



**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
DOMESTIC	single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
RELIGION	church school

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	CONCRETE
walls	BRICK
roof	ASPHALT
other	STONE
	METAL

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**ARCHITECTURE**  
**INDUSTRY**

**Period of Significance**

**1905-1940**

**Significant Dates**

**1905-06**  
**1917**

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Rucker, Pannill**  
**Brown, Rives Spotswood, Sr.**  
**Pannill, William Letcher**

**Cultural Affiliation**

**N/A**

**Architect/Builder**

**unknown**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approximately 2 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 601290 4060810

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title L. Daniel Pezzoni  
organization L. Daniel Pezzoni, Preservation Consultant date July 18, 1996  
street & number PO Box 7825 telephone (540) 366-0787  
city or town Roanoke state Virginia zip code 24019-0825

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Christ Episcopal Church Trustees  
street & number PO Box 4162 telephone (540) 632-2896  
city or town Martinsville state Virginia zip code 24115

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

### Summary

Scuffle Hill occupies a landscaped lot anchoring the western edge of Martinsville's historic Church Street neighborhood, near the city's downtown business district. The two-story mansion was completed between 1917 and 1920, and it occupies the shell of an earlier house, built in 1905, that was gutted by fire in 1917. Scuffle Hill incorporates portions of the pressed stretcher-bond brick walls, two-story polygonal window bays, poured concrete foundation, and granite belt courses of the original house, with the addition of a Doric portico and a dormered gable roof. The center-passage-plan interior features a graceful stair, glazed pocket doors with elliptical fanlights, accomplished ceiling plasterwork, and Georgian and Federal-influenced mantels and door surrounds. Behind the house extends a landscaped parking lot.

### Inventory

1. Scuffle Hill. 1905, 1917-20. Contributing building.
2. Parking lot. 1972. Noncontributing structure.

### Exterior Description

Scuffle Hill's dominant exterior feature is its monumental front portico, which has Doric columns, a coffered ceiling, and a heavy cornice with swags and triglyphs in the frieze. Originally, steps led up to the front of the portico; in 1972 these were replaced with slate steps on the sides, and an iron railing was inserted between the columns. The portico shelters a grand entry with a surround of fluted Doric pilasters and lead-camed sidelights and transom, the latter with a fanlight design. The entry has double eight-panel doors and, to either side, modern coach-lamp light fixtures. Above the entry, enriched consoles support a balcony for a second-story entrance with a Federal surround and an elliptical fanlight.

The portico is flanked by two-story polygonal window bays--remnants of the original 1905 construction--with six-over-six sash windows below six-pane transoms and jack arches on the first story, and nine-over-nine sash windows above rectangular panels on the second story. The portico cornice wraps across the top of the bays to the corners of the house's gable ends, and granite belt courses at the first and second floor levels tie the bays to the side elevations of the house. The nine-over-nine sash window and panel scheme of the bays continues down the second-story side elevations, but on the first story the pattern switches to eight-over-eight sash with eight-pane transoms. Other features of the front and sides of the house include a one-story polygonal window bay with concrete parapet balusters on the east elevation, concealed gutters,

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

**Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.**

---

**Description (continued)**

quarter-round fanlight-like windows flanking the chimney flues in the gables, molded rake boards, brick and concrete chimney caps, and bow-roofed dormers with casement windows and vinyl siding.

The principal elements of the asymmetrical rear elevation are the sun room, breakfast room, and sleeping porch, all originally glazed but now filled in with modern sheathing and windows. The sun room, contained in a one-story extension, is defined by brick corner piers with paneled wooden pilasters between, and is crowned by a wooden balustrade with reticulated grilles. The first-story breakfast room and second-story sleeping porch occupy the central gable end of the elevation. The sleeping porch has two pent roofs with concave roof planes supported by brackets. Other features of the rear elevation include a service entry with a semi-circular fanlight under a gabled stoop, slate steps leading up to the service entry with steps to a basement entrance below, and bulls-eye gable windows framed by concrete keystone motifs. A modern wood fence hides garbage cans next to the rear entrance.

