Cape Lookout National Seashore
Portsmouth
GEORGE DIXON HOUSE

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

Cultural Resources, Southeast Region
National Park Service

2004

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Southeast Region
National Park Service
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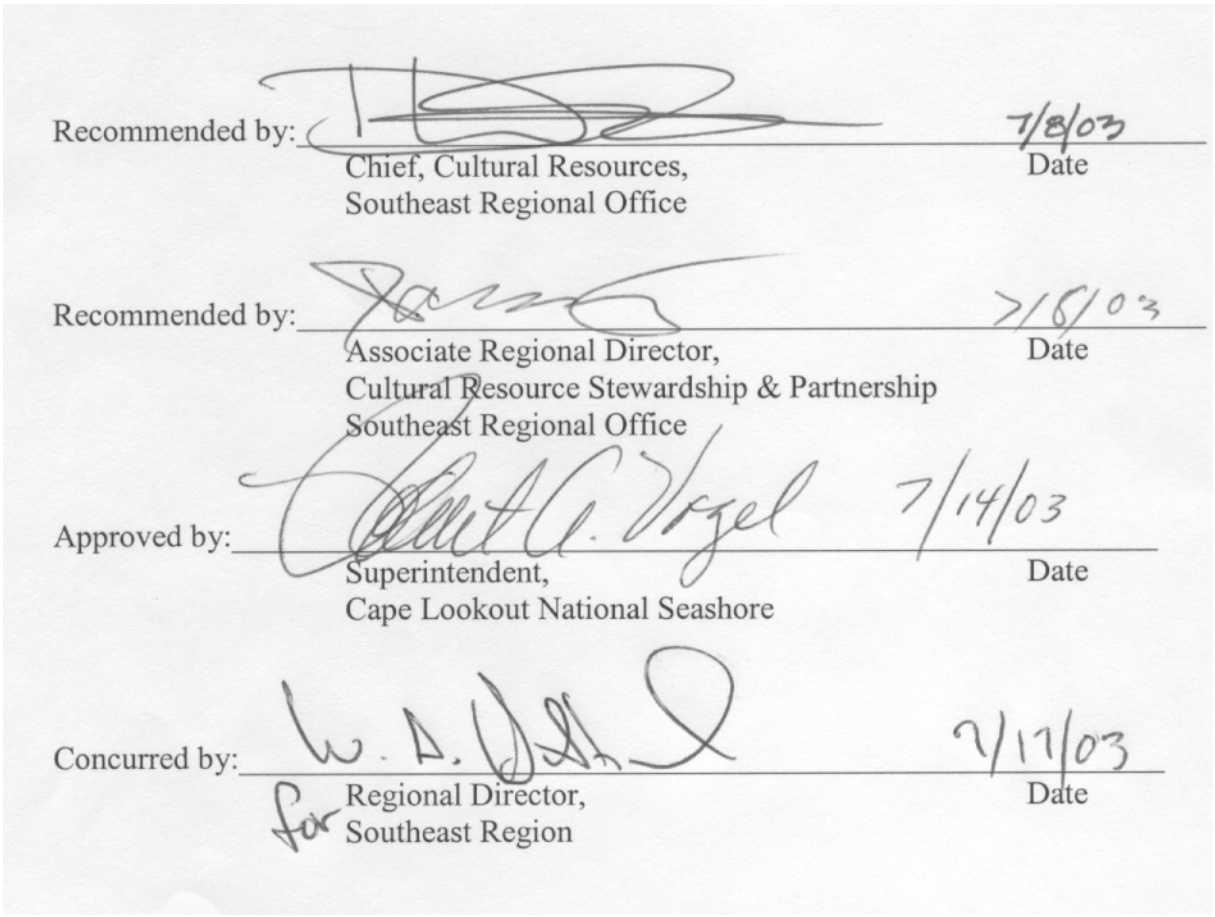
2004
Historic Structure Report
George Dixon House
Cape Lookout National Seashore (CALO)
Portsmouth, NC
LCS#: 12519

Cover photo of Dixon House, 1984 (CALO Coll.)

The historic structure report presented here exists in two formats. A traditional, printed version is available for study at the park, the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) of the National Park Service, and at a variety of other repositories. For more widespread access, the historic structure report also exists in a web- based format through ParkNet, the website of the National Park Service. Please visit www.nps.gov for more information.

George Dixon House

Historic Structure Report



Recommended by: _____ 7/8/03
Chief, Cultural Resources, Southeast Regional Office — Date

Recommended by: _____ 7/8/03
Associate Regional Director, Cultural Resource Stewardship & Partnership, Southeast Regional Office — Date

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Concurred by: _____ 7/17/03
for Regional Director, Southeast Region — Date

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Foreword

We are pleased to make availabe this historic structure report, part of our ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the historic structures and landscapes of National Park Service units in the Southeast Field Area. Many individuals and institutions contributed to the successful completion of this work. We would particularly like to thank the staff at Cape Lookout National Seashore, especially the park's facility manager Mike McGee, cultural resources manager Michael Rikard, and superintendent Bob Vogel. We hope that this study will prove valuable to park management and others in understanding and interpreting the historical significance of the George Dixon House at Portsmouth Village.

Chief
Cultural Resources Division
Southeast Regional Office
December 2004

Executive Summary

The George Dixon House is one of only twenty historic structures remaining in historic Portsmouth Village at Cape Lookout National Seashore. The house was leased as a temporary lodge for hunters and fishermen under one of the park's special use permits until the mid- 1980s but has now been vacant and deteriorating for over fifteen years. It is one of a handful of nineteenth- century structures remaining in the village.

Historical Summary

The 1982 historic resource study of Cape Lookout provides extensive documentation for the eighteenth- and nineteenth- century history of the village but very little for the twentieth century. Most of what is known about twentieth- century Portsmouth in general, and the Dixon House in particular, has come from the park's compilation of oral interviews with former residents and descendants

of those who lived in the village. Research in early twentieth- century Federal censuses and county records during the present project provided additional contextual information.

Architectural Summary

Located between the two branches of Doctor's Creek and facing in a northeasterly direction, the Dixon House is a wood- framed, end- gabled house, a story and a half high. Built around 1887, it measures about 31' end to end and 22' front to rear, encompassing about 1,100 square feet of floor space in six main rooms, a center hall, and a small bathroom. Vernacular design and construction broadly define the character of the Dixon House; like most of the other buildings at Portsmouth, the house is a simple, utilitarian structure that was built in response to specific needs and circumstances, with little consideration of architectural style or refinement of detail.

The roof of the house was recently restored and is in excellent condition. Significant termite damage has been done to the structure's framing, and repairs made prior to the 1980s were hapazard at best. Part of the floor framing has collapsed under the center of the house, and there are major structural issues with the walls at several locations. In addition, the majority of the historic finishes were removed from the exterior and many from the interior after World War II when the building was remodeled as a hunting and fishing lodge.

Summary of Recommendations

In spite of the damage done by termites and insensitive remodeling, the building's original form, floor plan, and fenestration remain mostly intact and readily discernible. Large portions of the original finishes remain intact as well, but the original exterior doors and the mantle piece in the parlor have been lost as has most of the exterior wood siding.

Because of the building's importance to the cultural landscape at Portsmouth, exterior restoration to its appearance before remodeling after World War II is recommended for the Dixon House. Because of the loss of interior finishes, the interior can be simply rehabilitated for modern use. Existing historic finishes should be carefully preserved, so that if interpretation of the interior should become a priority for the park, interior restoration will remain an option.

Site

- Plan program of archaeological investigation of the entire site (approximately one acre).

Foundation

- Repair/replace piers as necessary, seeking to restore original pier configuration.

Structure

- Replace sill at southeast end of house and collapsing sill running through center of the house; repair other sills as necessary; raise and level building structure.
- "Sister" new floor joists to broken joists.
- Inspect stud connections to sills and plates and repair as needed.

Roofing

- No work required.

Doors

- Replace front door with four- panel door similar to those that remain on the interior.
- Replace window on northwest side of Room 102 with a four- panel door, similar to the other exterior doors.
- Remove and close existing back door.
- Restore original back door opening, using typical four- panel door.

Windows

- Remove existing windows in Room 103 and replace with original window now in Room 102.
- Repair all existing sash, replacing those that are missing or too badly damaged to repair.
- Restore and reinstall louvered shutters.
- Close window on northeast side of Room 102 if kitchen wing is reinstated.
- Install aluminum- framed half screens.

Porches

- Reconstruct rear porch deck, replicating existing decking and using wooden piers similar to those used under the main body of the house.

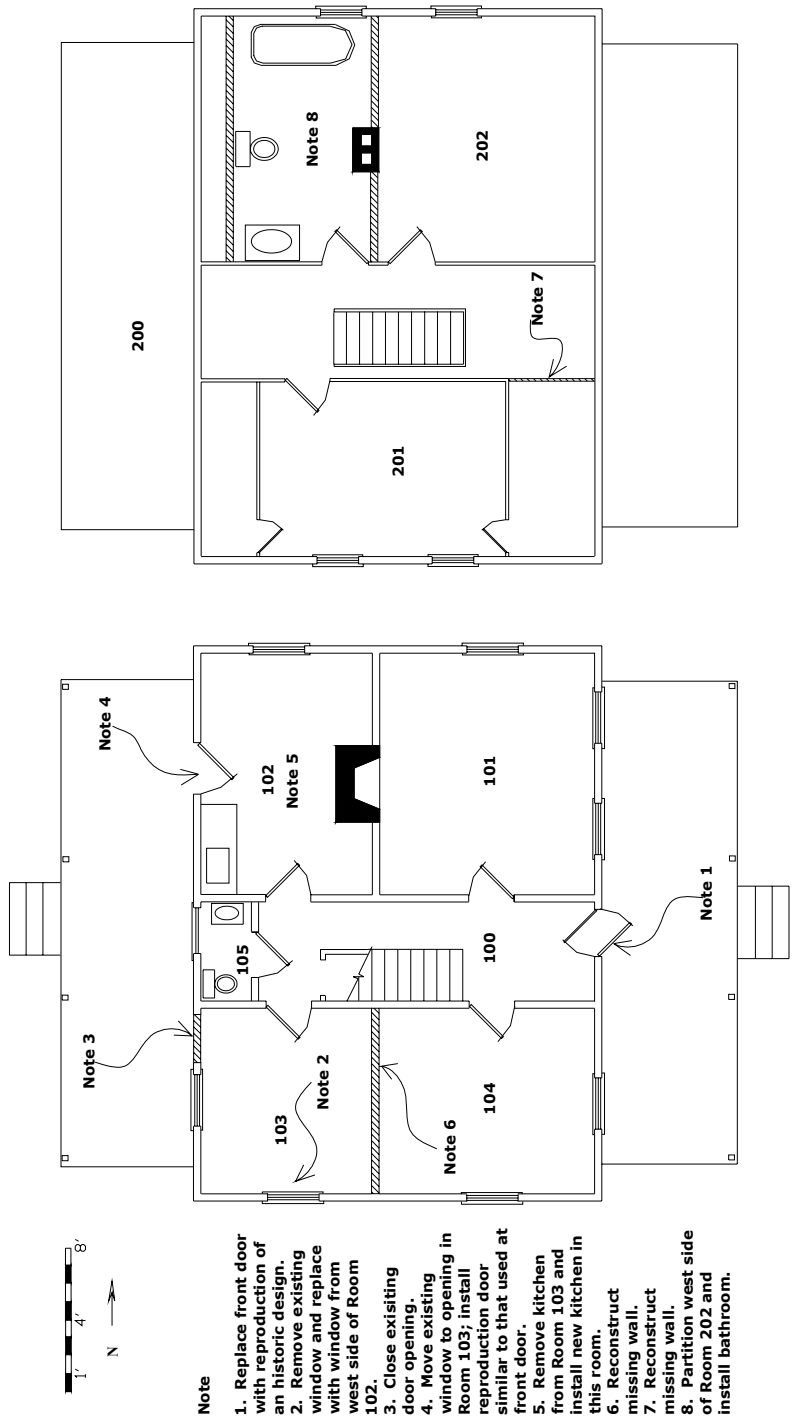
Exterior Finishes

- Remove existing asphalt siding, preserving at least one complete panel in the park's permanent collection.
- Identify original 1" by 8" siding material, and re- install all sound material as lapped siding, replacing missing material as necessary.
- Paint siding and trim as dictated by careful analysis of surviving finishes.

