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## Haymarket Historic District Proposed

### Black Community Once Thrived There

By Amy Joyce  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Sunday, October 10, 1999; Page V03

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A Williamsburg-style historical attraction focusing on the area's black history is in the pre-planning stages for the area south of Haymarket and east of Route 15--near the area that Disney once considered for an American History theme park.

Gainesville District Supervisor Edgar S. Wilbourn III (R) proposed the idea last month for a historic community.

"That area was a very thriving free black community pre- and post-Civil War," Wilbourn said. "Some of the families in that area date back to the 1700s."

Wilbourn is in the process of establishing a committee to strictly focus on the black history of the area. He's exploring an annexation of some of the property to the town of Haymarket into a historical overlay. It will be part of Prince William County's new sector plan for Gainesville and Haymarket.

"We want to annex this land back into the town of Haymarket," Wilbourn said. "We want to create a tourist destination." Such an area might include replicas of working blacksmiths' shops, dry goods stores and other reproductions of buildings that would have been in the area.

Wilbourn met with Haymarket officials about two months ago to propose the idea. It was voted on unanimously by the Town Council, he said.

Betty Duley, chairwoman of the Prince William County historical commission, said a meeting will convene on Wednesday to discuss potential plans for the project.

"We want to do whatever we can, whatever it might be to honor the people" who lived in the Haymarket area, she said.

The committee will have to get the signed approval of landowners in the area to create a historic district before any planning can begin.

With so much growth happening on the west side of the county, forming a historic district "might be a great way to set aside some of



those open spaces and keep it a rural area," she added.

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A Washington-style historical marathon focusing on the area's black history is in the planning stages for the area south of Haymarket and east of Route 17—near the area that history buffs consider for an American history theme park.

Gainesville District Supervisor Edgar S. Wilborn III (R) proposed the idea last month for a historic community.

"That area was a very thriving free black community pre- and post-Civil War," Wilborn said. "Some of the families in that area date back to the 1700s."

Wilborn is in the process of establishing a committee to study the area's black history. He is also exploring an acquisition of some of the property to the town of Haymarket into a historical park. It will be part of Prince William County's new sector plan for Gainesville and Haymarket.

"We want to chunk this land back into the town of Haymarket," Wilborn said. "We want to create a formal designation." Such an area might include replicas of working blacksmiths, stores, dry goods stores and other reproductions of buildings that would have been in the area.

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