

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic School No. 142

and or common Coleman, Robert W., School (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 2201 Walbrook Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of Seventh Congressional District

state Maryland code 24 county independent city code 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Neighborhood Progress Administration, City of Baltimore

street & number 222 East Saratoga Street

city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of state Maryland 21202

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse

street & number 100 North Calvert Street

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust tax act
Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Coleman, Robert W., School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Robert W. Coleman School is an "H"-shaped Renaissance Revival structure, located in an early twentieth century Baltimore rowhouse neighborhood. The front, Walbrook Avenue, running bond brick facade of the building is twelve bays wide. The central portion of the structure features a slightly projecting, pedimented two bay wide entrance section. It is flanked by three bay wide end building sections which project from the central portion of the building. The central arched entrance to the building is located above a flight of three granite steps. The stone arch with acanthus leaf console keystone is surrounded by blank spandrels and terra cotta engaged fluted Ionic columns. Above the arch and columns is a decorative band course and a small cornice with dentils surmounted by a balustrade which immitates a balcony. Within the arched entrance which is presently protected by an iron grate are metal double doors with a covered transom. The transom is surmounted by a decorative terra cotta dentilled pediment supported by end brackets with leafy designs.

The basement section which flanks the entrance is defined by a granite base and water table. The basement walls are punctuated by windows protected by iron grates. Above the water table is the rusticated brick first floor level which features boarded over eight over eight windows. A band course which features egg and dart, and wave molding completes the first floor level. The second floor eight over eight windows have stone sills and are capped by splayed stone flat arches with emphasized keystones. A flag pole supported by a console stone projects above the central second floor windows. the third floor eight over eight windows are arched. The full triple header brick arches feature emphasized keystones. The attic level which is defined by the central pediment is decorated by four small openings. A central arched one over one window is flanked by two smaller windows. The windows share a stone sill. The central window has a triple header arch, while the end windows feature splayed brick flat arches. A small narrow rectangular window is located above the arched window. A plain metal pediment, broken at the bottom, caps the central building section.

Two downspouts run along the ends of the central building section. The original cast iron base of the downspouts is inscribed with the lettering, "Dietrich Bros., Balto. Md." The sides of the projecting end sections are punctuated by narrow three pane casement windows with stone sills and splayed stone flat arches with emphasized keystones.

The three bay wide projecting end sections are similar to the central section, however the central bay features wider windows. The central eight over eight windows are flanked by side two over two windows.

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Coleman, Robert W., School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The third floor central windows feature a segmental arch instead of the full arch of the other third floor windows. The front facade is capped by an ornate metal cornice with egg and dart molding and decorative acanthus leaf consoles. A standing seam hipped roof with projecting eaves caps the facade. Two large ventilation shafts project above the roof.

The seven bay wide side elevations of the building are similar to the front. The central side entrances are located above a flight of granite steps. The Smallwood Street elevation features a larger basement level and higher flight of steps due to the slope of the site to the east. The boarded over entrance doors are flanked by engaged fluted square pilasters supporting a small cornice and entablature, which displays a shield and leafy motif. Above the entrance within a recessed arch is a decorative arched window with interlacing mullions on the upper sash. A narrow arched, nine over twelve window provides light to the central side stairwell. The entrance section of the side elevations is flanked by an arrangement of windows similar in style to the front facade, however the third floor arched windows do not have emphasized keystones.

The rear elevation is distinguished from the front by the large metal fire escapes covered with corrugated metal which project from the inner bays of the end building sections. While the end building sections are similar to the front (except for the absence of granite band courses at the basement, and third floor emphasized keystones at the arches), the common bond brick six bay wide central building section is bisected by a central chimney which projects above the roof line. The eight over eight windows have simple flat arches. A light well is located at the basement level. Two hipped dormers are located on the roof above a simple gutter at the central building section. Original fluted downspouts are located at the ends of the central section of the rear elevation.

The perimeter of school grounds is enclosed by a chain link fence. The grounds are paved in asphalt. The inner block side features a small playground area. Photographs of the building from the early 1960s show some trees at the sidewalk in front of the school and a wood fence enclosing the grounds.

The interior of the building originally housed twenty-three classrooms (the inclusion of basement classroom space has increased the number of classrooms to twenty-six). They are laid out along a central hall which bisects the length of the building and ends in stairways. Eight classrooms are located on each floor (one of the classroom spaces

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Coleman, Robert W., School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

on the first floor may have originally functioned as the principal's office). A secondary hall runs along the inner side of the projecting end sections. This hall leads to the rear fire escapes and houses partitioned cloakrooms. A large vestibule space is located at the front entrance of the building. Two first floor classrooms in the center of the building are separated by a series of panelled doors which apparently could be opened to create a large assembly hall.

Much of the wood strip interior flooring is extant. The ceilings of halls, stairways and classrooms are of decorative pressed tin throughout, in a variety of patterns. The walls are plaster with tongue and groove wainscotting in the halls and stairways. The cloakrooms along the secondary halls are made of tongue and groove wood partitions. Most of the doors within the halls are wood panelled with a large upper glass pane. Each is surmounted by a glass transom. Connecting doors between rooms lack the glass pane and transom, and a few flush wood doors have been added near the stairways. The door and window frames are plain. The vestibule area features wood panelled wainscotting, and double doors surrounded by a four pane transom and five pane sidelights. The entrance to the hall is decorated with pilasters and a dentilled cornice. Arched passageways are located within the halls. The classrooms feature blackboards and wood bookcases. Illumination to the building is provided by fluorescent light fixtures hanging from the ceilings. Many of the large iron radiators remain throughout the building.

The general condition of the interior is poor. Many of the tin ceilings are rusted or dilapidated with peeling paint. Trash is strewn along classrooms and halls. Some of the flooring has buckled in a few classrooms. Many of the windows have been broken and the building has been subjected to vandalism. Despite this deterioration most of the original architectural features survive.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1903 **Builder/Architect** Edward Preston, designer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A, C
 Applicable Exceptions: none
 Significance Evaluated: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Robert W. Coleman School, formerly School No. 142, is significant architecturally as an intact representative of turn-of-the-century public school architecture in Baltimore. The building exhibits many characteristic details of the period, including metal ceilings, decorative terracotta classical motifs, and an ornate metal cornice. Historically it is significant that the structure was designed in the office of the municipal Inspector of Buildings, without benefit of a professional architect. This practice, the design of public buildings by the City government, was promoted by Mayor Thomas G. Hayes and Buildings Inspector Edward D. Preston, but vigorously opposed by architects, including the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. After a few short years, the City relented, resulting in the return of such design commissions to private architectural firms. The school is significant for association with Buildings Inspector Preston, a prominent builder. The school served in the development of the surrounding area, providing progressive, elementary level education as well as prompting the growth of the residential community. Vacant since 1980-81, the building remains a visual landmark and is slated to be converted to housing for the elderly, again serving the needs of the Greater Mondawmin neighborhood.

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Coleman, Robert W., School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

From 1816 until 1883, North Avenue was the northern boundary of Baltimore City. When the City expanded in that year to take in 23 square miles of land to the north and west, it created a need to construct more schools to meet the demands of the population growth in outlying areas. The Robert W. Coleman School, originally known as School No. 62, was built in 1903, replacing a structure on Payson Street. School No. 62 occupied land that was formerly part of the estate known as "Causeway", owned by J. Leroy White. The school served the rowhouse community which was spreading to the east and south. When it was built, there were no rowhouses to the west for five blocks, nor any houses between the school and the Mondawmin estate directly to the north. (See attached maps.)

School No. 62 was one of four Baltimore City public school buildings whose construction was authorized by the Mayor and City Council in 1902 and completed by the Building Department in 1903. Elementary Schools Nos. 62, 74, 83, and 84 were described collectively in the School Board's Annual Report of 1903 as "large brick buildings, three stories in height above a good basement; [and] well planned following more or less closely the arrangement of classrooms, corridors and stairways as was provided in School No. 47". Described as "nearly ideal in all the essentials of good arrangement", School No. 47 of 1898 was rated exemplary of "class no. 1, modern" design. Basic features common to each of the five building plans include the location of entrances at front, center and at each end; the placement of stairways at the ends of wide corridors, purported to eliminate the need for fire escapes; well lighted classrooms, sized generally to allow the optimum amount of space per child; and cloakrooms, "drinking water" and lavatories conveniently placed. Although the architectural appearance of Schools Nos. 62 and 74 was described in the report as exceeding that of Schools Nos. 83 and 84, generally, each building displayed the simplicity, symmetry, and pleasing proportions that were said to denote good design. (See attached photo copies.)

John Hughes, Jr., was the contractor for Schools Nos. 62 and 74. Construction costs were \$64,872 and \$69,029 respectively. According to the "Baltimore Sun" of May 3, 1902, the metal ceilings cost \$1,552 and the heating and ventilation systems, provided by Crook, Horner and Company, cost \$5,575 at each school.

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Coleman, Robert W., School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Benjamin B. Owens became Supervisor of School Buildings in 1900; he served until 1910. The report referenced above reflects his values. In his former post as the City's Inspector of Buildings, 1896-1897, his second annual report proudly stated:

"In designing the school buildings and engine-houses erected by this department during the last two years, it has been our aim to secure the desired results by the employment of the most efficient means available. Architects of recognized ability and experience only have been selected to prepare the designs. The planning and arrangement of schools and engine-houses have had the most careful consideration by the departments interested, and, after acceptance by them, the entire design of each building has been submitted to the Art Commission for its criticism, and not until its approval is given are the drawings placed in the builder's hands.

Thus, the designs of the late-nineteenth century buildings that Supervisor Owens cites in 1903 as examples of good school-house architecture would have been developed following the procedure he described during his term as Inspector of Buildings. Indeed, distinguished architects, Wyatt and Nolting, were selected to design the earlier School No. 47. In 1898, Buildings Inspector Everett J. Dowell, Esq., called it "a model in every appointment . . ." rivaling ". . . in every detail similar structures in any of our more advanced sister cities".

In 1902, however, the designs of schools were prepared in the office of then Inspector of Buildings Edward D. Preston, without benefit of architect except, presumably, by emulation. Preston was a respected builder. Educated in Baltimore City public schools, he started to learn the construction business at age 17 under the supervision of William Williams. Between 1874 and 1891, he worked in the firm of William T. Markland and Brother, becoming owner of the business after the deaths of William and Charles Markland. He supervised the construction of various notable buildings, including the Strouse Brothers Building at Lombard and Paca Streets as well as the Marburg Building at Charles and Conway Streets. His term as Buildings Inspector, from 1900 to 1910, coincided with the initiation of the progressive movement in the public school system. Appropriately, as reported in an article of unknown source, one of Preston's two goals was "to make [his office] independent of all politics".

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Baltimore (city), Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Mayor Hayes and Buildings Inspector Preston took office just before the School Board was organized in 1900, inheriting the persistent problem of overcrowded schools and inadequate funds. According to the "Architects and Builders Journal" of November, 1901, Mayor Hayes considered Buildings Inspector Preston "as good an architect as the City needs . . ." declaring that ". . . all plans for public buildings should be prepared at his office". Indeed, the use of municipal employees to design public buildings was a cost savings measure adopted by the City of Baltimore periodically in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The "Baltimore Sun" of July 29, 1903, explained, "This system is an economical plan as the money which would have to be paid to architects would amount to a very considerable sum, and it is deemed wiser to spend the money on the buidings, themselves, rather than on architects."

However, this practice drew vigorous objections from local architects. The Baltimore chapter of the American Institute of Architects directed an official protest to Mayor Hayes that was printed in the "Architects and Builders Journal" of December, 1901. To summarize:

". . . our action hereby is in no way whatever a criticism of the work of our present most excellent building inspector . . . We hold, however, that the incumbent of that position must necessarily be entirely occupied by the legitimate work of his own department, and there should not be submitted to him the designing or supervising of any new city work such as we have referred to."

Preston countered in his annual report of 1901, stating:

"It is to be regretted this course has been adversely criticised by some architects and unwarranted statements made as to the duties of the Inspector of Buildings, but they are evidently unacquainted with the law regulating expenditures of money."

"There are in Baltimore professional architects who will equal any in the country . . . who have become proficient in construction as well as drawing. These gentlemen are indifferent apparently as to who makes building plans, as their professional engagements are

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Section number 8 Page 7 Coleman, Robert W. School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

such as to keep them engaged at all times. But several who have not been able to impress the public as architects, and not able to get above a mere picture, have diverged from the path of such study as might place them where they would like to be, and are proclaiming what are the duties of city officers without even having enough energy to read the whole law."

Preston added that the bureaucracy attendant to awarding building designs to architects would lead to delays and confusion. The municipal design of public school buildings gave way to architects, at least for a few years, by 1908.

School No. 62 remains a good representative of public school architecture as well as the particular skills of Edward D. Preston and his staff. The building is remarkably intact considering its age and former function, retaining many important architectural elements from the turn of the century. These include terracotta entrances, multi-pane wood windows, prominent metal cornice, decorative band courses, rusticated brick work, some of the fluted downspouts, and all of the iron boots which are inscribed with the manufacturer's name, Dietrich Brothers. An awkward element, such as the central pediment that disturbs the strong continuity of the cornice, may betray the lack of a trained architectural designer.

The City Charter of 1899 resulted in fundamental reform of Baltimore's public schools. Under the old system, each school had been controlled by its local committee politics, without coordination between schools or districts. The new law resulted in Baltimore's first Department of Education and a Board of School Commissioners, organized in March, 1900, that served as the central governing authority. In the Mayor's Message of 1902, he declared that his administration had honored its promise to divorce public schools from the political domain, adding that "the standard of public education has been elevated".

In 1903, School No. 62 and its contemporaries were the first schools to open under the new system. These new facilities provided fresh environments for a progressive curriculum. For example, preparatory classes, a publicized innovation of the previous year, had been introduced only at School No. 1 but was

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 8Coleman, Robert W., School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

extended in 1903 to Schools Nos. 62 and 74 to accommodate the demand. These classes enabled brighter pupils to take Latin and a modern language along with their regular courses. While credit for these studies would save time in high school, the objective was to capitalize on a child's facility to retain a language and, therefore, master it at an early age.

Census field books from 1900 and 1910, indicate that many German immigrants lived in the surrounding community when the school was constructed. Despite the distinctive German character of the population, the majority of the residents were born in the United States and employed as skilled workers, such as carpenters, painters, butchers, roofers, and shirtmakers. A few Irish immigrants lived in the area in 1900. By 1910, at least one Italian family and one Jewish family lived nearby. (The census does not indicate religious background, but a Russian immigrant was characterized as "Yiddish".) Clearly, the school was an important center for the community in assimilating immigrant families into American culture.

While Baltimore's public school system was created in 1828, it was not until 1902 that the Board appointed a committee to develop names and numbers for each of the new schools as well as a broader list of names appropriate to all other City public school buildings. The school at Walbrook Avenue and Smallwood Street was designated No. 69 but soon changed to No. 62 in 1903. In October of that year, it was called "Smallwood", a name appropriate to the building's location and, probably, as suggested in a "Morning Sun" article of February, 1903, honoring "the distinguished Marylander of Revolutionary fame". This may refer to General William Smallwood, 1732-1792, a member of the Maryland Assembly in 1761 and a patriot, who was elected brigadier general by the Continental Congress in 1776. He became major general in 1780 and governor of Maryland from 1785-1788. Evidently, the name "Smallwood School" did not become official until sometime between 1910 and 1915 when it first appeared in the "Public School Directory".

As the racial composition of the area's residents shifted from white to black in the mid-twentieth century, the building was underutilized as a so-called "white" school. Thus, in 1951, the remaining white pupils were transferred and School No. 62 became a "colored" elementary school, designated No. 142.

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Coleman, Robert W., School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Custom, associated with racial segregation, dictated the change to a number of 100 or above. At the same time, the Smallwood name was withdrawn. "Colored" status lasted about three years, during which time it is said to have drawn pupils for all over northwest Baltimore. Later, desegregation permitted pupils of both races to attend.

In 1958, by indirect request of family and friends as well as by enthusiastic student vote, the school was named in honor of Robert W. Coleman, 1877-1946, a distinguished black humanitarian who was blind. Born in Washington, D.C., he spent most of his life in Baltimore, living about one and one-half miles from the school that would honor him. In 1913, determination led to his establishment of the "Maryland Association for the Colored Blind" which resolved to create opportunities for the blind. With an expanded perspective, the organization became "The Association for the Handicapped" and, in 1927, it incorporated. With Robert Coleman as manager and motivator, the organization successfully promoted the introduction of sight conservation classes for colored children which began at School No. 127 in 1928 and later led to the Association's SAVE-A-SIGHT campaign which provided eye glasses or eye-glass repairs to the needy, colored public school children of Baltimore. Tireless efforts resulted in the construction, in 1930, of the Francis M. Wood School for the Handicapped, No. 176, where classes were held for colored children who were deaf or mentally retarded as well as those with vision, orthopedic, and mild lung problems. Robert Coleman pioneered a long campaign to open the School Board to Negroes who would represent the needs of colored school children. A civic leader, Robert Coleman served on the Baltimore Youth Commission as a Mayoral appointee, the Civic Action Committee, the Clean City Campaign Committee, and was chairman of the Citizen's Committee on Problems of the Blind. Today, the Robert W. Coleman Association for the Handicapped continues its fund-raising and, in particular, its provision of eyeglasses to needy school children regardless of race. Mrs. Roberta Keets, daughter of Robert W. Coleman, directs the Association's work from her long-time residence, about four blocks from the school.

