

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Gabriel's Landing

Wilmington, New Hanover County, NH2345, Listed 5/07/2008
Nomination by Ed Turberg and Janet Seapker
Photographs by Janet Seapker, August 2005



View from the Sound



Entrance façade

**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 Gabriel's Landing

other names/site number Old Oak Point

2. Location

street & number 1005 Airlie Road not for publication N/A

city or town Wilmington vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county New Hanover code 129 zip code 28403

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
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 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u> </u> entered in the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Gabriel's Landing
Name of Property

New Hanover; North Carolina
County and State

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	
5	3	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
5	4	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
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling
Domestic Sub: single dwelling
Domestic Sub: multiple dwelling
Agriculture/Subsistence Sub: agricultural outbuilding (barn)
Agriculture/Subsistence Sub: animal facility (stable)
Agriculture/Subsistence Sub: storage (pit)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling
Domestic Sub: guest housing
Domestic Sub: storage site
Agriculture/Subsistence Sub: agricultural outbuilding (barn)
Agriculture/Subsistence Sub: animal facility (stable)
Agriculture/Subsistence Sub: storage (pit)

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
roof ceramic tile
walls brick
other

Narrative Description

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

Gabriel's Landing
Name of Property

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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 individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

Period of Significance

1936

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Willis Irvin, Architect

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: NC Historic Preservation Office

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Name of Property

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 38.7

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

Zone Easting Northing
1 18 239960 3789920
2 18 240400 3789520

Zone Easting Northing
3 18 240220 3789260
4 18 239760 3789700
X 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 Janet K. Seapker & Edward F. Turberg, Architectural Historians

organization _____ date August 10, 2007

street & number 307 North 15th Street telephone 910-762-6301

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28401-3813

12. 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 Agnes Rankin Beane

street & number 1005 Airlie Road telephone 910-256-2363

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28403

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.

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Gabriel's Landing
New Hanover County, North Carolina

7. Description

Summary

Gabriel's Landing, located at 1005 Airlie Road, Wilmington, North Carolina, consists of a total of 102 acres, the nominated thirty-nine acres of which includes the house (contributing,) eight outbuildings and structures (four contributing and four non-contributing.) The remaining acreage is marsh purchased to protect the site from visual intrusion. Gabriel's Landing is bounded on the east and south by the ninety-degree bend of Airlie Road. The east-facing house, situated on a grassy knoll near the center of the property, overlooks a marsh and Wrightsville Sound beyond. The edges of the property are heavily wooded; the western twenty acres consist of pasturelands, a small pond, and woods. To the west are housing developments; single family dwellings are located to the north; and across Airlie Road is public Airlie Gardens on the former residential property owned and planted by Mr. and Mrs. Pembroke Jones.

Fieldstone pillars mark the north-south entrance drive; they are square-in-section with low, opposing, crescent-shaped walls linking them. The pillars at the gate have pyramidal tops. All along Airlie Road, the perimeter of the property is cordoned with a post-and-rail fence, painted black. Wood-frame outbuildings, painted bright red, line the driveway that curves east and terminates in a loop at the rear of the house. They are: the guest cottage with privy, the cabin, stable and barn. A horse shelter faces south, beyond the other outbuildings, and a 2007 carport is situated northwest of the entrance drive. The driveway covering of crushed shell has been restored. In front of the house and to the north is a pit of cement and oyster shell, approximately ten by six feet and seven feet deep. The tabby fabric looks ancient, having survived from an earlier owner. While its purpose is unknown, it is suspected to have been used for preserving food by refrigeration. The 1959 pool and pool house are located just to the east of the pit.

The owner, Frank E. Beane, Jr, described the property in 1936 emphasizing native versus landscape plantings:

To supplement the natural growth of native pines, oaks and hichories (*sic.*) there has been planted over 80 varieties of *Camellia Japonicas*', containing about 360 of these beautiful shrubs which bloom in winter and early spring. Also about 125 Carolina Cherries which is the outstanding southern evergreen. A great deal of tea olive and Cape Jessamine. About 100 or more magnolias have been put out, especially along the highway fence line. Perhaps 250 cedar trees dot the place and fence lines. Fifty America Holly here and there in the front yard. There are also over 100 dog woods set out which bloom profusely in early spring and in

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the fall their leaves turn adding much color. Over 50,000 early blooming Jonquils and Narcissus have been planted three or four years and have multiplied many times. They are naturalized in the pine groves and along the shell roads running thru the front yard.¹

The rural, residential qualities of Gabriel's Landing are rare in the region. On and around Wrightsville Sound, dwellings and commercial properties choke the land. Wrightsville Beach and Wilmington are similarly developed. New Hanover County's Bradley-Latimer Summer House (NR 1987) (ca. 1850) with 4.3 acres of land, shares a water orientation, but is much earlier and dissimilar in intent, having been a summer residence. The Masonboro Sound properties (NR 1992) also have water orientations, but are not on large parcels of land. Thus, Gabriel's Landing is unique in the Wilmington area in its scale, setting, and era as a landscaped suburban setting with attention given to native flora. Later development of the property has been restricted to the area around the historic buildings.

