

Tom & Lucy Gilgo House
Portsmouth Village
Cape Lookout National Seashore

Historic Structure Report



December 2015

for

**Cape Lookout National Seashore
Southeast Region, National Park Service**

by

JOSEPH K. OPPERMAN-ARCHITECT, P.A.

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2015
Historic Structure Report
Tom Gilgo House
Portsmouth Village
Cape Lookout National Seashore (CALO)

Tom and Lucy Gilgo House
LCS#: 012521
CALO ID#: 512

The historic structure report presented here exists in two formats. A traditional, printed version is available for study at the park, at the Southeast Regional Office of the NPS (SERO), and at a variety of other repositories. For more widespread access, the historic structure report also exists in digital format through the IRMA Portal, Integrated Resource Management Applications, including the NPS Data Store, accessed at <https://irma.nps.gov/App/Reference/Welcome>, a website of the National Park Service.

Tom and Lucy Gilgo House
Portsmouth Village
Cape Lookout National Seashore
Historic Structure Report
2015

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Superintendent, Cape Lookout National Seashore Date

Recommended by: **Acting** Palzani 4/26/16
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Recommended by: **Acting** Daniel E. Elos 4/28/16
Deputy Regional Director, Southeast Region Date

Approved by: Star Cusker 4/28/16
Regional Director, Southeast Region Date

Foreword

We are pleased to make available this Historic Structures Report, part of our ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the historic structures and cultural landscapes of National Park Service units in the Southeast Region. A number of individuals contributed to the successful completion of this work, but we would particularly like to thank the Project Team who authored the report.

The authors would like to thank the staff at Cape Lookout National Seashore who assisted with the project, especially Patrick Kenney, Superintendent, and Jeri L. DeYoung, Chief of Resource Management, who provided helpful comments. Dr. Ali Miri, historical architect with the National Park Service's Southeast Regional Office, also provided helpful comments as part of his technical review and project oversight. The authors extend special appreciation to the Friends of Portsmouth Island and the many volunteers and descendants who readily provided information and interviews. We hope that this study will prove valuable to park management in ongoing efforts to preserve the Gilgo House and other Portsmouth buildings, and to everyone in understanding and interpreting these unique resources.

Dan Scheidt, Chief
Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science Division
Southeast Regional Office
2015

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Management Summary

The purpose of this report is to document the development, use, and current condition of the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House in the Portsmouth Village Historic District at Cape Lookout National Seashore. The National Park Service (NPS) will use this report to inform and guide its stewardship of this historic structure.

The present study first provides historical background and context for Portsmouth Village based on a series of studies, interviews, and reports developed by NPS since the 1970s. Portsmouth's history has been well documented; this Historic Structure Report includes no additional archival research on the larger community, but does include substantial research and historical documentation on the house and its considerable changes over the years.

Determination of the physical evolution of the house is based primarily on NPS photographs and family history combined with building investigation and dating of building fabric, a process sometimes called "building archaeology." The house is a mix of new and early materials.

The report is divided into two major segments, Part I: *Developmental History* and Part II: *Treatment & Use*. Part I is organized into three sections that address in sequence the historical background and context of Portsmouth; a chronology of development and use of the house specifically, including a timeline; and a physical description of the house's exterior and interior on a room-by-room basis. This last section includes an assessment of condition and a listing of character-defining features. A bibliography concludes Part I.

Part II presents the recommended "ultimate treatment and use," and also examines alternatives for treatment and use as well as requirements that guide the house's treatment and use. A bibliography follows.

The Appendix contains scaled drawings of the existing building, including floor plan, exterior elevations, and selected details.

Historical Overview

Established in 1753 by an act of the colonial legislature of North Carolina, Portsmouth is located on the south side of Ocracoke Inlet, which was the principal access into Pamlico Sound and North Carolina's seaports until a storm opened competing Hatteras Inlet in 1846. The community flourished in the late eighteenth century and by 1800 was the largest on the Outer Banks with a population between 200 and 250. Because Portsmouth was a center of maritime trade, the Federal government established a customs house there in 1806, a marine hospital in 1827, and a post office in 1840. The town reached its peak population in 1860 with more than 600 residents.

Evacuated during the Civil War, Portsmouth recovered neither its population nor its economic vitality, and the customs house was abolished in 1867. As the inlet shoaled up and the population declined, the number of houses in the town dwindled as well, falling from 109 in 1860, to 59 in 1870, and to 44 in 1880. Many buildings must have sat abandoned in the late nineteenth century, including the marine hospital, which burned in 1894. Of those that survived hurricanes and the generally harsh environment, most were dismantled or relocated as the village slowly contracted along with the local economy. After 1883, the shifting sands of the Outer Banks closed Ocracoke Inlet to shipping.

The village got a boost in 1894 when the U. S. Life-Saving Service built a station at Portsmouth. Over the next four decades, a number of Portsmouth residents found employment there. Others made a livelihood in commercial fishing or catering to the wealthy sportsmen who frequented the Outer Banks to hunt and fish.



Figure 1. View of Doctor's Creek and surrounding vegetation. Tom and Lucy Gilgo House in distance at the left. (2013, JKOA)

The island was regularly inundated by tidal surges accompanying tropical storms and hurricanes; these often caused more damage than the wind. In September 1913, for example, a relatively weak hurricane blew across Portsmouth, but the accompanying storm surge destroyed both the Primitive Baptist and Methodist churches, the only buildings of worship on the island. The community was still strong enough, however, to support construction of a new church.

In 1933, a strong hurricane hit the village with sustained winds of 100 mph and torrential rain that flooded most of the island and destroyed many houses. Many residents moved to the mainland.

In 1937, the Coast Guard Station (former Life-Saving Station) was closed, further diminishing the town's vitality, until by 1940 only 42 permanent residents remained, and after another devastating hurricane in 1944, the number dwindled further. By the 1950s, Portsmouth had only fourteen year-round residents.

Several unused buildings were adapted for use by sport fishermen, especially after World War II, including the Coast Guard Station, which was declared surplus property in 1946 and used as a sportsmen's clubhouse. The post office was discontinued in 1959, and by the time the Cape

Lookout National Seashore was authorized in 1966, only a handful of permanent residents remained.

With the death of the village's last surviving male resident in 1971, the two remaining residents moved to the mainland. Portsmouth Village became uninhabited, without permanent residents for the first time since the eighteenth century. A number of buildings continued to be occupied seasonally as private residences through an NPS lease program that only recently ended. Other buildings, such as the Methodist Church and Coast Guard Station, are open year-round to the public. In all but the coldest months Portsmouth Village is a popular destination for day-trippers arriving by small boat from Ocracoke.

The House

In 1976, the Cape Lookout National Seashore was established. Among the buildings of Portsmouth included in the new park is the small one-story residence known as the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House, named for the young couple who first lived there after moving it to the village.

Originally rectangular in plan, the house consisted of two rooms: a small living room and smaller bedroom. It was constructed in the mid-1920s

at the Coast Guard Station to house enlisted personnel who performed rescue operations. Soon thereafter and before 1928, it was acquired by Tom and Lucy Gilgo. As a newlywed couple, they had returned to Portsmouth in late 1925 and moved into the crowded home of Tom's parents and two other families. Both Tom and Lucy worked at the Coast Guard Station and perhaps through associations there arranged to purchase the house and move it to its current location. Tom, a fisherman, and Lucy, who supplemented her income by making clothes for others, raised their young children in this small house. After the devastating hurricane of 1933, they moved inland to Oriental, a mainland community with a more robust economy.

The vacated house was sold to Jesse and Gladys Bookhardt, a couple not from Portsmouth but who had spent summers in the village. They added a kitchen wing and used the enlarged residence as a vacation house until 1969 when the family sold it to the State of North Carolina for eventual transfer to NPS.

Statement of Significance

The Portsmouth Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 for its significance to the state's early maritime history and as the only remaining village on Core Banks. As the park's Long-Range Interpretive Plan (2011) points out, "the park contains cultural resources rich in the maritime history of human-kind's attempt to survive at the edge of the sea."¹

The 1978 National Register nomination identifies thirty-one historic structures and sites that contribute to the district's historic character, one of which is the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House. Unfortunately, several of those structures were already in ruins when the nomination was written, and others have since been lost to storms and decay. No eighteenth-century buildings remain, and only a handful of nineteenth-century buildings have survived into the twenty-first century.

The nomination identifies no period of significance; it was written before these were included in nominations. More recently,

1. NPS, Cape Lookout National Seashore Long-Range Interpretive Plan (2011), p.11.

the Cultural Landscape Report (2007) has recommended a period of significance ending in 1971, when the island lost its last permanent residents. The authors of this report agree with that recommendation.

The Gilgo House continues to contribute to the historic character of Portsmouth. It is historically significant for its role in the evolution of the community and for its association with the Gilgo family, one of the earliest to settle in the community.

The house is architecturally significant as an example of a building that began as simple housing for an enlisted Coast Guard surfer and subsequently was moved and adapted as a single family residence, then expanded and further modified to be a seasonal vacation home.

Methodology

The objectives of this Historic Structure Report (HSR), which complies with the guidelines at NPS-28 (*Cultural Resource Management Guideline*), are to research and prepare a comprehensive and scholarly assessment of the building's history and fabric, to describe its existing physical conditions, and to recommend treatment for preservation.

The findings and recommendations made in this report rely on the combined research of primary and secondary sources, early photographs, oral histories, and the physical investigation of extant building fabric.

The Scope of Work prescribed by NPS for this HSR specifies "limited" historical research as defined by Director's Order #28: Cultural Resources Management Guidelines. Nevertheless, additional research was necessary for an adequate understanding of the context and history of the site because documentation associated with the house and the people who lived there before Park ownership is scarce. Information gathered from that period comes from the park's genealogical research, census records, and especially a published history of Lucy Gilgo's recollections. The earliest photograph found in park records was a 1969 aerial.

The Scope of Work also specifies "limited" physical investigation of the building to determine

its evolutionary history. However, given the lean archival information, our investigation of the building fabric, the “building archaeology,” was a large component of the work. Investigations involved a close look at architectural features and details such as surviving framing materials and methods; the relationship of finish treatments; and the variety of siding, ghost marks, and nail types. Together these research efforts, both documentary and physical, provide a dual, coordinated approach to determining how the building was used and adapted over the progression of its history.

The firm of Joseph K. Oppermann–Architect, P.A. (JKOA), prepared this HSR. The team for the work was led by Joseph K. Oppermann, FAIA, historical architect and principal-in-charge; Rebecca L. McCormick, AIA and Christopher M. Woollard, Associate AIA, assisting architects; and Langdon Edmunds Oppermann, architectural historian. The team conducted the historical research and building investigation, documented the building with photography and measured drawings, and authored this HSR. This interdisciplinary approach improves understanding of the building’s history and present conditions, both necessary prerequisites for the development of appropriate treatment recommendations.

An initial multi-day visit to the site and the archives was made in September 2013 with follow-up visits in April and October 2014. Measurements were compiled using manual measuring tape, carpenter ruler, digital cameras, and digital recorder, a Leica Disto laser distance meter. Photography was completed for the building’s exterior and its interior spaces. Detailed field drawings were made and used to create digitized AutoCAD drawings of floor plan and elevations. The initial digitized drawings were the base document on which final recordations and assessed conditions were made during the subsequent return trips.

During these subsequent trips, a standard assessment methodology was used for the condition survey of each exterior feature and each interior room, itemizing features and elements, and correlating with research findings. Detail photography was conducted. Visual observation

of surface conditions, supplemented by a 20-power magnification loupe and Protimeter BLD 2000 moisture meter, was the basis for assessing the physical condition of building materials. In accordance with the NPS Scope of Work, no building system components were tested, and no invasive methods of investigation were employed.

Unique to these field visits was the necessity of wearing hooded net suits while on Portsmouth Island. Present for most of the year, mosquitoes can be so thick at times that the tour boats cease operation. It is not uncommon for visitors and work crews to don mosquito suits while on the island.

Findings

Little is known about the house as it stood at the Coat Guard Station. When moved to the village, it was small, rectangular in plan and one story in height with a simple gable roof. Along the front elevation were two windows and a centered doorway. A single window was centrally placed on each gable end, and a doorway was centered on the back wall opening to a porch. The only two rooms were separated by a board wall; the larger room the living room, the smaller the bedroom. Both had beaded boards at walls and ceiling, painted in the living room and unpainted in the bedroom.

The house apparently remained much the same after being acquired as a vacation house. A kitchen wing added after the Gilgos moved away appears to have been an existing building moved and attached to the rear elevation. A small bathroom addition was later built anew. By 1983 an Historic American Buildings Survey team (HABS) found that “due to bad roof problems, structure is not used.” Felt roll roofing was installed over the entire house as a temporary repair.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, the house was in dire condition. As a Portsmouth descendant said, the termites left because they were going to starve. Despite a 1984 recommendation to allow the house to deteriorate to a “discovery site,” NPS embarked on a major project to save the building in 2002. The bathroom addition was removed and the house was extensively rebuilt by NPS crews with reattachment of salvaged materials.



Figure 2. Tom and Lucy Gilgo House at left on access road to Henry Pigott House, seen in background. (2013, JKOA)

As a result of those repairs, the exterior reflects its appearance at mid-twentieth-century when used as a summer house with kitchen wing. The interior retains portions of early elements, but is missing its original dividing wall.

Existing Conditions

The repaired and rebuilt house remains in good condition with a few exceptions. Poor drainage is characteristic of most of Portsmouth, in part the natural process of decay of vegetation and generation of new humus, which creates a bowl-like depression beneath buildings. This traps water and keeps the area damp for extended periods of time, which not only exacerbates rotting of wood posts, but also creates conditions conducive to termites. This condition does not currently exist at the Gilgo House site, due in large part to the extensive repairs and replacement of foundation piers. However, given the prevalence of this condition in Portsmouth, it would be wise to watch for signs of its development. The majority of the foundation posts remain in good condition.

The floor, wall and roof framing of the original house and kitchen addition were largely replaced in 2002 and remain in good condition. The roof framing systems are largely exposed on the interior. There are two exterior doorways, each with an early door in place and without screen door. Both doors are in sound condition. The door of the rear entrance is fixed in place.

Window sash, many early if not original, are in place in all window openings and are in generally sound condition. However, the protective exterior finish and glazing is failing on most.

The recently installed cedar shingle roofing appears to be in good condition with no apparent leaks. No shingles appear to be damaged, missing or loose. As with most Portsmouth buildings, no gutters are present.

Salvaged remnants of three siding materials from multiple installation periods were reinstalled in 2002, including board-and-batten, weatherboard, and wood shingle. New weatherboards and board-and-batten siding completed the protective

exterior envelope. Salvaged trim pieces of various types were also reinstalled, supplemented by matching new pieces. The new elements are in good condition in general. The salvaged elements are generally sound. None appear to have a protective finish.

The front porch was also built new in 2002. A porch joist has failed and attached deck boards have partially collapsed.

Salvaged materials were reinstalled on interior surfaces. New material was not installed in the interior to supplement what was missing, except for flooring. Therefore, there are gaps in the finish materials; framing is exposed in every room and the dividing wall of the original house was not replaced. Some unused salvaged elements are stored in the house, including the door and beaded board siding for that dividing wall.

General Threats

Barrier islands, such as Portsmouth, will be especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change and sea-level rise, which may negatively affect cultural resources on these islands.

It must be noted that as buildings age, they tend to be less able to stand the stress of constant exposure to the harsh marine environment. The maintenance of a protective exterior paint layer on exterior wood elements is difficult but critical. Unpainted wooden surfaces are eroded by UV sunlight. Termites and wood rot attack and weaken wood framing, and blasts of wind-driven sand abrade exterior surfaces.

More ominous for the historic structure, the nailed connections that hold the house together have been compromised by the inevitable oxidation of nails and other ferrous materials, a condition that may not be readily evident. While wood framing that uses mortise-and-tenon joinery, such as the nearby Washington Roberts House, may withstand high winds and storm surge with minor damage, aging balloon or stick frames with severely corroded nails are less likely to do so. If sea-level rise continues at its present pace, much of Portsmouth Island will be inundated, and the effects of hurricanes and nor'easters will be amplified many times over.

Recommendations for Treatment and Use

The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the house is Preservation of the exterior in acknowledgement of the house as a major feature in the district's cultural landscape, and Preservation of the interior in its current unfinished state, ready for Rehabilitation for occupancy as a residence, if the opportunity presents itself.

General Recommendations for Portsmouth Village

- Consult with Janet Cakir PhD, NPS SER Climate Change, Socioeconomics, and Adaptation Coordinator to guide management policies.
- Use results from the climate change study "Identify Cultural Resources Sites Affected by Sea-Level Rise at Cape Hatteras National Seashore" to guide management policies. This study is also applicable to Portsmouth Island.
- Prepare or update a Topographic Survey for the site.
- Prepare a Log of Flood Occurrences. Record at a minimum the dates of occurrences and approximate extent and severity (e.g. depth at specific locations). Correlate recordings with Topographic Survey. Maintain data so that they can be correlated with conditions such as tide, moon phase, etc.
- Evaluate site for flood avoidance potential including the introduction of dams and/or swales to divert or direct flooding waters.
- Evaluate each building, structure, and significant site feature for flood avoidance potential and/or enhancement potential for better withstanding the projected threatening events.
- Identify critical services (fresh water supply, waste disposal, energy sources, etc.), evaluate options, and develop a contingency plan for each.
- Strive to maintain for all buildings a sound structural system and a weather-tight exterior envelope, especially the roof.
- Use maintenance activities as opportunities to enhance the resistive capacities of the buildings and structures whenever feasible.
- Prepare minimum level of record documentation (overall view photographs

and text descriptions) for all undocumented cultural resources in the community that are at risk; prepare more extensive documentation (including scaled record drawings with descriptions) for the more significant resources at risk.

House Site

Recommendations for House Site

- Keep lawn grasses mowed and regularly remove volunteer plants and shrubs close to the house.
- Observe drainage patterns of the site during periods of significant rainfall and flooding; determine the feasibility of creating shallow swales to promote drainage away from building.
- Monitor conditions beneath the house; be prepared to add fill to depressions should they begin to form.
- Conduct rigorous inspections for termite infestation and treat accordingly.
- Secure clearance from an archaeologist before commencing work that might require ground disturbance.

House Exterior

Recommendations for Foundation Posts

- Keep vegetation closely trimmed near foundation posts.
- Investigate condition of foundation posts on a regular basis.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail.
- Install termite shields wherever possible.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Recommendations for Floor, Wall and Roof Framing

- Conduct regular inspections for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects; treat accordingly.
- Conduct routine inspections, some preferably during rainstorms, to inspect for evidence of water intrusion and instances of damage.
- Periodically review for evidence of deflection across planes of framing, framing members out of square or plumb, or heightened vibration in framing members.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Recommendations for Doors and Entrances

- Ensure all hardware remains operable. Apply lubricant on a regular basis.

- Reconstruct step to ground at side stairs.
- Maintain sound paint finish at all exposed surfaces.
- Monitor condition and operation on a regular basis.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Recommendations for Windows

- Ensure all sash are in working order, reglaze and repaint exterior surfaces.
- Monitor condition and operation on a regular basis.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Recommendations for Roofing

- Routinely inspect for missing, damaged or loose shingles and repair or replace as needed.
- Routinely inspect for roof leaks, especially at valleys and roof ridges. On some occasions inspect during rainstorms.

Recommendations for Siding and Trim

- Apply a clear, sheenless wood preservative. Monitor and reapply on a regular basis or as needed.
- Monitor regularly for open joints, displaced or loose elements, or other evidence of movement; re-nail loose pieces.
- Monitor checking, splitting, and instances of rot, and plan remedial actions accordingly.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Recommendations for Front Porch

- Replace in-kind the failed porch deck joist, reusing deck boards if sound.
- Regularly inspect for signs of deterioration or distress and for evidence of harmful insects and plants and treat accordingly.
- Apply a clear, sheenless wood preservative. Monitor and reapply on a regular basis or as needed.

House Interior

Recommendations for Interior

- Confirm with NPS personnel involved with the 2002 campaign that the door now stored loosely in the house is indeed the door of the unreconstructed dividing wall. Label accordingly with a permanent marking

material in an inconspicuous location. Place out of harm's way on top of the ceiling joists with other stored salvaged building elements.

