

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED DEC 19 1977
DATE ENTERED MAY 22 1978

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

"The Buildings"

AND/OR COMMON

The Lord Stirling Manor Complex *Site*

OK per tel. f. h. K... 12-22-77

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

96 Lord Stirling Road

SE of Basking Ridge

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Basking Ridge *mic.*

VICINITY OF

5th

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Somerset

CODE

035

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

County of Somerset

STREET & NUMBER

Milltown Road

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Somerset County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory

413.4

DATE

1962

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Environmental Protection

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE 1763

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lord Stirling Manor Complex consists of 5 ~~1/2~~^(TK) acres of land (now Lord Stirling Park) granted to William by his father in 1761. All that remains of the 1763 Stirling Manor Complex is the foundation of the mansion, cisterns, slave quarters and many structures of undetermined usage. The use of many of the out-buildings for farming has resulted in their deterioration. Some buildings which were not needed by various owners were torn down to avoid maintenance.

The exact locations of all structures on this 5 ~~1/2~~ acre plot are depicted on the attached map.

A description of the only remaining buildings, the slave quarters, is as follows: Each is a 2 layer thick, rose brick structure, measuring 12 by 16 feet. The roofs are a low gable construction with slate shingles and are believed to be of a more recent period (19th century). The interior wood paneling and floors are in a decaying condition and have been extensively altered for storage purposes.

The land and buildings were abandoned for several years prior to their acquisition by the Somerset County Park Commission. Most of the park remains undisturbed by the Park Commission to avoid inadvertant damage to possible historic artifacts. However, a house built upon the foundation of the 1825 farmhouse (this house was constructed in part on the Stirling Mansion foundations and burned down in 1919) has been converted into offices for the Park Commission.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			Local History

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Lord Stirling, also known as General William Alexander, led a successful career as both a businessman and a soldier. His estate was one of the finest in the area; it was built to imitate an English nobleman's residence. It was of such splendor that the people of the area called the estate "The Buildings" and the road leading to it "Building Lane." While the rest of the buildings are gone, including the mansion, the slave quarters are still existent. By themselves these remnants of Lord Stirling's Manor complex are of unique historical significance. They are the only known slave quarters remaining in New Jersey.

The Alexander family were slave owners from before William's time. William's father owned slaves in a moral climate that sanctioned slavery as a socio-economic necessity. Lord Stirling's early business career was closely allied to the lucrative slave trading largely due to its profit potential. His interests in slave trading waned as other business interests intervened and the availability of trained servants from Europe after the French and Indian War made slave owning impractical. One of the uses to which Black slaves were put is indicated by a request to Mrs. Alexander's tore for clothing green or blue with lining suitable for two wenches and a boy. It can be assumed from this that the wearers were to be domestics.

William Alexander's manor complex was built on a 700 acre tract of land purchased from his father James Alexander. Also, 5 1/2 acres were granted to William by James expressly for the building of a Basking Ridge parsonage. The manor, begun in 1761, was not finished until after the Revolutionary War.

The Manor Complex contained stables, slave quarters, coach houses and other offices ornamented with cupolas and gilded vanes which were built behind a large, paved court behind the mansion. The front with plazas opened in a fine lawn descending to the Black River (Passaic River). A large hall extended through the house. On one side was a drawing room with painted walls and stuccoed ceiling. This description was given by Mrs. Eliza Susan Morton Quincy, a close neighbor. The most skilled gardeners in America were hired to design and lay out an immense park, containing a large enclosure for deer, a rose garden, an Italian vineyard and other accessories of a nobleman's seat.

Here at the Manor Alexander and his wife, Sarah Livingston, the sister of the Governor of New Jersey, entertained prominent citizens of the area. Despite the war, "The Buildings" were used not only as a meeting place for Lord Stirling and his staff officers, but was in a sense a center for the social life of the rebel community.

After Stirling's death in 1783 the estate was sold. By time and neglect "The Buildings" soon fell in disrepair. The decaying house was rebuilt in 1825 but hardly resembled its forerunner. This house was destroyed by fire in 1919.

William Alexander stood paramount amid the social elite of pre-revolutionary and revolutionary America. His lineage to the European aristocracy could not be denied. During a lengthy trial in Scotland, this native-born American was successfully proven heir to the old Stirling grants which held title to such holdings as Long Island and Maine. The Parliament (the House of Lords) failed to sustain his claim.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Carrington, Henry B., Battles of the American Revolution. A.S. Barnes and Company N.Y., 1876.
2. Danforth George H. Doctorial Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1955.
3. Donnan, Elizabeth, Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America, Carnegie Institute, Washington, 1932.
4. Snell James P. A History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, Everts and Peck, Phila., 1881.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	I 8	5 3 9 6 6 0	4 5 9 4 7 1 9	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Lord Stirling Manor Complex is shown as the red line on the accompanying map entitled "Road Map of Bernards Township, Somerset County, New Jersey, 1976.

The property size is approximately 5 acres.

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

George A. Chidley, IV, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION

N.J. Historic Sites Section, Dept. of Environmental Protection 9/76

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1420

TELEPHONE

609-292-2023

CITY OR TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey 08625

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

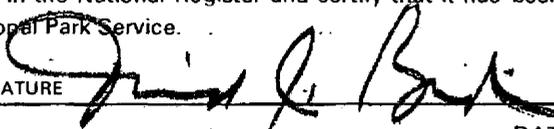
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XXX

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



TITLE

Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

DATE

12.1.76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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



DATE

5-22-78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST William Cole

DATE

5-12-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE

Significance:

"The Buildings"

Somerset County 035

New Jersey 34

In 1756, the Proprietors of New Jersey made William Alexander their Surveyor General. As Surveyor General of New Jersey, Lord Stirling built and improved many roads in the Basking Ridge and Raritan River areas. One of the new roads built by Stirling was from Basking Ridge to Summit in direct line of the present Route 24. Also in 1773 William Alexander helped arbitrate the New York-New Jersey boundary. This concluded a 30 year effort started by his father.

Lord Stirlings military career spanned both pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary America. During the latter he commanded the New Jersey Militia and assumed Brigadier General status in the Continental Army.

Alexander delayed Lord Howe at Long Island, an action which proved to be psychologically important to American resistance against the power of Britain. His battle tactics were sound and effective. He performed with precision at Trenton and offered the toughest defense against the enemy at Brandywine. His engagements with the British at Germantown and Monmouth proved him to be a strong leader.

Despite his contribution to the American War effort, his being Surveyor General of New Jersey and in spite of his many business failures, the vast majority of people thought of him only as the fabulous owner of "The Buildings" at Basking Ridge.

ROAD MAP

OF

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP

SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

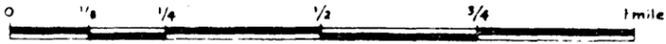
1976



SCALE IN FEET



SCALE OF MILES



LEGEND

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① BASKING RIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ② BISHOP JAMES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ③ COVENANT CHAPEL, REFORMED EPISCOPAL ④ ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH ⑤ ST. JAMES ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ⑥ J. BERTY CORNER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ⑦ J. J. BRICK ACADEMY ⑧ PUBLIC LIBRARY ⑨ SOMERSET HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH ⑩ MILLINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH ⑪ POST OFFICE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS STATE HIGHWAYS F. A. S. ROUTES COUNTY ROADS MUNICIPAL ROADS PRIVATE ROADS |
|--|--|

PREPARED BY BERNARDS TWP ENG. DEPT.
L. STANLEY STIRES, TWP. ENGINEER