Inventory List

1. **House.** 1936. Contributing

The main block of the gable-roofed, Colonial Revival style house is five bays wide, one-and-a-half stories high, white-painted brick with a one-story piazza across the front (east) elevation. Ceramic tile shingles cover the roofs. The flat-roofed piazza is supported on wooden pillars, square-in-section, with simple molded capitols and connected by a railing with a molded top rail and balusters square-in-section. The open center bay allows access to the central entrance. It consists of double, six-panel doors framed with transom and sidelights leaded in a decorative pattern. A cable molding surrounds each sidelight and transom panel. A pierced and gouged frieze surmounts the entrance and is crowned by a cornice that includes a Wall-of Troy course.

Six-over-six, double-hung, wooden sash windows, set beneath brick flat arches with louvered blinds, are used throughout the house. The exceptions are found in the three front dormers that have no blinds and are set in shallow wooden arches. Also, on the south elevation there is a four-over-four sash window in the center of the first floor façade. A similar window, without blinds is set to the right of the rear entrance to light a bathroom.

On the side elevations, double-shoulder, exterior end chimneys are placed in between the windows closest to the front. On the north end, a second chimney stack occurs at the junction with the wing.

¹ Beane, Frank E., Jr, "Wrightsville Sound Place, "Old Oak Point," typescript in possession of property owner, March 26, 1936, p. 4.

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The one-story, end gable, recessed wings on the north and south each have front-facing, multi-paned bay windows with entablatures that mirror that above the entrance. The bay window on the north or kitchen wing, replaced a pair of windows removed during a kitchen remodeling in 1994. It also has a four-over-four sash just north of the bay. One bay deep, the north elevation has a double casement window with fixed transom centered. It replaced a pair of sash windows. The western elevation contains the exterior access to the kitchen wing through a six-light, double doors flanked by six-light sidelights, all topped by a nine-light transom. The south wing, two bays deep and with a two-bay west façade has a single shoulder, exterior end chimney centered on the end.

On the rear (west) elevation, a five-bay piazza is set between the two wings. A large, single dormer accommodates the interior stair to the second floor. The double entrance door is identical to the front door except that it has no transom. Only the north wing has a basement and a stair descending to it is accessed from the north end of the piazza.

Interior

The interior, a center-hall plan, displays elements of the Georgian, Federal, and early Greek Revival styles. The Georgian style, open string stair, placed at the rear of the hall, has turned newels and balusters carrying a wide, molded rail which ramps and eases at the landing and the ascent to the second floor. The stair rises to a landing and turns 180 degrees to the front of the house to complete its ascent.

The four corner rooms are, on the north, the parlor and dining room; on the south, bedrooms with a closet and bath in between. The smaller, southwestern bedroom has its own bathroom and a closet, accessible from the hall entrance, occupies some of its space. A bathroom on the south side between what were Mr. and Mrs. Beane's bedrooms, was converted in recent years to a passageway connecting a library and a study. A living room, known by the family as the wing room, occupies the south wing.

The door and window moldings are in the Greek Revival style; those in the main block are symmetrical in section with square, paneled corner blocks. The door and window moldings in the wings are three-part. All doors have six raised panels. On the north, the parlor and dining room both have a combination of Wall-of-Troy and pierced dental cornices. Other cornices are simple crown moldings. Walls are finished in plaster above and below chair rails, unless otherwise noted.

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All four mantels are of wood, and save for the Georgian-style one in the living room, are Federal in style. The living room mantel has a frieze that breaks in the center and above each pilaster. A carved, horizontal ellipse occupies the central space and vertical ellipses are carved in each end. The lower course of the cornice has a Wall-of-Troy motif. Black and white striated marble surrounds the fire opening and is used for the hearth.

The dining room mantel has paneled pilasters that support a frieze containing a central gouged fan, side gouged ellipses and an intervening section of seven vertical gouges. The cornice has a reeded course beneath a molded shelf. It also has a black and white striated marble surround and hearth.

The library mantel combines elements of the other two mantels. Its frieze breaks only over the paneled pilasters and contains simple vertical pierced ellipses. A central, horizontal, pierced ellipse completes the frieze design. A diminutive dental course forms the lowest element of the molded cornice. White marble surrounds the fire opening and is used for the hearth.

