

Habit, Kentucky

By Jerry Long
c.2024



Kentucky Place Names, Robert M. Rennick
(The University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, KY, 1984) p.127:

Habit (Davies): This settlement with extinct post office lies at the junction of KY 142 and 762, 5 1/2 miles southeast of Owensboro. Its post office was established on July 30, 1884, and named for Frederick Habitt, an English-born blacksmith who had arrived in Daviess Co in 1870. The office closed in 1906. [source: Michael J. Edgeworth, manuscript on Daviess County place names for Kentucky Place Name Survey, 1973.]



Daviess County, Kentucky, 1815-2015: Celebrating Our Heritage, Daviess County Bicentennial Committee, M. T. Publishing Company, Inc., Evansville, IN, 2015, pp. 8 & 29:

Habit

by Isaac Settle

Officially incorporated July 30th, 1884, the post office at Habit was established and named for the English born blacksmith, Frederick Habit. Habit was known as a thriving farm community and its focal point was Bethabara Baptist Church, one of the oldest churches in Daviess County. It was organized October 5th, 1825 by members from surrounding churches such as Yelvington and Panther Creek Baptist Churches. The Habit area was first settled by 1815, the year Daviess County was established. Until the late 1800s, the community was known as Bethabara, and some of the area's earliest settlers were Kirks, Millers, Bristows, Barnhills, and Harrisons, just to name a few. The first school near Habit was Tribbel's School House, named for Jack Tribbel, its first teacher. The school was organized in 1825, and located on the present site of the Bethabara Church Cemetery. During the Mexican and Civil Wars, Habit produced many soldiers, some of whom are buried in Bethabara Church Cemetery. Some of the most noteworthy Civil War Veterans include Squire Adams Camp and James H. Bozarth. After the Civil War, Habit experienced rapid growth and by 1876, a general store had opened up across from the church. In 1886, the community of Habit had a physician, Dr. L.G. Armendt; Glass & Becker's wagon maker's shop; a post office; Habit & Coots blacksmith shop; Miller's general merchandise store; school and a school teacher, Miss Mamie Miller; and, of course, Bethabara Baptist Church. Habit also at one time had a Masonic Lodge, a railroad station, a grist mill, and in 1889, a "summer hotel" ran by Hiram Bristow. The first post master of Habit was James C. Miller (1884-1891), followed by Henry C.

Miller Jr. (1891-1903), and the last was James W. Harrison (1903-1906), and on September 29th, 1906 the post office closed, and the mail was then sent to Philpot.

Page 8 – “Daviness County Bicentennial Chronology: 200 Historical Events”, by Jerry Long:

1825, 10-5 Bethabara Baptist Church was organized. At first they met in a log structure, known as the Tribbel School, built on land owned by Jack Tribbel; it was located just northwest of where the Big Rivers RECC tower now stands.



An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY
(Leo McDonough & Co.: Edwardsville, IL, 1876) p.31:



Bethabara (subsequently Habit) plotted on 1876 map of the Masonville Precinct



History of Daviess County, Kentucky
(Inter-State Publishing, Co., Chicago, IL, 1883) pp.660-662:

Bethabara Baptist Church. — This church was constituted Oct. 5, 1825, in a log house built by the citizens of the neighborhood for a meeting-house, and free for all the different denominations then existing around them. At this point Panther Creek, the nearest Baptist church, had kept up regular services for a time, styling it an arm in the Forks of Panther Creek, Daviess Co., Ky., and at the above date lettered off some members for the purpose of constituting a church here. Preliminaries being arranged these members met with a few others at this old log house, situated on the farm known as the D. A. Miller farm, and very near the spot of ground upon which the dwelling-house of Dr. Magruder now stands, some eight miles east of Owensboro and four miles northeast of Masonville. The ministers in attendance were Elders Ancell Hall, J. H. L. Moorman, William Moorman and D. J. Kelly. They proceeded in the usual order and constituted the church with ten members, viz. : Nancy Crofford, Bettie Crofford, Warner Crofford, William Miller, Peggie Miller, Susan Maddux, Fleming Miller, Preston Talbert, Emma Talbert and Joseph M. Martin. After the organization, there were received by experience Elizabeth Martin and Polly Stout, who were baptized the next day by Ancell Hall, who was chosen pastor of the church. Mrs.

Martin is the only member now living whose name was in the constitution, and from that day to this she has continued an active working member whose care and toil have been given to the church. Though now (1882) eighty-three years old she has recently manifested her devotion to the cause in presenting to the church a beautiful communion set which was thankfully received, and an engraving was put thereon commemorating this event.

For two years the church continued its efforts to build itself up, under the labors of Elder Hall. He then resigned and Elder J. Bristow was called to the pastorate, who served only a short time. J. M. Martin was the first Moderator and Preston Talbert the first Clerk. About this time some trouble arose and Mr. Bristow resigned. The clerk also moved away thus leaving only two male members in the church. The prospects were now so gloomy — no pastor, no clerk, and no member willing to act as clerk — that the church was on the eve of dissolution. Polly Stout, wife of the Hon. Simpson Stout, and one of the constitutional members, arose and remarked, "We cannot give up the ship," and volunteered to act as clerk. Her proposition was accepted; she acted as clerk for a time, during which the church called Elder W. Downs to the pastorate. He accepted and served the church with profit.

At an early day the church united to the Goshen Association. At the May meeting, 1831, Elder Downs was again chosen pastor. In 1832 a new meeting-house was built some 400 or 500 yards north of the present house, on the lot of ground now used by the church as a burying-ground. About or near this time Elder Reuben Cottrell moved into the neighborhood and became a member of this church, which had become prosperous, holding frequent meetings from house to house, and adding many members to her number. In 1835 Elder Cottrell was called to the pastorate in connection with Elder Downs, and in 1836, was elected pastor of the church, in which capacity he continued until 1842, when he resigned. He was succeeded by Elder B. F. Mitchell who remained one year. The church then remained several months without a pastor. In 1845 Elder Cottrell again became its pastor. He was succeeded by J. P. Ellis, who commenced his labors in 1850, and continued with them until 1857.

In 1849 several members took letters of dismissal and formed themselves into another church. They received $116.66 \frac{2}{3}$, being one half of the estimated value of the church property, to enable them to build a house of worship. This church was called Macedonia, and became a member of the Daviess County Association.

In 1851 Bethabara Church erected a new edifice, 40x60 feet. It was a substantial brick building, situated about 400 or 500 yards south of the old site. In 1857 Elder Ellis declined a re-election, and was succeeded by Elder J. B. Haynes, who remained until 1860, when Elder J. P. Ellis was again called to the pastorate. In 1863 he was succeeded by Elder J. M. Dawson for one year. In 1872 Elder Ellis was again chosen pastor, and in 1873 he agreed to serve the church for an indefinite length of time. He continued with the church until 1874, when he resigned, and was succeeded by Elder J. D. Arnold, who remained under an annual call until June, 1881. In July of the same year Elder R. S. Fleming was called to fill out the unexpired term of Elder Arnold, the latter having been removed by death, which call was accepted. In January, 1882, he was elected pastor by a large majority. He served until April following, and in June the present pastor. Elder A. J. Miller, was elected.



A History of the Daviess-McLean Baptist Association in Kentucky, 1844-1943,
Rev. Wendell H. Rone (Messenger Job Printing Co., Inc., Owensboro, KY, 1943),

Chapter VII: Histories of the Churches in Daviess County, Kentucky, pp.150-154:

BETHABARA CHURCH

This historic and influential Church was organized on October 5, 1825, in a log house built by the citizens of the neighborhood to be used for a school house and house of worship, and free for all the different denominations then existing around them. At this point, Panther Creek, the nearest Baptist Church, had kept up regular services for some time, styling it as the "Arm in the Forks of Panther Creek, Daviess County, Ky.," and in 1825 dismissed some members by letter to form a church there.

These members, with a few others, met in the log house on October 5th, and with the assistance of Elders Ancil Hall, James H. L. Moorman, William Moorman, and David J. Kelley, organized Bethabara Church with ten constituent members. The names of these members were:

Nancy Crofford	William Miller	Fleming Miller
Bettie Crofford	Peggie Miller	Preston Talbert
Warner Crofford	Susan Maddox	Emma Talbert
Joseph M. Martin		

The next day Elizabeth Martin and Polly Stout were baptized by Elder Hall, who had been chosen as the first pastor. Mrs. Martin outlived all the other constituent members and on July 20, 1878, at the age of eighty-three, wishing to show her devotion to the Church presented a beautiful communion set to the Church.

For two years the Church continued to build up under the leadership of Elder Hall. He then resigned and Elder Jasper Bristow was called to the pastorate. He served but a short time as some trouble arose over the subject of missions and he resigned. He later cast his lot with the anti-missionary Baptists.

Preston Talbert, the first clerk, moved away, leaving only two male members of the Church, one being the Moderator, Joseph M. Martin. The prospects now looked gloomy, no pastor, no clerk, and no member willing to act as clerk, and the Church was on the verge of dissolution. At this point Polly Stout arose and remarked, "We cannot give up the ship," volunteering to act as clerk. Her proposition was accepted and she acted as Clerk for a time, during which Elder William Downs was called to the pastorate. He was a man of unusual ability and was especially fond of debating. Something is said of him in the sketches of the founding fathers.

The neighboring Churches at this time were Old Panther Cree&, Rock Spring (Yelvington), Green Brier, and Little Flock (Bell's Run). The records show numerous instances when a friendly letter was read from one of the Churches, or when Bethabara wrote to one or sometimes all of them, requesting the sending of delegates, or "helps," as they were called, to aid in settling some difficulty that had arisen in the Church.

The Church grew under the ministrations of Elder Downs and had frequent meetings, often at the homes of the members. About this time Elder Reuben Cottrell moved into the neighborhood and became a very active member, supplementing the work of Elder Downs. He was a very firm believer in missionary work but bitterly opposed all organizations other than the Church.

On November 17, 1832, plans were made for a new meeting house to be built on the northeast corner of Brother Cottrell's farm, on the site now occupied by the Church Cemetery. This new house of worship was to be a one-story building thirty-six feet long and thirty feet wide, built of hewn logs and having a shingle roof. Elder Cottrell and Brethren Enoch Stone and Thomas Taylor were the committee to superintend the new building. As no mention is made of the cost it is to be inferred that both material and labor were, for the most part, donated by the members of

the Church and their neighbors. The house was soon finished and the first services held in it on July 17, 1833, eight months to the day from the time the matter was taken. up and nearly eight years after the organization of the Church.

Twice during that year the Church met at the home of Brother Joe Martin and observed the ordinances of foot washing, the only instance recorded when this was done. The doctrine of foot washing remained a part of the Articles of Faith until the year 1852. It was also in the year 1833 that a part of the land given to the Church was selected as a cemetery.

Since the organization of the Church the following brethren have served the Church as pastor: Ancill Hall, 1825-1826; Jasper Bristow, 1827; William Downs, 1828-1835; Reuben Cottrell, 1835-1842; B. F. Mitchell, 1843; No Pastor for two years with Elder K. G. Hay acting as supply part of that time; Reuben Cottrell, 1845-1849; J. P. Ellis, 1850-1857; J. B. Haynes, 1857-1860; J. P. Ellis, 1860-1863; J. M. Dawson, 1863-1872; J. P. Ellis, 1872-1874; J. D. Arnold, 1875-1881; R. S. Fleming, 1882; A. J. Miller, 1883-1884; B. F. Swindler, 1884-1889; L. H. Voyles, 1889; J. N. Jarnagin, 1890-1896; E. W. Coakley, 1896-1900; W. B. Rutledge, 1901; W. H. Dawson, 1902-1903; J. J. Cloar, 1904-1909; P. E. Gatlin, 1909-1912; I. B. Timberlake, 1912-1913; A. S. Pettie, 1914-1919; O. M. Shultz, 1919-1921; J. Norris Palmer, 1922; Russell Walker, 1923-1926; Sankey L. Blanton, 1927-1928; E. L. Spivey, 1928-1929; J. W. Kincheloe, 1930-1934; J. B. Leavell, 1935-1938; Carl E. Bates, 1938-1941; Kelley Barnett, 1942; Howard Olive, 1942-1943.

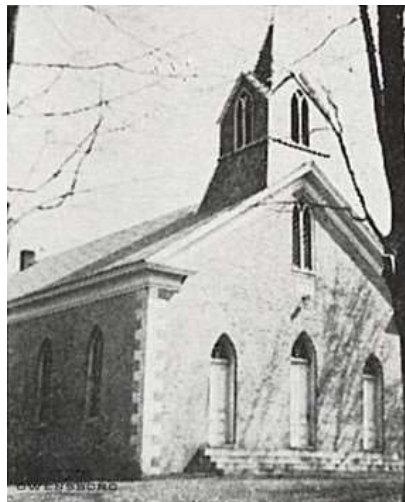
This Church has been served by the following Clerks during her more than one hundred and seventeen years of history: Preston Talbert, 1825-1827; Polly Stout, 1828; John Taylor, 1829-time unknown; J. M. Dawson, 1844 or earlier to 1850; Elijah Griffin, 1851-1857; J. M. Holmes, 1858-1861; W. M. Harrison, 1862-1863; Phocian Harris, 1864-1868; N. B. Barnhill, 1869; Oliver Bryant, 1870; J. M. Holmes, 1871; J. M. Gordon, 1872-1873; Oliver Bryant, 1874; J. F. Camp, 1875-1876; J. W. Barnhill, 1877-1878; J. F. Camp, 1879; J. W. Barnhill, 1880; J. F. Camp, 1881-1884; J. T. Dawson, 1885-1894; N. J. Cook, 1895-1900; Oscar L. Camp, 1901-1925; Emmett Jones, 1926-1928; Oscar L. Camp, 1929-1943.

Bethabara Church became a member of the Goshen Association in the year 1826. Up to the year 1844 the Church was represented almost annually in the gatherings of that body. In accordance with previous arrangements messengers from the following Churches met with the Bethabara Church on November 1-3, 1844, to organize the Daviess County Baptist Association: Owensboro (First), Rock Spring (Yelvington), Buck Creek, Pleasant Grove, Bell's Run, Mt. Liberty, Green Briar, and Fredonia (extinct). The fiftieth session of the Association met with Bethabara in the year 1893 and plans are now on foot for the one hundredth session to be held at the same place in 1943. In the meantime this Church has entertained the sessions of the Association in the years 1854, 1879, 1909, and 1931. This coming session will mark the sixth time the Association has met with the Church.

This Church has been a mother of other Churches. She has furnished members in whole or in part for the following daughter Churches: Macedonia, Sugar Grove, Karn's Grove, Hopewell, Friendship, and Dawson. The origin of Macedonia Church came about because of two factions that had arisen within the membership of Bethabara Church. The feelings grew so intense that finally the pastor, Elder Reuben Cottrell, and twenty-one members were excluded from the fellowship of the Church. Later, however, on the advice of a Committee called in to help the Church in her difficulties, these brethren and sisters were restored to fellowship and granted letters of dismission for the purpose of organizing a new church. They received the sum of \$116.66 $\frac{2}{3}$, half the estimated value of the Church property, to aid them in building a new house of worship. Elder Cottrell, in turn, gave Bethabara a deed to the Church property. The mother and daughter

Church have maintained the best of feelings for one another since that time and at present have the same pastor. This has been true on another occasion.

By the year 1852, the old log Church had been outgrown by the Church and the brethren set on foot a plan to erect a new house of worship. As the present site at that time was considered too small a Committee of five, therefore, secured the present location and erected a brick house 40 x 50 feet. The clay from which the bricks were made was secured from the same hill on which the Church was organized. This new house of worship was first used in November, 1854, and was completed at a cost of \$1,134.19. Many who were not members of the Church or denomination made gifts for this work. By the year 1885 plans were made to enlarge and improve the house of worship. The house was made 12 feet longer, and 4 feet higher, a new slate roof was put on, and other necessary improvements. This work cost about \$2,500.00. The bell which still calls the people to worship was installed at this time. During the year 1939 the Church completed seven new Sunday School rooms on the inside of the building. This has proved to be a valuable asset to the church's work. Besides her own houses of worship the Church also gave the old house of worship to the colored members to be used as their own house of worship after 1854. The colored members were also given permission to put a new roof on this building. The Church, with the assistance of the Whitesville, Macedonia, and South Hampton Churches, erected a mission chapel in the Hopewell community which later became Hopewell Baptist Church. In like manner she cooperated with Bell's Run, Sugar Grove, Whitesville, Macedonia, and Owensboro First Churches in erecting a mission chapel at Laffoon which is now the Friendship Church.



Bethabara Church erected in 1885

Not only has this Church been a mother of Churches but many of her members have been licensed and ordained to the work of the ministry. In this number is a colored brother. They have been as follows: Hardin H. Ellis, licensed on December 19, 1840, and ordained in July, 1841; Nelson a colored man, licensed early in 1857 and ordained in October of the same year; Isaiah Wheeler, licensed in 1857; James W. Bristow, licensed in 1886; Myron Gordon, licensed in 1886; Reet Jones, licensed in 1897; and Bunyan Bristow, a grandson of Elder Jasper Bristow, licensed in 1900.

This Church in her early history was very strict in disciplinary measures. Three brethren were appointed as peacemakers, whose duty it was to report to the Church any difficulties between members, or an unbecoming conduct on the part of any member. That these officers did their duty nobly is attested by the fact that scarcely a meeting was held without reports of discord or

misconduct. Exclusions were frequent and were without regard to race, wealth, social standing or church position of the one excluded. At least one deacon and one minister were excluded and charges were preferred against another minister. Even one of the peacemakers was later excluded. The Church dealt with, members for having committed such offenses as threatening to sue one another, wanting to fight' slandering their neighbors, being punished in a court of law, absenting themselves from more than two business meetings of the Church without good reason, leaving the house during business sessions without the consent of the Moderator, separation from husband or wife, contempt of the Church, refusing to heed the call of the Church and many other similar acts, not to mention the grosser crimes such as dancing, swearing, gambling, rioting, drinking ardent spirits to excess, selling liquor, etc. The office of peacemaker was abolished in 1842. Nevertheless the Church continued to call for "the peace of the Church" at the opening of each business session. A large majority of those excluded were later restored to fellowship after they had manifested a spirit of repentance.

As has already been noticed the Church had many colored members as a number of the white members were slave owners. These were later given permission to hold their own worship services superintended by a committee of the white brethren to see that the services were conducted in an orderly way. After the Civil War the colored members were freed to pursue their own ways.

During the pastorate of Brother E. W. Coakley the Church held a summer Bible School for the children. This practice was followed for some time only to be abandoned. It is a forerunner of the modern Vacation Bible School. The Sunday School has been in existence since April, 1846, and has been a credit to the Church life. The Church has also been missionary during all her history even though she had two pastors in her early days who were popularly known as "Hardshell" Baptists. The W. M. S. has functioned since the year 1912.

No record is at hand of the number of fine men who have served the Church in the office of deacon. They have been the best the Church has had in her membership and have acquitted themselves in a commendable way in this important office. Among this number have been the following: Enoch Stone, Elijah Griffin, J. M. Martin, J. M. Dawson, B. T. Dawson, J. C. Miller, Fleming Miller, Joe King, J. W. Barnhill, J. S. Coots, Otis Hazelrigg, Otis Kirk, Miller H. Taylor, Rollie Chapman, and others whom we do not know.

This Church celebrated one hundred years of history on October 4, 1925. At that time Brethren E. W. Coakley and W. B. Rutledge returned and preached to the large congregation gathered for the occasion. Bro. Russell Walker, the pastor at the time, gave the welcome address. The history of the Church for one hundred years was read by Bro. Otis Hazelrigg. The sketch had been prepared by a committee and was later published in pamphlet form. This history has been used extensively without quotation marks by the author. Bro. J. P. Ellis wrote a sketch history of the Church and the same was read before the Association in 1882 and published in the minutes for that year. An account is also given in the History of Daviess County, published in 1883. Incidentally, the Hon. Wiley B. Rutledge, who was recently appointed to the Supreme Court by President Roosevelt, is a son of the Bro. Rutledge who spoke on the centennial program and was at one time pastor of the Church. Two sons of former, pastors who were present that day also. Rev. Martin Miller, son of Elder A. J. Miller, and Dr. William Arnold, son of Elder J. D. Arnold.

Since about the year 1896 the Church has had twice-a-month preaching and has been very liberal in the matter of pastoral support. She has paid better than the average in this matter. Perhaps no Church in the entire Associations has excelled this Church in the pastoral talent which she has secured. As a result the membership of this Church has been above average in Christian intelligence and labors. For many years she was the largest rural Church in the Association. The

second century of activity has been entered into and the prospects are bright for a very useful future.



Bethabara Baptist Church: On right Kentucky Historical Highway marker E\erected in 1973 by the Kentucky Historical Society and Kentucky Department of Highways; (Marker Number 1873). Inscription “This congregation was organized on Oct. 5, 1825, in log house. New meeting house, on the site of present cemetery, built 1832. Current brick church erected in 1854, with clay from the original site. Six churches have grown from Bethabara: Macedonia, Sugar Grove, Hopewell, Karn's Grove, Friendship, and Dawson.” Marker is at the intersection of State Highway 142 and Millers Mill Road (State Highway 762), on the right when traveling north on State Highway 142.



Bethabara Baptist Church Cemetery at Habit



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 5 October 1975, p.1B:



Members of Bethabara Baptist Church posed for a photographer outside the Habit church in the early 1890s. The small trees in this picture now tower above the 121-year-old building and the shot could not be recreated. In the foreground is the wooden platform where ladies disembarked from buggies to follow the plank sidewalk (since replaced by brick) to the church.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 19, August 1884, p.4:

– A new postoffice, Habit, has been established in this county, with James Miller as postmaster.



**Database of Appointments of U.S. Postmasters
Habit, Daviess County, KY appointments:**

James C. Miller	30 Jul 1884		Albert D. Powers	26 Feb 1892
Henry C. Miller, Jr.	2 Jan 1891		Marcellus O'Bryan	2 Feb 1893

Thomas C. Floyd	4 Apr 1894		James W. Harrison	5 May 1903
John P. Harrison	11 Dec 1896		Discontinued	7 Sep 1906

Subsequently mail was sent to the Philpot post office.



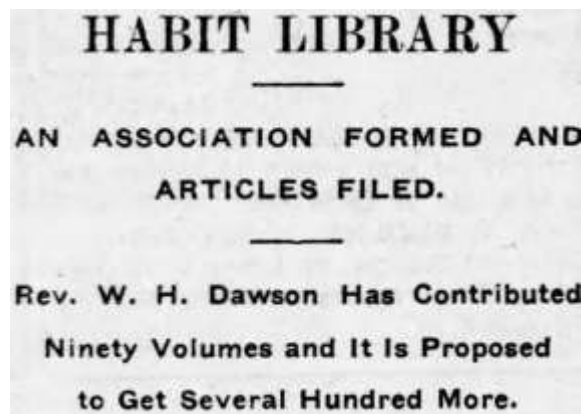
Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1895-96
R.L. Polk & Co., Louisville, KY, 1895, p.107:

HABIT. Daviess county, 9 miles southeast of Owensboro, the county seat, banking and shipping point. Population 50.

Floyd, T. C., general store.		Harrison Bros., grocers.
Habit, F., blacksmith.		Owsley, Wm. blacksmith.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 6 March 1903, p.7:



Articles incorporating the "Habit Library association" were filed on Wednesday with the county clerk. The document contains the usual formal stipulations as to number of officers, limits of indebtedness, etc. The object of the association is to secure for the Habit neighborhood a public free circulating library. Already a good start has been made as the library now contains 150 volumes. Of these ninety volumes were Contributed by Rev. W. H. Dawson, of Thruston. The other sixty volumes were donated by various other persons. The purpose of the promoters is to continue their efforts until 1,500 or 2,000 volumes have been secured and properly housed and classified.

The annual dues of members have been fixed at fifty cents, and \$10 pays for a life membership.

The officers are: President, Prof. W. C. Bell; vice president, Joseph A. Camp; secretary, Miss Lillie Rice; directors, D. N. Combs, Dr. A. Kirk, Mrs. W. C. Bell, Miss Mary Barnhill, J. M. Taylor, J. W. Harrison, Miss Jimmie Patterson and J. S. Coots.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 18 July 1904, p.8:

DEDICATED
Public Library at Habit Now in Its Own Building

Sunday was a gala day at Habit in this county, the occasion being the dedication of the public library at that place. The exercises were witnessed by 500 people, who are all deeply interested in the growth and prosperity of the library. A brass band was in attendance and addresses were made by Messrs. James Taylor, chairman of the meeting. LaVega Clements and Sam Bedford of Owensboro. Mr. D. N. Combs gave an account of the origin, the growth and financial condition of the library, which has now been installed in the building of its own. There are now in the library over 600 volumes, most of which were subscribed and it is entirely free from debt.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 8 January 1905, p.14:

HABIT LIBRARY

An Institution That Has Been Made a Marked Success.
Has a Good Building and Nearly Eight Hundred Volumes on Its Shelves.

The people of Habit and vicinity have a library of which they are very proud. The people of thy neighbor had felt the need of such an institution and set to work to supply it and they have succeeded beyond their expectations

The first thing that was done was to provide a building for the library. The people of the neighborhood contributed the material and a great part of the work, so that the building which is now worth \$100 cost a comparatively small amount of actual cash. A few books were contributed at the start, purchases were made and books secured in other ways until on January 1 there were 784 volumes on the shelves, representing 253 authors in every department of literature.

There is no reading room connected with the library. It is opened on Sunday afternoon after Sunday school, and the demand for books is so great that it frequently takes more than an hour to issue those called for. The books are allowed to be kept out for thirty days, fines being inflicted for those kept for a longer time.

The library is conducted by a board of directors. Dr. A. Kirk is chairman and Messrs. D. N. Combs, James Taylor, John King, Walter Rager and John S. Coots are the remaining members of the board.

The library association gives entertainments from time to time, which are marked social features. The committee will meet Monday night and decide on the form and time of the next affair of the kind. These are always successful, on account of the interest of the people in their library.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 28 November 1909, p.1B:

SEVERAL NEW HOMES BEING ERECTED AT HABIT

Habit, like Owensboro, Whitesville and other points in the county, is having its building boom. Three pretty new homes are being built near the pretty country town and several houses are being repaired in the town. The Baptist church was . recently thoroughly renovated and a steel

ceiling was put in, bettering greatly its appearance. M. J. Cook is building a five-room cottage. Bun Kirk is putting up a four-room dwelling and John Cook is erecting a two-story seven-room house. These are all new homes added to the community and do not take the place of older or smaller houses.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 6 January 1937, p.10:

Board Discusses Building Plans

.... A site for Philpot school was bought last spring at the intersection of the Habit and Leitchfield roads, from Carl Harrison at a cost of \$800. Schools to be absorbed by this consolidated school includes Habit, Cane Run, Philpot, Hopewell, Dermot and Rose Hill....



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 12 July 2002, pp.1C & 3C:

Cherishing town is Lashbrook's Habit
Bethabara Baptist Church remains centerpiece

By Steve Vied, Messenger-Inquirer

HABIT - The crossroads community of Habit sits on a high plateau in southeast Daviess County - quaint, inviting, restful and rich in history.

The center of Habit has always been the Bethabara Baptist Church. The present church, a masterpiece of white-painted brick, was built in 1854. It sits among maples so big and so close together that sunlight can scarcely reach the front lawn. The church was organized in 1825, and the town was known as Bethabara until 1884, when it took the name of Habit, after local blacksmith Fred Habit.

Over the years Bethabara Baptist has been modernized. The slate roof gave way to asphalt shingles and an addition for Sunday school rooms, and a fellowship hall was built. But a decorative metal ceiling still adorns the sanctuary.

Today, the little church is the last real connection Habit has to its past, if you don't count some of the older houses. It has been decades since the town had a grocery, a school, a community library, a telephone exchange and a doctor's office. But a half century ago, Habit was a thriving community that folks like Norma Lashbrook loved dearly.

Lashbrook is 74. She arrived in Habit at the age of 11 months and, except for five months after she was married, has lived there every day of her life. Until she married, she lived directly across the road from the church. For years her parents, Miller H. and Rae Vivian Taylor, owned the general store that bought eggs and milk from farmers, and sold groceries, gum boots, feed, seed and just about anything else people needed.

"We were all one big family here," Lashbrook said. "I went to the school for three years before consolidation, then we all went to Philpot in 1937."

The two-story frame school was torn down in the mid-1960s. The store shut down in 1977 and has since been torn down too.

For one to get a real sense of the history of Habit, a short journey to the local cemetery is in order. Just off Ben Head Road past Bill Chapman's house, the cemetery contains the graves of people who lived their entire lives before 1900. Taylors, Cooks, Kirks, Armendts and Alsips are a few of the names. Many headstones are too weathered to make out the letters.

"My dad bought here in the '30s," Chapman, 61, said. "There was an old-time blacksmith way back. I remember the building. Habit's changed some, but I've changed with it. When my son comes to visit, he says it's too quiet to sleep. A few old original houses are left, and the church bell still rings every Sunday."

Lashbrook, who has gathered history of the community and the church, said Habit grew after oil was discovered in nearby Friendship, swelling the church roll to 150. Today, a crowd of 100 is pretty good. But the church is doing well and getting ready to build an addition for a gym and rest rooms.

When Lashbrook was young, summer Saturdays in Habit meant games of tennis and croquet at the community playground, or the local baseball team, the Habit Highlanders, taking on a team from a neighboring town in the field next to the cemetery. Winter meant regular practices for the church Christmas program.

Habit, easy to reach at Kentucky 762 and 142, is much quieter today than it used to be. But its glory days still live in Lashbrook's mind.

"It was the neatest place to live that ever was," she said.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 1 February 2005, p.1D:



This house stood at Kentucky 762 and Old State Road in Habit. The original building date is unknown, but it was remodeled about 1900. Paul Camp (on horse) lived his entire life in the house, which has now been torn down. The land is currently used as a picnic grove. Photo submitted by Mary I. DeLacey.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 4 October 2005, p.1C:



Habit General Store [ed. note: store closed in 1977]



During the 1930s, Habit was a thriving community 10 miles east of Owensboro. The general store was run for many years by M. (Miller) H. Taylor and his wife, Miss Rae

Vivian. The benches on the front porch served as the meeting place for the "spit and whittle" club for elderly gentlemen to solve the world's problems. The school was on the other side of the grove of trees behind the store. The school building consisted of two rooms downstairs. Only one was used because the floor had collapsed in the other room. The upper floor was one large room with a stage at one end. This room was used for Christmas parties and community plays. Photos submitted by Norma Lashbrook. [ed. note: school closed in 1937]



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 9 May 1908, p.8:



Mr. Fred Habit, one of the best known old residents of the city, died of a complication of diseases at noon Friday, at his home at 531 Lewis street. He had been in poor health for several months. He had been a resident of this county for many years and had many friends.

Mr. Habit was a native of England, being born in Liverpool, England in 1849. He came to this country when a young man and settled in Daviess county. The town of Habit was named in honor of the deceased. He was one of the first settlers at that place. Mr. Habit was a blacksmith by trade. He was respected by all who knew him.

Besides his wife he is survived by three children. They are Wade Habit. Mrs. C. N. Matthews and Miss Anna Brown Habit.

The pallbearers will be Messrs. Fred Rarrick, Walter Moore; Charles Rarrick, R. T. Moore, W. B. Palmer and O. D. Read.

The funeral will be conducted at 2:30 o'clock this afternoon from Settle Memorial Methodist church by the Rev. Frank Thomas. The interment will be in Elmwood cemetery.



Fredrick Habbitt (1849-1908)

By Jerry Long

Fredrick Habbitt was born 26 December 1849 in Liverpool, England. In various records his surname appears as Habit, Habitt and Habbitt. The latter spelling is engraved on his tombstone.

In a list of residents in the Masonville Precinct in the 1876 book, An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, Ky. (p.25) the following information was recorded for Frederick Habitt – residence 9 miles southeast of Owensboro, blacksmith & general merchant, born Liverpool, came to Daviess County in 1870. Fred Habitt is reported to be a blacksmith in the 1870, 1880 and 1900 federal censuses of Daviess County, KY. On 30 July 1884 the post office established near the Bethabara Baptist Church was named in his honor. In 1900 he was renting a home, 618 Third Street, in Owensboro, Daviess County, KY. Fred Habit died on 8 May 1908 at his residence, 531 Lewis Street, in Owensboro, KY.

Daviess County, KY Marriage Book P, p.290:

Marriage Return and Register.

Date of Marriage 21st Day of July 1878

PARTIES' NAMES.

Mr. Frederick Habitt

Miss Georgia Coots

By Whom Married J. D. Arnold

Place of Marriage Residence of Bride's Mother
Daviess County, Ky.

Names of Witnesses Present S. A. Camp and J. M. Bonhill

Attest, M. S. Manning
Clerk Daviess County Court.

Fredrick Habbitt married Georgia Ann Coots on 21 July 1878 at the home of the bride's mother near the Bethabara Baptist Church in Daviess County. Georgia was born 19 March 1856 in Shelby County, KY; she was the daughter of Samuel Shepherd Coots & Anna Cottrell Brown. Georgia Habitt died on 27 September 1945 at the home of her daughter, Ethel Mathews, in Louisville, KY. She was returned to Owensboro, where she was buried beside her husband, Fred Habitt, in section A at Elmwood Cemetery.

The 1900 and 1910 censuses of Owensboro record that Georgia Habitt was the mother of three children. Their children were Wade Hampton Habitt (1879-1964, married May C. Pruitt), Ethel Habitt (1883-1970, married Claude Nelson Mathews) and Anne Brown Habitt (1892-1976, never married). Georgia was also survived by three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Left: Fred & Georgia Habitt and their children, Wade & Ethel. Right: Gravestone of Fredrick & Georgia Ann Habitt in section A at Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro, KY.

