

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Robinson, William P., House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 0.2 mi. e. & 0.15 mi. s. of jct. Co. 107 & 112 [n/a] not for publication

city or town Lexington [X] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Lafayette code 107 zip code 64067

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered  
significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

Claire F. Blackwell 9 October 1997  
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
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

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0
		0	0
		0	0
		1	0

Name of related multiple property listing.

Antebellum Resources of Johnson,  
Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties,  
Missouri

Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National  
Register.

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

GREEK REVIVAL  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

foundation Brick  
walls Brick  
roof Asphalt  
other Wood  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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**

**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**

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or 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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

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

**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

# \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

**Periods of Significance**

ca. 1850

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

UNKNOWN

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than one acre

#### UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	427430	4334800			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing
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[ ] 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.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Roger Maserang/Historic Preservation Coordinator

organization Pioneer Trails Regional Council date May 15, 1996

street & number 122 Hout Street telephone 816/747-2294

city or town Warrensburg state Missouri zip code 64093

#### 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 SHPO or FPO.)

name James D. Sill, Sr.

street & number PO Box 3826 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Shawnee state Oklahoma zip code 74802

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Robinson, William P., House  
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

The William P. Robinson House, Lexington vicinity, Lafayette County, Missouri, is a brick, central passage I-House with modest Greek Revival styling, and a two-story ell (see MPS cover document "Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, Missouri: Associated Property Types: Greek Revival I-Houses, Central Passage Subtype"). The Robinson House, circa 1850, exemplifies the Greek Revival subtype which has only a small entry porch or, as in this case, lacks an entry porch as described by McAlester and McAlester.<sup>1</sup> *This vernacular building is a relatively small and austere example of the dwellings erected by migrating Southerners who established plantations in the Missouri River Valley prior to the Civil War. Sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location and setting is retained.*

Facing north, the Robinson House is on the south side of Lafayette County Road 107, approximately two miles east of Lexington. Linwood Lawn, an Italianate mansion completed in circa 1859 and one of the area's premier antebellum houses, is approximately one half mile northwest of the Robinson House (toward Lexington).<sup>2</sup>

The Robinson House is constructed of soft bricks laid in stretcher bond and common bond. Common bond prevails with the exception of the primary facade, where bricks are laid in a stretcher bond (although there is a single course of headers near the base). Exterior brick walls are approximately 14 inches thick. The foundation is also brick.

The main block of the five-bay building is 40 feet wide, which is relatively compact for a central passage I-House. Since the main block's depth is 18 feet, the two parlors in this case are distinctly rectangular rooms (13' x 16' interior dimensions) rather than roughly square units as in many examples of this property type. Between the parlors, an 11' x 16' hallway contains the house's only staircase. The right-hand ell is 24 feet long and contains the usual two rooms.

A classical trabeated entrance is the Robinson House's most obvious reference to Greek Revival architecture. Its austere, planar surfaces and symmetrical primary facade are also appropriate in a Greek Revival house. The frontispiece, painted white, consists of a plain entablature with a cornice, supported by pilasters, with sidelights and transom. Two smaller, slightly recessed pilasters flank the doorway. Sidelights consist of four rectangular windows with an apron and the transom consists of two rectangular panels. The front door is an inverted cross type.

This property lacks an entry porch today but it is possible that one or more porches have existed over the year. There is no upstairs entrance, however, only a central window. Two brick steps are a recent replacement of wood steps.

The unadorned cornice of the main roof projects slightly. Broad end chimneys pierce the gables. A smaller, square chimney emerges from the central portion of the ell. The west gable end contains single window openings on both floors. The east gable end is unpierced. Window openings in the primary elevation have

<sup>1</sup>McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, pp. 179-187.

<sup>2</sup>Linwood Lawn, also known as the William Limerick House, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 4-23-73.

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Section 7 Page 2

Robinson, William P., House  
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

flat brick arches with radiating voussoirs. Other original windows are simply set within the regular brickwork. These double-hung windows have wood lugsills and are an appropriate (6/6) type associated with Greek Revival buildings. Ell window openings are smaller than those in the main block and some ell windows are nonoriginal.

The Robinson House was largely unaltered until about 1948. Prior to 1949, the house had no electricity or running water. In circa 1950, a two-story porch on the east side of the ell was enclosed. Two window openings in the east ell wall (adjacent to the porch) were sealed at about this time, and a bathroom was installed inside the enclosed porch. A frame, one-story kitchen was removed from the rear of the ell.<sup>3</sup> In the early 1980s, the west and rear walls of the ell were repaired. Unfortunately, modern bricks and mortar were used rather than soft period bricks with an appropriate mortar mix, but so far the repair seems stable.