The living room, occupying the south wing, is Georgian in style. Black marble forms the hearth and surrounds the fire opening. The mantel itself has a three-part molded, crosetted surround above which is a frieze with vertically gouged center and end tablets. The cornice carries a pierced dental course above which is a molded shelf. The door and window surrounds are like the three-part molded mantel surround, but without the croset. The living room's north wall contains two six-panel doors, one leading to the study and the other to the rear piazza. Cherry paneling, applied vertically, now painted, lines the walls above a chair rail. It is crowned with a dental cornice. The front-facing bay window accommodates a window seat.

The kitchen has been remodeled twice, once in the 1970s and again in 1994. In so doing, the space occupied by the maid's water closet, butler's pantry, dressing room, service porch and three closets were incorporated into the modern kitchen. The front-facing bay window accommodates a window seat. The walls are finished with a vertical beaded-board dado below a chair rail with sheetrock above.

The second floor contains two bedrooms to the front of the house, each with a pair of closets flanking the front-facing dormer. A bathroom with dormer occupies the space between the bedrooms. The south bedroom has direct access to the bath. Two linen closets flank the entrance to the bath. Long storage areas occupy the space under the rear eaves.

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The basement, situated beneath the dining room contains the mechanical equipment and a masonry vault with shelves identified on the original plans as a "wine closet" and now used for silver storage.

Outbuildings

The wooden outbuildings, save for the run-in shed, are painted with the distinctive scheme of bright red with white trim. All but the barn face south; the barn faces east. They are covered with roofs of standing seam metal.

2. **Cottage.** ca. 1936. Contributing

Closest to the entrance drive is the one-story, gable roofed, weatherboarded guest cottage, three bays wide and three bays deep on the west and two bays deep on the east. It rests on brick piers. A one-story hip roof, full-façade porch across the front, rests on paneled wooden pillars set on brick pillars, all square-in-section. The balusters likewise, are square-in-section. The front façade consists of one-over-one sash windows flanking the door of three horizontal panels with a single glass light above. A square louver vents the attic. One-over-one sash windows are used throughout most of the rest of the house; those on the east side occur in pairs. Small sash windows light the bath and kitchen. The rear contains a one-bay wide gable-roof wing with the ridge along the same north-south plane as that of the main roof. A one-story, shed roof porch faces west and features a weather-boarded enclosure the height of a normal balustrade. The interior contains a living room, two bedrooms, bath, kitchen and dining area. Interior doors are of two types: two vertical and five horizontal panels set within simple frames with a backband molding. A privy, square-in-section, with a shed roof, faces west just beyond the rear wing; it provides storage space.

3. **Cabin.** ca. 1936. Contributing

Farther along the driveway and to the west is the small, one-story, German-sided frame cabin that offered accommodations for two servants. Now it is used for storage. It has a cross plan built on brick piers and uses six-over-six sash and five panel doors set in plain frames with drip molds at the top. Rectangular louvers vent the attic beneath the eaves of the standing seam metal covered cross-gable roof.

4. **Barn.** ca. 1936. Contributing

Just before the driveway bends to the east, is a two-story, wood-frame barn sheathed with German siding. It has one-story shed roof lean-tos on the sides, all set upon a concrete slab. The roof of the western lean-to shelters open space in the front and an enclosed area at the north end that houses a washroom. Double, board-and-batten wooden doors provide access to the central and end bays. The second story is devoted to hay storage. The central space on the first level is used for equipment storage. A

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repair shop occupies the southeastern space; an office is in the northeastern corner of the barn.

5. **Stable.** ca. 1936. Contributing

Facing east is a traditional stable covered with German siding and having a standing seam metal-covered gable roof, two-story central section and one-story shed-roof wings. It is built on a concrete slab. A single door provides access to hay storage at the second level and double, Dutch, board-and-batten doors below lead to the center aisle. Each of two square openings on the south side of the wings is covered with board-and-batten shutters. All the doors and shutters are set in simple frames painted white. There are four animal stalls, two of which have been converted to a tack room and storage for hay and feed. Frank Beane noted in his notebooks that his family kept pigs, cows and a mule; they probably resided in the stable.

6. **Run-in Shed.** 1992. Noncontributing

An unpainted wooden frame shed is set in a small grove of trees west of the above. It is available for horses to seek shelter during inclement weather.

7. **Pool,** 1959. Noncontributing

In 1959, a rectangular swimming pool of cement and surrounded by a cement edging was built in the front lawn, to the northeast of the house.

8. **Pool house,** 1959. Noncontributing

The pool house, adjacent to the pool to the north, is a side gable-roofed construction of brick veneer, painted white. The east-west roof shelters one bay of interior space and engages a porch that runs the length of the house. Paired sash windows of six-over-six lights occupy the east and west bays; sliding glass doors are used on the south facade.

