

WILLIAM S. SHARP HOUSE
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
31 Market Street
Salem
Salem County
New Jersey

HABS NO. NJ-1203

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM S. SHARP HOUSE

HABS No. NJ-1203

Location: 31 Market Street, Salem, Salem County, New Jersey

Significance: This elaborate Victorian townhouse reflects the prosperity of South Jersey during the last half of the nineteenth century and the high-style influences of urban centers such as Philadelphia, in addition to local craftsmanship and industry reflected in the dwelling's lavish ironwork.

Description: Built in 1862. This Italianate brick townhouse is three-bays wide and two stories tall, with a marble foundation and porch stoop, and a dramatic deep eave with elaborate brackets. Other highly decorative features include cast-iron balustraded window sills on the first-floor windows, and marble sills and hoodmolds. Fenestration on the main block is segmentally arched one-over-one-light and two-over-one-light double-hung sash. The entry is an elaborate projecting porch and recessed doorway comprised of two corinthian columns and pilasters and a lavish modillioned entablature. A plaque on the front facade reads: "William S. Shapr House 1862."

There is an intricate cast-iron fence with two gates, which is connected to the adjacent building: one gate features a wheel design, in addition to eagle-topped posts raised on a molded iron base. The identical fencing is found at the John T. Hampton House, 67 Market Street, built in 1866 (see HABS No. NJ-1204).

History: The City of Salem (New Salem), oldest of the three major municipalities in South Jersey, was established by John Fenwick in 1676, and despite his legacy of problems, it prospered as a successful river port through the nineteenth century. The portion of Market Street designated as an historic district was at the core of Fenwick's colony, and it remained the most strategically situated location in the county until about 1870. Commercially, Salem's main street was a depot for the import and export of goods, local craftsmen and small manufacturers were based here, politicians lived along it.

Salem's eighteenth-century Georgian dwellings reflect its founding Quaker traditions, though the frequency of patterned brick work here is limited to occasional Flemish-bond coursing and dated gable ends. There are approximately seventy-six structures included in the National Register of Historic Places's "Market Street Historic District," which suffers little or no intrusion by twentieth-century structures. Most of these buildings are two-and-one-half or three-story brick houses facing onto Market Street, the historic commercial thoroughfare. The prosperity of the Federal era is represented by formal interiors and exteriors, classical trim, fanlights and fireplaces. Later Greek and Gothic Revival styles are depicted by the use of marble for porch and window trim and gougework in the architraves. The texture of the wealthy Italianate homes extends onto the street by elaborate cast-iron fencing that is produced locally, as in the William Sharp and John T. Hampton homes. The housing is punctuated by alleys that once led to the livery stables behind Market Street and the wharves at water's edge. Not all of Salem's deserving resources are included in the historic district. Along the north and south sides of Route 49 there are fine examples of Georgian rowhouses, as well as Victorian and Gothic Revival

structures. The side streets east of Market Street are lined with examples of two-family double houses, which probably served as worker or middle-class housing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their form and features vary: steeply pitched roofs with center gables, or paired gables with decorated vergeboards, pointed-arch windows, or a one-story porch. The Victorian-influenced buildings have one- or two-story bay windows, a mansard or cross-gable roof, and spindlework on the cross gables and porches.

Sources:

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Project Information: The project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian. The project was completed during summer 1992. The project historian was Kimberly R. Sebold (University of Delaware). The photography was produced by David Ames, University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering.