Franklinville: A community lost to progress

Driving west of Taylorsville on Maryland Route 26 (Liberty Road) try not to blink or you'll miss what remains of the community of Franklinville. It may seem forgettable today, but 200 years ago, the village was an important stop on one of Carroll County's major transportation routes.

The Franklin family first appeared in the area in 1760 when Thomas Franklin (1732-1797) bought 108 acres called Sheredine's Range from Thomas Sheredine. By the time of his death, Thomas Franklin owned 329 acres which stretched south of Taylorsville along present-day Maryland Route 27 between Gillis and Gilbert roads. He left the land to sons Charles and Rezin who buried him and their mother, Lois Ann (Shipley) Franklin, in a small family cemetery that still exists on Gilbert Road.

In 1800, Charles and Rezin began selling their father's land south of Taylorsville. Charles (1759-1840) bought 220.5 acres called Resurvey on Hall's Range which lay west of Taylorsville along the well-traveled Liberty Road stretching from Baltimore to Frederick. The southern end of that land became the location of Franklinville. It is believed Charles, his wife, 10 sons and two daughters were living there prior to 1819. Charles Franklin showed up in the Frederick County 1825 tax records. His property included a tavern — one of many taverns accommodating travelers between western Maryland and the growing port of Baltimore.

Ten years later, the 1835 Frederick County tax records showed Charles owned a stone house. By 1837, when the area had become part of Carroll County, Charles was taxed for a stone house as well as a barn and the records actually mentioned the existence of Franklinville.

Joshua Franklin, son of Charles, inherited the 220 acres of Resurvey on Hall's Range when his father died in 1840. The inventory of Charles Franklin's estate included two bar room tables and four benches valued at $3.50 plus two bar room stoves and pipes worth $11.50. He also owned a cider mill. Altogether his household furnishings, animals, farm equipment and five enslaved persons were worth over $1,300. Very likely the tavern continued to operate after Charles died because Liberty Road saw plenty of traffic. Charles Franklin and his wife Susanna (Gilbert) Franklin were buried in the family cemetery on Gilbert Road. In 1865 when Joshua Franklin died, the 220 acres of Resurvey on Hall's Range passed into the hands of Thomas C. Porter although many Franklin descendants continued to live in the community and surrounding countryside. Joshua Franklin (1784-1865) and his wife Elizabeth (Porter) Franklin (1789-1860) were buried in a different Franklin family cemetery – this one near the intersection of Franklinville Road and Sams Creek Road. In the late 20th century, Porter descendants exploring the area found a few gravestones in a small hillside cemetery in what remained of the village. Burials in the two Franklin cemeteries and the Porter cemetery are included in Volume 6 of Carroll County Cemeteries published by the Carroll County Genealogical Society.

In a November 22, 1983 Carroll County Times article, staff writer Matthew Bowers reported on his visit to the village of Franklinville. He photographed Charles Franklin's original stone house and tavern and interviewed a number of the older residents living in the area. By that time the gas station, store, hotel, and tavern which once represented a thriving little community had disappeared or gone out of business. Joseph Hooper, age 93, recalled the tavern bore the quaint name "The Speckled Guinea." Joseph's father, Jefferson Hooper, raised his family in Charles Franklin's stone house, ran the store, the tavern and operated a threshing business plus a sawmill. "The Speckled Guinea" likely closed in the 1950s. By that time the bar room tables, benches, stoves, and pipes had probably served tavern customers for well over one hundred years.

The United States Geological Survey topographic map covering the Franklinville area still showed the Old Liberty Road in its original location in 1943, but sometime after that date Liberty Road was straightened leaving Franklinville nearly invisible on a two-block remnant of the old highway. The elderly residents Matthew Bowers interviewed over forty years ago are likely gone, but the stone house and tavern still stand and are well-maintained. Details relating to the early deeds mentioned in this article as well as a copy of Matthew Bowers' original story are on file at the Historical Society of Carroll County under "Franklinville."

Guest columnist Jeff Duvall is a frequent contributor to historical research in Carroll and Frederick counties.

Image 1: <u>Source</u> – Carroll County Times Archives   <u>Caption</u>: The two-story stone house and attached tavern built in Franklinville in the early 19th century by Charles Franklin.

Image 2: <u>Source</u> – 1877 Atlas of Carroll County, Maryland – Lake, Griffing & Stevenson   <u>Caption</u>: The 1877 Atlas shows the original route of Liberty Road running west of Taylorsville toward the Carroll-Frederick border. At that date Thomas C. Porter owned much of the land around Franklinville and his name appears on this map..