

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Franklin-Penland House**

Linville Falls, Burke County, BK0061, Listed 11/28/2006

Nomination by Clay Griffith

Photographs by Clay Griffith, October 2005



Façade view



Overall view from road.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Franklin-Penland House  
other names/site number Theodore C. Franklin House; Stokes Penland House; Linville Falls Post Office

2. Location

street & number 8646 Highway 183 not for publication N/A  
city or town Linville Falls vicinity N/A  
state North Carolina code NC county Burke code 023 zip code 28647

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination/\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
____ entered in the National Register	_____	_____
____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
____ determined eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
____ determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
____ removed from the National Register	_____	_____
____ other (explain): _____	_____	_____

Franklin-Penland House  
Name of Property

Burke County, North Carolina  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	4	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	4	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
In the National Register

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/single-family dwelling
- DOMESTIC/hotel
- GOVERNMENT/post office
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/single-family dwelling
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: I-House

- foundation STONE  
OTHER/concrete block
- roof METAL/tin
- walls WOOD/weatherboard  
WOOD/flush boards  
SYNTHETIC
- other

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Franklin-Penland House  
Name of Property

Burke County, North Carolina  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or a grave.

**D** a cemetery.

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

**G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

**Period of Significance**

Ca. 1883 – 1941

**Significant Dates**

Ca. 1883

1907

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

MacLamore, William – builder

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository:

Avery County Museum, Newland, NC

Tense Franklin Banks, private collection

Franklin-Penland House  
Name of Property

Burke County, North Carolina  
County and State

---

**10. Geographical Data**

---

**Acree of Property** 2.82 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>415520</u>	<u>3978950</u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
					<u>          </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

           See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title Clay Griffith  
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date July 10, 2006  
street & number 825-C Merrimon Ave., #345 telephone (828) 281-3852  
city or town Asheville state NC zip code 28804

---

**Additional Documentation**

---

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

---

**Property Owner**

---

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Brion K. and Shirley G. McNeil  
street & number PO Box 50 / 8646 Highway 183 telephone 828-766-6284  
city or town Linville Falls state NC zip code 28647

---

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

### Section 7. Narrative Description

Originally surrounded by hundreds of acres of family-owned wilderness, including the scenic gorge formed by the Linville River and the 90-foot waterfall from which the community takes its name, the Franklin-Penland House occupies a residual 2.8-acre tract on the east side of NC Highway 183 in Linville Falls, North Carolina. Less than one mile to the east, the Linville River flows through the rugged Linville Gorge, located southeast from the property. The community of Linville Falls stands at the junction of Avery, Burke, and McDowell counties, and the Franklin-Penland House is located in Burke County, in the far northwestern corner. In addition to the waterfalls and Linville Gorge, Linville Falls is near Linville Caverns to the southwest and Wiseman's View, as well as several unusual and distinctive mountain peaks in the region—Table Rock, Hawksbill, and Shortoff.

The Franklin-Penland House, which faces west-southwest, stands relatively close to the road on a wooded lot. A low, rock retaining wall extends on the east side of the road along the front of the property between two gravel driveways, which enter the property on the north and south sides of the house. Several mature trees surround the house, including a large ash in front of the house. A small landscaped area and garden are located to the north of the house. The driveway on the south side of the house provides access to a new garage erected in 2003. Two additional deteriorated outbuildings—a chicken coop and dog house—appear to date from the early twentieth century and stand at the rear of the house to the southeast. The concrete block foundation for a new storage shed positioned between the two outbuildings was laid in 2005. A small landscape garden on the north side of the house is surrounded by a wood picket fence and shaded by a large chinaberry tree. A very old and sizeable hydrangea is located just outside the fenced area. The former Linville Falls Post Office built in 1907 by Stokes Penland is located roughly thirty feet north of the house. In 2000, a modern garden shed was erected at the north end of the garden at the north end of the property, which slopes dramatically away from the house to the east and south.

**1. Franklin-Penland House, 8646 Highway 183. Ca. 1883; ca. 1915; ca. 1935.  
Contributing building.**

Built ca. 1883 for Theodore C. Franklin with the help of local carpenter William MacLamore, the Franklin-Penland House is a two-story, three-bay, frame I-house with a two-story rear ell and a twentieth-century replacement monumental front gable portico (the third front porch for the house). The Franklin brothers' sawmill supplied the lumber for the solid wood framing; tongue-and-groove walls, floors, and ceilings; and original wood shingle roof. The original wood shingles were replaced with metal roofing around 1915, at the same time the original one-story front porch with an enclosed second-story center bay was replaced by a full-width, attached two-tiered shed roof porch. The foundation consists of dry-stacked stone piers, which support mortise-and-tenon locust sills with pegged corners. The gable ends feature single-

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   2  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

shouldered, common bond, handmade-brick chimneys—the north chimney bears the date “1883” and possibly the name of the mason, “N.C. Pugh”—and decorative scalloped bargeboards. The two-story, single-pile gabled rear ell is covered with weatherboards and has flanking two-tiered side porches supported on round columns and turned balusters. The Franklin-Penland House was the second of three houses built in Linville Falls for the sons of early settler David Franklin with the assistance of local builder William MacLamore.

