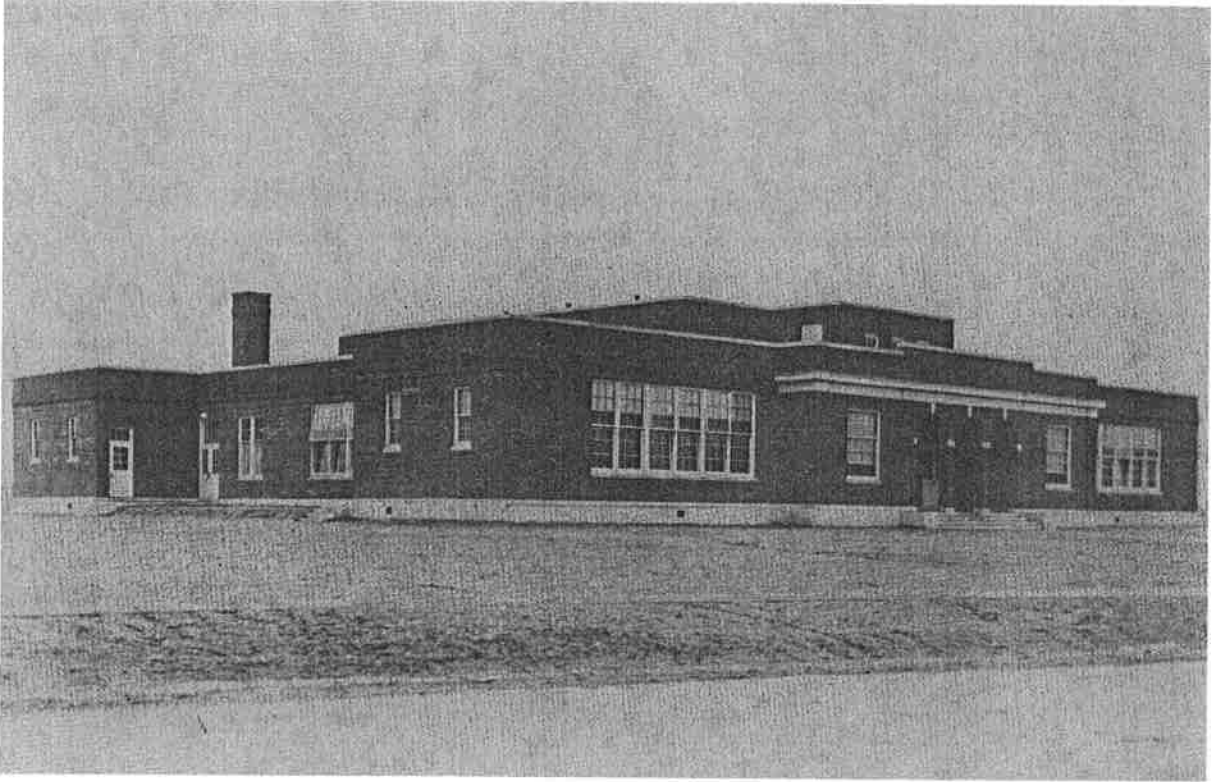


Benjamin Banneker Milford Colored School, New Castle County
Board of Education Collection
Courtesy of Delaware Public Archives

Booker T. Washington Junior High School

By the end of 1922, most of the schools were completed or nearly finished including Booker T. Washington Colored School under construction in Dover. It included a junior high school in addition to the standard six grades, which characterized most schools. Booker T. Washington Junior High School at Dover was a model design for consolidated schools that contained eight grades or a Junior High School. This was the largest school in Dover at the time costing \$84,955.47. The brick building contained seven classrooms and two auxiliary rooms holding a capacity of 300 students. It was located on a 6 ½ acre plot with a playground in the center of the African American neighborhood in Dover.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Delaware State Parent-Teacher Association, "The School as a Community Center," Series IV (Wilmington, Delaware, April, 1924)6:10-11, Education: Public Schools, Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware.



Booker T. Washington Colored School in Dover, Kent County
Courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library

After completing the building, the school added an auditorium and other rooms in 1923. These were added to the two rear sides of the H shaped building. Service Citizens of Delaware was very proud of the new facility in Dover. In its 1922 Annual Report, the Service Citizens boasted:

The largest colored school in the state will be in Dover and the plans adopted call for a central auditorium. This auditorium will meet a great need in the state. At present, there is no hall in which the colored people can meet for their various conventions and conferences. As such an auditorium will be used more for community purposes than for school exercises, it is felt proper that

we should equip that hall with seats, motion picture outfit and stage properties, at a cost of \$3700.¹⁸³

The Auxiliary Association usually located new school buildings near the old schoolhouses. If surveys showed a change in the concentration of the population, then they made attempts to locate the new school to reflect it. They tried to locate the new schools in the center of population concentrations. The new site for the Booker T. Washington school reflected shifts in the African American population away from the south side of Loockerman Street to the north side of it. There were numerous complaints about these new school locations that came mainly from Euro-Americans. Mrs. Nolan Steele from Dover complained in a letter to duPont about the location of the Booker T. Washington School. She wrote:

I have a little matter to bring before you. We own the farm that joins the ground on which the colored school-house stands here in Dover. Our land joins it on the west and north. My own two little boys, 7 and 11 years of age walk into Dover school every morning, and they are compelled to meet the road full of negro [sic] children...Partly on account of this we put our farm in the agent's hands for sale. Two or three different parties have been out to look at the place and because of the negro [sic] school-house, would not have it any price [sic]. You see it not only causes a depreciation in the value of our property, but knocks the sale of it entirely.¹⁸⁴

By the mid 1920s, the Auxiliary Association had completed fifty-three buildings with 156 rooms. The Auxiliary Association had under construction an additional twenty-nine buildings and sixty classrooms for both Euro-American and African Americans. During the 1920s, African Americans began settling into their new schools and began operations.

¹⁸³ "Co-operative Citizenship in Delaware," Report to the Annual Meeting of the Service Citizens of Delaware, (May 12, 1922), 74, Purnell Collection-Service Citizens, RG 9200, Delaware State Archives.

¹⁸⁴ Mrs. Nolan Steele, Dover, Delaware, to P.S. duPont, October 26, 1923, P.S. duPont Papers.