

"JERSEY RIDGE, near Maysville, Ky.

Jersey Ridge lies in that part of Mason County, Kentucky, designated in the early records as Tebbs Preemption, granted to him by the Commonwealth of Virginia by patent bearing date of 20th day of August 1786. This grant included what is now known as Hilltop, Hillcrest, and the Maysville County Club, County Club Heights and on westward to the east side of Lawrence Creek. "Lawrence Creek drew every incoming group of improver, many of whom discovered the choice lands already taken." (Clift's History of Maysville & Mason County).

Jersey Ridge Road extends from the old Limestone road, Highway 10 and crosses that highway to a trail leading to Charleston Bottoms. This tract of land afforded opportunity for extensive speculation. One finds erstwhile Reverend William Wood, pioneer of Baptists in Northern Kentucky, active in buying and selling land in this area. These transactions probably led to the dismissal of Parson Wood from the Limestone Baptist Church which he organized at Washington in 1788.

According to tradition, the name Jersey Ridge was chosen in memory of the state from which those early settlers had migrated. They are reputed to have come from the section of Plainfield, New Jersey, and were members of the Scotch Plains Baptist Church. They had the same pastor as did the group of families who settled May's Lick, (Drakes, Morris, and Shotwells). Dr. Daniel Drake in his "Pioneer Life in Kentucky" relates that it was the Rev. William Wood who visited the Scotch Plains Community and gave such glowing accounts of Kentucky that the emigration to Old Virginia which had been considered was forgotten.

The pastor of the Scotch Plains church was the Rev. William Van Horne. He had been a chaplain in the Continental Army, was a friend of George Washington, and a Whig. For his services in the Revolutionary War he had been granted a section of land near Lebanon, Ohio.

Gailard Hunt, in his *Life in America One Hundred Years Ago*, writes: "Of New Jersey there was a general verdict that the people were industrious, the western part of the state traded with Philadelphia and East Jersey with New York, so that manners in the former were like those of Philadelphia and in the latter like those of New York."

On Jersey Ridge there are several early built houses about which there are interesting stories. A short distance from the junction of the Germantown Road stands a large grey brick house, known as the birthplace of Judge Charles Kerr. It is an imposing house of two stories, one room and hall and an ell off three rooms to the rear. One learns from the old deeds that Samuel Kerr, Sr. purchased the land upon which the Kerr house was erected from the children of John Senteney, who had in 1799 purchased the same land from William Wood and Sarah, his wife. The land has since been divided and sold to many people. Judge Kerr was the famous man having written "Thirty Years of the Supreme Court" and edited the well-known five volumes of the History of Kentucky, which bears his name.

On part of this land stood the original Rand and Richeson Seminary for young men, and a tree standing there was supposed to have been planted by U. S. Grant, who went to school there.

On the opposite side of the road and about one-fourth mile from the Limestone Trail (now the Lexington Road, U.S. 68), stands a house of very early construction. Originally built by Richard Corwine, Sr. He bought the land in 1797, he as a Lieutenant in the Revolutionary War, serving from the state of New Jersey, where he was born at Amwell in 1748. He married Sarah Snyder and both are buried in the old Baptist Cemetery at Washington, Mason County, Kentucky. They had a famous grandson, Aaron Corwine, a portrait painter whom Mason County delights to claim. He was the youngest son of Amos Corwine and Mary (Polly) Merrill. He was

born in 1802 and early showed his remarkable talent for painting. He studied in Cincinnati and later in Philadelphia under Sully, and also in England. He died at the early age of twenty-eight years. The Mason County Museum is proud of owning a beautiful self portrait of Aaron Corwine. Richard Corwine was a man of prominence, being one of the petitioners in 1787 for separation of Bourbon County, and he was in the list of delegates from the Limestone Baptist Church in Washington to a meeting of the Bracken Association held at the church built by Lewis Craig, who was the leader of the "Traveling Church".

The original Corwine house was a log house, a story and a half with a lean-to and the later residence added in 1804. This log room has long been the center of interest as well as the center of hospitality in the old building. Its logs cemented with a mixture of mud and cut straw, its ash floor, under which on a sleeper is carved the date 1803, holds persons interested in the past, spell-bound.

Tragedy struck this old house at a later date as a boy murdered his father in this old room. He spent over fifty years in the asylum for this deed. This house is now owned and beautifully restored by the owners (1976), Mr. and Mrs. James Stripling.

(note - Kerr house now owned in 1976 by J. McNeill, Jr.)