

The Franklin Family in Jefferson County  
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In 1818 two cousins, Owen and Thomas Franklin moved into what is now Jefferson County. That was back when Alabama was yet a territory, and just recently separated from the Mississippi Territory. One year later, Alabama was admitted as a State in the Union. The Alabama Territory was only a wilderness in the possession of four tribes of Indians- the Cherokees in the Northeast, the Creeks in the Southeast, the Choctaws in the Southwest, and the Chickasaws in the Northwest. The beautiful Tennessee Valley, and much of the central part of the State was neutral territory. It was into this neutral section that a wave of immigrants came, the like of which was never seen before. Pickens in his early history of our state, gives us a vivid picture of this migration. They came from Virginia and the Carolinas in the main, and at first, but later, they came pouring from Kentucky and Tennessee. It was among these early Kentucky and Tennessee immigrants that we find these Franklin families.

Thomas Franklin and Owen Franklin were cousins and were Baptist preachers. Uncle Tommy settled in the northern part of the county, in what is now the Trussville community. He was a charter member of the Old Cahaba Church and being a preacher no doubt contributed very largely to its establishment. He had a large family of boys- Thomas, Jr., Jacob, James, William, Isaiah, John M. and Hosekial, all of whom were killed in the Civil War, but James and John. Jacob followed the example of his father and became a Baptist preacher, whose usefulness was cut off by the fortunes of war. Isaiah married Elizabeth Carlisle in 1851 and before he was called to the battle front, became the father of a large group of noble sons and one daughter- Williamson, Dyer, John, and William, and their sister, Ellen, who married Dyer Sams, a rugged cut, kind hearted gentleman, tender and devoted to his large family. Of this family only Williamson and William, the oldest and the youngest, are still living, the former in the Mount Pinson settlement and the latter in the Trussville Community. John M., the only other son of Uncle Tommy, who came through the war safely, became one of the most influential citizens of the county. He was at one time a Commissioner in the County and one of its wealthiest citizens. He married Elizabeth Baird, a union blessed with only one child who is Mrs. R. H. Hendon, now living in the West End. Thus the Hendons, another great family of the county, was linked with the Franklin family.

The other branch of this family was headed by Owen Franklin, who was also a Baptist preacher. He settled in the Southern part of the county with his brothers and sisters. They figured largely in the establishment of the Mud Creek Baptist Church, the second oldest church in the county. His brothers were Gore, Dave, William, and Green who moved up in the Northeastern corner in what is known as the Hebron Community. This family aided in the establishment of the Hebron Baptist Church, which has functioned continuously since 1820. The whole section had the stamp of Green Franklin's life upon it.

Owen's brother, Gore, settled in the Southwestern part of the county, along the Warrior River. He gave himself largely to cattle raising. As his herds grew, he had to look out for larger pastures and sent his son Jack with them to the cane-brakes of Mississippi. This son was also a preacher and later went over to Mississippi to preach the gospel in that new and rapidly growing state. He also had a daughter by the name of Lavina who married a Smith, whose son Ira Smith still lives an honored citizen of the Hueytown community. And thus another noble family was linked with the Franklin family.

One of Owen Franklin's sisters, Dorcas by name, married Curtis Howton, the progenitor of a prolific and useful family in South Jefferson. Mr. Howton was a very peculiar man and therefore interesting. Many laughable stories are told of him. His good wife once prepared enough provision to supply him on a trip to market, provisions for about one week. On the rough roads his box of provision kept falling off his wagon. Provoked by this, he stopped and ate the entire week's supply. The spring in the hollow where he stopped is known until this day as Hog Hock Hollow. Another view of his eating capacity is seen in the survival even to this day of the name of Howton Sop- meaning brown ham gravy of which he never tired, and the quantity was never too great.

Another sister, of Owen Franklin married a Huey and so the splendid Huey family was linked with the Franklins. Four children blessed this union, two boys, Samuel and Jessie (twins) and two girls, Rachel and Linnie. Rachel married a Bell and lived in the Shades Cahaba section. Linnie married Albert Gallatin Waldrop, whose name Albert Gallatin takes us back to interesting connections. Albert Gallatin established the first glass foundry in America back in Virginia about 1804. All Virginians, the Waldrops among them, honored Gallatin, one of the first and greatest United

States Treasurers, and Father Waldrop named his son for him. One of their daughters married a Parsons, the father of those sons who have sung their way into many happy hearts.

Grandfather Owen Franklin was the father of a splendid family, Owen, Emphraim, Jim, Dave, John, Alec, and two girls, Sally and Nancy. The oldest of these boys, Owen, had a large family and three of his sons, Dave, Madison, and John were well known in this community. Dave and Madison recently died in the Chalkville Community, verging near the century mark. This family for the most part, lived in the Southern part of the county, and Madison, the second son, was a charter member of the Hueytown Baptist Church. Ephraim, the second son of Owen, contributed another preacher boy to the goodly number of preachers in the Franklin family. This son, Jackson, by name moved to Arkansas. Jim, who was killed at war, also had a boy who became a preacher and migrated to Mississippi. This large number of preachers among them shows the high religious fervor among them. Jim, the fifth son was the father of that fine set of men best known to this writer- Jim (Uncle Jim), Jackson, John, Owen, Will, and T. W. (Doc). These all lived in this section of the county the greater part of their lives. One of Grandfather Owen's daughters, Sally married Sam Wilkie, who with his good family, lived in the Mud Creek settlement. The other daughter, Nancy, married, Rich Waldrop, brother of Jackson Waldrop, who was affectionately called Uncle Jackie by everybody. Possibly no man has done more to build up the religious life of this county than he. The Franklins and Waldrops this united have wrought mightily for God and men in this county. Few schools and churches in Jefferson County have not felt the touch of their hands and spirits in their establishment and development.

On Sunday the 18th of this month, there will be a reunion of this family at the New Prospect Baptist Church (Chalkville) and Judge John McCoy will speak at that time on Pioneer Days. All friends are cordially invited. Dinner will be spread at the Church.

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1824-1831 Jefferson County, Alabama Orphans Court, Page 154

Thomas Franklin, Sr.'s Will

July 25, 1826

Wife – Mary

Heirs – James Franklin

Unis Clark

Betsey Clark

Margaret Chappell

Sarah Chappell

Thomas Franklin, Jr.

Nancy More

Martha Ramsey

Jenny Moore

Silas Franklin

Probated: Sep 11, 1826

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1844-1851 Jefferson County, Alabama Orphans Court, Page 281

Green B. Franklin's estate worth \$666.16 to be divided among 3 parties

1) Nancy - widow

2) Nancy Minerva Franklin - daughter

3) Louisa Jane Franklin - daughter