

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 16 1979
DATE ENTERED	9

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Mt. Cuba Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *SR 261 and LB 82*
Along Rt. 261 between Pyles Ford Road
and Hillside Mill Road

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Mt. Cuba

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
One

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Delaware

CODE
10

COUNTY
New Castle

CODE
002

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <i>Abandoned Mill</i>

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Ownership

Complex

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City-County Building

STREET & NUMBER

8th and French Streets

CITY, TOWN

Wilmington

STATE

Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs, Cultural Resources Survey N-

DATE

1978

5001

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Hall of Records

CITY, TOWN

Dover

STATE

Delaware

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

—EXCELLENT
 GOOD
—FAIR

—DETERIORATED
 RUINS
—UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
—MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mt. Cuba Historic District is an area in Christiana Hundred in New Castle County, Delaware consisting of seven properties that lie along County Road 261. This half mile road runs between Hillside Mill Road and Route 82, which is called Pyles Ford Road at this point (see map).

From Pyles Ford Road, County Road 261 begins on a hill and then drops sharply to creek level. Running roughly parallel to Co. Rd. 261 are the tracks of the old Wilmington and Western Railroad, now part of the Baltimore and Ohio. The Wilmington and Western Railroad is currently being nominated to The National Register as a separate and distinct nomination. The landscape surrounding the district is hilly, encompassing sections of fallow fields, cultivated fields, and woodlands. It is not a densely built up area, although recently new housing developments have been started just beyond the district on Hillside Mill Road.

If not for a small bend in the road, the structures erected on the 7 properties would all be visible to each other. The earliest of these are Speakman's grist mill (N-5001.8), saw mill (N-5001.3), and adjoining stone house (N-5001.2), which together formed the original focal point of the district. The mills and the house first appear on tax assessments lists of 1816, although the saw mill is already described as old at that date. The shed of the saw mill extends to within 10 feet of the road. It operated a vertical sash saw, iron tracks for which run the length of the shed. Directly behind the saw mill, with the race in between, is the stone shell of the grist mill. An earthen ramp leads up to a large doorway on the upper level of the facade opposite the race. No trace of the water wheel remains, but within the grist mill lie two mill stones, approximately 4 feet in diameter. The adjoining stone house was always used as the mill owner's residence. The house has had one frame addition at two different points in time, but which do not detract significantly from the original appearance. Across the road is a smaller frame house (N-5001.4) now stuccoed over, built c. 1850. These 4 buildings plus the dam and mill races comprised the entire district until the opening of the Wilmington and Western Railroad in 1872.

With the opening of the railroad the district entered its second stage of appearance as its character changed from a tiny, isolated farm and mill complex to a small hamlet, connected by the railroad to Wilmington, Philadelphia and New York. The focal point likewise shifts from the mills to a picnic area (N-5001.9) located several hundred yards behind the mills, out of sight of the mills and the road, between the creek and the tracks. This was a popular excursion resort in the last quarter of the 19th century, with a dance pavillion, swings, croquet lawns, and refreshment stands, which are now gone. This is the period when the remaining four properties of the district become important. A Gothic-style Victorian cottage (N05001.5), very much in the manner of A.J. Downing's Architecture of Country Houses (1850), was built next to the stucco/frame house in 1877. This house is rich in architectural trim, with bracketed eaves, a

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mt. Cuba Historic District is primarily significant as an example of 19th century industrial and community development in northern New Castle County, Delaware. The industrial development of the area is clearly reflected in the aggregate of seven properties included in the nomination. The Speakman Grist and Saw Mill property can be traced back through deeds to 1784 and is physical marker of the earliest type of rural industry introduced into northern Delaware. The mills and the adjacent stone house (which has always served as the residence of the mill owners) first appear in the 1816 Christiana Hundred tax assessments corresponding to the period when the first steps towards the intensive industrialization of the area were being made. While many of the neighboring mill operations grew into booming family-run operations, the Mt. Cuba mills always functioned on an intimate scale within the community and provided the basic services of a custom mill rather than catering to a broader and more anonymous market.