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Coleman, Robert W., School
Baltimore (city), Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

As of today, as reported by the Department of Education's Physical Plant, the original Schools Nos. 47, 83, and 84 have been demolished and School No. 74 is in the process of construction, being converted to housing. Vacant since 1980-81, when the replacement school of the same name opened a few blocks away, the former Robert W. Coleman School No. 142 is to be rehabilitated to serve as a residential building for the elderly. This new use is indicative of the adaptability of former school structures. Recently, several nineteenth and early twentieth century schools in Baltimore have been converted to uses ranging from housing for low income and elderly people to luxury apartments, community centers, and artists' studios. In the case of the former School No. 142, many of the original features will be incorporated into the rehabilitation. The National Register listing of this structure will provide essential tax incentives, permitting the sensitive adaptive use of this important school building.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Baltimore (city), Maryland

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

"About Edward D. Preston: The Man and His Methods", article at Baltimore City Archives. Source and date unknown.

Andrews, Andrea R., "The Baltimore School Building Program 1879-1900 Study of Urban Reform". Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 70, No. 3, Fall 1975.

Annual Minutes of the Board of School Commissioners, Baltimore: 1901-1903, 1951-1956, 1958.

Annual Report of the Board of School Commissioners, Baltimore, for the fiscal years ending December 31, 1896-1904.

Annual Report of the Inspector of Buildings, Baltimore, for the fiscal years ending 31 December, 1897, 1898, and 1903.

Architects and Builders Journal, November, December, 1901; June, 1902; September, 1903; The Globe Publishing and Printing Co., Inc., Baltimore.

Henley, Joseph L., Senior Architect, Office of Physical Plant, Department of Education, Baltimore, Maryland - Interviews: 24 November, 11 and 12 December, 1986.

Keets, Roberta, daughter of Robert W. Coleman - Interviews: 24, 25 November and 2, 3 December, 1986.

Lymas, Dorothy Coleman, Robert W. Coleman and the Association for the Handicapped, Bay Printing, Inc., Baltimore: 1971.

New Century Encyclopedia of Names, edited by Clarence L. Barnhart, Appleton Century Crofts, Inc., New York: 1954.

Public School Directory, 1910, 1914, 1921, 1950-52, 1958-59.

"Robert W. Coleman School No. 142 named for courageous blind man", The Afro-American, Baltimore: 1958 (date unknown).

School Plant Directory, July, 1952 and as revised May, 1961.

Strayer, George Drayton, Report of the Survey of the Public School System of Baltimore, Maryland, Vol. 1, 1920-21.

The Morning Sun, Baltimore: 3 May, 29 July, and 10 September, 1902; 26 February and 12 March, 1903.

Videotape: Dedication Ceremony of the present Robert W. Coleman School No. 142, 25 May, 1983.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See Continuation Sheet No. 11

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .72 acre

Quadrangle name Baltimore West, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	3	5	7	4	5	0	4	3	5	3	3	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundaries consist of the city lot upon which the school and surrounding playground stand. The lot is No. 35 in Block No. 3204.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Fred Shoken
2. Hattie B. Russell

organization date 1986

street & number 1. 6211 Park Heights Avenue 1. 301-358-1839
2. 2111 Liberty Heights Avenue telephone 2. 301-523-9180

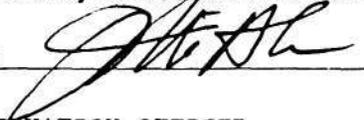
city or town Baltimore state Maryland 1. 21215
2. 21217

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature  4-30-87

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

John Thompson

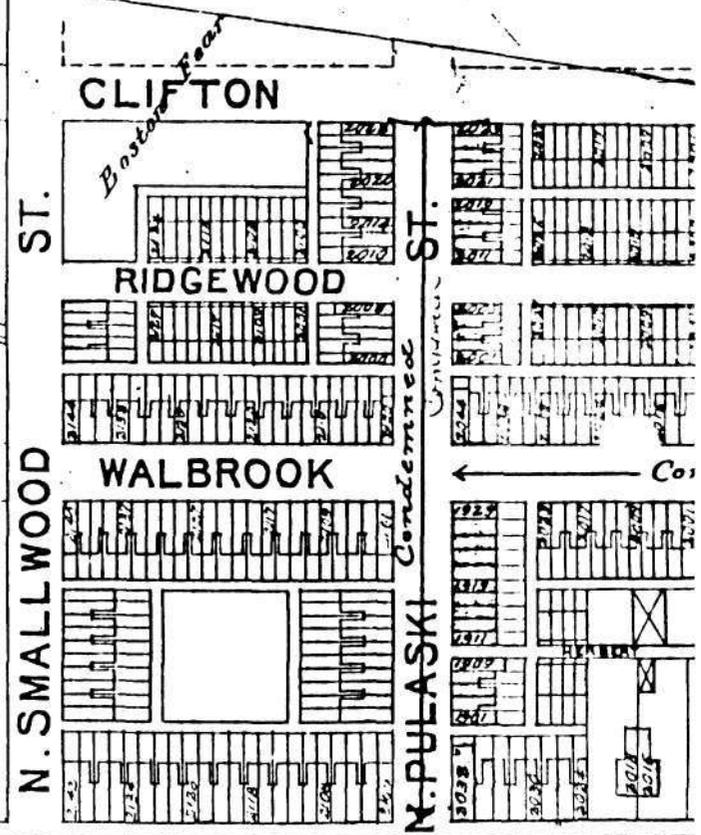
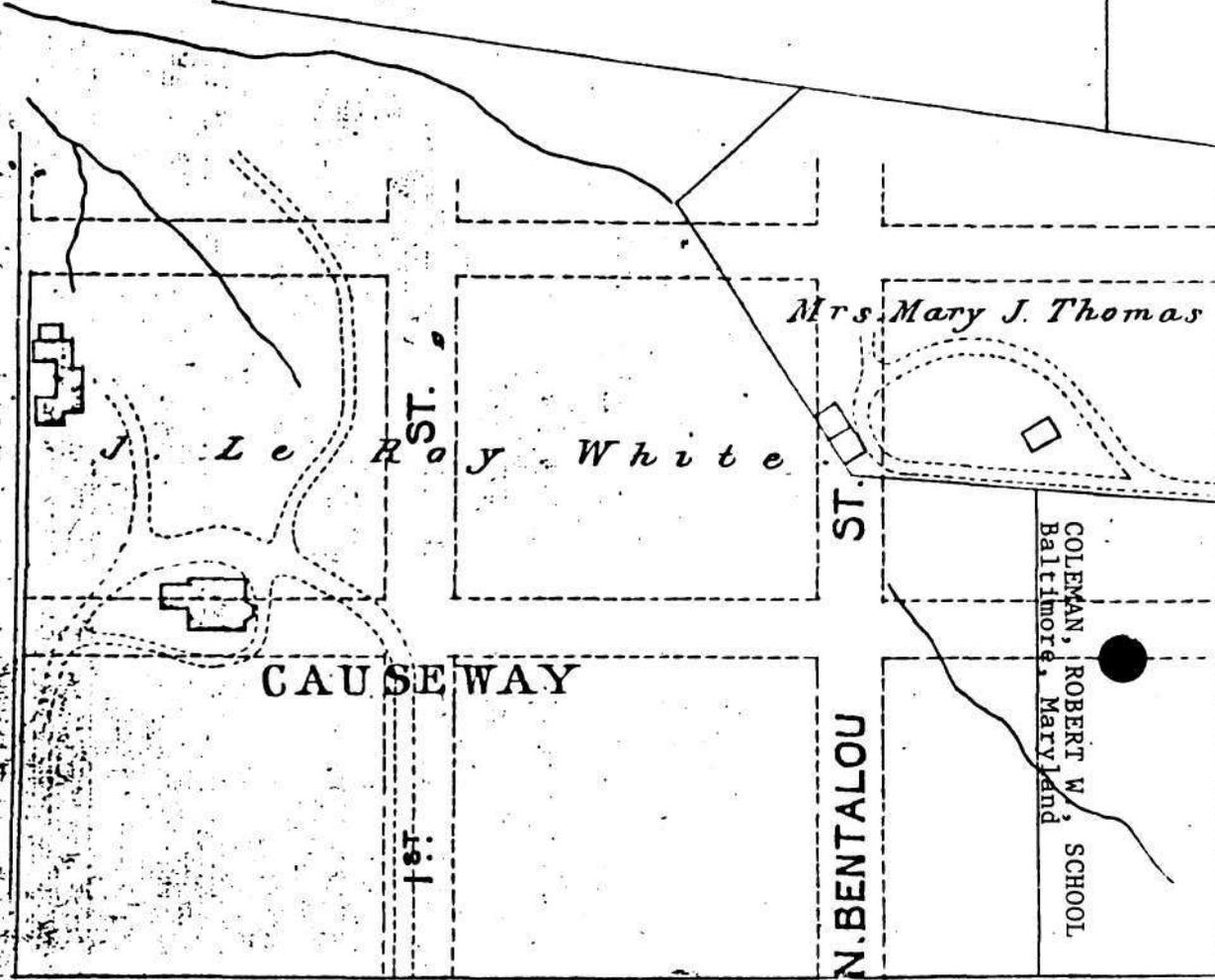
SUMMER HILL

ELGIN

M. N. & C. T. Murdock

NORTH

B-3938

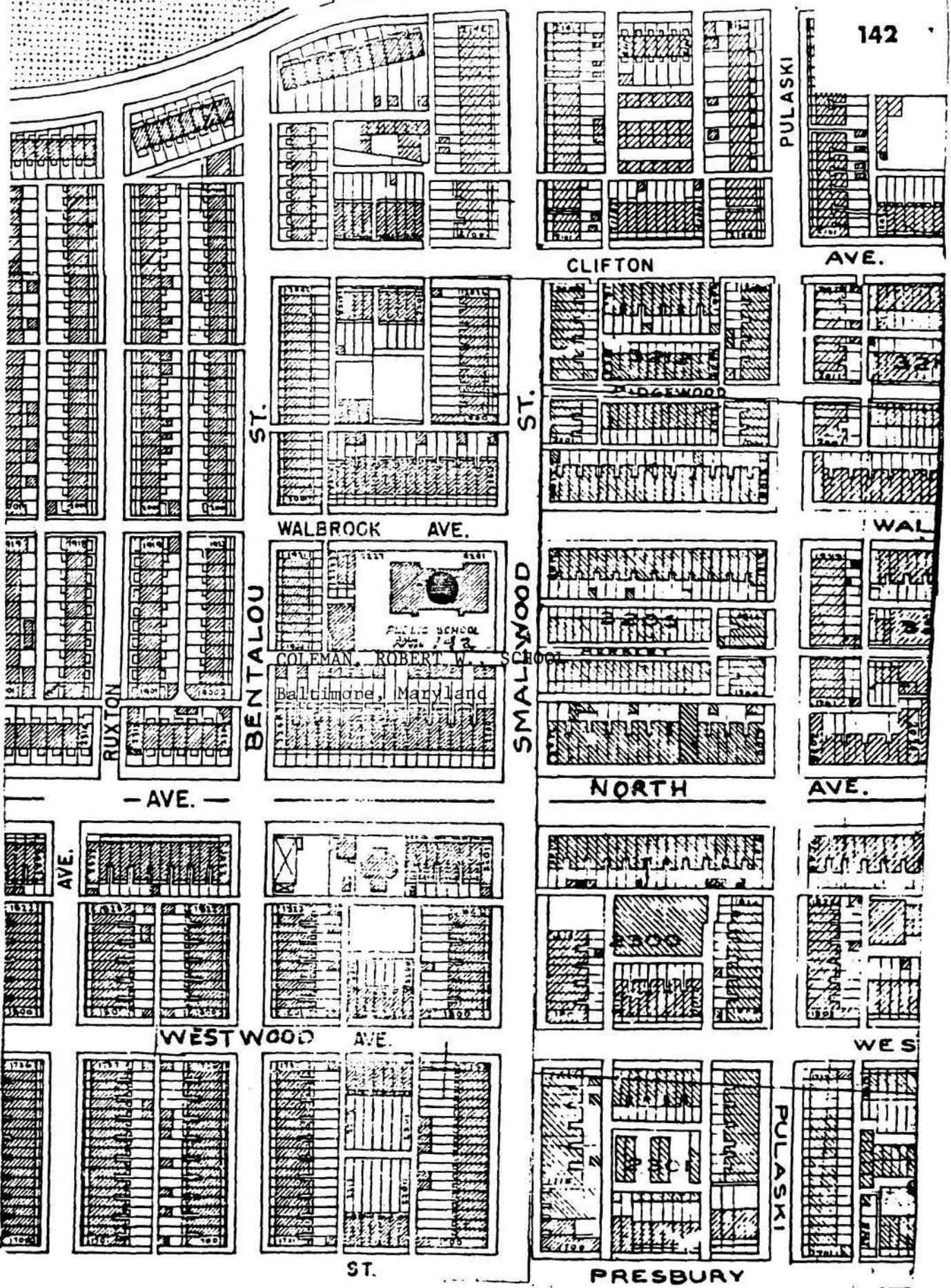


W. NORTH

Condemned as a Public Highway by the County Commissioners



COLEMAN, ROBERT W., SCHOOL
Baltimore, Maryland



(School Plant Directory)
Baltimore, MD

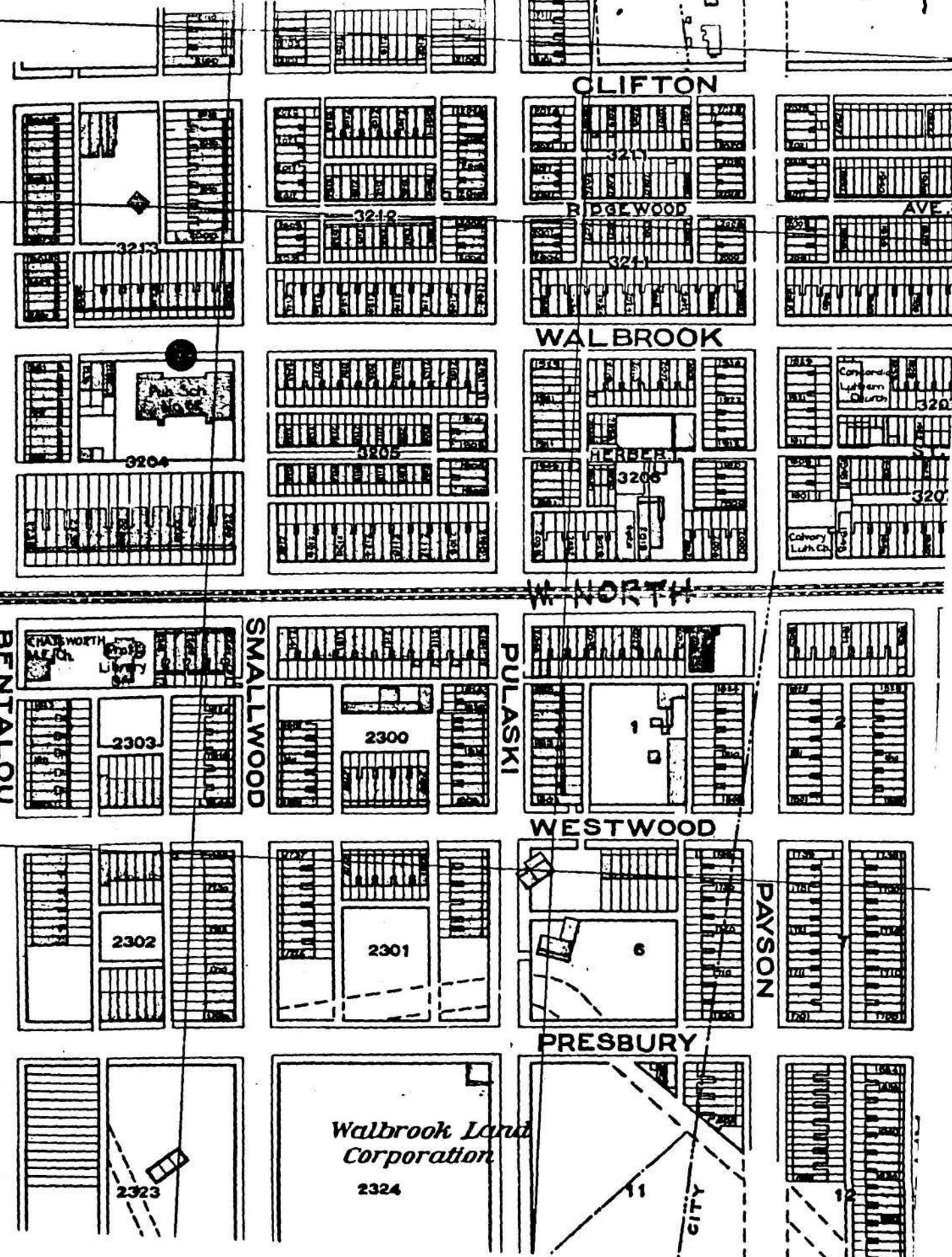
COLEMAN, ROBERT W., SCHOOL
Baltimore, Maryland

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Survey Commission, 1914.

Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Topographic



4000 NORTH

2000 NORTH

1 MILE NORTH

BENTALOU

SMALLWOOD

PULASKI

WESTWOOD

PRESBURY

PAYSON

CLIFTON

EDGEWOOD

WALBROOK

HERBER

W. NORTH

AVE. 3

320

320

2323

2324

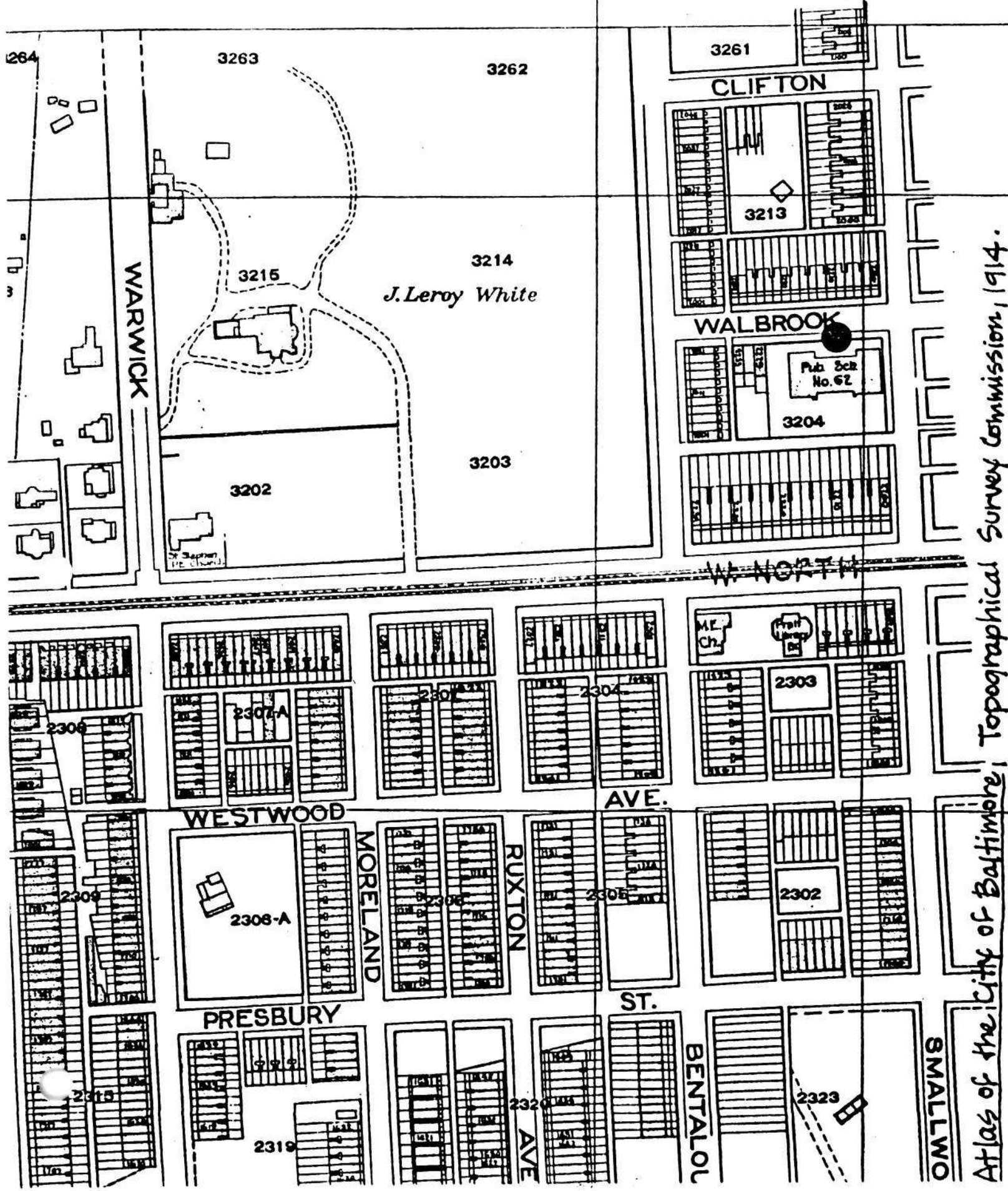
11

Walbrook Land Corporation

Calvary Luth. Ch.

Calvary Luth. Ch.

W. NORTH



Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Topographical Survey Commission, 1914.



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B-3938
Coleman, P. L. W.
School
Baltimore
Maryland

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B-3938

Robert W. Coleman School
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Baltimore (City), Maryland

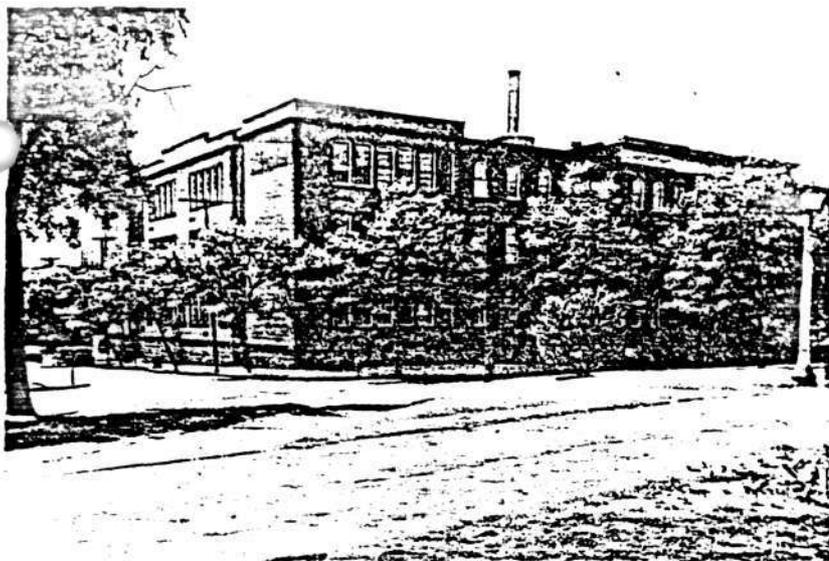
USGS Map Baltimore East Quadrangle
Scale 1:24000



(BALTIMORE EAST)
5662 1 SE
OVERLEAF 0.8 MI
BLL 419 23 MI

17'30"

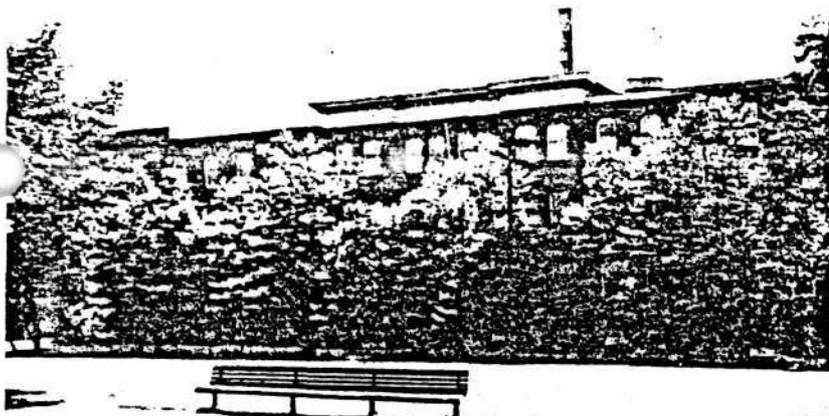
TYPE: Elementary



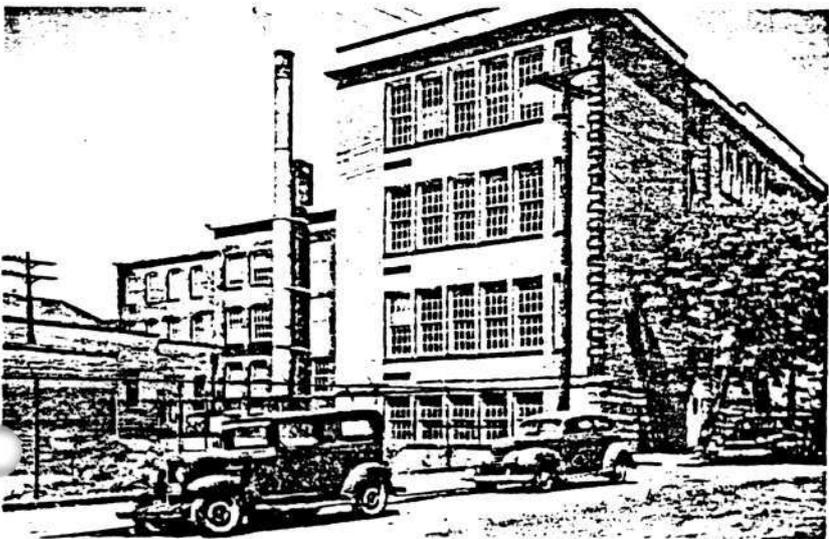
South and east faces of building, Heath and Johnson Streets respectively.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND RATING	
Date(s) of Constr.	1903/1931
Material	Brick
Rating, 1951 School Facilities Survey	Fair
Defects Noted in Survey	

FACILITIES	NO.	REMARKS
Auditorium	0	
Gymnasium	0	
Gym-Auditorium	1	Cap. Aud. 340 Cap. Gym. 35
Cafeteria	0	
Library	1	
Shop	0	
Home Ec. Room	1	
Laboratory	0	
Classroom	32	



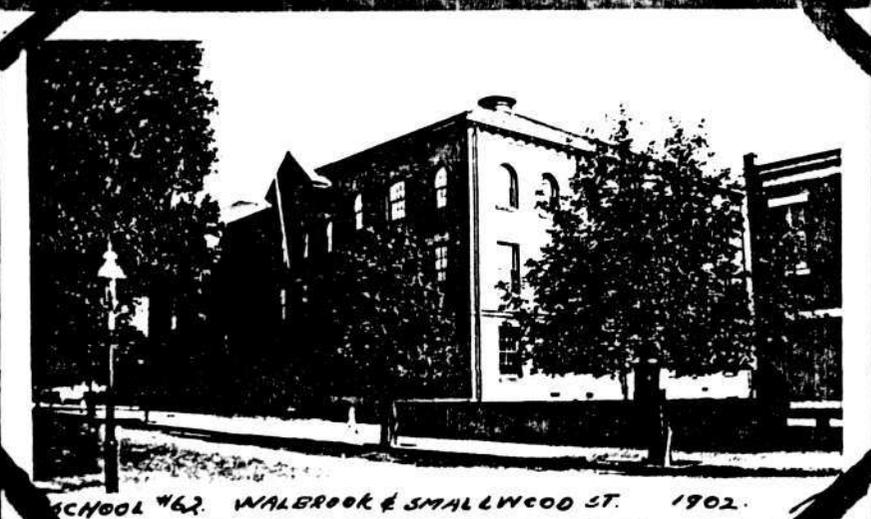
Front of building viewed from Riverside Park.



West face of building as seen from Heath St. This portion of building lies next to Warehouse 526.

AREAS	SQUARE FEET
Total Site (.71 acres)	30,935
Building	19,759
Floor Space <small>ALL FLOORS, INC. BASEMENT</small>	48,080
Play Space	9,806
Hard Surface	9,806
Soil	None
Ornamental and Service	1,370

REMARKS:



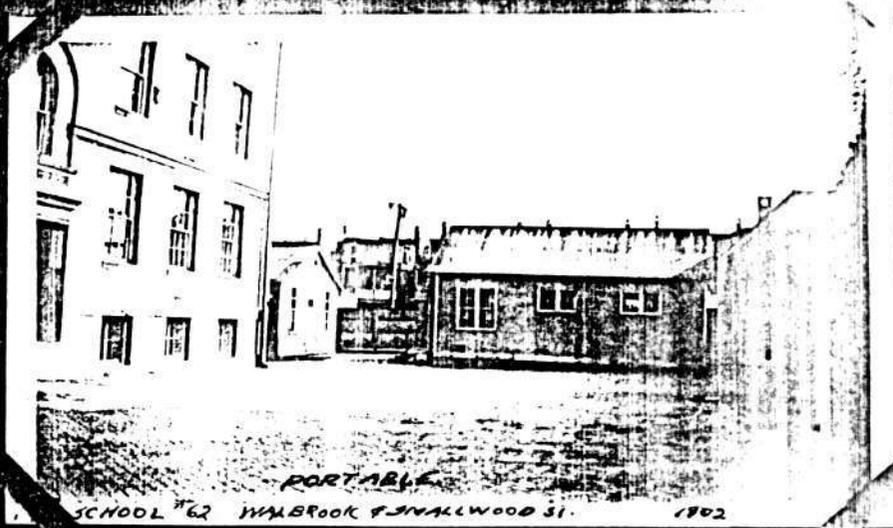
SCHOOL #62. WALBROOK & SMALLWOOD ST. 1902.



SCHOOL #62. WALBROOK & SMALLWOOD ST. 1902.



SCHOOL #62. WALBROOK & SMALLWOOD ST. 1902.



PORTABLE
SCHOOL #62 WALBROOK & SMALLWOOD ST. 1902

B-3938

COLEMAN, ROBERT W., SCHOOL
Baltimore, Maryland

B-3938

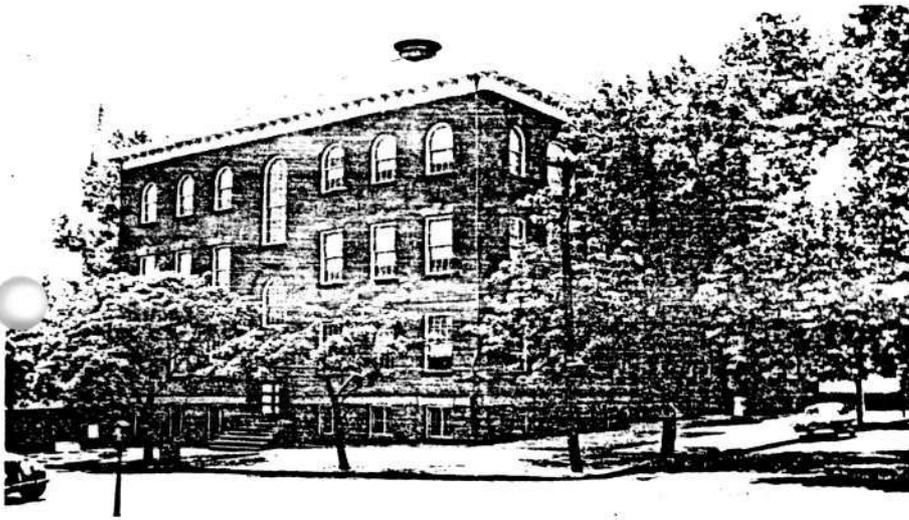
ROBERT W. COLEMAN SCHOOL
Walbrook Ave. and
Smallwood St. (16)

142

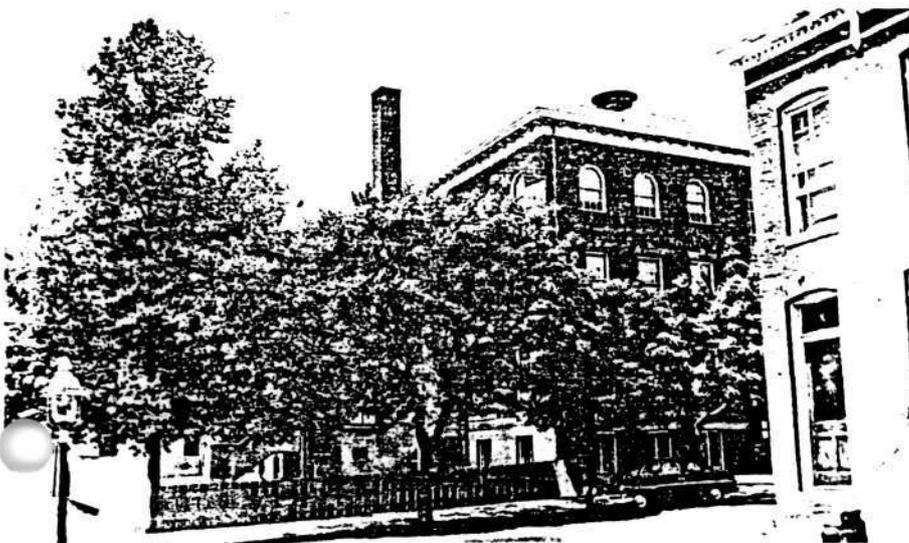
TYPE: Elementary



North, or front, elevation along Walbrook Ave.



East elevation, Smallwood St.



