

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G.# 72-9-39 Building Date: 1908

Building Name: Robert S. Nichols House

Location: 802 58th Avenue, Fairmount Heights, Md.

Private/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description:

The Robert S. Nichols House is a large two-part frame dwelling, of complex Foursquare plan. The main block is 2 1/2 stories high with hip roof, three bays by two; attached to its north elevation is a two-story hip-roof wing, two bays by two, inset from the principal east facade. Entrance to the main block is in the third bay of the east facade, through a door with a single-pane transom. This entrance is sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with turned posts, jig-sawn brackets and plain balustrade railing; the porch wraps around the north elevation of the main block to shelter also an entrance into the east facade of the wing. The building is covered with a combination of yellow bricktex and brown synthetic siding. Windows are 2/2 double hung sash with plain board surrounds painted white (as is the other trim) and brown louvered shutters. Centered in the east plane of the roof of the main block is a hip dormer with a six-pane window. The house rests on a high brick basement which encloses a basement.

Significance:

The Robert S. Nichols House is a noticeable landmark in Fairmount Heights and was certainly one of the handsomest and most substantial houses in the community when it was built in 1908. The two lots on which it stands were purchased in 1908 by John F. Collins, and in that year he built this house. In the following year he sold the new dwelling to Robert S. Nichols, who worked in the District of Columbia at the U. S. Pension Office. Nichols, who had come to Maryland from Texas, settled with his young family in this house in 1909. He soon became active in community affairs, heading the citizens committee which pursued and brought about the establishment of a public school in Fairmount Heights. In 1912 he served on the building committee of that new primary school. In 1914, Nichols contracted with the Detroit Heating Company to install a complete system of central heating in his house; the same company installed a similar system in the same year in the home of William Coles. Nichols worked toward the incorporation of Fairmount Heights, and, in 1935, when the town was incorporated, he was elected as its first mayor, and served two consecutive one-year terms. The house on White (now 58th) Avenue remained in Nichols family ownership until after Robert Nichols' death in 1960.

Acreage: 6,250 square feet

Survey No. PG#72-9-39

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Robert S. Nichols House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 802 58th 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	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 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 Lottie Thompson

street & number 802 58th 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 5175

street & number 14735 Main Street folio 842

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

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 date of move _____
<input 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 Robert S. Nichols House stands at 802 58th (originally White) Avenue. It was built in 1908 on Lot 8, Block C of the Fairmount Heights subdivision, which was platted in 1900.

This is a large two-part frame dwelling, of complex Foursquare plan. The main block is 2 1/2 stories high with hip roof, three bays by two; attached to its north elevation is a two-story hip-roof wing, two bays by two, inset from the principal east facade. Entrance to the main block is in the third bay of the east facade, through a door with a single-pane transom. This entrance is sheltered by a one-story hip-roof porch with turned posts, jig-sawn brackets and plain balustrade railing; the porch wraps around the north elevation of the main block to shelter also an entrance into the east facade of the wing.

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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 1908 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 Robert S. Nichols House was one of the handsomest and most substantial houses in the community when it was built in 1908 in 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

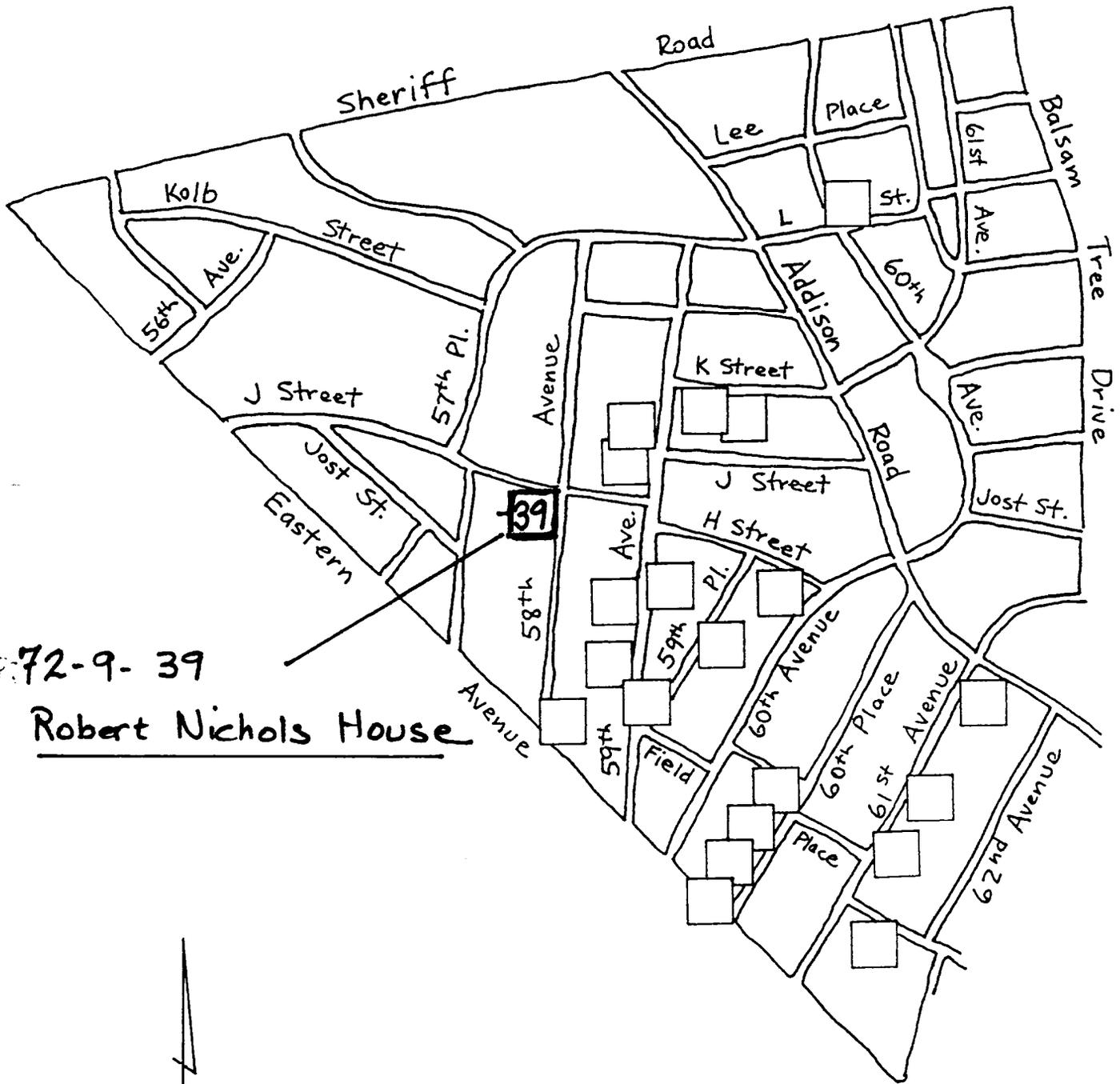
County Surveyor Edward L. Latimer, and laid out in lots and streets radiating from the northeast boundary of the District of Columbia. The deep, narrow lots were generally 25 by 125 feet; two of the streets were named for these first two developers. Sale of lots began almost immediately, and within a 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 Nichols House is a noticeable landmark in Fairmount Heights and was certainly one of the handsomest and most substantial houses in the community when it was built in 1908. The two lots on which it stands were purchased in 1908 by John F. Collins, and in that year he built this house. In the following year he sold the new dwelling to Robert S. Nichols, who worked in the District of Columbia at the U. S. Pension Office. Nichols, who had come to Maryland from Texas, settled with his young family in this house in 1909. He soon became active in community affairs, heading the citizens committee which pursued and brought about the establishment of a public school in Fairmount Heights. In 1912 he served on the building committee of that new primary school. In 1914, Nichols contracted with the Detroit Heating Company to install a complete system of central heating in his house; the same company installed a similar system in the same year in the home of William Coles. Nichols worked toward the incorporation of Fairmount Heights, and, in 1935, when the town was incorporated, he was elected as its first mayor, and served two consecutive one-year terms. The house on White (now 58th) Avenue remained in Nichols family ownership until after Robert Nichols' death in 1960.

