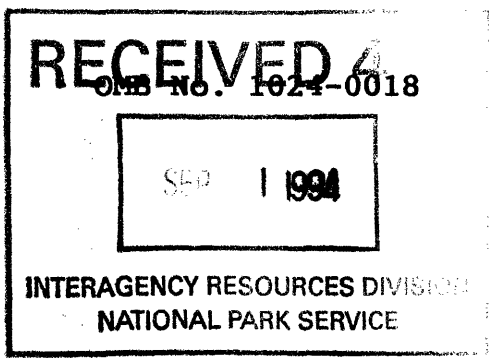


NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations 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 any 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 Springer-Cranston House  
other names/site number CRS # N-12931

2. Location

street & number 1015 Stanton Road not for publication n/a  
city or town Marshallton, Mill Creek Hundred vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Delaware code DE county New Castle code 003  
zip code 19808

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide x locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ August 30, 1994  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( x See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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Springer-Cranston House  
New Castle County, DE

=====

In my opinion, the Springer-Cranston House  
  ✓  meets/      does not meet the National Register  
criteria.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dennis E. Greenhouse  
County Executive  
New Castle County, Delaware

  2/23/53    
Date

=====

**4. National Park Service Certification**

=====

I, hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall* 9/30/94

Entered in the  
National Register

*Edson H. Beall*

Signature of Keeper

Date  
of Action

=====

**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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

\_\_\_\_\_

=====

**6. Function or Use**

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Secondary Structure</u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Vacant</u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>

=====

**7. Description**

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No Style: Vernacular Georgian

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

roof asphalt

walls stone

other

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 (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.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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)

Architecture  
Social History  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance c. 1830-1940  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

=====

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

=====

(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: University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering

=====

**10. Geographical Data**

=====

Acreage of Property 5.59 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>445280</u>	<u>4397320</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ 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 Bernard Herman

organization University of Delaware date April 15, 1994

street & number Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering

telephone 302-831-8097

city or town Newark state DE zip code 19716

=====  
**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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. and Mrs. Keith Wiseman

street & number 1015 Stanton Road telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Wilmington state DE zip code 19808

=====  
**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 the 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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SEP 1 1994

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Springer-Cranston House was constructed in the late-eighteenth century and was modified to its present appearance over time. Its primary configuration is a vernacular design resulting from the expansion of a smaller house which masks a Georgian interior floor plan. This four-bay, two-and-a-half story coursed rubble stone dwelling with a two-story stuccoed rubble stone service wing was constructed with Brandywine granite, a local material distinguished by its near black color. Located in the rapidly developing community of Marshallton, the Springer-Cranston House is being encroached upon by suburban development to the south. The house has been occupied and modified throughout its history but still retains its architectural and historical significance.

Setting

The Springer-Cranston House is situated on Stanton Road in Marshallton, Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. The 5.59 acre site (New Castle County tax parcel 08.045.10-196) is bordered to the west by Stanton Road, to the north by the grounds of the Marshallton United Methodist Church (NR 1987), on the south by a small subdivision and the former grounds of the Kiamensi Woolen Mills, and on the east by the waters of Red Clay Creek. The house sits on the crest of a low rise formed by the escarpment of Red Clay Creek to the east and now-vanished Ham Run to the north. The terrain of the nominated property slopes eastward toward Red Clay Creek for a distance of roughly 75 yards before dropping abruptly to the flood plain along the western bank of the creek. The general environment around the Springer-Cranston House and grounds reflect late nineteenth-century industrialization and early twentieth suburban development. The setting of the house on the crest of a low ridge leading down to the Red Clay Creek and amid second and third growth timber growth effectively places the house above the sight line of surrounding properties or screens the site from possible visual intrusions.

Outbuildings and Other Features

Approximately 76 feet east-northeast of the main house stands a small frame privy likely dating to the fourth quarter of the 19th century. Restored in 1989, the three-seat privy is a five-and-a-half foot square frame structure capped with a pyramidal roof and sheathed with milled rounded edge weatherboard. The six-inch thick walls are plastered over sawn wood lath on



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the interior. The privy contributes to architectural significance of the property.

