

Survey and Research Report
On The
N. S. Alexander House



[Thank you letter from Alexander Family](#)

1. Name and location of the property. The property known as the N. S. Alexander House is located at 5014 North Sharon Amity Road, Charlotte, N.C.

2. Name and address of the present owner of the property. The present owners of the property are:

Mary B. Alexander

James Alexander

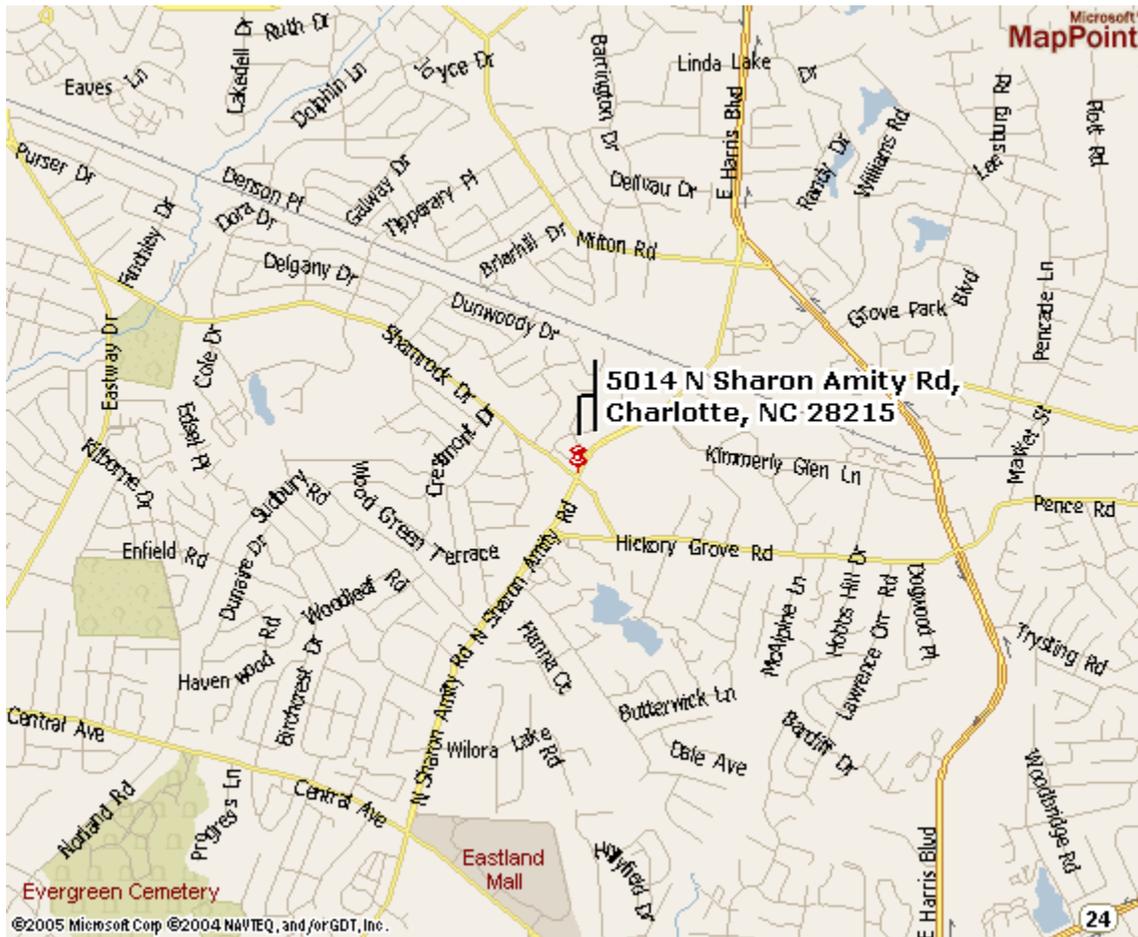
Alice Skinner

5101 Hickory Grove Road

Charlotte, N.C. 28215

3. Representative Photographs of the Property. This report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. A map depicting the location of the property. This report contains a map showing the location of the property. The UTM Coordinates of the Property are: 17 523049E 3898252N



5. Current Deed Book references to the property. The most recent reference to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Will Book T, Page 613.

6. A Brief Historic Sketch of the Property. This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. Dan L. Morrill

7. A Brief Physical Description of the Property. This report contains a brief physical description of the property prepared by Jack O. Boyte.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.

A. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance. The Commission judges that the property known as the N. S. Alexander House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following criteria: 1) the N. S. Alexander is among the most significant examples of Queen Anne Victorian architecture surviving in Mecklenburg County; 2) the N. S. Alexander House is a remnant of the fast-disappearing rural built environment of late 19th and early twentieth century Mecklenburg County; 3) the N. S. Alexander House was built for N. S. Alexander, a direct descendant of Hezekiah Alexander and a member of one of the most important families in the early history of Mecklenburg County.

B. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association. The Commission contends that the physical description that is included in this report demonstrates that the N. S. Alexander House meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal: The Commission is aware that owners of historic property may apply for an automatic deferral of 50 percent of the Ad Valorem taxes due on those portions of the property that are designated as a historic landmark. The current appraised value of the N. S. Alexander House and its property is \$1,048,900. The Tax Parcel ID Number of the property is 09926105

This report was prepared in 1979 by Dr. Dan L. Morrill and Jack O. Boyte. It was updated by Dr. Dan L. Morrill in February 2005.

Historical Sketch Of The

N. S. Alexander House

Dr. Dan L. Morrill

Neal Somers Alexander (1855-1926) was a prominent farmer in the Crab Orchard section of Mecklenburg County.^[1] A great grandson of Hezekiah Alexander and member of one of the most prestigious and influential families of this region, he married Ida Jane Caldwell (1855-1928), daughter of James M. and Catherine Caldwell of Mecklenburg County, on May 11, 1885.^[2] Soon thereafter, he acquired a tract of land on what is now Shamrock Dr. and erected a one-story house in which he and his family resided until 1903.^[3] Neal and Ida Alexander had five children: an infant son who died in 1886, J. Milton Caldwell Alexander who died at the age of sixteen in 1910, Nathaniel Alexander (1892-1968), Kathleen Alexander Richardson who resided in Wadesboro, N.C. until her death in the mid-1970s, and Ida Moore Alexander (1890-1978).^[4]



N. S. Alexander stands with his grandchild in front of house.

N. S. Alexander established and superintended a large cotton farm. Several tenant families lived and labored on the approximately one thousand acres that Alexander owned. The farm contained many outbuildings, such as stables for the horses and mules that inhabited the place. At one time Alexander's farm extended southward to the vicinity of what is now Windsor Park Elementary School and northward to embrace both sides of what is now Tipperary Place. N. S. Alexander enjoyed making and spending money. A close friend of H. M. Victor, a prominent local banker, Alexander was also an adroit capitalist.^[5]



House in the 1930s.

A large and imposing home was built in 1903 for N. S. Alexander in the side yard of the house that he and his wife had occupied since the 1880s. It is logical to infer that two considerations prompted Alexander to make this move. By then he had four children, two daughters and a son. No doubt he needed more room to accommodate his growing family. Also, Alexander liked to surround himself with finery and material luxury.^[6]

The N. S. Alexander House (1903) is predominantly Queen Anne in design. Interestingly, many of its interior features are similar to those of the J. P. Carr House (1904) on North McDowell St. Worth noting in this regard is the fact that the two were well acquainted with one another, both having been members of Second Presbyterian Church.^[7] It is not unreasonable to conjecture that the same craftsmen worked on both structures.



Restoration in Progress at the N. S. Alexander House.

Neal Somers Alexander died on November 7, 1926, after an extended illness.^[8] His wife Ida expired relatively soon thereafter, on August 19, 1928.^[9] Their son, Nathaniel Alexander, resided in the house with his wife, Louise Hutchinson Alexander (1895-1968), and his unmarried sister, Ida Moore Alexander. Nathaniel took over control of the farming operations, which continued to exist on a substantial basis through the 1930s.^[10] He died in Presbyterian Hospital on July 14, 1968.^[11] Ida Moore Alexander lived in the house until shortly before her death on September 16, 1978.^[12] She taught music in the public schools of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County for approximately 50 years. Among her students was John Scott Trotter, would later become Bing Crosby's music director and a major figure in American entertainment.^[13]

^[1] Charlotte Observer (November 8, 1926), p. 4. N. S. Alexander Burial Plot at Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte, N.C. Hereinafter cited as Plot.

^[2] Charlotte Observer (August 20, 1928), p. 2. Charlotte News (August 20, 1928), p. 2. Plot.

^[3] Interview of N. S. Alexander by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (March 17, 1979). Hereinafter cited as Interview. Mr. Alexander has invoices that document that his grandfather, Neal Somers Alexander, had the house built in 1903.

^[4] Charlotte Daily Observer (February 21, 1910), p. 5. Charlotte Observer (July 15, 1968), p. 7B. Charlotte News (July 15, 1968), p. 9A. Charlotte Observer (September 18, 1978), p. 2B. Charlotte News(September 18, 1978), p. 7C. Plot. Interview.

^[5] Interview.

^[6] Interview.

^[7] Interview of Annie Carr Wurzburg by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (March 26, 1979). Charlotte News (November 8, 1926), p. 17.

^[8] Charlotte Observer (November 8, 1926), p. 4.

