# Henry Pigott 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. OPPERMANN–ARCHITECT, P.A.**
539 N. Trade Street Winston-Salem, NC 27101
www.jkoa.net | office@jkoa.net | (336)721-1711

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**Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science Division**
**Southeast Region**
**National Park Service**
**100 Alabama St. SW**
**Atlanta, GA 30303**
**(404) 507-5847**

2015
Historic Structure Report
Henry Pigott House
Portsmouth Village
Cape Lookout National Seashore (CALO)

Henry Pigott House
LCS#: 012520
CALO ID#: 511
Kitchen Building
LCS#: 091747
Cool House
LCS#: 091748
Storage Shed
LCS#: 091750
Privy
LCS#: 091751

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.

Cover image: Joseph K. Oppermann, 2013

Henry Pigott House
Portsmouth Village
Cape Lookout National Seashore
Historic Structure Report
2015

Approved by: _____ 02/23/16
Superintendent, Cape Lookout National Seashore Date

Recommended by: Acting _____ 4/26/16
Chief, Cultural Resources Partnerships & Science Division, Southeast Region Date

Recommended by: _____ 4/28/16
Deputy Regional Director, Southeast Region Date

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

# Foreword

We are pleased to make available this Historic Structure 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 JKOA 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, Superintendant; Jeri L. DeYoung, Chief of Resource Management, who provided helpful comments; and Karen L. Duggan, park ranger, who provided CALO photographs. 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 church 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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# Project Team

**National Park Service – Southeast Regional Office**

Laurie Chestnut, Contracting Officer
Dr. Ali Miri, Historical Architect and Contracting Officer's Technical Representative

**National Park Service – Cape Lookout National Seashore**

Patrick Kenney, Superintendent
Jeri L. DeYoung, Chief of Resource Management

**Joseph K. Oppermann–Architect, P.A. (JKOA)**

Joseph K. Oppermann, FAIA, Historical Architect
Langdon E. Oppermann, Architectural Historian
Rebecca L. McCormick, AIA
Christopher M. Woollard, Associate AIA

# Management Summary

The purpose of this report is to document the development, use, and current condition of the Henry Pigott 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 house and its outbuildings are part of a group of historic structures that provide what is perhaps the iconic image of Portsmouth. Anchored by the Methodist church, 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. Treatment and use of the Pigott complex should be predicated on preserving its place in that ensemble of buildings.

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 regarding the house and outbuildings.

Determination of the physical evolution of the house and outbuildings is based primarily on early photographs combined with building investigation and extensive dating of building fabric, a process sometimes called "building archaeology."

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 Pigott complex specifically, including a timeline; and a physical description of the outbuildings and the house's exterior and interior on a room-by-room basis. This last section also 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 treatment and use. A bibliography follows.

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

## 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.

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 Henry Pigott, 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

Historical documentation of the house prior to its transfer into Park ownership in 1976 is scarce. Early histories rely on a few remaining historic photographs and several oral histories. In contrast, from 1976 onward, this house is one of the best photo-documented structures in Portsmouth Village. The existing photographic record of the house was invaluable to the understanding of its history and the physical changes it has undergone.

The name Henry Pigott House reflects its last full-time resident. The house was passed down through three generations of the Pigott (formerly Pickett) family, who lived there for nearly seven decades.

Constructed in 1902 by local carpenter Harmon Austin, the house was acquired by Rosetta (Rose) Pickett (ca. 1838-1909), a former slave and house servant of the Ireland family. Ownership of the house then passed to Rosetta's daughter Leah (1867-1922). Leah Pigott in turn passed the house to her son Henry Pigott (1896-1971).

No major changes were made to the house until Henry set about making it his own in the early 1930s. He raised the house to lower the risk of flooding, added a second story above a pre-existing rear ell, and rebuilt the front and side porches. He also added the kitchen building to the property.

Oral histories explain that in about 1934, Henry ordered paint from a Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalog; however, due to a mistake with the order the paint that arrived was pink. Being pragmatic, he decided to use the paint anyway, and painted his house, kitchen building, and cool house pink.

Henry lived in the house with his sister Elizabeth (Lizzie) Pigott (1889-1960). Neither married or had children. The house experienced no further alterations, though several stories recount Henry's great pride in his house and loving maintenance through the years.

In 1968, Henry, like many Portsmouth owners, sold his house and land to the State of North Carolina for the recently authorized National Seashore, but retained a life estate that allowed him to remain



**Figure 1.** Portsmouth Village viewed from Ocracoke Inlet, 2013. (JKOA)

in the house until his death. Shortly thereafter, He grew ill and moved to nearby Ocracoke to live with his friend Junius Austin, spending only a few months a year at Portsmouth. Henry died in 1971, prompting the remaining two elderly residents of the island to leave for the mainland, and marking the end of the period of habitation for Portsmouth Village.

Upon creation of the Cape Lookout National Seashore, the house was brought under National Park Service stewardship in 1976. Beginning in 1978, NPS spent the next five years completing work ranging from structural stabilization to routine maintenance. Rotten foundation posts were replaced, both porches were largely rebuilt, roofing was replaced, the cistern adjacent to the house was entirely rebuilt, the fence was repaired, damaged siding and trim were replaced, and the house and outbuildings were painted.

In January 1990, Charles Jackson Gilley and Jacob Eli Fisher, Jr. entered into a twenty-year lease of the house as part of the NPS leasing program. The agreement required maintenance and improvements for the term of the lease. However, the only work recorded in park files was that done by NPS.

Hurricane Isabel caused significant damage to the property in 2003. While the house received only minor damage, all of the outbuildings were significantly impacted, most being torn from their foundation posts. Funding for repairs was requested in 2004 with most repairs completed by 2008.

At the end of the twenty-year lease in 2010, the local preservation group, Friends of Portsmouth Island, was given a special use permit to manage and maintain the Pigott property as a house museum. The Friends volunteers have done a significant amount of work to the property including repairing and replacing damaged siding and trim, rebuilding much of the fence and the dock, and painting the house. The house museum was dedicated at the 2012 Portsmouth Homecoming, and repairs continue.

## 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]

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

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 Henry Pigott 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, 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 house and its four extant outbuildings continue to contribute to the historic character of Portsmouth. They are historically significant for associations with the Pigott family, especially Henry Pigott. The Pigott family was the only black family to return to Portsmouth after the end of the Civil War, led by their matriarch Rosetta, a former slave on the island. Henry Pigott, Rosetta's grandson, was the last remaining male resident of Portsmouth Village. His death in 1971 prompted the departure of Portsmouth's last year-round residents.

The house is architecturally significant as an excellent local interpretation of a cottage with a typical North Carolina triple-A roofline. Henry Pigott's pride of ownership and continual maintenance of the property, even as Portsmouth was in decline, illustrates the resilience of Portsmouth and its residents.

## 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 and 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, some additional research was necessary for an adequate understanding of the context and history of the site. Information gathered comes primarily from local records, park research and careful study of historic photographs and oral histories.

The Scope of Work also specifies "limited" physical investigation of the buildings to determine their evolutionary histories; however, given the lean archival information, investigation of the building fabric was a large component of the work. Investigations involved a close look at architectural features and details such as 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 building fabric, 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., 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 historical research and building investigation, documented the buildings with photography and measured drawings, and authored the HSR. This interdisciplinary approach improves understanding of the buildings' histories 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 both building exteriors and interior spaces. Detailed field drawings were made and used to create digitized AutoCAD drawings of

floor plans 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, the 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

The present house appears much as it did when first constructed in 1902. Changes in the early 1930s modified aspects of the design, but not the overall character of the house.

The house was raised several inches to lessen the risk of flooding. The chimney was rebuilt and a second story added above a pre-existing rear ell, enlarging a rear dormer window on the main block to become a doorway to a new second-floor back bedroom. A new roof was framed over the ell creating a cross-gable level at the same level as the ridge of the main roof. The shed-roof front porch was replaced with a full-width hipped-roof porch, and the uncovered side deck was roofed.

Also at this time, Pigott added the kitchen building to the property. The bricks of its chimney match the bricks of the rebuilt chimney of the house.

The house complex remains almost entirely intact to its appearance after the 1930s remodeling, with the major exceptions being the absence of the net house, destroyed by storms in 2003, and the present yellow paint color of the house and outbuildings.

## Existing Conditions

### House

Poor drainage is characteristic of most of Portsmouth. The natural process of decay of vegetation and generation of new humus has created bowl-like depressions beneath many of the houses. This traps water and remains damp for extended periods of time, which not only exacerbates rotting of wood posts, but also creates conditions conducive to termites, all conditions that are typical of most of the structures at Portsmouth. The lattice apron of the house and the skirt board of the kitchen building conceal the foundation posts, preventing a noninvasive inspection during investigations.

Like the foundation, the wood framing is concealed from view by floorboards and wall and ceiling cladding. From all outward appearances the framing seems to be in generally fair condition; ridge lines remain straight and floors level. The house, like many others of the period, may be under-structured by modern standards, especially in terms of the sizing and spacing of framing members, but there is no apparent systemic failure. However, the ferrous nails used in framing have inevitably corroded in the damp, salty environment, making the building more subject to wind damage and other stresses.

The house is finished with materials typical of the early twentieth century. The NPS and the Friends of Portsmouth Island preservation group have replaced in-kind a significant amount of exterior wood siding and trim elements.

Most of the house's exterior woodwork is in good condition. Painted finishes are recent and remain intact. Documentary evidence indicates the exterior color of the house was almost certainly never yellow until painted by NPS in 1979.

The exterior doors remain in generally good condition. Screen doors, opening to the interior in the traditional Portsmouth manner, are installed to both exterior doorways. The wood-framed screen doors remain in good condition. Early, if not original door hardware remains in place and operable.

Early if not original sash remain in all window openings and are in good to fair condition. Painted finishes are in good condition; however, there is visible staining from rusting nails. Window glazing is in generally good condition. Many windows have wood-framed single-sash screens; those present are in fair condition. Window shutters are missing from first-floor windows on all but the south side (front) of the house where the windows are protected by the porch.

The roofing is in good condition with no apparent leaks. No shingles appear to be missing or loose. As with most of the historic structures in Portsmouth, no gutters are present.

The front and side porches are in good condition, having had their foundations, floor joists, floorboards, railings, and steps replaced in 1978. Portions of the railings were again replaced after a 2003 storm. Paint coats are recent and intact.

The interior of the house is in generally good condition. The first floor is interpreted as a house museum under the direction of the Friends of Portsmouth Island and as such has seen a greater degree of maintenance than the second floor. The second floor remains off-limits to the public due to the steep staircase that poses an undue safety risk; the second-floor rooms remain storage areas.

Aside from minor aesthetic issues, the interior of the house has no major issues. A door matching others of the first floor was removed from the doorway between Rooms 101 and 103 and is now stored in the kitchen building.

The house holds a large collection of furnishings and decorative objects, but the provenance of most is unknown or otherwise unrecorded. According to the Friends of Portsmouth Island, some furnishings and objects belonged to Henry, while others have been acquired from other sources to fill out the collection.

The flooring is in fair condition throughout the house. There is water damage from flooding that has occurred periodically throughout the structure's history, but no major damage is apparent. Varnished finishes in the house are scant.

A hole in the floor in the northwest corner of Room 202 was cut for installation of a ventilation stack for a chemical toilet in Room 102. The toilet was installed by NPS before 2003 and later removed by the Friends of Portsmouth Island. The hole is temporarily patched with a plank board.

First-floor walls have recent paint coats and are in good condition. The paint finishes of second-floor walls are failing. Documentary research shows that the color scheme of the first floor is not historically accurate.

While the ceilings of the house are generally sound, there are two areas of deteriorated condition. Paint coats on the ceilings of Room 103 and throughout the second floor are failing. There is an open hole in the ceiling of Room 102 and a poorly patched hole in the northeast corner of the ceiling of Room 202 where the ventilation stack for the chemical toilet was installed.

Water damage from periodic flooding is visible on baseboards and lower sections of door casings throughout the first floor, most significantly in Room 103. Nails used to attach these trim pieces show significant oxidation; rust stains mar the varnished finish of the woodwork.

## Fence

Though not an outbuilding or ancillary structure, the fence is an integral component of the architectural integrity of the Henry Pigott building complex. Unlike most fences on Portsmouth Island, there is an ample photographic record. Understandably, the fence has required significant repair and replacement over the years as it is susceptible to storms. However, since NPS began maintaining the property in 1978, many non-historic alterations have been made to the fence design.

## Kitchen Building

With the exception of the collapsed chimney, the kitchen building appears to be in good condition. Given the building's proximity to the ground, deterioration of the inaccessible sills and floor joists can be expected.

The wood entrance steps are recent replacements.

The board-and-batten exterior door has extensive damage near the doorknob. The interior screen door has been removed.

The upper half of the chimney collapsed during Hurricane Isabel in 2003 and remains on the ground adjacent to the kitchen building. This poses

a trip hazard, and the open flue on the building poses a water and vermin infiltration threat. A great many bricks remain on the site.

Documentary research indicates the current yellow exterior paint color of the kitchen building is non-historic. The interior was painted and furnished and in active use as a kitchen during Henry and Lizzie Pigott's time there. The painted interior is in deteriorated condition.

The kitchen building is presently being used as a storage shed. Photographs of the interior taken in 1980 show both the kitchen's cast iron stove and screen door stored there at that time. It is possible that they remain among the architectural salvage material presently stacked inside the building. The stored materials are presently blocking the window on the north side of the building. Because the window is shuttered on the exterior, it is not known whether the sash is still present.

### Cool House

Though recently rebuilt, the dimensions of the present cool house are noticeably larger than those of the cool house seen in historic photographs. Documentary research indicates the current yellow paint color of the cool house is non-historic.

### Net House

The net house was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel in 2003. Subsequently its foundation posts were reconstructed and the remaining wood entrance step was retained in place.

This is the only documented building of this typology at Portsmouth Village.

### Storage Shed

The storage shed is in fair condition, and its foundation posts were replaced after 2003 storm damage. Documentary research indicates the current yellow paint color of the storage shed is non-historic.

### Privy

The privy was largely rebuilt using salvaged material after being structurally compromised in the 2003 hurricane, and is in fair condition. The window opening on the south side is missing its sash, leaving the building exposed to water damage and infiltration by vermin. Documentary research indicates the current yellow paint color of the privy is non-historic. The interior is used to store architectural salvage materials.

### Cistern

The existing cistern near the house is in good condition, having been rebuilt after 2003 storm damage.

## 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.

The nailed connections that hold the house and outbuildings together are susceptible to 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.

# Recommendations for Treatment and Use

***The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the house is Preservation of the exterior of the house as a major feature in the district's cultural landscape and Preservation of the interior to accommodate modern use as a house museum. The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the cool house is preservation. The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the kitchen building and privy is interior and exterior restoration. The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the storage shed is exterior restoration. And finally, the Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the net house is reconstruction.***

*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 – General*

- Investigate need for and feasibility of establishing drainage swales.
- Investigate need for and feasibility of partial or complete filling of any existing depression beneath the house.
- Raising the house should be considered; a significant change in elevation could affect the house's character-defining features.
- Conduct rigorous annual inspections for termite infestation and treat accordingly.
- When fence repairs are needed, return to historic design (*see page 10*).
- Secure clearance from an archaeologist before commencing work that might require ground disturbance.

## House Exterior

*Recommendations for Foundation Posts*

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

*Recommendations for Wood Framing*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Conduct routine inspections, some 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.
- Provide additional post-and-beam supports for the floor joists to maintain sound structural system.

*Recommendations for Doors*

- Ensure all hardware remains operable.
- Apply lubricant 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, repair and repaint as necessary using historically accurate colors.
- Repair existing and consider replacing missing wood-framed screens.
- Reconstruct missing first-floor window shutters using existing as a template.

*Recommendations for Roofing*

- Routinely inspect for missing or loose shingles; repair or replace as needed.

- Routinely inspect for roof leaks, especially at flashing
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

*Recommendations for Siding and Trim*
- Repair trim, renailing loose pieces as needed.
- Replace/repair wood lattice apron in-kind as necessary.
- Monitor regularly for open joints, displaced or loose elements, or other evidence of movement; renail 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 Exterior Finishes*
- Maintain protective finish coat for all exposed elements of the building's exterior envelope.
- Conduct paint analysis on exterior wood siding and trim elements, and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy.
- Prepare and repaint siding the historically accurate color in use during Henry Pigott's occupancy.

*Recommendations for Front and Side Porches*
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace posts in-kind as they fail.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Install termite shields wherever possible.

## House Interior

*General Interior Recommendations*
- Reinstall door, now stored in the kitchen building, in the doorway between Rooms 101 and 103.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

*Recommendations for Furnishings Collection*
- Prepare an Historic Furnishings Plan (HFP) that evaluates the furnishings and objects exhibited as well as any others in hand.
- Base curation and interpretation of the house museum's collection on the findings of the HFP.

*Recommendations for Flooring*
- Apply natural oil on a regular basis to renew the wood finish (no urethane).
- Use a Dutchman repair to patch the hole in wood floor of Room 202, matching the existing dimension, species, and graining pattern.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction.
- Consider recreating the floral-patterned painted linoleum "rugs" found in all rooms based on the 1980 documentary photographs.

*Recommendations for Interior Walls and Ceilings*
- Conduct paint analysis on interior walls and ceilings and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy.
- Use a Dutchman repair to patch hole in wood ceilings of Rooms 102 and 202, matching the dimension of existing V-groove boards. Paint.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction.
- Prepare and repaint walls and ceilings in historically accurate colors.

*Recommendations for Trim*
- Apply natural oil on a regular basis to renew the wood finish (no urethane).

*Recommendations for Utilities*
- Ensure all window sash are operable.
- Though the cast-iron stove in Room 101 is now intended to be decorative, consider retrofitting and using the stove for special events.

## Kitchen Building

*Recommendations*
- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail and install termite shields wherever possible.
- Investigate the current condition of floorboards of the kitchen building; repair with in-kind Dutchman repairs and add supports as necessary.
- Repair damaged door batten with in-kind Dutchman repair.
- Restore the kitchen building, including the chimney, north window sash, screen door, and historic paint scheme.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

- Interpret and curate interior as part of the house museum.
- Conduct paint analysis on exterior and interior surfaces and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Repaint accordingly.

## Cool House

*Recommendations*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail and install termite shields wherever possible.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Base all future work on the cool house on the ample documentary evidence of its historic appearance.
- Prepare and paint the historically accurate pink color documented in early photographs.

## Net House

*Recommendations*

- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly, especially for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects, and treat accordingly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they begin to fail.
- Consider full reconstruction based on historic photographs.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

## Storage Shed

*Recommendations*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail and install termite shields wherever possible.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Conduct paint analysis on exterior surfaces and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Repaint accordingly.

## Privy

*Recommendations*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail and install termite shields wherever possible.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Remove architectural salvage material from the interior.
- Conduct paint analysis on exterior and interior surfaces and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Repaint accordingly.

## Fence

*Recommendations*

- Investigate the condition of the fence posts regularly.
- Replace fence posts in-kind as they fail.
- Base all future work on the fence on the ample documentary evidence of its historic appearance.
- Reinstall the north fence gate in its historic location east of the cool house, and reconstruct the historic west gate.
- Using the historic gate design, reconstruct historically accurate gates and install at the three original gate locations
- Reconstruct the historic plank baseboard with molded cap detail and install on the outer face of the fence as shown in the documentary photographs.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

## Cistern

*Recommendations*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

# Administrative Data

## Locational Data

*Building Name:* Henry Pigott House

*Location:* Portsmouth Village, Cape Lookout National Seashore

*County:* Carteret County

*State:* North Carolina

## Real Property Information

*Acquisition Date:* 1976

## Numbering Information

*CALO ID:* Henry Pigott House, 511

*LCS ID:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Henry Pigott House: | 012520 |
| Kitchen building: | 091747 |
| Cool House: | 091748 |
| Storage Shed: | 091750 |
| Privy: | 091751 |

## Size Information

Henry Pigott House

| | |
|---|---|
| *Total Floor Area:* | 780 square feet ± |
| *Roof Area:* | 1100 square feet ± |
| *Number of Stories:* | 2 |
| *Number of Rooms:* | 6 |
| *Number of Bathrooms:* | 0 |

Kitchen Building

| | |
|---|---|
| *Total Floor Area:* | 143 square feet ± |
| *Roof Area:* | 300 square feet ± |

Cool House

| | |
|---|---|
| *Total Floor Area:* | 5.5 square feet ± |
| *Roof Area:* | 10 square feet ± |

Storage Shed

| | |
|---|---|
| *Total Floor Area:* | 77 square feet ± |
| *Roof Area:* | 100 square feet ± |

Privy

| | |
|---|---|
| *Total Floor Area:* | 18 square feet ± |
| *Roof Area:* | 40 square feet ± |

## Cultural Resource Data

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

## Proposed Treatment

### House

***Preservation of the exterior.***

***Preservation of the interior for museum interpretation.***

### Outbuildings

***Preservation of cool house.***

***Restoration of the interior and exterior of kitchen building and privy.***

***Restoration of the exterior of storage shed.***

***Reconstruction of net house.***

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Life-Saving Station Logs, excerpted by Tommy Jones, NPS.

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Whisnant , David E., 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.

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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, 1962[2]

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

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




**Figure 2.** 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. 2*).

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,

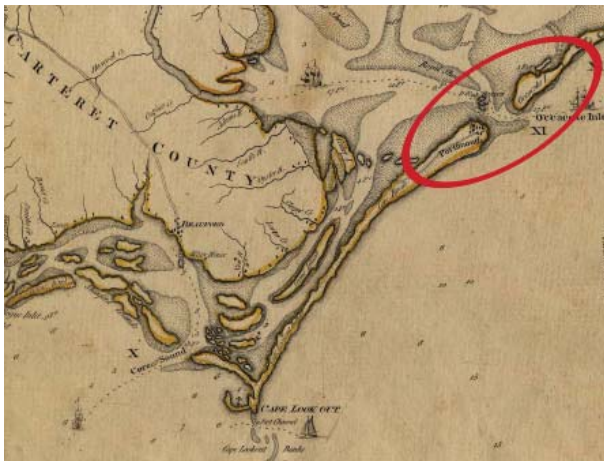



**Figure 3.** A portion of Henry Mouzon's 1775 An Accurate Map of North and South Carolina, showing the lower part of the Outer Banks with Portsmouth on the south side of Ocracoke Inlet. Ships are shown passing through the inlet at Portsmouth. (North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill)

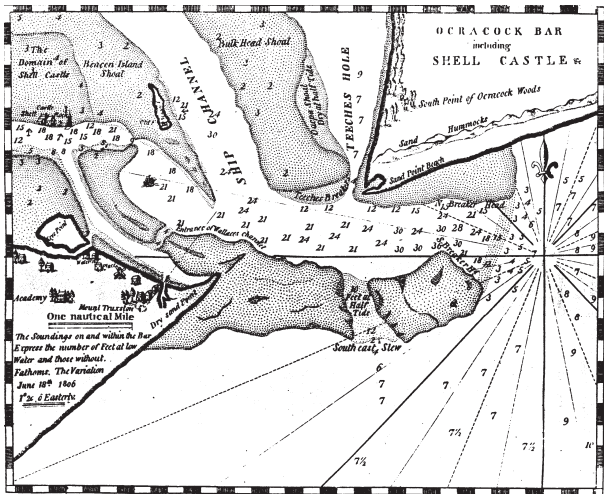



**Figure 4.** Nautical chart of 1806 shows the inlet's bar and shoals in detail. Skilled local pilots were required to navigate the channel, which changed with tides, time, and storms. "Ocracock [sic] Bar including Shell Castle," A Chart of the coast of North Carolina between Cape Hatteras and Cape Fear 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. 3*).

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]

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

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 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, &tc, 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



**Figure 5.** Duck hunter with live decoys near Portsmouth, December 1915. (CALO Coll. a33)



**Figure 6.** FDR travelling by oxcart on a visit to the Pilentary 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 Pilentary 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

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.

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 7.** 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. 10*). 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 8.** Carl Dixon taking mail from the mailboat to the Post Office by wheelbarrow, ca 1930. (CALO c29, Aycock Brown Coll.)



**Figure 9.** 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



**Figure 10.** 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

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

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

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.



**Figure 11.** 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]

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 12.** 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. 11*). 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, 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]

39. *Master Plan,1971*, p. 81.
40. *General Management Plan / Development Concept Plan*, 1982-83
41. Caroline Smith, "Historic Portsmouth," undated article in SHPO files.



**Figure 13.** 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 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

42. Olson, *Portsmouth HRS*, preface.

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, loosing 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.

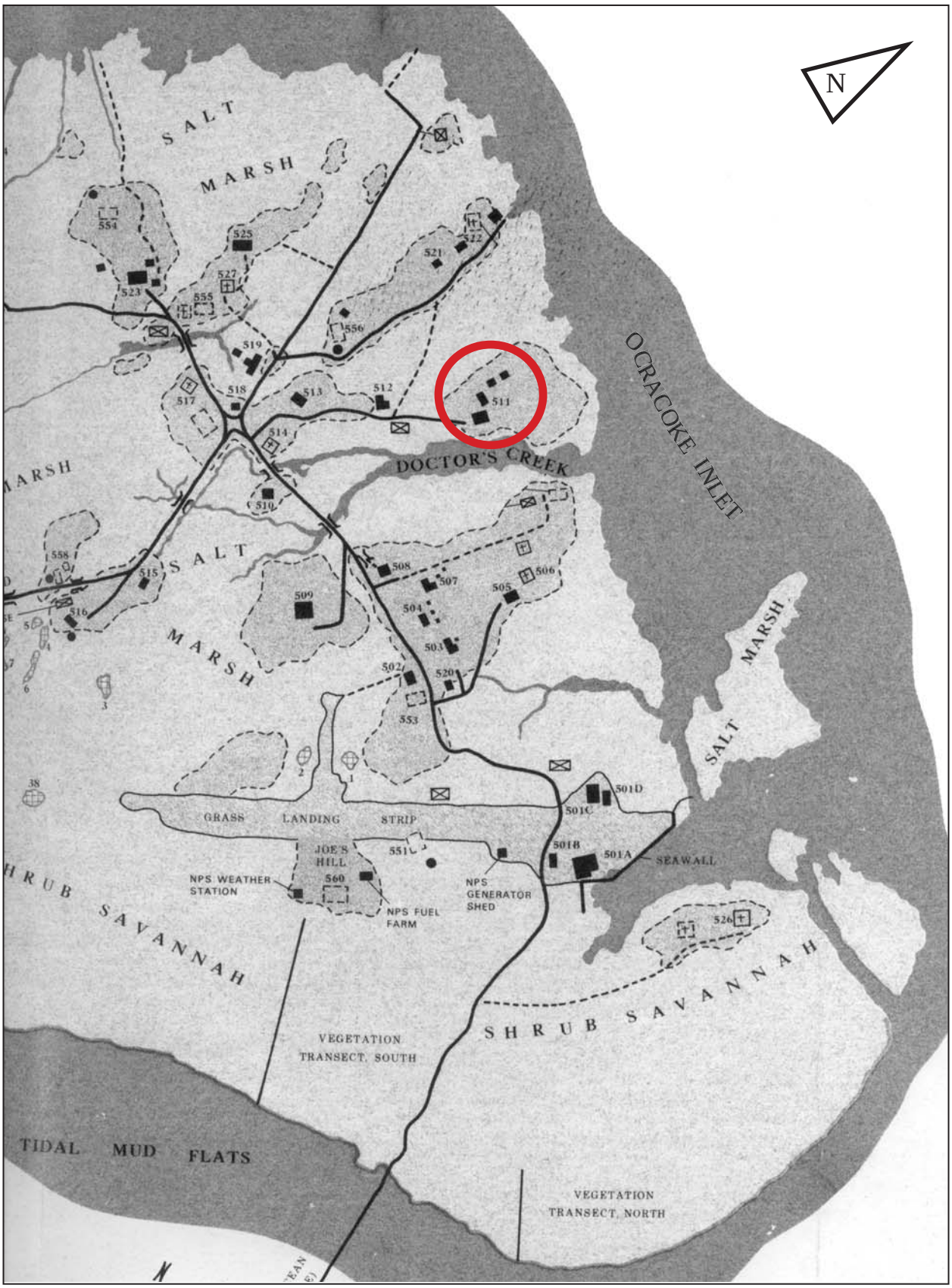
in HSRs; NPS selected thirteen other building complexes to be documented in a new approach to create a permanent visual and descriptive record of the buildings. *The Portsmouth Village Documentation Project* was completed in August 2015, with thirteen stand-alone reports bound in two large volumes.

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 Henry Pigott complex. (CALO base map)

# I.B Chronology of Development and Use

The Henry Pigott House is a quaint one-and-a-half-story cottage that sits on the west bank of Doctor's Creek near its mouth at Ocracoke Inlet. The name Henry Pigott House reflects its last full-time resident. The house was passed down through three generations of the Pigott family, who lived there for nearly seven decades.

## Harmon Austin

The house was built ca. 1902 by a Harmon Austin, though accounts differ on his first name, using "Harmon," "Harem," and "Harmin" interchangeably. Research indicates that two men named Harmon Austin, born ten years apart, both in Hatteras, and both with ties to Portsmouth, may have been the Austin in question.[51]

The first Harmon Austin was Captain Harmon Dudley Austin. Born on January 22, 1858, he is believed to have served at the Portsmouth Coast Guard Station. He married Betty Elizabeth Stowe (1851-1922) in Portsmouth in 1877, and together they had six children, including a grandson who

51. Harmin in NPS map and Cultural Landscape Report map (CLR fig. 17), Harem and Harmon in 1978 NPS records. Rebecca Harriet, "Henry Pigott Cottage Biography" (NPS, 1978).



**Figure 14.** Henry and his sister Lizzie Pigott in front of their fence. (CALO, Jessie Lee Dominique Coll.)

was a close friend of Henry Pigott. Austin died February 15, 1939 in Hatteras.[52]

The more likely of the two, Harmon Jones Austin, was born a decade later on March 9, 1868. He married Cynthia Wade and had at least one daughter, Pearlie, born in Portsmouth.[53] Portsmouth residents in interviews recalled that Austin was a carpenter, and it was he who built the Pigott House. Some remember that Austin lived in the house with his family for ten years; however, the more frequent report is that the house was built about 1902 and sold to Rosetta Pickett in 1904.[54]

It seems that Austin built at least two houses, probably more, and may indeed have lived in one while Rosetta lived in another. A conjectured ca. 1900 map of the village shows not only today's Pigott House, but another house farther south also on the west bank of Doctor's Creek. This house is labeled Harmin Austin. Although the map's locations and identifications are conjectured, they support recollections that Austin built more than one house.[55]

More compelling are two early images that show a house markedly similar to today's Pigott House (*Figs. 15-16*). A photograph taken about 1940 shows the "new" house that the Dixon siblings moved to its site behind the Methodist church in 1939. Clearly visible to the northwest is a house that appears to be the Pigott House, with similar design and proportions. However, the angle of the photograph and its close proximity to the Dixon house confirm that this is a different house. It seems likely that it was also built by Austin, and may be the house he lived in for those ten years.

52. Austin Families Association, http://www.afaoa.org/db_files/Hatteras_Austins_NC/Individuals/I23.html.
53. He died in Hatteras March 20, 1954. Pearlie Austin Obituary, *The Coastland Times*, Manteo, October 12, 1995. He is listed on death certificate as a retired carpenter.
54. Harriet, "Cottage Biography." Independent interviews with former residents E.D. Wilis, Elma Dixon, and Jesse Babb Dominique.
55. "Historic Base Map--1900," CALO. The information is repeated on a conjectured ca. 1910 map in the 2007 *Cultural Landscape Report*, Fig. 17, which used the 1900 base map as a source.



**Figure 15.** Ca. 1940 photograph of Ed, Nora, and Elma Dixon's house behind the church. The house in the background is strikingly similar to the Pigott House, and is far to the east of the Pigott House. The photograph shows the fence with its solid base. (CALO Coll. b13)

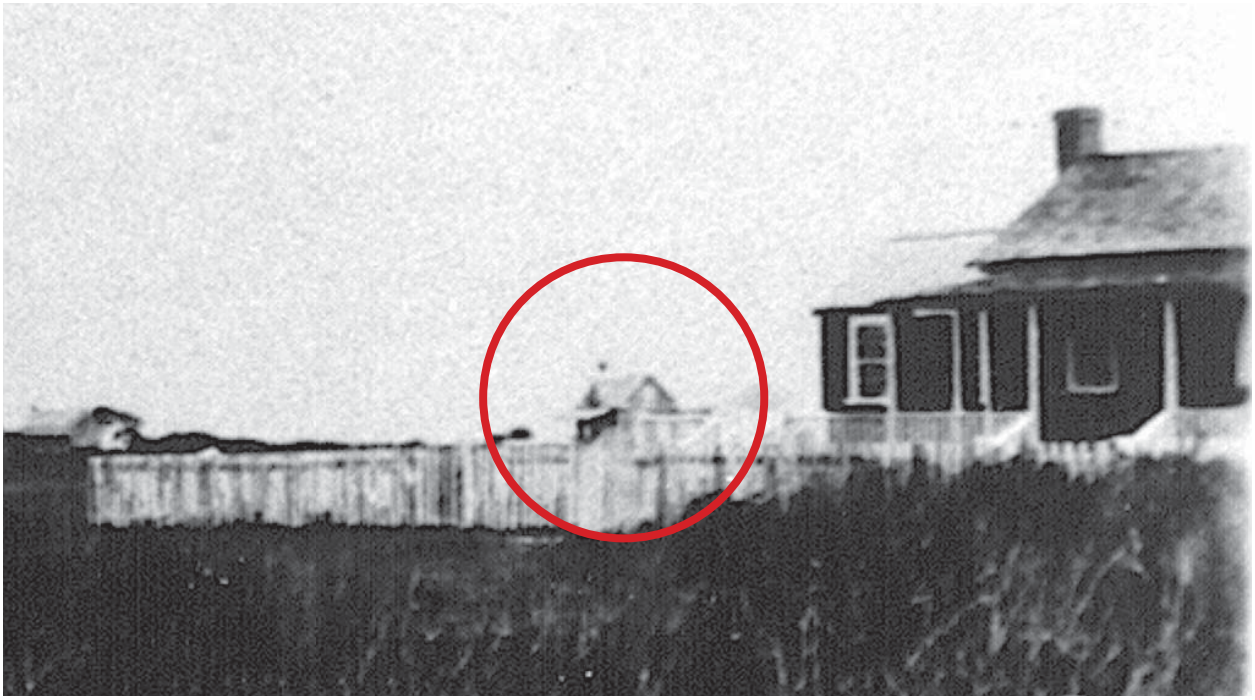


**Figure 16.** The same house is seen from a greater distance in this pre-1928 photograph. The house in foreground is shown before Harry Dixon's changes of 1928. (Dorothy Byrum Bedwell Coll.)

An earlier photograph, though less clear, shows what appears to be the same house, again easily mistaken for the Pigott House (*Fig. 16*). Identified as a carpenter on his death certificate, Austin likely built several houses in the village, including that on the conjectured map just south of the Pigott House and labeled with his name.

No primary record nor any of the many secondary sources provide a conclusive history of the Pigott House, but it is clear that within a few years after Harmon Austin built that house, it came into the possession of Rosetta Pickett.

## Rosetta "Rose" Pickett

Rosetta, called "Rosa" or more often "Rose," was born into slavery on Portsmouth. Her date of birth is unknown, perhaps even to her, as census records exhibit great variation. Even her last name is in question, appearing with equal frequency as "Ireland," "Abbot," and "Pickett." No marriage records have been found to clarify names, but it was not unusual for a slave to carry the name of an owner. Her tombstone gives the surname Pickett and places her birth in December 1838.[56] By all accounts, Rose was a formidable woman who lived and raised her family in the face of adversity.

As a flourishing port town in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Portsmouth depended on a large number of slaves, many serving as stevedores who provided the manual labor for ship lightering. The percentage of slaves was high for a town not explicitly associated with agrarian enterprise. By 1850, Portsmouth had a population of 463, a quarter of whom were slaves, most working in the shipping and fishing industries.[57] Many others worked as household servants, and those domestic roles increased as jobs shifted with the decline of Portsmouth's economy.[58]

Rosetta was apparently born into slavery in the household of Earls and Matilda Ireland, a wealthy family by Portsmouth standards. The Irelands were among the few to return to Portsmouth after the Civil War, accompanied by their domestic servant Rose with her children in tow.[59] Researchers have suggested that Rose was the daughter of Earls Ireland, a reason hers was the only black family to return.[60]

She is first found in public records in the 1870 census, shown as a domestic servant in the

56. Portsmouth genealogy website.

57. Tommy Jones, *Washington Roberts House HSR*, p. 3.
58. Whisnant, HRS 2010 draft, pp. 56, 85.
59. 1870 census, Portsmouth genealogy website. Whisnant, HRS 2010 draft, p. 290.
60. Cloud. *Portsmouth: The Way it Was* (Print Shop, 1996), pp. 98-100, Whisnant, HRS 2010 draft, and others.



**Figure 17.** Henry at age 14 in his Sunday suit. (CALO Coll. a19).

household of the Irelands under the name Rosa Ireland. Her five children are under the same name.[61]

Rosa Ireland is again listed in 1880, but this time as head of household, her occupation as "keeping house," and her marital status as single.[62] Author Ellen Fulcher Cloud reports that by then, Rose had two more children and was living in a house next door to the Irelands.[63] Whether the house was part of the Ireland property is not known, nor the location of the Ireland house itself.

Recorded as single in 1880, Rose is listed in 1900 as a widow with surname Pickett and mother of eleven children, eight living. She is head of household, her occupation "laundry work," and her age fifty-three.[64]

Earls and Matilda Ireland had left Portsmouth around 1895, most likely depriving Rose of her most steady source of income.[65] In addition to laundry work and forced to adapt, she worked for a period of time in the island's gristmill, fished, oystered, and served as the island midwife and nurse. She was known as Aunt Rose.[66]

Though there is no record of a husband, a traditional story recounts that before the Civil War, Rose married a slave named Isaac who was later sold and sent away.[67] He may have been the father of her first child, Harriet, who was born in the 1850s. Her next child was born in about 1860. Other children were born during and after her listings as single and widowed, when only white men lived on Portsmouth.[68]

Rose's children bear the surnames Bragg, Ireland, Abbot or Abbott, Pickett, Pigott, and Willis, the names of the white families of Portsmouth and nearby, and several are listed as mulatto in the 1910 census, the first year that categories of "color of race" were expanded.[69] Rose's great-granddaughter believes "there was an invasion into her life from the men on the island."[70]

As they grew up, most of her children left Portsmouth for the opportunities of the mainland, especially to New Bern. Two who chose to stay were Leah (1867-1922) and Joe (1870-1948).[71] Leah Pigott was born in 1867, listed in the 1870 census in the Ireland household and with the Ireland surname. In 1880 she is again named Ireland, even listed as a granddaughter as well as a servant living in the household of Matilda Ireland, though by then her mother Rose was living next door. In the 1900 census, Leah is listed with the surname Pickett, living with Rose, and is single but with five children, one of them Henry Pigott.[72]

61. Portsmouth genealogy website.
62. Ibid.
63. Cloud. p. 100.
64. Portsmouth genealogy website. Her birth in census records varies from 1835 to 1847. The 1890 census is missing.
65. Cloud, p. 100.
66. NPS brochure, http://www.nps.gov/calo/planyourvisit/upload/Henry2000.pdf. Cloud, p. 100.
67. Cloud, p. 98.
68. Portsmouth genealogy website.
69. Ibid. D'vera Cohn, "Race and the Census: The 'Negro' Controversy," Pew Research Center, January 21, 2010. Eight of her children, in order of birth: Harriet "Hattie" Bragg, Sarah Ireland, Dorcas Martin [née Ireland], Leah Pigott, Joseph "Joe" Abbot, Henry Willis, Nettie Pickett, and Edward Pickett.
70. Letter from Dorcas E. Carter to a Mr. Harris, April 25, 1991.
71. Death certificates and Portsmouth genealogy website.
72. Whisnant, HSR 2010 draft, p. 290.

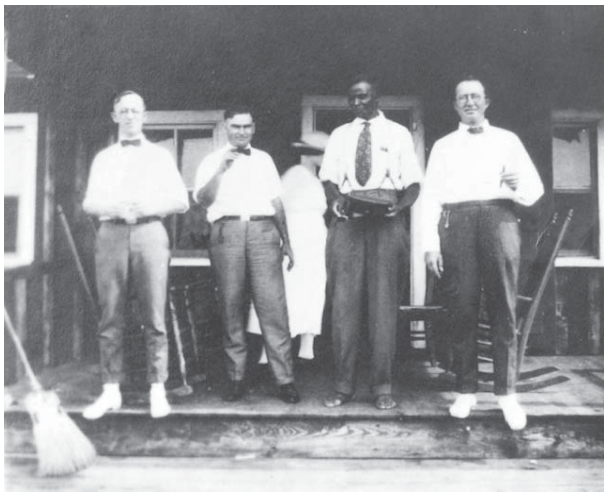


**Figure 18.** Joe Abbott with members of one of the hunting clubs on the island. (CALO Coll. b85)

Joseph Abbot (also spelled Abbott) was Leah's younger brother, born in 1870 and, like Leah, listed with the Ireland surname in the 1870 and 1880 censuses. In 1900 he is listed as Pigott, a common surname in Beaufort at that time, but by 1910 and thereafter he is again recorded as Abbot.[73] The only other Abbot known on the island was Jeremiah Abbot, a white man who operated a grocery store from the late 1860s to the early 1880s. There is no known connection between the families.[74]

In 1900 Joe was employed as a cook and likely living with his mother Rose and sister Leah Pigott and her children. They are believed to have moved into today's Henry Pigott House in 1904, only a few years before Rose's death in March 1909. According to former islander Mattie Daly Gilgo, "Rose went outside to roast oysters, caught her clothes on fire and burned to death."[75]

In 1910 Joe was again employed as a cook, likely at the nearby Pilentary Hunting Club (*Fig. 18*), and almost certainly remained in the house with Leah, but it is she who is listed in the census as head of household, employed as an oysterman.

In the 1920 census, Leah remains in the house, but in this listing her son Henry Pigott is head of household.[76] His uncle Joe Abbot is listed without occupation but also as head of household. This suggests he no longer lived with Leah, though the record is imprecise.

Leah, apparently a large woman, died two years later in March 1922. Her funeral was remembered by Cecil Gilgo:

> There was eight of us that were pallbearers. And when we went to the gate they couldn't get it out of the gate and had to lift it over, over the fence. We had sheets around underneath the casket you know and wrap around your hands the way they had to carry it. They didn't have handles on in them days. And somebody dropped the front end of it. And I see it right now how it went down in that dirt and they got it up and they got the mud off it. And we had to carry from Henry Pigott's up to Abner Dixon's place where she's buried. That's how far we carried it. You talk about somebody worn out. There was eight of us. She was a great big woman. A great big one.[77]

The gate and fence are those around the Henry Pigott House. Others remembered the difficulty of carrying her down the steep staircase from her bedroom.

Though the house had been in Rose's family since 1904 and passed from Rose to Leah and now from Leah to Henry, as yet there was no known record of ownership. Henry and his sister Lizzie were living there in 1930. In that census, both Joe Abbot and Henry Pigott are listed as head of household, again suggesting that Joe, by this time a cook at the Coast Guard Station, was living elsewhere. Nevertheless, his living arrangements would soon change. In the 1930s, possibly 1933, he moved to his friend Washington Roberts' house.[78]

"Wash" Roberts was Earls Ireland's nephew, a close friend of Joe Abbot and possibly related. When Roberts and his wife left Portsmouth in the 1930s, they "allowed their dear friend Joe Abbot to move in. . .as a gesture of affection, and apparently left much of their furniture for Joe."[79] Joe is said to have "taken tender care" of the Roberts house during his tenure. When he moved to New Bern in 1946-47, Henry moved some of his uncle's furniture to his and Lizzie's house.[80]

73. Portsmouth genealogy website; spellings vary.
74. Jones, *Washington Roberts House HSR*, p. 11.
75. Cloud, p. 101. Portsmouth genealogy website. She is buried in Keeler-Styron Cemetery on Portsmouth.
76. Jones, *Washington Roberts House HSR*, p. 11. Portsmouth genealogy website.
77. CALO, Final Oral History Excerpt Script, "Track 89: Burial on the Island." 2011.
78. http://www.villagecraftsmen.com/news022111.htm, p. 10-11.
79. Jones, *Washington Roberts House HSR*, p. 10, cites Dominique and Dixon interview, 1979.
80. Ibid., p. 11, cites Marion Gray Babb to Pam Stuart, January 20, 1982, transcript of telephone conversation in

## Henry Pigott (1896-1971)

Henry Pigott was born on May 10, 1896, the youngest of Leah's children.[81] Little is known of his early life on Portsmouth besides his occupation as fisherman and oysterman. As a child he moved with his mother and four siblings into the house that would become his own.[82]

Henry's had been the only black family on Portsmouth for decades, and in general was fully part of the community. Virtually unmentioned in the many fond remembrances and accounts of his life is his lack of education, a result of segregation laws prohibiting black children from attending white schools. Despite the fellowship of the community, he received no outside instruction and was never taught to read or write.

An islander remembered Henry:

> [He] was not dark in color, he was like an Indian in appearance.... We never heard about a color barrier in those days. There was no need; we were all in the work together.... The Pigotts attended the Methodist Church that we did. They visited with us and lived among us... [A] finer man I never knew.[83]

Similar descriptions of Henry's character are found repeatedly in primary and secondary source material.

park files.
81. Carteret County death certificate, Vol. 54, p. 211.
82. Portsmouth genealogy website.
83. Whisnant, HRS 2010 draft, p. 289.



**Figure 19.** Henry and Lizzie Pigott with other Portsmouth families in front of the Portsmouth Methodist Church, ca. 1949. (CALO Coll. b30)

### Henry and the Mail

The familiar image of Henry is on his skiff, poling out into Pamlico Sound to meet the mail boat. Mail, groceries and provisions from Ocracoke and the mainland, as well as passengers, were delivered to coastal and island communities by the mail boat, especially after the 1933 hurricane forced the general store to close.

As Portsmouth's population declined, the route no longer included the village; however, the boat continued to make deliveries and stopped in the sound. For many years Henry had the contract to pole out into the sound to meet the mail boat on



**Figure 20.** Henry Pigott poling his skiff, 1955. (Mike Riddick Photo Collection, http://villagecraftsmen.blogspot.com/2014_09_01_archive.html)



**Figure 21.** Henry Pigott poles out to greet Captain Fulcher and the *Aleta* off Portsmouth Island, ca. 1953. (Friends of Portsmouth Island)

its course (*Fig. 21*).[84] Deliveries were transferred to the skiff, outgoing mail and a list of orders from Portsmouth were given to the captain, and the skiff returned to Portsmouth where the deliveries were taken to the post office via wheelbarrow. After the post office was decommissioned in 1959, mail was delivered individually.[85] Several residents performed this job over the years. Henry took over the task of poling the skiff from Ernest Salter and Carl Dixon and continued for many years.[86]

The daughter of a mail boat captain recounts her childhood memory of joining her father on the mail boat *Aleta*, which he ran from Ocracoke to Atlantic. "I never remember having to wait for [Henry]. He timed it just right, so that when the mail boat arrived he would be right there to grab the side of it and hold while supplies were loaded in his skiff."[87]

Former resident Lionel Gilgo remembered Henry and his skiff as something of a landmark:

> Now, when you take the ferry to Ocracoke, you look for the lighthouse. Back then in those days, when we took the mailboat to Portsmouth, you watched for Henry poling his boat out to meet you halfway.[88]

When Henry retired, two men, Junius Austin and Lum Gaskill, took over mail responsibilities, with Austin also assuming the role of caretaker of the island until Cape Lookout National Seashore was formed.[89]

### Henry's Siblings

Henry had at least four brothers and sisters, Rachel, Isaac, Lizzie, and Georgia. Rachel in her youth on Portsmouth was an oysterman; she later moved to Hampton, Virginia where she was employed as a maid, but returned to Portsmouth to live in the house with Henry and Lizzie when she became ill later in life.[90]

Isaac was also an oysterman when young, but little is known of his life. He apparently remained on Portsmouth where he died a widower in 1939.[91] Georgia is shown only in the 1900 census when she was a child.[92]

Henry's sister Elizabeth Pigott (1889-1960), known as Lizzie, never married or had children. From the age of fifteen she lived in the Henry Pigott House with Henry.[93] Lizzie was known for her flowers and their well-kept yard and house, and served as the town barber, giving haircuts on the front porch to men, women, and children. An islander recalled.

> I remember her cutting my hair many, many times. Nothing but a comb and scissors, that was all she had, there weren't no clippers. And I remember that if it was five cent, it was all right, and if you didn't have it, it was still all right. . .[94]

Lizzie supplemented her income by fishing and oystering with Henry.

84. Carl Goerch, "Where the Mailman Comes by Boat," *Raleigh News and Observer*, 8 September 1957.
85. Cloud, pp. 92-94.
86. Eubanks and Salsi, p. 85.
87. Cloud, p. 97.
88. Taylor, "Transformed," p. 43.
89. CALO HRS, 1970, p. 70.
90. Portsmouth genealogy website. Carteret County death certificate, Vol. 43, p. 181.
91. Carteret County death certificate 22/189.
92. Portsmouth genealogy website.
93. Ibid.
94. Taylor. "A Home Transformed," pp. 44-45, cites Lionel Gilgo interview.



**Figure 22.** Lizzie Pigott swimming with friends, ca. 1916. (CALO Coll. a34)



**Figure 23.** Lionel Gilgo as a child helping Henry Pigott wind twine for fishing nets, ca. 1925. The east façade, rear porch and ell, and front porch roof are visible, as well as the vertical-slat skirt. Weatherboard pattern matches that still on the house in 1978. (CALO b47-2, Lionel Gilgo Coll.)

## The House, ca. 1902

Early photographs show Henry and Lizzie's house before later changes, presumably much as when built ca. 1902. The first known is a ca. 1925 photograph of Henry Pigott with a child; it provides significant information about the side of the house, the rear ell and both porches (*Fig. 23*). A photograph taken in about 1927 gives additional information about the house at that time (*Fig. 24*). These and later images help determine the chronology of the house, but are most valuable when coupled with physical investigations of the building conducted for this report.

It was essential while researching the house to confirm that the photographs are indeed the Pigott House rather than the "twin" house nearby (*Fig. 15*). The side photograph is confirmed by the weatherboard pattern near the top of the windows. The same boards remained on the house in 1979 (*Fig. 41*). (They were later replaced with boards of uniform size.) The front photograph (*Fig. 24*) is confirmed by weatherboard patterns still found on the house.

The house had a slightly unusual front porch configuration. The images show a three-bay shed porch extending less than the full width of the house by about two feet on each side. However, the porch deck and front railings extend beyond the corner posts the full extent of the front façade, a newel post at each corner.

The house is low to the ground with an apron of tightly-spaced vertical slats. The body of the house is painted a dark color with light (likely white) trim. The front door is solid, without glazing. Any front shutters are obscured, but the early shutters on the east side seen in the 1925 photograph are of vertical boards with three horizontal battens on the interior face.

The front apron continues along the side of the house and side stoop. More significantly, the rear ell is a single story, and the side stoop has no



**Figure 24.** Ethel and Russel Dixon standing in front of Henry Pigott House, ca. 1927, showing porch configuration (CALO b48 [index mislabeled b49], Lionel Gilgo Coll.)



**Figure 25.** Pigott House ca. 1959 showing front steps and details of porch and facade. Lizzie Pigott is at back left next to Lillian Babb. Seated are Elma Dixon and Marian Babb. (Jesse Lee Dominique Coll.)

roof. The location of the side doorway and the two-panel door are evident, and the shed roof configuration of the front porch is clear in both photographs.

## Alterations of the 1930s

Henry Pigott, presumably with Lizzie's input, made several changes to the house while he and Lizzie and perhaps other siblings were living there. Some secondary sources report that the changes were made in 1932; however, the hurricane of September 1933 caused severe damage to the island, destroying many houses, washing away outbuildings, and causing a large percentage of the population to leave permanently. Henry is quoted as saying the 1933 hurricane was the "most severe hurricane in the memory of Portsmouth." After the 1933 storm, "everybody just left" until the population hovered at around two dozen people.[95]

It seems likely that at least some changes to the Pigott house and property were made after the storm, though It is certainly possible that Henry made his changes in 1932 and only necessary repairs after the storm. With the dates unknown, this report refers to the changes of the 1930s.

But perhaps before the storm, Henry raised the house on taller posts to prevent flooding, his timing helping to reduce storm damages to the house.[96] Later photographs show the house to be six to ten inches higher than seen in the early photographs. It is likely that the orthogonally-oriented lattice apron was installed to replace the earlier vertical-slat apron soon after (*Fig. 25*). The chimney may have been replaced when the house was raised.

Henry made significant alterations to the rear ell to enlarge the house. The 1925 photograph shows a one-story ell (*Fig. 23*). In the 1930s, an upper level was added, its gable roof meeting the

95. CALO HRS, 1982, p. 70

96. Harriet, "Cottage Biography."



**Figure 26.** Front view of Pigott House, probably 1950s, showing house and west yard. Lizzie seated at left, Marion G. Babb at fence. (CALO Coll. b39, Marian Gray Babb Coll.)

ridge of the main roof to create a cross-gable.[97] Interior detailing on the second floor of the main block indicates there was likely a rear dormer with window matching the front dormer. When the second-story was added to the rear ell, the dormer window was reframed as a doorway to the new back bedroom, and the original window sash was installed as a new back window in the gable end of the ell.

Apparently at the same time, a hipped roof and support posts were added to the existing, but roofless, side porch. Another change perhaps made at that time was the addition of new two-panel window shutters on all first-floor windows (*Figs. 25-26, 31*).

According to interviews, the kitchen building and the cool house were added to the property at this time, though previous outbuildings of similar purpose were certainly on site, perhaps destroyed in the storm and replaced by Henry soon after.[98]

97. Harriet, "Cottage Biography," cites 1978 interview with Henry Pigott's friend Junius Austin.
98. Harriet, " Cottage Biography."

The brick of the kitchen building's chimney matches that of the house. The first known photograph of the kitchen building was taken decades later, but likely represents the structure as built.

The cool house was a typical structure on Portsmouth, its purpose to extend the life of perishable food. The simple method of food preservation relied on the principle of evaporative cooling–the breeze off the ocean flowed through the screened openings and over an open pan of water to create a zone of cool air.

Henry's further retooling of the house was likely spread over multiple years. The front porch was rebuilt in a different style five years after the storm, with a hipped roof replacing the earlier shed roof and extending the full width of the facade. Its new front steps were wider than the original, and a new railing and concrete landing were added; inscribed on the landing is the date 1938 (*Figs. 25-26*).[99]

99. *Doctor's Creek Journal*, Summer 2015, Friends of Portsmouth Island.

Stories of Henry's painting his house pink consistently date to 1934, though documentation of that date is unclear. The color was apparently a mistake in a paint order from the Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalogue. Some report his intended color as yellow, others white, but when the pink paint arrived he reportedly decided "it was too much trouble to send back," so he painted the house pink. At least two other houses were painted pink as well, perhaps because of an ample supply of paint.[100]

In a 1970s interview, former resident Jesse Lee Dominique, though born in 1927, reported that the house was yellow before the pink.[101] This seems unlikely. The 1925 and ca. 1927 photographs show the house a dark color. If the house were ever yellow while Henry resided there, the paint would have been applied in 1927 or later and covered with pink just a few years later in the early 1930s.

Henry's changes are shown in later photographs. A 1959 photograph taken from the front yard shows the lattice apron and a portion of the new front porch with its steps and railing (*Fig. 25*). A sash door with a single glazed panel over three horizontal wood panels has replaced the earlier door, and a decorative wood trellis attached to the front of the porch is a close match to trellises on two other Portsmouth houses.[102]

A second photograph, undated though before Lizzie's death in 1960, shows the 1930s porch more clearly (*Fig. 26*). The hipped roof extends to the end of the façade, and the corner post is in a more typical location serving as the terminus of the railing. There is a clear image of the fence around the property, the slant-top pickets rising above a baseboard detail at the exterior face. The same fence design, including the solid base, was at the Elma Dixon House (*Fig. 15*).

In the background is the first known photograph of the front-gabled kitchen building of flush vertical boards, showing a south side window with sash and drip cap, and the central door with steps.

100. Eubanks and Salsi, p. 102. The other houses are those of Marian Babb and of Harry and Lida Dixon.
101. Harriet, " Cottage Biography."

102. Photographs show similar trellis at houses of Marian Babb and of Harry and Lida Dixon. Both houses were also painted pink.



**Figure 27.** Aerial photograph of Portsmouth Island looking south, 1969. Henry Pigott House near the mouth of Doctor's Creek. Right of the house is its complex of outbuildings. (CALO c09, Bob Simpson Coll.)



**Figure 28.** Lizzie Pigott and Walker Syron inside the kitchen building, November 1955. (CALO b59, Sarah Roberts Styron Coll.)



**Figure 29.** Henry Pigott and Walker Syron inside the kitchen building, November 1955. (CALO b58, Sarah Roberts Styron Coll.)

The interior of the kitchen building is shown in two photographs taken in 1955 (*Figs. 28-29*). The wood framing of walls and roof of this utilitarian structure is exposed to the interior. The building's use as a kitchen and eating area is evident; supplies are on shelves, pots and pans are hung, and a table and chair are in a front corner. A tablecloth is in place and curtains are hung at windows. At the west wall is a cast iron stove attached to the chimney flue.

## Establishing Title to the Property

By 1950 Henry and Lizzie, both never married, had been living in the house for nearly fifty years. It had been passed down through three generations of their family, but still with no deed to the property, no record of ownership.

On November 14, 1951, Henry transferred the house and land to Lizzie. About two and a half years later, on July 2, 1954, Lizzie sold the land back to Henry for ten dollars, a typical stand-in amount that does not reflect any actual payment.[103] These recorded transactions established legal title.

103. Deed Books 137/82 and 154/520. Harriet, "Cottage Biography."

## The 1960s

By 1956, only 17 permanent residents lived on Portsmouth. Henry, at 59, was the youngest.[104] His and Lizzie's sister Rachel had returned from Virginia to live with them after she became ill. Towards the end of her life, Lizzie was also failing and was taken to the hospital in Morehead City. Hazel Gilgo Arthur remembers the event:

> She was down in the basement because she was black. But all the white people from Down East went to see Lizzie. Those other black people didn't understand why. I really, truly don't believe that anybody ever saw the color of her skin, or Henry's either.[105]

Henry took care of both sisters. Rachel died in March 1960, and Lizzie died at home on September 12, 1960, just six months later.[106]

By 1962 Henry was one of only four remaining full-time residents. Elma Dixon lived across the creek as well as her sister Lillian Dixon Babb and niece Marian Gray Babb, with occasional visits from

104. CALO HRS, 1982, p. 94.
105. Taylor, "A Home Transformed," p. 44.
106. Carteret County death certificates, Vol. 43, pp. 181 (Rachel), 183 (Lizzie).

Marian's sister, Jesse Lee Dominique.[107] Henry continued his mail runs and took a job as a cook for a group of hunters using the abandoned Coast Guard Station as a clubhouse.[108] His uncle Joe Abbot had held a job there in the 1930s.

When Lillian Dixon died, Marian Babb and her aunt Elma remained on the island with Henry Pigott. Henry had for some time been the last remaining male resident on the island and as such took care of the women.

Despite the island's decline, Henry improved his house in the 1960s after his sisters' deaths. The house was repaired and painted, perhaps by Henry, but certainly with help. A pair of color photographs taken by a family visiting the island show a before and after of the work (*Figs. 30-31*). The earlier photograph shows the pink house with exterior walls scraped as if in anticipation of new paint. The house has a deteriorated wood shingle roof. The latter photo shows the house freshly painted, again pink, with a new asphalt shingle roof. While the pink paint may have been a mistake when first ordered, it is clear that Henry maintained the color throughout his residency.

Another photograph taken about the same time shows Henry standing in front of the kitchen building (*Fig. 32*). The house, kitchen building, and cool house again appear freshly painted and the house roof is of asphalt shingle. All are pink. Of note on the kitchen building is the wood-framed screen door, now missing, installed to open to the interior in the traditional Portsmouth manner. This is a rare photograph showing this feature on an outbuilding.

Henry is said to have added the kitchen building and cool house in the early 1930s, but little is known of other outbuildings. The first visual record of a complex of outbuildings is an aerial photograph taken in 1969 (*Fig. 27*). Five are present in addition to the long wood cistern west of the rear ell. In a row behind and north of the kitchen building are a net house, shed, and privy.

## State of North Carolina

In 1968, Henry, like most Portsmouth owners, sold his house and land to the State of North Carolina for the recently authorized National Seashore. He retained a life estate on the property



**Figure 30.** Henry Pigott House viewed from east bank of Doctor's Creek, early 1960s, showing house with wood shingle roof and weathered or scraped pink walls. (Ocracoke Preservation Society, Drew Meeker Coll.)



**Figure 31.** Henry Pigott House again viewed from east bank of Doctor's Creek, early 1960s. House has new asphalt shingle roof and has been freshly painted pink. (Ocracoke Preservation Society, Drew Meeker Coll.)



**Figure 32.** Henry Pigott at the front of his kitchen building, probably mid-to-late 1960s. Cool house is also pink. (Joff Coe, photographer, https://www.facebook.com/friendsofportsmouthisland/photos/a.733617529983822.1073741828.721242237888018/972178452794394/?type=1)

107. Jones, *George Dixon House HSR*, p. 15.
108. Whisnant, HRS 2010 draft, p. 422.

that allowed him to live in his house until his death.[109] The recorded sale price was again the stand-in ten dollars. By this time Henry was 72 and spending only the months of June to September on Portsmouth, the remainder on Ocracoke living with his friend Junius Austin.[110]

He left the island permanently and spent his last year on Ocracoke with Junius Austin. The two remaining residents of the island, Marian Babb and Elma Dixon, reluctantly left Portsmouth and moved to Beaufort. Henry Pigott died at the age of 74 on January 5, 1971 and was buried in Portsmouth.

## Henry the Legend

After his death, Henry was immortalized as the living spirit of Portsmouth Village. Headlines proclaimed "Portsmouth Won't be the Same" and "Henry was a Good Man."[111] His obituary claimed he "was considered the patriarch of the island."[112]

109. Deed Book 290/411, July 18, 1968. Harriet, "Cottage Biography."
110. CALO HRS, 1970, p. 70.
111. "Portsmouth Won't be the Same," *Carteret County News-Times,* January 18, 1971.
112. Obituary, *Carteret County News-Times*, January 11, 1971. He is buried in Babb Cemetery with his sister Lizzie.

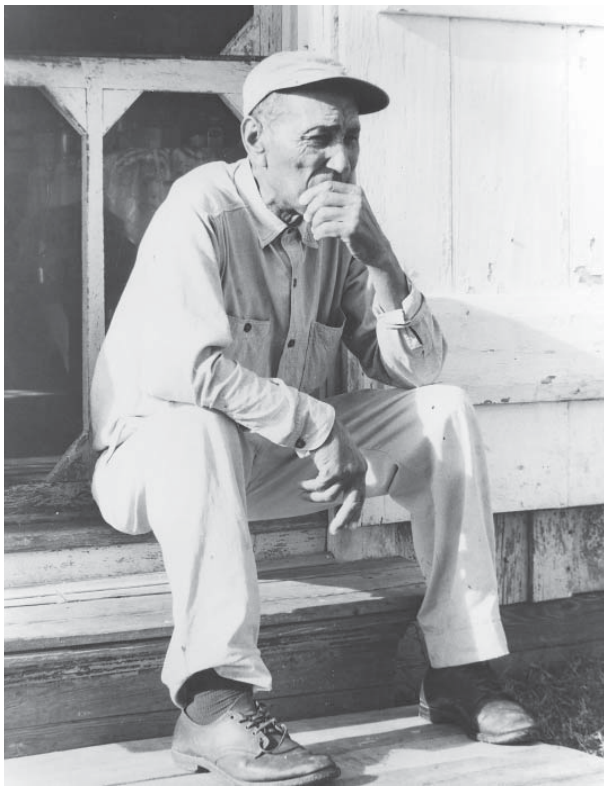


**Figure 33.** Henry Pigott sitting on the steps of his kitchen building, ca. 1970. (CALO Coll. c33)

A portrait of Henry is painted by Lionel Gilgo:

> When I get a picture of Henry, he's either sitting down on his steps that went up to the same porch where Lizzie cut hair, or he's doing something with his hands with making decoys, or he's in his boat poling in where he's been clamming. . . And I won't say anything to give or take credit [from] Henry in any way when I make this statement, but the last historians in the last few years have built him up to where maybe he was the greatest thing that ever was. . .
>
> As I remember Henry, he was just one of the other group of men that lived on Portsmouth. I don't know of any outstanding, great things that he did and I don't know anything he ever did to anyone that would discredit him.
>
> He was just an individual who minded his own business, worked as hard as he had to get something to eat and make a few dollars, and was never outstanding at anything that I know of.[113]

## National Park Service, 1976

The life estate in the property ended with Henry's death in 1971, and full ownership transferred to the State of North Carolina.

Five years later when the National Seashore was established, the state transferred the acquired properties to the National Park Service, including the Pigott complex and other Portsmouth buildings. Photographs taken that year show the condition of the property as it came under NPS purview (*Figs. 34-37*).

NPS was able to begin renovations of some houses in the late 1970s, including the Pigott House and its outbuildings. In 1977, $33,000 was budgeted for "stabilization" and "approved treatment" of the Pigott complex.[114] Repairs to the front and side porches began the next year (*Figs. 38-42*). Damaged deck boards of the front porch were replaced in stages, allowing portions of the porch foundation to be reconstructed and stabilized. Portions of railings on both porches were reconstructed and the steps to the side porch were replaced entirely. While this was occurring, the siding and trim of the house were scraped in preparation for a new coat of paint.

The house was still painted pink when the complex came under NPS jurisdiction, reflecting

113. Taylor, "Transformed," p. 48.
114. NPS, LCS Park/Region Report, March, 11, 1987, p. 49.



**Figure 34.** Aerial of Pigott property, April 1976, showing the house, kitchen building,and cool house painted pink. The other outbuildings and box cistern are white. (CALO acc. 00250)



**Figure 35.** Pigott net house, storage shed, and privy, ca. 1976. These three outbuildings are painted white. (CALO Coll. f113)



**Figure 36.** Front porch with splintered deck boards. (CALO Coll. f137)



**Figure 37.** Pigott kitchen building, painted pink, and net house, painted white, ca. 1976. (CALO Coll. f138)

Henry Pigott's continued use of that color from the 1930s to the end of his life. He also kept the kitchen building and cool house pink, while the three smaller outbuildings were painted white. His wood-box cistern in the northwest corner of the house was also white.

In the summer of 1979, NPS crews painted the house, kitchen building, cool house, and net house a shade of the "buff" yellow apparently used on other houses by lease-holding tenants (*Fig. 43*).

The storage shed and privy were left untouched (*Figs. 45, 47*). Portions of the fence were painted white and work began to replace missing pickets.

By late August of 1981, the roofs of most outbuildings were replaced (*Figs. 47-48*). The deteriorated wood shingled roofs of the kitchen building, cool house, net house, and privy were replaced with new cedar shingles. The rolled asphalt roof of the storage shed was left untouched.



**Figure 38.** Sections of front porch deck boards removed exposing porch foundation, ca. 1978. (CALO Polaroid album)



**Figure 40.** Side porch with steps and sections of railing removed, ca. 1978. (CALO Polaroid album)



**Figure 39.** Front porch decks boards replaced, ca. 1978. Sections of railing reconstructed. Siding scraped in preparation for paint. (CALO Polaroid album)



**Figure 41.** Side porch showing steps and railings reconstructed by NPS ca. 1978. (CALO Polaroid album)



**Figure 42.** Center section of front porch deck boards replaced, photographed July 1978 when the house was still pink. Damaged deck boards lying in grass. (CALO acc. 00514)



**Figure 43.** Aerial of Pigott property after repairs and new yellow paint, August 1979. (CALO acc. 00211)



**Figure 44.** Kitchen building, painted, looking southeast, December 1979. (CALO Coll. f124)



**Figure 45.** Net house, painted a non-historic color, looking northwest. At right are storage shed and privy, December 1979. (CALO Coll. f125)



**Figure 46.** Cool house, painted, looking northwest, ca. 1979. (CALO Coll. f131)



**Figure 47.** Raised wood-box cistern behind net house. Storage shed and privy in distance. Newly installed cedar shingle roof on net house and privy, August 21, 1981. (CALO Coll. f144)



**Figure 48.** Kitchen building with newly installed cedar shingle roof, ca. 1981. (CALO Coll. f122)



**Figure 49.** Exposed framing of dormer and replaced roof deck boards, July 23, 1982. (CALO Polaroid album)

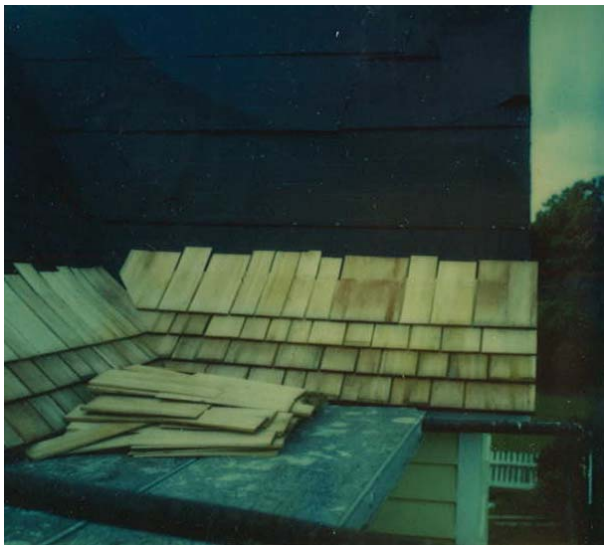


**Figure 50.** Felt underlayment, galvanized metal chimney flashing, and new cedar roof shingles, July 30, 1982. (CALO Polaroid album)



**Figure 51.** Deteriorated wood-box cistern adjacent to west wall of rear ell, July 21, 1982. (CALO Polaroid album)



**Figure 52.** Cistern removed, exposing foundation and siding, July 21, 1982. (CALO Polaroid album)



**Figure 53.** Replacement cistern under construction, September 2, 1982. (CALO Polaroid album)

The next summer, in June 1982, the asphalt shingle roof of the main house was replaced with a wood shingle roof. Rotten roof deck boards were replaced and a felt underlayment was used (*Figs. 49-50*).

Upon completion of the house roof in mid-August 1982, the deteriorated wood-box cistern at the west wall of the rear ell was removed and a new cistern built (*Figs. 51-53*).[115] A 1983 photograph shows that a galvanized gutter and downspout were installed on the west roof slope of the ell to feed into the new cistern (*Fig. 54*).

Work continued in the summers. Approximately sixty-two linear feet of fence were replaced in June of 1987; however, the baseboard detail seen in the ca. 1960 photograph was not replicated (*Figs. 15, 55*). The steps to the front porch, which were replaced in 1978, were now deteriorated and were replaced again in June 1988 (*Fig. 56*). The top two treads of the new side porch steps were replaced at the same time.[116]

The condition of the house and outbuildings in 1989-90 is thoroughly documented in an Inventory and Condition Assessment Report conducted by NPS.[117] Conditions were noted for the house, the five extant outbuildings, the fence and the cistern.

115. NPS, Henry Pigott House - Inventory and Condition Report, 1990.
116. CALO Polaroid album has additional images.
117. NPS, Henry Pigott House - Inventory and Condition Report, 1990. Personal communication, Ranger Dave Frum, September 10, 2013.



**Figure 54.** Replacement cistern completed, fed by a galvanized gutter and downspout from the west slope of the rear roof . Replacement fascia visible at west gable, 1983. (CALO Coll. f121)

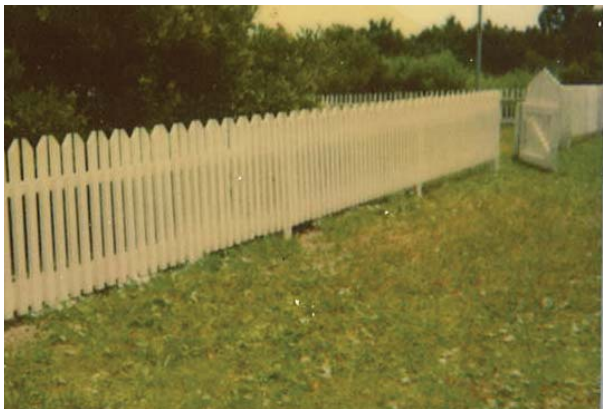


**Figure 55.** South side of fence, looking north, June 1987. Compare to Fig. 26. (CALO Polaroid album)



**Figure 56.** Newly constructed steps to front porch, photographed June 16, 1988. (CALO Polaroid album)

*House*

- 1982 wood shingle roof in good condition. Shingles treated with preservative, so water run-off cannot be used as potable water.
- Short gutter on northeast roof is rusted through.
- Approx. two hundred linear feet of siding need to be replaced due to rot and split boards.
- Some damage to fascia and soffit boards.
- Front door noted as sticking due to possible foundation failure.
- Both front and rear screen doors in need of repair.
- Windows in need of repair – Upstairs, all sills rotted and jambs on east side rotted. Downstairs, on east side the jambs and sills are rotted and on west side the sills are rotted.
- Front porch – piers are deteriorated. Outside sill has settled. Ceiling is loose and buckled.
- Foundation – all posts show extensive deterioration, with eight to ten posts needing immediate replacement. Portions of lattice skirt missing.
- Cistern – wood cistern noted as fairly new, but with damage from carpenter bees and separation of joints.
- All exterior surfaces need to be scraped, primed, and painted.
- Interior - in good condition but needs to be painted. Stair treads need to be repaired. Interior doors drag on floor (possible foundation settlement). Chimney in good condition.