**Interior Description**

Scuffle Hill's front entry leads into a spacious center passage with wood floors, walls with modern white-on-gold floral wallpaper above a paneled wainscot, and a plaster-and-lath ceiling with a simple coved plaster cornice. The focal point at the back or north end of the passage is a grand stair with outward-flaring curved bottom steps, handrails that spiral around columnar newel posts with finials, attenuated turned balusters, and a landing level over a back hall providing access to the rooms in the rear of the house. The doorways leading to the rooms off the passage have Federal-influenced surrounds. The broad doorways into the two front rooms are fitted with glass pocket doors and are surmounted by elliptical fanlights. The other, narrower doorways have paneled embrasures, molded jambs, and tripartite heads with reeding and elliptical motifs.

The library is to the front right of the passage, the most lavishly detailed room in the house. The walls are articulated with fluted Doric pilasters and panels in dark varnished wood that rise to just below a complex plaster cornice at ceiling level. Centered on the east wall is a Georgian architrave mantel with a shelf supported by consoles and a paneled overmantel below a broken pediment. To either side are arched window embrasures with console-style keystone motifs at their apexes. Book shelves line the other walls of the room, and glass pocket doors under an elliptical fanlight lead to the adjoining dining room. This room, with the one-story window bay at its east end, has an Adamesque elliptical plaster ceiling medallion incorporating swags and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

**Description (continued)**

rosettes. Molding strips imply wall panels and a wainscot. The fireplace at the west end of the room has a mantel with consoles, reeding, and a dentil molding. Behind the dining room is a narrow butler's pantry with modern counters and vinyl flooring, and beyond it is the kitchen, with an original counter and later vinyl flooring and glass-block window infill. A door from the kitchen leads communicates with the rear entrance at the base of a service stair that rises to the second floor.

The front room to the left of the passage functioned as a drawing room. Its simple Federal mantel apparently replaces an original mantel of more elaborate design. Other drawing room features include molded baseboards, chairrails, and picture rails, and a complex plaster cornice. The room behind it traditionally served as a den and is now used as a church office. This room has an ornate Federal mantel flanked by a doorway and book shelves in arched recesses. A doorway leads from the den into the former sun room--now a reception area--and the adjoining breakfast room, the latter with a trellis design on the walls. Most doors on the first floor (as well as the second floor) have eight-panel arrangements, and the fireplaces have ornamental cast iron linings.

The center-passage plan of the first floor is essentially repeated on the second. The stair rises into the north end or back of the passage. The wall behind features a broad elliptical fanlight that encompasses nine-over-six sash windows and a glazed door leading to the sleeping porch. The back wall fanlight is mirrored at the south or front end of the passage by an elliptical archway that sets off a small sitting and reading area. Under this archway, forming a partial partition, are book shelves with paneled backs and reeded cornices. Doorways similar to the simple versions in the first-floor passage open into the four bedrooms and a back bedroom/storage area. The bedrooms feature simple plaster-and-lath wall and ceiling finishes, molded door and window surrounds, panels under the windows, and varied Federal mantels. The fireplaces have surrounds and hearths finished with light green glazed tiles; one contains a fireback depicting a Renaissance room scene with female figures. The pairs of bedrooms share bathrooms with original fixtures and tile finishes in shades of ivory and yellow. Above the second floor is a large attic that was traditionally used for storage. The basement, originally used as servants quarters and now used as a church nursery and play rooms, retains its original center-passage room layout and early five-panel doors, but the stair, vinyl flooring, and drop ceiling are modern.

The front yard slopes down to Church Street and is planted with trees and shrubs. The present drive passes by the east side of the house, with a flagstone-paved drop-off area between it and the front steps. The drive leads back to a parking lot bordered and interspersed with trees and

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

**Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.**

---

**Description (continued)**

planting beds. Also to the rear, on what is now a separate lot not included in this nomination, is a story-and-a-half stuccoed residence that represents a 1945-46 remodeling of the carriage house/garage.

