

B-4475

WILLIAM J. TICKNER & SONS, UNDERTAKERS

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

This building was built in two stages: the first portion, between 1901-14, and the second, after 1928. It is a large-scale, wedged-shaped, brown brick corner building. It is three stories high, and the North Avenue facade is 24 bays long. There is a decorative metal cornice with lions' heads.

D INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM
SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER SURVEY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name William J. Tickner & Sons, Undertakers

other names/site number B-4475

2. Location

street & number 2500-20 Pennsylvania Ave. not for publication ___

city or town Baltimore vicinity N/A
state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510
zip code 21217

3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

4. National Park Service Certification N/A

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
2	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
2	_____ Total

MSDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
(William J. Tickner & Sons, Undertakers)
(Baltimore City, MD)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: FUNERARY Sub: mortuary

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE Sub: business

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Patterned Brick Commercial

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, STONE: marble
roof
walls BRICK
other STONE: marble, METAL

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance See continuation sheet.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Other
Ethnic Heritage

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(William J. Tickner & Sons, Undertakers)
(Baltimore City, MD)

Period of Significance 1901-40

Significant Dates 1901-14
post-1928

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Lucius R. White

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Maps

Bromley, G.W. and Co. Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Vol. 1. Philadelphia: 1885, 1896.
Hopkins, G.M. Map of the City of Baltimore, Maryland. 1876, 1877.
Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps, Baltimore, Maryland, Vols. 2,3, and 7. New York: 1890, 1901, 1914, 1928.
Simmons, Isaac. 1852 Revision of the Thomas H. Poppleton Map. Baltimore: 1852.

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .330 acres

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(Baltimore City, MD)

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UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	—	—	—	3	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Block 3405, Lot 1

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The boundaries are based on a city lot(s) retaining original property lines.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Jo Lampl & Kay Fanning/Architectural Historians
 organization Robinson & Associates date July 1992
 street & number 1710 Connecticut Ave., NW telephone (202) 234-2333
 city or town Washington state DC zip code 20009

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
 name Tickner United Partnership
 street&number P.O. Box 1504 telephone _____
 city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21203

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 5 & 6 Page 1

William J. Tickner & Sons,
Undertakers
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance;
Modern Period

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape
Architecture, and Community Planning; Economic

Resource Type:

Category: building(s)

Historic Environment: urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): commerce

Known Design Source: Lucius R. White

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National Park Service

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Section 7 Page 1

William J. Tickner & Sons,
Undertakers
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DESCRIPTION

A long-standing neighborhood institution, this large-scale corner building is a fixture at the prominent intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and North Street, being one of the few buildings of its era remaining at the actual intersection. Unlike most undertaking establishments, the building neither resembles nor occupies a large, suburban home; instead, it is designed as a commercial block. Only the large ground-floor hearse bays (now storefronts) betrayed its original, more specialized function.

The building was constructed in two stages: the first portion, between 1901 and 1914, and the second portion--the actual wedge at the corner--at some point after 1928 when the corner bank building was demolished. The addition continued the vocabulary already established in the building and addressed the intersection with a corner re-entrant angle. (See attached.)

As it stands today, the building is three stories high, and the facade on North Avenue is twenty-four bays long. It features patterned brown-brick screen walls, fixed plate-glass windows, and aluminum storefronts. The brick patterning adds a level of interest to the wall surface. The many examples include: side elevations composed of Flemish bond; a beltcourse made of three soldier courses; and piers made by aligning mortar joints to form vertical edges. Other decorative elements include cast-stone beltcourses at the sill and lintel levels of the second and third stories and recessed brick spandrels below the second-floor window openings.

The denticulated metal cornice has lions' head cresting and diamonds (in the frieze) which are stacked above each wall pier.

The company garage is today incorporated into the complex at 2614-20 Bruce Street. Most of the entire rear portion of this complex is the original Tickner garage. (See attached Sanborn Map, 1914.) Its condition requires further investigation, but unless substantially diminished in integrity, is considered a contributing part of the Tickner business complex.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

William J. Tickner & Sons,
Undertakers
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and StateSIGNIFICANCE

William J. Tickner was born in England and emigrated to Baltimore, where he worked as a cabinetmaker for the Knabe Piano Manufacturing Company in South Baltimore. In the last quarter of the 19th century, the high infant mortality rate caused mothers in Tickner's South Baltimore neighborhood to ask him to build caskets for their infants. Recognizing that he could combine this skill with the actual burial practice itself, Mr. Tickner started an undertaking establishment in South Baltimore on Paca Street in 1872. By the time the business closed c. 1966, it had the best reputation in the city; a former Tickner Funeral Director, Jack B. Cain, recalled: "Anyone of any prominence was buried by Tickner's."