With the exception of the central hallway, the interior has lost its historic appearance. The hallway contains an elegant walnut staircase with a closet under it. The staircase has a square, tapering newel post and a curved, slender handrail with a lift. Uprights are rectangular pieces of wood, painted white. The only remaining fireplace (in the east room of the main block) has a mantel shelf which is supported by narrow, tapering pilasters. Throughout the house, trim consists of plain, flat boards. Most interior doors have been removed. Modern paneling has been installed and ceilings have been lowered. Hardwood covers or replaces original flooring.

Despite austerity and a generally threadbare appearance, the Robinson House is immediately recognizable as a vernacular Greek Revival I-House of the type erected by slaveowning Southerners who developed a local version of the plantation lifestyle. There are no significant outbuildings.

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<sup>3</sup>Letter from current owner James D. Sill, Jr., to Roger Maserang, dated March 19, 1991.

United States Department of the Interior  
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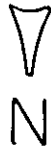
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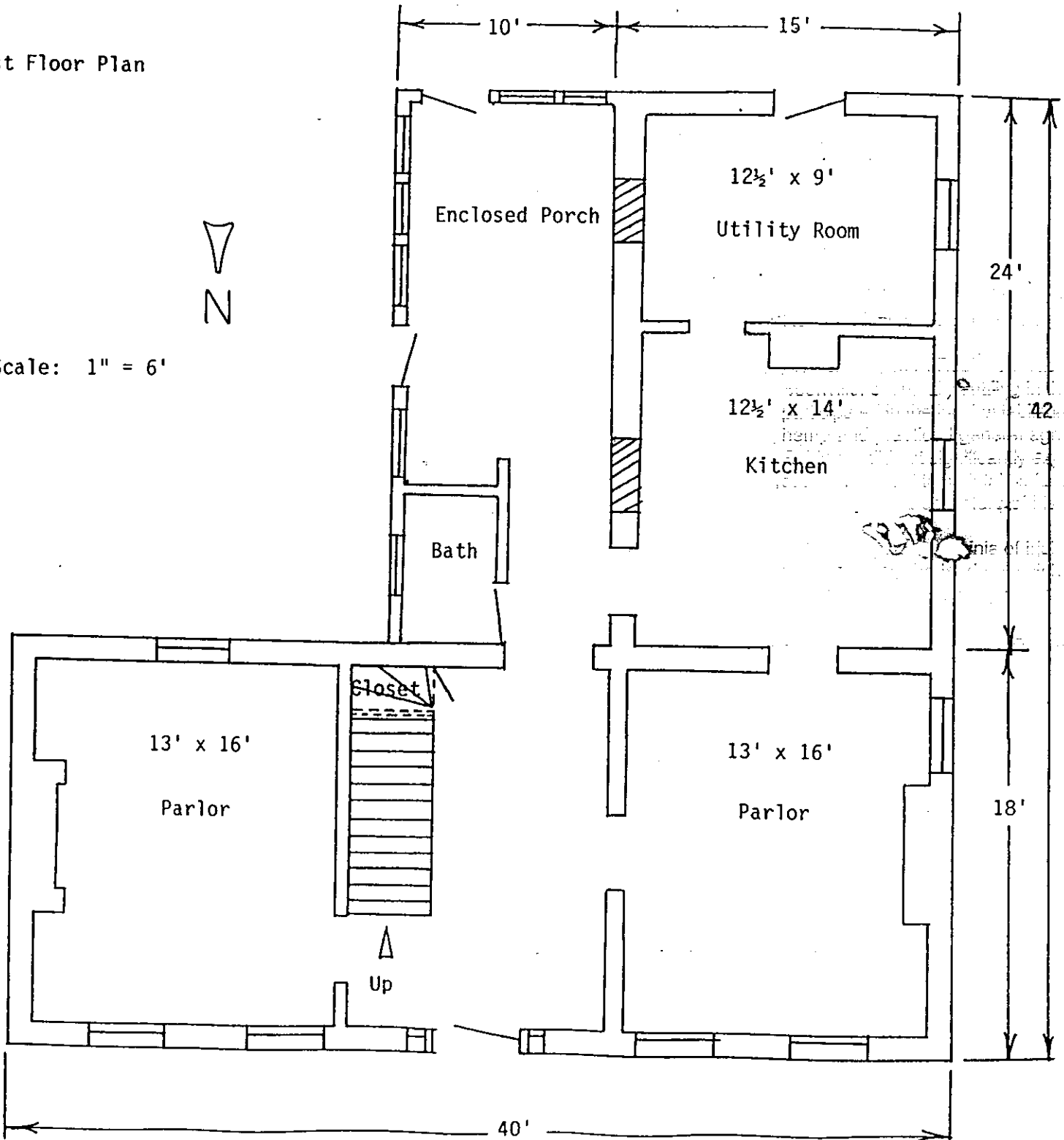
Robinson, William P., House  
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

