

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

562658

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Godwin School  
Other names/site number: DE CRS # S04595  
Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)  
N/A

### 2. Location

Street & number: 23235 Godwin School Road  
City or town: Millsboro State: DE County: Sussex  
Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide  local  
Applicable National Register Criteria:  
 A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

DE State Historic Preservation Officer 5/25/2018

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Signature of certifying official/Title: [Signature] Date 5.27.18  
DE State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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Signature of commenting official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Title : \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

*Lisa Deline*

Signature of the Keeper

7/16/18

Date of Action

**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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/schoolhouse

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Late 19<sup>th</sup> century frame building

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: brick, weatherboard, asphalt

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Godwin School is situated on a triangular parcel of land in rural Sussex County, Delaware approximately three miles west of the town of Millsboro. Set back about 100 feet from the intersection of two main roads, Hardscrabble Road (State Route 20) and the Godwin School Road, the building is positioned in a grove of mature deciduous trees. The property contains two resources: a frame nineteenth century one-teacher school (contributing) and a reconstructed frame privy (non-contributing). The frame, gable-fronted schoolhouse is rectangular in design and is three-bays deep. The reconstructed frame privy is also gable-fronted in design and features a lattice porch and louvered vented openings in the apex of the roof and on each side of the building. The restoration of the school and the reconstruction of the privy were based upon oral history, photographic records, and archival material. The classroom is furnished with fixtures and furniture reflective of the nineteenth century and includes student desks, a teachers' desk, a chalkboard, schoolhouse clock and a stove. The schoolhouse, preserved and maintained by the Millsboro Historical Society, is utilized as a museum. The buildings retain integrity of location, design, setting, feeling and association as the only-known surviving nineteenth century schoolhouse in Dagsboro Hundred, a political subdivision near the center of Sussex County, as well as the only-known white schoolhouse which survives on its original site within the county.

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## Narrative Description

### The Godwin School

As the only-known surviving historic edifice within the immediate rural area, this building represents the typical frame, rectangular, gable-fronted schoolhouse which at one time was frequently seen throughout rural Sussex County. Its reconstructed vestibule, appended to its west wall, was based in part upon oral history accounts and appears to be slightly wider and taller than the original depicted in historic photographs. With the closing of the schoolhouse in 1936, the original vestibule was removed and the single classroom section of the building was reused as a granary by descendants of Jacob Reese Godwin, the landowner who authorized the construction of this school on his property in 1897 and the individual for whom the school is named.

This one-teacher school retains its single classroom configuration as an undivided space without partition walls as well as original window fenestration, five pair of original raised panel shutters, rafters, gable roof line, many of the its original floor joists, framing timbers, and electroplated window hinges. As noted in early twentieth century Bureau of Education reports, Delaware's one-teacher schools were constructed frequently of perishable materials which often required repairs and/or replacement of original building materials.

The frame schoolhouse sits on a reconstructed brick foundation pierced at regular intervals by louvered metal vents. The gable roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles. The three windows are symmetrically positioned on both sides of the school. Functional two-paneled, side-hinged, wooden shutters flank each of the windows. Though the rear wall is blank, each corner of the main block of the school is marked by plain wood corner boards which are painted dark green. The eaves of the main block are marked by ornamental rafter tail ends and the exterior walls of the school are white-painted wooden clapboards. In accordance with the phased restoration plan developed by the Millsboro Historical Society, deteriorated sections of the original siding, window trim and sashes, floor joists, and shutters were replaced with in-kind materials.

### Interior of the School

Though the original interior fabric disintegrated during the building's use as a granary, in-kind materials were obtained to replace necessary flooring, joists, and wainscoting. Today the interior resembles its appearance when constructed in 1897. Features within the reconstructed vestibule include a coat rack and shelf. A side window was added to the south side of the vestibule during the 1980's restoration.

The classroom space is accessed through separate doorways with six-panel doors. Each entrance was designated for either boys or girls. Interior walls are marked by batten wainscoting, windows feature simple wood surrounds, and the east wall has a blackboard and school clock. Typical seating includes two rows of single desks and a third row of three-seat desks.

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### Reconstructed Privy

The recently reconstructed privy is based upon oral history recollections. It is a frame, gable-façade building with partial returns above the latticed porch. The white-painted clapboards are pierced with lancet-shaped louvered openings in the apex of the roof and on each side of the single-toilet area. The roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles.

### 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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure (some original fabric was replaced with in-kind materials)
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education (historic schoolhouse)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1896 – 1936 (creation of School District #190 and its use as a school)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1897 (completion date of the school's construction)

1936 (date of the closing of the school and its consolidation with School District #23)

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Godwin School, also known as Sussex County School District Number 190, is the only-known nineteenth century schoolhouse remaining in Dagsboro Hundred, a political subdivision within Sussex County, Delaware. Restored by the Millsboro Historical Society, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the history of Delaware's one-teacher schools. It is also the only-known white, one-teacher school in Sussex County remaining on its original location. This once commonly seen property type in rural Sussex County has virtually vanished from the cultural landscape. Most of the county's nineteenth century schools deteriorated over time and were demolished. Others were sold, relocated from their original site and adaptively reused for a variety of purposes including agricultural support buildings or were converted into houses.

The Godwin School remains on its original site which is surrounded by agricultural fields. A few houses built in the 1930s and more recently are situated along Godwin School Road, southeast of the school. The agricultural complex owned by Jacob Reese Godwin which contained a two-story three-bay house and multiple outbuildings built before 1868 was located northeast of the school, but was demolished before 2014. Mr. Godwin was a prominent resident of Dagsboro Hundred. He permitted the school to be constructed on his property which was centrally located within a newly created school district in 1896. Today, the school is significant not only for its educational value, but it is the only-known surviving nineteenth century edifice within the immediate area.

Godwin School served pupils living within this rural school district for forty years. After its closing in 1937, the building was returned to Mr. Godwin's descendants. In 1985, his descendants provided the Millsboro Historical Society with a ninety-nine year lease in support of their interest in restoring this historic edifice and creating a museum which educates the public about the building's history, information about Dagsboro Hundred, and education in rural Sussex County between 1896 and 1937.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **One-Teacher Schools in Rural Delaware**

Between 1800 through the 1920s, a significant number of students residing in rural communities received an education in one-teacher schools. A 1925 study, authored by Richard Watson Cooper and Hermann Cooper, titled The One-Teacher School in Delaware: A Study of Attendance and printed by the University of Delaware Press, chronicles the status of these schools. According to their statistics, a total of 224 one-teacher schools existed in Delaware with the greatest number being situated in the counties of Kent and Sussex. Kent County had at least 64 schools in comparison with Sussex County which contained 117 one-teacher schools. At least on-half of



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Delaware's one-teacher schools had been in service for at least 40 years. Twenty-six schools had been erected before 1850 with two constructed before 1800, 138 were built between 1850 and 1899, thirty-six were constructed between 1900 and 1920, and twenty-four were built between 1921 and 1925.

