

Herron-Moxley House  
1503 35th Street, N.W.  
(Georgetown)  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-195

HABS,  
DC,  
GEO,  
131-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HERRON-MOXLEY HOUSE

HABS,  
DC,  
GEO,  
131-

Location: 1503 35th Street, N.W., (Georgetown) Washington, D.C

Present Owners  
and Occupants: Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Fenwick. (1969).

Present Use: Private residence. (1969)

Significance: Built in the mid-nineteenth century by a well-to-do contractor, this free-standing brick mansion retains many outstanding Italianate and Greek Revival interior details. The elaborate trim, elegant mantels and ornate lighting fixtures have been maintained and used throughout the years.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1852-1855. William T. Herron purchased the lots in 1852 for \$775. The low price indicates that the property was unimproved. In 1855, the original address of this house, 76 Fayette Street, appeared for the first time in the City Directory.
2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Lot 146 out of Lots 825 and 826 in Washington, D.C. (formerly Square 1253, Lots 132 and 133 in Threlkeld's Addition to Georgetown). Its original address was 76 Fayette Street. The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1852 Elize M. Mosher to William T. Herron  
Deed September 3, 1852. Recorded September 20, 1852  
Liber JAS 39, folio 495

(Consideration \$775)

1868 William T. Herron and wife, Henrietta V. to  
Erastus B. Barrett  
Deed November 5, 1868. Recorded November 7, 1868  
Liber D-2, folio 414

"Lots 132 and 133 in the Threlkeld's Addition to Georgetown fronting about 120 feet on Fayette Street and same distance on Third (now P) Street."

"...Being ground and premise now and for a long time occupied by the said William T. Herron as a place of residence together with the brick mansion and all other buildings..."

(Consideration \$20,000)

1870 Mary Julia Barrett, widow of Erastus B. Barrett  
to Benjamin F. Moxley  
Deed April 21, 1870. Recorded May 21, 1870  
Liber 617, folio 285

Benjamin F. Moxley died November 26, 1870, leaving his wife, Emily, and eight children - Mary T. Dent, George C. Moxley, Florence R. Patterson, Eugene C. Moxley, Wilfred L. Moxley

Will November 16, 1870. Probated December 20, 1870  
Will Book 11, page 402

1899 Commissioners of D.C. to Malcolm Hufty  
Deed May 22, 1899. Recorded August 15, 1899  
Liber 2423, folio 272

(Sold April 7, 1897 for unpaid taxes)

1905 Commissioners of D.C. to Emily W. Wiltsie  
Deed July 17, 1903. Recorded May 26, 1905  
Liber 2919, folio 172

(Sold for unpaid taxes)

1918 Charles H. Wiltsie et ux et al to Hamilton, Monogue,  
and Gertman, trustees under equity case  
Quit Claim Deed March 6, 1918. Recorded March 6, 1918  
Liber 4041, folio 241

Hamilton, Monogue and Gertman, trustees to Fred L. Wagar  
Deed May 8, 1918. Recorded July 20, 1918  
Liber 4108, folio 82

1922 Fred L. Wagar and wife, Elizabeth H. to Nellie W. Brenizer  
Deed June 3, 1922. Recorded June 21, 1922  
Liber 4720, folio 498

- 1944 Albert M. Noble, sole acting Executor under Will of Nellie W. Brenizer to Lorraine Graham Bacon, Sr. Deed May 24, 1944. Recorded May 24, 1944  
Liber 7981, folio 449
- 1945 Lorraine Graham Bacon, Sr. to Bernice T. Morris Deed February 5, 1945. Recorded February 5, 1945  
Liber 8066, folio 311
- (Sale of stable and carriage house)
- 1951 Bernice T. Morris to Wesley I. Steele Deed July 27, 1951. Recorded July 27, 1951  
Liber 9521, folio 401
- (Stable and carriage house property)
- 1964 Lorraine Graham Bacon, Sr. et vir to Wesley Irving Steele, et al, joint tenants Deed June 30, 1964. Recorded June 30, 1964  
Liber 12234, folio 434
- 1966 Wesley Irving Steele et al joint tenants to Richard A. Graham et ux tenants in common Deed May 5, 1966. Recorded May 5, 1966  
Liber 12606, folio 85
- 1969 Richard A. Graham and wife, Nancy A. Graham to Charles G. Fenwick and wife, Marie Jose Fenwick Deed May 5, 1969. Recorded May 8, 1969  
Liber 12991, folio 518

