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Autobiographical Writings by Alma Thomas, circa 1960s-circa 1970s

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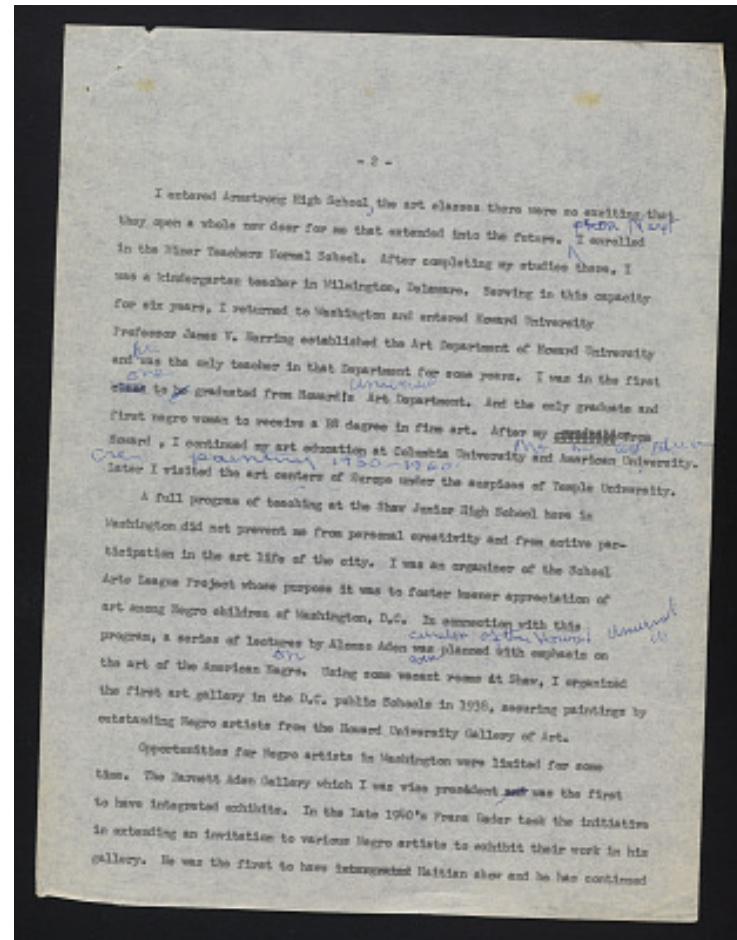
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I entered Armstrong High School^{^[[.]]} the art classes there were so exciting that they open a whole new door for me that extended into the future. ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ ^{^[[Then]]} ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ ^{^[[Next]]} I enrolled in the Miner Teachers Normal School. After completing my studies there, I was a kindergarten teacher in Wilmington, Delaware. Serving in this capacity for six years, I returned to Washington and entered Howard University Professor James V. Herring established the Art Department of Howard University and ^{^[[he]]} ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ was the only teacher in that Department for some years. I was in the first ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ class ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ ^{^[[one]]} to ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ be ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ graduated from Howard's ^{^[[University]]} Art Department. And the only graduate and first negro woman to receive a BS degree in fine art. After my ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ graduation ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ from Howard, I continued my art education at Columbia University and American University. ^{^[[MA in Art Education painting 1950-1960.]]} Later I visited the art centers of Europe under the auspices of Temple University.

A full program of teaching at the Shaw Junior High School here in Washington did not prevent me from personal creativity and from active participation in the art life of the city. I was an organizer of the School Arts League Project whose purpose it was to foster keener appreciation of art among Negro children of Washington, D.C. In connection with this program, a series of lectures by Alonso Aden ^{^[[curator of the Howard University over]]} was planned with emphasis on the art of the American Negro. ^{^[[on]]} Using some vacant rooms at Shaw, I organized the first art gallery in the D.C. public Schools in 1938, securing paintings by outstanding Negro artists from the Howard University Gallery of Art.

Opportunities for Negro artists in Washington were limited for some time. The Barnett Aden Gallery which I was vice president ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ and ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ was the first to have integrated exhibits. In the late 1940's Franz Bader took the initiative in extending an invitation to various Negro artists to exhibit their work in his gallery. He was the first to have ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ intergrated ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ Haitian show and he was continued



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