Associated with the house and grounds are also the rubble remains of numerous structures which may possess potential archaeological significance but have not been evaluated by a qualified archaeologist. The land between the house and creek originally contained the farm yard and a number of outbuildings which survive largely as clearly visible archaeological sites. The archaeological features include the site of a combination smokehouse and springhouse roughly 30 yards eastnortheast of the house, a carriage house or small barn approximately 30 yards east of the dwelling, and a stone foundation for a building of undetermined function situated at the bottom of the ridge dropping down from the house to the creek. All visible archaeological features are marked by traces of collapsed dry laid, rubble stone walls. Likely archaeological remains indicated by documentary sources but not visible in the present terrain include accommodations for the seven slaves residing on the site at the end of the eighteenth century. In addition to the house and its associated cultural features, the site contains an abundance of second and third growth timber and a recently excavated artificial pond.

**Present Appearance**

The Springer-Cranston House is a four-bay, two-and-a-half story coursed rubble stone dwelling with a two-story stuccoed rubble stone service wing. The stone used in the primary (south) elevation of the house includes local Brandywine granite distinguished by its near black color. The gable roof is carried on a common rafter framing system reflecting two periods of construction in the main block and a third in the ell. A box cornice with simply finished bed molding accents the base of the roof. The four-bay fenestration includes a number of joined window architraves with beaded edges and pinned lintels and sills. The first floor sash follows a six-over-nine light configuration while the second floor is glazed with six-over-six light sash. The off-center front door is a six-panel arrangement with the top panels replaced with glazing to further light the entry. A plain post supported shed roof porch runs across the south elevation.

The present house plan follows a center-passage, single-pile with two room service ell configuration on the first floor. The second floor plan consists of a center-passage arrangement with two rooms on either side of the passage and a small unheated room over the entry. The attic is finished with a room on either side of a centrally placed landing; the cellar, built into a natural embankment, contains two-rooms under the main block including an

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early nineteenth-century basement kitchen as well as a full cellar and a crawl space beneath the two rooms of the service wing. As a type, the plan of the Springer-Cranston House conforms to the popular interpretation of Georgian architecture as built in the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century throughout New Castle County. Because of the complicated history of the house, interior details are described below by period or phase of development.

**Periodization**

The Springer-Cranston House grew to its present appearance through a sequence of at least five major building episodes beginning in the late 18th century and culminating in the 1940s. Each episode transformed the appearance and organization of the house in architecturally and socially significant ways.

**Period I (late 18th century)**

The earliest surviving fabric contained in the Springer-Cranston House describes a one-story stone dwelling roughly 24 feet by 18 with its primary elevation fronting present day Stanton Road. Built of roughly coursed rubble stone consisting mostly of local granite and quartz, the house possessed a two-bay elevation with the original exterior door located away from the chimney gable. A round arched relieving arch in the north gable carried the five foot six inch wide by approximately three foot deep chimney stack up through the house. A disturbed area in the exterior masonry of the north wall suggests that the first floor fireplace also possibly possessed a bake oven, although the evidence for the actual size of the opening remains inconclusive. The fenestration of the cellar wall opposite the chimney end reflects an infilled centrally placed door flanked by a shallow window symmetrically placed on either side. Although all evidence for the placement of the original stairs or interior finishes has been removed, the Springer-Cranston House likely followed local practice with a winder stair and chimney cupboards placed on either side of the gable end chimney pile.

Documentary evidence in the form of a probate inventory and tax assessments strongly suggest the presence of either a separate kitchen-slave quarter or a log or frame kitchen wing. The pattern of blocked openings in the south and west walls suggest the likelihood that either one of these elevations may have abutted a wing or connecting dooryard. The archaeological potential for these two areas, due to the undisturbed nature of the site, is high. Areas of potential archaeological significance include the former

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dooryard of the first period house which extends into the present right-of-way for Stanton Road.

Period II (circa 1800-1815)

In this second period the builders of the Springer-Cranston House raised the one-story stone house to a full two-stories and reoriented its primary elevation to face south and away from the public road. The reorientation of the house required the demolition of the Period I chimney stack leaving only the cellar relieving arch, removal of the Period I roof, the enlargement of the former southeast gable window into a front door, sealing the old west wall entry with rubble stone infill, and construction of a second story and a new west gable end chimney pile carried on relieving piers. The roof frame for the Period II dwelling with its joined common rafter pairs heeled to a heavy raising plate reciprocally notched over the extended ends of the new second floor ceiling joists clearly indicates that the second story and the reorientation of the building occurred at the same time. The first floor appearance of the house in Period II is unknown, although the second floor was finished with plaster walls, exposed ceilings with plain unbeaded whitewashed joists and bridging beam, and a chimney complete with a built in jamb cupboard.

The continued presence of an ell or freestanding outbuilding for the Period II phase of the Springer-Cranston House seems likely. Again, no visible architectural evidence for the size, construction, finish, or general appearance of these spaces remains.

Period III (circa 1820-1825)

The third phase of the Springer-Cranston House's building history resulted in the dramatic enlargement of the stone house with a twenty by twenty-four foot addition made to the east gable end. The Period III appearance of the building resulted in a four-bay, center-passage, single-pile dwelling with both an intricately subdivided second floor and integrated service functions in the cellars. The overall arrangement reflected the functional consolidation and increasing subdivision of interior space reflected throughout much of northern and central Delaware in the mid 1800s.

The two-story roughly coursed rubble stone wing matched the configuration of the Period II profile and created a uniform four-bay

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fenestration. Construction of the new extension resulted in the demolition of the Periods I and II stone gable to the top of the cellar wall. The addition changed the domestic landscape of the house in several key ways. First, the former one-room stone house now contained a center-passage plan with a five-foot wide stair hall holding an open stair finished with a closed string, turned newels, ramped handrail, and square balusters. The "old" house achieved parlor status, while the new room on the opposite side of the entry became the dining room.

Second, service in the form of cooking and storage functions was placed in a new basement kitchen complete with a ten by two foot chimney pile containing a five foot wide cooking fireplace and a brick bake oven that extended into an exterior housing. A simple board mantel occupied the space above the cooking hearth while a wrought iron crane stood inside the northwest corner of the fireplace. The northwest corner of the room between the outer face of the chimney jamb and the rear wall of the house contained a built-in four-door cupboard with three shelves above and likely two shelves below. A second cupboard one-and-a-half by three feet stood in the southeast corner of the room. The east wall of the cellar kitchen clearly shows the exterior masonry configuration of the Periods I and II cellar in the swale of the formerly exterior wall where it would have been raised from the inside out against the original builder's trench. The walls of the cellar kitchen were plastered on stone and heavily whitewashed; the ceiling joists received riven lath attached with fully developed cut nails and also plastered and whitewashed. Two entries provided access to the cellar kitchen. Interior access was provided by a set of open stairs located beneath the first floor stair; exterior access was provided through a door opening onto a partially excavated work space outside the west gable end. Iron clamps for a shed roof ridge beam indicate the former presence of a shed roofed porch or enclosed lean-to outside the gable end.

Third, the second floor plan of the Springer-Cranston House was divided into a cramped double-pile arrangement. A partition wall inserted against the bridging beam in the Periods I and II upstairs chamber divided the former open space into two bedrooms or chambers with only the north chamber heated. Access into the north chamber occurred from the hall; entry into the south chamber, however, required passage through the small unheated room partitioned off of the south end of the second floor stair hall. The two equal size chambers in the west end of the house were gained by access directly from the stair landing. The second floor of the Period III dwelling was fitted with six-panel doors hung on cast iron butt hinges and enframed

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with beaded edge and quirked quarter round molded architraves. The second floor stair continued the use of turned newels and square, ramped handrails and square balusters.

Fourth, the remodelers of the enlarged Springer-Cranston House provided the roof with two gable dormers on the north elevation. The dormers, finished with segmental arched openings externally enframed with reeded pilasters and bulls eye corner blocks, illuminated lath-and-plaster finished attic chambers. The roof frame for the new stone wing, like the Period II arrangement, consisted of collarless common rafter pairs bridle jointed and pinned at the apex and footed to a heavy raising plate pinned to the upper surface of the second floor ceiling joists.

Period IV (circa 1830-1850)

The fourth phase in the development of the Springer-Cranston Houses focused on the redefinition of service inside the dwelling. The apparent inconvenience of the cellar kitchen led to the construction of a two-story rubble fieldstone kitchen wing against the southwest corner of the house. As built, the mid 19th-century wing appears to have been a full two-stories on the east (road side) elevation and one or one-and-a-half stories on the west (back) elevation. Such "flounder" or shed roofed service wings are recorded on a number of contemporary New Castle County houses. On the first floor, the service wing was divided into unequal size rooms. The larger room roughly thirteen feet square on the interior and located adjacent to the dining room contained a cooking fireplace, chimney cupboard, and stair as well as a full cellar which could be entered from the old cellar kitchen, the outside, or the new first floor kitchen. The smaller room (approximately six by thirteen feet) possessed no cellar and may have been finished either with a packed dirt floor or paving. Without evidence of a chimney stack or stove flue, the smaller room was likely designed as a pantry and storage space. Both rooms were plastered.