**Integrity Statement**

Scuffle Hill preserves good exterior and interior integrity. The basic form and appearance of the house have remained virtually unchanged since 1920; even details such as fire backs and bathroom fixtures survive. The principal changes to the exterior include the loss of a parapet balustrade from the cornice, the reconfiguring of the portico steps and the addition of railings, and the enclosure of formerly glassed-in rooms on the rear elevation--the sun room, breakfast room, and sleeping porch--with modern windows and sheathing. The grounds have been altered to a greater extent by the creation of a landscaped rear parking lot in the 1970s, but the yard areas to the front and sides of the house--the areas visible from the street--have traditional planting schemes with shrubs and ornamental trees. Surrounding parcels are occupied by Christ Episcopal Church (1896) and dwellings constructed principally before World War II.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

## NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Summary

Scuffle Hill, located in the City of Martinsville, Virginia, is a Colonial Revival mansion of considerable distinction. The two-story brick house occupies the shell of an earlier home—Oak Hall—begun in 1905-06 for tobacco manufacturer Pannill Rucker and his wife Frankie by the latter's father, former Liggett & Myers executive Benjamin F. Stevens. Oak Hall burned in 1917, and the present house was completed by the Ruckers soon after. Later occupants included furniture manufacturer Rives S. Brown, Sr., and textile magnate William L. Pannill, who gave the house its name. Scuffle Hill's "colonial" features include a Doric portico and Georgian and Federal-influenced mantels and interior doorways, several of the latter with glass pocket doors and elliptical fanlights. Through its first three owners—the Rucker, Brown, and Pannill families—Scuffle Hill is associated with the foundation industries of the Martinsville economy: tobacco, furniture, and textile manufacturing.

### Justification of Criteria

Scuffle Hill is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a Colonial Revival mansion of considerable distinction. The house is also eligible under Criterion B for its association with three prominent businessmen whose careers encompassed the principal industries of twentieth-century Martinsville: tobacco manufacturer Pannill Rucker, furniture manufacturer Rives S. Brown, Sr., and textile manufacturer William L. Pannill. Criterion Consideration A is also applicable, since the property is owned by a religious institution and is used for religious purposes. Scuffle Hill is eligible at the local level of significance for the years 1905--the begin date of construction of the house walls--to 1940, the year of death of William L. Pannill. Local level of significance is supported by the quality of Scuffle Hill's design, and by its association with industrialists who played an important part in the development of Martinsville, one of Virginia's leading twentieth-century manufacturing centers.

### Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. The Rev. Edward M. Covert and Richard M. Simmons, Jr., of Christ Episcopal Church, owner of the property, provided guidance throughout the process. Librarian Carl deHart and the staffs of the Blue Ridge (Martinsville) and Bassett public libraries helped track down local sources of information. Adele P. Carter supplied information on the property during Pannill family ownership, and James D. Coleman, Jr., provided information on Rives S. Brown, Sr. John Wells

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources made available information on Scuffle Hill's architectural context, and John Tackett of the Duke Homestead State Historic Park in Durham, North Carolina, and Mary Bell of the Consumer Relations Branch of the Liggett Group, Inc., Durham, North Carolina, offered information on Benjamin F. Stevens.

**Historical Background**

Scuffle Hill occupies the walls of Oak Hall, an imposing eclectic mansion begun in 1905-06 by tobacco magnate Benjamin F. Stevens of St. Louis, Missouri, and Martinsville, Virginia, for his wife and self and for his daughter Frankie (1877-1932) and her husband, tobacco manufacturer Pannill Rucker (1867-1930).<sup>1</sup> In the 1890s, B. F. Stevens was one of five stockholders in the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company, incorporated in St. Louis in 1878. In 1892, at a time when Liggett had grown to become the largest manufacturer of plug (chewing) tobacco in the world, Stevens served with the firm's president and a Liggett family member on the Company Committee, charged with advising the board of directors on questions of mergers and acquisitions. During the latter 1890s, Stevens' 5% stockholding would have provided him a substantial return on company profits that averaged \$900,000 a year. Liggett & Myers was acquired by the Continental Tobacco Company in 1899 and ultimately became a part of James B. Duke's vast American Tobacco Company trust.<sup>2</sup>

In 1897, Stevens's daughter Frankie married Pannill Rucker. Rucker, the son of Lynchburg merchant and tobacco manufacturer George H. Rucker and his wife, Susan Pannill Rucker, first learned the operations of a tobacco factory during his school years. In the late 1880s he was employed in a business position by the G. Penn & Company tobacco factory at Penn's Store, near Martinsville. By 1891 he had begun the Pannill Rucker Leaf Tobacco Factory on Franklin Street in Martinsville. Rucker's operations steadily grew in combination with other manufacturers; in 1905 his Rucker & Witten Tobacco Company (organized in 1893) was esteemed Martinsville's largest industrial concern.<sup>3</sup>

