

### **Resources Related to African-Americans in Delaware**

The Delaware Plan and subsequent reports and funding priorities generated by and for the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office have clearly stated the need to begin a comprehensive program to identify and nominate resources related to the African-American experience in Delaware. Due to the history of this group of people, and the fact that historically they have been poor and often landless, architectural resources that can be tied specifically to them are rare. The state has placed a high priority on the documentation and preservation of any resources identified as being related to this group. Only one resource in the study area has been linked at the present time to the context of African-Americans in Delaware: the school house on Route 896 south of Mount Pleasant (N-5240). Although local tradition seems to hold that the school building has been moved from its original location, any structure that can be linked to this context must have every attempt made at preserving the standing structure and documenting its history and current condition.

### **Conclusions**

The proposed Route 301 Corridor will have a major impact on the cultural resources of the area. Some 68 historic buildings and sites are directly impacted by the proposed corridor alternatives, but many more will suffer the indirect impact of the destruction of an agricultural landscape that has remained largely intact and free of intrusions since the nineteenth century.

North of Route 40, the impact will fall primarily on early twentieth century rural residential and commercial architecture that has been largely ignored by the Cultural Resource Survey and National Register process until very recently. There are a significant number of resources that are potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register in this part of the study area and while we are not recommending that all of them be considered for nomination, it is crucial that they be documented to preserve the information they can contribute to this newly developing historic context.

Between the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and Route 40, the impact falls on several additional twentieth century dwellings and a number of farmsteads that were previously evaluated in the Route 896 study. Again, the twentieth century sites should be documented to preserve the information for the future development of the historic context on Early Twentieth Century Rural Architecture. The DeShane-Paxon Farm should also have further work done to preserve the information related to the context on Agricultural Tenancy.

South of the Canal, there are two major alternatives: the Ridge and the Reconstruction. While the Ridge impacts far fewer resources than the Reconstruction, the Ridge alternative will have a highly detrimental impact on the agricultural landscape, destroying the visual links between the farms, and

permanently altering the integrity of the setting for these resources. Use of the Modified Reconstruction alternative would mitigate the impact on the late nineteenth century agricultural economy illustrated by the Mount Pleasant area, but it would irreparably damage one resource--the historic woodlot and wet meadow off Churchtown Road.

Moving south along the Reconstruction alternative, there are several sites where every effort should be made to preserve the properties with their historic plantings intact. These include Weston (N-121), the Armstrong-Walker House (N-5146), Cochran Grange (N-117), Hedgelawn (N-118), and Summerton (N-112). At the Rumsey Farm (N-113), the plantings near the road are more recent and could be removed without affecting the integrity of the site. The four properties west of Summerton also retain historic plantings that should be protected.

Particularly rare survivals within the study area include the log dwellings at the R.G.Hayes House (N-5153), the Brisbane House (N-6320), and the Fields Heirs House (N-105). All three of these sites should have a high priority for either protection or intensive level documentation. The other rare resource is the African-American school (N-5240).