

City of Darlington

South Carolina

Architectural Survey



Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc.

May 2002

City of Darlington, South Carolina

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City of Darlington

and

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We extend our deepest gratitude to all of you and the people of Darlington.

Clay Griffith
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Sarah Woodard

21 May 2002

City of Darlington, South Carolina

Architectural Survey

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All photos by the authors unless otherwise indicated

I. Introduction

In the fall of 2001, the City of Darlington and the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SCSHPO) engaged Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. to conduct an intensive architectural survey of historic resources in Darlington. An initial planning meeting was held at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History on September 6. Among those in attendance were Andrew Pitman, Nicholas Theos and Jennifer Martin representing Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc.; Daniel J. Vivian and Brad Sauls of the SCSHPO and Michelle Law, Planner for the City of Darlington. A contract was executed on October 8 and that evening a public meeting was held at the Darlington City Hall. Members of the Darlington Historic Preservation Commission, Dan Vivian of the SCSHPO, Sarah Woodard representing Edwards-Pitman Environmental and several citizens of Darlington attended the meeting.

Fieldwork took place in January 2002. Data for each resource surveyed was entered into the Department of Archives and History Survey Database in February and March 2002. In early 2002, historians for Edwards-Pitman Environmental conducted further research on the history of the city, prepared this final report and mapped the surveyed properties on a GIS map supplied by Charles Rogers, GIS Coordinator for Darlington County.

II. Project Summary

A. Name of Survey

City of Darlington Architectural Survey

B. Boundaries of the Survey Area

- Lee Street from South Main Street to Edwards Street
- Edwards Street from Lee Street to Chestnut Street
- South Main-Third Street District
 - “C” Avenue from South Main Street to Second Street
 - “D” Avenue from South Main Street to Third Street
 - “E” Avenue from South Main Street to Third Street
 - First Street from “C” Avenue to “E” Avenue
 - Second Street from “C” Avenue to “H” Avenue
 - Ross Street
- Darlington Industrial Historic District
- Residential District bounded by Cashua Street, South Ervin, East Broad and Columbian Streets
- Cashua Street-Spring Street Historic District and adjacent areas. Survey area bounded by Cashua Street from Warley to Oak Street; Oak Street; Segars Court; Woodland Drive; Evangeline Drive;

North Street from South Park Drive; Williamson Park Drive from Spring Street to North McCall Street; North Ervin Street; Augusta Drive; North Spain Street; James Street; and Williamson Park

- St John's Historic District and adjacent areas. Survey area bounded by Wells Street from Swift Creek to Orange Street; Orange Street from Wells Street to South Main Street; Park Street; North Dargan Street; St. John's Street; Haynesworth Alley; Sanders Street from Wells Street to St. John's Street and the Amphitheater on the south side of Swift Creek.
- Downtown Darlington: Public Square; South Main Street from Orange Street to East Hampton Street; Fountain Street; Hewitt Street; McIver Street; Pearl Street from Liberty Street to South Main Street.
- West Broad Street Historic District and adjacent areas. Survey area bounded by West Broad Street from Dargan Street to Washington Street; Edwards Avenue from Pearl Street to West Broad Street; and Darlington Avenue.
- Le Petit Rogue/Mary Bethune Library on South Main Street
- St. Matthews Episcopal Church on South Main Street
- Houses at 521, 523 and 525 East Broad Street
- 110 Min-Lou Circle

C. Number of Properties Surveyed

440

D. Number of Square Miles Surveyed

Approximately four square miles

E. Names and Affiliations of Surveyors

Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. employs all surveyors who worked on the City of Darlington survey. Jennifer Martin served as Project Manager. Clay Griffith served as Senior Historian and Sarah A. Woodard was Project Historian. The Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. staff assigned to the project meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards set forth in 36 CFR Part 61.

F. Dates of Survey

The survey began in October 2001 and was completed in March 2002.

III. Project Objectives

Architectural historians with Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. undertook the architectural survey of the City of Darlington as part of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History's Statewide Survey of Historic Places which forms the bedrock of the historic preservation program in the state. The primary objectives of the survey program are to gather, organize and present information about historic properties in photographs, narratives, maps and drawings, in order to identify properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and to identify properties eligible for potential local designation. During the survey, the surveyors sought to identify historic resources, record their locations and evaluate their significance in a local, statewide and national context. This project will promote a richer understanding of the city's historical and architectural development and encourage economic incentives for rehabilitation, cultural tourism development, education and local compliance with state and federal preservation and environmental laws.

IV. Survey Methodology

The survey of City of Darlington followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation (36 CFR 61.3 and 6 and 61.4[b]).

The principal fieldwork took place in January 2002 with follow up in March 2002. Clay Griffith, Jennifer Martin and Sarah Woodard served as the principal investigators. During the fieldwork stage, all streets in the survey area were traveled, either by car or on foot; resource locations were recorded on City of Darlington maps; individual survey forms were completed; on-site interviews were conducted where possible and all resources were documented with black and white photographs. The resources that appeared potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or as local landmarks or districts were further documented with color slides.

Because the scope of work specified the areas to be surveyed, the consultants were not forced to make many judgments about which properties to survey. The consultants documented all resources of historic, architectural or cultural significance that are roughly fifty years old or older and located in the survey area.

V. Historical Overview

Introduction

Most people associate the city of Darlington with the motor speedway established on the edge of town after World War II. The track, a host to sanctioned NASCAR events, has brought this county seat national renown. But the story of the “Pearl of the Pee Dee”, as it is known, involves more than the billion dollar sports industry. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this town brimmed with activity and prosperity. The railroad and the industries it helped to establish served as the center of a regional economy. With its prominent location in the Coastal Plain of South Carolina, Darlington, according to one late nineteenth century observer, was “a progressive little city, favored by nature and improved by art.”¹

The advent of long-haul trucking diminished the role of railroads in transporting goods and led to changes in the landscape of railroad towns across South Carolina. The Highway Department built bypasses around most of the larger rail towns, including Darlington. Communities like Allendale, once a bustling railroad hamlet on US 301, have nearly expired as industries closed or left the town. In Darlington, industrial concerns still operate, but more citizens are employed in the service and professional fields than in the city’s plants. Darlington has managed to retain a busy downtown by avoiding much of the sprawl development common in towns like her. A few fast food restaurants have opened along US 52/401, but large super stores have not been built and as a result, shops downtown appear to thrive.

Darlington today stands at a crossroads, both literally and figuratively. The city contains an impressive collection of late nineteenth and twentieth century architecture, but much of it is endangered with the potential to be lost. It is our hope that the city can use this report to recognize and protect its architectural resources and display its heritage to attract visitors who otherwise pass the city on nearby interstates or highways.

Geographic Setting

Darlington is near the center of Darlington County, a mostly rural county in the Pee Dee section of the state approximately sixty-eight miles east-northeast of Columbia. The state legislature created Darlington County in 1785 and since that time its boundaries have changed in order to create neighboring counties. The county is bounded on the north by Chesterfield County; on the east by Marlboro County; on the south by Florence County and on the west by Lee County.

Darlington lies in the Coastal Plain, the largest of the landform regions identified by geographers Charles F. Kovacik and John J. Winberry. The topography of the Coastal

¹ *Resources of the City and County of Darlington, South Carolina* (Charleston: Lucas & Richardson Company, ca. 1899), 11.

Plain varies from nearly flat to gently rolling.² Along the Pee Dee and Lynches rivers, the low lying bottom lands are poorly drained and are at risk for flooding. In the central portion of Darlington County, land characterized by gently rolling hills interrupted by small streams has historically been the most productive in the county, yielding impressive cotton and tobacco crops. In the northern and western portions of Darlington County where the topography is hillier, loose sandy soil has proven unsuitable for large-scale agriculture.³

The city of Darlington occupies nearly level ground, except along the north side of downtown where the topography drops quite sharply to Swift Creek, the only significant watercourse that ventures within the limits of Darlington. A writer in 1893 described Swift Creek as “a small creek nearly surrounding the city, which carries all of the refuse matter collected from the sewer pipes leading thereto.”⁴ It empties into Black Creek, which runs north-south on the east side of the city and eventually dumps into the Great Pee Dee River in Florence County.

Darlington stands at the junction of or in close proximity to several major transportation corridors. Interstate 95, the east coast’s major north-south artery, lies approximately five miles to the southeast, while Interstate 20, which extends from neighboring Florence to Kent, Texas, is twelve miles to the southwest. US 401, which begins in Sumter, enters Darlington from the west where it makes a turn toward the north when it meets US 52 on the west side of the city. US 52 begins in North Dakota at the Canadian border, runs southward through the heart of Darlington and ends in Charleston. SC 34—a major east-west running road in the state—ventures into downtown Darlington as Cashua Street on the east side of the public square and exits the city as Pearl Street on the west side of the square. Just west of downtown SC 34 merges with SC 151; the two roads split just east of Hartsville. SC 340 forks from Pearl Street on the west side of the city and extends southwesterly where it terminates at the junction with SC 403 northwest of Timmonsville.

Historically, the railroads crisscrossing Darlington greatly advanced commercial and industrial development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The current railroads in Darlington are part of the Seaboard System, a company that resulted from the merger of the Seaboard Coastline—which is made up of three lines that merged in 1967: the former Atlantic Coast Line, Seaboard Air Line and Charleston and Western Carolina—and the Louisville and Nashville, Clinchfield and Georgia railroads.⁵

² Charles F. Kovacik and John J. Winberry, *South Carolina: A Geography* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 18.

³ Clarence W. Flowers, “Natural Resources,” in *Darlington County Economic and Social*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, ed. O.L. Warr, C.W. Flowers and Valerie Schaible, no. 196 (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1 February 1927), 9.

⁴ R.B. Branch, “Darlington, South Carolina: A Guide to Leading Industries, (1893)” booklet in the Collection of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, 16.

⁵ Kovacik and Winberry, 197.

A Brief History of Darlington

First Settlement

The earliest known settlement by whites in what is now Darlington County occurred in the 1730s at Long Bluff near present-day Society Hill. Groups of Welsh from Pennsylvania and Delaware were among the first to come and according to one source “settlers from the lower country—French Huguenots, Scotch-Irish, English and Germans soon followed. In numbers, the Welsh predominated, but race characteristics were soon blended and lost.”⁶

The Formation of Darlington County

The formation of Darlington and the rest of South Carolina’s counties is a complex story which began when the Fundamental Constitution of 1669 divided the colony into four counties for the purpose of distributing land grants and administering local government. The county system proved ineffective because government remained concentrated in Charleston. By 1706, the parish system had been instituted in conjunction with the establishment of the Anglican Church as the state church. Darlington originally fell within Prince George’s Parish, Winyah, which had been created in 1721-1722. A 1768 act created St. David’s Parish and included present-day Darlington County. In 1730, Gov. Robert Johnson proposed to the colony’s Board of Trade an idea for peopling the backcountry. The board allowed for the survey of eleven townships to both attract settlers and protect them from Native Americans and Spanish. The area encompassing present-day Darlington County fell within the Queensboro Township and like the colony’s other townships, it contained twenty thousand acres. In 1768, the Cheraws District was created and included present-day Darlington County. In 1785 commissioners divided the District of Cheraws into Chesterfield County, Marlboro County and Darlington County; at the time Darlington County encompassed 795 square miles. In 1800, the state’s judicial districts were abolished and all the counties became districts. The Constitution of 1868 designated these judicial districts as counties. In 1889, a portion of southern Darlington County was given for the creation of Florence County. In 1902, the formation of Lee County took forty-six square acres on the east side of the Lynches River from Darlington County.⁷

Much speculation swirls around the origin for the county name. In his *Statistics of South Carolina*, Robert Mills asserts that the name comes from a Colonel Darlington who

⁶ Thomas D. Rice and F.W. Taylor, *Soil Survey of the Darlington Area, South Carolina, 1902*, reprint from the Field Operations, Bureau of Soils, 1902. In the collection of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, 291.

⁷ Kovacik and Winberry, 7; Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 52-53; Michael E. Stauffer, *The Formation of Counties in South Carolina* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1994), 1-2; Bright Williamson, “Historical Sketch,” in *Darlington County Economic and Social*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, ed. O.L. Warr, C.W. Flowers and Valerie Schaible, no. 196 (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1 February 1927), 5.

fought in the Revolutionary War.⁸ Others suppose the name carried over from the English town of the same name. Another theory is that the county and town were named for the Darlington family whose progenitor—Englishman Henry Dixson Darlington—settled first in Charleston in 1837, then later moved to Edgefield and finally Due West. Members of this prominent family went on to excel in the fields of journalism and education.⁹



Plate 1: Railroad Tracks East of Main Street

⁸ Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina, Including a View of its Natural, Civil, and Military History, General and Particular* (Charleston: Hurlbut and Lloyd, 1826; reprint, Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1972), 512 (page references are to reprint edition).

⁹ Eliza Cowan Ervin and Horace Fraser Rudisill, *Darlingtonia: A History of People, Places and Events in Darlington County, South Carolina* (Darlington: Darlington County Historical Society, 1984), 3.

