Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC: South Carolina Statehouse

AND/OR COMMON: South Carolina Statehouse

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Capitol Square — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Columbia — VICINITY OF — CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 2

STATE: South Carolina — CODE: 45 — COUNTY: Richland — CODE: 079

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	X GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: State of South Carolina--General Services Division

STREET & NUMBER: 300 Gervais Street

CITY, TOWN: Columbia — VICINITY OF — STATE: South Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER: 1430 Senate Street

CITY, TOWN: Columbia — STATE: South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Historic American Buildings Survey; National Register

DATE: 1964; 1970 — X FEDERAL X STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress; National Register

CITY, TOWN: Washington — STATE: D.C.

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

[The following description is based in part on Christie Z. Fant's The State House of South Carolina: An Illustrated Historic Guide (Columbia: R.L. Bryan Co., 1970).]

A fine example of neoclassical architecture, the South Carolina Statehouse is an imposing, three-story, domed edifice of granite, marble, brick, and iron. Vienna-born architect John Niernsee began the structure in 1851, but the Civil War and post-war poverty slowed progress on the building. It was finally completed in 1907 under the direction of Charles Coker Wilson.

The statehouse has a hipped, slate-shingled, balustraded roof and two Corinthian-columned, pedimented porticoes--one on the north facade and one on the south--and resembles, in outward appearance, the U.S. Capitol in Washington. The South Carolina Capitol is rendered on a much smaller scale, though; it measures 164 feet high, 264 feet long, and 167 feet wide, excluding the porticoes. On the first story, the wall is rusticated stone and is broken by semicircularly arched windows topped by radiating voussoirs. Second and third floor walls are plain coursed ashlar with rusticated quoins. Rectangular windows on the second floor are topped by bracketed pediments, whereas the smaller third floor windows display shouldered molding and bracketed sills. Rising immediately rear of the center of the statehouse roof is a large Italianate-style circular dome of two distinct sections. Atop the whole is an additional cupola from which fly flags of the United States, South Carolina, and the Confederacy. On its lower section the dome is stone-faced brick and has eight pairs of semicircularly arched windows separated by pilasters and topped by hoodmolds with keystones. Atop this section is a patined copper-faced wooden section with eight circular skylights. The wooden cupola above is also copper-covered.

Granite stairways flanked by stone buttresses ascend to the two porticoes, which provide access to the second floor level and are supported by Corinthian columns and pilasters. Entrance to the building from the front portico is through a large double doorway flanked by exterior facings of ornamental white marble hand-carved in a frieze of oak leaves and acorns. Flanking these are fluted Corinthian pilasters that reach to the portico ceiling, and adjacent to the pilasters on the lower level are panels with carved Roman fasces, and above these are hand-carved eagles. Over the entrance a smaller, semicircularly arched doorway with marble balustrade admits light to the interior. This doorway is flanked

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	X POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1869-77 BUILDER/ARCHITECT John Niernsee, Frank Niernsee Frank Milburn, Charles Wilson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The South Carolina Statehouse has a three-fold significance. First, it served as a stage for some of the most important and exciting scenes of the drama of Reconstruction. The only legislature in American history with a black majority met here from 1869-1874 and provided James Shepherd Pike with the setting for his highly influential The Prostrate State. This book, described by historian Claude G. Bowers as the "'Uncle Tom's Cabin' of the redemption of the South," not only helped turn the tide of Northern public opinion against the Republican Party's Southern policy but greatly influenced the viewpoints of future historians as well.[1]

Second, the statehouse is the only extant structure associated with Wade Hampton. In 1876-77 it played an important role in the contest between Hampton, Daniel H. Chamberlain, and their respective followers for control of South Carolina, leading eventually to the formation of two separate governments. According to scholar Hampton M. Jarrell, if Wade Hampton "had no other claim to greatness, his wise leadership during the five months following the election of 1876 would entitle him to both state and national honor; for during this crisis he maintained peace in an area where but for him violence would have erupted."[2] As part of the compromise which allowed Rutherford B. Hayes to become President, Federal troops were withdrawn from South Carolina, and Hampton and the Democrats assumed undisputed control of the governorship and legislature.

Third, the statehouse provides an outstanding example of the disruptive effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction Eras on Southern development. First started in 1851, work on the project proceeded rapidly until the State seceded in December 1860. The exigencies of war slowed construction between 1861 and 1865, and the poverty-stricken condition of South Carolina afterwards

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[1] Claude G. Bowers, The Tragic Era (Boston, 1929), 418.

[2] Hampton M. Jarrell, Wade Hampton and the Negro (Columbia, 1949), 186.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bowers, Claude G., The Tragic Era (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929)

Durden, Robert F. (ed.), James S. Pike, The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper & Row, 1968, orig. pub. 1874).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 11 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	17	496740	3762030	B	17	497090	3762120
C	17	497140	3761980	D	17	496800	3761890

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See last page of description)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Mary Jane Gregory and Ralph Christian, Assistant Editors; and George R. Adams, Managing Editor

ORGANIZATION American Association for State and Local History

DATE December 1975

STREET & NUMBER 1400 Eighth Avenue South

TELEPHONE 615-242-5583

CITY OR TOWN Nashville

STATE Tennessee

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ 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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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by cement bas-relief plaques of Robert Hayne and George McDuffie, two illustrious South Carolina Congressmen of the early 19th century. The doors of the main entrance are oak with glass panels. On the south portico is a doorway similar to that of the front portico. Walls under both the north and the south portico have recessed niches intended to house statuary.

Inside the statehouse there are two lobbies: a lower lobby, located on the ground floor; and above it, the main lobby, which is on the second or main entrance floor. Thirty-two granite Doric columns support the white-painted, brick, vaulted ceiling of the lower lobby. Walls in some areas of the lower lobby are 6 feet thick. The floor is marble and uncarpeted. The Governor's suite occupies the west wing of the ground floor and is entered from the lower lobby through a massive, broken-pedimented, mahogany door. Remodeling in 1967 sealed off this wing and converted former corridor and office space into the Governor's suite. Across the lower lobby, directly opposite the Governor's suite, an identical mahogany doorway opens into the Lieutenant Governor's suite and several committee rooms. This area also was remodeled in 1967-68.

Two staircases ascend from the lower lobby to the two-story main lobby, which begins on the second floor. The stairs feature black, ornamental, wrought-iron railings and a mahogany banister. The main lobby, accessible also from the front portico by way of the main entrance, was redecorated in 1963, and its red, gold, and black-painted plaster cornices contrast with the white walls to create a mildly Egyptian effect. A pattern of gold eagles embellishes the red carpet. A 6-foot-wide balcony extends completely around the room and is reached by twin staircases placed against the rear wall. This balcony breaks the verticality of the lofty lobby and provides access to chambers on the third floor. Ornamental brackets of cast iron lighten the sturdy effect produced by the heavy cantilevers that support the balcony. An arched mosaic rose glass window depicting the State seal graces the balcony's rear wall and is flanked on either side by a pedimented walnut doorway. In the center of the main lobby stands a bronzed statue of South Carolina statesman John C. Calhoun. It was created by sculptor Frederick Ruckstull. Around the walls, marble or bronze busts and plaques commemorate several other illustrious South Carolinians. Six preserved palmetto trees, representing South Carolina as "the Palmetto State," are also a permanent feature of the main lobby.

At the east end of the main lobby, a walnut door opens into a small, marble-floored foyer which in turn leads to the Senate Chamber. White plaster covers the walls of this large room. The original coffered

ceiling is accented in gold and contains a hidden lighting system that conveys the impression that the ceiling is a pattern of skylights. Thin white Corinthian pillars and ornamental brackets support a balcony, which has a polished brass railing. Focal point of the Senate Chamber is the hand-carved mahogany Senate desk, built in 1915. Behind it, a pedimented mahogany reredos displays a portrait of John C. Calhoun.

Directly across the main lobby from the Senate Chamber, the Hall of the House of Representatives occupies the west wing of the statehouse's second floor. This spacious room has black marble wainscoting (a 1967 addition) and a coffered ceiling with gold and pale-blue-painted trim. A balcony with an original brass railing bearing a palmetto design extends around the Hall of the House. Portraits of outstanding public figures such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert E. Lee line the walls on both the balcony and the main level. A carved mahogany rostrum, added in 1937 as part of an extensive renovation program, stands near the west wall. Behind it is a carved mahogany reredos. On display in a glass case beside the reredos is an ornate, solid-silver and gold-burnished mace crafted in London in 1756. It is the emblem of authority of the House of Representatives and is still an impressive part of the ritual used during House sessions. Some Representatives' desks are early 20th century; others are new.

At the rear or south wall of the main lobby, three marble-framed, semicircularly arched, pine doors with leaded, stained-glass panels and fanlights provide entry into the Office of the Legislative Council. Formerly this chamber housed the State Library. Green- and rose-painted trim accents the cream-colored coffered ceiling and molding. Two narrow, black, wrought-iron, spiral staircases rise to a balcony, which is supported by black iron columns and ornamented by a black grillwork railing and a mahogany banister. This balcony is furnished for use by legislators for informal meetings and conferences.

