NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990)		OMB No. 10024-0018
United States Department of the Interior National Park Service		
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form		
1. Name of Property		•
historic name Charles Turner Open Air School		
other names/site number <u>Turner Middle Branch</u>	School	
2. Location		
street & number <u>4235 West Kennerly Avenue</u>		[n/a] not for publication
city or town St. Louis	·····	[n/a] vicinity
state Missouri code MO county St.	Louis [Independent City] code	<u>510</u> zip code <u>63113</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Pres [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility med National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedur opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the Nation significant [] nationally[] statewide [X] locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)	ervation Act, as amended, I hereby ce ets the documentation standards for re al and professional requirements set for hal Register criteria. I recommend that	rtify that this gistering properties in the orth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my this property be considered
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Black	ckwell/Deputy SHPO D	2 Myps 1895
Missouri Department of Natural Resources State or Federal agency and bureau		
In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the to ( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)	National Register criteria.	
Signature of certifying official/Title		
State or Federal agency and bureau		
4. National Park Service Certification		
I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date
<ul> <li>[] entered in the National Register See continuation sheet [].</li> <li>[] determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet [].</li> <li>[] determined not eligible for the National Register.</li> <li>[] removed from the National Register</li> <li>[] other, explain See continuation sheet [].</li> </ul>	•	
See continuation sheet [ ].		
National Register.		<u> </u>
National Register		
See continuation sheet [ ].		
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### USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], MO

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5.Classification	·			
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of R Contributing	esources v Noncontri	vithin Property ibuting
[ ] private [X] public-local [ ] public-State	[X] building(s) [ ] district [ ] site	1	0 -	buildings
[] public-Federal	[ ] structure [ ] object	0	0	sites
	( ))	0	0	structures
		0	0	objects
		1	0	Total
Name of related multiple pro		Number of con previously liste		
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis	ources of the	Register.		
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·				
6. Function or Use				
Historic Function Education/school		Current Functions Education/school	<b></b>	 -
	_			-
••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••			······	-
				-
7. Description		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
Architectural Classification Classical Revival	_	Materials foundation <u>brick</u> walls <u>brick</u>		_
	_ _	roof <u>slate</u> other iron limestone		<b>-</b>
	- - -			_

1 -

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

### 8.Statement of Significance

#### **Applicable National Register Criteria**

[X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

[] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[]C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

#### Property is:

[] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[] B removed from its original location.

[] C a birthplace or grave.

[] D a cemetery.

[] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[]F a commemorative property.

[] G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance Ethnic Heritage--Black

Health/Medicine

#### Periods of Significance 1925-1949

#### Significant Dates

<u>n/a</u>\_\_\_\_\_

#### Significant Person(s)

n/a

### **Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

Architect/Builder

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

#### 9. Major Bibliographic References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) Primary location of additional data: Previous documentation on file (NPS):

( ) preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

[] previously listed in the National Register

[] previously determined eligible by the National Register

[] designated a National Historic Landmark

[] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

[]	recorded by	V Historic	American	Engineering	Record

Milligan, Rockwell M.

[X] State Historic Preservation Office

[] Federal Agency

[] Local Government [] University

[X] Other:

Name of repository: Landmarks Association of St. Louis. <u>inc.</u>

[] Other State Agency

10 Coographical Data	
<b>10.Geographical Data</b>	

Acreage of	Property 1.3	3 acres			
UTM Refere					
UTWI Melerc					
A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	• Northing
15	740280	4282790			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing
-		<b>iption</b> property on a continuation		[] See cor	ntinuation sheet
Boundary J (Explain why the	e boundaries w	ere selected on a continuati	on sheet.)		
11. Form Pr	epared By		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
name/title <u>s</u>	ee continuat	ion sheet			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
organization	l			date	
street & number			telephone	9	
city or townstate		_ state	zip code		
Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed form:					
Continuation Sheets					
Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.					
Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.					
Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)					
Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)					
name <u>Board</u>	l of Educatio	n of the City of St. Lou	lis		
street & nun	nber <u>911 Loc</u>	cust Street		telephone	e <u>314/231-3720</u>
city or town_	St. Louis		state_MO	zip code_	63101

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**Inited States Department of the Interior Iational Park Service** 

# VATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Section 7 Page 1

Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

Summary: The Charles Turner Open Air School is a two-story brick school building designed in 1924 in a modest Classical Revival style using a shallow H-shaped plan. The gabled slate roof has a fairly wide overhang with exposed rafter tails. The walls are finished with a red brick mix that features diapering in the gables. Turner School was designed by Board of Education architect Rockwell M. Milligan and is located on a residential street in the north-central St. Louis neighborhood known as the Ville. It represents the "Institutional Buildings" property type established in the National Register cover document *Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis.* The property is in good condition; exterior alterations consist primarily of infilled windows and replacement doors.