Establishment of Darlington as the Seat of Government: 1785-1799

Long Bluff, a community on the west side of the Pee Dee River and the first settlement in area, served as the original seat of government upon creation of the Cheraws District in 1768. Long Bluff was later abandoned when nearby Society Hill became the social and cultural center of the Pee Dee region. The Cheraw District Court House at Society Hill functioned as Darlington County's first courthouse.¹⁰

With passage of the County Court Act in 1785 which created Darlington County, a site for a courthouse had to be chosen. The decision over where to locate the court proved difficult because some of the newly-appointed justices disagreed. Col. Lamuel Benton wanted Mechanicsville—a community on the Great Pee Dee River and northeast of present-day Darlington—as the county seat. Elias DuBose preferred Coffee Town, a settlement on Swift Creek approximately six miles north of present-day Darlington. As a compromise, the chosen site was part of John King, Sr.'s plantation situated between Coffee Town and Mechanicsville near Swift Creek. Of the area that would become the county seat, one nineteenth century historian commented that “so sparse were the settlements in that neighbourhood, that only a few years before, nothing but an old Indian trail led from that point to Camden.”¹¹ King donated the land for the courthouse which was built at the intersection of two roads just south of his dwelling. He also had surveyor Josiah Cantey divide all the lots around the courthouse. When the post office opened in October 1801, the settlement was called Darlington Court House.¹²

¹⁰ Horace Fraser Rudisill, *Historical Tours in Darlington County* (Darlington: Darlington County Tricentennial Committee, 1970), 6-7.

¹¹ Right Rev. Alexander Gregg, D.D., *History of the Old Cheraws* (New York: Richardson and Company, 1867; reprint, Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1965), 434 (page references are to reprint edition).

¹² Rudisill, *Historical Tours of Darlington County*, 7; Horace Fraser Rudisill, *Darlington County: A Pictorial History from the Archives of the Darlington County Historical Commission* (Norfolk: The Donning Company, 1986), 39.

The Early Years of the New County Seat: 1800 to 1840

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the population of Darlington District stood at 7,631. Slaves numbered 2,336. In 1820, 6,407 whites and 4,542 blacks lived in Darlington District. Population figures for the county seat are not available, but it appears that for the first several years after the construction of the courthouse, Darlington remained a sleepy town containing only the court building and John King's dwelling. According to local history, in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century merchant Thomas Knight likely purchased the first parcel in town where he built a store and residence. Col. John Smith, a Revolutionary War veteran, built the next dwelling on the square. Joshua Lazarus later operated a store from this house. Other early merchants who built businesses on the town common include John Pearce, Moses Sanders, John Gibson and Col. Bright Williamson.¹³

On 19 March 1806, a fire destroyed the courthouse and many of the records it contained. Officials built a two-story wood-sided court building in the center of the square. It stood only a few years until a two-story brick courthouse replaced it around 1810 or 1812. The Commissioners of Public Buildings sold the wooden edifice to Rasha Cannon who moved it across the street, made additions to it and converted to use as a hotel. About the time the new courthouse was built, a brick jail was erected on the northeast corner of the square to replace an old hewn log jail building.¹⁴

According to local history, Darlington remained a modest town until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century because several men owned land around the square and refused to sell it to those who wished to build dwellings and other buildings. A significant advancement in the town's development came in 1825 when Col. Bright Williamson purchased land on the southwest side of the square from T.D. Pettigrew to subdivide and sell as building lots.¹⁵ In 1826, Robert Mills described the town of Darlington as containing "a handsome new brick court-house and jail...several private houses, and the requisite taverns." By this time, St. John's Academy, the town's first school, had been built.¹⁶

In 1835, the state legislature granted a charter to incorporate the town of Darlington. This act mandated that an intendent and four wardens would be elected annually to govern. The voters elected Col. E.W. Charles, a banker and merchant as the first intendent and David R. Lide, William Wingate, James S. McCall and E.A. Law as wardens. Fourteen years after incorporation, the town council was given the right to tax citizens.¹⁷

¹³ Mills, 516; Gen. J.B. Nettles, "Darlington in its Infancy," in *Darlingtonia*, ed. Eliza Cowan Ervin and Horace Fraser Rudisill (Darlington: Darlington Historical Society, 1964), 12-13.

¹⁴ Nettles, 13.

¹⁵ Nettles, 17.

¹⁶ Mills, 513, 516; Nettles, 15.

¹⁷ Rudisill, *Darlington County: A Pictorial History*, 40.

Architecture

The earliest remaining architecture in Darlington dates to the 1830s and reflects the influence of the Federal style. The localized Federal idiom was vernacular in expression, but drew on the elements of classicism which appealed to those just settling in the county's new seat of government. Examples of the style in Darlington exhibit traditional forms and plans with attention to proportion and details like moldings, entranceways and mantels. Although builder's guides—such as Asher Benjamin's *American Builder's Companion*—were widely available during the period, it is uncertain if any of the Federal period houses in Darlington were patterned after these guides.



Plate 2: Moses Sanders House (site # 0136) at 114 Sanders Street

One of the most outstanding Federal period houses in Darlington is the Moses Sanders House (site # 0136) at 114 Sanders Street. Built around 1832, it is a two-story, frame house with flush sheathing on its gable ends. The circa 1834 (former) Trinity Methodist Church (site # 0156), located at 124 St. John's Street, stands two stories tall with its front gable facing the street. It was greatly altered when it was converted to a dwelling.

Darlington in the Antebellum Era: 1840 to 1861

Although population figures for the town of Darlington for 1840 are not available, the census for that year indicates that 14,222 people lived in Darlington District. Of those, 7,482 were white and 7,653 were black.¹⁸ Just before the Civil War, Darlington continued as a town of modest size with fewer than five hundred people living in the county seat in 1861.¹⁹ In the surrounding county, cotton reigned as the major money crop. In 1840 over one million pounds were gathered.²⁰

Noted South Carolina author and poet William Gilmore Sims described Darlington in 1843 as ‘a small neat town, with a handsome brick Court House, a jail, sundry taverns, etc.’ Historian W.A. Brunson, writing in 1910, described Darlington’s public square before the Civil War as containing stores and buildings that were “plain, one-storied, and, for the most part, brown and weather-beaten... [with] piazzas or porches in front.”²¹

The circa 1810 courthouse that occupied the center of the public square until just after the Civil War was a grand building reminiscent of architect Robert Mills’ courthouse designs. W.A. Burton recollected that “the Court House was a handsome building of red brick, with circular granite steps with iron railings leading up to the porch. The court room had a gallery, where the boys softly cracked their [pinders], and the floor of the room was spread with sawdust.” When court was in session and the town was crowded with judges, lawyers and citizens, the prominent building functioned as the center of great activity. According to Burton, “droves of horses came from Tennessee and Kentucky and numbers of covered wagons from North Carolina and Virginia, having for sale tobacco, leather, yarn, bacon, flour, apples, cranberries, chestnuts, now and then apple and peach brandy and other good things. Those wagons were arranged on each side of the court house.”²²

W.A. Burton described Darlington’s houses in the mid-nineteenth century as “of moderate size,—the people of the day valuing comfort more than display, so far as houses were concerned.” According to Burton, “in village and county, refinement, social position and even wealth were not to be measured by great houses.”²³

Initially, promoters in Darlington did not express much interest in the railroad and by the 1850s three lines—the Cheraw and Darlington; the Wilmington and Manchester and the North Eastern Railroad—crossed paths ten miles south of Darlington. In 1856, the Cheraw and Darlington was extended to the county seat.²⁴

¹⁸ Darlington County Manuscript Census of Population, 1840, (microfilm).

¹⁹ *News and Courier* (Charleston), 26 July 1917.

²⁰ *Statistics of the United States...from the Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: Blair & Rives, 1841), 248.

²¹ W.A. Brunson, *Glimpses of Old Darlington*, (Columbia: The State Company, 1910), 4.

²² Brunson, 21.

²³ Brunson, 7.

²⁴ Ervin and Rudisill, 181.

Architecture

Greek Revival reigned as the predominant style of architecture throughout the South in the decades before the Civil War. The monumental proportions of the style appealed to both the wealthy who sought to assert their position and more middling families who emulated them. On a practical basis, Greek Revival elements merged well with traditional forms and plans of the previous decades.



Plate 3: Julius A. Dargan House (site # 0222)

The Julius A. Dargan House (site # 0222) at 488 Pearl Street exemplifies the localized Greek Revival style. Built circa 1856, the two-story, weatherboard dwelling features interior stuccoed chimneys and a hipped roof with a boxed cornice embellished with pendant soffit brackets on its south elevation. Four square paneled posts support a two-tiered pedimented portico with a delicate “sheaf-of-wheat” balustrade. According to some sources, this balustrade design has Irish origins and symbolizes bounty or economic prosperity.

The Italianate style, which drew heavily from the picturesque motif, also found favor in the pre-Civil War years. The idiom proved popular in railroad towns and among more urbane clients. The style was typically expressed in two stories with a low-pitched roof with heavy brackets embellishing overhanging eaves. The Col. Samuel H. Edwards House (NR) at 120 Edwards Avenue is one of the region’s best examples. The circa 1856 frame dwelling is square in form and features a high masonry foundation, massive stuccoed chimneys, Corinthian columns supporting its porches and hooded windows typical of the style.

After the War: Darlington from 1862 to 1882

The town of Darlington saw no conflict during the war as no battles took place in the area. In 1865, Union troops passed through Darlington and burned the depot, some cotton platforms and railroad trestles. At the end of the war, the United States government established a military post and imposed martial law. In July 1865, Darlington began serving as the headquarters for the Third Separate Brigade of the Military District of Eastern South Carolina. Darlington also became the headquarters for the Freedman's Bureau, a program much reviled by many whites but one that distributed rations to starving black and white South Carolinians after the war. R.B. Branch, a New South proponent writing at the end of the nineteenth century, described Darlington at the end of the Civil War as "a very insignificant place, having only six or seven business houses and 200 or 300 inhabitants." For two decades after the end of the war, very little building took place in Darlington.²⁵

In a larger context, the period following the war was one of great upheaval in South Carolina. Most whites' main goal remained the denial of citizenship for blacks, while the latter sought different, more urgent objectives, namely education and a means to make a living. An environment of racial tension emerged as whites began to fear blacks. Amid this environment came a series of legislative events that altered life for whites and blacks in South Carolina.

In 1865 President Andrew Johnson appointed Benjamin Franklin Perry of Greenville provisional governor of the state with the authority to reorganize government. Later that year a constitutional convention met in Columbia with members of the elite from the antebellum period participating. The body drew up a constitution and elected James L. Orr of Anderson as governor. The legislature elected at the convention met in December 1865 and passed the "Black Codes," which in essence re-instituted many of the rules that governed blacks during slavery days.²⁶

In March 1866, Radical Republicans in Congress overrode President Johnson's veto of the Civil Rights Act, which ordered states to stop participating in race-based discrimination. In June, the Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment, which defined citizenship and gave all Americans equal protection under the law. South Carolina politicians overwhelmingly rejected the Fourteenth Amendment. In the next congressional elections, northern voters overwhelmingly elected Radical Republicans to Congress.²⁷

In 1866, while Darlington was under military occupation, the early-nineteenth-century courthouse burned, as did much of the town's commercial area. A rumor circulated that a drunken soldier from the federal garrison located on a hill overlooking Swift Creek on the east side of North Main Street started the fire. The federal presence was strong in

²⁵ Edgar, 396; Rudisill, *Darlington County: A Pictorial History*, 40; Branch, 16.

²⁶ Edgar, 384.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Darlington with soldiers using St. John's Academy and its campus as a hospital and the adjacent Haynesworth House as its garrison commander's headquarters.²⁸

The South's defiance of federal legislation ushered in Radical Reconstruction. In March 1867 Congress passed legislation that abolished state government in the South which, in essence, meant the states' expulsion from the Union. In order for a state to be readmitted to the Union, it would have to take measures to ensure all males could vote; adopt a new constitution to submit to the people for approval; ratify the Fourteenth Amendment; hold elections for a constitutional convention based on universal male suffrage and disband all military organizations. In a follow up act, the Congress required that a majority of registered voters approve the constitutional convention. As the result of a large black voter turnout combined with a backfired plan by whites to boycott the vote on the convention, blacks made up over half the delegates when the constitutional convention opened in Charleston in January 1868.²⁹ Of Darlington's four delegates, John Boston, Alfred Park, Jordan Lang and G. Holliman, Holliman was the only white representative. The white population branded Holliman as a traitor and Lang was later assassinated over a dispute about a tax increase.³⁰

According to historian Walter Edgar, the constitution drafted in Charleston "was designed to create a new order in South Carolina based upon equal opportunity." It extended voting rights and educational opportunities to all people and de-centralized state government. Of course, it proved unpopular among most whites who saw it as establishing a black government. Nevertheless, voters ratified it and in the elections that followed, Republicans filled almost every elected office in the state. Seventy-five of the 124 members of the newly elected General Assembly were black, while blacks held ten of the thirty-two seats in the Senate. Across the state, blacks filled a great number of political offices during the next nine years.³¹

The courthouse was rebuilt in Darlington in 1870 and the last of the federal soldiers exited the town in October 1871. Radical Reconstruction in South Carolina ended in April 1877 after newly elected president Rutherford B. Hayes ordered federal troops that had been stationed in the state to leave.³² The years that followed witnessed the reinstatement of a society that existed before the Civil War in which an elite white majority controlled state government. The 1895 constitution, which disenfranchised blacks and firmly established separate schools for the races, ushered in the Jim Crow era in South Carolina. As a result, segregation became a way of life in the state.

²⁸ Rudisill, *Darlington County: A Pictorial History*, 40.

²⁹ Edgar, 385-386.

³⁰ Horace Fraser Rudisill, interview with Sarah Woodard, 9 May 2002.

³¹ Edgar, 386-387.

³² Williamson, 8; Rudisill, *Darlington County: A Pictorial History*, 40; Edgar, 406.

