

## **CAPSULE SUMMARY**

**BA-3056**

**Turner's Station African American Survey District**

**Dundalk, Baltimore County**

**1900-1950**

Originally known as Steelton, Turner's Station was developed during the early 20th century as a concentric African-American neighborhood. This enclave developed in the area due to its proximity to several industrial plants along the coves and rivers of the Chesapeake Bay. The steel industry in particular, represented primarily by Bethlehem Steel, provided thousands of jobs to African American workers. Bethlehem Steel began in 1931 and provided a total of 11,286 jobs. The large influx of black workers to the area during the war era made Turner's Station the largest African American enclave within Baltimore County. A sampling from the 1920 and 1930 U.S. Census shows that the majority of the residents were African American originating from Maryland. The 1920 census lists a handful of white residents most of which emigrated from European countries such as Germany, Poland, Russia, and Hungary. The 1930 sampling lists very few immigrants, however, Italy, England, Poland, Scotland, Belgium, and Germany are noted. The most notable occupations listed in both the 1920 and 1930 census include steel plant and shipyard laborer. The few women that worked kept to the servant positions with several occupied as teachers.

This large African American enclave is centered on Sollers Point Road and includes roads such as Chestnut Avenue, East Avenue, Main Street, Avondale Avenue, Walnut Avenue, Balnew Avenue, Ash Avenue, Center Street, Pine Street, Avon Beach Road, Cedar Avenue, and Oak Street. A sizeable rowhouse community called Day Village stands to the southeast of the community. Largely a residential area, Turner's Station is a self-sufficing community supported with several commercial businesses and three religious organizations. Neither single-family nor multiple-family dwellings dominate the built fabric in the survey district. Single-family dwellings range in date from the early 20th century to the mid-20th-century. Multiple-family dwellings date to the 1940s and are situated north of Sollers Point Road primarily along Chestnut Street.



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## 7. Description

Inventory No. BA-3056

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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

Turner's Station is located on the Patapsco Neck on Bear Creek as a suburban addition to Dundalk. This large African American enclave is centered on Sollers Point Road and includes roads such as Chestnut Avenue, East Avenue, Main Street, Avondale Avenue, Walnut Avenue, Balnew Avenue, Ash Avenue, Center Street, Pine Street, Avon Beach Road, Cedar Avenue, and Oak Street. A sizeable rowhouse community called Day Village stands to the southeast of the community. Bordering Turner's Station to the west is the Penn Central Railroad and Main Street, Dundalk Avenue to the north, Peachorchard and Clement Coves to the east and northeast, and the Baltimore Beltway to the south.

Largely a residential area, Turner's Station is a self-sufficing community supported with several commercial businesses and three religious organizations; Union Baptist Church, New Shiloh Baptist Church, and First Apostolic Faith Gospel Tabernacle Church of Turner's Station. Neither single-family nor multiple-family dwellings dominate the built fabric in the survey district. Single-family dwellings range in date from the early 20th century to the mid-20th-century. Multiple-family dwellings date to the 1940s and are situated north of Sollers Point Road primarily along Chestnut Street.

The survey district features paved streets, sidewalks, and small rectangular level lots with trees, shrubs, and foundation plantings. Several of the lots are surrounded by chain link fences and many do not have driveways. Each of the dwellings maintains a similar set back close to the road approximating ten feet and is tightly spaced between each building. Several of the streets are laid in a grid pattern whereas others either run diagonal to these streets or create curvilinear patterns as in the Day Village area.

Twentieth-century styles exhibited throughout the Turner's Station African American survey district include Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Dutch Colonial Revival. Like many of the African American communities throughout Baltimore County the vernacular dwellings of Turner's Station are modest and lack any stylistic treatments typical of these styles. Interpretation of style is primarily through the form of the dwelling such as Four Squares, Cape Cods, ranch dwellings, and bungalows. Construction materials used throughout the area include brick, wood frame, and concrete blocks. Brick construction is used for multiple-dwellings along Chestnut Avenue and in Day Village. Single-family dwellings use both wood frame and concrete blocks. The popular concrete-block construction is either covered with simulated siding materials such as Formstone or with stucco.

One popular building form is a two-story shotgun house most of which date to the 1920s. This house measures two bays wide, three bays deep and is covered with a hipped roof. Examples of the two-story shotgun in Turner's Station stand at the northeast intersection of Main Street and Center Avenue, and at 204 through 208 Center Avenue.

A rock-faced concrete-block Four Square dwelling stands at 101 Walnut Avenue dating from 1923. Typical of Four Square houses this dwelling is two-and-a-half stories high, two bays wide, and is capped with a hipped roof. Features include a one-story, half-hipped roof porch, a hipped dormer on the front and rear elevations, paired windows, and a concrete-block chimney.

A typical Craftsman-style bungalow exhibited throughout the Turner's Station survey district is at 123 Sollers Point Road. Dating from 1921, this house is one-and-a-half-stories high and measures three bays wide. It is constructed of wood frame and rests on a rock-faced concrete-block foundation. It is capped with an asphalt-shingle hipped roof which features gable dormer on the façade and overhanging eaves. Across the full-width of the façade is an inset porch supported with battered wood posts atop rock-faced concrete-block piers.

A Dutch Colonial Revival-style dwelling stands at 208 Walnut Avenue. This dwelling dates to the 1930s. It rises two-and-a-half stories and measures two bays wide. It is constructed of concrete blocks clad with stucco. Features include a full-width shed-roof dormer on the façade, rowlock sills, a center-interior brick chimney, and a full-width shed-roof porch. The porch is supported with stucco clad posts and a solid stucco clad balustrade. The house sits on a raised rock-faced concrete-block foundation and is capped with a gambrel roof.

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St. Mathews United Methodist Church has been located at 32 Avon Beach Road since its establishment. According to the cornerstone the church was built in 1910. The Bromley Atlas of 1915 does not show the St. Mathews United Methodist Church, however, the 1932 Sanborn Map denotes the original section of the church. The addition to the church which faces Main Street was constructed in 1937.

The First Apostolic Faith Gospel Tabernacle Church of Turner's Station at 206 Balnew Avenue was constructed in 1931 according to its cornerstone. This concrete-block building is one-story high and three bays wide with a center gable vestibule on the facade. It is covered with a front-gable roof and has been re-clad Formstone. Features include side buttresses, overhanging eaves, and double-hung stained-glass windows. A non-historic rectangular one-story addition was constructed on the west elevation.

Founded in 1893, the Union Baptist Church relocated on Main Street between Sollers Point Road and Center Avenue in 1974 according to the cornerstone. The 1959 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Turner's Station shows the original building as a movie theatre. Constructed during the 1930s this Art Deco concrete-block building is clad with a brick veneer. It rises two-and-a-half-stories high and measures three bays across (the end two are false bays) on the first story of the Main Street elevation. The center bay contains a double-leaf entry flanked by multi-light glass-block windows. The second story features two 2/2 wood-sash windows.

At 209 Walnut Avenue is the Greater St. John Baptist Church constructed in 1952 according to the cornerstone. This minimalist building is two-stories high and one bay wide with a center entry. It is capped with a front-gable roof and is clad with stucco. The façade contains eight plate-glass fixed windows above the entrance.

Constructed in 1953 the building originally built for the New Life Presbyterian Church is currently owned by the Most Worshipful Hiram. It is two stories high and constructed of wood frame clad with stucco. New Shiloh Baptist Church is located at 105 East Avenue and was constructed between 1932 and 1959. Friendship Baptist Church at 307 N. Avondale was constructed circa 1950.

A handful of 1920s two-story commercial buildings stand throughout the Turner's Station community. One such building stands at 121 Sollers Point Road and was constructed circa 1920. It has a long rectangular plan and is distinctive due to its flat roof with front and side parapets. This building most likely is constructed of concrete blocks and is re-clad with Formstone. It is two bays wide with a plate-glass store window and a single-leaf entry on the first story of the façade. A secondary entry exists on the corner of the building.

