

Kentucky Innovations



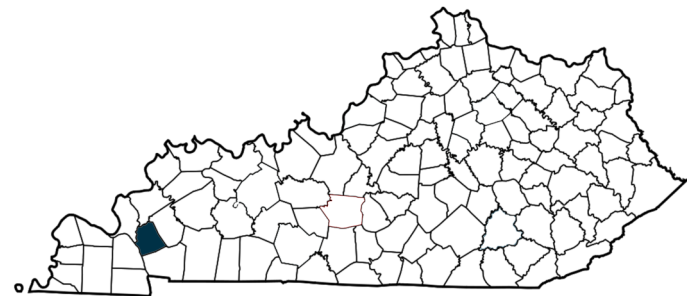
Morgan Postcard Collection, 1907, KHS Collection

William Kelly and Steel Production

One Kentuckian's innovation changed industrial development during the 19th century. William Kelly developed a pneumatic steelmaking process, a production system based on air, that transformed nationwide steel production.

Kelly developed this process at **Eddyville** during the 1840s. Born in Pittsburgh in 1811, he worked with his brother at a dry goods firm before moving to Kentucky and purchasing an ironworks in 1846. Kelly's new process was the first in the world to produce decarbonized iron. Kelly later learned that Henry Bessemer, an iron maker in Great Britain, had developed a similar method and applied for a U.S. patent in 1856.

Kelly applied for his own patent, and after legal proceedings, was awarded one for his innovation.



Kentucky Historical Society

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