

JOHNSON & McCALLUM HOUSES, KITCHEN DEPENDENCY  
Johnson & McCallum Houses  
Natchez  
Adams County  
Mississippi

HABS NO.: MS-270-B

HABS  
MISS  
1-NATCH,  
32B

PHOTOGRAPHS

ADDITIONAL  
FOLLOWS...

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Department of Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO:  
JOHNSON & MCCALLUM HOUSES, KITCHEN DEPENDENCY  
Natchez National Historical Park  
210 State Street  
Natchez  
Adams County  
Mississippi

HABS No. MS-270-B

HABS  
MISS  
I-NATCH,  
32B-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS  
MISS  
1-NATCH,  
328-

JOHNSON & McCALLUM HOUSES, KITCHEN DEPENDENCY

HABS No. MS-270-B

Location: 210 State St., rear (south side State Street between Canal and Wall streets), Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi 39121. Located on .1419 acres of Block 5, Lot 3 (tract 103-1) in downtown Natchez. UTM's: 15:651310.3492580

Present Owner/  
Occupant: National Park Service

Present Use: Awaiting restoration, remodeling for use as interpretive site.

Significance: This two-story brick kitchen building was constructed in 1897 to replace an earlier brick two-story kitchen for the descendants of William and Ann Johnson, who used the building until 1975. The galleried, two-story brick kitchen dependency is a vernacular building representative of the type of detached cooking facility and servants' quarters found throughout the South in the mid to late nineteenth century. The creation of a separate cooking facility prevented heat build-up in the main house, while the additional rooms providing sleeping areas for the servants that were conveniently close to, but not within the owner's residence.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1897. The Sandborn map of that year indicates the building as "being built."
2. Architect: unknown; probably done by a local builder.
3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants and uses: see chain of title included in the HABS report on the William Johnson House, HABS No. MS-270-A.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: not known.
5. Original plans and construction: The rectangular, two-story building is largely unaltered. The building has two rooms per floor, with a central chimney. A full-width gallery is on the northeast wall, with a recently (August 1992) constructed open stair. There are two central doors per floor on the northeast wall, flanked by six-over-six, double-hung windows. Single windows are on the northwest wall, and two plywood-covered openings per floor on the southwest wall.
6. Alterations and additions: There has been little structural alteration to the kitchen dependency, although the southeast wall has been rebuilt.

ca. 1910: The gallery received a second-story wood roof.

- ca. 1925: A bridge was constructed between the William Johnson House and the dependency.
- 1978-79: Following specifications from the architectural firm of Koch and Wilson, contractor Dix Fowler of Natchez rebuilt the southeast wall, re-using many of the original units on the exterior. The remainder of the exterior units were contemporary bricks purchased from the Old Carolina Brick Company of Salisbury, North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>
- 1987: The frame gallery was rebuilt.<sup>2</sup> The four upper columns consist of two 2" x 4" studs set at right angles to each other. The lower posts are set on brick pads. The floor is tongue-in-groove, and joists are set into joist pockets.
- 1992: July-August (on-going). Natchez National Historical Park removed first-floor flooring for archaeological investigations and re-roofed the building with shiplap sheathing and building paper.

## B. Historical Context

In 1897 the two-story brick kitchen was constructed southwest of the William Johnson House, separated by a small yard. William Johnson, a successful free black entrepreneur in antebellum Natchez, built the substantial brick townhouse at 210 State St. in 1840-41 as a commercial property and primary residence. Within the main building, Johnson maintained a diary documenting his life, his business enterprises, social relationships and status in the Natchez community. The document is the first known complete diary to chronicle the life of a free black person in the antebellum South.

The brick dependency replaced an earlier kitchen, of approximately the same size and materials.<sup>3</sup> The earlier kitchen was located in the same area, but was oriented at right angles to the main house, and had front and rear galleries facing northwest and southeast. The first building was used for a kitchen and slave quarters. The present building continued that tradition, with a kitchen and dining room on the first floor, and servants-apartment rooms on the second floor. The Johnson family used the building as a kitchen well into the 1930s, when Alice Johnson, daughter of William Johnson, continued to use the lower rooms as a kitchen and dining room. A bridge, built about 1925, allowed access to the building without crossing the yard at ground level.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>“William Johnson House, Natchez, Preservation Society of Ellicott Hill CN 1239 A 1977-78-79,” Koch and Wilson Papers, Southeastern Architectural Archives, Tulane University Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas J. Padgett, “Final Report on the Test Excavations at the William Johnson House,” TMS 1978, Preservation Society of Ellicott Hill, Natchez, Mississippi, 5-9.

