

JOHN BURNS HOUSE

609 Baltimore Avenue has significance in that it is one of a few remaining cross-gable structures in present downtown Towson. Its architecture is reflective of the more rural atmosphere of Towson as a small courthouse town. Along with the other buildings on Baltimore Avenue, this structure helps to maintain the scale and appearance of a portion of the town which has changed only slightly since the early days of the courthouse. Also of interest is the outbuilding which is, perhaps, a good example of an early automobile garage. Especially interesting is the presence of mortice, tenon, and trunnel construction in the framework of all modern materials. This detail seems to reflect a rather old-fashioned method of construction which may stand as a good example of the rural nature of late nineteenth century Towson.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC **609 Baltimore Avenue -- John Burns House**

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
609 Baltimore Avenue

CITY, TOWN **Towson** VICINITY OF _____ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT _____

STATE **Maryland** COUNTY **Baltimore**

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 checked="" 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 **Vestry of Trinity Church**

Telephone #: **8233588**

STREET & NUMBER
120 W. Allegheny Avenue

CITY, TOWN **Towson** VICINITY OF _____ STATE, zip code **Maryland**

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Baltimore County Courthouse**

Liber #: **1729**

Folio #: **338**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN **Towson** STATE **Maryland**

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

____ FEDERAL ____ STATE ____ COUNTY ____ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

BA-1419

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE Spring, 1978

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at 609 Baltimore Avenue is a two-story frame house with a gable-end roof. It consists of a main block, characterized by a centrally located chimney, and a projection to the east. The main block of the house is three (3) bays wide and one (1) bay deep with the projection being two (2) bays more to the east.

The west or main facade is characterized by a cross-gable. The facade maintains a regular fenestration of 6/6 windows with louvered shutters. There is a full porch covering the first story, which is supported by four square columns with chamfered corners. The porch is finished with a banister and square ballisters, and with two pilasters on opposite sides of the porch, possibly helping to support the porch ceiling. Tongue and groove boards cover both the floor and the ceiling of the porch. The porch rests on brick piers with lattice-work filling the space between the ground and the porch floor.

A centrally located entrance in the west facade suggests a central hall plan. This entrance is surrounded by a doorframe with a rectangular transom and sidelights. Below the sidelights are raised panels which correspond to four raised panels in the door.

Visible on the north facade are one (1) bay of the main block and the gable-end of the roof with a small louvered opening in the top of the gable. The east wing, which has its own porch and entrance, is two (2) bays wide. Again this porch is supported by square columns with chamfered corners and the floor by brick piers. A door with a rectangular transom is visible, central to the facade, but off center in relation to the projection. All windows visible on the north facade are 6/6 windows.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

The east facade of the building is typified by the L-plan. The gable-end of the east wing is not characterized by the regular fenestration present in the other facades. Instead, this facade contains two (2) two-paned windows which light the cellar, and one very wide window venting the south bay of this wing, and two tiny windows in the second story. An apparently enclosed porch occupies the first floor of the L, thus covering the first floor of the main block of the house.

The south facade consists of one (1) bay of the main block and the gable-end of the roof, again with a small louvered opening in the gable. Also visible on this facade is the stone foundation of the main block of the house. Two (2) 6/6 windows are visible on the second floor of the eastern projection, being occupied by what is apparently an enclosed porch. Upright beams or supports are seen on either side of the middle window, with the western most window being small and the other two (2) windows of the regular 6/6 type seen elsewhere in the house. The floor of the porch is supported by thick brick piers. Also visible are the rafter-end eaves on the eastern side of the enclosed porch. The covered entrance to the cellar was noticed at the eastern side of the main block on the south facade.

Although the house is covered with asbestos siding, on the east side of the east wing, was observed, under one damaged portion of the siding, capboards with wire nails. Also observed was a rounded wooden watertable, directly above the stone foundation.

INTERIOR

Approaching 609 Baltimore Avenue from the main or west entrance, one enters through this doorway into a shallow hall, with double parlors on either side. The parlor on the north side of the house opens into a short hallway with a stairway leading to the second story on the south side, and a door leading to another northern porch on the north side. Directly to the east is a doorway leading to a kitchen which typifies the L-shaped plan of the house. Significant details of the house include an ornate floral patterned chair rail in the front entrance hall and moulding seen around some of the doors in the double parlors.