The façade of the Franklin-Penland House consists of vinyl siding over flushboard sheathing, of which the latter was likely installed ca. 1915 when the porch was reconfigured and the façade fully sheltered by a two-tiered porch. Replaced in the mid-1930s, the present monumental front gable portico is supported by four square, paneled wood posts on raised bases that are connected by plain balustrades. The glazed and paneled single-leaf entry door is flanked by large sidelights and topped by a transom. At the second story under the portico a four-panel single-leaf door opens onto a cantilevered balcony projecting with square corner posts and plain rail. Windows on the first story are nine-over-six double-hung sash and six-over-six on the second story. Rafter ends across the façade and on the sides of the portico are exposed under the eave.

The north end chimney is flanked by four-over-four double-hung windows on the first story, but the south end chimney is flanked by six-over-six double-hung windows on the first story and small four-light casements on the second story. Original weatherboards cover the side and rear elevations of the front house block. The visible section of the rear wall of the front block (excluding the rear ell) consists of the northern bay with a nine-over-six window on the first story, six-over-six window on the second story, and decorative scalloped fascia board covered by a modern gutter.

The rear ell contained guest rooms for the Franklin’s (and later the Penland’s) mountain inn. On the north side of the rear ell, the first story of the porch was partially enclosed (east end) in the 1990s to form a laundry room and unfinished space with a modern glazed door and small two-light wood sash windows. The remaining open section forms a recessed entrance into the kitchen with a glazed and paneled single-leaf door and single six-over-six window. The round porch columns and turned-baluster rail on the north side appear some time after 1920, and may have been salvaged from the front portico when it was remodeled in 1935. Four plank wood doors on the second story opened to three guest rooms, including a double room at the east end, and lit by two-over-two double-hung windows. A fifth door, positioned adjacent to the rear wall of the house, opened into a cross-hall that connected the north and south rear porches. Although the original exterior doors and windows are present, some of the interior walls have been removed but ghostmarks indicate their original locations.

On the south side of the rear ell, an attached shed-roof two-tiered porch extends the full length of the ell and is supported on round columns. The first story of the porch is slightly elevated and accessed by a modern set of wooden steps. A four-panel door at the west end of the porch opens into the kitchen and is flanked on the west side by a single six-over-six double-hung window. Another paneled single-leaf door at

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   3  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

the east end of the porch opens into the unfinished rear room on the first story of the ell. Near the west end of the porch a raised wooden cover on the porch floor protects a stone-lined well (four-foot diameter by forty feet deep) with poured concrete enclosure located below the porch floor. A square scuttle in the ceiling above indicates how water drawn from the well below was provided directly to the second story rooms. A rectangular opening in the ceiling positioned near the center indicates the original location of an exterior stair to the second story. On the second story, three plank wood doors opened to three guest rooms lit by two-over-two double-hung windows. (The upper sash of the easternmost window appears to have been replaced with a salvaged six-light sash). A fourth door, positioned adjacent to the rear wall of the house, opened into the cross-hall that connected the north and south rear porches.

The interior of the Franklin-Penland House follows a typical center hall plan with the straight stair rising against the south wall of the hall, and living room and dining room located to the north and south of the hall, respectively. The stair is plainly finished and clearly shows more than a century of wear. The simple newel and turned balusters support a plain square rail. The living room and dining room have matching wood-burning brick fireplaces with native soapstone hearths. Mantels are painted wood, simple in design, with flat pilasters and a keystone ornament. Tongue-and-groove wood planks cover the walls and ceilings; thin fiberboard paneling in the dining room was installed over the original walls in the 1970s. The dining room displays the original random-width plank floorboards, while the flooring in the living room is narrow yellow pine replaced in the second half of the twentieth century. A modern wood door located under the stair opens into a modern bathroom, which was partitioned from the northeast corner of the dining room in the 1970s. The opening between the hallway and living room was likely enlarged in the later part of the twentieth century.

The second story interior contains a central hall and two bedrooms with original tongue-and-groove wood walls and ceilings, plank floors, paneled doors, and tall baseboard moldings. A thin skimcoat of plaster was added to the bedroom walls in the mid-1980s. The south bedroom features a fireplace and mantel identical to those on the first story; the north bedroom had only an opening to the chimney flue for a wood stove. The hall opens onto the front balcony at its west end and onto the upper porch on the north side of the rear ell.

The interior of the rear ell is accessed from the exterior and from the interior through the dining room on the first story. The largest room is the kitchen, which has updated cabinets and appliances and a vinyl tile floor. A modern wood door at the southeast corner leads to the two unfinished rear rooms, which display well-worn original floors, plank doors, and tongue-and-groove walls and ceilings, with some areas of sheetrock covering the original walls. A laundry room and unfinished utility room are located in part of the north porch, which was enclosed in the 1990s. The second story of the rear ell contained a cross-hall located adjacent to the rear wall of the house and six guest rooms. The second story retains original doors and windows, tongue-and-groove interior walls, plank floors, and remnants of original paint and wall coverings. Some of the interior walls have been removed but ghostmarks indicate their original locations.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   4  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

**2. U.S. Post Office, Linville Falls, N.C. 1907. Contributing building.**

The former United States Post Office in Linville Falls stands a short distance north of the Franklin-Penland House. Built in 1907, the one-room front gable frame building measures sixteen feet wide by twenty feet deep. The symmetrical façade feature six-over-six double-hung windows flanking a single-leaf wood door. The exterior is covered with weatherboards and a metal roof. The original foundation rotted and the building has been raised with new wood sills on concrete block piers. A single six-over-six window is located on the rear wall at the northeast corner of the building. An interior brick flue projects above the ridgeline, but has been dismantled on the interior beneath the ceiling. The interior is finished with wood floors, flush board walls, and exposed ceiling joists.

