

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G.# 72-9-27 Building Date: circa 1910

Building Name: Samuel Towles/Lawrence Brooks House

Location: 708 59th Avenue, Fairmount Heights, Md.

Private/Residence/Occupied/Fair/Inaccessible

Description:

The Towles/Brooks House is two-and-one-half-story crossgable frame dwelling, presently covered with red asphalt bricktex. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay main east gable front, sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with turned bracketed posts and continuous X-pattern railing which wraps around the north elevation as far as the crossgable. Windows are 2/2 double hung sash with plain board surrounds; the plain boxed cornice is returned at the gable ends, and all trim is painted white.

Significance:

The Samuel Towles/Lawrence Brooks House, typical of the modest crossgable dwellings of the early 20th century, was built circa 1910 by Samuel Towles shortly after he purchased two unimproved lots from developer Robinson White. Members of the Towles family have remained in the house to the present day. Samuel Towles, like many others who settled in Fairmount Heights, commuted into the Federal City, working as a messenger for the U. S. Department of the Treasury. Samuel Towles' house is now owned and occupied by his nephew, Lawrence Brooks, who served as Mayor of Fairmount Heights from 1967 to 1972. The house is typical of the modest crossgable dwellings of the early 20th century; it is noticeable in that it retains some of its late Victorian decorative detail.

Acreage: 6,250 square feet

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Samuel Towles House

and/or common Lawrence Brooks House

## 2. Location

street & number 708 59th Avenue  not for publication

city, town Fairmount Heights  vicinity of congressional district 5

state MD county Prince George's

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Frances Towles et al

street & number 708 59th Avenue telephone no.:

city, town Fairmount Heights state and zip code MD 20743

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 2545

street & number 14735 Main Street folio 161

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

The Samuel Towles/Lawrence Brooks House stands at 708 59th (originally Fairmount) Avenue. It was built circa 1910 on lots 57/58, Block D of the Fairmount Heights subdivision, which was platted in 1900.

This is two-and-one-half-story crossgable frame dwelling, presently covered with red asphalt bricktex. Entrance is in the third bay of the three-bay main east gable front, sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with turned bracketed posts and continuous X-pattern railing which wraps around the north elevation as far as the crossgable. Windows are 2/2 double hung sash with plain board surrounds; the plain boxed cornice is returned at the gable ends, and all trim is painted white.

# 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify

**Specific dates** ca. 1910 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or  
Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Samuel Towles/Lawrence Brooks House is a good example of the modest crossgable houses built in developing urban areas early in this century. It was built circa 1910 on one of the lots of the Fairmount Heights subdivision.

The Town of Fairmount Heights is located just outside the easternmost point of the District of Columbia in Prince George's County, Maryland; it is composed of a group of early twentieth-century subdivisions that form one of the earliest planned communities for blacks in the Washington, D. C., area. The community began with the Fairmount Heights subdivision in 1900, followed by five adjoining subdivisions, the last being Sylvan Vista platted in 1923. The Town was incorporated in 1935, and grew steadily through the years before World War II.

The land which was to become Fairmount Heights consisted, during the late nineteenth century, principally of parts of the small farms of John H. Wilson, John and Caroline Silence, Samuel Hoover, Mosby Brown and John Wiessner, all clustered around the east corner of the District of Columbia. In the early years of the twentieth century, these farms were bought up and subdivided by land speculators, who then began to sell individual lots to black families, most of whom worked in the District of Columbia.

The first section of Fairmount Heights was subdivided in 1900 by Robinson White and Allen Clark (both white men) out of parts of several small farms which they had purchased from the Wilson, Godfrey, Belt and Lee families. Robinson White was a lawyer and developer who resided in the District of Columbia; Allen C. Clark was a lawyer and manager of the Equitable Life Insurance Company of Washington, D. C. White and Clark had approximately fifty acres surveyed by

County Surveyor Edward L. Latimer, and laid out in lots and streets radiating from the northeast boundary of the District of Columbia. The deep, narrow lots were generally 25 by 125 feet; two of the streets were named for these first two developers. Sale of lots began almost immediately, and within a few years, dwellings were constructed and a community began to form.

From the beginning, blacks were encouraged to buy lots and settle in the new community. White and Clark sold the lots at relatively low prices, making home ownership finally attainable for black families. Most of the earliest purchasers of lots worked for government agencies; many built their own houses, or relied on friends and family to help with construction. Many families were quick to seize the opportunity to move out of the city, determined to progress, by hard work and amid healthful surroundings, toward a better life.

The earliest dwellings were of frame construction, modest in size and form, and many of these have not survived. Within a few years, however, several interesting and substantial houses were constructed for individuals who would make significant contributions to the development of Fairmount Heights.

