

Daviess County Bicentennial Chronology

200 Historical Events

By Jerry Long,
Member of Daviess County Bicentennial Committee
2015



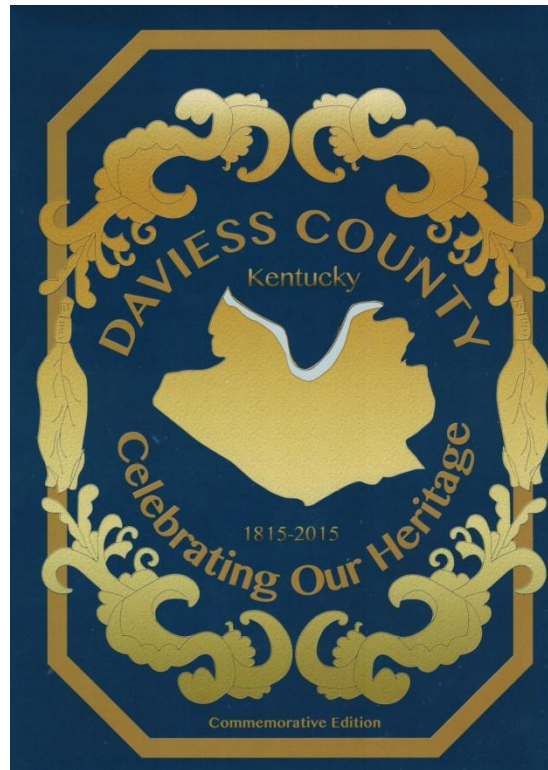
Daviess County Bicentennial Committee, December 2014: Bottom row (left to right) – Sr. Amelia Stenger, Aloma Dew, Lee Dew, Wesley Acton, Jerry Long. Middle row – Kathy Olson, Nancy Bradshaw, Sarah Patterson, Shirley Trunnel, Isaac Settle, Shelia Heflin, Forrest Roberts. Back row – David Smith, Whaylon Coleman, Ed Allen, Jim Lambert, Glenn Hodges, David Zachary, Grady Ebelhar.

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 21 June 2013, p2A:

At its meeting Thursday at the Daviess County Courthouse, Daviess Fiscal Court took the following action: Approved appointing Aloma Dew, Lee Dew, Amelia Stenger, Shelia Heflin, Glenn Hodges, Wesley Acton, Sarah Patterson, Forrest Roberts, Jerry Long, Ed Allen, Grady Ebelhar, Nancy Bradshaw, Kathy Olson, David Zachary, Larry Worth, Shirley Trunnel, County Commissioner Jim Lambert, David Smith and Ross Leigh to the Bicentennial Committee.

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The following chronology of important events in the history of Daviess County, KY was compiled in celebration of Daviess County's Bicentennial in 2015 and was published in the book, Daviess County, Kentucky Celebrating Our Heritage, 1815-2015 (Evansville, IN, M. T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2015, pp7-18):

- 1794, 6-21 George Mason (1725-1792), of Gunston Hall fame and author of the Virginia Bill of Rights & Constitution, owned about 60,000 acres in Western Kentucky. His heirs on this date deeded lands in Kentucky to his son, George Mason, Jr., for the purpose of distributing the land among his heirs; the deed was recorded in Daviess County's first deed book (A pp210-3). Some of his grandchildren, including George W. Mason and Leannah Mason Barron, moved to Daviess County settling on some of the land and they have descendants here.
- 1806, 7-1 Date on which the accounts of James Meed, the first postmaster of Yellow Banks, commence. Yellow Banks was the county's first settlement and a decade later would be renamed Owensborough. Many, however, continued to refer to the town as Yellow Banks for decades to come.
- 1808 Bethlehem Methodist Church organized by Rev. William Craig at the house of Benjamin Duncan. It is the oldest church in the county.

- 1811, 11-7 Joseph Hamilton Daveiss was killed in campaign against the Indians at the Battle of Tippecanoe in Indiana. Daviess County was named in his honor. His home in Daviess County, Cornland, was overlooking the Ohio River, near the intersection of US 60 East and the Wendell H. Ford Expressway. In 1803 he married Jane Marshall, a sister of John Marshall, the US Chief Justice.
- 1811, 11- The first steamboat, Robert Fulton's New Orleans, passed the shores of Daviess County.
- 1813, 6-30 Yelvington Baptist Church organized; it is the second oldest church in what is now Daviess County.
- 1815, 6-1 Daviess County was officially formed from Ohio County. It was the 58th Kentucky county. It was created by an act of the Kentucky legislature that was approved on 14 January 1815.
- 1815, 6-23 First marriage license in county was issued to Samuel McCoy & Jane Helm. They were married two days later by Rev. Daniel T. Pinkston, Methodist minister.
- 1815, 10-9 First meeting of the Daviess County Circuit Court was held at the home of Thomas Moseley. Moseley, a Revolutionary War veteran, is buried in the Moseley family cemetery, on 5th Street near Triplett in Owensboro.
- 1816, 12-30 Plat of the proposed town of Rossboro, now Owensboro, was recorded; 12 streets as laid out on the plat still bear the same names. It was named for David Ross, who owned land where the town was located. He & his partner, John May, donated 80 acres for the new town that was to be seat of government for the new county of Daviess.
- 1817, 2-3 Owensboro was named in honor of Col. Abraham Owen, of Shelby County, KY, who was killed in campaign against the Indians at the Battle of Tippecanoe in Indiana on 7 November 1811. An act of the Kentucky General Assembly enacted on this date provided that the town formerly called Rossboro and Yellow Banks "shall hereafter be called and known by the name of Owensborough". The latter spelling was used in the annual Daviess County tax books throughout the 1820's & 1830's but beginning in the 1840 book the spelling of Owensboro is utilized. When the first newspaper was published in 1842 "Owensboro" appeared in its banner and that is the spelling utilized when the town was granted a city charter in 1866. The spelling of Owensboro appeared on state maps published in 1824, 1827 & 1839. Owensboro became the official spelling when the town received a city charter on 16 February 1866.
- 1820 Daviess County Seminary, first school building erected in Owensboro, is located on lot bounded by 2nd, 3rd, Lewis (now J. R. Miller) & Crittenden. A school continued on this lot until 25 January 1948 when the Washington School burned; the following year Sears & Roebuck opened a store on the site.
- 1820, 10-29 Green Brier Baptist Church organized; it is the third oldest surviving church in the area that is now Daviess County.

- 1825, 10-5 Bethabara Baptist Church was organized. At first they met in a log structure, known as the Tribbel School, built on land owned by Jack Tribbel; it was located just northwest of where the Big Rivers RECC tower now stands.
- 1828, 11-4 Benjamin Field & William R. Griffith donated 200 acres and sold an additional 160 to Rev. Benedict J. Flaget, Bishop of Bardstown, for the establishment of a Catholic settlement in Daviess County. St. Lawrence Church, near Knottsville, the first Catholic church built in Daviess County was erected on this property. First Catholic services in the county were held in the same neighborhood about 1820. The first burial in the St. Lawrence Cemetery was Mrs. Jennie Bowlds, who died on 25 October 1828.
- 1829, 1-3 Hancock County was created from parts of Breckinridge, Daviess & Ohio Counties. Its county seat was established on lands donated by Richard Hawes (1772-1829), of Daviess County, and the town was named Hawesville in his honor. Two of his sons, Albert Gallatin Hawes and Richard Hawes, Jr., served in the US Congress; the latter was also Kentucky's second Confederate Governor.
- 1829, 2-10 Two prominent residents of Owensboro, Robert Triplett (1794-1853) & Philip B. Thompson (1789-1836), have a pistol duel across the Ohio River from Owensboro. Thompson, Owensboro's first lawyer and first from the county to serve in the US Congress, was wounded but recovered. On 25 November 1836 he was stabbed to death near the intersection of Frederica & Main in Owensboro in a fight with Thomas Jefferds.
- 1830 George Mortimer Bibb (1776-1859) is listed in the 1830 census of Daviess County. He resided at Cornland, the former home of Joseph Hamilton Daveiss. When he was elected to the US Senate in 1829 he was living in the county. Under President Tyler he served as Secretary of the US Treasury (1844-1845).
- 1836 Town of Knottsville was laid out by William R. Griffith and James Millay. The town was named for Leonard Knott, who built first house there in the fall of 1827.
- 1836, 10-16 Albert Smith Marks (1836-1891), born in Daviess County, served as the 24th Governor of Tennessee, 1879-1881. A Kentucky Historical Highway marker on West Parrish Avenue just west of the Wendell H. Ford parkway commemorates the place of his birth, where the Owensboro-Daviess County Airport is now.
- 1837, 8-13 William Smothers / Smeathers / Smithers dies at Columbia, Texas. He has been acknowledged as the first settler at Yellow Banks, now Owensboro. By 1797 he had built a cabin on the riverbank near where the Veterans of Foreign Wars is now located. On 2 August 1963 Riverview Park on Owensboro's riverfront was renamed Smother's Park to honor the city's pioneer resident.
- 1842, 8-21 St. Stephen's, the first Catholic Church in Owensboro, was dedicated. Prior to the erection of the church at Second & Cedar Streets services had been held in the home of William Coomes. The church was moved to its current location at 610 Locust Street in 1926.

- 1842, 10-7 Inaugural issue of the Owensboro Bulletin, the first newspaper published in Daviess County. It was edited by William Pattee, it consisted of four pages and was published every Friday; a subscription was \$2.00 per year.
- 1845, 2 James K. Polk (1795-1849), 11th US president, while traveling on the steamboat, Courtland, to his inauguration in Washington, DC stopped at the Owensboro wharf and greeted a few citizens.
- 1847, 10-2 A company of 91 men under Col. Decius McCreery left Owensboro on the steamboat, Meteor, for service in the Mexican War. They “went to the field of carnage and did valiant service.”
- 1847, 12-30 George Thomas Montgomery (1847-1907) born in Daviess County near Knottsville. He was ordained a priest in December 1879 and became a bishop in January 1894. He was the first American born Bishop of the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles, CA, now the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, serving in that capacity from 1896-1902. In 1902 he was named coadjutor to Archbishop Patrick William Riordan of San Francisco. He led the archdiocese in caring for the victims of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.
- 1849, 2-23 Zachary Taylor (1784-1850), 12th US president, while traveling on the steamboat, Courtland, from his home in New Orleans to his inauguration in Washington, DC, stopped at the wharf in Owensboro and greeted the crowd.
- 1850 James Weir (1821-1906), of Owensboro, publishes book Lonz Powers: or, The Regulators. He also published two other novels, Simon Kenton: or, The Scout's Revenge (1852) & The Winter Lodge: or, Vow Fulfilled (1854).
- 1852, 4-10 George Graham Vest (1830-1904) established the newspaper, Owensboro Gazette. He later went to Missouri, where he served as a US Senator. He wrote the world famous verse “Tribute To A Dog”. This spontaneous oration in court in defense of a backwoodsman’s dog, Old Drum, won the case for his client and gained George G. Vest world fame. A Kentucky Historical Highway marker at the Daviess County Courthouse commemorates him.
- 1853, 4-12 Robert Triplett, of Owensboro, dies while on a visit to Philadelphia. One of the largest land owners in Daviess County he was a distiller, barge operator; developed county’s first coal mines in Bon Harbor Hills and to get the coal to the Ohio River built Kentucky’s first railroad in 1826. His home, Haphazard, built about 1820, still stands on the Pleasant Valley Road and is on the National Register of Historic Places. His autobiography, Roland Trevor: or, The pilot of human life. Being an autobiography of the author, showing how to make and lose a fortune, and then to make another, published in 1853, can be found in the Kentucky Room of the Daviess County Public Library.
- 1854, 11-1 Curtis Richardson, a white man, was legally hanged. He was convicted of having killed a Mr. Lanfier / Langfier near Knottsville on 25 December 1853. The 1883 History of Daviess County states that he “was executed on a hill in the southeastern part of Owensboro, since known as ‘Hangman's Hill’”. It took place

near the corner of Breckenridge Street and the Texas Railroad, the scaffold was about 50 feet south of the railroad tracks and the hill from which the crowd watched was on the north side of the tracks. The execution was carried out by Sheriff Thomas Landrum in front of a crowd of about 2500. His was the 2nd of five legal hangings in Daviess County; the first was when a Negro was hanged in 1838 for rape; two legal hangings occurred in 1905 and the last was in 1936.

- 1855 Washington Irving publishes "The Early Experiences of Ralph Ringwood" in his book, Wolfert's Roost. It relates the travels as a young man of William Pope Duvall (1784-1854), later territorial governor of Florida, who about 1800 visited the area that became Daviess County. Among the early pioneers referred to are Bill Smithers, Owensboro's first settler.
- 1857 Mattie Griffith Browne publishes book, Autobiography of a Female Slave. A prominent abolitionist she was the daughter of Thomas & Martha (Young) Griffith and was born in Daviess County on 2 October 1828. The slaves she inherited from her father she freed in 1858. She married Albert Gallatin Browne, also a noted abolitionist, in 1867. She died on 25 May 1906 in Boston, MA.
- 1861, 5-28 Dixie Guards, formed by Capt. John Phillip 'Jack' Thompson, leave Owensboro to join up with the Rebel army in Virginia 46 days after the beginning of the Civil War. They were the first Confederate outfit organized in Kentucky; some of the group was killed at the Battle of Bull Run. Thompson was the son of Philip B. Thompson, Owensboro's first resident lawyer and Congressman.
- 1861, 10-12 Eight acres on the Henderson Road was purchased for a Catholic cemetery. Mater Dolorosa Cemetery also referred to as the Catholic Cemetery or St. Stephen's Cemetery, was opened on the property at the intersection of West 9th Street & Crabtree Road. There are no remains of an earlier abandoned Catholic cemetery just east of Owensboro, near where the Johnson Meat Packing Company, was later located.
- 1862, 5- Pvt. J. A. Kyle, a Confederate soldier, died while being transported by boat to a prison camp and his body was set ashore in Owensboro in a box marked "Dead Rebel", with the box was left his name and address in Louisiana. A fund was raised to give him a decent burial. Though among strangers, his funeral was attended by over 1,000.
- 1862, 9-20 Battle of Panther Creek is fought at Sutherland Hill. It was the only battle in Daviess County during the Civil War. A Kentucky Historical Highway marker near the site of the former Sutherland School reads: Sept. 19, 1862, Confederate force occupied Owensboro. USA troops at old Fairground refused demand for surrender. Skirmish followed. Union soldier swam Ohio River to summon help from Indiana Legion. CSA retired to here. Home Guards from Indiana crossed river and attacked next day. CSA retreated with 36 killed, 70 wounded. USA loss, 3 killed and 35 wounded.
- 1863, 9-20 Maj. Rice E. Graves (1838-1863), of Daviess County, major in the 1st KY Brigade

of the Confederate army is killed in Battle of Chickamauga, GA. Daviess County's group of Confederate veterans was named in his honor and a picture of him formerly hung in the Daviess County Courthouse.

- 1864, 3-5 Algernon Sidney Thruston died in Daviess County. He served as a colonel in the Texas war for independence and later as a member of President Sam Houston's cabinet in the Lone Star state. His nephew died at the Alamo in March 1836. He came to Daviess County in 1854 and settled in the neighborhood that was later named in his honor. In 1989 a Kentucky Historical Highway marker was dedicated in his honor in Thruston.
- 1864, 7-22 Two Daviess County Confederate soldiers, Charles W. Thompson & Pierman Powell, were executed in Henderson in retaliation for Rebel raids. Both were buried at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church Cemetery in western Daviess County.
- 1865, 1-4 Daviess County Courthouse burned by Confederate guerillas under the command of Capt. Bill Davison (1839-1865), of Hawesville. The county's third courthouse, it had been erected during 1858-9. A Kentucky Historical Highway marker on the Courthouse square commemorates the event.
- 1865, 1-31 George H. Yeaman (1829-1908) cast a key vote for the 13th Amendment, which outlawed slavery. A resident of Owensboro, he was serving his second term representing the 2nd Kentucky District in the US House of Representatives. A strong opponent to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation he had earlier opposed the amendment. His reversal was one of courage because he had predicted it was one of political suicide in his district. In 1865 he was defeated for reelection. On 26 August 1865 he was appointed Minister to Denmark by President Johnson.
- 1866, 2-21 First chapter of "William Smither or Bill Smothers: Early Reminiscences of Owensboro", by Thomas Clay McCreery (1816-1890), is published in the newspaper, Owensboro Monitor. The serial was continued in the following nine issues. In 1867 it was printed in booklet form. McCreery served in the US Senate 1868-1871 & 1873-1879. His home was located on the hill overlooking Frederica Street, where the Longfellow School was later located; the former site of the Daviess County Public Library was on his former homestead and the adjoining street was named McCreery Avenue in his honor.
- 1866, 2-16 Owensboro was chartered as a city by the Kentucky Legislature. On 2 April 1866 E. S. Ayres was elected the first mayor of the city.
- 1867, 4-5 Whitesville, Daviess County's 2nd largest city, was incorporated. It was named for Dr. William Lee White, an early settler there. The town had been laid out in 1844. It had previously been called "Cross Roads".
- 1868 Elmwood Cemetery is opened on 40-acres purchased by the Rural Hill Company on the Old Hartford Road. The cemetery then a mile southeast of Owensboro was christened Elmwood on 2 April 1869. Some of the burials at Owensboro's older cemetery, the Rural Hill Cemetery, between Triplett, Center, 4th & 6th Streets, were moved to the new cemetery but many were not. On 27 February 1873 the city

of Owensboro purchased two acres adjoining Elmwood for a pauper cemetery later referred to as the Owensboro Cemetery.

- 1869, 5-3 Construction on the first railroad in the county, the Owensboro & Russellville Railroad, is commenced. In the summer of 1872 it reached the Elizabethtown & Paducah Railroad, where Central City is now.
- 1870, 7-12 John J. Given, corporal in US Cavalry, is killed by Kiowa Indian war party at the Battle of the Little Wichita River, Texas. For bravery in action he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. He is one of three Daviess County soldiers to receive the nation's highest military decoration.
- 1871, 5-17 Col. Charles Stewart Todd died while on a visit to Baton Rouge, LA. He was chief of staff for Gen. Harrison in the War of 1812, served as Kentucky Secretary of State, representative in Kentucky Legislature, consul to Columbia and minister to Russia. In 1840 he wrote a book on Gen. William Henry Harrison. He was buried at Elmwood Cemetery, beside his wife, Letitia Shelby Todd, daughter of Isaac Shelby, the first governor of Kentucky.
- 1874, 8-14 Mount St. Joseph Academy is founded as a boarding school. Kentucky Historical Highway marker reads: Mount Saint Joseph Motherhouse and Academy, the first motherhouse for Sisters in western Kentucky, the oldest operating girls' academy in Daviess County, founded August 14, 1874, by Rev. Paul Joseph Volk under auspices of Bishop George McCloskey of Louisville. Mother Aloysius Willett of Union County elected first Superior of the autonomous Ursuline house in 1912.
- 1874, 10-5 Edward Rumsey Wing died in Quito, Ecuador. A resident of Owensboro he served as an aide to Gen. James S. Jackson in the Union Army during the Civil War. In 1870 he was appointed Minister to Ecuador; he was then 26 and the youngest to be appointed as a Minister of the US to a foreign government. His body was returned to Owensboro and interred at Elmwood Cemetery
- 1876, 6- Book, An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, Ky.: Carefully Compiled from Personal Examinations and Surveys, published by Leo McDonough & Co. It was the first book compiled about the county. It contained maps of county and each of its precincts, showing property owners, post-offices, roads, railroads, churches, school-houses, a history of the county, engravings of several noted residences, biographies of 55 residents, and a list of patrons of the work, showing their residences, post office, occupation, nativity, and when they came to the county. A few of the book's subscribers were dissatisfied over the quality of the work claiming it had many inaccuracies and filed a suit against the company but it was ruled the company had fulfilled its contract.
- 1876, 12-21 Fielding Bradford Meek, a noted geologist, paleontologist and illustrator, died in Washington, DC. During 1838-1852 he resided in Owensboro. Upon moving to Washington in 1858 he joined the staff of the Smithsonian, where he was made 'Resident Collaborator in Paleontology', a position he held until his death. The Washington Union referred to him as "the greatest paleontologist of this country".

- 1878, 7-28 A phone call was received from Evansville, IN at the office of J. W. Porter, telegraph operator, in Owensboro. It was the first successful test of the telephone in the county. It was two years after Alexander Graham Bell was awarded the first patent for the telephone. On 29 January 1880 the Owensboro Telephone Exchange was incorporated bringing local service.
- 1879, 10-20 Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), famous suffragette, gave a lecture in Owensboro at Hall's Opera House at the northeast corner of St. Ann & Third. She visited Owensboro again on 14 January 1895 and spoke on women's rights in the circuit courtroom at the Daviess County Courthouse. Two days later a woman's suffrage society was organized here. Miss Anthony was acclaimed for her pioneer contribution to women's rights.
- 1879, 10-23 The county got its first view of "the greatest invention of the age", the electric light, when W. W. Cole's Circus gave an exhibition in a large pavilion in Owensboro. The Owensboro Messenger reported that 4,000 were in attendance. By 1882 electric lights began to be used in the county.
- 1881 Pictorial lithography, "A Bird's Eye View of Owensboro, Ky., 1881", is published by J. J. Stoner, Madison, WI. A copy hangs in the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library.
- 1882, 7-17 Thomas Cruse (1857-1943), 2nd lieutenant US Cavalry, for actions against hostile Indians on this date at Big Dry Fork, AZ he received the Congressional Medal of Honor. He is one of three Daviess County soldiers to receive the nation's highest military decoration. He served 40 years in the Army and retired with the rank of Brigadier General. His autobiography, Apache Days and After, can be found at the Daviess County Public Library.
- 1883, 4-2 Decision in suit of Edward Claybrook & other blacks against the city of Owensboro over the unequal distribution of tax funding between black & white schools was issued. The Federal District Court ruled that the Kentucky laws allowing school taxes from white citizens to be used only for whites while black schools were supported only by taxes from blacks was in direct violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The case impacted the dual education system throughout Kentucky. As a result of this case, the black schools were improved rapidly over what they had been. Later in 1883 Western School was opened on West 3rd Street in Owensboro and continued as the county school for blacks until the desegregation of schools in 1962. Edward Claybrook (c1821-1896) in 2001 was elected to the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame.
- 1883, 5- The book, History of Daviess County, Kentucky, is published by the Inter-State Publishing Co. of Chicago. The Owensboro Messenger newspaper printed several scathing and negative reviews of the volume.

- 1883, 5-5 Josiah Henson died in Dresden, Canada. During 1825-1829 he was a slave on the Amos Riley plantation near Yelvington in Daviess County. He escaped to Canada where he founded a settlement for other fugitive slaves and worked as an abolitionist. His book, The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself (1849), was one of the slave narratives that influenced Harriet Beecher Stowe in developing the main character in her classic novel Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852). Her best seller played a major role in bringing on the Civil War and the end of slavery in the United States. Henson & Stowe met in 1849 & 1850 and Stowe devoted a page to his biography in her A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1853.
- 1884, 7-13 Dick May, a Negro, was taken by a mob from the jail and lynched from a tree near the southeast corner of the courthouse. He was reported to be the third man hanged by a mob in the courthouse yard. He was accused of attacking the 17-year old daughter of Sod Kelly on 4 July 1884. Jailer William J. Lucas bravely tried to protect his prisoner and was shot and died about two hours later from his wound.
- 1884, 8-4 Mildred Summers Lucas was elected Daviess County Jailer. On 13 July 1884 her husband, William J. Lucas, Daviess County Jailer was shot to death while trying to protect a prisoner. She was appointed to fill his unexpired term and in the following general election was elected to the position. Her election was contested and in December 1885 the Court of Appeals ruled that under the state constitution of that day she was ineligible to hold the office. She was the first woman in Kentucky to be elected county jailer and the first to hold a publicly elected office in Daviess County.
- 1886, 4-6 The Owensboro & Cannelton Ohio River packet, Mountain Boy, capsized in a gale at the Owensboro wharf and three are drowned.
- 1886, 5-24 Robert Hayes Gore was born in Knottsville. He was a newspaper editor-owner and capitalist, who built a financial empire. In 1933 he served as national finance chairman for President Franklin D. Roosevelt and for six months as the Governor of Puerto Rico. He died in 1972.
- 1887, 2-16 The Owensboro City Railroad Company began operating mule driven routes in the city. On 3 June 1893 electric streetcars began operating. On 14 April 1934 the Owensboro Rapid Transit was replaced by a bus service.
- 1887, 7- Book, Ben Hardin: His Times and Contemporaries, is published by Judge Lucius P. Little (1838-1919), of Owensboro.
- 1888, 3-1 Owensboro Wagon Company was incorporated. On 20 February 1888 a group of investors purchased the Owensboro Wagon Manufacturing Company. The top line of wagons made by the new company was named the "Owensboro Wagon". It became one of the most famous products ever made in the county. It was widely used throughout rural America. At its peak the company manufactured

30,000 wagons a year and was one of the county's largest employers.

- 1889, 12-19 Dock Jones, a Negro, was taken by a mob from the jail and lynched from a tree in the yard of the courthouse. The previous day he shot barber, John Westerfield, who died about two hours later. Westerfield reportedly ran him out of his barbershop for being drunk. Newspapers at the time reported that since the Civil War five Negroes have been lynched in the Daviess Courthouse yard, two for murder & three for crimes against women.
- 1890, 3-27 A system of storms wrecked destruction in Western Kentucky. What was described as a cyclone struck the West Louisville neighborhood in western Daviess County causing extensive property damage and four deaths. The twister proceeded eastward across the county, its path running several miles south of Owensboro.
- 1890, 7-7 Tom Powers born in Owensboro. He was the first resident of the county to become a featured player on Broadway and in the Movies. He appeared in over 150 movies from 1911 until his death. He died on 9 November 1955 in Los Angeles County, CA.
- 1892, 3 Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), 26th US president, visited county.
- 1893, 5-4 Opening day of a revival by Rev. Sam P. Jones (1847-1906), a Methodist minister and celebrated evangelist. The crusade was the largest ever in the county. His visit is attributed as leading to a moral upheaval. Soon after his visit a Women's Christian Temperance Union and a Young Men's Christian Association were organized. To get him to come a large building, The Tabernacle, was built. It stood on the northwest corner of the intersection of 11th & Locust Streets. It was a rough wooden building and could hold up to five thousand. He held a second revival here in 1895 and spoke to vast crowds at the Chautauqua in 1903 & 1904.
- 1894, 2-7 Herrwood became the first city to incorporate under the new state constitution. It was immediately adjacent to the western boundary of Owensboro; included the neighborhoods of Stringtown and Dublin and the area that is now English Park. It had its own post office and town council. It was named for Henry C. Herr and W. H. Woodford; Herr Ave. & Woodford Ave. today are the only reminders of the short-lived town. By 1895 Herrwood was in debt and petitioned to be annexed to Owensboro.
- 1894, 2-21 The Investigator's Club was organized at Waveland the home of James Weir. The purposes of the group are to promote literary and scientific research and self-improvement. The club still meets once a month and at each meeting an original paper, scientific discussion and a book review are presented. Over 1,000 original papers have been written but over 300 are now missing. The club's files are stored in the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library; they have been on file at the library since 1917.

- 1894, 4-27 Camden Riley sold Riley's Woods, 23¾ acres, a mile and a half south of Owensboro on the Veach Road to the City of Owensboro for a park. It was acquired largely through the efforts of Mayor James H. Hickman. The park was initially called Hickman Park. On 11 June 1923 the name was changed to Legion Park in honor of the service of the veterans of the local American Legion post during World War I. The park has proved to be a valuable recreational asset.
- 1894, 8-1 Over 6,000 attend opening day of the first Ellendale Fair. Began by William F. Rapier (1869-1923) as a way to promote his family's livestock business it was held on his family's farm, Ellendale, where the Owensboro-Curdsville Road, now Highway 456 intersects the Curdsville-Calhoun Road, now Highway 500. The 1896 fair attracted some 30,000 admissions for the five-day event. The last year of the fair in 1898 was a failure and the company went bankrupt.
- 1896, 9-14 William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925), celebrated politician and orator, as the Democratic nominee for president delivers an address to a crowd of 10,000 in Owensboro, at the Sam Jones Tabernacle on Locust Street just north of the L. & N. Railroad. He also spoke here on 14 June 1895, 3 June 1899 & on 7 August 1903.
- 1896, 12-26 Alfred Holt, a Negro, was taken by a mob from the jail and lynched from a tree in the yard of the courthouse. He was on trial for the murder of policeman, Aquilla White, who was shot to death on 4 November 1896.
- 1897, 10-23 General Evan Shelby Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was organized in Owensboro at the home of Mrs. Rosa Burwell Todd (1848-1911), who was chosen regent of the chapter. It was named after her great-great-grandfather, who was a hero and general in the American Revolution.
- 1898, 5-7 Between 3,000 & 5,000 witnessed the departure at the Texas Railroad depot of a company of 84 local boys that were off for the war effort twelve days after the Spanish American War had been declared.
- 1899, 9-4 A crowd estimated at 8,000 to 10,000 turned out to hear a Labor Day speech by state senator William Goebel, the Democratic nominee for governor, at the fairgrounds at 18th & Triplett. Earlier in the year in February and on June 10 he also gave addresses in the county. On 7 November 1899 he was elected governor of Kentucky. On 30 January 1900 he was mortally wounded by an assassin, the following day he was sworn in as governor and after being in office four days died on 3 February 1900. He is the only governor in the US to be assassinated while in office.
- 1899, 11-30 The new Owensboro city hospital is formally opened to the public. The German-American School Association had purchased property with the view of constructing a hospital. In May 1898 they deeded about 8 acres to the City of Owensboro on the east side of Triplett and south of the L. & N. Railroad and the

following month signed a contract for the construction and operation of the hospital. The hospital was initially managed by a joint board representing and chosen by the school association and the city respectively. For the next 113 years the hospital operated at this site until opening its doors at its new location on the Pleasant Valley Road on 1 June 2013. Almost every family in the county has been touched in some way by the hospital and in recent decades it has become the county's largest employer.

- 1900, 7-23 James H. Parrish, banker and entrepreneur, is the first Daviess County resident to purchase a horseless carriage (automobile). On this date the automobile age was launched in Owensboro when he drove his Waverly through town. The headline in the Owensboro Inquirer read "The Automobile – The First of Its Kind Makes a Sensation in Town."
- 1900, 9-18 Frank James (1843-1915), member of the notorious outlaw gang the James Gang, started the races on the first day of the Owensboro Fair, including the county's first automobile race.
- 1900, 9-21 Confederate monument on the Daviess County Courthouse square is dedicated on the 37th anniversary of the death at Chickamauga of Daviess County's most famous Confederate hero, Major Rice E. Graves. The unveiling of the statue of a Confederate soldier designed by sculptor, George Julian Zolnay (1863-1949), was witnessed by a crowd of between 5,000 & 7,000.
- 1900, 11-21 Jean Raphael Fuqua, of Owensboro, married J. C. W. Beckham, the 35th Governor of Kentucky, 1900-1907, at the First Presbyterian Church in Owensboro, now the site of the Brescia University Science Building.
- 1901, 12-18 The Seven Hills Chautauqua Company was incorporated. The group purchased 30 acres, embraced in what is now Chautauqua Park, and made plans to hold annual Chautauqua assemblies on the grounds. Thousands attended the grand opening of the park on 3 July 1902. In the following decade the Chautauqua met with great success, some of the assemblies hosted crowds of 8 to 10 thousand. Many nationally known figures spoke there including, William Jennings Bryan, Samuel Gompers & Rev. Sam P. Jones. The last annual Chautauqua program was held at Chautauqua Park during 25-30 June 1932.
- 1902, 4-1 Free rural mail delivery begins in Daviess County. The Owensboro Messenger commented: "This means much for the people along the routes." Home delivery of mail in Owensboro had begun on 7 July 1890.
- 1902, 7-17 Josh Anderson was taken from the jail and lynched by a mob. He had shot to death his wife, Millie, on 8 July 1902. He was hanged from the city scales on the south side of the courthouse lawn. He was the only white to have been lynched by a mob in the county; prior to this one white had been legally executed by hanging in 1854.

- 1903, 9-21 The 2nd annual Kentucky State Fair opened in Owensboro. It was the only time it was held here. It ran from September 21 to September 26 and drew 23,580 people but was considered a failure because it lost \$10,584. In 1907 Louisville was chosen as the permanent home of the Fair.
- 1903, 8-11 Samuel Gompers (1850-1924), president of the American Federation of Labor, delivered an address on organized labor to a crowd of about 3,000 at the Chautauqua auditorium at Chautauqua Park.
- 1904, 1-25 The Vaudeville act, The Four Cohans, perform at the Temple Theatre. The act included, George M. Cohan (1878-1942), legendary American entertainer, playwright, composer, lyricist, actor, singer, dancer and producer. His life and music were depicted in the 1942 Academy Award winning film, Yankee Doodle Dandy. The Temple Theatre was located where the Owensboro Area Museum of Science & History in downtown Owensboro is now located.
- 1905, 2-17 Roy Green, a Negro, was executed by hanging in Owensboro. He killed James Coomes on 31 July 1904 at the Daviess County Fairgrounds by driving a stake into his heart.
- 1905, 7-7 Robert S. Mathley, white, was executed by hanging in Owensboro. He was convicted of the murder of his lover, Emma Watkins, & James Gregson, who he shot on 26 June 1904.
- 1906, 2-19 Greenwood Cemetery is incorporated. Located at 1821 Leitchfield Road in Owensboro the cemetery for the next 70 years became the burial ground for over 2,300 members of the Black community.
- 1906, 9-16 New Union Station Railroad Depot, that could be utilized by all of the railroads, serving Owensboro, opens. When the last passenger train rolled out of the station on 16 November 1958 the once bustling depot was no longer needed. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places on 1 August 1979.
- 1906 John P. Walker opened the first moving picture theatre, the Nickelodeon, at 219 West Second Street. The Rahjah's Casket was said to be the first film.
- 1908, 7-31 James H. Parrish (1855-1928), prominent Owensboro businessman is charged with embezzlement and wrecking the Owensboro Savings Bank & Trust Company. He was president of the bank and of the Homestead Land Company and developer of the Seven Hills suburb. On 9 April 1909 he was sentenced to serve five years in the penitentiary and on 4 April 1912 was paroled.
- 1908, 9-29 Samuel Walter Anderson (1837-1923) opened his new store, S. W. Anderson's Department Store, in Owensboro in the building that is now the Owensboro Area Museum of Science & History at the southwest corner of Main & Daviess. Since

1889 he had operated a dry goods store in downtown Owensboro at two prior locations. In a few years Anderson's would be known as "Western Kentucky's Leading Department Store". The store closed its doors in 1990.

- 1909, 4-29 Yewell Tompkins (1909-1994) was born in Owensboro to Samuel W. & Martine (Yewell) Tompkins. Under the stage name of Tom Ewell he became a noted stage, movie and TV actor. He co-starred with Marilyn Monroe in the classic movie, The Seven-Year Itch, in 1955 and appeared in the TV show, Baretta.
- 1911, 7-4 Charles Foster Willard (1883-1977), brought the first aero plane to Owensboro. More than 10,000 watched at the Daviess County Fairgrounds as he soared to 600 feet in the Curtiss biplane, circled overhead and plunged to 75 feet in a thrilling aero display. Willard, recognized as the first barnstormer, began piloting the Golden Flyer in 1909 and was the fourth American to acquire an aviator's license.
- 1912, 4-26 Formal opening of the Carnegie Public Library at 9th & Frederica Streets is held. The building had been ready for occupancy in April 1911 but its opening was held up when the City balked on its appropriation. On 11 May 1966 the name of the library was changed to the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library and in 1968 was relocated to 450 Griffith Ave.
- 1915, 8- George Washington Carver (c1864-1943), famed scientist, botanist, educator & inventor, is a speaker at the 9th annual Negro Chautauqua in Owensboro.
- 1915, 9-21 A crowd of about 5,000 attend the Daviess County Centennial celebration held at the Courthouse yard.
- 1916, 11-20 John Wesley Howard was first burial at Owensboro's new Rose Hill Cemetery.
- 1917, 11-29 Owensboro High School won its first Kentucky football state championship, defeating Henderson 124-0. Three of the Owensboro stars, Terry Snowday, Tom Bartlett and Porter 'Hump' Tanner went on to play for Centre College and had key roles in Centre's upset victory over No. 1-ranked Harvard on 29 October 1921. Tanner in 1999 was one of 38 inducted in the Owensboro-Daviess County Tourist Commission's Hall of Fame.
- 1918, 5-18 James L. Yates was the first from Daviess County to be killed in action in World War I. He is buried at the Somme American Cemetery in Bony, France. Seventy-one from the county were reported to have died in the military service during the war. On 5 January 1933 the American Legion's Daviess Post No. 9 was renamed the James L. Yates Post No. 9 in his honor.
- 1918, 9- The Spanish Flu epidemic arrived in Daviess County. The 3 January 1919 issue of the Owensboro Messenger (p1) reported that from 1 September 1918 to 1 January 1919 there were 189 deaths in the county from influenza (117) and pneumonia (17); of these 97 were under the age of twenty.

- 1920, 8-17 Ray Chapman (1891-1920), shortstop for the Cleveland Indians professional baseball team, was hit in the head in a game played in New York City on 16 August 1920 by a pitch thrown by Yankee's pitcher Carl Mays and died the next day. He is the only player to have died as the result of injuries suffered during a major league game. A native of Ohio County, KY he had resided and played ball in Owensboro and frequently visited relatives here.
- 1920, 10-2 Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945), 32nd US president, during an unsuccessful bid for the US vice-presidency, gave an address at the Grand Theatre, 101 St. Ann Street in Owensboro, now the site of the American Legion building. On 27 April 1943 while on a cross-country journey his train passed through Owensboro but did not stop.
- 1923, 3-10 West Louisville High School girls basketball team wins state championship.
- 1924, 3-28 Students move to the new Owensboro High School building at 1800 Frederica Street. The formal grand opening was held on the following Friday, April 4th. Construction had begun on 11 September 1922. The school had been located at the southwest corner of 9th & Frederica since it was established on 10 October 1892.
- 1924, 7-6 Eugene Oberst (1901-1991) won the bronze medal in the javelin event at the 1924 Paris Olympics. He was the first from the county to participate in the Olympics and the first American to win a medal for throwing the javelin.
- 1926, 2-14 Moneta J. Sleet, Jr. (1926-1996) was born in Owensboro. He worked for Jet and Ebony magazines as photojournalist for 41 years. His photos documented the African American struggle for independence and the American civil rights movement. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for photo of Coretta Scott King at funeral of Martin Luther King.
- 1927, 2-14 Frank P. Sheehan is killed in crash of his airplane, the Kentucky Cardinal, on Frederica Street just south of 9th Street and the Carnegie Public Library. A few months before he had started the Kentucky Aircraft Company near Owensboro for the manufacture of his own planes that he had designed. His death terminated his company's enterprise and ended dream of making Owensboro an airplane manufacturing center. The site of his plant on Daniels Lane near the L & N Railroad in 1934 was developed into a municipal airport that was dedicated on June 26 of that year.
- 1928, 9-12 Ohio River Lock & Dam 46 at Owensboro is opened and the steamer Shawnee is the first boat to pass through; construction had begun on 29 August 1923. Built to improve navigation on the Ohio River, it was located at the foot of Hanning Lane, where English Park is now. With the construction of newer dams along the river it became obsolete and on 28 August 1975 the demolition by dynamiting of the dam began.

- 1928, 3-10 Beulah Sheriff Annan (1899-1928), a Daviess County native, died in Chicago, IL. In 1924 she was acquitted in a sensational trial for the murder of a young man in her Chicago apartment. She was referred to as “the woman too pretty to hang”. She was the basis of the character Roxie Hart in Maurine Dallas Watkins' play Chicago (1926), which in turn inspired the 1975 Broadway musical and its Oscar-winning 2002 film adaptation. She was returned to Daviess County and buried at the Mount Pleasant Cumberland Presbyterian Church on Kentucky 81.
- 1929, 1-2 Owensboro’s two newspapers, Messenger and Inquirer, are united under one ownership. Except for the Sunday edition the two papers, however, continued to publish under their former names, the Messenger in the morning and the Inquirer in the evening until they were consolidated under one banner Messenger & Inquirer beginning on 5 December 1954.
- 1929, 1-9 Daviess County’s Bonnie & Clyde, Carl & Grace Browder, rob the West Louisville Bank. Daviess County Deputy Sheriff, Robert Weikel, tracked the couple to Atlanta, GA, where he arrested them. Carl was sentenced to 18 years in prison and on 15 June 1931 attacked a guard at the Eddyville prison and was shot to death; he was buried at Rose Hill Cemetery in Owensboro. Grace was sentenced to 20 years and was paroled from prison in 1935.
- 1930 First paved highway in Daviess County, 8.3 miles of Highway 60 East from Owensboro to the Hancock County line, is completed.
- 1931, 10-1 Logan Feland (1869-1936), of the Marine Corps, was promoted to the rank of Major General. Former resident of Owensboro, where he began a 35 year military career as a leader of a local military unit that left for service in the Spanish American War. He served under Gen. Pershing in World War I. Received numerous military decorations and retired in 1933. During World War II a troop transport in the Pacific theatre was named in his honor.
- 1934 Lawrence Bader, Jr. opened the first indoor barbecue restaurant in the county. Called the “Akin Inn”, its first location was at the corner of Main & Woodford in Owensboro. Bader is known as the inventor of chopped mutton. In 1918 Ollie Foreman, had started a barbecue carryout stand at 25th & Frederica. Today Owensboro is recognized as one of the barbecue capitals of the world.
- 1936, 8-14 Rainey Bethea is executed by hanging. It made national headlines. A crowd estimated as high as 20,000 witnessed the spectacle between the former sites of the Daviess County Jail and Executive Inn in Owensboro. It is recognized as the Last Public Execution in the US. Bethea had robbed and choked to death Mrs. Elza Edwards on 7 June 1936.
- 1937, 1-29 The Ohio River on this date during the great flood of 1937 crested at 54.85 feet. In downtown Owensboro flood waters stretched to Third Street. Property damage

and hardships were far greater out in the county. The previous record flood mark was 48.9 feet in 1913.

- 1937, 5-20 Miller's Field, home of the Owensboro Oilers, minor league baseball team, is dedicated. A crowd of 3,000 witnessed the team's 4-3 victory over Union City, TN. The stadium was at the intersection of 18th & Triplett, where Gabe's shopping center is now. It was named in honor of Julius C. Miller, an Owensboro oil operator, who was the driving force behind bringing the Oilers to Owensboro and the construction of their home field. Several major league baseball teams played exhibition games here, one between the world champion Yankees & the Brooklyn Dodgers was witnessed by 7,500 in 1940. Several future major leaguers, including Tony Kubek & Chuck Tanner, played for the Oilers. The team folded at the end of the 1955 season and the last game was played there on 28 August 1955 and one month later the park was torn down.
- 1937, 6-15 The Green River Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation was organized. In May 1938 it began providing electricity to farms in Daviess County. It brought a major transformation in rural life.
- 1937, 12-9 Owensboro Roman Catholic Diocese was formed out of the Louisville Diocese. On 16 December 1937 Rev. Francis R. Cotton was appointed bishop and on 18 January 1938 St. Stephen's was selected as the cathedral of the new diocese.
- 1938, 2-7 Radio Station WOMI signed on the air at 7 p.m.; it was the 7th radio station in Kentucky. The broadcast was from the dining room of Hotel Owensboro. Mrs. Hugh O. Potter, wife of the station's manager, was the first voice heard in its initial broadcast; she was one of the first women broadcasters in the country. There had been one previous radio broadcast in the county. During the 1937 Flood an emergency broadcast was transmitted on AM radio station W9UKD for four days from January 22 to January 26.
- 1940, 6-12 The Glover H. Cary Bridge was opened. The first day it was open only to pedestrians and between 2,000 & 3,000 walked across and inspected it. The following day at 8 a.m. it was opened to vehicular traffic. Dr. D. M. Griffith was the first to pay the toll and drive across. It was formally dedicated on 30 July 1940. On 18 August 1954 the bridge became toll free and Dr. D. M. Griffith the first to pay the toll was also the last to pay.
- 1942 Ellen Hart Smith (1910-1985), publishes book, Charles Carroll of Carrollton. She also wrote a series of seven fiction-mystery novels under the pen name of Louisa Revell and at least one other under the name of John David Hughes. She was a literary critic & book reviewer for the New York Herald-Tribune and New Yorker Magazine. She served as chairman of the board of directors of the Daviess County Public Library, 1963-1969, and was instrumental in getting a new library constructed in 1968.

- 1943 Book, History of Daviess-McLean Baptist Association in Kentucky, 1844-1943, is published by Rev. Wendell H. Rone (1913-2003). The Kentucky Room of the Daviess County Public Library has 24 other church histories written by Rev. Rone as well as his books, An Historical Atlas of Kentucky and Her Counties (1965) and Biography of Rev. Alfred Taylor (1983).
- 1943, 10-11 Dudley Walker ‘Mush’ Morton (1907-1943), Owensboro native, commander of the submarine USS Wahoo, goes down with his ship near the Japanese island of Hokkaido. The Wahoo sank at least 19 Japanese ships, more than any other submarine. Several movies and books have been based on the exploits of the Wahoo and Morton.
- 1944, 6-6 Lt. John Martin Spalding (1914-1959) was in the Normandy landing on D-Day. For “extraordinary heroism above and beyond the call of duty” in the battle the following month he became the first Owensboroan to receive the Distinguished Service Cross in World War II. After returning to Daviess County he was elected to serve two consecutive terms in the Kentucky House of Representatives.
- 1944, 10- Last one-room school house in Daviess County, Friendly Grove, four miles from Knottsville, closes. Nine years before there were 65 one-room schools that have since been merged with other community schools.
- 1945, 1-2 Roy Burlew (1883-1958) sold the Ken-Rad Tube & Lamp Corporation to the General Electric Company. Prior to the sale Burlew had made the company the largest employer in the county at about 2,500. Its success helped the county weather the Depression. Products produced by the company, light-bulbs and radio tubes, carried the name of Owensboro into businesses and homes throughout the nation. Ken-Rad light bulbs illuminated the first night game in major league baseball history on 24 May 1935 at Cincinnati’s Crosley Field.
- 1946 William Foster Hayes (1868-1964), lawyer & historian, publishes book, Sixty Years of Owensboro. It traces the city in the six decades that have transpired since the 1883 History of Daviess County, Kentucky.
- 1947, 11-27 WVJS Radio station began broadcasting. The county now had two radio stations.
- 1947, 2-5 Darrell Waltrip was born in Owensboro. He is a three time NASCAR Champion, won the Daytona 500 in 2001 & 2003 and is tied for 3rd place on career NASCAR winners list with 84. In 2012 he was elected to the NASCAR Hall of Fame.
- 1948, 3-1 Our Lady of Mercy Hospital opens on Ford Avenue. It was dedicated on 22 February 1948. Lena Fogle, 76, was the first patient admitted. It was merged with the Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital in 1995 and was closed in 1996. The main building of the Mercy Hospital complex was razed in 1997.
- 1948, 9-30 Harry S. Truman (1884-1972), 33rd US president, made a whistle stop campaign

speech to a crowd of 15,000 at the Union Station train depot in Owensboro. He spoke from a platform on the back of the train near the Allen Street railroad crossing. He was the first president to visit the county while in office.

- 1948, 12- After 43 years in the circus business Zach Terrell (1879-1954) retired and sold the famous Cole Brothers Circus. Under him it was rebuilt into a circus equal in magnitude to Ringling Bros., the largest American circus of the era. A native of Daviess County, he retired to his farm on the Leitchfield Road, near Owensboro, where Menards is now located. He was inducted into the International Circus Hall of Fame in 1991. His wife, Estrella Nelson, was a member of a famous circus family of acrobats and of the Circus Hall of Fame.
- 1949, 2-4 The Sportscenter was opened with a high school basketball game between Henderson (59) & Owensboro Technical High (32). The following night the facility was officially dedicated with a basketball game between the University of Kentucky (62) & Bradley University (52). It was named the Memorial Recreational Center in honor of those who died during World War II and is located on grounds of the west half of the original Moreland Park lands. Countless sporting, school, religious, political and entertainment events have been held there. Who's who of the entertainment world have performed there; including Bob Hope, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Ray Charles, Louis Armstrong, Victor Borge, Liberace, Andy Williams and the Harlem Globetrotters.
- 1949, 3-19 Owensboro High School won its first Kentucky Basketball championship. Their star, Cliff Hagan, scored a record 41 points. He went on to be a two-time All-American at University of Kentucky, winning a national title in 1951 and played 10 years in the NBA with the St. Louis Hawks, winning the league championship in 1958.
- 1950, 9-11 Brescia College opened at 120 West 7th Street. It had developed from the Mount St. Joseph Junior College, founded by the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph in 1925. In 1998 the school's status was raised and it became Brescia University.
- 1951, 3-1 A crowd of 3,500 attended the inauguration of national air service at the Owensboro-Daviess County Airport. Service was initially provided by Eastern Airlines and in 1955 a second carrier, Ozark Airlines, was added. Two local private flying services had been utilizing the airport since its completion on 19 November 1949.
- 1951, 6-8 Florence Agnes Henderson, Broadway, Film & Television star, graduated from St. Frances High School at Fifth & Allen in Owensboro. She was born on 14 February 1934 at Dale, IN; most of her nine siblings, however, were born in Daviess County and she has many relatives here. Shortly after graduating she went to New York to attend the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and by 1952 was starring on Broadway. She became a household presence when she starred on TV's "The Brady Bunch" during 1969-1974

- 1951, 9-11 Owensboro Catholic High School at 1524 Parrish Avenue was dedicated. The school replaced the city's oldest high school, St. Francis Academy, at 505 Allen Street. St. Francis had been established in 1849 by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth and the building was razed in 1963.
- 1951, 9-25 After its removal from Winchester to Owensboro Kentucky Wesleyan College is opened. In 1954 the college was relocated from its downtown location to their 70-acre campus at 3000 Frederica Street.
- 1952, 9-22 Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969), 34th US president, while campaigning for the presidency made a 12-minute whistle stop speech to a crowd of 8,000 at the Union Station train depot in Owensboro.
- 1955, 3-28 Ronald Reagan (1911-2004), 40th US president, visited the county. Movie star and host of the General Electric Theatre TV show spent a day touring the General Electric Company's plant on 9th Street and greeting many of the nearly 5,000 employees.
- 1955, 8-5 The Kentucky premiere of the movie The Kentuckian, starring Burt Lancaster, was held at the Malco Theatre, later the location of Goldie's Opryhouse and the Theatre Workshop of Owensboro. During the summer and fall of 1954 scenes for the movie were filmed in the Owensboro area. Many local residents were featured as extras in the film.
- 1955, 8-29 Owensboro Board of Education adopted its first policy on integrating city schools, "Resolution on Integration". Students at Western High School were permitted to attend classes at Owensboro High School that were not offered at their school. Owensboro's segregated school system ended in 1962 with the closing of Western High School.
- 1956, 3-2 James C. Ellis (1873-1956), Owensboro capitalist, dies. He owned some 40,000 acres and was one of the wealthiest men the county has ever produced. He made millions in extensive enterprises including oil, farming, horse breeding, coal mining and banking. He was owner of the Ellis Park racing track at Henderson. More than 800 attended his services at the Owensboro Funeral Home.
- 1956, 10-4 John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), 35th US president, in behalf of the Adlai Stevenson presidential campaign addressed a Democratic dinner at the Rudd Hotel in Owensboro and made a speech in the Circuit Courtroom of the Daviess County Courthouse.
- 1956, 10-9 The Daviess County Poor Farm was closed. The farm's main building was where the clubhouse of the Windridge Country Club is now. On 10 December 1848 the county purchased 170 acres on Millers Mill Road to house the county's indigent. In 1893 the county began to bury paupers on the property. Prior to this the county

had buried paupers at least two other locations; one near Ensor and between 1876-1893 the county had a pauper cemetery along where Kelly Lane in the Trinity Hills subdivision in Owensboro is now. The Poor Farm property on 21 January 1958 was sold to the Windridge Country Club. The unmarked graves of those buried there still lie beneath the 10th and 17th tees of the golf course.

- 1958, 10-26 Daviess County High School is dedicated at its new location on Highway 231. It was moved from its former location on East 4th Street, its home since 1931, and merged with high schools that had been at Utica, West Louisville & Whitesville.
- 1960, 10-20 Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973), 36th US president, in his successful campaign for the US vice-presidency spoke to a crowd of more than 5,000 at the Owensboro Sportscenter.
- 1961, 11-7 Louise Gasser Kirtley (1903-1972) was elected to represent the county in the Kentucky House of Representatives. She was the first woman in Daviess County to be admitted to the bar association, the first elected to public office (other than school board) without succeeding her husband, the first female Kentucky State Representative and first female Kentucky Bar Association President. She was re-elected to a second term in 1963.
- 1963, 4-5 Kentucky Wesleyan College signed their first Black basketball player, Charles Taylor, a former Owensboro High School star. Along with Western State College they were the first to break the color barrier in college athletics in Kentucky.
- 1963, 6-9 John (Johnny) Christopher Depp, box office star of TV and Movies, was born at Our Lady of Mercy Hospital in Owensboro. His parents, John Christopher & Betty Sue Depp, were at the time residing at 518 Stockton Drive in Owensboro.
- 1963, 11-15 Gabe Fiorella (1900-1977) opens Gabe's Tower Motor Inn at 1926 Triplett Street on the site of the former Miller's Field baseball stadium. The 12-floor cylindrical motel was at the time the tallest building outside of Louisville. The life of Fiorella was one of rags to riches. He began in business by operating a lunch cart on the streets of Owensboro and in 1922 opened his first restaurant. On 19 March 1959 he relocated his restaurant to the same block that he built his motel.
- 1964, 9-5 The new Daviess County Courthouse is dedicated. The moving of records to the new building began on 16 March 1964 and the first court was held there on the March 24th. In April 1964 demolition of the old courthouse, on the same square, was begun; it had served the county since 6 July 1868.
- 1965, 4-19 Charles Francis Millay, 23, is killed when his helicopter is shot down over Binh Dinh, Vietnam. He was Daviess County's first casualty in the Vietnam War.
- 1965, 4-29 US Air Force pilot, Colonel Charles E. Shelton, is shot down while flying a secret reconnaissance mission over Laos. He was captured by communist forces. For

the next 29 years he was listed as a Prisoner of War; the last American from the Vietnam War to be classified as a POW. On 21 September 1994 he was declared officially killed in action. The Col. Charles E. Shelton Freedom Memorial in Owensboro's Smothers Park was dedicated On 18 September 1999.

- 1966, 3-11 Kentucky Wesleyan College won its first Division II basketball championship by defeating Southern Illinois University, 54-51, at Roberts Stadium in Evansville. KWC also repeated as champions in 1968, 1969, 1973, 1987, 1990, 1999 & 2001.
- 1966, 3-20 "Jughandle" Johnny Morrison (1895-1966), of Owensboro, dies. He was a former professional baseball player. He was a right-handed pitcher over parts of ten seasons (1920–1927, 1929–1930) with the Pittsburgh Pirates and Brooklyn Robins. For his career, he compiled a major league 103-80 record. His best season in 1923 he went 25-13. When the Pirates won the World Series in 1925 he pitched in three games. In 1999 he was inducted in the Owensboro-Daviess County Tourist Commission's Hall of Fame.
- 1966, 10-8 Owensboro Museum of Science and History opened its doors at 602 Sycamore Street. On 19 January 1969 it reopened at the former Carnegie Library building at 901 Frederica Street. In 1976 moved to a new building at 2829 South Griffith Avenue and in 1995 to their current location at 122 East 2nd Street.
- 1968, 12-1 New Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library opens at 450 Griffith Ave. On 1 January 1996 the name was officially changed to Daviess County Public Library.
- 1968, 12-29 David Paul Nash (1947-1968), of Whitesville, private US Army, was killed in Vietnam War. He smothered the blast of an enemy-thrown grenade with his body, sacrificing his life to protect his fellow soldiers. For his actions he received the Congressional Medal of Honor. He is one of three Daviess County soldiers to receive the nation's highest military decoration.
- 1969, 8-29 Apollo High School is opened. It began as a junior high and in 1972 became the county's fourth high school, serving the western half of Daviess County.
- 1969, 6-15 First hydroplane regatta held in Owensboro. Owensboro resident and hydroplane racer, Bill Sterett (1924-1992), played a pivotal part in bringing the large boats to Owensboro. He won the Gold Cup championship and was a seven-time national champion and one-time world champion. Several of the regattas drew crowds in excess of 30,000. The Owensboro Regatta was discontinued after 1978.
- 1970 The US 60 Bypass (Owensboro Beltline) is completed. Construction began in 1965. In 1971 it was expanded from two lanes to four lanes. It was renamed Wendell H. Ford Expressway on 27 November 1978.
- 1970, 12-18 Audubon Parkway, 23.91-miles, is opened between Owensboro & Henderson. It was Daviess County's first four-lane link to the outside.

- 1971, 12-7 Wendell Hampton Ford inaugurated as 53rd Governor of Kentucky; he was elected on 2 November 1971. He was born in Daviess County on 8 September 1924. In 1974 he was elected to the US Senate and held that office for 24 years. He was the Senate Democrat Majority Whip from 1991 until his retirement in 1999.
- 1972, 12-15 The Green River Parkway, 70.24 miles, is opened, linking Owensboro & Bowling Green. On 15 July 1994 it was renamed the William H. Natcher Parkway.
- 1974 Hugh O. Potter (1905-1986) publishes book, A history of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky. He also compiled several historical booklets, Daviess County sesquicentennial historical factbook, 1815-1965: 150 years of progress (1965), A History of Settle Memorial Methodist Church, 1836-1966 (1967) and In the beginning --- historical facts about the earliest days of present Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky (1968).
- 1977, 10-14 Bob Green's (1911-1991) Executive Inn Rivermont Hotel is dedicated. It was Western Kentucky's largest hotel and soon after its opening tourism became a leading industry in the county. Nationally known acts regularly performed there before sellout crowds. Large conventions frequently filled the hotel. During the 1980's it became the county's third largest employer. On 9 June 2008 the Big E closed and on 8 November 2009 was imploded.
- 1978, 3-4 Town Square Mall opens on South Frederica Street and traffic is backed up about 25 blocks. The 500,000 square-foot mall soon becomes a major shopping hub for Daviess County and the surrounding area. In 1985 Town Square North, with another 200,000 square feet, was opened.
- 1979, 4-28 First International Barbecue Festival held in downtown Owensboro. Attendance was estimated at between 10,000 & 15,000. The annual event has become the county's largest tourist draw.
- 1984, 8-29 Owensboro Community College is opened and registration exceeds expectations. Classes were first held at the former Longfellow School building and Owensboro High School. In 1986 it became part of the University of Kentucky Community College system. On 11 January 1989 the 2-year college began classes at their new campus at 4800 New Hartford Road.
- 1985, 5-4 Spend A Buck won the Kentucky Derby. The thoroughbred was born in 1982 at Rowe Harper's Irish Hill Farm on KY 405 in Daviess County near Thruston.
- 1985, 11-5 Rev. Richard L. McFarland (1917-2002), Baptist minister and funeral home director, won a seat on the Owensboro City Commission. He was the first black to be elected to an office other than the school board in the county. In 1979 Jean Higgs had been appointed to fill a vacancy on the city school board and in the next election was elected to the post.

- 1988, 1- Lee & Aloma Dew publish book, Owensboro, the city on the Yellow Banks: a history of Owensboro, Kentucky. Prof. Lee Dew also served as editor for the Daviess County Historical Society Quarterly, 1983-1996.
- 1988, 9-27 George H. W. Bush (1924-), 41st US president, in his campaign for the presidency spoke to over 5,000 at English Park on the Ohio River. At the time of his visit he was the US vice-president.
- 1988, 6-28 Rex Chapman, Owensboro native, was selected by the Charlotte Hornets in the National Basketball Association draft; he was the 8th overall pick. He was named Mr. Kentucky Basketball as a senior at Apollo High School in 1986 and was a star on the UK basketball team for two seasons. He played 12 seasons in the NBA.
- 1992, 9-12 A gala, headlined by Florence Henderson & John Denver, opens the \$17 million RiverPark Center at First & Daviess Streets. The ribbon cutting is held the next day. The facility, Western Kentucky's first performing arts center, is touted as the key to the redevelopment of the downtown.
- 1994, 1-19 Mercury shrunk to low of 23 below the coldest temperature recorded in the county's history. The old record 21 below was set on 13 February 1899 and tied on 2 February 1951.
- 2000, 1-3 An F3 tornado hits the county; it passed through Owensboro at 4:10 pm. No one was killed but 13 people were injured. Some people were without electricity for a week or more, as temperatures fell below freezing the next day. The tornado caused \$70 million in damage in three local counties. Many monuments in the historic section of Elmwood Cemetery were damaged.
- 2000, 5-3 William J. Clinton (1946-), 42nd US president, while in office he visited the county on a School Reform Tour; he made stops at the Audubon Elementary School and the Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn. After his presidency he was in the county on 16 May 2008 (while campaigning for his wife & presidential candidate, Hillary Rodham Clinton, he spoke in the Jones Gymnasium at Kentucky Wesleyan College) and 6 March 2013 (spoke at the River Park Center at a fundraising event for the Wendell H. Ford Government Research Center).
- 2000, 7-29 George W. Bush (1946-), 43rd US president, in his campaign for the presidency visited the county. He delivered a 25-minute speech to about 2,000 at the Owensboro-Daviess County Regional Airport.
- 2002, 8-16 The William H. Natcher Bridge, near Maceo, is dedicated. It was opened to traffic on the following October 21st.
- 2002, 4-11 The International Bluegrass Music Museum opens in downtown Owensboro.

- 2006, 10-29 Owensboro native Nicky Hayden won the MotoGP world championship. He & his brothers, Roger & Tommy, have put Owensboro on the motorcycle racing map. The brothers in 2013 were inducted into the downtown Owensboro Walk of Fame.
- 2007, 9-9 Grand opening ceremonies are held for the new Daviess County Public Library at 2020 Frederica Street. The library had opened several days earlier on August 21st.
- 2009, 1-27 Ice storm damaged power lines and knocked electricity out at thousands of homes for days, and in many cases, weeks. The storm severely damaged trees and caused thousands of dollars in damage in the county. The lack of electricity, damage to roofs & homes and the freezing temperatures created prolonged hardships for many.
- 2010, 6-9 Christine Johnson Smith (1911-2010) died at her home in Owensboro. During the 1940's she performed at the Metropolitan Opera and on the Broadway stage. In 1945 she starred in the original production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel, which earned her a nomination for a Tony Award.
- 2010, 10-29 The General Electric Company closes its last operation, the GE Motors Plant, in Owensboro. For two decades following World War II their plant on 9th Street, was the largest employer in the county; at its peak in 1966 the company employed more than 6,600. The development of transistors had gradually made GE's vacuum tubes obsolete and in 1987 a group of private investors bought out what was left of the tube products operation and opened MPD Inc.
- 2012, 8-24 Renovated Smothers Park on the riverfront is opened. A three day grand opening drew an estimated 20,000 people downtown.
- 2014, 1-31 Gala opens the new Owensboro Convention Center. The facility overlooking the Ohio River boasts of 92,000 square feet of meeting space. Grand opening events and tours for it and the adjoining Hampton Inn hotel were held the next day.