In 1889, the first post office in Linville Falls was located in the entrance hall of the Hyams House, across the street from the Franklin-Penland House. In 1905, Stokes Penland assumed operation of the post office, which was then moved to the front hall of the Franklin-Penland House. Apparently tiring of this arrangement, Penland built a new one-room building thirty feet north of the house in 1907. The post office was staffed by the Penland family at this location until 1925, when the second Linville Falls Post Office was built in the center of the community near the intersection of US 221 and NC 183. After the post office moved, the 1907 building was used as a guest house for the Penland House inn.

**3. Garage. 2003. Non-contributing building.**

Located on the south side of a gravel driveway that runs along the south side of the house, this modern structure is a two-story, two-bay frame garage and rests on a stone veneer foundation. The garage features a front-gable metal gambrel roof with one-story shed-roof side additions. Windows throughout are six-over-six double-hung sash with two windows in the gable end above the garage doors. The side rooms are used as an office and as a workshop.

**4. Chicken coop. Ca. 1930. Non-contributing building.**

The chicken coop, which stands to the east of the garage and southeast of the main house, is a one-story shed roof frame structure with flush board siding, metal roof, and a single square window opening flanking the central doorway. The chicken coop is badly deteriorated.

**5. Dog house. Ca. 1930. Non-contributing building.**

The dog house, located to the rear of the main house, is a one-story, shed roof frame structure with a metal roof, board-and-batten siding, and a central front entrance. The structure is overgrown and badly deteriorated.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   5  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

**6. Garden shed. 2001. Non-contributing building.**

The modern garden shed is a pre-fabricated one-story frame building with a front gable roof and central entrance flanked by one-over-one aluminum-frame windows.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   6  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

### Section 8. Statement of Significance

#### *Summary*

Built in 1883 for Theodore Columbus Franklin (1853-1904), the Franklin-Penland House is an intact two-story frame I-house attributed to local carpenter William MacLamore. One of three brothers from a prominent local family to settle in the Linville Falls area, Theodore Franklin was a partner in the family business operating a large sawmill. The Franklin family, whose land holdings included the scenic waterfall on the Linville River from which the community gets its name, began offering tourist accommodations for travelers visiting the area. The house sold to Stokes and Laura Penland in 1901, who continued to operate the property as an inn and constructed the first post office in 1907. For nearly twenty years, the Penland House inn and Linville Falls Post Office served as a central gathering place for residents and visitors in the Linville Falls community.

The Franklin-Penland House meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its role in the development of early tourist activities and accommodations around Linville Falls. The property is also significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an example of a stylish I-house and early inn. The Franklin-Penland House is the most intact of the surviving nineteenth-century Franklin family houses in Linville Falls. The period of significance for the Franklin-Penland House begins ca.1883, with the construction of the house, and continues through 1941 and the death of Laura Penland. The Penlands' daughters continued to operate the Penland House inn after their parents' deaths, but with the passing of Stokes and Laura Penland, construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway, automobile tourism, and increasing numbers of roadside restaurants and motels, the important role of private inns in Linville Falls gradually decreased after World War II.

#### *Historical Background and Tourism in Linville Falls*

The community of Linville Falls is situated at the junction of three counties—Avery, Burke, and McDowell—in a section of the Blue Ridge Mountains known for its unique and scenic natural features. The earliest European travelers to the area came through on horseback over old Indian trails in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1766, Cherokees killed William Linville and his son, who were camped several miles below the falls on a hunting trip, and many natural features in the area now bear Linville's name. By the late 1700s, however, white settlers began to claim the territory and settle the area. The first permanent settler, Samuel Franklin cleared land for farming and established a small homestead on the side of Humpback Mountain.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Tense Franklin Banks, "The Village of Linville Falls – a heritage of hospitality," *The Tennessee Magazine* Mountain Electric Cooperative Edition (October 2005), 18.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   7  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

In the early nineteenth century, David Franklin (1819-1890), the son of Samuel Franklin, built a log house and four other cabins on his property, which included much of the rugged gorge formed by the Linville River. Franklin's cabins were a popular stopping off place for travelers to the mountain wilderness. David Franklin and his wife Eliza became well known for their hospitality. One early visitor, Henry E. Colton, wrote of his visit in 1859:

...we rode to within three miles of the Falls, and then leaving our buggy, we went on horseback to the house of Mr. David Franklin, one mile from the Falls. Mr. Franklin consented to become our guide, and, after a short rest, we moved on to the Falls.... Having spent the afternoon at Linville, we returned to Mr. Franklin's house, and there rested for the night.<sup>2</sup>

Colton also described his visit to the waterfalls in glowing terms, comparing their scenic beauty and visual delight with Niagara Falls and other "grand scenery" he had seen. According to oral tradition, David Franklin decided at one point to sell a portion of his property including the falls, which could not be farmed, for a suit of burial clothes. Franklin later reconsidered and was able to buy back the land around the falls.<sup>3</sup>

