

VLR 9/11/02
NRHP 1/27/02

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Spring Hill

other names/site number DHR #063-0080

2. Location

street & number 11221 Carriage Road (Local Route 629) 9 not for publication N/A

city or town Providence Forge 9 vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county New Kent code 127 zip code 23140

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (9 See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date 2/10/02

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/ agricultural field
COMMERCE/restaurant

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC/ Federal**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>BRICK</u>
roof	<u>WOOD/ shingle</u>
walls	<u>WOOD/ weatherboard</u>
other	

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE**Period of Significance** c. 1782 - 1952**Significant Dates**1782, 1947**Significant Persons**N/A**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Architect/Builder**individual distinction.
Unknown**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Swem Library at The College of William & Mary

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 11.12 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
	1 18	323600	4144750	3 18	323260	4144670
	2 18	323470	4144600	4 18	323260	4144850

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Holly Marie Williams

organization Hopke & Associates, Inc.

date July 11, 2002

street & number 1156 Jamestown Road, Suite C

telephone (757) 229-1100

city or town Williamsburg state Virginia

zip code 23185

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **Mr. & Mrs. Richard & Sharron Dawes**
street & number **11221 Carriage Road** telephone **(804) 966-2550**
city or town **Providence Forge** state **Virginia** zip code **23140**

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Summary Description

Spring Hill is a private residence located on the south side of Route 629 in New Kent County, Virginia. Believed to have been constructed c. 1782 for Richard Croshaw Graves (1735-1798), the house is a one-and-one-half-story, five-bay, gable-roofed, timber-frame, Federal-style structure with a center-hall plan. The original structure is 36'-3" wide by 22'-2" deep; in 1947, a 36'-0" wide by 24'-0" deep addition was constructed on the northeast side. Although it is likely that the house originally had front and back porches, those present today are 20th century additions to the structure. The house has a brick foundation, weatherboard siding, and a wood shingle roof. The property includes four outbuildings; the smokehouse, believed to have been built shortly after the original portion of the house and constructed of similar materials, is considered a contributing building.

Architectural Analysis

Spring Hill is located approximately 120 yards southwest of Route 629, less than one mile from State Route 60. Route 629 was formerly a part of Route 60, a road among the oldest in the United States. As the most direct route between Richmond and Williamsburg, this road— also known as Pocahontas Trail or Richmond Road— wound through New Kent and Charles City Counties and was the primary path for travelers in the 1700s. One day's drive from Williamsburg, Spring Hill was used as a tavern in the latter part of the eighteenth century. To enhance its popularity and draw additional visitors, Spring Hill also featured a race course and stables where the race horses were boarded. Today, the property has been whittled down from the 906 acres willed to Richard C. Graves in 1749¹ to eleven acres. Spring Hill is bounded on the south and east by a large yard sloping two hundred yards to agricultural fields surrounded by forest. To the west, the ground is level to an unpaved driveway. The house is bordered on the north by a large, gently rolling field stretching from the house to Route 629.

There are currently four outbuildings associated with the house; a barn on the site was demolished in the 1990s and a chicken coop and ice pit were earlier removed from the site. The existing smokehouse features

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2

much of the same detailing as found on the house and was likely constructed shortly after Spring Hill was built.

The garage is a frame structure covered with weatherboards and was probably constructed in the mid-1900s. There is also a pre-fabricated storage shed and a frame shed, currently under construction, on site.

Spring Hill is an example of the center-hall plan popular in Virginia in the seventeenth century. The center-hall plan typically consists of two main rooms, one on each end of the house, separated by a small hallway. The front and back doors to the residence, as well as the stairs, were generally located in this hallway, and the arrangement permitted the opportunity for cross ventilation.² This appears to be the case at Spring Hill; however, it is unclear whether the house was originally designed in this manner. Evidence in the brick foundation walls suggests that the house was originally constructed as one room with a passage and, perhaps, was enlarged with a second room at a later date.³ A slight bulge in the brickwork at the same location on both the southeast and northwest walls may be evidence of an alteration to the original plan; at this location, the bond pattern changes from common to Flemish.⁴

Early examples of the center-hall plan had a screen or temporary partition sectioning off the main room from the hall.⁵ Nail marks in the flooring and a scar in the wall approximately seven feet from the northeast corner of the room are evidence of the former existence of a partition wall, which was removed in the 1990s to enlarge the living space. However, the chair rail is uninterrupted, strengthening the hypothesis that this partition was constructed after c. 1782.⁶ Nail holes and patches in the floor also remain as remnants of a small powder room, added to the space in the mid-20th century and removed in the 1990s.

Spring Hill is a timber-frame structure with studs set 1'-8" on center, as is evident in the basement stairway and in a closet in the 1947 addition. This closet offers a peek into the bones of the structure. The studs are approximately 4" by 4" and are each marked with Roman numerals. There are twelve standard joists and two larger joists— placed at 24" on center and all visible from the basement— supporting the first floor. Each

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

framing member spans from foundation wall to foundation wall with no center supports or summer beams. The joists are approximately 8" deep and 5" wide, while the beams are 9-1/4" wide and 12" deep. Where possible, the joists bear directly on the masonry wall. Where joists meet perpendicular members, such as at the opening for the basement stairway, they are attached with mortise-and-tenon joints secured with treenails.⁷ The bottom edge of the end of each joist and girder is planed to keep the tops of the structural members level. The tongue-and-groove flooring is approximately 1-1/2" thick and is applied directly to the structural system; there is no subfloor. A similar planing technique was used on the floor boards to ensure a level appearance on the top surface.

The house has a full English basement with fireplaces at either end. From the basement it is possible to examine the masonry techniques used in the construction of the foundation. The northwest wall is laid in a compacted version of common bond; a header course, three courses of stretchers, and another course of headers. The brick patterns on the southeast wall have been obscured by layers of plaster and paint, but the pattern on the exterior indicates that the foundation was constructed with common bond below grade, and Flemish bond above. The fireplace at the southeast end of the basement features a two-course segmental arch over the 43" wide by 39" high firebox opening, with the bricks placed in rowlock. At the northwest end of the basement, the bricks above the fireplace opening rest on top of a steel lintel. The opening of this fireplace is much larger, measuring 53" wide by 39" high. A hatch in the middle of the floor permits access to a large root cellar, approximately 10 feet x 9 feet wide and 3½ to 4 feet deep.

Seven small windows in the foundation permit light to enter the basement. All of the openings have been fitted with modern windows, but the masonry openings appear to be original. Most houses of this era had unglazed openings with wooden bars to prevent entry and permit ventilation,⁸ and a 1970 examination of the house for the Historic American Buildings Survey documents that Spring Hill was no exception.⁹ On the northwest wall, there are two foundation windows; on the opposite side, there is evidence of four penetrations. Three of these openings still house windows; one of the openings has been filled with brick. There is one window on the southwest elevation (although the present location of the basement door may also have originally been a window opening) and one opening at the northeast end, enclosed during the construction of the 1947 addition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

Interior walls are finished with riven laths and horsehair plaster; exterior walls are faced with beaded weatherboards, probably pine¹⁰, with a seven-inch exposure. The weatherboards are painted white, and appear to be white or a very light color in every photograph on record.

The framework supporting the roof is comprised of 3" x 3½" rafters placed at 24" on center. The gable roof, originally covered with wood shingles, was replaced with a standing seam metal roof in the mid-twentieth century and was restored to wood shingles in the 1990s. The bargeboard, or rake board, at the gable ends is approximately 8" in width, beaded on the bottom edge, and tapers to overlap the end of a box cornice, capped with an ornamental eave detail. There are four simple gable dormers on each side of the roof. The dormers are arranged asymmetrically and align with the major openings (doors and windows) below. Each dormer has a four-over-four, single-hung window measuring 3'-9" high by 1'-10" wide.

Although it is now the "back door" to the structure, it is believed that the primary facade at the time of construction may have been the elevation facing southeast. This assumption is based upon the foundation brick bond pattern; on all other elevations, the foundation walls have been laid in common bond, but on the southeast side, the bond pattern switches to the more decorative Flemish bond at one foot above grade. The assumption is strengthened by the omission of certain bricks on the southeast side of the chimney, forming decorative diamond and rectangular patterns. Such a masonry detail would most likely have been found on the main facade of a structure. The southeast facade is pierced by two large (2'-4" wide by 5'-5" high) six-over-six windows to the left of the centrally located entrance. (The windows are not original to the structure but were placed into the original openings.)