*Site Features/Outbuildings*

- Fence – approx. 110 linear feet of pickets, support posts, and the front gate need to be replaced. Existing portions need to be repainted.
- Privy – noted as blown off its foundation and lying on its side. Foundation and framing need to be repaired. Floor is rotted and needs replacement.
- Cool House – needs to be reconstructed.
- Kitchen building – ridge line and siding show deflection, indicating possible foundation failure. Siding shows rot, particularly at ground level. Chimney in good condition.

- Net house (Listed as "Storage Building") – in good structural condition. Floor boards rotted in spots. Roof in good shape. Fascia board missing in spots. Exterior needs to be scraped and repainted.
- Storage shed – foundation system and rafters have failed. Door hinges and siding need to be replaced.

## House Interior

The interior of the house was photographed in July of 1980 (*Figs. 57-62*). At the time, first-floor walls retained Henry Pigott's pink paint. Second-floor walls, except for the varnished walls of the back room, were painted yellow. The second floor may have been yellow in Pigott's time, although a bureau in the upstairs hall is painted the same pink as the downstairs rooms (*Fig. 57*).

A floral-patterned linoleum "rug" remains in all three first-floor rooms and in the hall and at least one bedroom of the second floor. Many pieces of furniture still in the house likely belonged to Henry, perhaps some from the group that his uncle Joe Abbot received from Wash Roberts.

The photographs provide information on Pigott's kitchen, which is of special interest when compared to the 1955 photographs of the kitchen building. In one corner is a cabinet with sink; in another a gas refrigerator. Between them on the west wall is a 1940s or 50s Norge gas stove with center oven. Long wall shelves wrap the southeast corner above a small table and chairs, and a linoleum rug is on the floor. The stove was noted after Pigott's death by visitor Charles McNeill: "When I was there," he recalled, "he had a four-burner cook stove. It was 30 years old and it looked brand new."[118] Henry Pigott similarly maintained his house.



**Figure 57.** Upstairs hall, July 1980, showing pink bureau, linoleum rug, and floor heater. (CALO 05384)

118. "Portsmouth Won't be the Same," *Carteret County News-Times,* January 18, 1971. McNeill was director of the Hampton Mariner's Museum in Beaufort.



**Figure 58.** Southwest corner of kitchen, July 1980. (CALO acc. 05385)



**Figure 59.** Southwest corner of kitchen, July 1980. (CALO acc. 05385)



**Figure 60.** Southwest corner of kitchen, July 1980. (CALO acc. 05385)



**Figure 61.** Living room with pink walls, linoleum rug, and gas heater, July 1980. (CALO acc. 05386)



**Figure 62.** Second-floor west bedroom looking into east bedroom, July 1980. (CALO acc. 05382)

## Under Private Lease, 1990-2010

In January 1990, Charles Jackson Gilley and Jacob Eli Fisher, Jr. entered into a twenty-year lease on the Henry Pigott House, which required maintenance and improvements for the term of the lease.[119] Gilley was founder of the manufactured homes company World Homes, Inc., of Rocky Mount, and opened the property to his employees and their families for hunting and fishing vacations. In return they performed routine maintenance.[120] No known records of the work on the property are found in park files.[121] Gilley's time at Portsmouth was noted in his obituary, "As an outdoorsman, he loved spending time with family and friends, hunting, fishing, the mountains and especially Portsmouth Island." Little is known of Fisher, from the Salisbury area of Rowan County, nor the connection between Fisher and Gilley.[122]

Photographs show that at some point all painted wall and ceiling surfaces in the house were painted white, though it is unclear whether this work was done by the lessees during their tenure, or after their departure (see *Interior Description* section in *I.C - Physical Description*).

## Hurricane Isabel, 2003

On September 18, 2003 while the property was under lease, Hurricane Isabel made landfall near Portsmouth with sustained winds of 105 miles an hour.[123] The storm flooded Portsmouth and inflicted heavy damage on several properties, among them the Pigott House. The damage and extent of flooding was documented in a series of photographs, some showing a boat and tree lying on the front fence, and parts of the fence blown away (*Figs. 63-65*).

The house withstood the storm with no apparent structural harm, though the shingled roof sustained heavy damage. The lattice apron was entirely blown off. The steps to the side porch were torn off and siding was damaged near the porch deck. The cistern adjacent to the house was ripped off its foundations, causing further damage to the siding of the house.

The damage to the outbuildings was more severe. The cool house and the net house were blown away entirely. It appears the cool house was later recovered albeit without its screens or south-facing door. The kitchen building was torn from its foundations and dragged several feet. Its chimney partially collapsed, the shingled roof was damaged, and much of the board-and-batten siding was split and fractured near ground level. The storage shed, already partially fallen over, was further dragged from its foundation posts. The privy remained standing, though it is shown leaning to one side.

119. CALO lease records.
120. Personal communication, Ranger Dave Frum, September 10, 2013.
121. Ibid.
122. http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/rockymounttelegram/obituary.aspx?pid=166779204.
123. Jack Beven & Hugh Cobb, "Hurricane Isabel Tropical Cyclone Report" (National Hurricane Center, 2003). http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/data/tcr/AL132003_Isabel.pdf



**Figure 63.** House, cool house foundation, and kitchen building, looking southwest, post-2003 storm damage. (CALO Coll.)



**Figure 64.** House and kitchen building, looking southeast across the foundation of the destroyed net house, post-2003 storm damage. (CALO Coll.)



**Figure 65.** Kitchen building, remnants of net house, storage shed, and privy, looking northwest, post-2003 storm damage. (CALO Coll.)

The siding of both the storage shed and the privy was damaged.

Other conditions are of note in the photographs, though unrelated to the storm damage:

- the storage shed and privy had been painted yellow before the storm to match the house and kitchen building;
- the fixed, two-light privy window sash is still in place;
- by this time a modern above-ground septic tank has been placed east of the house with plumbing connecting to the east room;
- a ventilation stack for a chemical or composting toilet appears at the roof line above the same east room.

In 2004 a funding request was made for $42,256 for storm repairs at Portsmouth. This amount included repairs to the Carl Dixon House, the Marian Gray Babb House, the Lionel Gilgo House, and the Henry Pigott House. Work listed as necessary for the Pigott property included reroofing, exterior painting, reconstructing 200 linear feet of fence and 30 linear feet of handrails, and replacing damaged siding.[124]

124. NPS LCS records.



**Figure 66.** House, cool house, kitchen building, and reconstructed foundation of net house, looking southwest, 2008. (CALO Coll.)

## Late 2000s

The property was assessed in late 2006 for the Cultural Landscape Report (finalized 2007), and reflects the condition of the property at that time. Again the information is fairly comprehensive. Much of what is reported coincides with the photographs of 2003 storm damage and information in the 2004 funding request.[125]

- House exterior is in need of repainting, the roof needs to be replaced, and portions of the porch railing and siding need repair.
- Chimney of the kitchen building has collapsed. The floor is deteriorated. The roof needs to be replaced, and the siding is in need of repair.
- Cool house is noted as having been mothballed. Its structure has deteriorated and the screens are missing.
- Net house is gone save for foundation posts.
- Storage shed is missing three of its four doors.
- Structural base of the privy is deteriorated. The roof is rotted, the hardware is rusted, and there is a large degree of "general" damage from the 2003 hurricane.
- Large sections of the fence are missing.

125. Whisnant, *CLR*, 2007.

Photographs taken in 2008 indicate that some, but not all of the enumerated issues were addressed (*Figs. 66-67*). This work was conducted by NPS while the house was under lease to Gilley and Fisher.

The railings and steps of the side porch were reconstructed once again. The lattice skirt is missing. The roof of the house and those of the outbuildings appear to have been repaired, but not replaced; the galvanized ridge caps are rusted and the wood shingles appear worn. The cistern adjacent to the house was either found intact and reinstalled, or was reconstructed. A wood gutter and downspout were constructed to supply water to the cistern, though the source of the design is not known (*Fig. 67*).

Apparently found among the storm debris, the cool house has been reinstalled atop its foundation, though it is missing its screens. The kitchen building has been moved back into place, the splintered siding has been replaced and a new skirt board installed. The foundation posts of the net house have largely been reconstructed (*Figs. 66-67*).

The photographs also show that the fence has been reconstructed, though with gate openings differing



**Figure 67.** House, cool house, and kitchen building, looking southeast, 2008. Wood gutter and downspout lead to cistern. (CALO Coll.)

from those in early photographs: the west gate is now gone, and the north gate has been moved from the east side to the west side of the cool house. The new gates are designed with an over-scallop rather than the historic pointed arch design seen in earlier photographs. The reason for these changes is not known.

In 2009, the wood shingle roof of the house, installed in 1982, was replaced with sawn red cedar shingles in widths varying from 3½" to 9½" with a 5" exposure. According to the site's maintenance ranger, the roofing material is the Certigrade Blue Label Number 1 Grade Red Cedar Shingle. The ridge cap was changed yet again. The 1927 photograph (*Fig. 15*) shows a wood plank on the dormer ridge, suggesting the same on the main roof. An asphalt cap was used with the new asphalt roof in the early 1960s. In 1982-83, NPS installed a wood shingle roof with galvanized ridge cap. And in 2009 a shingled cap was introduced.

The ridge caps on the outbuildings were similarly changed. The kitchen and cool house caps were originally plank board, while the privy's was metal. In 1982-83, metal ridge caps were installed on all, and in 2009 wood shingles were used.

## Friends of Portsmouth Island

At the end of the Gilley-Fisher lease in 2010, the organization Friends of Portsmouth Island (FPI) received a special use permit from NPS to renovate and restore the house and its associated outbuildings.[126] The Pigott House became the focus of the organization, with the goal to open the house as a museum with emphasis on the lives of Henry and Lizzie Pigott. FPI members quickly set about repairing the property.

FPI furnished the house "with period furniture that belonged to Henry and Lizzie Pigott, as well as other pieces from Portsmouth," and dedicated the museum at the April 2012 "Homecoming," the biennial reunion of Portsmouth descendants and former residents.[127]

A large amount of work was completed before the Homecoming, when the house was to be unveiled. A photograph from that time indicates the skirt board on the front porch and the lattice apron on the whole house were replaced (*Fig. 72*).The siding, eave returns, and fascia on the dormer were replaced, along with the fascia on the south edge

126. http://friendsofportsmouthisland.org/fopi/2014/news/friends-of-portsmouth-island-is-on-facebook/.
127. Ibid.



**Figure 68.** The Pigott cool house in 1979, looking northwest. Shingle roof has no overhang at gable ends; ridge cap is metal; openings are large to allow greater ventilation. (CALO Coll. f131)



**Figure 71.** Cool house in 2014 showing altered proportions in the rebuilding. Structure is taller and narrower. East side opening is narrower, shorter, and considerably higher than the earlier opening.



**Figure 69.** The kitchen as interpreted.



**Figure 70.** Table and chairs in SW corner of kitchen.

of the roof. The exterior was repainted. Missing portions of the fence were rebuilt.

The project included rebuilding of a cool house. The existing foundation was reinforced and extended in height. New walls were built to create a structure of different dimensions and proportions from the earlier cool house. Photographs show that the new structure is taller and creates a more narrow appearance (*Figs. 68, 71*).

Several interior rooms have been furnished and arranged for interpretative purposes. The walls are painted white and linoleum rugs have been removed. In the kitchen, the gas refrigerator, Norge stove, sink cabinet and simple bracketed shelves have been removed. These items, documented in the 1980 interior photographs, have been replaced by a bank of new wall cabinets with a ribbon of cubbyhole shelving above. In the southwest corner are a table and chairs of higher quality than those used by the Pigotts (*Figs. 60, 69-70*).

Henry's four-burner stove and refrigerator may be in CALO storage (*Figs. 58-59*).[128]

128. *Doctor's Creek Journal*, Fall 2014, Friends of Portsmouth Island.



**Figure 72.** House looking northeast, ca. 2012. Front gable has been scraped for repainting. (CALO Coll.)

FPI continues its work on the house. The organization held two workdays on the property on April 29 and 30, 2015. Repairs completed by members are listed in the FPI newsletter:

- All broken fence pickets replaced and fastened with stainless steel nails to prevent rust. Loose fence pickets secured.
- Hinges on the two fence gates were replaced.
- The front-face on the south side of the fence was painted.
- The front porch steps and floor deck were scraped and repainted.[129]

During the weekend of November 9, 2015, FPI volunteers replaced the roof of the storage shed, installed new steps at the kitchen building, and replaced the privy door.[130]

The house is occasionally open to the public, and will open again for the next Homecoming gathering in April 2016.

129. Ibid., Summer 2015.
130. Ibid., Fall/Winter 2015/2016.

# 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.<br>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.<br>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. |
| 1858 | Possible birth date of Rosetta (Rose) Ireland/Pigott. |
| 1860 | Population is over 600 residents with 109 dwellings. |
| 1867 | Leah Pigott born, daughter of Rose, mother of Henry and Lizzie. |
| 1870 | Census records 59 dwellings.<br>First listing of Rosetta Pigott, under the name Rosa Ireland, and five children, living in household of wealthy islanders Earls and Matilda Ireland. |
| 1880 | Census records 44 dwellings. |
| 1883 | Ocracoke Inlet no longer navigable for lightering. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1889 | Lizzie Pigott is born. |
| 1894 | Portsmouth Life-Saving Station (LSS) is established. |
| 1896 | Henry Pigott is born. |
| 1899 | Great Hurricane of August 1899, the San Ciriacio Hurricane, submerges Portsmouth and destroys many buildings. |
| 1901 | New Methodist church is built. |
| ca. 1902 | House built by Harmon Austin, later owned by Pigott family. |
| 1904 | Rose Pigott acquires house. |
| 1913 | Hurricane destroys the island's two churches. |
| 1915-16 | Current Methodist church is built. |
| 1922 | Leah Pigott dies; house passes to Henry though no deed is recorded. |
| mid-1920s | First known photographs of Pigott House. |
| 1933 | Damage from major hurricane causes many families to relocate to the mainland. Hurricane opens new inlet through Core Banks south of Portsmouth, creating Portsmouth Island. |
| 1930s | Alterations to the house included raising foundation, new front porch, new apron, new upper story at rear ell, side porch roofed, house painted pink. Kitchen building and cool house built; other outbuildings probably on site. |
| 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. |
| 1951 & 54 | Henry Pigott transfers the property to Lizzie Pigott, who sells property back to Henry; deeds recorded to establish legal title. |
| 1956 | Regular church services are discontinued; 17 permanent residents at Portsmouth, the youngest is Henry Pigott, then 59 years old. |
| 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. |
| 1960 | Lizzie Pigott dies. |
| 1960s | Improvements to the Pigott complex include roofing, repairs and repainting. |
| 1966 | Cape Lookout National Seashore authorized. State of NC begins purchases. |

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|---|---|
| 1968 | Survey History of Cape Lookout National Seashore is prepared. |
| 1968 | State purchases Pigott House with life estate held by Henry Pigott. |
| 1970 | Draft Historic Resource Study of Portsmouth. |
| 1971 | Henry Pigott dies; two remaining residents 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 Portsmouth properties including Pigott House. |
| 1977 | NPS begins stabilization of Pigott House. |
| 1979 | Portsmouth Village Historic District listed in National Register of Historic Places. NPS crew paints Pigott House and some outbuildings, repairs fence. |
| 1980 | Interior of house is photographed. |
| 1980s | NPS crews conduct series of repairs in summers, including roof replacements and repairs to house, outbuildings, and fence. |
| 1982 | First Historic Resource Study of Portsmouth is finalized. |
| 1982-83 | General Management Plan states intent to preserve exterior of all buildings. |
| 1989-90 | NPS Inventory and Condition Assessment includes Pigott complex. |
| 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. |
| 1990 | Pigott House starts 20-year lease for use as hunting & fishing lodge; maintenance required of lessees. |
| 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. |
| 2003 | Hurricane Isabel damages Pigott complex. |
| 2004-06 | Historic Structure Reports completed for Life-Saving Station and three Portsmouth houses. |
| 2006 | Pigott property assessed for Cultural Landscape Report; reflects 2003 storm damage. |
| 2007 | Cultural Landscape Report suggests extension of National Register period of significance to 1971. |
| 2007-09 | NPS repairs and reroofing of Pigott House and outbuildings. |

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|---|---|
| 2010 | Cape Lookout National Seashore Historic Resource Study and recommendations prepared in draft form for the Organization of American Historians under cooperative agreement with NPS. |
| 2010 | Friends of Portsmouth Island acquire special use permit for the Pigott House with focus on repairing for use as a museum. Members conduct the work; regular maintenance ongoing. |
| 2011 | CALO Long-Range Interpretive Plan. |
| 2012 | CALO Foundation Document. |
| 2014 | Dedication and opening of repaired Pigott House at Homecoming celebration. |
| 2014 | Pigott House again open as over 400 attend Homecoming. |
| 2015 | Pigott 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 Henry Pigott House, Tom and Lucy Gilgo House, Portsmouth Methodist Church, 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. Most are close to the mainland; in contrast, North Carolina's "Outer Banks" jut out into the Atlantic as much as thirty miles to form an eastern barrier to a series of 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 monthly 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 August.



**Figure 73.** East side of Portsmouth Village viewed from west bank of Doctor's Creek on the sand Village Road. Portsmouth Methodist Church near the center, with Ocracoke Sound off to the left and salt marshes off to the right. Unless otherwise indicated, all photos in this section taken by JKOA in 2013.

The minimum average monthly rainfall is 3.19 inches in April. The humidity of the salt-laden air 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 strength. 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.[131]

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.[132] 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,




**Figure 74.** Record of high water marks from storm surge flooding on Theo Salter House shed (NPS 519).

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

131. Part of NOAH'S National Climate Assessment.
132. http://www.nps.gov/orgs/ccrp/index.htm

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 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 located near Charleston, South Carolina. The last major quake, recorded by the light keeper at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, was in 1886. Sporadic seismic activity may again affect the coast.

### Flora and Fauna

Much of Portsmouth Island is characterized by salt marshes, shrub savannahs, and shrub thickets, with characteristic low, wind-swept stands of loblolly pine, eastern red cedar, wax myrtle, yaupon, other small trees and shrubs. Large open areas of salt-resilient grasses dominate much of the historic district and is the setting for the Henry Pigott House.

Raccoons live on the island but there are no deer or ponies as found on some of the other barrier islands. A variety of sea and shore birds also frequent Portsmouth, but the most renowned inhabitants are the mosquitoes. They are present most months of the year and can be so thick at times that the tour boats cease operation. Some visitors and work crews typically don hooded net suits while on the island.



**Figure 75.** Documenting buildings in mosquito net suits.

### The Village

The extant buildings of Portsmouth Village are grouped at the northwest end of the island. Some 21 historic buildings are fairly evenly scattered on both sides of the main road, Village Road, a sand road running 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 (Tom Bragg) House (NPS 523); at the west terminus is the U.S. Life-Saving Station. The Portsmouth Methodist Church is a focal point near the center of the Village.

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 unpaved 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.



**Figure 76.** Access road to Pigott House, near center, with the Tom and Lucy Gilgo House on left.

### The House Site

The Henry Pigott House is one of the closest properties to the water surrounding Portsmouth Island. Set back approximately 350 feet from Ocracoke Inlet, the house faces southwest but for the clarity of this report, the house is assumed to face south. The house dates to about 1902. Since initial construction, the house has been raised, a second-level rear addition constructed, and porches modified. Yet, the original character remains intact.

Located in relative isolation north of the central concentration of Portsmouth Village, the Pigott property is accessed by a side road that splits off from Village Road near the Post Office and runs northeast. At the end of this access road stands the house.

The Pigott House is one of the few truly riparian properties on the island. Near the mouth of Doctor's Creek – a brackish tidal creek off the Ocracoke inlet that quickly ends in the marshy interior of the island – the house is set back about 40 feet from the west bank. Routinely mowed by NPS, the flat grassy clearing extends beyond the house and its outbuildings for several feet in all directions with a dense brush thicket forming the border. The property lines encompass about half



**Figure 77.** Henry Pigott House on west bank of Doctor's Creek, photographed at high tide.

an acre. The thicket quickly gives way to the creek at the eastern edge of the property. North and west of the property is a raised sandy landform known as a hammock. Ocracoke Inlet, the shallow passage between the Atlantic and Pamlico Sound, is located



**Figure 78.** Fenced back yard of the Henry Pigott House. Doctor's Creek and Ocracoke Inlet beyond.



**Figure 79.** South of Front elevation of house.



**Figure 81.** North elevation of house.



**Figure 80.** West elevation of House.



**Figure 82.** East elevation of house.

just north of the property. The smell of saltwater is heavy in the air surrounding the house and on windy days, spray from the Inlet can be felt.

## The Architecture

### Organization

The Henry Pigott House is a one-and-a-half-story, wood-framed structure raised above grade on a foundation of wood posts. First-floor level is approximately 2'-4" above grade. The footprint of the house measures roughly 32'-4" north to south and 21'-6" east to west. The ridge of the roof is 18' above grade.

Composed in a T-shape, the house consists of a two-room, side-gabled main block with a single-room-deep ell centered on the rear. The upper floor repeats the plan of the first. A full-width hipped-roof porch is attached to the front of the house and a small hipped roof is set into the northeast corner of the T-shape. A gabled dormer is centered above the front porch creating a typical North Carolina triple-A roofline.

Weatherboarded on the exterior, the walls of the house are pierced with double-sash windows. A door is set just east of center on the middle bay of the three-bay south façade of the main block. A single window is in each adjoining bay. Two windows are equally spaced on each of the east and west facades. A single window is centered on the south-facing dormer and another in the east gable end at the upper level. A smaller single-sash window is off-center on the west gable end at the second-floor level; this is the only window in the main block that does not match the others.

At the first-floor level of the rear ell, a single window is on each of the three exposed sides. On the west elevation, the window is centered. On the north and east elevations, the windows are offset. Also on the east elevation is a door set to the north of the window. At second floor-level, a single window is centered on the north gable end.

The property presently has a total of four outbuildings, which are described at the end of this section. Closest to the house are a kitchen building and cool house. These buildings were added to the property in the 1930s. Together with the house, they are enclosed by a white picket fence. Farther northwest are a storage shed and a privy, as well as foundation posts where there was once a net house.

### Architectural Style

More sophisticated than many houses on Portsmouth, the Henry Pigott House nevertheless lacks a clearly defined architectural style. It is a typical North Carolina triple-A house and could be considered a cottage – a compact one-and-a-half-story dwelling.

Stylistically, the house borrows aspects of the Craftsman style, seen in the hipped porch detailing, and aspects of Greek Revival seen in the eave returns. Thus, it exists as an amalgam of traditional architectural elements.

# Construction Characteristics

## Structural System

### Type

The construction type for this house is wood frame.

### Foundation and Floor Framing

The house is raised about 2'-4" above grade on a grid of 8"-diameter milled posts. The foundation and floor framing, save for the perimeter posts,



**Figure 83.** Foundation post concealed by lattice apron. Corner boards and skirtboard of house. Skirt board of front porch.



**Figure 84.** Rear porch posts, header beams, joists, and deck boards.

are concealed by a lattice apron. Henry is said to have raised the house in the 1930s to avoid flooding.

Similarly, both the front and side porches are supported by 8"-diameter posts, with much of the foundation and floor framing concealed by a lattice apron.

### Wall Framing

Similar to the foundation, the wall framing is concealed from view by siding on the exterior and by the wall finish on the interior.

There are no inconsistencies between the wall thickness of the main block and the rear ell, suggesting that the house was constructed as a cohesive unit. Photographic evidence does show that the rear ell was initially only a single story in height. An upper level addition to the rear ell was constructed in the 1930s.

### Roof Framing

When the upper level addition to the rear ell was constructed, the ridge of the gable roof was raised to meet the ridge of the main roof.

The roof framing of the main block and ell are concealed by boxed eaves on the exterior and finish walls and ceiling of the second floor on the interior. There is a narrow strip of flat ceiling, about 1'-10" wide in each room on the second-floor level, underneath the roof ridge of the main block and the rear ell. This strongly suggests that collar beams are present.

### Porch Framing

In contrast, the only exposed structural system of the house is the vertical support posts and roof framing of the two porches. The posts and framing of both are identical in design.

The posts are 3½" by 4½" and extend a height of 6'-3". Spanning the tops are beams measuring 2" by 4". Rafters are 1¾" by 3¾" spaced at 2'-0" on center, with vertical-cut ends. A molded cornice on the outside face of the support beam runs between rafter tails. Porch roof deck boards are nominal 1" by 4" planks, running perpendicular to the rafters. A finish ceiling of 4" to 4½" wide tongue-and-groove, V-groove boards is on the front porch only.

## Utility Systems

### Heating and Cooling

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

The main block of the house is oriented east-west with a 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.

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

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

The chimney serves a flue opening in Room 101, now patched. It is likely that a flue opening in Room 201 was covered, as the beaded-board walls surrounding the chimney in that room are modern replacements.

### Electrical

The house was constructed without an electrical system and none was installed during the Pigott family occupancy. No evidence exists that any system was subsequently installed.

### Plumbing and Water Supply

A large wood-box cistern, adjacent to the west wall of the rear ell, supplied water for consumption, cooking, and bathing. The cistern is described

in the *Outbuildings, Ancillary Structures, and Site Features* section below.

### Security
The front and side door are secured by mortise locks, probably original to the initial construction of the house. The side door has a galvanized metal hasp with a modern padlock, a typical security mechanism installed by NPS. There is a ghost mark of a similar lock on the front door.

### Fire Detection
There is no fire detection system.

### Fire Suppression
There is no automatic fire suppression system or hand-held fire extinguisher.

## Exterior Features

### Foundation Posts
Wood foundation posts, 8" in diameter, are visible only on the perimeter of the house. The foundation system is described in further detail in the preceding Structural Systems section.

### Siding and Trim
The weatherboard siding is 5/8" thick and has 5" to 6 ½" exposure. Siding is painted yellow color common to the buildings on Portsmouth. Portions of the siding were replaced and repaired in 2004 following hurricane damage from the previous year.

At the base of the house is a plank skirt board measuring 5/8" by 7½". Below, a lattice apron conceals the foundation posts. The lattice is orthogonally-oriented and measures ¾" by 5/4"spaced at 4½" in each direction.

Corner boards on the main block and the rear ell are identical wood plank, measuring 5/4"by 3½".

Door and window casing are lintel-cut, plank board measuring 5/4"by 3". All doors and windows also have an angled drip board and an angled sill.

Plank fascia boards measure 5/4"by 6". The gable ends and the front dormer have eave returns measuring 2'-6" in length that match the fascia.

All trim is painted white except the lattice apron, which is bare wood. There is a high degree of consistency in the house's trim work.



**Figure 85.** Weatherboard siding, corner boards, fascia, boxed eaves and eave returns. Typical upper-level window.



**Figure 86.** Typical first-floor window.

### Windows
Two window types are found on the house. The first and most prevalent is a four-over-four-light, wood double-sash window. There are eleven in total, nine on the first floor, with the remaining three on the dormer and gable ends of the second story. These windows are early, if not original to the house. First-floor windows measure 2'-0" wide by 4'-6" tall, while second floor windows, except for that on the west gable end, measure 1'-8" wide by 3'-8" tall. Window sash are painted white to match the casing. All have an interior wood-framed screen sash.



**Figure 87.** Front steps and porch. Remaining wood shutters on south first-floor windows only.



**Figure 89.** Wood shutter with astragal. Metal strap hinges and hook-and-eye closure.



**Figure 88.** Front sash door and interior wood-framed screen door. Front porch floorboards.

Paired wood shutters measuring 11¼"wide by 4'-6" tall by ¾" thick with a ¾" rounded astragal, are attached to the two south windows. The shutters are painted dark green and hung with a pair of 3½" strap hinges.

One window is of a different design. On the west gable end of the main block, at second-floor level, is a four-light, wood single-sash window measuring 1'-10" wide by 1'-6". This too, is early, if not original. The window is smaller and off-center because the chimney bisects the west wall. Window sash are painted white to match the casing.

## Front Entrance Doorway

The front entrance doorway is just east of center on the south elevation of the main block. The threshold is composed of an early 1" by 4" over a 2½" sill. Casing is described in the preceding *Siding and Trim* section.

The opening holds an early, single-light-over-three-horizontal-panel, wood sash door measuring 2'-5" wide by 6'-0½" tall by 1⅜" thick. The door is hung with a pair of 4", five-knuckle, steel ball-pin hinges, closed with a mortise lock and an interior metal hook. On each side is a glass knob with a beveled rectangular escutcheon measuring 2¼" wide by 7" tall. The exterior of the door is painted white to match the casing.

A screen door of three-panel, wood-spindle design is mounted to open to the interior in the distinctive Portsmouth fashion. The screen door is varnished.

## Front Entrance Steps and Porch

Four plank board treads on an open stringer lead from the remains of a concrete landing at grade to the front porch. The first riser is 8" tall, with the proceeding three risers each 6" tall. The last tread is level with the porch floor. The treads are about 7'-9" wide and range from 10" to 10½" deep. The steps are centered on the porch.

The three-bay porch spans the entire south façade, measuring 22'-6" wide by 6'-0" deep. Portions of



**Figure 90.** Side five-panel door.



**Figure 91.** Side steps and porch.

the foundation and floor deck were rebuilt around 1982.

Details of the porch framing are in the preceding *Structural Systems* section. Porch flooring is modern ¾" by 3¼" tongue-and-groove running north-south. Four roughly equally-spaced rectangular posts measuring 3½" by 4½", have a ¾" chamfer on all four corners from a height of 2'-0" above the floor deck to about 9½" below the roof beam. Two chamfered newel posts, one at each side of the bottom stair tread, measure 3½" square and extend 3'-1" in height. Newels posts have 5" square caps, 1½" tall with a beveled top.

Spanning the posts is a wood railing. The handrail is at a height of 2'-1" above the floor deck and measures 3⅝" by 1 ½" with a ¾" bevel. The bottom rail is at a height of 1" above the floor deck and measures 1⅜" by 3½". Extending a vertical height of 1'-8" between the bottom rail and the handrail are balusters measuring 1" by 2⅛" at 5½" on center.

Porch posts, newel posts, and railings are painted white. The steps and porch flooring are painted a medium-toned blue.

## Side Entrance Doorway

The side doorway is on the east elevation of the rear ell. The threshold measures 2½" tall. Doorway casing is described in the preceding *Siding and Trim* section.

In the doorway hangs an early, five-horizontal-panel wood door measuring 2'-6" wide by 6'-3" tall by 1⅜" thick. The door is hung with a pair of 4", five-knuckle, steel ball-pin hinges, closed with a mortise lock. A modern NPS installed galvanized metal hasp and padlock serve to further secure the door. On each side is a glass knob and a keyhole escutcheon. A ghost mark from a rosette backplate can be seen on the exterior of the door. The door is painted white to match the casing.

A screen door of three-panel, wood-spindle design is mounted to open to the interior in the distinctive Portsmouth fashion. The screen door is varnished.

## Side Entrance Steps and Porch

Three plank board treads on an open stringer lead from grade to the side porch. The first riser is 7" tall, the second 6½" tall, the third 6" tall, and the last 4¾" tall. The treads are about 3'-11" wide and



**Figure 92.** Cross-gable roof of the main block and rear ell, gable front dormer, and hipped front porch roof. Brick chimney with corbelled cap.

range from 11" to 1⁵/₄"deep. The steps are placed north of the center of the porch.

The east-facing two-bay porch fills the northeast corner of the main block and rear ell, measuring 13'-1" wide by 4'-7" deep. Portions of the foundation and floor deck may have been rebuilt around 1982.

Details of the porch framing are in the preceding *Structural Systems* section. With one exception, the side porch is of the same design as the front porch, described in the preceding Front Entrance Steps and Porch section; the side porch has three posts rather than four.

## Roofs

A cross-gable roof covers the main block and rear ell of the house. The south-facing dormer is covered with a simple gable roof. Roofs of both porches are hipped.

The roofing shingles for all roofs were replaced around 2005. The replacement shingle is a sawn red cedar with widths varying from 3½" to 9½" and an exposure of 5". According to the NPS ranger, the roofing material is the Certigrade Blue Label Number 1 Grade Red Cedar Shingle. The ridge caps of all the roofs are shingled.

## Chimney

Centered on the west wall of the main block is a brick interior end chimney. Measuring roughly 2'-9" north-south by 1'-3" east west at its base, it tapers to about 1'-10" north-south by 1'-6" east-west at second-floor level. The chimney extends above roof height by seven courses, corbelling out for the last two courses.

Bricks measure 2½" by 3¾" by 7¾" and are consistently reddish-orange in color. Joints are flush and filled with a tan mortar.

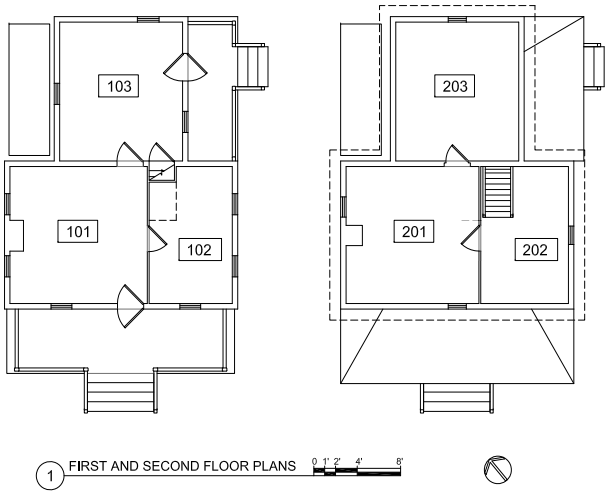



**Figure 93.** First and second floor plans.

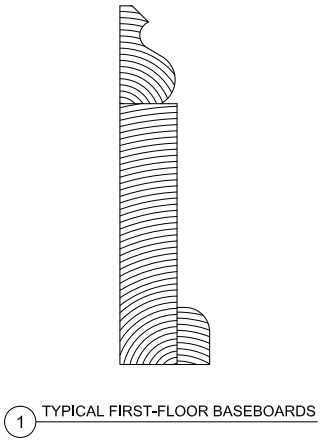



**Figure 94.** Section of typical first-floor baseboards.



**Figure 95.** Typical first-floor baseboards.



**Figure 96.** Typical second-floor baseboards.

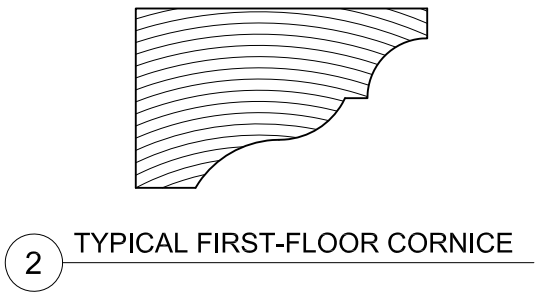



**Figure 97.** Section of typical first-floor cornice.

## Interior Features

Under the direction of Friends of Portsmouth Island, the first floor of the Henry Pigott House has been curated with period furnishings. Some belonged to Henry, while others were salvaged from other residences on Portsmouth. The provenance of individual pieces in the collection is unclear.

### Common Interior Features

#### Baseboards

Baseboards throughout the first floor are composed of a 7/8" by 4" plank board with a 7/8" by 1½" molded cap and a 7/8" by ½" shoe molding.

Throughout the second floor is a simpler 5/4"by 5/8" shoe molding.

#### Walls

Typical on walls throughout the first is vertical beaded board measuring 3¼" wide with a ¼" edge bead.

Sheathing on walls of the second floor varies.

#### Interior Doors and Door Hardware

Found throughout the first floor are three-horizontal-panel wood doors measuring 2'-5" wide by 5'-10½" tall by 1 3/8" thick. Doors are hung with a pair of 3", five-knuckle ball-pin butt hinges. Doors have mortise locks, glass knobs with a brass shank, brass rosette backplates, and brass keyhole escutcheons.

Doors and door hardware on the second floor varies.

#### Door Casing

Doorways throughout the first floor have 7/8" by 3¾" plank board casing with 3¾" by 3¾" by 7/8" corner blocks.

Door casing on the second floor varies.

#### Window Casing

Window casing and corner blocks match those of the doorways. Windows throughout the first floor have a 3/8" thick sill with a 7/8" by 3¾" apron.

Window casing on the second floor varies.

#### Cornice

Throughout the first floor is a crown molding measuring 2 7/16" deep by 1½" tall.



**Figure 98.** Typical first-floor interior three-panel door. Typical beaded-board walls and ceilings of first floor.



**Figure 99.** Typical plank board window and door casing and cornerblocks of first floor.



**Figure 100.** Typical first floor door hardware—glass knobs, rosette backplates, and keyhole escutcheons.



**Figure 101.** Typical first floor door hinges.



**Figure 102.** Typical beveled-edge sill and plank board apron of first-floor windows.

On the second floor, a 5/4"by 5/8" trim piece with rounded top edge is used as crown on the flat and sloping edges of the ceilings, as well as on the vertical wall edges.

### Ceiling
Typical on ceilings of the first floor are beaded boards measuring 3½" wide with 2 3/16" beads.

Ceiling sheathing on the second floor varies.

## Interior Features Room-by-Room

### Room 101 (Living Room)
Measuring 12'-8" east-west by 12'-5" north-south, this room occupies the entire west side of the main block. This room is original to the house.

### Flooring
Flooring is 3¼" by 7/8" tongue-and-groove pine, running east-west.

### Baseboards
Baseboards are of the type typical of the first floor, described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Walls
Walls are vertical beaded board typical of the first floor, and are described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Doorways
Three doorways serve Room 101. On the south wall is the front door to the house described in the preceding *Exterior Features* section.

On the east wall is a doorway to Room 102. The threshold measures ¾" tall by 2¾" deep. The doorway is hung with the typical three-panel door found on the first floor described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

On the north wall is a doorway to Room 103. The threshold measures ¾" tall by 6½" deep. The door is no longer present, the hinges remain on the frame. The dismounted door is currently stored inside the kitchen building.



**Figure 103.** Room 101 looking west.



**Figure 105.** Room 101 looking southeast.



**Figure 104.** Room 101 looking northeast.



**Figure 106.** Covered flue opening in Room 101. Cast iron stove is period, but not original to the house.



**Figure 107.** Three-panel wood spindle screen door in Room 101, mounted to open to the interior in the distinctive Portsmouth fashion.

Door casing typical of the first floor is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Windows
Three windows provide light, one on the south wall and two on the west wall. Each window opening measures 2'-0" wide by 4'-6" tall. A description of the windows is in the preceding *Exterior Features* section.

Window trim typical of the first floor of the house is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Cornice
A molded crown, typical of the first floor, runs the perimeter of the ceiling and is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Ceiling
Beaded-board ceilings typical of the first floor run east-west and are described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.



**Figure 108.** Room 102 looking northeast.

### Finishes
Walls and ceilings are painted white; all other surfaces are varnished.

### Heating and Cooling
The chimney serves a flue opening on the west wall of this room, now boarded over. The cast iron stove is not original to the house. Operable window sash allow for natural ventilation. No physical evidence was found of a mechanical heating or cooling system.

### Electrical System
No electrical system is present.

### Plumbing
No plumbing system is present.

### Security
All doors to the room have mortise locks.

### Fire Detection and Suppression
No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.

## Room 102 (Bedroom)
Measuring 7'-8" east-west by 12'-5" north-south, this room occupies the east side of the main block. This room is original to the house.

### Flooring
Flooring is 3¼" by $^{7}/_{8}$" tongue-and-groove pine, running east-west.

### Baseboards
Baseboards are of the type typical of the first floor, described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.



**Figure 109.** Room 102 looking northwest.



**Figure 110.** Room 102 looking southwest.

### Walls
Walls are vertical beaded board typical of the first floor, and are described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Doorways
The single doorway in Room 102 is described in the preceding *Room 101* section.

Door casing typical of the first floor is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Windows
Three windows provide natural light, one on the south wall and two on the east wall. Each window opening measures 2'-0" wide by 4'-6" tall. A description is in the preceding *Exterior Features* section.

Window trim typical of the first is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Cornice
A molded crown, typical of the first floor, runs the perimeter of the ceiling and is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Ceiling
Beaded-board ceilings typical of the first floor run east-west and are described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Finishes
Walls and ceilings are painted white; all other surfaces are varnished.

### Heating and Cooling
Operable window sash allow for natural ventilation. No physical evidence was found of a mechanical heating or cooling system.

### Electrical System
No electrical system is present.

### Plumbing
No plumbing system is present.

### Security
The door to the room has a mortise lock.

### Fire Detection and Suppression
No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.

## Room 103 (Kitchen)
Measuring 11'-4" east-west by 12'-7" north-south, this room occupies the entire rear ell. This room is original to the house.

### Flooring
Flooring is 3½" by $^{7}/_{8}$" tongue-and-groove pine, running north-south.

### Baseboards
Baseboards are of the type typical of the first floor, described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.



**Figure 111.** Room 103 looking southeast.



**Figure 113.** Room 103 looking northwest. Built-in cabinetry is modern.



**Figure 112.** Room 103 looking southwest.



**Figure 114.** Room 103 looking northeast.

### Walls

Walls are vertical beaded board typical of the first floor, and are described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Doorways

Three doorways serve Room 103, two on the south wall and one on the east wall. The east doorway is the exterior side door to the house, described in the preceding *Exterior Features* section.

The two doorways on the south wall share the same casing. The western doorway leads to Room 101 and is described in the preceding *Room 101* section.

The eastern doorway opens to the stairway to the second floor. The threshold measures ¾" tall by 2¾" deep. The doorway is hung with the typical three-panel door found on the first floor described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

Door casing typical of the first floor of the house is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Windows

Three windows provide the room with natural light, one on the east wall, one on the north wall, and one on the west wall. Each window opening measures 2'-0" wide by 4'-6" tall. A description can be found in the preceding *Exterior Features* section.

Window trim typical to the first floor of the house is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Cornice

A molded crown, of the design typically found on the first floor, runs the perimeter of the ceiling and is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.




**Figure 115.** Room 201 looking west. Brick chimney enclosed by vertical beaded boards.



**Figure 117.** Room 201 looking northeast, Room 203 beyond. Passageway is at location of former dormer.



**Figure 116.** Room 201 looking east. Later four-panel wood door.



**Figure 118.** Room 201 looking southeast. South-facing dormer window.

### Ceiling
Beaded-board ceilings typical of the first floor run north-south and are described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Built-In Cabinetry
Modern upper and lower wood cabinets are built into the northwest corner of the room. These cabinets were added around 2012.

### Finishes
Walls, cabinets, and ceilings are painted white; all other surfaces are varnished.

### Heating and Cooling
Operable window sash allow for natural ventilation. No physical evidence was found of a mechanical heating or cooling system.

### Electrical System
No electrical system is present.

### Plumbing
No plumbing system is present.

### Security
The doors to the room have mortise locks.

### Fire Detection and Suppression
No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.



**Figure 119.** Rim lock and glass knob on door to Room 202.



**Figure 121.** Lintel-cut V-groove board casing of doorway to Room 203.



**Figure 120.** Circa 1930s board-and-batten door to Room 203.



**Figure 122.** Tongue-and-groove dormer window casing with a double-bead.

## Room 201 (Bedroom)

Measuring 12'-3" east-west by 12'-5" north-south, this room occupies the west side of the main block. This room is original to the house.

### Flooring

Flooring is 4½" by 7/8" tongue-and-groove pine, running east-west.

### Baseboards

Baseboards are of the type typical of the second floor described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Walls

The north and south walls and ceilings are configured to accommodate dormer openings. Walls are a mixture of horizontal and vertical beaded board. The walls enclosing the chimney and the east wall of the room are vertical beaded board; all other wall surfaces are horizontal. Vertical beaded boards on the chimney measure 2½" wide and have one 3/16" center bead and beveled edges. Two sizes of horizontal beaded boards are used, measuring 5½" and 7½" wide, both having two 3/16" beads. The vertical beaded boards of the east wall match those installed horizontally.

### Doorways

Two doorways serve Room 201, one on the east wall and one on the north wall. The east doorway leads to Room 202. In the opening is a four-panel wood door of a later design measuring 2'-4" wide by 5'-10" tall by 1 3/8" thick. The door hardware matches that described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section with the exception of having a rim lock instead of a mortise lock. Casing around the doorway is ¾" by 4 5/8" lintel-cut plank board. The threshold measures ¾" tall by 5¾" deep.

The doorway to Room 203 was originally a dormer window. It has a board-and batten door measuring 2'-2" wide by 5'-10" tall by 5/8" thick. Vertical V-groove boards measure 5/8" by 4½". Three horizontal battens measure ¾" by 3" and have beveled edges. The door is hung on three face-mounted 3", five-knuckle ball-pin butt hinges and is closed with a wood swivel latch. Casing around the doorway is ¾" by 4¼" lintel-cut V-groove board. The threshold measures 1" tall by 8" deep and has beveled edges.

### Windows

A single-sash window on the west wall and a double-sash window in the south-facing dormer provide natural light. The window opening on the west wall measures 1'-10" wide by 1'-6" tall. The dormer window opening measures 1'-8" wide by 3'-8" tall. A description of the windows can be found in the preceding *Exterior Features* section. The dormer window has an interior wood-framed screen sash.

West window trim consists of ¾" by 4" lintel-cut plank board casing, a square cut sill, and an apron measuring ¾" by 3½". Dormer window casing is 7/8" by 2¼" tongue-and-groove boards with a double ¼" bead, lintel cut. The dormer window has a beveled-edge sill and an apron of the same beaded-board as the casing.

### Cornice

A simple trim piece with a rounded top edge, typical of the second floor, runs the perimeter of the ceiling and is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Ceiling

The main ceiling of the room is of beaded board matching the walls and runs east-west. The ceiling of the dormer is of matching beaded board, running north-south. The ceiling of the passage to Room 203 is of 4" wide V-groove board, also running north-south. Plank boards matching the casing around the east doorway are used to trim the ceiling at the openings to the dormer and the passage to Room 203.

### Finishes

Walls, ceilings, doors, and trim are painted white. The floor is varnished.

### Heating and Cooling

No physical evidence was found of a mechanical heating or cooling system.

### Electrical System

No electrical system is present.

### Plumbing

No plumbing system is present.

### Security

The doors to the room have a combination of rim locks and wood swivel latches.



**Figure 123.** Room 202 looking east.



**Figure 125.** Room 202 looking southwest.



**Figure 124.** Room 202 looking northwest.



**Figure 126.** Room 202 looking down staircase.

### Fire Detection and Suppression

No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.

## Room 202 (Bedroom)

Measuring 8'-1" east-west by 12'-5" north-south, this room occupies the east side of the main block. This room is original to the house.

### Flooring

Flooring is 4½" by $^{7}/_{8}$" tongue-and-groove pine, running east-west.

### Baseboards

Baseboards are of the type typical of the second floor described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Walls

Walls are a mixture of horizontal and vertical beaded board. The walls enclosing the stairwell are vertical beaded board, described in the preceding Room 103 section. The west wall is the exposed flush backs of the beaded boards composing the east wall of Room 201. Other wall surfaces are horizontal V-groove board measuring $2^{3}/_{8}$" wide.

### Doorways

Two doorways provide access to Room 202. The doorway at the bottom of the stairs is described



**Figure 127.** Room 201 looking up the stairs. Note the steepness of the risers and shallowness of the treads.

in the preceding *Room 103* section. The other is on the west wall and is described in the preceding *Room 201* section.

### Window
A single window on the east wall provides natural light. The window opening measures 1'-8" wide by 3'-8" tall. A description is in the preceding *Exterior Features* section.

Window trim consists of ¾" by 2 3/8" lintel-cut V-groove board casing, a square cut sill, and an apron matching the casing.

### Cornice
A simple trim piece with a rounded top edge, typical of the second floor, runs the perimeter of the ceiling and is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Ceiling
The ceiling is of the same 2 3/8" wide V-groove board as the walls.

### Staircase
The staircase is contained in this room. It is 2'-6" wide with ten treads and eleven risers. With the exception of the first tread, which measures 11½" deep, the treads are extremely shallow, ranging from 5¾" to 6½" deep. The first riser measures 10½" tall, the last measures 6¾" tall, and all others range from 7¼" to 7¾" tall.

A newel post measuring 2 5/8" square and extending 2'-2¾" in height is on each side of the steps at the top of the staircase. Each post has a cap measuring 3¾" square by 7/8" tall with a ¼" base and a 1" bevel. Extending from the newel posts to the north wall and running along the east and west sides of the staircase are handrails measuring 2 5/8" by 1½" with a pillowed top. Balusters spaced at 5" on center are at the second floor only, measure 1" square and extend 1'-8" from the floor to the bottom of the handrail. The handrail running along the stairs is attached directly to the wall.

### Finishes
Walls, ceilings, doors, and trim are painted white. The floor and all components of the staircase are varnished.

### Heating and Cooling
Operable window sash allow for natural ventilation. No physical evidence was found of a mechanical heating or cooling system.

### Electrical System
No electrical system is present.

### Plumbing
No plumbing system is present.

### Security
The doors to the room have a combination of rim locks and mortise locks.

### Fire Detection and Suppression
No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.

## Room 203 (Bedroom)
Measuring 11'-4" east-west by 12'-7" north-south, this room occupies the entire rear ell. This room was added in the 1930s.

### Flooring
Flooring is 3½" by 7/8" tongue-and-groove pine, running north-south.



**Figure 128.** Room 203 looking north.



**Figure 130.** Wood swivel latch of board-and-batten door.




**Figure 129.** Room 203 looking south. Board-and-batten door to Room 201.



**Figure 131.** Hinge of board-and-batten door.

### Baseboards

Baseboards are of the type typical of the second floor described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.

### Walls

Walls are a mixture of horizontal 5" wide and 3¼" wide beaded board, both with two $^{3}/_{16}$" beads. The south wall is horizontal 4" V-groove board.

### Doorway

A single doorway is on the south wall and is described in the preceding *Room 201* section.

### Window

A single window on the north wall provides natural light. The window opening measures 1'-8" wide by 3'-8" tall. A description is in the preceding *Exterior Features* section.

Window trim consists of $^{5}/_{8}$" by 3¼" lintel-cut tongue-and-groove board casing and a square cut sill.

### Cornice

A simple trim piece with a rounded top edge, typical of the second floor, runs the perimeter of the ceiling and is described in the preceding *Common Interior Features* section.



**Figure 132.** Siting of the fence line and kitchen building (left) in relation to the house.



**Figure 133.** Siting of the privy (far right), storage shed, and cool house (inside fence line) in relation to the house.

### Ceiling
The ceiling is of the same mixture of 5" wide and 3¼" wide beaded board as the walls.

### Finishes
The north, east, and west walls, and the ceiling, floor, and north window casing are varnished. The south wall is painted. The door and its casing are painted.

### Heating and Cooling
Operable window sash allow for natural ventilation. No physical evidence was found of a mechanical heating or cooling system.

### Electrical System
No electrical system is present.

### Plumbing
No plumbing system is present.

### Security
The door to the room has a wood swivel latch.

### Fire Detection and Suppression
No fire detection or suppression systems are in place.

## Outbuildings, Ancillary Structures, and Site Features

The Henry Pigott House site boasts one of the most complete collection of outbuildings, ancillary structures, and site features of the properties on Portsmouth Island. The complex includes a kitchen building, foundation of a former net house, a storage shed, and a privy; all northwest of the house. The latter three are arranged in a north-south row. Behind the house is a cool house. A wood cistern is at the northwest corner of the house. Site features include a wood picket fence, a modern mailbox, a modern dock and modern above-ground septic tank. Features no longer extant are a flagpole that once stood in the front lawn of the house until it collapsed during a 2003 hurricane, and a secondary wood cistern located behind the former net house and a fish cleaning table near the cool house, both present as late as 2007.

### Fence

The central portion of the Pigott property is surrounded by a wood picket fence. Standing 2'-4" tall, the fence has 1½" wide by ¾" thick pickets spaced 3" on center. The pickets are decorative, with alternating angle-cut tops, and are secured to top and bottom rails mounted on posts measuring 1⅝" by 3½". Historic photographs show that the fence has long been painted white.

Enclosing a space measuring 53'-2" east-west and 72'-5" north-south, or about 3,836 square feet, the fence has a linear length of 240'-9". Completely enclosed within the space are the house and the cool house. While access is gained to the kitchen building from within the fenced area, only the east wall of the kitchen building rests within the fence line. The fence terminates just west of the northeast and southeast corners of the kitchen building.

The house is more or less centered within the fenced area. The fenceline is about 19'-4" north of the house, 16'-3" east, 20'-9" south, and 15'-4" west. Access to the fenced area is gained by two identical gates, one to the north and one to the south. Measuring 3'-4" wide, the gates are both hinged on the east side and swing outward from the fenced area. The pickets on the gates are the same design as those of the fence, with the exception of their height, which rises from the fence height into a single over-scallop. The north gate is located



**Figure 134.** Kitchen building looking southwest. Shuttered window opening on north facade.



**Figure 135.** Kitchen building with partially collapsed brick chimney, looking northeast.



**Figure 136.** Board-and-batten siding and skirt board of kitchen building. Adjacency of fence line to south facade.



**Figure 137.** Board-and-batten door and front steps of kitchen building. Noticeably patched siding.



**Figure 139.** One of two identical windows on kitchen building south elevation. Trim include plank board casing, sloped sill, and angled drip board.



**Figure 138.** Mortise lock and ridged knob of kitchen building door. Note deterioration of batten.



**Figure 140.** Painted interior of kitchen building. Note varnished wood door from house stored inside.

about 1'-4" west of the cool house, while the south gate is more or less centered on the front steps of the house. Each gate is hung with a pair of 6", three-knuckle strap hinges and closed with a 4" galvanized metal hook.

Most of the fence appears to be comprised of modern materials. In the past, large sections have collapsed and have even been entirely washed away by storms. Portions of the fence are known to have been rebuilt in 1979, 1987, 2004, and 2012, and 2015.

## Kitchen Building

Largest of the outbuildings, the front-gabled kitchen building is oriented perpendicular to the house. Measuring 16'-5" by 10'-4", the building encloses a single room of about 143 square feet.

The kitchen building is located 19'-0" west of the west wall of the rear ell and 5'-4" north of the north wall of the main block of the house. Access is gained from the east façade inside the fenced area.

The building is said to have been added to the property around 1932. Whether it was built new or moved from a different location (a common practice on Portsmouth) is unknown. The building was repainted by NPS crews in 1979. Portions of the building were repaired and reconstructed after it was blown off its foundation during Hurricane Isabel in 2003.

### Structural System

The building sits above grade on a regular grid of 8" diameter wood posts, similar to those of the house. The foundation is concealed by a modern skirt board measuring 1½" thick by 8½", bolted to the posts.

The walls and roof are wood framed. Vertical 2" by 4" studs extend 6'-1" between a bottom plate measuring 7/8" by 3¼" and a top plate measuring 2" by 5¾". A continuous horizontal brace measuring 1 1/8" by 3¾" is at mid-height. A diagonal brace runs from mid-height to the bottom plate on each side of the west wall.

Rafters measuring 1" by 4¾" spaced at 2'-3" on center form the structure of the gable roof. Deck boards measure 2" by 8" to 10", with a ½"to ¾" gap between boards. There is no ridge beam. The rafters meet in a mitered joint and are laterally braced by collar ties. Ceiling joists are spaced about every third rafter, though no ceiling is installed. Historical photos indicate that the framing has always been exposed on the interior. Utilitarian open wood shelves are set between the open framing members.

### Flooring

Flooring measures 7/8" thick, varying in width from 3¾" to 7½". Floor boards run north-south.

### Siding and Trim

Board-and-batten siding covers the exterior walls. Boards measure ¾" thick, with widths varying from 9" to 10". Battens measure ¾" thick, with widths of 3½" and 4½". Corner boards vary greatly in dimension, measuring ½" by 4¼", ¾" by 3½", and 7/8" by 3½". Fascia boards also vary, measuring 1½" by 4½" and 5/4" by 4". Window and door casing is lintel-cut plank board measuring ¾" by 5". Windows have an angled drip board and square-cut sill. Siding is painted yellow common to the buildings on Portsmouth, while all trim is painted white.

### Openings

The kitchen building has a single doorway, which is centered on the east wall. The board-and-batten door measures 2'-6" by 6'-7". Flush vertical boards measure ¾" thick, with widths varying from 10½" to 11". There are three horizontal battens on the interior face. The top batten measures 7/8" by 5" and the mid and bottom battens measure 7/8" by 8". The door is hung with a pair of 6", three-knuckle strap hinges and is closed with a galvanized metal hasp with a modern padlock. Also on the door is a mortise lock with an exterior key escutcheon and ridged knobs with a plain rosette backplate. The doorway is accessed by two wood steps on an open stringer.

A wood swivel latch and ghost marks of hinges found on the inside face of the door frame are evidence that the doorway once held a screen door that opened to the inside of the building in the distinctive Portsmouth fashion. The dismounted screen door was stored inside the kitchen building as late as 1980.

A single window opening, measuring 1'-10" wide by 2'-2" tall, is more or less centered on the north wall. The opening is protected by an exterior board-and-batten shutter on the exterior. The window sash, if still present, is obscured from view by architectural salvage stored inside the building.



**Figure 141.** Cool house looking northwest.



**Figure 142.** Cool house looking southwest.

Two identical six-over-six-light, wood double-sash windows measuring 2'-4" wide by 3'-10" tall are equally spaced on the south wall.

### Roofing

Roofing is random-width $^{3}/_{8}$" by 18" wood shingles with a 6" exposure, similar to those used on the house. A shingled ridge cap runs along the gable peak. The current roof dates to 2009.

### Chimney

The lower portion of an exposed brick chimney measuring about 1'-4" square is slightly south of center on the west wall. The bricks differ from those of the chimney of the house. The color ranges from a more prevalent reddish-orange to an occasional dark brown.



**Figure 143.** Cool house looking northeast.

The chimney partially collapsed during Hurricane Isabel in 2003. Inside the kitchen building is a cast iron stove that connects to the flue.

### Interior Finishes

The wall framing members, ceiling joists, and exposed interior surface of the exterior siding are painted a light blue. Exposed ceiling rafters and deck boards are painted white. The floorboards are bare wood.

## Cool House

Smallest of the outbuildings, the front-gabled cool house is oriented south, like the house. Measuring 2'-7" by 2'-2", the structure encloses a single space of about five-and-a-half square feet.

The cool house is located 15'-9" north of the rear ell, 17'-9" west of the east fence line, and 1'-4" south of the north fence line.

An original cool house is said to have been added to the site in the 1930s. It was blown off its foundation during Hurricane Isabel in 2003. Though damaged from the storm, the original cool house was rescued and placed back on its foundation, remaining there until it was largely



**Figure 144.** Siting of storage shed and privy in relation to northwest corner of fence line.



**Figure 146.** Storage shed and privy looking southwest.



**Figure 145.** Storage shed and privy looking northwest.



**Figure 147.** Storage shed and privy looking east.

reconstructed around 2012. The dimensions of the current cool house vary considerably from the original.

### Structural System

It appears that only the supporting wood piers were reused in the 2012 reconstruction.

The cool house sits 1'-6" above grade on a group of wood posts that include three apparently salvaged milled posts, two measuring approximately 4" by 6" and the third 2" by 4". A variety of trim boards provide lateral support.

The walls are built of plank boards of various widths assembled vertically.

The gable roof is framed with two pairs of rafters, each pair constructed of nominal 1" by 4" lumber.

The structure of this utilitarian building is exposed on the interior and is without finish.

### Flooring

The base flooring of the house rests atop the piers and consists of plank boards of various widths. The floorboards are bare wood.

### Openings

Each wall has a screen-covered opening for the essential ventilation. On the east and west elevations, the opening measures approximately 8" wide by 2'-2" tall. On the north and south elevations, the screened area measures about 1'-0" wide by 2'-0" tall. On the south wall, the screen is part of the access door which has two small three-knuckle butt hinges and a wood swivel latch.

### Roofing

The roofing material is Blue Label sawn-cut cedar shingles of varying widths, the same roofing shingle used on the house. A shingled ridge cap runs along the gable peak. The current roof dates to the 2012 reconstruction.



**Figure 148.** One of two identical modern board-and-batten doors on east facade of storage shed.



**Figure 149.** West-facing X-braced board-and-batten doors of storage shed. Painted exposed framing.

## Storage Shed

To the northwest of the kitchen building and also facing east, the storage shed has a low shed roof sloping to the west. It measures 10'-4" wide by 7'-8" deep. The structure encloses a single room of about 77 square feet.

The storage shed is located 22'-5" north of the fence line, and 22'-10" west of the fence line.

Said to date to the house's construction around 1902, a large portion of the structural system was likely rebuilt after the building was blown off its foundations sometime prior to 1979 and again during Hurricane Isabel in 2003.

### Structural System

Set on a regular grid of 8" diameter wood posts, the storage shed is raised 1'-5" above grade. The walls and roof of the building are wood framed. Floor joists measure 1½" by 5½" and are spaced 1'-4" on center. Rafters also measure 1½" by 5½" and are spaced 2'-2" on center. Deck boards measure ¾" by 7".

The structure of this utilitarian building is exposed on the interior and is painted white.

### Flooring

Flooring measures ¾" by 7" and runs north-south. Floorboards are bare wood.

### Siding and Trim

Flush vertical plank board siding measures ¾" by 6½". A layered fascia consists of ¾" by 3 3/8" plank board on top of ¾" by 5" plank board. There are no corner boards or casing, nor is there a skirt board. Siding is painted yellow, while all trim is painted white.

### Openings

Three doorways provide access to the interior. There are no windows. Two identical board-and-batten doors measuring 2'-1" wide by 5'-6½" tall are equally spaced on the east wall. Flush vertical boards measure ¾" thick, and vary from 5" to 7½" wide. Three interior horizontal battens measure 1 ½" by 3½". The doors are each hung with a pair of 4", three-knuckle T hinges and are closed with a wood swivel latch.

The third door opening spans the entire width of the west wall. Double board-and-batten doors measuring 4'-6" wide by 5'-7" tall are now nailed shut. Flush vertical boards measure ¾" by 6½".



**Figure 150.** Board-and-batten doors of privy.



**Figure 151.** Wood swivel latch of privy door.



**Figure 152.** Metal T hinge of privy door.

Interior X-brace battens measure 1½" by 3½". The doors are each hung with a pair of 4", three-knuckle strap hinges and are closed with an interior sliding barrel bolt.

All door hardware is modern metal. The southernmost of the double doors and the two doors on the east side are of modern construction, dating after 2007 when they were listed as missing.

### Roofing

Roofing is asphalt roll, the age is unknown.

## Privy

Just north of the storage shed is the east-facing front-gabled privy. It measures 4'-2" wide by 4'-5" deep. The walls enclose a single room of about 18 square feet.



**Figure 153.** Exposed roof rafters and deck boards.



**Figure 154.** Painted privy interior, with double seat.



**Figure 155.** Modern reconstruction of historic wood cistern in shaded northwest corner of house.



**Figure 157.** Foundation posts and entry step of former net house. Some posts are modern replacements.



**Figure 156.** Opening for downspout in cistern lid, usually covered with brick-weighted board to right.



**Figure 158.** Modern wood dock, since rebuilt. Modern metal mailbox to far left.

The privy is located 4'-2" north of the storage shed, 37'-3" north of the fence line, and 22'-9" west of the fence line.

Said to date to the house's construction around 1902, a large portion of the privy was apparently rebuilt after it was blown off its foundations and sustained heavy damage during Hurricane Isabel in 2003.

### Structural System

The double-seat privy is raised 1'-2" above grade on a regular grid of modern 6" by 6" wood posts. The walls and roof are wood framed. Bottom plates, corner posts, and mid-height horizontal bracing measure 3" by 4". Three pairs of rafters measuring 5/4" by 4" support the gable roof. Deck boards measure 1" by 8" with ¾" to 1½" gaps.

The structure of this utilitarian building is exposed on the interior and is painted white.

### Flooring

Flooring measures ¾" by 7½" and runs north-south. Floorboards are bare wood.

### Siding and Trim

Flush vertical-board siding measures ¾" by 6½". A single tongue-and-groove beaded board measuring 5/8" by 4½" serves as fascia. Casing is lintel-cut tongue-and-groove board measuring ¾" by 3¼". The window and door have an angled drip board. Siding is painted yellow c, while all trim is painted white.

### Openings

Off-center to the north on the east wall is the only doorway. The board-and-batten door measures 1'-8½" wide by 5'-4" tall. Flush vertical boards measure ¾" by 6½". Three interior horizontal battens measure 2" by 4". The door is hung with a pair of 4", three-knuckle T hinges and is closed with a wood swivel latch.



**Figure 159.** Southwest view from Pigott front yard across Doctor's Creek with Portsmouth Methodist Church beyond.

A single window opening, measuring 1'-2" wide by 1'-10" tall, is centered on the south wall. The sash is no longer present.

### Roofing

Roofing is random-width 3/8" by 18" wood shingles with a 6" exposure, similar to those used on the house. A shingled ridge cap runs along the gable peak. The current roof dates to 2009.

## Cistern

A wood-framed cistern, reconstructed around 2007-08, is located adjacent to the west wall of the rear ell of the house. Measuring 3'-9" east-west and 11'-11" north-south, the cistern is about 3" west and 5" north of the house. The cistern is raised on a platform of 1½" by 9¼" plank boards resting on treated 8" diameter wood posts and vertical 1½" by 9¼" sill plates. The walls of the cistern are of boards matching those of the platform beneath. The lid is convex and constructed of ¾" by 3¼" tongue-and-groove boards. Water was collected by a gutter and downspout on the northwest corner of the house, no longer extant.

## Net House Foundation

Largely destroyed by Hurricane Isabel in 2013, the net house sat northwest of the kitchen building and also faced east. The only remains of the net house are six 8" diameter wood foundation posts extending 1'-6" above grade, and a single step composed of a wood plank board supported by a wood post on either side. The tread measures 3'-10" wide by 1'-0" deep.

The layout of the foundation indicates that the building measured about 9'-6" east-west and 7'-6" north-south, enclosing a space of about 71 square feet. The foundation is 10'-2" south of the storage shed, 22'-0"west of the fence line, and 5'-3" north of the fence line.

Said to date to the house's construction around 1902, the net house served as storage for fishing and oystering gear.

## Site Features

A modern plastic above-ground septic tank in a wood-framed enclosure is just east of the house.

Northwest of the house, a wood dock about forty feet long extends into Doctor's Creek. Historic photographs show that no dock was associated with the Pigott property until it appears in 2003 photographs. The dock was largely rebuilt around 2014.

A metal mailbox on a wood post is located near the west end of the dock. Historic photographs show that no mailbox was associated with the Pigott property until it appears in a 1976 photograph. The mailbox was moved to its present location after 2003 storm damage.



**Figure 160.** South view from Pigott front yard. Visible from left to right are: George and Patsy Dixon House, Post Office and General Store, Robert and Caroline Wallace House, and Tom and Lucy Gilgo House.

## Character Defining Features

### Distinctive Characteristics of the Site

- Level grade.
- Mowed grass lawn immediately surrounding the house.
- Tall grasses and low shrubs surrounding the grassy site with interspersed clumps of wind-bent trees.
- Location of buildings and site features.
- Wood picket fence and gates.
- Dirt road adjacent to the house.
- View of Ocracoke Inlet to the north.
- Long vistas across Doctor's Creek of the Church and other buildings on the east bank.
- View of the Tom and Lucy Gilgo house and others buildings on the west side of Doctor's Creek.

### Distinctive Characteristics of the Building Exterior

- Wooden open stairs to the front and side porches.
- Open front and side porches with chamfered posts supporting wood-shingled hipped roofs.
- Tongue-and-groove floor boards of the front and side porches.
- Exposed, vertical-cut rafter ends of the front and side porch roofs.
- Wood hand rail and balustrade with chamfered newel posts at front and side porches.
- T-plan configuration.
- Orthogonally-oriented wood lattice apron concealing the low wood foundation posts.
- Wood weatherboard siding.
- Four-over-four-light, wood double-sash windows.
- Paired, flush-panel, wood window shutters.
- Four-light, wood single-sash window on the west gable end of the main block.
- Single-light-over-three-horizontal-panel wood sash front door.
- Five-horizontal-panel wood side door.
- Early door hardware, including glass knobs with brass shanks, rosette backplates, keyhole escutcheons, and mortise locks.
- Plank board door and window casing (lintel-cut), drip edge, sill, and apron.
- Plank board fascia, corner boards, and skirt board.
- Boxed eaves and eave returns.
- Wood-shingled cross-gable roof of the main Body and rear ell.

- Triple-A roofline.
- South-facing gable dormer.
- Brick chimney with corbelled cap.

## Distinctive Characteristics of the Building Interior

- Varnished tongue-and-groove wood flooring throughout the house in 3¼", 3½", and 4½" widths.
- Beaded-board walls and ceilings of both levels.
- Varnished decorative baseboard throughout the first floor.
- Absence of baseboard at second-floor level.
- Varnished molded cornice throughout the first floor.
- Sloping ceilings at second-floor level and quarter-round trim at junction of walls and ceilings.
- Early varnished three-horizontal-panel wood doors.
- Early three-panel, wood-framed screen doors of wood spindle design, that open to the interior of the house in the distinctive Portsmouth style.
- Early door hardware, including glass knobs with brass shanks, rosette backplates, keyhole escutcheons, and mortise locks.
- Later four-panel wood door with rim lock and board and batten door with swivel latch on upper level.
- Varnished plank board window and door casing with corner blocks, square-cut sill, and apron found throughout the first floor.
- Beaded boards arranged vertically to cover chimney stack at second-floor level.
- Built-in wood cabinetry in Room 103 (Kitchen).
- Narrow, steep staircase to the second floor with extremely shallow treads.
- Varnished handrail, balustrade, and newel posts of the staircase.

## Distinctive Characteristics of the outbuildings/Ancillary Structures

### Kitchen Building

- Location at fence line.
- Board-and-batten exterior siding.
- Wood-shingled gable roof.
- Six-over-six-light, wood double-sash windows.
- Board-and-batten door with mortise lock, ridged knobs, rosette backplates, and keyhole escutcheons.
- Plank board door and window casing (lintel-cut), drip edge, sill, and apron.
- Plank board fascia, corner boards, and skirt board.
- Remains of brick chimney.
- Wood steps.
- Board-and-batten window shutter.
- Wood swivel latch and evidence of interior screen door.
- Exposed wood wall and roof framing on the interior.
- Bare wood floorboards.
- Interior wood shelves.
- Painted interior finish.

### Cool house

- Wood-shingled gable roof.
- Distinctive centerline foundation post configuration.
- Wood-framed screen door and window openings.
- Exposed wood wall and roof framing on the interior.

### Storage Shed

- Location in row of outbuildings.
- Shed roof.
- Flush, vertically-laid plank-board siding.
- Board-and-batten doors.
- Wood plank board fascia.
- Exposed wood wall and roof framing on the interior.

- Bare wood floorboards.
- Painted interior finish.

**Privy**

- Location in row of outbuildings.
- Wood-shingled gable roof.
- Flush, vertically-laid plank board siding.
- Board-and-batten door with wood swivel latch.
- Window opening.
- Tongue-and-groove board door and window casing, with angled drip board.
- Tongue-and-groove board fascia.
- Exposed wood wall and roof framing on the interior.
- Bare wood floorboards.
- Painted interior finish.
- Wood double-privy seat.

**Cistern**

- Protected location at northwest corner of house.
- Wood platform on exposed wood posts.
- Plank board walls.
- Tongue-and-groove board convex top.

**Net House Foundation**

- Location in row of outbuildings.
- Round foundation posts.
- Wood plank board step.

## Summary of Physical Conditions and Other Concerns

Repairs conducted by NPS in the late 1970s, throughout the 1980s, and in the mid-2000s were extensive and addressed major concerns. General upkeep provided by the Friends of Portsmouth Island group over the last several years has addressed many of the building's aesthetic issues. Overall, the house is in good shape, and the outbuildings in good to fair condition.

While most current concerns are aesthetic in nature and represent no threat to the safety of the general public or NPS staff or to the building, a handful of concerns do require attention.

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

- There are no immediate threats to the building.
- There are no immediate threats to the safety of occupants. The narrow and steep interior staircase is a distinctive feature of the house, and should be recognized as a potential trip hazard.

### High Priority: High Potential for Becoming a Threat to Occupants or Building

- The semi-collapsed brick chimney of the kitchen building poses a high threat of water infiltration through the now unprotected flue opening. The fallen bricks scattered in the yard also pose a tripping hazard for the public/staff.
- The unboarded window opening devoid of sash on the privy represents a high threat of both water infiltration and infiltration by vermin.

### Medium Priority: Delayed Threat to Occupants or Building

- The floors in the kitchen building, the storage shed and the privy are in deteriorated condition.
- The cool house is leaning on its foundation posts.

