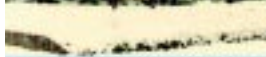


# A Walking Tour of Residential Seneca

by DONALD D. CLAYTON



◀ *The Lunney  
Museum, home for  
the Oconee County  
Museum Association*



THE LIVINGSTONE-STRIBLING  
HOUSE ▶  
(210 South Townville Street)



◀ **THE HINES HOUSE**  
(S. 2nd Street and  
Townville Street  
[corner])



▶  
THE C. N. GIGNILLIAT  
HOUSE  
(310 South 1st Street)



National Register of Historic Places

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
DIGITAL PRESS



**The Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing** exists in the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities to develop, direct and focus the academic publishing program in the college. The Center superintends the trademark Clemson University Digital Press and publishes three journals: *The South Carolina Review*, *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal*, and *Mirare: In Search of Ideas*. For information, see our website (<http://www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp>), write to the Director, or call 864-656-5399.

Director/Executive Editor: Wayne K. Chapman  
Department of English  
Strode Tower, Box 340523  
Clemson University  
Clemson, SC 29634-0523  
E-Mail: [cwayne@clemson.edu](mailto:cwayne@clemson.edu)

Editorial Assistants: Kaushal Seshadri and Kimberly Grissop

CEDP Advisory Board: Sydney Cross, Roger Grant, Lillian Harder, Tharon Howard, Steve Madden, Judy Melton, Patricio del Real, Sean Williams, Richard Woodward, and (*ex officio*) James Andreas.

# A Walking Tour of Residential Seneca

*by* DONALD D. CLAYTON

National Register of Historic Places



CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
DIGITAL PRESS

Clemson, SC

Copyright © 2001 by Clemson University

Previously prepared and copyrighted by Donald D. Clayton © 1994 in conjunction with the Historic Buildings Association of Oconee County, South Carolina.

Published by Clemson University Digital Press at the Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing, College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.

Produced in the Document Design Laboratory at Clemson University using Microsoft Word 2000, OmniPage Professional, and Adobe PageMaker 6.5. This book is set in AGaramond and was printed by University Printing Services, Office of Publications and Promotion Services, Clemson University.

Photography furnished by the author. Layout and illustration by Kaushal Seshadri.

# INTRODUCTION

This is a walking tour of the National Registered Historic District of Seneca, South Carolina. This historic district was established in 1973 at the Centennial of the founding of Seneca in 1873. The effort by the Seneca Centennial Committee Chair, Louise Bell, was significant. A second Registered Historic District was created in the year 2000. Not pictured in this book, that district lies at the center of downtown Seneca, consists of Ram Cat Alley and Parts of Townville Street, and can be found easily on the internet ([www.seneca.sc.us](http://www.seneca.sc.us)). As the map on the opposite page shows, the second district is not far from the first.

This tour should not be interpreted as either the finest or the oldest of Oconee County buildings. Many fine historic homes lie outside the boundaries that were drawn. The boundaries of the district were chosen to represent the transition of American life from about 1880 to 1925. The viewer should have this in mind. In 1973, the boundaries chosen for the residential district constituted an especially well-contained record. Unfortunately, losses have occurred: two key houses on Fairplay Street have been destroyed since 1973; one house has been moved; several houses and the Baptist Church have newer additions. These and other changes of time reduce the homogeneity of the architecture that once existed here. Nonetheless, those changes too are a valid part of our history. The buildings shown are those designated as “contributing structures” on the original enactment document. The tour is best taken slowly, on foot, allowing one’s eye to notice detail and one’s imagination to recall the horse-drawn carriages on their way over dirt streets to the bustling railroad-town square as Americans looked toward the 20th century.

The residential district has two zones:

(1) West South 1st Street, from the Seneca Presbyterian Church (east end) to the G. W. Gignilliat, III House at the corner of Poplar Street (west end), now named Bruce Hill Blvd. This street was called “Silk-Stocking Hill.” Six of its houses (five contributing structures) were built by the Gignilliat family.

(2) Fairplay Street and the parallel Townville Street from the intersection of South 1st Street (up the hills) to South 3rd Street—two blocks each.

The first section remains intact, and viewers wishing to minimize walking may walk it first, then drive to Townville Street (2 blocks east) to conclude with a tour of that section. Fairplay Street has suffered the most change—two destroyed houses, the moving of the Dendy-Macauley House (#11) to its location at the bottom of the street, and the church modification.

