

A pictorial tour of Caldwell Springs-Frances area

Each area of our county has many interesting features. Some are old and some are new. Some are historical and some will one day be a part of our history. Let's take a tour of the Caldwell Springs-Frances area and see a few of their places of interest.

Maple Sink Lake

Parts of this information on Maple Sink is from an article in The Crittenden Press written in 1983. Maple Sink Lake is located between Frances and Caldwell Springs Church. Maple Sink was formed around 1887 as a result of a large sinkhole filling up and failing to permit drainage of the several hundred acres of farmland surrounding it.

The sinkhole, it was believed, led to an underground stream, which carried the water to the Cumberland River. The hole was filled after a nearby barn burned and its remains were dumped into it. Because of the number of maple thickets in the area, the barn rubbish eventually clogged with leaves and drainage of the farmland ceased. Following a rainy season, Maple Sink Lake was created covering a large area.

During the 1950s a fishing resort sprang up in the area with a good tourist business. People from southern Indiana, Illinois and central Kentucky used to come and camp there all the time. The camping area was owned by Addie Brasher Davis Sunderland. The camp was known as Maw's place.

Caldwell Springs resident Margaret Parish told me a story that had been shared with her by her father-in-law, Hiram Parish. When the sinkhole got stopped up they tried to dynamite it open so the water would drain out, but it only stopped it up completely and water held more than ever. I imagine the farmers, at the time, hated to lose their farmland. Margaret and her family use the area of lake on their property for water recreation, such as boating and skiing.

Mr. Loya Travis, who has always lived in the area, and today resides on Main Lake Road, remembers when Maple Sinks was only a low area with sink holes in it. This low-lying area had a lot of large timber in it. Over the years, it started holding water, which got deeper and deeper. Eventually, the trees started to decay. He remembers when you could still see the stumps sticking up out of the water. He thinks the water in some places is 25-30 feet deep. The lake is approximately a mile long.

When I was growing up in the 1950s, Maple Sink Lake



Marion Pogue chose this modest stone for his grave.

was a mystery and was talked about a lot. One story asserted that there was a monster in the lake, on the order of the Lockness monster. After talking with Mr. Travis, I wonder if possible these decaying tree stumps, at times, would resemble a



monster, maybe a large fish, or maybe just a tall tale.

My dad took me fishing there once when I was about 10 years old. He rented a boat from Ma Davis, and we went out on the lake. I didn't do much fishing. I was too busy looking in the water for the monster. But it was always interesting, this mysterious lake in the Caldwell Springs-Frances community.

Caldwell Springs and Koon Cemetery marked

The Caldwell Springs Cemetery has a new memorial marker. Sue Peek shared with me that the ladies group from the Caldwell Springs Baptist Church helped with this project. She said they sold cookbooks to pay for the monument. The church congregation thought it would be good if the cemetery was identified with its own marker. The marble marker is indeed an asset to the cemetery and church.

The Koon Cemetery, located on the Larry and Margaret Parish farm, on the Caldwell Springs Road also has a new sign. This sign was made possible by a state cemetery grant in 2006.

Many early pioneer families from this area are buried



John Hodge

Thanks go to Margaret Parish, Greg Tabor and Doyle Polk for seeing that this cemetery is maintained.

Tobacco Barn

Still on the Parish farm within walking distance of the Koon Cemetery is an old tobacco barn. The barn is still in fairly good condition. It was once the barn of the Brasher family, who originally owned the land.

The barn was built with the wide doors on both sides so they could drive the wagon loads of tobacco inside. Once inside they would take the tobacco and hang it from the cross beams on laths, also called tobacco sticks. The empty wagon would then exit on the other side.

These barns are almost extinct in our area, truly a stately relic of a bygone era.

Pogue family of Frances

The Pogue family was a very prominent family in the Frances community. The Pogue homeplace is still



The Pogue homeplace is one of Frances' jewels.



The John Hodge home was located on the same farm where a prosperous spar mine was in operation in 1902.



Frances School's gymnasium was dedicated in 1939 with a basketball victory over Flat Rock.

there. The tombstone with the earliest burial date is that of Jacob Coon, who was born Aug. 26, 1822 and died Sept. 26, 1840.

At some point, the family changed the spelling of its name to Koon.

standing today.

The family was an important part of the Frances community for many reasons. It contributed to the area by providing teachers, store owners, businessmen and good and caring neighbors.



Maple Sink is a fascinating lake in the southern part of Crittenden County. It was formed by a sink hole many years ago.

Marion F. Pogue, the first owner of this home, was a well-known educator and politician. He held several state offices in his time, and one office was that of our area's state senator from 1930-1934.

His grandson, Forrest C. Pogue, was also well known for his many accomplishments. Although he was born in Lyon County, his family moved to the Frances community while he was a child. He is also buried in the Pogue family plot in the Frances Cemetery.

These two men had respected, well-known and with highly-distinguish careers. They could have had large impressive monuments to mark their burial place, but both chose to be buried in their home community of Frances with only a modest monument to mark their resting place.

Frances Gymnasium

This historic gymnasium was built in during the years 1938-39. It was a WPA project. The Oct. 27, 1939 Press tells us that Frances dedicated her new gym Oct. 17, by defeating one of her foes, Flat Rock High, in a close basketball contest. The cheerleaders of both teams and students nearly tore the house down with their lusty yells of encouragement. The score was Frances Bulldogs 23, Flat Rock High 22. The cheerleaders were Pauline Moran, Alfreda Kemper and Mary Crider.

The gymnasium was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

Hodge Ancestral Homeplace

This lovely old house, located on 855 North just a little way from the Frances community, was once the home of John Dancy and Maria Durham Hodge. Maria died in 1896, but John continued to live there and raise their children.

From The Crittenden Press, Jan. 30, 1902, we learn that the Hodge mine, said to be the largest and best paying spar mine in the world, was located on John Hodge's land. It put out from 40 to 60 tons of spar a day. Mr. Johnnie Hodge, told that he got \$3,000 a year as royalty. The Hodge mine was located not too far from the homeplace.

John Dancy Hodge died May 3, 1924 and is buried beside his wife in the Owen Cemetery.

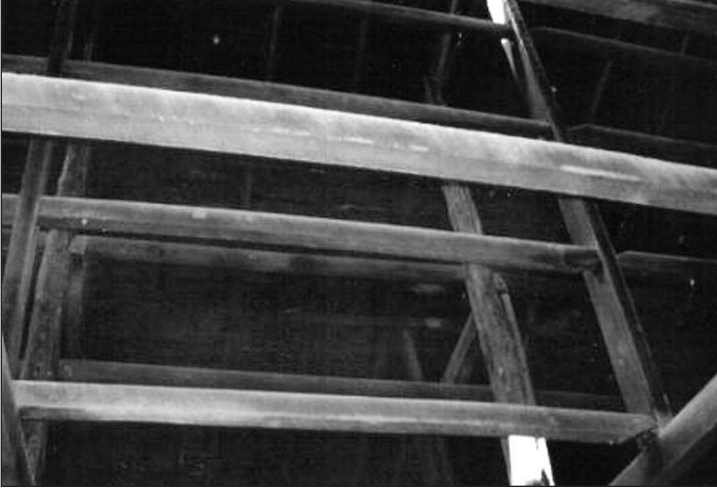
Today, John D. Hodge's great nephew, Donald Bruce Hodge, is the owner of this beautiful country home.



Koon Cemetery was cleaned up thanks to a state grant.



The Caldwell Springs Church ladies organization helped raise money to place this new marble stone at the cemetery.



This old tobacco barn is located on the old Brasher farm in the Caldwell Springs community.



This is an outside picture of the same barn as above. The barn is located on land now owned by the Parishes.