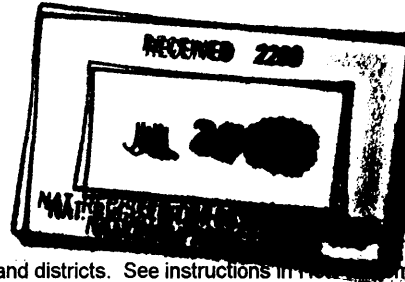


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Robin House and Barn

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1616 Highway 31 NA not for publication

city or town Arnaudville X vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county St. Landry code 097 zip code 70512

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally X statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Gerri Hobdy

July 22, 1999

Signature of certifying official/Title Gerri Hobdy, LA SHPO Date

Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

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 certifying 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
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

8/27/99

Robin House and Barn
Name of property

St. Landry Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing		Noncontributing		
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	buildings
<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	sites
<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	structures
<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	<u> — </u>	objects
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Louisiana's French Creole Architecture

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic
Agriculture/Subsistence

Sub. Single Dwelling
Agricultural Outbuilding

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic
Vacant

Sub. Single Dwelling
Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

House: Other: French Creole, Greek Revival
Barn: No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick Wood
walls Weatherboard Weatherboard, Shingle, Metal
roof Metal Metal

other _____

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" next to 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.

Criteria Considerations NA
(Mark "X" next to all that apply.)

- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1820

c. 1835

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):** NA
- 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: _____

Robin House and Barn
Name of property

St. Landry Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 2.7 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 603390 3368765

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff (Research by Louisiana State University student Sara A. Hahn)

organization Division of Historic Preservation date June 1999

street & number P.O. Box 44247 telephone (225) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

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 Michael and Myra Matas

street & number 1616 Highway 31 telephone (318) 754-7816

city or town Arnaudville state LA zip code 70512

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETSection 7 Page 1

The Robin House and Barn stand on rural acreage on the east bank of Bayou Teche in lower St. Landry Parish. The closest towns are Leonville, situated a few miles to the north of the home, and Arnaudville, located to the south and just across the line in neighboring St. Martin Parish. Both buildings are one-and-one-half stories tall and of frame construction. The house combines French Creole and Greek Revival style features; the barn is also an example of the French Creole building tradition. The house is being dated to c. 1835 and the barn to c. 1820 for the purposes of this nomination (see below). Although they have received alterations over the years, both buildings retain their National Register eligibility.

The House

The Robin House's constructional history is not clear. Primary source research indicates that Robins were living on the property as early as 1815. The present house has features that appear to be c. 1835 and others that appear to be earlier. It could be an older house remodeled c. 1835, or it is not impossible for it all to be from c. 1835.

The house exhibits a number of French Creole features. These include:

- 1) an asymmetrical facade (door, window, door, door),
- 2) *bousillage* walls,
- 3) a braced frame featuring mortises, tenons and pegs,
- 4) the fact that it stands several feet above grade upon brick piers,
- 5) a Class III umbrella roof with gabled ends (see attached figure). Each gable contains two, eight-over-eight windows and two small plank doors.
- 6) a Creole floorplan still easily visible despite a slight alteration (see below). This plan contains a gallery, a central *salle* flanked by equal sized *chambres*, and a rear *cabinet/loggia* range containing a curved, steep stair leading from the *loggia* to the attic.
- 7) exposed beaded ceiling beams throughout (and beaded ceiling boards as well),

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

- 8) two wraparound mantels. These combine the somewhat chunky shape associated with the Greek Revival style with reeded pilasters and entablatures suggestive of the Federal period. A third mantel features the French lozenge motif. However, this mantel appears to have been added at a much later date and does not wrap around the flue in the French manner.
- 9) several sets of batten double doors featuring beading on the vertical members.

The house also has handmade wrought iron hardware (including strap hinges). This feature, along with the asymmetrical facade, suggest that the home is earlier than c. 1835, but a more specific construction date cannot be ascertained from available evidence.

In addition to its French Creole characteristics, the Robin House exhibits restrained Greek Revival features which were not found in Louisiana until the 1830s and 1840s – thus the c. 1835 date chosen for this nomination. These features include two frontal roof dormers featuring pilasters with molded capitals and pedimented gables with raked cornices, boxed columns (with molded capitals) creating a symmetrical gallery with five bays (the center bay being slightly more narrow than the others), and a simple entablature outlining the gallery roof. The wraparound mantels described above are also suggestive of the Greek Revival style.

