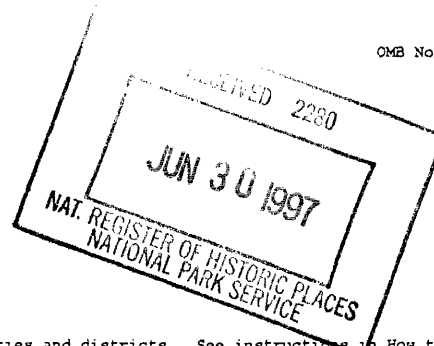


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



### 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.

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#### 1. Name of Property

=====

historic name : Graham, Robert House

other names/site number : CRS # N-292

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#### 2. Location

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street & number : 751 Crossan Road  not for publication

city or town : Newark  vicinity hundred : Mill Creek

state : Delaware code : DE county : New Castle code : 003 zip code : 19711

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#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

*David R. Smith*  
Signature of certifying official

June 25, 1997  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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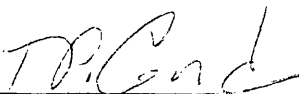
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*Agency Certification*

In my opinion, the Robert Graham House  meets  does not meet  
the National Register criteria.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas P. Gordon  
County Executive  
New Castle County, Delaware

2/25/97  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper: Edson H. Beall Date of Action: 8/1/97

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</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>
Cat: <u>Landscape</u>	Sub: <u>Street Furniture/Object</u>
Cat: <u>Landscape</u>	Sub: <u>Other: Terrace</u>

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

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
Cat: <u>Landscape</u>	Sub: <u>Street Furniture/Object</u>
Cat: <u>Landscape</u>	Sub: <u>Other: Terrace</u>
Cat: <u>Agriculture</u>	Sub: <u>Other: Ruin</u>
Cat: <u>Agriculture</u>	Sub: <u>Horticultural Facility</u>

**7. Description**

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

Other: Log Construction

Other: Vernacular Federal

Colonial Revival

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>stone</u>
walls	<u>weatherboard</u>
	<u>stone</u>
roof	<u>asphalt</u>
other	<u>wood</u>

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

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***Description***

The Robert Graham House is located in the northwest section of Mill Creek Hundred, in the northwest part of New Castle County, Delaware. The stone, log, and frame house is prominently situated close to the north side of Crossan Road on a parcel of 1.89 acres. The house's three main sections were built side by side with three, separate, side-gable roofs. The roof ridges step down with the landscape as it slopes toward a branch of Pike Creek on the east. In addition to the house, the other resources on this parcel are a stone terrace, circa 1947, located behind the house (a contributing site); a small, masonry greenhouse constructed in the late 1950s at the rear of the parcel (a noncontributing building); stone foundation walls of an early nineteenth-century frame barn, located approximately halfway between the house and the greenhouse (a noncontributing structure); and a stone wall from the mid-1930s, which encircles much of the yard, uniting the various elements (a contributing structure). This well-maintained property possesses a high level of integrity.

The forty-three square miles of Mill Creek Hundred were originally heavily wooded. Early settlers took advantage of this abundant natural resource, constructing a preponderance of log buildings in the first period of European settlement in this region, which occurred after 1680 when William Penn began making land grants to the settlers. Strong, clay soil, with some loose rock, and the presence of several streams, made this land highly suitable for farming and milling. The landscape of rolling hills that characterizes this area, the southernmost extension of the Piedmont Plateau, is created by the underlying rock known generically as fieldstone. Composed of micaceous gneiss and schist, this fieldstone was the material used to construct the permanent buildings that began to replace the impermanent log buildings in the early nineteenth century. Today, the parcel is surrounded by scattered residential development, primarily from this century, notably on the south side of Crossan Road where a subdivision has recently been created. Compared with the rest of the county, this general region of Mill Creek Hundred remains thinly developed, with fieldstone houses and bank barns of the nineteenth century still very prominent features on the landscape.

***House***

The Robert Graham House was erected in three main periods, beginning with the log, central core (circa 1790), first constructed as a one-story building with a loft. The two-story, stone western section was built circa 1819. It was probably at this time that the roof of the log section was raised to create two full stories. The final building period occurred in the mid-1930s with two frame additions, a two-story, frame, rear wing behind the stone section, and a one-story, frame wing east of the log section, with a three-car garage at the basement level. The major feature of the house is the stone wing, because of its placement and angle, with both its west side and south front close to the road, and because of its height. Because the house is banked into the hill, a full three levels of the stone end, including the basement, are exposed. The first-floor, shed-roofed, front porch on a high stone foundation further draws attention to this section of the house.

The original orientation of the house appears to have been to the north, where the door in the log section is located. From this northern door, the house looks out over the landscape as it descends toward the creek, whose path leads toward a brick homestead, today known as Penn Manor (N-306, DOE 1981). In the eighteenth century, Penn Manor was owned by the family who built this log dwelling. With the addition of the stone section to the log house, and subsequent construction of the barn north of the house, the main entry was relocated to the south elevation of the stone section.

Although there are a total of seven bays on the facade of the house (its south elevation), the overall impression of a modestly-sized house is created by the small proportions of each of the sections and the fact that the whole is not covered with one roof but remains three parts. Although the log section is

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covered with weatherboard, matching the siding on the 1930s additions, the three periods of construction are still distinct. The only elements uniting the three construction periods are the asphalt roof shingles and the forest green board-and-batten shutters, formed with three vertical boards, a popular shutter form in the 1930s and likely added to the house at that time.

*Period I, Circa 1790, A Log House*

The first period of construction is represented by the log middle section of the house. The current one-room plan, two-story, gable-roofed log house on a high, stone foundation began about 1790 as a one-story house with a loft space and possibly with a lean-to on its eastern side, where the garages are now located.<sup>1</sup> The log section measures approximately twenty-feet square and is two-bays wide. The entrance is on the north side of the house in the east bay. This appears to be the original entrance location.

The logs are not evident from the exterior, although the small and deep window openings hint about the log construction. Today, the logs are covered with wide weatherboard matching the siding on the frame additions of the 1930s. Looking up toward the first floor from the area in the basement between the log and stone sections, the exposed log walls can be viewed through a very small sliver of space. The unhewn logs, some with bark still attached, measure about seven- to eight-inches high. Evidently, the logs were not covered at the time the stone section was added, about 1819. The chinking here appears to be wood scraps with mortar. The method of notching the corners is detected in the southeast corner of the house when viewed from the basement-level garage. In this location, the texture of a V-notch is evident behind the parging of this west garage wall.

The exposed, fully-barked log joists at the basement level run in a north-south direction. When the stone section was added on the west side, it appears that the foundation wall below the log sill on the west end was removed to create one large cellar below the entire house. The log sill was left to support the weight of the entire west wall. Subsequently, metal posts have been added to support this end. An empty mortise on the underside of this exposed sill, and the slightly chamfered undersides of about three of the joists, suggest that there may have been an east-west partition in this space. In the southeast corner, a small area was partitioned for a coal bin at a later period. The walls of the basement have been covered in the modern period with an impervious concrete coating.

The foundation on the south elevation is pierced by one opening containing a new window. There is a small door in the north foundation wall providing access to a deep well with stone walls. The original unhewn log lintel over this small door was recently replaced by the owner with a new door casing and door for greater security. There is no evidence of the well from ground level. There is currently no access within the log section from the basement to the first floor, as the staircase is located in the stone section.

There is a large fireplace foundation in the eastern end of the basement. The massive size of the foundation is likely larger than it was originally, in order to support a wide, stone hearth on the first floor, which appears to date from the Colonial-Revival period. On the north side of the fireplace foundation is a narrow passageway leading to the basement-level garage.

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<sup>1</sup>Much of the construction history of the log section of the house is based on observations made by Rebecca J. Siders during investigations in April and May of 1996, at which time detailed measurements, field notes, and photographs were taken. These are preserved in the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

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From inside the garage, the exposed foundation wall of the log section can be viewed. From this vantage point, it is evident that there was originally some kind of exterior porch or lean-to on this eastern end. The north stone foundation wall still extends about seven feet beyond (east of) the log section. The south foundation wall was apparently treated in a similar manner originally. However, a portion of the wall was removed to make room for the garage doors, leaving a jagged edge where the wall was sheared off. Centered on this eastern foundation wall, immediately behind the stone fireplace foundation, is a small, rectangular, stuccoed-stone protrusion that has been sheared off at the top, probably when the addition was added. This may have been an additional support for a porch over this space. This evidence of an outdoor space, along with the access to the well at the basement level, suggests that the basement may have been used originally for cooking. (The parging conceals any evidence of whether the fireplace was used for this purpose.) It is also possible, however, that the purpose of the buttresses was to provide support for a beehive oven on the first floor.

On the first floor, the main door to the log house is located in the north elevation east of a 3/6 sash window. The first floor openings do not quite line up below the two, 3/6 sash windows on the second floor, suggesting that the second floor may have been a later addition. The door, composed of vertical boards, is in the Colonial-Revival mode. The fenestration on the elevation facing Crossan Road consists of two, small, sash, 3/6 window openings on each level. Because of the slope of the landscape, the first floor of the log section is located high above the ground level on the south side, making it quite unlikely that the entrance was ever on that side. Like the north elevation, the second-story openings are slightly asymmetrically spaced over the first. The east end, with the fireplace, probably never had any window openings, although it is not certain whether the door that now leads to the 1930s wing is an original doorway. The west end now has one opening to the stone section. Because of the covering of the interior walls, the original fenestration on the west end is not possible to determine.

The floor in the main room is made up of wide boards with no subfloor. The largest board measures one-foot, two- and three-eighths-of-an-inch wide. The undersides of these boards, viewed from the basement, are whitewashed, except for scars about two- and three-eighths-of-an-inch wide across the boards. The scars indicate that the floor boards were not originally in this location and were once supported by sawn joists with the same width as the scars. Five varnished, round-log joists run in the north-south direction. The diameters of the logs vary from approximately six to eight inches, similar in dimension to those supporting the first floor. These joists were set on approximately two-foot, ten-inch centers. They contain irregular notching, suggesting that they might be reused timbers.

Although the second story is newer than the first, the joists visible from that level are pit sawn. The width of the second-floor joists corresponds with the scars on the undersides of the floor boards on the first floor. It is possible that the joists visible in the main room were installed in the 1930s to create a more rustic look, replacing joists more like those still in place on the second level. Indeed, the floor boards in the main room may have been on the floor in the loft area originally, so that the scars would have been made when the main room was whitewashed. Although the walls in the main room are covered with tongue-and-groove pine paneling, likely added in the 1930s, the finish on the interior sides of the logs of the first floor walls, as seen from the basement level, was whitewash.

The very wide, stone fireplace, with its massive, timber lintel, dominates the first floor room of the log section. The fireplace was formed of the native stones, roughly-coursed. Long and narrow stones were intermingled with some smaller, rounded stones. The fireplace opening measures approximately eight-feet wide and two-feet, ten-inches deep. There is no crane. At the rear of the fireplace is a shallow, cut-out section about four-feet, five-inches wide, which originally may have been filled with a large, cast-iron fireplace back. The jambs are approximately one- and one-half feet thick. The rough hewn timber lintel is eleven-feet, seven-inches long, one-foot, one-inch high, and about one-foot, five-inches deep. The interior of the lintel is cut on the angle. The flat stone hearth (with more

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circular stones than those forming the fireplace), extends two feet, eight inches from the fireplace, and is approximately eleven- and one-half-foot long. There appears to be a line in the stonework from jamb to jamb. This suggests that this hearth area was rebuilt, probably in the 1930s, as the general character of the stonework, and proportion of stones to mortar, is similar to the hearth in the 1930s addition. Currently, the fireplace opening is outfitted with a plant grow-light and filled with plants. This arrangement was devised by former owners, Louis and Marie Larson, so that Mrs. Larson could use the artificial light to grow orchids and fuchsia.

There is a narrow passageway, measuring approximately two-feet, two-inches wide, between the end of the fireplace and the north wall. This passageway leads up three steps to the 1930s addition. There is no evidence to indicate whether or not this is an original opening. South of the fireplace (on its right side), a corner stair leads to the second floor. One full step rests in the main room. The vertical board door is formed with the pine paneling used to line the walls in this room. Originally, when the house was one story and a loft, there was probably a ladder in this space.

Probably at the time of the addition of the stone section, about 1819, the roof of the log section was raised so that the rooms on the second floors of both sections would roughly correspond. The exposed chimney caps of both sections are brick. In the attic of the log house, the stone corbeled cap and the flashing stone of the original stone chimney are visible. The measurement from the top of the chimney to the flashing stone indicates that the roof was raised about four feet. This space has a mid-nineteenth-century roof with circular-sawn, butt rafters.

The fact that the raising of the roof occurred earlier than the mid-nineteenth century is suggested by the construction materials evident on the second floor. The joists are pit sawn. Although these could have been reused, the owner has removed a section of the wall board on the north wall, which revealed further evidence for an early date for the second floor. About two feet, nine inches from the floor there is a wide, chinked space between the logs, probably marking the original wall height. The general appearance, however, is of one construction period, with unhewn logs, some with bark still on them, used to extend the walls to the ceiling. The settling of the second floor windows also indicate their age. The floorboards in this space have been covered with modern wood floors; however, the original wide boards are still in place below the new floor and can be seen from the first floor. Some of the boards are as wide as sixteen inches. The fireplace at this level is stuccoed over.

*Period II, Circa 1819, A Stone Wing*

The second period of construction occurred between 1816 and 1822 when a one-room, two-bay, two-story stone wing with a gable roof was added next to the log section on its west side. The walls are random-laid russet, brown, and white fieldstone. The stone addition is approximately fifteen- and one-half-foot wide by twenty-four-foot deep, a few feet deeper than the log section. The stone section is positioned flush to the south wall of the log house and projects beyond the north wall of the log section by a few feet. The main entrance is in the east bay of the south elevation of the stone addition. The stone addition rests on a high stone foundation. Assessment records refer to the house as stone after 1822, which suggests that the log walls had been stuccoed. Twentieth-century records, from the period before the additions of the 1930s, consistently refer to the house as being stone, again suggesting that the logs had been stuccoed.

The main feature on the front elevation is the shed-roofed, two-story porch, extending across the full width of the stone addition. The porch is supported by stone foundation walls in front of the exposed cellar level. These walls form a ground-level space, which has been enclosed in this century with diagonal lattice and with a door formed of the same material. The second story of the porch is located at the house's first-floor level. The porch floor is tongue-and-groove board. Three, square posts support



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the wood framework of the porch's shed roof, which is secured to the stone wall through pockets in the stone.

The fenestration on this main, south facade is symmetrical, with two, replacement, 6/6 windows upstairs, and a 6/9 window and a door on the first floor. The first floor window is set in narrow wood framing, with a slightly wider sill joined with pegs. The front door does not date from the circa 1819 period but appears to be an early-twentieth-century replacement, with a four-light (2/2) top section, and a lower section with two vertical panels with chamfered edges.

On the west elevation, two, wood, 6/6 sash windows flank the chimney block. Their moulded trim is different from the front window, indicating that these windows date to a later period. There is another small, 3/3 window near the north end of this elevation, which lights the corner stair between the first and second floors. The trim matches the front window. A small, 2/2 opening, with similar trim, north of the center point of the gable end, lights the garret. Below the peak of the roof on this west side is a small, arched, brick tablet space for a date stone, but the date stone is gone.

On the east side of the first floor, a doorway leads to the log wing, which is two steps down from the stone addition. The door is the Cross-and-Bible type seen elsewhere in the stone section. There is also a doorway on the north elevation of the first floor of the stone wing, approximately centered on that wall. This may be an original exterior opening. It cuts through the stone walls, which measure about one-foot, ten-inches wide at this point. Since the 1930s, this doorway has led to the kitchen wing.

