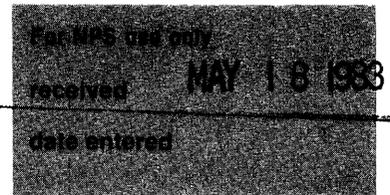


**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



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K-1379:

Property Name: Robert Hill House, "Alley"

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The Robert Hill House, "Alley", is located on a 2.2-acre lot on the south side of Route 6 about 3/4 mile east of Blackiston Crossroad. The nominated property includes the entire lot. Tax Map No. 17-2-20; Deed Book W-30, p. 104.

Owner: Edwin & Gloria Covington  
R. D. 1, Box 646  
Clayton, DE 19938

Description:

The Robert Hill House "Alley" is a brick, 3-bay, side-hall-plan dwelling built during the last decade of the eighteenth century. It is a well-designed Federal-style building with Flemish bond brickwork and a belt course on the facade. The interior details, most especially the corner cupboard in the parlor with its raised panelling and three butterfly shelves and the elaborate chimney piece, conveying a strong sense of the design forms popular at the time of construction.

The house has not been much altered since it was first built. The rear wing was extended in the late-nineteenth century with the addition of a frame wing. As presently built, the rear wing is a 1½-story block on the south wall with a basement only under the original wing. A common roof with two dormers ties the two parts of the wing together. When the wing was extended, the corner fireplace in the wing had its chimney removed. The new rear wall of the wing has an interior gable-end chimney and fireplace. The main roof has a new covering of asphalt shingles and a box cornice with bed moulding. A frame portico has been added to the front, while a simple portico has been added to the east end of the rear wing.

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Historical Background:

The dwelling and farm came into the possession of the Hill family after 1826, when Robert Hill married Frances A. Cummins. Miss Cummins had inherited the 233-acre farm in 1826 at the death of her father, George Cummins. The tract was first recorded in 1801 when Samuel West died and his heirs sold the land to Benjamin Blackiston. The land was described as being in the "Forest of Duck Creek" on Huckleberry Ridge. The land remained in the Hill family until 1926 and remained one parcel until 1976, when the house was separated from the farm. The farm and house are located on the south side of the road from Smyrna to Millington, Maryland, which has been a main transportation route since the mid-eighteenth century.

Statement of Significance:

The significance of the Robert Hill House, "Alley," lies in its documentation of the evolution of house types from the period of original settlement into the nineteenth century. The influence of the growing of grain crops helped to maintain the vitality of the built environment by providing the means to build in the most fashionable method. Brick was the preferred building material during the eighteenth century and served to provide a common fabric to bond the various housing choices together. The arrangement and function of the interior space changed over the century. By adding rear wings as service areas, and incorporating those into the main house, the arrangement and use of the main living space became more formal. This increasing formality is indicated by the spacious stair hall and open staircase, and by the attention paid to the detail of woodwork and decoration. As the main room became display areas for wealth rather than work areas, corner cupboards and full entablature on the chimney breasts became the norm, rather than the exception. Because of the expression of the changing fashions in architecture, "Alley" House is being nominated under Criterion C as a well developed and preserved, Federal-style farmstead.