

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CE - 794  
MAGI #0807942419

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad right-of-way

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

--NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Between Porter, Delaware and

-- VICINITY OF

STATE

Frenchtown, Md.

CODE

24

COUNTY

Cecil

CODE

015

Maryland

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Too numerous to mention

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

-- VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cecil County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Elkton

STATE  
Maryland**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Maryland Historical Trust's Historic Sites Survey of Cecil County, Maryland

DATE

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Maryland Historical Trust - John Shaw House, 21 State Circle

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

STATE  
Maryland 21401

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CE-794

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad originally crossed the Delmarva Peninsula from a wharf in New Castle to a wharf at Frenchtown on the Elk River in Maryland. Part of the original route, from the Delaware Railroad near Porter to New Castle, still is in operation as part of the Penn Central System. From Porter to Frenchtown, the right-of-way is abandoned for railroad purposes, although parts of it serve as country roads.

Much of the abandoned right-of-way survives as a trace along field boundaries and through second-growth woods. At Belltown Run, west of Delaware Route 401, a stone-arch bridge survives in good condition. Delaware Route 394, near the Maryland line, is built on part of the roadbed. At Frenchtown, the long curving roadbed to the Elk River survives as a county road; another portion of the roadbed east of Frenchtown is a private lane that connects with Route 213.

The most evident surviving portions of the railroad are in the valleys of small streams, where earth-fill embankments survive. The long causeway across the valley of Belltown Run is the largest of these.

Like many early railroads, the New Castle and Frenchtown was built on 10" or 12" square stone sleepers that carried the strap-iron rails. This system proved unsatisfactory, and by the middle of the nineteenth century had been abandoned in favor of wooden ties. Stone sleepers from the New Castle and Frenchtown, salvaged by local residents, may be seen today in the foundations of buildings near the right-of-way.

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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1831

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Chesapeake and Delaware drainages were the principal avenues of settlement in the middle colonies. Although they were separated by only a narrow isthmus, their political and economic histories followed different courses. Passage across the land barrier was tedious at best, even as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century. Although the portage was only five or ten miles wide in places, shippers usually preferred to take the dangerous sea route between the two bays.

As early as the middle of the seventeenth century, entrepreneurs were proposing canals, turnpikes, and other internal improvements to connect the two bays. A century and a half later, however, the portage still involved poor roads, undependable packet connections, and long delays. Albert Gallatin, in his 1808 report to Congress, recommended a series of canals that would eliminate the portages and connect New England with the South by an inland water passage. Gallatin's recommendations were eventually carried out, but not by Congress. Independent companies built canals, turnpikes and railroads, helter-skelter, along the East Coast, first to connect major waterways, and finally to provide a single land transportation system.

While the present coastwise transportation network was evolving, dozens of companies built turnpikes, canals, and railroads that enjoyed a brief prosperity, only to be superseded in a few years by newer and cheaper routes. The New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad was one of these ephemeral schemes.

As early as 1775, there was regular stage service between New Castle and Frenchtown, a jolting seventeen-mile passage over unimproved county roads that connected with the relatively comfortable packet boats on the Delaware and Elk rivers. By 1811, the demand for an improved road between the two rivers led to the construction of a short turnpike from New Castle to Clark's Corners, a distance of about three miles. The successful completion of this turnpike revived interest in the proposal for a New Castle and Frenchtown turnpike, which had been chartered in 1809 but never organized. Delaware and Maryland rechartered the New Castle and Frenchtown company in 1813, and by 1816 it had built a fifteen-mile road from Clark's Corners to Frenchtown. Until the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal was opened in 1829, the turnpike from New Castle to Frenchtown was the principal route over the portage. The success of the Frenchtown route encouraged the Elkton and Christiana Turnpike Company, which built a competitive road to connect the head of Elk River with the head of the Christina. This competition hurt the Frenchtown company, which was dependent almost entirely upon the trans-peninsular stages operated by the Union Line of steamboats.

