

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Stowe Teachers College

other names/site number Turner Middle School

2. Location

street & number 2615 Billups [n/a] not for publication

city or town St. Louis [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis [Independent City code 510 zip code 63113

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date

Claire F. Blackwell 12 August 1995

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

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

entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [] .

determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [] .

determined not eligible for the
National Register.

removed from the
National Register

other, explain
See continuation sheet [] .

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

n/a

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
Education/school

Current Functions
Education/school

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement

Materials
 foundation brick
 walls brick

 roof asphalt
 other limestone

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

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

Periods of Significance

1940-1948

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Sanger, George W.

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.)

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 Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	740160	4282730			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title see continuation sheet

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state MO 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 St. Louis Board of Education

street & number 911 Locust Street telephone 314/231-3720

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3

Stowe Teachers College
City of St. Louis, Missouri

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary: Stowe Teachers College (now Turner Middle School) is a three- and four-story, brick, Modern style school building with a flat, multi-level asphalt roof and an irregular, squarish plan shape. The walls of this 1938-40 project are finished with buff brick trimmed in limestone; the foundation is brick. Extending seven bays long, Stowe takes up the equivalent of half a block along Billups (formerly Pendleton Avenue) from Kennerly Avenue to Cottage Avenue; diagonally immediately southeast of the school is Sumner High School, where the original Stowe College students did their student teaching. The rather austere building is distinguished by its dramatic massing and one-story round lunchroom (Photo #1, at right) and the extensive use of sharply geometrically-cut limestone. It is nominated as a representative of the Institutional Buildings property type defined in the multiple property submission *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Vhle, St. Louis [Independent City]*.

Narrative: Sited with very little lawn and almost at grade, the school faces Tandy Park. Its own narrow, asphalted playground extends across the rear (west side) of the building. The main facade, facing roughly east along Billups, is broken into four sections. The southern two thirds of the facade is three stories high and five bays long. A taller entrance volume projects just north, and an even taller four-story bay juts forward to the north of that. To soften the effect, a one-story semicircular lunchroom is attached at the northern end of the building.

Stowe's main corridors run north-south parallel to the facade, with classrooms along the east wall of the building and larger spaces to the west. On the exterior these larger rooms (from south to north the original auditorium, gymnasium and kitchen/boiler room) are reflected as irregular one-, two- and three-story segments, massed for function more than effect (Photo #2). On the north side elevation, this massing reads as a stair-step effect with the semicircular lunchroom framed by a block of rooms three additional stories high and three bays wide with a two-story and then a one-story section as the building continues west. The south elevation reflects the windowless wall of the auditorium, with an entrance at the south end of the main corridor (Photo #3).

A stone water table crosses the primary facade of the school, echoed in the coping and beveled window surrounds. The greatest number of windows on the primary elevation are horizontally divided three-over-three double-hung sash, grouped into fives. A narrow entrance bay is distinguished by the use of deep, beveled limestone mullions and glass brick windows above the doorway to provide a hint of International Style. Engaged stone columns support a small stone entablature bearing the name of the school. The school is in very good condition and the exterior has been altered very little; the building retains a high degree of integrity.

Ornamentation on this Depression-era Public Works building is necessarily restrained, softened only by the large trees that now rise around it, almost totally obliterating any clear view of the school during the warm months. Interestingly, the more "traditional" (albeit different) St. Louis school designs of Ittner's Sumner High School and Milligan's Turner Open Air School are located immediately to the south and north of Stowe, respectively, while directly east across Tandy Park is the Art Deco Tandy Recreation Center - four institutions within a block of one another, each with its own style and each reflective of a different purpose.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 4

Stowe Teachers College
City of St. Louis, Missouri

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary: Stowe Teachers College is significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage - Black, representing the context "The Ville as a Center For Black Culture, 1910-1950" in the *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City]* cover document. It represents the "Institutional Buildings" property type established in that document. The first building constructed specifically for the training of African-American teachers in St. Louis, Stowe's new building (opened in 1940) provided a much-needed facility during the pre-integration years, replacing the cramped, shared, temporary situations previously endured at Sumner High School and Simmons School. As the final piece of the educational ensemble of the Ville - the only complete educational grouping for blacks ever in St. Louis - Stowe provided a kind of validation for black educators in St. Louis.

Narrative: In September, 1890, the St. Louis Board of Education approved the creation of a Normal Department for black teachers in Sumner High School, located at that time at Fifteenth and Walnut. The Normal training, organized by principal Oscar Waring, provided for one year beyond high school. Because black teachers were not allowed to teach white children, the number of positions in segregated St. Louis schools was limited for Sumner graduates. Fourteen young women received the Normal diploma at the end of the 1890-91 school year. In order to reduce the number of qualified candidates for the few teaching positions, the St. Louis Board of Education instituted an apprentice system and limited the size of the class accepted in the Normal training program of 1904.

With the move of Sumner High School to the Ville in 1910, many teachers who were employed in the Normal program moved to the Ville also. Among the teachers responsible for the teaching program in 1920, Dr. Ruth Harris and Miss Grace Nichols lived in the community. In 1921, the Board of Education ordered that the training received by black teachers in the Sumner Normal Course should be equal to the training of white teachers offered at Harris Teachers College. Also, it was ruled that teachers could, by extension work, earn sufficient credit for an A.B. degree. In 1925, Sumner Normal School was officially designated as a college, although it continued to be housed in the Sumner High School building. The 1929 graduating class of Sumner Teachers College was the first to receive the bachelor's degree in education.

In that year, Sumner Teachers College was moved to a new wing in the Ville's Simmons School; it also ended up using portable buildings placed on the playground. Just after the move the Board of Education changed the name of the college to Harriet Beecher Stowe College (after the author of the abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) under the principalship of E. D. Hamilton. Of the 21 accredited institutions of higher learning located in St. Louis in the mid-1930s, only Stowe and the Homer G. Phillips School of Nursing admitted African Americans.¹

Throughout the 1930s, a number of efforts to establish a junior college at Stowe met with varying degrees of success. In 1931, registration soared from 271 students to 531 when regulations changed allowed young men and women who did not wish to teach to take courses offered to freshmen and sophomores at the college. This successful program was discontinued by the Board of Education in 1932 because of lack of funds. In 1933, Lincoln University (a college for African-Americans in Jefferson City, Missouri)

¹Katharine T. Corbett and Mary E. Seematter, " 'No Crystal Stair:' Black St. Louis, 1920-1940," *Gateway Heritage* v. 16 no. 2 (Fall 1995), 85. No date or reference is provided for this assertion.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 5

**Stowe Teachers College
City of St. Louis, Missouri
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri**

established a junior college division at Stowe Teachers College under the Public Works Administration Program (PWA). Lincoln hired a separate faculty to teach its freshmen and sophomore courses at Stowe. Although this program was discontinued after a few years, Stowe received its own junior college standing in the fall semester of 1938. The junior college curriculum equalled the first two years of the teachers' A.B. program. In the first semester, 77 men and 56 women enrolled.²

By the mid-1930s, there was pressure from the community and the college to provide a more suitable building and facilities than those available at Simmons. Meetings were held at the Kennerly Avenue Church to urge the Board of Education to appropriate money to build Stowe Teachers College its own building. The Board approved the construction of a new building designed by Board of Education architect George W. Sanger, built at an estimated cost of \$397,523 in 1938-40 at 2615 Pendleton (now Billups).

Stowe was one of dozens of building projects in the St. Louis area subsidized by the PWA.³ From the time of the PWA's authorization in 1933 until St. Louis area projects were completed in 1940, millions of dollars in building program assistance was disbursed in the form of grants and loans. In the first four years of the program alone, the PWA claimed to have spent over 72 million dollars in the state of Missouri. About 8.5 million dollars of that was spent in the St. Louis area to support projects such as the Civil Courts Building, Municipal Auditorium (Kiel Center), the Soldiers' Memorial and in the Ville, Homer G. Phillips Hospital.⁴ Additional funds between 1933-1940 were spent at City Hospital, Koch Hospital, the St. Louis Training School for the Feeble Minded, and a variety of schools, recreation centers (including the Tandy Center in the Ville) and police stations. Non-building PWA projects included construction of or improvements to streets, sewers, bridges and viaducts.

As built, Stowe Teachers College included seven classrooms, three laboratories, an art room, an auditorium/music room, a gym, library and lunchroom. In 1940, Dr. Ruth Harris was appointed president of the school, a position which she held until the merger with Harris Teachers College (formerly all white) after the Supreme Court ruled for desegregation in 1954.⁵ The new Stowe was dedicated in a public ceremony on May 24, 1940. In his opening address, Dr. Rudolph Hofmeister praised the "architects, engineers, educators, commissioners, school officials and employees, government experts, as well as skilled and unskilled labor of every type" who contributed to "this splendid building which will now house the teacher training institute which prepares the teacher for the thousands of our colored children and to provide more abundantly higher educational opportunities for many worthy and deserving young colored

²"Stowe Given Junior College Standing," *St. Louis Argus*, 6 January 1939, p. 15.

³"Hundreds Attend Stowe Dedication," *St. Louis Argus* 31 May 1940, p.1.

⁴"\$72,345,374 SPENT BY PWA IN MISSOURI," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 16 June 1937; "PWA Here Spent 72 Million in 4 Years," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 16 June 1937.

⁵Harris-Stowe State College is located in the former Vashon High School building near downtown. The administration recently announced a major expansion of their formerly boxed-in campus when land was procured after the adjoining Laclede Town Housing Project was razed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Stowe Teachers College
City of St. Louis, Missouri

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

people whose chances have been sadly limited and restricted."⁶

Regular columns in the *St. Louis Argus* kept the city's black community up to date on activities at Stowe both before and after the move. Life at Stowe had a great deal in common with experiences at other institutions, black and white. In the early 1940s, there were numerous accounts of the school's Pan-Hellenic Council and its fraternities and sororities (at least three sororities had been in place before the school even moved from Simmons). Social events included dances and lectures, and the school put together winning sports teams which competed against other local black schools and organizations. The Speech Club, Mask and Wig Club, Library Club and others sponsored activities and contests. An Enlisted Reserve Corps was formed during World War II. Students were offered the chance to take a special course on war time topics such as rationing and post-war plans; classmates regretted the loss of their fellows to the armed forces.⁷

According to Board of Education records, Stowe Teachers College was merged into the all-white Harris Teachers College in September of 1954. The building was used as a grammar school for black students in the next year, with desegregation following in 1955.⁸ The Turner Middle School for grades six through eight is still open, attracting three hundred forty-four students attended the school during the 1992-93 school year. Like nearby Turner Open Air School, the middle school was named for Charles Henry Turner, a well-known local black entomologist and educator.

To the residents of the Ville, Stowe Teachers College was an important fixture in the cluster of institutions which offered education to black students. It represented educational opportunities that were unavailable to African Americans anywhere else in the city. In an era of "separate but equal" education, the concentration of segregated institutions in the Ville incubated a flourishing black St. Louis culture which is remembered nostalgically today. For many years, Stowe Teachers College and the nurse training program at Homer G. Phillips Hospital were the pinnacle of black education in St. Louis. In 1977, Harris Teachers College was renamed Harris-Stowe in response to requests from alumni, commemorating one of the city's great black institutions.⁹

⁶"Hundreds Attend Stowe Dedication."

⁷"The Stowe College News." *St. Louis Argus*, various editions, 1940-43. A full list of college organizations in 1941 is included in "Stowe Teachers College," n.a., n.d., typescript, 4 pages, collection of Landmarks Association of St. Louis. In addition to those listed above, groups included: President's Advisory Committee, Activity Committee, Glee Club, International Relations Club, Les Collegians, YWCA Club, and Women's and Men's Athletic Association.

⁸"Turner Middle School" description in miscellaneous loose records, St. Louis Board of Education Archives.

⁹*The African-American Heritage of St. Louis: A Guide*, Saint Louis Public Library, 1992. 14.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9.10 Page 7

Stowe Teachers College
City of St. Louis, Missouri

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

9. Major Bibliographic Sources

"\$72,345,374 SPENT BY PWA IN MISSOURI." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. 16 June 1937. *The African-American Heritage of St. Louis: A Guide*. Saint Louis Public Library, 1992.

Corbett, Katharine T. and Mary E. Seematter. " 'No Crystal Stair:' Black St. Louis, 1920-1940." *Gateway Heritage* v. 16 no. 2 (Fall 1995). 85.

"Hundreds Attend Stowe Dedication." *St. Louis Argus*. 31 May 1940. 1. Miscellaneous Records, Saint Louis Board of Education Archives. "PWA Here Spent 72 Million in 4 Years." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. 16 June 1937.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of St. Louis, v. 7, for 1909, 1951, 1961. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company.

Short, C. W., and R. Stanley-Brown. *Public Buildings: Architecture Under the Public Works Administration 1933-1939*. v. 1. New York: Da Capo Press, 1986. Reprint of 1939 edition.

"The Stowe College News." *St. Louis Argus*, various editions, 1940-43.

"Stowe Teachers College." n.a., n.d. Typescript, 4 pages. Collection of Landmarks Association of St. Louis.

Toft, Carolyn Hewes, ed. *The Ville: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood*. St. Louis: Social Science Institute, Washington University, 1975.

Vose, Clement E. *Caucasians Only: The Supreme Court, the NAACP, and the Restrictive Covenant Cases*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959.

Wright, John A. *Discovering African American St. Louis; A Guide to Historic Sites*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1994.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of Stowe Teachers College is shown as the bold line on the accompanying map entitled "Boundary Map of Stowe Teachers College."

Boundary Justification: These boundaries are the historic boundaries of the school property, including the Stowe Teachers College building and surrounding lawn and lot.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 11 Page 8

**Stowe Teachers College
City of St. Louis, Missouri**

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

1. 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
January 1998
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
November 1998
editor, items 1-11

AV.

KENNERLY AV.

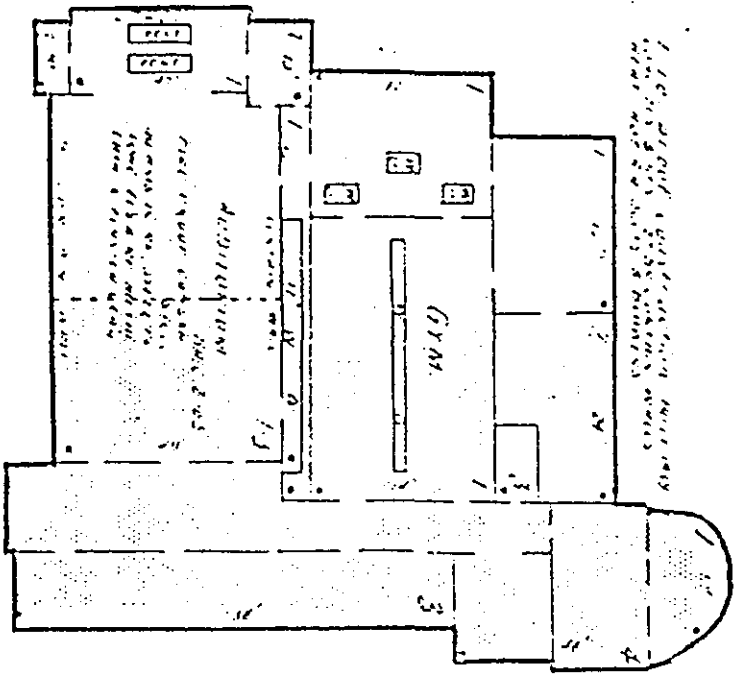
6" W PIPE

(14)

AV.

20

TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL NO. 2



COTTAGE AV.

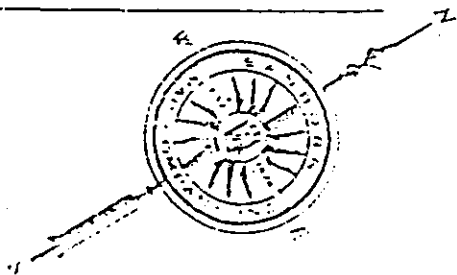
4375

4301

6" W PIPE

BILLUPS AV.

6" W PIPE



Boundary Map of Stowe Teachers
College
2615 Billups
St. Louis (Independent City),
Missouri
Historic and Architectural
Resources of The Ville, St.
Louis MPS
Source: Sanborn Map Company,
1969

22

HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF THE VILLE, ST. LOUIS
CINCINNATI (CINCINNATI CITY)

STOWE TEACHERS COLLEGE

(TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL)

2615 BILLYS AVENUE

ST. LOUIS (CINCINNATI CITY) MO

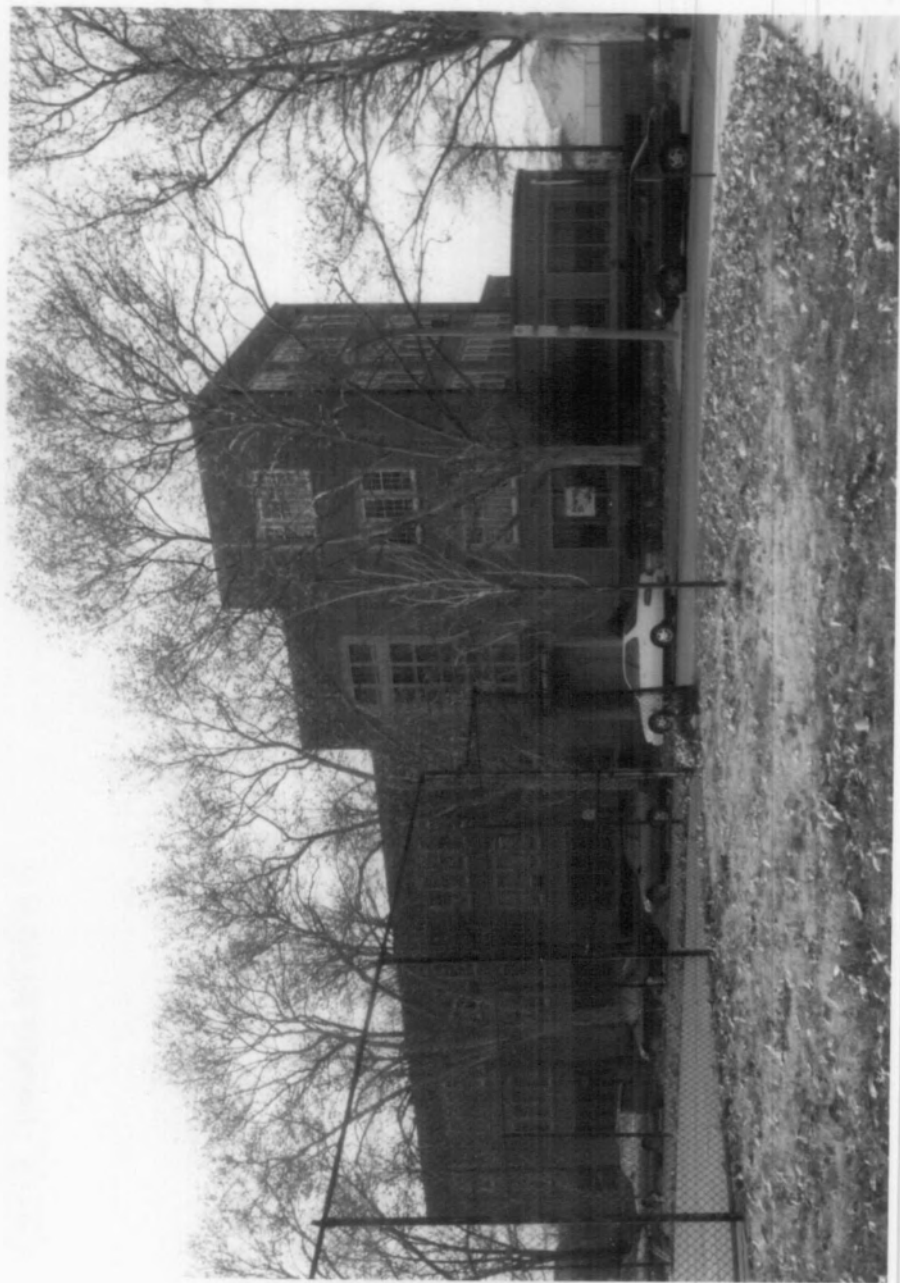
BY: CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

DATE: 12/1996

NEG: LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

FACING SW; PRIMARY ELEVATION

1 of 3



HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF THE VILLE, ST. LOUIS
(INDEPENDENT CITY)

STOWE TEACHERS COLLEGE
(TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL)

2615 BILLYPS AVENUE
ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY) MO

BY: CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

DATE: 12/1996

NEG: LANDMARKS ASSOC OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

FACING SW; PRIMARY ELEVATION

1 of 3



HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF THE VILLE, ST. LOUIS
(INDEPENDENT CITY)

STONE TEACHERS COLLEGE

(TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL)

2615 BILLUPS AVENUE

ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY) MO

BY: CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

DATE: 12/1996

NEGATIVE: LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

FACING SOUTHEAST; REAR ELEVATION

#2 of 3



HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF THE VILLAGE,
ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY)

STOWE TEACHERS COLLEGE
(TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL)

2615 BILLUPS

ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY) MO

BY: CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

DATE: 9/1997

NEG. LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

FACING NW: SOUTH SIDE ELEVATION

3 of 3

