

CAPSULE SUMMARY

BA-1048

320 East Pennsylvania Avenue

East Towson, Baltimore County

1880-1895

Private

The dwelling at 320 East Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1880 and 1895 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendants of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures.

This single-family Gothic Revival-style dwelling is two-and-a-half-stories high capped with a cross-gable roof with two interior brick chimneys, one of which is capped. The house is three bays wide with an off-center entrance using a *single-leaf, four-light over three-panel wood door*. The two bays flanking the entrance in addition to the three bays on the second story contain 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash windows. There is a 2/2 double-hung wood sash window located in the steeply pitched center cross gable on the façade. The house stands on a brick pier foundation with partial infill of concrete blocks. The roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles, and the original siding is covered with asbestos shingles. A one-story, half-hipped roof porch across the full width of the façade has been removed. There is a one-story shed-roof porch addition located in the angle of the ell on the rear elevation.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA- 1048

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic

other

2. Location

street and number 320 E. Pennsylvania Avenue __ not for publication

city, town Baltimore __ vicinity

county Baltimore County

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Francis Johnson

street and number 320 E. Pennsylvania Avenue telephone Not Available

city, town Baltimore state MD zip code 21286-5313

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse liber unknown folio unknown

city, town Towson tax map 70A tax parcel 128 tax ID number 910450250

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	_____	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	1	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	_____	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	_____	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	_____	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
			1	

7. Description

Inventory No. BA- 1048

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This single-family Gothic Revival-style dwelling is located at 320 East Pennsylvania Avenue. It is two-and-a-half-stories high capped with a cross-gable roof with two interior brick chimneys, one of which is capped. The dwelling is three bays wide with an off-center entrance using a single-leaf, four-light over three-panel wood door. The two bays flanking the entrance in addition to the three bays on the second story contain 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash windows. There is a 2/2 double-hung wood sash window located in the steeply pitched center cross gable on the façade. The house stands on a brick pier foundation with partial infill of concrete blocks. The roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles, and the original siding is covered with asbestos shingles. A one-story, half-hipped roof porch across the full width of the façade has been removed. There is a one-story shed-roof porch addition located in the angle of the ell on the rear elevation.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA- 1048

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates 1880-1895 **Architect/Builder** Unknown

Construction dates 1880-1895

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The house at 320 East Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1880 and 1895 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA- 1048

- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland.* Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.
Baltimore County Historic Inventory.
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.
Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.
Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.
Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.
-

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of surveyed property .13 Acre
Acreeage of historical setting Unknown
Quadrangle name Towson Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

This dwelling is located at 320 East Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with Tax Map 70A, Parcel 128 since its construction between 1880 and 1895.

11. Form Prepared by

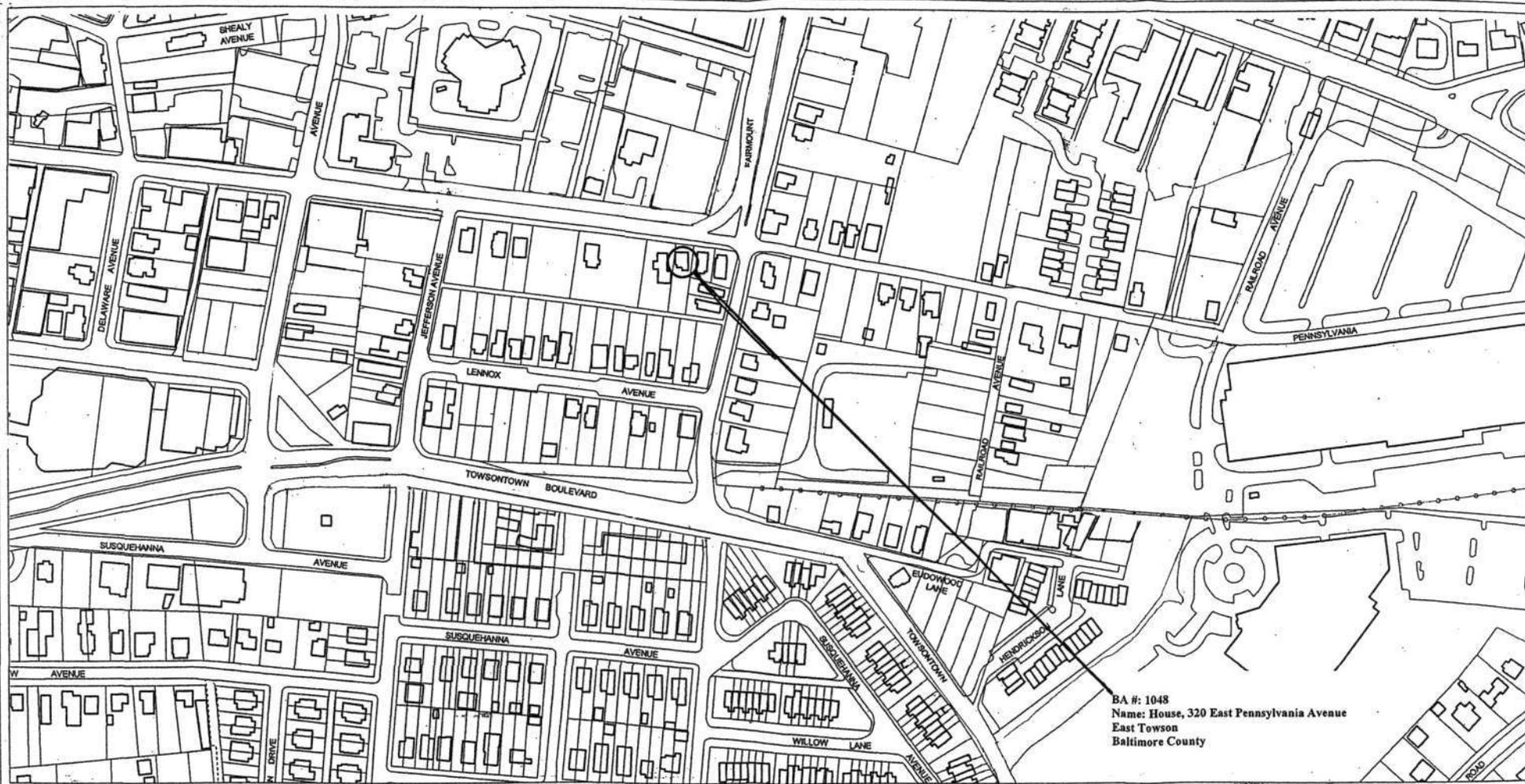
name/title	K. Baynard, R. Weidlich, J. Bunting, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Incorporated	date	November 20, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

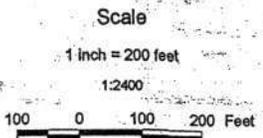
East Towson: Planimetric Data



BA #: 1048
 Name: House, 320 East Pennsylvania Avenue
 East Towson
 Baltimore County



Prepared by:
 Baltimore County Office of Planning
 401 Bosley Avenue
 Towson, Maryland 21204
 June, 2001



Legend

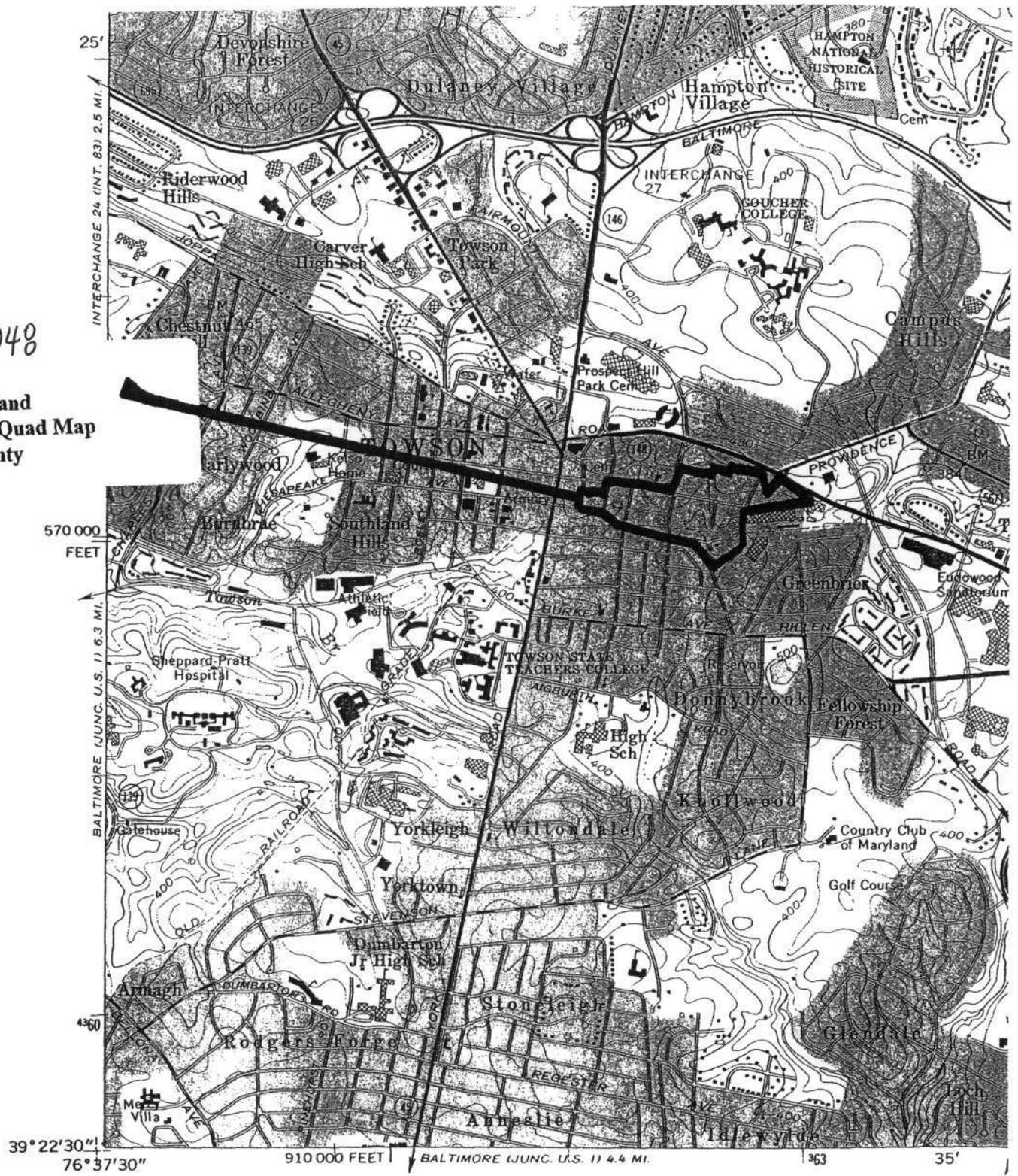
Study Area Boundary	Hydrographic Features
Paved Roads	Buildings
Unpaved Roads	Vegetation
Paved Parking / Driveways	

