

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received SEP 30 1986  
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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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N-1110

Property Name: Springer Farm

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The Springer Farm is located on the east side of Limestone Road (Route 7) just south of the Delaware/Pennsylvania line. The nominated site coincides with the boundaries of Parcel Number 08-006.00-009, which contains 19.32 acres. The boundaries are delineated on the attached map titled, New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985.

UTM References: A. 18/438310/4404160  
B. 18/438320/4404010  
C. 18/438000/4403880  
D. 18/437900/4404050  
E. 18/438070/4404140

Owner: Hilmar Fritze  
Box 198, Route 1  
Hockessin, Delaware 19707

Description:

The Springer Farm contains four buildings of historic significance, spanning a time period from the late eighteenth century through the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The stone house is the earliest building on the site; the first documentary evidence of it appearing in 1798. Circa 1820, a stone and frame bank barn was built. A stone springhouse, and a braced frame corn crib that was constructed later in the nineteenth century, are also situated on the property. There is a non-contributing frame garage.

The house is a two story, gable-roofed, fieldstone structure on a coursed fieldstone foundation. Its facade is arranged with three evenly spaced bays and a side hall entrance. All windows are six-over-six sash with paneled shutters on both the first and second floors. The entrance has a molded six-panel door and a four-light rectangular transom. A box cornice with partial gable end returns emphasizes the gable roofline. During the 1930's the house was expanded by adding a frame, one-and-a-half story, gable-roofed wing on the northeast endwall. The design of this wing with its gable roofline, six-over-six sash windows, and weatherboard siding, complements the original structure.

Standing in front of the house is a gable-roofed, stone springhouse with a gable end entrance.

The Springer barn is a circa 1820, bi-level, stone building with a frame front wall and a frame, gable-roofed straw shed addition. A datestone in the west gable reads

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"RBLT 1937" (rebuilt 1937), indicating the date it was restored, not the date of original construction. The stone walls consist of uncoursed, light brown fieldstone and large fieldstone quoins. The straw shed is sided with board and batten. A slight ramp leads to the center bay double doors which are hung on rollers.

The upper level is three bays long by two bays deep. There is a framed-in stair on the northeast side of the door, and two hay drops by the frame long wall. The bays are roughly equal at 13 by 26 feet, and the straw shed expands the barn another 13 feet. The inner bents consist of three posts with a girt that is framed over the plate. The two posts on the frame wall are flared and notched. There are no end bents. The posts are interconnected by three tiers of rails. The end rails joined into the frame long wall posts are inserted into the stone walls at one end. Two large diagonal posts are on the straw shed long wall, a typical feature of late nineteenth century frame construction.

The roofing system consists of common rafters on principal purlins which are supported by flared and notched, angular purlin struts emanating from the girts. The purlin ends rest on the stone gable end walls without braces or a roof truss. Because of the absence of gable end framing members, the builder joined the plate to a piece of timber embedded in the gable wall.

The girts, plates and purlins are hewn timbers while the posts and secondary timbers are vertical sawn.

The flooring system consists of replacement, circular sawn, lateral plank joists with cross pieces, and square-hewn, lateral sills for the upper level bents. The original lower level plan is non-extant except for two board and batten doors with strap hinges on the southwest gable end.

Associated with the barn is a narrow, rectangular corn crib of hewn, braced frame construction with a gable roof and replaced vertical slat siding. Nailed braces have been added.

Significance:

The Springer site is significant under Criterion A because it reflects three different building periods: the eighteenth century, the early nineteenth century rebuilding, and the late nineteenth century rebuilding. Under Criterion C, the stone house represents one of the few eighteenth century buildings to survive. Built prior to the 1798 tax assessment, the stone dwelling was a part of an architectural landscape where building material was principally log. The log barn and log kitchen (perhaps an earlier dwelling) also listed in the 1798 assessment, were evidence of the dominance of that building material.

In 1766, Nicholas Springer purchased this property, which then contained 43 acres, from William Eynon. The first documentary evidence of property improvements is contained in the 1798 tax assessment which lists Nicholas Springer as the owner of a 110

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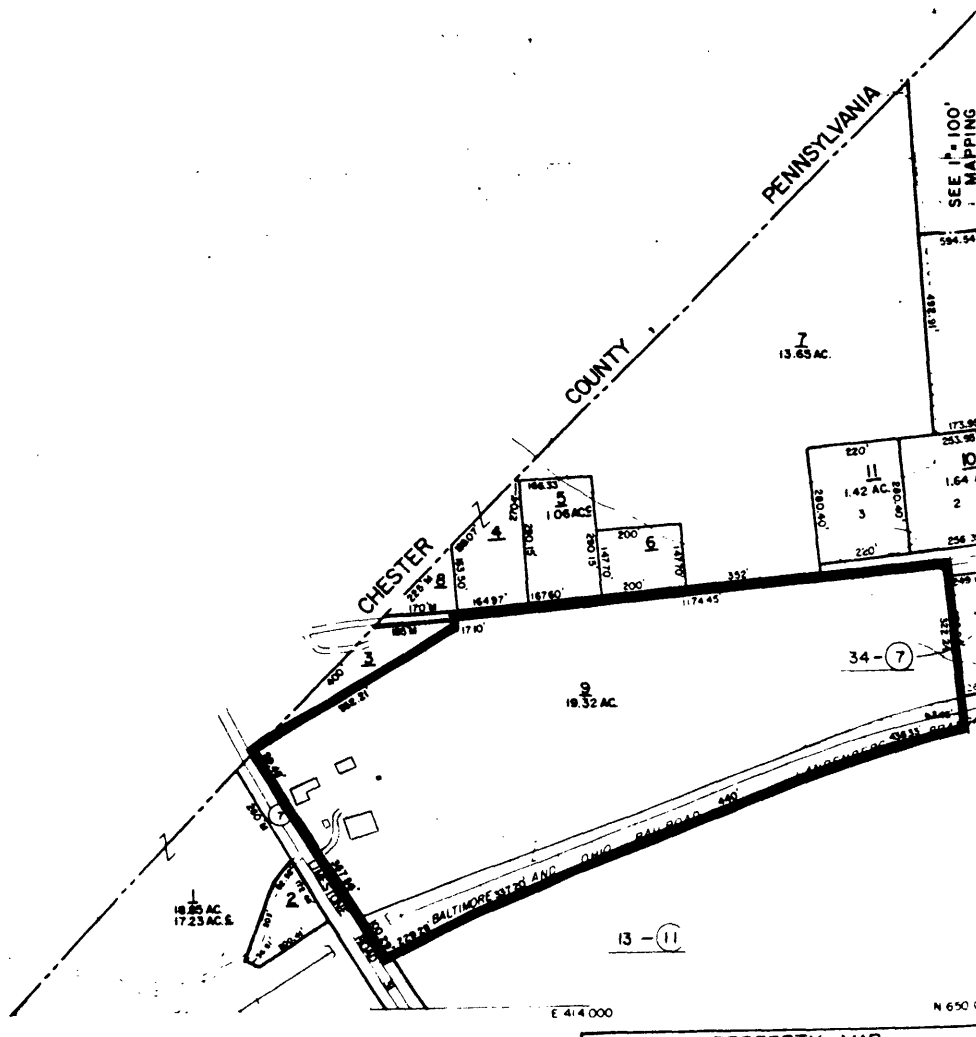
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acre tract with a stone house, a log kitchen and a log barn. After his death in 1800, the property passed to his heirs, Elizabeth, Nicholas, Jr., and Stefen Springer. The 1816 tax assessment for Elizabeth Springer reveals that 64 acres had been sold off, and that the stone house and "some old log houses" were situated on the property. The farm stayed in the hands of the Springer family until 1837 when Stephen sold it to Alfred Yeatman.

The stone barn on the Springer site reflects the early nineteenth century rebuilding period. This rebuilding was the result of complex factors involving available capital from a prosperous agricultural and industrial economy, a rapidly growing population, and a societal consciousness of material wealth and social status.

The late nineteenth century rebuilding period is represented by the gable straw shed on the barn. This addition, like almost all other Mill Creek Hundred barns, reflects the specialization of Mill Creek Hundred farmers in the dairy industry in the late nineteenth century. The ubiquitous straw shed was needed for the extra hay grown for larger dairy herds. The establishment of a creamery in Hockessin in the 1870's is evidence of continued emphasis on this land and labor intensive farm practice.

The Springer site is also significant because of the integrity of the site in terms of building condition and building types. The four contributing buildings, dwelling, spring house, barn and corn crib, give a rough impression, although by no means complete, of a nineteenth century farm complex in Mill Creek Hundred.



E 412 000

E 414 000

N 650 C

N D

1" = 100'

**N-1110 Springer Farm**  
**New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985**  
**Parcel Number 08-006.00-009**