



STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
725 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104
PHONE: 832-6621



ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

COUNTY CHAMBERS

PRESENT NAME GRIGGS-SIMMONS HOUSE HISTORIC NAME

LOCATION (Street and number) 204 North 18th Street

TOWN (Give directions if rural) Lanett

PRESENT USE Residence HISTORIC USE

OWNERSHIP: Public ( ) Private (X) Public acquisition being considered ( )

OWNER'S NAME Dr. and Mrs. Coleman Simmons

MAILING ADDRESS 204 North 18th Street
Lanett, AL

CONDITION: Excellent (X) Good ( ) Fair ( ) Ruins ( )

INTEGRITY: Original site (X) Moved ( ) When?

From where? Give details in significance

THREATS: No (X) Yes ( ) By what?

RESTORATION WORK: Being considered ( ) Underway ( ) Completed (X) Not planned ( )

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Open land ( ) Woodland ( ) Scattered buildings (X)
Highway building density ( ) Commercial ( ) Industrial ( )
Residential (X) Rural ( )

If there are numerous buildings in the area, could this structure be part of a Historic District?

SIGNIFICANCE: Why is this important (X) associated with events, persons, or movements
Local (X) State ( ) National ( )
(X) a good example of a type or style of structure
( ) other

Explain: Home of an early settler in the area the house was involved in one of the last battles of the Civil War.

*Mary L.*

Nomination for the Alabama Registry of Historic Homes

Griggs-Simmons House

*Scott*  
204 N 18th

The land on which the Griggs-Simmons house is built on a fractional part of an original grant by the State of Alabama in November 1840, of the entire section 24, Township 22, Range 28, Chambers County, Alabama to Jesse Stanley, John M. Russell and Thomas R. Russell, early settlers on what was originally Fraction C.

In 1858, Major Allen G. McCants built the house with slave labor, out of clay, some lime and field stones, no cement. The stone walls are 12 inches or more in thickness and the original house measured about 40 feet by 50 feet outside. Due to the elevation, there was a large room and wine cellar downstairs and a hall and six rooms upstairs, the hall being about 12 feet wide by 40 feet long, down the center of the house. A stucco like material was applied to the outside walls and simulated blocks of stone were laid off with white stencilled lines to represent mortar joints. There were three sharp gables, reminiscent of the Gothic revival of the period on the front, at one time. A wide box, bordered walk led from the street to front steps rising to the front level of the present porch.

Allen G. McCants and Olivia A. McCants, his wife, conveyed the property to Thomas L. Scott by deed dated August 3, 1863, the place then consisting of the house and about two acres of land. On October 29, 1863, Thomas L. Scott and Mary E. Scott, his wife, conveyed the property by trustee deed to Asa W. Griggs, trustee for his wife, Lois A. Griggs, for \$3,000. The property is bounded ~~in~~ on the east by the Georgia State Line.



Mrs. Griggs before her marriage was Lois A. McCants, a sister of Mayor Allen G. McCants, a pioneer family in Chambers County. Her husband, Dr. Asa Wesley Griggs was born in Chambers County, December 12, 1828 and died August 16, 1900. They lived in the house from 1863 until their deaths. They were the parents of five children. A daughter, Mrs. Imogene Griggs Smith (1870-1950) and her husband Oceola Smith (1873-1948) lived in the house until their deaths. In 1951, their daughter, Mrs. Lois Smith Howard and her husband, John W. Howard, sold the house to Dr. Coleman Simmons and his wife ELIZABETH McClary Simmons, who have restored the house to the present appearance.

The Griggs-Simmons house is located in front of Fort Tyler, an earthen fort, hastily built on the Alabama-Georgia line before the advance of Union forces in April, 1865.

On April 16, 1865, the forces of Union Colonel LaGrange approached West Point and environs from Opelika. Orders were sent from Confederate Brigadier General Robert C. Tyler, for whom the fort was named, to the Griggs family, to vacate the house, as it was in the line of fire. Dr. Asa Griggs was away from home with the 33rd Alabama Regiment Infantry which he joined in June 1862. Mrs. Griggs, her children and servants, left the house and crossed the Chattahoochee River over the guarded wooden bridge.

Mrs. Griggs returned to her home late that afternoon, after the fort surrendered and firing ceased. The house was battle scarred with some of the marks and bullets still preserved in the house today, but the stone house had not been demolished. The house had been ransacked but Mrs. Griggs and other women in the area turned first to aid the wounded of both armies in the long hall and other rooms of the house.

Dr. and Mrs. Coleman Simmons have spent many years in the restoration of the house, now a landmark in the area. The interior of the house is just as it was when first built in 1858, with the exception of a library-living room at the rear of the house.

The architect for the restoration was Clement Ford of Atlanta. His address is Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA.  
(office is in his home)

Interior views of the house will be made available to the Commission if desired. Dr. and Mrs. Simmons will also be glad to answer any questions regarding the house, as they have spent much time in research on the history and construction of the house.



## GRIGGS-SIMMONS HOUSE

### SIGNIFICANCE

The Griggs-Simmons House is built on a fractional part of an original grant by the state of Alabama in November 1840, to Jesse Stanley, John M. Russell and Thomas R. Russell, all early settlers in the area.

The house was built in 1858 by Major Allen G. McCants, with slave labor, out of clay, some lime and field stones. In 1863 the house and land changed hands twice, first to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Scott, then to Mr. Asa W. Griggs, who served as trustee for his wife, Lois A. McCants Griggs, sister of Major McCants, the builder of the house. It remained in the Griggs family till it was purchased by the present owners, Dr. and Mrs. Coleman Simmons, who have restored the house to its present appearance.

The Griggs-Simmons House is located in front of Fort Tyler, an earthen fort, hastily built on the Alabama-Georgia line before the advance of Union forces in April, 1865. The stone walls of the house are 12 inches or more in thickness and the original house measured about 40 feet by 50 feet outside. Due to the elevation, there was a large room and wine cellar downstairs and a hall and six rooms upstairs, the hall being about 12 feet wide by 40 feet long, down the center of the house. A stucco like material was applied to the outside walls and simulated blocks of stone were laid off with white stencilled lines to represent mortar joints. A wide boxwood bordered walk led from the street to the front steps rising to the front level of the present porch.

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