Who cares what time it is?

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LA BELLE --- The attractive Hendry County Court House here has a tower that juts four stories in the air and sports a clock without hands.

The handless clock is a conversation piece, all right, and the visitor may interpret it as he likes. The general belief is that the clock symbolizes the easy-going life of this community in the sugarland of Florida.

This conception belies the true tempo of the area. Hendry County has one of the highest per capita incomes in the state and bustles with its big cattle empire and sugar plantations.

The county seat gets its name from Laura and Belle, the two daughters of pioneer resident Capt. Francis Asbury Hendry for whom the new county was named a few years after his death in 1917. Captain Hendry was a cattle king, State Senator and all-around leader of Southwest Florida.

Division of Lee County had figured in the legislative race of 1922. The chief talk was to slice off a piece of the eastern part of the county; this was done, with Hendry County being created in 1923. But at the same session, another chunk of Lee, this on the southern side, was also sliced and Collier County came into being.