**Narrative:** Built virtually at grade with no steps from the public sidewalk to its walkway and only a threshold into the building, the school is one of the first two St. Louis schools (one for whites, one for blacks) built for handicapped accessibility and other medical needs. Behind a low wrought-iron fence, a narrow lawn separates the building from the sidewalk. Centering the long center block is a brick pavilion featuring a closed limestone pediment supported by brick pilasters with limestone capitals. A small wrought-iron and brick balcony surmounts a round-arched, fanlighted entrance door in the pavilion. Double entrance doors are replacements. Front-gabled side wings (the "legs" of the H) extend almost to the sidewalk. At the rear of the building, a square stack in the center of the elevation towers above the low building, tapering at the top with decorative brickwork.

Above a brick foundation, Turner School has a limestone water table. Red bricks are randomly mixed with "culls" in a Flemish Garden Wall (Sussex) bond pattern, culminating in diaper bondwork in the upper portions of the front-facing gables. Brick also provides rectilinear hood molds on tiny paired windows centered right and left on the first story. The steeply-pitched slate roof is in good condition and features red clay ridge tiles. Windows are grouped in Milligan's signature quintet of 6-over-9 double-hung wood sash and feature brick sills and soldier arches. Limestone embellishes the center pavilion, both as coping and entablature. The words "Charles Henry Turner School" are carved in the architrave.

Although eclectic, the building is fairly simple in style compared with those typical of Milligan, whose designs most often followed the more elaborate examples by his Board of Education predecessor, William B. Ittner (many of which are included in the National Register \*St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools of William B. Ittner" multiple property submission). This may have been because the focus of the school was on the very specific needs of handicapped and sick children. In an era where handicaps were taken only minimally into public consideration outside of hospitals, Turner School and its south side counterpart Michael School (1924, Rockwell Milligan; demolished 1997) were the first schools in St. Louis to be designed specifically to address most of the needs of handicapped and tubercular students. Inside, ramps rather than stairs lead to the second floor and extra widths are allowed for wheelchair access. The school originally included ten classrooms, a lunch room, a gymnasium/assembly room seating 300, a dressing room and showers, three manual training rooms, a playroom, isolation room and a dental clinic. The east wing of the second floor was the "Open Air Department," in which French doors remained open in all types of weather. These doors, grouped to match the windows, have been bricked in to conform to window size elsewhere on the school. The interior was remodeled in 1995-96, with modifications being primarily cosmetic. The ramps remain, as does most of the classroom woodwork. Both the interior and exterior are in good condition and retain their integrity, with the exception of the transformation of French doors into windows noted above.

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# IATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

section 8 Page 3

Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

**Summary:** The Charles Henry Turner Open Air School is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its significance in the area of ETHNIC HERITAGE - Black and HEALTH/MEDICINE. Its period of significance, 1925-1949, is defined by the date the school was opened for black students and extends to the arbitrary fifty year end date. The first school specifically built for black handicapped students in St. Louis and reportedly the first of its kind for blacks in the United States,<sup>1</sup> the Turner School played a unique role in the city's African-American community as well as contributing to the singular ensemble of institutions in the Ville neighborhood (see associated context "The Ville as a Center for Black Culture, 1920-1950"). Designed by St. Louis Board of Education architect Rockwell M. Milligan, the school is one of the first two (along with Michael School for handicapped white children) built in St. Louis designed strictly with the needs of handicapped students and those with special medical requirements in mind. Since the 1997 demolition of the Michael School, Turner is the earliest extant example of a special-needs public school in St. Louis.

