

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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1. Name of Property

historic name Robinson-Tabb House

other names/site number H-51

2. Location

street & number 377 Holden Drive not for publication N/A

city or town Martinsburg vicinity

state West Virginia code WV county Berkeley code 003 zip code 25401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Susan Mierce, DSHPO 12/9/03  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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):

Edson H. Beall 2/11/04  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously-listed resources in the count)

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

Contributing Noncontributing  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ buildings  
\_\_\_\_\_ sites  
\_\_\_\_\_ structures  
\_\_\_\_\_ objects  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 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**  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation STONE/limestone  
walls BRICK; WOOD/log; STONE; SYNTHETICS/vinyl  
roof METAL  
other WOOD

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

Refer to 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

c.1818, c. 1840, c. 1844

**Significant Dates**

c. 1818; c. 1840; c. 1844

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**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 50 years

**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:

Berkeley County Historic Landmarks Commission

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property 1.8 acresU. S. G. S. Quad map: Hedgesville, West Virginia-Maryland**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>343300</u>	<u>4378120</u>	3		
2				4		

N/A See continuation sheet.**Verbal Boundary Description**

(See Continuation Sheet)

**Boundary Justification**

(See Continuation Sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title David L. Taylor, Principalorganization Taylor & Taylor Associates, Inc.date February, 2003street & number 9 Walnut Streettelephone 814-849-4900city or town Brookvillestate PAzip code 15825**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 David & Vivian McMillionstreet & number 377 Holden Drivetelephone 304-262-3708city or town Martinsburgstate WVzip code 25401

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**Berkeley County, WV**

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**7. Description**

The Robinson-Tabb House (Berkeley County Historic Sites Survey No. H-51; Photos 1-14) is a 2½-story residence of log and Flemish bond brick construction, built in two and perhaps three stages and dating from after the second decade of the nineteenth century. The house is located in the Hedgesville District of rural Berkeley County, in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, approximately three miles northwest of the County seat of Martinsburg. The nominated property occupies a 1.8-acre tract and includes two contributing resources, the house itself (Resource No. 1) and a stone outbuilding (Resource No. 2) located approximately eighty feet to the west. The property retains integrity and with the exception of interior renovations (including modern bathrooms and a kitchen), appears essentially as it did at the end of the period of significance, which includes the c. 1818 construction of the original log house, the c. 1840 construction date of the first brick section, and c. 1844, when it is estimated that a second brick addition was constructed.

The original house was a 1½-story log section dating from c. 1818, clad in weatherboard which in turn was clad in vinyl siding. This fact notwithstanding, the original siding is beneath the newer surface and the historic patterns of fenestration are unaltered. The wood section has a gable roof of standing-seam metal and an exterior gable-end chimney of native stone. It has undergone several remodelings over its long life, and presently includes a kitchen on the first story, bedrooms above, and an enclosed back porch.

Physical evidence, particularly in the asymmetrical fenestration on the principal (east) elevation (Photo 1), suggests that the brick section, vernacular<sup>1</sup> in character, may have been built in two stages. Berkeley County land records indicate that a significant improvement to the property occurred in 1840, perhaps referring to the construction of the first brick section built against the south gable end of the earlier log dwelling. Another increase in valuation occurred in 1844, which may refer to the addition of an extension onto the brick section, resulting in the existing asymmetrical patterns of fenestration on the east elevation. The east elevation is penetrated by a five-bay arrangement, with five windows on the second story and four windows and a door (Photo 2) on the first. The door opens above grade, suggesting that a stoop, porch, or portico may have originally been on this elevation; no evidence of such a feature has been retained and no historic views of the house have been found. The western

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<sup>1</sup>The term, "vernacular," when used in this context, conforms to the definition which appears in Ward Bucher's **Dictionary of Building Preservation**: "a building built without being designed by an architect or someone with similar formal training; often based on traditional or regional forms."

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elevation of the Robinson-Tabb House is of five bays, with a recessed double-gallery porch on the north side (Photo3). The porch is supported by turned posts and includes a compatible replacement open balustrade of wood with attenuated square wood balusters. One door and two windows open onto the porch from both the first and second story and the exterior walls of the house under the porch are parged. All fenestration is flat-topped, with historic six-over-six sash intact, set on extended sills and capped with jack-arched lintels. The brick section is gable-roofed, with asphalt shingle cladding and interior gable-end chimneys. Each gable-end elevations of the house is penetrated by windows in the pediment of the gable flanking the chimneys.

