United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Reynolds House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 100 Reynolds Heights

city, town Asheville

state North Carolina code 37 county Buncombe code 021

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Fred Faber

street & number 100 Reynolds Heights

city, town Asheville

state North Carolina 28804

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds

street & number Buncombe County Courthouse

state North Carolina 28807

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Buncombe County Historic Properties

Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? __ yes X no

date 1978-79

defedatory for survey records N. C. Division of Archives and History, Western Office

state North Carolina 28805
7. Description

The Reynolds House is an imposing double pile plan brick structure sited atop a minor ridge of Reynolds Mountain three miles north of downtown Asheville, N.C., and one and one-quarter miles east of the French Broad River, which flows south to north through Asheville. Reynolds Mountain rises to a 3000 foot peak three-quarters of a mile northeast of the house, and Merrimon Avenue (the old Weaverville Highway) skirts the foot of Reynolds Mountain below and 1000 feet south and west. A narrow gravel drive winds up to the house from the intersection of Merrimon and Beaver Drive.

The massive brick core of the Reynolds House was constructed as a home for Daniel Reynolds around 1855. No record survives, in the physical evidence nor elsewhere, of the appearance of this original structure, for it was thoroughly renovated, down to the brick walls, by Nathaniel Augustus Reynolds around 1905. The ca. 1905 renovations saw the addition of a finished third floor within a dormered mansard roof, the installation of bathrooms, minor alterations to the first floor plan, the introduction of Colonial Revival woodwork inside and out, and eventually—perhaps as late as 1913—the addition of a wraparound Colonial Revival porch. The substantial Colonial Revival dwelling which resulted from these early twentieth-century alterations is the building seen today, little altered during the past seventy years and currently undergoing an extensive restoration and rehabilitation for use as a bed and breakfast inn.

Fewer than ten brick houses survive in mountainous western North Carolina from before the Civil War. Less than half of these were built to the full two-story, two-room deep, central-hall plan. Within this context, the ca. 1855 Daniel Reynolds house takes its place as a substantial, if typically conservative (only one of these house departs from boxy, vernacular-classical massing) Antebellum mountain dwelling.

So thorough was the early twentieth-century renovation of the Reynolds House that one must carefully hunt for the nineteenth-century materials remaining in it other than its stout brick walls. Below its roof structure, which was added this century, most of the building's floor and ceiling framing is original frame-sawn timbers displaying heavy timber joinery. All but a few minor interior partitions on the first and second floors are original load-bearing brick walls although the plaster on them is apparently replacement. Original flooring survives beneath pine flooring added during the renovation. A single mid-nineteenth century four-panel door survived on the kitchen wing until recently when it was retired to an outbuilding.

The outline of an earlier mantel is visible on a second-floor fireplace where the newer (ca. 1905) plaster facing to the firebox has chipped away. Besides the items mentioned above, this ghost mark is the only hint of previous finish materials.

The ca. 1905 renovation basically did three things to the house. It added a finished third floor within a somewhat incongruous mansard roof, it created a large dining room by removing a partition adjacent to the original kitchen wing, and it outfitted the house with up-to-date woodwork mostly in the Colonial Revival style.

The house faces west astride a north-south ridge of Reynolds Mountain. The cubical massing of the original American bond brick structure is heightened by the steep mansard third floor addition, which is surmounted by a shallow hip roof. The one-story kitchen wing extends to the north, with the ridge. A large internal chimney with tapered cap rises from the kitchen wing; paired internal chimneys rise to multi-chambered caps above the main mass.
The east and west (principal) elevations of the building are divided into three bays by their fenestration and are each crowned by four hip-roofed, shingled dormers extending from the steep sides of the mansard roof. The north and south elevations are divided into two bays and are crowned by three dormers each. Twelve-over-one double-hung sash light the dormers. All other windows are one-over-one double-hung sash. All original windows are surmounted by simple timber lintels painted white. Some added window openings in the kitchen wing are supported by jack arches.

Elaborate porches were added to the house early in this century, apparently after the initial ca. 1905 renovations but before 1914. A first-floor porch wraps around the building on three sides—west, south and north. Second-story tiers are added along the south elevation and in a single bay centered on the principal facade.

These porches make the building's major Colonial Revival statement: they are supported by Tuscan columns which carry modillioned entablatures at both first- and second-story levels. The second-tier porch cornice is continuous with the major building cornice of the same detailing.

