

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store**

Currituck, Currituck County, CK0104, Listed 4/26/2021  
Nomination by Barbara Snowden and Meg Greene Malvasi  
Photographs by Meg Greene Malvasi, July 2014



Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store, looking southwest



Walker-Snowden Store interior, looking southwest

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Walker, Wilson House and Walker-Snowden Store

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 150-158 Courthouse Road

City or town: Currituck State: NC County: Currituck

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this  nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

 _____, Deputy SHPO	3/12/2021
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ <b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____ <b>Title :</b>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Domestic: Single Dwelling
- Domestic: Secondary Structure
- Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store
- Funerary: Cemetery

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Domestic: Single Dwelling
- Domestic: Office
- Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store
- Funerary: Cemetery



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

OTHER: I-House form

OTHER: False-front commercial building

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK

roof: ASBESTOS

walls: WEATHERBOARD

other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

Located on the south side of Courthouse Road and directly across the street from the Currituck County Courthouse are the c. 1876 Wilson Walker House and 1895 Walker-Snowden Store, both contributing buildings. The two-story, T-shaped, frame house, has a side-gable roof and a front porch that spans the facade. The walls are covered with weatherboard, the roof with asbestos shingles, and the foundation and chimneys are built of brick. This house replaced an earlier c. 1850 house on the site and several outbuildings on the property were constructed around the time of the earlier house but remain on the parcel and are contributing resources. The store is a one-story, frame building with a false front parapet hiding a front gable roof. The walls are covered with weatherboard, the roof with standing seam metal and the foundation and front porch piers are built of brick. A small grouping of outbuildings including the Walker Cottage (c. 1850, contributing building), kitchen (1852, contributing building), smokehouse (c. 1850, contributing building), shed (c. 1950, noncontributing building) and office (c. 1920, noncontributing building) are located to the rear south and west of the house and store. To the far south of the parcel is a small family cemetery. The property is sited on an approximately 4.07-acre parcel, sitting roughly 50 feet from the south side of Courthouse Road (SR 1242). The house and store are aligned on a north-south axis, with the façades of both buildings facing the north. Behind the smokehouse and kitchen is a curving dirt and gravel road running to the west and south from which Caratoke Highway (SR 168) can be accessed. The buildings are sited on a well-tended lot with a large lawn that includes mature oak and redbud trees and bushes. Seasonal plantings are located around the foundations of the Walker Wilson House, Walker Cottage, Walker-Snowden Store and outbuildings. The lot slopes gently on the north side to a concrete aggregate sidewalk that runs from the east to the west in front of the house. Another

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concrete aggregate walkway leads to a series of small, poured concrete steps that mark the front porch entrance of the dwelling. To the north of the property is Courthouse Road and the Currituck County Courthouse; to the east are dwellings, a state ferry building, and Currituck Sound; to the south is the Caratoke Highway; to the west is a gravel parking lot next to the store as well as a number of small businesses, dwellings and the Caratoke Highway. The property, buildings and outbuildings are overall in good to excellent condition; overall the historic integrity of the property is excellent.

**Wilson Walker House**  
**154 Courthouse Road**  
**ca. 1876**  
**Contributing Building**

Located approximately twenty-five feet on the south side of Courthouse Road is the Wilson Walker House. The house is situated on approximately 4.07 acres, sits slightly above street grade on a large grassy lot. Mature oaks dot the property; there are also a number of season plantings and bushes located along the foundation. A concrete aggregate sidewalk leads to a series of small, poured concrete steps that lead to the front porch of the dwelling.

The Wilson Walker House is a two-story, side gable I-house form with balloon frame construction; the T-shaped house is five bays wide, two bays deep and clad in its original weatherboard. At the rear of the original two-story ell, a two-story addition was added c. 1901. The house originally rested on brick piers, which have since been infilled with modern brick. Cornerboards articulate each elevation of the house. The roof is covered with diamond-shaped asbestos shingles, has a boxed cornice that includes a plain frieze without triglyphs, deep overhanging eaves and heavy cornice returns. Variegated brick interior chimneys with corbelled caps are located on the east and west ends of the front section of the house.

The exterior appearance is restrained in its overall styling, symmetry and limited decoration, reflecting the status of other I-House forms throughout the county. It is, however, the one-story, five bay, hipped roof front porch and window hoods that displays the Italianate style. The one-story porch spans the façade and has a projecting molded wood cornice, square chamfered wood posts, sawn and S-scrolled brackets with decorative scrollwork and bracketed entablature, a decorative milled running trim, and a sawn work frieze with saw tooth ornament. Each column is further ornamented with an intricate sawn bracket facing outward from each post. Located on either interior end of the porch is a single engaged chamfered pilaster.

Located on the west side of the rear ell is a simple, one-story, three bay, hipped roof porch supported by chamfered columns. A similar porch constructed on the east side of the rear ell was enclosed in 1951 to make room for a bathroom and laundry room. All of the porch floors were constructed at a slight sloping angle, allowing for water to run off and not pool on the tongue and groove wood decking. The ceilings of all the porches consist of painted, beaded board.

Other Italianate influences can be seen in the heavy molded wood surround with small brackets that marks the central entrance of the house with its double-leaf wood paneled doors. Contemporary glass and metal louvered double-leaf storm doors cover the original doors. The entrance is flanked by sidelights with small molded slightly recessed panels beneath and topped by a two-light transom. The doors retain their original locks and doorbell.

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The majority of openings on the first and second floor of the house consist of 2/2 wood sash windows. The first-floor façade has two elongated windows located on either side of the central entrance. The second story façade openings consist of five symmetrically-spaced 2/2 windows. The east and west elevations of the original front block have two symmetrical openings each on the first and second floors. On the south side of the original front block, there are two openings located at the far southeast and southwest ends. All openings have Italianate-styled molded drip hoods that consists of a molded cornice and heavy scrolled brackets with molded surrounds. Working louvered shutters flank all the windows, many of which still retain their original glass.

About 1901, a two-story, balloon-frame addition was added to the original rear ell. The addition rests on a stretcher-bond brick foundation. The first story is covered with weatherboard; vinyl siding was later added in the late 1960s or 1970s. The gable-end roof is covered with asbestos shingles, has slightly overhanging eaves and a boxed cornice; a small rectangular louvered opening is located in the south gable end. A variety of different window openings are found including on the east side, paired, modern vinyl 4/4 windows that flank a single leaf paneled wood door with a single light. Covering the door is a modern metal aluminum storm door. On the south end elevation is an older 4/4 wood sash window.

The second story of this addition was originally a one-story, wood frame building already located on the property that, according to family tradition, is thought to have once served as a school, though there is no documentation. The building is sheathed in a distinctive board and batten siding with a decorative sawtooth motif; a style and ornament seen on numerous late 19<sup>th</sup> century Life Saving Station buildings along the Outer Banks. Several homeowners in the county adopted the siding style for their own dwellings.

Other additions include the earlier mentioned closing in of a porch on the east wall during the 1950s for a bathroom and laundry room addition. A door located on the east side of the laundry room opens onto the modern pressure treated wood deck with a simple wood railing. In 2018, the chimney located on the rear ell of the original section was taken down because of storm damage.

### **Interior Description**

Like the exterior, the interior of the Walker House has retained a great deal of architectural integrity. The original block of the house consists of a central hall plan; on the first floor is a sitting room and parlor, on the second floor are two bedrooms. The rear block of the original house consists of a single room that serves as a dining room on the first floor and two small bedrooms on the second. Throughout, tongue and groove oak flooring with molded baseboards, plaster ceilings and walls finish the interior rooms. The doors consist of single-leaf, four-paneled, wood with metal or porcelain knobs; the first floor sitting room and a single light transom tops the first-floor doors. On the second floor, the doors still retain the original graining done to mimic oak. The molded wood surrounds of both the interior doors and windows are notable for their slightly pedimented surrounds. The ceilings on the first-floor rooms are twelve feet high; on the second floor, ten feet high.

