CAPSULE
BOSLEY MANSION

One of the most important episodes in the history of Towson was its selection as the county seat in 1853. That fact resulted in a significant period of growth and much westward expansion of the town. Most of that westward growth including the erection of the Courthouse and jail took place on the land of Dr. Grafton M. Bosley. The central portion of the large complex housing the Presbyterian Nursing Home was the Bosley residence.

The large building is typified by its Mansard styling and while there is some physical evidence of an earlier structure in the west wing, it is probably this main portion that is the most significant. The popularity of this style after the Civil War was nation-wide and is often cited in the authoritative literature on Victorian architecture. The Towson area had its share of these buildings although they have become few and central Towson itself lost the last of its several Mansard roofs in the last renovation of the John I. Yellott House (Penn Hotel) in 1978.

In addition to the importance of the Bosleys in helping to build Towson and the very age of the building with its well appointed interior, it is the growing scarcity of examples of this important style in this region that makes the Bosley Mansion an important structure.

In - 37
MAGI - 0300974504

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Bosley Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Georgia Ct. & Dixie Dr.

CITY, TOWN

Towson

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Presbyterian Home of Md., Inc.

Telephone #: 823-4622

STREET & NUMBER

Georgia Ct. & Dixie Dr.

CITY, TOWN

Towson

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21204

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Courts Building

Liber #: 660
Folio #: 454

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE March, 1979
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

There were many styles which became popular during the Victorian era and the Mansard was one of the most significant. It enjoyed popularity both in public and private structures with the "Executive Office Building" in Washington D.C. and the "Baltimore City Courthouse" being examples. The Towson area has had a significant number of examples of this style as well. The John I. Yellott House and the Urban House were right in the center of town and in the surrounding area the Historic Towson, Inc. survey has recently encountered Aigburth, Lewis Roberts, and #1517 W. Joppa Road. Quite a few residences of this style are in Lutherville. The Bosley Mansion belongs to this group because of its age, style and location but also, like Aigburth and Lewis Roberts, it appears to be the result of "Victorianizing." All three buildings are indicated on the maps of 1852 and 1857 which were published prior to the popularity of the style. Physical evidence suggests that the Mansard portion of the Bosley house may be an addition to an earlier structure. It is possible that it totally replaced an earlier structure but at any rate in its present role as the central core to a large nursing home the building is an effective document of this nationally important style. It is the last Mansard building within sight of Victorian Court-House Square.

The large house is not a "free standing" structure insofar as it is flanked on three sides by single and double story wings. The impressive portico of its main facade may not be original as well. Examination of the Bosley Mansion pointed up some problems that are as yet unresolved. It is certain that the east, north and westernmost portions of this large complex are all modern additions made since the Presbetyrians established the nursing home here in 1929. That portion of the west wing, however, where it joins the central block is at least as old as the Mansard portion if not older. A non-functional chimney support and non-functional windows in the basement of this portion of the building, as well as stucco covered clapboards seen in the attic prove that the west wing once ended approximately 25 feet west of the main block. A replacement roof and repointing of the foundation make it difficult to acertain if this wing is earlier than the main block or not although the visible wall framing suggests that it is free standing. A centralized, symmetrical and sometimes nearly square block is characteristic of Mansard buildings with any additions usually made at the rear. If the west wing is original it is somewhat of an oddity with its shorter height and gable roof breaking the symmetry of the central block. The L-shape appears on the 1915 Atlas by Bromley.

Another problem in decerning the original appearance of the Bosley Mansion is pointed up by the non-functional windows in the south cellar wall of the main block. Their presence suggests that the veranda and portico of that facade (which includes the same bracketing as the main eaves) is

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

BA-97

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1865 - 1877 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of the most important episodes in the history of Towson was its selection as the county seat in 1853. That fact resulted in a significant period of growth and much westward expansion of the town. Most of that westward growth including the erection of the Courthouse and jail took place on the land of Dr. Grafton M. Bosley. The central portion of the large complex housing the Presbyterian Nursing Home was the Bosley residence.

The large building is typified by its Mansard styling and while there is some physical evidence of an earlier structure in the west wing, it is probably this main portion that is the most significant. The popularity of this style after the Civil War was nation-wide and is often cited in the authoritative literature on Victorian architecture. The Towson area had its share of these buildings although they have become few and central Towson itself lost the last of its several Mansard roofs in the last renovation of the John I. Yellott House (Penn Hotel) in 1978.

