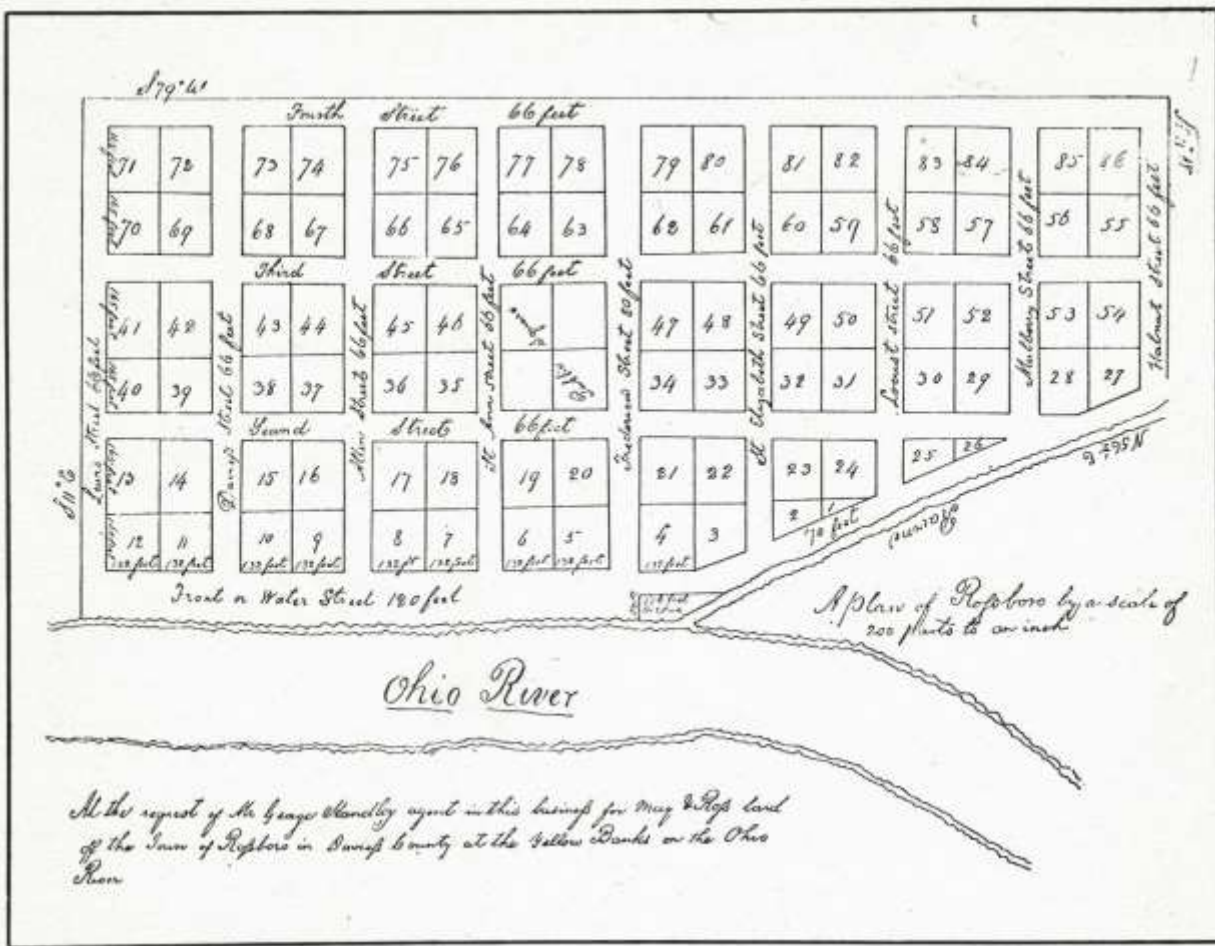


Names and Numbering of Owensboro Streets

By Jerry Long

.....



Plat of Rossboro recorded in Daviess County, KY on 30 December 1816. The town was laid out on a tract of 3,000 acres patented in the names of David Ross & John May. An act of the Kentucky Legislature on 3 February 1817 established and changed the name of the town to Owensborough. The town was named in memory of Col. Abraham Owen, who was killed at the Battle of Tippecanoe. By the 1830's the spelling of the town appeared largely as Owensboro – the spelling used when the city was incorporated by the State Legislature on 16 February 1866. On the 1816 plat the Ohio River is north of the town and Fourth Street is on the south. North – south streets were named Front (or Water Street), Second Street, Third Street and Fourth Street. East – west streets were named Lewis, Daviess, Allen, St. Ann, Frederica, St. Elizabeth, Locust, Mulberry and Walnut. Tradition says that David Ross named the streets – Frederica, St. Ann and St. Elizabeth.

.....

Owensboro streets named in the following published sources:

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

Boliver [sic]	Fredrica [sic]	St. Ann
Elizabeth [sic]	Main	Third
Fourth	Second	Water

.....

Wiggins & Weaver's Ohio River Directory For 1871-72, Fairbanks, Benedict & Co.
Printers and Binders, Herald Office, Cleveland Ohio, 1871, pages 339-352:

Allen	Frederica	River Road
Bolivar	Front	Second
Centre	Hathaway	Seventh
Clay	Henderson Road	Sixth
Crittenden	Lewis	St. Ann
Cumberland	Locust	St. Elizabeth
Daviess	Main	Sweeney
Eighth	Mason	Sycamore
Elm	McFarland	Third
Fifth	Mulberry	Triplett
First	Pearl	Walnut
Fourth	Poplar	Water

.....

An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY., Leo McDonough & Co.,
1876, pages 29, 80 & 81:

Allen	Grace	McFarland
Bolivar	Griffith Avenue	Mildred
Breckenridge	Griffith St.	Mulberry
Centre	Hall	Olive
Chestnut	Harriet	Pearl
Clay	Hathaway	Plum
Crittenden	Jackson	Poplar
Daviess	Johnson	Second
Eighth	Kentucky	Seventh
Elm	Lewis	Sixth
Fifth	Little Avenue	St. Ann
First	Locust	St. Elizabeth
Fourth	Main	Sweeney
Frederica	Maple	Sycamore
Front	Maryland	Third

Thompson
Triplett

Vine
Virginia

Walnut
Water

.....

Owensboro Monitor, Owensboro, KY, 12 August 1874, p3:

Would it not be a good idea for our City Fathers to have the houses of our various streets numbered. It will prove quite an unimportant expense, compared with the advantage that is certain to follow. It is much easier to find John Smith's house when directed to No. 999 Jones street, than when directed to turn so many corners, go so many squares and pass by so many red brick houses.

.....

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 17 June 1884, p8:

Mr. H. Thornton Bennett, of Evansville, who was in the city for the purpose of compiling a city directory, left for home last night, after concluding that he would wait until fall, when the houses will be numbered and a directory can be made that will be really useful.

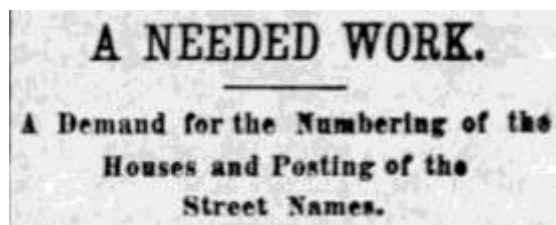
.....

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 11 June 1885, p4:

The gentlemen engaged numbering the houses inform us that they have put up thus far about 600 numbers. They say the people are taking hold right along and that when their work is done there will be very few houses in Owensboro without numbers. Most of the business houses will have their numbers painted on the posts which support the fronts. The same gentlemen have also contracted with the city to put up the names and numbers of the different streets at each crossing. When the work is completed it will be very easy for a stranger to find his way about the city.

.....

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 9 November 1889, p1:



The Matter a Prime Necessity in View of the Early
Establishment of the Free Postal Delivery System.

The attention of the honorable council is respectfully called to the fact that the houses in the city are sadly in need of numbering. A few years ago an ordinance was passed regulating the matter and requiring numbers to be prominently displayed on all the buildings in the city. The ordinance was carried out after a meager fashion, but since that time the number of houses has increased fully 30 percent., and no attempt whatever has been made to keep up the numbering. A

large majority of the numbers that were put up were on shabby little tin plates painted over with cheap yellow and black paint that soon faded out or rusted away so as to be invisible and useless. Within the next three or four months the free mail delivery is to be established in the city, and the numbering of the houses will be an absolute necessity. The council should revive and revise its ordinance at once and see that the houses are properly numbered as soon as possible.

Another matter that demands attention is the posting of street names. A stranger finds it impossible to get to any part of the city without stopping in country fashion and inquiring his way of somebody he chances to meet, that somebody, perchance, as ignorant as himself. The worthless little tin tags tacked up years ago have all disappeared like the house numbers, and they should be replaced by some more substantial method of marking.

This work ought to be done before the free delivery is established, and the sooner the better. The Messenger would suggest, that as the new directory will be used in the city for the next two or three years, the numbers given in it, which are reasonably correct, be used as far as possible as a basis for the work to be done.

.....

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 5 June 1890, p1:

An ordinance providing for the numbering of the houses in the city on the Philadelphia plan was read and laid over under the rules. One hundred numbers are given to a square, beginning with 100 at the south side of Water street, going South, the even numbers on the west side and the odd numbers on the east side of streets running north and south. In going East and West Allen street shall divide the city, the numbers running both ways and the words "East" and "West" being prefixed to the name of the street to distinguish the direction from Allen street. In case of a break in the street, the numbers shall continue as if there had been no break. Half numbers shall be placed on the entrance to a second floor the occupancy of which is separate from the ground floor. All numbers shall be painted on zinc or japanned tin, 3x2 inches in size, though any person may place a larger or more conspicuous number on his house. All buildings now standing or hereafter to be erected shall be numbered with a number to be designated by the city surveyor on application to him. Any person who shall place any erroneous number on his property shall be fined from \$1 to \$10. The numbering shall be done at the expense of the city, except in the case of buildings hereafter erected, which shall be done by the person erecting same at his own cost and within ten days after the completion of the building. Any person altering, defacing or destroying numbers shall be fined from \$1 to \$10. If a number shall be torn down or destroyed, the owner must replace it.

.....

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 17 July 1906, p1:



An important meeting of the city council was hold on Monday night. Much business was transacted and there was little or no idle talk. An ordinance changing the names of east-west streets was passed on its first reading. The following members were present: Messrs. Deuser, Davis, Guenther, Hafendorfer, Lambert, McCormick, Steitler and Stimson.

Street Names Changed.

An ordinance providing for a change of names of all streets running east and west except those that are numbered was passed on first reading, all members present, except Dr. McCormick voting for it.

Following are the changes: Water street and Cherry street will henceforth be known as First street; Main street will be Second street; Third street, Fourth street, Fifth street will be unchanged; Seventh street will remain Seventh street, and Harriett street, White's avenue and Mason's avenue, will also be called Seventh; Anthony street and Mildred street will be called Eighth street, McFarland street will be Ninth street; Tenth street will remain as it is; Virginia street, Little's avenue and Grand avenue will constitute Eleventh street; Maryland street, Kentucky street and Woodland avenue will constitute Twelfth street; Grace street, Randolph avenue, Monahon street and Calhoon street will be known as Thirteenth street; Ryan street and Monarch avenue will be Fifteenth street; Griffith avenue and Todd avenue will be Seventeenth, and Johnson's lane and Kennady avenue will be known as Eighteenth.

.....

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 21 July 1906, p2:



The people of Owensboro, so far as can be ascertained, are generally pleased with the action of the city council in changing the names of the streets running east and west so they will be numbered consecutively. Some are displeased. Among this number are those who, to use the expression of one of them, have been "moved off the block." This included some of the residents of McFarland street and persons having business establishments on Main street, now officially Second street.

There is, however, a much larger number of persons opposed to calling Main street Second street. Many business men believe that, despite the action of the council, it should continue to be called Main street. The fact that it is the principal business street of the city and that the change of name will be much harder to put into effect here than elsewhere are the reasons given for this. Something like half of the business houses in city would be affected by the change in name. It is pointed out that the leaving of this street named as it formerly was would not be without precedent. Parallels referred to are the action of the city council of Nashville, Tenn., last year in numbering

the streets running north and south, but leaving Market street, unchanged in name, and of the council ft Minneapolis in not changing the name of Main street in that city when all of the others running parallel were numbered. There are very few business houses on any other street the name of which will be changed.

Excepting Main street, it is believed that very little confusion will result by the change of names. Some of the real estate men are not entirely pleased, but most of them do not object to the change. "It will not affect us one way or the other," said a well known real estate dealer yesterday. "There will be no trouble locating property. The law requires that a deed shall state record book number and page at which the former deed to the same property is recorded and by whom the former deed was made. This prevents any possibility of confusion that might result from the names of streets being changed."

.....

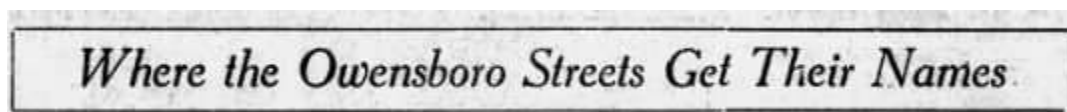
Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 1 August 1906, p8:



In order to break Owensboro people into calling the streets by their new names and to help strangers in getting their bearings, Mayor O'Bryan will recommend to the city council at its next meeting that name plates be placed on every corner in Owensboro. The mayor has no special choice in the style of plates, but is pleased with crossed plates projecting from a house corner or telephone pole on just one of the four corners at every crossing. If the council deems it too expensive to place name plates at every corner the mayor believes that a "string out Frederica and then every three or four streets both east and west, better than none at all. Second street will be well labeled, as it will probably be hard to break the people into changing its name from Main street. Plates on the streets running north and south are not deemed so necessary, as none of their names has been changed.

