "four-Square" brick house in spacious grounds exemplifies the Georgian tradition and expresses the taste of well bred, well-to-do Americans throughout the country in the 1920s.

300 South First Street

9--Miss Sue L. Gignilliat House, built 1898. (300 South First Street. Present zoning CP, proposed zoning CP.) This very distinguished late Victorian House is in virtually original condition except for the color. The interesting patterned shingle work of the second story, with alternating rows of dentiled and straight shingles, similar to that in the gables of the Marett house across the street, must have been originally in some tone of brown or green stain. Stained glass panels appear over the transom of the front door and in several windows. The porch which is supported by paired posts, connected in each bay by a valance of vertical spindles is more in keeping with the house than is the Roman Doric of the Marett house. The basic understructure has a massiveness which relates it to the Austin-Harper House. A comparison of the three houses would be profitable to the student of 1890 architecture. Mr. G.W. Gignilliat and brothers were among the pioneer merchants who came to Seneca and made large contributions to the development of the town.

Area B. Comprises areas of South Fairplay Street from South First Street to South Third Street and both sides of South Townville Street from South Third Street to South First Street and is in itself a very compact area. Two of the buildings are in Zone CP, four in Zone GC, and the remainder in Zone R-10.

Proceeding South on South Fairplay, South Fairplay Street

10B--R.L. Nimmons, Jr. House, built ca. 1900. (Proceeding South on South Fairplay, South Fairplay Street. Present zoning CP, proposed zoning CP.) One could hardly find a more typical example of the vernacular house of this area at the turn of the century. Basically a square under a pyramidal roof, it has a prominent central gable above a veranda which stretches across the front and wraps around both sides to reach a projecting wing. The slender

Seneca Historic District
7. Description (cont.) (c)

posts are terminated in brackets which make a graceful transition to the horizontal. The house is in a good state of preservation.

114 South Fairplay Street

11B--Burckhalter-Davis House, built 1890. (114 South Fairplay Street. Present zoning CP, proposed zoning CP.) This house is deteriorating fast and may be too costly to preserve. In the past it has served as Post Office and Masonic Lodge. As it is in two parts it could reasonably be rehabilitated as a two family dwelling or in apartments. Its most desirable feature is the porch as it curves around from the front of the house to the side. It was originally built as a dual purpose house-living quarters and store.

210 South Fairplay Street

12B--Seneca Baptist Church, built 1924. (210 South Fairplay Street. Present zoning R-10, proposed zoning CP.) This imposing building exemplifies Baptist church architecture of the first half of the 20th Century. The four column portico is an outstanding example of the Ionic order at a time when classic architectural detailing was still remembered. It was organized in 1873 and the first building was erected in 1882-1883.

206 South Fairplay Street

13B--B.A. Lowry House, built 1916-17. (206 South Fairplay Street. Present zoning R-10, proposed zoning CP.) Referred to locally as "California Style". This house has indeed much of the character of a bungalow. The heavy columns and suggestion of trellises (although roofed) link it with the architecture of Maybeck in Berkeley at this time. The brown shingles in alternate narrow and wide rows of the second story, the lattice-like treatment of the gable, the light tan or beige clapboards, alternating narrow and wide, under the porch roof are all indicative of this period. Mr. Lowry was mayor of Seneca in 1920s.

212 South Fairplay Street

14B--T.J. Harper House, built 1890s. (212 South Fairplay Street. Present zoning R-10, proposed zoning CP.) This house is so similar to the Davis house mentioned above as to require no further description. It is probably too dilapidated to save.

215 South Fairplay Street

15B--D.P. Thompson Waikart House, built 1914. (215 South Fairplay Street. Present zoning R-10, proposed zoning CP.) Although typical of pre-World War I dwellings, this house is different from others in the area. The ground floor

Form 10-300a
(Dec. 1968)
RECEIVED
JUN 11 1974
NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
South Carolina	
COUNTY	
Oconee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries)

Seneca Historic District
7. Description (cont.) (d)

is a dark brick while the upper floor is finished in "half-timber" and plaster. This romantic reference to medieval England had a tremendous surge of popularity throughout the United States in the 1920s when it became known as Tudor. In spite of this, there is a marked local carryover in the use of porches on front and side of the building.

