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Natchez National Historical Park
Natchez, Mississippi



Natchez National Historical Park

William Johnson House Cultural Landscape Report

January 2022



Cultural Resources
Interior Region 2

Natchez National Historical Park

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National Park Service

Interior Region 2

Cultural Resources, Partnerships & Science



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Natchez National Historical Park

William Johnson House

Cultural Landscape Report

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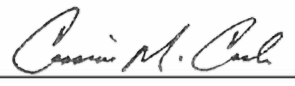
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Foreword

The William Johnson House unit of Natchez National Historical Park provides visitors an insight into a very special segment of the antebellum world: the life of a prosperous family of free people of color. William Johnson, who was born enslaved and manumitted during childhood, was a family man, an entrepreneur, a savvy businessman, a gambler, a farmer, a slaveholder, an author, and an artist. During the last decade of his life, this house was home to Johnson, his mother-in-law, his wife and young children, and several enslaved persons.

After Johnson's 1851 murder, his descendants and their extended family continued to live in this house for another 125 years. During this time his wife shepherded the family through the loss of their father and the loss of their enslaved servants as a result of Civil War. Some of his sons followed his path as a barber while young Clarence chose to become a blacksmith. The women of the family peddled baked goods and worked as seamstresses. Only one of the daughters married, and others became teachers during Reconstruction. His eldest son, William, was confined to an insane asylum in New Orleans, and another, Byron, was murdered. At some point in the post-Civil War era, the family name changed from Johnson to Johnston.

Clarence's son, William Johnston, attended Wilberforce University, then Howard University medical school. Early in the 20th century he and his wife Sally returned to Natchez where he set up practice as one of the town's earliest black physicians; they redecorated the first floor of the house for their apartment.

The cultural landscape that surrounds the house has undergone considerable changes through the years since its construction in 1842. The western half of the property was sold in 1906 to accommodate a railroad station, and little tangible evidence remains that this site was once home to a vibrant family life that was largely lived outdoors. The information from this report, and its accompanying recommendations, will help to bring that world alive to our future visitors.

The park is grateful for the expert guidance of our broad contractor team: Chris Woollard of Joseph K. Oppermann-Architect, PA; Laura L. Knott, Historical Landscape Architect, LLC; and Herpreet Singh, John Welch, Ashley Braquet of Suzanne Turner Associates. We appreciate our partner reviewers Mimi Miller, Chase Klugh, and Manuel Duran-Duran, and the assistance of our NPS colleagues Anthony Marshall and Meredith Hardy. Park staff who assisted with the production of this report include Jeff Mansell, James Davis, Melissa Tynes, Amy Gordon, and Mia Taylor. We are especially grateful for the guidance of our park curator, Cheryl Waldrep, for keeping this project on track, and for the oversight and expert steering of our regional historical landscape architect, David Hasty, who brought invaluable experience to the task.

Kathleen McClain Bond
Superintendent, Natchez National Historical Park
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Introduction

Management Summary

The William Johnson House is a component of Natchez National Historical Park (NATC) in Natchez, Mississippi. The house was constructed in 1841 for William Johnson, a free African American barber, businessman, and famous diarist. After his death in 1851, his family and descendants continued to live in the house until 1975, when they sold the house and its urban lot to the Preservation Society of Ellicott's Hill. The Society sold the property to the City of Natchez in 1990, which immediately donated it and the adjacent McCallum House to the National Park Service (NPS).

On October 7, 1988, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 100-479, establishing Natchez National Historical Park. The stated purpose of the park was to

- (1) preserve and interpret the history of Natchez, Mississippi, as a significant city in the history of the American South;
- (2) preserve and interpret the sites and structures associated with all the peoples of Natchez and its surrounding area from [the] earliest inhabitants to the modern era, and including blacks both slave and free;
- (3) preserve and interpret the region's social, political, and economic development,

with particular emphasis on the pre- and post-Civil War eras; and

- (4) preserve and interpret the region's commercial and agricultural history, especially in relation to the Mississippi River and cotton.¹

At that time, the park comprised the antebellum estate of Melrose and the site of Fort Rosalie.

In 1990, Congress added

the lands and structures known as the William Johnson House, together with all personal property located on such lands, and the building adjacent thereto which bears a common wall.²

The adjacent building mentioned is the McCallum House.

Today, the NPS administers the William Johnson House and the McCallum House, along with Fort Rosalie, Melrose, Forks of the Road, and the park's visitor center as Natchez National Historical Park.

The William Johnson House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 16, 1976, before it became an NPS property. This nomination lists the property as significant in the areas of literature and African American history for the period of 1800 through 1899.³ The William Johnson House was also included, along with the

¹ Public Law 100-479, 100th Cong. (October 7, 1988), 1.

² Public Law 101-399, 101st Cong. (September 28, 1990), 1.

³ William C. Allen, "William Johnson House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1976). This nomination was prepared using an early version of the nomination form that required preparers to select a century as a period of significance.

McCallum House, as a component of the Natchez-on-Top-of-the-Hill Historic District, added to the National Register on September 17, 1979.⁴ This nomination lists the district as significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, community planning, exploration/settlement, landscape architecture, military, politics/government, and transportation for the period of 1700 through 1900. Finally, the William Johnson House and McCallum House are also included in the administrative listing in the National Register for Natchez National Historical Park, dated October 7, 1988.⁵

By initiating this cultural landscape report (CLR), the NPS aims to better understand the significance of the cultural landscape of the William Johnson House, particularly how it might differ from the significance of the buildings. Based on this understanding, the park would like to receive recommendations on how to utilize the landscape for interpretation, address archeology on the site, solve ongoing drainage problems, provide universal accessibility, treat existing intrusive utilities, store maintenance tools, and screen intrusive views.

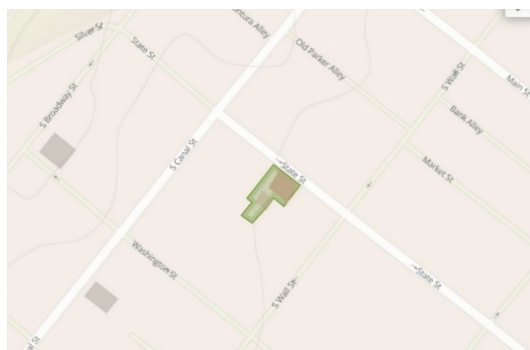


FIGURE 1-1. Location of the William Johnson House on State Street. NPS.

⁴ Mary Warren Miller, "Natchez On-Top-of-the-Hill Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1979).

Description of Study Boundary

The William Johnson House stands on 0.14 acres located on the south side of State Street in historic downtown Natchez. It is about two miles northwest of Melrose and around one-half mile northeast of Fort Rosalie (Figures 1-1 and 1-2). The house and its urban lot are part of a larger complex that also includes the adjacent McCallum House, which is used as a visitor center and NPS staff offices related to the operation of the Johnson House. The McCallum House and its lot were not included for consideration in the CLR.

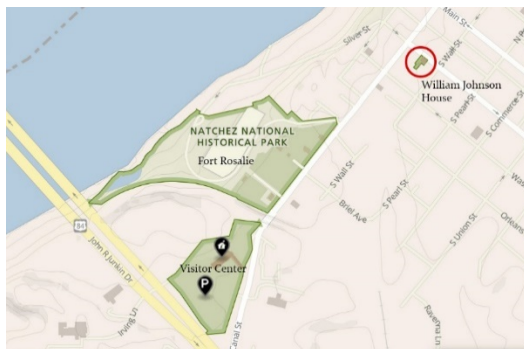


FIGURE 1-2. Location of the William Johnson House in the context of Natchez National Historical Park. NPS.

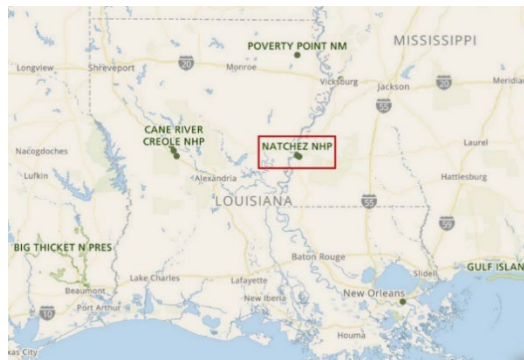


FIGURE 1-3. Location of Natchez along the Mississippi River. NPS.

⁵ Note: this nomination has not been digitized for review. When digitized, it will be located at <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail?assetID=23cbaed1-4c69-451f-b6ca-bf2593aea8bd>.

Natchez is in southwest Mississippi, sited atop a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River (Figure 1-3). Natchez National Historical Park is about 120 miles due east of Cane River Creole National Historical Park, which was also established in the 1990s, and around 75 miles southwest of Vicksburg National Military Park, which is also located on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi. The park is 175 miles northwest of New Orleans by highway and over 250 miles by boat.

Historical Summary

The William Johnson House was built for William Johnson, a free African American barber, businessman, and famous diarist. Johnson was born enslaved around 1809 to an enslaved woman named Amy Johnson. It is believed that his father was a white planter of Adams County who was also named William Johnson. Young Johnson was freed in 1820 through his owner's petition to the Mississippi legislature, which asked that he be allowed to grant

liberty to a human being which all are entitled to as a Birth-right & extend the hand of humanity to a rational creature, on whom unfortunately Complexion Custom & even Law in This Land of freedom, has conspired to rivet the fetters of slavery.⁶

In response, the legislature passed "An Act to Emancipate William, a Person of Color."⁷

William Johnson kept a diary from 1835, after his marriage to Ann Battles, a free woman of color, until 1851, when he was murdered by a neighbor over a property

dispute. In it, Johnson recorded not only his daily business dealings but also his musings and opinions on the political and social events of antebellum Natchez as they unfolded around him. The diary, along with other documents of the William T. Johnson and Family Papers held by Louisiana State University, provides detailed information about the construction of the house in 1841 and subsequent events in the evolution of the cultural landscape around it.

Following Johnson's murder, Ann Battles Johnson and her nine children continued to live in the house.⁸ Two of William and Ann's three sons became barbers like their father while another established a blacksmith shop on a large lot adjacent to the Johnson's. One of the daughters married and moved away while three of them remained at the family home and became schoolteachers after the end of the Civil War. In 1897, the remaining Johnson daughters replaced the kitchen dependency that their father had commissioned in 1841 with a new brick building. In 1920, they had the house remodeled, adding electricity and running water. Johnson's grandson, Dr. William R. Johnston, returned to Natchez in the 1910s after gaining his medical degree, moved into the Johnson family home, and set up practice in the city.⁹ Dr. Johnston died in 1938. His wife Sallie sold the property to the Preservation Society of Ellicott's Hill in 1975. The Society sold the property to the City of Natchez in 1990, which immediately donated it and the adjacent McCallum House to the NPS.

⁶ William Ransom Hogan and Edwin Adams Davis, eds., *William Johnson's Natchez: The Ante-Bellum Diary of a Free Negro* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1979), 16, citing Petition of William Johnson, January 21, 1820, Petitions and Memorials to the Legislature, Series I, No. 93 (Petitions and Memorials to both Territorial Assembly and State Legislature in Mississippi Department of Archives and History). Note that all quotes taken from William Johnson's diary are presented by Hogan and

Davis. For the CLR, they are presented as they were written and have not been edited for spelling or punctuation.

⁷ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, Passed by the General Assembly*, 3 Sess. (Natchez, 1820), 38, cited in Hogan and Davis, 17.

⁸ The Johnsons had a total of ten children, but one of them, Phillip, died in infancy.

⁹ Dr. William R. Johnston, the last descendant to live in the house, seems to have consistently used a "t" in his last name.

After the NPS acquired the property, it began to develop plans for its restoration, which in the end took over ten years to accomplish due to limited funding. The restoration of both the William Johnson House and the McCallum House was substantially completed by 2004, when the site opened to the public.

The site history chapter of this report organizes the story of the evolution of the cultural landscape into four periods of development. These periods reflect important events that affected the management of the site, such as the death of William Johnson and the influence of prominent family leaders. These periods are:

- William Johnson Period (1829-1851);
- Ann, Byron, and Anna Johnson Period (1851-1900);
- A New Generation (1901-1930); and
- Preservation of the William Johnson House (1975-present).

The final period begins after the 1975 sale of the house and documents subsequent preservation activities to the present day. There is no information available on changes in the landscape between 1930 and 1975, so this period is not covered.

Scope of Work and Methodology

Project Scope

Cultural landscape reports serve as principal treatment tools for the long-term management of cultural landscapes. Treatment and management decisions affecting the physical features, biotic systems, and use of the landscape are guided by the comprehensive description of a landscape as presented in a CLR. The document establishes preservation goals for the landscape based on historical research, inventory and documentation of existing conditions, and evaluation of the historical significance of landscape characteristics and features according to National Register

criteria. The documentation included in the CLR forms the basis for management, maintenance, treatment, use, and interpretation of the landscape consistent with the historical significance of the site.

The CLR for the William Johnson House is intended to:

- Describe the historical development of the William Johnson House and its setting;
- Document existing site conditions;
- Analyze the landscape's potential National Register significance to confirm the period of significance;
- Assess the landscape's integrity by comparing its existing conditions to those during the period of significance;
- Identify the site's character-defining features;
- Identify a preferred treatment alternative; and
- Provide detailed treatment recommendations and guidelines that balance preservation of site resources with contemporary needs of park operations.

The CLR also includes a prioritized list of implementation projects that can be developed as NPS Project Management Information System (PMIS) statements of landscape treatment. This list of projects was generated directly from the treatment recommendations and guidelines developed in the treatment section of the CLR. The prioritized list is intended to provide a general outline for the work needed at the site to fully implement the recommended treatment. Park staff may further develop proposed projects, generate cost estimates, and submit them for funding following NPS requirements.

Methodology

The CLR has been prepared in accordance with guidance offered in the most recent versions of various federal standards documents, including:

- *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques.*
- Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.*
- NPS Director's Order 10A: *Design and Construction Drawings.*
- NPS Director's Order 28: *Cultural Resources Management.*
- NPS-SER-82: *Biotic Cultural Resources: Management Considerations for Historic Districts in the National Park System, Southeast Region.*
- *Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standard (ABAAS).*
- NPS's *Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design.*
- National Register Bulletin: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.*
- National Register Bulletin: *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes.*
- National Register Bulletin: *Guidelines for Documenting and Evaluating Rural Historic Landscapes.*

The methodology used to prepare each component of this study is described in detail below.

Background Research and Data Collection

Prior to visiting the site in October 2019, CLR project team members collected documents and other materials pertaining to the project and site. These included various NPS reports, secondary sources addressing the history of the site and region, information available from the NPS Technical Information Center (TIC) online, and information available from the NPS Integrated Resource Management Applications Portal (IRMA) online. In preparation for field investigations, the team

commissioned a detailed survey of the site to be used as a base map for field inventory.

Start-Up Meeting

On October 16, 2019, project team members met with NPS park and regional personnel at Natchez National Historical Park headquarters to initiate work on the CLR and a cultural landscape inventory (CLI) for the Forks of the Road. Those participating in the meeting included:

*Southeast Regional Office of the NPS:*¹⁰

- David Hasty, Senior Historical Landscape Architect and COTR

Natchez National Historical Park:

- Kathleen Bond, Park Superintendent
- Cheryl Munyer Waldrep, Museum Curator
- Jeff Mansell, Park Historian
- Larry Stewart, Facility Manager

Joseph K. Oppermann Architect, PA

- Christopher Woollard, Associate

Suzanne Turner Associates

- John Welch, Director of Research
- Herpreet Singh, Studio Director
- Ashley Braquet, Researcher

During the meeting, the purpose, goals, and methodology of the CLR were reviewed by David Hasty and project team members. Park staff provided an overview of the history of the site, shared concerns and issues, and provided a list of available resources. Afterward, the team visited the project site.

The purpose and goals for the project as stated by park staff were:

- To develop more nuance in telling the story of race and the enslaved—get past “Moonlight and Magnolias”.

¹⁰ Note that at the time, the Interior Region 2 office was still part of the Southeast Regional Office of the NPS.

- To enhance the significance of the landscape and utilize the yard for interpretation.
- To track the changes in buildings and dependencies on the property.
- To increase the understanding of the family and descendants, and share this information with the public.

Park concerns and issues were:

- Significance of landscape versus interior of house.
- Challenges of interpretation in a small space and approaches to treatment.
- Addressing archaeology on site.
- Drainage problems leading to dampness and humidity in the dependency.
- Accessibility issues.
- Exposed HVAC units and electrical generator.

Research sources available to the project team were discussed during the meeting, including park planning documents, archeological reports, maps and drawings, aerial photographs, GIS data, and other NPS sources. Park personnel also suggested several books to be consulted that may inform the site history.

Field Investigation

On October 30, 2019, the project team conducted preliminary field investigations to document landscape resources at the site. Team members photographed landscape features and made notes about materials, conditions, and other information to be used to update maps and plans.

Site History

The project was then subcontracted to Laura L. Knott, Historical Landscape Architect, LLC. Laura Knott completed the research and developed the treatment recommendations.

For the site history, Laura Knott consulted both primary and secondary sources of information gathered from NATC records, NPS Southeast Region Office files, the NPS e-TIC database, the NPS IRMA website, the Library of Congress, and Louisiana State University (LSU). LSU operates the Louisiana Digital Library, home to the fully digitized collection of the William T. Johnson and Family Papers. Research reports provided by the NPS that were especially helpful included the William Johnson House Historic Structure Report (1997), the William Johnson House Historic Furnishings Report (2004), the William Johnson House Cultural Landscape Inventory (2005), 5,000 Years of Life and Death Along the Natchez Bluffs (2005), and 11 archeological reports that described the results of investigations at the William Johnson House.

Researchers also consulted several books, including:

- *William Johnson's Natchez: The Antebellum Diary of a Free Negro*, which contains a transcript of Johnson's diary from 1835 to 1851.¹¹
- *Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To Be Free, Black, & Female in the Old South*, which contains transcripts of letters to and from Johnson family members, as well as William Johnson's daughter Catharine's diary.¹²
- *The Barber of Natchez*, a narrative of Johnson's life based on information from his diary.¹³

The first two books contain transcriptions of Johnson family papers with extensive introductions that summarize the information provided.

¹¹ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*.

¹² Virginia Meacham Gould, ed., *Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To Be Free, Black, & Female in the Old South* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998).

¹³ William Ransom Hogan and Edwin Adams Davis, *The Barber of Natchez* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, [1954] 1973).

Base Mapping

The base map for the CLR was provided as a survey prepared for the NPS in 2020 by Jordan, Kaiser & Sessions, LLC.

Historic Period Plan Preparation

Historic period plans of the William Johnson House cultural landscape were prepared to represent the site during phases of its evolution to the present. The team developed the historic period plans through registration of historic maps with the 2020 survey's existing conditions information. The project team then used primary source materials, including historic aerial photographs, archeological investigation diagrams, historic surveys, historic photographs, and written descriptions of the landscape found in research materials, to refine the base map to reflect a series of snapshot moments in the history of the landscape.

Existing Conditions Documentation

Existing conditions documentation was developed through preparation of cross-referenced narrative, graphic, and photographic materials compiled from existing conditions base mapping, field investigation, field photography, and review of park planning documents, park files, and other relevant cultural and natural resource documents received from the NPS or acquired through research. It also relied on photographs of representative landscape features taken in the field and used to support narrative descriptions of site features.

The resulting narrative descriptions and existing conditions plan describe the following cultural landscape features:

- Natural systems and features;
- Land use;
- Spatial organization;
- Circulation;

- Buildings and structures;
- Utilities;
- Cultural vegetation;
- Small-scale features;
- Views and vistas; and
- Archeological features.

Each feature was assessed using the categories suggested by the *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*: good, fair, poor, and unknown. These categories are defined as follows:

- Good: indicates that the feature shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. It is as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.
- Fair: indicates that the feature shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and that some degree of corrective action is needed within three to five years to prevent further harm to its historical and/or natural values.
- Poor: Indicates that the feature shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the feature.
- Unknown: indicates that not enough information is available to make an evaluation.¹⁴

The conditions ratings were annotated when needed to include specific condition-related observations made in the field that help to justify the ratings.

Significance Evaluation

Documentation from the 1976 and 1979 National Register nomination forms was

¹⁴ Adapted from Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Processes, and*

Techniques (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1998), 67.

reviewed and compared with the detailed historic documentation of the site developed for the CLR. A new period of significance, 1835-1930, and new areas of significance were recommended for the site based on historic documentation.

Comparative Analysis of Historic and Existing Conditions

To better understand the relationship between the existing landscape and the character of the landscape during the period of significance identified in the CLR, the project team undertook a comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions. The analysis, which included narrative discussion and graphic illustration, focused on extant features and their dates of origin. The three primary goals of the comparative analysis were to:

- Understand which features survive from the period of significance;
- Establish the basis for an integrity assessment; and
- Provide an understanding of the similarities and differences between historic and existing conditions that would contribute to the development of a well-grounded treatment plan for the cultural landscape.

Typically, the analysis narrative would be illustrated with comparative photograph pairs that compare historic with existing conditions within the study area, but no photographs from the period of significance were available. The comparative analysis, therefore, describes what is known or can be deduced about historic conditions gained primarily from maps and narrative descriptions.

Identification of Character-Defining Features

As part of the development of the comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions, the project team identified the landscape's character-defining qualities. Character-defining qualities are the prominent or distinctive

aspects or features of a cultural landscape that contribute significantly to its historic character.

The analysis also identified individual features that contribute to the landscape's historical significance as contributing, non-contributing, or missing. Contributing features are those surviving from the period of significance with integrity, and that can be tied to the site's associated historic contexts. Non-contributing features are those that originated after the period of significance, have lost integrity, or are not associated with the site's historic contexts. Missing features are those that are known or thought to have existed on the site during previous periods but that are no longer evident except in the archeological record.

Integrity Analysis

Based on an understanding of the individual character-defining qualities of the cultural landscape, the project team determined the integrity of the overall site by examining it in the context of seven aspects—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—described in the National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. It is through this work that a final decision was made regarding its historical significance.

Treatment Plan

Work on the treatment plan was based on the list of issues and project goals, needs, and objectives discussed during the project start-up meeting. The collective list of goals, needs, and objectives provided by NPS regional and park personnel for consideration in this CLR is documented in the treatment plan chapter of this document and addressed in its guidelines and recommendations.

The treatment plan is also based on the findings of each of the chapters represented in the CLR. Site analysis and the National Register-level significance evaluation suggested an overarching treatment approach to support preservation and

enhancement of the site's historic character, as well as its interpretation. After identifying the treatment approach for the project, the team prepared a treatment concept narrative to guide the development of treatment guidelines and recommendations. The subsequent guidelines and recommendations respond to each of the NPS's management issues and concerns conveyed during project meetings and in the scope of work, the CLR condition assessments of site resources, and the results of the comparative analysis and integrity evaluations. Based on the treatment recommendations, the team developed a prioritized list of implementation projects.

Bibliography

The bibliography was developed as a list of sources used in the preparation of the document.

Summary of Findings

Significance and Integrity

One of the goals for this CLR was to clarify the historical significance of the landscape and how it might differ from the significance of the buildings. While both the buildings and the landscape were determined to be significant under National Register criteria A, B, and C, the landscape is also significant under Criterion D.¹⁵ This is based on the information already revealed through archeology about previous structures, walkways, planting beds, and a bottle garden, as well as its potential to provide additional information about the lives of the Johnsons through additional investigations.

Unfortunately, the ability of the cultural landscape of the William Johnson House to convey its significance is somewhat diminished. While the landscape retains integrity of location, setting, and association

for its period of significance, the loss of character-defining outbuildings and secondary structures, circulation patterns and materials, and plant materials has a negative impact on the integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling.

Treatment

This CLR recommends rehabilitation as the most appropriate choice for the site's overall treatment, supported by specific instances of preservation or restoration of remaining historic landscape features and characteristics, including archeological resources. This approach permits compatible changes so that the lives of William Johnson's descendants can be interpreted to the public.

The recommended treatment section discusses the treatment period, presents the overall treatment concept, and describes general treatment standards. It then addresses specific recommendations for landscape features organized by landscape area, including the screening of some intrusive, non-historic features and restoration or interpretation of missing historic features. That section is followed by guidelines for specific implementation projects, each presenting a goal or vision for a specific treatment and a process for achieving it.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Conduct Phase III archeological investigations to locate cistern sites, the series of privies, missing outbuildings, fence lines, walkways, and garden spaces within the William Johnson House site. Consider implementing pollen testing to identify species cultivated in garden spaces.
2. Add interpretation of the cultural landscape of the William Johnson

¹⁵ *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, National Register Bulletin*

(Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1990), 11-24.

INTRODUCTION

House to the park's long-range interpretive plan.

3. Conduct further research to identify plants that the Johnson family may have cultivated within the lot in the 1920s or species that may have been cultivated in other urban Natchez lots during that period to provide context.
4. Conduct further research to place the William Johnson House cultural landscape within the context of other urban residential cultural landscapes of Natchez of the same period, as well as urban residential cultural landscapes of other Southern cities. This information will help inform interpretation.

Site History

Introduction

William Johnson was born enslaved in 1809 to an enslaved woman named Amy Johnson (Figure 2-1). In 1820 he was freed by his owner and father, a planter of Adams County who was also named William Johnson. Freedman William Johnson became a barber and respected businessman of Natchez. In 1835, he married a formerly enslaved woman named Ann Battles.



FIGURE 2-1. Portrait identified by descendants as William Johnson, Sr. Davis and Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez*.

Between 1835 and 1851, Johnson acquired three barber shops, a bath house, and a plantation and maintained a variety of business connections, becoming the wealthiest freedman in Natchez. Johnson and his family also enslaved at least eight African Americans, who lived either with the family in town or on the family's plantation.

After his marriage to Ann, Johnson moved in with the Battles family, rebuilt their frame house in 1838, and lived there for one year until the house burned down in 1839. Starting in 1840, Johnson organized the work to replace the frame house with a two-story brick house and kitchen dependency, completing and occupying these buildings in 1841.¹ In 1851, the 42-year-old Johnson was shot and killed by a neighbor who was angry over a property boundary conflict. William Johnson left behind a large family who struggled to maintain their lifestyle after his death, particularly when the children were young.

The year of his marriage, Johnson began a personal diary to record his daily activities and financial affairs. The diary, which continued until just three days before his death, is a rich source of information about the activities and attitudes of a formerly enslaved person who rose to become a successful businessman. Information about the life of Johnson and his descendants comes primarily from this diary, along with his and his family's other papers, including correspondence, manuscripts, legal and

¹ A "dependency" is defined as an adjunct building to a main building in a complex.

financial documents, bank books and ledgers, notebooks, and printed materials. These documents also include daybooks of Ann Battles Johnson, letters received by Ann and her daughters, and the diary of another daughter.² Together, these documents provide an intimate portrait of the life and social relations of a free Black family in a southern town before and after the Civil War.

In 1976, the last Johnson heirs to live in the house sold it to the Preservation Society of Ellicott's Hill to preserve the house. The Preservation Society had originally planned to transfer management of the house to an African American organization that could operate it as a site important in Black history. In 1990, after almost fifteen years of work to preserve the house and learn more about the property through archeological investigations, the Preservation Society sold the house to the City of Natchez, which immediately donated it and the adjacent McCallum House to the NPS. The NPS continues to administer it, along with Fort Rosalie, Melrose, Forks of the Road, and the Natchez Visitor Center as Natchez National Historical Park.

Natchez

Early Natchez

Perched on a bluff above the Mississippi River, Natchez is the seat of Adams County. The county was formed in 1799 but has its earliest roots in the interactions of early French explorers and the Natchez American Indian people in the early seventeenth century.

The settlement that became Natchez was established by the French in 1713 in the area of the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians. In 1716, the French constructed a fortification known as Fort Rosalie. After a series of conflicts with the Natchez Indians, ending in the almost complete decimation of the native tribe, the French managed to establish a permanent presence. In 1763, the French ceded all lands west of the Mississippi to Spain and those east and north of New Orleans to England. British troops arrived at Fort Rosalie in 1766 and encouraged settlement in the area. In 1779, Spain took back control of Natchez and the rest of what was then West Florida. In 1790 the Spanish governor laid out a new town plan, upon which the core of modern Natchez is based. The plan was organized by a roughly north-south and east-west grid of 35 blocks, with a central plaza, church, cemetery, and commons along the bluff edge. A portion of the bluff edge was later formalized as a parade ground with scenic overlooks (Figure 2-2).³

Natchez in the Mississippi Territory (1798-1816)

In 1798, U.S. Congress created the Mississippi Territory out of the Spanish-ruled province of West Florida, where Natchez had been established by the French in 1713. Originally, the Mississippi Territory extended from the 31st parallel northward about 100 miles and from the Mississippi River to the Georgia border. Natchez, the most important town in the territory, became its first capital. The territory was expanded in 1804 and again in 1812 to reach from the southern edge of Tennessee to the Gulf of Mexico. In 1802, the capital was

² Johnson's diaries and the rest of his and his family's papers have been digitized and made available for viewing at the William T. Johnson and Family Papers website, maintained by Louisiana State University in the Louisiana Digital Library at https://louisianadigital.library.org/islandora/search//william%20t.%20johnson%20and%20family%20papers?type=dis_max&islandora_solr_search_navigation=0.

³ Thurston Hahn III, Douglas Wells, and Joanne Ryan, *5,000 Years of Life and Death Along the Natchez Bluffs: Archaeological and Historical Inventory and Reporting for Reaches 6 and 7 of the Natchez Bluff Stability Study and the Orleans Street Disposal Area, Adams County, Mississippi* (Baton Rouge, LA: Coastal Environments, Inc., 2005), 66-68.

moved from Natchez to the village of Washington, Mississippi, just six miles east along the Natchez Trace. Adams County, named for John Adams, was formed within the territory in 1799. At first, the territory extended from the Mississippi River to Georgia to include 14,810 square miles of land. In 1800, it was reduced to a quarter of that size, then reduced again to 1,370 square miles in 1802. The seat of Adams County was Natchez until it, too, was relocated to nearby Washington for some time before being returned to Natchez.⁴

Antebellum Natchez (1817-1861)

In 1817-1819, the Mississippi Territory was divided to form the states of Mississippi and Alabama. Natchez became Mississippi's first state capital and remained so until the

capital was moved to Columbia in 1821, then to Jackson in 1822, where it remained (Figure 2-3). Statehood fueled an economic boom that had begun with the lifting of Spanish duties on the import of enslaved workers in 1782. It continued with the invention of the cotton gin in 1795 and the arrival of the steamboat in Natchez in 1812, which reduced the time of river transport by 75%. By 1833, Natchez planter Rush Nutt had patented the rot-resistant 'Petit Gulf' cotton seed, increasing planters' success with the crop.⁵

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Natchez played an important role in the development of the Old Southwest. It was the southern terminus of the Natchez Trace, originally an important American Indian trade route that by the 1800s was the most direct inland connection to Nashville. Before the first steamboat arrived in Natchez in 1812, crews of flatboats would unload their cargoes in Natchez or as far south as New Orleans, then head north on the Trace to their homes in the Ohio River Valley and beyond.⁶

Natchez became one of the most important slave trading centers in the South. Enslaved people were sold from boats on the riverfront and on downtown streets until a series of city ordinances adopted in the early 1830s pushed traders outside the city limits.⁷ The junction of two major roads coming from north and east towards Natchez, which became known as "Forks of the Road," became the center of the local slave trade.⁸ By 1840, Natchez was home to one-ninth of Adams County's enslaved African Americans, three-fifths of its White citizens, and three-fourths of its free Black citizens.

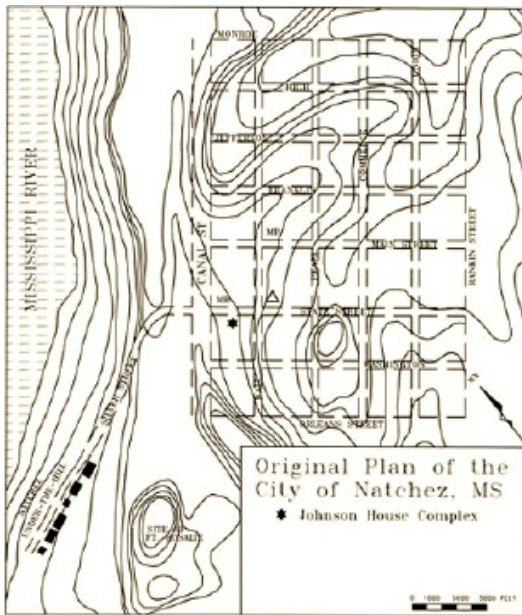


FIGURE 2-2. Original Plan of the City of Natchez. Atkinson.

⁴ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 66-68.

⁵ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 68.

⁶ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 68-71; and Rita Kohn, ed., *Full Steam Ahead: Reflections on the Impact of the First Steamboat on the Ohio River* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2011), 10-11.

⁷ Mimi Miller, Executive Director Emerita of Historic Natchez Foundation, comments on 75% draft of CLR, January 28, 2021.

⁸ Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, "The Forks of the Road Slave Market at Natchez," *Mississippi History Now*, <http://mshistorynow.mdh.state.ms.us/articles/47/the-forks-of-the-road-slave-market-at-natchez>.

SITE HISTORY

The free Black population grew by over 250% in the thirty years between 1820 and 1840 to a total of 207. Before 1822, free Blacks in Natchez had most commonly been the mistresses and children of White enslavers who had been legally freed by their owners. During the first two decades of the century, the enslaved could buy their freedom; this occurred most often with those who earned money through their skills, such as blacksmithing or carpentry. In 1822, however, a law passed in Mississippi allowed the enslaved to be freed only if approved by the state legislature, a move that sharply reduced emancipations state-wide. After 1840, the free Black population of Natchez remained constant, with 208 counted in the 1860 U.S. Census.⁹

Natchez developed originally as two settlements: Natchez-Upon-the-Hill and Natchez-Under-the-Hill. The two areas, which were separated by a river bluff, were distinguished by their activities and character. The upper town, which stood on the bluff plateau, was the seat of government; it had the most service businesses and residential developments. The lower town along the riverfront thrived

river trade; it was filled with warehouses, industries, hotels, taverns, and shanties.

Natchez-Upon-the-Hill originally developed adjacent to Fort Rosalie as a residential settlement associated with the military; it was surrounded by widely spaced farms and plantations (Figure 2-4). Vast plantations with high-style mansions were established by wealthy Southern planters who had abandoned their used-up Virginia tobacco farms for more fertile land to the west. On the Mississippi floodplain below the town, these planters grew cotton and sometimes sugarcane with enslaved labor.

During the cotton boom in the first half of the nineteenth century, banks, stores, hotels, and homes crowded into the upper town. At first, builders made the best of the uneven terrain of the loess soils but soon they began to fill many of the plateau's drainage ditches and eroded gullies to create more building sites. Along the bluff, a strip of the roughest land was set aside as a commons per the Spanish plan, then as a parade ground after it was leveled between 1823 and 1828.

Afterward, the city expanded a block to the west and established Broadway Street.¹⁰

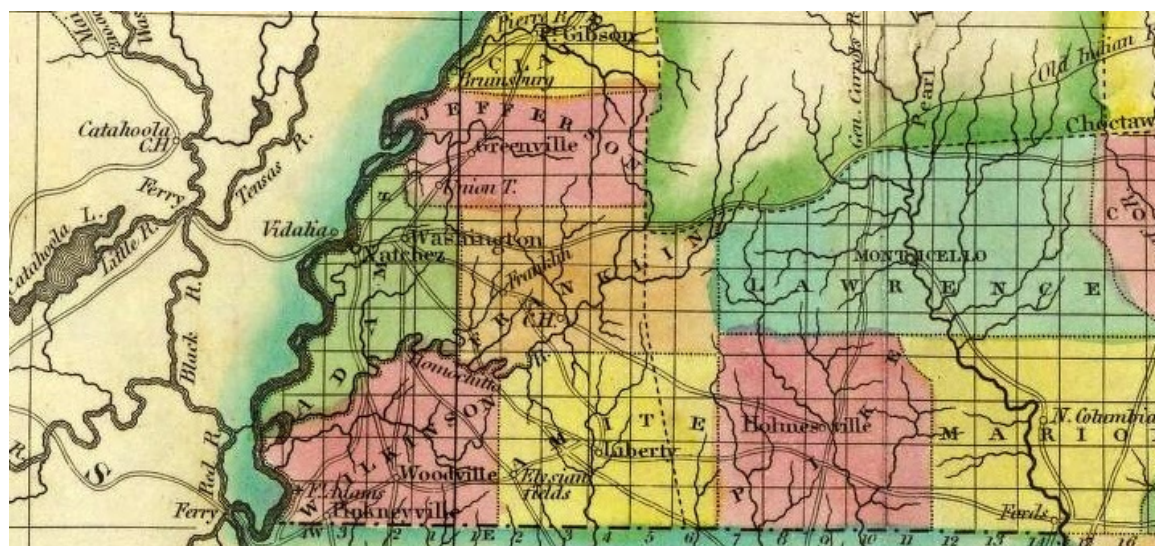


FIGURE 2-3. Detail from 1822 Map of Mississippi Territory by H.C. Carey and I. Lea. David Rumsey Collection.

⁹ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 68-71.

¹⁰ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 58-59, 72.

The streets of Natchez remained unimproved until 1822, when city records reported that “paving,” which was likely gravel, was used to surface some streets downtown. The city maintained a street contractor from 1826 onward.¹¹ By the time William Johnson built his house in 1841, herringbone brick paving was commonly used for sidewalks in downtown Natchez.¹²

Natchez-Under-the-Hill became one of the most important ports of the Lower Mississippi due to increased steamboat traffic (Figure 2-5). Although a rough and rowdy place frequented by gamblers, river pirates, highwaymen, and prostitutes, it was also the economic center of Natchez. At its height, the lower town had dozens of houses lining the riverbanks for about a mile, as well as a hotel, stores, a dozen landings, two inclined railroads, steam-powered sawmills, warehouses, tanyards, cotton presses, oil mills, abattoirs, and cotton mills. Its two major streets, Water and Silver, were crossed by two shorter connectors. Water Street ran along the riverfront while Silver Street connected Under-the-Hill with the upper town. Ferry Street extended from Silver Street to the ferry landing.¹³

Despite its economic success, antebellum Natchez was plagued by erosion, fires, floods, tornadoes, and disease, which challenged life in the bustling town. Erosion and landslides were a constant problem as the river ate away at its banks and rainwater eroded the loess bluffs. The lower town saw large flood events in 1811, 1815, 1828, 1840, and 1897.¹⁴

Fire, storms, and disease regularly menaced both the upper and lower towns. William Johnson, who was an avid volunteer firefighter, reported these events in his diary. There he wrote about a fire in Natchez in 1836, another in 1839 that also destroyed his home, and three large fires in Natchez-Under-the-Hill, where he maintained a barber shop. He also reported a severe tornado on May 7, 1840, that destroyed a mile-wide section of Natchez. It damaged William Parker’s Mississippi Hotel, which stood across the street from William Johnson’s house, and leveled all but one house in the lower town. To add to the misery were the almost annual occurrences of yellow fever in Natchez, which reached



FIGURE 2-4. Painting of Natchez made in 1822 by John James Audubon. *5,000 Years of Life and Death*.