(See Continuation Sheet No. 1)

CE-794

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad  
Cecil County  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Significance, continued

In 1821, the turnpikes suffered another blow when the Delaware General Assembly levied a tax on them to support the proposed college at Newark, denounced as "a small village in an obscure corner of this state, where it is impossible it can ever flourish." The tax was repealed the following year.

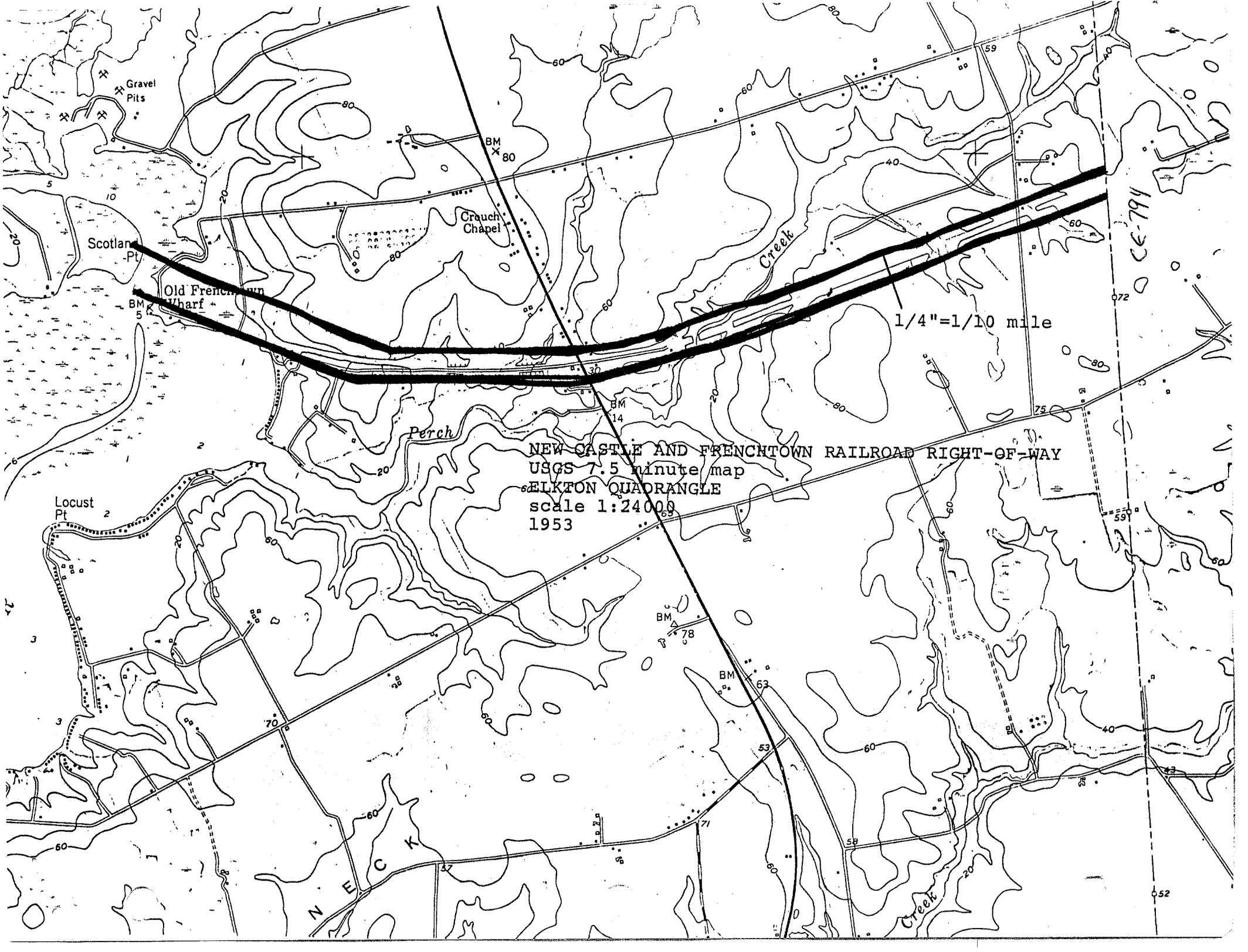
By 1827, it had become apparent that the canal across the isthmus would be completed, and would siphon away the stage traffic that supported the Frenchtown road. The turnpike management began to investigate the prospect of building a railroad; a few miles to the north, citizens of Wilmington proposed to build a rail line from that city to Elkton. The Wilmington interests got their Maryland charter, and a few months later the Frenchtown company obtained permission during the 1827-28 Maryland Legislative session to expand its own operations to include a railroad in Cecil County. When the Delaware legislature met in 1829, it failed to charter the Wilmington road, but passed acts that permitted the New Castle and Frenchtown turnpike companies to build railroads. By March 1830, the two companies had raised enough new capital to permit them to build railroads. The next month, the short New Castle Turnpike was merged into the New Castle and Frenchtown Turnpike and Railroad Company. The chief engineer was John Randel, Jr., who had designed the C & D Canal, but had no experience with railroads. Randel laid out a route, a few hundred yards south of the turnpike, which was under construction by July.