210 South Townville Street

16B--Livingston-Stribling House, built 1885. (210 South Townville Street. Present zoning R-10, proposed zoning CP.) This house is a splendid example of late 19th Century domestic architecture. It is so similar to the Marett (4) and Gignilliat (9) houses on West South First Street as to be readily confused with them; in fact, suggesting construction dates less than a decade apart. In addition to the porch posts and spindled "valance" of the Gignilliat house, this house has a scroll work "fringe" of great charm which is to be seen on the upper porch of the Abbott house on North First Street of a similar date (1887). An oddity of this house is that it faces North, at right angle to Townville Street and away from the adjacent South Third Street which suggests that it must have had more lawn and entrance drive toward South Second Street. Dr. Stribling was one of the early medical doctors of Seneca.

206 South Townville Street

17B--H.L. Thompson House, built 1925. (206 South Townville Street. Present zoning R-10, proposed zoning CP.) Not many examples still remain of this type of substantial family house of the mid 1920s. Although this square clapboard house has classic proportions, great solidity and dignity, there are actually no classic details. The porch roof is supported by paired square posts rather than by columns and the trim has little or no molding. The simple, direct forthrightness gives this house an American-ness which distinguishes it from any "period".

207 South Townville Street

18B--W.P. Nimmons House, built 1902. (207 South Townville Street. Present zoning R-10, proposed zoning CP.) A vernacular house of the turn of the century, chronologically, this house comes between the Marett House (4) and the Lunny Museum (2); if anything more related to the former. Its forceful frontal symmetry has been altered by the addition of a sleeping porch.

S. E. Corner South Second Street and South Townville Street

19B--Hines House, built 1876. (S.C. corner South Second Street and South Townville Street. Present zoning R-10, proposed zoning CP.) The present severe appearance of this late 19th Century house is due to the loss of porches which extended acorss the front on the ground floor and possibly on

Seneca Historic District
7. Description (cont.) (e)

the second floor. A second story porch extended the width of the house. The present porch would be adequate if it had properly proportioned square posts but the present wrought iron is visually too thin although probably structurally adequate. The house is presently divided into two apartments on the ground floor, which seems an appropriate use although the second story is not utilized.

N. W. Corner South Townville Street and South Second Street

20B--Episcopal Church, built 1882. (N.W. Corner South Townville Street and South Second Street. Present zoning GC, proposed zoning CP.) A building of such essential simplicity is rarely found. A timeless building, it is worthy to appear among the best in the state and should be preserved at all cost even if relocation is necessary. The church was organized in 1879.

S. W. Corner South Townville Street and South First Street

21B--(J.G.) Harper-Burley House, built 1890. (S.W. Corner South Townville and South First Street, Present zoning GC, proposed zoning CP.) A very simple, direct, one story "vernacular" house whose roof slope continues to cover a porch of turned posts. Again, as before on this street, the house faces at a right angle to the street toward the North. On the front lawn is a unique octagonal "flower house" of brick which is worthy of special notice. An upper story was destroyed by fire.

S. E. Corner South First Street and South Townville Street

22B--Whit Holleman House, built 1889. (S.E. Corner South First Street and South Townville Street. Present zoning GC, proposed zoning CP.) This is the most pretentious house in the area. Like the Harper-Burley House (21), across Townville Street, this house faces North but is a long way from South First Street. Present excavation on First Street indicates the owner is taking advantage of the GC Zoning. However, this need not detract from the house if care is taken in screening the structure. The presence of two bay windows, each with its own roof, suggests that the house has been greatly modified and its original aspect changed. Early photos show it to have looked rather like the Stribling and Gignilliat houses. The builder of the houses, Mr. J.W. Stribling, was the First Clerk of Court for Oconee County and founder of the Seneca bank.

23B--Roach-Matheson-Bell Log House, circa 1835. (110 W.S. Second Street rear) This one and one-half story log house was built at Long Creek in Oconee County by Jeremiah Roach. It was relocated in 1969.

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
South Carolina	
COUNTY	
Oconee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
DEC 31 1974	

(Number all entries)

Seneca Historic District
8. Significance (cont.)

make one or possibly two closely adjacent historic districts, a series of houses of very good quality representing the gradual change of taste from the 1890s to the present day. I believe that this will make a very desirable outdoor historic museum, showing that good quality in building (even in a small and new town) can reflect the taste and inheritance of the people in its area, and can reflect equally gradual growth and change to keep up with the changing culture of that town.