There are two doors to the residence on this facade; the larger opens directly into the living room, or parlor, and the smaller leads to the dining room. Theories abound regarding these two side-by-side entrances. They may be evidence of an addition requiring an additional access point. It is possible that this second, smaller door leading directly into the dining room was used to service the dining room and upstairs chambers. A second door on the stair, located directly across from the exterior dining room door, would have permitted quick passage to upstairs rooms without disturbing activities in either the parlor or the dining room.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

To the left of the entrances is a narrower window of the same height as the other two on this elevation. Each of the windows has operable shutters painted dark gray with wrought-iron shutter dogs and hardware. It is likely that this facade has always had an entry porch of some type given the vertical distance from the door threshold to grade (approximately 3½ feet) but the porch existing today is not original to the house. A photograph of Spring Hill appears in the July 1937 issue of the William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, illustrating an article entitled *Old Houses in New Kent County*. This photograph shows the structure with two-over-two windows and a screened back porch constructed on concrete piers. Shutters are not present in this photograph and probably are not original to the house.¹¹

The windowless northeast and southwest elevations are dominated by massive brick chimneys, centered on the gable ends, very similar in appearance to those found on the Bracken House in Colonial Williamsburg, constructed c. 1760.¹² Presumably, the bricks were manufactured in the colonies rather than being imported from abroad; in The Eighteenth Century Houses of Williamsburg, the author stresses that "there is not a single building... within fifty miles of Williamsburg, of which it can assuredly be said that it was built of imported bricks."¹³ Many of the eighteenth century brick houses in nearby Williamsburg were constructed with mortar made from shell lime; although no chemical analysis has been conducted, the brickwork in this house is probably no exception.¹⁴ The chimneys are 7'-3" wide at the base and step from approximately 3'-6" deep at the base to 2'-10" approximately 3'-0" above grade. They continue to the top at 2'-10" deep and are laid in a combination of Flemish and running bond. The base of the chimney is laid in running bond, and the body of the chimney is comprised of brick laid in Flemish bond with queen's closers, and occasional glazed headers. The portion above the ridge of the gable returns to running bond. The assembly is topped with a stepped brick chimney cap.

The southwest facade is fairly plain, with no windows. A small, shed-roofed pent to the right side of the chimney is a 1990s addition and permits access to the basement. It can be assumed that the northeast facade of the original house, entirely enclosed in the 1947 addition, was quite similar to the opposite end. The middle section of the chimney is exposed in the modern-day kitchen and an upper section is exposed on the second floor of the addition; both are laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers. A groove in the masonry on the left

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6

side of the chimney indicates the previous existence of a shed-roofed entrance. This structure is visible in the photograph published in William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine in 1937¹⁵ and is similar in size and character to the one existing today on the opposite elevation.

The northwest facade is considered the front of the house today. The entry porch is a modern addition. The doors and windows on this facade are not original to the house but are replacement units inserted into the original openings. The brick foundation can barely be seen above grade; where visible, it is evident that this foundation wall has been laid in common bond. The off-center location of the windows and dormers above may be attributed to the arrangement of the spaces inside. The two large windows to the right of the door are in the living room; the window to the left is in the dining room, and the blank space between the door and this window is occupied by the enclosed stair.

As mentioned previously, the first-floor plan of Spring Hill today consists of two rooms— a living room and a dining room— divided by a partition wall and an enclosed stair. The second level has a small hallway in the center, with two rooms flanking it on either side. Both upper-level rooms were probably used as bedchambers at the original time of construction; today, the room on the southwest side of the house is used as a master bedroom and the room to the northeast is a converted bathroom.

The southwest first-floor room was presumably used as a parlor or meeting room during the residence's tenure as a tavern; today, the owners use this space as a living room. The baseboard, wainscot, chair rail, and window and door casings are original to the structure; the crown molding and fireplace surround were later additions. The first floor ceiling height was originally 13'-0",¹⁶ but in the 1990s, central air conditioning was added to the house and a suspended gypsum board ceiling was installed to conceal the necessary ductwork, lowering the ceiling height to 11'-4".

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7

The 7" chair rail is comprised of a flat piece of stock with a beaded bottom edge and a small cornice-like moulding at the top. The wainscot is a solid, hand-drawn piece of wood approximately 23" in height. An 8" baseboard completes the paneling on the lower half of the walls. Saw marks are evident in the wood panel. The floors are constructed of tongue-and-groove heart pine planks, which vary in width but average approximately 6" wide. The floor boards are attached directly to the joists below using cut nails.

The northeast first-floor room is smaller than the living room and is accessed from the living room through a cased opening. It is currently used as a dining room. This room also has original chair rail and baseboards, although the woodwork is simpler in profile than those in the southwest room. The chair rail is approximately 6" in height and is beaded at both the top and bottom edges. The baseboard is approximately 7" tall and is beaded at the top edge. The walls are comprised of hand-split lath and horsehair plaster above the chair rail and between the chair rail and the baseboard.

A report compiled in 1970 by Chappell for the Historic American Buildings Survey notes that the mantle in the dining room was salvaged from Windsor View, also in New Kent County, and was installed at Spring Hill.¹⁷ The centerpiece of the mantle has a carved sunburst design with a crescent moon shape carved into the wood at the upper left and right corners. Old photographs of the mantle, taken at the time of the HABS visit, show that at one point in Spring Hill's history, the crescent moons were filled with putty, sanded, and painted to give a flat appearance. In the 1990s, the putty was painstakingly chiseled out and the mantle was returned to its original design.

A narrow, dog-leg stair leads from the entry hall to the second story and divides the southwest room from the northeast room. The narrow stair enclosure, approximately 28" from wall to wall, may be entered either through a cased opening in the southwest room or by opening a door to the stair in the northeast room. Scars in the cased opening indicate that there were once hinges mounted on the door frame. The door in the dining room is directly across from the smaller exterior door, giving credence to the theory that this extra door may have been used for access from the outdoor kitchen to the upstairs bedchambers. The natural finish, heart

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 8

pine stair treads are 11" deep and the painted risers are 8" high. There are no railings on either side of the steps.

The second-floor rooms retain their original plaster walls, woodwork, fireplaces, and wood floors. The running trim on the second level is simpler than, but complementary to, the woodwork on the first floor. The baseboards are 5" high and are fashioned with a beaded top edge detail similar to that found in the northeast room downstairs. The doors are only 6'-1" high to fit within the attic space and are framed with a 3" casing. Door hardware was originally placed at 27" above the floor but the knobs and latches were moved up to standard height by a previous owner. Each dormer has an 8" header and is trimmed at the edges with a 3" piece of trim finished with a beaded edge. Fireplaces in the modern-day master bedroom and bath have two-course segmental arches laid in rowlock.

The design of the 1947 addition is sympathetic to the c. 1782 original house. The addition is a platform frame structure covered with weatherboards that have been planed to match the profile of the original beaded siding. Two dormers on the northwest elevation were constructed to match the dormers of the original house.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 9

Summary Statement of Significance

Spring Hill, in New Kent County, Virginia, is architecturally significant as a well preserved example of a typical mid- to late-eighteenth-century farmhouse in the Tidewater area of Virginia. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

Arranged according to the center-hall plan, it is representative of many mid-eighteenth-century houses found in the region. The c. 1782 house retains its original exterior brick chimneys and foundation, weatherboards and trim. The interior is equally well preserved, maintaining the original tongue-and-groove flooring, woodwork and paneling and plaster walls. Minor changes over the years have been completed with a respect for the integrity of the structure; the 1947 frame addition is complementary to the c. 1782 structure in materials, form, and detail. The smokehouse is believed to have been constructed shortly after the original part of the house was built and is considered a contributing resource.

Spring Hill is located just off Route 60, the major thoroughfare between Williamsburg and Richmond before the construction of Interstate 64. The house was formerly a tavern and the site of a race course operated by the Graves family in the 1700s. Today, it is a private residence.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Historical Background

The Graves family was a prominent family in James City and New Kent Counties in the years from the early landings at Jamestown through the decades preceding the Civil War. In Dr. Malcolm Harris' 1977 book, Old New Kent County, Some Account of the Planters, Plantations, and Places in New Kent County, Volume I, he details their lineage and the history of their residence at Spring Hill.

