

# Owensboro's Historian: Frank Lockett Hall (1823-1907)

By Jerry Long

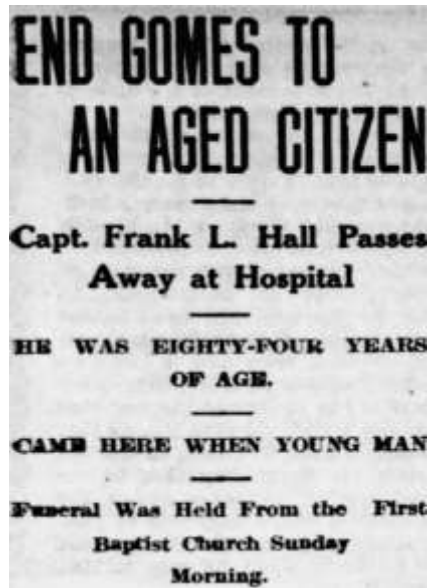
Francis (Frank) Lockett Hall was born 17 March 1823 New Castle, Henry County, KY and died in Owensboro, Daviess County, KY on 26 July 1907. He was the son of Banister Hall & Nancy Eastham. His parents were married in Nelson County, KY on 31 December 1809. His father is listed in the 1820 and 1830 censuses of New Castle, Henry County, KY. Banister Hall (born 1783, died 1832 aged 49 years) has a gravestone in the Bethabara Baptist Church Cemetery, at Habit in Daviess County, KY.

Frank L. Hall married twice. He married Elizabeth (Thompson) Hewitt on 7 June 1851 (Daviess County, KY marriage book A, p223). Elizabeth married first Spotswood T. Hewitt (Hewlett), 18 July 1832 Daviess County, KY. Frank and Elizabeth had two children that died during infancy; one of these Bettie was born in 1854 and died prior to 1860. Elizabeth, wife of Frank L. Hall, died during 1870-1875. Frank L. Hall married second Mrs. Mary M. (Ford) Elliott (1835-1913), 29 June 1875 Louisville, Jefferson County, KY; she was the widow of Thomas J. Elliott. Mary Ford Hall was buried at the Highland Cemetery, Fort Mitchell, Kenton County, KY.

Frank L. Hall had made Owensboro his home in 1839. He is listed in the 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880 and 1900 federal censuses of Daviess County, KY. In 1904 there were only two other residents of Owensboro, James M. Holmes & James Kennady, that were living here when F. L. Hall arrived. At his death Frank L. Hall was one of the oldest and most prominent businessmen of Owensboro and was considered the town historian. He had been an operator of a livery stable, carpenter, tobacco dealer, auctioneer, and proprietor of several of the town's leading institutions, Hall's Hotel (in operation in 1852), Hall's Opera House and F. L. Hall & Co. His Opera House was the scene of many artistic performances and social events. His company according to the 1880 census carried "agriculture implements, wagons and everything else"; it later specialized in furniture. He retired from business in March 1905. He died on 26 July 1907 at the Owensboro hospital of infirmities incident to old age. Owensboro's Hall Street and Hall's Addition to the city were named after him; both are shown on an 1876 map of Owensboro. He was buried in section D of Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery.

A multitude of articles about Frank L. Hall appeared in the Owensboro newspapers during his lifetime. A few of these compiled by this writer can be found in the entry for Frank L. Hall in the "Owensboro Area Obituary Index" on Owensboro's Daviess County Public Library's website. An effort was made to transcribe the following articles as they appeared in the original text.





Captain Frank Lockett Hall, one of the oldest and probably the most generally known man in Daviess county, died of infirmities incident to old age at the city hospital at 5:30 o'clock Friday morning. He was eighty-four years, four months and a few days old. Until a few weeks ago, Captain Hall was in good health, active and vigorous, both physically and mentally. While on a visit at Little Rock, Ark., he became ill and was in a critical condition for several days. He improved greatly, however, and returned home within a week after the beginning of his illness. He was able to drive about the streets for a short time after his return but the hot weather affected him unfavorably and, about three weeks ago, he became confined to his bed. Two weeks ago he was taken to the hospital, there he remained until his death.

#### Distinctive Character.

In the passing of Captain Hall, Owensboro loses one of its most sterling and distinctive characters. Practically all of his active life was spent in Owensboro, and he had come in contact socially or commercially, with almost every citizen of this and the preceding generation in Daviess county. Although not a native of Owensboro, he was for several years the oldest citizen in the city in point of residence.

