

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 93000490 Date Listed: 11/3/93

Rohrbaugh Cabin Grant WV  
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for Patty Sackett Chrisman*  
Signature of the Keeper

11/5/93  
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

A number of discrepancies in the resource count as recorded on the nomination form needed correction. The "portion of Smokehole Road," a contributing site, was not included in the count. In addition, the "log crib" was counted as a contributing building, but is more appropriately termed a "structure." The amended count is 2 contributing buildings, 2 non-contributing buildings, 2 contributing sites and 1 contributing structure. Ruth Bricker of the Monongahela National Forest was consulted about these changes. The nomination is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

USE TO COPY

United States Department of the Interior  
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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 *How to Complete 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 an 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 Rohrbaugh Cabin

other names/site number Allegheny Cabin

2. Location

street & number Smokehole Road. SR 28/11, 3 miles South of intersection with SR 28/55  
Monongahela National Forest ☐ not for publication

city or town Petersburg ☒ vicinity

state West Virginia code WV county Grant code 023 zip code 26847

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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State of 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 the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ 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:)

Rohrbaugh Cabin  
Name of Property

Grant, WV  
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	
3	2	buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
4	2	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

N/A

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic Single Dwelling  
Vacant/Not in Use  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other - Hewn Log House  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone  
walls Log  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Tin  
other Chimney-Limestone  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description

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

(See Continuation Sheet)

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## Narrative Description

### Summary Description:

The Rohrbaugh Cabin is a freestanding, two and one half story, "double pen" plan log house built of 6" hewn tulip poplar logs. It has stone foundations, an exterior stone chimney base, and a gable roof with corrugated metal roofing. The interiors are unfinished with the exception of one space on the main floor level which is clad with vertical t&g paneling. It was built about 1880 and was home to several generations of the Rohrbaugh family who farmed on the property until 1962. Several generations of additions to the house were removed after the property was purchased by the Federal Government in 1971.

Other contributing resources on the property include a frame storage shed, a log animal pen, remains of the stone springhouse and portions of the original Smokehole roadbed adjacent to the house site. Non-contributing resources on the property include the collapsed frame ruins of the corn crib and root cellar.

The property is located on the eastern slope of North Fork Mountain, three miles south of SR 55 in Grant County. The site is bounded by SR 28/11 on the west, and slopes gradually to the South Branch of the Potomac River. The house site delineated on the plan is relatively level, and bounded on the south by a stream which flows through Austin Gap to the east. Portions of the tilled fields and pastures remain clear of new forest growth.

### Description of Existing Configuration:

(The house and contributing and non-contributing resources are located on the accompanying site plan prepared by Dove & Associates, Inc.; the house is documented graphically on the accompanying drawings by Dove & Associates, Inc. Fairfax, Virginia)

Two and one half stories tall, the Rohrbaugh Cabin consists of a "double pen" plan which measures 26'2" x 16'-6", containing 431 square feet of living space on each floor. The gable roof is topped with corrugated metal panels. The drylaid limestone foundation walls are 12" thick and rise 36" above grade on the south elevation. Surface grade on the north elevation and applied board splash plates which protect the sill combine to obscure the foundation. The main floor framing consists of a longitudinal round log "summer beam" which spans from the chimney

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pier on the east to just off the west face of the foundation, and is supported on stone piers at the midpoint and west end and with supplemental 4" x 4"s.

The principal walls of the house are built of squared tulip poplar logs, approximately 6" thick and varying between 6" and 13" in height. Log surfaces have always been exposed as no evidence of applied finishes of any kind was found. Cement-based chinking is in place throughout the structure. The foundation sills are continuous on the long axis as are cambered plates at the second and attic floor levels on both north and south elevations. The attic floor level is 15' -6" above the sill and the ridge is 7' -1" above the attic floor. The gable pediments are framed with 2" x 4" studs and clad with horizontal clapboards.

The south elevation has stacked pairs of window openings which flank the first floor door opening symmetrically. There are no openings in the log structure on the west elevation but there are two small window openings in the clapboard pediment. The north elevation has two window openings on the first floor which correspond to those on the south, and one on the west side of the second floor. The north door is offset to the east from the south door axis as the staircase ascends in that location in the interior. There are several graffiti marks cut into the log surfaces on the north elevation, an area covered for a considerable period by a porch. Discernible text and names include the following: "Arlie Rohrbaugh August 1, 1924 (living in the house as a child; son of Arnold, grandson of William, the builder); "Harry Nelson August 10, 1924 (relationship not known); "Earnest A. Dolly March 23, 1938" (cousin to the Rohrbaughs).

