

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received OCT 22 1984
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Aiken Winter Colony ~~Thematic Resources~~

and/or common

2. Location

3 dist. + 5

street & number City Limits of Aiken, South Carolina and Hitchcock Woods NA not for publication

city, town Aiken NA vicinity of

state South Carolina code 045 county Aiken code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>NA</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:	<u>NA</u> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
thematic group		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: recreation

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership: see individual inventory forms

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Aiken County Office Complex

street & number 828 Richland Avenue

city, town Aiken state South Carolina 29801

6. Representation in Existing Surveys *see continuation sheet

title South Carolina Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 - 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>See individual inventory forms</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Aiken Winter Colony Thematic Resources nomination contains three historic districts and five individual properties located in Aiken, South Carolina, which are associated with the large number of northern visitors who wintered in Aiken between ca. 1880 and 1948. These properties include residences rented by and built by the Winter Colonists as well as sports facilities constructed for their recreation, and schools, an inn and a church associated with the Winter Colony.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The city of Aiken is situated on a sandy ridge surrounded by pine forests in the southwestern section of the state. Its location gives it the mild, dry climate and sandy soil which made it famous first as a health resort and later as the winter playground of wealthy northern horse and sports enthusiasts.

When the city of Aiken was laid out ca. 1833, the farsighted planners, Andrew Dexter and C.O. Pascalis, divided the streets with wide medians. Once used to graze cattle, these medians were later planted with trees and shrubs and are a defining characteristic of the areas included in the Aiken Winter Colony thematic nomination. The park-like medians were one of the features that attracted the winter residents to Aiken and they favored constructing or renting homes along the wide shady streets.

The Aiken Winter Colony nomination encompasses portions of a unique section of Aiken. In the southwestern section of the city large estates are located along tree-lined roads which have never been paved in deference to the horses which are so important to the Winter Colony. Also in this section of the city are two golf courses, polo fields, and Hitchcock Woods, 1400 acres of fields and pine forests laced with bridle paths and drag lines.

Most of the buildings and structures in the Aiken Winter Colony nomination were constructed or renovated between ca. 1880 and ca. 1948. They range from modest one-story cottages to large two- and three-story mansions and are constructed of both masonry and wood. Many of the properties include stables and other outbuildings which contribute to the historical and visual quality of the area. Plain and serpentine brick walls or high wooden fences surround many of the properties. Many of the architectural styles fashionable during the period of significance are represented in the nomination including Georgian Revival, Shingle Style, Queen Anne, and Second Empire. The works of a number of prominent architects are included in the nomination including Willis Irvin, Scroggs and Ewing, Thomas Hastings, and Julian Peabody.

The three historic districts included in the nomination contain relatively small numbers of properties which do not contribute to the historic character of the districts. There are properties included in Aiken Winter Colony Historic Districts II and III which are not associated with the Winter Colony theme; however, these properties are similar in size and scale to some of the modest properties in the districts and do contribute to the visual character of the areas.

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Survey Methodology:

The Aiken Winter Colony Thematic Resources nomination is based on a survey of architectural and historical properties associated with the Winter Colony conducted by the Lower Savannah Council of Governments in 1981-83. The survey involved identifying Winter Colony properties through historical research in local primary and secondary sources and through interviews with knowledgeable local citizens. Physical descriptions were written and photographs made of the extant properties identified and each property was located on a base map of the city. Using this information, three concentrations of Winter Colony properties and five significant individual properties were identified and evaluated as potentially eligible for the National Register. Properties surveyed but not included in the nomination either did not individually meet the National Register criteria for significance and integrity or did not fit into one of the areas covered by the historic districts. The survey did not include an archeological component and the nomination is considered complete without such a component.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) recreation, society/customs
Specific dates	ca. 1880–ca. 1941	Builder/Architect	See individual inventory forms	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Aiken Winter Colony Thematic Resources National Register nomination includes three historic districts (177 properties) and five individual properties associated with the large number of northern winter residents in Aiken between ca. 1880 and ca. 1941. The Aiken Winter Colony has played a major role in the development of the town and greatly contributed to the visual quality which characterize Aiken today. During this period, Aiken enjoyed an international reputation as a sporting resort offering a mild climate and excellent facilities for horse training and racing polo and golf as well as other outdoor activities. Aiken's popularity as a winter resort began about 1880 under the patronage of Louise Eustis Hitchcock and continues to the present; however, the construction of the Aiken Mile Track (see individual inventory form) in 1936 and the Aiken Training Track (see individual inventory form) in 1941, lent a new dimension to Aiken's reputation as a winter resort. For the first time, high quality training facilities were available to accommodate larger numbers of trainers and horses. The tracks were instrumental in carrying Aiken's horse industry through the lean years of the Depression and World War II and in giving the industry permanency not dependent on individual winter colonists. Although there may be other properties associated with the Winter Colony in Aiken, the three historic districts represent the largest concentrations of Winter Colony properties and the five individual properties represent various important facets of the Winter Colony.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As early as the 1830s Aiken was known as a summer resort for Lowcountry planters because of its clear, dry, malaria-free climate and its excellent supply of drinking water at Coker Springs (listed on the National Register 1/18/78).¹ About this same time Aiken enjoyed a reputation as a place of retreat for consumptives and other invalids who came to recuperate in the mild, dry climate.² In 1851, the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal featured an article extolling the virtues of Aiken as a winter resort for northern invalids. Among other things the article noted that "owing to its having been a place of resort for some years, there have sprung up in it many...accommodations and conveniences of life...one can employ there many of the northern comforts of a home amid a southern climate."³

