

FRANKLIN PIKE TOLL HOUSE

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The information was compiled from the following sources:

- *Granny White and Her Pumpkins*, by Vance Little, ©1993; pages 51 and 52.
- *Historic Brentwood*, by Vance Little, ©1985; pages 105 and 106.

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Highway User Fees Pave City's Early Road Projects

By the 1830's northern Williamson County (the part that was to become Brentwood) was prospering mightily. No doubt the public began to clamor for better roads (sound familiar?). The result was the construction of two major thoroughfares, Franklin Road and Wilson Pike.

One big difference with life in the 1830's and 1840's is the fact that the roads were built, but they were not built with taxpayer money. Both Franklin Road and Wilson Pike were built by turnpike companies. They were corporations that were organized to construct the roads and operate them for profit. Local residents were investors. Both were toll roads, and revenue was generated by user fees paid at toll house located along the road.

Franklin Road (which is also known as Jackson Highway) was chartered by the Tennessee legislature in 1834 and was finished the same year as a "macadamized turnpike." Major Thomas Edmondson was superintendent of the construction of the highway. The route followed the old buffalo trail to the salt licks at Nashville. North of Brentwood, it followed the path of what is now Franklin Pike Circle and lay east of the railroad. In 1928 and 1929 the road was rebuilt to run on the west side of what is now Interstate 65.

There were four toll gates on the road between Franklin and Nashville. One of them was at Concord Road. The log house still stands.

Ten years after the construction of Franklin Pike, Granny White Pike came close to being converted into a major thoroughfare to Nashville. A group got together and tried to construct a new road from Nashville to Franklin along the route of what was "commonly called the Middle or Granny White Road." The efforts were opposed no doubt by the principals of the competing turnpike company. Local residents got up a petition that stated "... the convenience and welfare of the people generally does not require the construction of another turnpike road ..."

The petition stated further that they wanted to reserve the "privilege" of traveling the old road, which today has passed into oblivion.

Wilson Pike was chartered by the State in the 1840's. It was then called "The Harpeth Turnpike," but it took the name of the major stockholder of the turnpike company James Hazard Wilson. It ran from Brentwood to Arrington. Stately plantation homes lined the route, but time is beginning to obscure their secrets.

There is no more historic stretch of road in Tennessee than the 13 mile course of Wilson Pike. Reputedly there have been 13 murders along the way. Stories range from two brothers getting into an argument over which one of them their mother had told to drive a calf out of the yard to an argument that arose over fox hunters chasing a fox into the basement of James Hazard Wilson's home.

But there is no more poignant tale than that told by a tombstone in the Standfield cemetery on the old Tulloss farm in the Clovercroft community. The inscription reads: "Spivey Standfield, born October 1809, murdered by Bill and Sam Wilson, died September 17, 1841."

The ladies of Owen Chapel decided to add a little decorum to church services by removing the spittoons. At least one of them had to be put back in place when one member continued to expectorate where the receptacle had been.

Transportation And Communication

Holly Tree Gap

Holly Tree Gap is the gateway to Franklin and the Harpeth Valley. The earliest settlers passed through this gap making their way to new homes. Before the area was settled, scouts went out from Fort Nashboro to explore. In 1797, three such scouts, whom tradition has identified as Graham, Brown, and Tindel, went out with a servant and a dog. They killed a bear, built a fire and were cooking it at Holly Tree Gap when they were attacked and killed by Indians. When a search party went out, they were met by the half-starved dog which led them to the bodies of his slain masters. The search party discovered that the scouts had killed more than their number of Indians.

Controversy exists as to whether the name of this site was originally "Holly Tree" or "Hollow Tree." The early Williamson County Court records refer to it as "Hollow Tree Gap." In later years, these records refer to "Holly Tree Gap." Thomas Hart Benton, the famous Senator from Missouri, lived in Williamson County in the early 1800's and traveled often from Nashville to his home in the Hillsboro community. In his journals, Benton makes reference to a holly tree at the gap, and this reference is often cited by proponents of the name "Holly Tree Gap."

Franklin Road

The Franklin Road (also known as Jackson Highway) was chartered by the Legislature in 1834 and was finished the same year as a "macadamized turnpike." It was built by the Franklin Turnpike Company, and many local residents were investors. Major Thomas Edmondson was superintendent of the construction of the highway. The general route followed the old buffalo trail to the salt licks at Nashville. North of Brentwood, it followed the path of what is now Franklin Pike

Circle and lay east of the highway. In 1928 and 1929, the road was rebuilt to run on the west side of what is now Interstate 65.

Four toll-gates were on the road between Franklin and Nashville, one of which was located at Concord Road and was in operation until the 1920's. The log building which was the toll house still stands.



State and City officials mark the widening of Franklin Road in 1982.