

431-33 E. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE (DUPLEX)  
Towson  
Baltimore County  
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-1074

HABS  
MD  
3-TOW  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

HABS  
MD  
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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

431-33 E. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE (Duplex) HABS No. MD-1074

- LOCATION:** Towson, Baltimore County, Maryland
- SIGNIFICANCE:** 431-433 E. Pennsylvania Avenue is an example of a ca. 1930s two-story duplex. Although it postdates most of the houses within the East Towson Historic District, its siting, shingled exterior, front porch, and plain trim are typical of vernacular form and materials of the older residences within this African-American community. The simplified cornice with dentils is an unusual stylistic survival given the building's mid-20th century construction date.
- DESCRIPTION:** 431-33 E. Pennsylvania Avenue is a two-story frame duplex constructed after 1929. The shingled duplex faces south onto E. Pennsylvania Avenue, a residential street that deadends at the Black and Decker headquarters approximately 100 yards east of the building. Like other residences in the East Towson Historic District, the duplex is situated at the street frontage of a deep, narrow lot. There is a shotgun house to the east of the 24 ft. x 27 ft. duplex (See HABS No. MD-1075); the lot to the west is vacant and overgrown. The two-story two-bay residence rests on a concrete block foundation and is topped by a flat roof that slopes north. A porch with an enclosed rail projects from the front of the house and a centered ell projects from the rear. Trim for both exterior and interior openings consists of flat boards. A cornice with dentils extends across the front of the building. The two-story units within the building are mirror images of one another. 431 is on the west; 433 on the east. Each unit is two-rooms deep. The rooms communicate directly with one another; there is no side hall. The 1st floor kitchen and 2nd floor bathroom are located in a centered rear ell. With the exception of plumbing fixtures, a pantry projecting east of the kitchen on the 1st floor of 433 appears to be the only major alteration.
- HISTORY:** The East Towson Historic District, which comprises the neighborhood surrounding 431-33 E. Pennsylvania Avenue, was settled between 1850-1930 by African Americans. Many early residents were descended from enslaved African Americans at Hampton, the nearby plantation of Capt. Charles Ridgely. Ridgely made provisions for his slaves' freedom upon his death in 1830.
- Sanborn Insurance Maps reveal that the site of 431-433 E. Pennsylvania Avenue was vacant through 1929. The duplex first appears on the 1955 paste-up map. (Sanborn coverage for this neighborhood appears particularly diligent because of its proximity to the Black and Decker plant, which appears as a "special" in each series.) The Polk's Baltimore Suburban Directory for 1955, the first directory for Towson, lists Ellen Keating as the occupant of 431 E.

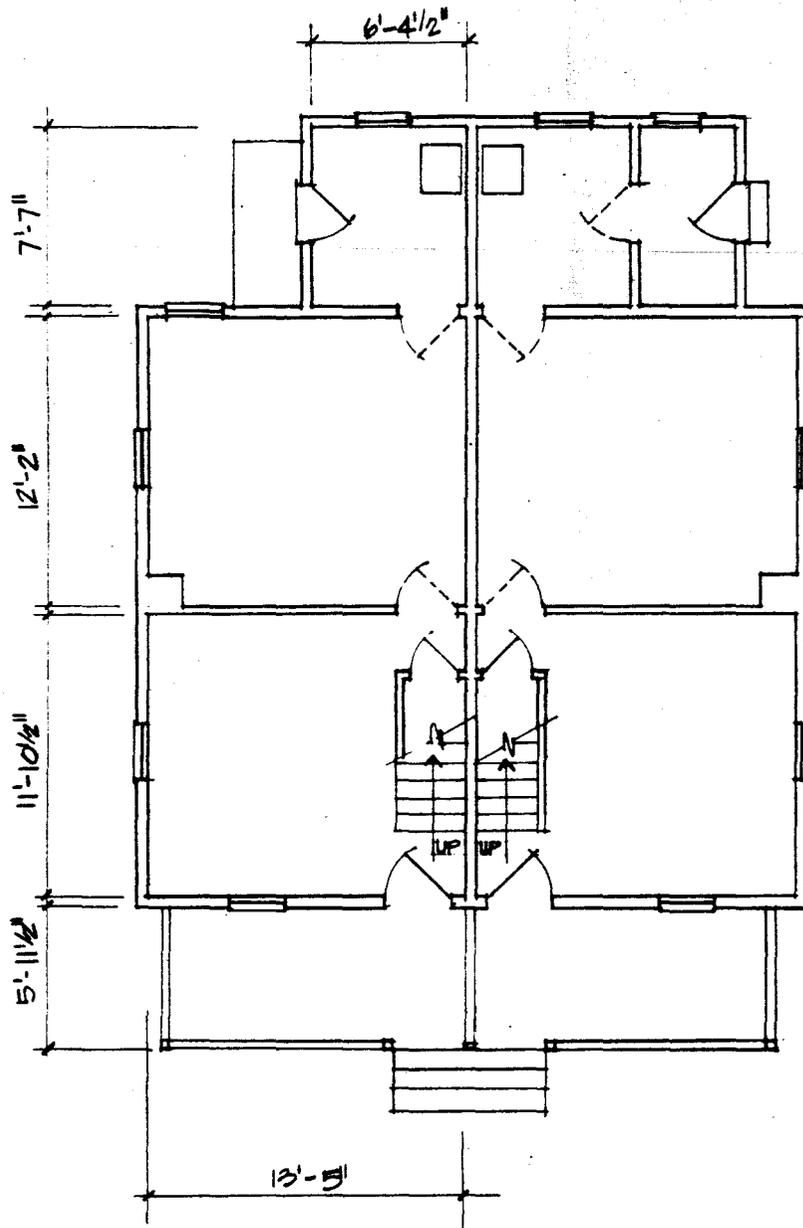
Pennsylvania Ave. and Daniel W. Frazier as the occupant of 433 E. Pennsylvania Ave. Ellen Keating was the widow of Marsh Keating and worked as a maid. Daniel W. Frazier was married to Elizabeth and worked as a driver for Parker and Company. The Directories indicate that Frazier owned the house. (Polk's Baltimore Suburban Directories, 1955, 1957, and 1959).

