

PH 0352764

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	APR 5 1976
DATE ENTERED	APR 30 1976

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC **** Spring Banke

AND/OR COMMON

Spring Banke

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

NE of Clarksville

DE Route 26 and Irons Lane

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Clarksville

VICINITY OF

One

STATE

Delaware

CODE

10

COUNTY

Sussex

CODE

002

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Allen B. and Althea D. Clark

STREET & NUMBER

230 North Governors Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Dover

VICINITY OF

STATE

Delaware

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds for Sussex County

STREET & NUMBER

Sussex County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Georgetown

STATE

Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Delaware Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE

1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Preservation Section, Hall of Records

CITY, TOWN

Dover

STATE

Delaware

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Spring Banke was built in two sections; the original is of oak and gum construction. The sills and floor joists are of hewn oak. The predominantly gum framing is pit sawed and joined together with mortises and tenons, secured with locust pegs. The story-and-a-half earliest section has one room on each floor.

Centered on the west end of the original section is a fireplace, exposed on the outside. On the inside wall to the left of the fireplace is a four-panelled door to a small, circular stairway going upstairs. To its right is a small, two-panelled door for storage space under the stairway. Above the fireplace, four panels carry the design to the right where a large, four-door cupboard utilizes the space.

The north and south walls each have one window and one door. The plank front door has large strap hinges, wrought-iron latch on the outside, and wooden latch on the inside. The windows have old glass. There is a simple chair rail and beaded base. The trim on the doors and windows consist of ovolo moulding on the outside and beading on the inside.

The east wall now contains a door leading to the later portion of the house. The seven-foot ceiling is extremely low and has exposed beams beaded on the bottom edges. The pine, plank floor boards upstairs are wide and beaded on their undersides.

In the half-story room above the original section, the framing is exposed and appears to have always been so. There are two, four-pane windows on either side of the chimney on the west wall which appear to have been added at the time the later addition was built. Enclosed in the protected east wall (by the later addition) is a single, small, battened door-window which was probably the original means of light and ventilation. Protected by a later addition was random-width, beaded, cypress siding, not original as there are handmade nails beneath it suggesting earlier clapboards.

Part of the roof of the old house is also protected by the later wing. It has hand-split shingles that also do not appear to be the first, as they are nailed in the same manner as the siding and were probably done at the same time, indicating that the earlier house is much older than the later house.

The later part of the house is two stories high. The framing is oak and gum and is mill-sawed. It is mortised and tenoned and joined with pegs. The siding consists of thirty-three-inch cypress shakes with a thirteen-inch exposure. These shingles average at least three-quarters inch now, and wear indicates probably an inch thickness when new. They are bevelled on the bottom to provide a watershed. Behind these shingles run horizontal cypress sheathing boards, up to twenty inches in width. They run to the top-plate, but do not extend into the peaks. In the attic the shingles are secured with regular laths. The shingles in the peak adjoining the earlier part run parallel to the roof line. They are individually cut at the bottom to conform with the angle and make a chevron pattern to the roof line.

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 type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Spring Banke is a rare example of a well-preserved, eighteenth-century, small house of a type that was occupied by tenants, small farmers, and other colonists of limited means.

It is one of the few houses in Baltimore Hundred to survive virtually unaltered from the era of the dispute between Maryland and Delaware over the right to possession of the area. The conflict lasted for nearly a century before it was finally resolved in 1775. The skirmishes by raiding parties from both sides affected not only title to property, but also actual security of the area's inhabitants. The architecture of Spring Banke reflects the social implications of the protracted conflict in this area. The insecurity of land titles in the region probably discouraged erection of substantial houses that exist along the rest of the coast of Maryland and Delaware. Thus, the standard house in this area was a one-room structure. Only after the dispute was settled did the majority of the residents feel secure enough to build a larger home or to add another section.

Spring Banke was originally a 500-acre tract granted by Maryland to William Digges in 1687. In 1746 a hundred-acre portion was bought by Hinnan Wharton, who left it in 1778 to his son, David. After David Wharton's death, Littleton Townsend bought the property from his heirs.

