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**BARNES-HILL HOUSE, SPENCER, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL  
REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission recently approved the Barnes-Hill House in Spencer for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Barnes-Hill House in Spencer in the National Register will help to preserve a well-cared-for historic house, a remnant of the former agricultural village of Hillsville.”

The Barnes-Hill House, 12 North Brookfield Road, stands on a six-acre lot in a generally residential area characterized by late 20<sup>th</sup>-century and early 21<sup>st</sup>-century Cape Cod and Ranch-style homes, interspersed with older houses. The surrounding village of Hillsville, northwest of Spencer Center, was named for the many Hill family members that lived in the area during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Barnes-Hill House is believed to be the last remaining building associated with the Hill family, in what was once the commercial core of a farming village.

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The main block of the timber-framed house was constructed ca.1790 by David Barnes. The rear of the house has lean-to additions, and a two-story addition extends the house to the west, with a single-story garage beyond that. Extending from the east elevation of the main block is a one-room wing with a gunstock post that suggests the east wing may predate the rest of the house. The property stretches to the north, and includes a pond behind the house.

Among the children David and Rebekah Barnes raised in the house was a son, also named David. In 1828, the younger David's widow, Sarah Barnes, sold the property to Willington Hill, a member of the family for which the village of Hillsville is named. Sullivan Hill, who purchased the house from his brother Willington in 1842, was likely responsible for some of the building's Greek Revival-style features, including the main entry surround and two-panel door. The Barnes-Hill House retained many of its interior finishes as it passed through a series of owners during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, including a fireplace with bake oven in the west wing, and a four-panel door and boxed cornerpost in the southwest chamber.

J. Richard Sherman purchased the house in 1973. Mr. Sherman, who restored the house, uncovered a smoke chamber in the main stairwell. Sherman was a veteran of World War II, active in town affairs, and shortly before his death in 2013, at the age of 101, he received Spencer's Boston Post Cane. Mr. Sherman was very proud of the Barnes-Hill House, and his son wishes to list it in the National Register as a way to honor his father.

The Barnes-Hill House is one of five historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are more than 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

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The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs ([www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

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