The east elevation has a partially reconstructed stone chimney base, centered on the building axis. Iron bolts protrude through the log wall at the second floor. These formerly secured the now vanished chimney flue which was offset from the exterior face of the log wall and gable end. There are two small window openings in the gable pediment. There are two stacked door openings in the log wall at the northeast corner, which are not original to the log shell.

Original second floor joist ends are exposed flush to the exterior surfaces on both north and south elevations. Attic floor joists project 10" from the face of the top log plate to receive the roof rafters, the ends of which are clad with a plain fascia. The log corner joints are half dove-tailed and are very well fitted, with a high degree of craftsmanship.

The log ends of the first floor partition are flush to the exterior walls to the second floor elevation and are fitted with v-notches on the tops, with squared seats on the bottom surfaces. Wide gaps between the partition logs and with the openings let

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into the principal exterior logs have been filled with chinking materials. The lesser degree of craftsmanship in these joints suggests that the existing partition logs may be replacements. The top plate of the partition extends beyond the exterior face of the wall on both elevations to form a mortise plate to receive a tapered locking pin. The pin is missing on the south side and in place on the north side.

Plain board casings, 1" x 4", remain in place in all openings but no window sash remain on the building. Photographs from 1971 showed 6 x 6 double hung sash in principal openings and casement sash in the gable ends. Main openings are 2'4" x 4'0" on the first floor, 2'4" x 3'-8" on the second and the casements are 1'-10" square. The main entry doors on the north and south elevations survive in part. Each measures approximately 2'-8" x 6'-4", and has (or had) four recessed panels, rimlocks, decorative case butt hinges and escutcheon plates at the exterior keyholes. The doors on the east wall are random width board and batten.

The two spaces on the first floor are separated by a 6" log partition. The larger space to the east measures roughly 16' square and contains the reconstructed stone fireplace and a closed staircase with winders at the floor landing giving way to a straight run and which has an enclosed storage closet below. Evidence of an earlier stair is visible on the west wall surface. The space has windows on the east and west, and door openings on all walls and formerly had a freestanding stove in front of the fireplace.

Walls are clad with 1" thick, flush random width, vertical tongue and groove paneling, which has no evidence of an applied finish. The staircase is enclosed with boards as well. A 1"x7" plain mantel shelf is supported by a composite fascia/bracket made of plain boards of varying widths applied to the wall in descending order. The exposed ceiling joists are nominal 2"x8" and the flooring consists of 4-1/2" tongue and groove boards. The space on the west measures 10' x 16' and has two windows and an interior door opening. The flooring is random width tongue and groove, varying from 4" to 10". The exposed, clear span ceiling joists are full dimension 2" x 8". Log surfaces show trace evidence of an applied finish which may be whitewash.

The second floor has two principal spaces, separated by the stairhall which is defined by vertical board partitions. The spaces share similar characteristics in the flooring, which is random width tongue and groove, 7"-9", with exposed ceiling joists, nominal 2" x 8", and log surfaces with evidence of whitewash. There is a stovepipe cutout in the east room and an unexplained vertical ghost in the whitewash on the north wall of the west room. The attic winders ascend from the northeast

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corner of the west room. There is one original ceiling joist in place above the board partition in the east room, which measures 5" x 6-1/2".

The undivided attic space has rough sawn random width floor boards with a stovepipe cutout on the east end. The exposed 2"x4" (nominal) rafters meet at a 1/2"x 5" continuous ridge plate and have alternating 1"x2" and 1"x 6" sheathing boards under corrugated metal roofing.

Description of other features:

Contributing historic features on the house site include a frame storage shed and a log crib from the early 20th century, part of the springhouse, and portions of the original Smokehole Road. Non-contributing features include the frame ruins of the mid-20th century corn crib and root cellar structures.