On February 28, 1832, the railroad opened for passenger service, using horse-drawn carriages because its temporary rails were too light for locomotives. By September 10, English-built steam locomotives were operating on an improved roadbed. The New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad was not only among the first railroads built in the United States, but it was the first upon which steam power was applied for the transportation of passengers.

In 1833, the railroad absorbed the Steam Navigation Company, which operated packet boats to the line's termini. A competing steam packet line, operating through the canal, forced the railroad to charge unreasonably low fares that weakened its financial structure. By 1834, however, the competition had been put out of business, and the railroad enjoyed a monopoly on the passenger-carrying trade that lasted until 1837, when a new railroad network between Philadelphia and Baltimore was completed. The New Castle and Frenchtown tried to compete with the new line until 1843, when it became a subsidiary of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. A spur to Wilmington chartered as the New Castle and Wilmington Railroad, was completed in 1852. In 1855, the Delaware Railroad built a connection with the New Castle and Frenchtown east of Glasgow. The line west of the junction was abandoned after service to Frenchtown wharf was discontinued.

[The major portions of this form have been reproduced almost exactly from the nomination form prepared by the State of Delaware].





Scotland Pt

Old Frenchtown Wharf

Crauch Chapel

Perch Creek

Locust Pt

NEW CASTLE AND FRENCHTOWN RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY  
USGS 7.5 minute map  
ELKTON QUADRANGLE  
scale 1:24000  
1953

1/4"=1/10 mile

66-794



CE-794

EXHIBIT WC

1858 Martenet Map of Cecil County

**E L K T O N**

**Elkton**

**FRENCHTOWN AND NEWCASTLE**

RAIL

OLIVE BRIDGE

Run

Creek

Run

Run

Run

Run

Run

Run

Run

Plum Pt

W. V. Namee

W. Ford

W. Simpson

W. Gladding

Sam. Sullox

Matther Woods

Henry Fowler

randall

Geo. W. Boulden

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

W. Biddle

W. Boulden

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

W. Biddle

W. Boulden

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

W. Biddle

W. Boulden

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

W. Biddle

W. Boulden

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

W. Biddle

W. Boulden

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

W. Biddle

W. Boulden

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

Ans. Griffith

W. Biddle

W. Boulden





**ROWLANDSVILLE BUSINESS REFERENCES.**

- H. S. Migraw, Manufacturer of Flour, Chop, Buckwheat and Mill Feed. Porter Bridge P. O. Colorado.
- McCullough Iron Co. Galvanized, Refined and Charcoal Bloom Sheet Iron Manufacturers. Cor. Sixteenth and Washington Avenue, Philadelphia.
- Caldwell & James, Dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Notions, etc. Ready-made Clothing a Specialty. Conowingo.
- W. C. Mullen, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps, and a full line of Notions. Store at Rock Springs.
- James Cummings, Justice of the Peace. Office on Lancaster Road, 2 1/2 miles north of Conowingo.
- J. T. French, Dealer in Fresh Fish. Conowingo P. O., via Rowlandsville Station. P. & B. C. R. R.
- W. M. Grubb & Co., Dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps, Notions, and all articles usually kept in a general store. Grubb's Corners. On Lancaster Road.
- Davis, Christie & Co., Proprietors of Octoraro Flouring Mills.
- Christie & Hindman, Dealers in Fancy and Staple Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Queensware, Ready-made Clothing, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps, and a complete Stock of General Notions.

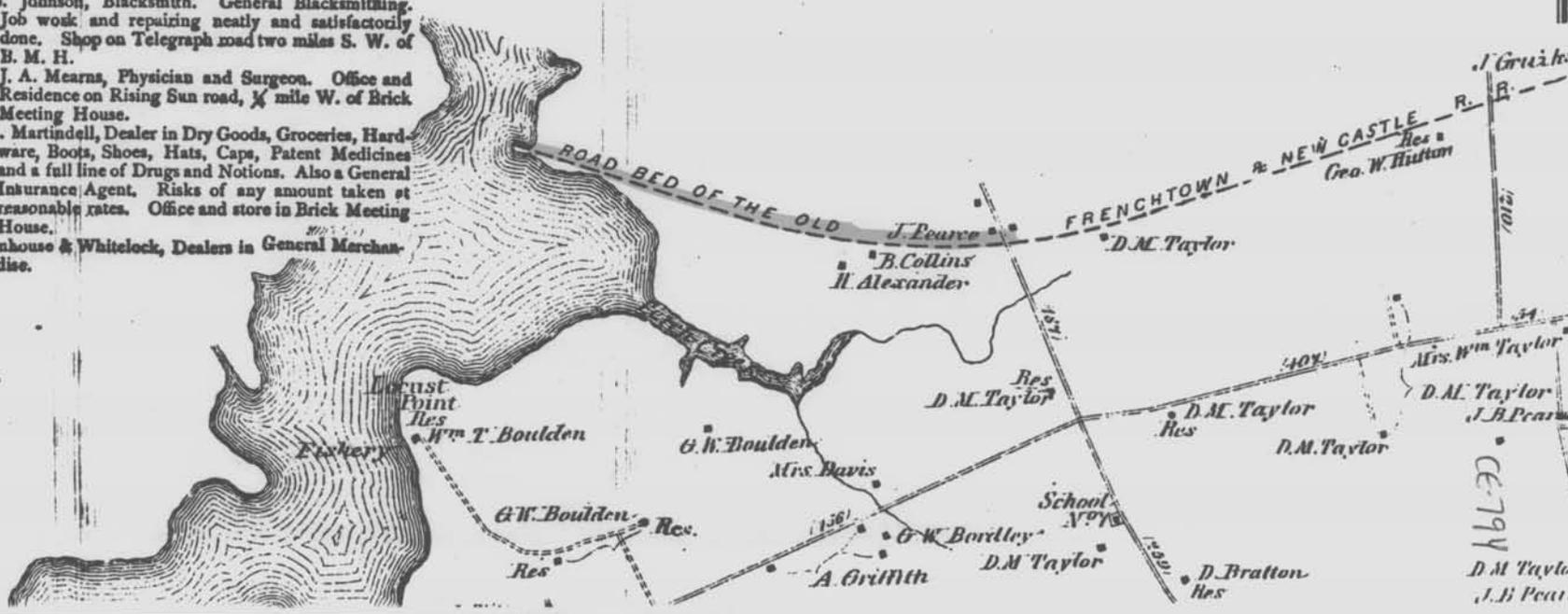
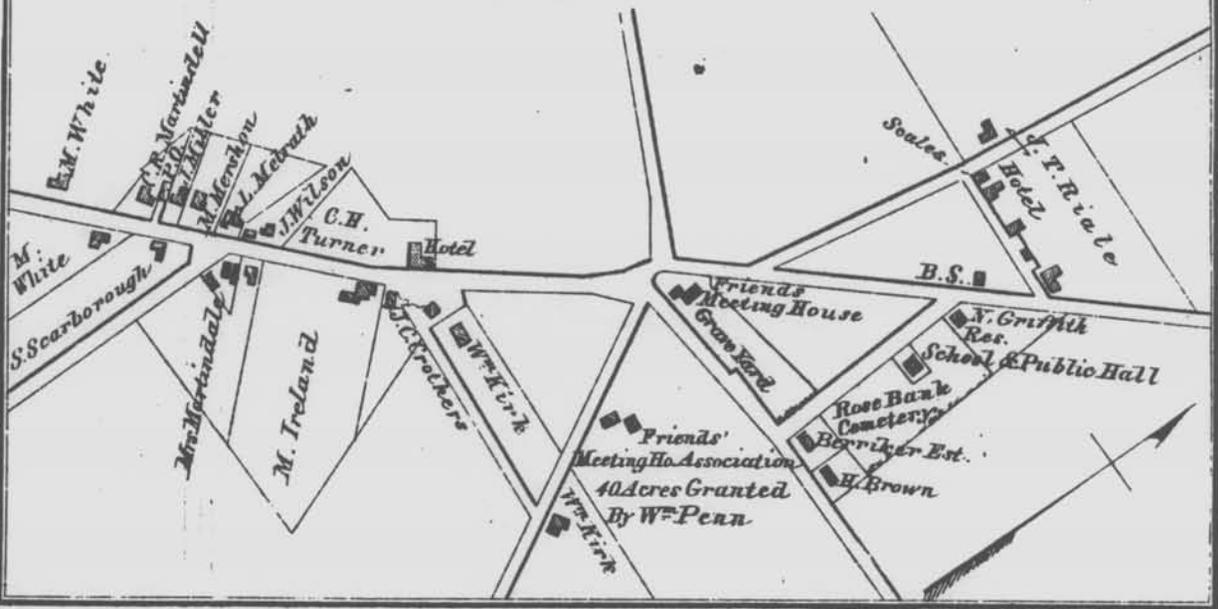
**BRICK MEETING HOUSE BUSINESS REFERENCES.**

- James Turner, M. D. Physician and Surgeon. Office and Residence 1/2 mile West of Brick Meeting House.
- Joseph Hopkins, M. D. Physician and Surgeon. Office and Residence 1/2 mile West of Brick Meeting House.
- W. E. Mathews, Manufacturer and Dealer in Flour, Bran, Ship Stuffs and ground feed of all kinds. Lumber sawed to order and kept on hand. Mill on North-east Creek, five miles from North-east.
- L. S. Johnson, Blacksmith. General Blacksmithing. Job work and repairing neatly and satisfactorily done. Shop on Telegraph road two miles S. W. of B. M. H.
- Dr. J. A. Mearns, Physician and Surgeon. Office and Residence on Rising Sun road, 1/2 mile W. of Brick Meeting House.
- G. B. Martindell, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps, Patent Medicines and a full line of Drugs and Notions. Also a General Insurance Agent. Risks of any amount taken at reasonable rates. Office and store in Brick Meeting House.
- Rittenhouse & Whitelock, Dealers in General Merchandise.

**BRICK MEETING HOUSE P.O.**

(Brick Meeting House Dist)

Scale 30 Rods to an Inch







CE 794

pg 3/4

MINGTON

MAP NO. A-16  
1160 TO NEWARK

440

1170



31





STATE OF MARYLAND  
MARYLAND GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



CE-794  
ELKTON QUADRANGLE  
MARYLAND-DELAWARE  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

Pg 2/4 UNIT:  
DEPARTMENT  
GEOLOG

47° 30"

4.4 MI. TO DEL. 896 1 860 000 FEET (MD.)

135

75° 45'



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

CE-794

pg 3/4

5863 1  
(NEWARK)



60A

Saint Georges, De.

1953

CE-794

pg 4/4

SAINT GE

DELAWA

7.5 MINUTI

SW/4 W

WILMINGTON 8.5 MI.  
STATE ROAD 2 MI.

5863 II NW WILMINGTON 10 MI.  
(NEWARK EAST) 3.9 MI TO U.S. 13





New Castle & Frenchtown R.R.