Richard Cooper and Herman Cooper also provided an overview of rural education in Delaware in their 1925 report to the Bureau of Education. They noted that the state's rural area represented prosperous farming communities and compared the average size Delaware farm of 93 acres with at least 64 acres improved to the national average size farm of 148 acres and 78 acres respectively. At least 58% of Delaware farms were owner-operated and 42% were farmed by tenants. The majority of farms were owned and/or managed by native-born Delawareans who were considered "permanent inhabitants."<sup>1</sup> The traditional agricultural activities which contributed to the prosperity of many farmers included the planting and harvesting of crops such as wheat, barley corn, oats and rye; the raising of livestock such as sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle; and the planting of fruits such as peaches and strawberries.

Seasonal activities associated with the picking of tomatoes, digging of sweet potatoes, and picking of fruit such as strawberries, as well as the wrapping of holly for the Christmas season commandeered the assistance of multiple family members. Therefore, the demand for agricultural assistance triggered a problem with school attendance. In addition to agricultural needs, attendance at the rural one-teacher schools was impacted by parental indifference, illness, bad weather, the physical neglect of one-teacher schools, and the use of "perishable timbers."<sup>2</sup> These situations as well as the improvement of roadways which enhanced transportation with neighboring communities eventually resulted in the elimination of smaller districts and their merging with larger school districts. An example is the 1936 elimination of Sussex County School District # 190, the Godwin School, and its consolidation with the Millsboro School District # 23.

### **Dagsboro Hundred - Sussex County, Delaware**

Dagsboro Hundred, a political subdivision established in Sussex County in 1773, was originally positioned within the territory whose ownership was disputed between the Calvert family of Maryland and the Penn family of Pennsylvania. With the boundary dispute settled between these two colonial proprietors in 1767, this former section of Worcester County, Maryland was officially ceded to Pennsylvania and was among the land ordered resurveyed by Governor John Penn in 1776.

This hundred is bounded on the north by Indian River, a navigable waterway, the State of Maryland on the south, Baltimore Hundred on the east, and Broad Creek Hundred on the west. Historically, this area was known for its numerous sawmills, grist mills, and its forests of pine,

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<sup>1</sup> Cooper, Richard and Hermann, The One-Teacher School in Delaware: A Study in Attendance, University of Delaware Press, Newark, Delaware, 1925, page 39.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 29.

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cedar, and oak. Early industries included the burning of charcoal and the manufacturing of lumber and cedar shingles. Landings established along the Indian River, which flows into the Indian River Bay, which in turns empties into the Atlantic Ocean enabled locally grown produce and commodities to be transported by vessels to major cities like Philadelphia and New York.

J. Thomas Scharf noted in his 1888 publication titled The History of Delaware 1609 – 1888 that educational activities were in practice in Dagsboro Hundred before 1780. Mr. Scharf referenced that a resident of the hundred named Major Benson, a surveyor by profession, taught school in an old log house on Shadrach Short's farm. Apparently between 1800 and 1818 at least three teachers: Job Runnels, Henry Runnels, and Thomas Marvel were conducting school in old houses. By 1888, J. Thomas Scharf recorded the existence of at least fourteen school districts in Dagsboro Hundred which accommodated about 400 scholars.

The Wilmer Atkins Company of Philadelphia published the Farm Journal-Farm Directory of Sussex County in 1913. It recorded that the Dagsboro Hundred contained 911 square miles, which represents approximately one-quarter of the size of Sussex County. A total of 5,508 farms were situated within the hundred with an average size of eighty-five acres. The principal crops grown and harvested were corn, potatoes of the white and sweet varieties, and berries (strawberries and blackberries). Demographically, the hundred consisted of 91% native-born Americans, 1.5% foreign-born residents, and 7.5% colored citizens. Approximately 60% of the farms were owner-operated and 40% were occupied and farmed by tenants. In addition to farmers, a myriad of occupations were noted in the directory including bank cashiers, barbers, blacksmiths, constables, druggists, harness makers, hotel proprietors, laborers, liverymen, lumber merchants, machinists, merchants, millers, owners of a cannery, packers, railroad agents, sheet metal workers, shoemakers, teachers, telegraph operators, and wheelwrights. Individuals specifically associated with construction included carpenters, lumber merchants, nailers, painters, and stone masons.

Millsboro remains the largest community within Dagsboro Hundred. During the time period when the Godwin School functioned, the town's population grew from 324 people to 479 residents. The town's proximity to Indian River, its function as the terminus of a stage route, and numerous businesses which included a tan yard, box factory, lumber company, plow manufactures, and a furnace foundry were among the economic factors which enabled newer and improved schools to be established within the community. The development of Millsboro and the enhanced educational opportunities offered at its graded school are examples of the circumstances which prompted the consolidation of smaller school districts with their larger neighboring school districts.

### **The Creation of School District Number 190**

The March 1896 term of the Sussex County Levy Court convened in Georgetown and included commissioners from each of the county's hundreds including Mr. William P. Short from Dagsboro Hundred. The court acknowledged receipt of a petition received from Millard F. Murray and signed by fourteen others asking the Levy Court to consider creating new school

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districts from the following contiguous districts: School Districts numbers 34, 42 1/2, 35, 42, 59, and United School Districts numbers 23, 23 1/2, 161, and 161 1/2. Mr. Murray explained that he and the other fourteen signatories resided in and owned land within these areas and that each district contained more than 35 scholars above the age of five.

The matter was referred to the State Board of Education during their meeting in Dover on March 10, 1896 where they passed a resolution "...recommending that the Levy Court appoint a commission to go to the school districts... and layout an additional district."<sup>3</sup> During the next Levy Court proceedings held on May 13, 1896 Commissioner William P. Short made a motion which referred this situation to the county's Committee on Education. As a result, an Oath of Commissioners was affirmed by three freeholders of Sussex County namely Peter Shockley, Elihu A. Phillips, and Theophilus S. Rogers who were instructed to go to the districts and propose new boundaries. Returning to the Levy Court on June 25, 1896 these Commissioners proposed boundaries for new school districts which were subsequently approved by the State Board of Education. Therefore, the Board reviewed the Commissioners' report and authorized the Sussex County Levy Court to create new districts which included School District Number 190 within which the Godwin School would be constructed.

### The Godwin School

The financial records maintained by Millard F. Murray, Clerk of School District #190 the Godwin School, contained information about the construction of the school. These documents revealed that the money initially borrowed from S.H. and J.S. Dobson totaling \$158.40 was repaid by subscriptions collected from Jacob R. Godwin, Robert F Godfrey, Edward Houston, Millard F. Murray, William Smith, Benjamin Roach, Clayton M. Atkins, William Burton, and Leonard Moore. Between May and October of 1897 local residents and business men were paid for the following building materials and miscellaneous items:

**lumber:** Benjamin Roach, Clayton M. Atkins, and Millard F. Murray

**work and wood:** Benjamin Roach, Leonard Moore

**paints, stove, and seats:** Jacob R. Godwin

**unspecified materials:** Houston & White, William J. Thoroughgood, William A. Faucett & Co., F.A. Dryden and Charles S. Goslee

Functioning in 1897, the Godwin School continued to serve students from the first to eight grade levels for approximately forty years. Expenditures noted in the fiscal records for School District #190 identified that the earliest-known teachers were Mary L. Buchanan and John S. Dobson. In 1999, the Millsboro Historical Society conducted an oral history interview with Mrs. Willa Lingo, the teacher of Godwin School in the 1922-1923 school year. During the interview she

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<sup>3</sup> Sussex County Levy Court Docket, March Term 1896 pp 222 – 223.

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mentioned that Godwin was a small school and that she taught as many as thirty students during a regular school day. She walked three miles to school every day and never stayed home on snowy days. Routine duties included building a fire in the wood stove and sweeping out the school before students arrived. Each morning began with Bible reading, praying the Lord's Prayer, and the saluting the flag followed by studies in a variety of subjects including arithmetic and history. Mrs. Lingo explained that girls typically sat on one side of the classroom and boys on the other. As a teacher, Mrs. Lingo continued her education by attending the University of Delaware in the summer, successfully completing multiple teacher examinations, and broadening her knowledge by studying subjects such as botany and zoology at the University of Virginia.

During the early years of the twentieth century, school attendance declined which resulted in the adoption of a resolution by the State Legislature which enabled the State Board of Education to close single one-room schools with average attendance below twelve pupils. Records indicate that by the year 1919, a total of 222 one-room schools had been closed throughout the state. Contributing factors included severe weather, epidemics, and the desire of some parents to give their children benefits of furthering their education in graded schools which provided high school instruction, and the impact of financial losses within districts due to the Great Depression, and cuts made to teacher salaries. Department of Public Instruction reports indicate that salary cuts were not restored until 1938.

The June 30, 1936 Annual Report of the Department of Public Instruction (school year 1935 – 1936) referenced that nine school districts were consolidated in Delaware including six in New Castle County, two in Kent County, and one in Sussex County. Explanations for consolidation included schools with attendance less than twelve students and teacher resignations. Mention was also made to a favorable referendum which approved the consolidation of Godwin School with Millsboro School District Number 23. The Millsboro School was located within the town of Millsboro and Principal J. M. Bennett noted in his annual report to the Department of Instruction that pupils in elementary and secondary classes had been recognized for their above average academic achievements and the town's schools had a successful attendance rate of approximately 90% throughout the school year. During the 1935 – 1936 school year, the Millsboro school had become one for the county's thirteen schools which offered grouped education to students in grades seven through twelve with an educational staff of ten teachers.

The June 30, 1937 Annual Report of the Department of Public Instruction (school year 1936 – 1937) mentioned that enrollment of students attending one-room schools dropped from the previous year and that only 2,495 students were in attendance. Statistics also noted that only 102 one-room schools continued to operate within the state. Consequently, eleven school districts were consolidated including one in New Castle County, three in Kent County, and seven in Sussex County. Godwin School was among the eleven school consolidated districts. Specific reference was made that it closed during the past spring and that the State Board of Education authorized the disposal of school property on September 25, 1936. Students previously attending Godwin School were officially transferred to Millsboro School District Number 23 where the principal, J.M. Bennett cited in his annual report to the Department of Instruction that scholastic work was emphasized and better than average success was experienced by students.

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### **Jacob Reese Godwin: Namesake of the Godwin School**

Jacob Reese Godwin was a native-born Sussex Countian who lived-in and purchased real estate in southeast Sussex County throughout his adult life. Born on September 2, 1838 Jacob Reese Godwin was the oldest of five children. His parents David and Comfort Hancock Godwin owned numerous parcels of land in Baltimore Hundred, a political subdivision located in the southeast corner of Sussex County. As an adult, Jacob Reese Godwin began acquiring property in 1869 which was comprised of landholdings lying in three neighboring hundreds: Baltimore, Dagsboro, and Indian River. His real estate acquisitions represented miscellaneous farms, storehouses, town lots as well as a hotel situated within the town of Dagsboro, town lots within the town of Millsboro (the largest community within Dagsboro Hundred), as well as family property situated in Baltimore Hundred which he purchased in 1891.

As an adult, Mr. Godwin became a financially successful individual who established a lumber business in the town of Millsboro where he resided and became a prominent member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. He also managed money successfully and made financial investments in various stocks including banks, life insurance companies, railroads, and agricultural equipment. He married a native-born Sussex Countian Mary Ann Tinley, and had one child named Georgiana Tinley Godwin. Their daughter married William Jacob Peter White in 1898, a Marylander by birth. Their union produced two grandchildren Jacob Reese White and Mary Catherine White.

Georgianna Godwin and her two children were identified as beneficiaries in Jacob Reese Godwin's 1911 will. Though details about his interest in education and his association specifically with the Godwin School are few, his will indicated that he believed in the value of a formal education. Both grandchildren, Jacob Reese White and Mary Catherine White, were bequeathed money that was especially set aside for them to finish their education. Mr. Godwin's financial arrangements specified that the guardian of his grandchildren, the Millsboro Trust and Safe Deposit Company, would dispense these reserved funds until they reached the age of twenty-one or until they finished their education.<sup>4</sup>

Among the rural property owned by Jacob Reese Godwin in Dagsboro Hundred was the farm on which the Godwin School was constructed in 1897. Positioned on a triangular shaped piece of property bordered by two prominent roads, the Godwin School Road and the Hardscrabble Road, this one-teacher school served the rural community west of Millsboro for approximately forty years. In 1936 when the building ceased being used as a school, descendants of Mr. Godwin, namely his daughter Georgianna T. White and her husband J.P. White, utilized the building as a granary which supported their extensive farming operations in Dagsboro Hundred.

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<sup>4</sup> Last Will and Testament of Jacob R. Godwin, Sussex County, Delaware Will Book V, No. 21, Page 197.

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### **The Godwin School Today**

The Godwin School is located approximately three miles west of Millsboro, Delaware. It is located on a 1.9 acre portion of the farm originally owned by Jacob R. Godwin. Shortly after the creation of School District Number 190, Mr. Godwin gave permission for this new district to construct a schoolhouse on his property in 1897. This farm remained in family hands for over one hundred years. It was the descendants of Mr. Godwin who provided the Millsboro Historical Society with a ninety-nine year lease in 1985 which enables the Society to preserve and maintain this historic edifice.

Research indicates that the Godwin School was one of the twenty-eight one-teacher schools built in Delaware between 1890 and 1899. It was also among the 117 one-teacher schools in existence in Sussex County when Richard Watson Cooper and Hermann Cooper conducted their survey in the 1920s for the Bureau of Education. Though one-teacher schools were common building types once found on the rural landscape throughout Sussex County, the Godwin School is the only-known remaining one in existence today within Dagsboro Hundred.