The family who built and resided at Spring Hill from the time of construction (c. 1782) until the time of the Civil War were descendants of Captain Thomas Graves, who arrived in Virginia on the *Mary and Margaret* in 1607.¹⁸ Thomas Graves (1580-1636) was a member of the first General Assembly, which met at Jamestown on July 30, 1619, and held a number of important positions in Colonial governance, serving as a Burgess from Accomack County, Commander of the Plantation of Accomack, a Justice, and a Vestryman until his death in 1636.¹⁹

According to Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia, Captain John Smith was captured by Indians on this property and was taken before Powhatan.²⁰

All New Kent County records were lost in fires in 1787 and 1864, making ownership of the property prior the 1749 questionable.²¹ The first mention of the property is found in the will of Thomas Graves' fifth generation descendent, Ralph Graves III (?-1748), in 1749. He died testate, and allocated a parcel of his James City County estate to each of his sons.²²

His youngest son, Richard Croshaw Graves (1735-1798), inherited 906 acres then known as Indian Fields, located on the Chickahominy River. In 1768, the land became a part of New Kent County.²³ The date of construction of the house at Spring Hill is questionable; visual evidence and construction techniques indicate that the house was most likely built in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11

Circumstantial and historical evidence indicates that, perhaps, the house was constructed even earlier. A previous owner found a small lockbox dated 1765 prior to the construction of the 1947 addition. The lockbox was misplaced during the construction of the addition, but was found in the barn in the 1990s during the Mountcastle renovation. Unfortunately, it was so badly deteriorated it was unable to be saved.

Richard Croshaw Graves and his wife, the former Elizabeth Valentine, lived in New Kent County with their seven children in the latter part of the eighteenth century.²⁴ Graves is mentioned in the *Virginia Gazette*, a colonial newspaper published in Williamsburg, quite frequently between 1768 and 1777 as the owner of a large estate; most often, in the context of advertisements for the sale of property,²⁵ ²⁶ notices of runaway slaves,²⁷ or the execution of estates.²⁸ Richard Croshaw Graves was probably responsible for the construction of the existing structure and was presumably the first member of the Graves family to live at what is now called Spring Hill.

The Graves family encountered hard times while living in New Kent County; on December 29, 1768, the *Virginia Gazette* advertised the sale of 685 acres of their property, plus livestock, furniture, and slaves, at auction.²⁹ Apparently, the cause of the Graves' financial difficulties was Richard's generosity; "... his misfortunes were not occasioned by any want of industry, but by accident, and his too hospitable, friendly, and generous temper, which all his acquaintance can testify."³⁰ In 1781, their eldest son Henry died of smallpox, and upon Richard Croshaw Graves' death, ownership of the property passed to son Col. Richard Graves.³¹

Local legend has it that Thomas Jefferson spent the eve of his wedding to Martha Wayles Skelton at Indian Fields. Jefferson would have been traveling to her parents' home, The Forest, in Charles City County, from Williamsburg, where he was attending court. He departed on his journey on Christmas Eve, and arrived at The Forest after Christmas Day, 1771. Jefferson applied for a marriage license on December 31, 1771 and the couple was married on New Year's Day, 1772.³²

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12

Col. Richard Graves (1772-1835) and his wife were the proprietors of a racetrack and stables and a hotel on the property.³³ Graves served as a member of the Virginia General Assembly in 1822, and following his term in office, he lived on at Indian Fields, his only place of residence during his life, until 1835.³⁴

The years between 1835, the time of Graves' death, and 1863 are somewhat of a mystery. Sometime between 1835 and 1840 the name of the property was changed to Spring Hill.³⁵ Although listed in the 1810 U.S. Census as a family comprised of a man and a woman between 26 and 45 years of age, four male children under the age of 16 and two female children under age 16³⁶, the family is absent from the 1850 census.³⁷ Deeds show that the property remained in the possession of the Graves family.

Local lore has it that Spring Hill was commandeered as a field hospital during the Civil War, and that the northeast bedchamber was used as an operating room for amputations. A former owner of the property relayed to the current owners that he had invited a historian from the Smithsonian Institution to the house to analyze the pattern and composition of stains on the wood floor. He concluded that the stains were caused by blood, and determined the layout of the operating theater based on the locations of the stains; unstained areas were covered by operating tables, stained areas were at the periphery. Regrettably, neither the researcher nor the property owner documented the findings; however, they add a layer of interest to the story of a property thought to be associated with a range of historic events. During the 1990s renovation, a number of Civil War artifacts were unearthed. Oral tradition also has it that there was once a tunnel from the house to a safe spot near the Chickahominy, to be used by the family in such a case. However, no physical evidence of the tunnel has been found.

The Graves family sold Spring Hill to Thomas Sherman in 1863.³⁸ New Kent County Deeds show that the house passed into the possession of James Bradley four years later,³⁹ who sold it to Mordecai & Emma B. Rouse in 1883.⁴⁰ The Rouses sold the property to W.M. and Martha Ann Smith later that year,⁴¹ who sold it to J.J. Robinson and his wife Mary in 1906.⁴²

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13

Although not reflected by the Deeds, Harris' Old New Kent County: Some Account of the Planters, Plantations, and Places in New Kent County states that the house was owned by Joseph Brown until 1918.⁴³ Brown had purchased it from J.J. Robinson, a conductor on the nearby Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. The conductor had a habit of stopping the train at the outskirts of the property to check on the house, a practice his employer did not look favorably upon.⁴⁴ According to Harris' interview with W.J. Robinson, Robinson's father, G.F., assumed possession of the property in 1918.⁴⁵ However, the Deeds show that G.F. & W.J. jointly owned the property from 1920 to 1923, when son W.J. and his wife Addie bought out his father.⁴⁶ In 1939 Addie became the sole owner of the property until her death in 1955, when it was inherited by Nora Lee Robinson Cowles and her husband Edward G. Cowles and Howard G. and Anne S. Robinson.⁴⁷ The 864-square-foot addition was constructed in 1947, doubling the living space in the residence. In 1970, W. J. Robinson was interviewed by Chappell, a recorder for the Historic American Building Survey. This report reveals that the house had fallen into decay before Robinson assumed ownership; Robinson is credited with saving the property from falling into ruin.⁴⁸

The property was purchased by Bob R. Harrelson and Francis W. and Barbara Ann Selby in 1982,⁴⁹ and Harrelson purchased Selby's share to become the sole owner in 1984.⁵⁰ Harrelson sold the property to Warren Mountcastle in 1990.⁵¹ Mountcastle, a general contractor skilled in the rehabilitation of old houses, completely renovated Spring Hill and demolished a few of the dilapidated outbuildings, including the barn. The property was deemed eligible for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 1991, but the formal application was never completed. He sold the property to William Hartsock in 1997.⁵² The present owners, Richard and Sharron Dawes, purchased the house in 1998.⁵³

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7, 8 Page 14

END NOTES

1. Harris, Old New Kent County, 200.
2. Morrison, Hugh. Early American Architecture From the First Colonial Settlements to the National Period. (Oxford University Press: New York, 1952), 140-141.
3. Parker, Giles. Essay written for Historic Preservation 305, Mary Washington College, April 18, 1991. 3.
4. Ibid., 4.
5. Morrison, Early American Architecture, 140-141.
6. Ibid., 4.
7. Whiffen, Marcus. The Eighteenth Century Houses of Williamsburg, revised edition. (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation: Williamsburg, Virginia, 1960), 91.
8. Ibid., 112.
9. Chappell. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory: *Spring Hill, New Kent County (VDHR 63-80)*. August 1970.
10. Ibid., 11.
11. Swem, Earl Gregg & John Stewart Bryan, eds. "Old Houses in New Kent County." William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, Vol. 17, Series II, No. 3. (William and Mary College: Williamsburg, Virginia) July 1937. Plate 50, 238.
12. Whiffen, The Eighteenth Century Houses of Williamsburg, 203.
13. Ibid., 11.
14. Ibid., 11.

