

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 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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name David Robbins Homestead

other names/site number Mansion Farm, CRS # S03373

## 2. Location

street & number 26285 Broadkill Road

city or town Milton

state Delaware code DE county Sussex County code 005 zip code 19968

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title

DE SHPO

November 13, 2012

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 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:)

Patrick Andrews

1/02/2013

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

David Robbins Homestead  
Name of Property

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## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	6	buildings
	1	sites
	1	structures
		objects
1	8	<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Single Dwelling

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century – rural vernacular

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: brick  
walls: vinyl siding  
roof: Cedar shake  
other: wood

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The David Robbins Homestead, constructed around 1850, is a single-pile, two-story, frame, vernacular farmhouse. About 1909, the house was doubled in size with the addition of a two-story, frame, Victorian-style section. Present owners recently expanded this historic residence by constructing a two-story porch across the northern façade which connects two, new, single-pile additions located at the rear of the dwelling. The house rests on a brick foundation and is covered with a cedar shake roof. Facing south, the house is oriented toward Delaware Route 16, a major beach corridor which was originally laid out during the nineteenth century. The nominated tax parcel features this historic residence as well as eight non-contributing resources (garages, sheds, a silo, new formal garden, greenhouse, granary, and adaptively reused barn with cow shed). The nominated property is situated in a predominantly agricultural area and is part of Broadkill Hundred in Sussex County, Delaware. This mid-century residence is the oldest known remaining nineteenth-century dwelling situated along this historic road. The dwelling retains its original windows, doors, hardware, and interior embellishments.

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### Narrative Description

#### The Setting:

Located in Broadkill Hundred, a political subdivision in Sussex County, Delaware, the David Robbins Homestead is situated on the north side of State Route 16, a primary highway running the breadth of Broadkill Hundred. The single-family residence continues to be surrounded by farmland on the east, north, and west elevations. The house is set back approximately fifty feet from the road. A landscaped buffer consisting of trees, lawn, hedges, and a paled wooden fence separate the nominated property from the two-lane highway. The original farm driveway is situated east of the dwelling. This lane separates the farmhouse from a line of outbuildings positioned along the easternmost boundary of the property. This residential parcel is similar to the home farm lot depicted in a 1954 aerial view of the premises.

#### South Elevation:

The main façade entrance is oriented toward the south and faces State Route 16. The five-bay, c. 1850 section features brick interior end chimneys, original six-over-six double-hung sash windows, and its original heavily molded elongated panel door surmounted by a three-light transom. The original, plain, cedar clapboards exist but are encapsulated under new vinyl siding of similar dimensions. This section measures eighteen by forty feet and represents dimensions of a house constructed for an affluent property owner. The interior walls were constructed of oak, 2X4-inch timber with lath-and-plaster walls. Pine logs were halved, notched, and rested crossways on beams in parallel rows approximately eight feet apart. A historic photograph indicates that a Victorian-style porch was added around 1900. This four-bay-long front porch retains its original decorative turned columns with ornate corner bracket trim. By 1909 a single-pile Victorian-style addition was added perpendicularly to the c. 1850 section. It features a gable roof with small returns. A two-story bay window was

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centrally placed in the gable end. The bay window retains its original, two-over-two, double-hung sash windows, decorative paneled frieze between floor levels, and a diamond-shaped multi-paned glass window at the apex of the gable roof between small returns.

### **East Elevation:**

The c. 1909 Victorian-style addition was two rooms deep. This early-twentieth-century addition retains its original two-over-two, double-hung sash windows. Walls in these two rooms, utilized as a dining room and kitchen, measure ten inches thick. They contained pocket doors supported by heavy-gauge metal rails. The construction consists of 2X4-inch floor joists. In keeping with local vernacular traditions, this addition also included a back staircase, servant quarters, and two additional second-floor bedrooms. A narrow, exterior brick chimney was placed between these rooms at a later date. Within recent years, the length of the Victorian-style section was extended by adding a two-story, single-pile, frame addition containing a sitting room on the first floor and a bathroom on the second floor. A portion of the one-story side porch was also enclosed and enhanced by a bay window which expanded the kitchen area.

### **North Elevation:**

The rear façade of the David Robbins Homestead is dominated by a newly constructed two-story frame porch. The porch connects the expanded Victorian-style section with a narrow, single-pile, two-story addition which houses bathrooms at the first and second floor levels on the north side of the c. 1850 section. Each gable end of these modern additions features narrow returns and contemporary windows. Beyond the northern façade is a contemporary fenced-in garden with flower beds, pathways, trees, bird houses, and garden ornamentation. Within the footprint of this garden is a one-story farm machine shop with porch. According to oral history, this machine shop was associated with Charles G. Jones, Sr., a twentieth-century owner of the property.

### **Interior Details:**

The simply designed interior of this house retains its historic plan and much of its original material. The floor plan of the five-bay, c. 1850 section is unusual because it consists of an unusually large hall-and-parlor plan rather than a center-passage plan. The hall features a closed-string staircase with turned balusters, molded handrail, and a large, square, decorative newel post. Four-panel interior doors feature their original hinges, box locks, and porcelain door knobs. Original interior embellishments include baseboards, window surrounds, and fluted door surrounds with decorative bulls-eye corner-block trim. The main entrance, situated across from the staircase, is a wooden door with flat, elongated panels surmounted by a three-light transom. West of the hall is a single-pile parlor which features a decorative mantelpiece with a wide band of trim below the mantelshelf and plain pilasters with molded capitals.

The second floor of the c. 1850 section is accessed by the closed-string staircase. A split landing at the top of the stairs allows access to a bedroom above the west room and a hallway along the north wall of the dwelling which accesses multiple bedrooms. The landing features decorative newel posts including an octagonal-based post with molded cap. Second-floor rooms feature their original six-over-six, double-hung sash windows, as well as four-paneled doors with original porcelain door knobs, locks, and electroplated hardware. Original baseboard trim remains intact along with plain, wooden mantelpieces.



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The interior of the Victorian-style section, situated east of the c. 1850 portion of the house, was constructed in a plain style by descendants of David Robbins. Research suggests that John M. Robbins and his wife Orpha Pierce Robbins constructed this section between 1889 and 1909. Measuring eighteen feet by twenty-five feet, this frame addition doubled the size of the c. 1850 section of the house. Original baseboard trim and two-over-two, double-hung sash windows remain intact on both floors. The dining room is the most ornate. It features reeded window sills and wainscoted panels below the bay window.

### **Twentieth-Century Improvements/Preservation Activities:**

Oral history interviews, conducted by the property owner between 2007 and 2009, chronicled information about improvements made to this historic dwelling by twentieth-century property owners. For example, in 1947 William T. Jones introduced plumbing, updated the kitchen, added hardwood floors, and installed a central heating system. Deed research indicates that the Jones family subdivided the 131-acre property and sold off the 1.6-acre tax parcel containing the home farm lot with the David Robbins Homestead. The remaining acreage, which surrounds this historic house, was sold off as farmland and is still used for agricultural purposes today, thereby preserving the rural landscape which surrounded the house historically.

In 2007, the Greaves family purchased the 1.6 acres in anticipation of restoring this historic dwelling. They updated the house by re-plastering the walls, refinishing floors, adding new bathrooms, and updating the kitchen. Interested in maintaining the architectural integrity of the dwelling, the present owners constructed two, two-story additions on opposite sides of the north side of the dwelling in order to house upgraded HVAC and plumbing systems. These contemporary additions function as a family room, library, and bathrooms. The current owners also planted a formal garden behind the house in what was part of the original farmyard. However, current owners have preserved some of the original fruit trees, planted by the Robbins family. Species include pear trees, cherry trees, chestnut trees, pecan trees, and apple trees.

### **Outbuildings/Farm Complex:**

The current 1.6-acre tax parcel associated with this nominated property is similar to the home farm area delineated on a 1954 aerial view. Though the parcel remains surrounded by agricultural lands, the historic functional relationship between the dwelling and outbuildings has been changed to accommodate contemporary needs. Therefore, all the outbuildings are considered non-contributing resources. These structures include a c.1900 metal silo, a frame granary covered with corrugated metal with modern inserted windows and a replacement asphalt-shingled roof, a frame one-story machine shop with porch situated in the formal garden, a small glass greenhouse north of the recently developed formal garden, a frame utility shed near the granary, and frame single-car garage which according to local oral history may have functioned as the original summer kitchen, and a two-car garage and storage building built in 2012. Other non-contributing objects include renewable energy systems with a wind generator and ground-mounted solar array installed between 2011 and 2012. The cow shed, renovated and converted into an art studio in 2011, represents an adaptive reuse concept. In 2012, the owner placed the barn onto a new foundation and structurally reinforced and re-cladded the barn with new board and batten siding.

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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.)

Property is:

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

c. 1850 - 1909

### Significant Dates

c. 1850 main section

1889 - 1909 Victorian-style section

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

**Period of Significance (justification)** The timeframe, c. 1850 to 1909, represents dates associated with primary construction activities associated with the David Robbins Homestead. The two-story, five-bay section was constructed around 1850 and the Victorian-style addition was built between 1889 and 1909.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The David Robbins Homestead is significant at the local level under Criterion C. Its architectural integrity includes the unusually large, hall-and-parlor plan associated with the c. 1850 section, its Victorian-style addition, and its retention of original decorative embellishments throughout the interior. This dwelling is also the largest and oldest known surviving example of vernacular buildings constructed along Route 16. The history associated with the establishment of this road is essential to the story of the David Robbins Homestead. Nineteenth-century documents identify this historic roadway as the "Road from Milton to Broadkilln Beach." Petitions record that residents, living in this rural area, requested that the Delaware General Assembly develop a road as early as 1801. Property transfers executed by the Robbins family verify that the road was established before 1850 and shortly thereafter they constructed this frame dwelling. Analysis of the Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware suggests that this Broadkill Hundred road stretched the entire breadth of the hundred by 1868 and that approximately thirty structures had been constructed along this thoroughfare. The cultural resources built by 1868 include dwellings, farms, stores, churches, cemeteries, and a schoolhouse. However, over the years the majority of these resources have disappeared and only a handful survive today. Surviving examples include a one-story, frame house; two cemeteries; the David Robbins Homestead; and one farm complex with a two-story, single-pile dwelling and outbuildings at the eastern end of the hundred. Though the area remains primarily agricultural, the cultural landscape changed overtime and now includes ranch houses, mobile homes, poultry houses, shopping centers, a bank, and a few commercial businesses spread out along this route.

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

**Regional Connections:**

As a successful farmer raising corn and wheat, David Robbins and his descendants benefitted from local business endeavors including grist mills and commercial ventures associated with the transportation of agricultural commodities to Philadelphia and other ports via the nearby Broadkill River. As early as 1850, David Robbins was among the rural residents listed in Milton's city directories. This town, located less than two miles southwest of the David Robbins Homestead, has a historic district which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. During the 1800s it contained a significant number of residences and commercial buildings as well as lumber dealers, sawmills, and brickyards. The town's local artisans including bricklayers, painters, brick manufactures, carpenters, and sawyers would have been among the men David Robbins hired to construct his residence.



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### Land Acquisition and the Robbins Family:

Deed research indicates that the Robbins family began acquiring property in Broadkill Hundred during the late eighteenth century. As one of the county's earliest political subdivisions, established before 1696, it became a rich agricultural area and its forests provided resources that supported construction and shipbuilding activities. By 1782, tax records indicate that it contained the largest number of county residents of any hundred in Sussex County – 2320 men and women. The 1818 county assessments reveal that the Robbins family had acquired multiple farms ranging in size from 68 acres to 100 acres and that their rural parcels included marsh and woodland. They were also taxed on livestock including horses, oxen, cows, swine, and sheep.

A deed dated August 5, 1851, records David Robbins, Jr.'s acquisition of the four-hundred acres of land in Broadkill Hundred on which this dwelling was erected. During his lifetime he also acquired shares in local banks as well as in a schooner named *Robert W. Daizey*. His 1892 will provides insights about his assets which included the Broadkill Hundred real estate he inherited from his father David Robbins, Sr. in 1856 as well as the property on which he built the nominated dwelling. David Robbins, Jr. stipulated that upon his death his beloved wife Lydia would acquire one-third share of the farm on which he lived (the David Robbins Homestead) and that upon her death it would be transferred to their son, John M. Robbins. The will also identifies the names of their children who grew up on this mansion farm – a son named John and three daughters, Alice, Mary, and Lydia. His 1901-probated inventory also provides information about the nominated property, including the fact that floor coverings included carpets, rugs, and oil cloth.

Upon the death of Lydia Robbins in 1906, the farm was bequeathed to her son, John M. Robbins. Lydia Robbins' probated inventory provides additional information about the functions of interior spaces. This document specifically mentions an attic, a summer and winter kitchen, a parlor, and multiple bedrooms, as well as a porch. This information also suggests that the Victorian-style section may have been constructed after that date. These deeds, wills, and probate records clearly establish a chain of title for the David Robbins Homestead which remained in family hands for at least sixty-nine years. Perhaps the most politically accomplished member of the Robbins family was John M Robbins. He was elected to represent Sussex County in the Delaware General Assembly in 1894 and in 1910.

The David Robbins Homestead is architecturally significant as one of a handful of surviving, vernacular, nineteenth-century cultural resources situated along the "Road from Milton to Broadkiln Beach." The family's social prominence, financial success, and involvement within the Broadkill Hundred community is reflected in a variety of historical documents. For example, their elevated social status is revealed through an analysis of the hundred's tax assessment records. Data recorded in 1873 demonstrates that the value of the property owned by David Robbins represented the top 3% of the hundred's taxable individuals. At the time he owned 280 acres of land of which 120 acres were marsh. Other taxable commodities included his horse, one mare and colt, three oxen, four cows, six young cattle, one sow, and pigs. His overall assessment was rated at \$4,640. In comparison, 655 of the 789 residents assessed in 1873 were taxed at rates between \$150 and \$991.

Another indicator of David Robbins' wealth was revealed in his 1901-probated estate records which record that he had cash assets in local banks totaling more than \$8,500. Unfortunately, in 1920 John Robbins, grandson of the original owner, used the title to this historic property as collateral in a business venture. When his business venture failed in 1923, the Sussex County Investment Company and eventually the Delaware Trust Company took title of the farm, thus ending the Robbins family association with this historic property.



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### Modern Site History:

As the twentieth century progressed, the David Robbins Homestead remained part of the agricultural community in Broadkill Hundred. In 1924 the Delaware Trust Company sold the farm to Robert D. Lingo and Charles G. Jones. Approximately one year later, Charles G. Jones bought Mr. Lingo's interest in the farm and expanded his holly wreath business at the David Robbins Homestead. Considered a pioneer in Delaware's holly industry, Mr. Jones became known as the "Holly Wreath Man." Here he expanded his business ventures and perfected a holly wreath preservation technique which enabled him to ship wreaths to New York and Philadelphia during the holiday season. Eventually Mr. Jones' son, William Thomas Jones, took control of farm operations. When his father, Charles G. Jones, died in 1944, William leased the farmhouse to tenants. Three years later, William and his wife Dorothy moved into the dwelling, upgraded the heating system, and installed indoor plumbing. The Jones family continued to reside on the premises for decades. In recent years, the nominated, 1.6-acre tax parcel was separated from the farm and conveyed to the current property owners. The new owners conducted archival research and oral history interviews with descendants of the Robbins and Jones families. Maintaining an interest in historic preservation, they restored their residence. Interested in conservation, they installed energy-efficient systems, applied adaptive-reuse strategies to the outbuilding complex, and constructed additional buildings to accommodate their needs.

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### Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

### Comprehensive Planning

Zone: Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp  
Time Period: 1880-1940+/-: Urbanization and Early Suburbanization  
Theme: Architecture, Engineering, and Decorative Arts  
Property Type: Dwelling: Nineteenth Century Vernacular and Victorian

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**Appendix 1: Names of Nineteenth Century Carpenters, Residing in Milton, Featured in State Directories**

**1868**

Davidson & Wilson (John Davidson and Samuel Wilson)  
John M. Hall  
George Prettyman

**1876-1877**

Davidson & Wilson,  
John M. Hall  
William T. and A.S. Holland

**1882**

John H. Davidson (carpenter and builder)

**1888**

Henry Atkins  
Greensbury W. Betts  
James Alfred Betts  
Eli Burton Carey  
David Clendaniel  
Joseph C. Clendaniel  
John H. Davidson (house carpenter and builder)  
John W. Dean  
John Ellingsworth  
John M. Hall  
Joseph b. Johnson  
William H. Magee  
William Morris  
Thomas Plummer  
Edward Reynolds  
Myers Reynolds, Jr.  
Henry Robinson  
George F. Williams  
William Workman

**1897-1898**

Henry Atkins  
William H. Atkins  
Greensbury W. Betts  
James A. Betts  
Charles Carey  
David Clendaniel  
Joseph C. Clendaniel  
Eli Collins  
N.J. Conwell  
Andrew J. Davidson  
Charles A. Davidson  
William H. Davidson  
John A. Hickman  
Peter H. Leonard  
William H. Megee  
Harry Manship  
Henry Messick  
Joseph B. Morris  
Lewis L. Mustard  
George Reed  
Burton M. Robinson  
George Sharp  
Peter Stevens  
William A. Vent  
William Workman

Reference: Hancock, Harold and Russell McCabe. Milton's First Century 1807 – 1907. Westerville, Ohio: Otterbein College, 1982.

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**Appendix 2: David Robbins Tax Assessments, Broadkill Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware**

**1861**

300 acres upland @\$12 per acre	\$3600
125 acres marsh @ \$1.25 per acre	156
1 horse	40
1 mare and colt	125
2 Pair of Oxen 3 Cows, 5 yearlings	136
1 sow & pigs	5
Person	150
(total)	\$4212
*Add on 200 acres \$2 per acre	400
(total)	<b>\$4612</b>

**1873**

210 acres	\$2600
70 acres	1050
120 acres marsh	480
1 horse	125
1 mare & colt	100
3 oxen	75
4 cows	48
6 young cattle	54
1 sow & pigs	8
Investment	100
(total)	<b>\$4640</b>

**1892 – 1916**

land @20 [150 acres]	\$3000
land @15 [60 acres]	900
land marsh	200
horse	25
2 mules	200
2 oxen	55
6 cows	90
1 heifer	12
personal	382
(total)	<b>\$4864</b>

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

### Primary Resource Documents (Delaware Public Archives – Dover, DE):

Photographic Collections – Milton

#### Sussex County Deeds:

Volume 58 page 331 (1851)  
Volume 59 page 125 (1851)  
Volume 60 page 234 (1853)  
Volume 246 page 256 (1924)  
Volume 246 page 257 91924)  
Volume 250 page 113 (1925)

#### Sussex County Wills:

David Robbins Sr. (1856)  
David Robbins Jr. (1892 – 1901)

#### Sussex County Probate Records:

David Robbins (1847 – 1858)  
Lydia Robbins (1859 – 1866)

#### Sussex County Testamentary/Distributive Accounts:

David Robbins Sr. (1858)  
David Robbins Jr. (1901)  
Lydia Robbins (1906)

#### Sussex County Inventories:

David Robbins (1856)

### Historic Map:

Beers, D.G. Atlas of the State of Delaware. Philadelphia: Pomeroy & Beers, 1868.

