

## 6.0 SUMMARY

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The Terminal Phase II Archaeological Survey of the World War I Railroad, recorded as the Mt. Pleasant to Port Penn Railroad (CRS N145191) during the Phase Ib survey for the U.S. Route 301 project, presents the findings of additional background research and field survey to discover the history of the line as well as how it fit into the larger context of World War I mobilization and military supply networks. Although only a portion of the rail line was encountered in Section 1 of the Phase Ib survey, the history of the entire line was researched and mapped for the purposes of this report.

The railroad was designed and built under contract to the U.S. Army in the summer and fall of 1918 by the Marlin-Rockwell Bomb Loading Company and its subcontractor, Fred T. Ley & Co. The line was to connect the proposed Marlin-Rockwell bombing loading plant at Port Penn on the Delaware River to the Pennsylvania Railroad at Mt. Pleasant, 8.5 miles to the west. Built in the late summer of 1918, the access line never really fulfilled its purpose before the war ended and the Army cancelled the plant construction contract. The rail line was one of the few projects associated with the plant that was actually completed, the plant itself never having been built. The purpose of the line, according to background research, was to haul construction materials, supplies, and equipment to the site. It is not known how the line was to be used after construction of the plant was completed, or what, if any, types of bomb materials would have been hauled via rail. No bombs or explosives were ever delivered to the uncompleted plant.

The majority of freight the line hauled consisted of construction materials, such as lumber, brick, steel, and terra cotta tiles, for the few buildings that were constructed prior to the end of the war. These buildings, all of which were referred to as temporary, included an administration building, a commissary, and approximately 30 bunkhouses for workers. None of the bomb loading buildings was built because the Army never approved design plans due to the constantly changing recipe for the explosives. Later, after the war ended, the access line was used to haul materials off the site when salvage operations began in the summer of 1919. The rails, ties, and fencing were removed from the corridor by the mid-1920s and the land returned to the previous owners.

Ultimately, the rail line was not an important transportation corridor in the Army's mobilization efforts for the war. The line's purpose was to provide the proposed plant a connection with a larger national railroad network. However, the line was completed too late in the war to be of any significance, and its purpose was never fulfilled. As an historic property, it is considered not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.