(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places**Continuation Sheet**Section 7, 8 Page 15

15. Swem, "Old Houses in New Kent County," Plate 50, 238.
16. Harris, Old New Kent County, 201.
17. Chappell. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory: *Spring Hill, New Kent County (VDHR 63-80)*. August 1970.
18. Harris, Old New Kent County, 199.
19. Ibid., 199.
20. Brock, R.A. Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia, Illustrated. (H.H. Hardesty and Company, Publishers: New York, Richmond, Chicago & Toledo, 1884), 398.
21. Harris, Old New Kent County, 223.
22. Ibid., 200.
23. Ibid., 200.
24. Ibid., 200.
25. Purdie, Alex. & John Dixon, eds. Advertisement for the sale of property at the home of Richard Graves, New Kent County, Virginia. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: December 29, 1768.
26. Rind. Notice of sale of slaves and gun. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: January 19, 1769.
27. Rind. Notice of runaway slave named Will. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: August 12, 1773.
28. Dixon & Hunter, eds. Advertisement of the estate of Joseph Valentine. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: June 13, 1777.
29. Purdie, Alex. & John Dixon, eds. Advertisement for the sale of property at the home of Richard Graves, New Kent County, Virginia. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: December 29, 1768.

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB No. 1024-0018

(8-86)

Section 7, 8 Page 16

30. Purdie, Alex. & John Dixon, eds. Advertisement for the sale of property at the home of Richard Graves, New Kent County, Virginia. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: January 28, 1768.
31. Harris, Old New Kent County, 200.
32. Bedini, Silvio A. Thomas Jefferson: Statesman of Science. (Macmillan Publishing Co.: New York, 1990), 56.
33. Brock, Hardesty's, 398.
34. Harris, Old New Kent County, 201.
35. Letter from Dorothy Fowler (great-great-granddaughter of Richard C. Graves) to Jackie Pomeroy, Heritage Library, September 1992.
36. Martha Washington Chapter of the District of Columbia, NSDAR. New Kent County, Virginia U.S. Census for 1810 and U.S. Census for 1850 and Abstracts of the Application Papers of Revolutionary War Pensioners, Vol. 1. (National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution: Washington, DC, 1938), 5.
37. Ibid., 12-56.
38. New Kent Deeds, Book 4, Page 154.
39. New Kent Deeds, Book 3, Page 482.
40. New Kent Deeds, Book 1, Page 655.
41. New Kent Deeds, Book 3, Page 511.
42. New Kent Deeds, Book 10, Page 467.
43. Harris, Old New Kent County, 201.
44. Ibid., 201.
45. Ibid., 201.
46. New Kent Deeds, Book 17, Page 73, and New Kent Deeds, Book 18, Page 400.

(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 7, 8 Page 17

47. New Kent Deeds, Book 28, Page 184 and New Kent Deeds, Book 119, Page 281.
48. Chappell, Historic American Building Survey Inventory: *Spring Hill, New Kent County (VDHR 63-80)*. August 1970.
49. New Kent Deeds, Book 104, Page 57.
50. New Kent Deeds, Book 119, Page 281.
51. New Kent Deeds, Book 160, Page 477.
52. New Kent Deeds, Book 247, Page 240.
53. New Kent Deeds, Book 271, Page 196.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 18