Several factors contributed to the rise of tourism as a lucrative nineteenth-century industry in the mountains of western North Carolina, but the foremost attraction of the region was rooted in its geography. Of the Appalachian Mountains, which extend the entire length of the eastern United States, the Blue Ridge chain of North Carolina boasts of unparalleled scenery, plant life, and elevations, including Mount Mitchell, the highest peak east of the Mississippi River. The Great Smokies, or Unaka chain, which also supports a lush wilderness, forms much of the border between North Carolina and Tennessee, and along with several smaller chains, North Carolina claims forty-two peaks exceeding 6,000 feet in elevation and eighty-two peaks between 5,000 and 6,000 feet. Many of the first tourists to western North Carolina came to enjoy the natural beauty of the mountains through hiking, fishing, and hunting, while others retreated from the stifling summer heat and "fever seasons" of the coastal regions. In the later part of the nineteenth century advancements in the treatment of tuberculosis and respiratory ailments attracted a new type of visitor seeking the mild climate of the mountains, along with the salubrious air and natural mineral springs.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Henry E. Colton, *Mountain Scenery* (Raleigh, NC: W. L. Pomeroy. Philadelphia: Hayes & Zell, 1859), 52-54.

<sup>3</sup> Banks, 18-19. Burke County Historical Society, *The Heritage of Burke County* (Morganton, NC: Burke County Historical Society, 1981), 41-42.

<sup>4</sup> Richard D. Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky: Tourism and Society in Western North Carolina* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 9-12. Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 36-41.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   8  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

The majority of nineteenth-century tourists possessed the time and financial resources to travel for extended periods or maintain a summer house in the mountains. As a result these wealthy visitors introduced their style and tastes at the early summer colonies and resort hotels. The community of Flat Rock in Henderson County was established in the 1820s and 30s as a summer colony by Charleston, South Carolina, families (NR district, 1973). Built in 1850-52, the Woodfield Inn in Flat Rock claims to be the oldest operating hostelry in the state. The Mountain Park Inn in Hot Springs, Sulphur Springs Hotel in Asheville, and White Sulphur Springs Hotel in Waynesville were among a group of large, luxury hotels dating from the mid-nineteenth century that attracted and accommodated early travelers in the region. The tourism industry in the area also benefited from transportation improvements during the nineteenth century—first with the completion of the Buncombe Turnpike in 1827 and later the Western Turnpike in the 1850s, which ran from Salisbury through Morganton, Asheville, and Waynesville to Murphy in the far western corner of the state. The completion of railroad lines to the area beginning in the 1870s opened the region to even greater numbers of visitors.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1870s and 1880s, David Franklin's four sons—Albert, David Jr., James, and Theodore—began building fine two-story frame houses in the Linville Falls community. The brothers were partners in several family businesses and operated a large sawmill that supplied the lumber for their houses, as well as flooring and shingles. David Franklin Jr., however, died in 1891 before his house was started. The three completed houses, along with a few others built during the same period, were among the earliest frame dwellings in Linville Falls, and several operated as boarding houses to serve the burgeoning tourist trade in this section of the western North Carolina mountains.<sup>6</sup>

The growth of the timber industry and the construction of short-line railroads in the area also brought increasing numbers of excursionists to Linville Falls, which never enjoyed the convenience of a direct railroad connection. Until the turn of the century, however, the majority of visitors to Linville Falls traveled on horseback or in horse-drawn buggies. The two closest railroad stations were located at Pineola in Avery County, approximately eight miles to the northeast, and in the Ashford community of McDowell County, roughly the same distance to the southwest. The Linville River station in Pineola (formerly known as Saginaw) was built for the Linville River Railroad around 1896. The line linked the timber operations of the W. M. Ritter Lumber Company, who owned 12,000 acres around Pineola, with the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad (ET&WNC) in Cranberry. Originating in Johnson City, Tennessee, the ET&WNC (better known as Tweetsie) was eventually completed to Boone in 1918. The Linville Falls station in Ashford was located on a difficult section of the Carolina, Clinchfield & Ohio Railroad (CC&O) known as the Blue Ridge Loops between Sevier and Altapass. The Charleston, Cincinnati & Chicago

---

<sup>5</sup> Starnes, 14-21. Bishir, 316-321.

<sup>6</sup> Banks, 18-19. Millie M. Barbee, ed., *Historic Burke: An Architectural Site Inventory of Burke County* (Morganton, NC: Historic Burke Foundation, Inc., 1987), 38 and 75-76.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   9  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

Railroad (later the CC&O) was completed from South Carolina to Marion in 1889, and by 1905, the South & Western Railroad had built a line from Tennessee to Altapass through Spruce Pine in Mitchell County. Located on the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Altapass is only four miles from Sevier as the crow flies, but twenty miles of track, numerous switchback turns, and sixteen tunnels are required to negotiate the change in elevation between the two communities. The CC&O assumed control of the South & Western Railroad and completed the connection between Marion and Altapass in September 1908.<sup>7</sup>

Born in 1853, Theodore Columbus Franklin (1853-1904) was the youngest of the four Franklin brothers. In the late 1870s he married Nancy Ellen Fox (1861-1892), and they built their home ca. 1883 at the head of Winding Stairs Trail and the Morganton Road (old Highway 105), to serve as an inn in the tradition of Franklin's father. Guests were provided meals and horseback tours to the waterfalls (one-half mile away) and Wiseman's View. Though the inn was successful, the accommodations were spartan: rooms were eight-foot square and plumbing consisted of chamber pots, water pitchers and basins, and galvanized wash tubs. Theodore Franklin eventually sold his interests in the sawmill so that he and Nancy could focus on the running the inn and raising their five young children. Franklin was devastated when Nancy died in 1892 at age 31, shortly after giving birth to their youngest son. He soon moved with his children to the Rutherford College community of Burke County, where his great-grandfather John Franklin had settled in 1764. Theodore Franklin remarried and ran a local grocery store until his death in 1904.<sup>8</sup>

Stokes Penland (d. 1935) and his wife, Laura (d. 1941), purchased the property from Theodore Franklin in 1901. Penland, who worked as a driver for the Cloudland Hotel on Roan Mountain and often passed the Franklins' inn on his way to the falls, was well known and socially well connected. His family had owned the Penland House (later the Young Hotel) in Bakersville in Mitchell County. In addition to owning hotels and boarding houses, Penland ran a general store in Linville Falls, taught at the community school, served as a revenue agent for nine years, was an avid bear hunter and mountain guide, and installed the first residential telephone and electric generator in Linville Falls. Stokes and Laura Penland had a son, Arnold, and two daughters, Eula and Clara. The daughters never married and lived at the Franklin-Penland House throughout their long lives, helping with the guests, preparing and serving meals, and driving the hack. Eula and Clara Penland continued to run the inn for a short time after their parents' deaths.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cary Franklin Poole, *A History of Railroad in Western North Carolina* (Johnson City, TN: Overmountain Press, 1995), 77-80; and Mallory Hope Ferrell, *Tweetsie Country* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1976), 25-27.

<sup>8</sup> Avery County Historical Society, *Avery County Heritage, Volume III, Biographies, Genealogies, and Church Histories* (Banner Elk, NC: Puddingstone Press, Lees-McRae College, 1979), 68-71. Burke County Historical Society, *The Heritage of Burke County* (Morganton, NC: Burke County Historical Society, 1981), 193-194; and Barbee, 87.

<sup>9</sup> Muriel Earley Sheppard, *Cabins in the Laurel* (1935; Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 91. Also see Avery County Historical Society, *Avery County Heritage, Volume II, Biographies, Genealogies, and Church Histories* (Banner Elk, NC: Puddingstone Press, Lees-McRae College, 197), 214-216. Eula Penland died in 1971 at the age of 84. Clara Penland died in the early to mid-1980s in her late 90s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page  10 

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

Drawing on Penland's social connections and hotel experience, the "Penland House," as the inn was known, became one of the best known boarding houses in the region, attracting visitors from southern cities as well as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Penland House also hosted a number of regionally significant visitors, including artist Warren Wheelock (1880-1960), writer Muriel Sheppard, author of *Cabins in the Laurel*, and naturalist Asa Gray. The *Morganton News-Herald* described the convenience of Linville Falls and the experience of Penland House:

Few people realize, although living within 35 miles, that they can leave Morganton at 12:30 o'clock and catch a nice string of Rainbow trout from Linville Gorge for supper. By going to Marion and catching a transfer back to the C.C.&O. junction this can be easily done.... You get off [the CC&O Railroad] at the Linville Falls station, which is six miles from the falls.... By having Mr. John Wiseman or Mr. Stokes Penland to meet you on horse back or in buggy (horse back preferable) you can reach the top of the mountain by 6 o'clock. Here you find can a hotel run by Mr. Penland.... The people here are good livers. No cleverer set of people are to be found anywhere.<sup>10</sup>

In 1907, Stokes Penland built the first free-standing post office in Linville Falls, adjacent to the Franklin-Penland House, and his sister, Jennie Penland Clark, was appointed as its first postmistress. Previously the post office had been located in the home of the local postmaster and moved each time the postmaster was reassigned. Members of both the Franklin and Penland families serve as postmasters through much of the twentieth century, including Eula and Clara Penland, who also held the position. The sixteen-foot by twenty-foot one-room frame building built by Stokes Penland served until 1925, when a new building was erected near US 221, closer to the present center of the community. A third post office building, which still stands, was erected in 1938 near the intersection of US 221 and NC 183. After the post office moved in 1925, the Penlands used the one-room building as a guest house for their inn.

The post office complemented the prominent social role of the Penland House inn and served important communication, commercial, and social functions for the isolated region. Public notices of all types were posted on the door of the post office, and the door bears the numerous nail holes of myriad notices attached to it through the years. Tourists to the area also utilized the post office as a center of communication, to both send and receive mail and packages. Mail carriers also transported items to support the sparse local industries including plants and herbs such as galax and ginseng. In addition, the post office was an important gathering place for the entire population of the community. Men frequently discussed bear hunting, fishing, and the condition of their crops while the women swapped tales of neighborhood happenings. Young people also gathered and talked about the next square dance, candy pulling, or community event, but one resident remembered that the most exciting times were when the Sears and

---

<sup>10</sup> *Morganton News-Herald* (June 17, 1909).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page  11 

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

Roebuck catalogs were delivered.<sup>11</sup>

The Penland House inn remained active through the early 1940s. Stokes Penland died in 1935 and Laura Penland passed away in 1941. Eula and Clara Penland continued to help run the inn for a short time after their parents' deaths. The lingering effects of the Great Depression, entry into World War II, and improved public highways, along with increased automobile tourism following the war, led to changing patterns of tourism in the mountains in the mid-twentieth century. Construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway, a federally sponsored scenic road, began in 1935 and continued through the 1960s, when only a seven mile section around Grandfather Mountain remained to be completed. The route of the exceptionally popular Blue Parkway passed less than one mile north of Linville Falls. As visitors increasingly came to the mountains in their own cars, visits became shorter and the area visited became larger. This new type of tourist to Linville Falls was increasingly served by auto-oriented motels and restaurants, which contributed to the demise of the traditional mountain inn. The former Linville Falls Tavern (NR, 2000), built in 1936 for C. J. Howell at the intersection of US 221 and NC 183, typified a new type of tourist accommodation that was located close to the main highway and provided not only food and lodging but also gas and automobile service. Other accommodations for the automobile tourist included the 1937 Linville Falls Lodge, also located near the intersection of US 221 and NC 183, and the mid-century Park View Motor Lodge on US 221 near the entrance to the Blue Ridge Parkway.<sup>12</sup>

In 1941, Laura Penland's obituary stated that the Penland House was an important factor in opening the area to outsiders, and "...throughout its long history it has been more than a mountain inn, it has been the home of hundreds of persons who have stayed there. Sojourners at Penland House were so inspired by the spirit of mountain hospitality typified by Mr. and Mrs. Penland that many of them returned to build summer homes."<sup>13</sup> Although they stopped taking guests in the 1940s or 50s, Eula and Clara Penland continued to reside in the Franklin-Penland House through the 1980s, when Clara Penland died in her late 90s. Prior to its sale in 2000 to the current owners, who plan to restore the house and reopen it as a bed-and-breakfast inn, the house had only one additional owner since the Penlands.

---

<sup>11</sup> Anne Clark Smith, untitled document dated September 12, 1978 in the collection of Tense Franklin Banks, Linville Falls, NC. Ms. Smith was the daughter of postmistress Jennie Penland Clark. Also see Emma Franklin's series of articles, "Linville Falls Revisited," in *The Avery Journal* (August 11, September 20, and October 6, 13, and 27, 1983).

<sup>12</sup> (Former) Linville Falls Tavern National Register of Historic Places Nomination (2000).

<sup>13</sup> Laura Penland obituary, May 8, 1941 (Collection of Emma Franklin, Linville Falls, NC).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page  12 

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

### *Architectural Context*

The diverse architectural heritage of Burke County reflects the varied geography of the area. Burke County was one of the first counties created in the western part of the state, covering a vast area, and Morganton, incorporated in 1784 as its county seat, was the earliest town in western North Carolina. While Linville Falls occupies the far northwestern corner of present-day Burke County, Morganton is more centrally located in the southern part of the county. The fertile Catawba River valley of southern Burke County supported an early-nineteenth century plantation culture as evidenced by a group of two-story brick dwellings with three-room plans and paired front doors, including Quaker Meadows (NR, 1973) and Bellevue (NR, 1973), located northwest of Morganton. The rich farmland of the county roughly marked the western limit for large scale agriculture, and the prominent, interconnected families that settled here traded their goods down river in South Carolina markets, which influenced the architecture. As the regional center for commerce and government until after the Civil War, the nineteenth-century residential and institutional architecture of Morganton and the surrounding area reflected the prosperity of its citizens.

In the southeastern part of Burke County, the Waldensians, immigrants from northern Italy, settled the town of Valdese in the late nineteenth century. In addition to their social, agricultural, and religious customs, the small immigrant group brought their Old World building traditions, which translated into a distinctive vocabulary of architectural forms. The Waldensians constructed many of their early buildings with tightly stacked fieldstone, and they earned a reputation as skilled stonemasons.

The more rural areas of the county were also influenced by architectural styles and building practices seen around Morganton and Valdese, and builders developed vernacular interpretations of the most stylish examples. The Western North Carolina Insane Asylum (Broughton Hospital; NR district, 1987), designed in the early 1870s by Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan and completed by his assistant A. G. Bauer, greatly influenced a wide range of buildings in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In the early 1890s, Bauer designed the main building for the North Carolina School for the Deaf (NR, 1976), a four-story Queen Anne structure with a grand central tower. Although Sloan and Bauer's ornate Victorian-era architecture was less influential in the rural areas, simpler versions of Victorian era detail were frequently applied to the otherwise conservative center-hall frame I-house form that appears throughout the region.

