

Ebenezer Maxwell House  
200 W. Tulpehocken Street  
Philadelphia (Germantown)  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1098

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, O.C. 20240

1400  
SF  
51-3 Bldg.  
100-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

EBENEZER MAXWELL HOUSE

HABS No. PA-1098

Location: 200 W. Tulpehocken Street, Philadelphia (Germantown section), Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

Present Use: Victorian arts museum.

Significance: This house is a fine example of the Tudor Victorian style. It was built in 1859 for Ebenezer Maxwell, a successful dry goods merchant in Philadelphia. Authorship of the design is uncertain although it has been attributed to Samuel Sloan.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1859.
2. Architect: See Significance statement.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following history of ownership comes from the City Hall of Philadelphia, Registry Unit, Department of the Records, Philadelphia, Pa.

Plan 49 N 14, Lot 11

Date:	Grantor:	Grantee:
12-30-1852	Isaac S. Serrill	Christopher Fallon John Fallon

a tract with the building thereon erected sit SWesterly s Main St. in the Borough of Germantown beginning at a corner in the side of the said street a corner of Wm. Bonner's land then S 63°27' W 5.53 perches to a cornerstone then N 39° (?)' W 8.28 perches to a corner the S 42° (?)' W 18.78 perches to a corner then N 45°56' W 6.67 perches to a stone then S 42° W 112.63 perches to a corner then N 48°17' W 9.85 perches to SE s Washington Lane then along said Lane S 41°55' W 127.41 perches to center of a Road

for \$10,000.00 and a mortgage debt of \$10,000.00

Date:

Grantor:

Grantee:

dividing the Township of  
Roxborough and Germantown then  
along center of said Road S  
47°59' E 43.53 perches to a corner  
then N 42°10' E 244.22 perches  
to a Maple Tree then N 32°47' W 14.  
93 perches to a corner then N  
41°49' E 15.87 perches to a  
corner then N 55°43' E 4.4 perches  
to side of said Main Street  
then along same N 28°05' W 6.43  
perches to beginning

Note: This above description is  
quite incomprehensible.

4-24-1858

Christopher Fallon,  
Attorney at Law  
Sarah L., h/w

John Fallon,  
Attorney at Law

1/2 part of premises held  
in common with John Fallon  
(there was no specific mention  
of the above premises)

11-17-1858

John Fallon,  
Attorney at Law  
Susan E., h/w

Ebenezer Maxwell,  
merchant

a lot sit SEasterly s  
Tulpehocken Street and  
SWesterly s Green(e) St.  
Front on Tulpehocken:  
150'. Depth: 291'4"  
to the middle of a 20'  
wide street or alley

being part of the above  
premises

10-20-1862

Ebenezer Maxwell, merchant  
Anna G., h/w

Rosalia C. Hunter,  
wife of Wm. Hunter,  
Jr., merchant

a lot and stone dwelling  
sit SEasterly s Tulpehocken  
St. and SWesterly s Green(e)  
Street

Date:	Grantor:	Grantee:
	Front on Tulpehocken: 150'. Depth: 217'  being the greater part of the above large lot	
1-24-1870	Rosalia C. Hunter, widow	Alexander Allan; Wm. Underdown, trustees
7-12-1900	Wm. Underdown, surviving trustee	The Real Estate Title Ins. and Trust Co.-- deed of trust for Rosalia C. Stevenson
4-12-1911	Braddin Hamilton Augusta Rosalie Hamilton (nee Stevenson), h/w. The Real Estate Title Ins. and Trust Co. of Phila.	Howard A. Stevenson
	Howard A. Stevenson by will to Augusta R. Stevenson 1/4 interest. Other interest not mentioned.	
11-20-1956	O.C. No. 2633 56 Estate of Augusta R. Stevenson her 1/4 interest	American Red Cross
10-21-1957	The American National Red Cross et al.	Greenwood Warehous- ing Corp.
5-4-1964	Greenwood Warehousing Corp.	Unitarian Universa- list Hse. of the Jos. Priestly Dist- rict, for \$30,000.00
1965		Germantown Historica Society

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A suburban mansion with eclectic features.

2. Condition of fabric: Restored condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The mansion measures 78'-3 1/2" (seven-bay front) X 45'-9 1/2" which includes the kitchen wings on the west and south sides of the house. It is two-and-a-half stories plus three-story tower. The layout is irregular rectangle.
2. Foundations: Dressed rubble, medium grey in color.
3. Walls: Random-width hewn Wissahickon schist with maroonstone diamond patterns. Color of stone: medium grey.
4. Structural system, framing: Stone bearing walls. Wood structural system with wood joists. The 1859 fire insurance survey for this house indicates that the joists are of hemlock.
5. Porches: There are three nice porches, two on the front and one on the rear. The front ones are between the entrance, and are similar in details. They have "bundled" columns, decorated arches, and miniature battlemented cornices. The rear porch is located on the southeast side of the house, and is similar in design to the front porches.
6. Chimneys: There are four stone chimneys, two in the main block and two in the wing.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The front door is set in a series of stone arch recesses. The door is a double-arch door each with two rectangular and one-half semicircular door panels. Panels are deeply recessed and molded. The front porch doors are double French doors which are similar in design to the windows. Other doors are in the rear.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The windows in the entire structure (including tower) are four-sash casement windows. Each sash has two lights and a single "transom". A bay window on the east elevation has three windows with casement sash. Dormers are circular sash, now changed to diamond-shaped panes.  
  
Shutters to most windows are three-panel operating flat shutters.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The main roof is mansard with slate and sheet metal edging. It also has a ridge and a valley. The

side wing is stepped in two levels: the higher level, a hipped roof, and the lower level, a gable roof. Slate, which has been the standard covering since construction, is plane unpatterned grey.

- b. Cornice: The wood cornice is flat and molded with a slight parapet effect.
- c. Dormers: The dormers have interesting Gothic architraves. For their sash, see Window section.
- d. Tower: A tower occupies front central part of the house. Its slate-covered mansard roof has dormers on its four sides. A fancy railing crowns it.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: Original rooms included the following: a parlor, a dining room, a library, a kitchen, and a hall with a vestibule. See sketched first floor plan in the Sources of Information section, under the heading, "Supplemental Material".

The hall is centered in the main block of the house and continues to the rear. To left is a large parlor with a bay window. To right are a dining room and a library with built-in bookshelves. In the wings are two rooms (unnamed at this writing), a new dining room, a pantry room, and a kitchen.

- b. Second floor: Six rooms, a hall and a bathroom made up the original second floor plan.

Today the second floor plan is similar to the first floor, with a central hall, flanking rooms, etc. A bathroom has been built in the tower portion of the house. At left are two bedrooms with double sliding doors between. (The doors are possibly original, as they are mentioned in the 1859 fire insurance survey). At right are two rooms with a passage to the wings.

- c. Third floor: Current third floor plan was not included in this survey. Original plan included three rooms, a hall, and a storeroom.

2. Stairways: In the 1859 fire insurance survey, the main stair was a "continual rail stairs with yellow pine steps, turned ash balusters, walnut rail and newel post". It is still there, and is largely unchanged. There is a curved turn at a landing between first and second floors.

The fire insurance survey also mentioned a "plain winding back stair way with white pine steps" that extended to third floor.

3. Flooring: Modern hardwood flooring in most of the house. Some rooms still have the original pine floor, called "sap pine" by the fire insurance survey. Original cellar floor was of mortar, according to the fire insurance survey.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most rooms have plaster walls and ceilings with stucco cornices, which are mentioned in the fire insurance survey. Major rooms have elaborate plaster ceiling medallions. For a view of the latter, see HABS photograph, HABS No. PA-1098-11. Simple baseboards line the second floor.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: First floor doors were originally six-panel type with mortice locks. Second and third floors originally had four-panel doors with mortice locks. First, second, and third floor doors all have architraves.
  - b. Windows: Like the doors, the windows have architraves. A number of them have original paneled interior shutters.
6. Notable features: Typical mid-19th century marble mantles are in the major rooms, three in the first floor and two in the second floor.

Original bathrooms featured hot and cold water and a wood bathtub with copper lining.

The bookcases in the library, as mentioned above, were originally fitted with sash doors and decorated with stained glass panels.

Original kitchen included the following: a cooking range, a boiler, an iron sink with hot and cold water, a pantry, and closets.

Small diamond-cross windows in the second floor have fancy stained and painted glass.
7. Hardware: Some servants' bell call systems remain. Mortice locks, as mentioned above, were the original door hardware.
8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: Registers for all hot air systems are in the walls and floors throughout the house. Old iron heating ducts (interesting design) are in the floors and walls. According to the fire insurance survey, a brick furnace was in the cellar for the purpose of supplying heat to the ducts in the upper floors.
  - b. Lighting: Modern electric fixtures. Some handsome original gas fixtures remain on the walls.

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c. Plumbing: At the time of the 1859 construction, gas pipes were installed throughout the house.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is located on the west side of Germantown Avenue, a busy road. Cement walks and brick walks are around the house.
2. Outbuilding: A small stone outhouse with a polygonal roof is in the rear yard.
3. Other information: A frame conservatory was built along with the house. It was located in the rear southeast part of the house. It measured 8' X 13' and included a skylight, roundhead windows, and fancy columns.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Property ownership records, Philadelphia City Hall, Registry Unit, Records Department, Philadelphia, Pa.

Fire insurance survey, 1858, for 200 W. Tulpehocken Street, from the files of the Fire Association, Philadelphia, Pa.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Webster, Richard. Philadelphia Preserved. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976

B. Supplemental Material: See last page.

Prepared by: James C. Massey  
Architect, Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
August 19, 1964  
(architectural section)

Susan McCown  
Historian, Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
July 19, 1984  
(historical and architectural  
sections)

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was made possible from the Mission 66 program of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), National Park Service. James C. Massey, a HABS supervisory architect, directed the program. Drawings and measurements were made by NPS architect A. Craig Morrison. The 1964 documentation was written by Mr. Massey, and was updated and edited in 1984 by Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office. The photographs were taken in 1964 by Jack E. Boucher, a HABS staff photographer.

