

## **Timberneck**

### Gloucester County, Virginia

Timberneck is a two-story, double-pile house with two front doors. The west side of this frame house is the original part built around 1800 while the east front door is the entrance to a mid-nineteenth century addition. There is a graveyard behind the house with burials from both the Thurston and Catlett families (primarily the Catletts). Until recently, two brothers lived in the house and little work was done while they were there. As a result, much survives from both building periods. The small size of the 1850s addition lends to the probability that it was created as a side apartment for relatives to live.

### **Period I (ca. 1800)**

#### **Exterior**

The exterior of the Period I section has a Flemish bond foundation with scribed joints and handmade bricks. The cellar windows have closers. The chimney on the west end was rebuilt in the late twentieth-century with machine bricks in 1:7 bond. The north end contains two patches in the foundation brick and weatherboards. At the end of this section is a patch one brick wide and fourteen bricks high which connects the modern kitchen addition to the original house. About one and a half feet west of that break is a patch the size of a door. A dentilated cornice runs beneath the roofline and the primary (south) façade contains beaded weatherboards. The windows are pegged with molded window sills and double Roman architraves on the south end, and single architraves on the north and west ends. The first floor windows are nine-over-nine, while the second floor windows are six-over-nine sash. The front porch is not original and contains cut and wire nails and was probably rebuilt in the late twentieth-century. An old photograph from the early twentieth-century shows a one-story shed porch stretching across the entire length of the front façade.

#### **Interior**

The cellar extends beneath the original section, not under the addition. Originally there was a cellar entrance in the center of the west gable end. The current entrance to the cellar is in the northeast corner, in the modern kitchen addition. On the way down the stairs there is a boarded-up entrance on the north wall coinciding with the door-sized patch on the north wall exterior. The underside of the floor boards on the ground floor are sawn, but not undercut. They are supported by hewn and pit sawn joists, which run the breadth of the house. A larger summer beam bisects the breadth of the building. The cellar is divided into two major rooms by a brick wall with two doors. One batten door with strap hinges remains. This area was most likely used for storage of goods. All the joists taper before being lapped to the sills, summer beam and chimney trimmer. The east wall contains a fireplace with a flue. This probably means that this cellar was used as some kind of storage or service space.

The main floor plan consists of a side stair passage with a smaller heated room behind it and two larger rooms to the east of the passage. The first-floor architraves are the same throughout the ground floor. They are double architraves with cyma reversa backbands. The doors are primarily raised, six-paneled doors hung on HL hinges. There is evidence of previous locks and knobs on them. The front door and the door from the rear east room to the kitchen addition have diagonal sheathing on their interior surfaces and four-light transoms above them. The stair passage walls have wainscoting to chairboard height and plastered walls above while the other rooms have plastered walls with molded chairboards. The modern hole in the plaster of the rear west room indicates that the post and other framing members were hewn and pit sawn. The floors throughout are tightly joined, secret nailed pine boards. The stairs are a closed string and have square newels posts with slightly molded caps. The unusual balusters are fluted and diamond shaped. There are three fireplaces on the first floor. The rear west room fireplace has a new brick surround and wood mantelpiece painted black. The mantel is Greek Revival with symmetrical fluted pilasters and a plain entablature. The rear east room has a finished wood mantelpiece with a raised panels and a molded brick cornice. This appears to be the only original mantel in this part of the house. The opening has been modified to incorporate a stove. The front east room has a painted wood, Greek Revival mantelpiece and has also been modified to fit a stove. Another notable feature, located in the front east room, is a window with the names of Catletts and others and date September 18, 1844 etched into the middle pane.

On the second floor the single architraves of the door surrounds contrast with the first-floor double architraves. The doors are also raised, six-paneled doors hung on HL hinges with the exception of one in the rear west room which has butt hinges with marks from previous HL hinges. Many of the rooms on this floor have been replastered in places. A molded chairboard is present throughout the rooms with the exception of the passageway's west wall. Ghost marks on this wall are only seen by the attic door. The absence on the rest of the wall can be explained by either the replastering or, perhaps it has been added later but there is no evidence of an addition seen in the front west room. There are also three fireplaces on the second floor with later mantels. The mantel in the rear west room is a simple Greek mantel with fluted pilasters and Doric capitals. The fireplace in the front east room, located on the east wall, has a late nineteenth-century mantel with angled brackets. There is an iron piece inlaid, narrowing the opening to fit a coal grate. The rear east room fireplace is the same as the front east room without the iron center. Because of the addition the east side of the second floor has gone through some major changes. Closets flank both the front and rear room fireplaces. The south closet in the rear room and north closet in the front room have been connected. There are ghost marks on the walls indicated previous shelving that was most likely taken down sometime in the early twentieth-century when a door was cut to connect the closets. A twentieth-century doorway has also been cut in the back wall of the front room closet. This door is a four-paneled door with an unmolded surround and butt hinges and connects the newer section of the house.

The attic boasts a hewn and pit sawn common rafter framing system. Charred rafters, at the east gable end, show evidence of a fire. The rafters sit on a false plate and

are dovetailed and pegged to the collar beams. The wall up the stairs is partially finished with plaster and lath, held in place with wrought nails. More evidence of finishing can be seen in tightly fitted floorboards. Given this and the presence of the plaster and lath, it is probable that this space was intended to be used as living space but was never finished. There is no evidence of lath nails on the ashlers or underside of the rafters and collars.

## **Period II (ca. 1850)**

### **Exterior**

The exterior of the later addition to the east side of the structure is similar to the form of the original house with some notable differences. The foundation is laid in 1:4 bond, rather than Flemish. There are no cellar windows; instead, airholes are present on the south and east ends. The weatherboards have both machine cut and wire nails, though some of them are beaded and run across the joint with the original home, indicating that they were still using beaded boards in the middle of the nineteenth century. The door is a four-paneled one and the windows on the addition have single architraves with Greek quirked moldings, the exception being the windows on the north end. The three, second-floor and two, first-floor windows have single architraves with a stretched out cyma reversa and end bead like the west end windows. The chimney on the east end is built in 1:5 bond with oyster mortar but no decorative mortar joint and was also once whitewashed or painted white. The shoulders are stepped and there is a decorative jut-out in the middle, like the west end chimney.

### **Interior**

The plan of the mid-nineteenth-century addition consists of a side stair passage with a single room on both floors opening off the east side of the passage. The entrance door to the passage is a four-paneled one with a four-light transom above. It has wooden tortoise shell knobs, iron locks, and butt hinges. The rear door connecting to the modern kitchen has a single panel at the bottom with ovolo and cavetto molded stiles and rails. The upper half is a nine-light window with molded mutins. There are iron knobs and locks, screwed HL hinges, and a four-light transom above. The side door to the east room is the same as the front door with the exception of a three-light transom. The doors have Greek symmetrical fluted architraves with corner blocks. The west side of the front door is mostly covered by floor to ceiling plywood. The windows from the front east room of Period I are still intact with the early paint colors on the east wall of the passage. They have sloped wooden sills, original exterior louvered shutters on iron strap hinges, and the same architraves as the first floor interior windows of Period I. The floors are tightly joined and there are irregularly sized replacements in front of the west corner. The walls are plastered and have tall slightly molded baseboards. The closed string staircase has cavetto molding at the junctions of the risers and treads, an oval hand rail, a plain round newel post, and thin rectangular balusters.

The front east room has uneven floorboards, which were previously stained. The walls are plastered with the same baseboard as the passage. An exposed post reveals reciprocating saw marks. The door to the bathroom on the west wall is two paneled with simple molded trim and butt hinges. The east closet door is four paneled with and iron

lock and tortoise shell knob. The second closet has modern louvered hinge doors. The architraves on the windows and the entrance door are symmetrical fluted Greek architraves with plain corner blocks.

As noted earlier, when first added, the new wing did not communicate with the old section at the second-floor level. In the early twentieth century a door was cut through to connect the two sections. The entrance door from the south room closet of the original section is a grained, four-paneled door with a molded surround, iron locks, and butt hinges. The landing window is a six-over-nine single hung sash window with quirked cyma molding. Window architraves in this addition are all quirked cyma moldings.

The modern bathroom has blue and white linoleum tiles and a white baseboard. The lower half of the wall is covered in a green tile-board while the upper half is white plaster. The west wall window is four-over-four, single sash window with a single cyma architrave. This window looks into the closet of the front east room in the original house. The door is four-paneled with graining and butt hinges. The butt hinge is stamped with the name T. Clark and Broad. This stamp can also be seen in Beaufort, S.C. at the Fyler-Chaplin House. There is a circular cut on the west wall resembling a hole cut in for a stove. This could be an indication of a previous living space before the modern bathroom was put in.

The east room door is four-paneled with butt hinges (also stamped T. Clark and Broad) and iron locks. Outer molding is symmetrical Greek with graining while the inner molding is a single quirked cyma architrave. The walls are partially redone, white plaster. The mantel on the east wall is Greek with unmolded pilasters and Doric capitals.

The attic of the addition is visible through a small opening in the east wall of the original house. Beaded weatherboards with t-headed nails from the outer wall of the Period I house are visible. The ridgeboards appear to be circular sawn as well as the rafters. Collar beams are present on every other rafter. There is a question as to whether the roof in this later section has been substantially rebuilt, perhaps as a result of a fire.

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