Data Sources:
 Planimetric Data: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)
 Parcel Boundaries: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)
 Study Area: Baltimore County Office of Planning (1:2400)

Coordinate System:
 Maryland State Plane: NAD83/91 Horizontal Datum
 Elevations in Feet: NAVD88 Vertical Datum

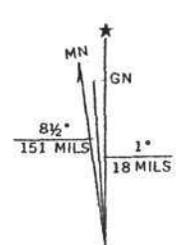
Date of Data Capture: March 1995
 Scale of Data Capture: 1" = 100'

BA-1048
 East Towson
 Towson, Maryland
 Towson USGS Quad Map
 Baltimore County



(BALTIMORE WEST)
 2662 / SW

Mapped by the Army Map Service
 Edited and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps
 Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944
 Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
 10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system
 1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
 Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
 Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not field checked
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



BA-1048

HOUSE, 320 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

BALTIMORE County, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

NORTHWEST CORNER, VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST

1 of 3



BA-1048

HOUSE, 320 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
BALTIMORE COUNTY MD

TRALERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

NORTHEAST CORNER, VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST

2 of 3



BA-1048

HOUSE, 320 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

SOUTH ELEVATION

3 of 3

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME THE FRANCIS JOHNSON HOUSE

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 320 Pennsylvania Avenue second

CITY, TOWN Towson Maryland VICINITY OF Baltimore Co. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Emily Ruth Morris Harris

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

320 Pennsylvania Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Towson Maryland VICINITY OF Baltimore Co.

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, BALTIMORE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #: Folio #: 5367:527

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson Maryland 21204

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

D/ BA-1048 - 320 Pennsylvania

before 1915

DI
SI
CI

The main section of this two-story frame house is three bays wide by one bay deep, followed by a two bay deep, one bay wide kitch to the southeast. A porch and a steep cross gable accent the front of the house.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

320 Pennsylvania Ave.- 1898-1915

This two-story frame house was built before 1915 it is simpler than its neighbors to the west in this block of Pennsylvania Avenue. The house is three bays wide by one bay deep, with a two bay deep by one bay deep southeast. Tow story addition- All the windows contain 2/2 sash and are framed with narrow boards.

A cross gable lit by one window projects from the north side of the east-west gable roof. Three windows light the second floor facade, and one window lights either side of the central door. A window lights each floor and the attic in the east and west ends. The front porch's hip roof is supported by iron post.

The houses is covered with green asbestos shingles and is supported by a cellar. A neat hedge frames the small lot.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Francis Johnson house has survived two generations of the Johnson Family. Built in the late 1890's this house was initially built by local builders Ben and Willie Johnson. Mrs. Johnson later conveyed the property to Mrs. Francis Johnson (daughter of the elder Johnson). Mrs. Francis Johnson died around the sixties conveying the property to Mrs. Emily Johnson Harris.

Two fires one in the early sixties and then another in the summer of 1976 failed to destroy the property, however in both cases heavy damage was sustained to the right side of the 320 structure. In the 1960 blaze the whole right side had to be replaced.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BYNAME / TITLE
Marcus E. Pollock/coordinator Merry Stinson/architect 7/77ORGANIZATION
Committee to Save E. Towson/Towson Ymca DATE
8238870STREET & NUMBER
600 W. Chesapeake Ave. TELEPHONECITY OR TOWN
Towson Md. 21204 STATE

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



BA-1048

Francis House

320 Pa. Ave.

Towson, Md.

north

Merry Stinson

1977