

# Horse Branch Cemetery

## Ohio County, KY

By Jerry Long

The cemetery is located on the north side of Highway 62 at Horse Branch just east of the Horse Branch Elementary School. It is adjacent to the Wilson Cemetery. In my interview of Horse Branch historian, Mrs. D. C. (Pearl Rains) Ferguson (1894-1987), on 18 April 1983 she said the Wilson Cemetery was the Dan T. Wilson (1841-1924) family cemetery. His son, Job Wilson (1873-1942) gave an acre adjoining the Wilson Cemetery to the town of Horse Branch for a public cemetery and it was setup as the "Horse Branch Cemetery". Several obituaries refer to the cemetery as the Horse Branch General Baptist Church Cemetery. Inscriptions in cemetery were copied by Jerry Long on 13 April 1981 and additions were made in 2021.

Arnold, Ivan H.	17 Dec 1888	23 Mar 1963
Katie D.	19 Aug 1889	2 Feb 1967
Arnold, Joseph F.	14 Oct 1865	14 Nov 1956
Laura A.	1 Dec 1875	4 Dec 1962
Barnes, Claude E. (World War II veteran)	24 Jan 1891	14 Sep 1952
Nola	5 Dec 1903	30 Nov 1998
Barnes, Claude E. Jr., Bud	5 Aug 1927	16 May 1975
Brown, John H.	31 Jul 1897	19 Apr 1936
Brown, Mary Ann	17 Dec 1857	29 Jul 1948
Bratcher, Judy	10 May 1888	26 Mar 1932
Burden, Harry	11 Feb 1904	14 Dec 1981
Alice	4 Mar 1906	13 Jan 1968
Clouse, David E.	26 Jan 1941	8 Mar 1941
Crahen Frank [unmarked grave]	c1889	Aug 1939
Craig, Annie	1877	1951
Craig, James T.	12 Aug 1905	27 Jan 1962
Corinne	14 Jan 1910	4 Jul 1958
Craig, Lloyd C.	15 May 1946	16 Aug 1978

Craig, Randall Lee	1932	1975
Crume, Dionne Rhea	9 Jan 1971	9 Jan 1971
Crume, George W.	1882	1956
Myrtle	1886	1973
Daniel, Lon T.	1883	1976
Ida	1885	1958
DeHart, Eliza Rains	1856	1950
Geary, Everett E.	1897	1983
Ruth L.	1919	1975
Havens, Bobby [unmarked grave]		
Landrum, Blemer B.	1916	1974
Anna Mary (married 30 Jan 1940)	1917	1994
Lewis, Marvin	1965	1982
Locke, Phillip W.	11 Apr 1922	9 Sep 1983
Park, W. H.	28 Dec 1869	18 Jan 1957
Vicie	10 Feb 1873	13 Sep 1956
Perguson, Dee C.	1893	1976
Pearl Rains	1894	1987
(married 31 Dec 1917, 1child, Dee C. Jr., born 1921)		
Perguson James M.	24 Aug 1870	1 Nov 1953
George Ann	14 Aug 1872	17 Apr 1945
Pierce, Harvey A.	4 Sep 1888	5 Jan 1965
Ethel E.	21 Nov 1888	29 Oct 1969
Stevens, Calvin L.	6 Dec 1889	12 Nov 1957
Cliffie	1886	1968

Additions:

Arnold, Sheldon D. (S Sgt. US Army WWII)	7 Sep 1912	5 Sep 1990
Burgess, James C. (Pvt US Army WWII)	3 Apr 1922	24 Jun 1987

Catherine R.	25 Apr 1916	20 Sep 1994
Craig, James K. (AB US Air Force)	10 Mar 1938	18 Apr 2000
Craig, Lewis T. (US Army Vietnam)	19 Aug 1940	19 Dec 2004
Crume, Darren T. Barbara L. (married 26 Jul 1996)	6 May 1961 20 Apr 1951	22 Nov 1999
Crume, Stephen	1965	2002
Decker, Carl Stanley	6 Jan 1942	23 Feb 2010
Fulkerson, Willie H. Lois M.	25 Dec 1906 19 Jun 1916	9 Sep 1990 3 Feb 1993
Geary, Barbara Janette Smith	28 Dec 1942	1 Jun 2019
Geary, Chloe McCaslin	17 Apr 1943	3 Nov 2016
Geary, Leonard Alton Judlida J. (parents of Rita, Frances, Tammy & Alton)	1 May 1938 17 Jan 1947	21 Apr 1999 17 Feb 2002
Geary, Marvin Lewis	23 Aug 1965	16 Nov 1982
Goodwine, Reba R.	6 Dec 1907	24 Nov 1989
Harvey, Robert	25 Feb 1953	19 Mar 2008
Havens, Sandra Kay Havens (d/o Daymond & Carolyn)	7 Aug 1965	7 Aug 1965
Hayden Robert Dwayne	27 Jul 1970	13 Aug 2014
Jones, Thomas Clark (US Navy Vietnam)	18 Feb 1948	29 May 2012
Lindsey, Wesley Edgar	17 Apr 1932	17 Nov 2014
McCoy, Christian Edward	12 Feb 2011	12 Feb 2011
McCoy, Holly Helene Hudspeth	15 Mar 1984	12 Mar 2017
Scott, Claude T "Scotty"	22 Oct 1944	3 Oct 1995
Sharp, William C.	12 Aug 1932	8 Dec 2002

Stevens, Alice M. Broughton	15 Apr 1925	11 Feb 1987
Stevens, Mary A.	20 Apr 1947	
Stevens, Raymond Lee	20 Apr 1921	14 Feb 2007
Sutherland, Randell Edwin, Jr.	20 May 1973	27 Apr 2011
Swift, Roger Dale	29 Sep 1961	2 Nov 2018
Walker, Donald Cooper	19 Jan 1934	13 Aug 2013
Wallace, David Lee	19 Aug 1965	9 Sep 2013

Note: On Findagrave.com there are several that died before 1961 that are listed as being buried at the "Horse Branch Cemetery" based on the fact their death certificates said they were buried at Horse Branch, KY. The latter only means that they were buried in the Horse Branch neighborhood which could include several cemeteries. Several of these individuals were found to be buried elsewhere.

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY  
 Wednesday, 7 February 1900 p4

**Notice.**

OHIO CIRCUIT COURT. }  
 PETITION IN EQUITY. }

We, the undersigned citizens and legal voters of Ohio county, Kentucky, most respectfully petition the Judge of the Ohio Circuit Court to establish or cause to be established a town of the sixth class at Horse Branch, Ohio county, Kentucky, on the Illinois Central railroad, in said county, at a point where the Owensboro, Falls of Rough and Green River railroad intersects the Illinois Central railroad at a place that is now known as the station of Horse Branch, on said railroad; the name of said town is to be Horse Branch, and the object of your petitioners is to have a town established at that point as provided for by chapter 89, article 8, Kentucky Statutes, creating and organizing towns of the sixth class. The proposed town as set out by metes and boundaries is as follows:

Beginning at a stone on the S. W. corner of said town 42 poles N. of the Illinois Central railroad, near Miller's corner; thence S. 83½ E. 160 poles to a stone near the creek; thence N. 2, W. 160 poles and extending 32 poles beyond the railroad to a stone; thence N. 83½ W. 160 poles to a stone; thence S. 2, E. 160 poles to the beginning, inclosing in said boundary an area of one-fourth of a mile in each direction necessary to form a square.

Your petitioners state that they and each of them are now legal qualified voters of Ohio county, Kentucky, and reside in said boundary as set out above. and that there are now residing in said boundary 162 inhabitants, and of that number there are 44 legal qualified voters residing in said boundary. They state that the proposed town of Horse Branch is located at a regular freight depot and passenger station on the Illinois Central railroad, and that many people passing through said town are compelled to wait for several hours for trains coming in and going out from said station, and that they have no police protection whatever and can not have same unless said town is incorporated as set out above. They state that they have no officers of the law residing in said town or near same and that the citizens and residents thereof have no protection from violation of the law frequently occurring around said station, and that by establishing said town as a sixth-class town that it will afford them all necessary protection, and that the establishment of same is a public necessity, and especially those citizens residing therein would be greatly benefitted by the establishment of a town of the sixth-class as set out above.

Wherefore, your petitioners pray judgment establishing a town to be known as Horse Branch, in Ohio county, Kentucky, within the prescribed boundary as set out above, and they pray that the court appoint for said town not less than five trustees, a police judge, marshal, assessor and all other officers necessary for the government of said town, and finally they pray for all proper and equitable relief.

J. B. McDaniel,	R. L. Boyd,
Wm. M. Awtry,	Wm. Dehart,
Perry Dehart,	John Moore,
R. L. Canan,	W. H. Lyons,
J. W. Bradley,	L. N. Worley,
J. B. Martin,	Dr. J. L. Lynch,
C. D. Short,	G. B. Staples,
W. E. Doyle,	Ed Taber,
Van Hazelip,	W. A. Miller,
Isaac Haycraft,	W. S. Cole,
S. Pierce,	J. A. Purcell,
C. E. Ellington,	M. B. Crowder,
H. Morris,	W. C. Leach,
W. M. Miller,	Joe Miller,
L. S. Storms,	J. M. Furgeson,
Jas. M. Miller,	W. M. Underhill,
R. L. Viteto,	James T. Acton,
H. Short,	L. P. Crowder,
G. T. Price,	Wm. P. Miller,
W. B. Crews,	L. S. Simpson.

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Train depot at Horse Branch – picture taken by Jerry Long on 5 August 1980

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 12 July 1982 p1V



—J. D. Schwalm, Messenger-Inquirer

The train station was once the hub of a bustling town, but the Illinois Central Gulf Rail-

road will officially abandon the tracks through Horse Branch Tuesday.

# Once a railroad boom town, but now the railroad's gone

By KAREN OWEN  
Messenger-Inquirer

**HORSE BRANCH** — German opera singers aren't a common sight here anymore.

This former stagecoach stop and railroad boom town has been reverting back to one-horse status for years, but Tuesday it becomes official. Illinois Central Gulf Railroad is abandoning its 15-mile Horse Branch-Fordsville line, company officials said Friday.

The abandonment concludes a plan ICG began in 1977 to end service over 40 miles of spur line track connecting Owensboro with its Louisville-Paducah line where it passes through Horse Branch.

The company finally achieved half that goal last year, when it abandoned the section between Owensboro and Fordsville after wrangling in and out of court for nearly four years with shippers and businessmen who wanted to keep the spur open.

The Ohio County towns ICG will leave behind Tuesday may seem small and sleepy now, but in the heyday of railroad activity here in the 1920s, they boasted hotels, flourishing businesses, and even celebrities passing through on their way to Louisville or New Orleans, area residents remembered Friday.

Pearl Ferguson, 88, a Horse Branch native and local historian, says she can remember when four passenger trains a day passed through town on the main Paducah-Louisville line, and two a day made the round trip across the spur line to Owensboro.

The railroad's main line opened up in 1876, and the Horse Branch-Owensboro spur was built in 1887, she said.

The branch line passed through Magan, Olaton, Davidson Station, Narrows, Fordsville, Deanfield, Phil-

pot, Whitesville and Seven Hills on its way to Owensboro, said Narrows native Henry Daniel, 75, who still lives in the area.

In the years before World War I, Horse Branch had three hotels, a restaurant, drugstore, barbershop and two general stores, and everyone in the town either worked for the railroad or ran a business that profited from the railroad's presence, she said.

Narrows was also a bustling little town in the '20s, with four doctors, a saw mill, a barrel stave mill, and a general store that sold everything from automobiles to medicine, remembered Daniel.

"Everything revolved around the railroad," Mrs. Ferguson said. After church on Sunday everyone went home, ate lunch, and headed for the depot to watch the trains come through.

The trains brought traveling salesmen, dentists, preachers, and on Saturday, a supply of light bread, remembers Eula Mitchell, 67, a Narrows native who now lives at 2230 Stratford Drive, Owensboro.

"Many famous celebrities came through," including a German contralto named Madame Schumann Heint, who was quite famous in the early part of the 20th century, Mrs. Ferguson said.

The ribbons of track connecting Horse Branch and Narrows with the rest of the world was the quickest way to get around in a horse-and-buggy world. "We rode trains like people (today) ride in automobiles," Mrs. Ferguson said. Before Ohio County's first beauty shop opened, she used to pay \$1 for a 30-minute train ride to Owensboro to get her hair styled, she said.

Daniel rode the branch line 20 times a month to Fordsville High School for \$3.36 a month. "You wouldn't run a car

very far on that today," he said with a chuckle.

"We even went a-courtin' up the railroad," Mrs. Mitchell said.

ICG's tracks are in such bad condition now they wouldn't be safe to travel, even if the trains continued to run, Daniel said. "I wouldn't have ridden that train (under such conditions) for \$50," he said.

ICG discontinued passenger trains over the spur line in the 1930s, but allowed passengers to ride on mail coaches in "mixed trains," carrying mail and freight until sometime in the '40s, Daniel remembered.

The extinction of the passenger train also killed off most of the businesses along the line. Hotels had no customers and families moved away, natives of the area said.

ICG's freight business across the spur began to falter, too, in the late 1960s and early '70s, said James Wilson, 64, of Horse Branch, who operated ICG's depot there for two years until 1976.

"They really didn't have enough traffic (on the spur) to pay expenses," he said. There were times when he worked at Horse Branch when locomotives chugged back to Owensboro "with just a caboose."

These days Horse Branch and Narrows are pale shadows of their former glory, the towns' natives agreed.

About a dozen people live at Narrows now, Daniel estimated, and the store that sold everything from cars to cough syrup was finally torn down two years ago.

Progress ruined Horse Branch, Mrs. Ferguson said. "I know that sounds kind of corny. Trains have always been a part of my life. . . . I miss them vet."



**The old caboose has served as a landmark in Horse Branch for many years.**



**The old post office was a place where locals would hang out. The one bedroom apartment attached has served as the first home for many new-lweds. In 1966, the apartment rented for \$15 a month.**

Ohio County Times-News, Hartford, KY, 2 April 1981 p2B:



This old photo of Horse Branch School was made in 1914. In the first row are Stoy Phelps, Logan Arnold, Charlie Duvall, Carmon Duvall, Harold Stuart, Willie Phelps, Estil Heath, Joe Buck Arnold, Johnny Phelps, -----, Thomas Ferguson. In the second row are Jerome Heath, Louanna Miller, Florence Frymire, Alliene Frymire, Vonnie Wilson, Ella Wilson, Ursa St. Clair, Duell St. Clair, Eloda Heath, Vonnie Duvall, Lillie Phelps, Nellie Phelps, Lillian Stuart, Merry Heath. In the third row are Fred Heath, George Johnson, Foy Ragland, Gabe Arnold, Vigie Evans, -----, Randolph Frymire, Foy Wilson, Buster Wilson, Tommy Wilson, Ermine Short, Maymee Wilson. In the fourth row are Wavie St. Clair, Hayden Brown, Joy Arnold, Iva Short, Belma Wilson, Nola Arnold, Damie St. Clair, Marie Skaggs, Opal Stuart, Nellie Arnold, Charlie Ragland and teacher, Miss Martha Sandifer. In the back row are Musker Wilson, Pearl Rains, Thomas Ragland, Edna Short, Charlie Johnson, Ruby Stuart, Roy Geary, -----, Herbert Wilson, Leslie Wilson and teacher, Vernon Crowder.

Kentucky Place Names, Robert M. Rennick (Lexington, KY):

University of Kentucky Press, 1984, pp144, 255 & 353:

**Horse Branch** (Ohio): *hawrs brānch* (Rosine). This village with po is on the Illinois Central Gulf RR and Horse Branch of Caney Creek, 11 mi e of Hartford. There was a stop here in antebellum times for a change of horses on the Owensboro-Morgantown stage run. According to one account, it was customary, after a long trip, to take the horses to the branch for a dip. On one occasion a horse got stuck in the mud and local people ran about excitedly crying "horse in the branch!" The Elizabethtown and Paducah (Illinois Central) RR was built through in 1871 and a station was built on land deeded by William M. Miller and Job Arnold. The po was est on Mar 8, 1871, with Miller as the first pm. Over the past few decades the community has shifted ½ mi n to US 62. 255, 703, 1400.

Sources: : "How Horse Branch Was Names", Loreca Arnold, Ohio County Messenger, Beaver Dam, KY, 20 October 1967; "Horse Branch – Stage Coach and Railroad Played Initial Parts in Its Beginning", Nina Schroader, Ohio County News, Centennial edition, 26 December 1974 p3C; and Hartford, KY.