WI-249 1896-97
William J. Johnson House
Salisbury
Private

The William J. Johnson house is a particularly well detailed example of the large Queen Anne style houses that define the historic district of Newtown. The two-and-a-half story main block is distinguished by a wide variety of original finishes; including a decorated turned post porch, colored glass windows, a steeply pitched jerkinhead roof of patterned slate, and corbeled cap brick chimneys. Gable roof pavilions extend the main house on the south, east, and west sides, and a two-story service wing stretches to the rear.

The exuberant and intricate display of late nineteenth exterior and interior detailing of this house was undoubtedly due to its construction by William J. Johnson, a prominent Salisbury builder active during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. He married Lida H. Pusey on February 5, 1890. A short notice in the *Salisbury Advertiser* of March 21, 1896 stated, "*Mr. William J. Johnson is preparing to erect a residence on his lot on Isabella street adjoining the property of Mr. Thomas H. Mitchell. He will build during the year.*" William J. Johnson had acquired the lot several years earlier, in October 1890, through a purchase from Isabella Humphreys. In January 1897, following the construction of the house, he transferred ownership to his wife Lida for the sum of $3,000. During the first half of the twentieth century, the house and lot were held by Oscar L. Morris, who acquired the property in 1916.

MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: William J. Johnson House

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-249

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture

2. Geographic Orientation: Eastern Shore

3. Chronological/Development Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1830

4. Resource Type(s): Single family dwelling

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WI-249

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic: William J. Johnson House

and/or common: Oscar L. Morris House

2. Location

street & number: 113 East Isabella Street ___ not for publication

city, town: Salisbury ___ vicinity of congressional district: First

state: Maryland county: Wicomico

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	_x_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_x_ building(s)	_x_ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	_x_ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_x_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	_x_ not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

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

name: John and Virginia Cleary

street & number: 113 East Isabella Street telephone no.:

city, town: Salisbury state and zip code MD 21801

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Wicomico County Clerk of Court Map 104, P. 641 liber 945

street & number: Wicomico County Courthouse folio 405

city, town: Salisbury state Md 21801

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. WI-249

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

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

Historically identified as the William J. Johnson house, or more recently the Oscar L. Morris house, the two-and-a-half story irregularly shaped frame house stands at 113 East Isabella Street in the center of the Newtown Historic District in Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland. The asymmetrically planned house faces south with the roof oriented on a north/south axis.

Built in 1896, the Queen Anne style frame dwelling is supported on a raised brick foundation, and the exterior is sheathed with a combination of asbestos shingles, plain weatherboards, and fishscale shingles. The steeply pitched jerkinhead roof is covered with patterned slate, and multiple gable roofs extend from the main slope. Attached to the back of the main block is a two-story service wing.

The south (main) elevation is an asymmetrical facade defined by a projecting gabled pavilion and a shed roof porch that wraps around the west corner of the house. A double door entrance is located in the left (west) bay, which is accentuated by a projecting gable roof in the porch. The paneled double doors are flanked by sidelights. The adjacent projecting bay is pierced by a four-part window of single pane sash windows. The first floor is sheltered by the shed roof porch, which is supported by bold turned posts. The porch features decorated end boards, exposed rafter feet, scroll brackets, and a turned baluster railing. The uneven south wall on the second floor is defined by a variety of window treatments. Located over the entrance bay is a series of colored glass windows, whereas the second floor of the projecting pavilion is pierced by a pair of single pane sash. Fixed above the second floor windows and piercing the gable end are a pair of sixteen-over-one sash windows. The eaves to the gable roof are extended and trimmed with a decorated bargeboard. The eaves to the main roof are open with the rafter ends exposed and decorated. Echoing the gabled pavilion is the small gable form of the jerkinhead roof, which is finished with a decorated bargeboard and pierced by a six-over-one sash window. Corbeled cap brick chimneys pierce the steeply pitched roof, which retains its cover of patterned slate

The east and west sides of the house are defined by projecting pavilions covered with gable roofs. Distinctive to the east side pavilion is a semi-circular curve to the lower portion of the two-story pavilion. The walls are pierced by narrow single-pane sash windows, and the exterior surfaces are sheathed with a combination of asbestos shingles and fishscale shingles. Small decorative brackets are fixed in the lower corners of the roof.

The interior has survived with a large portion of its original late nineteenth century finishes.

8. Significance

Survey No. WI-249

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1896-97 **Builder/Architect** William J. Johnson, builder

check: Applicable Criteria: ___A ___B X C ___D
and/or
Applicable Exception: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G

Level of Significance: ___national ___state X local

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

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On account of its intricate exterior detailing and well preserved architectural character, this property should be listed in *Category A*, which designates structures that must be retained.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. WI-249

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____ Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
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
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Private Consultant	date	6/26/97
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

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

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

PS-2746

WI-249
William J. Johnson House
113 East Isabella Street
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland
Chain of title

Map 104, Parcel ~~104~~ 641

945/405	Franklyn Parker Coulbourne as attorney for James F. Coulbourne and Jayne T. Coulbourne
	to
7/24/1980	John R. Cleary Virginia P. Cleary
AS 907/719	Edward M. Toadvine Diane H. Toadvine
	to
10/19/1978	James F. Coulbourne Jayne T. Coulbourne
AS 880/649	Samuel L. Sherwell, et al., Jon P. Sherwell, Co-personal representatives of Vera Y. Sherwell
	to
7/29/1977	Edward M. Toadvine Diane H. Toadvine
JWTS 292/586	Ernest C. Clark Charles E. Hearne, Jr. Trustees
	to
11/12/1947	Samuel L. Sherwell Vera Y. Sherwell Decree of Circuit Court

WI-249
William J. Johnson House
113 East Isabella Street
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland
Chain of title continued

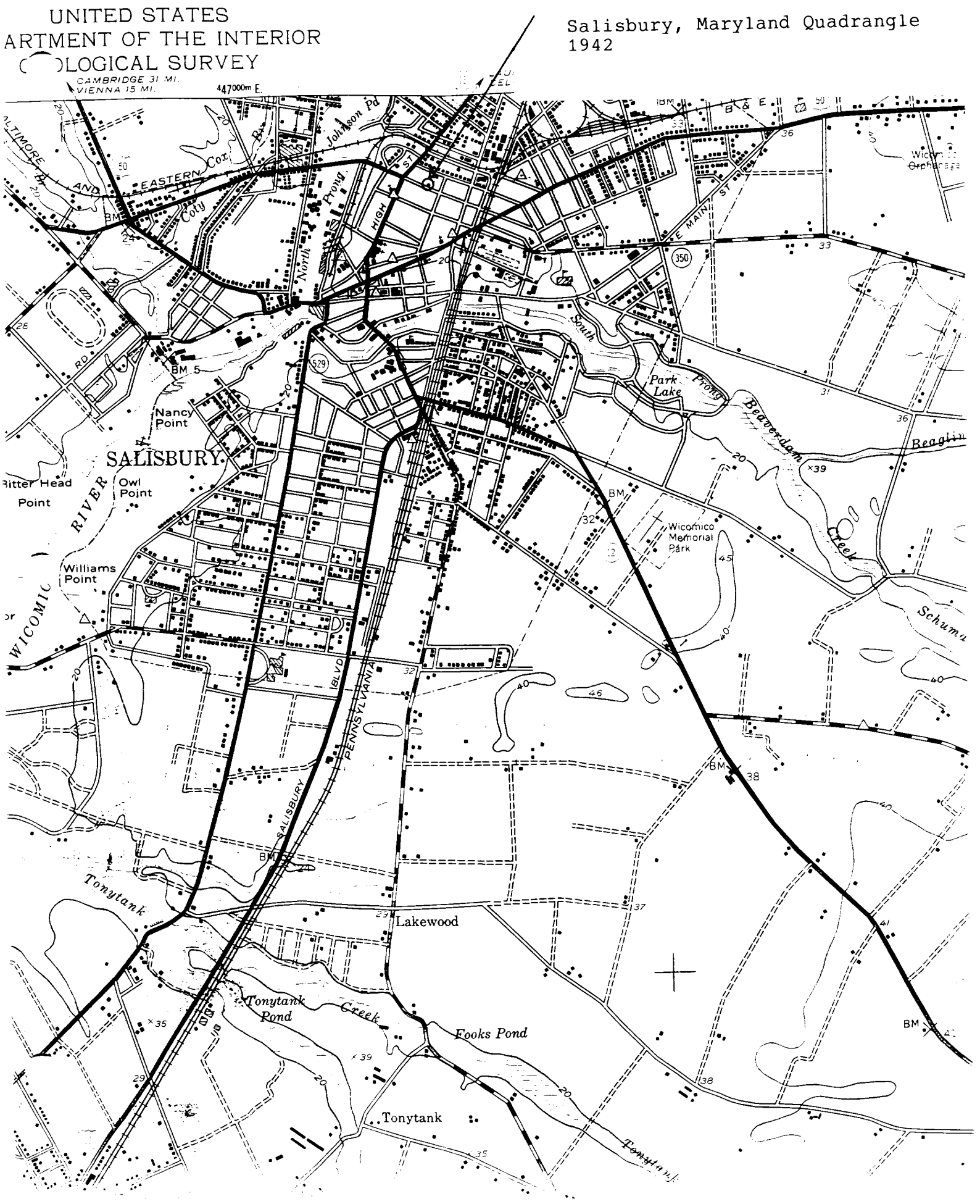
JWS 265/383	Ida Morris and Salisbury National Bank under the Last will and testament of Oscar L. Morris, deceased
	to
12/16/1944	Samuel T. Morris, Baltimore
	Will of Oscar L. Morris
	Item 1: I will and direct that my executrix, herein after named, shall offer to sell to my brother John L. Morris, should be then be living; one hundred (100) shares of any common capital stock of the W. B. Tilghman Company of Salisbury
	Item 3: All that rest and residue and remainder of estate, real and personal and mixed, I give unto my sister Ida Morris
JCK 101/74	L. Atwood Bennett, Attorney
	to
2/11/1916	Oscar L. Morris
	$6750.00
	Lida H. Johnson
	to
	L. Atwood Bennett

WI-249
William J. Johnson House
113 East Isabella Street
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland
Chain of title continued

JTT 19/434	William J. Johnson
	to
1/21/1897	Lida H. Johnson
	$3,000 Lot 128' x 292', width at rear being 115'4"
Mortgage FMS 6/429	Isabella Humphreys
	to
10/31/1890	William J. Johnson
	$550 indebtedness
Deed JTT 19/434	Isabella Humphreys
	to
10/31/1890	William J. Johnson
	$600

WI-249
William J. Johnson House

Salisbury, Maryland Quadrangle
1942



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1 of 2