9. **Carport,** 2007. Noncontributing

A carport capable of accommodating three vehicles, is situated to the rear of the house, northeast of the entrance. It takes its design cues from the porch, with columns square-in-section and a flat roof. Pierced brick walls, covered with creeping jasmine connect the columns on the east and south sides.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Gabriel's Landing, a 1936 architect-designed Colonial Revival style house, is eligible for listing under Criterion C: architecture at the local level of significance. It exemplifies an academic quality of design and building craftsmanship from the popular early twentieth century style. Gabriel's Landing confirms the important role of the regionally prominent architect, Georgia society architect Willis Irvin, and the urbane taste of the well-traveled owners, Frank and Agnes Beane.

For generations, from 1800 until 1929, and then again from 1947 until now, the property known as Gabriel's Landing has been owned by the Wright family, prominent business and community leaders, and owners of large tracts of land in New Hanover County, North Carolina. Oddly enough, the eighteen-year hiatus in Wright ownership was when the Gabriel's Landing property was purchased and the house and most of the outbuildings were constructed for Frank E., Jr and Agnes Rankin Crook Beane. They hired Augusta, Georgia architect, Willis Irvin, to design their estate, which they called Old Oak Point. The design of the house was modeled after Mr. Beane's ancestral home, *Rosemary Cottage*, in Augusta, Georgia. Following Frank Beane's death in 1944, his son William Sterling Roberts Beane III and his wife, Eleanor Gilchrist Wright Beane, made the estate their residence, returning it to Wright family ownership. They changed the name to Gabriel's Landing in honor of an eighteenth century owner, Gabriel Johnston, a royal governor of the colony. William Beane lived until 1992, but several years before, deeded the life estate to Mrs. Beane and the remainder to their daughter, Agnes Rankin Beane. Agnes and her family moved into Gabriel's Landing in 1986.²

Gabriel's Landing is a notable property in the county and region. It consists of an impressive thirty-nine acres of landscaped setting situated on the edge of the mainland overlooking marshland that cascades into Wrightsville Sound. The sound separates the mainland from Wrightsville Beach, a barrier island and popular North Carolina family beach community. The residents of Wilmington, the county seat approximately ten miles to the west, used the sound and Wrightsville Beach as summer resorts, places to escape the oppressive heat and humidity of the climate. By the early twentieth century, a beach car (trolley) carried residents between town and the beach, making commuting for businessmen possible.

² New Hanover County Vital Statistics, Deaths; New Hanover County Deeds, 1085, 319; Wilmington City Directories, 1990-current; author's interview with owner, Agnes Rankin Beane (hereinafter referred to as A.R. Beane); and information provided by Louise Beane Parker.

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Until the last twenty years, the north and west sides of the road along the sound, Airlie Road, were sparsely populated by only a few houses; maritime businesses and restaurants occupied the east side of the road. Lately, waterfront or water-view land has become so valuable that almost all nearby tracts have been subdivided to allow the maximum number of large, expensive houses. Gabriel's Landing is an exception, with an unobstructed view across the sound. Other exceptions are county-owned Airlie Gardens, across the road to the south, and a privately owned parcel adjacent to Airlie, the Bradley-Latimer Summer House ((NR 1987) (ca. 1850) on four and three-tenths acres of land. The acreage upon which Gabriel's Landing sits is unique in the neighborhood and rare in the county.

The property was landscaped under the tutelage of P.A.J. Berckmans, an Augusta horticulturalist. Pending a complete evaluation of the extant landscape, a claim for landscape architecture may be made in the future.

Historical Background

Gabriel's Landing was built in 1936 for Frank E. Beane, Jr and his wife, Agnes Rankin Crook according to a design provided by architect Willis Irvin. Beane (1886-1944), was born in Augusta, Georgia and Agnes (1891-1969), was a native of Columbus, Georgia.³ Frank was educated at the Richmond Academy in Columbus, Georgia and joined his brothers, Alpheus Crosby Beane and William Sterling Robert Beane in business as Beane Brothers, a Columbus and New Orleans cotton brokerage.⁴ The firm dissolved with Alph forming a partnership with Charles E. Fenner that created the New Orleans stock brokerage and commission house of Fenner and Beane. Brother Will moved to Natchez, Mississippi, to Elgin Plantation (NR 1979) to farm, and Frank to Columbus, Georgia, where he worked as a cotton agent for McFadden's, a Philadelphia cotton broker.⁵

The Frank Beanes lived in Charlotte, North Carolina during World War I and for a couple of years in the early 1920s, after which they moved to Augusta, Georgia.⁶ The Beanes had summered at Wrightsville Beach since they were in their early twenties. In 1929, they purchased property on Wrightsville Sound with the prospect of relocating and building a permanent residence there.⁷

³ 1930 US Census, Richmond County, Georgia

⁴ 1910 and 1930 US Census, Richmond County, Georgia

⁵ *Dressed in Sunlight: Eleanor Wright Beane*, as told to Susan Taylor Block, 2002, 89, hereafter identified as *Sunlight*; A.R. Beane; and information provided by Louise Beane Parker (hereinafter referred to as L.B. Parker).

