

Spring Bank Farm
7506 Old Shepherdsville Road
Louisville
Jefferson County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-149

HABS,
KY,
56-LOUVI,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SPRING BANK FARM

HABS No. KY-149

Location: 7506 Old Shepherdsville Road, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky. (New address pending development of subdivision)

Present Owner: Blieden Development Company.

Present Occupant: Briscoe Family.

Present Use: Dwelling.

Significance: Spring Bank Farm is an extremely unusual and complete ensemble of pre-Civil War farm buildings. Executed in a vernacular style, they are typical of what was once found on many of the smaller Kentucky farms.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: From 1805 onward the buildings were erected according to need and availability of materials and labor. The buildings were basically complete as a group by the outbreak of the Civil War.
2. Architect: Probably none.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The buildings of Spring Bank Farm are located on a 5.777 acre lot, numbered 5 of block 2091 in Jefferson County. The following references tracing the title of this lot are found in the Jefferson County, Kentucky Deed Books:

1805 Deed, September 14, 1805, recorded in Deed Book 7, page 490. Robert Breckenbridge sold 110 acres to George Seebolt for \$110.

1815 Deed, December 2, 1815, recorded in Deed Book I, page 461. James D. Breckenbridge and Alice Breckenbridge sold 180 acres to George Seabolt (sic) for \$1900.

1817 Deed, February 1, 1817, recorded in Deed Book M, page 184. George Seebolt sold 50 acres to Mary Risinger for \$100.

1824 Will, June 15, 1824, recorded in Will Book 2, page 273. George Seebolt devised his farm to his son, Amos.

- 1878 Deed, March 30, 1878, recorded in Deed Book 216, page 251. Thomas Shanks, assignee of Amos Seebolt, J.J.B. Hilliard, trustee, F.K. Hunt, Joshua F. Speed, James W. Henning, Sidney J. Hobbs, Frank S. Dravo and Margaret Dravo, H.F. Barnes and Fanny B. Barnes, John G. Hunt, Jacob Boston, Elizabeth Fox, Mr. Stephens, S.J. Hobbs, administrator of G.W. Bayless, deceased, Mix Booth, John Beha, H.T. Hird, T.J. Applegate, Frank Raidt and Co., Third National Bank of Louisville, Elizabeth Boston, M. Burkhart, and George W. Seebolt, administrator of John H. Seebolt, all by Robert Cochran, Commissioner of the Louisville Chancery Court sold the farm, then consisting of 297 acres, to W.M. Wilhoite for \$16,110.
- 1919 Deed, March 12, 1919, recorded in Deed Book 904, page 590. W.M. Wilhoite, widower, conveyed the 297 acre farm to his two sons B.F. Wilhoite and Walter M. Wilhoite.
- 1932 Deed, May 12, 1932, recorded in Deed Book 1500, page 595. Walter M. Wilhoite, Georgie W. Briscoe and Frank P. Briscoe, Heber Wilhoite (of unsound mind) by Lula Pendergrass, Lelly Kelley and B.W. Kelley, and Florence Durrett Ferrell, all heirs of B.F. Wilhoite and all by Ben Ford, H.C. Lovelace, and Joe Kennedy, Commissioner of the Jefferson Circuit Court placed the title to Spring Bank Farm in the name of Heber Wilhoite.
- 1939 Deed, March 14, 1939, recorded in Deed Book 1702, page 537. Georgie W. Briscoe, Florence Durrett Ferrell, and Lelly Kelley and B.W. Kelley, heirs of Heber Wilhoite, deceased September 4, 1936, conveyed two-thirds interest in the farm to Walter M. Wilhoite. See also affidavit of descent recorded in Deed Book 1702, page 533 and dated April 13, 1939.
- 1939 Deed, October 26, 1939, recorded in Deed Book 1967, page 51. Walter M. Wilhoite conveyed joint ownership of the farm to Lula Briscoe Pendergrass, his niece.
- 1973 Deed, September 7, 1973, recorded in Deed Book 4661, page 297. John Pendergrast Briscoe, executor of the estate of Lula B. Pendergrass by will dated February 13, 1972 and recorded in Will Book 176, page 544, sold the remaining 189.255 acres of the farm to Blieden Development Company for \$2,282,600 with the stipulation that the 5.777 acre tract containing the house and outbuildings be retained for the use of Billie Briscoe Paine and Helen Briscoe Preston as long as they live.

