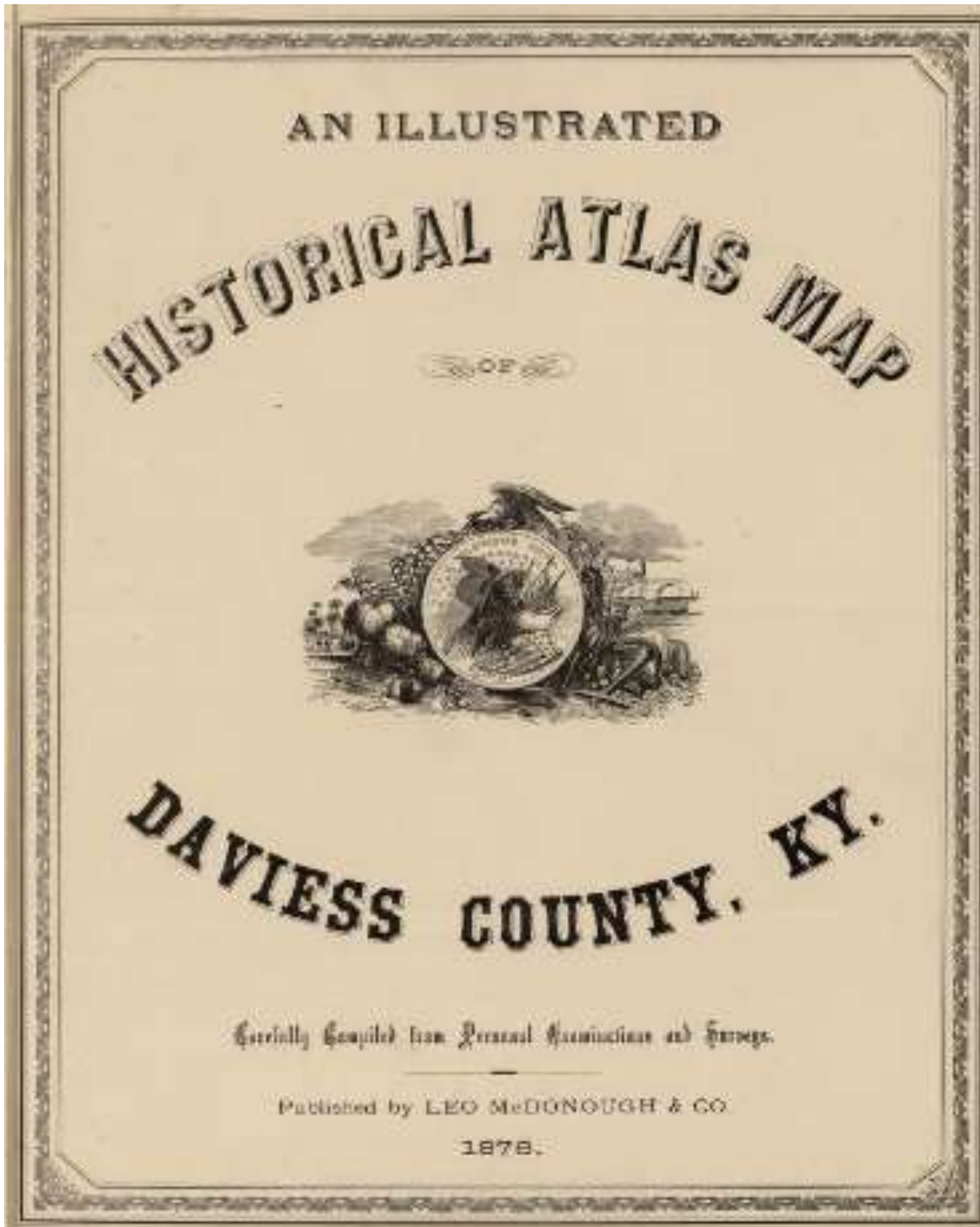


# Daviess County 1876 Atlas – History

By Jerry Long



Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, 2 July 1875 p.5:

**A Proposed Map of Daviess County.**

We were visited a few days ago by a gentleman proposing, provided he meets with sufficient encouragement, to get up a map of Daviess county. He exhibited a specimen of the work he proposes to get out. It is a large quarto, well bound, and will give every main road, private road, farm, dwelling, church, school-house, railroad, and, in fact, everything that could possibly be put upon a map. The county will be divided into precincts, where everything will be given on a large scale. Every man's farm, with the number of acres of land, and all the improvements on same, will be shown. We think the enterprise should be encouraged, as the map would prove of great value to many of our citizens.

Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, 23 July 1875 p.5:

**TO THE CITIZENS  
OF  
DAVIESS COUNTY.**

In case of sufficient encouragement, we propose to publish a map of Daviess County, in Atlas form, containing:

An Index and Table of Explanations; a double-page Map of the State of Kentucky, finely colored, and corrected up to time of publication, with population of counties and cities, according to the census of 1870.

A Map of the County, colored, by Precincts. showing the location of towns, post-offices, streams, wagon roads, railroads, churches, school houses, etc.

A history of Daviess County from its earliest settlement up to the present time.

A Map of the County by portions of about six miles square, on separate pages, colored, and on a scale of two inches to the mile, showing farms with owners names thereon, locating houses, orchards, streams, wagon roads-railroads, churches, school houses, etc., etc.

A Historical Sketch of each Precinct, with other interesting information.

Fine plats of towns and villages, colored by additions.

A Table showing the population, amount of stock and products, number of farms and acres under cultivation, with a general synopsis of the census of 1870.

A double-page Railroad Map of the United States.

A list of the names of those who patronize our work, their residence, business, post office, address, nativity, and when they came into the county.

Fine Lithographic Views of County Buildings. Also a select number of the prominent buildings, residences, and farms, per contract from drawings by our special corps of Artists.

A Biography of some of the early settlers and prominent citizens of the county, per contract. It will be about 14x17 inches square, finely bound, making it not only a valuable work for information and reference, but an ornament. To insure accuracy we have a corps of experienced topographical engineers who compile the Maps from official records and personal examinations.

An experimental canvass will soon be commenced, and should it meet with sufficient encouragement to warrant, its publication, we will finish the work as soon as practicable.

Hoping our enterprise will meet with your careful consideration and support, we are,

Very Respectfully, Yours,  
LEO M'DONOUGH & CO.

### **To the Public:**

We, the undersigned, citizens of Daviess County, Kentucky, have made a careful examination of a Pictorial and Historical Atlas of Sangamon County, Illinois, and consider it preferable to any other form of a county work, and inasmuch as we need a new Map of Daviess County, we hope every individual visited will give it his attention, examination and support:

Geo W Triplett, Judge D. C.

James A Small,  
G B Tyler,  
A B Miller,  
James Kennady,  
E A Hathaway,  
Robert Campbell,  
S T Lowrv,  
W E Parrish,  
J G Ford,  
James C Rudd,  
James Weir,  
L Lumpkin,  
S C Wing,  
Robert Craig,  
B W Slack,  
T S Anderson,  
John L Kirk,  
A J Eagles,  
T J Willingham,  
W B Tyler,  
John Wandling,  
P T Watkins,  
John S McFarland,  
J W Feighan,  
A G Brown,  
Edmund Turner,  
M S Mattlngly Cl'k D.C.C.,  
R E Duncan,  
W H Monarch,

J F Hite,  
J. H. Gates,  
H W Scott, Sheriff,  
J M Yewell,  
M P Fuqua,  
R L Ellis,  
P S Graves,  
I I Berry,  
C S Throcmorton,  
J A Jewell,  
A C Sutherland,  
Lucius P Little,  
Wm A Hickman.  
C B Hicks,  
Jo Thomas,  
J C Harris,  
N M Lancaster,  
Joseph Metcalf,  
C S Walker,  
R W McFarland,  
George T Hawes,  
C W Thomas,  
W W Chambers,  
W T Owen,  
W T Ellis,  
Ed T White,  
George W Jolly,  
J W Slaughter,  
J C Dear,