Our tour is best begun at the Lunney Museum (The W. J. Lunney House). That museum house is operated by the Oconee County Museum Association to record the turn-of-the-century interior of the area. Ideally, one could begin by viewing the interior of the museum. The homes are designated by number on the map, with commentary on each house on the following pages. *Italicized remarks are written by Clemson Architecture Professor Vernon S. Hodges in 1973, when application for historic recognition was made.*

In 1870, Seneca was a wilderness area on the Blue Ridge Railroad Line. When the Richmond Air Line Railroad also crossed at this spot, men saw the opportunity to develop a town at their intersection. They purchased the necessary land and marked the lots. The first auction was held in August 1873. The town that developed was called Seneca City,

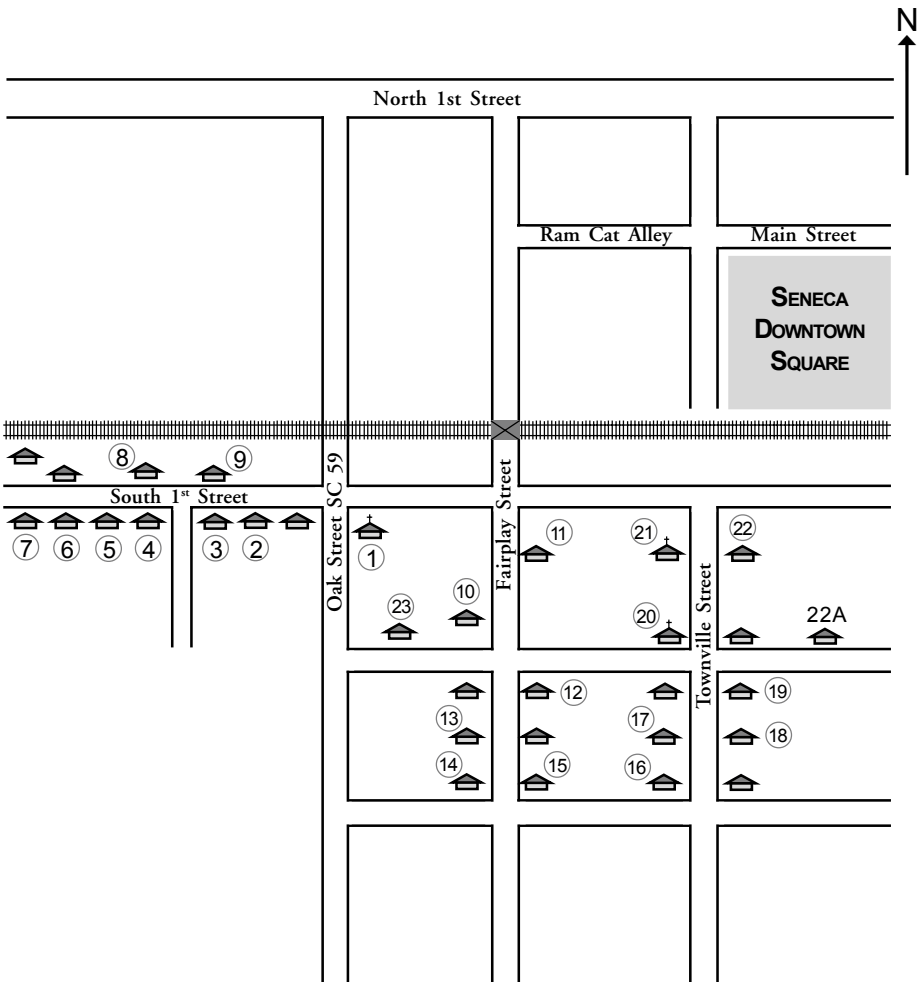
named for a tribe of Indians that lived nearby.

Professor Vernon S. Hodges wrote the following in 1973 in the original petition justifying the creation of the National Registered Historic District:

*“The town of Seneca, South Carolina, is preparing to celebrate its centennial this year. This offers a unique opportunity for preservationists to record the architectural development of Seneca as representing the immediate past century. Regrettably for historical accuracy, preservationists in the past have been much more concerned with buildings of greater age than the mid-19th century; therefore, they have neglected those of our*

*immediate past heritage. For the most part, late 19th-century buildings have been discarded, ignored, positively disguised, or destroyed.*

*The town of Seneca has, in a very compact area, a series of houses of very good quality representing the gradual change of taste from the 1890s to the present day. I believe that this will make a very desirable outdoor historic museum, showing that good quality in building (even in a small and new town) can reflect the taste and inheritance of the people in its area, and can reflect equally gradual growth and change to keep up with the changing culture of that town.”*





## Number 1

### **SENECA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CHAPTER HOUSE**

*(corner, South 1st Street and Oak Street)*

#### **DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1917. It replaced the earlier Presbyterian Church, founded in 1875.