**Narrative:** Prior to the opening of the Turner Open Air School in 1925, no special school existed in St. Louis to meet the educational needs of handicapped black students. There were several such schools for white children, although these were older buildings that had been adjusted to meet special needs. Concerned black parents and others lobbied the Board of Education for several years for a special school for black children in poor health.<sup>2</sup> Chief among these was Urban League<sup>3</sup> Board member and noted entomologist Charles Turner, for whom the school is named.<sup>4</sup> Turner led the Urban League's vigorous campaign for a school for black handicapped children. In response to their requests, Turner Open Air School was built in the Ville. The addition of Turner made a complete public school education available to all blacks in the city of St. Louis regardless of physical limitations.

The request for a special school coincided with the popular idea of "open-air" living and learning, in which sick people of all ages spent much of their time outside, even in cold weather. The "healthful air" theme

<sup>1</sup> John A Wright, *Discovering African-American St. Louis.* (St. Louis, Missouri: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1994), 84.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Rice, "A Broker for Help," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 25, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> The Urban League is a national organization formed in New York in 1911. The St. Louis chapter began in 1910 as the Committee for Social Services Among Colored People and was renamed in 1918 as the Urban League of St. Louis. Its original intent was to aid the thousands of black, rural southern migrant workers who had come to St. Louis to find factory work after cotton crops fell to the boll weevil. The group began by trying to fill gaps left by social welfare agencies, meeting with companies and agencies to convince them to hire blacks. Today, the Urban League still often acts as a liaison between large corporations and people and groups that need help. One League founder was the Rev. Roger S. Baldwin, who later founded the American Civil Liberties Union.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Henry Turner (1867-1923) in 1907 became the first black to receive a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He headed the Sumner High School science department from 1908 to 1922; his work was published internationally in leading science journals.

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#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section <u>8</u> Page <u>4</u>

Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

was very popular in health literature of the 1920s, and the general population was amply admonished about the benefits of fresh air and the grave dangers associated with breathing in carbon dioxide (as a waste product which "is poisonous and injures the body when it is breathed in again").<sup>5</sup> Many private homes built in the 1920s and '30s included sleeping porches both to take advantage of cooler night temperatures prior to home air conditioning and to give the sleeper the benefit of the healthful air. Simply keeping windows open at night, one St. Louis health newsletter advised, "will do a lot for that sick headachy feeling that you have had every morning on waking up."<sup>6</sup>

#### HEALTH/MEDICINE

#### Tuberculosis

At the turn of the century, tuberculosis killed more St. Louisans than all other common infectious diseases combined.<sup>7</sup> In a decade when the prevention and treatment of the disease were among the top health issues, open-air principles were seen as one of only a few treatment options. For home care of tuberculosis patients, the St. Louis Health Division offered tips on "sleeping out" on porches or balconies. Patients at the Koch Hospital (a contagious disease hospital in south St. Louis County) were reported to live year-round in "an open room or porch especially suitable for the care of the tuberculous."<sup>8</sup> The disease was particularly prevalent among urban, non-affluent citizens living in crowded, possibly unsanitary, conditions; also, proper nutrition was often lacking. "Ignorance of health laws is common . . . among those of our people who have had few opportunities to obtain an education," one report noted, citing a "common belief that night air is unhealthful, and that all windows, doors and other openings of sleeping rooms must be tightly closed." The epidemic reached a critical level among the black population of St. Louis during the first quarter of the century. The reported statewide tuberculosis death rate among blacks in Missouri was 3.9 times that of whites in 1923-24.<sup>10</sup> However, although both the statewide and

<sup>5</sup>"Ventilation," Bulletin of the St. Louis Health Department v. 15 no. 4 (October 1923), p. 28.

<sup>6</sup>lbid.

<sup>7</sup> Two Years Work By the St. Louis Society for the Relief and Prevention of Tuberculosis, 1910-11.\* (Pamphlet, St. Louis).

<sup>8</sup>Bulletin of the St. Louis Health Division (Tuberculosis Edition) v. 19 nos. 10,11,12 (April -June 1929) p. 97.

<sup>9</sup>Robert S. Cobb, comp. *Biennial Report of the Missouri Negro Industrial Commission 1921-22.* (Jefferson City, Missouri, n.p., [1922]), p. 58.

<sup>10</sup>Robert S. Cobb, comp. *Biennial Report of the Missouri Negro Industrial Commission 1923-24, \*Greater Missouri Number.*\* (Jefferson City, Missouri: The Hugh Stephens Press, [1924]), p. 25. Inited States Department of the Interior lational Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Section 8 Page 5

Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

St. Louis city overall death rates decreased from 1912-1920,<sup>11</sup> one 1927 study estimated that the St. Louis city tuberculosis mortality rate was up to five times as high among blacks as it was among whites.<sup>12</sup> Clearly urban blacks were at much higher risk of infection. Add to this the fact that St. Louis' African-American community had no sanitarium and only one hospital (Hospital #2, with 177 beds in 1920 to serve a black population of about 70,000<sup>13</sup>) and it becomes clear that there was a dire need for public health assistance. Although the Tuberculosis Association, the Public Health Association, the Missouri Negro Industrial Commission and others encouraged "hygienic" education, better care and improved living conditions, the situation was slow to improve. As late as 1927, a Public Health Association Report estimated an "immediate need for 150 sanatorium beds for colored people" in St. Louis. <sup>14</sup> This lack of public health facilities for African-Americans made early detection, intervention and education essential in slowing the tuberculosis rate. One of the critical functions of Turner School's open air facilities was the prevention of full-blown tuberculosis in children who had been exposed. The rooms of Turner's "open air department" had French doors which remained open during classes, often requiring teachers and children to remain warmly clad in coats, with wool leggings, mittens, mufflers and hats furnished by the school.<sup>15</sup>

#### Disabilities

Although the open air classroom was one of the principal distinctions of the school, Turner accommodated students with a variety of disabilities, as explained in a 1939 *St. Louis Argus* report:

In order that various types of children may be aided in overcoming their physical limitations, Turner School is divided into four units: the Open Air, the Deaf, the Sight Conservation and the Orthopedic. The Open Air unit provides for the undernourished, the nervous child and the cardiac. The Deaf unit offers instruction for the deaf and children with speach [sic] defects. The Sight Conservation department provides for those pupils whose visual energies need to be conserved. While the Orthopedic unit serves the crippled child.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Robert S. Cobb, comp. *Biennial Report of the Missouri Negro Industrial Commission 1921-22.* (Jefferson City, Missouri: n.p., [1922]), p. 60.

<sup>12</sup>Committee on Administrative Practice of the American Public Health Association, A Study of the Health Activities of St. Louis Missouri Including an Appraisal of the Public Health Services Rendered by Official and Voluntary Agencies, and a Study of the Services for Organized Care of the Sick. 1927. Typescript, St. Louis Public Library, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup>Mary M. Stiritz, *Homer G. Phillips Hospital* National Register Nomination, 1982, Section 8.

<sup>14</sup>Committee on Administrative Practice of the American Public Health Association, A Study of the Health Activities, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup>Patricia Rice, \*A Broker for Help,\* St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 25, 1993.

<sup>16</sup>"Turner School Graduating Class," St. Louis Argus, 20 January 1939, p.5.

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#### **IATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES** CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

The article explained that the Open Air unit emphasized "rest, baths, meals and fresh air," while the Orthopedic unit offered "a daily program of corrective exercises with therapeutic values." Students could participate in more than one unit; normally studies were tailored so students could return to their regular school when rehabilitation was accomplished. Some students, however, attended the school for the duration of their elementary education due to the lack of other accessible facilities.

Turner School was furnished with one large lunch room and two cooks. One main meal, including a vegetable, dairy product and meat or fish, was served to all the children. Additionally, the tuberculosisexposed children received cereal and milk in the morning and milk and crackers as an afternoon snack, in an attempt to build up their strength. A dressing room and shower, isolation room and dental clinic were provided in addition to a playroom, three manual training rooms, and ten classrooms. Original School Board records indicate that the school had space for 348 students.<sup>17</sup>

The courses offered at the Open Air Schools were comparable to regular school courses. The goal of the schools was to keep each child at grade level with regular and appropriate work and performance while insuring that their bodies would be improved, if possible. Manual training and home economics classes were required; part of the policy was to teach the public that the children were human beings not to be pitied, but given a chance to perform to capacity. This was a significant step forward in an era when so many children suffered from tuberculosis and polio without benefit of the Americans with Disabilities Act or even much public awareness of what they could do despite physical limitations. Turner School gave the children a place to develop confidence as well as skills and health in an atmosphere of acceptance and relative comfort.

Children were referred to the Open Air Schools by doctors, parents, and teachers. As a city public school, Turner charged no additional fees for attendance; the medical and nutritional care included at the school proved to be extremely valuable to the many poor families who benefitted from the facility. Two buses picked up the children from all over the city; they came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Many of the students went on to lead successful, healthy lives in any number of professions. One of the first graduates of Turner Open Air School was a polio victim who went on to become a physical education teacher at Sumner High School.

With the Supreme Court's 1954 decision to end segregation in all public schools, the Board of Education immediately set up a plan to transfer all Turner students to the Michael Open Air School and convert Turner to a standard elementary school for the September 1955 class start. Despite desegregation, the school drew from the Ville neighborhood, effectively retaining a black student body. The school now serves as an annex to nearby Turner Middle School (formerly Stowe College). Interior renovation in 1995-96 included new lighting and linoleum tile floors, leaving the original wheelchair ramps and built-in cabinetry. The exterior of the school has also been well maintained; the one major alteration is the conversion of upper-floor French doors to windows after the school was no longer practicing its "open air" policy. An early non-compatible infill was replaced in the 1990s to match the fenestration and brickwork of the rest of the building. With the exception of the loss of this significant feature, both interior and exterior

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Undated, unpaged loose sheets in St. Louis Board of Education vertical files, 1615 Hampton Ave, St. Louis, MO.

Jnited States Department of the Interior Vational Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

of the school retain a high degree of integrity. Since the 1997 demolition of the Michael School, Turner is the earliest (and apparently the only) St. Louis example of a historic public school built for special needs children, and certainly the only such school built in the city for African-Americans.

PS Form 10-900-a -86)

## Inited States Department of the Interior

### ATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ONTINUATION SHEET

ection 9 Page 9

#### Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Section <u>10</u> Page <u>1</u>

Charles Turner Open Air School St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

#### 10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 31-45-plus the western fifteen feet of Lot 46, Taylor's Subdivision of Block 1 (City Block 3689), City of St. Louis, measuring 145' x 390'.

**Boundary Justification:** These boundaries include the Charles Turner Open Air School and its lawn and playground and small parking lot; these are its historical boundaries.

#### 11. Form Prepared By

 Cynthia Hill Longwisch, Assistant Director; and Lynn Josse, Research Associate Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. 917 Locust Street, 7th Floor St. Louis MO 63101 314/421-6474 October 1997 original draft nomination, items 1-11

2. Steven E. Mitchell Assistant Director Historic Preservation Program Division of State Parks Department of Natural Resources P.O. Box 176 Jefferson City, MO 65102 573/751-4692 August 1999 editor, items 1-11 HIGTORICH ARCHITEOTURAL RESOURCES OF THE VILLE, 57. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CIT)

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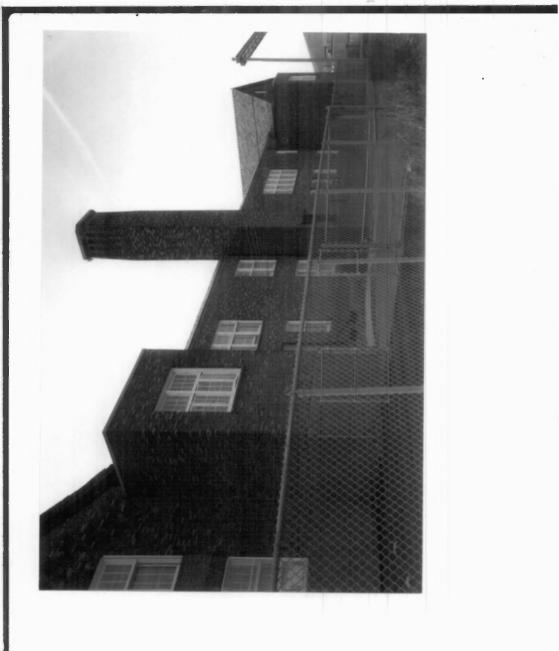
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4235 M.KENNERLY
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