The interior foundation walls of the stone wing have been covered, like those of the log section, with an impervious concrete coating. This coating was also applied to the fireplace foundation support. A door on the west end of the south wall of the foundation leads from the cellar to the outside space below the front porch. The joists in the stone section are mill-sawn and measure about seven inches by two and three-quarter inches. They run in a north-south direction. Near the open string stair in the northwest corner leading to the first floor, an east-west structural beam supports the north wall of the dining room directly above, and the corresponding second-floor bedroom wall. There is whitewash on the rear space of this cellar in the stone section, between the east-west structural beam and the north wall.

The main, front door of the stone addition leads into a single room, the most formal space in the house. This wing was finished with a six- and one-half-inch baseboard, including the quarter-round moulding cap; a simple, moulded chair rail; and similar, simple moulding on the door and window surrounds. Slight variations in the moulding confirm that the two western windows date to a later period. The main feature in the room is the fireplace mantel. Two reeded pilasters, with bases, support a lintel with projecting center and end blocks. Above the lintel is a boldly-moulded mantel shelf, which echoes the projecting blocks of the lintel below by projecting in the center and at each end. The projecting center and end blocks, like the pilasters, are reeded, but with slightly finer and narrower lines. The proportions of the mantel are perfectly square, measuring five feet, one inch in height and width. A brick hearth extends one and one-half feet in front of this fireplace. The walls of the room are plastered. The floors date to the 1930s and are identical to the floors in the 1930s wing. The boards are random widths, ranging from four to eight inches.

The other main feature of this room is a corner stair. The stairs themselves were replaced about 1995 by the present owners in the exact position in the corner of the room. That position, however, appears to have been slightly altered from the original, a change which probably occurred during the other alterations to the house in the 1930s. The stairs are currently positioned so that the first few steps are in the main room, revealing their fabrication with square spindles and a high and narrow handrail. A straight string of steps leads to the landing halfway between the stories. The main baluster appears to have been replaced during the alteration. Its four-inch square form probably dates to the 1930s, as it is

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typical of that time period. Originally, the stairs were probably a fully-enclosed, winder stair, corresponding to the boxed stairs leading from the second floor to the attic.

Behind the corner staircase, in the north end of this wing, a room is partitioned off from the main dining room. The basement revealed a structural beam below this wall; therefore, this division of space seems to be the original plan. This small space is about five-feet deep and is separated from the main room by a replacement, swinging, Cross-and-Bible door. Within this area, an original Cross-and-Bible door leads to the basement stairs. A powder room was created about 1935 in the east side of this hall. The north wall is the end wall of the stone house. It contains the wide doorway referenced above, which originally would have led outside, but now leads into the rear (kitchen) wing.

On the second floor, the stairs lead to a small space, originally probably used as a bed chamber. Since the 1930s, this space has been a passageway to the bedroom on the north in the 1930s wing, and to the bedroom on the south above the dining room. There is a bathroom in the northeast section of the passageway, from which the bedroom on the second floor of the log wing can also be accessed. The door to the boxed stairs leading to the attic is located in this hallway space, above the first flight of steps.

The roof of the stone section is formed with pegged, mortise-and-tenoned rafters. The rafters are mill sawn and appear to date to the circa 1819 period. There is a slight birds-mouth where the rafters meet the one-inch board plate. The cornice in the front (south elevation) is boxed. On the west side, the cornice extends beyond the stone wall to line up with the exposed rafter ends of the kitchen wing. It was probably extended in the 1930s from what was probably a nearly flush position. The attic floor boards have been taken up and re-laid, as indicated by the empty holes in the boards made by cut nails.

For more than one-hundred years, the house remained a two-story, stone and log dwelling, with two main rooms downstairs and three bedrooms upstairs. An inventory taken in 1889 accounted for the following spaces: a cellar; a porch; a room where a clock, sewing machine, table, and stove were located, which, because of the order in which this room was inventoried, and the more valuable items kept in this space, must have been the parlor in the stone section; a space where the butter tub was located, presumably the small back room in the stone section; a north bedroom, which must be in the stone section; a front bedroom, also in the stone section; an upper garret (stone section); a lower garret (log section); a room with a table, settee and bed, stove, cupboard, carpet, rocking chair, cook stove, chairs, and a table, which must have been the furnishings in the main room in the log section, then used as a kitchen; and a room with a chest, bed, and bureau, undoubtedly the second floor of the log section.<sup>2</sup>

*Period III, 1934 and 1936, Colonial-Revival Style Wings*

The third period of construction occurred in the 1930s in two separate projects by two different owners. The first project was undertaken by James and Eleanor Pryor. The assessed value of the property increased in April of 1934 because of a new addition to the home and remodeling prior to the sale of the home in August of that year. In 1936, a new addition to the dwelling by the new owners, Samuel and Margaret Rogers, again caused the assessment to increase.

The first addition was likely that of the kitchen wing attached to the north elevation of the stone wing. The frame wing is two-stories high on a stone foundation, with a gable roof and exposed rafter ends. This wing extends behind the stone section about eighteen feet, and is about sixteen-feet wide, so

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<sup>2</sup>Inventory of Estate of John Parker, 15 June 1889, Probate Records, Delaware State Archives.

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that it ends approximately where the log section begins. Originally, there was a fireplace or stove in the kitchen wing, but it has been removed, although the brick exterior chimney remains. This rear wing is covered with wide weatherboard. Most windows are 6/6 wood sash. The windows in the pantry and room above it are 4/4 wood sash, and 2/2/2 windows flank the chimney at the attic level. The main door has a 2/2/2-light top section over two horizontal panels in the lower section. A feature of note on the interior is the approximately six-foot square pantry built into one corner of the room. There is a bedroom on the second-floor level.

The final addition to the house occurred in 1936, when a large three-bay, one-story room, approximately 28-feet long, was added next to the east end of the log section on a stone foundation. The width of this wing is the same as the width of the log section, about twenty feet. The previous owners of the house, the Larsons, referred to this room as the living room. A large, stone exterior fireplace is centered on the east end of this wing. The wide, weatherboard siding matches that on the kitchen wing and the log section. This addition is also gable roofed, but its gable is at a slightly lower level than the main house. Because of the sloping terrain, the full basement level of this addition is exposed on its south side. This ground-level space was designed and still functions as a three-car garage.

The three, symmetrically-spaced windows on the main, south elevation are 6/6 wood sash. The three sets of paired garage doors below the first floor windows swing outward on large, metal strap hinges. Each door has a six-light window in its top section, and cross-bracing in its bottom section in the form of an X superimposed on a beaded-board door. There is no fenestration on the east, fireplace end. On the east end of the north elevation, the addition includes another two-bay room with access to the exterior, making the total width of the east elevation almost twenty-seven feet. On the north elevation, there is only one window lighting the main room, because of the additional room, which has one door and one four-light window on its north elevation.

The main feature of the interior of this large, rectangular room is the stone fireplace and hearth. The large, square and rectangular fieldstone blocks, larger and more uniform in shape than the similar blocks in the fireplace in the log section, were laid in courses. The straight lintel features a large keystone. Flanking the fireplace opening near the floor and on the walls above the narrow, pine mantel shelf are pairs of bronze-colored vents. The vents themselves are a stylized sunburst pattern akin to Art Deco motifs of the 1930s and 1940s. The modernized style of these vents is in contrast to the finish in the rest of the room. Wide, knotty-pine paneling covers the walls in this room. (The tongue-and-groove paneling is wider than that in the log section, with a larger groove.) Built-in bookshelves flank the fireplace, with enclosed shelves in the lower section. The doors covering these shelves are attached with Colonial-Revival, H-L hinges. The same type of hinge is used on the two doors on the north wall of this room, which lead to the additional space on the north elevation, where a bar, bathroom, and exit to the north, rear yard are located. The random-width floor boards are identical to those in the stone section.