#### **NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*"This church is a beautifully preserved example of the period of Presbyterian Church architecture so designed that the Pulpit above and behind the Communion Table became the focal point in the center of the congregation, which is seated in a semicircle. This arrangement stresses unity and participation on the part of the congregation. The architecture is a direct and straightforward example of the traditional classicism which flourished prior to the First World War." -- V.S.H.*

Stained glass windows on Oak Street and on the south side converge toward the choir behind the pulpit, and cast brilliant illuminations most Sunday mornings. The ceiling gives a sense of great height within,

as if to make room for the spirit. The Chapter House across South 1st Street is a simple design, combining utility with considerable graciousness inside. It is from the 1920s and was also designated "a contributing property" in the enactment of the historic district. The large Fellowship Hall behind the sanctuary is new (2000). A model of the original 1875 church stands in the Education Building.

#### **CURIOSITIES**

Scottish Presbyterian roots are strong in Carolina. In October, "the Kirking of the Tartans" brings many clans from the region in full dress with banners and bagpipes for formal participation in that special service. The original Manse was located across Oak Street in the vacant lot. It burned. The original church building (1882) was of simple beauty. It was moved into the middle of Oak Street for use while this sanctuary was completed. ■



*The Lunney Museum, home for the Oconee County Museum Association*

Number 2

### **THE W. J. LUNNEY HOUSE**

*(211 South 1st Street)*

#### **DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1909. Mr Lunney purchased the land in 1906 and presumably began construction in the same year.

#### **NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“There is a superficial resemblance to the California ‘Bungalow,’ popular at that time, because of the large central dormer window, the brown shingles and the wide ‘verandas.’ Diamond panes in the upper sash of the four windows of the dormer add a romantic English touch. However, the porch roof is supported by sophisticated Roman Doric columns below a well-proportioned entablature with a delicate dentil molding below the cornice, and the frontal gable is properly proportioned for the pediment.” -- V.S.H.*

The house profits from never having had an owner other than the builder, so no misguided improvements have ever been

attempted. An unfortunate exception was the removal of the original slate roof. Two dependencies of original construction are of great interest: the outdoor toilet (“a three-seater”) and a majestic carriage house. These will one day be restored for public view. The property now belongs to Oconee County and is operated as an historic museum by the Oconee County Museum Association. It features artifacts of old Oconee life. The public is welcome in the main house during open hours.

#### **CURIOSITIES**

Mr. Lunney moved to Seneca from the East, and established Lunney’s Drug Store in 1886 on the town square. Mrs. Lunney was from Westminster. Though traditional to our eyes, the house was considered very modern in 1909. Large trees before the house were removed in 1999. ■



Number 3

### THE AUSTIN-STOKES HOUSE

(215 South 1st Street)

#### DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1896-97. Present appearance c. 1925.

#### NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

*“The house is of interest in comparison with its neighbors, specifically the Glasier House to the west and the G. W. Gignilliat House across the street, which retain their original appearance. The present austere appearance is the result of modernization at a period when the scroll-saw decorations, the so-called ‘gingerbread’ of the late Victorian era, was in disfavor. Porches, blinds, and all surface decorations were removed in an attempt to give a ‘New England Colonial’ appearance to the house. The basic height and solidity of the house retains a severe dignity.” -- V.S.H.*

Notice the tall and relatively narrow windows. The property extends back to South 2nd Street, the standard gracious “lot” of the turn of century. Dr. Austin, a dentist,

removed the porches c. 1925. Dr. Austin also built on Townville Street from *Sammeth Drugs to Me and The*. Vinyl siding has been attached to the house recently, somewhat obscuring its construction and wood siding. The garage with upper room on the east was added in 2001. This house has the distinction of being the first on the street, which was called “Silk-Stocking Hill” by townsmen. The past two owners are clergy in Seneca. The view from the house remains one of the finest in town.

#### CURIOSITIES

The present owner maintains a fine garden at the very rear, on 2nd Street, where houses of the turn-of-century service community were built. Those houses on 2nd Street and on Pine Street merit a walk by to appreciate their historical integrity. ■



Number 4

**H. J. GIGNILLIAT-GLASIER HOUSE**

*(301 South 1st Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1898, built by H. J. Gignilliat. The J. L. Marret, John W. James and W. R. Ballenger families each lived in it for a considerable time. Restored by Mr. and Mrs. G. Glasier.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“The original builder is said to have satisfied a romantic desire to build a house of seven gables. Certainly these gables give the building its interesting and individual character. The upper gables contain semi-circular or wide rectangular windows and are given further interest by alternate rows of dentil shaped shingles. The central gable, virtually a pediment, over the entrance porch is dignified by a sunburst design. Rather unexpectedly, the porch roof is supported by Roman Doric columns. Compare with the contemporary G. W. Gignilliat House across the street.”-- V.S.H.*

The present owner has added some structure to the rear entrance and rebuilt the inadequate foundation. The previous owner covered the house with vinyl siding, with considerable loss of the sense of the windows. Originally, this property would have extended to the top of the hill, but was divided for other houses. Nonetheless, this house carries much of the romance of the late Victorian era of construction.