The plan seen downstairs is repeated in the upper story, with the west wing containing two(2) bedrooms and the east wing containing one large room to the north and a smaller room on the south side.

There is a full basement under the house with the east half having been fully modernized. On the west side is seen a full, stone cellar featuring stone walls constructed of un-coursed rubble and a massive chimney support of brick, square-arched and appearing to be load bearing. Constructed of salmon-coloured brick, this butress measures 27"x4 $\frac{1}{2}$ '. Also visible in the west side of the basement are vertically sawn joists with cut nails in the braces in the joists. Evidence is present that the basement under the east wing may have been cut later than that under the west wing.

The basement also features two (2) windows in the south end, two (2) windows in the east end, one (1) window in the west end, and the northern facade is without windows.

On the whole, the structure appears to be highly altered from its earlier appearance. Although evidence exists of certain periodic characteristics such as the radically different moulding around the doors, a true picture of the original plan of the house is not readily available on the existing surface. For instance, there is a central chimney, however there are no existing visible fireplaces, although it was learned that a former occupent of the house remembers mantles.

Also of interest is the kitchen where there is visible a door, now closed and painted, leading to a porch on the north side which is now enclosed.

Outbuilding

Located to the east of the main structure at 609 Baltimore A Avenue is a smaller frame building with a gable-end roof. This one story structure features a covering of German siding and a roof, at one time covered with wooden shingles, now covered with asbestos shingles. The outbuilding is of frame construction with all modern materials as shown in the circular sawn wood and wire nails visible throughout.

The south facade of the building features a 6/6 light window centrally located in the gable-end. The north facade features the same 6/6 light window in the gable-end, but below the gable-end of the roof, the rest of the facade features a single opening occupying this entire north side. The west facade features a door at the south end with an opening in the upper half and the lower portion characterized by three raised, rectangular panels. This facade also features a 6/6 light window set towards the north side of the facade. The outbuilding is constructed with a brick foundation and the frame construction of the structure is clearly visible in the interior. The joining of sill to post is accomplished using a mortice, tenon, and trunnel. This method of framing is also visible in other portions of the building.

This outbuilding is presently in use as an automobile garage and appears to have been built specifically for that purpose.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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

609 Baltimore Avenue has significance in that it is one of a few remaining cross-gable structures in present downtown Towson. Its architecture is reflective of the more rural atmosphere of Towson as a small courthouse town. Along with the other buildings on Baltimore Avenue, this structure helps to maintain the scale and appearance of a portion of the town which has changed only slightly since the early days of the courthouse. Also of interest is the outbuilding which is, perhaps, a good example of an early automobile garage. Especially interesting is the presence of mortice, tennon, and trunnel construction in the framework of all modern materials. This detail seems to reflect a rather old-fashioned method of construction which may stand as a good example of the rural nature of late nineteenth century Towson.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

BA-1419

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Land Records, Baltimore County Courthouse, Towson, Md.

Atlas of Baltimore County, Md. G. M. Hopkins
(F. Bourquin's: Philadelphia, 1877)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Attachment

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

WAYNE L. NIELD, II
HISTORIC TOWSON, INC.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory 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
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

Chain of Title

The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is the Baltimore County Land Records Office.

1949 Liber 1729 Folio 338

Ernest C. Hatch, Successor Trustee of L. Gibbons Smart (grantor)

to

The Vestry of Trinity Church (grantee)

...H. Courtney Jenifer and Maude Smart original trustees, filed a petition in Equity asking the court to assume jurisdiction of the Trust Estate... Ernest C. Hatch then appointed trustee in the place of Maude Smart ... Beginning...at the corner formed by the intersection of the East side of Baltimore Avenue and the Southwest side of the Jeppa Road thence running with and binding on the East side of Baltimore avenue and on a part of the first line of a parcel of land... South 13 degrees 30 minutes, West 109 feet thence leaving said avenue and outline running for lines of division the two following courses and distances, viz.: South 76 degrees, East 111.75 feet and North 13 degrees 30minutes, East 79.22 feet to the southwest side of the Jeppa Road and to the point in the fifth line of the aforsaid parcel of land... thence binding on a part of said fifth line and on the Southwest side of the Jeppa Road, North 61 degrees 30 minutes West 115.90 feet to the place of begining.