Interior

- Preserve existing interior finishes, especially the original double- beaded tongue- and- groove boards that have survived.
- Remove existing bathroom.

- Install new bathroom in Room 202, avoiding alterations to the ceiling in Room 102.
- Install modern kitchen in Room 102.
- Rebuild wall between Rooms 103 and 104.
- Reconstruct ceiling in Room 202.
- Reconstruct missing walls and ceiling at front (east) end of center hall.
- Repair finishes in Room 201, preserving as much of the historic wallpaper as possible.
- Install modern electrical and plumbing systems.



Note

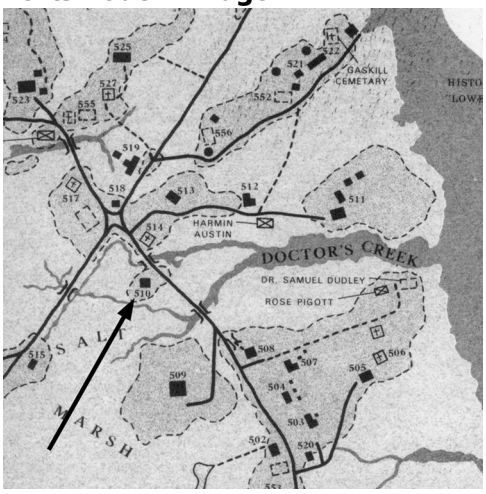
1. Replace front door with reproduction of an historic design.
2. Remove existing window and replace with window from west side of Room 102.
3. Close exisiting door opening.
4. Move existing window to opening in Room 103; install reproduction door similar to that used at front door.
5. Remove kitchen from Room 103 and install new kitchen in this room.
6. Reconstruct missing wall.
7. Reconstruct missing wall.
8. Partition west side of Room 202 and install bathroom.

Administrative Data

Locational Data

Building Name:	George Dixon House
Location:	Portsmouth Village
LCS#:	CALO 12519

Portsmouth Village



Related Studies

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Olson, Sarah. *Historic Resource Study, Portsmouth Village, Cape Lookout National Seashore, North Carolina*. NPS- DSC, 1982.

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Cultural Resource Data

National Register of Historic Places: Contributing structure in Portsmouth Village Historic District, listed Nov. 1979

Period of Significance: 1890- 1930

Proposed Treatment: Structural stabilization, exterior restoration

Historical Background & Context

Established by an act of the colonial legislature of North Carolina in 1753, Portsmouth was laid out in half- acre lots "with convenient streets" on fifty acres at the north end of Core Banks. The town is located on the south side of Ocracoke Inlet, which was the principal access into Pamlico Sound and the North Carolina seaports until a storm opened Hatteras Inlet in 1846. Founded as a port town, Portsmouth flourished in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the Federal Government establishing a customs house there in 1806, a marine hospital in 1827, and a post office in 1840. The town reached the zenith of its growth in 1860 with more than 600 residents and 109 dwellings.

Evacuated during the Civil War, Portsmouth never fully recovered its population or its economic vitality, and the customs house was abolished in 1867. As the population declined, the number of houses in the town dwindled as well, falling from a peak of 109 in 1860, to 59 in 1870, to 44 in 1880. By 1883, the shifting sands of the Outer Banks had closed Ocracoke Inlet to any shipping at all, forc-

ing a dwindling population to turn to fishing for a livelihood.

In 1893, the U. S. Life- Saving Service authorized a life- saving station at Portsmouth, which opened the following year near the site of the old marine hospital. Over the next four decades, a number of Portsmouth residents were able to find employment at the life- saving station, which became part of the U. S. Coast Guard in 1915.

Many buildings must have sat abandoned in the late nineteenth century, including the marine hospital which burned in 1894; those that survived hurricanes and a generally harsh environment were dismantled or relocated as the village slowly contracted.

Hurricanes were a constant threat, with the so-called *San Ciriaco* or "Great Hurricane" of 1899 being one of the worst. Winds at Hatteras reached 140 mph before the anemometer blew away, and the entire island was submerged under as much as ten feet of water. A *Washington Gazette* reported shortly after the storm that "Ocracoke is a complete wreck as a result of the fierce storm which swept the entire coast of North Carolina, leaving ruin and disaster in its path. . . . Practically every house on the island was damaged to some extent."[1] Low- lying Portsmouth, just across the inlet from Ocracoke, must have suffered heavy damage as well. The tidal surges that accompanied storms often did as much or more damage than wind. In September 1913, for example, a relatively weak hurricane swept Portsmouth, but with a storm surge that destroyed the Primitive Baptist and Methodist churches. The community was still strong enough, however, to support reconstruction of the Methodist church by 1915.

On August 23, 1933, another moderate hurricane swept across the Outer Banks, dumping rain but not particularly strong winds on Portsmouth. Less than a month later, on September 16, a strong hurricane hit Portsmouth with sustained winds of 100 mph and torrential rain that flooded most of the island and destroyed many houses. So much damage was done that, according to one resident at the time, "everybody just left."[2] Particularly hard hit were the residents of the Middle Settlement and Sheep Island to the southwest of the present village, both of which were essentially abandoned for residential use after that time.

In 1937, the Coast Guard's lifesaving station was closed, further diminishing the town's vitality. By 1940, there were only 42 permanent residents, and after another hurricane devastated the island in 1944, that numbered dwindled further, with the population standing at only fourteen by the 1950s.

A number of the old buildings were adapted for temporary use by sport fishermen, especially

1. Merlin S. Berry, "History of Northeastern North Carolina Storms," <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nchyde/HURICANE.HTM> (28 November 2002).

2. Sarah Olson, *Historic Resource Study, Portsmouth Village, Cape Lookout National Seashore* (NPS, Denver Service Center, 1982), p. 93.

Figure 1 View of Portsmouth from the north, c. 1970, with arrow indicating George Dixon house at head of Doctor's Creek. (CALO Coll. #C-09)

after World War II, including the old U.S. Coast Guard Station which was declared surplus property in 1946 and used as a sportsmen's club until at least 1958.[3] The post office was discontinued in 1959, and by the time the Cape Lookout National Seashore was authorized in 1966, only a handful of permanent residents remained. With the death of the village's last surviving male resident, Henry Pigott, in 1971, the two other residents still living at Portsmouth, Elma Dixon and and her niece Marion Babb, moved to the mainland, and Portsmouth was abandoned except for seasonal use.

The Dixon House was reportedly built by George Dixon and his wife Martha "Patsy" Williams, who raised their family there in the late 1800s and early 1900s.[4] George Dixon was born March 19, 1857, in North Carolina, probably on Portsmouth Island, the son of Solomon and Hetty Tolson Dixon. Hetty Dixon died, perhaps in childbirth, when George was quite young; and in 1861, Solomon Dixon, who was a pilot, married Bersheba Hill.[5]

3. Olson, *Historic Resource Study, Portsmouth Village*, pp. 94-95.

4. Ben B. Salter, *Portsmouth Island: Short Stories and History* (Doris S. Willis, 1972), p.55; Amy Elizabeth Atwell, "Portsmouth Village," unpublished mss., 1991, pp. 32-33.

The first recorded evidence of George Dixon is his appearance in the 1870 census where he is shown with his older sister Amanda in their father's household, along with their stepmother and three younger half- siblings. That census also listed George's occupation as fisherman, although he was not yet thirteen years old. By 1880, George and his sister Mandy were living with their grandmother Elizabeth Tolson.[6] Their father was living nearby, however, with his second family, and there were other Dixon relations in the neighborhood as well.

Among the Dixons' closest neighbors were Betty, Claudia, and Patsy Williams, the children of John and Esther Robinson Williams, who were married in Carteret County in February 1847. Patsy, who was born on 13 March 1859, was not yet a teenager when her father died sometime before 1870. Esther Williams appears to have died before 1880, and if either of the parents were buried at Portsmouth, their graves have now been lost.

On 22 June 1887, George Dixon married Patsy Williams, the youngest of the Williams sisters. The marriage was performed by the local minister J. R. Cannon and was witnessed by Patsy's brother William and their neighbor John R. Grace.[7]

5. See Federal Census, 1860-1880. Solomon Dixon's second marriage is recorded in Carteret County's marriage records; his first is not.
6. The 1880 census mistakenly lists George and Amanda as children of Elizabeth Tolson.
7. Carteret Co. Marriages, p. 22-C.

The Dixons' daughter believed that George and Patsy built their house around the time they were married. No deed for the land was recorded, however, and it is not known how and when they acquired the land on which the house was built, which was across Doctor's Creek from Patsy Dixon's widowed sister Claudia Daly.[8]

George Dixon was a fisherman by trade, but Patsy also worked to support the family by operating a store, something she may have begun at an early age. The deaths of both of their parents before 1880 left Patsy and her siblings to their own resources and may have been the impetus for opening a store. Although there appear to have been no full- time storekeepers at Portsmouth after 1870 (at least none are listed in the census), there remained enough business on the island to support a store until after World War II, and Patsy Williams and her older sister Betty, who never married, were able to fill that niche.[9]

According to Patsy's daughter, the first store was located on the north side of Doctor's Creek along the road to Henry Pigott's house. Later Patsy acquired or built a larger store directly across the road from the Dixons' house on the south side of Doctor's Creek- - Elma Dixon remembered that "[y]ou could step off the road onto the steps of the store." How long it operated has not been documented, but it was even-

8. Atwell, "Portsmouth Village," p. 32.
9. Interviews with Patsy's daughter Elma Dixon provide virtually all of the documentation for the store. Sources conflict as to whether Betty or Patsy actually owned the stores.

tually moved across Doctor's Creek (probably after Patsy's death in 1914) and remained the community's primary store and location of its post office until both were closed in the 1950s.[10]

Surprisingly, considering she was only 17 at the time, Patsy Dixon was appointed postmaster at Portsmouth on September 21, 1876, when Mary L. Abbot, the first female postmaster at Portsmouth, resigned from the position.[11] Patsy served as postmaster until her brother William was appointed to the position on 28 November 1887, two months before the birth of Patsy's first child. The postmaster position remained in the family when Ellen Daly, daughter of William and Patsy's sister Claudia, was appointed postmaster in 1899. Like Patsy, Ellen was only 17 years old when she became postmaster.

