

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



82  
2

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Colonel Robert Z. Taylor House

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 1008 South College Street N/A not for publication

city, town Trenton N/A vicinity of congressional district Seven

state Tennessee code 047 county Gibson code 053

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Dr. and Mrs. J.M. Moore, Jr.

street & number Humboldt Highway, Box 189

city, town Trenton N/A vicinity of state Tennessee

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Gibson County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Trenton state Tennessee

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Colonel Robert Z. Taylor House, surrounded by numerous oak and maple trees, is located on a large lot on South College Street in Trenton, Tennessee. The house is a two-and-½ story frame Queen Anne style residence constructed on an irregular plan. A verandah with balustrade encircles the house. There are three brick interior chimneys. The roof is multi-planed.

The house is supported by a brick and concrete block foundation (ca. 1950) which has been partially covered with stucco. The exterior walls exhibit a variety of wood sidings: fishscale shingles, beveled wood siding, sawtooth shingles, tongue-and-groove, and board-and-batten. The three brick chimneys each have two flues and service upstairs and downstairs fireplaces. These chimneys are contemporary in construction (ca. 1950) and replace the original corbelled brick chimneys. The multi-planed roof, which consists of gable and tent styles, is covered with asphalt shingles.

The majority of windows are straight-topped with plate glass in both the upper and lower wooden sash. Three other window styles are also found: an attic dormer with a four-pane casement, two gable end windows with plate glass in the lower sash and small panes in the upper sash, and a semi-circular window glazed with plate glass.

The door unit of the principle facade consists of a single leaf door with decorative moldings and a beveled glass panel. A sidelight of beveled glass is set into a wooden panel decorated with moldings and simple carving. Completing the unit is a rectangular beveled glass transom located above the door and sidelight.

Other decorative exterior architectural features include: a projecting bay with tent roof; gable overhangs with cut-out pattern brackets; spindle balusters; turned posts; cut-out pattern porch frieze with acorn pendants and fan-shaped brackets; a projecting second story gable with recessed porch, spindled frieze and balustrade; and decorative gable ends.

Significant interior details include: golden oak woodwork, poplar flooring, an elaborate cherry mantel, and cast-iron mantels which exhibit gilding and marbling. Much of the woodwork is poplar and retains the original oak graining.

The house has undergone minimal-moderate exterior alterations (ie., chimneys and foundation) and is in good condition. Interior alterations have been kept to a minimum. Original interior woodwork and exterior architectural trim has been retained.

The present owners are currently developing plans for the restoration of the house. These plans include: repair of foundation; reproduction and replacement of damaged exterior architectural features; replacement of present brick chimneys with those of a compatible design; and painting the exterior with appropriate paint colors.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1895 **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) **Criteria B,C**

Constructed ca. 1895, the Colonel Robert Z. Taylor House is a significant resource to the town of Trenton for its associations with Colonel Taylor, a prominent attorney who was influential in many local concerns from the 1870s to 1920. The house exhibits the skilled craftsmanship which was utilized to construct this Queen Anne style residence.

Robert Zachery Taylor was born in Madison County, Tennessee, on February 24, 1846. In October, 1848, his family moved to Gibson County, Tennessee, near the town of Trenton. Taylor received his early education in the county schools and assisted his father on their large farm. In late January, 1864, Taylor enlisted in Company A, 20th Tennessee Calvary Regiment, Confederate Army. After the company's parole in Gainesville, Alabama, May, 1865, he returned to Trenton and began to pursue the study of law. In 1869 he married Miss Mettie Ivie of Trenton and moved to Mt. Vernon, Illinois, to establish a law practice.

Colonel Taylor returned to Trenton in 1872 and became a leading attorney. In 1887 he was appointed Clerk and Master for the Chancery Court, a position he held for two terms. At the expiration of his second term in office, he returned to his law practice and formed a partnership with Albert W. Biggs. At this time he was elected chairman of the Gibson County Democratic Committee, a position he held for fourteen years. Colonel Taylor is also known for being instrumental in contracting the construction of the Gibson County Courthouse which was dedicated in 1901.

Colonel Taylor, along with several prominent citizens of northwest Tennessee, including Captain Quintin Rankin of Trenton, formed the West Tennessee Land Company in 1907. Within a short time, this company came to control Reelfoot Lake fishing rights and fish prices -- an issue which was greatly resented by many of the local people. By April, 1908, the Night Riders of Reelfoot Lake began a terror campaign against the land company. The Night Riders, a secret, oath-bound organization, intimidated the Reelfoot Lake region supposedly in the interest of the lake people. Despite their crimes of murder, physical abuse, and destruction of property, the Night Riders were never punished.

On October 19, 1908, Colonel Taylor and Captain Rankin arrived at Reelfoot Lake to discuss the lease of land to a possible business partner. After the meeting, the two attorneys retired to their motel where they were forced from their room by members of the Night Riders. Taken to a slough which ran from the main lake, the Night Riders demanded the lawyers to relieve the court-enforced restrictions of the land company. Both men refused. Verbal abuse by the Night Riders became physical and Captain Rankin, the younger of the two attorneys, was hung and his body riddled with bullets. During the confusion which occurred in the course of Rankin's murder, Colonel Taylor struggled loose from his guards and dived into the slough. The Night Riders searched the waters

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Night Riders of Reelfoot Lake (Vanderwood); A Series of Pen and Picture Sketches (Greene); Gibson County Sesquicentennial, 1823 - 1973; West Tennessee Historical Society Papers Vol.14, pages 52 - 61.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 1.83 acres

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle name Trenton - Gibson Co. Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 16 324890 3981940  
 Zone Easting Northing

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

                   
 Zone Easting Northing

C                        

D                        

E                        

F                        

G                        

H                        

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies townlot number 6, group J, tax map 107-L for the city of Trenton, Tennessee. The boundaries are outlined in red on the accompanying property assessor's map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ms. Cate Hamilton

organization N/A

date December 4, 1981

street & number 205 University Street, Apt. A

telephone (901) 587-6781

city or town Martin

state Tennessee

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national    state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Herbert L. Haynes*

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 2/23/82

For NCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*[Signature]*  
 Keeper of the National Register

*[Signature]*  
 date 4/1/82

Chief of Registration

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Colonel Robert Z. Taylor House

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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but, finding no trace of the older man, believed him to have drowned. Taylor's escape, accomplished by swimming underwater, provided the court with an eyewitness to the Rankin murder. Although six of the Night Riders were found guilty of second degree murder, none were punished as the State Supreme Court reversed the sentences on a technicality.

Since Colonel Taylor's death in 1922, the house has had several owners. The present owners, who recently purchased the house, are developing plans for the restoration of exterior and interior details.