The home's *loggia* was altered at an early date – it was extended outward and enclosed. The new interior room's rear wall was constructed of *brique entre poteaux* (brick between posts), while each side was closed by a single leaf French door surrounded by a transom and sidelights. The latter treatment left a small vertical opening between each door surround and the former *loggia*'s side walls; each of these open spaces was filled by a single sidelight (see floorplan attached and photo.) The panes in the new doors and sidelights resemble those in the twelve-over-eight windows found in the home's original rooms. Apparently at this time beaded clapboard siding was placed over the *loggia*'s plaster walls (surviving plaster is visible beneath the stairs leading to the attic). This treatment covered a window which formerly opened from the *salle* to the *loggia*. The facade apparently received identical beaded clapboard at this time.

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 3

Probably during the 1890s, the home's three original French doors were replaced with single leaf doors in the Eastlake style. At some point curving brackets were attached to the capitals of the gallery's boxed columns and the sheathing on the building's two side elevations was replaced. Between 1920 and 1940 a shed roof room was attached to the brick between post wall of the enclosed loggia. Other twentieth century changes include the installation of large double glazed doors between the *salle* and one *chambre*, the placement of paneling and wallpaper over walls in several rooms, the covering of the original cypress floors with a layer of pine floorboards, the conversion of one *cabinet* into a bath, and the removal of two rear dormers which matched those surviving on the facade.

Despite the foregoing alterations experienced by the home, the Robin House still strongly reflects its Creole lineage, which of course is the reason for its architectural significance. As a rare example of a building type which was once common in St. Landry Parish, the house is a prime candidate for National Register listing.

The Barn

The frame Robin Barn cannot be specifically dated. The French Creole construction techniques found in the structure were in use in the 1700s and did not phase out until the two or three decades immediately prior to the Civil War. Because Robins are known to have been living on the property by 1815, a date of c. 1820 will be used for the purposes of this nomination.

The barn consists of two almost equal sized cribs probably built at different times. They are separated by a wide breezeway. Scarf joints join the timbers used to expand the cribs' wall plates when the two spaces were connected. The cribs and breezeway stand beneath an extremely steep gabled umbrella roof (covered by corrugated metal) which extends outward to create wide ancillary passageways on two sides of the structure (see floorplan attached). The roof is supported by posts along its outer edges. The outer walls of the passageways are also covered by corrugated metal, although some pieces have been lost on one side.

The two cribs appear to have been built separately. The earlier is of *piece-sur-piece* construction – logs hewn into planks and joined at the corners with finely crafted full dovetail notches. Mortises, tenons and pegs are also used to hold the structure together. At one time the crib had a half-story beneath the eaves, but the floor

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 4

separating the two levels has been removed. It appears that at least two walls of the lower space were originally finished, because flush siding is visible. One wall has beaded batten French doors and a window; both of these openings feature surrounds with beaded molding as well. (There are also two batten doors on the lower level and a plank door within the upper part of the gable.) The windows and doors have bar-type latches which lock from the inside. The location of the latches, as well as the presence of the more finely finished materials, suggests that this space was once used as living quarters. The crib's exterior wall is presently sheathed in a combination of clapboards, flush boards and shingles.

The later crib is of *poteaux-sur-solle* (post on sill) construction. Three large sills (the fourth is missing) lie on the ground, with a series of upright members and diagonal braces mortised and tenoned into them. There is no evidence of a former half-story in this area, and the utilitarian nature of the materials from which it is built indicates that it was never intended for human occupation. This crib's outside wall is sheathed by clapboards.