### *Barn Ruin*

Stone foundations of a barn are located in the middle of this parcel, between the house and the greenhouse. The foundations demarcate three main sections. The middle section measures about twenty-four feet by about fourteen feet. It has walls on three sides. The fourth side is open on the east at ground level. On the south side of the main section is a smaller area measuring about fourteen-feet wide by twelve feet, which is also open on its east side. On the north side of the main section is a shed-roofed porch, built in the later 1950s. The foundation walls are about the same thickness and height as the walls built in the 1930s. The foundation walls are about one- and one-half-feet thick and about four- and one-half-feet high. On the west side, the walls are slightly higher because they are banked into the hill.

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A frame barn is first documented in assessment records in the 1820s, a few years after the stone addition to the house was recorded. Subsequent assessment records refer to a barn on this parcel through the period of significance. In 1936, the assessment records note that the old barn had been remodeled. According to former owner Marie Larson, there had been three to four cattle stalls in the lower part of the barn. Samuel and Margaret Rogers built an addition for their riding horses. In the 1950s, the barn was struck by lightning and destroyed, except for its stone foundations. After the barn's destruction, in the later 1950s, the owners, (the Larsons), incorporated the barn ruin into the landscaping of the yard. The Larsons put in the stone steps for easier access from the middle of the yard down into the ruins, so that area could be used for picnics. The Larsons also built the shed-roofed addition onto the barn ruin at the time the greenhouse was constructed, in the late 1950s.

Although the barn was present during the periods of significance, it no longer possesses historic integrity as a barn. As a building no longer possessing original design or structural integrity, the barn ruin is classified as a site. Because no archaeological testing has been undertaken on this site, it is presently unknown whether the site is capable of yielding important information about the historic periods and contexts for which this property is significant. The incorporation of the barn walls into the landscaping as ruins occurred in the later 1950s. The barn walls as ruins may one day qualify as contributing elements to this property, in which case they would be classified as structures. Because their use as a landscaping element is less than fifty-years old, the barn ruins are currently a noncontributing structure.

### *Stone Wall*

The stone wall was constructed by Samuel Rogers after he purchased the home in 1934. The wall, built with the native fieldstone, is about one-foot, five-inches wide and is surmounted with a flat concrete cap. Its original mortar joints have been patched many times over the years. The wall's height ranges from about four-feet, four-inches to a level nearly flush with the ground.

Flanking the driveway, which begins just west of the house, two walls extend diagonally from Crossan Road to the ground-level, three-car garage in the wing also added by Rogers. The northern wall is about four- and one-half feet high and functions as an embankment. It extends to the porch. The southern wall is only about five-inches high and gradually rises to about eleven inches in front of the garages, where it turns to meet the east end wall of the house.

The wall also extends from the rear wing of the house to the middle of the rear yard, about one-hundred-fifty feet. As it passes the house on the west side, the wall comes within one-foot, three-inches from the northwest corner of the rear kitchen wing, because, according to former owner Marie Larson, there was an old sycamore tree that Mr. Rogers did not want to disturb. (The tree had come down by the time the Larsons purchased the property in 1945.) Because the land slopes downward toward the east, the wall also forms an embankment. The wall begins again at the west side of the property, where it forms an embankment as it extends in an approximately north-south direction toward Crossan Road. The wall is a contributing structure.

### *Terrace*

Shortly after purchasing the house, about 1947, Mrs. Marie Larson, with advice from longtime friend, the local landscape architect William Frederick, devised a terrace for the north side of the house. The terrace was planned to fill the space formed by the projecting kitchen wing and the wing north of the

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family room. The terrace is round, as suggested by Mr. Frederick. Its stones were not set in concrete, another of Mr. Frederick's recommendations. The terrace is a contributing site.

*Greenhouse*

The concrete-block, gable-roofed house with attached greenhouse was constructed in the later 1950s at the rear of the parcel, after the period of significance for this property. Its windows are 6/6 wood sash with brick sills. Attached to the south gable end of the masonry house is a gable-roofed, glass greenhouse with a metal framework. It is a noncontributing building.

**SUMMARY OF RESOURCES:**

- 1 contributing building (house)
- 1 contributing structure (stone wall)
- 1 contributing site (terrace)
- 1 noncontributing structure (barn ruin)
- 1 noncontributing building (greenhouse)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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**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:** Architecture  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Periods of Significance:** 1783-1798  
1816-1822  
1934  
1936  
ca. 1947

**Significant Dates:** ca. 1790  
ca. 1819  
1934  
1936  
ca. 1947

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

**Cultural Affiliation:** N/A

**Architect/Builder:** William Frederick, Landscape Architect

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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*Statement of Significance*

The Robert Graham House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C and the Area of Significance of Architecture. The architecture of the Graham House is a product of three building periods, beginning with the tradition of building impermanent log buildings in this area in the eighteenth century; followed by the rebuilding that occurred in this region in the first few decades of the nineteenth century using more permanent materials, notably local fieldstone; and ending, after more than a hundred years of no building activity, with Colonial-Revival additions in the 1930s.

*Period I, Circa 1790, A Log House*

The log section of the Graham House was originally a tenant house owned by the Thompson family. The Thompson Tenant House is significant as a rare-surviving example of the common building form in this region in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Thompson Tenant House retains sufficient physical integrity to convey architectural significance for its log construction. The walls are built with horizontally-laid logs, with the bark still attached, chinked with wood scraps and mortar. The corner joints are V-notched. The original plan was a one-room dwelling with a loft, and with a lean-to or open porch on its east side. The roof was raised to create a full two stories in the early nineteenth century, probably at the time of the stone addition about 1819. The house is two-bays wide and about twenty-foot square. Its fenestration is not perfectly symmetrical. The surviving openings appear to be in their original locations, with two-windows on each level of the north and south elevations, except the first floor north elevation, where there are a door and window. The stone fireplace appears to be original, with an opening about eight-feet wide and about five-feet tall. The only visible hewn log is the timber lintel over the fireplace, a massive, eleven-foot, seven-inches long, one-foot, one-inch high, and about one-foot deep. The hearth appears to have been reworked in the twentieth century. There is evidence of whitewashing on the interior walls of the first floor.

Comparisons with two other known log dwellings in the region indicate that the Thompson Tenant House is in keeping with the general form of log dwellings from this period. For example, the log section of Merestone in Mill Creek Hundred (N-289, NR Listed 1995), built sometime between 1720-1734, is slightly wider than the Thompson Tenant House, being twenty-four-feet wide, but is the same twenty-foot depth. Merestone's log section was originally three-bays wide with a center entrance and another door directly opposite the main entrance. Like the Thompson Tenant House, the wide floor boards rest on exposed timber joists, although the joists in the Merestone House are square hewn. The log room in the Merestone House is dominated by the parged stone hearth, which has a wide, seven-foot opening. The Merestone House also has a large timber lintel, measuring nine-feet long and ten-inches square.

The Charles Springer Tavern on Lancaster Pike in Christiana Hundred also contains a log section (N-507, NR Listed 1992). The original log section, measuring sixteen by eighteen feet, is dated circa 1750. (The floor, walls, and roof were later raised to match those of the stone wing, dated 1780.) The dimensions of the log section make it slightly smaller than the twenty-foot square Thompson Tenant House, and even smaller than twenty by twenty-four foot Merestone. The sills of the original two-bay, single-room house appear to have rested directly on the ground, unlike both Merestone and the Thompson houses, which were built on high stone foundations. Like the Thompson Tenant House, the log joists were not hewn and some joists still retain their bark. The National Register documentation for the Charles Springer Tavern indicates that there were originally three doors leading into the log section, one on each wall except for the wall containing the fireplace. The fireplace has been walled in, so its details cannot be compared.

