

4.3.9 K-02747. Godwin Farm/Jones Agricultural Complex
2501 Barratts Chapel Road
SM-00-121.00-01-57.01

Description: The current tax parcel for this property contains 176.90 acres located on both sides of Barratts Chapel Road, approximately 2,500 feet east of McGinnis Pond Road. The farmstead, which consists of a vacant farmhouse, a garage, a ruined barn, and the foundation remains of an agricultural outbuilding, is located on the south side of the road. A gravel driveway that extends past the west side of the farmhouse grants access to the property. The farmstead is bordered by Barratts Chapel Road to the north and by open agricultural fields to the south, west, and east.

The farmhouse is a two-and-one-half-story, three-bay, L-shaped Vernacular structure, which was built ca.1905. The building has an asphalt shingle gambrel roof with gable returns and a shallow molded cornice. The roof on the two-story rear wing is a shallow gable. The structure sits on a brick foundation and is clad with clapboard siding that is missing in several sections. A partial-width enclosed front porch with a half-hipped roof appears to be an altered later addition to the house. The fenestration pattern on the main block and rear ell is irregular. Many of the historic one-over-one wood sash windows are broken and two of the doors are missing.

A partially collapsed barn with concrete block walls stands to the south of the farmhouse. The structure was probably built ca. 1920, but it is in ruinous condition now. Some foundation remains of another agricultural outbuilding can be discerned at the rear of the farmstead.

A two-bay concrete block garage, from ca. 1930, is located to the southwest of the farmhouse. The garage has an asphalt shingle side gable roof. The east facade has two open bays, with no overhead doors. The north elevation has a wood door and fixed window. The south and west elevations are blank.

Applicable Historic Context(s): Upper Peninsula Zone; Industrialization and Early Urbanization (1830-1880±); Urbanization and Early Suburbanization (1880-1940±); Agriculture; Settlement Patterns and Demographic Changes; Architecture, Engineering, and Decorative Arts; Other Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Houses.

Historical Overview: Stylistically, the farmhouse on the Godwin Farm appears to date to ca. 1905. The date coincides with a sale of the property. However, the land has been

occupied since at least the early nineteenth century. The earliest historic record of the land was a warrant of 193 acres to Absolom Brady prior to 1796. In 1796, Brady's land passed by will to Wilson Rufson of Rowan, North Carolina. Wilson sold the land five years later to Marcy Beauchamp of Kent County for 400 pounds (Kent County Deeds 1801). Beauchamp died intestate ca. 1815, and the land passed to his widow, Elizabeth, and their children (Kent County Deeds 1822). A response to an Orphan Court's order to value the rents due Elizabeth Beauchamp (Kent County Orphans Court Case Files 1817) contained a detailed record of the property. The amount of land was estimated as 180 acres, of which 120 acres were plowed. There was also a 20 foot by 18 foot one-story frame house with an attached shed in tolerable repair, a cook house, a log smokehouse "wanting repair," a 20 foot by 16 foot frame barn in tolerable repair, a corn house, a log stable, a shed carriage house, a log dwelling "in corner of farm," a 12-tree "old apple orchard," a 100-tree peach orchard, and fencing. The response from the estate's executors also noted (Kent County Orphans Court Case Files 1817):

We will allow no more land to be cleared nor repairs done than is eventually necessary to keep this farm tenantable and we direct that said farm be tended in three shifts as it is now laid out. So that there be not more than two thirds in grain at the same time and one third more in pasture.

The response revealed a great deal about Marcy Beauchamp and his farm. Foremost, it showed that Beauchamp was a prosperous farmer. A farmstead containing eight buildings prior to 1820, including a barn and a carriage house, was a sign of great wealth. The impression of wealth is enhanced by the fact that 120 acres of land were plowed, indicating that Beauchamp or his tenant (if there was one) had access to work animals. The second house on the property is evidence of a tenant, overseer, or hired hand. Beauchamp's 100-tree peach orchard meant that Jehu Reed was not the only farmer in this part of Murderkill Hundred cultivating the fruit as a market crop at this early date. The executors' order that no more land should be cleared or repairs made than is necessary to keep the farm tenantable indicated that they were trying to maximize the amount of Beauchamp's estate that would pass on to his heirs. Their dictum that the farm be tended "in three shifts" showed that Beauchamp was an early proponent in the basic principles of scientific farm management, which stressed that crops should be rotated and one-third of the cultivated land be kept fallow every year so as not to exhaust the soil. Finally, the response also showed that the small one-story dwelling and barn on the property in 1815 are not the buildings that are there today.

