

# Some of Owensboro's "First Things"

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Following is a partial list of "first things" that took place in Owensboro, some of them even antedating the year 1818, when the people began to drop the names of Yellow Banks and Rossboro and to use the present name spelling it, however, with an "ough" at the end.

The first house was a cabin erected by Bill Smothers about 1796.

The first thanksgiving was observed November 20, 1845. The first temperance organization was the Sons of Temperance, 1845.

First stethoscope introduced into Kentucky, and Owensboro, by Joseph Thomas.

First day of prayer and fasting observed for reconciliation of North and South, January 4, 1861.

First parade of Home Guards with muskets, May 13, 1861.

First organ used in church in town at St. Stephen's Catholic church, May 22, 1849.

First subscription taken up for railroad, March 1850.

First locomotive, the Joe Daviess, seen in Owensboro, December 8, 1870.

First shock of earthquake felt here, November 1811.

First "Beer Garden" in county opened May 8, 1871.

First Press Association meeting of Kentucky editors in Owensboro, 1871.

First Catholic Total abstinence society formed, June 5, 1873.

First tobacco factory built in Owensboro, probably first west of Allegheny mountains, built by Major John H. Smith. He died Jan. 16, 1883.

The first political club was the "Daviess County Clay Club," organ-

ized on Washington's birthday, 1874. This was the year of one of Mr. Clay's most active campaigns and he spoke all over Western Kentucky.

First Circuit Judge and Clerk respectively were Henry P. Broadnax and George Handley.

First Justice of the peace, John Calhoun and John Daviess.

First attempt to get U. S. Court here was made in 1868.

First bar association organized here, 1879.

First newspaper was Bulletin started in 1844 as Clay organ.

First book by local author, the late James Weir, was a novel entitled, "Simon Kenton."

First company of men for Confederate army was raised by Joseph Millett, September 5, 1861.

First recruiting done here for Federal army was by J. H. McHenry and John Grissom, September 9, 1861.

First gunboat was the Lexington, anchored in front of city to give protection, Sept. 25, 1861.

First military camp established here by Federals, October 2, 1861.

First man shot on account of war was a man named Vawters. He hurried for Jeff Davis, and on being ordered arrested, resisted, and was shot.

First battle or skirmish fought here September 19, 1862.

First draft of men for Federal army made of fifty-eight men, May 13, 1863.

The first census of Daviess County was taken in 1820 and showed 3,876 population. No distinction as to color was made and these were, doubtless, all white but twen-

ty years later there were 6,327 whites, 1,960 slaves and 44 free negroes.

The first census of farms was taken in 1850 and showed 1,292 farms and 1631 dwellings.

The first county fair was given in 1850.

The first improved road, a plank one, built five miles out Livermore Road, 1855. The same company added several miles of gravel to this road.

First toll gate roads commenced in 1882.

First telegraph line built to Louisville 1867.

First railway built from Bon Harbor, to river to haul coal probably first in Kentucky, was built in 1826.

First steam railroad, Owensboro and Russelville, opened 1870.

First Medical Association formed in 1867.

First coal mine operated, Bon Harbor 1825.

First legal execution, of Curtis Richardson, November 1, 1854, for murder.

First graded public schools were taught in 1870.

First marriage license granted by the new county was to Samuel McCoy and Jane Helm, June 23, 1815.

First steam boat passed Owensboro in October, 1811.

First directory of city issued by Courier-Journal in 1882.

First bank established 1833.

First mayor of Owensboro was E. S. Ayres, who died a few days after he was elected and the first clerk was C. N. S. Taylor, a brother of Mrs. C. C. Watkins.

First store was kept by David Morton.