^[9] Charlotte Observer (August 20, 1928), p. 2.

^[10] Plot. Charlotte Observer (September 25, 1968), p. 5C. Charlotte News (September 24, 1968), p. 4A. Interview.

^[11] Charlotte News (July 15, 1968), p. 9A.

^[12] Charlotte News (September 18, 1978), p. 7C.

^[13] "Trotter, John Scott," a Folder in the Files of the Carolina Room in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library.

Physcial Description of the N. S. Alexander House

Jack O. Boyte



Summary of Significance

The N. S. Alexander House (1903) exhibits characteristics of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles. Consequently, it is a transitional edifice. It illustrates the shift of aesthetic norms which occurred in pretentious domestic architecture in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County between 1890 and 1910. It most closely resembles the J. P. Carr House (1904) on N. McDowell St. in Charlotte. Both are predominantly Victorian in terms of overall scale and massing but possess many interior features which draw upon Classical motifs for their inspiration. Indeed, the original mantel in the parlor of the Carr House is identical to one in the parlor of the N. S. Alexander House. The same pine wainscoting, dado, doorway surrounds, corner posts and picture mouldings also occur in both houses. Indeed, the resemblance is remarkable. Adding to the significance of the N. S. Alexander House is the fact that the structure is essentially unchanged from the original. Another Mecklenburg County farmhouse that has essentially the same interior appointments as the N. S. Alexander House is the James A. Blakeney House (c. 1906) on Blakeney Heath Road.



J. P. Carr House



James A. Blakeney House

Detailed Description

The N. S. Alexander House is a two-story frame structure three bays wide and three bays deep which rests upon a continuous brick foundation. White horizontal board siding covers the exterior except beneath the porches and on the gable end at the left front and on the dormer in the projecting bay or corner tower at the right front. German siding occurs beneath the porches, and wooden shingles adorn the front gable and the pediment of the front dormer. The roof arrangement is complex. A hip roof with metal cresting along the ridge surmounts the house. Cross gables, projecting gables at the left front and right rear, and a ridged conical roof on the corner tower are also atop the main block. All are slate. Metal finials extend above the tower roof and dormer, and a decorative weather vane is situated on the ridge of the front gable.

The house has five chimneys, four interior and one at the gable end on the right side. All are brick with corbled caps. A Wrap-around one-story porch extends from the front of the middle bay on the left side to the rear of the middle bay on the right side. A shed roof with a low-pitched center gable is supported by a series of turned Doric-like wooden columns between which a balustrade of square balusters and pedestal newels occurs. A porte cochere or carriage entrance is located on the front bay on the left side, a one-

story porch at the side entrance at the rear of the left side, and a one-story porch with lattice screens at the right rear.



The cross gables and the front gable have lunettes which are reminiscent of Palladian motifs. Rectangular windows flank the gable end chimney on the right face. Rectangular side lights and an arched center window occur on the left face. The most unusual window arrangement is on the front gable end. A bracket supports arched sidelights. The majority of windows on the first and second story are one-over-one double-hung sashes (originally with blinds). The left bay on the front face of the first floor contains a wide single-light window with a decorative edge and a transom.

The front entrance consists of double doors, each having a large light in the upper half and two rectangular panels with moulded surrounds below. Fluted pilasters with Bull's eye corner blocks and a large pedestal-like base flank the front entrance and surmount a transom.

The front entrance leads into a small foyer which contains wainscoting of pine boards laid end-to-end and a single replacement

door. The same wainscoting occurs throughout the house, except in the dining room and the kitchen where it extends farther up the walls. From the foyer one enters the lobby, from which a stairway rises in two landings to the second floor. The balustrade illustrates the transitional quality of the N. S. Alexander House. The newels are quite massive, but the balusters are turned and slender after the manner of Colonial Revivalism. The nine mantels (one in the lobby, the parlor, the study, the dining room, and one in each of the five bedrooms on the second floor) are also Colonial Revival in overall design. The Victorian aspects of the interior décor, however, are highlighted by a spool-and-spindle wooden screen at the rear of the center hall and at the kitchen entrance, by the pairs of seven-paneled sliding doors which connect the lobby, parlor, and the study, and by picture moulding and the decorative corner posts.

The N. S. Alexander House has undergone little change since its construction in 1903. The columns of the porte cochere have been replaced. As have four of the columns on the Wrap-around porch. The exterior steps are not original. The door leading from the foyer to the lobby is a replacement, as is the door at the front of the center hall of the first floor. A spool-and-spindle wooden screen has been removed from the center hall (in the 1970s housed at the Mint Museum of History). The ceiling in the study on the first floor is not original. A bathroom has been installed at the center rear of the first floor. On balance, however, the house is remarkably well preserved.