Located on the east wall of the central hall is a quarter-turn staircase, featuring a turned pedestal newel post, and turned spindle balustrade with a circle end step leading to the second floor of the house. Underneath the staircase on the west wall is a small storage closet. Originally, the staircase was located along the northeast corner of the dining room, but soon after the completion of the house, the staircase was reworked and moved to its current position in the front hall. Traces of the earlier staircase can be seen on the east wall of the dining room.

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To the west of the hall is the sitting room with windows on the north, west and south walls. A more formal parlor room is east of the hall; windows are located on the east and north walls. Located on the south wall of the room is a single-leaf wood panel door with a single frosted light that once led to a side porch, later enclosed for a bathroom and a laundry room. The hall and parlor rooms are relatively simple in design; distinctive door surrounds and fireplace mantels are located on the east and west walls of each room respectively.

A single-leaf wood paneled door on the south end of the central hall leads to a large dining room. Situated in the northeast corner of the room is a large full-length wood corner china cabinet, one of the few pieces that survived from the original c.1850 house that stood on the property. Located in the center of the south wall is a fireplace featuring a simple rounded oak shelf with a green tile surround and brick hearth; a mantel is supported by slender wood colonettes. This fireplace mantel is the only manufactured mantel in the house and is believed to have come from Baltimore, a city that Wilson Walker often visited to conduct business. To the west of the fireplace is another full height built-in china closet which has retained its original graining on the inside, and has oak paneled double doors with a rectangular light in each door. On the west wall is a single-leaf wood paneled door that leads to the west porch. Flanking the door on each side is a 2/2 wood sash window. On the east wall, is a single-leaf wood door with a square light that once led to the east porch but now opens into a laundry room. Located on either side of this door is a 2/2 wood sash window. Another single wood paneled door with a single light, is located on the southeast corner of the south wall that opens to the later kitchen addition.

Ascending the staircase to the second floor, a small sitting area with a single 2/2 wood sash window is located in the central area facing north. Flanking this space is a single bedroom on the east and a single bedroom to the west. Windows in the east bedroom face the north, south and east. Windows in the west bedroom face the north, south and west. Both also feature elaborate fireplace mantels.

To the south of the second-floor landing, and directly above the first-floor dining room, a door leads to two additional small bedrooms that may have served as a child's room and nursery. The walls in both rooms are plaster; the floors are tongue and groove oak. Windows are located on the east and west walls of each room. On the south wall of the first bedroom is a single-leaf wood door that leads to the smaller bedroom. On the south wall of the second bedroom is a small fireplace with a simple wood surround and mantel. A single-leaf paneled door leads to the second floor of a later two-story addition that opens to a small hallway leading to a bath and another bedroom.

Certainly, one of the most striking details of the Wilson Walker House is found in the fireplaces located in the front downstairs rooms and the two main bedrooms of the north-facing façade block. These features would be notable in any case, but particularly stand out in a county dominated by small fireplace flues and simple mantels. No mantel in the house is the same; even though certain elements may be repeated, their interpretation is different in each room.

The fireplaces in the sitting and parlor rooms consist of a wood mantel with a simple shelf with rounded corners and a stylistic oval molding decoration in the mantel center. Upstairs, the east bedroom fireplace mantel features a narrow wood shelf that is supported by fluted and tapered columnettes with torus and plinth. An overmantel consists of a central placed mirror flanked by smaller fluted columnettes also with a torus and plinth. The west bedroom mantel also has an overmantel with supports consisting of square columnette with openings; each columnette has a torus and plinth. The surrounds and hearth of each room's fireplace are brick.



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The rear addition kitchen consists of a large open room with appliances; a small pantry is located on the northwest corner wall. The kitchen floor is torginol, a type of resinous flooring. Located on the west wall is a single-leaf wood paneled door with four-lights, covered by a modern aluminum storm door that leads to the west yard. Window openings consist of 4/4 wood sash windows and modern 1/1 sash windows on the east and west elevations. There is a similar single-leaf entrance door located on the east wall that opens onto a modern deck constructed of pressure-treated lumber with a simple pressure-treated wood balustrade.

The second floor provided space for a bathroom added in the 1920s, a small hall and a bedroom that is now currently used for an office. The second-floor addition was accessed in two ways; on the second floor a single-leaf paneled door from the south bedroom opened into the small hall. On the first floor, a single-leaf wood paneled door in the southeast corner of the kitchen opened to a narrow winding wood staircase that led to the current office room. The original walls of the second-floor addition were beaded board and at some point, were covered with sheetrock. The floors in the addition are wood. There are 2/2 wood sash windows located on the east and west walls of the office room and a single 2/2 wood sash window is found on the west wall of the bathroom. Hot water to the kitchen and upstairs bathroom was provided by a 500-gallon galvanized tank with copper piping, located underneath the house that went into the kitchen around the stove and then upstairs to the bathroom.

**Walker Cottage**  
**158 Courthouse Road**  
**c. 1850**  
**Contributing Building**

Located to the east of the Walker-Snowden House is the Walker Cottage, a small one-story, nearly T-shaped, frame and weatherboard dwelling, four bays wide and four bays deep. The building originally rested on brick piers that have since been infilled with stretcher bond brick. The side gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has slightly overhanging eaves and a simple boxed cornice. An inset exterior brick flue with a single corbeled shoulder and cap is located on the north wall of the building. A central interior flue of stretcher-bond brick with a corbeled concrete cap is found along the roof ridge of the rear ell; another chimney flue of stretcher bond brick is located at the south end of the front roof ridge. A one-story, one bay shed roof porch on the rear ell is supported by a single wood chamfered post; the northeast end of the porch was partially enclosed in the 1960s. The wood frame addition is covered with horizontal boards; a single wood 1/1 window is located on the north-facing wall. Two poured concrete steps lead to the side porch entrance. All of the windows have more contemporary working wood shutters.

The entrance doors are single leaf paneled wood and all are covered with modern aluminum storm doors; located on the west wall is a two-bay wood porch with a shed roof covered with asphalt shingles and simple balustrade; a wood handicap ramp with simple wood balustrade was added during the 1980s when the house was used as a business. Another one-story shed roof porch is located along the rear south east wall of the house and is partially covered with wood lattice screen; the southwest end of the porch was enclosed for a bathroom addition sometime in the 1960s. On the west wall of the cottage are the remnants of a brick walkway and a grape arbor that once connected the Walker Cottage and the Walker House.

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The interior of the cottage is unique; the four rooms each have their own single-leaf wood paneled door leading to the outside. The floors of the cottage throughout are wood plank; the walls are covered with plaster. The cottage also retains almost all of its original wood sash 2/2 windows.

The southeast corner room has a single-leaf wood paneled entrance door on the west wall. A single wood sash 2/2 window is located on the south and west walls of the room. Centered on the south wall is one of the two original fireplaces, consisting of a simple rounded wood mantel shelf supported by a wood paneled surround with short, engaged pilasters. The northwest room features a wood paneled entrance door on the west wall with a single wood 2/2 sash window; on the north wall wood sash 2/2 windows flank a fireplace of modern stretcher bond brick. The center north facing room is now used as a small kitchen; on the north wall is a single-leaf wood paneled entrance door that leads to the front porch and a single wood sash 2/2 window. A single leaf wood paneled door on the west wall leads to a small bathroom; a small wood 6/6 window is located on the south wall of the bathroom. The northeast corner of the house contains a single room with a single-leaf wood paneled door on the south wall. Single wood sash 2/2 windows are found on the northeast corner and the east wall of the room. A fireplace similar to the one in the southeast room is located on the west wall.

