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Introduction

"When Nature came to design the topography of eastern North Carolina," wrote North Carolina historian Charles Christopher Crittenden in 1936, "she almost persuaded herself to create a great maritime center."[1] The interplay between water and land in Currituck is key to understanding the history and evolution of the county. Although one of the oldest in the state of North Carolina, the county has also been one of the most overlooked. Piecing together the history of the county is difficult. Many of the records pertaining to the early history of Currituck have been lost or destroyed. A courthouse fire in 1842, for example, destroyed a substantial body of records, including marriage records. As a consequence, much of the county's past lives on as oral history; written accounts tend to be either personal reminiscences or a recounting of events that have been passed orally through the different generations of a family. The history of the county remains to be written.

A Geographical Overview of the County

The most northeasterly of the one hundred North Carolina counties, Currituck is a peninsula: the land is long and narrow, low and even. The county consists of a mainland

[1] Charles Christoper Crittenden, *The Commerce of North Carolina 1763-1789.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, p. 8.

portion and an offshore strand. This survey was confined to the mainland area and the islands in Currituck Sound, sometimes referred to as the Tidewater; the area of the county known as the Outer Banks was surveyed separately in 2002.

Running north and south through the county is a central elevation; from that point two creeks and roads extend to the east and west. The area is bounded by the North River to the west, Albemarle Sound to the south, and Currituck Sound to the east. Beyond the eastern shore, known as Currituck Bank, is the Atlantic Ocean. With the exception of sand dunes on the beaches, no point in the county rises higher than 25 feet above sea level. On both shores and to the northwest, however, the county merges with the Great Dismal Swamp, a marshy area that includes some deep forest.[2] Currituck Sound has but a limited watershed in North Carolina. Much of its water comes from Virginia, by way of the Northwest River, the North Landing River, and the various tributaries of the Back Bay. All three of these flow into the Sound near the state line.

Groundwater is the principle source of the county's water supply. Old bedrock formations dating from the Cretaceous Age lie underneath the coastal plain. Over these old formations are deposits of sand and clay that vary in thickness from ten to forty feet. The soil content varies throughout the county, though in general the soil tends to be poorly drained and composed of loamy sand. Despite the drainage problems, the land is suited for cultivation of such crops as potatoes, corn, and soybeans. The area also contains woodlands with native

[2] Bill Sharpe, "26 Counties," in *A New Geography of North Carolina*, Volume 3, Sharpe Publishing Company, Raleigh, NC, 1966.

trees such as loblolly pine, sweetgum, red maples, yellow poplars, willow and water oaks, black cherry, and American beeches.[3]

A focal point of the county history is the Currituck Sound, a protected inlet of the Atlantic Ocean. Separated from the Atlantic by Bodie Island considered to be part of Dare County, the portions of the Outer Banks in Currituck County and northern Dare County, Currituck Sound spans thirty miles from north to the south and extends three to eight miles wide. To the northeast, the Sound joins Back Bay in Virginia Beach, Virginia; a fork to the northwest leads to the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal, part of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. To the south, Currituck Sound joins Albemarle Sound. The North Landing River, the Northwest River, and Back Bay feed Currituck Sound.

In its early beginnings, Currituck Sound was a saltwater body; a series of inlets connected the Sound to the ocean. Since the early settlement of the county, six inlets have opened and closed on Currituck Sound. Two of the most important for Currituck history are the Old Currituck Inlet, located on the North Carolina-Virginia border, which dates from before 1687 to the 1730s. This inlet was vital to early trading vessels during the colonial period. The New Currituck Inlet, which opened during a 1713 storm, was located several miles south of the Old Currituck Inlet. This waterway was shortlived, existing from the 1730s until 1828, when it was closed by natural sedimentation. Musketo Inlet, near the town of Corolla closed by 1830. Caffey's Inlet which opened between 1790 and 1798 near the Currituck-Dare County line was

[3] United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Washington D.C: United States Department of Agriculture, 1982, p. 21.

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the last inlet into the Sound. An important development occurred with its closing sometime during the early nineteenth century: the sound's waters freshened.[4]

Given the close proximity of the mainland to the Atlantic Ocean, in addition to other bodies of water, Currituck County enjoys a maritime climate. Summers are hot and humid, though the coast does receive cool sea breezes. Winter is cool with some cold periods and snowfall is rare. Rain falls throughout the year and can be fairly heavy. In recent years, though, the county has been suffering from drought. The area also has a long history of storm activity consisting of two different types: tropical storms or hurricanes and extratropical storms, more commonly known as nor'easters. In 1713, a terrible storm opened a new inlet five miles south of the old; another inlet carved out by the storm marks the beginning of the North Carolina-Virginia boundary along the Atlantic coast. Hurricanes in the early 1730s and in 1828 closed two of the area's most important inlets, the Old Currituck Inlet and the New Inlet, which served as passageways between the ocean and the Sound. With the closing of the New Inlet, Currituck became landlocked and the waters turned from salt to brackish.[5]

The principal highway, NC168, marks the firmest land in the county, and serves as the major north-south corridor from the Virginia state line to the intersection of US 158 at Barco. From this point, NC 168 joins US 158 and continues south to the Outer Banks into Dare

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[4] Keith N. Meverden, "Currituck Sound Regional Remote Sensing Survey, Currituck County, North Carolina," Unpublished master's thesis, East Carolina University, 2005, p. 25, Orrin H. Pilkey, *The North Carolina Shore and Its Barrier Island: Restless Ribbons of Sand,* Durham, NC:; Duke University Press, 1998, pp. 139-140.

[5] Currituck Historical Society, *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society*, Currituck N.C.: Currituck County Historical Society, 1973, pp. 6-7.

County via the four-lane divided span Wright Memorial Bridge. US 158 is the major east-west intrastate corridor from the Outer Banks to the interior of North Carolina. NC 34 also links NC 168 at Sligo to US 158 in Camden. The Intracoastal Waterway, a toll-free route, is 3,000 miles

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(4,827 km) long, partly natural, partly man-made, providing sheltered passage for commercial and leisure boats along the Atlantic coast from Boston, Massachusetts to Key West, Florida., and along the Gulf Coast from Apalachee Bay, Florida. to Brownsville, Texas. The Albemarle portion of the waterway in Currituck is among the busiest canals along the Atlantic route. There are no incorporated towns in Currituck County; instead there are four townships: Poplar Branch, Crawford, Fruitville, and Moyock, each with a number of small communities. Currituck County is not a large area. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the county occupies approximately 443.63 square miles; of that total area, approximately 262 square miles is land, while 264 square miles, or 50.21 percent, is water. The 2000 census also states that the county has a population of approximately 18,190 persons, with the northern end of the county the most heavily populated.

Native American Occupation and Early Settlement

It is believed that the first peoples arrived in North America between 28,000 and 20,000 years ago. Descended from the Asian hunters who had crossed from Siberia over the Bering Land Bridge into Alaska, these peoples began to settle in what is now North Carolina between 9,000 and 8,500 B.C. When the first permanent English settlers arrived in North Carolina during the sixteenth century, almost thirty different Indian tribes already lived in the region.

At the time of the first contact between Europeans and Indians, the Algonquian tribes occupied the tidewater areas of the Atlantic Coast, extending from Canada as far south as the

Neuse River in North Carolina. In 1584, the estimated 7,000 Algonquians living in North Carolina were relative newcomers to the southeast, having come in a series of migrations. To some extent, they retained cultural elements from their Northeastern Algonquian traditions, but

there was also a great deal of cultural borrowing from their southern neighbors as they adapted to geographical and climatic conditions to become more oriented to the water and to place greater emphasis on hunting, fishing, and gathering.[6]

Currituck became home to members of the Algonquian nation; among the most prominent was the Weopemeoc, which included the Yeopin and Poteskeet tribes. Archaeological remains uncovered in the area of Poplar Branch in1972 have fleshed out the story of the county's first residents. Like the majority of other Algonquin Indians, the three groups were mainly sedentary and agricultural. Their bounty appears to have been limitless, as they grew such crops as corn, squash, beans, and tobacco. Their environment provided them with everything they needed. In the abundant woodlands they hunted various wild animals for food and clothing as well as acquiring timber to build boats and shelters. The surrounding waters offered up various fish and fowl.

Canoes used for fishing were of two kinds: one made of birch bark, which was very light and maneuverable, but liable to capsize; the other made from the trunk of a large tree, which was heavier but also more stable. Clothing was made chiefly of animal skins, tanned until soft and pliable, and was sometimes ornamented with paint and beads made from shells. Occasionally the Wepemeoc bedecked themselves with mantles made of feathers overlapping each other as on the back of the fowl. Their houses, known as *wetu,* were small, usually 8 to10

[6] Herbert S. Paschal, "The Tragedy of the North Carolina Indians," in Lindsey S. Butler and Alan D. Watson, *The North Carolina Experience: An Interpretative & Documentary History,* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984, p. 4.

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feet tall and constructed of wooden frames, covered with woven mats and sheets of birch bark. The frame was variously shaped like a dome, a cone, or a rectangle with an arched roof. Once the birch bark is in place, ropes or strips of wood were wrapped around the dwelling to attach it and hold if fast.

The Weopemeocs' first contact with whites came between 1584 and 1589 when Sir Walter Raleigh and a group of English colonists came to the territory north of Albemarle Island, North Carolina, an area that includes most of Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, and Perquimans counties. At the time, the tribe numbered between 700 and 800 led by their chief Okisco. Like the other Algonquin groups in the area, the Weopemeocs did not build long-term alliances with each other; what alliances existed between tribes were generally temporary and without real cohesion. By 1700, their numbers had dwindled to only 200, and by mid-century had decreased to almost nothing.

In 1660 Kiscutanewh, King of the Weopemeoc, granted a tract of land to Nathaniel Batts and in 1662, another tract to George Durant, the first deeds for land in North Carolina. But relations between the two groups disintegrated; by 1697 the Weopemeoc complained to the colonial government about the increasing number of white settlers coming into the territory. In 1704 the Executive Council created a reservation of 10,240 acres on the North River for the tribe; the land transfer was among the largest ever carried out during the proprietary period. The Council also promised to the tribe exclusive hunting and fishing rights. In return, the Weopemeoc were to give to the Council one-half of any gold and silver they found and pay a quitrent of one ear of corn per year. In 1723 the Indians sold 640 acres of their holdings and in 1739 sought and received permission to sell any land as they may wish.

The history of the Poteskeet tribe is even more elusive than that of the Weopemeoc. The Poteskeet hunted and fished, but their location is difficult to pinpoint. The Edward Mosely map of 1733 places two Poteskeet villages in the lower southern and western portions of the county.

The earliest record of European exploration of the region dates from 1524 with the arrival of a group of Portuguese and Florentine adventurers led by Giovanni da Verrazzano. The group landed near Cape Fear on March 21, 1524. Verrazzano's account provides the first descriptions of North Carolina; though Verrazzano's travels never led him to Currituck, his descriptions of a land filled with many trees, an abundance of wildlife, and fresh water could have easily described the area.[7] In 1566, a group of Spanish missionaries, hoping to establish a church in the Chesapeake Bay area, sailed into Currituck Sound, when rough weather forced their boat off course. A member of the group erected a wooden cross on shore. Despite declaring that the area held little value, the expedition leader, Domingo Fernandez, still claimed it for the King of Spain, Phillip II.[8]

Not to be outdone, the English began sending expeditions to the New World. Between 1584 and 1587, the English attempted to settle portions of the North Carolina coast, including the first English settlement at Roanoke Island. The Roanoke colony ultimately failed; however, the English had established a presence and would soon control the lands north of Florida, in effect pushing the Spanish out of the entire Atlantic seaboard. With the successful establishment of the Jamestown settlement in the Virginia colony, an increasing number of English settlers came to the New World. By 1650, Virginia officials were granting settlers land in the Albemarle region. It was during this period that first mention of Currituck County

[7] Meverden, p. 1.
[8] William Stevens Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries,* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989, pp. 32-33.

appears. A letter dated May 8, 1654, from Fr. Yardley to a John Farrar, identified the area as "Carotoke."[9]

On March 24, 1663, Charles II of England granted to eight of his friends and councilors the province of Carolina that included all of the land between the 31st and 36th degrees north latitude. Through one of the Proprietors, Sir William Berkeley, who was also governor of Virginia, grants were issued in April, 1663, for land situated in the region of Albemarle Sound. The Carolina venture almost stalled two months later when, in June1663, the Duke of Norfolk laid claim to Carolina, based on an earlier land grant. By August 12, 1663, however, the King and council declared the duke's claim null and void because no settlement had been established.[10]

Free to pursue their charter, the Proprietors sent a letter to Governor Berkeley, authorizing him to appoint a governor and six councilors for the newly-designated province. The governor would serve a term of at least three years; his pay would come from a three-year monopoly of the Indian fur trade. Berkeley was also instructed to grant ten-acre tracts to Carolina settlers, to set aside 20,000 acres for the Proprietors themselves, to charge a quitrent of one-half penny an acre, payment of which could be delayed for between three and five years, and to recognize land titles purchased from the Indians.[11] Instead, Berkeley signed a group of grants conveying land in the Albemarle River area based on a fifty-acre headright,

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[9] General John Elliott Wood, "Report on the Committee of Historic Sites," in *The Journal of Currituck Couny Historical Society*, Vol.1, No. 2, January 2, 1957, p. 39.
[10] "Lindsey Butler, The Governorship of Albemarle County, 1663 - 1689," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 46 (1969): 281 - 299.
[11] William L. Saunders (ed.), *The Colonial Records of North Carolina* (Raleigh: State of North Carolina, 10 volumes, 1886-1890), I, pp. 48-52.

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following the practice adhered to in Virginia rather than that prescribed by the Proprietors. William Drummond was named the first governor of Albemarle County in October 1664.

The following year, the first constitution for the County of Albemarle was completed. The new county government would be headed by an appointed governor, in addition to six to twelve councilors, a secretary, and a surveyor. A legislature of twelve representatives would be chosen by the freeholders to work with the governor and council. The county was divided into subdistricts, or precincts, with elected deputies. elected by the freeholders from each area[12]

One of the earliest problems that the new government had to deal with was determining the location of the boundary with Virginia. After discovering that the Albemarle County settlement was north of 36º north latitude, the Lords Proprietors requested and received a second charter on June 30, 1665. The boundary of Carolina was extended to 36º 30´ north latitude, which is approximately the present boundary. Virginia continued to claim the settlement at the head of Currituck Sound, so George Durant, an important Albemarle planter, was sent to Currituck in 1665 to survey the boundary line. Later Durant and John Willoughby journeyed to England as agents of the colony to have the boundary clarified. At about the same time as Albemarle and Virginia were wrestling over boundaries, the Albemarle County government divided the area into four precincts: Chowan, Pasquotank, Perquimans, and Currituck, making the latter one of the first and oldest counties in North Carolina.[13] In 1677, the first known representative to the Provincial Assembly from the county was William Sears,

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[12] Butler.
[13] Meverden, p. 2-3.

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another member of the assembly was Thomas Jarvis, who later became Deputy Governor of an area that "lyeth north and east of Cape Feare."[14]

In 1689, the county became the center of the North Carolina colony's first revolutions. Charged with bribery and the false imprisonment of his political enemies, Governor Seth Sothel was removed from office and imprisoned. Sothel was later banished from the area; the Proprietors then appointed Philip Ludwell as the new governor. When Ludwell arrived in Albemarle the following spring, however, he found that the colony was governed by a Captain John Gibbs, a relative of the Duke of Albemarle and large property owner with land in both the North Carolina and Virginia colonies. In 1682, the Proprietors of North Carolina gave Gibbs the title of *cacique,* a Spanish term for "leader" or "king." By assuming the governor's office, Gibbs was merely asserting what was for him a legal right to the position.

Gibbs publicly reviled Ludwell, calling him a "rascal, imposter and usurper. Let him call upon me with his sword and I will goe (sic) with him into every part of the King's Dominions and there fight him as long as my eyelids shall wagg."[15] To emphasize his position, Gibbs went to the Pasquotank Precinct where he broke up the court and took two magistrates to his home. In addition, Gibbs posted armed men at Ludwell's home. Samuel Jarvis of Currituck advised the two men to take their complaint to the Crown. In the end, Gibbs was removed and Ludwell installed as governor, though it is believed that Gibbs oversaw at least one session of the assembly.

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[14] S. Curtis Grey, "Notes," *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society,* Vol.1, No.1, p.6.
[15] Jesse F. Pugh speech, reprinted in *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society,* Vol.1, No.1, p.32.

In addition to Sears and Jarvis, a number of other Currituck residents became active in colonial affairs. Thomas Snoden was elected Speaker of the Assembly in 1711 and also held the offices of clerk of the court and attorney general of the Province of North Carolina. William Bray was a member of the Assembly in 1711 and also served as Deputy Marshall; his duties included monitoring border activity between Virginia and North Carolina. As tensions grew over the boundary, Bray was charged with arresting any Virginian caught trespassing in Carolina.[16] The border was a continual source of anxiety for the proprietors, given the large number of colonists traveling back and forth, and with land claims becoming a confusing mix. In the early 1700s, explorer John Lawson began surveying a boundary between Carolina and Virginia but was unable to complete the task. The border continued to pose problems until Virginian William Byrd surveyed the line in 1728. Colonial records show that land in Currituck County was acquired in a variety of ways: through land grants from Virginia and North Carolina proprietors, through head-rights that allowed fifty-acres per person who paid passage from England to Virginia, and through purchase from Indians. Squatters were present as well.

Some of the first to settle in Currituck came as early as 1650 from Virginia, establishing themselves on Knott's Island. Many of the earliest residents of the country settled in the "hammocks," which were hilly wooded areas that faced the Sound. By 1665, Peter Carteret and four partners had acquired a land grant in the southern part of the county in the area known today as Powells Point. They cleared between sixty and seventy acres for farming and the

[16] "Currituck County 1670-1970 Abstracts from Historical Notes," in Bates, Jo Anna Heath, ed, with the Albemarle Genealogical Society, Incs and The Currituck County Historical Society, Inc. *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985, p. 108.

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construction of a dwelling, quarter house, and hog house, none of which have survived.[17] In 1672, the town of Currituck was established. Known as the "port of Currituck," the town became a customs district for imported and exported goods. Throughout the proprietary period, Currituck was under the administrative control of the Port of Beaufort. By 1729, though, the site was recognized as the Port of Currituck. In the western part of the county, in the area known today as Shawboro, early settlers created the settlement known as Indian Town. Near the Virginia boundary, the small settlement of Moyock came into being; further south, beyond Currituck port, along what is now the Intercoastal Waterway, was the small settlement of Coinjock. The majority of landowners resided in the county instead of acting as absentee landlords. Another group of settlers arrived as a result of the burgeoning maritime trade. Many shipwrecked sailors eventually settled along the coast; in more than one case, lumber from wrecked ships provided the material with which to build a house. Those involved in shipping also made their homes along the Sound. In time, colonial customs inspectors came to live in Currituck.[18]

Because accurate histories of many of the county communities are lost or do not exist, early colonial maps help pinpoint the emergence of settlements throughout the county. The 1671 Ogilby Map clearly identifies Powells Point, located in the far southern end of the county. During the first two decades of the eighteenth century, a number of individuals settled in the county in areas that now bear their family name. Benjamin Tull, the descendant of French Hugenots, served as vestryman for "Carahtuck" parish. Tull's Creek, located along the eastern edge of the county, bordering Currituck Sound, was named for Tull's family. William Bell,

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[17] Pugh, p. 32.
[18] David Stick, *Graveyard of the Atlantic: Shipwrecks of the North Carolina Coast,* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989, pp. 3-4.

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whose family settled on Bell's Island, was a prosperous merchant who became treasurer of Currituck in 1714. Richard Church, a justice of the precinct court and a representative to the House of Commons, settled on the island that now bears his name.[19] In the southern region of the county, members of the Newbern family were believed to have first settled at Newbern Landing, in the area around Powells Point.

After 1712, North Carolina became a separate province with its own governor. The province, however, was proving to be unprofitable for the proprietors. Less accessible and wilder in geography than neighboring Virginia, the North Carolina country grew slowly. A description of the colony seems to fit particularly the development of Currituck:

> Of all the thirteen colonies, North Carolina was the least commercial, the most provincial, the farthest removed from European influences, and its wild forest life the most unrestrained. Every colony had its frontier, its borderland between civilization and savagery; but North Carolina was composed entirely of frontier. The people were impatient of legal restraints and averse to paying taxes; but their moral and religious standard was not below that of other colonies. Their freedom was the freedom of the Indian, or of the wild animal, not that of the criminal and the outlaw. Here truly was life in the primeval forest, at the core of Nature's heart. There were no cities, scarcely villages. The people were farmers or woodmen; they lived apart, scattered through the wilderness; their highways were the rivers and bays, and their homes were connected by

[19] "Currituck County 1670-1970 Abstracts from Historical Notes," p. 108.

