

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

**Maria Baldwin House**

AND/OR COMMON

**Maria Baldwin House**

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

**196 Prospect Street**

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

**Cambridge**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**008**

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

**Massachusetts**

CODE

**25**

COUNTY

**Middlesex**

CODE

**017**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**ACCESSIBLE**

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

**Mrs. Georgia Georgilas**

STREET & NUMBER

**196 Prospect Street**

CITY, TOWN

**Cambridge**

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

**Massachusetts**

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

**Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County Courthouse**

STREET & NUMBER

**Cambridge Street**

CITY, TOWN

**Cambridge**

STATE

**Massachusetts**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

**None Known**

DATE

\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_ STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Maria Baldwin House consists of a "T" plan Greek Revival double house of the 1840s to which ells have been added. The oldest core consists of a rectangular plan front section of two stories height with an original kitchen ell centered on its rear (east) wall, forming the stem of the "T". The kitchen ell is of two stories, although each story is slightly lower than those of the front section. Both sections are set on foundations of pressed brick, now painted red; both are covered with gable roofs of gray slate tiles. The roof of the front section is set with its ridge running parallel to the street and is joined at right angles by the ell's roof. Originally the front section had two chimneys placed symmetrically about center hallways of the house and rising through the ridge of the roof. The southern chimney (#194 Prospect Street) survives while that of the northern half seems to have been capped below the roof. Another chimney is located on the center of the rear wall of the kitchen ell and rises through the ridge of that roof.

The facade has six evenly spaced windows across the second story, while at the first floor there are two windows on either side of a double entrance, which occupies the center two positions of the six openings. The end walls of the front section have two windows at each story, arranged symmetrically about the center line of the wall, including windows at the attic and two four pane lights in the basement wall. Because the kitchen ell is narrower than the length of the front section to which it is joined, there are two pieces of the front's rear wall which are exposed, each of which has one window at the first and second stories. All the windows in the oldest core of the house have two over two sliding sash except the first floor windows of the south half of the building (#194) which have two over one sash. At the roofline of the facade and extending around all four sides of the front section is an undecorated entablature surmounted by a boxed cornice; its presence on the gable ends combined with the boxed eaves of the gable give the effect of a pediment to each end wall. The kitchen ell has an undecorated fascia surmounted a boxed cornice at its eaves on the north and south walls only.

The most prominent feature of the facade is its Ionic portico which is set in front of the double entry. The portico is one half bay deep and two bays in length. It is approached from a double set of straight run stairs of six wooden stairs each. Flanking the stairways and running up the center between the stairways are low solid railings constructed of wood. At the foot of the outer railings are two square wooden posts which terminate in rounded tops. Wooden picket railings are set into these posts; the railings extend horizontally into the rising solid railings. In addition a cylindrical wooden handrail runs between each of the two posts and the outer columns of the portico. Most of the stairways and their fittings appear to date from the mid nineteenth century, except for the treads which are replacements. The

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

Afro-American History

SPECIFIC DATES	Maria Baldwin (1856-1922) Residency (1892-1922)	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Not Known
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Maria Louise Baldwin was one of the most distinguished black educators of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Appointed principal and later named Master of the Agassiz School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Miss Baldwin was the only black in the New England region to receive such an appointment. She was also one of only two women in the Cambridge School System to hold the position of School Master. Her interests and energies extended beyond the classroom into the Boston - Cambridge community where she was a leader and organizer of many community groups and activities. An effective and commanding orator, Maria Baldwin spoke to audiences throughout the country on a variety of subjects directed toward informing and educating her listeners.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1856, Maria Baldwin spent most of her life in this small college town. She received her early education in Cambridge, graduating from high school in 1874 and from the Cambridge Teachers' Training School in 1875.

Inability to find employment in the area sent Miss Baldwin to Chestertown, Maryland to begin her teaching career. As the result of pressure from the black community, the Cambridge School Committee offered Miss Baldwin a position as a primary grade teacher, where she was assigned to the staff of the Agassiz Grammar School near Harvard University. Her career at the Agassiz School won her national distinction and recognition in the field of education. When a new and larger building was erected in 1916, Maria Baldwin was appointed Master of the school, becoming one of two women in the Cambridge School System and the only black in New England to hold such a position. In her position as master of the Agassiz School, Miss Baldwin supervised twelve teachers, all of whom were white, and a student body of 500, the overwhelming majority of which were also white. Her career at the Agassiz School lasted approximately four decades during which time she developed a strong and respected reputation as an extremely able and accomplished administrator, "She had a remarkable power of enlisting the child's cooperation . . . ."1 Maria Baldwin's career at the school was a distinguished one that established a national example of the strong and respected ability of a black female educator.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Boston Transcript, January 10, 12, 19, 1922.

Brawley, Benjamin G. Negro Builders and Heroes. Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1937.

(continued)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	327000	46192780	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Maria Baldwin House at 196 Prospect Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts is a duplex structure. A fence circles the property on the northeast and south sides. On the east side, a garage sits recessed but quite close to the property. Beginning at the point separating the duplex, proceed west along this fence, south, then east to a point parallel to the point of beginning. An imaginary line then bisects the house running to the point of origin.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY (Continued)

NAME / TITLE

Lynne Gomez Graves, Historical Projects Director

ORGANIZATION

Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation

DATE

3 February 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1420 N Street, Northwest

TELEPHONE

462-2519

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET Maria Baldwin House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE Two

portico is supported by three fluted Ionic columns on the front with plain pilasters (with moulded capitals) in corresponding positions on the house. Above both columns and pilasters is an undecorated entablature with a boxed cornice and a nearly flat tarred roof. The doors of both halves of the entrance are multipaned oak doors of a type used in the Boston area during the 1920s and 1930s, both doors are fitted with aluminum combination doors. Each door is set in plain jambs and flanked by five pane sidelights which, in turn, are flanked by the pilasters. Connecting each column with its corresponding pilaster is a wooden railing with cylindrical pickets. Surviving original features of the house are its portico; the wide, low profile mouldings of the window frames (characteristically Greek Revival); and the entablature cornice (it seems likely that the house also had corner pilasters to provide visual support for the cornice; they were probably eliminated along with the original clapboards when the shingles were applied)

Attached to the rear wall of the kitchen ell and with its facade flush to the line of the rear wall of the ell is a one story concrete block garage which occupies the entire rear yard of #194. Its front is on "rock-faced" blocks rising to a low, three stepped parapet, of a type popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Centered in this wall is a large opening containing three wooden doors, each with a nine pane light. The side and rear walls are of plain concrete block, except for the corners where blocks of slightly darker have been laid up in such a way as to resemble quoining. Two six pane metal windows exist on the south wall, arranged symmetrically about the center of that wall. The main source of light for the garage is two multipaned, hipped metal skylights set on the flat tar and gravel roof.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Maria Baldwin House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE One (Reference Notes)

1. Hallie Quinn Brown, Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction (Xenia, Ohio: 1926), pp. 188, 189.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Maria Baldwin House TEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Two

The respect in which Miss Baldwin was held was exhibited by her association with many well-known educators and intellectuals. Among them were Edward Everett Hale, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Julia Ward Howe, William Monroe Trotter, and Archibald Grimke'. Charles W. Eliot, the President of Harvard University, was also among her friends and he often referred to her as not only one of the most charming of his acquaintances but also as the best teacher in New England.

Maria Baldwin's interests extended beyond the classroom into the community. For many years she was President of the League of Women for Community Service, a group of prominent black women from the greater Boston area, a member of the Council of the Robert Gould Shaw House Association, the Boston Ethical Society, and the Twentieth Century Club of Boston. As secretary of the Boston Banneker Club, a scholarly literary society organized in 1875, she often held meetings at her home of 196 Prospect Street in Cambridge. It was into this home that she also brought black students attending Harvard University for weekly reading classes. One of these students was the notable W. E. B. Du Bois.

Miss Baldwin's activities were not limited to the Boston - Cambridge area. A forceful and very effective lecturer, Miss Baldwin was frequently asked to appear before national audiences. She appeared most often before teachers' associations in New England and in cities along the east coast. With a broad knowledge of a wide range of subjects, Maria Baldwin spoke on such topics such as poetry, history, women's suffrage and historical personages such as Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington. Because of her oratorical ability she was the first women selected to give the George Washington Birthday Memorial Address at the Brooklyn Institute in 1879. The subject of her address, "The Life and Services of Harriet Beecher Stowe" was in keeping with her belief that all such public appearances should be used as educational forums.

Maria Baldwin continued to lecture, involve herself in community activities, teach and administer the Agassiz School until her death in January, 1922. The tributes paid to her at that time are testimony to the high esteem in which she was held. The 1922 class of the Agassiz School dedicated a memorial tablet to her. The school's auditorium was named Baldwin Hall, and a scholarship was established in her name. December, 1923 the League of Women for Community Services in Boston formally dedicated the Maria L. Baldwin Memorial Library, and in April 1950 a dormitory for women at Howard University was named after her.

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Maria Baldwin was one of the most outstanding women of her day. Primarily an educator, she became principal of the Agassiz Grammar School in Cambridge and later master of its secondary school, the only black and one of two women in New England to hold such a position. Her career at the predominantly white institution lasted from 1882 until her death in 1922 and her ability as an educator was noted by such distinguished people as Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, Julia Ward Howe, and William Monroe Trotter. An effective and persuasive speaker, Maria Baldwin spoke before numerous national audiences on a variety of topics, and her concern for the civic and intellectual welfare of the Boston - Cambridge area led her to active involvement in numerous educational, literary, and scholarly associations.



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CONTINUATION SHEET Maria Baldwin House ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE Two

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Brown, Hallie Quinn. Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction. Xenia, Ohio:  
The Aldine Publishing Company, 1926.

Crisis. April, 1917, p. 281.

Du Bois, W. E. B. Crisis. April, 1922, pp. 248-9.

Porter, Dorothy. "Maria L. Baldwin." Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A  
Biographical Dictionary, 1971, vol. 1.

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7632 17th Street, Northwest  
Washington, D. C. 20012