

On August 6, 1855 the Know-Nothing Party killed at least 22 and injured many more Roman Catholics in Louisville while also burning homes and businesses owned by Roman Catholics. This violence was aimed at intimidating Catholic immigrants in Louisville on election day. During a recent renovation, Saint Martin of Tours found bullet holes in its steeple from this 19th century tragedy. The damage to Saint Martin of Tours is not the only ripple effect from Louisville's Bloody Monday felt today. The tragedy still appropriately serves as a cautionary tale regarding hatred.

Yet, in August 1854 another story began to unfold in Louisville's Catholic community. To be sure, this story began in a less conspicuous manner than the tragedy of Bloody Monday that occurred almost exactly one-year later. The Xaverian Brothers arrived in Louisville on August 11, 1854. Instead of violence, this event started with an act of kindness as a local merchant thought the Xaverian Brothers looked weary. She kindly gave the beleaguered Xaveirans a watermelon to eat.

The Xaverian Brothers' arrival was also tied directly to Catholic immigrants increasingly settling in Louisville. These early Xaverians struggled in Louisville. At times, it looked as though their entire enterprise would collapse, but by 1864 Saint Xavier's College was founded and eventually became Saint Xavier High School.

These first unsure steps taken in August 1854 by the Xaverian Brothers were far more obscure than the events of Bloody Monday, but it is fair to say that the ripple effects from their arrival are broader and more impactful than aftershocks of Louisville's Bloody Monday. One could point to Saint Xavier's many acclaimed alumni as *the* legacy of August 11, 1854, and they are certainly a wonderful part of that story. However, Saint Xavier also says that in harmony small things grow.

Every student and faculty member who ever had their faith strengthened and character shaped by Saint Xavier is also part of that living legacy. Their ability to turn good words into good deeds for over 150-years has generated countless positive stories for Louisville and the broader world. From the Saint Joseph to Arimathea Society to the Ryken Service Club, loving actions taken by Saint Xavier students today all continue to honor a humble arrival of the Xaverian Brothers in Louisville on August 11, 1854. We should never forget that the early Xaverian Brothers also received kindness from a stranger that provided their first sustenance for a journey that is still unfolding today.

The arrival of the Xaverian Brothers in Louisville and Louisville's Bloody Monday, separated by less than one year, represent two responses to the same reality of a changing Louisville, KY in the 19th century. One response to that reality sought to push Catholics out of Louisville. The other made Louisville a far richer place by tentatively planting seeds of hope. Saint Xavier demonstrates, not as a powerful monument but rather as a living and growing institution, that hope works through sharing and receiving generosity with and from others. May the Saint Xavier community of students, alumni, staff,

and faculty find ways to both receive and give the twenty-first century equivalents of watermelon today. Small things will continue to grow if we continue to demonstrate the courage of the early Xaverian Brothers and the generosity of one local merchant.