The frame storage shed measures 10' x 14', with undressed log sills on stone piers. The walls are built of 1" x 14" vertical boards with 3-3/4" battens, topped by a low pitched gable roof covered with corrugated metal panels. Roof surfaces have been lost and some piers have collapsed. The structure is in precarious condition, but retains its essential integrity of form, materials and use.

The 10' square log crib was known to have been used as an animal pen most recently. It has no floor and the sill logs rest directly on grade. The side walls are made of small diameter, (6"-8") v-notched logs, with no chinking or mechanical fasteners and there is a low door opening on the south side. No roof framing system evidence is discernible. The structure is intact to an elevation of 6' on all sides, but the joints are unstable and vulnerable to deterioration.

The stone base of the springhouse, which is about 4' square, remains intact but no evidence of superstructure was found.

Surviving sections of the original Smokehole Road on the site include the distinctive profile and portion of roadbed on the north side of the house which descend the hill from the switchback to the new road, as well as the fainter trace of road which turns to the southeast to cross the stream in front of the house on its original path toward Redman Gap to the south.

The two non-contributing features on the site are the collapsed structural ruins of mid-20th century frame service buildings. These were identified by family members as the corn crib (approximately 8' x 10') and the root cellar (approximately 6' x 10'). They presently exist as piles of 2" x 4" framing members and boards which were either siding or roof sheathing.

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## Assessment of existing conditions:

The house has been vacant since approximately 1972. During this period several major maintenance items have been completed including roof repairs and replacement, log stabilization and chinking, and chimney repair and stabilization. Additionally, a large, 1-1/2 story frame addition on the northeast corner of the building was removed as were shed roof porch canopies on the north side of the house and on both sides of the addition, and sliding exterior door panels at the south entry.

There has been some limited loss of fabric integrity in principal structural logs on the west wall and attic framing on the east wall which resulted from former roof leaks. There has been some displacement and loss of foundation stones on the south elevation. The house is open to windblown rain and snow through the window openings and there have been a variety of animal visitors as well. None of these conditions or intruders have yet reached the point of constituting a major threat to the structural integrity of the house.

The east wall has suffered the greatest loss to structural integrity through the insertion of two door openings, the loss of log ends to unknown causes and the partial rebuilding of the chimney, and the subsequent removal of an adjoining frame structure which may have served to counter the effects of the earlier changes to some degree. In its present condition, the wall is unstable and is an active threat to the continued existence of the house. Clearly, the remaining structural integrity of the exterior log shell as it exists today, can be attributed to the skill and craftsmanship of the original builders as well as to recent stabilization work.

## Assessment of historic integrity:

The Rohrbaugh Cabin is thought to have been built about 1880 by (or more likely, for) William and Jemima Rohrbaugh after they received the land from her father as a wedding present. This data was reported anecdotally in interviews in the 1970's and the attribution to William was confirmed in 1992 by Mrs. Ella Rohrbaugh, the last family member to own the property. She also stated that her husband McKinley built several of the service buildings which remain on the property. No other specific dates for construction or alteration of this house which can be corroborated by documentary sources have yet been identified.

The original configuration of the house apparently consisted of only the main 16'x26', two story log shell on stone foundations and an external stone fireplace. Exterior log



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surfaces were exposed as were interior log surfaces, whitewashed at some point. The original stair had a different pitch than the existing one. The original roof configuration and materials are not known but it is probable that it was a wood shingled gable, with accessible loft or attic.

The surviving, milled and paneled doors at the main entry and their hardware are clearly datable to the last quarter of the 19th century, although they are not exactly the same size. The form, method of installation and condition of the door surrounds and nails are similar to the surround in the now empty window openings, suggesting that both systems were installed at roughly the same period. The paneled treatment of the main ground floor room is consistent with practices of the period in this area. All of these items confirm that major construction activity was underway at about the time the house was reported to have been built.

There are a number of anomalies in the building structure and fabric which do not specifically belie the date of construction. They do, however raise the possibility that the core structure may have been built before that date, had fallen into disuse, and was possibly rehabilitated in 1880. Some of these factors are:

- the disparity in floor framing member sizes:

- the presence of much earlier structural elements in the attic floor and rafter systems:

- the inconsistencies of technique and craftsmanship in the basic log joinery:

- the disparity of existing doors, suggesting that they were field adjusted to fit previously existing openings:

- the first floor framing system is totally inconsistent with the systems used elsewhere:

- the fact, reported by Mrs. Rohrbaugh that they had always used a stove for cooking and heating, suggesting that the fireplace had been inactive or in ruins for many years prior to her occupancy:

- a deed for the property from 1839, which referred to the possible existence of a house on the site.

