

IMAGES  
of America

# DUNLEITH

E185.93  
D4J36

Victoria James

Copyright © 2005 by Victoria James  
ISBN 0-7385-4205-9

Published by Arcadia Publishing  
Charleston SC, Chicago IL, Portsmouth NH, San Francisco CA

Printed in Great Britain

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2005930922

For all general information contact Arcadia Publishing at:  
Telephone 843-853-2070  
Fax 843-853-0044  
E-mail [sales@arcadiapublishing.com](mailto:sales@arcadiapublishing.com)  
For customer service and orders:  
Toll-Free 1-888-313-2665

Visit us on the Internet at [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com)

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	6
Introduction	7
1. Early Establishments	9
2. Dunleith Estates	21
3. Military	31
4. Millside	37
5. Church History	41
6. School Days	81
7. Family Life	103
8. Celebrations	119

2010060

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been an incredible historical journey. Dunleith was documented in order to preserve its history and its legacy. Three generations helped to tie this book together, starting with the post-World War II matriarchs and patriarchs who purchased their first homes in Dunleith Estates. A relentless effort was conducted in terms of interviewing people and researching the history of Dunleith. Every person who contributed to this book did so from their perspective and because they sincerely desired to be a part of Dunleith history. Those reasons contribute to the uniqueness of this book. Nevertheless this book includes only a portion of Dunleith history. I am extremely grateful to everyone who helped with this project. Thank you for allowing me to use your family photographs for this project. Furthermore I am humbled by the support and the encouragement that I received from all of you. I would like to thank the following individuals: Jessie Carter, Thomas Carter, Maxine Davenport, Florence Foddrell, Emma Furrowh, Ricky Gaines, Robert Grinnage, Minister Glenn James Jr., Cherron Pindell-Miller, Rev. Dr. Maurice Moyer, Henrietta Nelson, Wayne Portlock, Marvin Prophet, Hazel T. Quarles, Sheena Quarles, Janice Rodgers, Ruth Slade, Eugene Stallings, Margaret C. West, Rev. Naomi Gaines-Winchester, Sue Wisher, and Dunleith matriarchs Dorothy Orr and Marion Perkins. I would also like to thank the following organizations: Rhonda Allende, Wilmington Institute; Martin Berger, Berger Brothers; Robin Bodo, State of Delaware Historical Preservation Office; Cameras Etc. Inc.; Colourworks Photographic Services; Delaware Public Archives; Connie Douglas, National Association of Home Builders, Washington, D.C.; Nancy Hadley, American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.; Barbara Hall, Hagley Museum and Library; George Kent, State of Delaware Mapping; Jaime Kinsey, Delaware County Department of Land Use; Marjorie McNinch, Hagley Museum and Library; Ronald Whittington, University of Delaware; and Jon Williams, Hagley Museum and Library. I would like to especially thank my daughter, Prophetess Sonja Hill, who gave me confirmation about this book three years ago. Thank you, Sonja, for extending yourself in the role as a consultant. I also would like to especially thank my husband, Rev. Glenn James, for his unconditional love, encouragement, and support throughout this project. Thank you, Lord.

## INTRODUCTION

The Dunleith community was one of the first subdivisions in suburban New Castle County that offered homes to African Americans. From the late 1940s to the 1970s, the home ownership dream became a reality. Establishing this unique African American community did not start with the blueprints of men. The planning started in the hearts and minds of the men and women who desperately wanted equal opportunities in the housing market that could result in a better quality of living.

Living in Millside Federal Housing was just a stepping stone before better housing became available. One challenge in particular was finding good, affordable, and decent housing. The Housing Act of 1949 was put in motion to eliminate inequalities that arose from racial prejudice. Gradually the African American dream of being a homeowner became a reality.

In the 1950s, men such as Leon Weiner, housing developer; Don A. Loftus, contractor; and W. Ellis Preston, architect, helped to make visions become realities. Many World War II veterans, blue-collar workers, and teachers became homeowners for the first time. The community was named after the Rogers estate, called the Dunleith Mansion. This mansion was formerly held in the Rogers Trust under the Annie Rogers du Pont will. The house was called "The Castle" by residents from the area. The land for was released from the du Pont trust on December 23, 1949, to Delaware Community Homes. Helen Rogers Bradford, sister of Annie Rogers du Pont, lived in the Dunleith Mansion, situated in the New Castle Hundred in New Castle County. Leon Weiner developed the community. Most of the 85 acres owned in Dunleith by the du Pont family were released from their trust specifically for the building of Dunleith Estates.

Dunleith homeowners took pride in their homes. Dunleith property was maintained by painting and remodeling the exteriors and interiors as well as modest landscaping. By the early 1960s, one could see the many major home improvements throughout the community.

The churches were the pillars of the community. The churches helped the community to have a sense of balance. The routine of daily living was carried out with a purpose and plan to succeed in life. These houses of worship functioned as formal mentoring centers for the community. The Coleman Memorial Methodist Church provided a myriad of resources to help educate youths and families in their spiritual walk, home life, and with social issues as well.

