

# Hale – Moorman Cemetery

## Hancock County, KY

By Jerry Long  
Owensboro, KY  
c2022

Cemetery is near Weberstown (Weber) a short distance north of the intersection of Highways 69 and 144. On hill on the east side of Highway 69 opposite the South Hancock Elementary School. Inscriptions in cemetery were copied by Jerry Long on 21 April 1980 and rechecked 24 October 1986. Thomas and Charles Hale, who are buried here are brothers of this writer's fourth great-grandfather, William Hale, Jr. (c1820-1861).



Picture was taken on 24 October 1986 by Jerry Long, The South Hancock County Elementary School is visible in the background. The school is built near the site of the Thomas Hale home.

Thomas Hale (aged 51y's, 4m's, 5d's) died 4 Apr 1863  
(The monument of Thomas Hale was lying flat on the ground. I rested it against a nearby tree to take a picture. I afterwards placed the monument flat on the ground as I had found it.)



Elizabeth J. Hale (w/o Thomas)

26 Jul 1810

13 Mar 1898



(Elizabeth Jane daughter of Rev. William Moorman & Mark Burkholder. Her monument had been completely buried and was dug up on my 1986 visit to the cemetery. While investigating the ground near the grave of Thomas Hale I saw what looked like a stone that was protruding from the ground about one-half inch. When I prodded around it I soon discovered that it was a monument that had been completely covered over. I placed the monument flat on the ground face up near the monument of Thomas Hale that was also lying flat. In several prior listings of the cemetery it was not included.)

Susan A. Hale (d/o T. & E. J) (Susan Artemissa, daughter of Thomas Hale & Elizabeth Jane Moorman)	5 May 1846	2 Nov 1870
Sarah Hale (d/o T. & E. J.) (Sarah B., daughter of Thomas Hale & Elizabeth Jane Moorman. Broken part of this monument was found in 1980 but could not be found in 1986. From family bible "Sarah B. Hale born 24 Aug 1853 died 9 Jun 1859)		1859
Henry V. Bruner (s/o R. T. & R. L.) (Henry Vanmeter, son of Robert Tabb Bruner & Rebecca Leura Hale)	6 May 1860	6 May 1860
William D. Bruner (s/o R. T. & R. L.) (William Dudley, son of Robert Tabb Bruner & Rebecca Leura Hale)	5 Feb 1871	5 Feb 1871
Joel A. Brown (Joel Asbury, son of William Brown & Judah Corley; husband of Elmina C. Hale)	2 Nov 1836	3 May 1876
Elmina Brown (Elmina C., daughter of Thomas Hale & Elizabeth Jane Moorman; wife of Joel Asbury Brown)	23 Feb 1837	17 Feb 1925



Lucy A. Moorman (w/o I. B., aged 33 y, 5m, 15d) (Lucy Ann Nichols, wife of Isaac B. Moorman)	died	18 Oct 1863
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Mary Moorman (w/o Wm., aged about 84) (Mary Burkholder, wife of Rev. William Moorman)	died	17 Mar 1869
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Also buried here in unmarked graves:

Charles Hale (son of William Hale, Sr. & Catherine Snider)	c1831	8 Jan 1907
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Eldred Moorman (son of Isaac B. Moorman & Lucy Ann Nichols; he was a bachelor; KY death certificate 1918 - #7681 reports that he was buried "Hale Cemetery")	17 Feb 1846	2 Mar 1918
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Preceding listing included in article, "Four Hale Family Cemeteries in Hancock County, Kentucky", by Jerry Long, published in: Kentucky Family Records, Vol. 13, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association (Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 1988), 96-98; Kentucky Ancestors, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, Summer 1988), 8-10; and Forgotten Pathways, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Hawesville, KY: Genealogical Society of Hancock County, Summer 1988), 18-19.

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## Thomas Hale (1811-1863)

Hancock County, KY, like the state of Kentucky, during the Civil War was not uniformly aligned with the Union or Confederacy and was sharply divided. The opposing views came to a shocking climax with the murder of Thomas Hale. An outspoken Union man Hale was killed by nightriders at his home on the Hartford-Hawesville Road (now Highway 69) near Weberstown in Hancock County; the South Hancock Elementary School is now on the site of the Hale home. He was the first fatality due to the conflict on the soil of Hancock County during the war.

On the night of 4 April 1863 a group of about fifteen rebel guerillas came to the home of Thomas Hale on the Hartford-Hawesville Road about seven miles south of Hawesville. Some of the group were recognized as being from Hancock and Daviess Counties. They demanded that Mr. Hale come out. He rose from bed and when he opened his door he was met with a volley of gunshots. Two minie balls struck him one hitting him in the temple and the other piercing his thigh. He was killed instantly. About five or six other bullets landed in his door. It was believed the assassins targeted him due to his outspoken support of maintaining the Union. Several accounts of the murder were published in the Owensboro and Louisville, KY and Cannelton and Evansville, IN newspapers.

Courier-Journal, Louisville, KY, Friday, 10 April 1863 p3:

"Assassinations and Outrages by Rebels"

**Owensboro, Ky., April 6, 1863.**  
One of the most revolting assassinations, in connection with other most damnable outrages, has just been committed in the adjoining counties, Ohio and Hancock. Twenty-five or thirty outlaws, some of whom are deserters from the rebel army, the rest citizen rebels, who have been for some time past secreted in this vicinity, occasionally prowling about committing most high-handed outrages against the Union community, urged on by the rebel sympathizers of this part of the country, and emboldened in their nefarious schemes, on last Saturday made their appearance in Ohio county, in open daylight, and captured and paroled a Home Guard Captain, taking his overcoat and horse, and then left to serve others in the same way. Towards evening they crossed into Hancock county, and, after swearing and otherwise abusing and misusing Union men, robbing them of their arms and making various threats, they came to the house of Wm. L. Bruner, a worthy and good Union man, an honest farmer and a peaceable citizen, about 10 o'clock at night, and called him out. Mr. Bruner not being at home, as luck would have it, a young man by the name of Amos Corly, who was working for Mr. Bruner, came to the door, whereupon, as he opened the door, they shot him, the ball taking effect in his left breast, ranging around his ribs, seriously, though it is hoped not mortally, wounding him. After finding they had not shot Mr. Bruner, four of the blood-thirsty assassins entered the house and searched it diligently for Mr. Bruner. Not finding him, they told the young man thus wounded, who lay

bleeding upon the floor, that unless he would conduct them to the stable and show them where to find the horses, bridles, and saddles, they would send another leaden messenger through his already bleeding breast; and thus forced, weak and faint, he did their bidding. Then, as if their thirst for blood was not satiated, they proceeded to the house of Thomas Hale, another prominent Union man, surrounding it. Mrs. Hale had not yet gone to bed, and hearing them walking around the house, she awoke her husband, who repaired to a window and called to know what was wanted, and receiving no reply, went to the door, opened it, and the first thing that met his sight was a gun presented at his breast. Closing the door, he went to an adjoining room and aroused his son, and together they returned to the door with their guns, and the instant Mr. Hale opened the door a Minie ball pierced his brain, entering at the temple and passing diagonally through his head, killing him almost instantly, while another passed through his thigh, breaking it. He never spoke after he was shot. His son fired as his father fell, and stepped back to reload his gun, when the assassins called to him to come out and give himself up, or they would burn the house over his head, which he did. They swore him, took his gun, and forced him to go and take his father's gun from his dying grasp. They then left and have not been heard from since. Mr. Hale was at his death about fifty years of age, one of the best men in the State, a zealous Christian, and for the last two years an invalid, using crutches, from the effects of rheumatism. Joe and Thomas Harrison, of Hancock, and Lindsay Roads, of Daviess, and others were recognized among



10 April 1863 continued

the murderers. They have been harbored by the Southern sympathizers in these counties for the last three months. The Union men have the most positive proof that the assassinations were headed by citizens who are trying to wreak their vengeance on the Union community. Great God! are the Union men of Hancock to be assassinated by these outlaws? murdered one by one by the murderous thieves, who are led by the citizen rebels, and who have been secreted and fed by them for twelve months? Are they to have no protection from the Government for their devotion to it? A more perfect reign of terror does not exist in the State than does in Hancock county. The rebel flag, that cursed rag which they vainly try to substitute for the Stars and Stripes under which so many of our proud Republic's brave sons have fallen, has been raised in Pelleveille, a small town near where the atrocious outrages were committed.

Hancock has had a rebel representative for the last two years, and the leading rebels of that county are men of wealth; and a more vindictive, tyrannical set of men is not to be found. They will countenance and uphold anything that tends to the extermination of the Union party in that county.

Other prominent citizens have been threatened by the home rebels of that county, and if a force is not sent immediately to that county, and stationed there, you may look for a repetition of the horrible tragedy. Cannot something be done? We hope so. We would like to see the old flag waving "o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

A CITIZEN.

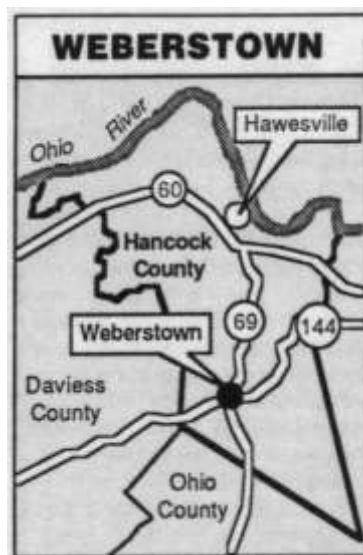
Daily Journal, Evansville, IN  
Saturday, 25 April 1863 p2:

Our readers will remember that some ten days ago we published the particulars of the cold-blooded murder of Mr. Thomas Hale, a highly respectable citizen of Hancock county, Ky., by a gang of guerrillas led by Lindsey Rose, Baker, Joe and Thomas Harris, and the dangerous wounding by the same gang of a young man named Cowley, the robbery of several citizens, and stealing of several horses. There were nine of these murderers and robbers in the gang. Up to this time they have evaded arrest. The whole gang crossed the river yesterday (Sunday) morning at Hardin's Landing, opposite Alton, Ind., and are now in this State.

It is ascertained that these murderers and robbers design stopping in the neighborhood of Vincennes and Terre Haute. They are all well mounted and armed. One of them rides a large, fine looking iron gray mare—another a large chestnut sorrel horse, with flax mane and agil. We hope the officers of the law at Terre Haute and Vincennes will be on the lookout for these scoundrels. We understand that Marshal Akers of this city has telegraphed to the officers in reward is offered for their apprehension.—*New Albany Ledger*.

Owensboro Monitor, Owensboro, KY, 6 May 1863 p3:

"Capt. Hornback still picks up a few "seceshers" occasionally. Among others he has recently arrested the murderers of Hale, and Judge Williams of Hawesville."



After the Thomas Hale house was razed the door with five or six bullet holes was kept by members of the family. In 1952 a grandson, Thomas Hale Brown (1859-1952), had the door. Casper Hale (1920-2015) of Patesville, KY and Bert Jackson (1927-1989), who operated a general store at Weberstown, KY, told this writer that Thomas H. Brown's son, Virgil W. Brown (1888-1975), who lived near Pellville in Hancock County, later had the door. Mr. Brown had it stored in an out building at his residence and when the property was rented out it subsequently disappeared.

Hancock Clarion 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
edition, Hawesville, KY , March 1968

## Ancestor Shot By Guerrillas During Civil War



THIS PICTURE OF WILLIAM SMITH (Uncle Billy) is typical of the hardy patriarchs of his day. His story of how the guerrillas called his father-in-law to the door during the Civil War, and shot him to death was well worth hearing. The late Tom Hale of Hawesville, was a grandson of Thomas Hale, the victim of this awful deed. At the time of his death, Tom Hale of Hawesville, had the door of the house in his possession, marked with bullet holes. Uncle Billy Smith has many descendants in Hancock County now.

Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Thursday, 2 October 1952: "Pellville – Dr. and Mrs. A. M. Cain, of Elvins, Mo., were here a few days since looking for the house where her great uncle, Mr. Thomas Hale lived when shot by soldiers during the Civil War. The house has long since been torn away and only a pile of rocks and some silver poplar trees remain to mark the place. Mr. T. H. Brown, a grandson of Mr. Thomas Hale still has the door with the bullet hole through it which Dr. and Mrs. Cain saw. Her grandfather was David Hale, a brother to Thomas Hale, but went to the Klondyke years while a young man but did not return to Kentucky. He settled in the west. Son, Ernest V. Hale, was the father of Mrs. Cain who is so eager to trace her relatives. Dr. and Mrs. Cain went from here to Hawesville to see Mr. Tom Hale who is also a grandson of Mr. Thomas Hale."

Thomas Hale was born 29 November 1811 in Montgomery County, Virginia. His parents, William Hale (1787-1863) & Catherine Snider (1789-1835), were married in Montgomery County, VA on 18 February 1811. He was the grandson of Thomas Hale & Agnes

Price and John Snider & Charity Barrick. Thomas came with his parents to the area that is now Hancock County, KY about 1819. At the time of their arrival it was Breckinridge County and in 1829 became Hancock County. Thomas' parents, William & Catherine, are buried in the Hale – Isom Cemetery about two miles north of Thomas' final resting place; the Hale – Isom Cemetery is on hill in sight of Highway 69 between the Truman Young Road and the Goering Road.

Thomas Hale appears in the Hancock County annual tax lists of 1837-1863. His wife appears in his place in the 1864 tax list. He is listed as a household head in the 1840, 1850 and 1860 federal censuses of Hancock County. In the 1860 census his occupation was given as farmer. At his death he owned a 200-acre farm on Blackford Creek. His family were members of the Bethlehem Baptist Church about a mile east of his home.

Thomas Hale was buried in the Hale – Moorman Cemetery on a hill on the east side of Highway 69 opposite his former home place (now the site of the South Hancock Elementary School). His gravestone has the inscription Thomas Hale died 4 April 1863 aged 51y's, 4m's, 5d's. When I last visited the cemetery in 1986 his monument was in good shape even though it was laying flat on the ground. Unfortunately it has since been broken into several pieces.

Thomas Hale married Elizabeth Jane (Lizzie) Moorman on 14 November 1833 in Hancock County, KY. Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. William Moorman & Mary Burkholder, was born 26 July 1810 Botetourt County, VA. Elizabeth is listed in the 1850, 1860, 1870 & 1880 censuses of Hancock County, KY. She died 13 March 1898 and was buried near her husband in the Hale – Moorman Cemetery.

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday,  
18 March 1898 p2, Pellville column:

Grandma Hale, a highly respected Christian lady, died near here Sunday in her 89th year. She several children, Mrs. Joel Brown, Mrs. W. T. Smith, Mrs. Geo. W. Brown and William Hale, of this place, and Mrs. R. T. Bruner, of Owensboro, besides a host of grandchildred and great-grandchildren. She was the widow of Thomas Hale, who was killed by rebel soldiers at his home here during the war. Her remains were laid to rest in the family burying ground Monday in the presence of a very large assembly of people. Rev. R. T. Bruner, Miss Cordie Bruner, Charles Bruner and Ed Bruner and family, of Owensboro, were here to attend the funeral.

Thomas Hale and Elizabeth Jane Moorman were the parents of twelve children:

1. Catherine E. Hale, born 30 March 1834 Hancock County, KY; married George W. Brown, 12 January 1857 Hancock County, KY; died 31 March 1919 Hancock County,



- KY; buried Pellville Cemetery, Hancock County, KY; children – Hardin David, Thomas Hale, Cordelia Jane, Nora Lee & one other died childhood.
2. Mary Ann Hale, born 4 June 1835 Hancock County, KY; married William T. Smith, 25 October 1859 Hancock County, KY; died 2 September 1921 Hancock County, KY; buried Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, Hancock County, KY; children – Mary Belle, Margaret Catherine, Frankie L., Effie R., Susan E. & 3 died before 1900.
  3. Elmina C. Hale, born 23 February 1837 Hancock County, KY; married Joel Asbury Brown, 30 December 1857 Hancock County, KY; died 17 February 1925 Hancock County, KY; buried Hale – Moorman Cemetery, Weberstown, Hancock County, KY; children – Edwin Lewis & John Oliver.
  4. Rebecca Leura Hale, born 3 September 1838 Hancock County, KY; married Rev. Robert Tabb Bruner, 14 July 1859 Pellville, Hancock County, KY; died 25 May 1918 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY; buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY; children – Henry Vanmeter, Edwin Ernest, Charles David, Martha Custis, Clement Joshua, Hilary Dawson, William Dudley, Carrie Elnora, Addie Electa & Cordelia Millicent.
  5. William Moorman Hale, born 19 August 1840 Hancock County, KY; married Mary Ella Miller, 6 August 1868 Hancock County, KY; died 9 September 1922 Hawesville, Hancock County, KY; buried Hawesville Cemetery, Hancock County, KY; children – Alma D., Thomas David & Beulah Dell.
  6. Charles Hale, born 21 May 1842 Hancock County, KY; died 3 October 1843 Hancock County, KY.
  7. Elizabeth Jane Hale, born 25 April 1844 Hancock County, KY; married William Marion Bradshaw, 17 November 1864 Hancock County, KY; died 24 April 1901 Hancock County, KY; buried Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, Hancock County, KY; children – Lula B., Eva C. & Roberta Joel.
  8. Susan Artemissa Hale, born 5 May 1846 Hancock County, KY; died 2 November 1870 Hancock County, KY; buried Hale – Moorman Cemetery, Weberstown, Hancock County, KY.
  9. infant son Hale, born 29 March 1847 Hancock County, KY; died 31 March 1847 Hancock County, KY.
  10. infant daughter Hale, born 12 January 1848 Hancock County, KY; died 18 January 1848 Hancock County, KY.
  11. David Lafayette Hale, born 13 June 1851 Hancock County, KY; married Mary Lutittia Bruner, 15 February 1872 Hancock County, KY; died 24 August 1932 Michigan City, LaPorte County, IN; buried Blackford Baptist Church Cemetery, Hancock County, KY; children – Laura Beatrice, William Thomas & Samuel Franklin.
  12. Sarah B. Hale, born 24 August 1853 Hancock County, KY; died 9 June 1859 Hancock County, KY; buried Hale – Moorman Cemetery, Hancock County, KY.

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## **Charles Hale (c1831-1907)**

In the last months of the Civil War William (Bill) Davison (frequently misspelled as Davidson) and other Confederate guerillas were prowling and terrorizing through the Kentucky

counties of Daviess, Hancock, Breckinridge and Meade. On 4 January 1865 Davison and his command burned the Daviess County Courthouse in Owensboro. On 24 February 1865 Davison and his company as they were advancing east on the Hardinsburg Road (now Highway 144) were intercepted by Union home guards part of a company under Capt. John A. Clark. The party of rebels also included noted guerillas Marcellus Jerome Clarke (alias Sue Mundy), Henry Magruder and Henry Smith Midkiff. An hour long engagement followed.



William Hardin "Bill" Davison (1839-1865)



Kentucky State Historical Marker in Hawesville



Marcellus Jerome Clarke "Sue Mundy" (1844-1865)



Henry Magruder (1843-1865)



Henry Magruder (1843-1865) and Henry Smith Metcalf (1831-1910)

Davison's party stopped at the home of Minor E. Pate (1808-1875) on the north side of the Hardinsburg Road (Highway 144) just before entering the town of Patesville. The Pate home in later years was known as the Sam Baker house. The abandoned ruins of the house were still standing in 1996. Newspaper accounts report that the ensuing skirmish with the Home Guards occurred shortly after leaving the Pate house just east of Patesville, near the Breckinridge County line.



Baker (Minor E. Pate) house, Highway 144, Patesville, KY  
Picture was taken on 24 October 1986 by Jerry Long



Minor E. Pate (1808-1875)



In the battle Davison was severely wounded by Charles Hale (c1831-1907), a member of Capt. Clark's company. Davison was secreted away and hidden by friends; a member of a prominent Hancock County family Davison had many connections in the county. Davison died of his wounds on 7 March 1865. He was first buried in a secret spot in the county and during the 1880's his remains were exhumed and re-interred in the back part of the Hawesville Cemetery.



Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer  
The grave of Bill Davison stands in the Hawesville cemetery. The Confederate soldier commanded guerrillas who burned the Daviess County Courthouse in 1865.



In recent years the monument on the right replaced the older one on the left. Picture on left is from article "Southern Soldier's Final Battle", by Glenn Hodges, published in the Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 7 May 1996 p10.

Accounts of the engagement between the guerillas and the Hancock County home guard were reported in several local newspapers. The Cannelton Reporter at Cannelton, IN carried reports on – 2 March 1865 p2 & 3 ("Correspondence From Hawesville, Feb. 28"), 23 March 1865 p2 ("Bill Davidson Dead"), and 30 March 1865 p2 ("Bill Davidson's Body"). The Daily Journal at Evansville, IN carried reports on – 3 March 1865 p2 ("Davidson and Magruder Killed"), 4 March 1865 p2, 7 March 1865 p2 ("Davison and Magruder's Guerillas"), and 10 March 1865 p2 ("Affairs at Hawesville, Ky."). The Courier-Journal, Louisville KY carried reports on - 7 March 1865 p2 and 23 March 1865 p3. The 6 April 1865 p3 edition of the Cannelton Reporter said – "We enjoyed, this morning, an interview with Mr. Hale, the Nemesis of Bill Davison. He is as mild a mannered man as ever whipped a score of guerillas."

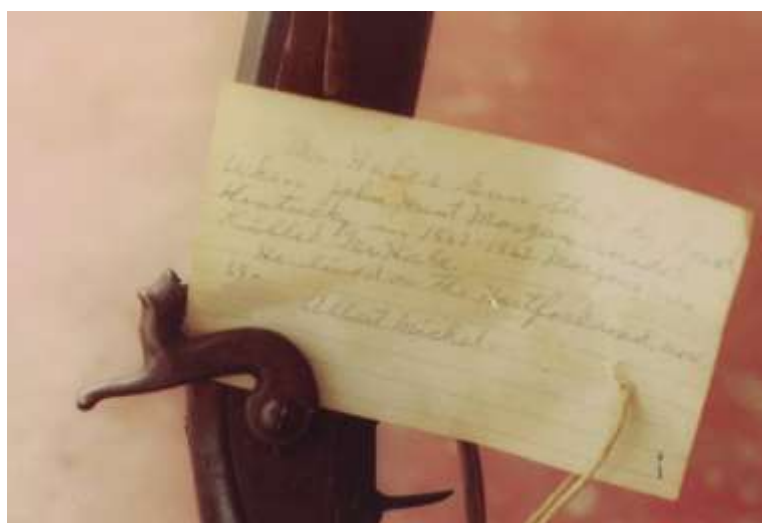
Others of Davison's party retreated and continued on towards Cloverport. Clarke, Magruder and Metcalf two weeks later on 12 March 1865 were captured near Webster in Meade County. They were taken to Louisville where they were placed on trial for their reign of terror and crimes against innocent non-military personnel that included robbery, destruction of private property, assaults, and even murder. Clarke and Magruder were declared guilty. Three days after their capture on March 15 Clarke was executed by hanging. Magruder was allowed to recuperate from wounds received in the Patesville skirmish and was hanged on 20 October 1865. Metcalf was granted a pardon and released ten months after his capture. Metcalf's release was reportedly due to the intervention of Col. John H. McHenry, a colonel & organizer of the 17<sup>th</sup> KY Infantry of the Union Army and a close friend of Metcalf's father, John Midkiff,

Charles Hale, on 20 February 1865 only four days before his engagement with Bill Davison had enrolled in the Union Home Guard, Company D, Green River Battalion. Charles was mustered out of service on 23 August 1865 at Cloverport, KY. Several members of the Hale family reported that Charles Hale while in the service used the gun that had belonged to his murdered brother, Thomas Hale.

On 21 April 1980 in a conversation with the late Kesner Gibson (1921-2005), of the Gibson & Son Funeral Home, in Hawesville, KY I learned that he had the rifle that Charles Hale shot Davison with. His wife, Mariam, had received the gun from her uncle, Albert Mickel (1896-1972), who had gotten the gun from Fred Hale (1890-1985), a great-nephew of Charles Hale. In 2015 the rifle was in the possession of Mr. & Mrs. Gibson's son, David C. Gibson, of Hawesville.



Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer  
**Hawesville funeral director** Kesner Gibson owns this rifle, which Thomas Hale of Hancock County used to defend himself the night he was shot to death by nightriders in April 1863. Hale was the first civilian killed in Hancock County during the Civil War.



Pictures: Kesner Gibson (1921-2005) of Hawesville, KY holding rifle that Charles Hale shot Bill Davison with. Note attached to rifle reads: "Mr. Hale's gun that he had when John Hunt Morgan raided Kentucky in 1862-1863. Morgan's men killed Mr. Hale. He lived on the Hartford road now 69. Albert Mickel". Pictures on left and below were taken on 7 May 1980 by Jerry Long. Picture on top left from article, "A War Within The State", by Glenn Hodges, published in the Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 16 April 1996 p1D.

I interviewed Frederick D. Hale (1890-1985), of Hawesville, KY on 19 October 1981 and Casper Ottis Hale (1920-2015), of Patesville, KY on 2 November 1981. Fred was the son of Eldred J. Hale (1849-1915) and grandson of John Hale (1818-1900), a brother of Thomas & Charles Hale. Casper was the son of Ottis Hale (1875-1956), a brother of Fred. Both Fred & Casper knew that Thomas Hale was killed at his home by nightriders during the Civil War and that his brother, Charles Hale, avenged his death by shooting Bill Davison. They said the skirmish was opposite the Baker house just outside of Patesville near the bridge over Blackford Creek. Contrary to family stories other accounts suggest the skirmish was east of Patesville near the Breckinridge County line about a mile east of the M. E. Pate house.

Charles Hale was born c1831 Hancock County, KY. He was the son of William Hale, Sr. & Catherine Snider. He first appears in the annual tax lists of Hancock County in 1852. He was enumerated in the 1850, 1860, 1870 & 1880 censuses of Hancock County. In 1850 he was reported to be age 20 and was living with his widowed father. He married Mary Richey, 8 March 1860 Hancock County. Mary, daughter of Jefferson Richey & Nancy Newton, was born in 1844 Hancock County, KY. In the 1860, 1870 & 1880 censuses Charles & Mary were listed as living together. In the 1870 census the occupation of Charles was given as farmer and as a carpenter in the 1880 census. In 1880 they were residing in the town of Hawesville. On 5 April 1886 Charles was elected as one of the six town councilmen for the town of Hawesville (Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 6 April 1886 p4). They resided on Lover's Leap, a cliff overlooking Hawesville.

Charles Hale's wife, Mary, is listed in the 1900 census of Hancock County. She was reported to be a hotel keeper. She was listed as being divorced. She made her living by operating several hotels and boarding houses. On 2 February 1907 she applied to receive a widow's Civil War pension of Charles Hale.

Owensboro Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 22 September 1887 p2: "Hawesville, Sep. 13 – Mrs. Chas. Hale has taken charge of the Carlton House. There were several offers but hers being best was accepted."

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 12 January 1889 p4: "Hawesville – Mrs. Mary Hale, of Covington, who formerly lived here, is here on a visit to friends."

Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Saturday, 21 July 1900: "Hawesville – Mr. Chas. Puckett, the barber, has bought the Water street residence of Mr. J. J. Carder, known as the Riverside Hotel and now occupied by Mrs. Mary Hale. The consideration was \$900, and he will occupy it in about thirty days."

Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Saturday, 18 August 1900: "Hawesville – Mrs. Hale will move to the Carlton Hotel on Monday and offers a first class place to all hunting a moderate price house."

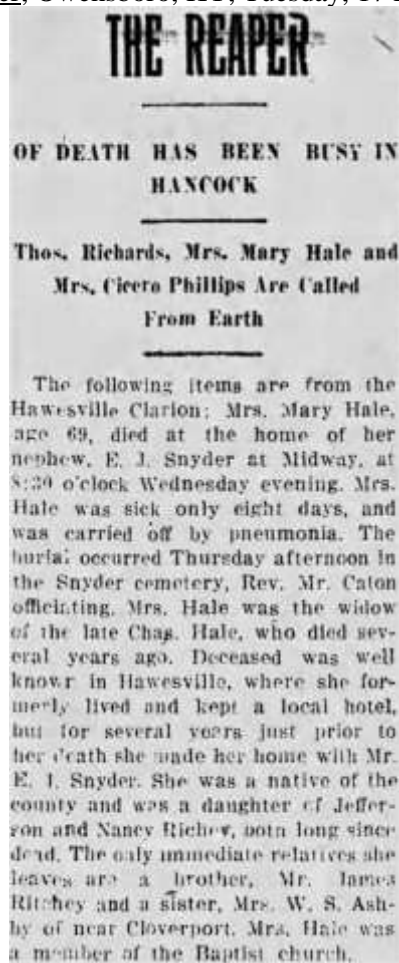
Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 17 January 1907 p3: "Hancock County news – The statement in our last issue to the effect that Mrs. Hale received the house and lot on the hill when the separation came between herself and the late Charles Hale, we understand was incorrect Mrs. Hale says she did not receive the house."



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 13 October 1907 p10: "Hancock County News – Mrs. Mary Hale moved Saturday to Owensboro, where it is said she will conduct a boarding house. She has been in that business in Hawesville for many years."

Mrs. Mary Hale died on 11 December 1912 at Midway in Hancock County, KY at the home of her nephew, Elijah J. Snyder. Her death certificate records that she was buried in the home cemetery; this is possibly the Snyder Cemetery at Midway in Hancock County. The 1900 census reports that Mary Hale was the mother of one child. William J. Hale, the only child of Charles Hale & Mary Richey, died on 25 June 1862. His monument in the Hale – Powers Cemetery on the Goering Road in Hancock County records that William was aged 1 year, 5 months and 7 days old. The Hale – Powers cemetery is about two miles northeast of the Hale – Moorman Cemetery; it was on the farm of Charles Hale's brother, John Hale.

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 17 December 1912 p8:



About 1882 Charles & Mary Hale separated. Charles left Hancock County and about 1886 he went west where he resided in Missouri, the Pine Bluff, Arkansas area and at Roswell, New Mexico. He continued to pursue the carpentry trade and he built a reputation as a sharpshooter and expert hunter. In January 1906 he returned to Hancock County to spend his last days. He lived with a niece, Mary Ann, wife of William T. Smith near Weberstown; she was a daughter of his brother, Thomas Hale.

Tri-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 30 January 1886 p1:  
“Hawesville –Mr. Chas. Hale, of this city, is visiting relatives in Missouri.”

Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Saturday, 17 August 1901: “Mr. Charles Hale has returned from Missouri after an absence of four years.”

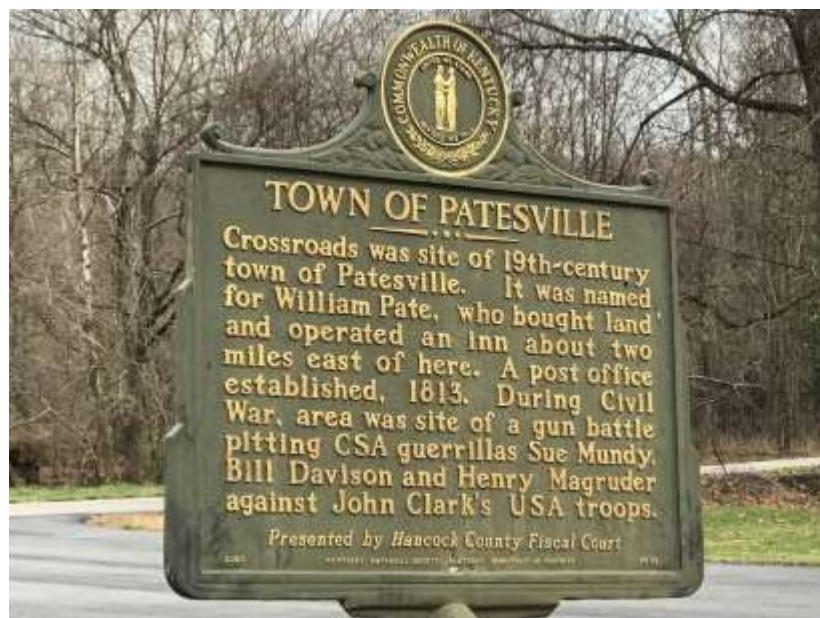
Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Saturday, 28 September 1901: “Weber – Charles Hale is at W. T. Smiths for awhile and will probably make his home there from now on.”

Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Friday, 10 September 1937: Changes In Hawesville In Past Years by L. S. Power – “Charles Hale lived where Vances’ now live”... “Mrs. Charles Hale’s boarding house where John Quisenberry now lives.”

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 12 January 1906 p6:

After an absence of two years in the far West, feeble and with wasting health, Mr. Charles Hale arrived from Roswell, N. M., Thursday, where he had been living with a niece. He went the next day to round out the remainder of his days with another niece, Mrs. W. T. Smith, near Weber, this county. He is seventy-five years old and will go West no more.—Hancock Clarion.

Charles Hale died at Hawesville in Hancock County on 8 January 1907. He was buried in the Hale – Moorman Cemetery near Weberstown. It is ironic that even though he was never viewed as a criminal his grave is unmarked and the grave of William Davison is prominently adorned. The name of William Davison is memorialized by numerous historical articles about his notorious exploits. Also Davison’s name appears on three Kentucky Historical Highway markers in Hancock County – “Captain William Davison” marker on Highway 60 in Hawesville, “Town of Patesville” marker on Highway 144 at Patesville and “Union Steamboat Captured” marker on Fourth & Market Streets in Lewisport. The name of Charles Hale is given no such prominence. Apparently criminality is more noteworthy.



## MAN WHO SHOT BILL DAVIDSON

Charles Hale Passes Away  
At Hawesville, and Re-  
membered as Man Who  
Killed Noted Guerilla.

WAS 74 YEARS OF AGE.

Later in Life Separated  
From His Wife and Spent  
Many Years as Hunter of  
Game.

Hawesville, Ky., Jan. 8.—Charles Hale died here this morning, aged seventy-four years. He was a quiet, peaceable man and for twenty-five years following the war he was conspicuous in the minds of all who knew of the circumstances for the man who shot to death the noted guerrilla, Bill Davidson. It will be recalled that Davidson was a daring and fearless man who became noted for his acts of felony and arson in this part

of the state, and especially for his burning of the Owensboro courthouse, a few days after which he was shot by Hale in a skirmish between his men and a squad of union soldiers about five miles back of this town. There was no dispute about the fact of Hale's having fired the fatal shot, Davidson's career and his death at the hands of Hale attracted all the more attention because of the fact that Davidson's father, Dr. Hardin Davidson, killed himself in an attempt to kill the late Bill Sterrett, father of the late Jeff Sterrett, the present Bill Sterrett, of Texas, and Mrs. Sarah Adair, of this place, with an infernal machine. The explosive was left in Stephen Power's store, near where the intended victim and others were seated, but it was slow in exploding. Davidson returned to it to see what was the matter, and reached it just as it went off. He alone was killed.

Hale was an expert shot with the rifle and at idle times when not employed at his trade of carpentry, he hunted much and killed such game as was found here. About twenty-four years ago, he and his wife Miss Polly Ritchey, separated. He left their beautiful home on Lover's Leap to her and went to Arkansas, where he spent a quarter of a century in honorable, though pioneer life, and returned only recently, apparently to die among friends. He leaves no children, but has worthy relatives in the county. C. T. Nichols, assistant chief of police of Owensboro, is his nephew.

The funeral will take place tomorrow.

## CHARLES HALE DEAD

WAS SLAYER OF NOTED GUERRILLA  
BILL DAVIDSON.

Spent Several Years in Arkansas But  
Returned to Old Home at  
Hawesville to Die.

Charles Hale, known since the war as the slayer of the noted guerrilla Bill Davidson, died yesterday at his home in Hawesville. Several years ago he went to Arkansas, where he lived until a short time ago, when his health fail-

ed and he returned to Hawesville to die at his old home.

The killing of Davidson occurred in a skirmish about five miles from Hawesville. Davidson was said to have been guilty of numerous acts of felony and arson, one of which was the burning of the court house at Owensboro. It was an open secret that the shot that killed him was fired by Hale, but no attempt was ever made to prosecute him. Davidson's father was killed by an infernal machine with which he attempted to kill the late Jeff Sterrett, of Hawesville.

Mr. Hale was a member of a prominent Hancock county family. He was an uncle of Charles T. Nichols, of Owensboro.



<p><b>MAN WHO SHOT BILL DAVIDSON</b></p> <p>—</p> <p><b>Charles Hale Passes Away at Hawesville, and Re- membered as Man Who Killed Noted Guerrilla.</b></p> <p>—</p> <p><b>WAS 74 YEARS OF AGE.</b></p> <p>—</p> <p>Later in Life He Was Separated From His Wife and Spent Many Years as a Hunter of Game in Arkansas.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Hawesville, Ky., Jan. 12—Charles Hale died here this week, aged 74 years. He was a quiet, peaceable man and for twenty-five years following the war he was conspicuous in the minds of all who knew of the circumstances for the man who shot to death the noted guerrilla, Bill Davidson. It will be recalled that Davidson was a daring and</p>	<p>fearless man who became noted for his acts of felony and arson in this part of the state, and especially for his burning of the Owensboro court house, a few days after which he was shot by Hale in a skirmish between the his and a squad of union soldiers, about five miles back of this town. There was no dispute about the fact of Hale's having fired the fatal shot. Davidson's career and his death at the hands of Hale attracted all the more attention because of the fact that Davidson's father, killed himself in an attempt to kill the late Bill Sterrett, father of the late Jeff Sterrett, the present Bill Sterrett, of Texas, and Mrs. Sarah Adair, of this place, with an infernal machine. The explosive was left in Stephen Power's store, near where the intended victim and others were seated, but it was slow in exploding. Davidson returned to it to see what was the matter, and reached it just as it went off. He alone was killed.</p> <p>Hale was an expert shot with the rifle and at idle times, when not employed at his trade of carpentry, he hunted much and killed such game as was found here. About twenty-four years ago, he and his wife, Miss Polly Ritchey, separated. He left their beautiful home on Lover's Leap to her and went to Arkansas, where he spent a quarter of a century in honorable, though pioneer life, and returned only recently, apparently to die among friends. He leaves no children.</p>
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From Fearful Times: A History of the Civil War Years in Hancock County, Kentucky, by Glenn Hodges (Hawesville, K: Hancock County Historical Society and The Hancock Claion,1986):

Pages 19-21

This clash and others between Union Democrats and Southern Rights men of the county produced a volatile climate that may have been responsible for the first publicized civilian death in Hancock County during the war. The action leading up to the killing began in the hours before midnight, Saturday, April 4, 1863. Nearly, 30 men rode onto the farm of William L. Bruner, eight miles south of Hawesville. Bruner was not at home and his 20-year-old hired hand, Amos Corley, came out of the house to see what the nightriders wanted. He was gunned down

immediately, hit in the chest by a pistol ball. The invaders left young Corley for dead (he survived his wound), stole two horses from Bruner's barnlot and raced away.

Within the hour, the same men went to the house of Bruner's neighbor, Thomas Hale. (South Hancock County Elementary School is now located on the site of the Hale home.) Hale's wife, Lizzie, was still awake, heard the riders come into the yard, and summoned her husband. The 51-year-old Hale, a native of Virginia, went to a window and called out to the riders, but got no response. He saw that all of the men were brandishing weapons and went to an adjoining room to awaken his son, David. Both men returned to the front of the house with their guns.

As soon as the elder Hale opened the door to confront the intruders, there was a burst of rifle fire and he was hit in the head and a thigh by two Minie balls. He died instantly. The band of horsemen then left the Hale farm as swiftly as they had come.

First reports of the shootings said the raiders were part of Morgan's guerrillas, but some of them were recognized by the Hales as local men who had organized their own band of irregulars and been harassing Unionists in southern Hancock County and northern Ohio County for nearly three months. One newspaper account of the incident said that Joe and Thomas Harris of Hancock County and Lindsey Rose of Daviess County had been among the attackers. It was believed that the raiders were being harbored and supported by well-known Southern sympathizers in the county.

The raid on the Bruner farm and killing of Hale triggered a wave of anger and protest among the people of that rural section of the county. Bruner and Hale were thought to have been targets because both had been involved in the Union Democrat movement in Hancock County.

Milton Cooper, a Union Democrat from southern Hancock County, voiced his party's first reaction to the Hale murder in a letter to the *Louisville Daily Journal* on April 5. "How long will such outrages have to be endured by quiet, peaceable and unoffending citizens?" he asked [*Daily Journal*, Louisville, April 7, 1863]. Cooper also demanded that an organized Union military force be stationed in Hancock County permanently for public protection.

On April 6, an Owensboro correspondent of the *Daily Journal* wrote a scathing report, pointing the finger once again at the Hawesville secessionists as the perpetrators of Hale's murder.

"Hancock County has had a Rebel representative for the last two years (W.P.D. Bush) and the leading Rebels of the county are men of wealth, and a more vindictive, tyrannical set of men is not to be found," the unidentified reporter declared. "They will countenance and uphold anything that tends to the extermination of the Union party in Hancock County. A more perfect reign of terror does not exist in the state than in Hancock." [*Daily Journal*, Louisville, reprinted in *Evansville Journal*, April 6, 1863].

The Cannelton *Reporter* feared the Hale incident would cause a smaller civil war in Hancock County and asked for a "sufficient number of troops (to be stationed) near Hawesville to preserve the peace." [*The Reporter*, Cannelton, April 15, 1863].

On the Tuesday night after the raids on the Bruner and Hale farms, 100 men from southern Hancock County and upper Ohio County took matters into their own hands. Heavily armed, they rode to Hawesville and gathered outside of town. Then individual delegations went to the homes of the reputed secessionists Williams, George W. McAdams, William Sterett, John Martin and Robert Beauchamp, demanding that each man pay Thomas Hale's widow \$1,000 within 20 days. [*The Reporter*, Cannelton, April 15, 1863].

In January 1865, the [Bill] Davison-Colter gang of guerrillas continued their wave of terror in Daviess, Breckinridge and Made counties. Eighty men led by the two captains stormed back into Owensboro Jan. 7 and levied a forced contribution of \$400 on the residents. The Rebel sympathizers of the town endeavored to raise the money but failed, and the guerrillas proceeded to help themselves to nearly \$2,500 worth of goods from Owensboro stores. In the next two weeks the Hancock County-based guerrillas tried to extort \$1,000 from the people of Cloverport, reportedly to buy guns in Indiana. They got only \$150. They raided Hardinsburg during the period, and also took control of Brandenburg for a day, driving many of the town's people across the Ohio River to Mauckport, Ind. In a rural section of Meade County, part of Davison's men broke into the house of Robert Blair, stole his watch and gun, and hanged him in a tree in his front yard. [The Louisville Press, reprinted in Evansville Journal, Jan. 30, 1865].

Kentuckians in the Green River region were afraid they would be killed in their sleep as the guerrillas became more and more vicious. Adding to the hysteria was a report that the notorious gang of William Quantrill had come into western Kentucky from Tennessee, riding northeast through Hopkinsville, Madisonville, Charleston, Greenville and Paradise. Disguised in Union bluecoats and posing as the 4th Missouri Cavalry, the bandit guerrillas stopped on Jan. 22 at the Hartford campsite of the 17th Kentucky, the Federal infantry regiment, and asked for directions north to Owensboro.

They then left, accompanied by a Union lieutenant and two other soldiers assigned to guide them. In a few hours, all three Yankees either were shot or hanged on Hawesville Road north of Hartford. One of them was gunned down at pointblank range by a young gang member named Frank James [Thomas Shelby Watson, The Silent Riders, Beechmont Press, Louisville, Ky., 1971, p.25-26, and War of Rebellion Records, Series I, Vol. 49, p657].

Later, it was learned that the same guerrilla group had killed another Union man they had forced to go with them. The body of Dixon Davis, a resident of northern Hopkins' County, was found in woods along the Greenville-Rochester road in eastern Muhlenberg County. He had been shot through the head, execution style [Daily Journal, Louisville, Feb. 11, 1865].

Despite these murders, the coming weeks of February 1865 would be the beginning of the end for guerrillas in Kentucky. The War Department in Washington issued an edict to restore law and order in the state at all costs. Maj. Gen. John Palmer, an abolitionist and Radical Republican, replaced Gen. Burbridge as head of the Kentucky Military Department and gave the word to shoot all guerrilla-marauders on sight. From the time of Palmer's appointment by President Lincoln on Feb 22, 1865, the guerrillas were tracked relentlessly by Union troops and the best civilian gunmen and scouts the state could hire, and were harassed by county Home Guard companies who lurked along secluded roads and trails and attacked from ambush.

Two young guerrillas on the run during that time were Marcellus Jerome Clarke and Henry C. (Billy) Magruder, who with 12 followers came into the Green River region from Nelson County in a bid to reach Confederate Gen. Hylan Lyon's headquarters at Paris, Tenn. They were joined by Bill Davison, whose band had broken up after the death of Isaac Colter. Colter had been killed on Feb. 4 in a day-long gunbattle with Ed Terrell's independent scouts at Squire Heady's barn near Bloomfield in Nelson County [Daily Journal, Louisville, Feb. 11, 1865].

The 20-year-old Clarke, a native of Franklin, Ky., had served John Hunt Morgan as a scout and artillery commander until the Confederate general's death in September 1864. After



that he had joined Magruder and left a path of death and destruction in the Kentucky counties of Nelson, Spencer, Bullitt, Jefferson, Shelby and Woodford.

Clarke was better known to the newspaper-reading public as Sue Mundy, made famous under that alias by Louisville editor Prentice in November and December 1864. Prentice first led his readers to believe that "Sue" was a female guerrilla. When he divulged Clarke's actual sex on Jan. 10, 1865, Prentice told a story of Clarke once dressing up in a long wig and female attire as a joke and trying to convince Gen. Morgan that he was a woman wanting to join the regiment. Morgan supposedly fell for the charade and, impressed by the "woman's" patriotism, agreed to enroll her. Clarke then revealed his identity to the general [Daily Journal, Louisville, Jan. 10, 1865].

Numerous stories were told in the last months of the war about how Clarke got the name "Sue Mundy." The one with the most credence claimed the name was given to him in fun by his fellow Confederates in 1861, when he was only 16 years old. He had such girlish facial features and long, wavy black hair that they named him "Sue Mundy" in crowning him queen of a May Day festival. It was said that Clarke adopted the nickname after that [L. F. Johnson, Famous Kentucky Tragedies and Trials, Henry Clay Press, Lexington, Ky., 1972, original edition 1916, Baldwin Law Book Co., p.180-190]. .

But Clarke was a war-hardened veteran. Like Colter who had ridden often with him and Magruder, Clarke harbored a deep disdain for all Union soldiers after they killed his brother in a surprise raid on the brother's farm in Logan County in 1862 [L. F. Johnson, p189].

Magruder, 21 in 1865, was from Lebanon, Ky., and had enlisted at the age of 17 as a member of Gen. Buckner's Guard, an elite troop of Confederate cavalymen who, astride their horses, could snatch quarters from the ground at a full gallop. Magruder later became a part of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's bodyguard and committed his first robbery by stealing \$1,200 from the dead and wounded on the battlefield at Shiloh. He murdered for the first time during the same period when he shot a Negro boy who had stolen \$2,000 in gold from Gen. Johnston's camp. After Johnston was killed at Shiloh, Magruder was transferred to John Hunt Morgan's cavalry [Henry C. Magruder, Three Years in the Saddle, The Life and Confessions of Henry Magruder, 1865, p.9-11, 18].

Both Clarke and Magruder were intimidating figures on horseback. Clarke was 6 feet tall and weighed 160 pounds. While he sometimes appeared in the bright red uniform that Kentucky guerrillas boldly wore in the final months of the war, Clarke usually dressed in a motley mixture of butternut uniform and civilian attire. He wore his crumpled Confederate cavalry hat with a feather stuck in the band, or with the front brim pinned back to the crown with a half-moon clip he carried as a good-luck charm. Like most guerrillas, he toted three or four large Navy Colt revolvers, stuck inside his belt or in holsters, turned butt-end forward so he could pull them quickly while riding [Thomas Shelby Watson, p.42].

Magruder was just as dangerous as Clarke and more flamboyant. Civilians who suffered at his hand often describe him as wearing a fancy black velvet roundabout jacket, matching pants, high-top boots, large spurs and a black hat adorned with an ostrich plume. He, too, sometimes donned bright red outfit and carried as many as four pistols [Daily Journal, Louisville, Feb. 10 and Sept. 15, 1865].

When they rode into Hancock County, Magruder, Clark and their men were clad in Federal uniforms to make themselves less conspicuous in the middle of state troops and Home Guard who were patrolling local roads.

The guerrillas were first reported in the southern part of the county during the last two weeks of February. The Hawesville correspondent of the Cannelton Reporter told of their presence there, noting that the gang had stolen \$315 in cash, plus other goods, from the store of James Snider at Pellville, 12 miles south of Hawesville. They also had raided the farm of Peter Purcell, taking three of his best horses.

During the same week the guerrillas were seen at Knottsville, a village just across the Hancock County line in southeastern Daviess County. There they reportedly shod their horses and paid for everything they wanted. But they were recognized and a courier slipped away to Owensboro to report their location to state troops.

Learning that their escape route to the west was blocked by Federal cavalymen, Clarke and Magruder moved east toward Cloverport and were joined by Davison, who had found a safe place for them to stay for several days.

On Feb. 24, Magruder, Clarke, Davison and the other guerrillas stopped at the house of Minor E. Pate about 10 miles southeast of Hawesville on the Hardinsburg-Shawneetown road near the Breckinridge County line.



Map of Hancock County, KY in 1865.

[Minor Pate's house was located on what is now known as the Sam Baler property on Kentucky 144 just west of the community of Patesville, where the skirmish between the Home Guard force and Magruder-Clarke-Davison guerillas is believed to have been fought].

Clarke and Magruder reportedly threatened to kidnap the elderly Pate and burn his home in reprisal for the harsh treatment they heard Hawesville's Robert Beauchamp had received from the Federals. But they were talked out of it by Davison who had been Pate's friend since the time the two Hancock Countians had sided with the Union and been involved in Union Democrat political activities.

Minutes after they left Pate's house, the Clarke-Magruder gang and Davison had ridden only about a mile when they spotted three Home Guardsmen near the intersection of the Hardinsburg and Cloverport roads. The civilian militiamen—Silas Taylor, Charles Hale and William Sinnett—were from the Pellville area and apparently were scouting the road for a company led by Capt. John A. Clark. They were attached to a force of 400 state troops stationed near Lewisport, Hawesville and Cloverport under the command of Maj. John Swinker.

When Taylor, Hale and Sinnett realized the riders coming toward them were guerrillas, they opened fire with their .44-caliber Ballard repeaters. The guerrilla band charged, apparently wanting to get closer to reduce the effectiveness of the rifles.

Sinnett spurred his horse and abandoned his companions, perhaps to alert Capt. Clark of the guerrillas' position. Taylor and Hale dismounted and took cover in the heavily wooded area, moving from tree to tree as they fired at the Rebels.

In an autobiography dictated before his death, Magruder said he last saw Davison chasing a Home Guardsman (later identified as Hale) through the woods. According to Magruder, Davison was shooting his revolvers at very close range when Hale fired a round that shattered the Hawesville guerrilla captain's right arm and lodged in his lower chest or, abdomen.

The two Home Guardsmen, according to one account, finally retreated into the shelter of a cabin and held off the guerrillas for about 45 minutes until Capt. Clark arrived with seven more men [The Reporter, Cannelton, March 12, 1865, "Correspondence from Hawesville, Feb. 25, 1865" and Feb.23, 1865].

At that point, Magruder and Clarke sensed that a large force of state troops was bearing down on them, broke off the fight and rode away with their men toward Cloverport. On the way, they were bushwhacked by a second Home Guard party and Magruder was wounded by a bullet in the right lung. Jim Jones, a guerrilla from Daviess County, was shot 16 times and died there in the road. Frank Mattingly, another Daviess County Confederate riding with Clarke, was captured.

While the rest of their men went back to Nelson County, Clarke, Magruder and an Ohio County guerrilla, Henry Metcalfe, (also spelled Midkiff) managed to evade Union troops and Home Guardsmen for two more weeks. They got as far as Webster, 10 miles east of Hardinsburg in Breckinridge County, where they found a doctor who treated Magruder. The three Rebels were hiding, in a barn near the doctor's home when the Union Army, acting on a tip from an informer, surrounded and captured them on March 12, 1865. All three were taken to a Federal Army prison in Louisville. Clarke was hanged there on March 15, Magruder went to the gallows in October and Metcalfe was imprisoned [Valentine, "Sue Mundy, Part II", p.279-280].

As Clarke and Magruder were being tracked down, all of Hancock County and the Indiana border area from Little Deer Creek to Troy heard the news that Davison had been wounded badly in the frantic gunbattle near Pate's place.

Lewisport, Hawesville, Utility, Bennettsville, Pellville and even the little community of Dukes near the Breckinridge County line were awash with rumors. Word spread that Davison had died and been secretly buried by his family and admirers. Another story alleged that the



Davison family and friends were nursing him back to health and planned to help him escape. Home Guard units and other civilians searched for him from the river to the hills in the south part of the county, egged on by a report that a \$5,000 reward had been offered for his head.

In truth, Davison was barely alive and was slowly dying. Despite his wounds, he had ridden about three miles north of the site of the fight toward the Skillman Bottom and Jeffrey's Cliff district of Hancock County on the river east of Hawesville. He was trying to reach the house of his uncle, Thomas Newman. Unable to go any farther, he sought refuge in the woods and lost consciousness. Two days later he reportedly was found by his teen-age cousins, Eliza and Sarah Newman, who heard the neighing of his horse. Davison was taken to the Newman home and nursed there for a few days before the Home Guard learned of his whereabouts. He then was carried deep into the woods to an old cabin that had been used by a Union deserter and he lay there for his remaining days. (Descendants of the Davison family say the old cabin was located in Bomer's Woods south of Jeffrey's Cliff.)

His mother, Mrs. Jane Dupuy Davison, was informed that her son was critically wounded but not where he was being hidden. Years later, Mrs. Davison told the Hancock Clarion how she suffered through that time knowing that her son was somewhere dying [The Hancock Clarion, July 12 and 19, 1935].

"Every night after my son was wounded, strange parties men came to my house at all hours to see if he was there," she said. "Sometimes they made blood-curdling threat against me to give them satisfaction. About a week after he had been wounded, a coarse, unfamiliar voice awakened me I thought as usual it was a party of men wanting to kill my son for the price on his head. I knew they would burn the house if I did not give them an answer and I invited them in. I was surprised when only one man came in out of the darkness and told me that he had come to get a bed for William to rest on and that I must go with him. First I thought it was a ruse to get me to divulge his hiding place. But I did not know when he was, although I wanted to know more earnestly than his meanest enemy. I gave the man a bed and rode (from Hawesville) behind him for eight miles. He was faithful and took me to my suffering child [The Hancock Clarion, July 19, 1935].

Mrs. Davison, the Newman sisters, some other friends and Dr. William Stapp remained with Capt. Davison until he died on March 7, 1865 [Ibid].

Three weeks later, the Cannelton Reporter wrote of Mrs. Davison's reaction to her son's death and of his last moments: "She speaks of (his death) as an event not to be regretted. She says that her greatest comfort is in the happy manner in which he died. He expressed himself at last, as having no wish to live, that the future was all dark and void of hope for him. He professed a consciousness that he had obtained forgiveness from heaven and died calmly, peacefully and sweetly [The Reporter, Cannelton, March 30, 1865].

In its profile of Davison in 1910, the Hancock Clarion described the guerrilla's death much differently "When his death drew near, his breathing, which was terrible, caused the shattered bones in his breast to grate harshly together until the awful noise could be heard across the cabin. As his death came and his broken bones clashed together, he gnashed his teeth in oaths against the North and the men who had sent him to his long home."

After he died, nine men, including George Sapp, Charles N. Buchanan and Henry C. Wilson, took Davison's remains in a crude box to a grave a short distance from the cabin. Davison had asked to be buried in a secret, secluded place to prevent Union authorities from implicating or retaliating against anyone on whose land his grave was discovered.

His death remained a mystery until March 20 when his uncle, Nestor Davison, informed Union Maj. Cyrus Wilson at Hawesville that Capt. Davison had died of his wounds. Wilson had just captured Magruder and Clarke a week earlier and was leading a new manhunt for Davison in the territory running six miles south of the river from Owensboro to Hawesville.

Though he didn't know where his nephew's body was buried, Nestor Davison tried to prove to Wilson that the now-famous guerrilla was dead. He told the Union officer that he would have the body exhumed and brought to Hawesville on March 26 for examination and burial if he could be assured there was no reward offered for the remains. Wilson told Davison that no reward existed; but Jane Davison overruled her brother-in-law's proposal, fearing her son's body would be desecrated in some way if taken to Hawesville.

Instead, Mrs. Davison chose her own way to convince Maj. Wilson that she was not concealing anything. She attested in writing that she had been present when her son died, and got Dr. Stapp to do likewise. Their statements were printed in the Cannelton Reporter on March 30, 1865:

"March 26—I do certify that I was present and saw my son, William H. . Davison, die on or about the 7th of March, from wounds received from someone, I know not whom. J. Davison." "This is to certify that I was present when William Davison died He died on the 7th of March, from wounds of the chest and right arm. Wm. Stapp."

Mrs. Davison was regarded as a woman of "estimable" character who bravely bore the tragedy of the violent death of her husband and two sons. (Her youngest son, James Davison, had shot himself accidentally while hunting in 1861.) She satisfied the Union Army officials and ended the controversy surrounding Capt. Davison's death. Her writtel word helped restore law and order in Hancock County in those last days of the war [The Reporter, Cannelton, March 30, 1865].

When he heard the talk of Davison's death, the Hawesville correspondent of the Cannelton newspaper was among those who doubted the report, but he defended the young guerrilla., "He has been wronged without doubt," he said "Every mean thing that was done was put to his account when he perhaps was miles away.. He told Mr. Pate he had come with (Clarke's) men in order to prevent them from burning his house. If he is dead, let it be said to his praise that he was brave man." [The Reporter, Cannelton, March 2, 1865].

But in Cannelton, editor Snow of the Reporter was glad Davison had been killed and heralded his slayer, Charles Hale, as a hero. On March 23, 1865, Snow wrote: "The country is indebted to him for riddance of this notorious outlaw. Even in these times, his successful daring is without parallel. For almost an hour, in close conflict with a gang of desperadoes, during which it is said a thousand shots were fired at himself and companions, he fought so resolutely as to save himself and fatally wound Davison." [The Reporter, Cannelton, March 23, 1865].

The 31-year-old Hale was the younger brother of Thomas Hale, who had died mercilessly at the hands of nightriders in 1863. He could have boasted that his killing of Davison was pleasing retribution for his brother's murder. But he was a quiet, self-effacing man who did not relish what he had done defending himself, and never spoke much afterward of his fight with Davison However, he would always be remembered for it.

[This writer was interviewed on 2 November 1985 by Glenn Hodges, author of Fearful Times: A History of the Civil War Years in Hancock County, Kentucky]