city, town

Tuscaloosa

United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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Condition excellent	deteriorated	Check one unaltered	Check one X original site	
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

7. Description

Situated on a knoll about half a mile west of the wooded Beaver Creek bottomlands, the Parks E. Ball house is a two-story, gabled, rectangular brick structure with 20th century frame additions. The original part of the house measures approximately 49 feet across the five-bay symmetrical facade, by 20 feet deep. The chimneys which buttress each gable-end have stepped weatherings. Walls are laid in common bond, with flat-arches above each opening, and measure over a foot in thickness. Sashing throughout is nine-over-nine, set into five-inch framing. The original roofline has been changed only in that the eaves now project beyond each gable end, rather than terminating flush with the wall, as formerly.

Inside, the house follows the typical center-hall plan, with a single room to each side of the twelve-foot wide passage, both upstairs and down. Originally, there was a pair of double-leaf doors, surmounted by a seven-light transom, at either end of the lower hall. While the transoms remain, the doors have been replaced. There is a charirail in the hallway, but the flanking rooms each have a simply paneled dado as well. Mantelpieces in these rooms are of rudimentary Federal design, characteristic of rural early 19th-century architecture. In the south room, a doorway to the right of the fireplace suggests that this room may have been used originally for dining and was linked to a now-destroyed outside kitchen.

Immediately to the left of the front door, a narrow stair with square newel and winders rises from the southeast corner of the hall to the second floor. Formerly, a board partition (now replaced by plywood) separated the upper hall from the north chamber. Though much of the second-floor woodwork is of relatively recent origin, the south room retains an early mantelpiece.

All existing additions to the brick core-structure apparently post-date the Second World War, with the exception of a rear porch, now incorporated into the den. This den, and a bedroom directly above, were added between 1947 and 1954. During the same period, the upstairs hall was also partitioned to form a fourth bedroom. In 1966-67, the present colonnade replaced an earlier front porch. The most recent additions date from 1969-70, when a kitchen, laundry room, bath and screened porch were built at the southwest rear, adjoining the den.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C — archeology-prehistoric — archeology-historic — agriculture — x architecture — art — commerce — communications		law literature military music	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	ca. 1830	Builder/Architect u	nknown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In an area where frame domestic construction was almost universal during the 19th century, the Parks E. Ball house is the only ante-bellum brick dwelling that has been documented in Pickens County. Moreover, it appears to be one of the earliest surviving brick structures anywhere in west central Alabama, as well as one of the comparatively few instances of Federal-period design.

On February 10, 1826, the tract on which the house is situated was purchased from the Federal government, at the General Land Office in Tuscaloosa, by Parks E. Ball. Sometime within the next decade, Ball is believed to have had the present house built. Born about 1803, Ball emigrated to Alabama from Columbia District, South Carolina, as a young man. He located first along Blubber Creek near present-day Aliceville before locating permanently on his 1826 purchase. Subsequently, he became a prominent cotton planter. The 1850 census reveals that his household then consisted of his first wife, Ziltha, four grown sons, and seven other family members ranging in age from eighteen to two years. On a parcel donated by Ball, the Enon Baptist Church and adjacent cemetery were established about a mile southeast of the house.

After Ball's death, on April 7, 1880, his second wife, Martha, retained the house and surrounding acreage until February of 1900, when it was sold to William B. Stansel. The property changed hands several times between 1918 and 1969, when the house and twelve acres of the original tract were acquired by the present owners.

As with many other rural dwellings in early Alabama, the living space contained within the brick nucleus of the Ball house may have once been augmented by frame attached or semi-detached wings, as well as the usual outside dependencies. If so, however, no trace of these remains today unless concealed by later construction. The colonnade added to the house in the 1960's, while incompatible with the original structure, utilizes six of the square wooden columns from the Phoenix Hotel in Carrollton, the county seat. Facing the north side of the courthouse square, this structure was built in 1841, and razed about 1965. In 1937, it was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey.

Both in general form and in some of its detail, the house recalls the frame Robert Foster house, in the Fosters community of neighboring Tuscaloosa County. It is conceivable that both houses were erected by the same builders, or that materials from a common source were utilized.

9. M	aior Bib	liographica	Referen	nces	
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Continuation sheet

Item number

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Page

From the NW corner of the NW 1/4 of SE 1/4 of Sec. 10, T 22s, R 16 W, run in an easterly direction along N line of said NW 1/4 of SE 1/4 for 216' to p.o.b., thence easterly along said line for 917' to the w. row of Old Memphis Rd.; then in a southwesterly direction for 1230', thence N 58°45' W for 572'; thence N 18°30' E for 774.8 Ft. to point of beginning. This parcel includes remaining portion of tract originally comprising the parks E. Ball plantation. (see attached Platt)



