

Franklin Street, only one block long, was opened about 1870 between Bank and East Washington Streets. It was reportedly named for John Franklin Pinner, a developer. This view (c. 1915) looks north from East Washington to Bank Street and the Truitt mansion. Tom Smith, who gave the Confederate monument in Cedar Hill Cemetery, lived on the west side of the street (approximately the third house from the left.). From Suffolk in Vintage Postcards, an SNHS publication, available at the Train Station.

Remembering Franklin Street

In the last quarter of the 19th century new people were moving to Suffolk to take advantage of the business opportunities to be found here with several rail lines, a steamboat line, great natural resources and a good labor force. Reportedly, John Franklin Pinner was responsible for opening new streets to the east of Main Street after the War. One of them was Franklin Street.

In the 1890s there appear to have been 18 dwellings on Franklin Street (one was a duplex). Today there are three. One by one the houses have fallen in the name of progress—one was replaced by a church, two by commercial structures, several for parking lots—and recently three fell to arson.

In this issue we remember the people who made their homes on Franklin Street in the early days. We would appreciate more information from members.

Modern readers might expect Suffolk of 1900-1910 to be a small, provincial town and one block long Franklin Street to be populated by Virginians with a few North Carolinians added. Not so, according to the 1900 census. Hardware store owner Ernest Folk's wife Mary was born in England. Barkeeper Joseph Keller was the son of German parents.

Rozel Jacobs, brick mason, and his wife Anna were from Pennsylvania. Horace B. Phillips, superintendent at a

sawmill (probably his father-in-law's), was from Delaware and his wife Evelyn (Whaley) was from Maryland.

By 1910 lumberman Alfred Cramer of New Jersey was at home on Franklin Street. Mrs. Claud Wright (Maggie), widowed since the 1900 census, headed a household that included her daughter Mary, her nephew Willis Riddick, who was a bookkeeper in a lumber business, and another nephew Holmes Butler; but her boarders were Frank Lummis of New Jersey, who was listed as a dealer in peanuts, and Horace Bowen of Maryland, who was a clothing merchant (H.J. Bowen & Co., fore-runner of G.S. Hobbs, fore-runner of Richardson & Nash).



Lummis factory mid 20th century on E. Washington St.

116 Franklin Street The Causey-Kendrick House

It is believed that the James Causeys built this house around 1882. James Colvin Causey, born 1841 at Montrose on the Chesapeake Bay near Hampton, was the brother of Charles Henry Causey, who would be the son-in-law of Peter Prentis. The Causey family lived in Milford, Delaware, when the first sons were born but moved to Virginia around 1839 when the father, William Causey, went to work as an engineer at Fort Monroe.

Like his brothers, James served in the Confederate Army. He wore a scar from a head wound received at the Battle of the Wilderness. He served as a courier for Robert E. Lee and was present at the Surrender at Appomattox in April 1865.

Perhaps his brother brought him to Suffolk because, by the 1900 census, he and his wife, the former Evelyn Spotswood Douglas of Cownes Plantation in King William County, were living on Franklin Street with their children: Mary Douglas b. 1881, Beverly Douglas b. 1882, and James Douglas b. 1886. Mr. Causey was in the lumber business.

In 1916 daughter Mary married businessman and Tennessee native Marion Kelly Kendrick. They too made their home at 116 Franklin Street where they reared their children: Evelyn b. 1917, James Causey (Jamie) b. 1918,



Mr. & Mrs. Kelly Kendrick with children Evelyn and Jamie c. 1919

and Elizabeth Dandridge (Betsy) b. 1920. They spent time in the country at Mrs. Kendrick's maternal home place Cownes Plantation. An acquaintance tells us that the first two children never attended public schools but were schooled at home and then were sent away to school. One of their home tutors or teachers was Franklin Street neighbor Louise Brinkley (Caulk).

Mr. Kendrick had a brokerage company that he started in 1910. He was a broker for peanuts (of course), hay (very important when horses and mules were in constant use), coconut oil and corn syrup (that came by tank car and were sold to Planters) and peanut shells ("vacuumed, cleansed and crushed" for chicken houses and stables). Nell Worrell Williams, a former employee, remembers when Mr. Kendrick first sold soybeans to Red China for human con-



The carriage house/garage is visible behind this current view of the Causey/Kendrick House. Originally the porch extended across the front of the house. The Italianate style was popular on Franklin St. Note the large addition behind the original section of the house.

sumption. Soybeans were just considered food for swine locally.

The Causey/Kendrick house was said to have been beautifully furnished with fine antiques and the garden was beautifully maintained. Mr. Kendrick ordered drapery fabric from England and regularly shopped for antiques in Richmond on his way to Cownes Plantation.

Mr. Kendrick only drank the water that was brought from Cownes plantation. A large water bottle was carried to his office at the American Bank Building every week.

Children who visited quickly learned that Mr. Kendrick believed that children should be seen and not heard, at least by the time their daughter Betsy came along.

He never drove a car. Though he had a liveried chauffeur, his cars were not luxury automobiles but usually Chevrolets. Mr. Kendrick was one of the investors in the new Elliot Hotel in the 1920s. Mrs. Kendrick was a member of the Suffolk Book Club, the Literary Club and the Nansemond River Garden Club. In fact, Mr. Kendrick is credited with naming the Nansemond River Garden Club. The family attended St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Mr. Kendrick died in 1968. Mary Causey Kendrick soon sold the house. Nearly 90 years after her family first moved to Franklin Street, Mrs. Kendrick left. The house has contained five apartments since then. But it still stands. *Thanks to Nell Williams and Betty Roane Kendrick.*

See related Memories next page.

Please note there are many more good stories about old Franklin Street, we're sure, but this is what we currently know. We welcome information.

113 Franklin Street The Thomas Smith House

Thomas Washington Smith (1832-1912) of Somerton was the son of Washington Smith, the innkeeper who entertained Lafayette in 1825. Smith, Confederate veteran, served in the 16th Virginia Infantry, Co. A, Mahone's Brigade; Lt. Col. 4th Regiment Virginia Volunteers; Grand Commander-Virginia Brigade Commander Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Tom Smith was listed as a landlord in the 1900 census. How he started in the real estate business after the war is not known but he did and he prospered.

He wanted to erect a monument to his fallen comrades. With the encouragement of his wife, Harriet Borland Smith, he went ahead with the project. The Confederate monument, given by Tom Smith, was unveiled with great fanfare in November of 1889. Governor Fitzhugh Lee came and he and other dignitaries were invited to dine at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Then the porch of their home was used as the reviewing stand as the long parade of veterans headed down Franklin Street, then Bank Street and Main to Cedar Hill Cemetery.

SNHS note: Harriet Borland Smith's parents once lived on Main Street in Suffolk. In the early 1800's they moved to Murfreesboro, N.C. Her father was one of the men from Murfreesboro who rode to Somerton to meet and escort General Lafayette on to their town in 1825.

Another note: In 1878 Col. Tom Smith organized a militia unit, the Suffolk Grays. During the Spanish-American War the Suffolk Grays served as Company F of the Fourth Regiment of the Virginia Militia under Col. Charles Henry Causey, brother of James C. Causey who lived at 116 Franklin Street. *Information on the Suffolk Grays from Suffolk: A Pictorial History, by Hobbs and Pacquette.*



Col. Tom Smith.
Courtesy Sons of
Confederate
Veterans

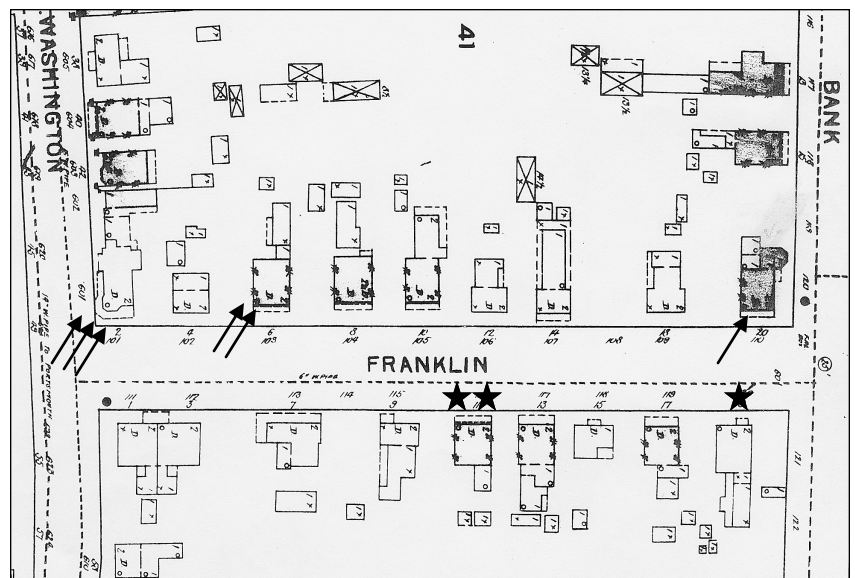


Memories of Franklin Street

When Tom Smith died in 1912, he bequeathed his primary residence (113 Franklin St.) to his nephew (my Grandfather for whom I'm named), Thomas Willis Cohoon. It was the Cohoon residence from that date until the death of my Grandmother in 1969 while I was in Vietnam. She was its last occupant and it was thereafter demolished to make way for a parking lot!! During its last 57 years of existence it, at one time or another, served as a residence for my grandparents, my parents, my sister and I as well as two aunts and an uncle. The Franklin Street residents of the 30s & 40s were like an extended family for me. I knew them well.

I don't know how much you know about the Kendricks, but they were among Suffolk's most prominent citizens of the era. I have some letters written by Mrs. Kendrick which are both newsy & amusing. Did you know that they employed a black liveried chauffeur who was decked out in full uniform, tunic, black boots, cap with visor, white gloves, the works? He lived above the garage at the rear of the residence and was a swain in the black community. Tall & handsome not unlike Cab Calloway or Duke Ellington!

Excerpt of an email from Thomas Willis Cohoon, II, April 10, 2005. Sent to SNHS by Hubert Young.



Franklin St. is shown on the April 1894 Sanborn map at right. House numbers on Franklin St. have changed several times over the years so pinpointing houses is difficult. The single arrow shows the Phillips-Dawson house when it faced Bank Street. The double arrow is probably the Smith house. The triple arrow is a house that moved away. (See picture and caption on p. 6.) The starred house was replaced by a church. Two stars indicate the Causey-Kendrick house.



120 Franklin Street The Brinkley-Perts House

Preston Brinkley, a merchant from Cypress Chapel, first appears on Franklin Street in the 1910 Census. By the 1930 census their address was 120 Franklin Street. He and his wife had three daughters: Helen, who never married and lived at home; Louise, called Brink, who married Wellons Caulk; and May, who lived at home much of her life and with Helen operated a shop downtown called The Gift Box. In 1930 Preston Brinkley is listed as a pickle manufacturer and daughter May, a poetess. See p. 5.

The Gift Box

175 North Main Street
Dial 2751

From a sales slip.

After her parents and then sister Helen died, May (b. 1898) packed up and headed west. A cousin, Jimmy Crocker, reports that about 1963 he and his wife boarded a plane going to California and there was May! She said she was going to San Francisco, where people still wore white gloves. Goodbye Suffolk! She was looking for more of the finer things in life.

She did start a new life. In what might be termed late middle age, May Brinkley married a Mr. Wahl. She spent the rest of her life in California and is buried in Contra Costa County near San Francisco. As far as we know she came back to visit only once.

John and Mary - From Russia with Art. The next known inhabitants of the house lent a decidedly more cosmopolitan air to Franklin Street in the 1960s and 70s.

John's story-- John and Mary Perts were from Russia. John was born with the surname Akimov-Perts c. 1906 in St. Petersburg/Leningrad. His father was head physician at a hospital there and was also attached to the American Embassy. His three older brothers married three sisters, one being Mary.

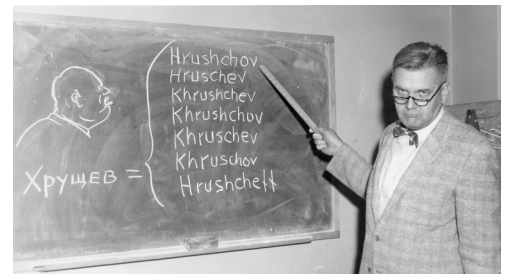
The Russian Revolution came and their lives were

turned upside down. One of John's brothers was executed by the Reds (Bolsheviks) in 1919, another in 1920. At age 15 John was able to escape with his mother to Finland. Other family members joined them as they were able.

John was in American Foreign Service in Riga, Latvia, then in Oslo, Norway. In 1935 he married Mary, by then the widow of his older brother. World War II started and friends helped John and Mary move to Richmond, Virginia, where he entered the insurance business.

His older brothers had always been cartoonists. Some of the work of one, Vladimir, is in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Art. John started doing political cartoons and caricatures in the 1950s. His first work was for the Washington Star but he was soon a regular contributor to The Richmond Times and The Virginian-Pilot. He was quoted as saying "Virginius Dabney sent me to see Lenior Chambers." The book *Virginia Leaders* was published in 1968 with caricatures by John Perts and text by Charles Houston.

Mary's story-- All the while his wife Mary was practicing her art. The story of her early life, though, is also tragic.



John Perts escaped from Russia during the Bolshevik Revolt. See Escape, p. 5.

The men in her family and her grandmother were killed in the Russian Revolution. Her mother was captured by the Nazis in the early days of what would become World War II and she was never heard from again. Mary and John were forced to flee from northern Europe and, in 1940, arrived in Richmond "without a penny and knowing no one." After a few years they moved to Roanoke and Mary took up portrait painting. By the time the Perts moved to Suffolk in 1953, Mary had been selected as one of three people to exhibit in the Virginia Museum of Art's first exhibition of Virginia artists.

When they first came to town Mary taught art at Suffolk High School. When they moved to 120 Franklin Street, John and Mary lived upstairs and she eventually established a studio in the big double parlors downstairs. She taught artists 14 years old and up in her studio. Her students included John Taylor, who today holds adult art classes himself.

In 1974 the Perts decided to move to Florida. Most of the information given here is based on two articles. The one about John covered the entire front page of the Lighthouse section of The Virginian-Pilot on Sunday, April 21, 1974. The one about Mary covered most of the first page of the Suffolk section of the same paper on Sunday, April 28, 1974.



From 1956 SHS annual

Mary Perts died in 1991 and John in 1999. Thanks to Karen Kusmez.

120 Franklin Street, continued

PRODIGAL

I am content to walk the plains,
And feel the dust beneath my feet,
For I have climbed the mountain top
And found the climbing sweet.

I am content to take the road
That white and hard goes east and west,
I have known valleys green and gold
With love against my breast.

But they who see my plodding steps
Will nod, approve, philosophize,
They cannot know the heights and depths
That curve behind my eyes.

—May Brinkley

This appeared in *The Will-o'-The-Wisp* January-February issue 1927. The publication was the creation of the Poetry Society of Suffolk. The president was Elkanah East Taylor of Driver, a noted Virginia poet. Henry Rawles collection.



114 Franklin Street—The Folk House

The Folk family lived on Franklin Street for at least three generations and most of a century but in different houses. Mr. and Mrs. Garnett Folk lived at 114 Franklin Street for several decades. It is now a law office. Garnett Folk was the son of E.L. Folk. (More on p. 6.)

Escape

An article from the Spartanberg (S.C.) Herald-Journal October 18, 1998 found online gives an account about Mr. Perts and the Russian Revolution. Here is a portion of the story.

In 1917, Perts, whose Russian surname was Akimov-Perts, nearly lost his life before Bolshevik firing squads. He and his mother barely escaped.

His two brothers were not so lucky.

The Bolsheviks targeted Perts' family because his older brother, Michael, had worked for the U.S. government, gathering information about the revolution in the Baltic state of Latvia.

One day, Bolshevik spies followed one of Michael's couriers to the Perts' family home in St. Petersburg. His two brothers were executed by the Bolsheviks, which later became the Communists.

After the executions, Perts and his mother, Katherine, were placed under house arrest. Perts was 15 when smugglers sneaked the two out of Russia in the dead of night. The year was 1922.

Perts and his mother loaded belongings and piled onto a horse-drawn sled for a daring dash across the snowy and frozen Finnish Gulf wearing camouflage.

"We put on white shrouds, and the wonderful horse was covered with a white shroud, then we started across the ice," Perts said. "The search lights were all the time circling around us, and one time I saw the Red soldiers preparing themselves to shoot us -- they were grouped on the ice exactly where we were galloping."

At that moment Perts thought he was going to die, just as his brothers had. His father, a doctor at St. Petersburg, died of infection during hard times after the revolution.

"I repeated the Lord's Prayer because it was the only thing I knew to do," Perts said.

There were no gunshots.

"They were decoys to scare people," he said. "People would see them at a distance and run away from them, but our Finnish smugglers knew exactly what they were and so they were galloping right through them."

When Perts and his mother arrived in Finland, he turned to face Russia one last time. "Damn it all, I hope to God I will never see . . . St. Petersburg again," I yelled," Perts said. "And it is correct -- I've never been back, I'm not planning to be back, and I don't want to be back."

"I consider that the real birth of John Perts — he escaped from hell and landed in the best part of Earth, that was Finland," Perts said.

<p>HUBS RIMS SPOKES SHAFTING STEEL BAR IRON IRON AXLES STEEL AXLES BABBITT METAL SPLIT PULLEYS BELTING BOLTS, NAILS PUMPS, ETC.</p>	<p>SUFFOLK, VA., <u>July 14</u> 1921 <u>M. L. W. M. Crumpler</u></p> <p>Bought of E. L. FOLK CO., Inc. Jobbers and Dealers in HARDWARE Mill Supplies, Farm Tools, Plows, Castings, Coach Materials, Sporting Goods, Sash, Blinds, Doors, Moulding, Brackets, Paints Oils, Window Glass, Putty, Lime, Plaster, Hair, Stoves, China, Lamps, Glassware, Etc.</p>	<p>Mail and Phone Orders Solicited Bell Phone 90</p> <p>TERMS: THIRTY DAYS After which six per cent interest will be added</p>
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Crumpler collection

115 Franklin Street—The Brothers House

The Brothers family lived on Franklin Street for several decades. Lyman was L.R. Brothers (1879-1963) who was involved in Brothers-Pruden Hardware Co. early in the 20th century. It later became Pruden Hardware.

The family was from Cypress Chapel where Mr. and Mrs. Robert Edward Brothers operated a store in the first half of the twentieth century. They sent their son Reginald (1903-1981) into town to live with their Bank Street kin while he attended high school in Suffolk. He later ran a hardware store, Reginald Brothers Co., Inc., which operated in Suffolk for decades.

The day this reporter moved to Franklin Street, July 1, 1970, the Brothers house was being demolished. A parking lot replaced it. We have no picture of the house but are happy to present some pictures provided by Lyman Brothers' granddaughter, Virginia (Gin) Simons Staylor.



Top right: Mr. & Mrs. Lyman Brothers at Christmas dinner, 117 Franklin St., 1950s.

Right: Cousins Betty Fitzhugh holding baby Leigh Newman, Gin Simons and Anne Newman in their grandparents' house.

Left: Cousins near the back porch—top row, Berry Fitzhugh; middle, Rick (Lyman R.) Brothers, Gin Simons, Betty Fitzhugh; bottom, Paul McDaniel, Ames Brothers and Anne Newman.



117 Franklin Street—Franklin Apartments



The Franklin Apartments were created by Mr. & Mrs. E.L. Folk who bought the property in 1911. The Phillips/Dawson house stands to the north of this site. The apartment house gave way to a parking lot.

The Book Club was charmingly entertained by Mrs. R. Edward Norfleet at her new home in the Franklin Apt. Nov. 9th. On the arrival of the guests they were conducted through the splendid new apartment and shown all the modern conveniences, the expressions of delight and admiration would truly have pleased both the owner and architect, and the graceful taste of our hostess in the arrangements of her grand furniture, much of it being heirlooms, was greatly admired. *From Suffolk Book Club minutes*



Moved off Franklin Street

Right: This is the current view of the house originally built at the S.W. corner of Franklin and E. Washington Streets. (See left side of picture on p. 1.) Sometime after 1920 it was moved to the Holland Road (#1634) beyond present day Oak Ridge. We've heard several stories about this home, none substantiated. Can members provide information?

The Walter Story family lived on Franklin Street when they first came to Suffolk from Southampton County to operate the National Screen Company. That company had been operated in the old buggy factory in Franklin.



Henry A. Rawles, Jr., Memorial Exhibit Riddick Related Art

At Riddick's Folly, 510 N. Main Street—Through August 31

The Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society, in conjunction with Riddick's Folly house museum, is pleased to present this exhibit of art work by five descendants of Mills Riddick, builder of Riddick's Folly. We do this in memory of Henry Alvin Rawles, Jr. (1927-2010), kind benefactor to both organizations. His gift last fall of \$20,000 was the largest individual one-time gift ever received by SNHS. Mr. Rawles was the son of Virginia Browne Riddick and Henry A. Rawles whose family trees are deeply rooted in Suffolk and old Nansemond County

The Riddick family artists featured are as follows:

- Anna Mary Riddick (1841-1936) — painting, drawing, needlework — granddaughter of Mills Riddick
- Gertrude Riddick Pruden (1889-1966) — painting, wood carving, silhouettes — great-granddaughter of Mills Riddick
- John Brooke Pruden, III (1949-) — painting, iron work — grandson of Gertrude Riddick Pruden and great-great-grandson of Mills Riddick
- George Paine Riddick (1899-1985) — painting — uncle of Henry Rawles and great-great-grandson of Mills Riddick
- Henry Alvin Rawles, Jr. (1927-2010) — painting — great-great-great-grandson of Mills Riddick

These five family members produced a wide variety of quality art. Three—Brooke Pruden, Henry Rawles and George Riddick—were mostly self taught, yet George Riddick made his living as a commercial artist. We urge our members to see this exhibit.

NOTE: George Riddick's father and brother (Henry's grandfather and uncle), both named Burwell Riddick, were architects who designed the bungalows at College Court.

Riddick's Folly is open Wednesday—Friday, 10:00--5:00, Saturday 10:00—4:00; and Sunday 1:00—5:00.



1983 photo

History and Heritage Day — April 17, 2010

Back by popular demand, again this year Kermit Hobbs will lead two bus tours of Suffolk Civil War sites. Tours will leave from the Train Station promptly at 10:00 a.m., returning at 12:00 noon, and at 1:00 p.m., returning at 4:00 pm. The cost is \$12.00, \$11 for members, for the morning tour and \$15.00, \$14 for members, for the afternoon tour. Payment is due at the time of reservation.



The morning tour will visit the site of Battery Onandaga with its earthworks and panoramic view of Suffolk Civil War activity. This will be followed by visits to the site of Fort Connecticut, also overlooking the Nansemond River, and Deserted House battlefield. The tour will include the site of the home of Judith Kilby Smith, the only civilian casualty of the Siege of Suffolk. Other sites will be added if time allows.

The afternoon tour will include the Battery Onandaga site and also Fort Stevens which still stands. Fort Huger, also known as Hill's Point Battery, site of a successful Union amphibious attack against the Confederates, will be the third stop. (Captain John

Smith also fought the Nansemond Indians within sight of this location.) From there the group will travel to the magnificent Fort Rosecrans, with its 18 foot high embankments. Last stop will be a visit to Riddick's Folly, the restored headquarters of Union General John J. Peck.

Both tours require walking on uneven ground; the afternoon tour involves a considerable amount of walking through woods. Comfortable shoes and insect repellent are recommended. Call 757-539-2781 now to reserve your spot. This is filling up fast.



Hats Off to:

- **Bruce Saunders**, 2009 recipient of the annual Marion Joyner Watson history award from the Tom Smith Camp, SCV
- **Lauren Gersbach**, NSA student member, winner of a blue ribbon at the Exhibit of Excellence: Suffolk Student Art Show 2010

- **Lee Hart**, chairman of the SCV Oakwood Restoration Committee for Richmond's historic Oakwood Cemetery
- **Byron Carmean** and others who worked to have the Blackwater River declared a Scenic River. There will be a celebratory paddle on April 24. For information call Bobby Clontz, 757-353-7376. The Blackwater River forms Suffolk's western boundary.