

**APPENDIX G:**

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS**

**INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY CHERYL C. POWELL**

No information provided for this page.

Telephone Interview with Mr. Charles Allmond

November 21, 1987

William Stewart Allmond was his grandfather's brother's son, and he died about twenty to twenty-five years ago. He had one son who is also deceased, and he did not have any children. Charles Allmond remembers that his father played with his cousin, Bill, Jr. (the son of William Stewart Allmond), at Spring Hill. His father was born in 1904 and died eight years ago. Charles' great-grandfather, John P. Allmond, was the first Democrat elected as mayor of Wilmington.

Telephone Interviews with Mrs. Ann Benethum

November 24, 1987

Mrs. Ann Benethum's husband was a partner in James R. Morford's law firm when she and her husband moved into Spring Hill in 1935. During the six years that the Benethums lived in the house, Morford made many of the alterations and additions to the house and gardens. There was a porch that went around three sides of the house before Morford made some alterations to the house between 1937 and 1938. The east and west porches were removed so that the dining room and the living room could be enlarged. Morford purchased the wallpaper for the dining room locally, and it was especially ordered from England. He also added a butler's pantry and a conservatory behind the dining room. On the second floor the master bedroom was enlarged into a suite that included a bath, dressing room, office, and bedroom.

December 2, 1987

There were an assortment of architectural designs used for the houses in The Cedars subdivision, including a lot of bungalows. A construction company called, Christopher Ward and Davey, Father and Son Carpentry, could have done some of the work at Spring Hill.

December 30, 1987

There was a barn on the property that Morford converted into a garage. Across from the garage entrance was a vacant lot which Morford purchased. Below the house and across Newport Gap Pike lived Mr. Pete George. His

family did a lot of odd jobs, mainly construction, at Spring Hill and also the gardening. She remembers the landscaping of the property that was done by a local firm, but she cannot remember the name of the company. She also remembers a blueprint plan for the landscaping.

#### **Telephone Interview with Mr. John Bue**

December 30, 1987

John Bue, a former employee of the architectural firm of Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning, provided an oral history of the firm. Bue worked there from 1948 to 1958, and the firm was formed in 1932. Before World War II their offices were located at the corner of 9th and Market Streets in the Equitable Security Trust Company building (now the Bank of Delaware). Most of their commissions were for housing design, especially in developments such as Wawaset Park and Westover Hills. Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning also designed and remodeled other large homes and small commercial structures in the Wilmington area. The firm disbanded in 1942 and reunited in 1946. They returned to the same office, but their commissions changed to encompass mainly elementary schools, high schools, hospitals, and nursing homes throughout the state of Delaware and Cecil County, Maryland. Ray Robinson died in 1951, and Burton Stanhope died in 1957. William Manning joined the architectural firm of Dollar, Bonner, Blake, and Street in 1958. Manning took all of the architectural plans by Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning with him, and the plans are stored with this firm (now called Anderson, Brown, Higley, and Funk).

#### **Telephone Interviews with Mrs. Roberta Davis**

November 21, 1987

Mrs. Davis says that her parents built their home on Newport Gap Pike in 1913. She remembers that Dr. Samuel and his family lived in Spring Hill when she was a child. Richard Crook lived in The Cedars, but not in Spring Hill. Richard Crook lived in a house next to Dr. Samuel, who lived in Spring Hill. Crook's house was probably the house that sits directly behind Spring Hill on Washington Avenue.

Spring Hill was the first place she ever saw that had a swimming pool, and she remembers the tennis courts and the orchard. These were all additions made by James R. Morford. His son, James R. Morford, Jr., had a

horse that he rode frequently. The horse was kept in the carriage house that was partially a barn and a garage.

Maris Dixon, one of her childhood friends who lived in the subdivision, was doing some research on the neighborhood about two years ago. [We never were able to find him.]

November 24, 1987

Her parents, Raymond and Betty Pierceson, were married in Wilmington in 1913, and they took the trolley out to their home in The Cedars (2608 Newport Gap Pike) after a brief honeymoon in Philadelphia. Her father, who was a machinist in Marshallton, built their house with the help of friends before he was married.