**CURIOSITIES**

Stand near this corner and look around. Envision the world of a century ago, with horses and buggies driving to town over narrow dirt lanes. One can still feel it. During Gignilliat’s ownership, Josephus Daniels (later Secretary of the Navy) made several visits. ■



*View from the rear, near S. 2nd Street*

Number 5

**C. N. GIGNILLIAT-MORGAN HOUSE**

*(305 South 1st Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

Originally, at the top of the hill, this house dates from about 1898. Moved to its present location in 1905 by the Gignilliat family, it had once stood where the water tower now stands. A large room was added to the back around 1920, and a c. 1950s add-on is at the right end. Present appearance dates from about 1960.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“Although the present appearance, resulting from the recent (i.e., c.1973) application of aluminum siding and imitation wrought-iron porch supports, is nondescript, the basic simplicity of the original structure makes it possible to fit into an environment which has remained current from the 1980s to the present.” – V.S.H.*

An added room above the driveway has since been removed. The photo above shows the much different impression from the rear of the house, where its seniority and good placement on the land reveals itself. C. N. Gignilliat described how the house was rolled down the hill on logs from its previous position at the water tower.

**CURIOSITIES**

The lot extends to South 2nd Street, as do those of the next two houses, and as shown in the photo above, taken from the rear. The C. N. Gignilliat (son of G. W. Gignilliat) family occupied the house until they moved across the street, in 1927, into their new house. Norma (Gignilliat) Adams, daughter of G. W. Gignilliat, renovated the house in the late 1930s and removed its porches while her family lived there. ■



Number 6  
**THE HOMER BALLENGER HOUSE**  
*(311 South 1st Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**  
1927.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**  
*“This house is interesting as an example of the lag-in-design progress often noted in small towns and rural areas. Though actually constructed in 1927, its appearance, with dark brick and a flat-gabled porch embraced by a parallel flat gable to the roof, bespeak the decade of World War I. It is not surprising for an owner to build a house which copies one he admired a decade earlier.” -- V.S.H.*  
The gracious deep lot that extends to

South 2nd Street calls to mind an apple orchard or, as with the scuppernong trellis behind the house, a vineyard, both very common in the area. One steps through the small arbor down into the rear garden. The interior rooms have the size and grace of the 1920s. This type of house and grounds will be of considerable interest to preservationists when its era lies beyond the memories of the living.

**CURIOSITIES**  
The Ballenger family was another one of the principle families of Seneca’s past. ■





Number 7

**THE G. W. GIGNILLIAT, III. HOUSE**

*( 315 South 1st Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1928.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“A rather simple brick cottage of 1928, [this house] was enlarged by an addition in 1954 at a different level. Unfortunately, a door to the newer part competes with the original door and suggests dual occupancy.” – V.S.H.*

The original cottage is so charmingly conceived that we are reminded that the owners modifying houses during this era were not usually thinking of architectural history. Their’s was the more practical wish for more space at modest cost. Still, the

beautifully situated house, on the deep lot extending to South 2nd Street, with a small but mature forest, conveys tranquility and overall appropriateness. This property, like the Ballenger House next door, will become increasingly more prized by preservationists in decades to come.

**CURIOSITIES**

In the forest behind the house sits the ruin of a substantial greenhouse made of steel ribbing and (broken) glass. The builder of the house, one of the grandsons of G. W. Gignilliat, also built the add-on seen at the right. ■





Number 8

**THE C. N. GIGNILLIAT HOUSE**

*(310 South 1st Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1925.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*"This imposing two-story four square brick house in spacious grounds exemplifies the Georgian tradition and expresses the taste of well-bred, well-to-do Americans throughout the country in the 1920s." -- V.S.H.*

The painted green metal roof harkens to earlier times and associates itself with the family "big house" to the east. C. N. Gignilliat was one of the sons of G. W. Gignilliat, and lived across the street at 305 until 1925. This house has been occupied only by its builder, C. N. Gignilliat and his family, and now by his son Thomas. Its pristine interior is equally evocative. The house was built with a steam heating

system and one-inch oak floorboards. The spacious grounds, extending to the railroad tracks, were part of the original G. W. Gignilliat farm on this side of South 1st Street. The garage, built after the arrival of the automobile, and its associated room and attic are interesting and are coordinate with the house.

