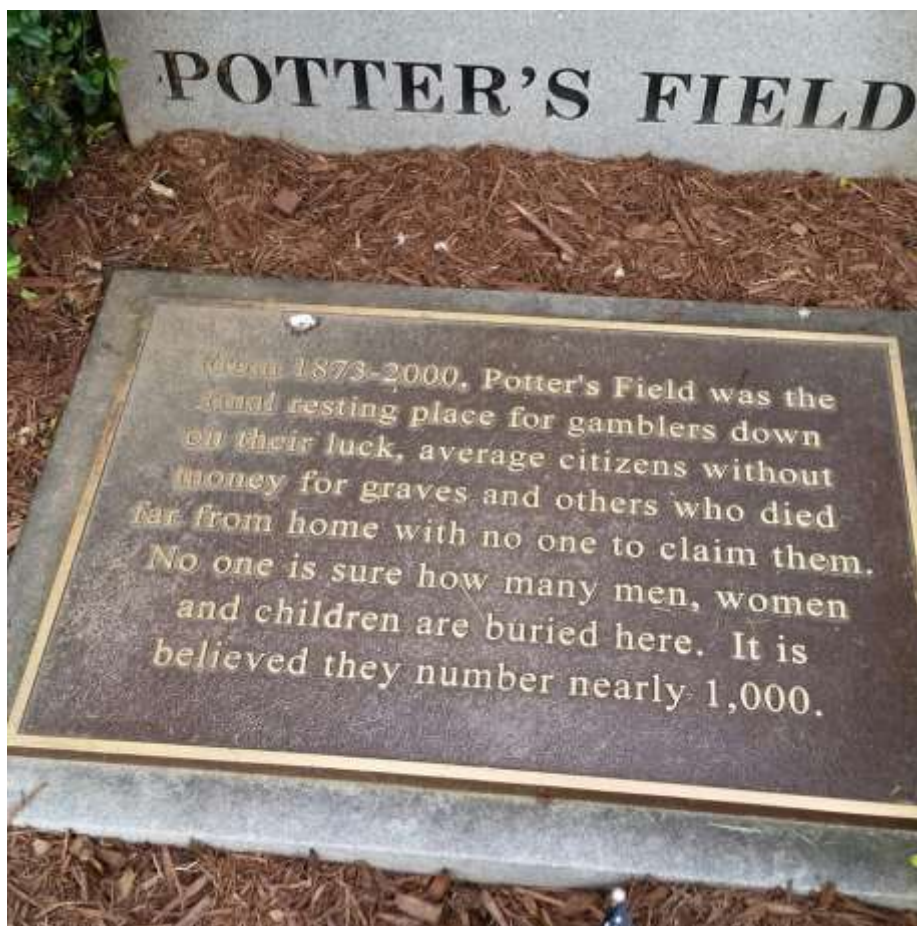


Owensboro's Potter's Field Cemetery

By Jerry Long



Owensboro Potter's Field Cemetery is adjacent to Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery and lies in behind the Carmel Home on the Old Hartford Road. The cemetery has been known by several names. It has also been referred to as the Pauper Cemetery, City Cemetery and Owensboro Cemetery. For a potter's field burial ground the city of Owensboro purchased 3 & 7/8 acres on 27 February 1873 from William W. Hays (1826-1883) – recorded Daviess County deed book Z, p.381. Entrance is at Mill Avenue and 21st Street. Formerly a fence ran between the Owensboro and Elmwood Cemeteries. No records of burials were kept. In it first year 85 burials were interred there and as late as the 1990's an average of about 10 to 15 burials were being made yearly. Burials in the cemetery were finally halted about 1995. The total of burials here is unknown. At the rate of 10 burials a year for over 120 years of its existence would suggested at the minimum 1,200 souls rest here. The following memorial was erected in 2000:



“From 1873-2000, Potter’s Field was the final resting place for gamblers down on their luck, average citizens without money for graves and others who died far from home with no one to claim them. No one is sure how many men, women and children are buried here It is believed they number nearly 1,000.”



Daviess County, KY Deed Book Z, p.381:

This deed made & entered into this 27 day of Feby. 1873 between W. W. Hays & M. M. Hays his wife of the first part & the City of Owensboro of the second part all of the county of Daviess & state of Kentucky. Witnesseth: That for and in consideration of the sum of Five Hundred & Eighty one dollars & twenty five cents cash in hand paid the receipt of which is here acknowledged the part of the first have & do convey to the party of the second part all their right title & interest in & to a certain three & seven eights acres of land, bounded as follows towit. Beginning at a stake on the east margin of the Hartford Road & corner to the cemetery and thence with a line of the same N. 39 E 26 poles to a stake also corner to the cemetery, thence with another line of same N10 E 52 poles to a stake also corner to the cemetery thence S 37 E 29 poles to a stake on top of the ridge thence S 39 W 75 poles to a stake on the East margin of the Hartford, thence East with the margin of the said road N 61 W 1 pole to the Beginning Containing three & seven eights of an acre.

To have and to hold the same to the party of the second part forever, the party of the first part sell & convey with covenants of General Warranty. In testimony where of they here unto set their hands and seals the day & date above written.

Wm. W. Hays
M. M. Hays

State of Kentucky
Daviess County

T. C. Jones clerk of the Daviess County Court do certify that the foregoing deed from Wm. W. Hays and M. M. Hays his wife to City of Owensboro was this day before me duly acknowledged by the grantors to be their act & deed. Witness my hand this 27th Feby. 1873.

T. C. Jones Clerk
By W. W. Chambers D.C.

And on this day the same was lodged in my office & admitted to record. Witness my hand this 28th Feby. 1873

T. C. Jones Clk.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 21 February 1899, p.5:

The city council met in regular session last night, Mayor Small and all of the members present... The special committee on the city graveyard reported a lot of rules and regulations for the government of the public cemetery, and they were adopted. No more burials will occur at the city cemetery without a permit from the mayor. Paupers will receive a permit free, but non-

residents will pay \$2.50 for each permit for a child under twelve years of age, and \$4 for a person twelve years of age and over. Residents of the city will pay \$2 for a person under twelve and \$3 for one of twelve years and over. Persons able to pay who secure free permits by misstatements of their ability will be charged double the schedule price. There was some opposition to the report on the grounds that it permits the burial of non-residents in the city cemetery, but it was adopted with only one dissenting vote, Mr. Cosby.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 27 January 1952, p.4B:

Birdie's Breezy Bits

By Lawrence D. Gasser

In other towns and cities in the United States they set aside a day for honoring Potter's Field dead in a simple memorial service and by placing flowers on these unmarked graves. This is especially true in Nashville, where for nearly 20 years this practice is an annual observance. However, in Owensboro, one would be lucky if the undertaker could enter its Potter's Field, located to the east of Elmwood Cemetery, in order to bury a person who might die penniless, without friend or kin.