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It is possible that the large frame addition to the northeast corner of the house was built at the same time as other work was underway for William and Anjemima, but it is clearly earlier than the frame service buildings constructed by McKinley in the 1940 period. No fabric survives and older photos are not very distinct but it is clear that the addition has a character that is different, primarily in the form of its horizontal clapboards, similar to the gable ends of the house, and the presence of a brick chimney, seen nowhere else in the house or on the property.

Although the structural and historic integrity of the basic log and stone building have been challenged, changed, and to some degree, compromised over time, the Rohrbaugh Cabin retains the essential strengths of its original form, materials, primary systems, quality of craftsmanship and relationship to its original setting.

The history and chronology of vanished features which have come and gone throughout its history and period of significance can be told only in part from the fragments of fabric, documents and memory which have survived.

End - Section Number 7

Rohrbaugh Cabin  
Name of Property

Grant, WV  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

#### Social History

### Period of Significance

1880-1940

### Significant Dates

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

## Narrative Statement of Significance

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

## 9. Major Bibliographical 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### 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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Statement of Significance  
Summary of significance:

The Rohrbaugh Cabin is nominated under Criterion A, in the category of Social History. The Rohrbaugh Cabin, with its immediate agricultural and natural setting, the contributing resources on the site, (including portions of the original Smokehole Road), are intact and representative remnants of an isolated mountain community which flourished in the century prior to World War II, a community which has largely disappeared in the context of the maturing Monongahela National Forest.

The Rohrbaugh farm is typical of others from this time (1880-1940) and its place in terms of size, configuration, crop and timber management practices, and the shared difficulties of sustaining productive cultivation beyond personal needs. Its place on Northfork Mountain adjacent to the Smokehole Canyon of the South Branch was geographically distinctive and isolated. The extended Smokehole community of small farms, occupied by close-knit families and individuals bound by shared circumstances and strong values, was linked by the old, frequently impassable, Smokehole Road which traversed the eastern slope of the mountain, passing through the Rohrbaugh property.

The Rohrbaugh Cabin and associated resources survive intact in their historic setting which is now almost entirely surrounded by the maturing forest. They stand as representatives of the vanished community, as representatives of an economically difficult way of life in an isolated area, in a context of broad scale and destructive changes to the land, and as representatives of the evolving relationship between cultural and natural resource management policies and practices.

Outline history of the Rohrbaugh family:

The Rohrbaugh name, which means "reed-brook" or "living by a brook" in German and originated in Switzerland in the eleventh century. Several waves of Rohrbaughs migrated to North America in the 18th and 19th centuries to escape religious persecution. Many settled initially in eastern Pennsylvania, and one branch of the family reached the South Branch Valley of the Potomac River in Virginia by 1778.

The patterns of arrival, settlement and subsequent westward movement in Pennsylvania, and later, southward to the Virginia highlands experienced by Christian Rohrbaugh and his descendants exemplify the experiences shared by the generations of immigrants and colonists who followed the same path.

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Christian Rohrbaugh, a farmer, immigrated to Philadelphia in 1743 and lived in eastern Pennsylvania until his death in 1786. His son Johann Heinrich, also a farmer, served briefly in the York militia before moving in 1778 to the South Mill Creek Valley of Hampshire County, Virginia (later Hardy, and after the Civil War, Grant County, West Virginia).

His eldest son, also Heinrich, was listed in the 1820 Hardy County census as a wagon maker and farmer. One daughter married a Sites (originally Seitz) and another a Stonestreet, both families pertinent to the North Fork and Smokehole communities later in the 19th century. Heinrich's son Daniel, also a farmer, fathered William H. Rohrbaugh in 1840, who became the first Rohrbaugh known to be associated with the subject site or the Smokehole community.

William H. Rohrbaugh married Anjemima Conrad in 1873. In 1880, her father deeded a 100 acre parcel on the South Branch where she and William made their home and lived in the subject of this nomination, the Rohrbaugh Cabin. William was a farmer and carpenter and lived until December 1931. In his holographic will, filed in the Grant County Courthouse, he expressed desire to be buried on the property.

