

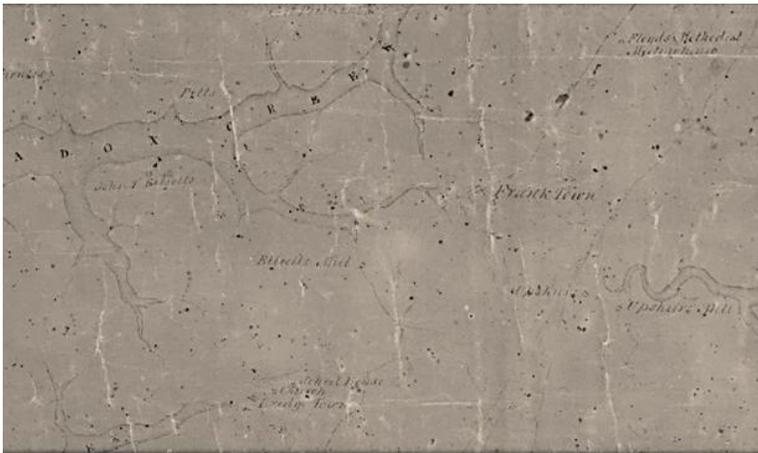
# Franktown History

## Self-Guided Walking Tour

Written by Cara Burton, 2025

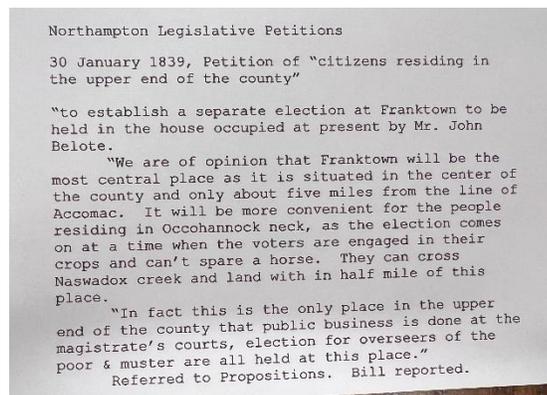
*Author's note: Many thanks is extended to those in the bibliography that provided information. Franktown has an extraordinary past and this history is not intended to be all inclusive. The goal was to provide some of the highlights of its recent history and compile the bits and pieces gleaned from the historical documentation to provide a sense of the life in and changes to a small Virginia town in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its geographic isolation did not closet the town from the impacts of America's response to the industrial age. In fact, Franktown is a good mirror of the larger story of the role of small waterside towns in the history of our nation. If you have additional information or corrections, please email them to burton.esva@gmail.com.*

Franktown, Virginia is an unincorporated town established about 1764, then called "New Towne." When Frank Andrews opened a store in 1764, the community came to be referred to as Frank's Towne (DHR 1996). It is located at the head of Warehouse Creek, where a tobacco warehouse was located on Wellington Neck. Franktown was officially recognized when a post office was located there in 1840, one of only 13 on the Eastern Shore by that time. Located on the bayside stage coach route, it was a hub of commerce and transportation.



1820 map showing Franktown's location at the head of Nassawadox Creek's 2 upper branches. Elliott's Mill is to the left and Upshur's Mill is to the right. You can see a large version of the map at the Barrier Island's Center or at the url in the bibliography.

The 1869 Virginia Constitution required that each county be divided into townships, and the enabling act stipulated that the commissioners be appointed to lay off the townships (later changed to magisterial districts). Franktown Township was designated and described as, "to include Hog island and all of the area of the county between the Eastville Township line and the Accomack County line...." (Turman, p. 193). You can see this Magisterial District designation on Census records.



In 1884, life in Franktown changed when the NYP&N Railroad began operating on the Eastern Shore. No longer were the stagecoach routes and creeks used for commercial transportation. The train tracks were laid straight down the middle of the Shore, bypassing Franktown. Towns quickly grew up along the railway, including Nassawadox and nearby Weirwood. Over time, Franktown became less of a hub, and more of a bedroom community for Nassawadox, where the Northampton-Accomack Memorial Hospital was built in 1928.

***Start the tour at the Franktown Town Hall and walk south on the sidewalk. All street numbers are on Bayside Road, unless noted. The tour can be entirely walked on this (east) side. If you do choose to cross the road, please be careful.***

**Franktown Town Hall, #7447 – c1925.** This quaint, little building never served as an official town hall, but acted as the local polling place when it was deeded to a community collective and moved to this location in 1971. Originally, it was located across the street at the home of Charles M. Lankford, Sr. (#7444) (about where the small gravel drive is on the left corner of the lot), where it served as C.M. Lankford, Jr.'s law office. It also served many other uses including as Dick Smith's barber shop (1910), "Hyla Kellam's" post office, and as Lankford, Sr. sheriff's office. In Franktown, "the wives would not let the men play with cards. But the men found a way! They played "setback" with dominoes here, in the "recreation center."

To understand why Franktown was a hub in the County, an 1839 citizen petition sheds light on the importance of its location for business. "*Petition of citizens residing in the upper end of the county...to establish a separate election at Franktown to be held in the house occupied at present by Mr. John Belote: 'We are of opinion that Franktown will be the most central place as it is situated in the center of the county and only about five miles from the line of Accomac. It will be more convenient for the people residing in Occohannock neck, as the election comes on at a time when the voters are engaged in their crops and can't spare a horse. They can cross Naswadox creek and land within half mile of this place. In fact, this is the only place in the upper end of the county that public business is done at the magistrate's courts, election for overseers of the poor & muster are all held at this*

place." Referred to Propositions. Bill reported. Northampton Legislative Petitions, 30 January 1839.  
Source: Kirk Mariner Collection, ESVAHC.

The history of this property will be revisited later in the tour.



**C.C. Bell Store #7465** - No longer standing. This was on the very corner of the property by Crystal Palace, which Bell owned. Franktown Road was a much smaller dirt road, back then. C.C. Bell and Joseph Dallett operated the store. The store sold "fabric, shoes, apparel, notions, groceries, farm supplies, etc. There was a large #20 granery to the rear of the store. On the second floor of the main building, there was even a theatrical stage. Gasoline was delivered to the store by a tank wagon pulled by horses. Mr. John R. Tankard was the bookkeeper for the store. This store burned in the late 1920's. The post office was once located in this store." (*Dennis*)

**Joseph Dallett/Dalatesky** (1893-1937), Jewish, was a merchant from Mensk/Minsk, Russia (now Belarus). He immigrated to the United States and married Hilda Stern in New York in 1906. By 1920 they had moved to Delaware County, Pennsylvania which was just outside of Philadelphia. The Eastern Shore had a remarkable Jewish population, mostly centered in Cape Charles, but also in Exmore (see the Exmore Walking Tour to learn more). During the earliest part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russian Jews sought prosperity in the U.S., mostly as merchants and to escape Jewish persecution (pogroms). The success of Benjamin's in Exmore likely affected sales at the Franktown stores, reflecting the change in commerce as automobiles became more common and the new Route 13 made travelling faster and easier.

**Fitchett and Tankard Blacksmith** – located in the field behind Crystal Palace. Fitchett had a blacksmith shop and also owned the Franktown Automobile Company with P.W. Tankard. In 1913, they received a train car loaded with Ford automobiles to sell. The circus performed in the field behind (east) sometime in the 1920's. (*Dennis*)

**Crystal Palace, #7465 – c1853.** This 3,024 sq. ft. Federal-style home was built for John H.E. Smith (1821-1859). Local lore says he built it for his fiancé, but she eloped with another man. Since his will gave his estate to his uncle Lewis Heath and Heath cousins

(Horace, Julius, and Virginia) and cousin James Fisher, it appears he did not marry or have children. Heath owned half a storehouse, called Smith and Bayly, and a schooner, the Mary Elizabeth, in addition to 175 acres and his "new brick house." It is said that Mr. Henry A. Wise made a campaign speech here in 1855 when he ran for Governor. After 1860, C.C. Bell (storeowner and insurance salesman) lived here, then Jack and Grace Weston. Thereafter, Judge Charles M. Lankford, Jr. (1898-1977), for whom Route 13 is named, and his wife lived here.

**Dr. Edmond W.P. and Margaret E. (West) Downing House & Office, #7483 – 1895.**

This 2,062 sq. ft. home also had a small outbuilding, which was later moved to an unknown location on Wellington Neck Road and has since been demolished. Dr. Edmond Wainhouse Poulson Downing (1860-1950) married Margaret Ethel West (1879-1952). He the son of Dr. Stratton Downing and descended from Edmund W. P. Downing (1776-1843), who owned a large plantation, Downingsville, which included the land Exmore now covers. Stratton's brother, Arthur Wainhouse Downing (1815-1901), also became a physician. Arthur bought Chatham (now Chatham Vineyards about 6 miles south), sometime after 1850. Edmond's signature is found on many Franktown residents' death certificates. A surgeon, he was one of the first doctors at the 1928 hospital in nearby Nassawadox.

**Ira P. and Mildred (Turner) Lankford House & soda bottling plant, #7497 - c.1880.**

This 1,728 sq. ft. home had a shed out back used as the "bottling plant" for I.P. Lankford sodas. Lankford (1874-1948) was married to Mildred Turner, daughter of William Turner, Sr. (1857-1908). Her parents are buried in Franktown cemetery. I.P. was listed as a painter on his death certificate. In 1918, however, he was working as a salesman for Samuel Tankard, Sr. Ira was the brother of Charles M. Lankford, Sr., mentioned earlier.

**Judge John E. and Maude (Taylor) Nottingham, Jr. House, #7505.** No date available. 2,170 sq.ft. This originally was the home of Gilmer Hurtt, a farmer. The house was also occupied by Russell Kellam, Pitts Wescott, Capt. Goode, Clayshia Willis Long, John R. Tankard, Jr., Robert Bridges, and J.E. Woodruff.

**Judge Nottingham** (1877-1942) married Maude Taylor Nottingham (1887-1979), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nottingham of Bayview. John was the son of John E. Nottingham, Sr. (1838-1916) and Malinda Catharine Fisher. A University of Virginia Law School graduate, the Judge was "three times elected Commonwealth's attorney, and also represented the counties of Northampton and Accomack three terms in the Virginia General Assembly. He was appointed to the judgeship in 1930..." (*obit., Eastern Shore Herald, 30 May 1942*). A Baptist and a Mason, he served



**Dr. Peter Scott House, Office and Apothecary #7523 - c.1920.** this 1,090 sq. ft. Dr. Peter Franklin Scott (1831-1929) was born in Suffolk and graduated from the University of Virginia. He may be most known for his defiance of widowhood, in that he married: Ella Tankard (m.1869), Peggy Wesley Nottingham (m.1882), Ella Raleigh (m.1893), Louisa E. Pitts (m.1902), and Margaret Duncan (m.1915), the later being 54 when she married the 84-year-old doctor. Four of the wives were buried in the backyard. The 1860 census record shows Scott working as a teacher and living in Franktown with George Wescoat. By 1870, he was a physician, married to Ella, and living in the house later owned by Dr. Downing (#7483). They moved to the John T. Wilkins place (*location unknown*) until in 1876, they bought this property. "The store featured one exceptional candy counter." (*Dennis*) We expect this made the visit to the doctor more agreeable to children.

**Bungalow #7537 - 1929** – "This bungalow and the residence which it replaced were the home of Bob Badger (brick mason), Sheriff George T. Turner, Mrs. 'Mag' Kellam, Mrs. Hargis, Leonard Fitchett, Harry McCann and Dize Savage." (*Dennis*) That it sits on two lots is a clue to its unknown history.

**Franktown United Methodist Church, #7551 – 1894.** Founded in 1790, the congregation has worshiped on this site since 1843, when Lewis D. and Emeline Heath deeded the property to the "Methodist Episcopal Church." It is believed that a Quaker meeting house was located here in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**Bethel African American Community on the outskirts of town** - From the front yard of the church, you can look south to the African American hamlet which has its own rich history, of which few material traces remain. There "was the residences of Nim Saunders, Wade Treherne, and George Treherne, a bar room, the old school house on the hill, the blacksmith shop of Wade Treherne and Ivan Upshur, the Nim Saunders undertaking establishment, and the Bethel Baptist Church. There was also the residence of Alfred and William Wallace." (*Dennis*)

Ivan Upshur later moved his blacksmithing craft to Nassawadox, first on Bayside Road and then near the sawmill, approximately 10099 Franktown Road.

The 'old school house' was the "colored" elementary school. African American children could not attend the Franktown Nassawadox school.

**West side of Bayside Road** - *For safety's sake, remain on this sidewalk as you turnaround and head north while learning about the west side of Bayside Road's history.*

**John R. and Georgianna House, #7542. - c.1940.** Miss Mary Ann Thomas, a school teacher for 60 years, lived here (dates unknown). John R. Warrenton (1846-?), a wheelwright, lived here at least until 1910 with his wife Georgianna (1846-?). The lot was previously owned by I.P. Richardson (1925), an undertaker. The front part of the house dates to 1800, the back part was added in the 2004. Phillip Barraud Tankard moved here from Hillcrest.



**“Hillcrest,” Dr. Philip William Tankard House, #7518 – 1924.** “At one time, Mr. John Finney lived in the house and farmed the land. When this brick house was built, Finney’s house was divided into three pieces, then moved to different locations. Dr. Tankard (1876-1961) married Florence Mary Mapp (1883-1961) and practiced dentistry. He named the house “Hillcrest Truck Farm,” as he was also a farmer and businessman. Later, his son Phillip Barraud Tankard (1903-1993) lived here and raised his family.

**Vacant lot** – This was the site of a residence occupied by “Mr. Geimer, F-N High School teacher. Other occupants were Willie Maddox (teamster), Ivan D. Mapp (farmer, and Miss Madge Walker (1883-1976), a milliner, who married Edgar B. Reid in 1919. Later d they lived across the street at #7513.

**Tankard “Old Home Place,” vacant lot – Southwest corner of Bayside and Wellington Neck Road.** Neither building survives, but two basements remain. The house burned in the 1950. In 1925, the property is listed as owned by Mrs. Sallie Tankard, the 2<sup>nd</sup> wife of Philip Bernard “Bernie” Tankard (1849-1919), a farmer, and her son, Edward Bernard Tankard (1888-1965). Edward, a farmer, married Hyla Bagley (1887-1939) in 1924. All that was salvaged was one corner cupboard. Edward then moved across the street into the Fisher House. The lot is still owned by a Tankard descendant.

*[Crossroads of Wellington Neck and Franktown Road]*

*At this time, you can cross to the west side of the road and then cross back over to the east side on the last section of the walk. Head west (no sidewalks).*

## **Wellington Neck Road**

**S.D. Tankard Bungalow, #9022 Wellington Neck Road – 1920.** This was also the residence of Annie Ames, Charles M. Lankford, Jr., S.D. Tankard, Jr., Mrs. Margaret Kellam, Tyson Mapp, and H.M. Arnold. It is said this was a “kit home,” perhaps from Montgomery Ward.

**Mary Anne White House, #9010 Wellington Neck Road – replaced.** White raised unfenced cattle around town. Also served as residence for Edgar Reid and John Gunter. Her house is no longer standing as the Willis’s built the current bungalow after inheriting the property from the Arnold estate (Mrs. Willis’s parents). They had previously lived at the end of Wellington Neck, where many Arnolds now live.

**Fisher House, #9041 Wellington Neck Road – William (1825 - ?) and Lillian?(1871 - ?);** daughter Ruth. This building was once used as a store building. It has a brick basement floor, “counting room” on the first floor, and a hoist on the end. It may have also acted as lodging for travelers. By the road there reportedly was a bar room and another bottling works. The house once occupied by John R. Tankard, John E. Nottingham, Jr., Will Wilson, George H. Floyd, Hallett Fitchett, and E.B. Tankard.

**John R. Tankard House.** Demolished, stood just west of the Fisher House, about where the paddock is now.

*Return to Bayside Road, and stay on the west side of the road.*

## **Bayside Road, heading north.**

**P.B. & S.D. Tankard Store (later Buster’s), #7454 - replaced.** Samuel Tankard, Sr. (1870-1963) and Phillip Bernard Tankard, Samuel’s uncle, operated the largest Franktown general mercantile store on this location. Samuel started working with his uncle at the age of seventeen, dating this store back at least to 1887. It sold furniture, apparel, housewares, farm machinery, grain, groceries, and more. It had a theatrical stage on the second floor. The store burned twice, once around 1919. It was later replaced by the Edgar Reid store which was moved from across the street (previously mentioned). This store was operated sequentially by Randall Kellam, Milton Kellam, W.C. “Buster” Willis (1913-1987), and Robert Bridges. Area children fondly remember buying penny-candy there while men sat on the barrels of nails to catch up on the weather. Ann Willis (1915-2003), operated the post office here for a time. Behind the

store was Dr. Philip W. Tankard's dental office and later the law office of John E. Nottingham, Jr. The small building burned with the store about 1919.



Postcard photo courtesy of Richard Tankard.



Photo courtesy of Clayshia Willis, Buster's daughter.

**The Small Town Post Office:** At some time, the post office in the store was moved into the Lankford office next door (current Town Hall building). In 1971, the federal Postal Reorganization Act was signed and the "contract" post office in the small store ended and a new post office was built on Franktown Road. The Bayford post office was also closed. Mrs. Jacqueline Dunton is fondly remembered as a postmistress.

POSTMASTER		NAME	CLASS	ESTABLISHED	DISCONTINUED	REMARKS
Georgia M. Wecott	June 23, 1910	July 14, 1915	July 16, 1914	Retired	No record	
Miss Fleta S. William	Feb. 5, 1920	Feb. 11, 1940	Feb. 11, 1940	Retired	9-20-67	
Mrs. Anna Elizabeth Willis	9-28-47	8-7-67	8-7-67	Retired	9-20-67	



Post Office (now Town Hall) in its original location. Photo courtesy of Richard Tankard

**Charles M. Lankford, Sr. and Mary Woodson (Fitchett) House, #7444 1890 and original location of "town hall."** 2,560 sq.ft. Charles Magruder Lankford, Sr. (1864-1951) was Sheriff and a farmer. Born in Somerset County, Md, his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife was Mary Woodson (Fitchett) (1865-1922). Charles M. Lankford, Jr. (1897-1977) married Genevieve Walker (1897-1985) and was a successful attorney, including acting as

Commonwealth Attorney and a Commissioner of Fisheries. He was president of the board of the hospital.

**Barton B. and Sallie C. Fitchett House, #7426 – 1902.** 2,420 sq.ft. Barton. B. Fitchett (1862-1941) was a blacksmith, car dealer, magistrate, and, by 1930, a seafood inspector and his wife, Sallie Coulburn Dunton (1873-1959), was a teacher.

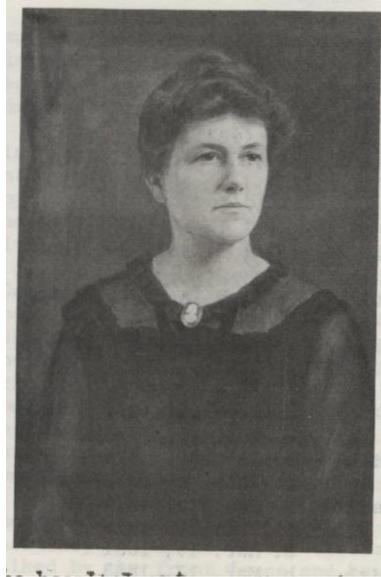
**Ida and Henry Tankard Hunt House, #7414 – 1892.** 2,920 sq. ft. Ida Hunt (1859-1939) was married to Henry Hunt (1855-1908). Also known as the **Kellam House**, Hyla Kellam (1897-1991) lived here. She never married and lived with her brother, a merchant, Randall Carter Kellam, (1907-1979) and Mary Kellam, a teacher, his wife. They had married in 1940. Hyla went to State Normal School for Women at Harrisonburg (later James Madison University) from around 1916-1919, being in their “Eastern Shore Club” with nine other young women. In 1930, she was in Augusta, Virginia, listed as a “boarder.”

**Methodist Church Parsonage, #7386. 1910.** Franktown Methodist Church was joined to Johnson’s Chapel (now Johnson’s Methodist Church, 11175 Bayside Rd.) in 1894, forming a “circuit.” The two churches shared a pastor and this parsonage. The 1894 parsonage burned and was replaced by this house.



**“Windemere,” Samuel Dunton, Sr. and Florence Mabel (Roberts) Tankard#7332 – 1920.** 2,688 sq.ft. A previous house burned and this one replaced it. Samuel Tankard, Sr., lived here and was married to Florence Mabel Roberts (1875-1943), a teacher. Thurman Charles “Tee” Renner (1910- ), owner of Western Auto in Exmore, married their daughter, Florence Mabel. They lived there after her mother passed to take care of her father.

**Bessie Badger Anderson House, #7316 – 1913.** 3005 sq.ft. four-square style home. Anderson (1876-1950) was widowed when her surveyor husband, Edward L. Anderson (1872-1911), died when he was unable to get to a hospital in Norfolk for an appendectomy. She turned her loss into action and helped lead fundraising efforts to build the 1928 Northampton-Accomack Memorial Hospital. Her efforts were honored when the nurse's school/dormitory in Nassawadox was named the Bessie B. Anderson Memorial Nurses' Home. Mrs. Anderson was the sister of George Badger and likely moved to this location after her husband's death, as the 1910 census locates them on Occohannock Beach Road. *Photo source: Kilham book.*



**George H. Badger, Sr. House, #7304 –** No date available. 3,172 sq.ft. Badger (1898-1950) was the chief surveyor for Northampton County, as well as, an oyster policeman and inspector and was the State Engineer for the Commission of Fisheries.

**Ida & Doris Hunt House (2<sup>nd</sup>), #7294 – c1920.** This classic bungalow was built from plans purchased from Sears and Roebuck.

*Turn around and head south. You can cross the road once the sidewalk starts on the east side of Bayside Road.*

## **EAST SIDE OF TOWN, WALKING SOUTH**



**"Bleak House," #7337 – 1847 –** Built by Louis/Lewis D. Heath (1810-1868), it was also the home of John F. Bell, Thomas T. Upshur, Mr. Wilkins, Joseph B. Savage, John E. Nottingham, Sr., Allie B. Dunton, Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. James, and Dr. and Mrs. John Snyder. Lewis Heath was a landowner, a farmer, and a carpenter and seems to have lived on Occohannock Neck. In addition to Bleak House, he helped build Crystal Palace. His grandmother was a Dunton. He had two wives, Emeline Susan Savage (1815-1845) and Sarah Ann C. Warner (1838-1880). Emeline gave him five children and Sarah three.

Heath owned a lot of land. In 1843 Lewis D. Heath, the then owner of the land thought to be the site of the Quaker meeting house, and his wife Emeline deeded property for the Methodist Episcopal Church the half acre "where the Church now stands." It is assumed that the meeting house and current church sites are about the same property. In 1849, Lewis and Sarah sold the School Commission ¼ acre. In 1845 (the year Emeline passed), Heath sold a storehouse and lot to John H.E. Smith (owner of Crystal Palace), and three years later, Heath sold Smith 20 more acres. The property in Nassawadox for the 1928 hospital was originally part of Heath's farm.

**John E. Nottingham, Sr. (1838-1916) House, #7393 – 1840.** 4,478 sq.ft. French, 2<sup>nd</sup> Empire style with the distinctive Mansard roof, a double-sloped, hip roof with a steep lower slope. Nottingham was a state legislator 1899-1904, serving one term and served several years as county supervisor representing the Franktown District. He had two children with his first wife Malinda "Lynn" Catherine Fisher (1850-1881) and six with his second wife, Mary Catharine Wood (1855-1932).

By 1910, **Dr. William Joshua Sturgis, Sr.** (1878-1960) and his wife Mary Grayson Nottingham (1886-1975)—John E. and Mary Catharine's daughter--- had moved into the house. Dr. Sturgis, Sr. is most renowned as the founder of the Northampton-Accomack Memorial Hospital, which opened in 1928. Sturgis had the vision to create the hospital and led the committee and fundraising for its construction. This often overshadows his skill as a surgeon. He was the father of Dr. Sturgis, Jr., who also served as surgeon for this hospital after serving in WWII.

**"White Shingles," #7403 - 1915.** 3,350 sq.ft. gambrel roof house. Served as home for Judge John E. Nottingham, Jr., Captain Thomas Goode (retired fire boat and Chesapeake Bay steamboat captain). Samuel D. Tankard, Jr. (1903-1983) and his wife Myrtle Mae Bell (1903-2007) also resided there. Samuel, Jr. was the founder of Tankards Nurseries, still in operation in Exmore (historically Hadlock) on the ancestral Tankard property, "Tankard's Rest."

**Otho and Helen (Hurtt) Walker House #7423 – 1896 (front part).** Otho Kerr Walker (1866-1931) and his wife Helen Hurtt (1869-1963) moved to Franktown when he was 25 (1891). By 1900, he was a fertilizer salesman and in 1910 he was a constable. His obituary states he worked on a State oyster police boat. By 1920, he had advanced to being a produce inspector with the Eastern Shore of Virginia Produce Exchange in Northampton County. In 1930, he was an oil company agent. By 1940, Helen was living in the house by herself. In 1950, her widowed son-in-law, Everett Nottingham and a 75 year old boarder Ella Tankard lived with her. The house has had at least one addition.

Between the large store and the Walker's, there was a millinery shop operated by Mrs. Helen Walker and Mrs. Madge Walker Reid. There was also a store called "Lowry's" (1910-1912). The buildings are no longer standing.

**Tankard, Downing, and Ashby Store, #7447 – No longer standing.** Before the "Town Hall" was moved here, this site was the store of Edward G. Tankard, Fenwick Downing, and Benjamin Ashby. It was later occupied as a residence and workshop by Capt. Thomas Goode (1896-1972). Goode married Elsa Gabriella Damm (1901-1971) from Sweden. In the 1940's, Goode sold the site to the State Highway Department, which deeded the property to the "Franktown Lighting Association" in 1971, when the little building was moved here and served as an election polling station. The residents contributed to the purchase of the building and Judge C.M. Lankford (attorney) arranged the transfer of property to the citizens organization. The Franktown Lighting Association entity was created to have a street light electric account, because the hamlet is not officially a town.

**Edward G. Tankard** (1862-1946) was the son of Phillip B. and Elizabeth Rodgers of Hadlock and worked as a farmer initially. He married Annie Dunton Nottingham (1870-1948) in 1888 and they had three children: Sophie (1889-1895), (who married (George) McMath (1888-1989)), Myrtis Chalk (1892-1979), and Ann Nottingham (William) Fray (908-1988). The Frays later owned **Cedar Hall**, which was built by her father, Edward G. By 1910, he was a produce dealer and farmer and by 1920, he is listed as a general store owner and living in Franktown. He apparently eased back into farming; in 1930 he reported his occupation as farmer and working in a general store. In 1940, he just listed "farmer."

**Fenwick Bayly Downing** (1874-1949) started out as a farmer in Eastville, living with his parents. By 1910, he was a salesman in a general store. He married Lola May Arnold (1883-1963) in 1916 and seemed to be living in Nassawadox. In 1920, he was a grocery store manager. By 1930, Downing had moved his family to Camden, New Jersey, working as a coal retail merchant and, by 1940, he worked with the WPA as a timekeeper.

**Benjamin Thomas Ashby** (1868-1933) and had a similar farmer childhood in Jamesville. His first wife was Eva Maude Hicks (1876-1968), whom he divorced and then later married Alice Evans (1875-1936) in 1923. He had a half-sibling, Virginia Margaret Ashby Arnold, which may have led to his working Franktown. By 1910, he was doing millwork and Maude worked as a milliner. In 1920 he reported his occupation as "manage – general store" and in 1930 as "merchant." He lived in Franktown.

From the life events of these three men, it seems that the store's 1930's demise happened after Downing moved to New Jersey and Ashby passed away. There were hard times during this Depression era that affected many small town stores. The retail growth in Nassawadox also likely factored in the closing.

### ***Other significant sites to drive or walk to:***

**Franktown Cemetery, Wellington Neck Rd.** – A who's who of the Franktown and Nassawadox area rest here as most of the people in this town history are buried here or Red Bank Baptist Church. The cemetery was created during the flu epidemic in 1917 by Dr. P.W. Tankard to serve members of the Franktown United Methodist Church and the community. It does not belong to the church, but rather is overseen by a board that provides perpetual care.

**Bethel Baptist Church, 7638 Bayside Rd.** The land on which the church was constructed was a gift from **Mr. Peter J. Carter, Sr. and Mr. John E. Nottingham, Sr.**, a white friend and Baptist leader, gave a generous cash donation toward the church's building campaign. The founding fathers and mothers of Bethel were inclusive of the following: **Mr. Sam Bell, Mr. William Brickhouse, Jr., Mr. James Hastings, Mr. James Heath, Ms. Francis Gunter, and Ms. Caroline Robinson.** Through the labors and prayers of these Christian pioneers, the **Reverend Thomas Byrd** became the **first pastor** of Bethel. <https://bbcfranktown.org/about-our-church/>

**New Allen Memorial A.M.E. Church, 7044 Bayside Rd.** It has a very interesting cemetery across the street. The pioneering efforts of **Richard Allen** established the **African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church** in **1816** and undoubtedly influenced the establishment of the **Pine Tree Mission** here in Franktown, Virginia on **April 20, 1869**. The beautiful white painted **Allen Chapel** was born. As the congregation grew, around 1890, the church was remodeled and renamed **Allen Memorial AME Church**. The current church building construction began in **1925**. The new bricked structure, **New Allen Memorial AME Church** (commonly referred to as New Allen) was completed in **1928**. <https://www.newallen.org/history>

### ***Other significant places no longer standing:***

**Cedar Hall, #7249 – demolished.** A large Victorian once stood to the left of the house (where pasture is) that was the home of Edward G. Tankard and William C. Fray.

**Franktown-Nassawadox High School (1905-1940)** – Located 0.4 miles north on the east side of the road in a wooded area before the New Allen Memorial A.M.E. Church. The elementary and high school was comprised of three buildings, now demolished. About 100 students were enrolled when it opened. The school had tennis courts and, across

the street, a baseball field. The campus included a vocational building, office, grade school and science building, and the high school building with classrooms, a music room, and an auditorium.



*Franktown Nassawadox elementary students.  
Photo courtesy of Jenny Nicholls Richardson.*



**Music Building**  
The three-room music building, constructed in 1936, was originally here, but replaced in 1949 when the vocational building was erected.

## Franktown-Nassawadox High School

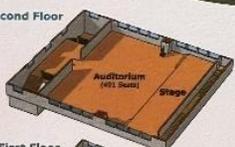
Nassawadox, Virginia - 1907 to 1940

"There are 635 graduates listed. Of this number 394 continued their education beyond high school." - Lucile Hamilton Horsley, Class of '34, 5/11/81

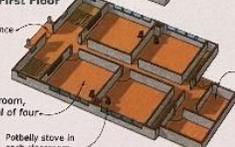


"Stand them on their heads  
Stand them on their feet  
Franktown-Nassawadox High School can't be beat!"

**Second Floor**



**First Floor**



**High School Room Layout**

Classroom, typical of four.  
Partially stove in each classroom.  
Toilet Rooms (added later)



- Baseball Field - land purchased 1914
- Horse Shed for students
- Grade School - 1904
- Tennis & Basketball Court(s)
- Observation Tower added for the war effort
- Vocational Bldg - 1919
  - Agricultural (front)
  - Woodworking Shop (rear)
  - Blacksmith Shop (rear)
- 2nd Floor:
  - Typing & Shorthand (front)
  - Domestic Science (front)
  - Library & Study Hall (rear)
- Principal's Office

Detailed description of the site map: The map shows the layout of the high school campus. Key features include the Baseball Field (land purchased 1914), Horse Shed for students, Grade School (1904), Tennis & Basketball Court(s), Observation Tower added for the war effort, Vocational Bldg (1919) with Agricultural (front), Woodworking Shop (rear), and Blacksmith Shop (rear) on the 2nd floor. The 2nd floor also includes Typing & Shorthand (front), Domestic Science (front), and Library & Study Hall (rear). The Principal's Office is also marked. The map includes directions to New Allen Memorial AME Church, To Nassawadox, To Franktown, and To Williams.

*Image courtesy of Charles Renner.*



Image from GoogleMaps. Possibly trace impression of ball field in middle.



*The Franktown-Nassawadox School around 1904. Courtesy of Northampton County Schools.*



*The Franktown-Nassawadox School around 1913. The small middle building was built in 1906 for music. The third building to the right was added about 1913. Courtesy of Northampton County Schools.*

**Source: Julie V. Nordstrom**

For other Accomack and Northampton County walking tours, such as Nassawadox,  
go to [esplheritage.org](http://esplheritage.org) and search "walking tours"  
or download the Visit Eastern Shore, VA app.

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