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HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
FOR
HISTORY OF PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE
CAPE LOOKOUT NATIONAL SEASHORE, NORTH CAROLINA

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September 1970

Prepared by:

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Approved by:

Regional Director, SERO

PREFACE

This report has been prepared to satisfy the research needs specified in Historical Resource Study Proposal CALO-H-1, Historic Resource Study, Portsmouth Village, Cape Lookout National Seashore, North Carolina. The area's historic sites have been identified, evaluated and plotted on the Historical Base Map. Structures that are to appear on the list of classified structures have been identified, as well as the lands and resources to be designated Class VI in the Land Classification Plan. National Register Forms have been prepared for structures and the historic district nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

The dearth of information on Portsmouth Village when I began the study has been overcome by the extensive use of colonial documents, deeds, decennial censuses of the United States and other official documents, State records, personal interviews and a personal survey of the area. Although limited by the scope of this historic resource survey, the history of Portsmouth has become viable and suggestions are made for further exploration of the subject.

Many persons were helpful with the preparation of this report. Outstanding were Senator Everett B. Jordan and Representative David Newton Henderson of North Carolina who provided vital information on the political organization and the whereabouts of State documents. Their interest in the project was exceptional.

Particular thanks are due the master planning team consisting of Team Captain William W. Smith, engineer-planner, Barron H. Bohnet, landscape architect, both of the Office of Environmental Planning and Design, Eastern Service Center, Superintendent Dan Davis of Cape Lookout National Seashore, and Park Ranger Dave Fletcher of Cape Hatteras

National Seashore (Ocracoke). All gave ~~us~~ unstintingly the sum of their knowledge and experience in the area and provided documents essential to the study. Much of it has been incorporated in the text. Bill Smith was most helpful in permitting me to use his recent photographs of Portsmouth Village.

Mark Eckoff, Mrs. Hope K. Holdcamper, Joseph Howerton, Arthur Hecht and Robert Kvasnicka and others of the National Archives were especially helpful in locating rarely used documents.

Especial thanks are due all those North Carolinians who so willingly and cheerfully aided me in my search for first-hand materials. Among these I would like to mention the Honorable John T. Icenhour, Assistant Attorney General; Mr. E. C. Coker, Head Administrator, State Archives and Library and his staff at Raleigh; and the administrators of the Office of the County Commissioners, County Courthouse, Beaufort, N.C., including the Honorable A. H. James, Clerk of the Superior Court; Mr. Elbert Davis, Tax Supervisor, and his assistant, Sterling Hancock; Mrs. Alma Tilghman, Register of Deeds, and her assistants, Mrs. Sharon Piner and Miss ~~Elma~~ Charlotte Taylor. For their enthusiastic^s in providing first-hand information on Portsmouth and life on the island I wish to thank Miss Elma Dixon, and Mr. Henry Pigott, the two surviving permanent residents; Captain Justin Austin, and Mr. and Mrs. George Wilkes of Ocracoke; and Mrs. Ada Roberts Styron of Arlington, Va., who as a child helped her mother in offering succor to the survivors of the wrecked Vera Cruz VII.

My colleagues Edwin C. Bearss and F. Ross Holland were especially helpful in providing information and copies of the excellent reports they had completed on Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout. Both read ~~the~~

preliminary drafts of the report and offered valuable assistance in its completion. I wish to extend my thanks to Frank B. Sarles for proof-reading the final draft and to Dr. R. Mortensen for reviewing my recommendations. Miss is due special thanks for an excellent typing job.

G. J. O.

Washington, D. C.

September 10, 1970

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

THE GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

Portsmouth Village ~~was~~ founded in 1753 lies in latitude $35^{\circ}04'11''$ and longitude $76^{\circ}03'55''$ on the northernmost tip of Portsmouth Island which stretches about eight miles ~~from~~ south to Core Banks. It is the northernmost ~~most~~ part of the chain of low, sandy, string bean islands known as the Outer Banks. They stretch for 40 miles in a southwest~~erly~~ direction to Cape Lookout at the southern extremity of which lie Shackleford Banks that jut out into the Atlantic off the coast of the mainland of North Carolina. Portsmouth Island is separated from Core Banks, most ~~probably~~ probably named for the Coree Indians who once populated the area, by Drum Inlet which opened in the 1930s and was formerly known as Swash Inlet. Whalebone Inlet which cut through Portsmouth Island in the 1860s closed in the early 1900s. There is no road connection between Portsmouth and the other areas of the Outer Banks and the mainland.

Portsmouth is separated on the north from Ocracoke Island, the southernmost extremity of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, by the ~~the~~ turbulent waters of Ocracoke Inlet discovered in 1585. It was known earlier by its Indian name, of Wokokon, Wosoton, Woccock, Okok, Ocacock and Ocracock. It appears on the White map of 1585, the Dudley map of 1647, and the Moseley map of 1733. The town of Portsmouth appears for the first time on the Collet map of 1770 and the Mouzon map of 1777 distinguished by a cluster of about nine houses and what appears to be a church. ¹ A road runs from the village in a southwestly direction.

Ocracoke is the scene of the last days of Blackbeard the pirate, known
as "North Carolina's own." ² The area is isolated; it is primitive.

² Hugh F. Rankin, The Pirates of Colonial North Carolina (Raleigh, 1965), p. 43.

Portsmouth is considered to be one of the most important areas of the Cape Lookout National Seashore now being established to preserve the primitive nature of one of the last-remaining seashores of our eastern seaboard.

EARLY EXPLORATION

The area was undoubtedly known to the Spanish and French fleets of

the sixteenth century as they took advantage of the trade winds and the warm currents of the Gulf Stream to beat their way back to Europe. It was in 1524 that the Italian navigator, Verrazzano, then in the employ of the French king and using a French fleet left the first written record of the Outer Banks, ~~exploring~~ naming them "Verrazzano Isthmus." Pamlico Sound appeared to him to be an endless sea and he believed that the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were separated by that narrow strip of land and that the prize for which he was searching — a route to India and China — lay just beyond. This idea was accepted by the French king and other Europeans for almost 150 years.

1. David Stick, The Outer Banks of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, 1958), p. 13.

It was during the second expedition of Raleigh that left England on April 9, 1585 under the command of Sir Richard Grenville, and with a force of over 600 men, half of whom were soldiers, that the area ~~came~~ to the English. ~~definitively~~ became known. Grenville reached the Outer Banks at Ocracoke and from there continued his exploration of the countryside moving up the Banks to Roanoke Island where he established a fort and a settlement. Thereafter English ships regularly visited the area. It was most probably during ~~the~~ one of these voyages that White prepared his map in 1585 showing "Wococen" Inlet with some degree of accuracy.

OCRACOCKE INLET

Once the English were established in America and their settlements grew as trade and commerce expanded between the Colonies and the Mother Country, Ocracoke Inlet was to become the most important port of entry for North Carolina. All exports and imports from her three most important ^{sea,} ports--New Bern, Washington, and Edenton--were funneled across the fresh waters of Pamlico (also known as Pamlico) Sound through its narrow exit at Ocracoke Inlet. And it was at this vital juncture where the fresh waters of North Carolina's rivers, lakes and streams met the turbulent salt waters of the Atlantic that nature was to challenge man.

Daily, according to figures furnished by the U. S. Geologic Survey Office at Raleigh, 15,000,000,000 gallons of water run off the mainland of North Carolina into its bays and sounds of which the most important is Pamlico Sound. ⁽⁶⁾ It is here that nature must keep her balance and to do this the waters must mix. And it is the mixing of these waters that create the dangers at Ocracoke Inlet for the undercurrents create the vast shoals and turbulence ^{that to hinder;} ~~as~~ a ship's passage through these waters.

4. Ibid., p. 5 fn.

~~Upon being informed of the dangers at Ocracoke Inlet,~~ ^{Once they had successfully defied} the dangers ~~inherent~~ ^{where} the cold waters of the Labrador current mix with the warm waters of the Gulf Stream off Cape Hatteras in what has become known as the "graveyard of ships," a ship's captain would still have to run the gauntlet of Ocracoke Inlet. Here shoals lured his ship aground. If he successfully navigated the ship channel or Wallace's Channel off Portsmouth Island, he still had to steer past the dangers of running

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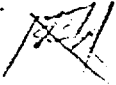


One of the earliest descriptions for safe sailing into Ocracoke  
1733  
Inlet is from the Moseley Map of ~~1733~~ which states:

DIRECTIONS FOR ~~Ocracoke~~<sup>C</sup> INLET in Lat.  $34^{\circ} 55'$

If you happen to fall in with Cape Hatteras which lies in Lat.  $35^{\circ} 3'$  N. the Cape land is full of low Trees. Your Course to Ocracoke is W. b. S. about 10 leagues distant from the Cape.

When you come up with the Inlet, to the Northward lies a large Tuft of Trees. In the middle of the Inlet lies a small Island having two large Beacons on it. You must bring them in one and your Course will be W. b. N. Then Steer up with them, till you come within a Cables length of the Shore. Then steer up along the said Beacon Island till you bring Thatch's Hole to bear ~~E.N.E.~~ E.N.E., then steer up with the same and then come to an Anchor in 5 or 6 fathoms water marked [with an anchor on the map].

 You have, over Ocracoke<sup>C</sup> Bar, 12 fathoms at low water in the range of the Beacons.

S.E.b.E. Moon, makes full Sea on the Bar, and the Tide flows 3 Feet. The flood runs in the Sound 3 Hours after High water.

If you happen to fall in to the Southward of Ocacock near Cape Lookout, then will appear double land. But if to the Northward, then a large Sound within, and nothing but water will appear over the Bank at Thatch's Hole, take a Pilot to go up the Country.

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J. Edward Moseley Map, 1733, photostat copy in Map Division, Library of Congress.

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sailing  
Note should be made in these directions of the variation which still existed in the spelling of "Ocacock" and "Ocracoke<sup>C</sup>."

*Didn't the shoals continually  
shift over the years?*



## BLACKBEARD, THE PIRATE, NORTH CAROLINA'S OWN

The colonial history of the waters off Portsmouth Island, the site of the future seaport, would not be complete without looking into the career of the pirate, Edward Drummond of Bristol, England, popularly known as Blackbeard, and considered North Carolina's own. He is seldom known under the name of Drummond for after he became a pirate, he started calling himself Edward Teach sometimes spelled in the records as Thatch, Tache, or even Tatch. His memory is preserved today under the name of "Teach" at Teache's Hole off the southwest coast of Ocracoke Island, where legends concerning him add lustre to the eyes of ~~the~~ modern day tourists, and a jingle to the pockets of local tradesmen. It was at Teach's Hole that Blackbeard's ~~name~~ piratical career was ended in 1718 by a powerful slice of the sword of Lt. Maynard tenant Robert Maynard of the British warship Pearl, ~~and~~ hung the head of the pirate from the bowsprit of ~~the~~ Ranger, the sloop on which Maynard and his men had hoodwinked old Teach, and threw his decapitated body into the waters of Ocracoke Inlet. Local legend says that because Blackbeard was such a powerful person, his headless body swam seven times around ~~his~~ his sloop, ~~the~~ Adventure, before it sunk out of sight. It is also said that on stormy ~~night~~ nights and in fog-bound weather, the <sup>strident</sup> ~~powerful~~ ~~bass~~ voice of Blackbeard calls out, "O-crow-cock," and is heard above the booming of the surf. ~~thus giving the inlet its current name which has appeared on charts since that time.~~



## CHAPTER II

### THE FOUNDING OF PORTSMOUTH

The town of Portsmouth was founded in 1753 for the specific purpose of providing a site on Core Banks for wharves and wharves where commodities could be stored that were used in the foreign trade of the Province of North Carolina. ~~Since the founding of North Carolina~~ For many years the

trade and commerce of the province had been greatly obstructed by ~~reason of~~ the numerous shoals which lay within Oçacock Inlet. Merchants and traders were obliged to employ <sup>smaller</sup> vessels as lighters <sup>or barges</sup> to partially lighten the load of heavier laden ocean-going vessels over the swash.

This procedure not only added to the expense of goods and merchandise and lowered the shipper's profit, but also placed the heavier vessel in a vulnerable position until it was light enough to pass over the dangerous shoals of Oçacock Inlet, enter the channel and ride safely at anchor in the harbor adjoining Core Banks.

Experience had shown that merchants trading ~~in the waters of the Province~~ ~~at the three principal ports of entry--~~ Edenton on Albemarle Sound, Washington on the Pamlico River, and New Bern on the Neuse River-- at least half of their cargo, at times the entire cargo were obliged to forward ~~the cargo~~ designed for export, to Oçacock Inlet or Core Banks, for shipment in vessels of any considerable ~~bulk~~ size. The early Proprietors in seeking legislation to establish the town of Portsmouth concluded:<sup>1</sup>

It is absolutely necessary to have warehouses and other conveniences on the said Banks, near the said harbor, for the reception and safe keeping of the commodities they are constantly obliged to send down, for completing [sic] the loading of their ships.

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1. Walter Clark (Coll. & Ed.), Colonial Records of North Carolina, 25 (Goldsboro, N.C., 1906), 252-254, cited hereinafter as Colonial Records (CR). See especially Chp. II, "Laws of North Carolina, 1753."

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~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ The site of Portsmouth was established on the original land grant made to John Kersey, an Englishman, who was granted six hundred and forty acres of land by King George, II, of England. The original grant which is filed in the Office <sup>of the</sup> Secretary of State of North Carolina reads as follows:

George the Second, etc., To all, etc., Know ye that we have given and granted unto John Kersey a Tract of Land Containing Six Hundred and Forty Acres Lying and being in the County Carteret. Beginning on the W side of Ocacock Inlet at a Small Creek. Running up the Creek S.S. 41 ~~W~~ 320 poles to a poynt of Marsh on Sheep Island Bay, the E<sup>t</sup> side thence S. 49 thence 320 poles to a Hammock or Island in Great Pond. Then N<sup>o</sup> 41 E<sup>t</sup> 320 Poles to a Small Cutt that Comes Out of the Harbour called Beacon Island Harbour. Then to the First Station to Holding and Yielding & Paying four Shilling Proc. [Proclamation] Money Yearley for every Hundred Acres [illegible] the Same According to his rights. Clearing and Cultivating ~~the~~ Three Acres for every Hundred within Three Years & Entering these Dates with the Auditor within Six months. On Testimony and Witness & Dated this Eleventh Day of April Anno Dom 1753.

/ Matt Rowan

Secretary of State,

1. Records of the ~~Secretary~~ N. C., Land Grants, Book 10, p. 362, file No. 247.)

2. Efforts were made to lay out the metes and bounds of the land granted to Kersey without success. Owing to variations in the ~~the~~ early maps such as the White ~~map~~ map of 1585, the Collett map of 1778, etc., in which the areas described are at variance with the description of the original Kersey land grant, it was suggested that in such a case ~~the~~ the "intent" inherent in the description of the property would be the guiding factor., i.e., attempts to tie in the description with a 90° angle to square off the property would bring ~~the~~ Portsmouth Island within the scope of the metes and bounds of this grant. Interview, S. G. Gray, Civil Engineer, ESC, ~~to~~ Olszewski, Sept. 24, 1970.

*Permed*

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AUTHORITY OF COMMISSIONERS

The first commissioners of Portsmouth were appointed by the Honorable Mathew Rowan, President, by and with the advice and consent of his Majesty's Council and the General Assembly of the Province. They were Joseph Bell of Cateret County, John Williams and Joseph Leech of New Bern Town, Michael Countanch of Bath Town, John Campbell of Edenton. All or any three of them <sup>were given</sup> ~~and~~ full power and authority to lay out fifty acres of land <sup>for a town</sup> on Core Banks at a point most convenient to the harbor and adjoining said Banks. The town was to be named Portsmouth and the fifty acres were to be divided into lots of half an acre each. The Commissioners were to lay out convenient streets as they thought requisite. <sup>2</sup>

2. Ibid., Sec. II, p. 253.

<sup>town was laid out</sup>  
When the ~~town was laid out~~, the Commissioners ~~and~~ were authorized to sell, <sup>grant</sup>, convey and to acknowledge by deed to any person or persons, and his or their heirs and assigns for ever in fee simple any lot or lots they may have selected upon paying ~~20~~ 20 shilling proclamation money. Lots were to be sold by the Commissioners to any person willing to become an inhabitant of Portsmouth and they were to be free to select <sup>unselected</sup> any lot or lots they desired. <sup>4</sup>

4. Ibid., Sec. III.

The first treasurer to be appointed was Joseph Bell, one of the Commissioners. He was to receive <sup>payments</sup> all ~~money~~ arising from the sale of such lots and he was to credit them to a special fund for the use of the original ~~and~~ proprietor, John Kersey, his heirs and assigns. Upon the death of the treasurer or if he should leave his government post, the other Commissioners--Williams, Leech, Countanch and Campbell--were to appoint



some other person in his ~~last~~ place or county where the former Commissioner resided.<sup>4</sup>

4. Ibid., Sec. IV.

The Treasurer<sup>1</sup> and every Treasurer to be appointed by virtue of the legislation was to post security to the County Court of Carteret, deposit from time to time the monies received from the sale of the lots in Portsmouth, and to present an accounting yearly on ~~first~~ March 25 to John Kersey or his heirs or assigns.<sup>5</sup>

5. Ibid., Sec. V.

~~obligation of Purchaser~~ All purchasers of lots were obliged within eighteen months after their deeds had been conveyed to them:

To build a good substantial habitable framed or brick house or a good substantial warehouse of not less than twenty feet in length and sixteen feet wide

otherwise such grant or conveyance would become void and of no effect as if it had never been made. Under these circumstances the lot or lots were to revert to the use of John Kersey, the proprietor, his heirs or assigns.<sup>6</sup>

6. Ibid., Sec. VI.

~~Fort Granville~~ Local historians have preserved the legend of ~~the~~ having been ~~the~~ built on <sup>one</sup> of the several islands existing among the shoals of Ocracoke Inlet and Pamlico Sound. Legislation for its construction and money to complete it were provided for in the same Act that authorized the founding of Portsmouth.

In view of the two subsequent paragraphs why this statement now?

George  
we by not record this  
a lot like the document it is based on

document  
transmission  
to be  
of



The idea for a fort at Ocracoke Inlet sprang from the practical view that Portsmouth was an isolated maritime town far out on the Outer Banks and that it was ~~isolated~~ isolated ~~from~~ <sup>thus</sup> from the the bulk of the inhabitants on the mainland. It was ~~therefore~~ subject to attack by an enemy in wartime and to being harassed and raided by pirates in peacetime. It therefore required some measures for its defence.

*when?*

An earlier Act of the Assembly had appropriated two thousand pounds proclamation money for building a fort or fortifications at or near Ocracoke Inlet but nothing had been done to carry it out. Under the legislation £2,000 proclamation money was "appropriated towards discharging the Expenses of building and erecting the said Fort or Fortifications."<sup>7</sup>

7. Ibid., Sec. VII, p. 254

*when?*

The Commissioners who had been named for carrying out the earlier legislation were discharged from <sup>e</sup>their responsibility and:<sup>8</sup>

The Commander in Chief for the Time being, the Honourable Francis Corbin, and ~~John~~ John Rieussett, Esqrs., Mr. Joseph Bell, Mr. John Williams, Mr. Joseph Leach [sic], ~~and~~ Mr. Michael Coutanch, and Mr. John Cambell [sic], be, and hereby nominated Commissioners ... to compleat and finish the said Fort or Fortification; and they, or the Majority of them, shall be and are hereby invested with all the Powers and Authorities given to the Commissioners in the before mentioned Act, nominated and appointed for ~~the~~ building the same; and that the said Fort shall be called Fort Granville.

8. Ibid., Sec. VIII.

The fort was named after Lord Granville, one of the early Lord<sup>7</sup>s Proprietors. ~~in the North Carolina Gazette of 1734~~



Apparently there was little enthusiasm for settling the town of Portsmouth. Two years later, when the newly appointed Governor Arthur Dobbs set out on a tour of Gore Banks and reached Ocracoke Inlet on May 9, 1755, he found that Portsmouth and Fort Granville existed in name only.

Surveying the site of the town, Gov. Dobbs felt that Portsmouth harbor was "so exposed that every Privateer sailing along the coast could from their mast head see every vessel in the harbor, and go in and cut them out, or destroy them." To combat such a contingency he urged construction of a Fort Granville and fixed its site on Beacon Island. It was described as a "fascine battery, secured by piles, with 2 faces; one to Secure the passage in coming down a Narrow Channel to this Harbour, and the other to play across the Channel where it is not above 300 yards wide."

1. F. Ross Holland, Jr., A Survey History of Cape Lookout National Seashore, North Carolina (Washington, 1968), p. 39.

2. ~~Stick, pp. 41-42.~~ Work was begun shortly thereafter on Fort Granville and when inspected by Gov. Dobbs in June 1756, he found the fort "almost piled and filled, and the house ready to be framed." Even the town of Portsmouth was beginning to take shape for the first lots had been sold earlier that year in February. By 1757 Fort Granville was far enough along to be manned by a garrison of 53 officers and men as provided for by an Act of the Assembly of 1758. The strength of the Fort Granville complement varied yearly according to the exigencies of war, the state of the colony's finances, and the general attitude of the colonial Assembly. There were 25 troops in 1762, only five in 1763, and with the signing of the Treaty of Paris ending the French and Indian War in 1764 the garrison was discontinued, and the barracks were ordered to be rented to provide funds for taking care of the guns.<sup>3</sup> The fact that troops were stationed there

<sup>3</sup> 3. Stick, pp. 41-42.

most probably gave added impetus to the development of Portsmouth.

*George - I recommend reworking the section on Ft Granville. There is a lot of repetition and some confusion.*



The First Deed.—The first purchaser of lots in the new town of Portsmouth according to the earliest deed registered in the office of the Recorder of Deeds ~~xx~~ of Carteret County at the County Courthouse, Beaufort, North Carolina, is that dated February 13, 1756, and ~~not~~ registered in the names of John Tweton, William Martin Denham, and Joseph Tweton deeding to them lots numbered 5 and 20 in consideration of the payment of 40 shilling proclamation money. Because of its historical significance and to remove all doubt from the minds of local historians, it is here recited in full as it appears in Deed Book A-F, folio 378:

presents shall come, Whereas  
To All to whom these<sup>d</sup> by an Act of Assembly made in the Year of our Lord one thousand Seven Hundred & fifty-three Entitled an Act for appointing and laying out a town on Core Banks near Ocracock Inlet in Carteret County & for appointing Commissioners for compleating the Fort at or near the same place & in virtue of the s<sup>d</sup> Act Mr Joseph Bell of Carteret County, Mr John Williams & Mr Joseph Leech of Newbern Town, Mr Michael Coutanch of Bath Town, Mr John Campbell of Edenton or any three of them are hereby appointed Commissioners with full power & authority to lay out to lay out fifty acres of land on Core Banks most convenient to the s<sup>d</sup> Harbour adjoining the s<sup>d</sup> Banks for a town by the name of Portsmouth into lotts of half an acre each lott with convenient streets as they may think requisite. And whereas the s<sup>d</sup> Commissioners or the major part of them are authorized by the s<sup>d</sup> Act to grant convey & acknowledge by deed to any person or persons who is willing to be an inhabitant of the s<sup>d</sup> Town any lott or lotts of land to him or their heirs and assigns forever in fee simple upon payment of twenty shillings proclamation money. And the said Commissioners in virtue of the s<sup>d</sup> Act have laid out the s<sup>d</sup> Town into Lots of half an acre each lot accordingly. Now Know ye that we Hoseph Leech, John Campbell & John Williams, three of the s<sup>d</sup> Commissioners in the above recited Act mentioned and in virtue of the same for & in consideration of the sum of forty shillings proclamation money to us in hand paid by Messrs John Tweton of the Parish of Rowley Regis in Staffordshire in the Kingdom of Great Brittain & William Martin Denham & Joseph Tweton of Bath Town in Beaufort County in the Province of North Carolina Merchants the receipt whereof we do hereby acknowledge & for divers other good causes & considerations as thereunto especially moving. Have granted bargained sold & confirmed unto the s<sup>d</sup> Mess<sup>r</sup> John Tweton, William Martin Denham & Joseph Tweton all those two lotts of land situate lying & being in Portsmouth town abovementioned known in the plan of the s<sup>d</sup> Town by the numbers five & No twenty together with all privileges & appurtenances whatsoever to the s<sup>d</sup> lots now belonging



or hereafter to belong or in any wise to appertain thereto. To Have and to Hold the s<sup>d</sup> two Lots above mentioned & every part & parcell thereof with appurtenances unto the s<sup>d</sup> Messrs John Tweton William Martinr Denham & Joseph Tweton their heirs & assigns to the only proper use & behoof of the s<sup>d</sup> Mess<sup>r</sup> John Tweton, William Martinr Denham & Joseph Tweton their heirs & assigns forever. And the said Joseph Leech John Campbell & John Williams for them their heirs & successors Commissioners aforesaid the s<sup>d</sup> two Lots & every part thereof against them & their heirs and successors aforesaid & against all and every other person or persons whatsoever in virtue of the above recited Act to the s<sup>d</sup> Messrs John Tweton, William Matines Denham & Joseph Tweton their heirs or assigns shall not within eighteen months from the date of these presents build a good substantial habitable framed or brick house or a good substantial warehouse of not less dimensions than twenty feet in length & sixteen feet wide on & upon s<sup>d</sup> lotts hereby granted then this grant or conveyance shall be void & none effect as if the same had never been made & the Commissioners in the above recited Act mentioned Shall & May grant & convey the s<sup>d</sup> two lots hereby granted to any other person or persons who shall or may apply for the same or in & by the above recited Act is directed. In Witness the s<sup>d</sup> Joseph Leech John Campbell & John Williams have hereunto sett their hands and seales this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February 1756.

Signed sealed and  
delivered in the presence of us.  
E. Legardue, John Smith

p  
John Cambell (Seal)  
John Williams (Seal)  
Joseph Leech (Seal)

Carteret County, March Court 1756. Proved in open Court by the oath of Jno Smith, pray<sup>d</sup> & ordered to be registered.  
Registered 8<sup>th</sup> April 1756.  
Jno Smith D. Reg<sup>r</sup>

Jno Smith C. Cr.C.

The above deed has been certified as follows:

North Carolina, Carteret County  
Register of Deeds of aforesaid County

and State, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy as taken from and compared with the records in this office, in Book "A, B, C, E & F," Page "378".  
Witness my hand and official seal, this 31 day of  
Aug. 1970.

ALMA TILGHMAN (Seal).  
Register of Deeds

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171. General Index to Real Estate Conveyances, Carteret County, N.C.,  
Grantors, p. 51.

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Actually a John Tolson had bought lot number 28 the previous day on February 12, 1756, according to the date of his deed, but it was not registered until June 28, 1757 more than two months after the deed of John Tweton et al. Furthermore, and perhaps this can be used as an indication of whose deed ~~was~~ actually represented the first lot sold in Portsmouth is the fact that Tweton's et al deed was registered in Book A-F on page 378, whereas Tolson's deed although dated the <sup>date</sup> previous <sup>was</sup> to Tweton's et al ~~was~~ not registered in Book A-F until page 443. >

Tweton et al also bought lots 6 and 19 adjoining 5 and 20 on June 22, 1756, their deed being registered on September 11, 1756. <sup>1756</sup>

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11. Ibid., Deed Book, A-F, p. 399.

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Another group of lots was sold when Charles McNear ~~was~~ bought lots 7 and 22 on March 19, 1757, both being registered on June 24, 1757, in Deed Book A-F, on pages 436<sup>5</sup> and 435<sup>5</sup> respectively. Valentine Wade also bought lot 27<sup>24</sup> the same day on March 19, 1757, the deed being registered in the same deed book on page 440.<sup>12</sup> Lot number 2 was purchased for twenty

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12. Ibid.

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shillings proclamation money by a John Campbell on December 14, 1757, the deed being registered on March 3, 1758, in Deed Book A-F, on page 473. <sup>35</sup>

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Author's Note:

13. Ibid. Although the certificate of the Register of Deeds which this writer obtained while on a recent trip to examine the Carteret County records at Beaufort, N.C., gives the date of registration as "March 3, 1757," it is obvious that the date is in error for it would have been impossible to register the deed before the lot was ~~was~~ sold.

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Valentine Wade purchased another lot (number 20) on March 28, 1759; but did not pay for it until June 5, 1759, the deed being registered in Deed Book C-H on page 11. William Baker may have been the earlier



1. Stick, p. 42.

Wade apparently was one of the first aggressive businessmen of Portsmouth for he immediately opened a tavern in the town, while the construction of Fort Granville was under way and workmen, <sup>were</sup> most probably looking for a place to relax at night after work. The growing town of Portsmouth was most probably an inducement for the workmen to row or sail the short- of about one and a half nautical miles distance, from the construction site of the fort on Beacon Island across and to the shoals, ~~the~~ Wallace's Channel ~~at Portsmouth~~ and Wade's Tavern. The following year 1858 Wade bought another lot (number 30) from a William Sibbly on October 7, 1758. Sibbly was a carpenter then living at Portsmouth who had bought the same lot from James Burns, a mariner, for forty pounds. Burns undoubtedly made a tidy profit on the deal for he had bought the original lot for one Pound (the stipulated twenty shillings proclamation money) the year before on October 7, 1757. Wade was noted in the

172. Ibid., Deed Book G and H, p. 150.

as being deed from Sibbly ~~that he was~~ an "inholder" so Wade, ~~inholder~~ having also been appointed a Justice of the Peace, was most probably dealing in real estate as well, for he ~~was to purchase~~ (number 20) another lot the following year on March 28, 1759. Wade may have been running into financial difficulties for the deed indicates he did not pay ~~for~~ the stipulated twenty shillings until June 5, 1759. A William Baker also purchased a lot, number

173. Ibid., p. 11.

50, ~~the same day~~, March 28, 1759, ~~but it appears~~ but there is no specific date to indicate when his deed was registered other than a notation that it was done during the session of the "June Court 1759." However, Baker's deed is registered on page 9 of the same deed book (G-H) and may be presumed to have preceded the registration of Wade's deed.

174. Ibid.



TABLE I  
EARLIEST DEEDS RECORDED FOR PORTSMOUTH <sup>1-0</sup>

| Name of Grantor:                                       | Lot No.: | Paid:   | Date of Deed:     | Date Registered:   | Deed Book & Fol |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| John Tolson                                            | 28       | 11.0.0  | February 12, 1756 | June 28, 1757      | A-F, 443        |
| John Tweton, William Martiner Denham & Joseph Tweton   | 5 & 20   | 10.40.0 | February 13, 1756 | April 8, 1756      | A-F, 378        |
| John Tweton, William Martiner Denham and Joseph Tweton | 6 & 19   | 0.40.0  | June 22, 1756     | September 11, 1756 | A-F, 399        |
| Charles McNear                                         | 7        | 0.20.0  | March 19, 1757    | June 24, 1757      | A-F, 434        |
| Charles McNear                                         | 22       | 0.20.0  | March 19, 1757    | June 24, 1757      | A-F, 435        |
| Valentine Wade                                         | 21       | 0.20.0  | March 19, 1757    | June 26, 1757      | A-F, 440        |
| John Campbell                                          | 2        | 0.20.0  | December 14, 1757 | March 3, 1757      | 1758 A-F, 473   |

Vol. I. Records of the Register of Deeds, Carteret County, Beaufort, N.C.



By now, however, Wade was running into trouble and afoul of the law.  
of maintaining decorum on the Lords day  
It appears that contrary to public policy/and in violation of ~~an~~  
"An Act to prevent excessive and deceitful Gaming," covering ~~an~~ gambling  
losses of Forty Shilling in twenty-four hours,<sup>1</sup> John Bragg, an  
Ocracoke Inlet pilot, and Joseph Ryall, a soldier at Fort Granville,  
had sworn out a complaint warrant against Wade.

The Council of the Colony was then in session at Wilmington, and  
on September 1, 1759, charged that:

Upon Complaint being made that Valentine Wade one of his  
Majestys Justices of the Peace for the County of Carteret  
and who keeps a Tavern in the Town of Portsmouth in said  
County, Permits suffers and encourages disorderly per-  
sons, to dance and play at cards and dice in his house  
upon the Lords Day and upon reading the affid of Joseph  
Ryall and another Affid of said Joseph Ryall and John  
Bragg

It is ordered that the said Valentine Wade appear be-  
fore his Excellency the Gov<sup>r</sup> in Council on Tuesday the 20th  
day of Nov<sup>r</sup> next at Wilmington to shew cause why he should  
not be struck out of the Commission of the Peace for the  
said County.

-- 71. CR, 6, 1759-1765, 82.

Wade, apparently, knowing that he was guilty as charged and that he  
had no chance of beating the case, failed to show up and subsequently  
Wade also assigned the deed to lot 30 to David Wallace on August 27, 1759.  
was no longer Justice of the Peace at Portsmouth. (This case undoubtedly  
was the first indication of a sense of morality and religion appearing  
in Portsmouth for the next year, 1760, a reader was appointed by St. John's  
Parish, ~~and~~ In 1766 Reverend Alexander Stewart Baptized 27 white and  
surrounding  
colored children from the islands ~~around Portsmouth~~ in a baptismal cere-  
mony held on Portsmouth<sup>7</sup>.

22. Vestry Book, St. John's Parish, ~~St. John's~~ Department of Archives  
and History, Raleigh, N.C.

23. ~~St. John's~~ Holland, ~~St. John's~~

That's a  
pretty big  
assumption!

Why? Because  
he didn't show  
up or because  
the council  
revoked his  
commission?

black?



### CHAPTER III

#### GROWTH OF PORTSMOUTH

Little information is available on the growth or activity taking place in Portsmouth up to the Revolution. However, the Collett map of 1770 shows what appears to be eight structures, <sup>they could be</sup> houses or warehouses according to the terms of the original ~~sales~~ deed-- and the Maunon map of 1775 also shows eight structures, one larger than all the others indicating the possibility that it may have been a church<sup>1</sup> although there is no record of one having been established <sup>there</sup> aside from the fact that a reader of the Gospel was appointed to Portsmouth as noted above.

1. William P. Cumming, North Carolina in Maps (Raleigh, 1966) Plates VII and VIII. Photostats of these original maps are in the Map Division of the Library of Congress and copies are included in the appendix.

During the American Revolution it was reported that the British made several forays into Pamlico Sound through Ocracoke Inlet and also attempted to close it to American shipping. However, there is no significant action that can be associated directly with Portsmouth during this period.<sup>2</sup> It was reported that the British landed a large force at Ocracoke

2. Holland, p. 40.

and Portsmouth while on their way to attack New Bern. They captured some sheep and cattle at both towns and shipped them north to the Chesapeake Bay area. This raid prompted the Governor of North Carolina to order Captain John Eelson in September 1777 to repel the British invaders

Does Reland, "The Outer Banks of N.C. during the Revolutionary War," N.C. Hist. Rev., v. 36, no. 1, pp. 1-16 have info on Portsmouth? R.



It is not until the taking of the first United States census in 1790 that we have any concrete evidence of the population of Portsmouth. ~~and~~ an examination of the original census returns makes that difficult to determine with any degree<sup>s</sup> of accuracy.<sup>1</sup> This is due not only to the illegibility of the records and the lack of systematic procedure

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1. Population Schedules of the First Census of the United States, 1790, North Carolina, Carteret County, in Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives, Record Group 29, cited hereafter as Census of the U. S. and the appropriate year.

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but also to the fact that the population of Carteret County was taken together as a group. Holland lists 96 free white males, 92 free white females and 38 slaves.<sup>2</sup> David Wallace, Jr., was apparently the lead-

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2. Holland, p. 20

ing citizen ~~with a total~~ of 16 slaves. William Williams was next with nine slaves. ~~The only~~ ~~known names~~ to appear on the first census and is, is which are identifiable from early deeds ~~are~~ Tolsin, but spelled with an "i" instead of an "o" as in the original deed for lot number 28. Other family names are: Wallace, Gaskin, Salter, Bragg, Howard, Neale, and Stiron.

The census of 1800 indicated that Core Banks and the neighboring Shell Castle Island which had become important to the economy of the area as having a free white population of 165, including 25 heads of families and 98 slaves.<sup>3</sup> The census of 1810 which is much more legible

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3. Ibid., p. 41.

---

than earlier ones shows an increase in the population of Portsmouth. Undoubtedly by this time it was also beginning to grow beyond the limitations



of the original fifty acres provided for in the ~~original~~ legislation for laying out the town of Portsmouth. The total white population ~~was~~ had grown to 225 in addition to which there were 121 slaves. David Wallace was still ~~still~~ the largest slave holder with 17 slaves, and a Hannah Wallace, possibly a widow, the second largest slave holder with 11. From the evidence it appears that ~~there~~ there were <sup>then</sup> 43 heads of families.

The name of John Kersey now appears as a head of family indicating that he had probably returned to Portsmouth to live on a section of his original grant, he being the original proprietor ~~of the land on which Portsmouth was laid out~~. It may also indicate that a former purchaser had not conformed to the terms of the original sale for building a home or warehouse on a lot within eighteen months of purchase.

There was also a Richard Kersey, possibly the son of the former Kersey who was listed as being over 45 whereas Richard Kersey was between the age of 26 and 45 as was his wife. The older Kersey had three <sup>male</sup> children between the ages of 10 and 16 whereas the younger Kersey (Richard) had four male children under 10 years of age. There was also a Thomas Kersey, over 45 years of age.

The name of a Wilson Wade appears for the first time possibly being related to the original Valentine Wade who had run afoul of the law. The largest families by number of families bearing the same name and possibly related are: Wallace, seven; Tolson, eight; Dixon, five; Styron, four; and Gaskill, three.

2. Third Census of the United States, 1810, North Carolina, Carteret County, NA, RG 29, pp. 427-30.



(54)

On February 24, 1861, on the eve of the Civil War, Dr. S. Singleton, who had replaced Dr. Cramer, tendered his resignation to the Secretary of the Treasury as physician to the Marine Hospital.<sup>1...</sup>

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1. USPHS, Treasury, Letters on Marine Hospitals, M-1861, p. 29, NA, RG 90.

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<sup>e</sup>  
The last not of record that appears to exist concerning the hospital is a letter of R. W. Chadwick, collector of customs at Portsmouth, dated January 15, 1866, to W. Sargeant, Commissioner of Customs at Washington, D. C. Chadwick submitted an account of Augustus Dudley for supplies which he claimed he had furnished the Marine Hospital according to his contract of July 1, 1860. Dudley had furnished the supplies from April 1 to May 11, 1861, and had ceased furnishing further provisions after the inhabitants of Portsmouth had fled before the approach of Federal troops.

Chadwick testified to the "unwavering fidelity" of Mr. Dudley to the government of the United States throughout all our troubles.<sup>2+</sup>

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2. Ibid., M1866.

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He enclosed a copy of Dudley's account amounting to \$271.20. Payment was refused by the Secretary of the Treasury.

Following the end of the Civil War and the closing of the Ocracoke Collection District in 1867, the Marine Hospital was abandoned and in 1894 it burned to the ground.<sup>3</sup> That same year the U. S. Life Saving

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3. Holland, p. 48.

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Station was established on the shore of the Marine Hospital property. Although detailed statistics of the number of patients handled at the hospital are not available, there was an average of 25 patients per day during 1860.



①

8300 - 9000 ft. being the highest  
and lowest found in the ocean.

What did  
they build  
there?

The two men were well suited to their business venture. Wallace, a practical man, was the ~~brains and~~ working partner of the organization. He was a resident of the Outer Banks and had accumulated considerable property in the area. He was fully acquainted with the peculiar navigation problems of Ocracoke Inlet. Blount was the brains of the organization. He was a former member of the Council of State, a representative to the North Carolina General Assembly, and a partner of the prosperous merchant firm of John Gray and Thomas Blount. The latter had considerable land holdings in the vicinity of Washington, and operated a small fleet of vessels trading with the West Indies and Europe.



Blount had been concerned over the difficulty in shipping his cargoes to and from ~~the~~ Pamlico River and was interested in setting up a shipping facility at Ocracoke Inlet where his own vessels could exchange and lighter cargo. His fleet of small scows, flats and lighters operated in the sounds and rivers between Ocracoke and Washington. His larger vessels used Ocracoke as a base for ocean voyages.

They started out by constructing wharves, a warehouse, a grist mill, and a windmill and several residences. Business prospered and they added stores, operated a fishery, controlled piloting of the Ocracoke Inlet and provided lightering service for vessels that had <sup>too great a draft</sup> to cross the Swash. *with full cargo (?)*

*who?*  
Local history states that Wallace was called "Governor" as a title, but it is believed that it was purely the traditional term of respect which the average Cockney or seaman applies to the British merchant. Wallace was most probably called "Governor" by the seamen of the British ships that tied up at the Shell Castle docks. However, it is reported that Wallace conducted himself as a feudal prince at times, <sup>tipping</sup> tipping the till without accounting for funds and often just placing the cash in his pocket. He also loved his rum and often tipped the bottle as <sup>once</sup> ~~one~~ clerk reported in a confidential letter to Blount.

*which specific letter?*  
*See my Cape Hatteras report pp. 16-18.*  
*John Gray*  
1. See original letters in the Blount Papers at the State Department Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C. <sup>State Department</sup> ~~North Carolina~~

*Why not mention their efforts to sell porpoise oil to the Legation?*  
When a severe hurricane struck Ocracoke Inlet in August 1795 and Shell Castle survived the blow, Wallace and Blount were elated that comparatively little damage was done to their enterprise. <sup>Feeling their location secure</sup> They added additional warehouses, a lumber yard ~~was added~~, new wharves were built and a ship chandlery was completed in 1797. <sup>what did it do?</sup> A porpoise fishery was added, they built more lighters, bought other types of boats and by 1800, when a

*the first warehouse*  
*Liberty*



some place around here with a large crane in the middle  
on Shell Castle contained in Jonathan Price, "A Description  
of Ocracoke Inlet" and Alice Keith, "John Gray and Thomas  
Blount, Merchants," cited in my Cape Fear River p. 41. 1  
tavern was built, the main warehouse at Shell Castle was 300 feet long.

pp. Stick, p. 79.

The Shell Castle pitcher in the collection of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, included herein as Illustration 3 and which is used as the cover design of the present study ~~is~~ may be considered indicative of the contemporary scene. The pitcher is most probably typical of what is called ~~the~~ "Liverpool China", sketched and painted to order for seamen visiting that port. 20

102. A companion pitcher was placed on exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, in May 1964.

The Shell Castle lighthouse was completed and lighted in 1798 and when the government sought a site on which to build a fort to replace Fort Granville, Wallace and Blount sold the government nearby Beacon Island for the purpose. Although little information is available on the construction of this fort, it is shown on Tatham's map of 1808 which he completed following a survey of Ocracoke Inlet and Pamlico Sound. No!!

The Wallace-Blount enterprise continued to prosper and the 1800 census which included Shell Castle as a separate entry listed a total of 25 persons living on the island, including five white males and fifteen slaves owned by Wallace. In 1806 ~~was~~ an official port of entry was established at Shell Castle. When Tatham began his survey of the coast between Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout, Wallace provided him with private rooms as office space. By that time Shell Castle was an important and established port in North Carolina's growing maritime trade and Ocracoke Inlet was still the main port of entry for a ~~long period~~ the ports of Edenton, Washington, and Bath Town.



The War of 1812 seriously interfered with the Shell Castle enter-  
prise and ceased to exist shortly thereafter. Governor Wallace died  
in 1818 and was buried on Portsmouth Island where a huge marble slab  
lauds his merits as "Governor" of Shell Castle. Although time worn,  
it is still eligible to the visitor.

*What happened to the Lighthouse here?  
See my Cape Hatteras report. R*



## THE WAR OF 1812

Portsmouth, being a maritime port, was to have its share of activity during the War of 1812 which began on June 4, 1812, and was ended by the Treaty of Ghent of December 24, 1814. When war broke out between the United States and England, it was the Outer Banks that provided protection to the mainland of North Carolina against British raids. It also provided a base of operations for American privateers and Otway Burns, a native of Swansboro, was to emerge from the conflict as the local hero.

He fitted out a fast Baltimore clipper, named it ~~the~~ Snap-Dragon and armed it with four 12-pound guns and a pivot gun. Though he sometimes put in at Ocracoke, Burns used Fort Hampton as his main base of operations. The fort had been constructed in 1808 near the site of Old Fort

Dobbs on Bogue Banks just west of Beaufort Inlet. Burns ranged from Newfoundland to the Caribbean in ~~the~~ Snap-Dragon and British shipping was to pay the toll. In the first seven months of his privateering operations Burns captured ten vessels, 250 prisoners, and cargo valued at approximately one million dollars. [H. STICK, p. 40.]

Although anticipated since the outbreak of hostilities, a British attack on the coast of North Carolina did not materialize until the summer of 1813. At daybreak on July 12 the residents of Portsmouth, Ocracoke and Shell Castle awoke to find a British fleet consisting of nine large war vessels anchored just off the Bar. Two American privateers, ~~the~~ Anaconda and ~~the~~ Atlas, and a revenue cutter lay at anchor.

The British attacking force consisting of 19 barges carrying 40 men each, according to one observer, put off from the warships, attacked <sup>and captured</sup> the privateers and forced the cutter to retreat up the Sound. British troops then landed at Portsmouth and Ocracoke, seized hundreds



of head of cattle and sheep. They spread terror on the Banks and after five days, the fleet weighed anchor and sailed away first announcing that the entire coast of North Carolina was under blockade.

Meantime the cutter reached New Bern and word quickly spread that the Outer Banks was in the hands of the enemy. Each town expected imminent attack by the British. Mrs. John Gray Blount, writing from the town of Washington to the wife of the President, Mrs. Dorothy Payne Todd Madison, said: "We are in hourly expectation of the British coming up here. I am so frightened that I scarce can write, the men flying to arms and the drums beating."<sup>1</sup> The British failed to return, however,

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<sup>1</sup>1. Cited by Stick, p. 84. ~~from the John Gray Blount Papers.~~

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and with the signing of the treaty of peace in December 1814 attention was paid to improving the navigational aids of the area.

Following the war Otway Burns returned to North Carolina and settled in Beaufort. He represented Carteret County in the General Assembly for 12 years and operated a shipbuilding business there. In 1842 he moved to Portsmouth where he lived until he died in 1850. Part of that <sup>time</sup> ~~time~~ was spent as keeper of the Brant Island Shoals Lightboat in Pamlico Sound. One interesting fact developed from a search of the records of the Clerk of the Superior Court at Beaufort. In 1838, Dr. Samuel Dudley brought suit against Otway Burns for the sum of \$20.00 for the use of Dr. Dudley's flatboat in transporting molasses from the cargo Schooner Palestine to the Schooner Wm. R. Smith lying in Core Sound. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ <sup>Dr. Dudley</sup> ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ obtained judgment against the local hero on December 2, 1838.<sup>2</sup> The tomb of Otway Burns is in the Old Cemetery at Beaufort, N.C., one of the guns of ~~the~~ Snap-Dragon lying atop his marble ~~enclosed~~ remains.

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<sup>2</sup>2. Records of the Clerk of the Superior Court, Carteret County, N.C., Judgment #3277. Copy in appendix.



## THE SHELL CASTLE LIGHTHOUSE

The dangerous waters and the lack of navigational aids for Vessels attempting to <sup>on route to + from</sup> ~~entering~~ Ocracoke Inlet for Portsmouth ~~and Shell-Castle~~ prompted Congress-  
led to the construction of a light house on Shell Castle but ita-  
tional action that ~~also led to the construction of~~ the more important Cape  
Hatteras Light Station.<sup>1</sup> Only the barest details of the latter are in-

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1. See F. Ross Holland, Jr., Cape Hatteras Light Station, North Carolina (Washington, 1968), p. 1, ff, for the ~~uninterrupted~~ history of the first important aid to navigation on the Outer Banks.

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cluded herein since the two lighthouses were built simultaneously by the same constructor.

In 1794 the United States Senate instructed the Treasury Department to examine the feasibility of erecting a lighthouse at Ocracoke Inlet. The Department took the opportunity to examine the North Carolina coast as a whole to determine its navigational needs. When the study was completed, Tench Coxe, then Commissioner of Revenue and consequently responsible for navigational safety reported that the majority of those engaged in maritime activities desired a light at Cape Hatteras. In view of increasing coastwise traffic, Coxe reported that a light at Cape Hatteras would be beneficial to far more mariners than would a ~~big~~ light at Ocracoke Inlet. A light there would benefit only those traders <sup>the</sup> Pamlico and other using ~~Ocracoke~~ Inlet to enter <sup>the</sup> sounds of North Carolina.

Coxe subsequently recommended that a lighthouse of appropriate size be erected at Cape Hatteras and that a smaller wooden beacon be erected at Ocracoke. Alexander Hamilton, the <sup>n</sup>Secretary of the Treasury, concurred in the recommendation of the lighthouse for Cape Hatteras. As a result, Congress in April 1794 authorized the erection of a beacon on Shell Castle Island at Ocracoke and <sup>since</sup> ~~it being~~ of more importance nationally, a lighthouse at Cape Hatteras. However, ten years were to slip by before a light shone at either ~~beacon~~ principally due to the difficulty



of locating a builder who would undertake the contract for the two lighthouses simultaneously.

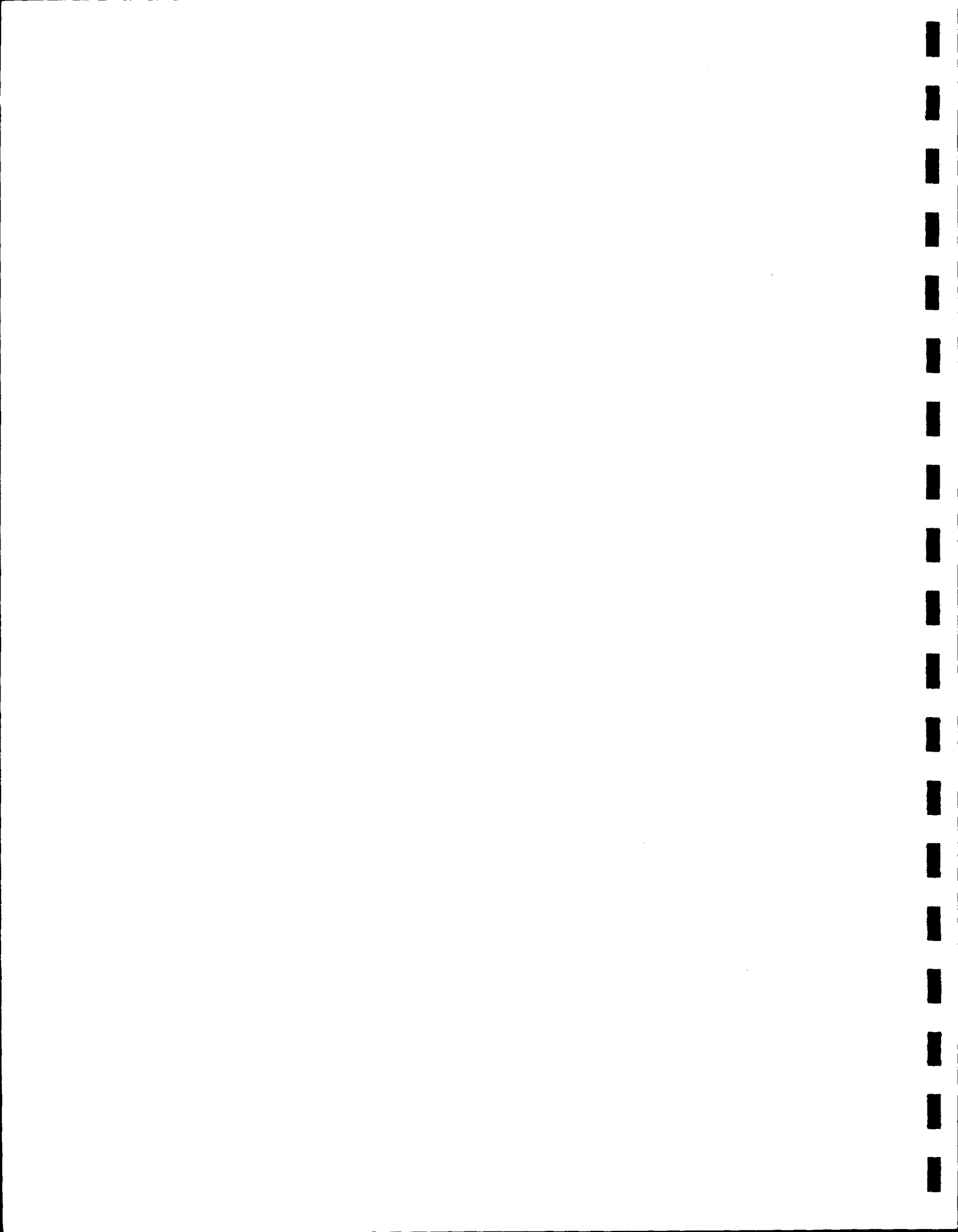
that was  
One of the minor delays occurred when the legislature of North Carolina ceded jurisdiction over land at Beacon Island (the site of Fort Granville) for lighthouse purposes at Ocracoke Inlet. Following a delay of 6 months the legislature finally remedied the situation by ceding jurisdiction over a small piece of land on Shell Castle Island in place of that on Beacon Island. The Federal Government then proceeded to acquire the necessary land. On November 29, 1797, John G. Blount and John Wallace, co-proprietors of Shell Castle, sold to the Government for \$200 a lot 70 feet by 140 feet on the island and stipulated that the government "shall not permit goods to be stored, a Tavern to be kept, spirits to be retailed or Merchandise to be carried on, on said Lott...."<sup>2</sup> This was to prevent any competition to their vast money-making enterprise on the island.

182. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

When the Government approached local contractors, they showed little if any interest in it. According to the ~~local~~ Collector of Customs *for Ocracoke*, local North Carolina people felt their money could be employed more "advantageously in Commerce or Agriculture and of course no one had a surplusage to tempt him into more arduous and less profitable enterprises."<sup>3</sup>

183. Ibid., p. 3.

Coxe thereupon had handbills posted in various government offices from Maine to North Carolina and instructed the collectors in North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts



to advertise for bids in local newspapers. As a result bids were received from several sources. One bid came from an "English master workman" who ~~had~~ offered to build the Shell Castle Light for \$16,000. Coxé considered the bid "dishonest and impudent" and filled with "misconceptions and misinterpretations." Coxé attempted to interest <sup>an</sup> ~~other~~ experienced lighthouse builder, such as John McComb, a brickmason who had built the Montauk Point and the Cape Henry lighthouses, without success. Even an attempt to elicit a bid from Thomas and John Gray Blount of North Carolina failed.

In the meantime further complications arose. The three-year limitation on the cession of land by the State of North Carolina to the Federal Government expired in 1797, just as the time limit on the <sup>appropriation</sup> ~~appropriation~~ for building the light house on Shell Castle expired. Coxé, <sup>thereupon</sup>, requested the North Carolina legislators for a new act of cession which was agreed to in December 1797. Earlier that year, in July 1797, Congress had appropriated \$44,000 for the lights at both Cape Hatteras and Shell Castle. Coxé now cast about for another contractor.

In July, Henry Dearborn, who had just completed his second term as a member of Congress from Massachusetts, wrote that he might be interested in ~~contracting~~ <sup>contracting</sup> to build the Shell Castle lighthouse. Coxé responded immediately and encouraged Dearborn to submit his bid. Dearborn did so and in September his bid along with two others was submitted to ~~President~~ President John Adams for approval. Coxé felt that Dearborn <sup>was</sup> would receive the contract. He felt so confident that Dearborn's bid would be accepted that he ordered the Collector of Customs in Edenton to purchase the land for the Shell Castle light house. But just <sup>at</sup> this juncture Tench Coxé was removed from his post as Commissioner of Revenue, and before



President Adams could take action on Dearborn's contract.

The newly appointed Commissioner of Revenue, William Miller, Jr., had his own ideas about the <sup>80</sup>contract. He felt it was too vague on transportation charges, the amount of stone required for the lighthouse, and the nature of the foundation. This vagueness, Miller contended, favored the contractor. In February 1798 President Adams disapproved Dearborn's contract on Miller's recommendation. The new ~~Commissioner~~ Commissioner thereupon wrote Dearborn and offered to draw up a new contract with more definitive wording and elimination of <sup>its</sup> ~~the~~ former vagueness.

In the meantime Miller wrote to McComb who, however, appeared to have lost interest. Miller continued to look elsewhere for a contractor. Sometime during the spring he wrote the Customs Collector at the port of Savannah, Georgia, asking if likely prospects were in that city. There were none. In the fall of 1798 Dearborn finally submitted a satisfactory proposal that the President accepted, and on October 9, 1798, Miller forwarded articles of agreement to Dearborn to sign. This he apparently did on October 31, 1798. <sup>417</sup>

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174. Holland, pp. 6-7.

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The site selected for the Shell Castle lighthouse was a small lot on the eastern end of the island with "Seventy feet fronting the north side of Wallace Channel and running northward one hundred and forty feet...." According to Dearborn's proposal, the Shell Castle light station was to consist of a wooden, octagonal beacon tower, 64 feet tall (including lantern), a wooden dwelling, and an oil vault and shed.<sup>54</sup>

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5: Ibid., p. 7.

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Even though the contract with a representative of the Federal Government was not signed until February 14, 1799, thus making it official, Dearborn began work on the construction of the Shell Castle light. In the latter part of November 1798 he requested and received a partial advance of funds to begin the work. He began to ~~transport~~ ship construction materials from Boston to the Outer Banks in the late spring, but owing to unforeseen delays ~~because~~ <sup>was</sup> he ~~did~~ not ~~get~~ able to begin actual construction until August of that year. His ship had barely cleared port when he was forced to return to Boston for a refitting due to an accident. Fortunately he was not delayed too long so that by the end of August Dearborn and the construction materials had arrived at Shell Castle.

Dearborn stayed but a short time at the site and then went to Cape Hatteras where he built the keeper's quarters. Leaving workmen to continue construction ~~work~~ of the light, Dearborn journeyed between the two sites. At Shell Castle Dearborn met Samuel Tredwell the collector



of Customs at the port of Edenton, whom the Commissioner of Revenue had appointed to supervise the work of the contractor. Tredwell indicated to Dearborn ~~the site~~ the site that was desired for the Shell Castle beacon.

As work on the lighthouse progressed during the fall, Dearborn received <sup>partial</sup> payment for his work and then most probably due to the approach of winter left the Outer Banks with his crew.

He returned the following March (1800) with another construction crew ~~that he had hired~~ and by July the workmen had erected Shell Castle beacon. It lacked only the light to be complete. The keeper's house was also nearing completion. Thereafter Dearborn concentrated on ~~com-~~ finishing ~~the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse~~ and worked on it during 1801 and 1802. In July of that year, June Dudley Hobart, Dearborn's representative at the Cape Hatteras site, estimated that ~~the light~~ would be ready for lighting that month. It proved to be a poor estimate for the "raising of the light" as it was termed had not occurred by June 28, 1803, when <sup>local</sup> newspapers were complaining about the delay. According to Holland it is not known just when <sup>Shell Castle</sup> the light was "raised" but it was in operation before October 29, 1803.

19.6 Ibid., pp. 11-12.

In the meantime Dearborn agreed to <sup>strengthen</sup> ~~build up~~ the foundation of the Shell Castle lighthouse for ~~the~~ apparently inspection must have shown its ~~foundations~~ to be deficient. He received an additional \$1,200 for the work ~~which consisted of~~ of building up the foundation "By running an outside wall at the distance of 12 feet from the foundation of the Buildings 2 feet high, between the wall and the foundation, a solid bed of stone was to have been laid gradually rising towards the center ~~so~~ as to cover the foundation, and to extend as high as where the



wood work of the Beacon and Dwelling commences." <sup>52</sup>  
-7-

257. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

By the fall of 1803 Dearborn obtained \$39,300 of the total contract price for the two lighthouses of \$39,650. ~~Because~~ Due to litigation which developed when the Commissioner of Revenue refused to approve payment of overall the final \$350 on Dearborn's contract, his claim was not settled until May 6, 1824. It is not known whether Dearborn <sup>did</sup> add the additional stone the foundation of Shell Castle lighthouse required. <sup>B</sup> Apparently,

258. Ibid., p. 13.

Dearborn's reputation did not suffer for in 1825 he was appointed Secretary of War, and about six years later in 1831 he contracted for and erected the lighthouse on Plumb Island and two beacons in Ipswich Harbor. <sup>C</sup>

259. Ibid.

~~As Shell Castle light neared completion, the question of a keeper for it arose. Dearborn and his agent, Hobart, recommended a ~~Thomas Jones~~ John Mays ~~for~~ for the job, and he was appointed to the Shell Castle light by the President in the autumn of 1802. Mays was to be paid \$250 per year, but declined the appointment when he heard that the Cape Hatteras keeper was to receive \$333 per year.~~

Tredwell, the collector at Edenton, in searching about for a replacement ~~and~~ for Mays, reported that John Wallace, one of the owners of Shell Castle island would accept the job for the same salary as that paid the keeper at Cape Hatteras (\$333). Wallace received his appointment shortly thereafter and accepted the post. However, he had a misunderstanding



about the salary when he took the job. Tredwell claimed that he had made it clear to Wallace that his salary would be \$250 per year. When Wallace claimed his salary a year later he said he understood that it would be \$333. Albert Gallatin who was now Secretary of the Treasury gave Wallace the benefit of the misunderstanding but informed him that he would henceforth be paid at the rate of \$250 per ~~year~~ year. Wallace, dissatisfied with the offer, informed Tredwell shortly thereafter that he had stopped lighting the Shell Castle beacon. Dismayed at the news Tredwell apparently visited Shell Castle and secured the service of a John Willard who remained on duty for a year and was then followed by a James Taylor. <sup>10.13</sup>

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<sup>10.</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

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Several years later Tredwell recommended that the salaries of the two keepers be equalized. Recognizing the fact that the Shell Castle light was not as important as Cape Hatteras, Tredwell felt that it was a more difficult place to live. The keeper at Shell Castle not only had to bring his own wood in by boat but the station property was too small for the keeper to grow his own garden. Washington turned a deaf ear to Treadwell's plea and the keeper's pay remained at \$250 per year. Several years later, on August 16, 1818, when lightning ~~destroyed~~ struck Shell Castle beacon and destroyed it together with the keeper's quarters, the question became academic. It was replaced four years later in 1822 with the lighthouse now at Ocracoke. <sup>11.14</sup>

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<sup>11.</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

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*George -*  
*This is a rather abrupt change of direction. Perhaps do the heading some other way.*

The census of 1820 showed a continuing increase in the population of Portsmouth for the number of dwellings had now <sup>grown</sup> increased to 37. The ~~total~~ white population consisted of 139 ~~white~~ males and 126 ~~white~~ females, reaching a total of 265. The slave population had fallen to 92 possibly due to the closing of the Shell Castle enterprise.

1. Fourth Census of the United States, 1820, Carteret County, N.C., NA, RG 29, pp. 122, 127-28.

*George -*  
*2 had a total pop. of 393.*

Portsmouth continued to grow during the next decade and the census for 1830 indicates there were 51 dwellings with a total white population of 342 persons, consisting of 173 males and 169 females. The slave population reached its highest figure of 120 to that time and was to taper off thereafter. Some of the leading family names continued to <sup>be</sup> the Dixons,

2. Fifth Census of the United States, 1830, Carteret County, N.C., NA, RG 29, pp. 119-121.

Tolsons, Wallace, Styron, Gaskins and Roberson. Samuel Dudley was the general practitioner of Portsmouth and Joshua Taylor, the Collector of Customs. The number of dwellings listed in the census schedules is generally taken to mean the <sup>number</sup> of individual residences containing the head of a family, thus giving some idea as to the growth of a town. For instance, according to the legislation which provided for 100 sites for homes or warehouses to be constructed on the fifty-acre limits of Portsmouth, it is obvious, even though there is a complete lack of data to prove the point, that more houses were constructed for domiciles than were warehouses ~~or~~ for the storage of goods for transshipment from the port.

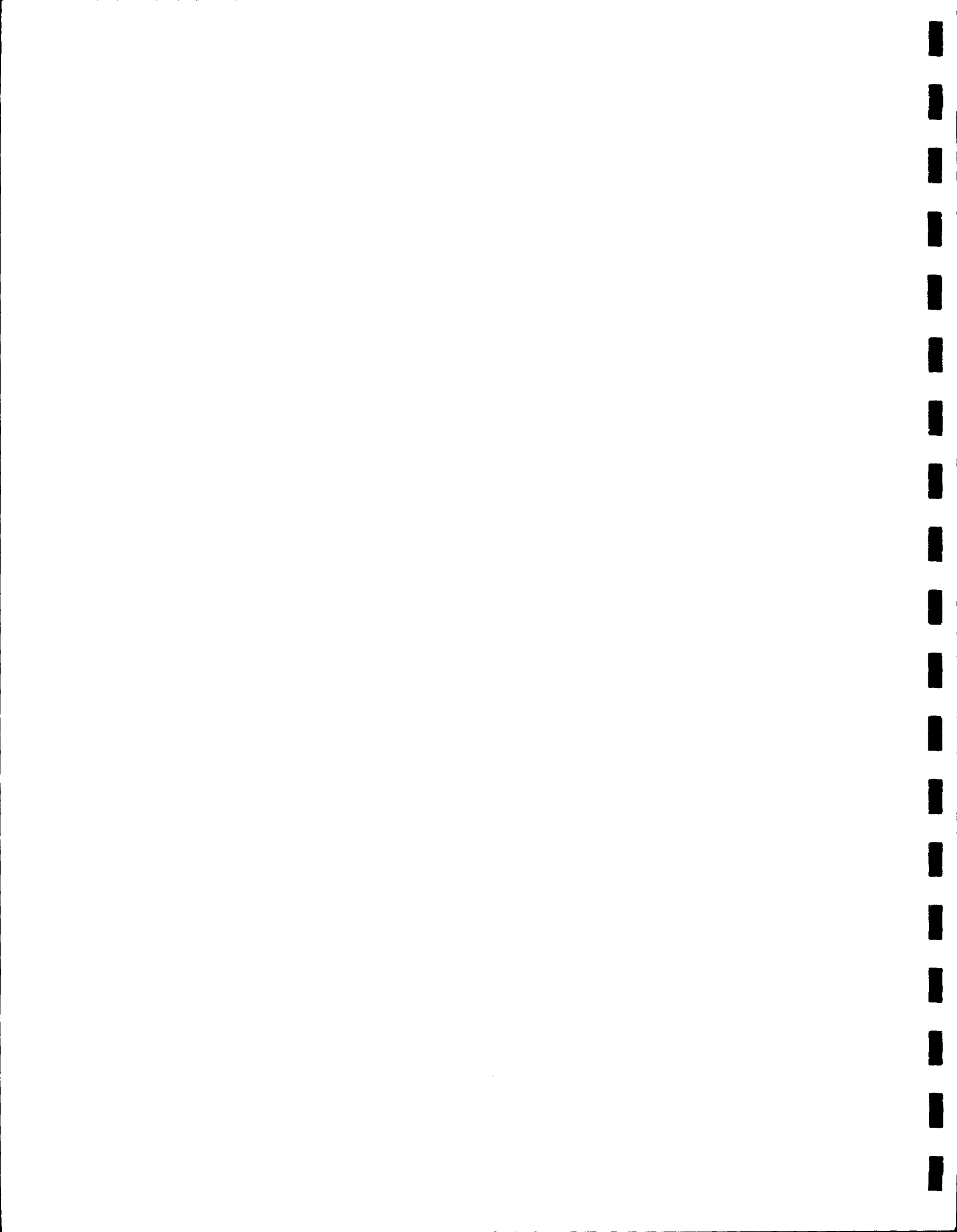


In 1835 the Boston firm of Witterage and Wyman applied for <sup>the</sup> lease of a site on Beacon Island, the property of the United States. The lease was granted and a two-story dwelling house and a warehouse for the storage of naval stores, staves, etc., was constructed as part of the firm's lighterage business. In 1860, upon the death of Wyman, his heirs requested permission to remove the buildings so that they could be dismantled and sold at a greater profit than they could be if sold on the site. Permission was granted.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>. O. S. Dewey, Collector, to the Hon. Howell Cobb, Sec. Treasury, April 7, 1860, in Letters on Marine Hospitals, M. 1866, NA, RG 90, p. 137.

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CHAPTER IV  
PORTSMOUTH THE SEAPORT

The greatest period of Portsmouth's activity as a seaport was between the end of the War of 1812 and the outbreak of the Civil War. Its growth and importance is reflected in the number of vessels that designated Portsmouth as their home port, on the enrollment papers. Unfortunately, we do not have the complete story. An examination of the ship enrollment records at the National Archives ~~which~~ reveals that they are not only in very poor condition, having been subjected to fire and other hazards, but that ~~some~~ they are incomplete, and many are presumed to be missing. Nevertheless, what records are available do give some indication of the activity of Portsmouth as a seaport.

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1. Personal interview with Joseph Howerton, Archivist, Social and Economic Records, NA, RG 41, Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, September 15, 1970.

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The ~~enrollment~~ <sup>list</sup> papers of ships enrolled in the Ocracoke Collection District <sup>for 1815</sup> indicates that seven ships sailed out of Portsmouth ~~in 1815~~. On these papers, Portsmouth is indicated as being the ship's home port. In 1816 ~~there were~~ <sup>were</sup> nine ships enrolled.<sup>2</sup> The number of enrollments for 1817-18

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2. Enrollments from the Port of Ocracoke, 1815-16, ibid.

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is considered to be too few to give any real clue as to the size of the Portsmouth fleet.<sup>3</sup> The information <sup>as</sup> contained in the enrollments, however,

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3. Burke, p. 31.

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does not give a complete clue as to the real identity of ships for a ship's owner would apply for a new enrollment only when a change was made in the ownership, name, or build of the vessel. Therefore, if it was not desired to show a ship as being from a certain port, or for other reasons known only to the owner, a ship could be registered from any other port he desired.



Practically all the ships enrolled from Portsmouth were single deck, two two masted schooners. Their tonnages ranged from 21 to 60 tons each. Tonnage was not the actual weight of the vessel, but rather an arbitrary computation for tax collection purposes, taxes being imposed according to the capacity of the ship's hold, in other words, its cargo capacity. A ship under 80 tons cargo space was not considered to be an ocean-going vessel. Ships listed as ~~being~~ having a 40-ton capacity were approximately 55 feet in length. Such vessels drew from four feet, seven inches to six feet, three inches of water. The logical conclusion would be that these vessels were used chiefly in the lightering trade, for it was a common practice and a necessity to get the ships over the shoals of Ocracoke Inlet. <sup>17</sup>

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1. Letter of Thomas Singleton, Collector at Ocracoke, to William H. Crawford, Sec. Treasury, June 21, 1817, in Letters to and From the Collector, Ocracoke, N.C., NA, RG 56.

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From 1822 to 1829, 36 ships were enrolled from Portsmouth. This is considered to be a conservative estimate for the reasons stated above. During these years, the enrolled ships showed greater tonnage capacity. Thirteen of the 36 were over 60-ton vessels. The Brig Galaxy, Thomas Robinson of Portsmouth owner, <sup>for instance,</sup> was calculated to be over 111 tons and of 75 feet, 5 inches length. Its master was ~~Mr~~ John S. Hunter. <sup>25</sup>

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52. Ibid., 1822-1829.

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No one man or group appears to have owned a disproportionate share of the Portsmouth vessels. Many masters were part-owners of the ships they commanded. The Elizabeth, one of the larger ships of 74 tons ~~cap~~



capacity was built in the Portsmouth yards in 1826. Certainly, if a ship of this size was built at that port, it is a fair indication that Portsmouth had an active shipbuilding industry.

During the decade from 1829 to 1839, 25 ships were enrolled from Portsmouth, showing a definite decline in enrollments from that port. On the average at least <sup>1</sup> 12 ships a year were enrolled and it can be calculated from the file numbers that many papers are missing. However, there was a continual increase in the size of vessels based at Portsmouth. Nearly twenty-five percent of the ships enrolled during the decade were over 85 tons, and Portsmouthers had a definite interest in these ships. Dr. Samuel Dudley, one of the most affluent of its residents acquired an interest in at least four <sup>(1)</sup> ships. Other Portsmouthers, whose names appear regular in the census population schedules, such as Thomas Robinson, John C. Wallace, and William W. Dixon each had an interest in at least three ships. But lightering, rather than ship building or owning, was

#### 1. Enrollments from Port of Ocracoke, 1830-1839.

the great source of income for the many pilots of Portsmouth for ~~lightering~~ between 1836-37 over 1,400 vessels <sup>3</sup> passed through Ocracoke Inlet <sup>2</sup> and the great number requiring lightering is obvious. But the beginning of the end of the great hey-day of Portsmouth was undoubtedly marked with the opening of Hatteras and Oregon Inlets ~~in 1841~~ a few years later in 1841.

~~There were no enrollments~~ 2. Fish, p. 306.  
As late as 1869, however, vessels were built at Portsmouth as proven by the enrollment papers of the Schooner Alice B. Hill, John Hill, owner, and Joseph A. Hill, master, which was registered at New Bern, October 12, 1869. The vessel was <sup>Schooner</sup> a single deck, two masted with a square stern and billet head. <sup>4 1/2</sup> Its length was 43 and 2/10 feet, her breadth 15 ~~and~~ feet, and her depth four and 7/10 feet. She measured 21 tons



and 34/100 cubic feet of cargo space.<sup>7</sup> In this analysis of such an important activity as ship building, vital to any seaport, it is indeed strange that not a single resident of Portsmouth ever declared himself to be a shipbuilder on any of the census records of the nineteenth century. One or two carpenters appeared in the census for 1860 and 1870, but that appears to be the limit of what can be associated with ship building. Undoubtedly, further ~~intensive~~ research, perhaps in the Whaling Museum at New Bedford, Mass., where over 600 ships logs <sup>whaling ships</sup> are collected would produce vital information on the subject.

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<sup>7</sup>1. Ship Enrollments from the Port of New Bern, Registry No. 1833, NA, RG 41.

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The increasing importance of Portsmouth as a seaport was shown when a U. S. Post Office was established at the town in 1840 by the federal government. It was located in the general store on the island and its site still exists as shown in Illustration 8. John Rumley was the first postmaster and he was appointed September 3, 1840.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>2. See Table of Postmasters, Portsmouth, N.C., in Appendix compiled by the author.

See page 37

According to the census of 1840 there was a slight drop in the ~~white~~ population of Portsmouth when it was reported as being 397 compared to 402 in 1830. White males registered a very slight gain whereas white females increased by 35. There was a drop in the slave population from 120 in the census of 1830 to 90 in the census of 1840.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the effects of the Panic of 1837 was even felt on the Outer Banks. Even the fury of nature had increased during the 1830s, when hurricanes became more frequent.

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<sup>9</sup>3. Census of 1840 the United States, 1840, North Carolina, Carteret County. NA, RG 29.

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On August 10, 1835, a particularly severe hurricane struck Portsmouth. Although it was of short duration, it did considerable damage to shipping anchored in the roads. Portsmouth could do little to protect ships at anchor in such storms. Vessels usually anchored on the Pamlico Sound side of Portsmouth in an area about due north of the town. The storm sweeping down on the island from north northeast, crossed the unbroken waters of the sound and buffeted the ships at anchor.<sup>12</sup> Portsmouth Island could offer little safety against such a storm.

On August 29 and 30, 1839, a far more severe gale struck Portsmouth. To old inhabitants it was the worst since 1795. During the height of the storm, the tides completely inundated the island sweeping everything before it. The water was reported as rising to an unbelievable height in many of the homes of the Portsmouthers. All gardens on the island were destroyed and most of the livestock was swept away. Several houses, including one belonging to the U. S. Government vanished before the storm. Fortunately, only 15 vessels were anchored in the roads at the time, far fewer than usual. Four were totally lost; seven were driven ashore. Two were saved by cutting the rigging; two rode out the storm. One master was lost with his ship.<sup>21</sup> ~~THE AMERICAN ARCHIVE~~

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<sup>16</sup>1. Letter of Sylvester Brown to Hon. L. Woodbury, Sec. Treasury, Aug. 14, 1835, in Letters from Collectors, NA, RG 56.

<sup>17</sup>2. Ibid, Aug. 31, 1839.

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## THE PORTSMOUTH MARINE HOSPITAL

The succor of its seamen has been one of the constant problems of civilization since man first went to ~~the~~ sea in ships. The barbarity and cruelty with which ship's captains flung sick and injured seamen ashore in strange lands or overboard to a watery grave led to ~~in~~ international recognition of the problem. The rise of nationalism and international law led to worldwide agreements for rendering aid to these unfortunates so that they could be brought back to health and eventually returned to their native lands and homes.

With the founding of Portsmouth, Ocracoke, and <sup>the</sup> Shell Castle enterprise as colonial trade and commerce grew, steps were taken on a local basis and eventually by the federal government to see that some assistance was provided for these seamen. It was also realized that the lack of facilities--most lacked a ship's doctor--aboard the many types of sailing ships which plowed the commercial highways of the seas could lead to the spread of uncontrollable diseases. The location of the Portsmouth-Ocracoke area at the very core of the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" finally brought action from the federal government as it no longer became feasible to handle sick and injured seamen on a community basis.

*what steps*



What about the marine hospital  
established in 1827? Dr. Potts & Dr. Dudgeon  
were in charge there at different times.

In 1842 the Commerce Committee of the House of Representatives

issued a factual report on the status of shipping passing through Ocracoke Inlet. The report stated that "Ocracoke Inlet is the outlet for all the commerce of the State of North Carolina from the ports of Newbern, Washington, Plymouth, Edenton, and Elizabeth City and the whole extent of country for many miles around. More than two-thirds of the exports of the State of North Carolina pass out to sea at this point." Statistics were compiled for a year and showed that 1,400 ~~sail~~<sup>of</sup> loaded vessels pass<sup>d</sup> through the aforesaid inlet in the space of twelve months, bound for various ports. Because vessels were frequently detained at the inlet by adverse winds or tides, it was "not uncommon to see from 30 to 60 sail of vessels anchored in the roads at the same time."<sup>13</sup>

13.  sick, p. 27.

Inevitably there was a certain amount of sickness in such a vast accumulation of ships. The question of what to do with sick seamen at Ocracoke Inlet had been a matter of great concern for many years. The federal government at first entered into individual contracts to ~~take~~<sup>with doctors, hospitals?</sup> care for them at the rate of \$1,500 per annum. Later it became the responsibility of the port collector to secure room, board and medical attention for any sick seamen in his district. ~~However~~ The collector was authorized to pay "\$3.00 a week for board, 25 cents per day for attendance ... and apothecary rates for medicine."

In 1841 the collector at Ocracoke Inlet, S. Brown, informed Representative William H. Worthington of the difficulties experienced under this system. He complained that ship's masters who found sick seamen aboard



their vessels feared "to take them to sea lest they should be quarantined at their ports of destination, <sup>[and]</sup> will land them here regardless of consequences." Most of the houses at Ocradoke and Portsmouth were small with only but two rooms and often ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> story high. They were suitable, <sup>for</sup> caring for sick seamen. Brown said that he frequently had trouble securing a place for the men to stay. "I have, on one occasion," he wrote, "having 17 sick seamen on my hands, been compelled to fit up a common boat-house as well as I could and put part of them in that—a situation not at all calculated for a person in the best of health, much less one laboring under severe bilious fever or some other dangerous disease. At another time I was under the necessity of procuring an old house built on a shell rock, two miles or more from any inhabitants to accommodate several seamen thrown out here having small-pox." The inhabitants ~~would~~ <sup>had</sup> refused to allow them to be landed on either Ocradoke or Portsmouth Island.

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11. Stick, p. 88.

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The cause was promptly taken up and Congressman Worthington secured legislation for a <sup>marine</sup> hospital ~~was~~ at Ocradoke Inlet to accommodate all sick seamen in northeastern North Carolina. In 1846 the hospital was built at Portsmouth and placed under the administration of the Office of the Collector of Customs for the Ocradoke District. <sup>25</sup> Despite comparatively rapid ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

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15. 2. USPHS, Treasury Department, Letters from Marine Hospitals, Vol. M1834, June 30, 1854. NA, RG 29.

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action on the part of the Congress/ in passing the legislation, it was to be six more years (1841-1847) before the basic medical supplies, furniture, and medicines were to be delivered to the Marine Hospital, <sup>and it could</sup> ~~so that it could~~ be opened to perform the function for which it was authorized.



The site of the Marine Hospital at Portsmouth insofar as it has been possible to trace the deeds was known as the "Burns" place. It is possible that this was the site of ~~the~~ original lot number 30 laid off when the town was first founded. A James Burns, a mariner, had purchased the site for one pound in October 1757 and had sold it to a William Sibbley, a carpenter, a year later for forty pounds. Sibbley in turn deeded the <sup>prop</sup>erty over to the notorious Valentine Wade when he ran afoul of the law in 1759 and lost his post as Justice of the Peace for Portsmouth.

Wade, who was undoubtedly a promoter, <sup>6</sup> assigned the deed to a David Wallace in August 1759 most probably to avoid having the property seized by the authorities. It is believed that David Wallace was related to John Governor<sup>^</sup> Wallace who operated the Shell Castle enterprise. But the property remained known as the "Burns Place" and in 1840 Otway Burns, the local hero of the War of 1812, had built a home and made other improvements on the property at an expenditure of \$1,500. The hospital building was built as a separate unit and the Burns house was to be used in later years as a residence by the hospital surgeon and his family. ~~and~~ Litigation involving the federal government was to arise for it was not ~~known~~ known if the government had a clear title to the property when it built the Marine Hospital on the same grounds.

The site of the Marine Hospital consisted of eight acres of which two were enclosed as the hospital grounds and surrounded by a common paling fence. The land was on the highest and most level part of ~~the~~ Portsmouth Island and was susceptible to improvement by planting trees, shrubbery and grass.<sup>1.</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1. O. S. Dewey, Collector to Sec. Treasury, Hon. Howell Cobb, April 1, 1857, *ibid*, M-1836.

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(43)

Although its specifications could not be located after considerable research, it is possible to reconstruct the size of the hospital from reports to and from the Collectors Office. O. D. Dewey reported in April 1857 that the Marine Hospital at Portsmouth was a "fine" building with four wards in the main building and two upper rooms with a wing on each side containing four rooms each with piazzas in the front and rear. Two cisterns for fresh water were constructed of wood, one being on the east side and the other on the west side of the hospital. Heat was supplied by coal stoves in each ward.

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17.1. Ibid.

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Furnishings, beds, linen, chairs, medicine, etc., for the hospital were purchased from Phelps and Kingman, 118 to 120 Chatham Street, New York City for \$1,000, as shown in Appendix F which includes the complete invoice for the materials, their quantities and prices. Dr. Wm Cramer was the hospital surgeon at the time.



I would  
use negro  
or black  
instead  
of colored.

~~Operating~~  
Operating personnel of the hospital consisted of a physician, a white  
one male servant  
matron, ~~and two~~ colored slaves and two female servants, one a free white  
a colored slave. In commenting on the efficiency of this  
staff, O. S. Dewey reported that "the slaves are much the best servants,  
for when a patient enters the Hospital with a contagious disease, the  
white servants leave immediately and it is difficult to supply their  
places at that time. This is not the case with slaves." 17

1. Letter to Hon. Howell Cobb, Sec. Treasury, dated April 1, 1857,  
ibid., M. 1857.

Dr. S. Singleton commented in an earlier letter to the Secretary  
of the Treasury of the lack of personnel for adequate staffing of the  
hospital, saying, "In the organization of the Hospital I am allowed no  
Steward or Apothecary and but one man Servant--the Matron and this ser-  
vant are the only nurses I have at command and when (as in the case at  
the present time) contagious diseases are in the institution, I am wholly  
deprived of any service from this servant but such as are bestowed upon  
the patients suffering with the contagion." He suggested the addition  
of a boy to the staff. 217

172. Ibid, March 25, 1857.

Wages for the hospital staff were fixed when the hospital was ~~organized~~  
first organized. The male servant was paid \$10 per month; <sup>and</sup> \$5 each per  
month for the female servants. The Collector felt their wages should  
be increased for "considering the great advance in the price of labour  
within the last five years, <sup>[1852-57]</sup> the wages are inadequate to secure good and  
efficient servants, as a good cook will now hire for \$80 to \$100 per  
month." Dewey ~~and~~ recommended that the wages of the matron be raised  
to \$12 per month and <sup>that</sup> the two female servants to \$8 per month each. He



also recommended that a boy be added to the servants staff with wages from \$6 to \$8 per month. <sup>1.</sup> Up to the eve of the Civil War no changes

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<sup>2.</sup> 1. Letter of O. S. Dewey, Collector, to Hon. Howell Cobb, Sec. Treasury, M1857, NA, RG 59.  
Ibid.,

are recorded in the size of the hospital staff.

~~Modern~~ Modern day red tape upon entering a hospital is apparently nothing new for Dewey complained that Regulations No. 68, the basic regulations for the administration of Marine Hospitals, had materially increased his labors. <sup>He</sup> ~~and~~ suggested that blank forms be furnished "as a sick seaman must be examined and wait until the Collector can write out a permit, requiring a whole page of letter paper before he can enter the Hospital." <sup>2.</sup>

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<sup>2.</sup> Ibid.

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~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
Provisions <sup>for</sup> ~~the~~ the Marine Hospital were supplied under <sup>yearly</sup> contract between  
the District Collector and <sup>local</sup> merchants. ~~Records of yearly contracts~~ They were  
entered into following advertising in three local newspapers for a period  
of 90 days, by the District Collector. Bids were then opened and the name  
of the lowest bidder was selected and forwarded to the Secretary of the  
Treasury for approval. Although few bids were found in the official re-  
cords of the Secretary of the Treasury, the bid for fiscal year 1856 is  
herewith given as it is most probably typical of those received and will  
give concrete evidence of the trend of the economy in Portsmouth for  
that year.

On June 9, 1855, Oliver S. Dewey, <sup>of</sup> Collector <sup>of</sup> the Ocracoke District  
and Agent for the Marine Hospital at Portsmouth forwarded the following  
agreement between him and Augustus Dudley of Portsmouth, N.C., to furnish  
provisions to the hospital as enumerated and at the prices cited.<sup>2</sup> A. Dud-  
ley had been the contractor for the previous fiscal year as well.

Ibid., Letters to and from Collectors of Small Ports, NA, RG 90.

The agreement read:<sup>1</sup>

This agreement made the first day of June 1855 by and between  
Augustus Dudley of the County of Carteret, State of North Car-  
olina, and Oliver S. Dudley, Collector of the Customs for the  
District of Ocracoke, N.C., and Agent of the Marine Hospital  
in ~~the~~ said District, on behalf of the United States. Wit-  
nesseeth that the said Augustus Dudley doth hereby bind himself  
to supply said Marine Hospital for the term of one year, from  
the first day of June 1855 with the articles named in the an-  
nexed list, at the prices set opposite each, and also to fur-  
nish any and all articles that may be required, not enumerated  
in said list, at the lowest market prices. All of said art-  
icles to be of the best quality, and to be furnished at such times  
and ~~in~~ in such quantities at the Hospital, as on the requisition  
of the ~~said~~ of the Collector may be required; to be paid for  
at the expiration of each quarter as they shall have been fur-  
nished. It is further understood that any of the articles so  
furnished, which may be considered inferior by the Collector,



shall be exchanged by the said Augustus Dudley for others of suitable quality, so that otherwise said articles shall be purchased by the Collector at the expense of said furnishing party.

In testimony whereof the parties to this agreement have hereto set their hands and seals this 1st June 1855.

Signed, sealed & delivered  
in presence of  
THOS. C. JONES

AUGUSTUS DUDLEY (SEAL)  
O. S. DEWEY, COLLECTOR (SEAL)  
Agt Marine Hospital

I hereby guarantee the full and faithful performance of the above Contract on the part of Augustus Dudley

SAMUEL DUDLEY /LS/

The list of articles to be furnished the Marine Hospital according to the above Contract with the prices set opposite each article/ was as follows:

|                       |                   |                                         |      |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|
| Mess beef per bbl     | \$20.00           | Soap per pound                          | .80  |
| Mess pork do          | 21.00             | Candles "                               | .20  |
| Flour "               | 14.00             | Lard "                                  | .15  |
| Hams per pound        | .15               | Dried apples " "                        | .12  |
| Fresh beef " "        | .16               | Cheese " "                              | .15  |
| Dried do " "          | .16               | Meal per bushel                         | 1.15 |
| Brown sugar " "       | .09               | Irish potatoes <del>per box</del>       | 2.25 |
| Crushed " "           | .12 $\frac{1}{2}$ | Molasses, per gal.                      | .35  |
| Coffee " "            | .15               | Vinegar " "                             | .25  |
| Rice " "              | .07               | Sperm oil " "                           | 1.75 |
| Butter " "            | .35               | Chickens, not less than half grown, ea. | .40  |
| Tea (black) " "       | 1.00              | Milk, per gal.                          | .40  |
| Tea (green) " "       | 1.00              | Eggs " doz.                             | .15  |
| Crackers (butter) " " | .10               |                                         |      |

From the above one can surmise that the diet of the people of Portsmouth was as well-balanced for the day as it could have been elsewhere. Augustus His surety/ was Dr. Samuel Dudley both of whom were Portsmouthers their Dudley was a grocer or merchant at Portsmouth. /What supplies were not xnames being listed in the census of 1850. Perhaps they were related. available from the mainland were shipped in by coastwise vessels from New York and Boston ship chandlers. Sugar and coffee came from the West Indies. What the above foods lacked in freshness, <sup>and in quantity</sup> was supplied by garden vegetables such as lettuce, tomatoes, radishes, carrots which grow in practically any type of soil. Most probably there was also a garden someplace on the hospital grounds, surrounded by the typical white picket fence. Any seaman recuperating at the hospital was usually more than willing to tend to the garden a short time each day. Often, it would remind them of home.



*Why not crank in  
Edmund Buffin's comments  
on Portsmouth at his point  
It would make good prelude to Civil War period. See  
my Cape Lookout 1945-46.  
R.*

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CIVIL WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

On the eve of the Civil War the population of Portsmouth reached its height as revealed by the census of 1860 which gives a comprehensive breakdown of the economic activity of the people. From it ~~is~~ it is possible to give a comprehensive and definitive cross section of the age of the population, the leading families, the various age groups, the occupations and other statistical data that is comprehensible in a modern sense. It is believed that the cross section of Portsmouth as presented in this 1860 census and analyzed herewith should be used as a median for interpretive and administrative data for the future role of the town when it is absorbed into the Cape Lookout National Seashore. Sufficient information is included from which to prepare contemporary exhibits, charts, tables and displays that should prove one of the more interesting tourist attractions. Based on this analysis and the information it produces, this basic data study could be used for further investigation when more time and funds are available for ~~such~~ a future study.

According to the eighth census of the free and slave inhabitants of Portsmouth, enumerated on July 5 and 6, 1860, and certified to by D. H. L. Bell, Portsmouth Postoffice, the following facts are deducible therefrom: The free white population of Portsmouth consisted of 263 males, and 305 females or a total of 568 persons occupying 109 separate or individual homes or dwellings. The Negro slave population was 117 and although the majority were usually considered to be household servants, it is obvious that some must have been employed in economic activity. Some may even have had their own dwellings counted in the above ~~XXXXX~~ figures, the total white and black population for Portsmouth being 685 persons.

Considering the original limits of the town of Portsmouth when it



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was first laid out in 1753 of fifty acres divided into 100 lots of half and acre each it is obvious that the town spread far beyond its original limits. ~~and~~ The population must have been spread over a goodly portion of Portsmouth Island <sup>must have been</sup> and the seaport itself ~~the~~ scene of much social and economic activity to support a population of this size. Yet many North Carolinians to whom I spoke on the mainland in Raleigh, Beaufort and Morehead City expressed their skepticism that Portsmouth could have had such a large population at any time. Even an authority such as the Administrative Head of the ~~North Carolina~~ <sup>State</sup> Department of Archives and History, E. M. Coker, refused to believe that Portsmouth could ever have been of such a size, even when this writer presented him with the facts shown in the 1860 census. But then again hardly any of the people interviewed on the mainland had ever heard of Portsmouth.

The social and economic activity of the population is reflected in the type of work indicated according to the following tabulation: Fishermen~~f~~-81, mariners~~f~~-54, domestics~~f~~-46, pilots~~f~~-7, seamstresses~~f~~-7, farmers-3, merchants-3, mechanics-2, and one clerk.

Administrative and federal employees were the following: Reverend W. H. Wheeler, age 22, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who resided at the home of Dr. Dudley; Dr. Samuel Dudley, now age 70, town physician; Dr. Spyer Singleton, age 40, resident physician of the U. S. Marine Hospital; O. S. Dewey, age 52, Collector of Customs for the port of Ocracoke; Sylvester Styron, age 26, deputy collector of customs at Portsmouth; Thomas C. Jones, age 39, light boat keeper, and John Wallace, age 28, also a light boat keeper; and two teachers at the local school, Love Ireland, age 27, and Margaret Mayo, age 30.



The most numerous families were the Styrons-10, <sup>Lupton-6,</sup> Roberts-6, Robinson-6, Dixon-5, Gaskill-5, Goodwin-5, Tolson-4, Willis-4, Daniels-3, Ireland-3, Wallace-3, Jones-2, Mason-2, ~~and~~ Mayo-2, and Salter-2. These families were descended from some of the original settlers on Portsmouth and accounted for the majority of the population. The ~~majority~~ of the balance were <sup>single</sup> families.

In analyzing the reasons for the demise of Portsmouth, ~~maximization~~ consideration ~~was~~ was given to the possibility that it was an aging or over-age effects of the town and that the population rapidly died out from the primitive life of the area. Such is not the case for the census when analyzed on the basis of age groups reveals the ~~substantive~~ vitality of the Portsmouthers, particularly of some of the families who were in their fourth and fifth generation.

| Age Group:   | Male: | Female: | Total:             |
|--------------|-------|---------|--------------------|
| Infants to 5 | 54    | 65      | <del>109</del> 119 |
| 6-18         | 85    | 107     | 192                |
| 19-34        | 78    | 78      | 156                |
| 35-50        | 37    | 47      | 84                 |
| 51-59        | 18    | 11      | 29                 |
| over 60      | 5     | 5       | 10                 |
| over 70      | 1     | 1       | 2                  |
| over 80      | 1     | 1       | 2                  |



During the year 104 children attended school at Portsmouth of whom 49 were boys and 55 were girls. They ranged in age from 6 to 21 years. ~~refugee~~ Figures compiled on illiteracy reveal the following: Illiterate in the over 20 age group: 30 male, 55 female; husband and wife, both illiterate, 16; husband only, illiterate, 6; wife illiterate, 29. Illiteracy in the work groups reveals the following: fishermen, 22; mariners, 6; domestics (female), 15; and housewives, 41. One mechanic and one pilot were illiterate. There was one deaf and dumb male, aged 26. No idiots or paupers were reported. Three marriages were performed during the year.

The total value of all real estate was computed at \$33,320. for the entire population of Portsmouth. Of 40 fishermen who owned real estate valued at from \$50 to \$800, they owned a total of \$8,495, or an average of \$212.25 each. W. Gaskill, age 41, owned \$600 in real estate. The Gaskills were one of the earliest settlers at Portsmouth. Christopher Lupton, age 60, was the most affluent fisherman whose personal estate was valued at \$2,000. O. S. Dewey, age 52, ~~was~~ the collector of customs, was the most af-

fluent member of Portsmouth society. His real estate holdings were valued at \$10,000; his personal estate at \$30,000. Rebecca Gaskill, age 82, had a personal estate value at \$16,000, but had no real estate holdings. Dr. Dudley's real estate was value at \$2,500, and that of both Earl Ireland, age 60, and Valentine Robinson, age 54, both mariners, at \$1,000 each. The latter two also had personal estates valued at \$5,000 each. A pilot, Francis C. Dixon, age 55, also had a personal estate of \$5,000. Others with personal estates in the upper brackets, \$1,000 or more, were: Dr. Dudley, \$3,000; Susan Wallace, age 60, \$3,000; Dr. Singleton, age 40, \$2,500. Portsmouthers in the \$2,000 bracket were: Thomas C. Jones (39) and John G. Wallace (28), both keepers of light boats; W. C. Dixon (44), pilot, and John Hill (43), a mariner. Both Winifred Dixon (50) and Ellender Dixon (59) had personal estates valued at \$1,000 each.



## PORTSMOUTH AND THE CIVIL WAR

*that pre-empted hostilities*

Although the ~~first~~ shot of the Civil War was fired at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, North Carolina did not formally secede from the Union until May 20, a month after Lincoln had issued his call for troops to suppress the rebellion. The formation of the Confederate States of America in February 1861 had kept North Carolina walking the tight-rope of neutrality as she prepared for eventual conflict under Governor Ellis, a secessionist. He acquired military supplies, equipment and stores so that in the early stages of the conflict North Carolina troops were said to be the "best armed, and best clothed men that passed through Richmond."

1. Stick, p. 117.

At the outbreak of the conflict Confederate troops moved quickly to occupy the Outer Banks, including the key points to North Carolina's foreign trade and commerce, Ocracoke Inlet and the forts on Beacon Island and at Cape Hatteras. One of the most significant aspects of Lincoln's strategy was to blockade the South and appropriate steps were taken by the Union General ~~Amos~~ Burnside, when he attacked Fort Hatteras on August 27, 1861. It fell a few days later. Portsmouth was quickly to become a casualty of

the war from which it was never to recover.

and Fort Ocracoke

Fort Morgan, also known as Fort Beacons on Beacon Island had been constructed to replace the earlier Fort Granville. It was pentagonal shaped and constructed of thick mud sods. There was an earth bomb-proof protecting a large cistern and a stockpile of munitions. Nine guns were at the fort but had not been mounted. Four rusting guns lay on the beach at Portsmouth never having been installed in Fort Morgan. With the fall of Fort Hatteras,

*Doc Kate M. Rowland, ed., Letters from N.C., 1861-62,  
in Wm & Mary Quarterly, V. 25, No. 2 & No. 4 (1916-1917)  
have anything on Portsmouth?*



Confederate troops abandoned Fort Morgan and evacuated Portsmouth causing consternation among the inhabitants who now realized they were defenseless. Portsmouth was abandoned as the population fled before Union troops. Tradition states, however, that one Portsmouther remained for she was too fat to get through the door to her home in her attempt to escape. In her excitement she forgot to go through the large rear door of her kitchen which had been especially constructed for her. When the population returned after the war she still lived on Portsmouth and reported that she had been treated very kindly by the Federals.<sup>1</sup> Union forces, however, had found Portsmouth

*How? Have you looked at the Official Records? R.*

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1. Holland, pp. 46-7; Stick, pp. 117 ff.; and Burke, p. 47.

a virtual ghost town and after destroying military stores at both Portsmouth and Ocracoke departed the area. The history of Portsmouth during the period of the Civil War is shrouded in darkness; few, if any, records of the flight of the Portsmouthers having been found.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Ibid. See also John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill, c. 1963), pp. 33-4, 38, 49, cited by Holland.

But the Civil War accented a trend which had been going on at Ocracoke Inlet since the 1840s when Hatteras Inlet opened. Being more convenient to coastal shipping and port facilities, almost all shipping through the Outer Banks had switched from Ocracoke Inlet to Hatteras Inlet by the end of the Civil War.<sup>3</sup> The effects of this trend on the economy of Portsmouth will become more evident when the census for 1870 is analyzed below.

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3. Holland, p. 47.

Although attempts were made to breathe new economic life into the community such as the establishment of a menhaden processing plant in 1866, that industry soon failed. A further blow was given to the Portsmouth



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economy when the Treasury Department abolished the Ocradoke Collection District in 1867 thus certifying to <sup>its</sup> ~~its~~ lessening importance as the Portsmouth office was closed, and the Pamlico District was created with ~~the~~ New Bern becoming the port of entry.

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1. Lewis Heyl (comp.), Statutes of the United States Relating to Revenue, Commerce, Navigation and the Currency (Boston, 1868), p. 510.

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The census of 1870 gives the first concrete evidence on which to base the ~~conclusion~~ conclusion that ~~Portsmouth~~ decline of Portsmouth definitely began with the Civil War. Most probably some of the residents felt that they had had enough of the primitive life of the town and settled on the mainland. However, the census reveals that the population had declined to 323 persons occupying 60 dwellings as compared to <sup>the pre-Civil War</sup> population of 568 persons occupying 109 dwellings. This figure did not include the <sup>Negro</sup> 117 <sup>slaves</sup> of whom none are listed as returning <sup>had any</sup> to Portsmouth after the conflict. Dr. Dudley, now 80, returned to continue his medical practice. There were four lighthouse keepers and their assistants, this figure undoubtedly including keepers of the <sup>light</sup> ~~the~~ boats. Occupations still reflected the majority as being connected with the sea: <sup>there were</sup> nine pilots, 37 mariners or seamen, and 36 fishermen. This represents a decline of 60 from the pre-war figure of 112 being associated with the sea. Two school teachers, two grocers, two store clerks and one gardener and one brick rason, the latter being noted for the first time, completes the trend of the working force of Portsmouth.

By 1880 the population had fallen to 222 white persons, <sup>not</sup> ~~being~~ <sup>slaves</sup> indicated ~~any longer~~ occupying 44 dwellings. James W. Lumly,

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7. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, NA, RG 29.

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age 30 and illiterate was the new minister. Nine sailors or seamen were listed with 31 fishermen. Piloting ships through Ocracoke Inlet appears to have come to a definite end as an occupation for none are listed in this census. <sup>the Portsmouth pilots</sup> Most probably all ~~these seamen and fishermen~~ <sup>the Portsmouth pilots</sup> had moved to the vicinity of Hatteras and Oregon Inlets for all ships entering North Carolina harbors ~~now~~ sailed the shorter route. Unfortunately we cannot follow the trend of the Portsmouth population for the census records of 1890 have been destroyed by fire and those from 1900 on are inaccessible.

However, it is reported that the trend of the population for the next 30 years [1880-1910] was fairly static. <sup>27</sup> One indication that the

1. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. NA, RG 29.

2. Burke, p. 59

life on Portsmouth was continuing was the discovery of records of the Census of School Children at Portsmouth which was known as School District No. 1. <sup>I these</sup> These were found among miscellaneous records of the office of the Register of Deeds at Beaufort during a recent trip to the area. Although incomplete they do fill part of the gap in our knowledge of the population.

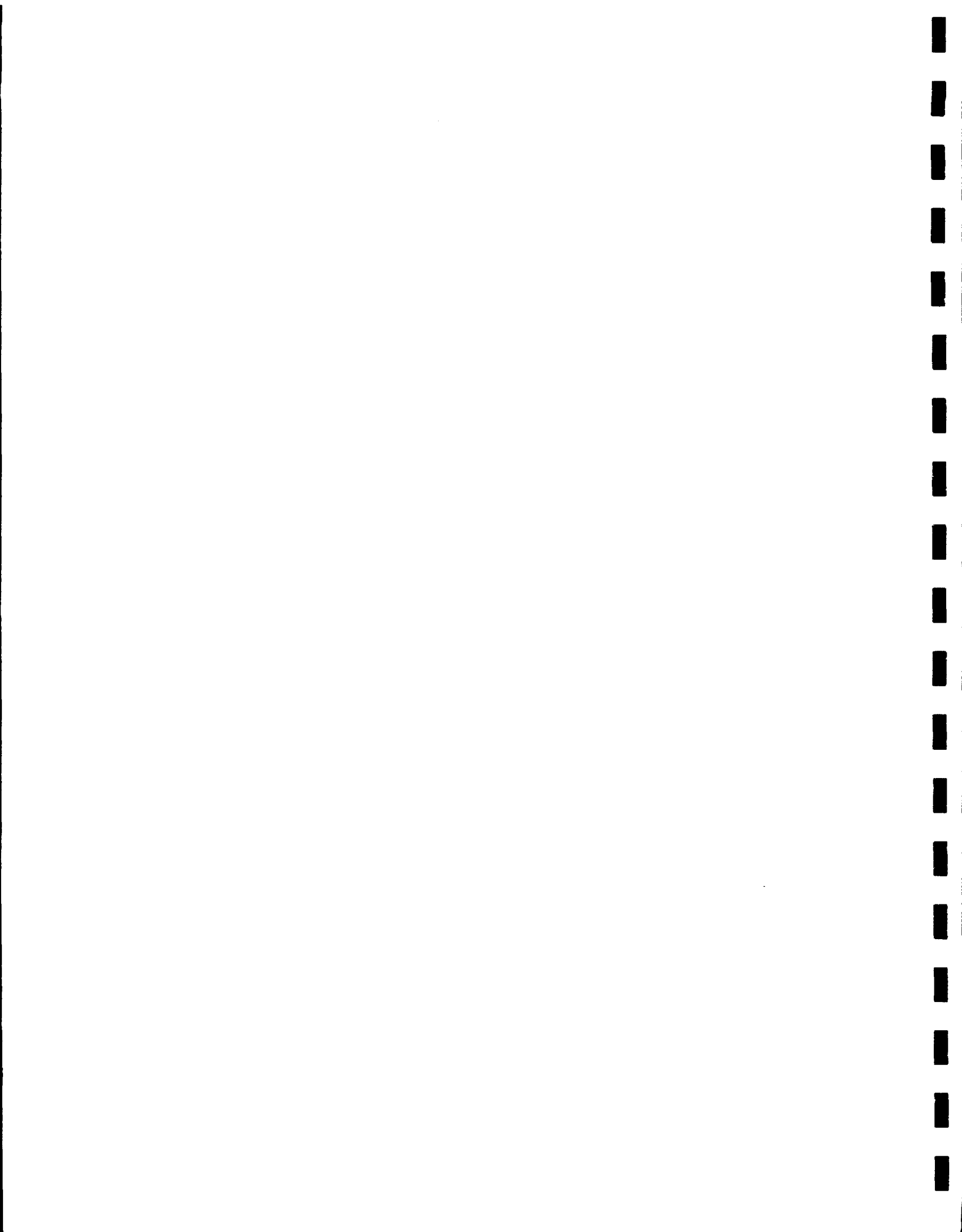
The school children were ~~aged~~ from 6 to 21 years ~~ages~~ of age and their attendance ~~was~~ was as follows: <sup>17 19</sup>

| Year: | No. of Boys: | No. of Girls: | Total: |
|-------|--------------|---------------|--------|
| 1894  | 42           | 33            | 75     |
| 1904  | 30           | 25            | 55     |
| 1907  | 37           | 26            | 63     |
| 1912  | 30           | 17            | 47     |
| 1913  | 28           | 20            | 48     |
| 1915  | 32           | 21            | 53     |
| 1916  | 32           | 23            | 55     |
| 1917  | 20           | 16            | 36     |

3. School Census of School Children, Portsmouth, Records of Carteret County, Beaufort, N.C.

*Did the village  
of Ocracoke assume  
in part the role of  
Portsmouth?*

*good  
information!*



~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

The Portsmouth Life-Saving Station was established on Portsmouth Island in 1895 on the ~~grounds~~ northeast corner of the grounds of the former Marine Hospital which burned to the ground the previous year. It was one of the three established on Core Banks the others being the one at Cape Lookout which had been authorized in 1878 and the <sup>third</sup> other opposite Hunting Quarters in 1897.<sup>11</sup> The Portsmouth station was active

<sup>11</sup> U. S. Life-Saving Service, Annual Report for 1878 (Washington, 1878), p. 35; Ibid. for 1888, pp. 12, 374; Ibid. for 1895, p. 343; Ibid. for 1897, p. 369.

*I make no mention of the Life-Saving Service in my Cape Hatteras report.*

Excellent histories of the founding of the U. S. Lifesaving Service and its transition to the U. S. Coast Guard are given in Edwin C. Bearss, Rescue Operations from the Chicamacomico Station, 1874-1954 (Washington, 1965), and Ross Holland, Cape Hatteras Light Station, F. (Jr.), A History of the North Carolina (Washington, 1968), ~~xxx~~ to which the reader is referred.

to 1915 when the U. S. Coast Guard was formed from a merger of the former Revenue Cutter and Life-Saving services, and in 1939 the Bureau of Lighthouses was placed under the Coast Guard. Some of the Coast Guard stations were de-activated prior to World War II--the one at Portsmouth being deactivated in 1938,--due to the improvement of ships communications and navigational instruments which made the stations unnecessary. The duties of the Portsmouth station were taken over by the Coast Guard station at Ocracoke and today are still being performed. A few historical notes

<sup>12</sup> U. S. Coast Guard, Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers and Cadets, and Ships and Stations of the U. S. Coast Guard, July 1, 1938 (Washington, 1938), p. 105. National Archives and Record Service, Guide to the Records in the National Archives (Washington, 1948), pp. 89, 91.

indicate ~~xxx~~ the stirring events of the Portsmouth station.







[a line to him]

rising. 11:40 flagpole fell, fence washing down. Weather getting worse, took one of the surfmen' skiffs—bent (illegible) to her and went & got two families from there (sic) Houses seven all told, brought them to the station, sunset—lookout taken impossible for surfmen to make patrols, tide still rising, 8 PM (scuttled) station 8:15 tide in station still rising 9:35 PM water 9 inch high on floors 9:45 tide falling (illegible) and surfmen's stables gone with horses in them.

F. G. TERRELL /LS/  
Keeper

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Ibid.

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Thus we have the mute testimony of nature vs the Portsmouthers. How many of the residents lost their lives in these periods that nature was running amuck will never be known. Few, if any, records have been preserved by them. Generations have come and gone. Thanks to the preservation of official records such as the foregoing ~~do~~ we have some knowledge of the primitive life they led. But the record shows among other things, the valiant work of the men of the Portsmouth life-saving station and after 1915 of the men of the Coast Guard. Here is a partial list of the ships <sup>during</sup> that were lost at Portsmouth ~~for~~ almost a quarter of a century.



(5)

VESSELS TOTALLY LOST AT PORTSMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

| <u>Name:</u>           | <u>Type:</u> | <u>Date:</u>  | <u>Lives Lost:</u> |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| <u>Etta M. Barter</u>  | Schooner     | Feb. 27, 1895 | 0                  |
| <u>Sallie Bissel</u>   | Schooner     | March 4, 1895 | 0                  |
| <u>S. Warren Hall</u>  | Schooner     | April 5, 1898 | 0                  |
| <u>Charmer</u>         | Schooner     | March 4, 1899 | 0                  |
| <u>Fred Walton</u>     | Hulk         | Aug. 17, 1899 | 0                  |
| <u>Lydia A. Willis</u> | Schooner     | Aug. 17, 1899 | 2                  |
| <u>Henrietta Hill</u>  | Schooner     | Aug. 24, 1899 | 0                  |
| <u>Three Friends</u>   | Schooner     | Feb. 9, 1900  | 0                  |
| <u>Leading Breeze</u>  | Schooner     | Nov. 23, 1901 | 0                  |
| <u>Vera Cruz VII</u>   | Brig         | May 8, 1903   | 1                  |
| <u>John I. Snow</u>    | Schooner     | Jan. 14, 1907 | 0                  |
| <u>Arroyo</u>          | Steamer      | Feb. 20, 1910 | 0                  |
| <u>Luna</u>            | Schooner     | July 29, 1918 | 0                  |

*good*

Portsmouth Station Log 5

1. Ibid. The Station Journal throughout this period give the dramatic story of these rescue operations.



VERA CRUZ VII

Of all the dramatic events which have occurred within the memory of Portsmouthers who are still alive, it is the ~~memory of~~ stirring rescue of the 421 shipwrecked persons from the 605-ton brig Vera Cruz VII on May 8 and 9, 1903. Mrs.

Cora Roberts of Arlington, Va., now 74, reaffirmed the events depicted in the Log of the Portsmouth Life-Saving Station by Keeper F. G. Terrell. Not only did the Portsmouthers try to clothe them, but they also ~~and~~ prepared ~~also~~ over 1,248 meals for them, using practically all the flour on the island. Mrs. ~~Sty~~ Roberts recalled that as a girl of nine, she had helped her mother bake biscuits.

Phone interview with Mrs. Wm. A. ~~Roberts~~ Styron, born on Portsmouth, now Arlington, Va., ~~born~~ Oct. 11, 1970. ~~Interviewed by~~ David Stick, Graveyard of the Atlantic (Chapel Hill, 1952), pp. 180-81.

The Vera Cruz VII was a 29-year old vessel which hailed from the Cape Verde Islands. While trying to enter Ocracoke Inlet, it stranded on Dry Shoal Point about 2 p.m. on May 8. Why the brig ~~ran~~ ran ashore at this point is a mystery to this day for she had sailed from the Cape Verde Islands and was en route to New Bedford, Mass., and Ocracoke Inlet was considerably off course. Her Captain, Julius M. Fernandez, claimed that he was running short of fresh water and that he headed for Ocracoke to replenish the supply. It has been generally believed in Ocracoke ever since that in reality he was attempting to smuggle some 399 Cape Verde Islanders into the United States through the sounds of eastern North Carolina. Local legend adds details to the story by saying that Captain Fernandez escaped the authorities at the time of the shipwreck and that he later had smuggled his way ~~aboard~~ aboard a New Bedford whaler in a sperm oil barrel.

When the "collors" were seen by the watch at the Portsmouth Life-Saving Station, Keeper Ferrell and his surfmen approached the wreck, throwing



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a line aboard her. Not getting much satisfaction from the Captain and the first mate, Ferrell rescued the passengers, hauling them over to the station even though his quarters were limited. ✓ The word soon spread and ~~the~~ Ferrell commandeered every available boat on the island. Portsmouthers immediately provided care, aid and sustenance for the passengers stranded ~~on the beach~~. Meantime a fight broke out aboard the Vera Cruz VII which Ferrell helped to quell. It was no easy task to transport the 421 passengers, including 23 women and three children from the wrecked vessel to safety on Portsmouth Island. A strong northeaster was still blowing and the tide was still high enough to keep the beach flooded during the rescue operations.

*What was the fight about?*  
When Ferrell returned to the stranded ship and asked the first mate who was going to pay for the expenses involved with the rescue operations, he was told that no one would. Ferrell thereupon placed members of his crew aboard her and spent ~~several days~~ <sup>until Sunday</sup> unloading the cargo of 214 barrels of sperm oil valued at \$6,000. The hulk of the Vera Cruz VII lay on the beach ~~struck~~ for years, giving its name to the shoal, until it eventually disappeared beneath the waters of the Atlantic. For years, <sup>navigation</sup> maps carried the name of the Vera Cruz shoal on them, and Portsmouthers recount the story of the rescue as another <sup>episode</sup> in the life of their town.

171. Log, Portsmouth Life-Saving Station, Nov. 12, 1902-<sup>9</sup>Nov. 13, 1903.<sup>Dec. 5</sup>  
NA, RG 41.



The history of Portsmouth during the first half of the twentieth century is indeed meager with the exception of the material which has already been cited.

In 1913 the Methodist Episcopal Church was ~~burned~~ destroyed by a storm but by 1915 the inhabitants of the town had erected the present church building in which occasional services take place. ~~The post office~~

*21 Sept 1933*  
The final coup occurred in 1933 when what was termed the "most severe hurricane in the memory of Portsmouth," according to Henry Pigott, practically wiped out the island and all its ~~houses~~ dwellings. Henry Pigott, who was then a young man of 38, said, "Everybody just left." ~~At that time on there was barely two dozen residents of Portsmouth~~  
~~which dwindled thereafter so that in 1950 there was but nine.~~

The postoffice  
fice continued to be served regularly until 1959 when the last postmistress, Dorothy M. Salter, closed it on April 11, ~~1959~~ of that year. Postal service was kept up for the few remaining residents of Portsmouth whose numbers had fallen to but ~~seven~~ <sup>14</sup> persons in 1950 by a villager named Tom Bragg who would meet the mail boat from Atlantic. Recently the schedule has been changed ~~to~~ <sup>from</sup> Cedar Island ~~direct~~ to Ocracoke, ~~as~~ stops no longer being made at Portsmouth. Henry Pigott, now 72 and the last surviving Negro resident of the island, poled over to pick up the mail and supplies for a time but it is now handled by a Captain Justin Austin of Ocracoke, who has assumed the role of caretaker of the island. Pigott only spends the months of June to September at Portsmouth now passing the remainder of the year with Captain Austin at Ocracoke. The other surviving resident, Miss Elma Dixon, now 66 and who was voting Registrar for Portsmouth in the 1950s, spends the summers on the island and the balance of the year with her niece at Beaufort. <sup>10</sup>

N.C.,



Undoubtedly many of the Portsmouthers left the town after the chain of events which deprived them of a livelihood and settled on the ~~skidoo~~ whereabouts of the descendants mainland. If names are any clue to the ~~disappearance~~ of the ~~population~~ in the records prior to ~~of the town~~ original families whose names appeared prior to and in the population schedules of Carteret County as reflected in the decennial censuses, the information gleaned from the 1970 edition of the Carolina Telephone Directory for Morehead City, Atlantic, Beaufort, Marshallberg, Newport, and Ocracoke may be useful. It is entirely possible that an investigation and subsequent interviews with some of these families may produce primary source material which, if not looked into, may be lost forever thus depriving the Service of valuable historical material.

Among these families now living in the area and whose names appear to have been associated with Portsmouth are the following: Morehead N.C.: Fulcher, 20; City; Dudley, 11; Gaskill, ~~five~~ four; Gaskins, five; Lupton, four; Roberts, 13; Robinson, 13; Salter, 18; Styron, 25; Wade, 18; Willis, 103.

Atlantic, N.C.: Fulcher, 26; Gaskill, 15; Gilgo, ~~6~~ six; Styron, 18.

Beaufort, N.C.: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Dixon, 10; Dudley, 11; Eubanks, nine; Fulcher, 13; Gaskill, 11; Lupton, seven; Mason, 23; Pigott, two; Robinson, three; Slater, nine; Styron, nine; Taylor, 30; and Wallace, four.

Marshallberg, N.C.: Fulcher, four; Pigott, seven; Salter, eight; Styron, eight; and Wade, six.

Ocracoke, N.C.: Gaskill, ten; O'Neal, 13; Styron, four; Tolson, ~~four~~ four; and Wahab, three.

Common names such as Brown, Jones, and Smith are too numerous to mention, but undoubtedly the potential information on Portsmouth is unlimited within the areas mentioned above which also includes Harker, Cedar, and other islands of Pamlico Sound.



## CHAPTER SIX

## PORTSMOUTH TODAY

Portsmouth today lies alone and desolate. The memory of her active and turbulent history is kept alive in the records of Carteret County, at Beaufort, N.C., and by the federal government in its records at the National Archives. Few, if any, personal records of the Portsmouthers are available as they did little correspondence. From the evidence of numerous interviews, however, and current investigations carried on during this study it is evident that existing gaps can be filled.

A few of the old structures such as the late nineteenth century clapboard Post Office, the Coast Guard Station, one or two other weather beaten buildings dating back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century and several frame dwellings from the early twentieth century as shown on the illustrations still stand. The latter are used for weekend and seasonal visiting <sup>si</sup> ~~subducing~~ from the mainland; the Post Office stands idle, the nearest one being at Ocracoke; and the Coast Guard Station is used as a weekend and seasonal gun club. Divine services are conducted occasionally in the Methodist Church.

The remnants of Portsmouth Village are in a fair state of preservation, some of the buildings being recently painted as is that of Elma Dixon and Henry Pigott. It would lend itself to historic stabilization for the buildings could be used for a cultural exhibit depicting the life of the village and of the Outer Bankers.

The final phase of the history of Portsmouth is now being written in the Office of the Attorney General of North Carolina. As a result of congressional legislation authorizing the establishment of the Cape



Lookout National Seashore,<sup>1</sup> including the authority to appropriate \$3,200,000 for the acquisition and development of the seashore in accordance with the purposes of the Act,<sup>2</sup> the Honorable John C. Icenhour, Assistant Attorney General, has been acquiring the land clearing the titles to all properties not only within the boundary of the original 50 acre site of Portsmouth Village but also of the entire Portsmouth Island. Mr. Icenhour has had a staff of legal assistants searching the Carteret County records books consisting of deeds, transfers, grantors, grantees and others in an effort to establish ownership of the various parcels many of which have had a mixed history over the years.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Public Law 89-366, March 10, 1966, copy in Appendix .

2. Ibid., Sec. 77, p. 3.

3. Personal Interview Mr. Icenhour with Olszewski, Raleigh, N.C., Sept. 4, 1970.

---

One interesting point that developed during a recent trip to the area is that the entire complexion of the study has changed. Instead of the basic data being restricted to the original site of Portsmouth Village and to its two remaining residents, a completely new set of owners, practically all non-resident, has been uncovered.



Beginning in  
~~During~~ the 1950s, various tracts of land of Portsmouth Township  
 were ~~surveyed~~ surveyed, sold to the following persons or organ-  
 izations and registered in the deed books of ~~the State of North Carolina~~  
 Carteret County, ~~North Carolina~~ as herewith noted:

| Deed Book: | Page No: | Date Registered:   | Owners Name:                           |
|------------|----------|--------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 2          | 157      | October 10, 1951   | Eugene B. Reams &<br>Chas. F. Driscoll |
| N          | 159      | March 26, 1952     | Stanley Wahab                          |
| 2          | 185      | May 20, 1952       | C. H. Case                             |
| 2          | 210      | January 5, 1953    | T. T. Potter                           |
| 3          | 16       | July 31, 1953      | Morgan Bisette                         |
| 3          | 74       | September 16, 1954 | T. T. Potter                           |
| 3          | 149      | March 29, 1956     | H. L. Holt & C. Roy<br>Eubanks         |
| 6          | 5        | August 2, 1962     | Long Rock Club, Inc.                   |
| 6          | 24       | January 6, 1964    | R. S. Wahab                            |

*What parcels of  
land are involved?*

#### 4. Office Register of Deeds, Beaufort, N.C.

In addition to all the tracts which have been under investigation and eventually will lead to acquisition of the entire island of Portsmouth by the State of North Carolina prior to transfer of their jurisdiction to the United States and the National Park Service, both Elma Dixon and Henry Pigott have donated their lands and the improvements thereon to the state of North Carolina, but will continue to occupy the premises until their deaths.



## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

~~Considerable~~  
~~A great deal of~~ primary source material has been uncovered in the course of this ~~basic data~~ study. It has brought to light much that was unknown. It is obvious that further historical research is needed to fill in the gaps which the study has accented. The story of Portsmouth Village is stirring in that it shows man's determination to dominate a primitive environment. That he did it for more than a century from 1753 to the 1860s is proof of man's determination to live the way of life he desires. That he gradually was forced to seek his livelihood elsewhere is proof of man's reaction to contemporary social and economic changes. Earlier concepts that the story of Portsmouth involved only the history of the site of the original town have given way to the realization that it is possible to reconstruct the history of the vitality of the people, and of the social and economic changes that took place at Portsmouth as part of a ~~unique~~ history that primarily involved man and the sea.

This undoubtedly is the broad historical theme that should dominate the establishment of Cape Lookout National Seashore. It is the same theme that ~~prevails~~ prevails at Cape Hatteras National Seashore. However, different facets of this comprehensive theme should dominate each area. At Cape Hatteras the main emphasis is on the story of the efforts of the United States to provide lighthouses and life-saving stations to make the lot of the mariner safer. Less stress is placed on the cultural and economic history of the Outer Banks.

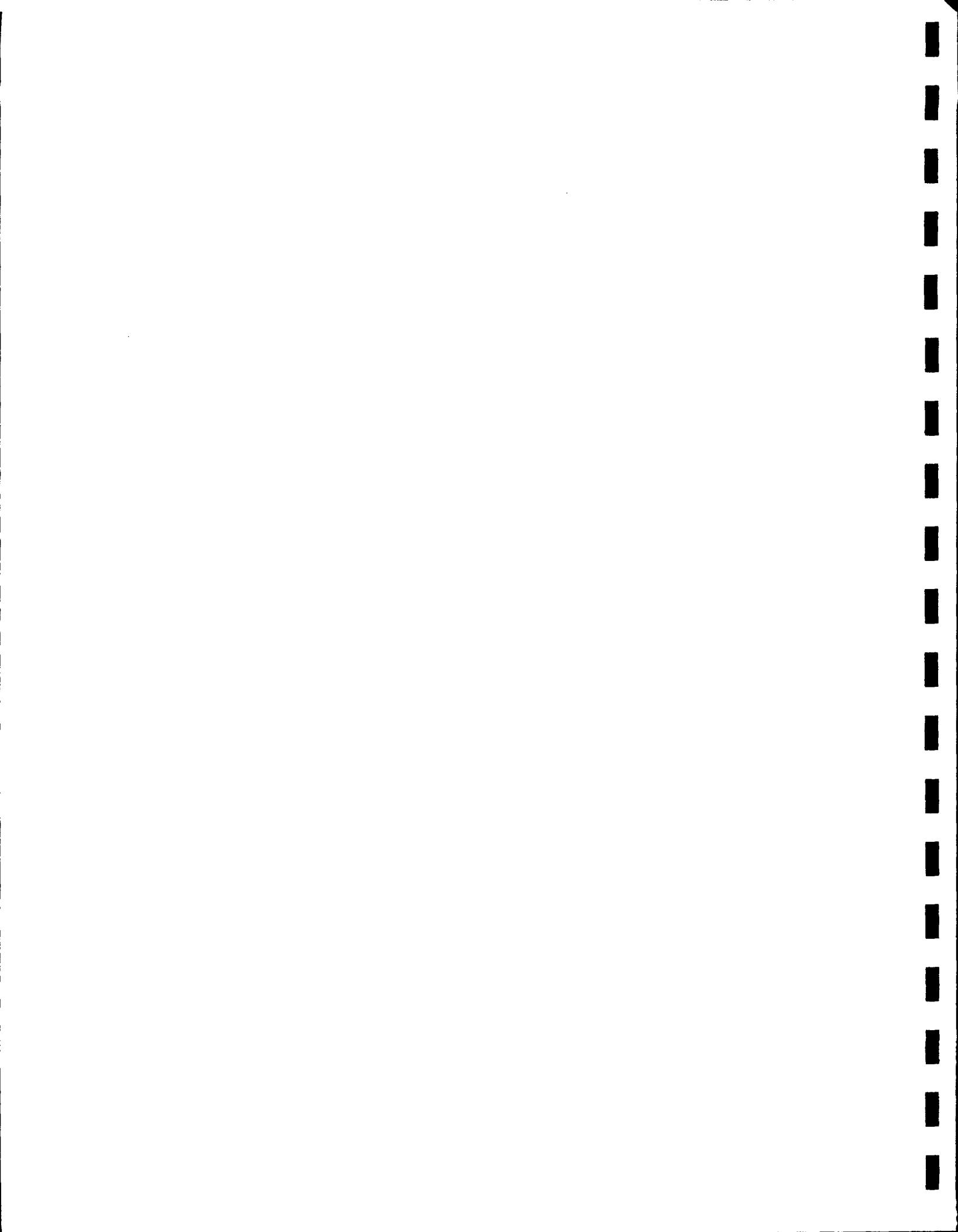
At Cape Lookout just the opposite should prevail. Portsmouth should be restored ~~to accent~~ to accent the cultural and economic life of the Bankers. At Portsmouth the story could be told of how the people lived, earned their daily bread, raised their children and adapted to their environment. Economic activity centering around Ocracoke Inlet should be



~~Considerable~~  
~~A great deal of~~ primary source material has been uncovered in the course of this ~~basic data~~ <sup>Literature</sup> study. It has brought to light much that was unknown. It is obvious that further historical research is needed to fill in the gaps which the study has accented. The story of Portsmouth Village is stirring in that it shows man's determination to dominate a primitive environment. That he did it for more than a century from 1753 to the 1860s is proof of man's determination to live the way of life he desires. That he gradually was forced to seek his livelihood elsewhere is proof of man's reaction to contemporary social and economic changes. Earlier concepts that the story of Portsmouth involved only the history of the site of the original town have given way to the realization that it is possible to reconstruct the history of the vitality of the people, and of the social and economic changes that took place at Portsmouth as part of a ~~unique~~ history that primarily involved man and the sea.

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At Cape Lookout just the opposite should prevail. Portsmouth should be restored ~~and~~ 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.



*an exterior restoration. Some houses  
could be adapted to employee  
quarters. Room*

For these reasons, it is suggested that the area within the confines of the boundary shown on the map of Appendix *B* be declared the Portsmouth Village Historic District.

Within this district the following features should be included:  
the U. S. Marine Hospital,  
Methodist Episcopal Church, the Coast Guard Station, the Postoffice,  
the Portsmouth School, the Old Building (1875), the Portsmouth Cemetery,  
Cottage Cottage  
the Elma Dixon ~~House~~, and the Henry Pigott ~~House~~.

#### SITE EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 1. The Methodist-Episcopal Church

The Methodist Episcopal Church was the scene of much community and social life for the women of the village. It gave life and meaning to an otherwise drab existence. It brought them together in meaningful social gatherings. This historical resource should be interpreted to give depth to the meaning of the life of the Portsmouthers to the visitor. ~~Tablets~~ should ~~most probably~~ indicate the history of the previous church building and list the names of the ministers.

##### 2. The Portsmouth Coast Guard Station

The stirring events of ~~the role of~~ the earlier life-saving station in assisting the Portsmouthers in times of distress and in the many rescues of crews of ships that had gone ashore on the shoals of Ocracoke Inlet, including the later work of the Coast Guard station should be interpreted for the benefit of the visitor. The building should be preserved.

##### 3. The U. S. Marine Hospital

The site of the Marine Hospital should be located and its role in providing aid to sick and injured seamen stressed in its interpretation perhaps at a nearby Visitor Center.

*More - I think that all the  
stone houses now remaining should  
be included in the historic district.  
Most of the buildings should have*



#### 4. The Post Office and General Store

The Post Office and general store was an active scene of the daily life of the Portsmouthers. Here they came for their mail and to do their general shopping for groceries, dry goods, and most probably drugs. The site should be recreated to ~~also~~ portray the type of goods and services, including the mail handling facilities that were available so far from the conveniences of the mainland. This historical source should be interpreted in a colorful and meaningful fashion for the visitor.

#### 5. The Portsmouth Elementary School

Here was the scene of whatever intellectual development was available to the villager. The appearance of the schoolroom should be recreated and if possible contemporary school books should be located by the Park staff to bring this historic resource to its daily appearance, to bring a meaningful experience of this phase of the village's history.

#### 6. The Oldest Building (c. 1875)

Since this building is one of the oldest of the village, reflecting construction techniques of the island for resisting the storms of the area further investigation should be made, if possible, to pinpoint its original appearance. This historic resource should be made one of the highpoints of the visitor's experience, possibly with full restoration or at least partial stabilization to prevent further deterioration.

#### 7. The Old Portsmouth Cemetery

Here lie buried many of the early Portsmouthers. Further investigation should be made of the headstones to identify <sup>them</sup> so that interpreters may point out some of the historic personalities.



*This house also has an excellent water tank of local design, very important item since there are no fresh water wells there.*

8. The Elma Dixon Cottage

Upon the death of the present inhabitant when the site becomes the property of the State of North Carolina (or of the National Park Service), every effort should be made to preserve this historical resource as evidence of the manner in which her last days and her life was spent.

9. The Henry Pigott Cottage

*Has a very good food preserver in the back yard. again,*

For the same reason as enumerated under 8. above, the site should be preserved as a historic resource and interpreted for the benefit of the visitor. If possible, all furnishings presently within both cottages should be retained. *an example of man adapting to his environment.*

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Based on the above recommendations and in view of the rapid deterioration which might possibly occur under the adverse weather conditions of the area, it is suggested that Historic Structures Reports for the following structures be immediately programmed to preserve this vital and prime historical resource of Cape Lookout National Seashore:

1. The Methodist Episcopal Church.
2. The Portsmouth Coast Guard Station
3. The Post Office and General Store
4. The Portsmouth Elementary School
5. The Oldest Building (c.1875)
6. The Elma Dixon Cottage
7. The Henry Pigott Cottage.



Historical Base Map, Portsmouth Village, N.C.

Proposed Boundary Portsmouth Village Historic Site

Nomination Form: Portsmouth Village Historic Site

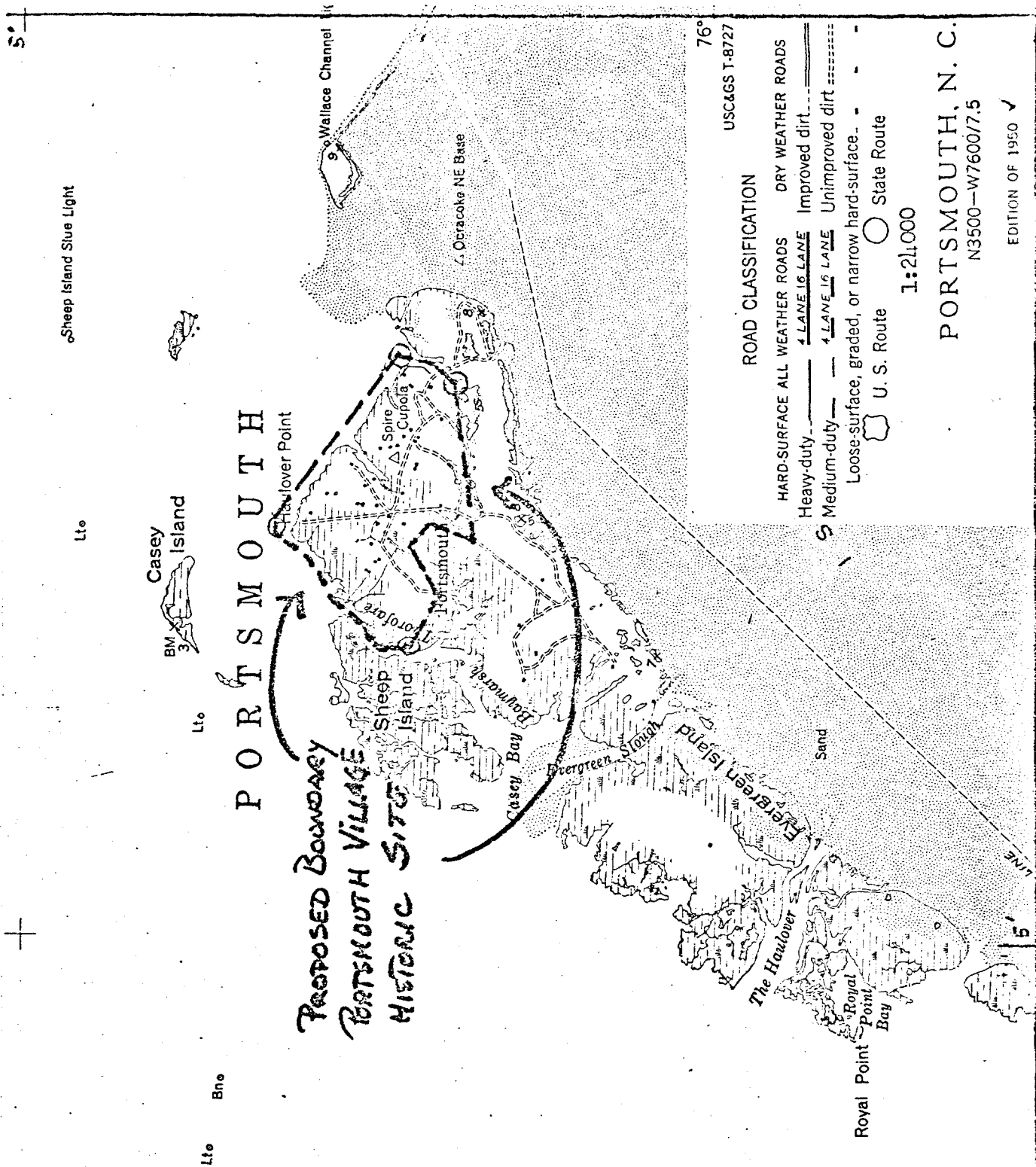
Nomination Form: Portsmouth Coast Guard Station

(Note: to be paginated during final typing. GJO)



HISTORICAL BASE MAP, PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE, N.C.







NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| STATE<br>North Carolina |      |
| COUNTY<br>Carteret      |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY        |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER            | DATE |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

|                                                                                                              |      |                  |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------------------|------|
| 1. NAME                                                                                                      |      |                  |      |
| COMMON: Portsmouth Village Historic Site                                                                     |      |                  |      |
| AND/OR HISTORIC: Portsmouth Village Historic Site                                                            |      |                  |      |
| 2. LOCATION                                                                                                  |      |                  |      |
| STREET AND NUMBER: That portion of Portsmouth Island surrounding the site of the original Portsmouth Village |      |                  |      |
| CITY OR TOWN:                                                                                                |      |                  |      |
| STATE: North Carolina                                                                                        | CODE | COUNTY: Carteret | CODE |
| 3. MAP REFERENCE                                                                                             |      |                  |      |
| SOURCE: U.S.G.S. - Portsmouth, N. C. Quadrangle                                                              |      |                  |      |
| SCALE: 1:24,000                                                                                              |      |                  |      |
| DATE: 1950                                                                                                   |      |                  |      |
| 4. REQUIREMENTS                                                                                              |      |                  |      |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS                                                                                   |      |                  |      |
| 1. Property boundaries where required.                                                                       |      |                  |      |
| 2. North arrow.                                                                                              |      |                  |      |
| 3. Latitude and longitude reference.                                                                         |      |                  |      |

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| STATE            |      |
| COUNTY           |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER     | DATE |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

|                                |      |         |      |
|--------------------------------|------|---------|------|
| 1. NAME                        |      |         |      |
| COMMON:                        |      |         |      |
| AND/OR HISTORIC:               |      |         |      |
| 2. LOCATION                    |      |         |      |
| STREET AND NUMBER:             |      |         |      |
| CITY OR TOWN:                  |      |         |      |
| STATE:                         | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| 3. PHOTO REFERENCE             |      |         |      |
| PHOTO CREDIT:                  |      |         |      |
| DATE OF PHOTO:                 |      |         |      |
| NEGATIVE FILED AT:             |      |         |      |
| 4. IDENTIFICATION              |      |         |      |
| DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. |      |         |      |



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| STATE:<br>North Carolina |      |
| COUNTY:<br>Carteret      |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY         |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER             | DATE |

|                                                      |  |
|------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. NAME                                              |  |
| COMMON:<br>Portsmouth Village Historic Site          |  |
| AND/OR HISTORIC:<br>Portsmouth Village Historic Site |  |

|                             |      |                     |      |
|-----------------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| 2. LOCATION                 |      |                     |      |
| STREET AND NUMBER:          |      |                     |      |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Portsmouth |      |                     |      |
| STATE<br>North Carolina     | CODE | COUNTY:<br>Carteret | CODE |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3. CLASSIFICATION                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)                                                                                                                                                                                           | OWNERSHIP                                                                                                                                                     | STATUS                                                                                                                                                              | ACCESSIBLE<br>TO THE PUBLIC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <del>Site</del><br><input type="checkbox"/> Building<br><input type="checkbox"/> Structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both                                               | Public Acquisition:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Process<br><input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered                                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work<br>in progress<br>Yes:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment                                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)<br>Comments                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                                                                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY                                                             |                          |
| OWNER'S NAME:<br>Various private; National Park Service, State of North Carolina |                          |
| STREET AND NUMBER:                                                               |                          |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Portsmouth                                                      | STATE:<br>North Carolina |
|                                                                                  | CODE                     |

|                                                                  |                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION                                 |                          |
| COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:<br>Office, Register of Deeds |                          |
| STREET AND NUMBER:<br>Carteret County Courthouse                 |                          |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Beaufort                                        | STATE:<br>North Carolina |
|                                                                  | CODE                     |

|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| TITLE OF SURVEY:<br>Basic Data Study, "History of Portsmouth Village, N.C."                             |                                                                                                                                                    |
| DATE OF SURVEY:<br>1969                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State<br><input type="checkbox"/> County<br><input type="checkbox"/> Local |
| DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:<br>Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service |                                                                                                                                                    |
| STREET AND NUMBER:<br>801 19th Street, NW                                                               |                                                                                                                                                    |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Washington                                                                             | STATE:<br>D.C.                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                         | CODE                                                                                                                                               |

STATE: North Carolina  
COUNTY: Carteret

|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
|--------------|------|

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



## 7. DESCRIPTION

|           |                                             |                                    |                                          |                                                   |                                |                                    |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                                 |                                    |                                          |                                                   |                                |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent          | <input type="checkbox"/> Good      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated             | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|           | (Check One)                                 |                                    |                                          | (Check One)                                       |                                |                                    |
|           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Portsmouth Village today consists of about 12 houses in fair condition including the former Coast Guard Station, the old Postoffice, and the Methodist Episcopal Church. The original site consisted of 50 acres and has since expanded to take in almost the entire island. Although there are only two surviving permanent residents of Portsmouth, the majority of private owners are non-resident. Unless these areas are included within the site as recommended, it will be impossible to present a true picture of Portsmouth at the height of its greatest population.

Portsmouth was originally founded in 1753 as a seaport and consisted of 100 half-acre lots. By 1861 its population had increased to more than 500 residents and the population had spread over a considerable area of Portsmouth Island involving hundreds of acres.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| STATE<br>North Carolina |      |
| COUNTY<br>Carteret      |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY        |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER            | DATE |
|                         |      |

(Number all entries)

area as a prime example of American heritage.

The two remaining residents, one a white woman, Miss Elma Dixon, now 74, and a Negro, Henry Pigott, now 88 (both descended from two of the early families to reside there), continue to live at Portsmouth refusing to quit the area. They have donated their lands and its improvements to the State of North Carolina and will live there until they expire--Portsmouthers to the last.



## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☒ 18th Century☒ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal

☐ Prehistoric☐ Historic☐ Agriculture☐ Architecture☐ Art☒ Commerce☐ Communications☐ Conservation☐ Education☐ Engineering☐ Industry☐ Invention☐ Landscape☐ Architecture☐ Literature☐ Military☐ Music☐ Political☐ Religion/Philosophy☐ Science☐ Sculpture☒ Social/Humanitarian☐ Theater☒ Transportation☐ Urban Planning☐ Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The story of the people of Portsmouth is of a population determined to establish their homes and families in an area buffeted by all the primitive forces of nature. Established as a seaport in 1753 with the admonition to build either a wooden frame house or a warehouse suitable for the storage of goods in transit to aid in the economic growth of North Carolina, the people of Portsmouth gradually gained a dominant position at Ocracoke Inlet in the lightering trade. Hundreds of ships, coastwise and foreign, anchored in the vicinity, had their cargoes lightered, and goods stored in the warehouses of Portsmouth so they could continue to the main ports across Pamlico Sound on the mainland. The Wallace-Blount Shell Castle enterprise (1798-1818) was an important constituent of this activity and the Portsmouthers aided in its success.

The colonial government recognized the importance of Portsmouth and in 1764 established an official commodity inspection station at the port. From 1799-1806 Portsmouth was the official customs collection district for the port of New Bern. Between 1836-37 over 1,400 vessels passed through Ocracoke Inlet. In 1840 a U. S. Postoffice was established at Portsmouth. In 1841 Hatteras and Oregon Inlets opened depriving Portsmouth thereafter of much of its maritime trade. In 1847 a Marine Hospital was established on the island. From 1876-85 a U. S. Weather Bureau station operated there. In 1894 a U.S. Livesaving Station was established to become a Coast Guard Station in 1915. Earlier in 1880 a telegraph station had been opened.

During this entire period the Portsmouthers gave assistance and succor to those in need or shipwrecked in the vicinity. In 1903 for instance, when the Vera Cruz foundered on the shoals at the entrance to Ocracoke Inlet, Portsmouthers rescued and fed its 371 passengers.

Time after time and despite all the adversity which the Portsmouthers had to face by the frequent storms and hurricanes which swept their island, they returned to rebuild their homes. Some of these were the severe gale of 1795, the frequent hurricanes of the 1830s, especially the one of August 29, 1839, when the sea swept over the entire island inundating the houses with 27 feet of water, and the hurricane of San Ciriaco of 1895 which destroyed almost everything on the island. But the climax appears to have occurred in 1933 when the greatest hurricane of all swept the island to disaster. After this most Portsmouthers left their homes to settle on islands and other areas of the mainland.

Even with the loss of their piloting business after the opening of Oregon and Hatteras Inlets, Portsmouthers turned to the sea and continued to live as fishermen and mariners while their wives continued to bear children.

The history of these sturdy people should not be lost and everything possible should be done to recapture and retain the primitiveness of the

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



# 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Holland, F. Ross, Jr., A Survey History of Cape Lookout National Seashore, Washington, 1968.
2. Olszewski, George J., History of Portsmouth Village, Washington, D.C. Basic Data Study, 1970
3. Burke, Kenneth E., Jr., The History of Portsmouth, North Carolina, 1753-1861, Richmond, Va., 1958

# 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | O<br>R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |                         |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER                                                                           | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |        | LATITUDE                                                                                                | LONGITUDE               |  |
|                                                                                  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |        | Degrees Minutes Seconds                                                                                 | Degrees Minutes Seconds |  |
| NW                                                                               | 35° 4' 28"              | 76° 3' 59"              |        |                                                                                                         |                         |  |
| NE                                                                               | 35° 4' 10"              | 76° 3' 27"              |        |                                                                                                         |                         |  |
| SE                                                                               | 35° 4' 6"               | 76° 3' 30"              |        |                                                                                                         |                         |  |
| SW                                                                               | 35° 4' 5"               | 76° 4' 15"              |        |                                                                                                         |                         |  |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY  | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |

# 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Dr. George J. Olszewski, Historian

ORGANIZATION Office of Archeology & Historic Preservation  
Eastern Service Center, National Park Service

DATE

October 26, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:

4228 Wisconsin Ave., NW

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE

D. C.

CODE

# 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

# NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name

Title

Date

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| STATE:<br>North Carolina |      |
| COUNTY:<br>Carteret      |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY         |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER             | DATE |

|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. NAME          |                                |
| COMMON:          | Portsmouth Coast Guard Station |
| AND/OR HISTORIC: | Portsmouth Coast Guard Station |

|                                               |      |                     |      |
|-----------------------------------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| 2. LOCATION                                   |      |                     |      |
| STREET AND NUMBER:<br>Old Coast Guard Station |      |                     |      |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Portsmouth                   |      |                     |      |
| STATE<br>North Carolina                       | CODE | COUNTY:<br>Carteret | CODE |

|                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3. CLASSIFICATION                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                |
| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)                                                                                                                                                               | OWNERSHIP                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                          | STATUS                                                                                                                                           | ACCESSIBLE<br>TO THE PUBLIC                                                                                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building<br><input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input type="checkbox"/> Both                                    | Public Acquisition:<br><input type="checkbox"/> In Process<br><input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work<br>in progress | Yes:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Restricted<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)<br><u>Unoccupied</u>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Comments<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____                                                                   |

|                                          |        |      |  |
|------------------------------------------|--------|------|--|
| 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY                     |        |      |  |
| OWNER'S NAME:<br>State of North Carolina |        |      |  |
| STREET AND NUMBER:                       |        |      |  |
| CITY OR TOWN:                            | STATE: | CODE |  |

|                                                                  |                         |      |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------|--|
| 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION                                 |                         |      |  |
| COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:<br>Office, Register of Deeds |                         |      |  |
| STREET AND NUMBER:<br>Carteret County Courthouse                 |                         |      |  |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Beaufort                                        | STATE<br>North Carolina | CODE |  |

|                                                                                                                                                                |                 |      |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------|--|
| 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS                                                                                                                          |                 |      |  |
| TITLE OF SURVEY:<br>Basic Data Study, "History of Portsmouth Village, N.C."                                                                                    |                 |      |  |
| DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local |                 |      |  |
| DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:<br><del>1969</del> Office of Archeology & Historic Preservation, National Park Sv                                               |                 |      |  |
| STREET AND NUMBER:<br>801 19th Street, NW                                                                                                                      |                 |      |  |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Washington                                                                                                                                    | STATE:<br>D. C. | CODE |  |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: North Carolina  
COUNTY: CarteretFOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE



## 7. DESCRIPTION

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                    |                                               |                                          |                                                   |                                |                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | (Check One)                        |                                               |                                          |                                                   |                                |                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated             | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | (Check One)                        |                                               |                                          | (Check One)                                       |                                |                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                |                                    |
| DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                    |                                               |                                          |                                                   |                                |                                    |
| <p>In 1894 the U. S. Life-Saving Service established a life-saving station at Portsmouth. This building dates back to 1905 as indicated by its architecture. It is a two-story wood frame structure with a cupola watchtower. The first floor is divided into two sections, one 32 feet by 42 feet for living quarters, the other section 28 feet by 42 feet has a concrete floor and was used as the boathouse fronting on Station Creek. The second floor was used for sleeping quarters and has two baths. There is an L-shaped porch 8 feet by 52 feet on the south extending part way on the east side to 10 feet by 28 feet. The foundation is solid masonry. The gabled roof is shingled. The floors are of softwood; the interior is of dry wall construction. It has no heating apparatus and the building is in fair condition.</p> <p>Located on Station Creek, the Portsmouth Coast Guard Station is a good example of a facility of this period located on a cove, bay or sound. This was opposed to a station, such as the one located on the beach at Cape Lookout. In answering calls for assistance during storms, it was frequently impossible for crews of beach stations to launch their surfboats through the breakers, while Coast Guardsmen posted at a station such as at Portsmouth could take their craft through the comparatively calm waters of Station Creek to Ocracoke Inlet.</p> <p>The station was deactivated in 1938, when its duties were taken over by the Coast Guard Station at Ocracoke. As the other structures such as the wharf, walks, garage and cistern complement the station, they must be preserved.</p> |                                    |                                               |                                          |                                                   |                                |                                    |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☐ 19th Century

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☐ Industry☐ losophy☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☐ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art☐ Architecture☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature☐ itarian☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Portsmouth Coast Guard Station is a historical resource that is closely identified with the life of the sturdy people of Portsmouth living their lives under the most adverse conditions as they were buffeted by all the primitive forces of nature. At the same time they extended their hospitality to the unfortunates who were ship-wrecked in the vicinity at Ocracoke Inlet or suffered through the numerous storms, gales and hurricanes that swept over the island. And it was the men stationed at the Portsmouth Coast Guard Station who were instrumental in rescuing and providing assistance and succor to the victims of the sea's fury. Of more than a dozen schooners and other types of vessels which came to grief on the shoals at Ocracoke, there was a minimum loss of life, only three deaths being recorded in almost a quarter century of service.

Among the vessels whose crews were brought to safety were Etta M. Barter (1895), Sallie Bissel (1895), S. Warren Hall (1898), Charmer, the hulk of Fred Walton, Lydia A. Willis, and Henrietta Hill (all in 1899), Three Friends (1900), Leading Breeze (1901), Vera Cruz VII (1903), John I. Snow (1907), Arroyo (1910) and Luna (1918). The most stirring of all these events was that of ~~the~~ Vera Cruz VII when the station crew rescued its 421 passengers and crew without loss of life, the Portsmouthers providing food and clothing for them to the best of their ability.

Noteworthy assistance was provided to the people of Portsmouth when the town was struck by the San Ciriaco hurricane in 1899 and the hurricane of 1933 when the entire island was inundated. These events should ~~be~~ not be lost sight of for they will provide the visitor with a prime example of man's courage in the face of the furies of nature as he conquers his environment.



# 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Kenneth E. Burke, Jr., The History of Portsmouth, North Carolina, 1753-1861, Richmond, Va., 1958.
2. Holland, F. Ross, Jr., A Survey History of Cape Lookout National Seashore, Washington, 1968.
3. Olszewski, George J., History of Portsmouth Village (Basic Data Study), Washington, 1970.

# 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | O<br>R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |           |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| CORNER                                                                           | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |        | LATITUDE                                                                                                | LONGITUDE |         |
|                                                                                  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |        | Degrees                                                                                                 | Minutes   | Seconds |
| NW                                                                               | 0 . .                   | 0 . .                   |        | 35°                                                                                                     | 04 .      | 25 .    |
| NE                                                                               | 0 . .                   | 0 . .                   |        | 76°                                                                                                     | 03 .      | 50 .    |
| SE                                                                               | 0 . .                   | 0 . .                   |        |                                                                                                         |           |         |
| SW                                                                               | 0 . .                   | 0 . .                   |        |                                                                                                         |           |         |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY  | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |

# 11. FORM PREPARED BY

|                                                               |               |                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| NAME AND TITLE:<br>George J. Olszewski, Historian             |               | DATE<br>Oct. 26, 1970 |
| ORGANIZATION<br>Eastern Service Center, National Park Service |               |                       |
| STREET AND NUMBER:<br>4228 Wisconsin Ave., NW                 |               |                       |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Washington                                   | STATE<br>D.C. | CODE                  |

# 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

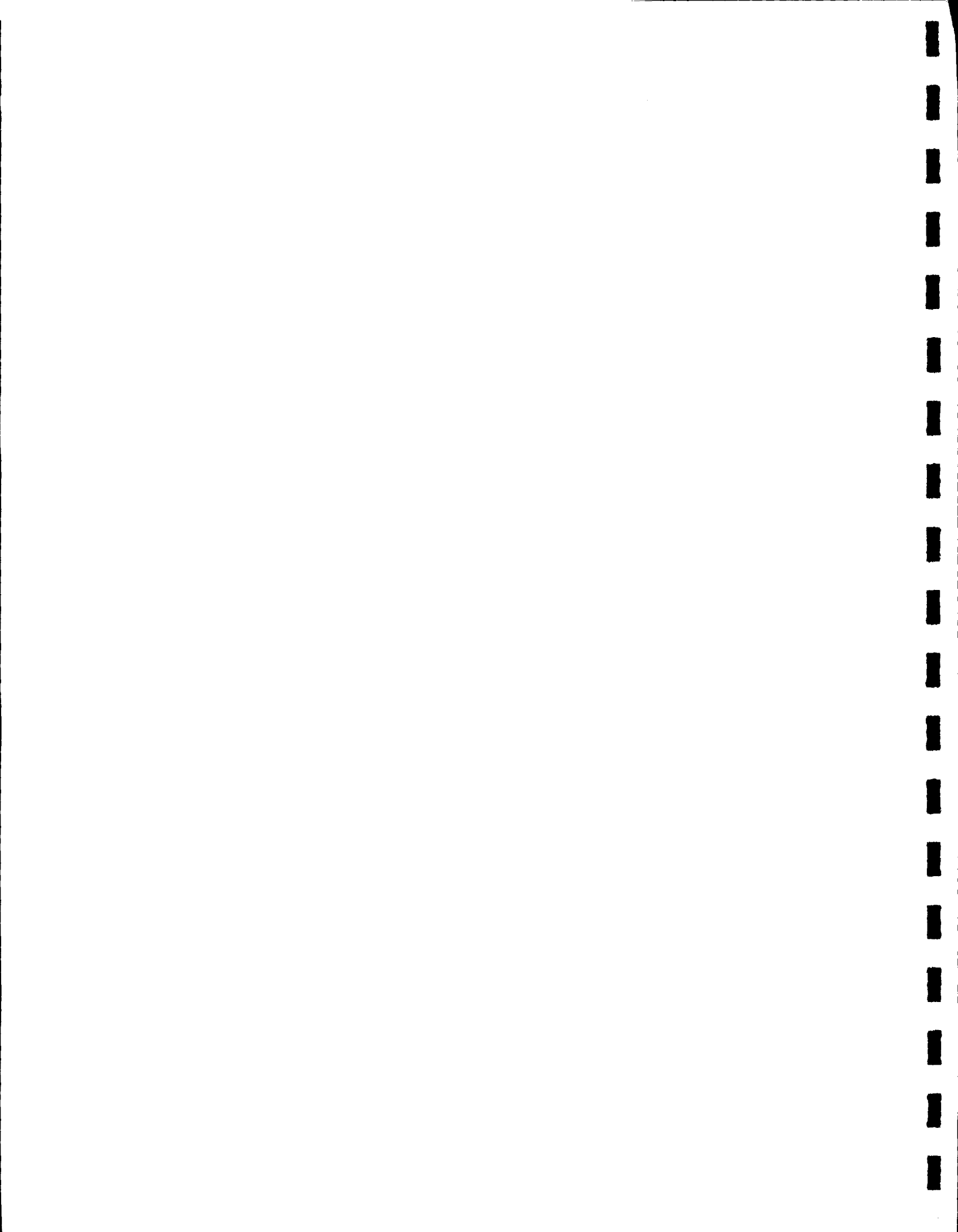
Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Typical Page  
after doc's

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES: ARCHIVES

#### NATIONAL ARCHIVES

##### Records of the Department of Commerce

Records of the Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules,  
1790-1890, Record Group 29. Carteret County, N.C.

##### Records of the Treasury Department

Letters to and from Collectors of Small Ports, 1789- 1833,  
Record Group 90  
Letters on Marine Hospitals, M-1834 to M-1876, 33 vols.  
Letters of the Secretary of the Treasury  
Letters Received  
Letters Sent  
Life-Saving Service Log Books, 1874-1942, Record Group 41.  
Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation  
Ship Enrollments, 1800-1869

#### NORTH CAROLINA STATE ARCHIVES

Records of Carteret County, North Carolina, County Courthouse,  
Beaufort, N.C.:

##### Records of the Clerk of the Superior Court, Carteret County, N.C.

Judgments, 1700-1970  
Lis Pendens, 70-7-16, -18, -163, -164, -165, -545, -1627,  
-1672.  
Old Court Papers, 1700 to date  
Order of Decrees, 1700-1970  
Special Proceedings, 1700-1970  
Wills, 1700-1970, 12 vols.

##### Records of the Register of Deeds, Carteret County, N.C.

Birth Certificates  
Death Certificates  
Deed Book to Carteret County, N.C., A-F, G-H  
Deeds, Carteret County, 50 vols.  
General Index to Real Estate Conveyances, Grantors, 1700-1970  
General Index to Real Estate Conveyances, Grantees, 1700-1970  
General Registration Book for Portsmouth Precinct, Carteret  
County, Book No. 1898  
Map Index Book, A-Z, June 29, 1773-Oct. 11, 1969  
Marriage Certificates  
School Census Records, Portsmouth, 1893-1920



Records of Carteret County, North Carolina, Beaufort, N.C.,  
County Courthouse (Cont.)

Records of the Supervisor of Taxes, Carteret County, N.C.

Map of Parcels as Tax Appraised, PO-10, PO-10A, PO-11  
Parcel Re-Evaluation, Portsmouth Township  
PO-10-1 to PO-10-11, Portsmouth  
PO-10A-1 to PO-10A-44, Core Banks  
PO-11-1, Casey Island

Records of the Secretary of State, N.C.

Land Grants, Book 10

State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

John Gray Blount Papers  
Petitions in Legislative Records, LP 95  
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- 2/ U. S. Coast Guard. Historically Famous Lighthouses. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1950.
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- 5/ \_\_\_\_\_ . Compilation of Public Documents and Extracts from Reports and Papers Relating to Lighthouses, Light-Vessels, and Illuminating Apparatus, and to Beacons, Buoys, and Fog Signals, 1789-1871. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1871.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ . List of Beacons, Buoys, and Daymarks in the Fifth Lighthouse District, 1900. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900.
- 7/ \_\_\_\_\_ . Light List, 1866. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866.
- 8/ U. S. Post Office Department. List of Post Offices in the United States and Canada. Washington: William H. Boyd, 1873.
- 9/ U. S. Coast Guard. Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers and Cadets, and Ships and Stations of the United States Coast Guard, July 1, 1938. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938.
- 11/ National Archives and Record Service. Guide to the Records in the National Archives. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1948.
- 16/ Heyl, Lewis (comp.). Statutes of the United States Relating to Revenue, Commerce, Navigation, and the Currency. Boston, 1868.
- 8/ Grimes, J. Bryan. Abstract of North Carolina Wills. Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell & Co., 1910.
- 14/ Olds, Fred A. Abstract of North Carolina Wills. 1760-1800. Oxford, N.C.: Privately printed and bound by the "Orphan's Friend," 1925.

*Typist: 1/2 type in # order*



## GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

Bearss, Edwin C. Rescue Operations from the Chicamacomico Station, 1871-1954. Washington: National Park Service, 1965.

F.  
Holland, Ross, Jr. Cape Hatteras Light Station, North Carolina. Washington: National Park Service, 1968.

\_\_\_\_\_. A History of the Bodie Island Light Station. Washington: National Park Service, 1967.

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Trustees of the British Museum. British Museum Catalog of Maps, Plans, and Charts. London: British Museum, 1888.

## PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

~~Dan Davis, Superintendent, Cape Lookout National Seashore, Beaufort, N. C., ~~EXXESXXX~~ August 31, 1970.~~

~~David Fletcher, Ranger, National Park Service, Ocracoke, N. C., August 29, 1970.~~

- caretaker, Portsmouth Island,
- 1) - Captain Justin Austin, Ocracoke, N. C.
- 2) - Mr. and Mrs. George Wilkes, Ocracoke, N. C.  
66 years old;
- 3) - Miss Elma Dixon, Portsmouth, N.C.  
72 years old,
- 4) - Mr. Henry Pigott, Portsmouth, N.C.
- 5) - Miss Alma Tilghman, Register of Deeds, Beaufort, N.C.
- 6) - Mrs. Sharon Piner, Assistant Register of Deeds, Beaufort, N.C.
- 7) - Miss Charlene Taylor, Secretary to Register of Deeds, Beaufort, N.C.
- 8) - Mr. Elbert Davis, Tax Supervisor, Carteret County, Beaufort, N.C.
- 9) - Mr. Sterling Hancock, Assistant Tax Supervisor, Carteret County, Beaufort, N.C.
- 10) - Mr. A. H. James, Clerk of Superior Court, Carteret County, Beaufort, N.C.
- 11) - Mrs. Wm. H. Styron, age 74, born Ada Roberts at Portsmouth, 2509 South Adams Street, Arlington, Va.
- 12) - Hon. John T. Icenhour, Assistant Attorney General, Raleigh, N.C.
- 13) - Mr. Robert Newcomb, engineer, Raleigh, N.C.
- 14) - Captain J. D. Willis, Morehead City, N.C.

*Typical  
11/2 tape  
as of 8/2*



NEWSPAPERS

N. C.

Durham Morning Herald, October 12, 1947

Greensboro Daily News, N.C., September 22, 1946.

Raleigh News and Observer, N.C., July 3 and 11, 1946.

Carteret County News-Times, N.C.