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narrow trails winding among the trees. Yet the people were happy in their freedom and contented with their lonely isolation. [20]

Certainly one of the first to suggest that the North Carolina colony lagged in manners and gentility was the wealthy landowner William Byrd of Virginia, who undertook a surveying expedition to settle a boundary dispute between Virginia and North Carolina in the spring and summer of 1728.[21] His travels took him from the border of Currituck Inlet to a point 241 miles to the west. In his *History of the Dividing Line*, Byrd writes of his first impressions of the Currituck area:

> Farther Still to the Southward of us, we discovered two Smaller Islands, that go by the names of Bell's and Churche's Isles [sic]. We also saw a small New England Sloop riding in the Sound, a little of the South of our Course. She had come in at the New-Inlet, as all other vessels have done since the opening of it. This Navigation is a little difficult, and fit only for Vessels that draw no more than ten feet Water.[22]

[20] Henry William Elson, *History of the United States of America*, New York: MacMillan Company, 1904. p. 88.
[21] Byrd and other surveyors defined the line from the coast as far westward as modern Stokes County, about 240 miles. The survey of the boundary between the two colonies was completed in 1749. Still, the border was often in dispute and as late as 1887, the two states sponsored another joint boundary survey.

[22] William Byrd, *History of the Dividing Line*,

Despite Byrd's misgivings about North Carolinians, civilization slowly took root. Absentee landowners were rare in the county. And although land was given away by the proprietors and royal governors, private land trades in Currituck were thriving, as was the passing on of land in families through wills or deeds.[23] In addition, during the first two decades of the eighteenth century, Currituck Precinct was losing land; in 1729, the southern portion of the area was given to the creation of Tyrrell County.

The early settlers widened and improved the Indian trails into bridle trails and then dirt roads. When it became necessary to transport goods farther inland, local laws were passed directing that a road be built to the nearest landing. By this piecemeal process, the state slowly acquired a system of dirt roads. The 1733 Edward Mosely Map illustrates a "Road From Elizabeth River," which ran to the east of the Dismal Swamp and crossed Moyock Creek. The road jogged again to the east-southeast where the properties of William Tulle[sic], W. Swann and M. Dukes in the Tulls Creek area were located. The road continued west of Currituck Courthouse, marked by a small building on the map. The road then turned to the southwest and passed northwest of Indiantown to Sawyer's Ferry over the Pasquotank River. The land holdings of the Sanderson family, which were located to the south of the courthouse and the Williamson family in the area of Powells Point, are also noted on the map.

[23] In part, these activities are difficult to trace because of the lack of records, many of which were lost or burned in a fire that destroyed the county courthouse in 1803 and again in 1842.

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By 1760, two other roads were in existence; one branched to the southwest of Moyock Creek to the present site of South Mills in Camden County, and was believed to have crossed the swamp. The other road branched south from Tulls Creek, joining the earlier c.1733 road at the crossing of the North River; the current Ridge Road is thought to be along the general trace of this thoroughfare. By the time of the Revolutionary War, the old road to the Elizabeth River had become a secondary route with one stem leading to Indiantown and the other pushing to the south down the peninsula, following what is now the main highway 168.[24]

Waterways, however, were the main "roadways" in Currituck County. As one observer noted: "Farmers, along the sounds and rivers, own boats, as, in other places, they own horses, and a man must be poor, indeed, who has not even a 'cooner'—canoe dug from a solid log—in which he can carry his produce to market."[25] Almost all products moved on rivers and streams within the state, and most manufactured goods arrived by sea. Because the inlets in Currituck were shallow, the early residents depended on small crafts to navigate from place to place. Small, flat bottomed boats known as "kunners" built of split cypress logs that had been hollowed out and joined with timber planks easily handled the shallow waters of the sound. For a more rapid form of water transportation, a sail was attached to the kunner. Another common sight on the sound was the Periauger, built from wood planks or hollowed out logs. These vessels were considered to be excellent workboats; not only were they larger than the kunners,

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[24] John Elliott Wood, "Report of the Historic Sites Committee," 2 January 1957, Currituck County Historical Society. *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society,* Vol. 1, No. 2, 1974, pp.39-40. See also 1733 Edward Mosely Map, 1770 partial map by John Collett, and 1775 partial map by Henry Mouzon, Jr.

[25] David, Cecelski, *The Waterman's Song: Slavery And Freedom In Maritime North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, p. 75.

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but they could also handle the shallow waters of the sound as well as the open water of the ocean. In addition to the sound, one of the principal waterways in the mainland county during this period was Tulls Creek. [26]

North Carolina became a royal colony in 1729 when King George II purchased the land from the proprietors. Over the next several decades, the colony experienced its first real period of marked progress evidenced by a stable government, steady population growth, and improvements in transportation and agriculture. Settlements expanded, and many new counties and towns were established. By the mid-eighteenth century, Currituck was appointed one of five ports of entry in North Carolina with its own customs house located between the village of Currituck and Bells Island. It would become clear, however, that the port could not compete with larger and more accessible ports such as Norfolk, Virginia, a consequence that would dramatically impact the development of Currituck and that of the county. One historian described the port as "of little consequence, for the few vessels which put in there were small, and the cargoes inconsiderable."[27] Whenever one came to the port to unload goods, the port master would simply be there to greet the vessel.

The principal exports of Port Currituck, like those of the other North Carolina ports during the colonial period, consisted overwhelmingly of naval stores, including tar, pitch and turpentine, sawn lumber, shingles, staves, and provisions, especially corn. Vessels entering the

[26] Penne Smith Sandbeck, "Historic Architecture Survey of the Outer Banks. Essay for Multiple Property Documentation Form: Currituck Banks, North Banks, and Roanoke Island," NC Historic Architecture Survey, December 2002, p. 23-24.
[27] Charles Christopher Crittenden, *The Commerce of North Carolina 1763-1789*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, p. 42

port came primarily from the northern colonies, the West Indies, and, to a lesser extent, directly from the British Isles. Many vessels trading with North Carolina were involved in a triangular pattern of commerce, sailing from a northern port to North Carolina, thence to the West Indies, and from there back again to their place of origin. Imports from Great Britain consisted mainly of manufactured goods, including large quantities of cloth. Also imported from Great Britain in considerable quantities were wide varieties of hardware items, household goods, and similar articles, ranging from scythes and saddles to looking glasses and playing cards. Imports from the West Indies were mainly rum, molasses, brown sugar, and salt, the last commodity coming almost entirely from Turks Island. Other goods from the West Indies included coffee, cocoa, citrus fruits, cotton, and pimento. Coming from other North American colonies were a wide variety of miscellaneous goods and foodstuffs, including large quantities of New England rum, molasses, sugar, and salt. A large portion of the goods brought to North Carolina from the northern colonies had first been obtained from the West Indies or Great Britain.[28]

One of the area's most prosperous industries was the McKnight Shipyard, in present-day Shawboro. A Scottish immigrant, McKnight had become a wealthy merchant with business interests in Norfolk, Virginia and extensive land holdings in Currituck and Pasquotank Counties. He described his shipyard, located near Indiantown Creek on the north side of the North River, as the "most commodious, and . . . best shipyard in the province" with "large warfs and convenient warehouses." Almost no documentation has survived detailing McKnight's operations. He did, however, offer a description of one of his ships: "From this yard I have launched a ship (one hundred feet long) into fourteen feet of water, upon sliding

[28] Ibid., p. 158-162.

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boards not more than thirty in length, the whole run did not exceed twenty-five feet; and from the top of the keel blocks to the surface of the water was a fall of little more than two feet."[29] McKnight made his home at "Belville," his 8,000-acre estate in Indiantown. The property included orchards, a ten-acre garden, and house, none of which have survived.[30]

Agricultural activity in Currituck County tended to be conducted only a little above the subsistence level, with farmers raising only what they needed to feed themselves, their families, and their livestock. It is possible that some of the early settlers attempted to cultivate exotic fruits, plants, or herbs that early promotional publications for the colonies claimed could be grown. With those failed efforts in mind, colonial farmers in Currituck turned their efforts to reliable crops introduced to them by the Native Americans such as corn, beans, squash, peas, and later wheat. Farmers also learned a valuable lesson from Native American groups about farming: instead of just breaking the ground and sowing seed as English farmers did, they learned to sow their seeds in careful rows or hills, maintain a vigilant watch over weeds, and tend their crops earnestly. Livestock was important to the livelihood of local farmers, too. Cattle, hogs, goats, chickens, sheep, ducks, and geese were common sights on many farms.

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[29] "Currituck County 1670-1970 Abstracts from Historical Notes," p. 109, Barbara B. Snowden, "Thomas McKnight, Local Tory, Caught "Betwix and Between," unpublished paper, December 14, 1982, John D. Neville, "Thomas McKnight," in William S. Powell, ed., Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, IV, 165, Charles Christopher Crittenden, "Ships and Shipping in North Carolina, 1763-1789," North Carolina Historical Review (January 1931): 1-13, Robert O. DeMond, The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc, 1979, p. 68.

[30] Barbara Snowden, "Thomas MacKnight, Local Tory," in Bates, Jo Anna Heath, ed, with the Albemarle Genealogical Society, Incs and the Currituck County Historical Society, Inc. *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985.
p. 101-102.

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Hog raising was particularly successful. Only in rare cases was livestock fenced in; in general the animals were allowed to roam. Farmers also planted cotton, though it did not become the main cash crop as in other areas of the state, and black leaf tobacco.[31]

Land was often quickly worn out; cultivating crops at this time demanded an almost constant supply of virgin soil. Land freshly cleared of trees was planted in tobacco for three years and then in corn, leaving the soil exhausted in a very short time. According to the historian Guion Griffis Johnson, in her book *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History*, the land in the area, including Currituck County, wore out in about eight years; less fertile areas were no longer usable after three.[32] In the ongoing quest for more land, forests were then cleared and the unprofitable acres left to revert to nature.

Based on family records, the life of Thomas Cox offers one of the clearest pictures of life for a county resident. The son of a prosperous London merchant, Cox immigrated to the colonies in 1682. Around 1695, Cox moved his family to Currituck Precinct, where Thomas, his family, a friend, and eight free blacks purchased as head rights 640 acres on the south side of Moyock, Creek in the northern end of the county. He built a house for his family and for almost five decades farmed, raising corn, vegetables, and hogs on his property, "Wolfpit Ridge." He traded with the Indians and was in part responsible for preventing hostilities against the tribes. According to colonial records, Cox was doing well; the 1714 Tax List records Cox's property as valued at £15 or roughly $3600 today, a considerable sum by the day's standards.

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[31] William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,1989, p. 132.
[32] Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1937, p.6.

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At the time of his death in 1743, Cox's personal property included land, livestock that was divided among his children, a house, a gun, and "one Large Puter [pewter] Dish," left to his daughter Mary.[33]

Other signs of civilization were appearing in the county. In 1723, the county authorized the construction of a courthouse, to be built by a Robert Peyton. Peyton, however, failed to comply with the building specifications. After local magistrates sued him for damages, Peyton's building was replaced. In 1768, the colonial assembly authorized funds for the county to "build a prison pillory and stocks in the said county on the lot where the court house stands."[34] Little is known about these two buildings or what they looked like; on May 31, 1803, the *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser* reported that "the court-house, jail, and clerk's office in that county, with all the books and papers, were totally destroyed by a fire on Wednesday morning last."[35]

A Growing Community 1770-1820

By 1775, areas of Currituck County had been settled for almost a century. A 1770 partial map by John Collett shows an area dotted with the names of small farmers and large landowners: Bray, Jones, Poiner [sic], Shergold, and Williams as well as the Currituck Courthouse. A c.1790 map contains even more names: Bray, Buckin [sic], Bunnill, Cave,

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[33] Norma R. Romm, "The Cox Family," in Bates, Jo Anna Heath, ed, with the Albemarle Genealogical Society, Incs and the Currituck County Historical Society, Inc. *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985, pp. 183-184, William Cox, Jr., "My Cox Ancesters in Currituck," in Murray, Jeanne Meekins, ed. *Histories of Currituck County, North Carolina Families*, Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 2005, pp. 56-58, Currituck County 1714 Land Tax Records, Will of Thomas Cox, July 5, 1743, located at: http://www.ncgenweb.us/currituck/wills/coxthomas1743.html

[34] *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol.7*, p. 623-624.

[35] *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily* Advertiser, May 31, 1803, 3:1.

Cooper, Chittum, Davis, Dosier, Duke, Fanshaw, Glasgow, Jones, Lurry, Perkins, Phillips, Poiner, Robison, Talor [sic], and Williams. Small settlements at Narrow Shores, (the site of present-day Aydlett), Moyock in the far northern end of the county, Gibb's Point, Indiantown, and Sligo, situated between Currituck and Moyock, were established, but the area still lacked a significant commercial center. Even the port of Currituck had dwindled in size and profitability, becoming the smallest and least significant port of entry for the North Carolina colony.

In part the decline was due to factors beyond local control: continual marauding by pirates along the Outer Banks until 1725 and the passage of the Navigation Acts in 1661 and 1663, which mandated that all colonial produce was required to be exported in English vessels and that the colonies were prohibited from receiving goods carried in foreign vessels. These developments helped cripple any chance of economic growth and importance for the port of Currituck. The geography of the Sound also plagued the county. In a report to the Board of Trade of Great Britain in March, 1764, Arthur Dobbs complained of the shallow waters, stating "The second defect of this Province is the defenceless state of the Sea Coast, and the want of a sufficient depth of water for large Ships to carry away lumber and naval stores from the Northern parts of this Colony . . . . Currituck having only six feet water at high water."[36] The shallow waters were the result of a changing landscape. With the closing of old Currituck Inlet in 1726, the General Assembly appropriated monies to mark the entrance of the New Currituck

[36] Arthur Dobbs, "Letter from Arthur Dobbs to the Board of Trade of Great Britain,"March 29, 1764 *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, Volume 6, Pages 1027.

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Inlet. The new inlet began silting badly, however, even though efforts were made to improve the situation in 1761. The shallows remained a challenge for ships.[37] Yet, ship traffic continued; in 1786, the Currituck Custom House reported visits by 194 schooners, 43 sloops, and 5 brigs.

To address Dobbs's other concern—lack of protection for the county and the colony--a number of local militias were organized; the earliest recorded muster is for Captain William Bray's company in 1748. According to law, the county militia was required to hold four company musters and one regimental muster to complete five days of training every year.

With the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, several local militiamen fought for Continental forces. The mainland portion of the county experienced little conflict, other than local residents keeping watch to make sure British troops did not come ashore to steal provisions or livestock. A hindrance to trade, Currituck's shallow waters now afforded protection against invasion. In a letter dated November 5, 1780, however, Colonel John Christian Senf wrote to General Thomas Benbury about possible British activity in the county and hinted at local reluctance to serve the revolutionary cause. "Yesterday I was at the County of Currituck & Indian Town, which is 28 miles from here. I have ordered the Militia of Currituck and__[torn out]___of Camden to make a stand at Tulley's [sic] Creek, but I don't know if they can muster 40 Men with arms, and the Inhabitants are much discontented by reconnoitering the County."[38]

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[37] John B. Flowers and Ruth Little-Stokes, "Currituck County Jail National Register Nomination," November, 1979.
[38] John Christian Senf, "Letter from John Christian Senf to Thomas Benbury, November 05, 1780, *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, Volume 15, Pages 144 – 145.

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Indeed, not all Currituck residents supported American independence. Shipyard owner Thomas McKnight, a vocal Tory and member of the Assembly, was in 1775 voted out of office as an act of "civil excommunication." McKnight's growing unpopularity within the county led to the closing of his shipyard; he later fled the area because of the growing hostilities and an attempt on his life. His 8,000-acre plantation in Indian Town, "Belvile," was seized and sold. After the war, McKnight filed a claim to recover his losses in the sum of £23,183, but received only £3,638 in compensation.[39]

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Currituck residents were engaged in a variety of occupations ranging from farming and raising livestock to fishing and trapping. Also available were the rich resources of the forests. During the 1770s and 1780s, trees were everywhere. In Currituck, oaks and cypresses rose from the swamps, while elsewhere pines, oaks, walnut and other varieties stood. On a visit to the area during 1840-1841, the noted writer and agriculturist Edmund Ruffin described the pine forests and the economic possibilities they held:

> One of the most remarkable and valuable qualities of some of the pines is, that their winged seeds are distributed by winds to great distances, and in great numbers so that every abandoned field is speedily and thickly seeded, and the kind of pine which is most favored by the soil and situation, in a few years covers the ground with its

[39] "Currituck County 1670-1970 Abstracts from Historical Notes," p. 109-110, DeMond, Appendix D.

young plants. The growth, especially of the most common second-growth pine, (*p. tæda,*) is astonishingly rapid, and even on the poorest land. And while other land might still be bare of trees, that which favors this growth would be again under a new and heavy, though young, growth of pines. This offers, (especially in connexion with the use of calcareous manures,) the most cheap, rapid and effectual means for great improvement of poor soils. And besides this greatest end, the cover of the more mature wood, if marketable for fuel, will offer the quickest and greatest return of crop that could have been obtained from such poor and exhausted land.[40]

Such a plentiful resource offered a livelihood for many. Pines were hacked and notched for their sap to make turpentine; dead pines were split and baked as black tar oozed into scooped out holes. Tar was then boiled or burned to make pitch. All three products formed the basis for what would become a major industry of naval stores. Certain types of pine would do only for use as the masts of ships. Oak and cypress trees were cut to make into barrel staves and shingles to store naval products or other supplies. These goods were then transported over roads to Currituck port or any of the private landings and floated to market.[41]

The federal census of 1790 recorded a total population of 5,392 persons in Currituck County, with 792 heads of households; included in that number were 1,017 white males over the age of sixteen, 1,900 free white females, and 115 other free persons. Of that total

[40] Edmund Ruffin, Agricultural, *Geological and Descriptive Sketches of Lower North Carolina and the Similar Adjacent Lands,* Raleigh: Institution for the Deaf & Dumb & Blind, 1861, p. 253.
[41] Harry L. Watson, "The Forest, The Indians And The Yeoman Family," in Mobley, Joe A. ed. *The Way We Lived in North Carolina.* Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline, 2003, pp. 111-113.

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population, slightly more than twenty percent, or 1,103, were slaves. By this time, slavery was an established institution in the county, having been introduced at the creation of the first settlements in the Albemarle; as early as 1710, 97 slaves were reported living in Currituck. Next to land, slaves were among the most valuable property a man, or woman, could own.[42]

Many slaves came to Currituck when their masters moved there from Virginia; others were brought into North Carolina ports, most commonly from the West Indies, and sold. As settlement spread, the number of both whites and blacks living in the county grew. Slaves worked in the maritime trades. They built and sailed boats. They fished and guided whites on duck hunts.

Little documentary evidence exists describing the life of the maritime slave in the county; however in 1882, a former slave named London R. Ferebee wrote his autobiography, *A Brief History of the Slave Life of Rev. L. R. Ferebee, and the Battles of Life, and Four Years of His Ministerial Life. Written from Memory. To 1882.* Ferebee was born in Big Ditch near Coinjock in August, 1849. His parents were the slaves of the Whitehurst family; young London was later sold to a Captain E. T. Cowles (or Cowells), in whose service he learned to sail. He recalled:

> After leaving my mother, I had a rough life. Many hardships I had to undergo, as all young slave children had to suffer. I went by water with my master a good deal until I learned to man the vessel pretty well; even at night I could

[42] Federal Census 1790, p.9, Powell, p. 112.

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> steer by the compass, or by any star. My master would point out to me, before he went to his bunk, and I've heard him tell gentlemen in my presence he could lie down as well satisfied with me at the helm as any one of the crew.[43]

Other slaves worked on small farms and large plantations as field hands, artisans, and house servants. Although the number of slaves held by local landowners was miniscule compared to the large holdings of Virginia and South Carolina planters, their presence was significant. According to the 1790 census, some of the largest slaveholders lived in the northern end of the county, particularly in Indiantown. William Ferebee owned 17 slaves; Catherine Merchant owned 22, as did Willoughby Dauge. Thomas Sanderson in Tulls Creek owned 14; Jesse Sanderson owned 20.[44] But by far the majority of slaveholders in the county, like the majority throughout the South, owned no more than a few. Blacks lucky enough to escape bondage and offspring of mixed marriages found freedom in the small fugitive and runaway communities located along the swampy fringes of Currituck Sound or in the Dismal Swamp.