- Confirm with NPS personnel involved with the 2002 campaign that the beaded boards now stored on ceiling joists of the original house are indeed boards from the unreconstructed dividing wall. Label accordingly with a permanent marking material in an inconspicuous location. Return to storage location atop the ceiling joists of the original house.
- Remove any loose debris.
- Keep rooms broom-swept of dirt and other materials to facilitate inspections.
- Conduct paint and finish analyses to document the sequence and types of paints and finishes used on salvaged interior surfaces, with special emphases on the Coast Guard surfman and Gilgo (early-twentieth century Portsmouth) periods, of which little is known.
- Also conduct paint and finish analyses to document the sequence and types of paints and finishes used on salvaged features, now interior but formerly exterior surfaces (rear entrance now enclosed and partially covered by the kitchen wing) with special emphases on the Coast Guard surfman and Gilgo (early-twentieth-century Portsmouth) periods, of which little is known.

Remedial Action by Priority

Highest Priority

Remedial actions of highest priority are those that address immediate threats to life and safety of persons, closely followed by immediate and serious threats to the building.

- Replace in-kind broken joist at front porch. Repair associated deck boards as needed.
- Repair in-kind damaged steps of side entrance.

High Priority

Remedial actions of high priority are those that address conditions that have a high potential for serious threat to persons or the building.

- Evaluate option to fill gaps in checking of exterior boards and trim that are interpreted as weathered and without finish.
- Apply a clear, sheenless wood preservative to the unfinished exterior wood elements. Regularly reapply or on as-needed basis.
- Reglaze and repaint window sash.
- Repaint exterior doors.

Medium Priority

Remedial actions of medium priority address conditions that have a medium potential for serious threat to persons or the building.

- Renail loose boards of the box cistern. Replace in-kind unsalvageable elements. Apply wood preservative as on the house.

Administrative Data

Locational Data

<i>Building Name:</i>	Tom & Lucy Gilgo House
<i>Location:</i>	Portsmouth Village, Cape Lookout National Seashore
<i>County:</i>	Carteret County
<i>State:</i>	North Carolina

Real Property Information

<i>Acquisition Date:</i>	1976
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Numbering Information

<i>CALO ID:</i>	512
<i>LCS ID:</i>	012521

Size Information

<i>Total Floor Area:</i>	366 square feet ±
<i>Roof Area:</i>	600 square feet ±
<i>Number of Stories:</i>	1
<i>Number of Rooms:</i>	3
<i>Number of Bathrooms:</i>	0

Cultural Resource Data

<i>National Register Status:</i>	Contributing structure in Portsmouth Village Historic District, Listed November 29, 1978.
<i>Period of Significance:</i>	No period of significance included in the National Register nomination; it was written before these were included in nominations.

Proposed Treatment

Preservation of the exterior and Preservation of the interior in its current unfinished state, ready for Rehabilitation for occupancy.

Related NPS Studies

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I.A Historical Background and Context

“Just think, Portsmouth in 1815 or 150 years ago was the largest seaport in North Carolina and now there are just four people who live there year around. Oh! what changes have come about or taken place in 50 years in my lifetime and remembrance. What will happen in the next 50 years? God only knows.”

--Ben B. Salter, 1962²

From the early days of the eighteenth century, North Carolina was dependent on ocean trade

2. Letter to editor, *Carteret News Times*, 1962, printed in Ben B. Salter, *Portsmouth Island: Short Stories & History*, 1972, p. 47.

with other colonies and with the West Indies and Europe, exporting pine products—lumber, tar, pitch—and importing foods and manufactured goods. But access to its ports was not direct; the colony’s coastal geography made shipping difficult. With the single exception of Wilmington, North Carolina’s ports fronted not the ocean but the waters of Pamlico Sound, separated from ocean trade by the long stretch of the Outer Banks.

Several inlets spaced along the Banks allowed seagoing traffic to reach mainland ports, but by the 1730s most of these inlets were unusable as storms



Figure 3. Detail of the 1770 A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an actual Survey by Capt'n Collet, Governor of Fort Johnston. Engraved by I. Bayly, London. The map shows Portsmouth just south of the winding channel of the inlet.

closed or shoaled them. Ocracoke Inlet remained navigable and was to become the principal ocean passage.³

In 1753, the colonial legislature of North Carolina established Portsmouth Village on the south side of that inlet. The town was a planned community, the act specifying “fifty acres of land on Core Banks, most convenient to the said harbour, adjoining the said Banks, for a town, by the name of Portsmouth, into lots of half an acre each, with convenient streets, as they may think requisite.”⁴ John Tolson bought the first lot in 1756. Buildings were to be substantial; purchasers were required to build a frame or brick house or warehouse, specified to be not less than twenty feet long by sixteen feet wide.⁵

Portsmouth quickly became the largest settlement on the Outer Banks, and was soon the largest English port south of Virginia.⁶ A 1770 Survey Map shows Portsmouth and Ocracoke Inlet with the essential outline of its twisting underwater channel (Fig. 3).

Ocracoke Inlet provided the principal access for shipping trade. However, the underwater geography of the inlet was precarious, with a sandbar at the inlet's entrance and a shoal within. Because the waters were too shallow for large, heavy-laden ships to navigate, cargo was offloaded onto lighters, small boats suited to the shallow waters of the inlet, and taken to Portsmouth's warehouses while the ships passed through the inlet.⁷

This practice, known as lightering, was the reason for Portsmouth's establishment and for its success.

At Portsmouth were built the warehouses, wharves, and boats needed for the lightering business, as well as structures for its residents. The town was home to the many pilots and crew, mariners,



Figure 4. A portion of Henry Mouzon's 1775 An Accurate Map of North and South Carolina, showing the lower part of the Outer Banks with Portsmouth on the south side of Ocracoke Inlet. Ships are shown passing through the inlet at Portsmouth. (North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill)

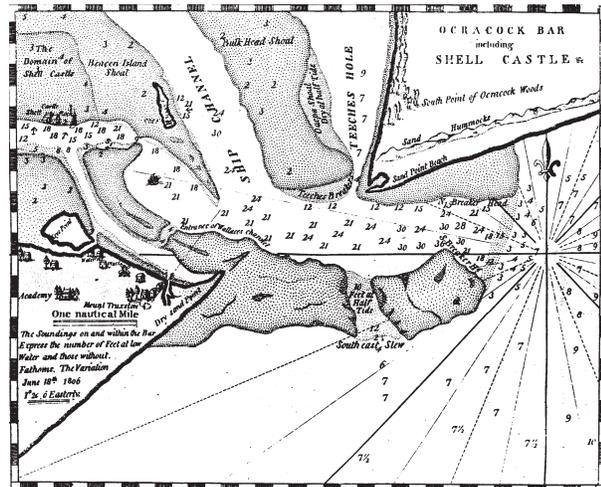


Figure 5. Nautical chart of 1806 shows the inlet's bar and shoals in detail. Skilled local pilots were required to navigate the channel, which changed with tides, time, and storms. “Ocracock [sic] Bar including Shell Castle,” A Chart of the coast of North Carolina between Cape Hatteras and Cape Fear from a Survey Taken in the Year 1806, Thomas Coles and Jonathan Price.

channel markers and boat builders. Related businesses developed, in addition to those needed to support a growing population. Five years after Collet, Henry Mouzon's 1775 map of the two Carolinas shows Portsmouth as a developed town with buildings delineated. The inlet is marked as a ship passage (Fig. 4).

Census data give a picture of the village, although the listings for Portsmouth are not precise and

3. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., *Portsmouth Village, Cultural Resources Report* (Atlanta: National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2007), p. 17.

4. David Stick, *The Outer Banks of North Carolina, 1584-1958* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 40, quotes the act.

5. Sarah Olson, *Historic Resource Study, Portsmouth Village, Cape Lookout National Seashore, North Carolina* (Denver, Colorado: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, March 1982), p. 17, citing State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 25, pp. 252-54.

6. Pat Dula Davis and Kathleen Hill Hamilton, eds., *The Heritage of Carteret County North Carolina, Vol. 1* (Beaufort, NC: Carteret Historical Research Association, 1982), p. 63.

7. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., *Portsmouth Village, Cultural Resources Report*, p. 17.

result in differing interpretations. Nevertheless, the figures show the healthy growth of the settlement and the importance of slaves to the enterprise. The white population in 1800 was 165; slaves numbered 98. The total of 25 families gives an indication of the number of houses in the village. By 1810 the white population had increased to 226, the slave population to 121.

As expected, the census reveals that over eighty percent of workers engaged in some aspect of maritime activity.⁸ Portsmouth's life depended on the inlet; residents made their living from trade through the passage, working as pilots, lighter captains, mariners, ship owners. Some were customs agents who sailed out to collect duties. Others had occupations necessary to support the town: teachers, merchants, doctors, and fisherman.

Supporting all were the slaves, whose labor kept the enterprise a success. Slaves were involved in most activities of the village. They loaded and unloaded cargo, but also operated a dolphin fishery and served the critical roles of pilots, who manned all types of vessels.⁹ David Cecelski reports, "At Portsmouth Island, slave crews piloted vessels through Ocracoke inlet, lightered their cargoes, and then guided them to distant seaports of the other side of Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds."¹⁰

Portsmouth continued to grow, with almost 400 people by 1830. Two years earlier, Currituck Inlet farther north had closed, leaving all shipping dependent on Portsmouth's help at Ocracoke Inlet. The community was robust; more than 1,400 vessels passed through the inlet in 1836-37.¹¹ Recognizing Portsmouth's importance to commerce, the federal government established a customs house there in 1806, and in 1827 provided for a marine hospital. A U.S. post office was established in 1840, and in 1842, Congress appropriated funds to buy land and build a new marine hospital, which when completed was the largest structure ever built in Portsmouth.¹²

8. Olson, *Portsmouth HRS*, p. 68.

9. David E. Whisnant and Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Cape Lookout National Seashore Historic Resource Study* (prepared for the Organization of American Historians under Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service, Draft, January 14, 2010), pp. 121, 137-138.

10. David Cecelski, *The Waterman's Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. xiii.

11. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., *Portsmouth Village, Cultural Resources Report*, p. 24, cites Stick, *The Outer Banks*, p. 306.

12. Tommy Jones, *Portsmouth Life-Saving Station Historic Structure Report* (Atlanta: National Park Service Southeast

Portsmouth is considered today remote and isolated, but in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it was a bustling commercial center with direct contact with European and Atlantic trade and culture, far less isolated than most of North Carolina.¹³ In 1842 the U.S. House Committee on Commerce stated, "Ocracoke Inlet is the outlet for all commerce of the state of North Carolina, from the ports of Newbern [sic], Washington, Plymouth, Edenton, and Elizabeth City. . . more than two thirds of the exports of the State of North Carolina pass out to sea at this point."¹⁴

An event four years later would change the shipping industry in North Carolina. In 1846, a hurricane created an inlet at Hatteras, about twenty miles north of the Ocracoke Inlet. This was the undoing of Portsmouth. Where Ocracoke Inlet was tricky and required lightering, the new Hatteras Inlet was deep and navigable. By 1850, Portsmouth's population reached 463—Hatteras had grown to 661.

Portsmouth depended on its lightering and piloting jobs. The 1850 census recorded 27 pilots, 37 mariners, 7 boat men, 3 fishermen, 5 merchants, 4 carpenters, 2 farmers, and a teacher with 77 students.

Portsmouth, with its facilities well established, grew in the next ten years to more than 600 and the census reported 109 dwellings. This was its peak, not only in population but in importance.

The growth of railroads also affected trade, not only at Portsmouth but on the ports facing the sound, as they strengthened easier north-south travel to the port of Wilmington over the east-west trade to the sound.¹⁵

Portsmouth was still operating as a lightering port in 1860 when, during Edmund Ruffin's visit, he explained,

The village of Portsmouth owes its existence to the fact of its adjoining the nearest water of Pamlico sound, where vessels must anchor and wait for fair winds and tides to cross the shallow and dangerous bar of Ocracoke inlet—and

Regional Office, 2006), p. 17.

13. Whisnant, *Cape Lookout National Seashore Historic Resource Study*, pp. 81-82.

14. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., *Portsmouth Village, Cultural Resources Report*, p. 25, cites Stick, *Outer Banks*, pp. 87-88.

15. William S. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 261-63.

after passing outward, as usual but partly laden, to wait to receive the remainder of the cargo, carried across the bar by lighters.¹⁶

Ruffin also described the village:

The occupations of the whole resident population of Portsmouth are connected with the vessels which have to wait here. Pilots, and sailors, or owners of vessels, make up the greater number of the heads of families and adult mails—and the remainder are the few, who as shopkeepers, &c, are necessary to minister to the wants of the others.¹⁷

Ruffin's description then became a forecast:

If Ocracoke inlet should be closed by sand (which is no improbable event) the village of Portsmouth would disappear—or (like Nagshead) [sic] remain only for its other use, as a summer retreat for transient visitors, sought for health and sea-bathing.¹⁸

Ruffin's forecast was timely. The shoals of Ocracoke Inlet were spreading into the inlet, no longer the easiest access to mainland ports. The steady withdrawal of shipping traffic continued and Portsmouth lost its strategic importance. Hatteras with its favored inlet surpassed Portsmouth.¹⁹

The Civil War brought changes to Portsmouth as it did throughout the South. Residents fled for the mainland as the Union Army advanced down the Outer Banks. Many chose not to return; among the former slaves and free blacks, only one family returned to the island. After the war, the town's decline spiraled. By 1870, the number of houses fell from 109 to only 59, and then to 44 in 1880. By 1883, the inlet was no longer navigable for lightering. Many more left, or turned to fishing as occupation.

Other means of livelihood sustained the village. In 1894 the U.S. established a Life-Saving Station in

16. Edmund Ruffin, *Agricultural, Geological, and Descriptive Sketches of Lower North Carolina, and the Similar Adjacent Lands*. (Raleigh: Printed at the Institution for the Deaf & Dumb & the Blind, 1861).

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. Impact Assessment, Inc. *Ethnohistorical Description of the Eight Villages adjoining Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Interpretive Themes of History and Heritage*. Final Technical Report, Vol. 2 (Atlanta: National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, November 2005), pp. 408-410. http://www.nps.gov/history/ethnography/research/docs/caha_ethno_v2.pdf.



Figure 6. Duck hunter with live decoys near Portsmouth, December 1915. (CALO Coll. a33)



Figure 7. FDR travelling by oxcart on a visit to the Pileitary Club while Assistant Secretary of the Navy. (CALO Coll. a55)

Portsmouth that provided jobs for some residents as cooks, surfmen, or mechanics. Others worked for the several hunting clubs that opened nearby in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Wealthy northern sportsmen formed clubs near the flocks of water fowl that wintered on the warm waters of Pamlico Sound. One was the Pileitary Club, built by wealthy New Yorkers about ten miles from Portsmouth Village and among seven similar gun clubs in Carteret County. Despite its isolation, the elegant club was visited by prominent figures, including Franklin D. Roosevelt while he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The clubs provided jobs for both men and women as hunting guides, cooks, maids and laundresses.

Hurricanes were a constant threat to Portsmouth. The "Great Hurricane of August 1899" brought winds that reached 140 miles per hour at Hatteras

before the anemometer blew away, and submerged Portsmouth and Ocracoke under ten feet of water in some places.²⁰ The storm destroyed a Methodist church. Two churches were destroyed in a 1913 storm, though the community was still strong enough to support construction of a new Methodist Church in 1915-16.

Many left Portsmouth after the devastation of another hurricane in 1933. The last general store closed its doors. The force of the hurricane opened a new inlet through the Core Banks south of Portsmouth, creating an island thereafter called Portsmouth Island. Until then, as seen on the old maps, Portsmouth had been a town at the north end of Core Banks, not its own island.²¹

Life on the island in the first half of the twentieth century was far different from its prosperous and bustling earlier years. Older methods of living and housekeeping were rarely updated. Cooking stoves were fueled with kerosene for decades after electricity was common elsewhere. Heat from the stoves dictated summer kitchens, outbuildings more typical of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Refrigeration was not available, either from ice or fuel. Instead, small screened houses, known as dairy houses or milk houses but more akin to a small compartment, were used for short-term storage, sheltering the food from the sun while welcoming ocean breezes. Electricity from generators came late to Portsmouth, after World War II, and only to a few houses.

Drinking water was not taken for granted. There was only one deep freshwater well on the island, and that eventually became brackish. Residents depended on rainwater collected from roofs into cisterns built adjacent to the houses. These were carefully designed and regularly cleaned. Special preparations were made before hurricanes to prevent infiltration of salt water.²²

Years later Ada Roberts Styron visited the island and recalled aspects of life there.

"Usually two of our cows would come up from the range at night, to nourish their penned-up calves and supply us with milk, cream and butter. For them we drew brackish water from a shallow well. We drank rain water from our large juniper cistern. There was only one deep well of good, fresh drinking water on the island. It was on land Up-the-Banks."²³

Essential to the island were provisions from Ocracoke across the inlet, and especially from the mainland. The mailboat *Aleta* served multiple functions. Officially the ferry to Ocracoke across the inlet, it also came out to the inlet to serve Portsmouth. In the 1930s, the *Aleta* made a round trip to the mainland every day, leaving Ocracoke at 6 am for Atlantic, then leaving the mainland at 1 pm for a stop at Cedar Island and a second stop at Portsmouth. A designated resident took a small boat over the shallow waters to meet the mailboat and pick up or deliver items. From the *Aleta* came mail, groceries and provisions from general stores in Atlantic. It also served as a passenger ferry.²⁴



Figure 8. The mailboat *Aleta*. (NPS photo gallery website)

In 1937, the Coast Guard's Life-Saving Station was closed, further diminishing the town's vitality. The population by 1940 dropped to 42 people and continued its rapid decline. There were two students in the school when it closed in 1943 (*Fig 11*). Families still lived on the island, but their older children went to school off the island, probably in Ocracoke.²⁵

20. Tommy Jones, *George Dixon House Historic Structure Report* (Atlanta: National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2004), p. 10.

21. The inlet later closed, then reopened. Today the sand between Portsmouth and the Core Banks is more often above water than below.

22. Delores Gaskins interview, April 26, 2014 Homecoming (Babb descendant).

23. Ada Roberts Styron recalling 1968 visit to Portsmouth, *Ocracoke Newsletter*, February 21, 2011, <http://www.villagecraftsmen.com/news022111.htm>.

24. Charles S. Killebrew, *Raleigh News & Observer*, February 1, 1948, quoted in "Doctor's Creek Journal," Summer 2015 newsletter of Friends of Portsmouth Island, p. 11.

25. Lynn Salsi and Frances Eubanks, *The Crystal Coast*. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), p. 90.



Figure 9. Carl Dixon taking mail from the mailboat to the Post Office by wheelbarrow, ca 1930. (CALO c29, Aycock Brown Coll.)



Figure 10. Only three people on Portsmouth owned automobiles, among them Walter Styron's 1929 Chevy shown in 1931 on a barge at Portsmouth, heading for Atlantic on the mainland. (CALO a15, Sarah Roberts Styron Coll.)

A year later the Great Atlantic Hurricane of 1944 flooded Portsmouth and caused great damage to buildings, causing yet more residents to relocate to Ocracoke or to the mainland. Families with young children had no choice but to leave.²⁶ The Coast Guard reactivated the station during World War II, but in 1945 closed the station, taking more jobs from the island. The church was next; it ended services in 1956. Thereafter, a minister

26. By 1950 the youngest resident was 28; NPS exhibit at Portsmouth Visitor Center (Dixon-Salter House).



Figure 11. Teacher Mary Dixon with two of her last students. (CALO Coll. b04)

from the mainland visited congregants at their houses once a month. Finally, the mailboat made its last Portsmouth stop in the late 1950s and the Portsmouth Post Office closed in 1959. The former Life-Saving Station (Coast Guard) was used as a lodge by a hunting and fishing club.²⁷

In the 1950s while Portsmouth institutions were closing their doors, individuals began buying abandoned houses for use as summer cottages, and the State of North Carolina began purchasing land on Core Banks, including properties in Portsmouth Village, for the purpose of preserving the natural barrier islands.

When the Cape Lookout National Seashore was authorized in 1966, the State of North Carolina began acquiring buildings in Portsmouth for eventual transfer to the National Park Service. Most owners who used the properties seasonally sold outright, but the remaining residents were granted life estates allowing them to live in their houses until their deaths. The state transferred all

27. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, *Portsmouth Village Cultural Landscape Report*, pp. 43-44.

properties to the Park Service in 1976 when the National Seashore was established.²⁸

Although Portsmouth houses continued in seasonal use, in 1950 only fourteen residents remained, and only four were living year-round on the island in 1962. Soon there were three, a man and two women, all elderly. By the late 1960s, all spent their winters at Ocracoke or on the mainland but the majority of the year at Portsmouth.²⁹ In 1970 the man, Henry Pigott, became ill and moved to Ocracoke to live with a friend.³⁰ After his death in 1971, the women agreed reluctantly to move to Beaufort. Those were the island's last year-round residents. Marian Babb retained a lifetime right to her house and continued to return to Portsmouth in the summers.³¹

In the 1970s, the Park Service was juggling life estates, special use permits, and a court judgment for a 25-year lease.³² It began a successful leasing program for several Portsmouth houses. The long-term agreements, generally twenty years, required leaseholders to maintain and improve the buildings following the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" and specific conditions of the lease, including a requirement for a compost toilet if a flush toilet was not installed.³³ A typical rental amount was about \$5,000 per year.³⁴ Some were leased to fishermen and many to families with a connection to Portsmouth, who used the houses for weekends and summer vacations. The program was successful for many years in putting the houses to use and helping with their maintenance.³⁵

NPS Planning Efforts

The first planning document for the park that addresses Portsmouth is the 1971 Master Plan, compiled from studies carried out from the 1966

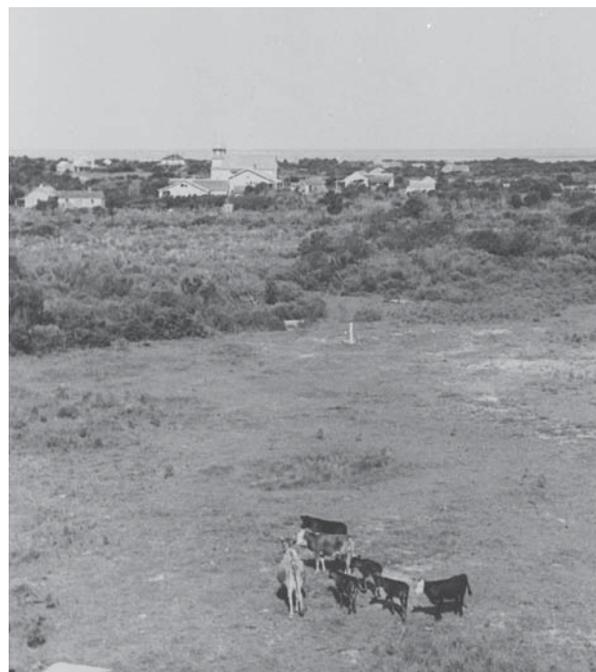


Figure 12. View of the village from the Coast Guard tower ca 1928, when wild cattle grazed the island. (CALO c19, Aycock Brown Coll.)

authorization of the park to 1970.³⁶ One of the studies for the plan was a preliminary Historic Resource Study (HRS), produced by NPS historian George Olszewski in a 1970 draft "to satisfy the research needs specified in the Historical Resource Study Proposal CALO-H-1, Historic Resource Study, Portsmouth Village." The area's historic sites were identified, evaluated, and plotted on an historical base map.³⁷ The HRS examined a large number of primary documents not previously researched, and may be the first academic study of the island's history.

The Study recommended the "theme" that should guide the National Seashore's treatment of Portsmouth. The village "should be restored to accent the cultural and economic life of the Bankers. At Portsmouth the story could be told of how the people lived, earned their daily bread, raised their children and adapted to their environment. Economic activity centering around Ocracoke Inlet should be emphasized since it relates so closely to the life of the Portsmouthers."³⁸

28. George J. Olszewski, "Historic Resource Study for History of Portsmouth Village," typewritten draft, September 1970, p. 73.

29. Olszewski, "Historic Resource Study," pp. 70, 72.

30. Rudy and Celestine Carter of Hampton, Virginia, interview, April 26, 2014 Homecoming. Pigott was Rudy Carter's uncle.

31. Salsi and Eubanks, *Crystal Coast*, p. 86.

32. Site map, "Special Use Permits," showing categories of agreements, June 24, 1976.

33. Ellen Fulcher Cloud interview, April 26, 2014 Homecoming.

34. For example, the lease of January 3, 1990 made to Charles Jackson Gilley and Jacob Eli Fisher, Jr. for the Henry Pigott House.

35. Cloud interview, 2014 Homecoming.

36. Cape Lookout National Seashore, *Master Plan, Cape Lookout National Seashore* (Harkers Island NC: Cape Lookout National Seashore, 1971).

37. Olszewski, "Historic Resource Study," p. 1.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 77.



Figure 13. Path through the overgrowth to the church. Undated. (CALO Coll. 04847)

The 1971 Master Plan repeated earlier informal proposals in focusing on the natural environment. It introduces historic resources only generally, loosely stating an intention to “restore the historical scene” at Portsmouth Village.³⁹

The Park Service did address immediate issues at Portsmouth. Vegetation had grown up on the island since the 1950s when the state of North Carolina outlawed free-range grazing on the Outer Banks (*Fig. 12*). In the following years, trees and low vegetation took over much of the open land in the village when only a tiny and elderly population lived on island. In the late 1970s and early 1980s after the Seashore was established, NPS began clearing the trees and overgrown brush and began an as-needed program of repair to buildings.

In response to requirements of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, NPS completed a more comprehensive General Management Plan (GMP) in 1982 (printed in 1983).⁴⁰ The plan reflects additional research on Portsmouth, for which a National Register nomination had been completed. The plan incorporated historic resources planning and introduced interpretive themes for the village,

39. *Master Plan, 1971*, p. 81.

40. *General Management Plan / Development Concept Plan, 1982-83*

mostly taken from Ross Holland’s 1968 Survey History of Cape Lookout National Seashore.

The GMP was preceded by a draft released in August 1978. Work at this time is explained in an undated article:

According to its proposed management plan, released in August of 1978, the National Park Service intends to preserve the exterior of the buildings remaining on Portsmouth. Work has already started on some of the buildings. The Coast Guard Station has been reshingled and both the church and the post office-general store have been painted.

The Park Service hopes to provide transportation to the island for 150 visitors a day. These visitors will receive guided tours during the busy season and may go on self-guided tours in the off-season. Also planned for the village is a dock, water and sanitation facilities, a ranger station, and a maintenance area.

According to Portsmouth district ranger Kevin Kacer, in *The News-Times*, a half-million dollars has been appropriated by Congress for restoration of the buildings over the next five years. However, it will be ten years before restoration is finished.⁴¹

41. Caroline Smith, "Historic Portsmouth," undated article in SHPO files.



Figure 14. The marsh at Doctor's Creek, looking out to the sound. (JKOA, 2013)

The early history of Portsmouth is compelling, and is reflected in planning documents as it supersedes the more recent history of the town. Economics and hurricanes destroyed all eighteenth century and all but two nineteenth-century buildings, yet the documents do not address an interpretive plan for the buildings actually on site.

In 1982 the park finalized the Historic Resource Study on Portsmouth Village, many years in the making. The 1970 draft was delayed by the park's work on the 1976 American Bicentennial. When picked up again it was revised and updated by three other historians before its 1982 publication.⁴²

The park completed a Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment in 1984 that more explicitly addresses historic resources. This was the first indication of a systematic look at cultural resources by the park, mainly to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Its emphasis is on preventing deterioration; the plan places historic resources as the park's third priority, behind recreation and natural resources. Recommendations for cultural resources management, focus largely on Portsmouth and the

42. Olson, *Portsmouth HRS*, preface.

Cape Lookout Light Station (because both were listed in the National Register), the park museum, archives, and archaeological sites.⁴³ Portions of this plan apparently were written some years earlier and state in one place that Portsmouth was not yet listed in the National Register, though the listing was effective in 1978.⁴⁴

The Resources Management Plan recommended detailed HSRs, necessary to conduct proper stabilization as well as management of rampant overgrowth around the buildings of the village. At that time, work in the village was unprogrammed and reactive, without benefit of historic research to guide decisions. No interpretive themes were proposed in the plan, but the report recommended hiring a full-time park historian.⁴⁵

In December 1983, NPS staff led by Rene Cote, Southeast Region Historical Architect, inspected the buildings of Portsmouth and prepared a report in January 1984, its purpose "to establish areas of priority which can later be systematically

43. *Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment*, (Cape Lookout National Seashore, 1984), pp. 8-9, 115-16; the plan includes a chronology of archaeological work in the park.

44. *Ibid*, Archaeological Data Section.

45. *Ibid*, pp. 162-72, 173-74.

programmed into budget proposals.” The report first recognizes the inalterable geographical conditions of Portsmouth that affect its buildings: the limited natural horizontal drainage, the aggressive marine environment (wind, salt, sun, flooding, humidity), the high water table, and the saline soil.⁴⁶

The geography of the waterways surrounding the island was also noted as a preservation issue, their shallow channels limiting the size of boats and transport of equipment, materials and crews to the buildings. The shoaling that contributed to Portsmouth's economic decline was now affecting its preservation.

After their inspections, Cote and his team addressed factors that could be improved.

- crews (carpenters, painters, roofers) who had conducted repairs and maintenance were not adequately qualified;
- crews were using incompatible paints on structures, applying oil-based primer coat and one latex finish coat;
- water was ponding under and around structures, and sand buildup had caused some structures to sit below grade, leading to moisture deterioration and insect infestation;
- these conditions were causing structural settlement, in turn restricting the operation of windows and doors for interior ventilation.

NPS completed Structure Survey forms in the field to assess conditions at Portsmouth's buildings. These are dated 1984 in CALO files, but are more likely the field notes that Cote's team made in December 1983 to create the January 1984 report cited above.

A management plan completed in 1990 includes brief historical information on Portsmouth. A 1997 plan addresses interpretive themes, not mentioned in the 1984 plan, but a repeat of the “sea” theme in the General Management Plan. The focus for Portsmouth was its early development associated with shipping at Ocracoke Inlet. The plan gave some emphasis to the need for in-depth historical study of Portsmouth's buildings.⁴⁷

In the early and mid-2000s, four Historic Structure Reports (HSRs) were completed by Tommy Jones of the NPS Southeast Regional Office. These in-depth studies of the physical histories of buildings are invaluable to the park's decisions for repair.

The park's first comprehensive study of Portsmouth was not until 2007, when the Cultural Landscape Report provided a lengthy history of the island and specific recommendations. The CLR endorsed the finding of the 1978 National Register nomination that Portsmouth was over 200 years old, and “the only existing village on the Core Banks south of Ocracoke Inlet.” It recommended an extension of the period of significance to the 1971 end of permanent residency.⁴⁸

In 2010, David and Anne Whisnant submitted their excellent draft Historic Resource Study for CALO, which includes a comprehensive history of the lands within the park, including Portsmouth, and recommendations for interpretation.

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan of 2011 addresses the difficulties of providing adequate sanitary facilities for leasing Portsmouth's buildings for residential use. Other daytime, administrative uses might be found, since such facilities for non-residential uses may be feasible. Compost toilets can be housed in the village's outbuildings with minimal impact on historical fabric.

Hurricanes have continued to flood and damage Portsmouth's buildings during NPS ownership. During Hurricane Sandy in October 2012, the village was flooded by storm tides. The Post Office received approximately eight inches of water and the Portsmouth School lost some windows. The Methodist Church was damaged by the heavy winds, losing roof shingles and developing a significant structural tilt.⁴⁹

Documented changes in climate are projected to produce larger and more violent storms. Sea levels are rising as predicted, and the dangers affecting the buildings of Portsmouth Village are expected to increase. Faced with these threats, the National Park Service (NPS) recognized the need to record the buildings of the village. The impact of sea level rise is addressed in the Foundation Document of 2012. Eight properties are extensively documented

46. Rene Cote, “Narrative Report on the Findings of Historic Structures Examination; Preliminary Test of Historic Structures Survey, Portsmouth Village,” 1984.

47. *Resources Management Plan*, pp. 31, 42, 50.

48. Wiss, Janney, Elstner, and John Milner Associates, Inc., *Cultural Landscape Report*, .

49. NPS press release, “Historic Portsmouth Village Methodist Church is Damaged by Hurricane Sandy,” November 16, 2012.

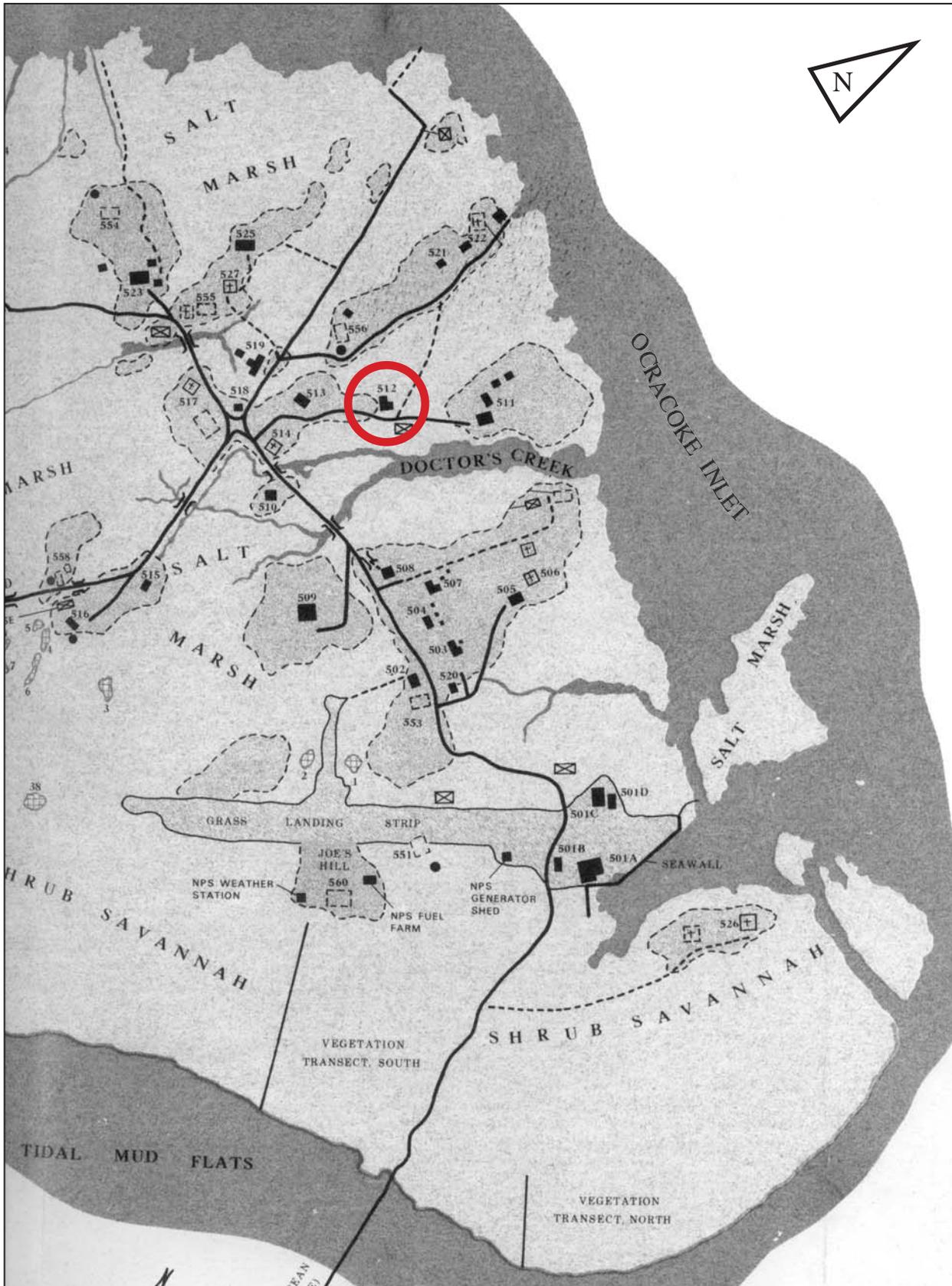
in HSRs; NPS selected thirteen other building complexes to be documented in a new approach to create a permanent visual and descriptive record of the buildings. *The Portsmouth Village Documentation Project* was completed in August 2015, with thirteen stand-alone reports bound in two large volumes.

Portsmouth is celebrated and not forgotten. In 1992 the first Portsmouth Homecoming was held, and has continued to be held in April every other year. In 2000, only nine people were living who were born on Portsmouth; two of them attended the homecoming, including Jesse Lee who was reputedly the last baby born on the island.⁵⁰

The 2014 Homecoming was held on April 26. Over 400 people attended, arriving over several hours in small groups as shallow-draft boats made the rounds from Ocracoke, Core Banks, and Cedar Island. From many states and as far away as California, nineteen Portsmouth families were represented by their descendants, many of whom had spent summers and vacations in Portsmouth houses through NPS leases. The Homecomings are important to the people and beneficial to the village, helping retain an attachment to place. Planning for the 2016 Homecoming is underway.

50. Village Craftsman, *Ocracoke Newsletter*, May 4, 2000.

MAP OF PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE



Map of Portsmouth Village showing location of the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House. (CALO base map)

I.B Chronology of Development and Use

The 1894 establishment of a Life-Saving Station at Portsmouth gave a boost to the declining community, offering employment to several islanders not only as rescue crew, known as surfmen, but also as cooks, mechanics and other support jobs. Some worked there for decades, but most for shorter periods or intermittently.⁵¹

The LSS complex was southeast of the village and included a variety of support structures, including an oil house, privy, stables, boat house and later a summer kitchen, among others. The main building was large, the island's largest. On the second floor were the crew's quarters in one large open room, though some officers and surfmen lived in simple houses on station property.⁵² The Tom and Lucy Gilgo House is one of those surfman's houses.

Tom and Lucy Gilgo

Thomas Gilgo (ca. 1902-1949) was born into a large family who had lived on the island since the early 1800s. Tom was the son of Sarah J. Gilgo (1875-1956) and William Thomas Gilgo (1870-1942), who was also known as Tom.⁵³ About the time Tom was born, the elder Tom Gilgo and his brothers Warren and George had a fish scrap and oil factory near Davis, south of Portsmouth on Core Sound, though it operated for only a few years. The son Tom became a fisherman at a young age, but at least for a short time was among the cooks employed at the LSS.⁵⁴

51. Jones, *LSS HSR*, p. 16.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

53. 1910 census; ancestry.com; Portsmouth online genealogy compiled by Karen Duggan <http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?uidh=000&rank=1&new=1&so=3&msT=1&gsln=Gilgo&gss=angs-c&MSAV=1&cp=0&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&sbo=t&gsbco=Sweden&gl=34&gst=&ghc=20&fh=220&pgoff=11&noredir=true>.

54. Interview with James Salter in Mabel Murphy Piner, *Once Upon A Time, Stories of Davis, North Carolina* (Morehead City, NC: Carteret County Historical Society,



Figure 15. Tom Gilgo as a student at the Portsmouth school, 1916. Former residents identified two boys on the back row as Tom. (Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, www.downeasttour.com)



Figure 16. Tom Gilgo in 1920 at about age eighteen. (Lucy Beacham Gilgo Coll.)



Figure 17. Lucy Beacham at about age seventeen, photographed in 1921 at the Woman’s College in Greensboro. (Lucy Beacham Gilgo Coll.)

Lucy Beacham Gilgo (1904-1987) was born and grew up on her parents’ farm in Beaufort, south of Portsmouth on the mainland. Her father Paul Beachum was a farmer, her mother Lizzie a mother of ten and a midwife. At a time when few women went to college, Lucy left eastern North Carolina for Greensboro to attend the North Carolina College for Women, where she took instruction to become a teacher. Her first job took her to Portsmouth, of which she had never heard. She arrived there in 1922 after a seven-hour journey on the mailboat, then on a shallow skiff to the island. There she lived at the LSS, by then the Coast Guard Station, with the captain and his two daughters. She was eighteen, teaching grades one through seven in Portsmouth’s one-room schoolhouse.⁵⁵

2002), <http://www.downeasttour.com/davis/oyster-creek-memories.htm>. Jones, *LSS HSR*, p. 22.