Beauchamp's heirs sold the farm in 1822 to William Curtis, who also purchased a neighboring farm the same year, giving him a total of 312 acres (Kent County Deeds 1822). The land devised to his wife, Emma Curtis, upon his death in the early 1830s. Curtis's will clearly stated that he had lived on the farm (Kent County Wills 1834a). Emma Curtis held the farm until her death in the mid-1840s. In 1847, her heirs sold the 312-acre tract to James and Ann Buckmaster. Two years later, the Buckmasters sold 173 acres to Isaac Godwin for \$1,850 (Kent County Deeds 1849).

Initially, Godwin was an owner/occupant of the farm. He was a fairly wealthy, diversified farmer. The 1850 agricultural census valued his farm at \$1,800; his machinery and implements were assessed at \$75, a fairly high amount. He had a large number of livestock, including two horses, four milk cows, two working oxen, four other cattle, and nine swine. The number of milk cows, cattle, and swine indicate that he was producing goods for market (U.S. Census 1850a). Two years later, at the time of the 1852 tax assessment for Murderkill Hundred, he had fewer cattle and pigs but three horses and 10 sheep (Kent County Tax Assessments 1852). Of his 173 acres, 140 were listed as improved and 33 as unimproved. His primary crop was corn (1,200 bushels), but he also harvested 436 bushels of oats, by far the largest amount in this portion of the hundred; perhaps he was supplying feed for many horses in the area. Godwin's output also included 35 bushels of wheat, 35 bushels of rye, 50 bushels of Irish potatoes, 20 bushels of sweet potatoes, 150 pounds of butter, and unspecified produce from a market garden valued at \$10 (U.S. Census 1850a). His farmstead included a two-story frame house, a smaller frame house that was probably a tenant house, a barn, and a stable, all in tolerable repair (Kent County Tax Assessments 1852). This was the first mention of a two-story frame house on the property, and it serves as a potential construction date for the current farmhouse. However, the date does not correspond to the style of the house. The initial survey form for this property called it the Godwin Farm based on his mid-nineteenth ownership of the property.

The 1859 map of Murderkill Hundred showed Godwin as the owner of K-02747, but the 1860 agricultural census indicated that while Godwin still owned the property, the farm was in the tenure of John Quillen (see Figure 3). Godwin, in fact, was living as a tenant on a 300-acre farm owned by someone else. K-02747 had the same amount of improved and unimproved land, 140 and 33 acres, respectively, but the value of the farm had risen to \$2,500 and the amount of implements and machinery had doubled, with an increased value of \$150. The crop mixture was also different. The farm produced significantly less corn (500 bushels compared to 1,200 bushels 10 years earlier), but 200 bushels of wheat were

now harvested, whereas no wheat production had been reported in 1850. Oats were still an important crop, but the 210 bushels in 1860 paled in comparison to the 436 produced 10 years earlier. Butter and sweet potato production had increased, while Irish potato production had declined. Livestock included four horses, three milk cows, two working oxen, six other cattle, and four swine (U.S. Census 1860a). The farmstead still had a two-story house, barn, and stable, as well as a kitchen, granary, carriage house, and smokehouse (Kent County Tax Assessments 1860).

The evidence from the 1860 agricultural census and tax assessment portrays Godwin as a diversified, comfortable farmer with sufficient wealth to hire a tenant while he worked a larger farm as a tenant. He was selling for market, and clearly making enough money to erect new buildings on his tenant property.

Isaac Godwin owned the 173-acre farm until 1866, when he sold it to Virgil and Harriet Grinnell for \$6,600, a very high sum, particularly since it had been assessed just six years earlier for \$2,500 (Kent County Deeds 1866a). Virgil Grinnell is shown as the owner on the 1868 map of Murderkill Hundred (Beers 1868) (see Figure 4). Shortly after Grinnell bought the property, Barratts Chapel Road was extended on a more direct line to what is today McGinnis Pond Road. Grinnell's farmstead was now just to the south of Barratts Chapel Road, with the farmland on both sides of the road.