Period V (1940-1949)

Following its mid 19th-century remodeling, the Springer-Cranston House stood largely unaltered for the next seventy to ninety years. In the 1940's, however, the last generation of Cranston descendants to occupy the house undertook one last set of alterations which have resulted in the present appearance of the house. The majority of these final family changes updated the older interiors. Vertical board pine paneling with inset beaded

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edge concave batten-like moldings was installed in the west parlor. Similar paneling was installed in a new office created out of the old pantry behind the kitchen in the south end of the el. The installation of paneling and more up-to-date plaster surfaces was accomplished by studding in the first floor walls approximately six inches. The result not only upgraded the dwelling with new and fashionable mid 20th-century rustic interiors, but also effectively encapsulated and preserved the older wall finishes. The creation of a study in the south end of the service wing required the removal of the mid 19th-century chimney pile, the shifting west of the partition wall, and the installation of new kitchen cabinets. Despite the loss of this chimney stack and the one associated with the cellar kitchen, sufficient architectural evidence remains clearly indicating their location, configuration, and appearance.

The ruins and archaeological sites associated with the house have not been evaluated as part of this nomination. Landscape features associated with the house and including historic plantings and masonry steps cutting through the roadside embankment and leading down to curbside are contributing elements to the overall site and its integrity. The poured concrete walk rises from the edge of the present road to the Period I dooryard and splits into two curvilinear garden walks. Two American basswood or linden trees (Tilia americana) flank the walk between where the stairs meet the dooryard and the walk splits. The two linden trees average nearly nine feet in diameter and date to the mid 19th century and the Period IV enlargement and remodeling of the house. The walk dates to circa 1940 or the Period V improvements to the house which include the installation of pine paneling in the parlor and the office newly created out of the old pantry. The general dimensions of the dooryard including elements from Periods I through V are forty feet along Stanton Road and extending eastward approximately one hundred feet to include both the earliest dooryard, the mid 19th-century plantings, and the circa 1940 pathways. Noncontributing elements include a modern frame garage and garden building. Neither of the non-contributing structures compromise the integrity of the house or grounds.

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Springer-Cranston House is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: broad patterns in local history and Criterion C: architecture. The Springer-Cranston House and site possesses integrity of location, design, workmanship, setting, and association.

The history of the Springer-Cranston House site dates to the development of Marshalltown in the early nineteenth century as a rural milling center located on the Red Clay Creek in Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. The house was clearly modified by three successive owners over two generations. Each period in the development of the dwelling illustrates larger patterns in the architectural and landscape history of New Castle County. The architectural and historical significance of the Springer-Cranston House relates to earlier National Register of Historic Places nominations. As an example of the processes of architectural renewal and rebuilding, the Springer-Cranston House represents a geographical extension of historic themes and property types set forth in the thematic multiple resource nomination, "The Rebuilding of St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, 1850-1880." As a particular example of the archaeological-like layering of architectural change within a single building, the Springer-Cranston House reflects an area of architectural significance identified in the nominations of the Vandergrift-Biddle House, St. Georges Hundred, and the Marshall House in the Auburn Mills Historic District, Christiana Hundred.

The builder of the original block of the Springer-Cranston House was John Reece of Mill Creek Hundred who died in late 1795 or early 1796. Reece's estate was taxed in 1803 for 75 acres including a stone dwelling, stone barn, merchant mill, and sawmill. When his heir, also named John Reece was assessed for the same tract in 1816, the mills and the three acres on which they sat had already been sold leaving Reece's namesake with 72 acres (67 of which were improved), the house, and barn. A land transaction between Simon Cranston and the heirs of Thomas Stapler in 1827 clearly refers to this property as the "lands formerly of John Reece now John Springer."

Based on the architectural evidence of the house, Reece's dwelling appears to have been built on a one-story, one-room plan. As built the house fronted the public Stanton-Christiana Road and held a chimney stack in what was then the north gable end. If the house possessed a service wing, it was uncellared and most likely of log or frame construction. The furniture listed

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for the house in Reece's 1796 probate inventory include a feather bed, walnut desk and bookcase, six "old" leather bottomed chairs, an eight day clock, walnut dining table, old table, clothes press, corner cupboard, looking glass, "old low case drawers," tea table, "small" table, pine table, old featherbed, walnut clothes press, walnut table, and "rope" bedstead and featherbed. The volume and quality of furnishings suggests that while the first floor contained a single room, the second appears to have been divided into two sleeping chambers with the best room holding the case drawers and tea table. The contents of the first floor room describe a living space that melded business (desk and bookcase), dining (walnut dining table and six leather upholstered chairs), and sleeping (feather bed and clothes press). Cooking and other domestic work operations occurred in a service wing or separate building which also housed Reece's seven slaves.

