

1800 Johnson Street  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
B-1070  
private, 1905

Statement of Significance

The large four-story brick industrial building at 1800 Johnson Street has been the site of a successive series of "needle trade" firms. Built by the W & J Knox Net and Twine Company in 1905, this fine structure was later the home of Baltimore's last major umbrella manufacturer. It serves as a reminder of Baltimore's once great textile industry as well as its golden era of garment manufacture, when the city produced more umbrellas than anywhere else in the world.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

W.J. Knox Net & Twine Company

AND/OR COMMON

1800 Johnson Street Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1800 Johnson Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input 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 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 type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Jacobus Ten Broek Memorial Fund

Telephone #: 659-9316

STREET & NUMBER

1800 Johnson Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

Maryland 21230

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore City Courthouse

Liber #: RHB 3660

Folio #: 381

STREET & NUMBER

Fayette and Calvert Streets

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

Maryland

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

none

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

B-1070

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

This massive complex was built in 1905 as the W.J. Knox Net & Twine Company and reflects the influence of New England mill architecture. This four-story brick and timber L-shaped structure is built around a central court containing a power house, maintenance and shipping facilities. It is of slow burning timber construction on cast-iron columns. This formula was developed in New England and later in the textile towns of the South as the industry migrated. The large mass of the main building made it necessary to reinforce the east facade with three buttresses at a later date. The building is very wide and its usefulness for textile manufacturing was only possible because of the availability of artificial light by 1905. Earlier textile mills were relatively narrow because of this requirement and had a maximum number of windows. Windows were originally double-hung sash placed in pairs with a segmental arched lintel. These have been replaced with a smaller modern version.

Originally the south end on the first floor housed the picker house where the manufacturing process began. Bales of cotton were brought from the storage warehouses along Byrd Street to the picker house where they were opened and sent to the carding machines. Spinning of yarn and weaving the nets took place on the upper floors. Interior construction is of heavy timber beams and heavy layered flooring supported by three rows of cast-iron columns.

The structure whose axis parallels Barney Street is of similar construction except for the top floor where a raised monitor with sidelights is supported on wooden posts in the center of the space. Finished nets were taken from this building via a second floor bridge to the tar shed in the center of the complex. Here they were tarred and dried before storage or shipping. Adjacent to the tar shed was a power house which housed air compressors, generators and air cleaning equipment for the plant.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> _1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> _ART	<input type="checkbox"/> _ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> _MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> _1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> _POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The large four-story brick industrial building at 1800 Johnson Street has been the site of a successive series of "needle trade" firms. Built by the W. & J. Knox Net and Twine Company in 1905, this fine structure was later the home of Baltimore's last major umbrella manufacturer. It serves as a reminder of Baltimore's once great textile industry as well as its golden era of garment manufacture, when the city produced more umbrellas than anywhere else in the world.

The large 1905 industrial building located at 1800 Johnson Street originally housed the manufacturing operations of the W. & J. Knox Net & Twine Company. Little information on this firm's history is available, although they appear to have had additional facilities (probably business offices or retail) on Calvert and Lombard Street in the loft district. The enterprise was typical of the city's many textile manufacturing firms, which specialized in heavy canvas products such as cotton duck broadcloth, seine and twine. In 1933, Knox sold the Johnson Street building to another textile firm, the Linen Thread Company, which had been in business in the loft district at 201 E. Lombard since 1910.

In the 1950 the building became the new home of one of Baltimore's major umbrella manufacturers, the Polan-Katz Company. Founded in 1906 by umbrella salesman Charles Katz, Jesse Polan and William Fox, this firm was for seventy-five years a leading innovative force in the umbrella industry, which for many years was centered in Baltimore. As their operations grew, the Polan-Katz Company moved from its original S. Hanover Street site to successively larger facilities on Baltimore Street & Market Place, Fayette & Hanover, Hopkins & Lombard, and finally to 1800 Johnson Street. Here, the cutting, sewing and finishing operations of the firm were located in the huge open loft spaces of

(con't.)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Polk's Baltimore City Directories  
Vertical file, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Central Library  
Interview & information supplied by Lawrence Katz, former  
President of Polan-Katz Company  
Manekin & Company real estate brochure

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

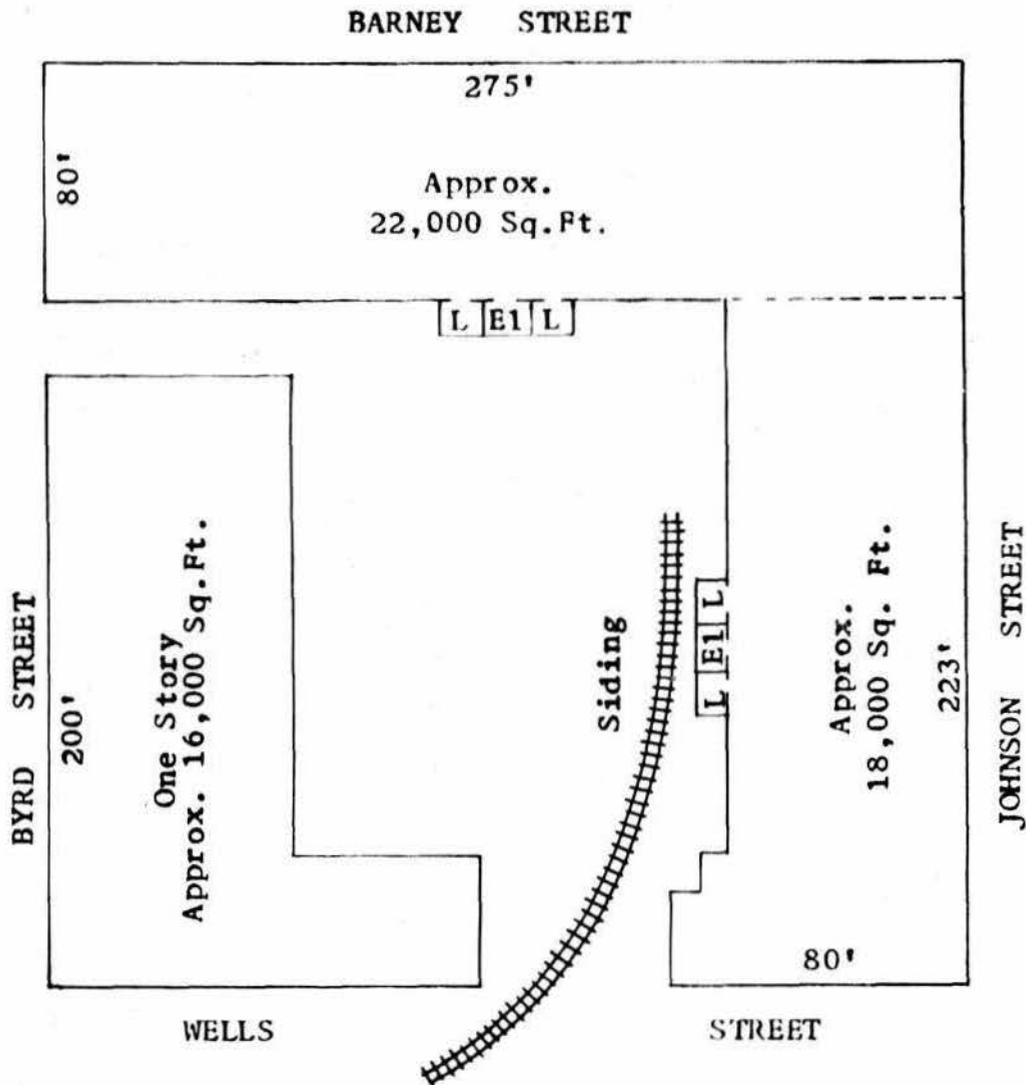
NAME / TITLE	
Ann Steele, Dennis Zembala, Leslie Barr	
ORGANIZATION	DATE
Baltimore Museum of Industry	May, 1983
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
1415 Key Highway	(301) 727-4808
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
Baltimore	Maryland 21230

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

1800 JOHNSON ST.  
 - BUILDING -  
 (Just 1 Block East of 1800 Light St.)  
 5 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN  
 BALTIMORE



**M ANEKIN & CO.**  
 Commercial and Industrial Realtors

Garrett Bldg. • SARATOGA 7-8333

1800 Johnson Street  
 Baltimore City Md  
 B-1070

194

**We have CORNERED . . .**

194



1800 Johnson Street (Former Linen Thread Co. Plant)  
5 Minutes from Downtown

**THE FINEST SPACE IN BALTIMORE**  
*for*

- MANUFACTURERS
- DISTRIBUTORS
- PRINTERS
- WHOLESALERS . . . etc.

Please turn the page ►

**M ANEKIN & CO.**  
Commercial and Industrial Realtors

Garrett Bldg. • SARatoga 7-8333

1800 Johnson St. B-1070  
Baltimore City, MD.

Real Estate Brochure, c.1949 (in Balto. Museum of Industry collections)



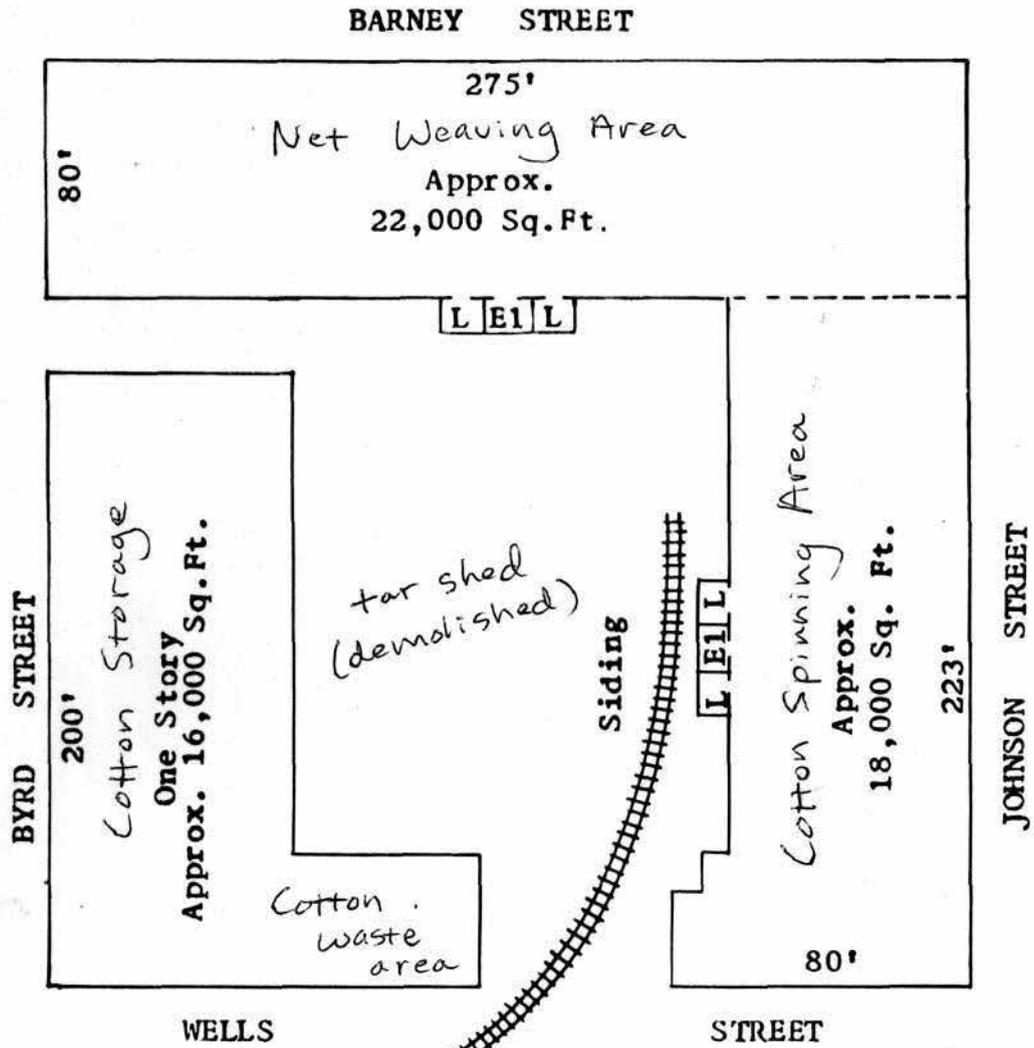
TYPICAL DAYLIGHT FLOOR  
4 Story Bldg.

**DON'T WAIT - THIS SPACE WILL RENT QUICKLY -**

Call us at SARatoga 7-8333, or mail the enclosed postpaid card, to arrange for an inspection and for additional information.

Turn page for directions -----

1800 JOHNSON ST.  
- BUILDING -  
(Just 1 Block East of 1800 Light St.)  
5 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN  
BALTIMORE



1800 Johnson Street  
# B-1070

Site plan,  
labeled for  
Knox Net + Twine Co.  
era (c. 1905-1933)

**M ANEKIN & CO.**  
Commercial and Industrial Realtors

Garrett Bldg. • Saratoga 7-8333

2. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION: *manufacture*

3. PRIORITY: [ ]

4. DANGER OF DEMOLITION? (SPECIFY THREAT)  YES  NO  UNKNOWN

5. DATE: *1905*

6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT: OWNER [ ] ADMIN [ ]

7. OWNER ADMIN: *Jacobus Ten Broek Memorial Fund*

8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE: *1800 Johnson Street*

9. OWNER'S ADDRESS: [ ]

10. STATE COUNTY: *MD* COUNTY NAME: [ ] CITY/VICINITY: *Baltimore* CONG DIST: [ ]

STATE COUNTY: [ ] COUNTY NAME: [ ] CITY/VICINITY: [ ] CONG DIST: [ ]

11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO): *1800 Johnson street*

12. EXISTING SURVEYS:  NPL  NHL  HABS  HAER-  HAER  NPS  CL6  
 CONF  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL  OTHER

13. SPECIAL FEATURES DESCRIBE BELOW:  
 INTERIOR INTACT  EXTERIOR INTACT  ENVIRONS INTACT

14. UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE:  1:24  1:625 QUAD NAME: *Balto East*

UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE:  1:24  1:625 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, Ann Steele, Dennis Zumbala* AFFILIATION: *Balto. Museum of Industry* DATE: *5/83*

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

*see attached*

18. ORIGINAL USE: *manufacture* PRESENT USE: *commercial/manufacture* ADAPTIVE USE: [ ]

19. REFERENCES - HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER: *vertical file Enoch Pmt Library*

20. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE?  YES  NO

21. NPS REGION: [ ]

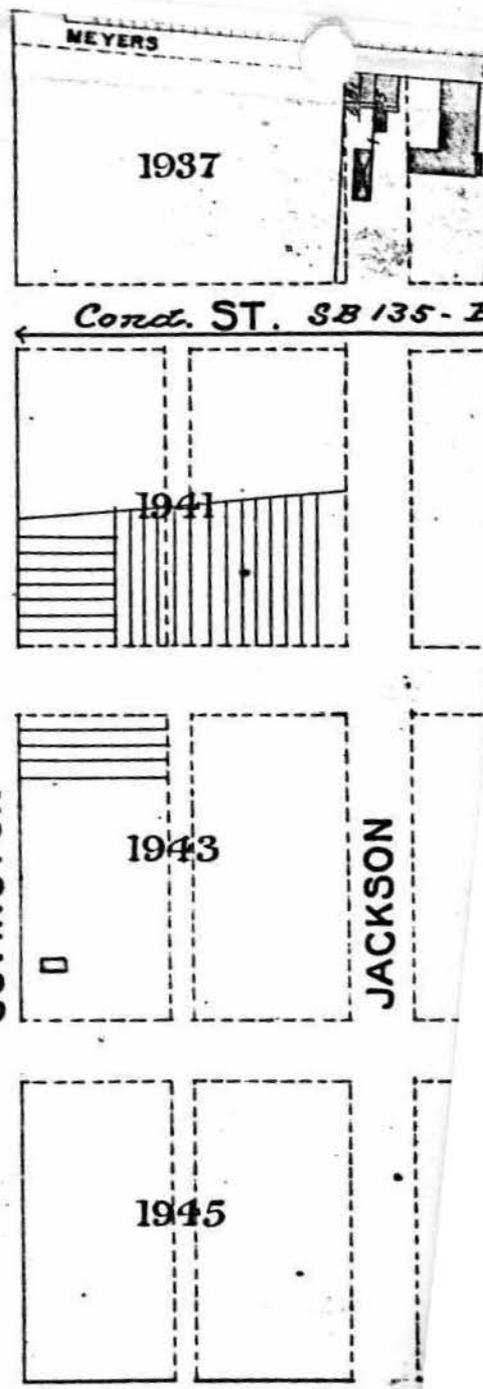
22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY:  YES LIMITED  YES UNLIMITED  NO  UNKNOWN

23. EDITOR INDEXER: [ ]

24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT?  YES  NO NAME: [ ] DISTRICT I.D. NO: [ ]



JOHNSON STREET  
 BUILDING SITE  
 BALTIMORE CITY, MD  
 8-1070  
 1896 BROMLEY ATLAS





JOHNSON STREET BUILDING B-1070  
 BALTIMORE CITY, MD.  
 USGS 7.5" Balto East  
 USGS: 18<sup>7</sup>61070 43 48319

Mapped by the Army Map Service  
 Edited and published by the Geological Survey



1800 Johnson St.

B-1070

Balto. City Md.

Peter Liebhold 7/83

looking SW



1800 Johnson Street

B-1070

Baltimore Md.

Peter Liechold 7/83

looking SE



B-1070

8-

1800 Johnson ST.

Balto. City, Md.

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Looking northwest



B-1070

B-1

1800 Johnson St.

Balto. City Md.

Peter Liebhold 7/53

Gatehouse



B-1070

B-10

1800 Johnson St.

Balt. City MD.

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Tar sheds looking north  
north



1800 Johnson St B107  
Baltimore City MD  
Peter Liebhold 8/83

Looking N.E. from  
Wells and Byrd



B-1070

B-1

1800 Johnson St.

Balt. City MD.

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Cotton waste shed-8.

South Facade