The interior of the brick portion of the Robinson-Tabb House is organized around a side-passage plan, with a hallway running from front to back and a double-run open-string stair accessing the second story. The stair retains the original balustrade and a modest newel (Photo 4) as well as a molded handrail set into the interior wall of the stairway. Four rooms are on each story and fireplaces have been retained in most of the rooms (Photo 5). The mantles on the first story (Photos 5, 7) are somewhat more elaborate than those on the second story (Photos 11, 12, 13). In the diningroom a historic two-tier built-in cupboard is on the left side of the fireplace (Photo 5). Woodwork includes multi-panel wood doors with original hardware (Photo 6), modest baseboard, random-width wood flooring, and chair rail and wainscot in some rooms. Among the most distinctive interior features of the interior of the property is the oversized doorway with pocket doors which leads between the two rooms on the south side of the first story (Photos 7, 8). This feature incorporates reeded trim with corner blocks surrounding grained six-panel doors which retain historic white porcelain knobs.

The Robinson-Tabb House is located on a former agricultural tract which has been subdivided for residential development. One contributing outbuilding stands immediately west of the main house. (Photo 14). It is a 1½-story gable-roofed limestone dependency with two gable-roofed wood additions and a gable dormer. The stone section and its dormer are slate-roofed, while standing seam metal roof cladding is on the two wood wings. It is divided into four rooms and presently is used as an antique shop. The date of construction and historic use of the dependency is not known, although both the Robinsons and the Tabbs were slaveowners, and the building may have been slave quarters which dated to the same period as the house.

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**8. Significance**

The Robinson-Tabb House (Berkeley County Historic Site Survey No. H-51) meets National Register Criterion C and is significant on a local level for its *architecture*. It is a well-preserved and intact example of domestic design which began as an early nineteenth-century log house to which was appended a brick section which itself may have been built in two stages. As noted in Section 7, the period of significance is c. 1818 for the construction of the house and stone outbuilding; c. 1840 for the construction of the first brick section; and c. 1844 for the construction of the second brick addition, by which time the house assumed the essential appearance which it retains.

Berkeley County land records indicate that a large tract of land on Wellstown School Road was granted in 1767 by Lord Fairfax to Robert Paul. In 1777, following Paul's death, his heirs, including his widow, Sarah, conveyed the acreage to their son, James, who along with his wife Rachel, sold one-half of the Paul tract to Alexander Robinson. Robinson acquired the remaining half of the original tract in 1810. Robinson erected the log section of the house c. 1818, shortly before his death. In 1828 the Robinson property was acquired by George W. Tabb, Jr. (1794-1869), a member of a pioneer family who had migrated westward from the Tidewater area of Virginia shortly before the Revolutionary War and whose members owned several plantation properties by the time of the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> About 1839 George Tabb began the construction of the brick section which is appended to the south end of the earlier Robinson log house. Land records show the assessed valuation of the property to have risen from \$350.00--where it had remained for many years--to \$900.00 in 1840, suggesting that a substantial improvement--such as a brick house--had been constructed at that time under Tabb's ownership. In 1844 the valuation rose again, this time to \$1,310.00, perhaps accounting for the enlargement of the dwelling.

George W. Tabb was listed as a farmer in census records and retained ownership of the property until 1866. Three years before his death in 1869, he conveyed a total of 205 acres to Cromwell Riner

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<sup>2</sup>"Rural Hill," the home of gentleman farmer Edward Tabb, is a Federal-style house of coursed rubble limestone which is located on Berkeley County Route 30; it was listed in the National Register on January 12, 1984.

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Sperow. Cromwell Sperow's parents, George and Mary Sperow had come to Berkeley County about 1807 and became parents of eleven children, one of whom, George, wed Mary Riner. George and Mary Sperow's son, Cromwell Riner Sperow, married Catherine Riner, who may have been a distant cousin, and owned and farmed the Robinson-Tabb property until his own death, at which time the property passed to his sons, George and Charles Sperow. The Sperows retained the farm until 1948, when it was acquired by James A. Riner, perhaps another distant relative, whose family owned the farm until 1999 when the property was sold to Ryan Homes for subdivision and residential development. A 1.8-acre tract containing the historic Robinson-Tabb House was kept separate from the modern development and is the subject of this nomination.

With reference to National Register Criterion C, the Robinson-Tabb House is significant as a well-preserved representative of vernacular nineteenth-century domestic architecture in Berkeley County, executed with some reference to the Federal style, particularly seen in its Flemish bond brickwork and the jack-arched lintels which cap the windows in the brick portion of the house. The property reflects the growth of the county from its era of settlement--when the most rudimentary shelter served the needs of those clearing the land--to the ante-bellum era of the 1840s, by which time farmers and small plantation owners had attained comparative prosperity to the degree that they could erect far more substantial and permanent shelter. By comparison, another Berkeley County Federal-style house, also built by a Tabb--Edward, in that case (NR 1984)--is considerably larger than the Robinson-Tabb House. It is built of coursed rubble limestone and is more pretentious than is the Robinson-Tabb House. The 1850 L-shaped Daniel Ropp House on Faraway Farm (NR 1980) is of brick and is larger than the Robinson-Tabb House. The Myers House (NR 1980) is also of the Federal style, but involves a central-passage interior plan. While other period properties may be larger and more elaborate, the Robinson-Tabb House nonetheless represents architecture of the era of settlement, growth, and maturity of Berkeley County evident in its original log section and two brick additions with their Federal-influenced appointments.

