

#B-986

AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL COMPANY

Statement of Significance

The complex of buildings that today comprises the operations of the American Agricultural Chemical Company in Canton is significant because it houses one of Baltimore's oldest industries. The fertilizer industry has played an important role in Baltimore's industrial development. Baltimore has not only been the world center of the fertilizer industry, first natural and then artificial since the beginnings of the industry, but has the distinction of being the birthplace of the first artificial fertilizer. The buildings still remaining on the AGRICO site were all designed with the peculiar characteristics of the fertilizer industry in mind.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

American Agricultural Chemical Company

AND/OR COMMON

AAGRICO

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2207 So. Clinton Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME American Agricultural Chemical Co.

Telephone #: 301-276-8100

STREET & NUMBER

(same as above)

CITY, TOWN

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore City Courthouse

Liber #: RHB 2899

Folio #: 534

STREET & NUMBER

Calvert & Fayette Sts.

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore,

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The AGRICO complex is a combination of manufacturing and storage structures, some of which date back to the late 19th century. The oldest are the large barn-like buildings used to store bulk raw materials and products. Because fertilizer is a water-soluble substance it has always been stored under cover. There are several such structures on the AGRICO site, the earliest having been constructed in the 1880s when that part of the complex belonged to the Canton Chemical Company. This building has its axis perpendicular to Clinton Street. It is a two-story post and beam timber frame covered with wooden siding and asphalt "brick-tex" (added recently) which covers the bottom of the large piles stored inside.

Perpendicular to this building are two later buildings which serve a similar function but with far different morphology. These structures are of heavy timbers in a gambrelled A-frame configuration peculiar to the fertilizer industry.

The manufacturing facilities for the production of super-phosphate fertilizers were housed in the brick structures along Clinton Street and the adjacent timber-frame building. Phosphate mined in Florida and overseas arrived by ship and were stored in the wooden structure. When needed they were moved by conveyor to a mixing tank where they were combined with sulphuric acid to produce a substance with an abundance of available phosphorus. The brick building with adjacent smokestack housed the boilers and generators which provided power for the operation. A small machine shop for repairs was also contained in this building.

Across Clinton Street, a large acid plant with massive lead tanks produced the necessary sulphuric acid. This structure is now gone. An interesting small brick storage building with the remnants of the conveyor system remains, as does a more modern office building.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings in the Agrico complex are significant in that they house one of Baltimore oldest businesses. The fertilizer industry has played an important role in Baltimore's industrial development. Baltimore has not only been the world center of the fertilizer industry, first natural and then artificial since the beginnings of the industry, but has the distinction of being the birthplace of the first artificial fertilizer. The buildings still remaining on the AGRICO site (oldest, 1880s), were all designed with the peculiar characteristics of the fertilizer industry in mind.

History

The structure now part of the headquarters of the Baltimore fertilizer complex, known as Agrico, was originally built to house the Chemical Company of Canton. A group of Baltimore businessmen, Charles J. Baker, William G. Harrison, William Davidson and others established the Chemical Company of Canton in 1873; It was soon "one of the principle works of Canton." Known as the Chemical Paint and Varnish Company the business was a general manufacturer of chemicals. In the 1880's the firm began to produce artificial fertilizers and by 1885 it was noted that the company's operations had "been confined (for a number of years) to preparation and distribution of high grade commercial fertilizers." The company was also cited as an "importer of Agricultural Chemicals", in 1898.

The site of the Chemical Company of Canton is a large section of property on Lazaretto Point "covering nearly 4-acres, situated directly on the waterfront with large wharf accomodations, extending thence in depth across Clinton Street to First Street and in width from 9th to 10th Avenue. The buildings are large and commodious and fully equipped with the latest improved machinery and with two acid chambers for the manufacture of sulphuric acid used in the business." (1895 description)

In 1898 the Chemical Company of Canton became part of a "fertilizer trust," named the American Agricultural Company. The trust acquired eight Baltimore plants, including some of the largest in the city at that time: Lazaretto Guano Company, Patapsco Guano Company, Maryland

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Industrial Bureau, "The Story of Fertilizer in Baltimore,"
Baltimore Magazine, (June, 1950), p.17, pp.48-59.

Query and vertical files, Enoch Pratt Free Library
Baltimore, The Gateway to the South (1898), pp.92-93

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ann E. Steele, Linda Daur, Rosalie

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Museum of Industry

DATE

October, 1982

STREET & NUMBER

1415 Key Highway

TELEPHONE

301-727-4808

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21230

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

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

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

#B-986
American Agricultural Chemical Company

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

SIGNIFICANCE

History (cont.)

Fertilizing and Manufacturing Company; Susquehanna Fertilizer Company; Chemical Company of Canton, all clustered together in Canton, Dietrick Fertilizer Works and Zell Guano Company in Locust Point and Slingluff and Company at the foot of Leadenhall Street, (formerly Davidson, Kettlewell and Company). The largest of the works, Lazaretto Guano Company (on nearly 9-acres of land) was made part of the local headquarters with the Chemical Company of Canton, and the plants not adjacent were eventually phased out.

In the early 1900's many advances were made in the fertilizer industry. In 1907 the American Agricultural Company was one of the first local plants to use electricity as motive power. This local plant ranked as one of the city's largest manufacturer of complete fertilizers. The demands of World War I stimulated the fertilizer industry and continued until the depression of the 30's. There was partial recovery in the late 1940's.

In the 1960's Agrico was taken over by the Continental Oil Company as part of a general movement: a "major invasion of the fertilizer field by the petroleum industry", a move which has eliminated many of the plants who found it difficult to compete.

1 SITE I.D. NO

B 9 8 6

HAER INVENTORY

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

2 INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

Manufacturing

3 PRIORITY

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

5 DATE

6 GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT

OWNER

ADMIN

7 OWNER/ADMIN

American Agricultural Chem. Co.

8 NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

American Agricultural Chemical Co.

9 OWNER'S ADDRESS

10 STATE COUNTY

MD

COUNTY NAME

CITY/VICINITY

CONG. DIST

Baltimore

STATE COUNTY

COUNTY NAME

CITY/VICINITY

CONG. DIST

11 SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO.)

2207 So. Clinton St.

12 EXISTING SURVEYS

 NR NHL HABS HAER-1 HAER NPS CL6
 CONF STATE COUNTY LOCAL OTHER

13 SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW)

 INTERIOR INTACT EXTERIOR INTACT ENVIRONS INTACT

14 UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN

18 3647154346960

SCALE 1:24 1:62.5 OTHER

QUAD NAME Balto. East

UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN

SCALE 1:24 1:62.5 OTHER

QUAD NAME

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

16 INVENTORIED BY

Ann Steele, Linda Dawr

AFFILIATION

Baltimore Museum of Industry

DATE

Oct., 1982

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

[See attached st. of significance]

(CONT OVER)

18 ORIGINAL USE

Manufacturing

PRESENT USE

Manufacturing

ADAPTIVE USE

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

Industrial Bureau, "The Story of Fertilizer in Baltimore," Baltimore Magazine
(June, 1950) pp. 17, 48-59

(cont.)

(CONT OVER)

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

21 PRIORITY

22 PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

 YES LIMITED YES UNLIMITED NO UNKNOWN

23 EDITOR INDEXER

24 SITE IN A NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

 NO

NAME

DISTRICT ID NO.

PHOTOS AND SKETCH MAP OF LOCATION

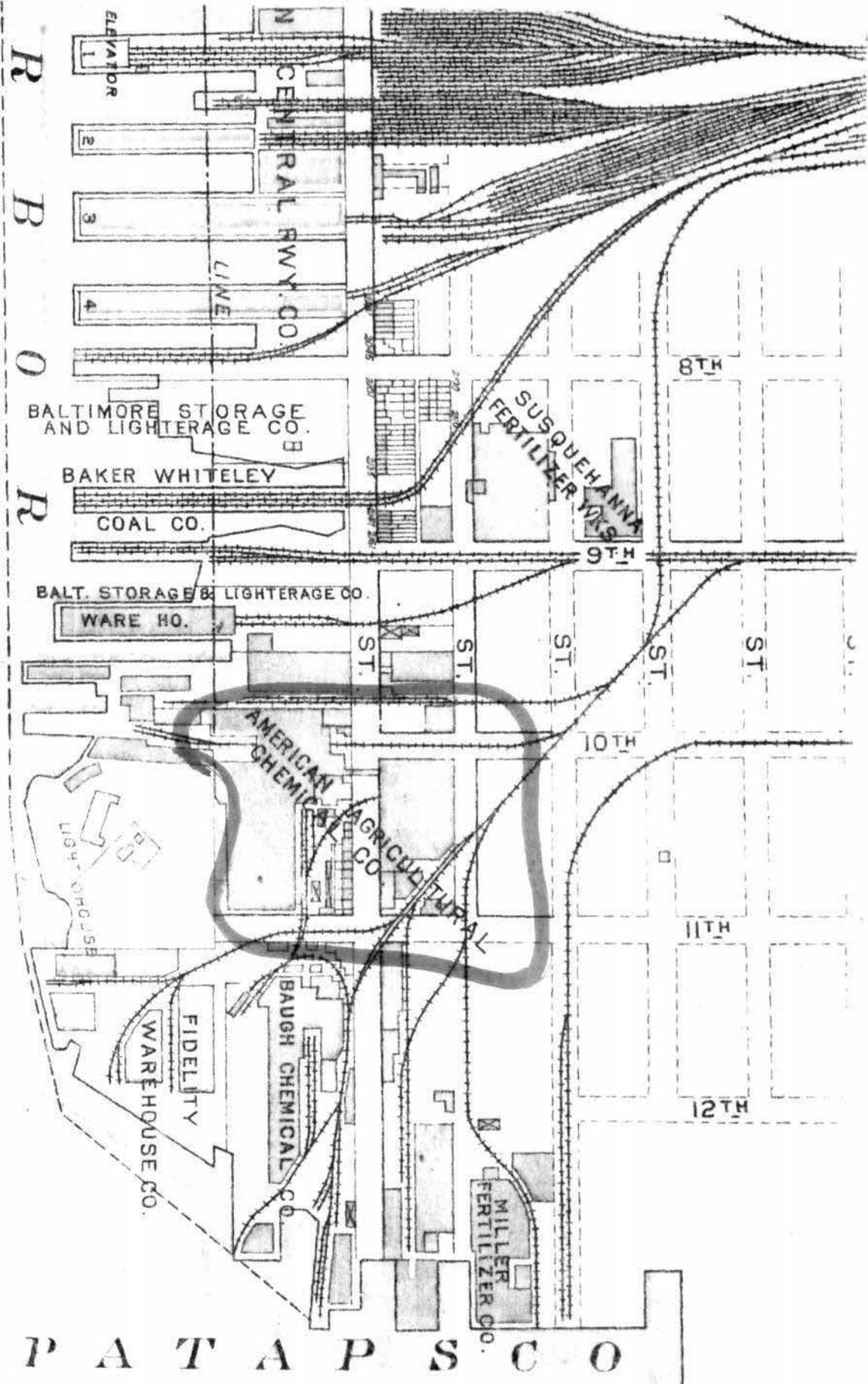
DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

Query + vertical files, Enoch Pratt Free Library
Baltimore, The Gateway to the South (1898), pp. 92-93

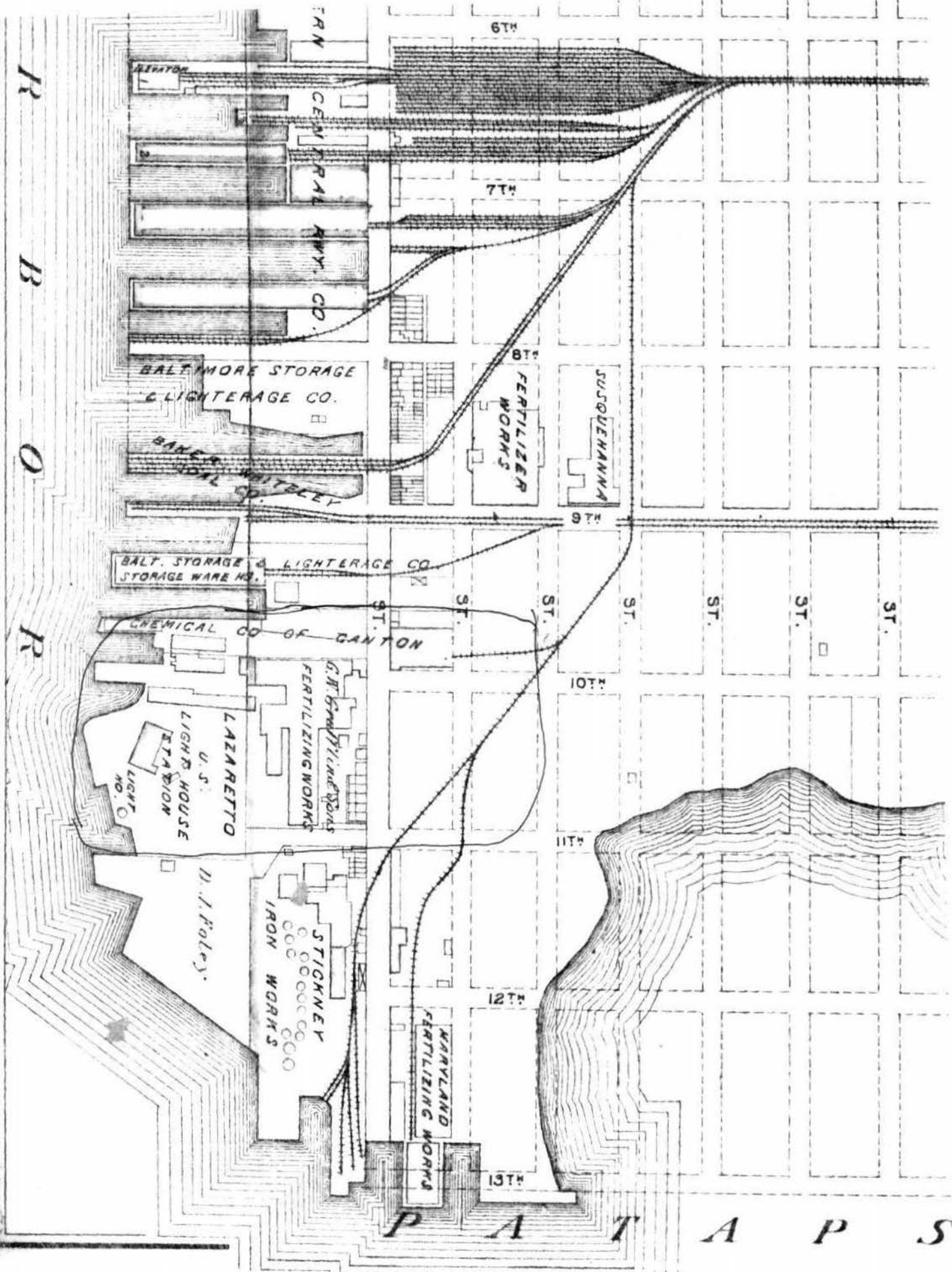
ABSTRACT	HAER NO.	LC	TECH REPORT	HIST REPORT	CONTEMP PHOTO	HIST PHOTO	CONTEMP DRWG	HIST DRWG	COLOR PLATE	PHOTOGRAM	SW	FILM

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AAGRICO
BALTIMORE, MD
1914 Baltimore City Atlas

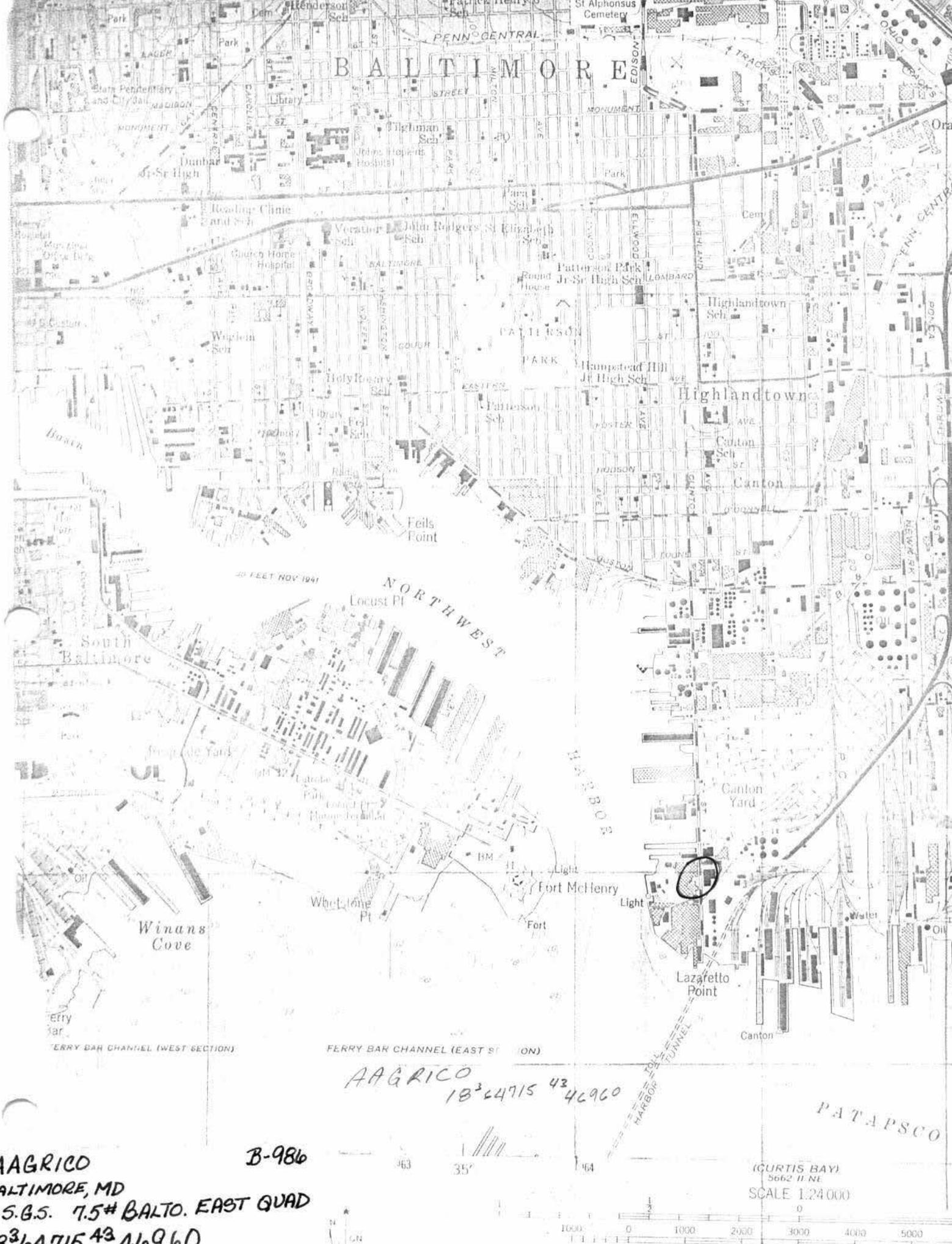
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AAGRICO
 Baltimore City, MD
 Bromley's Baltimore City Atlas, 1896

BALTIMORE



AAGRICO
18³64715 43 46960

AAGRICO
BALTIMORE, MD
U.S.G.S. 7.5# BALTO. EAST QUAD
18³64715 43 46960

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(CURTIS BAY)
5662 II NE
SCALE 1:24 000





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American Agricultural Chemical Co.
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD, Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 Laboratory - South facade



B-986

American Agricultural Chemical Co.
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 North facade



B-986
American Agricultural Chemical Co.

Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 West Facade/Store/bldg.



B-986

American Agricultural Chemical Co.
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 Storage Building/West Fac.



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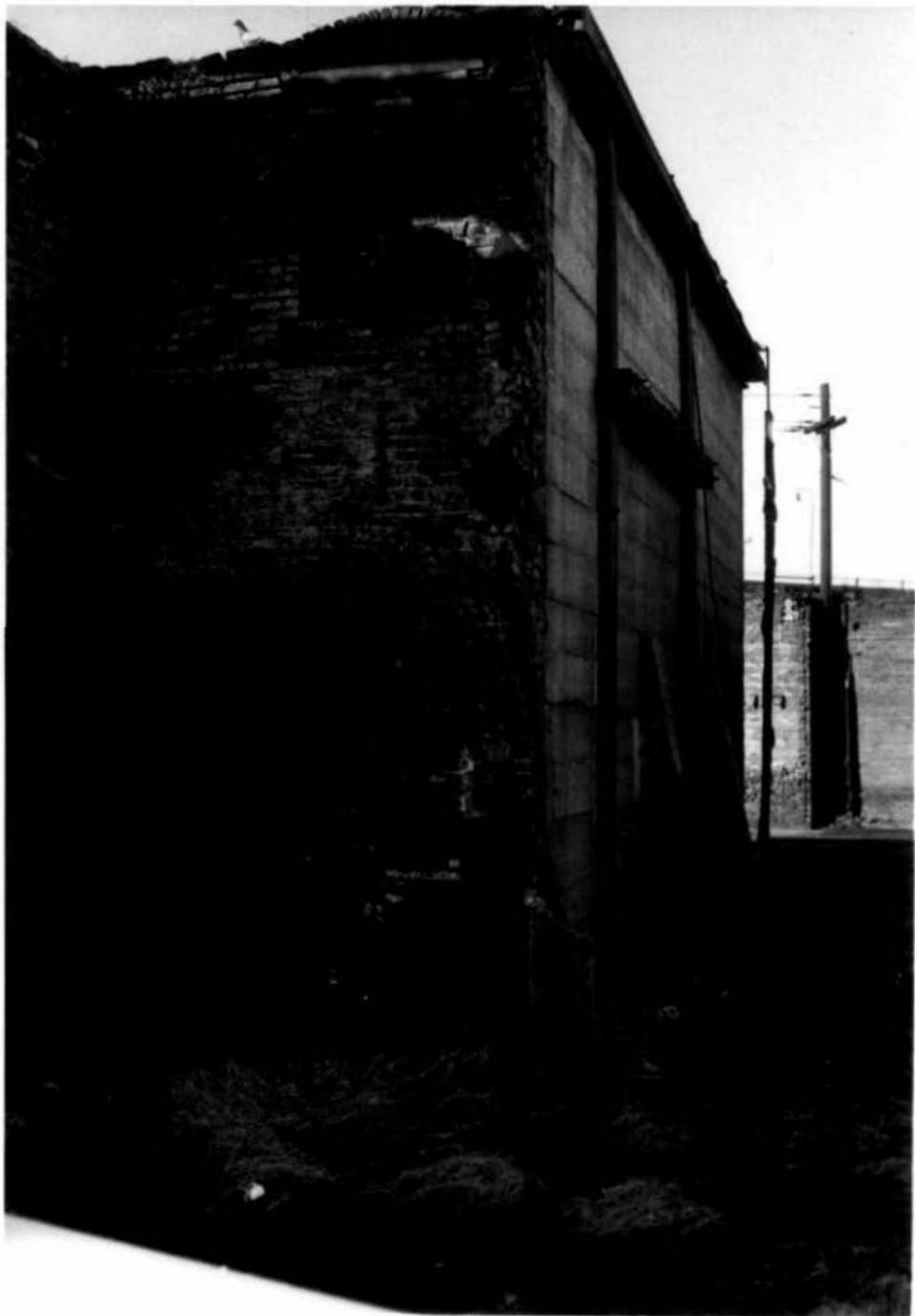
American Agricultural Chemical Co.

Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD. Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 Remains of trestle



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American Agricultural Chemical Co.

Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD. Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 Early Masonry



B-986

American Agricultural Chemical Co.

Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 Looking Northwest



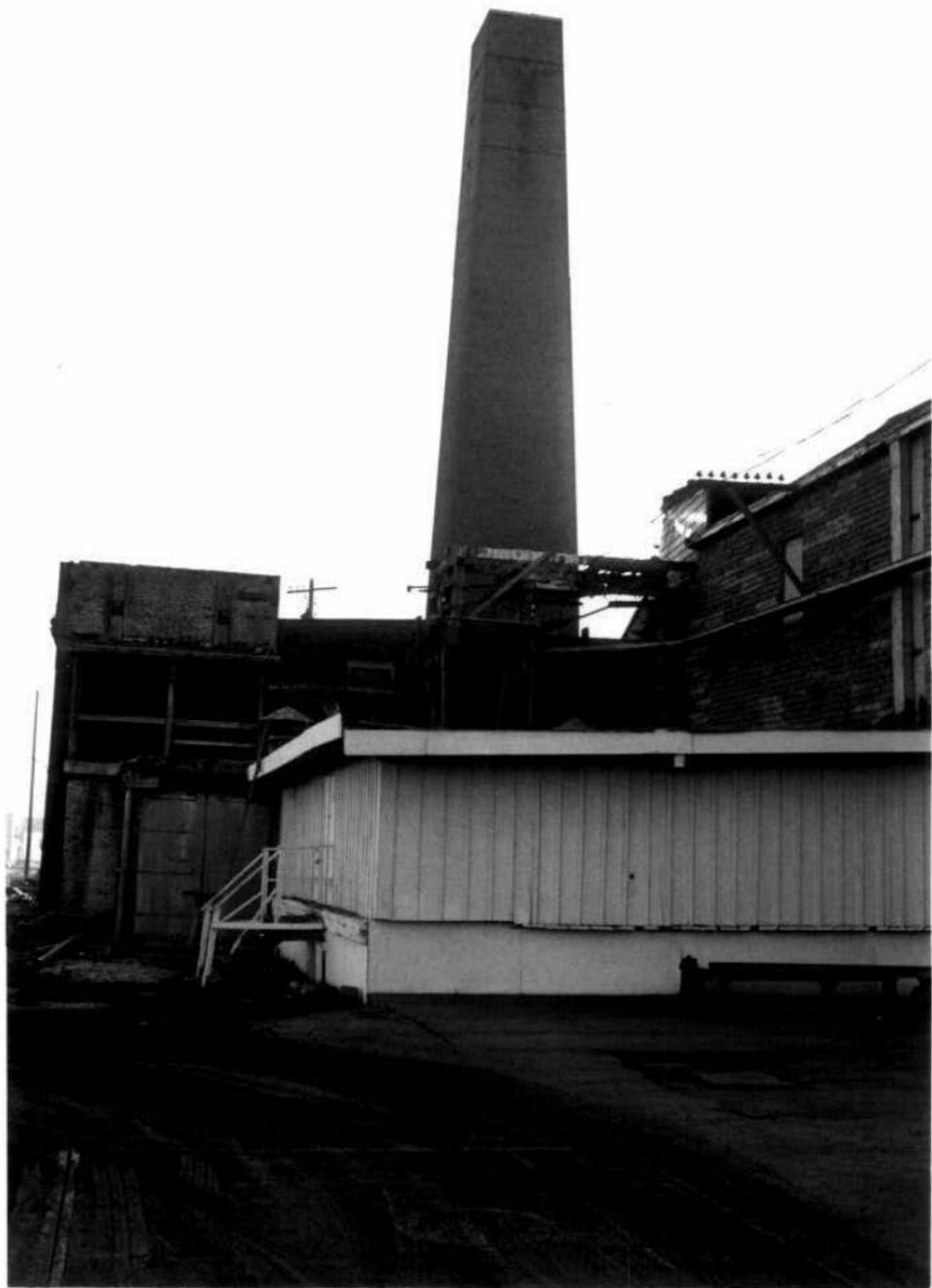
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American Agricultural chemical Co.
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 Looking west



3-986
American Agricultural Chemical Co.

Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 Smokestack - Looking South



B-986

American Agricultural Chemical Co.
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo: Ann Steele

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Dec. 1980 East Facade/Smokestack