Reece's house represents the continuation of older living patterns associated with the colonial period in northern Delaware. Although Reece appears as a property owner in possession of a merchant mill and a sawmill, he continued to occupy an older style "open plan" dwelling where access into the living areas of the house was direct rather than through the social buffer of a stair or entry passage. The house containing this older customary pattern of access was of stone construction in a time period when stone was associated with economically and socially higher valued housing. Although the vast majority of Delawareans still lived in one-room houses at the end of the eighteenth century, the occupation of such a dwelling would have been deemed old fashioned for merchant millers and other engaged in extensive economic activities.

After John Reece's death the property fell under the administration of the county orphans court. As the court sought to resolve the Reece estate, the property came into the possession of John Reece's son also named John. Under John, Jr.'s ownership (possibly at the initiative of the guardian appointed by the orphans court) the dwelling was raised one story, converted into a chambered-hall plan, and the primary elevation reoriented to the south. The written record at this juncture in the structure's history, however, is unclear. Still, it is evident through implications and cross references in other deeds that John, Jr., could not hold the property. Sometime between 1816 and 1822 the Reece property was acquired by John Springer. Springer's approximately ten year ownership resulted in dramatic changes to the old Reece dwelling.



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John Springer extended and remodeled the chambered-hall dwelling into a center-passage stone house with a cellar kitchen. Springer accomplished this by demolishing the stone gables of the old house to the top of the second floor walls, tearing down the chimney stack to the cellar floor, and removing the old wood kitchen wing or outbuilding. With the old house reduced to four stone walls, Springer constructed a twenty by twenty-four foot extension against the east end of the old house. This addition not only extended the house in length, but enabled Springer to make use of the terrain to construct a cellar kitchen into the natural embankment. At the same time Springer filled in the old door and window openings and opened up new ones with the result being the creation of a four-bay asymmetrical fenestration masking a Georgian plan interior. The plan was further complicated by Springer's decision to subdivide the second floor into five rooms in addition to the stair landing. The final second floor plan contained two small rooms on either side of the stair landing as well as an unheated room over the entry usually associated with two-story, center-passage, single-pile houses in the region. John Springer's extensively remodeling efforts continue to characterize the house today. The final plan with domestic service contained in the cellar and its second floor divided into a warren of sleeping chambers represents the full use of local ideas about house form and domestic life in a truly creative solution.

John Springer died in 1827. The extensive orphans and probate court records generated by the estate present a particularly clear sense of the house, its contents, and surrounding lands at the end of the federal period in Delaware. An orphans court valuation establishing the annual projected revenues for the property in 1831 described "a good stone dwelling house a good Spring and Smoke house, a frame and Stone Barn, and old apple Orchard and a young one, the old one an Incumbrance and some of the trees Spoiling the Hedges, a Small Peach Orchard, the Hedgeing wanting dressing very much, there is but one pump in repair on the farm." The whole was expected to yield \$250 in rents per annum. An associated division survey shows that the house lot consisted of a small parcel on the east side of the Stanton-Christiana (now Stanton) Road while the farmlands were contained in a large irregularly shaped tract on the west side of the road stretching between Ham and Calf runs. Two elements of this description are of particular note. First, Springer followed the practice advocated by agricultural reformers of the era to plant live fences or hedges. We cannot know if Springer enclosed his fields with the locally popular New Castle thorn or some other cultivar such as osage orange. His commitment to the capital outlay required for such hedges, however, places him in the ranks of local agricultural reformers such

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as his contemporary, the hedging enthusiast Caleb Kirk. Similarly, the combined spring and smoke house represents a consolidation of domestic functions in a way that is the hallmark of the domestic reforms associated with progressive agriculture in the period. The outbuilding built over a spring with its dairying functions below and meat preservation operations housed either in an abutting room or in an upper story reflects the pattern of streamlined domestic operations most closely associated with progressive farmers. Both the hedging and combination outbuilding resonate with the elaborated plan of the old house which expresses a parallel concern with integrated service (the cellar kitchen), stylishness (the Georgian plan), and compartmentalization and privacy (the multiple second floor sleeping chambers).

