

Maxcy-Rhett House
1111 Craven and Church Streets
Beaufort
Beaufort County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-288

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

MAXCY-RHETT HOUSE

Address: 1111 Craven and Church Streets, Beaufort, Beaufort County, South Carolina.

Present Owner and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Claude McLeod, 1111 Craven Street, Beaufort, South Carolina.

Present Use: Residential.

Brief Statement of Significance: A mid-nineteenth century mansion notable for secessionist activity and architectural character.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Original and subsequent owners: Milton Maxcy; later Edmund Rhett, Barnwell; now Mr. and Mrs. Claude McLeod.
2. Date of erection: Earliest part, mid-eighteenth century.
3. Notes on original plan and construction of building: Basement walls of original building remain; it was once a two-story building.
4. Notes on known alterations and additions: About 1830, under the ownership of Edmund Rhett, the second story was removed and a two-story house erected on the first-story walls of the old building. A rear porch has been enclosed within recent times.
5. Sources of information:
 - a. Primary and unpublished sources: A stereopair photographic print, taken c. 1862 by Sam A. Cooley, photographer of the Tenth U. S. Army Corps, is in the Beaufort Library.
 - b. Secondary and published sources: South Carolina, in American Guide Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941). Other data supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Howard E. Danner of Beaufort, South Carolina.

- B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with Building: Meetings to discuss secession were held here, and it is popularly believed that a draft of the Ordinance of Secession was written here by Barnwell Rhett. Occupied by U. S. Army officers during Civil War.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A mansion with a mid-18th century tabby basement, double-tiered piazza and notable interior finish.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Number of stories, bays, overall dimensions, layout--shape: two stories over high basement; 3 by five bays; 40' front by 30' deep, plus 9'-deep piazza; rectangular.
2. Foundations: Tabby, stuccoed; some large brick, stuccoed. High basement.
3. Wall construction: Upper two stories of frame, clapboards exposed 5 1/2", painted white.
On south side: wood double-tiered piazza over arcaded basement; fluted Greek Ionic columns at main level, Corinthian above, Tower-of-the-Winds capitals. Carved marble stair with wrought and cast iron rails at east end of piazza. Ceilings paneled, with moldings similar to doors.
4. Chimneys: Two interior chimneys, stuccoed above roof.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Entrance doorway centered on south side, opening to main level of piazza; side lights and rectangular transom light. Wide pilaster trim with paneled corner blocks and center block. Door has six molded panels.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Six-over-six light, double-hung sash, except for French windows which open to piazza. Architrave trim. Louvered blinds.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hip roof, composition shingles (modern).
 - b. Cornice: Wood cornice with dentil course and moldings; a modern sheet-metal gutter is hung outside it.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans

- a. Central stair hall, two major rooms each side. Front piazza. Rooms at the rear fill the area of a former porch. 10'-7" ceiling.
- b. Second floor is similar; 9'-10" ceiling. Basement is generally similar.

2. Stairways: Basement to first floor--straight flight, open string. First to second floors--open well, open string, brackets, turned newel, round mahogany rail with turned mahogany balusters (painted), yellow pine treads (natural color).
3. Flooring: Basement largely floored with 6" yellow pine boards. First floor is supported on 3" x 11" joists, 30" on centers, bearing on heavy yellow pine sill. First and second floors covered with yellow pine boards, 4" to 7 1/2" wide, natural color. This is first-growth lumber, still perfectly preserved.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Typically plaster on lath, painted. Front parlors have ornamental floral plaster centerpieces in ceiling, and ornamental plaster cornices. Hall has ceiling centerpiece and ornamental cornice. Other rooms have molded plaster cornices.
5. Doorways and doors: Double sliding doors between hall and front parlors, six molded panels each half; other doors single, hung on two butts, six molded panels. Fluted pilaster trim with ornamental corner blocks. Square-headed opening between front and rear halves of hall.
6. Trim: High, painted wood base. Front windows extend to floor, others are paneled below stool.
7. Hardware: Six openings, in basement arcade, have wrought and cast-iron grilles.
8. Lighting: Nothing of historical note.
9. Heating: Fireplaces in each major room. Dark-colored marble mantels of simple design in first-floor rooms and front rooms of second floor. Simple mantels in front basement rooms.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Corner lot on residential street; blocks small in size. Faces south, overlooking waterfront.

2. Outbuildings: Frame, one-story kitchen building (now used as a studio), 12' x 20', gable roof. A large central chimney divides the space into two rooms, each with a large cooking fireplace.
3. Enclosures: Wall of stucco on west side, with a simple gateway; another stucco wall on east side of lot. Wrought and cast-iron fence across south front of yard, connecting with entrance railing; anthemion finials surmount grille pedestals.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
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