### Publications:

"From the Land of Holly." Delaware Conservationists Winter 1988:16 – 19.

Hancock, Harold B. The Reconstructed Delaware State Census of 1782. Wilmington, Delaware: Delaware Genealogical Society, 1983.

Hancock, Harold and Russell McCabe. Milton's First Century 1807 – 1907. Westerville, Ohio: Otterbein College, 1982.

"Milton's Holly Wreath Man." Delaware Beach Life November/December 2012:22 – 24.

Scott, Joseph. A Geographical Description of the States of Maryland and Delaware. Philadelphia: Kimber & Conrad, 1807.

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

"When Holly was King." Milton Historical Society- Milton, Delaware:1976

### Miscellaneous:

Greaves, Charles R. Oral History Interviews 2009 – 2012 – Lucius Robbins Webb, Margaret Osborne Webb, Dorothy Jones, Albert Land, and William Jones Jr.



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**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  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): S03335

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.6 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 474845.2366 4293991.9806  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

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

Flat cultivated farmland surround three sides of the 1.60 acres of land that is identified as Sussex County Tax Parcel ID# 235050000401. Retaining its rural cultural landscape, the David Robbins Homestead features a hedgerow of trees that buffers the property from adjoining cultivated land on the west, north, and east. This adjoining farmland, part of the original land acquired by the Robbins family in the 1800s, totaled more than 300 acres. The southern boundary, known today as State Highway 16, is actually an improved roadway that historically bordered the southern side of the property by the middle of the nineteenth century. In addition to cultivated farmland, a hedgerow of trees borders the property on the west and a row of outbuildings including a silo, sheds, garage/storage buildings, and a barn are located within feet of the eastern edge of the property. Front yard trees, some planted in the nineteenth century, still provide shade for the Robbins family dwelling.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.) Acreage associated with the nominated property represents the Sussex County tax parcel owned by the current property owners. It is visually similar to the home farm lot depicted in an aerial photograph dated 1954.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Madeline Dunn, Historian, and Charles F. Greaves

organization Div. of Historical and Cultural Affairs; owner

date November 1, 2012

street & number 21 The Green

telephone 302-736-7417

city or town Dover

state DE

zip code 19901

e-mail Madeline.dunn@state.de.us

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

### List of Figures:

- 1 of 8 Site plan, David Robbins Homestead
- 2 of 8 Pomeroy & Beers Atlas of 1868: section of Broadkill Hundred
- 3 of 8 Surviving Examples of c. 1868 Cultural Resources along Route 16 in Broadkill Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware
- 4 of 8 Historic view, 1889
- 5 of 8 Historic view, 1909
- 6 of 8 Photo Collage: House and Outbuildings, David Robbins Homestead
- 7 of 8 Photo Collage: Interior Details, David Robbins Homestead
- 8 of 8 Photo Key, David Robbins Homestead

### List of Photographs:

Name of Property: David Robbins Homestead  
City or Vicinity: Milton  
County: Sussex State: DE  
Photographer: Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs  
Date Photographed: 2011, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 31 main façade, south elevation
- 2 of 31 west elevation, ¾ view
- 3 of 31 north elevation
- 4 of 31 west elevation
- 5 of 31 porch column, south elevation
- 6 of 31 main entrance, exterior, south elevation
- 7 of 31 main entrance with three-light transom, interior, south elevation
- 8 of 31 closed-string staircase, c. 1850 section
- 9 of 31 newel post, detail of staircase

David Robbins Homestead

Sussex County/DE

Name of Property

County and State

- 10 of 31 staircase, view from second floor
- 11 of 31 stair landing, second floor
- 12 of 31 hall, first floor
- 13 of 31 four-paneled door with porcelain knob, second floor
- 14 of 31 6-over-6, double-hung window, second floor
- 15 of 31 mantelpiece, second floor
- 16 of 31 baseboard, wainscot, and door surround, second floor
- 17 of 31 dining room bay window, 1909 Victorian section, first floor
- 18 of 31 bay window sill, paneling, and baseboard, 1909 Victorian section, first floor
- 19 of 31 modern formal garden, looking south
- 20 of 31 20<sup>th</sup>-century machine shop in modern garden
- 21 of 31 granary, shed, and garage
- 22 of 31 barn and silo
- 23 of 31 granary and shed
- 24 of 31 modified barn
- 25 of 31 silo and barn-cowshed
- 26 of 31 east elevation and driveway
- 27 of 31 new garage
- 28 of 31 new garage and driveway, with view of solar panels and windmill
- 29 of 31 granary, north elevation
- 30 of 31 landscape view, looking west
- 31 of 31 granary, silo, barn-cowshed, and windmill, looking west

---

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Charles F. Greaves

street & number 26285 Broadkill Road

telephone 302-249-2525

city or town Milton

state DE

zip code 19968

**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 18 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 the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



## Site Plan: David Robbins Homestead

nominated Sussex County  
tax parcel

windmill

solar panels

barn and cow shed

silo

glass greenhouse

granary

20<sup>th</sup> century  
machine shop

shed  
one-car garage (may have  
been an original kitchen but  
was removed from site and  
returned at a later date)

new formal garden

new two-car garage  
and storage building

recent two-story additions  
connected by a two-story porch

c.1850 section of  
dwelling

1899 – 1909 Victorian-style  
section of dwelling

farmyard drive



16

Road from Milton to Broadkin Beach

Figure 1 of 8. David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware





Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware 1868

Broadkill Hundred (section)

Figure 2 of 8



# Surviving Examples of c. 1868 Cultural Resources along Route 16 in Broadkill Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware



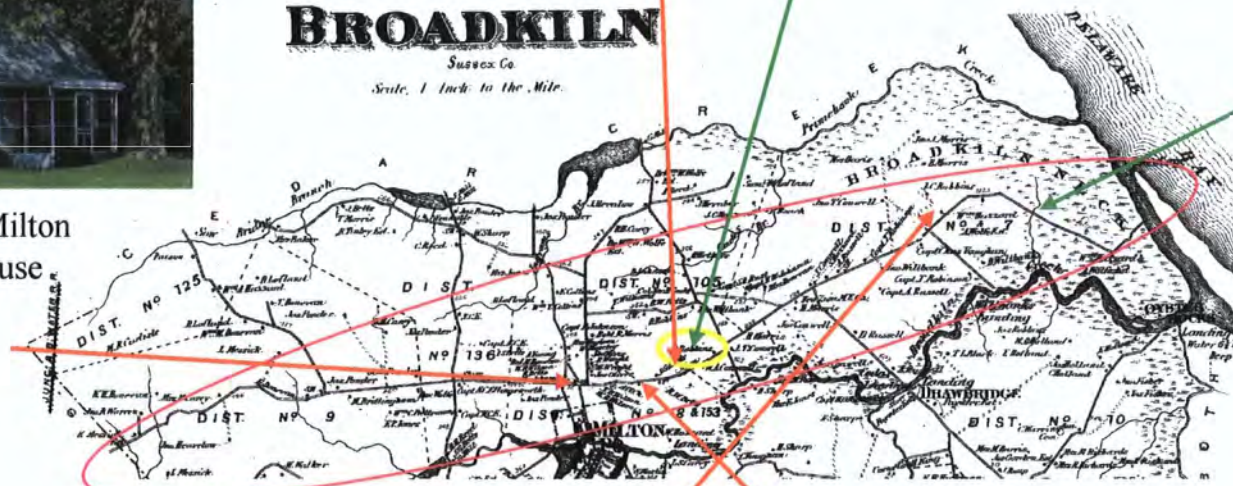
Betts Cemetery - west of David Robbins Homestead  
(Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of Delaware - 1868)



one-story dwelling west of Milton  
(possibly Mrs. Johnson's House  
Pomeroy & Beers Atlas  
Of Delaware -1868)

## BROADKILN

Sussex Co.  
Scale, 1 Inch to the Mile.



Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware - 1868

David Robbins Homestead

"Road from  
Milton to  
Broadkill Beach"  
(State Route 16)



farm complex in Broadkill Neck east of nominated property  
(possibly the William Hazzard & A. Wolfe Estate -  
Pomeroy & Beers Atlas of Delaware - 1868)



African American Church Cemetery  
(Pomeroy & Beers Atlas of Delaware - 1868)

Figure 3 of 8. David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County , Delaware



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
Historic view, 1889





Cardi Fiddle House  
Russell County, Oklahoma  
c. 1900



## House and Outbuildings David Robbins Homestead



late-nineteenth granary and new shed -  
northeast side of tax parcel



north gable end of nineteenth  
century granary with corrugated  
metal sheathing



metal silo, frame barn, and cow shed  
southern elevation



windmill north end of  
tax parcel



west façade of nineteenth century  
barn and silo



farm drive east side of dwelling looking south  
and showing the Victorian section



farm drive looking north with outbuildings  
on east side of tax parcel



shed, fence, one-car garage, new  
two-car garage looking south



20<sup>th</sup> century machine shop  
northeast end of formal  
garden



glass greenhouse  
north of formal garden



new two-car garage and  
storage building  
east of dwelling

**Figure 6 of 8. David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware**



## Original Architectural Embellishments David Robbins Homestead



turned column with  
bracket trim, front porch,  
southern elevation -  
c. 1850s section



original exterior door with  
heavily-molded elongated  
panels - c. 1850s section



original interior door with flat  
elongated panels and a  
three-light transom - c1850s  
section



four-paneled, second floor  
interior door with porcelain  
knob, electroplated hardware -  
c. 1850s section



Original wainscot, baseboard,  
trim, reeded window lintel,  
Victorian addition



closed-string staircase, molded  
Handrail, turned balusters, and  
decorative square  
newel post - c. 1850s section