In addition to the importance of the Bosleys in helping to build Towson and the very age of the building with its well appointed interior, it is the growing scarcity of examples of this important style in this region that makes the Bosley Mansion an important structures.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

B4-97

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Baltimore County Land Records
Baltimore County Will Records
Baltimore County Tax Assessment Records
"Map of the City & County of Baltimore" J.T. Sidney, 1850, Robert Taylor, 1857.
Genealogy and Biography of Leading Families of the City of Baltimore and Baltimore County Maryland, Chapman Publishing Co., New York, Nov. 1897.

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

ORGANIZATION HISTORIC TOWSON, INC. 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

PS-1108

BA-97

Tax Assessments

1876 Tax Assessment Record for Baltimore County District 9

Grafton M. Bosley

"Highlands" 130 acres @ $ 225

Improvements $ 9,150

It has 31 inch square openings that is 18 inches deep. The surround consists of plain pilasters 7 inches wide, the plain entablature is 9 inches wide and the 62 inch shelf is 9 inches deep. The chimney itself projects into the room 26 inches.

B4-97

CHAIN OF TITLE FOR BOSLEY MANSION

LIBER	FOLIO	DATE	GRANTOR	GRANTEE
660	454	October 2, 1928	Southland Company	Presbyterian Home of Maryland

Beginning at the corner formed by the intersection of the north side of Georgia Ct. and the west side of Florida Rd. Northeast 332.57 ft., Northwest 544 ft. to the east side of Dixie Dr., Southwest 356.57 ft., Southeast 605.88 ft. to beginning.

Being lot # 11, block 1 in Plat Book 7, folio 187 "Part of Subdivision of Southland Hills"

632	178	March 4, 1926	J. Elmer Weisheit & wife	Southland Company
555	252	May 20, 1922	Emily J. Offutt	J. Elmer Weisheit
256	515	December 5, 1901	Arthur L. Bosley et al Trustees	Emily J. Offutt

Containing 17.79 acres

Arthur L. Bosley et al Trustees were appointed by Grafton M. Bosley by way of his Last Will and Testament dated January 14, 1901 and recorded in Will Book 12, folio 111.

Grafton M. Bosley came to Towsontown in 1848 where he formed a partnership in medicine with his uncle Josiah Marsh. At the death of Josiah Marsh, August 17, 1850, Dr. Bosley inherited his estate in Towson.

not original. It is possible, however, that the portico in spite of its brackets is an alteration to the Mansard design.

Physical Description:

The basement area reveals that at one point this residence was L-shaped. There are stone walls, a modern cement floor and one can see mechanically vertical sawn joists measuring 3 inches by 9 inches.

In the west wing 24'West of the main block is a non-functional chimney support projecting 18 inches into the room with a total thickness (original end wall) of 36 inches. A hearth support is still visible.

Regardless of whether the oldest portion of the west wing pre-dates the main block or not it appears to be a free standing structure that measures 13½ feet deep and 18 feet long in the basement.

The aforementioned mechanically sawn joists in the west wing have an 18 inch center-to-center transverse placement, however, at the east end of the room there is a 3 foot wide space containing longitudinal braces suggestive of an earlier stairs opening.

Additional evidence of a difference in age between the west wing and main block is a thick sill on the east end of the wing that exhibits a non-functional mortise, presumably for a now missing stud.

A total replacement of any possible earlier flooring is suggested by the fact that the joists and flooring of the main block are identical to those of the west wing. As mentioned, the south cellar wall of the main block contains non-functional windows. It can be seen in this area that the hall and flanking parlors are differentiated by longitudinal joists beneath the parlors and transverse joists supporting the hall floor.

The stuccoed exterior obscures the fact that this is a frame building. The interior of the south foundation and a line visible on the exterior suggest that there is a 15 inch brick watertable on top of the stone foundation into which the wooden studs are embedded.

First Floor:

The west wing is presently used as a dining room and reception area. A large upright and longitudinal girder differentiate the old from the new portions but any other early appearance is gone.