⁶ New Hanover County Deeds, (Wrightsville Beach)

⁷ New Hanover County Deeds, 207/143-144; they added 63 acres in 1935, 249/359-360½.

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The couple engaged friend, and Augusta architect Willis Irvin, to design a house based on *Rosemary Cottage*, Mr. Beane's grandparent's home in Augusta. Roger McCarl and U. A. Underwood, both of Wilmington, were the associate architect and the contractor, respectively.⁸ They completed construction on November 1, 1936.⁹ The design won honorable mention in a 1938 competition sponsored by *House and Garden* magazine as an ideal home "for combining traditional southern architecture with modern demands for livability."¹⁰ Frank and Agnes Beane lived at Old Oak Point from late spring until Christmas, when they moved back to Augusta, then traveled.¹¹

Frank Beane kept extensive notes in small bound journals that reveal his interests—photography, hunting and fishing, for instance—and particularly his compulsion for horticulture. He comments on the estate, its history and location; the Intracoastal Waterway; the climate, highways, fishing, hunting, Wilmington, Wrightsville Sound, taxes, conveniences, caretaker's cottage, fences, plantings, fruit and nut trees, the interior, and the materials used in the construction. It is a substantial documentation of the place during his lifetime.¹²

The notebooks reveal that Frank Beane followed Augusta landscape architect P.J.A. Berckmans' recommendation to retain much of Gabriel's Landing's natural vegetation and of what to plant to enhance the estate. Despite the thinning effects of hurricanes, many of the specimen trees, magnolias, live oaks, and hickories, and introduced camellias, still flourish. Beane commented on Berckmans' passing: "Mr. Allie died suddenly at his home in Augusta from a heart attack—Feb. 1938. He planted many things at 'Old Oak Point' and gave valuable information re: flowers, plants, trees, etc."¹³ Beane was an honorary pallbearer, in abstentia, for the funeral of Mr. Allie.¹⁴

The Beanes had two children, William Sterling Roberts Beane III (January 25, 1915-May 7, 1992) and Louise (1918-___). William was born in Columbus, Georgia, and Louise in Charlotte, North Carolina. Louise married Richard Parker at Old Oak Point in 1942; the couple spent their married life in New England.¹⁵

⁸ "Beane Residence is Being Built," *Wilmington News*, January 24, 1936, Beane family file, William N. Reaves Collection, North Carolina Room, New Hanover County Public Library, Wilmington, North Carolina.

⁹ Notation on Willis Irvin's plan in possession of house owner.

¹⁰ Photographic copy of announcement in possession of house owner.

¹¹ *Sunlight*, 112-113.

¹² A.R. Beane; Frank E. Beane, Jr.'s address book in possession of Agnes R. Beane; hereinafter identified as "address book"

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ "Berckmans Rites Set For Morning," *Augusta Chronicle*, Wednesday Morning, February 2, 1938.

¹⁵ *Sunlight*, 113 and 107; L.B. Parker.

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William traveled the world aboard steamships for two years. He spent time at various exotic ports, soaking up the indigenous culture. One of his interests was the Boy Scouts. In 1929 and 1933, he visited principal European cities attending jamborees.¹⁶ William married Eleanor Gilchrist Wright (November 19, 1915-May 24, 2002) in 1938.¹⁷ She was born in Wilmington to Eleanor Gilchrist and Thomas Henry Wright.¹⁸ Eleanor attended public school in Wilmington before enrolling in high school at St. Mary's School in Raleigh and later in Sweet Briar College in Sweet Briar, Virginia and the Kingsmith School in Washington, D.C.

During World War II, the United States Army, drafted and posted William to Charleston, South Carolina as a captain. Eleanor accompanied him and participated in the Red Cross Auxiliary, working at the canteen and in the hospital as a nurses' aid. She also worked in the Motor Corps and Interceptor Command.

Frank Beane died in 1944. Agnes did not want the house, so by 1947, William and Eleanor Beane had moved to the Wrightsville Sound house as permanent residents.¹⁹ Their action resumed the property's long association with the Wright family—through Eleanor's lineage.

William was one of three businessmen who in 1945 purchased the Heide Company, a shipping company that handled general cargo at the North Carolina State Port and bulk cargo at their headquarters, up-river on the Wilmington waterfront. He was president and general manager of the company. He bought out his partners and in 1965 sold the general cargo division. He exempted certain functions from the Heide Company and renamed it Almont Shipping, of which he was president. He sold Almont to the employees in 1983 and retired.²⁰ William remained interested in the Boy Scouts and was a staunch supporter of the Boys' Home at Lake Waccamaw.²¹

Eleanor continued her volunteer work. She helped operate "Magnolias," the tearoom sponsored by The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of North Carolina in the basement of the Burgwin-Wright House. Eleanor also was president of the dames from 1984 to 1986. She served as vice-president of Wright Development Company and Princess Street Rental Corporation, her brother's

¹⁶ "address book."

