



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

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 "x" 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 Cowpens Depot

other names/site number Cowpens Museum and Civic Center

**2. Location**

street & number 120 Palmetto Street not for publication

city or town Cowpens vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

state South Carolina code SC county Spartanburg code 083 zip code 29330

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

Mary W. Edmonds 7/29/97  
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & 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  See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.  determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 9/4/97  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

for  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>    </u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	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)

Cat: TRANSPORTATION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub: Rail-related  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE  
SOCIAL  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub: Museum  
Meeting Hall  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)  
LATE 19th CENTURY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation Brick  
roof Asphalt  
walls Wood  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

### 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 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)

- ARCHITECTURE
- TRANSPORTATION
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1896  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Period of Significance**

1896  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Southern Railway Company  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(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: Cowpens Municipal Building

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** 2.7 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>17</u>	<u>426760</u>	<u>3874860</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>					

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Linda Dearybury Taylor, Historian, and Wilhelmina S. Dearybury, Chairman  
organization Cowpens Museum Committee date August 27, 1996  
street & number P.O. Box 10 telephone (864) 463-6545  
city or town Cowpens state SC zip code 29330

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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## Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Cowpens  
street & number P.O. Box 236 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Cowpens state SC zip code 29330

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Cowpens Depot  
name of property  
Spartanburg County, South Carolina  
county and State

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The Cowpens Depot, at 120 Palmetto Street at the tracks of the Southern Railway and at the corner of Brown and Palmetto Streets in Cowpens, Spartanburg County, S.C., is a one-story, rectangular frame railroad station with a gable roof and a freight loading platform. Brick piers laid in cement mortar support the freight platform. The exterior wainscoted walls are a combination of weatherboard siding and wood shingles. Single transom doors lead into the interior of the building which includes an entrance hall, a large freight and express room used for civic meetings, a smaller room used as a museum, and two bathrooms. Two double freight tracked doors are along the freight platform.

The depot was moved to its present location--a block from its original site--in 1982 and has since been renovated for use as a museum and civic center. The exterior wainscot walls are the original rustic tongue and groove weatherboard siding with Georgia pine sawn wood shingles. The clear heart pine brackets which supported the roof are the original. The eight foot wide pine loading platform rotted. Renovators rebuilt the platform with 2x8 treated pine lumber and added a horizontal railing for safety.

Before the repairs and renovations there were two small waiting rooms in the front of the depot for white and black passengers. The partition in the waiting rooms were removed to make one large room which now serves as a museum. The interior walls of the depot waiting rooms/museum area are original 7/8 inch beaded tongue and groove board with a three inch bard cap. The interior walls of the waiting rooms and office were wainscot with the plaster walls (three coats thick) above the four foot high bright pine beaded tongue and groove panels. The two transom entrance doors and the windows in the museum area are original to the station building. Bathrooms were relocated alongside the museum entrance.

According to the materials and construction specifications of Southern Railway Chief Engineer, the inside of the freight and express rooms were to be ceiled up 8 feet with one inch merchantable stuffsized to 7/8 inch and the flooring was to be two inches thick of clear heart yellow pine. The interior walls of the depot freight room-civic meeting room are original white pine and retain the initials of local turn of the century merchants painted on them to designate individual delivery points. The exposed pine ceiling rafters, "free from any imperfections impairing its durability" in the freight room are original. Two double freight doors 2 1/4 inches thick backed with 7/8 inch tongue and groove are also original. During the renovation the back part of the freight room was partitioned off for kitchen and storage facilities. Since the original pine floors rotted, the floors were replaced with oak hardwood flooring throughout the building.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section 8 Page 6

Cowpens Depot  
name of property  
Spartanburg County, South Carolina  
county and State

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The Cowpens Depot, built in 1896 by the Southern Railway, is significant both as an excellent example of a late nineteenth century Southern passenger and freight depot and for its association with the significance of the Southern Railway in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century growth and development of the town of Cowpens.

The Cowpens community was part of a larger agricultural community within eastern Spartanburg County and western Cherokee County. Wide expanses of land planted with cotton and various grains, large farm houses and a sparse population typified the area in the late nineteenth century. The Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line Railway built the first depot here along its line in 1873, and by 1880 the town of Cowpens was incorporated in 1880, with its charter specifying that "its corporate limits shall extend one-half mile in every direction from the railroad depot in said town." The Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line was leased by the Richmond and Danville Railroad in the 1880s and early 1890s, but by 1894 had become part of the main line of the Southern Railway.

In May 1896 the Southern Railway contracted with Joseph D. Elliott to build a new depot alongside its tracks at the corner of Brown and Church streets. The corner of Brown and Church streets was already a route for the Cowpens business district. Church Street directed the flow of people and goods to and from the depot to the mercantile stores that lined Church Street and Main Street. Facing the depot across the street was the Cowpens Hotel, a thirty room hotel with a dining room, parlor and wide porches to accommodate the needs of rail travelers. After the turn of the century, R. R. Brown, a local resident, built the Cowpens Mill and Manufacturing Company strategically behind the depot.

The construction of the railroad line and the opening of new textile mills in the area brought some people to the town. However, according to the histories of local farming families in the White Plains, Battleground, Thicketty Creek communities, the town's population grew as an increasing number of farm boys moved into the town. They opened general mercantile stores, cafes, livery stables, drug stores, banks, saw mills, practiced medicine and preached. The town's population grew from about 300 in 1889 to more than 1300 in 1940, in large part due to the influence of the railroad.