**CURIOSITIES**

Three millstones adorn the garden. An especially fine scuppernong trellis is behind the house and has a good fall crop. Among the seventy-year-old pine trees in front of the house are several southern Longleaf Pine, the wood source for these houses. Just west of the house are two large Cedars of Lebanon. ■



Number 9

### THE GEORGE WARREN GIGNILLIAT HOUSE

*(300 South 1st Street)*

#### DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1898. G. W. Gignilliat's earlier house was east of the Presbyterian Church.

#### NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

*"This very distinguished late Victorian house is in virtually original condition. The interesting patterned shingle work of the second story, with alternating rows of dentiled and straight shingles, similar to that in the gables of the Glasier house across the street, must have been originally in some tone of brown or green stain. Stained glass panels appear over the transom of the front door and in several windows. The porch, which is supported by paired posts connected in each bay by a valance of vertical spindles, is more in keeping with the house than is the Roman Doric of the house across the street. The basic understructure has a massiveness which relates it to the Austin-Stokes House across the corner. A comparison of these three houses would be profitable to the student of 1890*

*architecture. Mr. G. W. Gignilliat was among the pioneer merchants who came to Seneca and made large contributions to the development of the town." -- V.S.H.*

#### CURIOSITIES

The thirteen acres between Oak and Poplar Streets and the railroad track constituted the original property, shown on the original town plats as a small farm. Two houses to the west were built later by successive generations of the Gignilliat family. The house remains in almost original condition. The lead-coated copper porch roofs are restored. The original carriage house decayed and was replaced by the 1998 Clayton Carriage House (for automobiles). The front porch originally abutted the Porte Cochere for level stepping into carriages. Original attic windows of distinction have been replaced. The house was repainted (1996) in its original tones of grays and rusty reds.



Number 10  
**THE R. L. NIMMONS, JR. HOUSE**  
*(110 South Fairplay Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

c. 1900.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“One could hardly find a more typical example of the vernacular house of this area at the turn of the century. Basically a square under a pyramidal roof, it has a prominent central gable above a veranda which stretches across the front and wraps around both sides to reach a projecting wing. The slender posts are terminated in brackets which make a graceful transition to the horizontal.” -- V.S.H.*

**CURIOSITIES**

The pillar and iron fence in front is recent, as are the handsomely constructed entrance steps. The sprawling Burckhalter-Davis House stood in 1973 on the adjacent vacant lot at the corner. The set-back Dendy-Macauley house (#11), across the street, was moved there in 1993 from its original location on South 2nd Street, opposite the Education building of the Baptist Church. ■





Number 11

**THE DENDY-MACAULEY-GILBERT HOUSE**

*(107 South Fairplay Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:**

c. 1890. Moved to this location in 1993.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES:**

This square clapboard house has good proportions, with solidity and dignity. It is currently undergoing renovations on a lot behind the Gilbert Funeral Home, just beneath the church parking lot where it stood, for a century, facing the Baptist Church on South 2nd Street. Its original gardens, for which Mrs. Hugh Macauley (a Samuel K. Dendy daughter) was renowned, extended down the hill from a spot opposite the Baptist Church on 2nd Street to almost the spot where the house now stands. The house has been elevated onto a higher foundation of modern construction block following its recent move, giving it a majestic appearance as it views Fairplay Street from a recessed

after the move. Notice the original mullions dividing the windows into four squares atop four rectangles. This house was saved after impending demolition caused it to be moved. The Baptist Church had bought the property for its land but gave the house away to allow it to be saved. Mr. Gilbert accepted the house and moved it, earning thanks from friends of the historic district. The chimneys and fireplaces were removed for the move, along with some later additions.

**CURIOSITIES**

The house had been moved once before, in 1922. Because it was too close to South 2nd Street, it was moved back several feet. At the same time it had a modernization and renovation: including the addition of a larger front porch (rebuilt on the house in its new location). ■



## Number 12

### **SENECA BAPTIST CHURCH**

*( 210 South Fairplay Street)*

#### **DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1924. Modified c. 1980.

#### **NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“This imposing building exemplifies Baptist Church architecture of the first half of the 20th century. The four-column portico is an outstanding example of the ionic order at a time when classical architectural detailing was still remembered. It was organized in 1873, and the first building was erected in 1882.”*  
--V.S.H.

The new sanctuary on the south (not visible in this photo) jutting into the original one was the result of a perceived need for increased size. The description above, written in 1973, nonetheless, can be appreciated today by focusing on the

church’s original features. The Education Building to the east is a more modern construction. Note the stained-glass windows on two levels above the majestic original entrance and on the northern wall of the original sanctuary. The large gable above the columns would have provided unquestioned inspiration.

