Clay Williams, 62, an active merchant, and Farmer H. Bashford, born 1885, a retired schoolteacher, were the sources of the following information. The material footnoted\(^1\) is predominantly from Mr. Bashford and that footnoted\(^2\) is primarily from Mr. Williams.

A number of French families settled on the ridges above the present location of Frenchburg. They developed good vineyards\(^2\) and made good wines. The wine was hauled to Mt. Sterling by ox carts and sold on the legal market there. The county seat got its name from these able farmers who were among the area's first settlers.

On Tar Ridge, the Rangee family\(^1\), one of the most prominent surnames among the French settlers, farmed their vineyard and got a reputation for being progressive farmers. A cemetery bearing the family name, Rangee, can still be found near Marlba. The tombstones have information carved in the French language.\(^2\)

As witness to the fact of their farming ability, they grubbed\(^1\) every particle of a briar or shrub. One of the Rangee brothers had a habit of saying, "me sposey," instead of "I suppose."\(^2\) When his neighbors questioned him about his methods of grubbing roots, he answered, "me sposey, me leave roots, me sposey she sprouts."

One night two men came to the Rangee home and ask for food and overnight shelter. After entering and finding out that their hosts did not know them, they decided to rob the Rangees. The Rangees protested and tried to fight for their belongings. One of the robbers took one of the Rangee brothers outside and around the house, presumably to kill him. Inside, the other robber shot the other Rangee brother but not critically. As the first two went around the dark house, the Frenchman grabbed a piece of iron he remembered being stuck in the eave.
of his home. He described what happened when he turned and struck the robber by saying, "He sposed me knocked him down, and me sposed me beat him as long as he wigged."

This tale was told to Mr. Bashford by a neighbor, Mrs. Stella Steele, widow of Rhuben Steele, now in her late eighties, who operated her husband's grocery store until 1964. Mrs. Steele is a descendant of the Rongee family.

Mr. Williams heard the stories of the French settlers from his parents, who were among the earlier and most prominent settlers in the county.
Johnny Kendrick migrated from Scott County, Virginia in 1863, coming into Kentucky via Pound Gap near Jenkins. He settled in Menifee County which was then a part of Bath County.

George Kendrick, his son, married Nancy Jane Rice, a Tennessee girl, and to this union were born eleven children. James Thomas Kendrick, one of these children, was born at Clinch Port, Virginia in 1868. He is the father of the narrator of the following historical sketch, whose name is Milburn Kendrick.

Many of the Kendrick ancestors are buried in the Lovelace Cemetery near Harba. His great great grandfather, owner of a 5000-tree fruit orchard in Virginia, where he made and sold brandy, was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. He died at the age of 115.

The vast Kendrick land holdings in Menifee County, now known as Kendrick Ridge, was purchased from Shelby Kash Sr. in 1863, when the area was still a part of Bath County. It was also a forested wilderness, inhabited by wild animals, including deer, bear, panthers, and large flocks of wild turkey. The Kendricks developed acute hunting skills.

George Wheeler built the first log cabin on the ridge and this was the original Menifee home of the Kendricks.

Being from Virginia and having natural sympathies with the Southern Cause during the Civil War, the Kendrick clan were soon the victim of ill will and hard feelings among their neighbors, predominantly Union in sympathy.

John Poplin, a near neighbor and Union Man, was one against whom particularly severe animosity grew and developed. A small war broke out on the ridge when the JayHawks, a renegade band of guerilla fighters--whose loyalties were suspect and who roamed the countryside
preying on the people—attacked the homesteaders.

The Kendricks sent for the Kentucky Home Guard or Militia, under the command of John Milt Gose. This group leaned toward the Northern cause and hesitated to stop the destruction that raged up and down the ridge reaching Betty Gap, Myers Fork, and Scranton. The homes of the Hurley's, the Greenwades and the Kendricks were burned to the ground. Mrs. Kendrick, who was ill at the time, was carried from the house on a feather bed. That was the only material thing saved from the home. The young daughters were told that they would be thrown into the flames if they attempted to take out any possessions. The men of the family had taken weapons and fled into the forest, where they stayed in caves and organized as "Bushwhackers" to try to stop the destruction.

