

Easement

WC-125

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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NR

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

The Costen House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

206 Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Pocomoke

___ VICINITY OF

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Worcester

CODE

047

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- ___ DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- ___ STRUCTURE
- ___ SITE
- ___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- ___ PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- ___ BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- ___ IN PROCESS
- ___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- ___ OCCUPIED
- ___ UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- ___ YES: UNRESTRICTED
- ___ NO

PRESENT USE

- ___ AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- ___ COMMERCIAL
- ___ PARK
- ___ EDUCATIONAL
- ___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ___ ENTERTAINMENT
- ___ RELIGIOUS
- ___ GOVERNMENT
- ___ SCIENTIFIC
- ___ INDUSTRIAL
- ___ TRANSPORTATION
- ___ MILITARY
- ___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The Spirit of Newtown Committee, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

217 Walnut Street

CITY, TOWN

Pocomoke

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Worcester County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Snow Hill

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

W0-132

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Costen House located at 206 Market Street, Pocomoke City, is a two story, hipped roof, frame dwelling in the Victorian Italianate style. The street facade is five bays in width at both floor levels. The center three bays of the first floor are sheltered beneath a flat roofed porch decorated with elaborately carved cornice brackets and arched lacework between the porch posts.

The main entrance occupies the center first floor bay and consists of a door of four octagonal panels framed by over and side lights. The four windows flanking the door and the five windows of the second floor frame sash of four over four panes and have louvered exterior blends. Unlike many houses of this type, the windows of the Costen House lack ornamental hoods or sills.

Centered on the front slope of the roof is a iron gable with a small arched sash window near the gable peak. Similar iron gables are on the ends of the house. The bracketed roof cornice is continued around the inside of the gables.

On the north end of the house, there is a three sided bay window set forward of the center line. It has narrow sash windows divided by plain wood pilasters over a simple paneled base. The treatment of the roof cornice repeats that of the main roof. The whole of the exterior of the house retains its original clapboard sheathing.

Centered on the rear elevation is a three bay, two story service wing with a flush gable chimney at the west end. This chimney has an ornamental corbelled cap which matches the two centered chimneys of the main block in design. On the west end of the wing is a later second floor sun porch supported by three posts.

The first floor room configuration of the main block consists of a centered stair hall with four flanking rooms, the two forward rooms being the larger. Most of the woodwork throughout the house is original and in good repair. Later changes would include the glazed tile facing around two front fireplaces, built in coal grates, a circa 1900 Adamesque mantel in the northwest parlor, and chair rails and, possibly, wood ceiling cornices in the principal ground floor rooms.

The main stair, which rises along the south wall of the hall, has turned newels and balusters and a walnut rail. Evidences of alterations to the stair suggest that the balustrade might not be original to the house, even though it is stylistically appropriate.

As the house has been occupied by one family since its construction, significance can be attributed to virtually all alterations. The house is perhaps as important as the Costen family's home, reflecting their changing tastes and living habits, as it is as a good local example of nineteenth century Italianate architecture.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

local history

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A capsulized history of Pocomoke City published in 1940 explains that it is "the largest town in Worcester County. It was established as Meeting House Landing about 1700. Later called Warehouse Landing, and still later (1780-1878), the place has steadily developed as an agricultural shipping center."¹ In spite of its long history, Pocomoke has few older buildings left due to a series of fires in 1888, 1892, and 1922.

The building standing at 206 Market Street, known as the Dr. Isaac T. Costen House, is one of the few survivors. It is a good example of the Victorian Italianate style and has remained basically unaltered since its construction. It is Pocomoke City's finest remaining nineteenth century structure.

Dr. Costen (usually spelled Coston until the twentieth century) was a well-known citizen of Pocomoke even before he became the city's first mayor in 1888. Born in Somerset County several miles from Pocomoke in 1832, he attended a local school and then Washington Academy in Princess Anne. He taught school for two years and then went to the Pennsylvania State University where he studied medicine. He began his medical practice in Somerset County, moving to New Town in July 1865 where he married Olivia Adams the following February.

The Costens purchased a house and lot at 206 Market Street from William Ulysses Schoolfield in 1877 for \$1,000.² Schoolfield had purchased the property almost two years before for \$600 from William S. Dickinson.³ It appears that the present house was built shortly before the period of the Costen's ownership.

Reportedly a compassionate, humanitarian physician, Dr. Costen was also active politically. He ran for the House of Delegates in the

¹Work Projects Administration Writers' Program, Maryland, A Guide to the Old Line State (Reprint of 1940 ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 427.

²Deed ITM 6/59, Worcester County Land Records, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

³Deed ITM 4/430.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

THE COSTEN HOUSE
Worcester County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Maryland Assembly in 1881 and was elected to that position. He was also a member of the Democratic State Central Committee at this time. In 1888 he was elected mayor of Pocomoke, the first to hold this position.

During the Civil War, Dr. Costen was a supporter of the Confederate cause. He supposedly was a blockade runner for the South, having once been caught by Union troops carrying money and supplies to a boat at Cedar Hall Dock.⁴

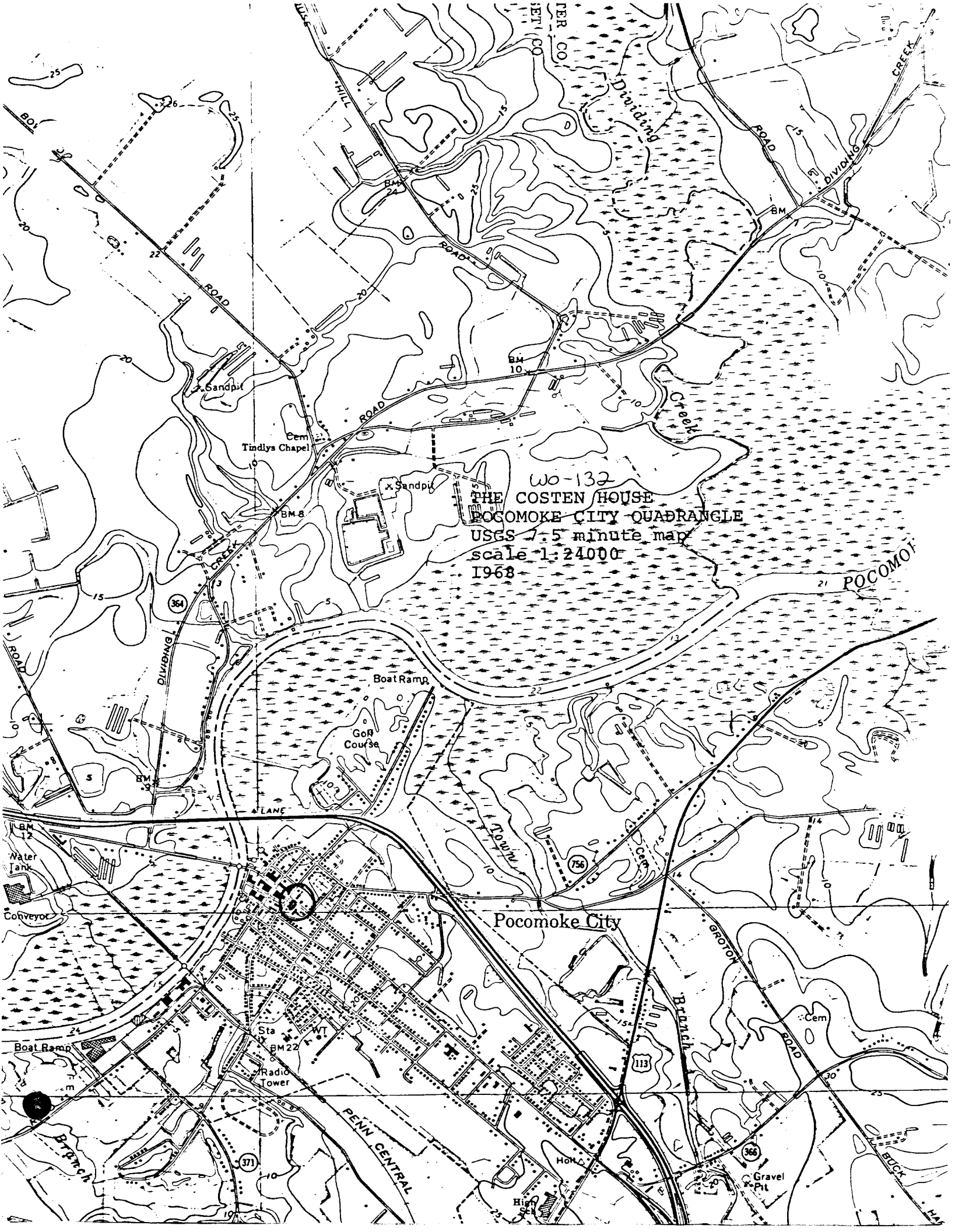
Dr. Costen died in the spring of 1931, leaving his widow and four daughters, Mary H., Addie L., Olivia J., and Elizabeth C. Costen. The house was kept by the family until several years ago when Olivia J. Costen left it to enter a nursing home. At that time it was sold to the Reverend Elmer Bennett who subsequently sold it to the city of Pocomoke. It was decided to demolish the building to make way for a parking lot, but through the efforts of interested residents this plan was averted.

A group of citizens who joined together in order to obtain a court order to stop construction of the parking lot was subsequently organized and incorporated under the leadership of Mrs. Myrtle A. Polk as the Spirit of Newtown Committee, Inc. They offered to buy the house from the city and were eventually successful in this attempt. The voters of the area elected, 413 to 324, to save the house. Some money was raised locally and an interest-free loan was obtained from the Maryland Historical Trust for the purchase of the building.

The Committee's plans for the future of the house were outlined by Mrs. Polk in the September 23, 1973, edition of the Worcester County Messenger:

"The Committee hopes to form a museum where the historic gems of Newtown and Pocomoke may be exhibited--along with a woman's exchange where individuals may bring their handiwork arts, crafts and culinary arts, antiques on consignment to be sold with a percentage from the sale going to the home," Mrs. Pold said. "This will be the means of defraying the cost of maintaining the home. It is our hope that all this will bring more people to our downtown area."

⁴The information about Dr. Costen's life was taken from: Deborah Jean Hall, Salutatorian Address and Old Home Prize Essay, June 1974, copy in the files of the Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland.



WO-132
THE COSTEN HOUSE
POCOMOKE CITY QUADRANGLE
USGS 7.5 minute map
scale 1:24000
1968

Pocomoke City

POCOMOKE

PENN CENTRAL

Branch

GROTON

BUCK

Tindlys Chapel

Boat Ramp

Golf Course

Sta

Radio Tower

High Sch

Hotel

Gravel Pit

Cem

Water Tank

Conveyor

Boat Ramp

WATER

BRANCH

ROAD

Sandpit

ROAD

ROAD

ROAD

ROAD

ROAD

ROAD

LANE

TOWN

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ROAD

ROAD

ROAD

PER CO

DET CO

Dividing

Dividing

CREEK

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W0-132

COSTEN HOUSE

POCONOKE CITY, WORCESTER COUNTY, MD.

SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

10/99

PHOTOGRAPHER, MICHAEL HARRISON DAY

NEG. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST



W0-132

COSTEN HOUSE

POCOMOKE CITY, WORCESTER COUNTY, MD.

EAST ELEVATION

10/7/88

PHOTOGRAPHER, MICHAEL HARRISON DAY

NEG. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST



206

Home of
Dr. Isaac C. Costen
First Mayor of
Pocomoke City
Maryland
circa 1870

Please Credit to: J. m.
Kilvington
Maryland Historical Trust
2525 Riva Road
Annapolis, MD. 21401

WO. - 132 Coston House

10/74

(opening day)