Playground at south (rear) of building.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND RATING	
Date(s) of Constr.	1903
Material	Brick
Rating, 1951 School Facilities Survey	Fair
Defects Noted in Survey	

FACILITIES	NO.	REMARKS
Auditorium	0	
Gymnasium	0	
Gym-Auditorium	0	
Cafeteria	0	
Library	1	
Shop	0	
Home Ec. Room	0	
Laboratory	0	
Classroom	26	

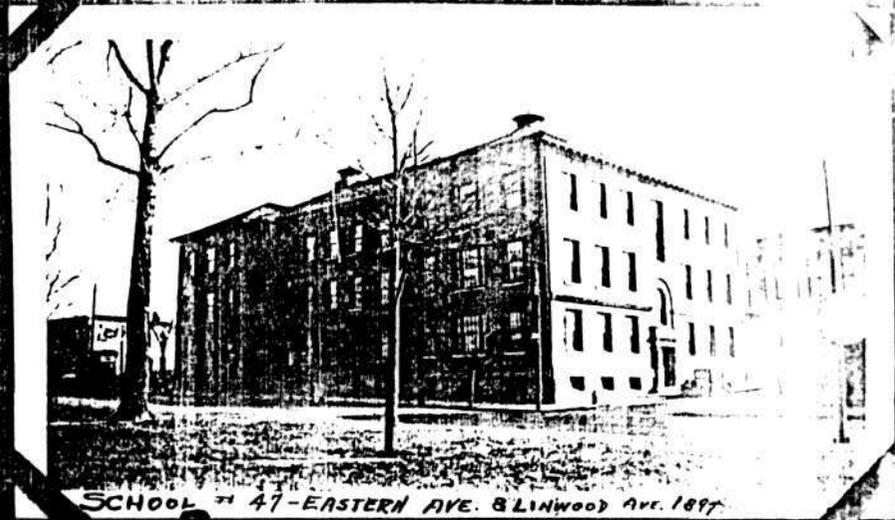
AREAS	SQUARE FEET
Total Site (.72 acres)	31,500
Building	10,935
Floor Space <small>ALL FLOORS, INC. BASEMENT</small>	34,968
Play Space	15,941
Hard Surface	15,578
Soil	363
Ornamental and Service	4,624

REMARKS:

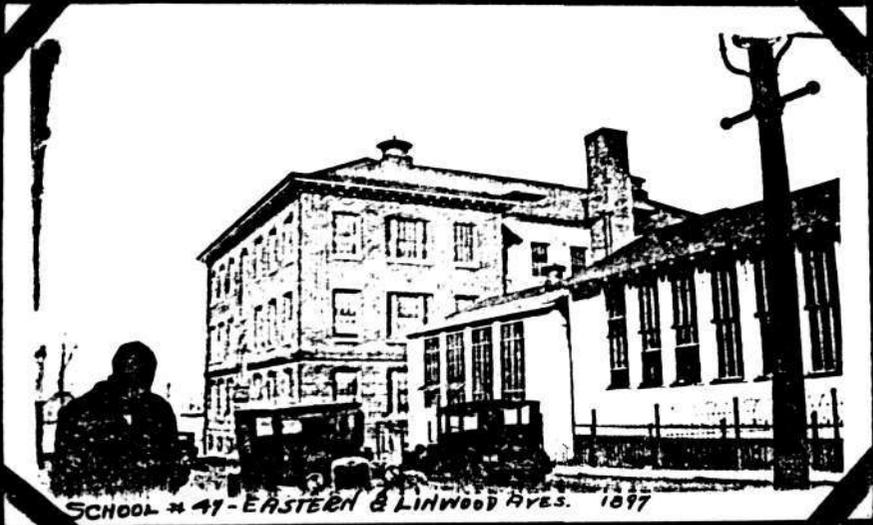
Revised 5/61, Map 1/63
(School Plant Director)
Baltimore, MD



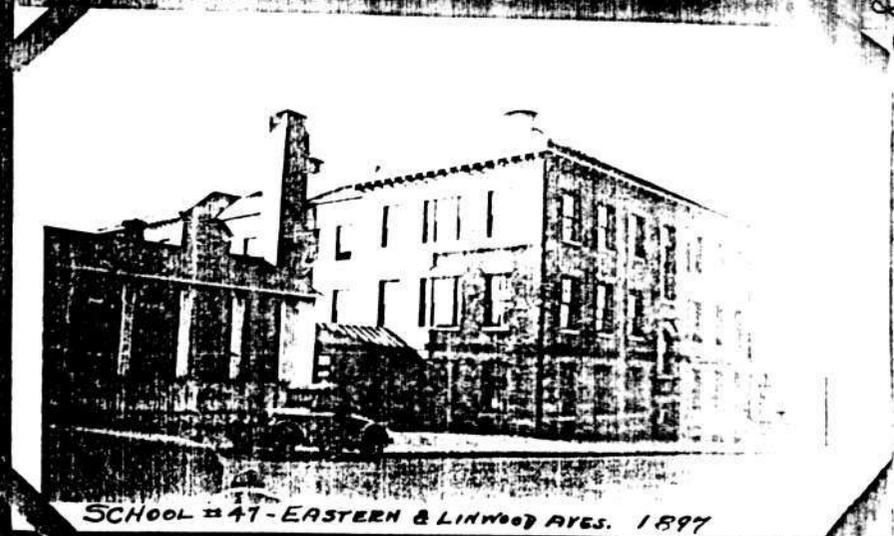
SCHOOL # 47- EASTERN & LINWOOD AVES.



SCHOOL # 47-EASTERN AVE. & LINWOOD AVE. 1897



SCHOOL # 47- EASTERN & LINWOOD AVES. 1897



SCHOOL # 47- EASTERN & LINWOOD AVES. 1897

B-3938

COLEMAN; ROBERT W., SCHOOL
Baltimore, Maryland

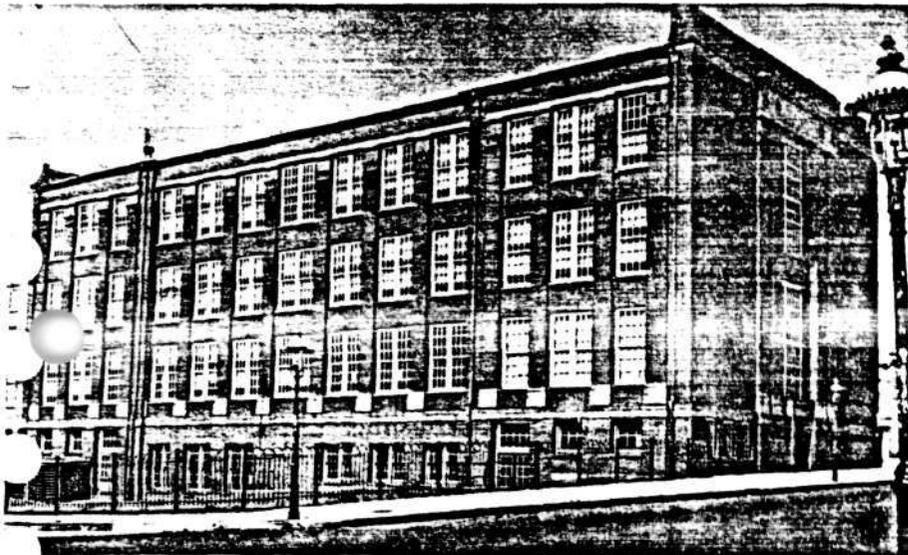
B-3938

HAMPSTEAD HILL SCHOOL **47**
Fleet St. and Linwood Ave. (24)

TYPE: Elementary



Corner view of 47; connecting wing and section used by 43A.



West and south elevations; Fleet St. in foreground.



Playground at rear—Fleet and Streeper Sts.

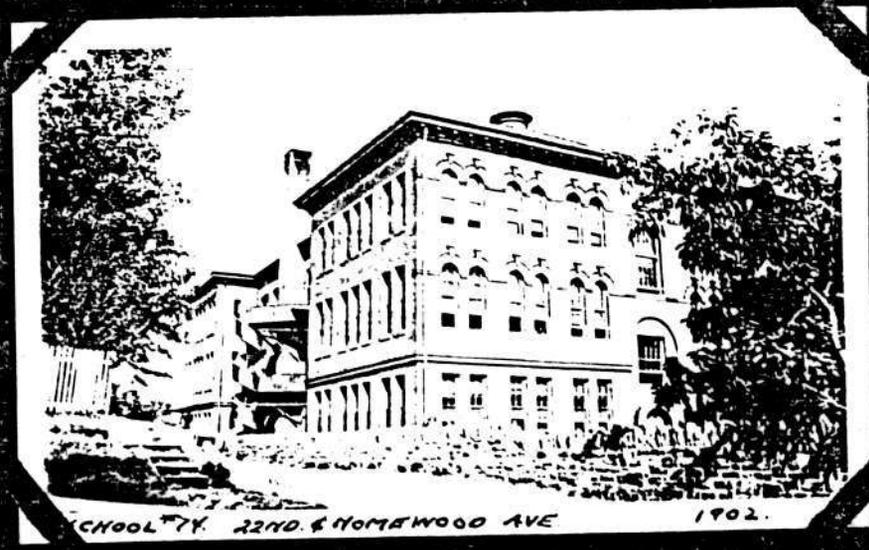
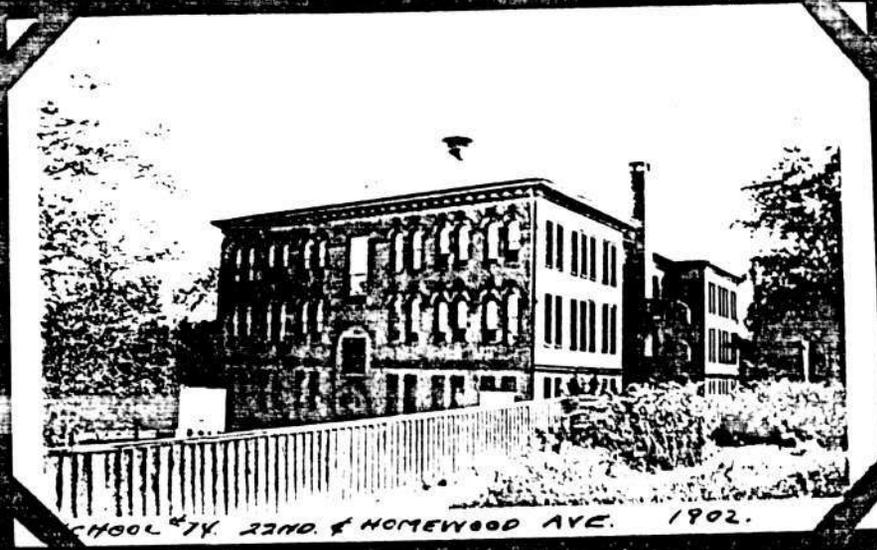
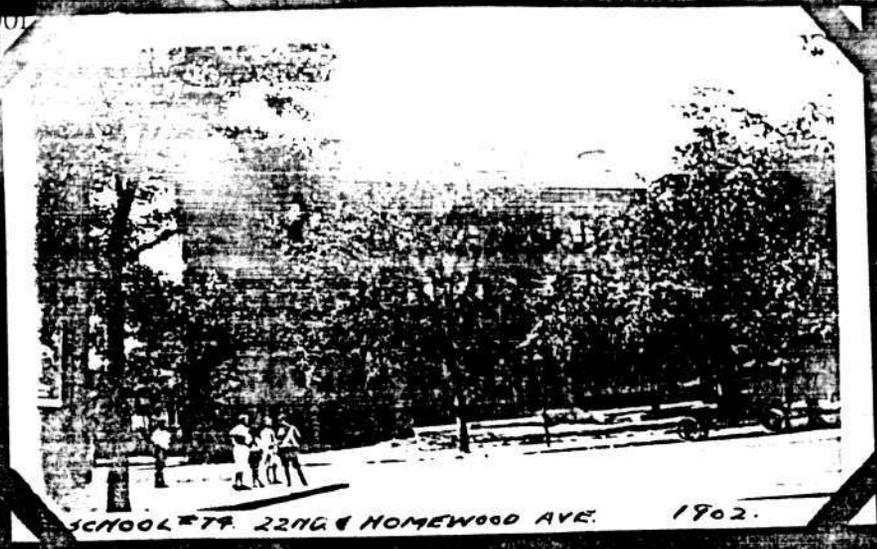
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND RATING	
Date(s) of Constr.	1898/1918/1937
Material	Brick
Rating, 1951 School Facilities Survey	Fair
Defects Noted in Survey	

FACILITIES *	NO.	REMARKS
Auditorium	0	
Gymnasium	1	Capacity 50
Gym-Auditorium	0	
Cafeteria	1	Capacity 200
Library	2	
Shop	2	
Home Ec. Room	3	
Laboratory	3	
Classroom	44	
Health Suite	2	
School Store	1	

AREAS *	SQUARE FEET
Total Site (.99 acres)	43,200
Building	24,570
Floor Space <small>ALL FLOORS, INC. BASEMENT</small>	36,920
Play Space	7,556
Hard Surface	7,556
Soil	None
Ornamental and Service	11,074

REMARKS: * This building also houses Junior High School No. 43A

Revised 5/61, Map 1/63
(School Plant Directory)
Baltimore, MD

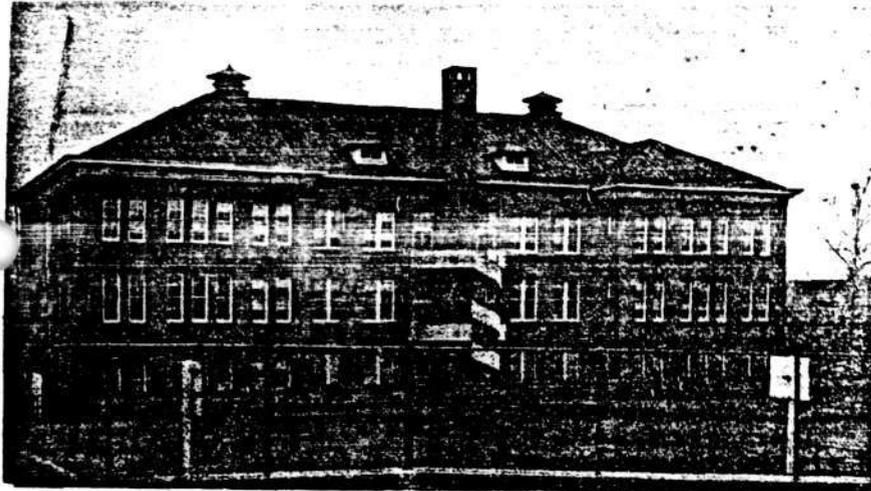


OLIVER CROMWELL SCHOOL
Twenty-second St. and
Homewood Ave. (18)

TYPE: Elementary



Building stands obliquely across northwest corner at 22nd St. and Homewood Ave.



Corner of building pointing due north.



Playground in rear of building.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND RATING	
Date(s) of Constr.	1903
Material	Brick
Rating, 1951 School Facilities Survey	Fair
Defects Noted in Survey	

FACILITIES	NO	REMARKS
Auditorium	0	
Gymnasium	0	
Gym-Auditorium	0	
Cafeteria	0	
Library	1	
Shop	0	
Home Ec. Room	0	
Laboratory	0	
Classrooms	26	3 used for Kdg.
Health Suite	1	
Conference	1	Speech and Social work

AREAS	SQUARE FEET
Total Site (1.47 acres)	63,815
Building	10,647
Floor Space <small>ALL FLOORS, INC. BASEMENT</small>	33,423
Play Space	34,016
Hard Surface	34,016
Soil	None
Ornamental and Service	19,152

REMARKS:

Revised 1/62, Map 1/63
(School Plant Directory)
Baltimore, MD

P-5188



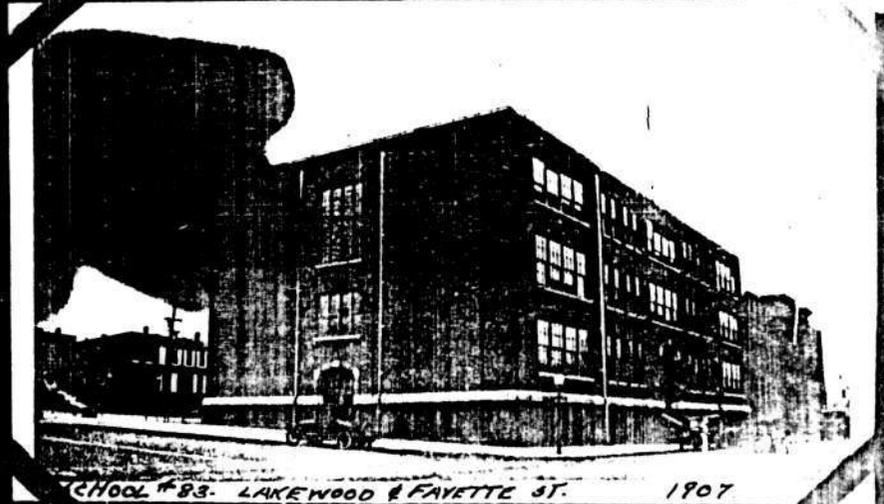
SCHOOL #83. LAKEWOOD & FAYETTE ST. 1902.



SCHOOL #83. LAKEWOOD & FAYETTE ST. (old blog) 1902



SCHOOL #83. LAKEWOOD & FAYETTE ST. 1902-1907.



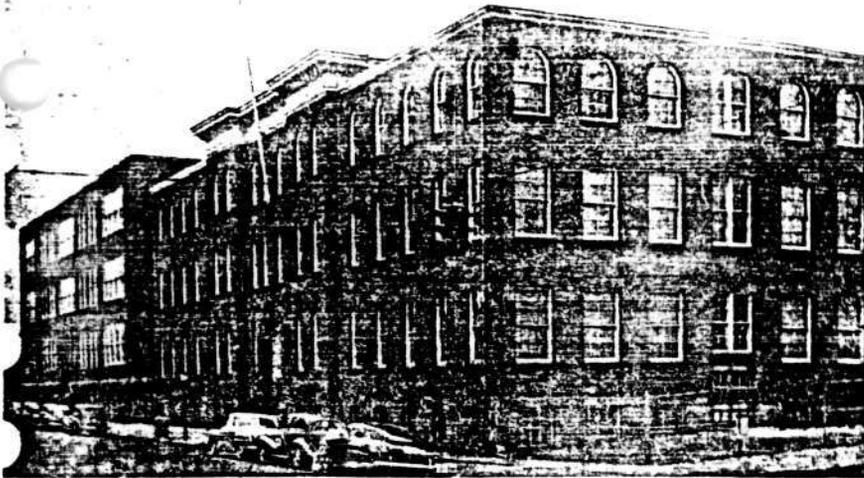
SCHOOL #83. LAKEWOOD & FAYETTE ST. 1907

COLEMAN, ROBERT W., SCHOOL
- Baltimore, Maryland

W. IAM PACA SCHOOL
Lakewood Ave. and
Fayette St. (24)

B-3938
83

TYPE: Elementary



View of east (front) and north elevations of building. School faces Lakewood Avenue.



Rear of building showing playground.