In February 1904, B. F. Stevens purchased ten acres on Church Street for the construction of Oak Hall, which served both as a residence for his daughter, son-in-law, and their two sons, Benjamin and Pannill, and as a retirement home for Stevens and his wife. Tax records suggest construction began in earnest during the years 1905 and 1906, with the possibility that preparatory work commenced in 1904.<sup>4</sup> At about the time of the construction of the house, Rucker sold his tobacco factory to R. J. Reynolds and devoted himself to his wholesale grocery and retail drug store in Martinsville, but available evidence suggests he remained active in the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

tobacco business.<sup>5</sup> A joint venture of Stevens and Rucker beginning in 1908 was the Horse Shoe Stock Farm, a 2,234-acre tract operated as a model dairy farm supplying Martinsville and surrounding areas.<sup>6</sup>

Oak Hall, described in its day as a "splendid brick and granite home," was a three-story house of over twenty rooms combining classical, Craftsman, and Mediterranean elements in its design.<sup>7</sup> Like Scuffle Hill (which shares its foundation and many of its walls), Oak Hall featured two-story polygonal window bays flanking a front portico. Other features included a center-passage plan, a porte cochere supported by rusticated pillars sheltered under a Spanish tile roof, and a two-story semi-detached servants quarters off a rear veranda. Outbuildings included a coal house and a "damn good garage," as B. F. Stevens termed it.<sup>8</sup> Oak Hall doubled as a showcase for Stevens' collection of art and antiques, said to have been one of the finest in the state.<sup>9</sup> This collection, which included a French miniature of Marie Antoinette, was destroyed in the early morning hours of February 19, 1917, when a fire originating in the basement gutted the house. The loss of the house and its contents was estimated at \$125,000, of which only \$30,000 was covered by insurance. Within days, however, the family made plans to build a new house incorporating the front and side walls of the former residence.<sup>10</sup>

In April 1920, the Ruckers announced that they would be relocating to Richmond, where Pannill planned to join his two sons in the leaf tobacco business. The local paper ran a promotional piece--"Martinsville's Most Ornate Home Will Be Sold at Auction"--directed at both the local "top-notchers" and northern "men of means" who sensed a "tugging at the heart to own an old colonial home in Virginia." The article continued:

"Here is something better than an old colonial home. Built on modified lines of old Virginia architecture, it has the added advantage of all modern conveniences, and everything new . . . This attractive house [located] in the most desirable portion of the leading residential thoroughfare in the city, a sector of the National Highway, is one of the handsomest, and one of the best located, homes in Southern Virginia, barring none in even the larger towns."<sup>11</sup>

Cornelia Frances Gregory Brown, wife of businessman Rives Spotswood Brown, Sr. (1894-1958), purchased the house and other property for \$50,550. Of the departing former owners, the newspaper noted: "Col. and Mrs. Rucker . . . for many years identified with the social life of the town and with its best enterprises . . . will be missed."<sup>12</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

The Browns lived in Scuffle Hill from 1920 to 1933. Rives Brown's parents died while he was young and he was raised in the household of his uncle, Henry C. Lester.<sup>13</sup> In 1917, he was the manager of his uncle's livestock and grain company in Martinsville.<sup>14</sup> By the early 1920s, Brown had focused his interest on furniture manufacturing. According to various accounts, he was a vice-president and possibly president of the Virginia Furniture Company in Martinsville and a vice-president of the Vaughan Furniture Company in Galax, Virginia, and he served as the director of two other furniture companies--Bassett Furniture in Bassett, Virginia, and Vaughan-Bassett Furniture in Galax.<sup>15</sup> He was an organizer and director of the Shenandoah Life Insurance Company in Roanoke, Virginia, today one of that city's larger enterprises. Brown also involved himself in textile manufacturing, banking, stocks and bonds, and real estate, establishing the Rives S. Brown real estate firm in 1928, today Martinsville's premier locally-owned real estate firm. In the late 1930s, he commenced development of the Druid Hills and Forest Park subdivisions, two of the city's up-scale residential neighborhoods.<sup>16</sup> The opening paragraph of Brown's obituary read:

"Martinsville paused briefly today to pay its respects to Rives Spotswood Brown, Sr. The brief pause hardly reflects the impact of this man's life on Martinsville and Henry County. Many times in the future it would be well to pause again and look to the vision and courage he displayed in influencing the growth and development of our two localities, as well as that of the State and nation."<sup>17</sup>

In 1933, the Browns sold Scuffle Hill to William Letcher Pannill (1880-1940), who moved in with his wife Adele Dillard (1887-1969) and the couple's children, Adele Dillard (Dell), Carolyn Ann, Lucy Lee, Mary Lou, Pat Dillard, William Gordon, and Yonnie. Like his predecessors in the house, Will Pannill was a successful businessman, and his interests reflected another important aspect of the region's economy: textile manufacturing. Individually or with others he established mills throughout Virginia and North Carolina including Carter Underwear in Reidsville, North Carolina, Virginia Underwear (later Bassett-Walker Knitting Company, in Bassett, Virginia), Tultex (originally Sale Knitting, in Martinsville), and Pannill, of which he was president. Pannill mills originally produced long underwear--Will Pannill quipped that "he was a confederate but he wore a union suit"--but as fashions changed the company shifted to producing sweatshirts in the mid-1930s. According to a local history, Martinsville was dubbed "Sweatshirt Capital of the World" as a result of the production of the companies begun by Pannill. Adele Pannill devoted herself to social work and was instrumental in the development of Martinsville's public library, which today stands across Church Street from Scuffle Hill.<sup>18</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

The Pannills named their new home "Scuffle Hill" after the seat of Martinsville's founder, Joseph Martin, a family ancestor. Will Pannill liked to tell the story that he came up with the name because the house was located on a hill and he had to "scuffle like hell" to pay for it during the Depression. Another family tale concerns the grandeur of the house, which people sometimes mistook for the Henry County Courthouse and could be found picnicking in the front yard, assuming it was the public square.<sup>19</sup>

While the Pannills lived at Scuffle Hill, the two front rooms served as a library and a drawing room, the latter with Chinese mural wallpaper and silver wall sconces. Behind the library were the dining room, a butler's pantry, and kitchen. Behind the drawing room were a den, sun room, and breakfast room or second dining room. The second floor contained bedrooms, bathrooms, a small sitting and reading area at the front of the center passage, and a sleeping porch to the rear. The basement contained an apartment for the family's yard man and cook, who in the 1930s was Lee Ezra Hairston. Later the family employed Tommy Joe Burnett as a yard man and Katie Brown as a cook. Both Burnett and Brown lived in their own residences. Behind Scuffle Hill stood a separate servants quarter (no longer standing) which Will Pannill outfitted as his "Whoppee House," for card playing and parties. Further to the rear (now located on a separate parcel) stood the carriage house and garage, remodeled as a residence in 1945-46 by Dell Pannill and her husband, architect J. Coates Carter.<sup>20</sup>

In 1959, Adele Pannill sold Scuffle Hill to Christ Episcopal Church, which adjoins on the east. Renamed Christ Church Parish House, the house has since served as parish offices and activity rooms. In 1972, the church retained Richmond architect Kenneth Higgins to lay out a landscaped parking lot behind the house and to reconfigure the steps leading up to the front portico. An early front drive and axial walkway were removed at this time. Recent efforts have focused principally on decorating the interior and returning to the house furniture that once stood in it.

**Architectural Analysis**

Both Scuffle Hill and its predecessor, Oak Hall, represent sophisticated works of domestic architecture for their time and place. Oak Hall's closest documented relatives in the region are a group of eclectic houses built in Lynchburg beginning in the early 1910s. These Lynchburg examples fuse classical and Mediterranean elements and have been described by one architectural historian as "*Spanish Georgian*," for lack of a better term.<sup>21</sup> Oak Hall, too, combined the classical symmetry and curved front portico of the Classical/Colonial Revival with a tile roof and heavy modillion-like eaves brackets that are Mediterranean or Mission Style in inspiration. But

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 10

**Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.**

---

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Oak Hall dates to 1905-06, making it several years older than the Lynchburg houses and early examples of Mediterranean influence in another urban neighbor of Martinsville, Danville.<sup>22</sup> Oak Hall's precociousness suggests it was designed by an architect from outside the region, perhaps one from B. F. Stevens's home city of St. Louis.