The Grinnells owned K-02747 only until 1869, when they sold the farm for just \$1,629; they had paid \$6,600 just three years earlier. The Grinnells were indebted to many people, so this perhaps explained the low sale price. The purchasers were Stephen B. Jackson and John McIntosh of Saratoga, New York (Kent County Deeds 1869a). McIntosh was credited with living on the farm in both the 1870 agricultural census and the 1872 tax assessment of South Murderkill Hundred. The farm was valued at \$7,000, making the \$1,629 purchase price a bargain. One hundred-sixty acres were improved, and 14 acres were unimproved woodlands. However, the assemblage of buildings is much more limited than during Godwin's ownership, comprising a two-story frame dwelling, barn, and "cowhouse" (Kent County Tax Assessments 1872). Implements and machinery added another \$170 of value to the farm. McIntosh kept four horses, one milk cow, two working oxen, three cattle, nine sheep (the 1872 tax assessment listed 25 sheep), and six swine. McIntosh's primary crops were corn (400 bushels), buckwheat (211 bushels), and Irish potatoes (150 bushels). Other crops included 44 bushels of winter wheat, 21 bushels of oats, 50 bushels of sweet potatoes, 150 pounds of butter, \$150 of orchard products, and 15 gallons of molasses. McIntosh was diversified, but not wealthy. The estimated value of all

farm production was \$701, which was a middling figure in South Murderkill Hundred at this time (U.S. Census 1870a).

The 1880 agricultural census listed McIntosh as the owner of only 101 acres of land. He had apparently sold his farmland on the north side of Barratts Chapel Road, while retaining that to the south. The 101 acres was described as 80 acres tilled; one acre in meadow, pasture, orchard, or vineyard; and 20 acres as unimproved (not growing wood). Farm products included 400 bushels of corn (grown on 25 acres), 210 bushels of wheat (also grown on 25 acres), 200 pounds of butter, 50 bushels of Irish potatoes (grown on one-half acre), and \$20 worth of forest products. New crops included 150 dozen eggs and 10 acres supporting 1,000 bearing peach trees. The eggs were produced by 30 chickens; it is presumed that the other seven chickens listed were for home consumption. Additional animals included three horses, two working oxen, two milk cows, five neat cattle, and three swine. McIntosh remained a middling farmer for the area. His farm was valued at \$4,000, and his implements and machinery at \$120 (U.S. Census 1880a).

McIntosh sold the land on the south side of Barratts Chapel Road in 1883 to William Krebs of Snyder County, Pennsylvania. The deed called it 95 acres, and the sale price was \$3,335 (Kent County Deeds 1883). When it was next sold, in 1905, the price was significantly more at \$9,200 (Kent County Deeds 1905). This could indicate that significant improvement had been made, and serves as the basis for dating the house to 1905. The family of the 1905 purchaser, James Oliver Jones, retained ownership until 1923, when the farm was sold to Alvin Jarrell. He and his wife sold the property in 1950 for \$16,000. The deed noted that the farmstead included a two-story frame house, horse stable, tool shed, shed with loft, corn crib, pump house, and other outbuildings (Kent County Deeds 1950). Those buildings were also listed in a 1973 deed, when the property sold for \$150,000 (Kent County Deeds 1973). At some point in the mid-twentieth century, the land on the north side of the road again became part of the farm, raising the total acreage to approximately 177 acres. The farmstead is currently abandoned and the property is being considered for a more than 500-residential unit planned subdivision (Preliminary Land Use Service 2008).

Evaluation: The Godwin Farm/Jones Agricultural Complex is evaluated for NRHP eligibility as an agricultural complex from the Urbanization and Early Suburbanization Era (1880-1940±). The farmhouse is also evaluated as an early twentieth century, L-shaped vernacular center hall plan farmhouse.

An agricultural complex is composed of dwelling(s) and agricultural outbuildings, plus utilitarian and non-utilitarian spaces and features directly associated with these buildings. Also included are agricultural fields, woodlots, marshes, ditches, landscaped lawns, yards, gardens, drives, lanes, paths, and trash and other waste disposal areas and features (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992). An agricultural complex must have the ability to convey information or exhibit trends concerning national, state, or local agricultural development. Primary and secondary source historical documentation is used to substantiate the significance of an agricultural complex. The principal historic components of the complex, the dwelling(s), domestic outbuildings, agricultural outbuildings, and utilitarian and non-utilitarian landscapes must convey strong associations with the farm's period of significance. Changes to active farms are expected and will not preclude NRHP eligibility. However, the major buildings, including dwelling(s) and barn(s) should retain much or all of their historic exterior fabric. In addition, to remain eligible, new construction must not dominate the old.