Cotton fields on the corners of Church Street give way to the construction of stores. Cowpens became a town with significant commercial ties to outlying farm communities. Farmers in mule drawn wagons drove down the rutted dirt roads to the depot with their cotton and timber and returned to the farm with fertilizer, seed, and clothing for the family. Some farmers came with their homemade furniture or corn, wheat, cabbages and other food stuffs to trade at the increasing number of mercantile stores. By 1910, thirteen mercantile stores, five meat markets, two picture galleries, two livery stables, two barber shops and one pressing club are recorded in the

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Cowpens Depot  
name of property  
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county and State

town's records as having purchased business licenses. In addition the town citizens enjoyed the services of the Postal Telegraph and Cable Company which constructed telegraph lines in the town in 1902. Telephone services were available to the citizens by 1906 along with the electric power services of Electric and Manufacturing & Power Company. Thus the freight service of the railroad, along with the freight and express room of the depot, were invaluable in the commercial growth of the town.

Life in Cowpens revolved around the depot and the rail transportation system. In the years before the automobile became the major means of transportation, the folk of Cowpens used the passenger service of the railroad to commute to nearby mill villages at Converse and Clifton or to Spartanburg. Businessmen associated with the growing number of manufacturing companies in the area and traveling salesmen stopped in Cowpens to dine across the street from the depot as they traveled between Charlotte and Atlanta.

Passenger rail service to Cowpens ceased in the 1950s and freight service ceased in 1967 when the depot closed its doors to all rail service. Moore Furniture Company of Cowpens leased the depot from the Southern Railway and used it as a storage warehouse from 1967 to 1980, but by 1980 the railroad decided to demolish the deteriorating depot when the lease with Moore Furniture Company expired. The Cowpens Bicentennial Committee negotiated with Southern to preserve the building, and the railroad agreed to donate the depot to the town on the condition that it be moved from railway property. In 1982 the Town of Cowpens moved the depot one block from its original side to its present location alongside the tracks at the corner of Brown and Palmetto Streets, a move necessary to save the building and one which did not compromise its integrity.

In 1985 the Cowpens Bicentennial Committee, with the help of World War II crew members of the USS Cowpens and local contributors, began renovating the depot for service as the Cowpens Museum and Civic Center, housing memorabilia from World War II and the U.S.S. Cowpens and offering a meeting place for local clubs, families and reunions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Town of Cowpens Charter, February 20, 1880, and Cowpens Town Records, Cowpens Municipal Building, Cowpens, S.C.; Southern Railway Company Contract, May 5, 1896; Architectural Blueprints for Southern Railway Combined Depot, Cowpens, N.C. [sic], ca. 1896; and Specifications for Materials and Construction of a Combined Depot at Cowpens, S.C., ca. 1896, all in Archives of Norfolk Southern Corporation, Atlanta, Ga.; Ezell, L.D. "Cowpens Depot Closes: Locks Many Memories." Spartanburg Herald, 15 July 1967; and Linda Dearybury Taylor, ed., and the Cowpens Bicentennial Committee, comps., History of Cowpens, South Carolina. Inter-Collegiate Press: Shawnee Mission, Kansas, 1982.

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Cowpens Depot  
name of property  
Spartanburg County, South Carolina  
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**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- Archives of Norfolk Southern Corporation, Atlanta, Ga.  
Southern Railway Company Contract, May 5, 1896.  
Architectural Blueprints for Southern Railway Combined Depot, Cowpens,  
N.C. (sic), ca. 1896.  
Specifications for Materials and Construction of a Combined Depot at  
Cowpens, S.C., ca. 1896.
- Town of Cowpens Charter, February 20, 1880, and Cowpens Town Records.  
Cowpens Municipal Building, Cowpens, S.C.
- Ezell, L.D. "Cowpens Depot Closes: Locks Many Memories." Spartanburg  
Herald, 15 July 1967.
- Taylor, Linda Dearybury, ed., and the Cowpens Bicentennial Committee,  
comps. History of Cowpens, South Carolina. Inter-Collegiate Press:  
Shawnee Mission, Kansas, 1982.



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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 9

Cowpens Depot  
name of property  
Spartanburg County, South Carolina  
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the parcel marked "Cowpens Depot" on the accompanying Spartanburg County Property Map, School District 3, Sheet 3-10-11, drawn at a scale of 1"=100'.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property is restricted to the historic depot and its immediate setting adjacent to the former Southern Railway track.

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Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 10

Cowpens Depot  
name of property  
Spartanburg County, South Carolina  
county and State

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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Cowpens Depot  
Location of Property: corner of Brown and Palmetto Streets  
Cowpens, Spartanburg County, S.C.

Name of Photographer: John Byrum, Spartanburg Herald-Journal  
Date of Photographs: 23 January 1997  
Location of Original: Cowpens Museum and Civic Center  
Negatives:

1. Cowpens Depot, 1976, in original location at corner of Church and Brown Streets
2. Cowpens Depot, 22 June 1982, being moved from original location to present location at corner of Palmetto and Brown Streets
3. Facade, facing W
4. Rear Elevation, facing E
5. Right Elevation, facing S
6. Left Elevation, facing N
7. Eave Detail, facing N
8. Left Elevation Door, facing N
9. Rear Elevation Freight Door, facing E
10. Interior, Facade Freight Door
11. Interior, Facade Door and Window