

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

For NPS use only
received AUG 2 1984
date entered SEP 1 1984

Substantive Review

1. Name

historic Searcy House

and/or common Board of Education

2. Location

street & number 815 Greensboro Avenue

NA not for publication

city, town Tuscaloosa

NA vicinity of congressional district 7

state Alabama

code 01

county Tuscaloosa

code 125

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>NA</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Tuscaloosa County Board of Education

street & number 2314 9th Street

city, town Tuscaloosa

NA vicinity of

state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Probate Office - Tuscaloosa County Courthouse

street & number 714 Greensboro Avenue

city, town Tuscaloosa

state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present

federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery

state Alabama

7. Description

Condition
 excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair unexposed

Check one
 unaltered
 altered

Check one
 original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This 1904, two-story, five-bay, frame, Colonial Revival house has a full height tetrastyle portico with fluted wooden columns topped with terra-cotta Ionic capitals (photo #1). The central doorway has original leaded stained glass side lights with a matching fanlight above. Flanking either side of the doorway is a small free standing Ionic column, each of which is topped by a wooden bracket which supports a balcony at the second-floor level. The balcony has a rather heavy wooden balustrade. The original door from the second floor onto the balcony has been replaced with a large one-over-one sash window.

On the south side of the house is an entry with a one-story portico supported by a pair of square wooden columns which are not original (photo #2). The entrance is flanked by only one leaded stained glass sidelight with a transom above which stretches across the top of both the door and the sidelight (photo #3). Across the back of the house there once was a two-story gallery which is now completely enclosed (photo #4).

The house has a hipped roof which has recently been covered with copper sheathing. The roofline is marked by a full entablature which completely surrounds the building (photo #5).

The interior has been heavily remodeled with plywood paneling, asphalt tile flooring and lowered accoustical tile ceilings (photo #6). The original plaster walls and ceilings, however, do still exist beneath the modern coverings. The original hardwood floors are also intact beneath the present tile flooring. The house has most of its original mantels and some of its original doors (photos #7 & 8). The large one-over-one sash windows are original and were carefully preserved when the dropped accoustical ceilings were installed in the 1960s (photos #9 & 10).

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1904 **Builder/Architect** William E. Spink

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecture, Criterion C

The fine decorative features of the Searcy House (1904) are typical of those found in the Colonial Revival genre in the South at the turn of the century. This house is one of only two remaining Tuscaloosa structures of this particular southern version of the Colonial Revival style. Specific southern features include the colossal columned portico with projecting second floor balcony, the two-story gallery across the back facade, and the hipped roof with former widow's walk. In contrast to this, the Colonial Revival in other parts of the United States, at this time, tended to emulate the Georgian or Federal styles rather than the large scale pseudo-Greek Revival exhibited in the Searcy House. This house represents an excellent example of an architectural expression of a popular early twentieth century interpretation of southern history, because it embodies the romantic glorification of the old South as perceived at that time.

INTEGRITY: The house retains in visible, intact condition, the major exterior elements of the style, the original floor plan, and much of the decorative interior trim. Although unsympathetic alterations to the interior currently obscure considerable original fabric, these alterations are cosmetic and reversible. The interior plaster walls, the original flooring, and the original ceiling are intact beneath the modern coverings. All the original mantels and interior trim are intact, and most of the original doors have survived. The only major loss of original fabric has been the widow's walk on the roof and the monumental interior staircase. A duplicate of the stair exists in the Monnish-Nichols House in Tuscaloosa.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Interview with Mrs. Fred R. Maxwell (Kathaleen Searcy)
County Board of Education
Heritage Commission of Tuscaloosa County files

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Tuscaloosa

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	4	4	7	2	0	0	3	6	7	4	1	1	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 45, lot 297, 100' x 100'

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy B. Hayslip, Heritage Commission of Tuscaloosa County, and Tom Dolan

organization Alabama Historical Commission date 2/28/84

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 205 261-3184

city or town Montgomery state Alabama

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 26, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



date 9/14/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

Historical Development Searcy House

The Searcy House is a reminder of the historical make-up of Tuscaloosa's residential district along Greensboro Avenue. The Colonial Revival style of the house is a memorial for the once antebellum fabric of the street. Although this house is twentieth century, the owner, George A. Searcy, probably wished to express what he felt was the glorious past of Tuscaloosa in his 1904 home.

George Searcy, a prominent businessman born in Tuscaloosa, was from a distinguished family. He was one of five children born to Mary Fitch and Dr. Reuben Searcy who was an outstanding physician practicing medicine in Alabama for fifty-five years. Dr. Reuben Searcy was closely associated with the establishment of the Alabama Insane Hospital and served on its board of trustees for nearly thirty years. George Searcy was president of the Merchants National Bank which opened in Tuscaloosa in 1887 and became a very prosperous financial institution.

In 1904, George Searcy hired William E. Spink, a Birmingham architect, to design a new home for him in the Colonial Revival style on Greensboro Avenue. The house reflected the personal status of Mr. Searcy in the Tuscaloosa community. The Searcy family used the house as their home until 1926 when it was sold to Tuscaloosa County. Between 1926 and 1955 it served as the county public library. In 1955, the county had acquired a new library building, and the Searcy House became the offices for the board of education. In 1966, the building was heavily altered to accommodate a federally-funded education program for the Tuscaloosa County school system. Currently, the house is still owned by the county board of education but is vacant and is being offered for sale.