

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rabb, Andrew House other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Off Rt. 166 N. of Masontown not for publication N/A city, town German Twp. vicinity N/A state PA code PA county Fayette code 051 zip code 15461

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories. Resource counts: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0, Total 1.

Name of related multiple property listing: Whiskey Rebellion Resources in Southwestern Pa listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official Date State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Stone

roof Metal

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Andrew Rabb house is situated on 76 acres nestled between high topped hills on the south, east, and west. The house itself is just above the flood plain of Brown's Run. The Rabb House was built in 1773 in the vernacular Georgian style with no exterior embellishment. The house is surrounded on the south and east with a mid-twentieth century frame bungalow, a mid to late twentieth century frame garage, a series of frame chicken coops and sheds which form a farm courtyard and appear to have been constructed from the early to late twentieth century. These all would have been noncontributing to this nomination and were excluded from the boundary.

The Rabb house is a 2½ story, five bay, stone house which faces northeast toward a high cliff above Brown's Run. According to an inscription in the plaster of the western gable attic wall, the house was built in 1773. The house was constructed such that steps are needed to enter the opposing front and rear doors of the first floor. The front elevation displays a typical Georgian symmetrical facade. The rear elevation is four bays with asymmetrical fenestration. The masonry of the front elevation is fairly coursed; the other elevations are not coursed. The stone, evidently quarried nearby, is soft, and some of the stones have a high amount of iron content which has been oxidized. The first and second floor windows of the front elevation have flat arches with central keystones. All of the lights in the windows are twentieth century. The only fenestration in the gable ends are the attic windows. Each gable end has an opposing ground floor door as well. An unusual feature of the house is the high cornice on all elevations of the house. This evidently resulted from the rebuilding of the roof after a fire in the late 19th/early 20th century.

The house was originally four rooms over three rooms with a central hall and stair. The west front parlor has a corner fireplace. The partition between this and the rear parlor was removed in the mid-twentieth century. Part of the partition between this parlor and the hall was also removed at the same time. A small bathroom was added to the southwest corner of the east parlor sometime in the mid to late twentieth century. The interior window frames have a thick bead and quarter round molding. The window reveals of the first floor consist of three matching recessed panels. The front door has a similar surround as the windows and a recessed panel reveal as well.

The stair rises in the southeast corner of the hall. It has a moulded handrail, simple turned newel posts with square finials, and spindles of moderate thickness of a common turning. There is an arched stone fireplace in the center of the eastern

 See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Andrew Rabb House

Section number 7 Page 2

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gable end making it appear that this was a single room originally. The plaster was removed from this fireplace when the house was renovated in the mid twentieth century. This room has similar window and door surrounds as the rooms on the west side.

The original doors on the second floor are composed of six raised panels. There are fireplaces only in the front or north rooms on this floor. The original quarter round, window and door surrounds remain intact on the second floor. Although the northeast room has had its fireplace closed in, its original chair rail remains as well. To the rear of the stairwell the window straddles the floors to allow light in the stairwell from the first to the third floors. This stairwell was originally open to the third floor but the uppermost portion now is enclosed to conserve heat.

The roof appears to have been rebuilt in the late 19th/early 20th century after a fire. An unusual feature is that the floor joists appear to have been topped at some point. A wooden peg holds each top section to the lower. The plate board rests on the ends of the floor joists. The original rafter seats cut into the tops of the plate remain. The wooden pegs that hold the plate onto the joists appear to have also served to catch the rafter feet. The raised floor joists have served to make the exterior cornice board unusually high.

The cellar is divided by a central stone wall. It has a door in line with the opposing gable end doors. There is a cooking fireplace in the west gable end, and a fireplace support in the east end. A summerbeam runs from the fireplace support to the central wall. The pit sawn floor joists are pegged from the top into the summerbeam. The floor boards have a channel or trough on their underside similar to those in the Edward Cook house.