1944 Liber 1333 Folio 516

Henry Paul (grantor)

to

Maude Smart, Trustee of L.Gibbons Smart (gratee)

1919 Liber 513 Folio 336

George C. Tracey and Anna Parker Tracey (grators)

to

Henry Paul and Clara May Paul (gratees)

...Being a part of the ground which by a deed alone reffered to wa
was conveyed by Adolph Sterk to Tracey and a part of the ground
conveyed as aforesaid by Henry L. Bowen to Tracey.

1893 Liber 197 Folio 336

Henry L. Bowen and Daniel Alden (grantors)

to

George C. Tracey (grantee)

... at the end of One Hundred and Fourteen (114) feet southerly
from the intersestion of the east side of Baltimore Avenue and
the south side of the County Road... and assuming thence a
southerly bounding on the east side of Baltimore Avenue fifty(50)
feet thence easterly and parallel to Alleghany Avenue one hundred
and seventy eight feet three inches (178' 3") to the ground of
the Prtestant Episcopal Church ... firstly described and conveyed
to Washington Townsend and wife to the aforesaid Henry L. Bowen...

1892 Liber 192 Folio 198

Adolph Sterk and Sons (granter)

to

George C. Tracey (grantee)

... at the corner formed by the intersection of the eastern
side of Baltimore Avenue and Southerly side of the County
Road leading from Towsontown... and running thence southerly
bounding on the eastern side of Baltimore Avenue onehundred
and fourteen feet (114) thence easterly parallel with Alleghany
Avenue one hundred and Seventy-eight feet and three inches (178'3")
to the lot of ground belonging to the Vestry of Trinity Episcepal
Church...then northerly bounding on said church lot... sixty-six
(66) feet to intersect the southerly side of the said country
Road... (179) feet to the place beginning.

1883 Liber 144 Folio 333

David G. McIntosh (grantor)

to

Adolph Sterk (grantee) doing business as A. Sterk and Sons

missing deed: John Burns (grantor) ?

to

David G. McIntosh (grantee) ?

1871 Liber 71 Folio 348

Washington Townsend and wife (grantors)

to

John Burns (grantee)

...being the same lot of ground which was leased by the said Townsend

and wife to the said Burns ...

1869 Liber 63 Folio 565

(John Burns agrees to rent the same lot of ground from

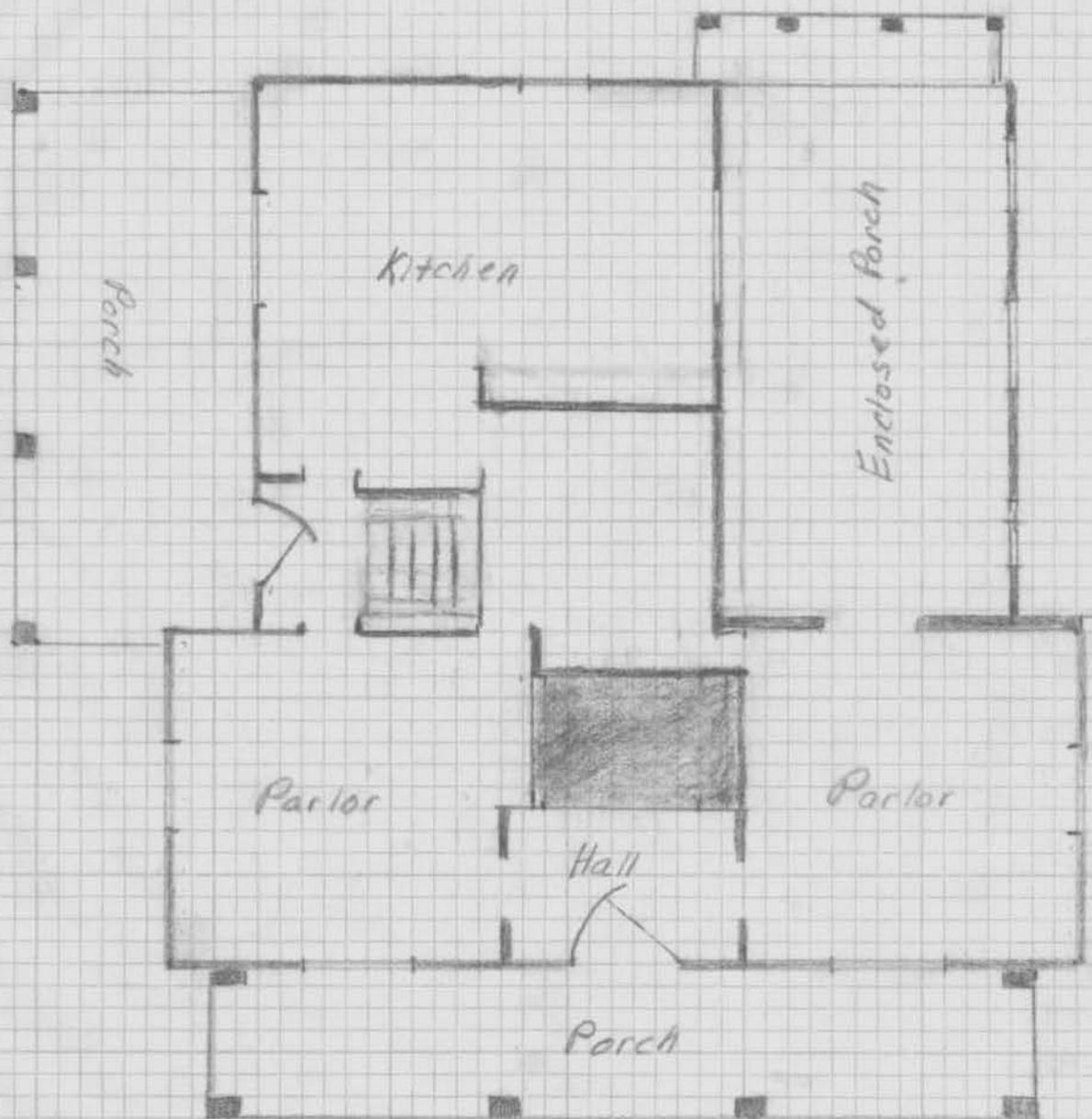
Washington Townsend and wife)

-- last deed refered to

OUTBUILDINGS IN TOWSON

Outbuildings are important in understanding pre-modern lifestyles. In the area of transportation for example it is easy to overlook the number of buildings and other structures which have come into existence with the development of the combustion engine. These would include not only the home garage and gas station but heavier bridges and hard top roads as well as a host of "drive-in" stores and entertainments.

Although not as extensive or explosive, the same may be said of the age of horse travel and its buildings and structures. An understanding of Towson in the second half of the 19th century would be incomplete without realizing the number of stables necessary for housing horses and wagons. Neither the Hopkins nor Bromley Atlases indicate chicken houses, privies, etc., but they do show that quite a few homes had stables and barns behind them. The Hopkins Atlas of 1877, for example, shows over forty stables in central Towson. The Bromley Atlas of 1898 shows most of these still in existence with an additional twenty or so having been built in the meantime. All but one of these outbuildings are indicated as being of wood construction. Most of these were probably frame although it is known that the Bowen House for example had several log outbuildings. In 1850 there were stone outbuildings at Epsom and there was a stone spring-house behind the Towson Tavern but the only masonry barn/stable indicated by Bromley is a large brick structure on the southwest corner of Delaware and Pennsylvania Avenues. Hopkins appears to indicate the same structure in 1877.



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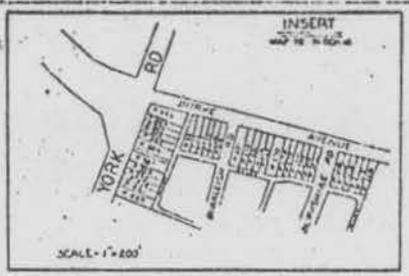
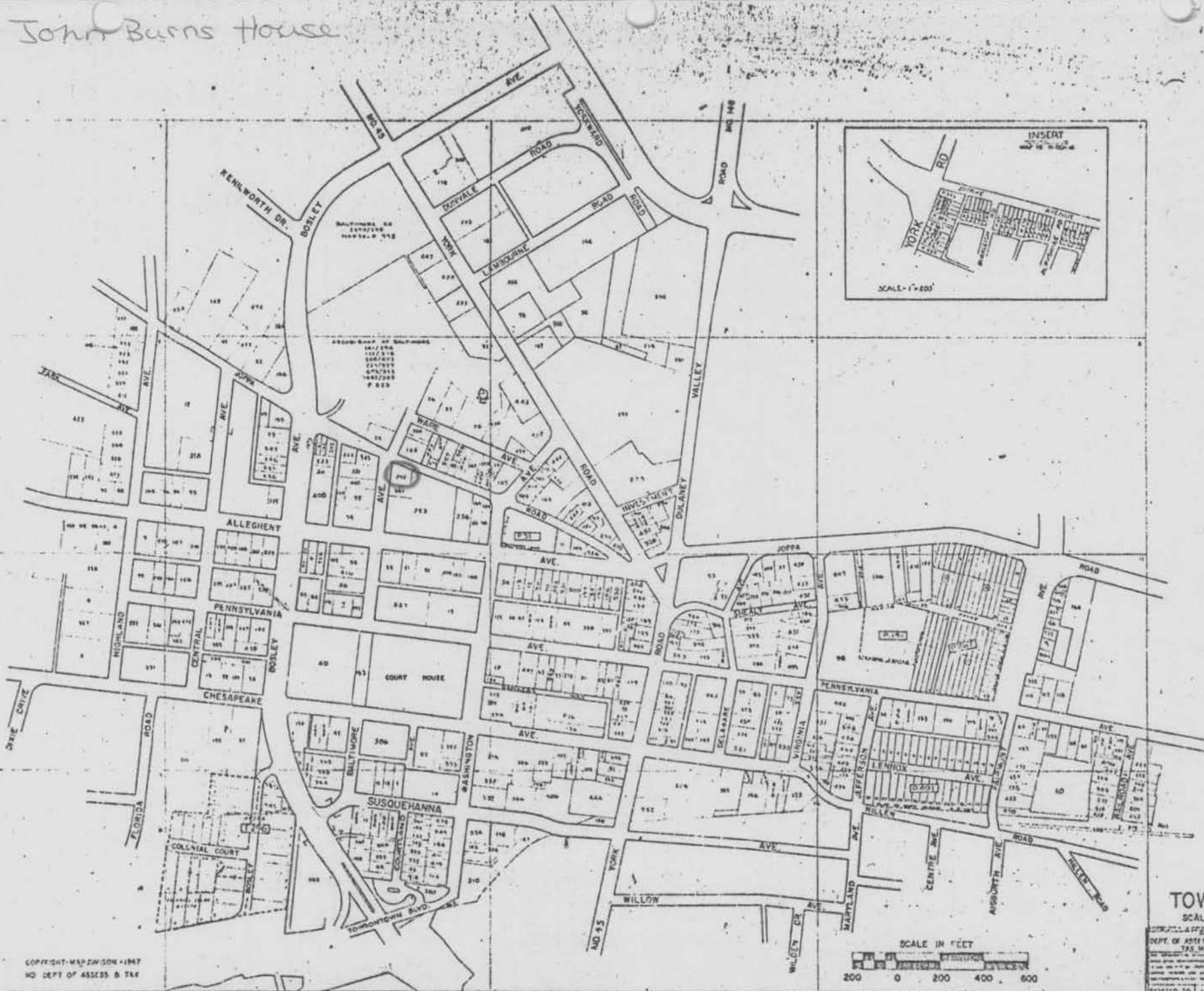
609 Baltimore Ave.