After the Civil War, Aiken was not beaten and the town fathers began immediately to try to attract visitors and permanent residents to Aiken. Aiken was once more touted as the ideal recuperation spot for those in frail health.⁴

About 1872, Miss Celestine Eustis of New Orleans began to winter in Aiken, believing it to be healthy for her niece and ward, Louise Eustis. An avid horsewoman, Louise Eustis came to love Aiken as a place where equestrian activities could be comfortably pursued during the winter months. She was also a strong advocate of the simple, even spartan, healthy lifestyle which she found in Aiken.⁵

After Louise Eustis married, she convinced her husband, wealthy society sportsman, Thomas Hitchcock of New York, to continue wintering in Aiken. Hitchcock also found Aiken ideal for horse and other sports and with Mrs. Hitchcock played a major role in Aiken's transition from a health resort to a winter pleasure resort. Along with Miss Eustis, the Hitchcocks encouraged their friends and family to spend the season in Aiken, thus forming the nucleus of healthy, wealthy, northern sports enthusiasts that became known as the Aiken Winter Colony. Winter residents of Aiken included such well-known names as Eugene Grace, president of Bethlehem Steel, Oliver Iselin, the great yachtsman, Allan Pinkerton of the detective agency family, George Mead of the Mead Paper Co., and Evelyn Walsh McLean, owner of the Hope Diamond.⁶

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As the circle of wealthy northerners who flocked to Aiken each winter grew, facilities for their accomodation and entertainment were established. Among the hotels constructed to cater to winter residents were the Highland Park Hotel and the Palmetto Inn, both no longer standing, and Willcox's (listed on the National Register 3-19-82, AWCHD II, #5).⁷ Many of the homes in Aiken constructed during the heyday of the Winter Colony, ca. 1880-1941, were associated with winter residents. These homes ranged from modest cottages to grand establishments complete with stables, tennis or squash courts, and servant and guest houses. Many regular Winter Colonists built their own homes, often large estates with all the amenities. A number of homes available during the season were constructed by permanent residents to rent during the winter months. Accomodations could also be found in the homes of permanent Aiken residents. There were several boarding houses with rooms to let and many Aiken citizens simply moved out of their homes into other quarters and rented their houses lock, stock, and barrel to visitors.⁸

Sporting interest in Aiken lay primarily in equestrian activities. William C. Whitney, who renovated and enlarged Mrs. Joye's boarding house into a spectacular mansion he called Joye Cottage (listed on the National Register 9-29-80, AWCHD II, #73a, b), along with Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock, was instrumental in establishing many of the horse facilities in Aiken.⁹ Perhaps their most important contribution to equestrian activity in Aiken was the development around the turn-of-the-century of Hitchcock Woods (AWCHD I, #1). Hitchcock and Whitney, along with Hitchcock's brother Frank, purchased 8,000 acres of woods and fields and laid out drag lines and bridle trails. Hitchcock Woods became the center of riding activities for the Winter Colony including horse shows, hunt breakfasts, leisurly canters along the many trails, and the Aiken Drag. The drag hunt is conducted like a fox hunt; however, the dogs run an artificially scented trail rather than chasing a live fox.¹⁰

During the heyday of the Winter Colony, Aiken was known as the "Winter Polo Capital of America." Polo was first played in Aiken in 1882 on the Whitney Polo Field (AWCHD I, #28), just six years after the game was introduced to the United States. Mrs. Hitchcock encouraged polo among school age boys with her Meadow Lark Polo Club (AWCHD I, #38) and there was also a ladies club. By 1931, there were at least fourteen polo fields in Aiken. Most of the big names in polo wintered in Aiken including Pete Bostwick (AWCHD I, #13), Tommy Hitchcock, F. Skiddy von Stade (AWCHD II, #74), Devereux Milburn (AWCHD I, #16), and Seymour Knox (AWCHD I, #30).¹¹

Horse racing and training were also important aspects of the Winter Colony life. Horses were trained for polo and for trotting, steeplechase, and flat races in Aiken and elsewhere in the country. In 1936, the Aiken Mile Track (see individual inventory form) was constructed and in 1941, the Aiken Training Track (see individual inventory form) was established. The construction of these two training and racing facilities was instrumental in carrying Aiken's horse industry through the lean years fo the Depression and World War II and in giving the industry permanancy not dependent on individual winter colonists.

Other sports important in the life of the Winter Colony included golf, squash, and court tennis. The Palmetto Golf Course (AWCHD I, #35,a), begun in 1892, is one of the earliest courses in the country and the Highland Park Golf Course (AWCHD I, #2), ca. 1912

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was once associated with the Highland Park Hotel. Many of the Winter Colony estates had their own private squash courts and tennis courts and the elite Aiken Club maintained a squash court and the Court Tennis Building (see individual inventory form).¹³

The Aiken Winter Colonists also involved themselves in other aspects of Aiken's community life. In 1916 Mrs. Hitchcock founded Aiken Preparatory School (AWCHD III, #35) to provide a good education and a healthy spartan lifestyle for sons of the winter residents. Mrs. Josef Hofman founded the Fermata School (AWCHD I, #31,a), a female counterpart to Aiken Prep, in 1919.¹⁴ Mrs. Hitchcock and her aunt Miss Eustis were devout Catholics and were great supporters of St. Mary Help of Christians Church (listed on the National Register 3-25-82). St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church (see individual inventory form) counted many of the colonists among its rolls as well.¹⁵

Architecture:

The architecture associated with the Aiken Winter Colony ranges from small cottages to enormous mansions and also includes sports facilities such as court buildings and stables. Because most of the winter residents came from wealthy cosmopolitan backgrounds, the buildings they commissioned and the renovations they undertook are for the most part stylistically sophisticated, elegant properties that distinguish Aiken from other parts of the state. Architects Willis Irvin and Scroggs and Ewing of Augusta, Georgia, designed or renovated many of the winter residences. Thomas Hastings's tiny cottage, Horsehaven (AWCHD II, #25) is believed to be his statement on small house design. Julian Peabody, son-in-law of the Hitchcocks, designed several of the properties in the nomination (AWCHD I, #s8, 15, 16, 30).¹⁶

Stylistic influences represented in the architecture of the Winter Colony include Queen Anne (AWCHD II, #42), Colonial Revival (AWCHD I, #15), Shingle Style (AWCHD II, #43, AWCHD III, #12, 45), Georgian Revival (Whitehall, AWCHD II, #72), Tudor Revival (AWCHD I, #6, AWCHD II, #87), and Second Empire (AWCHD II, #5).

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FOOTNOTES

¹Lawrence Fay Brewster, Summer Migration and Resorts of South Carolina Low-Country Planters (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1947), pp. 49-50.

²Ibid.

³W.J. Burnett, M.D., "Considerations on a Change of Climate, by Northern Invalids, and the Climate of Aiken, S.C.," The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal 45 (November 1851): 270-274.

⁴South Carolina, With Special Reference to Aiken and Vicinity, as a Desirable Location for Actual Settlers (New York: Russell's American Steam Printing House, 1867), p. 7.

⁵Harry Worcester Smith, Life and Sport in Aiken and Those Who Made It (New York: Derrydale Press, 1935), pp. 4-40; Emily Bull, Eulalie (Aiken, S.C.: Kalmia Press, 1973), pp. 15-17.