Although the barn has lost some of its fabric (possibly for reuse in the non-contributing element described below), it still clearly retains its identity as an antebellum barn constructed in the French Creole tradition. As an example of this very rare building type, the Robin Barn is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

Non-Contributing Element

A double crib barn with wooden plank walls and a metal gambrel roof also stands on the property. It is being counted as a non-contributing element because it was constructed between 1940 and 1950 and does not relate to the significance of either the house or the above early barn. Nor is it individually eligible.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

The Robin House is of local architectural significance within St. Landry Parish because it is one of relatively few surviving French Creole houses in a parish where once they would have been quite numerous. It is particularly important because of its *bousillage* construction and because it is a typical small-to-medium French Creole house. The Robin Barn is significant at the state level in the area of architecture because, as an example of an antebellum barn, it is a rare survivor of a utilitarian building type which would have existed on every plantation and farm throughout the state. It is also significant at the state level because it is a very rare example of the application of the French Creole building tradition to a barn.

House – Architectural Significance, Local Level

The region where the Robin House is located is one of Louisiana's earliest settled areas. The parish of St. Landry was one of the state's original parishes, having been established in 1807. And, like the rest of southern Louisiana, St. Landry, of course, was settled by the French. French Creole houses would have been the norm from the colonial period through roughly the 1830s and 1840s. In the later years of this period, the tradition was being influenced and in some cases supplanted by the American Greek Revival.

Given the foregoing, it is clear that St. Landry Parish, for example, in about 1850 would have been a showcase of French Creole architecture, with examples numbering in the hundreds. And while St. Landry today is known for a handful of French Creole landmarks, the actual number of buildings remaining to represent this native tradition is rather small, especially when one considers the number that once existed. As is typical in the state, the vast majority of St. Landry's historic buildings date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A "high probability area" survey of the parish combined with Louisiana SHPO staff knowledge reveals that there are probably less than 20 to 25 French Creole houses remaining in St. Landry. (This number does not include seriously altered examples or late nineteenth century cottages that have an overall Creole shape and maybe a detail or two.) Of these survivors to represent the parish's earliest architectural tradition, the Robin House is noteworthy because of its *bousillage* construction, which was once the norm in rural French Louisiana. Also, its floorplan is important because plans with two equal sized *chambres* flanking the *salle* are now rare. They were once characteristic of the Creole houses of Louisiana's

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

prairie region. Finally, the building is important as an example of a typical small-to-medium size Creole house – a type that has tended not to survive as well as larger examples. The Robin House, along with a few others of its size, enables the parish to illustrate the full range of French Creole architecture.

Barn, Architectural Significance, State Level

The Robin Barn is significant at the state level in the area of architecture for three reasons:

- 1) Louisiana retains a number of plantation and farm houses, but on the whole few historic barns remain standing. Historically the landscape would have been dotted with several thousand barns, but today they are rare survivors. These buildings once played important roles in cotton and sugar production but have now lost their utilitarian value. In most cases they have either been left to fall down or been the victims of progress. Although twentieth century and a few late-nineteenth century barns may still be seen (some in deplorable condition), the antebellum barn is almost non-existent. Although no specific survey of barns (antebellum or later) has been conducted, and the state's comprehensive historic building survey is unfinished, the Division of Historic Preservation's staff members believe that less than ten antebellum barns survive in Louisiana. The survivors include two within the Whitney Plantation Historic District (St. John the Baptist Parish, National Register), one at Oakley and one at Rosedown plantation (both West Feliciana Parish), one at Melrose and one at Oakland (both on the National Register and within Natchitoches Parish) and St. Landry Parish's Robin Barn.
- 2) Although French Creole homes and plantation dependencies rank as Louisiana's oldest building tradition, few examples of Creole outbuildings such as *pigeonniers* and barns have survived. For example, although historically *pigeonniers* would have been found on almost every large French landholding in the state, the Division of Historic Preservation knows of only between 30 and 40 extant *pigeonniers* today. The rarity of French Creole barns is even more pronounced. Although all or most of

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3
9 1

the state's early Creole plantation holdings would have had Creole barns, virtually all were replaced by newer structures over the years. As a result, the Division knows of only two French Creole barns in the state. One is within the Whitney Plantation Historic District; the other is the Robin Barn.

- 3) The *piece-sur-piece* construction found in the Robin Barn is known to exist in only one other building in the state – the Pointe Coupee Parish Museum near New Roads.

Historical Note:

As noted elsewhere, archival sources reveal that Louis Joseph Francois Robin and his family were living on the property in question by 1815. The Robin family continued to live in the house until 1925.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Division of Historic Preservation. Standing Structures Survey of St. Landry Parish, Louisiana.

