



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

30 North Market Street, Third Floor Frederick, Maryland 21701 (301) 600-1147



CASE NO. CR 22-05 (DOE 21-03) NOMINATION TO COUNTY REGISTER STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY

Property: Buckeystown African American School
6821 Michaels Mill Road, Buckeystown

Applicant: Gelda Ortega

Public Hearing for consideration of placing the property located at 6821 Michaels Mill Road, Buckeystown African American School, on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. Submitted by Gelda Ortega, property owner of record.

The public hearing for designation to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places will be held at 7:00 p.m., or thereafter, on August 3, 2022.



Fig. 1: Subject Property

DESIGNATION STATUS

The property is located within the Buckeystown National Historic District, which is inventoried on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) as F-1-29. The Frederick County Historic Preservation Commission determined the property eligible for listing to the County Register at their November 3, 2021 meeting (DOE # 21-03). The property contains the historic house and encompasses a quarter acre of land.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The applicant submitted a completed County Register nomination form, a written property description, a map, and photographs. Staff assisted in writing the architectural and historical significance description.

SITE VISITS

Site visit dates were scheduled prior to the November 3rd determination of eligibility (DOE) hearing. These visits were scheduled on October 23 and October 30, between 10 and 12 p.m. each day. No exterior changes have occurred at the subject property since the DOE hearing. Commissioners who were not able to attend any of these dates are urged to familiarize themselves with the exterior on their own time from the public right-of-way.

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) Analysis

The architectural and historical significance of the Buckeystown African American School is documented in the supporting materials. The property has historic and cultural significance for its association with the education of African Americans in Buckeystown. Based on the information provided, Staff finds the property would be eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(1A).

2) History Summary

The Buckeystown African American School, built in 1902, has been the site for African American education in Buckeystown since circa 1878. The property is located to the east of the intersection of Buckeystown Pike and Michaels Mill Road.

Buckeystown began educating African American students circa 1877 following an 1872 State law requiring free public schools for African Americans in every school district. The population in the Buckeystown Election District grew by 1877 to have two African American schools, one at Point of Rocks and one at Buckeystown. The site of the current Buckeystown African American School

originally contained a stone schoolhouse that was located further away from Michaels Mill Road. This stone schoolhouse was built circa 1850 for the education of the White children in Buckeystown. With the need for an additional schoolhouse in the election district to educate African Americans, the Buckeystown School Board of Trustees petitioned the County School Commissioners for a new schoolhouse to be built north of town for the White students. The new schoolhouse was completed circa 1878, freeing the stone schoolhouse for the African American students. In 1901, the stone schoolhouse was determined to be in a state of great disrepair and was ordered to be demolished and a new frame school building built on the same lot but closer to the road. This building was utilized until 1938 when it was closed due to low enrollment. In 1939, it was sold and shortly thereafter converted into a residence. The property has been in residential use since the early 1940s. The period of significance for this property is circa 1878 to 1938, the period the site was utilized for educating African American children in Buckeystown.

3) Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Significance Criteria

The property would be eligible for listing under this category for meeting criteria 6B(1A) as outlined in Chapter 1-23-6B(1) of the Frederick County Code:

- 6B(1A): *The property has significant character, interest, or value as part of development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation.*

The property has significant interest and value in the development and heritage of the County and State for its association with the movement toward African American social independence and education during Reconstruction and beyond. The property is a product of Maryland's early education system to include the free education of African Americans.

Maryland made several attempts in the 17th and 18th centuries to establish an education system. It was not until 1864 during the Maryland Constitutional Convention that a statewide uniform education system was adopted. However, the 1865 Public Schools Law was not enforced for the education of African Americans. The law did require the collection of school taxes from Black landowners; however, land ownership at this time, shortly after emancipation, was low. In fact, in Frederick County the Board of School Commissioners at their November 21, 1866 meeting divided the school tax paid by African Americans in the County, a total of \$103.04, among the eight African American schools. This equaled \$12 being paid to support each school for the entire year. It was not until 1872 that the General Assembly passed an act requiring free public education for African Americans and funds be appropriated to support these schools based on the Black population between the ages of 5 and 20 years old.

Frederick County had one African American school in each election district by 1870 with the Frederick District and Petersville District reporting three African American schools each. The 1871 meeting minutes of the Frederick County School Commissioners showed that a total of \$442 was being appropriated to the African American schools while \$5,000 was being appropriated annually to the White schools. By 1877, Buckeystown had a school for African Americans.

Buckeystown is located at a crossroads of Buckeystown Pike and Michaels Mill and Manor Woods Roads. Its proximity to the Monocacy River and Carrollton Manor influenced its development as a commercial center. Mills, limekilns, wheelwrights, taverns, blacksmith shops and more were established in the area to support the many farms in the region. The area had several large plantations that utilized slave labor to support its operation. By 1775, the Buckey brothers John and George had arrived and established a tannery and tavern. The town grew during the 1800s and early 1900s.

Following the State's emancipation of enslaved persons in 1864, many African Americans remained working on the farms while others left to establish communities of their own either on the outskirts of existing towns or in rural locations. In Buckeystown, a small African American community was established along Michaels Mill Road. Housing was built to accommodate domestic and farm laborers and later industrial workers in the cannery and brickyard. A church was built circa 1890 next door to the Buckeystown African American School.

The Buckeystown African American School was originally located in a stone schoolhouse that was built circa 1850 on the same lot as the existing schoolhouse. This early schoolhouse was used to educate White children until a two-room brick schoolhouse was built north of town circa 1878. The stone schoolhouse was then utilized to educate the African American children. In 1901, the stone school was determined to be in poor condition and a new frame building was constructed in 1902. The frame schoolhouse housed all grades until a second building was added to the lot. The existing building then housed grades 4 through 7 while the portable building was used for grades 1 through 3.

In 1938, the school was closed due to low enrollment and students were transported to Hopeland. In 1939, the School Board sold the property and the new owners converted the building into a residence. It has been used as a residence ever since.

4) Architectural and Design Significance Criteria

Staff finds that the property is not eligible under this category since numerous alterations have altered the architectural character of the original 1902 structure.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Buckeystown African American School to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criterion 6B(1A) as described in Section 1-23-6B of the County Code.

If the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recommends in favor of determining the property eligible for listing based on meeting this criteria, then a letter will be issued to the property owner stating this determination. The property owner may return to the HPC within one year to nominate the property to the County Register of Historic Places.