

## This is MY Land, Christian County

Christian County is among those counties that are on the southern tier of Kentucky on the Tennessee state line. It is at 88 degrees longitude and at the 37<sup>th</sup> parallel which extends through the middle of the county.

Christian is the second largest county in the state of Kentucky with an area of 725 square miles. In my life I have roamed over this county and love it as it is so diverse. The rock formations are sedimentary of limestone, and sandstone. We find deposits of coal, oil, galena, and iron pyrite.

The county is divided in specific geologic as well as physical divisions. The land, as we see it, is the upper Mississippian geologic formation, in the North section which is composed of younger strata as it has not eroded as has been the case in the southern part of the county, which lies in the lower Mississippian.. Most of the county is in what is termed the Pennyroyal with the exception of the extreme northern section which is in the Western Kentucky Coal fields. It is in the northern part that was generally settled first. There is an exception as along the Westfork of the Red River in the southeast corner was first settled by John Montgomery and James Davis. The reason the northern part was settled more rapidly than the south was the presence of timber, game, and spring water.

As a child, my parents took me to Fairview where we attended church picnics. Fairview or Davisburg as it was previously known is on the eastern border of Christian County with Todd County. It is here where the Jefferson

Davis monument, a poured concrete obelisk, rising 351 feet up to the sky. This structure was built by the UDC to commemorate his birthplace. I was more interested in the slides on each side of the steps that led up to the monument base. Jefferson Davis was born, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1808, just over the present Todd County line where Bethel Baptist Church is relocated. The caretakers cottage behind the monument is a replica of the Davis homestead. From the top of the monument one can see Pilot Rock, an intriguing place. It is a limestone monadnock. The surrounding land has eroded leaving this feature high upon the countryside. This place, we are told was a favorite place for the native Americans to lookout for the approach of enemies. At one time the State Forestry Department had a firewatch tower on the top of the rock formation. It has been a favorite place over the years for picnics and outings. Of recent years soldiers from nearby Ft. Campbell have used the south face of the formation to weekend repel which is part of their readiness.

In the Apex area lies a natural bridge that can be accessed by parking on the side of highway KY 189 and walking across the road from the Apex Fellowship Church. A walk through the woods to the east about a hundred yards one will see a limestone bridge formed by nature of water running against and finally through, forming a natural bridge.

The next feature is one mile north of the town of Crofton, which is exposed in two cuts, one in the CSX railroad cut and the other the Breathitt Parkway cut. Here we find the Whitethorn Fault where the layers of rock are exposed by

these cuts in the syncline. This was first surveyed in 1905 by Julius Fohs. Then again in 1914 by A.F.Crider and referenced on the then published quadrant map. Again A.H.Sutton surveyed it in his report in 1929. My information on this geologic feature is based upon the work of Dr. Willard Rouse Jillson who studied it in the middle autumn of 1957. This fault structure sits on the dividing line of two watersheds, one to the west into Dripping Springs a branch of the Tradewater River and to the East the drainage is to West Fork of Pond River. Within sight of the Breathitt parkway lies lake No. 5 one of the one of the six lakes in the West Fork Pond River watershed net work. Also to the North we find the terrain as being a part of the geographic area called the West Kentucky Coal field. This area thus dips into Christian County but stays north of Crofton. To the south of this area the topography is identified as part of the Pennyroyal Region of Kentucky. Therefore the remaining part of the county is in the Pennyroyal region. This fault was caused by a collision of the Pottsville and Chester sandstone conglomerates, of limestone and shale dipping to the north, creating a disturbance in the layers. Faults are the result of pressure that moves the rock formations. These formations are what is termed as sedimentary. Christian County rocks are all sedimentary. According to Jillson this fault formation brings tourist to see this feature that rivals with Mammoth Cave, Cumberland Falls and the Breaks of the Sandy as one of the most scenic places in Kentucky. The popularity of this geologic feature is surprising to me. This is just one of many faults that are hidden within the earth of Christian County.

on the south fork which to this day is subject to heavy flooding. The Little River forks come together about four miles south of Hopkinsville near old Hargis Bridge and from there goes to the Cumberland River near Barkley Lodge. The other principal river in the county is West Fork of Red river along the southeastern part of Christian county. This drains into the Cumberland River at Clarksville.

Some of the principal springs in the county are Quarles spring which is on the Wayne Hunt farm just west of the Ft. Campbell reservation at Garrettsburg, and Noah's spring which is now in Ft Campbell below Garrettsburg. This spring has been in yesteryear a poplar picnic area but now is abandoned. Swallow Springs, just a mile north of Beverly, is a strange one, for a few days after we have a downpour of rain, this spring rises up to swallow up a lot of the surrounding countryside. KY 107 is raised along the borders of this reservoir and just five years ago went above the road and into the fields to the west. Swallow Spring is a part of a huge underground water system that stretches from just east of Novadel Farm and Golf Course going in a westward direction to Boyd's Lake, just west of Julian including the system that drains the Sinking Fork of Little River, and thus to Gracey. When the water goes down one can find numerous fish that are trapped. It is said that the fish from this spring have no eyes which indicates they have adapted to the underground caverns. Along this path are sinks that one can hear the water running. Other springs in this general area are Means spring, on the Lilly farm, and Torian Springs on the Carlyle Kirkpatrick farm. Carlyle named his farm thus Torian Springs Farm.

Even the town of Hopkinsville has its own underground stream, for one begins at the old Ellis Ice Factory on Clay Street from which they drew water to make 100 lb. blocks of ice. This subterranean stream meanders to the west and a bit to the North through the downtown area, and empties into the town fork of Little River just north of the Bassett Bridge or 9<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, as it is known today. It is indelible in my memory as our father tapped this stream when he had a basement dug under the hardware store. Before 1951 our store was located where Barts Restaurant is today. During the 1937 flood, we had three pumps working to control this stream from damaging the hardware store and they just held their own.

Here it might be well to mention at least two sulfur springs or wells in the county. One out the Cox Mill Road which was commercialized at one time called Smithson's mineral well, and the other which is on Ft Campbell Blvd behind the Burger King Restaurant. In the 1830's this land and spring was given to the city of Hopkinsville for a park, but was never developed. It is oft when one is riding across the Little River Bridge that one can smell this sulphur spring, as it empties into the river at that point. It has been mistaken for an overflow of sewerage but it is in reality from this sulphur spring.

There are several caves in the county with names such as Campbell's off the Greenville Road and Fleming's Cave off the Butler Road. Both of these cave systems are in the eastern part of the city. The most famous cave in the county is Bells Cave now called Glovers Cave in the extreme southeast part of the county. Here there was once a large Indian community of the Mississippian culture. They

inhabited this cave for a period of maybe 1200 years. There is evidence in the midden piled up there. Dr. Vietzen an anthropologist from Ohio examined this site in much detail and wrote a book about it, called, "The Saga of Glovers Cave." South of Pembroke is the Williams site which was composed of a quarry site, a village, a ceremonial mound and burials. The graves found are lined with limestone slabs. This area is connected to the village habitants that were at Glovers Cave some four miles away. Montgomery Creek is nearby and the supposed water source for this community. Another lesser known site is the Duncan site that is in the southwestern area now in Ft. Campbell. This site was excavated in 1930 by the University of Kentucky. Both of these sites have numerous stone box graves as well as other artifacts. A few years ago I came upon the Funkhouser booklet entitled Duncan Site and copied it and made it available to the archeological section at Ft. Campbell. Another site here in Christian County lays along banks of a stream that transverses the Greenville Road. In the 1823 C.S. Rafinesque, an eccentric botanist from Transylvania University came to town, visiting John P. Campbell, who lived on South Main Street on the lot just south of the First United Methodist Church. While here he also visited Dr. Charles Wilkins Short. In 1825 Dr. Short became the President of the botanical and medical school at Transylvania. Dr. Short became Dean of Louisville Medical School which was the nucleus that became the Medical School at University of Louisville. Rafinesque cataloged plants of interest and discovered an area where he said there was a large Indian village. Constantine S. Rafinesque taught at Transylvania University from 1819 to

