

ELIZABETH RIVER FARM HOUSE  
CIRCA 1789

The year is now 1992, the address is 316 Kemp Lane, Chesapeake, Virginia and the present day house which is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Colonna, Jr. is much changed from the Elizabeth River Farmhouse - Circa 1789 - as depicted by modern day artist Casey Holtzinger.

With this painting the artist attempts to portray a typical, upper middle class, farmhouse of the late 18th century and the details are based on information obtained from various sources; some recorded, some passed down by word of mouth, some from close inspection of the house itself as it exists today and some which represents conclusions arrived at by the owner and the artist from their evaluation of information from the foregoing sources.

This 20' x 40' two story, gambrel roofed, timber house located on the Indian River branch of the Elizabeth River is built mostly of handhewn heart pine timbers, fastened together with wooden pegs and hand made nails. The painting shows the main house, outside kitchen, smoke house and barn. These buildings are probably just a few of the outbuildings that would have been in use on a typical farm of that day.

The house probably belonged to a fairly well-to-do farmer who lived and worked here with his family, slaves and farm animals in what was virtually a self sufficient small community. His main mode of transportation for himself and the produce from his farm was by water, although horses and wagons were also used on the very elemental roads of that day and time.

In 1860 this house was moved 100 feet southeast from its original location to its present location giving way to a larger house which was being built on the water's edge at its location. Since then its uses have been many; a home for its owner's farmhands, a storage facility for farm produce and a shelter for small equipment. Vacancy plagued this house until 1930 when Dr. Dean and Molly Preston, in search of an old house to renovate, found this house and attached carriage house in disrepair and after renovating it made it their home for many years.

Since this house was relocated in 1860 it has had five additions as follows:

1. Carriage House - a two story brick and wood frame addition on east side which was added about 1912 by Mr. A. W. Kemp.
2. Basement Section - one story brick add-on to north end of carriage house built 1954 by Vernon Forehand.
3. Great Room - Porch and Basement - one story wood frame addition to north end of original 1789 house. Built 1982 by Wilmer and Faye Peters.
4. Kitchen - second story added to basement section off north end of carriage house. Built 1982 by Wilmer and Faye Peters.
5. Three Story Brick Addition - north end of great room facing river 40' x 36' with two massive 56' tall chimneys. Built 1990 by Bill and Evelyn Colonna.