Like many of the one-teacher schools constructed in the late nineteenth century, the Godwin School was built in a plain rectangular style. Slightly larger than many, the Godwin School measured 31'6 1/2" X 21' 6 1/2" wide; traditional measurements were 20' X 28'. The Godwin School also had a vestibule constructed on the west side of the building. Reconstructed with oral history information, the current vestibule measures 6'21/2" X 10'2".

The overall design and layout of the Godwin School is similar to the "Design A" plan proposed for Delaware's free schools by James H. Groves in the State Superintendent Report published for the 1875 – 1876 school year. Shared common characteristics included its construction of inexpensive materials, the placement of windows directly opposite each other for the benefit of light and cross ventilation, the positioning of the teacher's desk at the opposite end of the entrance, and its construction without a cellar.

### **The Millsboro Historical Society**

Negotiating with the descendants of Jacob Reese Godwin and his wife Mary Ann, local citizens established the Millsboro Historical Society with an expressed interest in the restoration and preservation of the original 1897 schoolhouse. A ninety-nine year lease was obtained from the descendants of the Godwin family in 1985. This agreement, arranged with the Godwin's great-grandchildren: J. Reese White Jr. and his sisters Mrs. Virginia T. Frazier and Mrs. Mary McMahan, enabled the Historical Society to initiate an ambitious restoration project and to create a museum which interprets the history of the schoolhouse and educational experiences in the rural vicinity of Millsboro to visitors of all ages. Continuous funding from the Sussex County Council, established by an alumnae of the Godwin School and former Councilman James Mariner, has greatly enhanced the Millsboro Historical Society's restoration efforts.

This preservation project engaged many people including local historians who conducted an oral history interview as well as archival research and utilized the talents of an experienced restoration carpenter and contractor, Mr. Franklin T. Baker. Their collaborative efforts produced

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phased plans for the building's restoration and the development of an interpretive program. Physical work included the stabilization of the building, the installation of a new foundation with cement blocks faced with bricks, repair of termite damaged sills, and the in-kind replacement of exterior weatherboarding and corner boards, the repair and/or replacement of exterior shutters which duplicated the design of the original shutters, the reconstruction of a vestibule, and the exterior and interior painting using colors that were mentioned in the oral history interview.

Currently, the Millsboro Historical Society is raising funds to install an asphalt-shingle roof. Members continue to work with newspaper reporters who publicize the Society's activities and programmatic events and conduct tours as requested. The work performed by these preservationists complement the State of Delaware's 2013 – 2017 Historic Preservation Plan: Preserving our Past for a Better Future, **Goal IV: Expand opportunities for public education to increase support for historic preservation. Strategy 3.** Tie stories of historic buildings, structures, archaeological sites, landscapes, and objects to educational goals for students. **Goal V: Maintain and expand access to information about historic properties and preservation. Strategy 2.** Increase public access to information about Delaware's historic properties.

As a result of the Society's enthusiasm and dedication to the preservation of the Godwin School, they have successfully increased the public's awareness regarding the importance of identifying and preserving a once commonplace historic building type that has vanished from the rural landscape, have encouraged elected officials to contribute financially to historic preservation, and have ignited interest in learning about local history through the development and implementation of interpretive programming activities to visitors of all ages.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

### **Delaware Public Archives:**

Sussex County Levy Court Docket 1889 – 1900, pages 222 – 224, 259-266, and 269. [RG 4200.007- Roll 18 - Proceedings/Minutes/Tax Lists]

Sussex County Probate, Register of Wills Probate Files, Jacob R. Godwin, 1911 – 1914. [RG 4545.009, Roll #91.]

Annual Report, Delaware Department of Public Instruction. Dover, Delaware, 1936.

Atkinson, Wilmer Co. Farm Journal-Farm Directory of Sussex County, Philadelphia, 1913.

Biennial Report on the Free Schools of Delaware, 1890.

Board of Education Photograph Collection – Godwin School, Box 3, Folder 10.

Delaware State School Superintendent Report 1875 – 1876.

Cooper, Richard and Hermann, The One-Teacher School in Delaware: A Study in Attendance, Bureau of Education. University of Delaware Press, Newark, Delaware, 1925.

J. Thomas Scharf. The History of Delaware 1609 – 1888. L. J. Richards & Co., Philadelphia, 1888.

### **Millsboro Historical Society:**

*Mrs. Willa Lingo – A Teacher Reminisces on the Godwin School in Turn of the Century Delaware.* " A 1999 oral history interview recorded by Margaret Mitchell – President, Millsboro Historical Society and transcribed by R. Brian Page – Historic Preservation Planner, Sussex County.

School District #190 – Godwin School Account Book 1896 – 1899.

### Miscellaneous Newspaper Articles:

*Barefootin'* - "Millsboro Historical Society's First Project is a One Room School," 1985.

Ferbar, Doug. "A one-room wonder." *The Wave*, September 26, 2017.

"Willa M. Lingo has done a lot of living in her 100+ Years." *Sussex Countian*, Georgetown Delaware, July 22, 1998.

### **State Historic Preservation Office:**

Godwin School Cultural Resource Survey Files – CRS# S04595.

Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware, Philadelphia, 1868. Dagsboro Hundred.

### **On-Line Resources:**

U. S. Census Records – Jacob Reese Godwin (1900, 1910)



Godwin School  
Name of Property

Sussex County, DE  
County and State

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency (Delaware Public Archives - Dover Delaware)
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Millsboro Historical Society – Godwin School

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** DE CRS # S04595

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.9 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.600651                      Longitude: -75.346519
2. Latitude:                                      Longitude:
3. Latitude:                                      Longitude:
4. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

Godwin School  
Name of Property

Sussex County, DE  
County and State

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |          |           |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated National Register boundary which includes the schoolhouse and the privy is a triangular portion of Sussex County tax parcel 133-16.00-75.00. The 1.9 acre property encompasses a wooded area at the eastern edge of the tax parcel which has never been cleared or farmed and is evident on historic aerial maps. It measures 410 feet along Hardscrabble Road (State Road 20), 448 feet along Godwin School Road, and 337 feet north/south along the eastern end.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.) The referenced boundary is the historical portion of Jacob Reese Godwin's property on which the school was constructed by 1897 and is the portion mentioned in the 1985 ninety-nine year lease written between descendants of Jacob Reese Godwin and the Millsboro Historical Society.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Staff - Delaware State Historic Preservation Office  
organization: Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs  
street & number: 21 The Green  
city or town: Dover state: DE zip code: 19901  
e-mail madeline.dunn@state.de.us  
telephone: 302-736-7417  
date: 4/12/2018

Contributors to Nomination: Margaret Mitchell – President, Millsboro Historical Society;  
Dick Carter – Historian, C. Daniel Parsons – Sussex County Preservation Planner, Douglas  
C. McVarish – John Milner Associates, Inc., Beverly Laing and Madeline Dunn – State  
Historic Preservation Office.