#### **CURIOSITIES**

Not surprisingly, the church’s membership was badly divided between the wish to preserve historical beauty and the wish for more sanctuary space—a common developmental conflict everywhere. Similar questions occurred over the large parking lot. The Dendy-Macauley House (#11 above) can be seen here in its original location. ■



Number 13

**THE B. A. LOWRY HOUSE**  
*(206 South Fairplay Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1916.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“Referred to locally as [being in the] ‘California style,’ this house has indeed much of the character of a bungalow. The heavy columns and suggestions of trellises (although roofed) link it with the architecture of Maybeck in Berkeley at this time. The brown shingles in alternate narrow and wide rows of the second story, the lattice-like treatment of the gable, the light tan or beige clapboards alternating narrow and wide, under the porch roof are all*

*indicative of this period. Mr. Lowry was mayor of Seneca in the 1920s.” --V.S.H.*

The repainting of the house and addition of gray vinyl siding makes some of Professor Hodges’ remarks of 1973 inappropriate today. But the structure of the house remains much as it was originally.

**CURIOSITIES**

Mr. B. A. Lowry’s daughter, Rachel Lowry, has made an account that may be read among the collection of reminiscences assembled by members of the Presbyterian Church. ■





*Harper family, automobile and house in 1920s*

Number 14

**T. J. HARPER HOUSE AND BURCKHALTER-DAVIS HOUSE**

*(212 South Fairplay and 114 South Fairplay Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

c. 1890 (both houses). Destroyed since the 1973 enactment of the historic residential district.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

These houses were deteriorating fast in 1973 when the Historic District was created, although they might have been saved with an expensive effort. Their loss has greatly thinned the South Fairplay stretch. The houses were similar to the other Victorian structures, although the Burckhalter-Davis House was more rambling and had been

built as a dual-purpose living quarters and store. It was famous for its ten entrances—five on the front porch, which wrapped around the L-shaped front—and five back doors. It served also as a meeting place for Masons and as an early Post Office.

**CURIOSITIES**

The Burckhalter-Davis house stood on the now vacant lot at the corner of Fairplay and South 2nd Street Mr. Davis still lived in Seneca at the time the Historic District was enacted. The Harper House stood up the hill where the modern one-story brick bungalow now sits. ■





Number 15  
**THE THOMPSON-WAIKART HOUSE**  
*(215 South Fairplay Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1914.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“Although typical of pre-World-War I dwellings, this house is different from others in the area. The ground floor is a dark brick while the upper floor is finished in “half timber” and plaster. This romantic reference to medieval England had a tremendous surge of popularity throughout the United States in the 1920s when it became known as Tudor. In spite of this, there exists a marked local carryover in the use of porches on the front and side of the building.” --V.S.H.*

Allusion to Tudor England also utilized diamond mullions in the lower-floor

windows, jutting beams for roof support, external shingles on a protruding second-floor room having four windows on the south side, and chimney pots -- all of which are now common in home building.

**CURIOSITIES**

The present owner (Sara Waikart), granddaughter of Colonel Livingstone, grew up in the Livingstone-Stribling House just behind it (see # 16 below). She was known to generations of Senecans as a painter and a teacher.

The two houses to the south on Fairplay Street, along with one diagonally across the street, also contribute to the spirit of this historic district. ■



Number 16

**THE LIVINGSTONE-STIBLING HOUSE**

*(210 South Townville Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1885.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“This house is a splendid example of late 19th-century domestic architecture. It is so similar to the Glasier [#4] and G. W. Gignilliat [#9] houses on West South 1st Street as to be readily confused with them--in fact, suggesting construction dates less than a decade apart. In addition to the porch posts and the spindled valance of the Gignilliat House, this house has a scroll work ‘fringe’ of great charm which is to be seen on the upper porch of the Abbott House on North 1st Street of a similar date (1887). An oddity of this house is that it faces North, at a right angle to Townville Street and away from the adjacent South 3rd Street, which suggests that it must have had more lawn and an entrance drive toward South 2nd Street. Dr. Stribling was one of the early medical doctors of Seneca.” --V.S.H.*

This house is rumored by old-timers to

have replaced an earlier house that burned around 1880. The possibility exists that the summer kitchen to the south may have survived the fire; and the site atop one of Seneca’s pristine hills might explain the north facing. There were no other houses on this block before 1900. The sale plat for the initial city, marked off in lots for sale, shows no evidence of existing property at that time, however. Notice the Victorian chimney and the well house between the house and summer kitchen. A recent owner covered the house with vinyl siding. Present owners restored the house to its fine appearance in 2000.

