

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 9 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Paris Simkins House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 202 Gary Street- NA not for publication

city, town Edgefield NA vicinity of

state South Carolina code 045 county Edgefield code 037

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"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> NA in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> NA being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Benjamin Quarles

street & number 3520 Olinville Avenue

city, town Bronx NA vicinity of state New York 10467

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Edgefield County Courthouse

street & number Court Square

city, town Edgefield state South Carolina 29824

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1981 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

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Paris Simkins House is a one-and-one-half-story, frame, weatherboarded residence located in the town of Edgefield, South Carolina. The house is believed to have been constructed ca. 1870 as a residence for Paris Simkins, whose family owned the property for almost one hundred years. Located in the midst of multi-family residential and commercial developments, the dwelling continues to serve as a single-family residence. The original wooden porch pillars and balustrade were replaced with wrought-iron supports and railing in 1982. However, few other alterations have taken place, and the house retains integrity as a nineteenth century residence.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Paris Simkins House is a one-and-one-half-story, frame residence sheathed in weatherboarding. It rests on a foundation of stuccoed brick piers; the spaces between the piers have been closed in with cinder block walls. The steeply-pitched gable roof is covered in composition shingles. Two brick chimneys with rattoo courses and corbelled caps pierce the roof at its ridge. There is a boxed cornice with returns. First story windows throughout the house have six-over-six lights, pedimented surrounds, and louvered shutters. The smaller, upper story windows have nine-over-six lights, unornamented surrounds, and louvered shutters.

The three-bay facade (east elevation) consists of a central, double-door entrance flanked by windows. The entrance has sidelights and transom of patterned, frosted glass and is set in a shelf architrave. A shed-roofed porch with wrought-iron supports and railing extends across the facade. The original wooden pillars and turned balustrade were removed in June of 1982, but two pilasters remain.

Each side elevation contains two windows on each story. The original first story window on the western end of the south elevation has been replaced with a tripartite window consisting of a large, single pane central section flanked by four-over-four, double-hung sections.

An original, single story, gable-roofed ell projects from the northern end of the rear (west) elevation. This ell has a brick exterior end chimney; boxed cornice with returns; and six-over-six windows with pedimented surround and louvered shutters. A shed-roofed porch across the remainder of the rear has been enclosed, and a small, gable-roofed kitchen has been added to its south end.

The Paris Simkins House has a central hall on each floor, five large rooms on the first floor, and four bedrooms of equal dimensions on the upper floor. Walls and ceilings throughout the house are plastered. Each of the nine original rooms has a fireplace, most with simple mantels; a relatively ornate mantel is located in the parlor. The first floor hall is bisected by a partition with French doors, which allows for the creation of a separate entrance foyer and stair hall. The staircase, which rises from the rear of the back hall, has a turned balustrade. A wide archway provides access between the parlor (southeast room) and front hall. French doors open between the parlor and dining (southwest) room. Other doors on the first floor have four panels; second floor doors have two vertical panels. Three bedrooms are located in the northern side of the first floor, and four bedrooms comprise the upper floor rooms. The northeast, first floor bedroom has a picture molding. The only built-in closet is found in the middle first floor bedroom. The back

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) black history; local history
Specific dates	ca. 1870	Builder/Architect	Unknown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Paris Simkins House is located on a tree-shaded, corner lot in the town of Edgefield, South Carolina. The one-and-one-half-story, weatherboarded residence was the home of Paris Simkins, a former slave who distinguished himself as a state legislator during the Reconstruction period and as a prominent member of the local black community until his death in 1930. Simkins is believed to have had the house built as his residence ca. 1870. The Paris Simkins House, which is more substantial than the homes of most black South Carolinians during the period, is a symbol of the aspirations of some freedmen and a physical record of what a few blacks were able to achieve during Reconstruction.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Family sources indicate that Paris Simkins was born in February 1849, the son of Colonel Arthur Augustus Simkins, a prominent white public official, planter, and editor of the Edgefield Advertiser, and Charlotte Simkins, one of the Colonel's slaves. Paris Simkins was a valet in his father's house, and traveled with the Confederate army during the Civil War in this capacity. He was present at several engagements, including the Battle of Gettysburg, where he gave aid to the wounded on the battlefield. After the war, Simkins returned to Edgefield and opened a barber shop.