¹⁷ St. James Episcopal Church Marriage Records, 1938.

¹⁸ New Hanover County Vital Statistics, Register of Deeds; New Hanover County Wills, 02 E 479; *Sunlight*, 51

¹⁹ Wilmington City Directory, 1947; *Sunlight*, 111-112.

²⁰ Wilmington City Directories, 1968-1981; he is listed in city directories as vice-president of the Shell Island Company in 1983-1985; "125 Years of Almont Shipping," *Shipping News*, Vol. 1, No. 6, July/August 1995, Almont vertical file, North Carolina Room, New Hanover County Public Library, Wilmington, North Carolina.

²¹ A.R. Beane

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enterprises.²² Through her membership in the Social Service League, she became a volunteer at James Walker Memorial Hospital, helping to found a diabetes clinic and a cancer detection and diagnostic center. She also chaired the Nurses Aides Service for the Wilmington chapter of the American Red Cross. In the 1980s, she served on the Figure Eight Yacht Club Board of Directors. Governor James Hunt appointed Eleanor Beane to the Tryon Palace Commission, a position she held for thirty-five years. William and Eleanor both owned and flew airplanes for recreation.²³

William also associated with his brother-in-law Thomas Henry Wright in real estate enterprises like Beane Realty (which owned interests in Shell Island and other barrier island properties along the southeastern North Carolina Atlantic shore) and Acme Investment and Realty Company.²⁴ William died in 1992 and was buried at St. Andrews-on-the-Sound, but now lies beside the 2002 grave of his wife in the graveyard of Mount Lebanon Chapel (NR 1986) surrounded by Airlie Gardens.²⁵

William and Agnes Beane diligently maintained the character of his parents' and her grandparents' estate, keeping horses and preserving the rural character of the land. They added a swimming pool in 1959 for the enjoyment of their young daughter, Agnes Rankin Beane.²⁶ They ensured that Agnes had a classical education. She attended schools in Europe, Canada and the United States and earned a law degree and a Master's in international law and taxation. Agnes inherited her father's keen interest in land conservation and her mother's passion for historic preservation. Currently she serves on the board of North Carolina Coastal Land Trust and initiated the process by which Gabriel's Landing was entered in the roster of Century Farms by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture in 2005. The program recognizes farms that have been owned and operated by the same family for 100 years or more.²⁷

Architectural Context

Sitting in an aloof position far west of Airlie Road, the house is perched on a rise, embraced by trees. Its modest facade overlooks Wrightsville Sound. The estate's nearly thirty-nine acres is an anomaly in suburbanized New Hanover County. Brunswick County's Orton Plantation House (NR 1973) (1735; 1840; 1910) a bona fide plantation with twenty acres of gardens among thousands of acres, and New Hanover County's

²² Wilmington City Directories, 1948-49 through 1968

²³ *Sunlight*, 96-97; 101; 103; 129; 132; 136; 137.

²⁴ Wilmington City Directories, 1947 to 1968; in 1958, William Beane served as vice-president of Acme Investment and Realty, an association he maintained into the early 1960s.

²⁵ New Hanover County Vital Statistics, death certificate, May 7, 1992; *Wilmington Morning Star*, Death Notices, May 9, 1992; *Wilmington Morning Star*, Death Notices, May 25, 2002

²⁶ New Hanover County Vital Statistics, birth certificate, September 7, 1956.

²⁷ Various Internet sites and A.R. Beane.

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Bradley-Latimer Summer House (NR 1987) (ca. 1850) with four-and-three-tenths acres of land also have water orientations, but are much earlier and dissimilar in intent. Several Masonboro Sound properties (NR 1992) also have water orientations and a few are important early twentieth century period revival houses, but they no longer are associated with large parcels of land. Thus, Gabriel's Landing today is unique in the Wilmington area in its abundant acreage and waterfront orientation.

Gabriel's Landing's Colonial Revival style reflects the mainstream of American architectural design. Colonial Revival probably is the most long-lived style, spanning some seventy-five years from 1880 through 1955. In addition to the Colonial Revival, residential architecture of the early-twentieth century in America included an array of stylistic influences—several European revival references held over from the previous century, and eclectic designs and modernist innovations as seen in the prairie, craftsman and modernistic styles. But, revival of traditional designs rooted in America's colonial past were the most ubiquitous and most referenced style reflecting wholesome and patriotic qualities. The Colonial Revival often combined architectural elements from buildings found along the eastern seaboard and the piedmont settlements of America. Its vocabulary came from the Georgian and Federal styles, as well as elements of many other styles that preceded the Victorian era.²⁸

Particular features of the Colonial Revival style include symmetrical plans with central entrances, a preference for exterior walls faced with brick instead of wood siding, hip or gable-end roofs, full-width porches, double-hung windows with multiple glass panes, exterior louvered blinds, bay windows, often located in side elevations or secondary wings, interior or exterior brick chimneys with molded caps, and attic dormers containing arched or trabeated fenestration.