In 1808, when Littleton Townsend sold his part of Spring Banke to his son John, he indicated that a lot on the northwest corner of Spring Banke, the location of the present four-acre plot and house, was occupied by Daniel Davenport, apparently a tenant on the land.

When he sold the surrounding area to his son, John, Littleton Townsend exempted Davenport's lot. Five years later Townsend sold Davenport's homesite to Aaron Wharton who passed it on to his son, Eli Parker Wharton.

In 1835, Lemuel Williams bought the property from Eli Parker Wharton, son of Rhoda Wharton Howard. Rhoda, in a separate deed, renounced her one-third dower to the property.

Lemuel Williams lived only two years after purchasing the property, but his widow, Nancy, lived nearly forty years. She joined her brother-in-law, Ezekiel Williams, Jr., in building a new 65-foot schooner, the MARY ANN CATHERINE. Mrs. Williams had income from the shipping trade, and a store next to the house. The fact that the house was owned by a widow who lived to be nearly ninety, and whose family was already grown, helps to explain how the house escaped the extensive

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Conwell, Tilney Clarke. Ships and Men of the Broadkill. Corte Madera, Calif.: Published by Compiler, 1966.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware, 1609-1888. Volume II. Philadelphia: L. J. Richards and Company, 1888.

Deeds, Wills, Administration Records, Orphans' Court Records, Plot Records, Patent Records, and Road Records found at Delaware Archives, Sussex County Court House, and Maryland Hall of Records.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Four acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	118	487800	4266930	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is bounded on the south by State Road 26, on the north by a ditch, and on the west by Irons Lane.

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

Allen B. Clark

ORGANIZATION

DATE

January 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

230 North Governors Avenue

674-1802

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Dover

Delaware

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Lauren [Signature]

TITLE : Director, Div. of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

4/1/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Acting

[Signature]

DATE

4/30/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

[Signature]

DATE

4.30.76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The interior layout of the newer part is similar to the original section. There is a single back door between the two rear windows. Originally, there was also a center door in the front (south wall), but it was closed up early in the history of the wing.

Centered on the east wall is a large fireplace. To its right are the stairway, the stairway door, and the door to the storage space beneath the stairway. Above the fireplace is the mantel and to its left a cupboard. There are two six-panelled doors; one leads to the early house on the west wall and the other is the entrance door on the north wall. There is a chair rail, door trim with ovolo moulding, and beading. The ceiling joists are exposed and beaded. There is a design in the ceiling apparently made by playing the soot from a burning candle over whitewash. The floorboards upstairs and downstairs are predominantly cypress. The upstairs has very simple trim around the window and beaded baseboard. The ceiling joists are also exposed and beaded. Apparently, it was originally one large room, but it has been divided into two, with a later plastered wall. The attic floorboards were apparently removed as the ceiling has been plastered, but will be replaced with similar boards of the period.

On the roof of each section, hand-split cedar shingles have been applied using the nine-inch exposure found on the shingles protected by the addition of the later house. Heating ducts and electrical switches and sockets are being hidden. The entire house has been rewired and insulated and will be replastered.

The house stands by the side of the main road from Bethany Beach to Dagsboro. Modern road-widening has encroached on the site but has not destroyed the setting. A store formerly stood on the property.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Victorianization that befell most houses in the area during this period. She or her husband may have built the newer part of the house.

After Nancy Williams, the house was occupied by several families of the area: the Helm family; John Steel, a merchant; Henry Holt, a merchant and sawmill operator; and George Torbert, Sr., the last owner to operate the store. Shortly after World War I, Edgar Evans agreed to buy the house and moved to the property. His third wife, Effie Evans, got a clear deed in her own name in 1927. She was the second widow to occupy the house, living there alone for twenty years.

The exceptional preservation of the property can be attributed in part to the fact that its owners have been financially unable to remodel and to modernize it extensively. The house is being restored by the son of the current owner.

Because it has been altered little since the eighteenth century, the older part of the house is a rare expression of the architecture of an unsettled period in southern Delaware history. When land ownership was unsure, government was tenuous at best, and the region was depressed as a result.