**CURIOSITIES**

The view toward town is one of the finest in all Seneca, and must have been marvelous from the original house, unimpeded by other houses. Walk down the hill toward town and imagine a century ago. The woodwork of the entrance rooms and staircase is a joy to behold.



Number 17

**THE LONSDALE CO. - H. L. THOMPSON HOUSE**

*(206 South Townville Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1925. The Lonsdale Company bought local textiles in the 1920s. They built this house for their General Manager.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“Not many examples still remain of this type of substantial family house of the mid 1920s. Although this square clapboard house has classic proportions, great solidity and dignity, there are actually no classic details. The porch roof is supported by paired square posts rather than by columns, and the trim has little or no molding. The simple direct forthrightness gives this house*

*an American-ness which distinguishes it from any ‘period.’” --V.S.H.*

**CURIOSITIES**

The metal roof on the porch was not only practical but popular during Seneca's development. Most metal roofs are gone, as are many of the porches themselves; but the original porch on the G. W. Gignilliat House (see #9) remains after almost a century. It is very likely that the Lonsdale Company acquired the land for this house from that of the Livingstone-Stribling House, which faces it (see # 16, immediately above). ■





Number 18

**THE W. P. NIMMONS HOUSE**  
*(207 South Townville Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1902. Present appearance 1993.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“A vernacular house of the turn of the century, chronologically, this house comes between the Marrett House [#4] and the Lunny [House] Museum [#2]; if anything, it is related to the former [more than to the latter]. Its forceful frontal symmetry has been altered (by 1973) by the addition of an upstairs sleeping porch (still evident).” --V.S.H.*

Considerable enlargement (the south wing with massive fireplace and chimney) was added in 1993 by the owners, as part of a restoration of the original house. A new structure at the rear of the house, replacing an earlier addition, was also done at this time. But the original house remains intact, beautiful and evident, within the whole.

Enjoy the original work within the gables and the triple window under the front gable. The house sits spaciously in the middle of a city block.

**CURIOSITIES**

Nimmons was another prominent family associated with the growth of Seneca. Mr. W. P. Nimmons bought the fertilizer business from Mr. G. W. Gignilliat and operated it successfully for a long time. W. P. Nimmons and his wife were married in a ceremony in the Gignilliat House [#9] on South 1st Street. The two adjacent houses to the south of the Nimmons house are, though simple, noteworthy as early twentieth-century additions to a fine street and could have been included among the contributing properties. ■



Number 19

**THE HINES HOUSE**

*(S. 2nd Street and Townville Street [corner])*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1876.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*"The present severe appearance of this late 19th-century house is due to the loss of porches which extended across the front on the ground floor and possibly on the second floor. A second-story porch extended the width of the house. The present porch would be adequate if it had properly proportioned square posts, but the present wrought iron is visually too thin although probably structurally adequate. The house is presently [i.e., 1973] divided into two apartments on the ground floor, which seems an appropriate use although the second story is not utilized." --V.S.H.*

This was the first house in this area of town that still stands. It has a sweet simplicity. Standing close, one is impressed by its sense of height in proportion to its widths. Vinyl siding has been recently attached.

**CURIOSITIES**

Dr. E. A. Hines was a local physician and Secretary of the South Carolina Medical Association. His son, John Elbridge Hines, became Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States. The church to which he belonged sits diagonally across the street. ■



Number 20

**THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**

*(Townville Street at North 2nd Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1882.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“A building of such essential simplicity is rarely found. A timeless building, it is worthy to appear among the best in the state and should be preserved at all cost even if relocation is necessary. The church was organized in 1879.”*  
—V.S.H.

**CURIOSITIES**

The building was consecrated on May 18, 1882 by the Right Reverend W. B. Howe, sixth Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina. It is easy to imagine the Seneca of over a century ago by picturing this church building in use. In 1903, the membership numbered thirteen families. A more recent building behind it (west of the church) serves as the studio for the Blue Ridge Art Association, which now owns the church building. ■





Number 21

**J. G. HARPER-BURLEY HOUSE**

*(Townville at South 1st Street [west corner])*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1890. Present appearance is recent.