Hahn, Sara A. *A History of the Robin House and Property, St. Landry Parish, May 3, 1999*; copy in National Register file.

Site visit by National Register staff.

Robin House and Barn
Name of property

St. Landry Parish, LA
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 1

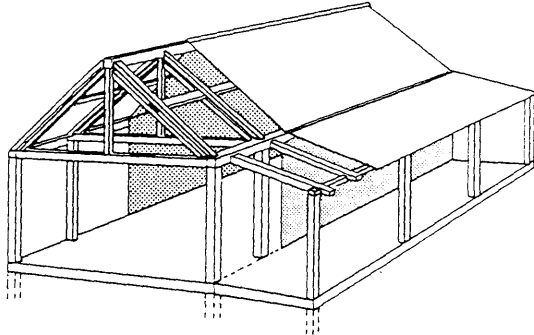
BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

See attached plat map.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

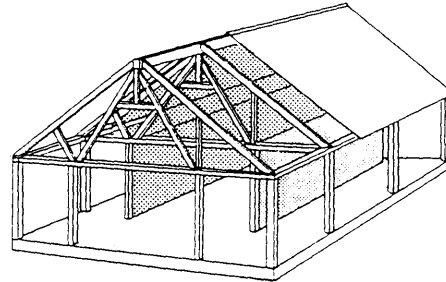
Boundaries were chosen to encompass the significant resources (house and early barn) and the immediate setting while excluding non-contributing buildings elsewhere on the property. The boundaries also recognize the house's orientation to Bayou Teche. It is impossible to follow the historic property lines of the Robin holding because the land has been subdivided over the years.

SOME CLASSES OF CREOLE VERNACULAR HOUSES



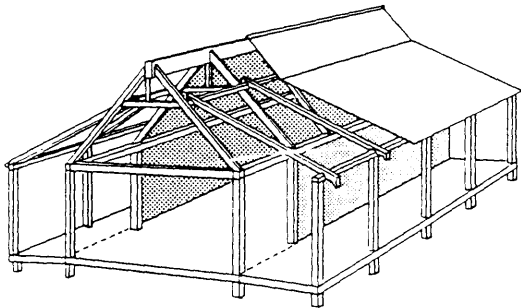
CLASS I

Single-pitch roof. Truss system includes the use of a king post and a double rafter system. Rafters set on wall plate. Inner rafters (truss blades) set on tie beam. Gallery optional. If present, gallery rafters tied into wall plate or front wall, and supported by an outer gallery plate, which is itself supported by light weight colonnettes.



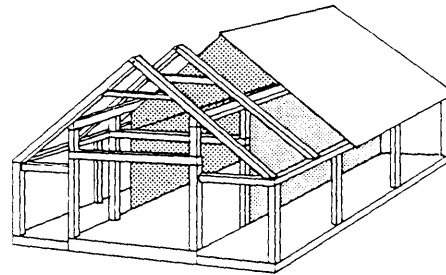
CLASS IIIa

Full (single-pitch) umbrella roof. Truss blades (principal rafters) mounted on wall plates. Long outer rafters mounted on outer gallery wall plates and let into or notched over the roof ridge. These rafters supported in their middles by posts (right side) or braces (left side), or by purlins supported by these.



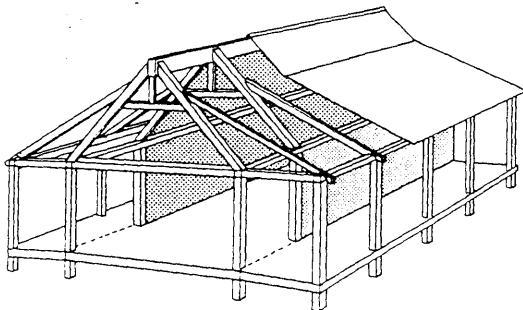
CLASS IIa

Mississippi Valley French Colonial broken-pitch roof (early form). Gallery always present. Gallery rafters notched over principal purlin and supported on outer gallery plate.



