

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

*Excerpt*  
**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Survey No. WI-13  
Magi No.  
DOE  yes  no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic James Cannon House Gillis-Grier House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 401 North Division Street  not for publication

city, town Salisbury  vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Wicomico

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Mr. and Mrs. Harry Levantahl

street & number 401 North Division 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 107, P. 678  
liber 838

street & number Wicomico County Courthouse folio 891

city, town Salisbury state MD 21801

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

date 1970  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville state MD 21032

# 7. Description

Survey No. WI-13

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<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 Gillis-Grier house is located at 401 North Division Street in the center of the Newtown Historic District in Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland. The two-and-a-half story Queen Anne style frame dwelling faces west with the steeply pitched hip roof oriented on an east/west axis.

Built in 1887, the two-and-a-half story Queen Anne frame house follows an asymmetrical plan with gable-front elevations on three sides and a three-story octagonal tower on the southwest corner. Attached to the back of the main block is a shorter two-and-a-half story service wing. The house is clad with a combination of German siding and patterned fishscale shingles and decorative woodwork. The steeply pitched hip and gable roofs are covered with patterned slate.

The west (main) elevation is a complex facade of asymmetrical design. A two-and-a-half story gable-front wall is juxtaposed against the three-story tower that is capped by a concave curved conical roof also sheathed in slate. The first floor is sheltered by a turned post porch that wraps around the north, west and south sides. Fixed between the posts is turned baluster railing. The turned post porch shelters a double door entrance and flanking single-pane sash windows. Marking the entrance bay on the porch is a cross gable distinguished by a variety of applied decoration and a peak finial. The window to the north is part of a three-sided bay window. On the south side the porch roof extends to the edge of the three-story tower, which has a square sided first story filled with colored glass upper sash windows. The porch floor and turned baluster railing continue on a circular curve to a cross-gabled side porch. The second and third floors of the tower have an octagonal shape. On the second floor each side is pierced by a single-pane sash window, while the third floor has sash windows alternating with decorative panels.

The second floor of the main house is defined on its west side by a variety of window openings. The northwest corner is defined by a turned post and short section of turned baluster railing and a window piercing a cut or chamfered corner of the house. Centered under the gable-front is a tripartite composition of eighteen-over-one sash windows. Piercing the wall between the tripartite window group and the southwest tower is a single one-over-one sash window. The gable end is covered with a layer of fishscale shingles and it is pierced by a tripartite series of nine-pane attic windows. The edge of the roof has an extended eave, open soffits, and a decorative bargeboard. Fixed atop the peak of the gable is a turned wooden finial. The west slope of the roof, covered with pattern slate, is marked by an off-center gabled dormer that lights the main attic, while a small triangular shaped dormer illuminates the upper attic. Rising through the roof in three locations are tall brick chimney stacks featuring inset paneled sides and corbeled caps. The north chimney incorporates the sculpture of a woman's head.

(Continued)

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates**                    1887                    **Builder/Architect**

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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.

Singularly outstanding among the Queen Anne dwellings that define Salisbury’s Newtown neighborhood is the elaborately detailed Gillis-Grier house, named after the two inter-related families that held title to the property between 1896 and 1975. While this hyphenated name recognizes the property’s long-term owners, the impressively designed and crafted house was assembled for Salisbury merchant James Cannon in 1887. A short item in the July 23, 1887 issue of the *Salisbury Advertiser* announced:

*James Cannon, Esq. has begun the erection of his residence on the corner of Division and William streets. Judging from the drawings it will be of the cottage style, main entrance on Division street and side entrance on William street. At the southwest corner will be a tower.<sup>1</sup>*

It is evident from this brief notice that little of the exterior had been completed by the summer of 1887 since James Cannon financed one of the most elaborate Victorian dwellings for its day in Salisbury. Dominated by a three-story tower with a conical roof of pattern slate, the sprawling hip roofed dwelling includes multiple pavilions, bay windows, and a variety of gabled dormers that provide a variety of form that is enriched with varying styles of exterior siding and applied decorations. The lively exterior is matched by equally rich interiors of late nineteenth-century design. Parquet floors on the first floor are combined with cabinet style mantels with tiled fireboxes. Spotted throughout the house are colored glass windows that provide another rich source of interior decoration to the many room interior.

James Cannon figured prominently in history and development of Salisbury following the Civil War. The first attempt to introduce a source for gas to the city involved Cannon, who, with several other businessmen, incorporated the Salisbury City Gas Company.<sup>2</sup> He was also a member of the board of trustees for the Salisbury

<sup>1</sup> Salisbury Advertiser, July 23, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> Charles J. Truitt, *Historic Salisbury Updated 1662-1982*, Historical Books, Inc. Salisbury, Maryland, 1982, p. 217.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A [ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]
Zone Easting Northing

B [ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]
Zone Easting Northing

C [ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

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E [ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

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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 3/19/98

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.

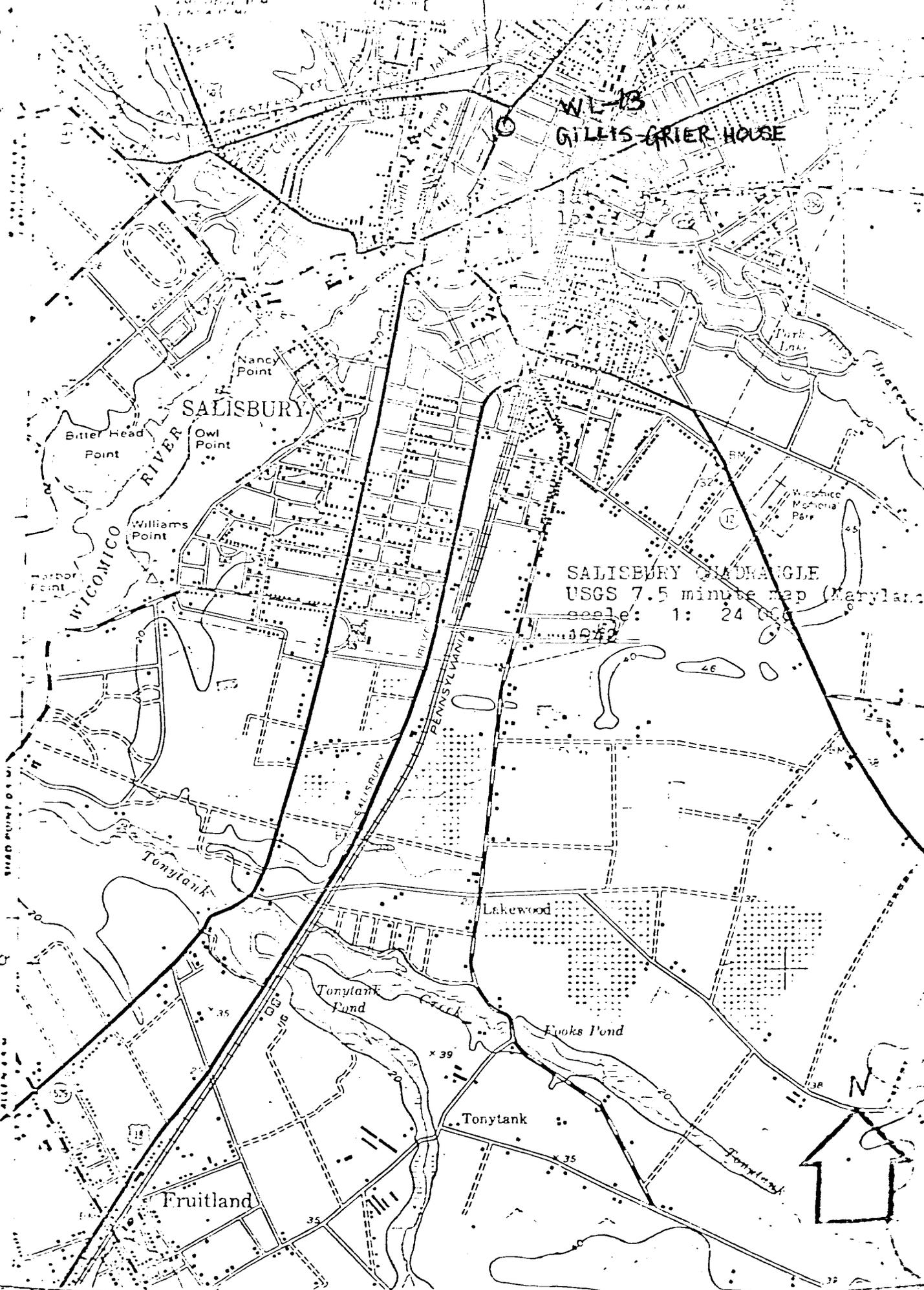
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

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

WL-13  
GILLIS-GRIER HOUSE

SALISBURY

SALISBURY CHADRANGLE  
USGS 7.5 minute map (Maryland)  
scale: 1: 24 000



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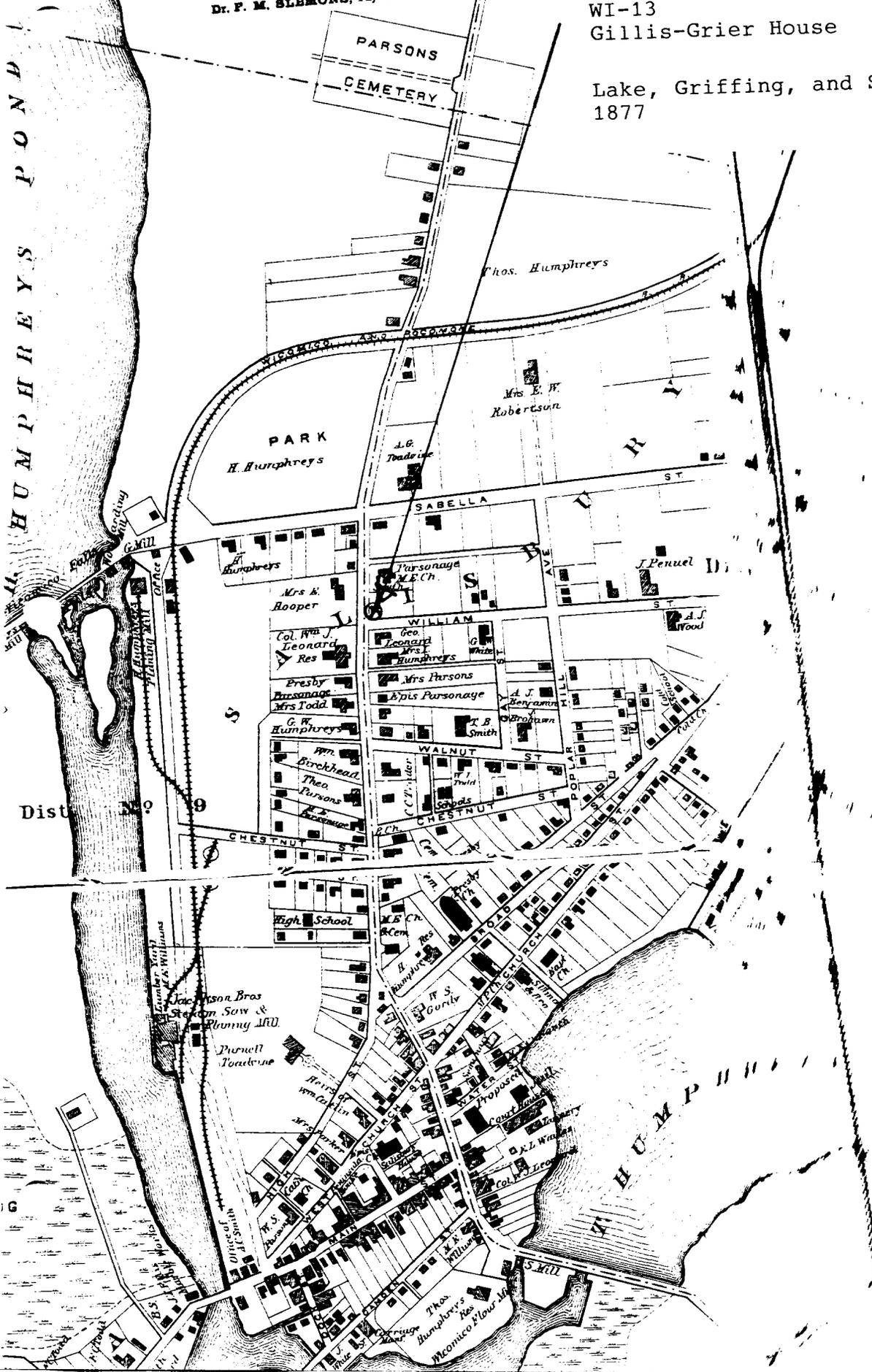
otel.  
ictor of the "Peninsula Ho-  
ntic Hotel," "Ocean City."

JOHN W. ...  
Saw and Grist Mill 5 miles north of ...  
GEO. H. W. RUARK, Farmer and Proprietor of  
"Ruark Mills" 3 miles north of Salisbury. Res.  
Salisbury.  
M. A. PARSONS, Proprietor of S. S. Mill, 2  
miles west of Salisbury on Wicomico River. Also  
Proprietor of Marine Railway.

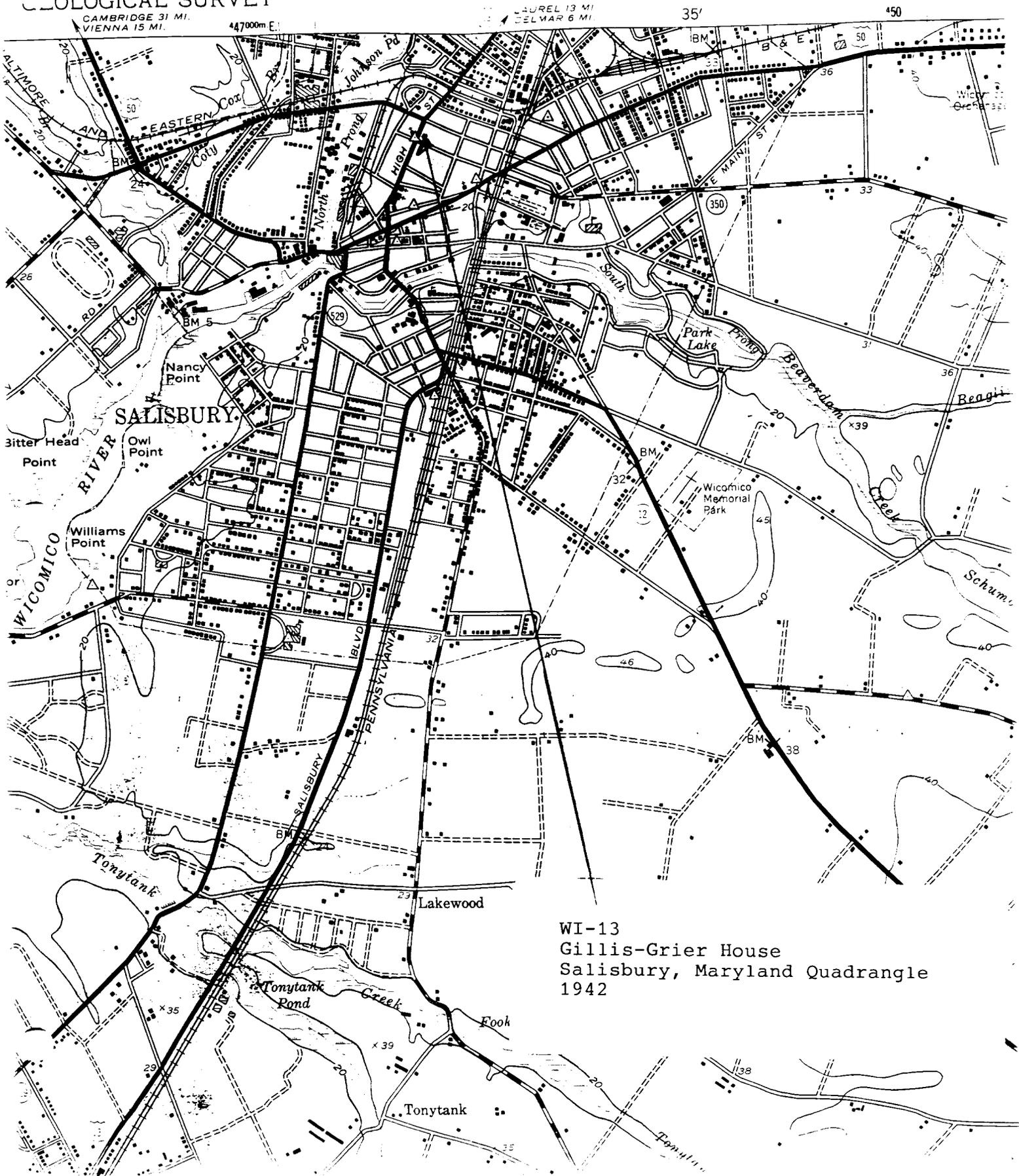
Physician.  
Dr. F. M. SLEMONS, Physician and Surgeon.

WI-13  
Gillis-Grier House

Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas  
1877



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



WI-13  
Gillis-Grier House  
Salisbury, Maryland Quadrangle  
1942



WI-13)

GILLIS-GRIER HOUSE

SWISSBURG, WICOMICO CO., MD.

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

1/97, PAUL TONKAT, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEG. / M.D. HISTORICAL TRUST



Agillis Guer House

W1 13

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
2525 RIVA ROAD  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

South and West elevations

Michael Bourse  
1969