

Gen. Don Carlos Buell (1818-1898) and his home at Airdrie, Ky.

By Jerry Long



Don Carlos Buell (1818-1898)



**The Kentucky Encyclopedia, John E. Kleber, editor,
The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 1992, p.137:**

DON CARLOS BUELL

Don Carlos Buell Civil War general was born in Lowell Ohio on March 23, 1818. He graduated from the U.S: Military Academy at West Point on July 1, 1841 and on June 18, 1846 was promoted to first lieutenant. Distinguishing himself at the battles of Monterrey Contreras, and Churobusco in the Mexican War, he rose to the rank of major. After the war he became assistant adjutant general (1848 49), then served in the Washington military bureaucracy as chief of several departments. On May 11, 1861 Buell was promoted to lieutenant colonel and in July was made brigadier general of volunteers.

Buell assumed command of the Department of the Ohio which included Kentucky, on November 15, 1861 His actions were instrumental in keeping Kentucky in the Union. On February 14, 1862 Buell entered and took control of Bowling Green as a Confederate force under Gen. Albert S. Johnston retreated toward Nashville. The following September, Buell reached Louisville and prepared to advance against Confederate forces to the southeast. Buell's Federals surprised

Gen. Braxton Bragg at Bardstown, forcing him to divide his army and withdraw south. Buell and others pursued and engaged the Confederates at Perryville on October 8, 1862. The following day, Bragg withdrew to Harrodsburg while Buell moved to Danville thus threatening Bragg's line of communication. With a superior cavalry force, Bragg completed his retreat from Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap.

Buell 's failure to prevent Bragg 's escape along with his refusal to permit confiscation of property in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama precipitated questions about his loyalty and negated earlier commendation of his victory at Perryville. He was relieved of command on October 30, 1862, by Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans. On April 25, 1863, a commission hearing the allegations reported no serious misjudgements and recommended that Buell be returned to duty. The damage to Buell 's reputation had been done, however, and his political enemies prevented his reassignment. He resigned his commission on June 1, 1864. Buell then moved to Kentucky, becoming president of the Green River Iron Company in Muhlenberg County. On March 9, 1880 Gov. Luke P. Blackburn (1879-83) appointed him one of twelve members of the first board of trustees of the Agricultural and Mechanical College (now the University of Kentucky) in Lexington. In 1885 Buell received a presidential appointment as state pension agent, a position he held until 1890.

Buell married Margaret (Hunter) Mason of Mobile, Alabama and adopted her daughter by a previous marriage. He died on November 19, 1898, in Paradise Kentucky, and was buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis.

[See also: Biography of Don Carlos Buell on Wikipedia.org]



Owensboro Monitor, Owensboro, KY, 28 August 1867, p.2:

.... At this writing, General Buell is to be found on the south bank of Green river, amongst the hills and rocks that are to be found alongside the banks of that beautiful stream, bringing to the surface the rich mines of coal and iron that are imbedded around the village of Paradise, in Muhlenburg countv.

These mines are commonly known as the Airdrie mines, and belong to R. A. Alexander, the great stock grower of Kentucky.

General Buell has a lease of these mines for a term of years, and is preparing to go largely into the mining business.

In thus directing his mind, talents and means towards the development of the mineral wealth of our State, it is to be hoped that his undertaking may be successful, not only so far as he is concerned, but that the whole mining interest of the State may be benefitted by the developments sought to be made by the General. These mines have not been worked successfully heretofore. Mr. Alexander having expended two or three hundred thousand dollars, and built up quite a town at Airdrie, had succeeded in getting everything ready for work about the time the war broke out. He abandoned operations, and they have not been worked to any extent until now, when, we understand, General Buell has made arrangements to move matters very lively during the approaching coal season.

SOLDIER



**Muhlenberg County, KY 1870 Federal Census
Paradise Precinct – post office Paradise, p.559B:**

98	Buell Genl, D.C.	52	M	W	Civil Dealer	20000	8000	Ohio
	— Margaret H	47	F	W	Keeping House			D.C.
	Mason David M	30	F	W	Without occupation			D.C.
	Beadle, J.G.	38	M	W	Civil Engineer			Perm



**Muhlenberg County, KY 1880 Federal Census
Town of Airdrie, p.174B:**

146	Buell D. C.	M	M	62		1	Coal Operator
	— Margaret	W	F	50	wife	1	Keeping House
	Mason Annie	W	F	32	Daughter	1	at Home
	Joyner Margaret	B	F	43		1	Servant
	— Emily	M	F	10		1	Servant
	— Flora	M	F	3		1	Servant
	Bell Adeline	B	F	24		1	Servant
	Schummers Fanny	B	M	24		1	Servant



**The Green River Country From Bowling Green to Evansville
W. P. Greene, J. S. Reilly, Evansville, IN, 1898, pp.82-83:**

Airdrie.

This is one of the most interesting spots on Green River. Not because of any particular charm arising from natural location of artificial embellishment, but because it is and has been for many years, the home of one of America's illustrious citizens. At the close of the civil war General D. C. Buell retired from public life and sought seclusion, here upon the rugged banks of Green River. The motive for this seclusion has never passed the breast of General Buell. The fact remains that here in the calm and quiet of his woods and farms this almost lone survivor of the great leaders of the union army is content to spend the evening of life. The house and grounds of Airdrie are located upon the crest of a moderately high bluff on the left hand bank of the river, about one mile below Paradise.

The latter is its post town. The dwelling house at Airdrie is a two-story frame with wide central hall and wing extending back, containing dining room, kitchen and storerooms. A veranda spans the front of the house from which is obtained a view of the river for a considerable distance up and down. A narrow lawn set with flower beds and flanked by forest trees, descends somewhat steeply from the front of the house to the river bank. The view of Airdrie from the river is impaired

by the presence of these trees and other low growth near the water's edge. Airdrie is not a grand place made resplendent by the skill of the architect, the sculptor's chisel or the painter's brush. No special effort has been bestowed upon its ornamentation. It is simply the plain and unpretentious home of a cultured gentleman. Graveled walks extending to different parts of the forest covered grounds and whitewashed arbors reached by rustic bridges over intervening ravines, make up the sum of human infringement on nature's domain. The untrimmed woods, canopying moss-grown banks and tenanted by nature's choirs, seem to accord best with the mood of the master of Airdrie...

In person, General Buell is about five feet ten inches in stature, sparely, though sturdily built, and weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds. His carriage is erect, and his motions active, yet deliberate. His manner is reserved, though not unsocial. His general bearing in social converse is that of thoughtfulness tending to introspection. He is a ready, though not a fluent conversationalist, and impresses one as be incapable of indulging in light talk or humor. The portrait accompanying this sketch from a photograph taken in 1864, and is the only profile likeness of General Buell in existence.



Gen. Don Carlos Buell and his home at Airdrie

It recalls a dark hour in the history of our country, but it also reminds us of the debt of love and veneration we owe to those noble spirits who stood as the nation's bulwark of safety while the fearful shadow passed. Time has seared the wounds of fratricidal strife and drawn its flower-wrought robe over fields sodden with the blood of brothers, but it has not effaced from the minds of the survivors of the struggle a shuddering sense of its horrors nor a tender reverence for its heroes.

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 23 November 1898, p.2:

GEN. BUELL DEAD.
A Man Famous for Half a Century
Passes Away at His Coun-
try Home.

Gen. Buell, an account of whose serious illness appeared in last week's Herald, died at his home in Paradise, Muhlenberg county, last Saturday afternoon. Old age was assigned as the main cause of his death. He was buried in St. Louis Monday.

Don Carlos Buell, Brigadier General of Volunteers, retired, was one of the most conspicuous figures of the early days of the civil war. General Buell was a native of Ohio, where he was born 80 years ago, but at an early age removed to Indiana with his parents. He was appointed to the Military College at West Point, and after being graduated in 1841, was assigned to the Third United States Infantry. Upon joining his regiment it was sent to Florida to help suppress the Seminoles.

During the Mexican war he distinguished himself at Palo Alto, Pass of Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Acalaca, Contreras and Cherubusco, In the later place being so severely wounded he had to be invalided home on sick furlough.

For gallantry he received the brevets of Captain and Major. In the years that followed he served in the Adjutant General's office at Washington, and in the department of Texas and the East. When the civil war broke out General Buell was in San Francisco with the Eighteenth Infantry as Lieutenant Colonel. He was then immediately raised to be Brigadier General of Volunteers, and after service in the defenses around Washington was transferred to Louisville as Commander of the Department of the Ohio.

He was later changed to a minor command under Grant at Shiloh, but for allowing General Braxton Bragg to escape around the right wing of the Union army in that struggle and attack it from the rear, nearly cutting it to pieces, General Buell returned to Louisville in disgrace and was tried by court-martial. The matter was hushed up, however, and after being allowed to remain for waiting orders for 18 months, he was mustered out of the volunteers and resigned his commission in the regular army, At the close of the war he became President of the Green River Iron Works, and also engaged in coal mining. He was appointed Pension Agent in Louisville by Cleveland in the latter's first term and served four years. Then he retired to his country home at Paradise. He was never married.

General Buell was 80 years old.

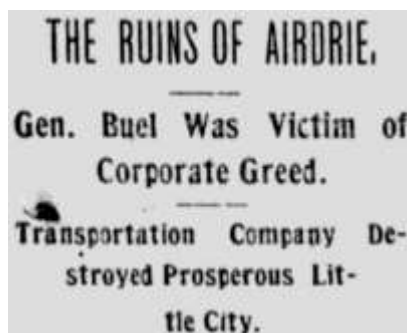
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Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 17 December 1898, p.8:

Gen. Buell's Beautiful Home.
The home of General Buell, near Paradise, Ky., is one of the most beautiful spots in the corn-craeker state, says the Evansville Courier.
The thousands of tourists along Green river every year are attracted to the home of the departed warrior at Airdrie, Ky.
"I never saw a prettier place in all my life," said Col. John Rains, of Spottsville, Ky., who was in the city on business on Wednesday. "The residence of Gen. Buell sits on a high hill and the house is surrounded by beautiful trees. Gen. Buell in the last years of his life very seldom left home. He enjoyed the enchanting scenery around Paradise and spent many hours roaming through the woods communing with nature."



Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, 20 July 1906, p.3:



Recently a party of nineteen from Render and McHenry crossed Green river at Paradise and walked down one-half mile to Airdrie, the home of the late Gen. Don Carlos Buel

There are 950 acres in the estate which belongs to his stepdaughter Miss Nannie Mason of Louisville, who is the only living heir. On a rugged and picturesque hill 250 feet above high water mark stand the ruins is the once famous Kentucky town, which was noted principally for its iron mines and smelting works With some difficulty we ascended the hill by terraces and after considerable puffing and blowing we stood on ground still held sacred by those who admired Gen. Buel. There stood the old stone building once filled with machinery, with its many dark and mouldy rooms at one end, and of which is still standing the old smelting tower forty foot high, with the old rusty iron tank quietly resting on its top like a sentinel, keeping watch over the lonesome dreary desolate looking estate. In this building many hands were employed in the days before the war.

About 100 yards from this is the dwelling once occupied by Kentucky's noted general The storms of time have changed this two-story building of a dozen rooms from a beautiful residence to a dingy old structure which does not look like a suitable abiding place for the man who with 25,000 men saved Grant and Sherman from the brave Confederates who were fighting under the indomitable chivalrous Albert Sidney Johnson at Shiloh, and who, with his army of 100,000 men chased Bragg, who was invading Kentucky with his powerful army and forty-mile wagon train across the Tennessee line, yet our guide informed us that such was the fact.

There in that old building is the room in which Gen. Buel spent his last days on earth and in which the priests administered to him the last rites of the Catholic church, he having joined that church ten days before his death The bed on which he died is there with its linen covers just as they were when he was removed from it to his coffin The sheets and pilows in the same place, have never been moved since he was taken from the house a corpse. Everything about the place has a dreary appearance and to look upon the waste and desolation makes one lonesome and desirous of leaving at once. One is impressed with the fact that greatness vanishes with everything mortal.

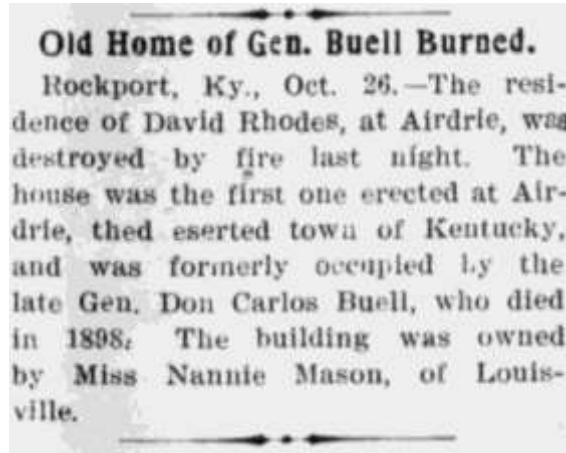
When Gen. Buel took charge of the works at Airdrie for the Alexander company, after the war, the future prospect of the town was flattering and doubtless to-day it would have been a thriving manufacturing village had not the state sold Green river to the Green and Barren Rivers Navigation company. That famous or infamous monopoly, by its exorbitant charges and greed,

soon shut off all profits on any of its productions and Airdrie went down and is what you see today – a manufacturing town in ruins.

BLUE AND GRAY.

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 30 October 1907, p.5:



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**A History of Muhlenberg County, Otto A. Rothert,
John P. Morton & Company, Inc., Louisville, KY, 1913
(parts of pages 220-221, 225-226, 233-234, 236-239):**

PARADISE COUNTRY AND OLD AIRDRIE

AIRDRIE and its furnace were built in 1855 by R. S. C. A. Alexander, and since that time it has been one of the most interesting spots along Green River. General Don Carlos Buell made it his home in 1866, and continued to live there until his death in 1898.



Don Carlos Buell, 1866

In the course of years Airdrie's twenty-five or more frame houses have all been abandoned. The Deserted Village became a demolished village, and to-day little is left to mark the site of this once-flourishing town. No trace of the buildings that stood on Airdrie Hill can now be found. Some of the houses were carried off in the shape of lumber, others tumbled down years ago and rotted away. The Buell residence, erected by William McLean many years before Airdrie was started, was not only the largest and oldest residence in the place but was also the last to pass away. It burned in 1907. This historic mansion stood in a beautiful park near the top of Airdrie Hill, on which the town was built. The landscape viewed from this spot, up and down Green River and across the stream and overlooking the farms and forests in Ohio County, is an unusually beautiful one. This riverside park, so well kept by General Buell during his lifetime, is now almost a jungle. The winding paths are rampant with ivy and honeysuckle, the foot-bridges are tottering, and what was once a shaded lawn is now overgrown with wild weeds and run-wild shrubbery.

On the narrow strip of land between the water's edge and the top of the hill, and running parallel with the river, are now found the only evidences of the old iron works and old mines. Among the cedars and sycamores are the ruins of a large brick chimney, and near it lie two rusty boilers. Here and there, protruding from the ground, can be seen traces of old stone walls that remind one more of the work of prehistoric mound-builders than of a foundation laid by mill-builders. Two of the old shafts look like long-abandoned wells, and another like a mere hole in the ground. The opening on the hillside leading into the abandoned drift mine, known as the "McLean Old Bank," looks like the entrance to a cave that has never been explored.

The stack of the furnace still stands, a majestic old pile, fifty-five feet or more in height. But the days of this picturesque landmark are evidently numbered. Near the stack is the Stone House, whose massive walls seem able to defy storm and sunshine for many years to come. This house, used in former times for machinery, is a sandstone structure three stories high, fifty by twenty feet. The wooden floors and window frames have long ago fallen away. This fortlike building was at one time covered with a slate roof, which was ruined by visitors throwing rocks on it from the top of the bluff at the foot of which the house stands. The shingle roof placed on it by General Buell has since met with the same fate. About half-way up the wall of the Stone House, between two windows, the thoughtful architect placed a large stone bearing the inscription. "AIRDRIE, 1855."

The hillside stone steps leading from a point just beyond the Stone House to the top of Airdrie Hill, where the town stood, are most picturesque. Virginia creeper has found its way up the solid stone foundation, and the drooping branches of the nearby trees shade the beds of heavy moss and clusters, of clinging ferns. The sixty stone steps, although without railing, can still be climbed in safety.

The stack of the old furnace, together with the Stone House and the stone steps, as they stand to-day (about fifty yards from the river), suggest a bygone time with which one's imagination could associate any long past age in the world's history, if the "1855" chiseled deep into its ancient walls did not keep the mind from wandering back further.

Such, as I have tried to describe it, is the Airdrie of to-day....

Airdrie derives its name from a small city of the same name in Scotland, situated between Edinburg and Glasgow. It is the old home of the titled Alexanders. Robert Sproul Crawford Aitcheson Alexander, the founder of Airdrie in Muhlenberg, was born in Frankfort, Kentucky, in 1819.... Alexander spared no expense in his work. The capital at his disposal for this undertaking was practically unlimited. It is said he invested over \$350,000. He enlarged the McLean house, in which he retained a few rooms for his personal use. Besides the furnace, Stone House, and mill he

erected. a two-story frame hotel, a few two-story frame dwellings, and about twenty frame cottages of three rooms each. These houses were lathed and plastered and supplied with massive chimneys and large open fire-places. Everybody around the works, regardless of position, was comfortably housed....

The furnace was built in 1855-56. It has an iron shell stack, resting upon a masonry base, twenty-six and a half feet square by twenty-one feet high. The outside diameter of the shell is twenty-three feet. The internal dimensions of the furnace are as follows: height fifty feet, diameter of bosh seventeen feet, height to bosh twenty-four feet (bosh cylindrical for six feet), diameter of throat eleven feet. The hearth is four feet high (elliptical in shape), seven feet four inches by (about) five feet. The furnace is entirely open-topped, having no facilities for saving the gases, and requiring' separate firing for both boilers and hot-blast. There are two hot-blast ovens of the old-fashioned pistol-pipe pattern, with thirty-four pipes in each oven, ten curved pipes on each side, with seven straight at each end. The pipes are eight feet long, elliptical in cross-section, nine by eighteen inches, with diaphragm through the center of each. There are four boilers, each forty inches in diameter by twenty-eight feet in length, each boiler having two flues. The engine is vertical, with direct connection between the steam and blast cylinders, and also connected with a heavy walking-beam and fly-wheel, the walking-beam working with a counterpoise at one end....

Immediately after the close of the war General. Buell began a search for an oil field. He came to Airdrie from Marietta, Ohio, in 1866, for the sole purpose of working the oil on the Alexander lands. He took a forty-year mineral and oil lease on Alexander's seventeen thousand acres. Alexander was to receive, among other things, one tenth of all "the petroleum or other oil or oily substance obtained from the land." This company, of which General Buell was president, was known as the Airdrie Petroleum Co. Buell drilled extensively on the Alexander property along Green River and also on the Buckner Furnace tract. Airdrie being on Green River, and having the best transportation facilities, he decided to establish himself there. Furthermore, after the death of Alexander; the Alexander heirs, wishing to dispose of some of the property which they had inherited, entered into an agreement with Buell whereby the latter received a deed to the Airdrie furnace and about a thousand acres around it for having released the forty-year lease that he then held. He thereafter confined his work to his own property near Airdrie. However, the coal Buell discovered while looking for oil was in such abundance that he changed his plans and directed most of his attention to coal development....

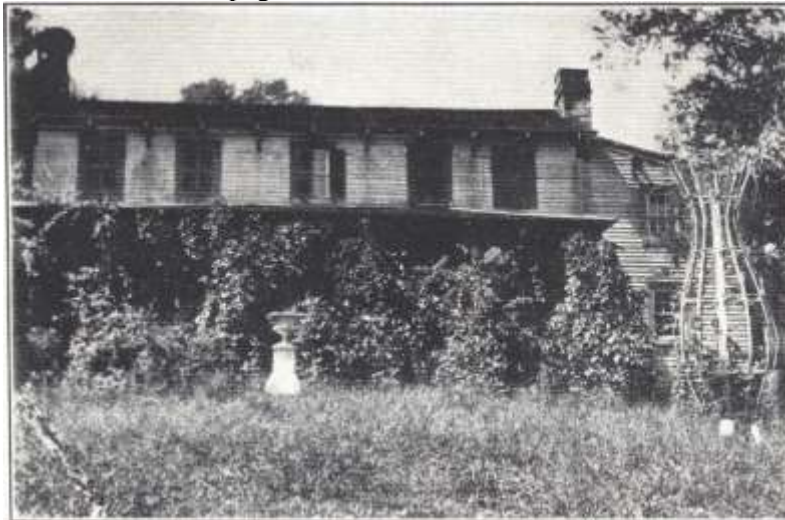
General Buell on November 19, 1851, married the widow of General Richard Barnes Mason, who was a grandson of General George Mason of Revolutionary fame....

General Buell's wife before her second marriage was Mrs. Margaret (Turner) Mason, the mother of Miss Nannie Mason; Mrs. Buell died in Airdrie on August 10, 1881. After her death Mrs. Course, the General's sister, made the place her home until 1885, when she died. General Buell died at Airdrie on November 19, 1898, and his body was sent to Belfontaine Cemetery, St. Louis. His estate was willed to Miss Nannie Mason, who a few years after his death made Louisville her home and died there November 19, 1912. In 1908 she sold the Airdrie lands to the Five J. Coal Company, of which Shelby J. Gish, of Central City, is general manager.

After the General's death William Shackelton occupied the house for about two years. He was succeeded by Lorenzo D. Griggs. John Hendrie, the then aged architect of the old stone structures at Airdrie, occupied the house from September, 1904, to November, 1906. David Rhoads came next, and was living in the historic mansion when, on the night of October 26, 1907, it was destroyed by fire. During its seventy-five years of existence many of Muhlenberg 's pioneers loitered under its roof....

General Buell lived in this house thirty-two years, including the four years (1885-1889) he made Louisville his headquarters while Pension Agent for Kentucky. In 1880 and during a number of years following he was one of the Commissioners of the State Agricultural College. He was one of the early members of the Kentucky State Historical Society, and was also identified with many conventions that have aided in the development of the resources of the State. In 1890, when the Shiloh Military Park Commission was organized, he was appointed one of its members, and served on that board up to the time of his death. Although never an applicant for office, General Buell's name has been mentioned in connection with many high offices, among them being the presidency of the United States.

Pictures from pages 225-226, 230, 232, 234-235, 237-239:



General Buell's residence, Airdrie, in 1900



General Buell's private park, residence, and boathouse, Airdrie, 1900



The Airdrie Furnace



The Stone House, Airdrie



Mill chimneys, Airdrie, 1900



The old hotel building at Airdrie, 1895



Ruins at Airdrie, 1900 – shortly before the last of the frame houses disappeared



Some of the abandoned houses at Airdrie, 1895



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 12 November 1939, p.1B:

Paradise Of Today Is Gaunt Reminder Of 75 Years Ago

Ny W. E. Daniel, Owensboro Messenger

Paradise, Ky., Nov. 11. — Reports from geologists sent to America by the Alexanders of Scotland a decade before the War Between the States were responsible for the migration of Robert Alexander, in 1855, from his Bluegrass stock farm in Woodford county, to the sparsely settled region bordering Green river in Muhlenberg. Mineral outcroppings and indications of iron ore in commercial quantities were believed by the Scotland Alexanders in sufficient quantity to replace the rapidly diminishing supply of Black Band ore in that country. Emboldened by flattering prospects, Robert Alexander quit the ancestral estate near Spring Station, between Frankfort and Versailles, and with a company of trained iron workers dispatched from Europe by his uncle, Lord Alexander, whose title he was to inherit, descended the Ohio and barged up Green river with their goods and chattels to the point where the ruins of Airdrie mark the spot selected for building an industrial city patterned after Airdrie in Scotland.

Robert Alexander was educated in Scotland by his uncle, Lord Alexander. He enjoyed the luxury of his horse breeding farm in Central Kentucky, to which he returned from college. But the promise of the rich uncle to finance a plan to develop the iron ore along Green river was too fascinating a prospect to deter the young nephew. He spent recklessly. A townsite was laid out. Hotels were built, coal mines opened and veterans from Scotland hoisted a small lot of iron ore. A blast furnace was built. A stone power house was equipped to operate the machinery. A long flight of stone steps led from the lower level near the river whereon stood the furnace and power house to the higher lands along which stretched the well-laid-out streets of the city of Airdrie.

But developing a new industrial section did not appeal to the young Bluegrass aristocrat. The rude outlines of a raw land were less inviting than the undulant fields of his stock farm, and after spending \$350,000 of his uncle's money in two years he tired of the monotony and went home to his horses, his elegant mansion with the spring nearby. Behind him Robert Alexander left the emigrants who had come from Scotland to people the wooded lands; to build an industrial domain in keeping with the dignity of Lord Alexander's across the sea. Most of them remained, the

Duncans, the Macdougals, the Vanlandingshams, the Hadens, the Smiths and others. Life was simple and they turned from mining, which never yielded a competence, to farming the new land. Their homes were well furnished. They had stores of all kinds needed in a village, dry goods, groceries, hardware, with saw mills, planing mills, and various industries on a small scale. Life moved quietly at Airdrie, despite the loss of the promoter who never returned from his Woodford county home.

Buel Leases Airdrie

Meanwhile the war came and went, and General Don Carlos Buel, native of Ohio who had soldiered through Kentucky, heard of Airdrie and saw possibilities in the dormant dream of Alexander. In 1866 the general leased the 17,000 acres of Alexander land lying along the river and the Buckner furnace farm a few miles away. He organized the Airdrie Petroleum company, and with a whim as wild as that of Alexander's, saw a fortune in oil instead of iron. The blast furnace was not used, nor the power house. His lease would extend 40 years. He established his home in the old McLean house built in the '30s, a rambling, palatial place overlooking the river. It was situated in a 60-acre park wherein the general cultivated flowers and shrubbery, transforming the rolling lands into a park-like expanse extending to the water's edge. Impractical in the extreme, the general turned from oil to coal, and one lone tunnel penetrating the hillside near the blast furnace and power house of Alexander's day, remains. That was after the Alexander heirs, following his death, in 1867, deeded General Buel 1,000 acres including the McLean house and the townsite of Airdrie, in exchange for his surrender of the 40-year lease on the 17,000 acres. Of that immense tract the Rogers Brothers and Crescent Coal companies, of Greenville, now own the Buel holdings and mineral rights of several thousand acres of the Alexander estate.

Buel's plans of becoming a coal baron were disrupted and finally dissipated. . Green river was leased by the Green and Barren River Navigation company, and freight rates raised to freeze out Buel. The owners of the river controlled the shipments of coal. Buel fought them with his old time determination, and finally in 1888 the federal government took over the river. But that was too late for the general who died ten years, later. He eked out an existence on the farm during the long-drawn-out litigation until a political appointment at Louisville made easier his declining years. The Airdrie of Alexander's dreams failed before operations were really under way, because the man heading the enterprise tired of the primitive life and returned to the pleasures of breeding race horses and living the life of a Bluegrass gentleman. And the Airdrie of Buel gradually passed out of existence because the old soldier was not equipped to fight with weapons used by financiers.

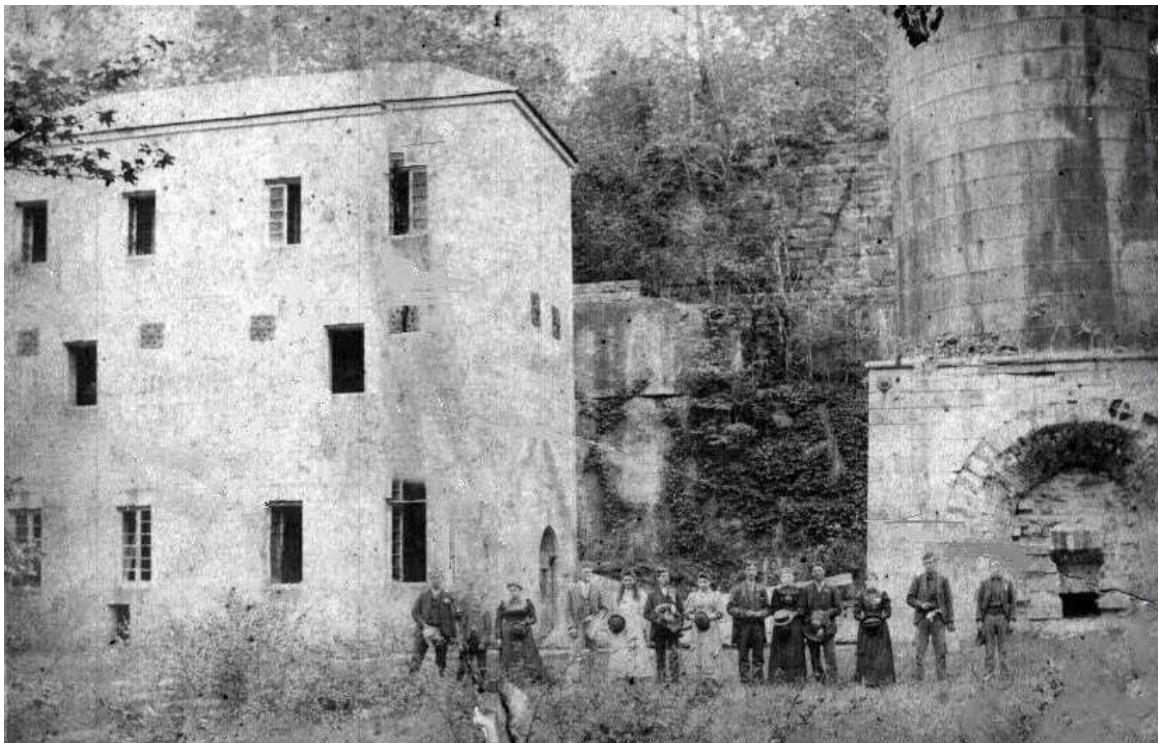
Now Hard to Reach

To reach Airdrie now the visitor goes either by way of Paradise or Rockport. The site is on the river between. A rutted trail, hard to negotiate by automobile, winds through scrubby timber, second growth, across a barren field, and the vicinity of the once promising industrial city is reached before the stranger is aware. A guide points out the places of interest: where the large hotel stood; the route toward the Buel home across a narrow valley from Airdrie proper; where Alexander's emigrants built their homes, and where openings were made for iron and then coal mines. The ruins are nearby without warning. A veritable jungle hides the few remaining units of the once ambitious scheme. A winding path, shadowed by bulging rocks, points toward the river which is hidden by timber. Then the massive stone fence alongside the ledge below which rears the tall crest of the blast furnace and power house, reached by stone steps. Such fine examples of masonry are now found only in the finished work of modern artisans. All is gone except these

stable but small parts of the comprehensive industrial plan. Fire destroyed the Buel home in 1907, and gradually the other buildings were burned or crumbled into decay. The general's step-daughter, Miss Nannie Mason, sold the farm and died later in Louisville, following the death of the general at Airdrie.

Strangely misnamed was this little river town, if those who first called it Paradise hoped for permanence, for with the end of transport afloat it rapidly declined, and the Paradise of today is a gaunt reminder of the thriving trading point in Alexander's and Buel's days. And while there is about it a feel of peace it was the near setting for a glaring paradox in the buoyant hopes of the Scottish emigrants and later the associates of Buel. It was the chosen spot for the planting of two vigorous dreams of industrial supremacy.

Both the founder of the potential iron foundry headquarters and his successor were men who visioned vast projects without the faculty of building, and as the reign of Alexander ended in abandonment after spending \$350,000 so were the years of the former federal general climaxed by failure. And the once promising village hard by Paradise perished after a season of glamour under both masters, the stone wall, the lofty flight of steps and the blast furnace and power house, standing like determined sentinels toward the memories of departed grandeur and thwarted ambition. For fame was both alluring and elusive to General Don Carlos Buel, who rode the crest of favoritism for a while, which mocked him when his laurels turned to ashes of disillusionment and disappointment. A visit to Airdrie is worth the exertion. It leads the stranger over rugged terrain, an abandoned town site and beside the placid river. The muse of history oft pauses, for those who love to re-explore a territory once vibrant with life, and, when the hills are clothed in moonlight, fancy may easily people them again. It is a chapter of which many know little, though they live nearby.



Airdrie iron furnace



Gravestone of Don Carlos & Nannie Buell
at Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis, MO



Hartford, Ohio County, KY Newspaper Articles

- Hartford Herald – 1881: 8/17 p.2 (Rockport: Mrs. D. C. Buell died Aug 10 at Airdrie in Muhlenberg County; survived by husband; taken to St. Louis, MO for burial)
- Hartford Herald – 1884: 12/10 p.2 (at Rockport)
- Hartford Herald – 1885: 1/28 p.3(how he was described by Gen. Grant)
- Hartford Herald – 1885: 11/25 p.1 (history of military career)
- Hartford Herald – 1887: 10/26 p.2 (returns to Airdrie)
- Hartford Herald – 1898: 8/31 p.3 (Gen. D. C. Buell is dying)
- Hartford Herald – 1898: 11/16 p.3
- Hartford Herald – 1898: 11/23 p.2 (Died of old age Nov 19 at home in Muhlenberg County at Paradise. Age 80. Born 23 March 1818 near Marietta, Ohio. Graduated from West Point 1841. Soldier in Mexican War, wounded & attained rank of Major. When Civil War began he was made a Brigadier General. After war was President Green River Iron Works & resided since 1864 at Airdrie in Muhlenberg County. Buried Nov 21 in St. Louis, MO)
- Hartford Herald – 1902: 10/15 p.4 (“Gen. Buell’s Home”)
- Hartford Republican – 1906: 7/20 p.3 (“The Ruins of Airdrie: Gen Buell Was Victim of Corporate Greed”)
- Hartford Herald – 1907: 10/30 p.5 (former home at Airdrie burns)
- Hartford Herald – 1908: 4/22 p.1 (“Lost Paradise” Will Be Restored)
- Hartford Republican – 1911: 2/17 p.4 (Courier-Journal recently published an article on Airdrie)

- Hartford Republican – 1911: 2/24 p.5
- Hartford Republican – 1912: 6/7 p.1 (Airdrie to be rebuilt)
- Hartford Herald – 1924: 11/5 p.7
- Ohio County Messenger – 1959: 11/20 p.2
- Ohio County Messenger – 1960: 3/11 p.3
- McLean County News, Calhoun, KY – 1994: 9/8 (Buell in McLean County named for him in 1886)

Owensboro, Daviess County, KY Newspaper Articles

- Owensboro Monitor – 1862: 10/8 p.3 (Commander-in-Chief of forces stationed at Louisville)
- Owensboro Monitor – 1862: 10/29 p.3 (being condemned for allowing Gen. Bragg to escape)
- Owensboro Monitor – 1862: 11/5 p.2 & 3 (relieved of command of the Army of the Ohio)
- Owensboro Monitor – 1863: 11/4 p.2 (Gen. Grant appoints him chief of his staff)
- Owensboro Monitor – 1863: 11/11 p.2 (cleared of charges against him)
- Owensboro Monitor – 1864: 9/7 p.2 (retires from Army after 23 years of service)
- Owensboro Monitor – 1867: 8/28 p.2 (history of his Civil War career, now residing on the south bank of Green River near Paradise in Muhlenberg County, where he is leasing the Airdrie mines)
- Owensboro Weekly Messenger – 1877: 11/14 p.2 (the “Washington Capital” runs editorial asking for him to be restored to his position in the Army from which he had been forced to resign during the Civil War)
- Owensboro Weekly Messenger – 1878: 5/1 p.2 (letter by him on Green & Barren River Navigation Bill)
- Owensboro Messenger & Examiner – 1881: 3/9 p.2 (at war with the Green & Barren River Navigation Company), 4/6 p.2
- Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger & Examiner – 1881: 4/5 p.2 (patents a machine he invented)
- Owensboro Messenger & Examiner – 1882: 2/15 p.4 (considered as a candidate for Governor)
- Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger – 1882: 2/17 p.1 (letter by him on political situation in KY)
- Owensboro Messenger & Examiner – 1882: 2/22 p.2 (letter by him on political situation in KY)
- Owensboro Messenger & Examiner – 1882: 9/6 p.2 (he has no political aspirations)
- Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger – 1883: 3/27 p.4, 5/11 p.1
- Owensboro Messenger & Examiner – 1883: 5/23 p.1 (false report on him having surgery)
- Owensboro Messenger & Examiner – 1883: 6/6 p.2 (his first cousin, Gen. G. P. Buell, died in Nashville last week)
- Owensboro Messenger & Examiner – 1884: 2/20 p.2 (views on Green & Barren Rivers lease)
- Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger – 1884: 12/12 p.2 (he has cruelly been wronged and robbed of his fortune by the monopoly Green & Barren River Navigation Company)

- Owensboro Tri-Weekly Messenger – 1885: 1/27 p.2 (statement about his service career by Gen. Grant)
- Owensboro Tri-Weekly Messenger – 1885: 1/29 p.1 (letter by him on the proposed purchase of the Navigation Company’s lease of Green River)
- Owensboro Tri-Weekly Messenger – 1885: 3/31 p.1 (mother, Mrs. Dunlevy, 86, died on 27 March 1885 near Aurora, IN)
- Owensboro Tri-Weekly Messenger – 1885: 9/8 p.4 (Airdrie is a deserted village)
- Owensboro Tri-Weekly Messenger – 1885: 11/12 p.1 (appointed pension agent for KY, history of military career)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1887: 10/27 p.2 (he is still optimistic)
- Owensboro Weekly Messenger – 1889: 9/5 p.2 (his term as pension agent will expire on 12 January 1890)
- Owensboro Weekly Messenger – 1890: 5/22 p.5 (has the iron camp bed used by Gen. Winfield Scott, on his campaign from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, during the Mexican War, served as Gen. Scott’s Adjutant General)
- Owensboro Inquirer – 1890: 7/3 p.4 (to give address at large Sunday school picnic near his home tomorrow)
- Owensboro Inquirer – 1898: 8/30 p.2 (he is dying)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1898: 8/30 p.1 (Gen Buell is dying)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1898: 9/2 p.1
- Owensboro Inquirer – 1898: 11/13 p.1 (he is near death)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1898: 11/20 p.1; died at home place, “Airdrie”, 4 miles from Rockport; soldier – graduated West Point in 1841, Mexican War (brevet major) & Civil War (USA, major general, “at Shiloh saved the day for Grant”, resigned in June 1864); buried beside his wife)
- Owensboro Inquirer – 1898: 11/22 p.2 (Gen. Buell is dead)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1898: 11/23 p.1 (taken to St. Louis for internment)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1898: 11/24 p.1 (buried with military honors at Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1898: 12/17 p.8 (home is a beautiful spot)
- Owensboro Inquirer – 1902: 9/7 p.4 (Airdrie has been sold to the St. Bernard Mining Company for \$40,000, this great mining property has laid idle for 25 years, it was wrecked by the Civil War & then by the destructive policy of the Green River Navigation Company)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1903: 5/24 p.1 (his old home at Airdrie has been robbed)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1907: 10/27 p.1 (old home at Airdrie burns)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1912: 6/2 p.2B (deserted city of Airdrie)
- Owensboro Messenger – 1939: 11/12 p.1B (“Paradsie Of Today Is Gaunt Reminder of 75 Years Age”, by W. E. Daniel)
- Messenger-Inquirer – 1967: 7/30 p.1C (“Old Airdrie Iron Works Link With 19th Century”, by Gary Kula)
- Messenger-Inquirer – 1998: 1/8 p.3C (Louisville’s Filson Club purchases collection of his letters)