Colonial Revival features of Gabriel's Landing that relate to contemporary popular examples in the Wilmington area include painted brick exterior walls, central entrance in the front and rear elevations with patterned-glass transoms and sidelights, multi-pane sash framed by louvered blinds, exterior end chimneys with sloping shoulders, symmetrical wings attached to the side elevations of the main block, an angular bay window in the south wing and square-headed gable dormers. In addition, Gabriel's Landing is enhanced by full-width porches along the water and land elevations.

Efforts to identify and recognize the country's historic record were spurred by the publication of detailed drawings of historic structures and their architectural details appearing in the *White Pine Monograph Series* published from 1915 to 1931, as well as

²⁸ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992, 321-326

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in popular magazines such as *Country Life*, *Good Housekeeping*, *House Beautiful*, and *House & Garden*. Their monthly columns featured articles, drawings and photographs of "Colonial style" suburban homes encompassed by landscaped gardens and enriched by antique and reproduction furnishings. Added to this were the restorations during the late 1920s and early 1930s of historic structures in Williamsburg, Virginia; Charleston, South Carolina and elsewhere, which found a high level of craftsmanship and attention to scale and proportion during a "golden age" of American building.²⁹

Colonial Revival architecture appealed to those of modest to middle incomes as well as to the wealthy classes who employed the style in elaborate homes and seasonal retreats. The architects for those places, often themselves belonged to the socially prestigious. John Russell Pope, who married into the glamour of the Pembroke Joneses of New York, Newport, and Wilmington, North Carolina, designed estates along the coast of New England and the beaches of the Hamptons on Long Island. Other nationally known society architects of the 1920s to 1950s included Dwight James Baum, who designed one hundred residences and a country club in Riverdale, New York and served as consulting architect for *Good Housekeeping* magazine during the 1920s and 1930s; Bostonian Royal Barry Wills, who operated mostly in New England; New Yorkers Hobart Upjohn, William Lawrence Bottomley and Aymar Embury II, whose work extended into North Carolina; and Wrenn, Lewis and Jencks, whose 1930s Williamsburg recreations drew attention to Baltimore's Roland Park development.³⁰

North Carolina was especially fortunate to have a substantial body of residential work by nationally and regionally known architects whose talent lay in the field of Colonial Revival architecture. For example, in Pinehurst (NR 1973), Aymar Embury II designed homes and shops in the golfing capital. William Lawrence Bottomley designed stately mansions in Raleigh and Weldon. Also in the North Carolina state capital, Hobart Upjohn designed the 1927-28 Chancellor's residence followed by a succession of eight academic buildings on the campus of North Carolina State University. In Wilmington, the post-Depression era witnessed an expansion of residential construction away from the downtown area. The 1933 Hargrove Bellamy House, designed by Luther Lashmit of Northrup and O'Brien of Winston-Salem, epitomizes the high-style elegance of Georgian architecture. The Alexander Sprunt House, by Arthur C. Nash of Chapel Hill, exemplifies the delicacy of the Federal style. The Emerson-Kenan House, originally built in 1911, was altered in 1928 by Thomas Hastings of the firm of Carrère and Hastings and, in 1931, by Leonard Schultze of Schultze and Weaver, designers of many of the nation's grand hotels of the 1920s and 1930s. Both firms were located in New

²⁹Colonial Revival In America : Annotated Bibliography, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/colonial/>; December 5, 2007

³⁰ *Ibid.*

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York City, but had close associations with the South. In the Forest Hills development two-and-a-half miles east of Wilmington's downtown, architects Royal Barry Wills designed the 1940 Gerdes residence (a Tudor style house with strong associations with early New England architecture), and in 1939 and 1940, Clarence Huff of Richmond, Virginia, produced five Colonial Revival mansions for the Ruffin, Bugg, Freeman and Davis families. Several of the homes featured landscaped grounds and gardens designed by landscape architect Charles Gillette.