A Union Soldier was killed. He may have been a Halsey, although many thought he was from Indiana and not a local boy at all. He was buried at Coal Hill Bank near where the Lockwood home now stands. Later the body was moved. Three or four Southerners were captured and all but one were hung. The one who escaped was a Free Mason.

John Poplin was riding to Owingsville on horseback to get warrants for the arrest of the Rebels, when he was overtaken near the site of the old Frenchburg School Dairy and taken from his horse. A hasty court was held on the spot and he was hung.

As late as three years ago, Kendrick found minie balls when he was splitting hickory trees felled on his farm.

Kendrick remembers hearing tales told by members of his family of a mine that was located on their land from which they mined ore to make bullets and farm implements. He says it was supposed to be marked by a rock shaped like a smoothing iron. He says the ore could have been silver, but he rather thinks it was lead.
One of the sites considered for the location of the county seat of Menifee County was Mariba, originally called Pokeberry. This community was named by William C. Taylor, a wealthy merchant and lumberman, who owned hundreds of acres of land surrounding the settlement.

He named the little community for his wife, Mariba Osborne Taylor. A county Judge of Menifee County, W. C. Taylor also served as Superintendent of county schools.

Mr. Sorrell showed a letterhead used by Taylor when he operated a general store at Mariba. Following is a copy of it.

W. C. Taylor
Dealer in General Merchandise
County Superintendent of Schools for Menifee County
Shipping Point Rothwell via Mt. Sterling, Kentucky
Mariba, Ky.
February 7, 1890

The Lovelace Cemetery, located at Mariba, has a portion enclosed by a beautiful stone fence surrounding the final resting place of members of the W. C. Taylor family. Mr. Taylor had voiced his intention of starting a well-kept memorial cemetery at Mariba.

Mr. Sorrell has a collection of antique articles that cover two walls of the post office. Among these articles are dough bowls, old flint loading guns, wool carders, coffee grinders, pepper mills, and numerous articles that are fast passing out of existence in our modern society. Attached is a picture of a part of this collection.
Once a thriving community of lumbermen and coal miners, McCausey is a sparsely populated area of scattered farms. No signs remain of the homes that lined each side of the road. The community was named for a Michigan lumberman. The populated area stretched along one-half mile. There were stores and homes.

Several good veins of coal were mined and the virgin timber was cut by the thousand board feet. A spur rail line was built from Tabor connecting with the Chesapeake and Ohio branch line. It was a narrow gauge railroad with a "little dinky" engine. The rails were laid for the Union City Lumber Company freight trade by the Kentucky and South Atlantic. Charles Cornwall and Charlie Lyons, well-known names in the county's history around the turn of the century were early workers on the railroad.

The two principal coal mines were the Big Amos and the Little Amos. Creeks and passes off of the ridge carry these names. No one could be sure how the mines were named. Mr. Williams was sure they were named for one of the lumbermen from up North who came in to take the timber out. The boom on the ridge ended about 1904.

Wells and Taylor, a local lumber company, also used the spur line that was extended through McCausey toward Kariba. (See Kariba.)

The rails of the spur line from Rotwell to McCausey were originally constructed of two by fours. When they wore down, iron stripping resembling the iron around wagon wheels was added. Sometimes these iron strips would come loose and the end would bow up coming through the floor of the passenger coach. It was very dangerous. They would rip through the floor with the speed of lightning. Still later "T" rails were used. "T" rails are the conventional all-steel rails that are familiar at the present time.
ODDS AND ENDS

BETTY GAP RIDGE

A family of Beattys lived near what is now called Betty Gap Ridge. A natural gap or passway through the cliffs and valleys was located on what was their property. Mr. Kendrick feels that Betty Gap is a corruption of the original name Beatty Gap.

WYNN FLATT

A plateau on a mountain top along U. S. Route 460 is called Wynn Flatt. Thomas Wynn called his store, started in 1940, Wynn Flatt Grocery. He remembers working on the grading of Highway 460 in 1924-25. Ellis, Smather and Brantley were the contractors. Elderly citizens believe the name was used long before the store was built. The land was owned for several generations by the Wynn family.

WELLINGTON

Wellington Davis, a wealthy landowner living near Wellington, was instrumental in getting up the petition that got a post office established in the area. As an expression of appreciation for his work in getting the post office located, it was given his name.

DEGNISTON

The DeJistons owned the land around the location of the post office. The family was responsible for getting a post office for the area. The name was to honor their efforts in behalf of the community.

FLAT ROCK

Located just above Pomeroyton, Flat Rock was named for the ford across the creek. The ford had been located at the site of a large flat rock bed in the creek that would support travel well. The creek also has the same name due to the unusual flat rock of the creek bed. Formerly a school was located nearby, now a small mission church is located there.
TARR RIDGE
During the late 1860's, when there was a small industrial boom in Menifee County, tar was manufactured on Tarr Ridge. The tar was made by cooking pine knots in specially prepared vats dug in the ground and walled up by timbers. The name Tarr Ridge was later given to the school and the community growing up on the ridge.

LAUREL GROVE
Just before one gets to the Tarr Ridge community when leaving Frenchburg, they pass a weatherbeaten rural church house. This is the Laurel Springs Baptist Church, one of the oldest churches in the county. It received its name because it was originally located in a grove of laurel trees.

YOUNG BRATHITT
In one of the most undeveloped areas of the county, there is a small area referred to as Young Breathitt. This area was settled by people who fled from Breathitt county during one of its bloodiest periods. The names Craft and Back are among the settlers coming from Breathitt County.

SUDITH
Located on Kentucky Route 36, between Frenchburg and Owingsville, Sudith is a small rural community. The post office was named for the Sudith family. The State representative at the time of the establishment of the post office was a Sudith. The name is spelled differently in nearby Owingsville, where Suddith Avenue is one of the streets.

HAVANA
When Harlan Sexton returned from the Spanish American War, he settled down between Scranton and Frenchburg and operated a general store. When the post office was established, he wanted to name it Havana after the capital of Cuba. He named one of his daughters Cuba. Mr. Sexton was later a County Judge of the county.
WILLS

Wills School, until a few years ago, was about one and one-half miles East of its present location. It was along side the old road on land now owned by Robert Downa.

It got its name from an elderly man named Nim A. Wills. He has one granddaughter now living in Terre Haute, Ind., and two or three great-grandchildren.

CARRINGTON ROCK

John Carrington lived on Salt Lick creek near a big rock formation. He was the grandfather of Mrs. Flora Craig, who died in 1964, at the age of 88. The rock formation took its name from this man who operated a thriving tannery business at the foot of the cliff.

PETER TRACE

Few people had theories about the naming of this creek and community. However, old court records reveal the name Petra. Mr. Cole mentioned Mr. Petra as conductor on the spur rail line running to Cornwell and Rothwell. The old map prepared about 1927 shows the creek with the spelling Patre Trace. Since Trace is the French word for trail or path and since the surname Patre has a French connotation, it could be surmised that the community and creek were named for a roadway that passed through Patre land or was the pathway used by the Patre family in their travels about the county.
IN NEARBY COUNTIES

Ezel in Morgan County was named for a rock in the Bible. The reference is First Samuel 20:19. The rock is named as a refuge for David.

Helechewa

A traveller came to a little community in Wolfe County. He asked a resident which was the better way out of the settlement. The questioned man answered, "Well, Sir, it's Hell each way." The phrase became the name of the community, Helechewa.

