

FRANKLIN FAMILY  
ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA AND SURRY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Probably John Franklin (before 1670, lived in Richmond County VA - before 1717, Essex  
County VA)  
married Elizabeth Erwin

Lawrence Franklin (1696, Richmond County VA - after 1764, Anson County NC)  
married second Mary Payne

Bernard Franklin (1731 Spotsylvania County VA- 1828, Wilkes County NC)  
married Mary Cleveland

Jesse Franklin (1760, Orange County VA - 1823, Surry County NC)  
married Maacha "Meckey" Perkins

Lawrence Franklin (before 1696-1764)

Lawrence Franklin, born about 1696, and his brother, Edward Franklin, lived on adjacent plantations in Spotsylvania County in 1722. Their land was on Gladly Creek, a tributary of the River Po, the middle branch of the Mattaponi River. Best evidence at present indicates that Lawrence Franklin's parents were John and Elizabeth (Erwin) Franklin of Richmond County, Virginia. Before John Franklin's death, the family moved across the Rappahannock River to Essex County.

Lawrence Franklin first appeared in the Essex County records in 1717. He is still a young man, and perhaps has recently come into possession of his inheritance at the age of eighteen or twenty-one. In 1728 when Caroline County was formed, Lawrence and Edward Franklin were already living on their own land in Spotsylvania County, whereas Elizabeth Franklin, presumably their widowed mother, was tithed for several slaves in Caroline County (formerly Essex).

In 1734/5, Lawrence Franklin and Edward Franklin, along with neighbors and relatives - the Clevelands, Madisons, Paynes, and Taylors - moved to St. Thomas Parish in Orange County. They settled along Blue Run near Piney Mountain. Lawrence Franklin's second wife, ancestor of the Surry Franklins, was Mary Payne, daughter of Bernard Payne and granddaughter of John Payne of Spotsylvania County. In 1764 Lawrence Franklin sold his Orange County, Virginia land and moved to Anson County, North Carolina with his son, also Lawrence. He was living in Anson County at the time of his death.

Bernard Franklin (1731-1828)

Bernard Franklin, son of Lawrence and Mary (Payne) Franklin, was born on May 26, 1731. He married his neighbor Mary Cleveland around 1752. The young couple was living in Orange County, Virginia when word was received that their leaders, meeting in Philadelphia, had adopted a Declaration of Independence in July 1776. A few years later, Bernard and Mary (Cleveland) Franklin took their family to Surry County to live, having been preceded by her brother, Benjamin Cleveland.

### Jesse Franklin (1760-1823)

Bernard and Mary (Payne) Franklin's son, Jesse, was born in Orange County, Virginia on March 24, 1760. He bore the same name as a brother who was born on March 3, 1758, and died a year later on March 14, 1759. Jesse Franklin grew to young manhood on Blue Run in sight of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. He was about ten years younger than James Madison (who married Dolly Payne, a Franklin cousin). Being neighbors, Franklin and Madison were undoubtedly acquainted with one another. When both men became active in federal politics, their acquaintance grew to close friendship.

The Rev. Rene Chastain of Buckingham County, Virginia, recorded the marriage Jesse Franklin and Meckey Perkins on January 29, 1789. She was born about 1769 to Hardin and Sarah (Price) Perkins of Buckingham County, Virginia. Familiarly known as "Meckey," her name, Maacha, is Biblical in origin; or it may have been bestowed in commemoration of the Celtic Goddess who figures prominently in Ireland's ancient lore. It was quite a fashionable name about the time Maacha Perkins was born for she was not the only baby girl on the upper James River who was named Maacha during the latter part of the 1700s.

Jesse Franklin and Meckey Perkins probably met one another when she visited a relative - perhaps her brother - William Perkins. He, like the Franklins, lived on Fishers River, but about fifteen miles north in Patrick County.

Jesse Franklin died on September 24, 1823 and his widow Meckey (Perkins) Franklin died in February 1834. Both were buried near their Fishers River home. In 1835, they were joined in rest by their daughter Matilda Caroline (Franklin) Moore, the young wife of Samuel Dalton Moore and mother of three small children.

The remains of Jesse Franklin, a true patriot and hero, were re-interred in 1902 next to Richard Taliaferro and Joseph Winston at the base of the *Monument to Southern Heroes* in the park that commemorates the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Jesse Franklin's public life as a hero and his service to North Carolina and the nation is well known in Surry County and will not be repeated here.

### Matilda Caroline Franklin (1805-1835)

Matilda Caroline Franklin, the youngest child of Jesse and Meckey Franklin, was born in Surry County in 1805. At the time of her birth, her father was serving in the national Senate in Washington D.C. She narrowly missed being a White House daughter. In 1801 her father was President Pro-Tempore of the U. S. Senate during Jefferson's first term when a vacancy occurred in the office of Vice President as a result of the Aaron Burr controversy. As President Pro-Tem, Jesse Franklin was "a heartbeat from the Presidency." At the same time, North Carolinian James Macon was Speaker of the House of Representatives. It is believed that at no other time did North Carolinians simultaneously hold the two principle offices of the United States Congress with immediate succession to the Presidency.

Matilda Caroline Franklin married Samuel Dalton Moore on October 29, 1827.

*The author's granddaughter, Caroline Browning, of Frederick, Maryland, born in 1991, is the seventh generation in our family to bear the name Caroline.*