

President James Madison (1751-1836)
Owned Land in Daviess County, Kentucky



James Madison (1751-1836)



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 9 May 1969, p4A:



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 27 November 1898, p7:

A FARM IN DAVIESS
ONCE OWNED BY EX-PRESIDENT MADISON.
Some Interesting Documents Found Among
Old Records at the Court House.

In deed book C of the Daviess county court is the record of a very interesting document. It is a power of attorney from James Madison, ex-president of the United States, and the fourth president, and Miss Nelly C. Willis to John A. Lee, an Owensboro attorney. The document was

made on January 28, 1828, eleven years after Mr. Madison had completed his second term as president of the United States, and eight years before his death. Horace Allen was clerk of the Daviess county court and recorded the instrument on pages 317 and 318 of deed book C. In those days the clerks did not have a separate book for the various kinds of instruments lodged for record, but most everything was recorded in the deed book. The instrument given by Mr. Madison and Miss Willis to Mr. Lee is as follows:

Know all men that we, James Madison and Nelly C. Willis, of the county of Orange and, state of Virginia, do, by these, presents, constitute and appoint John A. Lee, of the county of Daviess and state of Kentucky, our lawful attorney, with full power to receive and to pursue all lawful means for recovering for our use, the sum or sums of money remaining due to us by virtue of a covenant and agreement entered into on the tenth day of April, one thousand, eight hundred and eighteen, by the said Madison and Willis of the one part and Benjamin Bell and Wm. Tapscott, both formerly of the county of Jefferson and state of Virginia, of the other part, touching the sale to them and their heirs as tenants in common of certain lands on or near Panther creek in the state of Kentucky, as described in the said covenant, and we give to our said attorney full power on receiving the said money, or satisfactory provision for the payment thereof, in whole or in part, to make such conveyances of the whole or part thereof as he may judge necessary or proper, and in general to agree to and concur in such conditions and compromises touching the final execution of the covenant in the other part as he may judge expedient, hereby notifying and confirming whatever our said attorney, in pursuance of the powers here given, may do or cause to be done in the premises; and we do, moreover constitute and appoint the said John H. Lee our lawful attorney, with full power to investigate and ascertain all such tracts or parcels of land within the state of Kentucky to which we or either of us may be entitled in law or equity; to pursue all lawful means of securing and obtaining possession thereof, and also to sell and, in due form, convey the right and title of both or either of us to the whole or any part of such tracts or parcels, and to receive payments therefor for our use and behoof in such proportion as may be due to us respectively, here ratifying and confirming whatever may be done in the premises, and giving thereto the same validity and effect as if done by ourselves. Given under our hands and seals, this 28th day of January, in the year 1828.

JAMES MADISON. [Seal.]

NELLY C. WILLIS. [Seal.]

The certificate to this document by the county clerk of the Orange county, Va., court is as follows:

At a monthly court held for the county of Orange, at the court house on Monday, the twenty-eighth of January, one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-eight, this power of attorney was acknowledged by James Madison and Nelly C. Willis, parties thereto, in open court, and ordered to be recorded and certified to the proper courts in the state of Kentucky for record.

Seal. In testimony whereof, and that the same has been duly recorded, I, Reynolds Chapman, clerk of the county court of Orange, have hereto put my name and affixed the seal of the said court, this second day of February, one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-eight, and of the commonwealth the fifty-second year.

REYNOLDS CHAPMAN, C'l'k.

Following the certificate of the clerk of the Orange county court is the certificate of a justice of the peace as follows:

Virginia, Orange county, towit:

I, May Benton, presiding magistrate of the county court of said county, do hereby certify that the foregoing attestation of Reynolds Chapman, who is clerk of the said court, is in due form. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this twenty-second day of February, one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-eight.

MAY BENTON. [Seal.]

On page 374 of the same record book is recorded another instrument which states that the wife of Mr. Madison, Mrs. Dolly P. Madison, did not join her husband in the power of attorney executed by him and Mrs.' Willis to John A. Lee, and in this paper she joins him in making Mr. Lee her attorney for the purpose as has been stated in the foregoing. This instrument was signed and sealed by the ex-president and his wife in the presence of A. Madison, Richard Cave and John H. Todd. On page 376 of deed book C is recorded the deed which John A. Lee executed to James Rafferty- for the land. The boundaries of the land are given as follows: "Beginning at the lower corner of a survey in the name of Ambrose Madison, at 2 small beeches, an ash and hickory tree on the creek, running with the lower line N. 10 ½ E., three hundred and fourteen poles to 2 dog woods and small hickory and cherry; thence S. 79 ½ E., two hundred and forty-six poles to 2 beeches, gum and maple in the line of another survey in the name of A. Madison; thence with said line S. 11, W. two hundred and forty-eight poles to a walnut, sugar tree and water beech standing on the bank of Panther creek; thence down the creek, binding thereon to the beginning, containing, by survey, four hundred and twenty-five acres."

The deed is signed by John A. Lee for Mr. Madison and Mrs. Willis, but Mrs. Madison's name does not appear to the document at all.

"President Madison Owned Land Here: Some of the Fiercest Litigation In American History Result Of Land Owned Here By Third U. S. President", Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Daviess County Sesquicentennial Edition, 5 October 1965, p11C [ed. Note – James Madison was the fourth US president]:

James Madison, third President of the United States, once owned land in Daviess County which was the object of some of the fiercest litigation in American history.

The complicated story has been partly clarified in a recent six-volume scholarly biography of Madison by historian Irving Brant.

Combining Brant's account with extensive records which survive at the Daviess County Courthouse, many facts, along with a few contradictions and uncertainties, emerge.

It all started in the spring of 1780 when Hancock Lee, a land scout, went into the Western Kentucky wilderness and singled out 8,400 and 8,300 acres for George Mason, 10,000 acres for William Moore, and 10,000 acres for James Madison Sr., father of the future President.

The land was located in what is now Daviess County. All the claims were recorded, the 8,400-acre tract by close description and the others by reference to it.

A few months later, in the autumn of 1780, it was discovered that the key 8,400-acre had been incorrectly described, thus making the entire claim inaccurate. This error was corrected later in a special entry.

The whole 36,700 acres was surveyed in 1783 on the basis of the corrected entry. The partners then paid \$47,000 - the price of the land - to the state of Virginia.

Shortly, one George Wilson entered a claim for 30,000 acres, including all of the erroneously described property of Mason, Moore, and Madison except the corrected entry of 8,400 acres, which he used to describe the remainder.

Wilson then entered caveats against the three, asking the Kentucky Supreme Court (part of the Virginia judiciary) to validate his claim.

At the trial which followed it was established that Wilson was in partnership with Assistant County Surveyor Handley, with whom the original claim had been registered

A fellow-employee of Handley testified that the Wilson entry was made after a study of the Mason, Moore, and Madison survey "in a late hour of the night and that he held the candle to give them light.

George Mason, one of the original claimants and a friend of ; Washington and Jefferson, died in 1792, and the litigation, as a result, was temporarily interrupted. It was renewed, however, in federal district court in 1797.

Three years later District Judge Harry Innes ruled Wilson's claim fraudulent. He had had full notice Judge Innes declared, by reason of his partnership with the assistant surveyor, to know he was infringing a recorded claim older than his own.

Wilson, however, appealed to the Supreme Court, engaging Joseph Hamilton Daveiss to argue the case for him. Daveiss, historian Brant comments, was "a protégé of George Nicholas both in law and land piracy."

The case did not seem complicated to Chief Justice John Marshall. Mason's revised entry was a "removal," not an "explanation," therefore did not carry the other entries with it.

The land he said belonged to Wilson under the rule laid down by Lord Kaimes that in order to protect himself against a loss a man is free to take advantage of another man's error.

Marshall did not, Brant says, quote the next sentence of Kaimes, that if this is done to gain an advantage over the man it is a fraud.

By the time of the Supreme Court trial, James Madison Sr. was dead.

His son James, who had just begun an eight-year-term as secretary of state under President Thomas Jefferson and inherited a portion of his father's 10,000-acre claim here, soon received a letter from Joseph Hamilton Daveiss.

The letter informed Madison that Daveiss had bought rights to the entire 30,000 acres under the Wilson entry. It proposed that the two agree to be bound by the pending Supreme Court decision and discount entirely the two previous decisions given in favor of the Madison claim.

This tactic of Daveiss, called a "trap" by Madison's biographer, drew a cool tactful reply from the secretary of state.

"Of my father's interest about one-fourth only has devolved on me, and a like proportion on my brother William. The residue descends to all his children.

"In so complicated a case, and with such a fraction of the right in myself, you will perceive that little advantage of any sort will derive from my individual concurrence in your proposal, while the attempt to separate the course of (litigation(from that of my co-claimants diminish embarrassments. "

After Marshall had judged in Daveiss" favor, Daveiss presented a transcript of the opinion and persuaded the Register of Lands to award him a patent on the 10,000 acres without further hearing of the case.

In 1797, meanwhile, when James Madison Jr. was still a member of Congress, he had purchased with his brother Ambrose other large tracts of land Kentucky.

During the winter of that year the two bought 3,000 poor and hilly acres on Sandy River, 1,000 acres on Elk Creek, 1,000 acres opposite Rough Creek, and 2,000 acres in what is now Daviess County on Panther Creek.

The Panther Creek lands were almost opposite the 10,000 acres which the Madison family had just lost to Joseph Hamilton Daveiss.

A copy of the deed to the property, dated 1797 and bearing the signature of Gov. James Garrard next to the seal of Kentucky, survives in the Daviess County Courthouse.

Although his brother died in the meantime, Madison continued to hold ownership of the Panther Creek property throughout his term as President of the United States, from 1809 to 1817.

In 1818, however, Madison sold the 2,000-acre area to Benjamin Bell, who took the 1,000 acres below Panther Creek, and William Tapscott, who assumed control of an equal amount of land on the upper side of the creek.

Both men paid part of the purchase price when the deal was closed, but neither paid very much after that. Tapscott, in fact, died, leaving a widow, several children, and some slaves; Bell remained much alive, but unwilling to satisfy his creditor.

Legal action was initiated by Madison, and in 1828 he named his kinsman, John H. Lee, attorney in the case. Later a second power of attorney was granted Lee, following the discovery that Dolley Madison, James Madison's famous wife, had neglected to affix her name to the first document.

The error, however, was corrected, and Daviess circuit court rendered judgment in favor of; the Madisons. Bell was ordered to pay or submit to a sale the land.

While it is not perfectly clear why he acted as he did, Bell nevertheless chose to flee. He gathered his household onto a boat and floated down the Ohio River, headed for New Orleans, and died on the way.

In the meantime, according to Brant, it was discovered that Tapscott's property had been collusively conveyed to the widow Tapscott, necessitating another lawsuit.

At this juncture a Daviess Countian named William R. Griffith visited Madison saying that he had a plan to handle the claims against Bell and Mrs. Tapscott. "He appears to have a thorough knowledge of the law... and the respective interests of the parties," Madison wrote to his lawyer here.

Griffith, Lee replied, held a collusive mortgage on Mrs. Tapscott's slaves. She, after giving Lee "more abuse than I ever heard poured forth from a female tongue," was persuaded to make a settlement out of court.

Circuit court records, however, do not entirely support the story of an out-of-court settlement.

According to surviving records of Madison vs. Tapscott and Bell, the court ordered a public auction of the lands in 1831. The buyer was John H. Lee, the legal representative of James and Dolley Madison; he paid \$2,500.

On the other hand, some out- of-court maneuvering seems probable, for shortly after the date of the public sale an entry in the deed book notes that 200 acres of land were transferred from the Madisons to Mrs. Tapscott and Mrs. Bell for the token price of \$10.

Whatever the actual details may be, it is a fact that by 1832 the Panther Creek land was once again in the possession of James and Dolley Madison. Immediately they began to sell it in smaller tracts,

Four hundred twenty-five acres went to James Rafferty at a price of \$850 in 1832, and two years later 512 acres were sold to William Harrel for \$750. Also in 1834, 200 acres were

deeded to Howard T. Taylor for \$1,200, and the largest tract, 995 acres, went to Simpson Stout for \$1,790.

The money helped the Madisons make their annual purchase of pork from David Weaver, a farmer, who assured them that his hogs were fattened on Indian corn and if they "ante as meney as you want I can git you more."

Thus the connection begun 54 years ago between the Madison family and Daviess County was at an end.

By this time, Madison had long passed his zenith in public affairs. The work which would make him known to future ages as the "Father of the Constitution" had been completed many years before.

He had not been to Congress since 1797; he had completed his term as secretary of state in 1809, and his term as President had ended in 1817, about 20 years before his death.

In 1836 James Madison died at the age of 85. He had achieved great things, but his personality would always appear vague, uncertain to later ages.

Among the scarce accounts of Madison as a man is a short description by Henry Adams, who characterized the third president as "a small man, quiet, somewhat precise in manner, pleasant, fond of conversation, with a certain mixture of ease and dignity in his address."

Washington Irving, in addition, remarked the powerful contrast between the delicate, almost feeble figure of Madison, and the plump beauty of his wife Dolley.

Dolley, whom he married in 1794. was 64 at the time of her husband's death; ironically, her image, that of a woman of great social charm, would be transmitted to posterity much more clearly than Madison's own.

It is true, nevertheless, that Brant's massive biography has contributed to a revival of interest in Madison and a fresh recognition of the greatness of the President who was for much of his life a Daviess County landowner.

A History of Owensboro and Daviess County. Kentucky, Hugh O. Potter, KY, 1974, Daviess County Historical Society, Owensboro, KY, pp.15-16:

Among the other men connected in one way or another with the early history of what evolved into the Owensboro metropolitan area were some Whose accomplishments, reputations and exploits qualified them for more than local notice. They included Major William Bailey Smith, George Mason of Gunston Hall, his grandson, Brig. General Richard Barnes Mason, Colonel John Banister of Battersea, President James Madison and David Ross.

... The May, Banister and Company suit against the heirs George Mason resulted in court records that have been responsible for identifying other early land owners in present Owensboro and Daviess county as some of outstanding leaders of this nation prior to, during and in the post Revolutionary war period.

... The third was a member of the Continental congress, the Constitutional convention of 1787, the first four congresses of the nation, secretary of state under Thomas Jefferson, and the fourth President of the United States. He was James Madison who inherited his Daviess county land and who, with his wife, Dolly Madison, later sold it when they were in need of money.

These men who were among the founding fathers of the United States of America, looked to the West and saw a land of future promise in this wilderness, then a part of Virginia, on and

near the Ohio river, the great interior avenue of exploration and trade. The years which have passed since these men lived, planned and worked to convert the colonies into a great nation, have more than justified their judgment in staking out claims to thousands of acres, including those now covered by the city of Owensboro and the farms of Daviess county.

George Mason and James Madison were two of the recognized leaders in the convention at Philadelphia in 1787 of which the Constitution of the United States was shaped and put into written form.

For his wisdom and foresight in drafting the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the influence it has had on world thinking, George Mason's life has been commemorated by one of twenty-three medallions on the walls of the house of representatives of the United States congress as one of the world's great law-givers who advanced man's march to freedom. The only other American so honored was Thomas Jefferson.

The Constitutional convention was authorized by the Continental congress after its members had come to the conclusion that the Articles of Confederation which were drafted two years after the Declaration of Independence—and which, odd as it may now seem, failed to provide for a president or a supreme court—were no longer adequate to the preservation of the union.

James Madison, whose notes on the convention debates provide a record of this closed and well-guarded meeting, has been described as the father of the United States constitution. Despite his small stature and youthful appearance, (he was 36 at the time) Madison had already gained recognition as a thinker and leader in the Continental congress. He considered it to be of much importance that a stable and firm government, in the republican form, be offered to the American people for their approval. If this were not done he feared they would, sooner or later, in "universal disgust ... renounce the blessings which they have purchased at so dear a rate, and be ready for any change that may be proposed to them."

Madison vigorously and successfully fought for the ratification of the national Constitution by the Virginia assembly, in the face of strong opposition from Patrick Henry and 62-year-old George Mason, who not only voiced his dissatisfaction with the final document but refused to sign or support it. At the Virginia ratification convention, which met at Richmond on June 2, 1788. Madison made the first extended speech. He was credited by a reporter with disposing with most of the objections raised by Patrick Henry, insofar as they could be disposed of "by a calm and rational investigation." In the end his logic prevailed as Virginia ratified the Constitution by a vote of 89 to 79, but with the recommendation that it be amended so as to provide the Mason-advocated safeguards for the rights of the individuals to be governed.

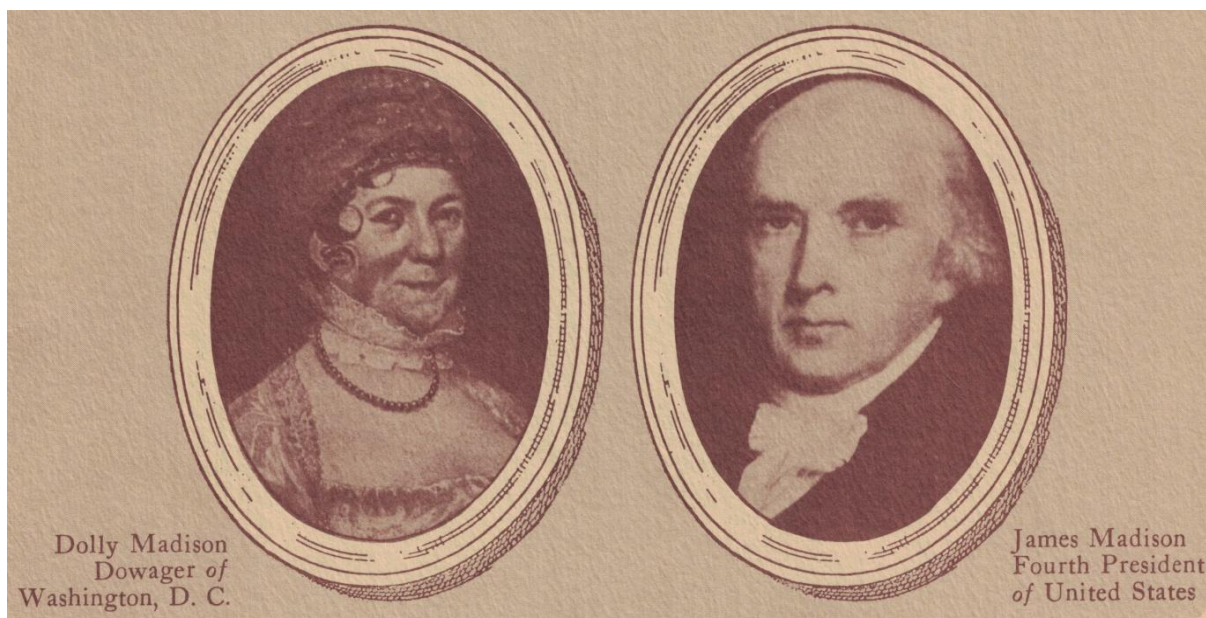
Madison was a member of the house in the first national congress under the new constitution and, carrying out the wishes of the Virginia convention, introduced twelve amendments to the Constitution, of which ten were accepted and became the so-called national Bill of Rights. Madison also proposed a resolution in congress which created the departments of the Treasury, War and State, and was chosen by Thomas Jefferson to serve as his secretary of state from March 5, 1801 until March 3, 1809, when he (Madison) was inaugurated President of the United States.

Following the end of his second term Madison retired to his estate at Montpelier, Virginia, where he spent the remaining nineteen years of his life. At his death on June 28, 1836, his financial affairs were in poor order which was reflected in the sale of 2,332 acres of land in present Daviess county, Kentucky, by John A. Lee with the power of attorney of James Madison and his wife, Dolly P. Madison.

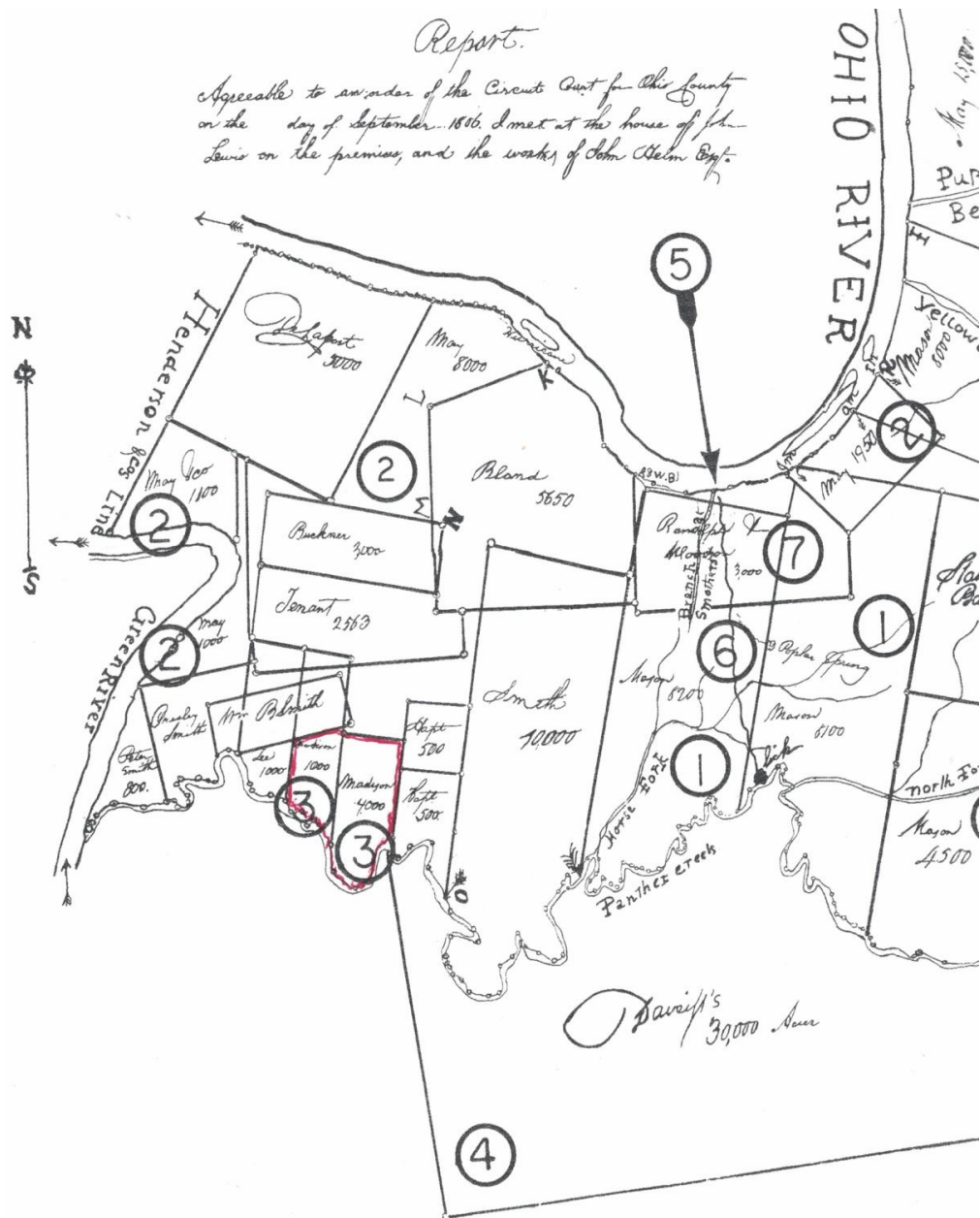
The Joseph Hamilton Daveiss Papers in the archives of the Filson Club in Louisville contain a letter from Madison to Daveiss, dated November 26, 1801, which refers to a 10,000-acre tract of land "on Panther creek" which the then secretary of state wrote was surveyed in the name of his father. The exact location of this land is not set out in the Madison deeds on record in Daviess county Deed books C and D, but the 1806 map prepared for use in the May, Banister & Co. suit against the heirs of George Mason, indicates 5,000 acres of the Madison survey covered land on Panther creek in what is now the general Curdsville-Sorgho section of Daviess county, near Green river.

In 1828 the power of attorney from James Madison to John A. Lee was entered in Daviess county Deed book C, page 317. In 1831 John Lee was given another power of attorney, this time by Dolly P. Madison and James Madison. It was recorded on page 374 of the same book. No sales were shown until 1832 when Lee executed deeds to Francis Bell for 100 acres, William Tapscott for 100 acres, and James Rafferty for 425 acres. The Bell and Tapscott deeds were entered on page 17 of Deed book D, and the Rafferty deed is on page 376 of book C. No sales were listed for 1833, but in 1834 three more transfers were entered in which Dolly P. and James Madison deeded 512 acres to William Harrel (Deed book D page 344), 200 acres to Howard T. Taylor and Allen Taylor (Deed book D, page 345), and 995 acres to Simpson Stout (Deed book D, page 380).

In the Beginning ... Earliest historical and biographical material concerning Owensboro and Daviess County with 1806 map showing original land surveys. Souvenir pamphlet researched and written by Hugh O. Potter, Radio Station WOMI, Owensboro, KY, 1968:



p.16A, 1806 Map of part of present Daviess County, Kentucky – 5,000 acres owned by (President) James Madison on Panther Creek in the western part of Daviess County is outlined in red:



Letter from Joseph Hamilton Daveiss to James Madison, 4 November 1801
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison>

FRANKFORT. 4. Novr 1801.

SIR

My letter of the 9th of Sepr. on the subject of your panther creek lands, remains unanswered; being sent by private hand, it may have miscarried, and I now state its contents.

Your father claimed 10,000 acres of land on panther creek, near Green-River—it was entered to adjoin Wm Moores 10,000, who had entered to adjoin George Masons 8300; these three claimants had one common agent, Hancock Lee, in locating, and one, H. Taylor, in making their surveys. George Wilson under whom I claim, entered 30,000 acres—or rather surveyed that quantity, upon a larger entry, to include, all these three claims; cross caveats have been depending for many years with each claimant. That with Mason was removed into the District court of U. S. & now depends upon appeal before the supreme court at Washington. You have a Caveat against Wilson in the state court. The cross caveat against you is in the Circuit court for the U. S. That in which you are plaintiff has I Am satisfied been taken to the state court by your fathers agent, there to rest untill the event of the contest with Mason should be known, and with design to endeavour to obtain a different decision of the question in the state court, should the appeal eventuate unfavourably.

I am informed, that upon the death of Mr James Madison, your father, this land has descended or been devised to you and the suit is r[ev]ived in yr name. I refer you to the papers of the case of Wilson vs Mason in the Supreme court the platt in which will shew you, with the inclosed entries, the true state of these claims, and that they turn on the *same question & circumstances* with Masons. I have therefore now to propose before the event of the case of Mason is known (& which will be known in Decer) to agree that our dispute shall end according to the decision of *it*. For tho, if that cause should terminate against me, I should surely be justifiable in dismissing my Caveat in the Circuit court & bringing it in the state court, for the very purpose Mr. Madison's agent has put *his* there—yet, I would even to save a valuable property feel the deepest reluctance in such a measure: For if different adjudications on our land law are made by these two courts the greatest evils must attend it in this country—especially on a question of so extensive influence. Two laws of property are at once established; two hostile principles of Tenure. And supposing each court decides *for the plaintiff*, the powers of the two courts are at once brought to ⟨a⟩ trial, whose judgment the Register shall obey. I am entire owner, now, of this 30,000 acres in name of Wilson; I am persuaded the State court would conform to the decision of the Sup. court, but lest they should not, and at any event, to prevent a tedious and expensive controversy between us, I make this proposal. If you accept of it before the 1st of December, when the Sup. court will meet, and notify me of it, you are to consider this proposal, so accepted, as creating a stipulation absolutely obligatory on me, and entitling your counsel in Kentucky to have the final judgment entered for you, if the sup court decides in favour of Mason. If you accept, you will advise your agent & counsell here of it, that such an entry may be made for me should the judgment at Washington entitle me.

Mr John Tho. Mason was counsell for Mason, and has I suppose certified copies of the inclosed entries (which were copied at my office from authentic copies, to day,) and also of the record in above named suit. I would have sent the authentic copies but must shortly file them in court.

I spoke to Col. Barbour, Your fathers agent on this subject, but he requires some act of yours renovating his powers, before he will act for you—the former warrant being of course revoked by the death of his constituent.

You will soon be able to satisfy yourself whether I am correct in stating these cases to rest on the same points, and then I presume will loose no time in advising me of your decision, that I may not be remiss in preparing for trial should you resolve not to end it otherwise.

The spirit of faction is not yet laid, If I am correctly informed; nor has the fermentation yet reached its crisis.

I dont envy you, the pleasure of your office.

Express my esteem for Mrs Madison and Miss Payne, and believe me to be with great respect Sir Your most obedt

J. H. DAVEISS.

Original letter written in 1829 by President James Madison (1751-1836), of Montpelier, VA, to William R. Griffith (1793-1848), of Owensboro, KY, is part of the collection of the Griffith Family Papers at the Kentucky Room in the Daviess County Public Library, Owensboro, KY (closed storage area).

See the Griffith Family Papers, by Jerry Long, Kentucky Room, Daviess County Public Library, Owensboro, KY, 1994, 6 Volumes, 1413 pp. Vol. 1 – “The Griffith Family”, 294 pp; Vol. 2 – “The Weir Family”, 245 pp; Vol. 3 – “Letters of William R. Griffith (1793-1848)”, 281 pp; Vol. 4 – “Lands Records of William R. Griffith (1793-1848)”, 316 pp; Vol. 5 – “Accounts of William R. Griffith (1793-1848)”, 204 pp; & Vol. 6 – “Addenda to the Griffith Family Papers”, 73 pp. Library catalog # KR-G-Grif]:

William R. Griffith (1920-1992), of Quogue, NY, was a descendant of the Griffith and Weir families of Owensboro and Daviess County, KY. Four prior generations of his family had resided and were prominent in shaping the history of Western Kentucky. Mr. Griffith upon his death left his family library and historical collection to his first cousin, Arria Griffith McGinniss. Miss McGinniss, of Kensington, MD, in 1992, donated the collection to the Daviess County Public Library, in Owensboro, KY. William R. Griffith had inherited most of the collection but had also added to it in his lifetime.

Among the items received by the Daviess County Public Library were: letters, documents, books, periodicals, newspapers, booklets, circulars, maps, prints, engravings, and photographs. The letters and documents of the Griffith and Weir families comprise the largest portion of the collection. All of these were duplicated and compiled by Jerry Long into a series of five bound volumes for the shelves of the Daviess County Public Library. Most of the documents spanning the years of 1810-1848, were the business papers of the donor’s great grandfather, William Ridgely Griffith (1793-1848). A public official, land agent and speculator, he owned vast quantities of land in Daviess and surrounding counties. These documents involved many of the region's earliest pioneers and his correspondence included many prominent officials and businessmen. Letters from such famous Kentuckians as Benjamin Logan, Hubbard Taylor and Buckner Thruston are found in the collection. One letter dated 16 August 1829 was signed by James Madison, of Montpelier, VA, who 12 years earlier had served as the 4th President of the United States (a copy can be found in Vol. I, pp. 68-69 & Vol. III, pp.45-46 of the Griffith Family Papers).

Dear Sir

Montpelier Aug. 16. 1829

your favor of ^{May} ~~May~~ 16. from Baltimore, was duly rec'd. In consequence of your friendly dispositions communicated when with me, to co-operate in settling the business with Mr. Tapscott in a manner favorable to all parties, letters on the subject were written to Mr. John H. Lee, who has been so good as to take charge of Mr. Willis's & my interest in the case. Apprehending from the lapse of time without hearing from him, that the letters may have miscarried, duplicates of them go by the mail which carries this.

What you say with respect to the Orange Company's Land on Panther Creek, seems to enforce the attention due to a part of it. My brother William, as you suppose, is the Executor of my father, and has been made acquainted with your view of the matter. But like myself, he has been in bad health latterly. He will probably be soon able to give attention to it. In the mean time, we shall all be thankful for any further light you may be able to communicate relating to that interest, or to other lands standing in the name of my father, or of Ambrose Madison my brother, and the father of Mr. Willis. Mr. Hubbard ^{Taylor} is better acquainted than any of us, with the claims of the family to lands in Kentucky.

With great respect & friendly salutations

James Madison

Mr. Griffith

Transcription of [President] James Madison letter:

Montpelier, Aug. 16, 1829

Mr. Griffith

Dear sir

Your favor of May 16 from Baltimore was duly rec'd. In consequence of your friendly disposition communicated when with me to co-operate in settling the business with Mrs. Tapscott in a manner favorable to all parties. Letters on the subject were written to Mr. John H. Lee, who has been so good as to take charge of Mrs. Willis's family interest in the case.

Apprehending from the lapse of time without hearing from him, that the letters may have miscarried duplicates of them go by the mail which carries this.

What you say with respect to the Orange Company's land on Panther Creek. I come to enforce the attention due to a part of it. My brother William, as you suppose is the Executor of my father, and has been made acquainted with your view of the matter. But like myself, he has been in bad health latterly. He will probably be soon able to give attention to it. In the mean time we shall all be thankful for any further lights you may be able to communicate relating to that interest, or to other lands standing in the name of my father, or of Ambrose Madison my brother, and the father of Mrs. Willis. Mr. Hubbard Taylor is better acquainted than any of us with the claims of the family to lands in Kentucky.

With great respect & friendly salutations
James Madison

An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY., Leo McDonough & Co., 1876, p46 – part of Lowertown Precinct – Rafferty lands above word Panther along bottom and tracts of land to the west and north of the Rafferty tracts were part of the lands owned by President James Madison:

