

Albert L. Scott House
29 South Market Street
Petersburg
Virginia

HABS NO. VA-648

HABS
VA
27-PET,
25-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

ALBERT L. SCOTT HOUSE

HABS
VA

Location: 29 South Market Street, Petersburg, Virginia

27-PET,
25-

Present Owner: Dr. Mason Romaine, 29 South Market Street,
Petersburg, Virginia

Present Occupant: Dr. and Mrs. Romaine

Present Use: Private Residence

Statement of Significance: This fine Victorian house, built c. 1860-1861, is particularly noteworthy on the exterior because of its elaborate window surrounds, heavy bracketed cornice, bold balusters on the balconies and entrance stair rail, belvedere, and scored stucco walls. On the interior, the marble mantels, newel, stair balusters, and heavy plaster ornamentation on the ceilings are noteworthy features.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1860-61 (Landbook 1860 and 1861, Handwritten bound manuscripts in the Clerk's Office of Hustings Court, Petersburg, Virginia.)
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: A chain of title for the building follows. Deed Books are in the Clerk's Office of Hustings Court at Petersburg.

1858 Deed October 2, 1858 recorded in
Book 25 page 394
Theophilus Nash
to
A. L. Scott
(property)

1862 Deed December 31, 1862 recorded in
Book 27 page 282
Albert L. Scott
Ella T. Scott
to
Travis T. Broocks

1874 Deed February 11, 1874 recorded in
Book 37 page 347
Thomas T. Broocks
P. H. Broocks
to

A. A. Allen

1893 Deed October 2, 1893 recorded in
Book 56 page 363
A. A. Allen
Virginia P. Allen
to
Victoria A. Romaine

1941 Deed October 1, 1941 recorded in
Book 144 page 9
Charles N. Romaine
Elizabeth P. Romaine
(one-half share of property)
to
Mason Romaine

4. Original plans and construction: Unknown.
5. Alterations and additions: The room arrangement of the ell portion of the house was changed c. 1936, and the ceilings were lowered in several of the rooms on the first floor of the main building. The front windows were changed in 1950, according to Dr. Romaine. There was originally a rear stairway. This has been removed.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

This building reflects the wealth and affluence that was present in Petersburg just prior to the War between the States.

C. Sources of Information:

Old Views: Unpublished photograph in the possession of Dr. and Mrs. Romaine before remodeling. c. 1950.

Prepared by Randall J. Biallas
University of Illinois, Urbana
August 1968

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Albert L. Scott House is a Victorian residence of the mid-1800's. Its ornate exterior detailing and handsome interiors make in an excellent example of the period.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The house is basically rectangular, with a small ell at the southeast (rear) corner. The main house is 52' (three bays) x 42', and the ell is 28' (two bays) x 17'. The main house is two stories high, with a basement, and a belvedere capping the roof.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Wall construction: Brick, originally covered with scored mastic. Now scored stucco in ashlar finish.
4. Structural system, framing:
 - a. Walls: Brick bearing walls.
 - b. Floors: 2 x 10 joists (approximately 16" o.c.) span along the short dimension between walls.
5. Porches: The covered front porch is supported by decorative moulded wood square columns and pilasters. The front entrance is recessed into the front hallway, thereby giving a strong sense of entry into the house from the porch. Granite steps lead up to the porch (and first floor) level, 5' above grade. On each side of the steps is a stair rail, splayed out at the base and terminated by handsome moulded newel posts. The entire rail and posts are large, keeping in the scale of the steps. Projecting out from the first floor windows are small balconies with ballustrades supported by two large brackets in a double ogee pattern. There is a similar ballustrade on the roof of the entrance porch.
6. Chimneys: Five brick chimneys (stuccoed). Four on main building and one on wing. All have ornamented projecting belt courses near their caps.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are two sets of large exterior doors at the front entrance. The outer ones are arched and were originally solid wood (paneled) but now have glass panels. The inner doors are rectangular with a glass transom above.
 - b. Windows and shutters: There is a double window on each side of the entrance on the first floor. These are high linear windows which reach from the floor to just below the ceiling, and are arched at the top with moulded decoration and keystone. The windows have been closed off on the interior at 3' above the floor and the ceiling has been lowered 2½' so that the arches are no longer visible from the interior. The original glass and sash have been replaced. Second story windows,

directly above and center over the floor windows, have ornamental moulding around the frame and are also arched at the top. They are double hung, with four lights--two in each sash. In the center of the second floor there is a double window similar to the ones at the first floor. On the south side there are three windows on each floor in the main house and five on each floor in the wing. All are double hung with six lights in each sash in the main building and four lights in each sash in the wing. The north side has a handsome bay window in the center at the second floor level. However, this may not be original, as the owner (Dr. Mason Romaine) reports that the house was originally built with no windows on the north side.

8. Roof: The roof is wood frame with supporting interior columns (wood) in the attic. The hipped roof rises approximately 6' from the lower edge to the base of the "widow's walk." It is covered with slate, which is placed directly on the roof rafters with no waterproofing material underneath. Subsequent owners have found it necessary to pour tar over the roof every few years to prevent leaking.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans, general: There have been several alterations and changes through remodeling, but the rooms are all in the basic original organization.
 - a. Basement: Rooms open off each side of a double loaded center hallway. Stairs lead down from rear of first floor hall.
 - b. First floor: The first floor consists of a central hallway with two rooms on each side (each with a fireplace along exterior wall). Originally a large enclosed porch extended across rear. Part of this has now been converted to the kitchen. Small rooms open off the hallway from kitchen. Stairs opposite front entrance (central hall) lead to upper floors.
 - c. Second floor: This has the same basic arrangement as the first floor. However, at the end of the hall (front) two glass windows open onto the roof of the front porch. The rear wall at the landing to the second floor has been removed, and an enclosed hallway to the second floor wing added behind. Originally the second floor wing has to be reached through other stairs that have now been removed.
 - d. Attic and "widow's walk": The attic is a large open space with a stair leading to the widow's walk, which

consists of one small room with double windows on all four sides.

2. Stairways: There is one central stairway. It is open, with ornate bannister rails, posts, and newel. The newel is basically octagonal shaped. All wood on the stair (newel, railing, and balusters) is mahogany.
3. Flooring: A parquet wood in decorative block pattern has been placed over the original pine floor on the first floor. The second floor is pine. Flooring in the basement was originally pine but was removed when it began to decay, leaving exposed earth as the present covering.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls, and particularly the ceilings, of the main home have undergone extensive remodeling. All walls and ceilings are painted plaster finish. The ceiling in the central hallway is 14', the height of all the first floor rooms originally. The two rooms on each side have since been lowered to 11½' and the large moulded plaster cornice which used to extend around all the rooms has been replaced with a small wood cornice in all rooms except the hall. Also on the hall ceiling is a large flowered decorative plaster moulding which accentuates the original lantern chandelier which hangs from its center. Walls and ceilings in all other rooms, save the attic and basement, are plastered, and papered in some cases. The basement walls are exposed brick and the ceiling is ¾" plaster, which in many cases has fallen off, leaving the first floor joists exposed. The attic walls are brick and the roof joists are exposed.
5. Doorways and doors: The 9' decorative paneled doors of the first floor are very handsome, as is their moulded wood trim. Sliding double-doors connect the living room and dining room. The panels in these doors were originally glass but have since been filled in with plywood.
6. Details and trim: The most interesting detail work not yet mentioned are the fireplaces on the first floor front rooms, particularly that in the north front room, which has an arched firebox opening and an ornate shell pattern, all in marble.
7. Lighting: Modern.
8. Heating: Hot water.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The residence faces west on N. Market St., once a very fashionable area. Commercial ventures have since moved into the area, i. e., directly

across the street is a parking lot and to the north across Market Street is a tire dealer.

2. Outbuildings: A brick privy, used as a toolhouse, stands along the south property line. At the rear of the lot is a car garage, originally a stable and carriage house.
3. Landscaping and walks: The lot is very nicely landscaped, with several large trees in the front yard, making the facade only partially visible in the street. In the back is a garden area neatly arranged with a walk extending the length of the rear yard. The walk extending from the front sidewalk to the steps is made up of marble blocks.
4. Fences: One of the striking features of the exterior is the cast-iron fence and large gate with rosette pattern, flanked on both sides by 6' high ornate cast-iron posts. This is apparently original.

Prepared by John M. McRae
Supervisory Architect
Historic American
Buildings Survey
August 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the documentation made during the 1968 Petersburg Summer Project, undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with The Historic Petersburg Foundation, Inc., with financial assistance from The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission. During the summer, records were made of twenty-two buildings in the city.

The project was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor was John M. McRae of the University of Florida. The recording team was composed of Randall J. Biallas, historian (University of Illinois, Urbana), and student assistant architects Michael Hamilton (University of Arizona), Thomas J. Sanford (Washington State University), and Edwin S. Smith, Jr. (Rhode Island School of Design). Photographs were made by George Eisenman.