J H McHenry,  
R H Taylor,  
Frank L Hall,  
John G Weir,  
W H Perkins,  
James Stuart, C.J.  
F J Birk,  
N M Newman,  
W B Vittetow,  
Col A Spray,  
A M Allen,  
S C Cook,  
John Glenn,  
G W Blanford,  
J G McFarland,  
J F Cundiff,  
J M Taylor,  
M J Taylor,  
J A Birk,  
W A Roberts,  
J W Welden,  
T V Rodman,  
J Q Boyd,  
James A. McClain,  
J L Shaw,  
James Burnett,  
J A Munday,  
John G Barkley,  
B E W Stout,

William Onan,  
A D Mattingley,  
Ed W Brooks,  
J L Stinnett,  
B T Ramsey,  
J B Aud,  
H T Aud,

C O Clements,  
George A Williams,  
W D Moore,  
E S Worthington,  
Henry P Tompkins,  
George Brown,  
John A Barr,

C C Corbett,  
John B Scott,  
J H Hopkins,  
James Bryan,  
Charles W Murphy,  
Geo H Cox.

Great improvements have been made in the last few years in the style of publishing County Maps – substituting Atlas form in the place of Wall Maps. Which add greater beauty, durability and convenience to the work. We show the precincts on a larger scale, and add a valuable Map of the entire State, colored by counties. And also a condensed Map of the County, with plats of every village and city in the county. As embellishments we add a lithograph department, for the purpose of showing the improvements in the county. The historical department will consist of a condensed history of the county, and of each precinct and village in the county. We also open up a biographical department, in which the biographies of the early settlers and prominent persons may appear. Incidents of interest in the early settlements of the county will thus be in a tangible shape for preservation. We shall add such statistical information with our historical record as will be of great interest to all classes. Our experimental canvass is now progressing. We leave the result in your hands. THE PUBLISHERS.

**Opinion of the Press :**  
[From the St. Louis Democrat.]

A splendid illustrated Encyclopaedia or County Map will soon be issued from the press. The work has been in course of preparation for many months past. Publication having been delayed from time to time in consequence of a large increase over the number of pages originally proposed, and the high grade of artistic merits required in the maps and the illustrations, The work has been done under the personal supervision of Mr. W. R. Brink, and reflects great credit on his taste, skill and literary ability. The volume consists of over two hundred and twenty-five pages, of double royal octave size, printed on superb plated paper, and bound in elegant and substantial style. The geography of the county is shown on thirty-four pages of beautifully colored Maps, upon which are accurately delineated all of the topographical features, the names of all the land owners, and boundaries of all the farms. It is embellished with over one hundred pages of charming lithographic views of substantial farms, residences and business houses. Also, many well executed portraits of prominent citizens. The history of the county and the biographical sketches are well written and complete, and add greatly to the value of the work, giving much statistical information that can be found in no other publication. The citizens of the county may well be proud of this elegant and valuable compendium of wealth and prosperity of the county, and the generous and far-seeing liberality with which they have supported the work cannot be too highly commended. The Atlas will be sold only to subscribers, and but a sufficient number have been printed to supply the list, which will, of course, greatly increase the intrinsic value of the book.

**Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY**  
5 November 1875, p. 5:

**Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY**  
19 November 1875 p.1:

#### **Map and History.**

The parties engaged in mapping Daviess county, and writing its history, are progressing with the work finely. We were shown some of the drawings by Messrs Buckingham and Smith, that were the finest specimens of pencil work that we have ever seen outside of a lithographic establishment. The drawings of the public buildings are as perfect as pencil work is capable of making, and the site of Col. Zach Taylor's residence on Green river shows more than ordinary skill. Everyone should be possessed of a copy of the drawings and the history.

#### **The New Atlas Map.**

We are glad to state that the work of completing the new atlas map of Daviess county is progressing rapidly in all its departments. The historical and biographical department will be one of the fullest and most interesting of the work. Mr. Williams, the gentleman in charge, has been busy the past week or two in collecting materials. A full and accurate history will be given of each section of the county. The list of biographies prepared by him embraces already the names of several of the old residents and prominent citizens of Owensboro. We hope a large number of others in Owensboro and throughout the county will be added. No part of the work will be more interesting and valuable.

**Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, 2 January 1876, p.5:**

#### **Fine Sketching.**

We have been shown by Messrs. Leo McDonough & Co., the gentlemen engaged in mapping Daviess county, an elaborate sketch of T. J. Monarch's distillery, both exterior and interior, with all its surroundings. The sketch not only shows the immediate vicinity of Grissom's Landing, but extends back into the country a distance of two and a half miles, showing clearly and distinctly several farms, farm-houses, fencing, &c., all as truly and accurately portrayed upon the sheet as they appear to the eye where situated. The sketch is designed for the new map of Daviess county, and will occupy a space of 16x26 inches. The gentlemen engaged in this work are masters of their specialities, and as the work is destined to redound to the credit of the county hereafter, we are glad to know that they are meeting with that success which the magnitude and usefulness of the enterprise warrants.

**Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 18 August 1876, p.5:**

**A Mooted Question Settled.**

Some time during the month of July, 1875, the Map Publishing Company of Leo McDonough & Co., Edwardsville, Ill., sent representatives to this county to prospect for the compilation of an atlas of Daviess county. The representatives, upon their arrival in this city, proceeded to interview a number of our leading citizens to obtain from them an expression of the probable success the company might meet with in case the construction of the atlas was undertaken. In introducing themselves and business, the representatives also exhibited an atlas of an Illinois county as a specimen of what the Daviess County atlas should be when completed.

A sufficiency of encouragement was extended the Map Company to justify it in undertaking the work of getting up the Daviess County Atlas, and it was accordingly begun at the stipulated price of \$12 per copy. The atlas was finished in due course of time and a couple of months or more ago the company's agents came on with the atlases for delivery. And here's , where the rub comes in. The work, it was claimed by a number of subscribers, was not what it was guaranteed to be, and they positively refused to accept it. The objections were several, chief among which were inaccuracies, inferior quality of material, typographical errors, etc. The company's representatives, however, left the atlases and employed an agent in this city for collection of the money. This brought matters to a speedy head, and the subscribers carried the question into the courts. The matter came up for a hearing last Saturday, and after due investigation, occupying the greater part of two days, the subscribers came off victorious.

**Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 19 January 1877, p.5:**

**Circuit Court.**

The circuit court, which has been in progress daily since the first Monday in December, still continues in session and will not close before the last of next week, making a continuous session of eight weeks. The jury empaneled to try common law cases was a few days ago finally discharged by the judge.

Many interesting and severely contested cases have been tried. No criminal cases have been before this court. In the case of Leo McDonough & Co., vs. J. H. Bishop, in which the sum of \$12 only is involved, is assuming very interesting proportions to the litigants. The case came about in this way: Leo McDonough & Co., are map publishers, with headquarters at Edwardsville, Ill. Something over a year ago the company undertook the publication of an illustrated map or atlas of this county, proposing to give the location of farms, water-courses, roads, churches, school-houses, post-offices, etc. Mr. J. H. Bishop, who was one of the subscribers to the Map, refused, as did several others, to take the Map on delivery, alleging that it was not a correct publication; that there were numerous errors in it, and that the plaintiff had not fulfilled their contract in the production of the same. The case was appealed from the quarterly court, where the defendant obtained judgment. The late trial in the circuit court consumed the greater part of three days, and was hotly contested. The jury finally took the case, wrestled with it for about six hours, hung, and by the court were discharged, thus leaving the case open for further litigation.

McHenry & Little for plaintiffs, and Williams & Brown, Boyd & McFarland for defendant. The plaintiffs say they will ask for a change of venue and try the case in another county.

[Note: No further litigation in the case of Leo McDonough & Co. vs. J. H. Bishop was found.]

**History of Daviess County, Kentucky,**  
**Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, p.320:**

COUNTY ATLAS.

A very correct and faithful "Historical Atlas" of this county was published by Leo McDonough & Co. during the centennial year. It is so well known to the citizens of Daviess County that a description is scarcely needed. It contains "eighty-one pages," counting twelve blank pages; size, 13 x 16 inches. The publishers made the serious mistake of drawing most of the maps on a scale about twenty per cent. larger than the book could "comfortably" contain. Hence it is inclined to "gag," with tongues sticking out around the edges!

Its contents are: A page of statistics and reference symbols, well spread out, two and a half pages of county history, one page of precinct history, maps of the precincts, State of Kentucky, United States, and of the whole world—the latter, of course, on a small scale; also thirty full-page illustrations of buildings and their premises, fifty-five biographical sketches of prominent citizens, and a list of patrons which purports to be only a "portion" of them.

In the delivery of this work the publishers met with considerable opposition, on the ground that the maps were too large for the book, and were incorrect; that some names were spelled wrong; that the paper was poor, etc.; but they ultimately proved in court that they had fulfilled their part of the contract, and the protesting patrons were accordingly compelled to fulfill theirs.



Copied from the cover of original 15x18 inch hardbound volume.



**An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY.**  
**(Leo McDonough & Co., Edwardsville, Il, 1876)**

**C O N T E N T S .**

Drawings, plats and pages in 1876 volume

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54	Residence & Distillery of Richard Monarch	67	St. Lawrence Catholic Church
55	Distillery of Martin V. Monarch	70-71	Distillery & residence of T. J. Monarch
56	Post-offices in Kentucky	74	Residence of Albert J. Eagles
58	Store & residence of C. E. Birk	74	Store of Frank T. Guenther
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58	Residence of L. P. Birk	75	Residence of David Hamilton
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59	Farm & residence of Richard W. Hawes	78	Residence of Judge George W. Triplett
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62	Residence of Y. L. Ford	78	Residence of Henry W. Scott
62	Ford's Drug Store	78	Residence of Dr. James C. Sutton
62	St. Alphonsus Church		
62	Mt. St. Joseph Academy		

In an edition published in 1984 there were no page numbers 8-9, 60-61, 64-65, 68-69, 72-73 and 76-77. The 1883 History of Daviess County, Kentucky stated the original volume contained 81 pages "counting twelve blank pages."



Daviess County Courthouse (p.19)



Daviess County House – Poor Farm (p.19)



Daviess County Jail (p.19)



St. Alphonsus Church (p.62)



Mount St. Joseph's Academy and St. Alphonsus Church, 15 Miles South West of Owensboro, Daviess Co .Ky. Conducted by the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Terms – board and tuition in the entire English course, Bed, Bedding, Washing, Stationery and Books &c. per session of five months, \$7500. Instrumental music & languages form extra charges. For Further Information send for catalogues. (p.62)



St. Lawrence Catholic Church, near Knottsville (p.62)

HISTORY OF DAVIESS COUNTY,  
KENTUCKY.

NOTE – For much of the information in regard to the early history of Daviess County we wish to express our acknowledgments to Judge Triplett. His aid has, been as valuable as it has been freely and willingly offered. We are also under obligations to several other gentlemen throughout the County.

W.

There seems good authority for the claim that the first permanent settlement in what is now Daviess County was made by the celebrated William Smeathers, otherwise known by the more popular name of Bill Smothers. This settlement was made on the site of the present city of Owensboro. Hartford, on Rough Creek, and Vienna (now Calhoon) at the falls of Green River, now respectively the County seats of Ohio and McLean Counties, were the centres of the principal settlements made in this part of Kentucky. Each place was rudely fortified against the attacks of the Indians, and crowded with men, women and children, who had gathered in the stockades for safety. Disease began its ravages among them. Their chief source of subsistence, wild game, became scarce in the vicinity, and as soon as danger from Indian depredations was somewhat over, the families settled outside the forts, though usually at first within an easy distance of the centre of the settlement. The families at Hartford located on the banks of Rough Creek, and those at Vienna scattered through the hills in the rear of that place.

Among the settlers at Hartford and Vienna was Bill Smothers. For the incidents of his history we are indebted to articles in the Owensboro Monitor from the pen of the Hon. Thomas C. McCreery. He was born on the western frontier of Southern Virginia, near the Holston River. One day his father while hunting was killed by the Indians, and his mother on the ninth day afterward followed her husband to the grave, dying from grief. These tragic circumstances engendered an undying hostility against the Indians in the breast of William Smeathers, who was then a boy of twelve. Standing by the graves of his parents, he raised his hand to Heaven, and swore that he would devote his life to the destruction of the Indian race. When he subsequently came to Kentucky it was with the intention of fighting Indians, and avenging the murder of his parents, and so joined a party who were coming down to fortify the Green river country. A fort was built on Rough creek, and called Hartford. In besieging this fort it was noticed that the Indians generally came from lower Kentucky, and waded Green river at the falls. At this point, now the spot where stands the County seat of McLean County, a fort was accordingly established and called Vienna. After its construction, the Indians seldom came in great numbers, and the white families soon scattered and selected locations where inclination, or safety directed.

Bill Smothers disliked living in a densely settled neighborhood, preferring rather the solitude of the wilderness, and he accordingly fixed on a location on the Ohio river at a point nearest the settlements. He built a cabin where now stands Owensboro. It was erected on the bank of the river near the gas works, and the exact spot is now occupied by the tobacco factory of Frazier Brothers. His cabin is described as being of round logs, and having two doors, one of which looked out on the Ohio, and the other opened into his garden. On the lower side of the house there was a shed room, made by extending the main roof, being enclosed by slabs of timber planted in the ground. About four feet of a single log had been cut out to make a passway into the room this were

deposited his peltries and groceries, and when he entertained a large company, which was frequently the case, it was converted into a bed-room, more comfortable and agreeable in cold than in warm weather, owing to the abundance of deer and bear skins and buffalo robes which were kept there. Such was the beginning of the city of Owensboro. In person Smothers was within an inch of being six feet in height. His hair was dark brown, and his thin beard of the same color. His complexion was fair, his eyes deep blue and prominent, and the expression of his face pleasing and intelligent. His figure was erect, his limbs and body firm and symmetrical, his motions easy and graceful, denoting great activity and a considerable amount of muscular power. He did everything deliberately, nothing in a hurry. His mind was in keeping with his body, quick, active and vigorous. He was rarely vulgar in conversation, and never affected the coarse manner and rude speech of the ruffian. He was inferior to no man in personal courage. In short, if he had received a thorough education and possessed good morals, he might have occupied a prominent and honorable position. His love of fun, the controlling passion of his life, led him into many improprieties, and perhaps clouded his memory with crime.

It was some time about the opening of the present century, certainly not later than 1799, that Smothers made his home on the Ohio. The situation was lonely enough to delight him with the solitude. From Panther creek to the Ohio, and from Green river to Blackford he was the only inhabitant. He roamed the forest alone, and slaughtered the game at pleasure. The necessaries of life were obtained at his door. The barges, slowly cordelled by their armed crews down the Ohio, would stop and give him salt, flour, and groceries in exchange for dried venison, hams, bear meat, and buffalo robes. These advantages enabled him to live in a style far beyond the means of his old friends and comrades. No gentleman below the falls could furnish so sumptuous a board, and no man entertained with more genuine hospitality. "Old rye and "flour bread" were unknown in the interior, and his visitors manifested a general partiality for those articles. "Pass the flour bread up here," "Start the old rye down here," were remarks usually heard at his table, while the generous host was attentive to the wishes of his guests, and labored to supply their wants. The one fear Smothers possessed above all others was that new settlers would intrude upon the domain he had marked his own, that farms would be opened up, the game driven away or destroyed, and that he would be left in his old age without the means of support in the very country from which he had expelled the Indians. He regarded a surveyor's chain with particular abhorrence, and "corner trees" were an abomination. He determined that his house should present fewer attractions, and that he would thus not assist in luring strangers to the neighborhood. Instead, therefore, of delicacies, the simplest and coarsest fare of the hunter supplied his table. He almost deserted his home, wandering in the woods for weeks and months together. He hunted deer and bear on the Kentucky side of the river, and twice a year took an Indian hunt on the other side of the Ohio, where he was as equally successful. Sleepless days and nights would he spend to get a shot, and at every crack of his rifle an Indian fell. If Indians were plenty, which was generally the case on the Upper Wabash, he would kill from two to half a dozen on a hunt; and if they were scarce he sometimes crossed that stream and shot them on the boundless prairies beyond. When horses were stolen from the settlements at Hartford and Vienna, he led the pursuit, and generally returned with the animals, or an equal or greater number. These expeditions made him familiar with the country as far west as the Mississippi. Smothers was compelled at last to witness the inroads of other settlers. The news saluted his ears that about twenty families had arrived on his territory, and were preparing to build houses and open plantations. The surveyor, with compass and chain, was making new lines, and the axe was laying low the trees.

The first arrivals at Owensboro were Roger Potts, Felty Husk, James Smeathers (or Smothers). In 1805 John Leaman built his cabin, a double cabin for a tavern, in front of what is now the river Hotel. At the same date Matthew Rogers settled at the same place, but afterwards moved to Poplar Springs, Roger Potts was a native of South Carolina; John Leaman came from Nelson County. Felty Husk, who settled at the mouth of Pup Creek in 1800 where his son George was born, was from South Western Virginia, was of character opposite from that of Smothers. He was a great Bible reader, and was thoroughly familiar with the contents of that book. The precise tenets of his religious belief were hard to determine with certainty, as he differed on essential points with every one with whom he conversed. These differences involved him in endless controversies, which were maintained on his part with ability and good temper. Smothers and Husk contracted a friendship which closed only with their lives. Notwithstanding his religious proclivities, Husk lent a helping hand to Smothers in carrying out his mischievous plans, and the latter, indifferent to all moral precepts, listened with attention while the other talked of Peter and of Paul.

One of the most remarkable events of Smothers' life was his arraignment at Hartford on the charge of murder. He was defended by the celebrated Jo. Daveiss. The circumstance was as follows: One summer evening a keel boat made fast at the landing at Yellow Banks, and the crew paid a visit to the house of Smothers. A man named Norris led the crew. He was of herculean proportions, and it was the common boast that he had never met his match in a fisticuff from Louisville to New Orleans. While in the house the boatmen indulged themselves in such freedom of remark that Miss Molly, Smothers' sister, concluded she could not remain with propriety, and ran to the house of Felty Husk. Smothers remonstrated at their behaviour, and six of the number left the house. Norris remained. The crew on returning found the lifeless body of their comrade extended on the floor with the warm blood trickling from two ghastly wounds. Smothers at their approach had fled the house and concealed himself in a strawberry bed in the garden. He escaped from here to the woods where he spent the night. At daylight next morning he knocked at the door of Ben Duncan, Esq., who lived on Pup Creek, ten miles from the Yellow Banks. He informed Squire Duncan of the nature of the charges against him, and demanded a judicial investigation. The crew of the boat were summoned as witnesses. They came in a body to the house of the Justice, many of them armed, and declaring their intention to hang the prisoner on the spot. But the friends of Smothers were there prepared to defend him and the day passed without serious disturbance. Smothers gave bond and security for his appearance on the first day of the next term of the Ohio circuit court. He was perplexed in mind upon the subject of employing good counsel in his defence. He was poor, and lawyers' fees were high. His anxieties about the matter were, however, happily relieved, for Jo. Daveiss, who knew Smothers well and admired him for his independent spirit and indomitable courage, sent him a message from Frankfort: "Don't ruin yourself hiring lawyers; I will be with you on the day of trial." The fame of Jo Daveiss and the wide-spread acquaintance of the deceased, brought such a concourse of people together at court on the day of trial, as had never before been seen in Hartford. The keel boatmen from Louisville were there, and strangers from a circuit of a hundred miles were in attendance, curious to see Bill Smothers and anxious to hear Jo Daveiss. In due course the case of the Commonwealth versus William Smither, alias Bill Smothers, was called. Judge Brodnax occupied the bench. John Daveiss, the brother of Jo Daveiss, was the prosecuting attorney.