The main block, however, approaches a museum like atmosphere as its rooms retain much late Victorian decoration that is complemented with period furnishings. The centrally located hall is entered by a doorway with side-lights, fanlight transom and tracery. It is seperated from the stair area by a tudor archway which is bracketed at the springs. The hallway is altered and neither the stairs nor their location appears original when compared to those of the second floor. The smaller parlors that flank the main hall are entered by doors opening into a "back" hall which runs transversely and nearly bisects the entrance hall. The west parlor does have a door opening into the entrance hall. That parlor contains built-in shelving. Both parlors have fireplaces in their north walls that are served by centrally located interior chimneys. The mantelpiece in the west parlor is relatively plain.

B7-97

Grafton M. Bosley

Mortgage Record:

Mortgage Book 210/131 July 15, 1899

Dr. Grafton M. Bosley to Maryland Title Insurance & Trust Co. for $11,500

Involving the 12 lots indicated on the plat of Grafton M. Bosley's land as surveyed by Charles B. McClean in 1891.

"And for the purpose of making accessible the said lots, it is hereby understood that the following Avenues represented on said plat are hereby dedicated to public use, to wit: Chesapeake Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Allegheny Avenue, Highland Avenue and Bosley Avenue."

D+97

TAX ASSESSMENT RECORDS

Grafton M. Bosley Estate

1911:

Private Avenues - Highland, Pennsylvania, Allegheny, Central & Bosley

Frame House on Lot "D" Southwest corner of Allegheny & Central Aves.

1916:

Lot 50' x 160' North side Pennsylvania Ave. 2nd S. of Bosley
"Clark"

Lot 75' x 120' Southwest corner Bosley & Pennsylvania Ave.
"Merryman"

Lot 100' x 180' Northwest corner Bosley & Chesapeake
"Merryman"

Lot 60' x 150' West side Bosley 2nd S. of Pennsylvania Ave.
"Merryman"

1917:

Lot 225' x 120' Pennsylvania Ave. between Bosley & Central Aves.
"Merryman"

Lot 150' x 180' Southwest corner Pennsylvania & Central
"Merryman"

Lot 60' x 150' East side Central
"Merryman"

Lot 60' x 150' Southwest corner Allegheny & Central
Frame House "Eckel"

Lot 100' x 150' North side Pennsylvania Ave. 100' West of Central Ave.
"Shirley"

B4-17

FROM: THE JEFFERSONIAN, TOWSON, MARYLAND, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1945
(VOL. XXXV - NO. 4)

Page 1:

YOUR COUNTY

BOSLEY MANSION IS NOW HAVEN FOR AGED WOMEN

BUILDER DONATED COURT HOUSE SITE

Sometime in the late eighteen sixties, Dr. Grafton M. Bosley, who had inherited a large tract of land from his uncle, Dr. Josiah Marsh, including all of what is now Towson, west of the York Road, south of the Joppa Road, north of the Sheppard-Pratt Hospital, and east of Woodbine Avenue, together with the Marsh homestead, now owned and occupied by Mrs. T. Scott Offutt, decided to build a home of his own. So selecting a site in what is now the "Southland Hills" section of Towson, he erected a three-story frame, brick-lined, colonial mansion in the middle of a charming twenty-five acre ark (sic; park?) and made it his place of residence until shortly before his death, about 1900. 1/

The property then passed into the hands and became the home of Milton Offutt, who lived there until his death. Then it was occupied by his brother, Thomas W. Offutt, who, about 1920, sold it to Elmer J. Weisheit, who, in turn, made it his home, reducing the immediate surrounding grounds, however, to about four and a half acres and platting the rest for building lots in the "Southland Hills" development.

Mr. Weisheit occupied the house until 1929, when he sold it, with its grounds of four and a half acres, to the Presbyterian Home of Maryland.

Dr. Bosley, builder of the mansion, donated to the County the ground upon which the Court House was built when Towson was made the County seat. He also donated

Page 6:

the land for Trinity Church 2/ on Alleghany Avenue.

A rather amusing story is told in connection with the location of the County seat. Cockeysville wanted it and those having charge of making the selection of the site seemed somewhat inclined to place it there. Joshua Cockey, the principal landowner in Cockeysville and vicinity, is said to have been approached on the proposition of contributing a Court House site, and, as the story goes, while he displayed a willingness to donate the required land, expressed considerable anxiety for the safety of his apple orchard in the event of his town being decided upon for the site of a Court House.

1/ Dr. Bosley died January 25, 1901.