Darlington's Boom Period: 1881 to World War I

Darlington underwent a remarkable transformation in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1880, the population stood at 940, but only ten years later it grew to 2,389 reflecting an improvement in the town's economy due to the establishment of new industrial concerns. At the turn of the century, the population numbered just over three thousand and by 1910, 3,789 people lived in Darlington.³³



Plate 4: Manne Building (site # 0226) on Pearl Street, built 1892

At the end of the nineteenth century, Darlington began to achieve an air of refinement as evidenced by the opening of an opera house on the southwest corner of the public square. The town attracted visitors who commented on its healthfulness and beauty. One observer, in regard to the town's cleanliness, noted that "Darlington possesses many advantages over its sister cities, nature alone making the sanitary condition of the city almost perfect."³⁴ He went on to extol the beauty of the town's neighborhoods:

The residence portion of Darlington causes the admiration of all visitors, the grounds being spacious and filled with rare flowers and a species of oak that grows to a height of fifty feet, then spreading out its branches, makes a beautiful shade tree.³⁵

Another commentator of the day described the town as "embowered in a majestic grove of evergreen oaks, and washed on two sides by the clear waters of Swift Creek."³⁶

³³ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Population* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913).

³⁴ Branch, 16.

³⁵ Branch, 20.

³⁶ South Carolina Department of Agriculture, *South Carolina: Resources and Population, Institutions and Industries* (Columbia: State Board of Agriculture, 1883), 695.



Plate 5: The Neoclassical Revival Style Judge E.C. Dennis House (site # 0151) at 215 St. John's Street, built ca. 1911

A fire on 27 February 1892 greatly altered Darlington's central business district. The blaze, which nearly gutted the entire business district, destroyed twenty-three commercial buildings. According to one contemporary observer, "This did not deter the energy of its people, for within a few days time they set to work to rebuild the burned district, and in place of the old-fashioned wooden buildings handsome brick structures with all the modern improvements have been erected in their stead which will compare favorably with any in the state."³⁷

In 1904 the county selected architect William A. Edwards, a native of Darlington who practiced in Columbia, to design a stately Neoclassical Revival courthouse for the square. The county engaged DeLeon & Lopez of Atlanta to construct the building, which displayed a dignified portico and broad dome. Around the same time, prolific architect and South Carolina native Frank P. Milburn designed an impressive city hall building that contained an auditorium. Florence contractor W.J. Wilkins erected the building on the north side of the courthouse square at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars.³⁸ This building served the town until 1963 when the current town hall was built on Pearl Street.

Transportation and Industry

By the end of the century, two railroads—the Charleston, Sumter & Northern and the South Carolina Western Railway—came through the county seat. These lines connected

³⁷ Branch, 18.

³⁸ Rudisill, *Darlington County: A Pictorial History*, 41; "Darlington, South Carolina: The Headquarters for South Carolina's Large and Growing Tobacco Business," in *The Exposition : A Magazine Devoted to the South Carolina Inter-State West Indian Exposition, Charleston, South Carolina, December 1, 1901 to May 31, 1902, And to the Manufacturing and Commercial Industries of the South*, June 1901, 255.

with the Atlantic Coast Line at Florence; the Sumter, Richmond & Danville System at Charlotte and Columbia; the Cape Fear & Yadkin Valley at Bennettsville and the Seaboard Air Line at Hamlet.³⁹ In the early twentieth century as part of a region-wide consolidation effort, these railroads became part of the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. Visitors who came by train to town would find commodious accommodations at the Enterprise Hotel which stood on the southwest corner of the public square facing the courthouse or at the James Hotel on Pearl Street. Salesmen could stay at the “Drummer’s Home” which was located in an exuberant Queen Anne style house on the northwest corner of Cashua and Spring streets.⁴⁰



Plate 6: “Drummer’s Home” (site # 0259) at 209 Cashua Street

Darlington’s role as a hub of industry for the region began when Major James Lide Coker established a cotton mill incorporated as the Darlington Manufacturing Company in 1883.⁴¹ Darlington was poised to become a center of the cotton trade for in 1870 the county led the state in the production of the crop. The county’s production remained high throughout the early twentieth century. For example, in 1910, just over forty-six thousand bales were grown on seventy-four thousand acres of the county’s farmland.⁴²

By 1900, only nine counties in South Carolina had more capital invested in industrial facilities than Darlington County.⁴³ Other industries established in Darlington during the last decade of the nineteenth century included J.A. Buchanan’s Cotton Yard, Darlington Phosphate Company, Darlington Tobacco Company, C.M. Mooney Planing Mill,

³⁹ Branch, 16.

⁴⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1889, 1903.

⁴¹ “Darlington County, South Carolina: Agricultural and Industrial Wealth,” Supplement to the *News and Press*, (Darlington), 12 August 1915.

⁴² Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Agriculture* (Washington: Government Printing Office), 517.

⁴³ *Census Reports, vol. VIII, Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900: Manufactures* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 832.

Darlington Roller Mill, Pee Dee Cotton Compress Company and Wood's Cotton Yard which stood on the northwest corner of Main and Orange streets. In 1893, A.C. Spain and Company, which manufactured brick, advertised that they kept "constantly on hand all the time, a full supply of pressed bricks for ornamental fronts."⁴⁴ In 1901, a magazine described the buildings of the Darlington Oil Company, which was organized in 1889, as "large and amply adequate for the needs of the work, all of them being made of brick."⁴⁵



Plate 7: (Former) Darlington Tobacco Prizeries Prize House No. 3 (site # 0164) on Columbian Street

Tobacco cultivation and the facilities used to process the leaf first appeared in and around Darlington at the end of the century and by the early 1900s, tobacco processing nearly dominated the town's industrial landscape. According to an observer in 1902, "the cultivation of ...tobacco has put the agricultural community on a more independent basis [and] the farmers of good management can now make and save money."⁴⁶ Darlington tobacco processors had the advantage of being both in the middle of South Carolina's bright-leaf-growing area and accessible to the railroad. In 1910, Darlington County alone produced over four million pounds of tobacco. As a result of this tremendous surge in cultivation, tobacco processing concerns flourished.⁴⁷ In 1898, the Darlington Tobacco Company Warehouse and J.R. Bowles Tobacco Prize House—the building where workers filled barrels with the leaf for shipping—stood on the southeast corner of East Broad and Russell streets. Darlington Tobacco Prizeries, a complex of three prize houses, occupied the northeast corner of East Broad and Columbia (now Columbian) streets. By 1903, the American Tobacco Company had a plant in Darlington. Other tobacco-related businesses located in the county seat at the beginning of the century included M.P.

⁴⁴ Branch, 9.

⁴⁵ South Carolina Department of Agriculture, 85; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1893, 1898; "Darlington, South Carolina: The Headquarters for South Carolina's Large and Growing Tobacco Business," in *The Exposition*, 262.

⁴⁶ Rice and Taylor, 306.

⁴⁷ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Agriculture*, 517.

Burwell and Company Stemmary, Carolina Tobacco Warehouse, J.T. Coleman Tobacco Prizing and Warehouse and Dargan and Stem Tobacco Sales Warehouse.⁴⁸ In 1901, *The Exposition*, a magazine published in conjunction with the South Carolina Inter-State West Indian Exposition held in Charleston, described Darlington as “by a heavy majority, the largest and strongest manufacturing town south of Columbia.”⁴⁹

Architecture

With new prosperity resulting from a booming economy, construction escalated during the decades just prior to and following the turn of the twentieth century. Following the dark days of the Civil War and Reconstruction, Darlingtonians embraced new styles, especially those that expressed modern ideas in their complexity and boldness. Builders and their clients were drawn to ornamentation and elaborate plans and forms.

