

PH0011312

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Delaware	
COUNTY: New Castle	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 8 1973

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad right-of-way

AND/OR HISTORIC:

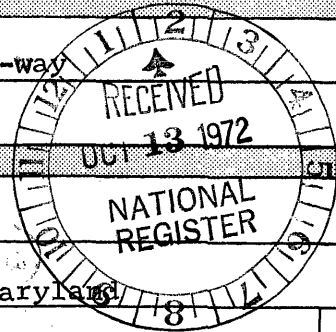
**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Porter, Del.

CITY OR TOWN: Hrus, Mo. (Correction)

Between Porter, Delaware, and Frenchtown, Maryland

STATE: Delaware CODE: 10 COUNTY: New Castle CODE: 003



**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
See continuation sheet

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Public Building

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Rodney Square

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:  
Wilmington Delaware 10

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
None

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

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MAY 8 1973

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad originally crossed the 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 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.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

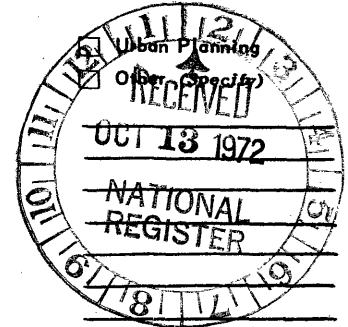
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1831

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |  |



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.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gibb, Hugh R. The Delaware Railroad. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Delaware. 1965.

Holmes, William F. "The New Castle and Frenchtown Turnpike and Railroad Company." Delaware History X(1962-1963).

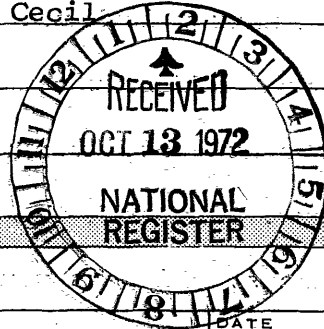
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	39° 36' 48"	75° 50' 36"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	39° 36' 48"	75° 41' 14"		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	39° 34' 23"	75° 41' 14"		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	39° 34' 23"	75° 50' 36"		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Maryland	24	Cecil	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Edward F. Heite, Historic Registrar

ORGANIZATION  
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

DATE  
August 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Hall of Records

CITY OR TOWN:  
Dover

STATE  
Delaware

CODE  
10

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name E. Berkeley Tompkins  
Dr. E. Berkeley Tompkins

Title Director, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Date 10-6-72

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert W. Utley  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/8/73

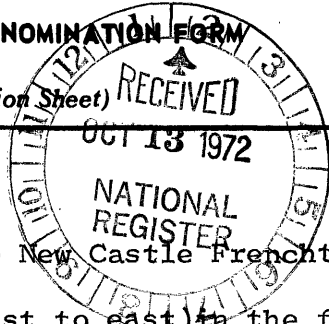
ATTEST:

[Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 6-2-73

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

(Continuation Sheet)



STATE	Delaware	
COUNTY	New Castle	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		MAY 8 1970

(Number all entries)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

The right of way of the New Castle Frenchtown Railroad now traverses properties (from west to east) in the following ownerships:

Waclaw Lowicki, R.D.2, Elkton, Maryland 21921; Josephine McDaniel, R.D.2, Elkton, Maryland 21921; along the boundary between Mary Peel, R.D.2, Elkton, Maryland 21921 and Edward Zeranski, R.D.1, Newark, Delaware 19711; along the boundary between Paul H. Brown, Wilmington, Delaware, and Levin Church, Arbutus Avenue, New Castle, Delaware 19709 and Howard Payne, R.D.1, Newark, Delaware 19711; Marabou Meadows Subdivision (Robert Peoples); Joseph N. Reynolds, R.D.?, Newark, Delaware 19711; Ralph Jarmon, R.D.?, Newark, Delaware 19711; along the boundary between Jarmon and Jay Savitz, Box 1001, Newark, Delaware 19711; along the boundary between Jarmon and Caravel Farms Subdivision (Robert Peoples); along the boundary between Caravel Farms and George Clay, Star Route, Middletown, Delaware 19709; along the boundary between Clay and PWK Enterprises, Inc., Route 273, Newark, Delaware 19711; along the boundary between PWK and Wilson Adams, Bear, Delaware 19701; along the boundary between Clay and PWK; Engineered Properties, Inc., DuPont and Washington Avenues, New Castle, Delaware 19720; Farmap Holding Company, Box 5026, Wilmington, Delaware 19808; George Friedland, 123 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19109; Elizabeth Walther, Bear, Delaware 19701; and along the boundary between Parkway Gravel, Inc., 4048 New Castle Avenue, New Castle, Delaware 19720 and Eastern Shore Concrete Pipe Company, Inc., Porter Road, Bear, Delaware 19701.

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Delaware	
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DATE	1973	

(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)---

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 transpeninsular stages operated by the Union Line of steamboats.



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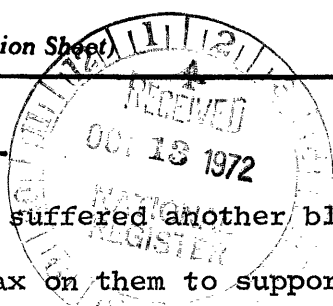
(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (page 2)---

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 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



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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued-3)---

locomotives. By September 10, English-built steam locomotives were operating on an improved roadbed. During the following year, 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, subject of this nomination, was abandoned after service to Frenchtown wharf was discontinued.