Godwin School  
Name of Property

Sussex County, DE  
County and State

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Time Period: 1880 – 1940 Urbanization and Early Suburbanization  
Geographical Zone: Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp  
Historic Period Theme: Education

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Godwin School

City or Vicinity: Millsboro

County: Sussex State: DE

Photographer: Delaware State Historic Preservation Office – Dover, DE and Dan Parsons –  
Sussex County Preservation Planner

Date Photographed: January - April 2018

Godwin School  
Name of Property

Sussex County, DE  
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 10 ¼ view of the Godwin School looking northeast.
- 2 of 10 ¼ view of the Godwin School looking southeast
- 3 of 10 ¼ view of Godwin School looking southwest.
- 4 of 10 roof rafter tails southeast elevation.
- 5 of 10 original shutter with raised panels and electroplated hinges.
- 6 of 10 southeast of view of property showing school, the reconstructed privy, and modern houses along the Godwin School Road.
- 7 of 10 Godwin School looking southeast.
- 8 of 10 Hardscrabble Road (State Road 20) northeast of Godwin School.
- 9 of 10 Southwest view of school property showing intersection of Godwin School Road and Hardscrabble Road (State Route 20).
- 10 of 10 Interior of classroom looking east.

**Figures:**

- 1 of 4 Excerpt from Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware – 1868 of Dagsborough Hundred showing the original nineteenth century school districts.
- 2 of 4 1917 U. S. Geological Survey of the Godwin School area.
- 3 of 4 1921- 1925 map showing the approximate location of white one-teacher schools in Sussex County.
- 4 of 4 Delaware Board of Education photograph of the Godwin School c. 1937.  
[Digital Photograph Collection -Delaware Public Archives]

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of

United States  
Department of the Interior  
Geological Survey

State of Delaware  
Delaware Geological Survey

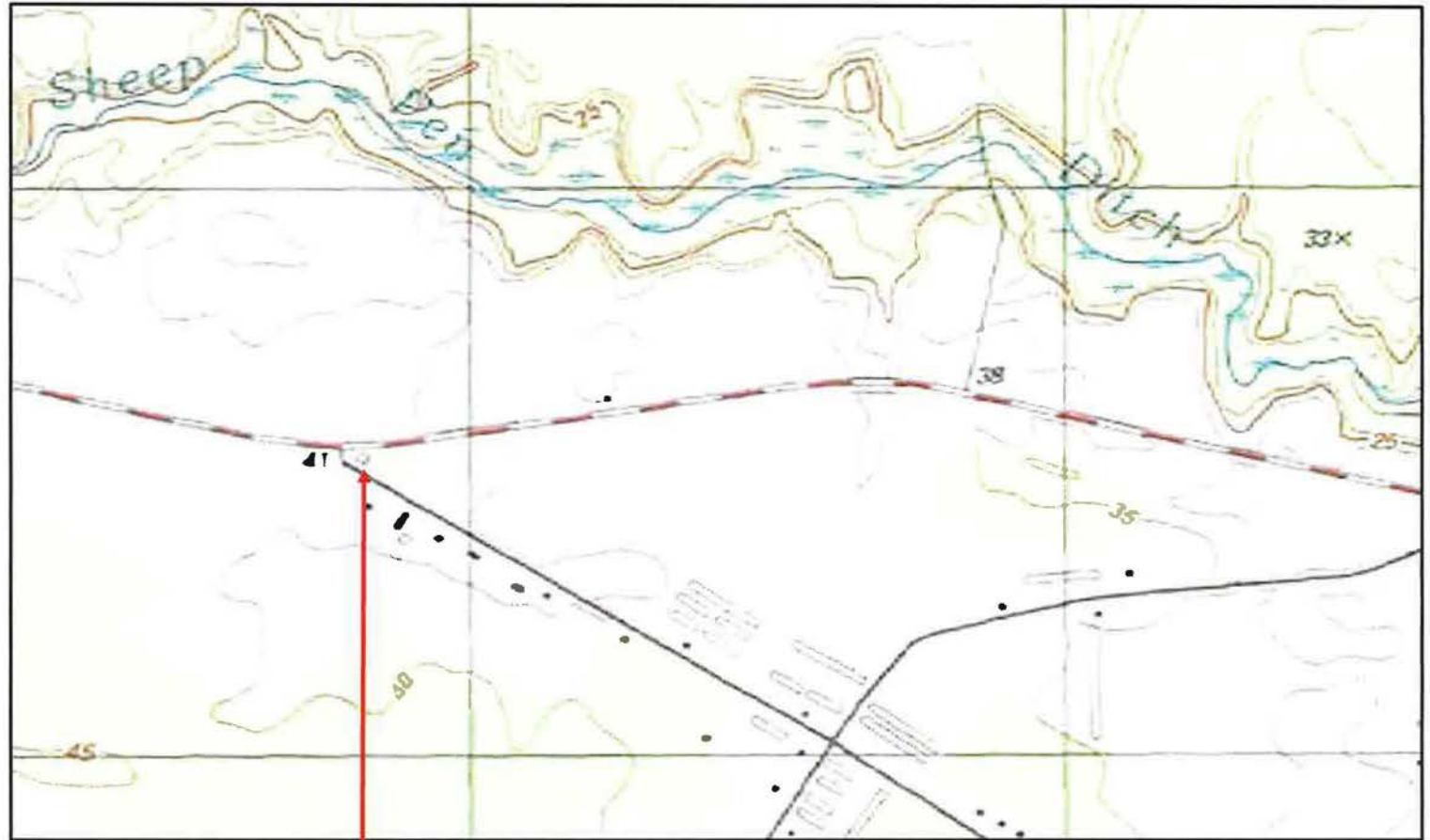
Millsboro Quadrangle  
Delaware - Sussex County



