

ALMA MANUFACTURING COMPANY  
B-1059  
BALTIMORE CITY, MD.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The brick factory building of the Alma Manufacturing Company is an excellent example of late nineteenth century industrial architecture. In addition, its location alongside the B & O Railroad tracks in Southwest Baltimore illustrates the importance of the railroad for transportation during this period. The Alma Manufacturing Company, established in 1887 to produce metal clothing trimmings, were the first in the country to produce steel buttons.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. B-1059

Magi No. 0410595614

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Alma Manufacturing Company

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 611/661 South Monroe Street  not for publicationcity, town Baltimore  vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mahendra H. Shah

street &amp; number 12195 Rilland Court telephone no.: 988-9465

city, town Ellicott City state and zip code Maryland

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber WA 3993

street &amp; number Fayette &amp; Calvert Streets folio 469

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Alma Button complex is one of the most elegant of the late 19th century mill buildings. It illustrates the trend toward larger yet lower manufacturing plants that followed the introduction of electric light and power.

The principal mass is actually two parallel structures connected by a slightly later addition. Each of these two-story brick structures is four bays wide by twenty long. Each gable end is divided by unusual corbelling and pilasters into geometric sections. The south wing appears to be the older of the two. It has a stone masonry foundation (visible at the rear) and its timber posts have a simple timber cap to support the beam. The north wing has cast iron post caps, typical by the 1890s. Both structures have a partial story under the roof. The south wing also has a southern addition to the basement level. This 20th century one-story structure can be seen from the south but is under grade at Monroe Street.

To the rear of the principal masses is a long, low, one-story building which probably housed the machine shop and power house since it is higher. The east facade is irregularly shaped, three bays wide with a circular window in the pediment. A ventilating monitor is present on the gable ridge. Since the structure is on a slope, the ceiling height decreases to the west. A second structure lies to the west at right angles to the power plant. Although the two are now connected by an addition they were both free standing before 1915. This is also a high one story building and has a monitor that runs the length of the ridge, typical of structures that housed either a furnace or power function. South of the power house group is a triangular one-story building, built before 1914, that was inaccessible. Another large structure of about the same age lies north of the two main wings. This was probably a shipping or garage facility since it has a large vehicle door facing Monroe Street. A small two-story office building, three bays wide, occupies a site across a yard south of the main wings.

This complex is an extremely large manufacturing facility for its day. Located on the principal rail line out of the City its markets were national in scope even though Baltimore had a large garment industry of its own.

# 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** \_\_\_\_\_ **Builder/Architect** \_\_\_\_\_

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The brick factory building of the Alma Manufacturing Company is an excellent example of late nineteenth century industrial architecture. In addition, its location alongside the B & O Railroad tracks in Southwest Baltimore illustrates the importance of the railroad for transportation during this period. The Alma Manufacturing Company, established in 1887 to produce metal clothing trimmings, were the first in the country to produce steel buttons .

The Alma Manufacturing Company was established in 1887 by German immigrant Herman Kerngood. The brick factory building was located on Monroe Street in Southwest Baltimore, alongside the B & O Railroad tracks. The company manufactured a variety of metal, particularly steel, clothing trimmings, including buttons, buckles, clasps and fasteners. Their products were used on hats, shoes and umbrellas, as well as on clothing. Alma was the first company in the country to produce steel buttons, which previously had to be imported from Germany. Among their other products were the "Superior Pantaloons Button" and the "Perfect Trousers' Hook". In all, they made about 35,000 different items, producing about 29 million pieces a month on highly specialized automatic machines.

Herman Kerngood was succeeded by his sons Allan and Martin in 1932. In 1946, the company was sold to the North and Judd Manufacturing Company of New Britain Connecticut.

In its heyday, the Alma Button Company was one of Baltimore's largest employers. In the 1930s the firm maintained sales offices in every large city in the U.S. and in a number of foreign countries. Since its closing in 1940, it has served as a mini-industrial park, housing a number of firms over the years including Standard Tailors Company, Acme Packing Company, George Weston Bakers, Peyton Bakers Supply Company, Columbia Container Corporation and American Plastics Industries. Current residents include Naron Candy Company.



1. SITE I.D. NO

B-1059

## HAER INVENTORY

Historic American Engineering Record  
Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240

2. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

manufacture

3. PRIORITY

DANGER OF DEMOLITION?  
(SPECIFY THREAT) YES  NO  UNKNOWN

5. DATE

1888

6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT

OWNER

ADMIN

7. OWNER/ADMIN

Mahendra H. Shah

8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

Alma Manufacturing Co

9. OWNER'S ADDRESS

12195 Rilland Ct

10. STATE COUNTY

M D

COUNTY NAME

CITY/VICINITY

Baltimore

CONG. DIST.

STATE COUNTY

M D

COUNTY NAME

Howard

CITY/VICINITY

Ellicott City

CONG. DIST.

11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET &amp; NO)

611/661 S. Monroe Street

12. EXISTING SURVEYS

 NR NHL HABS HAER-I HAER NPS CLB CONF STATE COUNTY LOCAL OTHER

13. SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW)

 INTERIOR INTACT EXTERIOR INTACT ENVIRONS INTACT

14. UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN

18 3579304349020

SCALE

 1:24  1:62.5 OTHER

QUAD NAME

Balto. West

UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN

SCALE

 1:24  1:62.5 OTHER

QUAD NAME

15. CONDITION 70  EXCELLENT 71  GOOD 72  FAIR 73  DETERIORATED 74  RUINS 75  UNEXPOSED 76  ALTERED 82  DESTROYED 85  DEMOLISHED

16. INVENTORIED BY

Leslie Barr

AFFILIATION

Balto. Museum of Industry

DATE

9/83

17. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC.

See attached

(CONT OVER)

18. ORIGINAL USE

manufacture

PRESENT USE

ADAPTIVE USE

19. REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER

Englehardt Baltimore Md The Book of its Board of Trade (1884)

Power Pictorial #23 Sept 32 p 21-23

(CONT OVER)

20. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE?

 YES  NO

21. NPS REGION

22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

 YES, LIMITED YES, UNLIMITED NO UNKNOWN

23. EDITOR

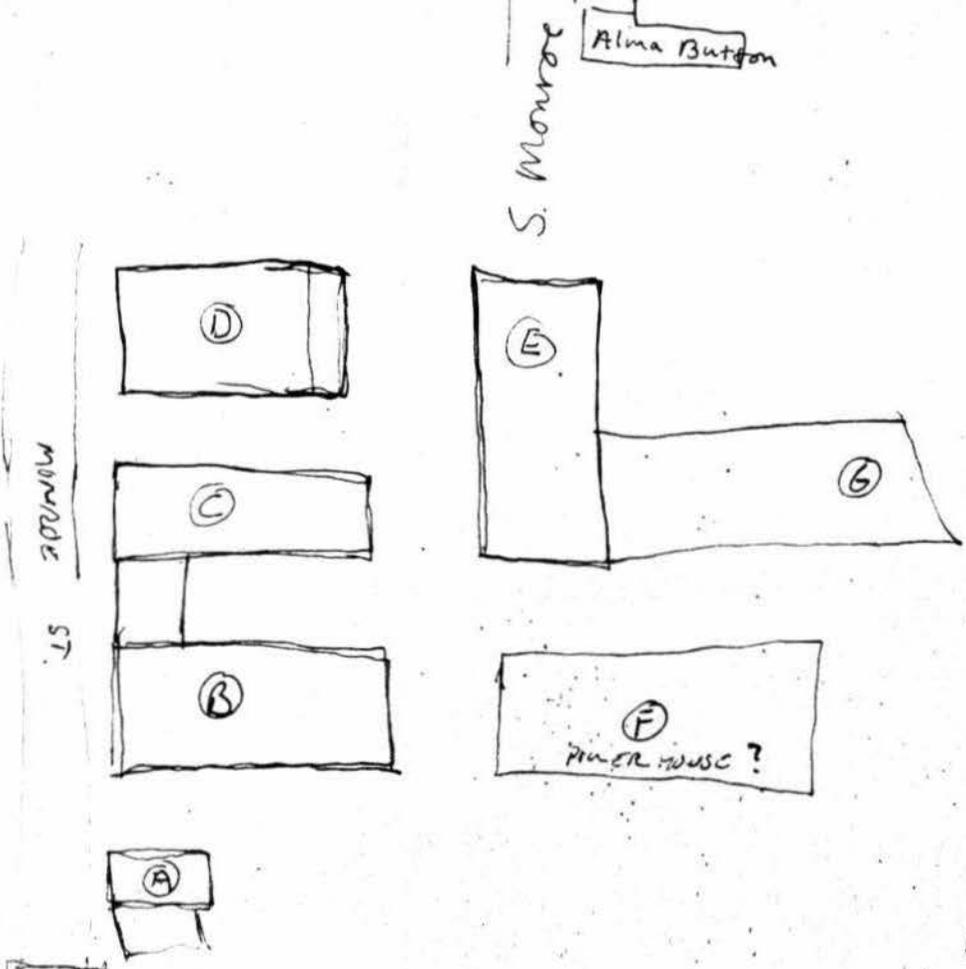
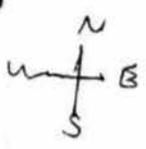
INDEXER

24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT?

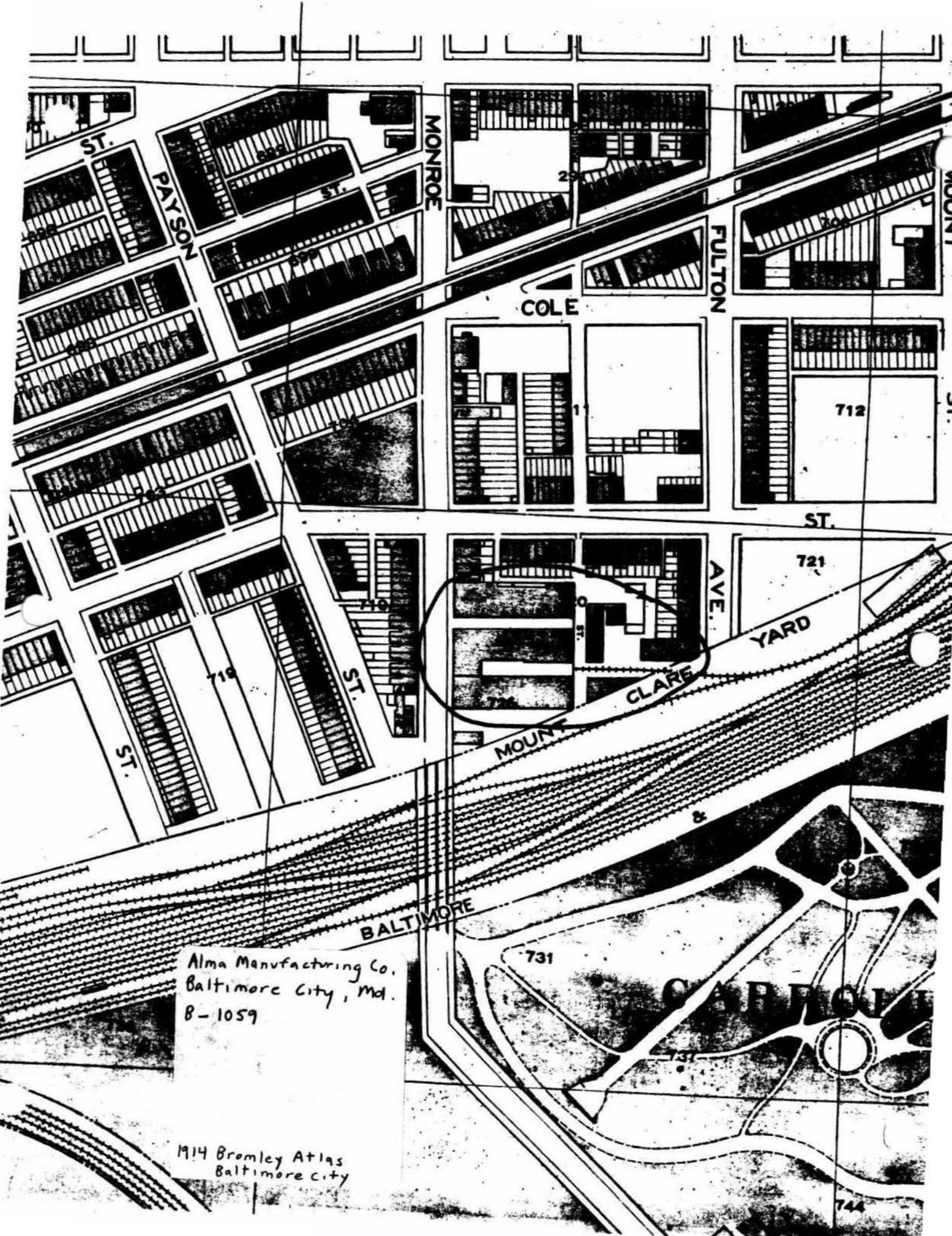
 YES NO

NAME

DISTRICT I.D. NO



Alma Manufacturing Co  
 Baltimore City, Md.  
 B-1059



Alma Manufacturing Co.  
Baltimore City, Md.  
B-1059

1914 Bromley Atlas  
Baltimore City

NNS FALLS PARK



17°30"

4349

4348

Alma Manufacturing Co  
 8-1059  
 Baltimore City Md  
 USGS 7.5 Balto West  
 18° 57' 30" 43 49 020

Radio Towers





Alma Manufacturing Company B-1059  
Baltimore City, Md.  
Peter Liebhold 10/53

looking NE at buildings B+C



Alma Manufacturing Company B-1059  
Baltimore City, Md.  
Peter Liebnoid 10183

looking NE at building B