Anecdotal information collected by other researchers identified William as one of the builders of the extant cabin and that it took 10 years to build. This data could not be confirmed as the informant is no longer living, but family members generally credit William with construction of the house. From analysis of the architectural fabric, attribution for the datable work of the 1880 period can be made readily to William.

The property passed to Arnold who retained the right to live on the farm after he had transferred it to his children. McKinley acquired full interest in the property from his brother and sister in 1946 and lived there until his death. In 1962, his widow sold the property, ending 82 years of Rohrbaugh ownership and presence in this part of the Smokehole Community.

Family members who had lived on the property recalled that life on this farm was not easy. They owned a few horses to work the fields and to provide transportation, as well as some cows, hogs and chickens for their own use. Crops were generally limited to corn, oats and wheat, supplemented by a garden and fruit trees. A limited income was obtained through the periodic sale of firewood, charcoal, pulpwood, tanbark and some saw timber.

The Rohrbaugh children attended a school at Deep Run, and picked up mail at the post office in Cabins. They seldom went much further or into Petersburg as they did not own a car.

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From other accounts of former residents and members of the community, this difficult existence was generally shared by most people in the immediate area, with the only significant difference apparently being the size of the land holdings. By all accounts, Smokehole people were characterized by a strong sense of self-sufficiency, a strong sense of being an insular, self-contained community and by a strong sense of ethics, summarized succinctly in the words of one individual who said "Your word is your bond".

History of the land:

The land owned and occupied by the Rohrbaughs for 82 years was a parcel of about 100 acres, formerly comprised of two separate parcels of about 77 or 79 and 20 plus or minus acres respectively. Each of these pieces of land had been part of larger properties which went through several complex transactions and succeeding owners until they were joined under the ownership of Isaac Conrad by about 1870.

The 79 acre parcel on Deep Run sold to Conrad by Elisha Stonestreet in 1845 was part of a larger parcel patented by Peter Hause in 1783. The deed contained references to houses, buildings and improvements. Conrad did not live on this parcel as his home was known to be elsewhere. If there was in fact a house on the site, it may have been unoccupied and in disrepair when the property was given to Conrad's daughter, Anjemima in 1880.

The other part of what became the Rohrbaugh site came to Conrad ownership through larger tracts which apparently belonged to land speculators, based upon the size of their holdings throughout Hardy County in the early part of the 19th century. Successive owners begin with James Machin, who had patented and surveyed large areas of the County by 1795. In that year, he sold 3230 acres in Hardy County to Henry Lee of Westmoreland County.

In 1839, Charles Lee sold an 800 acre piece of that tract to Thomas Bryan. Bryns and Barbee, evidently a firm of land agents, acquired the 800 acres in 1849, the land described as "on the dreans (sic) of the South Branch of the Potomac, being part of a tract of 2069 acres surveyed for James Machin, October 16, 1795."

The boundary description referred to "Smith's improvement", which raises the possibility that a house existed on or near the site well before the date of this sale. In 1818, William Smith sold 106 acres to John Conrad, but the deed contains no mention of a structure.

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Bryns and Barbee sold 100 acres to John Mace in 1868, the land identified as the north end of the 800 acre Bryan tract "after excepting thereout a lot sold by Stonestreet to I. Conrad." A few years later, Barbee sold another 100 acres of the Bryan tract to Isaac Conrad, which consisted of two separate parcels of 22 and 78 acres. A later deed referred to the smaller area as having been originally conveyed by Stonestreet to Conrad, suggesting the possibility of a subdivision of the 79 acres sold in 1845 and reversion of part of it to the Bryan tract. Although the descriptions and boundary delineations are not precise, it is clear that the two parcels evolved more or less together until joined definitively in this transaction.

In 1880, Isaac Conrad gave the combined 100 acres to his daughter, Anjemimah Rohrbaugh. The land was assessed at \$1.30 an acre in 1875 under Conrad, yet only \$1.00/acre in 1882 under Rohrbaugh ownership. There was no assessment of a house in 1882. By 1909, the next available record, the land was assessed at \$4.00 an acre. This unit compared to other parcels nearby which were assessed at \$4, \$5, \$10, and \$40 an acre, strongly suggests that this parcel was not very productive. The land assessment remained static at \$4.00 an acre until 1962 when it was sold out of the family. The building improvements were assessed at \$100 in 1909 and 1942, and only \$330 in 1962.

Anjemimah Rohrbaugh gave the property to her son Arnold in 1909, who in turn gave undivided shares to his children Arlie, Ethel, and McKinley in 1943. McKinley obtained his siblings's shares in 1946 and deeded them to his wife Ella. Thirty acres were sold to Robert Champ in 1958 and the remaining 70 acres were sold in 1962 upon McKinley's death. The property was held by a succession of three private owners until it was acquired by the US Government in 1971.

Discussion of significance:

**Summary:** The Rohrbaugh Cabin is significant to the history of Grant County, West Virginia for its association with and witness to the effects of the predominant social and economic forces which shaped the cultural history of this region of the South Branch Valley of the Potomac River, and particularly, the highlands adjacent to the Smoke Hole Canyon of the South Branch. It is also significant as a strong, representative survivor of the Smoke Hole community of which it was a part and which has largely disappeared.

**Period of Significance:** The years 1880 to 1940 coincide with the high period of development in the Smokehole Community and the Rohrbaugh property as viable, dynamic and self-contained entities. Prior to those years, the Smokehole area was considered remote and inaccessible to outsiders and it evolved

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largely unnoticed and unchronicled, even by local historians. Large scale development and exploitation of natural resources in the area around the Smokehole began in the 1870's, reaching record levels in the first decade of the 20th century. Creation of the Forest Service in the 1890's and the Monongahela National Forest in 1920 were intended to protect and manage these resources more responsibly.

As the Monongahela National Forest expanded, outside interest in the general area was heightened, which focused attention on the natural and scenic attractions in the Smoke Hole and upon the people of the Smoke Hole Community as well. Migration from the highland farms to urban areas in West Virginia and beyond continued to accelerate after World War II. Coincident with this self induced de-population of the area was the continued growth of the National Forest which eventually encompassed virtually all of the lands bordering the Smoke Hole Canyon and the sum of what once was the extended site of the Smoke Hole Community on North Fork Mountain, linked physically by the old Smokehole Road.

The first Europeans reached this part of the South Branch Valley in the 1720's. By the 1750's, small settlements had been established tenuously at several locations near the Smoke Hole including Upper Tract and sites closer to Petersburg. Migration of farmers and settlers from the Shenandoah Valley and directly from the heavily populated areas of German settlement in eastern Pennsylvania to the fertile bottom lands of the South Branch began to accelerate by the Revolutionary War, attracting the first Rohrbaughs to the Mill Creek Valley in 1778.

Although land surveys were underway in the highlands shortly after being patented in the 1780's and 90's, full occupancy and settlement followed more gradually. From the example of the lands which comprised the Rohrbaugh property in the Smokehole, the pattern seemed to be one of larger tracts held by absentee owners. Distribution of these tracts into the typical mountain farmstead of 100 to 125 acres began in the 1840's and for this immediate site, was probably complete by the 1870's.

This date, ca. 1870, coincides with the onset of the large scale timber and mineral speculation in the general area. This was precipitated by the arrival of rail transport and an intense effort by the leaders and promoters of the new state of West Virginia to take advantage of their natural resources and to build a capital base where there had been none. The rapid and disastrous deforestation of large areas of virgin forest in and near the South Branch Valley led some to realize the need to manage these resources more responsibly. This resulted in the creation of the Forest Service a few years later.



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Although virtually surrounded by it, this cycle of exploitation and devastation apparently did not affect the Smoke Hole Community too severely as it remained the isolated and inaccessible agricultural community it has always been. It was to stay that way for only a limited time.

As the Forest Service acquired more land on the North Fork Mountain adjacent to the Smoke Hole Community, the need for access roads to fire towers and general maintenance was increasing. The original road was not adequate to serve these needs as it was impassable much of the time. In 1930, the Civilian Conservation Corps began construction on a new forest road, still in service as SR 28/11. This road simultaneously provided a way into the previously insular community and also provided the way out of the Smoke Hole Community.

The Rohrbaugh Cabin survives in its original setting on a site now surrounded by maturing forest. It represents the migratory history of a family still present in nearby local communities, and it is a representative example of the difficult nature of highland farming which dominated the area for over 150 years. It is also a surviving, tangible, visible and accessible artifact which represents those aspects of the Smokehole Community and its culture which do not survive or are not accessible for public edification. Finally, the Rohrbaugh Cabin represents the history of a still evolving relationship between cultural resources, owners and residents, and the Monongahela National Forest, from its creation in 1920, into the future as the permanent steward of the Smoke Hole.

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Major Bibliographical References

Berman, Gillan Mace, Spencer, Melissa Conley & Howe, Barbara J., The Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia University Public History Program, Morgantown, March, 1992.

Goodall, Harrison, Friedman, Renee, Log Structures, American Association for State and Local History, Nashville, TN, 1980.

Judy, Elvin L., History of Grant and Hardy Counties, Charleston Printing Co., Charleston, WV, 1951.

Morrison, Charles, Wappatomaka: A Survey and History of the South Branch Valley, McClain Printing Co., Parsons, WV, 1971.

Rice, Otis, K., West Virginia- A History, University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, KY, 1985.

Rohrbaugh, Lewis Bunker, Rohrbaugh Genealogy, Dandeschaff Printing & Publishing Co, Philadelphia, PA, 1971.

Weslager, C.A., The Log Cabin in America, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1969.

Works Projects Administration, SMOKEHOLE and ITS PEOPLE Number 3 Folk Studies, West Virginia Writer's Project, Charlestown, WV, May 1940.

Rohrbaugh Cabin  
Name of Property

Grant, WV  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ± 4.25 Acres Around Cabin

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

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4	3	1	3	1	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

☐ 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 C. Richard Bierce, AIA & Dove & Associates, Inc.

organization Historical Architect/Consulting date January 15, 1993

street & number 121 S. Royal Street telephone 703-836-9085

city or town Alexandria state VA zip code 22314

### 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.  
(Site Plan - Rohrbaugh Cabin)

#### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The boundary of the Rohrbaugh Cabin Site is shown on the accompanying map entitled "Site Plan - Rohrbaugh Cabin", dated August 20, 1992, by Dove & Associates, Inc. with revisions to November 20, 1992.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries selected encompass the building, its surviving dependencies, spaces and natural features which were part of the house setting, and portions of the historic road adjacent to the house.

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Additional Documentation:

- 1) USGS Map - Current with site Circled.  
  
Xerox of 1920 USGS Map - Showing Smoke Hole settlement, and original Smoke Hole road thru site.
- 2) Site plan Rohrbaugh Cabin Site by Dove and Associates, Inc., Associates, Inc., August 20, 1992 to revision November 20, 1992. The following information applies to photos:
- 3) Name of photographer: C.R. Bierce, AIA
- 4) Date of photographs:
  - #1. August, 1991
  - #2. July, 1992
  - #3. June, 1992
  - #4. June, 1992
  - #5. June, 1992
  - #6. June, 1992
  - #7. June, 1992
  - #8. July, 1992
  - #9. August, 1991
  - #10. Aerial - 1943
- 5) Location of original negatives:  
Office of C.R. Bierce, AIA, 121 S. Royal Steet,  
Alexandria, VA 22314
- 6) Description of Views:
  - #1. Rohrbaugh Cabin and its surroundings, including the early 20th c. frame shed; view to southeast, from the hill north of the cabin.
  - #2. The pasture and the standing log crig; view to the west, from the grassed slope just south of the cabin.
  - #3. South elevation of the cabin; view to the north.
  - #4. West elevation of the cabin; view to the east.
  - #5. North elevation of the cabin; view to the south.
  - #6. East elevation of the cabin; view to the southwest.

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#7. Detail of interior partition mortise plate and locking pin on north elevation; also shows early 20th century graffiti on log surfaces; view to the southeast.

#8. Detail of log joints and corner construction at northwest corner; view to the south.

#9. Interior detail of stone firebox and flush board paneling in east room on the first floor; view to the east.