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The log section represents another dimension of the history of some of the earliest settlers in this region. In 1699, William Penn set aside a 30,000-acre tract of land straddling Chester County, Pennsylvania and New Castle County, Delaware. The tract was intended for his two younger children, William and Letitia. He divided the manor approximately in half in 1701, giving 15,500 acres to Letitia and the balance of 14,500 acres to William.<sup>1</sup> In 1714, William Penn of London, the son, through his Philadelphia attorneys, sold two-hundred-fifty acres out of the larger tract of 14,500 acres to Daniel Worsley, a yeoman then residing in Chester County (Deed Record L1/209). About 1725 Daniel Worsley and his wife, Sarah, built a hall-parlor plan, brick house, which is today known as Penn Manor (N-306, DOE 1981). (The original brick section is referred to in the National Register nomination as one of the earliest dated brick dwellings in New Castle County.) In 1728, Daniel Worsley of Mill Creek Hundred gave to his daughter Sarah, "All this plantation where I now dwell containing two-hundred-fifty acres" (Referenced in Deed Record E2/333). By 1750, Sarah Worsley, daughter of Daniel and Sarah, had married James Thompson and had inherited the plantation. The tract was then known as Thompson's lands.

Like many of the settlers in this region, the Thompsons were Quakers of English descent. In 1838, a descendent of this family, James Thompson, helped to establish the Mill Creek Meeting (N-290, NR Listed 1973). Several of the neighboring families referenced in the deeds to the Thompson lands were also Quakers, such as the Mitchells, Eastburns, and Hadleys. John Hadley was the brother-in-law of James Thompson (Will Record L/324).

In 1750, James Thompson (Sarah Worsley's husband), purchased the adjacent tract to the south of his two-hundred fifty acres (Deed Record Q1/325). The tract contained one-hundred acres with no buildings on it at the time of purchase. The log house would eventually be built on the hundred-acre tract. After acquiring these additional lands, James Thompson possessed three-hundred fifty-acres.

In his will of 1779, probated in 1783, James Thompson gave his two-hundred fifty-acre plantation and dwelling to both his son, Daniel, and his daughter, Grace Pennock (Will Record L/324). Daniel was also given the one-hundred-acre tract of land, originally purchased in 1750. The Will made no mention of buildings being located on the hundred-acre tract. Grace Pennock and her husband, Moses, sold their share of the Thompson homestead to Daniel in 1783 (Deed Record E2/333). Daniel then owned the three-hundred-fifty acres that had belonged to his father.

In 1798, Daniel Thompson was assessed for three-hundred-fifty acres. Two-hundred-fifty acres were improved and contained a stone dwelling, two frame barns, three log tenements, one log kitchen, and a brick secondary dwelling.<sup>2</sup> Based on construction methods and documentary records, it is likely that the log dwelling under consideration here was one of the log tenements owned by Daniel Thompson in 1798, built sometime after he inherited the property in 1783.

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<sup>1</sup>Clinton Alfred Weslager, *The Garrett Snuff Fortune* (Wilmington, DE: Knebels Press, 1965), 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>The assessment data for 1798 is from an unpublished computer analysis by Hubert F. Jicha III and Rebecca Sheppard Siders, "Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware Tax Assessment Analysis for 1798, 1804, and 1816," University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, 1985.



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By 1798, the average farm in Mill Creek Hundred was 126 acres.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, Daniel Thompson owned 350 acres. At this time, in 1798, only about thirty-one percent of the population owned more than one-hundred-thirteen acres.<sup>4</sup> Eighty percent of the landowners in Mill Creek Hundred owned fewer than 235 acres, and eighty-one percent owned fewer than 150 improved acres.<sup>5</sup> The log dwellings on Thompson's property were highly typical in their day. In 1798, about fifty-eight percent of the known dwellings in Mill Creek Hundred were log.<sup>6</sup>

The family homestead, Penn Manor, is located about half a mile north of the log house. By the late eighteenth century, the Penn Manor House had been added to several times, notably with a three-bay brick addition on its west side in 1780, and a two-bay fieldstone addition on its east side in 1799. When Daniel Thompson was assessed in 1804, he owned a log house, log barn, brick tenement, and frame barn. At the time of the nomination of Penn Manor to the National Register, it was thought that none of the buildings cited in the 1804 assessment, other than the brick homestead, survived. The survival of this log house was not known because of its location, about half a mile away, and because its log walls are hidden from view.

When Daniel Thompson died and his property was inventoried in 1809, he had been in possession of a large estate, the total value of which was \$8,142.63 1/2. His farm included a number of farm animals, including horses, sheep, swine, many cows, and a bull, indicating the growing preference of farmers in the region in the early nineteenth century toward dairying. In addition to his farm-related goods, Daniel possessed other items indicating a level of wealth above average, including an eight-day clock (valued at \$45.00), and a silver watch. He also owned a number of bound books, one of which, *Penn's Select Works*, was inventoried by name. In his will (Q1/353), Daniel Thompson gave his limestone quarry to his sons Daniel and Joshua.

In addition to his possessions, the inventory of Daniel Thompson accounted for rents due to him by four individuals, Martha Miller, Andrew Mondue, George Butler, and Joshua Brown. One of these individuals must have resided in the log house. When the census of Mill Creek Hundred was taken in 1810, three of the four individuals who had rented from Daniel Thompson were counted. The order followed by the census taker indicates that these three individuals were living in the vicinity of the Thompson homestead. Martha Miller was counted in the 1810 census in about the same order in the census records as the next owner of the Thompson Tenant House would be counted in the 1830 census. That owner was Robert Graham. In 1810, Martha Miller was counted right after the entry for James Thompson, and four entries away from Daniel Thompson. In 1830, Robert Graham was counted right after James Thompson and three entries before Daniel Thompson. Perhaps it was Martha Miller who was living in the Thompson Tenant House before it was sold to the Grahams.

In addition to many other possessions, including a large farming operation and a limestone quarry, a log building was owned for its rent profits, possibly as a tenant home for farm labor. A log dwelling, like a barn, was in this case one of the accoutrements of the wealthier landholder in this area. By

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<sup>3</sup>Hubert F. Jicha III and Valerie Cesna, "Agricultural Buildings and Complexes in Mill Creek Hundred, 1800-1840," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1986, Section 8, Page 1.

<sup>4</sup>Jicha and Siders.

<sup>5</sup>Jicha and Cesna, Section 7, Page 23.

<sup>6</sup>Jicha and Siders.

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contrast, the next owner would possess only the log house and a relatively small parcel of about 24 acres, as the house passed from the established Quaker Thompson family to a man of the manufacturing class, Robert Graham.

*Period II, Circa 1819, A Stone Wing*

Daniel Thompson gave his son Joshua the hundred-acre tract of land purchased by James Thompson in 1750 (Will Record Q1/353). Joshua Thompson lived in Chester County, and presumably possessed the one-hundred acres of land for its value and rents until he sold about twenty-four acres of the tract to Robert Graham in 1814 (Deed Record T3/436).

According to the census data, in 1816 Robert Graham not only owned a small farm compared with the majority of his neighbors, but he was also living in a house that was rather rapidly becoming an outmoded means of shelter. As noted above, log had been the preferred construction material in Mill Creek Hundred in the late eighteenth century. However, by the 1804 assessment, there was a slight decrease in the number of log dwellings, which accounted for about fifty-four percent of the dwellings.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, "stone buildings had increased by half and the number of stone barns had doubled."<sup>8</sup> About twenty-six percent of the dwellings were stone in 1804.<sup>9</sup>

Not only had the population in Mill Creek Hundred significantly increased by the time of the 1816-17 assessment, but the number of log dwellings had decreased by a third, while the number of stone dwellings had doubled.<sup>10</sup> According to the census records, the population in Mill Creek Hundred was 2,194 in 1800, 2,313 in 1810, 3,049 in 1820, 4,644 in 1830, and 3,145 in 1840.<sup>11</sup> In 1816, only twenty-nine percent of the known dwellings were log, while about thirty-eight percent were stone.<sup>12</sup> With his approximately twenty-four acres in 1816, Robert Graham was in the company of about twenty percent of the population in Mill Creek Hundred.<sup>13</sup> In 1816, the average farm size in Mill Creek Hundred was eighty-six acres.<sup>14</sup>

Little more is presently known about Robert Graham than what is provided by contemporary statistics. Perhaps he is the Robert Graham referenced in the will of Ann Graham, who died in Mill Creek Hundred in the early nineteenth century and whose estate was settled in 1805. She left five shillings to her son, Robert. His employment in manufacturing is recorded in the census of 1820. Of the 885 people employed in 1820 in Mill Creek Hundred, those engaged in agriculture accounted for sixty-four percent, those engaged in commerce accounted for less than one percent, and those, like Robert

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Jicha and Cesna, Section 8, Page 1.