Camargo

Several Spanish American War Veterans settled in a little community about three miles from Mt. Sterling in Montgomery County. They named the community Camargo in honor of a town in Mexico.

Kellacy

Kellacy in Morgan County was named for two sons of Mrs. Alice Cox, who celebrated her 102nd birthday in West Liberty November, 1964. Kelly and Asa were the names of the sons. One of them, Kelly, now lives in Mt. Sterling. The other was killed on a bridge near Kellacy.

Yale

One of the larger and more prosperous of the lumber companies that were a part of the lumber boom around Scranton was the Yale Lumber Company. The owners were from "up East", probably Pennsylvania. The little community of Yale in Bath County gets its name from this lumber company.
When Kenifee County was still a part of Bath County, the county seat was Owingsville. There is an interesting story regarding the naming of Owingsville, a city that celebrated its centennial in 1962.

Two wealthy, respected families, the Ewings and Owings, vied for the honor of naming the county seat. Finally, it was agreed that whoever built the finest home would have the privilege of giving the town a name.

As the houses were under construction, public opinion wavered back and forth. Both houses were pretentious for the era. Bricks for each were made on the scene by slave labor. The walls of each house were almost three feet thick.

The Ewings house, now converted into a business building on Owingsville's Main Street, still has the beautiful transom over the front entrance, that is identical with one in the White House designed by Pierre Charles L'Enfant. Many believe the house was designed by L'Enfant.

A spiral stairway fashioned in Baltimore, Maryland and brought by ox cart through the Cumberland Gap was the deciding factor in settling the contest. This staircase remains a tourist attraction at the Ewings House.

A large formal ball was held at the Owings House celebrating the victory of Colonel Thomas Dye Owings. Henry Clay was among the illustrious persons attending the ball. Another noted person present was King Louis XVIII of France. Louis was in exile at the time and was teaching music at Bardstown. A valuable collection of paintings now hanging in the Catholic Cathedral at Bardstown was donated by Louis.

Huge rafters crossed the ceiling of the large ballroom. Just after a large bowl of punch was brought in to serve the guests, a snake fell off of a rafter into the bowl. King Louis was horrified, saying that the snake was a "bad omen" and that everyone occupying the house for one hundred years would have bad luck.
The prophecy seemed to be coming true when a few years later Colonel Owings lost his fortune. By this time, King Louis had been recalled to France and was a King indeed. He heard of the financial worries of his old friend and sent an invitation to the Owings family to come to France and live there as his guests. The invitation was refused.

Another interesting feature of the Owings House was a tunnel that Colonel Owings had constructed from the old Owings homestead about a mile away. The tunnel permitted unmolested travel between the two houses.
TALES OF THE LOST SILVER VEIN

Mrs. Jena Mechlan, who died at Jane Cook Hospital in Frenchburg in the late 1950's, was an elderly widow owning property near McCausey Ridge South of Frenchburg. She was convinced that a valuable vein of silver was located in Lenifee County. She spent the greater part of her adult life searching for it. Often it was rumored that she had discovered the mystery mine.

The lost mine she hunted was supposed to be marked by a "turtle shaped" rock. Mrs. Mechlan was sure that the Donathan Rock located on a high cliff just out of Frenchburg city limits was the marker.

She hired many groups of men to excavate in various parts of the county, particularly in the Tolin area. John Adkins, an unattached man who worked with one of the groups, was so convinced that Mrs. Mechlan had true information about the mine that he stayed on at her home for many years, doing chores and helping care for her in her old age. Each summer, an engineer from Cleveland, Ohio would come to the Mechlan home and he and Adkins would travel many miles in an old jeep, digging, digging.

When Mrs. Mechlan became ill, she would not leave her home to enter a hospital for many weeks, clinging to the hope of protecting her secret knowledge of the location of the silver mine. Neighbors who tried to help care for her were rudely turned away.