According to family tradition, Simkins had been taught the alphabet while very young by another Simkins family slave. Although he never attended public school, he studied with the Reverend Luther R. Gwaltney after the war, and learned to read and write. He purchased a number of college textbooks and studied whenever he could.²

In 1868, Paris Simkins married Mary Ann Noble and purchased a "House and lot of land containing Three acres."³ An adjoining three-acre tract was purchased in 1872. Family members believe that an old two-room farmhouse (since demolished) on the place was purchased in 1868 and that Simkins had the present house built soon after acquiring the property.⁴ The one-and-one-half-story, nine-room Simkins house is more elaborate and substantial than the typical modest dwellings usually found in the black sections of South Carolina towns after the Civil War.⁵

Simkins served two terms in the South Carolina state legislature from 1872 to 1876 as a Representative from Edgefield County. While in Columbia, he took advantage of the temporary desegregation of the state university and entered the school of law, which was then chaired by a respected alumnus of the university.⁶ Although educational opportunities were unfolding for blacks during this time, achievements such as this were rare.⁷ Simkins was one of only eight candidates to receive a bachelor of laws degree in 1876.⁸ He was admitted to the South Carolina Bar in 1885, and although he never practiced his profession in court, he wrote briefs and served as law clerk to Governor John C. Sheppard.⁹ In addition, Simkins was postmaster general in Edgefield, operated a store, and was an ordained minister.¹⁰

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.21

Quadrangle name Edgefield

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

17	414775	3738525
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

--	--	--

D

--	--	--

E

--	--	--

F

--	--	--

G

--	--	--

H

--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary of the Paris Simkins House nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying Edgefield County Property Tax Map No. 137-08, which is drawn at a scale of 100 feet to the inch. The nominated property includes the house and the 2.21 acres which remain from the original six-acre tract.

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

state	NA	code	NA	county	NA	code	NA
state	NA	code	NA	county	NA	code	NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John C. Blythe, Jr., Historic Preservation Planner Debra J. Allen, National Register Assistant

organization Upper Savannah Council of Governments South Carolina Dept. of Archives and History

street & number P.O. Box 1366 telephone (803) 229-6627

city or town Greenwood state South Carolina 29648-1366

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

Charles E. Lee 3/1/84

Charles E. Lee

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

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

Entered in the National Register

for Melissa Byers
Keeper of the National Register

date

4/5/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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porch has been enclosed and subdivided as a bathroom, small hallway, and den. A small kitchen has been built onto the den.

SURROUNDINGS:

The Paris Simkins House is located on a 2.21-acre, tree-shaded lot at the corner of Gary and Coral Streets in the town of Edgefield. Although adjacent properties are used for commercial purposes and multi-family housing, the house's immediate surroundings preserve its single-family, residential character. The yard contains ornamental plantings such as crepe myrtle and massive oak and cedar trees.

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Paris Simkins died in September 1930 and bequeathed his house to his children. It remained in the Simkins family until 1966. The original six-acre tract had been reduced by that year to the approximately 2.21 acres being nominated.¹¹

Black History/Politics and Government/Local History:

Paris Simkins was elected to the General Assembly in 1872 and 1874, a time when blacks held a majority in the state legislature. During his term of office, Simkins introduced a bill which would have countered the attempt by conservative Democrats to withhold jobs from and thereby disenfranchise blacks in Edgefield County. The bill would have levied a two-mill tax on all property in the county, with the proceeds going to black laborers who had been discharged because they had exercised their political rights.¹²

