

Laura Stevens, AICP
Senior Environmental Planner
Parrish and Partners, LLC
140 Stonebridge Drive, Suite 500
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

June 25, 2018

Re: Stoney Memorial Gates (Resource 1337), Charleston County, SC

Dear Ms. Stevens:

Historians with Brockington and Associates, Inc., conducted archival research and field investigations on the Stoney Memorial Gates (Resource 1337) at the Fort Johnson and Stone Post Roads intersection on June 5-13, 2018. The following summary provides information to assist you in the planning stage of the proposed improvements to the Secessionville and Fort Johnson Roads intersection. These investigations met the standards and guidelines of the SC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and are part of a due diligence planning stage in the proposed project. The results should remain valid for approximately 10 years, unless new techniques or standards appear during that period. Future permitting and/or other triggering actions requiring SHPO review for compliance with federal, state, or local laws will require a more detailed investigation and report of these investigations and the concurrence of the SHPO with the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility recommendations.

The stone gates were erected at the entrance to the Agricultural Society of South Carolina (AGSC) tract on James Island in 1926. In 1925, in conjunction with the US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station Office, the AGSC acquired 159 acres on James Island for agricultural experimentation, specifically work on Sea Island Cotton production. The AGSC had at least two experimental offices that had preceded the one on James Island, one near Summerville, and one at the old Washington Race Course near Charleston. The Federal Government rented the land and managed the station. These experiment stations were established across the country to aid agriculture beginning in the last decades of the 19th century. The AGSC owned the land but the Federal Government rented it and managed the experimentation work.

Samuel Gaillard Stoney (1868-1926) who led the Society from 1909 to 1926 had recently died and had been an important member of the society since the 1880s. A plaque was attached to the entrance gates to the station honoring Stoney. The Gates were likely standard US Government construction. The east post plaque is marked "Agricultural Society of South Carolina, Organized 1785, United States Agricultural Field Station, Established 1925." The plaque on the west post is marked "In Memoriam, Samuel Gaillard Stoney, Our President 1910 to 1926, His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'this was a man,' A tribute of honor and affection by the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, 1926."

The Stoney Memorial Gates were first recorded in the *James Island & Johns Island Historical Survey* (Fick 1989) as Resource 2490063, later renumbered as Resource 1337 by the SHPO. The resource was included in the list of "Sites Worthy of Further Investigation to Determine Potential National Register Eligibility." At the time, the SHPO agreed on the recommendation that further investigation was required to make a NRHP eligibility determination.

A 1999 auto accident damaged the east post and the State Highway Department, now South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), informed the County and City of Charleston that the memorial gates needed to be moved because they presented a safety hazard, or they would be dismantled. The plan brought on intense lobbying by residents and the AGSC, enlisting efforts by Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley and Highway Commissioner Arnold Goodstein. A newspaper article at the time states that the highway department ultimately issued a variance to allow the gates to remain in the right of way (The Post and Courier, January 29, 1999 13-A).

Brockington Architectural Historian conducted an intensive level field survey of the Stoney Memorial Gates with photo documentation and the completion of a Statewide Survey of Historic Resources Survey Form. The setting of Resource 1337 is of a common intersection in the region: where a once rural low traffic crossroad has become high traffic due to the ever-growing residential development of the area. Midcentury houses are on both the southwest and northeast corners on the intersection. An abandoned commercial building sits on the northwest corner of the intersection, while a modern fire station rests on the southeast corner of the intersection. Mature oak trees line portions of the roads leading to the intersection.

The Stoney Memorial Gates are two gate posts with stepped wing walls & terminal posts constructed of Belgian stones and positioned approximately six feet from the corners of the roadway intersection. The primary posts are approximately 53 inches by 53 inches at the base and 41 inches by 41 inches at the posts. Both primary posts are approximately 10 feet tall. The wing sections are approximately seven feet long with slight concave curve. The wings are approximately 35 inches tall at their lowest section, 70 inches tall at the tallest section, and 13 inches deep. The terminal posts are approximately 35 inches by 35 inches and 54 inches tall. The stones used in construction of the gates are of roughly two different dimensions: 12 inches by 6 inches by 5 inches, and 14 inches by 12 inches by 5 inches. Please see the accompanying completed survey form and photographs for reference.

The Stoney Memorial Gates were assessed for potential eligibility for listing on the NRHP based on the significance criteria set forth in *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Under Criteria Considerations, the Bulletin states (National Park Service, 1997):

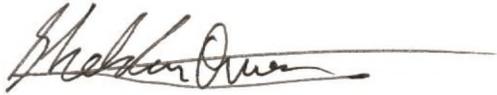
Ordinarily...properties primarily commemorative in nature...shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties *will qualify* if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:...f. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance...

It does not appear that the Stoney Memorial Gates possess *exceptional significance* based on design, age, tradition, or symbolic value. The design of the gates is of a common technique used around the time of their construction. The gates are around 92 years old, and in the region, that age is not exceptional for an architectural resource. Archival research did not identify any historic tradition tied directly to the gates other than as a local landmark used for directions. Archival research did not identify any symbolic value attributed to the memorial gates. The Stoney Memorial Gates (Resource 1337) are recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. However, archival research indicates that in 1999 the public ascribed a local importance to the gates. It seems likely that any attempt to remove the Stoney Memorial Gates could be met with resistance from the public.

To summarize, The Stoney Memorial Gates (Resource 1337) were erected at the Fort Johnson and Stone Post Roads intersection in 1926 as an entrance to the AGSC and US Department of Agriculture joint Agricultural Experiment Station Office. The gates were used to memorialize recently deceased Samuel Gaillard Stoney with a plaque. The SC Highway Department planned to remove the gates after an auto accident in 1999 partially destroyed one of the wings. However, a local public effort prevented the removal of the gates and the damaged portions were repaired. When assessed using the relevant NRHP Criteria Consideration f, the memorial gates do not retain exceptional significance. Therefore, we recommend these memorial gates not eligible for the NRHP. However, based on the past public effort to preserve the Stoney Memorial Gates, they were seen as an important local historic resource, which should be taken into account in the planning stages of the proposed project.

Thanks again for the opportunity to assist you with this project. I will be happy to provide any additional information or discuss any aspect of the investigations with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sheldon Owens", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Sheldon Owens
Architectural Historian