The Towles/Brooks House, typical of the modest crossgable dwellings of the early 20th century, was built circa 1910 by Samuel Towles shortly after he purchased two unimproved lots from developer Robinson White. Members of the Towles family have remained in the house to the present day. Samuel Towles, like many others who settled in Fairmount Heights, commuted into the Federal City, working as a messenger for the U. S. Department of the Treasury.

Samuel Towles' house is now owned and occupied by his nephew, Lawrence Brooks, who served as Mayor of Fairmount Heights from 1967 to 1972. The house is typical of the modest crossgable dwellings of the early 20th century; it is noticeable in that it retains some of its late Victorian decorative detail.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. PG#72-9-27

Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1906-1912  
Federal Census, Prince George's County, District #13, 1910  
Interview with Mrs. Margaret Brooks

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 6250 sq ftQuadrangle name Washington EastQuadrangle scale 1:24,000UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

TM 65, FH Blk D, lots 57-58

A            
Zone Easting Northing

B            
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

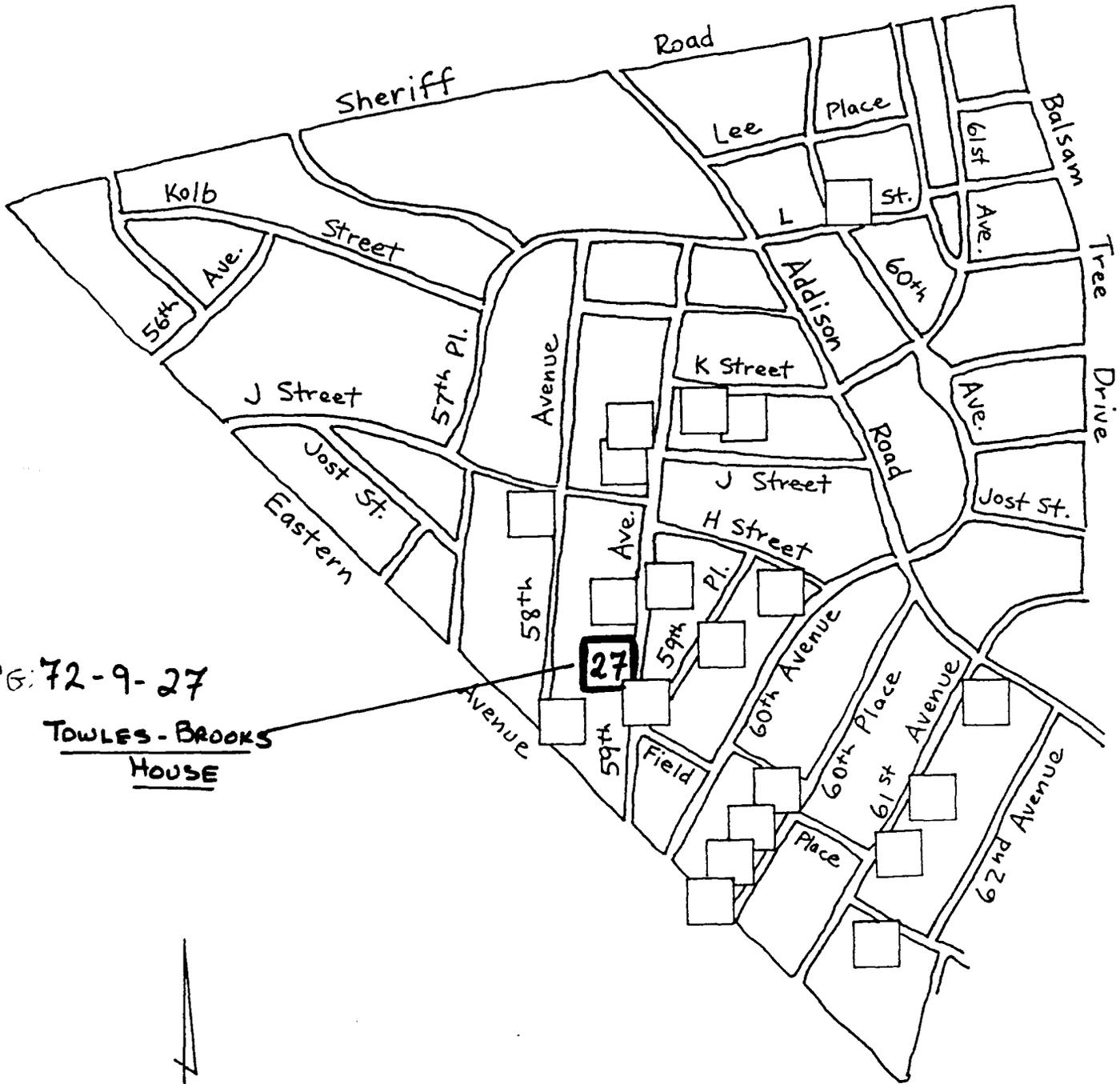
name/title Susan G. Pearl, Research/Architectural HistorianPrince George's Countyorganization Historic Preservation Commission date June 1991street & number c/o M-NCPPC, 4th floor CAB telephone 301-952-3521city or town Upper Marlboro state MD 20772

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.