Like their counterparts in other southern states, the fear of slave rebellions was real for whites in Currituck. During the Revolutionary War, rumors spread that the British planned

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[43] Reverend Lincoln Ferebee, A Brief History of the Slave Life of Rev. L.R. Ferebee, and the Battles of Life, and Four Years of His Ministerial Life. Written from Memory. To 1882, Raleigh: Edwards, Broughton & Co., Steam Printers, Publishers and Binders, 1882, pp. 7-8., located at: http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/ferebee/ferebee.html

[44] Some historians have used the number of twenty slaves as a cut-off point to define the moderately prosperous farmer from the large plantation owners.

to arm the slaves against their masters. By 1800, the idea of slave insurrections had become a reality; in response to the thwarted slave rebellion planned by Gabriel Prosser in Henrico County, Virginia, the court in Currituck, along with eight other county courts, hanged a total of twenty-one slaves suspected of participating in a similar uprising, while numerous others were whipped. [45]

Not all blacks living in Currituck were slaves. As early as 1715, a free black man named John Smith, who owned 300 acres, was listed in the tax records.[46] In 1755, Isaac Miller, another free black, was listed in that year's tax roll. The 1800 census counted among the county residents mulattoes Sally Splman[sic] and her household of two, Jonathan Case, who had ten family members, and Thomas Dunkin, who had five family members and possibly two slaves.[47] In the end, free blacks fared little better than slaves; county law mandated that all free blacks be registered. Even this practice was unsatisfactory to the citizens of Currituck; by 1860, they demanded a state law that either expelled free blacks or returned them to slavery.[48]

By 1810, a modest textile manufacturing establishment had developed in Currituck County, which included 41,000 yards of blended and unnamed cloths and stuffs, valued at $11,000 and 400 looms. Still, unlike other counties, Currituck had no documented gunsmiths,

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[45] Harry L. Watson, "Planters and Slaves," in Mobley, Joe A. ed. *The Way We Lived in North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline, 2003, pp. 148-149

[46] Currituck County Land Tax Records, 1715, located at: http://www.ncgenweb.us/currituck/tax/1715land.html

[47] 1800 Federal Census, Currituck County, pp. 138, 151, 168.

[48] Harry L. Watson, "Planters and Slaves," in Mobley, Joe A. ed. *The Way We Lived in North Carolina.* Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline, 2003, pp. 148-149, Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, Flora J. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, Raleigh NC: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2002, p. 3, John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina 1790-1860*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 195, pp. 75, 218-219.

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blacksmiths, tanneries, or distilleries.[49] A thriving cypress shingle business was located in Moyock; trees were cut from the Dismal Swamp, fashioned into shingles at the village, and then shipped from Shingle's Landing Creek. In the southern part of the county Willis H. Gallop of Martin's Point in the southern end of the county (now Dare County), who, by the early nineteenth century, not only owned hundreds of acres, but also engaged in shipbuilding and the carrying trade. Gallop's vessels sailed to Baltimore as well as the West Indies from his own landing.[50]

Religion and Education

The early charters of the proprietors contained provisions for religious freedom, but because of the slow settlement in the Albemarle, the emergence of organized religious groups and churches was slow in coming. The lack of organized religious institutions meant that many county residents were never baptized; marriages were arranged by mutual consent and authorized by the Assembly. Although the Society of Friends, or Quakers, established a strong foothold in the Albemarle, they did not make inroads into Currituck. There is some documentation of religious gatherings in the county beginning as early as 1708, when an Anglican missionary group, the Society for Preservation of the Gospel, sent a minister, James Adams, to the area. Adams, who was paid £30 a year for his services, resided in the home of Tulls Creek resident Richard Sanderson. By 1712, a small chapel had been established at

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[49] Bureau of the Census, *A Series of Tables of the Several Branches of American Manufactures*, 1810, pp. 129-135.

[50] Alyce Sumrell, "Willis H. Gallop And Descendants," in Bates, Jo Anna Heath, ed, with the Albemarle Genealogical Society, and the Currituck County Historical Society, Inc. *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985, p. 236.

Indiantown, where a Reverend Rainsford preached. Three years later, in 1715, a vestry was named for Currituck Parish. Among its members were Richard Sanderson, Foster Jarvis, William Reed, William Swann, and William Willams. The church still lacked any permanent facility and instead held services wherever it could. One of the early schools in the area, the Currituck Seminary of Learning in Indiantown also served as a church in 1789, as did the local Masonic Hall.[51] In a letter dated July 9, 1748, missionary Clement Hall wrote of his success in finding converts in Currituck:

> I journey'd thro' my North Mission preach'd about 16 Sermons within 3 weeks and baptized about 347 Persons—the Congregation were more numerous in Currituck than heretofore & generally behave devout & orderly—We were obliged there several times to perform Divine Service under ye Shady Trees, the Chapels nor Court House being not large enough to contain one half of the People.[52]

In 1773, Thomas McKnight of Indiantown presented a petition to the Assembly to cover the expense of building a church in Currituck:

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[51] Wilton J. Walker, Jr., "The Early Church in Currituck," in Jo Anna Bates, ed, with the Albemarle Genealogical Society, Inc. and the Currituck County Historical Society, Inc. *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985, pp. 70-71.

[52] Clement Hall, "Letter to Philip Bearcroft, July 9, 1748," *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 4*, p. 872.

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> Be it therefore enacted by the Governor, Council and Assembly, and by the authority of the same, that two acres of land now the property of Thomas Macknight situate in the County of Currituck at a place called the Indian Town . . . . and is hereby vested in Thomas Macknight, Isaac Gregory, Francis Williamson, Samuel Jarvis, William Ferribee, William McCormick and Thomas King, and their Successors forever, who are hereby constituted & appointed Trustees for the purposes hereinafter mentioned, that is to say to enclose the said two acres of land and to build thereon a commodious Chappel, to be called and known by the name of St Martin's Chappel, and to receive and take all such voluntary subscriptions and donations as religious and public spirited persons may think proper to bestow for the purpose of building and endowing the said Chappel, for enclosing of the Burying Ground and providing a fund for the maintenance of the poor.[53]

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, two religious groups dominated the county: the Methodists and the Baptists. The Baptist Church first emerged during 1727-1728 with the establishment of the Shiloh Baptist Church in Indiantown. Cowenjock Baptist Church, located approximately one mile south of the Currituck Courthouse, was formed in 1780. The Baptist Society of Indian Ridge met in members homes and later built the Providence Baptist Church

[53] "Bill proposed by Thomas Macknight concerning a church in Currituck County," *North Carolina Colonial Records*, 1773 Volume 9, Pages 638 – 640.

in Shawboro. By 1801, the Powell's Point Mission, later to become the Powell's Point Baptist Church (CK0129), had been organized.[54]

As early as the 1770s, Methodist circuit riders were traveling through Currituck County. Among the most famous English Methodist preacher was Joseph Pilmoor, one of two whom John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had sent to the American colonies. Pilmoor traveled south into North Carolina in 1772; his first stop was near the old Currituck Courthouse where he preached in September. For his sermon at Currituck he chose a verse from the Gospel of Matthew: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). He recorded in his diary that he had dined with Colonel Hollowell Williams, a resident of Tulls Creek, who was among the first prominent supporters of the Methodist Church in Currituck. Pilmoor returned to the area in December where he preached at a chapel in Tulls Creek, again staying with Williams.[55] A visit by Edmund Drumgoole, another Methodist circuit rider, in 1783 resulted in the naming of one of the communities in Currituck: Sligo. So taken was Drumgoole with the landscape that he called it after his home in Sligo, Ireland.[56]

Like formal religion, education in Currituck County had humble beginnings. Institutionalized education was almost non-existent; what education children did receive came from their parents. Children of the wealthy might have private tutors or be sent away to school. Sometimes a wealthy landowner might build a community schoolhouse if he had several children of his own to educate. In many cases, a school was obtained through subscription from

[54] Walker, pp. 70-71.
[55] Margaret C. Pritchard, History of Methodism in Currituck County, North Carolina 1772-1972, self-published manuscript, 1972.
[56] Barbara Walker Hudson, "Sligo," in *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1977, p. 205, C. H. Crookshank, M.A., *History of Methodism in Ireland Vol. 1,* Belfast: R.S. Allen, Son & Allen-University House, 1885, p.240.

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local residents. If they raised enough money to build a school, it could subsequently be transformed into an academy; these schools generally were chartered by the Legislature and governed by a board of trustees. By the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the academy movement was flourishing in North Carolina. Between1800 and 1860, the Legislature chartered 287 academies; almost every county in the state had at least one.[57] The only example of an academy school in Currituck was Indiantown Academy, established in 1789. Not much is known about the building itself; the site of the school can only be guessed, for nothing of the original structure remains. One account states the school was built on the grounds of William Ferebee's plantation.[58]

Architecture

Though no buildings survive from this early period, it is likely that "earthfast" construction techniques were used to build the first dwellings. These wood structures employed low framing members that rested directly on the ground or were embedded in postholes or shallow trenches. Clad by four-to-five foot-riven clapboards, these dwellings were of the rudest sort with dirt floors, offered little protection from the elements, and were subject to rot and termites because of the planted wood posts.

Log construction first appeared in coastal Carolina during the late seventeenth century. The structures were small and simple, generally consisting of little more than a single room.

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[57] Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1937, pp. 284-285.

[58] Mrs. Hollis Kannenberg, "The Migration of My Ferebee Ancestor," in Jo Anna Bates, ed, with the Albemarle Genealogical Society, Inc. and the Currituck County Historical Society, Inc. *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985, p. 216-217.

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Log houses also took comparatively little time to build; within one to two days, a settler could look forward to having some sort of semi-permanent or permanent shelter. Log construction also did not rely on the skills of carpenters or other artisans, thus making the buildings fairly cheap. But by 1800, many considered log buildings to be old-fashioned; by the Civil War, log constructed buildings were only for the poor. Today, historic log-constructed houses are difficult to find; what few remain have often been incorporated into larger houses. Although the earliest of dwellings built in Currituck County were log, no such buildings were documented during the course of the survey.

One earlier kitchen (CK0338), dating to approximately 1780, is found in Sligo on the Cowell farm property. Although retaining its original weatherboard siding, vertical board door and hewn sill plate, the original chimney is gone. There are other surviving domestic outbuilding scattered throughout the county, including a few detached kitchens such as those seen at the Twin Houses (CK0003) in Shawboro and the Caleb Bell House (CK0017) in Snowden. Both of these buildings appear to have been built during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Constructed of frame and covered with beaded weatherboard, the side-gable roof buildings also had a large exterior brick chimney with shoulders. Although the kitchen building at the Twin Houses is in poor condition, enough of the building has survived to suggest that it was of similar proportions and plan to that found at the Caleb Bell property

Perhaps one of the oldest surviving dwellings in the area, and a good example of a very early nineteenth-century waterman's dwelling, is the Alex Dunton House (CK0290) on Narrow Shore Road in Aydlett. Built by Dunton's father, Leven, the dwelling, set back from the road and facing the water, is a story- and-a-half, two-bay house with wood peg construction, sheathed in plain and beaded weatherboard. Dating approximately from the first quarter of the

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nineteenth century, the original front block of the house consisted of one room with tongue-and-groove pine floors. The six-over-six wood sash windows feature hand-hewn sills. An earlier picture of the house taken during the early 1960s shows the front shed roof porch as partially enclosed. A small frame breezeway connects to a frame-and weatherboard detached kitchen that was built in the mid-nineteenth century.

Home to many of the county's earliest and wealthiest residents, Shawboro, of all the areas in Currituck County, is the richest and most diverse architecturally with regard to buildings constructed in the the first quarter of the nineteenth century. For instance, the c.1815 Twin Houses (CK0003), unique in the state in terms of its composition, consists of two identical two-story frame, five-bay wide, side-gable buildings. The exterior end brick shouldered chimneys feature smooth tumbled weatherings that often mark Federal-style houses. Each interior features a hall-parlor plan with reeded chair rails and plaster walls and simple Federal-style mantles. Connecting the two dwellings is a one-story, frame and side-gable hall. A John Perkins built the property; its unusual footprint has been attributed to an arrangement in which Perkins and his wife resided in one house and his son in the other.

Culong, the 1812 residence built by wealthy landowner Thomas Cooper Ferebee Sr. (CK0006), is noted for its reserved Federal stylings. Ferebee, a prosperous landowner whose family owned much of the land in the Indiantown area, owned 280 acres and, by the 1830s, forty-three slaves, making him one of the largest slaveholders in the area. His house, a two-and-a-half story, three bay, dwelling, rests on an English basement foundation, the only one of its kind in the county, and was originally sheathed with cypress weatherboard. Further distinguishing Culong from its neighbors is its front-gable roof orientation, in an area where

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the side-gable roof form dominated. At one time, two rear exterior end brick chimneys with double shoulders were attached to the rear gable-end wall. The interior of the house also breaks with the more traditional hall-parlor plan in its long entrance cross-hall.

A similar interior plan is seen in the John Humphries House (CK 0052) and the Cosey Etheridge House (CK0032), both built in 1820 not far from Culong. The homes were originally part of the larger Ferebee land holdings; according to some sources, the house was one of six built along similar lines as Culong. Like William Ferebee, John Humphries was a wealthy landowner.

Among the surviving pre-1861 houses in Currituck County, the most common plan was that of the hall-parlor dwelling. In the northern end of the county, this design was most often executed in two-story dwellings belonging to the wealthier residents. Certainly one of the most distinctive hall-and-parlor plan interiors is found in the Banks-Tuckers House (CK0178), situated near Caratoke Highway in the Currituck vicinity. One of perhaps two surviving examples of a late Georgian-style interior, the two-story, side-gable, single-pile house features heavy random plank flooring and original dado, with raised panels and a molded wainscot cap. The focal point for each room is the floor-to-ceiling, wood, raised paneled fireplace chimneypiece, each topped by a molded wood cornice; the north wall chimney cornice has dentils.

One of the few surviving Federal-style dwellings in the county is the c.1801 John Sanderson House (CK0079) on Tulls Creek Road. John Sanderson, Sr., the son of early Currituck settler Richard Sanderson, was a wealthy land and slaveowner in the Tulls Creek and Moyock area. The two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, frame Federal-style dwelling was originally sheathed in beaded weatherboard, a stretcher bond brick veneer was added sometime in the late twentieth century. An unusually wide, exterior end chimney laid in Flemish bond with double shoulders, has a date brick of "1801." Unusual features of the house are seen in the two corner chimney fireplaces on the first and second floors, each with simple paneled surrounds.

The exteriors of houses with the hall-parlor plan admitted a number of variations. The two-story, five bay, c.1815 J. P. Morgan House (CK0010), and the now-demolished, two-story, three-bay, frame and weatherboard, Samuel Ferebee House (CK0043) in Shawboro built sometime in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, were built with two side-by-side front single-leaf, raised four-paneled front entrance doors, allowing family members and guests to enter directly into either room on the façade. The Morgan House was also distinguished by two exterior, shouldered, brick end chimneys laid in 7/1 bond. The original first floor 9/6 pegged sash windows are intact, with their heavy molded wood surrounds. The hall fireplace surround consists of a simple Federal-style wood surround with complex moldings and simple square pilasters. Double-shouldered brick exterior end chimneys laid in five-over-one bond marked the Ferebee House, an unusual chimney type in the county.[59]

[59] "Samuel Ferebee House," North Carolina State Survey, September 8, 1972.

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Currituck County 1820-1860

The lack of primary and secondary resources dealing with the history of the county makes the period 1820 to 1865 difficult to reconstruct. Perhaps the best picture of Currituck comes from the observations of travelers such as Edmund Ruffin, a writer and agriculturist, who traveled throughout the Tidewater during the early 1840s and from the Federal Census. During this period, too, the county was written about in passing in some of the nation's leading magazines such as *Harper's Weekly.*

[60] "Samuel Ferebee House," North Carolina State Survey, September 8, 1972.

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During this period, the population of the county continued to grow. According to the Federal Census of 1820, 8,098 persons resided in the county; of that number, 1,050 were identified as heads of households; twelve foreigners made their homes in the county. Of the African-American population, 1,854, or 22.8 percent, were slaves and 146 were free persons; 807 were engaged in agriculture, 302 in commerce, and 127 in manufacturing. This population also included people and their activities on Roanoke Island.[61]

The maritime landscape of Currituck was also changing. During the course of his visit to North Carolina, Edmund Ruffin had an opportunity to learn about Currituck Inlet:

> Formerly, and to within a recent time, the old Currituck inlet was deep enough for vessels drawing more than ten feet. Mr. B. T. Simmons, a respectable gentleman residing in Currituck county, informed me that he had sailed through this inlet in 1821, when it afforded throughout from ten to twelve feet depth of channel. It afterwards was more and more filled by sand, drifted by both wind and waves; and finally, in 1828, it was entirely closed by a single violent gale. The site of the former water-way, once more than a half mile wide, is said to be now diked across, the full breadth of the sand reef; and either very near or on the place, there has been raised by the wind a range of high sand hills.[62]

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[61] Federal Census, 1820, p. 112.

[62] Edmund Ruffin, Agricultural, *Geological and Descriptive Sketches of Lower North Carolina and the Similar Adjacent Lands*, Raleigh: Institution for the Deaf & Dumb & Blind, 1861, p. 116.

Ruffin also noted that the only waterway available for commercial shipping was the Dismal Swamp Canal, as the Sound was becoming increasingly shallow. With the closing of the old Currituck Inlet during the 1790s, the only vessels able to navigate the sound's waters were smaller craft. The makeup of the Sound's waters had also changed. Initially, the Inlet's water was salty; with its closing in 1828, the Sound was now fed by freshwater sources, yielding "rich yet firm marsh, covered by a luxuriant growth of water grasses," although the once abundant oyster beds and fish that lived in the salt water died. Livestock thrived in the area, however, grazing on the marshes and acquiring "habits suited to their aquatic position--and wade and partly swim from one island to another, when separated by water of more than half a mile in width."[63] There was no farming conducted along the banks of the Sound. As Ruffin described the area, "there is no grain or field culture on the reef, as far as to opposite Powell's Point, the southern extremity of Currituck county and the sound."[64]

Ruffin also had the opportunity to visit with a member of the Gallop family,[65] who resided in the southern portion of the county, and his description offers one of the fuller pictures of the life of a big planter in Currituck County. According to Ruffin, Gallop was:

> a cultivator of more surface than all the other proprietors put together, south of Knott's island. Though his land is of the usual loose blowing sand, it produces crops of 2,000 to 2,500 bushels of corn. Most of the ordinary culinary vegetables grow well on the best of these sandy soils, and there are abundant resources of

[63] Ruffin, p. 117.
[64] Ibid, p. 127.
[65] It is not known which member of the Gallop family Ruffin met; based on family records, it may have been Willis H. or his son, Reverend Hodges Gallop.

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> manure, in the old Indian banks of shells, and immense quantities of fish caught in the seines, and worthless for other purposes, to make a rich material for compost manure. . . . There were oaks and other trees of smaller size, and healthy growth. I was informed that live-oaks, large enough for ship timber had been formerly cut down here, for that use.[66]

By 1830, the population in the county numbered 7,655 persons. Of that total 5,467 residents were documented as free and 28.5 percent, or 2,188, as slaves. Given the agricultural practices of the time and the crops cultivated, slave labor was almost a necessity for a number of farmers in the mainland county. By 1840, the population had decreased; only 6,703 persons were recorded in the 1840 census; the decrease reflected a state-wide trend as people, searching for more land or better opportunities, left the state. Still, the agricultural economy of Currituck was diverse and rich. According to the 1840 census, the county employed four men engaged in the production of 400 pounds of salt. Livestock was still an important component of local farming; the census recorded 1,109 horses and mules, 5,919 cattle, 4,590 sheep, 13,220 hogs, and 6,372 poultry. The grain harvest included 7,685 bushels of wheat, 1,308 bushels of rye, and 7,084 bushels of oats. County farmers produced more than 213,000 bushels of corn and 52,000 pounds of potatoes. Other related industries, such as wool production, yielded 11,465 pounds. In manufacturing, however, the county lagged behind; no type of manufacturing enterprise for the county was recorded in the census.[67]

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[66] Ruffin, pp. 128-129.
[67] Federal Census, 1830, p. 19, Federal Census 1840, pp. 178-189.

