

## Citizens – Charles Johnson

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*C1880s - The Charles Johnson home on Spring Street*

Charles Johnson was born in Sweden on 5 February 1826. He and his wife Sarah Peterson (1822-1875) married around 1853 and came to this area shortly after. They had three children: Alfred (1854-1935); August (1858-1892) and Mary (1860-1938).

In 1860 Charles was listed as living in Oceana working as a logger. The 1870 census showed him as a lumberman still living in Oceana.

Charles operated a shingle mill which stood on property that is now Armstrong's on White Lake, with the mill standing just north of the former boat house. In 1875 he was in partnership with Carl O. Hagman. Carl was born in Sweden in 1828. He appeared in the 1870 census with his wife and three children.

Later, in 1877, John Miller joined the firm, and it became Johnson and Miller. John Miller was listed in the 1880 and 1888 city directory as being associated with Johnson & Miller of Whitehall, but he was listed as living in Racine, Wisconsin. There was also a Peter Miller employed as a fireman at Johnson & Miller during that time. Not sure if he was related to John or if it was just a coincidence with the same last name.

Charles' first wife Sarah died on 1 September 1875. Then on 6 October 1875 he married Elizabeth Winifred "Lizzie" Osborne-Carpenter (1843-1913). She had previously been married and brought her three children to their marriage: Florence Della (1863-1937); Vernon Ray (1865-1908) and Grace (1869-1944). Charles and Lizzie had a son Charles Carroll on 7 May 1880; however, he died from scarlet fever on 18 July 1882.

By the 1880 census, which was taken on 10 June, it indicated that Johnson and his wife Lizzie were now living in Whitehall, reportedly on Colby Street.

On October 1, 1888, it was announced that Charles Johnson and John Miller agreed to dissolve the shingle mill business by mutual consent. Mr. Miller retired from the firm. Johnson will pay all debts, if there are any against the firm, and will receive all accounts due. It appeared the business was being taken over by Alfred Johnson, son of Charles, and Jasper Smith.

In early March 1889 a fire broke out at the Johnson residence on Spring Street, just about church time on Sunday night. The fire department was quickly dispatched. The boys quickly went right to work and saved the house after the roof had been badly burned away.

Considerable furniture was damaged by the fire and water and the loss of \$500 reached, which was insured. Charles Tornblom, a member of the fire department, fell from the roof of the burning structure and dislocated a shoulder and an ankle. The wounds were treated as soon as possible and he is on the road to recovery, although he will be laid up for some time. Marshall Ocobock also had a nail driven through one of his hands and he will now be using a sling.

Joe Steffe took on the contract for rebuilding the Johnson house. The main part will be two stories now instead of three as before the fire.

The 1900 census showed them living on Spring Street but no occupation was listed for him.

Charles died on 25 June 1912. His wife Lizzie died 11 December 1914. They are buried in Oakhurst Cemetery along with their son and Charles' first wife Sarah and two of their children.