The Community Presbyterian Church started a day nursery for pre-school children of working mothers in 1956. These children were brought to the Community Presbyterian Church basement nursery school. Both of the churches role-modeled family living. Neighbors knew each other and consequently found themselves sitting on church pews together. Strong morals and values were taught. For the most part, families stayed intact.

Julius Ryland served as principal of Millside School for six months in 1952. The *Delaware Educational Directory 1953-1954* recorded Dr. George Miller Jr. as state superintendent and Earle C. Brown as the principal of Millside School. The new Dunleith Community School was completed in 1956. The school eventually provided education to students in grades one through nine. Benjamin C. Rogers joined the Dunleith faculty as elementary school principal in 1957.

Teachers were highly qualified and dedicated to molding and shaping individuals. The school was an educational setting where students were expected to achieve academically. The teachers were an extension of the family. Teachers combined their teaching skills and their nurturing techniques in an effort to help students to become successful.

Family meal times usually took place in the home. Streetlight curfews were enforced by parents who kept track of where their children were. Next-door neighbors were extended family members also. Many neighbors acted as substitute parents in the absence of a child's biological parent.

There were a variety of celebrations. Special occasions with family members were rituals that were practiced by the entire family unit. Parents and children took pride in attending and celebrating many major events together. A wholesome community managed to navigate through the stressful times of the post-World War II era successfully. As a result, the lives of many African Americans have been impacted positively because of a community named Dunleith.

## One

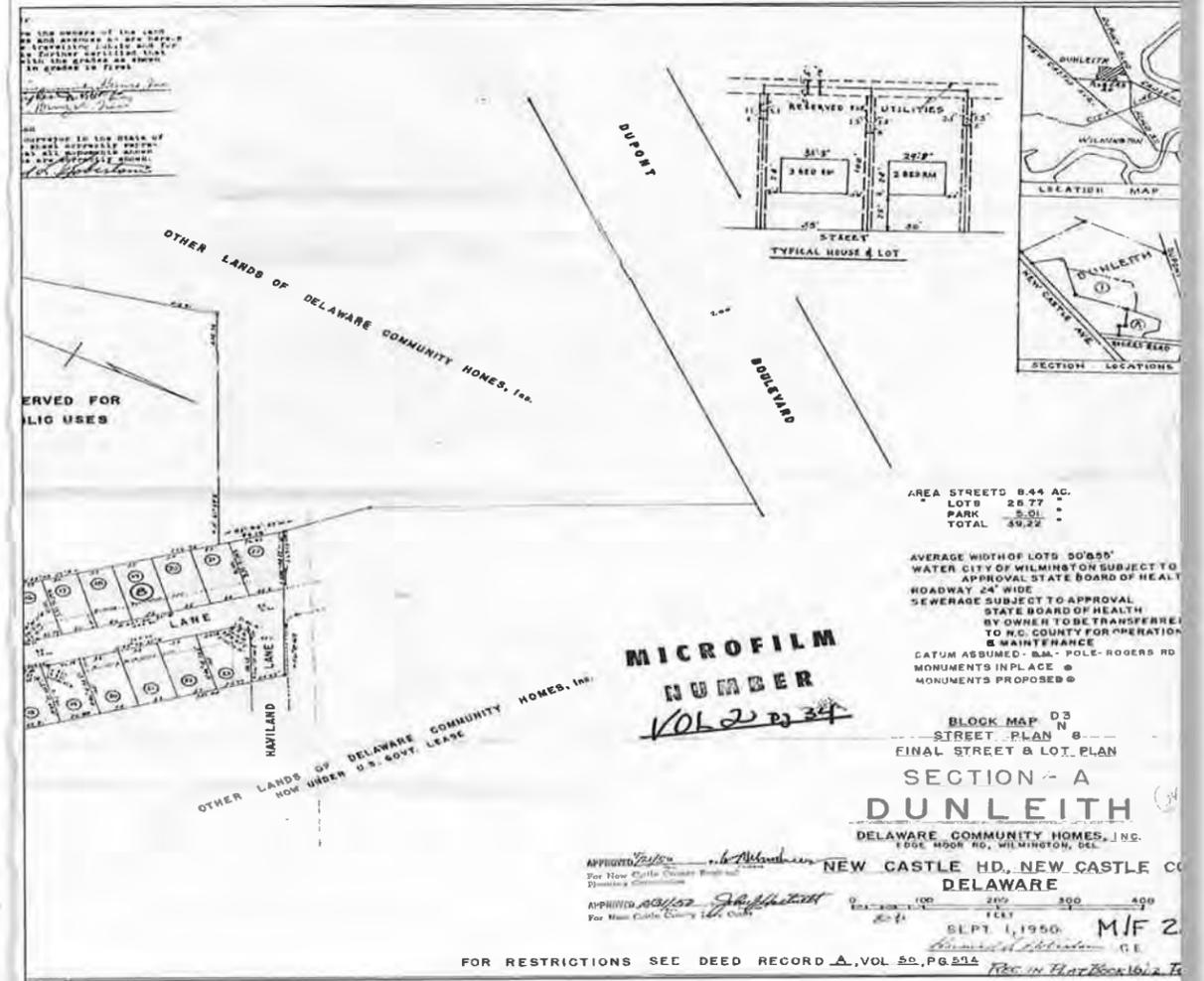
# EARLY ESTABLISHMENTS



Lyndon B. Johnson, president of the United States from 1963 to 1969, is seated at right. In 1968, President Johnson appointed Mr. Leon N. Weiner (far left) to the Kaiser Commission on Urban Housing, which led to the landmark Housing Act of 1968. The goal for every American to have suitable housing was set forth in the Housing Act of 1949.