55. James E. White III, *School Mom of Portsmouth: Memories of Lucy Beacham Gilgo* (Trent Woods, NC: Mount Truxton Publishing Company, 2011), pp. 6-8. White is the grandson of Tom and Lucy Gilgo. The college was later named Woman’s College; today it is the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Lucy and Tom began dating, though after a year she left to teach near Edenton. She then moved back to her parents’ house and taught near Beaufort. Nevertheless, she and Tom Gilgo were married on February 7, 1925 when Tom was 23 and Lucy was 20, and immediately moved to Norfolk where Tom had a job at the shipyard.⁵⁶

The Gilgos returned to Portsmouth late that year and lived with Tom’s parents and two other families. Lucy Gilgo later remembered, “Four families in one house was just too much.”⁵⁷ As an alternative, they acquired a two-room house from the Coast Guard complex and moved it to the west bank of Doctor’s Creek (*see map p. 24*). Their small house was reportedly built in the mid-1920s near the station as the home of a surfman and his family. The date and circumstances of the Gilgos’ acquisition and move are unknown, and may have been as late as 1928. Both Tom and Lucy had close association with the station, Tom as a cook, and Lucy a boarder with the captain’s family.⁵⁸

As Lucy Gilgo recalled,

Our house was on the Coast Guard property, and he [Tom] had to move it. We moved it over there right in front of Henry’s house. . . . He had to move it down there and got it livable.⁵⁹

The house was small, with two front windows and a central door. Inside were the two rooms, a living room with painted walls and ceiling, and a smaller, unpainted bedroom. Rising from the living room was a brick flue. A back door led to a porch.⁶⁰

Remaining on Portsmouth today is a house strikingly similar to the Gilgos’ (*Figs. 18-19*). The Ed and Kate Styron House is also small, of similar proportions and massing. Both houses have board-and-batten siding on the front, and the same fenestration pattern of two front windows with central door. The Styron House most likely had a front porch, and the Gilgo chimney, now gone, was in roughly the same position as that of the Styron House. It is likely that the Styron House also originated at the LSS and was moved to the

56. White, pp. 12-13. Portsmouth online genealogy.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

58. Outline research by CALO ranger Karen Duggan, ca. 2006. Other surfmen’s houses were moved to the village, some in the 1930s when the station was decommissioned, among them the Lionel and Emma Gilgo House and the Ed, Nora, and Elma Dixon House.

59. White, pp. 19-20. Henry was Henry Pigott, whose house still stands north of the Gilgo House.

60. Determined through physical investigations, NPS photographs, and Lucy’s published recollections.



Figure 18. The Tom and Lucy Gilgo House in 2013.

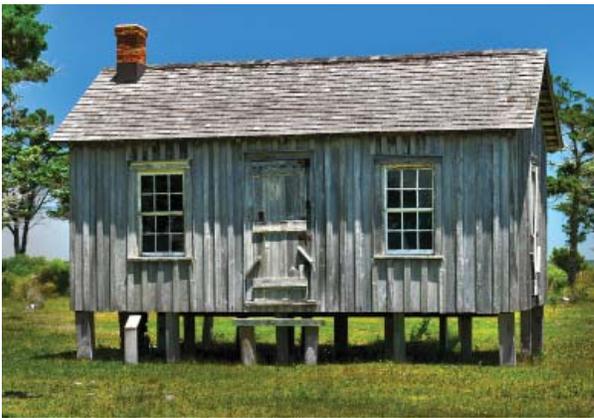


Figure 19. The Ed and Kate Styron House in 2013.

village. Two other extant LSS houses in the village are larger. There were others as well, but they were lost in storms.

Tom and Lucy lived in the small two-room house with their small children, Tom working as a fisherman. Lucy no longer taught, but supplemented Tom's income by occasionally making clothes for others. She remembered that they had in the house "beds, chairs of course, a heater, cook stove (we cooked with kerosene), table." Outside they had a milk house, or cool house: "We had a little house called a milk house sitting out in the backyard that was screened all around. We put our food out there so it would stay cool. That was the only way we had." Water was collected in a wooden cistern, or water box, but as mainlander Lucy explained, "the water was very different and took some getting used to. It tasted different, and was always hot."⁶¹

61. White, pp. 23, 27-29, 47. Children were Nina, William, Blanche, Paul, Jane, George, Billie, Jack, Jimmy, Peggy, and Sylvia.

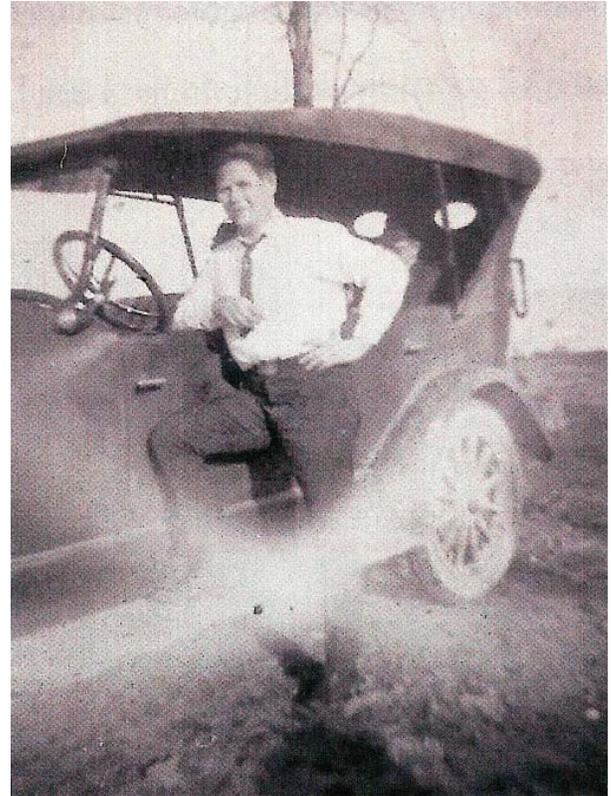


Figure 20. Tom Gilgo and his car, ca. 1923. (Lucy Beacham Gilgo Coll.)

Though their house was simple, the Gilgos also had a car, one of the few on the island, as well as a garage. Tom had a motor boat with cabin for his fishing, and various nets that he repaired in the yard and hung on a net line. Lucy Gilgo in interviews recalled that they had no garden, grew no vegetables, deterred by the strong winds that brought salt water into the yard from Doctor's Creek.⁶²

The Gilgos lived on Portsmouth only until 1933 when they joined the many who left after a major hurricane. Preparations for storms were not infrequent. Furniture was piled off the floor in case of flooding. In some houses, a table was placed on its side with the top against the door to prevent furniture from being swept away. Food was set aside, and containers were filled with water from the cistern. But the islanders' preparations could not protect against the hurricane of September 1933, which brought sustained winds of 100 mph and torrential rain that flooded most of the island and destroyed many houses.⁶³

62. White, p. 27.

63. Interviews, and Jones, *George Dixon House HSR*, p. 10.



Figure 21. Lucy Gilgo, undated. (CALO Coll. f16)

The storm remained a harrowing memory throughout Lucy's life. A hurricane a few weeks earlier brought water up to the door sill but not into the house, but September's storm was violent. Tom feared the house, because their house was not tied down, would be lifted as the water rose and begin to fall apart. "Breakers were crashing over the shorter houses," the water so high that Tom had to swim part of the way to his neighbor's house. He and the neighbor pulled a skiff to get Lucy and the children to take them back to the neighbor's two-story house for the night.⁶⁴

The next day they saw that their house, flooded with salt water, was still standing, though the back porch "had been washed up from the ground" and the garage was destroyed. The storm was the worst in islanders' memories. Boats, nets, outbuildings and equipment were swept away. Houses were destroyed, others were left unrepaired and vacant as families left for the mainland. The storm flooded

64. White, pp 32-33. The neighboring house was Walker and Sarah Styron's, also known as the Wallace House or Old Grace.

the water boxes on the island with salt water. Lucy insisted that they leave. "There was no way to make a living. We just had to leave. We couldn't get any fresh water." At the end of October, Tom moved to Oriental while Lucy, who was Portsmouth's registrar, remained in the house until after the pending election.⁶⁵

Tom and Lucy lived the rest of their lives in Oriental, a center of commercial fishing. Lucy Gilgo said of her life as a fisherman's wife, "It weren't a good living, but we had something to eat, had something to wear. What more did you need? I never worried about him much because he didn't go out much. They would go out in the water in the sound... They'd be gone all night long drop netting."⁶⁶

The couple ultimately had eleven children, and Lucy taught seventh and eighth grades at Oriental Elementary School. After Tom died in 1949 of a heart attack while fishing, Lucy raised her family and was chosen Pamlico County Mother of the Year in 1962. She died in 1987. Both are buried in Oriental Cemetery.⁶⁷

After the Gilgos

The Gilgos' vacated house was bought by Jesse Brenard Bookhardt (1903-1982) and Gladys Lorraine Byrum Bookhardt (1903-2000) (Figs. 22-23). Unlike the Gilgos, the Bookhardts used the house only as a summer residence. Both were familiar with the island. While at Duke Divinity School, Jesse spent a summer serving churches at both Portsmouth and Ocracoke. Gladys grew up in Raleigh but spent summers in Portsmouth with her parents in a house they bought in 1920.⁶⁸ In June 1926 after her graduation from Meredith College, Gladys and Jesse were married and moved to Winter Park, Florida where their first child was born.

What year the Bookhardts began using the house is not known, nor the nature of their repairs to the hurricane-damaged building. And the house was

65. White, pp. 34-35. The storm was the deadliest in North Carolina at that time, killing 21 people.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

68. Gladys's parents were Augustus Holly Byrum and Maime Stelle Byrum; <http://www.geni.com/people/Gladys-Bookhardt/3939789930920122483>. One of her sisters was Dorothy Byrum Bedwell, who wrote *Portsmouth, Island with a Soul*, recounting her early memories of living on remote Portsmouth. Carolyn Bookhardt Erwin, interviewed by the authors at April 26, 2014 Homecoming.



Figure 22. Jesse Bookhardt with his family ca. 1906 when he was about three, sitting on his grandfather's lap. His parents are centered in the back row. (Findagrave website <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=24192161>)

small. To add a kitchen, they brought up a smaller, existing structure, probably an outbuilding, and extended the roof of one of its small gable ends out over the existing wood shingle roof. They centered the structure on the back of the house with the former back door opening into the new wing. A door on the east elevation of the wing probably opened to a small side porch. Whether they attached the wing shortly after their purchase or at a later time is not known.

State of North Carolina

The Bookhardts continued her Byrum family tradition of summers in Portsmouth even after the rest of the Byrum family stopped. Then in 1969 they sold the house to the State of North Carolina for eventual transfer to the Park Service.⁶⁹ Photographs indicate that it continued to be used, probably under lease as a summer or fishing/hunting house.

An addition was made to the house in the 1970s. A 1969 aerial photograph shows the house with

⁶⁹. CALO outline.



Figure 23. Gladys Lorraine Byrum as a senior at Meredith College, 1926. (Find-a-Grave website <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=53106961>)

configuration of only the main block and back wing (*Fig. 24*). The earliest known image of the house taken from the ground, shows the front and east sides of the house in 1970 with a portion of the back wing visible. There is no addition (*Fig. 25*). The front is sheathed with vertical board-and-batten siding. The east-side gable-end wall is weatherboarded with wood shingles covering the weatherboards in the upper gable. The entire gable end may have been shingled at one time for additional weather protection. Wood-framed screens appear to cover lower sash.

Soon thereafter, but before an aerial photograph of 1978, a small bathroom addition was built (*Fig. 26*). Although some histories report the bathroom added in the 1960s, and the CLR reports the 1950s, the 1969 aerial and 1970 photo clearly show its absence. The addition was placed in front of the kitchen wing's side door, at the northeast corner of the house created by the main block and wing. The side door of the wing now became an interior door to the addition, which had its own exterior door. A photograph taken in 1996 shows that the addition was built inexpensively, typical of



Figure 24. Aerial photograph looking south, 1969. Gilgo House, circled at right, is on the west bank of Doctor's Creek. The kitchen wing can be seen at the back; the bathroom addition has not yet been built. (CALO Coll. c09)



Figure 25. Earliest known photograph of the house seen from the ground, labeled 1970, taken before construction of a small bathroom addition. The original photograph is out of focus. It shows the board-and-batten siding of the front and weatherboards with shingles at the east side. (CALO Coll. f432)



Figure 26. Aerial photograph looking northwest, 1978, showing the Gilgo House at upper left. By this time the metal-roofed bathroom wing has been added. (CALO Coll. c17a)



Figure 27. House in 1996 shows bathroom addition with asphalt sheeting, and remnants of sheeting on east upper gable. Rolled roof sheathing covers wood shingles. Chimney is not present. (CALO album)

bathroom additions in some other leased houses on Portsmouth (*Fig. 27*). The addition had a metal roof, and its exterior walls were sheathed with plywood covered with utilitarian red asphalt sheeting, apparently with a stamped brick design. Probably at the same time, the upper portion of the east gable end was covered with the same sheeting.⁷⁰

70. Asphalt building siding was a popular alternative to painting deteriorated wood siding as early as the 1930s and, particularly in the 1940s and 50s, was also used for low-cost housing.

National Park Service

In 1976 when the National Seashore was established, the state transferred the acquired properties to the National Park Service, including this house and other Portsmouth buildings. In 1979 and 1980, architect John L. Thompson produced sketch plans and elevations of buildings in the village. He made two sets of drawings for the Gilgo House, one dated 1979, the other undated. The drawings can be used only as general information, however, because there are significant differences in the two. One front elevation shows an engaged front porch, the other shows it attached. The measurements and proportions of the front door, windows, and chimney vary between the two drawings, as well as the chimney corbelling. The chimney is positioned behind the ridge on one drawing, but at the ridge line on the other.

Thompson's two floor plans of the house also vary. On the exterior, the front porch, labeled a stoop although shown with posts and roof, is significantly deeper in one drawing, and the cistern is about two feet wide in one drawing and over three feet wide in the other. The swing of the front door is shown hinged on the east in one drawing and on the west in the other, and the door from the main block to the kitchen wing is shown opening into the main block in one and to the kitchen in the other. Both

plans show a suspended flue almost centered on the ridge line.

Ultimately, Thompson's drawings provide an overall indication of the building at that time, but cannot be used as accurate documentation of its architectural elements.

NPS began renovations of some houses in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but this house was not among them. An NPS "Historic Building Survey" of Portsmouth's buildings was made in 1983-84, with a crew taking notes on the condition of building components. The Tom and Lucy Gilgo House was then under lease through a special use permit to a Charles McKay, but "due to bad roof problems, structure is not used."

The survey reported that "roof deterioration has resulted in structural damage and pest infestation caused damage to foundation." Despite the recommendations of the 1982-83 GMP to preserve the exterior of all buildings, this survey's recommended action was to "record structure and perform no preservation action. Treat as a discovery site. Section 106 compliance required." Nevertheless, in 1983 NPS built a temporary roof on the 1970s bathroom addition and installed 90-pound felt over the entire roof. No further information is provided.⁷¹

2002: Repairs and Replacement

By 2002 the house was in dire condition. As a Portsmouth descendant said, the termites left because they were going to starve. Despite the 1984 recommendation to allow the house to deteriorate to a "discovery site," NPS took on a major project to save the building. A series of photographs show the house as the Park Service began the project.

Photographs taken before the work began are undated, but deciduous trees suggest perhaps late winter or early spring (*Figs. 28-29*). The house retains its form of main block with simple porch, rear wing, and 1970s corner addition. An altered roof form over the addition is probably the temporary structure built in 1983, and the roof covering seen in 1996 is no longer present. The mix of board-and-batten and weatherboard siding remains, as well as wood wall shingles at the west gable end.



Figure 28. Back of the house showing 1970s addition with temporary roof structure; back wall of wing is missing. (undated, probably March or April 2002, CALO album)



Figure 29. East elevation in April 2002, showing front porch and 1970s addition. Temporary roof has been removed. (date stamped 4/23/2002, CALO album)



Figure 30. The back wing has been emptied and braced. Bathroom addition is at the left. Wood shingles cover weatherboards in west upper gable. Cistern remains in northwest corner, collapsed, and plumbing pipes and electrical wiring are visible under the house. (undated, possibly 4/23/2002, CALO album)

71. Historic Building Survey form.

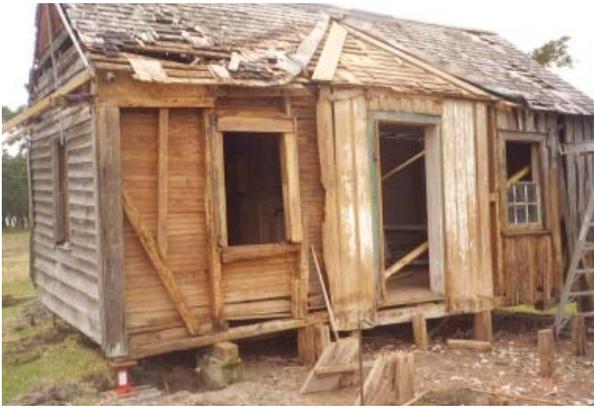


Figure 31. Back of house after removal of rear wing exposes original back wall and roof shingles. Flush vertical boards flank the back door; above door is a shallow section of board-and-batten. (date stamped 5/1/2002, CALO album)



Figure 33. Only the two-room block remains. Roof structure, foundation, front board-and-batten siding, and all sash doors have been removed. (date stamped 5/15/2002, CALO album)

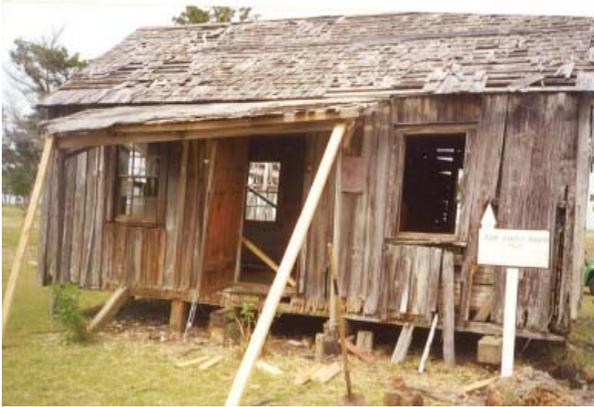


Figure 32. Removal of front porch in process. (date stamped 5/1/2002, CALO album)

The large rectangular wood-plank cistern remains in place at the northwest corner where it was better shielded from the sun. Partially collapsed, its west and long north elevations are of wide flush horizontal boards; a squared opening has been cut for unknown purpose (*Fig. 30*).

An album of photographs in CALO files document much of the 2002 work. The earliest dated photographs were taken on April 23, a Tuesday. Work began with bracing the east side of the leaning house and the interior of the back wing. The 1983 temporary roof was removed from the addition.

Work progressed quickly during the week. A photograph taken the next week shows that the entire kitchen wing was removed, leaving only its foundation posts and the original two-room house (*Fig. 31*). This and other images show the wood roofing shingles that were covered when the wing



Figure 34. Looking from the back of the house during removal of interior partition. The painted finish of the living room and unpainted walls of the bedroom are visible. Casing has been removed from bedroom window, and the interior beaded boards of the back wall are being taken down. A large hole is in the ceiling. (date stamped 5/15/2002, CALO album)



Figure 35. Construction of new frame for main block begins in June. (date stamped 6/6/2002, CALO album)



Figure 36. By June 12, roof structure has been built and salvaged areas of siding are being attached to the frame. (date stamped 6/12/2002, CALO album)



Figure 38. Structural frame is complete by late June.



Figure 37. New foundation for back wing, and attachment of original vertical flush boards flanking back door of main block. (date stamped 6/12/2002, CALO album)



Figure 39. Salvaged portion of weatherboard wall to be reattached.

was brought up and attached to the house. The original back wall is also exposed, revealing full-height flush vertical boards flanking the back door. Above the door is a shallow section of board-and-batten siding. The casing of the back door is simple, painted what is now a blue-green color, and retains an exterior hinge and wood swivel latch. At the front, the porch foundation, floor, and posts were removed, with the shed roof braced before removal (*Fig. 32*).

By May 15, only the two-room block remained, and the roof and roof structure had been removed. Large holes in the ceiling attest to its condition. The house was lifted, placed on temporary beams, and rotted foundation posts removed. The front wall with board-and-batten siding was removed, along with all sash and doors (*Fig. 33*). Inside, workers began dismantling. Beaded-board sheathing at walls and ceilings was taken down, and casings removed from the bedroom windows. More significantly, the vertical board wall dividing the house into living room and bedroom was removed (*Fig. 34*).

The Rebuilding

Demolition and dismantling was complete by the beginning of June, and construction of a new structural frame began. Photographs show the new framing on June 6. A salvaged sill is visible, and salvaged siding is laid on the ground near the house (*Fig. 35*).