Increased production of architectural elements with steam-powered lathes and planers, jig saws, and scroll saws coincided with the expansion of railroad service in the nineteenth century, making these materials more readily available in smaller towns and rural areas. Prior to the 1890s the markets for sawed lumber were generally local, and in Linville Falls the Franklin brothers' sawmill supplied the lumber for three of their family houses. David Franklin's sons—Albert, David Jr., James, and Theodore—helped each other erect the houses, along with local carpenter William MacLamore in the 1870s and 80s. David Franklin Jr.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page  13 

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

died before work began on his house. Their father's ca. 1835 log house and one of the four guest cabins he built also remain standing.<sup>14</sup>

The Albert Franklin House, built in 1877, was the first of the three brothers' houses to be built. The two-story, three-bay, center hall I-house originally had a two-tiered porch across the façade. The house, however, has undergone a number of alterations since it was moved a short distance in 1935. The two-tiered porch has been replaced with a monumental front-gable portico supported by paneled square posts. A cantilevered balcony at the second story is located beneath the portico. The stone end chimneys were likely rebuilt after the house was moved and a rear two-story gable roof ell was added at that time. The six-over-six double-hung windows also appear to be replacements. The Albert Franklin House does retain much original interior fabric, as well as decorative gable end vents and delicate scrolled bargeboards.

Completed in 1888 and overlooking the Linville River, the James Franklin House was the last of the brothers' houses to be built. The original two-story, three-bay, center hall I-house form has been partially obscured by a lean-to addition on the rear, which gives the house a saltbox profile. The house has undergone numerous alterations including replacement windows, decorative shutters, rear and side additions, and interior changes. The tall shed-roof portico is supported by paired square posts.

The Franklin-Penland House, originally built around 1883 for Theodore Franklin, remains the most intact of the Franklin family houses in Linville Falls, despite changes to the front porch. The Franklin-Penland House repeats the basic two-story, three-bay, center hall I-house form with single-shouldered brick end chimneys, decorative gable end vents, and scalloped bargeboards. The original one-story shed-roof porch with an enclosed center second-story bay was replaced around 1915 with a two-tiered portico supported by round columns and turned balusters. At the same time, it appears that the original roof shingles were replaced with metal roofing. The façade was changed again, probably in the mid-1930s, to a monumental gabled portico supported by paneled square posts. A cantilevered balcony at the second story projects beneath the portico. Although the façade of the house has been changed several times since its completion, the final alterations occurred more than fifty years ago and the portico contributes to the architectural significance of the house.

The interior of the Franklin-Penland House also retains much original fabric including vernacular mantels, original stair, wood floors, and paneled doors. Updates to the kitchen in the 1940s and the creation of an interior bathroom on the first floor do not significantly detract from the overall character of the interior. The bathroom—the only one in the house—was partitioned from a corner of the dining room in the 1970s to accommodate the elderly Miss Penland, and a portion of the first floor of the north side porch was enclosed for a laundry room in the 1990s by the previous owner.

---

<sup>14</sup> Bailey, 19. Barbee, 75-76.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page  14 

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

Guest rooms on the second floor of the rear ell retain original doors and windows, tongue and groove interior walls, plank floors, and remnants of original paint and wall coverings. Some of the interior walls have been removed but ghostmarks on the walls and floor indicate their original locations. The guest rooms do not appear to have been occupied since the 1950s or 60s as the Penland daughters aged and ceased innkeeping. A chimney fire in the 1970s damaged the guest room at the rear southeast corner, exposing the wall and roof framing.

Despite the changes and alterations, the Franklin-Penland House retains a high degree of architectural integrity. The house bears the signs of adaptation for different owners during the twentieth century, but maintains the character and appearance of a late nineteenth and early twentieth century boarding house with its clearly defined I-house form, applied Victorian details, and rear ell with guest rooms. The Franklin-Penland House appears to be the most intact of the nineteenth century dwellings built by the prominent Franklin family in Linville Falls and a good example of tourist accommodations from the period. Though somewhat deteriorated, the 1907 Linville Falls Post Office served as a center of information and social contact in the rural community until 1925, complementing the social functions of the Penland House inn.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page  15 

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

### Section 9. Bibliography

- Avery County Historical Society. *Avery County Heritage, Volume II, Biographies, Genealogies, and Church Histories*. Banner Elk, NC: Puddingstone Press, Lees McRae College, 1978.
- *Avery County Heritage, Volume III, Biographies, Genealogies, and Church Histories*. Banner Elk, NC: Puddingstone Press, Lees McRae College, 1979.
- *Avery County Heritage, Volume IV, Historical Sites*. Banner Elk, NC: Puddingstone Press, Lees McRae College, 1986.
- Avery, Issac T. Obituary for Stokes Penland. *The Avery Journal* (January 1935).
- Bailey, Lloyd Richard, ed. *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley*.
- Banks, Tense Franklin. "The Village of Linville Falls – a heritage of hospitality." *The Tennessee Magazine*, Mountain Electric Cooperative Edition (October 2005).
- Barbee, Millie M., ed. *Historic Burke: An Architectural Sites Inventory of Burke County*. Morganton, NC: Historic Burke Foundation, Inc., 1987.
- Bishir, Catherine W., Michael T. Southern and Jennifer F. Martin. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999.
- Burke County Historical Society. *The Heritage of Burke County*. Morganton, NC: Burke County Historical Society, 1981.
- Colton, Henry E. *Mountain Scenery: The Scenery of the Mountains of Western North Carolina and Northwestern South Carolina*. Raleigh, NC: W. L. Pomeroy. Philadelphia: Hayes & Zell, 1859.
- Ferrell, Mallory Hope. *Tweetsie Country*. Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1976.
- Franklin, Emma . "Linville Falls Revisited." Series in *The Avery Journal* (August 11, September 20, and October 6, 13 and 27, 1983)
- Johnson, Earline, ed. *Jonas Ridge History*. Banner Elk, NC: Puddingstone Press, Lees McRae College, 1974.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page  16 

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

Poole, Cary Franklin. *A History of Railroading in Western North Carolina*. Johnson City, TN: Overmountain Press, 1995.

Sheppard, Muriel Earley. *Cabins in the Laurel*. 1935. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

Smith, Anne Clark. Untitled document. September 12, 1978. Collection of Emma Franklin, Linville Falls, NC.

Starnes, Richard D. *Creating the Land of the Sky: Tourism and Society in Western North Carolina*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2005

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number   10   Page   17  

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

### **Section 10. Geographical Data**

#### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property for the Franklin-Penland House is shown by a heavy line on the accompanying survey map, "A Tract to be Conveyed from Calvin B. Knowlton and Hannelore I. Knowlton to Brion Kim McNeil, Jonas Ridge Township, Burke County, North Carolina," prepared by High Mountain Land Surveying and dated August 11, 2000.

#### **Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the residual 2.82 acres associated with the Franklin-Penland House. The property is described in Burke County Deed Book 874, page 521.

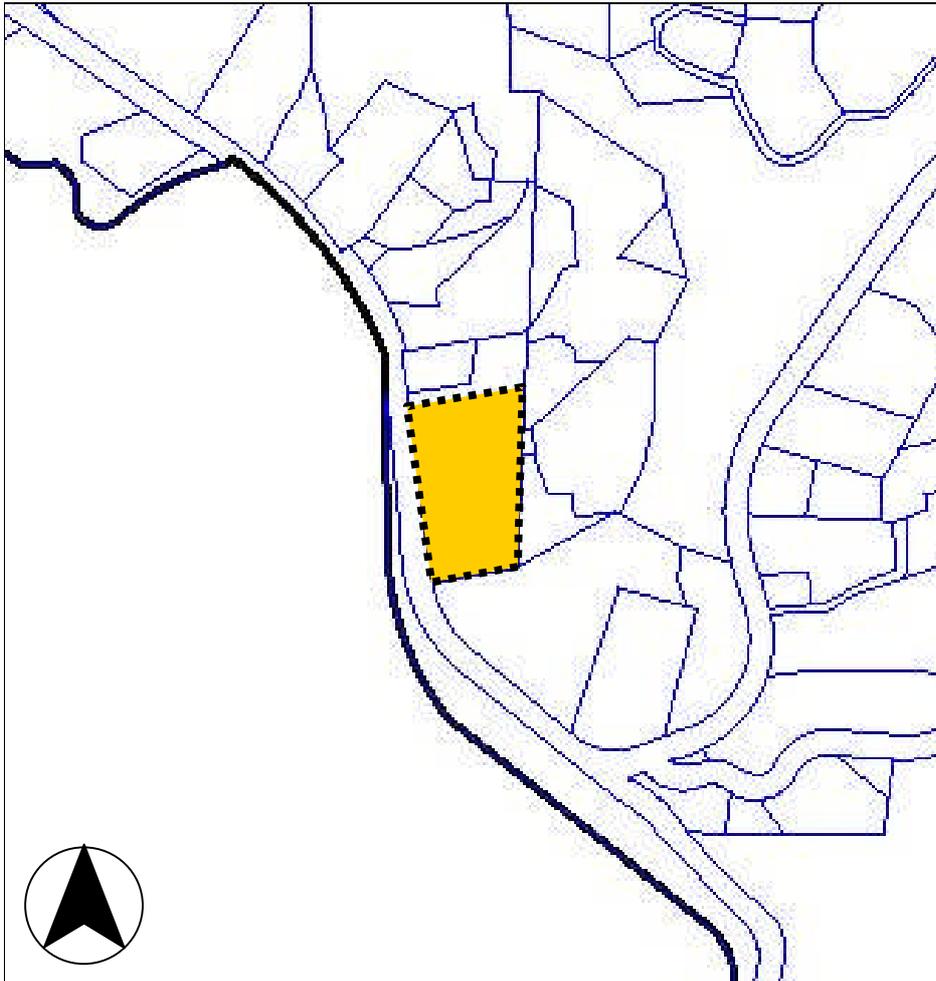
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 18

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---



**Franklin-Penland House – National Register Boundary Map**  
**Tax Parcel PIN 1831-00-14-0076**  
*(Source: Burke County Land Records Department)*

National Register Boundary is shown by the dashed line.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photographs Page 19

Franklin-Penland House, Burke County, NC

---

### Photograph Index

All photographs of the Franklin-Penland House in Linville Falls by Clay Griffith of Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., on October 28, 2005. Negatives are kept at the North Carolina Office of Archives and History Western Office in Asheville, North Carolina.

1. Façade, view to east.
2. Oblique side view to northeast.
3. North side of rear ell
4. Second story porch, north side of rear ell.
5. Interior – entry hall stairs.
6. Interior – living room mantel.
7. Interior – second story guest room, east end of rear ell.
8. (former) Linville Falls Post Office, oblique front view to northeast.