Maritime commerce, though, continued to flourish, especially fishing. In 1840, fisheries packed 400 barrels of pickled fish. In 1853, the noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead journeyed throughout the South, recording his observations on a variety of subjects. He visited Currituck where his host showed him some of the fisheries:

> The shad and herring fisheries upon the sounds and inlets of the North Carolina coast are an important branch of industry, and a source of considerable wealth. The men employed in them are mainly negroes, slave and free . . . . The largest sweep seines in the world are used. The gentleman to whom I am indebted for the most of my information, was the proprietor of a seine over two miles in length. It was manned by a force of forty negroes, most of whom were hired at a dollar a day, for the fishing season, which . . . lasts fifty days. . . .Cleaning, curing and packing-houses are erected on the shore, as near as they conveniently may be to a point on the beach suitable for drawing the seine. Six or eight windlasses, worked by horses, are fixed along the shore, on each side of this point. There are two large seine-boats, in each of which there is one captain, two seine-tenders, and eight or ten oarsmen. In making a cast of the net, one-half of it is arranged on the stern of each of the boats, which, having previously been placed in a suitable position--perhaps a mile off shore, in front of the buildings--are rowed from each other, the captains steering, and the seine-tenders throwing off, until the seine is all cast between them.[68]

[68] Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States; With Remarks on Their Economy,* New York; London: Dix and Edwards; Sampson Low, Son & Co., 1856, pp.352-353.

A more definitive agrarian way of life in the county had emerged by 1850. The population had grown once again to 7,236 persons, 4,590 whites, 190 free blacks, and 2,447 slaves. There were 926 families living in 995 dwellings. The county was still overwhelmingly agricultural: 405 farms were recorded with a total of 37,405 acres under cultivation and a total land value of $758,401. The number of cattle and hogs had more than doubled; the census recorded more than 15,000 head of cattle and 35,281 hogs. Corn was still the largest crop with almost 223,000 bushels harvested. For the first time, Irish and sweet potatoes appeared in the census; according to the document 74,199 Irish and sweet potatoes were grown. More than 20,000 pounds of butter and cheese were made and 30,950 pounds of flax collected. Cotton production totaled 12,284 bales each weighing approximately 400 pounds. Manufacturing was still not a large undertaking in the county.[69]

As a county seat, Currituck Courthouse was a bustling village, despite the facct that the settlement consisted of only five houses, which, by 1855, included the Simmons-Granberry House (CK0039) and the Walker Cottage (0083), as well as the Courthouse (CK0004) and the Jail (CK0007). In an engraving done for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in May 1859, there also appears a one-story, frame building located near the water's edge that may have been a commercial property of some sort. The accompanying article described the author's visit to the village while court was in session. Among the many sights he witnessed was how the residents traveled about:

[69] Federal Census 1850, pp. 279-283.

> From dawn till noon, therefore, did the yeomanry of Currituck and the attorneys of the nearest villages, twenty miles distant, pour in. Among the whole procession a "solitary horseman' would have required hard search to find.
> Everybody went on wheels. . . . they might challenge the world to match their buggies, sulkies, rockaways, carts, horses, mules, and shaft-oxen. There are no wagons. . . . Like everything else here, they—the carts and the horses—are amphibious. Scorning the superfluous luxury of a wharf, they meet the boats half-way. Backing into three feet of water, the vehicle is tilted into the vessel.[70]

The courts met twice a year in a large house located near the Courthouse. According to the *Harper's* account, the spring term was known as "Cherry Court," from the large quantities of the fruit everyone ingested, which led the magazine correspondent to comment that it was a wonder that anyone lived until June, as "bowel complaint" could "decimate" the populace.[71] Fall Court was known as "Chinquapin Court" for the large numbers of the nuts that were consumed. Visitors were often put up at local houses.

[70] "Loungings In The Footsteps Of The Pioneers," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, No. CVIII, May 1859, Vol. XVIII, p. 760.
[71] Ibid.

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The Albemarle & Chesapeake Canal

Water traffic increased with the construction of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal built in the area now occupied by Highway 158 and the village of Coinjock. First authorized in 1772, fifteen years prior to the Dismal Swamp Canal, its early history can be characterized as all "acts" and no action. No less than ten acts were passed in both Virginia and North Carolina over a period of eighty-three years before construction finally began in 1855, with $350,000 provided by the North Carolina State legislature. The new waterway was supposed to provide more efficient commercial traffic between North Carolina and Virginia as it would be wider and deeper than any others, to accommodate the large steam ships that had become more common on the waters. When the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal was finished in 1859, it was an engineering marvel. It consisted of only one lock, unlike the seven locks of the Dismal Swamp Canal. and two relatively short man-made channels, the Virginia Cut and the North Carolina Cut. The single lock, which balanced lunar tides of the southern branch of the Elizabeth River with the wind driven ones of the North Landing River and Currituck Sound, was forty feet wide and 220 feet long, the longest along the Atlantic coast and the second largest in the entire U.S. To mark the event, the newly-built steamship *Calypso,* traveling on her maiden voyage from Norfolk to Currituck, made the first canal passage. The opening of the canal brought regular commercial traffic through the sound. Sloops, paddlewheel steamers, modern barges, and recreational vessels sailed Currituck's waters.

The importance of the canal cannot be underestimated. Edmund Ruffin, who watched the construction of the canal, remarked that the canal would provide a route "cheaper, safer,

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and preferable in every respect," bringing products to North Carolina "cheaply, safely, and speedily." Further, with the canal's ability to accommodate larger ships, "the cargoes may be carried safely, and without trans shipment, to any port on our Atlantic coast, or to the West-Indies." [72]

In 1860, the mainland county population had increased, but only modestly. The total population was 7,415, an increase of approximately 200 persons. Of the free population 4,669 were white, 98 were black, and 125 mulatto; slaves numbered 2,471 black and 52 mulatto. More than 100,000 acres were being farmed at a total value of almost $1.2 million; approximately 68,000 acres were unimproved. Corn continued to be the major cash crop with 425,502 bushels harvested. Three thousand fifty pounds of tobacco were grown. Potatoes were another successful crop; by 1860, over 14,000 pounds of Irish potatoes and 64,433 pounds of sweet potatoes were harvested. The census also noted that 83 gallons of wine were made. [73] The 1860 census marked the first time that occupations were listed; a casual glance through the various areas of the county shows that farming was the most prevalent occupation. There were also mechanics, seamstresses, carpenters, doctors, spinners, watermen, and seamen.[74]

[72] Ruffin, pp. 131-132.
[73] Federal Census 1860, pp. 104-107, 356-358.
[74] Federal Census 1860.

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Education and Religion

By the mid-nineteenth century, Currituck had seven Methodist and five Baptist churches; in 1850, 7,900 persons in the county were attending church. During the antebellum period, however, both denominations began to splinter. Many denominations in mainland Currituck built their first churches during the antebellum period, though very few have survived in anything like their original form. One of the few is the Moyock Methodist Church (CK0245) that was built sometime after 1844 and is one of the oldest standing Greek Revival buildings in the county. In Tulls Creek, a much plainer church, the Baxter's Grove Methodist Episcopal Church, was built in 1860. According to custom, many of the church buildings had separate entrances for men and women. The Christian Home Baptist Church (CK0228) was organized in 1842, while in Shawboro, the New Providence Baptist Church was founded in 1862. [75]

Public education finally emerged in North Carolina in 1839, when the state organized a school system under the Public School Law. The citizens of each county could vote to tax themselves to support education; if a county voted for schools, the county court was to draw school districts and appoint school committees. Though no records exist as to when mainland Currituck County opened its first public school, by 1846, every county had at least one school. The census of 1850 reported that the county had 305 students attending public school; the number does not include private academies such as Indiantown that was still in operation. The

[75] Wilton J. Walker, Jr. "The Early Church in Currituck," in *The Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina,* p. 71.

census also found that the county was spending a total of $1,471 for education. Still, the majority of county residents, both black and white were unable to read or write. In addition to the Indiantown Academy, a "Male and Female" School was established near Currituck Courthouse in 1856. Students could enroll in a number of courses during a term; the school offered reading, writing, and spelling for seven dollars, geography and grammar for ten; classics and mathematics were the most expensive, costing twelve dollars a term.[76]

Architecture

By the eve of the Civil War, the county had been settled for almost two centuries. Even though the area was gradually acquiring the basic elements of civilization and settlement, the mainland remained overwhelmingly rural, and the area did not see the emergence of many towns. Small settlements were springing up; with them came other institutions such as churches, schools, and a county courthouse. The architecture of this period illustrated the growing distinctions of economic and social class in the county. Those individuals with money began building houses that alluded to their wealth and taste, as seen in the emergence of newer architectural styles, details, and craftsmanship. Between 1820 and 1860, some of the grander houses of the county appeared in the northern end around Moyock and Currituck. The southern end of the county is harder to describe since many of the houses from the period 1820-1860 are gone. Many of these homes were associated with

[76] Gordon Cowley Jones, "The Introduction of Modern Education Into Currituck County, North Carolina," in Currituck County Historical Society. *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1974, pp. 58-60.

large farms or plantations which had outbuildings and, in some cases, slave quarters. Unfortunately, in almost every case, the house is the only remaining resource, which many times has also undergone alterations of some sort.

The period also reflected new attitudes in building that were taking shape in the state and the nation. As the new United States of America and North Carolina lurched along in its quest for prosperity and identity, the sense that buildings not only reflect status or taste, but moral values became increasingly evident. Using brick to build public buildings, for example, promoted not only durability and safety, but also illustrated the progress and wealth of the community. In Currituck, the construction of the new courthouse, built sometime before 1869, and its jail, rebuilt in 1857, demonstrate the county's commitment to these principles. The gradual acceptance of the Greek Revival style, which promoted democracy and equality, as well as a clarity, order, and simplicity was important in the architectural history of the county. Whereas the early Federal architecture drew from Palladio and the Renaissance, Greek Revival's inspiration came from the orders, ornament and proportions of Greece. The style which emphasized a simple symmetry, weatherboard sheathing, columned porticos, front-gabled (or temple-front) facades, pediments, entablatures, cornices and the color white was enthusiastically adopted by Americans of both grand and modest means.

For those wealthy planters who adopted the style for their own homes, it offered a visible and physical statement of a prevailing order in their world. For middle-class whites, too, the style held great appeal. Adding small details to older houses, such as transom lights, columns or other classical touches, suggested not only refinement, but reinforced a kind of conservatism as well. The gradual leaving behind of the hall-parlor plan, although

not completely abandoned, for a center-hall plan also spoke to a growing sense of formality and control over space.

Without a doubt one of the most elegant homes in the county is the Northern- Cox House (CK0024) in western Moyock. The Greek Revival influence is restrained, but unmistakable in the c.1855 house built by Philip Northern, one of the wealthiest landowners in the northern end of the county. The framing suggests that for many North Carolinians the heavy timber frame was still a staple in building practices. Little is known of Philip Northern except that he was a man of some means. The two-and-a-half-story, five bay dwelling, sheathed in weatherboard is a rare survivor of a pre-Civil War double pile house in the county, and is the only house with paired interior end brick chimneys. The approximately 4,500 square-foot interior of the Cox House is almost completely intact featuring a central hall plan and approximately ten-foot high ceilings. Interior details not seen anywhere else in Currituck County today include Greek Revival, pedimented and shouldered surrounds with battered sides that adorn all the door and window openings. Four-foot wide paneled pocket doors separate the dining room from the parlor area. The centerpiece of the house is the elegant center-hall wood staircase with a Greek Revival styled round newel post.

Another Currituck house combining Greek Revival elements is the Samuel Wilson House (CK0021) in Moyock. A wealthy planter, Wilson built the two-story, five bay house in 1852. Clad in plain weatherboard with a side-gable roof, the Wilson-Broegler House, like the Walcott House (CK0086), features an unusual chimney formation consisting of three exterior chimneys: a single exterior chimney on one gable end and paired exterior chimneys

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on the other, an arrangement not seen anywhere else in the county. Other interesting characteristics of the house include chimneys with an intricate tumbled brickwork pattern found between the shoulders and the stack areas and a one-story, one bay Greek Revival-styled porch with a pedimented front-gable roof supported by slightly battered and fluted square columns. The center-hall plan interior features ovolo-molded door and window surrounds and baseboards, wood fireplace surrounds with raised panels, Ionic cornices, and fluted pilasters. The central staircase is one of the most expressive features of the house; the open, quarter-turn staircase has a rounded, gooseneck rail of a type similar to those seen in early nineteenth-century pattern book designs of Asher Benjamin. The house's interior rivals that of the Northern-Cox House as one of the most exuberant and most stylish examples of an antebellum dwelling.

Though little is known about its origins, a two-story porch makes the c.1850 Simmons-Morris House (CK0331) a unique single-family house in Barco. This modest Greek Revival dwelling is sheathed in plain weatherboard, with double cornerboards accentuating the walls. The side-gable roof is covered with standing seam metal, has overhanging eaves with heavy cornice returns, a boxed cornice, and a simple frieze. Unlike many of the houses in the county that favored a central entrance, the Simmons-Morris House has a side entrance door with its original 4-light transom and two-light paneled sidelights. Molded wood drip hoods are found over the original 2/2 wood sash windows. The interior side-hall plan, one of the few in the county, is relatively a parlor fireplace surround gouged with scrolled brackets and a central molded, incised panel.

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In the village of Currituck is the small, unassuming, one-story, Triple-A roof house known as the Walker Cottage (CK0083). The small L-shaped, frame dwelling retains many of its original exterior features. Built c. 1860, the house is thought to have been constructed from the scraps of an older dwelling that once stood on the site of the Walker-Snowden House (CK0082) and had been destroyed by fire. The plan of the building is unique; the four rooms each have their own entrance doors, in addition to a single door located in southeast corner at the rear of the house. It has been suggested that the house was constructed in this way because of fear of fire; with this plan everyone was assured of a way out. A much more likely possibility is that after the Walkers moved out of the cottage to the adjoining house, the rooms were rented to persons doing business at the courthouse.

Though given an 1869 building date, there is evidence to suggest that the Samuel McHorney House (CK0014) in Barco was constructed earlier. McHorney, a former sea captain and farmer, bought the property in 1861.The house appears to have been first sided with wood vertical board; this was later covered over by beaded weatherboard. Attached to the rear of the building is a two-story frame and partially beaded weatherboard addition; the addition is believed to have formerly been a slave quarters that was later attached to the building rear. The home is a good example of a hall-and-parlor plan, I-house, one of the most prevalent house forms in Currituck County. The two front single-leaf, wood 6-panel doors located at the north and south ends of the west front elevation opened into a parlor and sitting room respectively. Original interior features include random width plank floors, the simple mantel surrounds found in the hall; the house's interior doors retain their original locks and knobs.

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Though not nearly as elegant as more high-style examples, the Sally Owens House (CK0066) in Poplar Branch is a good vernacular representation of a coastal cottage house type seen throughout the coastal plain of North Carolina during the first half of the nineteenth century. Although the origins of the house remain obscure, it is believed to have been constructed around 1860 by Charles Williams Owens, a small farmer and hunter. Covered with plain weatherboard with double cornerboards and a broken-pitch side-gable roof, the house is reminiscent of the "piazza" vernacular house form with its engaged front porch and slightly tapered wood columns. Variations on the form, including the Owens House, often had a rear shed porch that was later enclosed. The house's interior plan was a hall-parlor, showing the persistence of that particular design well into the mid-nineteenth century.

Certainly among the earliest surviving buildings in the county are the McKnight Outbuildings (CK0061) in Shawboro. The seven outbuildings, consisting of an office, smokehouse, kitchen, shed, and three barns, span approximately seventy-five years of agricultural outbuilding construction, dating from approximately 1775 to 1850. First documented in a 1972 survey, the outbuildings have remained relatively intact, though all have undergone some alterations and deterioration.

The property's name is somewhat misleading. The only outbuilding that may survive from Thomas McKnight's plantation, Belville, is the one-story, mortise-and-tenon framed kitchen located to the north of the main house. Originally clad in beaded board siding, the front-gable roof building rests on a brick foundation with a brick floor. Rosehead nails are still in evidence. The remaining frame outbuildings appear to date from a later nineteenth-century owner of the property, Dr. Gideon Marchant, include his office, a

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one-story, frame, front-gable building, a smokehouse to the south of the main house, and to the north, located side-by-side, three frame barns. Although the original house no longer stands, a c.1893 two-story frame I-house was built on the original site of Dr. Marchant's house. Taken together, the house, along with its collection of domestic dependencies and barns, offer an interesting picture of what was doubtless a typical middling farm in the county.

Civil War

By 1860, the political climate in North Carolina was tense. Overwhelmingly rural and agrarian, North Carolina had few towns or cities of any size; economic growth overall had been slow with almost no new settlement. Unlike states such as South Carolina, Georgia, or Mississippi, where cotton reigned, North Carolina farmers relied on a variety of crops to make their living; even large slaveholders were reluctant to rely on one crop to sustain their way of life. Seventy-two percent of the white families in the state owned no slaves, and most farms were small, self-sufficient operations encompassing no more than fifty to one hundred acres.

Few leaders of the state shared the secessionists' alarm about southern rights. As the states of lower South seceded one by one and came together to organize the Confederate States of America, even large slaveholders felt dismay over the changing political climate. On February 28, 1861, North Carolina voters cast ballots on the question of calling a convention to consider secession. Although Governor John W. Ellis favored, and was working for, secession, the voters refused to hold a convention. When war became a reality after the attack on Fort Sumter, however, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill

for a convention, and on May 20, 1861, voted to leave the Union. Representing Currituck was Henry M. Shaw, of Indiantown, who voted to secede. Shaw later resigned from the convention to become colonel of the Eighth Regiment, North Carolina Troops. He was in command at Roanoke Island in February 1862 when the regiment was captured by Union forces under General Ambrose E. Burnside. Shaw was joined by hundreds of other Currituck residents who enlisted to fight for the Confederacy.

A *New York Herald* article, published in September 1861, highlighted the strategic importance of Currituck, stating that the county was crucial to

> communication with a considerable portion of the States of Virginia and North Carolina, and being the great channel through which the commerce of that section finds its way to market. . . . The soil of the region is of great fertility, yielding abundant crops of corn, wheat, and the various other agricultural products. Cotton is grown to the extent of some 100,000 bales, and a large proportion of our naval stores used to be supplied from this section. [77]

[77] "Operations of the Naval Expedition," *New York Herald*, September 8, 1861.

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The article also emphasized the attraction of the Sound, stating that "Currituck is about fifty miles long, ten miles wide, and is navigable for vessels drawing ten feet of water. Owing to the natural breakwater which protects a great portion of the coasts of North Carolina and Virginia, the water is as smooth as a lake and easily navigated."[78] Clearly the key to creating a Union stronghold in the area was to master the waters.

The Confederacy also understood the importance of protecting the Outer Banks. On June 9, 1861, a dispatch from Brigadier General Walter Gwynn, Commander of the Northern Department of the Coast Defense, declared: "The citizens of Currituck should be up and doing in the cruel war that is upon the South. . . . This appeal to the citizens of Currituck County to send laborers, slaves, or free Negroes to be put in charge . . . at Roanoke Island. Send them on at once. Delay is dangerous."[79]

On February 7, 1862, Brigadier General Ambrose E. Burnside landed 7,500 men on the southwestern side of Roanoke Island in an amphibious operation launched from Fort Monroe. The next morning, supported by gunboats, the Federals assaulted the Confederate forts on the narrow waist of the island, driving back and out-maneuvering Brigadier General Henry Wise's outnumbered command. (Wise himself was absent, recuperating from a bout of pleurisy.) After losing fewer than 100 men, the Confederate commander on the field, Colonel Henry Shaw, surrendered about 2,500 soldiers and 32 guns. Burnside's

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[78] "The Rebel Island and Towns," *The New York Herald*, February 13,1862.

[79] Walter Gwynn, "Special Orders No. 66," June 9, 1861, *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Volume 51, Chapter 63, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, pp. 136-137.

victory was crucial; not only had he secured an important outpost on the Atlantic Coast, he had also tightened the blockade against the Confederacy.

Another desired Union target was the Albemarle and Chesapeake and Canal. Early in the war, Confederate forces used the canal to move transports and steam gunboats. With the defeat at Roanoke Island, Elizabeth City, and Edenton, Union forces now turned to block the canal, but soon found that Confederate forces had already made the canal impassable. For months, the canal stood closed; by May, Burnside, realizing the importance of having the canal operational, ordered it to be cleared of obstructions. For the better part of the next three years, Union troops were positioned in Currituck to guard the canal, billeting at the Currituck Courthouse.