One day the past week, we chanced to drive out what once was the entrance to Owensboro's Potter's Field. A gate, which looked to us as if it had been nailed up, barred entrance at that point – with a yellow traffic sign of the Owensboro Police Department, stuck in the ground with the wording: "No Parking by Order of Police."

We were told that to get into Potter's field we would have to drive up a narrow lane between a local furniture factory and the cemetery. However, we looked in the direction of the "cemetery of the forgotten dead" and saw that it was covered by cocklebur bushes and other weeds.

Has Owensboro and Daviess County abandoned its Potter's Field? If not, it should at least be kept clean of unsightly weeds for it is not quite a background that one would want to gaze upon from a vantage point in adjoining Elmwood Cemetery.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 9 October 1955, p.13D:

**Final Resting Place: Thousands of Forgotten Bones
Lie In Crowded Graves Of Potter's Field**

By Lewis Donohew

In a bleak, pock-marked field rear the edge of the city lie the bones of a thousand people, most of them in graves unmarked and forgotten.

No more than a dozen tombstones are there to give evidence that the four-acre strip is a resting place for the dead. Yet within its crowded confines lie the people of many races, old and young, innocent and guilty.

This is Owensboro's potter's field.

Located just off Mill Avenue and adjoining the Elmwood Cemetery, the plot was purchased from W. W. Hayes and set aside as a city graveyard in February, 1873.

Since then it has been the burial spot for all who have had no other place to go. In some sections the graves have been placed so closely together that gravediggers have dug into two and three caskets while excavating for another.

The field is dotted by sunken graves, like scars on the body of a smallpox victim. Many times, observers report, the graves were dug so shallow that the bodies were buried barely, underground. This practice was stopped by the health department.

Among those interred in potter's field are a murderer-rapist, who was in 1936 and two unidentified Chinamen, one a murderer, the other his victim.

The most infamous of the trio is Rainey Bethea, who was hanged for the murder and rape of an elderly Owensboro woman.

Bethea, who had worked for the woman as a handyman, was captured at his hiding place on the Ohio River bank a few days after the crime. He was found guilty and sentenced to hang.

It was at first believed that Mrs. Everett Thompson (now Mrs. Carl Riney), who had succeeded her husband as sheriff following his death, would spring the trap and, the event was given wide advance publicity.

Although an outside executioner was employed for the event, large throngs poured into Owensboro for the hanging, not only from the surrounding area but also from several neighboring states.

An estimated 10,000 persons watched Bethea as he, in the words of the Owensboro Messenger, "paid for his crime... when he was dropped into eternity at the end of a hangman's rope" from a scaffold in the Daviess County garage lot. A sidelight story described Bethea's crime as the most heinous in the annals of the county's history.

Bethea, in a letter to a sister in West Virginia, had requested that his body be shipped away and buried beside his father. His wishes were disregarded and he was placed in a grave beside a horse barn at the edge of potter's field. Today his grave is unmarked and oldtimers can point out only the approximate, spot where his remains lie.

The two Chinamen are buried side by side in the field, where they have rested since the early 1900's.

One of them had fled from a long war in Chicago or New York and settled in Owensboro, where he set up a hand laundry.

With his Oriental customs – including the wearing of a long queue – and a willingness to talk about them, he won the friendship of many Owensboro people. They would stop by to chat and listen as he sang and played on a stringed Chinese musical instrument.

Then one day another Chinaman came to the city. Before anyone was aware of what was happening, he had slain the laundryman with a pistol and was making a bid for escape. Lawmen chased him and the Chinaman picked up a bottle of carbolic acid somewhere and drank it, saving the city and the state the expense of a trial.

They buried the two men in potter's field and sometime later relatives visited Owensboro and placed stones on their grave to mark it. The stones are still there today.

Many war veterans, some of them from the Civil War, are interred there. Most of the people in the field were placed there by their relatives but some were persons found dead here and never identified.

By the 1930's the plot had become overgrown with bushes and weeds and it was given a thorough cleanup, including the filling in of graves with a grader but the graves have sunk again.

Since the first cleanup, the field has been cleared off every two years and a mowing machine run over the area regularly.

At one time, when hearses were pulled by horses, the entrance to the field was a narrow lane off the Old Hartford Road but with the coming of the motorcar the road became "obsolete and the city traded it for the present entry off Mill Avenue.

During the first half century of its existence, funeral processions across the field were a common sight, but they don't bury many people there any more.

They say only three or four persons a year are taken to potter's field nowadays and it's a good thing. There isn't much more room.



IN POTTER'S FIELD – The little stone cairn in the foreground is all that remains to mark the burial place of two Chinamen, one a murder victim, and the other the man who killed him, in Owensboro's potter's field. The plot was set aside as a city graveyard in 1873.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 3 October 1977, p.1B:

The once notorious and the unknown:
Forgotten rest in Potter's Field

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

Up on the ridge two Chinese have laid side by side for nearly 70 years. Rainey Bethea, the last man publicly executed by hanging in the United States, lies in weeds along a fence row.

Somewhere, Roy Green, hanged at 17 for murder, has been resting for more than 70 years.

Over in a tree two boys are busy working on a clubhouse. Across the field two little girls play with a puppy.

Beneath this grassy four-acre field in eastern Owensboro lie the bones of a thousand forgotten people who died in poverty and often alone in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This is Potter's Field Owensboro's now-abandoned pauper's cemetery.

It's name is biblical. When Judas threw down the 30 pieces of silver, his payment for betraying Christ, and went off to commit suicide, the money was used to buy a "potter's field" for the burial of strangers, according to St. Matthew.

Owensboro's Potter's Field is no more than a burying ground. From the time the city bought the field from W.W. Hayes in February 1873, until it was abandoned in the late 1950s or early 1960s, no one bothered to list the dead brought here, and no one bothered to lay it off in cemetery plots.

Former city commissioner Russell Shifley probably knows more about the old cemetery than anyone else in town. When he was superintendent of city streets and sewers, he supervised several cleanups of the field.

And, long before that, as a boy he watched the horse-drawn hearses wind their way through the cemetery, unload their plain pine boxes and leave them in unmarked graves.

The cemetery entrance today is at Mill Avenue and 21st Street. Back in the old days, Shifley says, the hearses entered off Old Hartford Road.

Shifley looks around the closely mowed field and recalls, "When they sent me out here back in the '30s to clean this up, it was just covered with bushes, trees, briars and everything.

"And every grave, row after row of graves, was sunk down about 18 inches. I cleaned it all up, piled the bushes up and burned them, hauled some dirt in here, brought a grader out, leveled it all up, disked it all over and sowed it with grass."

By the '50s, the work had to be done again. Today only a few of the thousand graves are beginning to sink again.

"They buried on the high ground first," Shifley, now 78, recalls. "It looked like at first they kept them in pretty even rows, but later they just got to burying them any way. I saw them digging a grave one day and they dug into three (old) graves trying to open a new one."

He adds, "Way back yonder before insurance got popular and before they had a Welfare League, there used to be three or four funerals a week out here.

"It seems like the city and county together allowed an undertaker \$35 to bury a person out here. Back when I first went to work for the city 60 years ago, they used to have the park keeper at Chautauqua Park come over here and dig the graves.

"I think they allowed him \$3 for digging and filling a grave."

To many people, burial in Potter's Field meant disgrace. Shifley remembers the times he took up collections to keep friends and fellow workers from having to be buried there.

In those days a fence ran between Potter's Field and Elmwood Cemetery – where a grave then cost only \$20. Which side of the fence a person was buried on meant a lot to many people.

Back in the '30s there were a dozen or more monuments in the cemetery, Shifley remembers. Today there are only four. Two of them have been dumped in the weeds around a tree. One stands broken in half over the grave of a woman who died Aug. 27, 1897, and the other remains intact on its grave.

The broken stone with the missing name says simply, "She lies gone to her home in heaven..."

Nobody seems to know what happened to the missing monuments.

"They shouldn't have disturbed those monuments," Shifley says. "I don't like to see that. If we found one turned over, we straightened it up."

He recalls finding the tombstone of a man named Blay, a World War I veteran, he believes. Shifley remembers bringing the widow, some former pallbearers and the undertaker out to help him find the grave.

They couldn't be sure, so he reset the tombstone on what seemed the most likely site. Now that tombstone is nowhere to be found.

Potter's Field was the final resting place for gamblers down on their luck, ladies of the evening, some murderers, some rapists, a few men who died on the gallows legally or lynched and some average citizens who didn't have the price of a grave.

And there are some strangers here who died far from home with no one to claim them.

Nobody knows exactly how many are buried there. Someone once estimated 1,000. Shifley says simply, "It's full and they buried them as close as they could, right up against each other.

When I first came in here, you could see every grave. And it was solid."

Old records show the city paid for 85 burials there in 1874.

A local historian remarked, "If the truth were known, there are probably more interesting people buried in there than under those marble monuments in Elmwood."

Interesting?

Shifley points up the hill. "The Chinese were buried about on top of that ridge. There were two big concrete slabs on their graves."

One of the men, Shifley recalls, ran a laundry on Fourth Street between Frederica and St. Ann. "I was just a kid," he remembers, "but I used to stop in there and talk to him. My father sent off and got him a Bible in Chinese.

"We'd stop by there on Sundays on our way home from church (at Settle Memorial) and he'd play music for us. One time he gave my sister a Chinese bracelet. It must have been about 1908.

"Then there was another one (Chinese man who came down from Henderson on a Sunday and shot him and killed him. The police got after him and he ran over on St. Elizabeth and jumped down the coal chute at the old ice plant on St. Elizabeth between Third and Main.

"He drank a bottle of carbolic acid and killed himself."

Shifley recalls going to different funeral homes to see both men. "One was in the undertaking shop on the northwest corner of Third and St. Elizabeth. The other was over on Elm between Second and Third. They buried them side by side. Somebody, I suppose in their families, put up the concrete slabs later."

The slabs are gone now.

Walking along the cemetery's eastern boundary, Shifley points at the weed-covered fence row. "Rainey Bethea is buried right over there next to that fence. There was no marker on his grave at all. They buried them all the way to the fence and he's buried right against the fence."

Rainey Bethea. There should be an historical marker on his grave. He is officially listed as the last man in America to be publicly executed by hanging on Aug. 14, 1936, on the site of the new Executive Inn Rivermont.

Bethea was 22 when he was sentenced to hang for the rape of a 70-year-old Owensboro woman in June of that year. The woman was also murdered, but Kentucky law punished murderers in the electric chair and rapists on the gallows.

Newspapers reported a crowd of 20,000 people witnessed the hanging. Many of them had traveled across the country to see it. Bethea had requested that he be buried beside his father in West Virginia. But his wishes were disregarded, and he was buried beside what was then a horse barn in Potter's Field.

Dr. Lee Dew, Kentucky Wesleyan College history professor, says Bethea was buried in a tuxedo. That would probably make him the best dressed man in the cemetery.



Left: Former city commissioner Russell Shifley examines grave markers in Potter's Field. People who couldn't afford tombstones for relatives used a variety of markers – such as a simple stone, left, and a large block of wood. Right: A broken monument in Potter's Field is only a few dozen yards from Elmwood Cemetery, background, but the woman buried there was too poor to buy a grave in Elmwood.

One of the long forgotten graves is that of Roy Green, who was hanged beside the county jail on Feb. 17, 1905.

Although only 17 when he died on the gallows, Green had lived a lot. At 14, he ran away with a traveling show to St. Louis and was jailed there for eight days for stealing food.

He worked at Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital, played piano in the bawdy houses of Huntersville (around the present 18th Street post office) and was well known as a drinker and gambler.

On July 31 1904, he had been drinking in a bar in the east end it was a Sunday with a man named James Coomes from Webster County.

They left together to find a bawdy house in Huntersville and Coomes was next seen Monday with a piece of plank driven through his throat, lying in the fairgrounds (across Triplett from Gabe's Shopping Center).

After a widespread manhunt, Green was arrested, tried and sentenced to hang for the murder and theft of \$28.

At 7 a on Feb. 17, 1905, Green stood on the gallows beside the jail and told the crowd, "Mind what your mothers tell you and leave whisky out. Don't do as I have done."

Officials on the scaffold said, "Goodbye, Roy" and dropped him.

Dressed in a new suit the county had bought him, Green was buried in Potter's Field the following day.

Most of the people in this old cemetery committed no crimes. They just couldn't afford a better grave.

As late as 1955, three or four people a year were buried in the pauper cemetery. But soon after that the practice stopped.

William L. Fulton III, executive director of the Owensboro-Daviess County Welfare League, says the agency now buys graves in other cemeteries for those unable to pay burial expenses.

Shifley looks around the field at the few kids playing there. "It makes a good playground for kids," he says. "But it's no good as a cemetery any more."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 24 August 1981, p.1B:

Paupers cemetery: Neglect scars Potter's Field

By Mike Hill, Messenger-Inquirer

The city of Owensboro's only cemetery has become an unkempt playground.

Weeds, some of them two feet high, grow up around graves at Potter's Field, off Mill Avenue, where more than 1,000 paupers were laid to rest decades ago.

There are signs of life, but they don't show respect for the dead. Motorbikes have left scarring tracks in the ground. A basketball hoop has been erected on the cemetery's east side.

Although city crews cut the weeds and grass several times a year, there hasn't been any major effort to keep up the grounds.

"It just doesn't look like a cemetery," said William Fulton, executive director of the Welfare League, which has resumed burying poor people there within the last year.

Two weeks ago, Daviess Fiscal Court was asked by deputy sheriff Phillip Norris to do something about the cemetery's use as a playground. County commissioners passed the problem onto the city when it was learned that the graveyard is city-owned (although it is outside the city limits).

City Attorney Frankie Hager said the city is planning to erect a fence around part of the graveyard to prevent trespassers. The city will also post "no trespassing" signs, she said.

In addition, she added, the city may ask that the sheriff's department to do more patrolling at the graveyard. Owensboro police aren't being asked because the cemetery is outside city limits.

Mrs. Hager said city officials didn't act more quickly on the problem because they didn't know Potter's Field had become a playground. "It just wasn't brought to our attention," she said.

City Manager William Sequino said he viewed Potter's Field his first week in Owensboro but didn't remember how it looked. He said he plans to visit the cemetery this week.

George W. Little co-owner of adjacent Elmwood Cemetery and Rose Hill Cemetery across Old Hartford Road, said he's concerned that youths in Potter's Field may someday decide to extend their playground into Elmwood.

"If anybody has a social obligation or conscience, the cemetery should be fenced," he said.

Children playing at the site have said they didn't know the field was a burial ground. Only a few hidden gravestones are there. Most of the paupers' graves were never marked. No one really knows how many people are buried there.

From the time the city bought the field from W.W. Hayes in February 1873 until now, nobody bothered to lay out cemetery plots or make a list of those buried there.

The city may begin to keep records of new burials at Potter's Field, Mrs. Hager said. But she said she's not sure whether the city will mow the lawn more than the four or five times a year it's being done now.

Burials in the cemetery slowed by the 1950s. The field had become crowded with bodies, according to news stories of the day. In some sections, the graves were so close together that gravediggers were digging into two or three caskets to excavate for another.

Last year, it was determined that a southeast section of the field had sufficient room for more burials, so they resumed, Fulton said. Four people have been buried there within the last year and the new graves are being designated with markers.

During the four or five years before the latest burials at Potter's Field, Fulton said, the Welfare League was arranging for burial of poor people at other cemeteries.

Fulton said there probably will be more burials at Potter's Field as long as there is room. The maximum burial cost provided through the Welfare League is \$500, he said.

"It doesn't cost anything to bury in Potter's Field," he said. Previous newspaper articles on the graveyard said it contains the bodies of gamblers down on their luck, prostitutes, rapists, murderers, those who were hung, strangers who died far from home and were never claimed and those who couldn't afford better plots.

The most famous of those in Potter's Field is Rainey Bethea, who is officially listed as the last man in the U.S. to be publicly executed by hanging. He was hung Aug. 14, 1936, on the site of the Executive Inn Rivermont for raping a 70-year-old woman.



Neglect has taken its toll on Owensboro's paupers' graveyard. A basketball hoop stands at one end of Potter's Field, overlooking the unkempt grass worn from motorcycle treads. In the background is Elmwood Cemetery.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 2 December 1981, p.1C:

City improves Potter's Field

Owensboro has been making improvements to its only cemetery, but it hasn't been easy convincing people that Potter's Field is not a playground, City Attorney Frankie Hager says.

A fence was put up around part of the cemetery off Mill Avenue after city officials learned in August that the graveyard was being used for recreation, Mrs. Hager said.

But, she added, the fence has since been torn down. Someone also had erected a basketball hoop in the middle of the cemetery, and that has been removed, Mrs. Hager added. Weeds that were growing fairly high at the cemetery were also cut down.

Because the cemetery is just outside city limits, the sheriff's department was asked to make more patrols in the area, she said.

The city will probably wait until next spring before setting up the fence again, Mrs. Hager said. No trespassing signs also may be posted.

The city has owned the cemetery since 1873, but plots were never laid out and nobody knows for sure how many people are buried there. It's been estimated that more than 1,000 paupers have been laid to rest at Potter's Field, which is adjacent to Elmwood Cemetery.

For several years, nobody was buried at the cemetery because officials felt that it was filled up. However, last year the Welfare League resumed burials in a southeast section that was determined to have sufficient room for additional graves.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 12 May 1982, p.6C:



Good fences make good neighbors:

Elmwood Cemetery Inc. installed a fence at the cemetery's property line with Potter's Field several weeks ago to prevent damage from motor vehicles, according to George W. Little president of the cemetery corporation. There had been some turf damage and minor damage to monuments at Elmwood, Little said. He said he would like to see the city, which maintains the paupers' cemetery, install a fence all around Potter's Field, which has been used as a playground in recent years.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 10 September 1989, p.1A:

Agency ensures indigents' burial

By Dan Heckel, Messenger-Inquirer

There's an old joke that goes, "I'm so broke, I can't even afford to be dead."

But the sad reality is there are a dozen or so people each year in Daviess County who are so down on their luck at the time of death that a decent funeral and burial is well beyond their reach. Luckily, there are people who step in to help with that problem.

"We've never refused to bury anyone," said Allan Harl Jr., who works with a local funeral home.

The Owensboro-Daviess County Welfare League usually steps in when a person dies without the resources for a funeral. "We first have to ascertain if the deceased and remaining family are indigent or not," said Bill Fulton, executive director of the league. "Often a funeral home will help us with that."

If a person dies in the hospital, a funeral home is called for embalming, Fulton said. If there are no finances available, the League allots \$500 toward burial, he said.

"I don't relish pauper funerals," Fulton said. "We have to resort to burying them in the old Potter's Field. It's really not pleasant to go through."

