



Preservation Zebulon, Inc.

Promoting historic preservation and appreciation of buildings in the Zebulon NC area.

Newsletter – Spring, 2018

Horton Kimball House Built circa 1892

By Tony Williamson

The Horton Kimball house is situated in Wakefield just North of Zebulon. The Wakefield area began as a plantation owned by A. J. Foster in the mid 1800s. Due to its location on the Raleigh Tarboro road, a number of mills in the area, and the abundance of timber in the area, it grew into a thriving community by the late 1800s.

It was in this blossoming community that a wealthy farmer named Sidney Horton decided to build a larger home for his growing family across the road from his current home in about 1892. The home was purchased by his daughter, Mamie Horton Kimball, from his estate and



Tony and Briannie Williamson proudly stand before the Horton Kimball home that they acquired in 2017 and are restoring.

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stayed in the same family for almost 90 years until the late 1970s.

After Maime Horton Kimball passed away the home was purchased by E. Walton Jones in the hopes of creating apartments. His inability to acquire the needed permits was a blessing for the home and as a result the home continues to retain its original layout and many of the original features and materials.

The same year Jones sold the home to Larry Naylor who undertook the first restorations to the home. Larry stripped many layers of paint from the original wood floors and restored them, stripped many layers of paint from the exterior siding and details, painted the inside and outside, added electrical heat as the first source of heat other than the fireplaces. He relocated a door from the front to the side of the house, relocated the kitchen to a larger room in the house and added a deck off of the new kitchen. After a few years of renovations Larry Naylor sold the home to Robert and Susan Hardee who lived there for over 30 years and raised their family in the home. The home was purchased from Hardee by Tony and Briannie Williamson in 2017 with the hopes of fully restoring and preserving the historic home.

The house is constructed in the Folk Victorian style. Folk Victorian was very popular in the late 1800s to early 1900s particularly in small rural communities. The style is

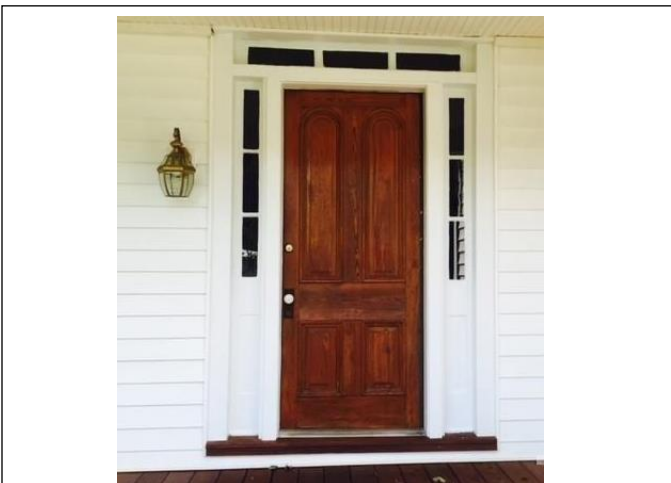


The entry foyer of the Horton Kimball house, with original winding stairs intact.

a combination of a classic American farmhouse with some intricate details characteristic of more elaborate Victorian homes added. These homes are often referred to as Victorian farmhouses.

The notable Victorian details of this home include ornate brackets around the eaves, small crosses in each of the gable vents, two square bay windows on the first floor, sidelights and a glass transom around the front entry and a curved staircase in the foyer.

This home was constructed at a time when construction methods were changing. As a result, the house builders used a unique combination of old and newer techniques. The house sits on a foundation of large 8x8 sill beams supported by granite piers that are about 16 feet apart. Some of the timbers are almost 40 feet long and



Front entry with glass side lights and transom.

the frame is connected together using mortise and tenon joints secured with wooden pegs. On top of this foundation the main frame of the house is a combination of large 4 x 8 rough sawn timbers in the corners and on either side of any door or window openings and 2 x 4 and 3 x 4 studs. The timbers and studs are up to 20 feet long and extend from the foundation frame all the way to the eave and are capped with a 4 x 4 beam at the top. The second floor joists are supported by 2 x 8 girders that are notched into the large post and studs that extend the full height of the house.

The frame is assembled using various size cut nails and includes 4 x 4 cross bracing in the corners to prevent the frame from moving side to side. The 6" lap siding is attached directly to the building's frame, more typical of a timber frame construction without an additional layer of sheathing that is more common in homes constructed with balloon framing and newer framing techniques. The presence of skip sheathing on the roof reveals that the original roof was cedar shingles, a few remnants of which have been found in the attic.

The eight fireplaces in the home are situated in two separate chimneys. The base of the chimneys and the fireboxes are constructed of granite slabs and rubble. Below the first floor level the base of each chimney flares out to a large stack of granite slabs that is almost 12 feet across. The chimneys switch over to brick about three feet below the second floor ceiling. The brick once continued through the roof but was disassembled to just below the roof line by a previous owner.

The interior finishes of the home include horse hair plaster on the walls, a unique bead board on the ceiling, and 4-inch tongue and groove heart pine floors. All the doors appear to be original and are constructed using through tenons secured with wooden pegs and no mechanical fasteners. Unfortunately, the mantels currently in the home do not appear to be original to the home due to the presence of the only wire nails found in the older construction of the home. Tony and Briannie Williamson are wrapping up the first part of a full restoration of the home, begun in February 2017 when they purchased it. The first phase of renovations has focused on the interior of the home giving a needed refresh to every room. All the existing trim in the home has had many years of paint stripped and large areas of damage have been repaired. The existing door hardware has been repaired or replaced as needed. The existing bead board ceilings have been repaired and restored with a fresh coat of paint. Victorian era moldings and other details have been restored and added throughout the home matching the originals as much as possible. Needed maintenance

and repairs have been undertaken to the existing electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems. The heart pine floors have been repaired and refinished. One of the largest repairs needed included replacing one of the 40-foot long 8 x 8 sill beams along the north side of the house. Due to cement that was poured against the house by a previous owner the existing beam was severely damaged from moisture and termites.



The Horton Kimball house has decorative, scrolled trim work, typical of folk Victorian styles popular in North Carolina in the late 19th century.

A full restoration of the exterior is planned for the future. This will include removing the existing vinyl siding and restoring the original lap siding, repairing and restoring the decorative brackets around the eaves of the house, restoring the brick chimneys above the roof line, replacing the front porch and railings with as close a match to the original as possible, replace the existing vinyl replacement windows with new wood sashes that match the originals, and restoring the existing stone piers. The Williamsons are still looking for any photos of the home that may show the original details of the home to help in the restoration efforts.

Watch for this home to be open for a PZ tour to members in the future.

June Event - A “Seated” Walking Tour

Preservation Zebulon presents an opportunity for the area residents to participate in Zebulon’s popular walking tour from the comfort of a chair. Scheduled for Saturday, June 9 from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. at the Rusted Hinge, 106 East Vance Street in Zebulon, this presentation will include a slideshow, 360 degree visualization, and map of the historic downtown and residential area in the time of

Zebulon’s founding and early years. This event is free for Preservation Zebulon members. Cost for all others is \$5 in advance or \$10 at the door. Space is limited to 25, so hurry and get your reservation in today at our website: <http://preservationzebulon.org>



A dozen attendees joined us on a walking tour through historical downtown Zebulon in April, 2018. Preservation Zebulon will host this event again in August and September.

Update on Historical Survey

Ellen Turco of New South Associates has been retained to undertake a survey of Zebulon and its surrounding areas to record and document all existing homes, structures and landscapes. Grant funding for this project has been provided by the NC State Historic Preservation Office and the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission and its non-profit arm, Capital Area Preservation.

If you see Ellen driving by, taking photos and sketching on maps, be sure to wave and welcome this highly knowledgeable consultant who is an expert in preservation with a long list of completed projects in the southeast. Ellen resides in Wake Forest in a historic home that she restored with her husband.

The results of the survey are expected to be available this Fall.

From the Desk of the Preservation Zebulon Board Chair

Greetings, and Happy Spring.

While the pollen subsides, I find that love is still in the air, as I recently began to muse about how Preservation Zebulon came to be. I thought I would share some thoughts that led us to the many blessings we have upon us.

MaryBeth and I fell in love. Then, we fell in love again. The first time it was with each other. The second time it was with a late-period Victorian Queen Anne house

with a wraparound porch. It was love at first sight. Both times.



The c. 1910 John D. Finch house, purchased by Scott and MaryBeth Carpenter, is undergoing renovations, including stamped-metal shingle preservation, porch reconstruction, and a rear addition to replace extensive rot over a previously covered back porch.

We knew that this would be our love child. Although it was already 105 years old when we met our adoptee, we knew our child was going to be very special to us. We took a while to give it a name. Finally, we decided on the John D. Finch house. Well, actually, some primary research told us that our house already had a name. But we loved it, and it stuck.

John D. grew fast after we met. In fact, I am beginning to think our child is already reaching the teenage years. It acts like a teenager: it makes strange sounds that I can't identify, it doesn't always do what I want, and it's always asking for more a little more money.

We immediately realized that John D. would need some friends and playmates. And so, I remember when MaryBeth and I, "outsiders" to Zebulon, coming from that "big city" of Raleigh, asked to meet with the Town Manager and Director of Planning. "So, where's your historic district?" we asked. And so, we then learned that Zebulon didn't have a historic district.

Panic set in. Who was John D. going to play with? Learn from? Share its utmost secrets with? And that took us on the journey to learn how a historic district is formed. "You need to start a grassroots organization," advised Claudia Brown, of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). (Translation: don't act like out-of-towners – find local support). We began to find local interest, initially leaning heavily on the Little River Historical

Society for information, advice, support, and even help in initially forming a Board of Directors. Soon, we were meeting others who shared the preservation passion. Our Board of Directors grew to seven, and out of that growth developed a core group of diverse individuals who bring excitement and passion that they combine with experience and thoughtful reasoning to promote and direct our organization. In 2016 Preservation Zebulon became incorporated, and in 2017 we received our non-profit status.

As I look back at the incredibly short time that we have been on the path towards establishing one or more districts on the National Register of Historic Places, I am amazed at how much progress Preservation Zebulon is making toward that goal. It is increasingly often that when we meet people and say, "We're with Preservation Zebulon" they respond with a huge smile, "We've heard about you." Now, I know that it is the first time that I am meeting these people, and so they are hearing positive things about what we are doing from our Board of Directors and our other supporters.



Preservation Zebulon Board of Directors: Scott Carpenter (Chair), MaryBeth Carpenter (Executive Director), Season Atkinson (Director), Ruth Moss (Secretary), Marvin Howell (Treasurer), Lewis Liles (Vice-Chair), and Tony Williamson (Director). Not pictured: Patricia Roberson (Director).

I say this often: Preservation Zebulon has THE BEST Board of Directors. I am blessed to be given an

opportunity to work with such a talented group of individuals. Their support, guidance, and “Yes! We can do that!” attitude motivates and invigorates me. I am eager to see where this team takes this group next.

Scott Carpenter, Ph.D.

Preservation Zebulon, Board Chair

No, We Don’t Care What Color You Paint Your Mailbox Post

Currently, there aren’t any districts in Zebulon that are on the National Register of Historic Places. That is something that Preservation Zebulon is working to change. In our endeavors, we often meet a variety of people with different interests and feelings about what this historic preservation stuff is all about. The most-concerned response that we often get is something along the lines of, “Oh, you just want to tell me what color I can paint my house or what I have to do to my porch.” That is not the goal of Preservation Zebulon at all. And it represents a common misunderstanding of what a historic district is all about. It is a well-founded fear, as many people have previously lived in or heard about homeowners associations, and other groups that exert strong, local control over residential appearances. Those are the groups that can give a thumbs up or thumbs down on what color you paint your mailbox post. But this is not what the formation of a historic district is all about.

What then, is a historic district?

First, our group is initially interested in identifying one or more districts to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The NRHP is merely the register - the “official list” - of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that “are significant in American history, architecture, archeology engineering, and culture.” A district, then, is just a collection of buildings within an area, where that entire district has enough historical significance contained within it.

What restrictions and rules are imposed on historic property owners? Can I modify, remodel, or renovate my historic house?

Under Federal Law, the listing of a property in the National Register places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance, usually funding or licensing/permitting. That is to say, unless you are seeking federal money, you can do whatever you want.

What about “tax breaks”?

Tax breaks are a very important benefit to owners of historic properties. When federal and state incentives are combined, income producing properties can receive up to 40% in tax credits, and non-income producing owners can receive up to 15% in tax credits for rehabilitation work that is done on a structure of site. That can be a lot of money saved on a large home or business improvement project. However, since this involves federal tax credits, then certain restrictions apply, but only if you want to take advantage of the tax credits. In that case, the owner generally has to be sensitive to the historic nature of the home. For example, you can claim the tax credits if you upgrade your HVAC or electrical but do not significantly modify the home in order to do so. You cannot claim credits by installing a new swimming pool, if your 100-year-old house never had one.

Where can I get more information?

The National Park Service, which administers the National Register of Historic Places, has numerous handouts on guidelines for what constitutes suitable rehabilitation work. And we have found that the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has always been excellent to work with when there are specific questions.

Of course, we encourage interested local residents to reach out to Preservation Zebulon. We’re happy to help get you in touch with other groups that can help you with your questions. But, please don’t ask us to pick out what color your mailbox post needs to be.

Happy Preserving!

Position on the Little River Dam

The Board of Directors of Preservation Zebulon approved at a special meeting in April, 2018 the following statement regarding the Little River Dam:

Preservation Zebulon is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt non profit that advocates for the preservation and appreciation of historic districts, buildings, and landscapes that embody important elements of the history and culture of the Town of Zebulon, North Carolina, which includes the Little River dam and mill.

Mission Statement

Preservation Zebulon advocates for the preservation and appreciation of historic districts, buildings, and landscapes that embody important elements of the history and culture of the Town of Zebulon, North Carolina and promotes their use and conservation for the education, pleasure, and enrichment of current and future generations of local, county, and state-wide residents and businesses.

Thank You!

Thank you for supporting Preservation Zebulon. Your support helps us provide the programs and information to assist our lovely town of Zebulon to research its rich history of important people, their families, and the homes and businesses that they built.

Your membership fees and donations help us work towards our next goal: creating one or more districts in Zebulon to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places

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Ruth Moss

Scott and MaryBeth Carpenter

Stay Tuned...

Be sure to follow Preservation Zebulon on Facebook and keep an eye on our web site for an important announcement later this summer regarding our Fall Fundraiser.

It's going to be an event to die for (and that's all we're going to say right now).



“Edwardians” MaryBeth and Scott Carpenter are ready to hit the town. “Why is everyone so oddly dressed?” they ask.