In January 1888, George and Patsy Dixon's first child, Arthur Edward Dixon, was born. In September 1889, a second child was born and named Harry Needham Dixon. Three more children were born to the couple, all daughters: Norah Elizabeth Dixon, born in March 1892; Lillian Mae Dixon, born in July 1896; and Elma Morgan Dixon, born in July 1903. Elma Dixon would be one of the last two residents of Portsmouth when the town finally died seventy years later.

10. CALO Interview with Elma Dixon, 18 August 1979; Atwell, p. 32.
11. United States Post Office, Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-Sept. 30, 1971, M841, roll 92, National Archives and Record Administration.

Figure 2 Norah Dixon in the parlor of her parents' house, c. 1908. (CALO Coll., #A-27)

Patsy Dixon was plagued by heart problems- -"heart dropsy" her daughter called it- - and periodically went to Washington, North Carolina, for medical treatment. In February 1914 a late winter storm struck Portsmouth, and as they usually did during bad storms, the Dixons sought shelter at the Dalys' house across the creek. In doing so, however, Patsy was soaked, and her daughter remembered that "she didn't live long after that."[12] Patsy Williams Dixon died on March 4, 1914, only fifty- five years old,

12. CALO Interview with Elma Dixon, 18 August 1979.

Figure 3 Bettie Williams (1847-1929) at the Community Cemetery, c. 1920. (CALO Coll., #B-22)

and was buried in the nearby Community Cemetery.

Both of the Dixons' sons grew up as fisherman, but both were also carpenters, with Harry noted for his boat- building ability.[13] Harry married Lida Woolard and, around 1918, bought Capt. David Willis' small frame house nearby. Ten years later, they reportedly rebuilt the house, which is one of the few residences surviving at Portsmouth today.[14]

The Dixons' daughter Lillian married Jesse Babb around 1915, and they, too, set up housekeeping nearby. The Babbs' daughter Marion, who was born in 1917, would inherit the Babbs' house and, with her aunt Elma Dixon, be one of the last residents of Portsmouth.[15]

Fishing did not always provide an adequate income for the family, and in the early twentieth century, George Dixon sometimes worked as a guide for the hunters who began to frequent the island. In addition, when the Portsmouth Fisheries Company opened on Casey Island in 1916, he and his sons "picked up some extra work" there. George worked as a night watchman at the company; but in November 1919, he fell while on his rounds after suffering what his daughter described as "one of his bad spells in the head." The kerosene lantern he was carrying was ignited and he was burned severely. His family heard his cries for help from across the water and Ed and Harry rowed out to bring him home. He did not recover, however, and died on 24 November 1919.[16] He was buried next to his wife in the Community Cemetery across the creek from their house.

Patsy Dixon's oldest sister, Elizabeth "Bettie" Williams, never married and lived with the Dixons for many years and by some accounts actually owned the store that Patsy ran. She probably moved out of the Dixon house after Patsy Dixon died in 1914, and by 1920, was boarding with Amanda Dixon, George's older sister, who was also unmarried. Bettie Williams died in 1929 and was buried in the Community Cemetery.

13. Ellen Fulcher Cloud, *Portsmouth: The Way It Was* (Havelock, NC: Print Shop, 1996), p. 151.
14. Salter, p. 56; Atwell, p. 33.
15. Salter, p. 55.
16. CALO interview with Elma Dixon, August 18, 1979; Atwell, p. 32.

After George Dixon's death in 1919, his son Ed continued to occupy the old family home, probably with one or both of his unmarried sisters, Norah and Elma, although Ed is listed alone in the household in the 1920 census.[17] In 1930, the household was composed of Norah and Ed, while Elma was living nearby with their sister Lillian Babb and her husband. Their other sibling, Harry, and his wife Lida lived nearby as well until Harry died in 1931.

The hurricane in September 1933 did terrible damage to Portsmouth and accelerated the exodus from the island that had been ongoing since the Civil War. Unlike many island residents, the Dixons made repairs and continued to live in their old house, although it was in increasingly poor repair. When the Coast Guard lifesaving station closed in 1937, a number of buildings became available for reuse and Ed Dixon bought what is now known as the McWilliams- Dixon house (built c. 1910), thinking it would be cheaper to move and repair than it would be to repair the family's old house. In 1939, with the help of some of the Coast Guardsmen, he moved the house to its present location just east of the Methodist church. Although in better shape than the old Dixon house, the new house still required extensive repairs, including construction of a new kitchen. On November 1, 1939, the "new" house was ready and Elma, Nora, and Ed vacated their parents' old house for good.[18]

17. Elma and Norah Dixon appear not to have been enumerated in the 1920 census of Portsmouth.
18. CALO Interview with Elma Dixon, 18 August 1979; Atwell, p. 33.

Figure 4 Norah and Elma Dixon, c. 1953. (CALO Coll., #B-57))

According to Elma Dixon, her brother "didn't bother to fix [the old house] up and sell it because by that time there was no one to buy it."[19]

Ed Dixon died in October 1945 and, because of arguments over ownership of the Community Cemetery, was buried on a low rise behind his sisters' house. The small cemetery is now known as the Babb cemetery.

In December 1951, the Dixon sisters finally decided to sell their parents' old house to J. W. and Mary P. York of Wake County, North Carolina.[20] For unknown reasons, in April 1952, the Yorks conveyed the property to Philip

19. *Ibid.*
20. Carteret Co. Deeds, Book 141, pp. 45-46.

K. and Edna Ball who made significant alterations to the house for use as a part- time residence.[21] The Yorks sold the house to Doward H. Brugh and Frank Wardlaw in January 1965.[22]

Nora Dixon died in 1956, but Elma Dixon continued to live at Portsmouth. After 1967, however, she no longer stayed on the island during the harsh winter months. Lillian Dixon Babb died in 1969, leaving her daughter Marion Babb, Henry Pigott, and Elma Dixon as the last residents of the island. In poor health, Pigott finally had to leave the island permanently in 1971, and when he did, Elma and Marion left as well. Elma Dixon died in Beaufort, North Carolina, in February 1990.

21.Carteret Co. Deeds, Book 141, p. 105.
22.Carteret Co. Deeds, Book 259, p. 101.

Chronology of Development & Use

George and Patsy Dixon are believed to have built the house around the time of their marriage.[23] Initial park research assumed that the marriage occurred in the late 1870s and so a date of ca. 1875 has been given for the house's construction. However, Carteret County's record of marriages show that the couple was actually married some ten years later, in June 1887.[24] The character of the house's original materials, including the use of circular- sawn lumber and cut nails, is consistent with an assumed construction date of ca. 1887.

No builder for the house has been documented nor has the source of the circular- sawn lumber used in its construction. Unlike some Portsmouth buildings, the Dixon house's materials do not appear to have been recycled from earlier buildings. Balloon- framed, the house appears to have originally been finished on the exterior with 1" by 8" lap siding, but the extent of the 1950s remodeling

23.Atwell, p. 32; Salter, p. 55.
24.Census records confirm this marriage date.

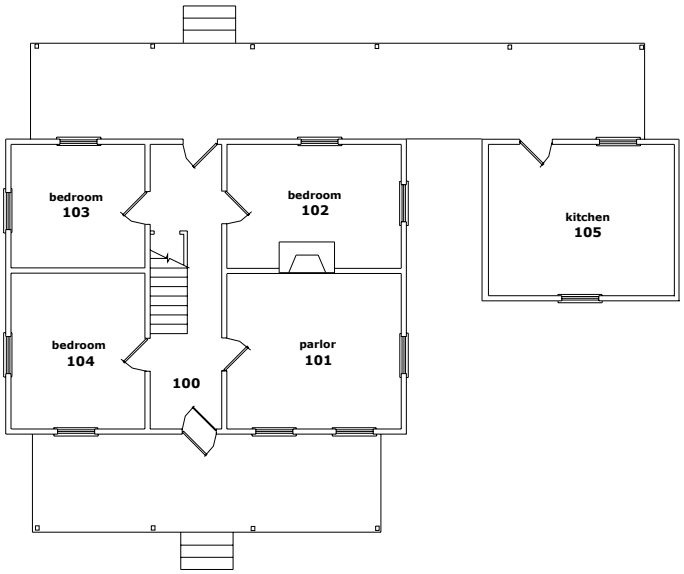


Figure 5 Reconstructed original plan of Dixon House. The distance of the kitchen from the main house is approximate. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

make that conclusion uncertain. Undoubtedly, it was roofed with wooden shingles.

The first floor of the house had two rooms on either side of a central hall that had both a front and back door. Walls and ceilings were originally paneled with double- beaded, tongue- and- groove boards.

The second floor appears to have had a ceiling paneled with 3½"- wide tongue and- groove boards. However, the continuation of the balustrade around three sides of the stairwell and the stairwell's relationship to the flanking walls suggest that the upstairs was not originally partitioned as it is now. At an early date, however, partitions were constructed using 4½"- wide, double- beaded, tongue- and- groove boards, thus creating Rooms 201 and 202 with a hall (Room 200) betweent the two. The layers of wallpaper on the walls in Room 201 indicate that this occurred as early as the 1890s or early 1900s.

Interviews with Elma Dixon in the late 1970s provide some information about the family's use of the structure. The "best room" or parlor was the front room on the northeast side of the hall, while the two rooms (now combined into a single room) on the southwest side of the hall were used as bedrooms. Elma herself was born in the bedroom at the rear, which was probably her parents' bedroom. The fourth downstairs room, behind the parlor, was also used as a bedroom, apparently for the boys. In the interviews, Dixon does not locate her aunt Betty Williams' room, but it quite likely was the second floor room on the south side of the house. Elma Dixon remembered that she and her

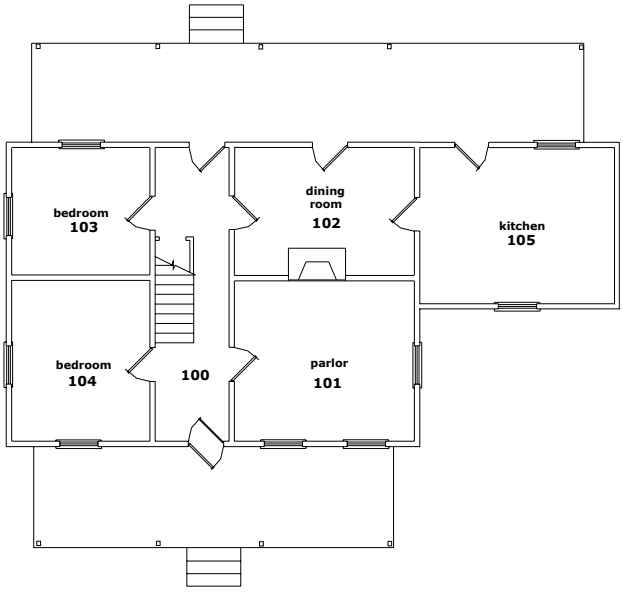


Figure 6 Plan of Dixon House after relocation of kitchen in the early twentieth century. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

siblings often slept in the other room on the second floor in the summer because they were better able to catch a breeze there than on the first floor.[25]

Elma Dixon also remembered the house's original kitchen which, like many at Portsmouth, was a separate structure off the end of the main house, connected by a porch or breezeway. Apparently located off the northeast end of the house, the structure served as both kitchen and dining room until, Elma remembered, "a cyclone tore [it] off its blocks" sometime before 1919. The storm, which may have been the legendary *San Ciriaco* or "Great Hurricane" of August 1899 or the 1913 hurricane that destroyed the Methodist church, did not destroy the kitchen, however. When George Dixon started repairs, he decided to move the kitchen a few feet and connect it to the main house "so they wouldn't have to go outside," according to Elma. Her father replaced the window on the north side of the bedroom behind the parlor, connecting the old bedroom to the relocated kitchen. After that, the Dixons began using the old bedroom as a dining and sitting room.[26] Probably at the same time, the window on the west side of that room was replaced by a door to the back porch.

By the late 1930s, the Dixon house like many others on the island was "in bad repair," and Ed Dixon began to make repairs before deciding to fix up the McWilliams house instead.[27]

25.CALO interview with Elma Dixon, 18 August 1979.

26.Ibid.

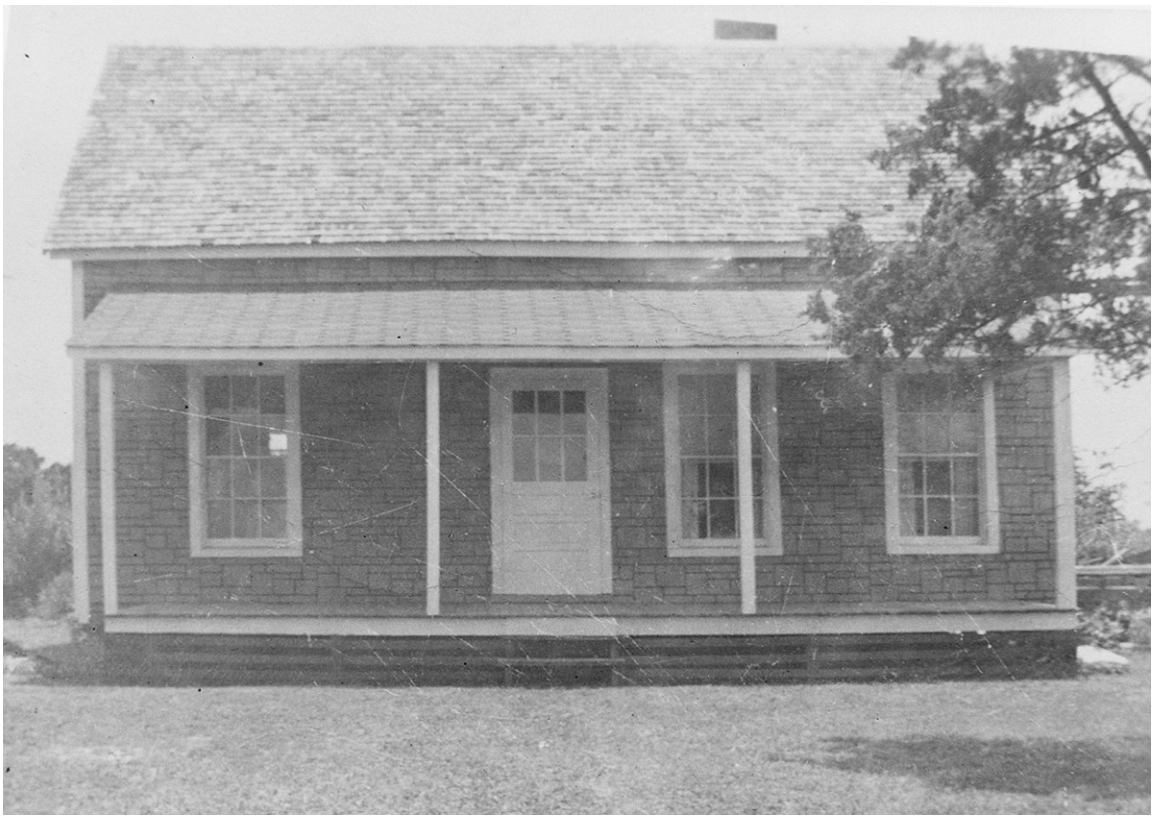


Figure 7 Earliest known photograph of George Dixon House, c. 1952, shortly after its remodeling by Philip Ball. Note wooden enclosure of foundation. (CALO Coll., #A-51)

The McWilliams house required extensive renovations, too, including construction of a new kitchen and privy. Dixon also moved a small wood- framed structure from his parents' place for use as a wash house. It had originally been built by Ed Dixon as a workshop or store house for their father and was later used as a summer kitchen by Elma and Nora Dixon.[28] Other sources outside the family indicated that this building may have been the original kitchen at the old Dixon house, but there is no evidence for that.

The Dixons moved into the "new" house on November 1, 1939, and essentially abandoned the old house since there was little demand for real estate on the island at that time. After World War II, economic conditions improved, and in December 1951, the Dixon siblings sold the house to J. W. York. A few months later, York conveyed the house to Philip Ball, who "had it all done over," according to Elma Dixon.

Ball may have been responsible for removing the old kitchen wing, if the Dixons had not already done that. When it was removed, the

27. CALO interview with Elma Dixon, June 1978.
28. CALO interview with Babb and Gaskins, 1979.

door on the north side of Room 102 was replaced by the present one- over- one window. In addition, the house was renovated, both inside and out, including replacement of the beaded- board walls and ceilings in Rooms 100, 101, 103, and 104 with the present plain tongue- and- groove boards. The surviving double-beaded tongue- and- groove boards beneath the sheet paneling in Room 102, beneath the stairs, and on the second floor are typical of the original material.

There is no ghost of a mantle on the present wall boards in Room 101, indicating that it was lost at the same time the original finishes were removed. At that time as well, the wall was removed between Rooms 103 and 104 in order to create a large combination living room and kitchen.

The exterior of the house was also stripped of its original siding. Old siding and material removed from the interior appears to have been used to resheath the house with flush- laid boards that were then covered with the present asphalt composition panels. The old wood-shingled roof covering remained in place but within a few years had been replaced by green, asphalt- composition, "hurricane" shingles.[29]

The Balls appear to have created the bathroom at the west end of the central hall. The toilet is dated 1979 but it may be a replacement fixture, with the bathroom actually constructed earlier. Construction of the bathroom necessitated closure of the door from the hall to the back porch and it was replaced by the present window. To replace the lost back door, a new door opening was created between Room 103 and the back porch. The present door was installed at that time, along with a similar door that was installed at the front entrance to the house.

In addition, Ball's work probably included removal of the window on the south side of Room 103, which was replaced by the present windows on that wall. The window that was removed was then apparently reused to replace the door that originally opened between the porch and Room 102.

Later alterations to the house appear to have been minimal. In the late 1990s, the house suffered significant storm damage. Major repairs to the roof were necessary and a new wood-shingle roof covering was installed at that time.

29. These shingles creates an interlocking pattern meant to resist hurricane winds.

Chronology	
June 22, 1887	**George and Martha marry and build a new house around that time**
January 1888	First child, Arthur Edward Dixon, born
September 1889	Son Harry Needham Dixon born
March 1892	Daughter Norah Elizabeth Dixon born
July 1896	Daughter Lillian Mae Dixon born
August 1899	"Great Hurricane" floods Portsmouth
ca. 1900	**Second floor of house partitioned**; household includes Patsy's sister Elizabeth "Bettie" Williams.
July 1903	Last child, Elma Morgan Dixon, born
August 1913	Hurricane destroys Methodist church
March 4, 1914	Patsy Dixon dies
November 24, 1919	George Dixon dies
September 1929	Bettie Williams dies
September 1933	**Possible damage to Dixon house**; after hurricane, "everybody just left"
1939	**Ed Dixon moves McWilliams House; Dixons vacate old house**
October 1945	Ed Dixon dies
December 1951	**Dixon siblings sell parents' house to J. W. and Mary York**
April 9, 1952	**Yorks sell to Philip K. and Edna Ball- - Balls renovate house**
September 1956	Norah Dixon dies
1959	Portsmouth post office closes
1960	Fourteen residents remaining in Portsmouth
January 2, 1965	**Balls sell house to Doward H. Brugh and Frank Wardlaw**
1969	Lillian Dixon Babb dies
1971	Elma Dixon and Marion Babb, the village's last residents, move to the mainland
c. 1985	**Dixon house abandoned**
February 1990	Elma Dixon dies

Physical Description

The George Dixon House is a one- and- a- half story, wood- framed house built around 1887. Three bays wide, the house has seven rooms and measures approximately 30' by 22'- 8", containing just over 1,000 square feet, not including front and back porches that run the length of the house.

A plan of the existing building is included at the end of this section.

Associated Site Features

The house is located just southwest of the northern bridge over Doctor's Creek. The house faces in a northeasterly direction on a grassy, level site surrounded on three sides by marsh. Small cedars or junipers are growing on the north side of the site, with a larger tree on the south side of the front yard. No other site features can be identified, although a cistern and privy must have been associated with the house at one time. There are known to have been other outbuildings on the site, including the original kitchen, which has been lost, and the small wood- framed structure now known as the McWilliams- Dixon House's "summer kitchen."

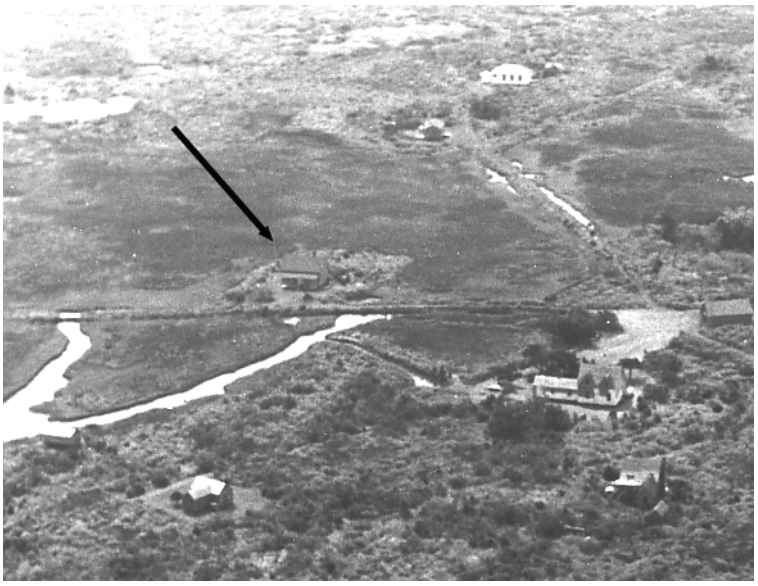


Figure 8 Aerial view of Dixon House, c. 1969. Extent of associated property is clearly evident in this image. (CALO Coll., #C-07)

Figure 9 View of front and north side of Dixon House. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Foundation

The house's wood frame rests on a series of cedar or cypress piers 8" to 10" in diameter set 5' to 6' apart. As is typical of many of the structures at Portsmouth, piers are so arranged that none appear immediately under the building's corners, where the pier/sill connections could be more easily damaged by storm surge during hurricanes. The piers are irregularly spaced and have been poorly maintained and repaired. At least one pier appears to be missing on the north end of the house and at least one pier appears to have been displaced or damaged, allowing partial collapse of the beam that runs through the center of the house.

Structural System

The house was constructed with a modified "balloon" frame using circular- sawn cypress and pine and a combination of mortise- and-tenon and nailed connections. Construction method, nails, and variable lumber dimensions are consistent with a construction date in the 1880s.

Sills and Plates: Perimeter sills have undergone extensive repairs and modifications, especially on the southeast side of the house where the original sill has been replaced by a stacked trio of boards, 2" by 6- 1/2". The 6" by 8" sill at the front wall of the house appears to be typical of the original sills. A beam, 6' by 7", runs through the house from end to end and supports the walls above that separate front from rear rooms. Support piers near the middle of this beam (under the central hall) appear to have been undermined and/or otherwise been displaced. As a result, the beam has broken and partially collapsed, causing nearby joists to split and allowing the center of the house to drop several inches.

Top plates are generally 4" by 5- 3/4" to 6". The plate at the front of the house was badly damaged by water penetration and its southern half was entirely replaced when the roof was recently repaired.

Posts and Studs: Corner posts are also around 4" by 6", while posts at window and door openings are about 4" by 4". Posts are mortised to plates and sills. Studs are generally 1- 3/4" to 2" by 3- 3/4" to 4" and continuous between sill and top plate. They are irregularly spaced, 20" to 30" on centers, and are connected to sills and plates using cut nails.

Joists: First floor joists are about 1- 7/8" by 7- 3/4", set about 24" between centers. Joists run front to rear in the house and are notched and lapped over front and rear sills and over the collapsing center beam. Most are in good condition; but at least one joist has split as a result of the collapsing beam.

Figure 10 View of rear or southwest side of Dixon House. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Figure 11 View northeast of front sill, showing typical joist/ sill connections and wooden piers. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Second floor joists (which are the first floor ceiling joists) are 1- 3/4" to 2" by 6" to 6- 1/4" and are laid on a ledger, 1- 1/2" by 6", let into the studs about 3' below the building's top plate.

Figure 12 View to northwest Room 202. Historic ceiling has been removed. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Figure 13 View of original, 6/6 window with typical wood frame for screening. Original location for back door opening was at window at extreme left in this image. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Joists are nailed to studs and so have the same irregular spacing as do the studs.

Roof

Rafters are 1- 7/8" by 4- 7/8", irregularly spaced, 24" to 34" between centers, and joined at the ridge without a ridge board. Perhaps a third of the rafters were replaced during the recent roof repairs and small plywood grommets were also added at all of the rafters' ridge connections. The ceilings for the rooms at the second floor-level are framed using 1- 1/2" by 4" joists that are nailed to the rafters and act as a wind brace for the roof.

The roof was originally decked with random-width boards, 6" to 10" wide, probably covered with sawn wooden shingles. Much of this decking was replaced with 1" by 4" boards during the recent roof repair. The existing wood-shingled roof was installed in the 1990s, replacing mid- twentieth- century, asphalt- composition shingles in an unusual interlocking design.

Doors

The house has two entrances, one from the front porch and one from the back porch. The front door is an original opening, 3'- 0" by 6'- 6-3/4", approximately centered in the facade. The design of the original front door is not known, since it was replaced with by the present door in 1979, but it was probably a four-panel door like those that remain on the interior. The existing door, which swings outward, is wooden and has three horizontal panels be-

low and six lights above. There is a screen door, which swings inward and appears to be older than the door.

The original back door was closed when the bathroom was created and a small window installed in its place. At that time, a new door opening, 2'- 8" by 6'- 8", was created from the back porch into Room 104. The door is identical in design to the front door but in much poorer condition with the lights in the upper part of the door missing and replaced by plywood.

Figure 14 View of added asphalt siding. Note part of shutter hinge on adjacent window casing, which is original. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Windows

Original first- floor window openings were 2'- 10" by 5'- 4" with six- over- six sash, 1- 1/4" thick. Original upper sash can be identified by their 10" by 14" panes, lower sash by 10" by 15" panes. Not all sash are in their original positions. The windows have fixed upper sash and the lower sash are not counter- weighted. The lower sash were originally held up by rotating wooden sash stays mounted to the window stop.

The original sash in the window on the north side of Room 102 was replaced by the present one- over- one sash when the kitchen was moved to another site in 1939. On the south side of what was Room 104, the original window opening was reconfigured into the present openings on that wall when the rooms were combined after World War II. Both openings are fitted with wooden, fixed sash, 2'- 10" by 2'- 0".

In the gables at the second floor level are pairs of windows, 2'- 4" by 3'- 10" with six- over- six sash, 1- 1/8" thick, fitted with rotating wooden sash stays mounted to the window stop. Sash are missing entirely from one opening in Room 201, but one of them appears to be stored in Room 202. The upper sash in one of the openings in Room 202 is missing all of its muntins.

All of the first floor window openings appear to originally have been fitted with louvered shutters, but only broken remnants of the hinges remain on some casings. Five fixed- louver shutters are stored on the second floor in Room 202 and appear to be some of these original shutters.

The windows on the front porch and one window on the back porch have wood- framed screens over the lower sash. These probably once existed at all of the windows, although

Figure 15 View of front porch; column at left is original. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

they are not original. When they were installed, use of the shutters was abandoned.

Exterior Finishes

Siding: The house is presently finished with asphalt- composition panels installed after World War II. Measuring 16" by 36", these panels have a design meant to imitate random- range, dressed- face ashlar. On the southeast end of the house, all of the panels have been replaced by rolled asphalt roofing. On the northwest end, a quarter or more of the panels are missing, leaving the underlying wood sheathing exposed. Panels are badly damaged elsewhere.

The house was entirely sheathed with the present flush- laid boards, installed horizontally prior to installation of the asphalt siding. At the northwest end of the house, much of the wall is sheathed with narrow tongue- and- groove boards, some of them beaded; in the gable at that end, just under the back porch roof, and at the southern corner of the house, wider plain-sawn boards, approximately 1" by 8", are visible. Paint lines on these boards suggest that they were probably some of the siding used originally to finish the house.[30] Plywood was used for recent temporary repairs to part of the sheathing on the southeast end of the house.

Trim: Much of the original window and door casing remains in place. Jamb casing is typically 1- 1/4" thick, 3- 3/4" wide; header casing is slightly wider and has a plain wooden drip cap. Window sills are extraordinarily thick, being around 2- 3/4". Sills and drip caps do not extend beyond the outside edge of the casing.

Unboxed eaves extend about 8" from the wall faces. Eaves are finished with a plain 1" by 6" fascia.

Porches

Porches about 26'- 7" by 7'- 4" span almost the full width of the house at the front and the rear. Each has a wood- framed, shed roof, paneled at each end with narrow, vertical, tongue- and-groove boards. Neither porch has a ceiling but both have been recently reroofed. The front porch is reached by two wooden steps, now in

30. The relaying of original lap siding as a flush sheathing to accomodate modern replacement finishes like the asphalt brick was a common occurrence in the mid-twentieth century.

poor condition. There are no steps at the back porch.

Both porches have wood- framed decks that appear to have been largely rebuilt, probably in the 1950s. Each was originally framed with three joists running end to end; decking is now supported by four joists running end to end. Decking is typically 1" by 6". The front porch deck is in fair condition, but deteriorating. The back porch deck is in poor condition, with the center of the outside sill collapsing and major deterioration of the decking itself.

The front porch header has been completely replaced and there are at least two generations of 2" by 4" rafters visible. Framing of the rear porch differs and appears to be older, or at least incorporates older framing material into its structure. The header there is only 3" by 4" and rafters are unusual in being about 2- 3/4" square. Porch roofs are supported by 4" by 4" posts, all of them modern except perhaps for a single column on the front porch which is probably original. It measures 3- 1/4" by 3- 3/4", 6'- 10" high, and has corners chamfered from about 23" from the base to about 12" from top.

Interior

The house has a central hall plan with two rooms on the north side and what was originally two rooms, now combined into one, on the south side. The second floor contains a windowless stair hall with two unequally- sized rooms, one on each side. The smaller room on the south side also features two small closets at

Figure 16 View of hallway (Room 100) from front door. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

front and rear. Ceilings on the first floor are set at 7'- 4" and at 7'- 11" on the second floor.

Room 100

This narrow central hall, which is 5'- 5" wide and 18'- 5" long, was truncated at its western end by installation of a bathroom in the 1970s. Doors open from the hall to all of the other rooms on the first floor and a steep, narrow staircase ascends to the second floor along its south wall.

Floors: Flooring is 5"- wide, painted, tongue- and- groove boards. The collapsing sill that runs through the center of the house has

Figure 17 View of south wall of Room 101, showing typical door in house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

caused major deflection of the floor around the middle of the hall.

Walls and Ceilings: Walls and ceiling are finished with the same tongue- and- groove boards, 3" wide, all of it painted. Three- inch- wide, double- beaded,tongue- and- grooveboards,are used in the paneling beneath the stair case. These boards are probably original.

Trim: Door casing consists of 1" by 3" boards, laid flush with the wall boards. There are no baseboards or crown molding.

Doors: The front door, which swings outward, is 3'- 0" by 6'- 6- 3/4" with six lights above three horizontal panels. It was probably installed in the 1950s replacing the original door, the design of which is not known. A wooden screened door is hung on the inside of the opening.

Doors to the other rooms on this floor open from this hall. See individual rooms for descriptions.

Staircase: The staircase to the second floor is in this room. The rise and the run of these stairs are both 8- 1/2", creating a very steep stairway. Treads are plain, without nosing. The newel post is 3- 3/4" by 3- 3/4" with a 6"- square cap. The bannister is ellipsoidal in section, 1- 7/8" thick and 5" wide. Balusters are 1" by 1", two per tread, and set into a routed channel on the underside of the bannister.

Lighting: A single, porcelain, keyless socket is mounted on the ceiling near the foot of the stairs.

Room 101

This room measures 11'- 10" by 13'- 4", making it the largest room on the first floor. It was probably the parlor or best room, although there is little to distinguish it from the other rooms except for the fireplace.

Floors: Flooring is 5" tongue- and- groove and is painted. The saddle is missing from the door opening to the hall.

Walls and Ceilings: Walls and ceiling are typical 3"- wide, painted, tongue- and- groove boards.

Trim: A 2- 1/4" bed molding is used at the juncture of the walls and ceiling. A 1" cove molding finishes the corners of the room. There is no baseboard.

Door: The opening to the hall is 3'- 0" by 6'- 5". The door has four, vertical, raised panels, with stiles and rails 1- 1/16" thick and with through-mortise joinery. The door also has a common rimlock with metal knobs, which are probably replacements of earlier, mineral knobs.

Windows: Windows are 2'- 10" by 5'- 4", six over six. Casing is 3- 1/2" wide; sash stop is 3/4" by 1- 1/4"; stool is 1- 1/4" by 3- 1/8". The top sash is fixed and the bottom sash is not counter-weighted but has a single wooden sash stay that can be used to keep the lower sash raised.

Fireplace: The original mantle appears to have been lost when the present wall boards were installed; no evidence for it remains. The opening in the wall paneling for the fireplace was about 3' by 4- 1/2" but has been closed with 1" by 6" boards, now partially removed. A terra-cotta flue for a stove is located about 5' off the floor.

Lighting: A single, porcelain, fixture is mounted near the center of the ceiling, with a switch mounted near the door.

Figure 18 View of fireplace opening in Room 101. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Room 102

This room measures 9'- 6" by 13'- 4". It was probably originally used as a dining room.

Floors: Flooring is typical 5"- wide, painted, tongue- and- groove. The saddle is missing from the door opening.

Walls: The walls of this room have been paneled with thin, 4' by 8' sheets of wood paneling.

Figure 19 View of typical window casing and wall paneling. Note pivoting sash stay at center, typical of original windows. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 20 View north in Room 101, showing window that infills earlier door to now-missing kitchen wing. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

The original double- beaded, tongue- and-groove paneling is visible behind the paneling on the east and west walls, and it may remain on the other walls as well.

Ceiling: The ceiling is paneled with plain, 3"-wide, tongue- and- groove boards similar to those used in Room 101.

Door: The door opening to the hall is 3'- 0" by 6- 5- 1/2" and has a typical four- panel door, complete with rimlock and its original mineral door knobs.

Windows: When the kitchen was repaired after the 1933 hurricane, a door was created out of the original window opening on the north wall in order to connect the relocated kitchen and this room. When the kitchen was moved in 1939, the door was replaced by the present window, which has one- over- one sash.

Figure 21 View west showing what was Room 103, now combined with Room 104. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

When the original porch door from this room was closed after World War II, the sash that had been part of the window on the south wall of Room 103 appears to have been recycled to fill this opening, since it matches the original sash in Room 101 and elsewhere.

Room 103/104

This space, which measures 10'- 3" by 21'- 10", was originally partitioned into separate rooms at the header still visible about 9- 1/2' from the west wall.

Floors: Flooring is 5" tongue- and- groove and is painted. The saddles are missing from the door openings to the hall.

Walls and Ceilings: Walls and ceiling are typical 3"- wide, painted, tongue- and- groove boards installed after World War II.

Cabinetry: The base cabinets and sink on the south wall appear to have been added when the rooms were combined after World War II. The wall cabinets, which are different from the base cabinets, were probably installed at a later date.

Miscellaneous: The cast- iron pump mounted to the cabinets on the south wall may have been installed when the rooms were combined or it may be an earlier fixture reused at its present location. It was made by Sanders Co., Inc., of Elizabeth City, NC.

Figure 22 View east showing Room 104, now combined with Room 103. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002

Room 105

Created after World War II, probably in the 1970s, this bathroom occupies the western end of the house's original central hall.

Floor: Flooring is the original 5"- wide boards found in the hall.

Walls: The wall that was constructed to partition this space from the central hall is composedofplain,3- 1/4"- wide,tongue- and- groove boards attached at the floor and the ceiling without an internal frame.

Ceiling: The ceiling is finished with the same 3" tongue- and- groove boards used on the hall ceiling.

Figure 23 View west in second floor hall. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Figure 24 View south in Room 201. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 25 View of wallpaper-covered paneling on north wall of Room 201. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Door: The door opening here is 2'- 0" by 6'- 0" and the door is a modern, two- panel wooden door, contemporaneous with creation of the bathroom.

Window: A small, single- sash, wooden, awning window, 2'- 6" wide by 1'- 9" high, fills what was the upper portion of the original back door to the house.

Fixtures: The fixtures include a standard, modern, porcelain toilet and wall- hung lavatory. The toilet is dated 30 October 1979.

Room 200

This hallway was created when the second floor was partitioned, probably around 1900. It is approximately 6- 1/2' wide, making it about a foot wider than the hall on the first floor. Part of the south wall toward the front of the house was removed, probably when repairs were made to the roof.

Floor: Flooring is 3- 1/2" tongue- and- groove boards. The difference between this and the 5" flooring used on the first floor is an indication that the attic was not finished originally.

Walls: Walls are created by 4- 3/8" double-beaded, tongue- and- groove boards, unframed but mounted to nailers at floor and ceiling.

Ceiling: Ceiling is finished with a mixture of 3- 1/2" and 4" plain tongue- and- groove boards.

Trim: A mixture of 1" quarter round, base cap, and cove molding is used as trim in this space.

Miscellaneous: The balustrade around the stairwell has the same bannister used on the stairs themselves. The balusters are also the same, 1" square, set on 4- 1/4" to 4- 1/2" centers. However, the balustrade has been removed from the end and from the south side of the stairwell.

Room 201

This room, which was created around 1900, measures about 10'- 2" by 13'- 6". It is flanked by closets (the only ones in the house historically) on the east and west.

The door opening to the rear closet is 1'- 10" by 4'- 3" with the door constructed of 2- 1/2", double- beaded, tongue- and- groove boards. The door to the front closet is about the same size but made up of 4- 1/2", double- beaded, tongue- and- groove boards.

Windows: There are two window openings on the south wall. Both are 2'- 4" by 3'- 10", originally fitted with six- over- six sash. Sash are missing from the west window but may be those that are now stored in Room 202.

Trim: The room appears to have been trimmed with 2- 1/4" modled base cap at the ceiling but much of it is now missing.

Miscellaneous: The closets were originally paneled with tongue- and- groove boards. These are now missing from the ceiling, knee wall, and north wall of the front closet.

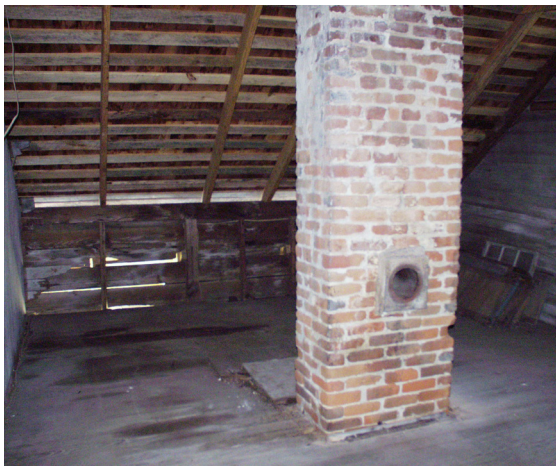


Figure 26 View west in Room 202. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Figure 27 View south in Room 202. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Room 202

This room measures 21'- 10" by 13'- 9".

Floor: Flooring is typical 3- 1/2" tongue- and- groove.

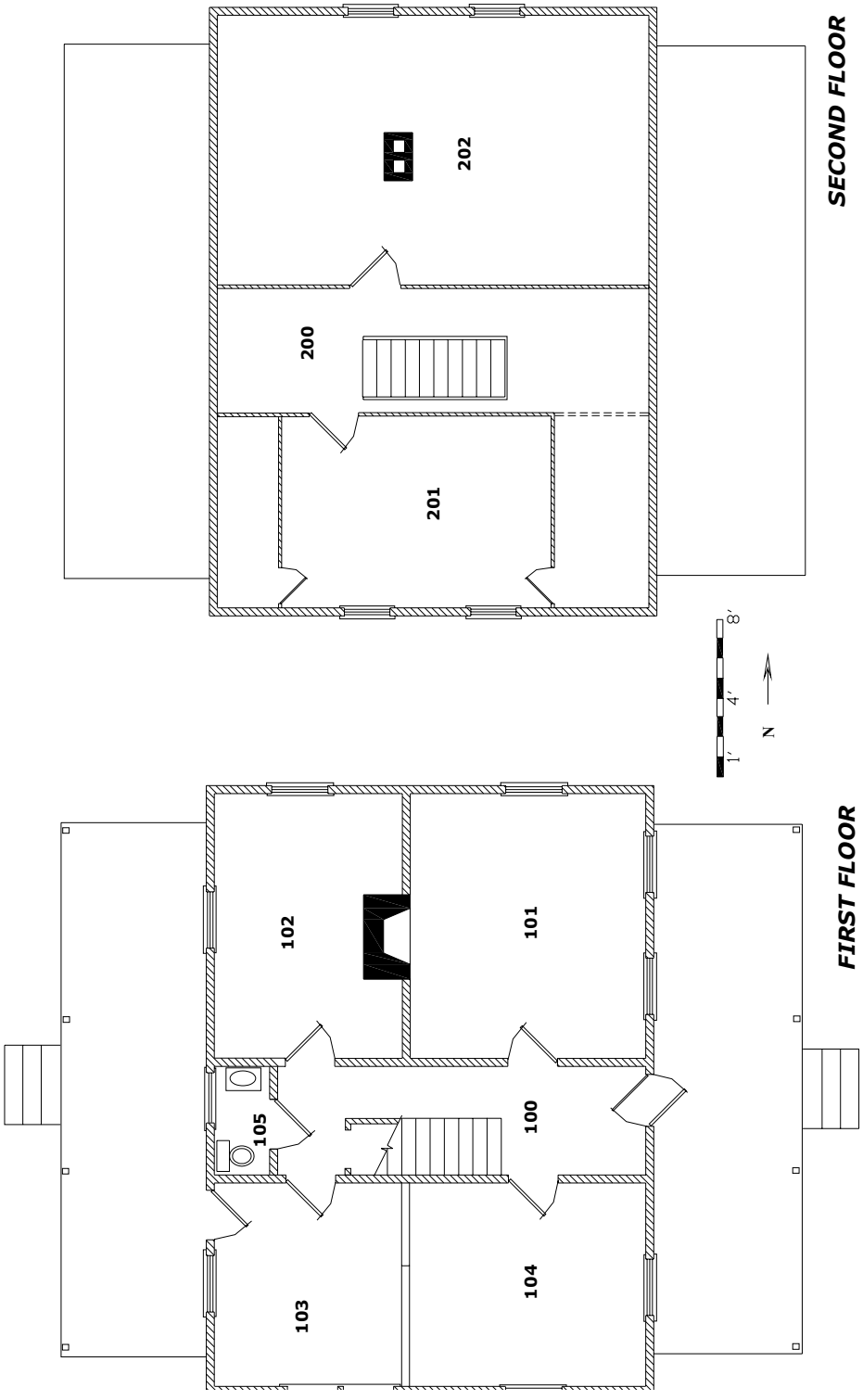
Walls and Ceiling: Walls and ceiling appear to have been originally finished like those in Room 201. Paneling on the ceiling and knee

walls is entirely missing. Plain, 3- 1/2", tongue- and- groove boards remain on the north wall. Typical double- beaded boards form the south wall.

Doors: The door opening from the hall measures 2'- 2- 1/4" by 6'. There is no door.

Windows: There are two window openings on the south wall. Both are 2'- 4" by 3'- 10", originally fitted with six- over- six sash. The upper sash in the east window is missing.

Miscellaneous: There is a stove- pipe flue built into the east side of the chimney, but a stove may never have been installed.


SECOND FLOOR
202
200
201
8'
4'
1'
N
FIRST FLOOR
102
101
105
100
103
104

Treatment and Use

Dating to around 1887, the George Dixon House is one of the oldest structures remaining in the village of Portsmouth. Dixon and his wife had deep roots on the island with parents and grandparents who were pilots and mariners before the demise of the port forced their own generation out to sea as fishermen. They raised five children in the house in the 1890s and early 1900s, two or three of whom continued to live there until 1939. One of the Dixon's children, Elma Dixon, and one of their grandchildren, Marion Babb, were the last residents of Portsmouth in 1971.

Remodeled for seasonal use around 1952, the house lost much of its historic character at that time. It has been vacant for over ten years and suffered a significant amount of deterioration from water penetration and termite infestation.

This section of the historic structure report describes a plan for treatment of the Dixon House that is meant to preserve the historic building while returning it to a useful condition. The fol-

lowing sections outline issues surrounding use of the building as well as legal requirements and other mandates that circumscribe its treatment. These are followed by an evaluation of the various treatment options—preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration—before describing in more detail the treatment recommendations.

Ultimate Treatment and Use

The authorizing legislation (Public Law 89-366) for Cape Lookout National Seashore mandated the park's establishment for the purpose of preserving "for public use and enjoyment an area in the State of North Carolina possessing outstanding natural and recreational values." However, by the time the seashore was actually established in 1976, the area's cultural resources at Portsmouth and at the Cape Lookout Light Station were also recognized.

The village and the surrounding 250 acres are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and, according to the nomination, are significant as the only historic village complex on the Outer Banks south of Ocracoke Inlet.[31] Although the existence of the village can be traced back to the 1760's, the nomination form states:

> Today the charm and significance of the area is in the informal placement of the complexes on high ground in the typical low salt marsh outer banks vegetation. These individual sites are connected by narrow, winding, grassy roads or lanes. This site relationship is very characteristic of early coastal villages.

The general management plan (GMP) developed for the park by the Denver Service Center in 1982 states that one of the park's management objectives is "[t]o preserve intact, as feasible, the historic resources of the national seashore and to recognized that dynamic natural forces have influenced them throughout their existence and will continue to influence them."[32] The GMP envisioned interpretation of the park's cultural resources that would "emphasize man and his relation to the sea" with maritime history a focus at the lighthouse and the cultural and economic life of the Outer Bankers at Portsmouth Village."[33]

Three points from the 1982 GMP are particularly relevant to treatment decisions on the buildings at Portsmouth.

- The 1982 plan "perpetuates the present level of use and development of Core Banks/Portsmouth Island. . . ."[34]
- Pointing out the resources' state level of significance, the 1982 plan meant "to preserve intact, as feasible, the historic resources of the national seashore and to recognize that dynamic natural forces have influenced them through their existence and will continue to influence them."[35]

31. The assemblage of houses near Cape Lookout itself apparently never functioned as a village in the same way as Portsmouth.

32. Cape Lookout *GMP*, p. 4.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *GMP*, p. iii.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

- "As appropriate, some structures may be perpetuated through adaptive use. Contemporary public and/or administrative rights will be allowed with necessary modifications. The qualities that qualified these resources for listing on the National Register of Historic Places will be perpetuated to the extent practicable."[36]

Use: In keeping with these parameters, the historic residential use of the Dixon House should be resumed through rehabilitation and long-term lease or special- use permit, as is presently the case with a number of the historic structures at Portsmouth.

***Treatment*:** In the early 1980s, the park proposed razing the Dixon House, the Ed Styron House, and others at Portsmouth if they could not be leased. More recently, the park has sought to preserve these and the other buildings that remain in Portsmouth, realizing that continued attrition of historic structures would soon result in loss of the village itself. The objective of the management staff of Cape Lookout National Seashore is to preserve as many of the serviceable structures in Portsmouth Village as possible to enhance and facilitate visitor appreciation and understanding of the cultural history of Portsmouth Village.

It is the belief of park management that such preservation can be effected through a combination of National Park Service investment, private contributions in the form of long- term and binding leases of village historic structures, and possibly through other private contributions from universities, etc. who may want to maintain a given historic structure as a public service. Until the early 1980s, the Dixon House was leased as a temporary lodge for hunters and fishermen under a special use permit. With major repairs, the house could again be useful in that capacity.

With major exterior restoration, the house's historical significance could be more effectively interpreted; but because of the unfortunate interior alterations in the 1950s, interior restoration may not be justified. Nevertheless, the mere presence of the house upon the Portsmouth landscape is critical, given the loss of historic structures that has occurred over the last thirty years.

Requirements for Treatment and Use

The Dixon House is in poor repair with significant damage already done to the historic building. It remains an important feature on the landscape at Portsmouth, but in its current condition, it is both unsightly and unsafe. At a minimum, those conditions must be corrected.

Legal mandates and policy directives circumscribe treatment of the Dixon House. The NPS's Cultural Resources Management Guideline (DO- 28) requires planning for the protection of cultural resources "whether or not they relate to the specific authorizing legislation or interpretive programs of the parks in which they lie." Therefore, the house should be understood in its own cultural context and managed in light of its own values so that it may

36.*Ibid.,* p. 35.

be preserved unimpaired for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Modern building codes and accessibility issues are a major factor in designing repairs and often require significant changes to historic buildings. Major intervention into the structure will be necessary to correct structural problems, but with the absence of historic siding, the existing exterior finishes can be easily removed to facilitate those repairs. Since there are no plans for visitor access to the house in the foreseeable future, compliance with ADA is not a factor in considering present treatment of the building beyond what is necessary to ensure a stable structure. Should the building be opened to the public, code- related issues should be re- evaluated, especially those relating loading and maximum occupancy.

To help guide compliance with the statutes and regulations noted above, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties have been issued along with guidelines for applying those standards. Standards are included for each of the four separate but interrelated approaches to the treatment of historic buildings: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. These approaches define a hierarchy that implies an increasing amount of intervention into the historic building. Rehabilitation, in particular, allows for a variety of alterations and even additions to accommodate modern use of the structure. However, a key principle embodied in the Standards is that changes be reversible, i.e., that alterations, additions, or other modifications 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 characters.

The key to the success of any historic preservation project is good judgment in determining where replacement of a deteriorated building element is necessary. Deterioration in a portion of an element should not necessitate total replacement of the element, since epoxy consolidants and fillers can repair the damaged area, often without even removing the damaged element to make the repair. While total replacement of a damaged element is often recommended, especially in rehabilitation projects, the success of most preservation projects can be judged by the amount of historic material that remains. Even "replacement in kind" does not typically address natural processes that give the historic materials an aged appearance that is only possible with the passage of time.

Alternatives for Treatment and Use

The four main approaches to treatment of historic buildings- - preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction- - require increasingly more aggressive levels of intervention into the existing building. Since the authenticity of the historical artifact (i.e., the building) decreases as more and more intervention is needed, several issues must be addressed in order to arrive at an approach that requires the minimum amount of intervention into the historic fabric of the building while achieving the desired goal.

The first of these issues is the relative historical importance of the building, which is included as a contributing building in the National Register district at Portsmouth. As one of the oldest houses remaining in the village and with the family's deep roots on the island, the Dixon House is one of the village's more important historic structures. Through it, much of the village's history through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be interpreted.

In addition to interpretive considerations, a second set of issues to be considered in determining a treatment for the house surrounds the building's physical condition. The Dixon House has lost many of its distinctive materials and features and some of the interior spaces have been altered. Deterioration is widespread and extensive repair and replacement of materials will be required. Unfortunately, the nature of the building's present exterior finishes make a simple preservation approach to treatment difficult at best. The asphalt siding which replaced (not just covered up) the historic siding after World War II is itself now missing from most of the northeast and southwest ends of the house. Additional damage can be expected as repairs are made to the building's framing and exterior sheathing. A suitable substitute for the asphalt siding is no longer manufactured, which necessitates installation of an entirely new siding system or, alternatively, using unpatterned asphalt roofing as a substitute for areas where the original asphalt siding is missing or damaged.

However, given the park's treatment of the other buildings on the site, which is based on the National Register's definition of the village's historic period of significance as 1890-1930,[37] preservation of the asphalt siding is not recommended. Rather, restoration of the exterior of the Dixon House to its appearance during the historic period is recommended.

A restoration goal is complicated, however, by the loss of the kitchen wing in 1939. If further research shows that the "summer kitchen" at the McWilliams- Dixon House is the old kitchen from the George Dixon House, it might be possible to return it to its original site or to reconstruct a replica. A cursory examination of the McWilliams- Dixon summer kitchen revealed no evidence of the structure's having once been a part of the George Dixon House. A careful study of the interior and exterior of the summer kitchen as well as a careful examination of the framing of the house when the ashpalt siding and wood sheathing are removed may provide evidence of the summer kitchen's attachment to the house. If the kitchen cannot be identified, then treatment options are more limited at the Dixon House. Archaeology might be useful in determination of the kitchen's dimensions and, in either case, could be useful in determining the kitchen's exact relationship to the main house.

Alternatively, the exterior of the main house could be restored while interpreting the missing kitchen through signage or other means.

37. Sarah Olson, *Historic Resource Study, Portsmouth Village, Cape Lookout National Seashore, North Carolina* (NPS, Denver Service Center, 1982), p. 6, gives dates of 1890-1920 [sic] for the interpretive period for the village.

Certainly that would be the most viable alternative in the short term.

Interior finishes are mostly intact, except for some water damage and lost material on the second floor. Repairs would be straightforward; but, since many finishes date to the post-war renovation of the house, preservation of the existing interior would be of little interpretive value. Unfortunately, there is little documentation to support recreation of the original interiors nor is there an obvious interpretive value to doing so unless the park intended to open the house to the public. Because so little of the house's historic interior remains intact, the park might be better served by a simple rehabilitative approach to treatment of the interior.

Recommendations for Treatment & Use

The recommended approach to treatment of the Dixon House is restoration of the exterior of the existing house to its appearance prior to its remodeling in the early 1950s. The interior should be simply rehabilitated, being careful to preserve the surviving historic finishes (which are few). The house could be leased under a special use permit without compromising the integrity of the historic structure.

Site

In addition to the missing kitchen, a privy and other outbuildings were associated with the house. Archaeological investigation could probably locate some of these features and also provide documentation for Patsy Dixon's store that once stood across the road.

- Plan program of archaeological investigation of the entire site (approximately one acre).

Foundation

The existing foundation for the house consists of wooden piers sunk to some indeterminant depth. At least one of the piers be-

neath the beam that runs through the center of the house has failed, which has allowed the partial collapse of the sill in that location. The piers across the front of the house appear to be in relatively good condition; the remainder need to be checked individually for deterioration and repaired or replaced as necessary. After repairs to the buidling's framing, piers that have been added to stabilize deteriorating members might be removed in order to restore the original pier configuration. This appears to have included five piers across the front and rear (including corner piers), four across each end (including corner piers), and three or four through the middle of the house.

- Repair/replace piers as necessary, seeking to restore original pier configuration.

Structure

The structure of the building has suffered significant termite damage. Since all of the existing exterior siding and sheathing will need to be removed in order to restore the original finishes (see below), the building's wall framing will be exposed and can be inspected and repaired as necessary.

In addition to the collapsing center sill, which must be repaired, if not replaced, the sill on the southeast side of the house is structured incorrectly and must be replaced as well. Portions of the sills on the opposite end and rear of the house will also need repairs. Once sill repairs are made, broken or damaged floor joists can be repaired. Exposure of the wall framing will also allow close inspection of and, if necessary, improvements in the connections of the studs to the sills and top plates.

- Replace sill at southeast end of house and collapsing sill running through center of the house; repair other sills as necessary; raise and level building structure.
- "Sister" new floor joists to broken joists.
- Inspect stud connections to sills and plates and repair as needed.

Roofing

Roof framing was completely repaired and the existing wood- shingle roofing installed in recent years. Both are in excellent condition.

Doors

The two existing exterior doors are replacements of the original doors, and the character of the original doors cannot be documented at this time. While the existing doors could be preserved, because of their obviously- modern character and the fact that they are contemporaneous with the asphalt siding (c. 1953), both doors should be replaced with one of the doors shown in Figue 1. Due to the frequent high winds in the area, many houses had solid, paneled exterior doors, and a reproduction of the four- panel doors on the interior of the house would be an appropriate replacement for the existing door. However, if oral tradition is correct, the Dixons' house was once a "show-

place" in Portsmouth, and it is quite possible that they installed a door with lights rather than solid panels. It is unlikely that they would have used one of the Queen Anne doors glazed with colored glass that were so popular after 1890.

In order to restore the building's historic fenestration, the back door should be returned to its original location at the end of the central hall. The half bath at that end of the hall should be removed and a full bath installed elsewhere in the house (see below). By the end of World War I, there was a door on the northwest side of Room 102, but it was replaced by the existing window in the 1950s. The window should be returned to its original location (see below) and the door opening to the back porch restored, using four- panel door similar to the ones recommended for the other exterior door.

- Replace front door with four- panel door similar to those that remain on the interior.
- Replace window on northwest side of Room 102 with a four- panel door, similar to the other exterior doors.
- Remove and close existing back door.
- Restore original back door opening, using typical four- panel door.

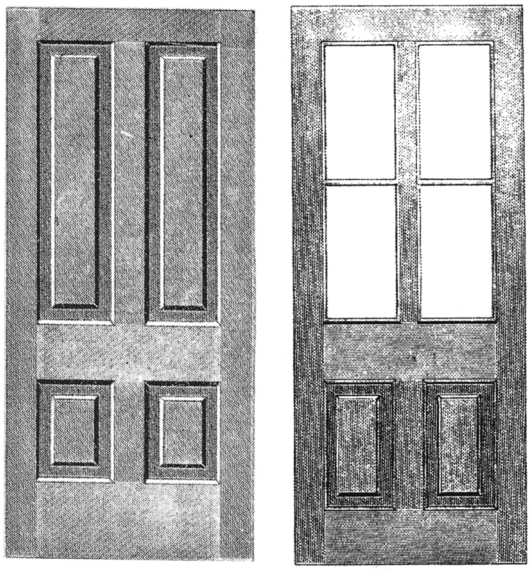


Figure 28 Two typical exterior doors in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. (from *The Elements of Style*.)

Windows

Alterations will be necessary to windows if the exterior of the house is to be restored. The pair of post- WWII windows on the southwest wall of Room 103 should be eliminated and the original single window opening, which matched the others on the first floor, should be restored. The sash now located on the porch side of Room 102 was probably taken from this location and, with restoration of a door in that location, could be returned to its original location.

If the kitchen wing is restored or reconstructed, the window on the northeast side of Room 102 should be closed. Otherwise the existing window should be repaired. The remainder of the window sash must also be repaired. Two or three sash may require complete replacement.

Restoration of the exterior would also include reinstatement of louvered shutters at all the first floor windows. A few of the original shutters remain in the attic and can be restored;

new shutters matching these can replace those that are missing entirely.

However, if the building is to be returned to a residential use, screens will be necessary at all windows. Since the louvered shutters cannot be used if the present wood- framed screens (c. 1952) are in place, the wood- framed screens should be replaced with modern metal framed "half- screens" that are designed to be placed within the interior sash track as needed.

- Remove existing windows in Room 103 and replace with original window now in Room 102.
- Repair all existing sash, replacing those that are missing or too badly damaged to repair.
- Restore and reinstall louvered shutters.
- Close window on northeast side of Room 102 if kitchen wing is reinstated.
- Install aluminum- framed half screens.

Porches

The floor framing and decking of the back porch will require complete replacement. If the kitchen wing is reinstated, the porch should be extended across the front (northwest) side of the kitchen.

- Reconstruct rear porch deck, replicating existing decking and using wooden piers similar to those used under the main body of the house.

Exterior Finishes

The nature of the original siding on the house is not certain, but lap siding appears to have been used originally. The re- use of old clapboards as flush- laid sheathing under asphalt siding was a common occurrence and appears to have occurred at the Dixon House in the early 1950s. While the asphalt brick is now considered an historic building material, it and the wood sheathing are in poor condition, and since installation of the asphalt siding occurred outside Portsmouth's period of historical significance, restoration of the original wood siding is recommended. At least one entire panel of the asphalt siding should be preserved in the park's permanent collection.

A careful analysis of the existing exterior sheathing will allow identification of original siding. Some boards will retain enough paint residue to confirm the color of exterior woodwork, which was probably always white.

In addition, some interior woodwork appears to have been re- used as sheathing, and examples of these materials, some of which should still retain historic paints, should be preserved in the park's architectural study collection as an aid to any future attempts to restore the house's historic interiors.

- Remove existing asphalt siding, preserving at least one complete panel in the park's permanent collection.
- Identify original 1" by 8" siding material, and re- install all sound material as

lapped siding, replacing missing material as necessary.
- Paint siding and trim as dictated by careful analysis of surviving finishes.

Interior

Funds are not currently available for any treatment of the interior of the house. When funding is available, repairs to the existing tongue- and- groove walls, ceilings, and floors will be necessary. Although the house's historic interior finishes could be restored (minus the mantle in Room 101, for which there is no documentation), the proposed modern residential use of the house does not warrant the expense of full restoration, especially since the interiors will not be interpreted. Complete analysis of the painted finishes on the surviving historic interior paneling and those on the interior finishes that were re- used as exterior sheathing might provide adequate information to support a future restoration.

The present kitchen sink, cabinets and counter should be removed from Room 103/104, which would allow reconstruction of the wall that historically separated the two spaces. If that wall is rebuilt, the same plain tongue- and- groove boards now present in the two rooms should be used to finish it. If the existing paneling were replaced with the original double- beaded tongue- and- groove, the beaded material should also be used on this wall.

A modern kitchen should be installed in Room 102. Not only will a back door be present in that room, it is also located beneath the area on the second floor where installation of a full bath is proposed, making installation of plumbing more efficient.

The existing half bath is not adequate for the proposed use and should be replaced by a full bath elsewhere, since the current location will not accommodate a full bath. The half bath could be maintained but that would leave a 1950s window opening instead of the historic back door and the house's exterior fenestration unrestored.

Installation of a new bath on the second floor will require construction of new walls in Room 202, with the bath using the existing door opening into the room. A new door will be necessary into the reduced Room 202. Installation of plumbing lines should avoid alterations to the ceiling below in Room 102, since that is the last of the original beaded, tongue- and- groove ceilings in the house that remains intact. This may require raising parts of the bathroom floor to accommodate waste traps and creation of a "wet wall" for waste lines around the southwest corner of Room 102.

Ceilings should be reinstated where they are missing in Room 202 on the second floor, using plain tongue- and- groove paneling. Areas of damaged woodwork in Room 201 should be repaired, matching the existing material wherever possible. Care should be taken to preserve as much of the surviving wallpaper as possible. If it is deemed necessary to paint the room, samples of the wallpaper must be retrieved and archived in the park's permanent collection. Missing walls at the northeast (front) end of the

center hall (Room 200) should also be reconstructed, matching existing material in that space.

Although the house appears never to have had an electrical system, one will have to be installed if the house is to be used for residential purposes. Plumbing supply and waste lines should also be replaced. Central heat is not recommended but the electrical system should be designed to accomodate space heaters or electric baseboard heaters.

- Preserve existing interior finishes, especially the original double- beaded tongue- and- groove boards that have survived.
- Remove existing bathroom.
- Install new bathroom in Room 202, avoiding alterations to the ceiling in Room 102.
- Install modern kitchen in Room 102.
- Rebuild wall between Rooms 103 and 104.
- Reconstruct ceiling in Room 202.
- Reconstruct missing walls and ceiling at front (east) end of center hall.
- Repair finishes in Room 201, preserving as much of the historic wallpaper as possible.
- Install modern electrical and plumbing systems.

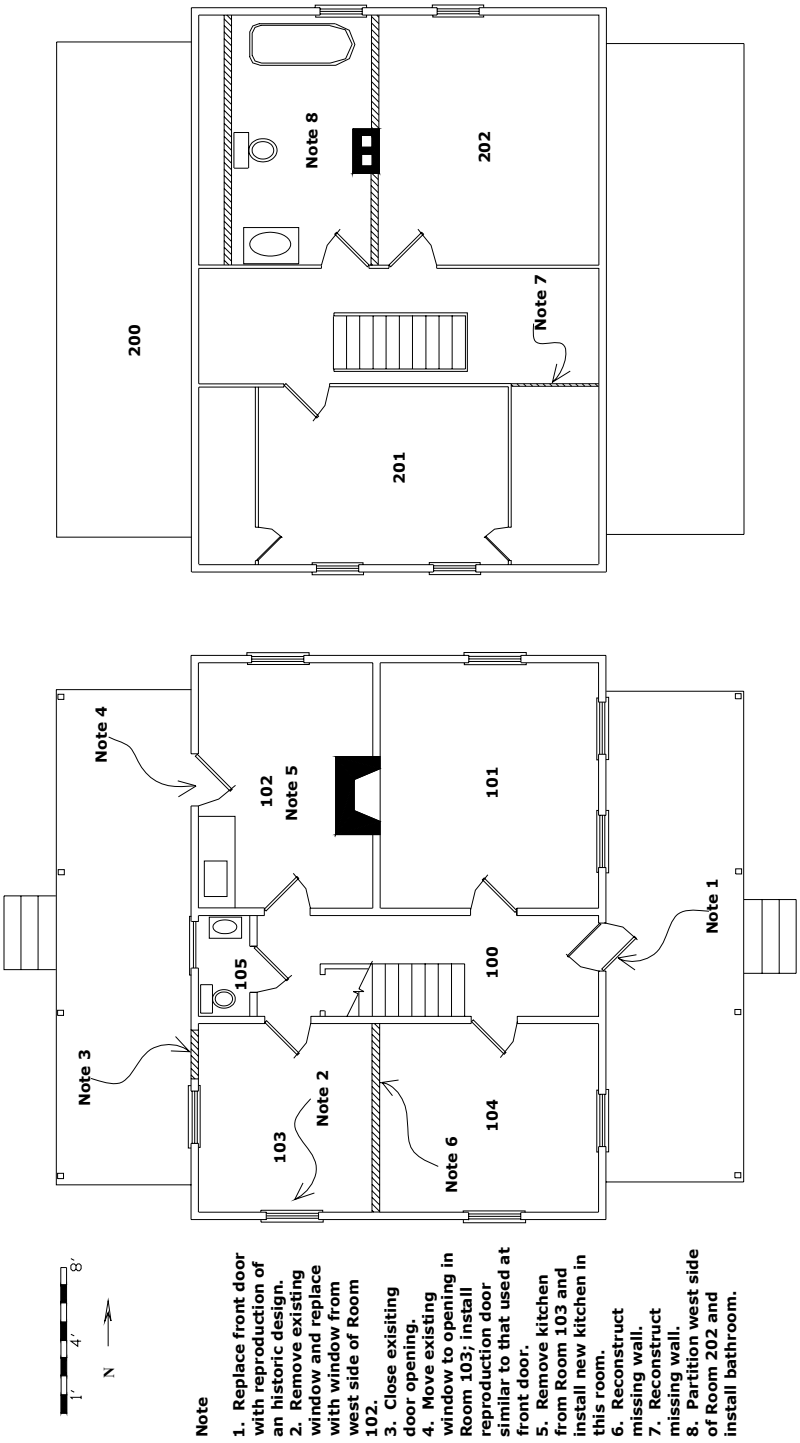


Figure 29 Proposed plan for treatment and use. (T. Jones, SERO-CR, 2003)

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

NPS D- 433 January 1997