1825, and traveled the state recording and identifying botanical species and listed 5 sites and 12 monuments here in Christian County. He did not elaborate in the list that is a forward in the 1824 edition of Marshall's History of Kentucky. He entitled this as Ancient History or Annals of Kentucky with a survey of the Ancient monuments of North America. Another article that he wrote was republished in 1944 from an earlier document, *Chronica Botanica*, Volume VIII No 2 spring 1944, chapter V, page 60-75 in which he outlines his travels in Kentucky searching for the ancient history as well as new botanical species.

Over the years certain sections of the county have taken on colorful names, such as Durgan and if that is not enough Humdurgan is a bit further down the road. Illa Earle Fowler who wrote about this section in her booklet, "Down In West Kentucky." This is in the Pennyrile State Forrest area, no one would claim to live in Durgan. Natives would say they lived on the edge of Durgan or that it was down the road a piece. Another section of the county with a similar vague location is Flat Lick. A section of the county to the North and west of La Fayette that has a hard pan under the plow depth thus the name. The lay of the land is a bit on the wet side. The first settlers prized the timber that was in this section and termed the blocks as: Little Flat Lick Timber and Big Flat Lick Timber. Having access to a woodlot was important to those early landowners. They had to have fuel for their homes as well as timber to build houses and barns as well as to make

tobacco sticks. These so called sticks were used to hang tobacco in the barns to cure.

One of my favorite books is one written by Jesse Stuart, called "My World." In this book he tells of his favorite places in Kentucky and lists them as My W Hollow, where he lived in Greenup County, and My east Kentucky, my Bluegrass, My Knobs, My Louisville, My Western Kentucky coal fields, my Pennyroyal and My Purchase. It is a delight as I go through the sections of Kentucky and from his description identify each section as we go through. Then he tells of his favorite places in the world. From this I would like to list some of the places that are my favorites...In England I would list a little town by the name of Woodstock which is North of Oxford, and as Jesse Stuart also said any where in Kent, which would be for me too., and in France the small town of Montpon just east of Bordeaux, and Lourdes one of the most spiritual places I have been, and it like the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem have been made spiritual because of the popularity and attitude of those who have visited there. One place I have never been but would like, is Andorra. This small country lies in the Pyrenees Mountains between France and Spain. Once I was within 27 kilometers of Andorra while in the small town of Tarason in southern France. To see this road sign "27 Kilometers" and not being able to go there, for we were on a bus tour, heading east toward Carcassonne and Nice. Then there is Southern Greece as it looks out into the blue waters of the Aegean sea, the olive groves and the Greek music. On the Northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, between Capernaum and Bethsaida, there is a villa that just



looks like home, as it looks out on one of the most beautiful sites in the world...the Sea of Galilee. The Wailing Wall is special as is the land south of Elat and the beautiful white sand beaches on the shores of the Gulf of Aquaba, the white sand beaches must go for 50 miles or more without a structure built there as it was 22 years ago...just white sand beaches, blue clear water and wandering camels. The water is so clear one can see the fishes thirty feet down; brilliant colored species of fish and marine life is abundant....Then I will mention the South Seas, and to some of the Islands there, such as Espirito Santos and neighboring Salvo, Tulagi and the Russell Islands. These are some of my favorite places, but there is no place in this world that would draw me from My Christian County, with its farms, and fields of pastures and corn, soybeans and wheat among other crops, its trees of Red and White Oak, Maple, Tulip Poplar, Walnut, and Hickory....our skies rival those anywhere else in this world. In the spring the dogwood blooms giving the appearance of a snow bank up against the woods a site that gives us a thrill. There are many wonderful places in this world but for me, give me Christian County and its people for this is my land.