

Frankford

OUR HOMETOWN
SPECIAL PULL-OUT SECTION

Buildings reveal Frankford's history

The face of Frankford is probably most notable for the variety of buildings and architecture that line the sides of the town's main street. Each site has an interesting history, and many of the buildings date back centuries. Some simply are no longer there. Whatever the case, Frankford's history has been long marked by constant change, a thought made obvious by buildings like the country store and the Town Hall.

The country store changed hands a number of times, originally belonging to the Long family. Considered a hub of town communication for many years, it is no longer there. Likewise, the Town Hall building began not as the town hall, but as the First National Bank of Frankford, originally constructed in 1913. After the bank moved across the street, then eventually out of town all together, the site was used to house the library and town hall. Eventually, the library would move into the Bank's second site (across the street), and the original site was used strictly for the Town Hall. It continues to stand today.

Other buildings such as the Post Office, have simply undergone a severe facelift over time. Originally founded in 1848, the Post Office was an extension of the country store, where people would stop daily to pick up their mail. As needs increased

and times changed, however, a new Post Office was opened, and continues to stand today on Clayton Avenue and Daisey Street.

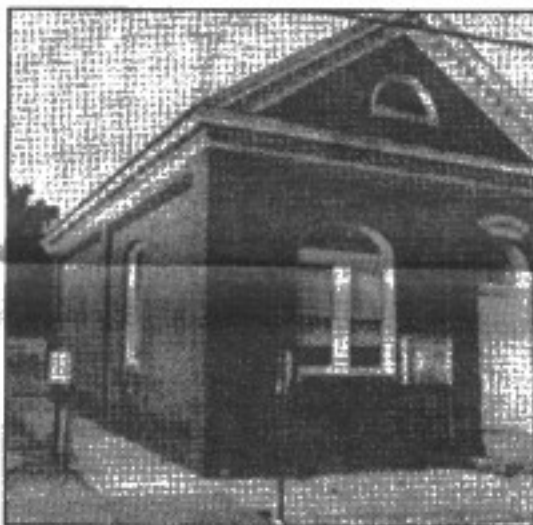
The Churches

The Methodist Church of Frankford, considered the earliest church still standing in the town was built in 1852 along with a cemetery.

Many prominent members of the town's original community are buried there today, including the Long family, who played a very important role in the development of the Church.

The Presbyterian Church stands across from the intersection at Thatcher Street and Main, on the land where once stood the original Gum family residence. The church was moved to that location in September of 1978, from its original location on Knox Street and remains almost exactly as it was when it was built in 1881.

In addition, the Antioch African Methodist Episcopal Church also joins the remarkable collection. Originally established in 1856, it is believed to be the only Negro church in the state with an active camp meeting. Meetings are held in August. The present church, built in 1890, was rebuilt in 1946 when a fire destroyed it. It is currently located at North Clayton Avenue.



Other buildings of note include Indian River High School, which was formerly known as John M. Clayton School and the community building, which was originally known as the Frankford Opera House.

Historian Eugene F. Castroville, Jr. gives an account of another Frankford landmark, one that has been gone for almost 30 years.

The Holloway Hotel was established in 1857 by William Holloway. It was located on Main Street and was demolished many years ago. For a better insight, we refer to

an interview with Bill Long, who remembers the Old Hotel and actually lived there for many years.

"In 1930-31, during the depression father lost his home and the store he owned. He went to work on a steamship and the family went to live in the hotel.

It was a two story structure with about eight to ten rooms, a porch in front, frame building covered with Cypress shingles gingerbread scrolling and had a stairway in the middle as you entered the front door.

The sidewalk curved inward in front of the porch and the hotel was set back from the street."

Long recalled his uncle, who was a dry goods peddler, coming into Frankford on the railroad from Philadelphia.

He would lodge at the Holloway Hotel overnight, then, the next day, rent a horse and carriage to go out into the countryside and sell his goods.

Babe Gum recalls that in 1932, the Holloway Hotel, downstairs front was being occupied by the Post Office.

The Post Office remained there approximately five years, at which time, it was moved elsewhere.

The hotel was demolished in 1970, when it was torn down and then burned.



The Antioch African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at North Clayton Avenue in Frankford, is a typical example of the many historical buildings that line the streets of the small town. Originally built in 1890, the church was rebuilt in 1946 after a fire destroyed it. It is one of many buildings in the town with a long and interesting history.



Above, the Frankford United Methodist Church stands at the corner of Main and Daisey Streets. Originally built in 1853, the spire was later added in 1880. The adjoining Sunday School room was built in 1916. The photo in center of the page features the Frankford Town Hall, formerly the First National Bank of Frankford, and originally built in 1913.

Frankford...A Brief History

(The following information was taken from the 1990 Town Directory and Eugene F. Castrovillo's historical account.)

The town of Frankford was started in 1808 and was once a thriving town prior to World War II. It had a Pennsylvania Railroad station at which trains routinely stopped and farm goods were shipped from the surrounding areas as well as traveling salesmen coming in and selling their latest fashions and wares.

Captain John Long's Boulevard Hotel, located behind the railroad station, was the place many people would spend the night. Frankford had several commercial establishments, such as Tingle Brothers and many general stores where people would gather around the coal stove for various everyday discussions. It also boasts of a haberdashery, drug store, coal and poultry feed business, and, of course, the First National Bank of Frankford. Doctor's offices were located at Main Street and Delaware Avenue, and Thatcher Street.

The cultural center of Frankford was the Jones Opera House. A school, named John M. Clayton school, was built in 1932 with laborers working at 40 cents an hour. It is now known as Indian River High School.

A post office was opened in 1848 and acquired the Frankford village title. Most

patrons would pick up their mail at the general store prior to a permanent building being built. The postmasters or keepers, were owners of the country store. The post office is now located on Clayton Avenue in a new modern building.

Once the DuPont Highway was built, the commercial outlook for the town changed. It was more economical to use the highway than the railroads, thus reducing the monopoly the railroads had on the town's economy.

Many other changes have affected the small town as well, according to local historian Eugene F. Castrovillo, Jr.

The country store, for example, which for so many years was the hub for information and local gossip, has slowly evolved. After first going from a country store to the larger "General Store (a term suggesting that all kinds of merchandise may be obtained, including food, clothing, seed, machinery, tools, toys, cigarettes, lumber, and building supplies of all kinds)," stores eventually evolved towards the very modern idea of supermarkets. Now, rather than being the central meeting place where much of the town gathers for discussions, it is simply a place to shop.

Many Other Changes

The town has seen many other changes



Photo provided by Barbara Godwin

Above, the original Chandler House in Frankford. The house was later moved back a few feet to accommodate the front porch, which was owned by Captain Ebe Townsend Chandler. The house still stands, though it is now a bed and breakfast.

as well.

The Town Hall, for example, is presently housed in what was originally the First National Bank of Delaware. In 1952, the bank built a new building across the street and the bank building became the library with the Town offices in the bank section. In 1980, First National Bank of Frankford built their present headquarters and merged with Sussex Trust in 1983. The library moved across the street into First National Bank's previous building, therefore allowing the Town offices to remodel and expand their facilities, keeping the same facade. The building was originally constructed in 1913.

In the spring of 1933, the town added a Volunteer Fire Company, the result of a serious fire on Clayton Avenue which destroyed the home of Dan and Mae

Carey, local residents.

In 1983, the fire company celebrated their 50th anniversary with a parade, and several area fire companies and dignitaries participated.

The company currently has 45 members, and a ladies' auxiliary. It consists of seven pieces of fire equipment and three ambulances.

The fire house was built in 1936, the first one being the south wing of the Power Station which had been abandoned when the Eastern Shore Public Service brought electricity to the town on a full time basis in the 1920s.

It now houses the water plant.

The town has seen many buildings and people come and go over the years, and change for the small town will likely continue.

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COME SEE SANTA!

First families

Continued from previous page

noncommissioned officers and privates.

On April 28, 1813 the Secretary of War requisitioned Long's detachment to rendezvous at New Castle as quickly as possible and to report to General Bloomfield, who was commander of the District. On May 13, the 10th Regiment was ordered to Lewistown by Governor Haslet, who considered that an emergency existed. On Oct. 15, 1814, Armwell Long was officially recommissioned Lieutenant Colonel, and finally given control of the 10th regiment, the post he had originally been given in 1807.

From the above accounts, we can now establish that Colonel Long served in the Delaware Militia approximately 10 years.

It appears that the Longs were very much involved with Prince George's Church in the 1790s. Armwell is listed as having been nominated and appointed as a vestrymen on Easter Monday, the fifth of April, 1790. On May 8, 1806, Long, his wife and father David received communion at Prince George's Chapel. On August 3, 1822, we find listed as present members Armwell and his son Isiah. It appears the Longs also owned Pew five at the Chapel as late as 1822. All lands, personal items and dwellings belonging to Armwell were divided among his children. On a recently discovered map dating back to 1817, it is revealed that

Armwell owned all the land on one side of Main St. in Frankford.

Isiah Long was the son of Armwell Long. He was born in Frankford on August 31, 1783 and died July 28, 1852. Isiah married Elizabeth Schofield and she bore him twelve children. Isiah Long is the founding father of Frankford, as he owned the first country store located on Vine's Branch road in 1808. The store was known by all during that period, going by the name Long's Store on Vine's Branch. A store ledger recently discovered verifies Isiah as the first owner of that store.

Isiah's estate totalled 2600 acres of land in the Baltimore and Dagsboro Hundreds, which he continued to own until his death. He died at the age of 49 years and is buried in the Long Cemetery.

The Gum Family

John Gum appears to have been the first Gum associated with Frankford. He was born on November 17, 1784 and was actually related to the Longs through his marriage to Martha Polly Long in November of 1806. Martha was born on April 2, 1784 and died October 16, 1830. In the War of 1812, John fought with Captain Isaac Waples Command, 4th company, 10th regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Armwell Long and was at Lewes with the company during the naval skirmish with the British. He died on December 16, 1875, and is buried in the Armwell Long Cemetery.

Manaen Gum was the son of John Gum. He was born February 16, 1808 and died in

1886. Manaen was married on September 26, 1836, to Sallie Crumpton, and later acquired the country store previously owned by Isiah Long located at the corner of Thatcher and Main St. We have examined the old store ledger and have discovered that over 200 different items were sold in the store. Manaen was a very wealthy and influential man. On a map of Philadelphia dated 1850, he is listed as owning a saw and grist mill. In 1860 he is listed with assets of \$115,000. On the 1868 Beer's map, Gum was listed as a lumber and grain merchant plus the owner of five separate buildings in Frankford. It is believed that he lived directly across the street from the old country store on Main St. Manaen's final resting place remains unknown to this date.

Francis Manaen Gum was born in 1848. He was the issue of Manaen and married Mary Catherine Bennett who was born in 1845. Francis was a doctor who attended to the sick and lame for many years between 1845 and 1924 in Frankford. The late Francis Manaen "Babe" Gum III remembered taking rides with his grandfather in the horse and buggy while making house calls. Many remember Dr. Gum's long white beard.

His office stands withering away, in solitude, vacant and in danger of disappearing. Dr. Gum owned 1,000 acres of land in the Cypress Swamp, where much of the lumber used in the Gum Saw Mill came from. He is buried in the Long Cemetery along with John.

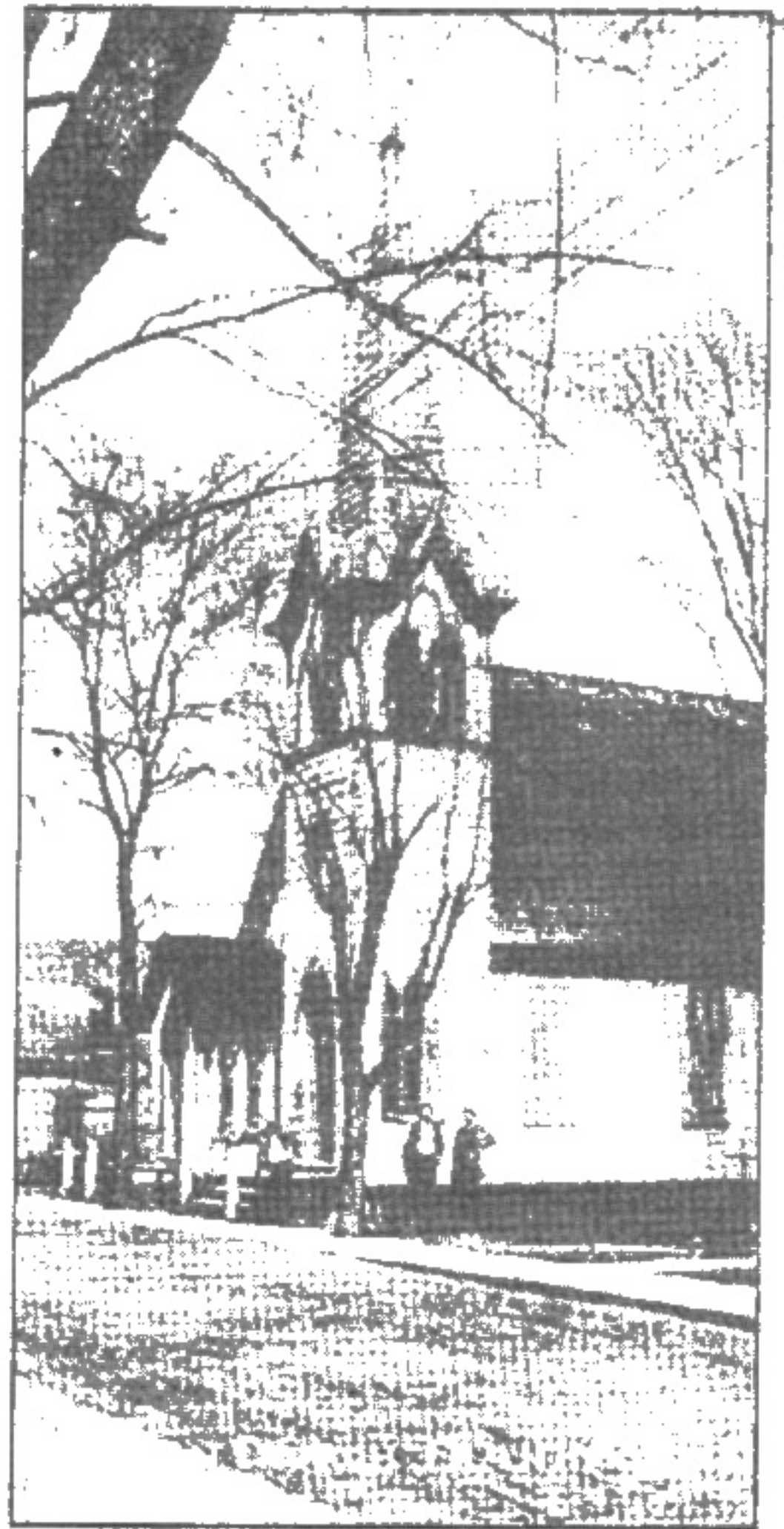
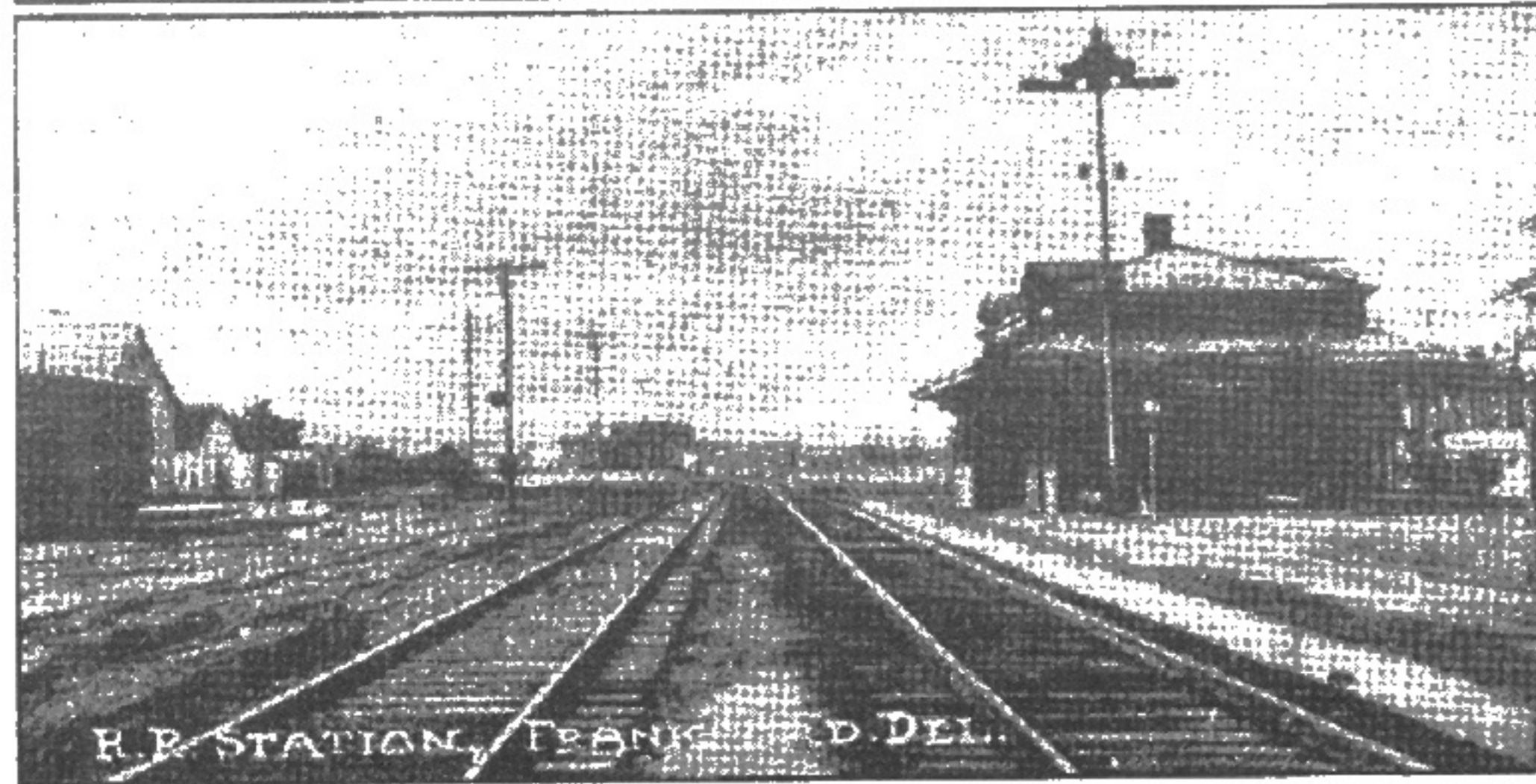
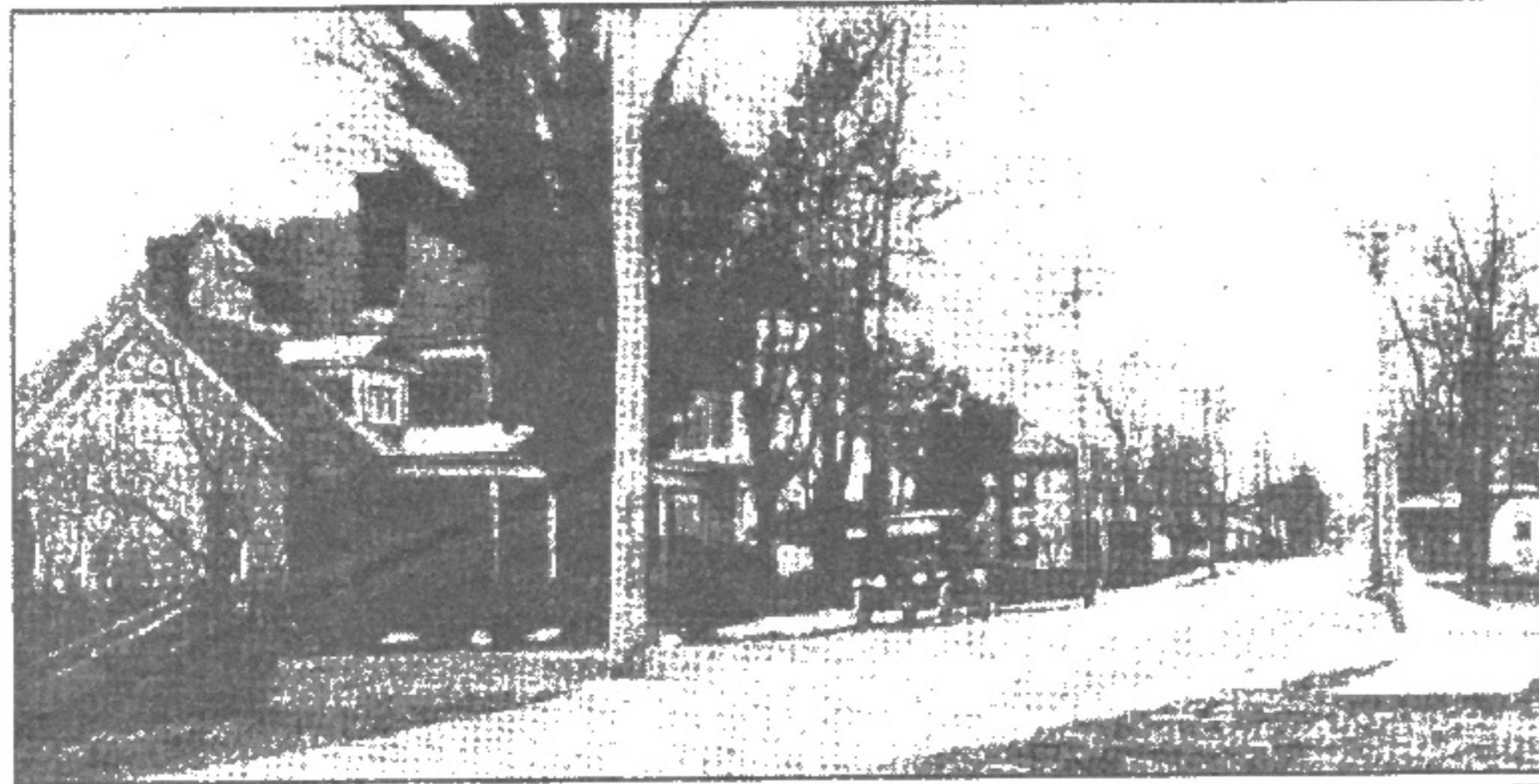


Photo provided by Barbara Godwin

Above, a shot of the original Frankford Presbyterian Church at its original location on Reed Street. The church was moved in September of 1978 and remains almost exactly as it was when it was built in 1881. The land was donated by Francis Manaen (Babe) Gum.

Two first families put Frankford on the map



Photos provided by Barbara Godwin

Above, a view of Main Street as it looked in the early part of the century. The building to the far left is the original office of Dr. Gum. The photo below depicts the original Frankford railroad station, which no longer stands.

In 1979, local historian Eugene F. Castrovillo, Jr. put together a brief history of Frankford, Delaware. Inside, Castrovillo researched two of the towns most important and prominent families, including the Long family, who originally founded the town, and the Gum family, whom Castrovillo deemed the "Developers" of the community. These families were undoubtedly key in the formation of the town today, and Castrovillo's account recalls exactly how the two clans began. The following excerpt is taken from Castrovillo's work, which is available at the Frankford Public Library.

Founders of Frankford

Not until 1775 did a feud between Lord Baltimore and William Penn become settled when Mason and Dixon surveyed the line between Delaware and Maryland.

David Long Sr. was born in Worcester, Md. in 1717 and died in Sussex County in 1791. He is the progenitor of the Long family in the lower Sussex County area and the first Long to own property in Frankford. According to his will, probated May 4, 1791, he owned two parcels of property in Lower Sussex. One was a plantation called Forest Flower, upon which he lived and the other was a tract of land located in the Cedar (Cypress) Swamp.

It is said he built the first road through the swamp. Long married Ann Lockwood on May 26, 1735, who provided him with 10 children. His sons were David, Benjamin, John, and Armwell, and his daughters were Mary Hutson, Elizabeth Newport, Nancy Scudder, Rachel Holloway, Miriam Gray and Joyce Chamberlin.

In David Sr.'s will, Armwell Long, his son, was named the executor of the will.

Armwell Long was born Feb. 12, 1754 and died Nov. 22, 1834. He is buried at the Armwell Long Memorial Cemetery in Frankford. Armwell married Elizabeth Robinson in July 1773. All the sons are listed as having served in the War of 1812, but Armwell seems to have attained the most recognition and highest rank. At this point in time, no link with the Long family and the Revolutionary War has been established.

According to an Act of Congress, on the 18th day of April 1806 the Delaware Militia was formed. On Oct. 5, 1807, the Governor of Delaware appointed Armwell Long Lieutenant Colonel of the 10th regiment, Militia of the State of Delaware. Governor Haslet would later change the appointment to the 12th regiment, placing in Long's control Benjamin Burton, captain, Isaac Cannon, Lieutenant, Joseph V. Crockett, ensign, and 66 noncommis-

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A walk down Memory Lane...

The old Frankford school house (top) still stands today, though it is now the Melson Funeral Home. The original school bell has been recently replaced in the front yard. A view of Thatcher street (middle) shows how little things have changed in the town, while the photo on the bottom shows the Frankford Presbyterian Church as it stands today.