Playground and rear of school building, newer section is in foreground.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND RATING	
Date(s) of Constr.	1900/1913
Material	Brick
Rating, 1951 School Facilities Survey	Fair
Defects Noted in Survey	

FACILITIES	NO.	REMARKS
Auditorium	0	
Gymnasium	0	
Gym-Auditorium	0	
Cafeteria	0	
Library	1	
Shop	0	
Home Ec. Room	0	
Laboratory	0	
Classroom	33	incl. 2 makeshift
Playrm-Assembly	1	Assembly 350 Playroom 35
Special	3	2 Speech Commun. 1 Resource (small)
Health Suite	1	Makeshift

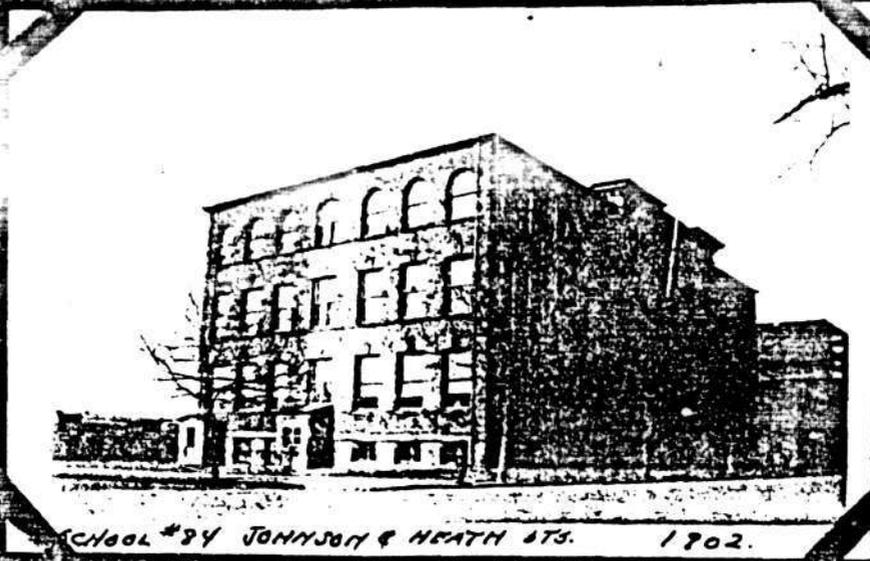
AREAS	SQUARE FEET
Total Site (1.11 acres)	48,466
Building	19,544
Floor Space ALL FLOORS, INC. BASEMENT	66,560
Play Space	26,930
Hard Surface	26,930
Soil	None
Ornamental and Service	1,992

REMARKS:

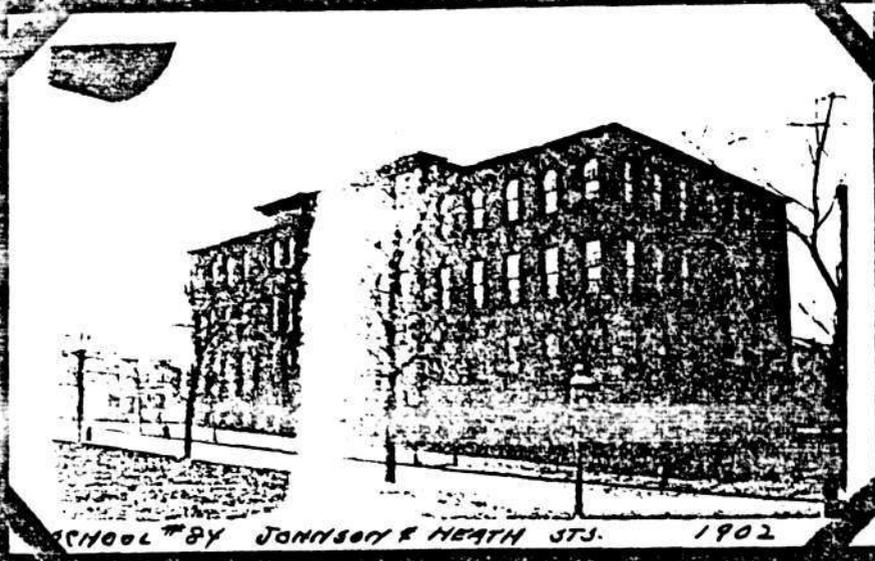
Revised 9/61, Map 1/63
(School Plant Directory)
Baltimore, MD

COLEMAN, ROBERT W. SCHUBERT
Baltimore, Maryland

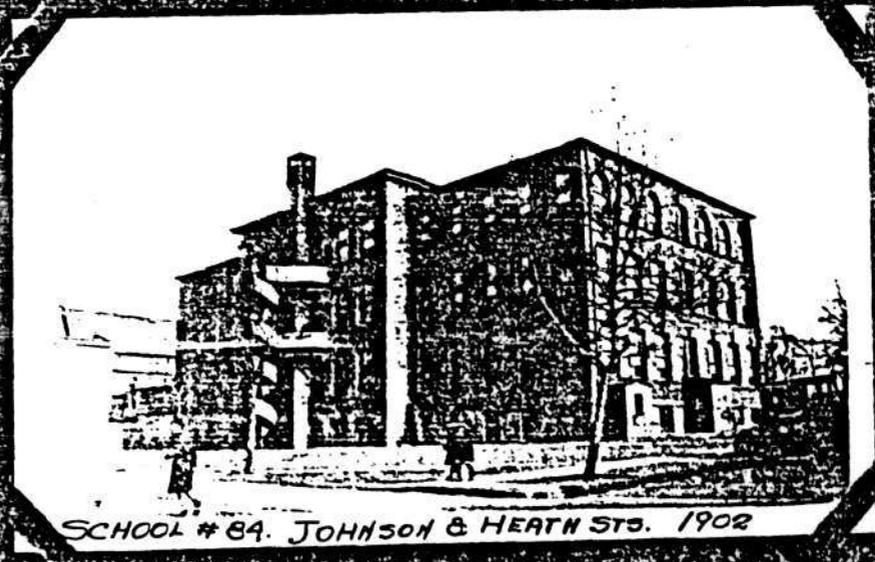
B-3938



SCHOOL #84 JOHNSON & HEATH STS. 1902.



SCHOOL #84 JOHNSON & HEATH STS. 1902.



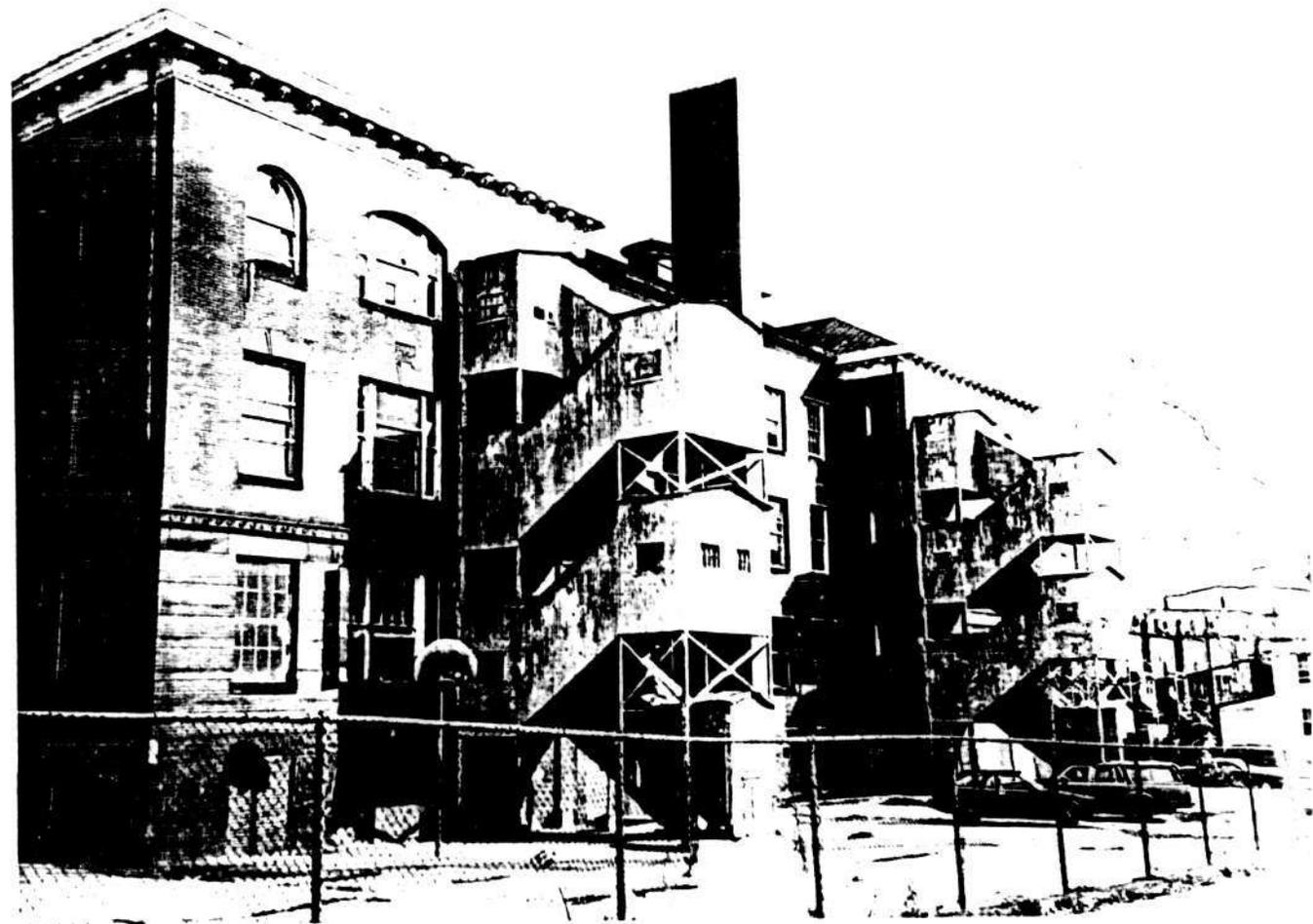
SCHOOL #84. JOHNSON & HEATH STS. 1902



B-3938

Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Overall view
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
view looking southeast
1/12

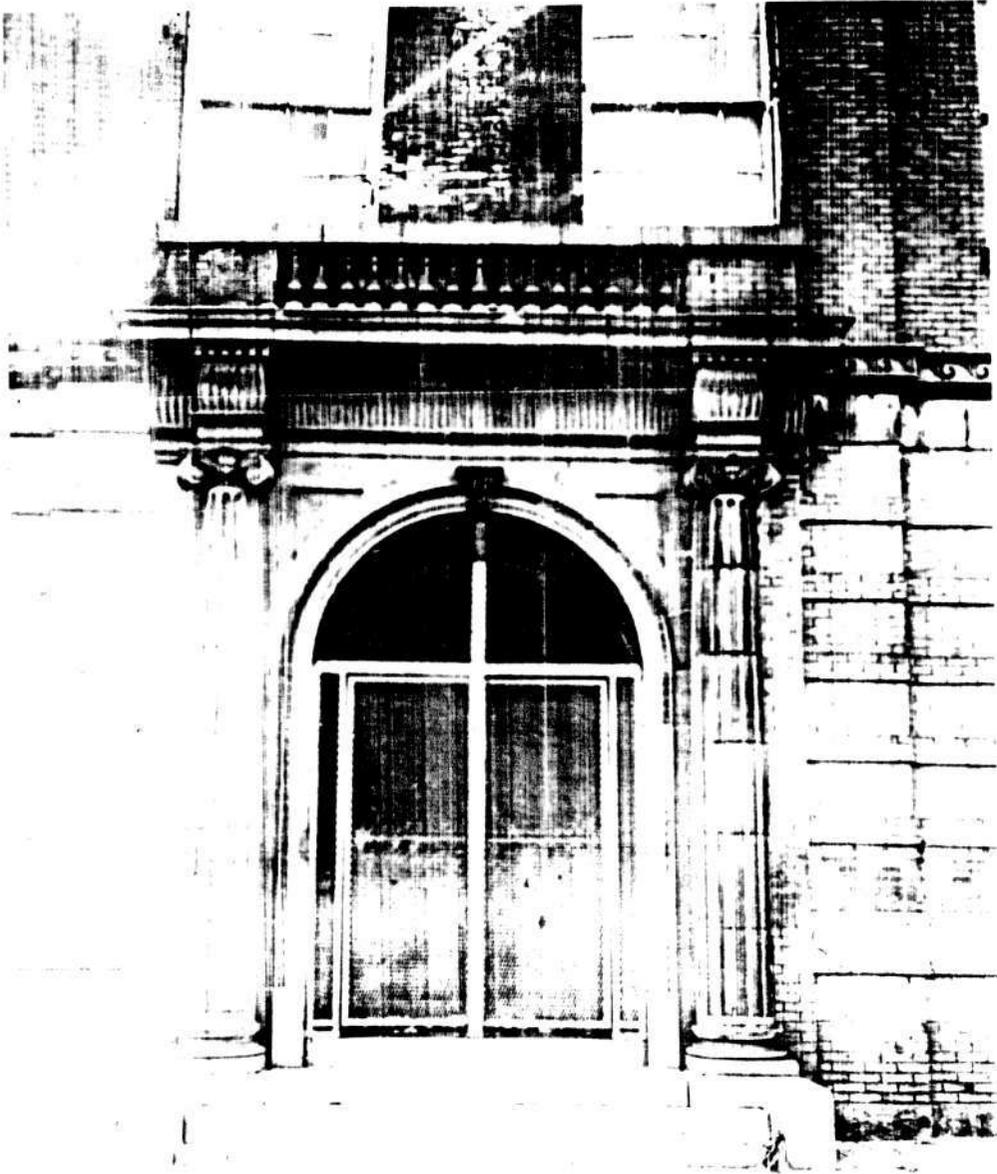
Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Front Facade
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
view looking southwest
2/12



Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Side elevation
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
view looking southeast
3/12

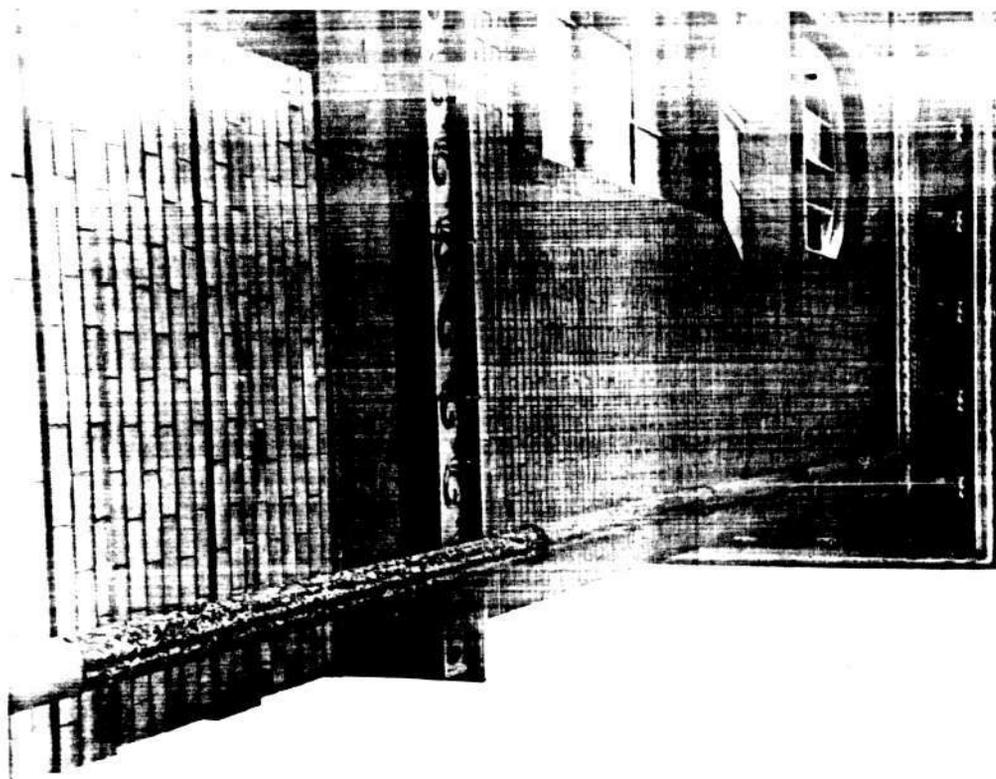
Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Southern Rear Elevation
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
view looking northeast
4/12

B-3938



Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Front Entrance
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
view looking south
5/12

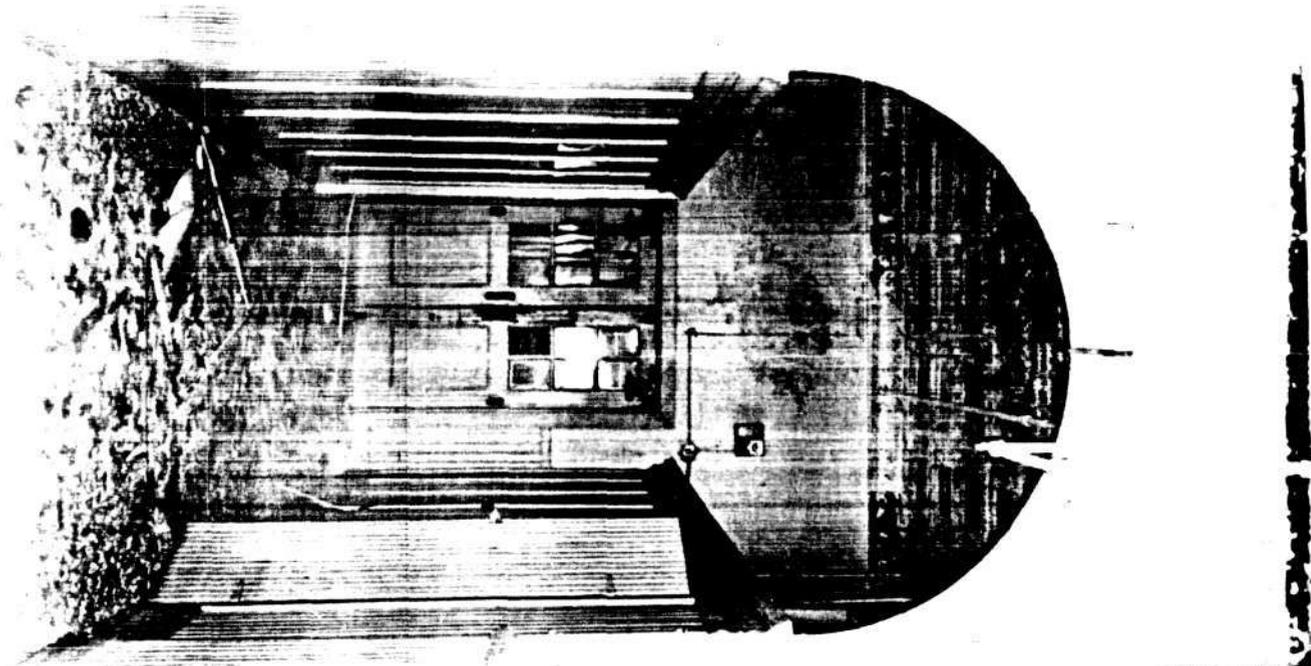
Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Window above side entrance
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
6/12



B-3938

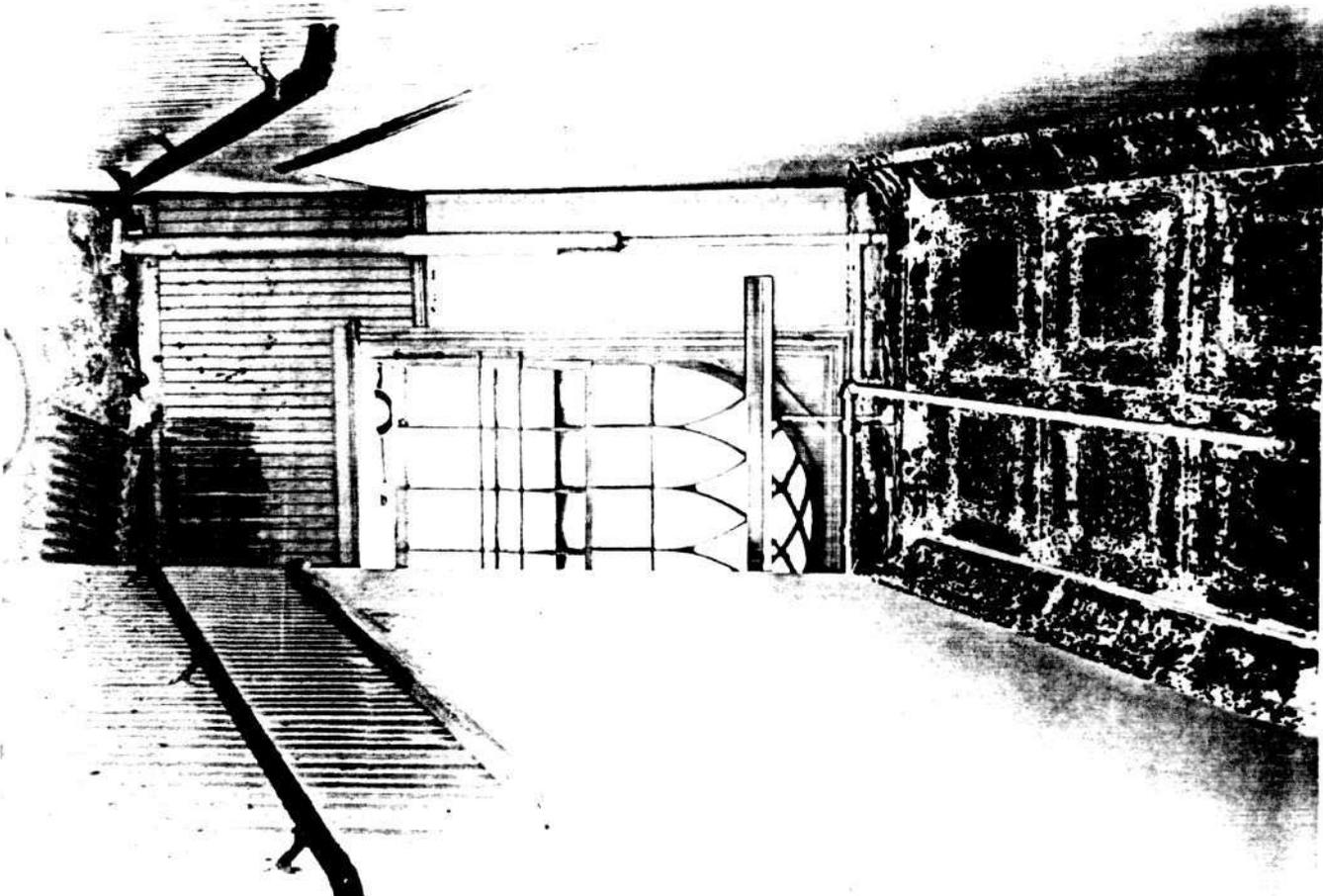
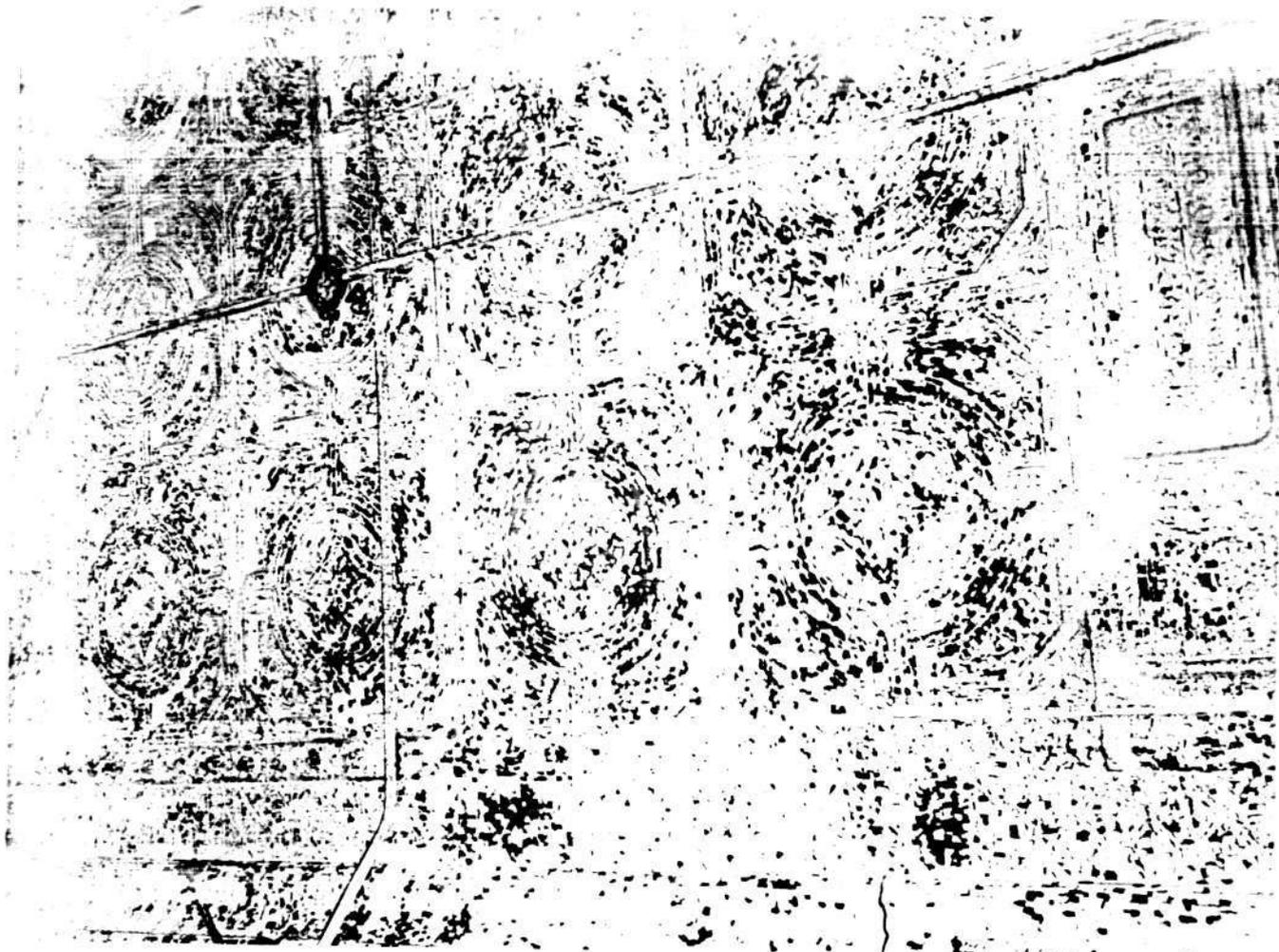
Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Northeast corner
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
7/12

Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Interior - front vestibule
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
8/12



Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Interior - Hallway showing
cloakroom partitions
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
9/12

Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Interior - Classroom space with
panel door partitions between
rooms on first floor
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
10/12



Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Interior - stairway
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
11/12

Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Interior - metal ceiling
Fred B. Shoken
November 1985
Maryland Historical Trust
12/12

Survey No. B-3938

Agri No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Public School #2142

and/or common Robert W. Coleman School (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 2201 Walbrook Avenue not for publication

city, town Baltimore vicinity of congressional district 7th

state Maryland county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

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

name Neighborhood Progress Administration, *City of Baltimore*

street & number 222 East Saratoga Street telephone no.: 396-4121

city, town Baltimore state and zip code Maryland 21202

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber RO 1939

street & number 100 North Calvert Street folio 24

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. B-3938

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date of move _____

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

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

total resources: 1

The Robert W. Coleman School is located northwest of downtown Baltimore. The school building is situated at the southwest corner of Walbrook Avenue and Smallwood Street, one block north of North Avenue near Coppin State College. It is a three story high (plus basement) brick, public school building fronting on Walbrook Avenue. The building is twelve bays wide at the front facade and seven bays wide along the side elevations. It features a rusticated first floor level, a recessed arched front entrance decorated by engaged fluted Ionic columns, original wood eight over eight windows, decorative arched windows at the side entrances, a metal cornice with egg and dart molding and consoles, and a standing seam hipped roof with a central front pediment. The interior which contains twenty-six classrooms and a library, features maple floors, decorative tin ceilings, wood panelled doors and wainscoting. Although the building has been vacant for many years, it is in fair condition and retains nearly all of its original architectural detailing.

(see Continuation Sheet for General Description)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Robert W. Coleman School is an "H"-shaped structure, located in an early twentieth century Baltimore rowhouse neighborhood. The front, Walbrook Avenue, running bond brick facade of the building is twelve bays wide. The central portion of the structure features a slightly projecting, pedimented two bay wide entrance section. It is flanked by three bay wide end building sections which project from the central portion of the building. The central arched entrance to the building is located above a flight of three granite steps. The stone arch with acanthus leaf console keystone is surrounded by blank spandrels and terra cotta engaged fluted Ionic columns. Above the arch and columns is a decorative band course and a small cornice with dentils surmounted by a balustrade which immitates a balcony. Within the arched entrance which is presently protected by an iron grate are metal double doors with a covered transom. The transom is surmounted by a decorative terra cotta dentilled pediment supported by end brackets with leafy designs.

The basement section which flanks the entrance is defined by a granite base and water table. The basement walls are punctuated by windows protected by iron grates. Above the water table is the rusticated brick first floor level which features boarded over eight over eight windows. A band course which features egg and dart, and wave molding completes the first floor level. The second floor eight over eight windows have stone sills and are capped by splayed stone flat arches with emphasized keystones. A flag pole supported by a console stone projects above the central second floor windows. The third floor eight over eight windows are arched. The full triple header brick arches feature emphasized keystones. The attic level which is defined by the central pediment is decorated by four small openings. A central arched one over one window is flanked by two smaller windows. The windows share a stone sill. The central window has a triple header arch, while the end windows feature splayed brick flat arches. A small narrow rectangular window is located above the arched window. A plain metal pediment, broken at the bottom, caps the central building section.

Two downspouts run along the ends of the central building section. The original cast iron base of the downspouts is inscribed with the lettering, "Dietrich Bros., Balto. Md." The sides of the projecting end sections are punctuated by narrow three pane casemet windows with stone sills and splayed stone flat arches with emphasized keystones.

The three bay wide projecting end sections are similar to the central section, however the central bay features wider windows. The central eight over eight windows are flanked by side two over two windows. The third floor central windows feature a segmental arch instead of the full arch of the other third floor windows. The front facade is capped by an ornate metal cornice with egg and dart molding and decorative acanthus leaf consoles. A standing seam hipped roof with projecting eaves caps the facade. Two large ventilation shafts

project above the roof.

The seven bay wide side elevations of the building are similar to the front. The central side entrances are located above a flight of granite steps. The Smallwood Street elevation features a larger basement level and higher flight of steps due to the slope of the site to the east. The boarded over entrance doors are flanked by engaged fluted square pilasters supporting a small cornice and entablature, which displays a shield and leafy motif. Above the entrance within a recessed arch is a decorative arched window with interlacing mullions on the upper sash. A narrow arched, nine over twelve window provides light to the central side stairwell. The entrance section of the side elevations is flanked by an arrangement of windows similar in style to the front facade, however the third floor arched windows do not have emphasized keystones.

The rear elevation is distinguished from the front by the large metal fire escapes covered with corrugated metal which project from the inner bays of the end building sections. While the end building sections are similar to the front (except for the absence of granite band courses at the basement, and third floor emphasized keystones at the arches), the common bond brick six bay wide central building section is bisected by a central chimney which projects above the roof line. The eight over eight windows have simple flat arches. A light well is located at the basement level. Two hipped dormers are located on the roof above a simple gutter at the central building section. Original fluted downspouts are located at the ends of the central section of the rear elevation.

The perimeter of school grounds is enclosed by a chain link fence. The grounds are paved in asphalt. The inner block side features a small playground area. Photographs of the building from the early 1960s show some trees at the sidewalk in front of the school and a wood fence enclosing the grounds.

The interior of the building originally housed twenty-three classrooms (the inclusion of basement classroom space has increased the number of classrooms to twenty-six). They are laid out along a central hall which bisects the length of the building and ends in stairways. Eight classrooms are located on each floor (one of the classroom spaces on the first floor may have originally functioned as the principal's office). A secondary hall runs along the inner side of the projecting end sections. This hall leads to the rear fire escapes and houses partitioned cloakrooms. A large vestibule space is located at the front entrance of the building. Two first floor classrooms in the center of the building are separated by a series of panelled doors which apparently could be opened to create a large assembly hall.

Much of the wood strip interior flooring is extant. The ceilings of halls, stairways and classrooms are of decorative pressed tin throughout, in a variety of patterns. The walls are plaster with tounge and groove wainscotting in the halls and stairways. The cloakrooms along the secondary halls are made of tounge and groove wood partitions. Most of the doors within the halls are wood panelled with

Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland

2201 Walbrook Avenue
Description Continued Page 3

a large upper glass pane. Each is surmounted by a glass transom. Connecting doors between rooms lack the glass pane and transom, and a few flush wood doors have been added near the stairways. The door and window frames are plain. The vestibule area features wood panelled wainscotting, and double doors surrounded by a four pane transom and five pane sidelights. The entrance to the hall is decorated with pilasters and a dentilled cornice. Arched passageways are located within the halls. The classrooms feature blackboards and wood bookcases. Illumination to the building is provided by fluorescent light fixtures hanging from the ceilings. Many of the large iron radiators remain throughout the building.

The general condition of the interior is poor. Many of the tin ceilings are rusted or dilapidated with peeling paint. Trash is strewn along classrooms and halls. Some of the flooring has buckled in a few classrooms. Many of the windows have been broken and the building has been subjected to vandalism. Despite this deterioration most of the original architectural features survive.

8. Significance

Sur. No. B-3938

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates 1903 Builder/Architect Edward D. Preston

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.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Robert W. Coleman School is architecturally significant as an intact representative of turn-of-the-century public school architecture in Baltimore. The building features many significant details of the period, including tin ceilings, hardwood flooring, decorative terra cotta entrance motifs, original multi-pane wood windows, and an ornate metal cornice. It is noteworthy, that the structure was designed by municipal employees in the office of the Inspector of Buildings, rather than a private architectural firm, as was the case with most public buildings. The design of public buildings by the City government created a controversy between Edward D. Preston, the Inspector of Buildings, and many local architects, resulting in a return to architect-designed school buildings in Baltimore. The school is associated with Building Inspector Preston, an important local citizen, and it is named after Robert W. Coleman, a notable Baltimore black civic leader. This school played an important role in the development of the surrounding community providing early education to the people of this neighborhood, including the children of German immigrants who lived here in the early twentieth century. The school has been vacant for many years, however it is slated to be re-used as a housing project for the elderly, providing a useful function to the surrounding neighborhood.

(see Continuation Sheet for History and Support)

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

From 1816 until 1888, North Avenue was the northern boundary of Baltimore City. When the City expanded in that year to take in 23 square miles of land to the north and west, it created a need to construct more school buildings to meet the needs of the population growth in the outlying areas. The Robert W. Coleman School, originally known as School #62, was built in 1902, replacing an earlier structure on Payson Street. It was built on land which was originally part of the estate known as "Causeway," owned by J. LeRoy White. The school served the rowhouse community which was growing to the east and south. When it was built, there were no houses to the west for five blocks, nor any houses between the school and the Mondawmin estate directly to the north.

The building was designed by the office of the Inspector of Buildings under the supervision of Edward D. Preston. Preston was a well-known local builder. He was educated in the Baltimore public school system and started to learn the building business at age 17 under the supervision of William Williams. He worked under the firm of William T. Markland and Brother, between 1874 and 1891, becoming the owner of the business after the deaths of William and Charles Markland. He supervised the construction of many notable buildings, including, the Straus Brothers Building at Lombard and Paca Streets, and the Marburg Building at Charles and Conway Streets.

The contractor for School #62 was John Hughes, Jr. The cost of construction was \$64,872. According to a Baltimore Sun article the metal ceilings cost \$1,552, and the heating and ventilation system was provided by Crook, Horne and Company at a cost of \$5,575.

The use of municipal employees to design public buildings was a cost savings measure which was undertaken by the City of Baltimore periodically in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Baltimore Sun of July 29, 1903 explained, "This system is an economical plan as the money which would have to be paid to architects would amount to a very considerable sum, and it is deemed wiser to spend the money on the buildings, themselves, rather than on architects."

This procedure touched off a controversy between local architects and Building Inspector Preston. Many architects criticized the actions of Building Inspector Preston, believing that public buildings should be designed by local architectural firms. Preston countered in his annual report of 1901, stating:

"...It is to be regretted this course has been adversely criticised by some architects and unwarranted statements made as to the duties of the Inspector of Buildings, but they are evidently unacquainted with the law regulating expenditures of money.

Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland

2201 Walbrook Avenue
Significance Continued Page 2

"There are in Baltimore professional architects who will equal any in the country, who, by their continued study and by their continual contact with and advice from the practical builder have become proficient in construction as well as drawing. These gentlemen are indifferent apparently as to who makes building plans, as their professional engagements are such as to keep them engaged at all times. But several who have not been able to impress the public as architects, and not able to get above a mere picture, have diverged from the path of such study as might place them where they would like to be, and are proclaiming what are the duties of city officers without even having enough energy to read the whole law."

He went on to explain that the bureaucratic procedure necessary in awarding building designs to architects would result in delays and confusion. Although, Building Inspector Preston retained the practice of designing public buildings for a few years, by 1908 the practice of hiring architects to design public schools became the accepted procedure in Baltimore.

Considering the controversy over the preparation of the plans for School #62 in the office of the Inspector of Buildings, the building is not only a good representative of public school architecture of the day, but the particular skills of Edward D. Preston and his employees. The building is remarkably intact for a school building of its age. It retains many important architectural elements from the turn-of-the-century. These include the terra cotta entrances, original wood windows, strong metal cornice, decorative band courses and rusticated brick work on the exterior. Even some of the original fluted downspouts survive and all of the iron bases which are inscribed with the manufacturer's name, Dietrich Brothers. Among notable interior features are the decorative metal ceilings, tongue and groove wainscotting, wood panelled doors, decorative entrance vestibule, the extant cloak rooms and the two central first floor classrooms that can be combined into an assembly hall.

There are, however, a few awkward design elements on the exterior, which may indicate the lack of a professional architect's hand in the design. The central pediment on the front detracts from the strength of the roofline and the restrained Renaissance Revival appearance of the facade. The window arrangement above the side entrances is not handled very well. Although the recessed decorative window above the entrance is attractive, it does not fit in with the rest of the design.

Census field books from 1900 and 1910, indicate that many German immigrants lived in the surrounding community, when the school was constructed. Despite the distinctive German character to the population, the majority of the residents were born in the United States and employed as skilled workers, such as carpenters, painters, butchers, roofers and shirtmakers. A few Irish immigrants lived in the area in 1900. By 1910, at least one Italian family and one Jewish family lived near the school (The census does not indicate religious background, but a Russian immigrant was characterized as "Yiddish"). Clearly the school was an important center for the community and aided

Robert W. Coleman School
Baltimore (City), Maryland

2201 Walbrook Avenue
Significance Continued Page 3

in assimilating immigrant families into American culture.

As the racial make-up of the area shifted from white to black in the mid-twentieth century, this elementary school serviced the surrounding black population. In fact the name of the school, Robert W. Coleman, is associated with a notable black resident of Baltimore. Coleman (1876-1946) was born in Washington, D. C. He was stricken with blindness at the age of 36, and devoted his life to improving conditions for handicapped Baltimore residents. An organization which he established, became known as the Robert W. Coleman Association for the Handicapped, after his death. Among important positions he held was the secretary to the Negro Business League, a Mayorial appointment to the Baltimore Youth Commission, a member of the Civic Action Committee, and chairman of the Citizen's Committee on Problems of the Blind.

Vacant for some time, the Robert W. Coleman School is to be rehabilitated for a new use as a residential building for the elderly. The new use for the building is indicative of the adaptability of former school structures. Several nineteenth and early twentieth century schools in Baltimore have been recently renovated for new uses ranging from low income and elderly housing to luxury apartments, community centers, and artist studios. Many of the original features of building will be incorporated into the rehabilitation plans, where possible. National Register listing for this structure will provide important tax incentives, allowing for a sensitive adaptive re-use of this important school building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-3938

Baltimore Public Schools Annual Report, 1903.
Inspector of Buildings Annual Report, 1901.
Baltimore Sun, May 3 and July 29, 1902.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .72 acresQuadrangle name Baltimore WestQuadrangle scale 1:24,000UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification

The parcel of ground known as block 3204 lot 35 located at the southwest corner of Walbrook Avenue and Smallwood Street. The boundaries take in the school and playground space.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Fred B. Shoken, Preservation Consultant		
organization		date	November 18, 1985
street & number	6211 Park Heights Avenue	telephone	358-1839
city or town	Baltimore	state	Maryland

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
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
STATE REVIEW SHEET

B-3938

Historic Preservation Certification Application--Part I

Property: ROBERT W. COLEMAN SCHOOL, 2201 WALBROOK AVE, BALTIMORE, MD

Historic District: INDIVIDUAL

2-11-87 date initial application received by State

N/A date additional information requested by State

2-11-87 date complete information received by State

___ date of this transmittal to NPS

inspection of property by State staff? ___ no yes date: ___

There is adequate documentation enclosed to evaluate the historic character and integrity of this property.

___ There is insufficient documentation to evaluate the property adequately. The application is missing the following items: ___

Reasonable efforts, described below, have been made to obtain this information. Copies of the information requests are enclosed.

This property involves:

- 1
- ___ Extensive loss of historic fabric
 - ___ Substantial alterations over time
 - Preliminary determination of listing for district
 - for individual property

- ___ Obscured or covered elevation(s)
- ___ Moved property
- ___ State recommendation inconsistent with NR documentation
- ___ Recommendation different than the applicant's request

Complete one section below as appropriate.

(1) The property ___ contributes ___ does not contribute to the historic significance of this district in:

___ location ___ design ___ setting ___ materials ___ workmanship ___ feeling and association
Property is mentioned in the NR documentation in Section ___, page ___.

(2) ___ For properties less than 50 years old:

___ the historical merits of the district (the periods and areas of significance) are documented in the National Register nomination form or district documentation on file as less than 50 years old, justifying the certification of this property's contribution.

___ the strong historical or architectural merit of this property as described in the National Register nomination form or district documentation on file justifies its certification as contributing.

___ there is insufficient justification to consider this property contributing to the district on the basis of its individual architectural or historical merits or the significance of the district does not extend up to and including the latest 50 year period.

Briefly explain how Standard (3) applies to this property's individual merits or its significance in relationship to the significant qualities and characteristics of the district.

(3) For preliminary determinations:

A. The status of the nomination for the property/historic district:

Nomination has already been submitted to State review board, and if reviewed by the board, nomination will be forwarded to the NPS within a reasonable period of time. (Draft nomination is enclosed.)

___ Nomination was submitted to the NPS on ___.

___ Nomination will be submitted to the State review board within twelve months.

___ Nomination process likely will be completed within thirty months.

___ Other; explain: ___

B. Evaluation of the property:

___ Property ___ is individually eligible and meets National Register Criteria for Evaluation

___ Property is located within a potential registered district that meets National Register

Criteria for Evaluation

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D Exceptions:

(4) The property is located in a registered district, is outside the period(s) and/or area(s) of significance as documented in the NR nomination and:

___ appears to contribute to the expanded significance of the district. Enclosed is the revised nomination documentation.

___ does not appear to contribute to the period(s) and/or area(s) of significance of the district.

Complete sections below for all properties:

3

Description of district including the period(s) and area(s) of significance as described in the National Register documentation or documentation on file (except for preliminary determination of individual listing).

N/A

Period(s) of significance: _____ Section _____ page _____

Description of the property documenting current condition.

SEE N.R. NOMINATION FORM, ENCLOSED.

Retains sufficient integrity? Yes No
Statement of significance of the property

SEE N. R. NOMINATION FORM, ENCLOSED.

State Official Recommendation:

4

This application for the above-named property has been reviewed by MICHAEL DAY, a professionally qualified architect, architectural historian, or historian on my staff.

The property is included within the boundaries of a registered historic district, contributes to the significance of the district, and is a "certified historic structure" for the purpose of rehabilitation.

The property is included within the boundaries of a registered historic district, contributes to the significance of the district, and is a "certified historic structure" for a charitable contribution for conservation purposed in accordance with the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980.

The property does not contribute to the significance of the above-named district.

The property appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be nominated.

The property does not appear to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will not be nominated.

The property appears to contribute to the significance of a:
 potential historic district which appears to meet the National Register Criteria For Evaluation and will likely be nominated.

registered historic district but is outside the period(s) and area(s) of significance as documented in the National Register nomination or district documentation on file with the NPS. Revised nomination or district documentation is enclosed.

The property should be denied a preliminary determination that it could qualify as a certified historic structure.

insufficient documentation has been provided to evaluate the structure.

Detailed NPS review recommended Precedent setting case Forwarded without recommendation

Date: 3-10-87

State Official Signature: 

RECEIVED

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION APPLICATION PART 1 - EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

B-3938

NPS Office Use Only

Project Number:

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Instructions: Read the instructions carefully before completing application. No certification will be made unless a completed application form has been received. Use typewriter or print clearly in black ink. If additional space is needed, use continuation sheets or attach blank sheets.

1. Name of property: Robert W. Coleman School

Address of property: 2201 Walbrook Avenue

City Baltimore County _____ State Maryland Zip Code 21217

Name of historic district: D.N.A.

- National Register district
- certified state or local district
- potential historic district

2. Check nature of request:

- certification that the building contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district for the purpose of rehabilitation.
- certification that the structure or building and, where appropriate, the land area on which such a structure or building is located contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes.
- certification that the building does not contribute to the significance of the above-named district.
- preliminary determination for individual listing in the National Register.
- preliminary determination that a building located within a potential historic district contributes to the significance of the district.
- preliminary determination that a building outside the period or area of significance contributes to the significance of the district.

3. Authorized project contact:

Name Bettyjean C. Murphy Title General Partner

Street 2201 Sulgrave Avenue City Baltimore

State Maryland Zip 21209 Telephone Number (during day): 433-8500

4. Owner:

Name Same as Above

Street _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Telephone Number (during day): _____

I hereby attest that the information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, correct, and that I own the above-named property.

Owner's Signature Bettyjean C. Murphy - Bettyjean C. Murphy Date February 8, 1987

Social Security Number or Taxpayer Identification Number _____

NPS Office Use Only

The National Park Service has reviewed the "Historic Preservation Certification Application - Part 1" for the above-named property and hereby determines that the property:

- contributes to the significance of the above-named district and is a "certified historic structure" for the purpose of rehabilitation.
- contributes to the significance of the above-named district and is a "certified historic structure" for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes in accordance with the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980.
- does not contribute to the significance of the above-named district.

Preliminary Determinations:

- appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer according to the procedures set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
- does not appear to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely not be listed in the National Register.
- appears to contribute to the significance of a potential historic district, which will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer.
- appears to contribute to the significance of a registered historic district but is outside the period or area of significance as documented in the National Register nomination or district documentation on file with the NPS.
- does not appear to qualify as a certified historic structure.

School No. 142 (former)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
CERTIFICATION APPLICATION-
PART 1

NPS Office Use Only

B-3938

Property Name
Baltimore (City), Maryland

Project Number:

Property Address
Bettyjean Murphy/

Owner Name/Social Security or Taxpayer ID Number

5. Description of physical appearance:

Northwest of downtown Baltimore, the former Robert W. Coleman School No. 142 stands at the southwest corner of Walbrook Avenue and Smallwood Street, one block north of North Avenue, near Coppin State College. (See photo no. 1) Located within an early twentieth century rowhouse neighborhood, the school stands three stories high plus raised basement, facing Walbrook Avenue to the north. (See photos nos. 2-4) This brick building features rustication at its first floor elevation, original multi-paned wood windows, a metal cornice with egg and dart motif and consoles, and a standing-seam hipped roof with projecting eaves and a central front pediment.

(see Continuation Sheet No.1)

1903

Department of Education
Baltimore, Maryland

Date of Construction: _____ Source of Date: _____

Date(s) of Alteration(s): 1929: fire escapes added; 1959: new fire-rated partitions/drs; 1966: new chimney constructed; 1970: sprinklers installed.

Has building been moved? yes no. If so, when? _____

6. Statement of significance:

The former Robert W. Coleman School No. 142 is significant architecturally as an intact representative of turn-of-the-century public school architecture in Baltimore. The building exhibits many impressive details of the period, including tin ceilings, hardwood floors, decorative terracotta entrance motifs, multi-pane wood windows, and an ornate metal cornice. It is noteworthy that the structure was designed in the office of the municipal Inspector of Buildings, without benefit of a professional architect. This practice, the design of public buildings by the City government, was promoted by Mayor Thomas G. Hayes and Buildings Inspector Edward D. Preston, but vigorously opposed by architects, including the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Eventually, the City relented, resulting in the return of such design commissions to private architectural firms. The school is associated with Buildings Inspector Preston, a prominent builder. It is named in honor of Robert W. Coleman, a distinguished black Baltimorean, humanitarian, and civic leader who actively inspired improvements in the City's public school system. The school served in the development of the surrounding area, providing progressive, elementary level education as well as prompting the growth of the residential community. Vacant since 1980-81, the building remains a visual landmark and is slated to be converted to housing for the elderly, again serving the needs of the Greater Mondawmin neighborhood.

7. Photographs and maps.

Attach photographs and maps to application.

(see Continuation Sheet No. 4)

Continuation sheets attached: yes no

CONTINUATION SHEET

School No. 142 (former)

Historic Preservation
Certification Application

NPS Office Use Only

Property Name

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Project Number:

Property Address

Bettyjean Murphy/

Continuation Sheet No. 1

Owner Name/Social Security or Taxpayer ID Number

This sheet: continues Part 1 continues Part 2 amends Project. NPS Project Number:

Twelve bays wide, the facade of this structure is symmetrical about a central, slightly projecting entrance section that is two bays wide. (See photo no. 5) The entranceway is approached by three granite steps and framed by a stone arch bearing an acanthus leaf console keystone, blank spandrels, and engaged, fluted Ionic columns of terra cotta. Above the arch and columns is a decorative band course and a small cornice with dentils surmounted by a balcony-like balustrade. (See photo no. 6) Within the arched entrance, which is presently protected by an iron grate, there are metal double doors with a covered transom. Above the transom is a decorative terracotta pediment supported by end brackets with leafy designs.

The basement section flanking the entrance is defined by a granite base and water table. Windows with iron grates punctuate the basement walls. Above the water table, the rusticated brick first floor level features eight-over-eight wood windows that are boarded over. A band course, bearing egg and dart and wave moulding, completes the first floor level. Stone sills and splayed stone flat arches with emphasized keystones adorn the multi-paned windows at the second floor. A centrally located flag pole, supported by a console stone, projects above these windows. Eight-over-eight wood windows with full triple header brick arches and emphasized keystones appear at the third floor. The attic level, as defined by the central pediment, bears four small openings. A central window with a triple header arch is flanked by two smaller windows with splayed brick flat arches; these three openings share a stone sill. Above, there is a small, narrow rectangular window. A plain metal pediment, broken at the bottom, caps the building's central section.

At each end of the central portion of the building, there is a downspout with an original cast iron base that is inscribed: "Dietrich Bros., Balto. Md." Adjacent, the projecting walls are

(see Continuation Sheet No. 2)

Owner's Signature Bettyjean Murphy

Date February 8, 1987

NPS Office Use Only

- The National Park Service has determined that these project amendments meet the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation."
- The National Park Service has determined that these project amendments do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation."

Date

National Park Service Authorized Signature

National Park Service Office

CONTINUATION SHEET

B-3938

School No. 142 (former)

NPS Office Use Only

Property Name
Baltimore (City), MarylandHistoric Preservation
Certification Application

Project Number:

Property Address
Bettyjean Murphy/
Owner Name/Social Security or Taxpayer ID Number

Continuation Sheet No. 2

punctuated by narrow, three-pane casement windows with stone sills and splayed stone flat arches with emphasized keystones.

While similar to the central section, the three-bay-wide end sections of the building project further and have narrower windows. In addition, at each floor and at the center of each of the end sections, relatively large masonry openings frame eight-over-eight windows flanked by two-over-two lights. At the third floor, these openings feature a segmental arch instead of the full arch that appears at other windows on this level.

Seven bays wide, the side elevations of the building are otherwise similar to the front. (See photo no. 7) The side entrances are centrally located above granite steps. At Smallwood Street, more steps lead to the entranceway because the site slopes gently down to the east. (See photo 8) Entrance doors are boarded over and flanked by square, fluted pilasters. These support a small cornice and entablature that displays a shield and leafy motif. Above the entrance, within a recessed arch, a window shows interlacing muntins at its upper sash. Directly above, an arched, sixteen-over-twelve window provides light to the central side stairwell. The entrance bay of each side elevation is flanked by windows that are similar in style to the front facade; however, the third floor arches do not have defined keystones.

The rear elevation is distinguished by large metal fire escapes, covered with corrugated metal, that project from the inner bays of the end building sections. (See photo no. 9) While similar to the front, the end building sections at the rear lack granite band courses at the basement and emphasized keystones at the third floor arches. The common bond brick, six-bay-wide central building section is bisected by a chimney which projects above the roof line. The eight-over-eight windows have simple flat arches. A lightwell is located at the basement level. On the roof, two hipped dormers are located above a simple gutter at the central building section. Original fluted downspouts are located at the ends of the central section of the rear elevation.

A chain link fence encloses the school's asphalt grounds. The inner block side features a small playground area. Photographs of the building from the early 1960's show trees at the sidewalk in front of the school and a wood fence enclosing the grounds.

