

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Benjamin Riggs House  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Robinhood Road  not for publication  
city, town Georgetown  vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Sagadahoc code 023 zip code 04548

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 11/16/88  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

[Signature] Entered in the National Register 12/22/88  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Federal

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Granitewalls Wood: Weatherboard

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roof Asphaltother Center Chimney through hipped roof

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Benjamin Riggs House is a two-story three-bay wooden frame dwelling covered by a low hipped roof and sheathed in weatherboards. Its main front block is two rooms deep and a two-story gabled ell extends to a barn. A granite slab foundation supports the building which features a central chimney.

Facing south, the principal elevation features a symmetrical fenestration pattern focussed on the central entrance. This is comprised of a four-panel door surmounted by a round arched seven-pane fanlight; thin pilasters framing the door; and the wide entablature which is punctuated by the fanlight and capped by a thin cornice. The two windows on the first story utilize nine-over-six sash whereas the three on the upper level are six-over-six. This pattern is repeated on the two-bay east elevation and, with the exception of a door replacing one first story window, on the two-bay west side.

The broad ell appears to consist of a mid-nineteenth century first story with an early twentieth century second story addition. It employs six-over-six windows on both stories. An enclosed wraparound porch on the north and east sides was added about 1937. The gable roofed barn may be a contemporary of the ell or somewhat later. Its large entrance door is located to the left of the intersection with the ell and two additional openings punctuate the facade.

The interior features of the original front block are of considerable significance. Reflecting its transitional Georgian/Federal character is the use of raised paneling on chimney breasts and flanking walls, mantelpieces with deep three-part surrounds and thin mantel shelves and horizontal flush board wainscoting. The stair, which is located in the front hall in front of the chimney stack, is particularly evocative of the Georgian period. Its molded turned newel posts and balusters, as well as its handsome handrail with knees at the newel posts, is reminiscent of the staircase in the 1755 Tate House in Portland.

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

c. 1790  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Believed to have been erected in the early 1790s by an as yet unidentified housewright, the Benjamin Riggs House is a well preserved two-story Federal period dwelling whose significance derives from its architectural prominence and the fact that it is the only extant eighteenth century building in this small coastal community. Furthermore, it exhibits very late use of Georgian style interior details, underscoring the persistent use of outdated architectural fashions frequently encountered in rural areas of the state. It meets National Register criterion C for its local architectural distinction.

According to tradition Benjamin Riggs (1759-1846) was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts and came to Robinhood at age seventeen. (This would place his settling here in 1776, which is curious given the political climate of that period.) Riggs was engaged in maritime shipping, primarily along the New England coast. He apparently prospered, and by the early 1790s had secured sufficient finances to erect the existing dwelling as a replacement for his "log cabin" which stood on this property. Some years later he and his sons erected store houses at their nearby wharf. A measure of Rigg's local prominence can be measured by the fact that he served in the Massachusetts General Court (term as yet not identified, but service proved) prior to Maine's admittance to the Union in 1820, and was later elected to the State Legislature in 1822 and 1826 (his son James served in 1824). Benjamin Riggs occupied the house until his death on January 2, 1846.

As described in 1937 by Eleanor E. Jannell for the Maine HABS catalogue, the Benjamin Riggs House "...occupies the most sightly location of all the buildings in the small village, located as it is, on the crest of the hill overlooking the river. It is also the most

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Jannell, Eleanor E. "Riggs Houses." HABS-ME-46, 1937. Typescript copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

Reed, Parker McCobb. History of Bath and Environs 1607-1894. Portland: Lakeside Press, 1894.

See continuation sheet

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 # ME-46
- recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 1

UTM References

A 19 | 440790 | 4855670  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the Town of Georgetown tax map U-17, lot 19.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property embraces the remaining lot historically and presently associated with the house.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian  
 organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October 13, 1988  
 street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132  
 city or town Augusta state Maine zip code 04333

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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interesting structure architecturally." What was true in 1937 is equally evident a half century later - more so in light of the building's continued integrity. Jannell's statement is true not only as it pertains to the exterior, but it is equally applicable to the interior, especially with respect to the transitional Georgian/Federal design. The late use of characteristic Georgian details in the stair, coupled with the three-bay configuration and the hipped roof punctuated by a central chimney is somewhat unusual in Maine for a house of this period. Nevertheless, it clearly demonstrates the owner's aspirations and economic success.