

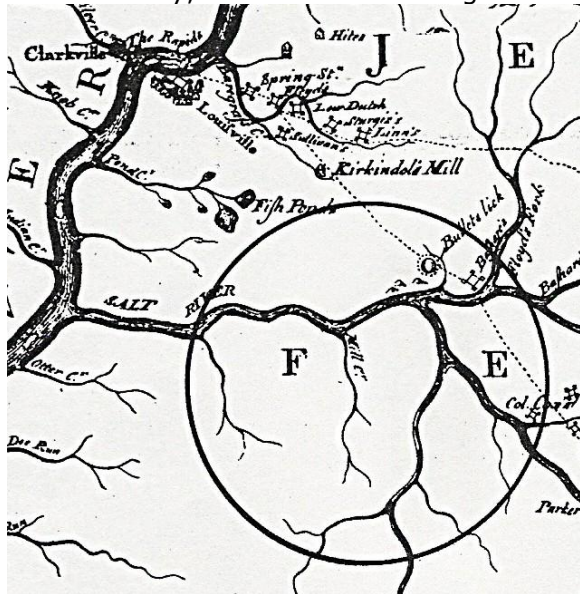
History Highlights of

# Radcliff, Kentucky and the surrounding area

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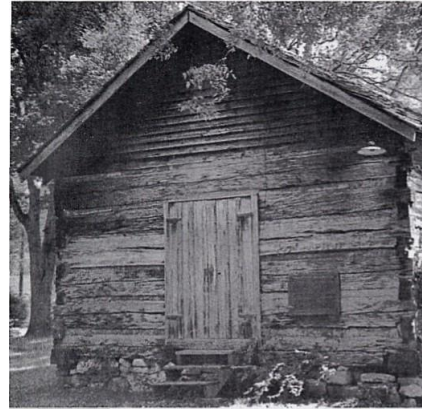
## PRE-RADCLIFF HISTORY

The area that we know as Radcliff today was once known as the Mill Creek area of Kentucky. The historical significance of the area is best shown by the first map of Kentucky published by John Filson in 1784. The first land surveys were made of this area in 1780 by Jacob Meyers, land grants were signed by Patrick Henry, the Governor of Virginia.



PORTION OF JOHN FILSON'S 1784 MAP  
SHOWING MILL CREEK

Mill Creek is depicted on the map and drawn with detail and named indicating this early use of the place name. One of the contributors to Filson's map was one Col. Daniel Boone. Local histories record that both Daniel and his brother Squire Boone, who later settled in Corydon, Indiana, spent quite a bit of time in this area. This fact is attested to by the Boone family cemetery located on Fort Knox just a few short miles north of Radcliff.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE (STROTHER MEETING HOUSE,  
NASHVILLE, TN)

The name Mill Creek continues today in the name of the creek as well as the Mill Creek Baptist Church founded in 1782 as a community meeting house and served by circuit riding ministers of both the Methodist and Baptist. The original location of the old meeting house was the Mill Creek Lincoln Memorial Cemetery at Ft Knox. The present congregation, active for over 225 years, worships today in a modern edifice on South Jones Street in Radcliff.



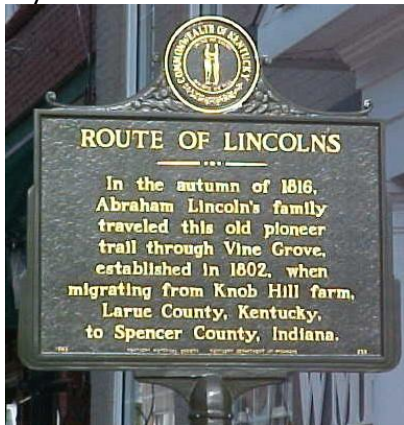
PHOTO COURTESY: CULTURAL RESOURCES OFFICE , FT KNOX, KY  
MILL CREEK LINCOLN MEMORIAL CEMETERY, FT  
KNOX KY



**THOMAS LINCOLN, FATHER OF THE PRESIDENT**

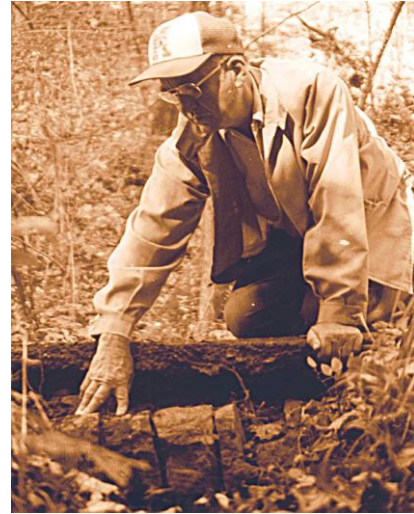
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO

**Thomas Lincoln, father of the 16th President, purchased his first farm on Mill Creek in 1807** two years before the birth of Abraham Lincoln. Mill Creek has long been considered one of the possible birthplaces of the future president. Thomas kept possession and actively worked his Mill Creek farm until the family moved to Indiana. Thomas' mother, Bathsheba Lincoln and sister spent their last days in the area. The Thomas Lincoln farm was located at the Southern Border of Radcliff with the family members buried in the historic Mill Creek Lincoln Memorial Cemetery on Fort Knox.



**Thomas Lincoln and family, including Little Abe, passed through our area during 1814 on their way to Indiana. The Lincolns migration was by way of a road, known today in Radcliff as Spring Street.** A marker denoting the passage was placed a few years ago in downtown Vine Grove through which the same road passed.

**The Louisville-Nashville Turnpike, now known as South Wilson Street** was one of Kentucky's first hard surface roads, began in 1829, but by 1840 only fifteen miles of the road had been completed in Hardin County. The roadbed was constructed by cutting limestone rock to the shape similar to that of a railroad spike then hammered into the ground to form a base eight inches thick.



**RICHARD BRIGGS EXAMINES A PORTION OF THE LOUISVILLE - NASHVILLE TURNPIKE**



**ELIZABETH HAYCRAFT PETERSEN AT THE HAYCRAFT INN JUNE 4, 2004**

Coleman Lewis constructed the first section of **Radcliff's oldest standing structure, the Haycraft Inn in 1814** which was located on the old **Louisville-Nashville Turnpike**. The inn, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was owned by Daniel K. Haycraft during the days of stage coach transportation.



**RAINE CABIN AT SAUNDERS SPRINGS**

**Hezekiah Owen Stovall built a one room log cabin in 1836** on his farm to serve as a home for his new bride Eleanor Young Brashear. They were married on January 27, 1835. Today it is known as the Raine cabin and moved in 2004 to Saunders Spring Nature Preserve.



**ED ATCHER CABIN**

**Additional cabins moved to Saunders Springs** includes the two story log house build by Civil War veteran Ed Atcher during the Spring or Summer 1875. These were followed in 2009 by remnants of the Ed and Matilda Stovall cabin constructed in 1873. Ed Stovall, though a Baptist and buried at Mill Creek Baptist Church, is best remembered today for his donation of one acre of land in February 1875 for the construction of Stovall United Methodist Church in the Rogersville area of Radcliff.

Local residents tell of the exploits of Frank and Jesse James spending the night in the barn of John Finley Hobbs just South of the Haycraft Inn. Meanwhile, just north of the Inn, William Dyer purchased five acres of land from the Haycrafts for construction of a General Store and Blacksmith Shop. This settlement was known as Dyer's Crossing during the late 1800's. Today Dyer's Crossing is the intersection of Hwy 1500 and South Wilson Avenue in the Rogersville area of southern Radcliff.

**The outbreak of the Civil War caused Union soldiers from Michigan to construct Fort Duffield** on Pearman's Hill overlooking the city of West Point.



**TODAY FT DUFFIELD IS OPERATED BY VOLUNTEERS.**



In **September 1862 General Don Carlos Buell had approximately 60,000 soldiers passing through present-day Radcliff**, on the Louisville and Nashville Turnpike. Camping Milton Stith's farm, whose house was located near Hill Street. Stith was never paid for the crops, animals and wood confiscated by the Union Army.

**General John Hunt Morgan and his Confederate raiders passed through Bloomington on July 7, 1863** (now the Wilson Road area of Ft Knox) on their way to Brandenburg, Ky. At Brandenburg, Morgan used two steamboats to ferry troops across the Ohio River to Indiana. This marked the northernmost penetration of the Union States by regular Confederate troops during the war.

**Numerous Stories of the War Between The States are told.** One of the more unusual concerns two brothers, John Marion and Samuel Shelton.



**JOHN MARION SHELTON – SAM SHELTON**

The Shelton brothers served in the Civil War and were discharged at Munfordville. John sewed his final wages inside his suspenders and returned to purchase a large farm located in the area of Captain D's today. Sam Shelton is believed to have been robbed and murdered as he never returned.

## ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS



**SAUNDERS SPRINGS SCHOOL 1889  
MARVIN W. LOGSDON (TEACHER)**

The exact history of the one room schools servicing the Radcliff area is unclear, but according to extant deed files Saunder's Springs (aka Mill Creek) and Bloomington date to prior to the Civil War.



**BLACK JACK SCHOOL MAY 1890**

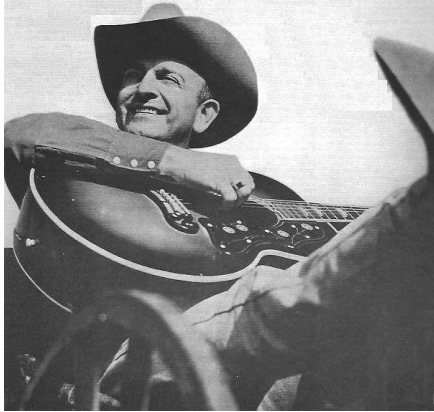
Blackjack, Crutcher, Red Hill, Stithton (later New Stithton), Sycamore, and Ireland (aka Otter Creek) also taught the three "R"s to students in our area.



**CRUTCHER SCHOOL 1909**, was located adjacent to present day Stovall United Methodist Church.

One room schools were generally placed ten miles apart. This was because it was felt that students should not have to walk more than 5 miles to get to school each day.

Moonlight School was conducted at Sycamore School in 1915 for adults during the evening hours. Frame buildings started to replace log structures after 1900.



**BOB ATCHER "DEAN OF THE COWBOY SINGERS"**

**Bob Atcher, known nationally as "The Dean of Cowboy Singers"** was born, according to family tradition, on May 11, 1914 at the R E I Ray farm located in the vicinity of 84 Lumber and Waddell's Recycling in Radcliff. Bob and his younger brother Randy Atcher, of WHAS TV fame, inherited their musical talents from their father George Atcher

## BIRTH OF RADCLIFF

**It was Horace McCullum who actually named Radcliff in 1919** when he subdivided lots along present day Wilson Avenue at it's insection with Elm Street and sold them at auction to the highest bidder. McCullum named the new community after his friend Major William Radcliffe, head of the Quartermaster Corps at the newly established Camp Henry Knox. McCullum opened a general store which survived under various owners until the early 1950s.



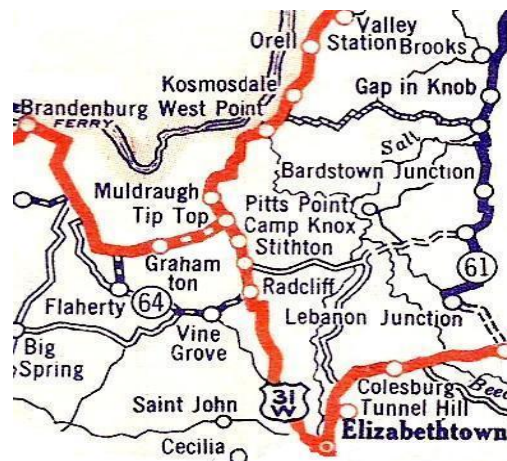
**HORACE McCULLUM'S STORE (CA 1952)**

Radcliff was known for many years as a town of two stores and one garage.

That garage was opened by Lee Hargan along Dixie Highway in 1926. The building remains today, on West Wilson Ramp Rd, with an old hand crank water pump at the side.



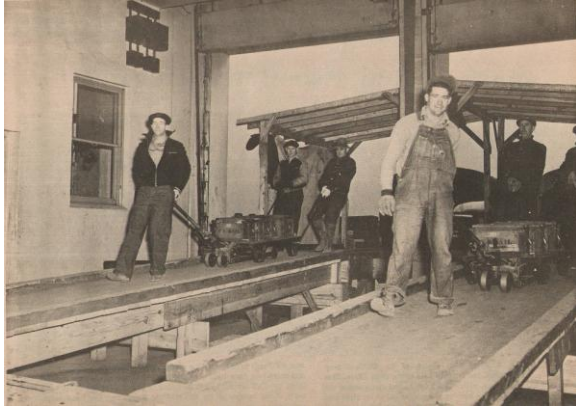
**LEE HARGAN'S GARAGE (LEFT)**



**1932 RADCLIFF AREA MAP SHOWS MANY SMALL TOWNS WHICH NO LONGER EXIST** New Stithton is incorrectly identified as Stithton.

The next significant step in Radcliff's history happened during the 1930's when Fort Knox expanded and dislocated the town of New Stithton causing various residents and businesses of those communities to move to Radcliff. The Stithton Baptist Church, then called New Stithton Baptist, relocated to Radcliff.

**The Treasury Department announced construction of the Bullion Depository (aka the Gold Vault) on land adjacent to Ft Knox at a cost of \$560,000. Many Radcliff area residents assisted in the construction and/or worked at the facility over the years.**



**LOCAL RESIDENTS EMPLOYED TO LOAD GOLD INTO THE GOLD VAULT (1937)**



**REV PAUL LOGSDON DIRECTOR OF THE RADCLIFF USO IN 1942**

**During World War II, thousands of soldiers trained at Fort Knox and spent their leisure hours at the USO on Dixie Highway in Radcliff opened in 1942. Meanwhile officers and local civilians danced to big band music at the Club Lex A Vila located at the northern end of Radcliff.**



**1986 PHOTO OF THE LEX A VILA MANISION**

**The Blue Lantern, later known as The Blue Steer, was built and opened as a restaurant/store in the early 1940s by J.M. and Helen Ward. Today, it is Uncle Frank's German Food and the oldest commercial building in Radcliff still in use.**



**DAIRY KING AND THE BLUE LANTERN (1950s)**



**DIXIE DIP IN RADCLIFF (CA 1952)**

**Dixie Dip was known for many years as "Hottie's Hamburgers" now it is J.C's Cigarette Outlet.**

**Hardin County Water District #1 was formed in 1953, and became a reality in 1955** with approximately 500 customers. The water district purchased the Saunder's Springs Water Treatment plant from Ft Knox in April 1954. Today the water district is the principle source of fresh water to all of Northern Hardin County.

**Radcliff's Fire Department was established in 1955, by the Water District #1** to service customers. Joseph B. Hutcherson was named the first Fire Chief. When the city incorporated, the loans for fire department equipment was transferred to the city.



**FIRE CHIEF JOSEPH B HUTCHERSON JR WITH THE FIRST RADCLIFF FIRE TRUCK, NOTICE WATER DISTRICT 1 ON THE DOOR**

## **RADCLIFF CITY GOVERNMENT**



The Radcliff Civic Club was organized in 1955, but realized they could only request local citizens and businesses to take certain actions and had no taxing ability. The civic club petitioned **Hardin Circuit Court incorporated Radcliff as a Sixth Class city on March 6, 1956** with an appointed Town Board, as recommended by the civic club. Elmer Hargan was selected as Chairman and assumed the title, "Mayor."



**FIRST RADCLIFF TOWN BOARD MEETING (MAR 7, 1956)**

L-R Elmer Hargan (Chairman), W E Duvall, Vestor White, Earl Brown and Dewey Hargan

**Radcliff Police Department was formed in July 1956 with Bernard Jones** appointed as "Town Marshall" paid on a fee basis. H.L. Froman was appointed Police Judge. Eventually Peter Kersey was hired as the first police officer, then as the department expanded he became "chief." Kersey designed the patch still used by the Radcliff Police.



**BERNARD JONES  
RADCLIFF  
TOWN MARSHALL**



**PETE KERSEY  
FIRST POLICE  
CHIEF**

**Post Office officially opened in Radcliff on July 1, 1957**, as a branch of the Ft Knox Post Office. J. Wayne Hargan, postmaster at Ft Knox, served as postmaster. The first post office was in the Bennett Building, behind Hottie's Hamburgers.



**RADCLIFF FALL FESTIVAL (1950s)**

**Radcliff Fall Festival was held for the first time in the Fall of 1956**, at the newly opened Radcliff Elementary School. The Fall Festival was centered around the Radcliff Volunteer Fire Department and funds for support of the fire department was raised at carnival type booths. **The festival was renamed "Golden Armor" in 1967**, suggested by Mary Stiles.



**GOLDEN ARMOR FESTIVAL PARADE**

The last Golden Armor Festival was held in September 2005, when the Radcliff Chamber of Commerce decided to discontinue the annual event.

The Vine Grove Chamber of Commerce now hosts most events in Northern Hardin County with Autumn Daze; Dickens of A Christmas; Hardin County's Veteran's Day Celebration and others throughout the year.



**"The night Moby Dick came through the screen" was May 21, 1957.** MoonLit Drive-In Theater owner Raymond Danner, eventually went into the seafood restaurant business and became known as "Captain D." The theater reopened Friday night June 14th, as Randolph Scott's film "The Tall T" entertained theater goers on a wet screen because the paint had not fully dried.



**FIRST DOG N SUDS CHAMPAIGN, IL**

**Dog N Suds opened in Nov 1961** on Wilson Road in the block originally known as McCullum's Town Site (1919). Today it is "Taste of Soul."

**Pee Wee Reese in Radcliff on July 16, 1963** for the dedication ceremonies of Pee Wee Reese Field at Radcliff Elementary.



**RADCLIFF MAYOR ELMER HARGAN WITH PEE WEE REESE**



**DEDICATION OF THE M 103 TANK IN 1965**



**Radcliff Jubilation Days held Oct 29-31, 1964** celebrated the completion of the new four lane Dixie Highway through Radcliff. Jubilation Days resulted in the formation of the Radcliff Chamber of Commerce in 1965.

**The M103 tank was dedicated on Sept 20, 1965 as a city symbol** on property next to the Elmer Hargan building (then city hall). The tank was given by the federal government, local businessmen donated \$2,587 for demilitarization and transportation from Red River Army Depot in Texas.



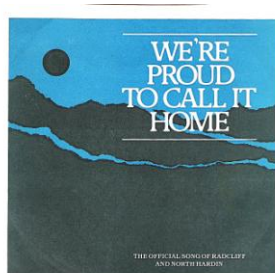
**Velva Darnell Records** opened in 1966 at Radcliff Plaza to coincide with the release of her Dot label single, "Not Me." Velva became a regular performer at various local "opry" type venues.



**Southwind Motel (now Econo Lodge)** was the third motel constructed in Radcliff and at the time the only AAA rated motel between Louisville and Elizabethtown. Expanded several times by the original owner, Harvey Barnes, the motel has served as lodging for various celebrities visiting our area including Anita Bryant (Sept 1976); Bill Murray during the filming of "Stripes" (1980); and the Oak Ridge Boys (2004).



**David S. Colvin Community Center** was dedicated on Oct 14, 1979. Named after long time Radcliff community leader, Dr. David Colvin. Colvin practiced medicine in Radcliff from 1961 to 1995.



**We're Proud To Call It Home**, composed and sung by Randy Davidson, became the official song of Radcliff and North Hardin county on July 19, 1983.

**The Challenger Learning Center of Hardin County opened October 1, 1999 and closed in February 2009.** The center utilized space exploration to create and inspire a interest in mathematics, science, and technology. Simulated missions included Rendezvous with a Comet™, Return to the Moon™ and Voyage to Mars.™



**CHALLENGER LEARNING CENTER FIRST MISSION (OCT 1999)**



**KNOX DRIVE-IN Closed April 25, 2003** It had been a source of many hours of entertainment since Spring 1954.

Radcliff over the years has grown from a small community in 1919 with approximately 25 residents to an estimated population of 22,000 today, making it the second largest city in Hardin County. Most of this growth has occurred in the last 50 years.