

**1. Project title**

A Celebration of Community: New London Road and School Hill

**2. Projected project date(s)**

21-Sep

**3. Library name**

University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press (UD Library)

**4. Provide a brief description of proposed project**

This free half-day virtual workshop centers on the historic African-American School Hill Community in Newark and consists of four presentations from prominent members of Newark's African-American community, Delaware history experts, and digital preservation professionals. The learning outcomes of each presentation all focus on helping attendees research the Black communities in Delaware using digital and physical resources and to preserve their historical documents and stories.

The University of Delaware's digital collection on UDSpace (MSS 0784 Friends of School Hill Oral Histories and Images, May 2017) provides a description of this school and surrounding community:

Initially built in 1922 with funding from P. S. du Pont and the Delaware School Auxiliary Association, the New London Avenue School served African American children in grades 1-8 until integration took place in 1958. The school and surrounding property, also known as School Hill, was an important meeting place for neighborhood residents for social and recreational gatherings as well. In 1961, the City of Newark purchased the building and grounds and it ultimately became the George Wilson Center. (<https://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/21630>)

The School Hill Community has been shaped by the City of Newark and the University of Delaware, as both have expanded their footprints and populations. As the City and University grew, the physical reminders of much of the community have slowly disappeared. However, the New London School is maintained and is still used for events, classes, voting, and other purposes by everyone in the surrounding communities. In fact, many people use the facility for its recreational appeal with no knowledge of its rich history. The proposed project will once again highlight this community and bring together the groups who have shaped its history.

**5. What do you hope to achieve with this project? Is this a new initiative or an existing project?**

"This online program will build on existing relationships with collaborators that were cultivated during a collaborative event, "Preserving the Past: Gathering History & Mementos of the New London Road / School Hill Community", held on May 20, 2017. This event brought together the Friends of School Hill, NAACP of Delaware, the City of Newark, and the University of Delaware for a day of sharing stories, food, scanning historic photographs, and collecting oral histories. Digital photographs and oral histories were then compiled into a digital collection now held in a freely-accessible University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press UDSpace collection (institutional repository):

<https://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/21630>

Goals for the proposed program include:

-- Collaborating with existing and new partners

The key to any successful project is collaboration with diverse partners. Following up on those collaborations builds trust and dependability and provides an opportunity to communicate resources, such as the services the UD Library has to offer.

-- Providing opportunities for education and skills development for the community

During a follow up meeting with the NAACP Newark Chapter in 2017, attendees expressed a desire to continue having events like the one in May 2017 and to expand the digital collection.

Roadblocks include a lack of funding and a lack of knowledge to preserve personal history.

-- Increasing promotion of the UD Library's existing digital collections and services

The UD Library currently has two digital collections highlighting this community. In addition to the collection linked above, there is also a collection of 22 oral histories in the MSS 0642 New London / Cleveland Avenue Oral Histories and Research Materials collection:

<https://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/9929>. Although these collections have been freely available for approximately 8 years, promotion to people who would be most interested in using them in research will increase usage and help us gauge interest in similar future collections.

-- Creating a freely-accessible online exhibit

Currently two physical exhibits exist that highlight the School Hill Community, one at the Newark Historical Society and one at the George Wilson Center entrance. This online exhibit will live on the Newark Historical Society's website, and a partnership with the UD Library's Digital Scholarship and Publishing Department will help make it interactive and appealing to younger researchers and community members.

#### **6. How will you publicize the event / exhibition?**

The program must be available virtually due to COVID-19 concerns, so promotion will primarily be done electronically through newsletters, listservs, and emails. If print materials are needed to reach older community members, partners will provide that printing for their constituents.

Partners that have committed to promotion or who will be approached about promotion include: University of Delaware Library (via Library newsletter)

-- Friends of School Hill

-- Newark, Delaware NAACP Chapter

-- Churches in School Hill Community

-- Paul Baumbach, State Representative

-- Delaware Historical Society

-- Newark Historical Society

-- National History Day in Delaware

-- Delaware Public Libraries

#### **7. How does this promote community engagement?**

The University of Delaware sits at the heart of Newark, and the surrounding communities are constantly shaped by -- but often left out of -- the decision making of the University. Partnering with community groups, especially those that represent underrepresented minorities, helps bridge gaps that exist in communication and understanding. The proposed program focuses on the celebration of history and preservation of the New London Road / School Hill community located just north of the University of Delaware's Newark campus. It will build upon past collaborative community events and include many of the same partners. Some coverage of the previous events includes:

-- [https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/former-residents-students-reminisce-about-school-hill/article\\_46e30e30-4f7a-544d-8651-904d50cf37f8.html](https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/former-residents-students-reminisce-about-school-hill/article_46e30e30-4f7a-544d-8651-904d50cf37f8.html)

-- [http://delawareway.blogspot.com/2019/08/historic-school-hill-community\\_10.html](http://delawareway.blogspot.com/2019/08/historic-school-hill-community_10.html)

The program will provide attendees with a better understanding of the Community's history and the skills to perform online and in-person research and preservation on their own. Instead of depending on the University or historical societies, attendees can take pride in participating in the process of preserving the history of their community. In order to make the online format interactive, questions will be collected before, during, and after the event to engage the attendees and help create a program that tailors to their needs.

**8. What specific activities will be planned? Will community partners be utilized?**

Delivery of program: The program will be held virtually via Zoom. If all presenters agree, the program will be recorded so that it can be made available to people who cannot attend.

In Spring 2021, Molly Olney-Zide will work with board members of the Newark Historical Society, the UD Library's Digital Scholarship and Publishing Department, and members of the community to create an online exhibit that highlights the School Hill Community. Although a physical exhibit exists at both NHS and at the entrance to the George Wilson Center (formerly the New London School), these exhibits are both aging and only accessible during the facilities operating hours. Creating an interactive online exhibit will improve accessibility and appeal to younger audiences. This online exhibit will be featured on promotional emails and during the proposed program.

The format of the program will be in the form of presentations with specific learning outcomes:

-- Introduction to Program - Molly Olney-Zide (UD Library) - Program facilitator, time keeper, program recorder, group norms

-- History of the Community - Freeman Williams (NAACP Newark president, Friends of School Hill); Learning Outcome: Attendees will gain background knowledge of the New London Road / School Hill Community and how it relates to the greater Newark area.

-- African American History in Delaware - Sylvester Woolford (independent Delaware researcher); Learning Outcome: Attendees will learn strategies to perform online research, including using Chronicling America.

-- Preservation of Personal History - Jesse Erickson (UD Library, Special Collections), Curtis Small (UD Library, Special Collections); Learning Outcome: Attendees will learn strategies on how to collect and preserve their own family history.

-- Mitchell Center for African American Heritage and the School Hill Community in the Archives - Dr. Stephanie Lampkin (Director, Mitchell Center for African American Heritage, Delaware Historical Society); Learning Outcomes: Attendees will be introduced to the Ellwood Roy Papers, a physical collection at the Delaware Historical Society (<https://dehistory.cuadra.com/starweb30/l.skca-catalog/servlet.starweb30>). They will learn strategies on how to perform in-person research at Delaware Historical Society and learn the history of and how to use resources at the Mitchell Center.

Community partners include:

-- Friends of School Hill

-- Newark, Delaware NAACP Chapter

- Delaware Historical Society
- Newark Historical Society
- Area churches

**9. Who is your target audience?**

The program will be promoted widely and will be open to all. Targeted audiences include members of the School Hill Community (current and past) and their descendents via the Friends of School Hill, area churches, the Newark NAACP chapter, and local researchers and historians. The presentations will be aimed to be accessible to K-12 audiences in addition to adults.

**10. How does the proposed program align with DLA's mission?**

DLA mission: <https://dla.lib.de.us/about-us/about-the-dla/>

The proposed program focuses primarily on the advocacy / value of profession and educational aspects of the DLA mission. The presentations are intended to increase awareness of libraries and historical societies and bring knowledge and resources directly to the public. Each of the four presentations offers a different, complementary approach to education, and the online format supports "affordable and accessible" education.

Additionally, this proposed program will meet 'Partnership and Collaboration' goals stated in the UD Library's strategic plan (<https://library.udel.edu/strategicdirections/partnership-collaboration/>):

- Communicate the value of the Library's expertise, resources, programs and services to current and potential partners,
- Develop relationships on and off campus to preserve and protect intellectual and cultural heritage, and
- Support the University's community engagement and research efforts to improve education and the quality of life in Delaware.

This freely-accessible program that focuses on highlighting an important community in Newark, Delaware and empowering attendees easily meets the overarching community engagement goals of both institutions.

**11. How will you evaluate the impact of this project?**

An indicator of impact for the proposed program is the number of attendees. The goal would be to have an attendance higher than the 2017 in-person event (~40 people). The online format does not require travel and gives attendees an opportunity to participate in the way they feel most comfortable. Attendees will be able to view only the presentations they are interested in. The program will be kept to a strict timeline so that participants can join when each segment begins. Attendees will be counted during each presentation.

Impact will also be assessed through a post-event survey. During promotion of the program, RSVP will be strongly encouraged but not required. The RSVP process will collect email addresses, and respondents will receive reminder emails and an emailed post-event survey. This feedback will be shared with presenters and community partners and can shape plans for future collaborative events.

Because one goal of the program is to increase collaborations and partnerships, a measure of success will be documenting the number of groups with which we renew partnerships and new

partnerships created. We will document how we interact with these groups and make recommendations for how to continue these partnerships in the future.

**12. Where will grant funds be expended? Check all that apply.**

Scholars, honorarium

**12a. If Other was selected above, please provide detail.**

n/a

**13. Total amount requested. Be specific and list amount requested by category.**

Scholars, honoraria - \$600 (Williams [REDACTED]; Woolford [REDACTED]; Erickson/Small [UD colleagues, not eligible for honoraria]; Lampkin, [REDACTED])

**14. Do you anticipate any sponsor cost-share in kind? If yes, how much?**

None at this time

**15. Do you anticipate any gifts from outside organizations / partners? If yes, how much?**

Not at this time

**16. Applicant contact information**

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Library, Museums and Press

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[REDACTED]

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