First Floor Plan



Scale: 1" = 6'



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Robinson, William P., House  
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

The William P. Robinson House near Lexington in Lafayette County is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C in the areas of AGRICULTURE and ARCHITECTURE. Constructed in circa 1850, the Robinson House is associated with the development of antebellum plantations in the Missouri River Valley (see MPS cover document "Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, Missouri: The Development of Plantations, 1830s-1860s"), and with vernacular Greek Revival architecture as it evolved on the frontier of western Missouri (see MPS cover document "Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, Missouri: Plantation Architecture, 1830s-1870s; and Greek Revival I-Houses, Central Passage Subtype"). The Robinson House is significant under Criterion A in the area of agriculture as the only extant antebellum building at the site of a documented hemp plantation established by migrating Southerners. With a handful of slaves to supplement his family's own labors, William P. Robinson was a relatively small-scale farmer compared with some of the area's more prolific plantation owners, but as usual the house was the center of plantation life. The Robinson House is also significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as one of the smallest and least pretentious of the vernacular Greek Revival I-Houses erected locally, and integrity is retained.

Builder William P. Robinson was among the migrating Southerners who opened the Missouri frontier west of Boonville, eventually settling in the Missouri River Valley near Lexington. Like most of the other settlers who participated in the local establishment of a plantation lifestyle, Robinson was a slaveowner who raised a little hemp and practiced general agriculture as the Civil War approached. Unlike many of his peers, however, Robinson did not significantly expand his farm or its productivity during the decade from 1850-60. Instead he seemed content to maintain a farm of sufficient size to satisfy his needs which apparently were simple, as the unpretentious architecture of his home suggests, while perhaps making a modest profit.<sup>4</sup>

Robinson, born in Virginia of Irish descent, is said to have entered the Territory of Missouri in 1818. In 1830, he purchased the land on which the Robinson House was erected. While the actual construction date is unknown, it was probably not much later than circa 1850.

Census data indicate that Robinson owned seven slaves in 1850, when his farm consisted of 480 acres including unimproved land. He owned the same number (but not the same slaves) in 1860, by which time his farm apparently had grown smaller.<sup>5</sup> During this period the farm's valuation doubled, which was normal, to \$14,000. After the Civil War, Robinson sold his wooded acreage but continued farming on the improved land which consisted of 200 acres, valued at \$10,000, in 1870. Like most of the other plantation owners, Robinson practiced diversified agriculture while growing some hemp. The amount of hemp produced on the Robinson plantation was neither huge nor insignificant: 6 1/2 tons of dew-rotted hemp in 1850 and 6 tons in 1860. Other produce included wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, hay, butter, beeswax and honey. Robinson also raised a few

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<sup>4</sup>Manuscript Census, Agriculture, Lafayette County, Missouri, 1850 and 1860.

<sup>5</sup>Some of the handwritten census data regarding Robinson are difficult to read, but apparently his improved acreage was reduced from 340 acres in 1850 to 160 acres in 1860.



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Robinson, William P., House  
Lafayette County, MO

cows, cattle, sheep and hogs and kept horses, mules and oxen as draft animals.<sup>6</sup>

With its classical frontispiece containing sidelights and transom, austere planar surfaces and symmetry, the Robinson House "reads" as Greek Revival. But except for radiating voussoirs above windows in the primary elevation, the frontispiece may have been the most ornate feature on this frontier example built in circa 1850 by transplanted Virginian William P. Robinson. Compared with most extant antebellum Greek Revival farmhouses erected in the area by migrating Southerners, the Robinson House is decidedly threadbare. While some builders made statements about their status through pretentious architecture, the Robinson family apparently was content with relatively simple lodging. While a portico may have been present at an earlier time, presumably it would have been unpretentious in keeping with the rest of the house. An elegant but plain balustrade suggests that the interior was probably very restrained even before its modernization. But the presence of grandeur is not required for significance, and the Robinson House is another illustration of how dwellings constructed under frontier conditions could be basic in conception and execution while clearly reflecting a Greek Revival heritage.

The Robinson House's minimal Greek Revival architecture is underscored by a spectacular Italianate mansion known as Linwood Lawn (listed in the National Register of Historic Places 4-23-73), less than half a mile away.