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bedini, Silvio A. Thomas Jefferson: Statesman of Science. Macmillan Publishing Co.: New York, 1990.
- Brock, R.A., Hardesty's Historical & Geographical Encyclopedia, Illustrated. H.H. Hardesty and Company, Publishers: New York, Richmond, Chicago & Toledo, 1884. Page 398.
- Calloway, Stephen and Elizabeth Cromley, eds. The Elements of Style: A Practical Encyclopedia of Interior Architectural Details from 1485 to the Present, second edition. Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996.
- Chamberlayne, C.G., ed. Vestry Book and Register of St. Peter's Parish, New Kent & James City Counties, Virginia, 1706 - 1768. Virginia State Library and Archives: Richmond, Virginia, 1989.
- Chappell. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory: *Spring Hill, New Kent County (VDHR 63-80)*. August 1970.
- Dawes, Richard & Sharron. Virginia Department of Historic Resources Preliminary Information Form: *Spring Hill, New Kent County (VDHR 63-80)* June 22, 2001.
- Dixon & Hunter, eds. Advertisement of the estate of Joseph Valentine. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: June 13, 1777.
- Farrar, Emmie. Ferguson. Old Virginia Houses Along The James. Hastings House, Publishers: New York, 1957. Page 203.
- Forman, Henry Chandler Ph.D., AIA. Virginia Architecture in the Seventeenth Century. The Virginia 350th Anniversary Celebration Corporation: Williamsburg, Virginia, 1957.
- Heritage Memory Lane: A Walk Through History Using Treasured Family Recipes and Homes, Charles City - New Kent Heritage Foundation, Inc., 1988. Selden Richardson, Illustrator.
- Harris, Malcolm Hart, M.D., Old New Kent County: Some Account of the Planters, Plantations and Places in New Kent County, Vol. 1, Virginia Book Company: Berryville, Virginia, 1977.
- Malone, Dumas, ed. "Jefferson, Thomas." Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. V (Hibben - Larkin). Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1961. Pages 17-18.
- _____. "Powhatan." Dictionary of American Biography, Vol VIII (Platt - Seward). Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1963. Pages 160-161.
- _____. "Smith, John." Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. IX (Sewell - Trowbridge). Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1964. Pages 295-296.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 19

BIBLIOGRAPHY, Continued

Martha Washington Chapter of the District of Columbia, National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution. New Kent County, Virginia U.S. Census for 1810 and U.S. Census for 1850 and Abstracts of the Application Papers of Revolutionary War Pensioners, Vol. 1. National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution: Washington, DC, 1938.

Morrison, Hugh. Early American Architecture From the First Colonial Settlements to the National Period. Oxford University Press: New York, 1952.

Mountcastle, G. Warren, Jr. Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Historic Resources Preliminary Information Request: Spring Hill, New Kent County (VDHR 63-80) December 28, 1990.

Mullins, Lisa C., ed. Early American Southern Homes. National Historical Society: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1987. From material originally published as The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs, edited by Russell F. Whitehead and Frank Chouteau Brown.

The Southern Tradition. National Historical Society: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1987. From material originally published as The Georgian Period, edited by Professor William Rotch Ware.

New Kent County Brochure: Historical Highlights. New Kent Businessmen's Association, P.O. Box 321, Lanexa, Virginia 23089.

Parker, Giles. Essay written for Historic Preservation 305, Mary Washington College, April 18, 1991.

Purdie, Alex. & John Dixon, eds. Advertisement for the sale of property at the home of Richard Graves, New Kent County, Virginia. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: December 29, 1768.

Purdie, Alex. & John Dixon, eds. Advertisement for the sale of property at the home of Richard Graves, New Kent County, Virginia. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: January 28, 1768.

Rind. Notice of runaway slave named Will. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: August 12, 1773.

Rind. Notice of sale of slaves and gun. The Virginia Gazette. Williamsburg, Virginia: January 19, 1769.

Roth, Leland M. A Concise History of American Architecture. Harper & Row, Publishers: New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco & London, 1980.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 20

BIBLIOGRAPHY, Continued

Schreiner-Yantis, Netti and Florene Speakman Love. Personal Property Tax Lists for the Year 1787 for New Kent County, Virginia. Genealogical Books in Print: Springfield, Virginia, 1987.

Swem, Earl Gregg & John Stewart Bryan, eds. "Old Houses in New Kent County." William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, Vol. 17, Series II, No. 3. William & Mary College: Williamsburg, Virginia, July 1937. Plate 50, Page 238.

Whiffen, Marcus. The Eighteenth Century Houses of Williamsburg, revised edition. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation: Williamsburg, Virginia, 1960.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 21

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary encompasses approximately eleven (11.12) acres and is all the land now associated with the house. The property being nominated is identified as Section 43, Parcel 41 on the tax parcel maps for New Kent County, Virginia.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary for this nomination includes all of the land now associated with Spring Hill, approximately 11 acres. This is a portion of the tract of land owned by the Graves family at the time of the construction of the house, c. 1765.

SPRING HILL
VDHR # 63-80
New Kent Co., VA
Zone: 18
Easting Northing
323600 4144750
323470 4144600
323260 4144670
323480 4144850

