

WI-249  
William J. Johnson House  
Salisbury  
Private

1896-97

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 Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 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street & number 113 East Isabella Street  not for publication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	
<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 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

pository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. WI-249

<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.

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

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.

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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.

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.



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

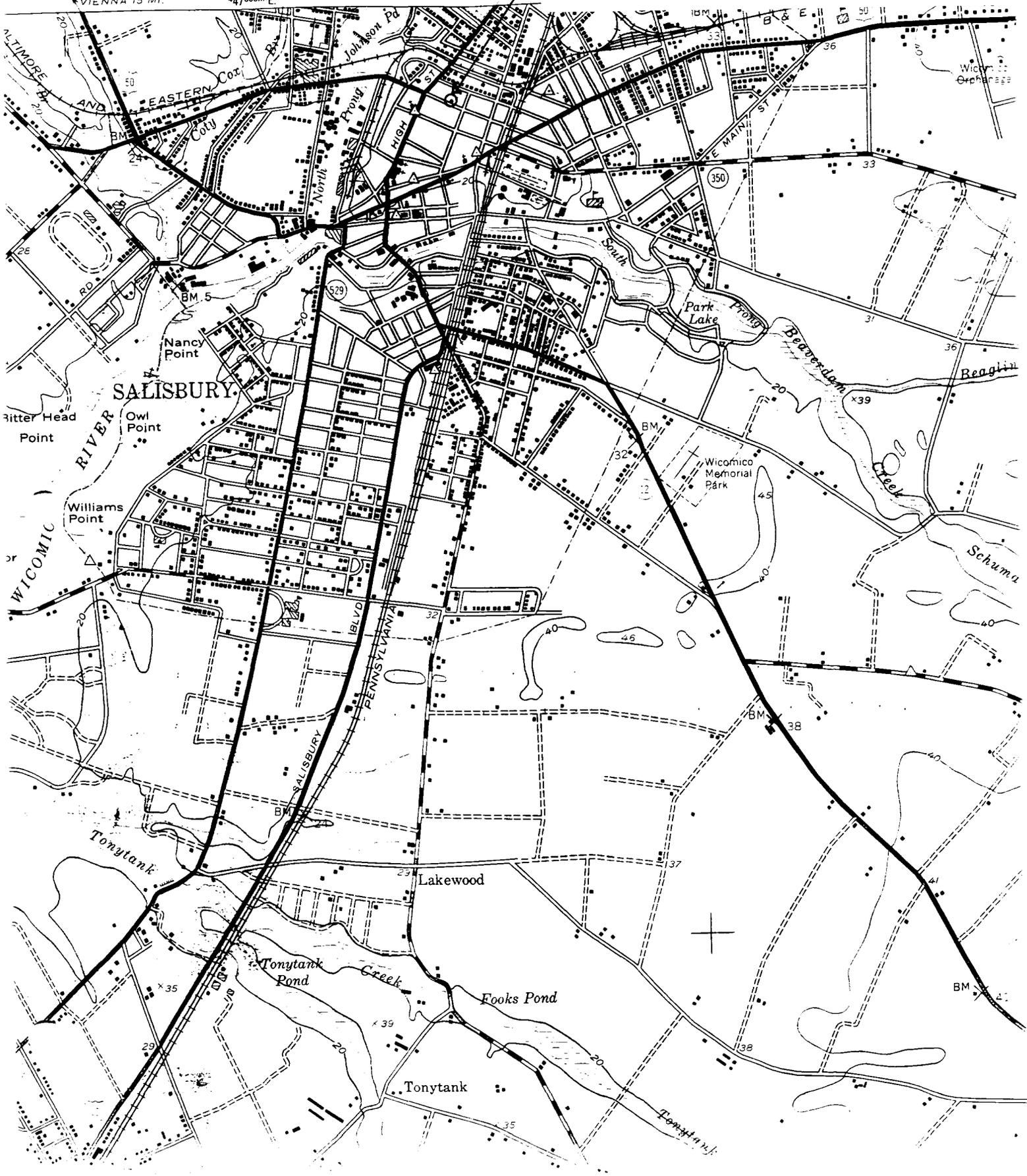
WI-249

William J. Johnson House

Salisbury, Maryland Quadrangle  
1942

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

CAMBRIDGE 31 MI.  
VIENNA 15 MI. 447000m E





10/2/2020

1. *Handwritten text, mostly illegible.*

1 of 2



1-2-67

1-2-67

1-2-67

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11/97

11/97

11/97