2/ Dr. Bosley did not donate land for the church; he donated land for the rectory.

B+-17

He feared that hoodlums attending criminal trials would raid his apple orchard - so Dr. Bosley's offer was accepted and Towson won the County seat by an apple orchard.

After the Dr. Bosley mansion in "Southland Hills" was acquired by the Presbyterian Home of Maryland much had to be done before the place was ready for its guests.

Many residents of Towson viewed the beginning of remodeling operations of the old Dr. Bosley mansion with sinking hearts, but before the work had progressed far the depression eased, for it soon became apparent that the house itself was not to be changed and that the dormitory wing, which was being built to the east, was designed to harmonize nicely with the original structure. The work completed, hurt nobody and gave the Presbyterian Home ample accommodations for immediate purposes.

At present the Home is equipped to accommodate forty women guests. Sometime in the future the management hopes to expand its facilities to care for that many male guests.

One must be sixty-five before she is eligible for entrance, but once in she may stay for the remainder of her days, and some have been in the Home for years.

The Home is not an institution. It has nothing outside of the office to suggest an institution. There are few rules, only enough to prevent confusion and keep the carefully concealed machinery of the place running smoothly. Guests may come and go at will. The Home is supported by contributions from all Presbyterian churches in the State, then, too, each guest has to pay an entrance fee of several hundred dollars. This entrance fee entitles her to remain in the Home for the rest of her life.

Copied by Claire A. Richardson
January 21, 1973

Information given in footnotes 1 and 2 on the previous page was supplied by Dr. Bosley's granddaughter, Mrs. Richard T. Pilling, Jr. of Baltimore.

