

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

and/or common Harmony School House, Dist. No. 32 (7NC-A-16)

2. Location

street & number Delaware Route 7 North (Limestone Road) not for publication

city, town Hockessin vicinity of

state Delaware code 10 county New Castle code 002

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Jeffery Kane

street & number 5709 Limestone Road

city, town Wilmington vicinity of state Delaware 19808

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New Castle County Recorder of Deeds

street & number City - County Building, 800 French Street

city, town Wilmington state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Phase I and II Archaeological Investigations

title of Route 7 North, New Castle Co., DE has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation CRS#N10279 Delaware Department of Transportation

city, town Dover, Delaware state Dover, Delaware

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Harmony Schoolhouse, District Number 32, is located in Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, on the eastern side of Limestone Road (Route 7), almost directly opposite the intersection of that road with Route 72. It is approximately 4 miles north of Stanton, Delaware (Figure 1). The size of the property being nominated is illustrated on Figure 2.

The original schoolhouse was a 1 1/2 story stone structure, approximately 40 feet by 50 feet, with a frame porch attached to the southern facade. The original section of the school was pierced by three openings on each of the northwest, south, and southeast walls, but there were no openings in the north wall. The only door to the schoolhouse was located in the southern facade. A date stone, giving the names of the commissioners of District 32 and the date of construction (1845), is located above the doorway. Two small garret windows are located in each of the southern and northern walls. A bell tower is located on the cedar shingle roof, near its southern edge. The present tower was constructed in 1907, but replaces an earlier one. When the Harmony School was active, two privies were located to the rear and north of the building, and were separated by a wood and/or coal shed. These are no longer extant.

Presently, the building has been considerably altered and modified, and is now occupied as a private residence. Interior partitions, plumbing and central heating, a kitchen addition to the south with three flues, and electrical wiring have been added. A garage and shed complex have been constructed where the school's outbuildings originally stood. The original building orientation and belltower have been retained (Plates 1 and 2).

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Harmony Schoolhouse is representative of the educational system that operated in Delaware throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Although its physical appearance has been modified for residential use, the schoolhouse has retained some of the characteristics of a rural one-room schoolhouse, most notably the belltower, and the building's orientation. The schoolhouse property is not eligible for its architectural integrity; it is eligible because it retains a strong sense of the characteristics of a rural schoolhouse, and can be identified as a landmark of local historical significance. The Harmony School is a visual reminder of the history of public education in Delaware, and has served as an educational and community center since its construction. The school was in operation until 1956, and serves as a focal point for much of the local populace in the study of their cultural heritage. The Harmony Schoolhouse, District Number 32, is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "A", because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of state and local history.

The Harmony School is representative of the continuity of education in Delaware, from its first inception in the second decade of the nineteenth century to the present century. Although two separate buildings at different locations housed the school during its history, the district which Harmony served maintained the same boundaries through time. The first Harmony School building was constructed about one-half mile north of its present location, on the western side of Limestone Road. The exact date of construction is not known, but a deed reference dating to 1819 was located that mentions the school yard, and the name "Harmony" is shown on Henry Heald's Map of the Roads of New Castle County, which was published in 1820. This circumstantial evidence suggests that the original construction of this stone building occurred soon after the State Legislature, in 1817, passed an act to help establish public schools. Later, Judge Willard Hall's "Free School Act" of 1829 was passed, and gave a more permanent structure to the state's public school system. Although amended several times, Hall's Act served as the basis for one-room school, rural education in Delaware for the next fifty years.

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The Harmony School occupied this first location until 1845. In February of that year, the State Legislature authorized the sale of this first schoolbuilding and lot, and the following July, a local farmer, William Torbert, sold the present lot located at the intersection of Limestone Road and Paper Mill Road to the District Commissioners. The present building was constructed at this time. The school operated from this building for the next 111 years, and finally closed its doors in 1956. At that time it was modified for use as a private dwelling.