A similar building at 204 Balnew Avenue is constructed of concrete blocks, however, according to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1959 this originally served as a dwelling. It is two stories high and measures two bays across featuring a half-hipped roof enclosed porch. It is capped with a flat roof with stepped parapets on the façade and side elevations. The façade is re-clad with Formstone and the side elevations are clad with stucco.

Another commercial building at 107 Main Street is typical of an urban form dating from the 1930s. It is two stories high and three bays wide on the first story. It features a long rectangular footprint and is constructed of wood frame with a brick veneer on the façade. The façade features a store window and two single-leaf entries on the first story. The second story store window has been replaced with three double-hung windows. The front-gable roof is hidden behind a stepped parapet.

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## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

<b>Specific dates</b>	1900-1953	<b>Architect/Builder</b>	Unknown
<b>Construction dates</b>	1900-1953		

Evaluation for:

National Register                       Maryland Register                       not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

Turner's Station African American Survey District is located south of Dundalk on the Patapsco Neck in the Twelfth District of Baltimore County. Dundalk initially developed as a station along the Baltimore and Sparrows Point Railroad and was named for the home of Henry McShane, who operated a foundry in the community. The community's early 20th century landscape was traversed by farmland owned by only a few families.(1)

Dundalk's growth occurred over two distinct phases. The purchase by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation in 1916 of 1,000 acres for the construction of worker housing was the initial spark that ignited the community's expansion. The Dundalk Company formed shortly thereafter in an effort to manage the community's growth and establish a model suburb on the east side of Baltimore City. Within one year, the town featured sixty-two dwellings, two stores, and one post office. Dundalk's population and building stock grew considerably after the creation of industrial jobs brought on by United States involvement in World War I. This expansion had a negative effect on prior efforts at managed growth in the community.(2)

At the end of the war, the temporary housing quickly constructed for the war industry often remained empty. A short period of stagnation between 1920 and 1924 ended with the re-involvement of the Dundalk Company in the community. Whereas Dundalk's population in 1920 was only 2,000 inhabitants, this number had climbed to 8,000 only ten years later.(3)

Originally known as Steelton, Turner's Station was developed during the early 20th century as a concentric African-American neighborhood. This enclave developed in the area due to its proximity to several industrial plants along the coves and rivers of the Chesapeake Bay. The steel industry in particular, represented primarily by Bethlehem Steel, provided thousands of jobs to African American workers. Bethlehem Steel began in 1931 and provided a total of 11,286 jobs.(4)

A sampling from the 1920 and 1930 U.S. Census shows that the majority of the residents were African American originating from Maryland. Other than Maryland, the African American residents came from the District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. In 1930, a large portion of the population came from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The 1920 census lists a handful of white residents most of which emigrated from European countries such as Germany, Poland, Russia, and Hungary. The 1930 sampling lists very few immigrants, however, Italy, England, Poland, Scotland, Belgium, and Germany are noted. The most notable occupations listed in both the 1920 and 1930 census include steel plant and shipyard laborer. The few women that worked kept to the servant positions with several occupied as teachers.(5)

The narrow streets and dwellings of Turner's Station did not equally compare to the rest of Dundalk. The community remained small and isolated until the Second World War. With the onset of World War II (1940-1945) the Federal Government contracted Bethlehem Steel to produce only defense products. Due to the high production requirements many more workers were needed at the steel plants. In order to ease the housing strain on the area with the influx of workers the government added approximately

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1,400 housing units in the area. The area grew to over 9,000 people with this large construction phase along Chestnut Avenue.(6)

By the 1940s the area changed its name from Steelton to Turner's Station. Turner's Station was a stop established in 1888 on the old Baltimore and Sparrows Point Railroad. Joshua Turner sold a portion of his land to the Railroad for the purposes of having the train stop established. Hence, the name Turner's Station derives from his land ownership.

The large influx of black workers to the area during the war era made Turner's Station the largest African American enclave within Baltimore County. Catonsville and East Towson were second and third in population counts after Turner's Station. Day Village, sited to the southeast of the original Turner's Station area, consisted of 500 two-bedroom, two-story rental units. Ernest Lyons Homes consisted of 300 one and two-story units. In 1977 the units rented for approximately 93 dollars a month.) The County's population jumped sixty-two percent from 155,825 in 1940 to 250,000 by 1946.(7)

The County recognized the need for the area to provide a public school for the African American residents. Turner Public School, built in 1928 was located on Pine Street between Chestnut Avenue and Oak Street. The school had eight classrooms and covered grades first through fifth. The school was closed in 1967 and the African-American children were admitted to Dundalk schools.

The large influx of African Americans in the Turner's Station community during the 1940s created a need for more community based services. After 1932 according to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps the number of churches increased from two to six. The original two churches for the area are First Baptist Church on Sollers Point Road and St. Mathews Methodist Episcopal Church on Avon Beach Road.(8)

This large community recognized the need for a self supporting commercial base. In 1932, there were a total of fourteen commercial buildings in Turner's Station. Seven commercial buildings were located on Main Street and seven were standing on Sollers Point Road. The number of commercial buildings increased only slightly by 1959 with a total of eighteen. Eleven businesses were located on Sollers Point Road, five on Main/Balnew Street, and two on Avon Beach Road. Businesses located in Turner's Station include Balnew Cab Company, Adam's Cocktail Lounge, Fanny Major's Community Laundry, Anthony Theatre, Wyatt Grocery Store, and Allmond's Confectionary to name a few.(9)

The first major developers for Turner's Station were Dr. Anthony Thomas and his son Dr. Joseph Thomas, both of whom were African American. Anthony Thomas developed Edgewater Beach, which is now in the neighboring community of Watersedge. This commercial and recreational area had three restaurants and a 1,000-seat pavilion. Joseph Thomas also owned The Grays, an African-American baseball team. Joseph Thomas built the movie theatre on Main Street and named it after his father. The Union Baptist Church now uses the theatre. According to several accounts, the Anthony Theatre is considered to be one of the first air-conditioned theatres for African Americans in the country.(10) The Union Baptist Church acquired the church after their displacement from Sparrows Point. In the 1970s, the Sparrows Point community, an African-American neighborhood, was razed and used for the Sparrows Point Industrial Complex.

Turner's Station population steadily decreased between 1960 and 2001, whereas the overall Baltimore County population increased during this time. The population count was 5,200 people in Turner's Station in 1970. The census also indicated that one quarter of the households in the community were overcrowded.(11) This number decreased thirty-two percent in 1980 leaving a total of 3,557 people. The population in 1990 for Turner's Station was a total of 2,819 African Americans, another decrease of twenty-one percent. In 1990, Turner's Station was sixty percent larger than Catonsville. According to the Turner Station Community Conservation Plan Report the 2001 population count for the area was approximately 1,000 people. Turner's Station still remains an entirely African-American community, however, to some it lacks a sense of cohesiveness.(12) This is due to the fact that many of the residences are rentals and the people do not attain a sense of place in Turner's Station. Many consider the area as a temporary residence. Only about a 1/3 of the people own their own homes.(13) A few of the significant figures that lived in Turner's Station

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include: (14)

1. Kwiesi Mfume, a congressman and President of NAACP
2. Calvin Hill, ex pro-football player and father of Grant Hill current NBA player
3. Larry Middleton, heavyweight boxer
4. Kevin Clash, puppeteer for Sesame Street and co-creator of the Elmo character
5. Robert Curbeam, an astronaut.

The peak in population counts for Turner's Station occurred during the early 1950s. In 1954, approximately 200 townhouse units were demolished with no relocation assistance provided. In 1966, in an effort to develop more industry in the area approximately 1,300 people were forced to relocate due to the demolition of rental townhouses.(15)

### ENDNOTES

1. Neal A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, A History of Baltimore County (Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979), p. 327.
2. Brooks, 327
3. Brooks, 327-330.
4. Brooks, p. 499, note 86.
5. U.S. Census Bureau, 1920 and 1930 U.S. Census, (National Archives).
6. Brooks, p. 377.
7. Brooks, p. 377.
8. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Dundalk, Maryland (New York: Sanborn Map Co., February 1932), sheet 6.
9. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Dundalk, Maryland (New York: Sanborn Map Co., February 1932-1959), sheet 6.
10. Draft Report of Turner Station Community Conservation Plan, Heritage Preservation and Revitalization Sub-Committee (2002), p. 8.
11. Paul Jablow, Future of Turner Station Is Worry For Its Residents. The Sun, (4 July 1971).
12. Brooks, p. 330.
13. Ellen L. James, Turner's: Death By Suffocation Feared; Housing Shortage Acute. The Evening Sun, (28 October 1977).
14. Draft Report of Turner Station Community Conservation Plan, Heritage Preservation and Revitalization Sub-Committee (2002), p. 6.
15. Paul Jablow, Future of Turner Station Is Worry For Its Residents. The Sun, (4 July 1971).

### LIST OF PROPERTY OWNERS AS OF JANUARY 9, 2003

110 Avondale Road map 110 parcel 31	New Shiloh Baptist Church of Baltimore County, MD, Inc.-- tax id # 1208001850 105 East Avenue Baltimore County Courthouse Liber 11912 Folio 189
307 Half Avondale Road map 110 parcel 45	Friendship Baptist Church-- tax id # 1206057523 Baltimore County Courthouse Liber 2125 Folio 472
121 Oak Street map 110 parcel 51	Most Worshipful Hiram -- tax id # 1213077780 Grand Lodge 1205 Eutaw Place

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Baltimore, MD 21217  
Baltimore County Courthouse  
Liber 3860 Folio 522

105 Sollers Point Road  
map 110 parcel 31  
Union Baptist Church, Inc. -- tax id # 1222035352  
105 Main Street  
Baltimore County Courthouse  
Liber 15920 Folio 43

101 Avon Beach Road  
map 110 parcel 51  
Saint Matthews Methodist Church -- tax id # 1219000882  
Baltimore County Courthouse  
Liber 3274 Folio 57

206 Balnew Street  
map 110 parcel 41  
First Apostolic Faith Gospel Tabernacle Church of Turners Station -- tax id # 1220066140  
Baltimore County Courthouse  
Liber 7166 Folio 57

209 Walnut Avenue  
map 110 parcel 41  
Greater St. John Baptist Church, Inc. -- tax id # 1207059850  
Baltimore County Courthouse  
Liber 2380 Folio 293

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 20 acres  
Acreage of historical setting 20 acres  
Quadrangle name Baltimore East Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Overlea African American Survey District is located in the Fourteenth District of Baltimore County. Approximately 61 properties within the survey district stand along Linden and Beech Avenues. These properties have been historically associated with tax map 81 and parcel 752.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title	Kristie Baynard, Architectural Historian		
organization	E.H.T. Tracerics	dat	11/25/2002
street and number	1121 Fifth Street, NW	telephone	202/393-1199
city or town	Washington	state DC	zip code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

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Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. A History of Baltimore County. Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

McGrain, John. Cherry Heights' Emerging History. Unpublished: Landmarks Preservation Commission, Towson; June 12, 1990.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men. Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys. Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. The Census of 1920, Baltimore County, Maryland. National Archives.









SPEED  
LIMIT  
25





UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

HO WA  
Chinese Food  
Carryout













BA-3056  
TURNER'S STATION AFRICAN  
AMERICAN SURVEY DISTRICT  
DUNDALK  
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD  
CURTIS BAY, MD USGS MAP

CURTIS BAY QUADRANGLE  
MARYLAND  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
NE/4 RELAY 15' QUADRANGLE

5769 IV SW  
(MIDDLE RIVER)