Maryland
Baltimore County
District IX

BA-~~92~~ 97

Bosley Mansion

0300975504

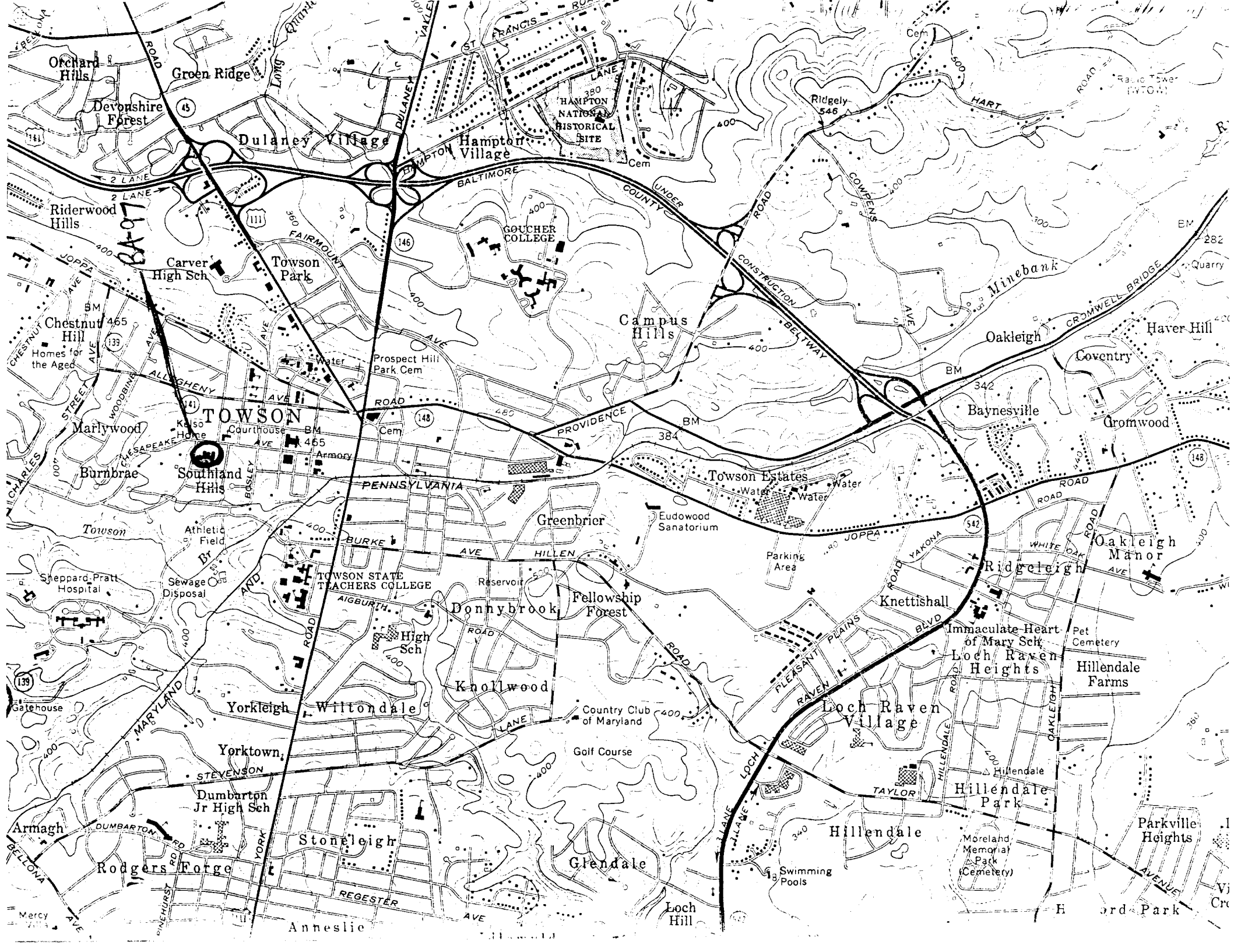
1860

Towson home of Dr. Grafton M. Bosley; built of stone, plastered over, portico, and cupola.

Greatly enlarged for its present use as the Maryland Presbyterian Home.

(First HABS Report)
E. Frances Offutt
HABS COMMITTEE OF BALTIMORE
COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July 29, 1965


BA-97
Orchard Hills
Green Ridge
Devonshire Forest
Dulaney Village
Hampton Village
HAMPTON NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE
Riderwood Hills
Carver High Sch
Towson Park
GOUCHER COLLEGE
Campus Hills
Minebank
Chestnut Hill
Homes for the Aged
Prospect Hill Park Cem
TOWSON
Courthouse
Armory
Marlywood
Kelso Home
Burnbrae
Southland Hills
Towson Estates
Eudowood Sanatorium
Greenbrier
Oakleigh
Haver Hill
Coventry
Baynesville
Cromwood
Oakleigh Manor
Ridgeleigh
Knettishall
Immaculate Heart of Mary Sch
Loch Raven Heights
Hillendale Farms
Pet Cemetery
Loch Raven Village
Hillendale Park
Hillendale
Parkville Heights
Moreland Memorial Park (Cemetery)
Swimming Pools
Athletic Field
Sewage Disposal
Sheppard Pratt Hospital
TOWSON STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
Reservoir
Donnybrook
Fellowship Forest
High Sch
Knollwood
Yorkleigh
Wiltondale
Country Club of Maryland
Golf Course
Yorktown
Dumbarton Jr High Sch
Armagh
Stoneleigh
Rodgers Forge
Glendale
Loch Hill
Anneslie
Gatehouse
Mercy
Parking Area
Water
Cem
Quarry
Radio Tower (WTOW)
Ridgely 546
BALTIMORE COUNTY
UNDER CONSTRUCTION
BELTWAY
PENNSYLVANIA
PROVIDENCE
ALLEGHENY
FAIRMOUNT
JOPPA
BURKE AVE
HILLEN
AIGBURTH
STEVENSON
DUMBARTON RD
REGESTER AVE
MARYLAND
YORK
BELLONA
LOCH RAVEN
PLEASANT PLAINS
YAKONA
WHITE OAK
TAYLOR
HILLENDALE
OAKLEIGH
CROMWELL BRIDGE
HART
COWPENS
DULANEY VALLEY
FRANCIS
CHESAPEAKE
CHARLES
CHESTNUT
WOODBINE
BOSLEY
Towson
Long Quarter
2 LANE
BM 465
BM 384
BM 342
BM 282
400
460
500
360
340
380

BA-97

BOSLEY MANSION

S. FACADE

J. CORCORAN
7/79

BA-97

BOSLEY MANSION
S.E. CORNER

J. CORCORAN
7/79

BA - 97

BOSLEY MANSION
S. FACADE
DETAIL

J. CORCORAN
7/79

BA-97

OUTBUILDING-
BOSLEY MANSION
S.E. CORNER

J. CORCORAN
7/79