

## EARLY HISTORY

Settlers were in the Knightstown area as early as 1819. Federal land surveyors reported a trapper named Montgomery who had a camp on the west bank of a stream named for him. When the National Road was surveyed, it crossed the farm of Waitstill M. Cary. In 1827, Cary engaged the road's chief surveyor, Jonathan Knights, to plat a village between Montgomery Creek and the Blue River. He named the town in honor of the surveyor. Cary erected the first building in town which is marked by a plaque on the northeast corner of Main and Washington Streets.

Incorporated as a town in 1837, Knightstown grew because of its location midway between Richmond and Indianapolis, and with excellent water resources, the town attracted industry and retail businesses. Water and steam-powered grist, wood, flour, saw and paper mills came. Other early industries included tanneries, a brickyards, a cabinet shop, cannery, furniture factory, casket factory, blacksmiths, feed mill, ice company, copper shop, and coal yard.

By 1850, Knightstown was a railroad hub connected to larger cities. The short-lived Knightstown & Shelbyville route was built and the Terre Haute and Richmond R.R. traversed east-west and evolved into the Indiana Canal and Later the Pennsylvania. The Big Four line came through north and south in 1891. In 1905, the T.H. & E. electric railway (interurban) was laid, offering quick passenger and freight service throughout the Midwest. The first newspaper was printed in 1833, the Federal Union, but it lasted only a short time. The Knightstown Banner was founded in 1867 and has continued ever since. In the early 1900's, three newspapers were here, including a daily.

The Knightstown Buggy Company (1898), once located on Third St. between S. Washington and S. Jefferson became the Knightstown Body Company which customized automobiles and manufactured funeral cars until the 1940's. The Knightstown Funeral Car Company was located at 221 W. Main and also customized funeral cars and ambulances until the 1960's. Between 1905 and 1911, the Leader automobile was manufactured here.

The Knightstown Concrete Company in the early 20th century, was responsible for the concrete houses at 4 W. Morgan, 38 E. Morgan, 405 N. Adams, 323 Franklin, 124 N. Washington, 16-18 E. Main, 124-136 W. Cary and many concrete porch columns throughout the city.

Knightstown has retained an extraordinary collection of 19th and early 20th century architecture. A large portion of the town and two individual buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places

## WALKING TOUR

A E Main and N Washington

An early history of Knightstown written in 1839 describes the Public Square:

"What beauties are presented in the town? Alas! They are few. The site is level and extended; the streets are wide, but how they look — unshaded, maddly, warped, and without sidewalks. The Public Square is part a mud hole, strewn with wood and chips and fragments of old timber; the market house until recently a hog shelter, the alleys are blocked with heaps of offal." The public square was raised and walled in the late 1830's. Thanks to the support of many local organizations, it is now beautifully landscaped complete with gazebos, pergola and Little Free Library.



B 24 N Washington

The Historic Knightstown Museum is housed in this Italianate facade row of buildings built in 1885 and was owned by John A. Deem, the publisher of the local newspaper, the Banner.



C 21 N Washington

The Garden of Memories Veterans Memorial was dedicated July 16th, 2005. This stunning memorial was built to honor all who served, during war or during peace time. It honors those who died and those who are living. We thank them for our beloved gift of freedom.



D 39 N Washington

Built in 1937, this Spanish Eclectic structure was originally called "Tjodi Super Service" and operated by the partnership by Harold Trump and Lowell Cooper. When the station changed ownership by 1945 it sold White Rose gas and was listed in the phone book as "Tjodi's White Rose Station". It remained a gas station for one brand or another and more recently was a Texaco Museum owned by Bruce Trump for a time.



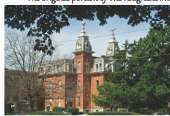
E 203 N Adams

This 1 1/2 story painted brick Greek Revival house was built c. 1860. The center gable and porch were added c. 1890 and 1900. The original front portico was removed and is used as a north side porch. Emmett Wood, who lived in the house for many years, remarked to visitor Bill Hershey, "Ain't God good to Indiana." Hershey later used it in his well-known Hoosier poem.