In 1850, Robinson's small plantation produced 150 bushels of wheat, 750 bushels of corn, 200 bushels of oats, 20 bushels of potatoes, 15 tons of hay, 110 pounds of beeswax and honey, and 6 1/2 tons of dew-rotted hemp. Livestock, valued at \$810, consisted of 8 cows, 12 beef cattle, 50 sheep, 60 swine, 9 horses, 4 asses and mules, and 6 oxen. The year's production also included \$70 worth of homemade manufactures and \$50 worth of produce from a market garden. In 1860, there was little or no change in the number of draft animals but the number of beef cattle doubled, to 25, although by this time Robinson had only 3 cows. He added a few swine but had only half as many sheep in 1860. The value of Robinson's livestock increased to \$1,500, but implements and machinery decreased from \$250 to \$200.<sup>7</sup>

Between 1850 and 1860, Robinson's corn production doubled to 1,500 bushels. Production of sweet potatoes, an added crop, totaled 15 bushels. But production was reduced for wheat (100 bushels), oats (80 bushels), butter (150 pounds), and hemp (6 tons). Production of Irish potatoes and hay was unchanged. Orchard products were valued at \$40, but income from homemade manufactures was down and produce from a market garden was zero. The Robinson farm survived the Civil War and by 1870, production had increased in several areas including corn (3,000 bushels), wheat (300 bushels), oats (500 bushels), potatoes (150 bushels) and butter (400 pounds). The family owned 9 horses, 9 cows (producing 1,000 gallons of milk), 9 beef cattle, 3 sheep and 40 swine in 1870.<sup>8</sup>

In 1860, William P. Robinson was 67 years old. Other family members were his wife, Rebecca, and a son,

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<sup>6</sup>Manuscript Census, Agriculture, Population, and Slave Schedules, Lafayette County, Missouri, 1850, 1860, 1870; Deed Records; Portrait and Biographical Record of Lafayette and Saline Counties (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1893), pp. 592-593; History of Lafayette County, Missouri (St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1881), p. 265.

<sup>7</sup>Manuscript Census, Agriculture, Lafayette County, Missouri, 1850 and 1860.

<sup>8</sup>Manuscript Census, Slave Schedules and Agricultural Census, Lafayette County, Missouri, 1850, 1860, 1870.

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Robinson, William P., House  
Lafayette County, MO

William, 17. There also was a farmhand, David Jackson, his wife Nancy and a child, in addition to the slaves.<sup>9</sup> Although productivity on the Robinson farm in the 1850s and 1860s was unimpressive compared with some of the other plantations, it was obviously sufficient for this family's more modest needs.

In 1855, when the Lafayette County Agricultural and Mechanical Society was incorporated, Robinson's oldest son John D. Robinson--who had recently returned to Lafayette County from California's gold fields--was an original member. The organization's main purpose was promotion of agricultural improvements, and to this end it built the county's first fairground which apparently was located in the general vicinity of the Robinson House.<sup>10</sup>

John D. Robinson inherited the Robinson House, which remained in the family until circa 1905. George H. Logan was a subsequent longtime owner, with the property remaining in the Logan family until its sale to James D. Sill, the present owner, in 1948.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Manuscript Census, Population, Lafayette County, Missouri, 1860.

<sup>10</sup> History of Lafayette County, Missouri (St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1881), op cit.

<sup>11</sup>Sill, James D., Sr., letter to Roger Maserang dated March 19, 1991.

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Robinson, William P., House  
Lafayette County, MO

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Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

Missouri Historic Inventory Survey Form No. 76, "Robinson House; Logan House."

Lafayette County Survey, December 1988. Copy in Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson City, MO.

Portrait and Biographical Record of Lafayette and Saline Counties (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1893).

Sill, James D., Sr. Letter to Roger Maserang dated March 19, 1991. Telephone interview on October 6, 1995.

(For additional bibliographic information, see MPA cover document "Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, Missouri.")

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of Lafayette County Road 108 and Lafayette County Road 107, proceed south sixty feet to the south edge of the right-of-way of County Road 107; then proceed west 600 feet along the south right-of-way of County Road 107 to the point of beginning; then proceed south 350 feet; then proceed west 250 feet; then proceed north 400 feet to the south edge of the right-of-way of County Road 107; then proceed east to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary has been drawn to include only the William P. Robinson House and its immediate surroundings; it excludes a number of agricultural storage buildings to the south of the house which do not relate to the areas or period of significance and the adjacent farmland, much of which was part of the original farmstead but which has been converted to modern practices of cultivation and processing and no longer retains integrity.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
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Section photographs Page 8

Robinson, William P., House  
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

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The following information is the same for all photographs unless otherwise noted:

Robinson, William P., House

Lexington vicinity, Lafayette County, MO

Date: March 1996

Photographer: Roger Maserang

Negative location: Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

- #1: View from north
- #2: View from northwest
- #3: View from northeast
- #4: View from southeast
- #5: Primary entrance, facing south
- #6: Interior view of entrance, facing north  
June 1991
- #7: View of hallway with staircase, facing south
- #8: East parlor, facing east
- #9: View of upstairs hallway, facing east