Location

Latitude: 38.600651

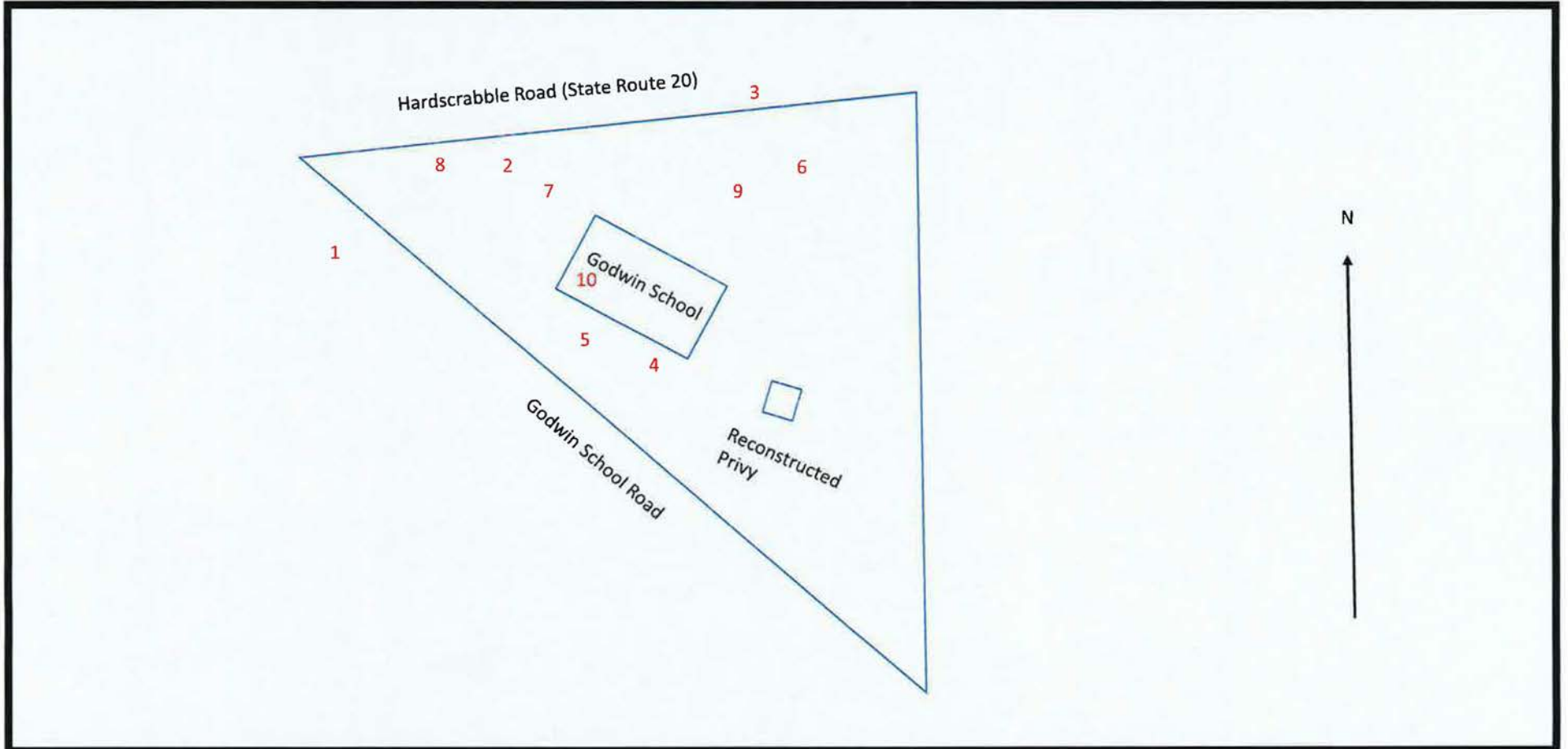
Longitude: -75.346519



Godwin School (CRS # S04595)  
23235 Godwin School Road  
Millsboro, DE

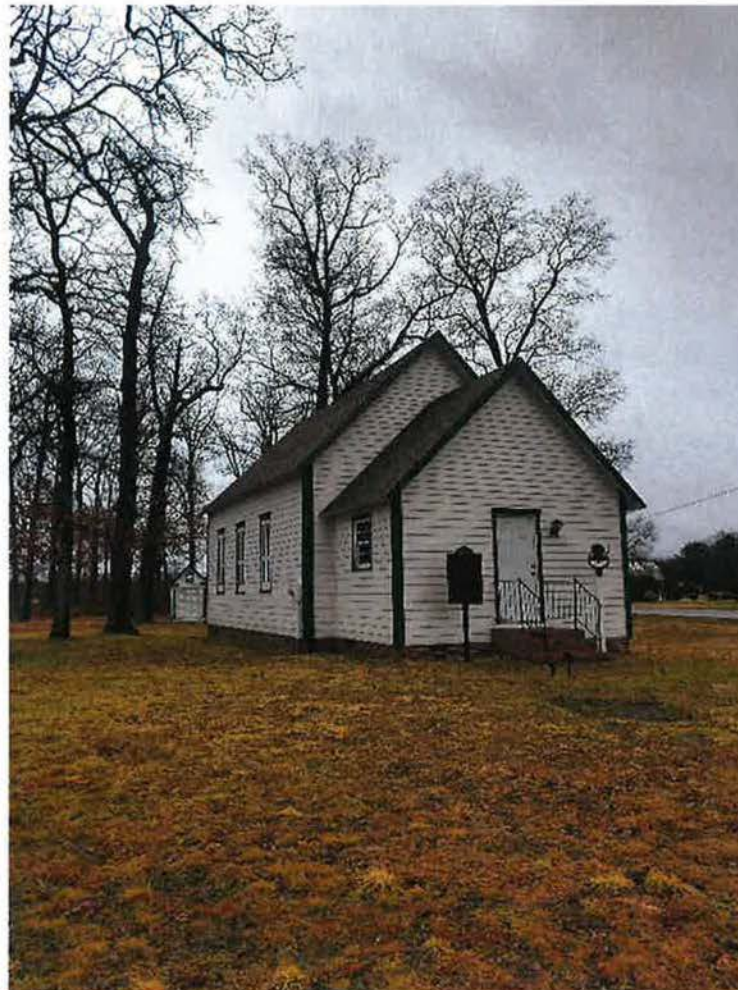
DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School

Photo Key  
Godwin School  
Sussex County, Delaware





DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 1 of 10



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 2 of 10



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 3 of 10



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 4 of 10





DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 5 of 10



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 6 of 10



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 7 of 10



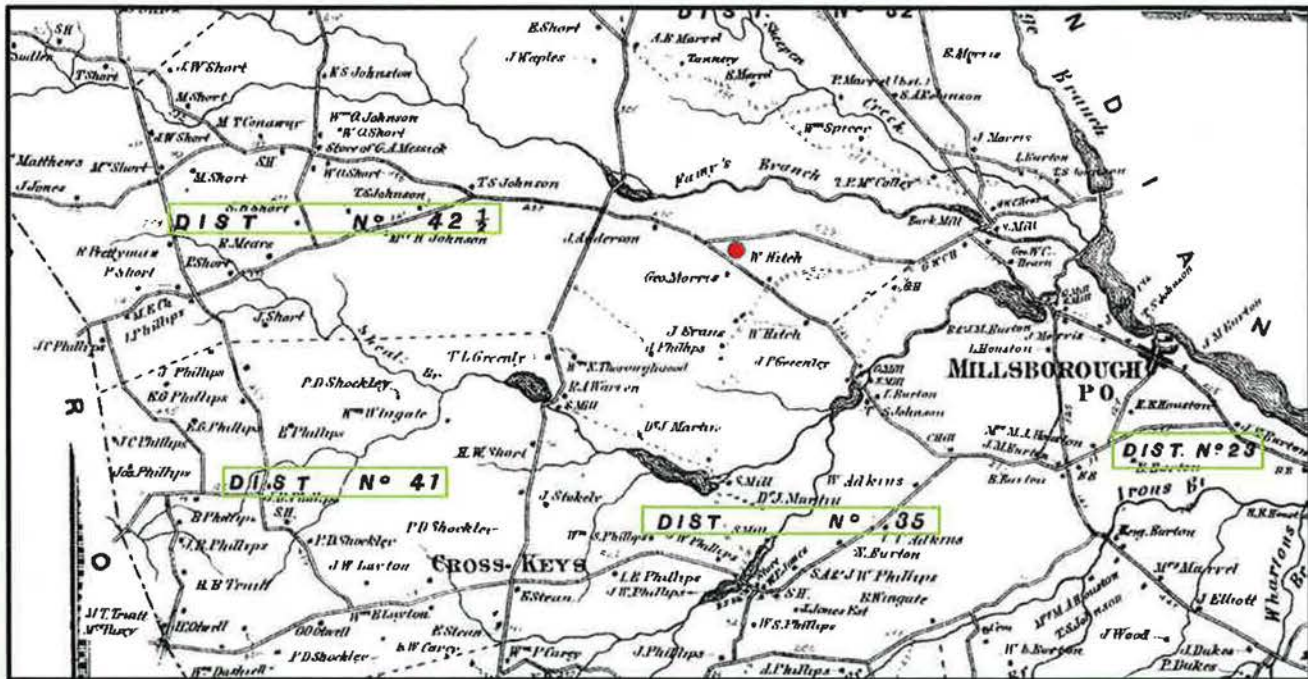
DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 8 of 10