split second floor stair landing,  
decorative newel posts -  
c. 1850s section

original second floor  
mantelpiece -  
c. 1850s section



two-story bay window  
Victorian addition



**Figure 7 of 8. David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware**



Photo Key - David Robbins Homestead

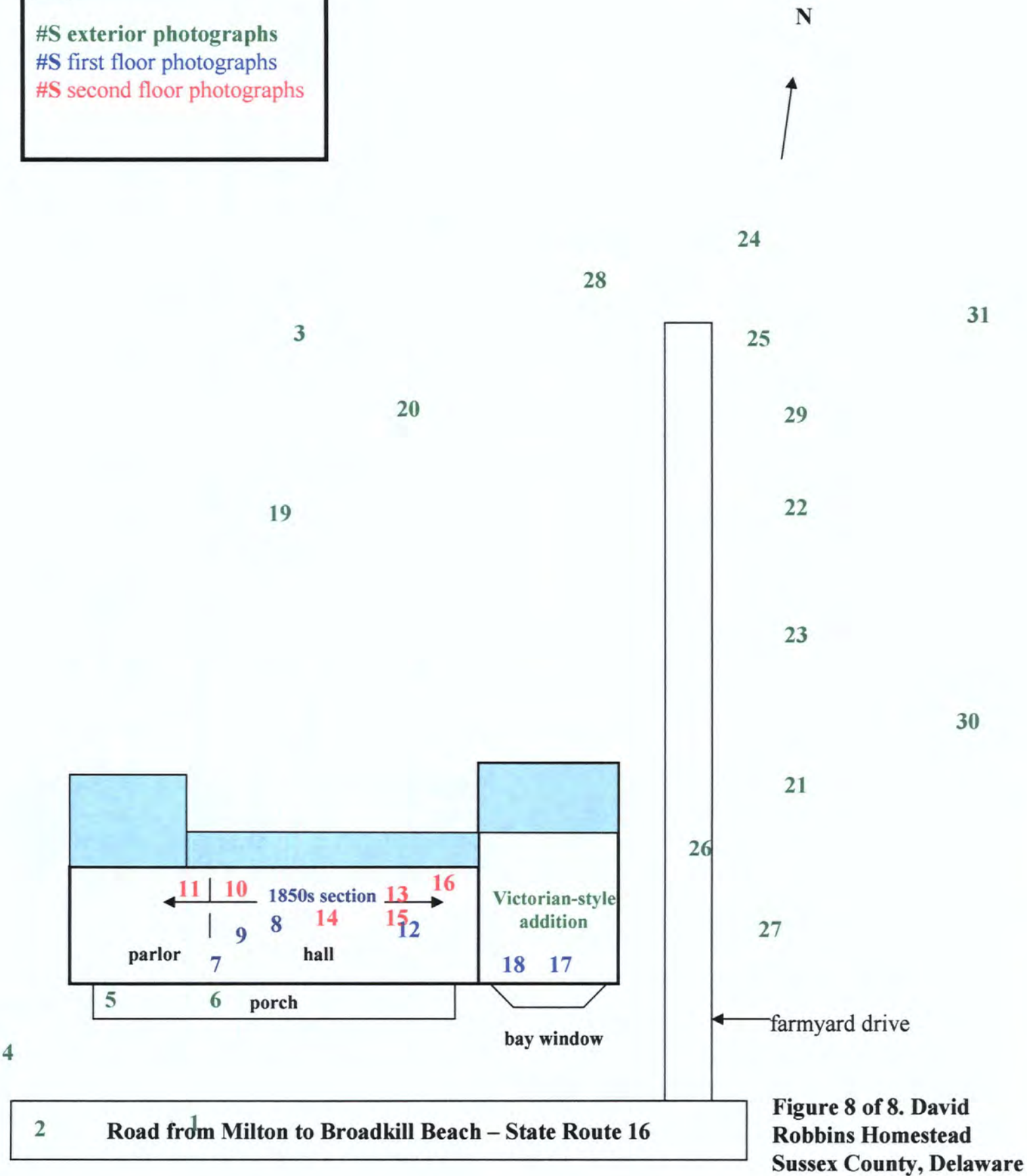
Key – Not Drawn to scale

recent additions to house

#S exterior photographs

#S first floor photographs

#S second floor photographs



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Robbins, David, Homestead  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DELAWARE, Sussex

DATE RECEIVED: 10/28/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/21/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/06/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/13/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000878

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

     ACCEPT ☒ RETURN      REJECT 12/12/2011 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*See attached Return Sheet for detailed comment*

RECOM./CRITERIA Return

REVIEWER Patrick Andrus DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE                      DATE 12/12/2011

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Robbins, David, Homestead  
State and County: DELAWARE, Sussex  
Reference Number: 11000878

Reason for Return: The nomination is being returned for a number of substantive and technical problems.

Historic context: This nomination does not provide sufficient information to evaluate the potential significance of the property. The David Robbins Homestead is nominated to the National Register for architectural importance under Criterion C as "an excellent example of nineteenth-century rural, vernacular Victorian architecture" (Section 8, p. 1), yet the registration form does not provide any contextual information on the development of this type of vernacular architecture in the locality or the region. Please provide information on the development of this type of vernacular architecture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and compare and evaluate the David Robbins Homestead to other extant examples of its building type and time period.

Historic Integrity: The nomination does not provide an overall evaluation of the historic integrity of the property. The nomination form notes that the main building has been covered in vinyl siding and that major additions were added to the rear of the house. Please evaluate the building's historic integrity and its ability to convey its claimed architectural importance. Does the synthetic siding match the historic siding in profile and detail?

Status of outbuildings: The nominated area includes a frame barn, silo, granary, machine shop, shed, and storage area, all of which are listed as non-contributing, but no justification or explanation is provide as to why they are considered non-contributing. Please provide.

Boundary Justification: The boundary justification provided in the form does not meet National Register standards because it does not address how the selected boundary reflects the significance and provides a sufficient setting to convey the importance of the nominated property. The



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

Property Name: Robbins, David, Homestead  
State and County: DELAWARE, Sussex  
Reference Number: 11000878

p. 2

boundary justification should note that the nominated area is historically associated with the David Robbins Homestead and provides a sufficient setting to convey its architectural importance.

USGS Map: The nomination does not include the required original USGS map locating the property (a copy of a portion of a USGS map was included). Please provide an original USGS map labeled with the name and location of the nominated property and a UTM point.

Additional Documentation: Three pages of additional documentation (a Beers map, the partial USGS map, and the Robbins site plan 2007) are not labeled with the nominated property's name and state/county. Please label these pages.

Category of Property: Please check the category of the nominated property in Section 5 of the form.

There appears to be a typographical error in Section 8, page 3, last paragraph, first sentence, which should read "of" its historic features, rather than "or" its historic features.



Patrick Andrus, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
202-354-2218  
[patrick\\_andrus@nps.gov](mailto:patrick_andrus@nps.gov)  
12/12/2011

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Robbins, David, Homestead

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DELAWARE, Sussex

DATE RECEIVED: 11/16/12

DATE OF PENDING LIST:

DATE OF 16TH DAY:

DATE OF 45TH DAY:

1/02/13

DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000878

DETAILED EVALUATION:

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1/2/2013 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

On resubmission, the form has been revised to address the  
issues noted in our Return Sheet dated 12/12/2011.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER Patrick Andrews

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 1/02/2013

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
main facade, south elevation





David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
west elevation, 3/4 view



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
north elevation



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
west elevation

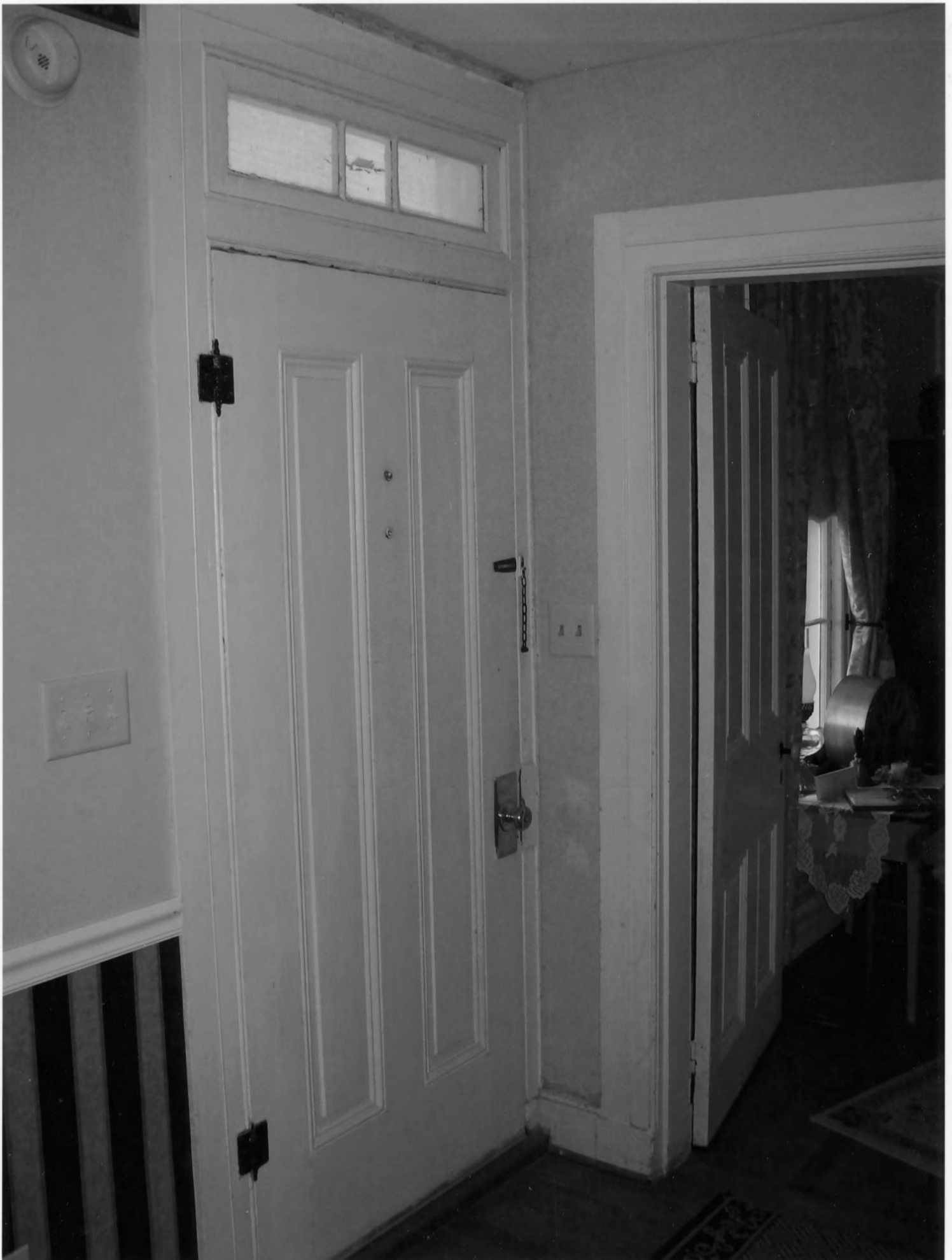




David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
porch column, south elevation



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
main entrance, south elevation



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
main entrance with three-light transom, interior 7 of 31





David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
closed-string staircase, c. 1850 section



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
newel post of closed-string staircase



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
staircase, view from second floor

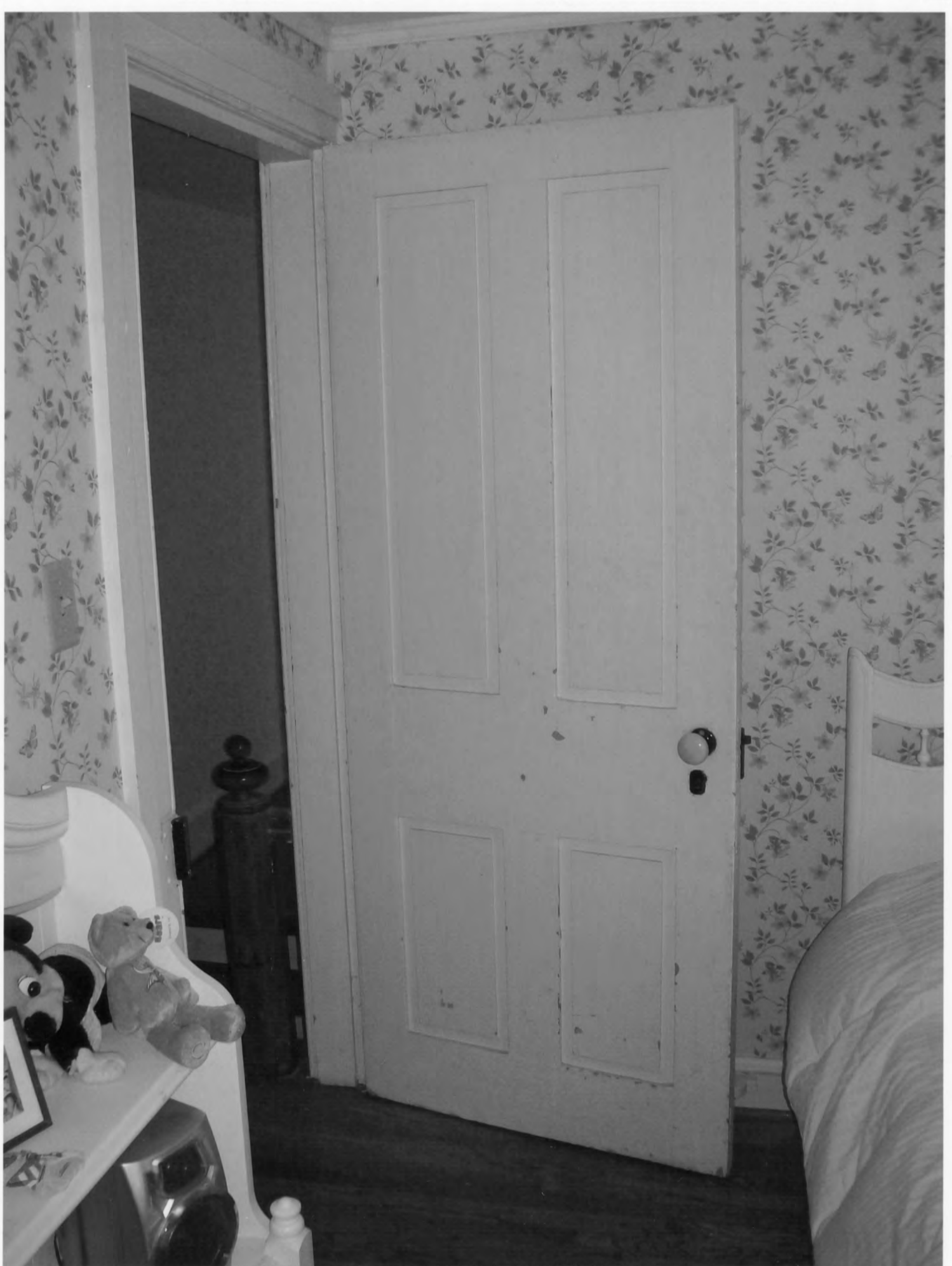




David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
stair landing, second floor

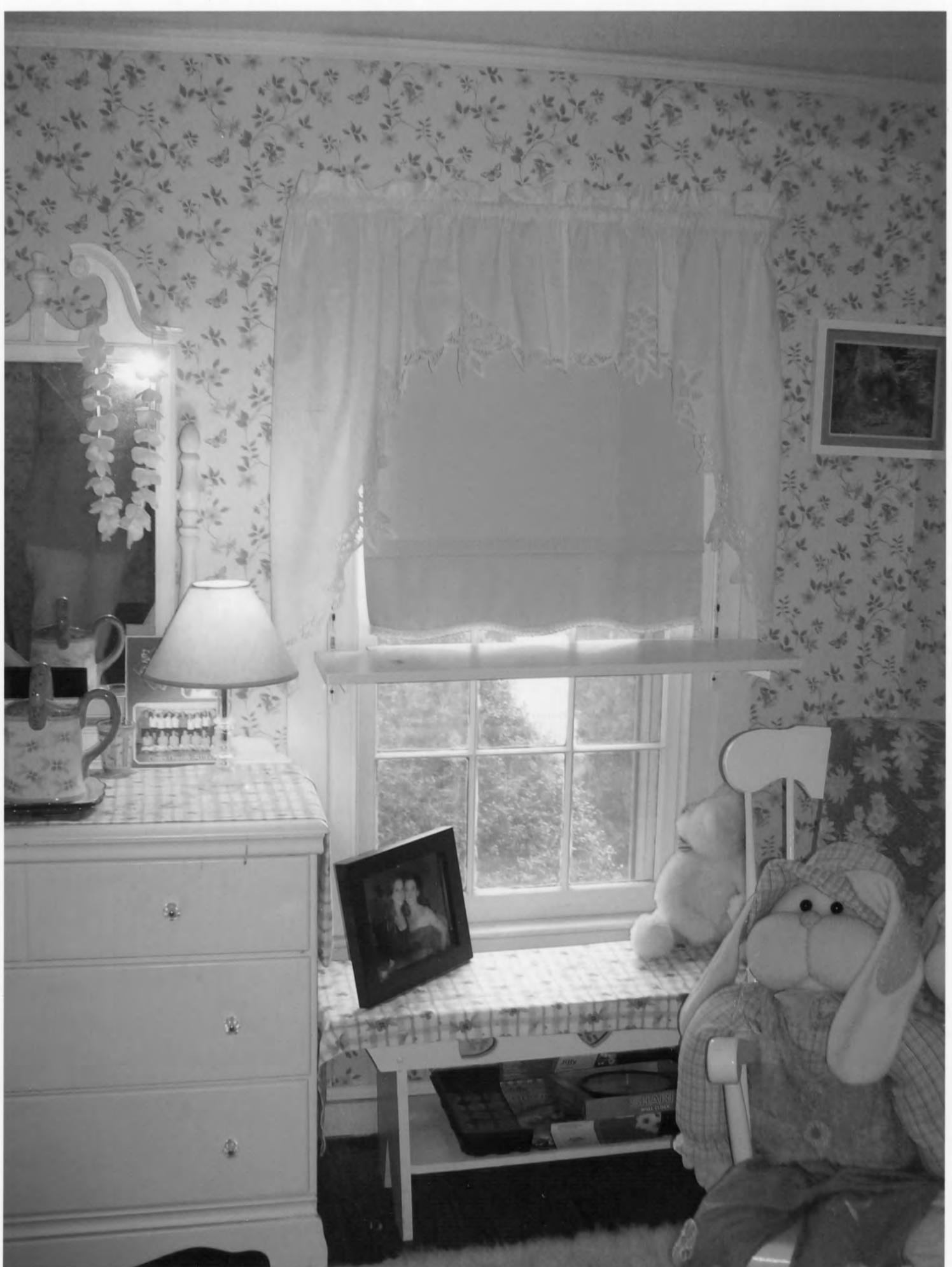


David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
hall, first floor



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
four-paneled door with porcelain knob, second floor





David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
6/6 double-hung sash window, second floor



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
mantelpiece, second floor



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
baseboard, wainscot, and door surround, second floor





David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
dining room bay window, 1909 Victorian section 17 of 31



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
bay window sill, paneling, baseboard detail



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
modern formal garden





David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
20th-c. machine shop in modern garden



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
granary, shed, and garage



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
barn and silo





David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
granary and shed



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
modified barn



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
silo and barn-cowshed





David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
east elevation and driveway



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
new garage



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
new garage and driveway, with view of solar panels  
and windmill





David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
granary, north elevation



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
landscape view, looking west



David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, Delaware  
granary, silo, barn-cowshed, and windmill, looking  
west





UTM Zone 18  
X: 474845.2366  
Y: 4293991.9806

# MILTON, DEL.

38075-G3-TF-024

1992

DMA 5961 IV SE-SERIES V832

David Robbins Homestead  
Sussex County, DE

State of Delaware  
Historical and Cultural Affairs

21 The Green  
Dover, DE 19901-3611

Phone: (302) 736.7400

Fax: (302) 739.5660



September 30, 2011

Carol Shull, Interim Keeper  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

David Robbins Homestead

Milton, Delaware

Sussex County

If there are any questions regarding these documents, please contact Madeline Dunn, Curator of Education – Historian for the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office at (302) 736-7417.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "T. Slavin", written over the word "Sincerely,".

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

Enclosures



State of Delaware  
Historical and Cultural Affairs

21 The Green  
Dover, DE 19901-3611

Phone: (302) 736.7400

Fax: (302) 739.5660



November 15, 2012

Ms. Carol Shull, Interim Keeper  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

RE: NPS reference number 11000878; Delaware Cultural Resource Survey number S03373

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following revised nomination for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

David Robbins Homestead

Milton, Delaware

Sussex County

We have addressed the National Park Service's substantive and technical comments on the initial nomination, as outlined in the Return Sheet (dated December 12, 2011; received in this office January 11, 2012).

If there are any further questions regarding this nomination, please contact Madeline Dunn, Curator of Education – Historian for the State Historic Preservation Office, at (302) 736-7417 or [madeline.dunn@state.de.us](mailto:madeline.dunn@state.de.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gwentyth A. Davis".

Gwentyth A. Davis  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures

cc: Timothy A. Slavin, Director and State Historic Preservation Officer

