

Isabel A. Davis House  
704-706 Lexington Avenue  
First Ward Neighborhood  
Altoona  
Blair County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5798

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### ISABEL A. DAVIS HOUSE I

HABS No. PA-5798

Location: 704-06 Lexington Ave.

Date of Erection: ca. 1873

Description: This two-story brick building is a five-bay double house; one unit is three bays wide (18'-6" front), the other two (14'-5" front). The main block is square, measuring 32'-11" x 32'-10", with a 15'-10" deep addition in the rear that accommodates an additional room on each floor for each unit. There is a side-gable roof and different one-story porches across the front. The windows at the second story have segmentally arched sash and molded lintels, while the square windows of the first floor appear to be an alteration.

On the interior, the primary difference in the two units is that the three-bay unit has a hallway, whereas in the two-bay unit the front door opens directly into the living room. The three-bay unit had two stairways along the party wall; one of these has been removed. The two units have comparable room sizes and numbers of rooms.

History: This double house was probably built for Isabel A. Davis, the widow of Philip, about 1873. Although Davis did not officially acquire the property until 1879, she was assessed for a double house here in 1874. Davis raised seven children in the three-bay side of the house. Her sons Frank, William, and Emmitt became a carpenter, machinist, and tinsmith, respectively. The other half of the house was rented by carpenter Thomas F. Donnelly, his wife Mary, and their three children in 1880.

In 1888, Davis moved to a new house next door at 700 Lexington Ave. She returned to the two-bay side of the house by 1900; Emmitt, who was widowed, and her unmarried daughter Mary, and a niece lived with her. In 1900, Scottish-born Thomas Weir, his three children, and a servant lived in the other half. After Isabel Davis's death in 1903, her youngest son, Henry J. Davis, the secretary for the select council at city hall, lived here. In 1912, Mary Holmes, Isabel Davis's daughter, sold the house to Ira S. Wolcott, a teacher at the Wright School who lived here until his death in 1934.

Sources: Maps: 1859, 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 45/503, 213/184, 547/453. U.S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of the first ward neighborhood (HABS No. PA-5788) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by HABS Senior Historian Alison K. Hoagland, project leader and editor, in the summer of 1989. Hoagland's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

ISABEL A. DAVIS HOUSE I  
HABS No. PA-5798 (Page 2)

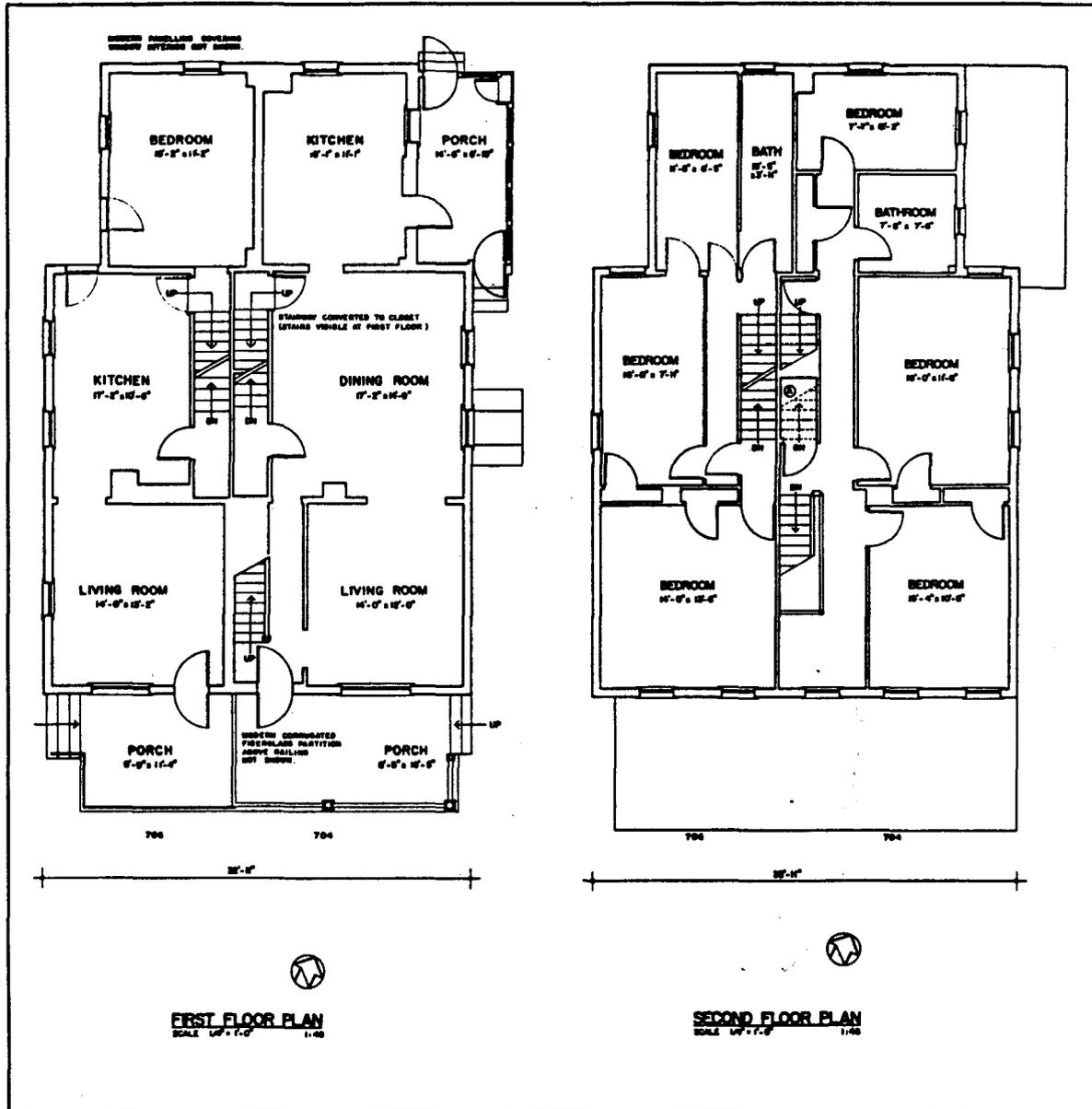


Fig. 1.1 First-floor plan, drawn by Pat Reese and second-floor plan, drawn by Paul J. Skeet, June 1989.