Preparatory to a public auction of John Springer's possessions, the probate court sent three men to enumerate and appraise the contents of the house. From this list we can gain a strong sense of how Springer furnished his house. The first floor room defined by the walls of Reece's old house served as Springer's parlor. In this room, referred to as the "west parlor" stood the best furniture of the house including a sideboard, round and square mahogany tables, a square cherry table, tea table, a set of eight yellow chairs including two arm chairs, candle stand, cupboard, and parlor stove. The room cross the entry and over the cellar kitchen served as a less formal dining and sitting room. Its contents included one walnut and two mahogany dining tables, a mahogany stand, a set of eight windsor chairs including a rocker, and settee. Unlike the parlor with heating stove, the sitting and dining room was heated by an open fireplace equipped with "Andiron Shovel & Tongs." The kitchen below held a number of flour casks, three tables, nine chairs, dough trough, and miscellaneous cooking utensils. The huge cooking fireplace accommodated an iron stove despite the presence of an open hearth with a built-in bakeoven. As in other material reflections of their lifestyle, the Springer's choice of a cooking range in the 1820s was progressive by the standards of rural New Castle County. Still, the stove represented a desire to conserve firewood and to compartmentalize, organize, and contain the functions of the family farm. The second floor furnishings for the house present a less concrete picture of specific room use. The furnishings of all the sleeping chamber was limited to sleeping, sitting, textile storage, and hygiene. The best chamber held a "High post bedstead and Bedding" along with trundle bed and mahogany bureau. The beds in all the other rooms were assigned lesser dollar values as were their associated wash stands, chairs, and case furniture.

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The barn contained Springer's harvest of wheat, oats, rye, buckwheat, hay, and corn in addition to providing shelter for his two oxen, seventeen head of cattle, and six horses and colts. The barn also provided storage space for his farming equipment ranging from cradles and scythes to farm wagons. The accommodations for Springer's nineteen sheep and five hogs is unclear. In the house yard stood a "scop of Bees & old beehives." A riding gig, "Dearborn Coach," and assorted tools filled a "chair House" recorded in the inventory but unmentioned in the property valuation. Finally, listed in both the inventory and sold by the estate administrator at private sale was "1 Black Boy 14 years to Serve." Whether Springer's servant lived in the house or one of the outbuildings is unknown as are the duties he performed for his master. Unnamed in either inventory or auction accounts, Springer's servant represented continuity with a slave holding tradition that had fallen into disfavor throughout the northern hundreds of Delaware. Where Springer's remodeled dwelling, household possessions, hedges, farm buildings, agricultural implements, crops, and livestock present an image of domestic reform and progressive agriculture, his ownership of an African-American servant links him to a conservative past which preferred human chattel over contracted labor. Whatever the paradoxes of Springer's material world, his death necessitated the sale of all his personal property and real estate.

The Springer-Cranston House was acquired in 1833-4 at public sale by Simon Cranston (who identified himself in the deeds as a ship builder). Simon Cranston's acquisition of the old Reece-Springer property appears to have been part of a calculated strategy to set up his sons as independent property holders as well as to increase his own extensive holdings. A review of all the deeds in which Simon Cranston is identified as the grantee, however, clearly reveals that he was busy acquiring property and consolidating his holding through the first third of the nineteenth century. Simon Cranston specifically left the property to his son James Cranston in his will of 1836 when he stipulated that James receive "the Farm or Tract of Land whereon he now resides formerly the property of John Springer." James Cranston likely commemorated his occupancy of the house by planting the American basswood or linden trees which stand in the Period I dooryard immediately to the west of the house. Two other sons, Benjamin and Joseph, also received sections of the Springer tract.

The fabric of the house as it stands today indicates that James Cranston initiated the final expansion and remodeling of the old Reece dwelling. Shortly after taking possession of the house Cranston appears to

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have found the old cellar cooking area too inconvenient for his tastes. As a response he commissioned a flounder roofed service ell containing a kitchen and adjacent pantry and store room. At some point between roughly 1860 and 1876, James Cranston moved to another nearby house, and in 1876 he sold his old residence to his son Edwin J. Cranston. The property at the time of the sale was described as being bounded by the public road, the bridge where Ham Run emptied into Red Clay Creek, Kiamensi Woolen Company, Red Clay Creek, and the farms and lots of several individual landholders.

Edwin Cranston and his family occupied the house lot much as James Cranston left it until it passed out of the hands of his descendants in 1987. The principle changes to the property were the collapse of the barns and the barnacular colonial reveival remodeling of the old parlor, kitchen, and pantry around 1940. Consistent with and contemporary to the improvements in the house, was the introduction into the Period I dooryard of a poured concrete footpath. The Cranston family also was instrumental in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century development of Marshalltown and nearby Cranston Heights. Rea and Price atlas of 1849 identifies four Cranston tracts; Beers Atlas of 1868 identifies five Cranston parcels in the immediate area as either owned or occupied by the Cranston family; by 1881 the number had risen to eight.

By 1909, R. M. Cranston was subdividing the family's Bellemoor Farm located down the road south of the house. The developer touted his new "Bellemoor Suburban Home Sites" in the Wilmington newspaper as:

a unique suburb on [the] Newport and Stanton trolley line only fifteen minutes ride from Fourth and Market streets with 5c fare. Every plot is carefully restricted and is improved with pavement. Electric lights and telephone connections are available.

Bellemoor is a place to locate for people of moderate means. No suburban development offers so much for the money as you can get here, no place is being so rapidly built up as in this section of the country.

The descendants of Edwin Cranston followed a similar impulse to develop a portion

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of their property. While they left the house site intact, they did carve out several adjacent lots in the farm fields across the road. The early 20th-century houses built on those lots still stand.

The Cranston family is also significant for its long association with the history and growth of Marshalltown. Simon Cranston, who first acquired the property from Springer's estate, married Mary Marshall in the late 18th century. Cranston's union with Marshall solidified the family's ties with several key Quaker and early milling families in the surrounding area including the Tatnalls and Pennocks. William Marshall, after whom Marshalltown is named, is particularly important in the history of early American industry. As a partner of miller James Stroud and a neighbor of inventor Oliver Evans, Marshall was one of the first millers in the United States to copy Evans's innovations which revolutionized flour milling. Marshall's ensuing success enabled him to leave his heirs numerous tracts of properties including both industrial and agricultural parcels. Among the beneficiaries of Marshall's will were Mary Marshall Cranston and her husband Simon who received the lands "whereon they now dwell." Although separate from the Springer-Cranston tract acquired thirty years later, the bequest established Simon Cranston and his heirs as landowners in the area. In the ensuing years Simon, then James, and finally Edwin would buy and sell property to increase and improve their situation as Mill Creek Hundred farmers. When James Cranston died in 1887, for example, he left his heirs his Newark, Kingston, and Skipton farms. Edwin Cranston, for his part, made a gift of a lot adjacent to his house for the construction of the Marshallton Methodist Church. Other Cranston family members, such as R. M. Cranston left their mark on the land in the form of early suburban housing tracts. In all these areas, the Cranstons played an instrumental roll in the growth and development of Marshallton. The Springer-Cranston House in turn is the tangible reminder of the family; the material history of the house and land links the fortunes of the family to those of their community. In the history of the house, we find the how one family's enterprise and sensibilities represent the architectural and domestic values of a larger society.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

ZONE: PIEDMONT  
PERIODS: 1830-1880 +/- INDUSTRIALIZATION AND EARLY URBANIZATION  
1880-1940 +/- URBANIZATION AND EARLY SUBURBANIZATION  
THEMES: ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING AND DECORATIVE ARTS  
SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE  
MAJOR FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS AND EVENTS

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**Boundary Description**

The Springer-Cranston House is situated on Stanton Road in Marshallton, Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. The 5.59 acre site (New Castle County tax parcel 08.045.10-196) is bordered to the west by Stanton Road, to the north by the grounds of the National Register listed Marshallton United Methodist Church, on the south by a small subdivision, the former grounds of the Kiamensi Woolen Mills and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and on the east by the waters of Red Clay Creek. The boundary goes to the existing curb line of Stanton Road and includes landscape features such as masonry stairs leading to curbside. The present parcel represents approximately three-quarters of the original house lot surveyed in the 1831.

**Boundary Justification**

The proposed boundary for the Springer-Cranston House includes all that remains of the historic house lot surveyed by the New Castle County Orphans Court in the 1830s. This includes a number of areas of significant archaeological potential including areas of documented industrial and agricultural use and slave occupation. The nomination includes a portion of the right-of-way along Stanton Road. Architectural and documentary evidence both indicate this composed the dooryard for the first period house and has a high probability of including archaeological sites related to both the white and African-American occupation of the site.