Willis Irvin (1890-1950) began designing on his own in the 1920s drafting plans for churches and schools in Georgia and South Carolina. He excelled in designing and remodeling older houses in the South Carolina low country. His reputation was built on designs that displayed the influences of Classicism and also the Mediterranean Revival. In 1929, he won an American Institute of Architects Southern Division award for "the residence of the year" for his Aiken, South Carolina built house for *Chicago Tribune* publisher Robert McCormick.³¹

The residential architectural resources produced by Irvin during his career as architect for a wealthy clientele along the eastern seaboard constitute some of the best Colonial Revival designs of the first third of the twentieth century. Several of his Georgia and South Carolina buildings are listed in the National Register for architectural significance.³² In Aiken, South Carolina, he designed four large estates: Idylwood (1923, NR 1984;) Green Boundary and Whitehall (1928), and Pine Knoll (1930).³³ For his work on Whitehall, Irvin received the prestigious Gold Medal awarded by the Southern Architectural and Industrial Exposition in 1929. In Augusta, the architect designed two houses in 1931, Banksia and Bonnie Doone Plantation. He further produced drawings for the Bon-Air Vanderbilt Hotel in 1923 and the Partridge Inn in 1929. Two residences by him in Hartsville, South Carolina, the James L. Coker, III house (1931) and the C. K. Dunlap house (1934), were placed in the National Register in 1991.³⁴

³¹ Willis, Irvin, *Selections from the Work of Willis Irvin – Architect, Augusta, Georgia* (New York: Architectural Catalog Company, INorth Carolina., 1937.

³² Sidney Johnston, National Register Nomination: *Modern Apartment Complexes in Georgia, 1936-1954*, 2003; Whitehall, Aiken: completed ca. 1928, NR 1984; <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/aiken/S10817702023/S10817702023.pdf>; Pine Knoll, Aiken: completed ca. 1930, NR, Aiken Winter Colony Historic District I, 1984;.

³³ Aiken (SC) Winter Colony Historic District III.

³⁴ <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/darlington/S10817716032/index.htm>;
<http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/darlington/S10817716031/index.htm>;

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Irvin, who lived across Hillcrest Avenue in Augusta from the Beanes, assented to Mr. Beane's request to copy his father's story-and-a-half home in Augusta.³⁵ He designed Old Oak Point (now Gabriel's Landing) overlooking Wrightsville Sound and received widespread attention through the publication of its plans and photographs in the December 1938 issue of *House & Garden* magazine.

Frank Beane's pocket notebooks confirm that he relied on planting and gardening advice from the Berckmans family. Prosper Jules Alphons (P.J.A.), Berckmans, Sr, a Belgian horticulturalist, immigrated to the US with his three sons, Prosper Jules Alphons, Jr, (1866-1938, "Uncle Allie"/"Mr. Allie"), Louis A., and Robert Craig. Together, in Augusta, Georgia, they established Fruitlands Nursery, the first large-scale horticultural nursery in the southeastern United States.³⁶

P.J.A. Berckmans, Jr advised Frank Beane about horticultural matters at his Wrightsville Sound property. The extent of Berckmans' influence is unclear; for instance, we do not know if he just recommended plants or actually planned the plantings, beds and gardens. Eleanor Beane credited Berckmans with the landscaping of Gabriel's Landing, commenting that the landscape was "very natural, so much so that you could almost not see the Sound."³⁷ Storms and hurricanes have diminished the density of Berckmans' influence.

³⁵ January 24, 2007 email communication from Cynthia P. Taliaferro (Frank Beane's granddaughter) to Agnes R. Beane.

³⁶ <http://www.newgeorgianorthcarolinacyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2064&hl=y>

³⁷ *Sunlight*; A.R. Beane, 109.

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10. Geographical Data

(NOTE: The number of buildings represented on the USGS map within the nominated area is inaccurate. Only the buildings listed in this nomination are located within the property boundaries.)

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property includes the 38.7 acres that Frank Beane purchased from the W.A. Wright heirs, specifically New Hanover County Tax parcel R05700-006-041-000.

Boundary Justification: The 38.7 acres are those purchased by Frank Beane from the W.A. Wright heirs in 1929. The acres are historically associated with the property and they are the historical setting of the house and outbuildings originally envisioned and created by Mr. Beane as a home place. The property is distinctly different from those surrounding it, and throughout the county, due to the retention of its large lot size and its high level of historic integrity. Much of the original landscaped setting, including mature trees and consciously retained native flora, is present throughout the nominated area. Even the western acreage continues to be used for farming and animal grazing as it was originally.

The following information applies to photographs 1-7:

Gabriel's Landing

1005 Airlie Road

Wilmington, North Carolina 28403

New Hanover County, North Carolina

Photographer, Janet K. Seapker

Date: 2006

Location of negatives: North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

Photo #1, house, oblique, looking southwest

Photo #2, house, rear (west elevation) looking east

Photo #3, house, south elevation looking north

Photo #4, interior, entrance hall looking west

Photo #5, interior, dining room mantel wall, looking northwest

Photo #6, cabin and barn looking northwest

Photo #7, looking north along the entrance drive from Airlie Road

The following information applies to photographs 8 and 9: Date: 2005

Photo #8, outbuildings, cabin (l) and barn (r) looking west from house's rear porch

Photo #9, front lawn looking east toward sound from house's front porch