¹¹ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 71-72. Note that asphalt or concrete was not developed for paving streets until the mid-nineteenth century.

¹² Mimi Miller, Executive Director Emerita of Historic Natchez Foundation, comments on 75% draft of CLR, January 28, 2021.

¹³ William Ransom Hogan and Edwin Adams Davis, eds., *William Johnson’s Natchez: The Ante-Bellum Diary of a Free Negro* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1979).

¹⁴ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson’s Natchez*.

epidemic proportions five times in the nineteenth century.¹⁵

Civil War in Natchez (1861-1865)

On January 9, 1861, Mississippi seceded from the Union, and one of its own, Jefferson Davis, was elected president of the Confederacy on February 4, 1861. War reached Natchez on May 12, 1862, when the U.S.S. *Iroquois* docked at the river landing and demanded surrender of the city. Mayor John Hunter complied the next day and called on residents to keep the peace. Two weeks later the U.S.S. *Hartford* arrived at the lower town, and two enslaved men from Natchez boarded the ship to join the Union Navy. On September 1, 1862, the Union gunboat *Essex* docked to get supplies and was attacked by 200 armed citizens, whereupon it fired on Natchez-Under-the-Hill. On September 2, the local home guard fired on the *Essex*, which retaliated by bombarding the lower town for a few hours, killing a child.¹⁶

On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing

436,631 enslaved people in Mississippi. That September, Union forces occupied the upper town of Natchez and imposed martial law, confiscating arms, ammunition, 5,000 heads of cattle, and a large quantity of lumber. Thousands of formerly enslaved people gathered in Natchez, living in contraband camps along the riverfront north of the suburban villa of Magnolia Vale in the northwest corner of the city, as well as at Forks of the Road. Union officers garrisoned at various downtown buildings and homes, including the Clifton mansion, which was subsequently demolished to make room for the Union's Fort McPherson.¹⁷

Fort McPherson comprised a circle of earthworks and batteries that created an enclosure around several suburban estates north of Natchez. The work was directed by superintending engineer Capt. John Moulder Wilson and the labor was supplied primarily by the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT). The fort became a major recruiting center for the USCT since so many



FIGURE 2-5. Sketch by Charles Alexandre Leseur of Natchez-Under-the-Hill in 1830. *5,000 Years of Life and Death*.

¹⁵ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*.

¹⁶ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 77.

¹⁷ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 68-71.

freedmen had gathered in Natchez.¹⁸ In 1864, Capt. Wilson and his men surveyed the area, documenting in detail the city of Natchez and its surrounding landscape. In addition to buildings and structures, they also included features such as orchards, street trees, and gardens (Figure 2-6).

Union presence peaked at 12,000 men, then dropped to 1,500 Black and 1,200 White troops by the summer of 1863. Confederates attempted to retake the city in December but were turned back. Many planters were ruined by the pressures to supply two armies with food and supplies. Confederate dead were buried in the Natchez Cemetery, and a national cemetery was developed to inter the over 5,000 Union dead from nearby skirmishes.¹⁹

Postbellum Natchez (1865-1900)

After the war, the plantation economy continued for the old planter elite despite crop failures in 1866 and 1867. Planters simply replaced the slavery system with one of sharecropping and crop liens, both of



FIGURE 2-6. Defences of Natchez and Vicinity by Capt. John Moulder Wilson, 1864. Usgwarchives.net.

which kept most freedmen in poverty. During the next thirty years, however, cotton prices dropped steadily to bottom out in 1894.²⁰

Emancipation left most rural freedmen without homes or income, so many moved to the town. At the same time, White entrepreneurs moved to Natchez from the Northeast and started businesses with northern credit. Although the town's population waxed and waned between 7,000 and 10,000 people, it remained about one-half Black and one-half White.²¹

Natchez-Upon-the-Hill received electricity in the early 1880s. A mule trolley system was installed in 1886, extending from the ferry landing in Natchez-Under-the-Hill, up Silver Street, and into the upper town. Mule-driven trolleys were replaced by electric trolleys in 1905; those operated until just after WWI. The telephone arrived in 1881 and the railroad in 1882. Because of the railroad, manufacturing expanded to the upper town and included cotton and yarn mills and cotton seed oil works. Many warehouses were built to store these products.²²

Steamboat traffic declined in Natchez after the arrival of the railroad; by 1886, only five steamboats serviced the area. The port, however, continued to be busy with cotton and lumber being shipped out and boats arriving with goods and produce. A privately owned inclined railway was built from the bluff down to the port to raise goods more quickly to the upper town. Natchez Waterworks was established in the lower town to draw water from artesian wells and pump it up the bluff to provide running water to those who could afford indoor plumbing. The Natchez Electric Light

¹⁸ Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service, "Feature – Fort McPherson Meets the Forks of the Road: The Nexus of Slavery, Freedom, and Resistance in Civil War-Era Natchez, Mississippi," April 12, 2015, in *15 Questions with An Archeologist*, podcast, <https://15questionswithanarcheologist.libsyn.com/feature-forks-of-the-road-meets-fort-mcpherson>.

¹⁹ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 77-78.

²⁰ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 78.

²¹ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 78.

²² Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 78-85.

Works and Pittsburgh Coal Company were also located Under-the-Hill.²³

Natchez in the Twentieth Century

In 1900, the U.S. Census counted 5,000 White and 7,000 Black citizens in Natchez. Despite the arrival of the boll weevil in Mississippi in 1908 and the decline of the cotton industry, Natchez's population continued to grow thanks to manufacturing, wholesale, and retail businesses. The city was served by three rail lines that made this possible. Between 1940 and 1960, the population of Natchez increased from 15,000 to 24,000, helped by the arrival of the International Paper Company in 1949. The paper company employed as many as 1,500 people.²⁴

Upon-the-Hill saw industry and urban retail businesses and banks expand. These included lumberyards, brickyards, a foundry, the gas and light plant, and Standard Oil, which supplied gas for new cars. To accommodate this new form of transportation, Natchez began to pave downtown streets in 1908, hiring the Southern Bitulithic Paving Company to do the work.²⁵ Tourism began in the 1930s with the opening of several antebellum homes for tours by the Natchez and Pilgrimage garden clubs.²⁶ In 1939, a local man named Jefferson Davis Dixon constructed a replica of Fort Rosalie on its old site as a tourist attraction. The collection of reimagined log buildings included a barracks, cafeteria, tower, stables, church, and powder house. Of these, only the log cabin on D.A. Biglane Street, which had been used by Dixon as a

gift shop, remains. It is now owned by the NPS.²⁷

Meanwhile, Under-the Hill was beginning to decline. There was so little land left due to a century of erosion and flooding that by 1901, only the sawmill, the water and sewer company, Pittsburgh Coal, and the Natchez Light, Power and Transit Company remained as going concerns in the lower town (Figure 2-7). The great flood of 1927 destroyed many houses and commercial buildings, most of which were not rebuilt, and left only Silver Street as a remnant. In 1940, the Mississippi River bridge carrying U.S. Route 84-425 and connecting Vidalia and Natchez was completed by the Works Progress Administration. While this improvement helped boost business and increase the population in Natchez, Under-the-Hill ceased to be used as a ferry landing. The waterworks closed in 1940, Magnolia Vale burned in 1947, and the sawmill went out of business in 1961.²⁸

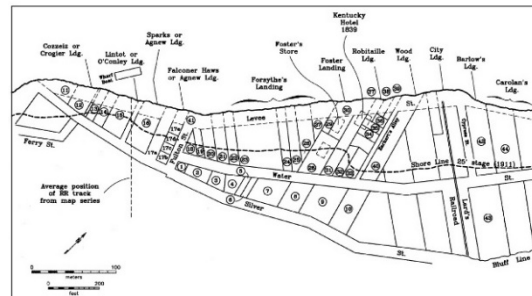


FIGURE 2-7. Detail from the Map Showing Port of Natchez, Miss., or Natchez Under-the-Hill as shown by Deed Records, in 1829, with 1911 shoreline added. *5,000 Years of Life and Death*.

²³ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 85-86.

²⁴ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 86.

²⁵ "Bitulith" is a mixture of stone and asphalt, an early asphaltic pavement.

²⁶ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 86-90.

²⁷ "Fort Rosalie reconstruction has bizarre history," *Natchez Democrat*, Sunday, August 12, 2001, <https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2001/08/12/fort-rosalie-reconstruction-has-bizarre-history/>; and Kathleen Bond,

Superintendent, Natchez National Historical Park, comments on 75% draft, January 28, 2021.

²⁸ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 90-93; and Suzassippi, "Dedicated to the People: Natchez-Vidalia Bridge," *Preservation in Mississippi* (blog), April 23, 2013, <https://misspreservation.com/2013/04/23/dedicated-to-the-people-natchez-vidalia-bridge/>.

Despite attempts to interest tourists in the old riverfront in the mid-1970s, Under-the-Hill did not recover until 1993 when the first gambling boat opened. By 2005, these businesses had become the third largest local employer because of the closing of the International Paper Company mill in 2003.²⁹

In 1988, Natchez National Historical Park was established by Congress by Public Law 100-479 (October 7). This law authorized the acquisition of Melrose, the site of Fort Rosalie, and an administrative site, and called for the establishment of historic districts as part of the park to preserve and interpret significant historic properties in the city that were not owned by the NPS. In 1990, Public Law 101-399 (September 28) amended the original enabling legislation by authorizing the acquisition by donation of the William Johnson House and the McCallum House.

The William Johnson House

Introduction

William Johnson was born enslaved in 1809 to an enslaved woman, Amy Johnson. His birth date is documented on his headstone in the Natchez City Cemetery and in his 1851 obituary.³⁰ It is believed that his father was a White planter of Adams County, also named William Johnson. Due to changing laws regarding manumission, planter

Johnson freed Amy Johnson in Vidalia, Louisiana, in 1814, and her daughter Adelia in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1818.

Young Johnson's manumission was gained through his owner's petition to the Mississippi legislature, which asked that he be allowed to grant

Liberty to a human being which all are entitled to as a Birth-right & extend the hand of humanity to a rational creature, on whom unfortunately Complexion Custom & even Law in This Land of freedom, has conspired to rivet the fetters of slavery.³¹

In 1823, the legislature passed "An Act to Emancipate William, a Person of Color." The Act described young Johnson as "the mulatto boy named William, son of Amy, a free woman of color, and the slave of William Johnson of Adams County." It also declared that the boy "shall never become a public charge, and that the said William Johnson shall educate and maintain said child until he arrive at the age of twenty one years."³²

It is not known where young Johnson received his education since his mother was illiterate, signing documents with her mark. Johnson's diary demonstrates a literacy gained possibly before or even after his emancipation. What is known is that in 1820, the 11-year-old William Johnson became an apprentice in the Natchez barber shop of his brother-in-law James Miller, who had married Johnson's sister Adelia.³³ Johnson

²⁹ Hahn, Wells, and Ryan, 90-93; and "International Paper mill grew over the years," *Natchez Democrat*, Wednesday, July 30, 2003, <https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2003/07/30/international-paper-mill-grew-over-the-years/>.

³⁰ William Johnson (obituary), *Natchez Courier*, June 20, 1851, 3.

³¹ Petition of William Johnson, January 21, 1820, Petitions and Memorials to the Legislature, Series I, No. 93 (Petitions and Memorials to both Territorial Assembly and State Legislature in Mississippi Department of Archives and History), cited in Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 16-17.

³² George Poindexter, ed., *The Revised Code of the Laws of Mississippi: In Which Are Comprised All Such Acts of the General Assembly, of a Public Nature, as Were in Force at the End of the Year 1823: With a General Index* (Natchez: Francis Baker, 1824), 579, https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Revised_Code_of_the_Laws_of_Mississippi?id=sO0uAAAAYAAJ.

³³ Adams County, Mississippi, Circuit Court, marriage certificate of Adelia to James Miller, Marriage Record Book II, 54, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *William Johnson House Historic Structure Report* (Atlanta: National Park Service Southeast Region, 1997), 14.

left his apprenticeship around age 19 and set up a barber shop in Port Gibson, Mississippi, where he worked for almost two years. After returning to Natchez in September 1830 at age 21, he bought Miller's lease on a Main Street barber shop and all its equipment for \$300. James and Adelia relocated to New Orleans the same year.³⁴

For the next five years, William Johnson lived the life of a "young-man-about-town" in Natchez. Because he recorded even the smallest of daily expenditures in account books, it is known that he enjoyed beer, wine, and spirits; played dominoes, checkers, and billiards; attended the circus; escorted free Black women to the theater; and visited prostitutes. He gambled at games, bought lottery tickets, and placed bets at the horse races. Johnson traveled to New Orleans, Philadelphia, and New York, where he bought scents for his business, a violin, and two canaries, among other luxury items. Although he played the field at first, pursuing three or four young women at a time, he finally settled on a 21-year-old free mulatto woman named Ann Battles, whom he had been courting since 1831. William, who was 26, and Ann married in 1835.³⁵

The information presented below on the history of the William Johnson House landscape for the William Johnson Period comes primarily from his diary, in which he recorded his daily activities. Much of the information on the evolution of the landscape after Johnson's death in 1851 comes from letters written to Ann and Anna Johnson from various friends and family members, a diary kept in the 1870s by Catharine Johnson, and the copious notes

and records of the family that have been digitized and are now available to the public in Louisiana State University's Louisiana Digital Library collection of the William T. Johnson and Family Papers. Additional information was provided by reports of archeological investigations conducted at the site from 1978 to 2015 and park superintendents' annual reports.

William Johnson Period (1829-1851)

(Map 2-1, 1851 Period Plan)

In 1829, the lot on which the William Johnson House was eventually constructed was deeded to Harriet Battles, Johnson's future mother-in-law, by her former enslavers, Gabriel and Elizabeth Tichenor. The lot was on First South Street (later renamed State Street), measured 36 feet by 140 feet, and was on the north side of Square 2 of the Spanish plan of the City of Natchez (see Figure 2-2).³⁶ Harriet Battles' first house on that lot was of wood frame set on brick piers. Known as the Overaker House, it was one of several that occupied the lot in succession before William Johnson built his brick house in 1841.³⁷

Although the property was never legally in his name, William Johnson took control of the State Street property after his marriage.³⁸ In December 1836, Johnson moved his wife and mother-in-law out of the wood frame house. On March 9, 1837, Johnson recorded in his diary that he paid local master builder Thomas Rose to tear down the structure and

³⁴ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 19-20.

³⁵ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 22-23. Ann Battles and her mother Harriett Battles were freed by their owner, Gabriel Tichenor. Harriet was freed in 1822, in Vidalia, Louisiana, and Ann was freed in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1826.

³⁶ Adams County Deed Book R, 451, cited by Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 15.

³⁷ James R. Atkinson, *William Johnson House Complex: Archeological Excavations, Natchez National Historical Park* (Tallahassee: Southeast Archeological Center, 1999), 47-52.

³⁸ During this period, when a woman married, her husband gained control over any property she owned. While this law did not apply to Harriet Battles as Johnson's mother-in-law, it appears that she relinquished control over the property to him in deference to his gender.

build a new frame house.³⁹ On April 16, Johnson paid Rose for plans for the new house, which were drawn by “Deadsmore the Carpenter.” This was likely J. C. Deadmore, who advertised locally in 1836 as an architect and draftsman.⁴⁰ Instead of moving the family in immediately, Johnson rented the new building to a Mr. A. Green and a Mr. George W. Blake for unnamed purposes, then to a P. McGetterick and his wife to operate a business called the Southern Exchange.⁴¹ Johnson recorded in his diary that Harriet Battles moved into the new house on August 6, 1838, followed by Johnson and his family on December 11. At the same time, he was building a second barber shop on Main Street.⁴²

The family lived in the new frame house on State Street only nine months before it was destroyed by fire on September 25, 1839. At the time of the fire, the Johnson family had been out of town, having fled yellow fever by moving temporarily to a plantation owned by the Quegles family, who were merchants and planters. That day, Johnson recorded in his diary that

It was near 9 Oclock to night that I saw from the Country a Large fire Given Light from Natchez and I mounted my horse and in a few minutes was in town and found, I am Sorry to say, One of the Larges Kings of Fires on the Hill in State Street.⁴³

The fire destroyed almost every structure on that block, except the Texada Inn. A brick building and its brick dependency that stood

on the lot adjacent to the east of the Johnsons also burned down. The lot had just been purchased the previous year by Robert and John McCallum from William Lancashire, who owned the lot from 1832 to 1838 and had constructed both buildings.⁴⁴

Other buildings that were destroyed on the block included the nearby law office of John Quitman and John McMurran, the remains of which would supply Johnson with bricks for his new house.⁴⁵ The fire also damaged William Parker’s Mississippi Hotel, located directly across State Street from Johnson’s property.⁴⁶

Johnson moved his family back to Natchez on November 18, 1839, into a house owned by a Mrs. Richards; they remained there until August 1840. In October, the family moved to another house, renting from a Mrs. Neiburt. During this time, Johnson began planning for a new brick house on Harriet Battles’ lot. Meanwhile, the family remained at Mrs. Neibert’s house until they moved into the new house in 1841.⁴⁷

The house that burned had cost \$2,952 to construct, but Johnson had insured it and received \$2,000 to rebuild.⁴⁸ On January 3, 1840, he wrote that he “Commenced this morning again to Survey the lot in State Street.” The surveyor discovered that “McCullam [McCallum] Come On my Lot a fraction over four inches on the front on State Street – 1 foot 1 ½ inches from the row of Brick on the pavement which was thot to be the old Line. . . .”⁴⁹ Just a month later, Johnson opened a third barber shop, this

³⁹ Atkinson, 47-83. All references to Johnson’s recording of activities in his diary come from the 1993 edition of Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson’s Natchez*.

⁴⁰ *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette*, March 11, 1836, cited by Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 18.

⁴¹ Atkinson, 31.

⁴² Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 18.

⁴³ Note that all quotes by Johnson are transcribed with the original spelling and grammar.

⁴⁴ Atkinson, 36.

⁴⁵ John Quitman to Eliza Quitman, Jackson MS, May 12, 1840, Quitman Family Papers, Subseries

1.1, Folder 18, Southern History and Folklife Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, typed transcript, Natchez National Historical Park, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 21.

⁴⁶ *Natchez Daily Courier*, March 7, 1856, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 21.

⁴⁷ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 19.

⁴⁸ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 33.

⁴⁹ The McCallums owned the lot adjacent to Johnson’s to the east and had already begun to rebuild their house when Johnson commissioned the survey.

time in the Tremont Hotel, putting an enslaved man named Charles in charge of the shop in Natchez-Under-the-Hill and a free man of color named “Bill,” or William Nix (or Nicks), in charge of the shop in the hotel.⁵⁰

Johnson had not yet begun construction on his new house when a powerful tornado plowed through Natchez on May 7, 1840. In addition to leveling all but one house in Natchez-Under-the-Hill, the storm damaged McCallum’s house, which was under construction next door to Johnson’s lot, and completed the destruction of Parker’s hotel.⁵¹ The ruins of the hotel would also provide Johnson with bricks for his new house. The McCallums repaired the damage to their house and continued building; by August they were installing their new flooring. At some point, they agreed to share a common wall with Johnson, but evidence of windows in the McCallums’ west gable end wall suggests that either they had not originally planned a common wall or that Johnson had originally planned a shorter building.⁵²

While planning for the new house was underway, Johnson used the empty lot for various purposes, including growing food and possibly corralling his cows. On March 9, 1840, he reported buying “1 fine red and white Cow for fifty nine Dollars and one Bath tub at thirteen dollars.” Throughout his diary, Johnson frequently mentioned livestock that he bought and sold, lost and found. Although occasionally kept on his home lot or on a rented site nearby, many animals were marked as Johnson’s and pastured in the commons.

On March 12, 1840, Johnson reported working “part of the day in my Late Gardin on the Hill.” Then, on March 13, he spent

his afternoon “in my Gardin on the Hill a planting of corn and the Like.”⁵³ On March 20, he reported that “The Cows got in my Corn Pach this morning and Eat down my corn.” On May 2, he reported that he bought an enslaved man named Phil and his wife Silvia on April 30, then moved them “up to my dwelling House,” likely the one they were renting from Mrs. Neibut.

Johnson continued to make improvements to the State Street lot. On May 19, 1840, he reported that “I made out an Account to day of three Dollars against Mr Howe for the making or rarter putting up a Division fence between myself and Him.” This was likely the adjacent lot to the south since McCallum owned the east lot and, as will be discussed below, the west lot belonged to Peter M. Lapice.

Throughout the summer of 1840, when he was not at his barber shop or out hunting, Johnson was busy salvaging brick from Parker’s hotel site. After the hotel was demolished in the tornado, Parker sold the salvaged brick to Johnson and likely to others in town. Johnson and his enslaved men worked hard to gather, clean, and transport loads of brick across the street:

May 21: “I was to day very Buissy in Cleaning Brick in State Street Mr. Parker is selling of[f] his Brick very fast—number of Carts are hauling from thare.”

May 22: “I was to Day geting Brick down at Mr Parkers. He gave me a Small Lot of them to take them away which I did with Great pleasure.”

June 1: “I was at work a good part of day at the Brick that I Bot of Mr Parker on State St.”

June 8: “I was a part of the day Buisy in getting Brick from Mr Parker, the same that I

⁵⁰ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 69, 277. Footnote 21 on page 69 describes William Nix.

⁵¹ *The Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Weekly Gazette*, May 11 and 14, 1840, cited by Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 20.

⁵² Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 20.

⁵³ It is assumed that “on the Hill” referred to the State Street lot, differentiating it from Under-the-Hill.

gave Him fifty Dollars for in good funds—
Sure and no mistake.”

June 12, "I am yet Getting Brick from Mr.
Parkers Hotell."

June 22 "I was a great part of this day down
at Parkers Buildings at work getting away the
Brick that I Bot of Him or rarther Cleaning
off the Pavement according to our
agreement.”

Johnson continued to grow food on his lot,
including corn and watermelons. On July 14,
he recorded that “I commenced to day and
planted a Small Crop of Corn, Second Crop
that I have Planted this Season—I Eate one
very fine water melon out the Garden to
Day, the first that I have tasted from there,
tho some one stole 2 before.”

Throughout 1840 and 1841, Johnson hired
various laborers to build his house,
meticulously recording the progress of
construction, as well as expenses, materials,
and other activities, in his diary.⁵⁴ His
enslaved workers and hired laborers did the
rough labor, including collecting bricks and
mixing mortar, and he contracted with more
skilled workers to do the carpentry,
bricklaying, and plastering.⁵⁵

In August, Johnson reported that a Mr.
Brown “Commenced to measure off the
Ground Yeterdy.” This was likely the Mr.
W. Brown who advertised in late 1837 as
providing “designs, plans, specifications,
estimates and working drawings for
Churches, Court Houses, Banks, Hotels and
other public buildings and city and country
dwellings, and superintend their
construction.”⁵⁶

Johnson recorded work on the house by his
slaves, contractors, and himself throughout
August and into the fall:

August 3: “I sent down Stephen and Phillip
this morning to Commence on the House we
had Burned down last year[.] The[y]
Commenced at Breakfast time and worked
all Day. Mr Brown was giving them the
Instructions &c.”

August 4: “Steven and Pill [Phillip] worked
all Day Down at the Building and I also
Hyred 2 hands and gave them 1.75 to work
from 12 Oclock until night—they belonged
to the Miss Evanss.”

August 15: “I paid Mr Fox to day thirty
dollars for Brick work done by him to this
date. . .Mr Weldon Commenced to put on
the Joice for my new House.”

August 17: “Phill works to day at the Building
and Steven works at home. Two
[brick]Layers at work.”

August 25: “I worked with dirt this Evening
very hard. . .I was removing it Out of the
Streets opposite the State Street Building.”

August 24: “I Made a Bargain to day with Mr
Weldon. He is to Build me a Kitchen, 12 by
14, for forty Dollars, payable when it Suits
me, to be Commenced to morrow And I am
to find the materials.”⁵⁷

August 28: “Mr Weldon makes a finish this
Eveing of the Little Kitchen that he has been
at work on for several Days past.”

August 30: “I was Quite Buisy all Day to day
taking my Brick from the yard of
McMurren.”

⁵⁴ This report only discusses the details related
to the development of the cultural landscape.
For more detail on the construction of the
house and dependency, refer to Ann Beha
Associates *HSR*.

⁵⁵ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*,
288, footnote 14, referring to Ledger 1837-41,
pages 122, 161, 169-78, 205, 265-66, and 270.

⁵⁶ John Hebron Moore, *Andrew Brown and
Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest* (Baton

Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967);
and Population Schedules, U.S. Census
microfilm, Armstrong Library, Adams County,
Mississippi, 1860, 17, cited in Ann Beha
Associates *HSR*, 23-24.

⁵⁷ Johnson did not start building his brick
kitchen until December 1840, so it appears that
the 12x14 kitchen may have been either a
temporary structure on the State Street lot or
for one of his barber shop properties.

On October 10, Johnson paid rent to his landlady and reported in his diary that “My new Brick House is very near Finished.”

On December 12, Johnson recorded working on the site, “Filling in dirt that was washed out from yeterdays and Last nights Rain.”⁵⁸ He began building the brick kitchen dependency on December 18, recording that “I Commenced to Day to haul Brick down from my yard to State Street to Build a Kitchen with—Brick Layers commenced the Foundation of the Kitchen this Evening.”⁵⁹ This kitchen was a brick, two-story building approximately 26’ by 14’, with two rooms on the first floor and a single room on the second. Its long axis ran approximately north to south, perpendicular to the house, leaving the side yard open for other uses. Archeological evidence suggests that the kitchen had a wood frame gallery on its west side with a brick pavement.⁶⁰ On December 21, Johnson reported being “Quite Buisy with Building in State Street,” and on the twenty-second, he noted that his “Carpenter Commenced to [partition] of[f] the Rooms this Evening—Chimney was commenced in the Kitchen today.”

During the next two months, Johnson began installing plants, outbuildings, fences, and drainage gutters. From February 2 to 4, 1841, Johnson and a laborer built a brick-lined privy near the back of the State Street lot. Brick-lined privies were common in downtown Natchez, and according to a review of Sanborn maps, most were topped with frame structures.⁶¹ During April 10-12, Johnson, his enslaved worker Stephen, and several other laborers took 4,000-5,000

bricks from the Parker Hotel site for more projects at the new house.

On February 20, Johnson bought “four China trees and Set them Out.” Although not specified in his diary, he likely bought them for the State Street lot to create fast shade. Chinaberries (*Melia azedarach*), locally called “Pride of China,” were the most popular shade tree of antebellum Natchez (Figure 2-8). Joseph Holt Ingraham, in his description of Natchez in an 1830s travel account, explained that the chinaberry surrounded the homes and lined the streets of “villages of the southwest” and “yields in beauty to no other.”⁶² On March 26, Johnson had a wood cage built around one of his trees, likely one that he had planted along the street. Caging street trees was a common practice that prevented horses from gnawing the bark and protected trees from damage from buggies or wagons. Chinaberries along Natchez streets, some caged, are recorded in photographs in the Stewart and Gandy-Norman collections (Figures 2-9 and 2-10).⁶³



FIGURE 2-8. Photograph of Franklin Street taken ca. 1880, showing chinaberry trees shading the south-facing side of the street. Gandy-Norman Collection.

⁵⁸ Drainage at the State Street property has continued to be challenging.

⁵⁹ It is not certain where “my yard” was located, but this note suggests that he may have been using another property to store building materials.

⁶⁰ Thomas J. Padgett, *Final Report on the Test Excavations at the William Johnson House, Natchez, Mississippi* (Hattiesburg: University of Southern Mississippi, 1978), 15; and Atkinson, 86-88.

⁶¹ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 28.

⁶² Joseph Holt Ingraham, *The South-West, By a Yankee*, Vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Cliff-St., 1835), 110-11, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 29.

⁶³ Figures 2-9 and 2-10, Stewart Photograph Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives & History, <http://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/stewart>; Henry C. Norman photographs, Thomas H. and Joan W. Gandy Photograph Collection, Louisiana Digital Library, <https://louisiana.digitallibrary.org/islandora/object/lsu-sc-tjp:collection>.

On February 27, Johnson reported speaking with “Mr Deal, Maneger for Mr Lapiece, to day to see if he Could get the Old Gentleman to agree to Let me fence in the Lot next to me belonging to Mr Lapiece.” The message may not have gotten through because on March 6, Johnson wrote this:

I then walked under the Hill and saw Mr Lapiece and told Him that I would Like to



FIGURE 2-9. Photograph taken ca. 1890s of the J.C. Schwartz store, showing wood tree boxes built to protect the chinaberry trees (left). Gandy-Norman Collection.



FIGURE 2-10. Photograph taken ca. 1890s of a residential street with its chinaberry trees protected with tree boxes. Stewart Collection.

get about thirty ft of His Lot and that I would fence it in and full up the Large holes in it and do some repairs on the Cistern and if He thought it worth a rent that I was willing to pay a reasonable price for it. He told me I could do so.

“Mr. Lapiece” was Peter M. Lapice de Bergondy, who was born in Santo Domingo, fought in the Battle of New Orleans, and owned several plantations along the Mississippi River. He also owned an undeveloped lot west of and adjacent to Johnson’s, at the corner of State Street and South Canal Street.⁶⁴ Johnson eventually bought Lapice’s entire lot in 1851.

Other work on the property included installing a wood cistern and building a hen house. On March 10, 1841, Johnson moved a wood cistern to his property, and on June 24 added a pump on a stand and paid a carpenter to install a windlass (Figure 2-11).⁶⁵ On March 12, Johnson recorded building a hen house in preparation to move his family to State Street on March 15, 1841. On June 17, he reported that “I got three Little chickens to day from Mother as a Present, 2 of them was Freeslings—the whitish Rooster.”



FIGURE 2-11. Photograph of wood cistern near Destrehan, Louisiana. Library of Congress.

⁶⁴ Peter M. Lapice indenture conveying land to Joseph F. Lapice, March 29, 1836, William T. Johnson and Family Papers, Legal and financial documents, Folder OS 01-01, 1802-1836, Louisiana Digital Library, <https://louisiana.digitallibrary.org/islandora/object/fpoc-p16313coll51%3A54653>.

⁶⁵ When he reports installing the cistern, he described the location as “the building,” so it is possible that this cistern was installed at one of his other properties. However, it is likely the State Street house because he does not report any other cistern being built or installed until January 1842.

Johnson also had a front fence installed because on March 20, 1841, he writes that “Mr Tucker swung the Front Gate this Evening but did not Quite finish it.” Then, on July 1, Johnson installed a “big gate” given to him by a Mr. Raly, likely James Railey of Oakland Plantation in the nearby Second Creek community. It is likely that the gate was installed in the perimeter fence on his State Street property.⁶⁶

On July 22, Johnson reported putting up lath as a lattice enclosing part of the first-floor back gallery for outdoor dining. Pre-restoration photographs taken in the 1970s show a remnant of a lattice enclosure with lath criss-crossed at a 45-degree angle (Figure 2-12). The back gallery faced southwest, and a lattice would have provided shade and privacy. Lattice was also used to cover cisterns, crawl spaces under houses on piers, and galleries in the Natchez area (Figure 2-13).⁶⁷

In January 1842, Johnson began work on an underground cistern with help from his enslaved workers, reporting that “Myself, Winston and Edd Came down after dinner this Ening and worked at the Diging of the Cister. . . . We had the old Grey Horse in the Cart, Hauling Dirt &c.” He continued work on the cistern February 2 and 3, and then on the eighth with Edd and Steven. They finished excavations on February 17 and 18,



FIGURE 2-12. Photograph taken of the rear gallery of the William Johnson House in the 1970s before restoration. The crisscross lattice is used here as a privacy screen. Padgett.

then had a “Mr Oblemis” top the structure with a brick arch on the nineteenth. On March 8, he reported that he and Winston “put One Course of Bricks on the Cistern Top and then put on the Top and Cut a hole through the Top for the pipe and planted a post for the Pipe to Rest on—Mr Walker, the Tiner, put up the pipe from House and Kitchen to the Cistern for which he Charged me \$5.75.” This cistern was likely a hole in the ground that was plastered to make it watertight, with the brick neck added on top (Figure 2-14). A historic photograph of the front and west side of the house shows a downspout from the front gutter across the side towards the rear, perhaps to supply this or subsequent cisterns (Figure 2-15).

Aside from recording the chinaberry tree plantings, Johnson only once mentions installing ornamental plants at the house site. On March 5, 1841, he wrote that “I was up at Auction to day and Bot Some Rose Bushes. Came home After Dinner, Mooved the wooden Cistern and planted the Rose Bushes &c.” It is possible that these roses were planted within one, or both, of the two brick-edged planting beds that were uncovered in two separate archeological investigations at the William Johnson House. The first was found in the southeastern area of the courtyard between the house and the dependency in September



FIGURE 2-13. Photograph of the lattice-covered cistern building at Melrose. The stuccoed neck of the cistern can be seen behind the standing man. National Archives.

⁶⁶ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 34.

⁶⁷ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 35.

1978.⁶⁸ The bricks used to make this edging were set in a sailor course with edges meeting (Figures 2-16 and 2-17). The second was found in 1994 under the floor in the center of the west end of the 1897 dependency and were the same thought by Padgett to pave the ground under a wood gallery there (Figure 2-18). These bricks were set at an angle to the ground to create a sawtooth effect, a detail found in American gardens starting in the colonial period. Adjacent to this planting bed, archeologists

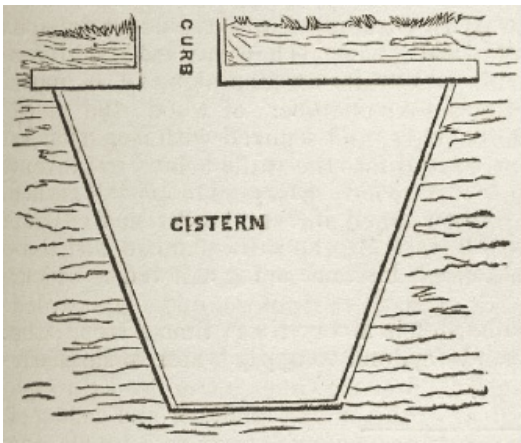


FIGURE 2-14. Sketch showing the general construction of a plastered in-ground cistern. Mansberger.



FIGURE 2-15. Photograph from 1979, showing a downspout leading to the rear of the house. Building Conservation Society.

found a brick walkway, edged in much the same way (Figure 2-19).⁶⁹

Johnson spent a good deal of time building more fences on his and adjacent lots to keep animals either in or out. During Johnson's lifetime, Mississippi operated as an open range territory in which animals could be allowed to range freely if they were identified by the owner's brand or mark. The greatest challenge was not to keep animals in as much as to keep them out. The problem was exacerbated after the Civil War, during which passing armies had purloined wood crop and garden fencing for use in making fires and constructing earthworks. In 1866, Mississippi passed a law affecting seven counties, including Adams, that permitted a small group of landowners to petition the county commissioner's court to close the range and require livestock owners to fence in their animals. This changed in 1882 when a county was authorized to order an election to allow voters to decide to close the range. In 1892, a new state law specified that cities and towns of 1,000 or more citizens must

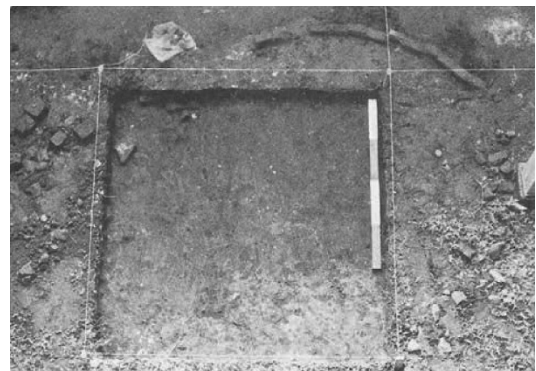


FIGURE 2-16. The brick edging laid in a sailor course appears at the top right of this photograph taken ca. 1978. Padgett.

⁶⁸ Padgett.

⁶⁹ Atkinson, 44, 86-88.

prevent animals from running at large within their limits.⁷⁰

On May 4, 1842, Johnson asked for permission to build a “small fence” on a lot across the street owned by a Mr. S. Davis, where he could keep some calves.⁷¹ He bought the materials on May 5 and started building the fence on the sixth. On May 10, he reported that “I was a good part of to day at work in the Sun putting up a fence around the Lot opposite my Dwelling House. I was making a Calf Lot.” On May 11, he finished, and on the twelfth he put the calves into the fenced area. It was unusual to fence in animals so he likely would have done this for a specific purpose, such as raising them for sale for a short period of time. The fencing

would likely have been the zig-zag style, a sturdy, but temporary fence (Figure 2-20).

The same day, he started building a garden fence using lath; the next day, he had Steven begin whitewashing it (Figure 2-21). On May 14, he reported that “to day I was Quite Buisy making the fence around the few plants that are in the yard &c.” On June 21, Johnson bought two Berkshire sows and took them home to put in a pen in an unspecified location, likely at the rear of the house site, since pigs have an unpleasant odor. An example of the urban yard of a free Black family in the Hayti neighborhood of Alexandria shows a pig shelter in the rear left corner of the yard (Figure 2-22). A clothesline stood along the yard’s right boundary, and a vegetable garden lay between.

On July 5, Johnson made plans to “Extend the Fence to remove the Privy or have a small One made &c” to accommodate a tenant who was to rent the house for a year. This would likely have been the first floor of the main house, which he rented out for various commercial or professional uses.

Work continued throughout the summer, focused on paving the yard between the house and the kitchen with brick salvaged from the hotel and digging and building a new privy:

July 7: “The Boys Charles & Winston was Laying of Brick all day to day down in the yard—They have a greate deal to Lay yet and it will take a Quantity of Brick.”

July 8: Charles continued the work of “making a pavement in the Yard.”

July 11: “Winston and myself Commenced to dig in the yard of the new House to Lay a pavement with Brick—We Got along first rate. We would have got through[h] if it had

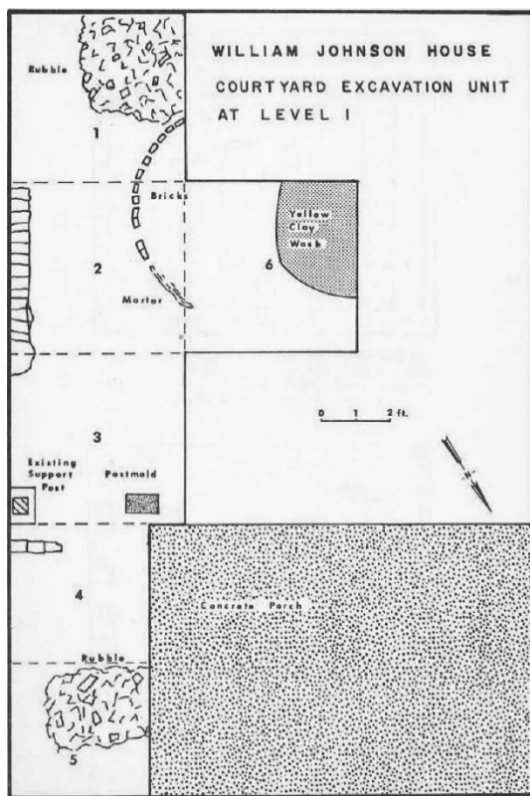


FIGURE 2-17. Diagram of excavation by Padgett in 1978. The brick edging appears in test pits 1 and 2. Padgett.

⁷⁰ J. Crawford King, Jr., “The Closing of the Southern Range: An Exploratory Study,” *Journal of Southern History*, 48, No. 1 (Feb. 1982): 53-70.

⁶⁸ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 382.

not have Rained in the Afternoon and we had to stop.”

July 12: They continued “Laying Brick in a Kitchen to my new House—We got through with it and then Levelld the yard and dug a gutter, Coverd it up &c.”

July 13: Johnson moved and stacked leftover brick in the yard with Steven and Winston.

July 14: Johnson and his workers dug a hole for a new privy and “Bricked it up.”

July 15: They “Built a House on it and finished it off in Stile.”

The team continued to organize leftover brick and on July 18, 21, 22, and 25 went back to laying brick in the yard (see Figure 2-19). With many breaks for other tasks, Johnson’s workers did not complete paving the yard until almost a year later on May 2,

1843, when Johnson reported that “Mr Reynolds’ boys finished working on the Pavement below the gate.”⁷² It is not known how extensive the brick paving was in the yard; it may have extended across the entire courtyard between the house and dependency, but archeological evidence of the previously-mentioned brick planting bed borders suggests that the eastern half of the courtyard may have been unpaved.⁷³

The referenced privy was likely the second erected on the lot, since this was 1842 and the family had been living in the new house for over a year. Mary Louise Miller recalled a privy on the property in the 1920s that was divided into two compartments, with the larger one for women on the north side, but it is unlikely that it was the privy built in 1842.⁷⁴

On July 15 and 16, Johnson and his workers “did considerable fencing &c.” He also

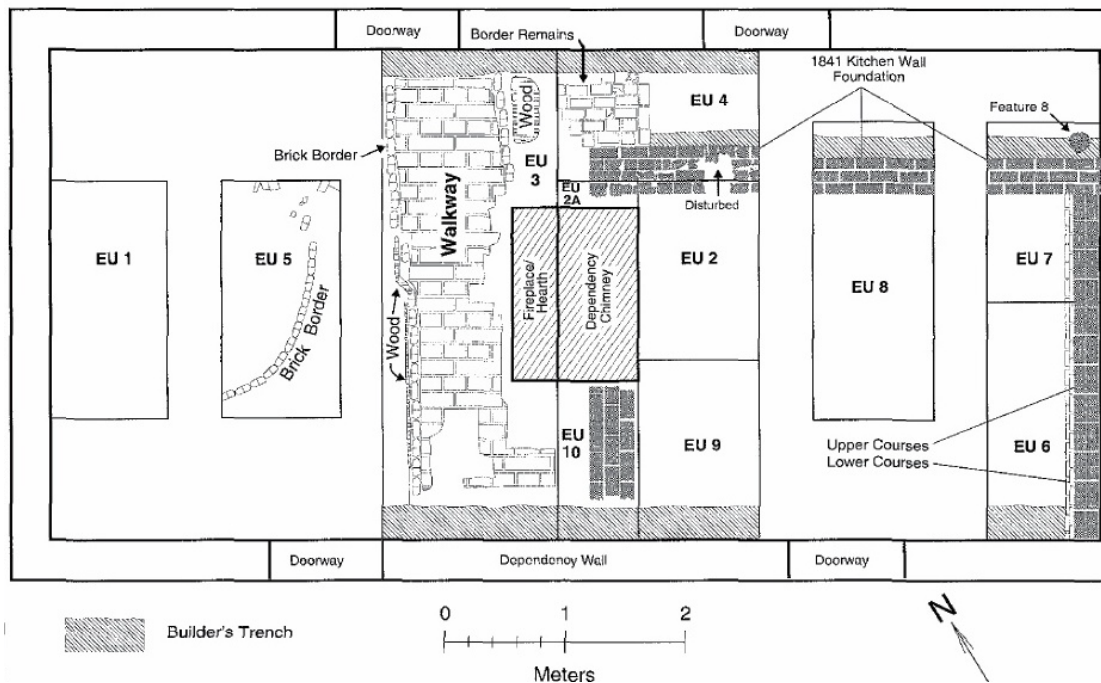


FIGURE 2-18. Diagram of excavation by Atkinson in 1992. The brick edging appears in EU 5. Atkinson.

⁷² This suggests that Johnson may have hired enslaved workers belonging to Mr. Reynolds to do the work.

⁷³ Padgett; and Atkinson, 44, 86-88.

⁷⁴ Mary Louise Miller interview by Carol Petravage and Kathleen McClain Jenkins, February 6, 1996, notes, National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez MS, 1, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 36-37.

reported that “Gim had those Big Gates swung at lower End of my yard,” likely being the south end where an alley met the lot. Johnson and Winston put up another fence with a gate on October 22. Fencing projects continued during February 7-11, 1843, when Johnson finally got around to fencing Lapice’s property, possibly with a rail fence, which he sketched in his diary on February 8. On the thirteenth, he “had a Small Fence made this Evening across the Lot.”

July 30, 1842, six months after digging the first one, Johnson hired Charles Reynolds to build another underground cistern, this one of brick, 12’ square and 20’ deep (Figure 2-

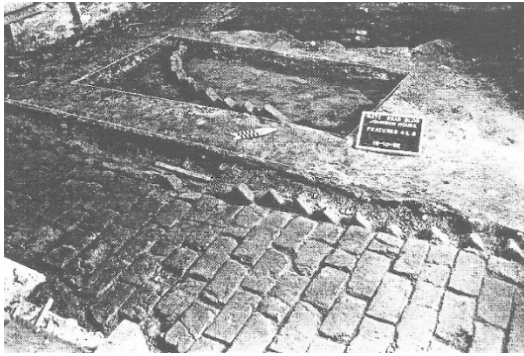


FIGURE 2-19. Photograph from 1994 of excavation under the floor of the 1897 dependency, showing the curved planting bed edging and brick walk. Atkinson.



FIGURE 2-20. Photograph of a zig-zag style fence, also called a snake rail or Virginia rail fence. National Archives.

23). With Johnson and “the Boys” helping to dig and lay brick in late August, the brickwork was completed in early September; it was plastered inside on September 20-22. A top for the cistern was delivered on October 10, probably a cast iron top, the type that is seen elsewhere in Natchez.⁷⁵ On November 8, Johnson bought a bucket for the cistern, installed it on a chain fastened to the windlass, “Drew out a Buckett of the first water, and took a Drink of it, that ever was Caught in the Cistern—It was pleasant and good.” It is possible that this is the same cistern that Mary Louise Miller remembered being located between the house and the 1897 kitchen dependency.⁷⁶

Johnson spent several days dealing with the poor drainage on his lot. During September 8-10, and 13, 1842, he reported leveling and grading his yard to drain towards the street. On October 22, he dug a gutter, and on the twenty-seventh, hired “G Brustee to put up my tin spout to day. . . .in all near about eighty ft. of pipe besides Some Elbows &c.” A brick gutter feature was uncovered by archeologists in 1994 and 2004; this could be

A SOUTHERN PICKET FENCE.

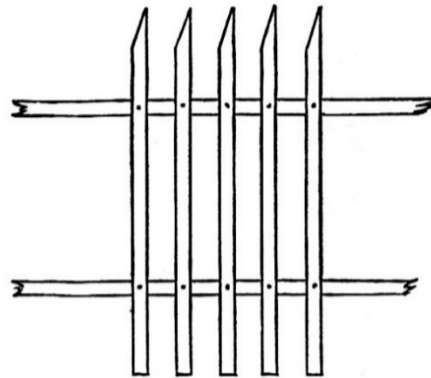


FIGURE 2-21. A style of lath fence used in the South in the late nineteenth century. If set close enough, laths are effective in keeping rabbits and other small mammals out of a garden. Gutenberg.org.

⁷⁵ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 37.

⁷⁶ Mary Louise Miller interview, 1, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 36-37.

one of those Johnson dug (Figure 2-24).⁷⁷ Drainage problems within the lot continued well into 1843, when on September 19 Johnson reported being “buisy a part of this day in plowing the yard Leading to the gate to make the water run of[f] free.”

Johnson also erected three sheds on his property. On July 29, 1841, he wrote, “I have been away all the Eveing making a Shed in the yard.” On December 9, 1842, he made plans to have “Young Welding finish working on my Little Shed to morrow, ie making the door &c., putting the Latch &c.” On February 20, 1843, he reported that he and Winston began making a shed. Winston finished it on the twenty-third.

With most of the building tasks complete, in 1843, Johnson and his enslaved workers focused on growing food and managing livestock:

May 9-10: Enslaved worker Steven plowed up the garden area, then Johnson planted corn on the eleventh and twelfth.

June 26: Johnson reported being at home “bothering with the sows and Pigs and they



FIGURE 2-22. Woodcut showing a portion of the Hayti neighborhood in Alexandria, Virginia. Alexandria.gov.

Gave me plenty of bother Certain, I was making pens for them, Winston and myself, with Steven, having Shavings brot for them and mooving them from place to place and did not have them fixed at Last to Suite me.”

July 26: Johnson reported cutting “a Considerable Quantity of Corn” from “the field,” then sending some to New Orleans with butter beans and four heads of cabbage. On the 29th, he cut corn to make fodder. Then on August 22 and 23, cut more corn to “Stack and dry in the yard.”⁷⁸

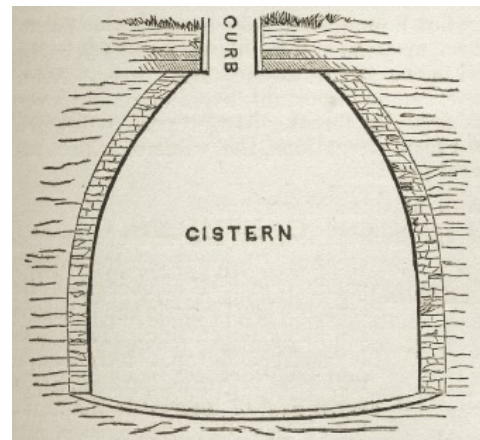


FIGURE 2-23. Sketch showing the general construction of a mortared brick in-ground cistern. Mansberger, citing Thomas, 1858.



FIGURE 2-24. Brick gutter drain uncovered in 1993 by archeologists. Atkinson.

⁷⁷ Atkinson, 97, figures 11 and 77; and Robert T. Moses, *Trip Report on Monitoring of Storm Drain Installation at William Johnson House, Natchez [National] Historical Park, Natchez, Mississippi, February 9-23, 2004*, SEAC Acc. 1888.

⁷⁸ It is not clear if by “field” he means somewhere on the State Street lot, on the Lapice lot, or in another location that he may have leased. He had not yet purchased Hard Scrabble at this time.

August 25: Johnson wrote that “I was at Home nearly all day attending to my crop— The Hogs has annoyed me very much by breaking in my fence.”⁷⁹

September 1: Johnson reported that he brought home a new plow and that the handle was already broken by the time he got it home from the shop. The same day, “I Commenced to plant Turnips this Evening in the yard. I hope they are good Ones.”

September 18: Johnson wrote that he had Steven plow a little and counted 23 pigs in the “Pen to Kill, when we please &c.”

November 19: “Our Cows are all well, that is a Live and in the range.”⁸⁰ On December 10 Johnson bought a white cow and her calf, and “had great trouble in getting Her Home. . . I did not get home until a Late Supper time and then had the assistance of Several persons to help me pull her along.”⁸¹

Other than in the commons, Johnson also kept cattle on other people’s land, reporting on December 17, 1843, that “I after Dinner started Down to McCance to Look after my Cows.”

In 1843 and subsequent years Johnson often reported spending time riding around the town and countryside looking for his livestock, mostly cows, but some horses. As mentioned above, it was common practice in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for owners to allow their livestock and other animals to roam free in the urban environment. In fact, animals provided public services: hogs ate household waste from the streets, chickens ate insects, and sheep and goats cropped the grass on the commons. Urban reforms aimed at food

animals included public health regulations regarding animal disease early in the nineteenth century and sanitation laws limiting animals in the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁸² Johnson’s diary reported that his family’s pigs and chickens were penned either on the family lot or nearby, as were some of his cattle, but some other animals roamed freely in the town. For example, on June 28, 1846, he wrote that “I wrode out to Salt my Horses on the Commons.”

In 1844, Johnson and his workers continued to improve the lot:⁸³

February 12: Johnson reported tearing down one shed and putting up another.

March 4: Johnson cleaned out his “Corn House to put a Floor in it etc.”⁸⁴

March 5: Johnson installed more fencing and a new gate.

March 7: “Jim and Frank Commenced to day to plough. They ploughed all over the yard or Lot.”

March 8: Johnson reported that he “planted my Little Crop of Corn to day &c.”

March 9: Johnson stayed home to do some planting. He put hay in the loft and gave Jim instructions to do things around the yard.⁸⁵

March 12: Johnson had Jim make an “iner fence in the yard of Some stuff that I got down at Mr Sisloffs Mill.”

It is possible that the “Corn House” Johnson refers to is a small corn crib, a tall, narrow structure with a shed or gable roof. A corn

⁷⁹ By referencing that he was “at Home,” Johnson suggests that “my crop” was either being grown on or close to the State Street lot.

⁸⁰ “[I]n the range may reference cattle that he kept in the Natchez commons.

⁸¹ Again, here Johnson implies that he kept some cattle on his lot on State Street.

⁸² Catherine Brinkley and Domenic Vitiello, “From Farm to Nuisance: Animal Agriculture and the Rise of Planning Regulation,” *Journal of Planning History* 13, Issue 2 (2014), 113-135.

⁸³ Natchez tax records for 1844 report that Johnson owned 8 enslaved persons that year, as reported in Virginia Meacham Gould, ed., *Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To Be Free, Black, & Female in the Old South* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), xlix.

⁸⁴ This suggests that one of the sheds might have been constructed to store and dry corn.

⁸⁵ This loft may have been the upper story of a larger shed or small barn on the property.

crib is usually set one to two feet above the ground on wood or stone piers. The walls are usually narrow wood slats spaced about one inch apart to allow for air flow to dry the corn.⁸⁶

More fencing was completed in the yard on May 31 by Jim and Frank, who also repaired Johnson's stable. It is not known exactly where the stable was located, but the 1904 Sanborn map with Johnson's block shows a possible easement from S. Canal Street to Johnson's lot. This easement might have been arranged to provide Johnson with a driveway and location for a stable.

On March 15, Johnson ordered some lumber to be brought up to build a cistern house, and on March 29, he paid a carpenter named St. Clair to complete it. The cistern house was most likely a small, latticed building similar to the extant cistern houses and gazebos at Melrose, The Elms, Hope Farm, and Myrtle Bank, which are documented in historic photos (see Figure 2-13).⁸⁷

Johnson's 1844 vegetable garden was productive. On June 7, he reported harvesting corn ("½ Doz Good Roasting Years [sic]"), greens, squash, and radishes from his State Street garden. On August 12, Johnson turned his horses loose in the remains of the garden, which he planned to plow to plant turnips. That same summer, on June 12, he had Jim make a shed roof in the yard for an unknown purpose.

In 1845, Johnson did little work on his home lot except in his garden. On January 8, he had Jim plough up the garden to plant oats.

On March 14, he did more plowing and on the seventeenth had Jim lay out the garden. On March 27, he reported that "We were Planting Garden Seed To day in the Garden &c." Oats planted so early and in such a small place were likely a cover crop that would be plowed into the soil to improve fertility for the summer garden and not grown as feed.

On March 7, Johnson reported that the family's "Billy Goat fell in Our Cistern yesterday Evening and was not found until this morning, drowned of Course. . . . Jim Painted the Buggy to day and then Commenced to drain water Out of the cistern to clean it &c."

The main event for the family in 1845 was Johnson's August purchase of 120 acres of swamp land south of Natchez for \$600. The tract had a small run-down house on it. Johnson came to call the tract "Hard Scrabble." The following year, he bought another 242.14 acres adjacent to Hard Scrabble. A later survey reported that together, these two tracts totaled 345.5 acres. Later in the year, he also leased for 99 years 403.1 acres of school-section land that was near his other properties.⁸⁸

At Hardscrabble, Johnson raised corn, vegetables, and fruit; pastured cattle and sheep; and kept pigs and chickens. He also cut timber and transported it to the riverbank to sell to steamboats. While running his barber shops, he also worked long hours fencing and breaking ground, repairing the Hardscrabble house, and putting up outbuildings.⁸⁹ Most of his diary

⁸⁶ Sam Moore, "The Disappearing Corncrib," *Farm Collector* (October 2014), <https://www.farmcollector.com/farm-life/corncrib-zmlz14octzkel>.

⁸⁷ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 38. Sometimes cistern houses appear on Sanborn maps as small circular or octagonal structures outlined in dotted lines. Such a structure, however, does not appear in any of the Sanborn maps of Johnson's block, so it may have been gone when the first Sanborn map was made of the area in 1886.

⁸⁸ Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 42. "School-section" land was created with the Land Ordinance of 1785, in which section 16 of each township was set aside for school purposes. Sometimes a school was built in this section and sometimes it was sold or leased as a source of income for public schools. "Land Ordinance of 1785," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_Ordinance_of_1785.

⁸⁹ Carol Petrevage, *William Johnson House Historic Furnishings Report* (Natchez: National Park Service, 2004), 16.

entries after buying Hard Scrabble are about the crops he raised there and other activities on the tract, such as these in 1846:

June 1: “My Corn in my Garden is Considerably Blown down, by the wind of Last night.”⁹⁰

June 2: “Gim & Billy took down a few pea Seed to plant to day; I have Sent for more.”⁹¹

June 4: “I collected a Lot of Peas and Started to have them planted.”

June 10: “We were at Hard Scrable Cuting Logs for a Hen House &c. . . . My Corn in both Fields is Commen[c]ing to tassel, Peas have Came up very fine.”

June 15: “Billy and Gim at work in the Garden.”

He also kept livestock at Hard Scrabble, mostly cows and sheep, but sometimes set his pigs free on the property to forage for acorns.

The few projects Johnson worked on at home on State Street for the next few years included maintaining the brick paving in the yard, fencing, gardening, and erecting three more outbuildings:

October 27, 1846: Johnson had “Frank Pave the yard a part of the day today.”

September 2, 1847: “We fenced in the Garden this Evening and planted it with turnip Seed. We Commenced yesterday and finished to day—We did a good deal of work in the Affair I do assure you.”

September 3, 1847: “We swung the Gate this morning and made Some other improovments.”

On June 13, 1848, Johnson reported that “We had a very hard Rain this Evening and

wind with it which blew down Our China tree in the yard. It fell on the Cistern House.” If the tree was one of those planted by Johnson in 1841, it would not have been large, nor would it have damaged the cistern house greatly, because there is no mention of rebuilding it afterward.

In March and April 1850, Johnson had a new frame building constructed by a Mr. Waller on the State Street lot, likely one that was attached to the south wall of the original dependency and shown on the 1886 Sanborn map. On April 10 and 11, Johnson had workers pave the yard and whitewash the inside of the new building. Then on the 16th, he put up a fence between his property and the Turner property, where the Texada Inn was located. On the 19th, he had workers start building a “wash House.” On May 15, he wrote that Winston and Gim “Built me a Little Carriage House yesterday.”⁹² It is possible that he replaced the stable with the carriage house on the south end of the lot.

In 1851, the last year of his life, Johnson bought almost 800 acres of additional swamp land in noncontiguous tracts near Hard Scrabble. The same year, he purchased the entirety of the Lapice property.⁹³

That summer, Johnson became involved in a disagreement with his neighbor Baylor Winn over the location of the boundary between Hard Scrabble and Winn’s adjacent property. On June 16, 1851, Winn shot William Johnson, who died from his wounds that afternoon.⁹⁴ Johnson did not leave a will, but inventories taken after his death showed that he enslaved fifteen people and owned property on both Main and State

⁹⁰ It is not clear if by “my Garden” he means the one at home or at Hard Scrabble.

⁹¹ “Billy” was likely an enslaved man and not “Bill” or William Nix, a free man of color, who was a barber at one of Johnson’s shops.

⁹² Winston and Gim were likely two of the five enslaved persons that the Johnson family

owned in 1850 as shown in the city tax records. Gould, xlix.

⁹³ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 42.

⁹⁴ Descriptions of the events leading up to the murder of Johnson and the subsequent trial of the killer are provided in Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 55-63.

streets, as well as his “swamp land” south of town, including Hard Scrabble.⁹⁵

Ann, Byron, and Anna Johnson Period (1851-1900)

(Map 2-2, 1900 Period Plan)

While William Johnson was alive, his wife Ann depended on him to provide for her and her family through his barbering business and other business interactions. While his work kept him out most of the day and some nights, Ann stayed home and ran the household. She received an allowance from her husband throughout their marriage, mostly \$1/day until 1849, when, for reasons unknown, she began to receive only 50 cents, which she would use to purchase foodstuffs, clothing, and other items. In addition, William Sr. often bought goods and produce in bulk from places that Ann would not have gone, such as Under-the-Hill, down by the river, or in remote areas.⁹⁶ As the family became more prosperous, they bought enslaved workers and Ann managed this large household.

Ann grew some of their food in their backyard where she kept a garden, growing squash, turnips, okra, peas, beans, and tomatoes. She also kept chickens, turkeys, and pigs in the yard, and a cow and horses in the portion of a neighbor’s lot across the street that William had leased and fenced. She sold whatever produce, eggs, meat, or milk her family did not consume.⁹⁷ She also exchanged goods with her sister-in-law’s family in New Orleans, the Millers. They

sent her oysters, fish, and other seafood, as well as spices and herbs, and lemons, limes, and other tropical produce. In return she sent them pigs, eggs, nuts, turkeys, cloth, finished clothing, and other items from her garden and home and from the countryside around Natchez.⁹⁸ Most of these exchanges were accomplished by Wellington West, an enslaved man owned by the Millers, who made regular trips up and down the Mississippi to carry goods and mail between their home and the Johnsons’.⁹⁹

When he died, William Johnson left Ann responsible for their nine children, age 15 and under, as well as Ann’s mother Harriet.¹⁰⁰ The oldest children were William, Jr., 15; Richard, 14; and Byron, 12. The girls included Anna, 10; Catharine, 9; Eugenia, 6; Alice, 5; and Josephine, 2. Baby Clarence was born in 1851 shortly before his father’s death.¹⁰¹ With children so young, the family would have struggled to maintain their lifestyle after William’s death.

In 1853, Ann Johnson sold her husband’s farm at Hard Scrabble and related lands—around 1,562 acres—to James Surget for \$5 an acre, netting her almost \$8,000. Although her husband had not earned any significant profits from his lands at Hard Scrabble, Ann was able to make a profit of \$3,612.50 in the sale, almost doubling what he had paid for the land in the 1840s. This would have helped the family stay afloat until the boys could complete barbering apprenticeships and take over their father’s shops.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Adams County, Mississippi, Office of Chancery Clerk, Probate Real Estate Record Book 2, 232-239, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 43.

⁹⁶ Gould, xix-liv.

⁹⁷ William Johnson’s journal and the day books of Ann Johnson, W.T. Johnson Collection, cited in Gould, xxv and l.

⁹⁸ Letter from Adelia Johnson to William T. Johnson, February 16, 1844; letter from Octavia Miller to Ann Battles Johnson, December 1847; and letter from Lavinia Miller to Ann Johnson, December 2, 1848, W.T. Johnson Collection, cited in Gould, xxv, xxvi, and l. This collection is now available online in the William T. Johnson

and Family Papers, Louisiana Digital Library, <https://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/search/william%20t.%20johnson%20and%20family%20papers?type=dismax>

⁹⁹ Gould, 3, footnote 2.

¹⁰⁰ The couple had ten children altogether, but the tenth child died in infancy.

¹⁰¹ Gould, xix-liv.

¹⁰² Gould, xli; and Deed, July 11, 1853, Anna Johnson to James Surget, Adams County Deed Book KK, Office of Records, Natchez, Mississippi, cited in Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 212.

Meanwhile, Ann and her daughters made a variety of products at home and sold them to support the family. Instead of appearing at markets herself to sell her produce, baked goods, and dry goods, such as finished clothing, she had her enslaved workers do the selling for her. For example, Ann recorded in 1855 that “Eliza sold 3 hoods, 2 bonnets, 2 small bonnets, 1 silk bonnet, 7 scarves, 4 spenser capes, 2 cravates, 5 caps, 2 head scarves, 3 rouches, head pins, and 1 headdress,” and that Hannah sold “4 spenser capes, 4 scarves, 1 cravat, 2 caps, 6 pair mitts, 4 pair stockings, 2 bags, 3 old ladies caps.”¹⁰³

The family also kept up the garden that William Sr. had established on the lot and continued to exchange food and other items with the Millers in New Orleans. Letters to Ann from the Millers suggest that most exchanges during that period comprised cloth from New Orleans in exchange for completed garments. However, there was at least one instance of produce sent down from Natchez: on July 23, 1859, Ann Johnson’s son, Richard, who was visiting in New Orleans, wrote her a letter thanking her for cucumbers, cabbage, and peaches that she sent down to him and the Millers.¹⁰⁴

Ann Johnson also continued the family’s practice of renting out rooms in their home. Shortly after her husband’s death, for example, she leased a room to a Mr. Carter for \$50.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, William Jr. married and brought his wife home, where the couple lived for some time with the rest of the family, causing much disturbance. William was showing signs of mental illness,

“laughing and grumbling to himself as is habit here lately. . . .seldom if ever has any sane moments now.”¹⁰⁶

Ann also managed her husband’s barber shops, and eventually built another shop in 1854 on a lot she owned on Main Street. There, William, Richard, and Byron could continue the family tradition of barbering. The same year, the family bought two lots on Magnolia Street, a new subdivision north of the town and below the bluffs on land once owned by the Bellvue Cotton Press Company. It is not clear if any of the family ever lived on either of the lots; they may have been bought as an investment to re-sell.¹⁰⁷ By the late 1850s, Ann had begun making business loans to acquaintances in Natchez, earning an income in interest.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the family was not so destitute that it had to sell its enslaved workers. In 1857, city tax records show that Ann Johnson paid taxes on six enslaved workers that year and seven in 1860.¹⁰⁹

The family’s fortunes received another blow ten years after the death of William Johnson with the start of the Civil War in 1861. That year, city tax records showed that the family owned eight slaves, valued at around \$6,000.¹¹⁰ While it is known that as early as 1862, the enslaved were taking advantage of the presence of the Union on the Mississippi River to escape servitude permanently, the details of the transition of enslaved to paid servant in the Johnson household are not known. The William T. Johnson and Family Papers Collection contains three passports written by Ann Johnson in the summer of 1862 allowing two enslaved workers to

¹⁰³ Notebook, vol. 38, July 1844-1857, William Johnson Family Papers, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, cited in Gould, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Gould, 35.

¹⁰⁵ Account book, 1854-1866, W.T. Johnson Collection, cited in Gould, xli. The practice of leasing rooms in private houses, entire houses, spaces for businesses, and unimproved land was common in urban southern towns and cities.

¹⁰⁶ Diary of Catharine Geraldine Johnson, Monday, September 25, 1865, cited in Gould, 82.

¹⁰⁷ Deed, October 23, 1854, Alexander S. Postlethwaite and Wife, and Ayres P. Merrill to William Johnson et al, Adams County Deed Book KK, Office of Records, Natchez, Mississippi, cited in Hogan and Davis, *The Barber of Natchez*, 212-213.

¹⁰⁸ Account books and loose receipts, W.T. Johnson collection, cited in Gould, xlii.

¹⁰⁹ Gould, xlix, l.

¹¹⁰ Gould, xlix, l.

travel to another county.¹¹¹ Little else is known about the family and their life at the house on State Street during the war.

As the war wound down, the family's financial challenges escalated. Four of the family's enslaved workers left the Johnson house in the summer of 1863; in September 1864, their enslaved worker Jim reported that "Clifton had gone off with some recruiting Officer."¹¹² In September 1865, Catharine wrote in her diary that it would be hard to part with two servants—Sicily and Maria—who had been with the family for "so long." This suggests that they had been enslaved with the family but after emancipation had stayed with the Johnsons as paid servants.¹¹³

Ann's daughter, Catharine, began to keep a diary in 1864 and wrote often of her despair and their falling fortunes after the death of their father:

My mind goes back to the past. . . to the time when we were happy thoughtless children when the earth seemed to be one abode of happiness.¹¹⁴

She also wrote frequently of problems with her oldest brother William, saying "I am afraid he will lose his mind entirely." By the mid-1860s William had married and brought his wife and at least one child to live together in the State Street home, but he was not well enough to bring in adequate income to support them. Catharine wrote on March 11, 1865, that "the burden of another family (for William does not provide for them)—and such a family—is a heavy weight on [Anna's] income."¹¹⁵

In March 1864, Byron Johnson enlisted in the Mississippi Federal Colored Militia.¹¹⁶

The other male members of the family did not enlist, being exempt due to health concerns. Richard received an exemption due to heart disease and William due to chronic rheumatism. It is not known whether Clarence enlisted or not.¹¹⁷ In 1865, Ann Johnson rented one of the family's barber shops on Main Street to O.H. Rob & Co. as a storeroom. It was referenced in the paperwork as the shop previously operated by William R. Johnson, who was likely then completely unable to manage the work.¹¹⁸ Other income during the war came from the continued sales of homemade products; for example, in March 1865, Catharine reported in her diary that it was her week to bake and "[a]fter baking quite a number of pies I sent Forest out with them." Forest, a Johnson family employee, had gone down to the river landing to sell the pies, but met people there "of a very reckless character" who stole the pies from him. She wrote that "[i]t was a real test to my patience but I hid it as well as I could and tr[i]ed not to murmur."¹¹⁹

A small glimpse into the character of the Johnson's house site in the mid-1860s comes from the *Map of the Defences of Natchez and Vicinity*, which was surveyed and prepared in 1864 under the direction of Union Capt. John M. Wilson (Figure 2-25). The map clearly shows structures and other landscape features in Square 2, including the William Johnson House and 1841 dependency, along with fence lines enclosing that and adjacent lots. It shows the adjacent lot bought from Lapice in 1851 as fully fenced and containing a small orchard and at least one shed. It also depicts a small building, likely William Johnson's carriage house, at the south end of the Johnson's lot, accessed by a

¹¹¹ William T. Johnson and Family Papers. Legal and financial documents. Folder 01-21, 1860-1866, Louisiana Digital Library, <https://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/fpoc-p16313coll51%3A35562>.

¹¹² Gould, xlv.

¹¹³ Gould, 81-82.

¹¹⁴ Gould, 69.

¹¹⁵ Gould, 79.

¹¹⁶ Gould, 77.

¹¹⁷ Richard M. Johnson military exemption certification, 1865 February 5, and William Johnson Jr. medical certification for military service exemption 1865 March 14, William T. Johnson and Family Papers, Folder 01-21.

¹¹⁸ William T. Johnson and Family Papers, Folder 01-21.

¹¹⁹ Gould, 79.

long, fenced-in driveway from Wall Street.¹²⁰ Johnson either purchased an easement or arranged to rent the space for both the carriage house and driveway from the owners of the Texada Inn to the south.

Ann Johnson died in 1866 at age 51. The same year, her son William Jr. was committed to an insane asylum in New Orleans.¹²¹ A family friend, Natchez planter A.L. Bingaman, made regular visits to see William in the asylum and sent home reports. Although William escaped from the asylum at least three times in 1866, in a later letter to Anna Johnson, Bingaman reports that William “looks a little slim but is in good health.”¹²²



FIGURE 2-25. Detail from the 1864 *Map of the Defences of Natchez and Vicinity*, annotated to show the location of the Johnson property in red. Usgwarchives.net.

After Ann Johnson’s death and William’s commitment, Byron Johnson, also a barber, assumed the role of head of household. In 1867, the Johnson children began to rent out the kitchen dependency, presumably the rooms above the first-floor kitchen.¹²³ Anna began to keep notebooks recording expenses; entries for 1867-1868 suggest that the family continued to maintain a garden on the home lot. Her list of expenses from 1867 included packets of garden seeds, among them peas and turnips, and she mentioned buying lumber and nails to have someone repair the garden fence. She bought cabbage plants in October, perhaps seedlings to raise to greater maturity since she reports selling 400 cabbage plants in November.¹²⁴ In 1868, she does not mention buying seeds or plants and records a “New Cistern Top” and a wheelbarrow as the only garden-related purchases that year.

The 1870 U.S. Census reported that at the State Street house, Byron Johnson, barber, was head of household. His grandmother, Harriet Battles, was listed as being age 86 and having “no occupation,” although she was likely quite busy helping out at home. Byron’s sister Anna L. Johnson was listed as “keeping house;” her sisters Catharine, Josephine, and Alice as seamstresses; and their brother Clarence as a blacksmith. Juanito and Carlito Garrus, who boarded at the Johnson house, were listed as barbers. Another boarder, William York, was a tinner who, as mentioned above, made the gutters for the house’s cistern.

Beginning in 1868, Byron Johnson leased at least three plantations on the outskirts of Natchez, starting with the St. Genevieve

¹²⁰ John M. Wilson, *Map of the defences of Natchez and vicinity*, Capt John M. Wilson Chief Engn. prepared and surveyed under direction of Capt P. Hains, by Ch. Spangenburg & J. Fiedler Asst. Engrs, 1864, Cartographic and Architectural Records, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., <http://da.mda.ms.gov/mapindex/index.php?keyword=adams%20county&page=>.

¹²¹ Sexton Records, Natchez, June 4, 1866, Armstrong Library, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 44.

¹²² Gould, 44-45.

¹²³ Anna Johnson’s Day Book, Johnson Papers, Diary, LLMVC/LSU, vol. 45, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 44.

¹²⁴ Anna Johnson notebook, Johnson and Family Papers. Volume 46, notebook, 1867 October-1868 December.

Plantation, located west of the river in Louisiana's Concordia Parish. Through these leases, the family began to manage a sharecropping business.¹²⁵ In 1869, he leased Carthage Plantation, located on the east side of the river south of Natchez in Adams County. In 1870, Byron leased Black Lake Plantation, located west of the river in Concordia Parish.¹²⁶ Byron, his sisters Anna and Catharine, and their brothers-in-law Juanito and Carlito Garrus contracted with freedmen to work both Carthage and Black Lake plantations. Byron's brother Richard managed the Black Lake Plantation.¹²⁷ Richard wrote to Anna on May 31, 1872, saying that he would give her half of all the crops raised there and asking her to send him a sack of oaks and corn. He added: "Do not send yellow corn. Please. And send me out them peas you told me you would try to get for me. White peas, I want 3 or 4 pints."¹²⁸

Byron Johnson was murdered on Saturday, January 13, 1872, at 10 pm at the rear of his barber shop. The suspected murderers included formerly enslaved man David Singleton, a drayman named Charles Cotesworth, and a free Black man named William Fitzhugh. The Fitzhughs were another prominent free African American family of antebellum Natchez.¹²⁹ After he died, Anna became head of the family.

Richard and Clarence continued to live in the State Street house with their sisters. The family continued to lease Carthage Plantation after Byron's death.¹³⁰

In 1870, the city council of Natchez organized a "committee on colored schools" and approved a monthly budget for these schools of \$300.¹³¹ In 1872, Catharine began working as a schoolteacher at the newly-constructed Union School.¹³² She stayed there a few years, eventually leaving to teach at Ravenswood Plantation, upriver of Natchez about ten miles. In her diary, Catharine complained that at the Union School, she had worked hard but "received nothing but a lot of worthless warrants for my pain."¹³³ Anna also taught at the Union School until she retired in 1906 or 1907; both women taught second grade. Josephine eventually joined Anna there. The women of the Johnson family were well-qualified to accept positions teaching since they had been well-educated as children; Anna and Catharine had been sent to New Orleans to attend school.¹³⁴

The Johnson children's grandmother, Harriet Battles, died in 1873, leaving the William Johnson House, which was never actually owned by William Johnson, to her

¹²⁵ Lease, March 14, 1868, St. Genevieve Plantation, Ayers P. Merrill Jr. to Byron Johnson, cited in Hogan and Davis, *The Barber of Natchez*, 198.

¹²⁶ Agreement with Freedmen, February 12, 1869, Carthage Plantation; Lease, February 15, 1869, Carthage Plantation, John Minor and K.L. Minor to Byron Johnson, and Lease, February 3, 1870, Black Lake Plantation, Byron Johnson, Johnson Family Papers, LSU, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, cited in Hogan and Davis, *The Barber of Natchez*, 198.

¹²⁷ Elaine B. Smyth, compiler, "William T. Johnson and Family Papers Inventory," Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, January 1990, revised by Jessica Mlotkowski, April 2015, 4,

<https://www.lib.lsu.edu/sites/all/files/sc/fpoc/0529.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Gould, 47-48.

¹²⁹ Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, Research Notes, n.p.

¹³⁰ Mortgage, May 5, 1875, Anna L. Johnston and others to William Lynch, Office of Records, Natchez, Mississippi, cited in Hogan and Davis, *The Barber of Natchez*, 198.

¹³¹ Gould, xlviii.

¹³² Gould, 89.

¹³³ Gould, 89. Warrants worked like checks and requested payment to the presenter, but they were not backed by actual funds; the warrants issued to Catharine by the local school board were often of no value.

¹³⁴ Minutes of the City Council of Natchez, January 1870, and Teacher Register and Teacher Pay Certificates, 1874-1915, W.T. Johnson Collection, cited in Gould, xlviii

five granddaughters.¹³⁵ Anna's sister Catharine became quite despondent over her family's fortunes, writing to her sister in 1873 from her teaching position at Ravenswood Plantation:

I believe that to all our other ills and troubles is to be added that of poverty, for every year we grow poorer and poorer. . . . [We are] chained to the rock of adversity—bound there, by masculine mismanagement & indolence, not a little mixed with meanness.¹³⁶

In 1874, Anna Johnson bought a portion of Peachland Plantation, which had been established by the McCaleb family in the countryside north of Natchez. Anna's portion of Peachland was called the "Swamp Tract." That area of the county is today known as Anna's Bottom, in reference to its being a low area, or bottomland, around a stream. The USGS map depicting the Peachland portion of Adams County designates a community or post office as "Anna." This name almost certainly references the Anna Johnson who was William Johnson's daughter.¹³⁷

The 1880 U.S. Census reported only six people living at the State Street house, including four family members and two boarders. Anna, Catharine ("Kate"), Alice, and Josephine were all listed as "teaching school." The two boarders—Pauline Elliott and John Chavers—were also listed as teaching school. Clarence had married around 1876 and established himself as a blacksmith in his own shop at the corner of

State and Canal streets, the lot that was purchased by his father in 1851 from Lapice. The shop appears in the 1886 Sanborn map as facing S. Canal. He and his wife had moved themselves and their first two children from the family home to their own residence. The census listed him as living on Homochitto Street in Natchez with his wife, Catherine Lynch Johnson, a schoolteacher, and their two children: Evangeline, 3, and Kenneth, nine months.

By 1880, Anna's sister Eugenia, who had married Juanito Garrus, had moved to New Orleans with her husband and started a family. In 1892, Eugenia Johnston Garrus deeded her one-fifth interest in the property to her sisters. Her name was spelled Johnston in this document, so it is possible that in the late nineteenth century, a branch of the family started spelling their name with a "t."¹³⁸

After purchasing the "Swamp Tract" of Peachland, the family would have stopped most vegetable gardening and animal husbandry on their town site and sustained themselves with products from the plantation, managed by Richard Johnson. Anna Johnson lived at Peachland, which she called "the Place," on and off during the next few years. On May 7, 1888, Anna wrote from Peachland to Catharine in Natchez that "[t]hey have a right nice garden started at the Place." She also reported that she had her cisterns finished and only lacked a top and pump or bucket, "when it will be all ready for water then for the gutters."¹³⁹ She wrote Catharine again on February 28, 1889,

¹³⁵ Sexton Records, January 2, 1906 [Natchez], Armstrong Library; Will Book 4, 63-64, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*.

¹³⁶ Sanford, 28, and another letter from the Johnson Papers, Letter, LLMVC/LSU, no. 2, folder 23, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 45.

¹³⁷ Deed Book TT:193, James F. and Martha McCaleb to Anna L. Johnson, Mary 1, 1874, 450 acres more or less, being that part of Peachland Plantation known as the Swamp Tract, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, Research Notes, n.p.

¹³⁸ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 44-46. It appears that the "t" comes and goes in documents

referring to the family. Family members may have preferred using the "t," but the tax assessor and others usually referred to them as "Johnsons." Dr. William R. Johnston, the last descendant to live in the house, seems to have consistently used the "t," even when public documents referring to him sometimes removed it. Mimi Miller, Executive Director Emerita of Historic Natchez Foundation, comments on 75% draft of CLR, January 28, 2021.

¹³⁹ Gould, 62.

reporting that three of the cows they kept at Peachland had calves and that she had sent a nephew up there to plant “Irish Potatoes” and plow up about three acres of land.¹⁴⁰ On March 31, 1895, she wrote Catharine again, reporting that a worker planted 20 acres of corn and some potatoes at Peachland and planned to plant more, as well as plow up another section where he would plant peas.¹⁴¹

Little is known about activities shaping the landscape of the lot on State Street in the 1880s and 1890s. The 1886 Sanborn map shows the Johnson and McCallum houses, each with a wood frame gallery and brick dependencies (Figure 2-26). The Johnson dependency was shown as having a wood gallery on its west side, not surprising since the shade would be vital in the summer, and a wood frame building attached to the rear wall. The construction of this wood frame addition was mentioned by William Johnson in his diary and evidence of the west gallery was later discovered by archeologists. The map also shows two sheds oriented north to south at the rear of the property, one of

which may have been Johnson’s carriage house. On what had been the Lapice lot, the map shows Clarence Johnson’s blacksmith shop facing S. Canal Street and two wood frame sheds constructed along a fence on the south lot line. By 1892, the two wood frame sheds had been torn down and a wood frame gallery had been added to the back of the blacksmith shop (Figure 2-27).

Because there would have been less pressure to produce food on the lot, the family might have grown more ornamental shrubs and flowers. As mentioned above, archeological investigations of the courtyard and under the floor of the current dependency in the early 1990s uncovered remnants of curved planting beds edged in brick (Figure 2-28). Another also uncovered two rows of bottles to the west of the house that appeared to form edgings for a path or planting bed, or possibly comprised part of a pavement (Figure 2-29). The ceramic bottles originally held ale or ginger beer, and several were stamped with the words “Grosvenor/ Glasgow,” indicating a manufacturing period between 1869 and 1899.¹⁴² More

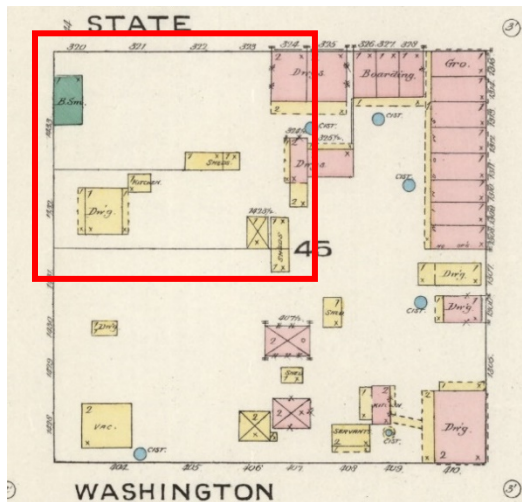


FIGURE 2-26. Detail from the 1886 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Square 2, annotated to show the location of the Johnson property. Library of Congress.

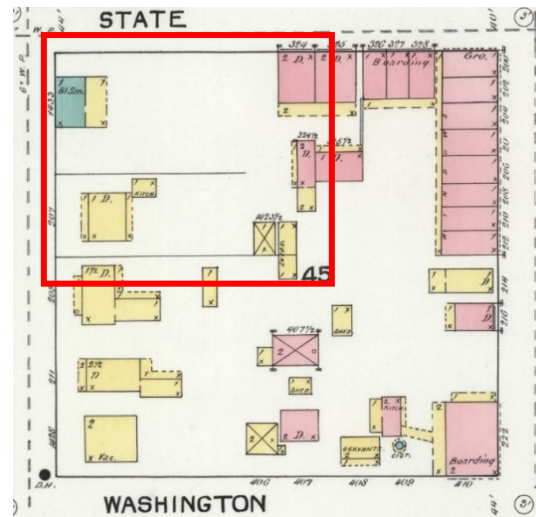


FIGURE 2-27. Detail from the 1892 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Square 2, annotated to show the location of the Johnson property. Library of Congress.

¹⁴⁰ Gould, 63; Hogan and Davis, *The Barber of Natchez*, 212.

¹⁴¹ Gould, 64.

¹⁴² Atkinson, 96-99.

rows of bottles were discovered on the site north of those by archeologists monitoring a piping trench in 2004 (see description below).¹⁴³ Although bottles were sometimes used as edging in nineteenth century gardens of middle- and upper-class houses, only two others in Natchez are known to survive to recent memory. The John Smith House at the corner of North Pearl and Jefferson streets in Natchez once had a bottle-edged parterre in front of the house with bottles dating to the mid-nineteenth century. These were removed and replaced with brick because tourists were stealing them.¹⁴⁴ In addition, the John Mayer House on Monroe Street in Natchez once also had

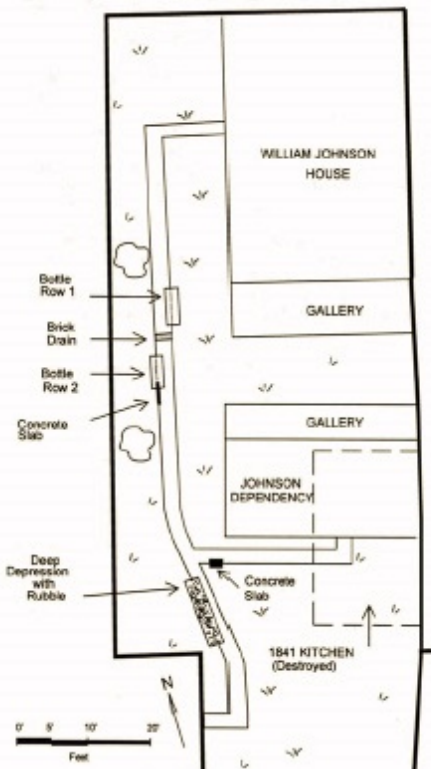


FIGURE 2-28. Diagram showing Atkinson's 1993 investigation of a utility trench on the Johnson site. Atkinson.

a bottle garden.¹⁴⁵ Oakland Plantation in Louisiana's Cane River Creole National Historical Park still retains its bottle-edged garden featuring wine and beer bottles. This tradition survived into the twentieth century in the South, with blue and brown snuff jars and glass bleach bottles used to line walkways in urban gardens.¹⁴⁶

The event that most impacted the landscape of the State Street lot during this time was the construction of a new kitchen dependency in 1897. This date is known because the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map for 1897 shows the outline of the new building with the note, "BEING BUILT" (Figure 2-30). It is not known why the old kitchen was demolished and replaced since it was also a two-story brick structure. Instead of being aligned north to south like the 1841 kitchen, the new dependency was oriented east to west to face the house. This alignment was possible because the family had acquired the Lapice lot, giving them more space to the west; if they had not, the new alignment would have limited their access to the rear of the lot. A bridge connecting the house and dependency second floor galleries would



FIGURE 2-29. Photograph of row of ale bottles found during 1993 utility trench investigation. Atkinson.

¹⁴³ Moses.

¹⁴⁴ Gladys Smith, interview by Mary W. Miller, 1970s. William Johnson House Site File, HNF, n.p., cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 47.

¹⁴⁵ Wendy Machlovitz, *Clara Lowenburg Moses: Memoir of a Southern Jewish Woman* (New Orleans: Museum of the Southern Jewish

Experience, 2000), cited in Mimi Miller, comments, 75% draft of CLR, January 28, 2021.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Westmancott, *African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 45-47.

likely have been added between 1897 and 1917.¹⁴⁷ In addition, it is possible that the freestanding wall between the Johnson and McCallum courtyards was also constructed in 1897 (Figure 2-31).

It is thought that a new kitchen dependency was also constructed in 1897 on the adjacent McCallum lot to replace one that had been built in 1849. As was done with the two houses, the Johnson dependency shared its east wall with the new McCallum dependency.¹⁴⁸

At the turn of the nineteenth century, comparisons of the 1897 and 1901 Sanborn maps reveal similarities: both show the 1897 kitchen dependency, with its wood frame gallery facing the rear house gallery across the courtyard (Figure 2-32 and see Figure 2-30). It also shows the McCallum house with a two-story brick dependency facing the house across a courtyard. An 8' brick wall divides the Johnson courtyard from that of

the McCallums. Replacing the two sheds at the rear of the property is a single large wood building labeled “storage” that extends fully across the entire 36' of the original lot at the south end. It has an open shed roof along its south side that extends into the property labeled as “Kilgarlin’s Wood Yard.” This shed would have been accessed from the wood yard’s driveway on Wall Street. The 1897 map no longer shows the two sheds that stood at the south fence of the Lapice lot in 1892. Both maps show a single small shed standing in the southeast corner of the lot.

The greatest change during this time was a large expansion of Clarence Johnson’s blacksmithing operation. The 1901 map shows the addition of a large shed roof at the intersection of State and S. Canal, a large shed on the south lot line, and a feature labeled “ENG.” It is possible that Clarence

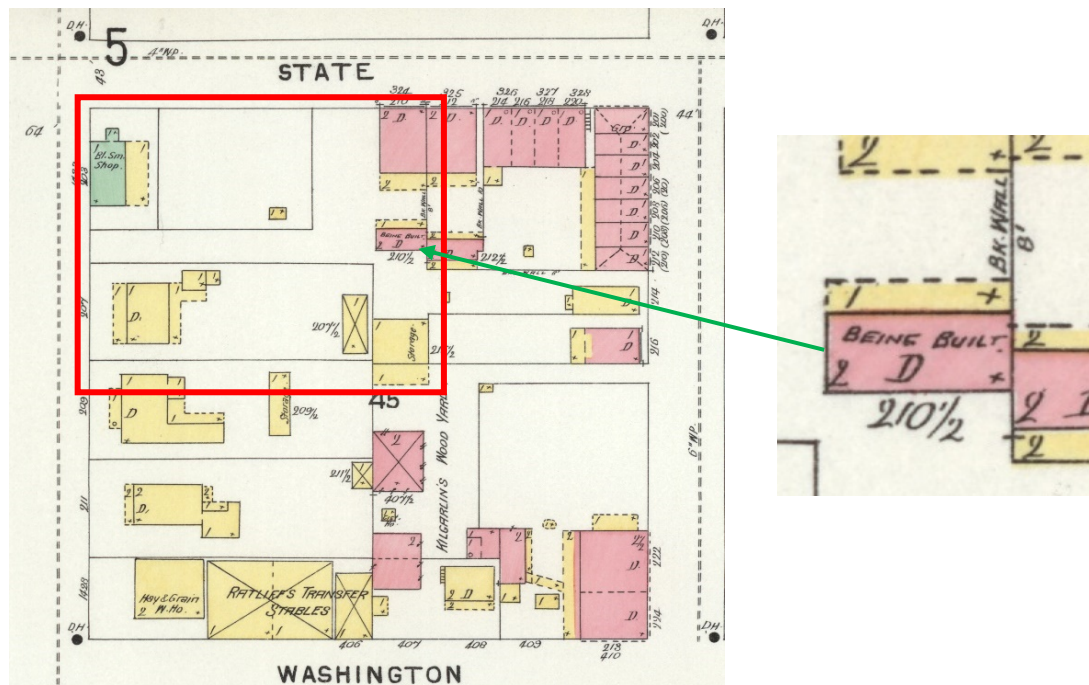


FIGURE 2-30. Detail from the 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Square 2, annotated to show the location of the Johnson property and note on dependency. Library of Congress.

¹⁴⁷ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 48.

¹⁴⁸ Atkinson, 37.

built the shed roof to protect a new steam-powered engine at his shop.

In 1900, the U.S. Census reported that there were 14 people living in the State Street house. Anna Johnson was listed as head of household and living with her sisters Kate (Catharine), Alice, and Josephine, all listed as schoolteachers. Clarence had moved back into the family home, bringing his wife Katherine, and their children Mable, William, Kenneth, and John. Clarence and his son Kenneth were listed as blacksmiths. There were also four boarders living with the Johnsons, including two teachers, a barber, and a paymaster.¹⁴⁹ They were accommodated on the second floor of the new dependency and by partitioning the first story commercial space.¹⁵⁰



FIGURE 2-31. Photograph taken in the 1990s, showing a freestanding wall between the Johnson and McCallum courtyards. Atkinson.

A New Generation (1901-1930)

(Map 2-3, 1930 Period Plan)

In 1901, Catharine Johnson died in the family home, bequeathing her interest in the property to her three sisters. She was buried near her father and grandmother in the Natchez City Cemetery.¹⁵¹ Anna Johnson retired from teaching in 1906 and moved permanently to her house on Peachland Plantation. Clarence closed his blacksmithing operation and helped his sister manage the sharecropping of Peachland with a handful of local families. Anna rarely traveled away from her country home except to see family in Natchez, but more often, the family would regularly visit her at the plantation on Sundays. Anna died in 1922 and was buried at Peachland.¹⁵²

In 1906, the Johnson family sold most of the Lapice lot, except the 10-foot-wide section closest to their house, to the Eastern Railway Company.¹⁵³ Between 1906 and 1910, the railway constructed the terminus of its line on the lot, providing both a freight and passenger depot (Figures 2-33 and 2-34). This addition would have dramatically changed the character of the Johnson's home lot, not only reducing its size, but bringing noise and pollution from train engines and a massive increase in foot and vehicular traffic just outside the door. The 1910 Sanborn map also shows that around the same time, the family sold off or otherwise released the portion of the lot with the large storage/garage building, reducing their lot back to its original 140' length. This map further indicates that they added a wood structure aligned north to south from the rear of the kitchen dependency. This was likely the "boys' workshop" remembered by Mary Louise

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Census 1900.

¹⁵⁰ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 47.

¹⁵¹ Gould, 93; Will Book 5, 305, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 47 and Research Notes, n.p.

¹⁵² Gould, 93, says 1916, and Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 63, says 1922.

Neither cites a reference for this information.

Given that she appears as head of household in the 1920 census count for the State Street property, 1922 is more likely.

¹⁵³ Jaeger Associates and David Hasty, *William Johnson House Cultural Landscape Inventory* (Atlanta: Southeast Regional Office, 2005), 23.

Miller as standing in that area in the 1920s (see below).

The 1910 U. S. Census reported ten people living in the State Street house. Anna had moved already, so Alice Johnson, spelled “Johnston” by the enumerator, was listed as 71 years old and head of household. She lived with her sister Josephine, shown as age 64. Clarence and his family, including his wife Catherine and children William (age 35), Kenneth (age 30), and Mabel (age 18), also continued to live in the family home. The census also listed Evelyn Smith, age 30, as “adopted daughter,” and two boarders—Pauline Elliott and Rachel Ross—who were schoolteachers.¹⁵⁴

At some point in the same year—after the census had been taken—Dr. William Roy Johnston, William T. Johnson’s grandson and Clarence’s son, came back to Natchez to practice medicine and moved into the family home.¹⁵⁵ Dr. Johnston had left Natchez to attend Wilberforce College and went on to obtain his medical degree at Howard University.¹⁵⁶ Clarence Johnson died in 1911, leaving his son and his son’s wife as the last Johnson family members to live in the State Street house.¹⁵⁷ The 1912 Natchez City Directory reported two heads of household at 210 State Street that year: Dr. W.R. Johnston and A. [Anna] L. Johnston, although she was not listed as in residence in the census and was actually already living at

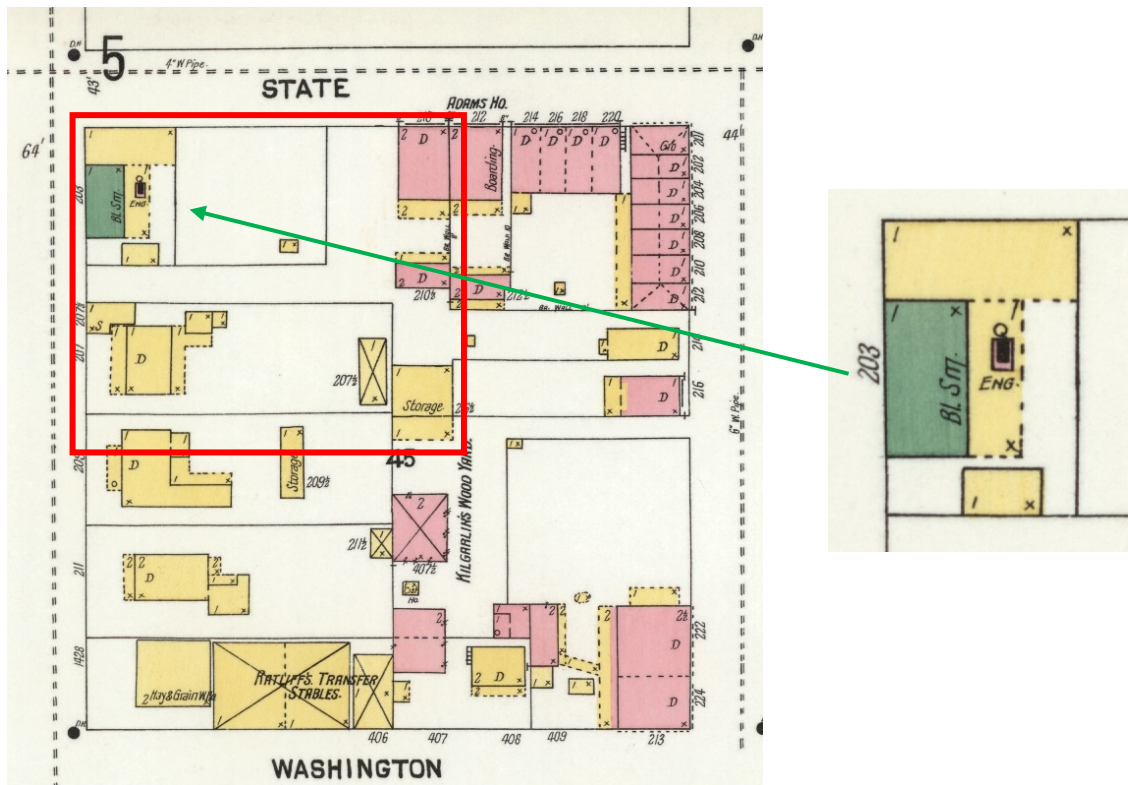


FIGURE 2-32. Detail from the 1901 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Square 2, annotated to show the location of the Johnson property and close-up of blacksmith shop. Library of Congress.

¹⁵⁴ U.S. Census, 1910.

¹⁵⁵ Index to Physicians, Pharmacists & Dentists, Starting 1808,” ed. Robert Shumway, computer

printout, HNF Library, NHF, 69, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 47.

¹⁵⁶ Gould, 93.

¹⁵⁷ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 44-45.

Peachland.¹⁵⁸ The house by then was divided into two apartments.¹⁵⁹

The 1920 U.S. Census showed Anna Johnson as head of household, so she may have moved back home from Peachland. She lived with her brother Richard, incorrectly listed in the census as age 70 when he was actually 83, and her sister Alice, also incorrectly listed as age 50 when she was actually 68. Dr. William Johnson, at age 38, was included in the count, although his family was not. The Johnsons had three boarders: a stable keeper, a seamstress, and Pauline Elliot, a long-time boarder who was a former schoolteacher and family friend. Two years after the census was taken, Anna Johnson died; she was buried at Peachland.¹⁶⁰

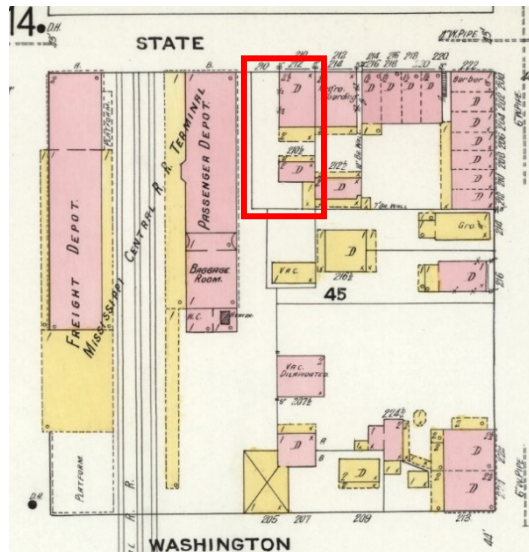


FIGURE 2-33. Detail from the 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Square 2, annotated to show the location of the Johnson property. Library of Congress.

The 1930 U.S. Census in listed William R. Johnson, a doctor, as head of household, living with his wife, Sally F., his aunts Josephine and Alice M. Johnston, and his niece, Mary L. Taylor (later Mrs. Mary Louise Miller).¹⁶¹ Mary Louise Miller was interviewed in the 1970s about her memories of the house in the 1920s and recalled the following, as indicated on her sketch (Figure 2-35):

- A. A wooden fence encircled the yard area, with a gate in the front where one exists currently.¹⁶²
- B. A water hydrant was located on the southwest corner of the main house. Water was drawn into white graniteware pitchers.
- C. A water hydrant was located on the southwest corner of the kitchen dependency.
- D. A cistern with hand pump was centrally located between the main house and the kitchen dependency.
- E. Dr. Johnston's garage ran across the back of the property, with an entrance on the south end. He had a car prior to his marriage to



FIGURE 2-34. Early postcard showing the Mississippi Central Depot next to the William Johnson House. Mississippi Rails.

¹⁵⁸ Polk's Natchez City Directory 1912 (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1917), 74, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 48.

¹⁵⁹ Mary Louise Miller interview, 4, 8, cited in Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 48.

¹⁶⁰ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 63.

¹⁶¹ U.S. Census, 1930.

¹⁶² The gate listed by Miller was a 42" wood single-leaf gate that was removed by the NPS in 2004 and replaced with a wood double-leaf gate to allow access to the back yard for construction equipment, likely to serve the renovation of the house and kitchen dependency. The new gate is centered on the north fence.

Sallie Feltus. Early on, he kept his horse Monetta across the street.

- F. The boys' workshop was located on the north side of the rear of the property. Here Alphonse and others would repair violins, mandolins, guitars, etc. It had a window, bench, and chairs characteristic of a tinker's shop. Later on, they also worked on clocks and scissors.
- G. Chicken coops were located at the back of the property. Ducks were also kept. Cows from the plantation were brought into town and kept in the yard if they were sick or needed watching. Also Dr. Johnston let his pointer and setter dogs run here.
- H. A privy was located almost in the back corner of the property. It had two sides for men and women, with the larger (north) side designated for women, and two holes on each side (none lower for children).
- I. A pecan tree stood in the center of the back part of the property. The yard also held white and red camellias, red japonicas, altheas, fig trees, and sweet olive.
- J. A pile of firewood was kept in the yard close to the back wall of the kitchen between the two doors.¹⁶³

Miller explained that the family did not grow vegetables at the town lot, but instead got them from Peachland.¹⁶⁴

In 1924, Josephine and Alice Johnson deeded their interest in the property to their nephew, Dr. William R. Johnston, and his wife Sallie. The deed also reports that the sisters had spent \$2,000 on improvements, likely reflecting the costs of remodeling cited earlier. The improvements included adding a gallery to the front, converting a window to a door, partitioning the first floor, connecting to electricity, gas, and city water, and replacing wood shingles with metal.¹⁶⁵ A new privy was constructed on the house site close to the southeast corner of the kitchen dependency sometime around 1930.¹⁶⁶

The improvements made to the property in the 1920s also likely included the concrete gate piers that were still present when the property was acquired for preservation in 1975 (Figure 2-36). These were also removed by the NPS in 2004 when staff replaced the 42" single-leaf gate with a wood, double-leaf gate centered on the north fence. Concrete began to be used to

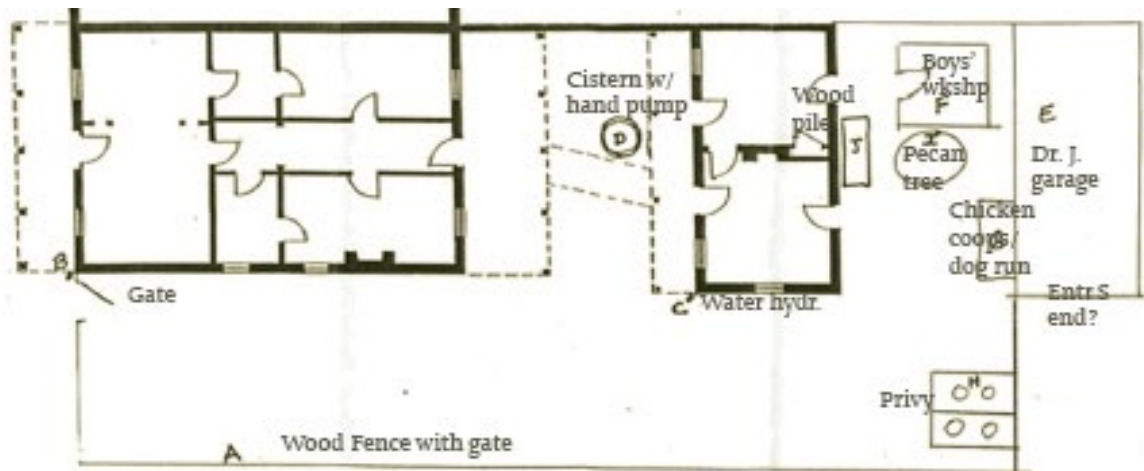


FIGURE 2-35. Sketch illustrating Mary Louise Miller's recollection of the Johnson House site during the 1920s, annotated to identify features. William Johnson House CLI.

¹⁶³ Mary Louise Miller interview, cited in Jaeger Associates and Hasty, 48. The identity of Alphonse and his relationship to the family is not known.

¹⁶⁴ Mary Louise Miller interview, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 54.

¹⁶⁵ Mary Louise Miller interview, 3 and 10, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 49.

¹⁶⁶ Padgett, 9.

create fence posts in the early twentieth century and may have been commercially manufactured to order locally or from catalogues.¹⁶⁷

The 1930 U.S. Census records five people living at the State Street house: William R. Johnson as head of household, his wife Sallie F. (Feltus), his niece Mary L. Taylor, and his two elderly aunts Josephine, age 80, and Alice M., age 88. Alice M. Johnston appears again in the 1935 Natchez city directory living with her nephew's family at 210 State Street. Josephine is not listed there, suggesting that she likely died sometime between 1930 and 1935. Dr. Johnson died in 1938, willing the State Street house to his wife, Sallie.¹⁶⁸

In the late 1930s, Sallie Johnston sold William Johnson's diary, along with other family papers, to Louisiana State University. The diary, edited by Hogan and Davis, was first published as *William Johnson's Natchez* by LSU Press in 1951, one-hundred years after Johnson's death.¹⁶⁹

Preservation of the William Johnson House

In 1975, Sallie Feltus Johnson willed the William Johnson House to her great-nephew, Spencer Griggs, and her great-niece, Mary Louise Miller.¹⁷⁰ In 1976, the Johnston heirs sold the house to the Preservation Society of Ellicott's Hill (PSEH) for \$35,148.53; the Mississippi



FIGURE 2-36. Photograph taken around 1975 of the front of the William Johnson House, and detail showing concrete gate piers. Over the Hill Historic District National Register Nomination.

¹⁶⁷ Erin McDonald, "Concrete fence posts: statues in the fields," abstract (master's thesis, Ball State University Department of Architecture, 2001), <https://cardinalscholar.bsu.edu/handle/handle/187044>.

¹⁶⁸ Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 49.

¹⁶⁹ Hogan and Davis, *William Johnson's Natchez*, xxiii-xxiv.

¹⁷⁰ Will Book 8, 344; Will Book 34, 199, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 49.

Department of Archives and History helped to buy it by administering a federal grant of \$17,500. The Preservation Society of Ellicott's Hill planned to preserve the house and eventually transfer it to an African American organization that could operate it as a site important in African American history.¹⁷¹

In 1978, PSEH, with funding from the National Park Service's Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, contracted with the University of Southern Mississippi for an archeological investigation at the William Johnson House. The study, conducted September 11-20 of that year, was initiated to supplement architectural studies being done by Koch and Wilson Architects of New Orleans. The principal issues studied were the status of the dependency (whether it was original or had been rebuilt), its orientation and dimensions if it was not the original, the location and construction of stairways to the second-floor balconies of both the front and rear houses, the structure of the central patio area, the location of a purported cistern, and information on the property's outbuildings. Principal investigator Thomas J. Padgett speculated that the dependency had been rebuilt to replace a former kitchen, oriented north to south, that had been destroyed by fire between 1892 and 1897. Excavations near a privy that was constructed in 1930 and still standing in 1978 suggested that it had been preceded by a series of privies located in the same general area. The archeologists found no evidence of the cistern or the stairways to the second-floor balconies.¹⁷²

The site plan recorded during the 1978 archeological investigation showed a 3-foot-wide concrete path leading from the front gate down the west side of the house to the back gallery, which was also paved in concrete (Figure 2-37). It also indicated that a privy stood behind the kitchen

dependency, which was described in the report as being shaded by a large pecan tree (see Figure 2-35). As mentioned above, based on excavations around the foundation of the 1841 dependency, the archeologists also suggested that a gallery with a brick paving extended along the west side of the building.¹⁷³

In 1979, the first historic structure report (HSR) was completed by Building Conservation Technology, Inc., of Washington, D.C. This was followed by restoration work, funded partially by a federal historic preservation grant administered by the state and partially by the PSEH. The PSEH hired Koch and Wilson of New Orleans to plan and supervise the

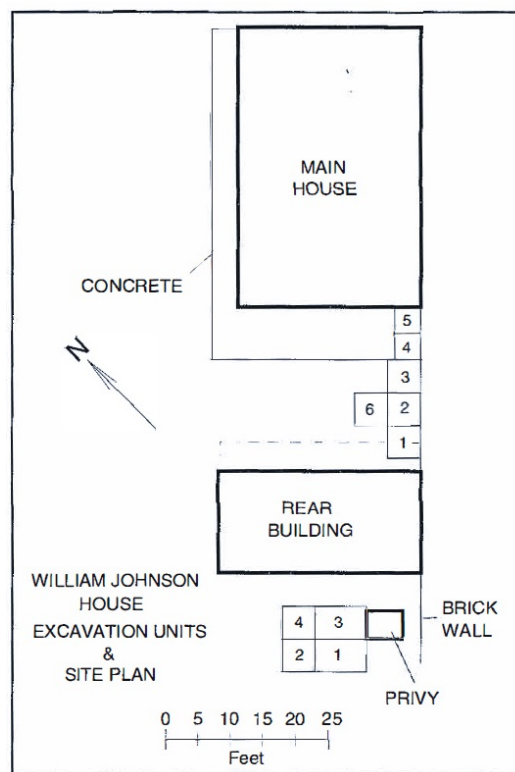


FIGURE 2-37. Diagram showing excavation units of the 1978 archeological investigation, the concrete walk along the west side of the house, the concrete porch, and the 1930 privy. Padgett.

¹⁷¹ Deed Book 13-J, 431, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 49.

¹⁷² Padgett.

¹⁷³ Padgett, 4, 15, 17.

restoration work, with Henry Krotzer leading.¹⁷⁴

On October 7, 1988, Congress passed Public Law 100-479, establishing Natchez National Historical Park, and authorizing the acquisition of Melrose, the site of Fort Rosalie, and an administrative site. It also called for establishing historic districts as part of the park to preserve and interpret significant historic properties in the city that were not owned by the NPS. The law stated that the purpose of the park is to preserve and interpret the following:

1. The history of Natchez, Mississippi, as a significant city in the history of the American South;
2. The sites and structures associated with all the peoples of Natchez and its surrounding area, from the earliest inhabitants to the modern era, including “Blacks both slave and free;”
3. The region’s social, political, and economic development with emphasis on the pre- and post-Civil War eras; and
4. The region’s commercial and agricultural history, especially in relation to the Mississippi River and cotton.

In 1989, the PSEH received a grant of \$7,600 from Seagram’s Whiskey to hire a mason to repoint deteriorated areas of the house walls and a contractor to stabilize the first story section of the dependency’s gallery.¹⁷⁵

On September 28, 1990, Congress passed Public Law 101-399, which amended the original enabling legislation by authorizing the acquisition by donation of the William Johnson House and the McCallum House. In 1990, the PSEH sold the William Johnson House to the City of Natchez, which

immediately donated the property and the adjacent McCallum House to the National Park Service.¹⁷⁶

In 1990, the park was administered as part of Natchez Trace Parkway, although operations began with the assignment of a unit manager to help with the Melrose acquisition and development of a general management plan and a land protection plan. Park staff identified local African American history as an area of study that lacked much accurate and reliable data, and contracted with a historian to research this history from 1798 to 1877 in Natchez. Professor Ronald L.F. Davis of California State University at Northridge, author of *Good and Faithful Labor: From Slavery to Sharecropping in the Natchez District, 1860-1880*, was chosen.¹⁷⁷ In 1993, he completed the special history study, *The Black Experience in Natchez, 1720-1880*.¹⁷⁸

Nineteen ninety-one marked the beginning of what would be a series of three archeological investigations at the William Johnson House conducted by the NPS Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) between December 1991 and January 1993 (Figure 2-38). The goal of the 1991 and 1992 investigations was to gather information on construction methods used for the house and more information about the dependency. The third, conducted in 1993, monitored the backhoe excavation of a utility line trench on the grounds. The first investigation discovered, among other things, burned footings of Harriet Battles’s frame house, as well as remnants of houses built on the site from 1775 to 1820. The second uncovered remnants of the foundation walls of the 1841 dependency, a brick patio, and edging of a planting bed. The third discovered the two lines of bottles

¹⁷⁴ William Johnson House File, Preservation Society of Ellicott’s Hill, NATC, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 50.

¹⁷⁵ Moss interview, cited in Ann Beha Associates, *HSR*, 51.

¹⁷⁶ Jaeger Associates and Hasty, 25; and Natchez National Historical Park *Narrative Report for*

Calendar Year 1990 (Natchez MS: National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park, 1991).

¹⁷⁷ Natchez National Historical Park *Narrative Report for Calendar Year 1990*.

¹⁷⁸ Ronald L.F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez, 1720-1880* (Natchez: Natchez National Historical Park, April 1993).

mentioned above, as well as the portion of the brick gutter or drain.¹⁷⁹

The early 1990s also saw a campaign of extensive repair and restoration work on the William Johnson House and dependency, starting in 1991. In 1992, the National Park Service replaced an existing vertical board fence that stood across the front of the property, leaving the original arch-top, vertical plank gate that was flanked by two cast concrete square piers. At the same time, the NPS built a pressure-treated wood boardwalk leading from the gate to the kitchen dependency. In 1993, HVAC was added to the dependency.

In 1995, the NPS contracted with Ann Beha Associates to provide a new HSR for the William Johnson House. The goal for the HSR was to build on the previous studies, provide a general building assessment, and offer treatment and recommendations for the building as part of a historic site. The HSL reported that while a lawn covered most of the west yard, there were “plantings beside the fence” (red canna lilies), a fig tree near the kitchen dependency, and a frame storage building southwest of the dependency.¹⁸⁰

In 1998 and 1999, in preparation for work to stabilize the William Johnson House, SEAC conducted excavations of the courtyard to locate historic cisterns and physical evidence of historic galleries associated with the house and its dependency (Figure 2-38). Remains of brick piers and a brick floor associated with the 1841 dependency were found, but no cisterns. Archeologists, however, identified a large circular area of undisturbed subsoil between the house and

kitchen dependency. that they concluded was the remains of a small hill that had been cut away.¹⁸¹ It is also possible, due to its shape and location, that it was clean soil used to fill the abandoned underground cistern.

The following few years saw planning for restoration, which continued to exceed available funds. In 1999, the park received \$876,000 for restoration of the William Johnson House but a cost estimate doubled the price for the work, so a value analysis was conducted.¹⁸² The following year saw approval only for Phase 1, including partial restoration of the Johnson House and stabilization of the McCallum house.¹⁸³ In

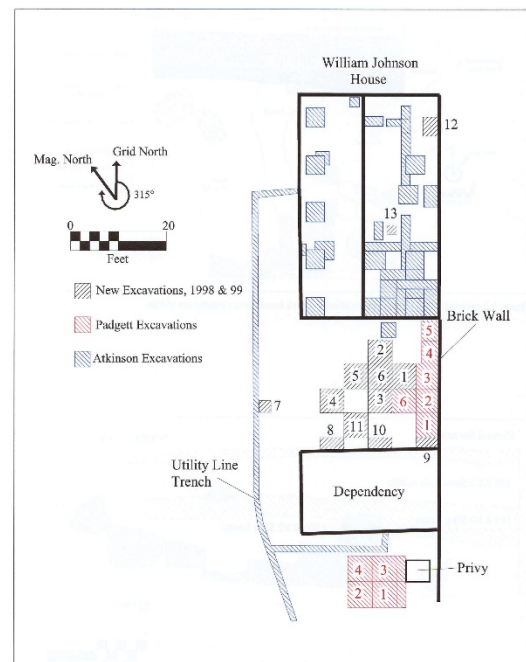


FIGURE 2-38. Diagram showing areas of excavation prior to and during the 1998-1999 excavation period, as well as the 1978 and early 1990s investigations. Cornelison.

¹⁷⁹ Atkinson, 96-99.

¹⁸⁰ Ann Beha Associates HSR, 1, 54, 82.

¹⁸¹ John E. Cornelison, Jr., Charles F. Lawson, Tammy Cooper, Rolando L. Garza, Lou Groh, and Ariana Slemmens, *Archeological Testing of the Area between the William Johnson House and its Dependency, William Johnson House, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez, Mississippi*, SEAC Acc. 1356, 2005, 10, 33; and National Park Service, *Narrative Report for*

Calendar Year 10/01/97-9/30/98 (Natchez MS: National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park, 1999).

¹⁸² National Park Service, *Narrative Report for Calendar Year 10/01/98 – 9/30/99* (Natchez MS: National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park, 1999).

¹⁸³ National Park Service, *Narrative Report for Calendar Year 10/01/99 – 9/30/00* (Natchez MS:

2001, new Title 8 funds allowed for full restoration of both of the buildings, some work on the Johnson kitchen dependency, and final project approval.¹⁸⁴ In 2002, a contract was awarded for the work, which continued until 2004, when the William Johnson House was opened to the public on September 30.¹⁸⁵ An elevator was added behind the McCallum House during the restoration to provide wheelchair access between the first and second floors.¹⁸⁶

Construction work under the house in 2002 revealed subsurface features that were investigated by SEAC archeologists. The archeologists concluded that these appeared to be brick piers or related brick features associated with the Overaker House, which preceded the Battles House.¹⁸⁷

Starting in 2003, a cultural landscape inventory (CLI) was conducted at the William Johnson House. During field work for the CLI, researchers documented the white-painted wood fence with wide vertical planks along the north property line from the Johnson House to the depot building. Its hinged, arch-top, vertical plank gate, which gave access from the yard to the street at the northwest corner of the house, was flanked by two cast concrete square piers (Figure 2-39). This gate or one similar in design was present in the early twentieth century according to an interview with Mrs. Mary Louise Miller, who lived in the Johnson House as a child in the 1920s.¹⁸⁸ When it replaced the fence in 1992, the NPS had left the old gate in place.

From 2004 to 2006, remaining restoration work was completed at the site, chiefly comprising finishes in the McCallum House, roof replacements, a wood security fence, and moisture remediation in the root cellar.¹⁸⁹ In February 2004, improvements were made to stormwater drainage within the site. The new system collected stormwater from downspouts on the southwest and southeast corners of the house and from the southwest corner of the kitchen dependency. The water was conveyed underground to a pipe installed just inside the west fence line, and thence northward to connect to the city stormwater system. An archeological investigation was conducted to monitor the excavation of trenches for these pipes. Archeologists uncovered six landscape features, including four rows of ginger beer bottles similar to those found by Atkinson in 1993.¹⁹⁰ The work also uncovered an extension of the brick drain found by Atkinson during the same 1993 project. The sixth feature was a brick foundation wall and stairway headwall that appeared to be associated with the Battles House (Figure 2-40).¹⁹¹

In August 2004, archeologists monitored the excavation of 17 postholes that were dug for the installation of a wood privacy fence around the site. While archeologist found many artifacts in the posthole fill, most notable for the CLR were lenses of ash found in the posthole closest to the southwest corner of the kitchen dependency, suggesting that this may have

National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park, 2000).

¹⁸⁴ National Park Service, *Narrative Report for Calendar Year 10/01/00 – 9/30/01* (Natchez MS: National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park, 2001).

¹⁸⁵ National Park Service, *Narrative Report for Calendar Year 10/01/03 – 9/30/04* (Natchez MS: National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park, 2004).

¹⁸⁶ William Johnson House Cultural Landscape Report Scope of Work, PMIS 277811, 2. NATC Museum Curator Cheryl Waldrep reports that the elevator was replaced in 2018.

¹⁸⁷ Jill Y. Halchin, *Trip Report on Archeological Investigations Under the William Johnson House, Natchez [National] Historical Park, Natchez, Mississippi, and Other Tasks in Mississippi, November 12-22 [2002]*, SEAC Acc. 1821.

¹⁸⁸ Mary Louise Miller interview.

¹⁸⁹ National Park Service, *Narrative Report for Calendar Year 10/01/04 – 9/30/05* (Natchez MS: National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park, 2004).

¹⁹⁰ Atkinson, 96-99.

¹⁹¹ Moses.

been where the household burned their trash.¹⁹²

During the August 2004 investigation, archeologists also excavated eight test units at the southeast corner of the William Johnson House site. This was an area where the Johnsons had constructed at least three privies and built a variety of sheds and pens during their tenure. Archeologists located several postholes with artifacts indicating that they were from fences surrounding the property before the twentieth century. The team also uncovered a brick pier that may have been the corner of a frame addition built onto the 1841 dependency. Alternatively, it may have been associated with another outbuilding, such as a privy.¹⁹³



FIGURE 2-39. Arch-top, vertical plank entrance gate at the William Johnson House in 2003. Jaeger Associates.

In 2004, after the archeological investigation was complete, NPS staff replaced the site's perimeter fence. The work included removing and replacing the original concrete posts of the Johnson-era fence with wood posts. The concrete posts had stood at approximately ten feet on center along with west and southwest property lines (Figure 2-41). Work also included removing the original arch-top gate and replacing it with a double-leaf wood gate centered on the north fence, making it easier to bring equipment into the site for construction projects.¹⁹⁴ The gate is currently in storage at the park shop.¹⁹⁵

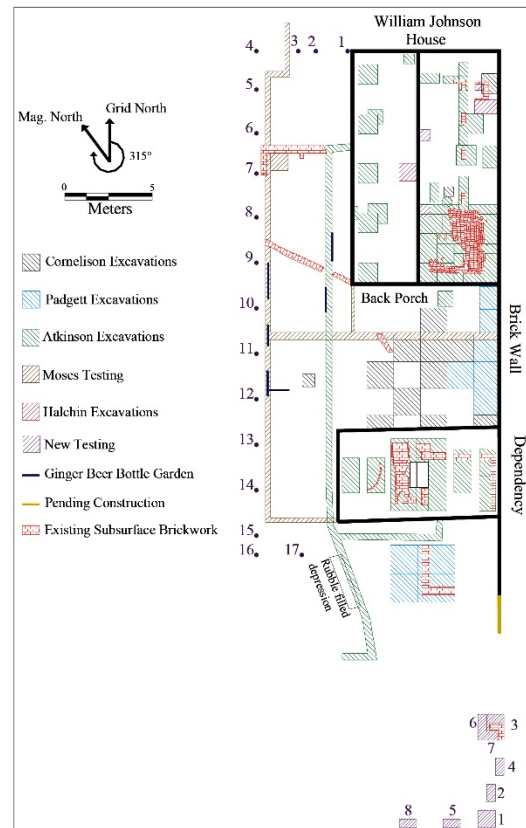


FIGURE 2-40. Diagram showing the locations of the 2004 excavation and preceding it. Lawson.

¹⁹² Charles F. Lawson, *Trip Report on Archeological Testing for a Proposed Fence Surrounding the William Johnson House Property and Ventilation Access Holes in the Johnson House Basement, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez, Mississippi, Aug. 2-16, 2004*, SEAC Acc. 1916 and 1920.

¹⁹³ Lawson.

¹⁹⁴ Jaeger Associates and Hasty, 32.

¹⁹⁵ Kathleen Bond, comments on 95% draft CLR, Dec. 3, 2021, "20210804 NATC Wm Johnson CLR 95% CLR Combined Comments-resolved (DCH)--CM2 with add by Kathleen," project electronic files.

SITE HISTORY

Plants identified at the property in 2005 for the CLI included a large crape myrtle planted in the neutral ground on State Street just outside the gate. Inside the fenced house yard and parallel to the side of the depot stood several clumps of canna lilies (*Canna* sp.), one althea (*Hibiscus syriacus*), and one fig (*Ficus carica*). This fig tree has been in that location since the 1920s.¹⁹⁶ Opposite the northwest corner of the dependency building stood a 12" caliper, densely-branched, twin-trunk devilwood, or American olive (*Osmanthus americanus*) (see Figure 2-41). At the time of the site assessment this plant was loaded with dark fruit and attracted numerous birds. Beyond the devilwood stood a 12" caliper American elm (*Ulmus americana*), and at the very back of the property stood two paper mulberries (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) just inside the south property line that had 20" and 24" caliper trunks (Figure 2-42). The balance of open space consisted of a lawn in poor condition.¹⁹⁷

In 2005, new telephone service box and a new air conditioning unit on a concrete pad had been installed near the southeast corner of the dependency. An older gas meter was located on the west side of the Johnson House. Just outside the west property line were four air conditioning units, two gas



FIGURE 2-41. Johnson House side yard 2003-2004, with concrete fence post to the left, devilwood clump in left center, and crape myrtle beyond far fence. Jaeger Associates.

¹⁹⁶ Mary Louise Miller interview.

¹⁹⁷ Jaeger Associates and Hasty, 38.

meters, an electric load center, and an electric meter that were all associated with the adjacent depot building. An electric transformer on a concrete pad, two electric service centers, and a telephone pedestal were located just inside the southwest corner property line and were also associated with the depot building. A wooden utility pole located just outside the north property line supported overhead electric power lines connecting to another utility pole across State Street. Overhead cable and telephone lines, as well as additional electric lines, connected to other utility poles along State Street in front of the Johnson House. A water meter was set in the sidewalk just outside the fence and a water hydrant just inside the fence. A sewer/drain vent was located at the rear of the McCallum House.¹⁹⁸

In 2010, the park installed a large back-up generator at the William Johnson House. Because the generator runs on natural gas, a new gas line had to be installed. The trench for the gas line ran parallel to the west fence line just west of the drainage line installed in 2004. SEAC archeologists monitored the work and while they uncovered many artifacts, few were associated with any particular subsurface feature. The one exception was in the area southwest of the



FIGURE 2-42. Two paper mulberries stood just inside the south property line in 2003-2004. Jaeger Associates.

¹⁹⁸ Jaeger Associates and Hasty, 37.

kitchen dependency, which earlier investigations suggested may have been a place where the family burned trash.¹⁹⁹

In 2014, work on restoring the kitchen dependency continued, addressing long-term deterioration of brickwork, mortar, and interior plaster. In 2015, recognizing the need to improve stormwater drainage at the site, the park replaced the drainpipes installed in 2004 with larger pipes, which were more capable of handling the flow from the roofs of the house and dependency. The work was monitored by SEAC archeologists, who made no notable discoveries within the trenches.²⁰⁰

During the same 2015 trip, the archeologists conducted a ground penetrating radar (GPS) study within the site of the William Johnson House (Figure 2-43). They collected data from two grids: one was in the area between the William Johnson House and the privacy fence to the west; this grid measured about 16 by 26 feet. The second grid, at about 20 by 49 feet, covered most of the back yard south of the kitchen dependency. The first grid revealed an area of high reflection at its south end (Figure 2-44). This is also the area where three rows of bottles were found in previous investigations and is thought to be the location of a bottle garden on the western side of the site. The second grid revealed an area of high reflection around the backup generator where soil disturbance would have occurred during its installation.²⁰¹

Preservation work on the dependency continued in 2016, including masonry conservation and plaster repairs. Finally, the connecting gallery on the rear of the

Johnson House was repaired and galleries of both houses were painted.²⁰²

Attempts to improve stormwater drainage on the site in 2015 failed to address water problems that continued to have a negative effect on building conditions. Contractors who visited the site in 2019 noted that building gutter systems were not functioning as they should. Instead of being conveyed into the underground system, stormwater was pouring over gutter edges, falling to the ground, and splashing up onto wood and historic brick and mortar, causing deterioration. They recommended a



FIGURE 2-43. Diagram showing the location of the trenching and the two GPR grid surveys. Seibert.

¹⁹⁹ Stephen Andrew Wise, *Archeological Monitoring Prior to the Installation of a Back-Up Generator at the William Johnson House, Natchez National Historical Park, August 30, 2010*, SEAC Acc. #2317.

²⁰⁰ Michael Seibert, *Geophysical Survey for Sub-Surface Anomalies in Preparation for Repainting the Foundation of Melrose*

Plantation and Monitoring of Trenching at William Johnson House, Natchez National Historical Park (NATC), Natchez Mississippi, March 2-6, 2015, SEAC Acc. #2710.

²⁰¹ Seibert.

²⁰² "Preservation Work Plan for Masonry Conservation," (Natchez: Natchez National Historical Park, December 10, 2016), 1.

SITE HISTORY

redesign of the gutter systems and development of a surface level grading plan to achieve positive drainage away from building walls.²⁰³

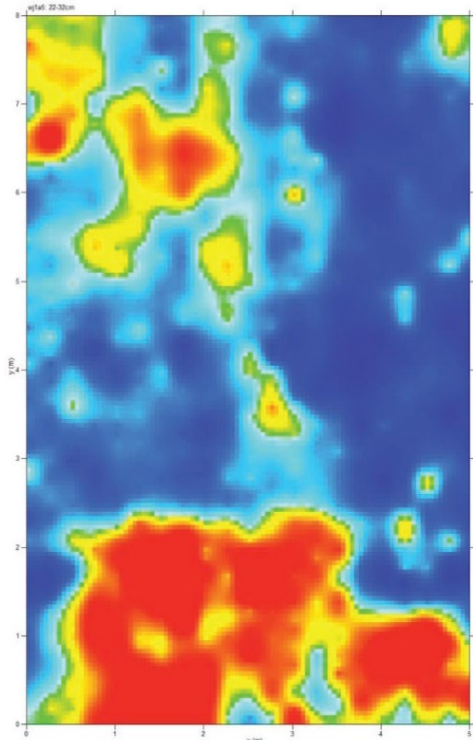


FIGURE 2-44. Image of Grid 1 GPR, showing the area of a possible bottle garden at its south end. Seibert.

²⁰³ Letter from Brian Goad of Suzanne Turner Associates to Robert Hotes of Joseph K.

Oppermann-Architect, P.A., November 5, 2019, project digital files.

William Johnson
House, Natchez
National Historical
Park

Legend

- 1851 Boundary
- Building
- Possible building
- Brick paving
- Fence
- Tree
- Possible tree

Sources:

Jordan, Kaiser & Sessions Map of
Topographic Survey, William
Johnson House and McCallum
House, 5/20/2020

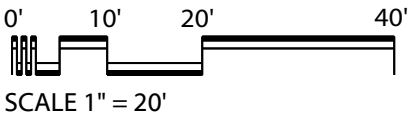
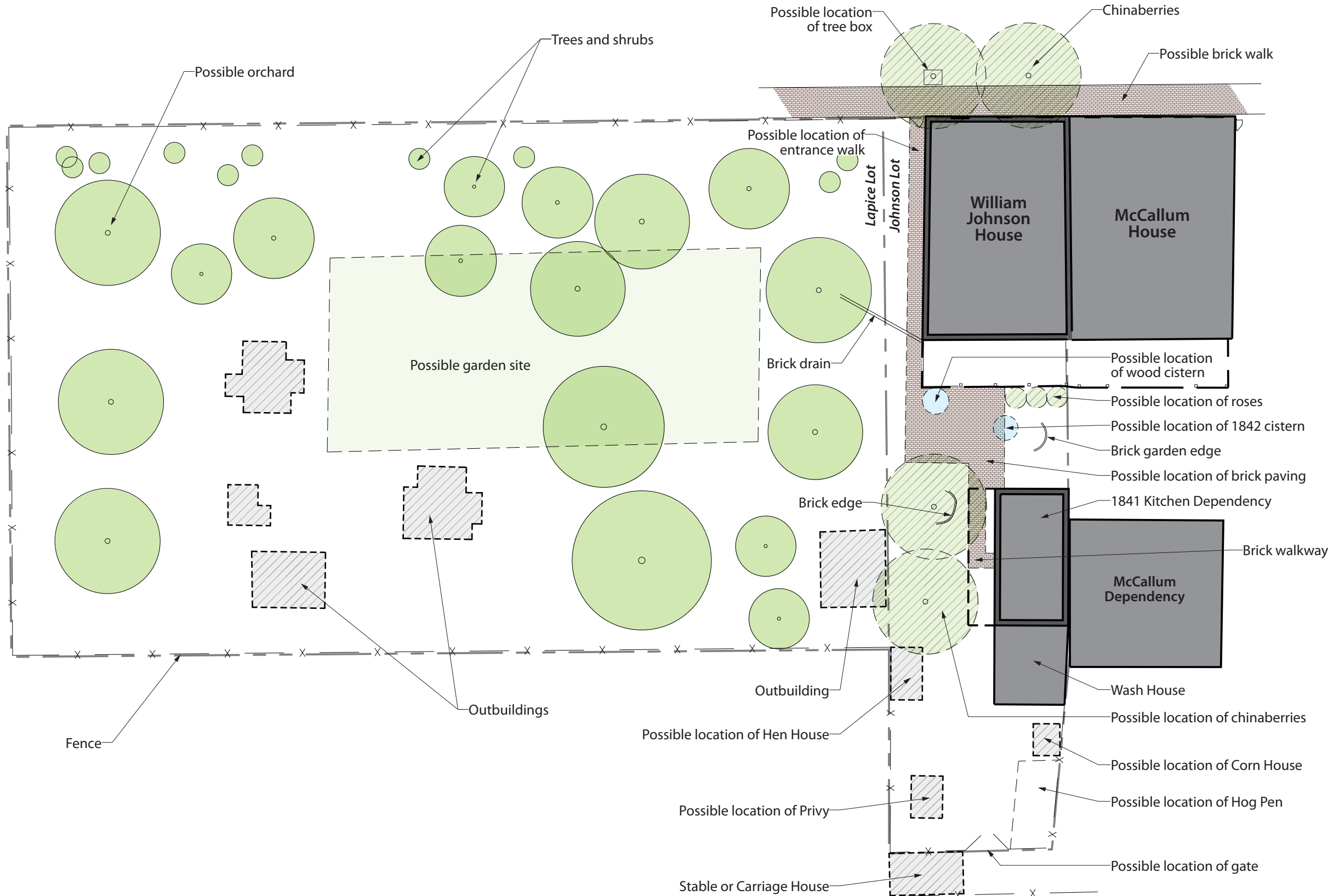
Wilson, John M. 1864 Map of
Defences of Natchez and
Vicinity.

Padgett, Thomas. Excavations at
the William Johnson House,
1978, 11 and 64.

Atkinson, James R. William
Johnson House Complex,
1999, 73 and 76.

Notes:

The locations of trees shown on the
Lapice lot were based on those shown
in Wilson's 1864 Map of Defences of
Natchez and Vicinity.



William Johnson House, Natchez National Historical Park

Legend

- 1851 Boundary
- 2019 Boundary
- Building
- Possible building
- Brick paving
- Fence

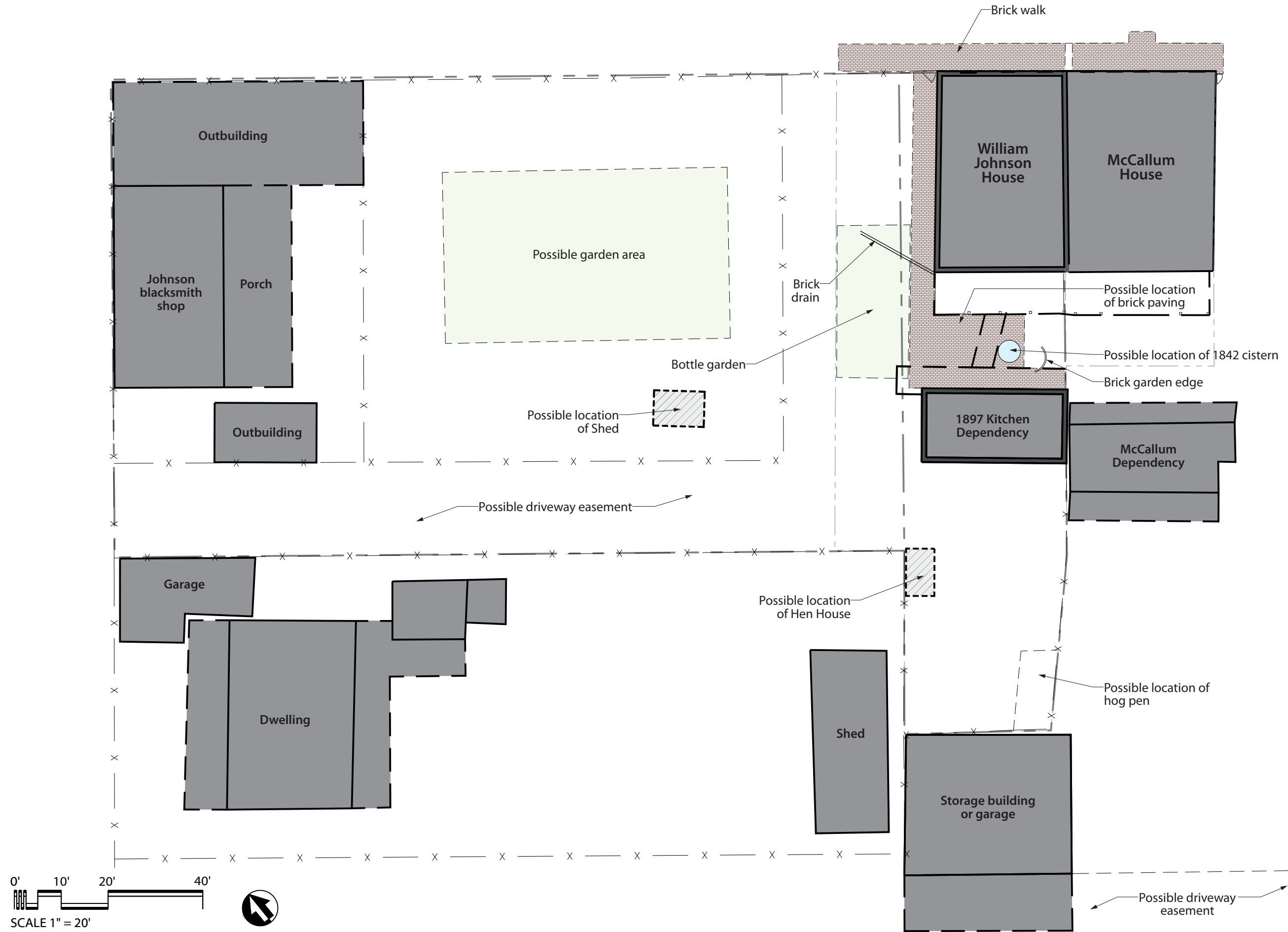
Sources:

Jordan, Kaiser & Sessions Map of Topographic Survey, William Johnson House and McCallum House.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, 1901.

Notes:

There were no sources available to indicate the locations of trees during this period.



for

William Johnson House, Natchez National Historical Park

Legend

- 2019 Boundary
- Building
- Possible building
- Brick paving
- Concrete paving
- Fence
- Tree

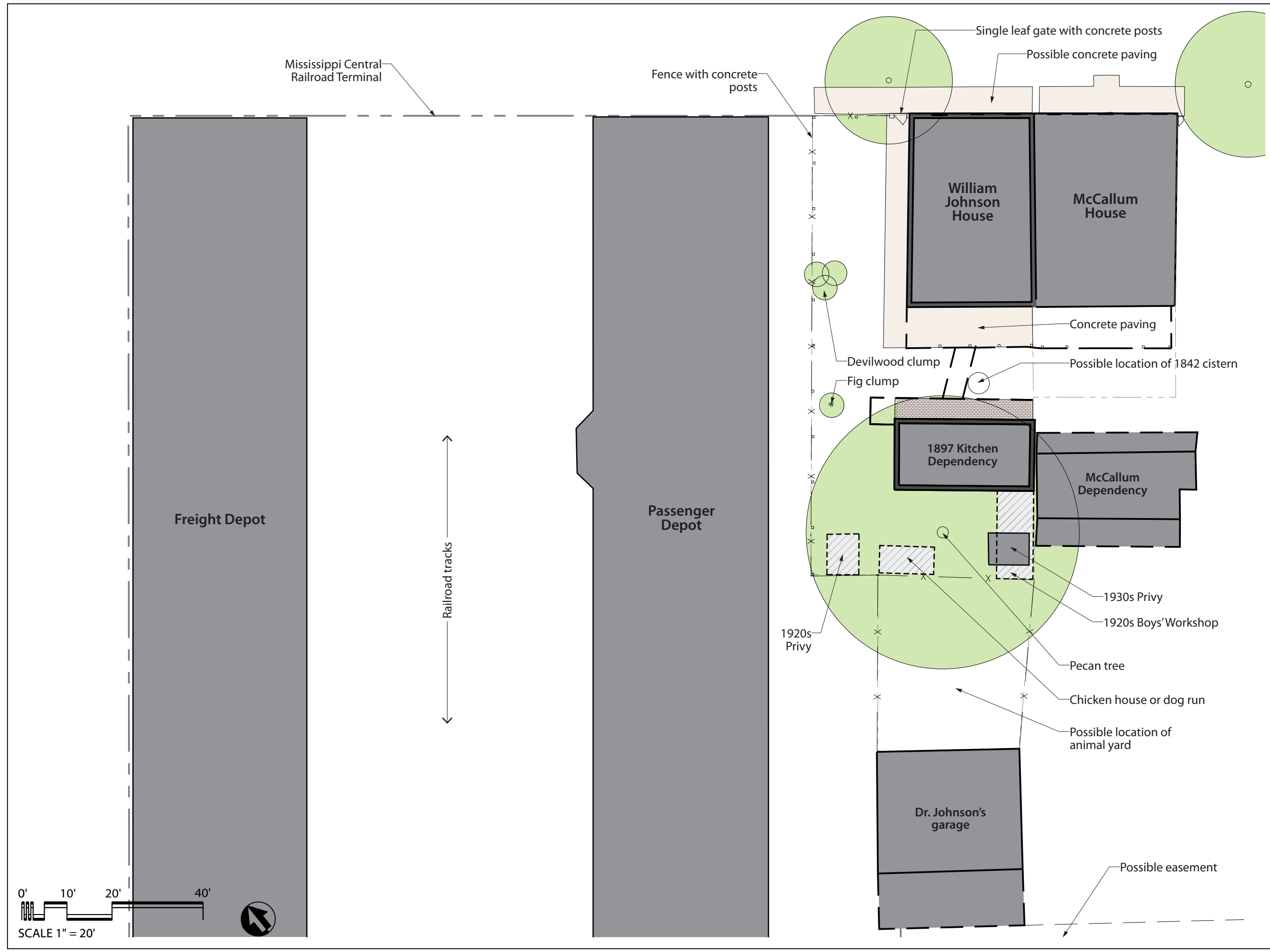
Sources:

Jordan, Kaiser & Sessions Map of Topographic Survey, William Johnson House and McCallum House.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, 1910.

Mary Louise Miller Interview Sketch Plan

2005 CLI Site Plan.



Existing Conditions

Introduction

The William Johnson House cultural landscape, comprises 0.14 acres located on the south side of State Street in historic downtown Natchez, Mississippi. Its historic resources include the William Johnson House, a two-story brick kitchen dependency, a boundary fence and a remnant landscape containing archeological evidence of its use by the family. To the east of the William Johnson House stands the McCallum House, and to the west is the former passenger depot for the Mississippi Eastern Railway, now housing residential units. To the north of the site is a parking lot and to the south are residential lots.

This chapter describes the existing conditions of the property's cultural landscape characteristics in narrative form, illustrated with photographs and plan-view graphics. Each cultural landscape feature is identified as belonging to at least one of several characteristics defined by the NPS in *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, and its condition assessed as either good, fair, poor, or unknown.¹ Inventory numbers of each feature listed in the NPS Cultural Resources Inventory System for historic structures (CRIS HS), cultural landscapes (CRIS CL), archeological resources, and ethnographic resources are noted when available.

¹ Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports:*

Cultural Landscape Features

(Map 3-1, Existing Conditions)

Natural Systems and Features

Topography

The William Johnson House is located within the Loess Hills Physiographic Unit of the Lower Mississippi River Valley (Figure 3-1). This unit is characterized as highly dissected with high

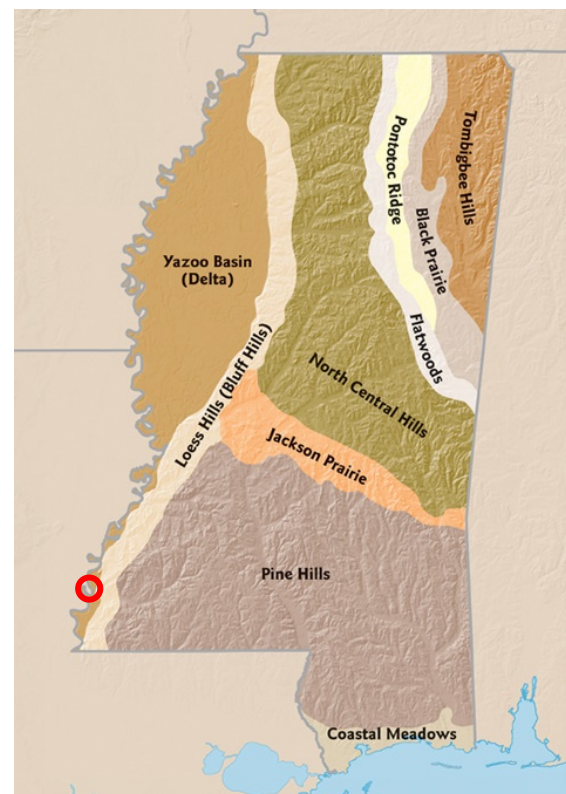


FIGURE 3-1. Physiographic map of Mississippi. The red circle indicates the location of Natchez in the Loess Hills Physiographic Unit. State of Mississippi.

Contents, Process, and Techniques (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1998), 53 and 67.

ridges standing between streams. Its soils are alluvial and colluvial materials, primarily loess, a thick layer of wind-blown river silt sediment. Due to the erosive nature of these soils, the Loess Hills range between 200 and 400 feet above mean sea level with differences of 100 feet or more between ridges and stream bottoms.²

Downtown Natchez was established on the flattest portion of the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. The William Johnson House stands at approximately 196 feet above mean sea level, about 140 feet above the Mississippi River banks. The house site is quite flat, sloping only where graded to drain at 2% maximum (Figure 3-2). The highest point is the far southeastern corner of the rear yard, where the ground slopes about 5% to 197 feet above mean sea level.

As described by William Johnson in his diary, wet soils and lack of drainage was a problem in the nineteenth century and continues to be a problem today. A project to address drainage issues was initiated in 2019.

Soils

The Memphis series of soils underlies most of downtown Natchez, including the William Johnson House. This deep, moderately permeable soil forms in loess deposits sometimes over four feet deep; these are well-drained only when sloping. Typically, the surface layer of the Memphis series on the flat ridgetop of Natchez where the house stands is a silt loam about 8-12 inches thick on top of a silty clay loam over 24 inches thick. These soils are sometimes strongly acidic but high in natural fertility.³

Vegetation

Native trees typically found growing in the Memphis series loess soils include loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) and upland hardwoods. Upland hardwoods contain many oak species: white (*Quercus alba*), water (*Q. nigra*), black (*Q. velutina*), chestnut (*Q. montana*), swamp chestnut (*Q. michauxii*), and red (*Q. rubra*). Other large hardwoods include tulip tree

(*Liriodendron tulipifera*), mockernut hickory (*Carya tomentosa*), bitternut hickory (*C. cordiformis*), walnut (*Juglans nigra*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), slippery elm (*U. fulva*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Carolina basswood (*Tilia americana*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), and hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*).

Smaller hardwoods and flowering trees that grow in the Memphis series loess include blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), umbrella tree (*Magnolia tripetala*), Southern magnolia (*M. grandifolia*), cucumber magnolia (*M. acuminata*), bigleaf magnolia (*M. macrophylla*),

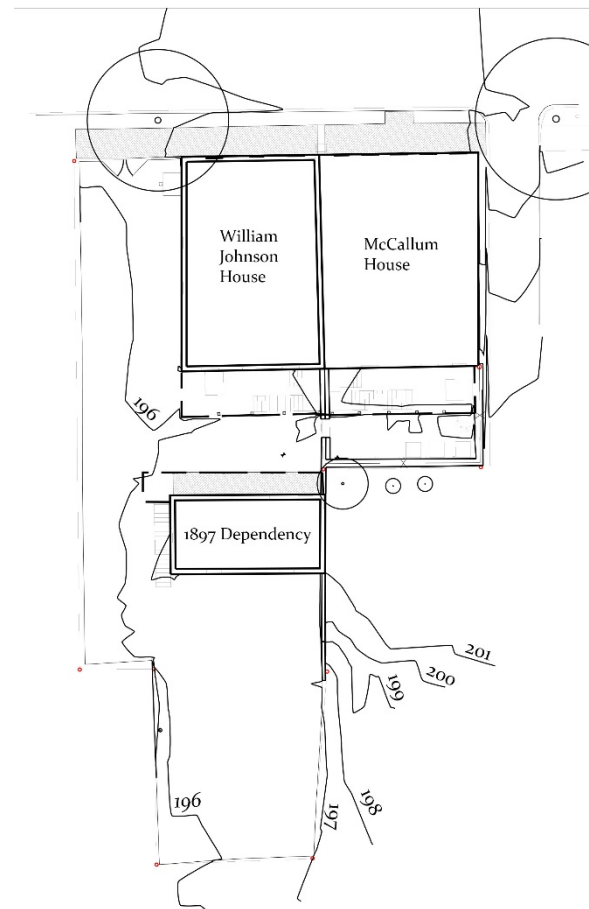


FIGURE 3-2. Topographic plan of the William Johnson House and adjacent McCallum House lots, annotated to illustrate the flat topography of the Johnson lot. Jordan, Kaiser & Sessions Map of Topographic Survey.

² Hahn, 7-8.

³ *Soil Survey of Adams County* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1970).

American chinquapin (*Castanea pumila*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), basswood (*Tilia* sp.), mulberry (*Morus rubra*), American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*), honey locust (*Glenditsia triacanthos*), redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), dogwood (*Cornus florida*), sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*), winged elm (*Ulmus alata*), and American plum (*Prunus americana*).⁴

Native small trees and shrubs that do well in loess soils include oak-leaved hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*), pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), smooth hydrangea (*H. arborescens*), spice bush (*Lindera benzoin*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and highbush huckleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*).

Native forbs and grasses of the Memphis loess include Southern shield fern (*Dryopteris normalis*), asters (*Aster* sp.), beggar's tick (*Bidens frondosa*), bellwort (*Uvularia* sp.), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.), Indian pink (*Spigelia marilandica*), milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.), seedbox (*Ludwigia* sp.), sunflower (*Helianthus* sp.), sedge (*Carex* sp.), violets (*Viola* sp.), crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum*

acrostichoides), fragile fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), wall-fern (*Pteris serrulata* Poir.), poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*), white baneberry (*Actaea alba*), and ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*).⁵

Land Use

The William Johnson House is used today as a historic house museum. The first floor contains an exhibit room with interactive interpretive programs and universally accessible displays. Its second floor has been restored and is furnished with many of the Johnson family's original pieces to interpret their living quarters. The building's third floor attic has not been restored and stands empty. The 1897 kitchen dependency is also used for interpretation, including a display of archeological remains of paving and a planting bed border associated with the 1841 kitchen dependency. The adjacent McCallum House contains a visitor center, public restrooms, and a bookstore on its first floor; offices for National Park Service staff on its second floor; and mechanical equipment and a work/storage space on its third floor. The landscape of the complex has not yet been developed to support this interpretive mission.

Spatial Organization

The William Johnson House stands facing State Street in downtown Natchez (Figure 3-3). Just one and one-half blocks to the west is the upper end of Silver Street, which leads down to Natchez Under-the-Hill. William Johnson would have taken this route to the riverfront regularly to check on his barber shop and conduct business. On the southeast corner of Square 2 is Texada, which was established there between 1798 and 1805.⁶ The Johnson family

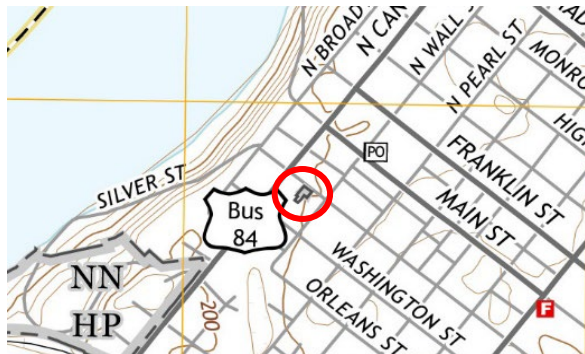


FIGURE 3-3. USGS map of downtown Natchez, annotated to show the location of the William Johnson House. USGS.

⁴ Sonja N. Oswalt, *Mississippi's Forests*, 2013 (Knoxville: U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station, 2013).

⁵ J.O. Snowden, Jr., Richard R. Priddy, and C.D. Caplenor, *Loess Investigations in Mississippi: Geology of Mississippi Loess and Forests of West Central Mississippi as Affected by Loess*, Bulletin 111 (Jackson: Mississippi Geological, Economic and Topographical Survey, 1968), 213-216 and 221-223,

<https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Bulletin-111.pdf>. and Jim Conrad, "Wildflowers and Ferns in the Loess Hills," Loess Hills of the Lower Mississippi Valley online, <https://www.backyardnature.net/loess/wf&ferns.htm>.
⁶ "Texada," Historic Resources Inventory Fact Sheet, Mississippi Department of History and Archives, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/Public/prop.aspx?id=627&view=facts&y=728>.

occasionally leased land from the owners of Texada.

The Johnson House shares its east wall with the McCallum House, the two having been built at the same time. The yard of the Johnson House is fully enclosed with a 6-foot-tall wood fence. The side yard west of the Johnson House maintains a width of 20 feet from the north boundary southward for 100 feet, then the property line turns eastward for 14 feet before turning south again; the fence follows this line. This 14-foot-by-100-foot space is a portion of the Lapice lot purchased by Johnson in 1851 and allowed for the east-to-west orientation of the kitchen dependency constructed in 1897. The previous dependency had been oriented north-to-south due to the narrowness of the original Johnson lot.

On the back the Johnson House has a full width, two-story gallery facing the kitchen dependency, which also has a two-story gallery. Between the two buildings is a courtyard around 11 feet wide. A freestanding brick wall with an opening to the McCallum House courtyard encloses the Johnson courtyard on its east side. A stair on the west side of the kitchen dependency connects its second floor to the ground level at its southwest corner.

The rear yard maintains its original width and contains no structures except utility boxes on concrete slabs. It is partially enclosed on its east side by a retaining wall of brick and concrete.



FIGURE 3-4. Photograph of front sidewalk, looking west. The William Johnson House is to the left. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architecture.

Circulation

Pedestrian

Front Sidewalk. A 5-foot, 8-inch brick herringbone sidewalk runs the length of the front of the Johnson and McCallum houses; it connects to the concrete sidewalk that runs along the rest of the block (Figure 3-4). The brick sidewalk is flush with the building façades on its south edge and is separated from the concrete street curb by a 3-foot-wide yard locally called the “neutral ground.”

Brick Walkway Ruin (CRIS 091815). This remnant brick walkway was discovered by archeologists under the 1897 dependency. Bricks are laid in east to west rows in a mixed running bond-Flemish bond pattern, bordered by a sawtooth brick edging. This feature survives from the period between 1841 and 1897 and would have been built in association with the 1841 dependency, non-extant. The walkway is exposed on the interior of the 1897 dependency as an interpretive feature (Figure 3-5).

Courtyard. A short area of brick paving that may be part of that used in the courtyard is exposed on the interior of the 1897 dependency as an interpretive exhibit. It has the same pattern as the brick walkway ruin.

Vehicular

Street Parking. There are four parallel parking spaces on the street in front of the Johnson House (Figure 3-6). Some of these are blocked



FIGURE 3-5. Interpretive exhibit on the first floor of the kitchen dependency, showing the brick sidewalk and planter edging associated with the 1841 dependency. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architecture.

off to accommodate a bus on occasion. There is a parking lot across the street and one across an alley adjacent to the McCallum House, but these appear to be associated with office buildings and not designated for the Johnson House.

Buildings and Structures

Buildings

The two buildings that stand on the lot under consideration are the William Johnson House and its 1897 kitchen dependency. The adjacent McCallum House is part of the complex but is not included in this cultural landscape description.

William Johnson House (CRIS 090307). The William Johnson House is two-and-one-half-story brick townhouse built in a simplified Greek Revival style (see Figure 3-6). Its footprint measures 42.5 feet by 28 feet, with the long side oriented generally north to south. The peaked roof of the building has two dormers on the street side. To the rear, the Johnson House has a full width, two-story gallery facing south with a stair that connects it to the second floor (Figure 3-7). There are 3 double doors on the front façade of the building and a central single door at the rear on the first and second floors. An opening in the gallery floor provides access to a root cellar located under the west side of the



FIGURE 3-6. View of the front of the William Johnson House, looking east. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architecture.

house. On the house's exterior west side is an opening framed by a 6-inch-tall structure measuring 2-feet-by-3-feet and protected by a wood-shingled roof (Figure 3-8). The opening functioned historically as a coal chute.⁷ The building is in good condition due to stabilization and restoration completed in 2004.

1897 Kitchen Dependency (CRIS 090308). The kitchen dependency, built in 1897 to replace the 1841 kitchen, is a two-story gabled brick building oriented east-to-west (Figure 3-9). It measures approximately 31 feet long and 15.5



FIGURE 3-7. Photograph taken in 2019 of the back of the William Johnson House, looking northeast. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architecture.



FIGURE 3-8. Photograph taken in 2019 of the cover of the coal chute opening on the west side of the William Johnson House. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architects.

⁷ Carol Petravage, *Historic Furnishings Report, The William Johnson House, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez, Mississippi* (Harpers Ferry WV:

National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center, 2004), 114-115, 122.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

feet wide. It has a second-floor gallery that shades the brick patio on its front façade. This building has also been stabilized and rehabilitated with new electrical and HVAC systems. The interior floor in the lower west room has been partially removed so that visitors can view the brick walkway and brick planting bed edging associated with the 1841 dependency.

Structures

Structures include a freestanding brick wall, a brick retaining and freestanding wall, a concrete retaining and freestanding wall, and a perimeter fence.

Freestanding Brick Wall. A freestanding brick wall separates the courtyards of the Johnson and McCallum houses. It has a 3-1/2-foot opening that allows passage between the two spaces (Figure 3-10). The wall is attached to the kitchen dependency's northeast corner. It appears to have been stabilized and rehabilitated at the same time as the building. It is likely the same wall that stood there during the historic period, but the opening was likely added to accommodate the NPS program.

McCallum Dependency Brick Wall. A brick combined retaining and freestanding wall extends southward from the southeast corner of the kitchen dependency (Figure 3-11). The brick portion is 13 feet 6 inches long and is 7 feet tall. Three feet 6 inches of this brick wall are

freestanding. This wall is supported on its east side by two brick buttresses.

Combined Retaining and Freestanding Concrete Wall. A combined retaining and freestanding concrete wall is attached to the south end of the combined retaining and freestanding brick wall. It is about 7 feet 8 inches long and stands about 3 feet 6 inches tall, much of which is freestanding (see Figure 3-11). Steel rebar extends from the top of this wall, suggesting that it has not been completed.

Wood Fence. Most of the rear yard of the Johnson House is enclosed by a 6-foot-tall, white-painted wood fence with wide vertical planks (Figure 3-12).

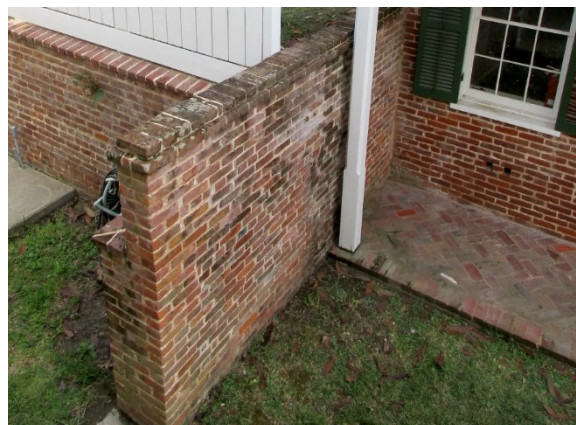


FIGURE 3-10. Photograph taken in 2019 of the freestanding wall separating the Johnson and McCallum courtyards. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architects.



FIGURE 3-9. Photograph taken in 2019 of the north side of the 1897 kitchen dependency. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architects.



FIGURE 3-11. Photograph taken in 2019 of the combined retaining and free-standing brick wall and its concrete extension. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architects.

Utilities

Gas

An above-ground gas meter stands along the west fence close to the entry gate.

Electric

A wood utility pole stands just outside the northwest corner of the William Johnson House property and supports overhead power lines that connect to another pole across State Street (see Figures 3-6 and 3-12). At the southwest rear corner of the property stands a large, aqua-painted, electric generator serviced by an underground gas line (Figure 3-15). The generator stands on a concrete pad. Next to it are six electrical panels attached to the

Water

A water meter is set in the tree yard at the northeast corner of the McCallum House (see Figure 3-4). City water connects to the McCallum House and serves both buildings.

Stormwater

Both the Johnson House and its dependency have downspouts that connect to an underground stormwater system leading to the city system (see Figure 3-7).



FIGURE 3-12. In 2004, the park constructed a new fence around the site and replaced the old gate with a new double-leafed gate for easier access. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architecture.

Cultural Vegetation

The 2005 cultural landscape inventory reported the presence of canna lilies (*Canna* sp.), a fig (*Ficus carica*), a clump of devilwood (*Osmanthus americanus*), an American elm (*Ulmus americana*), and two paper mulberries (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) on the site. None of the trees exist on the site today, but the canna lilies were collected and propagated by staff off the site. NPS staff reports seeing paperwhite narcissus (*Narcissus papyraceus*) behind the kitchen dependency.⁸

Trees

The neutral ground in front of the William Johnson House contains a single, mature crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) that may date back to the 1920s when the Johnson family renovated the house (see Figures 3-6, 3-12, and 3-13). The tree is in good condition.

Turf

The back yard of the William Johnson House is maintained in mown turf grass, possibly either St. Augustine (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*) or centipede grass (*Eremochloa ophiuroides*) (see Figures 3-7 and 3-11).



FIGURE 3-13. Photograph taken in 2019 of the site's electric generator and electrical panels. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architecture.

⁸ Kathleen Bond, NATC Superintendent, comments on 75% draft CLR, reporting sighting by Park Ranger Melissa Tynes.

Small-Scale Features

There are very few small-scale features located within the William Johnson House site.

Furnishings

On the front sidewalk stand a six-foot wood and steel bench, a trash/recycling can, and a single recycling can, all recent and installed for visitor convenience (see Figures 3-4 and 3-6). All these furnishings are in good condition.

Garden Border Ruin (CRIS 091816)

This remnant planting bed border made of bricks arranged in a sawtooth pattern was discovered by archeologists under the 1897 dependency (see Figure 3-5). This feature survives from the period between 1841 and 1897 and would have been built in association with the 1841 dependency. The border is exposed on the interior of the 1897 dependency as an interpretive feature.

Garden Border Ruin 2

This remnant planting bed border made of bricks arranged end-to-end was discovered by archeologists in the 1970s in the courtyard between the house and the dependency. This feature may have been added as early as the 1840s. After it was excavated, the border was recovered in earth.



FIGURE 3-14. Photograph taken in 2019 of the view into the storage area behind the historic passenger depot. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architects.

Views and Vistas

Views to the William Johnson House

Views to the William Johnson House from the street are available but often blocked by cars parallel-parked along that side and utility wires (see Figure 3-6).

Views into Setting

Views into the surrounding city from the house are available to the east and west from the second-floor galleries (Figures 3-14 and 3-15). These include some views of utilities, storage, and a small outdoor dining area associated with the depot, as well as several HVAC units behind the McCallum House. From the ground level within the rear site, views to the south are dominated by the large, aqua-painted electric generator and associated electrical panels.

Vistas

There are no planned vistas within this property.

Archeological Features

Several archeological investigations have been conducted at the William Johnson House and have informed decisions about rehabilitation. For example, the interior floor in the lower west room of the 1897 kitchen dependency has been partially removed so that visitors can view the brick walkway and brick planting bed edging from the 1841 dependency that was revealed by excavations in the 1990s.



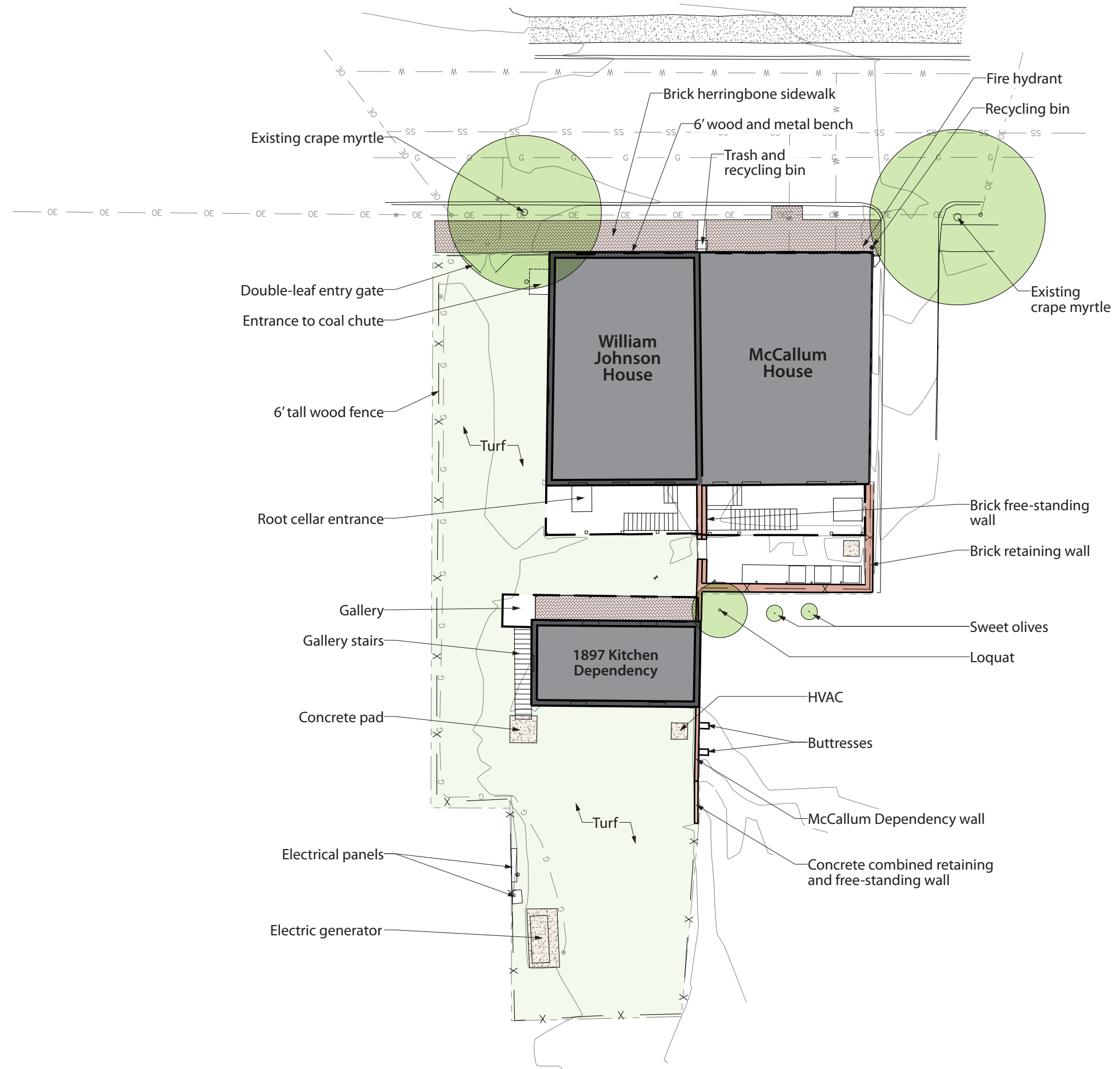
FIGURE 3-15. Photograph taken in 2019 of the view into the surrounding neighborhood to the east taken from the second story gallery of the William Johnson House. Suzanne Turner Landscape Architects.

Archeologists have still not located either of the underground cisterns, nor have the privies been located or investigated. The GPR study undertaken at the site in 2015 suggested that the rows of bottles discovered in investigations may have been part of a larger bottle garden. Additional information about gardens, both food and ornamental, that may have been at the site would be useful for future interpretation.

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for

William Johnson
House, Natchez
National Historical
Park



Legend

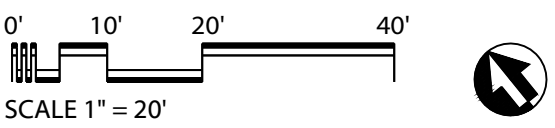
- 2019 Boundary
- Building
- Brick paving
- Concrete paving
- Fence
- Tree

Sources:

Jordan, Kaiser & Sessions Map of
Topographic Survey, William
Johnson House and McCallum
House.

Notes:

The loquat and sweet olives shown on
this plan are not on NPS property.



Map 3-1.
Existing Conditions

Analysis and Evaluation

Introduction

This chapter has three sections: a significance evaluation, a comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions, and an integrity assessment. These are followed by a summary list of features and a map that shows the locations of those that contribute to the landscape's historical significance (Table 4-1 and Map 4-1)

The significance evaluation of the William Johnson House cultural landscape was done in accordance with guidance provided by the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). It identifies the important historical associations of the property, as well as its architectural, archeological, and social value. The property's significance is tied to a discrete period of time in which its important contributions were made, and to relevant national, state, and local historic contexts.

The comparative analysis explores the similarities and differences between historic and existing landscape conditions. Through this comparison, one gains an understanding of how much the historic site today reflects its character and appearance during the period of significance. Each section of the comparative analysis concludes with an inventory of resources. Resources that retain integrity and are associated with the William Johnson House's period of significance are referred to as "contributing" features. Features that are known to have existed during previous periods of the site's history but are no longer extant are identified as

"missing" resources. Resources that originated after the period of significance and do not relate to the site's significant historic contexts are identified as "noncontributing." This information is summarized in Table 4-1, which lists each of the features described in this chapter. The table conveys the names and alternate names for inventoried landscape features through time, identifies which features contribute to the significance of the landscape, provides a condition rating for each feature, and lists dates of origin and modification for each feature, if known.

The final section of this chapter is an integrity assessment that summarizes to what degree the William Johnson House cultural landscape retains its ability to convey conditions present during the identified period of significance.

National Register Evaluation

National Register Status

The William Johnson House was listed in the National Register on June 16, 1976, as a building in private ownership before it became an NPS property.¹ The nomination describes the building and its kitchen dependency only, and their deteriorating conditions at the time. The statement of significance lists the period of significance as 1800-1899 in the areas of literature and

¹ Allen, "William Johnson House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1976.

African American history, tying the property to the life of American diarist William Johnson, who wrote about his activities and lifestyle as one of the wealthiest freedmen in antebellum Natchez.

The William Johnson House is also included, along with the McCallum House, as contributing features in the Natchez-on-Top-of-the-Hill Historic District, listed in the National Register on September 17, 1979.² This nomination lists the district as significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, community planning, exploration/settlement, landscape architecture, military, politics/government, and transportation for the period of 1700 through 1900. This nomination is more detailed in nature than the 1976 nomination and addresses topographical features, street plans and planting, density and massing, open spaces and gardens, objects, structures, sites and buildings, and archeological potential for the overall district. It does not, however, include such detailed information for the William Johnson House, briefly describing its buildings only.

The William Johnson House is part of a third National Register nomination, an administrative listing for Natchez National Historical Park that occurred on October 7, 1988.³

Guidance and Themes

The information presented in the existing National Register nominations was considered in conjunction with the guidance provided by National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, the 2005 cultural landscape inventory, and information derived from a comprehensive investigation into the history

of the landscape.⁴ The conclusion is that the entire property is significant within the contexts of Expressing Cultural Values from 1836 to 1851 (Literature, Non-Fiction), Creating Social Institutions and Movements from 1836 to 1976 (Ways of Life, Urban Life), and Expressing Cultural Values in 1841 and 1897 (Architecture, Greek Revival from 1820 to 1840).

National Register Criteria

For a property to be eligible for listing in the National Register, it must possess significance under one of four criteria:

- A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represents the work of a master; possesses artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- D. Yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.⁵

Based on research, analysis, and consideration of all materials available for preparation of this CLR, the William Johnson House appears to be nationally significant under Criteria A, B, and D, and locally significant under Criterion C.

Criterion A. The William Johnson House is significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic History: Black, for its contribution to our understanding of African American culture, both enslaved and free, in the pre-Civil War South of William Johnson and in the post-Civil War South of his children and grandchildren.

² Mary Warren Miller, "Natchez On-Top-of-the-Hill Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1979).

³ When digitized, it will be located at <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail?assetID=23cbaed1-4c69-451f-b6ca-bf2593aea8bd>.

⁴ National Register Bulletin: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1995).

⁵ Adapted from *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 37.

Criterion B. Under Criterion B, the William Johnson House is significant in the area of Literature and Ethnic History: Black, from 1835 to 1851 for its association with William Johnson, whose extensive diary provides a rich picture of the life of a free black man in the antebellum South and the society in which he moved.

Criterion C. The William Johnson House is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture (Mid-19th Century: Greek Revival) and as one of the few survivors of the common commercial building form in Natchez from 1800 to 1866, when commercial storefronts with parapet facades began to replace side-gabled roofs.

Criterion D. Under Criterion D, the property is significant in the area of Archeology (Historic, Non-Aboriginal) for the wealth of information it contains about the physical characteristics of an antebellum home in Natchez, including associated outbuildings and spatial characteristics. Archeological investigations have uncovered foundations of ancillary buildings, remnants of walkways, fence lines, and edges of planting beds, which contribute to the overall understanding of this lifestyle. Future investigations may provide additional information from excavation of privies and cisterns remaining to be discovered on the lot, as well as the bottle garden.

Period of Significance

The proposed period of significance for the William Johnson House is 1835 to 1930. It begins with the year that William Johnson moved to the property upon his marriage to Ann Battles and extends through the years during which he commissioned a new frame house to be built on the property in 1838 and its destruction by fire in 1839. The period of significance continues through 1841, when the existing brick house and its kitchen dependency were completed, to 1897, when the family commissioned the replacement of the 1841 kitchen dependency. The proposed end of the

period of significance is 1930, the year that Dr. William R. Johnston died. This year also marks the end of the period described by Mary Louis Miller when she recalled the property as it was when she lived there as a child. Although William Johnson's descendants lived in the house until 1975, little is known about the appearance and use of the landscape for the last 45 years. If more documentation becomes available for the period between 1930 and the sale of the house by the family in 1976, then that end date could extend further.

Recommended Changes to the National Register Nomination

In the context of the proposed new period of significance and expanded criteria described above, the existing 1976 National Register nomination should be amended to update the descriptions of the buildings, add descriptions of the few cultural landscape features present on the site, and describe archeological resources identified to date. The amended nomination should list additional areas of significance, including Community Planning and Development, Literature, and Archeology (Historic-Non-Aboriginal). The period of significance should extend from 1835 to 1930. Alternatively, the park could submit a new nomination for the entire park that could argue for additional areas of significance.⁶

Comparative Analysis

To develop a better understanding of the relationship between the existing cultural landscape documented in the Existing Conditions chapter and the landscape that existed during the period of significance, this section presents a comparative analysis of historic and existing conditions. Because the landscape evolved between 1835 and ca. 1930s, the comparative analysis also

⁶ Cynthia Walton, National Historic Landmarks Program Manager, comments on 75% draft of CLR, January 28, 2021. Appendix Q of Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management suggests writing one all-encompassing nomination for a historical park.

provides information about changes that occurred during the period of significance.

The comparative analysis that follows focuses on the landscape during three primary time periods:

- The construction and development of the property during the lifetime of William Johnson, from 1835 to 1851;
- The development of the property by the Johnson family from 1851 to 1900; and
- The changes made to the property until the end of the life of Dr. William R. Johnston in 1930.

The comparative analysis narrative is organized by the same landscape characteristics used to document the site in the Existing Conditions chapter.

Natural Systems and Features

Historic Conditions

In his diary, William Johnson recorded ongoing problems with poor drainage on his lot that were caused by the fairly flat topography of the upper town and its dense loess soils. Solutions included conducting rainwater from the roof of his house and kitchen dependency to cisterns on the property, constructing a brick drain, and paving areas of the yard (see pages 2-20 through 2-21).

Existing Conditions

Drainage continues to be a problem on the William Johnson House site. A project to continue to address stormwater drainage on the site was initiated by the NPS in 2019.

Land Use

Historic Conditions

The historic land use of the William Johnson House influenced the character of the landscape by directing its organization, form, and spatial organization over time. William Johnson and his descendants used the house as their primary residence from 1841 to 1975 and the two kitchen dependencies as workplaces. During much of this period, they also rented out rooms in

both buildings to boarders. As early as 1838, after the completion of the frame building that preceded the brick house, William Johnson began renting the first floor of the family dwelling as commercial space. He and his family continued this practice after the construction of the brick house in 1841.

The landscape supported residential use of the buildings and contained features such as animal pens, vegetable and ornamental gardens, fruit trees, cisterns, privies, workshops, storage buildings, stables, and garages. The courtyard between the buildings would have been especially active, serving as the key workplace on the property. Although not much is known about the Johnson's use of the area, it was likely

a scene of constant motion, [including] cutting wood for cooking. . .carrying wood to stoke the fireplaces and cook stoves. . .[a]nimals would have been slaughtered and dressed and vegetables would have been cleaned in an almost continuous cycle of activity to keep the family, visitors, and workers provided with daily meals. The cook would have been coming and going to the market to obtain provisions. . .[workers] would have been watering and feeding horses, harnessing them with saddles or to carriages, mucking out stalls, and generally doing the daily work required in the time when horses were the primary means of transportation throughout the city and out to the family plantation. Laundresses would have been washing, sorting, and ironing. The items included would have been clothes, bed sheets, tablecloths, and napkins. The stream of laundry would have been seemingly endless between the house and the back laundry area.⁷

The women of the house would have been in constant motion, overseeing these activities and the maintenance of the vegetable garden and orchard.

⁷ Building Conservation Associates, *Aiken-Rhett House Feasibility Study* (Charleston: Historic Charleston Foundation, 2013), 6-97.

The yard of the house might have also supported horticultural and gardening pursuits. Passive recreation, such as relaxing and visiting, might have occurred in shaded area of the yard during warm weather. Because the yard was traversed from the house to the privies, there may have also been screening or ornamental plants along the path.

Existing Conditions

The William Johnson House and its 1897 kitchen dependency are both used by the NPS to interpret the life of William Johnson and his descendants. Other than the two buildings, the landscape today contains few above-ground historic features. Remnant paving, garden edging, a crape myrtle, and a cluster of narcissus in the yard behind the kitchen dependency begin to tell a broader story about the Johnsons.

Spatial Organization

Historic Conditions

Throughout its history, the cultural landscape of the William Johnson House property has been organized in a way typical of narrow residential lots in many Southern cities.⁸ The short end of the house presented its façade to the street with no yard, while the length of the building and its dependencies extended into the lot behind the house. First and second floor galleries attached to the back of the house faced the courtyard. In his diary, William Johnson detailed how he enclosed the first story of the house's rear gallery with lattice, which would have provided privacy and a shaded area to relax outdoors. Remnants of the lattice survived until the late 1970s (see Figure 2-12).

Johnson built the 1841 kitchen dependency perpendicular to the back façade of the main house, perhaps because the lot was so narrow. This arrangement left a courtyard

between the two buildings and a generous west yard, which together would have served as work yards. It was here that Johnson also placed at least one of the chinaberries because he reported later that it fell over onto the cistern house (see page 2-24). The chinaberry would have matured into its typical umbrella shape, enclosing the space below and providing deep shade.

The 1841 dependency had a frame addition attached on its south end that served as a wash house. Behind it were arranged a variety of workshops, sheds, and animal pens that supported domestic activities. Horse and vehicle storage occurred at the back end of the lot where it could be accessed from an alley. The entire ensemble expressed a hierarchy of use from its public face to its private, then more utilitarian uses.

Because Johnson purchased the Lapice lot to the west, his descendants were able to orient the 1897 kitchen dependency east to west without dividing the home lot into two spaces. When the Johnsons sold the Lapice lot to the railroad in 1906, they retained a 15-foot strip, which would have provided for easier access to the south yard. If they had not done this, there would have been only five feet between the new kitchen and the west property line. In the 1910s or earlier, the Johnsons planted a pecan tree that matured to provide a broad canopy over the south yard until the tree was removed in the 1970s.

Fences in a variety of configurations and types enclosed the lot and adjacent use areas, including the Lapice lot to the west after it was leased, then purchased, by the family. Johnson and his family also leased other lots or portions of lots from neighbors and fenced those areas too, primarily to hold livestock, including cows and pigs.

Existing Conditions

Today, only the house, kitchen dependency, and fence remain from the ensemble of above-ground landscape features present in the historic period. The main house maintains its original orientation to State

⁸ Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, *Slavery in the City: Architecture and Landscapes of Urban Slavery in North America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 87-122.

Street and the kitchen dependency to the house, creating a courtyard between them. The entire lot, including the original portion and 15 feet of the Lapice lot, is enclosed with a six-foot-tall wood plank fence that was built in 2004 to match the fence that existed on the lot in 1975 and likely dated from the 1920s. Remnants of three garden spaces have been retained and one is being interpreted within the dependency.

Contributing Status and Condition Rating

Main House on Front Boundary

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Location of Dependency behind Main House

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Courtyard between House and Dependency

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Portion of Lapice Lot

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Fence Enclosure

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Spatial Relationship between Buildings and Outbuildings/Structures

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Spatial Enclosure of Chinaberry

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Spatial Enclosure of Pecan Tree

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Garden Border Ruin under 1897 Kitchen Dependency (CRIS CL 091816)

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Garden Border Ruin within Courtyard

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Unknown

Remnants of Bottle Garden/Bottle Garden Space West of Courtyard

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Unknown

Circulation

Historic Conditions

Historic circulation around and within the William Johnson House site included some sort of public walkway and vehicular parking at the front, a path from the fence entry gate to the back gallery of the house, a courtyard between the house and its kitchen dependencies, a paving under the west gallery of the 1841 dependency, and access at the back of the lot for the family's vehicles. Although not yet documented, the yard likely contained a path from the house to the privies and other use areas in the south yard.

Public Walkway. It is likely that a hard paving was used to form a public walkway along the front of the William Johnson House. Historic photographs of Natchez show a variety of paving used in the downtown area, including wood planks, herringbone patterned brick, and scored concrete.

Vehicular Parking. It is not known how vehicles may have been accommodated in the street in the front of the house. One might assume, however, that carriages and wagons may have been parked with the horse at the curb because William Johnson reported in his diary that he had a box made to protect one of his street trees. It is also believed that boxes around chinaberry trees

kept horses from chewing on their bark, which was toxic to the animals.⁹

Side path. It is likely that a hard paving was used to form a path from the front gate of the William Johnson House property to the courtyard. When the property was acquired by the NPS, the path was made of poured concrete. However, in his diary, William Johnson reported using bricks to pave an area “below the gate,” meaning either under the gate or south of the gate. It is also possible that the rows of bottles found on the west side of the house by archeologists may have been used to outline a garden path.

Courtyard. William Johnson reported in his diary the many days spent by him and his workers paving “the yard” with brick taken from Parker’s hotel lot across the street. Archeological evidence shows a short area of paving that may be part of that used in the courtyard.¹⁰ The paving pattern used was an unusual mix of running bond and a herringbone pattern edged with brick in a sawtooth arrangement.

Brick Walkway under West Gallery. In the 1990s, archeologists discovered the remains of a brick walkway that would have run under the west gallery roof that was attached to the 1841 kitchen dependency. Bricks were laid in a mixed herringbone and running bond pattern, aligned east-to-west, and bordered by a sawtooth brick edging. This walkway is exposed on the interior of the 1897 dependency as an interpretive feature.

Vehicular Access. In the rear, vehicles would have approached the lot along an easement from Wall Street to the south end of the property leased from a neighbor by the Johnsons. William Johnson reported in his diary that he had a stable built, and later a carriage house, presumably at the rear of the property. Mary Louise Williams recalled that Dr. Johnson had a garage built in the

1920s at the south end of the property to house his car and Sanborn maps show a building in that location.

Existing Conditions

Little evidence remains of historic circulation that existed at the end of the period of significance. There is a public sidewalk, but it is not known if its herringbone brick pattern reflects historic conditions. While the courtyard space is evident in the landscape, most of its brick paving is not, although it may exist as an archeological resource. A portion of the historic courtyard paving and the brick walkway west of the 1841 dependency have been left uncovered as an interpretive exhibit inside the 1897 kitchen dependency. Vehicular parking is available along the front curb as it was historically, but there is no evidence of private vehicular storage at the south end of the house lot.

Public Sidewalk. Today, the public sidewalk is paved in a herringbone brick pattern in good condition. It is likely that this paving was installed after the property was acquired by the NPS. A photograph from the 1970s shows what appears to be concrete paving in front of the house.

Vehicular Parking. Today, parallel vehicular parking for both cars and buses is available along the front of the house.

Courtyard. A short area of paving that may be part of that used in the courtyard is exposed on the interior of the 1897 dependency as an interpretive exhibit.

Brick Walkway under West Gallery. The remains of the brick walkway that would have run under the west gallery roof of the 1841 kitchen dependency are exposed on the interior of the 1897 dependency as an interpretive exhibit.

Contributing Status and Condition Rating

Public Sidewalk

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

⁹ Mimi Miller, Executive Director Emerita of Historic Natchez Foundation, comments on 75% draft of CLR, January 28, 2021.

¹⁰ Atkinson, 44.

Vehicular Parking

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Side Path

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Courtyard Paving

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Brick Walkway under West Gallery (CRIS CL 091815)

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Fair

Vehicular Access

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Buildings and Structures**Historic Conditions**

Throughout its history, the William Johnson House lot has contained the variety of buildings and structures typical of narrow residential lots in many cities.¹¹ Facing State Street was the William Johnson House, the main residence and building on the lot. The house was built in 1841 under the direction of William Johnson and his consultant, a Mr. Brown. Labor was supplied by Johnson's enslaved workers, skilled contractors, and occasionally, himself. The house was remodeled in the 1920s by the Johnson family to create living space on the first floor and to add gas, water, and electricity. After acquiring the house and adjacent McCallum House in 1990, the NPS underwent a series of studies to inform an extensive renovation from 2002 to 2004.

Behind and closest to the main house stood the kitchen dependency. The original dependency, also built in 1841, was oriented facing west, likely due to the narrowness of the lot. In 1897, it was replaced with the dependency building that stands today

facing the house. The house and dependency created a courtyard space between them. The 1897 dependency was renovated at the same time as the house.

In the south end of the lot stood a variety of workshops, sheds, and animal pens that supported domestic activities. A stable, later replaced with a carriage house and then a garage, stood at the back end of the lot where it could be accessed from an alley. Other buildings and structures, including a blacksmith shop and various sheds, were constructed on the adjacent Lapice lot, which was purchased by Johnson in 1851 and sold by the family in 1906. With the exception of the kitchen dependency, there were no outbuildings present on the property when it was acquired by the NPS.

William Johnson House. The William Johnson House is a two-and-one-half-story brick townhouse built in 1841. It was designed in a simplified version of the Greek Revival style that was popular in that period, with a commercial space on the ground floor, which was unpartitioned, and living quarters on its second and third floors. The second floor had a central rear hall onto which four rooms opened; the third floor was also unpartitioned. A two-story wood gallery attached to its south end provided shade. Access to the second floor was from a stair between the two floors. The building had a full basement under its western half where a variety of foodstuffs was stored. The basement also stored coal, which was delivered via an opening in the north end of the west wall. Renovations to the building in the 1920s included partitioning of the first floor to create six rooms and connecting the house to public utilities. Prior to that, water would have come from one of the three cisterns Johnson constructed during his lifetime.

1841 Kitchen Dependency. The original kitchen dependency was two stories high, made of brick, and approximately the same dimensions as the 1897 dependency. It was

¹¹ Ellis and Ginsburg, 87-122.

oriented perpendicular to the main house, which was necessary due to the narrowness of the lot prior to the acquisition of the Lapice lot. The 1841 kitchen had a one-story gallery along its west elevation. A two-story wood addition to this building was constructed around 1850, according to Johnson's diary, and appears in the 1886 Sanborn map.

1897 Kitchen Dependency. In 1897, the 1841 kitchen dependency was demolished and replaced with the current structure. The 1897 brick kitchen dependency, two stories high with a low-pitched gable roof, is oriented parallel to the main house. It has a two-story wood gallery with connecting stairs that provide access to the second floor. At the time the building was completed, a diagonal wood bridge was built to connect its second-floor gallery with that of the main house. The building has no basement. It is not known if it, too, received public utilities in the 1920s when these were connected to the house.

Boys' Workshop. This wood-frame structure was reported by Mary Louise Miller as having stood in the south end of the yard in the 1920s. In the workshop, Johnson's descendants repaired musical instruments and later repaired clocks and sharpened scissors.

Stable/Carriage House/Garage. William Johnson reported in his diary that his workers did repair work on his stable in 1844. Then in 1850, he reported having workers build a carriage house on the property. It is not known exactly where either was located, but they were both likely sited at the south end of the lot and accessed via an easement leased from a neighbor. It is also likely that Dr. Johnson had his garage constructed in the same location since the Sanborn maps show a building in that location.

Blacksmith Shop. Although not on the original William Johnson House lot, a fireproof building was constructed on the Lapice lot, which was acquired by Johnson

in 1851. The blacksmith shop was operated in that building by his son Clarence. Wood frame additions and other wood structures were attached to the shop and built close to it until the lot was sold in 1906.

Privies. In his diary, William Johnson reported the construction of at least one privy on the property. Other privies were constructed during the lifetimes of his descendants until a bathroom was added to the first floor of the main house in the 1920s and another added after 1946. The last privy was constructed behind the kitchen dependency in the 1930s.

Sheds. William Johnson reported the construction of numerous sheds on the property during the ten years he lived there. In addition, the Sanborn maps and the 1864 *Defences of Natchez* map also show the locations of several sheds on the lot and the adjacent Lapice lot.

Hen House. William Johnson reported building a hen house on the lot in 1841, the year the house was completed. The Johnson family kept chickens throughout most of their tenure on the property and would have maintained some sort of hen house in the south end of the property well into the 1920s, as reported by Mary Louise Williams.

Cistern House. In his diary, William Johnson reported building a shelter over the family's cistern in 1844; in 1848, he reports that one of his chinaberry trees was knocked over by heavy wind onto the cistern house. There is no further mention of a structure over the cistern.

Freestanding Brick Wall. The Sanborn maps from 1897, 1901, and 1904 show a brick wall standing between the William Johnson House and its 1897 kitchen dependency. It does not appear in the 1910 map, but this may be an oversight. A freestanding brick wall was documented on the site by Padgett in 1978 (see Figure 2-12) and again in the 1990s by Atkinson (see Figure 2-31). It appears to have been partially a retaining wall with the rest

freestanding. If installed for privacy, it would have been at least six feet tall.

McCallum Dependency Brick Wall. From 1897 until it was demolished, possibly in the 1960s, a brick kitchen dependency located on the McCallum lot shared its west wall with the Johnson's 1897 dependency. It was offset southward from the Johnson dependency about twenty-two feet (see Figure 2-33).

Wood Fence. During the historic period, the house lot was enclosed with a six-foot-tall wood fence with wide vertical planks, painted white. Historically, the fence would have been constructed with the smooth surface facing outward and the posts showing only in the interior.¹² A hinged, arch-top gate served as an entrance at the northwest corner of the house. The gate was attached to two, six-foot-tall, concrete piers that had flat concrete caps with deep reveals. The concrete pier at the house was about six inches wide with a concrete base about eight inches wide. The other pier was double the size. The rest of the fence was supported by concrete posts. This fence was documented by the 2005 CLI based on earlier photographs since the fence was replaced in 1992.

Other Fences. In his diary, William Johnson reported constructing numerous fences around and within his original lot, the adjacent Lapice lot, and even across the street where he kept some cattle for a time. Other fencing on the lot would have ranged from a lath enclosure around the vegetable garden to what was likely a more temporary snake rail fence built to control livestock. One of Johnson's fences could have also been a post-and-rail type, which were also constructed during that time in Natchez.

Existing Conditions

Most of the buildings that were present during the period of significance are no

longer extant on the site. Remaining are the William Johnson House and the 1897 Kitchen Dependency. A wood fence surrounds the property much as it would have in the 1920s. Also extant are the freestanding brick wall, the McCallum Dependency brick wall. The combined retaining and freestanding concrete wall was poured in 2004.

William Johnson House. The William Johnson House is in excellent condition after a restoration was completed in 2004. An earlier restoration completed in the 1980s included the removal of partitions added to the first floor in the 1920s.

1897 Kitchen Dependency. The 1897 Kitchen Dependency is in excellent condition after a complete restoration was completed in 2004. The restoration also included removal of the bridge that connected the second floor galleries of the house the kitchen dependency.

Freestanding Brick Wall. Today, a six-foot-tall freestanding brick wall in excellent condition separates the courtyards of the Johnson and McCallum houses. It is not known if it is the original recorded from 1897 to 1904, or if it was constructed when the two main buildings were restored. The existing wall has an opening that connects the two courtyards.

McCallum Dependency Brick Wall. A combined retaining and freestanding brick wall extends southward around thirteen feet six inches from the southeast corner of the kitchen dependency. It appears to be in good condition.

Combined Retaining and Freestanding Concrete Wall. A combined retaining and freestanding concrete wall is attached to the south end of the combined retaining and freestanding brick wall. Steel rebar extends from the top of this wall, suggesting that it is the core of an uncompleted wall in only fair condition. It is not known when this wall was poured.

¹² Mimi Miller, Executive Director Emerita of Historic Natchez Foundation, comments on 75% draft of CLR, January 28, 2021.

Wood Fence. The six-foot-tall painted wood plank fence that encloses the William Johnson House property was constructed around 1992 and is in excellent condition. It was built to match the fence that enclosed the property when it was acquired by the NPS, except for the arched wood plank entry gate, which was replaced with a flat-topped double-leaf wood gate centered on the north side of the fence. It was also constructed with the smooth side facing inward, the opposite of how it would have been built historically.¹³

Contributing Status and Condition Rating

William Johnson House (CRIS CL 090307)

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

1841 Kitchen Dependency

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

1897 Kitchen Dependency (CRIS CL 090308)

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Boys' Workshop

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Stable/Carriage House/Garage

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Blacksmith Shop

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Privies

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Sheds

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Hen House

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Cistern House

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Free-Standing Brick Wall

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

McCallum Dependency Brick Wall

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Combined Retaining and Free-Standing Concrete Wall

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: Fair

Other Fences

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Wood Fence

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Utilities

Historic Conditions

Gas. The house was connected to natural gas in the 1920s. Nothing is known about historic above-ground resources related to this utility.

Electric. The house was connected to the city's electrical grid in the 1920s. Little is known about historic above-ground resources associated with this utility.

Water. The house was connected to the public water system in the 1920s. Mary Louise Miller recalled that water hydrants

¹³ Mimi Miller, Executive Director Emerita of Historic Natchez Foundation, comments on 75% draft of CLR, January 28, 2021.

were attached to both the house and dependency.

Stormwater. Most stormwater from the roof was historically conveyed to the cistern, which is thought to have been in the courtyard between the house and the dependency, or away from the house via a downspout and brick drain.

Existing Conditions

Gas. An above-ground gas meter stands along the west fence close to the entry gate.

Electric. A wood utility pole stands just outside the north property line and supports overhead power lines that connect to another pole across State Street. At the southwest rear corner of the property stands a large aqua-colored electric generator serviced by an underground gas line. The generator stands on a concrete pad. Next to it are six electrical panels standing along the fence; some of these serve the three buildings. An HVAC unit stands at the southeast corner of the kitchen dependency.

Water. A water meter is set in the neutral ground at the northeast corner of the McCallum House. City water connects to the McCallum House and serves both buildings.

Stormwater. Both the Johnson House and its dependency have downspouts that connect to an underground stormwater system. This system connects to the city stormwater system.

Contributing Status and Condition Rating

Gas Meter

- Contribution Status: Unknown
- Condition: Unknown

Electric Generator, Electrical Panels, and HVAC Unit

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: Unknown

Wood Utility Pole and Overhead Power

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: Unknown

Water Meter

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: Unknown

Stormwater

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: Unknown

Cultural Vegetation

Historic Conditions

Little is known about the locations and species of plants cultivated in the William Johnson House cultural landscape during the period of significance. Of those, only one tree and several bulbs remain.

Trees. In his diary, William Johnson reported planting four chinaberry trees on his house lot in the winter of 1841. In 1848, he noted that one of them fell on the cistern house (see page 2-24). Since he also reported building the cistern in the courtyard, it is assumed that the chinaberry was located within the west part of the lot. Mary Louise Miller reported that a large pecan tree stood in the back portion of the lot in the 1920s. This tree was removed after the NPS acquired the property. A crape myrtle in the tree yard in front of the William Johnson House is of an age to have been planted in the 1920s. Although the 2005 CLI documented two paper mulberries on the property, it is likely that these were volunteers and not planted by the family. Mary Louise Miller also remembers at least one fig tree on the original lot. One fig was remaining in 2005 when the CLI was written.

Shrubs. In his diary, Johnson reported in 1841 that he bought some roses, and after he moved the wood cistern out of the way, he planted them in its place. Other shrubs reportedly cultivated by the Johnsons were listed by Mary Louise Miller and included white and red camellias (*Camellia* sp.), “red japonicas” (possibly quince), altheas (*Hibiscus syriacus*), figs (*Ficus carica*), and sweet olives (*Osmanthus fragrans*). It is not known if the camellias were the Chinese

variety or sasanquas. Although not documented, because the yard was traversed from the house to the privies, there may have also been screening or ornamental shrubs along the way.

Bulbs. The 2005 CLI documented red canna lilies on the property, and NPS staff has reported a cluster of paperwhite narcissus in the middle of the backyard.

Vegetable Garden. William Johnson and his family kept a vegetable garden on the house lot and likely on the Lapice lot during much of the historic period but stopped once Anna Johnson began growing vegetables on her plantation at Peachland. Vegetables cultivated by the Johnsons included corn, watermelon, butter beans, cabbage, turnips, oats, squash, okra, peas, beans, and tomatoes.

Orchard. The 1864 “Defences of Natchez” map also shows an area on the Lapice lot, purchased by Johnson in 1851, that appears to be an orchard, so the Johnsons may have been raising what was likely peaches, apples, or plums there.

Existing Conditions

Trees. The only tree remaining on the Johnson lot is the crape myrtle planted in the 1920s in the neutral ground. It is in good condition.

Bulbs. The red cannas and the paperwhite narcissus, although not seen in the field by the CLR team, are thought to still be present on a seasonal basis.

Turf. The back yard of the house is maintained in turf, either St. Augustine or centipedegrass. It is in good condition.

Contributing Status and Condition Rating

Chinaberry Trees

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Pecan Tree

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Fig Tree

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Crape Myrtle

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Paper Mulberries

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: N/A

Shrubs

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Vegetable Garden

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Orchard

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Bulbs, Narcissus

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Unknown

Bulbs, Cannas

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: Unknown

Turf

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: Good

Views and Vistas

Historic Conditions

During the historic period, the William Johnson House would have been visible from the street except when carriages or cars were parked along the curb. Views, pleasant and unpleasant, would have been available into the surrounding city from the second-floor galleries. From the ground level, views toward the south end of the property would have been of sheds and other utilitarian structures and animal pens.

There were no known planned vistas within the property.

Existing Conditions

Today, views to the William Johnson House from the street are available except when vehicles are parked along the curb. Views into the surrounding city from the house are available to the east and west from the second-floor galleries and include glimpses of buildings and patterns of streets that would have been visible during the period of significance. Foreground views of the HVAC unit behind the dependency; utilities, storage structures, and a small outdoor dining area associated with the depot; and several HVAC units behind the McCallum House, date from after the end of the period of significance and are noncontributing. From the ground level within the site, the view behind the dependency to the south end of the yard is dominated by the large, aqua-colored electric generator and associated electrical panels and is also noncontributing. There are no planned vistas within this property.

Contributing Status and Condition Rating

View of William Johnson House from the Street

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Views into Surrounding City

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Foreground Views

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: N/A

Views to the South Yard

- Contribution Status: Noncontributing
- Condition: N/A

Small-Scale Features

Historic Conditions

Small-scale features that are known to exist within the cultural landscape of the William

Johnson House include planting bed edgings, the two rows of bottles, and the windlass for the cistern. Otherwise, there may have been outdoor seats, planting pots, gardening tools, clotheslines, and other items for household use.

Existing Conditions

There are very few small-scale features within the cultural landscape of the William Johnson House today. Garden border ruins found under the 1897 dependency remain in place uncovered as an interpretive display in the west room of the first floor. It is not known if the planting bed edging found in the courtyard was removed by archeologists in the 1970s or was simply covered back up. Bottles that were part of the bottle garden and removed by archeologists are in storage, but there may be other bottles *in situ*. There are no other small-scale features within the house lot.

On the sidewalk that runs in front of the Johnson and McCallum houses stand a six-foot-long wood and steel bench, a trash/recycling can, and a single recycling can, all recent and installed for visitor convenience. They all appear to be in good condition.

Contributing Status and Condition Rating

Garden Border Ruin under 1897 Kitchen Dependency (CRIS CL 091816)

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Good

Garden Border Ruin 2 in Courtyard

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Unknown

Remnants of Bottle Garden/Bottle Garden Space West of Courtyard

- Contribution Status: Contributing
- Condition: Unknown

Windlass

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Constructed Water Features

Historic Conditions

Cisterns. In his diary, William Johnson reported installing three cisterns in his home lot, starting in 1841. The first was a wood cistern that was purchased and installed by William Johnson. The second was a plaster-lined cistern constructed in 1842 somewhere in the yard. The third was an enclosed, brick-walled cistern with a plaster lining constructed later in 1842 in the courtyard between the main house and the 1841 kitchen. Johnson installed a windlass on the top of the brick cistern to draw water. It is likely that this is the cistern around which Johnson had built the cistern house. It is also likely the one remembered by Mary Louis Williams as standing in the courtyard between the house and the dependency.

Water hydrants. In her interview, Mary Louise Williams remembered two outdoor water hydrants, one at the southwest corner of the house and one on the southwest corner of the dependency. These were likely installed after the house was connected to the city water system.

Existing Conditions

There is no above-ground evidence of either of these water features extant today.

Contributing Status and Condition Rating

Cisterns

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Water Hydrants

- Contribution Status: Missing
- Condition: N/A

Evaluation of Landscape Integrity

The historic integrity of a cultural landscape depends on its ability to convey its significance; that is, if its characteristics and associated features, along with its spatial qualities, are present in much the same way

they were historically. This is determined by evaluating the property in the light of seven aspects developed by the National Register to define the integrity of a historic property: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. These are defined as follows:

- **Location** is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred;
- **Setting** is the physical environment within and surrounding a property;
- **Design** is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property;
- **Materials** are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property;
- **Workmanship** is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory;
- **Feeling** is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time; and
- **Association** is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

For a property to convey its historic significance, it must possess integrity in at least a few of these seven aspects.

Location

The William Johnson House is situated on State Street in downtown Natchez where William Johnson commissioned its construction in 1841. The 1897 kitchen dependency remains in its original location and the foundation of the 1841 dependency that preceded has been preserved as an archeological resource under the 1897 building. A brick walkway, a portion of the brick pavement of the courtyard, and a portion of the brick edging of a planting bed associated with the 1841 dependency have also been preserved *in situ* on the property.

Further, the boundary fence that encloses the lot today follows much of the original property boundary, along with a 15-foot portion of the Lapice lot that was purchased by Johnson in 1851. Overall, the property retains integrity of location.

Setting

The setting of the William Johnson House, including land use patterns, has changed little since the historic period. It continues to be surrounded by buildings typical of downtown Natchez to the north, residential lots to the south and east, and the depot established in 1910 to the west. The only change in immediate setting since 1975 is the use of the McCallum House as an NPS visitor center. Overall, the property retains integrity of setting.

Design

The William Johnson House itself retains its form, floor plan, and significant interior and exterior features from the period of significance, as does the 1897 kitchen dependency. Within the lot, however, all that remains of the property's cultural landscape features are archeological remnants preserved for interpretation within the dependency, and possibly the freestanding and retaining walls. The spatial relationship of the two buildings and their views could be said to retain integrity. The perimeter fence, however, although designed to be similar to the one it replaced in 2004, was erected in approximately the same location. Its entrance gate was changed from the single-leaf corner gate with an arched top to a centered, double-leaf gate. Integrity of design has been diminished by the loss of outbuildings, paving, other historic fence lines, and cultural vegetation. Overall, the cultural landscape of the property does not retain integrity of design.

Materials

Due to careful rehabilitation of the William Johnson House and its 1897 kitchen dependency, much of their original materials remain intact, and most repairs

included original and historically compatible materials where possible. On the other hand, little remains of the materials of the cultural landscape of the period of significance.

Known exceptions are the remnant paving and planting bed edging preserved for interpretation inside the 1897 dependency, and the freestanding and retaining walls.

The historic perimeter fence was replaced in 2004 with a similar design but could not be said to be replaced in-kind. Overall, the cultural landscape of the property does not retain integrity of materials.

Workmanship

The existing workmanship of the architectural detailing of the William Johnson House and its 1897 kitchen dependency reflect the period of significance. After careful restoration in 2004-2005, its exterior is in good condition, and the interior of the house has been restored to reflect the period of the family's occupancy. The interior of the dependency has been remodeled for interpretation. The brick paving and edging preserved inside the 1897 dependency are the only remaining cultural landscape features on the site that display historic workmanship. Overall, the cultural landscape of the property does not retain integrity of workmanship.

Feeling

The appearance of the William Johnson House from the street contributes to the historic character of the property. Inside the perimeter fence, the historic spatial relationship between the house and 1897 kitchen dependency contributes to its integrity of feeling, as does the enclosing quality of the fence, designed in some part to match the historic fence it replaced. The house and dependency have been rehabilitated, including a careful restoration of their first and second floor galleries. The loss of outbuildings and structures in the south portion of the lot, the loss of brick paving from the historic period, and views to the aqua-colored generator in the back

diminish the feeling associated with the period of significance.

Association

The site exists as part of the Natchez National Historical Park because of its association with famous diarist and businessman William Johnson and his descendants. Its exhibits interpret the fascinating story of their lives as free blacks in the antebellum period and their lives after the Civil War. Due to the careful rehabilitation of the house and dependency, the integrity of its location and setting, and interpretation of the stories of the Johnson family, the property retains integrity of its

association with William Johnson and his family.

Overall Integrity

The cultural landscape of the William Johnson House retains integrity of location, setting, and association for its period of significance (1835-1930). The loss of character-defining outbuildings and secondary structures, circulation patterns and materials, and plant materials has a negative impact on the integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Overall, the integrity of the cultural landscape of the William Johnson House is somewhat diminished.

Feature Name	Date of Origin	Contributing	Noncontributing	Missing	Condition
Natural Systems and Features					
Flat topography and poorly drained soils	n/a	X			n/a
Land Use					
Residential	1835			X	n/a
Commercial	1838			X	n/a
Museum	2005		X		n/a
Spatial Organization					
Main House on Front Boundary	1841	X			good
Dependency behind Main House	1841	X			good
Courtyard between House and Dependency	1841	X			good
Portion of Lapice Lot	1851, 1906	X			good
Fence Enclosure	1841	X			fair
Spatial Relationship between Buildings and Outbuildings/Structures	1841			X	n/a
Spatial Enclosure of Chinaberry	1841			X	n/a
Spatial Enclosure of Pecan Tree	1920s			X	n/a
Garden Border Ruin within Kitchen Dependency (LCS 091816)	ca.1841-1897	X			fair
Garden Border Ruin 2 in Courtyard	ca.1841-1897	X			fair
Remnants of Bottle Garden/Bottle Garden Space West of Courtyard	1890-1910	X			fair
Circulation					
Public Sidewalk	unknown	X			good
Vehicular Parking	1841	X			good
Side Path	1841			X	n/a
Courtyard	1841			X	n/a
Brick Walkway Under West Gallery (LCS 091815)	1841	X			fair
Vehicular Access	1841			X	n/a
Buildings and Structures					
William Johnson House (LCS 090307)	1841	X			good
1841 Kitchen Dependency	1841			X	n/a
1897 Kitchen Dependency (LCS 090308)	1897	X			good
Boys' Workshop	1920s			X	n/a
Stable/Carriage House/Garage	1840s-1920s			X	n/a
Blacksmith Shop	1850s			X	n/a
Privies	1841-1930			X	n/a
Sheds	1841-1920s			X	n/a
Hen House	1841-1920s			X	n/a
Cistern House	1844			X	n/a
Free-Standing Brick Wall	ca.1897	X			good
McCallum Dependency Brick Wall	unknown	X			good
Combined Retaining & Freestanding	2004		X		good
Wood Fence	1841-1920s,	X			good
Other Fences	1841-1920s			X	n/a
Utilities					
Gas Meter	?		X		good
Electric Generator, Electrical Panels, and HVAC Unit	2010		X		good
Wood Utility Pole and Overhead Power	?		?		good
Water Meter	?		?		good
Stormwater	1841-2019		?		good

(Continued on 4-19)

Cultural Vegetation					
Chinaberry Trees	1841			X	n/a
Pecan Tree	ca. 1920s?			X	n/a
Fig Tree	?			X	n/a
Crape Myrtle	ca. 1920s?	X			good
Paper Mulberries	?			X	n/a
Shrubs	1841-1920s			X	n/a
Vegetable Garden	1841-1920s			X	n/a
Orchard	1851-1870s			X	n/a
Bulbs, Narcissus	?	X			good
Bulbs, Canna	?	X			good
Shrubs	1841-1920s			X	n/a
Views and Vistas					
View of William Johnson House from the Street	1841	X			good
Views into Surrounding City	1841	X			good
Foreground Views	1841		X		poor
Views to the South Yard	1841		X		poor
Small-Scale Features					
Garden Border Ruin within Kitchen Dependency (LCS 091816)	ca.1841	X			fair
Garden Border Ruin 2 in Courtyard	1897?	X			fair
Remnants of Bottle Garden/Bottle Garden Space West of Courtyard	1890-1910	X			fair
Windlass	1841			X	n/a
Constructed Water Features					
Cisterns	1841-1842	X?	or	X?	unknown
Water Hydrants	1920s			X	n/a

TABLE 4-1. List of Contributing, Noncontributing, and Missing Features.

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Treatment Recommendations

Introduction

Treatment is a preservation strategy for long-term management of a historic property, intended to direct physical work on the landscape so that the distinguishing characteristics and features that contribute to the significance of the property are preserved. This treatment plan has been prepared to provide the NPS with an overall vision for the cultural landscape of the William Johnson House and to guide and support its long-term management and interpretation.

The treatment plan portion of a cultural landscape report (CLR) typically addresses resource management by providing a preservation master plan or blueprint for the historic landscape for both the short and long term. One of the goals of the treatment plan is to enhance the historic character of a cultural landscape while accommodating contemporary function and use. Treatment plans establish how the landscape should look and be maintained to protect and/or enhance historic integrity and character. Treatment plans also address other park management goals, such as access, sustainability, and interpretation, as well as routine and cyclical maintenance measures necessary to perpetuate the identified desirable character of the landscape.

This treatment plan responds to the specific management issues, concerns, and objectives shared with the CLR team by park and regional National Park Service personnel during start-up and treatment meetings conducted on behalf of this project, while also addressing stewardship of

historic natural and cultural resources of the cultural landscape in accordance with federal guidelines. The treatment plan also addresses the needs and goals for site management identified in various park planning documents, including the 1994 General Management Plan (GMP), the 2000 Archeological Overview and Assessment, the 2001 Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP), the 2005 Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), and the 2017 Foundation Document.

The treatment plan is organized into six sections:

1. **Park Management Goals, Issues, and Concerns** describes the goals, issues, and concerns raised by the park for consideration within the CLR treatment plan and the issues identified in the GMP.
2. **Recommended Treatment Approach** presents the four approaches recognized by the Secretary of the Interior for treating historic properties and identifies the approach recommended for the William Johnson House cultural landscape.
3. **Treatment Concept** conveys the overarching vision or concept for landscape treatment for the William Johnson House based on the significance of the property and the issues, goals, and concerns identified by the National Park Service for its management and interpretation.
3. **General Management and Design Guidelines for Treatment** provides an overarching set of guidelines that applies

to all resource management activities conducted within the William Johnson House cultural landscape.

5. **Treatment Recommendations** identifies the individual actions required to address the park's management goals, issues, and concerns, organized by cultural landscape feature.
6. **Implementation Projects** provides the information necessary to move forward with treatment recommendations as a series of discrete projects. The projects are organized in such a way as to support inclusion in the Project Management Information System (PMIS), which is used to secure funding for national park improvement efforts.

Park Management Goals, Issues, and Concerns

The management goals, issues, and concerns to be addressed by this treatment plan were identified in the project statement of work, notes from the kick-off meeting, field investigations, notes from the treatment meeting, and a review of previously prepared planning documents.

Statement of Work and Meetings

The overarching goals conveyed in the project's 2018 Statement of Work and clarified in the kickoff and treatment meetings were to:

1. **Develop a more nuanced story of race and the enslaved** that surpasses "moonlight and magnolias" representations of antebellum life. Present information at the William Johnson House that will increase understanding of the Johnson family and descendants.
2. **Enhance significance of the cultural landscape and utilize it for**

interpretation by determining the period of significance of the William Johnson House cultural landscape compared to that of the house and recommend ways to strengthen its expression in the landscape. This could include interpretive signage, as well as tracking locations and footprints of former dependencies in the landscape.

The park also asked the team to address:

3. **Visitor use and accessibility** by making the site fully accessible by following ABAAS guidelines.¹
4. **Interpretation within a small space** by sharing the story of the Johnsons and descendants using nonintrusive methods that maintain the site's historic character.
5. **Vegetation management** by replacing historic vegetation that has been lost since the period of significance while simplifying turf maintenance and preventing erosion.
6. **Viewshed management** by addressing views into and within the site that are incompatible with its historic character (electric generator, electrical panels, HVAC unit, and neighboring fencing) using relocation or screening.
7. **Impact of increased storm events** by eliminating ponding from building downspouts and achieving positive drainage away from buildings and other use areas within the site.
8. **Subsurface archeological resources** by providing guidelines on treatment of underground archeological resources within the site.

These goals align generally with those expressed in the park's planning documents.

¹ U.S. Access Board, Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards, <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/>.

Planning Documents

General Management Plan

The park's General Management Plan (GMP) was developed in 1994, after initial archeological research had been conducted at the site. The GMP, however, recommends that the grounds of the William Johnson House be further investigated to understand how they functioned and to determine if other outbuildings existed within the landscape during the antebellum period. The GMP proposed the following goals, depending on the findings of these investigations:

- Develop the 1,200 square feet of open space along the west wall of the house as an outdoor gathering place with seating, and plant with native shade trees and shrubs;
- Provide access to this gathering area via a brick walkway extending from State Street to the rear of the house;
- Plant shade trees of the type used in antebellum Natchez along State Street and along the wall of the adjacent depot;
- Manage natural resources at the site so that they support cultural resource objectives, and manage vegetation following an IPM protocol;
- Provide wheelchair access to the first floor of the William Johnson House; and
- Enclose the William Johnson complex with fencing of a design that is based on historical research.²

Most of these ideas are compatible with current goals and concerns expressed by the park for the CLR. Archeological investigations in 2015, however, indicate that the open space along the west wall of the house was historically a bottle garden; it would be inappropriate to develop this area as a gathering place.

Historic Structure Report

In 1997, a historic structure report (HSR) completed for the William Johnson House provided brief recommendations for its landscape. It called for treatment that is historically accurate, contributes to the interpretive program, and meets current standards for visitation. It also recommended additional archeological research to determine the locations of outbuildings, gardens, animal pens, and systems, such as privies and cisterns from the time of Johnson's death to the 1890s when the kitchen dependency was built, to inform the interpretive program for the landscape. While noting that it would be inappropriate to reconstruct outbuildings to their appearance at the time of Johnson's death, it suggests devising ways to indicate the use of the site for animals, gardens, and household systems, such as privies and cisterns. Although it recommends rebuilding the "boardwalk," it neglects to mention that this was not a historic feature, but one added by the NPS after it acquired the site.³

Long Range Interpretive Plan

In 2001, a long-range interpretive plan was completed for the park, but focused solely on exhibits to be developed inside the William Johnson House with no recommendations for the cultural landscape. The kitchen dependency was mentioned briefly as having potential for interpreting the Johnson descendants lives after Johnson's death in 1851, but the archeological exhibit of garden edging inside the dependency was, unfortunately, determined to not "constitute a compelling story for the site" and recommended to be

² *Final General Management Plan, Development Concept Plan, and Environmental Impact Statement, Natchez National Historical Park*

(Denver CO: National Park Service Denver Service Center, 1994), 36 and 39.

³ Ann Beha Associates *HSR*, 88.

“documented and closed.”⁴ This plan is currently being revised.

Instead of documenting and closing views to the garden edging, this CLR recommends that the park include this and other cultural landscape features in the new interpretive plan. Interpretation of these features would enhance the connection of visitors with the story of this free Black American and his family during and after the antebellum era and into the 1920s.

Cultural Landscape Inventory

The 2005 cultural landscape inventory (CLI) proposes restoration as the approved treatment for the William Johnson House cultural landscape. In the explanatory narrative, however, it goes on to explain that treatment for the landscape should also include rehabilitation and preservation. It references the HSR as providing the most detail about these treatments, but the HSR, as described above, provides brief guidelines and little detail to guide treatment.⁵

Recommended Treatment Approach

Treatment Alternatives

The four treatment approaches recognized by the Secretary of the Interior for historic properties were considered in conjunction with the park’s objectives in developing this CLR to determine the approach most suitable for the William Johnson House cultural landscape. These approaches are preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Described in *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Properties* as forming “the philosophical basis for responsible preservation practice and enable long-term preservation of a landscape’s historic features, qualities, and

materials,” these approaches are defined as follows:⁶

- **Preservation:** the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a historic property. Includes stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing preservation maintenance and repair of historic materials and features.
- **Rehabilitation:** the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.
- **Restoration:** the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period by removing features from other periods in its history and reconstructing missing features from the restoration period.
- **Reconstruction:** the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period and in its historic location.

Preferred Treatment

Based on the park’s need to meet current and projected future interpretive, functional, and management goals, **rehabilitation** is recommended as the most appropriate overarching treatment approach for the William Johnson House cultural landscape. This selected treatment differs from the one identified in the CLI, which was restoration, supported by rehabilitation

⁴ *Long-Range Interpretive Plan*. (Natchez MS: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Natchez National Historical Park and Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Planning, 2001), 24.

⁵ Jaeger Associates and Hasty, 44.

⁶ Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, 82.

and preservation. Rehabilitation is more appropriate as the overarching treatment because preservation and restoration are assumed as components of rehabilitation, even when new uses are accommodated. This approach supports protection of the site's historic character and resources while meeting the need for interpretation, paved circulation routes, visitor amenities, and vegetation restoration and maintenance.

Other treatment alternatives recognized by the Secretary of the Interior are inappropriate as stand-alone alternatives for the William Johnson House cultural landscape. Preservation is overly restrictive because it does not allow for the changes to the landscape to accommodate contemporary needs, such as accessibility enhancements and interpretive features. Neither restoration nor reconstruction are appropriate because they assume, as a prerequisite, that sufficient documentation exists to accurately portray most lost historic conditions. At this time, the only documentary source detailed enough to even begin to support comprehensive restoration or reconstruction of the William Johnson House cultural landscape to a particular period are the recollections of Mary Louis Miller, which provide information about features that existed in the landscape in the 1920s.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The following section summarizes the standards for rehabilitation espoused by the Secretary of the Interior for historic properties. The ten basic principles that comprise the standards are intended to help preserve the distinctive character of a site while allowing for reasonable changes to meet new needs. They are as follows:

- A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

- The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
- Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

- New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.⁷

The standards (36 CFR Part 67) apply to historic properties of all periods, locations, sizes, conditions, and uses and create a baseline of guidance to which intended changes to the historic landscape must be compared. These standards are neither technical nor prescriptive but promote responsible preservation practices.

Additional standards apply for restoration, which is permissible when:

- Archeological, documentary, or physical evidence is sufficient to permit accurate restoration with minimal conjecture;
- Restoration is essential to public understanding of the cultural associations of a park; or
- Reinforcements required for stability of existing support systems and protective or code-required features are concealed whenever possible so as not to intrude upon or detract from a cultural landscape's aesthetic and historical qualities, except where concealment would result in the alteration or destruction of historically significant features, materials, or physical or visual relationships.

Additional standards apply also for preservation, including the third in the list for restoration. In addition, only qualified technicians should perform maintenance work following approved work procedures; if not, the appropriate cultural resource specialist should be consulted. Finally, all preserved features should be regularly

inspected, and their condition noted in the Inventory and Condition Assessment Program (ICAP).

Treatment Period

The CLR proposes that the cultural landscape be interpreted to represent its character in the 1920s, which differs from the period interpreted in the interior of the house and the kitchen dependency. While the interior first floor of the William Johnson House is being used for exhibits, the second floor is being interpreted with historic furnishings to the 1840s and 1850s to reflect its appearance during William Johnson's life. For the kitchen dependency, plans are underway to have its interior interpret the Johnson family story around the turn of the twentieth century.

The interpretation of the cultural landscape to the 1920s is based on the recollections of Mary Louise Miller in her interview with NPS staff in 1996. Her memories of the site as it was in the 1920s are enhanced with a sketch map showing the approximate location of features such as water hydrants and the cistern, boys' workshop, privy, chicken coop, log pile, garage, large pecan tree, and the surrounding wood fence. Her written descriptions also list several plant species she recalled being cultivated within the yard.

Despite William Johnson's notes about developing the site in the 1840s, they were never accompanied by descriptions of the location of features, nor would it be appropriate to reconstruct the 1840s landscape because of the presence of the 1897 kitchen. In addition, little information has been found to support reconstruction or interpretation of the cultural landscape to the turn of the twentieth century, leading to the conclusion that the 1920s is the best period to interpret in the landscape.

⁷ Charles A. Birnbaum and Christine Capella Peters, eds. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of*

Cultural Landscapes (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996), 49.

Treatment Concept

The concept for treatment at the William Johnson House is to interpret the lives of the Johnson family in the 1920s, preserve existing features that contribute to the site's historic significance, and restore documented features that facilitate interpretation, while improving visitor orientation, interpretation, access, and circulation.

Existing features to be preserved include the two buildings and enclosure fence; the public sidewalk and vehicular parking area; the brick walkway ruins; historic plants, including the crape myrtle and paperwhite narcissus; views to the house from the street; views into the surrounding city from the house; the garden border ruins; and the bottle garden. Archeological resources would be preserved unless a compelling research question or informational need justifies disturbance or excavation, or mitigation to accommodate unavoidable change, as necessary.

Features to be restored include the brick side path and courtyard paving, if indicated by archeological research; the front fence and its arch-top gate in its original location; the pecan and fig trees; and the bottle garden edging. If additional archeological investigations are implemented, they may provide additional information that could inform at least the locations of missing outbuildings, cisterns, privies, and other fences.

Rehabilitation will include pedestrian and wheelchair access via brick walkways in the configurations used during the Johnson family period of occupation and expanded to provide access around the dependency. In addition, rehabilitation will include exhibits in the landscape where additional information is needed to interpret missing features or features uncovered through archeology. Interpretive exhibits should be developed to show varieties or hybrids that may have been grown in the landscape during the 1920s. These plants should be

based on Mary Louise Miller's list, originate before the 1920s, and be common for gardens of that period. Plant selections will occur through careful research into plant species, varieties, and hybrids to choose the specific plants that can communicate the historic character of the landscape. New features displaying these plants will be designed to be clearly part of the interpretive program, differentiating them from features that are known to have been on the site during the interpretive period.

Additional archeological investigations are key to determining the locations of outbuildings, gardens, animal pens, and systems, such as privies and cisterns. Exhibits could potentially include footprint indicators or ghost structures showing the locations of outbuildings in the landscape and fences showing the locations of animal pens and food or ornamental gardens.

General Treatment Standards

The following section provides general guidelines for the treatment of the William Johnson House landscape intended to support the rehabilitation approach. These guidelines relate to a philosophy of cultural landscape treatment based on the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, and a comprehensive view of the property as a whole. They should be used when planning for any landscape changes and considered in connection with each of the specific landscape treatment recommendations included in this CLR.

Land Use

- Avoid land use activities, permanent or temporary, which threaten or impair known or potential archeological resources.
- Monitor and regulate use of the landscape to minimize immediate and long-term damage to cultural resources.

Buildings and Structures

- Consider the interpretive value of non-intrusive, non-contributing structures, and retain when possible.
- Remove non-contributing structures that are intrusive to the historic landscape if they are found to be without historical or functional merit or value.
- Avoid conjectural reconstruction of historic buildings and structures.

Circulation

- Minimize the visual impacts of new pedestrian access systems.
- Design and locate contemporary structures that facilitate access, such as ramps, railings, signs, and curb cuts, to minimize adverse impacts on the character and features of a cultural landscape.
- Ensure that all paths are evenly graded and well-drained to prevent trampling of vegetation, soil compaction, and erosion of the path margins.

Sustainability

- Use cultural and natural resource treatment and maintenance methods that are environmentally and culturally sensitive and sustainable over the long term.
- Encourage the application of Best Management Practices, Integrated Pest Management, and soil and erosion control measures in all maintenance and management practices to minimize water pollution and degradation of natural systems.
- Minimize the extent of any ground disturbance, except for archeological investigations, as well as earth grading and compaction, and drainage pattern alteration.

- Promote biodiversity and native plant species in new plantings.
- Take into consideration life-cycle costing of materials, including their long-term wearing capacity and maintenance costs, when evaluating options. Always consider materials that are non-toxic, durable, and low-maintenance.

Topography

- Preserve existing landforms and natural drainage patterns to the greatest extent possible.
- Avoid attempts to reconstruct or restore historic grades unless supported by clear documentary evidence of their appearance or original design during a specific period.

Resilience

- Prepare for the increasing effects of climate change in Mississippi. These effects include increases in annual rainfall occurring in heavy downpours, along with soil erosion, but drier soils due to fewer occurrences of light rainfall. Other effects include an increase in unpleasantly hot days with the accompanying increase in risk of heat stroke and other heat-related illnesses.⁸
- Plan new stormwater management and irrigation systems to accommodate more frequent heavy downpours, drought, and the impact of heat on plant transpiration.
- Shade trees and shade structures should be used to provide visitors with relief from unpleasantly hot days.
- Consider providing a bottle refill station at the site to ensure visitors remain hydrated. To protect historic resources during heavy downpours, increase gutter and storm pipes sizes to

⁸ Environmental Protection Agency, "What Climate Change Means for Mississippi," EPA 430-F-16-026, <https://19january2017>

snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/climate-change-ms.pdf

accommodate new heavy flows and avoid backplash onto buildings. Ensure positive drainage so that water does not pond or pool near buildings, structures, and paths, which has been an ongoing problem at the site.

New Design and Construction

- Avoid altering existing features or adversely affecting the landscape's historic character when adding new features to support interpretive, management, and visitor access functions. Features that facilitate access and interpretation should be designed to minimize adverse impacts on the historic character and features of the landscape. Consider the use of temporary structures that do not require soil disturbance.
- Undertake sufficient study and recordation of landscape features requiring modification, repair, or replacement before work is performed to understand and protect research and interpretive values.
- Limit the use of destructive techniques, such as archeological excavation, to those necessary to provide sufficient information for research, interpretation, and management needs.
- Retain and maintain historic materials, features, finishes, construction techniques, spaces, and spatial relationships when implementing changes to the cultural landscape.
- Design all new additions and alterations to be a product of their time, and compatible with historic resources in materials, size, scale and proportion, and massing. Differentiate new work from historic resources.
- Design and site new additions and alterations to the landscape in such a way that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the cultural landscape would be unimpaired.

- Retain and maintain changes to the cultural landscape that have acquired historic significance in their own right.
- Repair, rather than replace, deteriorated historic features. Replacement of severely deteriorated features should be based on archeological, documentary, or physical evidence. The new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.
- Avoid landscape changes that create a false sense of historical development, including the addition of conjectural, typical, or representative features. Instead, consider interpretation of typical features in cases where restoration is not possible, but where providing the information is important to the visitor experience.
- Establish wayside exhibits in the least intrusive manner possible to fulfill interpretive goals.
- Avoid the use of chemical or physical treatments that cause damage to cultural resources and natural systems. Undertake the surface cleaning of structures using the gentlest means possible.

Visual Quality

- Utilize screening methods that blend with the surrounding character of the site, such as matching existing fencing or vegetation.

Access and Interpretation

- Provide universal accessibility throughout the site and the larger park without having a negative impact on historic cultural landscape resources.
- Design accessible paths in compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standard (ABAAS).
- Follow ABAAS guidelines in the design of interpretive, wayfinding, and park information signs, including using the recommended fonts, font sizes, and color contrast, as well as providing the

same information in Braille and audio form.

- Ensure that pamphlets, fliers, and other documents available online have been reviewed for 508c compliance. For those documents distributed at the park, ensure that copies are also available in Braille.
- Provide an alternative means for interpretation, such as a visitor center exhibit or interactive video monitoring system, of those features located in areas that cannot be made universally accessible or where new interpretive features would be a visual intrusion. The NPS has begun to offer immersive 3-D interactive tours so that challenges to physical access, whether due to location or ability can be overcome.⁹
- Erect the minimal number of signs possible for identification, directional, interpretive, and regulatory needs.

Role of Preservation Specialists

- Undertake all treatment projects under the direction of appropriate specialists, including historical landscape architects, historical architects, archeologists, conservators, natural resource management specialists, and qualified technicians and artisans.

Documentation

- Document, through drawings, photographs, and notes, all changes to and treatments of the historic landscape. Consider the use of GPR, GPS, and GIS technology in documentation efforts. Maintain records of treatments and preserve this documentation according to professional archival standards.
- Accession and catalog representative features salvaged from a cultural landscape, provided that they fall within the park's scope of collection statement.

Treatment Recommendations

The following recommendations are specific to the William Johnson House cultural landscape. They are organized by specific areas of the landscape, as identified on the Treatment Plan (Map 5-1)

Streetscape

This area is located between the facades of the William Johnson and McCallum houses and the street curb. Although this area is in the public right-of-way, it is used by the NPS and the public to access both buildings: the McCallum House through its front door, which serves as the front entrance to both buildings, and the William Johnson House cultural landscape through the entrance gate in the north boundary fence.

- Consult with an arborist to develop a long-term maintenance plan to care for the crape myrtle that stands in the neutral ground at the northwest corner of the William Johnson House and was likely standing during the period of significance. Establish a no-mow/no-trim zone that extends a minimum of three feet from the trunk. Mulch the no-mow/no-trim zone twice a year with cottonseed hulls, rice hulls, shredded cypress mulch, or other locally-available natural mulches.
- Maintain the herringbone brick paver sidewalk in front of the William Johnson House by inspecting it twice a year and re-setting disturbed pavers.
- Consider expanding the sidewalk to the curb to cover the neutral zone, thus minimizing wear on turf and preventing gravel from being brought into the buildings by visitors' shoes. Create a neat brick border around the crape myrtle's no-mow/no-trim zone area,

⁹ "Immersive 3-D Interactive Tours," National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/3d-tours.htm>.

- while leaving a minimum public sidewalk width of three feet.
- Relocate the large brown trash/recycling bin to the northeast corner of the McCallum House and remove the “Natchez Recycles” bin to minimize visual clutter. Alternatively, remove the large bin to another site and add a smaller trash can next to the “Natchez Recycles” bin, matching it in scale, color, and size, or replace the large brown bin with a smaller combined trash and recycling bin.
- Relocate the park bench to the front of the McCallum House to preserve and enhance views to the William Johnson House. Paint the metal supports of the bench brown to match the McCallum House doors and minimize its visual impact.
- Continue to restrict street parking in front of the Johnson and McCallum houses.

Entrance Gate, Walkway, and Courtyard

This area includes the entrance gate into the William Johnson House landscape, the walkway that leads towards the courtyard between the house and kitchen dependency, the courtyard itself, and the walkway that leads around the back of the dependency.

- Remove the double-leaf vehicle entrance gate on the north side of the perimeter fence and replace it with a single-leaf pedestrian entrance gate to match the one that was removed in 2004. Accession and catalog the original gate in park collections as an artifact. Mount the new gate on concrete posts that match the ones that were removed in 2004.
- Construct a six-foot-wide herringbone or running bond brick walkway from the entrance gate to the courtyard between the house and dependency. This walkway will replace the concrete walkway that was in place in 1978 and

may have been installed in the 1920s. Edge the walkway with bricks arranged in a sawtooth pattern to reference the historic walkway discovered by archeologists under the 1897 dependency in the 1990s (see Figure 2-19). The surface of the walkway should comply with ABAAS standards and slope one to two percent away from the house to prevent standing water (Figure 5-1).

- Remove the cover from the coal bin opening, remove the top two courses of brick, and cover the opening with a removable section of wood boardwalk that meets the level of the brick walkway at both ends (Figures 5-2 and 5-3).
- Extend the brick walkway past the southwest corner of the kitchen dependency, then along the south elevation to meet the east retaining wall. Ensure that the paving drains away from the buildings.
- Expand the brick walkway paving to cover the ground level of the courtyard between the two buildings as far as indicated by archeological investigation. Ensure that the paving drains away from the buildings.



FIGURE 5-1. Brick walkway at Lincoln Home Historic Site. The walkway was designed and installed to meet ABAAS standards. Christina Osborn.

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Uncover the portion of curved garden edging at the east end of the courtyard and create an interpretive exhibit about how the Johnsons may have displayed ornamental plantings in the landscape. Protect the edging ruin with a gravel mulch and low brick curb (Figure 5-4).
- Consult with archeologists to discover the location of the cistern that stood in the courtyard in the 1920s and interpret



FIGURE 5-2. Wood boardwalk adjoining brick walkway at Lincoln Home Historic Site. The two materials were joined to meet ABAAS standards. Christina Osborn.

it as feasible through either reconstruction or footprint.

- Minimize the visual impacts of non-historic pedestrian access systems, including ramps and other accommodations added for accessibility.
- Identify the site's accessible route from the front door, through the entrance gate, and down the west side of the house to the courtyard. From there, extend the route around to the rear of the kitchen dependency.

West Yard

- Conduct additional archeological investigations to uncover the extents of the bottle garden, portions of which were uncovered in 1993 and 2004, and indicated by GPR in 2015.
- Consider exposing remnant bottle edging or paving, as indicated by archeologists, as an exhibit like that at Cane River Creole National Historical Park (Figures 5-5 and 5-6). Test the area around the bottles for pollen that might indicate species that were grown in the garden. Consider either replanting the

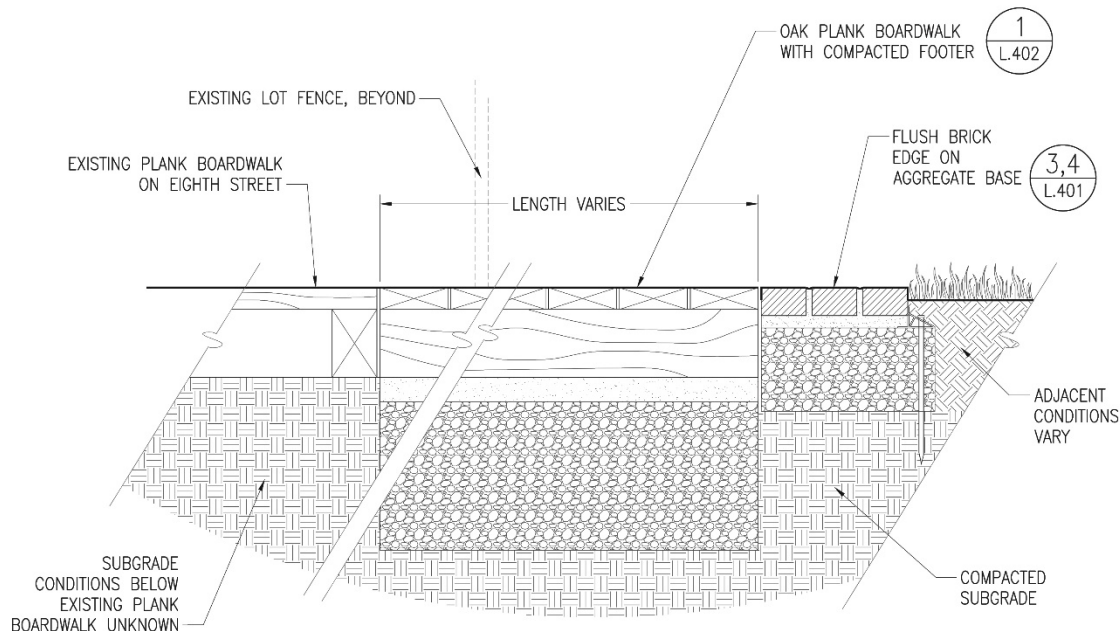


FIGURE 5-3. Detail section showing the connection between a wood boardwalk and brick paving at Lincoln Home Historic Site. Laura Knott.

- garden with species as indicated or protect the surface with a gravel mulch and a low brick curb (see Figure 5-4).
- Add an interpretive sign on the inside of the west fence to tell the story of how the Johnsons used the Lapice lot. Provide an extension of the brick walkway to the interpretive sign.
 - Replace the fig tree that was documented as late as 2005 west of the dependency. Recommended varieties for the Natchez area are ‘Celeste’ and ‘Southern Brown Turkey.’
 - Consider developing a heritage garden exhibit along the fence line opposite the west wall of the kitchen dependency. Here, the park could share information about ornamental plants that the Johnsons might have cultivated in the yard. Vicksburg National Military Park maintains a heritage garden at the Old Administration Building as part of the NPS Parks as Classrooms program. The

garden is maintained by the local master gardeners and the county extension service as an NPS partner program (see <https://www.nps.gov/vick/learn/history-culture/heritage-demonstration-garden.htm> for more information).

Rear Yard

- Replace the pecan tree that once stood in the yard behind the dependency. Recommended varieties, selected for disease resistance and nutmeat quality for southern Mississippi, include ‘Kiowa,’ ‘Sumner,’ ‘Melrose,’ ‘Jackson,’ and ‘Elliot.’¹⁰ For best survivability, plant a 4- to 5-foot tree grown in a container rather than bare root. If excavation for the tree unearths historic narcissus bulbs, replant them in the area around the tree.
- Consider, once identified by archeologists, interpreting missing outbuildings in the rear yard by using

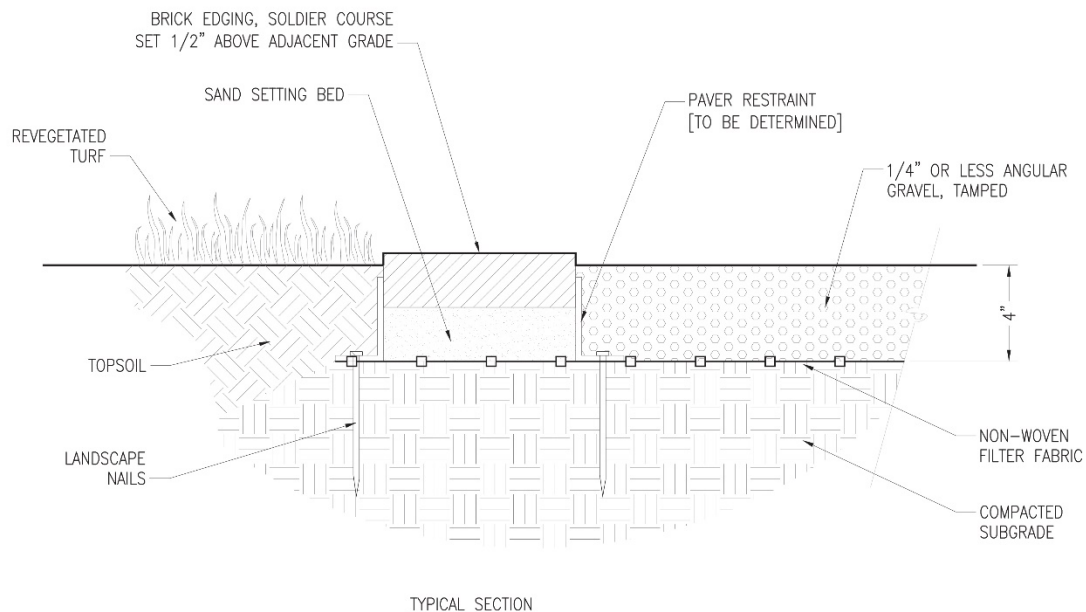


FIGURE 5-4. Detail section showing a brick edge and gravel fill in an archeologically-sensitive area. Laura Knott.

¹⁰ “What Pecan Varieties Should I Plant?” Mississippi State University Extension,

<http://extension.msstate.edu/content/what-pecan-varieties-should-i-plant>.

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ghost structures (Figure 5-7).¹¹ In this way, visitors can understand their spatial relationships to the house, dependency, and fence. If not feasible, consider using edging of wood, brick, or other material compatible with the historic character of the landscape to indicate the locations of the structures' footprints (Figure 5-8).¹²

- Interpret the footprint of the 1841 kitchen dependency in the rear section of the lot using brick or other material

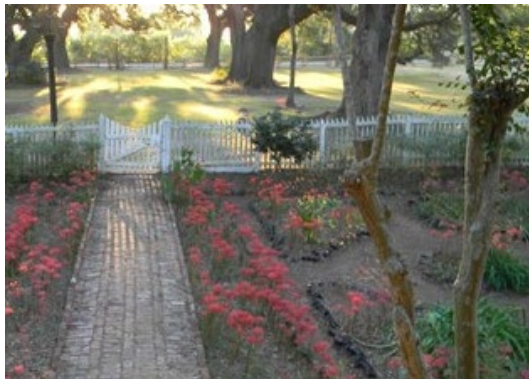


FIGURE 5-5. Bottles used as edging in an antebellum garden at Cane River Creole National Historical Park. NPS.



FIGURE 5-6. Close-up view of the bottle garden at Oakland Plantation, Cane River Creole National Historical Park. NPS.

compatible with the historic character of the landscape (see Figures 5-4 and 5-8).

- Consult with archeologists to investigate the locations and contents of the sites of former privies to enhance knowledge of the lives of the Johnson family.
- Consult with archeologists to learn the locations of other fences within the Johnson lot. If feasible and if information is available about their construction, reconstruct those that serve interpretation.
- Add a new fence matching the existing fence to screen views to the electric generator and electrical panels. Consider using this screened area for storage of outdoor maintenance equipment.
- Screen the HVAC unit behind the kitchen dependency with fencing to match the existing. This fencing could also serve to mark the scale and footprint of the boys' workshop recalled by Mary Louise Miller.



FIGURE 5-7. Ghost structures at Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site were constructed to indicate the scale and shape of missing buildings. National Park Planner (npplan.com).

¹¹ Additional information, along with examples of ghost structures, can be accessed at the Columbia Archaeology Program's website: <http://columbiaarchaeology.org/ghost-structures.html>.

¹² The NPS has used ghost structures in several places for interpretation, including at Tuskegee

Airmen National Historic Site (<https://npplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Tuskegee-Airmen-55.jpg>) and at Franklin Court in Independence National Historical Park.

- Add two water hydrants to replace the ones reported by Mary Louise Miller as being attached to the house and dependency in the 1920s. If the originals are not available, search for vintage replacements or reproductions that can be reattached to the water system and used to maintain plantings.

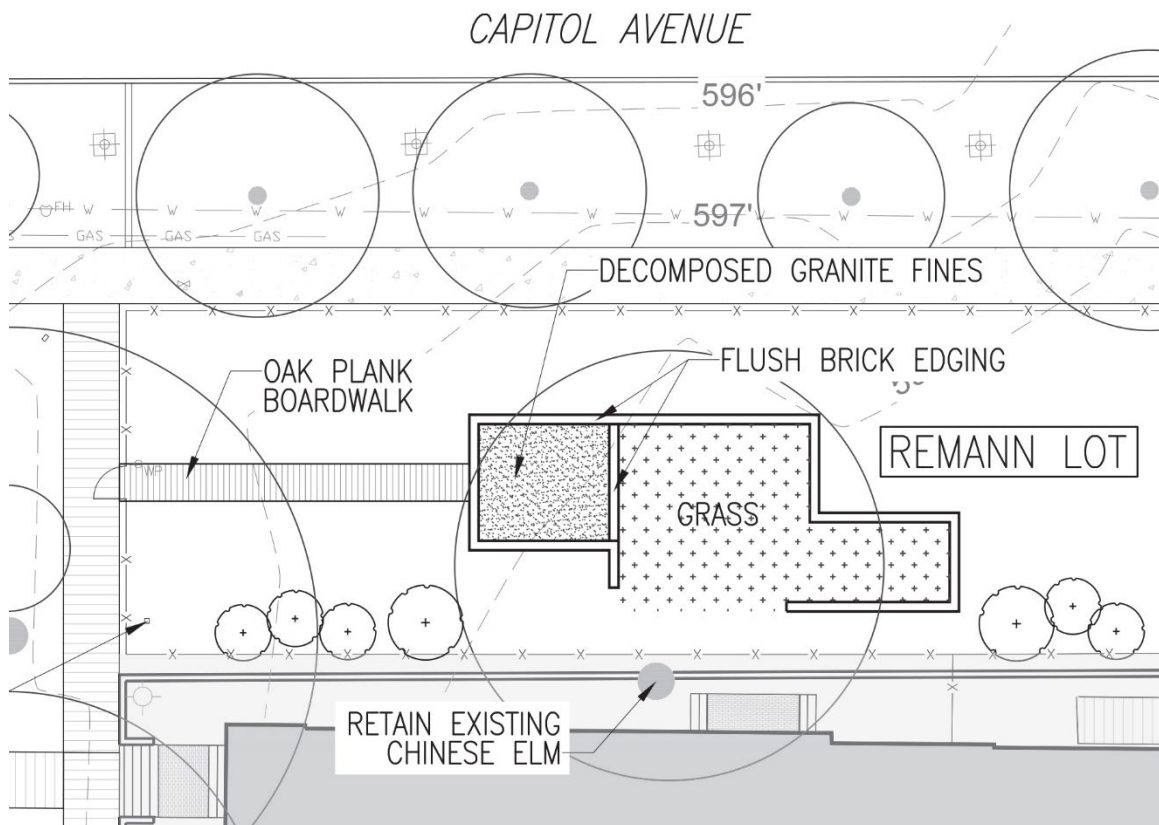


FIGURE 5-8. This plan interprets a missing historic building at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site using a combination of wood boardwalk, decomposed granite, and turf. Laura Knott.

Implementation Projects

This section provides a prioritized list of projects that can be accomplished at the site through the Project Management Information System (PMIS) and guidelines for implementation. The guidelines present a goal or vision for treatment and lay out a process for achieving it. These projects are subject to review under Section 106 and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) compliance.

The individual projects listed below are intended to support the park's ability to secure funding and are presented in a format that is consistent with the Facility Management Software System (FMSS) forms. Each project is broken down into six sections: 1) project description; 2) location; 3) considerations; 4) additional studies recommended; 5) related implementation projects; and 6) implementation process. The tasks listed for each project do not include project management, compliance-related reviews, and other procedures typically undertaken by National Park Service personnel as part of the planning, design, and construction phases of a project.

The following implementation projects are described below in the recommended order of priority:

- Conduct Phase III archeological data recovery.
- Replace entrance gate.
- Construct brick walkway and pave courtyard.
- Construct fences to screen electric generator, electrical panels, and HVAC unit.
- Create bottle garden and curved garden edging interpretive exhibits
- Interpret missing outbuildings with ghost structures or footprint edgings.
- Develop a site interpretation plan.
- Prepare a vegetation management plan.

Conduct Phase III Archeological Data Recovery

Project Description. The cultural landscape of the William Johnson House has undergone at least 11 archeological investigations since its purchase by the Preservation Society of Ellicott's Hill in 1975 (Figure 5-10). Archeologists have uncovered the foundation of the 1841 kitchen dependency, a length of brick walkway with sawtooth edging, two saw-tooth-edged garden border remnants, a brick gutter drain, remnant foundations of the Battle and Overaker houses, and scattered building materials. Some post holes that may be from previous boundary fences were uncovered in the southeast corner of the property. Excavated rows of ginger beer bottles and a GPR survey suggest the existence of the remains of a bottle garden. Countless excavated artifacts provide extensive information about the lives of the Johnson family.

Investigators, however, have not yet been able to locate the remains of any of the three cisterns reported by Johnson in his diary as being constructed in the yard, nor the one reported by Mary Louise Miller as being located within the courtyard between the house and dependency in the 1920s. Although archeologists have excavated a few post holes, there have not been any further investigations to identify locations of fences, additional walkways, or garden spaces within the landscape. Finally, none of the former privy sites likely located behind the dependency or sites of ancillary buildings and animal pens, have been investigated.

Although William Johnson's extensive diary provides detailed information about his own life and the social and cultural life of Natchez from 1831 to 1851, it provides little information about the life of his family during that period. Further, the vast collection of letters, household records, and other documents pertaining to Johnson's family for the next 126 years after his death provides little information about how the

family lived in the landscape of their Natchez townhouse. This makes it difficult to convey to visitors how the family might have used the landscape as a work yard, to cultivate and display ornamental plants, to raise small animals, and to gather with family and intimate friends outside. The proposed archeological investigations may be able to provide crucial information about the lives of Johnson family members, particularly after the construction of the 1897 dependency.

Location. Additional archeological investigations would address areas within the courtyard between the house and kitchen dependency, the yard between the house and boundary fence, and the yard to the rear of the dependency (see Figure 5-10).

Considerations. Of primary importance would be locating the last of the three cisterns thought to have been built in the courtyard. The cistern would have been a structure of central importance in the life of the Johnson family. *It is crucial that this investigation take place prior to construction on the site related to Project #140PS219F0021, implemented to comply with ABAAS regulations. This project proposes construction of a ramp at the southwest corner of the Johnson House and raising of the brick paving around the kitchen dependency.*

Once the cistern is found, archeologists should focus on locating ancillary buildings, such as the boys' workshop, wash house, hen house, corn house, garage, carriage house, and sheds, as well as structures, such as fence lines, paved walkways, garden edgings, wash lines, fire pits, trash middens and burn sites, privy sites, and animal pens. After these are located, it will be easier to interpret spaces where ornamental or food plants may have been raised. Garden archeology should also include soil sampling, flotation, and laboratory analysis to recover and interpret the remains of long-vanished plants and trees, such as pollen, seeds, hulls, or wood, which can provide

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information about the species of plants raised on the site.

Related Projects.

- Construct brick walkway and pave courtyard.
- Create bottle garden and curved garden edging interpretive exhibits.
- Interpret missing outbuildings with ghost structures or footprints.
- Develop a site interpretation plan.

Implementation Process.

- Conduct background research by reviewing reports of previous investigations at the Williams Johnson House to identify research gaps.
- Use ground-penetrating radar (GPR) to locate subsurface anomalies that may indicate the locations of cisterns, privies, buildings, and structures.
- Excavate test units, which should be placed based on GPR data to investigate anomalies.
- Process and analyze materials and produce report with diagrams and recommendations.

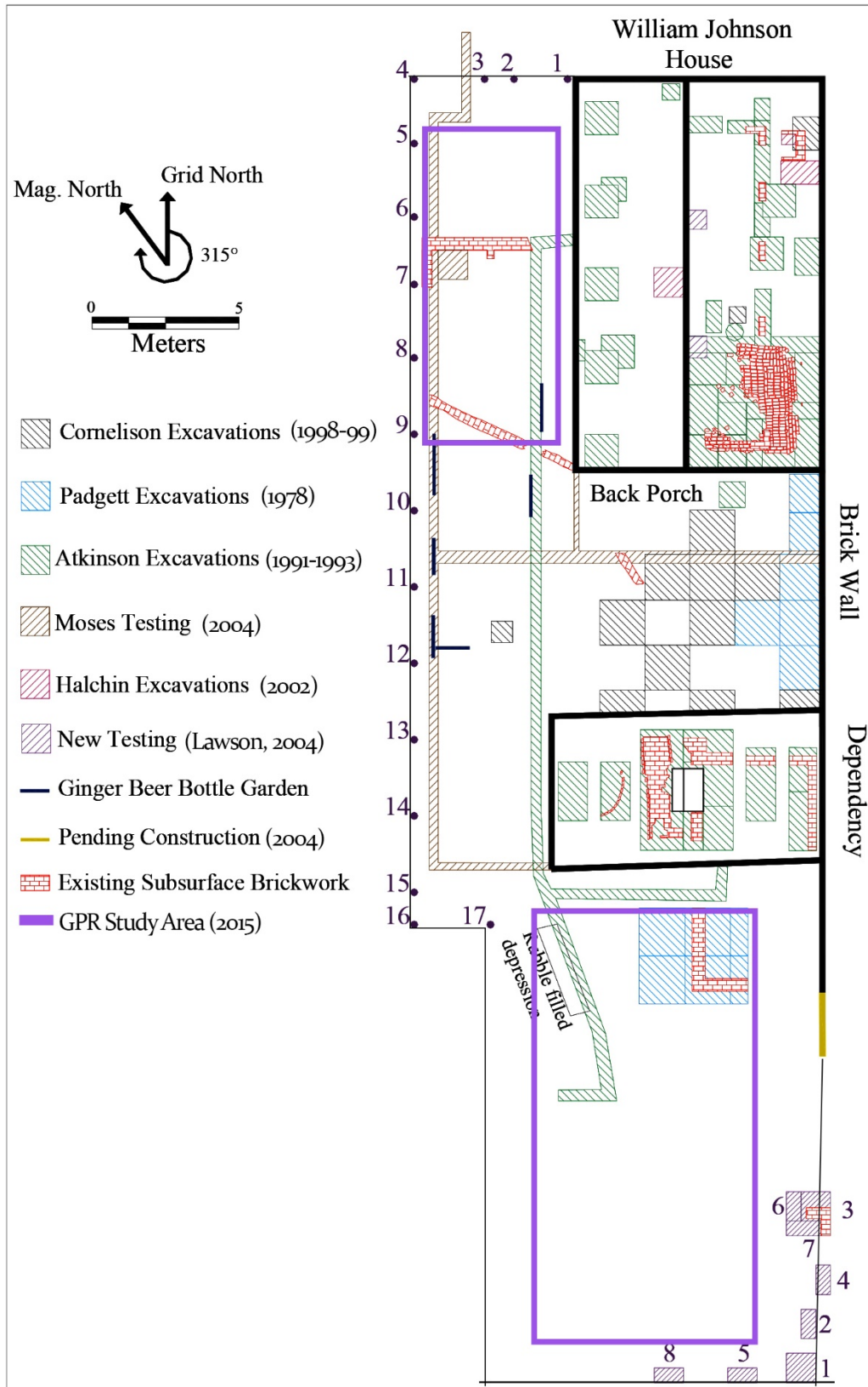


FIGURE 5-9. Diagram of previous archeological investigations from 1978 to 2015. Areas outside the lilac boxes need GPR surveys and all areas not hatched need to be excavated. Lawson, annotated by Laura Knott.

Replace Entrance Gate

Project Description. When the site was acquired by the NPS in 1990, the back yard was enclosed by a wood fence with an arched top single-leaf entrance gate hung on concrete piers at the northwest corner of the house (see Figures 2-36 and 2-39). This gate was removed in 2004 and put into storage at the park shop when a new boundary fence was constructed. The entrance gate was replaced with a double-leaf gate centered on the street side of the fence so that machinery used for building restoration could more easily access the site. Now that most of the restoration work is complete, the single-leaf gate hung on concrete piers should be restored to the historic location.

Location. North (street side) fence.

Considerations. The project proposes the creation of a copy of the original gate instead of restoring and re-using it. This is in anticipation of the gate being used more often once the cultural landscape of the William Johnson House is interpreted. A new gate would much better withstand increased use.

Additional Studies Recommended.

Conduct a historic paint analysis on the original gate.

Related Projects. Restore Brick Walkway and Courtyard Paving

Implementation Process.

- Create a copy of the original gate, including shape, board widths and hardware.
- Conduct a historic paint analysis to determine the original paint color used on the gate and paint it that color.
- Accession and catalog the original gate and add it to park collections.
- Design and install two concrete piers with square flat caps to match those that were at the site. If the original piers were stored upon removal, they can serve as models for the new piers. If not, their dimensions can be gauged by examining

photographs taken of the gate before 2004.

- Remove the double-leaf gate and fill the opening with solid fence.
- Hang the new gate on the new concrete piers.

Construct Brick Walkway and Pave Courtyard

Project Description. In his diary, William Johnson described the summer of 1842 spent, among other things, “making a pavement in the Yard” of his newly constructed house on State Street using brick he collected from the ruined hotel across the street. While it is not yet known how extensive this paving was, it is almost certain that he would have paved a path from the entrance gate to the kitchen. The family may have replaced the brick pathway with a concrete version in the 1920s.

Johnson would have also likely paved the courtyard, which would have been an active workspace. Most nineteenth-century townhouses in the area would have a paved courtyard shared by the main house and its outbuildings. Most archeological investigations conducted in the area of the courtyard have uncovered bricks and brick rubble, perhaps the remains of this paving.

This project would improve the historic character of the landscape, as well as make it more useful for park visitors and staff. These paved areas, if designed to meet ABAAS standards, would expand access from the building into the cultural landscape.

Location. This project applies to the area west of the house, between the house and kitchen dependency, and around the dependency.

Considerations. Archeologists should investigate the project areas prior to paving implementation to better determine the location and scale of these historic paved areas. This will also help ensure that the brick paving does not provide a false sense of history. If no evidence of a historic brick paving is found, the park should consider an alternative solution for access, such as a boardwalk structure.

Additional Studies Recommended.

Conduct archeological investigations to determine the location and scale of historic paved areas at the site.

Related Projects. Conduct Phase III archeological data recovery.

Implementation Process.

- Conduct Phase III archeological excavation to determine the location and scale of historic paved areas at the site.
- Design paving to withstand heavy foot traffic, provide positive drainage away from buildings, and meet ABAAS standards. Consult with a local civil engineer to determine if the paving needs a concrete or compacted gravel base.
- Install brick paving. The walkway uncovered by archeologist at the site were built with a combination of herringbone and running bond patterns, although most townhouse courtyards were paved in herringbone (see Figures 2-19 and 3-4). It is hoped that archeological investigations will guide the choice of pattern.

Construct Fences to Screen Generator, Electrical Panels, and HVAC Unit

Project Description. The electric generator and its related electrical panels located at the south end of the site, along with the HVAC unit located at the southeast corner of the kitchen dependency are intrusive elements in the cultural landscape of the William Johnson House. This project proposes to screen these elements from visitor view.

Location. This project applies to the area south of the kitchen dependency.

Considerations. Archeologists should monitor screening fence posthole excavation.

Additional Studies Recommended.

Conduct archeological investigations to monitor posthole excavation.

Related Projects.

- Conduct Phase III archeological data recovery.

Implementation Process.

- Design the location and configuration of screen fencing to match existing fencing on the site (see Figure 3-12). Include gates for access to machinery.
- Install the fencing and paint to match existing.

Create Bottle Garden and Curved Garden Edging Interpretive Exhibits

Project Description. Archeological investigations at the William Johnson House have so far uncovered three ornamental garden areas in the landscape. The first was a curved garden edging that was discovered in 1978 within the courtyard area. Another curved garden edging was located over a decade later inside the 1897 kitchen dependency; it was determined to be related to use between 1841 and 1897. The third site, a potential bottle garden, has become evident through archeological investigations in 1993, 2004, and 2015.

The discovery of these three features adds an exciting dimension to the story of the Johnson family and how they used the landscape for not only growing foodstuffs, as described in Johnson's diary, but also for the display of ornamental plants. The only ornamental plants mentioned by Johnson were some roses he bought and planted at the house in 1841, but the women of the house would certainly have cultivated and cherished ornamental plants for color and scent. That the Johnsons created and maintained a bottle garden, likely around the turn of the twentieth century, would certainly be of interest to visitors. The two sites located outside the dependency should be developed as exhibits, but additional information needs to be gathered through archeological investigations.

Location. This project applies to the courtyard and the area west of the house and courtyard, which contains evidence of a bottle garden.

Considerations. Archeologists should investigate the area of the bottle garden in detail to discover its extents and condition. In addition, it may prove interesting to conduct a pollen study to learn more about the species of plants that may have been cultivated in the bottle garden and the two other garden areas. Additional investigations

may uncover more garden areas within the site.

Additional Studies Recommended.

Conduct archeological investigations to determine the location and scale of historic garden areas at the site.

Related Projects.

- Conduct Phase III archeological data recovery.
- Develop a site interpretation plan.
- Prepare a vegetation management plan.

Implementation Process.

- Conduct Phase III archeological excavation to determine the extents and condition of the bottle garden.
- Conduct a pollen study to determine species planted there.
- Add the garden exhibits to the site interpretation plan.
- Uncover the remains of the bottle garden to create an exhibit in the landscape.
- Uncover the remains of the curved garden edging outside the dependency to create an exhibit in the landscape.
- Protect the bottle and brick edgings of these gardens with a low brick border. Protect their surfaces with a gravel mulch on top of a soil separator fabric.

Interpret Missing Outbuildings with Ghost Structures or Footprint Edgings

Project Description. In his diary, William Johnson described the construction of numerous outbuildings on his property, ranging from privies to hen houses. Sanborn maps also show a variety of outbuildings that were maintained on the Johnson property throughout its history (see Figures 2-26, 2-27, 2-30, 2-32, and 2-33). In addition, Mary Louise Miller's map of the property shows the general locations of a privy, Dr. Johnston's garage, a chicken coop or dog run, and the boys' workshop (see Figure 2-35). Although an archeological investigation in 2004 uncovered the brick footing of an outbuilding south of the kitchen dependency, no other evidence has been found yet that can identify the locations of these buildings in the Johnson landscape. When this information becomes available, interpretation of the cultural landscape would be enhanced if the locations and scale of these outbuildings could be presented to the visitors in the form of ghost structures.

Ghost structures have been used at many historic sites to represent the location, size, and scale of missing buildings. Examples within the NPS include Franklin Court at Independence National Historical Park, created in the 1980s, and more recently at Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site (see Figure 5-7).

If ghost structures are not feasible, the NPS could indicate the locations of these buildings by representing their footprints in edgings of brick, wood, or metal. A recent example of the use of this interpretive technique is at Lincoln Home National Historic Site. There, footprints of missing houses located within the historic site are represented by brick edging with gravel or turf fill and wood decking. These edgings were designed to minimize disruption to subsurface archeological resources (see Figures 5-4 and 5-8).

Location. This project applies to the area south of the kitchen dependency.

Considerations. Archeologists should investigate this area thoroughly to locate post holes, foundations, privy pits, concentrations of seed or other animal feed, and artifacts that point to particular uses, such as tools and materials used in the boys' workshop.

Additional Studies Recommended.

Conduct archeological investigations to determine the location and scale of outbuildings in this area.

Related Projects.

- Conduct Phase III archeological data recovery.
- Develop a site interpretation plan.

Implementation Process.

- Conduct Phase III archeological excavation to determine the locations of outbuildings in this area.
- Design plan for interpreting outbuildings through ghost structures and/or footprint indicators.
- Install ghost structures and/or footprint indicators and add interpretive signage.
- Include these exhibits in the site interpretation plan.

Prepare a Site Interpretation Plan

Project Description. The William Johnson House cultural landscape provides the only opportunity to interpret the lifeways of the Johnson family during the 1920s at the site. As such, consideration should be paid to expanding current interpretation available within the house to include the landscape.

Specific topics to be considered for interpretation within the landscape include:

- Illustration of the changing boundaries of the Johnson property through time, especially when the family owned the adjacent lot where the train station now stands. An exhibit could compare the existing and historic boundaries and discuss the uses of the adjacent lot for the blacksmith shop, an orchard, and other plantings or gardens.
- Sanborn maps showing the locations of outbuildings, fencing, roads, and other landscape features within Johnson-owned properties.
- Information about how the Johnsons may have used the courtyard and other areas of the landscape as workspaces.
- History of ornamental bottle gardens in Mississippi.
- Lists of ornamental plants the Johnsons may have cultivated in the landscape.

Location. This project applies to the entire William Johnson House lot.

Considerations. Most features that existed historically within the landscape are no longer extant, so visitors may have trouble imagining without interpretive aids. Provide wayside exhibits that feature artist renderings or historic photographs depicting how the Johnson landscape may have been used.

Additional Studies Recommended.

Interpretation should be informed by ongoing archeological investigations, which could themselves be interpreted to visitors.

Related Projects. Conduct Phase III Archeological Investigations within the William Johnson House cultural landscape.

Implementation Process.

- Consider accessibility, views and vistas, and key stories and their relationship to site interpretation at the William Johnson House.
- Develop site interpretation goals and stories, and the vehicles for conveying the information, as part of the plan.
- Make the cultural landscape interpretive plan an addendum to the long-range interpretive plan currently underway.
- Document and record any changes to the landscape associated with implementation of the plan.

Prepare a Vegetation Management Plan

Project Description. Only two vegetation features remain from the period of significance: the crape myrtle located in the neutral grounds and the cluster of paperwhite narcissus located in the rear yard. A vegetation management plan is needed to replace missing plant material, to add heritage plants that can enhance interpretation, and to maintain these features in good condition. Goals for the plan include prioritization of short- and long-term actions, appropriate and preferred maintenance procedures and protocols, and best management practices (BMPs) and Integrated Pest Management plans (IPM) for planting and maintaining desired plants and controlling invasives. The vegetation management plan would address the inherent needs of each species in the most sustainable manner, while establishing processes and methods that support historic landscape preservation and interpretation.

The existing plantings only begin to support interpretation of Johnson family life in the 1920s. While Mary Louis Miller's recollections provide not only the locations of some plant material during the 1920s and a supplemental list of plants by common name, the details of species and varieties and the precise locations of some of these plants are not known. Further, it is not known if and how the family cultivated a turf lawn within the lot or maintained the area as a swept yard.

Given the paucity of information, it is possible that the only way to supplement interpretation about plants in this cultural landscape would be to develop a heritage garden that can display species that may have been grown there. This should also be addressed in the vegetation management plan.

This vegetation management plan should specifically address:

- Turf management, including whether or not turf is appropriate, and if so, the desired species mixes and maintenance practices;
- Restoration of missing historic vegetation based on Mary Louise Miller's plan;
- Desirability and feasibility of developing a heritage garden at the site and identification of potential partners to support its maintenance;
- Archeological investigation to identify plants on the site based on seed and pollen analysis;
- Treatment of ornamental plantings;
- Treatment of specimen trees; and
- Invasive species control.

Location. This project applies to the entire William Johnson House lot.

Considerations. The first step in developing the vegetation management plan is to design a planting plan for the lot. Replacement of missing vegetation would be its first priority. Because specific varieties are not known, replacement plants should be of the variety known to have been locally available before 1920. Replacement vegetation would include the fig tree and red canna lilies that grew along the west fence. This step should also include a decision about whether to keep the turf lawn or if it might be more appropriate to have a swept yard.

The second step is to design a heritage garden on the lot to interpret species and varieties of ornamental shrubs and other plants that may have been grown by the Johnson family. Further research should be conducted on what species and varieties would have been available and commonly planted in the Natchez area. Consider inviting local experts, including master gardeners, to participate in the design of the heritage garden.

The third step is to develop a maintenance plan for the property, including guidelines for care of specific plant types and species, as well as a schedule for regular tasks, such

as irrigation, mowing, inspections for pests, fertilizing, and pruning.

Additional Studies Recommended.

Conduct archeological investigations to identify plants previously grown on the site based on seed and pollen analysis.

Related Projects. Conduct Phase III archeological data recovery.

Implementation Process.

- Conduct Phase III archeological excavation to find specific locations of plants identified in Mary Louise Miller's sketch of the Johnson yard in the 1920s.
- Replace plants identified on Mary Louise Miller's sketch based on their locations identified by archeologists. These include the pecan tree behind the kitchen dependency and the fig tree. Park staff may also provide information about the location of canna lilies that were removed.
- Make an informed decision about the appropriateness of a turf lawn or a swept yard.
- Design a heritage garden, in collaboration with partners, along the east side of the west stretch of the lot's boundary fence based on research to determine appropriate heritage cultivars.
- Develop BMPs and an IPM plan for turf care, specimen care, garden care, and invasives control.
- Implement strategies identified in the plan.
- Record all treatments so that they can be easily accessed by future researchers and park staff.

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for

William Johnson House, Natchez National Historical Park

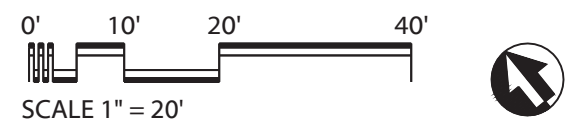


Legend

- 2019 Boundary
- Building
- Brick paving
- Concrete paving
- Fence
- Tree

Notes:

Jordan, Kaiser & Sessions Map of Topographic Survey, William Johnson House and McCallum House.



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