

Randol-Melin House, 1877 - 303 W. Washington St.

Built by D.B. Pankey in 1877 and sold to T.R.R. Ely in 1887, this Folk Victorian-style house is believed to be the oldest in Kennett. During the Victorian era, decorative brackets like these were often ordered from catalogs. The Victorian screen door features gingerbread corner brackets and spindles in the middle, while the original four-panel solid wood interior doors retain their cast iron rim locks which were popular at the time. Unlike today’s mortise locks, which are set within the door’s edge, these rim locks are surface-mounted. The house also boasts its original milk house, where dairy products were cooled with ice, insulated by sawdust-filled walls. Inside, the home has eight rooms, two of which have 14-foot ceilings.

In 1904, the house was purchased by V.V. Randol, who served as county surveyor from 1902 until 1940. Randol was also a school superintendent, rural mail carrier, farmer, and beekeeper. His son, Eugene Randol, was Kennett’s longest-serving postmaster - from 1935 to 1971. The house has remained in the family.



Children of V.V. Randol in front of the house about 1905: Eugene, Helen and Elizabeth. Also shown are a rim lock and the milk house.



Donaldson House, 1909 - 306 W. Washington St.

This American Foursquare house is the only home on the tour built by a woman, Mrs. Panola Mississippi Rayburn Donaldson. The cost was \$4-6,000, roughly equivalent to \$150,000 in today’s value. It was constructed of locally harvested cypress lumber. Interior moldings were milled of the same lumber by a firm in Cape Girardeau; the floors are pine. Coal was stored in the cellar to fuel the stove and fireplaces and that area remains intact. In the summer, screens were hung on the porch for sleeping, and the hooks that supported them are still in place.



The front staircase has two landings and is easy to negotiate. The back stairway is narrow and steep. Most interior walls were of lathe and plaster; the dining room has its original beaverboard ceilings and walls. Two of the original brass light fixtures in the living room are similar to Craftsman style. The stained glass window on the porch is part of the original construction. The house remains in the family.

Mrs. Donaldson’s family were early Dunklin County pioneers, and one of her sisters was Mrs. D.B. Pankey. Her husband, I.F. had a successful mercantile business, was elected to sherriff and collector of Dunklin County. They had four children, Davis, Thomas F., Madge, and Aileen. Thomas lived in the home with his mother until 1957; Madge lived there until 1975, when she was incapacitated by a stroke. Thomas was a former sheriff and was one of the founders of the Senath State Bank. The children and their decendents have continued to contribute to the city of Kennett through medicine, business, banking and more.



Panola Mississippi Rayburn Donaldson and her dog Jack. b.1858-d.1939

I.F. Donaldson, b.1847-d.1905

Redman House, 1885 - 401 St. Francis St.



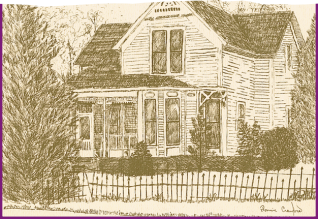
C.C. Redman, Sr.

Bartholomew Cousins built a one room cabin on this site around 1848 which still exists within a downstairs bedroom of the larger four-room house constructed by T. McCollugh in 1885. In 1895 a a second story was added by W.G. Bragg, Jr., who was involved in real estate and merchantile with the Tatum Brothers. He added the tower and stained glass windows typical of a Queen Anne style house. Built of gum and cypress, the house is believed to have more native lumber than any other in the city. Mr. C. C. (Charles Clinton) Redman, Sr., a decendent of a pioneer Dunklin County family purchased the house in 1914 and his daughter Thelma lived there until her death in 1994.

Mr. Redman was first an educator. In 1900 he began managing 12,000 acres owned by Senator William Hunter near Hollywood. In 1907 he became county collector and in 1914 was elected presiding judge and did much to remove area swampland, supervising the construction of several levees. He led the movement that resulted in building Highway 84 between Kennett and Hayti. In the 1930s he was among the leaders that created the Kennett municipal power plant.

J. H. Dunmire House, 1890-92 - 303 St. Francis St.

This Queen Anne style house was built by J.H. Dunmire about 1890. He was a pharmicist who came to Kennett in 1878 as a traveling salesman for Schuh Drug Co. of Cairo, Ill. The house has cypress foundations and orginally 8 rooms with 10 foot ceilings. The large magnolia in the front yard was planted the day his daughter Clara was born in 1897.



J.H. Dunmire b.1894 -d.1969



George T. Dunmire b. 1837 -d. 1928



Dr. George Q. Dunmire b. 1915 - d. 1981

Sources: History of Southeast Missouri, Robert Sidney Douglass, 1912; History of Dunklin County, Mo., Mary Smyth-Davis, 1896; Dunklin County Historical Society; Dunklin Daily Democrat, Twice-A-Week Democrat. Sketches by KHS Art Club, 1982. Scan the QR code for more information on Kennett’s history.



Heritage Homes Tour



Kennett was known as Chilletcaux in the early 1800s, after Chief Chilletcaux of the Delaware tribe, who lived in a two-room cabin surrounded by fruit trees. His land was purchased around 1829 by Howard Moore, Dunklin County’s first white settler. In the late 1840s, the town—originally founded in 1846—was laid out and named Butler. However, to avoid frequent confusion with Butler County, it was renamed Kennett in 1851 in honor of St. Louis Mayor Luther M. Kennett, an early railroad promoter.

In her 1895 publication, *The History of Dunklin County*, author Mary Smyth-Davis wrote, “One can judge the prosperity of a town or community by the character of its residences; these speak well of Kennett... many are unsurpassed by any to be found in a town of its size. Among the handsomest are those of Judge T. E. Baldwin, D.B. Pankey, and J. F. Tatum.” These homes, along with others, are included in this tour to highlight Kennett’s early founders and their contributions to the city.

Hemphill-Carter House, 1917 - 511 College Ave.

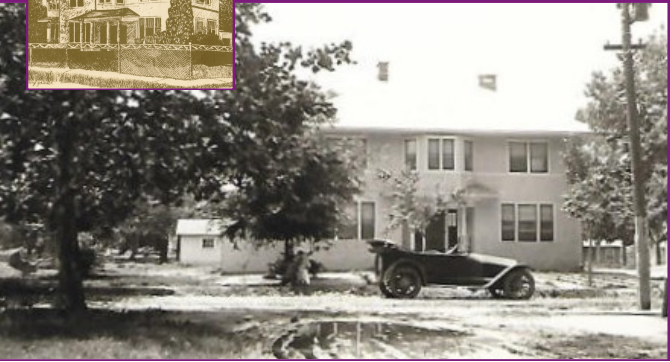
This stucco home was built in 1917 by J.A. Hemphill and his wife Elizabeth (Bess) Heath Russell Hemphill. Mr. Hemphill hand picked the oak and cypress wood for the house and had his best sawyer cut it. Much of the interior boasts dark quarter-sawn oak beams. The house may have the only elevator in a private building in Kennett, added in the 1950s. The home remains in the family.

When Mr. Hemphill acquired the Lasswell Lumber Company in 1915 he planned to manage it from St. Louis, but in early 1916 decided he would move to Kennett where he and his wife remained the rest of their lives.

- In 1925 Hemphill Lumber Co. was Kennett’s largest industry with an annual payroll of \$250,000 and 200 employees.
- When timber was no longer available, he started many other businesses including extensive farming operations, an auto dealership, cotton gin, dairy, farm equipment and more.
- He served on the Missouri Constitutional Convention 1943-1944 which rewrote the state’s constitution.

Mrs. Hemphill was the first woman to run for office in Kennett and was elected to the school board in 1927 only 7 years after women gained the right to vote. She also spearheaded organizing Kennett’s first Girl Scout troop.

Both were extremely active in community organizations. They contributed generously to the building fund of the First Baptist Church and provided the lumber through the Hemphill mill.



Above photo is from 1917; the interior room is circa 1930s.



Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Hemphill





**Pankey-Baker House, 1899 - 604 College Ave.**

When built in 1899, this house was known as “Park Place.” The style is Colonial Revival. It contains stained glass windows, hand-painted canvas walls and three fireplaces. It was built by D.B. Pankey, son of one of the oldest pioneers in Dunklin County. Born in 1861, D.B. was educated in Dunklin County, Cape Girardeau and St. Louis. In 1888 he married Josie Rayburn of Clarkton who was known as “one of the leading belles of Clarkton...and a leader” in Kennett society.

Mr. Pankey held numerous positions in Dunklin County and was an early county clerk. When the Bank of Kennett was organized in January 1891 he was chosen cashier and held that position until his death in 1915. The newspapers reported that the funeral service held on the five acre lawn in front of the house “was dotted with people from every walk of life, from the country and towns for miles around.”

The house remained vacant for several years before being purchased in 1929 by Charles B. Baker for the price of \$5,000. Mr. Baker founded Baker Implement Co., Baker Welman and Brown Insurance and numerous other businesses.



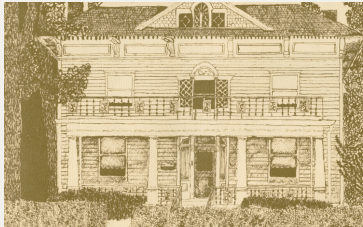
Mr. and Mrs. D. B. Pankey  
Park Place (left) and their  
earlier residence below.



**Judge T. E. Baldwin House, 1894 - 200 W. Washington St.**

Judge T.E. Baldwin, father of Dr. Paul Baldwin, built this house in 1894. The home originally lacked kitchen cabinets, as food was prepared in the kitchen and carried through a pantry to the dining room. It features large sliding doors, hardwood floors, and much of the original brass hardware.

Born in Cape Girardeau, Baldwin lost his parents at age 10. He remained in Cape until he turned 21, then moved to Dunklin County, where he clerked in a Clarkton store before being appointed circuit and county clerk, which prompted his move to Kennett. In 1872, he married Mary J. Pankey.



T.E. Baldwin  
b. 1849-d. 1904

By 1886, Baldwin had partnered with W.F. Shelton, one of Kennett’s earliest leaders, in a general store known as W.F. Shelton and Co. Four years later, he sold his share and purchased a drug store formerly owned by Dr. A.B. Mobley. Baldwin then constructed a brick building for the store, one of the first two brick structures in Kennett.

His next venture was in real estate, where he owned several thousand acres of swampland, including a 4,000-acre tract. He also co-founded the Bank of Kennett and served as its president until shortly before his death.



Mary Pankey Baldwin  
b.1856-d. 1933

**Tatum House, 1912 - 203 N. Jackson St.**

The Tatum home is an American Foursquare built by Bernie Tatum to replace the house originally constructed by his father, J.F. Tatum. The older home, which partially burned, was moved to a lot behind the new structure to make way for the new construction. In 1883, James Tatum and his half-brother Luther founded Tatum Brothers, a store offering a wide range of merchandise from clothing and boots to farm implements. J.F. Tatum was known as “one of the shrewdest businessmen in Dunklin County.” He was also a member of the Kennett school board and vice president of the Bank of Kennett. In 1877, he married Lillie Bragg, one of the nine “Bragg girls” and daughter of Captain W.G. Bragg.

Bernie Tatum, born in 1893, worked with the Kennett office of the IRS and passed away at his home in 1954.



J. F. Tatum  
b.1850-d. 1909



Tatum Block circa 1895, South  
side Kennett square

**Tatum-Adams House, 1898 - 201 N. Jackson St.**

This three-story home features 10 rooms, including four bedrooms, five fireplaces, and a basement. The dining room was furnished with hand-carved furniture made to fit the room's exact dimensions. A key feature of the house is a large stained glass window depicting Luther and Sallie Tatum’s daughter, Mary, as a small child.

Luther P. Tatum arrived in Dunklin County as a youth and initially operated his own store before joining his half-brother, James F., in a growing mercantile business that became one of the finest general stores in Dunklin County. The south side of the Kennett Square was known as the Tatum Block. In 1893, Luther married Sallie M. Baldwin, a “leading belle of Kennett” and the daughter of Judge T.E. and Mary Pankey Baldwin.



Luther Price Tatum b. 1862- d. 1931  
Sallie Baldwin Tatum b. 1873-d.1938

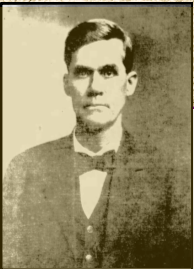


**Hawkins-Wickham House, 1893 - 301 W. Washington St.**

C.P. Hawkins built this frame home in 1893, where it stayed in his family for 113 years until it was sold in 2006. The 1.5-story house features seven rooms on the main floor, including a double fireplace. Hawkins, who arrived in Dunklin County in 1882, lived in Malden and Clarkton before settling in Kennett. His obituary described him as “a remarkable man in many respects, possessing an indomitable will and energy, with few equals in resourcefulness.”

Hawkins was considered one of Kennett’s leading citizens and attorneys, prominent in county and state politics. He served in the Missouri state legislature from 1890-99, 1908, and 1910, and held the position of county attorney in 1886-88 and 1894. In 1912, he served in the state senate.

In 1884, Hawkins married Augusta Bells Waltrip, the daughter of Judge J.M. Waltrip, another pioneer of the area, and the granddaughter of financier Elgin White, one of the wealthiest men in the region. Augusta was a charter member of the Presbyterian Church of Kennett.



C.P. Hawkins, left, b.1860-d.1917. Mr. Hawkins’ daughter Jessie Pearl on tricycle, and sister Lucy (also with curls) and their brother Paul on bicycle with friends at their playhouse whichno longer stands.



**T.R.R. Ely House, 1907 - 300 W. Washington St.**

The style of this house has been alternately described as Mission or Georgian. It features 13-inch thick solid brick and plaster walls, with bricks reportedly made in Senath. Five of the original six fireplaces, complete with their carved mantels, remain intact, and several stained glass windows add to the home's charm.

The house was built by T.R.R. Ely, who arrived in Dunklin County at age 21, fresh from the University of Virginia Law School. Just a year later, in 1882, he was elected prosecuting attorney for the county at a time when “lawlessness abounded.” Ely went on to serve in both the state house and senate from 1887 to 1927.

In 1904, Ely delivered a speech on the potential of the Bootheel, which led to a \$10,000 topographical survey of the region's five swamp counties. This survey was the first step toward draining Southeast Missouri, resulting in the formation of 25 drainage districts. The house was later sold to former Congressman Paul C. Jones in 1948.



T.R.R. Ely in his study  
b.1860 d.1935.

