

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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 Seaton

AND/OR COMMON

Seaton

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER U. S. Route 501

CITY, TOWN

South Boston

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
(W. C. Daniel)

VICINITY OF

Fifth

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

Halifax

CODE

083

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. J. Wallace Moore

STREET & NUMBER

Seaton

CITY, TOWN

Halifax

STATE

Va.

zip code

24558

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Halifax County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Halifax

STATE

Virginia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS** (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE  
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

Has this property been  
determined eligible?  Y  N

DATE

1958

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

DC

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Seaton, a Halifax County landmark, is located off U. S. Route 501 just north of the city of South Boston. The wood-frame Gothic Revival structure was constructed by the builder Josiah Dabbs in 1856-57 and substantially enlarged by a 2½-story addition and kitchen wing in 1887. Erected for William Matthew Howerton the house remains in the family of the original owner and is in a remarkable state of preservation.

The house is set on a stone and brick foundation. Both the original and 1887 sections are covered by weatherboarding. Imbricated shingles are used on portions of the later section. A belt course runs above the first-story windows on the older section. Ornamental bargeboards embellish the house's eaves course. The main (west) elevation contains a one-story porch which has square paired posts, open-pointed arches, a lattice rail and a battlemented shed roof. Sheltered by the porch, the main entrance consists of a rectangular transom-light doorway that retains its original paneled double doors and louvred and screen outer doors. A secondary entrance is located on the south elevation and is contained within a hyphen that joins the main house to an 1887 kitchen. The original kitchen, situated east of the house, was converted into a section of the 1887 carriage shed. The house contains two exterior end chimneys: a three-course American bond chimney is located on the north wall of the original house and a seven-course American bond chimney is found on the south wall of the 1887 kitchen.

Fenestration on the older section consists of original 6/6 hung-sash windows flanked by louvred shutters. Fenestration on the 1887 section consists of geometrically patterned Queen Anne sash as well as 6/6 hung-sash windows. The windows on the 1887 facade are contained within a projecting bay and include colored panes on the attic story. A number of windows are flanked by louvred shutters. The earlier section is covered by a gabled roof broken by three dormers also ornamented with fancy bargeboards. The 1887 section is covered by a combination of hip and gable roof. Both roofs have ornamental cresting.

Seaton is distinguished by an exceptionally well-preserved interior. The furnishings were assembled during the 19th century and are positioned as they appear in a late 19th-century glass negative. The original central-hall plan was made asymmetrical by the 1887 addition. The hall is dominated by an open-well stair that ascends to the second floor. The stair has a square newel, rounded handrail and square balusters. All second-floor rooms retain their original pine flooring, and the first-floor rooms their 19th-century carpeting and pine flooring. The walls and ceilings are plastered throughout the house. Doors and windows have simply executed surrounds. The first-and second-floor mantels are also simple in execution. In 1887 an ornate open-work wooden screen, Moorish in inspiration, was added as a divider in the parlor. About the same time a ca. 1830 Jardine pipe organ, removed from a church in Halifax, was installed in the house.

Seaton retains several 19th-century outbuildings. The carriage shed is located to the east (rear) of the house. The hip roof, wood-frame building was constructed in 1887 at the same time the kitchen was converted into a stable forming the east wall of the building. The structure is covered with weatherboarding and contains 6/6 hung-sash windows. A cupola breaks the roofline.

(See continuation sheet #1)

# 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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1856-57, 1887                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Josiah Dabbs

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE      Seaton, a documented work of the Halifax master-carpenter Josiah Dabbs, is one of the best-preserved mid-19th-century Gothic Revival cottages in Southside Virginia. Built in 1856-57 for William M. Howerton, the son of the tobacco entrepreneur Philip Howerton, the residence is an expression of the architectural taste of one of the county's leading families and illustrates the popularity of the Gothic style among cultivated people in the years just prior to the Civil War.

Enlarged in 1887, the house has remained in the builder's family to the present day. The effects of the first owner and each succeeding generation have remained on the property resulting in a great accumulation of material culture pertaining to 19th-century life in Halifax County. A well-landscaped, park-like setting contributes to the house's 19th-century appeal.

The first members of the Howerton family came to Halifax from Essex County in the late 18th century. They acquired considerable land and developed large plantations on the Dan River, Stokes Creek and Larsons Creek. Philip Howerton came to Halifax ca. 1817 after services in the War of 1812. He became a landowner in 1828 when he purchased 522½ acres and "Oatland." By 1850 he had increased his holdings by more than a thousand acres. As a large landowner he became interested in developing efficient farming methods. This is attested to by his purchase in 1830 and 1832 of patent rights to an "improved thrashing machine." In 1836 Howerton established a tobacco factory and later became a partner in the firm of Easley, Howerton & Co. In 1849 he bought out his shares and formed a partnership with his son, P. & W.M. Howerton Co.

William Matthew Howerton, the only son of Philip, was born in 1826 and educated at the University of North Carolina. By 1849 he became a partner in the tobacco factory of his father. Howerton was elected a member of the General Assembly in 1852 and founded a Halifax newspaper, The Virginian Echo in 1859. He was elected to represent Halifax County in the Congress of the Confederacy but never assumed the office. Howerton purchased two tracts of land in 1852 and 1855. The Land Tax Book of 1857 lists the building value of his tract as \$1,500. In 1856 his tobacco factory was destroyed by fire soon after the addition of improvements valued at \$2,200. This was a great loss to Howerton, and in April 1859 he conveyed to his father title to all of his property. At this time he was \$3,000 in debt and was forced to secure a bond from his father. Howerton never assumed legal possession of his former lands and died in 1875 at the age of 49 years.

The house has remained in the possession of Howerton descendants and has undergone very little alteration. The major modification consisted of the addition of a 2½-story wing and kitchen in 1887. Many of the original furnishings remain in the house and are complemented by later family purchases. Original 19th-century carpeting and curtains remain, as well as Howerton family papers. The papers include letters, ledgers, and contracts dealing with

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Arnold, B. W. History of Tobacco Industry in Virginia from 1860-1894. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1897.
- Dabney, Virginus. Virginia, The New Dominion. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1971.
- Halifax County Deed Books 13, 15, 28, 36, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 51, 54, 55, 58, 59.
- " " Land Tax Books 1823-1829, 1840-1875.
- " " Personal Property Books 1852-1860, 1865-1875.
- " " Index to Wills 1875, 1885.
- Moore, Mrs. J. Wallace & Pottage, Robert G.D. III. Seaton, Halifax County, Va. Interview 1-80

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 12 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME South Boston, Va.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1 7 | 6 8 5 | 2 5 0 | 4 0 6 8 | 4 2 0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1 7 | 6 8 5 | 5 2 0 | 4 0 6 8 | 3 3 0

B 1 7 | 6 8 5 | 4 9 0 | 4 0 6 8 | 5 0 0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D 1 7 | 6 8 5 | 3 8 0 | 4 0 6 8 | 1 6 0

E | | | | | | | | | |

F | | | | | | | | | |

G | | | | | | | | | |

H | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at a point 800' SSE of the intersection of State Route 783 and U. S. Route 501, .5 mi. N. of Centerville, 1 mi. S of Halifax; thence extending 800' WNW following 500' contour line; thence turning S and extending 600' following said contour; thence continuing to follow said contour approximately 700' SW to E side of

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES (See Continuation sheet #1)

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

March 1980

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

## 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

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE MAR 18 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Seaton, Halifax County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1 ITEM NUMBER 6,7,8,10 PAGE 1, 1, 1, 1

## 7. DESCRIPTION

A one-story, wood-frame shed also is located to the east of the main house. The 19th-century building is covered by weatherboarding and a gable roof.

A cast-iron bell on a standard is found to the rear of the kitchen. Three graves moved to the property in the present century are situated to the north of the main house.

The grounds contain old boxwood paths with box also surrounding the house. The rest of the grounds are lushly planted with ornamental trees and shrubs in an old-fashioned manner. The thick greenery contrasts with the areas of lawn.

RCC

## BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property consists of approximately 12 acres. The property is a fraction of the original Howerton tract of 159½ acres. It is drawn to include the house, outbuildings and the later graveyard.

## 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

the activities of the family through the 20th century. The landscaping has been maintained and includes varieties of trees and shrubs popular in the 19th century.

VDS/RCC

## 9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

U. S. Route 501; thence following said side of said route 800' N to point of origin.

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

- 2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1968, 1979 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