The Harmony School is notable in that it opened its doors soon after the passage of Hall's Act. From that date until 1956, the school functioned as an educational and social center for the rural community of Mill Creek Hundred. Thus, the Schoolhouse is representative of the chronology of public education in Delaware in the 19th century. The longevity of the School is also noteworthy because many of the local inhabitants were educated at the School. The Harmony School thus serves as a reminder to them of their sense of community. The Schoolhouse is significant in local and state history because of the role it played in educational and social affairs.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see attachment)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 2100 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name Kennett Square

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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4	3	9	1	9	10
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4	4	0	0	0	0	3
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B

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C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

(see attachment)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wade P. Catts/research associate

organization University of Delaware

date September 24, 1985

street & number Department of Anthropology, Ewing Hall

telephone 302-451-6590

city or town Newark

state Delaware

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

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Catts, Wade P., Kevin W. Cunningham, and Jay F. Custer
1983 Archaeological Investigations at the Welsh
Tract School, District No. 54, Newark, New
Castle County, Delaware. Delaware Department
of Transportation, Archaeology Series No. 22,
Dover, Delaware.

Pennington, Mrs. Lawernce, Mrs. Harvey Ball, and Mrs. Harry
Bracklin
1945 Harmony School District No. 32, Mermaid,
Delaware. The history of its Educational
Advantages during the one-hundred years of
its existence. Ms. on file, University of
Delaware Center for Archaeological Research.

State of Delaware
1852 Laws of the State of Delaware, vol. 10 (1845-
1852). S. Kimmey, Dover, Delaware.

New Castle County Deed Records, Hall of Records, Dover
Delaware: Book F, Volume 6, Page 260.
Book W, Volume 4, Page 272.

"Map of the Roads of New Castle County", Henry Beald (1820).

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The Harmony Schoolhouse Site is bounded on the western edge by an existing driveway built in the mid 1960's to connect the property to the rebuilt Limestone Road; on the eastern and southern edge by yard; and on the northern edge by the garage and yard. The boundary includes the location of the original schoolhouse structure and a concrete block addition built in the 1950's to provide plumbing facilities to the schoolhouse. The boundary measures approximately 35 ft. by 60 ft. making the size of the nominated property at approximately 0.05 acre.

FIGURE 1

Harmony Schoolhouse (N-202)

