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: Fort Hill

AND/OR COMMON: John C. Calhoun Mansion and Library

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Clemson University Campus

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Clemson __ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: third

STATE: South Carolina CODE: 45 COUNTY: Pickens CODE: 077

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	X 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	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: State of South Carolina; maintained by Clemson University and the United Daughters of the Confederacy

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: STATE:

__ VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Oconee County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER: Pickens

CITY, TOWN: Pickens STATE: South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: None

DATE:

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN: STATE:

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fort Hill's white columned "Big House" and the one-room plantation office, situated on a small hill in the midst of about five acres, are all that remain of the 1,100 acre plantation that was John C. Calhoun's home from 1825 until 1850. The mansion and office have been well preserved with little alteration, and contain many valuable original furnishings as well. Although located in the center of the Clemson University campus, the Calhoun Mansion is screened from much of the modern development surrounding it by large trees and shrubs, many planted by Calhoun himself. The university is required to maintain the Calhoun mansion by the terms of the will of Calhoun's son-in-law, Thomas Clemson, who bequeathed the land and funds to establish the school.

The land upon which the mansion was erected was originally granted by the state to Robert Tate in 1784. At that time the 600 acres was called the Fort Hill Tract, named for a fortification built there in 1776. Late in the eighteenth century the estate became the property of John Ewing Calhoun, who was to be the father-in-law of John C. Calhoun. In 1802 the Fort Hill Tract was deeded to the Reverend James and Elizabeth McElhenney and about this time a modest house, used as a rectory, was built by the minister and named "Old Clergy Hall."

The architecture of this house was very simple, consisting of four main rooms, two on the first floor and two on the second. The house was approximately 38 feet long and 18 feet wide. A large fire-place and hearth and a deep Dutch oven are still interesting features of the room to the right of the north entrance hall. The west end of this room was partitioned off to enclose a staircase leading to the two rooms above. The main entrance was on the north and the front door opened into a hall-way which occupied the center of the house. There is evidence that there was a shed room on the south side which was later enlarged to form the present bedroom.

After the death of Mr. McElhenney, the estate was owned by Mrs. John Ewing Calhoun, who was a cousin of John Caldwell Calhoun and became his mother-in-law also when he married her daughter, Floride. In 1825, following his decision to locate permanently in the South, John Calhoun moved his family from Washington, D.C. to Clergy Hall, which he rented from his mother-in-la Clergy Hall was located about five miles from the small town of Pendleton, in a district then developing as a socially and politically important plantation area in the fotthills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Mrs. John Ewing Calhoun died about 1836 and John C. Calhoun gained personal ownership of the estate the same year, and shortly thereafter changed the name to Fort Hill. Calhoun acquired adjoining tracts of land until the estate comprised 1,100 acres of forests, uplands and valleys.

Additions were made to the old house as the needs of the family which included nine children increased. Supposedly Mrs. Calhoun was constantly

remodeling the house and gardens, often while her husband was away in Washington. This explains the informal arrangement, unexpected steps and sudden turnings of the interior, which eventually contained fourteen rooms. The exterior of the two-story gable-roofed frame house is painted white and has a large central entrance portico supported by four Tuscan columns and two story porches with similar columns on the east and south. These large columns are plastered brick, except for the southwest colonnade whose columns are solid wood, but later cement was substituted. The wood used in the construction of the house is probably cedar, which was very prevalent on the estate. The interior woodwork is of red cedar.

The Calhouns used the east colonnade as the main entrance. Double doors open from it into a small hall, from which steep winding stairs ascend to the second floor. The house was heated by fireplaces in every room, each with a different carved mantel imported from Charleston. The ceilings are low and the floors are made of the wide pine planks.

On the first floor, to the south of the main entrance is the parlor. To the north is the formal dining room, while the room on the western side of the original section was probably the family dining room for the Calhouns. Most of the bedrooms were located on the second floor, with dressing rooms adjoining several of them. The nursery was connected to the west end of the master bedroom, which is next to the dining room, and the guest room was above the parlor.

An article about Fort Hill in Scribner's Magazine of 1881 substantiated the belief that the Calhoun's kitchen was not in the main portion of the house:

> At the Western side of the house begins an extension one story in height and about one hundred feet long. This held the kitchen and house servants' rooms, and it was half screened from view by a row of cedars.

Another source, (the housekeeper of the subsequent owner), said that the extension on the west end contained four rooms, each about 18 by 25 feet, and one served as kitchen, another as laundry. They were built of wood, the walls were of rough plaster, and the floors were made of stone.

Apparently the smoke-house was located a few feet south of this extension and a "double-room house" for the house servants was built

near the west end of it. Beneath the brow of the hill, to the north of the mansion less than 100 feet, was an abundant spring and a large arched chamber built of stones, described as a "semi-subterranean" springhouse. Also close by were the dairy and pigeon house.

The west extension of the mansion was removed sometime after the Calhouns died, but in 1938 a one-room detached kitchen was reconstructed on that site. The spring and springhouse were restored in 1950, and except for the library, all of the other many out-buildings of the plantation are gone.

The one-room library or plantation office is located about fifty feet south of the mansion. According to a nineteenth century description of the office:

> The library has its sides filled with bookshelves, and these are packed with volumes of every description, though largely the literature of law and rostrum. Calhoun's own speeches appear in several editions, and there are many books that bear the marks of his pen.

These books were put in the college library for safe-keeping and they were lost in a fire in 1894. Today the building houses a collection of early maps and some Calhoun furnishings, including his chair from the Senate and a carved roll-top desk which he used when Vice-President. The white frame structure, ca. 1825, has a columned porch in front and a fireplace on the south side. The interior is oak-paneled, with fairly high ceilings. The walled excavation under the building was used as an ice house.

