

Rev. Hiram Kellam (1798-1880)

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, Ky., 2002



Grave of Rev. Hiram Kellam
Old Panther Creek Baptist Church
Cemetery, Ohio County, KY



Owensboro Messenger, Wednesday, 29 March 1905, p.2:

VERY NEAT BOOKLET

Of Which Judge L. P. Little Is the
Author Just Been Issued.

A very neat booklet of thirty-two pages has been issued from the publishing house of the M. E. Church, South, the title of it being "Local Preachers in Old Times in Kentucky." The author is Judge Lucius P. Little of this city and the matter contained is that of an address delivered by him before the Historical society of the Louisville Annual Conference of the M. E. Church, South, which was held at Frankfort, Ky., last year. The subjects are all selected from Daviess and McLean counties, where Judge Little has always lived. There are eight chapters or sketches in the book and every line is written in that excellent English. The frontispice is a picture of the late Rev. Hiram Kellam, who was well known in Daviess and adjoining counties and who was the grandfather of Mrs. Robert Littell and Hon. W. T. Ellis, of this city, and of others in the county.



Local Preachers in Old Times in Kentucky: Address Before The Historical Society of the Louisville Annual Conference of the M. E. Church, South, Delivered at Franklin, Kentucky, in 1904, by Lucius P. Little (Nashville, TN, Dallas, TX, Publishing House of the M. E. Church, South, 1905, pp.26-32):

VIII. A Brave and Faithful Preacher.

Hiram Kellam was born in Breckinridge County, Ky., January 5, 1798, and grew to manhood in the home of his pioneer parents. The early residence of the family was on one of those thoroughfares frequented by emigrants from Virginia and the Carolinas bound for the new and fertile West.

One evening a white covered wagon loaded with movers craved hospitality of his father. There was nothing providential in granting it; for then, as long afterwards, hospitality was the rule. The early Kentuckians did not forget the time when they were strangers in the land.

The movers hailed from North Carolina—father and mother and children. Among the latter was a well-grown girl whose beauty caught young Hiram's eye and heart at first sight. She on her part could not be unmindful of the impression she had made on the tall and handsome son of the host. While others slept, these reckless youngsters listened to each other —albeit she listened most—and the short, dark night (sadly short, they thought; though not so dark, being illuminated by love's wonderful aurora borealis) quickly passed.

Next morning the wagon moved off on its western journey, but lighter of load. Those were primitive times. That very day the Carolina beauty became the wife of young Hiram. Jane

Boucher was a faithful wife, and the love she won so quickly was all her own till death parted them. Generous hospitality was a lifelong characteristic of Hiram Kellam. To him the injunction of Holy Writ had a more than sacred meaning: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

In his youth he became a professing Christian and joined the Methodist Church, and ever lived in that faith. On his marriage he opened a farm in Daviess County, a mile northwest of the present site of the village of Knottsville. Seeking larger opportunities than farming afforded a poor man in that day, he established a tannery. In early times boots and shoes were manufactured by home workmen. In fact, a large proportion of the farmers made shoes with their own hands for their families. By and by the home-made shoe was superseded by the more artistic output of the professional shoemaker. It was in those earlier times that Kellam's tannery had its highest prosperity. Its business had greatly declined in the decade preceding the breaking out of the Civil War. On the occurrence of that event he abandoned the business, and also his farm, and took up his residence in Knottsville, where he remained until the close of his life.

Mr. Kellam was a many-sided man. In the first half of the century militia duty was exacted of all white male citizens of Kentucky from eighteen to forty-five years of age. The people of the several counties were divided into companies, battalions, and regiments, and these were placed under command of officers commissioned by the Governor. In 1828 Governor Metcalf commissioned him as captain of a company of militia. On assuming his new duties he soon familiarized himself with military tactics as to become a skillful drillmaster, and his company soon found that militia duty was something more than a mere formality. His reputation subsequently gained for him a commission as colonel of a Daviess County regiment, a position he held until the militia organization was superseded by the State Guard.

Like all busy men, he found time for many things. At one time he held the office of constable, and at another he served as justice of the peace. The Whig party was dominant during his active manhood, and he was always faithful and diligent in support of its policies and leaders. During the Civil War his sympathies were with the South, and, save as restrained by weight of years and a sense of ministerial duty, his martial spirit would have led him to draw his sword for the cause that was lost.

The dwelling house erected on his farm at his marriage grew by additions with the years, and as family exigencies required. It was originally built of logs, and was two stories high, but finally ells were added, and, in deference to advancing architectural taste, the whole was weatherboarded. The house had not been built long before the Methodist itinerant gravitated thither. There was no Protestant church in the neighborhood, but a room in Hiram Kellam's house served the purpose. Here a few of the faithful from time to time gathered to hear preaching and join in other religious services. He manufactured benches, which were placed in the room for use during worship and removed at other times.

It was not only a preaching place, but it was literally a preacher's home. The presiding elder, the weary itinerant, the local preacher, the devout brother or sister, and all of that "way" found shelter beneath his roof, refreshment at his board, and a welcome heartier and warmer and better than all.

He was a high priest in his household. Morning and evening the family and the "stranger within his gates" assembled, while he or another read a lesson from the sacred Scriptures. The songs of Zion were sung, and prayers ascended to the throne of all grace

He was an affectionate father, but especially did he set his heart upon his only son he christened him, as a devout Methodist naturally would, John Wesley, and trained him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The only plan of life his father ever had for him was that he should enter the ministry. His education all looked to that end. Asbury University was a noted seat of learning in that day, and thither the young man was sent. He was bright and diligent, and distinguished himself in his classes. In his senior year the consumption that had lurked in his system developed. With an unusually handsome person and grace of manner, added to bright talents and lofty traits of character, the father had dreamed dreams of a glorious future in which his son would achieve great things for the Master's kingdom. But an inscrutable Providence had decreed otherwise. The young man came home and rapidly declined, and soon died. The stricken father bore this supreme affliction as only those can bear it who realize that here they have no continuing city. Shocked and sorrowing, he repeated with Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

His first thought was to repair the disaster by hews service for his Master. The voice he had hoped to hear proclaim the riches of grace was forever silent he would do his best to carry the message himself. His early education had been limited. He felt that he was at disadvantage in attempting to express himself in public with propriety and accuracy. At this period, though advanced in mature life, for the first time he mastered English grammar. He made the Bible his constant study, and, with the aid of Clarke's "Commentaries" and such other works on theology as came within his reach, equipped himself as a religious teacher. He had always been fond of reading, but now read more constantly in view of the task for which he was preparing. He acquired enough of American and French history to talk entertainingly about it. He indulged a taste for belles-lettres, Shakespeare and Milton became his friends. He cultivated an acquaintance with Young's "Night Thoughts" He, however, felt nearer to William Cowper than any other poet, because his songs so often expressed his own religious emotions. He was fond of repeating the lines beginning "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," and did so with unconscious dramatic effect.

He was licensed by the Quarterly Conference as a local preacher when about forty-five years of age, and, after the prescribed course of study, received deacon's orders from the Annual Conference. In the outset of his ministry he found abundant room for the exercise of his gifts.

He combined many of the elements of an effective orator. In conversation his voice was pleasantly modulated, soft and mellow; but, aroused by his theme or the emotions of the occasion, his tones grew deep and resonant. Several have said to the writer that in pulpit ability he was far above the average. His logic and persuasive powers were of a high order.

In the social circle he was genial and good-humored, appreciated a good joke, and joined in the innocent hilarity of his companions.

There was no uncertainty about his beliefs. His faith was part of himself, and with it he inspired others. He conducted a revival meeting in the autumn of 1865 at Beech Valley Church, in Ohio County, during which numbers were added to the membership. Of these, there were two — Mr. R. and wife — who desired baptism by immersion. On the day appointed the congregation repaired to Rough Creek, near by, and Mr. Kellam administered the rite. As he ascended from the water he was met by the aged mother of Mr. R. She had been a long Methodist. "Brother Kellam," she said, "I was baptized in infancy; but I have always had doubts as to whether it is sufficient, and I desire that you baptize me by immersion." Standing on the edge of the stream, his tall form erect, he stretched his right arm toward the heavens, and while his whole frame trembled with emotion in thrilling tones he exclaimed: "No! Before I would do so, I would suffer my arm torn from my body. Your baptism is all-sufficient. To baptize you again would be blasphemous, and I will not do it."

Said one who was present: "From that day forth no one in the Beech Valley congregation was heard to question the efficacy of infant baptism."

In person he was of strikingly handsome appearance, having the bearing, manner, and address of a gentleman of the old school. He was full six feet in height, of strong and stalwart build, straight as an arrow, with raven-black hair, cold steel gray eyes, and regular and expressive features.

He died April 1, 1880, having entered his eighty-third year. The unfaltering faith in the Christian religion which had been his most marked characteristic from youth to age sustained him in the last hour. To his descendants and to his brethren in the faith he left as a priceless heirloom the testimony of his saintly life, to the truth of revealed religion.

Note — Among his grandchildren are the following well-known people: Robert L. Ellis, of Daviess County; Mrs. Robert Littell and Hon. William T. Ellis, of Owensboro; and Dr. J. W. Ellis, of Masonville.



The following is from the book, The Family of William Boucher and Milly Faris, by Jerry Long (McDowell Publications, Utica, Ky., 2002, pp.67-70):

Jane Boucher, daughter of William Boucher & Milly Faris, was born in 1799 or 1800 in Madison County, KY. A death certificate for Jane, recorded upon her death on 26 July 1857, reports that she was then 57 years old. The same lists her parents as William & Mildred Boucher.¹⁰⁷ The 1883 History of Daviess County, Kentucky states she "was a daughter of William Butcher, an early settler of Yelvington".¹⁰⁸ Lucius P. Little in a sketch of Rev. Hiram Kellam, published in 1905, relates the story of how Hiram and his wife, Jane Boucher, met at his father's inn while Jane's family was migrating westward. The next day, before her family's

¹⁰⁷ Daviess Co., KY 1852-1861 Vital Statistics, 1857 deaths.

¹⁰⁸ *History Of Daviess County, Kentucky*, 643 [see copy p311].

departure, they were married.¹⁰⁹ His father, George Kellam, kept a tavern at his home on the Yellow Banks Hardinsburg Road, now Highway 144, in what is now Hancock County, KY, near where Pellville is today.¹¹⁰ Prior to 1829 it was part of Breckinridge County. William Boucher moved his family from Madison County, KY to the Yelvington area of Daviess County, KY about 1817. His new home was about 10 miles west of the Kellam inn. An entry in the International Genealogical Index of the Church of Latter Day Saints records the marriage date of Hiram Kellam & Jane Boucher as being on 13 Nov 1817.¹¹¹ Their marriage license may have been recorded in Breckinridge County, KY. The early marriages there were reportedly lost in a fire at the Courthouse in 1958.

The gravestone of Hiram Kellam records that he was born on 5 Jan 1798.¹¹² Sources differ on the place of his birth. Four report that he was a native of Kentucky, two of these identify Hancock (then Breckinridge) County as the site. Two other sources give his birthplace as Tennessee and another two say it was in Virginia.¹¹³ This writer believes that the oldest of these sources, the 1850 census, is probably correct. Tennessee is given in this record. Sources on a younger sister & brother, Malinda Husk (born 1801) and James M. Kallam (born 1803), also give Tennessee as their birthplace.¹¹⁴ Hiram's father, George Kellam, is not listed in the 1800 Kentucky tax list and records show that he did not move to Breckinridge County, KY until 1809 or 1810. The four sources that say that Hiram Kellam was born in Kentucky, were all recorded subsequent to his death.

When Hiram Kellam & Jane Boucher were married in 1817 he was only 19 years old. He is first listed in the Breckinridge County tax lists in 1819. This list shows him as being under the age of 21. The 1820 list shows him to be 21. Hiram & Jane, for about 6 years after their marriage made their home in Breckinridge County. He is listed there in the 1820 census and in the tax lists through 1823. In 1824 he begins to be listed in the tax books of Daviess County, KY. His new home was on a farm about 1 mile northwest of the present site of Knottsville (not laid out until 1836).¹¹⁵ The next five Federal censuses list him in the Knottsville neighborhood.¹¹⁶ About the time of the Civil War he moved from his farm into Knottsville. He worked as a farmer and operated a tannery. The History of Daviess County, Kentucky states that "he built the first tannery and distillery in the county".¹¹⁷ At one time he held the office of constable, and at another he served as a justice of the peace. He also served as a leader in the local militia. L. P. Little writes of his military service:

¹⁰⁹ Little, *Local Preachers In Old Times In Kentucky*, 26-7 [see copy pp305-9].

¹¹⁰ *History Of Daviess County, Kentucky*, 643.

¹¹¹ Kellam entries, I.G.I., *Family Search* computer program, L.D.S. Church.

¹¹² *Ohio County, Kentucky Cemeteries, Vol.I*, 6.

¹¹³ Daviess Co., KY Federal Censuses, 1850 p391 (born TN), 1860 p770 (born KY), 1870 p151 (born VA), 1880 p242 (Mildred Ellis says father born VA), 342 (Cynthia Mills says father born TN); Daviess Co., KY 1880 Federal Census Mortality Schedule (born KY); "Owensboro Messenger & Examiner", Owensboro, KY, 14 Apr 1880 (born KY) [see copy p302]; Little, *Local Preachers In Old Times In Kentucky*, 26 (born KY).

¹¹⁴ Federal Censuses, Hancock Co., KY 1850 p295 & 1860 p956 (James M. Kallam), Daviess Co., KY 1860 p718 (Malinda Husk).

¹¹⁵ Little, *Local Preachers In Old Times In Kentucky*, 27.

¹¹⁶ Daviess Co., KY Federal Censuses, 1830 p189, 1840 p20, 1850 p391, 1860 p770, 1870 p151.

¹¹⁷ *History Of Daviess County, Kentucky*, 643 [see copy p311].

In the first half of the century militia duty was exacted of all white male citizens of Kentucky from eighteen to forty-five years of age. The people of several counties were divided into companies, battalions, and regiments, and these were placed under the command of officers commissioned by the Governor. In 1828 Governor Metcalf commissioned him as a captain of a company of militia. .. His reputation subsequently gained for him a commission as colonel of a Daviess County regiment, a position he held until the militia organization was superseded by the State Guard.¹¹⁸

Hiram Kellam in his youth joined the Methodist Church. His home became a rendezvous of Methodist preachers and the place of worship for his brethren in early years, before they built a meeting-house. His only son was named John Wesley in honor of the great Methodist leader. His son was studying for the Methodist ministry when he died at the early age of 24 in 1853. In later life Hiram Kellam became a minister in the Methodist church.¹¹⁹ He was ordained about 1853. In Daviess County Order Book E it is recorded that Hiram Kellam, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was granted a license to celebrate the rites of matrimony on 14 Feb 1853.¹²⁰

In the records of Daviess and Hancock Counties several marriages celebrated by Rev. Kellam were located. Most of these were found to have some family connection to Hiram or his wife. In the Hancock County marriage books prior to 1874 five marriages by Rev. Kellam are listed. These were:

- in 1857 Richard Colbert & Georgia Ann Gatewood, the bride was a niece of Jane Boucher Kellam;
- in 1863 W. J. Husk & Elizabeth Reynolds, the groom was a nephew of Hiram Kellam;
- in 1867 Alexander Richmond & Irene Barker;
- in 1868 Jackson Horn & Rebecca E. Barker;
- in 1869 Thomas Lancaster & Arzella Barker, the last three brides were daughters of John Barker, whose brother, Samuel, married Hiram Kellam's sister.¹²¹

In Daviess County Hiram Kellam was found to have married:

- in 1859 Costin Shadwick & Clara Ann Chappel, the bride was a great-niece of Jane Boucher Kellam;
- in 1861 Hamilton B. Gillim & America Kellam, the groom was a nephew of Jane Boucher Kellam & the bride was a niece of Hiram Kellam;
- in 1862 Norman B. Morris & Rebecca L. Gillim, the bride was a great-niece of Jane Boucher Kellam;
- in 1873 Alexander Gillim & Elizabeth Hazelrigg, the groom was a great-nephew of Jane Boucher Kellam;
- in 1875 Hamilton B. Gillim & Mrs. Margaret McCray Allen, the groom was a nephew of Jane Boucher Kellam.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Little, *Local Preachers In Old Times In Kentucky*, 28.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 27, 29-31; Daviess Co., KY 1852-1861 Vital Statistics, 1853 deaths.

¹²⁰ Order Book E, p577, Daviess County Courthouse.

¹²¹ Hancock County Archives, *Hancock County, Kentucky Marriage Book 1B...*, 132; George Lee Gibbs, *1858 To 1874 Marriage Book II: Hancock County, Kentucky*, 29, 50, 56, 61.

¹²² Marriage Books F, p157 & 247, M, p458, N, p450, Daviess Co., KY Courthouse; Mastin, *Daviess County, Kentucky Marriages, 1815-1865*, 168.

Hamilton B. & James L. Gillim, sons of John B. Gillum & Mary Boucher, resided in the Knottsville Precinct about two miles southwest of the farm of Hiram Kellam.¹²³ Previous to 1843 John T. Gillim, another son of John B. Gillum & Mary Boucher, had served as an apprentice to Hiram Kellam.

Jane Boucher, wife of Hiram Kellam, died on 26 July 1857. A record of her death appears in the 1852-1861 Daviess County, KY vital statistics. She died at the age of 57 of consumption. The location of her grave has not been found. Hiram Kellam went on to marry two more times, neither marriage was recorded in Daviess County or its adjoining counties. Between 1857-1860 he married Lucy and about 1875 he married Robina.

Rev. Hiram Kellam died at his residence in Knottsville, Daviess County, KY on 1 April 1880.¹²⁴ In the 1880 census mortality schedule for Daviess County it is recorded that he was 82 years old and his occupation was listed as farmer, tanner & preacher. His tombstone stands in the Panther Creek Baptist Church cemetery, in Ohio County, KY, near where the three counties of Daviess, Hancock & Ohio met. Possibly he was interred there because his 2nd wife, Lucy, had been buried there. Lucy's gravestone bears the inscription "wife of Rev. H. Kallam, died 14 Feb 1875, aged about 60 yrs."¹²⁵ His nephew, Hamilton B. Gillim, subsequently was buried at the same cemetery. The will of Hiram Kellam was recorded on 19 April 1880. In it he names his wife, Robina, and three grandchildren, William T. Ellis, Molly Estes & Ben Harrison. He refers to several deceased daughters, in his will, but did not name them.¹²⁶ L. P. Little closed his biography of Rev. Kellam by saying: "To his descendants and to his brethren in the faith he left as a priceless heirloom the testimony of his saintly life, to the truth of revealed religion."¹²⁷

Hiram Kellam & Jane Boucher reared a family of 9 children. They were: Sarah A. (wife of James Johnson), Mildred C. (wife of Powhattan Ellis), Mary M. (wife of Luther Rice Ellis), John Wesley (died of consumption at the age of 24, he was single), Malinda Jane (wife of Luther H. Wells), Phoebe D. (wife of Milton T. Lambert, her middle name may have been Dudley in honor of her great-grandmother, Phebe Dudley Faris), Cynthia Ann (wife of George N. Forbis & William H. Mills), Eliza Jane (wife of Abraham Sanders) & Martha Ann (wife of Henry Harrison). Of their 8 daughters only two, Mildred & Cynthia, survived their father. The grandchildren of Hiram Kellam & Jane Boucher included:

- By Sarah A. Johnson – Mary Jane / Molly Johnson (wife of Gabriel Johnson & David C. Estes).¹²⁸

¹²³ *Historical Atlas Map Of Daviess County, KY.*, 26 [see copy p301].

¹²⁴ *Owensboro Messenger & Examiner*, 14 Apr 1880 [see copy p302].

¹²⁵ *Ohio County, Kentucky Cemeteries, Vol.I*, 6.

¹²⁶ Will Book D, p6-7, Daviess County Courthouse [see copy pp303-4].

¹²⁷ Little, *Local Preachers In Old Times In Kentucky*, 32.

¹²⁸ Marriage Book A, p80, D, p315, Will Book D, p6-7, Daviess County Courthouse; Federal Censuses, Daviess Co., KY 1850 p391, Hancock Co., KY 1870 p217, 1880 p149; Kenneth Allen Estes, *Estes Genealogy* (Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, undated), 20.

- By Mildred C. Ellis (11 children) – James L. (died childhood), Sarah Jane (wife of David Webb), Robert Lee, Melvina T. (wife of Robert M. Davis & John G. Ford), Margaret M. (wife of Robert W. Littell), Hiram K., Walter Powers (a doctor), George F., Fanny S. (wife of Charles Albert Payne), Birdie (died childhood), & Willie S. (died at age of 20).¹²⁹
- By Mary M. Ellis (two children) – William Thomas & James W., who lived with their grandfather, Hiram Kellam, after the death of their parents. The two boys became noted citizens of Daviess County, James W. Ellis was a doctor and his brother, W. T. Ellis was a lawyer and represented his district three terms in the U. S. Congress.¹³⁰
- By Malinda Jane Wells – Arvilla T. (wife of Jesse Knight) & Mary Elizabeth.¹³¹
- By Phoebe D. Lambert – Sallie, William Edward, Robert K., Lucy E., & Lou Belle (wife of W. B. Harp).¹³²
- By Cynthia Ann Forbis – David H. (died at age of 14 days) & James H.¹³³
- By Cynthia Ann Mills (two children) - Buereguard & one other died infancy.¹³⁴
- By Eliza Jane Sanders – William D. B. & Esculapius.¹³⁵
- By Martha Ann Harrison – Benjamin.¹³⁶

¹²⁹ *History Of Daviess County, Kentucky*, 643; Powhatan & Mildred C. Ellis family (?bible) record in Kellam family file, Archives, Hancock County Courthouse [see copies pp311-3].

¹³⁰ *Historical Atlas Map Of Daviess County, KY.*, 37, 53; *History Of Daviess County, Kentucky*, 123-4, 232; William Elsey Connelley & E. M. Coulter, *The History Of Kentucky, Vol.III* (Chicago & New York: The American Historical Society, 1922), 316-7 [see copies pp314-7].

¹³¹ Daviess Co., KY 1852-1861 Vital Statistics, 1854 deaths; Daviess Co., KY 1850 Federal Census, p391; Henderson Co., KY Federal Censuses 1860 p164 & 1870 p67.

¹³² Federal Censuses, Daviess Co., KY 1850 p391, 1860 p767, Hancock Co., KY 1880 p194; Daviess Co., KY 1852-1861 Vital Statistics, 1853, 1859 & 1861 births.

¹³³ *History Of Daviess County, Kentucky*, 864 [see copy p318]; Daviess Co., KY Federal Censuses, 1850 p391, 1860 p703, 1880 p342; Daviess Co., KY 1852-1861 Vital Statistics, 1855 deaths, 1855 births & 1859 marriages.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Federal Censuses, Daviess Co., KY 1850 p391, Hancock Co., KY 1860 p919, 1870 p198; Hancock Co., KY 1852-1861 Vital Statistics, 1859 births.

¹³⁶ Daviess Co., KY Federal Censuses, 1850 p391, 1860 p737; Will Book D, p-6-7, Daviess County Courthouse.