Under the statehouse is an arched subterranean basement with a low-hanging granite ceiling and thick granite walls. A maze of passageways and arches, the basement provides storage space and working rooms for maintenance personnel. The attic, which runs the length and width of the building, contains electrical wiring, air-conditioning components, and a sprinkler system.

Comprehensive renovation of the statehouse interior was begun in 1960. The main lobby was redecorated in 1962-63, at which time the marble floor of the main lobby was carpeted and the ceiling painted. Earlier adjustment of the statehouse for modern use had resulted in the

sealing off of most of the fireplaces about 1920, when central heating was first provided. The heating system was modernized again in 1960, and air-conditioning was installed at that time. Elevators, modern plumbing, and a sprinkler system all were added during the course of the modernization program. Modern lighting replaces the original gas chandeliers.

Wide lawns, patterned paths, flower beds, magnolias, oaks, and palmetto trees beautify the statehouse grounds. A concrete walkway borders the building on all sides. Directly in front of the statehouse stands a replica of Houdon's famous statue of George Washington. Steps lead from the front walkway to a front plaza which features a monument to Confederate soldiers. It was erected in 1879. On the southeast lawn of the statehouse stands a bronze equestrian statue of South Carolina hero Wade Hampton, dedicated in 1906. New York sculptor Frederick Ruckstull produced this 15-foot-tall statue of South Carolina's beloved hero. Inscriptions on the statue's concrete base read: "Erected by the State of South Carolina and its citizens to Wade Hampton... Governor of South Carolina, 1876-1879...United States Senator, 1879-1891 ...Commander of the Hampton Legion, Lieutenant General, CSA...Bentonville, Brandy Station, Sappony Church, Trevilion, Seven Pines, Burgess Mill, Cold Harbor, Hawes Shop, First Manassas, Gettysburg...Born March 28, 1828...Died April 11, 1902." Other monuments on the statehouse grounds include a Palmetto Regiment monument and a memorial to three Revolutionary War heroes from South Carolina: Francis Marion, Thomas Sumter, and Andrew Pickens.

Boundary Justification. The boundary encompasses the statehouse and approximately 11 acres of grounds (including the acreage covered by the statehouse itself). There are no modern intrusions.

Boundary Description. As indicated in red on the accompanying AASLH Sketch Map (December 1975), a line beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of Assembly and Gervais Streets and extending northeastward about 1,000 feet along the right curb of Gervais to the west curb of Sumter Street; thence about 500 feet southeastward along the right curb of Sumter Street to the south side of a concrete walk that passes from Senate to Assembly along a line parallel to and about 100 feet south of the northeast-southwest plane of the facade of the rear Statehouse portico; thence southwestward about 1,000 feet along the south edge of said walkway to the east curb of Assembly Street; thence northwestward about 500 feet along the right curb of Assembly to the point of beginning.

prevented completion of the structure until 1907--56 years after the cornerstone had been laid.

Today the neoclassical building of Carolina granite, brick, and iron still serves as meetingplace for the South Carolina General Assembly and contains the Governor's Office and the Office of the Legislative Council. The interior has been modernized, but the exterior is little changed.

History

The origins of the present South Carolina Statehouse, the third in the State's history, can be traced back to the 1849 recommendation of Gov. Whitemarsh B. Seabrooks that a fireproof building be constructed by the State to protect its historic papers. The cornerstone for such a facility was laid in 1851, but 2 years later the legislature expanded the project to include construction of a new capitol. By 1854, work was proceeding rapidly but had to be stopped when it was discovered that poor workmanship and materials had caused the walls to crack.

At this juncture, John Rudolph Niernsee, an Austrian-born architect then resident in Baltimore, was hired to oversee the project. Niernsee drafted a new design for the building--which would be followed with few exceptions until completion--and late in 1855, after the cracked walls had been razed, construction resumed. Using granite from the nearby Congaree River and $1,240,032 in legislative appropriations, Niernsee by 1860 had completed most of the exterior work on the new capitol, and by 1862 its vaults were ready to receive the public papers. During the Civil War, construction continued albeit on a somewhat limited basis.

In February 1865, William T. Sherman and the Union Army occupied Columbia, and he ordered a number of public buildings including the old statehouse put to the torch. For some unknown reason, Sherman spared the unfinished statehouse. Although some have claimed he admired its beauty and left it alone for that reason, South Carolina historian A.S. Salley offers a more likely explanation: "He probably wished to save the store of explosives it would have taken to blow it up and he probably feared injury to his reckless, drunken soldiers in the explosions."[3] Despite the exemption, the structure did suffer damage from

[3] Cited in Christie Z. Fant, The State House of South Carolina: An Illustrated Historic Guide (Columbia, 1970), 26.

shelling and the burning of the nearby old statehouse. Sherman's men also destroyed $700,000 worth of finished marble and other materials as well as Niernsee's models and plans.

In the first years after the war, work on the building proceeded very slowly. Not until 1869 was the roof finished and the legislature able to meet in the still uncompleted building. These were the years of Reconstruction, and the capitol served as the setting for some of this drama's most exciting scenes. Between 1869 and 1874, the only State legislature in American history with a black majority sat here, attracting attention both in this country and abroad. In 1873 James Shepherd Pike, a leading Republican journalist, used the capitol as the backdrop for his famous book, The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government, which made blacks appear as "ignorant dupes, the tools, of Federal power."[4] Although Pike, according to his biographer Robert F. Durden, was "far from dispassionate in his influential report on Reconstruction," his account was accepted at face value because of his prominence.[5] Pike's book also influenced historians, helping reinforce the image of Reconstruction as an era of black domination, corruption, and misrule. In 1935 Henry S. Commager praised its "transparent honesty" and "thorough documentation," and as late as 1947 it was described as the classic work on Reconstruction outrages.[6] The interpretation presented in The Prostrate State is, of course, no longer accepted by most historians.

The statehouse also witnessed one of the final acts of Reconstruction. In 1876 Wade Hampton and the Democrats conducted their famous "Red Shirt" campaign against Daniel H. Chamberlain and the Republicans in a concerted effort to "redeem" the State. "Both parties engaged in fraud, with some counties reporting more votes than there were registered voters," says historian Allen W. Trelease. **The result was**

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[4] Robert F. Durden (ed.), James S. Pike, The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government, Harper Torchbooks (New York, 1968, originally published 1874), xxxv.

[5] Ibid., ix.

[6] Cited in ibid., xiv.

[7] Allen W. Trelease, Reconstruction: The Great Experiment (New York, 1971), 186.

that both Hampton and Chamberlain claimed victory, and their respective parties claimed control of the lower house of the legislature. When the General Assembly convened in November 1876, the Democratic members of the lower house withdrew when several of their members' election certificates were not recognized. They then chose William H. Wallace speaker while Republicans elected Edwin W. M. Mackey to the same post. On November 30, the Democratic legislators returned to the capitol and "thus was seen the singular spectacle of two speakers and two Houses conducting deliberations in the same hall."[8]

Four days later, because of threatened bloodshed, the Wallace House moved to another meeting place, probably at the urging of Wade Hampton who exerted himself to the utmost to maintain peace. Both Chamberlain and Hampton were inaugurated as Governor, and South Carolinians found themselves confronted with the spectacle of dual government. It soon became apparent that Hampton and the Wallace House had the full backing of the white population and that Chamberlain and the Mackey House were tolerated only because of the presence of Federal troops in the State. On April 10, 1877, fulfilling part of the compromise which had allowed his inauguration, Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew these troops, and the following day Hampton and his supporters assumed full control of the government of South Carolina.

Because of the austerity programs of "Redeemers" like Hampton, work on the capitol proceeded slowly. Finally, in 1885 Governor Hugh S. Thompson, a strong advocate of completing the capitol, recalled John Rudolph Niernsee, its original architect, from Baltimore, but he died before he was able to resume the project. From 1888 to 1891 his son, Frank McHenry Niernsee, served as architect, and under his direction much of the interior work was completed. In 1900 Frank Milburn became architect and stirred up a great deal of controversy because he substituted the present dome for the tower which had been envisioned by the elder Niernsee. Because much of Milburn's work was of inferior quality, he was replaced in 1905 by Charles Coker Wilson, who corrected these deficiencies and finished the exterior in 1907. Finally, after 56 years and the expenditure of $3,450,000, the South Carolina Statehouse had been completed. Since 1907 the exterior of the capitol has changed little, while the interior has been modernized. Today, it still serves as meetingplace for the South Carolina General Assembly and contains the Governor's Office, and the Office of the Legislative Council.

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8 Francis B. Simkins and Robert H. Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction (Chapel Hill, 1932), 524.

Fant, Christie Z., The State House of South Carolina: An Illustrated Historic Guide (Columbia: R.L. Bryan Company, 1970).

Jarrell, Hampton M., Wade Hampton and the Negro (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1949).

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