1st floor plan

not to scale

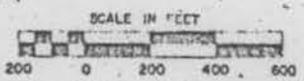
SMK/78

John Burns House



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NO DEPT OF ASSESS & TAX



TOWSON
SCALE 1"=200'

DEPT. OF ASSESSMENT & TAXATION
TAX MAP DIVISION

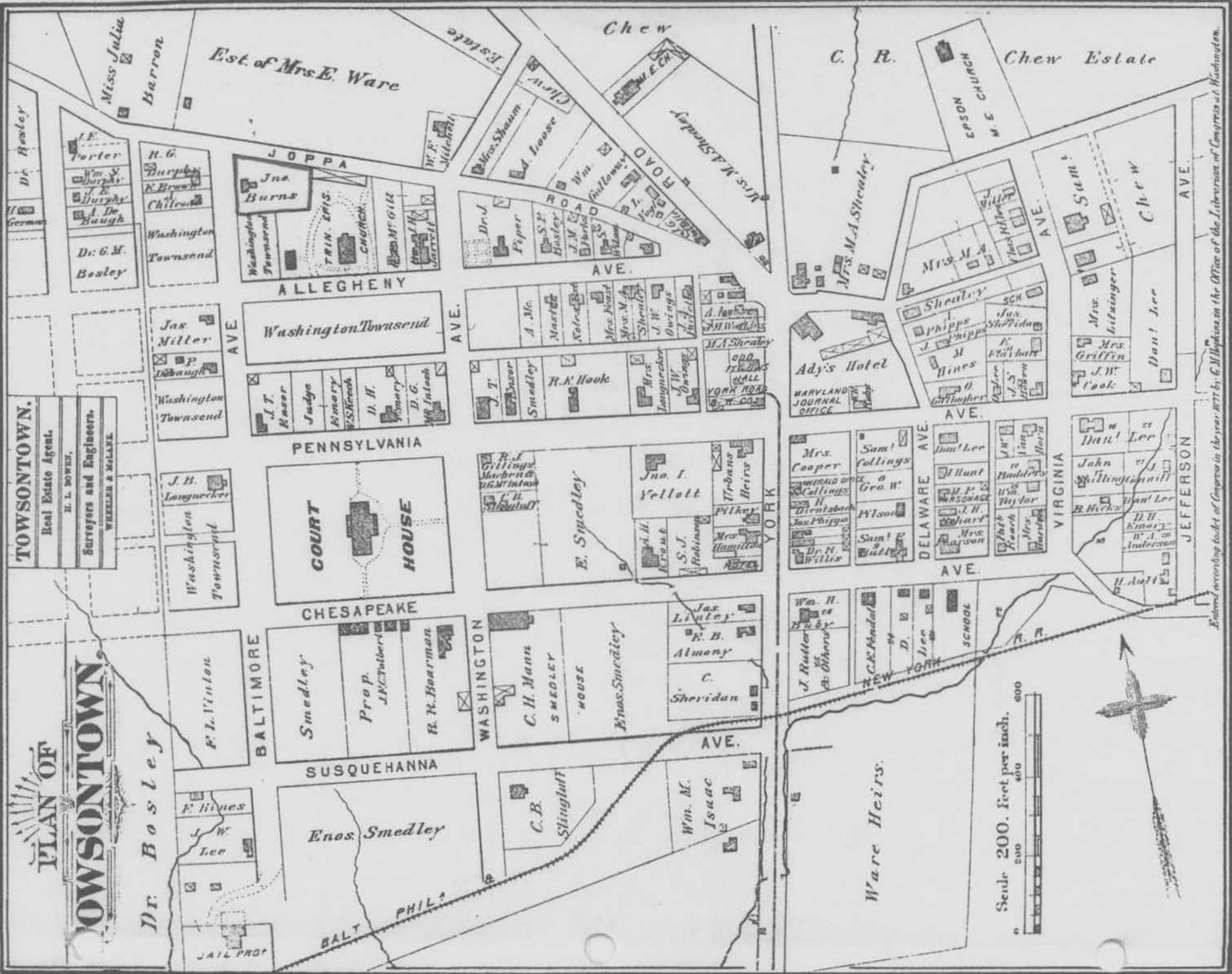
REVISED TO 11/1/73

MAP N
70A

BA-1419

PLAN OF TOWSONTOWN

TOWSONTOWN.
Real Estate Agent,
H. L. BOWES,
Surveyors and Engineers,
WHEELER & MALLER.



Scale 200 Feet per inch.
0 200 400 600



Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1877 by C. M. Hopkins in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.



BA-1419

JOHN BURNS HOUSE
S.W. CORNER

W. NIELD

WINTER 77-78