

PHC 294683 DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 29 1975

DATE ENTERED

UEG 6 1975

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

The Costen House

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

206 Market Street

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Pocomoke

__ VICINITY OF

First

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Worcester

CODE

047

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

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

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

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

PRESENT USE

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The Spirit of Newtown Committee, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

217 Walnut Street

CITY, TOWN

Pocomoke

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Worcester County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Snow Hill

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

local history

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

³Deed ITM 4/430.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Land and Probate Records of Worcester County, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Md.
 Hall, Deborah Jean. Salutatorian address and Old Home Prize Essay, June 1974. Copy in files of Maryland Historical Trust.
 Newspaper clippings in files of Maryland Historical Trust.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM OK - 12-22-75

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	4,5,0,19,0	42,1,4,04,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: J. Richard Rivoire, Architectural Historian; Pamela M. James, Assistant/ Historian
 ORGANIZATION: Maryland Historical Trust DATE: May 1975 (sao)
 STREET & NUMBER: 21 State Circle; The Shaw House TELEPHONE: (301) 267-1438
 CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis STATE: Maryland 21401

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: *John Pearce*
 TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer DATE: Aug. 21, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting *Jerry A. Rogers* DATE 12/6/75
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *Charles A. ...* DATE 11.28.75
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 Acting

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED	DEC 6 1975

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THE COSTEN HOUSE
Worcester County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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