The porch roofs are covered in standing seam tin, as is the roof of the kitchen wing. The mansard roof is covered in asphalt shingles.

Simple sidelight and transom compositions surround doorways centered on the principal elevation at both levels. A lighted transom surmounts the single rear entrance. The front door holds a large, glazed upper panel.

One enters directly into the central stair hall. The house is served by a single set of stairs that descend toward the front of the house along the north wall of the center hall on both the first and second floors. This is an open stringer stairway with well-crafted railings composed of molded hand rails, turned balusters, and robustly turned Colonial Revival newels. The stairway descends from the third to the second floor in a single run but employs a secondary landing four steps above the first floor level, from which it descends at a right angle into the center of the entrance hall.

A small bathroom fills in approximately half of the broad center hall on each floor at the back of the house (behind a curved wall on the second floor), but otherwise the building displays a "pure" double-pile plan through the second floor. The only exceptional room on these floors is the dining room which extends into the one-story kitchen wing from the main block.

Each room on the first and second floors is served by a fireplace outfitted with a simple, heavy mantel of post and lintel design. Each carries a thick unmolded mantel shelf on two sets of paired brackets resting on pilaster heads. The pilaster heads are each decorated with an incised quatrefoil-like pattern. An ogee molding makes the transition from frieze to shelf.

Doors throughout the interior of the house are built up of five horizontal panels and are set in molded surrounds. Other architectural embellishments include broad baseboards.
with molded caps, narrow chair rails in some rooms, turned wood corner guards, and picture molds. All the building's original (ca. 1905) door and window hardware survives including door knobs and plates richly embossed with floral patterns.

The building's third floor layout employs a narrow transverse hallway to serve eight small rooms, one of which has recently been subdivided to provide an additional bathroom.

The Reynolds House had suffered serious deterioration of its porches, extensive rainwater damage, and general neglect at the time it was purchased by its present owner several years ago. A thorough rehabilitation in accordance with accepted preservation standards is at this writing eighty to ninety percent complete. The building is in use as a bed and breakfast inn.
The Reynolds House was erected in the mid-1850s by "Colonel" Daniel Reynolds, a locally prominent farmer and former hotel owner, who only recently had waged an unsuccessful campaign against kinsman Zebulon Baird Vance for a seat in the North Carolina House of Commons. The house was originally a double-pile plan brick structure, a conservative but substantial plan type built only by the most prosperous of western North Carolina's citizens before the Civil War. The relative prosperity surrounding the Reynolds House declined markedly during and after the War; and by the time of his death in 1878, Daniel Reynolds's estate had been reduced to fairly modest proportions. The house was subsequently owned by Asheville businessman William Taswell Reynolds, whose son, Robert Rice ("Our Bob") Reynolds, would one day become one of the most colorful and controversial members of the United States Senate. It is very likely that Senator Reynolds spent at least some time at the Reynolds House during his youth; and it is virtually certain that he visited there frequently as an adult, during the years that the house was owned and occupied by his mother and uncle. Reynolds's uncle, Nathaniel Augustus Reynolds, undertook an extensive renovation and expansion of the Reynolds House soon after paying off an existing mortgage in 1904. These alterations included the addition of a third floor with a mansard roof and dormers, the addition of Colonial Revival porches and interior woodwork, and the installation of bathrooms. Nathaniel Reynolds lived there from about 1930 until his death in 1950. The house remained in the Reynolds family until 1973. For the past decade it has served as the residence of three separate owners. It is currently being rehabilitated for use as a "bed and breakfast" style inn.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT:

A. Associated with the antebellum prosperity of the Asheville area of western North Carolina, brought on by trade along the Buncombe Turnpike (1827) and Asheville's growing popularity as a recreational and health resort.

B. Associated with the life of Senator Robert Rice Reynolds, one of the most colorful and controversial members of the U. S. Senate.

C. Is one of only a very few antebellum brick structures surviving in the Asheville area and represents a substantial dwelling from that period; later thoroughly remodeled to stand as one of the more consequential Colonial Revival dwellings in the county.
The Reynolds House, at 100 Reynolds Heights, is located a short distance north of Asheville on the southwestern side of Reynolds Mountain. At the time of its construction it was fully four miles from a much smaller Asheville, on the east side of what was then known as the Burnsville Road. Its setting remains to this day at least semi-rural. Although the date of its construction is not definitely known, it is highly probable that it was erected by "Colonel" Daniel Reynolds soon after his purchase of the house site and 488 acres of surrounding land at public auction in 1855. Structural evidence indicates that the house was originally a two-story brick residence with internal chimneys and, very likely, a hip roof. The builder responsible for the Reynolds House has not been identified, but it quite possibly represents the work of Ephriam Clayton, who was very active as a contractor in Asheville and Buncombe County during the two decades preceding the Civil War.

At the time the Reynolds House was constructed, Asheville was a small mountain town still in the process of emerging from relative isolation. Its population in 1850 was listed as only 520, including eighty-six slaves and six free blacks. The completion of the Buncombe Turnpike in 1827 had placed the formerly remote village on a major thoroughfare linking South Carolina with Tennessee and Kentucky. Each fall and winter saw as many as 175,000 hogs and other livestock and poultry driven southward along the turnpike to major markets in Augusta and Charleston. These stock drives produced a heavy demand for corn and other grains, and contributed significantly to the development of a thriving agriculture in the Asheville area. Moreover, by the middle of the nineteenth century Asheville was already gaining celebrity as a fashionable summer resort for health and recreation. In many respects, Asheville and Buncombe County had entered a period of growth and prosperity, which would continue until the outbreak of the Civil War.

Daniel Reynolds, builder of the Reynolds House, was born on Bent Creek in Buncombe County on 10 March 1809. His father, Abraham Reynolds, owned large tracts of land in the area. Daniel Reynolds's marriage to Susan A. Baird eventually produced ten children, five boys and five girls. Susan Baird was one of the numerous Baird cousins of future governor and United States senator, Zebulon Baird Vance. In the 1850 census Reynolds was listed as both a farmer and a hotel keeper in Asheville. He is also said to have been a Methodist minister. In 1854 Reynolds ran against his kinsman Zeb Vance for a seat in the North Carolina House of Commons. Both men were Whigs and in general agreement on many issues within the state. They differed, however, in their approach to the slavery question nationally, with Vance accepting the Compromise of 1850 and Reynolds arguing, instead, for the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. In the election which followed the heated campaign, Vance defeated Reynolds by a vote of 688 to 579, carrying nine of Buncombe's eleven precincts.

It was during the year following his defeat that Reynolds purchased the property on which the Reynolds House now stands. He soon established himself there as a prominent farmer and landowner. By 1860 his farm included 250 acres of cultivated land and 1,150 acres of unimproved land. The owner of fifteen slaves, he tended a variety of livestock and raised considerable quantities of wheat and corn. The cash value of his farm was $8,000, with his personal estate valued at $18,000. The relative prosperity surrounding the Reynolds House evidently declined drastically during the years following the Civil War. By the time of his death on 21 January 1878, Daniel Reynolds's estate had been reduced to fairly modest proportions. Apparently the only property remaining was the home tract of 140 acres, valued at $1,000. The duties of administering Colonel Reynolds's
small estate fell to his son, William Taswell Reynolds, who would one day purchase the home place for himself.12

William Taswell Reynolds was born on 14 October 1849. He was twenty-nine years old when called upon to serve as administrator of his father's small estate. Between 1885 and 1887 he acquired the Reynolds House and its 140 acres from his mother and siblings; but it is unclear whether the house ever became his principal residence. Available evidence indicates that his usual abode was on Woodfin Street in Asheville, where he pursued a varied career as a businessman and judicial official. At various times he was a tobacco warehouseman, a hotel owner, and an opera house manager. He also served as clerk of superior court and as an alderman for the City of Asheville. His marriage to Mamie Spears produced three children, one of whom, Robert Rice Reynolds, would one day become an extremely colorful and controversial member of the United States Senate.17

Robert Rice ("Our Bob") Reynolds was born in Asheville on 18 June 1884. He was educated in the Asheville public schools and subsequently at Weaverville College and the University of North Carolina. He was admitted to the North Carolina bar in 1907 and began the practice of law in Asheville during that same year. He was an unsuccessful candidate for lieutenant governor of North Carolina in 1924 and for United States senator in 1926; but was elected as a Democrat to the United States Senate in 1932. Thereafter he served continuously in the senate until 1945. A-political marverick and champion of controversial causes, Senator Reynolds was the founder of the Vindicators and later of the American Nationalist party, both of which groups heartily espoused the doctrine of "100 per cent Americanism." Often labeled an isolationist, Reynolds vigorously opposed America's entry into World War II.19

