5 Franklin Street
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The house at 5 Franklin Street has been virtually ignored by history, which is curious because of its proximity to things great and small in the city of Charleston. Built in the early 1850s by the Pauls, a family of grocers, it is every bit as grand as the three houses to the north but is ignored completely by Sam Stoney's 1941 architectural survey, Jonathan Poston's survey of the early 1990s and The Charleston Guide For Tour Guides section written by Robert Stockton.

I have a theory about this. I believe that the tract of land was originally on Back Street, which is what that section of Franklin was called originally according to the Charleston Survey of Streets. (See map 1 --. Although the street has been named Franklin by the time the map came out). This was once a very trendy area. It received the benefits of being on the water without the banes as it was on the leeward side of the peninsula. It was close to the marina built where Colonial Lake once was in the late 1790s.

That tract was originally part of in what was once known as the Mazyck Pastures.

The tract where the house on the streets now so proudly sits was originally marsh when the first settlers arrived in 1670. The land in around that area was filled in by 1700, for the wall erected in 1704 carefully delineates the whole area. A secondary wall that was a buffer in the northwest part of the area ran a quarter of the way around the primary walled city and was built on the marsh. That wall started on the edge of Daniel's Creek (today Market Street) where Meeting Street is today --roughly where Charleston Place sits. It ran in a straight line to Beaufain Street in between Coming and St. Philip's streets. From there it angled southwest to where Magazine and Franklin intersect. It then ran straight down what is now Franklin to Broad, running directly over the spot where 5 Franklin Street lies today.

It's interesting that in the twenty years since the original settlers foresaked what is today Charles Towne Landing, they had felt a threat so severe come upon them that they fortified the area of the city against from whence they came. Nothing easily reachable resources bare explains why the good citizens felt a threat coming from that direction, save Indians. However, The Yemmessee Wars would be ten years away and never threatened the peninsula. The English came down the Ashley River of their own accord in 1680 with a fairly good relationship with the Kiawah Indians. By 1700, the Kiawahs had fared badly against other tribes.

In 1740, the Carolina Assembly meted out the land between Mazyck's land and the Old Burial Grounds to be a public square. The streets surrounding the square consisted of the present day Queen, Logan, Magazine and Franklin streets. Among the buildings that were constructed along the square was an almshouse, a public hospital which served as an asylum, a jail and pillory along with a new powder magazine. Right

outside the square were the city Burial Grounds. For years to come, this square would spawn very little happiness. One was sent to the almshouse for debt, the pillory for humiliation and wretched beatings, the asylum for madness and jail for crime. When one died in one of these hellholes, one's carcass would be tossed into the city burial grounds.

To cover the history of this area with succinctness, it is helpful to use Walter Fraser's eminently readable history of the city, *Charleston! Charleston! History Of A Southern City*. Published in 1989 by the University of South Carolina Press, excerpts from this book are all but invaluable to understand the area around 5 Franklin.

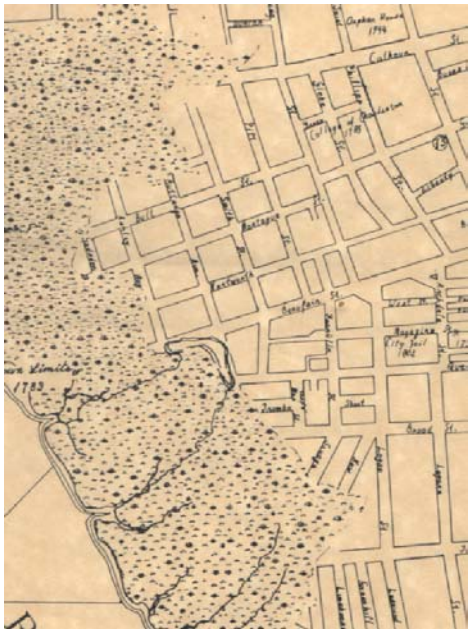
Eighty years before the house was built, Fraser writes, "Taxes on real property (in Charles Towne) remained the major sources of money for charitable purposes. The vestry of St. Philip's Church collected those taxes and provided food, shelter, and medical attention for the elderly, the disabled and the destitute. When indigents died, the vestry arranged for their burials. They reimbursed foster mothers 20 to 40 shillings a week for boarding very young orphans or abandoned children. As the numbers of whites increased with the 1730s, so did the demands on the vestry and the need for higher taxes. The vestry and churchwardens elected to care for the poor met with increasing frequency. 'I have lately been elected into an office which is attended with some Trouble.'

"By mid-decade, the vestry of St. Philip's was alarmed by 'the number of idle, vagrant... people" who were "Speedily reducing themselves to poverty and disease" by "drinking and.... debauchery" and becoming a great financial burden of the parish of Charles Towne. The churchmen also came to the conclusion that the private dwellings being rented as "Lodging... for Sick Persons" and paupers were inadequate, dilapidated, and too "extravagant" in price. Consequently, the parish officers petitioned the Assembly "to erect a Public Work House and Hospital." The Assembly responded by passing an "Act For The Better Relief and Employment for the Poor." It authorized the vestry to raise 2000 (pounds) immediately and 1,000 annually thereafter and to build a hospital for "paupers, vagrants an common beggars." Construction of the hospital began on "an acre of... Land called *the Old Burying Ground*, lying on the back part of Charles Towne." It would face newly cut Mazyck Street. The crude frame structure was completed by 1738. Five "commissioners" were elected by the Assembly and a warden was appointed. The physician of St. Philip's parish who attended "Sick Persons" throughout the town was obligated to visit and care for the poor at the hospital.

"The act of the Assembly creating the 'hospital' stipulated that it was to serve also as a 'Workhouse and a House of Correction.' The 'Lewd, idle and disorderly' poor were to be lodged with the ill and the indigent. The warden was authorized to use 'fetters of shackles' on the inmates, 'moderate whippings,' and to deprive them of food if necessary to maintain order. He was permitted to supplement his own salary by hiring out the labor of inmates and collecting their fees. True charity patients and 'idle poor' lodged here now could be segregated from the hardened criminals who were confined in the "stifling" and filthy rooms of private dwellings.

"The number of fugitive slaves, 'disorderly' poor whites, brawling sailors, sometimes drunken Indians, confidence men, and counterfeiters within the town alarmed

some citizens. They believed that the lack of a well-built, escape-proof local jail was responsible for the breakdown of law and order. Prominent citizens repeatedly urged the Assembly to provide for an adequate prison, but, after some debate, the cost-conscious members usually buried such demands in committees. Since there was no adequate jail, the Authority authorized the provost marshal of the province to lease private dwellings to serve as jailhouses, where black and white criminals and debtors were herded together without adequate food or medical care. Confined in such facilities and often unguarded, criminals frequently escaped.


(Map 1)

"Petty thievery increased as Charles Towne's population and wealth grew... Sometimes horse thieves were ordered to stand in the public pillory with one ear nailed to the post. At the expiration of the sentence, the ear would be cut off.

"Particularly severe punishments were reserved for sex-related offenses and crimes against nature. Members of the General Court sitting at Charles Towne in March 1738 found Sarah Chamberlain guilty of 'the Murder of Her Bastard Child' and sentenced her to death. Some months later the Court sentenced John Perkins to death for bestiality."

There was a spark of light and levity in the darkness. One must keep in mind that at this point in human history, life was, as Thomas Hobbes said, "short, brutish and nasty." This is hard to comprehend in the year 2000, but what went on in the square here was being played out the same way all over the world. The flicker of human kindness existed in the arts. One must remember that the inhabitants of Charleston did not truck with Cromwell's Roundheads from the mother country. Later, the Scotch Irish, descendant's of the puritanical fundamentalists, would move upstate, but at this point in her history, Charleston enjoyed liberty yet unseen by man.

It's not surprising that at the same time John Perkins learned that what might pass

as polite social intercourse in Wyoming later on was punishable by death (liberty, then as now, had its limits) in Charles Towne, the seeds of a fun-loving burg were sewn.

Fraser continues, "That same year (1735) Shepeard rented his 'long room' to a group of strolling players and local musicians who launched the town's first theatrical season on Friday evening, January 24, 1735. Charlestonians able to afford the 40 shillings for a ticket crowded in for the opening performance. Fraser writes, "In 1751... long-standing problems continued to plague the townspeople and torment the Assembly, which tended to regard taxes as a hellish invention of the Devil. Hospitals, jails and law enforcement remained grossly underfunded, and despite the efforts of the new scavenger, the congested streets were often filthy, slimy and stinking. Except in dire emergencies, the Assembly persisted in neglecting many of the needs of the townspeople.

"Swelling the ranks of the town's poor during the early 1760s were physically crippled soldiers and sailors, and their wives, widows and orphans, and prostitutes who had come there during the Seven Years War. From the 1730s through the early 1750s most of the people seeking relief in Charles Town had been the 'ancient and infirm,' but after 1756, the vast majority of those seeking relief were young women with small children. From 1751 to 1773 the requests of over 880 persons were granted by St. Philip's. These the vestry and churchwardens judged to be the "deserving poor" as the churchmen made a careful distinction between the "deserving" and the "disorderly poor."

"The most frequent appeals for aid came from the wives of servicemen who had deserted them. There was also a sharp increase in the number of wives deserting their husbands, which began during the social dislocations of the 1750s when the first reported cases of extramarital sex came before the churchwardens. Equally disturbing to the churchmen was the dramatic rise premarital sex and bastardy.

"...By the late 1750s some of the children supported at the public expense were living in 'the Orphan House,' a structure rented by St. Philip's Church."

Later, on pages 117-118, Fraser goes on to say, "In April of 1767, the Assembly concluded that there were specific causes "for the greatly increased numbers of Poor": the ease by which indigents from neighboring colonies and immigrants from abroad could settle in Charles Town and obtain welfare; "the super-abundance of Tipling houses" which brought "the Ruin of their health," "the *many Women and Children*" abandoned by soldiers, and recent British policies, such as the Stamp Act which had caused "a stagnation of Trade and business," leaving many jobless. The report did not cite the hiring out of slaves as a cause of unemployment among whites, perhaps because wealthy legislators profited from the practice.

"In response to the inquiry, the Assembly increased the residency requirements in Charles Town from three to twelve months for anyone seeking welfare at St. Philip's and in early 1768 passed "an Act for appropriating the present Work House for a place of Correction... and for building a Poor House and Hospital." These new brick facilities were built facing Mazyck Street on the four acres of public land bounded by Queen Street

to the south, Magazine Street to the north, and the Ashley River marshes to the west. Within these bounds on the city's western fringe were already a public Powder Magazine, the old "Barracks," and old poorhouse and hospital. When the new poorhouse and hospital were ready for occupancy in the spring of 1770, the older facilities were to be used solely as a place of confinement and correction for fugitive slaves, seamen, "vagrants and disorderly persons." Nevertheless, until the end of the colonial era grand juries continued to petition the Assembly for additional legislation "to prevent the *poor* and Idle from... neighboring provinces... and other parts of the world" from coming to Charles Town.

Fraser describes the area as growing grimmer with the passing years, "While the Exchange was going up at the eastern end of the "full half-mile long" Broad Street, a poor house, hospital and jail went up near the western end of the street. The new three-story brick jail, which faced Magazine Street and cost 7,500 pounds, was finished in 1771. Nearby, the land that is today bounded by Queen, Franklin, Logan and Magazine streets was set-aside as a cemetery for "strangers and transients."

Later, Walter Fraser further asserts, "During the war (of 1812) the number of inmates increased dramatically in the three-story brick building completed in 1771 near the corner of Mazyck Street (Logan Street today), and Magazine Street which still served as the city's Poor House. Those inmates certified by the Poor House physician as physically and mentally able were expected to work. Like those charged with overseeing the care of the indigent in Northern cities, Charleston's commissioners of the poor believed that the best way to preserve "the peace...correct...the public morals and prevent...the spread of Pauperism is to compel those to labor whose sufferings proceed from Idleness and Intemperance." Hence the inmates usually were kept busy at a variety of jobs. Those who were "refractory" were placed in solitary confinement on bread and water. The hospital ward of the Poor House served as a medical laboratory for the city physicians, and "the lunatics," who "filled the house with their unearthly whooping and halloings," usually were kept in the basement cells..."

Another moonbeam of hope flickered through the nimbus of despair in 1824 when the Medical College of South Carolina was opened on the corner of Franklin and Queen Streets. The houses that sat on the corner had yet to be built when the Medical College opened it doors.

Life really didn't get any better for some people, because a Fraser goes on to say, "(In 1839) A request reached the City Council for the installation of a treadmill in the Poor House, but it was turned down on the grounds that it was a "punishment for slaves and other colored persons and the committee are unwilling to break down any of the distinctions between that class of persons and the white population by subjecting them to a common mode of punishment." Likewise, the commissioners of the Poor House refused to admit blacks except for those certifiably insane."

This wretchedness was offset by the fact that in 1831, Robert Mills, the Charleston architect who lived in Baltimore while working for the federal government,

came home to build the Marine Hospital for sick and disabled merchant seamen on Franklin Street right above the Medical College.

The area was further improved for as Fraser explains, "The Poor House, looked on by the city's well-to-do "not only as a place of refuge for the victims of misfortune, but as a ... House of Correction" was jammed with paupers and criminals. The commissioners of the poor urged the city government to find other quarters because the needy poor refused to apply to the old Poor House because of its reputation "as a place of punishment for the unworthy." In 1856, the indigents were transferred from the old Poor House at the corner of Mazyck and Magazine streets to a larger brick building, the defunct Charleston Manufacturing Company on Columbus Street, between Drake and Court streets. Renamed the Almshouse, later the Charleston Home, it admitted only worthy paupers, and the city government believed the institution had been relieved of its former bad reputation."

The 1850s found the city of Charleston in high cotton.

The first block of Franklin Street was carried along with the paradigm.

The economic boom of the 1850s would be the last one Charleston saw for 130 years. Four houses were built along the west side of lower Franklin in the early 1850s. The house at 5 Franklin Street is one of them. Built by John Paul, a grocer whose store was at the southeast corner of Broad and Church. Paul owned the store with his brother, Wilson, and they obviously had a fine trade.

The house they built is almost exactly like the three to the north of it, although there are indications that the Pauls were there first. All four houses are unique for both the time and place. The have some of the characteristics of what is known as a "Charleston single house," such as the porch facing south to keep the harsh summer sun from beating through the windows, and are one room wide. There are also marked differences that all four houses have in common. The door opens into the house on the northeastern side of the houses and the windows on the northern exposures, which are sparse in typical Charleston houses, are plentiful in these four houses. Another factor they all have in common is the lack of a brick dependency in the back. It's interesting that all four should share the same characteristics that are not common in any other particular section of the city.

A few scant years later, the events of April 1861 spiraled completely out of the control and experience of an entire generation.

On December 11, 1861, the largest fire in the city's history began as a grease fire on the Cooper River. Few people realize that Beaufort and Hilton Head fell to Union forces in October and November of 1861 (There are those who would argue that they never left). There was a flood of refugees from this area that came into Charleston for sustenance and protection. There was no room for this deluge of people, so they set up tent cities along the Cooper River. On that fateful evening, the thought is that some

slaves were frying some fish on a wharf on the Cooper River, when the pan they were frying the fish in tipped over and the hot grease spilled into the open flames. A mattress factory was caught aflame. The firefighters thought that the fire had been extinguished and all went to bed.

They were wrong.

Around ten o'clock that evening, the wind began to blow 20 to 30 mph from the northeast. Described by Emma Holmes as "a literal wall of fire," the subsequent inferno cut a swath a block and a half wide from the Cooper to Ashley Rivers destroying everything in its path. That path burned a house down at the corner of Broad and Franklin just south of the Paul's new home. There is no doubt that they were evacuated. What's interesting that all three houses, which bordered the southern edge of the lot, were burned.

Things got worse.

In 1863, the longest land siege to take place in modern warfare commenced.

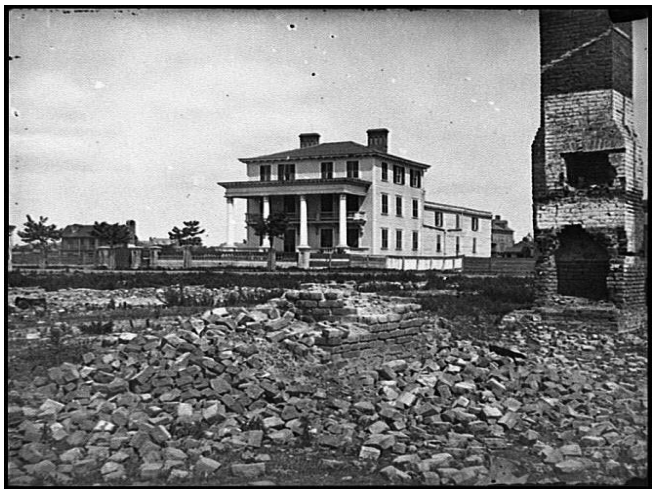
Charleston was pounded by Federal bombardment for 587 days.

The Battle of Battery Wagner in July of that year was so intense that private homes were used as emergency hospitals, including many houses in this section.

It got even worse.

Fraser writes, "During nine days in January 1864, some 1,500 shells were fired into Charleston; occasionally they started fires. St. Philip's Church was hit repeatedly and its interior wrecked. City Hall and the Guard House were punctured with shell fragments, but because the city below Market Street was deserted, few people were killed during the bombardment. A visitor in early 1864 observed that "the whole life and business has been crammed into a few squares above Calhoun Street and along the Ashley, where... the shells did not reach ... To pass from the bustling crowded scene to the lower part of the town was like... going from life to death."

The Pauls had to abandon their grocery business. It is estimated by some that every house in the city within reach of the projectiles was hit at least once. Even though it took four or five shells to demolish a house, a missile hitting the house down the street would be enough for most people to move. Many sought refugee inland, but there's a good chance that the Paul family did not. People had to eat. Also, the union officers were held right around the corner at 180 Broad.



180 Broad in 1865 (Matthew Brady. Library of Congress)
Note the fire damage.

The Pauls, spared by the fire, were also at the furthermost reaches of the shelling.

After Charleston's abject surrender in February of 1865, the city lay in ashes.

However, within months, the green sprigs of cultural life peeked through the cinders. Fraser writes, "With the spring life quickened in the city. The theater resumed soon after two New York producers arrived in Charleston with sixteen players and the German Artillery Hall on Wentworth Street was repaired and refurbished. It opened on April 12 with *The Honeymoon,* a comedy to a packed and enthusiastic house of Union soldiers, freedmen and native Charlestonians night after night for nearly three months. Other productions followed, yet by fall 1865, legitimate drama gave way to minstrels, burlesques, serenaders, trombonists and "bone players."

There's a good chance that while the Pauls did not prosper, for no one did in these years, they survived. The year 1871 finds that their grocery store is back at 45 Broad. John Paul and his wife Mary still lived in the house at 5 Franklin.

Meanwhile in the surrounding area, Colonial Lake was being formed where the marina once was.

(Bird's Eye View of Charleston 1872)
Note that there are still no houses to immediate south
Of 5 Franklin Street

Says Fraser, "Municipal supported hospitals serving the sick indigent included a portion of the old workhouse on Mazyck Street... Roper Hospital on Queen Street and the Marine Hospital on Franklin Street. Physicians of the city's health districts and at these hospitals between 1871 and 1880 treated about 2,500 white and 8,500 black indigents annually, but after seeing the accommodations for the poor, (Mayor) Courtney declared that "beds, bedding, the commonest necessities were lamentably deficient..."

"The pace of discrimination and institutional separation of races quickened at the end of the 1870s. By 1880 the insane of both races were strictly segregated at Roper Hospital. Even unto death the races were separated. Depending on the color of the

corpse, interments were made in either the black or the city white cemetery."

From 1881 to 1883, three houses at 164-168 Broad were built as spec houses along 5 Franklin's southern lot.

Imagine how everyone must have felt years later when the earthquake shook Charleston as a dog would a rabbit -- very few houses escaped damage although 5 Franklin probably suffered less harm than most as it is wooden.

Roper Hospital was devastated and had to be abandoned. That hospital and the workhouse on Mazyck Street were moved over to the edge of the water on the extreme west side of Calhoun Street.

During these years, the Marine Hospital no longer offered its services, either. What took its place would become a legend. It would be hyperbole to say that rock and roll was born on Franklin Street, but in an evolution that compares Homo erectus to Homo sapiens, certainly modern jazz and the blues owe many of their classic rifts from the band that was housed there for almost 40 years.

In 1891, The Rev. Daniel Jenkins found four homeless children huddled in the cold. He took them in and started the Jenkins Orphanage in the old Marine Hospital Building. It soon filled. It was the first private institute of its kind. By 1895, the building housed five hundred children. These children were taught trades and book learning with local teachers donating their time. They also put out a weekly newspaper with its largest subscription base residing in New York City.

According to a website called "kenyon.edu," The young people who stayed at the orphanage were called "black lambs" by Rev. Jenkins. They started a band called the pick-a-ninny band that toured the USA. The band was organized in 1895 as a means to gain funds for the orphanage. With its music, the band linked ragtime, march and jazz (jazz reached them from the boys who had run away to play in other bands and were sent back to the orphanage). Upon its establishment, it became the first and only black instrumental group organized in South Carolina. The band debut was on the streets of Charleston with the permission of the mayor, police chief, and chamber of commerce.

"Training for the band began at age seven or eight. First the students would learn to sing the parts, then they were given an instrument and taught to play the part. First they were taught sacred music, then overtures, and then the popular music of the time. Playing in the band was a yearlong commitment for the students; it began in May with practice sessions that prepared them for tour from June to September. In August the bands returned back to Charleston to start school. Then at Easter all the bands met up to perform in New York.

"By the 1920s there were five different bands touring the U.S. from Florida to Maine. One of the bands even went to play in England in 1914 in an effort to gain more funding. In 1927, the band also premiered in the opera, *Porgy*.

"The Jenkins Orphanage Band players often had the experience of travel which helped them to know the musical scene that they were stepping into. Some band members dropped out of tours in a city, particularly New York. Along with the music, the bands brought dance with them, which began to transform into popular dances such as the Charleston and the Big Apple. Often the dances began to change right on the floor of clubs such as The Savoy."

. In 1933, a severe fire across Franklin Street gutted the Old Marine Hospital devastating the Orphanage. The Reverend Jenkins pleaded with the city to help with the reconstruction for five years; his supplications fell bereft of attention.

The entire area that was once Mazyck's pasture was once again devastated, one side a collection of abandoned burned out buildings, the other side a nest of thieves and harlots.

To the south towards Broad, Mary Paul died in 1917 and by 1919, John C. Merhtens, the county auditor with his office in the Fireproof building which now houses the South Carolina Historical Society (and was also built by Robert Mills.) lived at 5 Franklin Street. He lived with his family until Miss Julia R. Raoul, a teacher at Memminger School moved into the house in 1927. At this point the Bissell family owned the house; Merhtens was married to a Bissell.

Up the street, the nest of thieves and harlots is converted to government housing.

Burnet Rhett Maybank was mayor during this period of the city's history. Fraser reports, "Maybank was a pioneer in the use of federal funds to preserve historic buildings, transforming a flophouse -- the once elegant 19th-Century Planter's Hotel at the corner of Queen and Church Streets and the site of an 18th Century playhouse -- with city funds and $350,000 from the WPA. Built inside the shell of the Planters' Hotel was a replica of a 1730s London theater, the facade, entrance and balcony being part of the pre-Civil War hotel and portions of the interior taken from old homes in the city. When completed, Harry Hopkins, administrator for the WPA, formally presented the key of the Dock Street Theatre to his good friend, Burnet Maybank. The theater infused new life into local dramatic associations like the Footlight Players, who before a packed house on November 26, 1937, performed the same play, *The Recruiting Officer* that had opened the original Dock Street Theater in 1736. Reinvigorated, the Players presented twenty-eight different productions over the next four years."

The next year, under Maybank's firm hand, the entire area around the Jenkins Orphanage was marked for demolition. City Council decided to move the orphanage north of the city. In turn, the Marine Hospital was sold to the Charleston Housing Authority, which was to be the headquarters for the housing project springing up around 160 Queen.

On December 30, 1938, *The Charleston Evening Post*, showed a large picture of the area with a caption that read, "Combining an aerial photograph and an artist's sketch

the picture above shows how Robert Mills Manor low-rent project will change the appearance of that section of the city in and around the old county jail."

The illustration shows Queen Street in the foreground, Magazine Street at the top, Logan at the extreme upper right hand corner and Smith Street at the extreme upper left-hand corner. The streets almost bisecting the picture are Franklin from Queen, and Wilson from Magazine. It will be noted that Cromwell Alley, long known as a slum area, will be completely wiped out by the new project.

"The jail building is to be seen to the upper right hand center of the picture. The old jail yard and the area back of it, until recently a littered backyard of the orphanage and of the old Medical College building will be converted into park-like areas.

On the corner of Franklin and Queen streets, lower right of center, where the old Medical College building once stood, is to be erected one of the several two-story apartment houses. The Marine Hospital building, directly behind this apartment house, is to be converted into administration offices. The jail building is to be converted into other public uses.

The area was once termed the "worst" slum section of the city. Houses on the sites required by the authority for the work have been demolished and the area today presents a far different than that to be evolved in the coming year."

By 1942, Merhtens died and Julia Raoul was the only person living at 5 Franklin.

Things continue in the same vein for almost ten years. Although there is some economic expansion due to World War II, Charleston is still very much in the economic doldrums.

In the mid-1950s, Mrs. Harriett M. Gordon and Mrs. Cornelia M. Jones shared 5 Franklin Street having inherited it from their aunt. These women are J.C. Mehrten's widowed daughters, who now need the house once Miss Raoul passed on. Either the house was subdivided in some way or these people got along swimmingly. The former is probably the case as Miss Raoul had a separate phone number as the Merhtens and Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. Jones kept separate phone numbers.

By the time Mrs. Gordon died in the mid-60's, all of the land west of Barre Street was filled in and Lockwood Drive was formed on top of the marsh adding almost a third more land to the peninsula city and room for economic growth. Mrs. Jones lived alone in the house until she could do so no longer. However, Burbage's Grocery opened during this period, which must have been convenient for her in her dotage.

In 1974, Elizabeth Douglas Bonner bought 5 Franklin Street for $40,000. She and her husband, Dr. John Bonner, a pediatrician, and their family moved into the house and lived there for pretty much the rest of the 20th Century until the McGuires bought the

house in 1999. Elizabeth Bonner died in 1988. Upon Dr. Bonner's remarriage, he moved from the house and his son, Frank, lived there until 1999.

The house suffered from Hurricane Hugo like the rest of Charleston in September 1989. Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. Jones faced Hurricane Gracie in 1959, but an apt comparison would be Gracie was ill-tempered child. Hugo was a psychotic teenager with an arsenal.

Up until that time, most houses in Charleston were still somewhat rundown, in need of paint, stucco falling in pieces affording glimpses of the Charleston gray brick below. That block of Franklin Street was not sordid like the block to the north but it was somewhat run-down.

The insurance money and the international media exposure that Hugo garnered shifted a paradigm. Many of the older people simply gave up, and sold their houses after they were fixed and newly painted. Their children couldn't afford to keep the houses up, and so one by one they were sold.

The economic expansion Charleston was experiencing when Herbert and Diane McGuire, both CPAs, bought 5 Franklin Street had not been seen since the Pauls built it in the 1850s.

When the McGuires bought the house in July of 1999, it was described as thus:

Set on a beautiful deep lot with grand trees and three doors from Broad Street this wonderful late Charleston single house has a very workable floor plan, a four-room kitchen building and lots of charm and ambience.

1st Floor: a well proportioned double parlor living room/dining room separated by an arched pocket door system, each room has a working fireplace with very nice mantel and a brass chandelier. French doors give access to the wrap around side porch. To the rear is a den/family room and a large kitchen with bay window. The half bath is located under the stairs.

2nd Floor: A master bedroom with bath is in the front and two nice sized bedrooms with connecting bath are to the rear. Two bedrooms, including the master have nice mantels and French doors leading to the 2nd floor porch.

3rd Floor: Two large dormer rooms are at the top of the staircase.

As this is being written in mid-September of 2001, there are no storms in the Atlantic, no swirling low-pressure systems with teeth. Any rational person know that life can throw some pretty mean curve balls, but one can only hope that the house at 5 Franklin will continue to be spared the grosser misfortunes of man and nature in it's next century.as it has the last century and a half.