Determination of Eligibility

UTM - E439220 N4400003

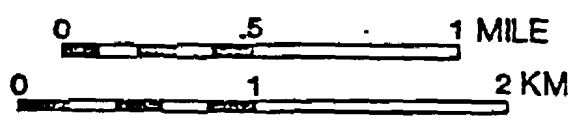
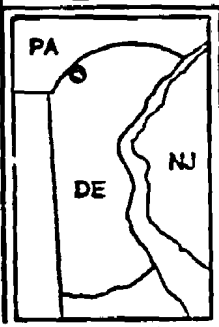
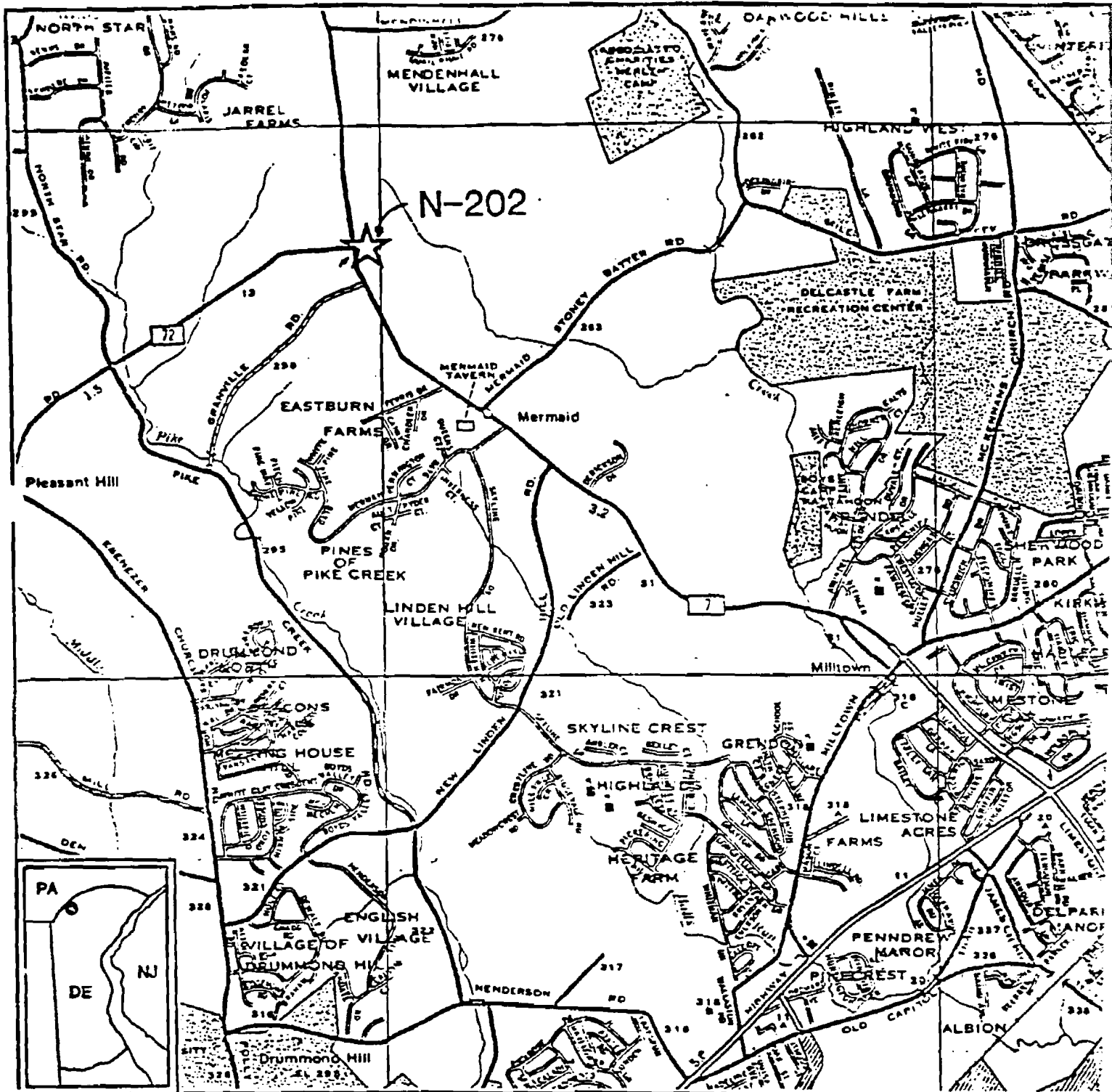
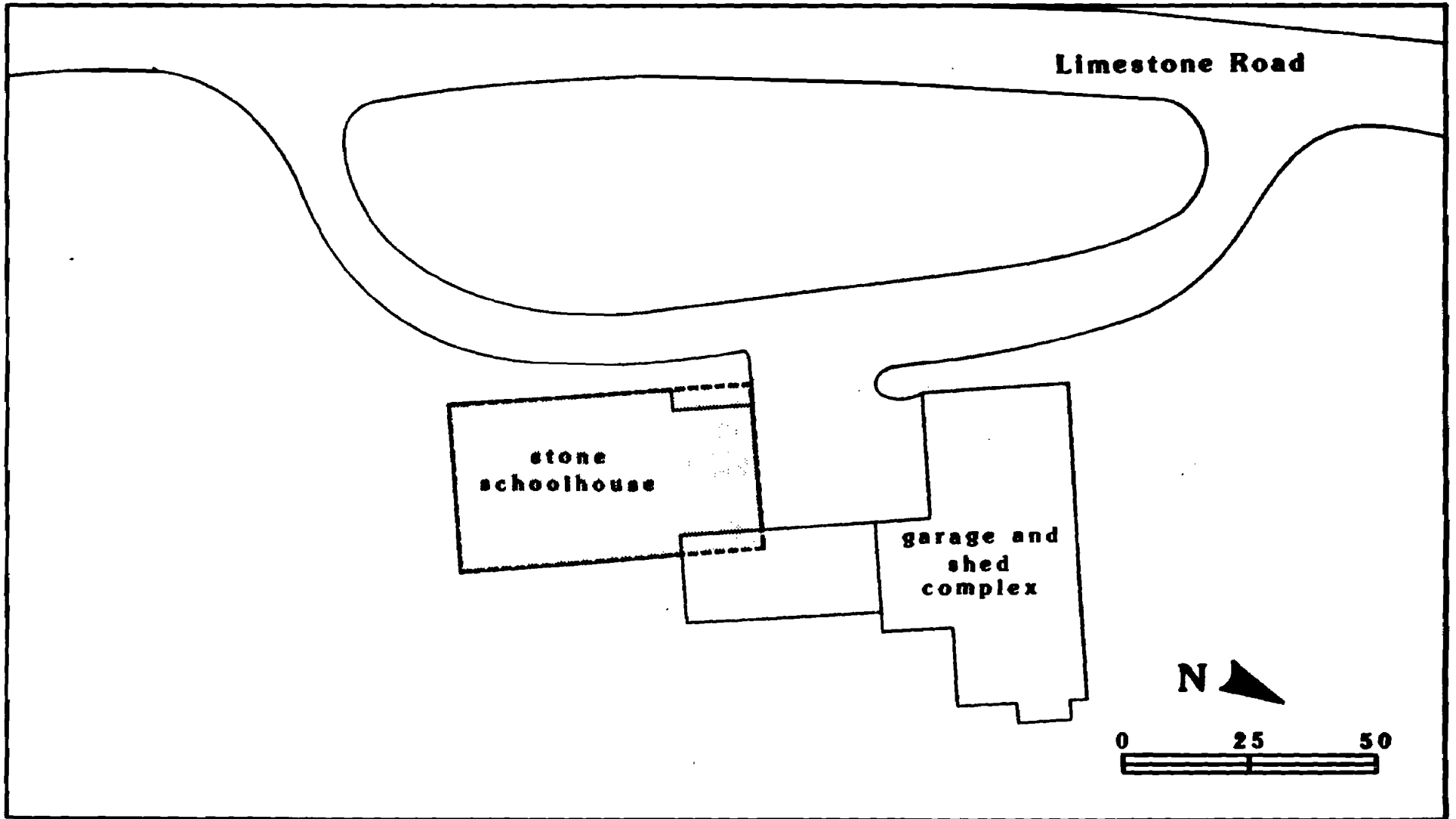


