

Brownsville – Newspaper Research Summary

High-level newspaper research thus far indicates Frostburg's Mayor and several town committees, the Allegany delegation in Annapolis, the State Board of Education, and the community, played a role in founding Maryland State Normal School No. 2. Initially, the bill proposed to the Maryland legislature for the founding of the school failed, but it was revived and passed with an amendment that the community had to determine a site for the school and deed that land to the State.

A 1908 article detailed some of the fundraising efforts:

"...over 1,500 people here realized a fund which purchased and *gave to the State* a valuable lot, which anywhere else for this or any other purpose the State would have had to buy, in all probability, at an exaggerated price."¹

Articles from the early 1900s indicate that Frostburg State Normal School had a desire and a need to expand in facilities, particularly dormitories, to attract students from out-of-the-area. There was concern about matching funding that was proposed by the Baltimore State Normal School to the Maryland legislature. A few newspaper articles suggested the Frostburg Normal School may face closure.

According to the articles, funding for the Normal schools in Maryland was not on par with other states. Two men were mentioned in several articles that had ties to the community – State Senator Clayton Purnell who served as Frostburg's representative on the State Board of Education and potentially was part of the committee that determined the site for the school, and A.C. Willison of Cumberland who served in the Maryland legislature and was also President of the Allegany County Board of School Commissioners. An article that incorporates a speech about the founding of the school indicates more community members who were involved. Further research would need to be conducted to determine any additional motivations for the founding of the school at this particular site.

This initial high-level review focused primarily on the Frostburg Mining Journal (issues available from 1871-1913). Additional newspaper research such as The Afro-American, The Washington Post, The Baltimore Sun, The Evening Star and others can be added in future rounds of research.

¹ "A Very Important Matter." *Frostburg Mining Journal* (Frostburg, Maryland), 1 Feb 1908, p. 2, col. 1; *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com> : accessed 28 Dec 2022).
PAMELA MOORE RESEARCH SERVICES LLC DBA BACKSTORIES

Brownsville – Deed Research Summary

In 1900, the heirs of Nelson Beall sold at least nine lots of Beall's First Addition for \$2,000 to support the initial establishment of Maryland State Normal School No. 2, also known as Maryland State Normal School, Frostburg. This property was purchased by funds raised by the citizens of Frostburg in order to encourage selection of Frostburg as the site for the state's second normal school. Deed research revealed additional property acquisitions for school expansions from 1927–1936 and from 1949 through at least 1983 when research stopped. These additional acquisitions included lots in Beale's First Addition (including Brownsville), Park Addition, Wittig's First Addition and private properties south of these additions. (Please see the Phase I Working map, provided separately for details of the lots acquired.)

In 1936, three deeds recorded the transfer or quitclaim of owners to the State of Maryland for the lot where the Lincoln School was located. (This lot is noted as the colored schoolhouse on the Phase I Working map.) In 1936, Deed no. 35 recorded that the heirs of Nelson Beall had originally sold the lot to six men, trustees for a colored school, who had since deceased. The Allegany County Board of Education had acquired a different property for the school and the lot was transferred to the State of Maryland for the use of the State Teachers' College of Frostburg. The deed describes the lot as Lot 11 of Block 9. It notes that the original deed was erroneously recorded as Lot 15 of Block 9. However, Beall's First Addition map shows the lot as a portion of Lot 8 of Block 9. It is possible that the school was originally in Lot 11 of Block 9 and that the new location was emplaced in Lot 8, but additional research is required to determine the exact location of the original lot and the new Lincoln School property.

John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church (colored) was located in portions of lots 5, 6 and 7 of Block 9. It was built in the unofficial extension of the original Lincoln School playground. Multiple deeds associated with lots 5, 6, and 7 were identified: Deeds 2 (1933), 6 (1933), 17 (1935), 32 (1935) and 48 (1951) as numbered in this book. An additional property was transferred by the Trustees of the John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church to the State of Maryland in 1962. (See Deed 15.) This property was identified as lot 6 of Park Addition. Additional research would be required to determine if the church was displaced twice. Only deeds 48 and 15 were transferred to the State of Maryland by the trustees of the church. Transfers of portions of these same lots suggests that residential structures may also have been present on the same lots. This hypothesis is further supported by a 1905 artistically rendered map of Frostburg revealing the church in the midst of other structures in those lots.

Between 1900 and 1983, it appears that over 75 extended families lost property ownership to Maryland State Normal School No. 2, also known as Maryland State Teachers College at Frostburg, Frostburg College and Frostburg University. Most families in Beall's First Addition had originally purchased their properties for ten to fifteen times the original acquisition price paid by the State of Maryland. The economic loss to these families was greater. Not only were they often paid less than the original purchase prices, but those prices were also not adjusted to then-current fair market value.

Determining the real property loss to families south of Park Avenue (a.k.a. Lonaconing St.) is somewhat more complicated. Most lots in the Park Addition and Wittig's First Addition were first owned by coal companies who agreed to sell the surface for a lesser price while maintaining mineral rights. In order to proceed with determining fair market value, additional research of the purchase price by the coal companies is suggested. Then, the fee can be prorated and/or adjusted in comparison to the same size lots north of Park Avenue.

Consideration of loss should not be limited to displacement of property owners. Some households had children, and some were multi-generational or multi-family households. Some families rented a portion or all of these properties, and rental displacements have not yet been taken into account. In order to proceed on this front, lot numbers will have to be aligned with street addresses from the censuses to determine a more complete picture of displacements. This will allow us to align census listings of families with the impact of deed transfers of lot numbers. We attempted to start this process during this round of research, but we were unable to attribute more than a third of census property owners to census

listings. Therefore, we suggest the more fulsome approach heretofore mentioned. This process appears to also have been further complicated by determining that actual property owner in the household. The census noted properties as belonging to the heads of household, but often a widowed mother living in the household may have actually been the property owner. Therefore, the process will require a more thoughtful review and analysis. Additionally, some sales came about as a result of equity cases and a trustee was appointed by the courts to sell the property to settle a dispute. In at least one case, it appears the heirs to a property could not be found and the property was sold despite this. While the deeds were covered in this round of research, the equity case files were not. They can be added to a future round of research. Of note, at least two families, perhaps more, appear to have been displaced twice: Harry and Mary L. Carter and Samuel and “Rosie” Kelley.

An annotated map with deeds representing displacements is provided as an accompaniment to the census worksheets, deed worksheets and deeds. We added Park Addition, Wittig’s First Addition and A.J. Willison’s lots to an available official survey map of Beall’s First Addition that was redrawn in 1956 by a surveyor. Using hand-drawn maps from deed books and descriptions, we estimated the locations of Park Addition, Wittig’s First Addition and A.J. Willison’s lots. Therefore, this map should be used as a visual tool and not as an exact scale map. We believe we approximated the locations as accurately as possible using available sources in plats or deed books as recorded in images available online through Maryland Land Records (<https://mdlandrec.net>).

Some abbreviations in deeds:

et ux. – *et uxor* – and wife

et vir – and husband

et al. – and others

d.b.n. – *de bonis non* – assets not previously administered in a probate)

c.t.a. – *cum testamento annexo* – with the will attached

Brownsville – Census Summary

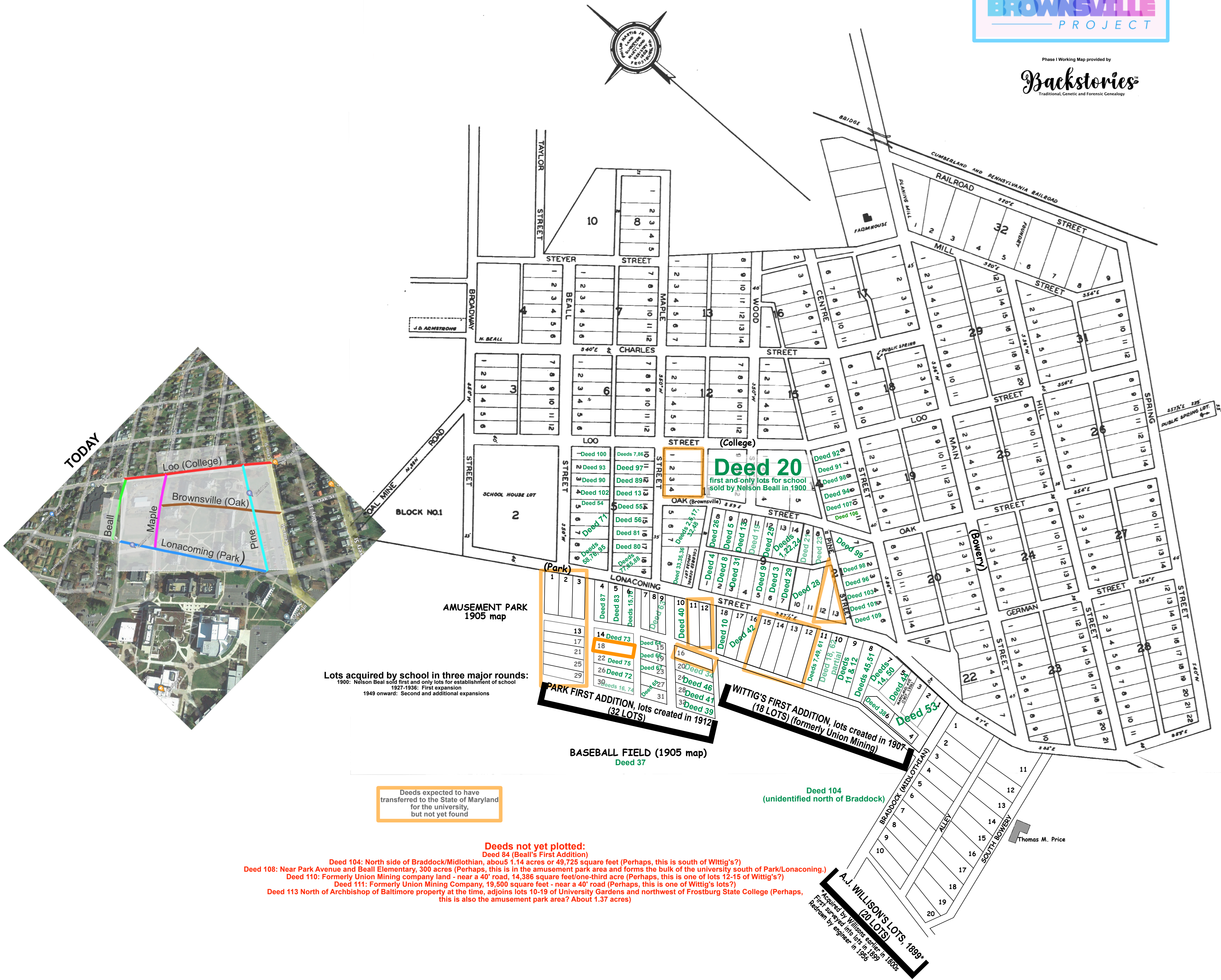
This project began with a focus on the families of Brownsville. Therefore, we focused our initial phase of census transcriptions on individuals identified as “black” or “mulatto” in any of the enumeration districts associated with Frostburg specifically. Between 1870 and 1950, the number of individuals that identified as such ranged from 222 in 1870 to 181 in 1950. A census comparison revealed that some families moved out and some moved in, so the displacement cannot rest solely on a decrease in numbers. However, we did notice that the number of new families moving in decreased after 1930 – after the first expansion of the school claimed a significant number of properties occupied by this community.

After commencing deed research, we noted that additional families of other races and origins were also impacted.

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THE
BROWNSVILLE
PROJECT



All lots north of Lonaconing (Park) Street were from Allegany County, Maryland, Circuit Court, Plat Book 1: 62, Beall's First Addition, July 1950; redrawn from Allegany County, Maryland, Circuit Court, Deed Book 30:710-710b; digital images, *Maryland Land Records* (<https://www.mdlandrec.net> : accessed 20 December 2022); citing MSA CE78_26. Park's First Addition was redrawn by Backstories from plat recorded in Allegany County, Maryland, Circuit Court, Deed Book 110:725-726a, Dillon et. al. to Jeffries, et. al., 27 September 1912; digital images, *MarylandLandRecords* (<https://www.mdlandrec.net> : accessed 20 December 2022); citing MSA CE78_103. Wittig's First Addition was redrawn from plat taken from Allegany County, Maryland, Circuit Court, Deed Book 100:681-682c, description and plats of eighteen lots laid out for George Wittig, 24 April 1907; digital images, *MarylandLandRecords* (<https://www.mdlandrec.net> : accessed 20 December 2022); citing MSA CE78_93. A.J. Willison's Lots redrawn by Backstories from Allegany County, Maryland, Circuit Court (Subdivision Plats), plat 213, A.J. Willison's Lots, 1947; redrawn based on original plat by G.G. Townsend in 1899 (original not located); digital images, *MarylandLandRecords* (<https://www.mdlandrec.net> : accessed 20 December 2022); citing MSA CE346_238; possibly referring to lots owned by A.J. Willison and Sarah Tomlinson in two instruments: Allegany County, Maryland, Circuit Court, Deed Book 57:2-3, A.J. and Mary Willison to Sarah Tomlinson, 27 September 1881; digital images, *MarylandLandRecords* (<https://www.mdlandrec.net> : accessed 20 December 2022); citing MSA CE78_50; also see Deed Book 79:466-467, and Deed Book 86:676-677, 23 Nov 1899, Thomas and Margaret Price to Andrew J. Willison. Map is not to scale and should only be used for general reference accompanied by full deeds to describe lots lost by Brownsville residents to Maryland State Normal School #2 (Teacher's College) which became Frostburg University.