December 30, 1987

There were many houses built along Newport Gap Pike and Washington, Harrison, and Maple Avenues by 1930. She doesn't remember where the orchard was located.

Telephone Interview with Mrs. Connie Figgatt

November 29, 1987

Mrs. Connie Figgatt is the daughter of James R. Morford. When the family moved into Spring Hill, the house was very old and was probably built in the 1890s. She was 10 years old when her grandparents came to live there. The porch extended on three sides of the house, and the living room and the dining room had porches to their sides. There was a screened-in porch that remained after her father removed the side porches to enlarge the living room and the dining room. Her father added the conservatory, the butler's pantry, and the library. The butler's pantry was originally the area occupied by the kitchen, and when the kitchen was enlarged the butler's pantry was added. The kitchen took over the space of a closed-in shed to its rear.

She doesn't think that the roof was changed, but the front door was different. There was a single heavy oak door to a little entranceway with green marble in it. Her father added the coat room and the powder room. The fireplace in the dining room was of the same green marble before it was removed when the butler's pantry was added. The staircase in the main

hallway was in the center of the room, and the hall was open to the back of the staircase. This staircase was of oak.

Her father expanded the back of the house and added a bedroom, living room, and bath upstairs at the same time. There were originally five bedrooms on the second floor. After the alterations, there were three bedrooms on the second floor. One large bedroom, or the master suite, took up the space of the other bedrooms. The two bay windows in her bedroom on the second floor (the southeast room) were always there, and she remembers a copper or tin roof over her bedroom.

The barn had a big hay loft and a workroom, two or three stalls, and a single carriage shed.

#### Telephone Interview with Mr. F. S. Gallagher

November 24, 1987

Mr. Gallagher says that Richard Crook lived in the house on Washington Avenue which sits directly behind Spring Hill. This is the same house where Mr. Gallagher lived from 1960-62. The switches for the Peoples Railway Company's electric trolley are located in the front part of the house, and the trolley went down Washington Avenue to the Brandywine Springs Amusement Park. Mr. Gallagher says that he visited the amusement park as a child on many occasions.

#### Interviews with Mrs. James R. Morford, Jr.

November 11, 1987

Mrs. Morford, Jr., daughter-in-law of James R. Morford, first visited Spring Hill in 1935. The house was never referred to as "The Cedars" when her father-in-law owned it. The Morfords and the previous owners of the house, the Samuels, called the house "Spring Hill." Before the additions and alterations were made to the house the exterior was very plain and looked like a simple farmhouse. A porch surrounded three sides of the house in a "U-shape," but not across the back, or north elevation, of the house. There was a small foyer inside the front hall and a staircase in the center of the hall on the left hand side. The library and the kitchen had been previously enlarged.

When Spring Hill was remodeled after 1935, her father-in-law removed the porches on the east and on the west sides of the house in order to enlarge

the living room and the dining room. Behind the dining room he added a small conservatory. On the second floor the master bedroom was extensively remodeled into a suite containing a dressing room and an office. The third floor had a guest room or den that was originally a servant's quarters. Mr. Morford, Sr. completely remodeled the garage and added an apartment for a live-in gardener. The gardener maintained the entire yard including a large vegetable garden and an orchard filled with several varieties of fruit trees. He also added a tennis court and a swimming pool to the property. There was a nineteenth-century springhouse on the property.

Telephone interview, November 12, 1987

The Cedars suburb was a middle-class community which had several nice houses, especially along Newport Gap Pike. Doctors, lawyers, and judges lived in the suburb during the period when she visited the house.

Mrs. Morford, Jr., recalls that there was a magazine article written about the dining room of the house, but she cannot remember which magazine that this article appeared in.

Telephone interview, November 29, 1987

She does not remember if the porch behind the living room was added when the Morfords lived there, or what types of fruit trees were in the orchard. Her sister-in-law, Mrs. Connie Figgatt, grew up in the house and now lives in California.

No information provided for this page.