

Knottsville Library (1895-1926)

By Jerry Long
c.2025



The early real-photo postcard above postmarked 1910 is of the Knottsville Free Library. St. William's Catholic Church of Knottsville established a school with the first circulating library in Daviess County. Beginning in 1895, patrons paying an annual fee of 50c could have access to the 1,000-volume library 20 years before the Owensboro Public Library was established. This school and library were destroyed by fire in 1926. [Postcard History Series: Owensboro, Terry Blake & David Edds, Jr. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007) p.95]



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 9 February 2003, pp.1A & 2A:

Knottsville pulls devotion from its people

By Steve Vied, Messenger-Inquirer

.... "St. William Church housed the first public library in Daviess County. In 1895 the library boast"ed 1,000 volumes available for a 50-cent annual fee. The library was destroyed in a 1926 fire....



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 25 June 1896, p.5:

Lecture at Knottsville.

Under the auspices of the Columbia Reading Circle, a lecture will be given at the St. Williams church, Knottsville, by Rev. Edward S. Fitzgerald, of Owensboro, for the benefit of the Knottsville circulating library. The subject is, "The Crusades," an interesting period of history. Admission 25 cents.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 15 December 1896, p.3:

Knottsville,

Dec. 14. – The St. William's Library association has leased the building adjoining the church, which is being remodeled and put in good shape for a first class library.



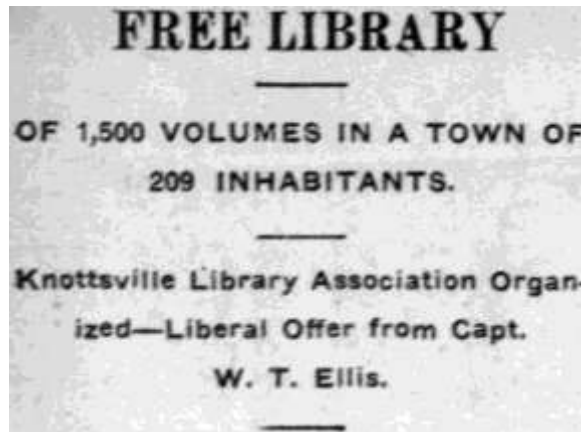
Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 12 January 1897, p.3:

Knottsville.

Jan. 11. – St. William's library has been removed to the building specially prepared, corner Church and Main streets. On Saturday night Artie Poole, Hal Perkins, Gus and Ernest Millay and John Howe entered the building through a window and built a fire to thaw out their cider. Harry Mattingly will have them explain about it to the court today.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 16 July 1901, p.3:



The Knottsville Library association was organized Sunday with the following officers and directors: President, Rev. Louis Spalding; vice president, H. F. Coomes; secretary, Ed J. Rhodes; treasurer, Mrs. Annie Lanham. The board of directors is composed of J. E. Roby, R. H. Medcalf, Isaac Kennady, H. T. Aud, Sr., G. W. Saulsberry, Jas. M. Haynes and La Vega Clements.

The Knottsville Library association is now a corporation and the articles of incorporation have been filed in the office of the secretary of state at Frankfort. The annual membership fee is 50 cents, and a life membership may be had upon the payment of \$10. The first persons to take a life membership were Capt. W. T. Ellis, Mr. Reuben A. Miller and Mr. LaVega Clements.

The library now contains 1500 volumes. It is a free library, open to persons without regard to denominational belief, and is the only public library in Daviess county. Sunday at its meeting, following the filing of articles of incorporation, Mr. La Vega Clements read a letter from Capt. W. T. Ellis stating that upon the purchase of a lot and the erection of a building he would purchase and donate to the library 500 volumes of works of standard excellence. This letter coming from Capt. Ellis, whose old home was at Knottsville, was hailed with delight by all present, and especially by the officers and directors of the association.

At the conclusion of the organization Mr. LaVega Clements, of this city, delivered his lecture, "Ideals," before an audience of about 300 people in a manner that delighted them. His reference to Ireland and Daniel O'Connell and to Robert E. Lee charmed them and his peroration was particularly captivating. His lecture also was enlivened with catchy and happy stories which greatly interested and pleased his auditors.

Knottsville is a town of only 209 population by the last census.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 28 September 1901, p.3:

Real Estate Transfers.

Mrs. Melvina W. Clements sells the Knottsville Library association 1 ¼ acres for \$300.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 8 June 1902, p.2:

The Knottsville Library To Be Nicely Housed

The Knottsville Library association will begin the erection of a new building tomorrow. Mr. John Carrico, of this city, has the contract. The structure will be a carefully planned one thirty feet by sixty feet, and two stories high. The lower floor will be used for the library proper and the upper floor will be nicely fitted up for general hall purposes. The lot has already been paid for, as has all the rough lumber, and still there is a good surplus in the treasury. The house will cost \$1,500 and it is expected to have it ready for occupancy by fall.

The library was started about eight years ago by the pastor of St. Williams church, the Rev. Louis Spalding. At first books were loaned or donated and money was collected various ways and with it books were bought. By persistent effort and this process of accumulation several hundred volumes have been placed on the shelves of the library. Besides the books there is a very valuable and quite a large collection of curios and Indian relics, most of which have been gathered in the old Indian Hill country, three miles northeast of Knottsville.

Last July the library association was incorporated. The incorporators and the present directors are: The Rev. Louis Spalding, H. T. Aud, Hillery Coomes, Richard H. Metcalf, LaVega Clements, Alex. Roby, James Haynes Button, Sansberry, Leonard Payne.

Prof. E. J. Rhodes is secretary, and Mrs. Annie Spalding is treasurer. The annual membership fee is fifty cents, five dollars pays for a fifteen year membership and a life membership costs ten dollars. The use of the library is absolutely free to everyone.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 2 July 1902, p.4:

KNOTTSVILLE LIBRARY

Officers and Directors Will Be Elected Sunday, July 13.

**Capt. W. T. Ellis Will Contribute 500 Volumes
When Building Is Completed.**

On Sunday, July 13, there will be a meeting of the stockholders of the Knottsville Library association for the purpose of electing officers and a board of directors for a term of one year from that date. The present officials are Rev. H. L. Spalding, president; H. T. Coomes, vice president; E. J. Rhodes, secretary, and Mrs. Annie Lanham treasurer. The probabilities are that the present officers and board of directors will be re-elected.

The building for the new library is under good headway and all the outside framework has been constructed. It is one of the largest buildings in Knottsville, and when completed will be quite an honor to that little town. The dedication of the building will hardly take place before September 1, as it will take nearly the rest of the summer to complete the work. This is due to the fact that work progresses very slowly, as all the material has to be hauled from Owensboro, all of which is donated by the members of that congregation. At the mass on last Sunday Father Spalding announced that ten men would be expected to contribute one days' work and also one team to haul brick and other materials from this city during the present week.

In April, 1895, as an experiment, an effort was made in the Knottsville community to start a library. The plan followed was to borrow for one year as many books as possible which, when classified and numbered, were loaned out to patrons. The experiment proved that a library was needed and appreciated. Many books were donated and money was raised, and for five years the library, first started with borrowed books, has continued on a permanent basis doing its silent work in many homes. It now contains, besides seven or eight hundred pamphlets and magazines, eleven hundred and fifty useful volumes and a number of interesting relics and curios. The average number of borrowers is now about 250, but as each book taken out is usually read by more than one person, it is not easy to estimate the number of persons to whom the library has furnished recreation, instruction and edification.

The library has been practically free from the beginning, as a fee of only 50 cents a year was charged for the privilege of taking out books, and this fee could be paid by donating a book; but as its aim is the greatest good to the greatest number, it was made entirely free in February 1901.

In June, 1901, the library entered upon another phase in its existence when it was regularly incorporated under the name of "The Knottsville Library Association." The object of the association as set forth in the articles of incorporation is "to provide and maintain a free circulating library at Knottsville, for the advancement and intellectual improvement of its members and of the community at large." The association and the library are governed and conducted by a board of officers and directors elected by the members on the second Sunday of July in each year. On July 14, 1901, was held the first election of officers and directors, all of whom are determined that, if their serious attention and earnest endeavors can accomplish it, The Knottsville Circulating Library shall become a more and more efficient agency in promoting the happiness and enlightenment to all within its reach.

In a letter read at the first meeting of the association W. T. Ellis says:

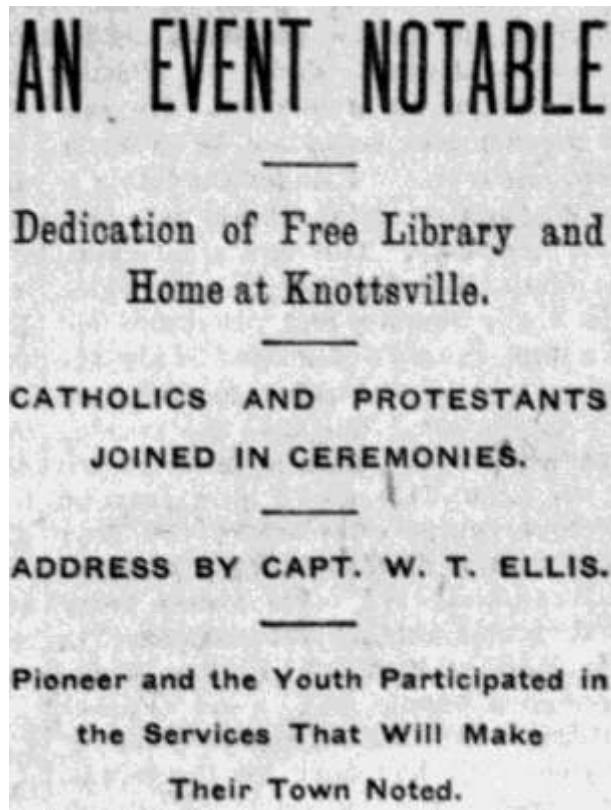
"As a slight token of my interest in your enterprise, I take this occasion to say to you that when you have selected a site and erected a library building within the corporate limits of the town of Knottsville, I shall be ready to contribute 500 volumes of standard books which are to be forever free to the very poorest boy and girl in the community." Elsewhere In the same letter this distinguished son of Knottsville says: "I am glad the people of Knottsville precinct are leading their fellow citizens of Daviess county in the laudable enterprise of establishing a public library which will afford every boy and girl a free opportunity to acquire that valuable information which cannot be acquired except by an appeal to history, poetry, fiction and general literature.

"I am delighted to know that you are about to lay the foundation of an institution which will result in elevating the youth of the community and at the same time afford those who have older and wiser grown much real enjoyment and pleasure. I shall welcome the day when every barefooted boy may march into a free library and select the very best books from which to glean such knowledge and information as will be useful to him in after life."

The library will be opened on Saturdays from 2 to 5 p. m. On Sunday from 7:30 to 9:30 a. m. and 4 to 5 p. m. and at other hours as soon as the directors can make the necessary arrangements..



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 25 November 1902, pp.1 & 2:



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 no 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, Monday, 28 December 1902, p.2:

HISTORIC HOUSE

Being Used By J. E. Hazel At Knottsville.
Has Been Used for Everything From a
Grog Shop to a House of Worship.

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, Tuesday, 3 February 1903, p.6:

St. Williams' Church Manual.

The manual and souvenir year book of St. Williams' church, at Knottsville, for 1903, has just been issued from the Messenger Job Printing company's office. It is a neat pamphlet of twenty-eight pages. It contains much information as to the church duties of the parishioners and pictures of the pastor, Rev. Louis Spalding, of the church and of the library building. There is also a sketch of the Knottsville free library, a new building which was dedicated on November 23 and the 2,000 books which are now being catalogued by the card system under the supervision of Miss Jennie Owen Cochran, a trained librarian of Louisville.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 19 July 1903, p.4:

KNOTTSTVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Picnic to Be Given Next Saturday to Finish the Hall.

The people of Knottsville are using every energy toward the completion of the free public library upon which they have been at work for the past two years. The exterior of the building has been finished, and the library is already in use, with about 1,500 volumes of choice literature, 500 volumes of which were donated by Capt. W. T. Ellis, of this city. The hall, which is to be free for all public uses, in connection with the library, is not finished yet, and the people are raising funds for that purpose. They will give a picnic next Saturday at Knottsville, which will be attended by hundreds of people from all sections of the county.



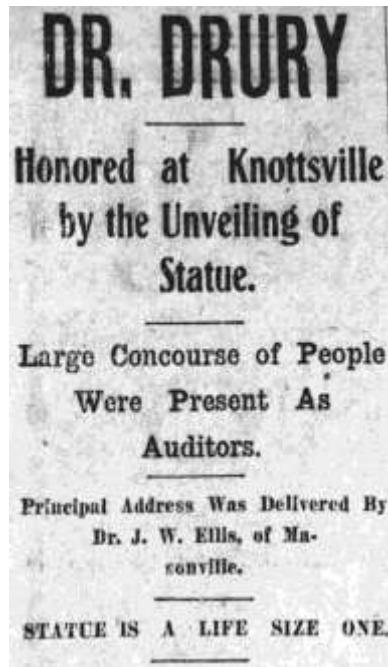
Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 20 December 1904, p.3:

Knottsville.

Dec. 19. – The library association was the recipient last week of two large and life like portraits handsomely framed, one of Captain W. T. Ellis and the other of his grandfather, Rev. Hiram Kellam, who was one of the early settlers of Knottsville and a man much loved by all who knew him.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 23 June 1906, p.3:



The first statue ever erected to a private or public citizen in Daviess county now stands in the, Free library hall at Knottsville and it was unveiled and dedicated Tuesday afternoon, in the presence of about 1,000 people who had gathered there to do honor to the memory of the later revered Dr. I. G. Drury, whose figure and face, the work of art so well represents and so appropriately commemorates. The unveiling took place in the presence of one of the most distinguished audiences that ever gathered in Knottsville for any purpose. There were present physicians from Owensboro and all over Daviess county to the number of nearly a half hundred. These were present as members of the Daviess County Medical association, under the auspices of which the statue was unveiled. There was also present a number of ministers and there were representative citizens from all parts of Daviess county and several from Ohio and Hancock counties and one from New Orleans.

Addresses were delivered by Dr. J. W. Ellis, of Masonville, Dr. D. M. Griffith, of Owensboro and Dr. S. J. Harris, of Philpot. These were introduced by Dr. C. H. Todd, who presided at the meeting, which was held on the lawn, adjoining the library building as that structure was not one-fifth large enough to contain the people that had assembled. The principal address was delivered by Dr. Ellis and that is printed in full in this issue.

Dr. Harris Speaks.

Dr. Harris spoke most fervently in regard to the life and character of Dr. Drury. He knew him well and had been closely associated with him as a friend and physician. He had often leaned on him as old man on a cane. When in trouble he always went to Dr. Drury and he was always helped when he did so. He had come to Knottsville, thirty-seven years ago, after riding on horseback all the way from Virginia. Later he began practicing medicine at Sorgho and spent some time in Owensboro and then located at Philpot. where he had remained ever since. This made him a neighbor to Dr. Drury and he had learned to love him as more than a neighbor. He loved him as dearly as any but a relative could love him. Continuing Dr. Harris said, "His memory will always be cherished by me. He shall always have a warm place in my heart. He had a great heart as well as a great brain. He was a great man, greater than many ever dreamed, There was none whom I more honored and I am glad to be here today to contribute my small part in honoring his memory on this occasion."

Dr. Griffith's Remarks.

Dr. D. M. Griffith said in part: "I stand aghast here this afternoon in deference to the character of the man we are assembled to honor. He left a memory of which all his friends and relatives may well be proud. The life he lived was not for himself, but for you, his neighbors. His labor was one of love and devotion to duty. The Divine Physician had instilled in him a love for his people. Dr. Drury had a great personality and a great character. He had a commanding presence. He had a remarkable ability for adapting himself to circumstances under which he lived. He was by precept and example an educator. His life was a positive one. His devotion to his profession was great."

At the close of Dr. Griffith's address little Marie Hazel Gropp drew the veil from the statue and the full figure of the well beloved physician, who had served perhaps, five hundred of those present, was revealed to all.

After the exercises were concluded the statue was placed in its permanent position in the south end of the library hall. It stands on a pedestal of the same material as the statue. This is about three feet high. The statue is of life size and dark in color. In the right hand is held a lead pencil and in the left a prescription blank book. On the stand beside the figure is an old style saddle pocket, such as was carried by country doctors in days gone by.

The Inscriptions.

On the front of the base is the following inscription:

"Another St. Vincent de Paul,
A father to one and all,
A doctor for over 40 years,
Bringing comfort to sorrowing tears –
Tears that flow from hearts so sad –
And, withall, the best friend I ever had."

On the rear and sides of the base were the following paragraphs:

"I dedicate this statue to the Knottsville library in token of thanks to him who did so much for me. W. S. Hazel, June 19, 1906."

"Rich in the grace of God and memory of mankind,
But poor in what the world seeks to find."

"Ignatius Guy Drury, M. D., B. A.,
Born, Nov. 18, 1829,
Died Sept. 4, 1902."

Address by Dr. Ellis.

The chief address was by Dr. J. W. Ellis, of Masonville, and it was as follows:

This is no ordinary occasion. This gathering is not to commemorate any great political victory, nor yet to consider any national event. The physician deals with the event of private life and this gathering is a tribute to the resources of friendship.

It is an expression of affection and esteem for one long regarded as a friend, and as an honor to the medical profession, for so many years.

It was one of his highest characteristics that he was able to look on the bright side of events and in his professional relations with his patients, this attitude of the true physician was ever uppermost.

Many of you have missed personally and all of us now miss from among us, a once familiar face, a manly presence, full of intelligence and dignified simplicity. The place which he, of whom I speak long occupied shall know him no more forever, but he has left imperishable records of worth and usefulness as friend and physician, honored and beloved by all who know him.

The annals of the medical profession of Daviess county contain no name more distinguished than that of Dr. I. G. Drury, none more dear to those who have had the good fortune to enjoy his society and profit by his wise counsels, his frank cordiality, his kindly and courteous manner.

Dr. Drury was born in Nelson county in 1829, his father removed with his family to Daviess county in 1830. Dr. Drury was reared on the old homestead about four miles southeast of Knottsville and was educated at St. Mary's college in Marion county. Returning home he taught school at Knottsville and it was my privilege as a mere lad to attend.

Already he had chosen the profession of medicine for his life work. With Dr. W. B. Holmes as preceptor, he read medicine while he taught school, soon entering the medical University of Louisville, he graduated from that institution in 1863.

He at once returned home and formed a partnership for the practice of medicine with his preceptor, Dr. Holmes, who was then recognized as one of the leading practitioners of medicine in the county of Daviess.

Dr. Holmes was a man of more than ordinary ability, and ranked high among the people who sought his professional services and the medical profession as well.

He Had Wide Practice.

He was always serious and in great earnest when he came to battle with disease and death, yet could tell the most entertaining stories of any man of his times, always cheering and exhorting his despondent patients to take a lighter and more hopeful view of their ills.

Although at that time suggestive therapeutics had never been dreamed of, he availed himself of its power in a way that but few modern physicians have.

In the beginning of Dr. Drury's professional career, he was constantly thrown in contact with such physicians as Dr. H. E. McKary, Dr. Lockhart, Caleb Hale, the elder Knoxes, Dr. Daly, Dr. Tichenor and many of the best physicians of Owensboro.

For a young physician to sustain himself in the midst of such an array of accumulated experience and wisdom, for his colleagues were giants in their profession at that time, was much,

but he did more, for he continually strengthened his stakes and lengthened his cables until the limit of his practice was bounded only by the limit of his physical, endurance.

His was a magnificent specimen of physical manhood, six feet and four inches measured his height, and he sat in his saddle like a centaur, always going at a rapid pace.

He perhaps wore out more saddles and bridles, saddlebags and carts and buggies and good horses in visiting the sick than any other physician in the state.

He was a splendid diagnosis while other physicians were compelled to compare symptoms and reason from cause to effect to arrive at correct conclusions as to what ailed the sick. Dr. Drury reached his conclusion as it were by intuition. When his opinions were compared with others, they suffered no disparagement. As an instance of his acumen and the promptness with which he saw the proper and exact thing to do, I shall relate an experience of my own with him.

When I was a medical student in Philadelphia, I had a tooth extracted by a regular dentist, who fractured my jaw, bone, from which I suffered much, a continuous running sore in my mouth was the result.

Not wishing to leave Philadelphia in that condition, I consulted my teacher, Dr. Samuel D. Gross, at that time he was perhaps the greatest living surgeon. His prescription was a mild antiseptic wash. Returning home I found my troubles no less, and at once sought the advice of my old physician, Dr. Drury. Looking into my mouth he seized a pair of instruments and removed a spicula of bone from my jaw and all my trouble was gone in less than one week. Innumerable instances of quick preception and a clear idea of the proper course to pursue could be easily recited.

One of His Associates.

About this time Dr. Drury associated with him in the practice of medicine Dr. T. J. Byrne, who was without question the finest scholar in the medical profession in this county. He was educated for the clergy having studied in Rome for, some six or seven years. Upon his return home he found his physical organization so shattered by his long collegiate career that he was not physically able to perform the exacting duties of the clergy, so turned his attention to the study of medicine, that he might have an out-door life.

His classical education enabled him to rapid strides in the study of medicine and soon he was a graduate from the medical University of Louisville and an accomplished physician.

When a schoolboy it was my privilege to live near him and I often sought his advice and counsel, which was of the most material benefit to me in my struggle with higher mathematics as well as with Greek roots and Latin idioms. His conversation always abounded in elevated thought and true Irish wit, he was a full blooded Irishman. He was a modest, retiring man, never obtruding his opinion or advice when not sought. As an evidence of his honesty and fair dealing with his patients he was on a certain occasion called in to see a baby that was thought to be very ill. After his examination of the little patient he made out a prescription and gave directions to the mother how the medicine should be given, but said he preferred that no medicine should be given the baby at all. Already the insidious hand of disease had laid strong hold on his constitution and he was forced to lay down his work at high noon and cross over to the great unknown, "so soon passeth it away and we are gone." Of all those who came on life's stare with Dr. Drury, but few if any remain. It was the day that the last one of his contemporaries received the mandate to answer for the deeds done in the body. Esq. J. B. Aud was a conspicuous figure in the town of Knottsville, for almost three quarters of a century he was here so long and, so constantly, and took such a keen and lively interest in Knottsville and her people that the very streets and houses are marked with his individuality.

Everybody's Friend.

He was a friend to every one, especially the poor, no one in trouble ever applied to him for help without receiving it. In his early manhood he taught school in Knottsville and adjoining community.

He made the only writing pens his pupils had from goose quills, and no modern steel pens are better today.

Afterwards he engaged in mercantile pursuits with his brother, the late H. T. Aud, and was senior partner at the time of his death.

In this business he was very successful and during his long career amassed a handsome fortune. In the death of Esq. J. B. Aud Knottsville has lost one of her best business men, the whole community a true friend, and the county a patriotic citizen.

Dr. Drury practiced his profession for forty years in and around Knottsville. He threw into it all of his splendid manhood and intellectual vigor. The great Hufeland said: "To him who fails to make a religion of the healing art, it is the most cheerless, wearisome and thankless labor upon earth." Indeed in him it must become the greatest frivolity and sin, Dr. Drury made his profession a part of his religious life, practicing both with a fidelity known to but few. He was an ethical physician, never resorting to questionable methods, but always following the golden rule, "Do as you would be done by." The majestic story of the unselfish and courageous life of Dr. Drury, whether told in poetry or song, will never grow old.

Consideration for the Poor.

No sketch of Dr. Drury will be even approximately accurate which omits to note his great charity and leniency. He practiced medicine for twenty-five years without ever presenting a bill or demanding payment from any patron to whom he had rendered services. His account books were stacked high in his office. He kept an accurate account of the services he rendered, but he rendered no bills. Every collar that came to his hands came voluntarily from those whom he had so faithfully served. If he had been a hard master, or if he had been an exacting or prompt collector, the inventory which was taken of his estate when he died, instead of presenting a very modest sum would have footed up anywhere from \$150, 000 to a quarter of a million dollars.

I think I speak within the limits of truth when I say that if he had been a diligent collector he would have left an estate of \$200,000 at the time of his death. But he did not practice his profession for money, but rather upon higher and lofty plane, namely, for the good and the relief of his fellows.

I doubt if he ever sued a half dozen in his whole life and I am perfectly certain that he never was himself sued but once in his professional career.

(Here was given a detailed account of the suit for damages for malpractice which resulted in a verdict for the defendant.)

That was a long time before Dr. Drury died, but from that day to the hour of his death no man ever dared to question his knowledge, his skill, his competency, or his integrity and no man ever ventured to be so reckless as to institute a suit against him for mal-practice or for any other purpose. Verily the history of this plain country physician furnishes one of the most eloquent chapters that has been written in our local professional history.

May we all, when we have answered the last call gather our mantles about us and go hence with as many good wishes and with as much honor and love and respect as Dr. Drury left behind him.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 24 July 1912, p.3:



There was a most interesting meeting of the members of the Knottsville public library association, held recently and at which the report submitted by the Rev. L. H. Spaulding, president of the association showed the library to be in splendid condition and also brought out the fact that it is proving a source of both pleasure and profit to the people in that community.

There are thirty-eight public libraries in the state and in point of the number of volumes in the library, the one at Knottsville, organized and maintained through the energies of the residents in that section, is the twenty-sixth. In the larger cities, however, there are fourteen Carnegie libraries.

The secretary of the state library association in a recent letter to the president of the Knottsville library spoke in words of the highest praise for the splendid plan that had been followed for the raising of funds to make the library a paying proposition and stated that the plan would be of great benefit to the formation of libraries in other small settlements throughout the state.

At the meeting the following officers were elected: Rev. L. H. Spaulding, president ex-officio; Dr. J. N. Filiatreau, vice-president; James H. Roby, secretary; Mrs. Annie Lanham, treasurer: The directors are: LaVega Clements, H. F. Coomes, G. W. Sansbury, J. N. Miles, Henry Mattingly, C. C. Mattingly and Marshal T. Payne.

The meeting was one of the most interesting and successful that the association has ever held.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 27 June 1917, p.6:



A matter that has been under consideration for sometime was finally adjusted between the directors of the Knottsville Free library, at a meeting recently held in the Library building at Knottsville, when it was agreed to convert part of the Library building into a home for the Ursuline sisters, the other parts to be used for the library and school purposes.

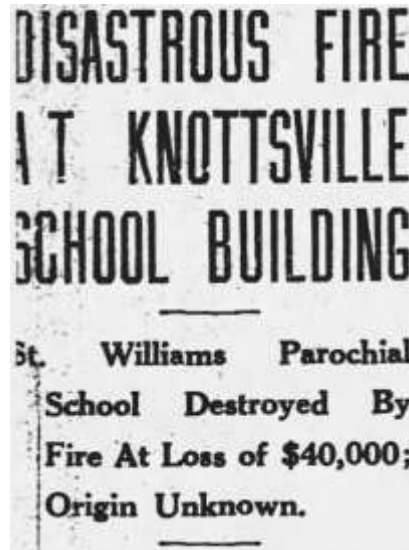
The board of directors authorized Rev. F. J. Timoney, pastor of St. Williams' Catholic church at Knottsville, to convey the property to Rt. Rev. Dennis O'Donaghue, Bishop of Louisville, which was done according to a deed lodged for record in the county clerk's office.

It is said that the library will be arranged in rooms on the second floor of the building, and the lower floors will be used for school purposes. The school will be under the control of the

Ursuline sisters to be sent from Mt. St. Joseph's Academy, and will be ready when school opens in September.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 24 April 1926, p.3:



St. Williams' parochial school building, located in the heart of the town of Knottsville, was destroyed by fire at 7 o'clock Friday morning. The origin was undetermined, as the kitchen, was found in flames by one of the nuns who resides, with four others, in the residence portion of the building.

All of the furniture and equipment and the Knottsville library, the first rural library of its size in the county, likewise was destroyed. Virtually nothing was saved, so quickly did the frame building burn. No one was injured, and except for scorching of nearby houses, little other damage was done.

The home of Guy Hazel was partly saved from burning by spreading wet blankets and quilts over the building and continually throwing water upon these. Several nearby buildings ignited from sparks blown about, but these were quickly extinguished.

Fire Chief Ed Cureton, of the Owensboro department, went to the scene of the fire with as much small equipment as could be taken in his car, as he stated he knew there was no place to obtain water to use the pumper with. By the time Cureton arrived at the fire, the building was about consumed by the flames.

The parochial school was built about fifteen years ago and had been the scene of many public speakings and lectures. It was to Knottsville what the usual town hall is to most places, as there was no other hall of a size sufficient to accommodate the crowds that attend the public affairs.

The building was valued at \$30,000, and equipment and contents of residence and library were valued at \$10,000. About one-third of the value was insured. No arrangements have been made to complete school the remainder of the school year. There is no public school at Knottsville.

Rev. J. A. McAleer, pastor of the church, also manages the school.

[Note: The St. William's School was rebuilt in 1927. The library was not rebuilt.]



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 29 April 1962, p.1B:

**St. William's Catholic Church Is Set To
Observe 75th Anniversary As Parish**

By Ed Shannon, Messenger-Inquirer

... Knottsville today is proud of the fact that it once had the first public circulating library in the county, established here in 1895. Within six months after it started, it had 390 books. By 1897, the library had 1,442 books in circulation, and by 1903 had raised the total to 1,600. In June, 1901, "Knottsville Library Association" was formed.

From its formation and until fire destroyed the library on April 23, 1926, members of St. William's parish acted as librarians on a volunteer basis. During its formative years, the library books were classified according to approved library methods. A card catalog system was set up under supervision of Miss Jennie Owen Cochran, a trained librarian from Louisville....



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 31 May 2006, Community section p.2:





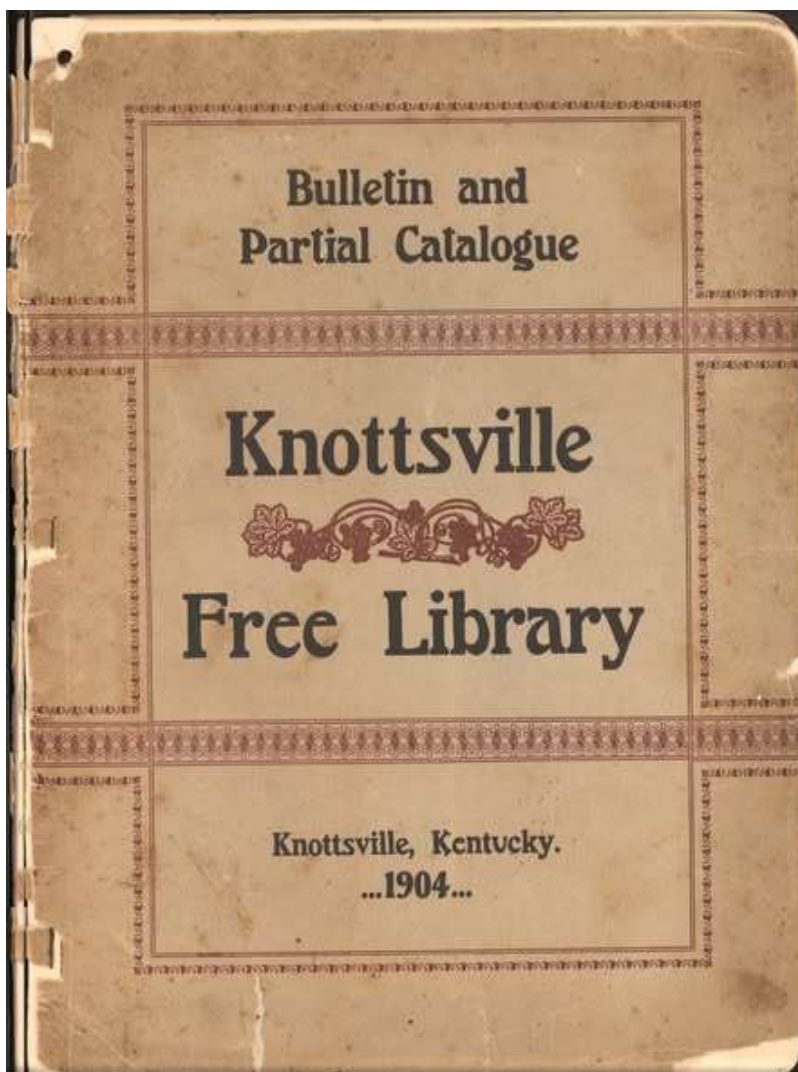
This photo of the Knottsville Free Public Library was taken around 1906 and provided by the Rev. J.E. Coomes of St. Louis. In the center of the photo is a statue of Dr. Ignatius Drury (1829-1904).

Dr. Drury never married and devoted his whole professional life to the people of Knottsville. The inscription on the statue read: "Another St. Vincent de Paul, A father for One and All, A Doctor for over 40 Years, Bringing Comfort to sorrowing Tears. Tears that flow from Hearts so Sad, and withal the best Friend I ever Had."

This statue was presented to the library by W.S. Hazel, a lifelong friend. It was unveiled June 19, 1906, by his granddaughter, little Miss Marie Hazel Gropp, sister of Jean Van Meter of Owensboro. Anyone knowing of the disposition of this statue should contact Joe Lewis, 684-4956. Photo submitted by Joseph L. Lewis.

[Note: The statue of Dr. Drury appears to have been lost when the Knottsville Library was destroyed by a fire on 23 April 1926.]





KNOTTSVILLE

This little library occupies a prominent site in Knottsville, a village of some 200 inhabitants, surrounded by a thickly populated, but somewhat unproductive farming district.

Although free to all, the library is owned by an incorporated association, known as the Knottsville Free Library Association, and is managed by a Board of Directors, elected annually by the association. The building is a substantial frame structure, 60x30 feet. The upper story, fitted with a stage and accessories, is used for lectures, entertainments and meetings of various kinds. On the lower floor is the library, containing, besides some 5,000 pamphlets and magazines, 1,550 bound volumes. The shelves are open to all. There is a special collection of children's books numbering about 300.

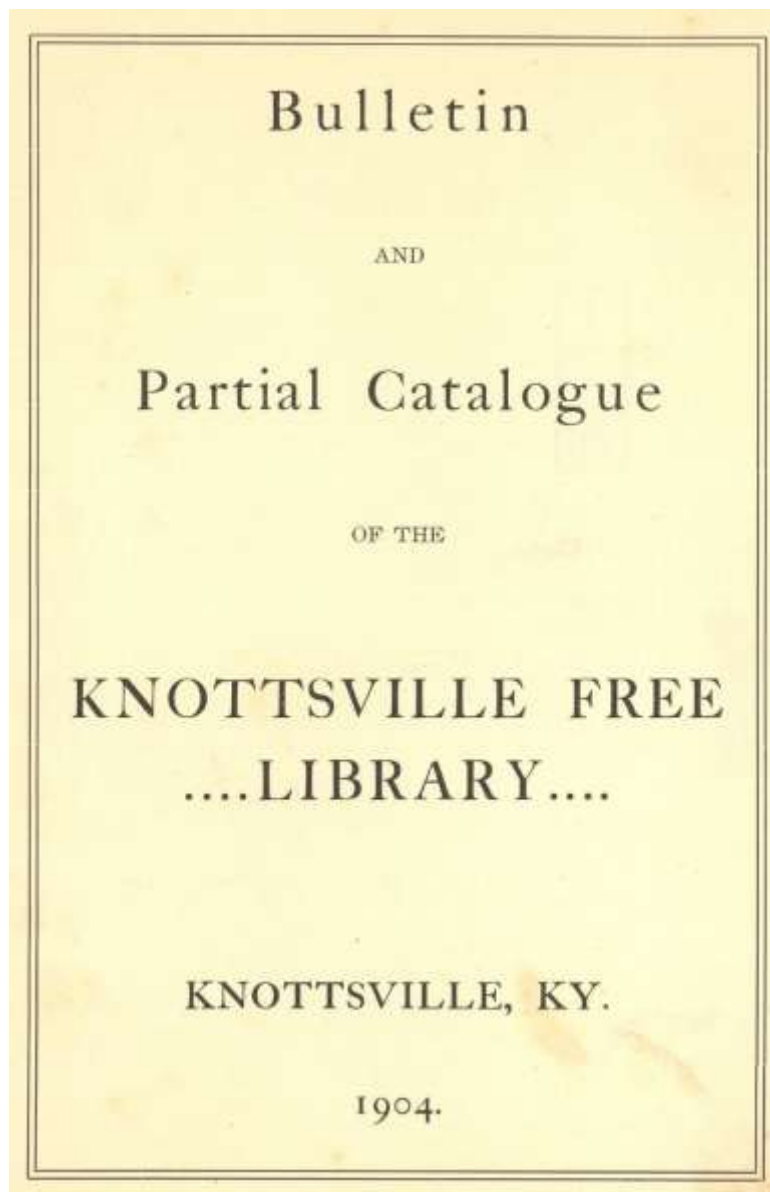
About one-fourth of the floor and wall space is taken up by a small museum containing many objects of considerable educational value.

The property of this library represents a value of \$6,000 or \$7,000. This is the result, not of large contributions from a wealthy few, but of the willing help and generally small contributions of many. The building cost about \$2,000, but much of the lumber used in the building and nearly all of the unskilled labor were given free of charge. The necessary funds have been procured

chiefly in two ways: (1) By membership fees. Though the use of the library is entirely free to all, it is owned and maintained by an association, membership in which may be secured for one year by the payment of 50 cents, or for life by the payment of \$10, either in cash, work or books. (2) Funds were also secured by holding picnics and entertainments and from the occasional renting of the hall.

The greater number of the books have been donated. The Hon. William T. Ellis, of Owensboro, has been a generous and constant benefactor of the little library of his boyhood home. When the new building was nearing completion he purchased for the library 500 volumes, and every year since then he has added a goodly number. Another collection of books came from a small parish library that was in successful operation here several years before the present library was opened. It grew in size and in popular favor, until when the time was ripe for a larger library with a wider field of usefulness, it turned over to the new organization nearly a thousand volumes.

Raymond Jarboe is the present librarian.



...THE BULLETIN...



This little pamphlet, which is presented to you; with the respectful greeting of the Knottsville Library Association, contains a few items of information concerning the free library that has been established at Knottsville. The hope is entertained that, by making the resources of the library better known, it may help to widen and make more fruitful the field of the library's usefulness.

It is not a complete catalogue – that is beyond our means – , but it gives with an occasional comment, several short lists of the best books in each class. These lists may help readers to lay out for themselves a course of reading for the winter; they may help others to make a selection of books at home, when it is not possible to visit the library personally.

Finally, by their use and by adding a simple mark on the margin, readers may easily keep account of the books they read.

It is on its presumed merits as at least a partial catalogue that the "Bulletin" ventures to hope that it may not at once be used to kindle the fire – unless perchance it be the fire of a nogle [sic] ambition –, but may be preserved in the home for occasional reference. If for any reason the "Bulletin" finds favor in your eyes, it begs to invite attention to the announcements of the advertisers whose kind patronage has made its free distribution possible.

The Board of Directors of the Knottsville Library Association avail themselves of this opportunity to thank all those who have in anyway aided the little library of which they are so proud, and to say to the public in general that the Knottsville Library, such as its many friends have made it, is absolutely free to any one who may wish to make use of its books, and to return them within a month.



The public library has been justly called a "literary park," the "people's university," the "school of the grown-ups." It is all this, and more. In crowded cities it is thought necessary for the

public health and. general welfare to have parks where people may go to breathe the fresh air and to recreate themselves by contact with nature. Fortunately for us who live in the country, we have parks at our very doors: the woods, the fields, the growing crops are parks for us. We have no need of public parks in the ordinary sense of the word, but we do need a "literary park," and such the free library is.

City people seek the parks for health and recreation. We should seek the "literary park" for reasons just as urgent. For the mind needs recreation, food and exercise just as much as the body does; or rather it needs them more because the mind is a nobler part of us than the body, and is susceptible of greater development. The mind, however, that feeds on nothing but its own little affairs and on the happenings and gossip of its limited neighborhood is very apt to be narrow, undeveloped, sickly, like the body of a child brought up in restricted quarters without fresh air, proper food or necessary exercise. The "literary park," the library, while it provides the most enduring recreation and the most satisfying amusement, furnishes the mind with food and exercise which will enable it to thrive and grow indefinitely. He who has a taste for good reading and the means of gratifying that taste, has something that will contribute more to his happiness and welfare than the amplest fortune; for he has a never-failing source of relaxation when he is tired, of diversion when he is worried, of comfort when he is sorrowful, of hope and courage when he is downcast.

"Have you read the history of —? " was recently asked an old man in our library. He hesitated for some time, but at last replied: "I can't read. I wish I could." His tone of sadness and regret indicated that he realized to a great extent his privation. When he hesitated to reply was he counting the many days of his long, laborious life when he was restless and miserable because the weather would not permit of his one enjoyment, work ? — days that might have been pleasantly spent had he been able to read. Was he recalling the long winter nights of the past that seemed so lonely and foreseeing the still more lonely nights and days of his declining years? It is to be hoped that the worthy old man did not realize all the pleasure, happiness and profit he has missed by not being able to read, for that realization might fill his old age with too much regret; but it is supremely desirable that the children and the young people and the middle-aged people should come to know that, unless they cultivate a taste for good reading, they are cutting themselves off not only from many avenues of profit, usefulness and honor, but also from very many of life's purest joys and sweetest consolations.

How dreary — and often how miserable — is the home where there is no love for books! How peaceful and happy is the one where books are loved! Here the rainy days are holidays and the long winter nights allow a delightful recess from labor. At nightfall the day's toil and worries are forgotten and the morrow's are not anticipated; for after the evening meal the children vie with one another in seeking their favorite places around the cheerful lamp, each one occupied with his book or listening with eager ears and sparkling eyes to father or mother reading aloud. Many are the humble homes nestling on lonely hilltops and hidden away in secluded valleys that would be less bright and contented, less happy and holy, were it not for the frequent arrival of interesting visitors that go out to them from the library in the shape of books.

What if many of the books read are works of fiction? That kind of reading at least keeps the mind occupied and prevents evil thoughts, provides innocent amusement and lessens the danger of evil companionship, makes the home pleasant and gives the family something to think about and talk about besides their own petty troubles or their neighbor's short-comings. But it has also other advantages. It strengthens and broadens the mind, cultivates the imagination, suggests new ideas and inspires noble sentiments. "The educational value of poetry, eloquence and history,"

says Bishop Spalding, "lies chiefly in the noble and magnanimous sentiments they awaken. Ability to admire and appreciate the best is more important than varied knowledge; for we are developed and formed more by what we admire and love than by what we simply know." Fiction, since it often partakes of the nature of poetry, eloquence and history, may likewise serve in awakening "noble and magnanimous sentiments," and thus may contribute much to the formation of character and the inspiration of high ideals.

But fiction, even the best, should not be the only kind of reading indulged in. Life is too serious to be all spent in amusements. We cannot afford the time to be always disporting ourselves even in a "literary park." We must go to school: and the library is a school, too, — a school for the children where they acquire a love for books and much information; a "school for grown-ups," a "people's university" where every one who can read may continue his education indefinitely. It offers opportunities which, if utilized, will make every boy and girl an enlightened, upright, influential man or woman. The library cannot take the place of the school, but it is almost as necessary. It is a great help and encouragement to children who attend school; it is almost a necessity for those who have left school, to keep them from forgetting what they have learned and to enable them to continue their education. For none completes his education in school; fortunate is he who has begun it there. "The best thing," says Bishop Spalding, "the youth carries from college is not knowledge but the ardent desire to learn; and the best knowledge he gets in school is the knowledge of how to learn." To one who has learned how to study and who has acquired the habit and the love of study, the library offers excellent opportunities for an education. "The best part of every man's education," says a great writer, "is that which he gives himself." With the aid of the library and with earnest, persistent labor, great results may be accomplished even by those who have had but little chance to go to school.

"The tissue of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own;
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown."
Whittier.