F 340 N Washington

The original portion of The Knightstown Academy was erected in 1876-76. It is a three story, Second Empire style structure with a slate covered mansard roof. Project architect was the renowned J.H. Hascoster of Richmond. The towers are crowned with a large metal globe on the one and telescope on the other. The building is surrounded by an iron fence and sits which once kept livestock out of the schoolyard. An addition was placed to the other in 1889 and another addition in 1939. The gymnasium was added in 1931 and featured in the movie "Hoosiers". The last addition about 1950. The Academy was in use as a school through grade 12 until 1966. Classes remained in the last addition until 1986. The original portion of this landmark is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is currently apartments for senior and disabled citizens.



G 308 N Washington

This home was built in 1914 by Richard H. Schweitzer, proprietor of the wire fence factory. This brick veneered home is Classical Revival with two-story fluted wooden ionic columns.



H 316 N Washington

This two-story painted brick Italianate house was built c. 1867 by William Penn Hill. Hill was an elder in the Presbyterian Church and a conductor on the Knightstown Shelbyville Railroad. Hill was also cashier with the First national Bank.



I 325 N Washington

The Knightstown School gymnasium was built in 1921, and underwent a face lift in 1995 under the Works Progress Administration program. It is now called The Hoosier Gym and is a basketball gym, museum, and community center. Famous for being the central location for the 1986 basketball movie Hoosiers, starring Gene Hackman and Dennis Hopper, the gym has kept the same look as it did when the movie was filmed over 30 years ago attracting just under 70,000 tourist visits in 2017.



J N McCullum — Hwy 109

A pleasant walk thru shaded 51 acres of winding roads of the Old Knightstown and Glen Cove Cemetery will lead you past mausoleums, a working fountain, and the Italianate Chapel c. 1875. In 1886, Knightstown Lodge 99, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, acquired 55 acres for 18,750 to begin the cemetery since the old town graveyard (c. 1827) was "filling up." There are 25 planned sections at this time with over 1800 burials. In 1936 the Odd Fellows ironed fence with the Stewart Iron Works Company in Cincinnati to build the handsome iron fence that stretches for approximately 6400 feet along the edge of the cemetery beside State Road 109 including 45 feet of gates. Ownership of the cemetery was transferred to the town when the Odd Fellows disbanded in 1956.



K 190 N McCullum

Built in 1868, this home is a superb example of Second Empire styling and was built for Richard Probasco who owned a large dry good store on Main Street. The second owner was John I. Morrison, prominent Indiana educator who was a delegate to the Indiana Constitutional Convention, State Treasurer and is credited with creating the Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Morrison was a school board member when the Knightstown Academy was built. His daughter Sarah was the first woman to graduate from Indiana University. The home was once used as a health sanitarium where people came for physical rejuvenation.



L Hill Avenue

Sunset Park and shelter house have served as a center of recreation since 1940. The park was originally named Hillcrest as a result of a local contest. Amenities include the shelter house, baseball diamonds, playground, splash pad, picnic shelters and a fishing lake.



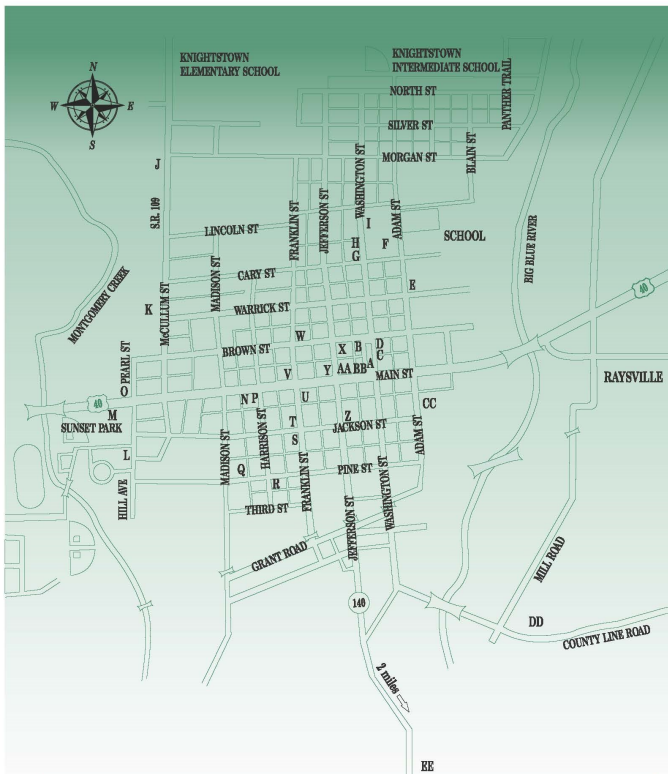
N 115 W Main

Built in 1935 by Floyd Newby, son of L.P. Newby who lived at 105 W. Main this Craftsman prairie style home retains its original features such as woodwork, built-in cabinets, pocket doors, and built-in furniture.



O 508 W Main

The Greek Revival home was built in 1836 in the 1 house style—a vernacular house type, popular in the United States from the colonial period onward. Historian Frank Edwards notes this home is an old land-mark which was long ago absorbed into the newer part of Knightstown. One can easily imagine that this was a tavern when the red stagecoaches dashed along the National Road, yet there seems to be no evidence that it was ever used as such.



# KNIGHTSTOWN

## 33 miles from Knightstown to Indianapolis

M 517 W Main

This brick with stucco home was built c. 1844 by Col. John J. Lehmannowsky, a Polish Jew who was a guardman under Napoleon. Bonaparte was condemned to death after the Battle of Waterloo. He escaped and came to Knightstown where he was a doctor and Lutheran minister. He lectured all over the US. The original Knightstown bandstand was moved from the Town Square and is now in the property's backyard.



P 105 W Main

This two-story brick Italianate/Queen Anne house was built in 1881 by Leonidas P. Newby. He was the first and only 1876 graduate of the Knightstown Academy and was a lawyer, state senator, and second president of Citizens Bank. His son, Floyd, built the house next door (115 W Main). The elaborate cast-iron veranda, complete with fretwork and tower, was added between 1890 and 1898.



Q 126 W Pine

The Dayton Heritage House was built c. 1866 by local furniture retailer, Dayton Heritages, who was not above sitting in on a quick game of "five cards round" or "who's got'em" (poker). He once confided that if there was a brick in that house that he had not made playing poker, he's like to see it! The house was restored by Leslie Corlton, long-time superintendent of the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home. This fine example of Gothic Revival style has an unaltered exterior with three different arch styles.



R 35 W Pine

Built in c. 1890, this was once the home of retired Lt. Luther Wellborn, a West Point graduate, who had been one of the U.S. Cavalrymen sent to subdue the Sioux Indians after Custer's Last Stand.



S 112 S Franklin

The first Bethel Presbyterian Church on this site was built in 1840 and another in 1865. The current Neoclassical structure was built in 1911 at a cost of \$15,000. In 1842 the first pipe organ was placed in the church and replaced in 1936 by a new pipe organ, one of three in Henry County. The basement of the church was originally used as a gymnasium for local organized sports.



T 98 S Franklin

This Italianate home at the N.W. corner of Jackson and Franklin was built c. 1870 by Col. Milton Peeler, a farm hand who made money in the West as a gold miner in 1849. He was an Indiana state representative in 1896, and state senator in 1864.



U 5 E Main

The Knightstown Public Library is one of many libraries across the country built with money donated by steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Built in Neoclassical style 1911, it has been in continuous use as a public library since it was founded. Today the library retains its original design and many original fixtures, still has shelves full of books, but has also incorporated modern technology such as an integrated library system (Evergreen Indiana) and public access computers.



V 16 W Main

This house, built in 1883 by Elias Hindshaw, is the only example of the Italian Villa style in Knightstown. The date of construction and owner's initials are on the keystone over the front doorway. Hindshaw was a blacksmith and farmer. The home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



W 12 E Brown

This modest building was erected between 1873 and 1885. It was the Graf and Wallace carriage shop and later the George D Steiner blacksmith and carriage shop. The structure contains original hand-wrought hardware. The concrete wing was added after 1948.



X 37 N Jefferson

This Neoclassical style U.S. Post Office was built as part of the massive public works initiative by the Roosevelt Federal government called the WPA. There are literally hundreds, maybe thousands, of Post Offices all over the US built by the same project and almost identical to this one. Ours also sports an original mural painted by Robert L. Morris called "The Evening Mail" which was also part of the WPA intended to support the Arts and Artists. The Post office was dedicated on April 29th, 1937 by the Postmaster General of the United States, James A. Farley. A crowd of 2000 Knightstownians attended the event.



Y 96 E Main

The Masonic Hall built in 1900 has undergone extensive alterations, yet the unaltered corner oriel is a comparison to the Morgan Building tower a half block east. This building is similar in style and located on the site of the Masonic Hall which burned in 1899 and took the lives of three local firemen.



Z 27 S Jefferson

The original United Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1829 on the southeast corner of Jefferson & Jackson Streets. The second structure was built in 1893 at the present location. The current Gothic Revival structure was erected in 1885.



AA 102-106 E Main

Built between 1898 and 1903, this virtually unaltered Italianate building at 106 E Main has recently been restored to its original state. Built by Dr. E.E. Halloway, it was occupied by Norman C.W. Reeves for his drug store c.1919. His son, Norman, later became president of Toole's Drugs, Inc. and was succeeded by his son, J. Douglas Reeves. The Neoclassical structure at 104 E Main was built as a bank in 1900. The building at 106 E Main has undergone many changes and was most recently used as a drive-thru for the bank. It is now home of the movie themed mural "Hoosiers" painted by Pamela Bliss. The 1986 movie made at Knightstown's Hoosier Gym was the central location for the classic true tale commemorating the Milan Basketball Championship of 1954.



BB 120 E Main

Romanesque Revival 1865



CC 25 S Adams

This two-story brick Greek Revival home was built in 1873 by hardware merchant Harvey Bell. After a fire destroyed the local hotel, Bell opened his home to boarders and for many years the name "Mansion House" was visible across the front portico. Bell sometimes housed entertainers who performed in his entertainment hall on Main Street. It is thought that Tom Thibault stayed here while performing at Bell's Hall.



DD 7014 W County Line Rd

Constructed in the 1860's and officially known as "Frankhall" but better known locally as the Pest House, it stands on a bluff overlooking Blue River valley. This French Second Empire was used by the town in 1902 as an isolation hospital or pesthouse for smallpox patients during an epidemic. Contrary to local stories, no bodies were buried in the basement!



EE 10832 IN-440

Originally known as the Indiana Soldier's and Sailor's Children's Home, this complex was opened in 1867 for disabled soldiers and seamen, widows and orphans. Ten children enrolled. By 1871 there were 371 children. In 1922 it is recorded that the age limit for discharge was 16. By 1924, four years of high school were offered and the first graduating class had four students. At one time, the complex was totally self-sufficient with a working farm dairy, bakery, greenhouse, florist, carpenter, cobbler, print shops, and hospital. Curriculum was full and diverse and a complement of sports teams, choir, band, scouts, and 4-H were offered. The chapel was designed by architect John Hascoster. Since 2007 it has been operated by the National Guard as the Hoosier Youth Challenge Academy developed to change the life path of young men and women between the ages of 16 and 18 who have dropped out of high school or are severely deficient in credits by bringing structure and discipline to these unfocused lives as an alternative to public school.



## BIKING/WALKING TRAILS

The Woolly Bear Parkway Trail is a multi-use rustic trail proposed to be along a former section of the New York Central Railroad corridor between New Castle and Shirley, passing through Westwood and Kennard. The trail is open from Kennard west for 1.4 miles, it travels across relatively flat farmland with a tree lined grass surface.

The Wilbur Wright Trail originating at the Henry County YMCA, is a 3.1-mile paved trail offering walking, running, rollerblading, and bicycling opportunities. This trail is ADA Accessible and goes through photograph worthy rural areas.

Honey Creek Trail is a two-mile stone trail that starts in Middletown at Dietrich Park and heads southeast through trees and agricultural fields. The trail is a great place for mountain biking, walking, running and is flat enough to be used by Cross Country Skiers in the winter.

The Nation Road Heritage Trail is an established trail that extends eastward along the former Pennsylvania Railroad corridor, which closely parallels the Historic National Road. This section contains 7 miles of trail that are open in two sections between Knightstown and Lewisville. Trail users can access the two open trail sections from developed parking areas. The hope for this trail is to extend it across the state and eventually connect Terre Haute to Richmond.

## HISTORICAL SITES

**A** Offutt's Ford Covered Bridge  
Offutt's Covered Bridge is a historic covered bridge located near Rushville, Indiana in Pony Township, Rush County, Indiana. It was built in 1884 by Emmett L. Kennedy and his brother Charles. It is a Burr Arch bridge, 85 feet (6 m) long over the Little Blue River. The bridge has rounded arch portals and decorative scroll work that are signatures of the Kennedy firm. It was listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 1985.



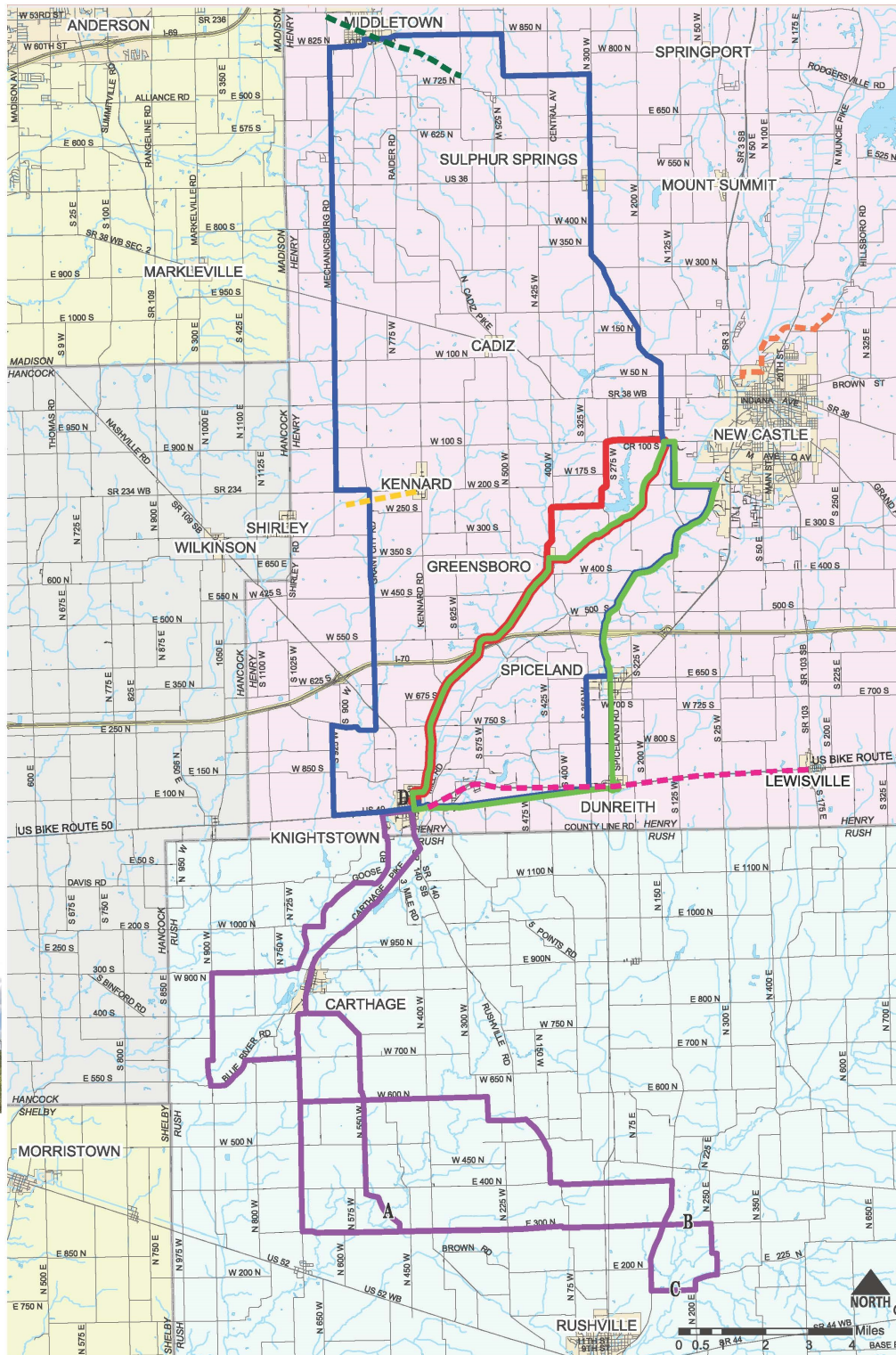
**B** Norris Ford Covered Bridge  
This bridge is located on County Road 390 N over Flatrock River. The Norris Ford Covered Bridge is the "youngest" remaining covered bridge built by the generations of the Kennedy family, and was the next to last one they built. Although it has the white horizontal lap siding and arched portals, it lacks the trademark Victorian style scrolls and brackets which were deemed to be out of vogue in 1916.