The Queen Anne proved the most popular style in Darlington during the period and today the city retains some of the best examples in the region. Pattern books of the day offered the public designs for all types of irregular-massed, cross-plan dwellings. These publications showed pictures of mantels, windows, doors, stairs and porch posts that could be purchased from a manufacturer or produced locally. An especially attractive feature of the Queen Anne style was that it could be expressed in its most animated form or as a modest house of asymmetrical proportions with little ornament.



Plate 8: M.S. Hart House (site # 0093) at 393 West Broad Street

A collection of Queen Anne style houses occurs along West Broad Street. African American master builder Lawrence Reese built many of the one and two-story weatherboard dwellings. The circa 1895 M.S. Hart House (site # 0093) at 393 West Broad Street is one story and features a polygonal projecting gable on its west end and

⁴⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1898, 1903.

⁴⁹ “Darlington, South Carolina: The Headquarters for South Carolina’s Large and Growing Tobacco Business,” in *The Exposition*, 255.

boxed cornices with bracketed eaves. The Mrs. J.F. Early House (site # 0062) at 368 West Broad Street dates from about 1890 and is a two-and-a-half-story dwelling with a prominent corner turret topped with a conical roof. A combination of fishscale shingles and weatherboard sheaths the exterior.

The Willis McCurdy House (site # 0259)—which was also known as the “Drummer’s Home” in the early twentieth century—occupies the northwest corner of Cashua and Spring streets and is one of the city’s most elaborate Queen Anne houses. The circa 1892, two-story dwelling features a conical roof surmounting a prominent corner turret. Staggered butt shingles cover the upper story, while plain weatherboard sheaths the first level. Elements of the Eastlake motif appear on the Edmund Deas House (site # 0426), a more vernacular expression of the Queen Anne style located at 229 Avenue E. This circa 1890 one-story frame house features a hip and gable roof terminating in bracketed eaves and twin projecting gables with polygonal bays.

Commercial buildings of the period exhibited elements of the picturesque movement seen in the town’s dwellings. After a series of fires, promoters in Darlington urged the construction of more substantial brick buildings. To the front of these multi-storied edifices, builders attached elaborate manufactured metal storefronts. The Willcox & Company (site # 0210) building on the south side of the public square displays classical elements such as colonnettes and fluted brackets. The circa 1890 building retains a metal storefront on the upper story and flanking metal pilasters on the street level.



Plate 9: The Late Nineteenth Century Willcox & Company Building (site # 0210)

Darlington in the Interwar Years: 1918 to 1942

For most of South Carolina, the years between the world wars proved difficult. Cotton and tobacco prices nosedived in 1920 due to overproduction and competition from international markets. The boll weevil, which first appeared in the state in 1917 and spread in the 1920s, compounded the problems for those involved in cotton production and trade. Because South Carolina farmers chose to grow cotton instead of food crops, numerous families in the 1920s went hungry. As a result of the poor state of agriculture, many rural residents moved to nearby towns or left the state altogether. In Darlington County from 1920 to 1930, the population of over half of the rural townships declined, while the populations of Darlington, Hartsville and Lamar increased. In 1920, 4,669 people lived in Darlington. Just ten years later, that number had increased by almost a thousand.⁵⁰

The Great Depression only added insult to injury in South Carolina. Cotton prices fell even harder after the stock market crash of October 1929. Programs of the New Deal, such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Works Progress Administration, the Public Works Administration, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, as well as statewide efforts like the South Carolina Emergency Relief Administration, pulled the state's citizens from the depths of poverty by providing food, clothing, jobs and services. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's programs for helping down and out Americans proved popular in South Carolina until the late 1930s when an increasing number of whites began to see the New Deal as a mechanism for the federal government to usurp their domination of blacks on the local level.

The economic stagnation ended with the country's entrance in World War II. The war and the goods it required meant that industries were revived and railroads increased the amount of goods they shipped.

While tobacco and cotton markets suffered during the interwar period, other industries flourished. Around 1918, the Darlington Veneer Company built a plant on Fourth Street near the railroad. The company employed hundreds of workers and built a collection of shotgun houses in an adjacent neighborhood. In the late 1930s, the company that makes Dixie Cups established its plant in Darlington. Both companies still operate in the town's industrial area.

"A Good Place in Which to Live"

By the 1920s, Darlington was shaping up as one of the Coastal Plain's most attractive and livable towns. Crepe myrtles and the famed Darlington Oak lined the streets and enhanced the setting of the city's dwellings. An observer in the late 1920s described Darlington as,

⁵⁰ Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 484-486; United States Department of Commerce, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931), 989.

among the leading towns of the State for its beauty. All of the important streets are paved, while all others are generally in good condition....The lawns are attractive and well kept, and the majority of residences neat and appealing. There are also many lovely old homes with spacious grounds that add to the beauty of the community....It has been described as a fine residential city and a good place in which to live.⁵¹



Plate 10: Bungalow (site # 0154) with Mission Influence at 112 St. John's Street

Because of the Depression, few buildings went up during the 1930s. A notable exception occurred in the early part of the decade after a fire engulfed the Darlington Hotel and took with it, a substantial portion of the south side of the public square. Much of that section of downtown had to be rebuilt.⁵²

Under the auspices of the WPA, several new construction projects helped to bolster the town during bleak years. The program erected an armory, a gymnasium at St. John's School, a county jail and a county agricultural building. The WPA also worked to improve several streets and enhance Williamson Park.⁵³

Just before World War II, the public square remained the center of retail and service trades in Darlington. In 1941 eight department stores populated the public square. Almost all the town's attorneys had their offices on the square in order to be close to the courthouse. Barbers, beauty shops, drug stores, banks, a billiard parlor, clothing stores

⁵¹ Leslie W. Edwards, "Darlington" in *Darlington County Economic and Social*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, ed. O.L. Warr, C.W. Flowers and Valerie Schaible, no. 196 (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1 February 1927), 14.

⁵² Rudisill, *Darlington County: A Pictorial History*, 41.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

and hardware stores maintained storefronts on the square. Professionals, such as dentists, frequently occupied upper floors.⁵⁴

Education and Religion

In 1920, South Carolina spent less per student than any other state. Business, civic and education leaders pushed the General Assembly to pass the 6-0-1 Act in 1924. This legislation ensured that school children attended school for seven months every year by instating a system in which the state would cover costs for six months, while local school districts paid for one month. The act did not require counties to appropriate any funding, but they were encouraged to do so. The legislation also established minimum standards and salaries for teachers. By the late 1920s three public schools operated in Darlington. St. John's and West End instructed white students and Mayo was for black children. At the time, twenty-seven white teachers and twenty black teachers worked in the city schools. A commentator of the period described St. John's as "a complete high and graded school, with two large buildings and one of the prettiest school campuses in the State." A new public library, built in town during the 1920s, was only one of three public libraries in the state that offered free service.⁵⁵



Plate 11: Documentary Photograph of St. John's Grammar School, Built Circa 1902 and Enlarged Circa 1917, Date of Photograph Unknown (From the South Carolina Budget and Control Board Sinking Fund Commission, 1930-1951 in the Collection of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History)

A Presbyterian, Episcopalian, two Methodist, three Baptist and one Christian church served the white community in Darlington by the late 1920s. Blacks could attend a Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian or Holiness church during the period.⁵⁶ One of the most

⁵⁴ *Darlington, South Carolina City Director, 1941* (Charleston: Baldwin Directory Company, 1941), 275-307.

⁵⁵ Edwards, 15.

⁵⁶ Edwards, 15.

impressive churches built during the interwar period was the Macedonia Baptist Church (site # 0471) on the South Main Street. The black congregation's sanctuary originally stood at the northeast corner of Hampton and Main streets, but in the early 1920s the group purchased a lot on the southwest corner of Lee and Main streets. All or part of the imposing brick church had been built by 1924.⁵⁷



Plate 12: Macedonia Baptist Church (site # 0471), built in the 1920s on South Main Street

Just before World War II, in 1941, Baptists were the most prevalent denomination with six churches in Darlington. Methodist churches followed with four chapels. Two chapels served the town's Presbyterians and Episcopalians had one church available to them.⁵⁸

Architecture

In suburban neighborhoods across South Carolina, modest houses of the 1920s sometimes exhibited Colonial Revival features such as a gabled portico with Tuscan or Doric columns, but more often middle class families built Craftsman houses, especially bungalows and Foursquare dwellings. The Craftsman style enjoyed national popularity in the late 1910s and 1920s and architects designed fine examples for clients from coast to coast. More scaled-down versions of the style proved immensely popular in towns and suburbs across the state. Building plans for these houses with their wide overhanging eaves, open arrangement of rooms and inviting porch appeared in national magazines and catalogs. The bungalow—in all its many expressions, construction materials and degrees of detail—was inexpensive and easy to build and appealed to families' desires for a modern house. Bungalows occur in nearly all of Darlington's central neighborhoods, but the Foursquare is rarer in town. One of the best examples of the latter style stands at 117

⁵⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1924.

⁵⁸ *Darlington, South Carolina City Directory, 1941*, 283-284.

Edwards Avenue (site # 0111) and features a low-hipped roof, stuccoed interior chimneys and an entrance with sidelights and a transom.

The expansion of local industry occurred so rapidly that in some parts of Darlington there was not enough housing for workers. Developers or the industrial concern often erected inexpensive housing that could be built quickly and on smaller parcels. When the Darlington Veneer Plant opened in the late 1910s, it constructed a group of shotgun houses in a nearby neighborhood, mainly along Third Street (site #s 0444-0466). The shotgun, a narrow, linear house with its front gable facing the street, typically has two or three rooms, but is one room wide. The form originated in the West Indies and was brought to the United States through the port of New Orleans. Although modest in size and detail, the shotgun is an important African American cultural carryover.



Plate 13: Shotgun Houses Built Circa 1920 Along Third Street

Epilogue: the Post World War II Era in Darlington

In the decades after World War II, Darlington County's population remained mostly rural with less than twenty-five percent of residents living in the towns. That number rose only slightly and by 1970, just fewer than seven thousand people lived in Darlington.⁵⁹

Darlington, like so many towns across the state, experienced a building boom as soldiers returned from war. Much of the residential construction in Darlington took place outside of the downtown neighborhoods that had been almost fully developed before the war. Families took advantage of federal programs that loaned money to veterans to build houses. The ranch house emerged as the most common house type built in Darlington from the 1950s through 1970s.

By the mid 1950s neither cotton processing nor tobacco manufacturing dominated the town's industrial economy. In 1954, Darlington's five cotton-related concerns and six tobacco warehouses stood alongside concrete suppliers, fertilizer plants and lumber mills. At the same time, the town's professional sector had expanded greatly. Eighteen lawyers, numerous insurance dealers and several dentists and druggists offered services to Darlington's citizens.⁶⁰

Darlington secured its place in the hearts and minds of stock car racing fans across the country in 1950 when native Harold Brasington opened the Darlington Raceway on seventy acres he purchased from Sherman Ramsey. The one-and-a-half mile oval track opened on Labor Day by hosting the Southern 500. The track became the first super speedway in NASCAR (National Association of Stock Car Automobile Racing) history and is credited with attracting new fans that delighted in the high speed racing.⁶¹

More positive changes occurred on the social front in Darlington and the rest of South Carolina during the period when in 1954 the United States Supreme Court ruled in the case *Brown v. Board of Education* that law of separate but equal facilities was unconstitutional. The white reaction in the state was overwhelmingly negative. In 1956, the state legislature passed a series of laws meant to undermine *Brown*. White schools defied federal law by not allowing blacks, or closing altogether in order to avoid desegregation. In the early and mid-1960s, the tide began to turn as South Carolina's leaders began to accept integration. Columbia was the first of the state's cities to end segregation in its schools and public facilities, but towns across the state soon followed suit.⁶² Darlington, however, was somewhat slow to comply. Despite a court order in the

⁵⁹ Pee Dee Regional Planning and Development Council, *Population and Economic Study* (Florence: Pee Dee Regional Planning and Development Council, 1972), 20, 36.

⁶⁰ *Darlington South Carolina City Directory, 1954* (Charleston: Nelsons' Baldwin's Directory Company, Inc, 1954), 340-367.

⁶¹ Jim Hunter, *A History of the Darlington Raceway and the Joe Weatherly Stock Car Museum* (Darlington: Darlington Raceway, n.d.), 5-7.

⁶² Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina in the Modern Age* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 101-107.

mid-1960s, integration did not begin in Darlington until around 1970. The school system did not become fully integrated until the 1980s.⁶³

A monumental change came to the public square in the mid 1960s when the county hired the firm of Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle and Wolff, Architects to design a new courthouse (site # 0197). The firm was well-known in the state for its work including the Thomas Cooper Library (1959) on the campus of the University of South Carolina in Columbia, the Forest Lake Country Club (1963) and the United States Post Office in downtown Columbia (1966). The Darlington County courthouse—a modern edifice which borrows from the classical in its windows which soar vertically like columns—stands in the middle of the square at the location of its predecessors. One architectural critic described the building as “essentially cubical in form and [rising] above a peripheral and boldly proportioned marble arched arcade.”⁶⁴



Plate 14: Darlington County Courthouse (site # 0197), built in the 1960s

Darlington, like so many small cities in South Carolina, has had to face the challenges of industries closing and its young people leaving in search of better jobs. However, this community has managed to attract new businesses and people from the outside, but at the same time retain some of the older establishments in the downtown area. Across this city, there is an awareness of the past and a respect for historic resources that provide reminders of the boom years in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The pride in Darlington’s old buildings shows in the well-kept and superbly maintained dwellings lining neighborhood streets. A wider awareness will help this city preserve a history that has been lost in many other communities in the state.