**SOURCES:** National Register Nomination for the East Towson Historic District (Maryland Historical Trust)  
Polk's Baltimore Suburban Directories, 1955, 1956, and 1957 (Library of Congress)  
Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1922, 1929, and 1955 (Library of Congress)

**HISTORIAN:** Betty Bird  
Washington, D.C.  
Consultant to Struever Bros., Echols and Rouse, Inc.  
September 21, 1993

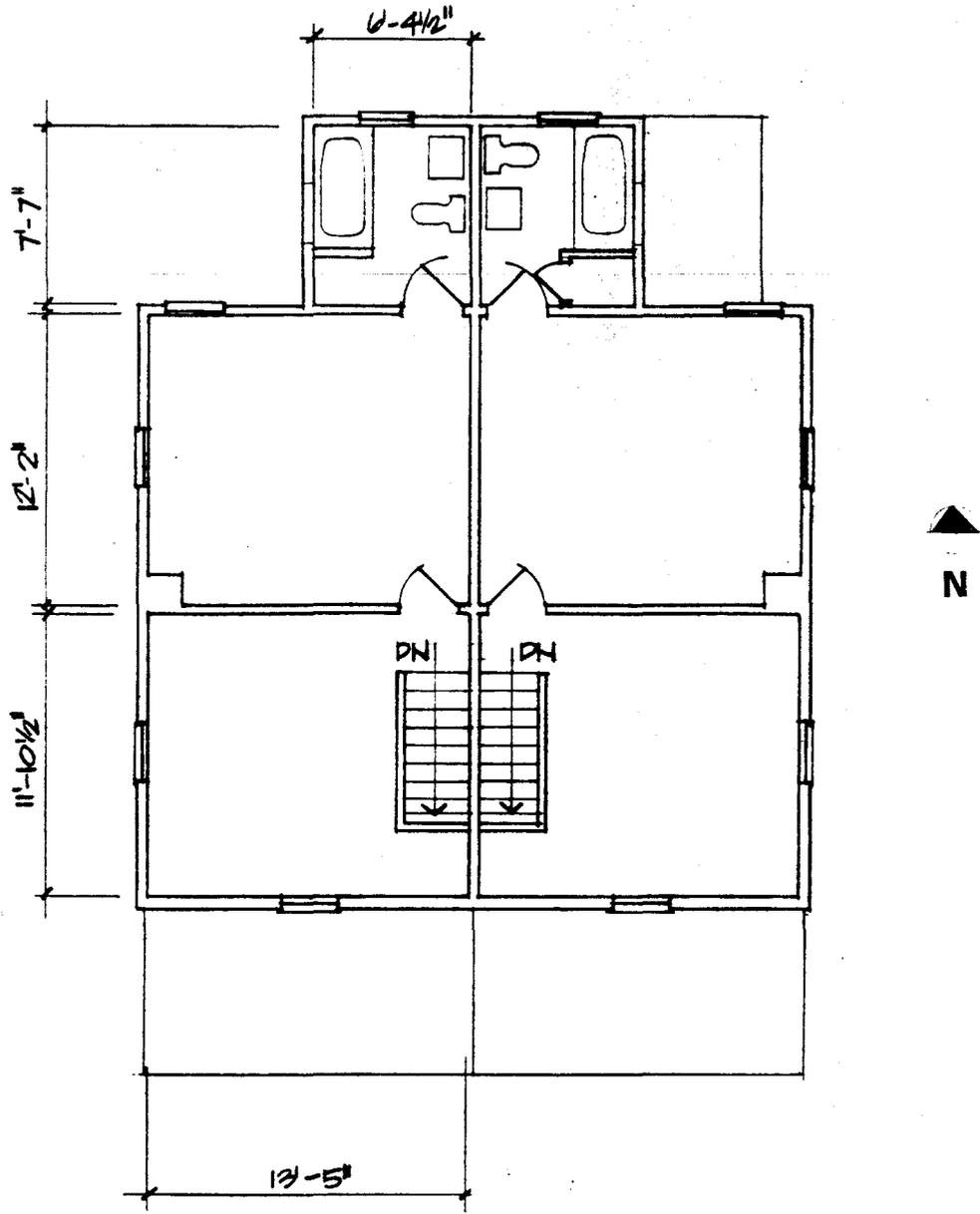


SOURCE: Adapted from USGS Towson Quadrangle



FIRST FLOOR

Drawn by Ellen Pratt Harris  
June 1993  
All dimensions are to interior wall surface



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Drawn by Ellen Pratt Harris  
June 1993  
All dimensions are to interior wall surface