FIGURE 2

Site Boundary N-202

A- E439190 N440003







HARMONY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.32

Mermaid, Delaware

The history of its Educational Advantages during
the one- hundred years of its existence.

Compiled by Mrs. Lawrence Fennington, Mrs.
Harvey Ball and Mrs. Harry Brackin

Written and Read by Mrs. Pennington
June 7, 1945
For the One-Hundredth Anniversary

Reread by Mrs. Pennington on June 16, 1955 for
the one-hundredth and tenth anniversary with ten years
added by Mrs. Sara Pennington Evans, her daughter.

The history was rewritten for the 125th anniversary
and read by Mrs. Evans on July 4, 1970.

This history is the complete one for posterity.

The necessity of educating the youth was felt early by the residents of Mill Creek Hundred. Private Schools were opened to those able to pay for these advantages. Harmony must have been among the earliest established rural school.

The first little stone building was used by Lewis Colmery, Jr. for a garage and has long since been demolished. The date of this school isn't known. Two men who attended that school, were Joseph Eastburn and Allen Springer.

June 7, 1945 marked the 100th anniversary celebration of Harmony School #32. Time passes swiftly and July 4, 1970, the 125th anniversary was observed with a reunion of about 150 former students and friends. To review the beginning, the pages of history were turned back and this story was given. Much of this recorded was written in 1945 by Mrs. Lawrence H. Pennington and Mrs. Harvey Ball both students, assisted by Mrs. Harry Brackin.

This stone structure was built in 1845, how or by whom the labor was provided or the time of the year, is not recorded. Naturally one would surmise it was done in spring or summertime. The size and thickness of its walls indicate that the men were their own architects with a far reaching vision. It is a well lighted building with ten windows-the two to the northwest were closed in later years due to light being injurious to the children's eyes. Close these windows and the laying of several floors, made the school warmer in winter. No one seems to know why the name Harmony was chosen as it was located in the Mermaid area and the Mermaid Post Office was located across the road in Pennock's store for many years.