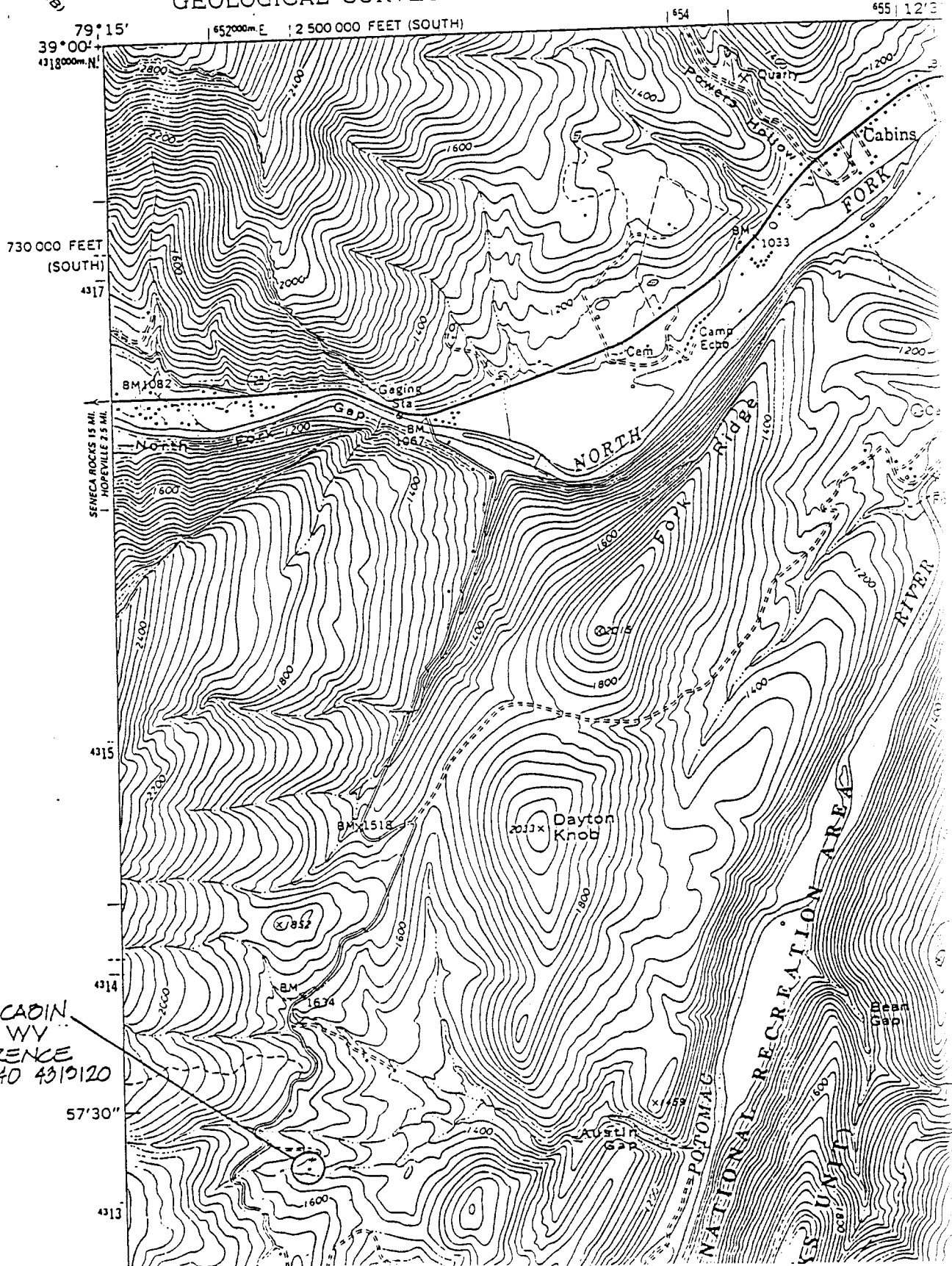
#10. Aerial photo - U.S. Army Air Corps (1943) government archive photo of Rohrbaugh cabin site and farmstead shows original Smoke Hole road, and new (CCC-built) logging road (now 28/11).

PETERSBURG WEST QUADRANGLE  
 WEST VIRGINIA  
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOP)  
 NW/4 PETERSBURG 15' QUAD

A-1

UNITED STATES  
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5122 III SE  
 (BLACKBIRD KNOB)



ROHRBAUGH CABIN  
 GRANT CO. WV  
 UTM REFERENCE  
 17 652340 4319120