Captain Hall was born at New Castle, Henry county March 17, 1823. He was a son of Banistier Hall and he the son of an elder Banistier, who was a French Huegenot and came to America as a refugee on account of persecution in his native county. Frank Hall was the youngest child of a family of six children, all of the others being girls. On his mother's side he was related to the distinguished Marshall family of Virginia. His father died when he was a small boy, and he was thrown on his own resources almost from childhood. He attended such schools as were available at that early day in Kentucky, and, by this means together with self instruction in later years, he obtained a good education. One of his school mates in Henry county was Judge W. S. Pryor, late of the appellate bench, of Kentucky.

When he was sixteen years old, Frank Hall, with his mother and two sisters, moved to Daviess county. They made the trip overland in a wagon, and Frank walked most of the distance, looking after the milk cows that were brought along. One of his sisters had married William Evins

and preceded the family to Daviess county, locating in what was then known as "Forks of the creek," now the Habit neighborhood. With Mr. and Mrs. Evins, the Hall family stopped temporarily.

#### Learned Carpenter's Trade.

Young Frank Hall came to Owensboro, then a mere village along the banks of the river with only a few hundred population, to secure employment. He secured a job as a farm hand on the plantation of Robert Triplett. Mr. Triplett was the means of putting him in position to learn the trade of a carpenter, which he did under Willis Pickett. In the reminiscences in which he delighted to indulge in his latter days, Captain Hall often remarked upon the kindness shown him by Robert Triplett, and declared that this was one of the things that enabled him to succeed in after years. While working as a carpenter, he lived in a small room in the rear of the store of Mercer Moorland and cooked his own meals, saving every possible cent of his wages. In a short time his savings amounted to a sufficient sum to enable him to buy a lot at the corner of Main and Lewis streets on which he built a house as a home for his mother and sisters.

Captain Hall continued to work as a carpenter for several years but, in the early fifties, engaged in the hotel and livery business, operating a hotel at the corner of Main and Frederica streets, and a livery stable at the corner of Third and Frederica. Instead of the familiar Frank L. Hall, of recent years, his name was displayed in front of the hostelry as F. Lockett Hall.

#### Famous Auctioneer.

At about this time, Captain Hall began to come into notice as an auctioneer and, until within very recent years, he was the most popular auctioneer in this entire section. He sold hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of property under the hammer. In the days before the war, his services were in demand in auctioning of slaves, and in later days he sold practically all of the high priced real estate that went at auction in Owensboro. He was frequently called to Louisville, Henderson and other cities of Kentucky and even of states across the river to cry sales. Probably no man ever mounted an auction block better equipped in point of voice for the work. He could make himself heard distinctly to the outskirts of the largest crowd and was an adept at the art of keeping the buyers entertained and in good humor. Through all of his business ventures, Capt. Hall continued to play the roll of an auctioneer.

A very large number of houses in Owensboro were built by Captain Hall. The first opera house in the city was built by him. It is the building at the corner of Third and St. Ann streets, now occupied, by the Nanz Floral company and the E. W. built the house at the corner of First and St. Ann streets, that was recently rebuilt and is now the Grand theater.

#### Amassed Fortune.

After retiring from the hotel business, Captain Hall engaged in merchandising. He was the first merchant to bring buggies and carriages to Owensboro for sale. At first he carried a general line of merchandise, but later handled only farming implements and furniture. He continued in this business, with the exception of a short time, until two years ago when he retired from active business pursuits. At the time of his retirement, he had been longer in business than any other merchant in the state in the lines that he handled.

In the latter fifties, Captain Hall began the buying of tobacco and was one of the most extensive dealers in the Green river country for several years. At the close of the war, he had

amassed a large fortune. He closed out his business interests here and moved to Chicago and later to Louisville. He met with financial reverses while away and returned to Owensboro practically a poor man. He settled down to business, however, and was in a short time on his feet and in a few years had amassed another fortune.

From the age of sixteen years, Captain Hall had been a member of the Baptist church. He united with Bethabara church shortly after coming to Daviess county, and, a year later, transferred his membership to the First Baptist church, of which he remained a zealous and unflagging member until his death. For over thirty years, he was a member of the finance committee, teacher of the Bible class in the Sunday school, and, for a number of years, moderator, which position he held until his death. The only fraternal organization with which he was ever affiliated was the Sons of Temperance, of which order he became a member in 1848. During the remaining sixty years of his life, he was an advocate of all temperance measures.

Captain Hall was twice married. His first wife was Mrs. Elizabeth Hewett. She was, before her first marriage, a Miss Thompson. She was married to Captain Hall in 1852. Two children, a son and a daughter, were born to them but both died in infancy. His second wife, to whom he was married June 29, 1875, was Mrs. Mary Elliott, formerly Miss Mary Ford. She survives him.

#### Never a Candidate.

In all of his long life, Captain Hall was never a candidate for a civil office. He was a Democrat in politics, and, frequently, his party could have found no more available man than him to put forward for important office. He was frequently urged to become a candidate, but consistently and firmly refused. He had no desire to be brought prominently before the public and was, on the whole, an exceptionally modest man. A prominent professional man said of him yesterday, "Frank Hall never voluntarily told a man what he had done himself. He delighted in telling of the good deeds that others had done, but, except as you questioned him about it, he would not mention his own deeds."

#### Always Cheerful.

Nobody ever saw Captain Hall otherwise than in a cheerful frame of mind. He was uniformly in good humor, cheerful in address, a hearty sort of man. The vicissitudes of a checkered life did not change him in the least. Even a few weeks ago, his powerful voice sounded its cheery greeting about the streets as of old. "Frank Hall," said an old friend of his yesterday, "has done more singing and whistling about Owensboro than any other man ever did. In the days when us fortunes were fallen, he walked these streets, apparently cheerful, always whistling. I suppose he kept his fortitude up in that way."

Captain Hall delighted to sing religious hymns. He inherited much of the musical talent of his Huegenot ancestors, and was one of the finest vocalists in the city. Even in his last years, his strong tenor voice was always heard in the song services at his church.

#### Had Wonderful Memory.

In point of accuracy of memory, Captain Hall was truly remarkable. If he ever forgot a fact or a date, no one was able to discover it. For many years he was the unfailing source of information for newspaper men on all subjects pertaining to the early history of Owensboro. He never failed them. He knew the history of the city as no other man did, and he was at all times willing to impart information to representatives of the press.

He leaves a large number of relatives In Daviess county. Mrs. James M. Holmes, whose home is on Anthony street, is a niece. The late Mrs. James Sawyer and the late Mrs. John Wandling were nieces. Emmett Barley, who lives a few miles from the city on the Leitchfield road, and William Evins, of Opelousas, La., are nephews. In addition to these, a large number of great nieces and nephews survive.

The funeral was held from the First Baptist church at 9 o'clock Sunday morning. Services were conducted by the Rev. T. N. Compton, former pastor of First Baptist church, and the Rev. Irvine Goddard, rector of Trinity Episcopal church. The pallbearers were Phil T. Watkins, J. W. Slaughter, Ernest Anderson, W. F. Reinhardt, Dr. L. G. Armendt and James Holmes. Interment was made in Elmwood cemetery.



Owensboro Gazette, Owensboro, KY, 24 April 1852, p3:

**HALL'S HOTEL,**  
**OWENSBORO, KY.,**  
**FORMERLY THE MANSION HOUSE.**

**T**HIS establishment has recently gone into the hands of Capt. **LOCKETT HALL**, for a term of five years, who has re-fitted and furnished the house in splendid style; he has built large additions, which makes it **one of the best Hotels in the Green River Country.**

Its situation is pleasant, fronting, as it does, the Public Square on the South, and the main business street on the East, and only one square from the Steamboat Landing.

Passengers arriving by boats will receive prompt attention from our Porters, who will take charge of their baggage, [free of cost] and conduct them to the Hotel.

**The Bar** has been supplied with the best Wines and Liquors that can be obtained, and

**The Larder** will be found bearing all the delicacies and viands of every country and clime.

He still continues his **Livery Stable**, which enables him to furnish provinder, and the proper treatment to the Horse. He can furnish saddle horses and vehicles to persons traveling into the interior of the country.

Being thankful for favors already bestowed, he hopes, by proper attention to business, and his intention to keep a good house, to merit a liberal share of public patronage.

**F. LOCKETT HALL,**  
Proprietor.

Owensboro, April 17, 1852.



Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory For 1859 and 1860, G. W. Hawes, 1859:

page 280 Owensboro – Hall, F. L., agricultural implement manufacturer and dealer.



Daily Journal, Evansville, IN, 8 December 1869, p4:

We had the pleasure of meeting Frank L. Hall, of Owensboro, a large tobacco dealer, and proprietor of Hall's Dramatic Temple, one of the finest Halls in the West.



Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory For 1876-7,

R. L. Polk & Co. Publishers, Louisville, KY, 1876:

Page 426 Owensboro – Hall, Frank L., auctioneer



An Illustrated Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY., Leo McDonough & Co., 1876, page 81:



Hall's Addition to the city of Owensboro – bordered on the south by McFarland Street (now Ninth Street), on the east by the Leitchfield Road, on the west by Center Street and on the north by Fourth Street.



**Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory For 1879-80,**

R. L. Polk & Co. & A. C. Danser, 1879:

Page 418 Owensboro – Hall, Frank L., auctioneer.



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

Page 352: Hall's Opera House. – This is the second and third stories of the large business Block erected by Frank L. Hall in 1869, at the southeast corner of the public square. Size, 88 x 105 feet. Cost, \$20,000. At that time it was the finest building in Owensboro. It was afterward appraised at \$30,000. The ceiling is eighteen feet above the floor. It is the only dramatic hall in the city. [Note this building at the northeast corner of Third & St. Ann Streets was razed in 1908 and the Masonic Temple was erected in its place.]

Page 422: 11 October 1869 “F. L. Hall's new dramatic hall opened”

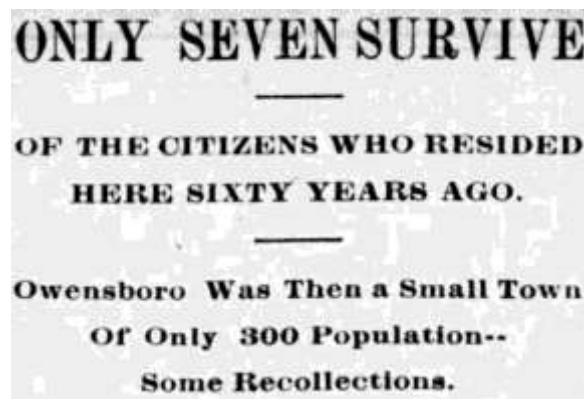


**Owensboro City Directory For 1889-90,** Owensboro, KY, 1889, page 69:

Hall, Frank L. (Frank L. H. & Co.) res. 512 W. 4<sup>th</sup>  
Hall, Frank L. & Co., furniture, carpets & c., 104 and 106 E. Main



**Owensboro Messenger,** Owensboro, KY, 13 December 1898, p4:



In the fall of 1838 the late Benjamin Bransford, with half a dozen slaves, left his native state, Virginia, for Daviess county, Ky. He traveled the entire distance overland. He traveled by

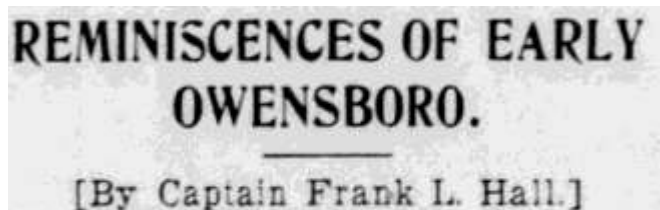
day, and at night would camp on the roadside when he could find no friendly hostelry. On arriving here he commenced his life business, the tobacco business, with his relative, Henry Bransford, who a year or two before had erected a tobacco stemmery on the west side of Walnut street, between Fourth and Fifth streets.

The writer left his native county, Henry county, this state, late in the month of November, 1839, coming the overland route all the way, driving two milk cows, and arriving at the hospitable home of Nathaniel Horn, who then lived six miles from Owensboro, on the Hardinsburg road, where I staid on the night of December 1, 1839. Next day I came on to Owensboro. then a small town of about 300 population, but which has grown from that small number to the metropolitan proportions of 15,000 during the past sixty years. Of all the persons who lived in Owensboro when I first came here only the following survive: J. Thomas, Mrs. Mariah Haney, Mrs. Sarah Moorman, Samuel Dixon Kennady, James Kennady and Tom Crump, colored. Mrs. Haney is the sister of Geo. N. Mackay, of Texas, and is over 90 years of age. Mrs. Moorman is the widow of Silas Mercer Moorman, who died away from home and kindred while serving in the Confederate army. I believe but few better men ever resided in Owensboro than Mr. Moorman. Tom Crump, the old colored man is a negro of good repute and he still resides in Owensboro. He came here with Benjamin Bransford on his overland trip from Virginia in 1838.

The late A. M. C. Simmons, who died Monday in the fullness of years and bright prospects for eternal happiness in that heaven of rest which is promised to the righteous and faithful, did not come to Owensboro for some years after 1839, but he was looked upon as an old citizen. I could give many reminiscences of the sixty years I have lived in Owensboro, but the Messenger would not spare the space for such desultory articles. FRANK L. HALL.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Industrial Souvenir Edition, Spring of 1900, p26:



The first house dedicated to the worship of our Creator in the Yellow Banks was built of logs in about the year 1835, and occupied the ground on the south side of the ravine occupied by the tobacco factory of Hon. A. C. Tompkins. This rude structure, before it was bought by the colored people and converted into a house of worship, had been used as a school house and here Aunt Suckey Tarlton, the pioneer female pedagogue of the Yellow Banks, taught her first school. Among her numerous pupils was the late S. D. Kennedy, and his brother, James Kennedy, who was there taught by this venerable woman to utter his first words in babyhood.

The colored brethren continued to worship and transact their church affairs under the direction and management of a committee furnished by the First Baptist church of white brethren and for many years this course was kept up. But the colored church grew to such numerical strength that they sold out the old building site and bought ground and built a church on West Fourth street and occupied it until it was destroyed by fire, after which they erected one of the most substantial and comodious houses of worship in the city.



The First Baptist church was organized and constituted in 1835, with George N. Mackey and wife, John Stout, Isaac Kennedy and wife, Mrs. Captain Johnson, Mrs. George W. Triplett and Oliver Potts, a man of color. This new church held some meetings in the court house and in the little old brick school house, that then stood on the ground now occupied by the colored upper ward school building.

In 1839 the Rev. John L. Burrows held a protracted meeting, resulting in 75 or 100 conversions, among whom was the lamented Silas Mercer Moorman, who afterward became the moving spirit in the erection on the river front where now stands the cellulose factory, the first house of worship for use of the First Baptist church of this city, which was done in 1842.

The first sound of a bell used to call the people of this city to gether for the worship of the Almighty Jehovah rang out from the spire of the First Baptist church in the year 1843. This same bell afterward continued to perform the same duty on the colored Baptist church for 5 years, calling the people to come into the houses of the Lord, and after the fire it was sold as old iron to a junk dealer.

The first brick church building erected in this city was built by the Cumberland Presbyterians on St. Ann street, between Third and Fourth streets, in about 1837 or 1838. The building is still standing. Joe Weaver, a better man than whom never lived in this city, was the moving cause in the erection of these houses of worship.

The Rev. Samuel Calhoon, who was the father of the late George Calhoon, was probably the first minister that occupied the pulpit in these houses of worship.

Speaking of cotton mills, brings to mind a man of noble birth and name, the sage of Haphazard, which was the name he gave to his new home in the dark and bloody ground of Kentucky before he left his native home in Virginia. He settled on the sands two miles above town on the river now owned by Mr. J. Hunter Bell. This place went by the name of Haphazard for many long years afterward. On his fine large estate three miles below the city in or about the year 1845 he built a large cotton mill. This place he named Bon Harbor in honor of an eddy that then and for many years existed at a point in the Ohio river opposite the estate. He operated this mill for several years, but it at that time proved a disastrous enterprise. He having encumbered the Bon Harbor estate, together with the mill, by a mortgage to A. B. Barrett of Henderson, Ky., for \$90,000. This sum was used in the building of and equipping the mill. Triplett lived fifty years ahead of his time. The same energy and capital put into such an enterprise now would no doubt prove a dividend paying plant. This city lost heretofore two opportunities of establishing a cotton mill and watch factory, which went elsewhere, and proved successful. It is to be hoped she will not lose this opportunity. This indomitable man had cancer to make its appearance on his upper lip, and after exhausting all known means and remedy without relief or cure, he went to New York or Philadelphia and under the care of the most eminent surgeons of the city had the diseased part of the lip cut out and had his arm cut and scared and drawn to his face and firmly bound to his head and neck in such position as to make the two wounded parts of face and arm come together. In this position he laid in that hospital until the two wounded parts grew or adhered together. Then the arm was cut loose from the face leaving part of the flesh of the arm adhering to the face, with which a new lip was formed. After his face and arm healed over he returned to his home here feeling that he was cured. But alas! alas! he was doomed to disappointment, for a few years later the insidious disease reappeared near the same place on his face. This man of such indomitable will and courage was most beautifully brought out in a late correspondence of the Hon. George W. Triplett a few months ago. He died at his house in this city about 1858.



Time's Print Sets Heavily Upon Historic Homes of City and Old Landmarks Crumble Into Ruins of Former Beauty

## Man's Neglect and Time's Ravages Combine to Ruin of City's Old Homes.....

Demolition of Old White Home, Now Progressing, Ends Career -- Old Hall Property Totters on the Verge of Falling and Will Soon Pass Away.



Day after day, as time rolls onward, the finger of destiny is pressed against the old landmarks of the world, with ever increasing force, and the things that are resplendent with reminiscences of an age or decade that is past and gone pass away.

Owensboro, one of the oldest cities in the Ohio valley to be settled by the white man, has many cherished places that sing of the olden days before modern methods of doing things replaced the homely but sturdy attributes of the people who many of them, have preceded the works of their hands into the rubbish heap of time's decay – have crossed the river at the end of life's journey ere their material accomplishments in upbuilding the world have fallen into disrepute and gone to swell the multitudinous list of things that have been, but are not.

Tradition sits nobly upon the brow of Owensboro, and there are yet places of historical interest connected with the city. But the progress of the ages is sure, and the increased velocity with which humanity and the world is moving listens not the sacred whisperings of the past pleading for the preservation of things that go to fill the dim recesses of the city's history with pleasant reminders of the decades that are gone.

About the ancient homes of a city silence monuments to the strength, energy and character of the builders of another age, sweet reminders by contrast of the advancement made by modern architects always clusters a wealth of tradition and history of more or less significance. But the hand of time stays not its ravages because of the significance of these earlier creations; the pressure of modern conditions of life crush out sentiment and when these structures have served their purpose and fallen into decay they are ruthlessly torn away to give place to different and modern structures.

While strong piles of masonry, modeled on different plans and equipped with twentieth century appliances, have taken the place largely of the homes and business houses that made up the old Owensboro. occasionally one catches a glimpse of the past in various places scattered about

the city. Here and there remains an old house, once a mansion, now decrepit and weakened, like the men who builded them, showing their age and infirmity as plainly as do the old timers who gave them place in the world and niches in the history of the city. Memory travels backward to a time when the scent of the woods was strong upon the air, when the songs of myriads of thrilling, warbling birds burst upon the ear from rise of sun to set, when one stands before a relic of the olden times, e'en though a mansion of stone has usurped the place of the old grove at its side, and the blistering heat of a summer day rises in nerce reflection from a granitoid pave.

But the passing of ancient homes is a \_\_ as the passage of time itself. The oak falls in the forest, after a century of upright, sturdy defiance, riven by lightning or prostrated by cyclonic blast. Rot and decay, rain and wind, combine forces to level into dust the structures that, once standing at the fore-front of the times, have become antiquated in material, construction and usefulness. The result is the ultimate passing into oblivion of the places themselves, and careful is the historian who preserves the records of their existence.

In recent years many of the old landmarks of Owensboro have been removed, and but few of the really old homes remain standing. Among them are two, the old White home on White's avenue, and in honor of whose builder the short thoroughfare was named, and the property builded by Captain Frank Hall. Mute witnesses they have stood for several years, their appearance testifying to the ravages of time, the home of bats, mice and rats, their usefulness as human habitations going with the decadence of their strength.

Rattletrap, tottering, like a man suffering with the sensility of old age, abandoned – aye, and more. But they bring recollections of former glories, even in their attitude of solitude and desertion. Even now the old White home is being torn down, mankind completing the work begun and nearly finished by Father Time. Its career is ended, and a long and honorable one it has been. Its purpose served, it is relegated to the accumulating assortment of things that have been. No longer serviceable to man, it passes away as do all things human and earthly, and in its final destruction goes a landmark of the old Owensboro - to give place, it is hoped - to a larger and better era than marked the days of its maiden glory. Even more decrepit and shaken is the old Hall home, with portico trembling to the point of falling, ceilings sagging from their wall supports, and floors worn and uneven. It stands alone, a thing out of place amid surroundings of present day manufactories and business houses, a jarring incongruity in a setting of modem splendor, but its days are also numbered, and ere long man will have applied to it the last touch that will result in its complete and final dissolution.

The Hall house stands at the northwest corner of Main and Lewis streets. It is now the property of Mullen & Haynes, but is not used for any purpose. For a time, until quite recently, it was utilized by the A. F. Wheeler Furniture company as a storage place for a portion of its stock. It is too greatly dilapidated for occupancy, and with its desertion as a store house apparently its last opportunity for usefulness ended.

The house was built in 1845 by Captain Frank Hall, who occupied it as a residence upon its completion in 1846, together with his mother and two sisters, whom he removed from New Castle, Kentucky.

While it is decidedly paradoxical, yet it is literally true, Capt. Hall, then quite a young man, began the building of this venerable mansion at the top. The first articles made were the shingles, which the builder carefully stored away. After this was done the actual construction of the house from the ground began, and in 1845 they were nailed on the roofing boards. These shingles were made of yellow poplar and were of an uniform size, eighteen inches long and five inches wide,

In 1887, forty-two years after the construction of the place, the property was purchased by James E. Sutton, who removed the old single roof. After nearly half a century of exposure to wind and water it was found that two-thirds of the shingles were still in good condition and serviceable. A metal roof was then put on and it still shelters the interior, the building having known but two roofs in its existence of fifty nine years.

The first roof of shingles placed on the house was made from a fine tree that stood near the present site of Bethabara church eight miles distant from Owensboro. Conditions were different then and timber could be had for the asking, almost. Mr. Hall could have obtained shingle timber nearer the city, but the tree from which the roof was made stood on land owned by his brother-in-law, who gave him the timber to get it out of the way. The lumber for the frame and finishings of the structure were also gotten there by Mr. Hall. All the timbers, with the exception of the end rafters, were split out and planed smooth by Capt Hall. The end rafters were sawed, but the remainder of the house was constructed entirely by hand labor.

The two chimneys constructed when the house was built are still standing, and are in good condition. Each was fitted with an old fashioned wide-mouthed fireplace. The land on which the house stands contained half an acre when purchased by Captain Hall, who paid \$2500 for it. It extended down to the present Wile building. Mr. Hall sold it in 1858 to Mr. Sutton, receiving \$3,000 for the property. The Sutton family occupied the house for many years, in fact, it was never occupied for any considerable time by others. Temporary tenants have occupied it at times since, but it was in too poor condition to be made a permanent home.

There is a little story in connection with the commencement of the building by Captain Hall. He was in Cincinnati in the early part of 1844. Being an enthusiastic Whig he came to Owensboro, to vote for Henry Clay. While here he started the work of building the house, and so came to, cast his lot in Owensboro, a choice he has never regretted.

While not the oldest house in the city it is the most remarkable, probably, in some of the features of its construction and history.

Far back in the beautiful yard on White's Avenue remains the shell of what was once one of Owensboro's handsomest residences. Piece by piece the timbers are being taken apart and in a few days the "Old White House" will cease to exist. It will only remain as a pleasant memory to the older generation of Owensboro, who in childhood accepted hospitality within its walls, attended dinings and danced "Virginia reels" at the Christmas parties. Yes, and in the summer time the beautiful lawn and grove adjoining afforded delightful places for fetes and other outdoor entertainments.

The "Old White House" was erected by Edward T. White in the spring of 1841. That the timber used in the construction of the house was of the very best is demonstrated by the present preservation of the lumber being taken from the building. The house sat far back in a lawn. It was surrounded by stately oak trees. When it was first erected it was one of the "mansions" of Owensboro. The color of the house has always been synonymous with the name of the original owner and the name of the avenue. The White house was built according to the architecture of that day, so popular then for Southern homes. It was a two-story frame effect. As one entered the house by the front door, a large and airy room was on each side of the hall. The hall stairs leading to the two upstairs rooms were constructed "L" shape, one landing and very slender banisters. There were only two upstairs rooms. There are four rooms down stairs. Under the house is a large cellar. This cellar was in four apartments. One was used for the kitchen, one for the dining room when there was no special company, and the other two apartments for pantry and store rooms. There was a

high front porch. The ceiling of the porch was plastered, not ceiled, as is the present custom. The upstairs rooms had four windows each.

Mr. White and his family resided in the house until after the war. Mrs. A . C. Wood, the wife of Dr. A. C. Wood, was a daughter of Mr. White and is the only member of the family living. Mr. White also had a large plantation west of the city. When the White estate was sold at auction many years ago the property on White's Avenue was purchased by Mr. William Castlen. Mr. Castlen resided at the place for a number of years. Recently the property was purchased by Mr. A. J; Mitchell. For the past three years no one has occupied the residence. A short time ago Mr. Mitchell sold a portion of the lot and a modern residence was erected. Preparations are now being made for the erection of another residence directly in front of the White residence, All of the beautiful trees have been cut down to give place for the residences. The workmen are busily engaged knocking the plank to pieces on the residence.

Another of the landmarks of Owensboro is passing out of existence. In a few weeks the "Old White House" will have been forgotten. Only those who have some tender recollection of the place will remember the beautiful lawn and the always attractive "Old White House,"



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 3 December 1904, p4:



"This day sixty-four years ago," said Capt. Frank Hall yesterday, "I first saw the town of Owensboro. I came down here with my mother to stay a few weeks with my sisters and to see if we liked the country. But it has been a long stay for me."

Captain Hall came from Newcastle, Henry county. He was a boy of sixteen years. Two married sisters lived in Daviess county and the only other sister was visiting them. The mother, with her boy, decided to come to Daviess county and, if conditions were all favorable, to reunite the family. They found them at least tolerable. The boy who looked upon a village of 300 people is now one of the oldest citizens of a city of nearly 20,000 and knows as much of the history of that transition as any living man. For more than half a century he has been a factor in the progress of the town.

There are only two persons in Owensboro today who were here when Captain Hall came. These are Col. J. M. Holmes and James Kennady. A more remarkable thing is that there are no descendants of many of these who then lived here.

Owensboro was confined within quite limited boundaries sixty-four years ago. All or most of the business houses were on Frederica street between Main and the river. Between Main and Fourth streets was the residence portion of the town. Philip Thompson lived on the corner of Main and Frederica, where the National Deposit bank and adjacent buildings now stand. Henry Dugan lived on the corner of Third, and Frederica and between these two residences was that of Dr. S. F. Ogden.

#### Only to Fourth Street.

The town extended only to Fourth street. Beyond that were corn fields and woods, and all of the land within what is now the city of Owensboro was owned by a few men. Philip Triplett owned all the land between Frederica and Triplett streets and from Fourth street to a line beyond what is now Hickman park. The land bounded by Frederica and Locust and Fourth and what is now White's avenue was the property of Alexander Moreland. From the present middle line of White's avenue to McFarland street and between Frederica and Locust was owned by White and Duncan. John G. Howard' owned all the land from that point south to beyond the point where now stands the residence of the late J. B. Morehead lying west of these three tracts was nearly 1,000 acres belonging to William R. Griffith, who lived in the residence now occupied by Mrs. Clinton Griffith. All that portion of the city that now lies east of Triplett street was embraced in a tract of 12,000 acres belonging to Robert Triplett. and some smaller tracts belonging to John Combs and John Hathaway. Triplett also owned Bon Harbor.

The court house stood on the site of the present one. It was a log structure, two stories high and perhaps fifty feet, square. Offices of the county officials were in small buildings scattered about the court house yard. The circuit judge at that time was named McClain, and lived in one of the counties remote from the river, the circuit at that time embracing very much more territory than now. John S. McFarland was clerk of the court.

#### Just Three Lawyers.

The Owensboro bar consisted of three lawyers. They were Philip Triplett, William L. Anthony and a Mr. Allen. James L. Johnson, who subsequently served as circuit judge and as congressman, was studying law in the office of Philip Triplett.

There were four stores in the town, all on Frederica street below Main. One of these was kept by Pointer & Cassaday, another by Phil Thompson and a third by Hugh G. Isler. The name of the fourth storekeeper Captain Hall does not remember.

Only two practicing physicians were located here. They were Dr. Howard and Dr. Williams. Dr. Lockhart, who lived at the Beech Woods in the eastern part of the county, did a large practice in Owensboro as well as elsewhere in reach of his home.

Three churches existed in the town. Of these the Cumberland Presbyterian was the oldest. The others were the Baptist church, now the First Baptist, and St. Stephens, Catholic.

This, briefly, is Owensboro as Captain Hall first saw it. He has spent the energies of a long and vigorous life in helping to make it what it now and few men have done more in this direction than he.



**Owensboro's First Church 1835-1985: The Sesquicentennial History of the First Baptist Church, Owensboro, KY**, Wendell Holmes Rone, Sr., Progress Printing Co., Inc., Owensboro, KY, 1985, pp.249-250:

HALL, FRANK L.

This man was a master at serving as a Presiding Officer over deliberative assemblies. He was born in New Castle, Henry County, Kentucky, on March 17, 1823; and died in Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky, on July 26, 1907, at the age of 84 years, 4 months, and 9 days. He was, at the time of his death, the oldest member of the First Baptist Church.

At the age of sixteen he was converted to the Christian faith, and was baptized into the fellowship of the Bethabara Baptist Church by Pastor (acting) Kinchen G. Hay. On June 1, 1844, he became a member of the Owensboro Baptist Church by Letter. He was dismissed by Letter in December, 1865, but returned to the membership of the Church by Letter on June 7, 1876. He held membership for a combined total of fifty-one and one-half years.

He served as a Trustee of the Church in 1858-1865; as Treasurer in 1858-1864; and, after his return to the Church, he served as a Trustee a second time from 1876 until his death, in 1907. As a new office had been created by the change in the Rules of Decorum, in 1885, Brother Hall was elected as the Assistant-Moderator of the Church, on January 2, 1889, the second person to fill that office. He continued to serve in this capacity until April 7, 1897, when he became the Church Moderator, in keeping with another revision in the Rules of Decorum. He was the first layman to fill this position, and continued until his death, being the oldest man in the Church's History to do so.

Brethren George H. Cox, James M. Holmes, and James Moorman presented an Obituary Report to the Church, which was adopted on October 2, 1907, containing, among other things, the following:

"His activity, consecration, and earnestness in every department of Church Work was his greatest pleasure. He loved to help those in need, frequently doing so in a quiet and unobtrusive way, and in this way many have been helped without ever knowing from whence the help came."

He was the Senior Trustee at the time of his death, having been such since the death of Brother Y. L. Ford, in 1895 His combined service of thirty-seven years in that office has never been surpassed. He seems to have had no children, and his wife was not a member of the Church with him.