Despite the changes that have occurred to the Rabb House due to a fire and renovations, the house retains sufficient integrity to represent a late 18th century, vernacular Georgian house.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Andrew Rabb House

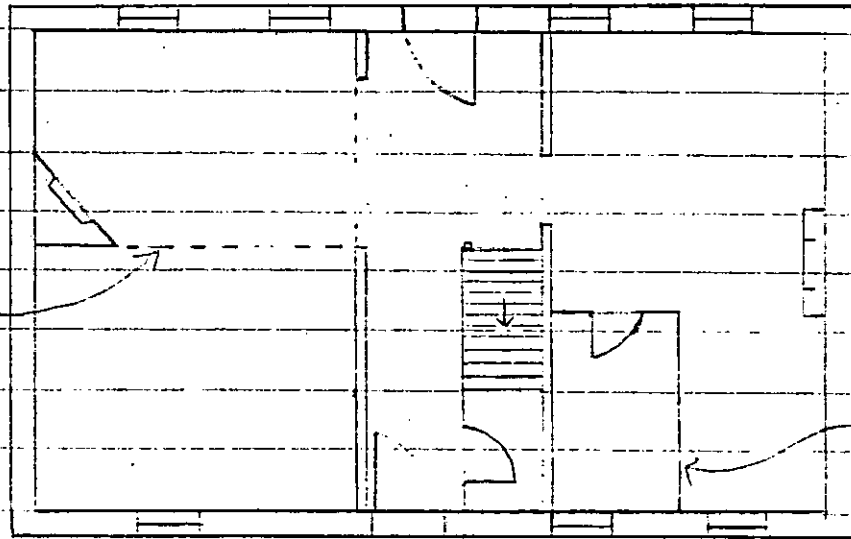
Section number 7 Page 3

Andrew Rabb House  
July 17, 1992



1st Floor  
Plan Sketch  
(Not Drawn to  
Scale)

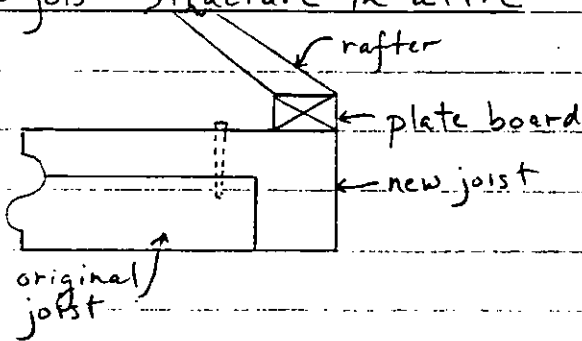
original partition  
line



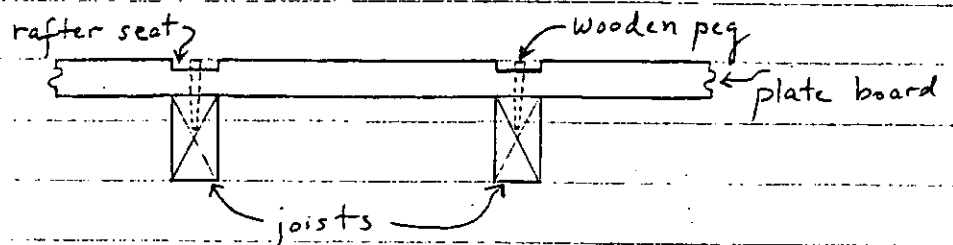
bathroom  
added in  
mid-20th C.

Detail of joist structure in attic

Gable End  
View



Eaves End View

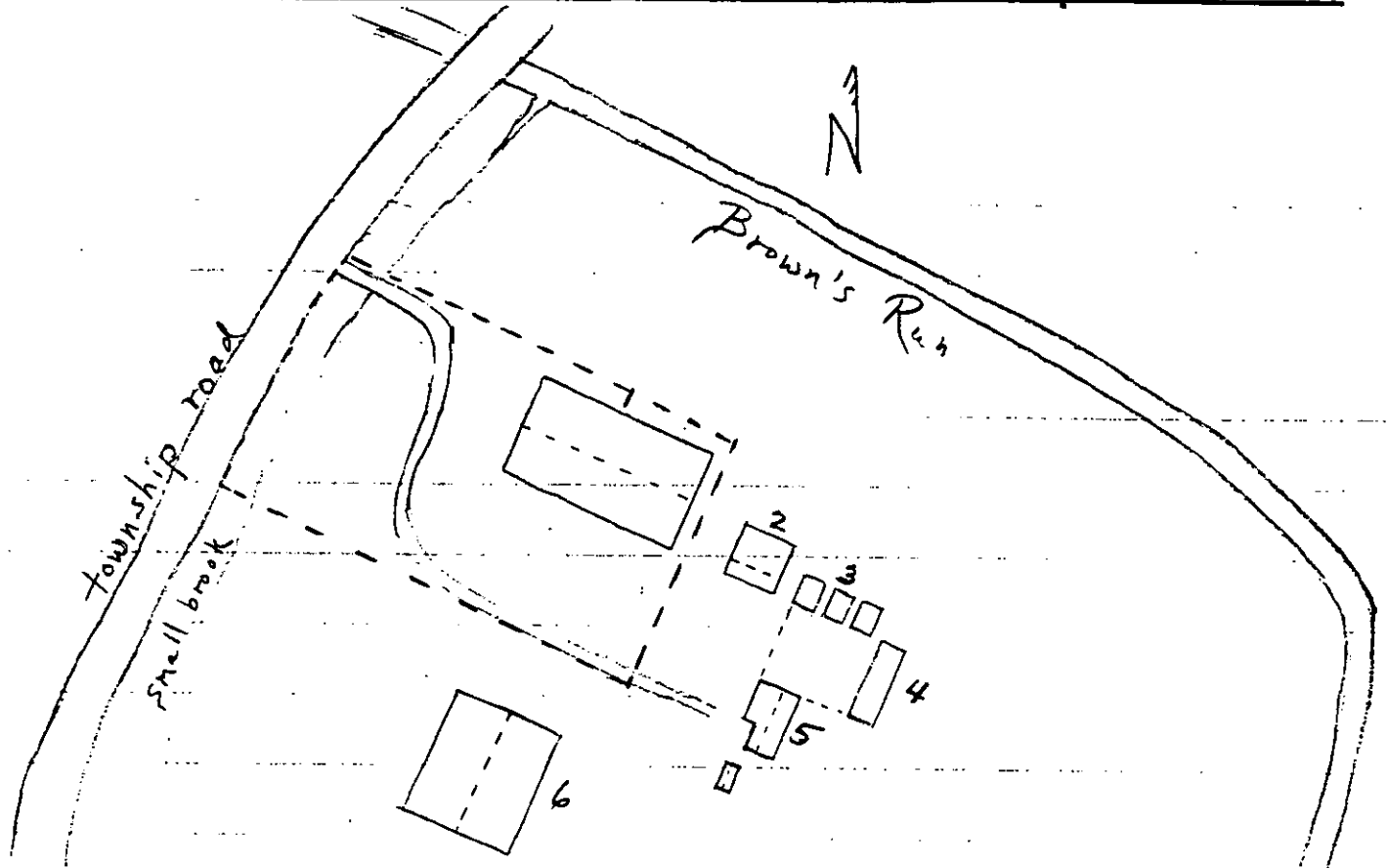


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Andrew Rabb House

Section number 7 Page 4



Site Plan

Andrew Rabb House  
German Twp, Fayette Co.  
(not drawn to scale)

Key

- 1. Main House
- 2. Garage
- 3. Chicken Houses
- 4. Tractor Shed
- 5. Garage / Shed
- 6. Bungalow
- National Register Boundary

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1773-1804

Significant Dates

1794

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Rabb, Andrew

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Andrew Rabb (c. 1740-1804), as a wealthy and prominent distiller, was locally significant in the Whiskey Rebellion. His actions and reactions to the excise law served to influence those less wealthy and middling distillers of his community. During the early stages of excise protest, Rabb was accused of threatening violence on an excise officer, but later he tried to moderate the protest and restore peace to the region. He was fairly typical in that he was against the excise because of the adverse affect on his business, but at the same time he was against violence which may result in the loss of his property. Rabb's house is significant as a rare survivor of a late 18th century vernacular style stone house in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Research of local court records along with local historian Tom Hunyadi, owner Frank Pavlovich, and vernacular architecture researcher Karen Koegler have given information to the writer to establish that this was the home of Andrew Rabb. In addition, the current measurements of the house match its 1798 federal tax measurements of 44 X 24 feet.

Rabb was one of the earliest settlers of what became German Township. He took out warrants on Brown's Run in 1773 and 1785, one of which he named "High German Mill Seat." In 1783 there was a petition to the Fayette County Court for a road from Uniontown to Andrew Rabb's Mill and from there to the Monongahela at the mouth of Brown's Run. This was the first road through German Township.

Rabb was assessed with four stills and 400 acres in 1795. The wealthiest man in German Township in 1796, Rabb had stills with a 600 gallon capacity compared to a normal still of 40 to 75 gallon capacity. In 1798 he was taxed for a still house, grist mill, 2 saw mills, and a store house. He milled both wheat and rye flour. Rabb was a premier distiller, having a secret formula producing a greater return from the grain. His distiller, John Dunlevy was able to produce two and three eighths gallons of whiskey from a bushel of grain.

The excise tax profoundly affected the distiller. Then, just as now, businesses had to remain competitive to stay in business. In order for distilleries to remain competitive in the market, all distillers had to register their stills and pay the excise

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Andrew Rabb House

Section number 8 Page 2

or no one could. In most instances, distilleries served a number of farmers from whom the distiller had to extract the excise fee. Consequently, how the distiller reacted to the tax affected how the larger community reacted. This is why the excise tax protest often appeared unified to eastern Federalists.

During the American Revolution, Rabb served as captain in the Westmoreland rangers; 1778-80. Rabb was also a justice of the peace. Rabb became involved early in the excise protest movement. On August 22, 1792 he was appointed a member of the Committee of Correspondence by members of the Pittsburgh Meeting. Later, he was charged with having offered a reward of ten pounds to kill the excise man. This charge was made by Benjamin Wells, excise collector for Fayette County, before Jacob Beeson, Esq. It is not known if the charge was proven or not. He did take a responsible role in representing German Township at the Parkinson's Ferry meeting in August, 1794 and acted as one of the judges along with Albert Gallatin during the signing of the submission papers in September, 1794.

Rabb died September 5, 1804 in Bath County, Virginia where he had moved. He was poisoned by a female slave at the request of a white man named Foredyce. In 1829, Rabb's son Andrew, Jr. sold the farm of 400 acres with a stone dwelling house, stone distillery, a grist mill and saw mill to Nathaniel Ewing of Uniontown. Between 1804 and 1829 at least part of the farm had become the property of Andrew's widow Catharine who was then married to George Vance. The Vance property rights were sold at a sheriff's sale to William Ewing. Andrew Rabb, Jr. evidently bought these rights and sold the entire property in 1829.

The Pavlovich family purchased the property of 76 acres in 1943. Part of the boundary description at that time mentioned that it was located at the "stone bridge in the public road leading from Masontown to McCann's Ferry, formerly Jennings Ferry on the Monongahela River." Previous to this the property had been in the hands of members of the Jacob Hoover family since 1856.

In Fayette County's top decile, politically and financially, Rabb naturally became a locally significant person during the Whiskey Rebellion. As a civic leader as well as an entrepreneur, his actions and reactions to the excise tax were fairly typical of the upper class in southwestern Pennsylvania. He was naturally against a tax on a business profitable to his situation, but was also against mob violence which could result in the loss of his well-built properties. His house is representative of early settlers who did well in the region.

The Rabb House represents only a handful of houses which have survived from that period in the southwestern Pennsylvania region. As mentioned in the context for this multiple property nomination pre-1798 stone houses were a rarity in the region. Of the four stone houses listed in German Township in 1798, only the Rabb House can be documented to be extant. The only other known extant stone house from the pre-1798 period in Fayette County is the Edward Cook House in Washington

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

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Andrew Rabb House

Section number   8   Page   3  

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Township.

The present owners said that there are a few stones remaining which indicate the location of Rabb's grist mill which was across Brown's Run from the house. Nothing else remains of Rabb's buildings and structures.



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Franklin Ellis, ed., History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches (Phila.: L.H. Everts & Co., 1882)

John B. Linn & William H. Egle, eds., Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. IV (Harrisburg: B.F. Meyers, State Printer, 1876)

Karen Koegler, "Building in Stone in Southwestern Pennsylvania: Patterns and Process," A paper presented to the Vernacular Architecture Forum, Lexington, Kentucky, May 12, 1990.

The Papers of Albert Gallatin, microfilm (Phila.: Rhistoric Publications, 1969) Sponsored by New York University and the National Historical Publications Commission

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 3/4 acre

UTM References

A 

1	7	5	9	3	44	0	4	4	3	7	80
Zone			Easting				Northing				

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing				

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing				

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing				

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point just on the east side of the township road and in line with the far southern edge of the drive between the Rabb House and the adjoining bungalow; thence going 150 feet southeast to the most southern edge of the driveway to a point; thence 150 feet northeast along the east gable end of the Rabb House to a point; thence going 150 feet northwest to a point on the east side of the township road; thence going 150 feet southwest to the place of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary only includes the land immediately surrounding the Rabb House in order to exclude noncontributing buildings and structures surrounding the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jerry A. Clouse, Preservation Specialist  
 organization Penna. Hist. & Museum Commission date July 21, 1992  
 street & number P.O. Box 1026 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 city or town Harrisburg state Pa. zip code 17108

Andrew Rabb House  
Fayette Co.  
Masontown 2nd  
Zone 17

E 593 440  
N 4413780

