

# SPY HOUSE, MONMOUTH CO., NJ

In the *Independent* August 20, 2003 the Middletown, NJ Administrator clarified the future of the Seabrook/Whitlock House or Spy House.

“The following information is provided to clear up any confusion spawned by a recent letter published in the *Independent* titled “Resident says historic Spy House should be restored”. The letter inaccurately suggested that Middletown Township is responsible for restoration and maintenance of the Seabrook/Whitlock House, aka the Spy House.

“In fact, the Spy House is now part of the Monmouth County Bayshore Waterfront Park, a 145-acre park in Port Monmouth that offers recreational access to the shoreline. The park was assembled by the county through the acquisition of multiple Bayshore properties, including the Spy House, marina, and sections of wetlands and beachfront. Monmouth County took responsibility for the Spy House from Middletown in 1997 and added it to the Waterfront Park, along with the fishing pier, observation deck, public restrooms, and surrounding 11 acres.

“As for the restoration of the house, it should be noted that an article published in the *Independent* the same week explains Monmouth County has received a \$574,378 grant from the New Jersey State Historical Trust to work on the house. Information provided by the governor’s office states that the grant will be used for exterior restoration and interior improvements.

“Since July 19,1998, the contents of the Spy House have been on display for public viewing at the Moses D. Heath Farm at 219 Harmony Road. The township worked with Spy House Museum supporters - who had previously worked with Gertrude Neidlinger - to bring the collection to the farm, which Walter and Susie Spradley offer to the community as a historical and educational resource.

“For more information on the Bayshore Waterfront Park, visit the Monmouth County website at [www.visitmonmouth.com/parks](http://www.visitmonmouth.com/parks). To learn about the Moses D. Heath Farm and its many exhibits, visit its website at [www.heathfarm.tripod.com/peacelane](http://www.heathfarm.tripod.com/peacelane).

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Our thanks to William Melvin Whitlock for the above information on the Spy House. Chuck Rockett also sent in the following on the Spy House.

“Port Monmouth is situated on the Lower New York Bay. During the American Revolution, a British Naval officer named the Whitlock - Seabrook - Wilson Homestead, the Spy House. Because the British Navy asserted that the house was being utilized to spy on their ships. When in all actuality the spying was being accomplished from Garrett’s Hill by John Stillwell which was located a short distance away from the house. The British in an endeavor to stop the spying attempted to burn the house down but the attempt failed.

“The house itself began from a one room cabin in 1648 and was added on to throughout the years. Sometime in 1677 the middle section was added, which was the widow Seabrooks home in 1703. Daniel Seabrook extended his home to his mother’s across the lawn after the death of Thomas Whitlock. The home stayed in the Seabrook family for 250 years. The home is now the Spy House Museum which presents the history and heritage of the Bay Shore. But the Spy House has its shadowy side also. It is said to be one of the most haunted places in America.

“An alleged female apparition dressed in white comes down the stairs from the attic. She then walks into the rooms known as the Blue and White rooms, located on the second floor. She then leans over the crib and straightens something in the crib, it is alleged a quilt.

“The apparition then turns away and fades into thin air. In 1975 as a group was touring the house while in the same room, the sewing machine popped open and the machine started to operate on its own without anyone using the foot treadle. In the front vestibule on the first floor an apparition of a man in a top hat with a full beard has alleged to have made an appearance many times over in the years. The Spy House is located at 119 Port Monmouth Road, Port Monmouth, New Jersey.”

Sources: X5258; X5268