Between 1834 and 1873 the milling complex was owned by the Speakman family and it was probably during their tenure that the stuccoed dwelling across the road and opposite the mills was erected. In 1850 Speakman's two sons were both of age to establish their own households and, therefore, the stuccoed house was likely the residence of one of the sons. For the next two decades the Speakman brothers ran the mills with one working as a sawyer and the other as the miller. In the 1870's the mill went into a financial decline, but with the coming of the railroad in the early 1870's the community blossomed and grew in prosperity. In the period from 1875 to 1885 Mt. Cuba's population rose dramatically and the community, as evidenced in the census for 1870, included tradesmen and skilled artisans of all kinds. There had always been a resident agrarian community including the Frederick, Leach and Concorran farms, which appear on Beers' Atlas of 1868 and remain in the same families for the next thirty years. In 1880, however, Mt. Cuba boasted, in addition to the established milling and farming operations, its own butcher, blacksmith, wheelwright, tinsmith, retail grocer, postmaster, and a machinist and his apprentice who labored in the mills. The blacksmith and wheelwright most likely shared the same shop building and resided in the double house adjacent to it. Both these structures were erected in the third quarter of the 19th century and stand today on the southern edge of the Historic District. The grocer and postmaster, who were the same individual, had his residence and business in the frame "Gothic cottage" just across the road and south of the mills. Architecturally this is the most stylishly conscious 19th-century structure in the district and surrounding area and clearly illustrates the popular acceptance of the eclectic Victorian architectural ideals advanced and widely disseminated by individuals such as Alexander Jackson Downing and Calvert Vaux. The property on which the house stands was purchased from the mill owners in 1877 and the dwelling built without delay for the post office opened in the same year.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

New Castle County Deed Records. J. T. Scharf History of Delaware, 1888.
 Delaware Census Reports, Christiana Hundred 1850-1890.
 Maps of Delaware 1849, 1868, 1893--Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware.
Every Evening, 1872-1881.
 A.J. Downing Architecture of Country Houses, 1850.
 H.C. Bounds A Postal History of Delaware, 1938.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 24 acres
 UTM REFERENCES Kennett Square

E: 18 445 197/4404 100
 F: 18 444 870/4404 233

1:24,000

A	18	444855	4404375
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	18	445315	4404580

B	18	445200	4404590
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	18	445295	4404110

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Deborah Ackroyd Smith

16 December, 1978

ORGANIZATION

American Studies Program, University of Delaware

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

317 Kirkbridge Office

TELEPHONE

302-738-8431

CITY OR TOWN

Newark, Delaware

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

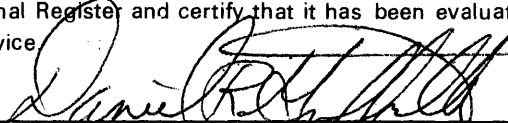
STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy

/ STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Chief, Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

DATE

10/3/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE

12-19-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST *Kristin O'Connell*

DATE

12/18/79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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MT. CUBA HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

- .1, .10 Gene F. Jordin
5803 Pyles Ford Road
Wilmington, DE 19807

- .2, .3,
.8, .9 Lamot DuPont Copeland
2100 DuPont Building
Wilmington, DE 19801

- .4, .5 H. Emerson Eastburn
Box 7, Mt. Cuba
Greenville, DE 19807

- .6, .7 Elva M. Chandler
Mt. Cuba
Yorklyn, DE 19736

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Mt. Cuba Historic District

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center gable with tracery in the point, diagonal bargeboards ending in tracery on the upper levels of the sides, and large double windows each having 16 panes, although a picture window has replaced the double windows on one side. Around the bend in the road from this house is a blacksmith shop (N-5001.6) built into a bank, and a large frame double house. The double house (N-5001.7) has had many rambling additions which back up into a bank, but these do not detract from the character of the house. The shop and the house are c. 1875. The long facade of the shop has a wide opening facing onto the road. Originally it would have been in sight of the station house and the covered bridge which carried Hillside Mill road over the creek. Today the station house has completely disappeared, the covered bridge has been replaced by one of stone, and the shop is a 3-car garage. On the hill at the other end of the road, looking down upon the mills, is a farm and slaughterhouse complex, also built c. 1875. This complex consists of a small ruined stone house (N-5001.10), the slaughterhouse (N-5001.1) and two shed-type outbuildings. Only the stone foundations and walls remain of the house.

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Mt. Cuba Historic District Structural Inventory

1. N-5000.1
(Also N-4043) This property contains a slaughterhouse of frame construction on stone foundation in good condition; a small, unidentified outbuilding of frame construction on stone foundation in excellent condition; a slightly larger unidentified outbuilding of frame construction on wooden supports in excellent condition.
2. N-5001.10 Foundation and walls of a ruined stone dwelling
3. N-5001.2
(Also N-302) This property contains a stone dwelling of uncoursed rubble masonry, two and a half stories, two end chimneys, three bay center entrance facade, two bays on ends, lean-to addition of one and a half stories of stone at rear with white frame one story addition to that, the whole in excellent condition. Large red frame barn on property also in excellent condition.
4. N-5001.3
(Also N-299) Speakman's Saw Mill contains a saw mill, also the races and dam for the water power of the mills. The saw mill has stone foundations of uncoursed rubble masonry to the rear, the front is an open shed of frame construction supported by wooden posts with a wooden planking floor. A small enclosed shed is attached to the right. In the enclosed section to the floor boards are circular sawn, in the open section the boards are straight sawn. The mill operated a vertical sash saw, iron tracks for which run the length of the shed.
5. N-5001.8 Directly behind the saw mill, utilizing the same water power, is a grist mill, now in deteriorated condition. The walls are of uncoursed rubble masonry stuccoed over. It is a two-story structure with an earthen ramp leading up to a large doorway on the upper level in the rear facade. One side is a three bay center entrance facade, with doors on both levels, The opposite side is only the upper level of two bays. The fourth facade faces the saw mill with the race in between. No trace of the water wheel remains. Two mill stones lie within the grist mill, approximately four feet in diameter.

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Mt. Cuba Historic District Structural Inventory

6. N-5001.4
(Also N-300) This property contains a two-story frame house stuccoed over, two end chimneys, three bay center entrance facade, four bays on the rear facade, two bays on the side, pedimented portico over the front entrance, one story lean-to addition to the left side with a frame addition behind the stuccoed addition. The whole in excellent condition. There is a small frame chicken coop in the back in good condition and a frame springhouse to the left in excellent condition.
7. N-5001.5
(Also N-301) This property contains a one and a half story house of frame construction, three bay center entrance facade, single bays on the side. The left side and the front have double windows with 16 panes, on the right side a picture window has replaced the double window. Stone foundation and center chimney. The house is rich in architectural trim, with bracketed eaves, a center gable with tracery in the point, diagonal bargeboards ending in tracery on the upper level on the sides. Its plan and treatment are in the style of Andrew Jackson Downing (see especially plate X of The Architecture of Country Houses, 1850). The house has a front porch with shed roof, an open veranda added to the left rear corner and an enclosed addition to the right rear corner. It is in excellent condition.
8. N-5001.6
(Also N-303) This property contains a large rectangular building, five bays by two bays, two stories. It was formerly used as a blacksmith shop. The structure is set into a bank. The long facade open to the road has a wide opening, now the doors for a three car garage. The lower story is stuccoed stone painted grey. The upper story is white frame with green trim. A porch and steps are added to the long rear addition. It is in excellent condition.
9. N-5001.7 This property contains a double house, two and half stories, frame construction with stone foundation, four bays by two. Many rambling additions, some of which back up into a bank at the back of the property, the whole in excellent condition. The porch on the left half is open and has balusters on the porch rail. The right side porch is enclosed by glass and has panelling for the porch rail. A small shed is to the left of the house, in good condition.
10. N-5001.9 Mt. Cuba picnic grounds
11. N-4091 Wilmington and Western Railroad

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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Mt. Cuba Historic District

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As a direct result of the opening of the Wilmington and Western Railroad, the community became the "Famous and Romantic" Mt. Cuba and a popular site for summer excursions. Now vanished structures included a covered bridge and railroad station (located at the intersection Hillside Road and Wilmington and Western Railroad tracks just outside the district bounds), a meeting house/chapel formerly situated by the Speakman's stone house adjacent to the mills and several recreational facilities placed between the mills and the creek and including a dance pavilion, swings, croquet lawns and refreshment stands.

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MT. CUBA HISTORIC DISTRICT

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Verbal Boundary:

The Mt. Cuba Historic District is situated in Christiana Hundred of New Castle County, Delaware, and is bounded as follows:

Beginning at a point on the south edge of Route 261-A, situated 80 meters from the intersection of Route 262-A and Route 261, and thence south with a line 80 meters east of and parallel to the meanders of Route 261 until it intersects a line 20 meters south of a frame double house and thence with this line to the southwest until it intersects the boundary separating Mill Creek and Christiana Hundreds and thence with this line to the north until it intersects a line 60 meters north of and parallel to an imaginary westward extension of Route 262 and thence with this line to the northeast until it intersects the east edge of Route 261 and with this line to the north until it intersects the south edge of Route 262-A and thence with this line to the east to the point of its beginning.

Justification: The western bound is a natural border formed by the meanders of Red Clay Creek. The eastern bound is principally a visual limit determined by the upper edge of the hillslope behind buildings .4, .5, .6 and .7. The southern bound is drawn to exclude two modern residences at the junction of Routes 261 and 269. The northern bound is also principally determined by visual consideration, with a projection northward to include properties .1 and .10.

Mt. Cuba Historic District (N-5001) Not to scale

1. Frederick Slaughterhouse
2. Stone house 2a. Frame Barn
3. Speakman's Saw Mill
4. Stuccoed House
5. "Gothic cottage" house
6. Blacksmith Shop
7. Double frame house
8. Speakman's Grist Mill
9. Picnic grounds site