⁶Smith, pp. 4-40, 188-201; Bull, pp. 16-18, 102, 109; Aiken (S.C.) Journal and Review, 21 April 1897.

⁷Aiken, South Carolina, Queen of Winter Resorts (n.p.:n.p., n.d.), n.p.; Rosetta Barlow Henderson and Frank Pickens Henderson, Pictures of Aiken and Vicinity Made in the Gay Nineties and Some Long Before (1953); John Martin Hammond, "That Well-Known Aiken," Winter Journeys in the South (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, Co., 1916), pp. 149-150; Queen of Winter Resorts: Aiken, South Carolina (n.p.:n.p., 1926), reprinted. (Aiken, S.C.: King Printing Co., 1975), pp. 4-5; Aiken Journal and Review, 21 April 1897.

⁸Smith, pp. 188-201; Bull, pp. 67-82, 88, 102; Aiken Journal and Review, 21 April 1897; Queen of Winter Resorts, pp. 6-27.

⁹Smith, passim; Bull, 16-19; Alderman Duncan, "Leaders of Nation Find Playground in Carolina," Resorts Life, 13 January 1931, pp. 6-8; Kay Lawrence, Horses, Heroes, and High Society (Columbia, S.C.: R.L. Bryan Co., 1971), pp. 15-24, 121-122.

¹⁰Alderman Duncan, pp. 6-8; Lawrence, pp. 15-24; McClesky Garlych, comp. and ed., Aiken, The Sports Center of the South (Aiken, S.C.: Aiken Standard and Review, 1938), n.p.; Smith, passim.

¹¹Smith, pp. 83-100; Garlych, n.p.; Duncan, p. 7; Bull, pp. 74, 109; P.F. Henderson, "Aiken Has Everything," South Carolina Magazine, May 1950, pp. 10-11.

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¹²P.F. Henderson, "Aiken Has Everything," pp. 10-11; Garlych, passim; Ed Kenney, "South Carolina's Winter Winner-Land," The State Magazine, 4 February 1951; Annie H. King, "Winter Home for Thoroughbreds," The State Magazine, n.d.; Jobie Arnold, "The Winter Horse Capitals of the U.S.: Aiken and Camden," Town and Country, March 1977, pp. 98-111, 139-140.

¹³P.F. Henderson, "Aiken Has Everything," pp. 10-11; Garlych, passim; Queen of Winter Resorts, p. 15; Aiken, South Carolina, Queen of Winter Resorts, n.p.; Town and Country, p. 111; Duncan, pp. 6-7; Smith, pp. 5, 8, 188-201.

¹⁴Smith, pp. 8-9.

¹⁵Bull, p. 17; Dorothy K. MacDowell, An Aiken Scrapbook (n.p.:n.p., 1982), pp. 129-130; Dorothy K. MacDowell, "St. Thaddeus Church," Sandlapper, June 1978, pp. 51-52.

¹⁶Smith, p. 191, 197; Southern Architecture Illustrated (Atlanta, Ga.: Harman Publishing Co., 1931), pp. 139, 113, 124, 195; H. J. Whigham, "A Small House by a Great Architect," Home and Field, July 1930, pp. 11-17.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

See individual inventory forms

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References

A
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual inventory forms

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county NA code

state NA code county NA code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Suzanne Pickens Wylie Margaret Marion, Lower Savannah Council of Governments; Jane Davis, Historic Aiken Foundation
organization South Carolina Department of Archives and History date August 13, 1984

street & number 1430 Senate Street telephone (803) 758-5816

city or town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

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 Charles E. Lee date 9/26/84
State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

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

See Continuation Sheet for listings  date 9/31/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Aiken Winter Colony Thematic Resources
State Aiken County, SOUTH CAROLINA

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Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 50
- 50

1. Aiken Mile Track

Substantive Review

Keeper

[Signature] 11/27/84

Attest

2. Aiken Training Track

Substantive Review

Keeper

[Signature] 11/27/84

Attest

3. Court Tennis Building

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

[Signature] 11/27/84

Attest

4. St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

[Signature] 11/27/84

Attest

5. Whitehall

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

[Signature] 11/27/84

Attest

6. Aiken Winter Colony
Historic District I

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

[Signature] 11/27/84

Attest

7. Aiken Winter Colony
Historic District II

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

[Signature] 11/27/84

Attest

8. Aiken Winter Colony
Historic District III

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

[Signature] 11/27/84

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest