

SCHOOLS FOR ALL

A HISTORY OF
DC PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDINGS
1804-1960



Cover/Inside Cover: Harrison Elementary School, 1890, 13th and V Streets, NW

SCHOOLS FOR ALL

“...THERE IS NOT AT PRESENT, EITHER RENTED FROM INDIVIDUALS, OR OWNED BY THE CITY, A SINGLE SCHOOLROOM ENTIRELY SUITED FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES.”

In this 1858 address on the city's public education system, the District Board of Trustees acknowledged the inadequate state of its schools. Despite great expectations for the system established in 1804, decades later it lacked the funding and political support necessary to be fully successful; “free” public education suffered from the stigma of being considered a charity institution. But beginning with the 1861 election of Mayor Richard Wallach, who campaigned on a platform of better education, the District of Columbia entered a “golden age of public education.” Over the course of the next two decades, the city developed a model, but segregated, education program that emphasized the importance of school building design from an urban, moral and educational perspective. Until the mid-20th century, the city built hundreds of public school buildings that stand as vital urban neighborhood landmarks today.

Several studies of the city's public school system from 1804 to 1960, sponsored by the D.C. Historic Preservation Office, form a comprehensive history of public school buildings in the District of Columbia and identify approximately 175 extant schools in the city. Architecturally, the schools are classified by chronological periods and physical types which reflect the architectural and cultural forces of their time and provide a valuable visual lesson in the city's educational philosophies. Based upon these studies, a number of the city's most important school buildings have been designated as D.C. landmarks and listed in the National Register of Historic Places for architectural, historical and/or cultural reasons. Many of these buildings are still operating as public schools, while others have taken on new life and new uses while retaining the characteristic original features.

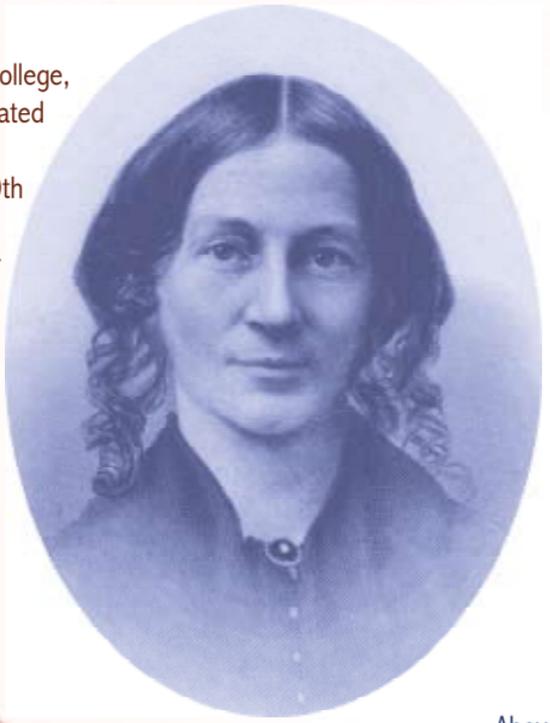
EARLY HISTORY

An Act of Congress, passed December 5, 1804 authorized the District of Columbia “to establish and endow a permanent institution for the education of youth in the city of Washington.” President Thomas Jefferson personally contributed \$200 towards the endowment of the schools and was rewarded by being named the first president of the thirteen-member Board of Trustees. Under Jefferson’s chairmanship, the Board aspired to create a primary and secondary school system, as well as a university.

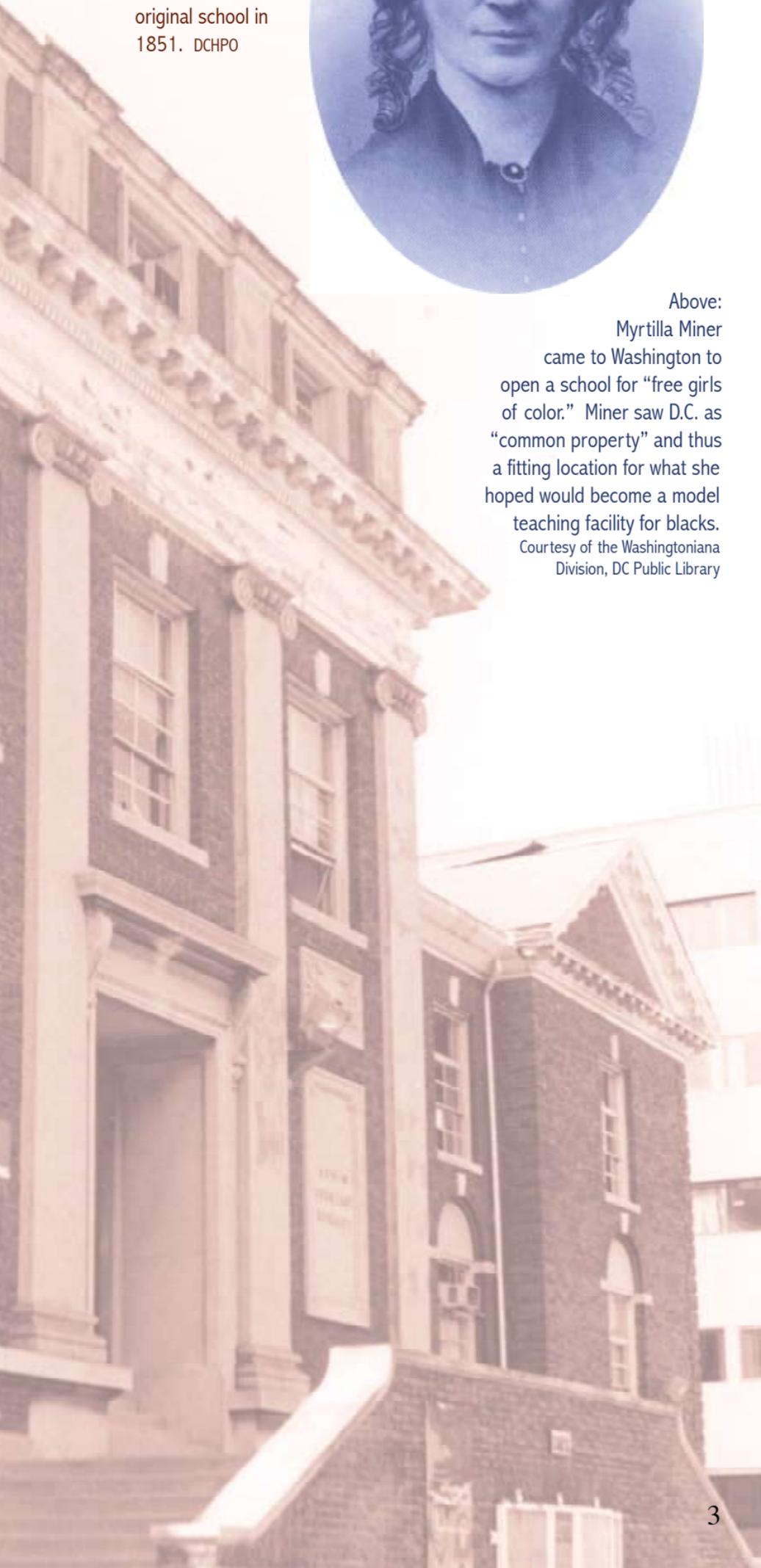
The idealistic intent of the governing body was to provide for the education of children whose parents were unable to pay tuition at private schools. This was to be accomplished with a meager annual budget of \$1,500, procured through the proceeds of taxes laid on dogs, licenses from carriages and hacks, ordinaries and taverns, “spirituous” liquors and the like. In 1806, the first two schools—Eastern Free School (east of the Capitol) and Western School (one-half mile from the President’s House)—were opened. Due to this limited budget and to the stigma of being regarded as “charity” schools, however, the public system grew slowly and developed little. Indeed, in its first half century of existence, the schools, despite opening up to the more affluent “paying” students, were still poorly regarded and housed in makeshift quarters, such as old market houses, fraternal halls, church basements and other structures. The conditions were so inferior that the members of the Board of Trustees were mortified to show the city schools to their counterparts from other cities.

Schools for African Americans were founded almost simultaneously, in 1807, but under the sponsorship of private citizens and religious groups. The earliest black schools were generally quartered in church basements and other black institutional buildings. In 1835, in response to the Nat Turner uprising and the related “Snow Riots,” the education of African Americans suffered a serious setback as their educational facilities were attacked and destroyed. Many of these schools were later revived. In 1851, Myrtilla Miner, a white pioneer in the education of African Americans, established one of the city’s first high schools for black women.

Background:
The Miner Teachers College,
built in 1914 and located
at Howard University,
was named for the 19th
century educational
pioneer Myrtilla Miner
who founded the
original school in
1851. DCHPO



Above:
Myrtilla Miner
came to Washington to
open a school for “free girls
of color.” Miner saw D.C. as
“common property” and thus
a fitting location for what she
hoped would become a model
teaching facility for blacks.
Courtesy of the Washingtoniana
Division, DC Public Library



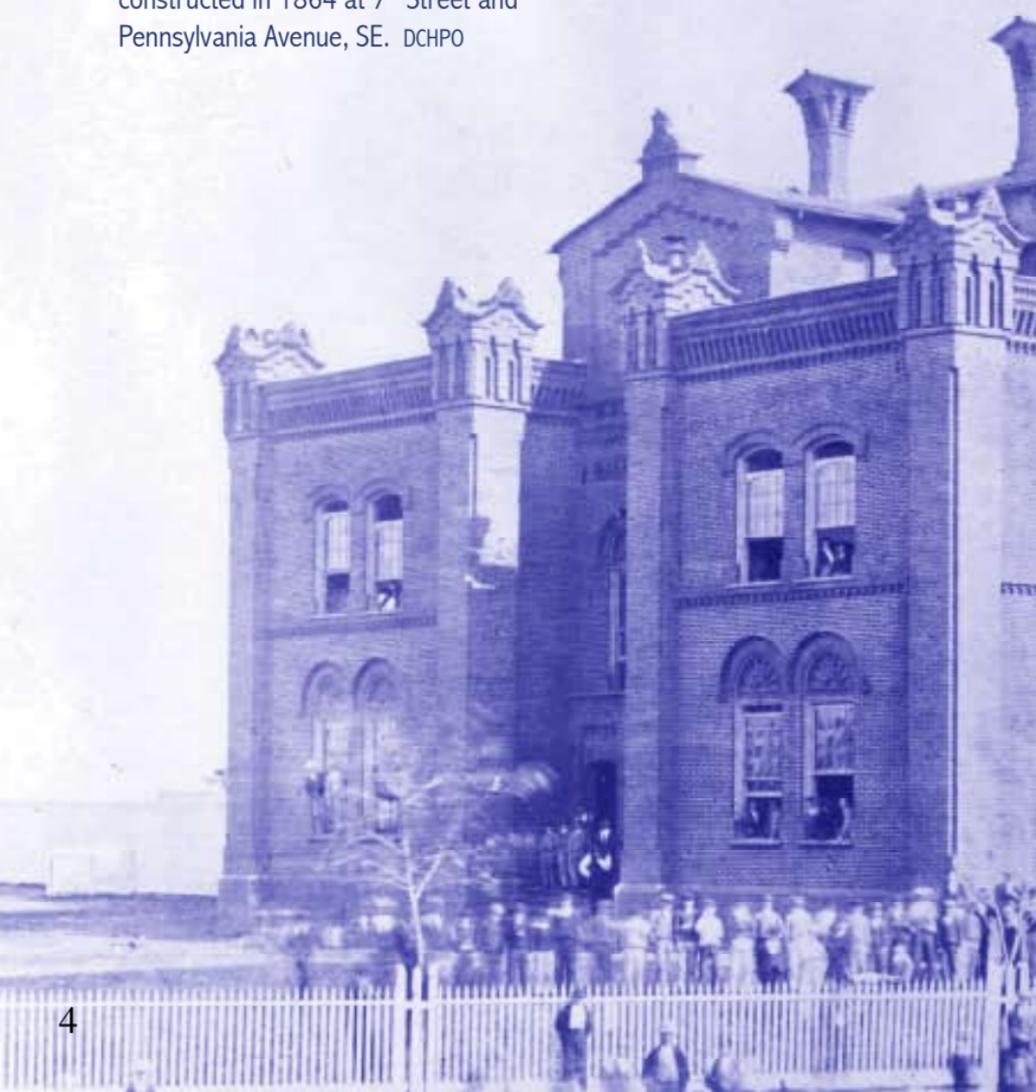
THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA

“SCHOOLS FOR ALL, GOOD ENOUGH FOR
THE RICHEST, CHEAP ENOUGH FOR THE
POOREST.”

*Motto of Mayor Richard Wallach,
elected Mayor of Washington in 1861*

Although the conflict itself disrupted the public schools as school buildings were commandeered for hospitals and other purposes, the Civil War years represented the “dawn of a new era” in the history of the D.C. school system. In 1862, newly elected Mayor Richard Wallach secured substantial additional funding for the construction of a series of new school buildings. The same year, an Act of Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia, and another law provided for the creation of public schools for African Americans, thus establishing a dual, racially segregated, public school

Wallach School, the city's first substantial school building, was constructed in 1864 at 7th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. DCHPO



Wallach, mayor of Washington from 1861-1868, applied himself directly to the construction of schools in the city. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Washington



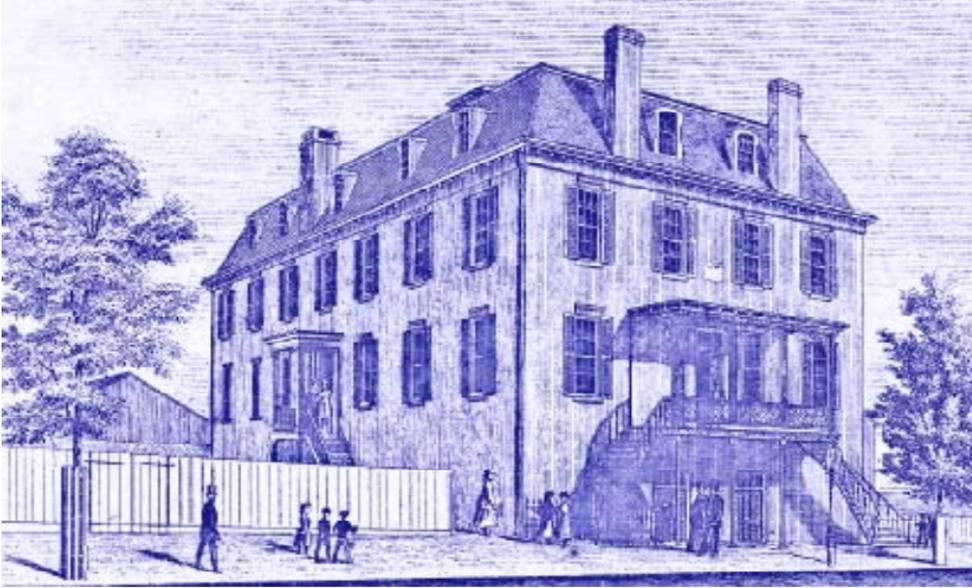
system. In 1864, a major restructuring of the schools occurred, creating a graded system, high schools, and a normal (teaching) school. Additional legislation provided for a fairer distribution of funds between white and black schools.



Franklin School at 13th and K Streets, NW was the flagship building of a group of seven modern urban public school buildings constructed in the city between 1862 and 1875. It was named for Benjamin Franklin who had clearly understood and advocated for universal public education in America DCHPO



Stevens School, named after Pennsylvania Congressman and abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens, was Washington's first African American school considered to be the architectural equal of the model white schools. DCHPO



The school buildings constructed under Wallach's leadership were meant not only to address the city's long-term needs, but to provide an urban educational model for the country. The first school completed, named Wallach School in the mayor's honor, was located at 7th and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. At the building's dedication ceremony in 1864, the mayor lauded the "beautiful structure" that marked the "commencement of a new era of school-house architecture in our midst." Indeed, Adolph Cluss, architect of Wallach School with then-partner Joseph Wildrich von Kammerhueber, went on to design seven of the city's most architecturally remarkable school buildings, for both blacks and whites, during the Reconstruction period.

Each of the schools designed by Adolph Cluss, either independently or in partnership with Kammerhueber—Wallach School (1864), Franklin School (1869), Sumner School (1871), Seaton School (1871), Cranch School (1871), Jefferson School (1872), and Curtis School (1875)—had its own architectural character, but each shared Cluss' innovative design features for multiple-grade urban public schools. All were designed with practical and aesthetic considerations intended to inspire students, dignify the educational profession, and elevate the public schools to a

The Sumner School, built 1871-72 for blacks at 17th and M Streets, NW was named in honor of Charles Sumner, Massachusetts senator and ardent abolitionist who attempted to ban segregated schools and public facilities in the city. Courtesy of the Sumner School Archives



position of respect and dominance. Among other major attributes, each of these schools offered independent classrooms separated by cloak rooms for privacy and noise abatement, and large windows on two sides for ample light and ventilation.

Although Wallach School was the first of these seven schools constructed, Franklin School is considered the flagship of the group. The architecture of Franklin School, located just four blocks from the White House, rivaled that of federal government buildings then being erected in the rapidly developing post-war city. Described as “Modern Renaissance” by the architect himself, Franklin School is a highly rational, symmetrical, yet exuberant, three-story brick building with octagonal bell towers dominating the façade.

The 1862 act to provide public education to black students was followed by additional legislation to distribute funds more fairly between the segregated school systems. The first public schoolhouse for blacks was a frame structure built in 1865 at 2nd and C Streets, SE. Several more substantial school buildings followed, including the John F. Cook School at 4th and O Streets, NW in 1867, and the brick Stevens School at 21st and K Streets, NW in 1868. The crowning glory of the black schools of this period was the Sumner School, constructed 1871-72 on 17th Street between M and N Streets, NW.

In 1873, the City of Washington won international recognition when it was awarded the highly acclaimed medal of “Progress in education for school architecture” at the World’s Exposition in Vienna. Still, as the city was developing its model, multi-classroom urban schoolhouse within the city, the one- and two-room frame schoolhouses still prevailed in rural Washington County.

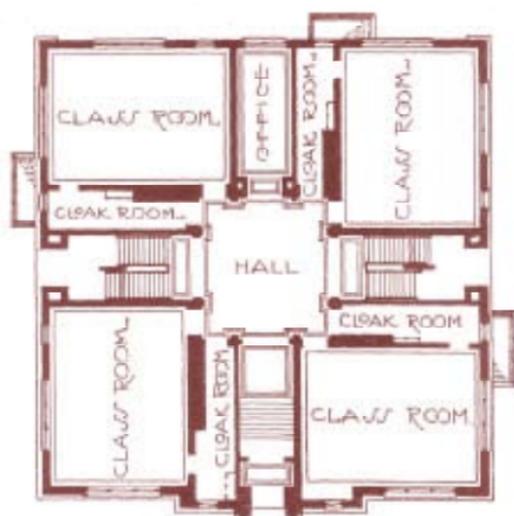
Background:

The Conduit Road Schoolhouse (erected 1865, but rebuilt 1874) on MacArthur Boulevard, NW is the last surviving example of a one-room schoolhouse within the District of Columbia. Courtesy of the Sumner School Archives

A MODERN SCHOOL SYSTEM: 1874-1900

In 1871, Congress established a territorial form of government for the District of Columbia, combining the governments of Washington City, Washington County and Georgetown, D.C. As part of this re-organization, Congress also merged the separate school systems, replaced “grammar schools” with eight-grade elementary schools, and established separate high schools and normal (teaching) schools. Although under a single board, the African American schools continued to function under their own black superintendent.

The standard 19th century school building in D.C. consisted of an eight-room brick structure with four classrooms per floor, as illustrated on this floor plan. Corner classrooms provided windows on two sides for light and ventilation, while adjoining cloakrooms provided privacy between classes. Courtesy of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library



Built in 1879 at 5th and C Streets, NE, Peabody School was the largest elementary school of its day and is the oldest extant school to have been designed by the Office of the Building Inspector DCHPO

Three years later, in 1874, when Congress changed the territorial system of government to a commission-led one (made official by the Organic Act of 1878), the Office of the Building Inspector was established. The Building Inspector had the task of preparing designs and specifications for municipal buildings, including public schools. As a rule, the schools of the late 19th century

produced by the Office of the Building Inspector were of red brick and reflected the then-popular Romanesque Revival style of architecture. In form and detail, these school buildings emphasized simplicity, efficiency, and durability. Located in the populated central city neighborhoods, they were designed to fit seamlessly into the surrounding community of red brick Victorian-era row houses. The small neighborhood school, with teachers living in the community among students and their families, became an established part of Washington life. These were modest-sized structures, most often two-story buildings with four classrooms on each floor and separate entrances and stairs for boys and girls. The public schools for whites and blacks followed this same model.



Designed by the Office of the Building Inspector and erected in 1889, Lenox School at 5th and G Streets, SE typifies the city's red brick public school buildings of the 1880s and 1890s. DCHPO



A TIME OF TRANSITION

“THERE HAS IN THE PAST BEEN TOO LITTLE ATTENTION PAID TO THE ARTISTIC DETAILS IN PLANNING THESE STRUCTURES...THE RESULT IS THE APPEARANCE THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF GREAT RED BRICK BLOCKS THAT ARE UNATTRACTIVE IF NOT POSITIVELY UGLY.”

Washington Star editorial comment on D.C. public school buildings, July 8, 1897

By the 1890s, the familiar red brick school, once lauded for its excellence of design, was being criticized on aesthetic grounds. In 1897, the *Evening Star* decried the city’s school buildings as “mere boxes of brick without any pretensions to beauty.” City and school officials responded by inviting private architects to prepare designs for new school buildings. As a result, prominent firms and practitioners such as Marsh & Peter, Appleton P. Clark, Leon Dessez, Glenn Brown, Robert Stead and Waddy B. Wood secured commissions to design a number of the city’s new schools. As a group, those designed by private practitioners offered a greater variety of styles and building materials than those that emerged from the Office of the Building Inspector in the previous decades.

Around the same time that the appearance of the city's schools was in question, the limitations of the traditional eight-room plan were also being felt. School curriculum was being broadened to include kindergarten, along with domestic and industrial arts, none of which could be accommodated in the eight-room-plan school buildings. To address these problems and others, Congress established a Schoolhouse

Left:

Hayes School, located at 5th and K Streets, NE and completed in 1897, was one of the first of the city's public schools to be designed under the system of private architects working under the supervision of the Building Inspector. DCHPO

Right:

At its dedication in 1898, just one year after the *Evening Star's* criticism of the city's school buildings, Eckington School on Quincy Place, NE was proclaimed "one of the finest school buildings to be found anywhere." DCHPO

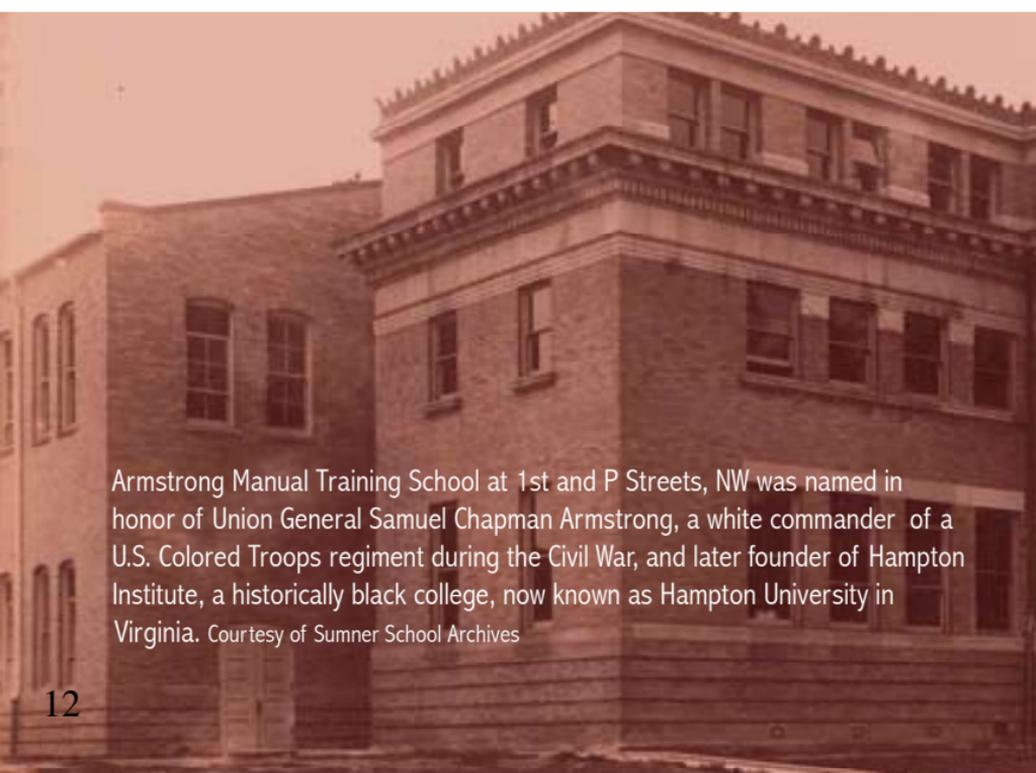


Commission in 1906 to study the city's schools that began by comparing schools nationwide. Based upon its two-year study, the Commission produced a 1908 report that recommended the adoption of a twelve-room school plan over the eight-room one; the construction of manual training schools; and the addition of playgrounds, assembly rooms and gymnasias to existing schools. The Commission also recommended the consolidation of the city's small school buildings into larger ones, such as those found in New York, St. Louis and Philadelphia. While District residents embraced the idea of constructing new, 12-room school buildings, they rejected the idea of consolidating its older, smaller schools into larger ones, and vehemently defended the city's entrenched neighborhood school model that allowed students to walk to school easily.



McKinley Manual Training School (later Shaw Junior High School), opened in 1902 as a manual training high school. This image from the school's 1907 year book shows the forge shop. DCHPO

During the early 20th century, school buildings also reflected technological advances (lighting, heating and ventilation) and progress in curriculum and philosophy. Schools, considered “temples of education,” no longer contained just classrooms, but included large gymnasias, pools, lunchrooms, and laboratories. The new schools also included athletic fields, reflecting the contemporary emphasis on athletics. During this time, the city also built its first manual training schools. The idea for manual training schools in this city arose out of state and national movements that encouraged the development of industrial education. Until then, the high school curriculum was intended to prepare the student for higher study and to meet college entrance exams. However, as only a minority of high school students actually continued with college, the desire for a more practical education materialized. The 1902-1903 Report of the Board of Education of the District of Columbia promoted technical education as an alternative in D.C. by noting:



Armstrong Manual Training School at 1st and P Streets, NW was named in honor of Union General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a white commander of a U.S. Colored Troops regiment during the Civil War, and later founder of Hampton Institute, a historically black college, now known as Hampton University in Virginia. Courtesy of Sumner School Archives



When it opened in 1902, Armstrong Manual Training School was one of just two high schools in the city for African American students. This photograph of a masonry class was taken in 1930. Courtesy of Sumner School Archives

“There is too much poorly balanced intellectuality and too much poorly balanced manual skill. Mind and hand must be mutually subservient, and to that end must be trained together and rationally...we are trying to turn out educated hand workers rather than merely skilled hand workers...”

Manual training appealed to both black and white educators. During the late 19th century, Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, led a campaign for the vocational training of African Americans. He argued that training such as agricultural, technical and business instruction, as opposed to the arts and humanities, would ensure racial progress.

In 1902, McKinley Manual Training School (for whites) and Armstrong Manual Training School (for blacks) opened as the city’s first two purpose-built manual training schools.



THE OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL ARCHITECT AND THE CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT

“IN THE OPINION OF THE COMMISSION, THE GENERAL ASPECT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WOULD BE IMPROVED IF SOME UNIFORM STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE COULD BE ADOPTED AND ADHERED TO...”

Letter from Wm. W. Harts, Commission of Fine Arts to Cuno H. Rudolph, D.C. Commissioners, February. 15, 1911.



Snowden Ashford served as the city's first Municipal Architect from 1909, when the office was created, until 1921. Ashford was responsible for designing and overseeing the design of the city's public buildings, including schools.

The Collegiate Gothic-style Eastern High School on East Capitol Street, NE, included 100 classrooms, laboratories and shops. Designed by Municipal Architect Snowden Ashford, the ornate school building was described at the time of its completion as a “veritable embarrassment of riches.” Courtesy Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library





The Miner Teachers College, built in 1914, was designed by architect Leon Dessez in a Colonial Revival style deemed appropriate by The Commission of Fine Arts. DCHPO

In 1909, the District of Columbia shifted the role of the Building Inspector as supervising architect for municipal buildings to the newly created position of Municipal Architect. During the early 20th century through 1933, just two men served in the capacity of Municipal Architect: Snowden Ashford, who served until 1921, and his successor, Albert L. Harris who served until 1933. Both of these men were well-known figures in the city's architectural community and each had his own distinctive personal style. Ashford preferred the Collegiate Gothic and Elizabethan modes, as illustrated by his designs for Dunbar High School (1916, demolished) and Eastern High School (1923), and by his oversight of Central High School (1916, now Cardozo High School), designed by architect William B. Ittner. Ashford considered the styles suitably "scholastic" in character, and "best suited to schoolhouse conditions, by reason of the large window areas."

The Commission of Fine Arts, established in 1910 and authorized to review designs by the Office of the Municipal Architect opposed those eclectic styles in favor of a more uniform standard of school architecture based upon a traditional and native Colonial Revival style. Although Ashford prevailed in his designs for many of the city's school buildings, the Commission of Fine Arts exercised its influence over others. In particular, the Commission of Fine Arts had a profound impact on the design for the Miner Teachers College. An initial Elizabethan design by Leon Dessez submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts by Ashford was rejected on the grounds that it was simply inappropriate for public buildings in D.C. Although Ashford objected to



Military Road School (for blacks) at 1375 Missouri Avenue, NW, built 1911-1912, was one of the city's first public buildings to be designed by the Office of Municipal Architect and reviewed by the Commission of Fine Arts. Courtesy Summer School Archives

the Commission's recommendations, the plans for the school were revised and the Miner School building, erected in 1913-14, showcased a strict Colonial Revival-style aesthetic.

Albert Harris succeeded Snowden Ashford as Municipal Architect in 1921 at the beginning of a major building campaign. Despite increases in the city's population, school construction was halted during World War I, and many schools were inadequate and in poor condition. The prospect for further population increases led to experimentation with "extensible" building designs. Extensible buildings were designed *in toto*, but built in sections as funds became available and as the surrounding school population demanded additional space. Harris developed a prototype that could be repeated in several configurations and accommodate various conditions. The extensible building also addressed the problem of additions appended to earlier school buildings, such as at the Slater-Langston complex.

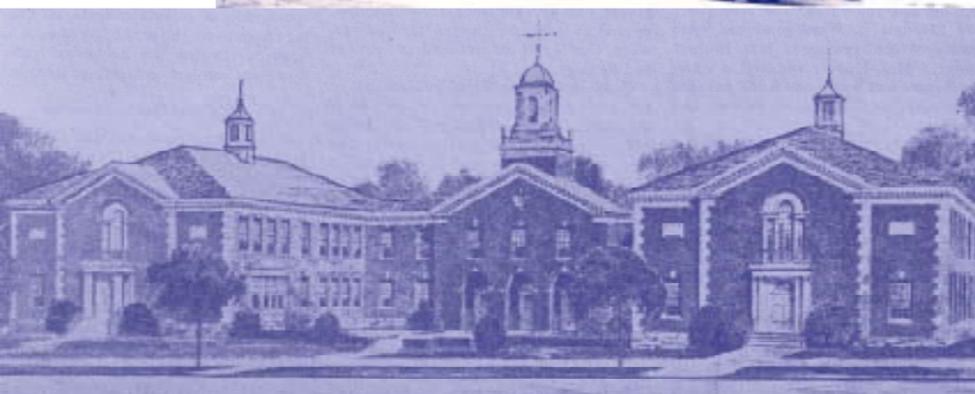
The idea for extensible buildings was embraced by the public and the Board of Education and used throughout the city. The general approach encompassed two principal sub-types: the rectangular or T-shaped block and the U-shaped courtyard. The rectangular or T-shaped block called for a sixteen-room school in the main block with a gymnasium and assembly hall in the stem of the T. The alternative U-shaped courtyard plan provided a central administrative section with gymnasium and assembly hall in the lower level, flanked by classroom wings. For his buildings Harris generally favored the classically derived Renaissance and Colonial Revival styles—a stylistic preference that fostered a more amicable and productive relationship between his office and the Commission of Fine Arts. The Colonial Revival style was further a style that had already proved popular for school buildings across the



Designed by private architect Robert Stead in 1901, the Lovejoy School at 440 12th Street, NE was one of several Elizabethan-style schools erected in the city during the first decade of the 20th century. DCHPO

country, and especially on the East Coast with its English colonial traditions.

By the early 1920s, in an effort to improve overcrowding, members of Congress urged that larger school buildings be constructed to replace the small schoolhouses scattered across the city. In 1925, the city embarked upon a multi-million dollar program, dubbed the Five-Year Building Program, to provide larger, modern schools. As part of the plan, Harris abandoned the eight- and twelve-room designs in favor of larger 16- to 20-classroom plans that provided for kindergarten classrooms and increased flexibility. The Board of Education considered the larger schools a “proper size for a city as large as this one.”



Murch School at 4810 36th Street, NW follows the U-shaped courtyard plan for the city's extensible school buildings, as shown in the above rendering published in *School Life* magazine in 1929. The school was built in stages with the central block and south end wing being completed first, as shown in the above 1930 photograph. Courtesy of The Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library

Despite the onset of the Great Depression, 27 new school buildings were added to the system's inventory during the 1930s. This high level of building activity during lean times was due largely to Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The expanding federal government significantly enlarged the city's workforce, and along with it, the city's school-age population and need for new school buildings.

During this period, economic conditions forced Congress to impose budgetary constraints on the city's new buildings. To the consternation of the Commission of Fine Arts, such constraints sometimes adversely affected the designs and detailing of the buildings. After Congress demanded that the approved cupola for Wilson High School be eliminated for economic reasons, the Fine Arts Commission commented:

"buildings may be designed without cupolas; but arbitrarily to strike a cupola off approved plans is detrimental to the architectural effect and a constant affront to those citizens who have to live near a mutilated building."

When completed in 1935, a clock tower had replaced the cupola of the building.

Although he initially continued in the Colonial Revival vein of his predecessor, Nathan Wyeth, Municipal Architect from 1934 until 1946, began to embrace a more modern, streamlined aesthetic during and after the war. The Kelly Miller School, for instance, retained the three-part form and monumental central entry of Classical buildings, but was stripped of its heavy Classical moldings and ornamentation. The Adelaide Davis and Neval Thomas schools went even further, whereby traditional symmetrical plans were abandoned in favor of form-follows-function layouts. Functional entrances replaced ceremonial ones, flat roofs replaced gable roofs, and exposed structural materials, such as concrete replaced ornamental and embellished stonework.

The Neval Thomas School at 650 Anacostia Avenue, NE and designed in 1945 by Municipal Architect Nathan Wyeth has shed all vestiges of Wyeth's pre-War Colonial Revival aesthetic. Thomas School is characterized by its horizontality, flat roof, and banks of windows that turn the building's corners. Courtesy of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library





Construction of Alice Deal Junior High School at Fort Reno, shown in this aerial view, began in 1930 to relieve overcrowding at the older and now demolished E.V. Browne School in Chevy Chase. DCHPO

Eventually, Wyeth's designs and those of his successor, Merrell A. Coe, were inspired by the International style, as illustrated by the John Philip Sousa School for one.

Despite continued construction, the overcrowding that began with the population increase of World War I continued to plague the school system throughout the 1930s. It was exacerbated by the labor demands of America's entry into World War II and another construction halt for lack of materials. The consequences were borne disproportionately by black students. Between 1930 and 1950 many of the newcomers to the city were African American, while many of those leaving were white. As whites left the city for the suburbs, the city's black student population thus increased from 33% to 50%. African American schools, always under-funded, were overcrowded while many white schools became underutilized. After the war, providing schools for black students became a priority. Although temporary solutions were sought by reassigning former white schools to African Americans, a majority of the new schools during this time were built for African Americans. Springarn Senior High School, the first new high school for African Americans in 36 years, opened in 1952.

The John Philip Sousa School, completed in 1950 at 3650 Ely Place, SE, stands out as a superb example of a city school building designed in the International Style of architecture. Courtesy of Sumner School Archives



THE END OF SEGREGATION

“WE SUBMIT THAT IN THIS CASE, IN THE HEART OF THE NATION’S CAPITAL, IN THE CAPITAL OF DEMOCRACY, IN THE CAPITAL OF THE FREE WORLD, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR A SEGREGATED SCHOOL SYSTEM. THIS COUNTRY CANNOT AFFORD IT, AND THE CONSTITUTION DOES NOT PERMIT IT, AND THE STATUTES OF CONGRESS DO NOT AUTHORIZE IT.”

Bolling v. Sharpe oral argument, December 11, 1952

In the 90 years between 1862, when Congress passed an act to establish white and “colored” schools in the District of Columbia, and 1954, when the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* ended segregation in schools nationwide, the District of Columbia operated a dual, race-based educational system. The “separate but equal” doctrine upheld in the Supreme Court’s 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision essentially blessed this system, and legal challenges over the next four decades failed. Beginning in the 1930s, however, a nationwide movement to dismantle school segregation gained considerable momentum, culminating in the watershed 1954 case. Two Washington schools are closely associated with this movement, Browne Junior High School and John Philip Sousa School.

Anacostia’s Browne Junior High was the focus of parent-student strikes, followed by a class-action lawsuit aimed at re-assigning students from the overcrowded, all-black Browne School into the nearby and underutilized, white Eliot School. Although this case, *Carr v. Corning*, ended in a 1950 District Court ruling upholding segregation, it became a stepping-stone for the 1954 case *Bolling v. Sharpe*. Students’ families, organized as the Consolidated Parents’ Group, decided to make another stand at the nearly completed and soon to be all-white John Philip Sousa Junior High School. On September 11, 1950, African American student Spottswood Bolling and eleven other black school children presented themselves at Sousa’s entrance. They were denied admission based on the District’s interpretation of the 1862 law that set up the segregated system. Two years later, the U.S. Supreme Court accepted the case



The first direct assault on the District's segregated school system came in the fall of 1947 with *Carr v. Corning*, a suit brought against superintendent Corning by the parents of Marguerite Carr, a student who had sought transfer from critically overcrowded all-black Browne Junior High School, shown here, to underutilized Eliot Junior High School nearer her home. Courtesy of the Sumner School Archives

Background:

Built in 1890-91, M Street High School (now Perry School) at 128 M Street, NW was one of the nation's first public high schools for African Americans. It had a rigorous curriculum and exceptional faculty that produced a high proportion of college graduates and numerous prominent local and national figures. Courtesy of the Sumner School Archives

of *Bolling v. Sharpe*. The Court heard the case in the same session as four other public school segregation cases that were combined under *Brown v. Board of Education*. The 1954 Brown decision concluded that educational segregation by the states violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Because the subject of the *Bolling* suit was the federal District of Columbia and not a state, the Court held that segregation in the public schools was a denial of the black students' legal due process guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment. In a reference to Brown, the court found that if segregation by the States is unconstitutional, it is "unthinkable that the same Constitution would impose a lesser duty on the Federal Government."

The day after the Supreme Court decision, President Eisenhower, who had pledged to end segregation in the Capital in his 1952 campaign, stated that he hoped the District would be a model to the rest of the nation in complying with the Court's decision.

NEW USES FOR OLD SCHOOL BUILDINGS



Within the past decade, the original 1887 Giddings School building along with its larger 1938 addition was successfully rehabilitated into an expansive and popular Capitol Hill health club. DCHPO

The Bryan School, rehabilitated into the Bryan School Lofts, earned a Mayor's Award for Historic Preservation in 2005. Courtesy of Abdo Development , LLC

The days of school overcrowding are past; demographic changes of the past forty years continue to necessitate school closings. As a consequence, many of the city's historic school buildings have been vacated. Within the past decade, a number of these schools have been rehabilitated and adapted to new uses. Several of these, including Bryan, Berrett, Lovejoy, Lenox, and Syphax Schools have been renovated and converted into residential condominiums. Another, Giddings School, was renovated and converted into a health club. The Sumner School now serves as the archives of D.C. Public Schools, providing access to the rich history of public education in the District of Columbia.





Central High School (now Cardozo High School), 1914-1916, 13th and Clifton Streets, NW

Schools for All – A History of DC Public School Buildings 1804-1960

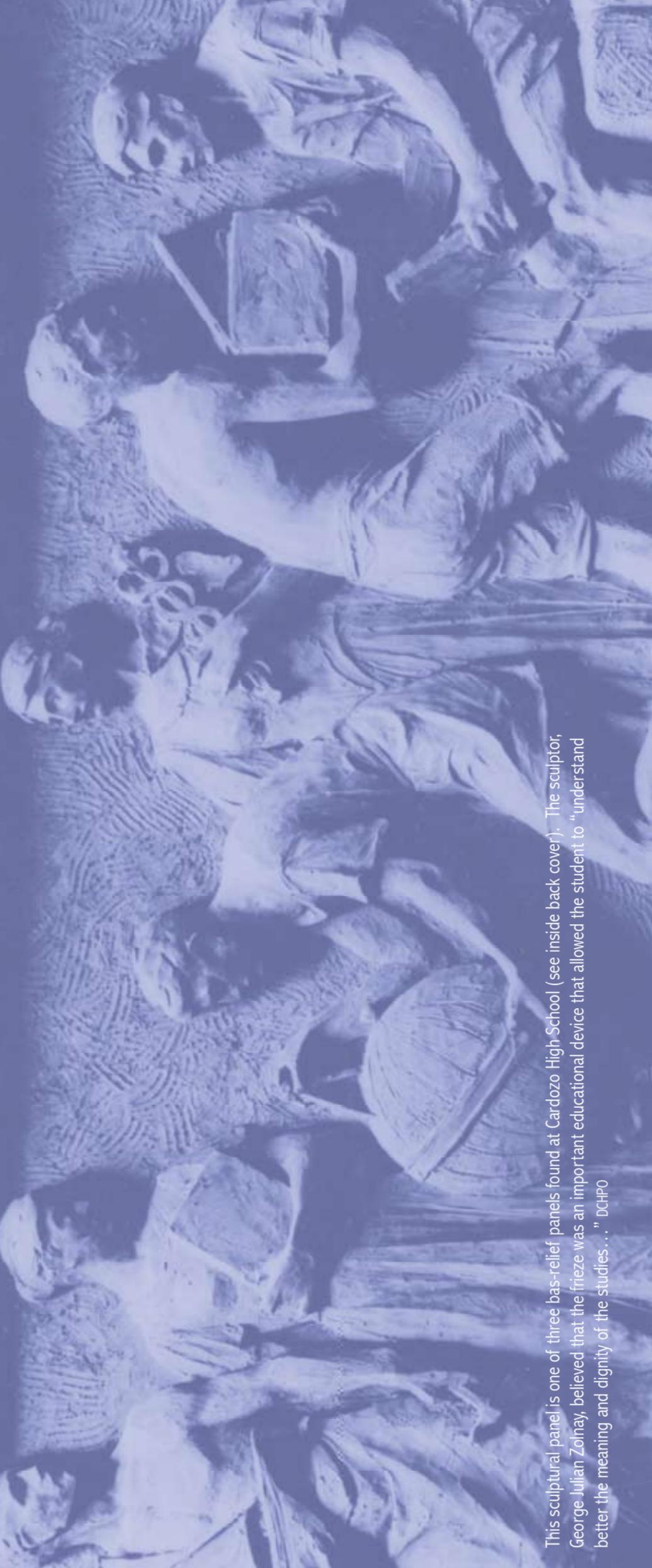
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This sculptural panel is one of three bas-relief panels found at Cardozo High School (see inside back cover). The sculptor, George Julian Zolnay, believed that the frieze was an important educational device that allowed the student to “understand better the meaning and dignity of the studies . . .” DCHPO