Harl said his funeral home offers two hours of visitation, graveside services, a casket and burial at the Owensboro Cemetery, also known as Potter's Field. The cemetery is on the east side of Elmwood Cemetery, blocked off by a fence.

"It's just part of doing business, taking care of our people," Harl said. He said he knows of no funeral home in town that would refuse to bury someone because of poverty.

The funeral home receives the money from the Welfare League, but it doesn't come near covering the costs of the funeral, Harl said.

For out-of-towners who die here penniless, the coroner takes responsibility to ship the body to the deceased's home. But if no relative can be located, the Fiscal Court pays and the funeral home offers the same service, Harl said. County Treasurer Louis Hammack said he could not recall the last time Fiscal Court paid for a funeral.

Coroner Bob Howe said he also has the option to turn an unclaimed body over to a medical school, but he has yet to do that.

There are more indigent deaths each year here than people realize, probably 10 to 15, Harl said. What sometimes makes a pauper's funeral more difficult are the unreasonable demands some family members make, he said.

"Sometimes the people who have nothing demand more," Harl said. "They want three days of visitation and a full funeral service. It's a little difficult to explain to them we're already giving more than they can afford."

Burial in Potter's Field usually means an anonymous legacy left for future generations. There are only a handful of tombstones in the field, and trees hide the tall grass from sight of the neatly trimmed cemetery next door. The city mows the grass there, and expects to trim it again this week.

The field has been used for more than 100 years, but from the early days on it was never set off in plots. Burials were halted in the early 1960s because no one was sure whether there was any land left to use. In 1980 an area was found where the indigent could be buried without hitting other graves, Fulton said.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 24 February 2000, p.1C:

We can't just bury our shame over Potter's Field

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

Gamblers down on their luck. Ladies of the evening whose families refused to the end to take them back.

A couple of men who died on the gallows.

An occasional stranger whose life ended far from friends and family.

And hard-working men and women who reached the end of the line without enough money - or friends - to pay for a grave.

Hundreds of them, maybe thousands, lie forgotten here in Potter's Field - or Owensboro Cemetery, as it's properly called.

Nobody kept records of the burials. Nobody bothered to count those who made this their final stop.

Just a few yards away in Elmwood Cemetery, the Jan. 3 tornado caused nearly \$1 million in damages to the beautiful trees and towering monuments.

But there was no damage here in Potter's Field. There are precious few monuments to mark the graves of the poor. And this graveyard could hardly be damaged more.

It doesn't even look like a cemetery. Not even grass grows over these graves. Potter's Field has been scraped bare by heavy machinery and left looking more like a landfill.

But look closely in the mud. The tornado scattered plastic flowers from Elmwood across these graves. Maybe a sign that somebody cares.

But obviously, we don't. There's not even a sign or a cross to tell visitors that hundreds are buried here.

"At one time, there were dozens of monuments in there," says Allan Harl, a local funeral director. "But the city, in its infinite wisdom, sent a bulldozer or something in there years ago to scrape it all off. I don't think there's a one in there now."

There are three or four. Mostly broken and sometimes covered by debris.

The city bought this property behind Elmwood Cemetery in February 1873 as a burial ground for paupers. And the first year, 85 people were laid to rest in the graveyard named for the biblical field for the burial of strangers.

Hundreds more would follow over the next 127 years.

Rainey Bethea, the last man publicly executed in the United States, was buried here in 1936. Roy Green, hanged for murder at 17, was laid to rest in 1905.

Two Chinese immigrants - a murder victim and the man who shot him - have lain side by side in this field since about 1908.

They say there are veterans here, too. Men who made the mistake of dying at a time when a grateful nation wouldn't even buy them a grave.

In the 1960s, burials stopped in Potter's Field. It was thought to be full. But in the early '80s, the city found room for more graves. And the cemetery, such as it is, is still in use.

Usually, I find peace when I walk through cemeteries. But when I stand in the mud of Potter's Field, I feel only shame.

How could we let this happen?

There are people buried here. Rich or poor, their graves deserve respect.

I know monuments are expensive. And the needs of the living should take precedence.

But we need to find a way to landscape Potter's Field and erect one monument that tells its history and lets visitors know that they're standing on sacred ground - not a dump. Maybe then, the chill I feel standing here - and the guilt - will go away.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 10 October 2000, p.3C:

Potter's Field Dedication

Owensboro Potter's Field Dedication ceremony is 10:30 a.m. today at the cemetery, located behind Elmwood Cemetery. Alma Randolph will sing and Mayor Waymond Morris and city commissioners will preside over the dedication, which is open to the public. The ceremony was originally scheduled for Sept 25 but was canceled because of rain.

Potter's Field is a cemetery that dates back to 1873, serving those without money to buy graves and those who had no family to claim them.

The new granite monument created by Mischel Monument will identify the site and honor the nearly 1,000 people buried there. The monument is inscribed with this quotation from Mark Twain: "Death, the only immortal that treats us all alike, whose pity and whose peace and whose refuge are for all the soiled and the pure, the rich and the poor, the loved and the unloved." Twain wrote those words on his deathbed.

A bronze plaque with a brief history of the site will be placed at the foot of the monument with benches on each side. Call Tracy Marksberry at (270) 687-8557 for more information.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 11 October 2000, p.1A:

City unveils memorial at long-ignored Potter's Field

By James Mayse, Messenger-Inquirer

Most of the men, women and children buried in Potter's Field sleep without names. But they are remembered.

No one knows for sure how many people are buried in Potter's Field a decades-old burial ground for paupers just a few yards from Elmwood Cemetery. They died without either the funds to pay for a proper funeral or anyone to cover the costs of a burial service and a headstone. Records of who was buried in Potter's Field have long since disappeared, and there are only a few marked graves.

On Tuesday morning, city officials unveiled a monument to the people buried in Potter's Field since the cemetery opened in 1873. Momentum to create a memorial came after a January tornado heavily damaged portions of Elmwood Cemetery, city community coordinator Tracy McQueen Marksberry said.

"Because of the tornado, we had an opportunity to do something we hadn't done before," Marksberry said.

After the city cleared the field of debris, Messenger-Inquirer reporter Keith Lawrence wrote a column lamenting the lack of a monument in honor of the dead there.

"Actually, it had a great deal to do with Keith's column," Marksberry said. "I do think it had an impact on community officials."

Mayor Waymond Morris said the bodies were buried on top of one another in the cemetery, just a few feet below ground. When the area would flood, Morris said, caskets would rise to the surface.

A wide variety of people are buried in Potter's Field, Morris said.



Owensboro Mayor Waymond Morris, left, helps city commissioners, from left, Charlie Castlen, Jim Wood and Bill Van Winkle unveil a new monument Tuesday honoring people buried in Potter's Field behind Elmwood Cemetery.

"Even some veterans who died before our nation provided them with a proper burial are laid to rest here," he said. "It is estimated perhaps a thousand or more people are buried in this area right here."

As Alma Randolph sang a memorial song Tuesday, Tammy Howard dried her eyes. Howard, who has two uncles buried in the field, also held a private ceremony at her uncles' graves, placing flowers on their small headstones and playing Elvis Presley's version of "Amazing Grace" on a small stereo.

"I got pretty emotional," she said.

Before the tornado, Howard said, the old cemetery was overgrown with weeds and all but obscured by shrubs.

"I would come here every Memorial Day, and, if I could, I'd try to visit on their birthdays," she said. "I'm relieved it's cleaned up, and I'm grateful the city finally acknowledged there is a cemetery here.

"If kind of sad it was neglected," she said. "I think it will really please my uncle and my mom. Now, they can walk over to see their brothers anytime they want."

After the ceremony, Brenda Johnson lingered in front of the monument. Johnson's grandmother is 'buried in Potter's Field in an unmarked grave, she said. Johnson said the field was in need of a cleanup.

"It was a mess," she said. "I remember my mother came to her funeral, and she tore her panty hose where she walked through branches and stuff.

"I think it's nice that they did this," Johnson said of the monument. "I know there's a lot more than 1,000 buried here. There's quite a bit more. It's a whole lot better than what it was. I thank God someone had the gumption to clean it up."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 18 October 2000, p.7A:

Editorial:

Potter's Field monument provides deserved dignity

People who are poor are easy to miss in our society.

They do not make grand pronouncements or live on the most well-traveled streets. They are not dining out at the latest restaurant or shopping at the most posh stores.

What they do is live in our community with the same rights to happiness, the same quest to make tomorrow a better day, the same feelings of disappointment if that day does not come. The poor strive to keep their dignity when sometimes that is all they have.

The poor deserve that dignity in death as well. Last week, the city of Owensboro gave them that.

City officials unveiled a monument to all the people buried in Potter's Field, the area inside Elmwood Cemetery where those too poor to pay for burial rest. Just who is buried in Potter's Field is unknown. Records are gone and only a few graves are marked.

After the January tornado damaged the cemetery, Messenger-Inquirer reporter Keith Lawrence wrote a column lamenting the lack of a monument to the dead in Potter's Field. Soon after, work began to put the monument in place.

Now there stands a handsome granite monument with the words of Mark Twain inscribed for all to see. The poor may be still be easy to miss in our society, but they will be difficult to forget in death.



One-half of the Confederate Statue at new home in Owensboro's Potter's Field - 17 October 2022



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 16 November 2022, p.:

Confederate statue moved to Potters Field
Science museum to take ownership

By Ken Silva, Messenger-Inquirer

The confederate monument that sat outside the Daviess County Courthouse for more than a century was moved to Potters Field on Thursday and will soon belong to the Owensboro Museum of Science and History, Daviess County Judge-Executive Al Mattingly said.

Mattingly spoke about the statue during Tuesday's Fiscal Court meeting, updating the public about its whereabouts and proposing the transfer to the museum.

"I would propose without objection that Daviess County Fiscal Court prepare the papers necessary to turn the statue over to the Museum of Science and History, which is where it should have been to begin with," he said. "This will give them care, control and custody."

No vote was necessary to transfer the possession of the statue. County Attorney Claude Porter said he'd make the move in the coming days.

Mattingly also explained that the statue was erected at Potters Field — a city-owned cemetery purchased in 1873 for people whose families had no money to bury them — last Thursday because the county had been waiting for a day when the area was free.

"We waited until it was the first day they had with no funeral services out there," he said, "which we didn't want to interrupt."

The statue had been in storage since it was removed from the county courthouse lawn June 1 after a lengthy court dispute with the United Daughters of the Confederacy over the statue's ownership.

Fiscal Court won the court case. After the statue was removed, Fiscal Court and the UDC agreed that the Confederate group would receive ownership of the statue's base so it could be moved to a site the UDC owns, the Panther Creek Battlefield.



A Partial list of burials at Owensboro's Potter's Field Cemetery

By Jerry Long

In parenthesis after each entry is the source(s) that indicate place of burial. The last burial found at the cemetery was in 1995. Those listed were discovered by checking local newspaper obituaries and Kentucky death certificates. The listing was complicated by the numerous names the Potter's Field Cemetery has been referred to as – Owensboro Cemetery, Owensboro City Cemetery, City Cemetery, Paupers Cemetery.

The listings for those interred after 1950 are fairly comprehensive. However, those buried earlier are far from complete. Identification of burials was limited by several factors. Kentucky death certificates were not consistently recorded until 1911. Death notices and obituaries in the early years typically listed no burial location and many just gave burial location as Owensboro. Many prior to 1930 never even had a death notice in the newspapers. Many notices gave wrong or misleading information. Some notices stated burial was in potter's field, which could also be the cemetery kept by the county at the Daviess County Poor Farm. Many burials in the Owensboro Cemetery were mistakenly stated as being in the adjacent Elmwood Cemetery (for example - Roy Green, Su Lee and Wah Lee). Many reported to be buried the "City Cemetery" were actually buried at Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery. Several unidentified and unclaimed individuals were interred here.

Allen, Herman Lee (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 6 September 1935, p.14 and Kentucky death certificate 1935 - #21666)	c1924	5 Sep 1935
Bailey, Charles (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 21 January 1900, p.1)		10 Jan 1900
Baker, Pete (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 20 September 1893, p.1)	c1868	19 Sep 1893
Barnes, Lloyd Ray, Jr. (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 7 November 1993, p.2C)	3 Mar 1972	4 Nov 1993
Bethea, Rainey	16 Oct c1909	14 Aug 1936

(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 15 August 1936, p.1;
and Kentucky death certificate 1936 - #24001; last public execution in US)

Blacklock	8 Mar 1897	8 Mar 1897
(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 11 March 1897, p.5, stillborn)		
Blay, Mr. WW I vet?		
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 3 October 1977, p.1B)		
Board, Mary Carmen	22 Aug 1925	2 Apr 1989
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 6 April 1989, p.2C)		
Bond, Mary Evelyn	23 Aug 1940	13 Jan 1941
(Kentucky death certificate 1941 - #806)		
Bosley, George	19 Feb 1923	7 Mar 1987
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 12 March 1987, p.2C)		
Brown, George C.	c1875	25 Oct 1915
(Twice-A-Week Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 27 October 1915, p.10 and Kentucky death certificate 1915 - #24116)		
Burris, Beulah B. (Nannie)	11 Apr 1911	18 Sep 1983
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 21 September 1983, p.2C)		
Canary, Raymond Earl	5 Jul 1936	14 Mar 1988
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 15 Mar 1988, p.2C)		
Carson, Esau	c1884	17 Apr 1902
(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 18 April 1902, p.2)		
Chapman, Mrs. Bice		29 Mar 1900
(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 1 April 1900, p.12)		
Clements, Ike		29 Jan 1897
(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 31 January 1897, p.1, elderly)		
Cobb, Choice	13 Sep 1858	16 Nov 1903
(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 18 November 1903, p.3)		
Cobb, Timothy D.	13 Dec 1961	17 Jan 1988
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 20 January 1988, p.2C)		
Condor, Mary Catherine	28 Apr 1941	12 Jun 1941
(Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 13 June 1941, p.3 and Kentucky death certificate 1941 - #14353)		
Coomes, John Nelson		7 Nov 1911

(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 9 November 1911, p2)

Cooney, son of George T. (Kentucky death certificate 1911 - #6041)	30 Mar 1911	30 Mar 1911
Cox, Buck (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 27 March 1942, p3 and Kentucky death certificate 1942 - #5823)	25 Dec 1873	26 Mar 1942
Cox, Emmett (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 6 January 1943, p10 and Kentucky death certificate 1943 - #664)	10 Mar 1918	5 Jan 1943
Crowder, John Wesley (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 5 March 1983, p.2B)	6 Feb 1924	4 Mar 1983
Crutchfield, George (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 14 June 1939, p.9 and Kentucky death certificate 1939 - #14617)	9 Aug 1895	13 Jun 1939
Daffron, infant of John (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 18 July 1902, p.2)		17 Jul 1902
Daffron, Rose Bell (Kentucky death certificate 1911 - #6034)	1 Dec 1906	27 Mar 1911
Darwin, Dennis (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 20 October 1991, p.2C)	c1953	18 Oct 1991
Davis, John (co. ?, 6 th U.S. Cav ?) (one of 5 monuments remaining in cemetery – U.S. veteran’s monument)		



Decker, Mat (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 6 September 1903, p.3)	c1881	30 Aug 1903
Dossett, Ebb (Kentucky death certificate 1911 - #30919)	23 Dec 911	23 Dec 1911
Duplin, J. V. (Kentucky death certificate 1911 - #8153)	27 Jan 1908	21 Apr 1911
Embrey, James W. (<u>Owensboro Weekly Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 2 January 1890, p.3)		26 Dec 1889
Ford, Eliza (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 14 April 1896, p.1)	c1820	12 Apr 1896
Frixell, Andrew (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 14 December 1900, p.1 and 22 December 1900, p.2)	c1871	13 Dec 1900
Gladden, George (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 10 February 1939, p.9 and Kentucky death certificate 1939 - #3492)	17 Feb 1916	9 Feb 1939
Goldsmith, Emma (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 16 May 1894, p.1)		15 May 1894
Goode, Harlan Paul (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 17 March 1985, p.2B)	20 Feb 1919	16 Mar 1985
Graves, Charles (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 31 March 1940, p.7A and Kentucky death certificate, 1940 - #6461)	c1860	28 Mar 1940
Green, Roy (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 19 February 1905, p.1, hanged)	c1887	17 Feb 1905
Griffith, Homer (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 5 April 1985, p.2C)	10 Jun 1905	4 Apr 1985
Haffen, Michael (<u>Semi-Weekly Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 4 July 1884, p.4)		2 Jul 1884
Hatchett, Alice (Griffith) (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 5 January 1941, p.2A and Kentucky death certificate 1941 - #805)	c1873	4 Jan 1941
Hatchett, Ruth Etta (Curry) (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 22 March 1985, p.2C)	27 Jun 1929	20 Mar 1985

Havener, Billy (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 24 July 1990, p.3C, World War II veteran)	6 Jul 1929	23 Jul 1990
Henderson, Rosia Ann (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 28 February 1987, p.2C)	2 Jun 1909	26 Feb 1987
Hendricks, Edwina Loraine (Frazier) (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 12 July 1987, p.2C)	9 Mar 1949	10 Jul 1987
Hoggard, Iva Itura (Calloway) (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 19 June 1984, p.2B)	28 Jul 1921	18 Jun 1984
Hoskins, infant son of Delia (<u>Twice-A-Week Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 8 April 1899, p.7)	Apr 1899	Apr 1899
Hunt, Everett (<u>Owensboro-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 3 April 1905, p.5)		2 Apr 1905
Huskisson, Eldred Eugene (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 12 August 1991, p.2C)	22 Jan 1923	9 Aug 1991
Hutchinson, Kenneth Lee (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 20 December 1994, p.2C)	3 Feb 1949	19 Dec 1994
Ijames, Walter (<u>Owensboro Weekly Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 14 April 1899, p.1)		13 Apr 1899
Jackson, Frances (Gross) (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 30 October 1981, p.2C)	24 Apr 1917	29 Oct 1981
Jewell, Eva (Kentucky death certificate 1911 - #6014)	2 Sep 1905	18 Mar 1911
Johnson, Cairo (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 22 December 1942, p.8)	Jun 1861	17 Dec 1942
Johnson, Mr. (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 14 December 1900, p1 and 16 December 1900, p.24)	c1870	13 Dec 1900
Johnson, Sarah (Wallace) (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 3 February 2011, p.5 and Kentucky death certificate 1911 - #594)	1871	31 Dec 1910
Jones, Alene (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 14 May 1995, p.2C)	14 Nov 1923	12 May 1995

Jones, Jacob	18 Jan 1924 (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 19 February 1988, p.2C)	17 Feb 1988
Jones, John Thomas	22 Feb 1945 (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 1 July 1986, p.2C, US Marine Corps veteran)	30 Jun 1986
Joseph, daughter of Marie	13 Jan 1897 (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 14 January 1897, p.5, newborn infant)	13 Jan 1897
Lanham, Joseph William	6 Dec 1921 (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 23 July 1985, p.2C)	12 Jul 1985
Lee, Su	(<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 9 October 1955, p.13D and <u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 15 December 1908, p.1)	13 Dec 1908
Lee, Wah	(<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 9 October 1955, p.13D and <u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 15 December 1908, p.1)	13 Dec 1908
Lightfoot, Jesse	Aug 1881 (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 3 October 1977, p.1B; one of 5 monuments remaining in cemetery)	21 Jan 1902



Logsdon, C. W.	1904 (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 18 March 1904, p8)	17 Mar 1904
Logsdon, child of Mr. B.	(<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 4 September 1894, p.8)	3 Sep 1894
Logsdon, Charles	c1876 (<u>Twice-A-Week Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 8 May 1897, p.4)	7 May 1897

Logsdon, James W.
(one of 5 monuments remaining in cemetery)

8 Feb 1863

14 Apr 1907



Mahoney, infant son of Mattie Belle
(Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 8 November 1898 p.4)

Nov 1898

Nov 1898

Meriwether, Henry
(Twice-A-Week Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 16 October 1895, p.3)

Oct 1895

Mofield, Bessie
(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 14 January 1904, p.5)

c1881

13 Jan 1902

Moore, Wallace Robert
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 29 Mar 1989, p.2C)

23 Jul 1904

25 Mar 1989

Moorman, Thomas A.
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 5 July 1987, p.2C)

16 Sep 1907

3 Jul 1987

Morefield, Jennie
(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 15 November 1892, p.1)

13 Nov 1892

Morris, William Taylor

21 Apr 1892

27 Apr 1942

(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 28 April 1942, p.12
and Kentucky death certificate 1942 - #10839)

Myles, Elizabeth (Moran)	13 Jun 1900	24 Mar 1985
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 26 March 1985, p.2C)		
Nesmith, Michael Glenn	18 Mar 1951	16 Sep 1989
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 17 September 1989, p.2B, US Navy veteran)		
Osgood, John H.		5 Nov 1884
(Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 7 November 1884, p.4)		
Palmer, Douglas Elbert	10 Oct 1942	12 Dec 1994
(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 14 December 1994, p.2C)		
Paul, Mattie	c1868	11 Mar 1896
(Daily Tribune, Owensboro, KY, 12 March 1896, p.1)		
Payne, Willie	1863	30 Dec 1882
(Messenger and Examiner, Owensboro, KY, 10 January 1883, p.3)		
Phillips, Bob	c1832	1 Jun 1897
(Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 2 June 1897, p.5)		
Proctor, Alexander	12 Sep 1844	17 Jun 1914
(Kentucky death certificate 1914 - #15166; monument has died 6 June 1914, death certificate & US veteran's records has died 17 June 1914; minister, pastor of the Snow Hill Baptist Church in Owensboro; one of 5 monuments remaining in cemetery)		



Preston, Mrs. Ed (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 14 October 1899, p.5)		12 Oct 1899
Sapp, Darrell Edward, Sr. (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 1 July 1994, p.6C)	8 Jan 1950	30 Jun 1994
Sapp, Sandra K. (Crowe) Peach (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 4 March 1986, p.2C)	11 Jan 1947	2 Mar 1986
Sheley, Calvin Lee, Sr. (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 25 January 1989, p.2C)	31 Jan 1922	20 Jan 1989
Smith, Rosa (Nickelson) (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 18 April 1915, p.1 and Kentucky death certificate 1915 - #9386)	28 Apr 1875	16 Apr 1915
Smith, Willis (<u>Twice-A-Week Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 25 December 1909, p.7)	c1879	21 Dec 1909
Speed, Charley (<u>Semi-Weekly Messenger and Examiner</u> , Owensboro, KY, 1 October 1880, p.3)	c1862	17 Sep 1880
Steel, Sarah (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 16 November 1943, p.10 and Kentucky death certificate 1943 - #24013)	7 Jan 1850	14 Nov 1943
Stewart, Charles Moses (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 1 July 1995, p.2C, Korean War Army Veteran)	7 Feb 1933	30 Jun 1995
Stroud, Arthur (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 2 April 1905, p.1)	c1875	31 Mar 1905
Talbott, Albert (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 21 December 1939, p.4)	25 Dec 1854	19 Dec 1939
Taylor, Bud (<u>Owensboro Tribune</u> , Owensboro, KY, 4 February 1896, p.8)		30 Jan 1896
Taylor, son of Emma (Kentucky death certificate 1911 - #27987)	7 Nov 1911	7 Nov 1911
Tindall, James (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 4 June 1896, p.5)	c1888	3 Jun 1897
Tinsley, child of J. R. (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 11 January 1891, p.8)		10 Jan 1891
Travers, Arthur Miller	11 Feb 1939	7 Jun 1991

(Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 8 June 1991, p.2B)

Travers, Robert Justice (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 13 February 1987, p.2C)	29 Jan 1937	12 Feb 1987
Vigous, Otha (<u>Owensboro Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 10 May 1935, p.2 and Kentucky death certificate 1935 - #11645)	c1903	9 May 1935
Webster, Alfred Daniel, III (<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u> , Owensboro, KY, 7 November 1987 p.2D)	20 Dec 1973	4 Nov 1987
West, Minnie L. (<u>Messenger and Examiner</u> , Owensboro, KY, 19 July 1888, p.2)	c1851	17 Jul 1888
Wickliffe, John (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 12 April 1940, p.14 and Kentucky death certificate 1940 - #9322)	c1875	11 Apr 1940
Wright, infant daughter of Guy (Kentucky death certificate 1911 - #28002)	25 Nov 1911	25 Nov 1911
Zeller, Louis P. (<u>Owensboro Messenger</u> , Owensboro, KY, 11 November 1901, p.2)	c1851	11 Nov 1901



In 2023 five monuments were found in the Potter's Field Cemetery. It appears that only one of these, Rev. Alexander Proctor's monument, is at the original gravesite. The other four monuments – John Davis, William L. Fulkerson and Jesse Lightfoot and James W. Logsdon, are lined up in a row near the Potter's Field memorial marker and the entrance from Elmwood Cemetery. Three of these are implanted in the ground and the monument pictured below is loose and unattached.



William Leslie Fulkerson (1904-1970) is not buried at the Owensboro's Potter's Field Cemetery. He was buried at the Glenville Baptist Church Cemetery in Daviess County, where he has an erected monument – see memorial by his daughter, Charlotte Fulkerson Howard, on

website, FindAGrave.com; obituary in Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 6 September 1970, p.8D; and the US Headstone Applications for Military Veteran's database. No sources were found to confirm that John Davis & James W. Logsdon were interred in Potter's Field.



Owensboro's Potter's Field Cemetery memorial erected in 2000