The integrity of the Robinson-Tabb House is retained and the interior alterations, particularly in the case of the kitchen remodeling, the siding of the log section with siding, and the enclosure of the back porch, do not adversely effect the overall strong integrity of the house. These changes reflect the adaptation of the house to modern requirements without the loss of significant historic fabric.



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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Berkeley County Land Records, Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Falling Waters Presbyterian Church Cemetery Records, in the files of the Berkeley County Historical Society, Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Feigley, Dorothea W., "Tabb Land Past and Present," paper presented to the Berkeley County Historical Society, May 22, 1973. MS in the collection of the Berkeley County Historical Society, Martinsburg, West Virginia.

"The Tabb Family," *William and Mary College Quarterly* 7 (1899), 45-49.

Tabb Family Genealogy [undated], MS in the collection of the Berkeley County Historical Society, Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Wood, Don C. Research notes on the Robinson-Tabb House, MS in the collection of the Berkeley County Historical Society, Martinsburg, West Virginia.

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**10. Geographical Data**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated area consists of that 1.8 acre tract of land recorded in Berkeley County Deed Book 634 Page 494.

**JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of this nomination consists only of the Robinson-Tabb House, its associated outbuilding, and the 1.8-acre tract containing both properties. The nominated area reflects that tract which remained with the house after the former farm was sold to a housing developer.

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**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

All Photographs:

**Robinson-Tabb House**

Berkeley County, West Virginia

Photographer: David L. Taylor

Date: 2002

Negatives filed at: West Virginia SHPO  
Charleston, West Virginia

1. Robinson-Tabb House, east elevation, looking west, showing brick section in foreground and original log section at right, including form, massing, and fenestration, including the asymmetrical massing of the brick section which suggests a two-phase construction.
2. Robinson-Tabb House, east elevation, looking west, detail, showing original multi-panel door, jack-arched lintel, etc.
3. Robinson-Tabb House, west elevation, looking east, showing original log section with enclosed porch at left, and 2½-story brick section at the right including double gallery porch, fenestration, massing, roof form, etc.
4. Robinson-Tabb House, interior, detail, showing stair hall, open-string straight-run stair, balustrade, newel, looking east
5. Robinson-Tabb House, interior, detail of diningroom, looking south and depicting original mantle, trim, cupboard, etc.
6. Robinson-Tabb House, interior, showing typical multi-panel doors, original escutcheons, trim, etc., found throughout property.
7. Robinson-Tabb House, interior, detail, first story, looking southeast across back livingroom and through large doorway into front livingroom, showing wainscot, volumes, trim, wood flooring, etc.

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8. Robinson-Tabb House, interior, first story, detail of large doorway between livingrooms, showing faux grained finish on door, trim, etc., looking southeast
9. Robinson-Tabb House, interior, showing typical trim and Classical-Revival-style wood mantle typical throughout
10. Robinson-Tabb House, interior second story stair hall, showing balustrade of double-run stair from first story and balustrade and stair leading to attic.
11. Robinson-Tabb House, second floor bedroom, looking northwest, showing overall condition, volume, trim, mantle, etc.
12. Robinson-Tabb House, second floor bedroom, looking southeast, showing overall condition, volume, trim, mantle, etc.
13. Robinson-Tabb House, second floor bedroom, looking southwest, showing overall condition, volume, trim, mantle, etc.
14. Robinson-Tabb House, outbuilding, looking northwest and showing overall condition of original stone dependency, wood additions, etc.