The business' early success in South Baltimore led to a removal of the family establishment to Edmondson Avenue, and then, roughly at the turn of the century, to Penn-North. The Tickner family lived in Walbrook, not far from this northwestern section of the city.

In the 1930s, when Jack Cain began working for Tickner's, most of the clientele arrived by streetcar. (See attached historic photograph. "Syfer's," in the background, was a competitor right next door.) People from all over the city could patronize Tickner's because of the multiple streetcar lines that passed through the Pennsylvania/North intersection. As this citywide clientele grew, so did the Tickner building. In approximately 1940, the Union Trust Bank at the corner of Pennsylvania and North was demolished, and Tickner's expanded. The addition was designed by the architect of the original building, noted Baltimore architect Lucius R. White. White added approximately a dozen private viewing rooms to the building in a nearly seamless addition in the same patterned brick style of the original building. Consolidated Engineering did the construction work. In 1955, a \$1 million remodeling added even more rooms to the building, making for 22 private rooms.

For most of its years of operation, Tickner's was the largest funeral home in the city. It handled approximately 1800 to 2200 funerals per year. It served every religious denomination and all cemeteries. Many of Tickner's

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burials took place at Loudon Park, New Cathedral, Druid Ridge, and Greenmount Cemeteries. A small number of Jewish families buried their members through Tickner's. These were primarily German Jews who lived out in the Park Heights neighborhood. (The orthodox Jews patronized Jack Lewis and Saul Levinson's funeral home establishments instead.) African Americans did not patronize Tickner's, however, primarily because there were several African-American-owned funeral homes in the neighborhood.

According to Art Queen, former apprentice and employee of the company, the business was so well-run that it was "next to perfect." Each of the private rooms was outfitted with oriental rugs and telephone service. Maid service was available for each family. Water was served from silver pitchers into crystal glasses. Limousines were chauffeur driven by drivers in livery.

The method for housing first the horse-drawn hearses, then the automobile hearses, was a state-of-the-art operation at Tickner's. The company's garage was built c. 1901-14 behind the 1700 block of North Avenue, between North Fulton and Butcher's Lane. A large stables was located adjacent to the garage on the west. Hearses would exit via a driveway at 1722 North Avenue. (Above the driveway was a dwelling.)

Another example of the "perfect organization" at Tickner's was the means by which the company organized the automobile processions. Family members and friends attending the funeral would drive up Pennsylvania Avenue and enter the building in their cars via open bays on the first floor. Once inside, cars would line up for the procession, then exit out of the building via a wide bay on North Avenue.

Out of the cars and inside the building proper, the program was equally orchestrated. A person entering the building at the corne of Pennsylvania and North Avenue stepped in an elegant foyer area with a grand Oriental rug. Off this foyer were two rooms - a large and small reposing room. A Funeral Director handled each funeral, and the Directors paired up to share 15-18 man crews to do all the work, including the religious work. The company did not use the services of churches or religious houses of worship.

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Undertakers
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Gradually, as the economy of the neighborhood declined, Tickner's sought to retain its strong business by moving to Towson, but could not obtain the necessary zoning approvals for an undertaking establishment. As a result, the fourth-generation Tickner family decided to sell the business to a Jewish-owned undertaking firm in Pittsburgh. This resulted in the closing down of Tickner's between 1966-67. The company's records were transferred to Jenkins Funeral Home, which was the recipient of most of Tickner's business in Baltimore. Unfortunately, a gentleman with the Pittsburgh concern purchased all of the Tickner Company records and, upon his death a few years ago, all of the company records disappeared.

Most of the Tickner family is buried in a large family plot in Druid Ridge Cemetery. Some Tickner family members still live in Baltimore today.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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William J. Tickner & Sons,
Undertakers
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interviews, July 9, 1992, with:

Jack B. Cain, former Tickner's Funeral Director (c. 1938-66), retired employee of Mitchell's Funeral Home, York Road.

Art Queen, former Tickner's apprentice and employee, currently of Loring Buyers Funeral Home, Liberty Road, Reiserstown.

Bill Davis, Jenkins Funeral Home.

SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER/PENN-NORTH
RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY FORM

Survey No. B-4475

Neg. No. 8/8

Historic Name William J. Tickner & Sons, Undertakers

Current Name/Use _____

Address(es) 2500-20 Pennsylvania Avenue

Resource/Property Type

- Rowhouses
 Commercial Structure
 Public/Institutional Building
 Public Housing
 Site
 Other

Attached

Freestanding

Note: _____

Stories 3

Primary Material brick Secondary Material stone, metal

Roof Form ?flat

No. of Bays in Unit/Facade ? If Rowhouse: Flat Front Swell Front Porch

Window Type: Double-Hung
 1/1 Sash
 2/2 Sash
 2/1 Sash
 Other Sash
 Transom

Door Type: Single-Leaf
 Double-Leaf
 Number of panels (if visible)
 Transom

Architectural Style Patterned Brick Commercial Date c. 1901-14; post-1928

Noteworthy Features: A longstanding neighborhood institution, this building was constructed in two stages, the first 1901-1914. After 1928 a corner bank was demolished, and the building was extended out to the corner of Pennsylvania and North. Commercial block with patterned brick screen walls, fixed plate windows and display windows, stone beltcourses. Denticulated cornice with lions' head cresting. The facade on North Avenue is 24 bays long.

Alterations: Formstone Stucco
 Vinyl/Aluminum Window/Door Changes
 Awnings Missing Cornice Elements
 First-Floor Use Change Other: _____

Status: Occupied Vacant Mixed

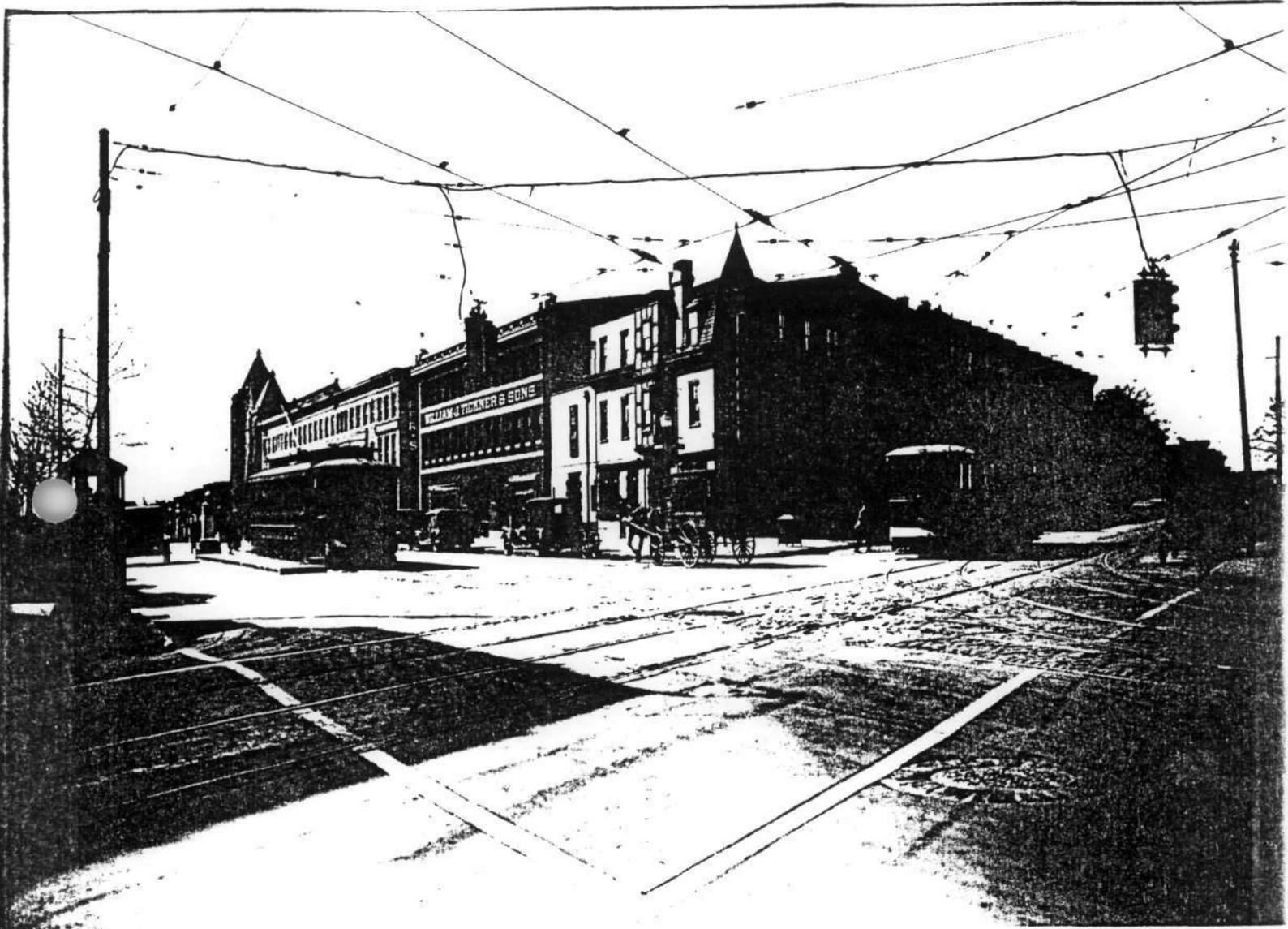
NR Evaluation: Contributing Non-Contributing

Recommended for Intensive Level: Yes No

Surveyor: Joey Lampl

Affiliation: Robinson & Associates

Date: February-April 1992

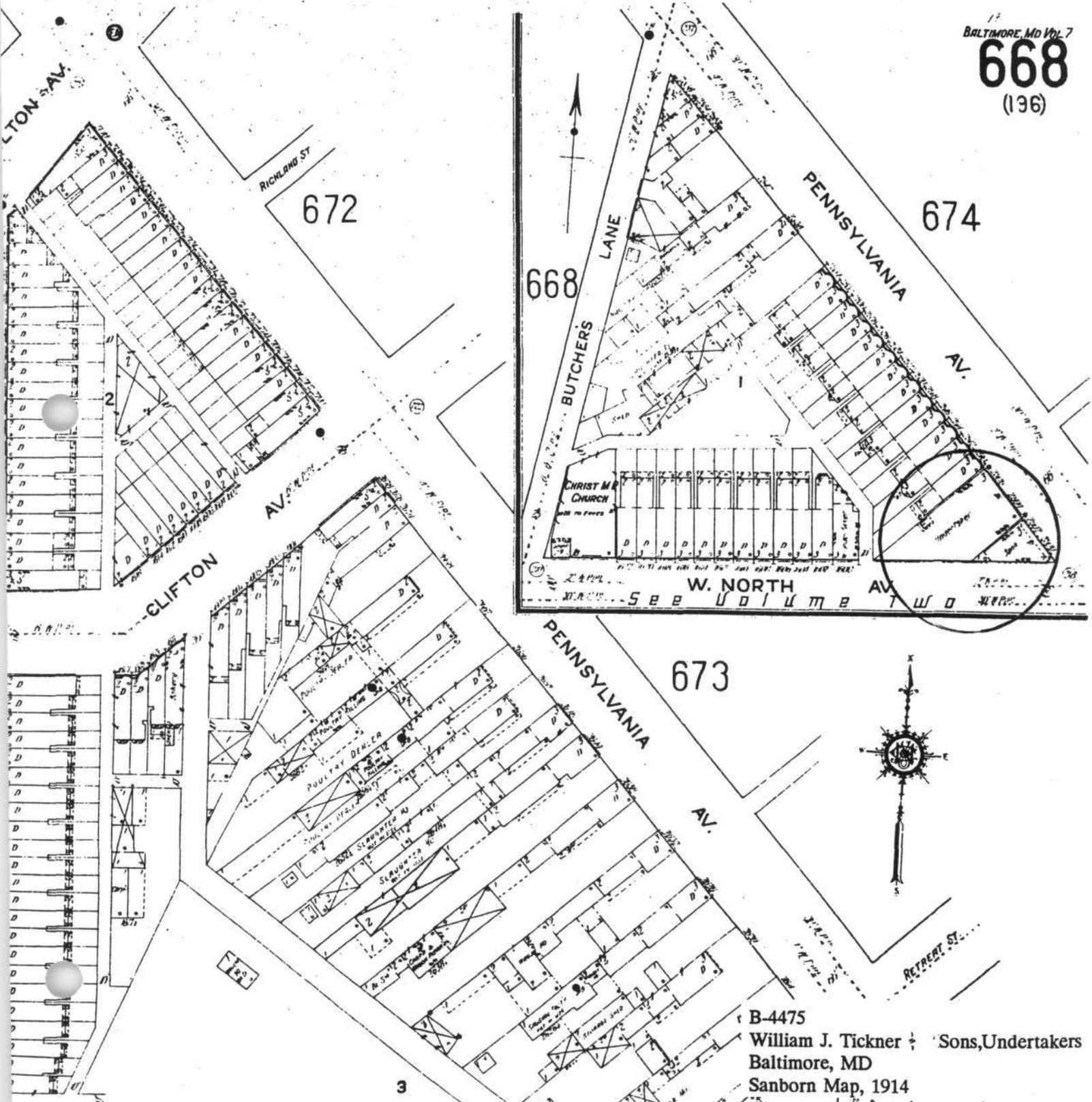


75. The always busy crosstown No. 13 streetcar stops for a passenger at North and Pennsylvania avenues in the early 1920s. The William J. Tickner & Sons funeral parlor was once one of the largest undertaking businesses in the city.

1920s Photograph of Tickner's (Jacques Kelly, The Pratt Library Album, Baltimore Neighborhoods In Focus, 1986)

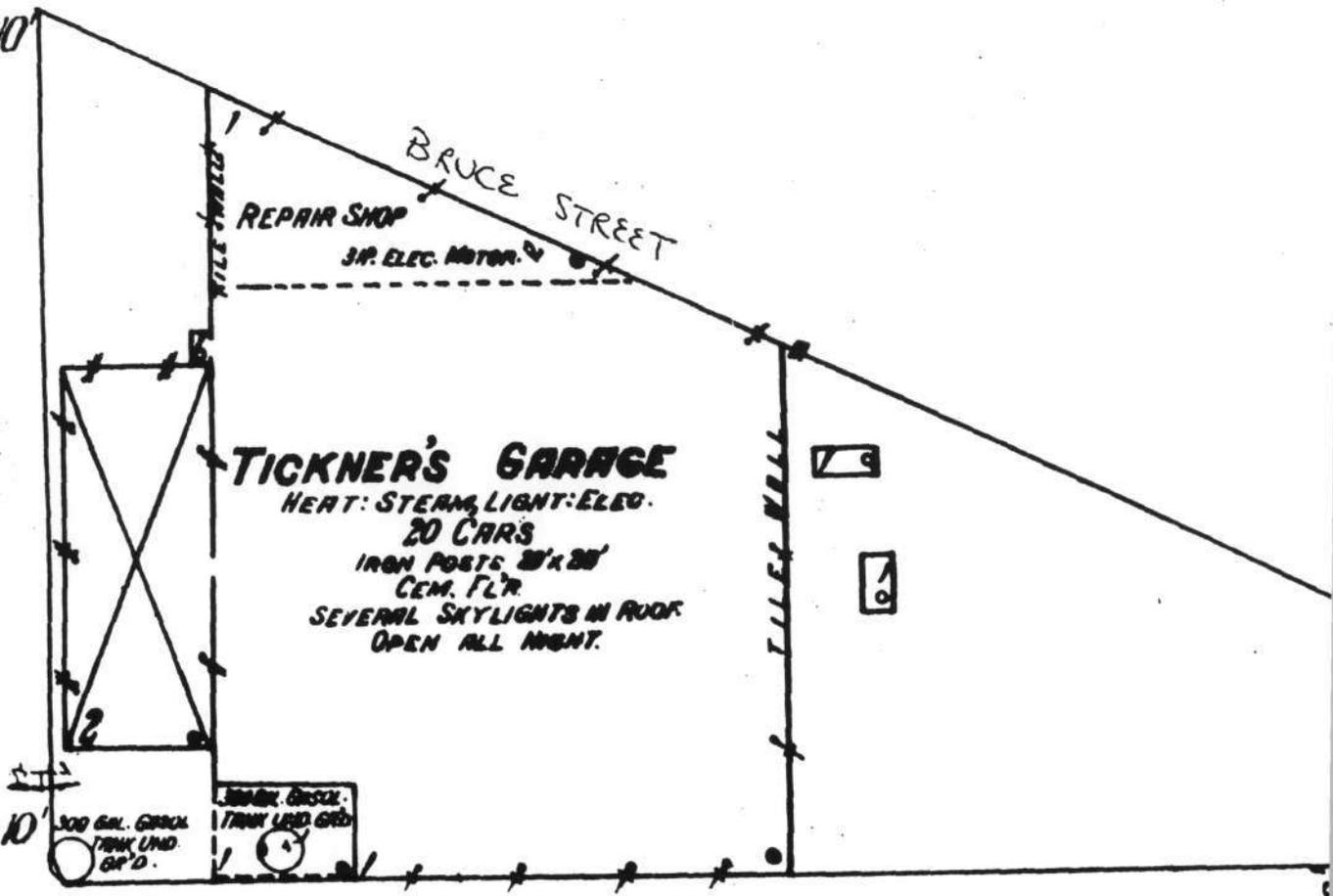
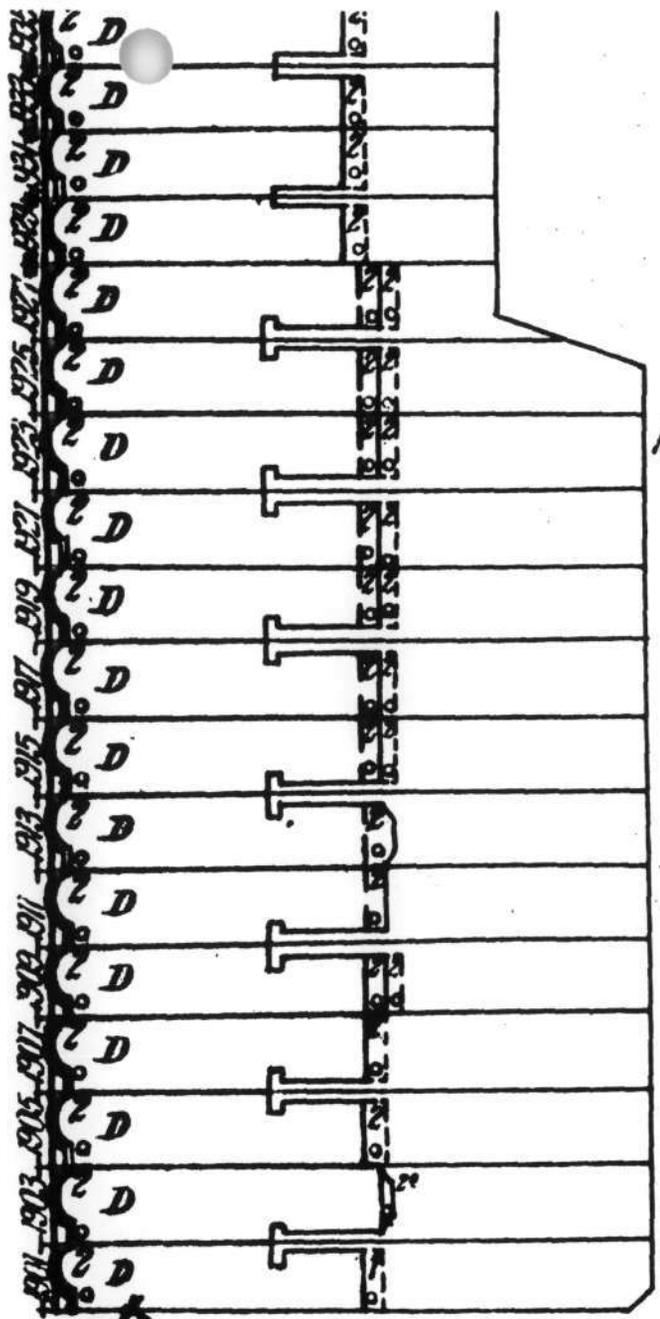
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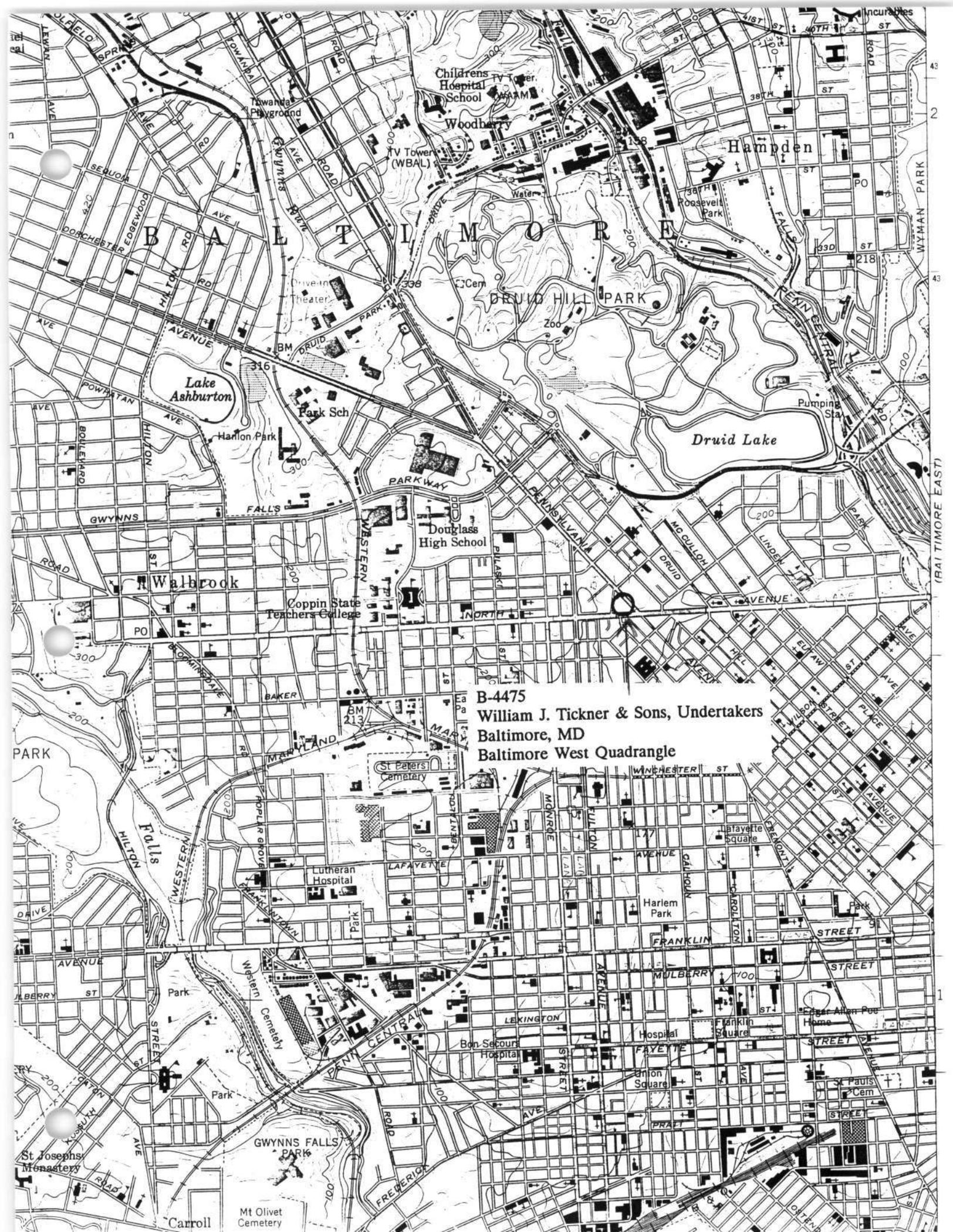


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 William J. Tickner & Sons, Undertakers
 Baltimore, MD
 Sanborn Map, 1914

FULTON AVENUE



B-4475
 William J. Tickner & Sons, Undertakers
 Baltimore, MD
 Sanborn Map, 1914



B-4475
William J. Tickner & Sons, Undertakers
Baltimore, MD
Baltimore West Quadrangle



SANDTOWN - WINCHESTER / PENN - NORTH

#B-4475

BALTIMORE, MD

ELIZABETH QO LAMPL

MARCH 1992

CITY OF BALTIMORE, COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

WILLIAM Q. TICKNER & SONS UNDERTAKERS: HISTORIC

2500 BLOCK PENNSYLVANIA AVE. (CORNER OF PENNSYLVANIA & NORTH)

SOUTH ELEVATION

ROLL 8 / NEG 8