CLASS IIIb

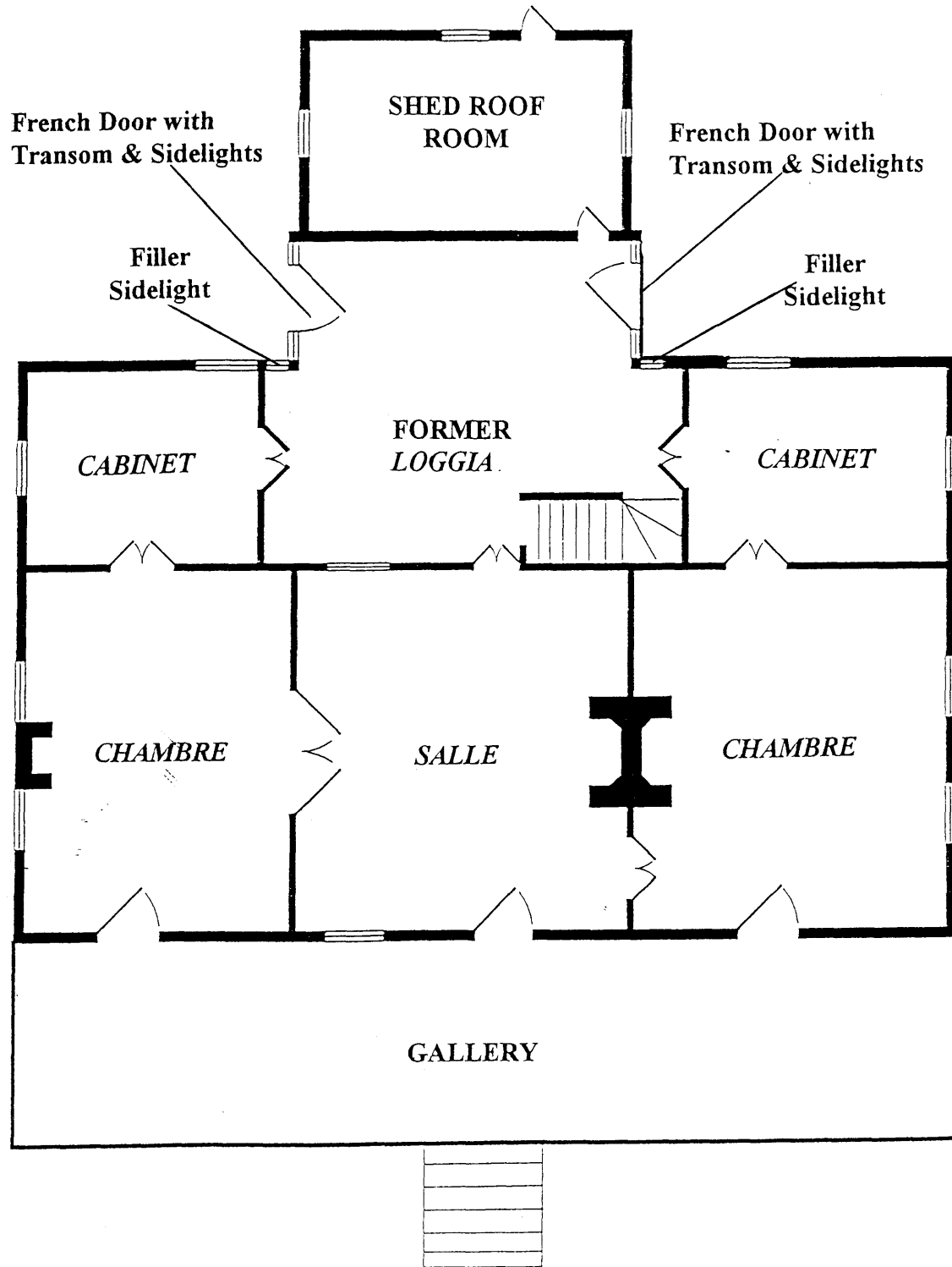
Full (single-pitch) umbrella roof (later form). Truss blades now absent. Outer rafters supported in their middles by posts or by post-supported purlins. Roof ridge generally not present



CLASS IIb

Mississippi Valley French Colonial broken-pitch roof (later form). Principal rafters (single or doubled) set on wall plate. Gallery rafters let into backs of principal rafters and supported on outer gallery plates.

ROBIN HOUSE



ROBIN BARN

