



**The Story of
5705 West Franklin Street
Richmond, Virginia**

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Part I

Prologue

Of all the children, he was known as the kindest, and here at the depot 11-year-old Eddie sat on the bench next to his mother and held her hand as they waited. She was stoic, but weary; the family had been through a lot. The biggest blow, of course, was that Pa had died last year. The sadness had been almost unbearable, but worse, without him, there weren't enough left of them to maintain the farm that even with Pa alive they had only been able to afford to sharecrop.

Now, at the depot, they were waiting on the train to Portsmouth -- Eddie, Ma, Beulah, Surrey, and Katie. Eddie didn't know much about Portsmouth, just that it was somewhere near Norfolk, and he'd only heard about Norfolk because Ma's brother, Joseph, had gone up there several years ago and gotten himself a job with the railroad. When Joseph had come home for Pa's funeral, he'd told Ma they'd be better off in Virginia. The boys could find work there, easy, he said. Still Ma had fretted. It didn't seem right to leave Pa behind, in the ground, alone. And she had only ever known these parts. Her family and Pa's family, why, they'd lived in Gates County or thereabouts for as long as anyone could remember.

So Sidney said he'd go up first. He'd find a job, and a place for all of them to live, and they could come later. He'd only known farming, so it felt like a good sign that he had found work so quickly, just like Uncle Joe said would happen, and Sidney had sent a letter home urging the rest to follow as soon as they could. And so here they were at the train depot at Drum Hill. The family had sold nearly everything they owned to be able to afford the tickets and to start their new life.

A sudden memory came to Eddie: a couple of years ago, a man they'd never seen before came to church. Eddie heard him tell a neighbor he was from Raleigh, and Eddie rose on his tiptoes high enough to whisper to Pa, "Where's Raleigh?" and Pa had laughed and

answered, "Pay no mind, you can't get there from here." Eddie didn't understand the joke at the time, but now it was beginning to dawn on him. The family was moving to Virginia because there was opportunity there and the train would take them there. Raleigh, the capital of the state they actually lived in, was very difficult to travel to -- not even the train had a direct route there.

Gates County was one of the counties in North Carolina that folks in the state sometimes called the "lost provinces." It was one of six counties in an area in northeast North Carolina that look on the map like a bobcat's pawprint, its claws pressing into the swampy Carolina coastal zones. In fact, the biggest swamp of them all, the Great Dismal, took up a good share of eastern Gates County. The Albemarle Sound and Chowan River bounded the south and southwest preventing easy access to Raleigh. On the other hand, the difference between Virginia and North Carolina was just a matter of steps from Drum Hill. On a given day, it was possible to wander back and forth over the border lots of times without even knowing.

Eddie stood up to stretch his legs. He saw Surrey glance at him and then lift his jaw in the direction where the train would come from. Eddie turned that way, and, like his brother, could hear the steam engine before they could see it. Eddie understood his mother's apprehension, but at that moment when the black beast came into view, all he felt was excitement. His first train ride. And his first trip to a real city.¹

¹ Though this is a fictionalized account of the family's move to Portsmouth, it is based on facts of the family's life which are part of the following text.

Part II

1. The Small Family

James Edward Small, Sr., and his wife, Ruth B. Ashworth Small, moved into the house at 5705 West Franklin Street in Richmond, Virginia, in about 1936, the first residents of the home which had been built the previous year.² Eddie, the boy from Drum Hill, had begun going by the name James Edward, changing to the more formal, grownup naming convention sometime between 1910, when he was 15 and listed in the Portsmouth, Virginia, census as Eddie, and 1917 when he registered for the World War I draft.

James' first known mention in official documentation is the 1900 census, where he is found living with five brothers and sisters and his mother and father in Gates County, North Carolina,³ very near a wide spot in the road about a half-mile from the Virginia border known as Drum Hill. The closest town of any size was the county seat, Gatesville, about six miles south with a population of about 200 at the turn of the century (it had only grown to be about a third larger a hundred years later). James' father, Thomas C. Small, 51 at the time, was a farmer, renting the home the family was living in and, according to the census, the farm it was located on. James' mother, Mary Francis Hill Small, 47, was working as a cook and washerwoman, the first indication of living conditions that would have been near poverty for her to be working outside of the home with so many young children. Both of them listed only two years of education, but the census taker noted that both parents could read and write. Brother Sidney was already working as a farm laborer at age 13; though he had had one year of school, he could not read or write. Sister Beulah Estelle, 13, was employed in housework and with her second grade education, claimed to be able to read and write. Brother William Arthur, 11, was working as a farm laborer, and with one year of school, was said to be able to read, though he could not write. It is not known if the boys were working on the family farm in a sharecropping situation since the family did not own the land or whether they were working for others, but it seems likely that Mary Francis and Beulah worked for other people; if they were working at home, the occupation

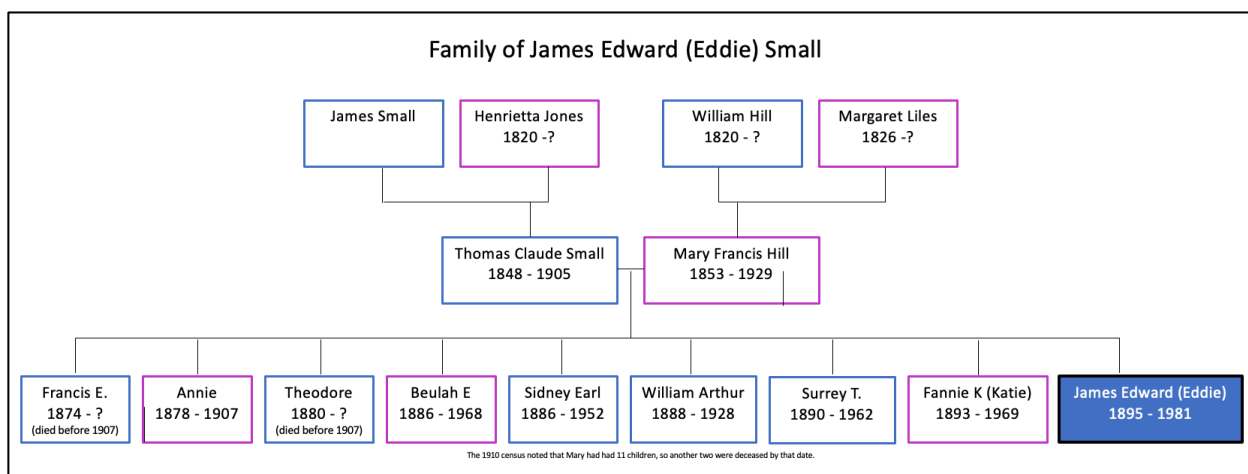
² 1937 Richmond City Directory. The date of moving in is provided here as 1936 because the directories were often a year late with their information due to the time it took to collect and print it, and because the date of 1936 fits better with the known timeline of events. A discussion which justifies this date can be found in Part V of this document which discusses real estate transfers.

³ 1900 U.S. Census, Gates County, North Carolina.

would likely have read “keeping house.” The three youngest children: Surrey Thomas (male), 9; Fannie K., 7; and, of course, James, 4, were all at home. James’ sister Annie, 22, was married and living with her husband Whitmel F. Clark. Unsourced family trees on [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) claim there were two other siblings, James’ sister Francis, who was born about 1874 and would have been 26 in 1900 (the eldest of all of the children) and brother Theodore R., born in 1880 and who would have been 20, are not known, and further information about them is unknown. Both likely died young.

There were other families with the surname Small in that part of northeast North Carolina at the turn of the century; some can be found living in a poorhouse while others, slaveholders, can be found on an apparently large plantation. Several men with the surname Small from the area are found on the rolls of Confederate civil war veterans, but not specifically James’ father, though it does not rule out possible involvement in the war by Thomas. Family tree information on [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) points to Thomas Small’s parents being James Small and Henrietta Jones, but the only information on Henrietta is that in 1850 she was living in Gates County with four children under the age of 8 (including Thomas), and there is no further known information on James (Thomas’ father).⁴

James’ mother, Mary Francis, sometimes called Fannie, was born in 1853 at Drum Hill.⁵ She married Thomas on December 4, 1873, in Perquimans County, North Carolina. She was 19; Thomas was 25.⁶ Located a county or two southeast of Gates County, with its population at 800 people four times the size of Gatesville. Perquimans’ county seat of Hertman must have seemed a veritable metropolis; a thriving lumber industry made use of the many byways of the nearby Albermarle River to transport timber. Her parents were William Hill and Margaret Liles, a couple who eventually had six children altogether, eventually moving to Perquimans County. They may have been somewhat better off financially than Thomas’ parents with William working as a carpenter and Margaret staying at home (although two of the older daughters were



⁴ 1850 U.S. Census, Gates County, North Carolina.

⁵ Death Certificate of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

⁶ North Carolina Registry of Marriage for Perquimans County, December 4, 1873.

working as a cook and a washerwoman; Mary Francis was the youngest).⁷

James' father died in 1905 at age 56 of unknown causes.⁸ Living conditions for the Small family, which already appeared hard, likely got much harder.

Mary Francis' brother Joseph had been living in Norfolk since at least 1894, when the second of his four children was born there.⁹ He likely had been home to North Carolina many times — there was a direct rail link to Drum Hill — and would have told Mary Francis and her family that there was opportunity to be had in the rail yards along the Virginia coast. Annie, James' married sister, and her husband Whitmel Clark may have been the first to go, settling in Norfolk the same year that Thomas died.¹⁰ Sidney, the oldest boy still at home,¹¹ likely was the next to leave Drum Hill, but he settled instead in Portsmouth, the next train stop after Norfolk, still only 40 miles away from Drum Hill. With a population of about 25,000 people in 1905¹² and the growing railroad and shipping industries, there had to be much the boys could do in Portsmouth to earn a living for the family.

Tragedy struck the family again in 1907 when Annie died. Besides her husband, she left two children, ages 4 and 6. Her body was taken to Drum Hill, and she was buried next to her father and an infant that likely had been hers.¹³

By 1910, the rest of James' family was living in Portsmouth, Virginia, with everyone but William Arthur, who was by this time going by the name Arthur, living at 1810 Hutcheson Street. Sidney, the eldest son, was listed as the head of the family on the census that year though he was only 23 and single. He was working as a car repairer for the railroad. Mary Francis, 56, the siblings' mother, was not working outside the home. Beulah, 23, Sidney's twin sister, was working as a finisher in a hosiery mill. Surrey, 20, was a helper in a machine shop, most certainly with the railroad. Katie, 18, was not working. James, the youngest at 15, was working, like Beulah, as a finisher in a hosiery mill. Though Arthur was not living with the family, he was only a couple of blocks away, lodging in a boarding house at 2007 Adams. Though the entire family had left Drum Hill, they remained close together in Portsmouth.

⁷ 1870 U.S. Census, Perquimans County, North Carolina.

⁸ www.find-a-grave.com

⁹ 1900 U.S. Census, Norfolk.

¹⁰ Whitmel Clark, Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia (1914) which indicated he had been living in Norfolk (where he died) for nine years.

¹¹ Family trees on www.ancestry.com indicate that there were two other boys in the family born before Sidney. They were Francis, born in 1874, and Theodore, born in 1880. There is no documentation known to exist for Francis after the 1880 census, when he was six years old and living at home with the family. No documentation is known to exist on Theodore's whereabouts after his birth. They likely both died as very young children.

¹² Population extrapolated from 1900 and 1910 censuses.

¹³ North Carolina *Christian Advocate*, Greensboro, May 9, 1907, obituary.

2. The Ashworth Family

In 1916, if you stepped out of the house where James was living and walked around back, and then walked another about seven or eight blocks, meandering a bit, maybe cutting across a few empty lots or neighbor's yards, you'd end up at the home of the 20-year-old Ruth Ashworth. Ruth Ashworth was to become James' wife.

Ruth lived with her mother and father and five siblings in what was likely a bit more upscale neighborhood in Portsmouth, in an area called Cottage Place. Homes there were new, and there may have still been ongoing development. Ruth's father, Lee D. Ashworth, was an engineer working for the railroad,¹⁴ and though it isn't certain when he started working for the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, it is known that he worked for that company for many years.¹⁵ Born a year after the close of the Civil War to a Confederate soldier and his wife, his full name was Lee Davis Ashworth resulting, no doubt, from the combination of two names of so-called heroes of the Lost Cause.¹⁶ Though Lee had grown up on a farm in Lunenburg County in south central Virginia,¹⁷ by 1900, he had made his way west to Roanoke, Virginia, with his own family of five children, including Ruth, then 4, in tow. In Roanoke, they lived in a fairly well-to-do neighborhood, about a half-mile's walk to the city center, with most of their neighbors working for the railroad. The family's neighbor there, a locomotive engineer like Lee, was even wealthy enough to have two servants in the home. Lee was 32 and with 10 years of schooling was considered well-educated for the time. His wife, the former Alona Jordan, three years younger than he, also had 10 years of school.¹⁸ By 1901, the family had moved to nearby Crewe, Virginia,¹⁹ a town with about 1,300 population so dependent on the Norfolk and Western Railroad that ran through it that the town was laid out like a string bean mostly along one side of the tracks. Founded in 1888 as a central location to house steam locomotive repair shops for the Norfolk and Western Railroad, the town even today has an Amtrak station. A railroad museum commemorates its importance to the movement of Appalachian coal from western Virginia to Hampton Roads where Portsmouth sits pretty much as its center. Lee and Alona added their sixth child, a daughter with the fanciful name of Sarah Ladybug, to their household. None of their children died as youngsters, possible an indicator of better living conditions than those that James and his family had endured.²⁰

Lee's father, Augustus (also known as Augustine) Washington Ashworth, was a farmer in Lunenburg County who in 1856 married Ann Eliza Bailey. The Ashworth roots go deep in south central Virginia; members of the family were slaveholders and Augustus and three or four of his brothers fought for the Confederacy. Augustus enlisted at Keysville, Virginia, as a private in

¹⁴ 1910 and 1920 U.S. Census, Portsmouth, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Library of Congress), 1913.

¹⁵ Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 18, 1949, obituary.

¹⁶ 1870 U.S. Census, Lunenburg County, Virginia.

¹⁷ 1880 U.S. Census, Rehoboth District, Lunenburg County, Virginia.

¹⁸ 1900 U.S. Census, Roanoke.

¹⁹ Birth Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia (for Sarah Ladybug Ashworth).

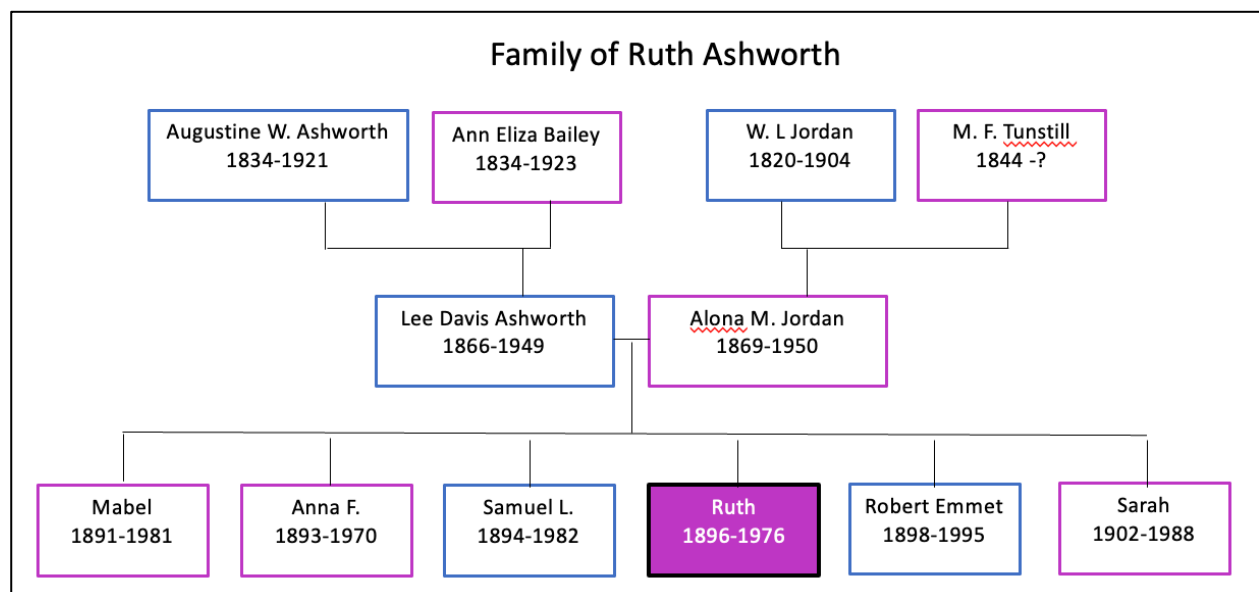
²⁰ 1900 U.S. Census, Roanoke, and 1910 U.S. Census, Portsmouth.

Company K, 23rd Virginia Regiment, on May 2, 1861. Military records show he was wounded at Manassas, Virginia, on August 28, 1862. He apparently recovered enough to fight on, because just days before the close of the war, on March 2, 1865, he was taken prisoner and held at Waynesboro, Virginia, transferred to Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, and then transferred once again to Fort Delaware, Delaware.²¹ His regiment surrendered at Appomattox Court House the next month.²² While a prisoner, in June Augustus took the oath of allegiance to the United States, and he was released.²³

Ann also had roots in the area, and at least some of her brothers also fought in the Confederacy.²⁴

Ruth's mother Alona was the daughter of native Virginians. Her father had worked for the railroad in Crewe, Virginia, as early as 1870.²⁵ But before that he had served a short time in the Confederacy (according to the pension form filled out many years later by his widow), enlisting late and surrendering with his unit at Appomattox in 1865.

By the census of 1910, Lee and Alona had moved to Portsmouth with their six children. Unlike James' family, where the older teenagers were already working at the time of the 1910 census, none of the Ashworth kids (the eldest, 18) was employed. Ruth, the fourth oldest of the six siblings, was 14 to James' 15 in 1910.²⁶ It is not known how Ruth and James met, whether it was at church, or whether through activities the children of that part of Portsmouth would engage



²¹ U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, www.ancestry.com.

²² <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle-units-detail.htm?battleUnitCode=CVA0023BI>, U.S. National Park Service.

²³ U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, www.ancestry.com.

²⁴ Genealogical information available at www.ancestry.com.

²⁵ 1870 U.S. Census, Crewe, Virginia. Details about his unit are unknown.

²⁶ 1910 U.S. Census, Portsmouth.

in (though Eddie was working), or perhaps Lee, through his work at the railroad had come to know some of the Small family boys. James eventually left the hosiery mill, a job that was probably reserved for young boys and women, and went to work for the railroad himself. In 1917, when he registered for the World War I draft at age 22, he noted he was a blacksmith for the Seaboard Air Line Railroad in Portsmouth. He was married by then to Ruth and was her sole means of support, as he noted on the registration form. They lived at 2002 County Street, likely boarding in the Victorian-style home still there today, located only three or four blocks away from Ruth's parents.

In the 1920 census, James and Ruth were living in a home they were renting at 819 7th Street in Portsmouth, still very near to both James' mother and Ruth's parents. Though at least some of the couple's siblings had grown up and started families of their own, many of them still nearby. James was working as a shipsmith at the Norfolk Naval Yard in Portsmouth, the skills he had acquired blacksmithing for the railroad apparently transferring to seafaring vessels. It was an easy walk of about five minutes to work for him. They had added a son, James Edward, Jr., to their family, born on November 29, 1918, when they were still living at 2002 County Street.

On March 12, 1929, James' mother, Mary Frances, died of a stroke in Portsmouth.²⁷ The family sent her body to Drum Hill so that she could be buried next to her husband.

3. Building a Company

On June 28, 1929, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported that Lee Ashworth, 64, Ruth's father, had incorporated a company he called Service Machine and Welding in Richmond. Lee's father, Ruth's grandfather, Augustus Ashworth, had died eight years before at the Confederate Soldiers' Home in Richmond at the age of 86. It is not known how long he resided at the Home; the 1920 census shows his wife Anne living without him with one of her children, in Mecklinburg County.²⁸ Lee's company would "carry on the business of welders' toolmakers, brass founders, metal workers, and metallurgists." Perhaps it had been on visits to his father in Richmond that Lee found the city had a dearth of steel machinists in the city historically known for its iron. A fellow named Jesse B. Taylor, 40 at the time, was listed as vice president of the business. Jesse apparently was a friend or colleague (or both) of the family; in 1920 he was working as a blacksmith at a shipyard in Portsmouth.²⁹ By 1930, he had moved with his wife and nine children to Richmond.³⁰ James was listed as secretary-treasurer of the new company.

James, 35, and Ruth and their son, James, Jr., 11, and daughter, Jacqueline Ruth, who had been born in Portsmouth on October 12, 1927, moved to Richmond in late 1929 or 1930, renting

²⁷ Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia.

²⁸ 1920 U.S. Census, Mecklinburg County, Virginia.

²⁹ 1930 U.S. Census, Portsmouth.

³⁰ 1930 U.S. Census, Richmond.

a home at 4 North Allen, a neighborhood of middle class white collar workers.³¹ Lee actually stayed in Portsmouth.

None of the three officers of the company — Lee, Jesse, or James — were likely to have had the kind of capital required to build the company Lee envisioned, and so the June 1929 announcement in the paper noted they were seeking \$50,000 of capitalized investment. The company was located at 2020 East Franklin in Shockoe Bottom.³²

It may say something about the qualities of his son-in-law that Lee brought him in as an executive in the business. His two sons, Ruth's brothers, stayed behind in Portsmouth — the oldest, Sam, 35, working still as a machinist on the railroad and Robert, 31, who had been living at home with his parents, either owning or working at a confectionary in the Portsmouth area.³³ Although it could have been that his two sons felt settled in Portsmouth and did not want to leave, especially to pursue a new business venture that might not succeed. Timing for the new business was a bit tricky, after all: it was the beginning of the Great Depression. Lee was lucky in that Richmond would be less affected by the downturn than many other parts of the United States. Its diversified economy cushioned the worst effects: unemployment in Richmond was half the national mid-Depression average of 24%, and a Chamber of Commerce report indicated that the city's industrial output actually increased 44% between 1929 and 1937.³⁴

Jesse's role in the company was either diminished by 1934 or it had always been nominal: in the 1932 Richmond City Directory, he was still listed as vice president of the company; by 1934, he was listed as a foreman. The reduction in role in the company seemed to coincide with the arrival of Lee's son Robert, then 35, who is shown as a "clerk," in 1933 and later (in 1935) as bookkeeper, at the company.³⁵ Robert lived with James and Ruth, at least for a couple of years at 4 North Allen.

Service Machine began to up its profile in the press and other venues. It advertised its business as far as Virginia's Northern Neck,³⁶ and the company as a whole participated often in charitable events. In 1938, it was listed as one of 27 blue ribbon (the highest) contributors to the Community Fund,³⁷ an organization which provided charitable resources to "destitute" Richmonders. In 1947, Richmond Area Community Chest was the beneficiary of a generous donation from the company: two of 85 "blue feather" firms were cited with "spectacular showings" and Service Machine was one of the two, pledging 720% of the amount requested from it.³⁸ The Community Chest may have been the re-named Community Fund; at any rate, it

³¹ 1930 U.S. Census, Richmond.

³² 1933 Richmond City Directory.

³³ 1930 U.S. Census, Portsmouth.

³⁴ <https://richmondmagazine.com/news/depression-and-denial/>. August 24, 2015.

³⁵ All information in this paragraph is derived from the respective Richmond city directories.

³⁶ *Northern Neck News*, April 23, 1937.

³⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 22, 1938.

³⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 22, 1947.

did the same kind of charitable work. Though those were just two examples, the company likely was consistent in its charitable giving; it either wasn't reported or was difficult to locate. In 1949, in fact, James' interest in community service was highlighted when he was elected president of the Richmond Citizens' Association, a group that worked as an apolitical organization to achieve such goals as increasing the number of voters in the city, promoting research for how government could approach civic and social problems, working for a cleaner, more beautiful and safer Richmond, and promoting educational, cultural, and recreational life for Richmond's of all ages, among other lofty goals.³⁹ In 1949-1951 James was listed as a director of Franklin Federal Savings and Loan Association of Richmond.⁴⁰ In May 1952, he was elected president of the Sales Executives Club of Richmond.⁴¹

As perhaps another example of James' heart: at some time the bodies of his mother and father were disinterred from the Drum Hill Cemetery and brought to Richmond and re-buried at Forest Lawn.



SPRAYING MOLTEN METAL—Demonstration of modern spray that handles hot metal like an atomizer does an antiseptic attracted crowds to the Service Machine and Welding Company plant here when shown for the first time in the city.—Staff Photo.

The only known photograph of Service Machine and Welding Company in its early years. Richmond Times-Dispatch, April 23, 1937.

4. Moving Away

On May 17, 1949, Lee Ashworth, 82, died of diabetes at Medical College Hospital in Richmond. He had been living with James and Ruth at 5705 West Franklin — Alona still lived there — and at the time of his death, he was still listed as president of Service Machine. His body was taken to Crewe Cemetery for burial.⁴² Alona stayed on with the Small family at 5705 West Franklin, but died on August 26, 1950, in a Richmond Hospital; her body was also taken to Crewe for burial.⁴³ James, 54, immediately became president of the company; his son, James, Jr., became vice president.⁴⁴ James, Jr., 31, had been working with the company since at least 1940

³⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 1, 1949.

⁴⁰ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 27, 1949, June 26, 1950, and December 30, 1951.

⁴¹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 20, 1952.

⁴² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 18, 1949, and Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia.

⁴³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, obituary, August 27, 1950.

⁴⁴ Richmond City Directory, 1951.

when he was 22.⁴⁵ Jesse Taylor either left the company or was pushed out: in 1951 he was listed as a machinist for Benjamin C. Better Co. and eight years later was a machinist for Continental Can.⁴⁶ Jesse died in 1973 in Richmond, at age 83, blind and deaf at the time of his death,⁴⁷ possibly a consequence of the hazards of the work he had engaged in for most of his adult life.



James E. Small, today's president of the Richmond Citizens' Association, recently took that office.

The only known photograph of James E. Small, Sr. Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 1, 1949.

Robert Ashworth may have also left the company at the time of his father's death; in 1960 he was a salesman for Smith-Courtney Company in Richmond, a company which sold machine tools and industrial supplies of the sort the Service Machine Company would require.⁴⁸

Sources are scarce about the house at 5705 Franklin, the Small family, and Service Machine after the mid- to late 1950s. Ruth died of a heart attack at St Mary's Hospital on December 3, 1976, and her address was still listed as 5705 West Franklin. She was buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Henrico County.⁴⁹ Jacqueline, 53, James' and Ruth's daughter, died on February 14, 1981. The death certificate indicates that she had never worked and had suffered from "general debility" since she was 7 years old.⁵⁰ At the time of her death, she was living on Cub's Lane in Ashland, which is also where James, Sr., was living. James, Sr., died, at age 86, on April 29, 1981.⁵¹ Jacqueline and James, Sr., were both buried at Forest Lawn. It seems likely that Jacqueline had lived at home her entire life, though her disability cannot be determined. The sequence of events shows the elder James Small family had apparently moved to Ashland from 5705 West Franklin sometime between 1976 and 1981, which is also likely the same time the company moved there.

The company today is still located at 12421 Maple Street in Ashland. Though it has been speculated that a back part of the house at 5705 Franklin might have been built to care for Jacqueline, Richmond City property records indicate it was built in 1977,⁵² instead coinciding with the time the James, Sr., and Ruth moved to Ashland and James, Jr., and Katherine took over the property, a gift from the elder James to the younger and his wife.⁵³

The company at some point was apparently sold outside the family. By 2012 the business was being run by Doug Shortridge in Ashland.⁵⁴ It maintains a presence on social media with its Facebook page showing employees participating in charitable works sponsored by the company, perhaps a legacy left to it by James, Sr. James, Jr., had died in 2006.⁵⁵

⁴⁵ U. S. Census, Richmond, 1940.

⁴⁶ Richmond city directories, 1951 and 1958.

⁴⁷ Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia.

⁴⁸ https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/SILNMAHTL_41011.

⁴⁹ Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia.

⁵⁰ Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia.

⁵¹ Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia.

⁵² Richmond City Property Card obtained from Richmond City Property Division.

⁵³ According to the deed obtained from Richmond City Property Division.

⁵⁴ Better Business Bureau, online.

⁵⁵ Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia. Because this is a fairly recent death, the actual certificate is not

Part III

The Builder

The builder of the home at 5705 West Franklin Street was Wirt Crawford. Crawford, 61 in 1935, had built many homes in Richmond at that point. He was born on March 17, 1874, on a farm in Charlotte County, Virginia, in Walton Township with Keysville, about 30 miles south of Farmville, Virginia, as its population center.⁵⁶ Wirt was the youngest of three children. At the time of the 1880 census, his father, Andrew B., was a farmer, and the family was prosperous enough that his mother, Martha, did not need to work; his older siblings Eudora F., 12, and John F., 10, were at home; but two of Wirt's cousins, 35 and 24, were working on the farm. An African American boy referred to only as "Willie," 14, was living with and was listed as a "servant" to the family. None of the children were going to school, but the white children were reported as literate; Willie was reported as being able to read but not write.⁵⁷ Wirt's father was a Confederate veteran of the Civil War.⁵⁸

No further information is known about Wirt until 1900, when he was living alone and working as a telegraph operator in Walton Township,⁵⁹ most likely at the Keysville railroad station. Keysville was a stop on the Richmond-Danville Railroad, well represented in histories about the prosecution of the Civil War. The station, now on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in Virginia, was relatively new when Wirt was there, being built in stages between 1890 and 1900. A one-story vernacular frame building, it contained offices and segregated black/white waiting rooms at the north end and a large freight area extending to the south with docks on three sides. The station was used as a set in the 1976 Emmy award-winning television film *Eleanor and Franklin*.⁶⁰ It is no longer in active use.

Wirt married a local girl, Blanche G. Russell, who, like Wirt and virtually all of their peers, grew up on a farm (in her case, in neighboring Lunenburg County) with a father who had

available publicly and only the information about the date of death can be obtained. No obituary could be located.

⁵⁶ Commonwealth of Virginia death certificate for Wirt Henry Crawford and 1880 U.S. census, Walton Magisterial District, Charlotte County, Virginia.

⁵⁷ 1880 U.S. Census, Walton Magisterial District, Charlotte County, Virginia.

⁵⁸ Records of Civil War soldiers available on www.ancestry.com.

⁵⁹ 1900 U.S. Census, Walton Magisterial District, Charlotte County, Virginia.

⁶⁰ Wikipedia, "Keysville Railroad Station."

fought in the Confederacy.⁶¹ They married in Richmond where Wirt was then working as a telegraph operator for the Seaboard Air Line Railroad.⁶² Wirt had other ambitions: by the 1910 census the census reported he was a “speculator” in real estate along with his brother, John F., who, along with his wife, Alpha Elizabeth, were living with Wirt and Blanche and their young son, Russell, 6. The extended family was living at the time at 422 North 10th Street, a home of 12 rooms not including the bath and with a garage.⁶³ Around the corner from today’s Valentine Museum, the residence has been lost to the maze of government and VCU buildings that are there now. Wirt was already wealthy enough to own the place free of mortgage.⁶⁴ The society columns of the Richmond papers in the early years of the 1900s sometimes reported on Wirt and Blanche going back to visit Keysville where they would have detrained at the platform of the depot where Wirt had once worked. Some indication of their financial well-being can be supposed from one of these articles which reported that they had been robbed of \$25 in gold and a diamond pin valued at \$75 while staying at the Keysville Hotel.⁶⁵

Ads began appearing in the Richmond paper for homes that Wirt had built, showing a steady move westward as Richmond developed in that direction. Sometimes the homes were for sale, sometimes for rent. Sometimes they were buildings that contained two or more residences and were offered not to homeowners, but investors. The first ad which can be found is this one on May 7, 1911, which advertises:



2509 West Main are the two doors on the right of this picture. It is apparent that Wirt also built the left side of the duplex as well. Google maps photo, March 2020.

For rent. No. 2509 West Main Street. Brand new, brick, just completed: two flats that are built for flats: 5 living rooms,⁶⁶ bathroom, pantry, and closets. Gas, electricity, water, and sewerage. Separate entrances and separate back yards: large porches to each flat, front and rear. Plenty of light and room everywhere: best flats in city. \$22.50 per month each flat. Will be on hand to show these flats

⁶¹ 1880 and 1900 U.S. Census, Pleasant Grove District, Lunenburg County, Virginia; *Richmond Dispatch* (newspaper) marriage announcement. Her father, Richard M. Russell, had been a private in Company B, 22nd Battalion.

⁶² *Richmond Dispatch*, January 15, 1902.

⁶³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 2, 1912, in an ad advertising its sale.

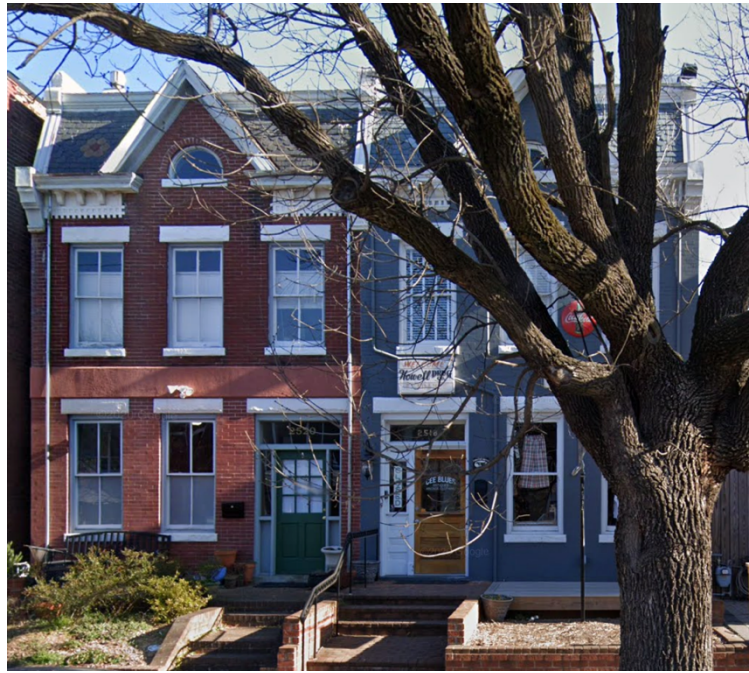
⁶⁴ The historical information is from the 1910 U.S. Census, Richmond, Virginia.

⁶⁵ *Richmond Times*, September 9, 1902.

⁶⁶ These are probably rooms to live in such as a parlor, dining room, kitchen, and possibly two bedrooms.

from 7 am - 5 pm every weekday. Wirt H. Crawford, owner, 422 North Tenth Street. Phone Madison 4919.⁶⁷

It is not known how Wirt raised the capital to begin his career as a “speculator.” A job as a telegraph operator would not have provided the financial foundation to do what he was doing, even with the help of his brother. Perhaps their father had helped the two brothers get set up, or the parents of the two wives had helped out. At any rate, his business ratcheted up quickly, and most of the properties, if not all of them, appear to have been built by him, as they are often described as up for sale or rent and as new or about to be completed and he lists himself as owner.⁶⁸ The rapidity of his expansion reflects both his drive and willingness to accept risk as well as the opportunity Richmond presented with its rapid expansion westward.



2518 and 2520 West Main Street. Google maps photo, March 2020.

On June 25, 1911, he advertised other properties:

For rent. \$300 per annum. The following new brick houses with all conveniences, cabinet mantels, gas ranges, etc. Nos. 2518 and 2520 West Main Street, ready for occupant July 1, Nos. 2522 and 2524 West Main, ready August 1, and Nos. 2526 and 2528, ready September 1. These are nice houses. For sale for \$3,600. Also No. 1 North Robinson Street, two separate flats, four rooms, besides bath and pantry; all conveniences, gas ranges, etc. Ready for occupants September 1st.⁶⁹

Other properties advertised by Wirt included:

- October 22, 1911: West End (address not specified)
- October 29, 1911: “Lee” District (address not specified; this likely is the area around the old Lee Monument)

⁶⁷ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 7, 1911. (Note: Quoted newspaper articles are edited to reflect today’s spelling, grammar, and punctuation norms.)

⁶⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 11, 1911.

⁶⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 25, 1911.

- November 12, 1911: 2203 and 2205 Stuart Avenue
- December 31, 1911: 2207 and 2209 Stuart Avenue
- March 24, 1912: 2705 and 2707 West Main
- March 31, 1912: 2701 West Main
- June 2, 1912: 2910 and 2912 West Main
- June 2, 1912: 2914, 2916, 2918, 2920, 2922, and 2924 West Main
- June 2, 1912: 2703 West Main
- June 2, 1912: 2 South Mulberry
- June 2, 1912: 422 North 10th Street (his home)
- September 21, 1913: 3015, 3017, and 3021 Grove Avenue
- November 22, 1914: 8 and 8A South Sycamore

After November 1914, advertisements cannot be found that are associated with Wirt's name, but it is likely that Wirt and possibly his brother formed a separate company under a different name and/or they outsourced the sale of their completed properties. Other sources of information about Wirt are also scarce after that date, except that it appears that his frenetic efforts to build his business (he was calling himself a general contractor by the publication of the 1913 city directory⁷⁰) may have cost him his marriage: by 1919, Blanche and their son Russell, were living as lodgers in the Murphy Hotel on Broad Street, alone, without Wirt.⁷¹ Where Wirt was living is unknown. Blanche went on to live her best life after the apparent separation; she became active in the fraternal charity group of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Valiant Knights, she traveled on



The row of houses from 2203-2209 Stuart Avenue. Google maps photo, March 2020.



The row of houses on Grove Avenue. Google maps photo, March 2020.

⁷⁰ Richmond City Directory, 1913.

⁷¹ Richmond City Directory, 1919 (city directories often reflect information a year later than it was collected because of the time it took to prepare the directory) and the 2020 U.S. Census, Richmond. The census has her marital status

vacation and stayed in a skanky hotel in Virginia Beach, she signed a petition urging Richmond to make the Franklin Library at First and Second streets larger, and she took a cruise to Cuba with a pair of friends. She worked, at least for a time, as a cashier at a clothing company.⁷²

Wirt's brother, John, died in June 1923.⁷³ His wife was named executor of John's will. He left \$20,230 (about \$330,000 in 2022 buying power) to her, his brother Wirt and sister Dora.⁷⁴

On April 1, 1931, Wirt bought the property at 5705 West Franklin from the Sterling Realty Company due to its

failure to make mortgage payments on it⁷⁵ (see the History of the Land section for more information about the lot prior to this date). Wirt may have let it sit fallow for a time. Richmond property records show it as having been built in 1935 which fits in the timeline of events (see Part V of this narrative). Though he likely rented the house to James E. Small and his wife shortly afterward, he didn't sell it to them until March 20, 1946.⁷⁶



No photo of Wirt is known to exist, but this charming one of his wife Blanche, in very stylish glasses, does. Richmond Times-Dispatch, March 9, 1924.

as "widowed," which is incorrect; however, there was no designation for "separated" and she may have felt that "widowed" described her status better than "married" or "single."

⁷² *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 15, 1924, January 25, 1925; July 11, 1929; July 27, 1929; and passenger lists on www.ancestry.com.

⁷³ www.find-a-grave.com.

⁷⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 11, 1923. At the time, coverage of executor matters were being covered by the paper.

⁷⁵ Deed dated April 1, 1931, Henrico County Property Division. (This deed was filed and is available in Henrico County since it was prior to the 1942 City of Richmond annexation of the area.)

⁷⁶ Deed dated March 20, 1946. Richmond City Property Division.

Published or genealogical information about Wirt and Blanche is again scarce after this time. In April 1931, there was an article in a Richmond paper that indicated a property Wirt owned on Northumberland Avenue might have been damaged by a public works project.⁷⁷ The city directory has him living, apparently alone, in Apartment 3 at 402 North Shepherd, possibly in a building he built and/or managed himself.⁷⁸ In March 1934, M. R. Palmore and his wife sold Blanche eight lots (lots 9-16) in Monument Avenue Crest subdivision, which is today where a row of identical, small cottages are built on the west side of



The house at 3211 Cutshaw. This is the only known existing photo of Wirt's homes taken at the time they were built. Though the number 3211 is murky in the caption, an accompanying ad confirms the address. Richmond Times-Dispatch, March 24, 1940.

Granite Avenue, starting about half-way between Franklin and Bromley Lane and extending to Wythe.⁷⁹ The sale of the property to Blanche does not necessarily mean that the couple was back together, but rather more likely that they simply cooperated on business deals which were mutually beneficial. Developers, in general, found it was convenient, for financial reasons, to put properties in the names of different family members, a practice which continues today (other businesses do this also).

The last real estate transaction involving Wirt that is known to have been published is one on March 24, 1940, when a permit was issued to him, then 66, to build a \$4,300 brick dwelling at 3211 Cutshaw. Not from today's WTVR-TV tower off Broad Street, the house no longer exists, having been absorbed by the Bennett Funeral Home. It is obvious that there are many, many other real estate transactions that involved Wirt over the course of his career that are not easily traceable at this date.

Blanche continued to be active with her projects. In 1942, she was appointed by the Housewives League to head a committee to protest the city council's proposed increase in city

⁷⁷ *Richmond News Leader*, April 30, 1931.

⁷⁸ 1932 Richmond City Directory.

⁷⁹ *Richmond News Leader*, March 21, 1934. The only exception to the row of small cottages is the house at the corner of Granite where it meets Wythe. This house (a red clapboard house in 2022) is probably on two lots (15 and 16). Most of the other houses on the lots that Blanche bought are built of concrete block with no exterior siding, although a couple of them do have clapboard siding which can be imagined to have been put up later over the concrete blocks.

water rates, a hot button issue at the time.⁸⁰ She supported the war effort by offering land behind 526 North Sheppard, where she was currently living (either with Wirt in a reconciliation or in a separate apartment), to individuals who wanted to plant victory gardens.⁸¹ Blanche, 67, died on September 17, 1946, in Richmond.

Wirt, 82, died on March 31, 1956. He had been living with his son Russell at 300 Old Bridge Lane, in a home above the James River near Huguenot Bridge. It could not be determined whether he had built the house or not; the house does not appear to be there any longer. His death certificate indicated his occupation as retired contractor.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Richmond News Leader*, January 8, 1942.

⁸¹ *Richmond News Leader*, March 11, 1943.

⁸² Death Certificate, Commonwealth of Virginia.

Part IV

An Unexpected Civil War Connection

As noted, the principals involved with the story of the first owners of the home at 5705 West Franklin had parents or grandparents who were Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. There is a purposeful coincidence among those soldiers which likely led to the purchase of the house by James and Ruth Small from Wirt Crawford. As noted, Ruth's grandfather, Augustus W. Ashworth, the man who died in 1921 at the Confederate Soldiers' Home in Richmond, had been a private in Company K of the 23rd Virginia Infantry. It turns out that Wirt's father (Wirt was a generation older than James and Ruth), Andrew B. Crawford, also enlisted as a private in the same company of the same infantry. They both enlisted the same day, May 2, 1861, at Keysville, Virginia. Without question they knew each other, and the ties from the war had reached through the generations to the time of the purchase of the house.

Another coincidence is that James, Sr., Ruth's father Lee, and Wirt all worked at about the time in the early 1900s for the Seaboard Air Line Railroad.⁸³ James and Lee might have known each other through the work since they both worked in Portsmouth on the trains proper, but Wirt worked at the telegraph office in Richmond. At the very least, the mutual employer likely provided a useful topic of conversation among the three men.

⁸³ For more information on this railroad, see <https://www.american-rails.com/seaboard.html>.

Part V

5705 West Franklin Real Estate Transfers

On page 23 is a table which shows the real estate transfers of 5705 West Franklin from present time to 1929 (Part VI of this document provides a history of the land prior to that year).

It is particularly interesting to note from the information provided in the table that in 1977, when James E. Small, Jr., and his wife Katherine took over the property, a significant correction was made to the previous deeds describing the property. Prior to that date, the parcel had been described as lots 4 and 5 (a combined lot) located 211.58' from Libbie Avenue. That was, however, the description of the two lots east of the current property. The 1977 deed corrected the description to being lot 6, 331.58' from Libbie. The correction coincides with the year that the addition was put on the rear of the house and was probably necessitated by that.



*The photo of the house in Richmond City's original property record.
Date of the photo is unknown but it is probably around 1956 or prior.*

The error and later correction to the parcel description makes researching the property difficult. Another added complication is that the address number of the property changed. City directories have James Edward Small living at 4 North Allen in Richmond in 1936 and then at 5505 West Franklin in 1937.⁸⁴ That 1937 mention is the first mention of the home's address that can be located (the home does not appear to have been listed for rent or for sale in the

⁸⁴ Another reference to the Smith family living at 5505 West Franklin appears in an October 28, 1940, article published in the *Times-Dispatch* which listed the draft numbers of Richmond men. James, Jr.,'s number was 1631.

newspaper). Changing address numbers, indeed, changing street names, over time is not unusual in Richmond City or Henrico County. Bromley Avenue, for example, one block north of 5705 Franklin, was changed at some point from its original Mt. Vernon Avenue name, probably to avoid confusion with other streets with the same or similar name in Richmond. The street number at the then 5505 Franklin in 1937, today's 5507, ignored the two blocks to the east of it that were in Westwood (Franklin even today skips over Westwood) and so would have been adjusted at some time to be consistent with where they were located in respect to other street numbers in surrounding areas. This also happened at Monumental Avenue which was bounded on the east by Sauer Company property before it was sold to the current Jewish Community Center. The addresses on Monumental were so perverse at the time that they merited a mention in the *Times-Dispatch*⁸⁵ and at least some of them, like today's 5705 West Franklin, were 5500. The house at 5505 (later 5707) West Franklin was annexed to Richmond City in 1942. The addresses for the houses on this section of West Franklin, however, were likely changed, as they were for Monumental, when a new Richmond Planning Commission undertook such efforts in 1958 (a process described in the 1958 *Times-Dispatch* article). Monumental was, and still is, in the county, but likely did the change at the same time to be consistent. At any rate, the property on West Franklin is referenced as 5707 throughout this document to avoid confusion.

Wirt Crawford bought the 5705 Franklin parcel in 1931 at auction from Sterling Realty Company. This was during the Great Depression, and he may have bought it for speculative purposes, planning to build later (other builders in Richmond were doing the same thing). Richmond City Property Records say the house was built in 1935 which is consistent with when Crawford bought the property and when the Small family first moved there (according to the city directory). Henrico County has wonderful old property cards for tax assessment purposes which have original photos of many of the old homes in the county; however, Richmond City did not begin the use of property cards until 1955, and the first one which exists (copy provided on pages 24 and 25), begins in 1957, so it is not contemporaneous to the time of the building of the house. Original Henrico County property cards for the house or other properties annexed to Richmond City from Henrico County in 1942 cannot be located and may have been destroyed. At any rate, the year "1935" is circled on the first card of the West Franklin home's property card under the section "permit data." It is probably the date that the homeowners (the Small family) gave to the assessor at the time the Richmond property card was first prepared (1956).

The side porch-like room of the house looks original but could instead have been enclosed at least a few years later. A note at the top of the first page of the property



Example of jalousie windows.
www.thecraftsmanblog.com

⁸⁵*Richmond Times-Dispatch*. July 6, 1958.

cards notes it had jalousie windows. Jalousie windows are thought of as being typical of mid-century architecture,⁸⁶ so if original to the house, they would date the closed-in porch closer to the 1946 mark which was when the elder Small family bought the house.

The property card solves the question of when the back addition was built as it notes in the alterations section the date of January 24, 1977, the same year that the correction of the parcel description was made to the deed, not likely coincidental. A drawing on the card shows the floor plan of at least the bottom floor of the house, including the addition, which means the drawing was done after 1977.

⁸⁶ Though they were originally patented in 1901, they did not catch on until much later. www.thecraftsman.blog.com.

Table 1. 5705 West Franklin Real Estate Transfers

Date	From (and any notes)	To	Ref. # or Deedbook#-Page
1999-0712	Nathan S. Ward	Warren S. Kolbert and Mary Catharine G. Kolbert	99-26235
1998-0409	Theron W. Ward and Darlene L. Ward (gift)	Nathan S. Ward, single	98-10320
1997-1009	Gail C. Rogers (owned by right of survivorship)	Nathan S. Ward, unmarried; and Theron W. Ward and Darlene Ward, husband and wife	97-22830
1988-0614	Albert L. Germanis and Rose Marie Germanis, husband and wife	James C. Rogers and Gail C. Rogers	168-1801
1987-0107	Martha B. Chisholm, unmarried	Albert L. Germanis and Rose Marie Germanis, husband and wife	0110-0739
1985-0816	Dean M. Nichols and Lorna Walthall Nichols, husband and wife (contains survey)	Martha B. Chisholm, widow	50-1171
1980-0128	James E. Small, Jr., and Katherine Ammons Small, husband and wife (this deed calls it 5705 W Franklin, lot no. 6)	Dean M. Nichols	763-624
1977-0913	James E. Small, Jr., and Katherine Ammons Small, husband and wife (correction to lot description) (this deed corrects previous deeds by correctly labeling it lot no. 6 as well as providing the correct distance from Libbie Avenue)	James E. Small, Jr., and Katherine Ammons Small, husband and wife	728-421
1977-0413	James E. Small, widower (gift) (this deed calls it lots 4 and 5 and provides the incorrect distance from Libbie Avenue)	James E. Small, Jr., and Katherine Ammons Small, husband and wife	722-308
1946-0320	Wirt H. Crawford and Blanche C. Crawford, husband and wife (this deed calls it lots 4 and 5 and provides the incorrect distance from Libbie Avenue)	James E. Small and Ruth A. Small, husband and wife	463-219
1931-0401	bought at auction due to the earlier failure of Sterling Realty to make mortgage payments - Joseph A. Purcell is the trustee for the auction (the property is in Henrico County here -- this deed calls it lots 4 and 5 and provides the incorrect distance from Libbie Avenue)	Wirt H. Crawford	251B-438
1929-1201	Sterling Realty* (this deed calls it lots 4 and 5 and provides the incorrect distance from Libbie Avenue)	Joseph A. Purcell	245A-150

* Sterling Realty Corporation was a real estate development firm which was developing much of this area of Westhampton. Land ownership prior to Sterling Realty can be seen in the "History of the Land" section of this document.

OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR OF REAL ESTATE		CITY HALL RICHMOND, VA.		DEED REFERENCE DATE - AMOUNT - ETC.		ACCOUNT NUMBER		PARCEL		AGENCY		FIELD		NAME OF OWNER		PROPERTY LOCATION & DESCRIPTION		FIELD		ADDRESS OF OWNER		OVERFLOW ADDRESS & DESCRIPTION		LAND		ASSESSMENT		RECORD		SPECIAL ASSESSMENT		YEAR			
10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10		10			
SMALL JAMES E & RUTH A		5705 W FRANKLIN ST		26		W-20		59		6		504		1500		16000		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE			
5705 16 B E		60X135		W20 59		CRANITE		08937600001000		089376.00		001 000		35		089376.00		001 000		2400		14000		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE	
310		089376 00 01		4		H 5705 W FRANKLIN ST		K 60100X 135.00		W20-0059/006		NICHOLS DEAN M		DB 0763 0624		01/28/80		MONUMENT AVE CREST L6 BE		6000		40000		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE	
310		089376 00 01		4		SMALL JAMES-E & RUTH A		5705 W FRANKLIN ST		23226		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		4800		26900		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE	
1		089376 00 01		4		H 5705 W FRANKLIN ST		K 60100X 135.00		W20-0059/006		NICHOLS DEAN M		DB 0763 0624		01/28/80		MONUMENT AVE CREST L6 BE		6000		40000		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE	
2		089376 00 01		4		H 5705 W FRANKLIN ST		K 60100X 135.00		W20-0059/006		NICHOLS DEAN M		DB 0763 0624		01/28/80		MONUMENT AVE CREST L6 BE		6000		40000		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE		NO CHANGE	
72		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		74		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		76		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		78		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		80		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		82		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE	
70		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		72		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		74		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		76		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		78		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		80		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE	
68		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		70		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		72		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		74		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		76		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		78		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE	
66		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		68		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		70		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		72		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		74		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		76		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE	
64		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		66		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		68		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		70		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		72		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		74		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE	
62		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		64		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		66		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		68		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		70		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		72		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE	
60		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		62		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		64		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		66		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		68		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE		70		REASSESSED		NO CHANGE	

Part VI

History of the Land -- 5705 West Franklin and the Area Around It

Historical Maps Since 1864, Subdivision Plat

One of the clearest, earliest maps of the area where West Franklin exists today is an 1864 map created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers based on their reconnaissance as well as captured Confederate maps (detail below). What would become West Franklin near Libbie and Patterson appears to be part of the property of L. N. Ellett, just to the southeast of Deep Run Turnpike which would later become Broad Street Road. Other landmarks on the map which help to show the location of Monumental Avenue is Plank Road to the south, an old buffalo trail

which would later become Cary Street, and the bend in the James River. Loftin (or Lofton) N. Ellett was a Henrico County Clerk in the 1860s. On the 1860 slave schedule, Ellett is shown as owning enslaved persons in western Henrico County, including at a farm near today's 5705 West Franklin, as well as at several properties he owned in the City of Richmond, where he resided. At the farm, the slave schedule shows him



Detail of the 1864 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers map with an arrow showing the approximate location of today's 5705 West Franklin. The L. N. Ellett farm is marked on the map. Full map available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3883h.cw0643000/?r=0.138,0.413,0.467,0.368,0>.

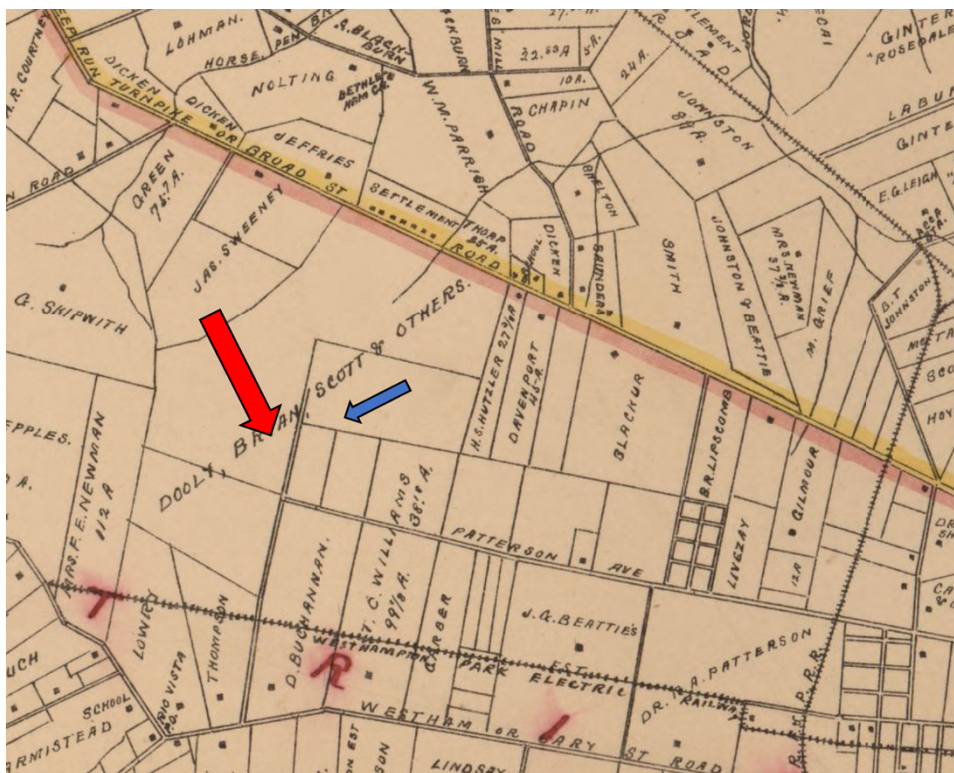
as an enslaver of six persons, a 50-year-old male, a 50-year-old female, two females 9 and 6 years old, and a 3-year-old male and 3-year-old female.

An August 1901 map (detail below) shows more population and development in western Henrico County. The red arrow shows the approximate location of 5705 West Franklin -- other landmarks include

Deep Run

Turnpike/Broad Street Road just to the north, and Patterson Avenue to the south (stopping at the approximate location of today's Glenburnie Road. The blue arrow points to two vertical box shapes which would later become known as Westwood Settlement, an area which is today considered an historic black neighborhood, settled by former enslaved persons after the Civil War.⁸⁷ Many of the black residents in Westwood by this time were working in nearby white homes, often as domestics.

The map shows the land where 5705 West Franklin would eventually be as being owned by Dooly, Bryan, Scott, and others. In a 1911 edition of *Fuel Magazine: The Coal Operators National Weekly*, there is mention of a Bryan Coal Corporation in Richmond which had been newly incorporated in Richmond. The incorporators included Thomas B. Scott and George Cole Scott of Richmond and James H. Dooley (residence not provided). The company was only lightly researched, but it seems likely that it had quarry interests in the Henrico County area.



Detail of the 1901 map with the red arrow showing the approximate location of today's 5705 West Franklin. The blue arrow shows the area (two vertical boxes) which would be called Westwood Settlement. Full map available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3883h.la002082/?r=0.215,0.202,0.196,0.154,0>.

⁸⁷ A history of Westwood can be found here: https://www.richmond.com/real_estate/richmond_neighborhoods/westwood-a-community-formed-by-ex-slaves-thrives-years-after/article_ce04a8e0-7fa8-11e3-be8a-0019bb30f31a.html, accessed February 26, 2022.

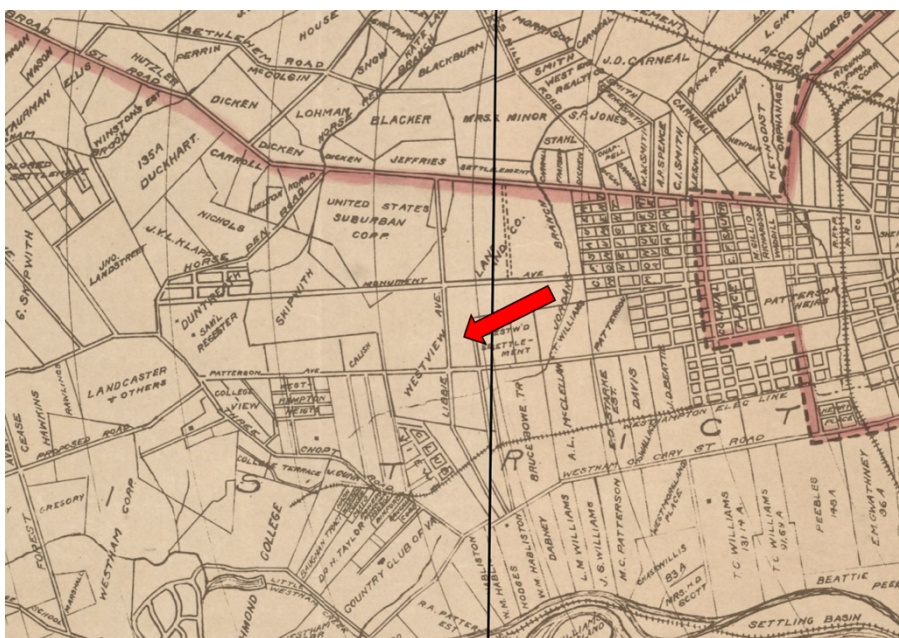
By the 1910s, the roads in the Near West End were beginning to firm up. The two maps here show the evolution from 1911 (top) to 1916 (bottom) with the red arrow showing in both maps the approximate location of the future 5705 West Franklin. Dooly, Bryan, Scott, and others

had either morphed into or sold to Westview Land Company. By late May 1926, Sterling Realty Corporation, representing Westview Land Company, filed with Henrico County the plan for a new subdivision called Monument Avenue Crest (plat follows). The plan created nearly 100 lots in an area between Monument and Patterson avenues and Libbie Avenue and Glenburnie Road. W. E. Purcell, Jr., immediately ran an ad in the *Post-Dispatch*: “The most desirable suburban lots can be had in Monument Avenue Crest at the lowest prices for West End lots.”⁸⁸ (Maps for the 1920s and 1930s and even the 1940s of Henrico County are rare, and to this point, have not been found. Though there are atlases of Virginia county maps for those decades, Henrico County is not included because it, like a handful of other counties, did not opt to be part of state control for its road systems. However, the original plat of the subdivision, Monument Avenue Crest, of which the extension of West



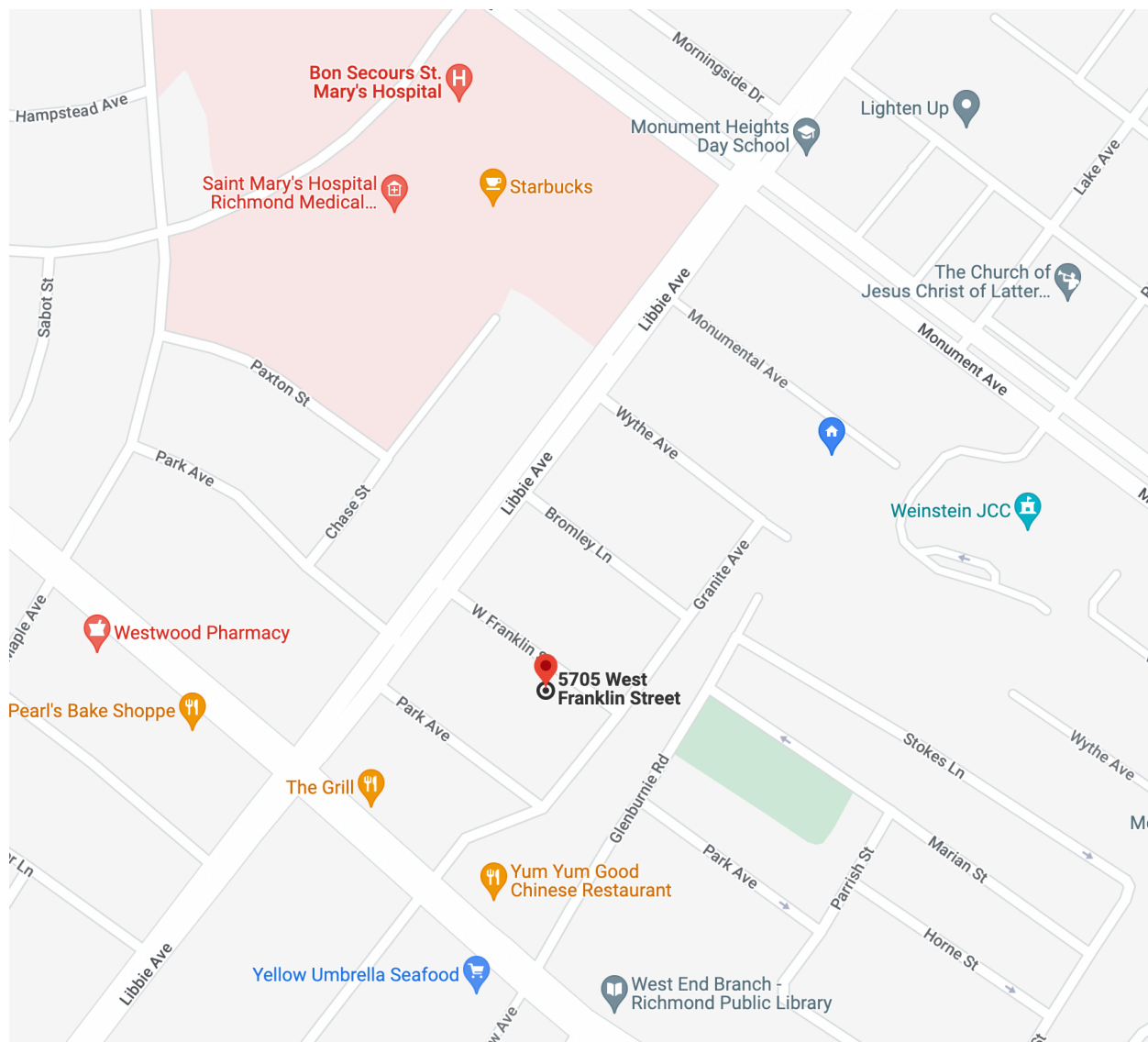
Top: Detail of the 1911 map with the red arrow showing the approximate location of today's 5705 West Franklin. Full map available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3883h.la002030/?r=0.287,0.203,0.136,0.107,0>

Bottom: Detail of the 1916 map with the red arrow showing the approximate location of today's 5705 West Franklin. Full map available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3883h.la002031/?r=0.281,0.189,0.136,0.107,0>

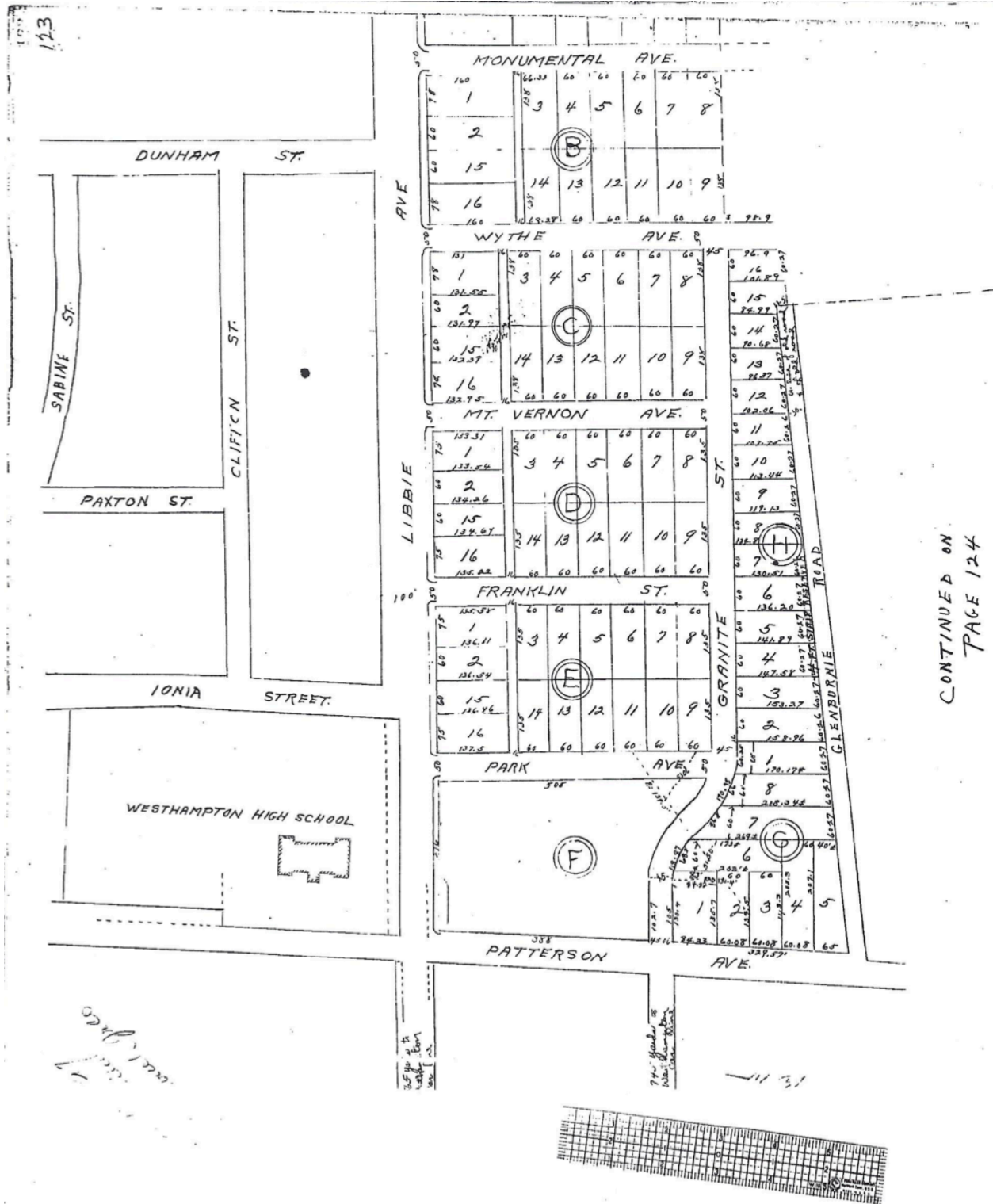


⁸⁸ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 5, 1926.

Franklin was part, was filed at the Henrico County Clerk's office. A smaller duplicate of it is found on page 30. The drafters of the plat drew fairly monotonous, equally-divided lots, but when compared to today's lot lines -- either on county maps or Google, it can be seen that developers sometimes moved lot lines to accommodate different styles of houses, driveways, etc. Such changes are duly reflected in deeds at the County Real Estate Assessment Division (and the guarantee of that is what homebuyers pay good money for during real estate closings).



A February 26, 2022, map taken from Google maps of 5705 West Franklin and the surrounding area.



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Monument Avenue Crest, Henrico County Platbook Page No. 13-123, dated February 24, 1926.