The first desks were of solid wood with hinged lids about 27x22 in size -when the lid was dropped by accident - what a bang to annoy the teacher. It was difficult for the girls to sweep the floor as the desks were fastened tightly. These were still in use in

1880 when the enrollment was 46, chairs brought by the 17, 18 & 19 year old pupils, were used at the rear desks where there were no benches. Much later, these old ones were replaced by open ones with iron feet and of course still later came the modern type.

In 1900, the porch was added. For over 50 years, only a large flat stone lay at the front of the doorway and is still there as a step to the porch. Shutters also graced the building in the early days as the 1895 picture shows. It was a great honor to have the teacher ask a student to close the shutters for the night.

School was called by the ringing of a large brass bell with an eight inch wooden handle. This bell was purchased by Mr. John Peach, grandfather of Paul Peach. The present bell and belfry was placed on the schoolhouse in 1907 but there was an earlier bell. Hervey Walker, Clerk, John Dennison, and Calvin Derickson, Commissioners authorize the 1907 bell. The first flagpole erected blown down during a storm in summer of 1908. The flag flies on the present pole every clear day of the year.

In the early days, the building was heated by a wood stove. Classes were held on Saturdays so that the older boys could cut the week's supply of wood. Later this stove was replaced by a cast iron one called the "Pot Belly Stove" and it burned coal. Then a heater type enclosed in galvanized tin was used.

It is believed that Mr. George Klair was the first School Commissioner in 1869. He carried a cane and on his frequent school visits caused much fear among the small boys. Mr. Klair lived to be 100 years and two months old.

At one time, each family in the district, except one two owned the farms where they lived. The taxes levied for school purposes handled by the school commissioners, enabled them to pay higher salaries to teachers than adjoining districts; therefore, the best teachers employed. This plan became extinct when the management of rural

schools was taken over by the state.

There were two private schools in this district - one on the Ochletree farm now owned by Donald P. Ross - the other, Rock Spring Seminary, located on the farm of the same name owned by Mrs. Sarah Denney Walker, great grandmother of Mrs. Evans - this farm is now a part of Mill Creek Venture Development. The latter school operated from 1865 to 1876 and was taught by Miss Maggie Wilson of Newark and later by Hannah J. Walker, daughter of the owner. Pupils wishing to study advanced subjects, came from adjoining districts, one was U. S. Senator L. Heisler Ball also Dr. Ball.

In the educational wheel of Mill Creek Hundred, Harmony could be considered the hub being in almost the center. The spokes led out to Hockessin, Brandywine Springs, Marshallton, Stanton, Forrest Oak, Fairview, Union and North Star. No building could be more beautifully located - standing high on the hill facing the sunrise and the Delaware River with a wonderful view of the surrounding country-side.

It would be impossible to name all the teachers who taught here. Among the earliest ones were: Miss Lizzie Connell, Miss Maggie Wilson, Miss Hannah J. Walker, Robert L. Walker, Georgiana Walker, Annie J. Pierson, Miss Mary Durnall, Francis M. Walker who at 96 years, was present for the 100th anniversary and stated he taught three months for \$100.00, Miss Mary E. Walker, his sister; Miss Maggie Durham, Miss Septema Valentine, Miss Clara Walker, Miss Emilie Pennington, Miss Elizabeth McDaniel, Miss Alyce Harvey, and Miss Jeannette Riley.

Romance played a part in the teacher's lives who came here: Miss A. Pierson became Mrs. John Dennison, Miss Lillian Y. Eastburn, Mrs. Abram Dennison; Miss Mary Buehm, Mrs. Granville Eastburn. All remained in the district and assisted in the furthering of education

~~and assisted in the furthering of education~~ and their children came to this school. Early families were Dericksons, Peaches, Walkers, Brackins, Greggs, Dennisons, Eastburns, Mendenhalls, Hanna, and Taylor.