<sup>9</sup>Jicha and Siders.

<sup>10</sup>Jicha and Cesna, Section 8, Page 1.

<sup>11</sup>New Castle County Census Records, Mill Creek Hundred.

<sup>12</sup>Jicha and Siders.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Jicha and Cesna, Section 7, Page 23.

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Graham, engaged in manufacturing accounted for thirty-five percent.<sup>15</sup> The manufacturing establishments were documented in the 1823 census; however, there is no breakdown of the names of those employed. In New Castle County, manufacturing establishments included four producing cloth; four producing cotton yarn; eight flour mills; seven gunpowder mills; two barley mills; leather mills of an unspecified number; three paper mills; and a rolled- and slit-iron mill, not in operation.<sup>16</sup>

In 1820, there were eleven persons in Graham's household, including two adults whose ages ranged from twenty-six to forty-five, seven children under the age of sixteen, one male sixteen to eighteen years of age, and one male eighteen to twenty-six years of age. In the census of 1830, there were nine people counted in Robert Graham's household. These nine included one male and one female, ages fifty to sixty, six children, ranging in age from five to twenty, and one female adult age twenty to thirty. When Graham sold the property in 1837, the deed recorded the name of his wife as Catherine (Deed Record Y4/72).

Subsequent references to a Robert Graham in deeds cite his profession as that of a shoemaker, although this may have been a different Graham. These references were to land owned by a Robert Graham on the Old Meeting House Hill in Mill Creek Hundred. One parcel was purchased in 1835 (Deed Record V4/226) and sold in 1838, at which time his wife's name was cited as Matilda (Deed Record C5/441), and the other parcel, about three- and one-half acres, was purchased by Robert Graham and Matilda in 1838 (Deed Record G5/382). In 1838, the assessment records contain a reference to Robert Graham of Mill Creek Hundred, a cordwainer (shoemaker), who owned three acres.

Assessment records help to target the date for the stone addition to Graham's house. About two years after purchasing the property, in 1816, Robert Graham was assessed for twenty-three acres, a log house valued at \$115, livestock (horses) valued at \$22.90, and personal tax, for a total value of \$271.90. The 1816-17 assessment was higher, and included twenty-three acres, a log dwelling, and some livestock, for a total assessed value of \$787.<sup>17</sup> The eleven people in Graham's household in 1820 suggest that the stone wing had been built by that date. In 1822, the stone addition was mentioned in assessment records for the first time. The assessment records for that year note that Graham owned a stone house valued at \$173. Some log houses had a higher value than this stone one in 1822. By 1828, Graham's assessment included a frame barn. Not surprisingly, the value of his livestock also increased, from \$26 in 1822 to \$136 in 1828. The type of livestock he owned was not specified. In 1828 and in 1832, Graham was assessed at \$1226. In 1834, his total assessed value had dropped to \$1090. In 1837, the year he sold the property, his assessment was \$1137, and included a stone house and frame barn.

The rebuilding phenomenon documented to have occurred in this area between 1800 and 1840 in the historic context, "Agricultural Buildings and Complexes in Mill Creek Hundred," was tied to the general rising prosperity in this region, specifically as it was connected to changing agricultural trends. Agricultural reforms of the period resulted in more efficient and profitable farming practices, with dairying as the most popular type.<sup>18</sup> The context focused on barns in the region, "since barns were the

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<sup>15</sup>New Castle County Census Records, Mill Creek Hundred, 1820.

<sup>16</sup>*Digest of Accounts of Manufacturing Establishments in the United States, and of their Manufactures* (Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1823).

<sup>17</sup>This increase may be attributed to the general rise in property values in this area during this period, as explained by Jicha and Cesna, Section 8, Page 2.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

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primary indicators of economic and social change in this agricultural society."<sup>19</sup> This period has been described as one of "major rebuilding . . . resulting in the transformation of the architectural landscape."<sup>20</sup> A change in material, method of construction, and style have been noted as occurring during this period between 1800 and 1840.

Development of local industries was also cited as a factor leading to the widespread rebuilding. Indeed, at the same time as the agricultural reforms, the power of the water in the numerous streams of this hundred was being exploited by milling activities, hence the name, Mill Creek Hundred. Although farming was still dominant, milling and other manufacturing activities were an important aspect of the history of this region. In 1820 in Mill Creek Hundred, as noted above, those engaged in agriculture accounted for sixty-four percent of those employed, while those engaged in manufacturing accounted for thirty-five percent.<sup>21</sup> Toward the end of the nineteenth century in the Piedmont region, industrial activities had become more important to the economy than farming.<sup>22</sup>

In the case of the stone addition built by Robert Graham, the resulting change in material, method of construction, and style paralleled the changes occurring in Mill Creek Hundred. The changes were effected by a manufacturer emulating, on a modest scale, the architectural changes occurring in the primarily agricultural landscape. The stone wing was a modest step toward keeping up with the times. Robert Graham also built a frame barn shortly after adding onto his house. Only later in the nineteenth century, during a period unrelated to the architecture that remains today, were the house and barn owned by a farmer.

Instead of the symmetrical three-bay, center-hall plan popular in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, seen nearby at the stone William Morgan House, constructed about 1813 (N-326, NR Listed 1986), the stone wing built by Graham was a modest two-bay, one-room addition. Graham made no attempt to transform the house into one of the more fashionable house plans of the period. There were other stone houses built in this period and region on a similar modest scale. The A. Armstrong House (N-10,909, NR Listed 1986, Demolished ca.1990), may have been the most similar architecturally to the Graham House. The Armstrong House consisted of a three-bay, log house, built about 1800, with a two-story, two-bay stone addition dating to the 1830s. (There was also a frame barn of circa 1830 associated with the Armstrong House.) The log walls were stuccoed and covered with siding, and little is known about its construction, making it impossible to compare details of its structure with the Graham House.

Interior finishes of the Graham House are in keeping with the architectural trends of the period and the modest scale of this stone addition. Although the plan is not the formal, center-hall or hall-parlor type, the one-room addition possesses elements of a well-appointed Federal parlor. The most elaborate feature of this room is the mantel. The mantel is ornate, with its reeded projecting center and end blocks and reeded pilasters. Yet, the mantel is not as richly ornamented as other front parlor mantels of the period. For example, in the nearby William Morgan House, built circa 1813, one of the mantels was elaborately ornamented with paired pilasters and urns. The staircase in the Graham House, originally

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Section 7.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Section 8, Page 2.

<sup>21</sup>New Castle County Census Records, Mill Creek Hundred, 1820.

<sup>22</sup>Bernard L. Herman, Rebecca J. Siders, et al., *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary* (Newark: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1989), 12.

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probably a winder stair, further expresses the modest scope of this addition. Although the room is only two-bays wide, its depth accommodates two windows, (added at a later period), giving the impression of a double-pile house. Wide baseboard and a chair rail complete the finish in this room.

Although a modest two-bays, the height and depth of the stone wing, its placement close to the front property line, and angle, with both its west side and south front close to the road, made it upon its completion a strong visual statement of the shift from impermanent to permanent materials.

In the later nineteenth century, when houses in this area were experiencing another period of remodeling, often in the Gothic Revival or Queen Anne styles, this house was not changed. This is because of several factors. After Graham sold the house in 1837 until about 1850, the deed records suggest that the house was used again as a tenant house (Deed Records Y4/72, I5/360, K5/472, and L5/82). John Parker, the house's owner in 1849 (Deed Record A6/303), was a farmer who may not have been affluent enough to afford a remodeling, as the inventory of his estate, assessment records, and agricultural census data suggest a modest existence. (For example, in 1857 his total assessment was \$1165, with his livestock valued only at \$145; and, in 1861, the value of his livestock had dropped to \$131, with a total assessment of \$1371.)

Not surprisingly, no construction occurred while his estate was being settled in the late 1880s. According to the Will of John Parker, his estate went to Jacob and Margaret Hanna, but was quickly sold back to John's son, Samuel, in 1888 (Deed Record N14/478). Samuel Parker owned this house until his death in 1912, when the estate went to his siblings, because he had not left a will and was unmarried. In 1913, Samuel Parker's assessment for the stone house and frame barn was \$1600, not significantly different from the value of the property in the 1860s. Through the nineteenth century, despite its stone addition, this was a modest house, not a wealthy homestead.

*Period III, 1934 and 1936, Colonial-Revival Style Wings*

The records indicate that the old Graham House survived relatively unchanged until the 1930s, when it was twice modernized. In 1914, the house was sold to Clara Crossan (Deed Record X24/295). In 1922, her property was assessed for a stone dwelling and barn at a value of \$2200. In 1932, Clara Crossan, a widow, as noted in the deed of that year, sold the house to James Lee Pryor and his wife, Eleanor (Deed Record C38/50). At the time of purchase, the Pryors lived in Wilmington. When the Pryors sold the property, they were still residing in Wilmington, indicating that the property was owned for investment purposes only. In 1934, the assessment for their property was revised on April 9 to account for a new addition to the home and remodeling. The previous assessment of \$1000 for the stone house and barn was changed to \$2000, with a total assessment for the property of \$3000. The Pryors owned the property for only two years, selling it to Samuel and Margaret Rogers in 1934 (Deed Record D39/577).

In 1934, the Rogers' property, including the stone dwelling and barn, was valued at \$3000, and in 1935 at \$3050, because the Rogers now had a horse. In 1936, the previous value of \$2000 for the buildings had been crossed out and replaced by \$4000. A note explained that a new addition had been added to the dwelling, raising its assessed value \$1000, and the old barn had been remodeled. The barn was assessed at \$1000, and a note explained that there had been no prior assessment on the old barn. According to Marie Larson, who with her husband purchased the property from the Rogers, the barn was remodelled to better accommodate the riding horses owned by the Rogers. There had been three to four cattle stalls in the lower part. The Rogers built an addition for their riding horses. Mr. Rogers, who was an actuary for an insurance company, also had engineering training, according to Marie Larson. He built the stone walls that encircle the property. In 1940, the value of the Rogers property again increased, because they had built a "frame bungalow" on their land. This house is now located at 741 Crossan Road

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on a dis-contiguous, one-acre parcel ( Parcel 08-023.00-021). Mrs. Larson recalls that the house was tenanted by an African-American couple, who farmed the twenty-four acres for the Rogers. With the construction of this house, the property came full circle from its own beginnings as a tenant house. Mrs. Larson also remembered that the Rogers had chicken houses on their farm. The Rogers owned the property until 1945.

By the mid-1930s, the housing market was experiencing a recovery from the effects of the Depression.<sup>23</sup> There was a strong remodeling trend in the industry. According to a study called "House Modernization," "approximately 14-1/2-millions dollars were spent on architect-planned house modernization in thirty-seven eastern states during 1939."<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, "between 1920 and 1929, dwellings wrecked or otherwise withdrawn for use equaled not more than 10% of the new units built."<sup>25</sup> To drive home the point, it was noted that even in the peak year of building activity, 1925, "new dwellings totaled only approximately 5% of the existing supply."<sup>26</sup> These statistics make apparent the extent of the remodeling market. Remodelling occurred for many reasons, not the least of which was to obtain an increased return on an investment. Considerations included "neighborhood trends, physical deterioration, and obsolescence of style, plan, equipment, and decoration, in order to evolve a financially justifiable scheme."<sup>27</sup>

The neighborhood trends in this section of New Castle County were favorable to house modernization. Well into the twentieth century, this section of Delaware remained sparsely settled. In 1880 and still in 1950, only four percent of the county's population lived in Mill Creek Hundred. The rural character is illustrated by the nonexistence of Crossan Road on nineteenth-century maps. On a USGS map surveyed in 1901, a road in the location of present-day Crossan Road finally appears, but as a dashed line to indicate a farm lane. The designation of this road as Crossan Road, named for the Crossans who lived in this area, indicates its relatively late date. (Not far east of this house, on the north side of Crossan Road, is another home referred to as the Mitchell-Crossan House in survey records, N-323, which is supposed to have been the home of Dr. Margaret Irvine Handy, the first woman pediatrician in Wilmington.)

Beginning in the early twentieth century, the eastern section of this hundred experienced the middle-class subdivision development process then gaining steam in the hundreds encircling the City of Wilmington, as it was occurring elsewhere in the United States. At the same time, the upper class was retreating to the country, as well, establishing country estates. Although the trend occurred up and down the East Coast, in Delaware it is primarily known to have occurred in the northern region of Christiana Hundred, but also was practiced in this still very rural region of northwest Mill Creek Hundred.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>"Residential Construction a New Factor in the 1935 Recovery Trend," *Architectural Record* 78 (September 1935): 147.

<sup>24</sup>"Building Types: House Modernization," *Architectural Record* 87 (May 1940): 89.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>"Country House Movement," in *Delaware Route 48 (Lancaster Pike), New Castle County, Delaware, Documentation of Adverse Effect and Memorandum of Agreement*, Prepared by KFS Historic Preservation Group (Dover, DE: Delaware Department of Transportation, 1993), Appendix A, 17-19.

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The national trend to remodel older homes coincided with an interest in the Colonial and Early American periods. Fiske Kimball and others published books and wrote hundreds of periodical articles on early American architecture. In 1933, Charles Peterson proposed the establishment of an Historic American Buildings Survey to measure and record old buildings. Architectural periodicals followed the restoration of Williamsburg with great interest.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the periodicals were reporting on aspects of the home modernization trend, with drawings of garages and advertisements for kitchen cabinets.

Locally, the dual interests are illustrated in a book by George Fletcher Bennett, *Early Architecture of Delaware*, published in 1932. This book is a testament to the local interest of the time in the Colonial and Federal periods. Part I contains photographs of period details. Part II includes measured drawings and profiles. Primarily a photographic catalog, the book preserves and celebrates the distinctive architectural details favored in Delaware, for the purposes of imitation and reproduction by the architects of the day. As stated in Bennett's text, "since 'details make the job' it is quite possible for the student of early work to find many valuable suggestions and practical ideas."<sup>30</sup> To illustrate the point, the reader is referred to an illustration where Bennett went beyond the recordation of architectural details. He included a "Conjectural Restoration Showing the Possibilities of Adapting Details of the Pre-Revolutionary Period to Meet Present Day Needs and Taste."<sup>31</sup> Bennett chose a house form based on the Wilson and Corbit Houses in Odessa, with a rear wing, to which was attached a one-story, gambrel-roof, brick addition, laid in Flemish bond, to function as a garage.<sup>32</sup> Merestone is an example of this dual phenomenon, where an older home was remodeled in the Colonial-Revival mode by an architect who specialized in precisely that type of project, Richardson Brognard Okie.

Like many of the houses in this region, the Graham House survived without severe physical deterioration because of the permanent materials used to construct its foundation and circa 1819 wing. Assessment records suggest that the log section must have been stuccoed shortly after the stone addition was constructed, resulting in its survival, as well. In addition to the physical survival of the Graham House, its modest style and decoration were authentic examples of the period celebrated in Bennett's book. But, the house's modest size, a two-room, first floor plan, with three bedrooms upstairs, did not provide enough space for a modernization; therefore, additions were added onto the older core. For this reason, the integrity of the original house was maintained, while adding three characteristic spaces of the modernization period: a kitchen, a large living room, and a garage.

