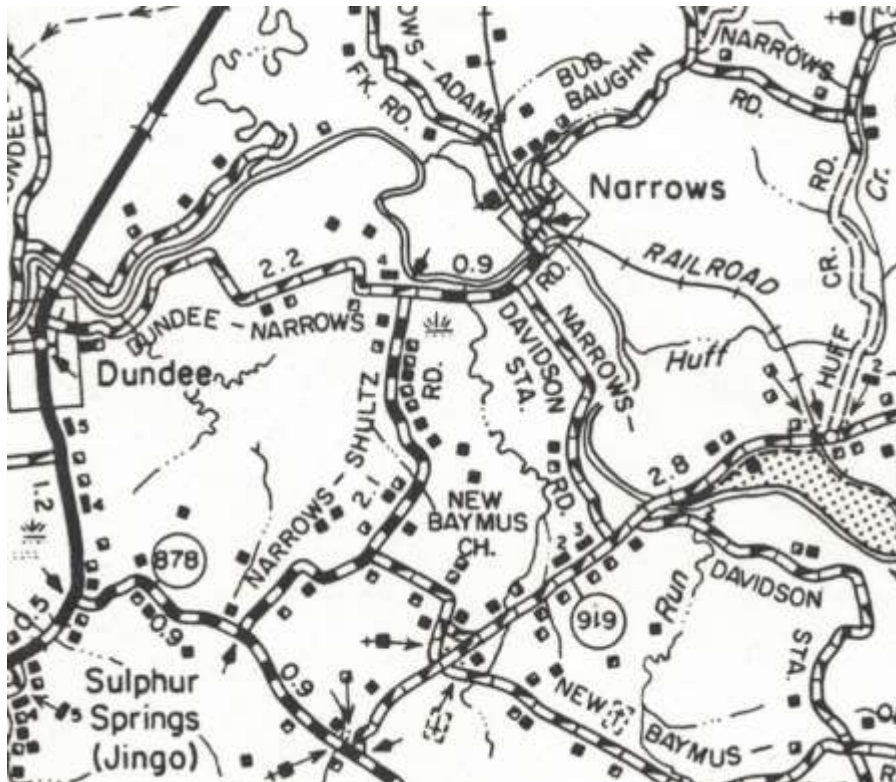


# Narrows, KY

By Jerry Long  
c.2025



1979 map of Ohio County, KY

Narrows was christened when a post office was established there on 1 July 1893. It was previously called Phillip's Station. Oswald G. Jett (1917-2003), historian and author, wrote: "Another settlement named for one of my relatives was Phillips Station (now Narrows) on the bank of Rough River near Fordsville." It was named for Solomon J. Phillips. The son of David Barnett Phillips & Catherine Bradshaw, Solomon was born in Ohio County on 25 June 1829; he married Mary Frances Black on 12 November 1852. He was a farmer and was residing near Fordsville, in Ohio County, at the time of the 1860 census. He was killed by a bolt of lightning on

4 May 1868. He was buried in the Roseville Cemetery, in Hancock County, KY. His widow, Mary F., Phillips died in 1910 near Narrows and was buried at the Gentry-Petty Cemetery. On an 1886 map of Ohio County, KY the name, "widow Phillips" is plotted where Narrows is now.

(Sources – Hancock County, Kentucky When It Was Frontier Country, Volume I, Oswald Jett (Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 1986) p.325; Hancock County, Kentucky Paths Widen, Volume 2, Oswald Jett (Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 1989) pp.369-370); Map of Ohio County, Kentucky, John J. McHenry, Hartford, KY, 1886; "Narrows, KY.", Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 26 February 1896, p.4.)



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 29 March 1893, p.3:**

Fitzhugh Renfrow, very successful merchant at Hines' Mill, will open up a branch store at what is known as the Narrows, on the new line of road from Fordsville to Horse Branch, in the near future.



**Appointments of U. S. Postmasters at Narrows, 1832-1971, National Archives:**

Narrows post office established 1 July 1893

Postmaster:	appointed:
Fitzhugh Renfrow	1 July 1893
John H. Thomas	22 May 1905
William C. Loyal	6 October 1913
Mrs. Verna Rae Loyal	1 February 1944
Elizabeth Renfrow	19 October 1944
Miss Elizabeth Renfrow	10 August 1945



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 3 January 1894, p.2:**

HINES MILL, KY.

Our new road to Phillip's Station his just been opened. Wo can't see how we ever prospered without it. Now for a bridge across Adam's Fork and we'll be in it.



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, 22 June 1894, p.2:**

NARROWS.

Since this interesting town is of too recent origin to be found on the maps, a few points in regard to it will probably be of interest to REPUBLICAN readers.

The Narrows is a beautiful town of about 60 inhabitants, situated on a gentle slope overlooking the calm, placid waters of Rough River 15 miles Northeast of Hartford.

It is also the most important shipping point on the O. F. R. & G. R. R., 32 miles Southeast of Owensboro. Three years ago the site of this busy town was a dense forest and probably the most inaccessible point in Ohio county.

The railroad touched the river at this point and within a few weeks a big saw and grist mill was put in operation by Powers & Renfrow, a large dry goods business by Renfrow Bros., a hotel by Capt. Frank Wilson and a blacksmith shop by Carnecke & Co.

By the energetic effort of Renfrow Bros. three public roads have been opened up leading from important points to this place. A post office established and a wire foot bridge spanning Rough River is in course of construction. And last but not least the Narrows has a wharf at which the Steamer, Uncle Frank, loads and unloads its heavy burden of freight carried between this point and Hines' Mills situated some miles below.

The Uncle Frank is no toy but a genuine keel bottomed, hot water steamer, carrying a burden of 8 tons with 42ft of length and 16ft of width. The new dam at Hines' Mills makes the Uncle Frank independent of Uncle Sam's River and Harbor Committee.

Our new steamer is manned by the following efficient officers and crew, Capt. And owner – Frank Wilson. Engineer – Jo White, First mate – Anslem Wadkins Wilkinson, Wharf master and general agent – John Renfrow, Cook and roustabout – Jim Carnecke. Further information on application by  
SHAMROCK.



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, 17 May 1895, p.3:**

A new telephone has been put up from Hines' Mill to Phillip's Station and it is now in good working order. This line will be a great convenience to the patrons along the route.



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 4 December 1895, p.3:**

The new wooden bridge, built entirely by private individuals across Rough River at the Narrows, was completed and a heavily loaded wagon passed over it last Wednesday. This bridge, which was constructed by Joseph Hunter, is said to be one of strongest of the kind ever built in the county. The untiring energy of Fitzhugh Renfrow, W. H. Moore, Virgil Renfrow, Joseph Hunter, Hiram Powers and others is what accomplished the work. Just why these men were compelled to build a bridge of such importance from their private means, when so many costly bridges have formerly been built from the county funds, is strange indeed.



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 26 February 1896, p.4:**

**NARROWS, KY.**

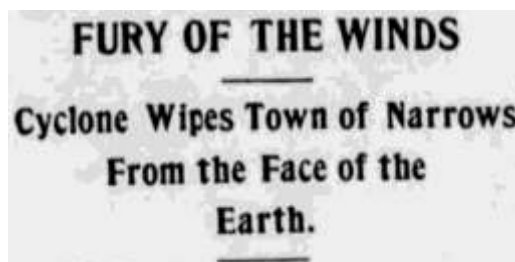
As I have seen nothing in your valuable paper from this place for quite awhile, I presume that your correspondent is wrapped in a profound slumber that knows no waking. Now, while I do not wish to intrude upon his rights as correspondent, I feel that I am justifiable in writing, from the fact that the people here are all but sleeping, much less dead, as the world must judge from the mysterious disappearance of your worthy correspondent.

I will first state that the Narrows takes its name from the narrowness of Rough River at this point, and this locality was so called by the first settlers. Three years ago, in building the extension of the Owensboro and Fordsville railroad, it touched the creek at this point, and a station was made that is known as Phillips Station. Immediately Renfrow Bros. built a large and commodious store house and filled it with a general line of merchandise, at the same time Powers & Renfrow put up a saw mill which has since done much work. A blacksmith shop and a hotel were started and soon after Uncle Sam established a post office. Since, roads have been opened in most all directions and a twenty-five hundred dollar bridge put across Rough River by Renfrow Bros., Powers & Renfrow and a few enterprising farmers in the immediate vicinity. Thus, this point which was half a dozen years ago frequented only now and then by a solitary fisherman or huntsman, has become quite a business center and easily accessible from all directions. In the way of natural resources, we have fertile bottom lands on three sides and on the fourth a hill full of coal, stone and there is no telling what else. Stone is now being extensively quarried and shipped to Owensboro, slack barrel stave timber is being shipped to Louisville, and many railroad ties are being made. In fact, everything and everybody seems to be thoroughly alive.

P.B.P.



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 12 February 1904, p.1:**



Narrows, Ky., Feb 10. – About 3:45 Sunday morning a cyclone of fearful energy swept down upon Narrows, and in the twinkling of an eye the hamlet was in ruins.

Of the six business houses and thirty residences, not a single building escaped partial or total destruction, and though no lives were lost a score of persons escaped as if by a miracle.

The property losses will amount to \$15,000 distributed as follows:

F. Renfrow & Co., stock of goods damaged \$7,000; Fitzhugh Renfrow, brick business house, total wreck, \$4,000; Ed Davison, one business house total wreck, and one business house, and a dwelling damaged \$1,000; H. C. Powers, damage to stock barn and saw-mill \$2,000; Robert Duff, new residence not quite completed, totally demolished, \$2,000; John P Johnson, residence

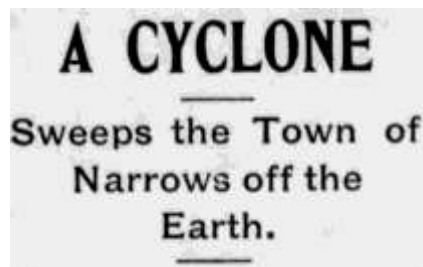
entirely destroyed, \$1,000; B. P. Petty, damage to stock of groceries, \$100; Roy Armendt, damage to house and stock of furniture, \$100; Allie Wymptsatt, damage to business house, \$100. Other losses in damage to residences and outbuildings will exceed \$2,000. The covered wooden bridge across Rough river was literally riven into splinters. The three story brick business house, 30x80 feet, occupied by F. Renfrow & Co., general merchants, was razed to the very ground level, scarcely one brick being left upon another, and the stock of goods, worth \$12,000 by recent invoice, were taken, piece by piece, from the shapeless mass of brick and mortar Sunday. The clothing department was on the third floor, and many garments were found in the tree tops on the hill east of the town, and a coat and vest were found in Thos. Harrison's yard two miles away.

The narrow escape from death of a number of persons are not, perhaps, the least interesting incidents of the storm. Only five minutes before the destruction of the brick building, Fitzhugh Renfrow had gone to the third floor to better secure some windows against the approaching storm. Frank Berkley, the night-watch, registered time at the door of the brick store about two minutes before it collapsed and had just entered his residence, thirty yards away, when the storm wrecked it, turning it almost over and jamming the doors so they could not be opened. To the terror of imprisonment in a house, rapidly going to pieces in the storm, was added that of an overturned and broken kerosene lamp. Fortunately the oil did not ignite and he and his family went out of the house by the panel of the door from which the wind had already blown the glass. Bob Duff and Bud Lawrence were batching in the A. Johnson drug store which was completely wrecked. The front of the house was wholly blown out, and, but for a stack of lumber on the east side of it, the walls would have fallen flat on the ground and crushed to death the sleeping, young men. Without waiting to dress they ran over to the brick store for shelter and were shocked to find it a pile of chaos. Frank Wade was sleeping in an upstairs room and a window was blown across his bed. He started down and when at the head of the stairway, another window struck his back. He said he thought it was hailing glass. John Johnson, a bachelor living in a small house near the river, had an appalling experience with the winds. After the storm John was there, but the house; where was it? Not a board marks the spot where it stood. Johnson was in bed when the storm struck his house, but so quickly and completely were sills, body and roof swept away that he does not know how it went or how he escaped with his life and limbs.

The storm seems to have been a local one, originating near Dundee, three miles below here, and to have expended its final energy in destroying this village. It destroyed Clay Crawford's house and the house colored man just south of Dundee, and damaged much fencing and out buildings between that point and this.



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 12 February 1904, p.8:**



**Every Business House and all  
Residences but one  
Wrecked.**  
**Renfrow & Armendt's Fine Brick  
Store Building Levelled to  
the Ground.**

The town of Narrows in the Northeastern part of this county on the Illinois Central Railroad was wiped off the face of the earth Sunday morning at 4 o'clock by a cyclone. Only one residence was left uninjured and only two others are habitable after being repaired.

The storm came about 3 o'clock with a strong wind, heavy rain and building flashes of lightning. There was some little alarm and everybody in the place was aroused. After the storm passed and clouds rolled away to the east a feeling of safety returned but it lasted only a few minutes. Before the people could get to sleep again a wild roaring sound was heard in the southwest and in a few minutes the cyclone was upon them in all its fury. It was all over in an instant almost, but in that instant the town was practically destroyed.

The most important loss was the fine brick store building of Renfrow & Armendt. It was 28 by 70 feet and two and one-half stories high. The cost of the building was about \$7,000 and the stock it contained was worth not far from \$20,000. The building was blown to the ground, the pile of ruins being not more than three feet high. Brick and pieces of timber were carried from the wrecked building to the top of the high hill to the east of the place. The water which accompanied the storm and which continued to pour for an hour afterward, completed the work of ruining the stock, very little of which will be salable.

John Renfrow's hardware store was wrecked and his stock scattered over the side of the hill. The roof and gable of the Johnson drug store were blown away and the body of the building turned over. Everything in the house was ruined.

Alney Wimsatt's saddle and harness shop was torn from its foundation and sent rolling up the hill, being battered to pieces after it had fallen before the wind.

Hiram Powers' sawmill, which stood on the bank of Rough river was torn to pieces, the boiler being moved from its foundation and partially crushed by falling timber, Powers' dwelling was also reduced to ruins.

Only one dwelling in the place escaped damage, that was a large and light two-story house that was erected for use as a hotel. It is very unsubstantial structure but it was not injured in the least.

The telephone wires were blown down and communication with Narrows and Fordsville has not been reestablished. It is reported that much damage was done to farm buildings and barns throughout the neighborhood.

As if by a miracle not a soul was hurt. This is attributed to the fact that everybody was awake and most of the people were up when the cyclone came. The people turned out of their houses into the inky darkness, with bricks and timbers flying through the air, but when daylight came it was found that nobody was injured.





**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, 29 April 1904, p.4:**

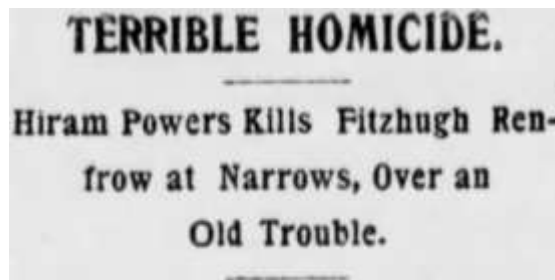
**NARROWS, KY.**

April 26 – B.P. Petty, who has conducted a grocery here for several years, has brought on a stock of dry goods.

F. Renfrow & Co.'s new business house, to replace the house destroyed by the cyclone, is nearing completion. It is a frame structure 48x80 foot. Messrs. Isaac Foster, Beaver Dam, and W. D. Luce and John King, Hartford, put in the glass front of the building.



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 5 April 1905, p.3:**



At Narrows, this county, late last Friday evening, H. C. Powers shot and killed Fitzhugh Renfrow. The killing was done with a pistol, four shots from which entered Renfrow's body.

The men were formerly partners in business, which was dissolved by mutual consent. Lately, however, there had been trouble between the men, which culminated in the shooting. It seems that there had been some of Powers' fencing destroyed by fire and he thought Renfrow was responsible for it. It is said that Renfrow agreed to pay for any damage that was his fault, but this did not seem to satisfy Powers.

Both were well known business men of their community and highly respected. The murdered man belonged to the well known firm of Renfrow Bros., general merchants, and Powers was in the sawmill business. Powers had been laboring under strange hallucinations lately. He imagined that some persons "had it in for him," and were trying to rob him or do him personal injury. Several misfortunes of late years only made him worse along this line. His hallucinations assumed the form of mild insanity. He seemed to think he was being persecuted by everybody.

Friday evening Renfrow was at the residence of Dr. Maxwell, who married Powers' daughter, looking after the construction of a brick pavement. Powers came up and, it is said, began to curse and abuse Renfrow about the fence matter. Powers, it is said, began to advance on Renfrow in a threatening attitude, and Renfrow picked up a brick and struck Powers in the breast, almost knocking him down. Powers then pulled a pistol and began shooting at Renfrow at short range. Renfrow attempted to save himself by grappling with Powers, but the latter wrenched his pistol hand loose and shot Renfrow four times. One shot struck Renfrow in the leg, another in the arm, while the two that proved fatal struck him in the breast and stomach. Renfrow was entirely unarmed and had nothing on his hands to defend himself.

When Powers emptied his pistol he pulled a dirk knife and was about to use it on Renfrow, it is said, when several men, hearing the shooting, rushed up and disarmed him. Renfrow immediately sank to the ground and was carried to his residence, where he expired within ten

minutes after he was shot. Powers fled to his residence where he procured a shotgun and fortified himself in a closet next to a fireplace. His wife was in the room with him. It was known that Sheriff C. P. Keown was at the residence of his father a few miles away and he was immediately sent for. He made a wild ride through the darkness to reach the I. C. train, which he boarded just in the nick of time. The train was held at Narrows long enough for the Sheriff to go to Powers' residence and arrest him, which took only a few minutes. He was brought to Hartford by Sheriff Keown, arriving here about 11 o'clock.

Powers was guarded at the Commercial Hotel after he arrived here. He has been very sick and is in a desperate condition, both physically and mentally. He says he regrets the killing of Renfrow but seems to think that he had to do it in order to defend himself. His wife has been with him and he has been under the constant care of a physician. The verdict of the Coroner's jury was cold-blooded murder.

Renfrow's funeral occurred Sunday and it is said it was the largest attended occasion of its kind that ever occurred in that community. He was a man who was universally liked and respected and his tragic end was a shock to the whole community. He leaves a widow and three children.

The case came up before Judge J. P. Miller Monday afternoon. Powers waived an examining trial and was committed to jail without bail.

[Note: Hiram Caleb Powers (1859-1917) was convicted of murder and sentenced to 21 years in prison. In 1906 he was transferred from the Eddyville prison to the asylum at Hopkinsville, KY. He was paroled during 1910-1916. He died on 14 April 1917 at Valliant, McCurtain County, Oklahoma, where he was buried in the Valliant Cemetery.]



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, 22 September 1911,  
Industrial, Historical and Illustrated special edition, p.20:**

**F. RENFROW & Co.  
MAMMOTH GENERAL STORE.**

This mammoth general merchandising store at Narrows, now one of the largest and most prosperous of its kind in Ohio county, was founded at Dundee, Kentucky, twenty-five years ago by Fitzhugh Renfrow, a hustling farmer boy. In 1892, he opened a separate store at Narrows, under the management of his brother, J. B. Renfrow. A few years later Fitzhugh Renfrow joined his brother at Narrows and erected a handsome brick store building which was destroyed by a cyclone in 1904. Within a few weeks the commodious building illustrated here arose above the ruins. In the meantime A. R. Renfrow became a partner in the business, which was enlarged to early a stock of twenty thousand dollars.

After the death of Fitzhugh Renfrow in 1905, A. R. and J. B. Renfrow incorporated the business under the name F. Renfrow & Company, and later O. D. Fentress was admitted to partnership.

The firm motto "F. Renfrow & Co. Sells Everything" is literally true, for there is no ordinary want that cannot be supplied from the stock carried by this firm. Besides the main building shown with this article, they have three warehouses stored full of goods. A square deal to everybody, and a stock embracing every ordinary want has made F. Renfrow & Company one of the most successful business enterprises in Ohio county and Western Kentucky.





J. B. Renfrow, pres..



A. R. Renfrow, gen, mgr.



The F. Renfrow & Co. Store

J. H. THOMAS  
POSTMASTER AT NARROWS, KY.

J. H. Thomas, postmaster at Narrows, Kentucky, was formerly editor of The Hartford Republican, and has a host of friends in Hartford and Ohio county. At the present time he is postmaster at Narrows, and since he received his appointment he has conducted the affairs of the office in a strictly business like manner. While he has never been a candidate for office he has been actively associated with Republican politics in the county for a long while, and holds a prominent place in the councils of his party, and his advice is often sought by the leaders in matters pertaining to the politics of the county.

WILLIAM PARK  
OLDEST RURAL MAIL CARRIER.

William Park was born in Ohio county Kentucky, thirty-three years ago. He was educated in the common schools, attending later West Kentucky Seminary at Beaver Dam, and Bardstown College. For a number of years he was teacher in the schools of Ohio and Hancock counties, Kentucky, and in September 1904. he was appointed a rural carrier at Narrows post office, on the first rural route established in Ohio county, and has been continuously in the service since.

Postmaster J. H. Thomas, under whom William Park serves, says that of the forty thousand carriers in the service of the government he has not a superior.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 20 April 1958, pp.1B & 2B:**



By MARGARET MORGAN

You won't find it on most maps. You won't find it easily by road. But it nestles on the side of a gently rolling hill near the Rough River. By car it's some three miles north and east of Dundee in Ohio County.

It's the community of Narrows, Ky., a village with a busy past, quiet present, and the kind of people who inspired the expression "salt of the earth."

Originally the community was known as Phillip's Station but the name was changed because of conflict with another Phillip's Station. It derived the name of Narrows from the narrow ledge on which the railroad squeezes between the hill and the Rough River.

In the town's hey-day six passenger and four freight trains of the Illinois Central passed through Narrows each day. Meeting the passenger trains was the most exciting thing the townspeople did.

Sawmills were among the community's first industries.' One was started by E. A. White about 60 years ago. Another was owned by Fitzhugh Renfrow and Hiram Powers.

Renfrow also owned a general merchandise store, a large brick structure; and with his cousin, A. R. Renfrow, he operated ginseng gardens which were the talk of Ohio Countians for miles around.

B. P. Petty came home from the War Between the States and opened a general store. He and neighbors also bought stock in the Equity Tobacco Warehouse Company when it opened. Burley and dark leaf were sold and prized at the factory, and shipped out by train in hogsheads made from staves processed in Narrows' own sawmills.

Corn was also shipped from Narrows in quantities, all going out by rail.

Coal mines – the Gentry, Truman, Sanders, and Isler – supplied coal for families in Narrows and communities as far away AS Breckinridge County.

People who traveled by any means other than railroad crossed the Rough River by covered bridge.

Then one spring night shortly after the turn of the century a devastating cyclone struck the town.

Down went the smokestack and most of the other structures of the sawmills. The covered bridge was blown away, and Renfrow's big brick store was leveled. Residences were also destroyed.

That night marked the beginning of the decline of Narrows. To his family and friends Hiram Powers was never the same after the town was struck. Then one day he killed his business partner.

The two men had been the town's leading citizens. Something went out of the community with Renfrow's death and Powers' imprisonment. True, a relative, J. B. Renfrow, had opened a general store. Tom Petty also opened a store, and B. J. Petty's other son, Alva Petty, eventually took over his father's business.

Telephones came to Narrows as train service was gradually cut down.

C. W. Sharp, Fitzhugh Renfrow's son-in-law, operated a sawmill there until about 1937, when he moved to the Jackson Flats near Masonville.

Meanwhile tragedy struck again. J. B. Renfrow was killed by a dynamite explosion in 1929.

His widow, Mrs. Ruth W. Renfrow, operated the store after his death, and is still its proprietor. His daughter, Miss Elizabeth Renfrow, has been the postmistress of Narrows for 13 years. The postoffice is located in a corner of the large storehouse.

Renfrow's other three children – James, Mrs. Agnes Daniel, and Mrs. Mary Louise Bowie, live at Narrows and Madisonville.

Renfrow's store has undergone few changes since his death. The store building is as large as many department stores. That meant there are many shelves. Some are stocked with modern staple groceries and household items.

But the town's population is not large and shelves were not needed for new merchandise so Mrs. Renfrow has kept many of the items which were carried in stock half a century ago.

A balcony with a rail encircles three sides of the store. On a dark portion of that balcony, a portion which has not been wired for electricity, rest two wooden coffins of a style used in Colonial days. The visitor who would like to examine them may borrow a coal oil lamp from a shelf in the store.

Also on the balcony is a washing machine – a slightly modernized version of a washboard – which Mrs. Renfrow used some fifty years ago.

Nearby is the first switchboard Narrows' telephone subscribers had, and close to that one of the first radios which came to Narrows, the kind of radio which had a gracefully curved horn.

On another shelf is a gasoline lantern and a "Renfrow" sewing machine, a model which was made to be sold by Renfrows.'

Downstairs horse collars hang on one wall near an ancient but still accurate set of scales. Behind the scales is a gasoline iron.

Nuts, bolts and screws have their own tall, fat bolt case such as is seldom seen now.

Stored in another part of the store are a spool bed, the Renfrow family's cradle, and the long, slender tables on which the coffins were once displayed.

It all sounds like an antique collector's paradise. But even though the hospitable community of Narrows welcomes any who would like to visit and look, Mrs. Renfrow can convince even the most persistent that her possessions are not for sale.

"They'll belong to my children when I no longer need them," she says. "They can do with them as they like. But I have nothing to sell."



[on left] OUTSIDE RENFROWS' STORE - On a much-carved, long used bench outside Renfrows' store in Narrows, Ky., Moses Bailey and young Wayne Blacklock muse on the type of subjects store porch sitters have mused on since such gatherings first started. The store was built about the turn of the century and still contains many items of merchandise carried in stock 50 years ago. The store, originally owned by J. B. Renfrow, has been operated by his widow since 1929. [on right] MRS. RUTH W. RENFROW carefully balances an old set of scales in the store she has run for a number of years. A gasoline iron sits on the counter in front of the scales.



[on left] ELIZABETH RENFROW, postmistress at Narrows for the past 13 years, also helps out in the store when she is not busy in the postoffice. Here she sacks nails beside a very old bolt case still being used in the store. [on right] SCARCELY AUTOMATIC - Mrs. Renfrow and her son, James B. Renfrow, examine a washing machine she used a half century ago. She says of it, "The machine was an improvement over the wash board."

The following are captions to seven other pictures in this article:

- **LAST WEEK** - Mrs. Mary Coppage has been Narrows' telephone operator for years. Last Thursday the dial system came to the little Rough River community.
- **THIS WEEK** - Mrs. Grace Harrison got a new white telephone when the switch was made to the dial system. She says she likes being able to dial, but she'll miss Mary Coppage's neighborly accommodation.
- **SATURDAY CHORE** - A small resident of Narrows reluctantly agrees to a Saturday haircut. Barber Shelby Coppage, husband of Narrows' former telephone operator, is considering retiring.
- **SHADOW OF THE PAST** - Star Route Carrier Oscar Pate of Owensboro uses a kerosene lamp to get a better look at old coffins on the balcony of Renfrows' store. The store once stocked clothing and furniture as well as coffins, but now carries only groceries, household supplies, and feeds.
- **INSIDE RENFROWS' STORE** - A large stove with a two-story pipe is the center of social life in Renfrows' on cold days. Around the stove are Mrs. Ruth Renfrow, Mrs. Robert E. Humphreys Sr., Moses Bailey, and Paul Robinson. The railing visible in the top of the picture outlines a balcony around three sides of the store.
- **AS OF YESTERYEAR** - Renfrows' store is not stocked as it once was, because Narrows is no longer a large community. But its owner has kept intact much of the merchandise once featured, Note for instance, the gasoline iron, the "beehive" string dispenser, the kerosene lamp, a "Renfrow" sewing machine, the horse collar, the early radio horn, and the "plug cutter."
- **J. PETTY** - Three generations of Pettys have made their home in Narrows. Alva, shown seated above in a chair which graced Narrows' depot fifty years ago, is the son of the man who founded the store Alva now operates. brother, Tom Petty, another well known merchant of Narrows, died two weeks ago.



**Ohio County News, Hartford, KY, 26 December 1974,**  
**“Centennial Edition”, section V, p.10:**



A NARROWS SCENE about 1900 depicts the gigantic logs cut in the woods and hauled by oxen. The man in the log is believed to be Jack Walker. Cyrus Sharp was identified as one of the onlookers in the town. Mrs. Arnett Williams, Beaver Dam, provided the photo which she says she does not know how she received it.





NARROWS POST OFFICE about 1900 when John Henry Thomas, from right, was postmaster. His daughter, center, Corrine Thomas Park, was postal clerk. Two were rural carriers, Will Park, and Morton Kuykendall, left. Center right is B. P. Petty, Narrows Merchant. In the background is C. C. Park, who was the father of Arnett Williams and Mrs. Louise McPherson, Narrows. Corrine Park was their mother. Photo was courtesy of Mrs. Arnett Williams.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 13 October 1985, p.1E:**

The following about the Narrows post office is from the article – “Friendly Sorts: Postmasters make post offices more than a place to buy stamps”:

... Rural post offices are typically housed in small block or wood buildings off two-lane highways with an American flag on the outside and a postmaster inside who does everything from sort mail to bookkeeping to sweeping floors. "It's a lot of responsibility no matter how small the office is. You are totally responsible for people's mail," Ms. Locke said. In the case of the post office in Narrows of Ohio County, which is located off a gravel road, the post office is largely responsible for a community's identity.

"Some of them think when I retire they will probably take our post office away, but I want us to keep said Narrows Postmaster Ira Mae Robertson [sic], 68. "Without a post office it just seems like the place goes downhill and nobody cares if they come in."

Hugh W. Hardesty, 67, knows just about everyone there is to know in Narrows. But for those he doesn't, "just a few trips to the post office and it don't take long until you know them," he said.



Glancing over at the old coal stove and oak bench at the center of her post office building, which until last October contained a general store, Mrs. Robertson said.

"People say there's been a lot of tobacco patches raised around that stove in the winter and there's been a lot of big fish caught too," she said.

"They drive her crazy sitting in here talking," said Paul Robinson, 69, Mrs. Robinson's husband.



Postmaster Ira Mae Robertson fears Narrows will lose its post office when she retires.



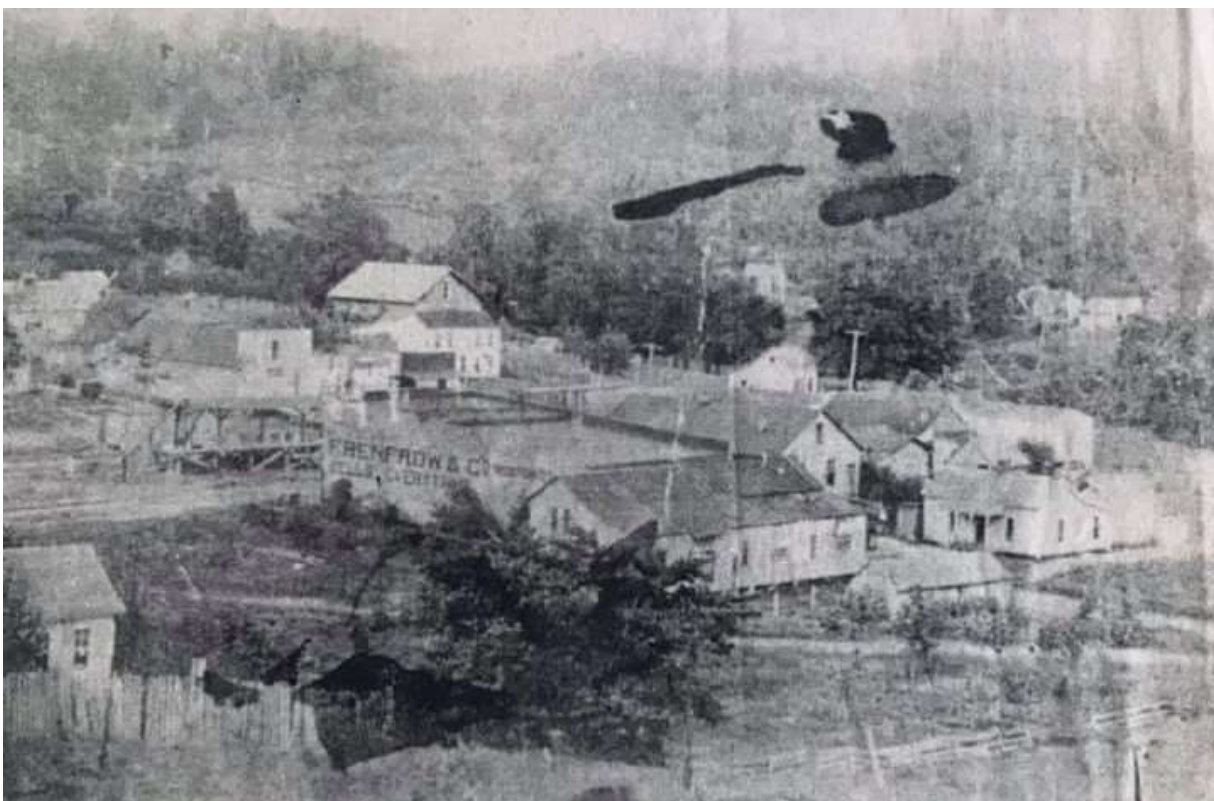
Narrows grocery



Narrows grocery



Location of the Narrows post office for several years.  
Building also housed a grocery store.



Narrows circa 1900



Oliver P. Willis store in Narrows





Narrows Baptist Church



Narrows Baptist Church



Narrows United Methodist Church



Narrows school



**Early Schools of Ohio County, Kentucky, Anna Laura Duncan**  
**(Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 2003, pp.474-476:**

**Narrows School**

Mrs. C. C. Mitchell Said, "Narrows was just a little railroad village, located on what we used to call Rough River Creek. I believe it is now called Rough River.

The village was so named for the narrow place in creek which was shallow at this point and made an excellent place for summer swimming as for baptizings.

In its hey day, Narrows had a blacksmith shop, a grain mill, a boarding house for drummers, many train people stopping if the train stopped to take water, a Methodist Church on the hill, a Baptist Church and a little one-room school building. I do not know when that school was started, but my mother was born in 1890 and she went to school there.

It was a typical one-room school. It had two front doors, a back door, a coal house and two privies. I attended this school in 1920's and what a glorious experience it was for all us country kids around it.

"We were farm kids and we had to work hard on the farm but we were so delighted when school started and we could see our friends again. We were ready to play together and do some book learning, too."

"The interior of that school had a stage with the teacher's desk on it, a long recitation bench or two, double desks on each side of the pot-bellied stove and in the back was a shelf for our lunch pails. There was also a table where two galvanized water buckets sat and these with sometimes one dipper furnished our drinking water for the day. Twice a day two older boys were sent to a neighbor's well and they would pass around this fresh water when they came back."

"The boys always sat on one side of the room and the girls on the other side. We were allowed to advance at our own speed. You might be in first grade reading, third grade math or maybe second grade spelling. When your class was called, you went up front to the recitation bench. If you were called on to answer a question, you would always stand. When we had a spelling lesson we always stood in a straight line. If you missed your word and the person behind you could spell it then they walked in front of you. I always studied my spelling because I didn't want anyone getting in front of me!" "This was called "Turning you down!"

"If we couldn't do our math problem then an older boy or girl would come up to the board and show us how to work the problem, at the blackboard."

"We all had slates that we could work on at our desks. We had to take rags from home to clean our slates but we had paper and 1c penny pencils that we trimmed with a knife. This was for special occasions! I was always so proud when my mother would get me a new penny pencil."

"I remember one year our school was so full that a boy had to sit on a croquet box all year long. One boy complained about being cold so the teacher made him sit on the stove. Of course, there was no fire in it."

"Our games were fox and hound, jump rope, town ball, marbles, and playhouse. Basket ball and baseball came later."

"All of the above things were about the same, year after year until our teacher decided that she was too old to keep on teaching. Then we had trouble getting a teacher. One tried out from



Beaver Dam but she told us that she just couldn't stay because we were too "Backwoodsey" for her at this school. But then one day we got Miss Felix. We all loved her. Each holiday she produced a play. This was with full costumes and decorations! Miss Felix brought us culture that here to fore had escaped us. I remember that she bought colored chalk and we put valentines all around our old blackboard. This made it look like something new. We thought that we were the luckiest students alive!"

"The classroom was not the only thing that was changed. This resourceful woman, with the aid of some strong men in the community built swings, seesaws, sliding boards and anything else she could think of. I know of no other school near or far than had as much playground equipment as our school."

"She also gave us good instructions and I was able to pass the entrance test at the age of eleven. Many of us went on to high school and even college with the skills that she taught us."

"I forgot to mention that it was Miss Felix who bought us a cooler and made sure that we brought our own cup from home for drinking our water."

James Smith remembers his first spanking at Narrows School. He said, "The first, second and third grade pupils were dismissed first at Narrows School. Mrs. Daniels was my teacher. She had dismissed us but I didn't want to go home without my bigger brothers and sisters. I went outside and played in the dirt until Mrs. Daniels came out and said, 'James, I thought I told you to go home!' After she went back in the schoolroom I picked up a big stick and whammed it against the schoolroom. Of course I started running but she sent an older boy to bring me back. When that paddle struck the seat of my pants, dust flew all over that classroom, all over the teacher and I felt so ashamed of myself. Mrs. Daniels was one of my favorite teachers because I knew that she had done the right thing and I was in the wrong. I'll sure never forget Narrows School for that reason!"

Mrs. Lucille Schapmire, a retired teacher in Ohio County, said, "I went all 8 grades to Narrows School. I remember Mrs. Lon White as being one of my best teachers there. She was very well read and much ahead of her time as far as teaching was concerned. I also remember that Mr. Stanley Phillips was a wonderful teacher. I'm not sure that any of us at Narrows would have gone on to High School if it hadn't been for Mr. Phillips. He was always there to encourage us and prepare us for the future."



**Ohio County Kentucky School Records, 1909-1913,**  
**Ohio County Genealogical Society (Utica, KY:**  
**McDowell Publications, 2004) pp.122-124, 249-251 & 428-430:**

**Narrows school: 1910-1911 school year**

parent / guardian	student	born
J. W. Conder	Nancy E. Conder	Feb. 26, 1899
	Edward H. Conder	Oct. 7, 1900
	McConnel Conder	Sept. 7, 1903
J. N. White	Monie White	Oct. 15, 1895
	Cecil White	Sept. 23, 1899
	Pauline White	Dec. 18, 1900
Leroy Crowder	Lela Livers	Jan. 31, 1896

T. L. Lloyd	Orville Lloyd	July 3, 1892
O. D. Fentress	Ray Fentress	Nov. 21, 1898
	Mary Fentress	July 17, 1903
A. R. Renfrow	Isacc Renfrow	Mar. 8, 1900
	Margaret Renfrow	Apr. 2, 1904
J. T. Shultz	Eunice Shultz	Apr. 18, 1893
	Grace Shultz	Feb. 13, 1894
	Collis Shultz	Dec. 8, 1895
Sam R. Bennett	Carl Bennett	June 8, 1895
	Manning Bennett	Jan. 2, 1899
Martha Winchel	Estel Winchel	Dec. 18, 1897
O. P. Willis	Emmel Willis	Sept. 28, 1892
J. R. Berkley	Ethel Berkley	Dec. 3, 1900
	Myrtie Berkley	June 18, 1904
Alonzo Phillips	Stanley Phillips	Nov. 16, 1898
B. P. Petty	Alva Petty	May 1, 1898
Maggie Powers	Mamie Powers	July 9, 1894
	Bryan Powers	Nov. 14, 1896
	Hugh E. Powers	Dec. 30, 1898
	Carmon Powers	Apr. 14, 1901
	Violett Powers	Feb. 28, 1903
E. G. Kirby	Everett Kirby	Oct. 26, 1893
	Griffin Kirby	Nov. 4, 1895
	Loretta Kirby	Oct. 14, 1897
	Beckham Kirby	Sept. 17, 1900
	Myrtle Kirby	May 16, 1903
Abigale Loyal	Sulu Loyal	Aug. 1, 1892
Ida Renfrow	Bessie Renfrow	July 18, 1891
	Elio Renfrow	Oct. 6, 1895
W. L. Lawlace	Hattie Lawlace	Aug. 18, 1891
J. H. Thomas	Isabelle Thomas	Apr. 16, 1894
	Anlie Thomas	Nov. 1, 1903
J. B. Renfrow	Mary L. Renfrow	May 15, 1908
Chas. Lagardo	Gypsie Lagardo	Jan. 2, 1901
Terrel Woosley	Eula Woosley	July 3, 1894
	Hazel Woosley	Sept. 14, 1898
	Rhey Woosley	Apr. 3, 1901
H. F. Forman	Roy Forman	Aug. 10, 1892
	Marvin Foreman	Dec. 26, 1894
	Myrtie Foreman	Mar. 10, 1899
	Mable Foreman	July 23, 1899
	Willie Foreman	Aug. 23, 1903
W. H. Brown	Gola Brown	Oct. 7, 1891
	Herbert Brown	July 23, 1894
Tom H. Brown	Edna Brown	Feb. 7, 1900
	Baymon Brown	Sept. 14, 1908

Chas. Carter	Myrtle Carter	Dec. 13, 1890
	Durward Carter	Oct. 3, 1897
	Hermon Carter	Sept. 9, 1899
W. I. Brown	Arnold Brown	Dec. 16, 1890
	Ilell Brown	May 24, 1901
J. H. Coppage	W. Ian Coppage	Sept. 19, 1897
	Marvin Coppage	Mar. 16, 1904
Warren Evans	Ray Evans	Feb. 25, 1903
	Roy E. Evans	May 15, 1904
J. E. Mattingly	Leibert Mattingly	Oct. 18, 1899
	Russel Mattingly	Nov. 1, 1901
Mc. K. Conder	Dillard Conder	Mar. 14, 1892
	Ina Conder	Oct. 3, 1893
	Elward Conder	Apr. 4, 1898
G. I James	Ina James	Apr. 25, 1894
	Ame James	Feb. 10, 1902
J. M. & Anna Graham	Eva Duke	Aug. 11, 1894
	Romney Graham	Oct. 27, 1892
	Douglas Graham	Dec. 8, 1896
Arris Wedding	Bessie Wedding	Nov. 26, 1890
W. A. Owen	Lyonel Owen	June 20, 1893
	Fletcher Owen	Mar. 17, 1895
	Piercy Owen	Feb. 1, 1900
	Rex Owen	May 10, 1902
	Cecil Owen	Feb. 8, 1904
Julia Wade	Clara D. Wade	Feb. 4, 1900
	Lucy Wade	Aug. 22, 1902
W. H. Ralph	Altha Ralph	Oct. 15, 1892
	Dillie Ralph	Oct. 18, 1898
	Flora Ralph	Dec. 21, 1896
	Gusta Ralph	Sept. 17, 1900
Gymon Westerfield	Beecher Westerfield	June 14, 1902

**Narrows school: 1911-1912 school year**

Joe N. White	Monnie White	Oct. 15, 1895
	Cecil White	Sept. 23, 1897
	Pauline White	Dec. 18, 1900
T. L. Lloyd	Orville Lloyd	July 3, 1892
A. R. Renfrow	Grace Renfrow	Mar. 8, 1900
	Marqurite Renfrow	Apr. 2, 1904
Joe T. Shultz	Eunice Shultz	Apr. 18, 1898
	Grace Shultz	Feb. 13, 1895
	Collis Shultz	Dec. 3, 1896
Sam P. Bennett	Carl W. Bennett	June 8, 1896
	Mamming Bennett	Jan. 2, 1899
James Winchel	Estell Winchel	Dec. 18, 1897

O. P. Willis	Emett Willis	Sept. 23, 1892
Alonzo Phillips	Stanley Phillips	Nov. 16, 1893
B. P. Petty	Alva Petty	May 1, 1898
Maggie Powers	Mamye Powers	July 9, 1894
	Bryant Powers	Nov. 14, 1896
	Huber Powers	Dec. 30, 1898
	Carman Powers	Apr. 14, 1901
	Violett Powers	Feb. 28, 1903
S. G. Kirby	Everett Kirby	Oct. 26, 1893
	Griffin Kirby	Nov. 4, 1895
	Laggratta Kirby	Oct. 14, 1897
	Beckham Kirby	Sept. 17, 1900
	Myrtle Kirby	May 16, 1903
Abby Loyal	Lula Loyal	Aug. 1, 1892
Ida Renfrow	Bessie Renfrow	Oct. 6, 1891
	Elio Renfrow	July 13, 1895
J. H. Thomas	Isabelle Thomas	Apr. 16, 1894
	Arlie Thomas	Nov. 1, 1904
J. B. Renfrow	Mary L Renfrow	Aug. 15, 1903
Terrel Woosley	Eula Woosley	July 3, 1894
	Hazel Woosley	Sept. 14, 1898
	Rhea Woosley	Apr. 3, 1901
C. F. Foreman	Roy Foreman	Aug. 10, 1892
	Marvin Foreman	Dec. 26, 1894
	Myrtie Foreman	Mar. 10, 1897
	Mabel Foreman	July 23, 1899
	William F. Foreman	Aug. 23, 1903
W. H. Brown	Gola Brown	Oct. 7, 1891
	Herbert Brown	July 23, 1894
T. H. Brown	Edna Brown	Feb. 7, 1900
	Raymon Brown	Sept. 14, 1903
Charlie Carter	Durwood Carter	Oct. 8, 1897
	Hemon Carter	Sept. 9, 1899
W. I. Brown	Clellen Brown	May 24, 1901
J. H. Coppage	W. Ion Coppage	Sept. 19, 1897
	Marvin Coppage	Mar. 16, 1904
Anna Graham	Rommy Graham	Oct. 27, 1892
	Duglas Graham	Dec. 8, 1896
J. M. Graham (guard.)	Eva Duke	Aug. 11, 1894
W. H. Ralph	Dillie Ralph	Oct. 18, 1898
	Flora Ralph	Dec. 21, 1896
	Gusta Ralph	Sept. 17, 1900
James Smith	Lawrence Smith	June 28, 1892
	Vera Smith	Oct. 25, 1895
	Beulah Smith	Aug. 15, 1899
	Delimer Smith	Apr. 16, 1905

