

History of Estill County's Sand Hill area is now available

A history of the Sand Hill area of Estill County is now being put in print and will be available by early August in a 3-volume work called "Estill County's Sand Hill/Witt Springs/Lower Bend Community."

The books are being produced by Jerry Rose and Jerry Eltzroth, two individuals who both have connections to the communities. And both have previously written books or articles about these communities and Estill County in general.

Jerry Rose has put together several books related to the county over the years, and Eltzroth has written a column for the Citizens Voice & Times newspaper for several years.

They describe the book as a "historical remembrances of the development and a way-of-life for a close-knit group of primarily farm families."

The book tells us that "The specific area of Estill County commonly known as Sand Hill is a primarily rural portion in the west-central section of the county. The land area totals 13 sq. miles (8,200 acres), representing 5.0 % of the area of Estill County's 256 sq. miles (163,840 acres). Sand Hill area is basically an elongated upland

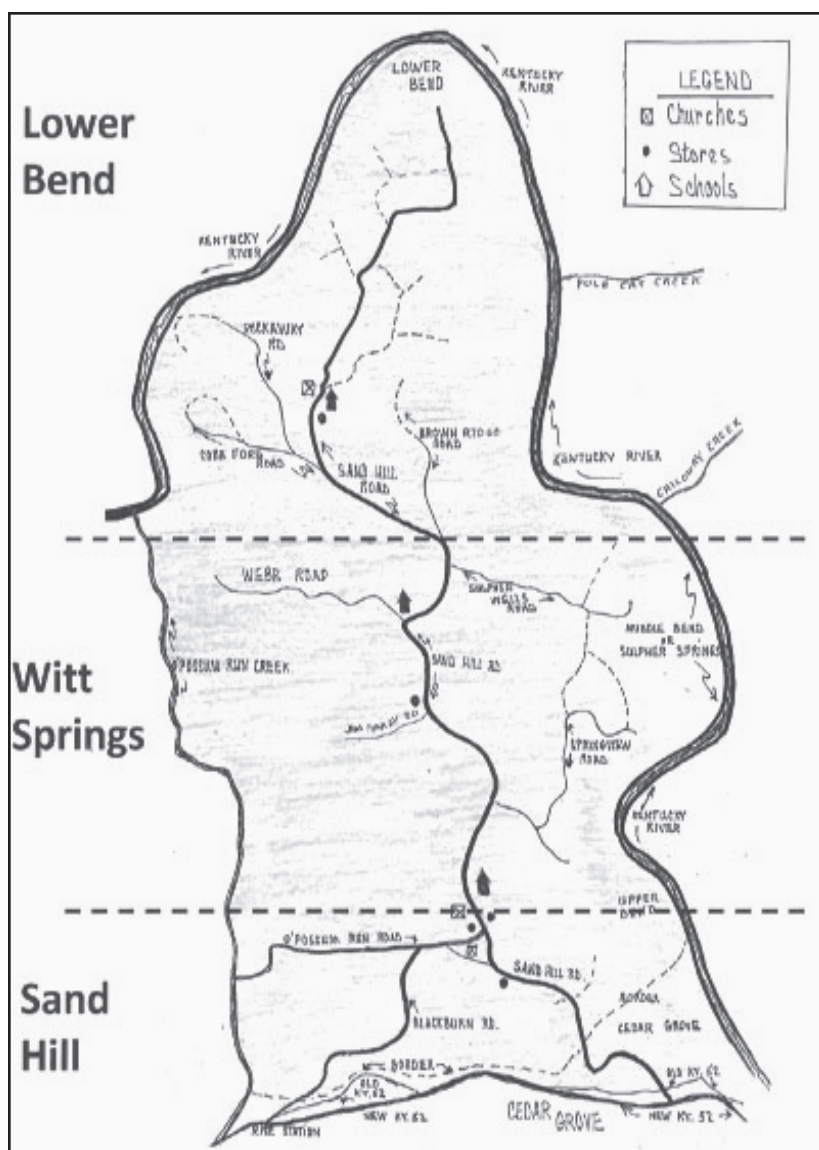
ridge trending in a northerly direction from the main access at KY 52 about two miles west of Irvine in the community of Cedar Grove. The southern portion of Sand Hill area is commonly referred to as Sand Hill, containing fairly small farms and higher population density; whereas continuing further north the middle portion is known as Witt Springs, containing larger size farms; the northern portion is known as Lower Bend as the Kentucky River forms a loop around the portion and this portion contains the largest size farms."

The area is bounded somewhat by O'possum Run Creek to the west, Kentucky Highway 52 on the south, and the Kentucky River to the north and east.

The primary objective of this book is to document the development of the Sand Hill/Witt Springs/ Lower Bend Communities from the beginnings in the very early 1800s and the continuation of the Sand Hill area until the mid-1900s when the mainly agriculture-based economy and farm lifestyles began to significantly change. Primary attention is given to documenting the various farm activities, farm families, and

residents scattered throughout the Sand Hill area from its settlement about 1800 up through about 1960. Additional features, issues, and happenings that contribute to Sand Hill's lore and history are also included. These include historical accounts of the grade schools, churches, cemeteries, general stores, cottage businesses, and the basic infrastructure. But perhaps the primary legacy of this book will be its documentation of the 'people' of Sand Hill and the means by which they lived and prospered during its initial 160 years as told by and handed down by its people. During these years Sand Hill/Witt Springs/Lower Bend was largely considered a 'close knit' community dominated by several generations of the same families. Marriages between children of Sand Hill families were common during the early years of Sand Hill's existence and continue to a lesser extent today.

Sand Hill has long been considered one of the more desirable areas of Estill County to live and raise families. This was particularly the case when its agricultural economy was considered beneficial and desir-



Map of Sand Hill/Witt Springs/Lower Bend area

able for the residents. This continues today even though most today's residents consider Sand Hill as an area for family residences as its primary desirable attribute. Farming continues to command a moderate role for the river bottom lands, but much less role for the uplands.

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Hargett Elementary School 2nd Grade April 28, 1960

Left to right, front:
Teacher Lillian Isaacs,
Tracy Randall Patrick,
Terrie Joan Wood,
Richard Dennis,
Teresa Puckett,
Wanda Gilbert,
Elizabeth Tuttle,
Charles Dean Barnes.
Second row:
Paul Powell, Gary
Henry, James Edward
Horn, Doris Hollon,
Melvin Edward Hardy,
Linda Spicer,
Jerry Rawlins,
Ernest Scott Jones,
Beverly Bailey.
Back row:
Paul Edward Estes,
Nancy Lou Williams,
Linda Estes, Joe
Isaacs, Lela Juleen
"Judy" Puckett, Ernest
Lee Sparks,
Margaret Winburn,
Pamela Goolman.



Hargett Elementary School "Class of 1966" and Estill County High School "Class of 1970"

by TRACY RANDALL PATRICK

A popular local site on Facebook is the Hargett Alumni site where many interesting pictures have been posted and shared.

I attended Hargett Elementary for eight years, as we had no middle school then, before attending Estill County High School for four years. There are several individuals with whom I attended over 12 years of school with, since many of us went to a summer school in the summer of 1969 as well.

My family moved from Tipton Ridge to Winchester Road then to Cressy in 1955 or so, which meant I started first grade at Hargett since we had no kindergarten then.

At that time, students for one fiscal year were in the same grade, so some had already turned six but many of us were still five when school started.

Despite being near the same age there was a great difference in the size of students. One girl

and one boy each weighed 110 pounds by the second grade while many of us were much smaller. I weighed barely 30 pounds so I was one of those used as an example when comparing big to small.

Large or small, it was the smallest that got the first paddling, on the first day, according to my friend Ernest Scott Jones. I remember it well.

Looking back at the history of Hargett School, it could be broken down into three eras. The school was original in a two-room white building which was next to the site of the present day entrance of the current building and the Hargett Fire Department.

Later, Hargett became the first "consolidated" school in the Estill district and took in students from small one-and two-room schools throughout the north end of Estill County.

The new school had eight classrooms (grades 1-8) and shacks out back for boys and

girls students and one for the teachers. We did have running water from a cistern with a couple of water fountains.

By the time I graduated in 1966, they were building a new addition with a gymnasium, rest rooms, a cafeteria and a library which later students got to enjoy during the third era.

Our first grade teacher was Mrs. Ica Mays, who just passed away a few months ago. Pictured above is Lillian Isaacs who was teacher for the second. Our class' third grade teacher was Madeline Bellamy.

Fourth grade was Opal Richardson who liked to lead her students with singing early in the morning. Eudell Tipton taught 5th grade. She spent recess and early morning writing statements on black boards which were covered by shades and pulled up as the day progressed to have students copy sentences from.

Sixth grade was Virginia Barnes who later married Bob

Walker. She was from Millers Creek and had taught a couple of years in Ohio.

Dillard Tipton was our 7th grade teacher. He was a veteran teacher and had taught at schools at Tipton Ridge where he lived. He was the husband of 5th grade teacher Eudell Tipton.

Shelby Naylor came to Estill County from southern Kentucky and taught a couple of years at Hargett. He was also our pastor at Ivory Hill Baptist Church and succeeded George Grubbs both as 8th grade teacher and as Ivory Hill pastor.

All in all, they were a pretty good group of teachers which led to our class doing very well in high school and in later life. Ica Mays was the last to go, and I'm sure all are dead now.

Of the class pictured here, all but five of us graduated from high school in 1970 plus a couple graduated in a later class.

One classmate, Gary Henry, moved away in the 3rd grade.

Another, Wanda Gilbert, moved later as well and graduated in 1970 at George Rogers Clark in Winchester.

Only two students are dead now, that being Charles Dean Barnes and I'm pretty sure Joe Isaacs is as well. A couple of students I have no idea about and don't even remember one being in our class.

There were several others that moved into the district in later years and finished the 8th grade with us and graduated high school with us as well.

Student pictures were generally taken in the fall and class pictures such as this one were made in the spring. It was a different time then than now and many of our parents would buy the singles but not the class photo. Luckily, Linda Spicer Estes was able to hang on to this one and was willing to share.

NOTE: This is the year for the 50th year reunion of the ECHS Class of 1970 but it likely won't happen because of Covid.