The Colonial-Revival style is evident on the exterior not only in the symmetry of the design but also in the materials, including wide weatherboard siding, multi-paned windows, board-and-batten shutters, a large, exterior fireplace, and the design of the garage doors, with an X superimposed on the beaded-board doors, which are hung with large, Colonial-Revival style, metal strap hinges. On the interior, features popular in this period include knotty-pine paneling, the rustic stone fireplace, the built-in bookshelves, and the Colonial-styled hardware. One of the planning recommendations offered in the

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<sup>29</sup>For example, see "The Restoration at Williamsburg," *Pencil Points* 17 (May 1936): 224-46. An entire issue of *Architectural Record* was devoted to the subject. "Restoration of Williamsburg," *Architectural Record* 78 (December 1935).

<sup>30</sup>George Fletcher Bennett, *Early Architecture of Delaware*, Introduction and text by Joseph L. Copeland (Wilmington: Historical Press, Inc, 1932), 47.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

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article on house modernization, and practiced here, was to attach the garage to the house to minimize the length of the driveway and create a sheltered access for the car.<sup>33</sup>

Thomas Tallmadge concluded his *Story of Architecture in America* with a section on the restoration of Williamsburg, noting that "without especial intent we are ending our story almost exactly where we began it, at the beginning of our architecture--our own endeared Colonial."<sup>34</sup> Similar circumstances caused the final addition to the Graham House to be built after the style of its original period.

In 1945, the Rogers sold the twenty-four acre tract to Louis and Marie Larson (Deed Record K45/101). Shortly after purchasing the home, Mrs. Larson, an avid horticulturist, with advice from longtime friend, local landscape architect William Frederick, had the terrace built in the space formed by the projecting wings in the backyard. Mr. Frederick suggested the round shape for the terrace and that the stones not be set in concrete.

Throughout the Larson's period of ownership, Mrs. Larson landscaped the yard with many perennials, trees, and shrubs. About the time the terrace was built, she was taking a three-year course in horticulture at the Barnes Foundation in the suburbs of Philadelphia. She went on several trips to Europe organized by the Barnes Foundation. Though she recalls the garden as a constantly changing work-in-progress, she remembers especially the removal of the walnut tree from the middle of the back yard, in front of the barn, to allow more light to reach this space and to create an opening in the midst of the plantings. She also recalls particular plantings, such as the evergreens, not native to the area, as well as many crab apples. Other plantings included boxwood near the house and yews. The lower branches of the yews were removed once the plants had matured.

During a violent August storm in the mid-1950s, the barn was struck by lightning and destroyed. After the barn burned, and after the period of significance, the greenhouse was built in the rear yard. Inside the barn ruins, a rose garden and lilies were planted. The Larsons also built the shed-roofed addition onto the barn ruins at the time the greenhouse was constructed.

In 1979, the Larsons subdivided their land, retaining 1.89 acres around their home (Deed Record T105/124 and Minor Subdivision Plan Microfilm Number 5016). The Larsons sold the Graham House on the 1.89 acre parcel in 1984 to Howard Simmons III and his wife, Constance (Deed Record Z125/320). The present owners, George Namey and his wife, Donna Woodworth Namey, purchased the home from the Simmons in 1993 (Deed Record 1560/0118).

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<sup>33</sup>"Building Types: House Modernization," 95.

<sup>34</sup>Thomas E. Tallmadge, *The Story of Architecture in America*, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1936).



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*Comprehensive Planning*

GRAHAM HOUSE (CRS # N-292)

**Geographic Zone:** Piedmont

**Time Period:** 1770-1830 +/-

**Theme:** Architecture, Engineering, and Decorative Arts

In reference to the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, this nomination for the Robert Graham House expands the available information on the architecture historic context in the Piedmont Zone during the 1770-1830 +/- time period. The property contributes information on the most common housing type in this period and region, the one-and-a-half story, impermanent log dwelling. The stone addition to the house of about 1819 reveals information on how a log building was incorporated into the more permanent, stone construction projects occurring in this region from about 1800 to 1840.

**Time Period:** 1880-1940 +/-

**Theme:** Architecture, Engineering, and Decorative Arts

In reference to the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, this nomination for the Robert Graham House expands the available information on the architecture historic context in the Piedmont Zone during the 1880-1940 +/- time period. The property contributes information on the trend in this period of establishing country estates. Although on a smaller scale, the additions of the large room for family living and the three-car garage, the construction of the bungalow on the estate, and the renovations to the barn, are part of the changes in the landscape that were occurring primarily in Christiana Hundred. This nomination expands the available information on the popular choice in this region of the Colonial-Revival style for such country estates. Furthermore, this property provides information on the practice of remodeling an older home.

**Theme:** Settlement Patterns and Demographic Change

In reference to the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, this nomination for the Robert Graham House expands the available information on the settlement patterns historic context in the Piedmont Zone during the 1880-1940 +/- time period. This property contributes information on the practice in Mill Creek Hundred of purchasing large tracts of land and establishing country estates, a practice best known in the Christiana Hundred area.

**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 : New Castle County Department of Planning

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 1.89 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	437230	4400960	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 Susan Brizzolara/Assistant Historic Preservation Planner

organization New Castle County Department of Planning date June 19, 1996

street & number 2701 Capitol Trail telephone (302) 366-7780

city or town Newark state DE zip code 19711

**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.)

**Robert Graham House:**

name George A. Namey and Donna L. Woodworth Namey

street & number 751 Crossan Road telephone (302) 239-3772

city or town Newark state DE zip code 19711

**Crossan Road Right-of-Way:**

name Anne Canby, Secretary of Transportation, Delaware Department of Transportation

street & number P.O. Box 778 telephone (302) 652-5600

city or town Dover state DE zip code 19903

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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*Geographical Data*

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated boundary for the Robert Graham House is the boundary line around the legal parcel on which the house is located, except on Crossan Road, where the boundary lies outside the existing right-of-way for that road, following the present curb line for the most part. The nominated boundary is outlined in a bold, black line on the accompanying map, "New Castle County Property Tax Map, Revised 4/19/1991." The outlined area, parcel 08-023.00-005, contains 1.89 acres. The nominated boundary is shown in greater detail on the accompanying map, "Record Minor Subdivision Plan of Property of Louis L. Larson and Marie H. Larson, his Wife, Recorded 1/4/1979, Microfilm 5016." The nominated boundary seen on this map lies approximately 35 feet outside the existing right-of-way along Crossan Road.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundaries of the legal parcel were chosen as the nominated boundary because these lines contain the contributing resources (the house, the terrace, and the stone walls). The right-of-way is included in the boundary in part because it contains one of the landscape features described as a contributing resource in this nomination. Specifically, the right-of-way line runs through the stone walls, as seen on "Record Minor Subdivision Plan of Property of Louis L. Larson and Marie H. Larson, his Wife, Recorded 1/4/1979, Microfilm 5016." Presently, the curbline is 13 feet, 7 inches from the western wall defining the driveway, lies directly on the curving eastern wall of the driveway, and is 18 feet from the easternmost stone wall. The right-of-way is also included in the boundary because it contributes to the historic setting. Because the house pre-dates the creation of the County Subdivision and Zoning Code, this house is located closer to the road than current building setback rules permit, as seen on "Record Minor Subdivision Plan of Property of Louis L. Larson and Marie H. Larson, his Wife, Recorded 1/4/1979, Microfilm 5016." The right-of-way line lies approximately 18 feet, 9 inches from the west corner of the front porch. Although the house has historically been close to road, both the setting and the stone walls would be jeopardized if the boundary were drawn on the right-of-way line. In order to protect the historic resources, the nominated boundary line is drawn outside of the existing right-of-way line, as indicated above, and not on the right-of-way line.



