THEME :

Americans at Work ... SUBTHEME: ence and Invention"

UNITED STATES DEPART ... CNT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

				2012	
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DATE ENTERED SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS **TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS** NAME William Morris Davis House HISTORIC AND/OR COMMON 17 Francis Street **2** LOCATION STREET & NUMBER 17 Francis Street NOT FOR PUBLICATION CITY, TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Cambridge VICINITY OF 8th CODE STATE CODE COUNTY Massachusetts 75 Middlesex 017 **3 CLASSIFICATION** CATEGORY **OWNERSHIP** STATUS **PRESENT USE** ___DISTRICT ___PUBLIC X_OCCUPIED __AGRICULTURE __MUSEUM X_BUILDING(S) X_PRIVATE __UNOCCUPIED __COMMERCIAL PARK __STRUCTURE __BOTH _WORK IN PROGRESS ___EDUCATIONAL X PRIVATE RESIDENCE __SITE PUBLIC ACQUISITION ACCESSIBLE __ENTERTAINMENT ___RELIGIOUS ___OBJECT _IN PROCESS __YES: RESTRICTED __GOVERNMENT ___SCIENTIFIC __YES: UNRESTRICTED ___BEING CONSIDERED _INDUSTRIAL __TRANSPORTATION XNO __MILITARYOTHER **4 OWNER OF PROPERTY** NAME Francis M. Shea STREET & NUMBER 17 Francis Street CITY, TOWN STATE Cambridge VICINITY OF Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Middlesex Registry of Deeds--Southern District COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

STREET & NUMBER

3rd and Ottis Streets

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE	None	
DATE		FEDERALSTATECOUNTYLOCAL
	FORY FOR RECORDS	
CITY, TO	WN	STATE

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CON	DITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK C	DNE
_XEXCELLENT	DETERIORATED	XUNALTERED	XORIGINAL	SITE
GOOD	RUINS	ALTERED	MOVED	DATE
FAIR (unresto	ored)UNEXPOSED			

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The William Morris Davis House in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a frame, 2½ story gabled roof house with a gambreled roof wing. The exterior is sheathed in shingles. The main entrance is located on the side of the house and there is also a rear entrance. The front elevation is characterized by an irregular or asymmetrical window arrangement and a columned porch at the entrance. An end bay window faces the street.

The date of construction and the builder are unknown. The use of shingles as covering indicates that the house belongs to what the authors of the Cambridge Historical Commission's <u>Old Cambridge</u> (1973) call the "shingle style" of the Queen Anne movement in Cambridge. This would indicate that the house was probably built in the 1890's. <u>Old Cambridge</u> does not note 17 Francis Street as a distinguished illustration of the "shingle style." In itself the building appears to be of no particular architectural significance.

17 Francis Street was the home Willima Morris Davis lived in from approximately 1898, the time he was appointed to the Sturgis-Hooper Professorship at Harvard, until 1916. It was during this period that Davis performed some of his most productive work in geography.

17 Francis Street retains an integrity of association with the Davis period. The building has undergone no significant exterior alterations since its construction. The basic interior floor plan is also intact with the exception that the present owner has installed an apartment on the third floor. The structure continues to function as a private residence.



8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AR	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	ECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	XXSCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART		MUSIC	THEATER
<u>X</u> 1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
<u>X</u> 1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES 1898-1916

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

William Morris Davis was born February 12, 1850, in Philadelphia. His father was a successful Philadelphia businessman and young Davis grew up in comfortable and secure surroundings. His early education was typical of the period. His mother taught him at home until he was eleven at which time he entered a private school. In 1866 at age 16 Davis enrolled at Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School. In 1869 he earned a bachelor of science degree magna cum laude and a year later he received an engineering degree. Although Davis early displayed a high aptitude for scientific and engineering subjects, he returned to Philadelphia in 1873 and entered his father's business. The life of a businessman soon proved unsatisfactory to the young man and in 1876 Davis returned to Harvard to pursue the study of geology under Nathaniel S. Shaler. In 1877-78 he took a trip around the world studying geological formations and meeting his colleagues in other countries. Upon his return Davis was appointed an instructor of geology at Harvard. The appointment marked the beginning of a teaching career at Harvard that lasted until 1912. Davis' academic career was highly successful and reached its high point in 1898 when he was appointed to the Sturgis-Hooper Professorship of Geology. In 1912 Davis resigned from the Harvard faculty. His elevation to emeritus status did not mean the end of his research, writing, and active participation in geological and geographical circles. According to Herman R. Friss, Davis' biographer in the Dictionary of American Biography, it was during the 36 years between his appointment as Sturgis-Hooper professor in 1898 and his death in 1934 that Davis, "...profoundly affected the science of geology and geography."1

After his retirement from Harvard, Davis traveled widely at home and abroad. In 1908-09 and again in 1911-12 he taught in Germany and France. Upon returning home in 1912 he lead a cross country excursion of leading American geologists and geographers. During World War I Davis served as chairman of the geography committee of the National Research Council. Beginning in approximately 1924 his interest centered on California where he studied oceanography and coral formations and lectured at various universities. Davis was active until the end of his life. He died on February 5, 1934, at Pasadena during the National Academy of Science annual meeting.

Herman R. Friss, "William Morris Davis," Dictionary of American Biography, 21, (New York, 1944), p. 230.

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAF ACAL REFERENCES

Reginald A. Daly, "William Morris Davis, 1850-1934," <u>National Academy of</u> Science Biographical Memoirs, 23, (Washington, 1945).

Herman R. Friss, "William Morris Davis," <u>Dictionary of American Biography, 21</u>, (New York, 1944).

New York Times, February 7, 1934.

10GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre UTM REFERENCES



VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COU	NTIES FOR PROPER	TIES OVERLAPPING	STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
11 FORM PREPARED BY			
NAME / TITLE			
James Sheire, Historian			
ORGANIZATION	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		DATE
Historic Sites Survey, Na	tional Park S	Service	July 1975
STREET & NUMBER			TELEPHONE
1100 L Street NW.			202-523-5464
CITY OR TOWN			STATE
Washington			D.C.
NATIONAL X As the designated State Historic Preserv	ation Officer for the	National Historic Pres	ervation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I
hereby nominate this property for inclusion	sion in the National	Register and certify t	ervation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hat it has been evaluated according to the
criteria and procedures set forth by the N	National Fark Service	.	
FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE			
TITLE			DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY			
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PRO	PERTY IS INCLUDE	D IN THE NATIONAL I	REGISTER
			0.475
			DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOG	SY AND HISTORIC F	RESERVATION	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGIST	ER		

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

William M. Davis House, Mass.

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William Morris Davis' significance in the history of science in America rests in his contributions to meterology, geology, and gemorphology. In over 500 books and periodical publications he created a body of work in the earth sciences that mark him as an outstanding American scientist.

In 1894 Davis published <u>Elementary Meteorology</u>. Although the work, which was essentially a textbook, did not contain any new basic science knowledge, it did bring organization and refinement to a large body of previously uncoordinated knowledge. <u>Elementary Meteorology</u> became the standard textbook on the subject for many years.

Davis' international fame as a creator of new knowledge rests chiefly on his contributions to geology and geomorphology. In 1912, after he had resigned from Harvard and while teaching in Germany, Davis published Die erklaerende Beschreibung der Landformen (A Reasoned Description of Landforms). The work represented a summation of Davis' forty year study of the shape of the earth and the evolution of the earth's forms. Employing the knowledge of meteorology, geography, and geology Davis offered an explanation of the genesis, development, and classification of landforms. His system, which could be applied to the topography of the entire earth, became known as the Davisian or American school of geomorphological thought. In this work and subsequent studies Davis created new doctrines and concepts (for example the concept of "erosion cycle") to explain the shaping and forming of the earth. In so doing he opened new areas of study for geologists and geographers. According to Reginald A. Daly, the distinguised geologist, Davis transformed the study of geography in America into a true earth science.

Davis' contributions to the earth sciences earned him the esteem and recognition of his peers. Among his awards were the Cullum Medal of the American Geographical Society (1903), the Academy of Natural Sciences' Hayden Medal, and the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society. Leading scientific societies both here and abroad, among them the National Academy of Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Deutsche Meteorologische Gesellschaft, elected him to membership.