As with Oak Hall, the architect for Scuffle Hill is unknown, but the sophistication of the latter house demonstrates a fluency in Colonial Revival design, and may even indicate a familiarity with Virginian prototypes. Rather than suppressing the polygonal window bays that were a Victorian holdover in the earlier house, the architect reinterpreted them in the vein of the octagonal bays of Federal masterpieces such as the Hancock-Caskie House (1808-09) in Richmond and Point of Honor (ca. 1815) in Lynchburg.<sup>23</sup> Other "colonial" touches included the dramatic portico, heavy Doric cornice, multi-paned window sash, contrasting jack-arched window heads with keystones and impost blocks, quarter-round gable windows, and bow-roofed dormers. The interior treatments are more specific in derivation, with the broken pediment overmantel and pilaster articulated walls of the library based on Georgian design, and the reeding, elliptical motifs, and delicate moldings of the mantels and door surrounds in other rooms based on Federal precedents.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

Statement of Significance (continued)

Endnotes

1. At the time of Frankie Rucker's death in 1932, her age was given as 52 in a *Henry Bulletin* obituary (April 5 edition), but the 1900 census gives her month and year of birth as August 1877.
2. Haas, Liggett & Myers history, 22, 30; Robert, *Story of Tobacco*, 147-48; "Sold American!", 94, 104-06; and Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 350. Stevens's high-level involvement in the affairs of Liggett & Myers presumably ceased with its acquisition by Continental.
3. Tyler, *Men of Mark*, 395; *Henry Bulletin*, April 5, 1932; Sanborn maps; and *Henry County Journal*, October 23, 1975.
4. Henry County land books. Library of Virginia, Richmond.
5. Tyler, *Men of Mark*, 395; *Henry County Journal*, October 23, 1975; and *Henry Bulletin*, April 30, 1920.
6. Henry County Deed Book 34, p. 189; *Henry Bulletin*, October 12 and December 21, 1917.
7. *Henry Bulletin*, February 23, 1917.
8. Sanborn maps; Windle, "Parish House."
9. *Henry Bulletin*, March 2, 1917.
10. Sanborn maps; Windle, "Parish House." A search of back issues of the *Henry Bulletin* for the year 1917 failed to identify an architect for the home's reconstruction. A search of the Virginia architects database maintained by John Wells also failed to produce an architect (for either Oak Hall or Scuffle Hill).
11. *Henry Bulletin*, April 9, 1920.
12. *Henry Bulletin*, April 30, 1920; Henry County Deed Book 40, p. 430. The Ruckers returned to Martinsville in the late 1920s, and at the time of his death in 1930, Pannill Rucker ran a wholesale lumber business with his son, Pannill, Jr. (*Henry Bulletin*, April 5, 1932, and May 13, 1930).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

13. *History of Virginia*, vol. 6, 489.

14. *Henry Bulletin*, December 14, 1917.

15. *History of Virginia*, vol. 6, 489; *Martinsville Bulletin*, undated "Martinsville Personalities" feature on Brown, supplied by James D. Coleman, Jr. Richard M. Simmons, Jr., whose family association with furniture manufacturing in Martinsville extends back to 1920, suggests Brown's involvement with these companies was principally as an investor, and that he was not actively engaged in their management (Richard M. Simmons, Jr., personal communication, confirmed by James D. Coleman, Jr., grandson-in-law of Rives S. Brown, Sr., personal communication).

16. James D. Coleman, Jr., personal communication.

17. *Martinsville Bulletin*, December 11, 1958.

18. Adele P. Carter, personal communication; Martinsville-Henry County Woman's Club, *Martinsville and Henry County*, 88.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Chambers, *Lynchburg*, 426-427.