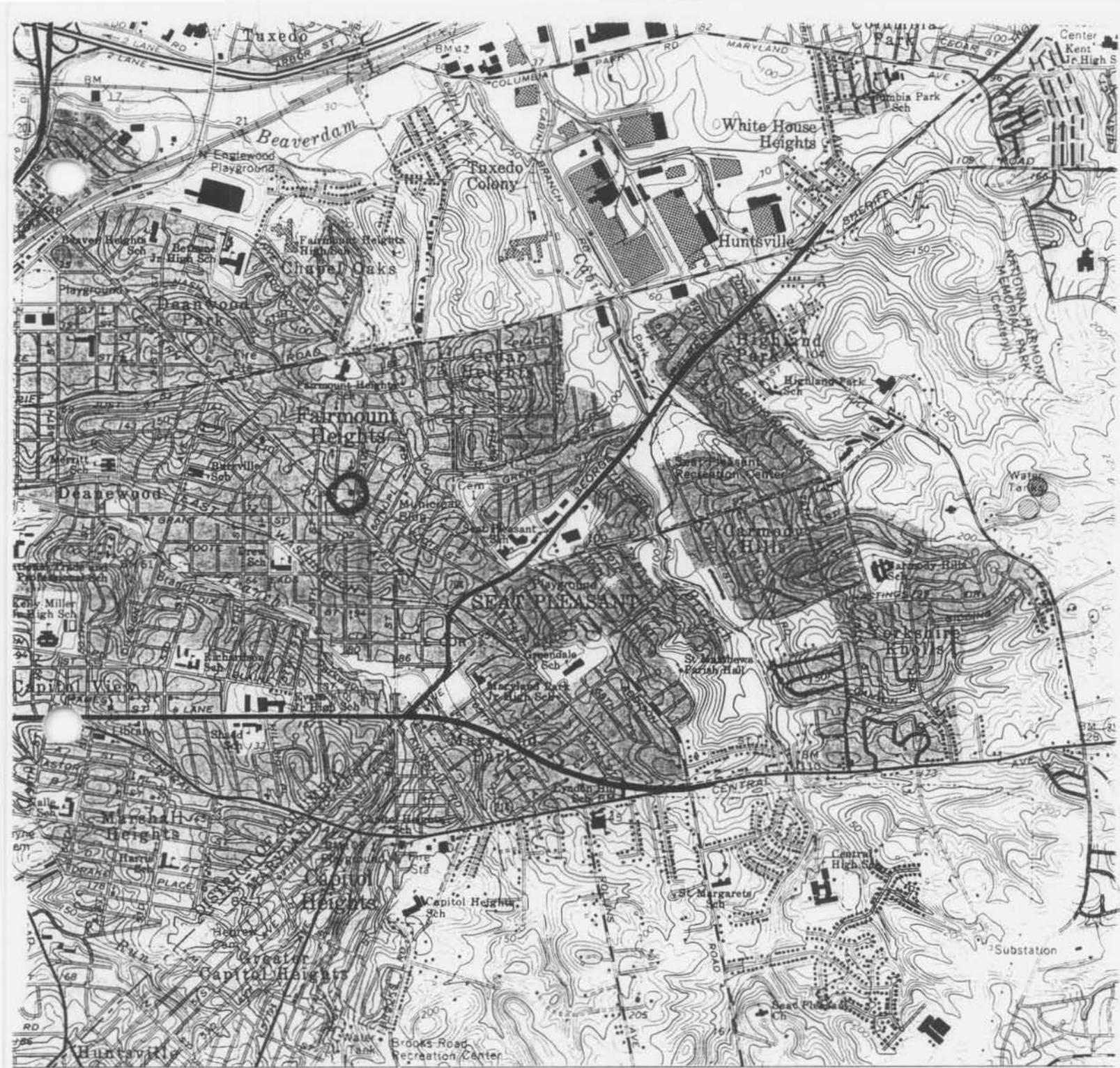
return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

# Town of Fairmount Heights



PG: 72-9-27  
TOWLES-BROOKS  
HOUSE





DISTRICT HEIGHTS 23 MI  
UPPER MARLBORO 11 MI



0 FEET  
LEVEL  
ATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
DATE 1965

ACCURACY STANDARDS  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
MBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PG: 72-9-27  
**72-9-27**



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty		Light-duty	
Medium-duty		Unimproved dirt	
	Interstate Route		U. S. Route
	State Ro		

WASHINGTON EAST, MD. - D. C.  
N3852.5 - W7652.5/7.5

1965  
PHOTOREVISED 1971  
AMS 5661 IV NW - SERIES V833



PG. # 72-9-27  
Lyles - Brooks House  
Susan H. Pearl  
January 1991

20 (N)

708 59<sup>th</sup> Ave

D: 57-58

Sacramento Heights