**C** EWBank Covered Bridge  
This bridge was built in 1877 by A.M. Kennedy and his sons. It is known to be the "First" Covered Bridge done by the Kennedy Family in Rush County. Through the years, the structure has weathered a number of storms and vandalism while serving as a means to cross the Flatrock River east of Fort Wayne Road on County Road 190 N. After an animal incident the bridge was renovated in 1996.



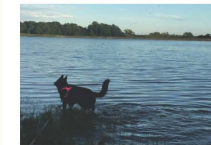
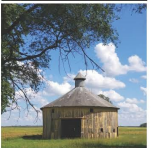
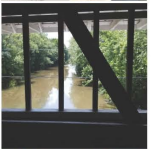
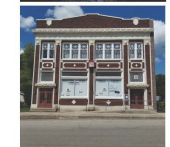
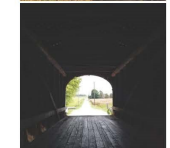
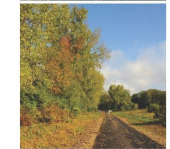
**D** Hoosier Gym  
Just off Highway 40 in Knightstown you will find an authentic shrine to high school basketball. Built in 1951 it has been home to generations of local basketball players, and now, thanks to the movie "HOOSIERS," is a part of our state's history, and a tourist destination for thousands of sports enthusiasts every year. The Gym is open daily for tours and may be rented for basketball, birthday, family reunions and corporate meetings.



## TRAIL KEY

### Bike Routes

- Westwood Tour  
20 miles
- Big Blue River Tour  
30 miles
- Covered Bridge Tour  
20-50 miles
- Small Town Tour  
60 miles
- - - Honey Creek Trail  
3.5 miles
- - - Wilbur Wright Trail  
3.1 miles
- - - Woolly Bear Parkway Trail  
1.4 miles
- - - National Road Heritage Trail  
9.5 miles



**WALKING TOUR ROUTE**  
OF  
**HISTORIC KNIGHTSTOWN**  
and  
**BIKING TOUR ROUTES**  
OF  
**WESTERN HENRY**  
and  
**NW RUSH COUNTIES**

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