

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**GOLDEN ASRO AND RUTH HOLLEY FRINKS HOUSE**

Edenton, Chowan County CO0680 Listed 8/08/2023  
Nomination by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.  
Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, June 2022



South elevation.



Northwest oblique.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Frinks, Golden Asro and Ruth Holley, House  
other names/site number Benbury-Frinks House, Freedom House

## 2. Location

street & number 122 West Peterson Street **N/A** not for publication  
city or town Edenton **N/A** vicinity  
stat North Carolina code NC county Chowan code 041 zip code 27932  
e \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] June 27, 2023  
Signature of Certifying official/Title Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

roof ASPHALT

\_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: Black  
Civil Rights

**Period of Significance**

1958-1973

**Significant Dates**

1923

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Frinks, Golden Asro

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Twiddy Construction Company, 1970 addition and remodeling

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Historic Sites Section, NCDNCR

Frinks, Golden Asro and Ruth Holley, House  
Name of Property

Chowan County, NC  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 0.26 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 36.066608 -76.608415  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Heather Fearnbach

organization Fearnbach History Services, Inc. date 12/28/2022

street & number 3334 Nottingham Road telephone 336-765-2661

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name State of North Carolina - North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

street & number 1321 Mail Service Center telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27699

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Chowan County, NC

## Section 7. Narrative Description

### Setting

The Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House is located approximately one-half-mile northwest of Edenton's central business district in a historically African American neighborhood of one- and two-story late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century dwellings. The two-story side-gable-roofed residence faces south toward West Peterson Street. The concrete north-south walkway between the road and front porch turns west to intersect the concrete driveway west of the house. Evergreen shrubs fill the landscape-timber-edged planting bed bordering the porch. Grass lawn surrounds the dwelling. The one-story, front-gable-roofed, concrete-block storage building north of the house is situated close to the west parcel boundary. Deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs line the lot perimeter and fill the north third of the parcel north of the storage building. Dr. Goldie Frinks Wells remembers that her father took pride in the neatly maintained yard.<sup>1</sup>

### Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House, 1880, 1958, 1970, contributing building

The Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House attained its current Colonial Revival-style appearance in 1970. At that time, the two-story, side-gable-roofed, frame dwelling with a shed-roofed rear wing built in 1880 for Thomas F. Benbury was enlarged and updated for the Frinks. The previous renovation, completed soon after the couple acquired the property in 1958, included covering painted weatherboards with gray asbestos-shingle siding and interior remodeling. When Twiddy Construction Company of Edenton erected the ten-foot-deep rear 1970 addition, a uniform exterior aesthetic was created by veneering original and new frame walls with running-bond pressed-red brick in a manner that achieved a flat wall plane. The wall alignment differential resulted in an approximately one-inch gap between the asbestos siding and brick veneer in the 1880 portion of the house.

Other 1970 exterior modifications included replacement of the single-bay hip-roofed portico supported by tapered square posts with an almost-full-width front porch that has a low-pitched shed roof, fluted aluminum columns, white-painted plywood-sheathed ceiling, red-painted poured-concrete floor, and brick foundation. Two brick steps with slender black-painted metal railings provide egress. The porch roof was originally topped with a white-painted wood railing with square posts and balusters that was removed in fall 2004 after sustaining hurricane damage. The white-painted cast-concrete planters with classical

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<sup>1</sup> No-longer-extant landscape elements include white-painted rocks as well as pipes and tires that Golden Frinks salvaged from the junkyard north of the house and used to edge the walkway and planting beds. Information regarding the appearance and evolution of the house and landscape during the Frinks' tenure was provided by Dr. Goldie Frinks Wells to North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office and Historic Sites Section staff in 2017 and 2021 and Heather Fearnbach in 2023.

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motifs on the porch have been in place since 1970. Two rectangular planters are elevated on fluted scroll supports at the east and west ends of the porch and two urn-shaped planters flank the entrance.

The three-bay façade's first story was transformed in 1970 by the addition of Colonial Revival stylistic elements. A classical surround with fluted pilasters that rise to a broken pediment with an acorn finial was added at the primary entrance. The single-leaf paneled door framed by narrow ten-pane sidelights and a two-pane transom was replaced with a single-leaf wood door with two panes above four panels flanked by four-pane sidelights with paneled bases. The early-twenty-first-century vinyl-frame storm door with a paneled base and glazed upper section replaced a 1970 storm door. The fixed louvered wood shutters that flank both tall nine-over-nine double-hung wood sash were installed in 1970. The header-course brick window sills are canted. Above the porch, two aluminum-sided gabled wall dormers with four-over-four double-hung wood sash pierce the front roof slope. Triple-track storm windows protect sash in all openings except two living room windows at the dwelling's southwest corner where storm windows were recently removed.

The original shed-roofed wing that spanned the main block's north elevation has a steeper roof pitch than the 1970 rear addition. A frame shed roof system was thus added above both areas in conjunction with the addition, creating an attic. White vinyl siding sheathes the east and west attic walls.

A 1970 carport with an almost-flat frame roof supported by slender black-painted round steel posts spans the entire west elevation. The west edges of the wood rafters, plywood roof decking, and asphalt shingles are in deteriorated condition. The poured concrete pavement beneath the carport extends to the addition's north wall. Fenestration of the west elevation, from south to north, comprises two windows with six-over-six and four-over-four double-hung wood sash in the main block and rear wing. The single-leaf wood door with a three-horizontal-panel base and three-horizontal-pane upper section provides egress to the addition corridor. Two brick steps rise to the entrance. At the base of the wall, five regularly spaced rectangular metal grates ventilate the crawl space. Above the carport, a nine-over-nine double-hung wood sash pierces the gable.

On the north elevation, two single and pair of six-over-six double-hung wood sash light the addition's interior. Plywood fills the high rectangular utility room window opening that contained a fixed six-pane wood sash. Two brick steps rise from the lawn to the central single-leaf wood kitchen door with a three-horizontal-panel base and three-horizontal-pane upper section. Two rectangular metal grates ventilate the crawl space.

The addition's east wall is blind. Nine-over-nine double-hung wood sash—two first story and one second story—light the main block. Four rectangular metal grates ventilate the crawl space. The air conditioning condenser unit is located on a concrete pad between the first-story windows. The electrical junction box

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is mounted on the wall south of the south window. The asphalt shingle roof was installed in 2020. White-finished aluminum gutters and downspouts are in poor condition.

## *Interior*

The floor plan was reconfigured in 1958 to maximize spatial utilization. Although the original floor plan is unknown, central corridors were typical in late-nineteenth-century houses of this form and size. If that was the case here, the first-floor corridor's west wall has been demolished, likely in 1958 when an arched opening was created between the living and dining rooms. A spacious living room and study fill the main block. The original shed wing, from west to east, contains the dining room, the kitchen's south half, and a bedroom. Dining room egress is possible from the living room and kitchen. The bedroom is accessed from the study. The 1970 addition encompasses the north half of the kitchen; the utility room, restroom, and corridor to the west; and an en suite bathroom and closet for the east bedroom. The second floor contains a corridor, two bedrooms, and a bathroom.

The stair rises on the living room's north wall in a straight run to the second-floor landing, mostly contained within a gypsum-board-sheathed enclosure. The lowest three steps that project beyond the enclosure's south wall have a wood railing comprised of a brown-painted square newel with a square cap, white-painted balusters, and a molded handrail that was once painted brown but now has an exposed-wood surface. A matching railing secures the second-floor landing. A wood handrail is mounted on the interior wall. Although the stair location is unusual, the comparable circa 1884 James J. Gregory House at 208 West Church Street features an enclosed stair on the rear parlor wall accessed from the rear of the center hall.<sup>2</sup>

Gypsum-board walls throughout the house and ceilings in the 1970 addition have a smooth painted surface. The Sawyer Brothers of Elizabeth City embellished ceilings elsewhere in 1970 with a decorative textured swirl pattern executed with drywall mud. Paint colors have remained the same since that time. The living and dining room walls are painted white; the kitchen, utility room, and service corridor bright blue-green; the west restroom pink; the study salmon; the first-floor bedroom blue; and the east bathroom white. The second-floor west bedroom is lime green, the east bedroom pink, and the corridor and restroom are white. Ceilings are painted white with the exception of the kitchen, utility room, service corridor, and west restroom, where ceilings are the same color as the walls. The 1970 ceiling-mounted living room light fixture has a brass base and frosted scalloped shade.

Flat wood baseboards and window and door surrounds with butt-jointed corners are typical. In the living room, baseboards are capped with molded trim and narrow 1970 door surrounds have mitered corners. Narrow-width oak floor boards, flat-panel hollow-core doors, and baseboard heaters were installed

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Butchko, "Gregory-Harrell House," 1988 notes in architectural survey file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office archive, Raleigh, N. C.



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throughout the house in 1958. The dark-green low-pile carpet in the living and dining rooms and on the stairs and the study's commercial-grade gray carpet were installed in the 1990s.

The decorative 1970 living room fireplace comprises a classically inspired mantel framing a red-brick firebox with gas logs on a red-painted concrete hearth scored to emulate square tiles.<sup>3</sup> Although the original fireplace location is unknown, comparable Edenton dwellings have central interior brick chimneys.

In the study, the full-height wood bookshelf north of the east window and the high shelf to the south were added in 1958. The high shelf and wood window valances in the study and adjacent bedroom have scalloped edges, as was common in the 1950s. The closet on the bedroom's north wall is part of the 1970 addition. The sliding flat-panel hollow-core closet doors have been removed. The 1958 half-bathroom in the first-floor bedroom's northwest corner was removed in conjunction with the 1970 addition's construction.

The 1970 bathroom has a white-porcelain tub, matching toilet, and frame vanity with a speckled-white laminate countertop and an aluminum-trimmed undermount white-porcelain sink. White-porcelain towel bars and soap, toothbrush, and toilet-paper holders are mounted on the square-white-glazed ceramic-tile wainscoting and shower surround. The metal sconces with six-sided opaque-white and starburst-patterned clear-glass globes above the vanity framed a no-longer-extant mirror. The bathroom's original white-glazed patterned ceramic-tile floor, covered with plywood subfloor during an uncompleted circa 2013 remodeling, is visible in the linen closet south of the tub. The vanity's south end was removed and the double-leaf door on the east side reduced in height when the floor was elevated.

The south half of the central kitchen, part of the original rear wing, served as an informal dining area upon completion of the 1970 addition. The south door on the west wall leads to the dining room. The high corner shelf with scalloped edges above the freezer at the room's south end was installed in 1958, as was the central ceiling-mounted bronze-finished light fixture with a scalloped metal shade suspended on a short chain.

The east-west ceiling beam spanning the kitchen's center carries the load of the opening created when the central portion of the original north wall was removed in 1970. In the addition, stained plywood cabinets with flat-panel doors and drawers and wrought-iron door handles, knobs, and H-hinges line the north wall east of the door and the east wall. The cabinets were relocated from 1958 kitchen. Speckled-cream laminate covers the countertop and the portion of the east wall between the base and upper cabinets. A stainless-steel four-burner cook-top and ventilation hood are at the east counter's south end. A wall oven

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<sup>3</sup> The concrete-block stovepipe chimney that had been erected on the west elevation by the early 1960s was removed in 1970.

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with a brown-enameled door is south of the cook-top. On the north wall, a 1958 stained plywood valance with a scalloped lower edge tops the window above the stainless-steel double sink. The exterior door is west of the sink cabinet. The north door on the west wall provides utility room and corridor egress. South of that entrance, a two-door cabinet is mounted on the wall above the wide double-door refrigerator.

In the utility room, the washing machine and dryer are on the north wall under a high window. The water heater is in the southeast corner. The recessed cabinet on the west wall houses a pull-down wood ironing board. The restroom contains a late-twentieth-century white-porcelain toilet and a wall-mounted sink with an oval basin and cross-handle polished-chrome-finish faucets reused from the 1958 half-bathroom removed in 1970 from the first-floor bedroom's northwest corner. A sconce with an opaque-white globe is mounted above the aluminum-trimmed mirrored medicine cabinet. The wall-mounted towel bar and hand towel and toilet paper holders have a polished-chrome-finish. Sheet vinyl has been removed from the kitchen, utility room, corridor, and restroom, exposing plywood subfloor. Remnants of sheet vinyl with a small white square and black diamond pattern remain beneath the dryer and at the restroom edges.

The second floor plan was reconfigured in 1958 to create a northwest corridor, two bedrooms with closets, a bathroom, and a hall closet that provides access to the unfinished attic. The slightly larger east bedroom was utilized by the Frinks daughter Goldie Ann, who selected the pink wall color. The oak floors are in good condition.<sup>4</sup> The ceiling-mounted corridor light fixture with an antiqued-brass base and a dimpled-clear-glass round globe was installed in 1958.

The bathroom has a white-porcelain tub, toilet, and a wall-mounted sink with a rectangular basin and central 1980s faucet. White-porcelain soap, toothbrush and toilet-paper holders, and towel bars are mounted on the square-white-glazed ceramic-tile wainscoting and tub surround. A sconce with an opaque-white globe is mounted above the aluminum-trimmed mirrored medicine cabinet. Square patterned-white vinyl tiles cover the floor. The toilet was manufactured on September 30, 1958, indicating that the remodeling was completed after that time.

## **Storage Building, early 1980s, noncontributing building**

The one-story, front-gable-roofed, white-painted concrete-block storage building north of the house has a single open room. Flat-board surrounds frame the single-leaf wood six-panel door and two window openings on the south elevation. The remaining walls are blind. White vinyl siding sheathes the gable ends. All wood trim including deep eaves with plywood soffits is painted white. The asphalt shingle roof is in poor condition. A portion of the roof's northwest section has collapsed, allowing water infiltration.

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<sup>4</sup> Carpeting installed in the bedrooms in the 1990s was removed in the early 2010s.

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The interior is characterized by a poured-concrete floor, unpainted concrete-block walls, and exposed wood roof framing and decking.

## Integrity Statement

The Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House possesses the seven qualities of historic integrity—location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship—required for National Register designation. The dwelling maintains integrity of location as it stands on its original site. The quarter-acre lot provides appropriate surroundings in keeping with the dwelling's size and character and the neighborhood retains its mid-twentieth-century character, thus allowing for integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

The dwelling also displays integrity of design, materials, and workmanship from the 1958-1973 period of significance, during which all substantial modifications were made for the Frinks. The nine-over-nine, six-over-six, and four-over-four double-hung wood sash are in good condition. The house retains the Colonial Revival-style appearance achieved in 1970, characterized by the brick veneer that unifies the original portion of the house and the addition, shed-roofed porch supported by fluted columns, classical primary entrance with a broken pediment and fluted pilaster surround, single-leaf wood front door with two panes above four panels, four-pane sidelights with paneled bases, and louvered wood shutters flanking the first-story façade windows. The wood porch roof balustrade removed in 2004 will be reconstructed when the house is restored in 2023.

The floor plan retains its 1958 configuration with the exception of alterations to the north wall made in conjunction with the 1970 addition. Finishes and built-in elements are also intact. Original features include wood baseboards, flat-board window and door surrounds with butt-jointed corners, and the stair with a brown-painted square newel with a square cap, white-painted balusters, and a molded handrail. Narrow-width oak floor boards, flat-panel hollow-core doors, the full-height wood bookshelf and high shelf flanking the east window in the study, and scalloped wood window valances in the study, adjacent bedroom, and kitchen were installed in 1958. The 1970 living room fireplace has a classically inspired mantel, red-brick firebox, and red-painted concrete hearth. The 1958 plywood kitchen cabinets relocated in 1970 have wrought-iron hardware and speckled-cream laminate.

Gypsum-board walls throughout the house and ceilings in the 1970 addition have a smooth painted surface, while ceilings elsewhere were embellished with a textured swirl pattern in 1970. Paint colors have remained the same since that time. The two ceiling-mounted light fixtures in the kitchen and second-floor corridor were installed in 1958, while the living room fixture was added in 1970. The first and second-floor bathrooms retain original elements including white-porcelain fixtures; square white-glazed ceramic-tile wainscoting and tub/shower surrounds; white-porcelain towel bars and soap, toothbrush, and toilet-paper holders; aluminum-framed mirrored medicine cabinets; and sconces.

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## Section 8. Statement of Significance

The locally significant Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House in Edenton, North Carolina, meets National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and B in the area of civil rights for its association with Black activist Golden Asro Frinks throughout his productive career. Frinks and other civil rights leaders traveled throughout the United States facilitating nonviolent direct action that led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act and hastened implementation of the legislation. As a young man, he demonstrated his propensity for leadership and engagement while coordinating African American community uplift initiatives in Edenton. After serving in the U. S. Army during World War II, Frinks was among the Black Chowan County veterans who organized American Legion Jernigan-Gramby Post No. 264 in January 1946. His 1948 move to Washington D. C. to attend the Capital School of Photography afforded him exposure to equal rights advocacy organizations including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and prominent civil rights leaders including Mary Church Terrell, Thurgood Marshall, Paul Robeson, and Martin Luther King Jr. Frinks witnessed the manner in which coordinated civil disobedience and legal action could affect social change and employed those tactics in myriad campaigns against racial, political, economic, and social injustice from the 1950s through the 1980s.

Based in Edenton after 1954, Frinks was secretary and youth council leader of the Chowan County Chapter of the NAACP during the late 1950s. He resigned on March 4, 1960, to lead eleven teenagers to picket Taylor Theater in protest of the discriminatory seating policy in which African American patrons were relegated to the balcony. The demonstration, among the earliest of its kind in northeastern North Carolina, launched a campaign for civil rights in Edenton that lasted until the mid-1960s. Frinks and Reverend Frederick H. LaGarde led the effort, known as the Edenton Movement, which brought national attention to the small town. During a December 1962 trip to northeastern North Carolina, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed five hundred people in the Edenton North Carolina National Guard Armory, rallying support for Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) initiatives to attain equal rights through peaceful demonstrations, voter registration, and legislative change. While in town, he toured historic sites and had a meal at Golden and Ruth Frinks' residence, called Freedom House due to its function as a meeting place, protest origination point, and lodging place for visiting equal rights advocates. When Dr. King returned to Edenton on May 8, 1966, he drew more than two thousand people to his speech at an armory rally and attended a dinner hosted by the Frinks. Notable guests of the Frinks on other occasions include prominent civil rights leaders William M. Kunstler, Diane J. Nash, James E. Orange, Wyatt Tee Walker, and Hosea L. Williams.

As a North Carolina field secretary for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from 1963 until the early 1980s, Frinks coordinated marches, rallies, voter registration drives throughout the southeastern United States during which he was arrested eighty-seven times. His charisma and showmanship inspired countless people into nonviolent direct action in myriad protest campaigns that often garnered positive

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results. The period of significance for the Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks begins with the couples' 1958 acquisition and renovation of the dwelling at 128 West Peterson Street and ends in 1973. The dwelling displays integrity of design, materials, and workmanship from this period, during which all substantial modifications were made for the Frinks. Although they remained in residence and continued to advocate for civil rights, the period after 1973 is not exceptionally significant. The Frinks House is a contributing building in the Edenton Historic District Boundary expansion, listed in the National Register in 2007.

## Criteria A and B Context and Historical Background

Golden Asro Frinks (1920-2004) was the tenth of eleven children born to Kizzie and Mark Frinks. The family moved from his birthplace, Wampee, South Carolina, to Tabor City, North Carolina, in 1929. Mark, a millwright, died the following year, leaving Kizzie, a housekeeper for the city's mayor J. L. Lewis and his wife Fannie, to raise their progeny. Golden frequently visited the Lewis home and attended church with the family as well as his own. After completing tenth grade, he departed Tabor City with the intention of finding work in Norfolk, Virginia. However, when he stopped in Edenton to visit J. L. and Fannie Lewis's daughter Harriet Lewis Sikes, she facilitated his employment as the caretaker for William D. and Mary Pruden's young disabled son George. Frinks aided and entertained George at the family's primary residence at 117 Blount Street in Edenton and their vacation home in Nags Head for approximately three years. During some of that time, he lived at 201 East Gale Street.<sup>5</sup>

While employed by the Prudens, Frinks became actively involved in African American community uplift initiatives, demonstrating his propensity for leadership and engagement. As president of the Youth Improvement Society, he planned and spoke at events such as a December 1940 party honoring Harry Felton, the first Black Edenton resident drafted for military service during World War II. The society dispersed donations to disadvantaged families at holidays. In April 1941, Frinks coordinated the group's construction of a playground for African American children at the corner of Freeman and Oakum streets. Frinks was also a member of the Junior Civic League, which promoted community improvement efforts including neighborhood beautification.<sup>6</sup>

His social network included Mildred Ruth Holley (1923-2009), known as Ruth, who was a secretary at Chowan Credit Union. Although she was initially reluctant to date him, their relationship gradually deepened and the couple married in Edenton on April 17, 1942. One week later, Golden, who had been drafted, enlisted in the U. S. Army at the rank of staff sergeant. After completing training at Fort Bragg in

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<sup>5</sup> Goldie Frinks Wells and Crystal Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks: Telling the Unsung Song* (Salt Lake City: Aardvark Global Publishing, 2009), 19-30.

<sup>6</sup> "Send Off Party," *Chowan Herald* (hereafter abbreviated *CH*), December 12, 1940, p. 5; "Yard Improvement Goal," *CH*, April 3, 1941, p. 8; "Colored Group Aids Twenty-three families," *CH*, January 2, 1921, p. 5; "Colored Group Adopts Recreational Project," *CH*, April 3, 1921, p. 5.

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Fayetteville, North Carolina, he was stationed for most of the war at Fort McClellan in Alabama. While there, he completed non-commissioned officers training and served as a reporter for *Peep-Sight*, a regimental newspaper. He was later posted overseas for seven months. By early 1944, he was in Iran, where he was president of the 482<sup>nd</sup> Post Battalion Third Club, which coordinated social events, and reported for *Tonnage Call*, the post paper. As a member of the transportation corps, he assisted with supply operations in Baghdad, Jerusalem, India, and Italy. Ruth remained in residence with her parents Andrew and Bernice Jernigan Holley at 128 West Peterson Street in Edenton. The Frinks' only child, Goldie Ann, was born there on November 8, 1942. Andrew was a fireman/machinist at Edenton Peanut Mill, while Bernice cleaned and cooked for William B. and Ida G. Jones. Mr. Jones was the president of Albemarle Motor Company, a Ford dealership.<sup>7</sup>

Golden Frinks returned to Edenton after his September 22, 1945, discharge. Despite constantly experiencing discrimination during military service, the experience imbued him with self-confidence and the desire to maintain interaction with fellow servicemen. The American Legion, a patriotic organization chartered by Congress in 1919, was the primary national veterans' support network at that time. As membership interest increased after World War II, African American servicemen and women established numerous posts throughout the nation. In January 1946, Frinks was among sixty-one Black World War I and II Chowan County veterans who organized Jernigan-Gramby Post No. 264, named for Charles Jernigan and Haywood Gramby, the first two Black soldiers from Chowan County to die during World War II. Frinks was elected post commander and in September 1946 was appointed first district leader of the American Legion Department of North Carolina's Black division, joining four other district commanders and eleven members on the division's executive committee. The following year, he was among the post's delegates to the American Legion's national convention in New York. Meetings and events of Jernigan-Gramby Post No. 264 and Edward G. Bond Post 40, founded by white veterans in November 1919, were segregated. The groups gathered at venues including Edenton Naval Station, the National Guard Armory, and schools. Frinks announced Jernigan-Gramby Post No. 264's opening of a United Service Organization (social club for servicemen, veterans, and their families) on Oakum Street in February 1946. He also partnered with Willie Goodwin Jr. in fall 1946 to operate the Mexicana, an integrated supper club at 608 North Granville Street that provided a rare venue for multiracial gathering in Edenton.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The Holley family resided at 228 Greenhall Road in 1930 and 113 West Freemason Street in 1940. U. S. Census, population schedules, 1940, 1950; Golden Asro Frinks, WWII Draft Registration Card, July 1, 1941; "Group of Twenty-Seven Young Men," *CH*, April 16, 1942, p. 1; "Chowan Colored Boys Making Good Soldiers," *CH*, May 14, 1942, p. 7; "Edenton Negroes Out In Front in Camp," *CH*, June 25, 1942, p. 6; "Two Edenton Negroes Promoted," *CH*, July 9, 1942, p. 2; "Edenton Colored Boy Honored," *CH*, February 17, 1944, p. 3; "S/Sgt. Golden Frinks is Discharged from Army," *CH*, October 11, 1945, p. 1; Goldie Frinks Wells, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, January 9, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Jernigan-Gramby Post No. 264 was officially disbanded on May 3, 1951. *Ibid.*, 33-36; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) Death File, Washington, D.C.; "Negro War Veterans," *CH*, January 31, 1946, p.1; "Colored Legionnaires Meet," *CH*, February 7, 1946, p. 2; "Negro USO Opened," *CH*, February 7, 1946, p. 5; "Plans Approved by Negro Legion," *News and Observer* (hereafter abbreviated *NO*), September 23, 1946, p. 12;

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Frinks attended evening classes subsidized by the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. He seized the opportunity to further his education by moving to Washington D. C. in 1948 to attend the Capital School of Photography, opened that year by African American photographers Robert and George Scurlock. The brothers and their father, Fayetteville, North Carolina, native Addison Scurlock, operated Scurlock Studio, which had documented the lives of Black Washingtonians through portraiture since 1904. After graduating from Howard University, Robert and George expanded the business in the 1940s to include current events photography for newspapers and periodicals such as *Ebony*, *Fortune*, *Life*, and *Look* magazines.<sup>9</sup>

Upon completing the Scurlock program, Frinks established a photograph processing business for clients including Waylie's Drug Store. After making a delivery one day, he joined a sit-in protesting lunch counter segregation organized by the Coordinating Committee for the Enforcement of the D.C. Anti-Discrimination Laws. The group led by National Association of Colored Women founder Mary Church Terrell coordinated pickets, sit-ins, and boycotts of drug and department stores with lunch counters throughout Washington D. C. beginning in 1950. Frinks continued to participate in demonstrations, regularly picketing segregated venues. He attended Black Democratic Club meetings and heard speakers from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Frinks' encounters with prominent civil rights leaders included meeting Martin Luther King Jr. at a rally and attending lectures by Paul Robeson and Thurgood Marshall. Inspired by their mission to eradicate racial discrimination, he built relationships that informed his lifelong participation in civil rights activism. The U. S. Supreme Court's June 8, 1953, ruling in *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Co., Inc.* that race-based exclusion in public accommodations in Washington, D.C. was unconstitutional demonstrated the manner in which coordinated nonviolent civil disobedience and legal action could affect social change.<sup>10</sup>

Golden Frinks put these tactics into practice after returning in 1954 to Edenton, where Ruth and Goldie had remained in residence with Ruth's parents at 128 West Peterson Street. Golden was a truck driver for Edenton Construction Company. Ruth, who had earned a B. S. in Education at Elizabeth City State Teachers College in June 1948, was a respected teacher, church elder, and community leader. On July 14, 1958, she purchased the dilapidated house at 122 West Peterson Street from Flossie and Mark Modlin. The dwelling had been vacant for several years after being rented by Flossie's parents Julia and Dr.

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"Tan Silverlaires at Mexicana," *CH*, October 24, 1946, p.7; "Golden Frinks New Division Commander," *CH*, June 26, 1947, p.1; "Negro Legion Heads Plan Meeting Here," *Durham Sun*, January 8, 1949, p. 3; Linna R. Agne, Collection Services Librarian, American Legion, Indianapolis, Indiana, email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, January 20, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Wells and Crystal Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 37; David Zax, "The Scurlock Studio: Picture of Prosperity" *Smithsonian*, February 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 38-39; Jacqueline Mansky, "How One Woman Helped End Lunch Counter Segregation in the Nation's Capital," *Smithsonian*, June 8, 2016.

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Charles Hines to myriad tenants beginning in 1904. Flossie and Ruth were colleagues who taught at the same schools. The Frinks occupied the house following a renovation completed in late 1958.<sup>11</sup>

Golden and Ruth Frinks were staunch supporters of the Chowan County branch of the NAACP, founded by 1946. Golden served as the branch's secretary and youth council leader until resigning on March 4, 1960, in frustration over the group's reticence to rally. That day, he led eleven teenagers to picket Taylor Theater in protest of the discriminatory seating policy in which African American patrons were relegated to the balcony. The demonstration, among the earliest of its kind in northeastern North Carolina, launched a campaign for civil rights in Edenton that lasted until the mid-1960s. Many Black adults initially refrained from overt participation due to fear of job loss and other retribution, but supported the effort in myriad ways. Protests at establishments including town mayor John A. Mitchener's namesake drug store drew crowds of several hundred supporters, some of whom were charged with trespassing. As unrest continued, the town council adopted an ordinance to discourage picketing in April 1961. Mitchener attempted to ease racial tension by appointing a ten-member Good Neighbor Committee equally comprised of Black and white citizens in October 1962. The town council also strengthened the anti-picketing ordinance that month. On November 27, North Carolina Superior Court Judge William J. Bundy found that the section of the amended ordinance requiring payment of a ten-dollar daily fee for picketing was unconstitutional, but left provisions regarding twenty-four hour advance notice, picketing location, two-foot-square maximum sign size, and number of protestors in effect. The ordinances and forty arrests that occurred during sit-ins, picketing, and store boycotts between March 4, 1960, and January 20, 1963, did not dissuade the Edenton Movement. Frinks was frequently jailed for illegal picketing, assault, resisting arrest, and contempt of court. Prominent African American Durham attorney and Congress of Racial Equality field secretary Floyd B. McKissick represented many demonstrators in legal challenges.<sup>12</sup>

The Edenton Movement served a model for civil rights activism in the region. Englewood, New Jersey, native Frederick H. LaGarde, the movement's co-leader, worked with Frinks to develop nonviolent resistance strategy. Reverend LaGarde was the pastor of Providence Baptist Church, the largest African American congregation in Chowan County. A graduate of Virginia Union University, a private historically black Baptist institution in Richmond, Virginia, he had strong relationships with community

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<sup>11</sup> Ruth purchased the adjacent house at 126 West Peterson Street from the Modlins in March 1965. Chowan County Deed Book 14, p. 205; Deed Book 20, p. 323; Hill Directory Company, *Hill's Edenton City Directories* (Richmond, VA: 1959, 1962); Goldie Frinks Wells, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, January 9, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> "Town Council Proceedings," *CH*, April 27, 1961, Section 2, pp. 3 and 5; "Officers Watching Edenton Pickets," *Durham Morning Herald*, February 7, 1962, p. 2; "300 Demonstrate at Edenton Store," *Durham Morning Herald*, February 12, 1962, p. B8; "Various Matters Face Council at October Meeting," *CH*, October 18, 1962, pp. 1 and 2; "Edenton \$10 Fee Per Day," *CH*, November 29, 1962, pp 1 and 4; "Judge Rules on Edenton Picket Law," *Charlotte Observer*, November 28, 1962, p. 15; "Negro Says Picketing to Continue," *Durham Sun*, November 30, 1962, p. 2; Vince Hovanec, "Tradition and Protest Clash in Old Edenton," *NO*, January 20, 1963, Section 3, p. 1; Bill Goodwin, "Edenton Moves Quietly Down Integration Road," *NO*, February 21, 1965; Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 40-45.



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members as well as national activists that enabled him to successfully promote civil disobedience. As a Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) representative in northeastern North Carolina, LaGarde was instrumental in arranging visits to the region by civil rights leaders. At one such event on the evening of December 20, 1962, SCLC president Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed an audience of approximately five hundred people in the North Carolina National Guard Armory at 702 North Broad Street, rallying support for initiatives to attain equal rights through peaceful demonstrations, voter registration, and legislative change. While in town, he toured historic sites and had a meal at the Frinks residence, known as "Freedom House" due to its function as a meeting place, protest march origination point, and accommodation for activists supporting the movement. Golden Frinks' notoriety triggered harassment including threatening phone calls, a cross burning on the lawn, and a dead rabbit left on the porch.<sup>13</sup>

Although civil rights activists made significant gains in the battle against racial discrimination in Chowan County by 1963, progress was incremental. The town of Edenton hired its first African American policeman, W. A. Satterfield; local businesses enacted non-discriminatory hiring policies; and hundreds of Black citizens registered to vote. The Chowan County courthouse, Shephard-Pruden Memorial Library, and places of public accommodations including stores, hotels, restaurants, and the Taylor Theater were ostensibly integrated, but racial inequity persisted, fueling ongoing demonstrations. After North Carolina Superior Court Judge Elbert S. Peele ruled in that Edenton's anti-picketing ordinance was unconstitutional, the town council rescinded the provision requiring twenty-four hour advance notice for demonstrations in May 1963. The historically white John A. Holmes High and Edenton Elementary schools enrolled a token number of African American students: ten in fall 1963 and twenty-four in fall 1964.<sup>14</sup>

As his reputation as an effective agitator grew, Frinks assisted Black communities throughout the southeastern United States with civil rights campaign planning and orchestration, often garnering positive results. In recognition of his success, SCLC hired Frinks to serve as a field secretary in early 1963. At a SCLC fund-raising event in New York City that spring, Dr. King asked him to respond to a request from Black residents of the eastern North Carolina town of Williamston for assistance in their battle against racial discrimination. Frinks and Williamston community leaders including SCLC chapter president Sarah Everett Small and Bible Way Church pastor David A. Carter developed a civil disobedience

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<sup>13</sup> "Integration Group at Edenton," *Durham Morning Herald*, November 17, 1962, p. 8; "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Will Address Huge Freedom Rally," *CH*, December 20, 1962, pp. 1 and 5; "Approximately 500 Hear Martin Luther King Speak Here," *CH*, December 27, 1962, p. 1; "King Speaks," *Durham Morning Herald*, December 22, 1962, p. 8; Vince Hovanec, "Tradition and Protest Clash in Old Edenton," *NO*, January 20, 1963, Section 3, p. 1; Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 50.

<sup>14</sup> *Carolina Times*, March 3, September 22, November 17, 1962; January 19, March 23, 1963; "Town Officials Take Oath of Office," *CH*, May 23, 1963, pp. 1 and 5; Bill Goodwin, "Edenton Moves Quietly Down Integration Road," *NO*, February 21, 1965.

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strategy. On June 30, 1963, Frinks and Carter led seventy-five local activists, many of whom were teenagers, on a “prayer pilgrimage” through Williamston that ended at City Hall. During the following week, a steadily growing group of demonstrators marched daily, protested outside Watts Theater, conducted restaurant sit-ins, and gathered at venues including Green Memorial Church of Christ for rallies and planning meetings. Almost four hundred Black protestors participated by the end of the week, drawing national attention to the town of seven thousand people. Williamston mayor N. C. Green responded by establishing a ten-member biracial Community Relations Committee in late July. Daily demonstrations continued until July 31<sup>st</sup>, followed by months of marches, rallies, and legal challenges. The town board adopted an anti-parade ordinance in early August that prohibited gatherings of six or more people without a permit. Arrests failed to discourage protestors who demanded desegregation of the city’s departments, programs, and venues including hospitals, schools, libraries, recreational facilities, and privately-owned concerns such as stores, restaurants, and hotels/motels. Local government agencies, business owners, and service providers were pressed to integrate facilities and hire African American workers.<sup>15</sup>

Tension escalated at demonstrations on the evening of August 29, 1963, and the following day, when around one hundred Black youth marched from E. J. Hayes School to downtown. Accounts of the ensuing events vary. Students threw soda bottles and rocks and broke windows after police attempted to stop the protest. Martin County Sheriff W. R. Rawls requested reinforcement from the State Highway patrol and Rocky Mount, Raleigh, and Goldsboro police departments and deputized twenty-five white citizens to control the crowd. Officers were accused of threatening activists with night sticks, guns, fire hoses, and electric cattle prods, triggering widespread outrage. Frinks and other SCLC leaders decried the violence and pledged to provide passive resistance training for activists. The Black community responded with boycotts of Hayes School and segregated businesses. Demonstrations continued, joined in mid-November by fifteen white northern clergymen invited to Williamston by Frinks and Small. The clergy and thirty-four Black protestors were arrested during a November 14<sup>th</sup> march, followed by Frinks and twenty-one Black activists after a march the next day. Frinks and other leaders were well aware that interracial demonstrations would have consequences. As the cause continued to attract white clergy, their families, and other civil rights supporters, threats and harassment by white authorities and the resurgent Williamston Ku Klux Klan Klavern escalated. Although Frinks was imprisoned in the Gates County jail for eighty-one days beginning in late November, he returned to assist the effort after his release on February 9, 1964.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> David C. Carter, “The Williamston Freedom Movement: Civil Rights at the Grass Roots in Eastern North Carolina, 1957-1964,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 76 (January 1999), 10, 12-13, 17, 19-20, 23-24, Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 65-66, 71-72, 78, 80; “Negroes Say Prayer on City Hall Steps,” *Charlotte News*, July 1, 1963, p. 13; “Williamston Talks Planned by Waynick,” *Durham Morning Herald*, August 2, 1963, p. 9; W. H. Scarborough, “Golden Frinks,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, August 2, 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> David C. Carter, “The Williamston Freedom Movement: Civil Rights at the Grass Roots in Eastern North Carolina, 1957-1964,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 76 (January 1999), 25-30, 36; Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 83-92;

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The Williamston protests lasted until the July 1964 passage of the Civil Rights Act. Although the legislation codified desegregation mandates at the federal level, implementation was slow. Black citizens still battled systemic discrimination at places of public accommodations, public and private institutions, schools, and workplaces. Frinks led demonstrations in the small northeastern North Carolina towns of Plymouth in summer 1965 and Hertford and Windsor in spring 1966 demanding economic and social justice for African American residents. In conjunction with a month-long boycott of Hertford businesses, just over one hundred protestors, most of whom were students, marched on U. S. Highway 17 from Hertford to Edenton on March 18, 1966. The boycott ended on April 8<sup>th</sup> when mayor V. N. Darden announced that lumber company employee Robert L. Harvey would become the town's first Black policeman.<sup>17</sup>

Ruth Frinks supported her husband's work despite his frequent and often lengthy absences from home. When he was in Edenton, the couple hosted myriad national civil rights leaders. Notable guests included William M. Kunstler, Diane J. Nash, James E. Orange, Wyatt Tee Walker, Hosea L. Williams, and Floyd B. McKissick. Lawyer William Moses Kunstler defended local activists arrested during demonstrations in the 1960s at the behest of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) as well as high-profile individuals such as Dr. King, U. S. Representative Adam Clayton Powell Jr. of New York, Black Panthers Stokely Carmichael and Bobby Seale, and the Chicago Seven. Diane Judith Nash was a co-founder in April 1960 of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), leader of the Congress of Racial Equality's (CORE) 1961 Freedom Rides, and a full-time organizer of SNCC and SCLC campaigns from 1961 until 1965. Reverend James E. Orange, an Alabama activist and aide to Dr. King, worked with SCLC from 1963 until 1977. As Dr. King's chief of staff and SCLC's executive director from 1960 until 1964, Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker was a key fundraising and protest planning strategist. He continued to campaign for civil rights while pastoring Canaan Baptist Church of Christ in Harlem for thirty-seven years. Georgia activist Hosea L. Williams joined SCLC in 1963 as a special projects director. He coordinated demonstrations and worked with SCLC in other leadership capacities through the 1970s. Durham attorney Floyd B. McKissick became CORE's national director on January 3, 1966. In addition to defending activists in court, McKissick was often a speaker at the SCLC voter registration training programs and drives led by Frinks in North Carolina during the mid-1960s.<sup>18</sup>

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Allen Paul, "We've Had It," *Charlotte Observer*, August 31, 1963, p. 2; "Leaders Call off Further Protests at Williamston," *Durham Morning Herald*, September 1, 1963, p. 11A; Allen Paul, "Hunger Strike Ended," *Charlotte Observer*, November 16, 1963, p. B1; "Frinks Freed on Bond," *NO*, February 10, 1964, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Harvey retired from the Hertford Police Department after a twenty-six-year career. Carter, "The Williamston Freedom Movement, 37; "Plymouth Peace Said Temporary," *NO*, September 5, 1965, p. 16; "Police Quell Hertford Outburst," *Daily Times-News* (Burlington, N. C.; hereafter abbreviated *DTN*), March 10, 1966, p. D8; Baldwin Renner, "100 Negroes Walk, Talk to Edenton," *NO*, March 19, 1966, p. 1; Baldwin Renner, "Hertford's Long Boycott Halted," *NO*, April 10, 1966, Section 2, p. 8; "Robert L. Harvey," *Loveland Reporter-Herald*, December 14, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 61; David Stout, "William Kunstler, 76, Dies," *New York Times*, September 5, 1995, Section B, p. 6; Lucia Cheng, "Meet Diane Nash," *Smithsonian*, July 7, 2022; Dennis Hevesi, "Rev. James

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Golden Frinks and the aforementioned individuals traveled throughout the United States facilitating nonviolent direct action that led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act. Pivotal events included the August 28, 1963, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, during which Dr. King, SNCC chairman John Lewis, and others addressed approximately two-hundred-fifty-thousand supporters from the Lincoln Memorial in the nation's capital. Frinks, one of the SCLC organizers in attendance, was deeply moved by Dr. King's inspirational "I Have a Dream" speech. The March 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery March for Voting Rights was also seminal. The three-week campaign included "Bloody Sunday," so named due to the violence that ensued when law enforcement brutally attacked about six hundred marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965.<sup>19</sup> Activism after the legislation was enacted focused on expediting implementation, empowering Black citizens, and electing representatives to local, state, and national offices who would advocate for civil rights.

Frinks continued to strategize with national leaders as he planned events. He facilitated Dr. King's return to Edenton on May 8, 1966, for a rally that drew more than two thousand Black and white spectators to the North Carolina National Guard Armory. Dr. King praised the efforts of SCLC leaders in North Carolina and promoted the organization's initiatives including voter registration drives. Frinks also addressed the crowd, stating that SCLC's civil rights advocacy would soon intensify in Greenville and other Pitt County communities. Dr. King attended a dinner at the Frinks' house before returning to Atlanta that night. In early June, Frinks attended a White House-sponsored civil rights conference in Washington D. C. at the invitation of President Lyndon B. Johnson.<sup>20</sup>

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandated school desegregation as a prerequisite for federal funding eligibility, it was not until the late 1960s that most North Carolina school systems completely integrated school districts. Golden Frinks played a significant role in the Hyde County African American community's 1968-1969 public school boycott in response to the Board of Education's May 1968 plan to close Davis and O. A. Peay schools, which served Black children; consolidate all mainland Hyde County students at Mattamuskeet School; and terminate many African American faculty and staff. The plan, developed without consulting Black citizens, garnered immediate resistance. African American residents

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E. Orange, 65, Aide to Dr. King, Dies," *New York Times*, February 22, 2008; Fernando Santos, "Wyatt Tee Walker, Dr. King's Strategist and a Harlem Leader, Dies at 88," *New York Times*, January 23, 2018; Daniel Lewis, "Hosea Williams, 74, Rights Crusader, Dies," *New York Times*, November 17, 2000, Section B, p. 10: "Vote Signup Training Session is Conducted," *Durham Morning Herald*, July 18, 1965, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> National Park Service, "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," <https://www.nps.gov/articles/march-on-washington.htm> (accessed in December 2022); Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 63-64; National Park Service, "Alabama: The Edmund Pettus Bridge," <https://www.nps.gov/places/alabama-the-edmund-pettus-bridge.htm> (accessed in December 2022).

<sup>20</sup> "Heard and Seen," *CH*, May 12, 1966, p. 4; Baldwin Brenner, "N. C. Rights Work Praised By King," *NO*, May 9, 1966, pp. 1-2; "Frinks Invited to Conference," *CH*, June 2, 1966, p. 5.

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supported integration but decried the HCBE's discriminatory plan that decimated important social and cultural institutions.<sup>21</sup>

In late August 1968, the "Committee of 14," a coalition of Black community leaders, enlisted the assistance of civil rights activists including Frinks to coordinate acts of civil disobedience including demonstrations, marches, and sit-ins. The effort, dubbed the "Movement," garnered national attention as protestors, most of whom were children, were arrested and jailed from fall 1968 through summer 1969 for actions including playing basketball and releasing chickens in the streets of Swan Quarter. Although all Hyde County schools remained open during the 1968-1969 term, most African American youth studied at home or "Movement schools" in seven churches. Black activism was met with fierce opposition, as white creditors, employers, and landlords threatened economic and social retaliation and the Hyde County Ku Klux Klan Klavern rallied. As demonstrations continued, youth refused to return to public schools, and racial tension escalated, Hyde County sheriff Charles Cahoon requested support from the state highway patrol. By November 22, 1968, approximately 125 demonstrators had been arrested, typically for blocking traffic, and jailed in Hyde and neighboring counties. State and Federal Bureau of Investigation agents were dispatched to Hyde County to prevent violence. The protest moved west on February 9, 1969, when approximately 125 activists began a 184-mile march from Job's Chapel in Swan Quarter to Raleigh. The group rode buses between the municipalities in which they demonstrated. Supporters joined the group during the six-day trip, resulting in an almost six-hundred-person contingent by the time activists arrived in Raleigh.<sup>22</sup>

Frinks employed similar strategy a few months later in the two-week, 250-mile trek he led from the Governor's western residence in Asheville to Raleigh. The demonstration, which he alternately called the "poor people's march" and the "mountaintop to the valley march," began on April 4, 1969, the one-year anniversary of Dr. King's assassination. The protest was intended to memorialize Dr. King, underscore economic disparities, and promote voter rights, equitable hiring practices, school desegregation, and death penalty abolition. Approximately one hundred participants traveled by car or bus, with stops for marches and rallies joined by local residents. Once in Raleigh, activists engaged in marches and sit-ins until May 15<sup>th</sup> that included blocking the entrance to the State Legislative Building. As usual, many of the

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<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992), 171-173; David Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina, and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 33-37, 41, 50-51, 57, 59, 74-76; Richard B. Lupton, *Olde Wickham, Little Kingdom by the Sea* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers Malloy, Inc., 2017), 167-168.

<sup>22</sup> Roy Hardee, "Youths Arrested in Swan Quarter," *NO*, November 13, 1968, pp. 1-2; Roy Hardee, "238 March to Hyde Co. Courthouse," *NO*, December 1, 1968; "March on Raleigh to Begin Today," February 7, 1969; Roy Hardee, "18 Negroes Apologize; Get Release," *NO*, January 12, 1969; Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road*, 78-82, 86-93, 100-101; Azalea Mackey, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, May 13, 2022; "How One Rural North Carolina County Made Civil Rights History," WUNC interview with David Cecelski, Alice Spencer Mackey, and Azalea Mackey, May 28, 2019; Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 112-119.

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protestors were teenagers, some of whom were arrested for trespassing and obstructing traffic while playing basketball and jumping rope in the streets. Most received suspended sentences. Frinks was convicted of contributing to the delinquency of minors.<sup>23</sup>

The Raleigh protest drew national attention to civil rights issues, but had little direct impact. However, the Hyde County school boycott, deemed one of the most sustained and successful civil rights protests in America by historian David S. Cecelski, achieved its goals. After a year of debate and dissension, the Hyde County Board of Education (HCBE), Black community leaders, and U. S. Office of Health, Education, and Welfare concurred that return to a freedom-of-choice integration approach would suffice for the 1969-1970 term while negotiations regarding an equitable plan continued. Due to the highly charged political environment and the necessity of taxpayer support for the May 1968 proposal, the HCBE deferred integration plan selection until after the November 1969 election. When Hyde County voters rejected the \$500,000 bond referendum to fund Mattamuskeet School's enlargement by a four-to-one margin, the HCBE agreed to utilize all three schools and retain Black faculty and staff. Beginning in fall 1970, all seventh- through twelfth-grade youth were assigned to Mattamuskeet School and Davis and O. A. Peay schools served first- through sixth-grade children. The effort inspired Hyde County's African American residents to advocate for social and economic parity in arenas such as voter rights, compensation, business and public facility access, local government representation, and employment opportunity.<sup>24</sup>

The tone of civil disobedience changed after Dr. King's death as those frustrated by lack of progress embraced more aggressive tactics endorsed by the Black Power movement. However, activists like Frinks continued to employ nonviolent protest as a means of achieving social justice. He promoted racial pride and self-determination while championing causes ranging from environmental justice to affordable housing, prison reform, and Indian Rights during the 1970s. His charisma and showmanship attracted large crowds and media attention to marches and rallies. Although most of his advocacy was in eastern and central North Carolina, he agitated for SCLC throughout the southeast. At the July 1972 Democratic National Convention in Miami, Frinks was deemed mayor of Resurrection City II, organized by SCLC and other activist groups. The encampment of thousands in Flamingo Park was named after its predecessor on the National Mall in Washington, D. C., a tent city erected in May 1968 in conjunction with the Poor People's Campaign. At both protests, designed to illuminate the plight of the nation's impoverished citizens, interracial multiethnic contingents of demonstrators camped for weeks. In Miami, rally speakers included prominent civil rights leaders SCLC president Reverend Ralph Abernathy;

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<sup>23</sup> "9 Young Negroes Arrested," Durham Morning Herald, April 27, 1969, p. 4; Richard Daw, "New Glimmer of Hope," Charlotte News, April 19, 1969, p. B1; "March Set to Begin in Asheville," DTN, April 4, 1969, p. B9; "Marchers Travel to Greensboro," DTN, April 14, 1969, p. 1; Charles Craven and Bob Lynch, "Frinks Sentenced to Year in Jail," NO, May 8, 1969, p. 1; Bob Lynch, "Frinks Says Group is Ready to Leave," NO, May 15, 1969, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup> Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road*, 98-99, 101, 152-153, 159-162, 168; "How One Rural North Carolina County Made Civil Rights History," WUNC interview; Roy Hardee, "HEW Oks Hyde School Plan," NO, July 23, 1969, p. 3.

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Andrew Young, a former SCLC executive director elected in 1972 to the U. S. House of Representatives by Georgia residents; and author, educator, and Black Panther Party member Angela Davis, recently released from jail. Frinks led protests at venues including U. S. Senator George McGovern of South Dakota's headquarters at the Doral Hotel and Alabama Governor George Wallace's lodgings at the Sheraton Four Ambassadors Hotel demanding that seven-hundred-and-fifty floor seats in the convention hall be allocated to activists. The request was not granted, but SCLC effectively publicized its "poor people's platform," which included guaranteed annual income of \$6,500 for disadvantaged four-person households.<sup>25</sup>

In March 1973, Robeson County residents of Tuscarora heritage led by Howard Brooks requested Frinks' assistance as they lobbied for relief from racial discrimination, equal representation in local government, and to attain tribal recognition and the associated state and federal benefits. Demonstrations throughout the month culminated in a four-day march from Pembroke to Raleigh, where approximately eighty Tuscarora Indians and several hundred supporters including students from historically Black Shaw University gathered on Capital Square on April 8<sup>th</sup>. As the rallies continued in subsequent days, students from North Carolina State University and historically Black St. Augustine's College joined the protest. The visiting activists were initially based at Shaw University. After Frinks and Brooks' requests to meet with the North Carolina Indian Affairs Commission, chaired by Haliwa chief W. R. Richardson, and Governor James Holshouser were repeatedly denied, a contingent of about thirty-five protestors camped for four days on the porch and lawn of the former residence that housed the commission's office. Twenty activists were arrested on April 19<sup>th</sup> for refusal to vacate state property. The following day, at the order of Wake County Superior Court Judge James Pou Bailey, Brooks, his wife, and Frinks were released to attend a meeting organized by the Indian Affairs Commission to be held in conjunction with previously scheduled tribal celebration in the Halifax County town of Hollister. The meeting did not take place due to disagreements about the venue and terms. The demonstrators were acquitted by a Wake County Superior Court on October 24, 1973.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 136, "Civil rights," *Miami News*, January 8, 1972, p. 3; "Protestors March at Miami Beach," *Durham Morning Herald*, July 12, 1972, p. 4B; "Wallace Leaves Questions Hanging," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 12, 1972, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Beginning in the 1970s, Robeson County Tuscarora Indians sought tribal recognition independently of Lumbee Indians, who attained tribal recognition from the State of North Carolina in 1885 and U. S. Congress in 1956. However, Congress specified that Lumbees were ineligible for federal benefits received by other Indians. Lumbees are still seeking full Federal recognition, while Tuscaroras have not attained state or federal recognition. "Tuscarora Band Gains Support," *Charlotte News*, April 9, 1973, p. B1; Robert B. Cullen, "Golden Frinks," *Durham Morning Herald*, April 15, 1973, p. 15A; Robert B. Cullen, "Indians Will Protest," *DTN*, April 10, 1973, p. 1; "Indians Continue Raleigh Camp-In," *Charlotte Observer*, April 16, 1973, p. C1; "Indians Set Up Camp," *DTN*, April 20, 1973, p. 13; "Indian Suit Citing Governor Dropped," *Charlotte Observer*, April 20, 1973, p. 14; Melvin Lang, "Frink Barred from Indian Meet," *DTN*, April 20, 1973, p. 1; "Golden Frinks is Acquitted," *Charlotte Observer*, October 25, 1973, p. 8; Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 137-144.

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The following month, Frinks, SCLC leaders including Reverend Ralph Abernathy, and the Edenton-Chowan County branch of the NAACP coordinated protests in Edenton following the termination of John A. Holmes High School band director Richard Satterfield. The Black educator was fired due to purported incompetence, insubordination, and inability to discipline students. Many African American citizens boycotted school, work, and businesses, and participated in marches and sit-ins at the school and Chowan County Office building that resulted in around 111 arrests between May 14 and 17, 1973. Unrest continued throughout the summer. Satterfield sued the Edenton-Chowan County Board of Education for racial discrimination in November, but was not reinstated. Ruth Frinks was among the teachers who testified in his defense during the July 1974 trial.<sup>27</sup>

The SCLC, despite being hampered by inconsistent messaging, factionalism, and financial shortfalls, had almost five thousand North Carolina members in 1975, a significant rise from around two hundred in 1965. Although Frinks remained a SCLC field secretary, organizing voter registration drives and demonstrations, his influence in the organization waned. His advocacy work in the mid-1970s included promoting the cause of Joan Little, an African American woman who, while incarcerated in Beaufort County for breaking and entering, stabbed to death Clarence Alligood, a white jailer she accused of sexually assaulting her on August 27, 1974. She escaped from jail, but surrendered after engaging Frinks' white Durham attorney Jerry Paul, who often represented Black clients in civil rights cases. The nationally publicized trial drew attention to issues of women's and prisoner's rights. The Southern Poverty Law Center, Women's Legal Defense Fund, National Organization of Women, National Black Feminist Organization, Feminist Alliance Against Rape, and Rape Crisis Center solicited funds for Little's defense and paid her \$100,000 bond. Frinks held rallies in her support, but after his acrimonious split with Paul and Little in March, Black Panther Party leader Larry Little of Winston-Salem served as the state coordinator of her defense. Joan Little was acquitted on August 14, 1975.<sup>28</sup>

Frinks supported myriad disparate efforts to advance civil rights during the late 1970s and 1980s. He was the eastern North Carolina campaign coordinator for African American New Bern attorney Reginald L. Frazier's unsuccessful 1976 bid for North Carolina governor. He challenged policies that negatively impacted minorities such as inequitable funding for North Carolina's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In a pioneering environmental justice case, Frinks joined Warren County citizens battling the burial of soil contaminated with PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) in their predominantly poor and Black community. The toxic soil collected from fourteen counties was the result of illegal dumping by

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<sup>27</sup> "Edenton Has March," *Durham Sun*, May 15, 1973, p. B10; "Screaming Protestors Arrested," *Charlotte Observer*, May 18, 1973, p. B1; "50 Arrested in Protest in Edenton," *DTN*, May 17, 1973, p. 7; "Text of Mayor Bynum's Statement," *CH*, October 11, 1973, p. 6; "Satterfield Denies Charges," *CH*, July 18, 1974, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Cynthia Jo Rich, "Rights Group in North Carolina Solvent," *Charlotte Observer*, November 18, 1975, p. 9B; Jerry Allgood, "Frinks, Attorney Split Over Joan Little Case," *NO*, March 17, 1975, pp. 19-20; "Joan Little Attends Rally," *NO*, April 4, 1975, p. 27; James Reston Jr., "The Joan Little Case," *New York Times*, April 6, 1975; "Rights Activist of '60s," *Durham Morning Herald*, May 22, 1978, p. 14B; Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 147-152.



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Raleigh-based Ward Transformer Company in summer 1978. After legal challenges and public hearings failed, residents organized a demonstration that commenced with a march of 130 multiracial activists from Coley Springs Baptist Church to the landfill on September 15, 1982. Frinks was among fifty-five participants arrested that day. Marches continued for six weeks, during which 523 protestors were arrested and 7,223 truckloads of waste were deposited in the twenty-acre landfill. Although activists were unable to stop the hazardous waste disposal, the state pledged not to place additional toxic materials at the site and enacted a two-year state-wide moratorium on permitting for such deposits. The effort strengthened relationships among Black and white Warren County residents and resulted in election of more African American representatives to local and state government. The demonstrations also served to bring environmental justice to the forefront of civil rights advocacy.<sup>29</sup> These successes epitomize the goals of direct nonviolent action espoused by activists such as Frinks who perpetuated Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's legacy.

Golden Frinks remained an outspoken champion for civil rights during the late twentieth century even as his leadership role gradually diminished. A self-proclaimed agitator, his engaging personality, political acumen, and organizational skill made him an effective coordinator of civil disobedience campaigns and legal action that spanned decades and societal shifts.<sup>30</sup> Myriad entities recognized his contributions to the civil rights movement. Accolades include a Georgia General Assembly resolution celebrating his achievements, an Edenton-Chowan County NAACP achievement award (1960), a Rosa Parks award from the National SCLC (1976), an Edenton Movement outstanding service award (1976), an award for dedicated service as the national field secretary for SCLC (1985), awards from the Pitt (1996) and Beaufort (2000) county and North Carolina (1996) chapters of SCLC, a North Carolina Black Leadership Caucus award for champions of civil and human rights (1998), and a Hyde County NAACP president's award (1999). Golden Frinks died on July 19, 2004.<sup>31</sup>

## Additional Context: House Ownership History

African American builder John R. Page (1840-1881) and his wife Jane conveyed the west half of lot number 237 on West Peterson Street to Thomas F. Benbury for five dollars on March 15, 1871. Benbury, born around 1854, is thought to have been Page's apprentice. Before moving to Edenton and learning the carpentry trade, Thomas lived with his younger sisters Lucy and Lucretia near Hertford in the home of Esther White, a forty-six-year-old Black woman. Thomas, like most of their neighbors, was a farm laborer in 1870. By 1880, he was a carpenter residing in Edenton with Black farmers John and Martline

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<sup>29</sup> "Black to Make Bid for Governor," *NO*, December 18, 1975, p. 29; Jenny Labalme, "Dumping on Warren County," Institute for Southern Studies, Durham, September 30, 2022, <https://www.facingsouth.org/2022/09/archives-dumping-warren-county> (accessed in January 2023).

<sup>30</sup> Timothy B. Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004), 151-156.

<sup>31</sup> Wells and Sanders, *Golden Asro Frinks*, 165. Goldie Frinks Wells, telephone conversations and email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, January 2023.

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Horton, both of whom were in their seventies. Although the majority of their African American neighbors also worked on farms, the community included cooks, carpenters, domestic servants, laundresses, sailors, teachers, and ministers. Carpenters Anthony Blount (51), Ellis Murphy (52), and Edward Blanchard (35) headed three consecutively enumerated households.<sup>32</sup>

Episcopal minister Robert B. Drane married Thomas Benbury and Dora Clifton Small, born around 1862, on June 14, 1882, at St. John's Church. O. A. Williams and E. K. and Jacob Skinner witnessed the ceremony. The Benburys occupied Thomas's residence at 122 West Peterson Street, which he probably built in 1880 with the assistance of John R. Page and other Black craftsmen.<sup>33</sup> The two-story weatherboarded dwelling, like three others of similar form erected by African American carpenters during the early 1880s, displays characteristics of the Gothic Revival style such as a steeply pitched gable roof and wall dormers. The weatherboarded residence at 306 South Oakum Street was built for John R. Page's widow Jane C. Page on a lot she purchased in May 1881. John Tyler Page, also a carpenter, may have erected the house.<sup>34</sup> The other comparable dwellings—carpenter Allen A. Johnson's circa 1880 residence at 129 East Albemarle Street and the circa 1884 James J. Gregory House at 208 West Church Street—have synthetic siding but, like the Page House, retain standing-seam metal roofs. While the Benbury House had a single-bay porch, the other dwellings have three-bay porches, all supported by square posts. Multi-pane sidelights and transoms frame the primary entrances of the Page and Gregory houses. Historic photographs illustrate the original ten-narrow-pane sidelights and two-pane transom at the Benbury House entrance. It is not known if the dwellings originally featured sawnwork bargeboards and bracketed porch posts typical of the Gothic Revival style.<sup>35</sup>

Thomas and Dora Benbury had two children, Ethel and Clifton, by 1885. On August 5, 1886, they mortgaged their Peterson Street property to C. S. Vann to secure a loan to repay a \$210 debt to W. D. Pruden. The Benburys retained ownership of the house when they moved to Boston around 1892. In

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<sup>32</sup> The nominal sales price and the deed reference to John R. Page's affection for Benbury support the assumption that the men knew each other well. Chowan County Deed Book V, p. 50; Thomas R. Butchko, *Edenton: An Architectural Portrait* (Edenton: Edenton Woman's Club, 1992), 67, 230; U. S. Census, population schedules, 1870-1880; gravemarkers.

<sup>33</sup> The construction date is unknown. However, census data and two December 1880 mortgages for which the Benbury house and lot were collateral indicate that the dwelling was likely constructed that year. The Benbury house and lot are referenced in the December 11, 1880, agreement between J. R. B. Hathaway, E. H. Sutton, Thomas Benbury, and Isaac and Margaret Johnson. Benbury uses the "town lot on which I now live" as collateral for a fifty-dollar loan from M. H. White on December 28, 1880. Chowan County Marriage Register; Chowan County Deed Book X, pp. 550-551; Mortgage Book E, p. 300.

<sup>34</sup> The relationship between John R. Page and John Tyler Page (1852-1901) is unclear. The men, who had been enslaved by Dr. Matthew Page and his second wife Henrietta E. Collins, were taken in 1862 by Henrietta, by then a widow, from Edenton to Hillsborough as the Collins family fled eastern North Carolina during the Civil War. John R. Page married Hillsborough resident Jane Cox in June 1864. John Tyler Page was the son of Lizzie Page. Butchko, *Edenton*, 67, 229; John Collins Sykes III, "A Collins Family Compendium," 1991, 137-138; John Collins Sykes III, conversation and email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, February 3, 2023.

<sup>35</sup> Butchko, *Edenton*, 67, 229-230.

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1897, Thomas found work as a janitor at Morgan Memorial (Good Will Industries), which was established and headquartered in Boston. The Benburys lived on Newcomb Street in 1900, when census records indicate that Thomas was a teamster and Dora was a janitor. Their household included laundress Ellen Bess, also from North Carolina. By 1910, the Benburys boarded with white Irish immigrant Mary Hagan, who ran a day nursery. Ethel married William T. Alford in Boston on April 10, 1912.<sup>36</sup>

The Benburys purchased a two-story frame duplex at 71 and 89 Prentiss Street in North Cambridge in August 1913. Thomas, Dora, and Clifton occupied one unit and the Alford, whose family soon grew to include a son Kenneth (1914-1980), resided in the other. With Morgan Memorial's encouragement, Thomas attended Boston University School of Theology. He became an ordained Methodist Episcopal minister in April 1916 and was one of the pastors at Morgan Memorial's Church of All Nations on Shawmut Avenue, where services were held in English, Italian, and Syrian languages to accommodate area residents. Reverend Benbury led the African American congregation until his death in 1943. He offered prayers during a November 10, 1934, service at which public school teacher Wilhelmina M. Crosson, later the second president of Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia, North Carolina, spoke about African American history. Clifton worked as office supply store clerk, a chauffeur for an auto concern, and a janitor at an apartment building from the 1920s through the 1940s. Dora died in 1945.<sup>37</sup>

The Benburys lost their West Peterson Street property to foreclosure in July 1899. Abraham Bonner, the mortgage holder, sold the two contiguous parcels to African American physician and real estate investor Charles H. Hines (1872-1921) for \$600 in December 1904. Dr. Hines, a Fayetteville native, established his Edenton practice in 1900 after graduating from Leonard Medical School at Shaw University in Raleigh. On July 17, 1901, he wed Julia Capeheart (1886-1957), born in Princess Ann, Virginia. The couple occupied a two-story, weatherboarded, Queen Anne-style house at 217 East Gale Street erected around the time of their marriage. Julia, also a Shaw University graduate, had previously resided nearby at 284 East Gale Street with her parents John and Julia Capeheart and seven of her siblings. In 1904, Dr. Hines commissioned construction of three one-story, frame, shotgun houses at 400, 402, and 404 North Granville Street to serve as rental property. He built the two-story brick commercial building at 316 South Broad Street in Edenton's central business district in 1910. The drug store on the first floor featured tall glass-front wood cabinets lining the walls, a marble soda fountain counter, and a pressed-

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<sup>36</sup> "Golden Wedding Party for Rev. and Mrs. Benbury," *Boston Globe*, June 15, 1932, p. 7; "Morgan Memorial Plans to Extend Its Work This Year," *Boston Globe*, September 26, 1927, p. 22; "Unusual Program at Church of All Nations," *Boston Globe*, November 10, 1934, p. 14. Ellen Bess (1850-1918) was the wife of Noah Bess and daughter of Rayfield Perkins and Phoebe Miller. The Benburys and Alford inherited a house and lot on East Church Street in Edenton from Noah Bess's estate. They sold the property to the tenant E. Butts on March 15, 1923. Noah Bess had purchased the property in 1887. Chowan County Deed Book B, p. 255, Deed Book P, p. 50, Will Book F, p. 318.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*; "Sale in Cambridge," *Boston Globe*, August 14, 1913, p. 16; "Methodist Situation in Tangle," *Boston Post*, April 16, 1916, p. 16; "Dr. DuBois Speaks at Church of All Nations," *Boston Globe*, December 19, 1921, p. 16; Index to Deaths in Massachusetts, 1941-1945.

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metal ceiling. His office was on the second floor. Julia was a public school teacher at Chowan, Currituck, Perquimans, and Northampton counties.<sup>38</sup>

Dr. Hines bequeathed two houses on West Peterson Street to Julia, who with her daughter Flossie L. Hines (1903-1984) leased the property to myriad tenants. Flossie, a public school teacher, resided with her mother at 217 East Gale Street, joined by her husband Mark Rufus Modlin (1903-1975) after their marriage on June 14, 1950. Her brother Julius Charles Hines (1906-1951), an alumnus of Shaw University (1928) and Meharry Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee (1933), practiced from his father's former office at 316 South Broad Street in Edenton for six years before establishing the practice in Brooklyn, New York, in May 1939 that he maintained until June 1, 1951. He remained a staff member at Unity Hospital, where he suddenly died on June 7 shortly after successfully performing an operation. Julius and his wife, dentist Olive Burke Hines, who met at Meharry Medical School, had recently purchased a house in St. Albans, New York.<sup>39</sup>

After Julia's death, Flossie and Mark Modlin sold the house at 122 West Peterson Street to Ruth Frinks on July 14, 1958. Flossie and Ruth had been teachers at the same public schools for many years. Ruth, her husband Golden, and their daughter Goldie occupied the house in late 1958 following an extensive renovation. Golden spent the last few years of his life at Britthaven assisted living facility in Edenton. Ruth deeded the property to Goldie on August 24, 2001, and moved to Greensboro to live with her in 2007.<sup>40</sup>

Dr. Goldie Frinks Wells, a graduate of Hampton Institute (B. S. elementary education, 1964), North Carolina A & T (M. S. elementary education, 1977, and M. S. in educational administration, 1986), and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Ed.D. in educational administration and supervision, 1991), has resided in Greensboro for much of her career as an educator and elected official. After teaching at Fuller Elementary School in Raleigh (1964-1967), she instructed elementary-grade students in Greensboro public schools for seventeen years before becoming the school-community coordinator for Statesville City Schools in 1985. Dr. Wells led classroom management and human relations seminars throughout the country from 1976 until 1987. She was the Title I Director for Iredell-Statesville Schools until her 1995 retirement from the public school system, after which she served as president of Saints Academy and College, affiliated with the Church of God in Christ, in Lexington, Mississippi, for two years. She returned in 1996 to Greensboro, where she has perpetuated her family's civic service legacy.

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<sup>38</sup> Butchko, *Edenton*, 63, 176, 183, 230; Chowan County Deed Book F, p. 231; Deed Book L, p. 95; "Funeral Services Held for Mrs. Julia C. Hines," *CH*, September 26, 1957, p. 8; Louis Van Camp, *Edenton and Chowan County, North Carolina* (Charleston, S. C.; Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 46.

<sup>39</sup> Death certificates; "Passing of Dr. Hines Shock to the Community," *CH*, June 28, 1951, p. 5; "Doctor Dies After Performing an Operation, *Alabama Tribune* (Montgomery), June 15, 1951, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Chowan County Deed Book 277, p. 263; Goldie Frinks Wells, telephone conversations and email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, January 2023.

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In December 1998, Dr. Wells organized a grassroots coalition to protest closure of a Winn-Dixie grocery store that left northeast Greensboro without ready access to affordable and nutritious food. The group, which became Concerned Citizens of Northeast Greensboro, continues to advocate for the community. She also led successful campaigns to close the White Street landfill, ensure equitable public transportation access, and prevent demolition of the 1929 James B. Dudley Senior High School and 1959 gymnasium (NR 2003), built to serve African American students. From 2005 until 2009 and 2017 to the present, she has represented District 2 on the Greensboro City Council. Dr. Wells holds leadership roles in myriad civic and professional organizations as well as the Church of God in Christ. Her contributions have been celebrated with numerous awards including an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from C. H. Mason Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia, in May 2021, and the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest award for state service presented by North Carolina's governor, in November 2022.<sup>41</sup>

Dr. Wells conveyed her family's Edenton house, vacant since 2007, and 0.24-acres to the State of North Carolina on May 8, 2020.<sup>42</sup> In April 2020, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DCNCR) received a \$241,940 African American Civil Rights grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service to rehabilitate the Frinks House and outbuilding to serve as part of Edenton State Historic Site. Moore Architecture of Charlotte rendered drawings delineating the repair scope of work. The department was awarded a \$74,415 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in February 2022 to develop an exhibition plan. A \$300,000 allocation from the North Carolina General Assembly in 2022 will further subsidize the renovation to be completed in late 2023.

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<sup>41</sup> "Goldie Frinks Wells named school coordinator," *CH*, November 7, 1985, p. 10B; Goldie Frinks Wells, telephone conversations and email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, January 2023; Goldie Frinks Wells biography (February 22, 2022) and curriculum vitae.

<sup>42</sup> Chowan County Deed Book 526, p. 679.

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Wells, Goldie Frinks, and Crystal Sanders. *Golden Asro Frinks: Telling the Unsung Song*. Salt Lake City:  
Aardvark Global Publishing, 2009.



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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 28 Frinks, Golden Asro and Ruth Holley, House  
Chowan County, NC

## Section 10. Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

The 0.26-acre National Register boundary encompasses the 0.24-acre Chowan County tax parcel 80519617604 and 0.02-acre municipal right-of-way as indicated by the heavy black line on the enclosed map. Scale: one inch equals approximately sixty feet

### Boundary Justification

The nominated tract contains the Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House, outbuilding, and associated landscape. The parcel size remained constant during the Frinks' tenure. The portion of the included municipal right-of-way encompasses the south end of the front lawn.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Chowan County, NC

## Additional Documentation: Historic Photographs



*Protest Leaders Frinks and LaGarde and Freedom House*

*News and Observer* (Raleigh, N. C.), January 20, 1963, Section 3, p. 1

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House, south elevation**

Early 1960s photograph donated by Dr. Goldie Frinks Wells to North Carolina Historic Sites (above) and August 1988 photograph taken by Thomas R. Butchko, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office archive, Raleigh, N. C. (below)



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Chowan County, NC

## Additional Documentation: Current Photographs

All photographs by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc., 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, NC, on June 28, 2022. Digital images located at the North Carolina SHPO.



1. Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House, south elevation (above) and
2. Northwest oblique (below)



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**3. East elevation (above) and 4. Storage building, southeast oblique (below)**



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5. Living room, looking northwest (above) and 6. Kitchen, looking north (below)



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7. First-floor bedroom, looking northeast (above) and 8. Second-floor corridor, looking west (below)



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**9. East bedroom, looking northwest**



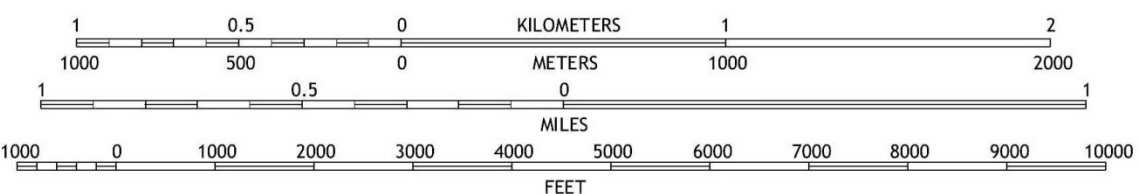
**Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House**  
122 West Peterson Street, Edenton  
Chowan County, North Carolina  
Location Map

**USGS Topographical Map**  
Edenton Quadrangle, 2022



**Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House**  
Latitude: 36.066608  
Longitude: -76.608415

SCALE 1:24 000



**Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House**  
**122 West Peterson Street, Edenton**  
**Chowan County, North Carolina, National Register Boundary Map and Exterior Photograph Views**



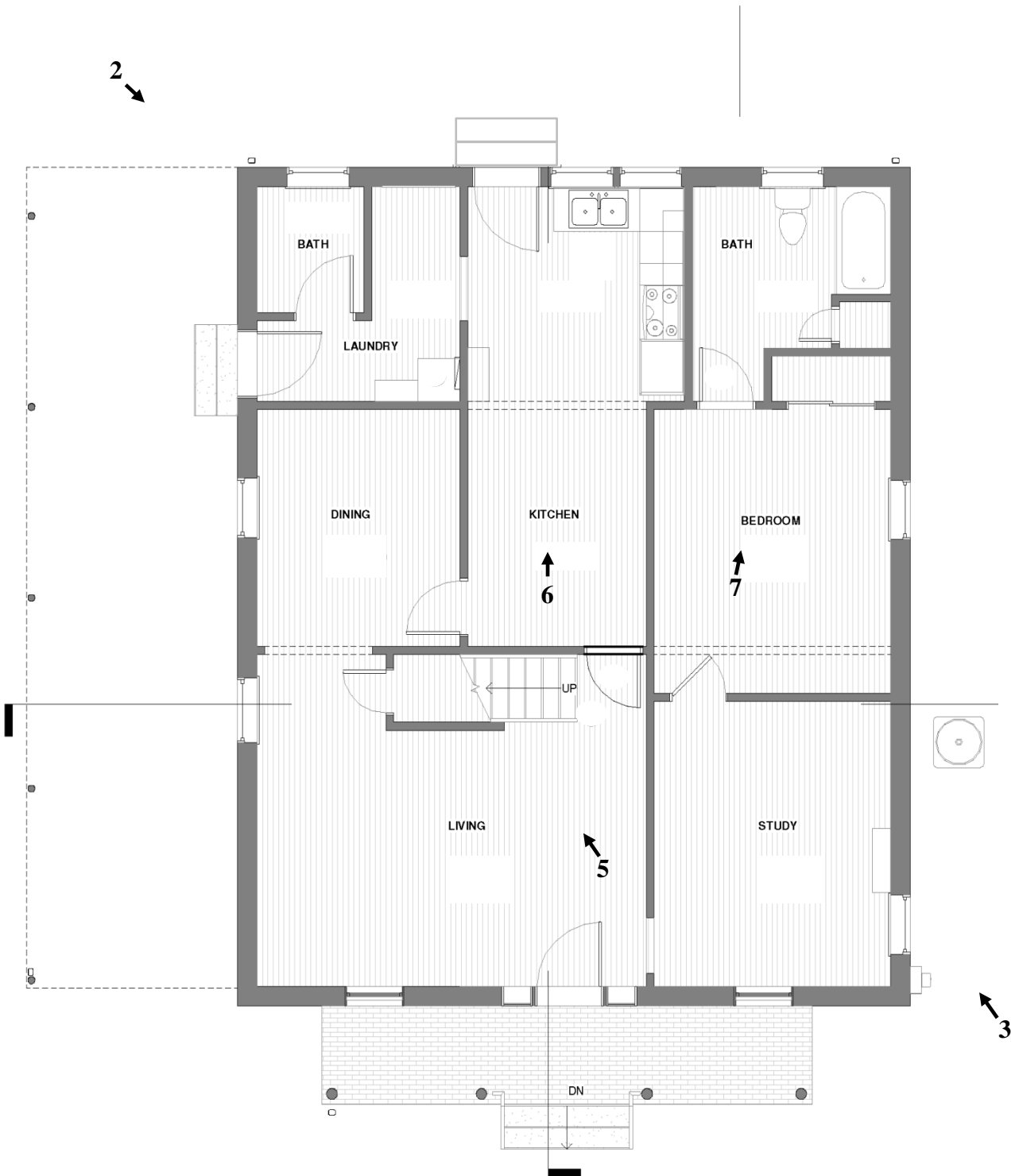
**National Register Boundary**  
0.26-acres: encompasses  
0.24-acre Chowan County tax  
parcel 80519617604 and 0.02-  
acre municipal right-of-way

**Storage Building,**  
**early 1980s,**  
**noncontributing**  
**building**

**Golden Asro and**  
**Mildred Ruth Holley**  
**Frinks House**  
**1880, 1958, 1970,**  
**contributing building**  
Latitude: 36.066608  
Longitude: -76.608415



**Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House**  
**122 West Peterson Street, Edenton**  
**Chowan County, North Carolina, First Floor Plan and Photograph Key**



**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

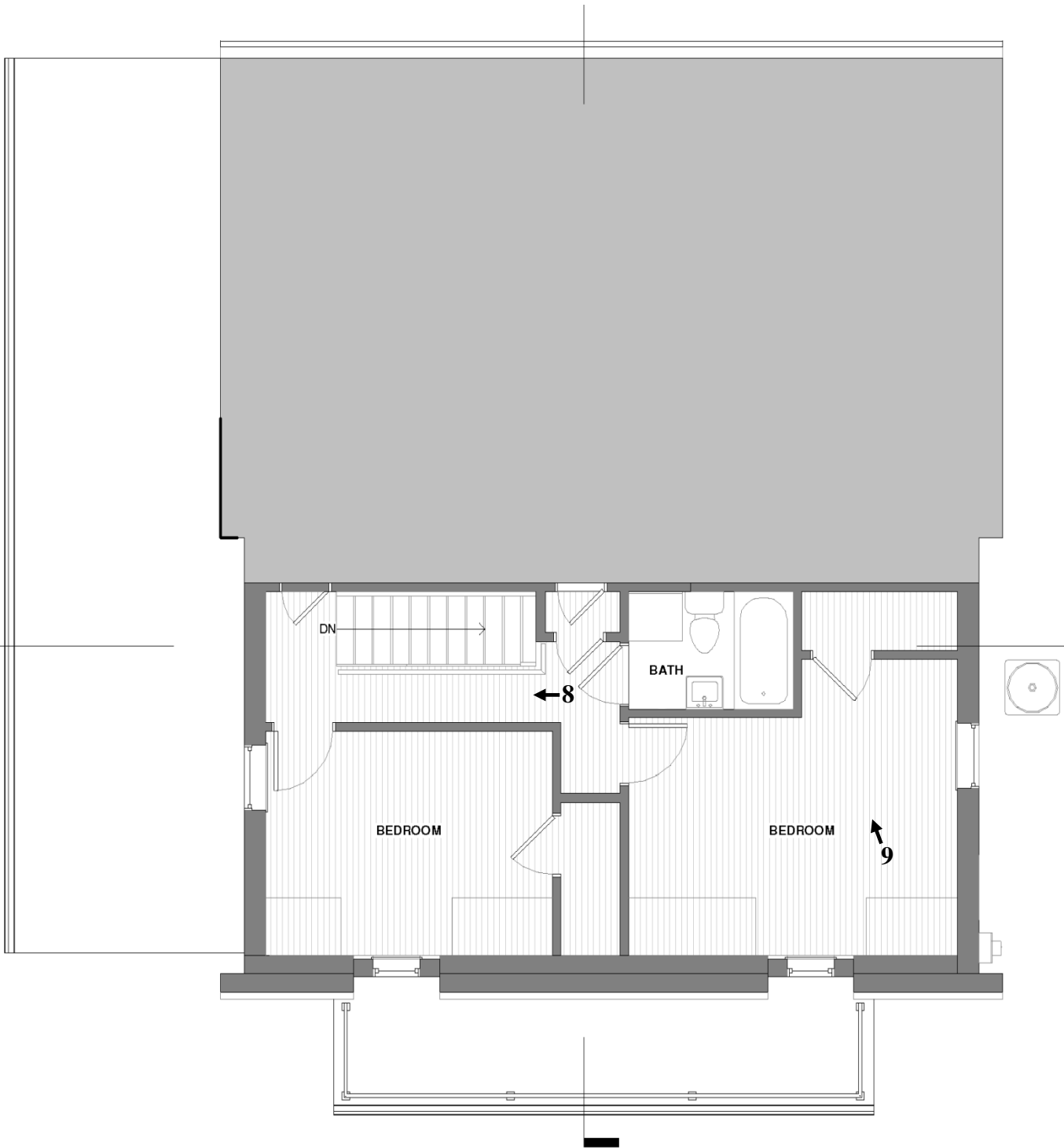
1/4" = 1'-0" REF: 1 / A1.02

Drawing rendered by Moore Architecture in February 2022

Photograph views annotated by Heather Fearnbach in January 2023



**Golden Asro and Ruth Holley Frinks House**  
**122 West Peterson Street, Edenton**  
**Chowan County, North Carolina, Second Floor Plan and Photograph Key**



**2 SECOND FLOOR PLAN**  
1/4" = 1'-0"

Drawing rendered by Moore Architecture in February 2022  
Photograph views annotated by Heather Fearnbach in January 2023