To be eligible under NRHP Criterion A, an agricultural complex must be significant in association with local, statewide, or national trends in agriculture and must be able to convey those trends. During the 1880 to 1940 period, South Murderkill Hundred grew a mixture of crops, with an increased emphasis on vegetables and cannery crops. Prior to 1820, the land associated with K-02747 was owned by Marcy Beauchamp, a wealthy farmer and an early proponent of peach production. No trace of his house or other agricultural buildings remains. Isaac Godwin, a later owner, was also a substantial mid-nineteenth century farmer. However, the buildings listed in his farmstead in the 1860s – two-story farmhouse (most likely not the current house), a tenant house, barn, stable, kitchen, granary, carriage house, and smokehouse -- are no longer extant. Also no longer present are the agricultural buildings referenced in both 1905 and 1973 -- a horse stable, tool shed, shed with loft, corncrib, and pump house. The remaining buildings are small and undistinguished. Absent the historic buildings, the property cannot convey its significance as an agricultural complex.

To be eligible under NRHP Criterion B, a property must be associated with a person of demonstrable significance; it must be associated with that person's productive life; and it should best reflect that person's historic contributions. Marcy Beauchamp was demonstrably significant as an early peach producer in Murderkill Hundred, but none of the surviving structures of the farm are associated with him, and even if they were, they would not reflect his historic contributions or convey his significance. Isaac Godwin was wealthy, but a review of published Delaware histories and biographies make no mention of him; thus, he cannot

be called demonstrably significant. Consequently, the Godwin Farm/Jones Agricultural Complex is not eligible under NRHP Criterion B.

To be eligible under NRHP Criterion C for architecture, the principal historic components of the agricultural complex must be present and must convey strong associations with the farm's period of significance. Buildings and structures should also retain integrity of materials, design, feeling, and workmanship. The Godwin Farm/Jones Agricultural Complex does not convey strong associations with the 1880-1940 period. As mentioned above, agricultural buildings referenced in 1860, 1905, and 1973 are no longer present. Absent these buildings, the farmhouse and the few remaining buildings cannot convey historical significance.

To be eligible under NRHP Criterion D, an agricultural complex must have the ability to yield important information on agricultural history and it must be the principal source of that information. Due to the absence of an intact, nineteenth century farmstead or historic buildings, the resource cannot convey information on agricultural complexes in South Murderkill Hundred not available from other sources. The farm could convey information through archaeological investigations, but that is beyond the scope of this historic architectural resource survey.

The Godwin Farmhouse is also individually evaluated for NRHP listing as an example of an early twentieth century, L-shaped vernacular center hall plan farmhouse. Such houses are not uncommon resources in South Murderkill Hundred and Kent County. While the basic form and massing of the house remain, it is undistinguished even for a vernacular house. Its proportions are awkward, particularly the roof and rear ell. The partial width front porch is clearly not original. The clapboard siding remains, but many original windows are broken out and two doors are missing. The house is abandoned and deteriorating. Its current status and lack of maintenance have diminished the dwelling's integrity of design and workmanship. The lack of outbuildings compromises feeling and association. The house is recommended as not individually eligible under NRHP Criterion C for architecture.

However, given the uncertainty of the building's construction date and the long period of occupation on the land, the house may be eligible under NRHP Criterion D. Deconstruction and demolition may reveal that the resource contains information important to the understanding of vernacular architecture traditions, should the dwelling be older than anticipated. If the building is to be demolished, moved, or renovated as part of a project, it should be evaluated by a qualified architectural historian or historic architect. Selective

demolition should be used to fully determine and conclude that the property is eligible under NRHP Criterion D and has important information to yield. If it is determined that the building was constructed using standard building technology of the time, including balloon or platform framing, this property would not be eligible for listing under NRHP Criterion D and demolition could proceed. Should the property be recommended significant by the qualified architectural historian or historic architect, it should be fully documented prior to demolition.

The Godwin Farm is recommended as not eligible for NRHP listing, either as an agricultural complex or as an example of an early twentieth century, L-shaped vernacular center hall plan farmhouse.

K-02747 Photographs



Farmhouse, north (front) and west elevations, facing southeast.



Farmhouse, east and north (front) elevations, facing southwest.



Farmhouse and outbuilding (.002), west and south elevations, facing north.



Outbuilding (.002), north and west elevations, facing southeast.



Garage (.003), east and north elevations, facing southwest.

K-02747 Mapping



K-02747 tax parcel on 2002 aerial photograph (Delaware DataMIL 2008).



K-02747 tax parcel on 1937 aerial photograph (Delaware DataMIL 2008).