In his private life, as well, Reynolds steered an independent and eccentric course. Possessed of a powerful wanderlust, he circled the globe a dozen times and sampled a variety of occupations:

- At one time or another, he was a soldier of fortune, a professional wrestler, football coach, door-to-door book agent, actor, motion picture producer, war correspondent, reporter, ranch operator, babysitter, author, and criminal lawyer.20

Five times he approached the altar, the last being in 1941 when he married the nineteen-year-old Evalyn Walsh McLean, whose mother owned the Hope Diamond. The fifth Mrs. Reynolds died in 1946, at which time Reynolds retired with his daughter Mamie to a log and stone house on Reynolds Mountain, not far distant from the Reynolds House. He died in Asheville on 13 February 1963, in the seventy-ninth year of his age.22

It is uncertain how much time Senator Reynolds spent at the Reynolds House during his youth. His family's principal residence was on Woodfin Street in Asheville, but it is very likely that the family visited their country home and perhaps lived there from time to time on a temporary basis. It is virtually certain that Reynolds returned to the old home place frequently as an adult, during the years that the house was owned and occupied by his mother and uncle.

Senator Reynolds's father, William Taswell Reynolds, died intestate on 16 January 1892. Although a prominent businessman and the owner of considerable real estate in and around Asheville, he was heavily indebted at the time of his death, and the settlement of his estate dragged on for many years. In 1895 it was necessary that the
Reynolds House be sold at public auction; but the last and highest bidder at this time was Reynolds's thirty-three-year-old widow, Mamie S. Reynolds. Mrs. Reynolds, however, continued to reside primarily on Woodfin Street, and it is unclear exactly what use was made of the old home place.

On 25 March 1902 Mamie Spears Reynolds married her forty-three-year-old brother-in-law, Nathaniel Augustus ("Uncle Gus") Reynolds. Prior to their marriage, Nathaniel Reynolds had been a tax collector in Asheville. For most of his adult life, however, he was associated with the funeral home business there. Although the couple maintained their principal residence on Woodfin Street for many years, it appears that Nathaniel Reynolds harbored a fondness for the country home in which he had been born and reared. As early as 1904 he arranged with his wife to secure payment of an existing mortgage on the "old Reynolds home place," and he subsequently acquired unencumbered ownership.

The Reynolds House was put to various uses during the many years that Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Reynolds continued to reside in Asheville. It is said to have been used as a boarding house prior to World War I. From 1919 to 1924 it was leased to Dr. Elizabeth Smith, who operated it as the Asheville Osteopathic Sanatorium.

In the late 1920s Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds decided to move permanently into the old Reynolds House. The move seems to have taken place in either 1929 or 1930, and it was apparently just prior to the move that extensive renovations and additions were made. These included the addition of a third floor with a mansard roof and dormers, the installation of bathrooms, and the addition of porches and a kitchen ell. In the very early 1930s a 25' x 62' swimming pool was installed on the grounds. Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds remained in the house for the remainder of their married life. As stated previously, it is virtually certain that Senator Robert Rice Reynolds visited frequently in the home, if indeed he did not reside there from time to time.

Mamie Spears Reynolds died at home on 29 July 1939. It was about the time of his wife's death that Nathaniel Reynolds severed his remaining ties with the funeral home business in Asheville and retired to "the old home place." There he remained until he, himself, passed away on 1 March 1950 at the age of ninety-one. He was survived by one daughter, a sister, and three grandchildren.

Upon the death of her father, the Reynolds House passed to Adelene Reynolds Hall (Mrs. William Lawrence Hall). Mrs. Hall, a widow, lived in the house until the early 1970s with her daughter, Anne Lee Hall. During much of this time Mrs. Hall managed the nearby Hall Coal Company, where her daughter was also employed.

On 12 July 1973, Anne Lee Hall sold the Reynolds House and four acres of land to Patrick W. Arabia, having acquired ownership from her mother some seven years earlier. In 1974 Arabia sold the house to Ralph and Sally Gates. On 17 August 1977 Mr. and Mrs. Gates sold the Reynolds House to its present owners, Frederick and Helen Faber.
FOOTNOTES


3. Swaim, Cabins and Castles, 68.

4. Swaim, Cabins and Castles, 68.

5. Swaim, Cabins and Castles, 14-17.


7. Information supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Faber, present owners of the Reynolds House. Reynolds House file, Survey Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. Hereinafter cited as Information supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Faber.


9. Buncombe County Census of 1850; Swaim, Cabins and Castles, 68; and Vance Papers, 22, n. 101. It is quite possible that Reynolds's hotel was the Carolina House, built by a John Reynolds. See Swaim, Cabins and Castles, 68.


11. Buncombe County Census of 1860, population, agricultural, and slave schedules.


15. The Buncombe County Census of 1890 listed Reynolds's residence as being at 22 Woodfin Street. For further information regarding his place of residence see Asheville City Directory of 1887, p. 222, the Asheville City Directory of 1890, p. 311; Buncombe County Estates Papers, William Taswell Reynolds folders; and the Greensboro Daily News of 4 December 1932.

17 Buncombe County Estates Papers, William Taswell Reynolds folders; and Greensboro Daily News of 4 December 1932. The other two children were George Spears Reynolds and Janie Reynolds, both of whom died while still young.


19 Asheville Citizen of 14 February 1963.

20 Asheville Citizen of 14 February 1963.

21 Asheville Citizen of 11 February 1963; and Asheville Citizen-Times of 3 April 1955.

22 Asheville Citizen of 14 February 1963; and Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1601.

23 Asheville Democrat of 21 January 1892; and W.P.A. Pre-1914 Graves Index.

24 Buncombe County Estates Papers, William Taswell Reynolds folders.

25 Buncombe County Deeds, Book 94, pp. 241-243; and Buncombe County Estates Papers, William Taswell Reynolds folders.

26 For Mrs. Reynolds's continued residence on Woodfin Street, see, for example, the Buncombe County Census of 1900.

27 Buncombe County Marriage Register.


29 Information (including copy of Dr. Smith's lease) supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Faber; and Asheville City Directories of 1922, p. 680; and 1923, p. 713.

30 Swaim, Cabins and Castles, 161. For date of the Reynolds's move, see Asheville City Directories of 1929, p. 622; 1930, p. 631; and 1931, p. 591.

31 Information supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Faber.

32 See, for example, the Greensboro Daily News of 4 December 1932. In speaking of Senator Reynolds's distinguished ancestry, this newspaper made specific reference to the Reynolds House and to the several portraits it contained:
In the beautiful suburban home of his mother, Mrs. Mamie Reynolds, on Reynolds Heights, near Asheville, are treasured relics of these forbears that rival each other in interest. On the walls of the spacious hallway and parlor hang life-like portraits of some of these early men and women with features not unlike "Our Bob."

Asheville Citizen of 31 July 1939.

Asheville Citizen of 2 March 1950.

Buncombe County Wills, Book CC, p. 147. Will citation provided by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Faber.


Buncombe County Deeds, Book 1108, p. 69. Deed citation supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Faber. See Asheville City Directory of 1976, p. 135.

Buncombe County Deeds, Book 1171, p. 495. Deed citation supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Faber. See Asheville City Directory of 1982, p. 125.
## 10. Geographical Data

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached map. Boundary of nominated property outlined in red.

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

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## 11. Form Prepared By

**Significance by Wilson Angley, Research Specialist, N. C. Division of Archives and History; Description by Doug Swaim, Preservation Specialist, N. C. Division of Archives and History**

**organization**  
N. C. Division of Archives and History  
**date**  
January 12, 1984

**street & number**  
13 Veterans Drive  
**telephone**  
(704) 298-5024

**city or town**  
Asheville  
**state**  
North Carolina  
**ZIP**  
28805

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- [ ] national  
- [ ] state  
- [X] 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**  
[Signature]

**title**  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
**date**  
June 28, 1984

For NPS use only

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

**Keeper of the National Register**

**Attest:**

**Chief of Registration**
Asheville City Directories.


Buncombe County Records
- Census Records
- Deeds
- Estates Papers
- Marriage Register
- Miscellaneous Records
- Plat Books
- Wills

Information supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Faber, present owners. Reynolds House file, Survey Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Newspapers
- Asheville Citizen
- Asheville Citizen-Times
- Asheville Democrat
- Greensboro Daily News