By June 12 a new roof structure had been built and portions of exterior siding were being attached to the frame. On the front, most of the

board-and-batten siding was attached, though not the casing, as well as the wider, lower weatherboards of the gable ends (*Fig. 36*). These wider boards are visible in the 1970 photograph, probably added to replace boards rotted by splash from rain runoff, and possibly salvaged from an earlier building.

At the back, foundation posts, sill and joists for the back wing were in place. The original back doorway and flanking vertical-board walls were reattached to the main block (*Fig. 37*).

By the end of June, construction of the structural frame of the kitchen wing was complete (*Fig. 38*). Additional portions of exterior siding were retained in large portions, including a section of weatherboarded wall, the shingle-on-weatherboard siding of the upper west gable, and the weatherboarded siding of the back gable (*Figs. 39-41*). These and other salvaged boards were replaced onto the new frame before the new siding was installed. The upper boards of the east gable end had been covered with asphalt sheeting for several decades, which apparently protected them from weather. They were returned to the same area and remain a lighter color today.

Photographs of the reinstallation of interior elements are apparently not included in CALO files. Much of the beaded-board wall covering was reinstalled, apparently board-by-board. Other walls are open to the framing. Window casing was replaced in the living room but not the bedroom, and both rooms were left without ceilings. Notably, the board wall with its doorway between rooms was not rebuilt, leaving the two-room house as one open space. The painted finish of the living room



Figure 40. Salvaged upper gable end of back kitchen wing to be reattached.



Figure 41. Salvaged upper gable end of west gable to be reattached.



Figure 42. Front and east elevations in 2013.



Figure 43. West elevations in 2013.

and unfinished boards of the bedroom identify the location of the former wall. Boards stored on ceiling joists are likely remnants from this rebuilding.

A new front porch and steps were built, and some window sash were replaced. The exterior of the completed house was not painted, except for the window sash and the side porch door, and remains without paint. Apparently unused since the early 1980s, the house is vacant today.

Timeline

- 1753 Portsmouth established by bill “appointing and laying out a Town on Core Banks, near Ocacock [*sic*] Inlet, in Carteret County” passes in the North Carolina colonial assembly.
- 1756 First lots in Portsmouth Village are sold.
- 1770s 1770, Collet map of North Carolina shows Portsmouth and winding channel of inlet.
1775, Mouzon map depicts Portsmouth.
- 1800 White population 165, slaves 98.
- 1806 Customs Office established. Coles and Price map shows windmill and two-story “academy” at Portsmouth.
- 1810 White population 226, slaves 121.
- 1820s 1827, Marine Hospital authorized.
1828, Currituck Inlet closes, sending more shipping to Portsmouth.
- 1836-37 1,400 vessels pass through Ocracoke Inlet.
- 1842 U.S. House Committee on Commerce states “Ocracoke Inlet is the outlet for all commerce of the state of North Carolina, from the ports of Newbern [*sic*], Washington, Plymouth, Edenton, and Elizabeth City. . . more than two thirds of the exports of the State of North Carolina pass out to sea at this point.”
- 1842 Congress appropriates funds for new Marine Hospital.
- 1846 Storms create an inlet at Hatteras. The new, deeper inlet draws trade from Ocracoke Inlet and Portsmouth.
- 1850 Portsmouth population is 463; Hatteras has grown to 661.
- 1852 Coast Survey of Ocracoke Inlet shows two churches at Portsmouth.
- 1860 Population is over 600 residents with 109 dwellings.
- 1870 Census records 59 dwellings.
- 1880 Census records 44 dwellings.
- 1883 Ocracoke Inlet no longer navigable for lightering.
- 1894 Portsmouth Life-Saving Station (LSS) is established.
- 1899 Great Hurricane of August 1899, the San Ciriacio Hurricane, submerges Portsmouth and destroys many buildings.
- 1901 New Methodist church is built.

- 1902-04 Thomas Gilgo (ca. 1902-1949) and Lucy Beacham (1904-1987) are born.
- 1913 Hurricane destroys the island's two churches.
- 1915-16 Current Methodist church is built.
- 1920s Surfman's houses continue to be built at Coast Guard Station (former LSS).
- 1923 Tom and Lucy Gilgo are married; move to Norfolk.
- 1925-28 Gilgos return to Portsmouth, live with his parents until they acquire and move a surfman's house to the village.
- 1933 Major hurricane causes many to relocate to the mainland. Gilgos move to Oriental, NC. Hurricane opens new inlet south of Portsmouth, creating Portsmouth Island.
- after 1933 Jesse B. and Gladys Byrum Bookhardt purchase the Gilgo property as a summer house, add existing building as a rear kitchen wing.
- 1937-38 Coast Guard Station is deactivated.
- 1940 Census lists 42 residents.
- 1943 School closes.
- 1944 Great Atlantic Hurricane brings major flooding and damage to Portsmouth; many residents leave for the mainland.
- 1946 Coast Guard Station closes.
- 1956 Regular church services are discontinued; 17 permanent residents at Portsmouth, the youngest is 59.
- 1959 Post Office closes.
- 1960 Census lists 14 residents on Portsmouth; only 4 permanent residents reported in 1962. Many buildings now used as vacation houses or hunting and fishing clubs.
- 1966 Cape Lookout National Seashore authorized. State of NC begins purchases.
- 1968 Survey History of Cape Lookout National Seashore is prepared.
- 1969 State purchases Tom and Lucy Gilgo House and begins leasing it and other Portsmouth properties to individuals for vacation residences. Aerial photograph shows house with back wing but no bathroom addition.
- 1970 Draft Historic Resource Study of Portsmouth.
- 1971 One of the three remaining residents dies; the others leave. Portsmouth now houses only seasonal visitors.
- 1971 Master Plan focuses on the natural environment, suggests "restor[ing] the historical scene" at Portsmouth.
- 1970s NPS begins clearing overgrowth.
- 1976 Cape Lookout National Seashore (CALO) is established; state transfers properties including those on Portsmouth. Gilgo house under lease as vacation residence.

- 1979 Portsmouth Village Historic District listed in National Register of Historic Places.
- 1979-80 Architect John L. Thompson produces sketch plans and elevations of the Gilgo House, though with inaccuracies.
- 1982 First Historic Resource Study of Portsmouth is finalized.
- 1983 Gilgo House emergency repairs include temporary roof on 1970s addition and felt covering over main roof.
- 1982-83 General Management Plan states intent to preserve exterior of all buildings.
- 1983-84 Portsmouth buildings inspected by NPS team. Assessment finds Gilgo House in deteriorated condition, recommends NPS “record structure and perform no preservation action. Treat as a discovery site.”
- 1989 Friends of Portsmouth Island is organized.
- 1990 Management plan repeats the “sea” theme of the 1982 plan. Emphasizes the need for in-depth historical study of Portsmouth buildings.
- 1992 First Homecoming, sponsored by Friends of Portsmouth Island. Seven people born in Portsmouth are present. Homecoming celebrations continue biennially.
- 1999 Hurricanes Dennis and Floyd flood and damage buildings.
- 2002 Gilgo House in dire condition after termites “left because they were going to starve.” House is dismantled and complete new frame is constructed; major repairs to and replacement of building components.
- 2003 & 04 Hurricane Isabel puts water in all buildings; Alex floods island.
- 2004-06 Historic Structure Reports completed for Life-Saving Station and three Portsmouth houses.
- 2005 CALO crew spends two years repairing Portsmouth buildings; recently completed Gilgo House is probably not among them.
- 2007 Cultural Landscape Report suggests extension of National Register period of significance to 1971.
- 2010 CALO Historic Resource Study and recommendations are prepared in draft form for the Organization of American Historians under cooperative agreement with NPS.
- 2011 CALO Long-Range Interpretive Plan.
- 2012 CALO Foundation Document.
- 2014 Over 400 attend eleventh Homecoming celebration.
- 2015 Gilgo House included in new Portsmouth brochure.
- 2015 Portsmouth Documentation Project documents 28 buildings, including 15 outbuildings, in an effort to create thorough recordation in the face of rising sea levels.
- 2015 Historic Structure Reports completed for Tom and Lucy Gilgo House, Portsmouth Methodist Church, Henry Pigott House, and Mason-Willis-Dixon House.

I.C Physical Description

General Description

Locale

Portsmouth Village is located on the north end of Portsmouth Island. Once separate from the North Core Banks to its south, the island is now attached by sand banks except during times of very high tide. Though its boundaries depend on the tide and currents, the total area is only about 250 acres.

Portsmouth Island and North Core Banks are part of the long chain of narrow sand reefs that fringe the southern Atlantic coast of the United States. In North Carolina they form an eastern barrier to a series of almost land-locked bays and sounds.

Portsmouth Village is on the south shore of Ocracoke Inlet, a two-mile-wide passage connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the broad and

shallow Pamlico Sound. Across the inlet to the north is Ocracoke Island with the small community of Ocracoke at its south end.

Climate

The climate is temperate and seasonal. Summers are hot and humid with cooler evenings. The warmest month is July with an average high temperature of 85°F and average nighttime lows of 74°F. The hottest temperature on record is 97°F recorded in 1988.

The coldest month is January with an average high of 53°F and low of 40°F. The coldest temperature on record is 6°F recorded in 1985.

The wettest seasons are spring and summer, though the annual rainfall of almost 53 inches is fairly evenly divided throughout the year. The maximum average monthly rainfall is 5.43 inches in



Figure 44. The Tom & Lucy Gilgo House as viewed from the east bank of Doctor's Creek. Salt marshes, tall grasses, and low wind-swept trees are prevalent. Unless otherwise indicated, all photographs in this section were taken by JKOA in 2013.

August. The minimum average monthly rainfall is 3.19 inches in April.

The humidity, laden with salt, is high through the year, typically staying between 80 and 85 percent RH.

Daily breezes range from 10 to 12 mph but wind gusts can reach two or three times that amount. Winter breezes typically come from the north; summer breezes typically are from slightly west of south.

Rising Sea Levels

The land of Portsmouth Village is but two feet above sea level, making the village especially vulnerable to damage from storms. The soil is sandy. The water table is just a few feet below grade. There are no freshwater wells.

From early summer through fall, tropical disturbances are typical, with hurricanes the most powerful, causing damage from both wind and flood. Strong winter storms called Nor'easters are also common. The location of the Outer Banks so far from the mainland makes it the most hurricane-prone area north of Florida. The buildings of the Outer Banks have suffered repeated devastation from these storms, which with climate change and resultant sea level rise are projected to be more severe and more frequent.

Estimates of sea level rise have been published by a variety of sources. Global estimates from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, used by several parks in their Foundation Documents, make estimates for 2100; however, projections for the next several decades are more pertinent for current planning and decision making. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has published sea level rise scenarios for the United States, but these are not readily useful for localized decisions.⁷²

The NPS has developed the Climate Change Response Program (CCRP), a cross-disciplinary program to preserve the natural and cultural resources and values under NPS stewardship.⁷³ The CCRP has collaborated with the University of Colorado at Boulder to develop scenarios of sea level rise based on local tide gauges and near-

term timeframes. UC Boulder scientists used the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Sea-Level Change Curve Calculator to develop high, intermediate, and low scenarios for 2030, 2050, and 2100.

In general, a "high" scenario reflects current rate of increase of greenhouse gases, or "no change." "Intermediate" scenarios reflect a reduction in greenhouse gases through changes in human behavior and choices. "Low" scenarios reflect historic rates of sea level rise, achieved by dramatic changes in human behavior and choices. This level of change is not anticipated in the near future; therefore, the NPS Southeast Region does not recommend the use of "low" scenario predictions for current planning or decision-making. More details about the scenarios can be found at <http://www.corpsclimate.us/ccaceslcurves.cfm>.

The Ocracoke Light Station is vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge. Scenarios based on the Beaufort NC tide gauge predict, under current rates of increase in greenhouse gas emissions, that Ocracoke will experience a little less than a foot of sea level rise by 2030, approximately 1½ ft. sea level rise by 2050, and about 5¼ ft. of sea level rise by 2100.

If the rate of greenhouse gas emission increase slows, and renewable energy technologies are embraced, it is projected that an intermediate scenario of sea level rise could unfold at the Beaufort tide gauge, the closest point of reference for Ocracoke. With the intermediate scenario applied for all projections, results show about ½ ft. of sea level rise by 2030, approximately ¾ ft. of sea level rise by 2050, and almost 2 ft. sea level rise by 2100. A high, or no-change, scenario shows a rise of 0.86 feet by 2030.

Storm surge is also expected to increase with sea level rise. The CCRP and UC Boulder scientists have modeled storm surge under a low and high tide scenario. In general, tomorrow's low tide scenario of surge will be similar to today's high tide scenario.

Their research indicates that the current no-change trajectory or "high" scenario and the high tide scenarios of storm surge are the most realistic for near-term planning, because dramatic changes in global behavior are unlikely in 15 years. In

72. Part of NOAA'S National Climate Assessment.

73. <http://www.nps.gov/orgs/ccrp/index.htm>



Figure 45. Conducting field inspections in a mosquito net suit.

contrast, the intermediate scenario is suggested for 2050 planning.

These figures are projections and the future may or may not unfold according to these estimates, additionally, the science surrounding the projection of climate change and sea level rise is rapidly advancing, and the Climate Change Response Program is already working to revise and update these figures.

Seismic Zone

The site is close to an active seismic zone near Charleston, South Carolina. The last major quake, recorded by the lightkeeper at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, was in 1886.

Vegetation

Salt marshes are prevalent. Vegetation includes mostly salt-resilient grasses and low, wind-swept trees and shrubs (*Fig. 44*).

Inhabitants

The last two permanent residents left Portsmouth Village in 1971. During the tour season, NPS

volunteers stay usually for two weeks at a time to serve as guides for the day visitors arriving primarily by private tour boats. Occasionally, visitors camp on the beach for a few days.

The first volunteers typically arrive about mid-April, the last leave about the first of November. An NPS ranger is on site a twice a week throughout the year to maintain the buildings and grounds.

Raccoons live on the island but not the deer or ponies found on some barrier islands. The most renowned inhabitants, however, are the mosquitos. They are present most of the year and can be so thick at times that the tour boats cease operation. It is not uncommon for visitors and work crews to don hooded net suits while on the island (*Fig. 45*).

The Village

The extant buildings of Portsmouth Village are grouped at the northwest end of the island. Some 21 historic building sites are fairly evenly scattered on both sides of Village Road, a major sand road that runs roughly east-west. Two of the village's largest buildings are close to the two ends of this road, forming visual termini. At the east terminus is the two-story Jody Styron and Tom Bragg House; at the west is the U.S. Life-Saving Station. The Methodist Church is a focal point near the center of the village. All three of these buildings are wood frame clad with wood siding.

Doctor's Creek extends from Ocracoke Inlet southwestward near the center of the village, bisecting the settlement into east and west sections, with small wooden bridges connecting the two.

Another sand road, Haulover Point Road, extends from the ferry dock at the northwest tip of the island southeastward to Portsmouth School, the southernmost building in the Village.

The House Site

The Tom and Lucy Gilgo House site is northeast of the village center and west of Doctor's Creek, situated on a sand and grass access road that leads northeast from Village Road. The sandy ground is low and flat. The immediate site is mowed grassland, the perimeter defined by tall native grasses and shrubs. Pockets of low wind-bent trees are immediately to the north, west, and south. To the east, beyond the access road, is marshland extending to Doctor's Creek (*Fig. 46*). The access road runs roughly parallel with the



Figure 46. Access road skirts the east side of the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House and continues to the Henry Pigott House.



Figure 47. Southeast oblique view.

creek, first to the one-and-one-half-story Walker & Sarah Styron House, then to the Tom and Lucy Gilgo place, and terminating at the Henry Pigott complex on the creek, close to Ocracoke Inlet.

The Architecture

Description

At one story in height with approximately 366 square feet of enclosed space, the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House is one of the smaller residences in Portsmouth Village.

The building is comprised of two major building components, each with a rectangular floor plan, arranged to form a T. The top of the T is the larger of the two building components, measuring 22'-6" wide by 12'-4" deep. It is referred to in this report as the main block. One of its long dimensions is the front of the house and faces

southwest. The smaller building component, measuring 15'-3" long by just 9'-4" wide, is centered on the back of the main block and is referred to as the rear wing. For the purposes of this report the building is described as facing south (Fig. 47-48).

Both components are wood framed, sheathed on the exterior with wood siding, and covered by a gable roof with wood shingles. Both sit low to the ground on short wood posts with the top of the floor about two feet above grade, the main block slightly higher than the rear wing.

The principal entrance is centered on the south elevation of the main block. Three narrow wooden steps lead from grade to a small open shed-roofed porch and the doorway. A secondary entrance is on the east elevation of the rear wing; accessed by a small set of wood steps.

Design Composition

The main block is the original building moved to the site in the mid-1920s to be the home of Tom and Lucy Gilgo. Its bisymmetrical arrangement of fenestration reflects its origin as a stand-alone building. A central front entrance stands opposite the back entrance and both are flanked by a single window set immediately across from its counterpart on the opposite wall. A single window is centered on each of the two gable-end walls. All window openings are the same size and contain the same window design of double sash with six lights over six lights. The front and rear door openings are also the same size, though the type of original doors has not been identified.

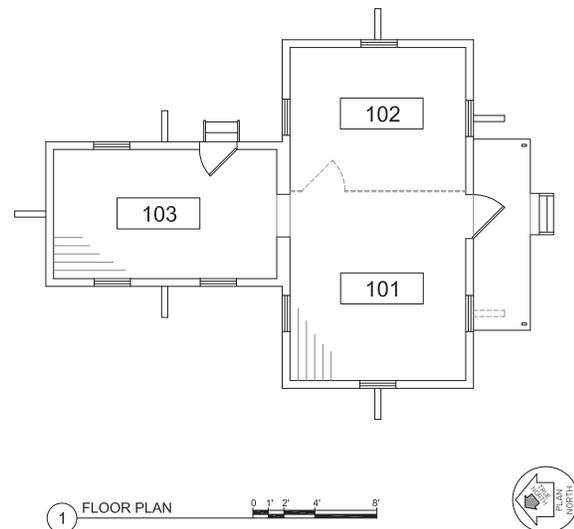


Figure 48. Floor plan.



Figure 49. South, or front, elevation.



Figure 51. North elevation.



Figure 50. East elevation.



Figure 52. West elevation.

The main block likely contained just two rooms when first moved. The repairs of 2002 eliminated the cross wall that created the larger west-side living room and east-side bedroom (*Fig. 48*). The interior casings for door and window are one of the few instances of embellishment. Though some are missing, they apparently were of the same Victorian-era design. The type of beaded board applied as finish material to walls and ceiling of the two rooms could date to the late nineteenth century but were installed well into the twentieth century.

The rear building component was originally a separate building as well. It was joined to the main block sometime after the 1933 hurricane when the Gilgo family moved out. It, too, relies on the symmetrical arrangement of its fenestration as a unifying design feature. However, it lacks the embellishment of decorative door and window

casings. It probably was added to serve as a kitchen wing.

Architectural Style

This is a utilitarian shelter of vernacular design relying primarily on building materials, massing and symmetry to create visual harmony. The construction is simple and straightforward with little architectural embellishment or stylistic flourish.

Construction Characteristics

Structural Systems:

Type

The construction type for this house is wood frame.

Foundation & Floor Framing

The main block and the wing earlier rested on separate grids of irregularly placed wood posts.



Figure 53. A few early foundation posts of various sizes, milled and unmilled, were able to be reused in the 2002 work. Replacement posts, as seen above, are made of treated lumber and measure 5½" by 5½".



Figure 54. Early floor joists measure 2" by 6" and only a few could be reused (sistered at left). Replacement joists are made of treated lumber and measure 1¾" by 6" and lap at the wall plate.

The early posts were both milled and unmilled, in a variety of sizes and shapes.

The repairs of 2002 replaced most of these posts with treated wood posts (Fig. 53). A few early

posts were retained. All replacement posts for the two building components uniformly measure 5½" square.

At the main block, the wall sole plates were replaced with circular-sawn lumber measuring 3⁵/₈" by 1¾" and half-lapped at the corner intersections and in connections along the long north and south walls. A few early floor joists measuring about 2" wide by about 6" deep were salvaged and reused. Circular-sawn replacement joists measuring 1¾" by 6" were installed (Fig. 54). The joists extend north-south at spacing that ranges from 32" on center (o.c.) to 38" o.c. and half-lap the sole plates.

At the rear kitchen wing, the wall sole plates were replaced with circular-sawn lumber measuring 3⁵/₈" by 1¾" which are half-lapped at the corner intersections. Circular-sawn replacement floor joists measuring 3⁵/₈" by 1¾" were installed. The joists extend east-west at various spacing and half-lap the sole plates.

