

626-628 N. EUTAW STREET (COMMERCIAL BUILDING)  
(Afro-American Company)

HABS No. MD-1070

626-628 N. Eutaw Street and 400-412 Druid Hill Avenue  
on a block bounded by N. Eutaw Street, George Street,  
Jaspar Street, and Druid Hill Avenue  
Baltimore *City*  
Maryland

HABS  
MD  
4-BALT,  
217-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U. S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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MD  
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217-

Location: 626-628 N. Eutaw Street and 400-412 Druid Hill Avenue on a block bounded by N. Eutaw Street, George Street, Jasper Street, and Druid Hill Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland.

U.S.G.S. Baltimore East Quadrangle  
Coordinates: 18-360120-4350720

Present Owner: Eutaw Place Associates Limited Partnership

Present Occupants: Unoccupied

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: These seven buildings housed the headquarters of the Afro-American, the largest and most influential Black newspaper chain in the country. The buildings were built before 1850 and passed through the hands of various private owners and religious institutions (including St. Mary's Seminary, the oldest Catholic theological seminary in the country) before its acquisition by the Afro-American Company from 1920 through 1943. The Afro-American newspaper was established as a regular paper in 1892 by John Henry Murphy and moved into one of the buildings on the site in 1911. When John Murphy died in 1922, the paper was run by his ten children and was then the largest Black newspaper plant in the country with 138 employees and a circulation of 14,000. In the 1930's, the newspaper used the largest printing press ever by a Black paper. By 1943, the company owned all seven structures and was running a circulation of 225,000 papers per week. The Afro-American became a leading voice for racial equality and economic advancement for Black America as well as the nation's pre-eminent outlet depicting Black life from the turn of the century, through the Harlem Renaissance<sup>1</sup> to the Civil Rights Movement.

The Afro-American continued its operations on the site until 1993. Since 1993, the great-grandchildren of founder John Murphy continue to run the paper from a new location.

Historian: Hardlines: Design & Delineation  
Bethesda, Maryland and Columbus, Ohio  
March, 1994

Archaeologist: Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc.  
Columbus, Ohio

## PART I: PHYSICAL CONTEXT OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN COMPANY SITE

The buildings occupy the northern part of a irregular shaped site in the Seton Hill area of Baltimore. The larger block is bound by Druid Hill Avenue (originally Ross Street) on the north at an angle sloping from southeast to northwest. Eutaw Street forms the eastern boundary, and N. Paca Street forms the west. Franklin Street forms the southern perimeter. The block is bisected by George Street (originally New Street) in the east-west direction and by Jasper Street (originally Long Alley) in the north-south direction. Each quadrant of the larger block is subdivided into long narrow lots that front either the main street or the alley. The buildings that face the streets usually contain commercial space on the first floor, whereas the alley-buildings are residential. The Afro-American site occupies the northern half of the northeast quadrant with buildings that face Druid Hill Avenue, Jasper Street, and N. Eutaw Street.

N. Eutaw Street was historically an active commercial street; today in 1994, Lexington Market is located two blocks south of the Afro-American Company site. Several of the narrow brick rowhouses that line the street contain commercial and retail space on the first floor with residential or office space above. In the nineteenth century, N. Eutaw Street also carried a streetcar line. Druid Hill Avenue in this part of town contained both mixed use buildings and pure residential structures. Jasper Street was originally called Long Alley, and its appearance reflects its original use as an alley and consists of narrow residential rowhouses that face the narrow brick street.

St. Mary's Seminary (first built in 1792) and the Mother Seton House, built in 1807, lie just one block west of the Afro-American site on N. Paca Street. Elizabeth Ann Seton donated funds to the Seminary in order to establish the Mother-House of the American Sisters of Charity<sup>2</sup>. Other prominent structures in the area include the fire station for Engine Company No. 7 at the northwestern corner of the intersection of Druid Hill Avenue and N. Eutaw Street. The Engine Company, established in 1859, was one of 13 formed by the paid fire department of Baltimore that superseded the volunteer groups<sup>3</sup>. Since the fire station has been on the site since at least 1859, it appears likely that there was already a density of buildings for it to service. St. Mary's Seminary sat just one block west, and one block east lay Baltimore College, Johns Hopkins University, and the Academy of Music.

The property is located on part of the original sixty acres of land that formed the new town in 1729. At the time, the land was part of the Chatsworth tract and was probably used for farming. By the early 1800s, the city had developed north and the blocks and alleys were laid out. The first buildings of St. Mary's Seminary were built in the 1790s. The Mother Seton House (which is not a rowhouse), built in 1807, was one of the first residences in the area. The area to the east of the seminary grounds contains narrow, three story brick rowhouses two to three bays in width. Most of these buildings were built during the first half of the nineteenth century. By 1850, building development had covered most of the lots and in 1859, the Number 7 Engine Company was established on Druid Hill Avenue across the Afro-American site to service the dense area.

The development on the block appears to have occurred sporadically. Structures appear to have been built one at a time in different years since their appearances are so varied. Some structures were only two stories in height, others were four. The buildings were also varied in the proportion of window and door openings and overall facade composition. Most of the earlier structures in this area contained elements of the Greek Revival rowhouse style with cornice banding and dentil details. This rowhouse style was popular in Atlantic and Gulf Coast seaboard cities that were rapidly developing between 1830 and 1860<sup>4</sup>. There are also examples with Italianate cornices, which became increasingly popular after 1840. Although there has been some development in the area, most of the buildings in the general area are original and date from the first half of the nineteenth century.

## PART II: HISTORIC CONTEXT OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN COMPANY SITE

Baltimore was founded in 1729 on 60 acres of land purchased for \$600.00 from Charles and Daniel Carroll. Three years later, in 1732, another settlement was established on the east bank of Jones Falls, and in 1745, the two small settlements combined to become Baltimore Town. By 1752 the town had 200 inhabitants, which increased with the arrival of exiled Acadians from Nova Scotia. Baltimore's status was as a trading post, and by 1783 the town was trading with all parts of the world. The county seat moved from Joppa to Baltimore in 1768. During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress relocated to Baltimore in order to find a safer place to meet. In 1797, Baltimore incorporated as a city with a population of 20,000<sup>5</sup>.

The site upon which the Afro-American buildings sit was originally part of the Chatsworth tract of land in Baltimore. Chatsworth was the name of the house built in 1730 by Dr. George Walker, one of the original commissioners who planned the town site in 1729. William Lux, a prominent shipping businessman who hosted a dinner for the Continental Congress on December 20, 1776, married Walker's daughter Agnes<sup>6</sup>. He is recorded as having received a "land commission" for part of Chatsworth in 1772. Lux then sold 20 acres of Chatsworth to William Russell in 1776, who in the late eighteenth century was acquiring much of the land in the Chatsworth tract.

In 1790, the French Revolution threatened the destruction of all religious institutions in France. The Society of St. Sulpice sent Father Nagot, assistant to the Superior-general, to London to meet with the Rt. Rev. John Carroll, Bishop-elect of Baltimore to discuss the possibility of establishing a seminary in America. Carroll agreed with the idea and suggested the Baltimore area<sup>7</sup>. Father Nagot arrived from France in 1791 on a ship that--according to legend--also brought a young Chateaubriand<sup>8</sup>. Nagot brought with him a number of priests of the Sulpician order, which that year founded St. Mary's Seminary on a site just one block west of the Afro-American site. Father Nagot is credited in the deed records with laying out the block and the alleys.

In 1792 William Russell and his wife leased 10 acres of land to Reverend Francis Charles Nagot (listed as president of a "French Seminary" on the deed). Six of those ten acres became the site of St. Mary's Seminary, and a portion of the

seminary site was laid out into blocks upon which sits the Afro-American Company building. The land was leased for 99 years to Nagot and this renewable lease remained in effect for the various lots on the site until the early twentieth century. All deeds affecting these properties in the duration contained a clause that stated that an annual, nominal rent had to be paid. The deed records of these leases are extremely tangled and complex; without legal assistance, it is impossible to determine which leases affected which lots.

In 1802, Father Nagot leased a portion of the site to John Lynch and in 1803, the remainder was leased to Father John Tessier, who came to Baltimore with Father Nagot and succeeded him as the seminary's administrator in 1809 and remained president until 1823. For nearly the next 100 years, the deed records indicate a tangle of ownership transfers overlapped with leases. It appears that it was possible to transfer the land lease and ownership deed separately, so that one party would collect the land lease from a separate building/lot owner. The leases also appeared to have been transferred over the years regardless of the ownership status, and the rent amount never changed. However, it appears that the last of the renewable 99 year land leases expired (and were not renewed) by the early twentieth century. By 1876, the block had been completely filled. Deed records indicate that by 1850 rights were granted to build against the walls of existing brick houses. In 1859, Engine Company Number 7 was established across the street, which would indicate that the immediate area was, by then, dense enough to warrant a local fire station.

Father Nagot's lease to John Lynch covered the site along Jasper Street and the northwestern portion of Druid Hill Avenue, and each lot passed through numerous parties before acquisition by the Afro-American Company. The parts of the site under the Afro-American building not leased through Lynch (mainly along N. Eutaw Street and the street corner) was leased through a succession of presidents of the seminary. Rev. Tessier (president from 1809-1823) transferred the lease to his successor in 1830, Rev. Louis Regis Deloul, who was president from 1823-1849. Rev. Francis L'Homme, president from 1849 to his death in 1860, obtained the lease in 1852. At his death, L'Homme transferred the lease to the Associated Professors of St. Mary's Seminary, who transferred it to the Methodist Preachers Aid of Baltimore City in 1890, who had owned the property rights since 1833.

St. Mary's Seminary played an important role in the cause of black Catholic missions in the United States. In 1794, special services were held for black Catholics at the "chappelle basse" on the seminary site; the first black school for religious training opened in 1928. The first religious community of black nuns was also founded in a building on the seminary grounds<sup>9</sup>. When the seminary opened a new campus in the suburbs in the 1920's, it offered its land and buildings for sale to the city of Baltimore for use as a black school, but the \$1,500,000.00 cost was too expensive at the time.

Another religious organization that held land on the site was the Methodist Preacher's Aid Society of Baltimore, who acquired the lot owned by the St. Mary's Seminary association. The Methodist Preacher's Aid organization was incorporated in 1827. This group transferred ownership of parts of the site to the Afro-American Company in 1942.

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A third religious organization which owned part of the Afro-American site was the Home for the Aged of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Baltimore City, which was founded in 1867 and 1868 by the Methodists of the city at the Maryland Institute. The Home organization commenced with 15 aged ladies housed in the renovated parsonage on Fulton and Franklin<sup>10</sup> in Baltimore. In 1920, the Home organization deeded the first lot (626-628 N. Eutaw Street) to be owned by the Afro-American Company.

The Afro-American Company (founded 1892), which published the newspaper Afro-American, first occupied 628 N. Eutaw Street on the site in 1911. They were by far the longest and most prominent of the tenants of the buildings on the site. Most of the buildings were used as income-producing properties. Commercial spaces occupied the first floor, and the upper levels were rented as apartments. Occupants often ran businesses on the first floor. Businesses that occupied the buildings include shoemakers, restaurants, and groceries. In 1920, the Afro-American Company purchased 626 and 628 N. Eutaw Street. By 1943, the newspaper business had grown and thrived and was able to purchase all buildings at the northern tip of the block along Druid Hill Avenue and Jasper Street.

### PART III: DESCRIPTION OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN COMPANY SITE

The site was originally divided into several long, thin lots. 12 lots of varying lengths (due to the angle of road) aligned Druid Hill Road. The two lots on N. Eutaw Street were fairly regular in shape, and three thin lots abutted to the rear along Jasper Street. The remaining two irregular shaped lots on Jasper were awkwardly wedged between the edge of Jasper Street and the rears of the Druid Hill Avenue lots. Just north of the 639 Jasper Street lay an access area that led to a narrow alley that serviced the rear of the Druid Hill Avenue buildings.

An 1876 atlas indicates that rowhouses occupied most the perimeter of the site, with a few openings for access. An 1890 Sanborn map shows the footprint of the structures currently standing, without the printing press enclosure which was added to the rear of 626-628 N. Eutaw Street in the 1930's. The map indicates that two and three story brick buildings lined both Druid Hill Avenue and N. Eutaw Street from corner to corner. The Jasper Street frontage contained several right-of-ways that led into narrow alleys that serviced the rear of the buildings. In 1901, the buildings appear to have been largely unchanged. By 1914, the building at 628 N. Eutaw Street contained a printing facility and a 2-1/2 HP electric motor. By 1944, the press addition had been built, and the Afro-American Company occupied most of the site, with the paper storage areas at the northwestern tip.

In the 1940's, six structures at the northwestern tip were removed to make way for a parking lot, and the last two remaining Jasper Street structures were removed for a loading area. The press addition had required the removal of three buildings on Jasper Street. Buildings that once sat on the site and have since been demolished include: 400-424 Druid Hill Avenue (12 rowhouses); 626-628 N. Eutaw Street (2 rowhouses); and 631-639 Jasper Street (5 buildings). Only 6 of the Druid Hill Avenue buildings remain (400-412)--the others were removed to form an on-site parking area; both of the Eutaw Street rowhouses; and none of the

Jasper Street ones. The buildings at 631, 633, and 635 Jasper Street were removed when in the late 1930's the company built the addition to house the new press, and the remaining were removed to build the new loading dock in the late 1940's.

Currently, the site contains seven distinct buildings which have all been linked with openings punched through the party walls. The entire building complex contains a maze of rooms that lead into each other, and small flights of stair mark the party wall openings where the floor levels between adjoining structures were different. The first floor of these buildings originally contained retail/commercial storefronts and all the buildings contained an ornamental cornice. The storefronts were modified in the late 1940's with plate glass windows, and many of the upper level windows were combined into larger windows. The frames were also replaced with multi-pane industrial windows. These windows are similar to the ones installed in the 1930's in the new press addition. The addresses to the buildings still remaining on the site include:

1. 626 N. Eutaw Street
2. 628 N. Eutaw Street
3. 400/402 N. Druid Hill Avenue
4. 404 Druid Hill Avenue
5. 406/408 Druid Hill Avenue
6. 410 Druid Hill Avenue
7. 412 Druid Hill Avenue

626 N. Eutaw Street is the southern-most building on the site. It is a three story brick structure, with two bays across the front elevation. The building is the same height as those that line the southern end of the block, but shorter than 628 N. Eutaw Street on the corner. The original structure is "L" shaped around a narrow light well on the south side. The three story printing press enclosure abuts the building to the rear and is accessed on Jasper Street. This structure originally had an Italianate cornice which was probably removed when the residential windows were replaced with the industrial ones.

628 N. Eutaw Street is a taller three story building at the corner of N. Eutaw Street and Druid Hill Avenue. This was the original structure occupied by the Afro-American Company when it moved onto the site in 1911 and purchased it in 1920 along with 626 N. Eutaw Street. All the remaining structures were purchased in the 1940's. This rowhouse consists of the main rectangular section and a small wedge-shaped piece on the corner. It too originally had a cornice, but one that was influenced more by the Greek Revival style with its wide banding.

400/402 Druid Hill Avenue, although the same height as the corner structures, consists of four shorter stories. The entry is located along the northwestern wall in one of the three bays of the rowhouse. The Afro-American Company, during its 1940's renovation, joined four of the individual windows on the second and third floors into two large industrial windows on each floor. The windows over the entry remained intact, as did the windows on the fourth floor. The ornamental cornice has been removed.

404 Druid Hill Avenue, like the house at 406/408, is also three bays wide and three stories tall. Although the same height as 406/408, the windows are much shorter in proportion on each of the upper levels. Both 404 and 406/408 Druid Hill Avenue are slightly shorter than the buildings closer to the corner. The stairs in 404 have been removed, and both sections no longer possess a cornice.

406/408 Druid Hill Avenue (originally just 406 in 1890) is a three story, three bay wide brick rowhouse. The windows become progressively shorter in proportion toward the upper stories. The stairs to the upper levels sit at the rear along the southeastern wall, and the first floor houses the camera. The damaged brick at the top of wall indicates the location of an original cornice.

410 and 412 Druid Hill Avenue, the last rowhouses on the northwestern end of the property are similar, two story structures. The 1890 Sanborn Map indicates that it was numbered 410, and number 410 was number 408. Both buildings are mirror "L" shaped and form an alley/light well between them. The upper levels share the party wall. Number 412 is the last building in the row and its blank side elevation faces the company parking lot. As with the other buildings on the site, neither retain its ornamental cornice piece.

The demolished buildings include 631, 633, 635, 637, and 639 Jasper Street as well as 414, 416, 418, 420, 422, and 424 Druid Hill Avenue. 631, 633, and 635, directly behind 626 and 628 N. Eutaw Street, were demolished in the early 1940's to make room for a new three story brick structure to house the new printing press and Jasper Street loading docks. The remaining structures were removed to build the company parking lot and loading areas.

As the Afro-American Company purchased the remaining buildings on the northern end of the block in the 1940's, they modified the rowhouses to function as a single building. The interiors of each of the rowhouses were connected by openings punched through the party walls and accessed by stairs if a floor level change occurred. The connection of seven individual rowhouses into one resulted in a maze of corridors, rooms, and stairwells. The first floor of the building contained the printing press and loading/receiving docks in the rear on the N. Eutaw Street buildings. The press fed papers into the assembly room where workers would pack the papers for delivery. Along Druid Hill Avenue was the camera and support area. The administrative offices occupied the front of the second floors. The layout/typesetting areas was above the press. Darkroom facilities were above the camera room on the second floor. Executive meeting spaces and offices occupied the third floor. Number 412 Druid Hill Avenue was used primarily for storage since it was separated on the first floor from the remainder of the buildings by an outdoor alley.

#### **PART IV: HISTORY OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN COMPANY**

The Afro-American started as a four-page sheet in 1892 that sold for four cents a copy. The paper originated from a printing press located at 1112 Fremont Avenue. The first editor of the paper was Reverend William Alexander, pastor of the Sharon Baptist Church in Baltimore. Alexander was also president of the Northwest Baltimore Colored League and a partner of the Northwest Supply Company.

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His associates included William Toney, William Daley, George Reid, F.A. Gains, and George Downtin. Daley, Toney, and Reid were stall keepers at the Lafayette Market and Downtin was a grocer<sup>11</sup>.

Prior to publishing the Afro-American, Rev. Alexander had published the Home Protector, a weekly paper which later became the Afro-American. Rev. Alexander printed and remained editor of the paper until the early 1890's, when the Northwest Supply Company (William Daley was president) purchased it<sup>12</sup>. At this time, there were only two other black weeklies published in the city: The Standard, and The Hour. When business at the Northwest Supply Company started to decline, Dailey was forced to sell the paper. The Afro-American was purchased by John Henry Murphy, Sr. at an auction for two hundred dollars.

John Henry Murphy, Sr. was born in Baltimore in 1840 to Benjamin Murphy, a whitewasher, and Susan C. Murphy. "Uncle Bennie" was a noted singer and led the Bethel A.M.E. Church Choir for 15 years. When he was 16, John Murphy enlisted in Company G of the 30th Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, Maryland Volunteers, and rose to the rank of first sergeant during the Civil War. When the war ended, Murphy returned to Baltimore and married Martha Howard (1846-1914), who was a founder of the Colored Young Woman's Christian Association (YWCA) and served as its president for 17 years<sup>13</sup>.

Murphy's first venture into the newspaper field was the Sunday School Helper, which he set up and printed himself in the basement of his home in order to create interest in Sunday school work. At the time, he was also serving as the District Sunday School Superintendent of the Hagerstown District of the A.M.E. Church. He inaugurated the first Sunday School Convention (then called Institutions) which was adopted as a regular feature of Sunday School work in that denomination. He also served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Bethel A.M.E. Church for 25 years.

In 1892, Murphy purchased the Afro-American from money he (allegedly) borrowed from his wife. For the year 1893, the Afro-American was not listed in the city directories although the company was already printing papers. From 1894 to 1895, the paper remained at the North Fremont Street Location, and in 1897 relocated to 1210 Patterson Avenue. The business continued to grow and the next year it moved to 123 North Liberty Street, and then to 307 St. Paul Street in 1900, where it stayed for the next ten years.

On August 10, 1895, the paper printed the following editorial on its name: "The word Negro is slanderous because of its slavery connotations and will not appear in these pages to indicate colored Americans. If we had our way, we would impose a fine of \$100.00 on every member of the African descent who would stamp our people with such a slanderous term."

On January 16, 1900, the Afro-American merged with another weekly known as The Ledger. The Ledger was owned and operated by Dr. George F. Bragg, rector of the St. James Episcopal Church in Baltimore. The newly merged paper then became known as the Afro-American Ledger and made a fresh start at the new headquarters on St. Paul Street. In 1907, the joint venture reincorporated into the Afro-

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American Company of Baltimore City". During the next fifteen years, Dr. Bragg remained with the merged paper as chief editor and writer for five dollars a week. When Dr. Bragg left the paper in 1915, the word "Ledger" was dropped from the title.

The newspaper moved to the N. Eutaw Street site in 1911, and it is an indication of its success that the Afro-American Company was able to purchase the buildings at 626 and 628 N. Eutaw Street in 1920 from the Methodist Church. John Murphy, Sr. lived to see the company own its own headquarters before he died in 1922. The paper was then led for the next 45 years by his son Dr. Carl Murphy. In the early 1940's, the Afro-American Company purchased the remaining buildings on the site one after another as its operations grew.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Afro-American tackled a variety of civil rights issues. In the 1920's, the Afro-American rallied the Black community to work for an increase of: Black policemen and firemen; Black representatives on city, county and state boards of education; equal salaries for equal work for school teachers; organization of labor unions among Black workers; and, in a time of segregation, the establishment of a university and agriculture college for Black students supported by the state.

Also during this era, in support of the anti-lynching movement, the Afro-American often carried exclusive pictures of various lynchings to appeal to the public to put a quick end to such activities. The paper also expressed offense at the practice of hiring whites as presidents of Black colleges. When Dr. James Durkee was hired as president of Howard University, the Afro-American pointed out that Dr. Durkee also served as board member of a Boston college which did not admit Black students. The pressure forced Dr. Durkee to resign his Boston post<sup>15</sup>.

During the 1930's, when segregation practices were common in Baltimore, the Afro-American reported that Blacks were barred from the public Charles Street transportation line, which was owned by the United Railway and Electric Company. The newspaper's reporters rode the line until the conductors grew tired of pushing them off the cars<sup>16</sup>.

Up until 1923, the newspaper was printed on an eight-page rotary press nicknamed "Ole Blunderbus." From 1923 to 1934, the Afro-American used a three-deck 32-page letter press. In 1934, Carl and his brother, D. Arnett Murphy, paid a visit to the Chicago Tribune as guests of the Goss Printing Company. They were shown a two-unit four-plate-wide webfed universal newspaper press that was being used for experimental work. The press was capable of printing up to 32 standard page with spot color on eight pages--and in two or four sections, at the rate of up to 50,000 papers per hour. The four Murphy brothers (Carl, John Jr., Arnett, and George) decided to purchase the Goss Headliner press, and the Afro-American entered the modern printing era with the largest press ever used by a Black newspaper<sup>17</sup>.

The press, which still remains in the building, was dismantled in Chicago, packed into dozens of wood crates, and shipped to Baltimore, where it arrived several months later. The press measured over ten feet by thirty feet and required more

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room than the present building could accommodate. The company hired Baltimore architect Charles Ginn to design the new building to the rear of the 626 and 628 N. Eutaw Street. The addition was two stories high with a basement for paper storage. The basement also contained the eight foot high and eight foot wide foundation of solid concrete that ran the length of the press. Ginn died before the addition was completed, and Albert Cassell, architect and close friend of Carl Murphy, was called in to finish the job. The new press was assembled and operational by the summer of 1937<sup>18</sup>.

During the late 1930's, the Afro-American's campaign for Black workers in the city library system became very heated. It is a mark of the Afro-American's influence that Dr. T. Wheeler, head librarian, pleaded with the newspaper not to make the library appear to have a race war against the Black population. Despite the campaign, the first Black librarian was not hired until 1942<sup>19</sup>.

During World War II the Afro-American modified its logo to include an American flag and a clenched fist. The new logo symbolized the need for unity first, and then a firm stand on economic, social, and political equality. After the War ended, the federal government prohibited the use of photographs on job applications in order to prevent discrimination. The Afro-American reported how federal workers circumvented this law by placing three red "X's" on the application to indicate a Black applicant<sup>20</sup>.

During the 1940's, the Afro-American advocated a variety of civil rights issues. The company financed a lawsuit against the Southern Railroad Company contesting their Jim Crow policies for passengers travelling southbound from Washington, D.C. The D.C. Court of Appeals handed down a verdict against the railroad and ordered it to pay nearly one thousand dollars in damages. The paper also joined with the NAACP, college students, and community leaders to encourage the Black community to register for the vote. The paper listed registration procedures and encouraged its readers to be responsible citizens. This campaign was instrumental in increasing the number of Black voters in Baltimore.

During its golden years in the 1940's and 1950's, the company operated out of all the buildings on the northern end of the block, and the press ran a circulation of over 225,000 papers a week and made the Afro-American the nation's only Black newspaper chain. Many prominent Black politicians and businessmen got their start working at the Afro-American. The chain was headquartered at this site in Baltimore for eighty years; the company left the site in 1993 due to the general deterioration of the 150 year old structures. Editions were also sent overseas wherever U.S. servicemen were stationed. The largest single edition ever run in Baltimore was 60,000 and the largest weekly run was 358,000.

The Afro-American Company moved out of its long-time headquarters on N. Eutaw Street in 1993 due to the gradual deterioration of the 150 year old buildings. Today, the paper is still based in the city of Baltimore with regional offices in Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia. It maintains a total circulation of approximately 110,000 and produces the publications Dawn magazine and Every Wednesday<sup>21</sup>.

**PART V: ENDNOTES**

1. This report is meant to provide a historical background of the entire site and an overview of the Afro-American Company's occupation. Information about the Afro-American Company's role in the Harlem Renaissance can be found by contacting the Afro-American Company.
2. J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881) 235.
3. Ibid.
4. Virginia and Lee McAllister, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984) 180.
5. J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881).
6. Annie Leakin Sioussant, Old Baltimore (New York: MacMillan Company, 1932) 31.
7. Scharf, 234.
8. Sioussant, 31.
9. Rosario de Paul, "Colored Missions Owe Gratitude to St. Mary's and Sulpician Fathers." The Colored Harvest December 1941-January 1942, 12-13.
10. Scharf, 600.
11. Karen Barnes, "The Afro-American: The First Fifty Years." (Morgan State University thesis, 1977) 1.
12. Ibid.
13. "History of the Afro-American Newspapers." (statement used by the Afro-American Company.
14. Ibid.
15. Barnes, 3.
16. Ibid.
17. "History of the Afro-American Newspapers."
18. Ibid.
19. Barnes, 4.
20. Ibid.
21. "History of the Afro-American Newspapers."

## PART VI: APPENDIX OF MAJOR TRANSACTIONS

(This is not a complete listing of owners, occupants, and/or lessors, but an indication of when and to whom the properties principally changed hands according to records readily available)

### General Background Outline

1729 Dr. George Walker lays claim to Chatsworth tract  
1772 William Lux receives "Land Commission" for parts of Chatsworth  
1776 William Russell buys 20 acres of Chatsworth  
1792 Father Francis Charles Nagot obtains 10 acres for St. Mary's Seminary for the Sulpician Order, and lays out the blocks and streets  
1802 Father Nagot leases part of the block to John Lynch  
1803 Father Nagot leases part of the block to John Tessier  
---- Subsequent transactions of property on the site refer back to land leased to Lynch and Tessier

### 626-628 N. Eutaw Street (Lot 14-15)

1803 Rev. John Tessier  
1811 Matthew O'Brien  
1824 Thomas Armstrong  
1833 Methodist Preachers Aid Society of Baltimore City (probably includes Home for the Aged of the M.E. Church of Baltimore City)  
1920 Afro American Company  
1940 Afro-American Company (appears to be for the lease)

### Leases Transferred

1829 Rev. John Tessier (president of SMS, 1809-1823)  
1830 Rev. Louis Regis Deloul (president of SMS, 1823-1849)  
1852 Rev. Francis L'Homme (president of SMS, 1849-1860)  
1860 Associate Professors of St. Mary's Seminary  
1890 Methodist Preachers Aid Society of Baltimore City  
1942 Afro-American Company

**404 Druid Hill Avenue (Lot 16)**

1802	John Lynch
1813	Noah Broughton
1824	George Wigart
1863	Trustees for George Wigart (?)
1863	John Nugent
1868	John B. Oldershaw
1870	Reinhardt Dietz
1899	Heirs of Reinhardt Dietz
1899	Augustus M. Denhard
1921	Louis F. Doberer
1929	Simon Wagenheim
1942	Afro-American Company

**406/408 Druid Hill Avenue (Lot 18)**

1802	John Lynch
1809	Mary McAllister Quinn
1827	Asa Treadway
1840	George Wigart
1906	Joseph Greenbaum
1916	Moses Tobias (half)
1924	Moses Tobias (half)
1943	Afro-American Company

**410-412 Druid Hill Avenue (Lot 19-20)**

??	Mary Denney Ridgely
1898	Executor for Mary Ridgely
1918	Robert Downey (half at \$1400.00)
1922	Sidney and Philip Needle
1933	Robert Downey (half at \$1350.00)
1942	Afro-American Company

## PART VII: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- 1876: City Atlas of Baltimore, Maryland and Environs. Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, CE. Volume 1, Plate E.
- 1890: Insurance Map of Baltimore, Sanborn-Perris Map Company, Limited, New York. Volume 3, Map 96.
- 1897: Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Maryland, prepared from the work of the Topographical Survey, July 1897.
- 1901: Insurance Map of Baltimore, Sanborn-Perris Map Company, Limited, New York. Volume 2, Map 139.
- 1914: Insurance Maps of Baltimore, Maryland. Sanborn Map Company, New York. Volume 2, Map 126.
- 1914: Sewage Map for Contract #137, July 15, 1914.
- 1940: Atlas of the City of Baltimore. Baltimore: Bureau of Plans and Surveys. Volume 2, Map 2N-1S.
- 1944: Insurance Maps of Baltimore, Maryland. Sanborn Map Company, New York. Volume 2, Map 126. Updated Map.
- 1952: Insurance Maps of Baltimore, Maryland. Sanborn Map Company, New York. Volume 1, Map 5A. Updated 1974.

### MAPS CONSULTED

- 1876: John F. Weishampel, Jr. New and Enlarged Map of Baltimore.
- 1877: C.M.Hopkins, CE, Map of the City of Baltimore, Maryland
- 1880: Phillips Brothers & Company Map of Baltimore
- 1880: John F. Weishampel, Jr. New and Enlarged Map of Baltimore.
- 1880: J.W. Woods Map of Baltimore for the City Directory
- 1882: Map of the City of Baltimore, supplement to the Baltimore Sun, April 11.
- 1882: E. Robinson map of the City of Baltimore and Vicinity
- 1886: Wood's Baltimore City Directory
- 1887: Baltimore and its Neighborhoods, U.S. Coast and Geodesic Survey
- 1888: Rippey Map of Baltimore
- 1896: City of Baltimore Topographical Survey, under the direction of H.T. Douglas, Chief Engineer. August, 1896. Sheet 1S-1W.
- 1904: U.S. Geologic Survey Map of Baltimore.

### HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1927: Aerial Photographic Map of Baltimore and Metropolitan District of Baltimore County, made by the Chesapeake Aircraft Company, Baltimore from October 19, 1926 to February 24, 1927.

No historic photographs were found of the buildings in public repositories such as the Enoch Pratt Free Library, U.S. Geologic Society, and Maryland Historical Society. Historic photographs used for the report were printed in newspaper articles (see newspaper section of bibliography). Original historic photographs can be found by contacting the Afro-American Company.

626-628 N. Eutaw Street (Commercial Building)  
(Afro-American Company)  
HABS No. MD-1070 (page 15)

#### BALTIMORE CITY DIRECTORIES

R.L. Polk & Company, 1890 - 1940.  
Thompson and Walker, 1796.  
Warner & Hanna, 1799.  
Edward Matchett, 1831 - 1840

#### BALTIMORE CITY LAND RECORDS

Grantee/Grantor Indexes, 1772 - 1800.  
Land Records, 1800 - present.

#### BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

de Paul, Rosario. "Colored Missions Owe Gratitude to St. Mary's and Sulpician Fathers." The Colored Harvest. 29:6. December-January, 1941-1942. pp. 12-13.  
McAllester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1984.  
Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted 1971. pp. 234-236 and 599-600.  
Sioussant, Annie Leakin. Old Baltimore. New York: MacMillan Company, 1932.

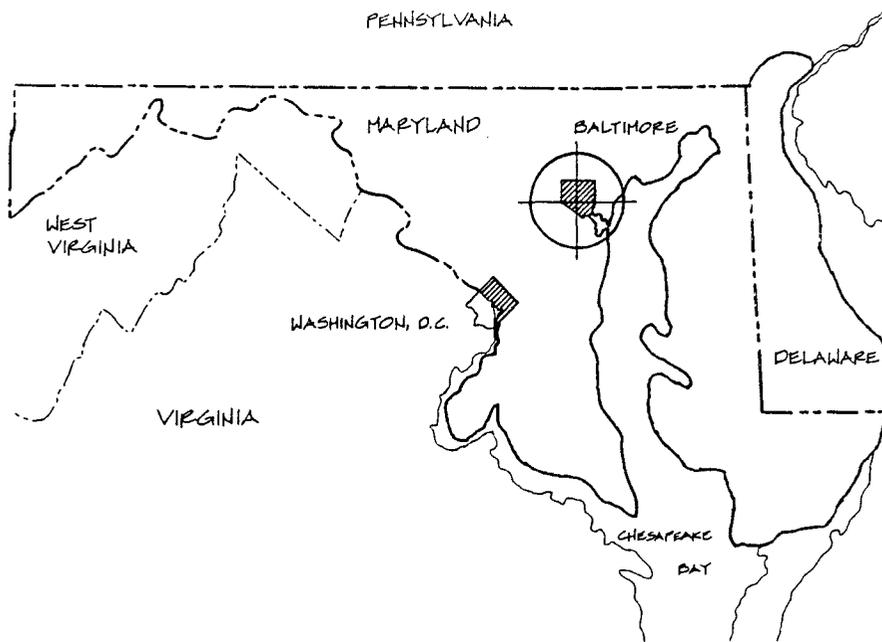
#### NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

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Hunter, Clarence W. "Celebrating years of service to the community." The Baltimore Afro-American. August 15, 1987.  
Oliver, John J. Sr. "The End of an Historic Era." The Baltimore Afro-American. May 3, 1986.  
Peters, Ida. "The Afro Enters Its 100th Year." The Baltimore Afro-American. August 10, 1991.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

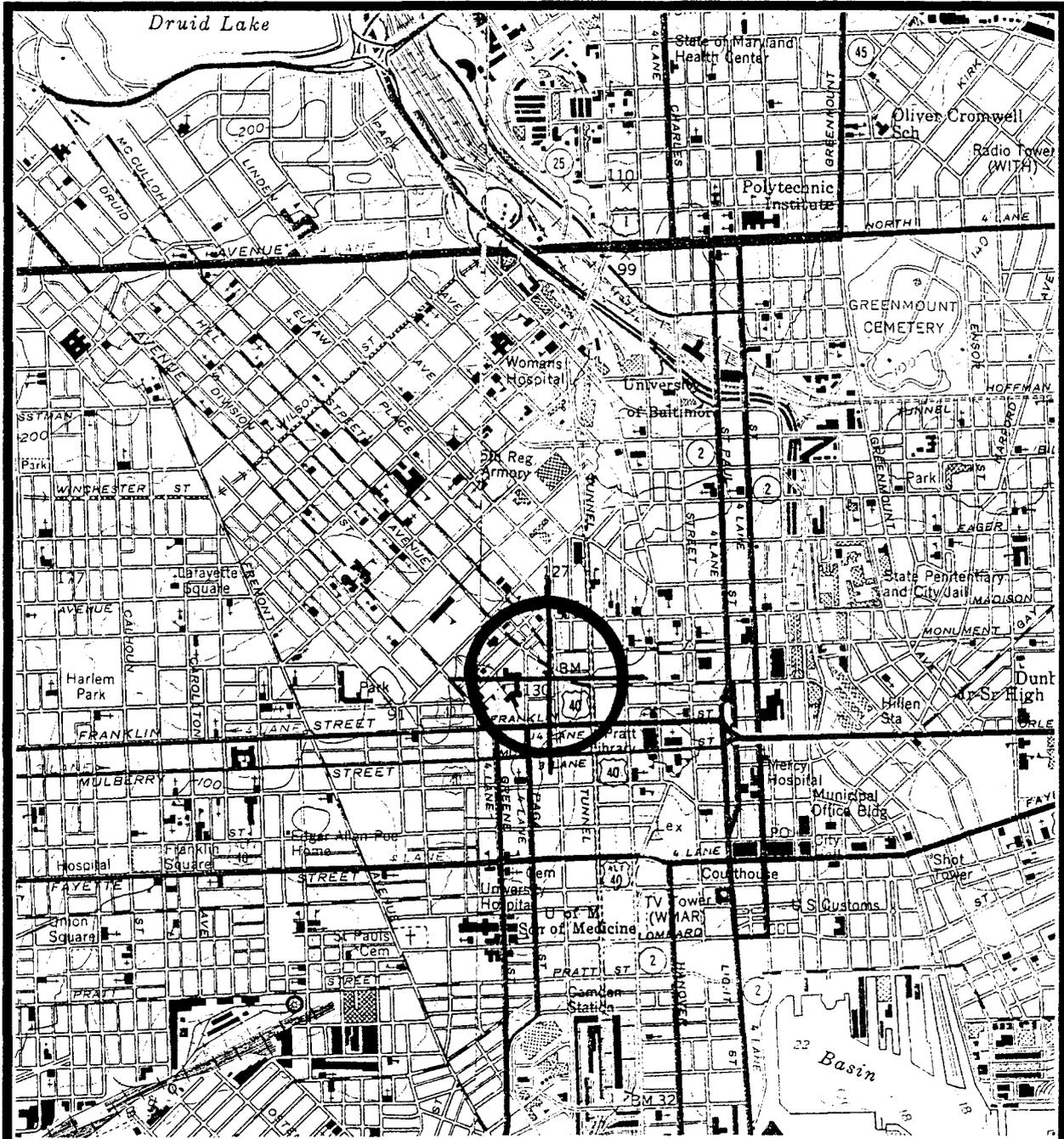
Barnes, Karen. The Baltimore Afro-American: The First Fifty Years. Thesis for Morgan State University, April 1977.

"History of the Afro-American Newspapers." No Date. Historical Statement used by the Afro-American Company.



MARYLAND MAP

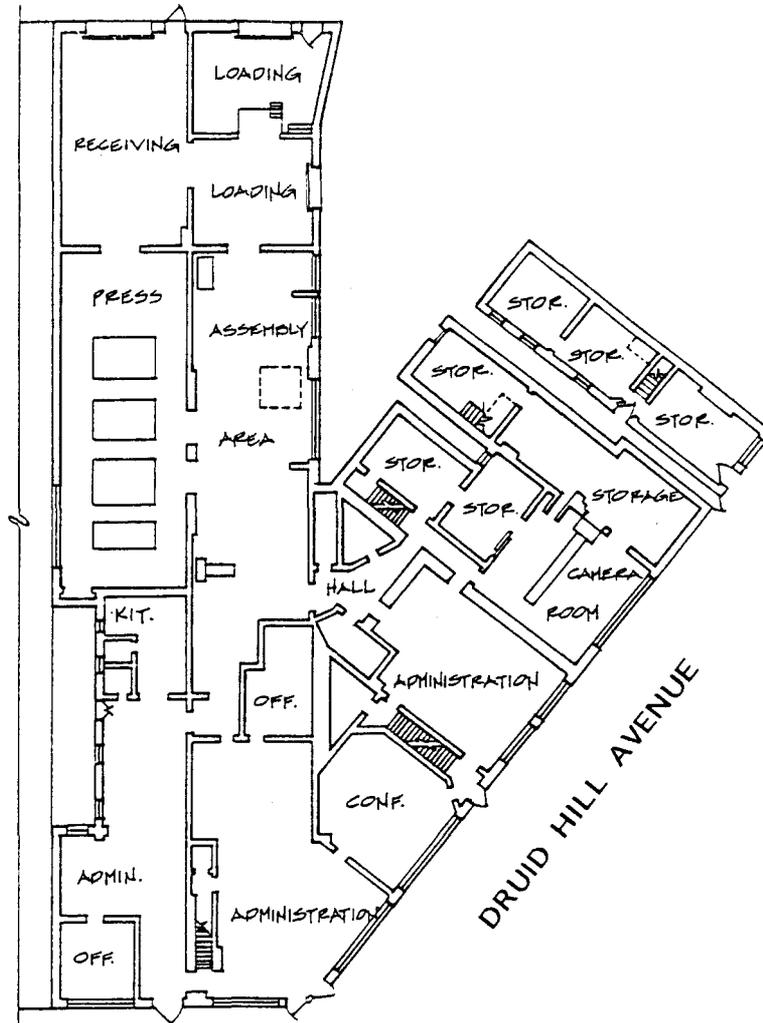
1" = 50 miles



**BALTIMORE CITY MAP**

1:24,000

JASPER STREET



N. EUTAW STREET

➔ **FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
1" = 30' - 0"

Plan drawn by Hardlines: Design & Delineation  
based upon field measurements taken by firm in March of 1994.