4. Builder, contractor: William T. Herron. His contracting business built this house for his family. The business, Rittenhouse, Fowler and Co. was located at 77 Fayette Street.
5. Alterations and additions: Location of the kitchen on the first floor is probably not original. Baths and storage areas have been added.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Erastus B. Barrett, who bought the house in 1868, was a ship chandler and Justice of the Peace. He was a partner with his son, H.W. Barrett, and Joseph F. Collin, in "Barrett, Collins & Co., brick manufacturers," whose factory was located at 23 Congress Street. Erastus died within a year after moving to the large house, and his wife rented the mansion to Senator John Scott of Pennsylvania before selling it in 1870 to Colonel Benjamin Moxley. (City Directories)

Colonel Moxley owned a tobacco and cigar store on the northwest corner of Bridge (M) and Washington (30th) Streets. He moved from his home at 57 Bridge (M) Street to the spacious dwelling on Fayette (35th) Street. After Moxley's death in 1870, his widow, Emily, shared the home with members of her family. Among them were James A. Moxley and George C. Moxley, partners in a feed business called Moxley and Brothers. (City Directories)

Although ownership passed from the family in 1897 when it was sold for unpaid taxes to Malcolm Hufty, the Moxleys continued to reside there as tenants until 1916. Prominent in Washington society, Mrs. Emily Moxley and Mr. Eugene Moxley were noted in The Washington Elite List in 1893. Eugene, once secretary to Alexander Graham Bell, died in the house in 1933. Once members of Washington's most exclusive clubs, this family was said to have suffered financial reverses in the "coffee panic." (Obituary, The Washington Daily News, April 4, 1933)

Dr. and Mrs. Gilmer Brenizer, who bought the house in 1922, came to Washington from North Carolina in 1899. Nellie Waddell Brenizer was an artist who had at one time worked for the United States Department of Agriculture. For many years she played an active role in societies which were concerned with genealogical and historic work. She died in the mansion in 1943. (Obituary, The Evening Star, April 15, 1943)

Commander and Mrs. Edward Alsted Bacon purchased the house in 1944 and resided there twenty years. Commander Bacon was a banker and later a government official. His career included service as Assistant to the Secretary of the Army for Canal Zone Affairs; Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army; Chairman of the Executive Council Air Coordinating Committee, Army and Navy Munitions Board; and U.S. Chairman of the International Joint Commission, U.S. and Canada. (Who's Who in America, Vol.26, p.111)

When the Bacons moved to Florida they sold their house to Wesley Irving Steele and Paul Judson Rohrich who lived next door in the converted carriage house of the mansion, which had been sold by the Bacons to Bernice T. Morris in 1945 and in turn to Steele and Rohrich in 1951. Steele and Rohrich kept the land they wanted for their elaborate garden and sold the big house in 1966 to Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Graham, who, with the five children, lived in the house for the next three years. In May 1969 the house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Fenwick who presently reside there.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Record Group 351, National Archives, Records of the City of Georgetown (D.C.). 1800-1879, Assessment of Real and Personal Property, Microcopy 605, Roll 12 (1865-1870)

2. Secondary and unpublished sources:

City Directories:

The Washington and Georgetown Directory 1853, p. 73.

Ten Eyck's Washington and Georgetown Directory, 1855, pp. 5, 7.