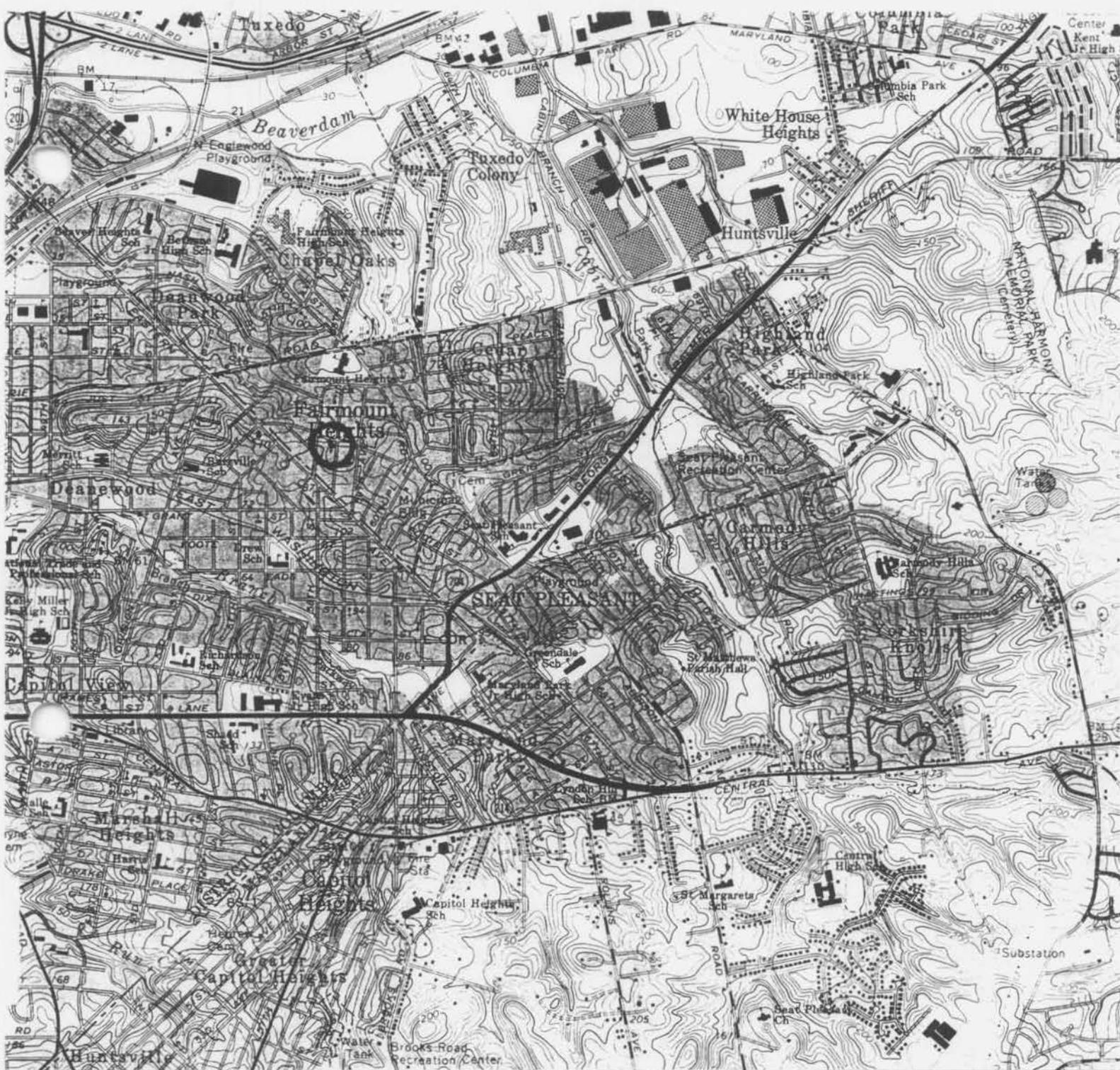
Town of Fairmount Heights



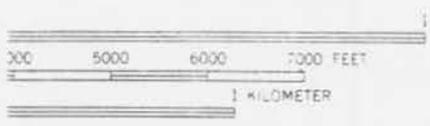
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Robert Nichols House





DISTRICT HEIGHTS 2 3 MI UPPER MARLBORO 11 MI 55' 334 335000m E INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WASHINGTON D C — 1971 76



PG: 72-9-39

72-9-39

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

0 FEET
EVEL
ATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
ATEL FEET



WASHINGTON EAST, MD.—D. ()
N3852.5—W7652.5/7.5

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

1965
PHOTOREVISED 1971
AMS 5661 IV NW—SERIES V833



Pl. # 72-9-37

Robert Speer's Hs.

802 58th Ave., Sacramento Hts

(FH C:8)

Prince George's Co. MD.

Susan H. Pearl

March 1991

East facade

7/4: 447