

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF HARTWELL, HART COUNTY, GEORGIA

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY #10

I. IDENTIFICATION

HISTORIC NAME: H. E. Fortson House
 CURRENT NAME: Gaines Residence
 STREET ADDRESS: 221 Richardson Street
 CITY: Hartwell
 PRESENT OWNER: Mr. & Mrs. Talmadge Gaines
 MAILING ADDRESS: 221 Richardson Street
 CITY: Hartwell
 STATE: Georgia
 ZIP CODE: 30643
 CURRENT USE: residence
 ACREAGE: one city lot (less than one acre)
 U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE: Hartwell, Georgia
 U.T.M. REFERENCE: Z17 E322670 N3803390
 V.B.D. OR TAX MAP NUMBER: H-6-7-1

II. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT CONDITION:

This house is a small, one-story frame structure characterized by a wrap-around porch and a hipped roof containing a gabled dormer with paired attic windows. The shed-roofed porch, supported with simple posts, wraps around two sides of structure. The entrance doorway is flanked by sidelights. Internal chimneys, covered with stucco, provide fireplaces to four rooms located on either side of a central hall. A rear ell contains two additional rooms and an enclosed porch. Interior features include original mantels. The central hall is intact, as are the four rooms on either side of it, although the rooms are now paneled and the ceilings were lowered in 1970.

The house is situated on a city lot which contains several large trees. A concrete block garage is located to the rear of the house.

The property is in good condition.

PHOTOGRAPH NUMBER: 71

III. HISTORY

ORIGINAL OWNER: H. E. Fortson
 ORIGINAL USE: residence
 ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown
 HISTORIC ACREAGE: two city lots
 DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: ca. 1913
 DATE(S) OF ALTERATIONS: 1960s, 1970s

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (FROM ORIGINS TO PRESENT):

This structure was built circa 1913 as the residence of H. E. Forston. Deed references indicate that Charles E. Matheson sold to H. E. Fortson "a tract or parcel of land in the city of Hartwell, better known as lots 11 and 12 of the subdivision of the W. E. T. McCurley lot, subdivided by A. W. McConnell and sold at auction, fronting on Richardson Street." Fortson was a minister at the Hartwell First Baptist Church, located across the street from his home (the church has been extensively renovated). According to Mrs. Katie Gilliard, the present secretary of the church, he served as the minister for three years. He also preached at several churches in Hart County.

Following Reverend Fortson's residency here, the house served as a rental residence for several years. In 1947, the property was acquired from Queenie Forston William, Hosea H. Fortson, Eula Mae Fortson Gaines, Jewell Fortson McLin, and Henry E. Fortson by Elise Gaines, O'Neal Gaines, Nathaniel Gaines, and Talmadge Gaines. In 1957, Talmadge Gaines acquired the property outright. One half of the property, a city lot, apparently was sold between the 1947 and 1957 sale. Talmadge Gaines continues to reside in the structure today.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA: B, C

AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Black/Social History

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL)

The H. E. Fortson House is important in local black/social history for its association with the Reverend H. E. Fortson. Fortson served as minister of the Hartwell First Baptist Church in the early twentieth century and preached at other Baptist churches in Hart County during his career. He was a prominent minister and teacher in the Rome community of Hartwell. Traditionally, churches were among the most important social and cultural institutions in black communities, and ministers were among the prominent figures in these communities; the role played by Fortson in the Rome section of Hartwell is no exception.

Architecturally, the Fortson House is significant as an example of the type of house built for and lived in by relatively prominent middle-class black citizens of Hartwell in the early 20th century. This type of modest, straightforward house, with its simple arrangement of rooms around a central hall and its wrap-around porch and hipped roof, typifies the housing found in many of Georgia's small-town black neighborhoods. Relatively few examples of this type of housing survive with their major features intact, making this house a good example of the type.

CONTRIBUTING/NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:

Contributing building(s): 1
Non-contributing structure(s): 1

V. SOURCES

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS: Historic Structures Field Survey: Hart County, Georgia

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: interview with Mrs. Talmadge Gaines, Hartwell; Hart County Courthouse, records.

FORM PREPARED BY:

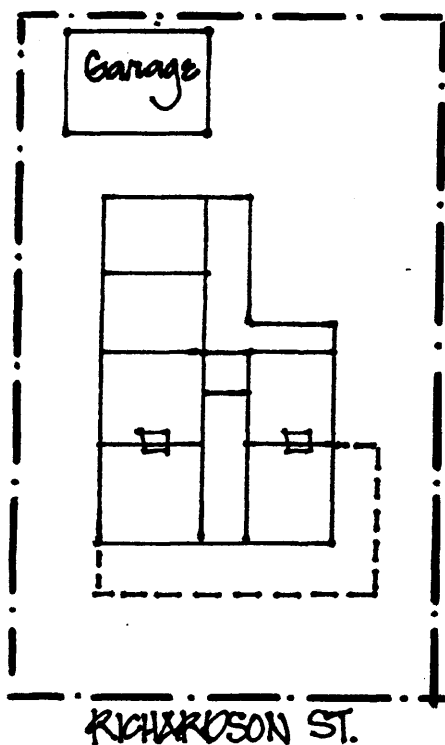
Dale Jaeger
Georgia Mountains Area Planning and Development Commission
Gainesville, Georgia

Donald Rooney
Historic Preservation Consultant
Atlanta, Georgia

Richard Cloues
Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources
Atlanta, Georgia

VI. SITE PLAN/SKETCH MAP/FLOOR PLAN

Attached sketches are intended only to help illustrate the nominated property. No scale is provided or implied, unless otherwise noted. Boundary markings are simply general indications of the extent of the nominated property; the actual boundary description, unless otherwise noted, is the current legal description of the property which coincides with the current tax map number cited in Section I of this form. Also, note that the orientation of the various sketches differs from sketch to sketch; each is provided with a north arrow for clarity.



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FLOOR & SITE PLAN