4. Alterations and additions: A multitude of minor alterations have been made to the buildings throughout their history. However, it can safely be said that none of the additions and alterations undertaken have been out of character with the rural vernacular nature of the buildings. With a construction history such as the one of this farm it is virtually impossible to determine when original construction ceased and the process of alteration set in. Perhaps the safest cutoff date would be 1878 when the ownership passed from the Seebolts to the Wilhoites.

A board fencing replaced metal fencing following Wilhoite purchase of the farm.

- B. Historical Context: The Seebolt family is best known for their adherence to the teachings of Alexander Campbell, noted early 19th century exponent of restoration of primitive Christianity and founder of the Churches of Christ and Disciples of Christ denominations. It is said that the preacher visited the Seebolts and used Fern Creek, for which the farm derives its name, for the baptism of early converts. Gravestones in the Newburg Christian Church cemetery yield the following information:

George W. Seebolt, born December 25, 1787, died July 31, 1869.

consort, Hannah, born at Hagerstown, Maryland March 13, 1788, died May 5, 1863.

Amos Seebolt, born June 10, 1821, died April 14, 1885.

John H. Seebolt, born July 7, 1817, died November 13, 1876.

Nancy J., his wife, born November 27, 1819, died January 14, 1885.

Maggie Seebolt, born February 3, 1853, died January 24, 1867.

The Wilhoite family is also noted as being pillars of the Newburg Christian Church. William Monroe Wilhoite moved to the farm on January 7, 1879 with his wife, Louise Ann Crum Wilhoite, his two small children, Georgia and Walter, and his brother-in-law, Morris Crum. They joined the Seebolts in cramped quarters until the Seebolts moved out in March of 1879. It was the Wilhoites who named the farm Spring Bank Farm. William Wilhoite was born July 9, 1837 and died at the age of 91 on August 14, 1928. He was a graduate of Centre College in Kentucky. He enlisted in the Confederate Army in Oldham County, Kentucky September 19, 1861 and served four years. He fought in the Orphan Brigade under the leadership of General Roger W. Hanson, Albert Sydney Johnston and Ben Hardin Helm, who was the brother-in-law of Abraham Lincoln. It was called the Orphan brigade because of the rapid deaths of its leaders. They fought at Shiloh, Corinth, Murfreesboro, Stone River, Atlanta, Vicksburg, and Baton Rouge. Wilhoite was one of only 240 survivors out of an original contingent of 5,000 men. William Wilhoite's brother, Paschal, also fought on the Confederate side. He was one of the men who was led into battle by a horse and buggy bearing Captain Griffith, the only man in history to lead a battle charge from a horse and buggy. Many mementoes of the Wilhoite family and its history fill the house.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

General description:

As previously described, Spring Bank Farm is an ensemble of farm buildings which was typical of farm complexes erected in Kentucky before the Civil War. The ensemble consisted of the main house, barn, cabin, smokehouse, drying house and a small frame structure. The barn is not included in the documentation, as it has probably disappeared. All buildings have plain, vernacular designs, and the walls are of clapboarding, brick and stone, all painted white. The main house is sheathed with narrow clapboarding. Across its front elevation is a two-story porch. The main house is also connected with various additions, which are also painted white. Six-over-six double-hung sash windows are found throughout the residential complex. A wide outside end chimney of brick and stone material serves as the side fireplace for the main house. In the rear yard, just behind the house, is the outbuilding, a smokehouse. It has diamond-shaped vents and a hipped roof. Behind the smokehouse is a small stone cabin with a large outside end chimney of stone material. The stone drying house, still another outbuilding, is of brick construction and is sheltered by a simple gable roof. The small frame structure, whose purpose is not known, is entered by any one of the three front paneled doors. Unusual large windows between these doors have narrow glass panes. A simple gable roof with a long front overhang shelters this structure. The white paint on all buildings is now beginning to show signs of fading.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books located in the Clerk's, Office Jefferson County Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

Will Books located in the Probate Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Papers:

"The Homes and People of Old Shepherdsville Road," by Geneva Aline Katzmann, 1956. pp. 1-14.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Preservation Alliance of Louisville and Jefferson County, Inc. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS, the project was completed during the summer of 1974 at the HABS Field Office in Louisville by Prof. John Haggard, (Syracuse University), Project Supervisor; David Arbogast (Columbia University), Project Historian; Mary Oehrlein, Project Foreman; Bayer Lee (City College of New York), Architect; and Mary M. Herd (University of Tennessee) and Charles Raith (University of Cincinnati), student assistant architects. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written descriptive data in the spring of 1981, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher took the photographs of the structures in 1979.

ADDENDUM TO
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