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 9 of 10



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School 10 of 10

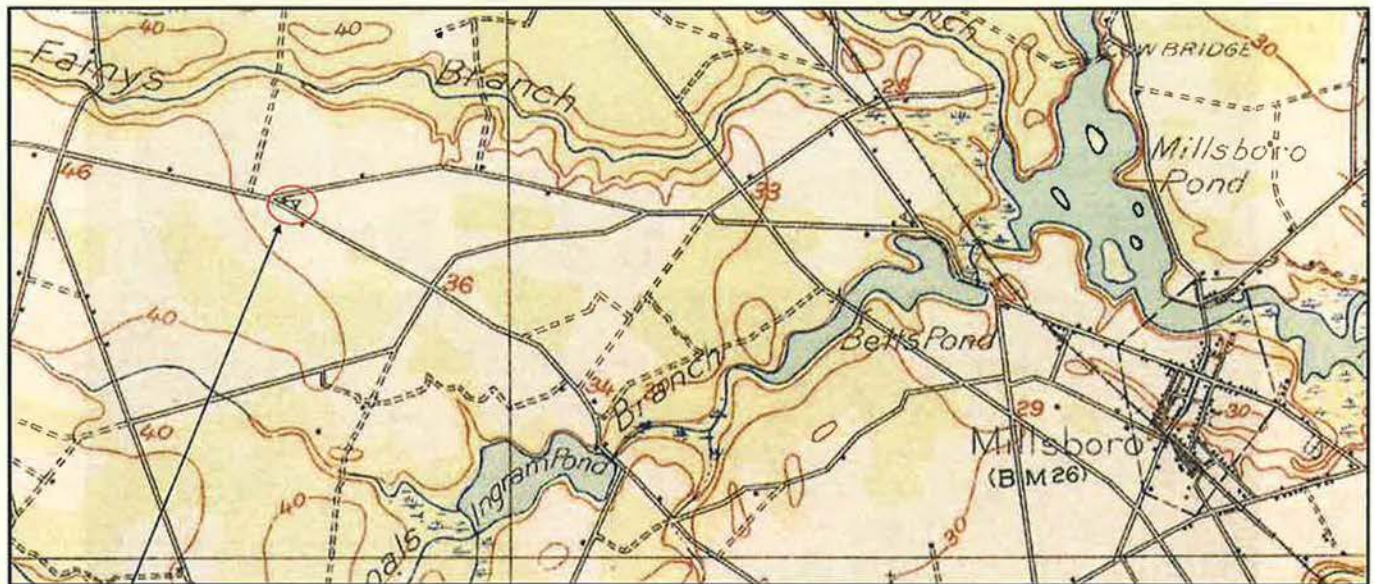


Map Excerpt – Dagsborough Hundred, Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware – Philadelphia, 1868

Names of the nineteenth century school districts are boxed in green. The red dot denotes the location of School District #190, Godwin School.

Figure 1 DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School

DE\_Sussex county\_Godwin School Figure 1



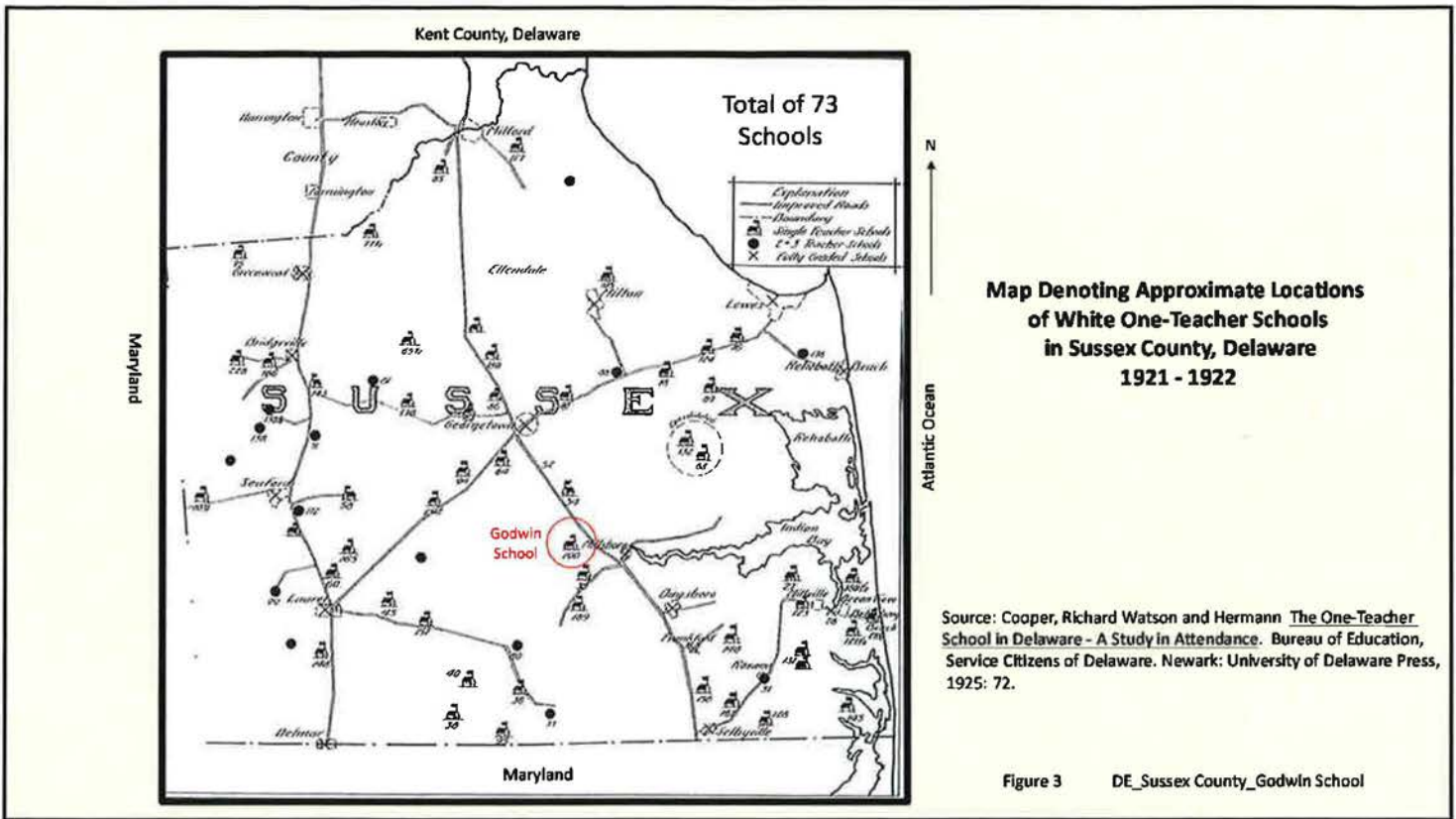
Godwin School  
23235 Hardscrabble Road  
Sussex County  
Millsboro, Delaware