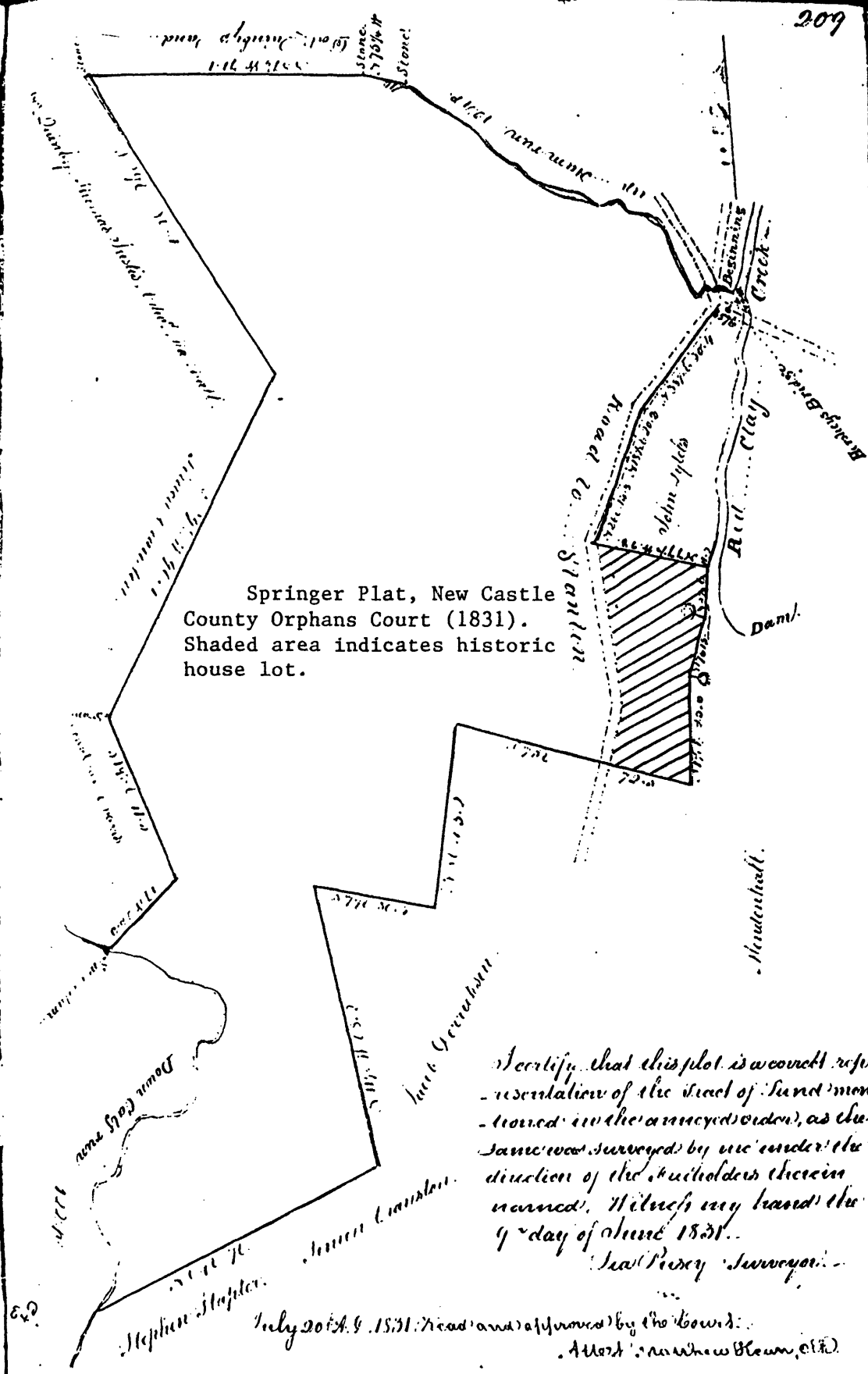


... fifteen perches to a. Hutton  
 ... the dam, thence up same  
 ... five tenths to a corner of  
 ... degree and a half West,  
 ... along the middle of the  
 ... eight tenths, North eight  
 ... thirty eight degrees and a  
 ... another road thence along  
 ... six perches to the  
 ... degrees that four perches  
 ... out fifty acres, and  
 ... a view of the opinion that  
 ... be divided among the  
 ... to the said parties and  
 ... and into two or more  
 ... made without det-  
 ... have made no di-  
 ... taments, but have  
 ... dollars \$1000)

1831  
 Simon Cranstow  
 James Sanders  
 Henry Salinger  
 James Smith  
 John Richardson

... and ...  
 ... 1831.  
 ...  
 ...  
 ...  
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\$ .25  
 .25  
 .26  
 .20  
 .10  
 .20  
 .80  
 .00  
 20' 28.11  
 100.61



Springer Plat, New Castle  
 County Orphans Court (1831).  
 Shaded area indicates historic  
 house lot.

I certify that this plot is a correct re-  
 presentation of the tract of land men-  
 tioned in the annexed order, as the  
 same was surveyed by me under the  
 direction of the trustees therein  
 named. Witness my hand this  
 9 day of June 1831.  
 John Richardson, Surveyor.

July 20th 1831 Read and approved by the Board.  
 Attest: Andrew Blum, Clerk.