

Knottsville, Ky.

By Jerry Long



Historical highway marker erected 2011 by the Kentucky Historical Society and Kentucky Department of Highways in September 2011 on Kentucky Route 144, 0.2 miles west of Knottsville.

Inscription: (1) Leonard Knott Homestead: In 1795, James Knott emigrated from Maryland to Cox's Creek Settlement in Nelson County, Ky., as part of the "League of Catholic Families." Born in 1797, his son Leonard married Mary M. Drury and moved to Daviess County in 1826. They settled on this site in 1827 and were founding members of St. Lawrence Catholic Church. (2) Knottsville, Kentucky: On this site in 1827, Leonard Knott built the first house in Knottsville. James Millay named the town in 1833 when he opened a store and post office nearby. In 1834, the name was officially set in the Kentucky Legislature by the Honorable William R. Griffith, and the town was formally laid out by Millay and Griffith in 1836.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 11 September 2011, p.1C:

Knottsville founder will be honored

Namesake's descendants to help unveil marker

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer



Leonard Knott

Leonard Knott's descendants will be coming from as far away as Arizona next weekend to honor the man who gave his name to the eastern Daviess County town of Knottsville.

Dennis Millay of Atlanta, one of Knott's great-great-grandsons, has spearheaded the drive to erect a state historical marker along Kentucky 144 near the site where Knott built the first cabin in the greater Knottsville area in the fall of 1827.

The marker will be unveiled at noon Saturday by Betty Knott Hamilton of Knottsville, Jim Knott of Owensboro and Mabel Knott Marshall of Tucson, Ariz. The three are among Knott's great-great-grandchildren.

The Rev. Pat Bittel, pastor of St. Lawrence and St. William parishes, will officiate at the ceremony with assistance from the Rev. Brandon Williams.

The marker will be erected Thursday on the William E. Meserve Farm, 9964 Kentucky 144. It will be covered until Saturday. Millay said the marker is on what was originally the Leonard Knott homestead, 0.8 miles west of Knottsville.

"I got the idea of the marker in early 2010," he said. "The deadline for submissions was in April and I got the application filed in March. We went through three rounds to get the text right."

People who ask the state for historical markers have to pay for them, Millay said.

"I raised the \$2,300 from family and members of the genealogical society in Knottsville," he said.

The Knott house stood on the farm for 150 years, until it was razed in 1977.

"My grandmother, Virgie Mae Knott Millay, was born in that house," Millay said. "It was lived in by four generations of the Knott family. My grandparents, Charles Carroll Millay and Virgie Mae Knott Millay, and their family lived there from 1950 to 1957."

They sold the house in 1957 and moved to Louisville, he said.

Timber from the Knott house was used to build a new house in Meade County in the early 1980s, Millay said.

Knott's father, James Knott, left Maryland in 1795, moving to the Cox's Creek Settlement in Nelson County as part of the "League of Catholic Families" migration.

Leonard Knott was born in Nelson County in 1797. He married Mary M. Drury and moved to Daviess County in 1826, when he was 29. They were founding members of St. Lawrence Catholic Church.

The settlement that would become Knottsville was first known as Heart's Delight, county histories say. Some people called it Grocery. Others called it Blacksmith Shop.

Knott was the town's blacksmith, county histories say.

But Millay said James Millay, who had the first store in the town, began calling the place Knottsville in honor of Knott in 1833.

Rep. William R. Griffith, who helped lay out the town, persuaded the Kentucky General Assembly to officially adopt that name for the community in 1834.

Millay said he is descended from James Millay's brother, Richard.

The Millay store was where Mary Carrico School is today, he said.

Millay said Saturday's unveiling was set for the day before the annual St. William-St. Lawrence picnic.

Many of his out-of-state cousins "have never tasted eastern Daviess County Catholic barbecue and burgoo," he said. "Now, they'll get to."



Spotlight



This historical marker was unveiled 0.8 of a mile east of Knottsville on Sept. 17 by three of the great-great grandchildren of Leonard Knott, who built the first cabin in the area and whose name was given to the town. James R. Knott of Owensboro is descended from Robert Ignatius Knott, Mabel Knott Marshall of Tucson, Ariz., center, is descended from William Michael Knott, and Betty Knott Hamilton of Knottsville is descended from Marcellus Victor "Marshall" Knott. Approximately 200 people attended the dedication ceremony.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 9 February 2003, p.1A:

Knottsville pulls devotion from its people

By Steve Vied, Messenger-Inquirer

Heading into Knottsville from the west on Kentucky 144, one is greeted by a pair of water towers, one new, one old. They are two focal points of a eastern Daviess County community that, while small, enjoys the devotion of the people who live there.

"It's a good community," said Jerome Hamilton, one of Knottsville's most devoted. "Good people."

Knottsville's other points of reference include St. William Catholic Church, established in 1867, its cemetery and Mary Carrico Memorial School, which sits diagonally across 144 from the old church. And tucked up next to the Catholic school is ever-busy Lanham's Grocery, where owner Charles "Doodlebug" Lanham goes a long way toward making trips to Owensboro more option than necessity for the townsfolk.

Directly across 144 from Lanham's store sits Bishop Soennecker Home for senior citizens. A couple of fields for baseball and softball, a basketball court and a picnic area for church barbecues tend to get busy in the warmer months.

Just west of the church-school-grocery-rest home cluster sits Millay's Tavern, a block building painted white that has been a Knottsville fixture for more than 60 years.

Knottsville proper is far from big. Stretching along Kentucky 144 for no more than about half of a mile, a handful of houses line either side of the road, which has a sidewalk on the south side. A few more houses sit on the roads that lead in and out of the community – Monarch, Free Silver, Short Station and Kentucky 951.

But it remains a small town by any measure, and that very fact seems to suit its residents just fine.

Mary Helen Rhodes and Lanham graduated from high school together in 1957. St. William School had grades one through 12 back then, but it has been the mid-1970s since high school students attended the school. Today, Mary Carrico School has kindergarten through eighth grade, and there's talk of the seventh and eighth grades being moved to St. Mary of the Woods School in Whitesville.

But while enrollment at Mary Carrico is slipping, Saturday night and Sunday Mass at venerable St. William Church, Knottsville's most visible landmark, are always full, Rhodes said.

"The church and school are what hold this community together," Rhodes said. "I was born and raised right here. There used to be a hotel, and my dad had a barber shop in it. There were four grocery stores. The house is down the road where I was born. That's kind of neat to know. It's a good place to live. The young parents strive to keep what we have. That's not easy this day and time."

Rhodes and Lanham were two of a class of 12 graduates almost 46 years ago. The class still gets together once in a while.

"There's a sense of caring for one another," Rhodes said. "We have a group of graduates, and we still keep in touch. There were eight girls and four boys. It was a whole lot simpler then. It's a close-knit community, and the reason we have it is our small-town background. We have that, all of us."

"I wouldn't want to live anywhere else," Lanham said. "People here have been good to me."

Thursday was the 34th anniversary of the opening of Lanham's Grocery on the south side of 144. The store enjoys strong patronage among the locals. Very much akin to general stores of an earlier age, Lanham's offers a little bit of everything, including hardware, plumbing and agriculture supplies. Customers can buy a shoulder roast or a roast beef sandwich, and gasoline for their tank.

"If he doesn't have it, he'll get it," Rhodes said of her old high school pal.

"Everybody knows he has the best cuts of meat," customer Francis Ballard said.

Ballard has lived in Knottsville for more than 50 years.

"It's just a special place, a lot of special people," she said of her hometown.

Ballard said people who move away from Knottsville often move back.

"They like the small-town life," she said. "It pulls them back. It's quiet, just the way I like it."

While Doodlebug Lanham's grocery dates to 1969, Millay's Tavern has been around since 1941. The original building is long gone, but the present building, built in 1969 and expanded in 1982, is one of the town's landmarks. With a grill, short order menu and pizza oven, it is Knottsville's only restaurant.

Millay's is owned by brothers Ricky, Joe Bill and David Millay and their sister, Janice Payne. Their grandfather Marshall Millay started the tavern just east of its present location. He eventually turned it over to his son Paul Millay and his wife Dorothy, and now their children own it.

Millay's has a pool table, a juke box and a wide screen television that was showing the Weather Channel one recent afternoon while four men sat at the bar.

"We have awful good customers," Ricky Millay said. "We draw from a pretty good area. We have a lot of customers from Hancock County."

Millay's serves beer but not hard liquor. That's because, Millay said, his mother said she could face God over a beer but not over a bottle of whiskey.

Millay takes a practical view.

"If you serve beer to 30 people, you'll have trouble out of one of them," Millay said. "If you serve whiskey to 30 people, you'll have trouble out of 10 of them."

"We don't allow trouble," Payne said.

Knottsville began in 1836 and was first called Heart's Delight and later Grocery and Blacksmith Shop. Rep. William R. Griffith, who helped lay out the town, persuaded the Kentucky General Assembly to name the town Knottsville, in honor of Leonard Knott, who built the first house there in 1827.

As early as 1810, a man named Walker had established a school in what would later become Knottsville. In 1847, the Kentucky State Register said Knottsville had two doctors. St. William Church housed the first public library in Daviess County. In 1895 the library boasted 1,000 volumes available for a 50-cent annual fee. The library was destroyed in a 1926 fire.

In 1883, Knottsville had two general stores, one drugstore, a shoe shop, a blacksmith shop, a wagon shop, two undertakers, a flouring mill, one combination saw mill and grist mill and three tobacco factories.

In 1990 Knottsville got a slogan, which is visible on signs on both ends of the town: "Welcome to Knottsville. The hometown that touches your heartstring."

If Knottsville ever had a mover and a shaker, it was Hamilton. Now 75, Hamilton was born and raised in Whitesville but moved to Knottsville nearly 48 years ago and never left.

"I got over here and I liked the people and I stayed," Hamilton said.

Knottsville should count itself lucky that he did. Lanham said Hamilton deserves the credit for the community getting water and a sidewalk. Improvements to Kentucky 144 are part of his legacy as well.

Hamilton said his pastor encouraged him to get involved in politics and to try to do something for the community.

Hamilton followed the advice. He buttonholed gubernatorial candidates Wendell Ford and Martha Layne Collins for improvements to woeful Kentucky 144. Both won, and both kept their promises to improve the road and to get a sidewalk installed.

"When they're running for office, that's the time to ask them," Hamilton said.

In the 1960s, public water was just a dream for many rural communities like Knottsville. But Hamilton drummed up support and led the drive to establish the East Daviess County Water Association, which not only supplies water to Knottsville, but portions of Hancock and Ohio counties as well.

"I had some friends in the right places," Hamilton said. "It was hard work getting all the rights of way for water lines. Everybody who wanted water called my house."

Hamilton said Knottsville and the immediate vicinity are seeing a bit of growth these days, with a few new homes popping up.

"The church and school hold everything together," he said. "Young people who were raised here want to come back."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 25 October 1994, Community section, p.5:

Knottsville community has, long colorful history in area

By Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer

The eastern Daviess County community on the old Indian trail from Vincennes, Ind., to Hartford bore several different, colorful names in its early years before it became known as Knottsville.

The first settlement there was called Goreham and was 1 1/2 miles east of where Knottsville was eventually built. At one time it had a post office - the only one in that section of the county, second only to the post office at Yellow Banks. A town was staked off, some buildings erected, and the community was named for a resident, Thomas Goreham. A voting place was even established there.

The village that became Knottsville was laid out in 1836 by William R. Griffith and James Millay. For the first few years, it was called the "Grocery," "Blacksmith Shop" and "Heart's Delight." But, when Griffith was elected to the state legislature, he had the town named Knottsville. That was to honor Leonard Knott, who had built the first house there in 1827 and was the town blacksmith. The name Knottsville endured.

Millay ran the first store in Knottsville. Other early settlers included B.J. McDaniel, William Higdon, L.T. Brown and Mrs. Mary Drury.

By the 1880s, the village of Knottsville included two general stores, a drug store, a shoe shop, a wagon shop, two undertaker parlors, a flour mill, saw and grist mills, and three tobacco factories.

Many Native Americans lived in that section of Daviess County in earlier years and a large hill six miles east of Knottsville, now in Hancock County, was named Indian Hill because of the stone houses or huts that had been erected there.

Valentine Husk was the first settler of the Knottsville precinct. He came from Virginia to Yellow Banks in 1796, and a few years later moved up the river to the mouth of Pup Creek. He stayed there awhile, then in 1804 followed the Indian trail inland and settled on the Knottsville-Yelvington road.

Shortly thereafter, George, Raleigh, Charles and Benjamin Duncan came from Nelson County. James Adams settled in a spot about four miles northwest of Knottsville. The Smeathers and Bell families arrived soon afterward.

The first religious service in the precinct was conducted by a preacher named Craig in the house of Benjamin Duncan in 1808.

Knottsville was the cradle of the county's first Catholic community, and the Knottsville precinct would draw hundreds of early settlers to the popular religious revivals every year at the nearby campgrounds.

The first priest to visit the section was Father Elisha Durbin, who came once a month from Union County.

St. Lawrence, the oldest Catholic Church in Daviess County, was started in 1821 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ezekiel Henning on Aull Road east of Knottsville. A log church was built in 1831, and Father John Wathen became the first resident pastor in 1833. In 1839, a brick church

was built. It was replaced in 1870 with the present church, which was dedicated in 1872. Religious revivals were held frequently in the precinct, and the Bethlehem campgrounds were the most popular site for the meetings. Ministers who preached there were strongly against the use of liquor, and a few humorous incidents involving the forbidden drink were handed down from one generation to the next.

In one instance, a close watch was being kept on the grounds for jugs of the liquor. As a Rev. Palmer was inspecting the outskirts, he saw a man with a sack across his shoulder. Supposing, of course, that it was filled with whiskey jugs, he gave chase and caught the man. The minister asked the man to carry the sack back to the pulpit and open it, which he did, revealing pumpkins.

During the same meeting, retrieved whiskey jugs were brought to the service and the ministers threw them against trees, breaking them and destroying the whiskey. One minister threw a jug against a tree, but it didn't break. A member of the congregation stepped up and offered to break it. The jug was handed to him, but instead of breaking it, he made his way through the crowd and off the grounds, carrying his trophy with him.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 20 April 1990, p.1A:

New sign, slogan hearten Knottsville

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

Knottsville used to have an identity problem.

But that was before the Lions Club decided to get the community a sign - well, one on each end of town, actually - and a slogan.

The 154-year-old unincorporated community in the hills of eastern Daviess County began life in 1836 as Heart's Delight.

Some people called it Grocery. Others called it Blacksmith Shop.

Nobody seemed to be able to find a name that would stick.

Finally, Rep. William R. Griffith, who helped lay out the town, persuaded the Kentucky General Assembly to name the town Knottsville, in honor of Leonard Knott, who built the first house there in 1827.

Not being incorporated, there were no city limits for a sign. But the highway department did stick up a little green sign a few years ago.

If you blinked, you'd miss it.

But it would take a big blink to miss the new signs.

"Welcome to Knottsville," they shout. "The hometown that touches your heartstring." Thursday afternoon, Clemmie Cecil, Bernard Murphy and John Lanham - Lions all - were busy erecting the second sign in Sam Roberts' yard on the east side of town. Last week, they put up the first one near the water tower on the west side.

Lanham brought up the idea at a Lions meeting last fall. But it fell on deaf ears. The treasury was a little on the short side at the time, Cecil explained.

But Lanham kept bringing up the idea. Knottsville needs a sign, he kept saying.

Finally, one of the members who works for a sign company got the company to pay the \$170 for painting the two signs. Another member donated the four posts. And the Lions had a contest to find a slogan.

They got a dozen suggestions - things like "World's Best Barbecue." But there was a problem finding someone to choose the slogan. Nobody wanted to make 11 people mad, after all. But finally, Cecil said, three people agreed to judge the slogans.

The winning entry came from Joyce Payne Howard, who lives over by Yelvington - which really should be named Yelverton, but that's another story. But, Cecil said, she's a former Knottsville girl.

Anyway, Mrs. Howard won the \$25 prize. But she donated it to the Lions, Cecil said.

Now that the signs are up, you can't miss Knottsville. And you can tell who lives in town and who lives out in the county.

Roberts' house is on the city side.

The sign comes in handy, he said. When you want to tell somebody how to find your house, you tell them to go to the Welcome to Knottsville sign.

Before, Roberts' landmark was a Speed Zone Ahead sign on the other side of his yard.



**Kentucky Place Names, Robert M. Rennick,
The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 1984, p.162:**

Knottsville (Davies) [sic]: This village is centered at the junction of KY 144 and 1513, 9 miles east of Owensboro. It may first have been called Hearts Delight, and was renamed Knottsville for Leonard Knott, a Nelson County native who built the first house on the site in 1827. In that year Thomas Gore, another Nelson Countian, established the Gorham (sic) post office about 1½ mi east. In 1833 storekeeper James Millay moved the post office and renamed it Nottsville (at least it was spelled this way in postal records). Discontinued in 1834, it was reestablished as Knottsville on June 29, 1837, by William Higdon. The village of Knottsville was laid out by Millay and William R. Griffith in 1836 and incorporated in 1868. After an intermittent existence the post office closed for good in 1915. [Source – History of Daviess County, Kentucky, Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, p.598]



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 14 March 1943, p.2A:

Old Indian Trail Guided The First Settlers Of The Knottsville Section In The 18th Century

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger

An old Indian trail leading from Vincennes, Indiana, to what is now Hartford, in Ohio county, and passing through a section that in later years became the Knottsville precinct in Daviess county, was this county's first road. Nothing more than a trail, it nevertheless guided the early settlers, and resulted in Knottsville and several small villages being built in the early 1800's. Some of the early settlements have long since passed into oblivion, not even foundation stones remaining to mark them.

Few residents remember the little town of Goreham, nevertheless it once existed. Built a mile and a half east of where Knottsville was later erected, it at one time had a postoffice – the only postoffice in this section except the one in Yellow Banks. A town was staked off, some building was done and the community was named after a Mr. Gore.

A voting place, the only one in the area except Yellow Banks, also was established there. However, interest in the community later lagged, and Knottsville took over.

Knottsville was laid out in 1836 by William R. Griffith and James Millay. However, the first house had been erected in 1827 by Leonard Knott. For the first few years, it went by various names such as "Heart's Delight," "Grocery" and the "Blacksmith Shop," but when Mr. Griffith got to the legislature, he had it called Knottsville, in honor of Mr. Knott, and thus it has remained throughout the years. James Millay operated the first store. Knott himself operated a blacksmith shop. Other early settlers included B. J. McDaniel, William Higdon, L. T. Brown and Mrs. Mary Drury. The first public school was built in 1854 and the first school was taught by Powahatan Ellis. In its heyday, the little village, in addition to numerous residences, also had two general stores, a drug store, a shoe shop, a blacksmith shop, a wagon shop, two undertakers, a flour mill, a saw and grist mill and three tobacco factories.

Many Indians inhabited that section in the early years, and a large hill six miles east of Knottsville, now in Hancock county, was named Indian Hill because of the stone houses, or huts that had been erected there by the red men. The foundations of the huts were deep in the earth, and the hill, which was high, provided a view of the entire countryside.

The first settler of Knottsville precinct was Valentine Husk, who came from Virginia and settled in Yellow Banks in 1796. He stayed here only a short while, however, then went up the river to what is now Pup creek, so-called because in the early days it was a favorite place to drown unwanted puppies. For while he stayed on Pup creek, then in 1804 followed the Indian trail in land and picked out a spot several miles from Yelvington. He was reportedly the first settler in that section.

Shortly thereafter came George, Raleigh, Charles and Benjamin Duncan, ancestors of the Duncan families who still live in the Maceo-Yelvington community. They came from Nelson county. James Adams came about the same time, and he, a little more daring than the others, followed the trail to a spot about four miles from Knottsville. The Smeathers and Bell families came shortly thereafter, and descendants of all are still residing in that community.

The first school in the country outside of Knottsville, was taught on Pup creek on land later owned by John Bell. The first religious service was held by a preacher named Craig, in the house of Benjamin Duncan in 1808. The first priest to visit the section was Father Durbin, who made the

trip to this section from Union county on horseback once a month. He had many narrow escapes from wolf packs at night, and one time, his spirited horse was all that saved him, the horse fighting the wolves all night long, until daybreak.

The first brick-kiln was burned in 1825 by Thomas Purcell and the first burying ground was started in 1806 on the land of Charles Duncan north of Pup creek on the Yelvington-Knottsville road. The first person buried there was Raleigh Duncan, a son of Charles Duncan. This was said to have been the first death in the precinct.

All of the pioneers in the section made their own sugar and syrup from maple trees that were abundant on Pup creek. They even sold sugar, and one man named Thomas Montgomery paid for an entire farm from the sale of maple sugar. He was known as "Sugar Tom" Montgomery.

Wolves and wildcats were numerous in the area and residents of the section for many years paid taxes with wolf and wildcat scalps on which the county had placed a bounty. Buckskin dresses were the every-day attire of the women. Their Sunday bests were checked cotton dresses.

Camp meetings were held frequently in later years and the Bethlehem camping grounds became popular with the religiously inclined residents of the section. Ministers who preached there were very bitter against the use of liquor, and accounts of many humorous incidents resulting therefrom have been handed down from generation to generation.

A close watch was kept on the grounds for jugs of the fiery fluid, and one time when a Rev. Palmer was inspecting the outskirts of the grounds he saw a man with a sack across his shoulder, supposing of course, that it was filled with whiskey jugs, he gave chase, catching him. The minister asked the man to carry the sack to the pulpit and open it, which he did, revealing instead of whiskey, pumpkins.

It was during the same meeting that retrieved whiskey jugs were brought to the service and the ministers would throw them against trees, breaking them and destroying the whiskey. One minister threw a jug against a tree, but instead of breaking it only bounded off, remaining whole. A member of the congregation stepped up and offered to break it. The jug was handed him, but instead of breaking it, he made his way through the crowd and off the grounds, carrying his trophy with him.

Mount Zion Cumberland Presbyterian was constructed first as Shiloh congregation in 1821. In 1839 it was changed to Mt. Zion and was located three miles northwest of Knottsville. Bethlehem Methodist church was organized in 1808. Among the early families were those of Henry Able, Hillary Aud, Joseph B. Aud, Benjamin Aull, Ignatius Aull, James Aull, Thomas E. Aull, Reuben Barker, Jefferson L. Berry, Benedict J. Bowlds, James D. Bowlds, Pius J. Bowlds, Zachariah Bowlds, John A. Castlen, A Harvey Clements, Charles O. Clements, John H. Clements, Hillary F. Cooms, Jacob Crouse, William F. Drury, J. H. Early, John Evans, Griffin Gatewood, Joseph W. Gore, Benedict J. Hagan, Richard Henry Hazel, Wm. S. Hazel, Thomas E. Hazel, Elisha Head, Wm. B. Head, Harvey E. Henning, James A. Henning, Charles H. Higdon, John A. Higdon, Richard Higdon, Isaac Lambert, Milton H. Mattingly, James M. May, Chrysostom, Henry and John McDaniel, Wm. D. Medcalf, Robert Miller, Wm. Muffett, David Monarch, John R. O'Bryan, John L., John T., and Stephen T. Payne, George W. Roby, G. B. Rowland, James Shouse, Henry B. Wathen, Dr. P. D. Wilson, Joseph F. Winkler and William Winkler.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 14 September 1909, p.5:

**REUNION OF KNOTT
FAMILY AT KNOTTSVILLE**
—
**Of Only Daughter and Grandchildren
of Man For Whom Town Was
Named.**

The only surviving daughter, the grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren of Mr. Leonard Knott, after whom Knottsville takes its name, to number of 125 met in reunion near St. Lawrence last Saturday. All agree that it was the most joyous occasion of their lives, a bounteous dinner of barbecued mutton with every other delicacy that could tempt the palate was served; in the afternoon W. P. Wathen and J. M. Haynes delivered addresses appropriate to the occasion. Mr. Haynes as the historian of the family traced its history back to Basil Knott, who moved from Maryland to Nelson county about 1790 with a large family. The name increased and the members began drifting away to other states.

Mrs. M. A. Hayden of Henderson, the only living child of Leonard Knott, now 71 years old, occupied the platform, seated in her father's old armchair, which has a history running back more than a century. The speaker exhibited a tomahawk made by Leonard Knott when a lad of 12 years, which he presented to his elder brother, Harry, who was engaged in the Indian wars in 1811. He fought most gallantly at Tippecanoe, again in 1815 he was of all the heroic Kentuckians that fought at the battle of New Orleans, the most daring one.

Those present were: Mrs. M. Hayden, daughter of Mr. Knott; the grandchildren present with their families were W. M. Knott, Marshall Knott, Mrs. R. J. Knott, J. M. Haynes, Mrs. J. T. Pickereel, Mrs. W. P. Wathen, Mrs. W. C. Coomes, Mrs. Agnes Payne, and Ed Melton of Henderson; besides there was so many grandchildren and great-grandchildren that it will be impossible to give their names.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 28 December 1902, p.2:



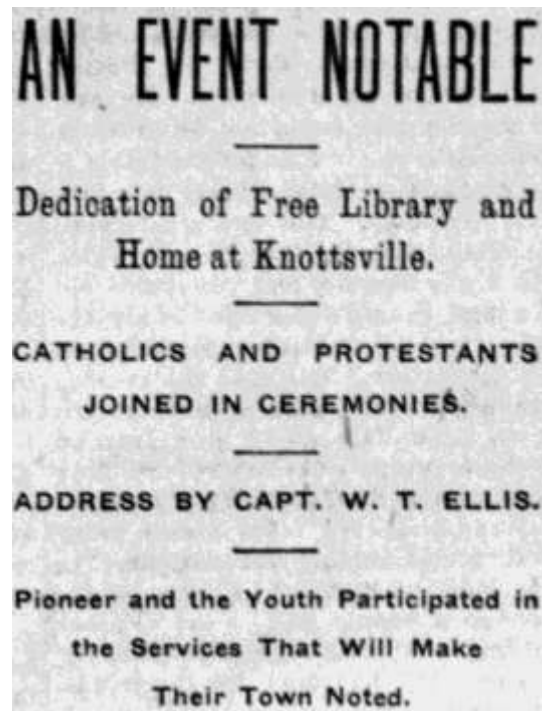
Mr. J. E. Hazel, until recently employed with Mr. J. W. McCulloch. of this city, has removed to his former home at Knottsville, where he has opened up a grocery and general store.

This is the newest business established there in many years in the way of a fresh stock, but the oldest when the house in which it is placed is considered. It was erected seventy years ago and

was the first storehouse erected in Knottsville. For many years it was occupied as a general storehouse. Then it was used as a saloon while liquor was permitted to be sold in Knottsville. It was for a while a meeting house. Both blacks and whites have, used it for a residence. For a while, about fifty years ago, it was used as the town court house. About two years ago, when the Knottsville library was established, the house was renovated and devoted to its use. Now, when the house has reached the biblical three score and ten, it begins its second cycle as a general store once more. It is doubtful whether any building in the county has a more remarkable history than this.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 25 November 1902, p.1:



Certainly not in the history of Daviess county and perhaps not in the history of Kentucky has there ever occurred a more notable or unique dedicatory or other kind of gathering than that at Knottsville on Sunday afternoon, when the Knottsville Free library and the building in which it is housed were dedicated. Larger concourses of people have of course come together, but when or where in Kentucky has a non-sectarian library of 2,000 volumes, housed in a fine two-story building, with building and lot on which it stands paid for, been dedicated to the free use of the public? If this be equaled then where did two Catholic priests and two Protestant ministers, by invitation of the Catholic pastor, heartily join their presence and their voices in the dedicatory exercises and preachers and priests and the whole audience, three-fourths of whom were Catholics, and again by invitation of the Catholic pastor, conclude the exercises by singing together under the same guidance of a Methodist choir leader, that good old Protestant hymn, "Nearer My God to Thee?"

An Ideal Day.

The day was an ideal one in every respect. The fine audience, enthusiastic and attentive and under such favorable circumstances, it is no wonder that the speakers were enthusiastically eloquent and, perhaps, more sincerely so than ever before.

The principal address of the occasion was that of Hon. W. T. Ellis. He spoke for one hour and it seemed as if he had been speaking for but a few minutes. He was in the best of flight, his audience was thrust up against him and then filled every seat, and men stood with gaping ears along the side and rear walls. In that audience were those past the meridian of life with whom, as a boy, the speaker rambled those hills. There sat his first teacher. There were a majority of the voters present of a precinct which thirty years before had not registered even one vote against him when he made his first race for public office. Last of all, through one of the windows of the hall in which he spoke, could be seen the house where he was born and where he was left an orphan in early boyhood.

Began Gathering.

At 12:30 p. m. the little town began to fill with people from the surrounding country and by 1:20, when the hall was opened, the main street was thronged. The hall was quickly filled and not a foot, of standing space was left for many others who came later. There were representative Methodists from Floral and other points in Hancock county, Baptists from Pellville and Thruston and Ensor, Cumberland Presbyterians from Scythia and the Winkler settlement, members of other denominations from various localities, and Catholics from the immediate neighborhood and some from distant parts of the county. About twenty-five drove out from Owensboro in carriages and buggies.

Rev. Louis Spalding began the exercises by giving an interesting sketch of the library movement, which stated several years ago by the promoters, borrowing books and loaning them out judiciously. The first year 250 volumes were handled. A taste for reading was developed. It was decided to make the library permanent. For a time a monthly fee of 5 cents was charged.

"But," said Father Spalding, "this is an age of expansion and in June, 1901, we incorporated and made the library free. There were then 1,000 volumes in the collection. Since nearly another 1,000 have been added. The lot has been bought and the house built and both, now representing an investment of \$4,000, have been paid for. The doing of all this is due in a great measure to the fact that a year ago a letter was received from a distinguished citizen, who is present, and whom I will soon introduce to you, in which he stated that whenever the association would complete a building in which to shelter the library he would contribute 500 volumes to it. This is that gentleman's birthplace. It is with great pleasure that we hail him today as our library's chief benefactor. Him we greet most gratefully and most respectfully and to him we will soon be listening, but we will next have a song by our school children."

"The Suwannee River" was sung by the school children, under the direction Miss Susie Bowlds.

Mr. James Haynes, who has been librarian since the first books were collected, gave an interesting sketch the workings of the association and the marked advance in literary taste already effected in the neighborhood.

Father Spalding introduced Miss Bowlds, who read a brief but excellent paper on the "Relation of the Library to the Public School."

Rev. W. H. Dawson, the well known Baptist minister of Thruston, was introduced in complimentary words by Father Spalding. He spoke in choice words of the thanks due from all for

the excellent work done by Father Spalding and his associates. He said too much praise could not be given to them. Said he: "I understand this is the only non-sectarian library now free in all Kentucky. This is a great credit and distinction for this village, which is in a way remote, and yet stands out as a fine example for not only the whole state but for other localities all over the nation." He said the benefits were not for the present merely, but for all time. He dwelt glowingly on the opportunity now before the boys and girls and of the certainty of other localities and even other states being led to found similar associations. In conclusion, he said: "All honor is due these good people and good Father Spalding and the distinguished lawyer for what they had done for the minds, and therefore for the hearts, of present and future generations."

Rev. Davidson Talks.

Rev. A. F. Davidson, the venerable Cumberland Presbyterian minister, was introduced. This minister is yet tall and straight, and is quite priestly in his appearance. He added words of praise and encouragement. In contrasting the opportunities of the youth of the present and of fifty years ago, he was quite happy. He turned to Hon. W. T. Ellis and this colloquy ensued:

Rev. Davidson: "Capt. Ellis, what kind of bench did you sit on when at school out here?"

Capt. Ellis: "A rough rail."

"What kind of book did you use?"

"A worn blue-backed speller."

"What others?"

"None."

In closing, Rev. Davidson said: "You see, boys and girls, what advantages you have. I pray that God may bless you and give you the will not to idle away your time, but to go higher and higher, because you have the means of knowledge within your reach."

"My Old Kentucky Home was next sung by the school children.

Mr. H. F. Coomes, one of the very best of Knottsville's citizens and an officer and incorporator of the library association, introduced Capt. Ellis. He was a boy when Capt. Ellis was a boy and they were together much. He knew well Ellis' grandfather. Rev. Hiram Kellam, a noted Methodist minister with whom Capt. Ellis lived after his parents died, and was present when that loved minister died, and his references to these were truly eloquent and very beautiful. "The speaker needs no introduction." said he. "You all know him. He is today on the highest round of his profession. He can truthfully be called a self-made man. Boys, look through that window and you can see the house in which he was born. Let your imagination picture to you a poorly clad orphan boy forging his way along a path to school. That boy is now with us, a mature man. Four long years. of his young manhood he gave to battling on the field of war for those principles of government which he believed to be right. Disfranchise, he returned home, threw off his soldier's garb and donned the clothes of a laborer. He worked in summer and taught in winter, and thus earned a few years at college. But I'll not tax your patience nor try his modesty by saying more. Where his fellow-soldier here he would tell you he was true and fearless; were his fellow-lawyer here he would say he had gone to the top as an attorney and as a jurist; were his fellow-congressman here his testimony would be that he had always been watchful and arduous in his efforts for better laws for his country."

Capt. Ellis Speaks.

Capt. Ellis began in an inspired, eloquent strain and he never faltered in sustaining it to the end. In the beginning he referred to the two Catholic priests and two Protestant ministers, seated

on this platform in glad accord and said he, "I challenge this commonwealth of 2,000,000 people, I challenge the civilized world to show anything higher, or greater, or more glorious than this." He spoke of the peacefulness of the people of Knottsville for the past fifty years, no bickerings, no malicious lying, no scandalous law suits, the fine people of today and days'gone by, no robberies, no pilfering, the coming of the pioneer families from Maryland and Virginia and North Carolina, their great cordiality, their honesty, the fact that fewer delinquent taxpayers lived in that precinct than in any in the county, his own struggles while there, the devotion of the people to him ever since, and many other incidents, all of which were eloquently and glowingly described. He paid ne tribute to the late Dr. William B. Holmes and to Mr. Joseph Aud, his first teacher, who was in the audience, and who he said on one occasion took him out on a hill at Knottsville and told him that the Knottsville precinct was in the center of the earth and that Knottsville was in the center of the precinct and to prove it, he said "Don't you see that the sky comes down all around Knottsville at an equal distance from it." His reference to Dr. I. Drury, who died a few weeks ago, was beautiful yet sad. Few eyes, especially those of the ladies, both old and young, but were not bedewed with tears during its delivery.

The Pioneer Life.

When speaking of the blameless lives of the pioneers, he admitted that they felt free to drink liquor when they wished it, but later one of their pastors concluded that the saloon must go. In this connection he was complimentary to moral suasion rather than to local option or prohibition, saying: "Did this good father go on the quart plan and ask a judge to lay off certain boundaries in which drinks should not be sold? He did not, nor did he denounce the vendors of drink. He did not annoy the courts with petitions for legal relief. He made no local option appeal. He did not array man against man and even woman against woman. He settled the matter once and for all for Knottsville, and left the saloon to rot down. He established a total abstinence society and told his people the security they would find in total abstinence. They heeded him and Knottsville became sober. And today we are gathered together in this fine building, this magnificent seat of culture and learning which marks the very spot where stood a saloon when I was a boy here."

Another fine period of sentences was the reference to the fact that Knottsville had never produced a rich man. The reasons were felicitously given the last one being that "God Almighty meant that every man born in that precinct should go to heaven."

The speaker's words about the library were also apt. He declared that, in addition to other marks of distinction, Knottsville should soon merit the legen, the best read locality in Kentucky. In conclusion, the speaker said: "I am not partial in this matter. All I say is true. I want no more offices. All political aspirations are behind me. Never again will I ask for your suffrages. All I want is the love and affection of those among whom I was born." He ended by repeating one verse of "The Old Oaken Bucket," which the school children repeated in song as soon as the speaker sat down.

County Attorney LaVega Clements, who is a director of the library, was present and was invited to speak. He did so briefly, but also most aptly.

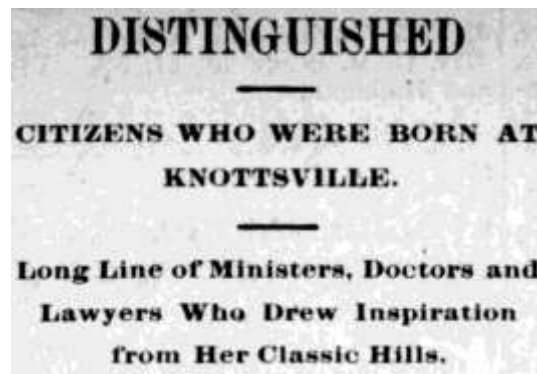
The climax of all was now reached, when Father Spalding arose and thanked the speakers and the audience and said: "I will now ask you all to join in singing, "Nearer My God to Thee,' and I hope that our doing so may draw us all nearer together and nearer to God."

The response was freely given, and by priests and preachers. Catholics and Protestants, with a Methodist choir leader as director.

The building is sixty feet by thirty feet and two stories high. It is a frame and well built. The lower floor is devoted to the library purposes and is sealed throughout in varnished wood. On this floor are twelve well-made bookcases, each twelve by four and a half feet. They are of ash, varnished. Besides the 2,000 volumes already collected, there are cases of botanical, geological and ethnological specimens. A mastodon's rib, seven and a half feet long, is on exhibition. A number of enlarged pictures of noted local pioneers are also given places. A tomahawk carried by Harry Knott to and in the battle of Tippecanoe is on exhibition, it having long been the property of his brother, Leonard Knott, who founded Knottsville. The latter was the grandfather of Mr. James Haynes, the present librarian.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 5 June 1898, p.3:



The three days of family reunion, social and religious gatherings out at Knottsville last week recalls the fact that the old red hills in the Eastern end of Daviess county form a large and influential precinct. The first settlers were families by the name of Smeathers, Duncan, Bell, Aud, Adams, Husk, Montgomery, Metcalf, Coomes, Winkler and Clements, from whom have sprung ministers, professional men and other good citizens of whom she may well be proud. Rt. Rev. George Montgomery, D. D., of Los Angeles, Cal., who spent last week at his old home, stands pre-eminently first. The bishop was born two miles east of Knottsville, fifty years ago, and is a grandson of "Sugar Tom" Montgomery, who came from Maryland. Young George Montgomery first attended school at old St. Lawrence. His mother died when he was a mere boy. In 1860 his uncle, Hon. Zach Montgomery, a '49er to California, returned home on a visit, became interested in his promising nephew, placed him in Cecilia college, Hardin county, and on graduating there, sent him to the seminary in Baltimore, Md., where he was ordained a priest twenty years ago. He located in California, was secretary to the archbishop of San Francisco until appointed bishop of Los Angeles four years ago. Doctor Montgomery is an able man, a splendid preacher, an earnest priest, as popular with all denominations as he is with members of his own church.

Knottsville has four other priests to her credit. Rev. Edwin Drury is the senior, being fifty-three years of age, and a priest twenty-eight years; Rev. L. H. Spalding, thirty-eight years of age, educated in Europe, and the present pastor at Knottsville; Rev. Celestine Brey, whose mother is a sister of Father Drury, is a promising young priest stationed at Cloverport, and last of all is Rev. L. E. Clements, who was lately ordained at his old home. Herbert Metcalf, son of the magistrate, is attending St. Mary's college with aspirations to the priesthood.

Strange to relate, all six of the above are blood relations, being descendants of "Great-grandfather" Coomes. A score of his descendants have also entered religious orders of brothers and sisters, placing the family at the head of any family in Kentucky in number of religion.

Popular members of other denominations are Rev. A. F. Dadisman, Presbyterian; Rev. Hillary Head, Baptist, and Rev. Winfield Winkler, Methodist.

Ferdinand Clements belongs to the teaching order of Christian Brothers, while Allie and Pauline Higdon, Charles Bowlds and Jo Montgomery belong to the Xavierian Brothers.

The sixteen young ladies to join the sisterhood in the past fifty years are Bertha Bowlds, Matilda Drury, Malisa Wathen, Janie Clements, Marie Clements, of the Loretto order; Sarah Henning, Mary Payne, Jane McDaniel, Mary Mollohon, Rosa Monarch, Grace Sansberry and Lizzie Aud, of the Nazareth sisters of charity; Emma Higdon, Franciscan; Mary Higdon, Dominican; Fannie Payne and Lizzie Coomes, of the Ursuline order.

The prominent physicians are Drs. Thos. Aud, Wm. Holmes, Wm. Lockhart, T. J. Byrnes and Simon Lockhart, all deceased. Of the living, Dr. I. G. Drury is the senior, being sixty-eight years of age, and has practiced medicine in the Knottsville precinct continuously for thirty-six years and three months, and has doubtless owned more good horses and ridden more miles than any other physician in the state. Dr. T. J. Byrnes studied and practiced under Dr. Drury; Dr. C. Z. Aud, of Cecelia, and Dr. H. D. Rodman, of Louisville, also studied under him. Dr. Charles Lockhart, of Ensor, is a son of old Dr. Wm. Lockhart. Dr. J. W. Ellis is at Masonville, Dr. F. M. Clements, Salisbury, Mo.; Drs. Jo and Dick Johnson in Union county; Dr. Lancaster, Pellville; Dr. Ed Payne, Curdsville; Dr. J. L. Barret, Deanfield, and Dr. J. L. Early, Knottsville. Three young men are studying for the same profession.

Knottsville has not produced many lawyers, but she may well boast of the quality, if not the quantity, of the goods. At the top of the ladder, still an active practitioner, stands the venerable Hon. Zach Montgomery, of California, eminent jurist, distinguished author, a forty-niner, assistant attorney general of the United States in President Cleveland's cabinet, guardian and educator of his distinguished nephew, Rt. Rev. George Montgomery, D. D. Then we have with us our own Hon. W. T. Ellis, lawyer, congressman, traveler, author and orator; La Vega Clements, our popular young county attorney; Bob Lancaster, county superintendent of schools; Bob Hays, W. E. Aud, George Jesse and ___ Winkler.

Of prominent business men J. B. Aud & Brother was the oldest firm in Daviess county when they dissolved a few months ago. Mr. C. O. Clements has been in business in Knottsville during the past thirty-one years. Four of his children are mentioned above. Mr. W. S. Hazel, now of Owensboro, during the past twenty-five years was the most aggressive business man that Knottsville ever had. Mr. Hazel has traded horses oftener, sold more goods, bought and sold more farms, built more houses, given more men employment, dispensed more in charity, for negro schools, and for churches of all denominations, buried more people and never got the pay, and has had more blessings and curses heaped on his head than any other man in the county.

The history of Daviess county contains an honored list of good farmers and other substantial citizens in and from the Knottsville precinct.. It does not boast of any landlord kings, but more of her population own their own little homes, are more independent and pay their taxes more promptly, than any other section of the county, and when it comes to election times, every candidate tells the 450 voters how near and dear old Knottsville is to him.

During the civil war her sons were about equally divided, but none arose to any special distinction. Many of her sturdy manhood have gone to the frontier states and reflected honor on

their old home state. Knottsville has good cause to be proud of her manhood during all of the seventy-five years of her existence.



Owensboro Daily Tribune, Owensboro, KY, 15 March 1896, p5:

Mr. J. M. Haynes, of Knottsville, has a tomahawk made about one hundred years ago, which he prizes very highly, both as a relic of Indian warfare as well as the family associations connected with it. It was made by his grandfather, Mr. Leonard Knott, a pioneer blacksmith, in Wilson [note: this should be Nelson] county, who early came to Daviess county, and in whose honor Knottsville was named. Mr. Knott's daughter, who become the mother of Mr. Haynes was the first child born in Knottsville. This tomahawk was hand-made, of the very best metal, and modeled after the weapon so generally used by the Indians at that time. It was customary for the Indian fighters in those days to use the same weapon against the enemy. Mr. Leonard Knott made this tomahawk specially for his brother Harry who used it in the great battle, of Tippecanoe, in 1811, under General Harrison, after which splendid victory he very proudly and honorably returned it to the maker who treasured it until his death many years afterward. At the sale of his effects, about the year 1850, old uncle Miley Aud, of late memory, after a spirited bidding bought it in and kept it until he died some forty years later, when his widow presented it to the present owner, as being the nearest kin to the maker.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 23 November 1886, p.3:

Neighborhood Notes – Knottsville

A recent census of Knottsville shows the number of inhabitants to be 212, against 192 one year previous, a gain of 20. Knottsville is coining, don't you forget it. We would ask as a favor from each of the MESSENGER'S correspondents to please state in their next letters the number of inhabitants of their towns. NEBUCHODNOZOR.



**History of Daviess County, Kentucky,
Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, p.598:**

KNOTTSVILLE

This village was laid out in 1836 by William R. Griffith and James Millay. The first house was built in the fall of 1827, by Leonard Knott, for whom the town was named. For the first few years it was called by various names, such as "Heart's Delight," "Grocery," the "Blacksmith Shop," etc. It was named Knottsville by Hon. Wm. R. Griffith, while he was in the Legislature. James Millay opened the first store. The first buildings were the house and blacksmith shop put up by Knott. B. J. McDaniel, William Higdon, Mrs. Mary Drury and L. T. Brown were other early settlers. The first school-house was built in 1854 or '5. It was a log cabin, but was replaced by a neat little frame building in 1857. The first school was taught by Powhattan Ellis. Knottsville is

situated thirteen miles east of Owensboro, on the Hardinsburg road. There are two general stores, one drug store, one shoe shop, a blacksmith and wagon shop, two undertakers, one flouring mill, one saw and grist mill, and three tobacco factories.

pages 595-596:

St. Lawrence Catholic Church. – The first services of this church were held in 1822 by Father Able, in the house of William Jarbol [sic]. At this time there were but three or four families in attendance. When the first house was built there were built there were ten families in the congregation. There are at present over 200 families in attendance The first house of worship was built in 1827 or '8, and the first services held in the new church were by Father Durbin, in 1828. The first stationed pastor was Rev. Father John Wathen, who came here in 1833. It was through the efforts of Mrs. Ezekiel Henning, Mrs. Alex. McDaniel, Mrs. Solomon McDaniel and perhaps one or two others that Father Durbin came here to preach.

The land, 400 acres, was donated by William Griffith and Hubbard Taylor, each giving 200 acres. They have since sold

St. Lawrence Cemetery.—The first person buried in St. Lawrence Catholic Cemetery was Mrs. Jennie Bowlds, in 1829 or '30. She had five daughters and two sons; four are still living, viz: Zachariah, now living in Knottsville; Elizabeth, now widow McCarty, of Curdsville; Bertha, now Mother Superior of Bethlehem Female Academy, in Hardin County, and Susan, now Mrs. Comstock, of Owensboro. The second person buried in this cemetery was Mrs. Katie Aull, and the third was George Montgomery, small boy.



**Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory For 1879-80,
R. L. Polk & Co., & A. C. Danser, Detroit, MI & Louisville, KY, 1879, p.219:**

Knottsville.

A village located in the eastern part of Daviess county, 13 miles from Owensboro, the county seat and nearest shipping point. Stages to Owensboro daily; fare 75 cents. Population, 150. H. T. Aud, postmaster.

Business Directory

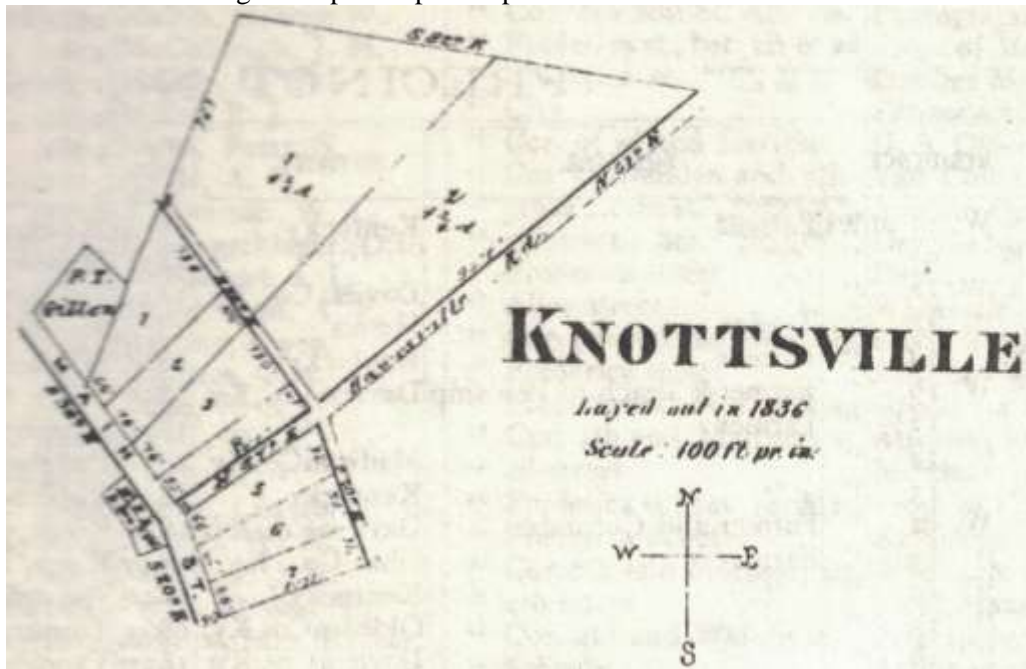
Aud, J. B., justice.
Aud, J. B. & Bro., general store.
Bowldis, J. P., lumber.
Byrnes, T. J., physician.
Clements, A. H., furniture and justice.
Clements, C. O., hotel.
Crouse, J., flour mill.
Drury, J. G. & Co., druggists.
Gillem, T. D., meat market.

Griffith, S. H. & Bro., blacksmiths.
Hazel & McJohnston, general store.
Higdon, J., barber.
Higdon, J. W., constable.
Rack, Rev. P. J., (catholic). [sic – Rock]
Rauch, H., cooper.
Smith, Joseph, wagonmaker.
Summers, W. T. druggists.
Tresler, R. K., live stock.



An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY.,
Leo McDonough & Co., 1876, pages 27 & 67:

Page 27 – part of plat map of the Knottsville Precinct





Owensboro Monitor, Owensboro, KY, 28 October 1874, p.3:

St. Lawrence's Catholic church at Knottsville will be dedicated next Sunday, November 1st, by Rt. Rev. Bishop McCloskey, of Louisville. Knottsville is the site of the first Catholic church in this part of Kentucky. The old building having become unfit for use, it has been replaced by a substantial brick church, costing about \$10,000. To the credit of the people of that vicinity be it said that the work was paid for as it was done, and now there is not a debt on the church. – Great praise is due to the reverend gentlemen Fathers Coghlan and Eggermont, to whose efficient management this happy state of affairs is mainly due. There are now eight Catholic churches in Daviess county, and we hear some talk of a ninth.



The Frankfort Argus, Frankfort, KY, 28 January 1835, p3:

Proceedings of the Legislature
Senate – Thursday, Jan. 22, 1835:

Mr. METCALFE, from the committee of Internal Improvement, to whom was referred a bill to establish a state road from the mouth of Salt river to the Ohio river, opposite to Shawnotown, so as to pass through the towns of Clair Dealing, Hardinsburg, Knottsville, Owenborough, Henderson, and Morgafield—reported the same without amendment. The further readings of this bill were dispensed with, and passed.



St. Lawrence Catholic Church near Knottsville



St. William Catholic Church in Knottsville