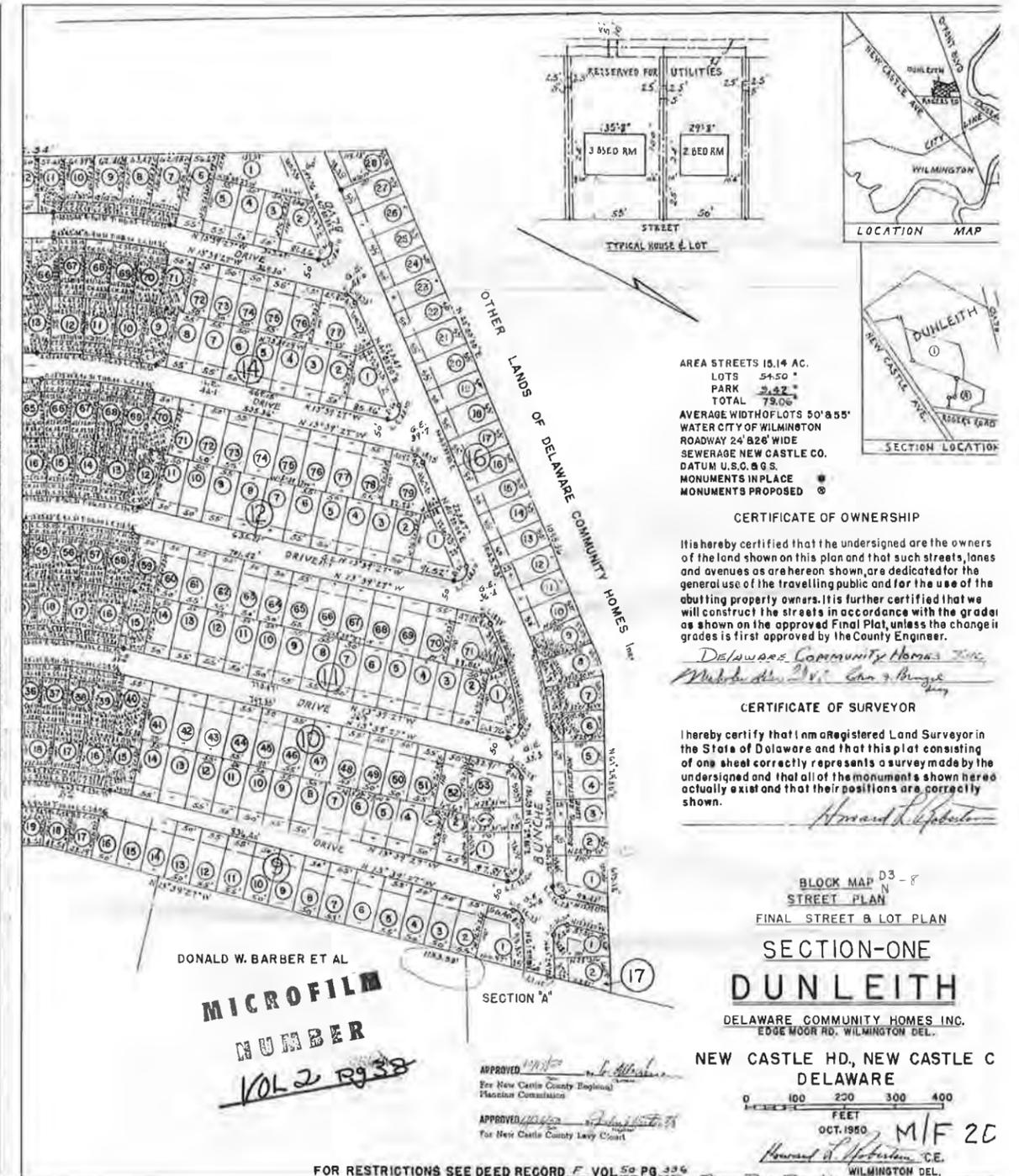
These street and lot plans for Dunleith Estates start with Rogers Road. The streets were named after famous people. William P. Rogers helped draft the 1957 civil-rights law. He was noted for



his prosecution cases involving violations of African Americans' civil rights.



The street and lot plans for Dunleith Estates shown here start with Carver Drive. George



Washington Carver was an African American scientist and educator.