

NELSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Information from "YESTERDAY'S SCHOOLS by Lucy Walsh Phinney

Dumfries School District
ca.1900

The Nelson School appears on the 1901 Brown map of the county, but it is not mentioned anywhere in any school records. Its appearance on that early map is the only place its name is found. Located within the present boundaries of Prince William Forest Park along the old Ridge Road, it was only about a mile west of the Thornton School which also is shown on the 1901 map. It is unlikely that two schools would have existed so close to each other at the same time serving the same population. Since the Thornton School was for white children, does that mean that the Nelson School served the black children of the area? Did it cease to exist soon after the turn of the century? Did the Thornton School, which opened sometime in the 1890s replace the Nelson School which might have closed during the four years it took to get the map published? Did the white children of the community then transfer to the Thornton School after Nelson closed? The answers are lost in history.