

‘New’ Local History Learning about Warner’s Ferry

Just as coming across sources of specific information on “Valdosta the Richest Per Capita,” as told on page one of this newsletter, is “new” history for us, so is coming across the name Warner’s Ferry. That name is recorded in the book *Journal into Wilderness, An Army Surgeon’s Account of Life in Camp and Field during the Creek and Seminole Wars 1836-1838* by Jacob Rhett Motte who was the medical doctor traveling with the troops. Jane Twitty Shelton references this journal in her book *Pines and Pioneers, A History of Lowndes County, Georgia, 1825-1900* when writing on the Indian Wars.

The map brought first attention to the name, in addition Motte mentions Warner’s Ferry two times in his journal. One mention states “...the 22nd of Febr., when we struck our tents and proceeded to Warner’s Ferry on the Upper Withlacoochee, close to the boundary line between Georgia and Florida. While there we built a stockade, for the protection of the neighboring inhabitants [when after we left] as a place of refuge for them.”

Again technology allows us the possibility of more information. The example shown below is of post roads. This listing from 1836 is the only postal route that searches to Warner’s Ferry. Troupville was very soon established and Franklinville would demise.

Note: Townsend, Florida Territory, in the post roads below, and Camp Townsend on the map at right are different locations.

Development of post roads

Excerpt from

Milledgeville Federal Union, November 1, 1836

2465 - From Waresboro to Franklinville in Lowndes County, 55 miles and back once a week.

Leave Waresboro every Tuesday at 6 a.m., arrive at Franklinville next day by 12 noon.

Leave Franklinville every Wednesday at 1 p.m., arrive at Waresboro next day by 7 p.m.

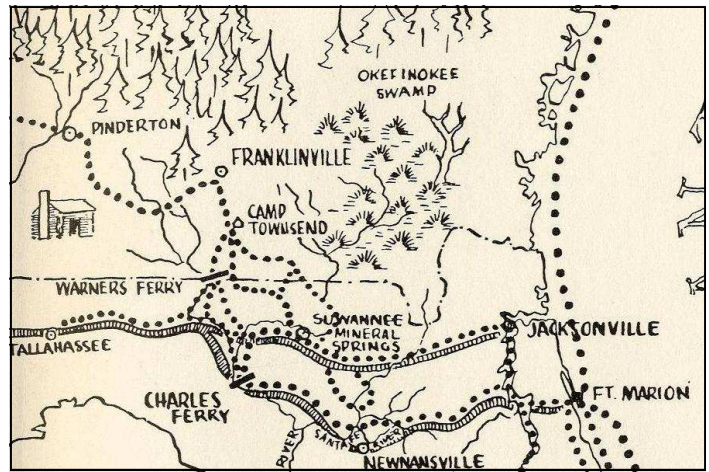
2466—From Franklinville by **Warner’s Ferry** to Townsend, Madison County, Florida Territory. 40 miles and back once a week.

Leave Franklinville every Wednesday at 6 a.m., arrive at Townsend same day by 8 p.m.

Leave Townsend every Thursday at 6 a.m. arrive at Franklinville same day 8 p.m.

Of the names listed above in the postal routes we were now aware of Franklinville, Warner’s Ferry and Waresboro, but what now was the site of Townsend, Florida Territory? I contacted Cary Hardee, attorney, and Kay Schnitker, accountant, Madison County citizens with whom I currently or formerly serve on the Huxford Board of Directors. They both responded. The following information came from Beth Sims’ *History of Madison County*. “Overstreet was established in 1833 with Silas Overstreet as postmaster. Silas Overstreet was born in NC, moved to SC, then GA and finally to Madison County, probably in 1829. He and his son Silas are both shown in the 1830 census..... In 1834 Overstreet’s was changed to Townsend with Asa Townsend as postmaster; then again in 1837 to Cherry Lake, Dennis Hankins, postmaster.”

By 1837 the names Franklinville and Townsend were replaced, the former by the new town Troupville and the latter by a new name, Cherry Lake. However, through this small window of time we learn of Warner’s Ferry and its service to early citizens.



Above: From *A Journey into Wilderness*, 1963 printing, a map showing the travels of Jacob Rhett Motte during the Creek and Seminole Wars of 1836-1838. Note Franklinville, Camp Townsend and Warner’s Ferry.

Lowndes Records Burned in Courthouse Fires

Courthouse fires place a burden on early historical and genealogical research in Lowndes County. The last fire was 1870 with a devastating fire in 1858 in Troupville. They were arson.

The new availability of Milledgeville, then the state capital, newspapers on line is significantly helpful. New, wilderness-counties with no newspapers often chose the Milledgeville papers to print their legal adds. Searching these papers provided our bits of information on “the who” involved in Warner’s Ferry. Luckily for us, the newspapers record various legal situations of Zenas Warner from 1835 to 1843. We were very glad to find the notice below as it is the only one that connected him specifically to Warner’s Ferry.

Lowndes Sheriff’s Sale

from the *Milledgeville Federal Union* March 30, 1841 and repeated April 6th, 20th and 27th.

“490 acres of land, well improved, known as the Warner Ferry’s lot, being No. 162 in the 16th district of originally Irwin now Lowndes County—levied on as the property of Zenas Warner, to satisfy three fi fas. Issued from Lowndes Superior Court, one in favor of Richard Cox, one in favor of Levi Starling and one in favor of Dennis Hills vs. said Warner.”

Lot 162, 490 acres, 16th Land District of Georgia Once all Lowndes

Now Lowndes, Brooks; and Madison County, Florida

In 1841, at the time the levy on Zenas Warner, lot 162 of the 16th land district was entirely in Lowndes County, Georgia.

In 1858 the portion of this lot west (actually south at this spot) of the Withlacoochee River became part of Brooks County, Georgia. All of lot 162 was still in Georgia.

In 1870 the lower portion of lot 162 in Brooks County, GA became part of Madison County, Florida when Georgia gave up a strip of land to Florida from the Chattahoochee River all the way to the St. Mary’s River to settle the border dispute.

So lot 162 of the 16th Georgia Land District is now located in Lowndes and Brooks Counties, Georgia and Madison County, Florida. It is in the discontinuous area of Brooks County.

For more confusion note: Lot 162 makes the western boundary of Land District 16. Abutting immediately west is Lot 162 of the Georgia 15th Land District, being its eastern boundary.