<sup>4</sup>Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; 1979 photographs from Pamela Hawkes, Mary Oehrlein, and Mary Jane Wells, “Historic Structures Report: William Johnson House, Natchez, Mississippi,” TMS (report by Building Conservation Technology for the Preservation Society of Ellicott Hill, April 1979), Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez,

The relationship between the Johnson House, its original dependency and its present replacement, and the yard reflect prevailing attitudes to building siting, massing and property ownership. The building group conformed to historian Richard C. Wade's conclusion that because of the constrictions of small city lots, the urban southern main house was built close to the street, with a small yard and slave quarters located to the rear. The dependencies were "long and narrow and usually two stories high, either adjoining the master's house at right angles or ... at the back of the lot overlooking a small open area."<sup>5</sup> Historic photographs show Natchez city blocks covered with similar building groups.

With the close of the Civil War, household servants replaced former slaves in the dependency. However, also during that time, the Johnson family economy experienced a decline following William Johnson's murder and the effects of the Civil War Reconstruction. After William Johnson's death, his widow, Ann, became head of the household. She was succeeded by son Byron upon her death in 1866. Byron was in turn succeeded by his sister, Anna L., after his murder in 1872. Without Johnson's business dealings and his enterprising nature, the family income shrank. Daughter Katherine lamented the state of the family fortune in 1865, noting resentfully that when brother William brought his wife and children to live in the house, the move was "a heavy weight on [Ann Johnson's] income."<sup>6</sup> William was committed to an insane asylum in 1866, and Richard moved out of the house at about the same time. Left to manage the house on their own, the Johnson women worked as seamstresses, sold pies Under-the-Hill and found employment as teachers to make ends meet. Their efforts had little effect on their difficult situation, Katherine wrote sadly in 1873. "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 can't get our rents and ... for two terms I have toiled in the Public School and received nothing but a lot of worthless warrants for my pains."<sup>7</sup>

The Johnsons also accepted tenants in order to boost their income. As early as 1867, a Mr. Carter and "Aunt Milly Johnson" were renting the dependency "kitchen room" from Anna Johnson for \$5.00 per month.<sup>8</sup> Census Manuscripts from 1870, 1880, 1900 and 1910 also list boarders at the lot, but do not distinguish in which building they were living. Boarders remained an element of the Johnson dependency through the turn of the century—Johnson's daughter Alice let out the upper floors to Mary Talbert and her niece, Marybell Schauvous, in the 1920s, and as late as the 1940s or 1950s, Sally Johnston rented out the dependency.<sup>9</sup>

---

Mississippi.

<sup>5</sup>Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the Cities: the South 1820-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 57.

<sup>6</sup>William T. Johnson Family Memorial Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Volume 31.

<sup>7</sup>"Population Schedules of the 6th Census of the United States (1870)," 1, Adams County, National Archives and Records Service, microfilm; Johnson Family Papers, Folders 1-6, Volume 31.

<sup>8</sup>Anna Johnson's Daybook, Johnson Family Papers, LSU, Volume 45.

<sup>9</sup>Mary Louise Miller, telephone interview by author, 21 July 1992.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Johnson Dependency is a two-bay, two-story vernacular brick building. Its form and use are typical of kitchen/servants quarters found in Natchez and the South from the 1800s through the early nineteenth century.
2. Condition of fabric: The current condition of the building is good. Much of the brick material is original, with the exception of the southeast wall, which was rebuilt in 1979. The gallery is new. Although the building has not been inhabited for several years, it has been sufficiently maintained. The chimneys have begun to fail, with debris filling the openings. Some floor boards on the interior have begun to rot, as a result of the close proximity to the ground below. As of August 1992, archaeological work has removed the first-floor flooring. A fire apparently occurred at some point in the kitchen, causing smoke damage.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures 30'-10" x 15'-7".
2. Foundations: brick.
3. Walls: The brick walls are of hand-pressed brick, 13" thick, set in a common bond, 7:1. The brick was whitewashed, which has worn off at the east and north corners of the northeast wall, and from the northwest and southwest walls. There is a crack in the wall beneath the second floor, west room window.
4. Structural system, framing: The outer 13" walls are load-bearing brick, and the internal framing is wood, covered in lath and plaster.
5. Porches, stoops: A ca. 1987 gallery replaced the original gallery, which prior to 1981 had balusters and three horizontal railings. An open wood staircase was recently (August 1992) built at the east corner of the gallery. The gallery rafters appear original, but new board sheathing has been applied. The original gallery was one story until about 1910, when it received a second-story roof. In about 1925, a connecting bridge was built between the house and the dependency.<sup>10</sup>
6. Chimneys: There is one corbelled brick chimney in the center of the building, which vents three interior fireplaces. The three fireplaces have simple, Colonial Revival mantelpieces. There are iron coal grates in the first-floor west room and on the second floor.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: There are two functional openings into the dependency, both located on the northeast wall. The doors have four

---

<sup>10</sup>Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

raised panels and transoms. The lower doors are painted gray, while the upper doors are painted brown, with panels of tan. The lintels are wood, and arches consist of a single row of ender bricks. Two doors are covered with plywood on the first-floor southwest wall.

- b. Windows and shutters: Windows are all six-over-six-light double-hung sash in wood frames, with wood sills and wood lintels. There are two per floor on the northeast and southwest walls, to the northwest and southeast of the center doors. Single windows are on the first and second floors of the northwest wall. Windows on the second-floor southwest elevation have been covered with plywood. Below the first-floor windows on the northeast and southwest walls are sets of three openings one brick-wide, designed for ventilation.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The dependency has a gabled roof, which had been covered with corrugated metal until August 1992. It is now in the process of being re-covered.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is no detailing at the juncture between wall and roof, and no overhang. Plain rake boards finish the gable ends. Remnants of a semi-circular gutter are on the northeast, northwest and southwest eaves.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First Floor: The kitchen dependency is symmetrically arranged about a central chimney. The west room measures about 13'-9" x 13'-4", while the east room measures 13'-1" x 13'-5". Both first- and second-floor rooms are connected by internal doorways northeast of the fireplaces.
- b. Second Floor: The second-floor plan is identical to the first floor.

2. Stairways: There are no internal stairways in the dependency.

3. Flooring: The flooring runs northwest-southeast, and consists of 5"-wide boards on the first floor, 3"-wide boards on the second. Archaeological work begun in August 1992 removed the first-floor boards, and discovered remnants of brick flooring.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster was applied to the brick exterior walls, and onto lath on interior partition walls. The plaster is cracking and falling off, particularly on the second-floor east room.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: One paneled door is located northeast of the fireplace on both first and second floors. They have four panels.

- b. Windows: Moldings around windows are plain, 6" milled wood.
  - 6. Decorative features: There are few decorative elements in this utilitarian building. The baseboards are simple milled boards.
  - 7. Architectural furniture: A shallow closet with wood shelves is located south of the fireplace in the first-floor east room.
  - 8. Hardware: Hinges are iron, and door handles are ceramic. Original locks have been removed, replaced with modern hasps and locks.
  - 9. Mechanical systems: The building was heated through the fireplaces, equipped with Colonial Revival mantelpieces and cast-iron coal grates. The semi-circular arched coal grates are similar to those found in the Johnson House.
  - 10. Plumbing: The dependency is not equipped with water or sewer lines.
- D. Site:

The Johnson Dependency is set on the rear of Lot 3, Block 5, in the city of Natchez, Mississippi. The block is part of a Cartesian grid system that parallels the Mississippi and is set 45 degrees off of a north-south orientation. It is southwest of a small center yard and the main William Johnson House which fronts directly onto the sidewalk. An open lot is to the northwest, screened from the street by a modern vertical board fence. Vegetation consists of a small deciduous tree northeast of the building, and fig tree at the west corner of the Johnson house.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

See HABS report on William Johnson House, HABS No. MS-270-A.

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was sponsored by the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert J. Kapsch, Chief, under the direction of Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of HABS, with assistance of HABS architect and project leader Joseph D. Balachowski, HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland, and Sarah J. Boykin, Southeast Regional Office project architect. The project was completed during summer 1992 at the HABS field office at Melrose, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez, Mississippi, by project supervisor John P. White, architect, with architectural technicians Roderick Fluker (Tuskegee University), John L. Alberstadt (Louisiana State University), Junne Kikata (Tokyo University of Fine Arts, Japan, through US-ICOMOS), Rachel L. King (University of Virginia), Dennis E. McCarthy (The Catholic University of America), Kristin A. Peterson (University of Texas, Austin), and Lawrence A. Weintraub (Tulane University). The project historian was Dena L. Sanford (University of Oregon, HABS-Sally Kress Tompkins Fellow). Sanford conducted all of the research associated with the project and wrote the historical information sections (Part I), including the in-depth historical context and the architectural information. Discussions with local architectural historian Mary W. Miller

provided insight into the stylistic development of Natchez architecture. The photography was produced by Jack E. Boucher, HABS photographer.