Replacement diagonal ground braces, or hurricane braces, of treated lumber measuring 5½" by 5½" are positioned at each elevation of the main block and wing to provide lateral support. The distant end of each brace is embedded in the ground while the opposite end is secured against the exterior siding at the height of the wall sole plate.

Also in 2002, all foundation posts for the front porch were replaced with treated wood posts measuring 5½" by 5½" and supporting 1½" by 5½" replacement joists of treated lumber. Three joists span the east-west width of the porch, one at the front edge, another at the back edge, and the third at mid-porch depth. Lumber of the same size extends north-south to cover the east and west ends of these joists, boxing in the porch framing.

Wall Framing

In the main block, the great majority of visible wall framing is replacement material from the 2002 project. The early reused material measures 2" by 4" and 4" by 4". Replacement material is rough cut and circular sawn to modern dimensions. Replacement corner posts and window posts measure 3⁵/₈" by 3⁵/₈". Replacement wall studs, irregularly spaced, and replacement diagonal corner braces measure 1⁵/₈" by 3⁵/₈" (Figs. 55-56). The replacement wall plates measure 1⁵/₈" by 3⁵/₈"



Figure 55. Wall framing of main block is exposed in east wall and part of north wall.



Figure 56. Wall framing of rear wing is exposed in east, north, and west walls.

and are half-lapped and nailed at the corners and at connections. Replacement ceiling joists, irregularly spaced, measure $1\frac{5}{8}$ " by $3\frac{5}{8}$ ".

In the rear wing, also, most of the visible wall framing is replacement material dating from the 2002 project (Fig. 59). The early reused material measures 2" by 4" and 4" by 4". Replacement material is rough cut and circular sawn to modern dimensions. Replacement corner posts measure $3\frac{5}{8}$ " by $3\frac{5}{8}$ " while replacement window and door framing, the mid-height horizontal braces between vertical framing, and the diagonal corner braces measure $1\frac{5}{8}$ " by $3\frac{5}{8}$ ". The replacement wall plates measure $1\frac{5}{8}$ " by $3\frac{5}{8}$ " and are half-lapped and nailed at the corners. Replacement ceiling joists measure $1\frac{5}{8}$ " by $3\frac{5}{8}$ " and are set 48" o.c.

At the open front porch, two posts support the framing for the shed roof. Each post measures $5\frac{1}{2}$ "



Figure 57. Retained early framing of the rear wing south wall was notched to fit around the casing (blue) of the original rear door of the main block when the two buildings were first joined.

by $5\frac{1}{2}$ " and both are aligned along the south or front edge of the porch (Fig. 60).

Shared Wall Framing: Intersection of Main Block and Wing

When the rear wing was first attached to the main block, the 2" by 4" wall framing of the south wall of the building that became the wing was notched to fit around the exterior door casing of the main block's rear doorway. The interior face of that south wall of the wing was subsequently sheathed with vertical boards, hiding the notched framing and the door casing. When the two building components were reattached in 2002, the interior wall sheathing was left off of the wing. Thus, the notched framing and partially hidden early door casing are again exposed (Fig. 57).

Roof Framing

At the main block's gable roof, most rafters are replacements dating to the repairs of 2002. The early rafters that were reused include the pair at the east end of the gable roof and the pair at the west end. The north rafter of the pair second from



Figure 58. Roof framing of the main block.



Figure 60. Replacement roof framing at front porch.



Figure 59. Roof framing of the rear wing.

the west gable end is also early. Each of these early rafters measures 2" by 4". The replacement rafters measure 1⁵/₈" by 3⁵/₈" and have tapered ends. The pairs of rafters are irregularly spaced. Each pair is nailed together at the ridge. There is no ridge pole. Each pair of rafters has a collar beam measuring 1" by 4" by approximately 2'-0" long. All deck boards are replacements, measuring 1" by 3³/₄" and set 8" o.c. (Fig. 58).

At the rear wing's gable roof, as at the main roof, only the two end pairs of roof rafters are early. The other rafters are replacements dating from the 2002 project. The early rafters measure 2" by 4" and are nailed together at the ridge. The replacement rafters measure 1⁵/₈" by 3⁵/₈" and are also nailed together at the ridge. The rafter pairs typically have an upper and lower collar beam. At the early pair of rafters at the south end of the grouping, the upper collar measures 1" by 6" while the lower collar measures 1" by 8". The replacements are made with modern dimensioned wood elements. The replacement upper collar beams measure about 7⁷/₈" by 3⁵/₈" while the lower collar beams measure about 7⁷/₈" by 7⁵/₈". The rafters are set 48" o.c. Early deck boards measure 1" by 8" while replacements measure about 7⁷/₈" by 7⁵/₈" (Fig. 59).

At the front porch's shed roof, all materials are replacements. The rafters measure 1⁵/₈" by 3⁵/₈" and are set 36" o.c. The replacement beam atop the porch posts and the replacement ledger board nailed to the front wall of the main block, which together support the porch roof rafters, also measure 1⁵/₈" by 3⁵/₈". The replacement deck boards measure 7⁷/₈" by 5⁵/₈" and are set 9" o.c. (Fig. 60).

Utility Systems

Heating & Cooling

Site orientation for sun angles, presumably combined with shading from vegetation and porch, and passive ventilation are the only means of cooling that have been identified.

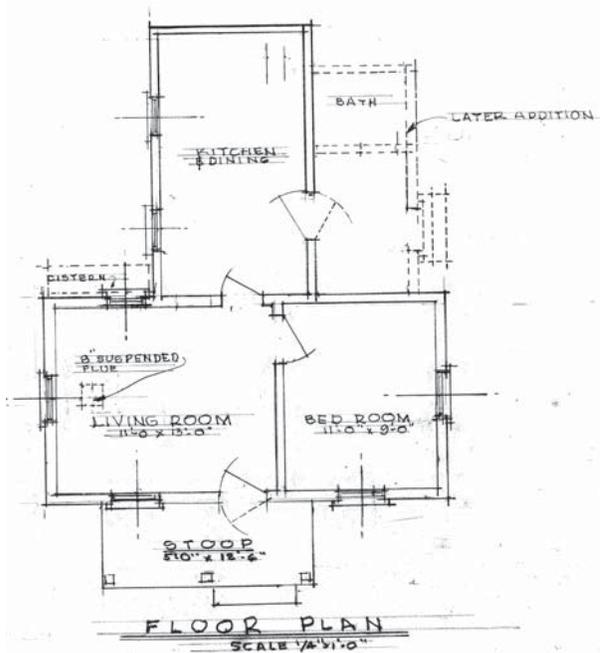


Figure 61. Field sketch by architect John Thompson notes a “suspended flue” in the room he identifies as the living room. Measurements are approximate.

The house is oriented north-south with its small gable end facing the hot late-afternoon summer sun, and the broad south elevation, susceptible to mid-afternoon summer sun, mostly shaded by a porch. Presumably, this configuration was purposeful to minimize heat gain.

Sketch drawings of 1979-80 indicate there was at that time an “8-inch suspended flue” in the west room of the main block (*Fig. 61*). Presumably this was a heat source.

Trees and other tall vegetation may have been used as a winter wind break. This was a common tactic to block northerly winter winds.

The building is on posts, as was typical to promote cooling ventilation in the summertime. In this locale, posts were also desirable because of the frequency of flooding.

Window sash could be opened for cooling and closed to retain the heat.

Lighting

Romex electrical cable is visible in park photographs taken during the 2002 project. No



Figure 62. Early wooden cistern.

physical evidence was found during the building investigations conducted for this report.

Plumbing & Water Supply

A box cistern, partially rebuilt in 2002, is located outside in the northwest corner created by the living room and the rear wing (*Fig. 62*). It sits on low posts made of sections of trees with a diameter ranging from 5” to 8”. The measurements of the cistern are approximately 6’-0” long by 3’-0” wide by 3’-0” tall. The sides and bottom are constructed of plank boards 1” thick of various widths and attached with both wire and cut nails. The modern top is constructed in sections to allow access for retrieving water; the boards there are thinner, just $\frac{5}{8}$ ” thick, in various widths. The wood may be cypress, as was often the case for storing water.

The 1979-80 drawings identify a “bath” in an eastside addition to the wing, now demolished. Plumbing pipes are visible in park photographs of the kitchen prior to the 2002 project. No physical evidence of plumbing was found during the building investigations conducted for this report.

Security

The building is secured with a mortise door lock at the front entrance. The side door of the wing is secured in place.

Fire Detection

There is no fire detection system.

Fire Suppression

There is no automatic fire suppression system or hand-held fire extinguishers.



Figure 63. Gable end walls have weatherboard siding. Front and rear elevations of main block and side elevations of rear wing have board-and-batten siding.



Figure 64. Salvaged shingle siding at the west end wall.

Exterior Features

Foundation Posts

Beneath the main block, three rows of low wood posts run east-west. Beneath the rear wing, three rows of low wood posts run north-south. Posts, as described above under *Structural Systems*, are visible along the building's perimeter (Figs. 62 & 63).

Siding & Trim

All three of the house's narrow, gable-end walls have weatherboard siding. On both gable-end walls of the main block the bottom three boards are early, salvaged and reused; they are 1" thick and have an 8½" weather exposure. The other weatherboards on these two walls, as well as all boards of the gable-end wall of the rear wing, are replacement weatherboards installed in 2002. These replacement weatherboards measure 1" thick and have a 5½" weather exposure.

At all three gable-end walls, the replacement corner boards measure 7/8" thick by 3⁵/₈" wide. The replacement cornice is made up of two boards with a narrow 3/4" thick by 2³/₄" wide plank board atop a plank board measuring 3/4" thick by 4¹/₄" wide.

The upper portion of the west gable-end was reused during the 2002 project and retains wood shingles (Fig. 64).

The front and back elevations of the main block and the side elevations of the rear wing have



Figure 65. Tapered rafter tails, board-and-batten siding, plank board and composite cornices, and plank corner boards.

vertical board-and-batten siding. The boards are 1" thick with widths varying from 6⁵/₈" to 10⁵/₈" wide, some early boards mixed in with replacements; the battens are 5/8" thick by 2⁵/₈" or 3³/₈" wide. A group of early boards and battens were apparently reinstalled along the front wall of the main block. The replacement corner boards measure 5/8" thick by 8¹/₄" wide. The replacement cornice is a 3/4" thick by 3⁵/₈"-wide plank board (Fig. 65).

Windows

There are nine, double-sash windows of six-light over six-light configuration in the main block and rear wing (Fig. 66). Each window opening measures 2'-4" in width by 3'-10" in height. Ten of the eighteen sash are reused and eight are replacements of comparable design.



Figure 66. Typical six-over-six-light double-sash windows with plank board casing.



Figure 68. Steps to front porch.



Figure 67. Front entrance doorway with reproduction six-panel door.



Figure 69. Side entrance with sash door likely dating to second quarter of twentieth century.

The replacement exterior window casings are made up of unadorned plank boards that measure $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick by $3\frac{3}{4}$ " wide with a lintel cut. The replacement window sills measure approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick at its forward face.

Front Entrance Doorway

The front doorway is on the south elevation of the main block. The opening measures 2'-10" wide by 6'-6" tall and holds a replacement six-panel door.

Casing is made up of plank boards that measure $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick by $3\frac{5}{8}$ " wide with a lintel cut (*Fig. 67*).

Front Entrance Steps & Porch

The front steps are replacements. Wood treads set in an open stringer lead from grade onto the front porch. The two stringers measure $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick by 8" wide. Each tread measures $\frac{3}{4}$ " by 8" and spans 2'-8" between two 1" by 2" ledger boards. The lowest tread is at grade. The rise is 8" at each of the three steps up to the porch deck (*Fig. 68*).

The front porch, rebuilt with new material in 2002, is 12'-4" wide and just 3'-8" deep. The porch deck is made up of plank boards of $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $\frac{7}{8}$ " thickness with $6\frac{1}{2}$ " to 11" widths. Two porch posts support the shed roof.

Side Entrance Doorway

The side entrance doorway is on the east elevation of the rear wing. The opening measures 2'-5" wide by 6'-6" tall and holds a sash door. New entrance steps were built when a 1970s addition was removed in 2002 (*Fig. 69*).



Figure 70. Typical sawn cedar shingles of various widths.

The casing on the doorway is made up of plank boards that measure $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick by $3\frac{3}{8}$ " wide with a lintel cut.

Roofs

Simple gable roofs cover the main block and the rear wing. A shed roof covers the front porch.

Roofing shingles of all roofs were replaced during the 2002 project. The replacement shingle is a sawn red cedar with widths varying from $3\frac{1}{2}$ " to $9\frac{1}{2}$ " and a 5" exposure. According to the site's maintenance person, the roofing material is the Certigrade Blue Label Number 1 Grade Red Cedar Shingle.

Interior Features Room-by-Room

Room 101: Living Room

The room measures 11'-0" deep by 13'-0" wide as defined by the extent of remaining beaded wall boards. It is now the west portion of the one large open room that fills the main block. The north-south wall that divided the main block into two rooms was removed during the 2002 project.

Flooring

It appears that all flooring was replaced during the 2002 project. The flooring runs east-west through the entire main block with no seam demarcating the rooms. The flooring is $\frac{7}{8}$ "-thick tongue-and-groove boards of both $2\frac{1}{2}$ " width and $3\frac{1}{4}$ " width.

Baseboard

There are no baseboards on the three walls that remain.



Figure 71. Northeast oblique of interior of main block.



Figure 72. Southeast oblique of main block interior.



Figure 74. Northwest oblique of main block interior.



Figure 73. Southwest oblique of main block interior.

Walls

Tongue-and-groove beaded boards measuring $\frac{7}{8}$ " thick by $4\frac{1}{2}$ " wide are on the south, west, and north walls, reinstalled during the 2002 project (Figs. 73-75). According to pre-repair photographs, the east partition wall was a one-board-thick wall constructed of the beaded boards typical of the main block. The boards were positioned vertically. This wall was dismantled in 2002 and not rebuilt. Ghost marks of window and door casings indicate that most boards appear to be on the wall from which it originated, but it is not clear whether each board was returned to its specific location on that wall. Replacement nails appear to have been positioned back into the original nail holes of the reinstalled boards, both wall boards and trim.

Doorways

Prior to the 2002 project, there were three doorways into this room according to 1979-80

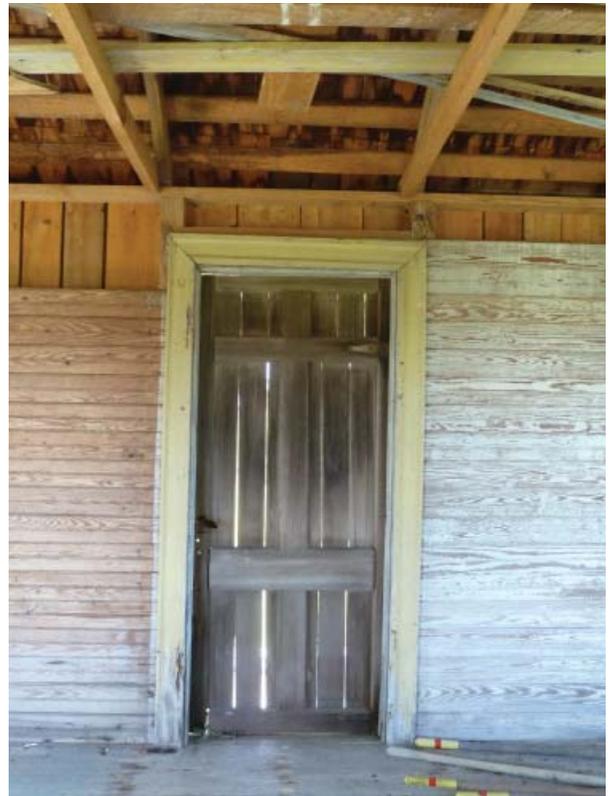


Figure 75. Front entrance doorway.

sketch plans. Two remain, one serving as the front entrance and the second connecting to the rear wing. The third doorway connected to the bedroom in the east portion of the main block; that partition wall and doorway were removed in 2002 and not rebuilt.

The front entrance doorway is discussed above in *Exterior Features: Front Doorway* (Fig. 75). The replacement six-panel door has two, six-inch,



Figure 76. Turn-of-the-century casing of front door and windows of Room 101 though probably original to Room 102 also. Note miter-cut corners.



Figure 78. Decorative trim board in Room 101 for window casing and apron. Front door casing is of the same trim.



Figure 77. Stored turn-of-the-century five-panel door may have been used in doorway of board wall that previously separated Rooms 101 and 102.

T-type modern zinc hinges; it has ghost marks for two eight-inch T-hinges. The door is secured with a padlock in a modern zinc hasp on the exterior side of the doorway. The interior screen door is missing. The door opening is cased with a decoratively cut Victorian/early twentieth century board of the same design as the three windows of

this room (Figs. 76, 78). The replacement wood threshold measures $1\frac{7}{8}$ " high by $7\frac{1}{2}$ " wide.

The opening of the cased doorway to the rear wing measures $2'-9"$ wide by $6'-5"$ tall (Fig. 57). The floor level of the rear wing is $3\frac{1}{2}"$ below the level of the flooring in the main block.

A five-panel door of a style popular in the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth centuries is stored in this room (Fig. 77). It measures $2'-10"$ wide by $6'-6"$ tall by $1\frac{3}{8}"$ thick. It may be the door for the doorway in the demolished board wall that separated the two rooms of the main block. The thickness suggests it was intended for an interior rather than exterior doorway.

Windows

There are three windows in this room, one each on the north wall, west wall, and south wall. Each window opening measures $2'-4"$ wide by $3'-10"$ tall and holds a pair of sash in a six-light over six-light arrangement. In the window on the south wall, both sash are salvaged and reused elements. On the west wall, the bottom sash is salvaged

and reused while the top is a modern sash of comparable design presumably installed as part of the 2002 repairs. On the north wall, both sash are salvaged and reused. All three window openings have the same decorative interior casing popular in the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries applied to the jambs and lintel; the casing is also used for the apron at each window (*Fig. 78*).

Cornice

The beaded-board siding does not extend to ceiling height at any of the three walls, and ceiling boards have been removed. The east board partition wall is also missing. Thus, the most common types of physical evidence are not available for study. Indeed, no physical evidence of a cornice was found. However, the pre-repair photographs show distinct ghostmarks on the board walls and board ceiling suggesting a cornice extending about 1" on both walls and ceiling.

Ceiling

Pre-project photographs indicate that the room had a beaded-board ceiling, though no ceiling boards are now present.

Finishes

The last paint layer on the door and window casings is a pale yellow. The paint color on the beaded-board wall is pale blue. The cased opening leading to the rear wing is painted white. The front door has a varnish finish. There is no finish applied to the replacement flooring.

Pre-project photographs show that the beaded-board ceiling was painted white in this room.

Heating & Cooling

No physical evidence remains of a combustion heating system shown on the 1979-80 sketch plans. Nor was physical evidence found of a mechanical heating or cooling system in this room.

Electrical System

Though electrical wiring can be seen in pre-project photographs, no physical evidence was identified.

Plumbing

Though plumbing lines can be seen in pre-project photographs, no physical evidence was identified.

Security

The front door of the house is kept locked with access by park personnel only. The side door is secured.

Fire Detection & Suppression

No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.

Room 102: Bedroom

The room measures 11'-0" deep by 9'-0" wide as defined by the extent of the remaining beaded wall boards in the adjacent room. This room is now the east portion of the one large open room of the main block. The north-south board partition wall that divided the main block into two rooms was removed during the 2002 project.

Flooring

It appears that all flooring was replaced during the 2002 project. The flooring runs east-west through the entire main block with no seam demarcating the rooms. The flooring is $\frac{7}{8}$ "-thick tongue-and-groove boards of both 2½" width and 3¼" width.

Baseboard

There are no baseboards on the three walls that remain.

Walls

Tongue-and-groove beaded boards measuring $\frac{7}{8}$ " thick by 4½" wide are on the south wall only, reinstalled during the 2002 project (*Fig. 79*). At the other walls the framing is exposed. According to



Figure 79. Beaded-board sheathing of ceiling and walls was left unpainted in the bedroom (Room 102). Note additional casing trim boards and beaded-board sheathing stored atop ceiling joists.

pre-project photographs, the west partition wall was a one-board-thick wall constructed of the typical beaded boards found in the main block. The boards were positioned vertically. This board wall was dismantled in 2002 and not rebuilt. Ghost marks of window and door casings indicate that most boards likely originated on this wall, but it is not clear whether each board was returned to its specific location on the wall. The replacement nails typically were placed back into the original nail holes of the reinstalled boards, both wall boards and trim.

Doorways

Prior to the 2002 repairs, there was one doorway in this room, according to pre-project photographs and 1979-80 sketch plans. The doorway provided connection to the living room in the west portion of the main block; the partition wall and doorway were removed during the project and not rebuilt.

A five-panel door that may have been installed in the doorway of the demolished board wall is discussed above in the section Room 101: Living Room.

Windows

There are three windows in this room, one each on the north wall, east wall, and south wall. Each window opening measures 2'-4" wide by 3'-10" tall and holds a pair of sash in a six-light over six-light arrangement. In the window on the east wall, both sash are salvaged and reused elements. On the south wall, the bottom sash is salvaged and reused while the top is a modern sash of comparable design, presumably installed as part of the 2002 repairs. On the north wall, both sash are replacements. All three window openings are missing the decorative interior casing seen in pre-repair photographs and matching the casing in the living room.

Cornice

The beaded-board siding does not extend to the ceiling height of the south wall and ceiling boards have been removed. The west board partition wall is also missing. Thus, the most common types of physical evidence are not available for study. Indeed, no physical evidence of a cornice was found. However, the pre-project photographs show distinct ghost marks on the beaded-board

clad walls and ceiling, suggesting a cornice extending about 1" on the walls and the ceiling.

Ceiling

No ceiling boards remain in this room though pre-project photographs indicate that the room had a beaded-board ceiling.

Finishes

No window casings or ceiling boards remain in this room. The beaded boards applied on the south wall have no evidence of an applied finish. There is no finish applied to the replacement flooring.

Pre-project photographs show that the beaded-board ceiling in this room was unpainted and without other applied finish.

Heating & Cooling

No physical evidence was found of a mechanical or combustion type heating system in this room, nor was physical evidence found of a mechanical cooling system.

Electrical System

Though electrical wiring can be seen in pre-project photographs, no physical evidence was identified.

Plumbing

Though plumbing lines can be seen in pre-project photographs, no physical evidence was identified.

Security

The house is kept locked.

Fire Detection & Suppression

No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.

Room 103: Kitchen/Dining Room

The room measures 14'-8" deep by 8'-4" wide, which are the interior dimensions of the entire rear wing. It is currently an empty room without built-in cabinets or accommodations for kitchen appliances or furnishings. Constructed as a separate building, it was attached to the main block sometime after Tom and Lucy Gilgo moved after the 1933 hurricane.

Flooring

It appears that all flooring was replaced during the 2002 project. The flooring runs north-south



Figure 80. Rear wing interior looking south.



Figure 81. Rear wing interior looking north.

through the rear wing. The flooring is $\frac{5}{4}$ " thick with widths ranging from $10\frac{1}{4}$ " to $10\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Baseboard

There are no baseboards.

Walls

At the north, east, and west walls, the wall framing is discussed in *Structural Systems* above.

On the south wall, west of the central doorway, the structural system is exposed. Four plank boards



Figure 82. Southeast oblique of rear wing interior.



Figure 83. Northwest oblique of rear wing interior.

of the main block's board-and-batten exterior siding are visible just beyond the framing. Above the doorway are six more boards, and two boards are visible east of the doorway (*Fig. 80*). The plank boards measure 1" by a variety of widths including $6\frac{3}{4}$ ", $6\frac{7}{8}$ ", and $7\frac{5}{8}$ ".

East of the doorway are two types of beaded board applied vertically. Both types measure $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick by $2\frac{3}{8}$ " wide. One type has a $\frac{3}{16}$ "-wide edge bead and center bead while the other has only $\frac{3}{16}$ "-wide center bead (*Fig. 80*).

Doorways

There are two doorways in this room (*Fig. 82*). The cased doorway to Room 101 is discussed in part in *Structural Systems – Shared Wall Framing: Intersection of Main Block and Wing* and in *Room 101: Living Room – Doorways*. When the house was moved to this site, this was an exterior doorway, as indicated by the weatherboard cap atop the door



Figure 84. Close-up view, Room 103, of south wall framing notched around doorway weather cap.



Figure 86. Secured three-panel sash door in side entrance doorway of Room 103.



Figure 85. Close-up view, Room 103, of south wall framing notched around doorway swivel latch.

casing (Fig. 84 & 85). This casing, like that of the front doorway, is comprised of unadorned plank board casing with a lintel cut. The weatherboard has a beveled top surface.

The doorway on the east wall leading to the exterior is discussed in part in *Exterior Features – Doorways*. The wood sash door with one large glass light and three horizontal wood panels probably dates to the second quarter of the twentieth century (Fig. 86). It measures 2'-5" wide by 6'-6" tall. Because the door is secured in a closed position, the door thickness could not be confirmed. The door hardware includes two 3½" butt hinges, a 2¼" by 7" beveled plate with no doorknobs, and a 1½" barrel bolt on the interior face of the door stile.

Windows

There are three windows in this room, one on the east wall and two on the west wall. Each window opening measures 2'-4" wide by 3'-10" tall and holds a pair of sash in a six-light over six-light arrangement. In the window on the east wall, both sash are salvaged/reused elements. On the west wall, all four sash are modern, constructed in a

comparable design, presumably installed as part of the 2002 project. None of the three window openings has interior casing.

Cornice

The beaded boards on the south wall have a distinct ghost mark extending down about two inches from the top edge where ceiling boards connected. The pre-project photographs show the same ghost mark on the wall boards but the 2002 camera angle does not allow a clear view of the ceiling.

Ceiling

Pre-project photographs indicate that the room had a beaded-board ceiling running north-south, though no ceiling boards are now present.

Finishes

The last paint layer on the covered casing of the doorway connecting with Room 101 is blue. The color of the finish on the face of the adjacent exterior wall boards is white, as is the interior face of the door in the east doorway. The beaded-board wall covering on the south wall has no finish, nor does the replacement flooring.

Pre-project photographs show that the beaded-board ceiling, like the beaded-board wall covering, did not have an applied finish.

Heating & Cooling

No physical evidence was found of a mechanical or combustion type heating system in this room, nor was physical evidence found of a mechanical cooling system.

Electrical System

Though electrical wiring can be seen in pre-project photographs, no physical evidence was identified.

Plumbing

Though plumbing lines can be seen in pre-project photographs, no physical evidence was identified.

Security

The house is kept locked.

Fire Detection & Suppression

No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.



Figure 87. Mowed yard around the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House surrounded by tall grasses, low shrubs, and an occasional wind-bent tree.



Figure 88. View from the yard across the marsh and Doctor's Creek to the Methodist Church and other buildings on the east bank.



Figure 89. View of Henry Pigott's house from Tom and Lucy Gilgo's house.



Figure 90. View of the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House (L) and Henry Pigott House from the bridge over Doctor's Creek.

Character-Defining Features

Distinctive Characteristics of the Site

- Level grade.
- Mowed grass-covered lawn immediately surrounding the house.
- Tall grasses and low shrubs surrounding the grassy site with interspersed clumps of wind-bent trees (*Fig. 87*).
- Dirt road adjacent to the house.
- Absence of yard developments.
- Long vistas of significant village features including the Church, the Henry Pigott House, and Doctor's Creek (*Fig. 88-89*).
- Long vistas of the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House from other parts of Portsmouth Village (*Fig. 89*).

Distinctive Characteristics of the Building Exterior

- Wooden open stair to front porch (*Fig. 53*).
- Open front porch with unadorned square posts supporting a shingled shed roof.
- T-plan configuration.

- Low wood foundation posts in separate, irregular-grid patterns for the main block and rear wing.
- Wooden board-and-batten siding of the front and back elevations of the main block and sides of the rear wing.
- Tapered weatherboard siding of the three gable-end walls and shingles on the upper west gable-end walls.
- Early broad-plank siding at the base of the east and west gable-end walls of the main block.
- Six-over-six light, wooden, double-sash windows.
- Plank board casing of doors and windows, lintel cut.
- Corner boards made of a single full-length plank board.
- Sash side door with horizontal panels and large glass light.
- Two-board cornice on the gable-end walls.
- One-board cornice on the front and back walls of the main block and side walls of the rear wing.

- Shingled gable roofs.
- Tapered rafter tails.
- Diagonal hurricane braces anchored into the ground along the house perimeter (*Fig. 91*).
- Wooden board cistern in northwest corner.

Distinctive Characteristics of the Building Interior

- Tongue-and-groove wood flooring of randomly alternating 2½” and 3¼” widths running east-west in the main block.
- Wide (10¼” to 10½”) plank board flooring running north-south in the rear wing.
- Tongue-and-groove, beaded-board siding, measuring 7/8” thick by 4½” wide, laid horizontally, applied to the walls of the main block (*Fig. 92*).
- Tongue-and-groove, beaded-board siding, measuring 3/8” thick by 23/8” wide, with one bead (3/16”) and two beads (3/16”), installed vertically, applied to the walls of the rear wing.
- Physical evidence, including paint remnants and edges, of board partition wall between Rooms 101 and 102.
- Physical evidence of window casings in Room 102, including paint edges and nail patterns.
- Finishes and lack of finishes on interior elements.
- Decorative board casing and apron of the windows of the west section (Room 101) of the main block.

- Decorative board casing of the doors of the west section (Room 101) of the main block (*Fig. 92*).
- Decorative casing of the doorway entrance to the main block from the rear wing.
- Wide plank boards of the early siding of the main block, as viewed behind the south wall framing of the rear wing.



Figure 92. Beaded-board siding and decorative casing of doors and windows.



Figure 91. Diagonal ground braces/hurricane braces.

Summary of Physical Conditions & Other Concerns:

The repairs and replacements conducted by NPS in 2002 were extensive. As a result, sound structural systems and a protective exterior envelope were reestablished.

In the years since the project was completed, only a few new concerns have developed. The concerns are as follows.

Highest Priority: Immediate Threat to Life/Safety of Occupants Or Immediate and Serious Threat to Building

- A broken joist and deck boards at the front porch. The condition is a potential hazard to the public and staff (*Fig. 93*).
- The tilted entry steps to the side door. Though the door is fixed in a closed position, persons unfamiliar with the building might try to enter. The steps are a potential trip hazard.

High Priority: High Potential for Becoming a Threat

- The exterior wood siding and trim is largely without a protective finish. Only the doors and window sash have been painted or varnished. Though an unpainted house may be the familiar image, paint is more than an aesthetic effect. It serves the important purpose of a shelter coat (*Fig. 94*).
- A number of the early boards were reinstalled. They are important features and generally are still useful for sheltering rain, though they are weathered. Some are checking. The caulking that accompanies repainting would improve the capacity for sheltering and increase the life of the board.

Medium Priority: Delayed Threat

- The cistern is an important site feature. It is in poor condition. The bottom boards have come free from the base and the side boards are loose (*Fig. 95*).



Figure 93. Broken joist and deck board at front porch.



Figure 94. Most exterior wood elements are unpainted.



Figure 95. Deteriorated wooden cistern in need of repair.

II.A Ultimate Treatment and Use

Situated on the west bank of Doctor’s Creek, the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House is part of a group of historic structures that provide iconic images of Portsmouth Village. Anchored by the Methodist church at the center of the village, this concentration of residences, outbuildings, community buildings, and cemeteries provides visitors a sense of the village in the early twentieth century when it was still a thriving community. Any treatment and use of the Gilgo House should be predicated on preserving its place in that ensemble of buildings.

The house contributes to the character of Portsmouth. It is historically significant for its role in the evolution of the community and for its association with the Gilgo family, one of the earliest to settle in the community.

It is architecturally significant as an example of a building that began near the Coast Guard Station (former Life-Saving Station) as simple stock housing for Coast Guard surfmen, and subsequently was moved into the village and adapted as a single family residence. It was later expanded and further modified for use as a seasonal vacation home.

Originally rectangular in plan, the house consisted of two rooms: a small living room and smaller bedroom. It was constructed in the mid-1920s for enlisted personnel who performed rescue operations. Soon thereafter and before 1928, it was acquired by Tom and Lucy Gilgo. As a newlywed couple, they had returned to Portsmouth in late 1925 and moved into the crowded home of Tom’s parents and two other families. Both Tom and Lucy worked at the Coast Guard Station and perhaps through associations there arranged to purchase the house and move it to its current location.

Tom, a fisherman, and Lucy, who supplemented her income by making clothes for others, raised their young children in this small house. After the devastating hurricane of 1933, they moved inland to Oriental, a mainland community with a more robust economy.

The vacated house was sold to Jesse and Gladys Bookhardt, a couple not from Portsmouth but who had spent summers in the village. They added a kitchen wing and used the enlarged residence as a vacation house until 1969 when the family sold it to the State of North Carolina for eventual transfer to NPS.

The park’s 1982-83 General Management Plan and its Long-Range Interpretive Plan provide little guidance in the treatment and use of this house other than to preserve it to maintain the historic character of the community.

Recognizing that the original use of an historic structure is often the most efficient adaptive use, and can generate greater appreciation for its history, NPS began in the 1970s a successful leasing program. The long-term agreements, generally twenty years, required leaseholders to maintain and improve the buildings following the Secretary of the Interior’s “Standards for Rehabilitation” and other conditions, including a requirement for a compost toilet if a flush toilet were not installed.⁷⁴ The program was popular with the public and a subject of frequent inquiry during preparation of this report.

The leasing program at Portsmouth Village, like that at Cape Lookout Village, came to a close as

74. Ellen Fulcher Cloud interview, April 26, 2014 Homecoming.



Figure 96. Tom and Lucy Gilgo House viewed from west.

the initial lease period ended. A plan for reuse was developed for the historic buildings at Cape Lookout Village after an unsuccessful challenge to the NPS decision not to renew. No similar plan has been developed for Portsmouth.

Reestablishment of the leasing program at Portsmouth seems unlikely in the immediate future. Maintaining potable water supplies has historically been a challenge. New, more stringent interpretations of code requirements for sanitary facilities is a more recent challenge. Indeed, the installation and maintenance of sanitary facilities during the initial phase of the leasing program was a recurring issue due to the shallow water table.⁷⁵⁷⁶ As noted in the park's Long Range Interpretive Plan, "development of adequate sanitary facilities is not only challenging in the district but is also further complicated by sea level rise. . . ."⁷⁷ With a rising and increasingly saline water table, wells may no longer be practical.

75. Cape Lookout National Seashore, Foundation Document, 2012, p. 29.

76. Henry Pigott House HSR

77. Cape Lookout National Seashore, Long-Range Interpretive Plan, pp. 38-39.

If a lease program is reinstated, The Gilgo House would not be a candidate for immediate occupancy. Though recently repaired and rebuilt on the exterior, the interior was left somewhat unfinished as two undivided rooms, one per building section. Residential use or occupancy of any type would require extensive retrofitting, and other Portsmouth buildings could more readily be used as residences if leasing opportunities become available.

Certainly the unfinished interior is not an unsurmountable obstacle, but it may deter potential leases. On the other hand, it could be seen as an advantage by those welcoming more flexibility in retrofitting.

Given these circumstances, the Recommended Ultimate Treatment is Preservation of the exterior of the house in acknowledgement of the house as a major feature in the district's cultural landscape, and Preservation of the interior in its current unfinished state, ready for Rehabilitation for occupancy as a residence, if the opportunity presents itself.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- promotes the preservation of a contributing property of the National Register historic district;
- is consistent with the park's General Management Plan by contributing to the historic character of the community;
- enhances the public's understanding of the house from its origin as a Life Saving Service/Coast Guard surfman's house, through its evolution as a private family residence, to its use as a seasonal residence;
- enhances the public's understanding of its first three phases of use and appearance (surfman's house, private family residence,

and seasonal vacation house) because of the physical separation of the parts of the building;

- leaves open the option of adapting the interior for a needed use;
- limits financial needs to maintenance costs.

This approach would have the following disadvantages:

- does not allow the opportunity to experience the interior spaces;
- does not include the presentation of the full range of evolutionary phases of its residential form and use by failing to exhibit the bathroom addition.

II.B Requirements for Treatment

Treatment and use of all historic properties maintained by the National Park Service are guided by a number of Federal laws and regulations, as well as by NPS policy, directives, and functional requirements. In addition to protecting cultural resources, these requirements address issues of life safety, fire protection, energy conservation, abatement of hazardous materials, and handicapped accessibility.

Some of these requirements may contradict or be at cross purposes with another if they are rigidly interpreted. Any treatment must be carefully considered with a goal of maximizing the preservation of historic features and materials.

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (NHPA) mandates Federal protection of significant cultural resources, including buildings, landscapes, and archeological sites. In implementing the act, a number of laws and authorities have been established that are binding on the NPS.

Section 106

A routine step in the park's planning process for the treatment of cultural resources is compliance with Section 106 of NHPA. This requires that, prior to any undertaking involving National Register or National Register-eligible historic properties, Federal agencies "take into account the effect" of the undertaking on the property and give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation "a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such undertaking."

To satisfy the requirements of Section 106, regulations have been published (36 CFR Part 800, "Protection of Historic Properties") that require, among other things, consultation with local governments, State Historic Preservation

Officers, and Indian tribal representatives. They also establish criteria under which the Advisory Council may comment, but as a practical matter, the vast majority of Federal undertakings do not involve review by the Advisory Council. The purpose of Section 106 review is to ensure that all interested parties have a voice in the preservation of our nation's cultural heritage, and that historic properties are protected.

To expedite the review process, a programmatic agreement (PMOA) has been developed among the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the NPS to allow for a streamlined Section 106 review process. With certain conditions, routine repairs and maintenance that do not alter the appearance of the historic structure or involve widespread or total replacement of historic features or materials are reviewed by cultural resource specialists within the NPS.

The Secretary's Standards

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* are the Secretary's best advice to everyone on how to protect a wide range of historic properties. They provide a philosophy to underpin historic preservation that is widely understood and almost universally accepted in the United States. They are intended to be applied to a wide variety of resource types, including buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. *The Standards*, revised in 1992, are codified at 36 CFR Part 68.

The Standards describe four broad approaches to the treatment and use of historic properties. These are, in hierarchical order:

- Preservation, which places a high premium on the retention of all historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. It reflects a building's continuum over time,

through successive occupancies, and the respectful changes and alterations that are made.

- Rehabilitation, which emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but provides more latitude for replacement because it is assumed the property is more deteriorated prior to work. (Both Preservation and Rehabilitation standards focus attention on the preservation of those materials, features, finishes, spaces, and spatial relationships that, together, give a property its historic character.)
- Restoration, which focuses on the retention of materials from the most significant time in a property's history, while permitting the removal of materials from other periods.
- Reconstruction, which establishes limited opportunities to recreate a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object in all new materials.

Regardless of treatment approach, the Standards put a high priority on preservation of existing historic materials and features and not just the architectural form and style. The Standards also require that any alterations, additions, or other modifications be reversible, i.e., be designed and constructed in such a way that they can be removed or reversed in the future without the loss of existing historic materials, features, or character.

Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) establishes comprehensive civil rights protection for disabled Americans, both in employment and in their right to free, unaided access to public buildings. While people with restricted mobility have most frequently benefited from ADA, protection also extends to those with other disabilities, including those with impaired vision or hearing.

Requirements for full compliance with ADA regulations are extensive and easiest to apply to new construction. Full compliance for historic buildings is more difficult and sometimes would require significant alterations to the historic

character of the property. Where that is the case, ADA authorizes a process for arriving at alternatives to full compliance that can preserve historic character while maximizing a disabled visitor's access to the historic building.

International Building Code

As a matter of policy, the NPS is guided by the International Building Code, which includes this statement regarding code compliance in historic buildings:

3406.1 Historic Buildings. The provisions of this code related to the construction, repair, alteration, addition, restoration and movement of structures, and change of occupancy shall not be mandatory for historic buildings where such buildings are judged by the building official to not constitute a distinct life safety hazard [emphasis added].

Threats to public health and safety should always be eliminated, but because this applies to historic buildings, alternatives to full code compliance are always sought where compliance would needlessly compromise the integrity of historic buildings.

NFPA Code 914

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has promulgated codes for historic buildings, most notably NFPA 909, "Code for the Protection of Cultural Resources Properties - Museums, Libraries, and Places of Worship," and NFPA 914, "Code for Fire Protection of Historic Structures." As a matter of policy, NPS recommends installation of fire-suppression systems in every historic building.