⁶³ Rudisill interview.

⁶⁴ Harlan McClure and Vernon Hodges, *South Carolina Architecture, 1670-1970* (Columbia: Columbia Museum of Art and Clemson Architectural Foundation, 1970), n.p.

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VII. Evaluation of Recorded Properties

National Register Properties (Listing date provided)

| | |
|---|----------|
| St. John's Historic District | 9/4/80 |
| Cashua Street-Spring Street Historic District | 2/10/88 |
| Julius A. Dargan House | 2/10/88 |
| Darlington Industrial Historic District | 2/10/88 |
| Edmund H. Deas House | 2/10/88 |
| Nelson Hudson House | 2/10/88 |
| Manne Building | 2/10/88 |
| Clarence McCall House | 2/10/88 |
| Charles S. McCullough House | 2/10/88 |
| South Carolina Western Railway Station | 2/10/88 |
| West Broad Street Historic District | 2/10/88 |
| Wilds-Edwards House | 2/10/88 |
| Mrs. B.F. Williamson House | 2/10/88 |
| First Baptist Church | 10/17/91 |

VIII. Data Gaps

The only data gap was a lack of maps that show parcel lines at a scale that would be appropriate for indicating the location of survey properties and illustrating recommended changes to the boundaries of the National Register historic districts. The county has a GIS technician who is currently working on creating such maps. All maps had to be hand drawn.

IX. Recommendations

Recommendations for Historic District Boundary Adjustments

- **Cashua-Spring Street Historic District:** The district could be expanded to include:(a) the Williamson House on the west side of Oak Street and as far south as 112 Oak Street; (b) all houses on North Street between Spring Street and 121 North Street.
- **Darlington Industrial Historic District:** Since its listing in the National Register in 1988, several resources in the district have been lost possibly compromising the integrity of the district as a whole. The resources that were listed as contributing, but no longer stand are the Charleston, Sumter and Northern Railway Freight Station (127 Avenue A); Darlington Roller Mills (301 Avenue A) and Price's Tobacco Warehouse (100 E. Broad Street). Five non-contributing resources are now gone. Unfortunately, many of the resources that have been demolished or otherwise lost stood in or near the center of the district. If the boundaries are ever redrawn, the one-

story, brick bonded warehouse immediately adjacent to the (former) Thomas and Howard Tobacco Warehouse on the west side of South Main Street might be included.

- **West Broad Street Historic District:** The boundaries could be extended to include: (a) both sides of Edwards Avenue from West Broad Street to the Wilds-Edwards House on the west side of Edwards Avenue and the two-story Craftsman Foursquare at 117 Edwards Avenue; (b) the west and east ends of Darlington Street in order to eliminate the noncontributing apartment building and dwelling that stand in the middle of the block between Edwards Avenue and Dargan Street and (c) the west end of West Broad ending at Coker Street.

Recommendations for National Register Listing

- St. Matthews Episcopal Church on South Main Street (site # 0469)
- Darlington County Library (site # 0233)
- Macedonia Baptist Church on South Main Street (site # 0471)
- Darlington Presbyterian Church and Cemetery (site # 0231)
- Darlington United States Post Office (site # 0229)
- Trinity United Methodist Church South (site # 0217)
- Darlington American Legion Hut (site # 0129)

Recommendations for Local Designation

- With the support of the property owners, locally designate properties that are already individually listed in the National Register.
- Mary Bethune Library (site # 0468) on South Main Street
- Darlington Veneer Company Worker Housing: Although probably not eligible as a National Register District, this substantial collection of shotgun houses from the 1920s located primarily along Third Street retains its streetscape and is an outstanding collection of this housing type.

Recommendations for Preservation Planning and Public Education

- Actively work to designate local landmarks and local historic districts. In order to gain support for this idea, promote the benefits of local designation through a public campaign. Distribute information in the form of brochures and handouts.
- Develop design review guidelines for use in reviewing alterations to buildings and new construction
- Incorporate local history and architectural history into school curricula
- Become more involved in the environmental review process in order to exercise some control over federally-funded or licensed projects that affect the city's historic resources. For example, become more proactive about the location of communication towers in the city and their visual effect on resources

XI. APPENDICES

- A. Compiled inventory of surveyed properties**
- B. National Register Criteria for Listing**



HISTORY & HERITAGE
For All Generations

CITY OF DARLINGTON [DARLINGTON COUNTY] SURVEY NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATIONS

PROPERTIES DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR LISTING IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The following determinations are based on evaluations of the City of Darlington Survey by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the S.C. Department of Archives and History. It is the opinion of the SHPO that the properties meet, with the exception of the one found worthy of further investigation, the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. These determinations are based on the present architectural integrity and available historical information for the properties included in the survey area. Properties may be removed from or added to this list if changes are made that affect a property's physical integrity. Historical information that is brought to the attention of the National Register Coordinator/Architectural Historian confirming or denying a property's historic significance may also affect a property's eligibility status. The process of identifying and evaluating historic properties is never complete; therefore, the SHPO encourages readers of this report to alert the National Register Coordinator to properties that may have been overlooked during this evaluation.

National Register determinations of eligibility were made by SHPO staff Andrew W. Chandler and Bradley S. Sauls in consultation with Jennifer Martin and Sarah Woodard of Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc.

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS ELIGIBLE FOR LISTING IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Of the 440 properties recorded in the City of Darlington Survey, inclusive of commercial, residential, institutional and industrial, the SHPO considers the following properties to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The survey site number and the historic or common name, if known, are given along with the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (Criterion A, B, C, or D) and/or Criteria Considerations/Exceptions (indicated with lower case letters "a - g" and providing property type) under which the property qualifies.

Also listed below are historic districts that the SHPO considers to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for their architectural significance. Although other National

Register criteria may apply, these districts were evaluated primarily on architectural merit. A historic district is defined by a significant concentration of properties associated historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. An eligible district may include contributing properties that may also qualify for individual listing.

CITY OF DARLINGTON

Individual Properties:

| <u>Site #</u> | <u>Name of Property</u> | <u>Criteria/Area of Signif.</u> |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 0231 | Darlington Presbyterian Church and Cemetery | C: Architecture |
| 0471 | Macedonia Baptist Church | A: Ethnic Heritage/Black C: Architecture |

Historic District Boundary Increase:

Cashua-Spring Street Historic District: This district was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 10, 1988. We concur with the consultant's recommendation that the boundary for the district may be increased to include sites 0250-0255, and 0289-0296 on North and Oak Streets.

West Broad Historic District: This district was also listed in the National Register on February 10, 1988. We concur with the consultant's recommendation that the boundary for the district may be increased to include sites 0072-0074 and 0096-0097 on West Broad Street, and sites 0100-0114 on Darlington and Edwards Streets.