### Low Priority: Aesthetic Concerns Posing No Threat to Occupants or Building

- The finishes of the porch floor decks and the front steps are failing.
- There is an open hole in the ceiling of Room 102 and poorly patched holes in the floor and ceiling of Room 202, where a ventilation stack once ran for a chemical toilet (1970s or after) formerly in Room 102.
- The finish of the ceiling in Room 103 is failing.
- The finishes of the second-floor interior walls and ceilings are failing.
- The middle of the three interior battens of the kitchen building door is deteriorated at the location of the door hardware.

- All finishes of most outbuilding exteriors are failing.
- The interior finished of the kitchen building and the storage shed are failing.
- The nails used on the fence and several of the outbuildings are severely rusted and have stained the painted exterior surfaces.

# II.A Ultimate Treatment and Use

The Henry Pigott House and its outbuildings and ancillary structures are part of a group of historic structures that provide what are 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. Treatment and use of the Pigott complex should be predicated on preserving its place in that ensemble of buildings.

The house is historically significant for its associations with the Pigott family, who resided there for nearly seven decades starting in 1904. The Pigotts were the only black family to return to Portsmouth Island after the Civil War. More importantly, this was the house of Henry Pigott (1896-1971), one of Portsmouth's most famous residents. The house is also architecturally significant as an excellent local interpretation of a cottage with a typical North Carolina triple-A roofline. Henry Pigott's pride of ownership and continual maintenance of the property, even as Portsmouth was in decline, illustrates the resilience of Portsmouth and its residents.

The siting of the Pigott House on the northern edge of the village is significant to the history of Portsmouth. The house is one of the few truly riparian complexes on the island. Situated near the mouth of Doctor's Creek – a brackish tidal creek off the Ocracoke Inlet that quickly ends in the marshy interior of the island – the house has a commanding position over one of the few sites



**Figure 161.** Henry Pigott House viewed from southeast.

where it was possible to bring a boat to shore. This is also the site from which Henry Pigott launched his skiff to meet the mailboat.

In 1968, Henry, like most Portsmouth owners, sold his house and land to the State of North Carolina for the recently authorized National Seashore. He retained a life estate on the property that allowed him to live out the rest of his days in his house.[133] The life estate in the property ended with Henry's death in 1971, and full ownership transferred to the State of North Carolina and later to NPS

In the 1970s, NPS 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 were not installed.[134] The Pigott House was among those in the leasing program.

The leasing program at Portsmouth Village, like that at Cape Lookout Village, came to a close as the initial lease period ended. A plan for reuse was developed for the historic buildings at Cape Lookout Village after there was an unsuccessful challenge to the NPS decision not to simply renew the leases. There is not yet a similar plan for those at Portsmouth.

Reestablishment of the leasing program at Portsmouth seems unlikely given the more stringent code requirements for sanitary facilities now in place. Installing and maintaining the sanitary facilities during the initial phase of the leasing program was a constant challenge due to the shallow water table.[135] In addition, the Long-Range Interpretive Plan notes that leasing may not be "desirable or feasible."

Continuing the use for which an historic structure was built is almost always the best option for historic preservation. However, in the case of the Pigott House, the current use as a house museum is the best option. The 1982 General Management Plan envisioned the interiors of some buildings used for interpretation.[136] The GMP directed this interpretation towards themes of "ethnic and religious minorities, occupational groups, and economic classes," noting that Portsmouth Village is uniquely able to address these issues.[137] Given the iconic status of Henry Pigott as one of Portsmouth's last three residents, his death marking the end of Portsmouth Village as an active community, the house is one of the most important residences on the island. The sheer number of stories in the conscious memory of Portsmouth involving members of the Pigott family is astounding and can be most effectively told to the visiting public through interpretation of the property.

As stated in the 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 . . . ."[138] Maintaining a potable water supply has always been an issue at Portsmouth, and with a rising and increasingly saline water table, wells may no longer be practical. Using the property as a house museum eliminates the need for sanitary facilities or a source for potable water located on premises, as visitors can rely on those in the Visitors Center at the Theo Salter House (NPS 519).

The use of the property as a house museum necessitates its being routinely opened to the public. The benefits are twofold. First, the availability of this cultural resource to the visiting public enhances the interpretation and experience of the Portsmouth Historic District. Second, any threat of vandalism is outweighed by the benefits of "eyes on the building," which can help forestall the inevitable neglect that results when a building is not being used. It is noteworthy that long-time park personnel cannot recall an instance of vandalism, a problem at some parks.

While the steps both NPS and Friends of Portsmouth Island have taken in the creation of the present house museum are laudable, the property has much potential yet to be utilized. The Pigott complex boasts one of the most complete collections of outbuildings on the island. Restoration of the existing outbuildings

133. Deed Book 290/411, July 18, 1968. Harriet, "Cottage Biography."
134. Ellen Fulcher Cloud interview, April 26, 2014 Homecoming.
135. Cape Lookout National Seashore, Foundation Document, 2012, p. 29.
136. NPS, Cape Lookout National Seashore GMP, 1982, p. 43.
137. Ibid, p. 1.
138. Cape Lookout National Seashore, Long-Range Interpretive Plan, pp. 38-39.

and reconstruction of the net house would be of immense educational value to the visiting public.

The net house is of particular interest as it is the only documented building of that typology in Portsmouth Village. In addition, it has close ties to the Pigott family's history of fishing and oystering. In this case, the educational benefits of reconstruction of the outbuilding and its incorporation into the overall interpretation outweigh other considerations.

Given the importance of the Pigott family, especially Henry, and the completeness of the house complex, the Recommended Ultimate Treatments are as follows:

***The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the house is Preservation of the exterior of the house as a major feature in the district's cultural landscape and Preservation of the interior to accommodate modern use as a house museum. The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the cool house is preservation. The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the kitchen building and privy is interior and exterior restoration. The Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the storage shed is exterior restoration. And finally, the Recommended Ultimate Treatment for the net house is reconstruction.***

# 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 to NPS policy, directives, and functional requirements. In addition to protecting cultural resources, these requirements also 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 one 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.

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 allows 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 not subject to review except 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 as 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.[139] 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."[140] The GMP directed this interpretation towards themes of "ethnic and religious minorities, occupational groups, and economic classes," noting that Portsmouth Village is uniquely able to address these issues.[141]

The Henry Pigott House is specifically addressed in the Park's 2011 Long-Range Interpretive Plan. It acknowledges that the Friends of Portsmouth Island group had requested and received special authorization in 2010 "to take responsibility for rehabilitation of the Henry Pigott House, and plan to open the house to the public as a furnished house exhibit and site depicting Henry Pigott's home."[142] The LRIP also calls for an Historic Furnishings Plan (HFP) in addition to an HSR for the Pigott house to be conducted "as soon as possible," noting that these documents "will form the foundation for what the Friends (of Portsmouth Island) plan to do."[143] The work conducted thus far by the Friends group has been without the aid of these to foundational documents.

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

140. NPS, Cape Lookout National Seashore General Management Plan, 1982, p. 43.
141. Ibid, p. 1.
142. NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2011, p. 43.
143. Ibid, p. 44.

# II.C Alternatives for Treatment and Use

In accordance with NPS policy, other alternatives for treatment and use have also been considered in addition to the Ultimate Treatment and Use described above. While perhaps not recommended under the present circumstances, these alternative approaches nevertheless fulfill the basic park mandate to preserve the historic resources at Portsmouth.

## Alternative #1: House Museum Interpreted to the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

An interesting alternative might be to continue the current use as a house museum, but to change the date of interpretation to a later point in Henry Pigott's life, with the interior and exterior restored to their appearance at the end of the period of significance of the Portsmouth Historic District suggested in the 2007 Cultural Landscape Report. With appropriate furnishing and decoration, the house could exhibit something of the lifestyle of Henry and Lizzie as well as other residents of the community in the second half of the twentieth century. Properly interpreted, the house could help visitors understand that time did not stand still on Portsmouth and that some modern conveniences like gas heaters and appliances aided life on the island for the few remaining residences.

Interpretation to this period would have the added benefit of being better able to tell the story of Portsmouth's last male resident and his duties as caretaker for the Island. Unlike many of the other residences, this house is in the unique position of being able to tell the story of a life of isolation in a rapidly dying community.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- provides public benefit and interpretive opportunity by interpreting a period during which the vast majority of the other houses on the island would have been vacant;
- expands visitor understanding of the role Henry Pigott played in the community.

This approach would have the following disadvantages:

- requires a significant outlay of funds to pursue the necessary research and investigations to accurately recreate the historic interiors;
- negates the interpretive work already in place.

## Alternative #2: Restoration ca. 1925

An second alternative might be restoration of the house to its appearance prior to Henry Pigott's remodeling in the 1930s. Such an approach could enhance visitors' understanding of the early community and the nature of its built environment in the early twentieth century.

This approach would include removal of the second floor addition to the rear, restoration of the original ell roof line, and reconstruction of the north dormer on the main block, the window for which was moved to the second-story gable end of the current rear ell. The front porch would be removed and the shed-roofed porch that existed before the 1930s would be reconstructed.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- enhance visitors' understanding of the early-twentieth century community and the nature of its built environment;
- the simplified design would also make long-term maintenance less costly;
- additional building archaeology may clarify



**Figure 162.** Lionel Gilgo as a child helping Henry Pigott wind twine for fishing nets, ca. 1925. The east façade, rear porch and ell, and front porch roof are visible. (CALO b47-2, Lionel Gilgo Coll.)

the construction date of the original portions of the house and could possibly clarify dates of the net house, storage shed, and privy;

It would have the following disadvantages:

- destruction of so much historic fabric would likely be judged an "adverse effect" and trigger protracted Section 106 consultation;
- the proposed restoration would be based on very limited archival documentation;
- would likely anger the local community by destroying a part of the cultural landscape they have always known and associate with Henry Pigott.

# II.D Recommendations for Treatment and Use

The following recommendations are intended to achieve the Ultimate Treatment and Use described above for the Henry Pigott House: preservation of the exterior of the house as a major feature in the district's cultural landscape and preservation of the interior to accommodate modern use as a house museum. Most of what is described below is compatible with a variety of uses and is intended to incorporate routine maintenance of the house as it exists today, repairing and, if necessary, replacing in-kind, as well as conducting routine inspections to minimize and prevent damage to the historic fabric of the building.

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.

## Portsmouth Village - General

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.

*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 Topographic Survey of 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 contingency plans.
- 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.

## 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, but the natural process of decay of vegetation and generation of new humus has created a bowl-like depression beneath many houses on Portsmouth. 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.

The foundation of the Henry Pigott House is now and has been historically concealed by a wood lattice apron, obfuscating the extent to which drainage may be a concern. Any existing depression might be filled with sand, gravel, or shell, but the low elevation of the building's wood frame would make that difficult.

Typically, the use of gutters and a drainage system to direct water away from a building is part of a solution, but the topography of the site would probably make such an approach of little utility.

Raising the house and regrading the site to eliminate the depression might eliminate this problem should it exist, but would likely require replacement of all of the foundation posts. In this case, the fact that the foundation posts are concealed makes the raised nature of the house the character defining feature rather than the posts themselves. The park can do little to combat rising sea level and the consequential threat to cultural and natural resources, however they can be more efficient to manage the effects with more frequent inspection for termites and other hazards to the building.

*General Recommendations*

- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

*Recommendations for House Site*

- Investigate need for and feasibility of establishing drainage swales.
- Investigate need for and feasibility of partial or complete filling of any existing depression beneath the house.
- Raising the house should be considered; a significant change in elevation could affect the house's character-defining features.
- Conduct rigorous annual inspections for termite infestation and treat accordingly.
- When fence repairs are needed, return to historic design (*see page 115*).
- Secure clearance from an archaeologist before commencing work that might require ground disturbance.

## Structural Systems

The one-and-a-half-story house is set on low wood foundation posts and has a conventional wood frame.

### Foundation Posts

As mentioned above, the foundation of the Henry Pigott House is concealed by a wood lattice apron, hiding the condition of foundation posts. In many locations on the island, standing water has precipitated rot in wood posts that are set directly into the ground. Typically, no metal shields separate the posts from the house's wood frame to protect the structure from termite infestation and damage.

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

*Recommendations for Foundation Posts*

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

### Wood Framing

Like the foundation, the wood framing is concealed from view by floorboards and wall and ceiling cladding. From all outward appearances the framing seems to be in generally fair condition; ridge lines remain straight and floors level. The house, like many others of the period, is likely under-structured by modern standards, especially in terms of the sizing and spacing of framing members, but there is no apparent systemic failure. However, the nails used in framing have inevitably corroded in the damp, salty environment, making the building more subject to wind damage and other stresses.

*Recommendations for Wood Framing*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.



**Figure 163.** Center section of front porch deck boards replaced, photographed July 1978 when the house was still pink. Damaged deck boards lying in grass. (CALO acc. 00514)

- Conduct routine inspections, some 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.
- Provide additional post-and-beam supports for the floor joists to maintain sound structural system.

## Exterior Features

The house is finished with materials typical of the early twentieth century. The NPS and the Friends of Portsmouth Island preservation group have replaced in-kind a significant amount of exterior wood siding and trim elements.

### Doors

The exterior doors of the house remain in generally good condition. Screen doors, opening to the interior in the traditional Portsmouth manner, are attached at both exterior doorways. The wood-framed screen doors also remain in good condition. Early, if not original door hardware remains in place and operable.

*Recommendations for Doors*

- Ensure all hardware remains operable.
- Apply lubricant on a regular basis.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Maintain sound paint finish at all exposed surfaces.

### Windows

Early if not original sash remain in all window openings and are in good-to-fair condition. Painted finishes are in good condition; however, there is visible staining from rusting nails. Window glazing is in generally good condition. Many windows have wood-framed single-sash screens; those present are in fair condition.

Window shutters are missing from first-floor windows on all but the south side (front) of the house where the windows are protected by the porch. Photographic evidence shows shutters installed at all first-floor windows. Closed and secured shutters could provide protection during the storm season. Using the existing shutters as a template, new shutters of an historic design could be manufactured as replacements for those that are missing.

*Recommendations for Windows*

- Ensure all sash are in working order, repair and repaint as needed using historically accurate colors in use during Henry Pigott's occupancy.
- Repair existing and consider replacing missing wood-framed screens.
- Reconstruct the missing first-floor window shutters using existing as a template.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

### Roofing

The roofing is in good condition with no apparent leaks. No shingles appear to be missing or loose. As with most of the historic structures in Portsmouth, no gutters are present.

*Recommendations for Roofing*

- Routinely inspect for missing or loose shingles; repair or replace as needed.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Routinely inspect for roof leaks, especially at flashing.

### Siding and Trim

Most of the house's exterior woodwork is in good condition. Painted finishes are recent and remain intact.

In keeping true to the historic appearance of the house during most of Pigott's years there, it is recommended that the house's siding be returned to their historic pink paint color. Documentary evidence is strong that the house was not yellow until NPS crew painted it in 1979. More to the point, the house was painted pink by Henry Pigott in about 1934 and remained so through his life and until 1979; it was pink for the majority of the recommended period of significance. Interpretation as a house museum should reflect this.

The initial pink color was apparently an error in the paint order. It is an oft-told part of Pigott's legacy, and he consciously repainted it pink several times as evidenced by 1960s photographs. 1980 photographs of the house interior (untouched since Pigott's death) show interior first-floor rooms all painted pink as well. Even a bureau in a second-floor bedroom is painted pink.

A correct interpretation of the house would return the historic pink color to the house, helping the public to see tangible and accurate evidence of Pigott's paint, and to hear the popular story. Unfortunately, the house has been painted the inaccurate yellow for the past 36 years. An expeditious correction of this mistake is advisable as public memory has undoubtedly begun to associate Henry Pigott with a yellow house.

In addition, it would be worthwhile to conduct paint analysis on the exterior siding and trim. In this manner the historic shade of pink could be determined from remaining exterior wood elements from the Pigott period, and a database of paint colors from that period could be developed. It is also possible that exterior wood elements remain from the late 1920s, and could provide analysis of the earlier dark color.

*Recommendations for Siding and Trim*

- Repair trim, renailing loose pieces as needed.
- Replace/repair wood lattice apron in-kind as necessary.
- Monitor regularly for open joints, displaced or loose elements, or other evidence of movement; renail 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 Exterior Finishes*

- Maintain protective finish coat for all exposed elements of the building's exterior envelope.
- Conduct paint analysis on exterior wood siding and trim elements, and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy.
- Prepare and repaint siding the historically accurate color in use during Henry Pigott's occupancy.

### Front and Side Porches

The porch is in good condition, having had its foundation, floor joists, floorboards, railings, and steps replaced in 1978, with portions of the railings again replaced after 2003 storm damage. Paint coats are recent and intact.

*Recommendations for Front and Side Porches*

- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace posts in-kind as they fail.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Install termite shields wherever possible.

## Interior Features

The interior is generally in good condition. The first floor has been interpreted as a house museum under the direction of the Friends of Portsmouth Island and as such has seen a greater degree of maintenance than the second floor.

The narrow staircase to the second floor, with its shallow treads and steep risers, makes any expansion of the museum function to the second floor impractical and unsafe for the visiting public. Access to the second floor should continue to be secured by rope as it is currently, or more securely by an acrylic panel similar to that at the mail room in the Post Office and General Store (NPS 518).

Aside from minor finish failure issues throughout the house and holes in the ceiling and floor of Rooms 102 and 202 where a ventilation stack for a



**Figure 164.** Southwest corner of Room 102, July 1980, showing wall color and linoleum rug. (CALO acc. 05388)

modern chemical toilet was removed, the interior of the house has no apparent major issues. A door matching others of the first floor was removed from the doorway between Rooms 101 and 103 and is now stored in the kitchen building. This door should be returned to its historic location.

The house holds a large collection of furnishings and decorative objects, but the provenance of most is unknown or otherwise unrecorded. According to the Friends of Portsmouth Island, some furnishings and objects belonged to Henry Pigott, while others have been acquired from various sources to fill out the collection. All pieces should be evaluated for historical significance. As suggested in the NPS 2011 Long Range Interpretive Plan, the collection would benefit greatly from the creation of an Historic Furnishings Plan (HFP). Curation and interpretation of the collection should reflect an understanding of the history and provenance of the furniture and objects.

*General Interior Recommendations*

- Reinstall door, now stored in the kitchen building, in the doorway between Rooms 101 and 103.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

*Recommendations for Furnishings Collection*

- Prepare an Historic Furnishings Plan (HFP) that evaluates the furnishings and objects exhibited, as well as any others in hand.
- Base curation and interpretation of the house museum's collection on the findings of the HFP.

## Flooring

Water damage from flooding has occurred periodically throughout the structure's history, but no major damage is apparent. Varnished finishes in the house are scant.

A hole in the floor in the northwest corner of Room 202 was cut for installation of a ventilation stack from a chemical toilet in Room 102 by NPS sometime 2003, and subsequently removed by the Friends of Portsmouth Island. The hole has been temporarily patched with a plank board.

Of note are the floral-patterned painted linoleum "rugs" that are seen in all three first-floor rooms in the 1980 photographs that show the interior as it was left by Henry Pigott. The rugs are no longer in the house. An example of such a rug still exists in the Lionel Gilgo House (NPS 502).

*Recommendations for Flooring*

- Apply natural oil on a regular basis to renew the wood finish (no urethane).
- Use a Dutchman repair to patch the hole in wood floor of Room 202, matching the existing dimension, species, and graining pattern.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Consider recreating the floral-patterned painted linoleum "rugs" found in all rooms based on the 1980 documentary photographs.

## Walls and Ceilings

The walls of the first-floor rooms were painted white after they were documented as pink in 1980, the interior at that time untouched since Henry Pigott's death. Second-floor rooms are similar in color to the muted yellow seen in 1980 photographs.

Documentary research shows that the current color scheme of the first floor is not historically accurate. It is recommend that paint analysis be conducted on interior walls and ceilings to establish a database of paint colors in use during the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Interior surfaces should be prepared and repainted their historically appropriate Pigott colors.

First-floor walls have recent coats of white paint and are in good condition. The painted finishes of second-floor walls are failing.

While the ceilings of the house are generally sound, there are instances of deteriorated condition. Paint coats on the ceilings of Room 103 and throughout the second floor are failing and should be renewed in appropriate colors. There is an open hole in the ceiling of Room 102 and a poorly-patched hole in the ceiling of Room 202 in the northeast corner where the toilet ventilation stack was once installed. These holes should be properly patched and painted to match the surrounding ceiling.

*Recommendations for Walls and Ceilings*

- Conduct paint analysis on interior walls and ceilings and establish database of the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy.
- Use a Dutchman repair to patch the hole in wood ceilings of Rooms 102 and 202, matching the dimension of existing V-groove boards. Paint.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Prepare and repaint walls and ceilings in historically accurate colors.

## Trim

Water damage from periodic flooding is visible on baseboards and lower sections of door casings throughout the first floor, most significantly in Room 103. Nails used to attach these trim pieces show significant oxidation; rust stains mar the varnished finish of the woodwork.

*Recommendations for Trim*

- Apply natural oil on a regular basis to renew the wood finish (no urethane).

## Utilities

No evidence exists that mechanical or electrical systems were ever installed. There are no smoke, fire, or security systems in place, and it appears that the house was always heated with stoves and ventilated by means of operable window sash.



**Figure 165.** Henry Pigott and Walker Syron inside Pigott's kitchen building, November 1955. Stove and flue at left. (CALO b58, Sarah Roberts Styron Coll.)



**Figure 166.** Painted interior of kitchen building. Note varnished wood door from house stored inside.

*Recommendations for Utilities*

- Ensure all window sash are operable.
- Though the cast-iron stove in Room 101 is now intended to be decorative, consider retrofitting the stove for use at special events.

## Kitchen Building

With the exception of the collapsed chimney, the kitchen building appears to be in good condition. Given the building's proximity to the ground, deterioration of the inaccessible sills and floor joists can be expected. The interior is in poor condition.

The board-and-batten exterior door has extensive damage near the doorknob. The interior screen door has been removed from the doorway.

The wood entrance steps were recently rebuilt.

The upper half of the chimney collapsed during Hurricane Isabel in 2003 and remains on the ground adjacent to the kitchen building. This poses a trip hazard, and the open flue on the building poses a water and vermin infiltration threat. Many bricks remain on site; the chimney should be reconstructed based on pre-2003 photographs.

The kitchen building is presently being used as a storage shed. Historic photographs show that the kitchen building was furnished and painted on the interior and used as an active kitchen during the time Henry and Lizzie Pigott lived in the house. It has been left unchanged. Restoration of the building paired with interpretation and curation of furnishings and objects would add greatly to the educational value of the house museum.

The floorboards of the building are deteriorated and further investigation is necessary to ensure their stability. Floorboards with rot should be repaired with in-kind Dutchman repairs and supports should be added as necessary.

Photographs of the interior taken in 1980 show both the kitchen's cast iron stove and screen door stored there at that time. It is possible that they remain among the architectural salvage material presently stacked inside the building. An effort should be made to find, repair, and reinstall them. If they are no longer present, the screen door could be reconstructed from historic photographs and a period stove from another source could be installed in a similar manner to the stove in Room 101 of the house.

The stored materials are presently blocking the window on the north side of the building. Because the window is shuttered on the exterior, it is not known whether the sash is still present. This should be determined. If no longer present, the sash should be reconstructed.

Documentary research indicates the current yellow exterior color is non-historic. Similar to the house, the kitchen building had a paint scheme devised by Henry Pigott and maintained throughout his lifetime. The exterior was painted pink. It is recommended that paint analysis be conducted on interior and exterior surfaces to establish a database of paint colors for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Interior and exterior surfaces should be prepared and repainted these colors.

*Recommendations for Kitchen Building*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as needed; install termite shields wherever possible.
- Investigate the current condition of floorboards; repair with in-kind Dutchman repairs and add supports as necessary.
- Repair damaged door batten with in-kind Dutchman repair.
- Restore the kitchen building, including the chimney, north window sash, screen door, and historic paint scheme.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Interpret and curate interior as part of the house museum.
- Conduct paint analysis on exterior and interior surfaces and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Repaint accordingly.

## Cool House

Recently rebuilt, the dimensions of the present cool house are noticeably larger than those of the cool house seen in historic photographs. While this is unfortunate, it does not negatively affect



**Figure 167.** Net house painted a non-historic yellow, looking northwest. At right are storage shed and privy, December 1979. (CALO Coll. f125)

interpretation or educational value of the cool house. However, future work on the cool house should be based on the ample documentary evidence of its historic appearance including photographs and John Thompson's field sketches of 1979-80.