Boyd's Washington and Georgetown Directory, 1860, p.171; 1867, pp. 103, 313; 1868, p. 108; 1869, pp. 70, 82; 1870, pp. 339, 454, 460; 1871, p. xxi.

Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, 1872, p. 518; 1880, p. 490; 1890, p. 659; 1897, p. 678; 1898, p. 719; 1901, p. 786.

Boyd's District of Columbia Directory, 1910, p.982; 1915, p. 927; 1916, p. 890.

Obituary of Mrs. Nellie Waddell Brenizer, The Evening Star (Washington, D.C.), April 13, 1943.

Obituary of Eugene C. Moxley, The Washington Daily News, April 4, 1933.

The Washington Elite List. Washington, D.C.; The Elite Publishing Company, 1893, p. 135.

Who's Who in America. Chicago, Illinois: A.N. Marquis Company, 1950-51, Vol. 26, p. 111.

Prepared by Volunteers for the  
Commission of Fine Arts  
Washington, D.C.  
1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A large, symmetrical, free-standing square brick mansion built in the mid-nineteenth century. The house has typical, but large-scale, Italianate and Greek Revival details.
2. Condition of fabric: Exterior and interior are intact and well maintained. Mid-twentieth century kitchen, bathroom and heating features are a minimum intrusion. The basement of the house is made into a large apartment and the upper floors are used as a family residence.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately 45' square. Three bays across the 35th Street facade. Two stories in height with a partially exposed basement.
2. Foundations: Brick. Continuous stone areaway on sides and rear.
3. Wall construction: Brick. The west or front of the house has a pressed brick facade, and the sides and rear are common brick. The walls appear to be in original condition with no alterations to the openings.
4. Porches: The house has porches on all four sides. The front entrance has a series of 14 stone steps leading up from the sidewalk and a graceful ornamental iron railing. Similar ornamental iron is used for the fence around the yard, around the side and rear areaway and over lower portions of first floor windows. Two similar side porches have round Doric columns, bracketed cornice trim, and flat roof decks. Railings with open ornamental woodwork are on the upper and lower levels. These porches are one story high. The rear porch runs the entire length of the house and has two covered floors. This porch is wooden, with square columns and bracketed cornice work. The railings for the porch have a panel motif on the lower half and square balusters on the upper half. The center stair at the rear of the rear porch is of ornamental iron.
5. Chimneys: Four brick chimneys. Symmetrical arrangement with two chimneys on each side of the house.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Main entry door is in the center bay of front (west) facade and has wood pilasters on each side and a pediment above. Louvered shutters in this opening form a vestibule behind which is a pair of glazed doors with side-lights and transom which have ornamental etched glass. Doors have Greek Revival and Italianate details. Lesser doorways are placed symmetrically on all sides of the house. French doors go from bedrooms to rear second floor porch.

- b. Windows and shutters: Variety of window sizes on different elevations. All windows are double hung wood sash. The basement has eight over-eight-light sash front and rear and six-over-six-light sash on the sides. Above most main sash have six-over-nine-lights. To the rear of the first floor are eight-over-twelve-light sash of which the bottom section slides into a ceiling slot to permit entrance to the porch. Windows have simple stone lintels and sills. Most windows are equipped with shutters that have louvers on the top half and panels on the bottom half.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Standing seam, metal, flat-hip roof with a center stub that may be a cupola stub. Porch roofs are flat.
- b. Framing: Wood.
- c. Cornice, eaves: Wood bracketed.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement is at present divided as an independent apartment, but most partitions are original to the house. Entry is from the center of the south side of the house under the porch. There is a hall running from there to the center of the basement which is also a stair hall to the first floor.

Across the front of the basement are two bedrooms in the corners with pair of bathrooms between. On the right (south) rear of the basement is the living room and to the rear left (north) are a kitchen and dining area. There are other small storage areas and access to the outside through the kitchen and a furnace room located on the center of the north side of the house.