### **Kitchen**

**1852**

#### **Contributing Building**

Directly to the rear south of the main house is an 1852 one-story, frame and weatherboard kitchen building resting on low brick piers and concrete blocks. The gable-side roof is covered with V-crimped metal. The building appears to have been built in two stages; the front area consists of a two-bay wide, one bay deep block. An entrance door on the northwest wall is single-leaf vertical board; 6/4 wood sash windows are located on the north and west walls. A one-story, one bay wide, one bay deep addition is attached to the south end of the original block. A single-vertical board door is found on the southeast side of the building. Located on the far south wall of the kitchen are the remains of a large brick chimney constructed of handmade bricks that includes a date brick. The interior of the building is vertical sheathing with a wide wood plank floor. The building is now used for storage.

### **Smokehouse**

**c. 1850**

#### **Contributing Building**

To the rear south of the main house and store stands a c. 1850 one-story, frame and weatherboard smokehouse resting on stone piers. The side gable roof is of standing seam metal. The original vertical board door is located on the east side of the building with its original lock and key intact. Located on the south wall is a small window opening. Hand cut square nails are in evidence throughout. Small, one-story, frame additions with shed roofs were added later to the rear west wall of the building. The interior consists of a single room with unfinished vertical board walls and wood floor. The building is now used for storage. Attached to the west wall of the smokehouse is a one-story frame shed that is open on the north-facing side.

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### **Shed**

**c. 1950**

#### **Noncontributing Building**

Located to the rear southwest of the property is a one-story, frame and weatherboard shed with a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The east-facing building has three open bays that are used for boat storage. Attached to the rear west wall is a one-story, frame and vertical board addition with a shed roof. An open bay is located on the south wall. The addition is used for boat storage.

### **Office**

**c. 1920**

#### **Noncontributing Building**

Located directly to the rear and south of the store is a small, c. 1920 one-story, frame and asbestos shingle office resting on concrete block piers. The gable-front roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has slightly overhanging eaves. A series of wood steps lead to an off-center single-leaf wood paneled door with three vertical lights located on the east-facing wall. Window openings consist of 1/1, 3/1, and 6/1 wood sash. The interior consists of one room with wood paneled walls. The wood floor is covered with carpet. The building was originally built for use as a lawyer's office on Courthouse Road; sometime after 1975, the building was moved on to the property where it is currently used as an office.

### **Walker-Snowden Store**

**150 Courthouse Road**

**1895**

#### **Contributing Building**

Approximately forty feet to the west of the main house stands the Walker-Snowden Store which has retained much of its original materials and historic character on the exterior and interior. The building elevation is at street grade, approximately fifteen feet from Courthouse Road. There is a small gravel drive to the north of the building's façade. A small planter constructed of pressure treated wood sits to the front of the store's façade. The planter covers the area where gas pumps were once located. A large cedar tree is found to the northwest of the building. A large crepe myrtle is found on the east side of the building, near a side entrance door.

The one-and-a-half-story, wood, balloon frame-constructed building is six-bays wide, covered with weatherboards and rests on brick piers. The side gable roof is covered with standing seam metal and has a boxed cornice. The front façade features the original false parapeted storefront with a molded cornice, small, molded wood "S" brackets and simple frieze board. Located in the center of the façade is a molded plastic sign reading "W.H. Snowden General Merchandise." A one-story, shed roof porch with concrete decking and a beaded board ceiling, spans the width of the façade and is supported by replacement battered wood posts on brick pedestals with concrete caps and concrete bases—remnants of the original porch posts can be seen in surviving pilasters attached to the façade beneath the porch. Attached to the east side wall is an inset brick flue of stretcher bond brick.

Double-leaf wood paneled doors with lights mark the two slightly recessed front entrances to the store, each topped by two-light transoms and covered with paired wood screen doors. Flanking the entrances are large canted four-light display windows. The east entrance has a simple stoop; the west has a small wood

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porch deck with a simple wood railing and balustrade. Beneath the windows are molded wood panels with a small inset covered in diagonal board sheathing.

The store has two rear additions; the first, constructed between 1920 and 1930 is a one-and-a-half story, wood, frame addition attached to the rear south end of the store. The addition is covered with weatherboard and rests on low brick piers. The side gable roof has a boxed cornice and is covered with standing-seam metal. Window openings are located on the rear south and consist of 2/2 wood sash windows with simple wood surrounds. During the 1940s, a one-story, wood frame shed roof addition was attached to the west wall of the first rear addition. A loading dock area located on the rear southwest corner of the building was enclosed in late 2019.

The interior also remains comparatively unchanged with elements of Italianate styling. The main store area consists of an L-shaped space. The walls and ceiling of the store and additions are covered in beaded board; the floor consists of tongue and groove oak planks. Two large counters are found along the south and east walls of the main area. The counters feature paneled and bracketed bases and diagonal beaded board countertops. The Italianate influence can be seen in the original shelves' bracketed cornices and zigzag sawn ornament, along the south, east and west walls. Several of the shelves still carry some of the merchandise sold by the store during the mid-twentieth century. Located beneath the shelves are oversized wood drawers with their original hardware, where extra merchandise was stocked. The rear addition area was outfitted with similar styled shelves and counters that increased the retail space of the store. A single-leaf wood paneled door on the west wall leads to the room known as the "Exchange Room," a large open room with freight doors on the west wall where goods were stored. This room was used to store, weigh and ship agricultural products from county farmers.

### **Gould-Scurr-Walker-Snowden Family Cemetery**

**1823 - 1985**

#### **Contributing Site**

To the south and west of the main house approximately one-tenth of a mile is the Gould-Scurr-Walker-Snowden family cemetery. This small area consists of a marble headstone, two large granite markers, and two ledger markers. The markers include the following graves:

George L. Johnson	December 5-November 6 1903
Grace W. Snowden	1923 - 1985
William H. Snowden	1901 – 1979
Jack Spence	1848 – 1923
Caroline M. Walker	February 26 1840 – July 29 1912
E. Leslie Walker	1902 - 1931
Ernest E. Walker	1879 – 1924
Gertrude Walker	1877 – 1963

To the west of the family stones are a small grouping of early nineteenth century markers that were moved a short distance to this location when the adjacent State Road was constructed in the 1950s. The inscriptions on the markers are illegible but are related to the Gould and Scurr families who once lived

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adjacent to the Walker property. According to an earlier study of the county cemeteries done by the WPA<sup>1</sup>, the graves include:

Davie, Maria Scurr	1828 - 1829
Gould, Elizabeth	1821 - 1823
Gould, Emerson	c.1794 - 1823
Gould, Sarah	n.d.

### **Billboard**

**c. 1990**

#### **Noncontributing Object**

Approximately 300 feet from the cemetery is a large wood and metal frame billboard that was constructed by the current property owner. It is located on the far west edge of the property along Caratoke Highway. The billboard was constructed around 1990.

### **Archaeological Description**

The structures are closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains such as trash pits, privies, wells, and other structural remains that may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the contributing structures. Information concerning land-use patterns, site development, agricultural and commercial practices, social standing and social mobility, as well as structural details, is often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structures. At this time, no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

### **Integrity Statement**

The Wilson Walker House exhibits excellent integrity in terms of its location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The house has remained largely intact since its construction in the 1870s. Almost all the additions and alterations made to the house, with the exception of the modern deck attached to the rear ell are historic and demonstrate how a property adjusted to changing needs over time. The surrounding landscape of the property has remained largely unchanged with two earlier buildings—the kitchen and smokehouse from an earlier house on the site—evidence of the early beginnings of this property. It demonstrates local building traditions with the I-House form, while also demonstrating an exuberant use of Italianate stylings as seen in the front porch, and window and door ornament. There is nothing that has obscured the original façade; the owners have been sensitive to the historic character of the property. The home's interior is suggestive of what might be found in a prosperous businessman's residence, where careful attention to details such as the doors and fireplace mantels suggest a more than passing interest in interior ornament.

The Walker-Snowden Store also retains a great deal of its historic fabric and stands as an excellent example of a southern general store, a type that played a prominent role in the economic and social

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<sup>1</sup> Goldie V. Harrell, Historical Record Survey of North Carolina, 1937, located at: <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15012coll1/id/35497>; accessed 18 April, 2019.



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history of the Currituck County area. The false parapet commercial architectural form is one of two surviving commercial buildings of this type in the county. The Walker-Snowden Store with its virtually

untouched interior demonstrates how these commercial spaces combined function and ornament that rarely exist today. Even with the recent side addition to the southwest corner wall, the exterior of the store looks much as it did when it was first built. The store's location is integral to its significance. Its close proximity to Currituck Sound and the Courthouse meant a steady supply of customers who stopped in the village to do business. Its location was also central to the farming community situated around Currituck Courthouse; the Walker-Snowden Store most likely was a needed and necessary stop for local residents.

Taken together, the house, store, cottage and surrounding outbuildings suggest a landscape that encompasses a variety of purposes: domestic, commercial and agricultural. It is an increasingly rare picture of what life looked like in the late-nineteenth century village of Currituck. The buildings and the grounds continue to retain sufficient integrity for National Register listing.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Period of Significance**

c.1876  
1895

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store located across from the county courthouse in the village of Currituck are locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture. The house constructed c. 1876 for Wilson Walker, a prominent local sailor, merchant, and businessman is an intact and significant local example of the Italianate style applied to the common I-house form, featuring decorative details including a full-width highly ornamental porch with brackets and chamfered wood supports, molded and bracketed window hoods atop tall narrow 2/2 wood windows and a double-leaf entry door. On the interior, the Italianate style is subtly indicated by pointed arch window surrounds. The house was constructed on the site of an earlier house that burned c. 1855. However, an 1852 kitchen and a c. 1850 smokehouse originally associated with the earlier house, still remain and are contributing resources. A small house built c. 1855 to the east of the Walker House was constructed after the main house burned. This house has retained much of its original character and is also a contributing resource to the property. The property has been owned and maintained by descendants of Wilson Walker for over 140 years.

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The Walker-Snowden Store, sited immediately west of the Wilson Walker House on the same parcel, was constructed in 1895 and remains a locally significant example of a rural, late-nineteenth century false parapeted commercial store, featuring modest Italianate detailing. The one-story, wood frame building retains the character-defining features of a rural store, including a wide parapet on the front elevation extending above a front shed roof porch and a decorative façade with symmetrical double storefronts featuring large multipaned windows and double-leaf entry doors. On the interior, it features intact original store counters and shelving. Italianate detailing is seen in the brackets adorning the parapet wall and the double-leaf entry doors, as well as the brackets and pointed arch openings on the interior shelving.

There are two distinct periods of significance for this property. The first is associated with the date of construction for the Wilson Walker House in c. 1876. The second is associated with the date of construction for the Wilson Walker Store in 1895.

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

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 portion and an offshore strand. 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, Albermarle Sound to the south and Currituck Sound, a protected inlet of the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Beyond the eastern shore, known as Currituck Bank, is the Atlantic Ocean. Currituck Sound is a focal point of the county's history. The inlet was vital to early trading vessels during the early settlement and colonial periods.

#### Early Settlement

Some of the first to settle in the area known today as Currituck came as early as 1650 from Virginia, settling in the "hammocks," or hilly wooded areas that faced Currituck Sound. By 1665, Peter Carteret and four partners had acquired a land grant in the southern part of the county. By 1672, the village of Currituck, located in the northeastern part of the county, not far from the Virginia border was established. Known as the "port of Currituck," the town became a customs district for imported and exported goods. By 1729, the site was formally recognized as the Port of Currituck. Still, settlement of the area was slow—despite the fact that the majority of landowners chose to reside in the county instead of acting as absentee landlords. Over time, settlers were drawn to the area as a result of the burgeoning maritime trade. Many shipwrecked sailors eventually settled along the coast too; in more than one case, lumber from wrecked ships provided the material with which to build a house. They were followed by merchants and later, colonial customs inspectors, all of whom made their homes along Currituck Sound.<sup>4</sup>

Waterways emerged as 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."<sup>5</sup> 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 "kunnners" built of split cypress logs that had been

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<sup>4</sup> David Stick, *Graveyard of the Atlantic: Shipwrecks of the North Carolina Coast*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989, pp. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> 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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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 kunnners 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 mainland Currituck during this period was Tulls Creek.<sup>6</sup>

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.”<sup>9</sup> Whenever one came to the port to unload goods, the port master would simply be there to greet the vessel.

The principal exports of the Port of 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, mostly consisting of schooners and sloops, entering the 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, 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.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> David Cecelski, *The Waterman’s Song: Slavery And Freedom In Maritime North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, p. 75.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Christopher Crittenden, *The Commerce of North Carolina 1763-1789*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, p. 42

<sup>10</sup> Crittenden, p. 158-162.



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In 1723, the county authorized the construction of a courthouse, to be built by a Robert Peyton in the Port of Currituck. Peyton, however, failed to comply with the building specifications leading local magistrates to sue him. 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 courthouse stands.”<sup>11</sup> Little is known about these two buildings or what they looked like; on May 31, 1804, 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.”<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the courthouse and jail, other public buildings appeared in the tiny village. In 1739, the colonial assembly ordered the county court of Currituck to use tax monies to construct a group of warehouses that would receive various commodities to be used for the payment of quitrents, a land tax imposed upon the colonies by the assembly. County residents were also subject to taxes to help improved navigation from Currituck Inlet to Albemarle Sound.<sup>13</sup>

### **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, 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.

This was caused in large part by the changing maritime landscape of the county. 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.<sup>14</sup>

With the inlet closing, boats could no longer reach the port easily. By 1826, the Port of Currituck ceased to exist.

<sup>11</sup> *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol.7*, p. 623-624.

<sup>12</sup> *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, May 31, 1804, 3:1.

<sup>13</sup> Alan D. Watson, “County Fiscal Policy in Colonial North Carolina,” *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Volume LV, No. 3, July 1978, pp. 287, 292.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

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It is against this backdrop that the first registered accounts of the Wilson Walker property appear. In November 1796, a Jeremiah Land bought three parcels of land, consisting of approximately 652 acres, including a tract known as the “Courthouse Tract,” for the total sum of £500. However, Land does not show up in county records until the 1800 census, which lists him as Jerimiah (sic) Land. He appears to be one of the prosperous landowners in the county as well, owning 13 slaves. By 1830, Land was the head of a household of five children with 19 slaves. At the time of his death in 1836, Land divided his holdings equally among his three sons, James, Thomas, and Benjamin.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Antebellum Period 1820-1860**

The lack of primary and secondary resources dealing with the history of the county makes the period 1820 to 1860 difficult to reconstruct. The village of Currituck struggled to remain viable and relevant as other parts of the county, particularly in the south and west, prospered. Still the village with its courthouse and jail, remained the county seat, in spite of an attempt in 1822 to move the county seat to a new destination to be called Crawford. As such, the village still remained an important political and civic center for the county.

Still the village of Currituck struggled to grow. By 1855, Currituck consisted of only five houses, which, included the dwelling now known as the Walker Cottage. The County Courthouse and Jail were also part of the village. 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 or warehouse of some sort. Among the highlights in the village were biannual meetings of the courts at 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.<sup>16</sup> Fall Court was known as “Chinquapin Court” for the large numbers of the nuts that were consumed.

During this period, the Land family maintained its holdings. The 1850 census lists James M. Land as a “Farmer” with a personal worth of 2250 dollars; by 1860, the Land family was no longer listed in the county census. It was also during this time that the original house that stood on the property burned; however, the detached kitchen and smokehouse survived and are still standing today. A smaller house, later known as the Walker Cottage, was built on the property for the Land family. The cottage was later used as a boarding house for visitors that came to the Currituck County Courthouse during the spring and fall sessions. However, the fortunes of the Land family continued to decline in the years prior and after the Civil War. The family would eventually leave the county, moving to New Bern.<sup>17</sup>

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. The purpose of the report was to “render all possible assistance to persons who desire to invest their funds in this State, judiciously.” 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

<sup>15</sup> Currituck County Deed Book 8, pgs 25-27, 1796; Currituck County 1800 Census, p. 145; Currituck County 1830 Census, p. 243, Currituck County Will Book 4, pg. 20-21.

<sup>16</sup> Loungings In The Footsteps Of The Pioneers,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, No. CVIII, May 1859, Vol. XVIII, p. 760.

<sup>17</sup> “Interview: Wilson and Barbara Snowden,” June 20-23, 2014, Currituck, NC

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unimproved acres. 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.<sup>18</sup> It is against this backdrop that the fortunes of a local businessman Wilson Walker began to rise.

Wilson Walker was born in 1816 near the small community of Maple, located approximately five miles to the south of Currituck Courthouse. He was one of three sons of a farmer and seaman Caleb Walker and his wife, Abigail Walker. Walker's father was also owner of a sailing ship that traveled the waters of what would become known as the Intracoastal Waterway to port cities such as Norfolk, Virginia and Baltimore, Maryland. When Wilson Walker came of age, he joined his father on these trips.<sup>19</sup>

In 1838 Walker married Emily Brabble, also of the Maple community; as part of the bride's dowry, Walker was given a house and a farm in Maple, which was later sold. Like his father, Walker also continued working as a seaman; invoices and correspondence show Wilson Walker being addressed as "Captain Walker." He first shows up on the Currituck County census of 1840, where he is listed as having two sons and two daughters, in addition to four slaves. In 1850, Walker's occupation was listed as "sailor," with land holdings valued at 600 dollars. He continued to operate his ship until the Civil War, when Union forces confiscated the vessel.<sup>20</sup>

At the war's end, Wilson purchased another boat, a stern-wheeled steamboat, *The Comet*. He also is listed as living in the Currituck Courthouse area. In 1867, while traveling with his family to Roanoke Rapids with a cargo of cedar shingles, Emily Walker took ill and died. By 1872, records show that Walker purchased 90 acres of land on which he would later build his house and store. He also remarried again in 1873; his new bride, Caroline M. Caulter Johnson, originally from Maine, was heading south with her two small sons in search of a warmer climate, and had booked passage on Walker's ship. After their marriage, Walker moved his new family to the village of Currituck, still a bustling commercial and government center. Walker continued to operate his steamer, visiting the cities of Norfolk and Baltimore for goods and supplies to bring back to Currituck to sell. Between the years of 1873 and 1876, Walker began construction of a new home. According to family members and written record, in 1879, the birth of Ernest Walker, the only child born to Wilson and Caroline Walker, took place in the west bedroom of the newly finished house.<sup>21</sup>

With the publication of business directories such as *Branson's Business Directories* and *Chataigne's North Carolina State Directory and Gazetteer: 1883-84*, a clearer picture of Walker's activities emerges. By this time, Walker was engaged in a series of businesses, including running a boarding house out of his own home as well as the small residence now known as the Walker Cottage. Among Walker's boarders were lawyers and judges who came to Currituck for court sessions; the location of Walker's house made it easy to get to and from the courthouse located across the street. Boarders stayed

<sup>18</sup> *Chataigne's North Carolina State Directory and Gazeeter, 1883-1884.*; Angeline Morrisette Hayman, "Albert Simmons," in Jeanne Meekins Murray, ed. *Histories of Currituck County, North Carolina Families*, Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Nell Brumsey, "The Wilson Walker Family," in Bates, Jo Anna Heath, ed. *The Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*. The Albemarle Genealogical Society, Inc., Winston-Salem, NC, 1985, pp. 436-438.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Nell Brumsey, "The Wilson Walker Family," in Bates, Jo Anna Heath, ed. *The Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina*. The Albemarle Genealogical Society, Inc., Winston-Salem, NC, 1985, pp. 436-438.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*; "Interview: Wilson and Barbara Snowden," June 20-23, 2014, Currituck, NC.

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in the upstairs bedrooms as well as the small house next door and took their meals in the main house dining room. In addition, Walker also owned and operated a corn and sawmill, a general store, and the village livery and stable service. Based on existing business ledgers kept by Walker, it appears that one of his primary sources of income in addition to his freight and passenger shipping, was that of a cotton broker. In 1895, a new general store was built to the west of the house and run by Walker's stepson Edwin Johnson, who carried on much of his stepfather's commercial activities. Ernest would continue overseeing his father's other business enterprises after Wilson Walker's death in 1898 with the exception of the shipping business, which was shut down. The property remained in the Walker family with the marriage of Ernest's daughter Grace to Henry Snowden. Today, the property remains in the family under the ownership of Wilson Walker's great-grandson Wilson Walker Snowden.<sup>22</sup>

### Architecture Context

#### The I-House and the Wilson Walker House

The most dominant house form throughout the county was that of the I-house, whose exterior could express varying degrees of stylistic influences, finishes, and craftsmanship. The house form, which evolved from the Georgian I house, so-called because it descended from the center-hall plan brought to North America by the English during the mid-eighteenth century. The plan would emerge as one of the most dominant house forms in the United States, particularly in rural areas, where it was equated with agrarian success. The house too could be as simple or decorative as the owner wished, again depending on available funds and architectural fashion of the period.

The I-house form is constant: two-stories in height and single room deep, and at least two rooms in width in a hall-parlor or center hall plan. Aside from the simplicity of the form, its tall and shallow silhouette is one of the defining characteristics of the I-House. The use of the central hall plan also introduced a sense of order; the hall was used to receive guests and also allowed an additional layer of privacy from the parlor rooms used by the family. Staircases became larger and often could claim a dominance in the larger homes. In addition, for ease of movement, the central hall also allowed one to enter any of the main rooms of the dwelling, as well as the front or rear doors without disturbing occupants or their guests. Another characteristic of the form is the side-gable roof that usually tops the house. Towards the late nineteenth century, some houses in the county had a central gable piercing the lower front roof slope, perhaps a nod to standardized plans of the Gothic Revival style and its roof configurations.<sup>23</sup>

In Currituck County, the I-house dominated from roughly the 1830s well into the first decade of the twentieth century. In mainland Currituck County, the I-house was primarily frame, almost always sheathed with some type of weatherboard and resting on a brick foundation or brick piers. The house was always oriented lengthwise, usually towards the road. The majority of dwellings in the county consisted of three-bay facades, were usually symmetrical in their fenestration and often with one or two gable end chimneys. However, in the northern part of the county, some I-houses employed a five-bay facade form, reflecting earlier building traditions of southeastern Virginia. The Wilson Walker House though built much later, followed this pattern as well.

During Reconstruction, another important element appeared on the I-house—the front porch which often spanned the first story of the building. The porches also were silent testimony to the owner's prosperity. It

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell, "The I-House in Rural America," *Old House*, May-June 2009, located online: <http://www.oldhouseonline.com/the-i-house-in-rural-america/>.

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was here that updating was often done, so homes built during the first half of the century might display brackets and millwork of the late-nineteenth century. An owner could show appreciation for new styles much easier in changing a porch design with new columns or ornament. This approach too was far less costly.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Italianate Style and the Wilson Walker House**

One of the most distinctive of these period styles was the Italianate. 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 found not only around the windows but the rooflines too. Like the Queen Anne style, Italianate design was easily assimilated into the rural vernacular of town and farm dwellings, especially on porches.

The Italianate style was made popular by the published pattern books of architect Andrew Jackson Downing in the 1840s and 1850s. As adopted into the American vernacular architectural tradition, the Italianate style aesthetic was best illustrated in its verticality and application of ornament along rooflines, entrances, and porches. The style was also a way for local builders to add fancy ornament to the porches of the solidly stable and more conservative I-house plan. In the United States, middle-class house owners eagerly latched onto the style's seemingly fancy ornamentation. Thanks to the explosion of mass-production technology in building construction after the Civil War, decorative ornament in the Italianate style was now more easily available—and affordable—for many home owners. However, by 1876, the style's popularity began to dim in many urban areas but had begun to slowly spread to rural areas throughout the country, including Currituck County.

Three dwellings are most closely associated with the Italianate style in Currituck County: the Shaw House (NR 1980), Indian Ridge Farm, and the Wilson Walker House. All three, located in the northern end of the county illustrate two different interpretations of Italianate architecture: one showcasing a high-style expression, the other two, using the style to add something extra to a basic I-house dwelling.

In Shawboro, the two-story Shaw House, also known as the “Cupola House” was built during the mid-1880s. The dwelling incorporates high-style elements such as an Italianate-villa styled tower, in addition to other exterior ornament such as curved brackets, a scalloped wood course that decorates the main block and cupola of the house as well as exterior crown moldings. The substantial and sophisticated styling of the dwelling also makes it stand out in a county where even wealthy homes tended to be conservative in style and ornament. In addition to being a local landmark, the Shaw House is one of the few examples of an Italianate villa-inspired building in rural North Carolina.<sup>25</sup>

A second example also located in Shawboro is Indian Ridge Farm. Built c.1847, what began as a small, two-story, one room dwelling became a two-story dwelling, five bay, I-house form, with a center-hall plan, a common type seen in northern Currituck County. The side-gable roof features overhanging eaves, heavy molded cornice and returns and a single interior end brick chimney with corbelled cap. One of the house's

<sup>24</sup> Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press with the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, 1990, p. 343.

<sup>25</sup> Meg Greene Malvasi. “Historic Architecture Survey of Currituck County,” NC Historic Architecture Survey, December 2008, p. 76



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most visually dominant features is the one-story, hipped roof porch supported by square, wood incised columns with heavy sawn and pierced brackets and frieze. The porch risers flanked by wood wing walls are scalloped. The central entrance consists of the original double-leaf wood paneled doors with raised circle-topped arched panels. Surrounding the entrance is a 4-light transom and 2-light paneled sidelight, a common door element throughout the northern end of the county.<sup>26</sup>

This use of porch ornament expressed in the Italianate style on an I-house form is also present in the Wilson Walker House. The influence of the Italianate style is best seen in the Wilson Walker House exterior in the north facing facade porch. With its distinctive molded wood cornice, square wood columns, heavy milled scrolled brackets with decorative scrollwork, bracketed capitals, sawtooth molding in the frieze, flat hood moldings atop tall narrow windows and double-leaf entry door, the overall effect demonstrates an awareness of then-current architectural stylings and taste. The tall, rectangular proportions of the façade gives the building a strong verticality that is even more pronounced given the smaller, one-story dwellings that surround it on the south, east and west sides.

The interior of the house with its stylized window surrounds and superb fireplace mantels displays an exuberance for shape, texture and form that is in keeping with the creative expression espoused by the proponents of the Italianate style such as the use of classical elements in pedimented window and door lintels, the colonettes of the fireplaces and the decorative brackets in the main hall of the house.

The Wilson Walker House is a significant example of how a high-style architectural expression is translated into the local building traditions of the county. Like all vernacular forms, the Wilson Walker House manifests a combination of what architectural historian Dell Upton has labeled “folk” and “academic” elements. As such, while the architectural ornament of the Wilson Walker House is clearly inspired by the Italianate designs of the 1870s, the building also cannot be pigeonholed into one single architectural category, but displays, and attempts to integrate, the aspects of other vernacular influences as well. The dwelling, when viewed from the street shows the influence with the more dominant house form in the county, the I-House. The simple symmetry of the façade and its central hall interior plan also is a nod to earlier and long-standing building traditions in the county that favored similar plans.

Despite the professionalization of architecture that was taking place in nineteenth-century America and the availability of pattern books, and catalogues of architectural interior and exterior elements, personal tastes and local conditions exerted a powerful, and frequently a determining, influence on architectural norms. The striking decoration of the porch attests to the owner’s success and awareness of prevailing styles. Yet the more restrained appearance of the Wilson Walker House, unlike the Shaw House, a more fully and exuberant expression of the Italianate style that showcased the wealth of one of the counties more significant families, is also a testament to local building traditions and tastes that tended to be more conservative. But what is more important about the melding of all these design types and elements was the freedom of choice that was now available to homeowners of the late nineteenth century. Increasingly, one did not have to be restricted to using just local building customs and ideas, but with the help of pattern books, and in Wilson Walker’s case, fashion seen other places, helped create a dwelling that today continues to inspire with its simple elegance and presence.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Walker, Wilson House and Walker-Snowden  
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### The Walker-Snowden Store and Commercial Architecture

Almost all buildings that engaged in commercial activities of any kind are grouped under the large category of Commercial Buildings. These buildings ran the gamut from single retail establishments found along a city Main Street, to retail and office buildings, office towers, corner stores and county stores. By the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century, the design of commercial buildings underwent an important change that saw an emphasis on façade design. Compared to building types, side elevations on commercial buildings tend to be nondescript. It is the façade that provides the identity of a commercial building. Here one can find ornament, signage and other features. The introduction of plate glass windows and stronger metalwork to hold them also allowed for the display of goods to entice customers to shop.<sup>28</sup>

In many rural areas of the South, the dominant commercial building type was a one-part commercial block. This one-story commercial building began appearing in the mid-nineteenth century and was associated with newly established communities or those communities experiencing growth. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth, who has studied the history of American commercial architecture, argued that this type was more likely constructed out of necessity than a design aesthetic noting that: “This type... was probably developed in a short period as an expedient solution to strong pressures for commercial development in areas where available resources limited construction . . . ”<sup>29</sup>

The architectural characteristics of the one-part commercial building mirror many rural country stores in the South, including the Walker-Snowden Store. For example, the rectangular building is longer than it is wide, with an open plan on the ground floor. The building is sited near the road it faces. Many stores were set on pier foundations, had wood weatherboard siding, and featured a square, three-bay façade. The one-part store was constructed from early nineteenth century through 1950. The majority of buildings featured a central entrance consisting of a set of wood double doors, often covered by screened doors. The entrance was flanked by two large windows. The Walker-Snowden Store differs in that the store had two inset entrances with entrance doors flanked by large glass windows. The entrance usually consists of a set of double doors, which may be covered by original or added double screened doors. The Walker-Snowden Store also differs in its window treatment. The flanking windows in many stores were wood sash that could be shuttered or covered when the store was not open. In the Walker-Snowden Store, large fixed plate glass windows are used. The exterior walls along the sides of the building typically had no windows, demonstrating the need for storage more than air circulation and ventilation. The interior walls featured wood shelves running nearly the length of the building. Besides the main double-door entry, a secondary side entrance toward the rear end of the building leading, in many cases, to a rear office, is not uncommon. A wide door was often located on the rear or side of the building, allowing for large shipments to be taken into the store.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Richard Longstreth. “Compositional Types in American Commercial Architecture.” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, vol. 2, 1986, pp. 12–15. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3514312](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3514312). Accessed 28 Sept. 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Longstreth. “Compositional Types in American Commercial Architecture.” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, vol. 2, 1986, pp. 30. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3514312](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3514312). Accessed 28 Sept. 2020

<sup>30</sup> Jackie Tyson, Kristie Lockerman, Mary Beth Reed, *Rural commerce in context : South Carolina's country stores, 1850-1950*, South Carolina Department of Transportation, New South Associates; located at: [https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/bitstream/handle/10827/30200/DOT\\_Rural\\_Commerce\\_in\\_Context\\_2013-04-30.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/bitstream/handle/10827/30200/DOT_Rural_Commerce_in_Context_2013-04-30.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) accessed 1 October 2020, p. 72-73

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One of the most recognizable types of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century commercial buildings was the false-parapet. This building type was among the most common and could be found throughout the United States. False-parapet commercial buildings could house anything from a small hotel, a meeting hall for social organizations, retail establishments and rural country stores. The use of a false-parapet helped convey a sense that the commercial building was much larger than it actually was. The false-parapet extended the height of the building, often obscuring the actual roofline. The feature could also serve a utilitarian purpose by conveying the name of the establishment. In smaller rural areas, the false-parapet might also emphasize a sense of progress and prosperity of the store's owner.<sup>31</sup>

As one of the last remaining and intact late nineteenth-century rural general stores in the county, the Walker-Snowden Store is a rare historic building associated with the history of the village and of rural commerce in Currituck County. The intact interior illustrates the prosperity of Wilson Walker with its Italianate stylings as seen in the counters, shelves, and size. The store is a significant part of the Currituck village landscape and symbolizes a time when the county was much more isolated, and people were unable to travel long distances to buy the things they needed, while also highlighting the prosperous activities of a local businessman and merchant.

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<sup>31</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings. *American Vernacular Design 1870-1940*, Ames, IA: Iowa University Press, 1988, p. 236; Richard Longstreth. "Compositional Types in American Commercial Architecture." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, vol. 2, 1986, pp. 16. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3514312](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3514312). Accessed 28 Sept. 2020.

Walker, Wilson House and Walker-Snowden  
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Name of Property

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Store

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1840, Schedule for Currituck County

1850, Population and Agricultural Schedules for Currituck County

\_\_\_, Slave Schedules for Currituck County

1860, Population and Agricultural Schedules for Currituck County

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1870, Population, Agricultural, and Manufacturing Schedules for Currituck County

1880, Population, Agricultural, and Manufacturing Schedules for Currituck County

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

\_\_\_ previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register

\_\_\_ designated a National Historic Landmark

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Walker, Wilson House and Walker-Snowden  
Store

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**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** CK0082

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.07

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.448850 | Longitude: -76.015890 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |          |           |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

Walker, Wilson House and Walker-Snowden  
Store  
Name of Property

Currituck County, NC  
County and State

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary is shown by a black line on an accompanying map, drawn at scale and in alignment with the tax boundary parcel.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store encompasses the current 4.07-acre tax parcel. This tract is the acreage historically associated with the Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Barbara Snowden/Meg Greene Malvasi  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: Box 134  
city or town: Currituck state: NC zip code: 27929  
e-mail: barbarabsnowden@embarqmail.com  
telephone: 252.619.6991  
date: 10 October 2020

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Walker, Wilson House and Walker-Snowden  
Store

Currituck County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Walker, Wilson House and Walker-Snowden Store  
City or Vicinity: Currituck  
County: Currituck  
State: NC  
Photographer: Meg G. Malvasi  
Date Photographed: July 4, 2014  
Location of Original Digital Files: North Carolina Historic Preservation Office  
Number of Photographs: 10

Photo #0001:  
Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store  
Looking southwest  
1 of 10

Photo #0002:  
Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store  
Looking southwest  
2 of 10

Photo #0003:  
Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store  
Interior  
Looking east  
3 of 10

Photo #0004:  
Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store  
Smokehouse  
Looking northwest  
4 of 10

Photo #0005:  
Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store  
Kitchen  
Looking south  
5 of 10

Photo #0006:  
Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store  
Cemetery  
Looking west  
6 of 10

Walker, Wilson House and Walker-Snowden  
Store

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Photo #0007:

Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store

Walker Cottage

Looking southwest

7 of 10

Photo #0008:

Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store

Walker-Snowden Store

Looking northwest

8 of 10

Photo #0009:

Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store

Walker-Snowden Store interior

Looking south

9 of 10

Photo #00010:

Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store

Walker-Snowden Store interior

Looking southwest

10 of 10

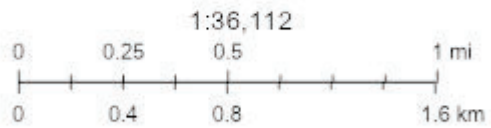
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store  
 Lat: 36.448850  
 Long: -76.015890

**Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store**  
 150-158 Courthouse Road  
 Currituck, Currituck County, North Carolina  
**National Register Location Map**



State of North Carolina DOT, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, EPA, USDA

Source: NC HPO, HPOWEB  
 Created by Hannah Beckman-Black 12-22-2020





National Register Boundary

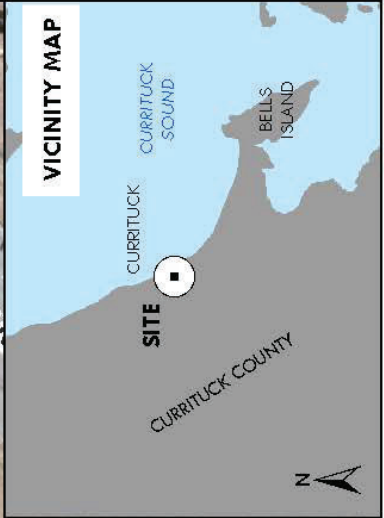
CEMETERY

36.448850, -76.015890

COURTHOUSE RD

CARATOKE HWY

VICINITY MAP



# Photo Views

National Register of Historic Places  
Boundary Map and Photo Key  
Wilson Walker House and Walker Snowden Store  
150-158 Courthouse Road  
Currituck, Currituck County, North Carolina

PROPERTY CENTROID COORDINATE  
(DECIMAL DEGREES): 36.448850, -76.015890  
0 15 30 60 Feet

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8





8  
CEMETERY

9

CARATOKE HWY

36.448850, -76.015890

3

4

5

6

7

2

1

COURTHOUSE RD

National Register of Historic Places  
Site Map  
Wilson Walker House and Walker-Snowden Store  
150-158 Courthouse Road  
Currituck County, North Carolina

**PROPERTY CENTROID COORDINATE  
(DECIMAL DEGREES): 36.448850, -76.015890**

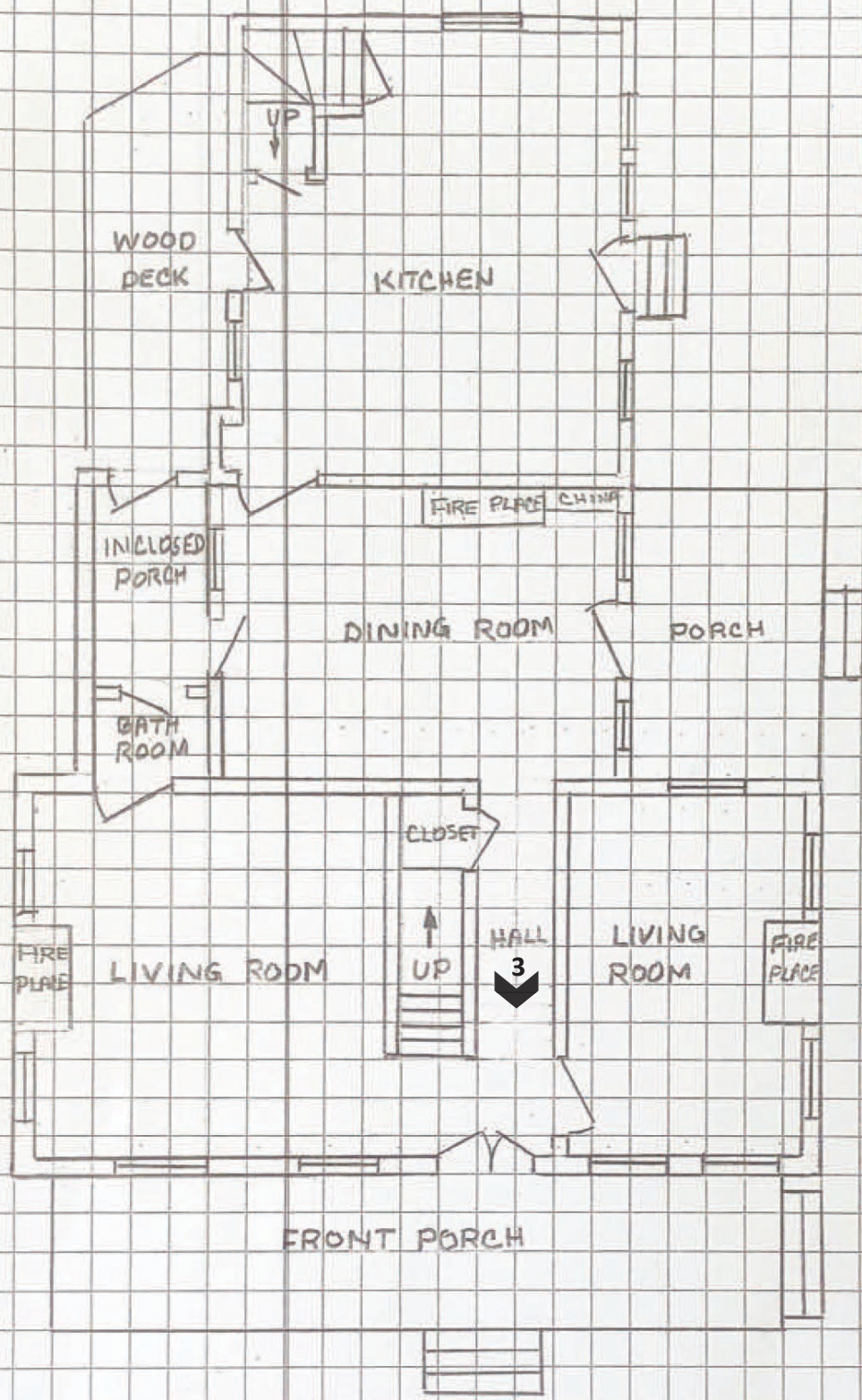
0 15 30 60 Feet

↑




## Site Map Resources

1. Wilson Walker House  
154 Courthouse Road  
ca. 1876  
Contributing Building
2. Walker Cottage  
158 Courthouse Road  
c. 1850  
Contributing Building
3. Kitchen  
1852  
Contributing Building
4. Smokehouse  
c. 1850  
Contributing Building
5. Shed  
c. 1950  
Noncontributing Building
6. Office  
c. 1920  
Noncontributing Building
7. Walker-Snowden Store  
150 Courthouse Road  
1895  
Contributing Building
8. Gould-Scurr-Walker-Snowden Family Cemetery  
1823 - 1985  
Contributing Site
9. Billboard  
c. 1990  
Noncontributing Object



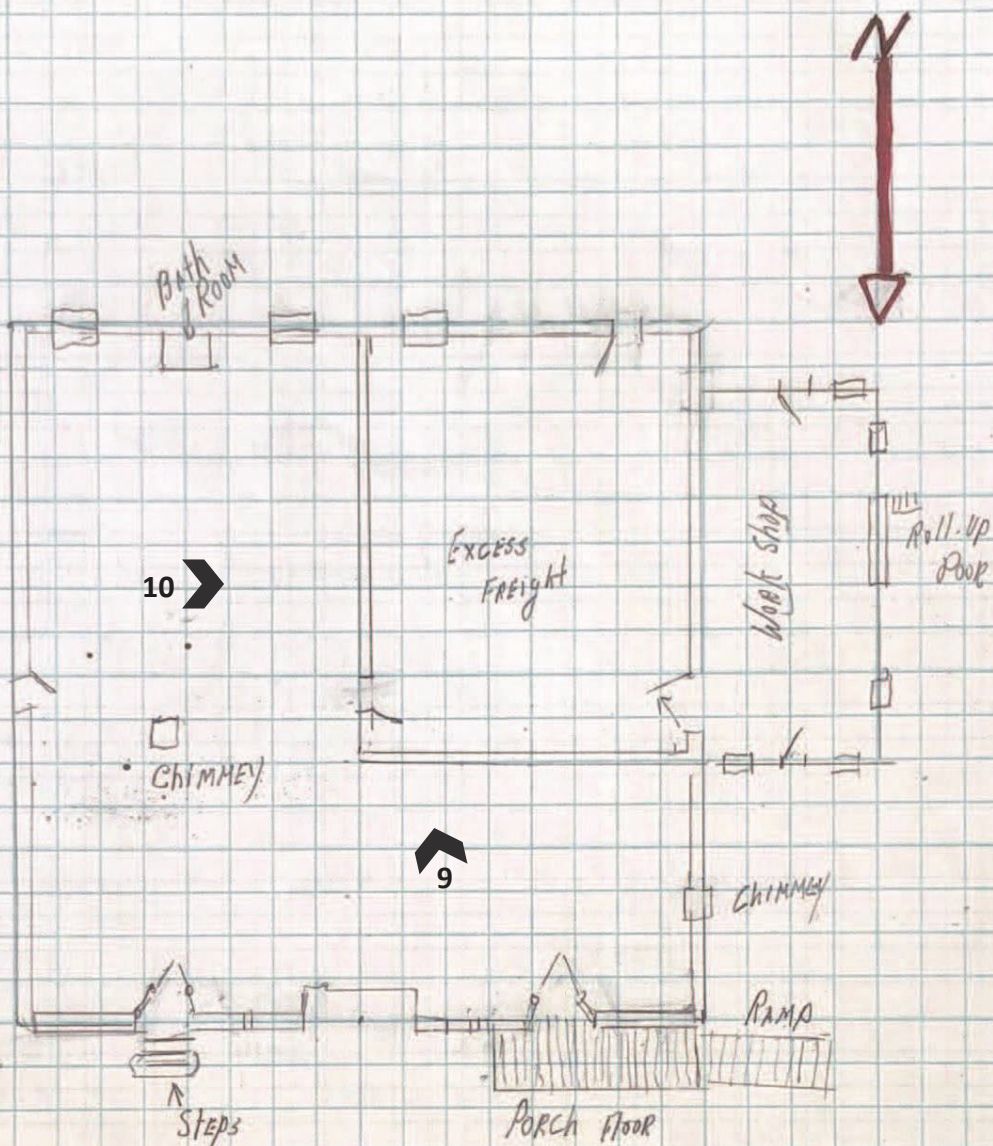
Not to Scale

 Photo Views

**Wilson Walker House**  
 154 Courthouse Road  
 Currituck, Currituck County, North Carolina  
**First Floor Plan and Photo Key**

AUGUST 2020






11895

W.H. SNOWDEN GENERAL MDSE

Not to scale.


 Photo Views

**Walker-Snowden Store**  
 158 Courthouse Road  
 Currituck, Currituck County, North Carolina  
**Floor Plan and Photo Key**