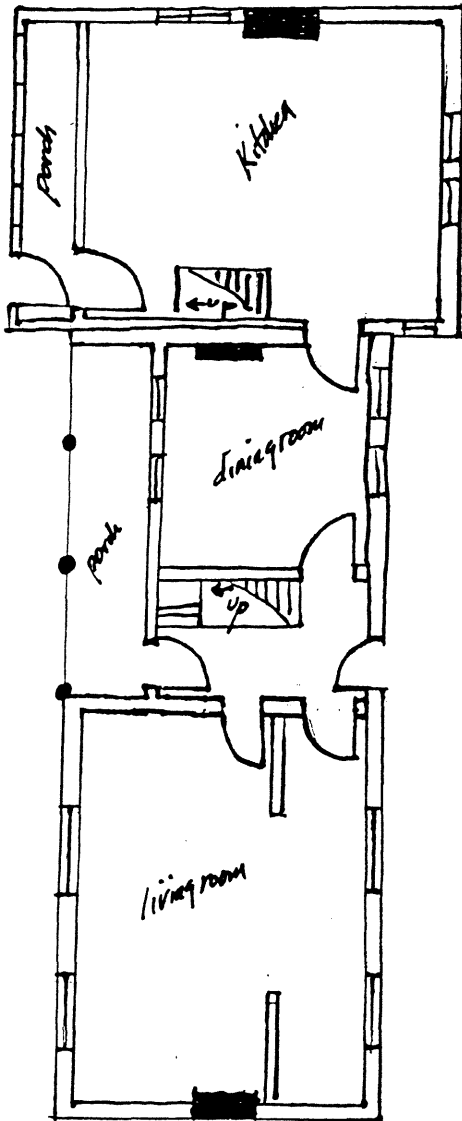
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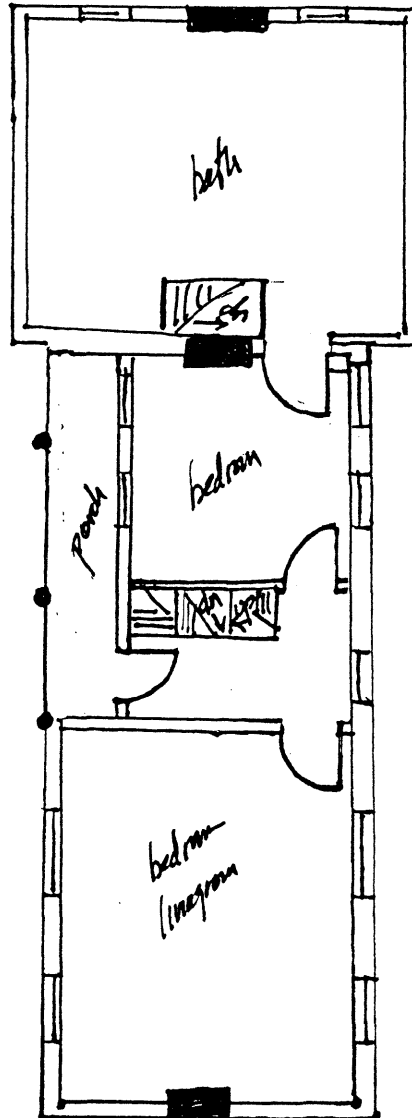
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First floor



Second floor

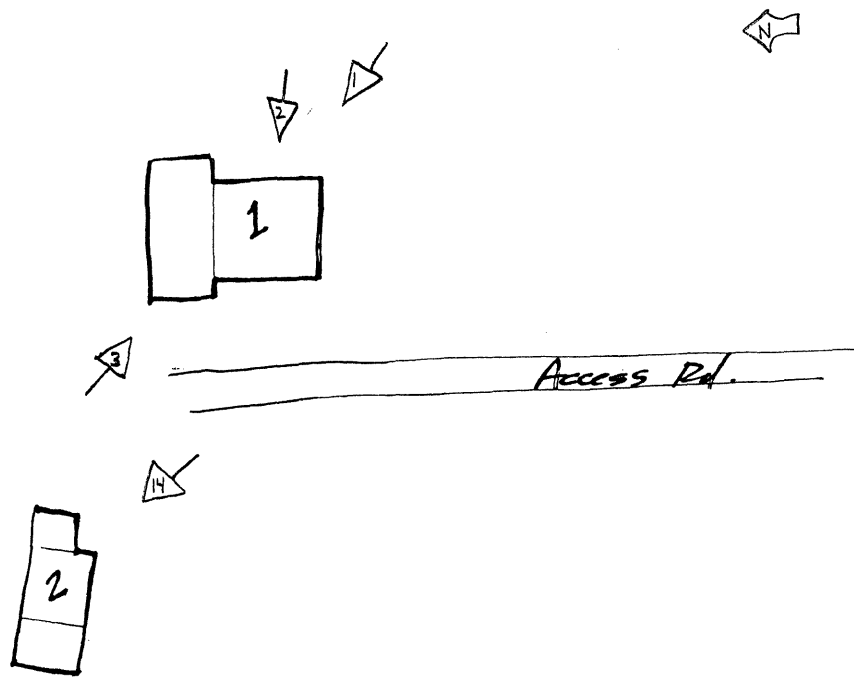
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*new housing development*

Sketch plan  
Not to scale