- b. First floor: The first floor has a center entry hall which is flanked on the left (north) by a kitchen and to the left (south) by the library. There is a center hall and stair hall from the right or south center of the house connecting the side porch. These two halls meet each other and form an L-shaped circulation pattern. Across the rear of the house are to the left (north) the dining room and to the right (south) the living room. All rooms are large.
- c. Second floor: The second floor has an L-shaped hall. Two bedrooms are on the front and two on the rear of the house. Bathrooms are located between the rooms on the front and on the rear centers.

2. Stairways: Main stairway is open on one side and runs from the first to the second floor in a U-shaped pattern. It is wood with a heavy newel post and a curving wooden rail with simple balusters. There is scrollwork on the stair ends, and a heavy chair rail running up the stair. The landing of the stair is lighted by a window in the center of the south side of the house. The stair from the basement to the first floor is simple, wood and utilitarian.
3. Flooring: Random width pine painted a dark brown, throughout first and second floors. Front of basement has wood random width boards in south (right) room and narrow hardwood in north (left) room.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Smooth plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Large wood doors throughout the house. Main doorways on the first floor are very high and have large scale Greek Revival pilasters and pediments and are similar to trim on windows. The heavy four-panel doors have simple molded trim. Second floor doors are similar but smaller in scale. Basement has some four and some five panel doors.
6. Decorative features and trim: Base moldings are very deep, especially on the first floor; there are also heavy chair rails and molded cornice trim on the first and second floors. The basement has only simple and utilitarian trim. Door and window trim as noted above. There are nine fireplaces open. These have a variety of mantels. The library has a white, rectangular, carved marble mantel. The kitchen has a brick faced fireplace with simple wood trim. The dining room has a white marble, arched carved mantel. The living room has a black, arched and carved marble fireplace with a coal grate intact. The right (south) rear second-floor bedroom has a white arched carved marble mantel. Both front bedrooms on the second floor have simple wood Greek Revival mantels. The front right (south) bedroom of the basement has a wooden mantel with free-standing Corinthian columns and a shelf. The rear right (south) room or living room of the basement has a simple wooden Greek Revival mantel.
7. Hardware: A variety of brass hardware - nothing outstanding noted.
8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: Radiators and nine fireplaces.
  - b. Lighting: A variety of electric fixtures in most rooms. The dining room and library equipped with ornamental brass and bronze gas chandeliers. These are mounted from ornamental plaster ceiling medallions.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is on a raised mound several feet above the grade of the street and side walks that are on the west and the south of the property. It is located in a residential section of Georgetown. The main front of the house faces 35th Street or west, the right side (south) P. Street.
2. Enclosures: The house is surrounded by a decorative iron fence that is on top of a brick coping and has brick corner posts.
3. Walks: Simple brick walks surround the house. A center walk connects the main entry porch to the sidewalk with a series of stone steps.
4. Landscaping: A variety of residential landscaping surrounds the base of the building. The planting is not highly formal, nor the site elaborately developed. The rear yard is grass. The house has a number of large trees around it.
5. Outbuildings: Originally, there was an icehouse, a carriage house and stables on the lot. A building located to the east of the house and facing on P Street is reputed to have been the stable or carriage house. It has been much altered and is a separate residence now.

Prepared by Donald B. Myer  
Commission of Fine Arts  
July 20, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a project to record structures in the western part of the Georgetown Historic District in Washington, D.C. The Project was conducted by the Commission of Fine Arts with the cooperation of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The resulting documentation was donated to HABS by the Commission and published in 1970 in HABS Selections Number 6, "Georgetown Architecture - Northwest: Northwest Washington, District of Columbia". Research for the project was conducted by volunteers under the supervision of Ms. Nancy Black, staff member of the Commission of Fine Arts. Architectural information was prepared by Donald B. Myer of the Commission of Fine Arts. The photographs were taken by J. Alexander. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS architectural historian Emily J. Harris in 1979.