Fort Hill Plantation in Calhoun's time consisted of over 1,100 acres, 450 being in cultivation. The cotton fields were large--one of them covered 120 acres. Calhoun also experimented with Bermuda grass and terraced the hillsides of his land. He raised purebred horses and experimented with cattle breeding as well as silkworm production. The large gardens were filled with a great variety of fruits and vegetables and he collected many interesting trees to landscape his estate.

In relation to the present Clemson University campus, the vegetable garden was where the Trustee House and Chemistry buildings now stand. There was a terrace to the west side of the rose garden where a grape arbor extended to it from the outside kitchen. Beyond the gardens were the

apple, peach and pear orchards.

The house servants' quarters extended from the west end of the mansion, beyond the outside kitchen. The slave quarters were located a short distance from where the present Architectural building now stands. The slave houses were built of stone and were joined together in a continuous r over 200 feet long, each house with a back and front yard. The stables were some distance away, as were the cotton press, granaries and the mills for grinding corn and wheat.

Many Clemson University building are located on what was once the lawn of Fort Hill, and the front gate of the plantation was where Sikes Hall now stands. The driveway to the mansion wound through a line of trees by the present Administration building to the east front of the house; some of the original trees are still standing. The spacious lawn was landscaped with oaks, locusts, cedars, elms, willows, wild orange, and fig trees. A fenced-in yard surrounded the house and the gate was where the Trustee House is now located. Gift trees, a varnish tree from Madagascar from Commodore Stephen Decatur, a hemlock from Daniel Webster, and an arborvitae from Henry Clay, still grace the lawn.

In 1850 Calhoun died and Thomas G. Clemson, his son-in-law, eventually inherited the estate. He lived in the mansion for many years and he willed the estate to the state of South Carolina for the establishment of an agricultural and mechanical college, with a provision to provide for the preservation of the Calhoun mansion. Clemson's will stated in part:

> It is my desire that the dwelling-house of Fort Hill shall never be torn down or altered; but shall be kept in repair with all of the articles of furniture and vesture which I herewith give for that purpose, and shall be always open for the inspection of vistors...

The college was established in 1889, with $80,000 and 814 acres bequeathed by Clemson, as a land grant college. Fort Hill is presently maintained by Clemson University and with gifts and a per capita tax on members of the South Carolina division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, who supervise preservation and conduct tours of the house.

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/HUMANITARIA	
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	X POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1825-1850 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Hill, the plantation home of home of John C. Calhoun during the last 25 years of his life is today well-maintained in the center of Clemson University campus. When he moved to the house in 1825 Calhoun was Vice President of the United States, at the height of his career, having gained national recognition as one of the "War Hawks" in the Twelfth Congress and as Secretary of War under James Monroe. He long aspired to the presidency, without success, but he did serve another cabinet position, as Secretary of State under John Tyler in 1845, and he died in Washington, D.C. in March 1850, still very much involved in representing the Southern viewpoint in the Great Compromise debate in the Senate.

Though his political career kept him away much of the time, Calhoun returned to Fort Hill whenever the opportunity offered and he wrote some of his most important political speeches and essays there, probably in his one-room library. During the Congressional recess of 1828, with a crisis brewing in his native state, Calhoun returned home to wrote his famous "South Carolina Exposition, " embodying the doctrine of nullificatio When nullification became a fact four years later, Calhoun hurried to South Carolina to guide proceedings, subsequently giving up the vice-presidency to enter the Senate in support of his doctrine.

During the first part of Polk's administration he retired to private life at Fort Hill, when he was not asked to remain as Secretary of State, but soon returned to the Senate because of the Oregon and Texas controversies. During his last summer at Fort Hill in 1849, Calhoun finished writing his "Discourse on the Constitution of the United States," and his famous essay "A Disquisition on Government," in which he presented his theories of state sovereignty, the concurrent majority and of the nature of the union.

John Caldwell Calhoun was born March 18, 1782 in Abbeville District, South Carolina. After graduating from Yale University in 1804, he studied law in South Carolina and Litchfield, Connecticut and was admitted to the bar in 1807. He was elected to the South Carolina Legislature in 1808, to the United States Congress in 1811. Until his death on March 31, 1850 in Washington, D.C., Calhoun was one of the most influential and dominant political figures in the country.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brannon, Mrs. Revelie W. "Honorable John C. Calhoun's Library," unpublished report, January 1970, Clemson University.

Coit, Margaret L. John C. Calhoun 3 vols. (Indianapolis, 1944-51).

Cook, Harriet Hefner, Fort Hill; John C. Calhoun Shrine (Clemson, S.C. 1959, revised 1970).

Leiding, Harriette Kershaw, Historic Houses of South Carolina (Philadelphia, 1921).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	17	331500	3838650
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Calhoun mansion and library are situated in the mid of the large campus, but on a five acre tract, relatively removed and screened by tall trees and shrubbery from the large modern structures surrou them on all sides.

As indicated on the enclosed Campus Guide, the landmark boundary includes th mansion and library. The Trustee House, a later house, built by the college

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 Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey

DATE 5/14/75

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L. Street, NW.

TELEPHONE 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN Washington

STATE D.C.

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

TITLE

DATE

Landmark Designated: 12/19/ date

Boundary Certified: Cornelius W. Heine 5-2 Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys 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 (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Boundary Approved: Acting Director, OAHP 5/21/ date