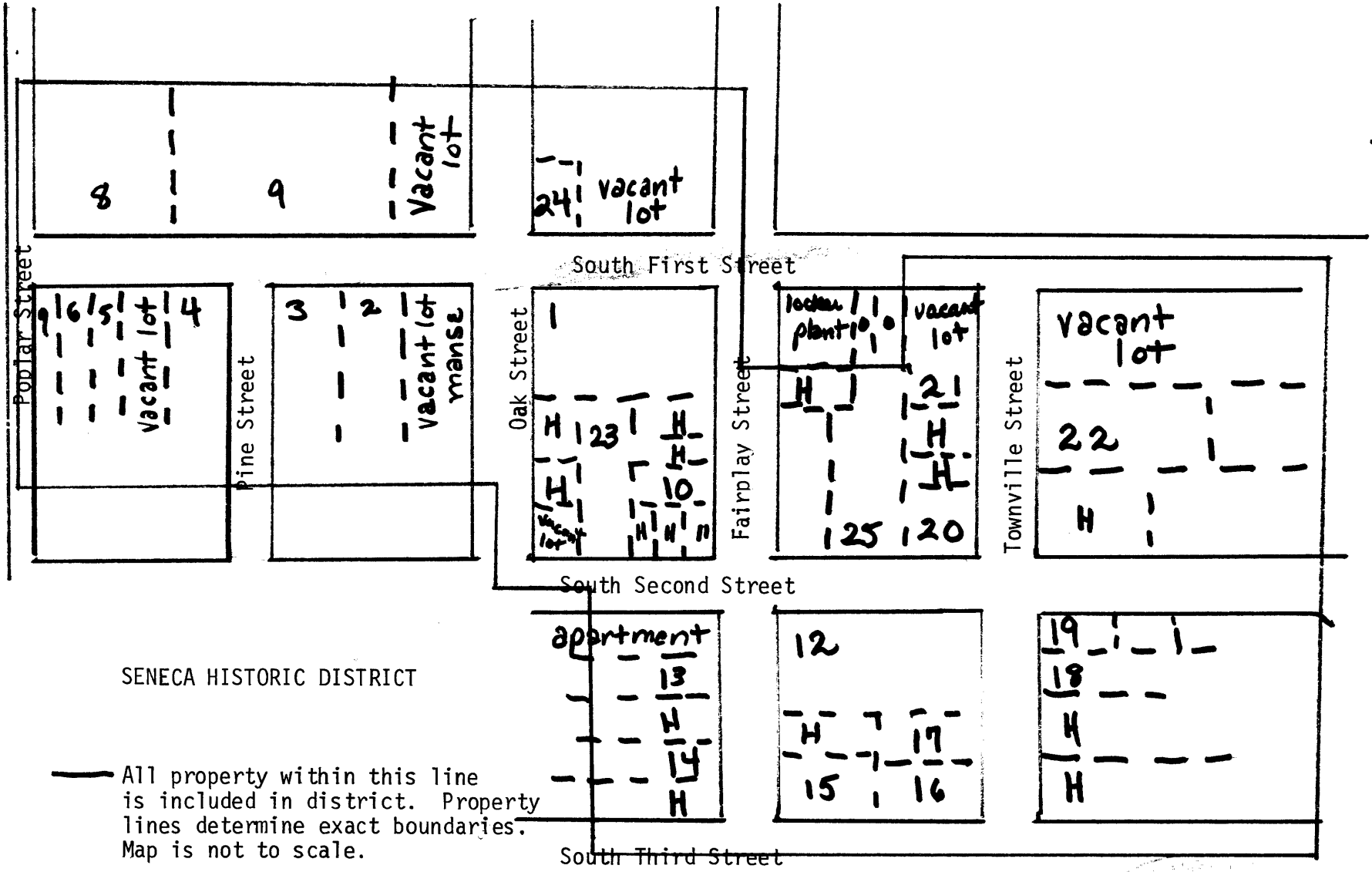
I will deal with this district in two separate parts: Area A and Area B, although together they compose a compact, homogeneous area.

Area A which I consider most desirable and most easily established as an historic district contains one church and eight houses, one of which has already been converted to an historic museum for the Oconee County Historical Society. This area, which consists of buildings on both sides and at the end of South First Street, is already partly zoned CP (conservation-preservation) and partly R-15 (Residential). This should provide for an easily controlled walking tour with the museum as headquarters.

Area B contains two churches and eleven houses of comparable quality but on busier streets and in areas presently zoned GC and R10."

(See description to identify area and houses.)

RECEIVED
JUN 11 1974
NATIONAL REGISTER



SENECA HISTORIC DISTRICT

All property within this line is included in district. Property lines determine exact boundaries. Map is not to scale.

H House
1-25 Numbers indicate historic structures
O Office

12-27-74

RECEIVED