Simkins was a leader in the black community in Edgefield, and was remembered for his charity and help to the poor.¹³ He was one of the founders of Macedonia Baptist Church, where he served as clerk-treasurer and Sunday school teacher. As the first president of the Mutual Aid and Burial Society, he drew up that organization's constitution and bylaws in 1884. He also founded a chapter of the secret fraternal organization, the Knights of Pythias.¹⁴ Simkins' prominence in his church and these black social and fraternal organizations after Reconstruction reflects the means through which many South Carolina blacks exercised leadership after they were denied their political rights.¹⁵

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FOOTNOTES

1

Interview with C. Bruce Bailey, Sr. (grandson of Paris Simkins), Columbia, South Carolina, 17 November 1982; Francis Frederick, "Honorable Paris Simkins," The Orangeburg Historical and Genealogical Record (January 1969):40; Edwin Booth Simkins and other children, "A Brief Narrative of the Life of Paris Simkins, Esq., of Edgefield, South Carolina, Who Died Sept. 26th, 1930," The Orangeburg Historical and Genealogical Record, (January 1969):41.

2

Bailey Interview; Simkins, 41.

3

Deed Book RRR, pp. 472-3, Edgefield County Courthouse, Edgefield, South Carolina; Simkins, 41.

4

Bailey Interview; Deed Book 2, pp. 272-3, Edgefield County Courthouse. C. Bruce Bailey, Sr. states that his mother grew up in the present Simkins house, but a sister of hers lived in the earlier house.

5

Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1924; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press Inc., 1971), p. 8.

6

Pamela White, "'Free and Open': The Radical University of South Carolina, 1873-1877" (Master's Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1975), p. 10; Daniel W. Hollis, University of South Carolina, Vol. 2: College to University (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1956), p. 52; Taylor, p. 103.

7

Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1965), p. 236.

8

White, p. 46; Hollis, p. 70; Diploma of Paris Simkins, Paris Simkins Papers, Personal Files of Mildred Brooks, Washington, D.C.

9

Bailey Interview.

10

Lawrence C. Bryant, ed., Negro Senators and Representatives in the South Carolina Legislature 1868-1902 (Orangeburg, South Carolina: By the Editor, 1968), p. 22; Frederick, "Honorable Paris Simkins," 40.

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FOOTNOTES (CONTINUED)

11

Vernon Burton, "Racial and Social Control in Edgefield County, South Carolina, During and After Reconstruction," paper presented at session on "Race and Control in 19th-Century South Carolina," St. Louis, Missouri, 9 April 1976, p. 23; Deed Book 51, p. 134, Plat Book 15, p. 68, Edgefield County Courthouse; Frederick, "Honorable Paris Simkins," 26; Simkins, "A Brief Narrative," 42.

12

Burton, "Racial and Social Control," pp. 15-16; Julian Landrum Mims, "Radical Reconstruction in Edgefield County: 1868-1877" (Master's Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1969), p. 26; John S. Reynolds, Reconstruction in South Carolina: 1865-1877 (Columbia, South Carolina: The State Company, 1905), p. 305.

13

Frederick, "Honorable Paris Simkins," 40; Edgefield Advertiser (Edgefield, South Carolina), 8 October 1930.

14

Bailey Interview; Mims, p. 25; Simkins, 42; Hortense Woodson and Church Historians, History of Edgefield Baptist Association: 1807-1957 (Edgefield, South Carolina: The Edgefield Advertiser Press, [1957?]), p. 221.

15

John F. Marszalek, "The Black Leader in 1919-- South Carolina as a Case Study," Phylon 36 (1975): 255-7.

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- Edgfield, South Carolina. Edgfield County Courthouse. Deed Books RRR, 2, 8, 51 and 54; Master's Deed Book 4; and Plat Book 15.
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- White, Pamela. "'Free and Open': The Radical University of South Carolina, 1873-1877." Master's Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1975.
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