NPS Management Policies

The NPS General Management Policies (2006) guide overall management of historic properties, especially Chapter 5 "Cultural Resource Management." Based upon the authority of some nineteen Acts of Congress and many more Executive orders and regulations, these policies require planning to ensure that management processes for making decisions and setting

priorities integrate information about cultural resources, and provide for consultation and collaboration with outside entities. These policies also support good stewardship to ensure that cultural resources are preserved and protected, receive appropriate treatments (including maintenance), and are made available for public understanding and enjoyment.

Section 5.3.5, “Treatment of Cultural Resources”

This section of the management policies provides specific directives, including a directive that “the preservation of cultural resources in their existing states will always receive first consideration.”

The section also states that “treatments entailing greater intervention will not proceed without the consideration of interpretive alternatives.... Pending treatment decisions reached through the planning process, all resources will be protected and preserved in their existing states. Except for emergencies that threaten irreparable loss without immediate action, no treatment project will be undertaken unless supported by an approved planning document appropriate to the proposed action.”⁷⁸ The present HSR is that approved planning document.

Park Planning

The 1982 General Management Plan (GMP) divided the park into management zones, with a 250-acre “historic zone” identified around Portsmouth where preservation and adaptive use of the historic structures was envisioned. Beyond that, the GMP recommended restoration of

Portsmouth “to the turn-of-the-century period, but without the replacement of now-missing buildings” and removal of “later buildings of non-historic character.” Those recommendations were based on a narrow understanding of the history and significance of Portsmouth that has since been broadened by additional research and the numerous studies that have been completed since the turn of the present century. We concur with the recommendations of the recently completed cultural landscape report, which suggests the period of significance be extended to 1971, when the island’s last year-round residents decamped for the mainland.

The GMP envisioned the interiors of some buildings being used for interpretation and others “adapted for contemporary administrative functions.”⁷⁹ Subsequent park planning documents, including the park’s 2011 Long Range Interpretive Plan, provide no additional guidance applicable to the treatment and use of the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House beyond maintaining its presence in the village.

78. NPS General Management Policies (2006), p. 50.

79. NPS, Cape Lookout National Seashore General Management Plan, 1982, p. 43.

II.C Alternatives for Treatment and Use

In accordance with NPS policy, another alternative for treatment and use has been considered in addition to the Ultimate Treatment and Use described above. While perhaps not recommended under present circumstances, this alternative nevertheless fulfills the basic park mandate to preserve the historic resources of Portsmouth.

Alternative Treatment: Restoration to ca. 1930

An alternative to continued preservation is the restoration of the house to its appearance during the occupancy of Tom and Lucy Gilgo. The house at that time essentially retained its form when a surfman's house. Lucy Gilgo's recollections provide information on its appearance and use. Surviving building fabric corroborates those descriptions and provides more specific information making exterior and interior restorations a credible exercise.

Such an approach would contribute to the public's understanding of a surfman's house, the Portsmouth practice of recycling building parts and even whole buildings, everyday life in the community and the nature of its built environment in the early twentieth century.

This approach would require removal of the rear kitchen addition, reconstruction of a rear porch, rebuilding of the dividing wall on the interior of the house, application of some salvaged and some new beaded boards and trim on the interior walls and ceilings, and reconstruction of the brick chimney.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- promotes the preservation of a contributing property in the National Register historic district;



Figure 97. Ed and Kate Styron House, Southwest oblique of front elevation.

- is consistent with the park's General Management Plan by contributing to the historic character of the community;
- enhances the public's understanding of a Coast Guard surfman's house;
- enhances the public's understanding of early-twentieth-century Portsmouth community life and the nature of its built environment;
- allows for the opportunity to experience the interior spaces.

This approach would have the following disadvantages:

- removes the early kitchen addition which serves the valuable role of showing the later evolution of the house, and is an early structure itself;
- requires time-consuming and potentially costly additional research including ground archaeology, document searches, the comparative method, building archaeology, and paint and material analyses to properly carry out the restoration;

- relies on a level of speculation;
 - returns to a building type (surfman's house) that is already represented in the community by the Ed and Kate Styron House;
 - proposed removal of the kitchen wing, which is also a significant historic feature,
- may be an "adverse effect" under Section 106;
 - may cause concern in the local community by removing a part of the cultural landscape (kitchen wing) long associated with that residence.
 - Incurs additional costs of construction.

II.D Recommendations for Treatment and Use

The following recommendations are intended to achieve the Ultimate Treatment and Use described above for the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House:

Preservation of the exterior in acknowledgement of the house as a major feature in the district's cultural landscape, and Preservation of the interior in its current unfinished state, ready for Rehabilitation for occupancy as a residence, if the opportunity presents itself.

The suggestions below are compatible with a variety of uses and are intended to incorporate routine maintenance, repairs and, if necessary, replacement in-kind, as well as routine inspections to minimize damage to historic fabric.

HSR recommendations are not intended to provide the specific guidance that architectural/engineering plans and specifications or other specialized professional documents would provide. However, A/E plans and specifications or other professional documents may not be needed for many of the recommended actions. Some of the in-kind repairs and maintenance tasks can be performed by skilled craftsmen, if properly guided by cultural resource specialists.

It should be noted that the house was extensively rebuilt by NPS crews in 2002. Salvaged portions of virtually every type of building element were reinstalled in the repairs. New materials to match the removed elements were used to complete the protective exterior envelope, and large portions of the interior surfaces were left incomplete. Some salvaged interior material is stored within the house.

Portsmouth Village - General

Barrier islands, such as Portsmouth, will be especially vulnerable to the effects of climate



Figure 98. Tom and Lucy Gilgo House, viewed from the east.

change and sea-level rise, which may negatively affect cultural resources on these islands.

General Recommendations for Portsmouth Village

- Consult with Janet Cakir PhD, NPS SER Climate Change, Socioeconomics, and Adaptation Coordinator to guide management policies.
- Use results from the climate change study “Identify Cultural Resources Sites Affected by Sea-Level Rise at Cape Hatteras National Seashore” to guide management policies. This study is also applicable to Portsmouth Island.
- Prepare or update a Topographic Survey for the site.
- Prepare a Log of Flood Occurrences. Record at a minimum the dates of occurrences and approximate extent and severity (e.g. depth at specific locations). Correlate recordings with Topographic Survey. Maintain data so that they can be correlated with conditions such as tide, moon phase, etc.
- Evaluate site for flood avoidance potential including the introduction of dams and/or swales to divert or direct flooding waters.

- Evaluate each building, structure, and significant site feature for flood avoidance potential and/or enhancement potential for better withstanding the projected threatening events.
- Identify critical services (fresh water supply, waste disposal, energy sources, etc.), evaluate options, and develop a contingency plan for each.
- Strive to maintain for all buildings a sound structural system and a weather-tight exterior envelope, especially the roof.
- Use maintenance activities as opportunities to enhance the resistive capacities of the buildings and structures whenever feasible.
- Prepare minimum level of record documentation (overall view photographs and text descriptions) for all undocumented cultural resources in the community that are at risk; prepare more extensive documentation (including scaled record drawings with descriptions) for the more significant resources at risk.
- Observe drainage patterns of the site during periods of significant rainfall and flooding; determine the feasibility of creating shallow swales to promote drainage away from the building.
- Monitor conditions beneath the house; be prepared to add fill to depressions should they begin to form.
- Conduct rigorous inspections for termite infestation and treat accordingly.
- Secure clearance from an archaeologist before commencing work that might require ground disturbance.

The House Site

Portsmouth's coastal climate with its regularly strong winds, high humidity levels and high salt content of the air, is especially damaging to many construction materials, especially ferrous-based metals. Left unprotected, such materials deteriorate quickly.

poor drainage is also characteristic of Portsmouth, created in part by the natural process of decay of vegetation and generation of new humus. The process eventually creates a bowl-like depression beneath buildings that traps water and keeps the area damp for extended periods of time. This not only exacerbates deterioration of wood posts, but also creates conditions conducive to termites.

This situation does not currently exist at the Gilgo House site, due in large part to the extensive replacement and repairs to the foundation piers in 2002. However, given the prevalence of this condition in Portsmouth, it would be wise to watch for signs of its development.

Recommendations for House Site

- Keep lawn grasses mowed and regularly remove volunteer plants and shrubs close to the house.

Structural Systems

The one-story house, T-shape in plan, is set on low wood posts and has conventional stick-frame wall and roof construction.

Foundation Posts

The great majority of foundation posts were replaced in 2002.

Posts will need to be replaced eventually, and should be replaced in-kind.

Recommendations for Foundation Posts

- Keep vegetation closely trimmed near foundation posts.
- Investigate condition of foundation posts on a regular basis.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail.
- Install termite shields wherever possible.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Floor, Wall & Roof Framing

The floor, wall and roof framing of the original house and the kitchen addition were largely replaced in 2002 and remain in good condition. The wall and roof framing systems are largely exposed on the interior.

Recommendations for Floor, Wall and Roof Framing

- Conduct regular inspections for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects; treat accordingly.



Figure 99. View from east bank of Doctor's Creek looking northwest. Tom and Lucy Gilgo House left of center.

- Conduct routine inspections, some preferably during rainstorms, to inspect for evidence of water intrusion and instances of damage.
- Periodically review for evidence of deflection across planes of framing, framing members out of square or plumb, or heightened vibration in framing members.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Exterior Features

The house is finished with materials typical of the early twentieth century. Much of it is in-kind replacements made in 2002.

Doors and Entrances

There are two exterior doorways, each with a door in place and without screen door.

Recommendations for Doors

- Ensure all hardware remains operable.

- Apply lubricant on a regular basis.
- Reconstruct step to ground at side stairs.
- Repaint exterior surfaces and maintain sound paint finish at all exposed surfaces.
- Monitor condition and operation on a regular basis.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Windows

Sash, many early if not original, are in place in all window openings and are in generally sound condition. The exterior finish and glazing are failing on most.

Recommendations for Windows

- Ensure all sash are in working order, reglaze and repaint exterior surfaces.
- Monitor condition and operation on a regular basis.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Roofing

The 2002 cedar shingle roofing appears to be in good condition with no apparent leaks. No shingles appear to be missing or loose. As with most Portsmouth structures, no gutters are present.

Recommendations for Roofing

- Routinely inspect for missing, damaged or loose shingles; repair or replace as needed.
- Routinely inspect for roof leaks, especially at valleys and roof ridges. On some occasions inspect during rainstorms.

Siding and Trim

Salvaged remnants of three siding materials from multiple installation periods were reinstalled in 2002, including board- and-batten, weatherboard, and wood shingle. New weatherboards and board-and-batten siding were also installed.

Salvaged trim pieces of various types were also reinstalled, supplemented by matching new pieces.

The new elements are in good condition in general. Salvaged elements are generally sound. None appear to have a protective finish.

Recommendations for Siding and Trim

- Apply a clear, sheenless wood preservative. Monitor and reapply on a regular basis or as needed.
- Monitor regularly for open joints, displaced or loose elements, or other evidence of movement; re-nail loose pieces.
- Monitor checking, splitting, and instances of rot, and plan remedial actions accordingly.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

Front Porch

The porch was also rebuilt in 2002. A porch joist has failed, and attached deck boards have partially collapsed.

Recommendations for Front Porch

- Replace in-kind the failed porch deck joist, reusing deck board if sound.
- Regularly inspect for signs of deterioration or distress and for evidence of harmful insects and plants and treat accordingly.
- Apply a clear, sheenless wood preservative. Monitor and reapply on a regular basis or as needed.

Interior Features

During the major repair campaign of 2002, as noted previously, salvaged building material was reinstalled on the new framing. New cladding was not installed to supplement what was missing, except for flooring. Therefore, there are gaps in the finish materials; framing is exposed in every room, and the beaded-board dividing wall of the original house was not reinstalled. Some salvaged elements that were not reinstalled are stored in the house, including perhaps the door and beaded boards for that dividing wall. These recommendations thus apply to the unfinished interior as a whole.

Recommendations for the Interior

- Confirm with NPS personnel involved with the 2002 campaign that the door now stored loosely in the house is indeed the door of the unreconstructed dividing wall. Label accordingly with a permanent marking material in an inconspicuous location. Place out of harm's way on top of the ceiling joists with other stored salvaged building elements.
- Confirm with NPS personnel involved with the 2002 campaign that the beaded boards now stored on ceiling joists of the original house are indeed boards from the unreconstructed dividing wall. Label accordingly with a permanent marking material in an inconspicuous location. Return to storage location atop the ceiling joists of the original house.
- Remove any loose debris.
- Keep rooms broom-swept of dirt and other materials to facilitate inspections.
- Conduct paint and finish analyses to document the sequence and types of paints and finishes used on salvaged interior surfaces, with special emphases on the Coast Guard surfman and Gilgo (early-twentieth century Portsmouth) periods, of which little is known.
- Also conduct paint and finish analyses to document the sequence and types of paints and finishes used on salvaged features, now interior but formerly exterior surfaces (rear entrance now enclosed and partially covered by the kitchen wing) with special emphases on the Coast Guard surfman and Gilgo (early-twentieth-century Portsmouth) periods, of which little is known.

Remedial Actions of Priority

Highest Priority

Remedial actions of highest priority are those that address immediate threats to life and safety of persons, closely followed by immediate and serious threats to the building.

- Replace in-kind broken joist at front porch.
Repair associated deck boards as needed.
- Repair in-kind damaged steps of the side entrance.

High Priority

Remedial actions of high priority are those that address conditions that have a high potential of serious threat to persons or the building.

- Evaluate option to fill gaps in checking of exterior boards and trim that are interpreted as weathered and without finish.
- Apply a clear, sheenless wood preservative to the unfinished exterior wood elements.
Regularly reapply or on an as-needed basis.
- Reglaze and repaint window sash.
- Repaint exterior doors.

Medium Priority

Remedial actions of medium priority are those that address conditions that have a medium potential of serious threat to persons or the building.

- Renail loose boards of the box cistern.
Replace in-kind unsalvageable elements.
Apply wood preservative as on the house.

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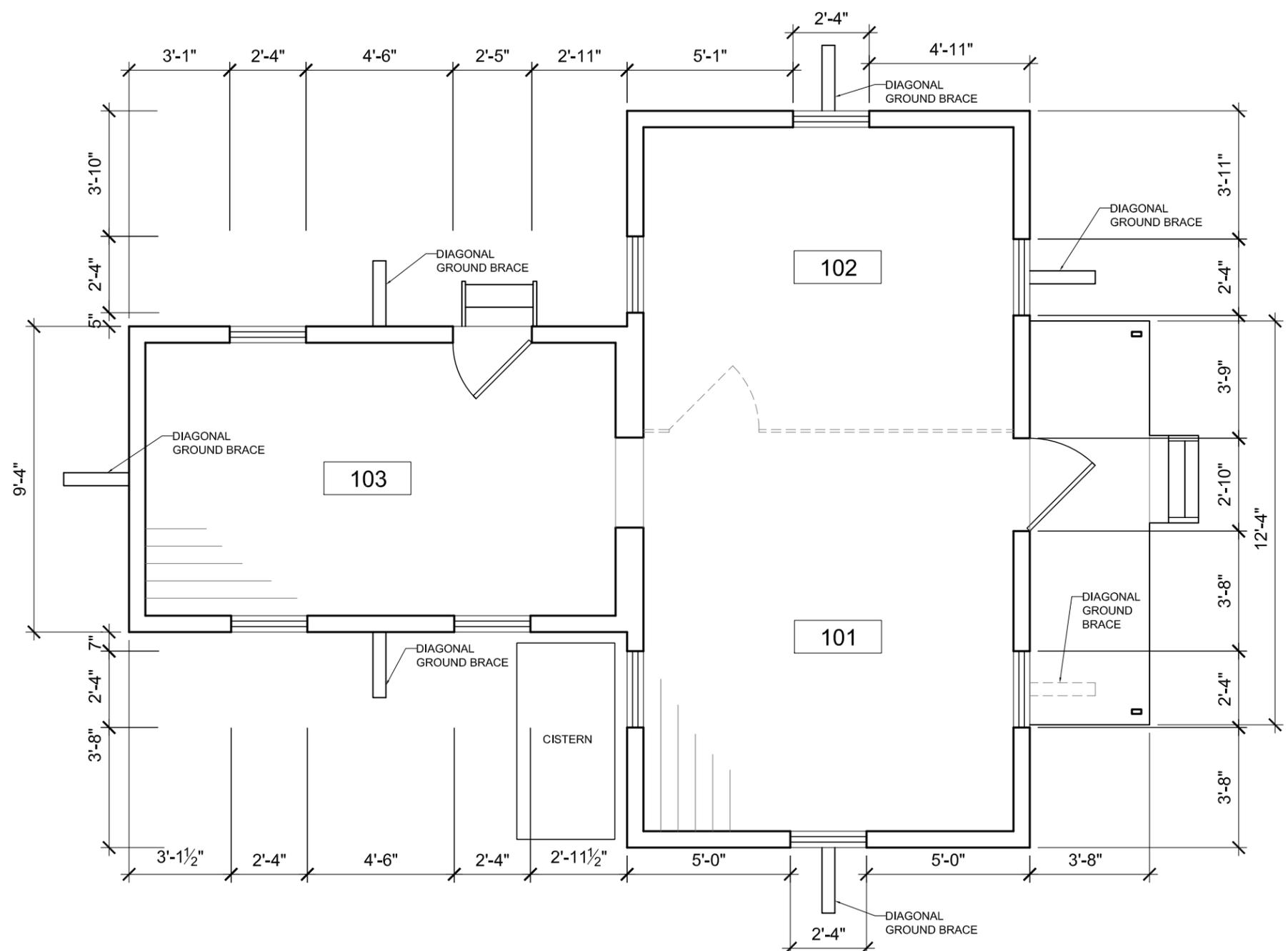
Appendix: Documentation Drawings

Sheet 1: Floor Plan

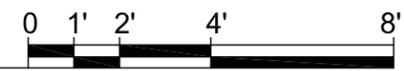
Sheet 2: North and South Elevations

Sheet 3: East Elevation

Sheet 4: West Elevation



1 FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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RECORDATION DATE:
 09.18.2013

RECORDED BY:
 JKO
 RLM, CMW

SCALE:
 1/4" = 1'0"

HSR
 APPENDIX:
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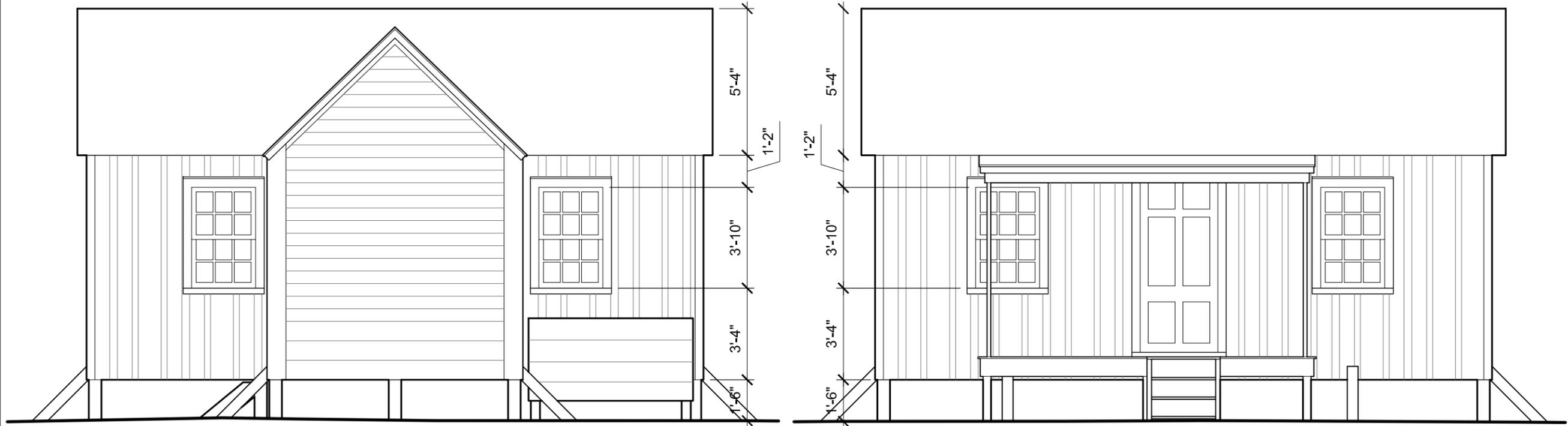
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1 NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



1 SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"





1 EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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1 WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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