

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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The Baptist Chapel, Oak Orchard on the Ridge

The Baptists of Knowlesville were organized in 1832. In 1833, they built a meeting house on the east side of Main Street in Knowlesville. This is now the site of the Fire Department building.

The church did very well in the 19th century and in 1873 remodeled its sanctuary and built an addition which included a baptistry.

In 1876, revival services were held and drew many new members into the church. Since many of these people lived near Oak Orchard-on-the-Ridge, they wished to have religious services in their own community. Consequently, they acquired a lot on the south side of the Ridge west of Oak Orchard Creek. Here they built a substantial brick meeting house with a very high pitched roof. However, this group did not organize as a separate society but was simply united with the Knowlesville Baptist Church. The brick building was simply known as the Baptist Chapel.

For about a quarter of a century, Sunday school and mid-week prayer meetings were held there with Knowlesville Baptist ministers



preaching there at least every two weeks.

In 1897, there were 155 members with a Sunday School enrollment of around 100 taking in both the chapel and the church in Knowlesville. However, by around 1910, the organization was defunct. In 1904, the chapel was deeded over to a man who transformed it into a dry house. The church in Knowlesville was deeded to the local grange in 1910.

Our photo shows the dry house as it appeared in 1908. The wooden portion of the building was added directly on the front of the Baptist Chapel in 1904. The original brick chapel shows to the rear with its very high pitched roof. The continuous ventilator on the ridge of the roof would have been added by the dry house operator.

It has now been many years since this chapel/dry house was destroyed.