.....

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 21 March 1909, p10:



Did you ever undertake to figure out who the people were that the streets of Owensboro were named for? It would seem simple enough, on first blush, but it isn't. The fact is that connected

biographies of the persons for whom Owensboro streets were named would be an epitome of modern English and American history, with something of the history of continental countries.

Frederica street? It sounds feminine – and it is, in form. But that thoroughfare was named in honor of Frederick, surnamed the great – he who was king of Prussia and raised and commanded the; army of the giants, and did something toward the solidification of the German kingdoms.

Does it strike you as a little strange that the Great Frederick should be flanked on both sides by female saints – St. Elizabeth and St. Ann? Well, no such thing ever was intended, and how those streets took on the suffix "Saint"- is one of the mysteries. They were originally and officially named Ann and Elizabeth streets, and the saints had nothing to do with it. One was named in honor of that English queen for whom a certain order in architecture – of which the Daviess County Bank and Trust company is a specimen – and the other was named honor of England's virgin queen, Elizabeth – for whom also was the Old Dominion of Virginia named.

Going west from St. Elizabeth street, there is no difficulty in arriving at the derivation, of the north and south streets. They were named for trees – Locust and Mulberry and Walnut and Maple and Elm and Sycamore and the others. But, going east from St. Ann street, the difficulty is greater. You strike a snag at Allen street. Undoubtedly, it was named for some prominent man in the early days of Kentucky, it being one of the original streets laid off and named in the plat of Rossboro, but which of the Allens was thus honored is not clear.

There is no mystery about Daviess street. That thoroughfare was named in honor of Col. Joe Daviess, the famous pioneer advocate of Kentucky and hero of the field of Tippecanoe, the man for whom Daviess county was named.

Lewis street "was named for Gen. James Lewis. That name may not be known to every one, but the subject is efficiently elucidated by saying that he was one of the leaders of the Lewis and Clarke expedition into the Western wilds, an important expedition of discovery and advancement of the frontiers.

Crittenden street was named in honor of John J. Crittenden, governor of Kentucky from 1848 to 1850; United States senator from Kentucky from 1817 to 1819, again, from 1835 to 1848, and again from 1855 to 1861.

Bolivar street derives its name from Gen. Simon Bolivar, the great South American patriot and liberator. Clay street – well, although there have been nearly a score of prominent Clays in Kentucky, no one would likely guess wrong as to the derivation of this name. The street was named in honor of Henry Clay, the great pacificator, frequently speaker of the house of representatives, United States senator , from Kentucky, with several intervals of two or three years, from 1806 to 1850.

Triplett street was named for Philip Triplett, one of the pioneer lawyers of , Owensboro, and representative in congress from this district from 1838 to 1844.

Breckenridge street – the natural supposition is that it was named for John C. Breckenridge, one of the Democratic nominees for the presidency in 1860. But the supposition is incorrect. That street was named for , still an elder Breckenridge, John by name, who was United States senator from Kentucky from 1801 to 1805.

Miller Hathaway, a prominent citizen of Owensboro until his death a few years ago, gave his name' to Hathaway street. Pearl street was named or his partner in real estate transactions, Dr. Francis M. Pearl. Hall street was named for Capt. Frank L. Hall, who died only a year ago.

And that completes the list of the north and south streets that bear the names of men. The east west, streets, for seven blocks from the river, are numbered and not named. The first one bearing a name is an extension of Seventh street – White's avenue, and was named for E. T. White,

for many years a prominent citizen of Owensboro and owner of real estate in that section. Mason avenue, an extension of White's avenue or Seventh street was named for "Uncle Billie" Mason, a well known citizen and prominent churchman.

McFarland street was named for John H. McFarland, who was prominent in the affairs of Daviess county in the early days. He owned a considerable body of land extending south from what is now McFarland, or Ninth street.

Although the list may seem rather meagre, this is all of the principal streets. There are a number of others, many of them recently and promiscuously named, some from letters of the Greek alphabet, others for women who were prominent or owned land, and for various other objects of public administration.

.....

Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 7 April 1935, p1B:

Harriett, Mohican, Merritt, Kentucky, Grace Former Names Of Streets Here

Few Owensboroans know it, but many of them live on streets which formerly bore such names as Mohican, Merritt, Bowmer, Mildred, Grace, Harriet, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky and McFarland.

A new plat book, showing each lot in each sub-division of Owensboro, which was made with F. E. R. A. labor, lists, the city street by their present and former names. This book is now one of the permanent records at the county clerk's office. With the exception of attorneys and others who do abstracting and a number of the older residents of Owensboro, few persons can identify the streets here by their original names. Among the street names that have been changed, as shown by the plat book, are:

Seventh street, formerly Harriet street.

Eighth street (between Poplar and Vine) formerly Mildred street.

Ninth street, formerly McFarland street.

Eleventh street (between Frederica and Lewis) formerly Olive street; (from Triplett eastward) formerly Virginia street.

Twelfth street, formerly Grace street.

Fourteenth street (from Frederica to Lewis) formerly Chestnut street; (from Triplett eastward) Kentucky street.

Fifteenth street, formerly Monarch street.

Sixteenth street formerly Johnson street.

Seventeenth street (from Frederica to Lewis) Todd street; (from Triplett eastward) Griffith street.

Eighteenth street, formerly Johnson's Lane.

Nineteenth street, formerly Mohican avenue.

Twentieth street, formerly Merritt avenue.

Hall street, formerly Bowmer street.

Jackson street, formerly Gilmore

.....

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 23 August 1953, p4D:

First Street In Owensboro Named For A Girl, But Which Frederica Was It?

By Charlotte Baumgarten

Owensboro's first street was named in honor of a girl, but which girl? Was it Frederica Ross, daughter of David Ross, the innkeeper and largest landowner in the community when the town was chartered in 1816? Or was it a beautiful young mulatto slave girl whom Ross owned and secretly favored? Could it have been Frederika, the German visitor, whose beauty caused the first council to name the avenue after the loveliest girl in town?

Nobody knows. Early county histories have contradicting versions. The answer lies buried with our first settlers, who for intriguing reasons we will never learn flanked the "mystery girl" street with streets dedicated to St. Ann and St. Elizabeth.

Other city street names are more easily traced to first families, distinguished citizens, heroes of a century ago, trees, counties and foreign capitals. Research for this story led to many interesting inroads of county history and folklore. Though not every street name can be pinned down with certainty, here goes a reasonable if unverified version of some origins:

When Daviess County was created in 1815 from lands of a vast Ohio County and a tip of Henderson County, surveyors laid off the county seat town, Yellowbanks, with streets and alleys. The new village was named Rossboro because of the hotel owner, who was a member of a Louisville land firm that owned title to a 3,000-acre tract in this area. The town name was short lived, however. In 1817 the state legislature changed it to Owensborough in honor of Col. Abraham Owen, famous Kentucky lawyer and friend of early settler Col. Joe Daveiss. Both men died in 1811 fighting the Indians under Tecumseh in the battle of Tippecanoe. Some of the first city fathers who had been in this same conflict thought it fitting to name the town after Owen since the county was named for Daveiss to link the two names together as a mark of respect for all times to "friends in life and death."

County Name Misspelled

Incidentally, historians say, the state clerk who registered the county name at Frankfort misspelled it, reversing the I and E so that it read "Daviess." The act was passed and the mistake was never corrected. Also noted – the "ugh" on Owensboro was dropped sometime after 1860.

According to the town council plan, streets to the east of Frederica were named after counties Allen, Daviess, Lewis, Crittenden, Clay and Breckinridge. Bolivar seems to have slipped in the lineup because of General Simon Bolivar, South American liberator and popular hero of the early 1800s. On the west of Frederica streets were named for trees Cedar (once Mulberry), Locust, Walnut, Elm, Poplar, Sycamore, Maple, Plum, etc. Streets going south were numbered in order. But the plan was flexible. Other street names began varying the schedule. Triplett was named for George W. Triplett, Franklin County surveyor who came here with his cousin Robert in 1833 to determine various government land grants. Both were paid off in land for their work. One grant belonging to George was bordered by Triplett St. George Triplett was a distinguished citizen, serving in the state legislature, the Senate and as a major in the Confederate Army in the position of chief of the quartermaster corps under Gen. John C. Breckinridge. Elected to the Confederate Congress in 1864, Triplett represented the 2nd District of Kentucky until the close of the war. Returning home in 1866 he was elected judge of the Daviess County Court, an office he held until retirement in 1878.

Named For Griffith

Another grand old man of Owensboro who has a street named in his honor is William R. Griffith, son of Joshua Griffith who came from Maryland and settled in the Utica neighborhood in 1804. William acquired large land holdings in the county and one historian gives him credit for attracting many settlers to Owensboro because of his honest dealings and acreages sold at low costs. Griffith built a beautiful home southwest of the city limits and the road leading to it became known as Griffith Avenue. The house was recently razed for the new First Presbyterian Church now under construction.

Wing Avenue was most likely named for E. Rumsey Wing, the Owensboroan who served as minister to Ecuador by appointment of President U. S. Grant from 1870-1874. Herr Avenue can be traced back to Wallace W. Herr who came from Oldham to Daviess County during the Civil War as a recruiting officer for the Confederate forces. The story goes that Mrs. Herr, a half-sister to Mary Todd Lincoln, was granted passes through the Union lines by the President to call on her sister, and that Herr and high-ranking southern officers saw that the courtesy was reciprocated for Mrs. Lincoln.

Daviess County's only U. S. senator, the Hon. Thomas Clay McCreery, inspired the name for McCreary Avenue. The street runs in back of his home site, now Longfellow Hill. McCreery's most notable acts while in office were voting for acquittal during the impeachment of Andrew Johnson and his attempts to have Arlington restored to the family of Gen. Robert E. Lee after the Civil War. His years in office ran from 1868-1871 and from 1873-1879.

Bordered Crabtree Farm

Crabtree Avenue most likely once bordered the farm of Colson Crabtree who lived in "Lower Town" precinct or one mile west of the courthouse around 1840. His father and three uncles – Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob Crabtree came to the county around 1800 from Virginia, and settled in the Vanover (Panther) community. History records that Moses had 16 children. Colson was one of a family of nine.

Banker James H. Parrish likely inspired the name for Parrish Avenue. He came to Owensboro from Bullitt County in 1865, learned the printing trade and later became president of the old Owensboro Savings Bank. Ewing Court and Ewing Road were so named because of the late Sam Ewing, prominent farmer and outstanding civic leader in the county for over 50 years. Hathaway Street came from the name of Robert Miller Hathaway, hardware merchant in the latter half of the last century who is noted for the establishment of Elmwood Cemetery.

Sweeney Street honors William N. Sweeney, Casey County lawyer who came here on a visit in 1853 and stayed. The next year he was elected county attorney, and in 1868 was elected to Congress from the Second District of Kentucky. McCulloch Avenue goes back to J. W. McCulloch, founder of the Green River distillery. He was serving on the city council when the street was named. Mrs. Sue Roberts McCulloch at the public library is a daughter-in-law.

Littlewood Drive was named for the late L. Freeman Little, who developed this subdivision in the Griffith Avenue area. The prominent business man and lawyer was founder of the Anglo-American Mill Corp. Phillips Court leads up to the old H. B. Phillips residence, now the Mary Kendall Home. Phillips was a tobacconist and with his brother, James, operated the mercantile firm of Phillips Bros. and McAtee, located in the present buildings of Turley Hardware Company. Freeman Avenue was named for the late Freeman Short, brother of Percy, Kelley and Harry Short.

Legion Boulevard's Name

Legion Boulevard was named in honor of the Daviess County boys who fought in World War I, and the Hickman park to which it leads became Legion Park. Other names for streets that have disappeared from signs are Mildred, Harriett, Maryland, Virginia, Olive, Kentucky, Grace, Chestnut and Little.

One of the most interesting sidelights in the name research concerns Dublin Lane and its derivation. After the establishment here in 1850 of a branch of the Southern Bank of Kentucky, Owensboro started to prosper. Tobacco stemming and other industries began to spring up, attracting newcomers. The Irish immigration law had recently been passed and many sons of the old sod were flocking to America. Many of those who came by the port of Charleston, S. C, found their way to Kentucky.

Two enterprising gentlemen, Robert G. Moorman and Thomas H. Pointer formed a partnership and established a packing house west of town, near the present site of the Field Packing Co. Irishmen who settled here found employment there among them Monohans, Owens, Cambrons, Whelans, McCanns. A village sprang up around the plant and the new citizens wanted to name it for a city back in the old country. Disputes arose when a number of names were suggested, each one the birthplace of the man submitting the idea. Finally the argument was settled the section was called Dublin after Ireland's capital. Dublin Lane leads back into this settlement, which was incorporated into the city limits in 1921.

A bit off the subject but the most soul-satisfying discovery for the writer was the reason for the name Maceo. The precinct was originally called Powers Station until a mulatto fighter by the name of Capt. Alonzo Maceo distinguished himself in a Cuban revolt, The newspapers at the time were full of the story, and residents of community so adopted his name.

.....

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 30 June 1963, p3A:

1899-90 City Directory Reveals Changes In Owensboro Streets

By Mrs. W. E. Daniel
Messenger-Inquirer

A look at the 1899-1900 City of Owensboro directory, belonging to Frank Yadack, 1650 Griffith Ave., shows about 30 streets that either no longer exist in that name, or the name is used for a street in another part of the town.

No longer found is the name Anthony (street or avenue) which then ran from 800 Allen west to Frederica, the first street south of 7th Street, evidently 8th Street.

Cemetery Avenue was then the Henderson Road south, the first west of Werner, probably what is now Independence Avenue. It now is listed as being from 1224 East 20th, south-southwest.

Cherokee Avenue was then in Moreland Addition, south from McFarland (what is now 9th Street), the second street west of Walnut, possibly what is now Woodlawn Avenue. Now, directories list it as south to Ford Avenue, the first street west of South Griffith.

Chestnut was west from 1200 Allen St., probably the present 12th Street.

Clark. Avenue was south from 1800 W Main, possibly now Hale Avenue. Clark Drive now extends between Sunset Drive and Wink Court, with a dead-end extension at either end.

Cox Avenue was between 5th and the Henderson Road, the ninth street west of Poplar, possibly now Foust Avenue.

Fulton Avenue, south from Henderson Road, first street west of Bosley simply must have disappeared. The map of Owensboro does not show any such location of a street today.

Grace Street ran east from 1300 Frederica to Allen, the third street south of McFarland; apparently it is now 13th Street. There is a Gracean Street now, from 1620 W. 7th St., south.

Grove, now 8th Street, ran from 800 Locust east, between White Avenue and McFarland. Groves Avenue is now a west ward extension of Grimes Avenue in the Chautauqua Park area.

Harriet was the same as W. 7th Street west from 700 Walnut St.

Gray, from Orchard Street west, the first street south of the river, is now Ohio Street.

Johnson ran from Moseley to Triplett, the fourth street south of McFarland, east from 1500 Moseley to Triplett. There is now no street between 14th and 16th from Moseley to Triplett.

Johnson Lane, from Frederica to Leitchfield Road, the third street south of Kentucky, east and west from 1800 Allen, probably now 18th Street. There may be a trend now for towns and cities to name a new street after the latest president, Kennedy. Owensboro had such a street at the beginning of the century. In the Seven Hills section it went east, an extension of Johnson Lane, or 18th Street.

Kentucky, from Frederica to Triplett, the fourth street south of McFarland (or 9th Street) was at the time the southern boundary of the city. It extended east and west to the city limits from 1400 Allen. Logically, it would be 14th street, although there are no through streets between 9th and 14th. Twelfth Street comes nearest, but from Lewis on to Triplett it is half-way between 12th and 14th farther west.

Little Avenue, from 1100 Frederica west to city limits, was the second south of McFarland, now is 11th Street.

McFarland, east and west from Allen to the city limits, the ninth street south of the river, seems to have been one of the important streets as so many other streets were located in relation to it. McFarland now extends from 1124 Crabtree Ave. west, and is an extension of 9th Street.

Maryland ran east from Lewis to Triplett, second south of McFarland. Would this now be a part of 12th Street .

Mason Avenue from 700 Locust to Walnut, sixth south of the river, apparently would be a part of what is now 7th Street.

Mildred, west from 800 Walnut St., to city limits, the eighth street south of the river, would be 8th Street.

Monarch Avenue is another rover from its original location. Then it went from Frederica to Lewis, at the L. & N. depot, east and west from 1500 Allen. This must be what is now 15th Street.

But Monarch Avenue is still the name of an Owensboro street, It is now what was Monarch Lane, from Wing Avenue, west, the first street south of E. 4th (it was then) and it has backed up a block to 701 Stone St.

But that is not all the story. There is a Monarch Street from 1500 W. 3rd St., south (two blocks).

Mulberry, from river to Little Avenue, fifth street west of Allen, south from the river, now is Cedar Street.

Randolph was in Moreland Addition.

Ravine Street, from Cary & Marble's lumber yard (no longer in existence) west to Walnut, first street north of W. Main Street, would be the present 3rd Street.

Skillman Avenue from Triplett to Breckenridge, first street north of Johnson Lane, probably 19th Street.

Smith Avenue, in Smith's Addition, south from 1805 W. Main to W. 5th Street. Now, there are only four numbers on it: 1407, 1409, 1400-13 and it extends from 2000 Henderson Road south. Todd Avenue, from 1700 Frederica east, second street south of L&N depot, now 17th Street.

Virginia, from Frederica to Triplett, tenth street south of the river, east and west from 1100 Allen, probably 11th Street. There is a Virginia Court at present, from 1000 E. 18th St., north.

White Avenue extends west from 700 Frederica to Locust, the first street south of 5th Street, probably now part of 7th Street.

So the street naming and numbering was just as confused around the turn of the century as it is now, perhaps more so. At least it doesn't seem that Owensboro has streets that change names from block to block. It is bad enough when the street changes from one side of Frederica to another.

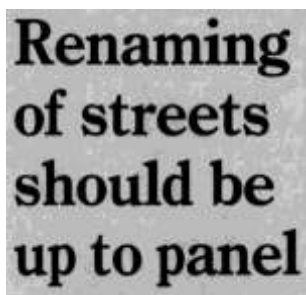
Nearly everyone in Owensboro is, of course, conscious of the number of names of Indian tribes used by developers. That section is spoken of as the "Indian Reservation," or merely as the "Reservation." Many newer street names also are reminiscent of our English heritage.

To enumerate the names of streets added since 1900 would be a task to surprise anyone. Owensboro has 202 street names (including "drives," courts, lanes, etc.). So on second thought, confusion has been multiplied with the growth of the town and such examples as Adams Avenue, Adams Court and Adams Street to give an idea of the situation.

When one notes the many courts, drives and streets with the same or approximately the same names, one is inclined to wonder how firemen, the police, cab drivers or strangers ever manage to arrive at any place with anything like promptness.

.....

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 8 September 1991, p1E



By Keith Lawrence
Messenger-Inquirer

Quick, where's Cherry Street?
How about Johnson Lane?
Grand Avenue? Kentucky Street?
Never heard of those? How about Main Street?
That one you've heard of. Second Street, right?

On July 16, 1906, the Owensboro City Council eliminated the names of 27 east-west streets.

The city was growing, automobiles were appearing on the scene and somebody had the idea that it would be easier to find your way around town if the north-south streets were named and the east-west streets were numbered.

Newspapers of that era didn't report any controversy. But I expect there was plenty. Somehow Grand Avenue sounds a heckuva lot more important than 11th Street, which it became.

Even today, 85 years after the name change, you still hear people referring to Second as Main Street. And we all know that Frederica has been the city's main street for a generation.

For you trivia buffs, here's a list of the old streets and what they became:

Water Street and Cherry Street (First Street). Main Street (Second Street). Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth streets were always numbered. Harriett Street, White Avenue and Mason Avenue (Seventh Street).

Anthony Street, Grove Street and Mildred Street (Eighth Street). McFarland Street (Ninth Street). Tenth Street was always numbered.

Virginia Street, Little Avenue and Grand Avenue (11th Street). Maryland Street, Kentucky Street, Chautauqua Avenue and Woodland Avenue (12th Street).

Grace Street, Randolph Avenue, Monahan Street and Calhoon Street (13th Street). Chestnut Street (14th). Ryan (sometimes listed as Rhine) Street and Monarch Avenue (15th Street). Griffith Street and Todd Avenue (17th Street). Johnson Lane and Kennady Avenue (18th Street).

And now we're debating the idea of changing the name of Fifth Street to Martin Luther King Boulevard.

Bad idea, some people say. It messes up the east-west number game. And it will confuse motorists.

But a year or so ago, the city extended the name Parrish Avenue from border to border, eliminating parts of 12th and 13th streets.

Fifth Street is a historic name, some say. It should be preserved. Lewis Street had existed from the city's birth as Rossboro in 1816. That didn't stop the city from changing it to J.R. Miller Boulevard a couple of years ago.

Martin Luther King Boulevard is too long a name. And J.R. Miller Boulevard isn't? Besides, dang near every city in the country has one.

Martin Luther King Jr. was never in Owensboro. Neither was Abraham Owen, the man the city's named after.

Any time change is proposed, there will be resistance. That's human nature. There are reasons to oppose change and then there are excuses. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference. But the easier it becomes to change things, the more rapidly things change. Look at the old Soviet bloc.

Say, we change Fifth Street to Martin Luther King Boulevard. What happens when the bluegrass people want to change Breckenridge to Bill Monroe Boulevard? Or someone wants to honor the Waltrips, Rex Chapman, Florence Henderson, Johnny Depp, Spend a Buck or any of our other celebrities.

What we need is a non-political committee (if there is such a thing) to evaluate each request, follow guidelines that it adopts and then make recommendations to the City Commission on any request for street name changes.

This would be a good time to start.

.....



Frederica Street in the early 1950s. Looking north toward the Ohio River from about Fourth Street.