*lawn is an octagonal 'flower house' of brick, which is worthy of special notice. An upper story was destroyed by fire.* --V.S.H.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*"A very simple, direct, one-story 'vernacular' house whose roof slope continues downward to cover a porch of turned posts. Again, as at the top of this street, the house faces at right angles to the street toward the north. On the front*

**CURIOSITIES**

Recent siding and revisions have made the historic house a little harder to see, especially so in that the upper story is missing. ■





## Number 22

### J. W. STRIBLING-DOYLE-HOLLEMAN HOUSE

*(Townville at South 1st Street [east corner])*

#### DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1889. Parts were removed in 1918 and the front modified.

#### NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

*"This is the most pretentious house in the area. Like the Harper-Burley House across the street, this house faces north but is a long way from South 1st Street. Present (1973) excavation on South 1st Street indicates that the owner is taking advantage of the GC zoning. However this need not detract from the house if care is taken in screening the structure. The presence of two bay windows, each with its own roof, suggests that the house has been greatly modified and its original aspect changed. Early photos show it to have been rather like the Stribling [#16] and Gignilliat [#9] houses. The builder of the house, Mr. J. W. Stribling, was the First Clerk of Court for Oconee County and founder of the Seneca Bank." -- V.S.H.*

The grand columns on the front porch were not originally part of the house. They are said to have been added by Dr. C. Doyle, who wanted the house to have a different visual impact. Dr. Doyle also cut off two sections of the house. Preservationists disapprove of such modifications, which, however, contribute to the ambience of the neighborhood because these changes were made long ago and are consistent with changes occurring in the district as a whole.

#### CURIOSITIES

Two old frame houses above this house, on South 2nd Street (see #22a, below) were pieces of this house, having been cut off from it in 1918 to create separate dwellings. A walk up to see them is worthwhile. Note the old and decaying barn and house just to the east. ■



Number 22a

**THE DOYLE-HOUSE FRAGMENTS**  
*(207 and 209 South 2nd Street)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

1889, removed from the Stribling House behind them (see #22 above). These parts were cut off and moved in 1918.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

The western fragment has a regal height for such a narrow structure—precisely because it was once part of the much larger house. These six rooms were at the back of the house, which explains the lack of windows on the rear of #22. The eastern fragment (209) became the home of Mrs. Fannie

Bruce. It was the “short L” of the original house. Notice the original metal roof. 207 has recently (in 2001) been renovated and enlarged since the photograph was taken, and it now includes a Charleston-like entrance on the west.

**CURIOSITIES**

Dr. Clay Doyle carved these wings off of the original large house (at location #22) in which he was then living and moved them both up the hill to this location. ■





Number 23

**ROACH-MATHESON-BELL LOG HOUSE**

*(110 West South 2nd Street, rear; also visible from rear of Presbyterian Church)*

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

c. 1835.

of 110 South 2nd Street. It can be seen from the Presbyterian Church parking lot behind the house.

**NOTEWORTHY FEATURES**

*“This one-and-a-half-story log house was built at Long Creek in Oconee County by Jeremiah Roach. It was relocated in 1969 to this location by Mrs. Bruce Bell.”--V.S.H.*

Unfortunately, it is not practical for a walker to inspect the house at close range, as it stands on private property to the rear

**CURIOSITIES**

Next to the log cabin is an old relocated schoolhouse. The resident owner, Louise Bell, was the Chair of the Seneca Centennial Committee, which worked hard for the creation of the historic residential district. ■



## The South Carolina Review

Sample copy \$5 plus \$1.50 postage per copy

One year subscription (institutional) \$15 plus \$3 postage

One year subscription (individual) \$10 plus \$3 postage

Two year subscription (institutional) \$23 plus \$6 postage

Two year subscription (individual) \$18 plus \$6 postage

Make all checks payable to Clemson University

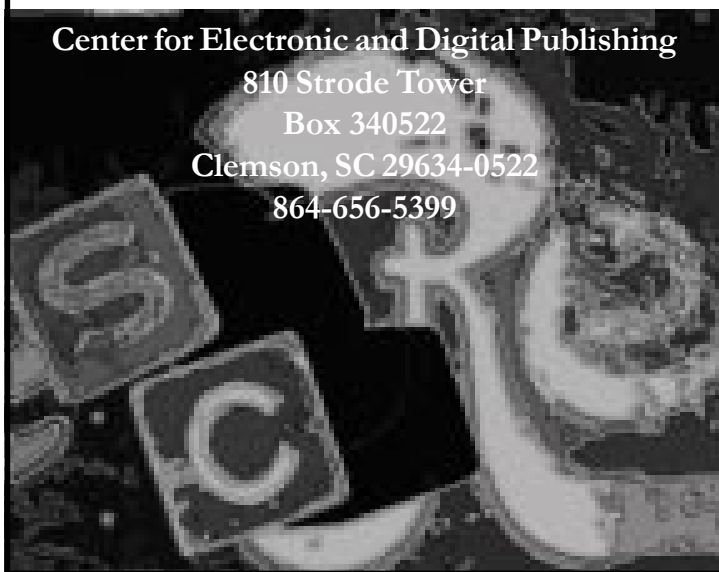
**Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing**

810 Strode Tower

Box 340522

Clemson, SC 29634-0522

864-656-5399



# Residential Seneca, SC

(see p. 2 and passim)

