

THE BEAUTIFUL INDIANA SILVER HILLS
They Rise 600 Feet Above the Ohio
and Extend For Fifty Miles Into the Interior.
Hundreds of Knobs Available For Summer Homes
Within Easy Reach of Louisville.
SETTLED BY THE FRENCH ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
By EDWARD FITZPATRICK

[as appeared in the *Courier Journal* dated November 11, 1900]

The beautiful Silver Hills, surrounding New Albany, 600 feet above the level of the river are too little appreciated by the people of the three Falls Cities, doubtless because they are known to comparatively few. Some day these hills will be dotted with summer residences. When this time arrives West Broadway will have been extended to the Ohio. Another bridge will span the river at the foot of this thoroughfare. The harbor of Louisville, instead of being at the foot of Fourth street, will be at the end of Broadway, where there is always a good stage of water. Steamboats will not be compelled to ascend the falls or to make a weary trip through the canal. They will discharge and load their cargoes for the great South at the more convenient and safe harbor. River traffic with Pittsburg and Cincinnati will continue at the old landing. All this may not come during the lifetime of some who read this, but there are boys and girls living today who will see this accomplished. When this does come the facilities for rapid transit across the river by electric cars, automobiles and other modern conveyances will make it worthwhile for business men to go to the hills for pure air and cool breezes during the hot summer. The summit of the hills will be made easy of approach by electric lines of railway, affording cheap and rapid transit.

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The Indiana Knobs

The range of hills, commonly called the Knobs, which commences about five miles below the falls, extends about fifty miles into the interior of Indiana. A similar range extends into Kentucky from the south side of the river, but the latter will never be so accessible to the people of Louisville. The Indiana knobs rise about 600 feet above low water mark, and are generally from a mile to half a mile in width. These hills are not in one range, but are in many groups, and for this reason are the more picturesque. Each hill separately is small, some of them covering less than an acre. The ones immediately surrounding New Albany, at this season of the year, when the leaves begin to turn, are exceedingly beautiful, but this fall not so much so as usual on account of the humid condition of the atmosphere during the summer and the absence of early frosts. The only bright red leaves in profusion this fall are those of the sumach trees, which

abound everywhere on the hillsides. When the fall season sets in early, the woods on the hillsides make a pretty picture.

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Primeval Forests

On many hills within five miles of the New Albany courthouse the foot of man has never trod, the knobs being almost perpendicular. They are covered in summer with luxuriant growth of trees, mosses and ferns. Some of the trees in these primeval forests have grown to great size, and many are 125 feet high. In probably no other part of Indiana or any other State is there so great a variety of forest trees as is to be found here. It includes the red, white and burr oak; black and white walnut; shell-bark and pignut hickory; sugar and water maple; black locust, wild cherry, cedar, blue, black and prickly ash, mulberry, cottonwood, sycamore, dogwood, ironwood, elm, pawpaw, black haw, sassafras, persimmon, spice bush, pecan, willow, hackberry, linn, honey locust, buckeye and other trees. Wild flowers, too, grow in great profusion both in the spring and fall and during the summer. Wild grapevines and trailing vines of every description spread over the ground and cling to the trees climbing sometimes one hundred feet to the tops of the tallest trees. Endless quantities of wild grapes, paw-paws, chestnuts, walnuts and persimmons can be found. Even in daylight the forests in some of the ravines is darkened by the density of the foliage. In spring and summer there are wild strawberries, blackberries and huckleberries in profusion. Pecans grow in many places.

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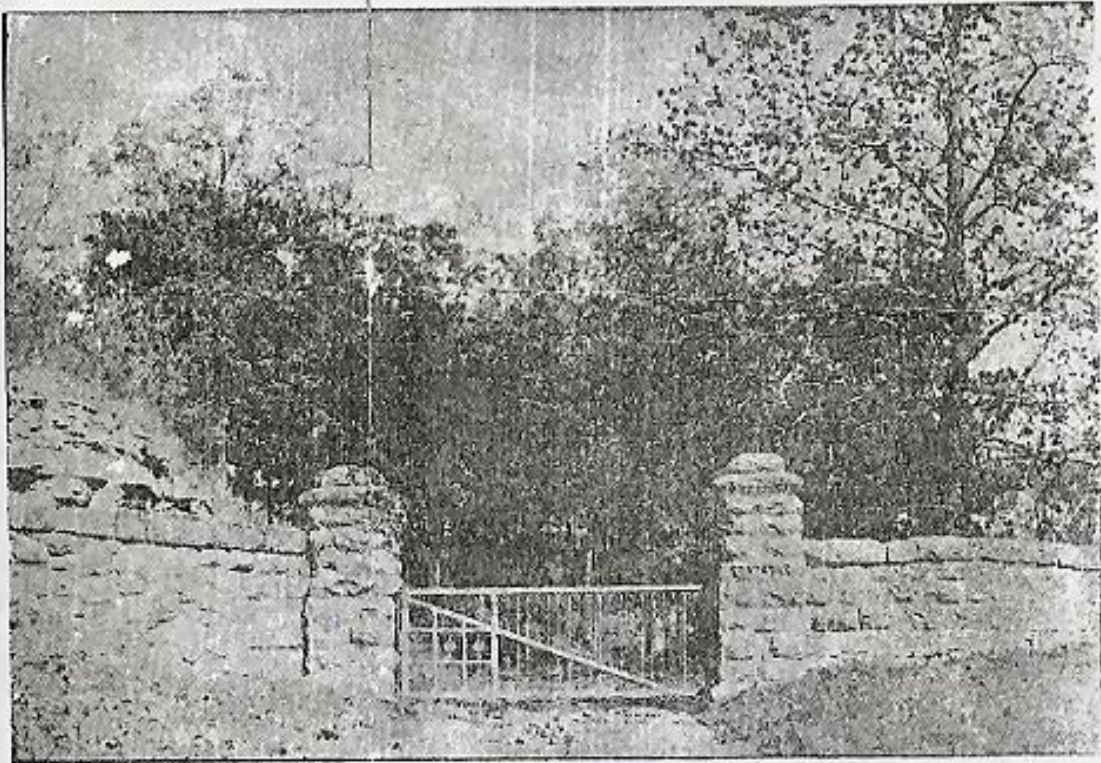
Plenty of Game and Birds

The Knobs in the early days were noted resorts for wild animals of all kinds. The region is still a good hunting ground for foxes, squirrels, rabbits, quail, raccoons, opossums, etc. Wolves, panthers, wild cats, bears and deer were plentiful within the memory of many now living in Lafayette township. Many wild animals remained in the hills after the lowlands were settled. Bears came to the Knobs in the fall to get chestnuts and wild grapes. Thomas Hopper, an old settler, who had a brush cabin on these Knobs many years ago, said it was no unusual thing for him to kill thirty to fifty bears and 100 deer in a season, which he sold in Louisville. Quail and rabbits and squirrels are the principal game sought after now, but most of the lands are "posted," and no hunting is allowed.

All these Knob lands are held at a comparatively low price, compared with the lowlands. The plains on the tops of some of the hills are very fertile, and are used for cultivating strawberries. Over ninety carloads were picked on these hills last season and shipped North. The hillsides are the best place in Indiana for successfully raising apples and peaches.

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THE SUMMER HOME OF MR. UDOLPHO SNEAD.



ENTRANCE GATEWAY FROM TURNPIKE TO "KNOBEDGE," ON INDIANA SILVER HILLS

The Most Beautiful Hilltop

Two fine turnpikes, one leading to Corydon, the old capital of the State and the other to Paoli and French Lick Springs, make the knobs easy of access to the people who take rides over them in summer in carriages or on bicycles. The pike over the hill to Corydon cost over \$100,000 to construct. The one leading to Paoli is the more picturesque. On the latter road, about three miles from New Albany, the hills rise to a height of 600 feet. The highest elevation is probably Knobedge, owned by Mr. Udolpho Snead, President of the Louisville Gas Company. He has spent fifteen summers there. Mr. Snead says his residence is 650 feet above the datum of Louisville. It was occupied by John B. Bangs, of the John P. Morton Company, during his lifetime. There are 130 acres, embracing garden, large pasture for Jersey stock and carriage horses, and has all the conveniences of a bluegrass farm in the lowlands. From his front porch he can get a view of Louisville, New Albany and Jeffersonville, and the Ohio river from above the Waterworks to the foot of Broadway, with the exception of the bend around the falls. The three bridges are in full view. The spot has been pronounced the most beautiful in the whole knob region.

Mr. Snead has been in the Alps, and says while the scenery may be grander and more majestic there, it is not so beautiful as from many points on the knobs. Bayard Taylor, who had traveled all over the world, visited this knob, and wrote that it was the most beautiful he had looked upon. There is a mention of it in his works. The United States Government erected a tower on this knob about twenty years ago while the Geodetic Survey was being run through Indiana, because it was the highest point for observations. The tower fell into decay and was removed, but from where it stood one can see Muldraugh's Hill in Kentucky, twenty-five miles away, on a clear day.

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The Legend of the Hermit

When Mr. Snead bought Knobedge, he found at the foot of the hill in a secluded ravine an old log house with one room in a good state of preservation. He had it moved up to the summit of the hills, within fifty feet of his own residence. It had previously been occupied by an aged French recluse. The old fellow, the story goes, was a son of one of Gen. George Rogers Clark's soldiers. This soldier had returned to France after the capture of Vincennes, but afterward returned to accept some land in Clark's grant in payment of his services for the march from Louisville to Vincennes in 1783. He returned to be in sight of La Belle Riviere, as the French called the Ohio, and to cross the Indian trail once more. When he died the only relative he left was this son, who became a hermit, living alone in the log cabin, sustaining himself by hunting and trapping. Once a year and once only he went over the hills to the little log church at St. Mary's. This was on All Hallow's, or All Saints' Day, which annually comes on November 1. He kept the dates of the Sundays and holy days by consulting the Dominical letter and Golden Number in his prayer-book. No modern calendar graced the walls of his neatly-kept cabin, and he conversed with no man, except the priest who shrived him. He is buried in the old cemetery, where each year he prayed for the souls of the departed. An iron cross marks his grave. His old log cabin is now frequently occupied by visitors to Knobedge when the main residence is overcrowded. Children who visit the house at Halloween are reminded of the old hermit, whose father fought against the Indians and British to make this country free and to acquire the great Northwest.

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Settled By the French

The hill country about Mooresville was settled by the French over one hundred years ago. There is a graveyard at St. Mary's of the Knobs that old. A log church used by the missionaries to the Indians was razed only recently. A modern brick church has taken its place, and the traveler up the valley of Little Indian creek can see the cross on the steeple long before he gets to the churchyard on the summit. One of the hills is called Nova Scotia because of the fact that the snow never melts from the time it falls in the early winter until late in the spring. There is also a place called "Wolfen Hollow," where in the early days wolves congregated in numbers and made night hideous. Louisville people spend their summers on these hills, one of which is owned by Joseph Campion, a former well-known and wealthy citizen of Louisville. He has spent twenty-one years on the knobs, and is now eighty-three. He reads without glasses, and thinks he will reach 100 years. A former pastor of St. Mary's, Father Neyron, died at the age of ninety-six, a few years ago. He was one of Napoleon's soldiers. His successor at the church, Father Bessonies, is now eighty-six and is Vicar General of the diocese of Indianapolis. The hill country is favorable to longevity. Col. W. W. Tuley, who lives on the hills near New Albany, was in the Mexican war and, though past three-score and ten, seems like a man of fifty summers. There are scores of people in the Knobs who are over

eighty years of age, and some of them work every day in the fields or on the roads. On one of the hills near Mooresville is the Franciscan monastery donated by Mary Anderson Navarro to this order. The town of Mooresville is nearly one hundred years old, though it has never been platted. A man named Hay came then in 1812 with \$60,000, intending to start a woolen mill, but was not successful. They made felt hats for men at Mooresville ninety-five years ago. They also ground your grist while you waited at the tavern. If the creek was too high you waited at the tavern at the expense of the miller. The old mills in this region have long since disappeared.

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Another High Point

The Knobs at Edwardsville, where the Air Line tunnel enters, are 571 feet above low-water mark at the foot of the Louisville and Portland canal. One who travels in his easy carriage up the gradual winding slope would not imagine, when he looked down at the fast passenger train coming through the tunnel immediately under the pike, that he was nearly 600 feet higher than where the train lands at Seventh street in Louisville. The Corydon stage line and the Paoli stage line run daily. Quaint old tollgates, with the long bars reaching across the road, cause you to halt at intervals to settle. The stage coaches are built after the same pattern that were in use half a century ago. Many prefer to ride in them instead of taking the steam cars. On Sundays hundreds of tourists from the cities go over these hills.

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Never-Failing Springs

At many points on the Knobs there are never-failing springs, and at the bases may be found medicinal springs, the water being in great favor by the residents. The Knobs are formed of sandstone and limestone, and there is a chance to open a quarry in almost every hill. Iron in considerable quantities has been found. There are as many as twenty quarries in the hills about New Albany, and the Jennie DePauw Memorial church is being built of Knob sandstone. The limestone is also of good quality.

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Old Indian Trails

At many points on the Knobs are old Indian trails. They were used in later days by white men in going from Louisville to Corydon and to Vincennes. Gen. Clark and Gen. William Henry Harrison used them often. The Indians utilized Knobedge and Bald Knob for a lookout. They could get a good view of the Ohio river from these points, and watch their enemies, red or white, crossing in canoes or coming up the trails. The whole region was once occupied by the Miami Confederation of Indians, who found it a good hunting ground. Later, to avoid malaria, the white man preferred these high grounds to the rich lowlands on account of

health and facilities for killing game. The hills to-day, as they were in 1800, when this region was noted for its chills and fevers, are the best place to escape malaria, and the wonder is that more people do not avail themselves of the privilege of living among them in the summer time.

- EDWARD FITZPATRICK

[Source: VF FLOYDS KNOBS]