(see Continuation Sheet No. 3)

School No. 142 (former)
Property Name
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Property Address
Bettyjean Murphy/
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Continuation Sheet No. 3

This sheet: continues Part 1 continues Part 2 amends Project. NPS Project Number: _____

Rectangular in plan, the interior of the building originally housed twenty-three classrooms; the inclusion of basement space increased the number of classrooms to twenty-six. (See photos nos. 10-14) They are laid out along a central hall that bisects the length of the building and ends in stairways. Eight classrooms are located on each floor; one of the classroom spaces on the first floor may have originally served as the principal's office. A secondary hall runs along the inner side of the projecting end sections. This hall leads to the rear fire escapes and houses partitioned cloakrooms. A large vestibule space is located at the front entrance of the building. (See photo no. 15) Two first floor classrooms in the center of the building are separated by a series of panelled doors which apparently could be opened to create a large assembly hall. (See photo 16) Much of the wood strip interior flooring remains. The ceilings of halls, stairways and classrooms are of decorative pressed tin throughout, in a variety of patterns. The walls are plaster with tounge and groove wainscotting in the halls and stairways. (See photo no. 17) The cloakrooms along the secondary halls have tounge and groove wood partitions. Most of the hall doors are panelled wood with a large upper pane of glass and a glass transom. Connecting doors between rooms lack the glass pane and transom. A few flush wood doors have been added near the stairways. Door and window frames are plain. The vestibule area features panelled wood wainscotting and double doors with a four-pane transom and five-pane sidelights. The entrance to the hall is decorated with pilasters and a dentilled cornice. Arched passageways appear within the halls. (See photo no. 18) Classrooms feature slate chalkboards and wood bookcases. Stem-mounted fluorescent fixtures provide light. Many large iron radiators remain.

In general, the condition of the interior is poor. Many of the tin ceilings are rusted or dilapidated with peeling paint. Trash is strewn in classrooms and halls. Some flooring has buckled in a few classrooms. Vandalism is evidenced by the many broken windows. Despite this deterioration, most of the original architectural features survive.

Owner's Signature

Bettyjean Murphy

Date

February 8, 1987

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National Park Service Office

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CONTINUATION SHEET

School No. 142 (former)

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Baltimore (City), Maryland

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Project Number:

Continuation Sheet No. 4

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

From 1816 until 1883, North Avenue was the northern boundary of Baltimore City. When the City expanded in that year to take in 23 square miles of land to the north and west, it created a need to construct more schools to meet the demands of the population growth in outlying areas. The Robert W. Coleman School, originally known as School No. 62, was built in 1903, replacing a structure on Payson Street. School No. 62 occupied land that was formerly part of the estate known as "Causeway", owned by J. Leroy White. The school served the rowhouse community which was spreading to the east and south. When it was built, there were no rowhouses to the west for five blocks, nor any houses between the school and the Mondawmin estate directly to the north. (See attached maps.)

School No. 62 was one of four Baltimore City public school buildings whose construction was authorized by the Mayor and City Council in 1902 and completed by the Building Department in 1903. Elementary Schools Nos. 62, 74, 83, and 84 were described collectively in the School Board's Annual Report of 1903 as "large brick buildings, three stories in height above a good basement; [and] well planned following more or less closely the arrangement of classrooms, corridors and stairways as was provided in School No. 47". Described as "nearly ideal in all the essentials of good arrangement", School No. 47 of 1898 was rated exemplary of "class no. 1, modern" design. Basic features common to each of the five building plans include the location of entrances at front, center and at each end; the placement of stairways at the ends of wide corridors, purported to eliminate the need for fire escapes; well lighted classrooms, sized generally to allow the optimum amount of space per child; and cloakrooms, "drinking water" and lavatories conveniently placed. Although the architectural appearance of Schools Nos. 62 and 74 was described in the report as exceeding that of Schools Nos. 83 and 84, generally, each building displayed the simplicity, symmetry, and pleasing proportions that were said to denote good design.

John Hughes, Jr., was the contractor for Schools Nos. 62 and 74. Construction costs were \$64,872 and \$69,029 respectively. According to the "Baltimore Sun" of May 3, 1902, the metal ceilings cost \$1,552 and the heating and ventilation systems, provided by Crook, Horner and Company, cost \$5,575 at each school.

Benjamin B. Owens became Supervisor of School Buildings in 1900;

(see Continuation Sheet No. 5)

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he served until 1910. The report referenced above reflects his values. In his former post as the City's Inspector of Buildings, 1896-1897, his second annual report proudly stated:

"In designing the school buildings and engine-houses erected by this department during the last two years, it has been our aim to secure the desired results by the employment of the most efficient means available. Architects of recognized ability and experience only have been selected to prepare the designs. The planning and arrangement of schools and engine-houses have had the most careful consideration by the departments interested, and, after acceptance by them, the entire design of each building has been submitted to the Art Commission for its criticism, and not until its approval is given are the drawings placed in the builder's hands."

Thus, the designs of the late-nineteenth century buildings that Supervisor Owens cites in 1903 as examples of good school-house architecture would have been developed following the procedure he described during his term as Inspector of Buildings. Indeed, distinguished architects, Wyatt and Nolting, were selected to design the earlier School No. 47. In 1898, Buildings Inspector Everett J. Dowell, Esq., called it "a model in every appointment . . ." rivaling ". . . in every detail similar structures in any of our more advanced sister cities".

In 1902, however, the designs of schools were prepared in the office of then Inspector of Buildings Edward D. Preston, without benefit of architect except, presumably, by emulation. Preston was a respected builder. Educated in Baltimore City public schools, he started to learn the construction business at age 17 under the supervision of William Williams. Between 1874 and 1891, he worked in the firm of William T. Markland and

(see Continuation Sheet No. 6)

Owner's Signature

Bettyjean Murphy

Date

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Continuation Sheet No. 6

Brother, becoming owner of the business after the deaths of William and Charles Markland. He supervised the construction of various notable buildings, including the Strouse Brothers Building at Lombard and Paca Streets as well as the Marburg Building at Charles and Conway Streets. His term as Buildings Inspector, from 1900 to 1910, coincided with the initiation of the progressive movement in the public school system. Appropriately, as reported in an article of unknown source, one of Preston's two goals was "to make [his office] independent of all politics".

Mayor Hayes and Buildings Inspector Preston took office just before the School Board was organized in 1900, inheriting the persistent problem of overcrowded schools and inadequate funds. According to the "Architects and Builders Journal" of November, 1901, Mayor Hayes considered Buildings Inspector Preston "as good an architect as the City needs . . ." declaring that ". . . all plans for public buildings should be prepared at his office". Indeed, the use of municipal employees to design public buildings was a cost savings measure adopted by the City of Baltimore periodically in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The "Baltimore Sun" of July 29, 1903, explained, "This system is an economical plan as the money which would have to be paid to architects would amount to a very considerable sum, and it is deemed wiser to spend the money on the buildings, themselves, rather than on architects."

However, this practice drew vigorous objections from local architects. The Baltimore chapter of the American Institute of Architects directed an official protest to Mayor Hayes that was printed in the "Architects and Builders Journal" of December, 1901. To summarize:

" . . . our action hereby is in no way whatever a criticism of the work of our present most excellent building inspector . . . We hold, however, that the incumbent of that position must necessarily be entirely occupied by the legitimate work of his own department, and there should not be submitted to him the designing or supervising of any new city work such as we have referred to."

Preston countered in his annual report of 1901, stating:

"It is to be regretted this course has been adversely criticised by some architects and unwarranted statements made as to the duties of the Inspector of Buildings, but they are evidently unacquainted with the law regulating expenditures of money."

(see Continuation Sheet No. 7)

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"There are in Baltimore professional architects who will equal any in the country . . . who have become proficient in construction as well as drawing. These gentlemen are indifferent apparently as to who makes building plans, as their professional engagements are such as to keep them engaged at all times. But several who have not been able to impress the public as architects, and not able to get above a mere picture, have diverged from the path of such study as might place them where they would like to be, and are proclaiming what are the duties of city officers without even having enough energy to read the whole law."

Preston added that the bureaucracy attendant to awarding building designs to architects would lead to delays and confusion. The municipal design of public school buildings gave way to architects, at least for a few years, by 1908.

School No. 62 remains a good representative of public school architecture as well as the particular skills of Edward D. Preston and his staff. The building is remarkably intact considering its age and former function, retaining many important architectural elements from the turn of the century. These include terracotta entrances, multi-pane wood windows, prominent metal cornice, decorative band courses, rusticated brick work, some of the fluted downspouts, and all of the iron boots which are inscribed with the manufacturer's name, Dietrich Brothers. An awkward element, such as the central pediment that disturbs the strong continuity of the cornice, may betray the lack of a trained architectural designer.

The City Charter of 1899 resulted in fundamental reform of Baltimore's public schools. Under the old system, each school had been controlled by its local committee politics, without

(see Continuation Sheet No. 8)

Owner's Signature

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coordination between schools or districts. The new law resulted in Baltimore's first Department of Education and a Board of School Commissioners, organized in March, 1900, that served as the central governing authority. In the Mayor's Message of 1902, he declared that his administration had honored its promise to divorce public schools from the political domain, adding that "the standard of public education has been elevated".

In 1903, School No. 62 and its contemporaries were the first schools to open under the new system. These new facilities provided fresh environments for a progressive curriculum. For example, preparatory classes, a publicized innovation of the previous year, had been introduced only at School No. 1 but was extended in 1903 to Schools Nos. 62 and 74 to accommodate the demand. These classes enabled brighter pupils to take Latin and a modern language along with their regular courses. While credit for these studies would save time in high school, the objective was to capitalize on a child's facility to retain a language and, therefore, master it at an early age.

Census field books from 1900 and 1910, indicate that many German immigrants lived in the surrounding community when the school was constructed. Despite the distinctive German character of the population, the majority of the residents were born in the United States and employed as skilled workers, such as carpenters, painters, butchers, roofers, and shirtmakers. A few Irish immigrants lived in the area in 1900. By 1910, at least one Italian family and one Jewish family lived nearby. (The census does not indicate religious background, but a Russian immigrant was characterized as "Yiddish".) Clearly, the school was an important center for the community in assimilating immigrant families into American culture.

While Baltimore's public school system was created in 1828, it was not until 1902 that the Board appointed a committee to develop names and numbers for each of the new schools as well as a broader list of names appropriate to all other City public school buildings. The school at Walbrook Avenue and Smallwood Street was designated No. 69 but soon changed to No. 62 in 1903. In October of that year, it was called "Smallwood", a name appropriate to the building's location and, probably, as suggested in a "Morning Sun" article of February, 1903, honoring "the distinguished Marylander of Revolutionary fame". This may refer to General William Smallwood, 1732-1792, a member of the Maryland Assembly in 1761 and a patriot, who was elected brigadier general by the Continental Congress in 1776. He became major general in 1780 and governor of Maryland from 1785-1788. Evidently, the name

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"Smallwood School" did not become official until sometime between 1910 and 1915 when it first appeared in the "Public School Directory".

As the racial composition of the area's residents shifted from white to black in the mid-twentieth century, the building was underutilized as a so-called "white" school. Thus, in 1951, the remaining white pupils were transferred and School No. 62 became a "colored" elementary school, designated No. 142. Custom, associated with racial segregation, dictated the change to a number of 100 or above. At the same time, the Smallwood name was withdrawn. "Colored" status lasted about three years, during which time it is said to have drawn pupils from all over northwest Baltimore. Later, desegregation permitted pupils of both races to attend.

In 1958, by indirect request of family and friends as well as by enthusiastic student vote, the school was named in honor of Robert W. Coleman, 1877-1946, a distinguished black humanitarian who was blind. Born in Washington, D.C., he spent most of his life in Baltimore, living about one and one-half miles from the school that would honor him. In 1913, determination led to his establishment of the "Maryland Association for the Colored Blind" which resolved to create opportunities for the blind. With an expanded perspective, the organization became "The Association for the Handicapped" and, in 1927, it incorporated. With Robert Coleman as manager and motivator, the organization successfully promoted the introduction of sight conservation classes for colored children which began at School No. 127 in 1928 and later led to the Association's SAVE-A-SIGHT campaign which provided eye glasses or eye-glass repairs to the needy, colored public school children of Baltimore. Tireless efforts resulted in the construction, in 1930, of the Francis M. Wood School for the Handicapped, No. 176, where classes were held for colored

(see Continuation Sheet No. 10)

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children who were deaf or mentally retarded as well as those with vision, orthopedic, and mild lung problems. Robert Coleman pioneered a long campaign to open the School Board to Negroes who would represent the needs of colored school children. A civic leader, Robert Coleman served on the Baltimore Youth Commission as a Mayoral appointee, the Civic Action Committee, the Clean City Campaign Committee, and was chairman of the Citizen's Committee on Problems of the Blind. Today, the Robert W. Coleman Association for the Handicapped continues its fund-raising and, in particular, its provision of eyeglasses to needy school children regardless of race. Mrs. Roberta Keets, daughter of Robert W. Coleman, directs the Association's work from her long-time residence, about four blocks from the school.

As of today, as reported by the Department of Education's Physical Plant, the original Schools Nos. 47, 83, and 84 have been demolished and School No. 74 is in the process of construction, being converted to housing. Vacant since 1980-81, when the replacement school of the same name opened a few blocks away, the former Robert W. Coleman School No. 142 is to be rehabilitated to serve as a residential building for the elderly. This new use is indicative of the adaptability of former school structures. Recently, several nineteenth and early twentieth century schools in Baltimore have been converted to uses ranging from housing for low income and elderly people to luxury apartments, community centers, and artists' studios. In the case of the former School No. 142, many of the original features will be incorporated into the rehabilitation. The National Register listing of this structure will provide essential tax incentives, permitting the sensitive adaptive use of this important school building.

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Coleman School

B-3938

A-2138

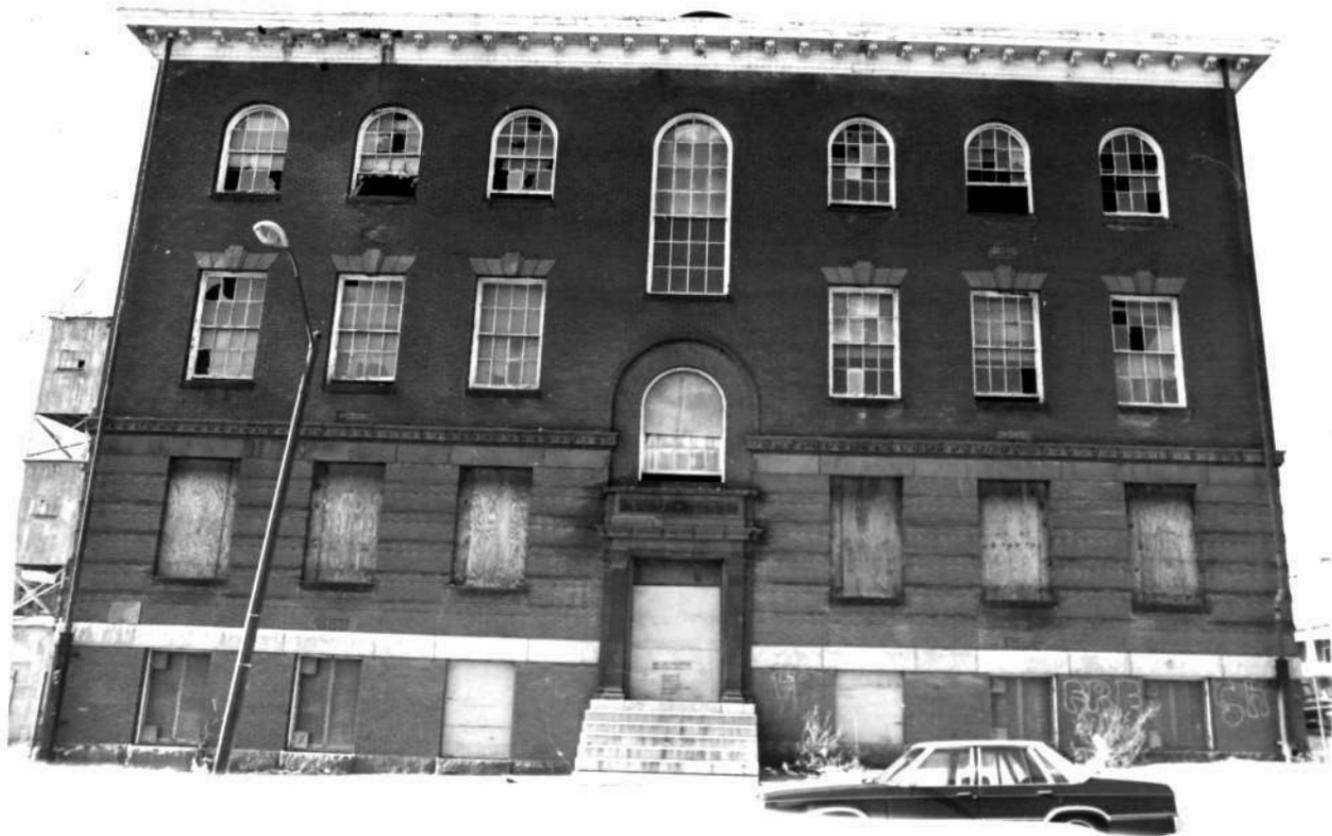
Colman School

Fred Goben

1985

~~SE view~~

NW view



B- 5938

School No. 142 (former)
2201 Walbrook Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland

east elevation
(camera facing west)
January, 1987
8/18



No. 4 - Fire Tower East Side of Building
- Facing West -
Date of Photograph: 12/9/88

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No. 9 - Southeast Corner of Building
Facing Northwest
Date of Photograph: 12/9/88

Colman Thayer
(Robert Colman School)



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No. 12 - East Side of Building
- Facing West -
Date of Photograph: 12/9/88



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No. 14 Original Entrance - Front of
Building
Facing South - Date of Photo: 12/9/88

Robert W. Coleman's School
School No. 142

connected to Coleman's as an Apartment

Robert W. Coleman



B-3938

No. 15 - Northwest Corner
-Facing Southeast
Date of Photograph: 12/9/8

Credit: Maryland Historical Trust

Edman Mauer
(Robert Edman
Sherry)



B-3939

No. 20 - Original Entrance Lobby

Facing North

Date of Photograph: 12/9/88