

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

1983

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

1. Name

historic Dawson, T.H.B., House

and/or common Dawson, T.H.B., House

2. Location

street & number 300 S. Green Street N/A not for publication

city, town Berkeley Springs N/A vicinity of ~~Washington, D.C.~~

state West Virginia code 54 county Morgan code 065

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name R.C. Dunn

street & number 15750 Westbrook

city, town Detroit N/A vicinity of state Michigan

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Morgan County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Berkeley Springs state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The T.H.B. Dawson House, a large red brick Italianate-style 19th-century residence, occupies a hillside city lot at the corner of Green and Market Streets in Berkeley Springs (Bath), seat of Morgan County, West Virginia. The slight gradient of the hillside parcel required the builders to erect the house with a high, front-facing raised basement and an expansive flight of wooden entrance stairs. These components combine to give the edifice a commanding presence on the city street. A wealth of detail in the form of turned, sawn, and open-work wooden ornament and other picturesque features such as three-sided window bays, segmental-headed window openings, and louvered window shutters on original pintles, survive in an excellent state of preservation. It is the presence of such detail and the survival of the Victorian massing and floor plan that cause this house - built in 1880 - to be so important to the community where many others of similar style have been altered or destroyed.

The Dawson residence is an L-shaped, 2-story brick house with highly ornate porches at the front and side elevations. The dwelling's gabled roofs, covered with corrugated tin (earlier with slate) are pierced at the gabled ends with interior chimneys and embellished at the apex of the eaves with massive open-work and punched wooden screens. Heavy wooden cornice heads appoint each of the window and door openings that are all segmental in shape. The cornices above the entrance and second story window centered in the facade, are especially heavy. Framing the central bay of the front facade is a massive and steeply pitched cross gable that lends the architectural composition a distinct Gothic touch.

Two, 3-sided bays flank the entrance and are linked with a roof and balustraded wooden deck rail that effectively forms a recessed porch extending across the entire first story of the entrance elevation. The doorway is centered beneath the porch within a mullioned opening with an expansive segmental transom and floor-length sidelights. The glass panes of the surrounds here and in the second story 3-part window, are referred to in the surviving bills and shipping notices (in the owner's possession), as "figured glass" (etched glass). The heavy front single-leaf door is deeply moulded and paneled in the High Victorian manner. Ash and black walnut planks comprise the flooring of the entrance foyer.

A 2-flight stair rises at the rear of the open-well entrance hall to provide access to the spacious rooms of the upper floor. The 10 rooms of the house are finished with heavy, dark softwood mouldings; all of the walls are either papered or painted. The custom-made book cases of the first floor left parlor are designed with Gothic-style ornament. While wall surfaces were generally papered after the turn of the century, original wall coloring called "alabastine", a bluish hue with lime mixture, was applied to many of the walls after construction. This finish can be seen in parts of the house today. The survival of numerous original lighting fixtures and hardware in addition to the large quantity of original furnishings, Victorian bric-a-brac, and household utility items, make the house a veritable museum of domestic Victorian material culture.

<sup>1</sup> grained to resemble hardwood

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While the Dawson House is not an example of baronial Victorian architecture, it is a significant and largely intact example of a substantial house type once commonly assigned to upper middle class businessmen and professionals of America's Gilded Age.

# 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				local history

Winner 8/31/83

**Specific dates** 1880 **Builder/Architect** H.H. & J.W. Hunter, builders

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The T.H.B. Dawson House in Berkeley Springs, Morgan County, West Virginia, is significant because it is the best preserved and detailed surviving example of Italianate-Gothic architecture in the community, and because it is associated with a prominent member of local 19th-century society in the environment of a rural county seat.

Plans for the Dawson House were drawn prior to 1880 and executed in 1880 by local builders H.H. and J.W. Hunter. (Plan books may have been used in the design). Building materials were ordered from area businesses; e.g. lumber from George D. Landwehr of Cumberland, Maryland, and P. Hein & Company. The finished house was an impressive addition to the community though its grounds were originally more spacious and contained several subsidiary structures for the storage of hams, wood and coal. Like most substantial suburban houses of 19th-century America, the Dawson House was surrounded by open lots. The quiet site above the town of Berkeley Springs gave its occupants a certain freedom from the bustle and pollution of the commercial streets around the courthouse; it also provided a degree of security from change.

Thus the Dawson House survives as an excellent, intact example of substantial small-town architecture of the period. With the encroachment of later, less sophisticated residential development on neighboring city lots, the Victorian quality of the Dawson House did not diminish but remained altogether a singular statement of ideas of fashion from another time.

The Italianate elements chosen by the builder are best represented in the use of heavy ornament over window and door openings and in the plentiful sawnwork embellishing porch and verandah columns. Gothic flourishes are evident too in the steep cross gable dominating the building's front elevation and in the wooden openwork screen of quatrefoils decorating the eaves of the verandah on the north side of the house. The vernacular character of the house is characterized then by a collection of style elements that harmonize within the broad genre of 19th-century building called "Victorian". The purpose of the builder was to create a dominating statement reflecting the status of the owner; it is the choice of ornament and vertical massing - as in the tall, segmental double-hung windows with console-supported heavy cornice heads - that produce this effect, although to have referred to the house as a "cottage" in the late 19th century would have been acceptable.

The citizen of Berkeley Springs for whom the house was built was Mr. T.H.B. (Thomas Hart Benton) Dawson (1840-1921), a native of the community who attained prominence in community service and business affairs. The Morgan Messenger upon the death of Mr. Dawson reported in its January 27, 1921, addition that he was "one of Morgan County's oldest and best known citizens." Following active service in the

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Miscellaneous bills, shipping notices, correspondence and photographs owned by R.C. Dunn of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

Morgan Messenger, Jan. 27, 1921.

"Register of Deaths", Morgan County, West Virginia, Vol. 1 (1905-29) p. 48.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property city lot 80' x 137'

Quadrangle name Stotlers Crossroads, West Virginia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000'

### UMT References

A 

1	7	7	3	7	9	8	0	4	3	8	9	5	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification City lot 80' x 137', no. 2-88, Wright and Smith Addition, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney S. Collins, Director, Historic Preservation Unit

organization Department of Culture and History date November 3, 1982

street & number Cultural Center - Capitol Complex telephone 304/ 348-0240

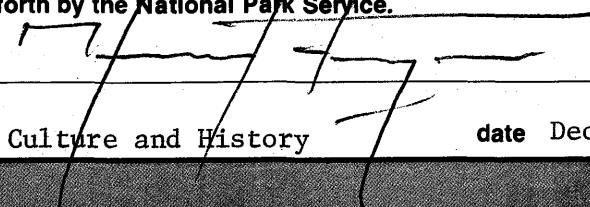
city or town Charleston state West Virginia 25305

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Commissioner, Department of Culture and History date December 21, 1982

For NPS use only

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

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

2/10/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Union Army during the Civil War, Dawson was elected in 1866 county clerk of Morgan County, a position that was held for 36 consecutive years. Also active in the legal profession and insurance business, Dawson played other roles in the community.

In 1889, "Col." Dawson was a charter and board member of the Bank of Berkeley Springs, a position he filled until the end of his life. Dawson also assisted as a charter member of the George G. Summers Post of the G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic). Dawson was the son of Henry and Elizabeth Fearnow Dawson. He and his wife, Mollie Brown Dawson, were the parents of ten children. Present (1982) owner of the Dawson House is Mr. R.C. Dunn, a grandson of T.H.B. Dawson.

The Dawson House is significant therefore because it represents a locally distinguished example of late 19th century architecture and because it preserves in its furnishings and lore the traditions of a locally prominent family.