22. Pezzoni, "Downtown Danville," 7.8.

23. Dulaney, *Architecture of Historic Richmond*, 135; Chambers, *Lynchburg*, 68-69. Point of Honor, located in Pannill Rucker's hometown, would have been more Italianate in appearance during Rucker's lifetime.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 13

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Carter, Adele Dillard Pannill. Personal communication, Martinsville, Va.
- Chambers, S. Allen. *Lynchburg: An Architectural History*. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1981.
- Coe, Malcolm Donald, ed. *Our Proud Heritage: A Pictorial History of Martinsville and Henry County, Virginia*. Bassett, Va.: Bassett Printing Corp., 1969.
- Coleman, James D., Jr. Personal communication, Martinsville, Va.
- Covert, Edward M., Rev. Personal communication, Martinsville, Va.
- Dulaney, Paul S. *The Architecture of Historic Richmond*. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1976.
- Haas, Fred. History of the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company, unpublished manuscript ca. 1976. On file in the Legal Department of the Liggett Group, Inc., Durham, N.C.
- Henry Bulletin* (Martinsville, Va.).
- Henry Bulletin Obituary Index. Reference Department, Blue Ridge Library, Martinsville, Va.
- Henry County, Virginia, deed, tax, and will records. Henry County Courthouse, Martinsville, Va., and the Library of Virginia, Richmond.
- Henry County Journal* (Martinsville, Va.).
- History of Virginia*. Vol. 6, Virginia Biography. Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1924.
- Koger, Patricia. "Historic home serves as church parish house." *Martinsville Bulletin*, October 23, 1988.
- Martinsville, City of, tax records. Martinsville City Hall, Martinsville.
- Martinsville-Henry County Woman's Club. *Martinsville and Henry County Historic Views*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: Hunter Publishing Company, 1976.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 14

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.

---

**Major Bibliographical References (continued)**

- Pezzoni, J. Daniel. "Downtown Danville Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1993.
- Primm, James Neal. *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri*. Boulder, Co.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981.
- Robert, Joseph C. *The Story of Tobacco in America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.
- Sanborn Map Company. Maps of Martinsville, Va., beginning 1886.
- "Sold American!"--*The First Fifty Years*. The American Tobacco Co., 1954.
- Simmons, Richard M., Jr. Personal communication, Martinsville, Va.
- Tyler, Lyon G., ed. *Men of Mark in Virginia*. Washington, D.C.: Men of Mark Publishing Company, 1909.
- U.S. census, Henry County, Virginia, population schedules for 1900, 1910 and 1920.
- Wells, John E., and Robert E. Dalton. *The Virginia Architects, 1820-1955: A Biographical Dictionary* (forthcoming).
- White, Martha Gorman. "History of the Parish House." Undated brochure in the collections of Christ Episcopal Church, Martinsville, Va.
- Windle, Virginia Stone. "The Parish House." 1989 typescript in the collections of Christ Episcopal Church, Martinsville, Va.
- Winkler, John K. *Tobacco Tycoon: The Story of James Buchanan Duke*. New York: Random House, 1942.
- Wood, Sudie Rucker. *The Rucker Family Genealogy*. Richmond, Va.: Old Dominion Press, Inc., 1937.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 15

**Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.**

---

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the Scuffle Hill nominated parcel are shown on the 1:100-scale map that accompanies this report.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the Scuffle Hill nominated parcel correspond to the present boundaries of the parcel on which the Scuffle Hill house stands.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photo Page 16

**Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, Va.**

---

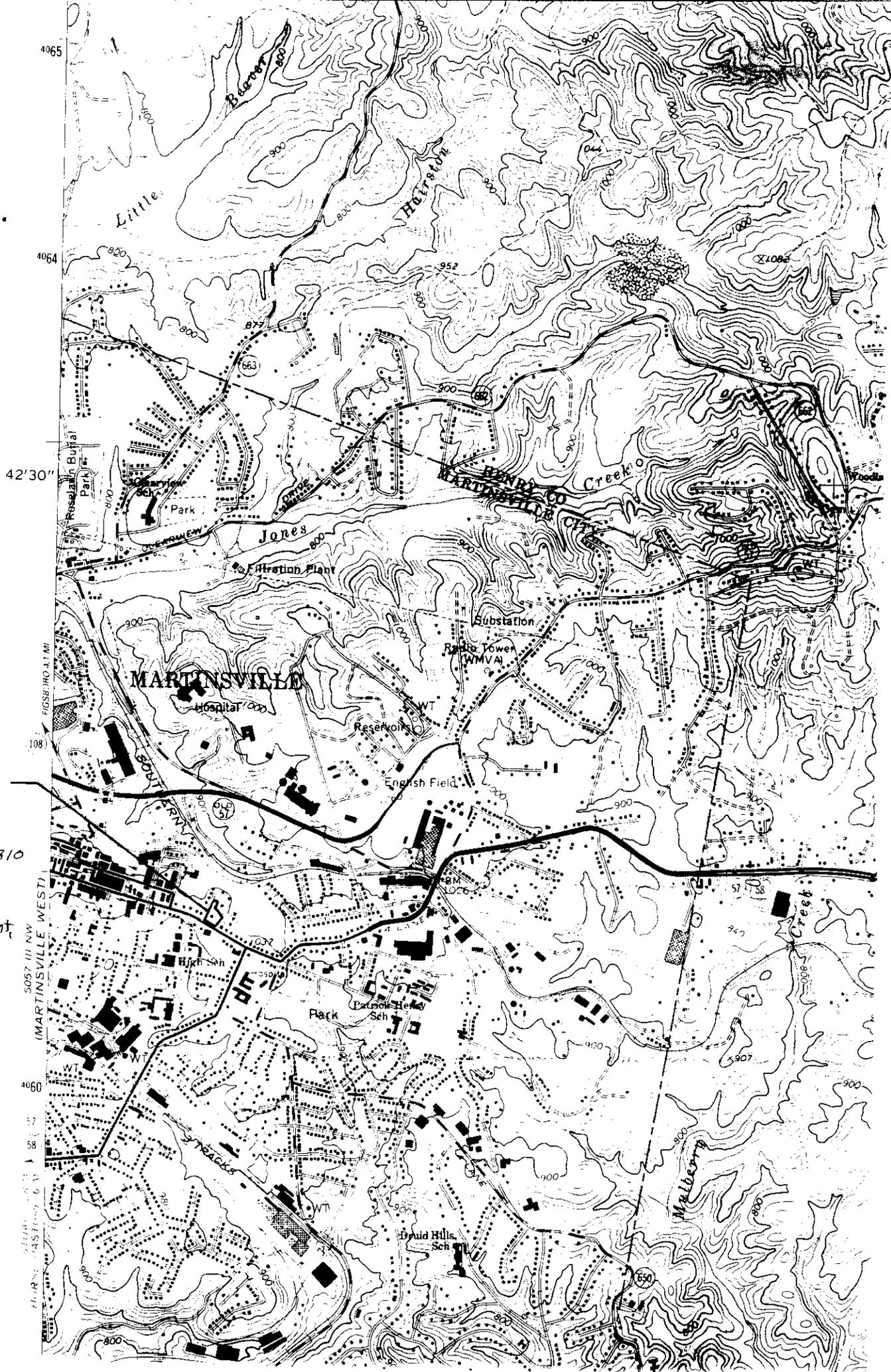
**PHOTOGRAPHS**

All photographs are of: Scuffle Hill, Martinsville, Va.  
VDHR File No. 120-6

All negatives filed at the Library of Virginia, Richmond.

1. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni DATE: April 1996  
VIEW OF: South (front) and east elevations. View looking northwestward.  
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14832 PHOTO 1 of 5
2. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni DATE: April 1996  
VIEW OF: North (rear) elevation and parking lot. View looking southward.  
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14832 PHOTO 2 of 5
3. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni DATE: April 1996  
VIEW OF: Center passage and stair on first floor.  
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14832 PHOTO 3 of 5
4. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni DATE: April 1996  
VIEW OF: Library on first floor.  
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14832 PHOTO 4 of 5
5. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni DATE: April 1996  
VIEW OF: Center passage and stairwell on second floor.  
NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14832 PHOTO 5 of 5





4065  
4064  
42'30"  
108  
5057 III NW  
(MARTINSVILLE WEST)  
4060  
58  
57  
56  
55  
54  
53  
52  
51  
50  
49  
48  
47  
46  
45  
44  
43  
42  
41  
40  
39  
38  
37  
36  
35  
34  
33  
32  
31  
30  
29  
28  
27  
26  
25  
24  
23  
22  
21  
20  
19  
18  
17  
16  
15  
14  
13  
12  
11  
10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1  
0

Scuffle Hill  
Martinsville, VA  
TM ref. (zone 17):  
46601290 N4060810

Martinsville East  
75