One of the biggest problems that Union forces encountered was the ongoing presence of guerilla bands who hid in the nearby swamps. In a dispatch written in September, 1863, Lieutenant-Colonel William Lewis explained: "We made every effort possible to induce the skulking dastards to leave their hiding place, but without effect." Guerilla forces led raids, destroying all the bridges in the county, ambushing Union ships in the canal, and in general causing mayhem throughout the region. A great deal of activity took place in and around Indiantown. Lewis also complained that "It is very difficult to gather any reliable information from the white people through that portion of Currituck County. . . I am inclined to believe that the inhabitants support them."[80] Lewis promised to burn down the houses of anyone who gave Union troops false information.

[80] William Lewis, "Report of Lt. Col. William Lewis, Fifth Pennsylvania Calvary," September 20, 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Volume 29 (Part I), Chapter XLL, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1890, pp. 137-138.

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While Lewis and others were contending with Confederate forces, many citizens of Currituck were feeling the pinch of restricted travel and no trade. In July 1863, Brigadier-General Henry M. Naglee wrote a letter to a group of prominent Currituck citizens stating that if the county's citizenry refrained from additional hostilities, Union forces would be willing to allow the shipping of goods to Norfolk or Portsmouth and the chance to buy necessary supplies. The response was not long in coming; in less than a month, Naglee received a letter stating that as much as they would like to re-establish commerce, they could not be held responsible for "what we cannot possibly control." The communication emphasized that not private citizens, but soldiers in the Confederate Army, committed the hostilities.[81]

For many residents of the county, the Union occupation proved bitter and hard. In December 1863, three columns of United States Colored Troops led by General Edward A. Wild raided the county, liberating slaves, destroying Confederate camps, and camping on the courthouse grounds. The area around Indiantown was hit particularly hard as the troops burned down the Indiantown Academy as well as Belville, the plantation once owned by Tory Thomas McKnight. A letter from Indiantown resident Joseph Morgan, dated "Indian Ridge, Currituck County, Jany28/63," to his son, Patrick Henry Morgan, a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute, described the chaos: "A few weeks ago they came over to Indian Town & burned all the buildings on Dr. Marchant' place [Belville], opposite where he used

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[81] Henry M. Naglee, July 28, 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Volume 39, Chapter 51, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892, pp. 849-850.

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to live, together with the academy & plundered several citizens, taking horses, carts [_groes], salt & c. [sic][82]

The Aftermath: Reconstruction and the Early Twentieth Century 1865-1910

The end of the war in 1865 left Currituck County, like most other counties in North Carolina, in a wretched state. North Carolina was readmitted to the Union in 1868, after it had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and had drafted a new state constitution. Some of the most significant innovations made by this document were the popular election of all state and county officials; the adoption of the township-county commission form of government; and a provision for a "general and uniform system of public schools." Thirty amendments were added to the state constitution in 1875 and 1876. Secret political societies were made illegal (an effort to stamp out the Ku Klux Klan and similar organizations); white and black schools were to be kept separate; marriages between whites and blacks were forbidden; residence requirements for voting were extended to circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment; and the state legislature was given virtual control over county government. For the first time, the state government was organized on the basis of universal male suffrage. The 1867 Voter Registration List for Currituck County illustrates the state constitution's expanded push for democracy for blacks and whites by eliminating all property qualifications for voting and

[82] Margie Welsted Rainey, "Civil War Letters From Joseph Morgan To His Son Patrick Henry Morgan," in Murray, Jeanne Meekins, ed. *Histories of Currituck County, North Carolina Families*, Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 2005, p. 188-189.

holding office. African Americans now could sit on juries, and imprisonment for debt was abolished. Another first was state-funded public education for African Americans. [83]

After the Civil War, farm tenancy replaced the old plantation economy with its masters and its slaves. The larger plantations were broken up and divided into smaller farms, each taken care of by a tenant, who took a share of the crop after harvest. But it soon became apparent that slavery by a different name had emerged. Tenants found themselves dependent on their landlord or local storeowner, often one and the same person, who extended credit with exorbitant interest for needed supplies. By the time the crop was harvested, there was little, if any, money left over to cover accumulated debts. It was more likely that the tenant owed the landowner. The system thus perpetuated a vicious cycle of debt from which few tenant farmers would ever break free.[84]

By the 1870s, there began appearing a number of publications geared toward evaluating or extolling the virtues of North Carolina and its resources. For instance, Edward King, reporting for the national periodical *Scribner's Monthly*, wrote a series of articles while traveling through the former Confederate States in 1873 and 1874. His portrait of Currituck and its environs, while initially unenthusiastic, still conveyed the economic promise the area held:

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[83] Allen W. Trelease, "Reconstruction, The Halfway Revolution," in *The North Carolina Experience*, pp. 285-294.
[84] Ibid.

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The North Carolina coast, as seen from the ocean, is flat and uninteresting. There is an aspect of wild desolation about the swamps and marshes which one may at first find picturesque, but which finally wearies and annoys the eye. But the coast is cut up into a network of navigable sounds, rivers and creeks, where the best of fish abound, and where trade may some day flow in. The shad and herring fisheries in these inlets are already sources of much profit. The future export of pine and cypress timber, taken from the mighty forests, will yield an immense revenue. The swampy or dry tracts along the coast are all capable of producing a bale of cotton to the acre. They give the most astonishing returns for the culture of the sweet potato, the classic peanut, or "guber," the grape, and many kinds of vegetables.It is believed that along this coast great numbers of vineyards will in time be established, for there are unrivaled advantages for wine-growing.[85]

Earlier, in 1869, the North Carolina Land Company published *A Guide to Capitalists and Emigrants: Being a Statistical and Descriptive Account of the Several Counties of the State of North Carolina, United States of America; Together with Letters of Prominent Citizens of the State in Relation to the Soil, Climate, Productions, Minerals, &C., and an Account of the Swamp Lands of the State,* which documented every county.

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[85] Edward King, *The Great South; A Record of Journeys in Louisiana, Texas, the Indian Territory, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland*, Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co.,1875, pp. 466-467.

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The purpose of the report was to "render all possible assistance to persons who desire to invest their funds in this State, judiciously."[86] The entry for Currituck County noted that the county had a population of 7,500 and included six doctors and three lawyers. There were twelve churches, two academies, and three post offices. There were 500 farms with 37,000 improved acres and 90,000 unimproved acres. Annual crop yields were corn, 300,000 bushels; wheat, 1,500 bushels; oats and rye, 2,860 bushels; peas, 40,000 bushels; Irish and sweet potatoes, 150,000 bushels; butter, 54,000 pounds; flax, 30,000 pounds; wool, 12,500 pounds; beeswax and honey, 5,000 pounds, and that scuppernong and other grapes grow finely. Livestock included 1,085 horses and mules, 7,250 cattle, 6,000 sheep and 15,500 hogs. Overall, the land was good, with good fishing and large quantities of wild game. The forests were primed to be harvested and included large numbers of oak, pine, juniper and cypress trees.[87]

By 1870, the population in the county had declined steeply from 7,415 persons in 1860 to only 5,131 persons in 1870. In part the attrition was the result of men who died in the war or residents who chose to leave the county in search of better opportunities. Politics also played a role; with the annexation of Roanoke Island to Dare County in 1870, Currituck County lost a number of residents.

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[86] North Carolina Land Company, *A Guide to Capitalists and Emigrants: Being a Statistical and Descriptive Account of the Several Counties of the State of North Carolina, United States of America; Together with Letters of Prominent Citizens of the State in Relation to the Soil, Climate, Productions, Minerals, &C., and an Account of the Swamp Lands of the State*, Raleigh, NC: Nichols & Gorman, Book And Job Printers, 1869, p.i.
[87] Ibid, p.22.

Over the next two decades, the population slowly increased; by 1890, there were 6,747 persons in Currituck County spread out among 1,330 residences. There were a total of 1,350 families with approximately five persons to a family. Farming continued to be the principal occupation in the county. In 1890, there were 958 farms with the average farm between 50 and 100 acres.[88] In addition, a number of villages had emerged. Based on post office records these included California, Coinjock, Currituck Courthouse, Jarvisburg, and Poplar Branch.[89] The publication of business directories such as *Branson's Business Directories* and *Chataigne's North Carolina State Directory and Gazetteer: 1883-84*, help fill out a picture of the county. For instance, according to *Chataigne's*, the Currituck County government consisted of five commissioners, a clerk of Superior Court, a Coroner, a Register of Deeds, a Sheriff, a Surveyor, Solicitor, Treasurer and County Examiner; fourteen magistrates heard cases in various districts and there were two attorneys practicing in the county. Other occupations included auctioneers, blacksmiths and wheelwrights, carpenters and builders, dentists, fertilizer agents, a number of fish dealers, two mills, two saddlers and harness makers, and thirty merchants who owned general stores throughout the county; one in Tulls Creek also sold insurance. There were one dentist and four doctors. The mainland county also had two boardinghouses, both in Currituck County.

The 1890 *Branson's Business Directory* describes the county as "well-adapted for truck farming," particularly for melons; the principal farming products included corn and

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[88] Federal Census, 1890, pp. 168, 925.

[89] John S. Hampton, *The North Carolina Guide and Business Office Companion, Containing a List of all the Post Offices in the State, with Distances from Principal Commercial Towns; Also the Population of all Incorporated Towns, Divided between the Two Races, together with the Names and Post Offices of the Leading Lawyers in the State,* Raleigh: News Steam Book and Job Office and Bindery, 1877, pp. 4-30.

cotton, along with a large variety of fruits including apples, peaches, pears, and grapes. The county's residents are a "church-going people," spread among seventeen churches, and the village of Moyock was "thriving" in part due to the emergence of the Norfolk and Southern trains coming through the area. The area had six schools, all private academies. There were also two watch and clock makers, a shuck factory, one undertaker, and a growing number of merchants and tradesmen throughout the mainland county.

Of all the settlements, the village of Moyock, located close to the Virginia border, was perhaps the closest thing to a commercial center for mainland Currituck County. Settled in 1753, Moyock never grew much, despite the presence of the Shingle Landing Creek, where lumber stores and other goods were shipped, and the establishment of a post office in 1857. Following the Civil War, the area, like the rest of the county was slow to recover. In 1881, however, with the construction of the Norfolk and Southern rail line through the village, Moyock's economy was revitalized. Interest in the area's timber by a Canadian businessman named Terault led to the creation of the Carolina Land and Lumber Company in 1902. To accommodate the many laborers who would be working for the company, a hotel was built. Before closing its doors sometime between 1913 and 1916, the Carolina Land and Lumber Company had harvested most of the area's trees, some of which were used to build a number of new houses in the area.[90] In 1910, the area also drew the attention of a group of Mennonites, who settled in the area known as Puddin'Ridge, just west of

[90] Penne Sandbeck and Sarah W. David, "Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report: Widen SR 1222 (Tulls Creek Road) from Moyock School to Intersection of SR 1214, Currituck County, North Carolina,"April 2006, pp. 7-8., Marion Fiske Welch, *Moyock: A Pictorial and Folk History 1900-1920,* Norfolk: Donning Company Publishers, 1982, pp. 60-61.

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Moyock. The group bought land from the Provident Land Company, a division of the Carolina Land and Lumber Company. The group, which consisted of several large families, farmed the land. The biggest and most profitable cash crop grown was that of peppermint, which, along with spearmint, were two commercial ventures of the Mennonites. The group built a peppermint mill that crushed the mint, extracted the oil from the plants, bottled it for sale and to candy factories and pharmaceutical companies. [91]

The county's population continued to fluctuate; by the turn of the century, 8589 people lived in the county. Ten years later in 1910, the population decreased to just under 7700 people. Farming still dominated, but unlike the population, the number of farms saw a modest increase, from 912 in 1900, to 932 in 1910. Of that number, 682 farms were white-owned, while 250 were belonged to African Americans. By 1910, the number of acres in the county numbered 186,880 with just over 87,000 acres devoted to farming. The average acreage farmed was approximately 93.7 acres. Cereal crops were still the primary source of income, especially corn and wheat. The cultivating of potatoes as a cash crop also increased, particularly sweet potatoes. Truck produce that included fruits and vegetables was on the rise.[92]

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[91] Esther Sullivan Silvester, " The Mennonites of Puddin Ridge," in *The Heritage of Currituck North Carolina 1985,* p. 39.
[92] Federal Census, 1900, 1910, pp. 168, 925.

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Transportation: From Water to Road and Rails

Water traffic remained vital to the mainland county. In the years following the Civil War, a number of harbors were dredged in the area to allow larger steam ships to navigate the waters of Currituck Sound. Tri-weekly visits by various steamer companies such as the Rogers Company out of Norfolk, Virginia, or the Bennett Line, also from Norfolk, to different landings throughout the county brought merchandise and people back and forth. By 1882, local resident W.G. Banks bought a parcel of land at Newburn's Landing near Powell's Point and operated a small shipping line along with a general store.[93] Many communities throughout the county had public and private landings where products were shipped and received. Coinjock was one of the central transportation centers of the county for water travel. Boats and ships traveling the inland waterways bearing travelers and goods passed through the small village. Schooners and other ships visited Point Harbor, located at the far southern end of the county. Boats from large shipping companies such as the Bennett Lines, the Jones Lines, and North River Lines, based in Norfolk,picked up waterfowl packed in barrels. Salted herrings and farm produce were also shipped from the harbor. Farm produce was also sent by water. Residents too, rather than relying on the county's poor road system, often traveled by water to Elizabeth City for shopping. Poplar Branch, previously known as Van Slyck's Landing was an important commercial fishing center. During the late-nineteenth century, two ships, the *Comet*, and later the *Currituck*, both owned by the Bennett's Line transported goods and people as far as

[93] Margaret Newburn Fowler, "Water Transportation," in *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1977, pp. 236-243.

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Munden's Point, Virginia, from which point they traveled to Norfolk by train. In the northern end of the county, Cowell's Bridge near Sligo received freight boats that delivered everything from farm implements and livestock to building supplies and furniture.[94]. The water traffic also spurred commercial growth in the county as specialized businesses such as fish houses, boat building, and marine supplies appeared. Most every landing had at least one general store that sold various goods and sundries to local residents. Residents of the county who traveled by water often depended on the watercraft known as the Currituck hunting skiff, a small flat-bottomed boat, no more than fourteen feet in length While the exact history of the design is unknown, local boat builders were building the skiffs sometime during the late-nineteenth century. The boats were mostly built from juniper and cypress wood; some local boat builders were known for their unique designs that allowed the craft to not only navigate the shallow waters of the sound, but were able to withstand the weather. The skiffs could be modified to use with sails, and later with small motors, and were used for everything from hauling fish to carrying duck hunters to transporting families to visit or to shop.[95]

In many cases, water transportation was necessary as the roads in the county were still very primitive. Horse and buggy were still the most common form of road travel, as well as horse-or oxen-pulled carts. The majority of roads crossed through the marshes and swamps; many of these roads were known as "corduroy roads" a log road made by placing

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[94] Grace W. Griggs, "Point Harbor," in *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society,* Vol. 1, No. 3, 1977, pp. 163-164, Vickie Brickhouse, "Poplar Branch," in . *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society,* Vol. 1, No. 3, 1977, pp. 171-174.

[95] Jeffrey S. Hampton, "Hulled to Perfection," *The Virginian Pilot,* September 1, 1996, p. 6, Geoff Bowlin, "Boating Lifestyle on Display at Outer Banks Wildlife Center," *Carolina Currents,* July 18, 2006.

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sand-covered logs perpendicular to the direction of the road over a low or swampy area. The roads were a definite improvement over the red clay roads in some areas, but still a challenge as loose logs could roll and shift, posing a great danger to horse and passenger. In order to provide some kind of systematic road maintenance, it became customary for a man from each family to volunteer a day's work on the county roads. The work entailed everything from digging ditches to filling holes with dirt or clearing brush from the road.[96]

The railroads also provided another alternative for traveling for county residents. The Norfolk Southern Railroad, established in 1883, had two depots located in Moyock and Snowden. The rail line, which transported mail, farm and lumber products, is credited for helping the growth of industrial development in Currituck County. The Norfolk Southern also served as a passenger line; on average six passenger trains—four local and two "through"— passed through the stations every day, bearing bridal couples, families salespeople, and sportsmen to points north and south. The trains were also chartered for special occasions by churches or by groups to travel to Virginia Beach. The rails provided ambulatory services; when necessary the trains were flagged at different points along the route to pick up people bound for hospitals in Norfolk. However by 1948 the Norfolk Southern had become a freight-only railway.[97]

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[96] Carlin Forbes, "The Roads of Currituck," in Bates, Jo Anna Heath, ed, with the Albemarle Genealogical Society, Incs and The Currituck County Historical Society, Inc. *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985, pp. 23-24.
[97] Warren L. Bingham, "Norfolk Southern Railroad," in William S. Powell, ed., *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006, pp. 799-800, Welch, *Moyock: A Pictorial and Folk History 1900-1920*, p. 95, Barbara Snowden, "Snowden," in *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society*, p. 214-216.

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Market Hunting and the Rise of the Hunt Club, 1852-1918

If there was one industry that almost single-handedly boosted the Currituck economy, it was the practice of market-hunting, that is, of providing meat, through hunting or trapping, to market. Market-hunting became a major source of income for many residents in the county. By the mid-nineteenth century, it was legal to sell waterfowl anywhere in the country and the demand for waterfowl had risen. As a result, many men in the county became professional hunters. At that time, there was no limit on how many or what kind of ducks, geese or swans could be killed. Given the vast waterfowl population of the county, it was only natural to take advantage of bounty.

With the closing of the New Currituck Inlet in 1828, the Currituck Sound's waters now offered up wild celery beds as well as other kinds of nourishment, making the area a perfect wintering ground for thousands of migratory waterfowl. Not only was there plenty of food and water, the area also had a certain degree of isolation that made it the perfect place for many different kinds of birds. Canadian geese were the most dominant group and would, in time, become the most prized and popular game bird. Other waterfowl that visited included swans, mallards, ruddys, canvasbacks, and other varieties of ducks. With the creation of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal in 1859 that connected the port of Norfolk with Currituck Sound, it became easier to ship large numbers of waterfowl to market. From Norfolk, the game was shipped to Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York, where much of the game made its way onto the menus in up-scale restaurants and

hotels. Waterfowl were not only prized for their meat, but also for their feathers that had become fashionable for women's hats and accessories by the 1850s. [98]

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Market hunting provided local residents with sorely needed income. By 1905, a market gunner could earn up to one hundred dollars a day. On a good day, a market hunter might kill upwards of 500 birds, worth almost $1,000 at market. One market hunter reported that he and his three companions received $1,700 for 2300 ruddy ducks they had killed. Different types of birds brought different prices with canvasback ducks commanding the highest price at five dollars per pair. Some market hunters would pack their catch and boat it themselves to the nearest landing, others sold their birds to fowl dealers, who then iced the birds, packing them in barrels and then shipped to northern markets. The majority of game was shipped from landings throughout the county including Poplar Branch, then known as Van Slyck's Landing, and Narrow Shore in the south, and Churchs and Knotts Islands. During the period 1903 to 1909, 400 Currituck markethunters earned $100,000 annually.[99]

The invention of the automatic shotgun in 1910 by the Remington Arm Company allowed market hunters to increase their take. With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the price of waterfowl dramatically increased. Market hunting was perhaps at its peak and the demand for waterfowl not filled the pockets of the hunters but also spurred other local businesses. Boat builders saw a dramatic jump in orders as did decoy makers who carved decoys by the hundreds.

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[98] Claudia Roberts, "Currituck Shooting Club," National Register Nomination, February 1980.
[99] Sea Grant North Carolina, "Coastwatch High Season 2006: Carotank...Currituck: Land of the Wild Goose," located at: http://www.ncseagrant.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=story&pubid=142&storyid=222

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The fabulous wealth of Currituck's wildlife was not limited to the local residents. After the Civil War, hunting tales told by Union soldiers inspired wealthy northern businessmen to come to Currituck to hunt. Journalist Edward King noted in 1875 that "Currituck Sound . . . in winter is a sportsman's heaven. Myriads of wild ducks, geese and swans resort there during the cold months, and amateurs from every climate under heaven visit the marshes and slaughter the fowls for months together." [100] Traveling by steamships, rail, and boats came wealthy businessmen, who would then travel by boat, oxcart, or horse to remote areas in the county to hunt. Hunting parties were not limited to the area along the Currituck Banks either. Several islands in the sound, including Monkey, Narrows, Pine and Swan Islands also offered abundant hunting opportunities. Drawn by the seemingly endless hordes of waterfowl, cheap land and inexpensive labor led many huntsmen to organize their own clubs throughout Currituck County.

The first hunting club organized in the county was the Currituck Shooting Club (CK0009), established in 1857 by a group of northern businessmen. The group purchased 31,000 acres at the cost of one dollar an acre in an area south of south of the village of Corolla, along the west banks of the county. The club was open only a short while when the Civil War broke out. The club closed; with many of the building's contents ransacked by the locals. Remarkably, the clubhouse itself was untouched. Still, it would not be until 1867 when the Currituck Shooting Club would reopen.

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[100] Edward King, *The Great South; A Record of Journeys in Louisiana, Texas, the Indian Territory, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland*, Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co.,1875, pp. 466-467.

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Between 1870 and 1930, wealthy sportsmen, the majority from the North, eventually bought land, constructed lodges, and opened private hunting clubs. At one point, almost all of Currituck Banks belonged to one of several private hunt clubs, with some clubs owning thousands of acres from ocean too the sound of marsh and open water, often bought for as little as ten cents an acre. [101] By the end of the 1880s, there was no land left to buy in the county's coastal area, prompting one traveler to comment, "There is not a foot of this ground in the whole territory that is not owned, registered by title-deeds, recorded in the archives, and watched over as if it sheltered a gold mine." [102]

By the turn of the century, there were six additional major hunt clubs in the county: the Currituck Sound Club, (now the Currituck Gunning and Fishing Club) on Knotts Island, the Swan Island Club, the Monkey Island Club, the Narrows Island Club, the Lighthouse Club and the Palmer Island Club (later named the Pine Island Club). Sports writer Alexander Hunter visited several of the clubs on a trip in 1905. In his book, *The Huntsmen in the South*, he wrote:

> There is no place in the Union that had so many costly clubhouses grouped together as Currituck Sound. Everything that could be done for the comfort and luxury of the sportsmen was accomplished. In the midst of barren marshes, lavish clubs were built. The initiation fee for the

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[101] Sea Grant North Carolina, "Coastwatch High Season 2006: Carotank...Currituck: Land of the Wild Goose," Jim Dean and Lawrence Earley,ed., *Wildlife in North Carolina,* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1987, p.11.
[102] Dean and Earley, p. 11.

various clubs was $1000 to $5000 with annual dues ranging from $250 to $400 per year in the 1890s.[103]

Hunt clubs and lodges were not just for the wealthy. Visiting hunters took advantage of the hospitality offered by local families, particularly on Bells, Churchs, and Knotts Islands. Visitors were offered room and meals; in many instances family members or local huntsmen in the area also provided guide services. Some lodges such as the Hampton Lodge, located at the northern edge of Churchs Island could house as many as twenty people at a time; however most other lodges such the Barnes Hunting Lodge on Knotts Island could accommodate anywhere from six to eight hunters at a time. Not only did families profit from these visitors; the local economy benefited too.[104]

Education and Religion

By 1866, the state system of education perilously bordered a total collapse. The problem was so great that for a considerable period the cost of providing educational resources depended on local governments. In most cities and towns, local taxes were levied in support of education, but schools in rural areas did not recover from setbacks during the

[103] Alexander Hunter, *The Huntsman In The South: Vollume I Virginia And North Carolina,* New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1908, p. 299.
[104] Archie Johnson and Bud Coppedge, *Gun Clubs & Decoys of Back Bay & Currituck Sound*, Virginia Beach:CurBac Press, 1991, pp. 134-135.

war years until the end of the century.

Little is known about education in Currituck during the Reconstruction period. Two schools are noted in 1867 in the *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory*: the Moyock School and the Cowenjock (Coinjock) School. One school that is not mentioned, but which opened around the same time, is the Jarvisburg Colored School (CK0055), originally located in Powell's Point. The present school, now in Jarvisburg was built around 1882. The two-and-a-half-story, frame and weatherboard building features a triple-A roof with overhanging eaves, boxed cornice and a frame and weatherboard belfry with a pyramidal roof. A one-story, slightly projecting shed roof block is located in the center of the façade; a small gablet and cutaway porch marks two entrances on either side of the block. Window openings are 2/2 wood sash.

In 1877, four schools are listed in the communities of Currituck, Indian Ridge, Moyock, and Sligo. By 1885, the county was divided into twenty-eight districts for whites with twenty-one schools, and fourteen districts for African Americans with eleven schools. The schools were standardized one-room buildings, measuring "30 feet by 18 feet with 10-foot ceilings and 8 windows; three on each side and two in the end with a door at the other end, windows to have 15 lights each, size of lights to be 10 by 12 inches.[105] During this period, 1,457 white students were attending school; 763 black children were also enrolled, between the ages of six and twenty-one years of age. The county had hired thirty teachers, nineteen white and eleven black. Unfortunately, school terms fell far short of the required state law of four months, often lasting from ten to twelve weeks. Matters were not helped

[105] Currituck County Minute Book 1, County Board of Education, p. 37.

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by poor attendance; both black and white students were reported as having missed almost fifty percent of the school term.[106]

Worsening economic problems and an indifferent Democrat state government did little to foster education in the county. In 1891, the state did increase the tax rate to support schools, but local problems with poor crops and lack of cash hampered such efforts in Currituck. To make matters worse, the local sheriff embezzled funds intended for the schools, making it necessary for the School Board to hire a lawyer to recover the monies. Even though the county now had twenty-eight schools for whites and twenty-six schools for blacks, private schools still played an important role. Six private academies were operating in the closing decade of the nineteenth century: two in Coinjock, two in Jarvisburg, one in Moyock, and one in Shawboro.[107]

An example of the one-room schoolhouse typical of this period is the Coinjock School (CK0238). Now located on Dozier Road in Tulls Creek, the wood frame schoolhouse, which may have been built sometime between 1890 and 1900, once stood in the village of Coinjock. The Colonial Revival influence is seen in its smallest details, from the front-gable roof and original weatherboard siding, to the overhanging eaves, boxed cornice, and single corner boards that embellish this simple building and its façade. The building has a pair of 6/6 double hung-sash with working hinged vertical board shutters on each side. Wood vertical board single-leaf doors mark the gabled entrances.

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106 Gordon Cowley Jones, "The Introduction of Modern Education Into Currituck County, North Carolina," in Currituck County Historical Society. *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1974, pp. 62-64.

107 Ibid.

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An early twentieth-century Colonial Revival-style schoolhouse (CK0334) serves as a reminder of the isolation and autonomy that is a part of the history of the Churches Island community. Residents built the structure from wood milled on the island, as evidenced by the rough-cut joists in the framing. The one-story, three-bay, beveled weatherboard building was originally located toward the marsh, which lies west of the community. The building has retained much of its vernacular Colonial Revival character, as seen in its overall symmetry of the front block and the front-gable roof with molded and boxed cornice and heavy cornice returns. Wood surrounds with small hoods mark the windows and door of the school. With the building's relocation and conversion to a dwelling sometime during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the interior was portioned into a two rooms and a side wing was attached.

The number of churches in the county dramatically increased after the Civil War, with the Methodist and Baptist denominations still the dominant religious forces in the area. One of the more outstanding examples of a rural church is the Coinjock Baptist Church (CK0175). Organized in 1893 as the Coinjock Missionary Baptist Church, today's Coinjock Baptist Church stands as one of the more architecturally interesting religious buildings in Currituck County. Constructed sometime between 1893 and 1894, the building was erected on land donated by a member of the parish, Dr. James Garrenton and his wife, Amanda. Mr. Henry Welstead, an English émigré and carpenter, designed a 40 x 60 foot building, keeping in mind the function and the financial means of the congregation. Lumber for the one-story church came from donated timber and from drift logs found in the Coinjock

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Canal; a member of the church who owned a saw mill cut the trees and logs for the wood frame and weatherboard used to build the gable-front church. The influence of the popular Gothic Revival style is seen in the church's arched art glass windows and wood entrance doors. Welstead's skill, not only in carpentry, but also as an engineer figure prominently in the church's interior, particularly in the try ceiling of beaded board in the sanctuary, which today still provides excellent acoustics. The interior walls, also of beaded board, were finished in hard oil that has never required any refinishing since the finish was first applied over a century ago. Welstead's design also included another distinctive feature as seen in the sanctuary's sloping wood floor, perhaps the only floor of its kind found in the county's religious architecture.

By 1953, the congregation had grown large enough to warrant additional building space, as seen in the three-story brick addition. Like many churches in the area, Coinjock Baptist covered its original weatherboard siding with brick veneer in 1955The alteration unifies the different blocks of the building. Perhaps more than most rural churches in the county, the Coinjock Baptist Church represents the slow evolution of a small country church that not only changed in terms of the needs of its congregation, but also tried to keep abreast of changing architectural tastes in rural church architecture.

The Knotts Island United Methodist Church (CK0211) is an excellent example of an early twentieth-century vernacular Victorian Gothic building, with the majority of its historic fabric intact. Built in 1911, the building is situated on the highest point on the island and was built on the same site where an earlier church once stood. The large one-story, frame and beaded weatherboard building rests on a foundation of cast concrete block, a feature not seen anywhere else on the island or in the county. Directly above is a wide molded wood water table that wraps around the church. The intersecting gable roof is

covered with slate shingles; and a simple wood King Post is found in each gable end. A central interior brick flue with corbelled cap is found on the west end gable. The entrance consists of two double-leaf wood paneled doors; a Gothic-arched stained-glass light tops each doorway. Sitting above the entrance roof is an octagonal-shaped steeple. The frame and weatherboard closed lantern has blind louvered, Gothic arched openings; the tower above is covered with slate shingles topped by a slate shingle-covered octagonal spire decorated by a copper cross finial.

The interior is no less impressive and is similar in style to that of the Coinjock Baptist Church. The interior walls and the tray ceiling are of dark tongue and groove beaded board laid in diagonal panels. One of the church's most elegant features is the dado panels that are hand-combed and fingered on the church walls. A turned wood balustrade with molded wood railing cap and simple newel posts separate the congregation from the slightly elevated, segmental-arched sanctuary.

The Knotts Island United Methodist Church is unique among churches in the county in its interpretation of the Victorian or Late Gothic Revival style. Unlike other churches in the area, which borrow from the Gothic style as seen most typically in Gothic-arched windows and entrances, the Knotts Island Church illustrates some of the style's basic characteristics with its large massing, its emphasis on verticality with the church's ornate steeple, the broad gables of the roofline, the heavy moldings used on the exterior, and even the simple King's Posts. Some of the church's design may in part have been influenced by one of the county's greatest benfactors, J. P. Knapp, who lived on Mackey's Island.

Also emerging were a growing number of African American churches, particularly African Methodist Episcopal (A. M. E.) and Baptist churches. In the early years of

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Reconstruction, a former slave turned minister, the Reverend Andrew Cartwright, made his way to Currituck County. Between 1866 and 1867, Cartwright founded five churches in the northern end of the county, among them, the A.M.E. Zion Weeping Mary Disciples (CK0219) and Pilgrims Journey (CK0227) in the Moyock area and Good Hope A.M.E. (CK0263) in Sligo. All of the churches bear striking similarities in design, materials, and style, illustrating a much larger stylistic pattern of vernacular Gothic Revival interpretation among African American churches in the county.

Pilgrims Journey, built in 1907, is a one-story, front-gable roof block, originally covered with weatherboard and with double cornerboards. The current vinyl siding may obscure a central window opening such as those seen on Good Hope A.M.E. and Weeping Mary. Nevertheless, the roof retains its overhanging eaves with beaded board soffit and shaped curved rafter tails along the north and south slopes. Attached to the northeast wall of the façade is a two-story tower with a pyramidal roof; a pointed arch Gothic window is located in the top east wall. The church retains the original two entrance openings; in between each is a large pointed arch Gothic art glass window.

The Center Chapel A.M.E. Church (CK0190), located directly south of the Coinjock Colored School on Caratoke Highway, is a small one-story frame church once covered with weatherboard. This current buildings was built sometime during the first two decades of the twentieth century. At first glance, the Center Chapel is remarkably similar to the style and form of Weeping Mary Disciples Church (CK0219) in Tulls Creek; it seems likely that these two late-nineteenth-century churches were constructed about the same time. Both feature front-gable roofs with overhanging eaves and heavy cornice returns; even the

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location of its interior brick flue on the lower roof slope is identical. Instead of Weeping Mary's Gothic arched window in the front-gable end, the Center Chapel features a lunette window. Double-leaf wood four- paneled doors flanked by Gothic-arched art glass windows set in rectangular molded wood surrounds mark the central entrance. Another interesting feature of the church is its windows; in addition to the windows mentioned above, the church has pointed arch 1/1 wood sash, art glass windows with wood pointed arch molded surrounds. Attached to the northeast corner of the façade is a two-story tower with a pyramidal roof; a shed pent articulates each story. Like Weeping Mary Disciples, the Center Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church conveys the signature elements of the Gothic Revival style, particularly through its windows, as well as the quiet dignity and simplicity of the small African American rural church.

Architecture
Houses

The period from the end of the Civil War to approximately the turn of the twentieth-century has been dubbed by one of the county's historians the "Golden Age of Building."[108] Good farm prices, the increasing demand for waterfowl, and successful fishing operations

[108] Roy E. Sawyer, "A Tour of Historic Sites," in *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1973, p. 30.

meant more residents could either modernize or build new ones their houses. With increasing mechanization, mass production of housing materials from lumber to nails to ornaments, meant cheaper construction. It also signaled the beginning of a standardization of decorative ornament and rooflines. New plans for houses, such as crosswing, along with the reshaping of the exterior façade to more asymmetrical lines, marked a new direction in local architecture. Ells and wings, already a common sight as additions to earlier buildings, were now incorporated into the design of late-nineteenth-century houses. Porches and windows might be enlivened, as owners, seizing on pattern books and catalogues, could order architectural elements such as brackets or moldings that would modernize their houses. The growing popularity of the Queen Anne and other Victorian period styles expressed itself in many Currituck homes.[109]

One of the most distinctive of these period styles was the Italianate style. Inspired by romantic interpretations of the grand Italian country homes of Tuscany and Umbria, the Italianate style emphasized symmetry of mass and strong vertical lines emphasized by tall, slender windows. The style also boasted exuberant window decoration that included hood moldings; elaborate brackets, scrolls and pendants were also found not only around the windows but the rooflines too. Like the Queen Anne style, the Italianate design was easily assimilated into the rural vernacular of town and farm dwellings.

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109 Catherine Bishir. *North Carolina Architecture.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press with the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, 1990. p. 343.

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One example of the vernacular Italianate style in the county, and the second oldest dwelling in Currituck village, is the Walker-Snowden House (CK0082) built in c.1875. The T-shaped, two-story, five-bay, dwelling stands relatively untouched. The side- gable roof features overhanging eaves with heavy wood cornice returns in the gable ends, a boxed cornice, and two interior end brick chimneys with heavy corbelled caps and curved metal hoods. The house is sheathed in weatherboard, has cornerboards, and 2/2 double-hung sash windows with molded surrounds and heavy molded drip hoods. The central entrance features double-leaf entrance doors with a bracketed transom and paneled sidelights. Although the overall exterior appearance is restrained, it is the hipped roof front porch that displays the ornament so closely associated with the Italianate style with its molded cornice, square columns, heavy milled scrolled brackets with decorative scrollwork and bracketed capitals, and sawnwork frieze.

The interior plan of the house features door surrounds with stylized pediment tops. Some of the interior doors were grained, a popular decorative painting technique common in the nineteenth century. All of the fireplaces, including the two in the downstairs parlors and the two in the front upstairs bedrooms, have their original mantels. Wilson Walker built the Walker-Snowden House sometime during the 1870s. An unknown Baltimore carpenter carried out the work, and completed the first story interiors, which, in part, explains some of the home’s unique ornamentation. Mr. Walker himself finished the upstairs interior, including the distinctive two-shelf fireplace mantels with stylized columnettes and paneled surrounds.

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The architecture that is probably most synonymous and certainly the most popular, of the Victorian period is the Queen Anne style. Despite the design's English roots, Queen Anne architecture, once enthusiastically embraced by Americans, crossed over social and economic boundaries to become one of the most pervasive styles throughout the county. With a pleasing visual array of numerous architectural elements and ornament that appeared almost playful next to the somber lines of the Gothic Revival and the previous simplicity of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles, Queen Anne buildings borrowed freely and exuberantly from across the architectural lexicon. Combining textures, patterns, light and shadow, the style also embraced color and materials that resulted in two and three-story houses with rambling plans, flowing porches, colored glass openings, lacy wrought iron balustrades, gingerbread roof ornaments and windows of all shapes and sizes.

The West-Meiggs House (CK0173) in Barco, is a late nineteenth-century house unusual in the county for its elaborate use of the popular Queen Anne style. Instead of the dominant front-gable roof, two-story, projecting bay window block seen in many of the houses in the South, front-gabled bay window blocks on the northwest and southwest corners of the façade and its single two-story bay window blocks on the south and north gable ends of the house distinguish the West-Meiggs House. What remains of the original elaborate Queen Ann ornamentation is seen in the bargeboards with a stylized king post with small drop pendant and semi-circular milled and pierced ornament, the small two-light window openings, the pedimented pent, and the original fish-scale shingles since covered with vinyl on the east, north, and south gable ends. Also notable are the two brick chimneys with corbelled caps and brick round arched hoods; the only other examples of this chimney type are seen in the single interior chimney at the Currituck Jail and a house near Moyock.

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The original plan of the house consists of a central hall with three rooms on the first floor and three rooms on the second floor. Five paneled single-leaf wood doors have their original hardware and molded door surrounds marked with bulls-eye corner blocks and one-light transoms above. Every room has a fireplace, each with a different mantel design. Among the unique features of the house are the large raised panel surrounds around closet doors. An ornate heavy painted square columned newel post has raised decoration and elaborate moldings, turned balusters, and risers on the quarter turn hallway staircase; a landing newel post features an acorn drop pendant.

The John Bunyan Owens (CK0119) House, a two-and-a-half-story late nineteenth-century-Victorian home, still retains many of its original elements, including the Queen Anne stained glass windows, the intricately carved and pierced bargeboards, and scalloped shingles decorating each of the home's gable ends, although the brightly painted turned posts with brackets that once supported the hipped-roof wrap-around porch, have been lost. A small gablet with a raking cornice and scalloped shingles in the end marks the entrance.

One of the better examples of a late nineteenth-century Victorian dwelling found in Powells Point is the Walter Scott Newburn Jr. House (CK0144). The two-story, five-bay, single-pile building is a c.1860 weatherboard cottage with later Victorian updating. The two side gables have heavy cornice returns with small rectangular louvered vents. A smaller central gable located on the façade is distinguished by a covering of sawtooth shingles with a diamond-shaped louvered vent. Decorating all the gable ends are decorative pierced bargeboards with spindlework. A large porch wraps around the west wall of the house, spanning the length of the rear two-story addition with side-gable roof.

The interior of the house has remained mostly untouched. The small entrance hall has a beaded board ceiling with beaded board wainscoting. A half-landing staircase features a turned wood balustrade with heavy wood acorn-styled pendants; the main turned wood newel post with a stylized acorn element on top is the same as that found in the Walter Scott Newburn Sr. House across the road. Another similarity to the senior Newburn's house is diagonally patterned beaded board walls and beaded board ceiling in a downstairs bedroom. Fireplace surrounds tend toward the elaborate; the dining room fireplace, for instance, has a scalloped cornice, a raised molded wood centerpiece with a bullseye medallion and square pilasters with the same bullseye motif in the center and molded base.

In Moyock, the Martin J. Poyner House (CK0237) is a two-story Queen Ann-style dwelling. Built in 1902, the T-shaped house, covered with novelty siding, is similar in plan and footprint to dwellings in the southern part of the county, particular in the façade's slightly projecting two-story front-gable bays. These buildings, however, are comparatively modest, even restrained, when compared with the Poyner dwelling with its Eastlake influences. The hipped roof wrap-around porch features a spindle frieze and unusually detailed milled and pierced brackets. Another unusual bracket styling is seen underneath corner edges of the projecting two-story, front gabled bay. The north, south, and west gable ends of the building are also highly ornate in style. In addition to the molded cornice and returns, the gables feature narrow diagonally cut wood strips arranged in a pattern that simulates a sunburst styling. The gable ends are marked by paired, single-light hinged windows with molded drip hoods with saw tooth ornament. The pattern is repeated with the

building's 2/2 wood sash windows, which also feature heavy scrolled, console-like brackets.

Another example of the Queen Anne style with a triple-A roof seen primarily in the northern end of Currituck County is the Henry Dozier House (CK0263), in Tulls Creek. Built in 1908 by Dozier, a prosperous farmer and merchant, the I-House dwelling was originally covered with German siding, a cladding type not often seen in the county. The roof features a boxed and molded cornice with heavy returns. Located in each gable end are elaborate scrolled wood collarbeams, reminiscent of Gothic Revival ornament. The dining room features an unusual fireplace surround; unlike the majority in the county, which feature fluted engaged pilasters with scrolled brackets, this surround consists of a simple wood mantel and shelf with Doric-styled columns, a type not seen anywhere else in the county.

Commercial

Some of the county's best surviving examples of commercial buildings date from the late nineteenth century. One of a small complex of buildings owned by the Walker Family is the former E.R. Johnson-Snowden General Store (CK0084). Constructed c. 1897, the building retains much of its original character both inside and out, and provides a glimpse into what was once a fixture in small communities across the South: the general store. This one-story building features the original false-front parapeted storefront and two recessed entrances, which are marked by double-leaf wood doors flanked by large four-light display windows. A shed-roof front porch supported by battered wood posts on brick pedestals was an early twentieth-century addition. At one time, gas pumps were located

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outside the store entrance. The interior remains comparatively unchanged, with many of the original shelves, which feature bracketed cornices with its zigzag sawn ornament. The counters are no less impressive, with paneled and bracketed bases and diagonal beaded board countertops. According to Margaret Walker, by 1911 the Johnson store was "one of the leading places to shop in the county." The store stocked a multitude of goods, ranging from everyday necessities, such as foodstuffs, hardware, seed, and livestock feed to clothing, hats, shoes, patent medicines, and second-hand furniture. A post office was also located in the store. Johnson later went on to a successful career in politics, serving as a member of the state Senate in 1909. Sometime during the early 1930s, William Henry Snowden took over the store, which continued to serve as a general store to the Currituck community until the 1960s.

Located roughly northeast of the Edmund Gallop property in Harbinger, is a one-and-a-half-story frame building that has served as a commercial, social, and agricultural structure. The c. 1908 Gallop Store (CK0131), built sometime around 1910, is covered with board-and-batten siding resting on brick piers. The front-gable roof has exposed rafter tails and in the front gable end is a small loft opening that has been boarded up. Marking the entrance is an oversized shed-roof hood supported by heavy wood braces sheltering by double-leaf vertical-board doors. Located on either side of the store's main block are two shed-roof, open-bay additions.

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Hunt Clubs

The operation of hunt clubs, both private and public continued to prosper in Currituck County. By the early twentieth century, a number of establishments were operating throughout the county, including mainland Currituck, the Outer Banks and several islands including Knotts, Monkey and Swan Islands. The prevailing architectural style for many of the large hunt clubs was the Shingle Style. The design, which rose to prominence following the 1876 Philadephia Centennial, celebrated early American colonial houses with their plain, monotoned, and unornamented shingled surfaces as well as their massing. The use of shingles suggested the passage of time, as well as blending into nature. And even though some of the hunt club buildings were the products of sophisticated designs, their roughhewn siding and rambling shape suggests buildings that were thrown together without a thoughtful plan. By covering most or all of a building with shingles stained a single color, architects created a uniform, unembellished surface.

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Located on the east side of busy Woodleigh Road on Knotts Island are two stone gate posts bordered by woods and a modern vineyard. Each post is marked by a marble plaque bearing the words "Currituck Gunning and Fishing Club," (CK0198) one of Currituck County's most architecturally significant hunting lodges. A long gravel drive that curves gently near the waters of Currituck Sound leads to its beautifully landscaped grounds and buildings, situated on one of the higher pieces of ground on the island. The two-story, five bay, cedar shingled building was constructed in 1905 on the same site where an earlier lodge once stood. The hipped roof has three brick chimneys with corbelled caps. Marking the dwelling's central entrance is a two-story slightly projecting front-gable roof block with wide overhanging eaves and a large lunette window in the gable end. The original one-story, one bay, hipped roof porch has been enclosed and extended; a smaller lunette window matching the original is seen in the newer front-gable porch roof. The central single-leaf wood paneled door has an unusual graduated wood surround with two sidelights that give the entrance a slightly art deco look. Attached to the north wall of the dwelling is a small one-story breezeway that leads to a c. 1884, one-and-a-half story frame and shingle addition that once housed the caretakers. This building was moved to the property from the Outer Banks. The gambrel roof has a single interior brick chimney with a corbelled cap; three front-gable dormers with 6/6 wood sash windows are seen on the east front slope.

The interior of the lodge is no less impressive. All of the floors are heart pine; the original single-leaf four-paneled wood doors have molded wood surrounds and retain their porcelain knobs and hardware. The first floor features a free-flowing plan with rooms loosely arranged around an open hall.To the south of the main hall is the men's den, which has two

large brick fireplaces, a cross-beam ceiling of dark wood, and beaded board wainscoting along the south wall. One of the more interesting rooms in the house is the gun room, located just to the right of the hall staircase. The room still has the original lockers that came from a stevedore union hall and gun racks.

The second oldest hunt club, the Swan Island Club (CK0332)'s current complex of buildings was constructed during the years 1913-1914 and remains among Currituck County's most intact grouping of hunt club structures, consisting of five frame and shingle-covered buildings. The main clubhouse, a two-story, five bay, square-shaped building has a hipped roof, and four brick chimneys; the roof is topped by a large glass-enclosed cupola with a hipped roof. The complex also includes a two-story, side-gable roof "long house" that may have served as the decoy and equipment building, a two-story, three bay, side-gable roof dwelling for the guides, a duck house, and a small one-bay boat house.

A Shifting Landscape 1910-1945

The first decades of the twentieth century brought some change to mainland Currituck County. The population held steady and agriculture was still the dominant way of life. By the 1920s, however, the appearance of paved roads and highways marked a gradual shift away from the water transportation that had served many residents for years. Slowly, businesses appeared along the highways, including stores, car dealerships, gas stations, and restaurants as well as a number of houses. Almost all the small communities in the mainland county were served by a local post office, though the county still had no incorporated towns. By the 1920s, Moyock had become a busy commercial center with three general stores, all of which were within a block or so of the depot. One store was owned by the Poyner family

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who also owned a bottling works that dispensed and delivered soda, and by 1935, an oil company.

Until the 1930s, steam-powered ships navigated the waters of Currituck Sound. Powered by a paddlewheel, the boats were economical to build, and maintained a strong presence in the county long after they had passed from use in other parts of the state. These steamships were often built with two decks and could carry everything from people to livestock, from foodstuffs to building supplies. The ships were also used to push barges. The ships provided the main source of transportation for the county until the advent of the highway system.[110]

By the 1920s, with the growing use of the automobile, it was clear that the existing roads in the county would have to be improved. While horses and buggies or wagons could still navigate the rough roadways, automobiles could not. With the state absorbing the county roads into its own growing statewide network of highways, road improvements finally got under way in the county. Construction crews were brought in along with heavy road building equipment to begin a large-scale road-building project. New roadbeds were created, graded, and leveled. Gone were many of the curving and twisting trails and corduroy roads that had made up Currituck's roadways. Road crews also dredged the canals across the marshes, creating causeways that connected communities such as Churchs Island and Gibbs Woods to the mainland. In 1928, the first concrete roads were poured from the Virginia line to Grandy. Between 1930 and 1933, the highway from Grandy to Point Harbor was surfaced and a

[110] Meverden, Keith. "Currituck Sound Regional Remote Sensing Survey, Currituck County, North Carolina," unpublished masters thesis, 2005, p. 32.

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bridge was built across the Currituck Sound between Point Harbor and Kitty Hawk. By 1937, a new highway had been built from Barco to Camden County in the west.[111]

One of the most important developments in the county was the formation of the Currituck Agricultural Extension Service. The seeds of extension work began in the late nineteenth century when federal and state movements saw the need for practical education to help working-class people improve their lives. A series of federal acts helped to establish extension services in the states. In 1862, the federal Morrill Act provided funds from the sale of public lands to establish land-grant colleges for teaching agriculture and mechanical arts. In North Carolina, the funds helped to finance what is now North Carolina State University, founded in 1887. A Second Morrill Act, passed in 1890, extended the benefits to African Americans in sixteen southern states; in North Carolina, the school that is now North Carolina A&T State University was established. The 1887 Hatch Act allowed for the creation of agricultural experiment stations to conduct agricultural research and discover scientific knowledge to be shared with students and farmers. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 strengthened the concept of service to the community by creating a cooperative system through which land-grant college administrators could join with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct demonstration work. It was this act that formally established what was then called the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service.[112]

Efforts to improve agricultural production were at the heart of the Extension' Service's early activities. Beginning in 1920, Demonstration Agents visited throughout the county to offer advice and education to local farmers. Initially, their efforts met with resistance. A report from J.E. Chandler, the Emergency Demonstration Agent, indicated that

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[111] Carlin Forbes, "The Roads of Currituck," in *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985, pp. 23-24.
[112] "A Brief History," Cooperative Extension Service, located at: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/history/

"County organization work has not been wholly accepted. An effort has at least been made towards getting this work started, but due to the backwardness of the people in the county . . . this all important work has not been appreciated as it should have been."[113] Yet, efforts to reach county farmers eventually proved successful.

By 1925, in addition to the farm demonstration agents, the county also had a number of women home agents, who visited homes in the county to offer assistance to women and children. Most of the home demonstration projects in the first few years directly related to commodities that could be sold to increase family income. Women and girls sold canned goods, eggs, poultry, ham, turnip greens, and fresh vegetables, and by doing so earned a small amount of money. Some of them used that money to buy labor-saving devices for the home. One popular device was the fireless cooker, which allowed farm women to cook poultry while they were doing other necessary work on the farm. A number of home demonstration clubs were established throughout the various communities in the county. In many cases, the women met at a club house where they offered instruction in everything from food-related projects to cleaning, increased storage space, and sewing clothing and hats.

Another popular program conducted was the beautification projects in which bushes, flowers, and trees were planted for homes, businesses, schools, and churches. In addition to these services, home agents helped create Girls Clubs or Canning Clubs in which young farm girls learned how to make money through tending gardens and preserving and selling the produce. Other goals of the home demonstration agents included a campaign for more dairy

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[113] Ibid., J.E. Chandler, "Report," 1920, n.p.

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cows, poultry, and fall gardens, and the establishment of more Girls Clubs in the county public schools.

The Decline of Market Shooting 1918-1930

Private hunt clubs and market hunters continued to take advantage of the great flocks of waterfowl that to came to Currituck Sound. Because there were no laws regulating waterfowl hunting, market hunters and clubs were free to kill as many birds as they could. This wholesale slaughter of birds, however, did not, go unnoticed. In his book *Our Vanishing Wildlife*, William T. Hornaday decried the practice of market hunting:

> Of all the meat-shooters, the market-gunners who prey on wild fowl and ground game birds for the big-city markets are the most deadly to wild life. Enough geese, ducks, brant, quail, ruffed grouse, prairie chickens, heath hens and wild pigeons have been butchered by gunners and netters for "the market" to have stocked the whole world. . . . In the United States the great slaughtering-grounds have been Cape Cod; Great South Bay, New York; Currituck Sound, North Carolina . . . . .[114]

Hornaday also protested the lack of strong game laws in North Carolina, stating that the

[114] William T. Hornaday, *Our Vanishing Wild Life*, New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1913, p. 64.

"game laws of North Carolina form a droll crazy-quilt of local and state measures, effective and ineffective." But he saved his harshest critique for the market hunters of Currituck

County, who

> persistently maintain[ed] the bloodiest slaughter-pen for waterfowl that exists anywhere on the Atlantic Coast. There is no bag limit on waterfowl, and unlimited spring shooting. So far as waterfowl are concerned, conditions could hardly be worse, except by the use of punt guns. . . . The market gunners of Currituck Sound are a scourge and a pest to the wild-fowl life of the Atlantic Coast. For their own money profit, they slaughter by wholesale the birds that annually fly through twenty-two states. It is quite useless to suggest anything to North Carolina in modern game laws. As long as a killable bird remains, she will not stop the slaughter. Her standing reply is "It brings a lot of money into Currituck County; and the people want the money." Even the members of the sportsmen's clubs can shoot wild fowl in Currituck County, quite without limit; and I am told that the privilege often is abused. [115]

The number of birds killed in Currituck during this period were far worse than even Hornaday imagined. According to the record book of the Pine Island Club, between 1888 and 1910 members killed 72,124 waterfowl, including geese, swans, snipes, black ducks, mallards, widgeon, gadwall geese, and Canada geese. The record kill for a day's hunt was 892 ruddy ducks by Russell and Van Griggs. This reckless killing decimated the numbers

[115] Ibid., p.293.

of waterfowl on the Currituck Sound, and market hunting was outlawed in 1918 by an act that made the selling of migratory waterfowl illegal.[116]

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The ban of market hunting left many county residents without work. Some men began working in commercial fishing; others pursued farming full-time. But perhaps the biggest employers for the out-of-work hunters were the private hunt clubs. Men became caretakers and guides, women worked as cooks and maids. Boat builders and decoy carvers found steady demand for their crafts. Locals also made a living as independent hunting guides. Some families began providing room and board to hunters during the season in order to make ends meet. Some local market hunters continued to hunt and sell ducks illegally, but on a much smaller scale.

The Great Depression and World War II

The collapse of the stock market in October 1929 and the coming of the Great Depression had a tremendous impact on the county. As in the rest of the South, the agricultural economy in Currituck had already been struggling since the early 1920s. The Depression only deepened the problem. Small business owners were particularly vulnerable; with less money in circulation, there were fewer paying customers; with the absence of credit and financing, businesses foundered. Although large farms generally continued to operate, small farmers suffered, having fewer resources and little money to fall back on. Adding to their misery was a terrible drought that struck in 1930 and 1931.

[116] Sea Grant North Carolina, "Coastwatch High Season 2006: Carotank...Currituck: Land of the Wild Goose"

Throughout the 1920s, the state of agriculture in the county had remained fairly constant; the typical farm consisted of approximately 92 acres; the largest number of farms (763) were classified as general, meaning that they did a little bit of everything as opposed to

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the 202 farms that grew grain crops or the 304 farms that harvested specialty crops, such as corn or potatoes. The percentage of tenancy remained constant as well; between 1920 and 1930, tenants in the county did twenty-one percent of the farming. Yet, the majority of farms had neither running water nor electricity. Only 27 farm homes had a telephone.

Federal programs to fight the Great Depression, or at least to counter the human suffering, brought almost $440 million into North Carolina by 1938, with the most important New Deal farm program, the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), paying farmers a modest sums to grow fewer crops and to raise fewer livestock, leading to better prices and higher incomes. State colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture emphasized farm management. Extension agents taught farmers about marketing and helped farm groups organize both buying and selling cooperatives. At the same time, extension home agents continued their mission to teach farm women the importance of good nutrition, canning surplus foods, house gardening, home poultry production, home nursing, furniture refinishing, and sewing, all skills that might provide some extra income or help families survive through the years of economic crisis. The success of the New Deal agricultural programs, however, came at a price. Reduced production meant that fewer tenant farmers and sharecroppers were needed; many left seeking better opportunities elsewhere.

One of the more popular programs in the county was the "Live-at-Home" program, in which farm families were encouraged to provide most of their own food. Perhaps one of the more important programs to come out of this service in Currituck was the emergence of the

roadside markets. Elizabeth Sanderlin, an agent for the Farmers Home Administration office, helped implement a program in which roadside markets were created along the main highway at which farmers could sell extra produce. At the time, only one farm family was

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interested in participating. In 1939, the Currituck Farm and Home Market opened near Poplar Branch, selling vegetables, poultry products, canned goods, homemade rugs and aprons. The idea gradually caught on, with many other farm families opening up their own markets to sell goods to people traveling on the highway.[117]

Another important program supported by the Home Demonstration Office was Rural Electrification. In 1930, a group of women went to the Virginia Electric and Power Company to request that Currituck be considered for electrification. That year, a line was extended from Suffolk, Virginia to Moyock; by 1936, Electricity was available to county residents for the first time. Lines initially extended as far south as Poplar Branch. By 1939, the majority of the county was being serviced, with the exception of Knotts Island and Churchs Island, neither of which received electricity until 1945. The impact of rural electrification was enormous; by 1938, it was reported that people were buying increasing numbers of electrical appliances. The installation of bathrooms in homes was ialso ncreasing, as was the use of running water and electricity in the kitchen.[118]

During World War II, the extension service again worked with farmers and their families, along with 4-H club members, to secure the production increases essential to the war effort.

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[117] Jeffrey S. Hampton, "The root of Currituck's roadside markets, " *The Virginian-Pilot,* August 19, 2001, n.p.

[118] Nat and Evelyn Sanderson and Elizabeth P. Sanderlin, "Rural Electrification," in the *Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*, Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1985, p. 53-54.

Local women were led by Home Demonstration and extension agents in programs to increase food production and preservation, which included tending livestock, growing tobacco, driving tractors, and doing any other tasks to ensure that farms produced greater

amounts of food. Women across the state raised Victory Gardens following the February 1942 "Victory Garden Week" sponsored by the Agricultural Extension Service. North Carolina 4-H club members also aided the war effort primarily through the "Food for Victory" program and the "Feed a Fighter" campaign. The Victory Garden Program was one of the most popular and successful programs of the war years; it provided seed, fertilizer, and simple gardening tools for the victory gardeners. An estimated 15 million families planted victory gardens in 1942, and in 1943 some 20 million victory gardens produced more than 40 percent of the vegetables grown for that year's fresh consumption. [119]

Religion and Education

Currituck County's school system might have continued its desultory progress if not for the interest of New York businessman and publisher J.P. Knapp. Knapp was drawn to the area for the hunting; by 1918, he had purchased Mackeys Island near Knotts Island and built a 2,500-acre hunting estate. During this period, one of Knapp's publications, *Collier's Weekly*, was running a series of articles on American education. At some point, Knapp became interested in the area's school system and its problems. He used his own money to build schools and teacherages, start educational programs, hire a traveling nurse and even supplement teachers' salaries. He also recruited a woman from Washington's Federal Bureau

[119] "A Brief History," Cooperative Extension Service, located at: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/history/

of Education to serve as superintendent of the county school system. When county officials could not meet her salary demands, Knapp again used his own resources to make up the difference. Knapp also helped start up a "bookmobile" library in the 1930s. Currituck County

residents gathered around a Model A Ford that Knapp had donated, which carried books to be loaned out. Almost single-handedly, J. P. Knapp transformed the county school system into one of the best in the area.[120]

The Knotts Island Elementary School (CK0204) was built by J.P. Knapp as part of a larger effort to provide better schools, teachers, and education for the Currituck community. With the Knotts Island School, Knapp spared little expense providing not only a school that was structurally sound, but one of great beauty as well. The school is one of the few high-style examples of Colonial Revival architecture seen in Currituck County. This popular architectural style was used to construct many institutional buildings such as schools and courthouses in the early twentieth century.

Built in 1925 with money that Knapp donated, the H-shaped schoolhouse was constructed of brick. Underneath each window is a small slightly projecting course of brick that appears to be a drip mold. The hipped roof is covered with slate shingles; a bell tower with a conical copper roof, finial, and octagonal base houses the original school bell. The central entrance to the original schools is marked by a projecting front-gable pedimented pent roof portico with full entablature originally supported by paired wood columns. The interior of the original school retains a good deal of its building fabric, including the oversized and shaped wood rafters and king posts that are said to resemble those used in J.P. Knapp's hunting lodge on Mackey's Island.

[120] Jones, "The Introduction of Modern Education into Currituck County," pp. 71-93.

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Sears, Roebuck and Company president Julius Roswenwald and African American educator Booker T. Washington, in an effort to provide better schools for African American children throughout the rural South, conceived the Rosenwald School Project. From 1915 to approximately 1930, more than 5,300 school buildings were constructed throughout fifteen southern states, including North Carolina. In Currituck County, three schools were built in Coinjock, Gregory and Moyock. Of the three, only the Coinjock and Moyock buildings have survived. The concept for the schools was straightforward; Rosenwald contributed approximately one-fifth of the monies toward the schools while black communities raised the rest through donations from blacks and whites and the local white school board, which agreed to operate the facilities. It was a radical undertaking for the time, a Rosenwald Fund official later wrote, "not merely a series of schoolhouses, but ... a community enterprise in cooperation between citizens and officials, white and colored."[121]

Rosenwald schools had a specific look about them, thanks in part to the efforts of two African American architecture professors at Tuskegee Insitute, Robert R. Taylor, a Wilmington, North Carolina native, and W. A. Hazel who designed a pattern book for the school buildings. For instance, large banks of windows as seen in the west rear elevation of the Coinjock School made the most of natural light during a period when electricity was at a premium in many Southern rural communities. The arrangement of the windows on this

[121] Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review LXV: 4 (October 1988).

elevation also guaranteed that the students would have the advantage of lighting on their left side, which was considered optimal for reading.

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The school designs were simple and straightforward as illustrated by the "Two Teacher Plan" specifically created for a school facing east and west. In the case of the Coinjock school (CK0165), the plan included two large classrooms; the slightly projecting gable-front with its curve-shaped rafter ends, housed the Industrial Room. The two inset entrance porches—each classroom had its own entrance—were located on the north and south walls of the projection. The Moyock Rosenwald School (CK0335) built in 1922 is an example of the four-teacher school plan with some variation. The one-story, side-gable roof building is sheathed in weatherboard and marked by a pair of single-leaf wood doors in the central bay, flanked by four 6/6 sash windows.

Another of the few remaining symbols of segregated educational facilities in northern Currituck County is the Currituck County Training School (CK0339) located on Caratoke Highway in Sligo. Until its establishment of the Currituck County Training School (CK0339), secondary education for African Americans in the county was virtually non-existent. In 1925, the land and the chapel were sold to members of the Grand United Order of the Odd Fellows, Lodge No. 10557, an African-American fraternal organization in the county. The school originally consisted of two buildings: the Methodist Snowden Temple Church, a one-and-a-half-story frame building and one-story lodge building that formerly belonged to the Odd Fellows. In 1931, the property with its buildings was sold to the Currituck County Board of Education for the purpose of establishing a high school for blacks. In 1943, the school suffered considerable damage from a hurricane. The school board

ordered the razing of the original buildings and authorized the building of a new school. With the opening of a new white elementary school in Poplar Branch, however, the board decreed

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that the former white Jarvisburg Elementary School be moved to the County Training School site.

The building is covered in beaded weatherboard, the walls are defined by double cornerboards with an intersecting-gable roof with returns. Located on the front west slope of the school is a front-gable dormer with paired window openings; an identical dormer is also found on the south slope of the roof. The front entrances to the school were originally marked by one-story, one bay, front-gable porches with pedimented pents, supported by paired square wood columns. The school stayed in operation until 1950 when the county opened Currituck Union School for African-American students in Barco. The County Training School was then closed.

Religious activities continued in the county with little variation, the Methodists and Baptists remaining the dominant religious communities in the county. Many congregations built new churches or added on to existing buildings. One of the most distinguished buildings built during this period is the second Moyock Methodist Church (CK0245), built in 1937. The church stands as a good, and only, example of a twentieth-century interpretation of the temple-front Greek Revival style found in the county. The one-story brick building is laid in stretcher bond with a side-gable roof. Dominating the front façade is a large, one-story, projecting front-gable portico; its pedimented pent roof is trabeated, with full entablature including dentils and a Doric frieze. Supporting the roof are oversized Tuscan columns.

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Surmounting the entrance is a molded frieze similar to those seen at the Cox and Walcott Houses, also located in the Moyock area. Distinguishing this frieze is the inclusion of small raised wood crosses as part of the surround.

Architecture

Houses

During the 1920s and 1930s, architectural taste in the county remained deeply rooted in the nineteenth-century tradition. Wealthy homeowners still tended to live in older houses, periodically updating them, but overall the county's tastes were conservative. It appears that there was not a great deal of new construction; quite often houses stayed in families. What new dwellings were constructed tended to be a variation on the bungalow: a one-to one-and-a-half-story dwelling with a full-length porch often supported by battered posts, or columnettes resting on brick piers. Brackets or braces along the roof and porch were also common. However, over time the term came to denote any small house that might have a remote connection to the basic elements of a bungalow.

Between the two world wars, the bungalow was one of the most pervasive forms of new middle-class housing in the rural South. In Currituck County, the bungalow tended to be quite plain, with almost no exterior decoration. The Spruill House (CK0328) in Grandy, a

one-and-a-half-story, front-gable roof, weatherboard dwelling with a simple hipped roof, is a good example of the typical bungalow that once dotted Caratoke Highway. The building also is a reminder of how quickly once-common building types and styles can quickly pass from

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view with change and progress in any area. The Houska House (CK0123) in Harbinger, and the house at 1530 Tulls Creek illustrates more closely what came to symbolize the "ideal" of the bungalow. Both homes are situated in lots with plenty of trees, plantings and lawn. Both are one-and-half-story with engaged porches that offer generous shelter. Using brick and wood, the homes embrace simple decoration as seen in the wood brackets along the rooflines. In short, the dwellings and their surrounding depict a successful partnership of the built and natural worlds.

The bungalow design was a popular model for kit houses. One of three documented Sears and Roebuck kit houses in Currituck County was built c. 1925 and is located on Knotts Island at the edge of the Mackey Island Wildlife Refuge. This kit house, now owned by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, is the "Madelia" model featured in the Sears Kit House catalogues from 1918 to 1922. Certainly one of this building's unique features is its jerkinhead roof, with heavy cornice returns and jerkinhead dormers on the east and west roof slopes, a roof type not seen anywhere else in the county. Sears kit houses could be customized, and it appears that the original owner kept the wood balustrade design but not the brick wing walls seen in the original design and the Sears advertisement. The building may have been purchased through the Munden General Store in Pungo, Virginia, at which kit

house catalogues for companies such as Sears and Aladdin were available. The house would have been shipped by rail; with the pieces brought to the site by truck.[122]

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One of the more interesting bungalow variations found in Currituck County is the John Gallop House (CK0125) in Harbinger. Overall, the façade maintains a simple symmetry. Giving a classical touch to the house is the Palladian-styled window in the front gable end that consists of a central circle top arched 3/1 light flanked by rectangular 3-light windows. Directly in front of the window is a small horizontal piece of wood that appears to have once simulated a "King Post" within a decorative bargeboard. This particular window and bargeboard design is seen on a number of other bungalows throughout the county and may represent the purchase of ready-made millwork elements and plans from a firm such as Kramer Brothers in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. Like the John Lloyd Gallop bungalow in Harbinger, the Aubrey Snowden House (CK0167) near Currituck village, is one of several bungalows in the county built during the 1920s and 1930s with the distinctive Palladian-inspired windows in the front-gable end. In this case, the window treatment consists of the center circle-top arch opening with diagonal muntins in the window top, flanked by two smaller, three vertical light, fixed openings.

A curious mix of Victorian formality and a vernacular bungalow open plan distinguishes the Stafford-Pruden House (CK0247) from other bungalows in the county. In many ways, the one-and-a-half-story, frame and weatherboard, three bay dwelling holds true to the bungalow

[122] Meg Greene Malvasi, "The Kit House in Southeastern Virginia: Architectural Documentation of Kit Houses Manufactured by Sears, Roebuck and Company Located within the Cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach, Virginia," William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research, July, 2006.

style as seen in the single and paired 3/1 Craftsman-styled sash windows, the single-leaf wood, three-light Craftsman-styled paneled door, and the one-story hipped roof porch supported by wood battered columns resting on brick piers. The current owner's father, Mr. Stafford, and his brother-in-law designed the house, built between 1935 and 1936. Mr. NPS

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Stafford had only one request for the house plan: that a formal central hall, reminiscent of the hall in the older Victorian house in which he grew up, be included. As a result, the entrance door opens into a small rectangular formal hall with two doorways: one leading to the living room, the other, which opens into a larger hall, leading to the first floor rooms and staircase to the half-story. This area is more reminiscent of the open plans seen in many bungalow houses.

In spite of the overwhelming popularity of the bungalow, some county residents stuck with more traditional designs. Certainly one of the latest I-houses to be built in the area, as well as an interesting variation on the two-story, five bay I-houses, is the c. 1928 Seth Aydlett House (CK0240) found just north of the hump-backed bridge and Moyock village. Unlike other five-bay I- houses seen in the northern part of the county such as those at Shawboro and Tulls Creek, the Aydlett House breaks with the overall Georgian-influenced symmetry of the façade by simply rearranging the intersecting gable and entrance door. Drawing the eye upward is the off-center front-gable located at the southeast end of the façade with the typical roof elements of a molded cornice, simple bargeboard, and heavy cornice returns with a central window opening. An unusual shingle arrangement of alternating rows of sawtooth and square shingles is a pattern not seen anywhere else in the county, and offers an interesting break from the traditional side-gable roof arrangement seen in the most common I-houses. A hipped roof porch supported by turned wood posts

connected to a turned wood balustrade spans the façade. A two-story side-gable addition flanked by shed roof additions is attached to the rear west of the dwelling.

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Commercial

Small community and crossroads stores continued their role of serving not only providing goods in Currituck County, but also serving as post offices and social centers. With the growing numbers of automobiles along the county roads, more stores updated their businesses by adding gas pumps. During the Depression, some new commercial establishments were built in “domestic” or "house and canopy" style of architecture for gas stations that consisted of a small house-like building with an attached canopy which protected the gas pumps and the customer from the weather.

Built in 1930 to give a relative a job, the C.A. Wright Store (CK0315) was a mainstay along Caratoke Highway. Located in the Jarvisburg vicinity, the store, later run by Mrs. C. A. Wright, is part of a small complex of buildings including the c.1880 main house (CK0314) owned by the Wright family. The one-story, four bay, frame and weatherboard commercial building is typical of the rural mid-twentieth century general store and gas station that was constructed along the “house and canopy” design. The front-gable roof has a raking and boxed cornice and a beaded board soffit; an interior brick flue is located on the roof ridge. The store’s walls are defined by molded wood double cornerboards and still has its original paired 2/2 wood sash windows with simple wood surrounds. A modified hipped roof porch with boxed rafter tails, supported by square wood posts, marks the rather unique roofline, somewhat reminiscent of the H. Etheridge-Dwzonek Store in Spot (CK0134). Two of the

store's original gas pumps stand in front of the entrance. The interior of the store remains unchanged. The large main room and small office area, located in the front southeast corner, are covered with beaded board. Simple wood shelving lines the north and rear west walls with the original glass and wood paneled counters lined in front.

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Located near the busy Caratoke Highway in Spot is the Etheridge-Dzwonek Store and Gas Station (CK0134). The one-story gas station and general store was built sometime around 1930. A photograph taken in 1954 shows the building was originally clad in weatherboard. The hipped roof had exposed rafter tails; square brick posts resting on square brick piers with concrete caps supported the roof's front slope. The central entrance door was flanked by 9-light commercial windows. Attached to the rear of the commercial block is a one-story, frame and weatherboard, hipped-roof Bungalow-style residence with an interior corbelled brick chimney, Craftsman-styled 3/1 wood sash openings, and a hipped-roof porch supported by square wood columns resting on brick piers. The interior of the one-room store is relatively intact; the original shelves and one original counter remain, as do the cash registers.

Hunt Clubs

Even with the ban on market hunting in Currituck County, the area continued to draw sportsmen from all over the country. The Dews Island Hunt Club (CK0028), located on Dews Island was built in 1923, for J.W. Barom and Raymond Peel, and was little more than a grouping of small rooms. In 1929, the property was sold to a New York stockbroker, George

Eyer, who renovated the building, making the rooms larger, including the addition of a large reception hall, and adding heating and plumbing. Enclosed by a cypress picket fence, the modest-looking two-story frame building remains relatively unchanged; it still retains its cedar shingle siding with its central entrance marked by a one-story, one bay, slightly projecting front-gable enclosed porch. The hipped roof has a boxed cornice with a

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blind front-gable dormer on the west slope. On the east side wall of the house is an engaged brick exterior chimney with a single shoulder; an engaged brick flue pierces the rear south slope edge. The interior consists of eighteen rooms including the large formal reception hall, dining room, living room and kitchen on the first floor and bedrooms and baths on the second. Beginning in the 1950s, a number of additions were constructed.

The Grover Cleveland Sawyer Lodge (CK0135), operated from 1928 until 1962 and was one of three popular hunting lodges in the village of Spot. Sawyer's lodge was also the largest and only public hunting lodge in that areaConstructed in 1928, the lodge was a simple but sturdy two-story building resting on brick piers. The lodge was constructed of wood frame, covered with weatherboard, and later, wood shingles. The roof has shaped rafter tails with two interior brick corbeled chimney flues. The west wall of the house has two single-leaf wood four-paneled entrance doors located at the northwest and southwest corners; simple wood steps led to each entrance. The interior of the house featured bedroom walls covered by horizontal and vertical beaded board; the floors are tongue and groove pine with each paneled door entrances identified by a number. Each room also had its own flue openings where stoves were used to provide heat.

In addition to private group hunt clubs, a number of individuals built their own hunting lodges in Currituck County. In 1924, the former Morse Point Gunning Club, located in Back Bay was sold to William E. Corey, the former president of U. S. Steel. Corey renamed the property Buzzards Bay and built a one-story clubhouse and a caretakers residence. The lodge, was an unassuming building consisting of a one-and-a-half story, low, rambling building, covered with shingles. The most distinctive feature of Corey's estate

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was the 75-foot steel watchtower, which enabled Corey or his help to keep an eye on his property for poachers.[123]

In 1920, construction began on an imposing, two-and-a-half-story hunting lodge on Mackey Island. The house, built by New York publisher Joseph Palmer Knapp, was situated on a 2500 acre site, formerly owned by North Carolina author Thomas Dixon. Knapp's fondness for the Colonial Revival style, particularly that of Mount Vernon, is illustrated in the lavish lodge's exterior with its stately roofline and massive two-story porch.

Stirred by memories of trips to English estates and of his own English ancestry led New York newspaper publisher Ogden Reid to build his hunting sanctuary, the 350-acre compound known as The Flyaway (CK0300), on Knotts Island. The original lodge house was built in 1920; unlike the popular Shingle style favored by most hunting clubs or the decided Colonial Revival influences of Joseph P. Knapp's hunting estate, the Reid's house was designed more as a Jacobean Revival residence. The original house burned in 1959 and was rebuilt the following year.

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[123] Johnson and Coppedge, *Gun Clubs & Decoys*, 126-127.

By far, one of the most striking and distinctive buildings in Currituck County is Reid's "Farm Building" for his hunting estate. Built during the period 1928 to 1930, the building is unique both as hunt club architecture in Currituck, as well as a high-style example of a domestic outbuilding. The building's construction is also English-influenced and was possibly designed by New York architect Lafayette Goldstone. The two-story, U-shaped frame and brick building housed everything from the servants to carriages, cars and farm animals to the estate's heating system. Servants employed by the Reid family lived on the

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second floor of the west and north wings of the building. Interior details of the living quarters include plaster walls and heart pine flooring. On either side of a long hall covered by pine flooring, were sixteen rooms of varying sizes that housed anywhere from 3 to 4 people, or a small family to one or two persons. While not spacious, each room featured a four-paneled, single-leaf wood entrance door, plaster walls, a molded baseboard, at least one small closet area to hang clothing and at least one window. Two bathrooms, a kitchen and a small dining room completed the living quarters.

Currituck County, 1945-2006

The late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries brought change to Currituck County. Agriculture continued to dominate the county's economy; in response the Currituck Agricultural Extension Service stepped up its services to help farmers with a variety of issues including control of disease and insects on crops, raising livestock, marketing of crops and education on the county's soils to raise higher quality of produce and grains. Home demonstration agents continued to be active in the county home demonstration clubs where

women met to discuss home economics as well as engaging in a variety of activities from cookie-baking contests to providing aid after the devastation of Hurricane Donna in September 1960.[124]

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Although there was some continued commercial growth, the mainland of the county never experienced the growing numbers of tourists who now passed through on their way to the attractions of the beaches along the Outer Banks. But even though mainland Currituck never became the as popular a tourist destination as the Outer Banks, tourism in the form of fishing and hunting provided a tremendous boost to the local economy throughout the 1960s, even though the numbers of water fowl had diminished greatly since the Great Depression.

In the meantime, the county had to cope with a number of challenges. Among the most serious threats to the county was, and continues to be increased residential development as new subdivisions crowd out many of the historic buildings and farms, and as new residents strain the transportation system and other services. As the county becomes an increasingly popular tourist spot, there are threats to its natural resources as beach erosion, changes in water quality, and new development overtake the coast. Commercial development also threatens the quality of life in the county.

According to recent reports by the U.S. Census Bureau, Currituck County is the 72nd fastest growing county in America. The ranking was achieved by a 31.7 percent increase in population over the last 7 years. From an economic perspective Currituck has a high median income of $49,863, low unemployment, and low property tax rate. This accounts for the migration of many new residents. The unique landscape, the Outer Banks,

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[124] Georgia Kight, "Currituck Agricultural Extension Service," in *The Heritage of Currituck County 1985*, pp. 48-52.

the climate, and tourist attractions also attribute to the influx of people. Currituck, however, does not produce many jobs, and many of the existing jobs are seasonal. Approximately 76 percent of the citizens commute to jobs outside the county. Conventional places of employment only account for 5,460 workers, most with few or no skills. The growth of tourism leads North Carolina at a rate of 9.9 percent, while employers report a shortage of

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labor and recruit international workers to fill the gap. In the absence of economic growth proportionate to population growth the county is experiencing increased demand for public services, education, water, parks, transportation, and public safety. Thus, rapid growth has brought about many changes in social, economic, and political structures. The affects of development have also impacted the available natural resources and rural nature of the county. Many public policy issues and individual needs have surfaced that require the attention of political leaders, public officials, and government agencies and departments.[125]

Still, the county retains its vitality. The agricultural community continues to be an important part of the economy. Hundreds of acres are cultivated in Currituck County each year, yielding millions of dollars in revenue. A number of farms also offer a wide variety of truck produce. The county has created a number of industrial parks that have attracted new businesses. The Currituck County Airport is a publicly owned, general use airport that is located on the north side of U.S. Highway 158. The newly constructed terminal and expanded runway are bringing increased commercial and private air traffic to the county.

[125] 2008 Currituck County Plan of Work, April 11, 2008, accessed at: http://currituck.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php?page=about

The architecture of the area reflected the new economic and social growth of Currituck County. By the 1950s and 1960s, new architecture in the area was defined mostly by the emergence of the Ranch-style house. These houses were usually frame with either a brick veneer or some other kind of wood sheathing. The ranch house is noted for its long, low- to- the-ground profile, and minimal use of exterior and interior decoration. Today, many of these houses have been re-sided with aluminum or vinyl siding. Some variations on the Colonial Revival style are in evidence; the most popular is the one-and-a-half-story

Cape-Cod style. For the last three decades subdivision development has grown in the county, bringing with it the split-level and other modern house designs. Builders began to borrow freely from a variety of historic traditions, offering Neo-eclectic houses that were "customized" using a mixture of features selected from construction catalogs.

Another phenomenon that is now an inescapable part of the county's built landscape is the appearance of mobile home parks. Currently there are fifteen mobile home parks in the county; because of rising home prices, these homes are often the only option available for many families. "A cabin on wheels," as the historian David Hackett Fischer characterized them, mobile homes provide the same kind of "small, cheap, simple, and temporary" dwelling that for three hundred years has been popular on the southern frontier.[126] A variation on the mobile home is the wide popularity of the double-wide trailer home, which allows residents more room and which blends more easily within

[126] David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 662.

residential areas. Modular houses have also become an affordable option for people in the county.

Each new development, however, comes at a price. One of the most distressing aspects is the gradual loss of the maritime landscape. Paved roads have taken precedence over water. Along with that development has come a decline in many of the industries that once defined Currituck, such as boatbuilding. The county's architectural past is also disappearing, as many of valuable historic resources are lost to development and neglect. A local historic building survey in the 1960s recorded approximately 125 dwellings dating from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fewer than 50 survive today.

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Fortunately, many residents and members of the Currituck County government recognize the need to document and when possible, preserve the county's built heritage. The survey and inventory of Currituck County's historic resources was designed to encourage Currituck County residents to preserve historic and representative examples of their historic architectural resources.

In 1654, an Englishman Francis Yeardley, upon visiting northeastern Carolina wrote, "We find a most fertile, gallant, rich soil, flourishing in all the abundance of nature . . . [and] a serene air." Currituck County today still retains much of that abundance and serenity. It is present in the waters of Currituck Sound, the fertile croplands of the western county and the presence of the various plant and animal life that continue to make their habitats in the area. Currituck's historic buildings, while never numerous, also speak of a time and place where dwellings and communities were carved from majestic trees, and the ducks and swans were more numerous than people.