Documentary research indicates the current yellow color of the cool house is non-historic. Similar to the house and kitchen building, the cool house had a paint scheme devised by Henry Pigott and maintained throughout his lifetime. The exterior was painted pink. Exterior surfaces should be prepared and repainted using the historically accurate colors in use during Henry Pigott's occupancy.

A greater effort should be made to include the cool house in the interpretation of the house complex.

*Recommendations for Cool House*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail and install termite shields wherever possible.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Base all future work on the cool house on the ample documentary evidence of its historic appearance.
- Prepare and paint using the pink color documented in photographs.

## Net House

The net house was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel in 2003. Subsequently the decision was made to reconstruct its foundation posts and leave the remaining wood entrance step in place. The net house is the only documented outbuilding of that typology in Portsmouth Village. The recommendation for the net house is full reconstruction based on the ample photographic evidence of the historic structure.

Unlike the house, kitchen building, and cool house, the late 1970s photographs of the net house, storage shed, and privy show them painted white. It is recommend that the paint scheme reflect the historic color scheme of the storage shed and the privy, based on paint analysis.

A greater effort should be made to include the net house in the interpretation of the house complex. Interpretation of the net house could add greatly to the educational value of the museum through the ability to further the story line of the Pigott family as fishermen and oystermen on the island.

*Recommendations for Net House*

- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly, especially for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects, and treat accordingly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they begin to fail.
- Consider full reconstruction based on historic photographs.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

## Storage Shed

The storage shed is in fair condition, and its foundation posts were replaced after 2003 storm damage. It is recommended that the exterior be restored and the building be interpreted for its utilitarian function. The interior should be protected from water infiltration and secured.

Unlike the house, kitchen building, and cool house, the late 1970s photographs of the net house, storage shed, and privy show them painted white. It is recommend that paint analysis be conducted on exterior surfaces of the shed to establish a database of paint colors for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Exterior surfaces should be prepared and repainted these colors.

Should the need arise for sanitary facilities at the Henry Pigott House complex, the storage shed might be a location to house them. A greater effort should be made to include the storage shed in the interpretation of the house complex.

*Recommendations for Storage Shed*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail and install termite shields wherever possible.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Conduct paint analysis on exterior surfaces and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Repaint accordingly.

## Privy

The privy is in fair condition, and was largely rebuilt using salvaged material after being structurally compromised during the 2003 hurricane. The window opening on the south side is missing its sash, leaving the building exposed to water damage and infiltration by vermin. The sash should be reconstructed based on historic photographs and installed to seal the building envelope.

The interior is presently used to store architectural salvage materials. Restoration of the interior and exterior is suggested.

Unlike the house, kitchen building, and cool house, the late 1970s photographs of the net house, storage shed, and privy show them painted white. It is recommend that paint analysis be conducted on interior and exterior surfaces of the privy to establish a database of paint colors for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Interior and exterior surfaces should be prepared and repainted these colors.

A greater effort should be made to include the privy in the interpretation of the house complex.

*Recommendations for Privy*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail and install termite shields wherever possible.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.
- Remove architectural salvage material from the interior.
- Conduct paint analysis on exterior and interior surfaces and establish database for the period of Henry Pigott's occupancy. Repaint accordingly.

## Fence

Though not an outbuilding or ancillary structure, the fence is an integral component of the architectural integrity of the Henry Pigott complex. Unlike many others on Portsmouth Island, there is an ample photographic record of this fence. Understandably, the fence has required significant repair and replacement over the years as it is susceptible to storm damage however, since NPS began maintaining the property in 1978, many non-historic alterations to the fence design have been made.

The original fence had three gated openings, one at the south, one at the north, and one at the west. The west gate has been removed entirely and the north gate has been moved from east of the cool house to west of the cool house. Only the south gate appears to be in its original location. Moreover, the design of the gates has been significantly altered. Historic photos show the original gate pickets to be placed to create the form of a Gothic arch, rounded at the outside edges and rising to a steep central point. In contrast, the pickets of the current gates form simple over-scallops.

In addition, the original fence design included a notable plank board baseboard with molded cap that was applied on the outside face of the fence. These important design details have been lost in the course of the many reconstructions of the fence. These period design details should be re-implemented using the documentation provided by historic photographs,

*Recommendations for Fence*

- Investigate the condition of the fence posts regularly.
- Replace fence posts in-kind as they fail.

- Base all future work on the fence on the ample documentary evidence of its historic appearance.
- Reinstall the north fence gate in its historic location east of the cool house, and reconstruct the historic west gate.
- Using the historic gate design, reconstruct historically accurate gates and install at the three original gate locations
- Reconstruct the historic plank baseboard with molded cap detail and install on the outer face of the fence as shown in the documentary photographs.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

## Cisterns

The existing cistern near the house is in good condition, having been rebuilt after 2003 hurricane damage. A second structure located behind the net house is said to have been a secondary cistern. The net house and secondary structure were destroyed in the 2003 storm. A handful of photographs shows the secondary structure as it existed in the 1970s. The information on the historic function of this secondary structure is too scant to advise reconstruction.

A greater effort should be made to include the existing cistern in the interpretation of the house complex.

*Recommendations for Cistern*

- Conduct annual inspection for the presence of wood-damaging plants and insects and treat accordingly.
- Investigate the condition of the foundation posts regularly.
- Replace foundation posts in-kind as they fail.
- Avoid use of ferrous-based fasteners in all construction and repairs.

## Priorities

The highest priorities are the routine actions necessary for the continued preservation of the house and outbuildings, which above all means regular inspection and includes keeping the roofing in good repair and maintaining all exterior painted finishes.

Also of high priority is restoration of the kitchen building. Of the many outbuildings in the Henry Pigott House complex, the kitchen building is certainly the most important. It served a vital everyday function and its interior was painted and furnished living space. At the very least, preservation of the building should be a priority, including reconstructing the chimney and ensuring the building envelope is sealed.

This is one of the properties on the island where paint analysis would be appropriate. Oral histories are important to Portsmouth and its community. The continued telling of the story of Pigott's pink house and the mistake in the paint order makes little sense when the house is painted a different color while being interpreted as a museum. The house was pink for the majority of Pigott's life. There is no reliable evidence the house was ever yellow. It is time the mistake of painting the house yellow in 1979 is corrected. Repainting the house, kitchen building, and cool house pink should be a high priority, especially because with every year the house remains yellow, the public becomes more accustomed to associating Henry Pigott with a yellow house.

Of medium priority is the restoration of the storage shed and privy and reconstruction of the net house. As components of the most complete collection of outbuildings on the island, they have immense potential for educational value in the current use of the property as a museum.

Also of medium priority is reconstruction of the window shutters for the house. They are an important character defining feature and provide protection during storms.

Of lower priority are the minor aesthetic concerns of the house interior, and the assessment of the collection of furnishings and objects. The collection and its educational value would greatly benefit from an Historic Furnishing Plan.

Among the many successful projects that have been completed at the complex are a few missteps, including the painting of the house and outbuildings an historically inaccurate color, the inaccurate reconstruction of the cool house, and the installation of character-altering non-historic features like the built-in kitchen cabinets. These emphasize the need for cooperative planning of future restoration efforts.

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**Selected Maps**

A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an actual Survey by Capt'n Collet, Governor of Fort Johnston. 1770. Engraved by I. Bayly, London.

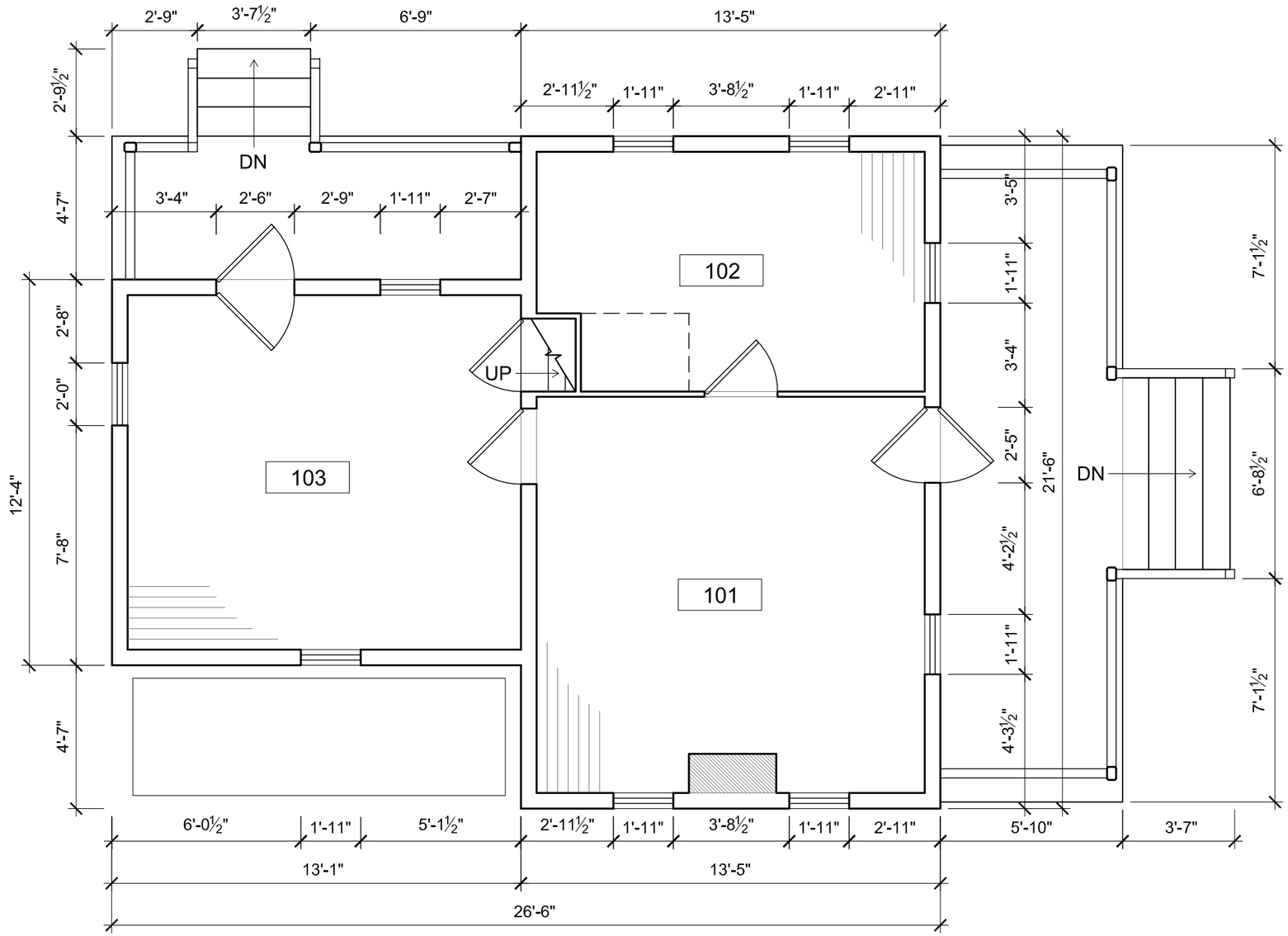
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# Appendix A: Documentation Drawings

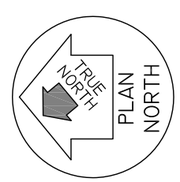
Sheet 1: First-floor Plan
Sheet 2: Second-floor Plan
Sheet 3: North and South Elevations
Sheet 4: East Elevation
Sheet 5: West Elevation
Sheet 6: Outbuildings
Sheet 7: Details




1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN

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

0 1' 2' 4' 8'




JOSEPH K. OPPERMANN - ARCHITECT, P.A.
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

# HENRY PIGOTT HOUSE

PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE, NC
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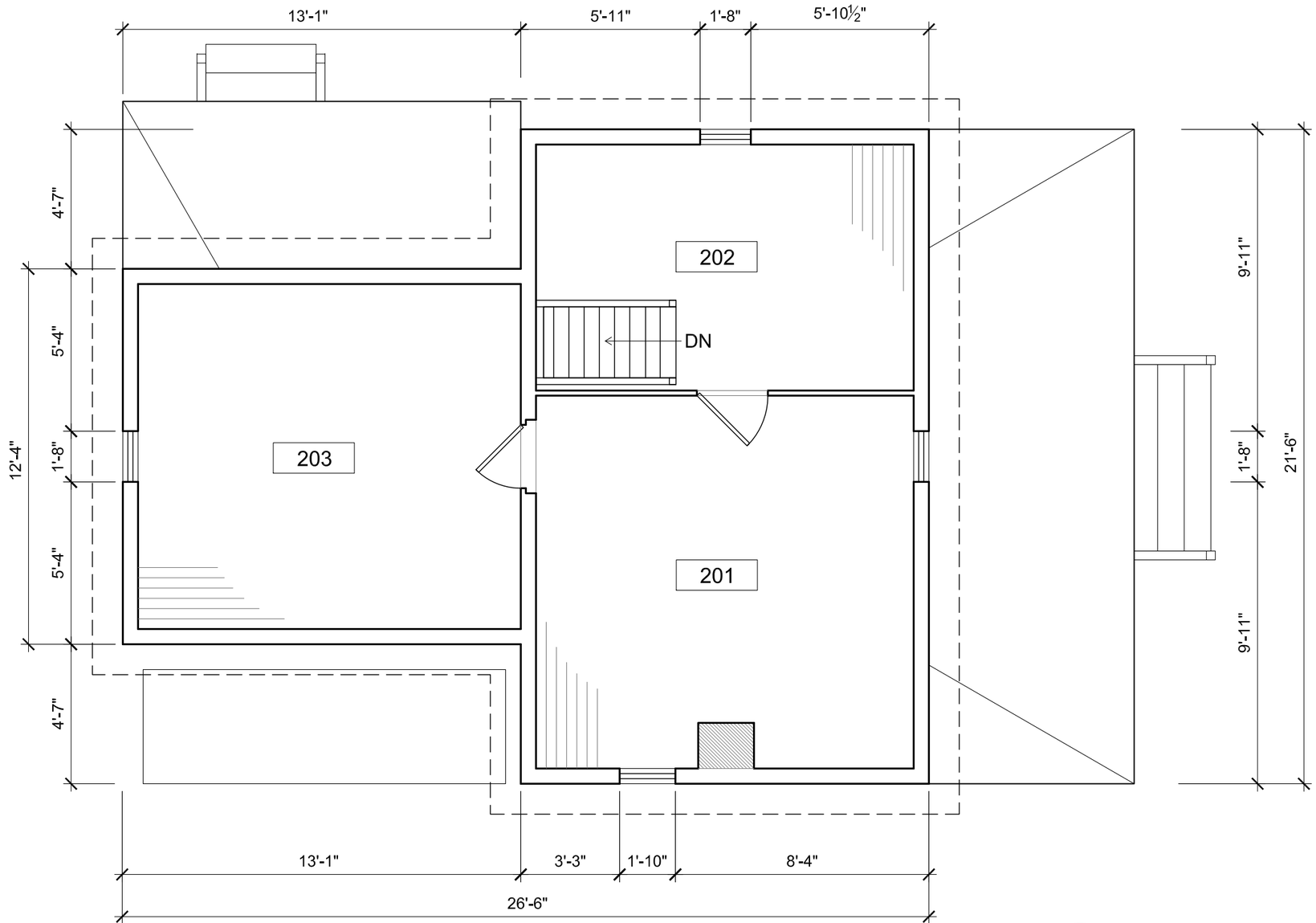
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JKO
RLM, CMW

SCALE:
1/4" = 1'0"

HSR APPENDIX: SHEET

1




1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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

0 1' 2' 4' 8'

TRUE NORTH

PLAN NORTH

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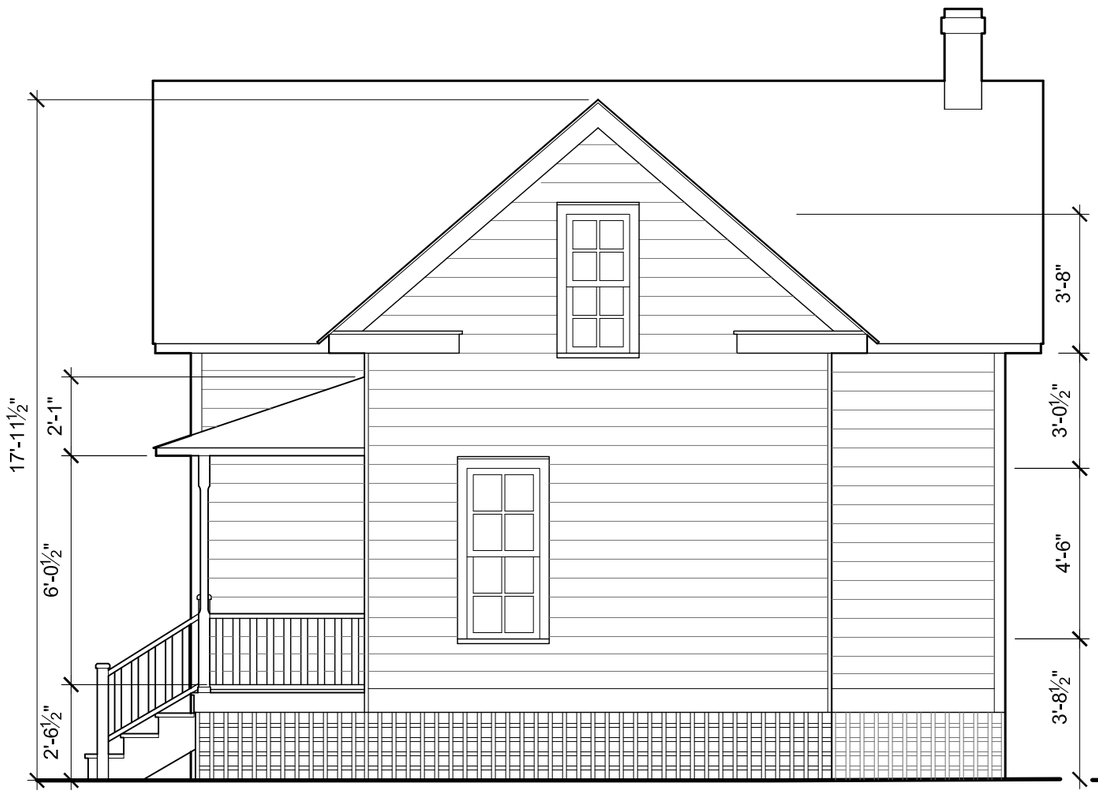
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RLM, CMW

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HSR APPENDIX:
SHEET

2




1 NORTH ELEVATION

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

0 1' 2' 4' 8'




2 SOUTH ELEVATION

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

0 1' 2' 4' 8'

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3




1 EAST ELEVATION

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

0 1' 2' 4' 8'

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4




1 WEST ELEVATION

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

0 1' 2' 4' 8'

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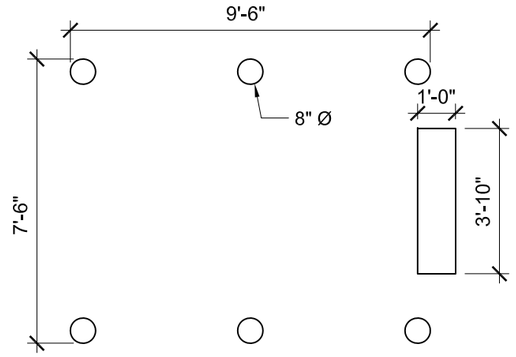
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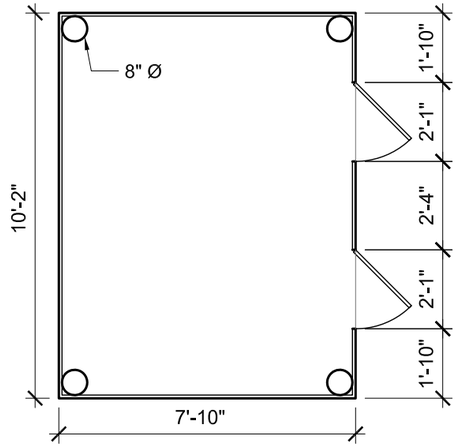
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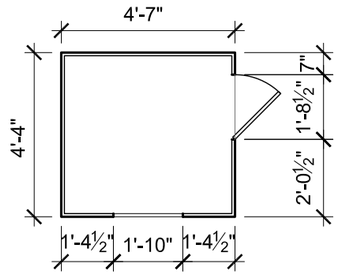
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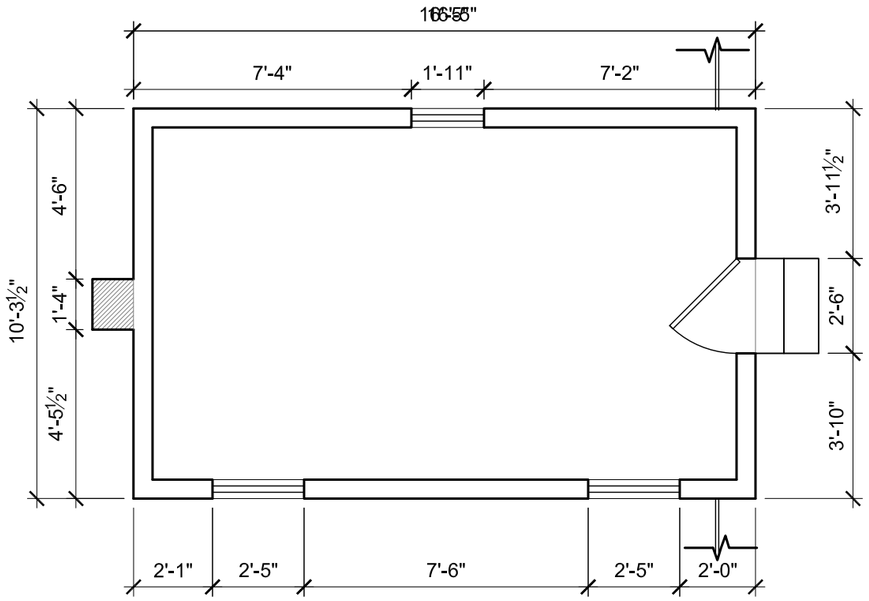

1 NET HOUSE FOUNDATION
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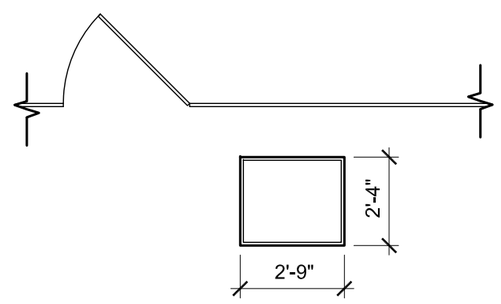

2 STORAGE SHED
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"




3 PRIVY
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"




4 KITCHEN BUILDING
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"




5 COOL HOUSE
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

0 1' 2' 4' 8'

TRUE NORTH
PLAN NORTH

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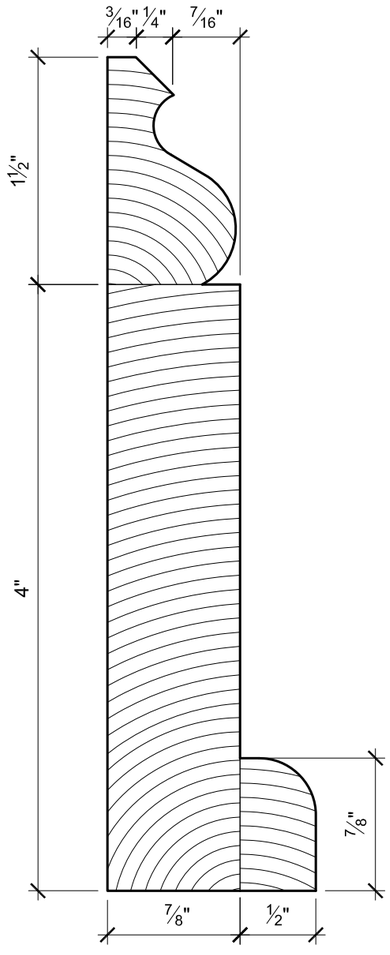
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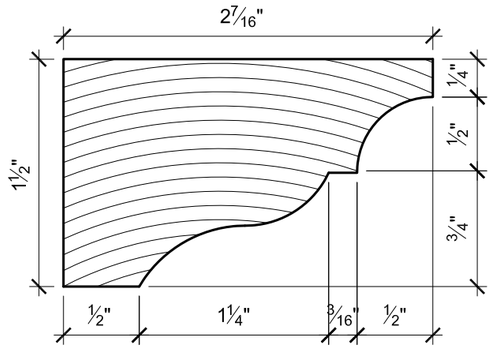
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1 TYPICAL FIRST-FLOOR BASEBOARDS

SCALE: FULL SCALE




2 TYPICAL FIRST-FLOOR CORNICE

SCALE: FULL SCALE

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