J. W. Conder	Nancy Conder	Feb. 27, 1897
	Herland Conder	Oct. 7, 1900
	McConnel Conder	Sept. 7, 1902
	Mary A. Conder	May 27, 1905
Frank Whitten	Clarra Whitten	Feb. 27, 1901
	Altha Whitten	Feb. 5, 1903
	Cassandra Whitten	Mar. 16, 1905
J. E. Mattingly	Herbert Mattingly	Oct. 18, 1899
	Russell Mattingly	Nov. 1, 1901
	Earl Mattingly	Aug. 2, 1904
J. T. Riadon	Myrtle Riadon	Mar. 3, 1904
Sally Coppage	Artie B. Coppage	Feb. 19, 1892
	Beatrice Coppage	Dec. 18, 1893
	Amanda Coppage	May 14, 1896
	Willis Coppage	Aug. 15, 1902
	Lerena Coppage	Aug. 28, 1904
Thos. J. Cook	Ogie Cook	Aug. 26, 1893
	Lizzie Cook	Dec. 4, 1895
	Clara L. Wade	Feb. 4, 1900
	Lucy J. Wade	Aug. 22, 1902
Thos. D. Harrison	Virgie Harrison	Oct. 24, 1896
	Clancy Harrison	Mar. 18, 1898
	Bethel Harrison	Apr. 12, 1900
	Polly Harrison	Feb. 7, 1902
	Orville Harrison	May 10, 1905
Roy Conder (guard.)	Cordelia Livers	Apr. 29, 1898
M. F. Sharp	Murry W. Sharp	June 28, 1899
L. B. Daniel	T. C. Daniel	Aug. 18, 1904
Wm. Wilson	Louis Wilson	May 1, 1902
O. D. Fentress	Ray Fentress	Nov. 14, 1898
	Mary Fentress	June 19, 1902
	Roy Fentress	Jan. 29, 1905
W. L. Lawlace	Cattie Lawlace	Aug. 18, 1893
J. H. Kirkley	Ethel Kirkley	Dec. 3, 1900
	Myrtle Kirkley	June 18, 1904
E. A. White	Bond White	Dec. 22, 1892
	Stoy White	May 25, 1894
Tom Cardister	Cerbert Cardister	Sept. 25, 1904
W. S. Grant	Clarence Grant	July 1, 1894
	Wm. E. Grant	Jan. 29, 1897
	Lena L. Grant	Dec. 6, 1899

#### **Narrows school: 1912-1913 school year**

J. N. White	Monnie White	Oct. 15, 1895
	Cecil White	Sept. 28, 1897
	Pauline White	Dec. 18, 1900

A. K. Renfrow	Grace Renfrow	Mar. 8, 1900
	Margurite Renfrow	Apr. 2, 1904
J. T. Shultz	Grace Shultz	Feb. 13, 1894
	Collis Shultz	Dec. 3, 1895
Sam P. Bennett	Carl W. Bennett	June 8, 1895
	Manning Bennett	Jan. 2, 1899
Martha Winchel	Estel Winchel	Dec. 13, 1897
O. P. Willis	Emmett Willis	Sept. 23, 1892
A. Phillips	Stanley Phillips	Nov. 16, 1893
B. P. Petty	Alva Petty	May 1, 1898
Mag Powers	Mamye Powers	July 9, 1894
	Bryan Powers	Nov. 14, 1896
	Huber Powers	Dec. 30, 1898
	Cannon Powers	Apr. 14, 1901
	Violet Powers	Feb. 28, 1903
E. G. Kirby	Everett Kirby	Oct. 26, 1893
	Griffin Kirby	Nov. 4, 1895
	Lagrata Kirby	Oct. 14, 1897
	Beckham Kirby	Sept. 17, 1900
	Myrtle Kirby	May 16, 1903
Ida Renfrow	Elis Renfrow	July 13, 1895
J. H. Thomas	Isabell Thomas	Apr. 16, 1894
	Arlie Thomas	Nov. 1, 1903
	L. L. Thomas	Nov. 7, 1905
J. B. Renfrow	Mary Lou Renfrow	Aug. 15, 1903
Terrel Woosley	Eulah Woosley	July 3, 1894
	Hazel Woosley	Sept. 14, 1898
	Rhey Woosley	Apr. 3, 1901
C. F. Foreman	Roy Foreman	Aug. 10, 1892
	Marvin Foreman	Dec. 26, 1894
	Myrtie Foreman	Mar. 10, 1897
	Mabel Foreman	July 23, 1899
	Wm. D. Foreman	Aug. 23, 1903
W. H. Brown	Herbert Brown	July 23, 1894
T. H. Brown	Edna Brown	Feb. 7, 1900
	Raymon Brown	Sept. 14, 1903
Charles Carter	Durwood Carter	Oct. 3, 1897
	Herm T. Carter	Sept. 19, 1899
W. I. Brown	Clell Brown	May 24, 1901
J. H. Coppage	W. Ion Coppage	Sept. 19, 1897
	Marvin Coppage	Mar. 16, 1904
Anna Graham	Romney Graham	Oct. 27, 1892
	Duglas Graham	Dec. 8, 1896
W. J. Graham	Era Graham	Aug. 11, 1894
James Smith	Lawrence Smith	June 23, 1893
	Vera Smith	Oct. 25, 1895



	Beula Smith	Aug. 15, 1899
	Delmer Smith	Apr. 16, 1905
J. W. Condor	Nancy Condor	Feb. 27, 1897
	Herlan Condor	Oct. 7, 1900
	McConnel Condor	Sept. 7, 1902
	Mary A. Condor	May 27, 1905
J. E. Mattingly	Herbert Mattingly	Oct. 8, 1899
	Russel Mattingly	Nov. 1, 1901
	Earl Mattingly	Aug. 2, 1904
Sallie Coppage	Beatrice Coppage	Dec. 18, 1898
	Amanda Coppage	Mar. 14, 1896
	Willis C. Coppage	Aug. 15, 1902
	Serena P. Coppage	Aug. 23, 1904
Leroy Condor	Corde Livers	Apr. 29, 1898
L. B. Daniel	Z. C. Daniel	Aug. 13, 1904
O. D. Fentress	Ray Fentress	Nov. 14, 1898
	Mary Fentress	June 19, 1902
	Roy Fentress	Jan. 29, 1905
W. S. Grant	Clarence Grant	July 1, 1894
	W. E. Grant	Jan. 29, 1897
	Vena L. Grant	Dec. 6, 1899
	Louie B. Grant	Oct. 13, 1901
C. L. Carter	Cecil L. Carter	Nov. 25, 1905
W. L. Lawlace	Catta Lawlace	Aug. 18, 1892
John M. Graham	Nellie Darnall	Dec. 28, 1896
L. P. Wells	Carry Wells	Nov. 20, 1896
	Sidney Wells	Apr. 4, 1900
R. M. Kuykendoll	Cecil Kuykendoll	July 14, 1895
	Jesse T. Kuykendoll	Sept. 29, 1896
	Dimple Kuykendoll	Apr. 20, 1900
	John P. Kuykendoll	Nov. 14, 1905
F. L. Sandefur	O. C. Sandefur	Oct. 8, 1898
	R. B. Sandefur	Oct. 18, 1900
T. C. Bean	Charlie Bean	Sept. 2, 1902
L. W. Lloyd	Eula Lloyd	Jan. 26, 1893
Jas. Wedding	Comma Wedding	June 27, 1893
	Leonard Wedding	Aug. 27, 1894
	Rudolph Wedding	Sept. 1, 1901
	Mary D. Wedding	June 9, 1905
Wm. Lewis	Eulah Gentry	Oct. 9, 1902
	Lena B. Gentry	July 17, 1905
Tom Hardisten	Herbert Hardisten	Sept. 25, 1904
H. H. Westerfield	Ploy Westerfield	Oct. 27, 1898
	Dimond Westerfield	Aug. 14, 1901
	Dimple Westerfield	Aug. 14, 1901
Oscar Petty	Myrtle Petty	Nov. 1, 1902