

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| STATE: Georgia | |
| COUNTY: Richmond | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | |

1. NAME

COMMON:
President's Home, Augusta College

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Commandant's House, Augusta Arsenal (Stephen Vincent Benét House)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
2500 Walton Way

CITY OR TOWN:
Augusta

STATE: Georgia CODE: COUNTY: Richmond CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____ |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

STREET AND NUMBER:
c/o President, Augusta College

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Georgia CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:

STREET AND NUMBER:
Richmond County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Georgia CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1935 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of Prints and Photographs

STREET AND NUMBER:
Library of Congress

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The commandant's residence of the old Augusta Arsenal forms part of an impressive complex, essentially Federal in style, completed between 1827 and 1829. Situated just south of the main arsenal building, the commandant's house is one of two formerly-identical living quarters which flank the central structure.

Two-stories in height, the house like its companion structures is constructed of brick over a full basement, and basically follows a conventional side-hall plan. A two-tiered portico, supported by Tuscan pillars and featuring a dentiled cornice at both levels, extends the length of the three-bay facade and along the south side of the dwelling. The side porch has been enclosed to form sunrooms on the first and second floors.

Surmounted by an arched transom, the main doorway at the right of the facade opens into a high-ceilinged hallway containing a wide, straight-run stairway beyond which a back doorway opens onto a rear gallery. To the left of the hallway lies the parlor, with a formal dining room immediately behind. The fireplaces in each room stand back-to-back, opening from a central chimney which once also heated the rooms above. A large, two-story wing projects to the rear of the house and contains on the lower floor a second dining room as well as the present kitchen. On the right or north side of the entrance hall lies a small, glassed-in chamber which now serves as a music room and is probably an addition of the present century. Behind the music room, in the square two-story north wing of the house, is a large rear parlor adjoined by a washroom.

The upper floor is virtually identical to the lower in plan. A stair-hall is flanked on the south by two large bedrooms, with additional bedrooms in the upper portion of the rear wing, and on the north by a guest chamber, dressing room, and bath.

The commandant's house evolved through successive 19th-century remodelings to its present, rather complex appearance. Comparison with the less-altered companion structure to the north of the principal arsenal building would indicate that the north wing of the residence was added later, perhaps in the middle or late nineteenth century. Also, the window sashing, the side porch, and most of the interior woodwork including the mantelpieces date from various periods of occupancy. It is reasonably certain, however, that the house as it stands today is little-altered in structure from its appearance at the time it was inhabited by Colonel J. Walker Benét and his family. A plaque to the left of the front door commemorates Benét.

After the deactivation of the Augusta Arsenal by the Department of the Army in 1955, the arsenal property was conveyed to the Richmond County Board of Education, and later became the home of the Junior College of Augusta. When the college became a part of the state university system in 1958, ownership was transferred to the State of Georgia. Now serving as the President's home for the college, the house was redecorated inside early in 1971. No structural changes were made, however, and the furnishings and decor fittingly express the character of the house.

(continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1911-1921

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginol | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Stephen Vincent Benét was noted both for his poetry and prose fiction, and was extremely popular among the reading public. As Henry Canby has said, "It seems probable that no writer of poetry in English has been read by so many in his lifetime...." Although his poetry was sometimes uneven, and much of his longer prose work unsuccessful, at his best he could stir the wellsprings of the American spirit with his ballad-like poetry and short stories. "Stephen Benét has the true gift of poetry, and he has a scope and energy of ambition that is rare among poets in this practical age." (Max Eastman)² In such works as John Brown's Body, Benét made a lasting contribution to American literature.

Stephen Vincent Benét began living at the Commandant's House in the second half of 1911, when his father, Col. J. Walker Benét, assumed command of the Augusta Arsenal. Young Benét lived here until the autumn of 1915, although he spent all his summers except the last in Highlands, North Carolina. From 1913 on, he wrote intensely. During July to August of 1915, he wrote his first book, Five Men and Pompey, a series of dramatic monologues in verse. This work represented the young poet's transition to artistic maturity and prefigured his technique in his most famous work, John Brown's Body. The Commandant's House is the extant structure most significantly associated with the career of Stephen Vincent Benét. In addition, the house and its setting have historical significance as part of an important early 19th-century military post.³

Biography

Stephen Vincent Benét was born in 1898 in Bethelhem, Pennsylvania. His father, J. Walker Benét, was an Army colonel and a lover of poetry and literature. Col. Benét's influence may help to explain the fact that both

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1. As quoted in Nyren, Dorothy, A Library of Literary Criticism, p. 49.
 2. Op. cit., p. 48.
 3. For information on the poet's period in Augusta, see Fenton, pp. 21-44.

(continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hart, James D., The Oxford Companion to American Literature, NY: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 72.
 Herzberg et. al., Readers Encyclopedia of American Literature NY: Thomas Crowell Co., 1962, p. 78.
 Kunitz, Stanley J., and Haycroft, Howard eds., Twentieth Century American Authors, NY: H.W. Wilson Co., 1942, pp 115, 116.
 also First Supplement, 1955.
 Nyren, Dorothy ed., A Library of Literary Criticism, NY: Frederick Ungar Co., 1964.

(continued on Form 10-300a)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | | | |
|--|----------|---------|-----------|---------|---|---------|-----------|---------|---------|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | | LONGITUDE | | |
| | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |
| NW | 33° | 28' | 42" | 82° | 01' | 36" | | | |
| NE | 33° | 28' | 42" | 82° | 01' | 12" | | | |
| SE | 33° | 28' | 23" | 82° | 01' | 12" | | | |
| SW | 33° | 28' | 23" | 82° | 01' | 12" | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 64

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Mr. Robert S. Gamble, Historian

ORGANIZATION: National Surveys of Historic Sites
 DATE: 6/21/71

STREET AND NUMBER:
 801 19th Street N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington
 STATE: D.C.
 CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST: _____

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (1)

President's Home, Augusta College

Besides the tripartite group of which the commandant's house is a component, other 19th-century arsenal structures in the environs of the house include several one-story barracks, an early cottage called "Bellevue," and a large multipurpose edifice erected during the Civil War. For the most part, these have found adaptive usage as college buildings and the setting has not substantially changed in half a century.

The historic area is bounded on the north by Walton Way, on the east by Katherine Street, on the south by Pickens Street and the former patrol driveway extending southwest to Arsenal Avenue, and on the west by Arsenal Avenue. The area enclosed by these boundaries is that of the former arsenal. Augusta College itself has a long-range expansion program and has already acquired more land than that comprising the old arsenal grounds. Consequently, the "historic area" is a portion of the present college acreage.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Stephen and his brother, William Rose Benét, became important literary figures.

Stephen Benét spent much of his boyhood in Benecia, California, on San Francisco Bay. In 1911, his father was transferred to Augusta Arsenal in Georgia. Here Stephen attended Summerville Academy and began to write steadily, becoming a genuine prodigy. In the summer of 1915, he wrote Five Men and Pompey, a series of dramatic monologues in verse. He entered Yale in the fall, and during the winter his work was published as a book. A second book, Young Adventure (1918), also appeared while he was in college. He graduated in 1919, and received his master's degree the following year.

Throughout his life Benét relied on his writing for support, and in his early years this income was meager. He went to France in 1920 and again in 1921. He met Rosemary Carrol there during the first trip, and married her a year later. During this period he wrote several novels, including The Beginning of Wisdom (1921).

In 1926, Benét obtained a Guggenheim Fellowship which enabled him to go to Paris to work on John Brown's Body. Published in 1928, this epic poem made his reputation. It is a bold patriotic narrative of the Civil War, a ballad to American greatness. It gained immediate popularity and won the Pulitzer Prize of 1929.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (2)

President's Home, Augusta College

His next major success was "The Devil and Daniel Webster" which appeared in 1937. This short story was recognized as a classic of American literature and was later made into an opera and a film. Besides the poetry and short stories for which he is best known, Benét also wrote for radio and the stage as well as propaganda for the government during World War II. He was a staff reviewer for Saturday Review and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He received his second Pulitzer in 1943 for the uncompleted long poem Western Star. He died in 1943 in New York, where he had lived since 1930.

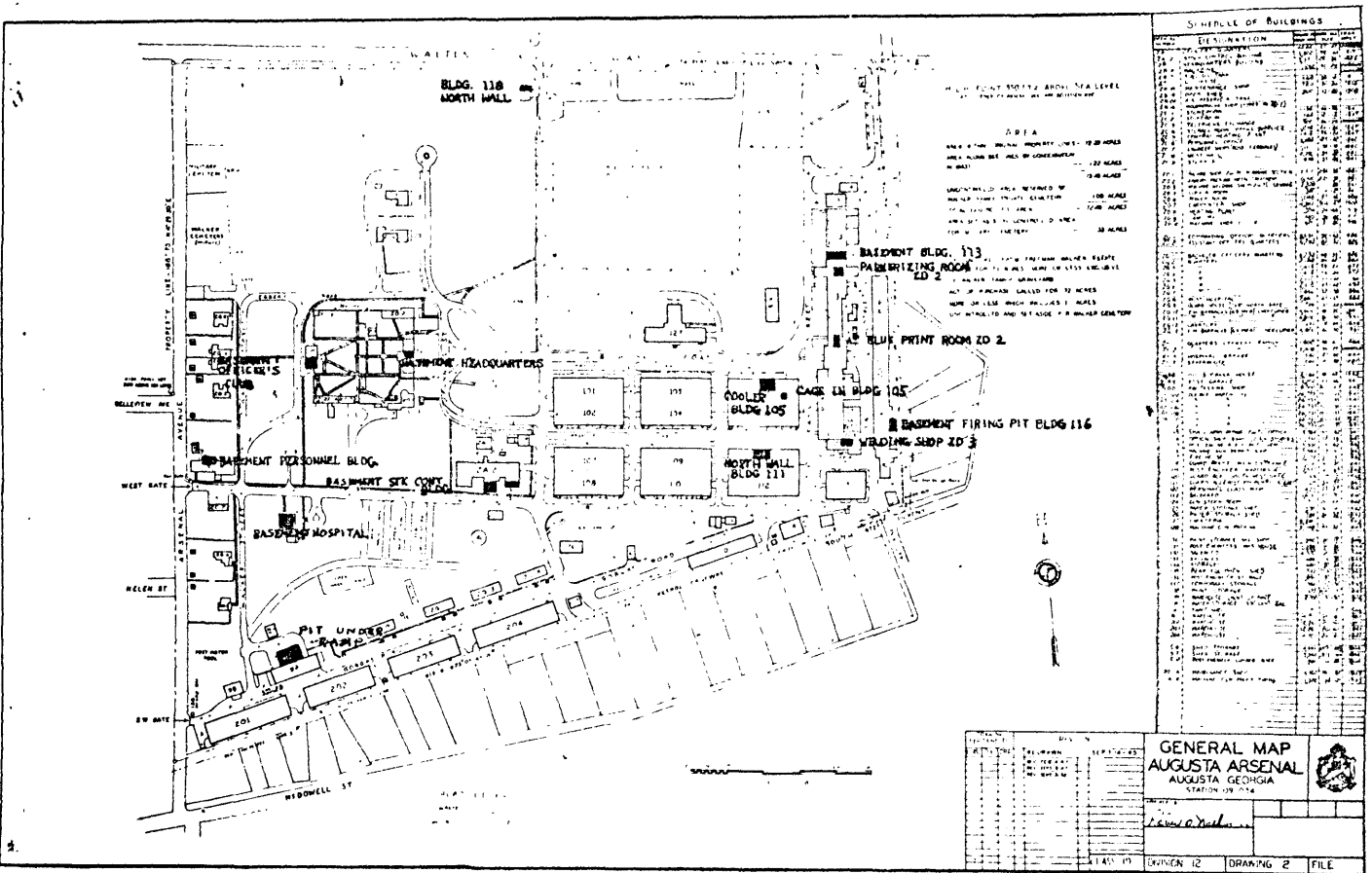
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(Number all entries)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (3) President's Home, Augusta College
Pfadenhaver, Ruby M., "History of Augusta Arsenal," Richmond County History,
Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer 1970), pp. 8-9, 12-13, 24-25.
Fenton, Charles A., Stephen Vincent Benet, New Haven: Yale University Press,
1958.



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