After her death, Adkins moved into a small shack in the edge of town. Not many months passed until the shack burned mysteriously and Adkins was burned to death. The men who took his body from the ruins of the shack, told of finding several charred rolls of paper money, burned past recognition of the denomination of the bills. The money was stashed in empty vegetable cans. This disclosure awakened the rumors that Mrs. Mechlan might have actually found the illusive silver vein.

No one seems to know if this is the legendary Swift mine or another "legendary" mine.
A TALL TALE

When I was a school boy, a young fellow about six or seven years old whose name was Earl McGlothen, always asked the teacher questions. No matter how busy the teacher, who was Charlie Ringo, was, the questions kept coming. So one day the teacher told Earl, "Next time you talk out to me when I am busy, I am going to tie your tongue."

About the next day, when we all came in from midafternoon recess, everybody was quiet, working on their lessons. Mr. Ringo had a little fellow in his ABC's around hearing his recitation.

All of a sudden Earl reared back and with a strong voice, said, "Mr. Ringo, you are not going to have Geography this evening are you?"

"No, Earl, Geography comes of mornings," Mr. Ringo answered. "You are not in Geography anyway, are you, Earl?"

Earl replied, "No, but I just wanted to know."

"Didn't I tell you next time you talked out to me when I was busy, I was going to tie your tongue?" asked the teacher.

"Yes, but you ain't got your string." About that time, Fay Harding, one of the older boys, held up a piece of string. Mr. Ringo said to Earl, "Come on around, we'll see if I haven't got a string."

The teacher looped the string around Earl's tongue and hooked him to a nail in wall of school house. In a moment, the string slipped off. Earl said, "Slipped off, didn't it, Mr. Ringo?"

"Yes, but we'll fix it so it won't slip off anymore." Replacing the string much better, pulling Earl up a little tighter, he let him stand for a while. Earl began to cry a little; teacher turned him loose. He went back to his seat and Mr. Ringo got on with the smaller boy's ABC's. About the time, Mr. Ringo got really busy, Earl said with a strong voice, "Mr. Ringo, what if you had cut my tongue off?" For a few seconds the other students thought the teacher was considering the idea. Then there was general laughter and the teacher gave up on Earl.

Leonard F. Cole
KEY TO FOOTNOTES

1 Farmer H. Bashford, born 1885, a retired schoolteacher and a wonderful conversationalist. Now residing at the Presbyterian Center, Frenchburg.

2 Clay Williams, 82, prominent merchant in Frenchburg.

3 Belle Lyons Wells, 90, a widow, who lives alone and has very little outside help with her housework.

4 Wilburn Kendrick, born June 18, 1902, a farmer who owns the residue of the once vast Kendrick family holdings. One of Menifee County's few historians and a remarkably interesting man.

5 Hicks Wells, in his sixties, Circuit Court Clerk of Menifee County. Formerly a State Representative, he now operates Frenchburg's only restaurant.

6 Jimmy Little, about 72, is owner and operator of a General Store.

7 Mrs. Lerlie Spencer Bryan, about 62, resides near Frenchburg. Mrs. Bryan is a descendant of the Trimble and Suiter families, two of the county's earliest and most prominent families.

8 K. K. Little, Jr., only 35, owner and operator of Frenchburg's only service station and a member of a prominent Menifee County family.

9 Elizabeth Greenwade Cart, age about 65, is a former school teacher, now living with her husband just at the foot of a hill on which is located Greenwade Cemetery, the cemetery for Frenchburg residents.

10 Clint Sorrell, about 42, is the postmaster of Mariba. He is the son of the late Mrs. Vinson Day, who was postmaster of Mariba for many years.

11 Harold Bryant is the son of Raymond Bryant and he operates a store at Mariba. He heard the story of Ezel from his elderly relatives.

12 John Williams, 80, a retired minister now residing at the Presbyterian Center in Frenchburg.

13 Leonard J. Cole, 70, a retired postmaster of Ruthwell, now residing in Mt. Difficulty.