

Diary of Joseph Thomas

For Years of 1844-1883

Joseph Thomas (1822-1911), of Owensboro, KY, served as Circuit Court Clerk of Daviess County, KY 1862-1868 and 1872. For over forty years he kept a diary. His diary was reproduced in the History of Daviess County, Kentucky (Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, 1883). It appeared in two sections – pages 275-291 (meteorological conditions, 1844-1865) and pages 408-429 (1844-1883, local events). The latter section is reproduced here:

BRIEF MENTION.

Most of the items given under this head are taken from that remarkable diary of Mr. Joseph Thomas, described at the beginning of Chapter XIII. Some of the events here referred to did not transpire in Owensboro, but in the vicinity; and as only a brief mention is made of them, we find it more convenient to collate them all together in a sort of chronological table.

1844.

March 12, at five P. M., the steamers Sultana and Alex. Scott left New Orleans, and arrived at Owensboro the 17th at eleven o'clock, A. M., being out from New Orleans four days, seventeen hours and forty minutes,—the quickest trip ever made to this place. The Scott beat the Sultana to the mouth of the Ohio by one hour. Average speed, eleven miles per hour. The Sultana broke her cam-rod, and ran an hour and a half with one wheel.

May following, the Duke of Orleans came up, beating the Sultana one hour. May 25, military muster in Owensboro. Colonel Butler and Judge Owsley, candidates for Governor, delivered addresses. Heavy thunder-storm to-day also, the lightning striking the court-house and market-house.

Measles prevalent.

June 1, meeting of the Clay Club. Speeches by Devereux, Johnson, Weir and Crow. The S. B. . Montgomery made the trip to Louisville in four days, twenty-three hours and fifty minutes,—the first boat that ever made it under five days.

Aug. 5, election very exciting; a great many drunk; only one or two fights, however. Much sickness during this month. River low. Rats worse than usual in their depredations in town.

September, Dr. Lockhart, above town, died. Sept. 26, Thanksgiving day in Kentucky.

Oct. 8, Wm. Watkins died, after a very severe and protracted illness.

Oct. 2, Whigs raised a flag-pole 120 feet high; a large meeting of Whigs, with music and banners. On the 3d, a great barbecue; addresses were delivered by McHenry, Letcher, Calhoon, and Dixon. Ladies were present, who sung and shouted and waved their handkerchiefs. On the 8th, boys march with lights. Streets dusty.

Dec. 27, Masonic celebration, by marching and ball.

1845.

Feb. 11, P. Triplett's fine barn burned; 12th, Athy's stable burned, with horse. A fire company was immediately afterward organized, and a subscription raised for ladders, cisterns, etc.; but the enterprise soon "fell through."

March, Sultana made the trip to Louisville in four days twenty-one hours and fifty-eight minutes.

April 7, Dr. Conway's house burned.

June 9, C. Riley, Mr. Crow and A. Jones, candidates for Legislature, addressed the people.

No. 20, Thanksgiving.

1846.

Jan. 17, Mr. Olarys house burned.

March 26, Dr. Wm. Morton, Jr., died.

April and May, a deaf and dumb man gave writing lessons in town.

May, exciting news from the Mexican war, and a volunteer, corps of ninety-three foot was formed, with G. W. Triplett for Captain; seventy volunteered in one day; all too late for acceptance, however. McCreery raised a horse company.

June 15, geological lectures.

June 24, celebrations by the Freemasons.

July, several boats passed with volunteers for the Mexican war.

Aug. 5, exciting election; 10, county court and trustee election.

Nov. 24, Dr. Williams died of congestive fever.

December, two new packets—Courier and General Worth—running up Green River. Considerable excitement this month.

On the 17th, three men—Harris, Pugh and Galloway—were tried before a magistrate for the murder of a store-boat keeper, Roberts, on Green River. The latter was dismissed and the other two were committed for further trial.

On the 24th, the b'hoys about town got to shooting guns and bursting balls of twine filled with powder, and by Be doing broke out many panes of glass. The trustees met and ordered the said b'hoys' to repair the damages (\$8) within three days.

1847.

Jan. 1, Sons of Temperance have a public march, to the number of forty, and were addressed by Rev. Mr. Hunter.

March 8, first trip up the river, by the Alex. Scott.

May 23-29, a jubilee, Revs. Deparcq, Coomes and Coghlan officiating; 22, Pugh cleared of the charge of murder.

June, Mexican volunteers of the previous year return home. 9, Thomas Field died.

July 11, steamer Wheel of Fortune burned about 3 A. M., six miles below town.

Aug. 2, exciting election. See Political chapter.

September, Captain McCreery's company raised for the Mexican war

Oct. 9, regimental muster, and D. Province elected Colonel; 19th, the steamer Concordia makes her first trip down the river; 20th, S. D. Johnson died. During the month, Prof Honfleur taught drawing lessons. Joseph Thomas' pork-house completed.

November and December, Mountaineer and Hibernia, packets. Dec. 25, march by the Sons of Temperance.

1848.

Jan. 30, Mrs. Robert Triplett died, after a very short illness.

April 1, Kerney & Thomas take possession of grist-mill and commence running it.

Aug. 15, Thomas Kelly died.

Dec. 25, Sons of Temperance parade.

1849.

May 27, music in the Catholic church,—the first ever in the town; 19, S. P. Hart died, of consumption.

July 1, two deaths from Asiatic cholera.

Wheat crop destroyed by rust.

1850.

Jan. 5, P. S. Anderson died; 28, Captain Sharp died.

Feb. 16, T. B. Fitch died; 26, Charley Harsford died, of consumption.

March, subscription for railroad.

April 4, at 8:25 P. M., a sensible shock of earthquake; all the citizens were alarmed; 29, H. Kerr & Co.'s stemmery, filled with tobacco, burned early in the morning; 14, F. Triplett's cabin burned at night.

May 13, a negro man died of cholera in town.

July 8, W. Edson, of Hartford, got off a steamer here with cholera and died; 9, old Aunt Grace died; 17, Mr. Steyfel, an old gentleman, died of cholera; 21, another death from cholera; 24; Mrs. H. Stanley died also of the same epidemic, and the next day her husband died with it.

Wheat crop ruined again by rust.

Aug. 7, Yontz died of cholera. During the month there were four or five other fatal cases of cholera.

Sept. 28, M. McFarland died.

October, considerable building in town--banking house, Bargess' store-house, M. E. church, R. P. Aull's dwelling, a splendid stemmery, and improvement of Main street.

1851.

Jan. 28, Fawn, a new packet.

April 17, Courtland, a packet.

May, from middle onward, locusts abundant; 14, two deaths from cholera. Fruit destroyed this month by frosts.

June 22, Charles Ogden drowned; 29, Joseph Ogden died. Crops promise fair. Several deaths from dysentery.

July, wheat good this season. A hot month.

Aug. 16, J. W. Lanham died; also Howard T. Taylor, one of the best farmers and citizens of the county, was accidentally killed by the discharge of a gun in the hands of Dr. Wilmot. Fifteen buckshot entered his heart, three of which went through him. The gun was so near him that the flash set fire to his shirt. He fell, exclaiming, "Lord, have mercy on me; I am killed;" and was dead before those immediately behind him could raise him up.

Aug. 27, W. Murphy died of cholera.

Sept. 5, Joe Stout and T. Kincheloe died; 2, "Dumb Billy Adams" died; 7, Mrs. Hall's son died of cholera; 10, P. Triplett's girl died of cholera; 19, Mr. Hathaway, a painter, died; 22, James Jones died, aged ninety-one on July fourth preceding. River exceedingly low.

October, about the second, A. L. Beard died; 4, T. O'Flynn died about the twenty-eighth, Ralph Calhoon died; 23, death of Mrs. Triple.

Nov. 1, J. Phelan died; 8, Samuel Morton died of apoplexy; 9, James Murphy died; 12, wife of Richard Thomas died.

Dec. 9, Robert Winsor died; 10, Simpson Stout died.

1852.

Jan. 8, death of Mat. Kirkpatrick; 10, of Robert Triplett, with erysipelas; 18, of V. A. Pegram, with erysipelas; also the death of Fanny Mayo, with congestion of the brain; also of Mr. Stone, an old gentleman; 18, of Miss Allison; 19, of Dr. Hill; 23, of Miss Sarah Triplett, with erysipelas; 24, of Mrs. P. Triplett, with same, and Mrs. Hathaway and Thomas Worley; 26, Mr. Combe's slave "Louis," also with erysipelas A month of extraordinary mortality.

Feb. 1, Miss De Lovell, a teacher, died; 3, Mrs. Combe died, some say of erysipelas; 7, death of F. W. Wall; 12, J. R. Kelly found dead in bed from apoplexy; 24, Helena Pegram died.

March 24, first trip of the great steamer Eclipse; also, Marcus McDaniel's cabin and houses were burned, and two small negroes with them. The Eclipse was 360 feet long, and probably the largest that had ever been built in the West; cost, \$135,000.

March 23, Mr. Thixton died of consumption; 24, Miss Laura Triplett died; 30, Philip Triplett died of erysipelas.

April 22, Mrs. Hall died.

May 2, J. J. Bowlds died; 13, a negro in the country died of cholera; 15, another case.

June 6, Z. Blanford died of cholera; 16, Miss Calhoon died of typhoid fever; 18, George Calhoon died of same.

July, spiritual rappings abundant.

Sept. 27, death of Miss Carico, Mrs. Campbell and a man below town

Oct. 15, Judge Calhoon died at Louisville, and remains brought home on the 18th. Joseph Thomas's steam flouring mill and carding machine were burned on the 1st of this month, by an incendiary; loss about \$8,000 A store adjoining, with \$12,000 worth of goods, was also consumed No insurance

Nov. 14, Mrs. Simmons (nee Sally Smith) died.

1853.

Jan. 13, A. L. Shotwell first trip down; a fast boat.

March 5, twelve boats passed.

April 12, Telegraph No. 3 made the best time.

May 13, James Jones died; 18, Eclipse passed,—only three days and twenty-one hours from New Orleans, in a race with The A. L. Shotwell, which was sixteen to twenty minutes longer reaching Louisville. The latter left New Orleans three days after the Eclipse. 27, four white men entered Capt. Bob McFarland's house, dragged him from his bed at his wife's side, inflicted several severe blows upon his face with an ax, and then left him dead on the floor. They fired a gun, but no bullet wound could afterward be found upon the body.

June 15, Dr. John Roberts died.

July 4, Mrs. Stirman died; 31, Pointers Washington drowned. This month Joseph Thomas made arrangements in Philadelphia to introduce the stereoscope into Kentucky.

August and September, good crop of fruit of all kinds this season. Town improving. Old court-house removed, to give place for a new building. Wharf enlarged, etc.

Dec. 28, J. Johnston died, of typhoid fever.

1854.

April 14, Mrs. Emma (nee Hawes) Nicholas died; 29, J. Hess died of cholera; there were two or three other cases of cholera during the month.

June 27, Dr. Macgruder died, of consumption.

Sept. 20 (about), Mr. Wilkinson died, of cholera, on board a steamer a few miles above town.

Oct. 2, Hathaway's store and three other buildings burned; 11, J. H. Mayhall died; 19, T. Burgess shot D. Murphy, and, the latter died four days afterward.

Nov. 1, C. Richardson hung by T. Landrum; about 2,500 persons present; 3, W. Thornton and two others died of cholera; 4, Sydney Hewitt and J. Lambsen died of cholera; 5, J. Decker died. "Hard Times" for want of money.

Dec. 7, Owensboro *Gazette* commenced; 10, S. Collier died.

1855.

Jan. 27, in the evening, at J. H. Daveiss' mill, Alex. Mason, a young man, was killed. He was putting a belt on the drum attached to the fly-wheel, and slipped and fell so that an arm of the wheel caught his shoulder and head and drew him into the wheel pit. His head was mashed to a jelly, and he lived but a few minutes after he was taken out.

Times harder this winter than before for many years. Provisions high and poor. Potatoes \$2 a bushel, and hard to get at that price. Meal, 70 to 75 cents a bushel, and flour, \$8.50 a barrel. No vegetables save turnips, and these were 80 cents a bushel, whereas the usual price is 12 to 15 cents. Corn, 60 cents at the crib and scarce.

April 9, John Combe died; 11, Wm. Rogers died; 18, Mrs. Thornton died; 30, Mrs. P. Johnson (Mrs. Ford) died.

May 3, S. Childers' brick store fell down.

June 11, Geo. W. Mason died.

Wheat crop fine, and cut early.

July 4, corner-stone of court-house laid; 30, Know-Nothings hold a mass meeting; 24, Mrs. J. Davidson died; 29, T. W. Watkins died.

Aug. 3, Mitchell Calhoon died; also, "Sister" Raphaella; 31, Evan Merriweather died.

Sept. 6, steamer William Garvin, a packet; 11, Weir's fruit-house burned; 16, Mrs. H. Dugan died.

Oct. 16-19, fair; receipts about \$565; 2, Major Ben Read died; 5, Tom Sale shot his wife. Chills prevalent this month.

1856.

Jan. 12, Mrs. Webb died, of consumption; 14, Dr. Hodges died.

Feb. 3, Hoskins' child burned to death.

March 29, H. A. Reed died.

April 4, Wm. Sansberry died; 28, Mr. Athis died.

May 10, Gilly Jones died.

June 24, Mrs. McIlveny died; 25, Henry Faith died.

July 1, Joseph Thomas, Jr., died of pneumonia, aged ten years; 25, Mr. Delahunt died.

Aug. 6, *National American*, a Know-Nothing paper, published in Owensboro; 17, Mrs. McClarty died; 20, Solomon Kigel died.

September, provisions high and difficult to be obtained, on account of drouth ; 23, Frank Head died;

Oct. 11, Mrs. H. Decker died; 22, Mrs. J. Carlin died; 27, Mrs. Kate Craig died; 30, John Snyder died. A very sickly month.

1857.

May, small-pox scare; 20, a. death in town from this disease; 27, G. W. Farrow died, from kicks given by Hugh B. Lea. The small-pox was introduced by a German who came to Kennney's Exchange. Several contracted the disease. Public meetings forbidden.

June 7, nine cases of small-pox or varioloid in town. Dull time in a business point of view.

July 1, crops very promising; wheat excellent; 30, a little small-pox yet.

Sept. 4, Mrs. Wall died; 21, John Talbott's child burned to death; 26, George Slaughter died; 30, W. B. Johnson died, of typhoid fever.

Oct. 5, Histrionic Association opened in "Lady of Lyons."

Nov. 7, Mrs. Sarah Thomas died of consumption; 20, H. Manzv killed his wife, and died in jail on the 24th.

1858.

Jan. 13, J. H. Daveiss, died. Considerable sickness this month- typhoid fever and pneumonia, and a few cases of small-pox and varioloid. In the country were some cases of scarlet fever. J. S. Dawson lost four children by this disease.

Feb. 2, J. F. Hunter died of typhoid fever; 19, Scioto No. 2, a packet.

March 9, three marriages at 4 P. M.; 26, Elijah Rafferty died.

April 20, Miss Mollie Whayne died, of consumption.

May 30, Mrs. McKay, an old lady, died.

Aug. 11, Mrs. N. Harlow died; 22, Mrs. Dean died.

Sept. 6, Mrs. McAtee died.

Oct. 17, death of Marvin Watkins, and on 31st, Mrs. Story.
 Nov. 6, death of Grayson Brooks.
 January - deaths: 2, Mrs. Dan. Kennedy; 3, Temp. Sublett; 10, Sam. Cottrell; 14, Dr. S. F. Ogden, and Mrs. E. Marks; 22, Mrs. Waters.
 Feb. 7, Ada Roberts died.
 March 1, J. McKee died, 12, death of "old" Tom Grooms.
 April 12, death of J. B. Watkins.
 July 3, Salmon's house robbed and burned by negroes; 12, death of Mrs. Trubler; 16, of Mary Yeaman; 17, of S. Paxton.
 Aug. 28, new African church dedicated
 Oct. 19, Mr. Hicks's house burned; 22, Ben Allen died.
 Nov. 24, Eliza W. Hobbs died, of hemorrhage of the lungs and disease of the heart. Only twelve hours afterward her servant from childhood, Roselle, died.
 Dec. 30, death of Mr. Harl and Mrs Yeager.

1860.

Jan. 30, Mr. Pegram's house burned.
 Feb. 22, spire of the Baptist church, just finished, was blown down, with scaffolding; damage about \$1,500. Whooping-cough prevailing
 March 20, J. Mitchell's store, Dodson's stable and three or four houses burned.
 April 29, death of Dr. Todd.
 May 19, death of Mrs. Shelby.
 Aug. 7, earthquake sensibly felt by everybody.
 Sept. 10, James Hoskins died of typhoid fever; Mrs. John Long, of consumption; 16, Baptist church opened for services for the 1st time.
 Oct. 24, death of Mrs. Reinhardt; 25, Cumberland Presbyterian Synod commences.
 Nov. 2, R. M. Dorsey died; 8; R. E. Cassiday died.
 Dec. 9, Larry Murphy died, 17; Deposit Bank in operation; 22, John Allen died; 24, Pat Enright froze to death, while drunk; 31, a street lamp lighted at night.

1861.

Jan. 4, a day of prayer and fasting generally observed by the citizens for the sake of reconciling the North and the South Stores all closed and churches mostly opened. Business almost suspended during the month, on account of the pecuniary depression caused by secession, etc.; Jan. 19, Sam Hawes, died.
 Feb 2, Methodist revival; 20, Judge Stuart, on petition, determined to render no judgments for debt this term, on account of the unsettled state of the country and consequent scarcity of money. There were 603 suits for debt on the docket.
 April 8, Fanny Grissom died; 15, Crockett and Yeaman spoke, on the occasion of the surrender of Fort Sumter, S. C.; 22, speeches by J. C. Breckenridge and A. Dixon; secession gaining ground; 21, Mrs. Clements died.
 May 13, George Howard, died; 18, forty of the "Home Guards" paraded with muskets, for the first time; 28, "Dixie Guards" left for the Southern army; 31, death of Mrs. Nunn and McDaniel.

July 17, "Home Guards" sworn by Judge Botts; 29, Mrs. J. Hathaway died.
Aug. 17, Wash Thompson died.
Oct. 16, death of Ben Hawes; 17, of Sid Gough.
Dec. 5, James Talbot died of typhoid fever; 6, Wm. H. Kinney's father died; 7, death of Mat. Cushing; 23, Miss Mollie Long died; 24, Mrs. O'Callaghan died.

1862.

May 12, R. Hughes died; 14, Mr. Dillman died; 1, Baptist Association commences; 15, Cumberland Presbyterian Assembly convened; 17, Mrs. Henry Scott died of consumption; 29, "Old" Jerry Yewell died.

July 22, Mrs. McHenry died.

Aug. 1, Mrs. James Talbot died; 7, Jesse Mason and J. C. Talbot died; 10, Mrs. Green died in Danville.

Oct. 1, Methodist Conference commences; 29, Mrs. J. Bristow died; crops fair this year; imported groceries high and money scarce.

Nov. 30, earthquake at 9:30 A. M; 29, Willis Field murdered.

Dec. 3, Mrs. Whayne died; 6, earthquake; 8, Wm. Evans died; 9, death of Mrs. Wm. Talbot; 29, Mrs. J. G. Howard and Mrs. McManus died. Greenbacks abundant and small change scarce; merchants issuing individual checks for 5 to 50 cents.

1863.

Jan. 18, Isaac Kerney died; 23, death of Rowell Robinson.

Feb. 11, Mrs. Wm. Norris died.

March 16, Mrs. J. G. McFarland died; 20, Mrs. Wash. Jones died; 25, death of John Dugan. Solomon J. Howard's house fired twice this month by an incendiary, but the fire was extinguished both times without much damage.

April 9, J. Rudd's house burned; 17, Mrs. Ann Read died.

May 19, death of John Moorman.

June 2, Andrew Jones died; 8, death of Allen Wilhoye, an old gentleman.

July 20, J. Fuqua died.

Sept. 27, Mrs. T. C. McCreery died.

Oct. 3, Wm. Phelan died; 8, Gregory Arns died from a stabbing received three days previously; 13, Silas Mason died; 15, Slaughter Newton died of typhoid fever, and Jake Leffler also died.

Dec. 6, J. H. Tarascon, a new packet; 8, Henry Thomas died of peritonitis; 24, Miss Salmons died about this time.

1864.

Jan. 7, Mr. Campbell's house burned; 15, S. Strauss, returning from Louisville, drowned about this time; 17, Bill Watkins ("Yellow Bill ") died; 23, L. Sims's tobacco stemmery burned; 24, Mrs. Hayden died; 29, death of Cunningham.

March 5, Colonel Thruston died.

April 15, John Leaman died.

June 7, Miss Kim Smith died.

July 29, Mrs. Edlin (J. Lancaster's daughter) died.

Aug. 18, Q. D. Mitchell killed by a negro picket.

Sept. 22, new packet, Morning Star - first trip.

Oct. 17, death of James B. Anderson. He was born in Lexington, Ky., in 1808. After living, at Louisville a number of years, he came to Owensboro, about 1836 or 1837, and engaged in farming until the fall of 1849, when he was elected Cashier of the Owensboro branch of the Southern Bank, which position he retained, the bank reorganizing as the Planters' meanwhile, until his death, Oct. 17, 1864. He was an Elder in the Presbyterian church, and an exemplary Christian citizen.

Dec. 17, Barna McNamee and Mrs. J. H. Nelson died; 25, death of J. M. Rogers, an old citizen.

1865.

Jan. 10, Anselm Watkins died; 29, John Hutchins found frozen to death; 24, Mrs. A. Imbler died.

31, Sam Tribble died, very suddenly.

Feb. 5, first mail received in Owensboro since Jan. 25; 25, death of Mrs. Ben. Read (nee Mary Kerney) and of Mrs. Cox; 28, Wm. Bell died.

March 6, Madame Berthoud died; 7, small-pox, erysipelas and spotted fever in the city; 12, Mrs. R. G. Moorman died.

April 7, the splendid steamer Ruth made her first trip on the Ohio; 12, Emma Queen died; 17, business suspended and crape on the doors, on account of Lincoln's death; 22, J. Bodine died.

May 2, Mrs. Clint. Griffith died; 15, J. Nelson's store burned.

June 24, Masonic celebration.

July 6, Mrs. W. Berry died; 17, Miss Mollie Scott died; 22, Tom Monohan died; 23, Mr. Webb, the hotel-keeper, died.

Aug. 2; Colonel Ewing, an old citizen, died; 26; G. H. Yeaman appointed Minister to Denmark.

Sept. 8, death of Mr. Kennady, uncle of S. D.

Oct 9, Hon. G. H. Yeaman and family left for Denmark; 20, Mrs. Stewart, an old lady, died; 21; Mrs. Webb died, also John L. Goodrum; 25, death of W. B. Hall.

Nov. 3, Green Crabtree died; 30, death of Sam Beers.

Dec 7, Thanksgiving; 8, Wash. Jones died

1866.

Jan. 1, Mrs. Winchester found dead in bed; 7, J. R. Allen also found dead in bed.

Jan. 30, the steamer Missouri exploded her boilers, some ten miles above Evansville. Her hull sank instantly, while her cabin, full of water, floated off. Among the lost was Mr. George A. Peters, a well-known and respected citizen and merchant of Owensboro. His state-room was immediately over the boiler. The number of deck-passengers and crew that was lost was seventy or eighty. The shock of the explosion was distinctly felt in Owensboro, a distance of about thirty miles.

Feb. 3, Mrs. Noel killed by explosion of the W. A. Carter; 13, Mrs. Colonel Ewing died; 15, Mr. Johnson died, the result of wounds inflicted by a homicide; S. V. Rogers died; 25, death of Warner Crow.

March 3, Anthony Fuqua (col.) killed by a stage-driver; 10, death of Atlas Jones. Some floods this month.

April 18, death of Captain E. S. Ayres; 21, C. Hiller's house burned.

May 13, Mrs. Bell's barn burned by an incendiary, with three horses; 17, Cumberland Presbyterian Assembly convened; 21, "Tom," a negro boy, hung on the court-house square by a mob; 27, death of "Jack" Ayres; 31, William Shelby's dwelling burned; 20, a negro named "Tom" was tried before City Judge Washburn for rape. On his way to the jail: an unknown party placed one end of a rope over his head, and threw the other end over a limb of a tree in the court-house yard, and the father of the injured girl drew the prisoner up, where he was kept suspended twenty or thirty minutes, and until after he was quite dead.

June 25, death of John Hathaway.

July, wheat crop very fine, but not so large as the previous year; 21, Confederate tournament above town.

Aug. 19, Mr. Jones's death, from cholera; 23, Miss Warner died, of same.

Sept. 15, another case of cholera; 20-27, very wet; great damage to railroads.

Oct. 26, the three stores of Messrs. Kendall, Moise and Oppenheimer were burned; loss, \$20,000; 29, John Pope died, of consumption.

Nov. 9, Tom Barron died; 30, James M. Smith died.

Dec. 5, death of Miss Nannie Ewing; 29, telegraph line to Louisville commenced.

1867.

Jan. 11, death of J. G. Harrison; 15, Lizzie Thomas died; 17 and 18, Admiral Semmes delivered two very fine lectures in Court Hall, on the cruise of the Alabama, physical geography of the sea, etc.; 31, Dr. Allen died, of cancer.

Feb. 7, Judge Stuart moved to Owensboro.

March, a cold, wet, backward spring.

April 25, 26, frost. Latest spring ever witnessed here.

May 18 body of G. Gossens found dead. Coldest May ever seen here.

June 28, Jo Dryer died, from gunshot wounds inflicted by Bradshaw.

July 14, D. Hamilton's cooper shop burned; 15, R. Patrick's mill burned.

Aug. 28, death of Mrs. Wm. Moorman, and 29, of Mrs. C. B. Hicks.

Sept. 5, Pius Clark died.

Oct. 13, Mrs. M. Loyd died; 21, death of J. H. Blair. Excessive drought.

November, lovely Indian summer.

December, commodities high, money scarce and business dull.

1868.

Jan. 18, Belle Lee's first trip down; 16, ice six inches thick; 18, "Jack" Bristow died; 21, Mr. Cate, an old man, died; 28, death of Mr. Pfister, from pneumonia; 29, coldest day this month - 5°.

Feb. 4 and 10, good skating; 11, death of Mrs. Isham Allen, and 14, of Mrs. Holmes, an old lady; 19, death of J. A. Scott, the saddler.

March 21, Barna May, an old man, died; 24, death of Miss Josie Evans and Mr. Naumheim; 25, Mr. Shedigger's house burned; 26, death of Mrs. E. Crook. Vegetation forward.

April 1, death of Mr. Nelson; 3-6, frost and ice; 19, death of Mrs. J. Metcalf.

May 14, Mrs. Eliza Watkins died, aged over forty-two years-disease of the heart.

June 7, John S. McFarland died; 14, death of Dr. H. B. Roberts; 18, Clint. Sweeney drowned; 21-23, cool enough for fire in the evening and morning.

July 6, new court-house ready for use, and the clerk's offices moved in; 17, one of the hottest days ever witnessed here-100'; a negro woman killed by lightning at the Bransford Institute; 18, 19, over fifty persons sick from drinking milk which had been poisoned with some antimonial preparation; no clue to the origin; none died;. 30, James and Jay Mason died.

Sept. 2, Co-operative Association met; 19, death of Mrs. Stembridge, and 21, of Mrs. James Jackson.

Oct. 14, death of Mrs. Craycroft.

Nov. 10, death of Kitty Bell; 18, Dr. Mitcheson and W Y. Cavin died.

Dec. 12, P. Lyddan fell off a horse and was killed; 25, part of the River Hotel burned; 28, some cases of small-pox, especially among the negroes.

1869.

Jan. 23, Mr. Crutcher's house burned; 27, a negro man, committed to jail for rape, was hung in the court-house yard.

Feb. 2, Mrs. J. S. McFarland died, of pneumonia; 3, Mrs. Wm. Owen and B. H. Triplet died.

March, cold weather and small-pox prevailing; 17, W. H. McKay's warehouse burned.

April 19, death of Mrs. Miles Lancaster, and 29, of Alf. Johnson.

May 6, Miles Lancaster died; 26, Miss Betsey Burgess died; 25, three barges loaded with ice landed at Owensboro for sale. D. Monarch bought 100 tons, at \$10 a ton. The blocks of ice weighing 300 to 400 pounds were curiosities to many of the citizens.

June 11, "Dick" Hutchison died; 13, high wind,- blew down trees in some places.

July 5, Sam Childers died; 7, Joseph Chatham, and 8, Eli Adams, died.

Aug. 25, Mr. Hickey's house burned; "Davis" died from sunstroke.

Sept. 10, Mr. Lumpkin (the elder) died; 26, Mrs. Lucy Blincoe (nee Roberts) died.

Oct. 11, F. L. Hall's new dramatic hall opened; 28, death of Captain Ellis and Wm. Harl.

Nov. 3, death of Ed. Barber and Mrs. Venable. The whole month cloudy and chilly.

Dec 31, parsonage of a colored church burned.

1870.

Jan. 21, roller skating rink opened, -Mr. France, manager; 23 Mrs. Sam McClarty died. River very high this month

Feb. 7, death of Harp. Higdon.

March 6, death of John W. Schenck; 19, of Mrs. P. F. Smith; 28, of Rev. Isham Howard, a colored minister.

April 4, election of mayor, and negroes voted for the first time; 21, Dan McFarland died.

May 9, J. Matthews killed by a kick from a horse; 22, James Craig died; 30, Mrs. Enoch Allen died.

July 2, Mrs. A. B. Johnston died; 6, death of Mrs. Wm. Sharpe; 17, Mike Donahue was murdered by Link Ballard, at a small saloon a mile from the city; the murderer was aided by accomplices; 19, of Mrs. "Dink" Read; 20, one of the heaviest rains ever witnessed.

Aug 6, W Anthony died

Oct. 4, death of Miss Amanda Weir; 16, of Charles Montgomery.

Nov. 1, first biting frost; 13, Dan Kennady died.

Dec. 8, O. S. Warner's house burned; 19, Allen Yewell killed by a log at a house raising, 21, first freezing weather; 26, ice six inches thick; 28, Mrs. "Ben" Abell died about this time; 31, locomotive Jo Daveiss put on the track and tried, Mrs. Donaldson died.

1871.

Jan, 17, John G. Holloway died; 22; Hon. G. H. Yeaman removed to New York City.

Feb. 3, death of Mrs. H. N. Davis; 4, of Captain Burge.

April 4, Mrs. James Kennady and Mrs. Ed. Hawes died; 15, Wm. Berry's still-house burned; 23, heavy frost.

May 6, Elio Taylor died; 7, frost; 10, J. Villito killed by a saw-head; 16, O. Cain killed Summers and wife; 8, first "beer garden" in the county opened.

June 2, death of Wm. Cummins; 7, meeting of the Kentucky editors in Owensboro; 10, Catholic picnic below town to raise funds for an organ: raised \$400.

July 4, mechanics' celebration and procession; J. Stuart, orator; 8, James Hathaway died; 27, death of Mrs. Murray, Nannie Shipp and two children.

Aug. 7, the circuit clerk's office was entered at night by a burglar, who cut out three slats of the shutters, and stole the docket for the ensuing term of court. A similar robbery was committed at preceding term of court.

Aug. 19, death of Mrs. Adele Hagan; 28, of R. P. Aull.

Sept. 18, Mrs. Willis Field died; 24, Mrs. Ogden (old lady), and 30, Ezekiel Camborn died.

Oct. 5, Judge Botts died about this time; 18, death of John O'Brien.

Nov. 1, Judge McHenry died; 14, first wintry day.

1872.

Jan. 5, an actress died of small-pox, at River Hotel; also to-day Lally Conway died; 27, a negro died of small-pox in town; 30, Mrs. Lily E. Mitchell died of congestion of the lungs. Severe winter. On the 29th the river closed for the third time, and remained closed until Feb. 11.

Feb. 8, Ap. Spalding and Dr. J. Conway died; 21, another negro died of small-pox; 26, J. G. Delker's furniture factory burned; loss about \$15,000; cause of fire unknown, but it originated as if by an incendiary; 16, the railroad blacksmith shop was burned.

March 6, Maggie Ferguson died of consumption; a backward spring; some small-pox in town.

April 3, J. P. Thompson died of brain fever; 14, a fire of mysterious origin consumed, the buildings on Frederica street, between Third and Fourth, belonging to Amos R. Hathaway, and the grocery stock of Alvey Brothers; total loss, \$8,000 or \$10,000.

May 10, J. Vairian died; 27, Geo. Clements died.

Sept. 19, A. Mooreland died.

Dec. -, ice eight inches thick, and very clear; much ice on the roads, almost totally preventing travel; crops good this year; some time during 1872, Mr. Kincheloe killed Mr. Throckmorton, on a road a little west of Owensboro.

1873.

Jan. 29, 4 below zero; a hard winter and hard times.

Feb. 2, Henry Hager died; 4, Frank Hagan and Mrs. Hall died; a cold, disagreeable month.

March 3, E. P. Washburn died; spotted fever prevalent; 5, Mrs. L P. Little and child died; 6, Mrs. Harlin (of spotted fever) and Mr. Johnson died; 16, death of "Jack" Jones and Mrs. Fisher; 21, boiler exploded at M. V. Monarch's distillery and flew into the river, 200 or 300 yards distant; two colored men were fatally injured; excitement in town on account of small-pox or varioloid; a backward spring; peaches not in bloom until April 6.

April 4, B. Tribble died; 5, Miss O'Neal died; 10, death of John Sharp, Thomas Kincheloe and Mrs. Wm. Collins; 16, Mr. Incal died; 18, Barna Bunch died; 26, heavy frost.

May 26, boiler in Rouse's mill exploded, killing two men.

June 5, Jerome Mitchell died; 22, Catholic Temperance Union formed -25 members; 25, George Donaldson died of white swelling.

July 2, death of Athy Aud; 4, of Frank Douring; 5, of Miss Margaret Vairen; 15, Mrs. J. Mitchell died of cholera; 24, Miss Ann Hagan died of typhoid fever.

Aug. 6, Joseph Allen killed by an unknown person; 18, Mrs. Gus Talbott died; 21, death of L. L. Talbott; 27, Mrs. Chatham died.

Sept. 2, Mrs. Rarick and two others died of cholera; 5, Mrs. Charles Green died of same; 7, James Thomas died of typhoid fever; 15, death of Annie Mitcherson; 25, death of T. Greenwell; 27, Mary Carter died of typhoid fever; there were several other deaths among adults in Owensboro this month; the cholera cases were all in the upper part of town.

Oct. 4, Jeff. Underwood shot and killed by Bud Borie; 8, Miss Lou Davis died of typhoid fever; 17, R. G. Moorman died of typhoid pneumonia; 19, Miss Ada Thornton, and 20, John Todd; both died of typhoid fever; 28, Mrs. Thornton died of typhoid fever.

1874.

May 12, Burns's tobacco factory was burned, with 250,000 pounds of tobacco, and adjoining buildings. Sol. Wile and W. S. Brittain (of Louisville) were also losers.

First week in May, two large fires. Thomas O'Brien's stable, dwelling, etc., consumed; loss, \$3,600; and the dwelling of W. L. Mitchusson, on Railroad street.

Aug. 3, George W. Swoope shot and killed Perry Riley, in the courthouse yard near the polls on election day. The deceased left a wife and five small children. Five days afterward Mr. Swoope was admitted to bail in the sum of \$5,000, but was finally acquitted on the ground of self-defense.

Dec. 12, a block of buildings on the corner of St. Ann and Main streets was burned. Principal loser: W. N. Sweeney, D. M. Griffith, Charles Kahler and Mr. Driver.

1877.

Nov. 30, Henry McDonald, restaurant keeper, committed suicide by taking chloroform.

May 12, St Joseph's Church (German Catholic) was burned; loss, about \$3,000; insurance, \$1,000. Fire probably incendiary.

1878.

Mr. Lavator, a "musical prodigy" as a violin-player, mysteriously appeared upon the streets of Owensboro in June, 1878, shoeless and shirtless, a wretched wanderer, gazing into vacancy and tottering along with nervous irregularity. Mr. Stone inquired into his case and being asked for a violin, furnished him one. He seized it and immediately astonished the bystanders with his powers. Prominent citizens then took up his cause and presented him on the stage two or three times.

Oct. 11, Nick Neal killed Henry Gearhardt, two miles from Grissom's Landing, by stabbing him in the abdomen. Three others, were wounded in the affray; it was a drunken spree. Neal was held to bail in a sum of \$2,000.

Oct. 25, Cohn S. Throckmorton, formerly an officer in the U. S. navy, and widely known in this State, died in Owensboro, after a long illness.

Nov. 17, the livery stable and warehouse of Hon. H. D. McHenry, worth \$1,500 or \$2,000, were burned, along with several other buildings, at or near the corner of First and St. Ann streets, aggregating a loss of about \$7,000. Cause of the fire probably incendiary, or at best by the carelessness of a tramp.

Dec. 8, Dangerfield Hathaway, a colored boy sixteen years old, was stabbed and killed by Jesse Gibson, another colored lad sixteen or, eighteen years old, on Fourth street, Owensboro. It was on Sunday, and Hathaway had just returned from church with a girl; 29, the frame cottage of A. G. Hawes, on Frederica street, was burned.

1879.

May 2, a \$1,500 fire occurred, between Mulberry and Walnut streets, the loss falling upon John Gillis, John Thixton, A. Rosenfeld and John Walt.

June 20, another loss of \$1,500 by fire was suffered by J. D. Murphy, and Hughes & Alexander. Stable, eight horses and a mule burned. Two days afterward an incendiary burned the Southern Wheel and Handle Factory; loss, over \$5,000, and throwing about fifty hands out of employment.

Sept. 13, a ferocious hog seized a child named Lela A. Hultse, while she was playing in the yard, and dragged the screaming sufferer a distance of fifty feet, almost killing her, before she was rescued.

1880.

April 10, the still-house, corn and cattle-shed of the John Hanning distillery were consumed by fire; loss, over \$6,000; on the 13th, Hope Mill, on Bolivar street, a dwelling on Third street, and other buildings were burned. J. B. Cruse & Co., on the mill, lost over \$6,000. The Misses Green lost \$1,500.

July 10, death of John A. Faulds, tobacconist, and a business man of high order. He was a native of Perthshire, Scotland, came to this country in 1855, at the age of eighteen.

Aug. 26, about midnight, Johnson & Cottrell's tobacco factory, F. J. Miller's residence, cottages belonging to Messrs. Woolfolk & Tharp, and other buildings were consumed by fire; loss, over \$30,000.

Sept. 5, N. M. Lancaster & Co.'s large new distillery was destroyed by fire; loss, about \$25,000; 9, J. S. Pottinger's large cooper-shop, at the west end of the city, was burned, throwing twenty-two men out of employment.

Dec. 4, on account of some excavation near it, the old Wecker Hotel building fell with a terrible crash, accompanied with cries and shrieks of men, women and children; and, although there were three men, one woman and three children in the building, not one of them was seriously injured; total loss, about \$900. It was built in 1850, at the foot of Frederica street, and occupied as a hotel until recently, when it was purchased by the People's Wharf Boat Company.

1881.

June 22, death of Joseph Rothchild, Sr., a prominent and successful merchant, and founder of the I. O. B. B. of Owensboro.

July 13, a storm so severe as to unroof the court-house, damage many other valuable buildings and destroy, thousands of trees.

Sept. 5, W. E. Hubbard accidentally killed by the falling of a derrick near Grimes's coal bank, a mile and a quarter from town.

Oct. 8, Henry Nelson, colored, was shot down in cold blood at a negro dance in Owensboro.

Nov. 13, death of Thomas Monarch, one of the most prominent pioneers of Daviess County. He lived to be eighty-one years of age. A biographical sketch of him is published in the Daviess County *Atlas* and in the *Messenger and Examiner* of Nov. 16, 1881.

Oct. 15, Jack Luckett was killed by Dick Vowells, in Herron & Co.'s saloon on Main street.

1882.

On the evening of Jan. 6, 1882, the building known as Mills Opera House was discovered to be in flames. Intense excitement prevailed, which was increased by a rumor that there were people in the building who had failed to escape; this, however, was untrue, as every one had left the theater upon the first alarm of fire. The following is a list of those who suffered losses; Robert Nunn, grocer, lost everything his establishment contained; insured for \$4,000. Parish's bookstore was pretty well consumed; loss covered by insurance. H. Washburne, proprietor of the Planters' House saloon, was a great loser; loss also nearly covered, by insurance. The Planters' Hotel was almost torn to pieces; it was saved from entire destruction by a fire-proof wall that intervened between it and the fire. The job office of O. T. Kendall, the barber shop of Elijah Hathaway and the dwelling of L. M. Ogden were badly crushed by the falling of the north wall of the Opera House. The Georgia Minstrels, who were to have played that night, sustained great losses.

The Opera House was owned by Alexander Hill, and was built in 1870, at a cost of \$22,000. There was an insurance of \$10,000 on the whole building. The fire appeared to have originated in the basement, under the grocery of Robert Nunn.

April 16, death of Thomas Moreland, in his forty-first year. He was a Captain in the Confederate army.

June 30, Madison Jessup shot and killed George Smith, a respectable citizen; both were colored. Jessup got away, and Artie, the wife of the deceased, was arrested for complicity in the act, found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment for life; but the Court of Appeals reversed the decision, and the case now stands continued in court.

Sept. 1, 1882, C. W. Roby arose from his bed in a somnambulistic fit, precipitated himself from a second-story window, near Spoerri's Hotel, and killed himself.

Oct. 16 occurred the death of Jacob Arnold, the oldest resident of Owensboro at the time, aged ninety-one years. He was a native of Alton, Switzerland, and the father of Theo, Godfrey and H. Arnold, all business men of Owensboro. Although he had been for some years a resident in this country, he never abandoned the language and dress of his native land; and it was a familiar sight on warm, bright mornings to see him for hours in the sunshine by the river, while his little grandchildren played near by. He never acquired the English language, and in his old age he lived a quiet, uneventful life. In his death lie left a wife, with whom he had lived threescore years, and who is now in her eighty-second year.

Nov. 1, death of Benedict B. Coomes, in his seventy-fourth year, after a tedious illness. He was born in Nelson County, Ky., and came to this county about 1840.

Dec. 25, a young negro named Charlie Weir killed Jim Montgomery, a white man, in a beer saloon in Owensboro. Weir and two negro girls were drinking beer, when Montgomery commenced a scuffle with him; on being ordered out of the saloon the negro ran, followed by Montgomery, when the former shot and killed the latter. Self-defense was claimed.

During this month an itinerant family stopped a few days in the suburbs of the city, one member of which was said to be 122 years old! Her hair was turning dark, her fingers plump and soft, and several other features of youth seemed to be returning. She is now dead.

1883.

Jan. 16, death of Major John H. Smith, at the age of seventy-three. He built the first tobacco factory in Owensboro—probably the first west of the Allegheny Mountains; was a high-toned business man, wealthy, well-known and highly respected.

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History of Daviess County, Kentucky, Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, 1883, 146:

JOSEPH THOMAS, Teller of the First National Bank, of Owensboro, was born May 1, 1822, in New Orleans, La., the son of Joseph and Eliza (Weissenfels) Thomas. Before he was five years of age General Jackson, when on a visit to New Orleans, gave him a half dollar bearing the inscription: "Gen. A. Jackson to J. Thomas, January 11th, 1828." He has sacredly preserved the gift through prosperity and adversity, and indicates his purpose to hand it down to future generations. The coin was made in 1806, but is only slightly worn. When ten years of age his father died, and the family moved to Bardstown, Ky., where Joseph went to school, attending St. Joseph's College four years. In 1837 he came to Owensboro, where he was still further

educated under the direction of Mr. Scarborough, a most excellent teacher. On entering the responsibilities of a more independent life, Mr. Thomas, being a fine penman and accountant, struck out in the mercantile line, first entering the dry-goods store of T.W. Watkins, then in the same trade alone, next a flouring mill, which was ultimately burned, then a saw-mill, pork trade, etc. He was Circuit Clerk of Daviess County six years, then deputy under John P. Thompson, about three years, and then succeeded Mr. Thompson as Circuit Clerk again for a few months. Since 1873 he has been connected with the bank formerly called "The Planters," and now the First National. Mr. Thomas was married on Jan. 16, 1844, to Miss Sarah Watkins, a native of Maryland, who died Nov. 7, 1856, leaving four children. Oct. 5, 1857, Mr. T. married Sarah M. Grissom, and she died July 21, 1878, leaving two children. There are now living five children of Mr. Thomas', namely: William, in Memphis; Alice, now Mrs. Burkhart, in Owensboro; Pell, clerk on the Anchor line of steamers between St. Louis and Memphis; Joseph, Jr., employed in the First National Bank of Owensboro; and Alfred, at home and attending school. Mr. Thomas has been a successful business man, but has met with many serious misfortunes – losses by fire, sickness and death. It is worthy of mention here that Mr. T. kept an elaborate diary for nearly thirty years of his life, which is described more fully in the chapter on "Meteorology."

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**Abstracts of Owensboro, KY newspaper articles that refer to
Joseph Thomas (1 May 1822 – 19 June 1911):**

Owensboro Messenger – 1890: 1/16 p.1 (Jo Thomas of Owensboro has kept a record of the weather for 40 years).

Owensboro Tribune – 1895: 9/19 p.2 (clerk of the circuit court for several years and afterwards was master commissioner).

Owensboro Messenger – 1898: 12/13 p.4 (one of seven surviving citizens residing in Owensboro, who were here upon Frank L. Hall's arrival in 1839).

Owensboro Messenger – 1911: 6/21 p.2 (died 19 June 1911 of infirmities at the home of his son, Joseph Thomas, in Seyppel, AR; age 89; born 1 May 1822 in New Orleans, LA; came to Owensboro as a boy & lived here until 10 years ago; circuit clerk of this district for 6 years; while here kept a diary of his life & events in Owensboro; survived by sons, Joseph & Alfred Thomas; burial was at Seyppel, AR); see also Owensboro Inquirer – 1911: 6/21 p.6.

Owensboro Messenger – 1931: 6/14 p.1B & 9B ("Old River Road of Long Ago Recalled", by C. W. Bransford - Riverside was 'a white frame house with a large front yard, adorned with a profusion of flowers.' Built by Joseph Thomas, who came here in 1837, bringing with him from his former New Orleans home, the bed which General LaFayette slept in while in New Orleans during his tour of the United States in 1824.' Thomas 'also had a half dollar given him by General Andrew Jackson in 1828.' He was circuit clerk of Daviess County for six years before becoming teller of the old Planters Bank and later of First National Bank. He married 1st Sarah Watkins & 2nd Sarah M. Grissom, who died in 1878. Thomas sold Riverside to Samuel M. Wing, a Greenville native. It was later acquired by James B. Anderson).

Messenger-Inquirer – 2014: 5/22 p.1B ("Old diary offers glimpse into early Owensboro", by Keith Lawrence; Joseph Thomas began keeping a diary on 22 January 1844, the Monday after his first marriage, a New Orleans native, he was 21 years old at the time, he came to Owensboro in 1837, he served two terms as circuit clerk and one as a deputy clerk, he also worked in

banking and retail through the years, his dairy was published in an 1883 history of Daviess County).

Messenger-Inquirer – 2016: 8/25 p.1B ("Old River Road was the height of local culture", article by C. W. Bransford published in the "Owensboro Messenger" on 14 June 1931 about the settlement along the Old River Road east of Owensboro).

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Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY
Wednesday, 21 June 1911 p2:

JOSEPH THOMAS

FORMER OWENSBORO CITIZEN
DIES IN ARKANSAS.

Eighty-nine Years of Age and Circuit Clerk of This District At One Time.

Joseph Thomas, for years one of the oldest and best known residents of Owensboro, died at the home of his son, Joseph Thomas, Jr., at Seyppel, Ark., Monday afternoon, of infirmities incident to old age, according to information received in Owensboro Tuesday morning. Mr. Thomas was eighty-nine years of age on the first of last May and had been in failing health for several years.

Mr. Thomas was born in New Orleans, La., May 1, 1822, but came to Owensboro in his early boyhood and lived here, till the past ten years, when he went to Memphis, where he resided with his son, till within the last few months when he removed to his son's farm in Arkansas.

During his residence in Owensboro, Mr. Thomas was first a clerk in an Owensboro store, but later became connected with the Planter's bank and still later he was teller of the First National bank. He was circuit clerk of this district for about six years and later operated a saw mill.

For about forty years, Mr. Thomas kept an accurate diary of the happenings of interest in this city and also the events in his own life. Mr. Thomas is survived by only two children, who are Joe Thomas, of Seyppel, Ark., and Alfred Thomas, of Memphis, Tenn.

Mr. Thomas was buried Tuesday afternoon at Seyppel.