This solid old stone building has heard voices of many generations of children who received their early training here. Many received an education equivalent to the present day tenth and eleventh grades. There have gone forth men and women who have filled almost every profession - agriculture, medicine, teaching, architecture, and science - many became successful in business and public affairs. Among the professional men are Dr. Willard Springer, Dr. Frank Springer, Dr. Alpheus Gregg, Dr. Martin B. Pennington, Dr. David Annand, the Rev. Thomas Springer and the Rev. Thomas Gebhart, besides many, many women teachers.

The fall of 1917, a Parent-Teacher Association was organized by Miss Miriam Gordy, teacher. Through the years, it played a valuable role in raising funds for necessary repairs and new school room equipment. There were festivals, suppers, card parties and plays to make money. Mrs. Frances Dennison Taylor directed the first play which was given by local talent in the Odd Fellows Hall at Hockessin. Through the efforts of Mrs. Granville Eastburn, a piano was purchased.

Special tribute should be paid to the late William P. Naudain, a valuable member of the schoolboard who gave much time in the interest of the school. Two of his sons took his place when death came to him. Many other board members played an active part.

During World War II, many young men from this area were called into the armed forces and returned safely.

The 100 year history closed with this verse:

'Tis the nation stand by the school.

'Tis the school bell that rings for our liberty,

'Tis the school boy and girl whose ballot shall rule.

From 1945 to 1955, many notable changes took place and again credit must go to the Parent-Teacher Association for the necessary funds.

A well was dug in September 1945 costing \$234.50 paid for by donations and benefits. The stove was moved from the center of room in 1947. Ten new desks were added. Hot lunches were started in 1949 and served three times a week using a two burner electric hot plate as electric had been installed earlier. Screens for windows and a screen door came that term.

By 1950, the state provided drinking fountains and a wash bowl with running water for students. The Hockessin - Yorklyn Lions Club provided the school with a yearly \$15 gift for educational film strips.

Harmony was completely modernized in 1952, by an addition built at the rear of the building to house an oil burner heating system, two lavatories, and redecoration of interior, new chairs and furniture made a marked change - cost about \$7,000. The grounds were beautified by removing old tree stumps and mowing of lawn. The old Carolina Poplar trees had to be cut down this year to make the playground safe for children. Playground equipment was obtained. Praise goes to the following families for the free labor given: Annands, Cannons, Penningtons, Naudains, Nowlands, Colmerys, Jarrells, and others.

In the 7th war Loan Drive, the school sold 1,095.65 worth of bonds and stamps during the drive. Its quota was \$400.00 and that year \$9,776.55 worth were sold, quite a record for a rural school.

During Mrs. Elsie Stradley's term as teacher here having taught from 1949 to 1956 much publicity was this school and its activities through feature articles in the Sunday Star, the Sunday Bulletin,

and the University of Delaware news.

It would be unfair not to record some of the outstanding Junior Red Cross work completed during this period. The students packed annual Christmas boxes for shipment overseas. They decorated candy cups, menu covers, and napkins, and contributed candy for the Veterans Hospital, Emily Bissell Hospital, and Governor Bacon Health Center also donated Mother's Day greetings for patients to mail home. The scope of their projects can be estimated by the amount given in the 1951-52 term as follows: 2,500 candy cups, 2,250 napkins, 200 menu covers, and 60 pounds of candy, representing the special holidays. About six or seven of the students were chosen to attend the Red Cross county parties and the annual picnics - the officers of the Busy Bee Club always attended.

Mrs. Anita Callaway Hygate who taught the 1911-12 term and Miss Elizabeth Dillon, teacher from 1930 to 1940, attended the 125th observance and told amusing incidents.

The little school house closed its doors to education on June 8, 1956 as the enrollment had dwindled to 11 pupils. It became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Holler two years later. The Hollers have shown a great interest in this school building and its rich history. They have acquired old pictures and news stories to share with others whereby hoping to enrich the lives of their friends. They have beautified the home and the grounds which holds a rich heritage for all its students and the community. For several Fourth of July's, the school bell has been rung to proclaim liberty and freedom for all, as their friends assemble here.

May this custom of ringing the bell and social time of fellowship continued in the years ahead when tribute is paid to this wonderful country by patriotic programs planned by the Hollers.

"Thus time marches on"