

President's Home  
University of Alabama  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Tuscaloosa, Ala.

(See map p. 14)  
(See document p. 14)

ALA  
HABS No. 16-207

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ALA  
63-TUSLO  
3 B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

District No. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey  
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer  
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

PRESIDENTS HOME  
University of Alabama.  
Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama.

Ownership:

Present Owner: University of Alabama.

Date of Erection: 1842.

Architect: Thomas Nicholls, Philadelphia Architect.

Builder: University of Alabama.

Present Condition: Excellent.

Number of Stories: Three.

Materials of Construction: It is of Greek Revival design, constructed of brick-stucco, three stories high including a basement floor entered at ground level. The main piazza at second floor level is reached by outside stone steps with wrought iron balustrade. Six round fluted columns support the projecting roof. These have carved Greek capitals. Entrance is through double doors into a central hall extending the length of the house. On each side are large rooms with folding doors and colonial mantels. The third floor, reached by a winding stairway in central hall has four large bed rooms. In front is a small balcony with wrought iron rail. Standing back some distance from University Avenue, surrounded by fine old trees and a mass of English Ivy clinging to its piazza, the building presents a view of dignity and interest.

Other Existing Records:

See: "CENTENNIAL" THE CRIMSON - WHITE  
1831 - 1931

"HISTORIC HOMES OF ALABAMA AND THEIR TRADITIONS"  
By Alabama Members of the  
National League of American Pen Women.

See: Birmingham News, August 12, 1934

"UNIVERSITY ANTE-BELLUM CHARM LINGERS"  
By Varian Feare (Mrs. E. Walter Burkhardt)

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Additional Data: This history of the building of this old home is interesting. Almost as soon as Alabama became a State, she acquired land for her University and very rich land it proved to be. Mars Field, as it was then called, lying about one mile from Tuscaloosa, was chosen for the University, and the old Huntsville Post Road divided this into two parts.

On one side was a garden and fruit trees, and here the Trustees of the University decided there should be a home for the President, while the main buildings for the school should be on the other side. One of the interesting things about this building is that up to that time rarely had it been felt necessary in America to employ an architect for dwellings, only for great public buildings, so when we find that Alabama imported an architect from Philadelphia, an Englishman named Nicholls, it is evident that much importance was attached to this home. This plan of Nicholls was for the buildings to be of this Greek Revival type and it is intensely interesting to find that all the recent buildings at the University carry out this idea, especially as to the magnificent columns and the double winding stairway at the entrance.

On the evening of April 3, 1864<sup>5</sup>, the Federal army swept through the little town of Tuscaloosa leaving a mass of wrecked and burned treasure behind them, and only the great bravery of Dr. L.C. Garland's wife saved this beautiful home of the President. She ordered the soldiers from her home when they had already started burning it. In indignation she told them that their General had not commanded them to burn private dwellings, only public buildings. Knowing full well that she was right, and rather awed at her courage, they desisted, some aiding her and her negroes in putting out the fires they had started. Thus was saved to the state this beautiful home which is now considered one of the most perfect types of Early Greek Revival architecture in America.

Source of Material: Historic Homes of Alabama  
and their Traditions.

Compiled by: Katherine Floyd.  
Auburn, Alabama.  
Approved: E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer, HABS.  
Auburn, Alabama.  
Date: 10-6-1936.

Rev. Dec. 4 '36 HLE

ADDENDUM TO  
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA,  
PRESIDENT'S HOUSE  
University of Alabama-  
Birmingham Industrial District  
University Blvd.  
Tuscaloosa  
Tuscaloosa County  
Alabama

HABS No. AL-207

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63-TUSLO,  
3B-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

HABS  
ALA  
63-TUSLO,  
3R-

Location: Southside of University Boulevard, University of Alabama Campus, Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama.

Date of Construction: 1839-1841

Project Information: This report is based on written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

Description: Designed by Philadelphia architect William Nichols, who also designed the Tuscaloosa Capitol, this Greek Revival residence is considered one of the state's finest structures. The three-story brick (covered with stucco) structure features second and third story Ionic columned open porches, plaster cornices, medallions, and frescoes said to be made by slaves of Tuscaloosa physician Dr. John R. Drish. The balustrade was added in 1855, the exterior stair railing in 1887. Inside, on each of the three floors, the central hall is flanked by two rooms. A 1907 renovation installed central heat, restored plaster friezes and restuccoed the exterior. Two brick servants' quarters also remain on the grounds. One served as kitchen and smokehouse, the other contained a well and dairy.

Historical Overview: This residence was designed and built as the residence of the president of the University of Alabama. Refusing to leave the property, Mrs. Garland, wife of president Landon Garland, ordered Federal troops to put out the fire they had kindled, thus saving the residence from destruction during the Civil War, when many university buildings were destroyed.

**Sources Consulted**

HABS (1935-36)

Tuscaloosa County Site Survey

National Register, 11/14/72

Tuscaloosa Landmarks

Gamble, Robert; The Alabama Catalog, 357