Millsboro Quadrangle  
Sussex County  
Delaware

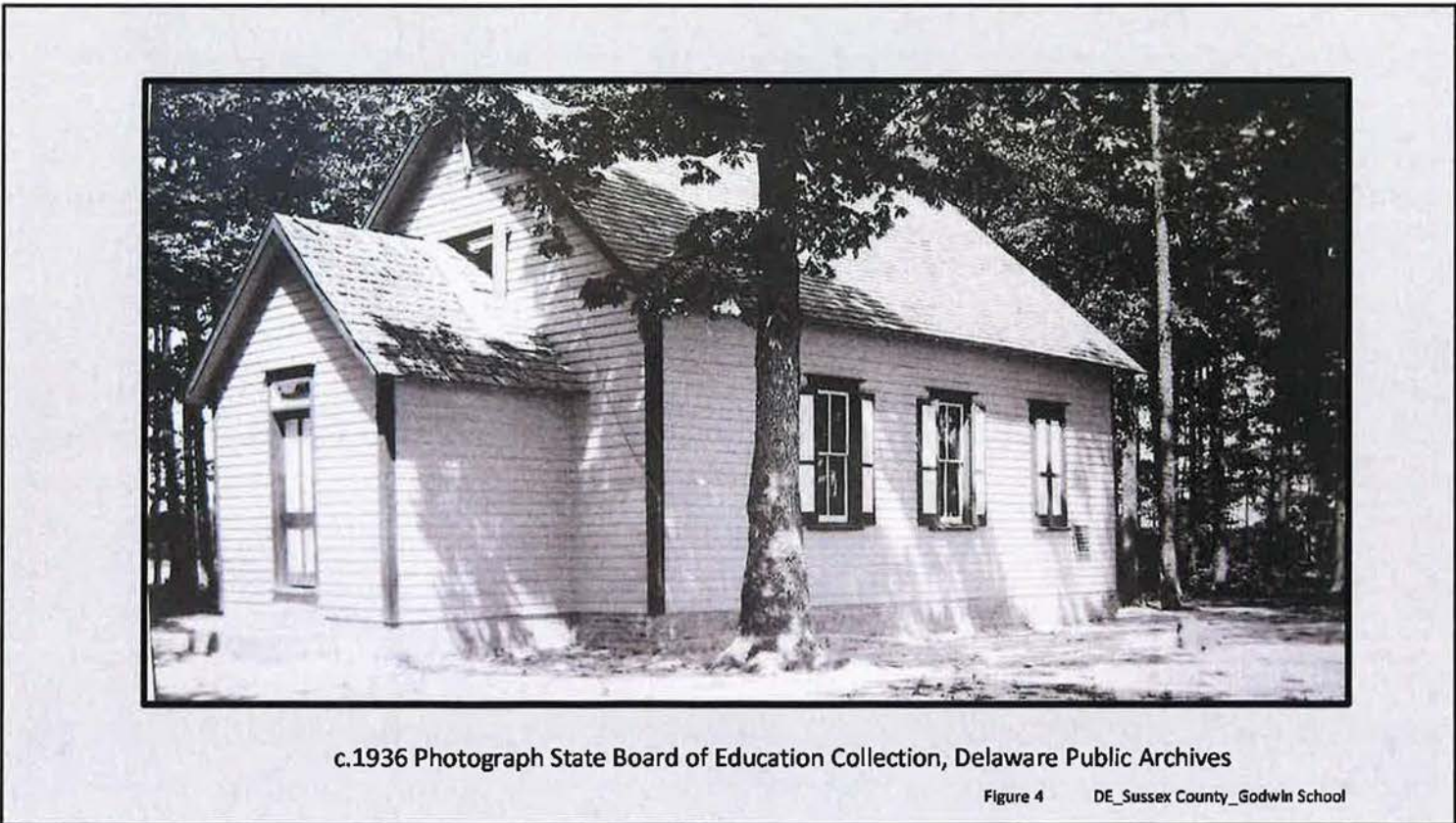
Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey  
1917

Figure 2 DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School

DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School Figure 2



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School Figure 3



DE\_Sussex County\_Godwin School Figure 4



















EAST  
20

EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITIES  
SALE  
CHRISTIE'S





Sept 4, 1911  
Lessons Today

8:15-9:15 Bible-Flag World's Prayer 1:15-1:45-1:45-2:00 Read 09 Geography-4-5 All Classes-6-7-8	12:00-1:30-Waiting All Classes
lunch-11:00-11:30	1:30-2:30-ART All Classes
Recess 11:30-12:00	2:30-3:15-MUSIC-All 3:15-4:00-Homework Time 4:00-Dismissed



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Godwin School

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: DELAWARE, Sussex

Date Received: 5/30/2018      Date of Pending List: 6/28/2018      Date of 16th Day: 7/13/2018      Date of 45th Day: 7/16/2018      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100002658

Nominator: State

Reason For Review: \_\_\_\_\_

X Accept       Return       Reject      7/16/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: POS: 1896-1936, Local level of significance, AOS: Education.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Criterion A. Education

Reviewer Lisa Deline      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239      Date 7/16/18

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



May 25, 2018

Mr. Paul Loether, National Register Chief and Keeper  
of the National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, N.W., Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Godwin School to the National Register of Historic Places. This historic property is located in Sussex County, Delaware and is being nominated under Criterion A for its association with Delaware's rural one-teacher schools and as the only-known surviving nineteenth century white schoolhouse on its original location in the county.

If there are any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Madeline E. Dunn, National Register Coordinator and Historian for the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office at [madeline.dunn@state.de.us](mailto:madeline.dunn@state.de.us) or 302-736-7417.

Sincerely,



Timothy A. Slavin, State Historic Preservation Officer and Director  
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs