DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 039 977 24 RC 004 375

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TITLE Education of Urban Indians: Lumbee Indians in Baltimore. The National Study of American Indian Education, Series II, No. 3.
INSTITUTION Chicago Univ., Ill.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
BUREAU NO BR-8-0147
PUB DATE Aug 69
CONTRACT OEC-0-8-080147-2805
NOTE 11p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.65
DESCRIPTORS *American Indians, Attitudes, *Disadvantaged Youth, *Educational Environment, History, Income, Schools, *Socioeconomic Background, Transient Children, *Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS Lumbee Indians, *Maryland

ABSTRACT

As one of the final reports of the National Study of American Indian Education, this paper is devoted to the Lumbee Indian living in Baltimore, Maryland. The history of the Lumbee's migration which led to the present-day permanent settlement is provided, along with factors such as population mobility, parental attitudes toward the schools, and student aspirations. Two interviews concerning the Indian student and descriptions of the schools that the Indians attend are included. An appendix and maps conclude the report. (LS)

THE NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

Education of Urban Indians

OEC-0-8-080147-2805

Series II

No. 3 LUMBEE INDIANS IN BALTIMORE

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August, 1969

NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

The attached paper is one of a number which make up the Final Report of the National Study of American Indian Education.

This Study was conducted in 1968-69-70 with the aid of a grant from the United States Office of Education, OEC-0-8-080147-2805.

The Final Report consists of five Series of Papers:

I. Community Backgrounds of Education in the Communities Which Have Been Studied.

II. The Education of Indians in Urban Centers.

III. Assorted Papers on Indian Education--mainly technical papers of a research nature.

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ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The Baltimore settlement of Lumbee Indians is approximately twenty-five years old. Its origins were reported to be during the second World War, when a number of Indians from North Carolina, along with a number of people from rural areas in Appalachia, came to Baltimore to work in defense plants and in the shipyards. The first Indians to come are said to have been young men of high school age who came up during the summer and got jobs with the Coca-cola company, working as helpers on their delivery trucks. The job paid ten dollars a day, and paid ten dollars every day at the end of the shift. They went back home to Robeson County with the news and a migration pattern began that today has resulted in a colony of approximately 2,000 Indians living in a six-block area based on East Baltimore Street.

There is some indication that migration to Baltimore and other places had an earlier antecedent in the early 1930's. Apparently, at that time, several young men migrated to the New York area, worked in the big city for two or three years, and subsequently came back to Robeson County where they attended Pembroke College and became teachers in the Robeson County school system in the Indian schools. As "trail blazers," they apparently encouraged some of the more promising and ambitious students to migrate to the urban centers where opportunities were greater.

In recent years Office of Economic Opportunity programs have been a significant factor in Lumbee Indian migration. In January, 1968, the Manpower component of the Tri-County Community Action Agency for Robeson, Scotland and Richmond Counties was organized. Their charge was to place people from the predominantly rural counties in better-paying jobs in the urban areas of North Carolina, and to train them for jobs if necessary. When the Manpower group was set up, a Lumbee Indian was placed in charge of hiring the interviewers, and several Lumbees were hired to secure applicants for Manpower's services. As a result, about 80% of the 454 persons relocated were Lumbee Indians.

These people were relocated primarily in industrial areas of North Carolina--mostly in the Greensboro-Winston-Salem-Highpoint area--although a few were placed in southern Virginia. Relocation, however, is often simply the first step in a

migration pattern. Many of the people in Baltimore had lived for a time in Greensboro, and almost all had friends or relatives living there. Part of the migration process seems to be a "state of mind" that is dependent on a "seeding process," a prior exposure to the urban environment and some of the unfamiliar problems it holds, along with their solutions.

In the process of moving to the city the migrant needs to feel it is both possible and advantageous. He needs to have a place to stay until he can get paid, and a place to ask questions so he can find his way around. He needs to have someone who will show him where to get food, and how to get a job. But most of all, he needs to have an environment that is transitional between what is familiar back home and what is unfamiliar in the city.

THE SETTLEMENT

Baltimore's Lumbee community is situated in an area six blocks long by two blocks wide between Patterson Park and Broadway, on Baltimore's East Side. The area is divided lengthwise by East Baltimore Street.

The Lumbee population is a highly mobile one, and while the impression is that the total number of Indians in the area remains fairly constant, there seems to be a rotation of individual members of the population between North Carolina and Baltimore, so that in a given year the total number of individuals who, at one time or another actually lived in Baltimore for a week or more might well be two to four times the estimated population figure of 2,000.

The Lumbee are not the only ones living in this area. It was formerly a first and second generation Polish neighborhood, and before that an upper-middle-class Jewish area, and before that an area for German immigrants, and before that a farming community. There are remainders of all of these groups--they have left their churches and some of their stores, their white marble steps, and some of their people. They have left their very old, who have nowhere else to go, and they have left some of their young, to inter-marry and inter-mate with the newcomers.

The grade school in their neighborhood--P.S. 27--is over fifty years old, in poor condition, and crowded. Of the 735 students, in 23 classrooms, 47 percent are Black, 40 percent are White, and 13 percent, or 75, are Indian. The first-graders and kindergarten kids are bussed to another school, because they had to close their Annex, a 96-year-old building adjacent to the school. The school is located in a partially leveled urban renewal area, and is surrounded by streets carrying heavy morning and afternoon traffic. The school stands grimly against the distant skyline of Johns Hopkins Hospital, overlooking the bulldozed land that marks the boundary line between the Blacks and the Whites.

The happiest thing about the school is the children. They are noisy and excited and exuberant and school is a thing of delight for them. As in most integrated primary schools, there is little racial tension among the children.

This is often the Indian's first experience with racially integrated schools. For the parents it is a difficult adjustment in some cases. and they send their children to a predominantly white school several blocks away. More common seems to be a disengagement from the school, except in cases where a child has trouble. There is a Parent's Advisory group for the school, but no PTA, and no Indian participation. Teacher Aides from the area are employed, but there have been no Indian applicants for the job.

The Principal of the school is a White man and the assistant principal is a Black woman. She handles most of the discipline problems, and it is she who becomes most involved with the Indian parents. When Indian children have trouble, it is most often that they are fighting in school or on the playground. When they fight, they most often fight with someone of a different race, probably because nine out of every ten kids is a non-Indian. The boys seem to be willing to take on anyone, regardless of size, age, or numbers.

Crisis needs at home--such as the need to take care of a younger sibling or a sick parent, or a trip to North Carolina--are seen by the parents as being justifiable reasons for keeping children out of school. Parents feel the schools do not always teach their children proper ways to behave, and that they "lack discipline," and thus the children tend to carry back into the home a lack of respect for the parents. They also feel that their children are getting a poorer education in the city, than in North Carolina.

On their part, the school administration experiences the Indian parents as being disinterested in the school's problems. One complaint was that the school never knows how many Indian children to expect in the fall--they keep showing up for registration into October, and will start dropping out in April and May, as their parents drift back and forth between Baltimore and North Carolina. The school would like to do something about teaching a unit in their social studies program dealing with American Indians, and specifically with the Lumbee, but have no materials or knowledge to do so.

As you move eastward from Broadway past Patterson Park toward the Junior High School, you move from an all-Black poverty area through the more transient area where the Lumbee live to an area of row-homes where lower and lower-middle class working families live.

The school's main unit was built in 1934, and its Annex, a former Junior High School, about 80 years ago. The school cares for just under 2,800 students in 74 rooms. Between 20 percent and 25 percent of the student body is Black, and there are about 45 Indian students who attend Hampstead Hill Junior High School.

The Guidance Counsellors at the school described the Indian students as follows:

> "Indian students tend to be quiet, to remain in the background of the school. They tend to be at one of two extremes, either steady and serious, which is more typical of the boys or, as is the case with the majority, they are not oriented to academic achievement. The girls seem to be interested in home-making and in their personal appearance. They want to look nice. They are very interested in boys. They are quite interested in child care.
>
> "Attendance is on the whole irregular. The girls seem to be even more irregular than the boys. There is a large degree of fighting in the 7th and 8th grades. This is true of many of our students, but physical fighting seems to be a part of the culture of a number of our Indian girls. The fighting does not seem to be racial, but rather over a particular issue.
>
> "A number of our youngsters are on their own, living away from their parents either because their parents are ill or out of the state. However, there always seems to be an Indian relative or friend to take over care of the child. There seems to be a great deal of unity in the community."

School has become much less fun for the Indians by the time they get to Junior High. Those that have transferred up from North Carolina see the lack of corporal punishment in the schools in Baltimore as contributing to a general lack of discipline. Aspirations toward higher academic levels seem to be dropping, compared to their North Carolina peers. By Junior High level they have become a very small minority and perhaps compensate with feelings of bravado, and a readiness to defend their position. They are competing in a tougher school now, and their interests often shift to non-school things like marriage and jobs. A further influence, at least for the older ones, is that the Indian area is getting a number of dropouts from Robeson County coming up to work in Baltimore, and these hold a peer-group attraction for the Baltimore students.

Patterson Senior High is located a mile or more to the East of the Junior High School, on a 32-acre site surrounded by an industrial park and a large hospital complex on one end, and a dump and an automobile junk yard on the other. It is a relatively new school, built in 1960, with a new wing added in 1968. It is, in the words of one interviewer, a "beautiful plant."

Its 109 teachers handle about 2,000 students in 60 homerooms in the 9th through 12th grades. There are approximately 100 Negroes and 12 Indians in the school. The majority of the students come from small ethnic enclaves located to the east of the Patterson Park area, and are of Polish, Italian, German, Bohemian, Greek, Russian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian extraction. Ethnicity is still a very real part of this particular melting pot. Most of the students are from blue-collar families, and only 10 percent of the students in the highschool are enrolled in a College Preparatory curriculum.

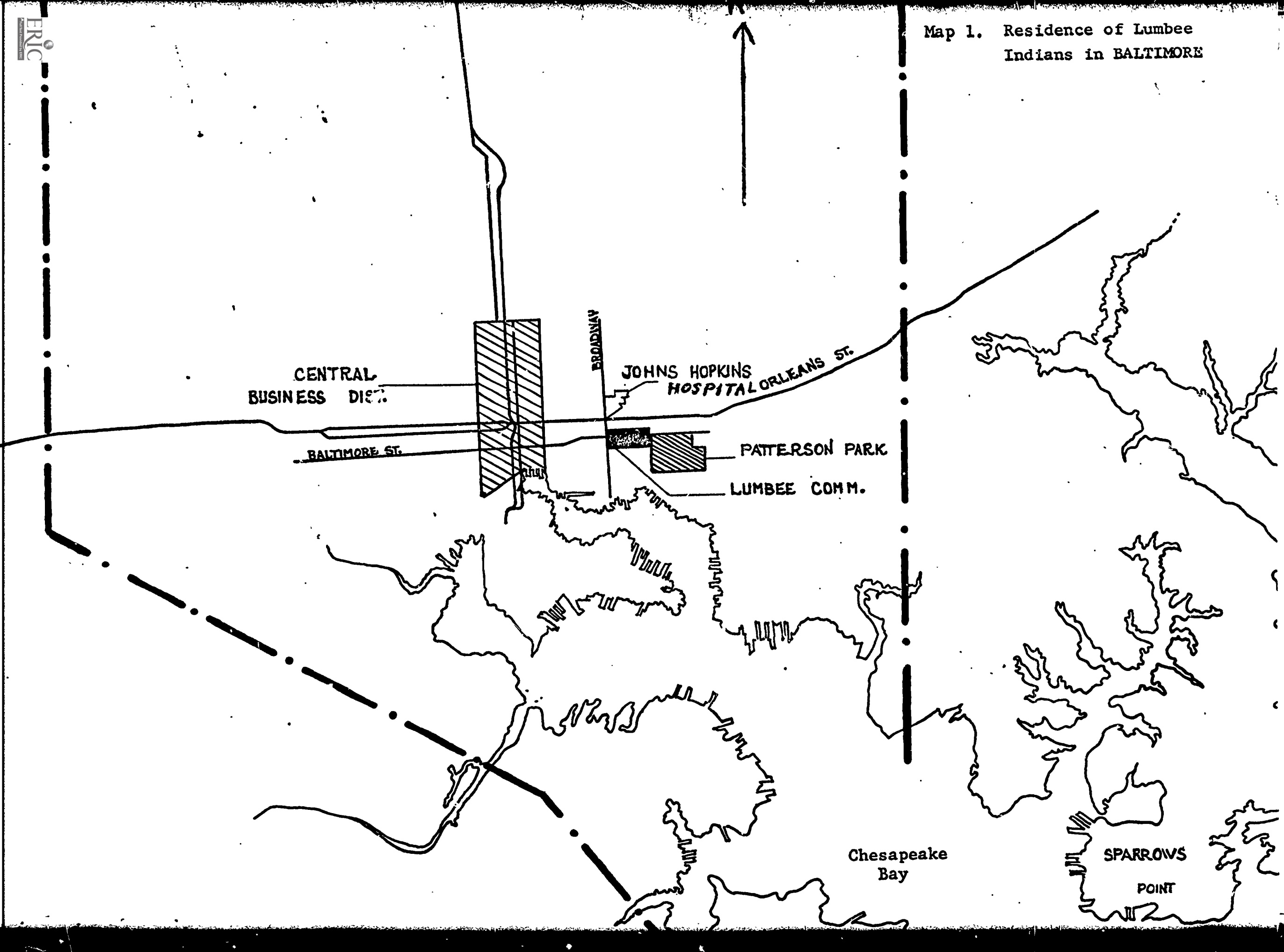
The Indian students in Patterson are experienced by the few faculty members who recognize them as Indian, as being more passive than most students. These people had the feeling that when the Indians did respond with violence, it was a long overdue response, and because of this, seemed a bit out of place. The Indian students themselves experience the school situation as less desirable than North Carolina high school, and experience being Indian as a problem. Most disclaimed the name, "Lumbee," substituting Cherokee.

As the urban Indians move away from competition with Blacks and toward competition with more established Whites, life gets considerably tougher for them, and they become much more passive, with a resulting decline in performance. It is probably here among the high school students that the greatest acculturation pressures are felt. Their transitional Baltimore base offers the fewest role-models for this kind of coping behavior--at least, Indian models.

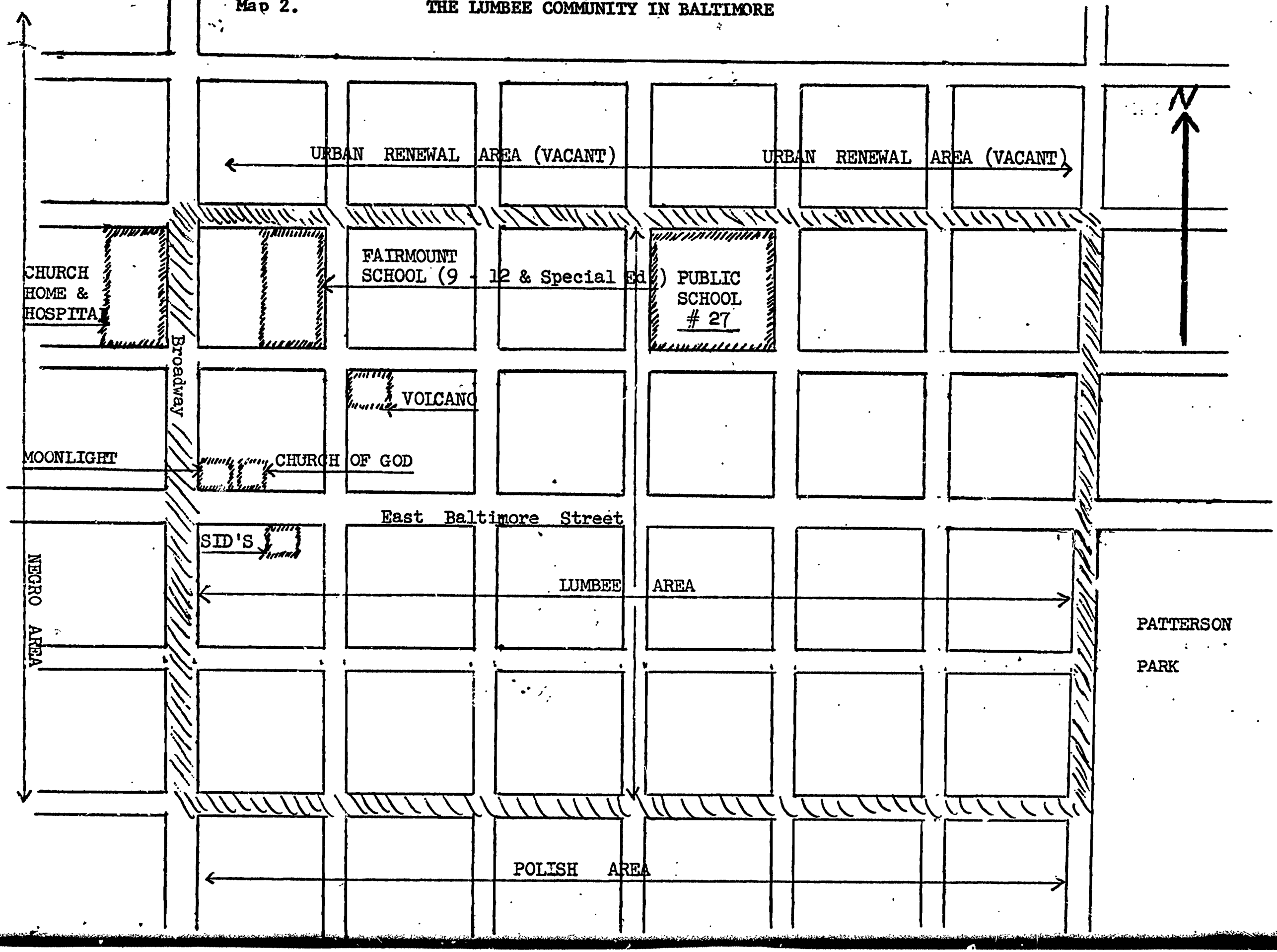
Perhaps the best summary of the educational experience was expressed by one of the field assistants. It went as follows:

> In Baltimore, the teachers' main concern seemed to be to educate the Indian in "the white man's ways." As far as they were concerned the Indian Culture has very little, if any, relevance. They seemed to insist on forcing conformity on these students, thus tending to frustrate and discourage them when they were unable to keep up with other members of their peer group. Though they may be good professional teachers, they seemed to be handling the students on a very objective impersonal basis. On the other hand, the teachers in North Carolina seemed to be well liked and had more rapport with the students and parents. As most of these teachers had grown up in the area, this type of relationship would be quite natural. Finally, one must decide which aims of education are really most important. In Baltimore where the educational standards tend to be higher, the Indian student generates more hostility and dissatisfaction towards education; whereas in North Carolina where standards seem to be lower, the Indian student appears to be much more adjusted to life in general and expresses very positive attitudes towards education.

Map 1. Residence of Lumbee Indians in BALTIMORE



Map 2. THE LUMBEE COMMUNITY IN BALTIMORE



APPENDIX I

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

EAST BALTIMORE STREET INDIAN SURVEY

FALL, 1967

	Number	Per cent
Households in area	269	100
Households interviewed	220	80
Indian households interviewed	55	20

Origin of Indians

From Lumberton	40
From Pembroke	7
From other N. C.	8

Age Groupings of Indians

	Number	Per cent
Total population	252	100
Under 5	55	22
5 through 11	69	27
12 through 18	17	7
Over 18	111	44

Occupation

Female: (N-19)

52% of those occupied were "machine operators."

Male: (N-40)

	Number	Per cent
Building trades	14	35
Metal workers	13	32
Other	13	32

Only one person listed occupation as "office worker." All others were blue-collar jobs.

Income

Median income for the Indian sample was $5,000 per year. When welfare recipients were excluded (19% of the households were on welfare, compared to 23% for the neighborhood as a whole), the median income for employed Indians was $5,591.

Length of residence in present apartment -- 26 months, mean.

Length of contact with Baltimore -- 10 years, mean.

These figures are based on a complete census of a six-block area of East Baltimore Street done by VISTA Volunteers, under the auspices of the local Community Action Agency office. They interviewed only residents living on Baltimore Street, in the area from Broadway to Patterson Park.