The evidence in the main was in accordance with the facts already stated. From the historic interest to the people of Daviess County connected with the names both of defendant and his counsel, we make room for a traditional report of the further proceedings in the case from the pen

of the Hon. Thomas C. McCreery: Jo Daveiss made no labored effort at cross-examination, but permitted the witnesses to make their statements in their own way, sometimes putting a single question, to elicit explanation. When the Attorney announced that the testimony was closed on behalf of the Commonwealth, Jo Daveiss exchanged a few words with Smothers, and then rose and said, that his client, from motives of delicacy, had positively refused to introduce his sister, who was the only witness who could state anything material to the defence – that the prosecuting attorney might proceed with his argument to the jury. By the feeling manner in which he made this simple statement, he seemed already to have gained the vantage ground. But John Daveiss was a man of no ordinary ability, and knowing that he had to cope with one of the greatest advocates in the country, or the world, he put forth his full strength in his opening speech, endeavoring to forestall the impression which had always attended the powerful efforts of his brother. The evidence was arrayed in a masterly manner, and he closed by a spirited and strong appeal to the jury to discharge their sworn duties honestly and faithfully, exhorting them to disregard alike the fame and the passion of the orator who was to follow him, and assuring them that whilst the wicked might rejoice at acquittal, all good men would say amen to the condemnation and the execution of a marauder, an outlaw, an assassin, and a murderer.

That wonderfully eloquent and strangely eccentric man, Jo Daviess, then rose to address the jury. It was his ambition to do everything after a fashion that nobody else in the world ever had attempted. He never was known to ride to a court-house, but made his circuit on foot, whilst a negro boy accompanied him on horse-back, carrying his papers and clothing in a pair of saddlebags. His manner, his style, his tactics at the bar, were all his own, and they all lie buried with their great master on the field of Tippecanoe. No fragment of a speech of his remains to-day; and from the erring and fading memories of men we derive our only ideas of that inspiration which moved upon the feelings and swayed the passions, until he could drive his triumphal car over any obstacle that might oppose his onward course. Tradition furnishes a dim outline of his speech in defence of Smothers, which was probably the greatest forensic effort of his life. It was made for a friend, without hope of reward, and the whole power of mind, body and soul, were poured forth in his cause.

He commenced as if he had a fee to assist in the prosecution. He reiterated the strong points in the Attorney's speech, and offered additional arguments in favor of conviction. The friends of the accused began to whisper that he was a snake in the grass, and that he had come to help his brother, and the eyes of Smothers were raised in calm surprise to the face of his counsel. But Daveiss went on, urging that an acquittal, under all the circumstances, would be a monstrous outrage upon law and justice, and insisting that the jury ought, without hesitation, to hang the criminal. Adopting all the epithets which had been so liberally bestowed, he called upon them to hang the marauder, hang the outlaw, hang the assassin, hang the murderer. Proof or no proof, let the hangman proceed on his mission of strangulation. That such, in effect, was the common reasoning of prosecuting attorneys, and he had been repeating in substance what had fallen from the gentleman who preceded him, but the law was established upon principles precisely of an opposite character. He dwelt upon the tenderness and mercy of the law, and the safeguards it threw around the life and liberty of the citizens. That malice – premeditated malice – was an essential ingredient in making out a case of murder. That if the killing was in sudden heat, it was manslaughter, and if the blow was given in self-defence, or in defence of family and home, then it became a virtue, and was no crime at all.

Without a note, he reviewed the evidence from beginning to end, calling the names of the witnesses as he went, and contended that the Commonwealth had failed to prove that his client had

slain the deceased. That he was found dead in the house of the prisoner at the bar, but no man had seen the prisoner inflict the wound. That circumstances, however, conclusive they might appear, were frequently deceptive. He read a case in the English Reports, where an innocent man had been executed upon circumstantial evidence even stronger than that before the jury, and took the position that the unscrupulous and vindictive prosecutor was guilty of murder, and the twelve jurors were his aiders and abettors, because they did not require that positive and undeniable proof which leaves no room for a reasonable doubt. That if, in truth, it was the hand of Smothers that directed the blade, the facts in the case warranted the conclusion that the other was the aggressor. That the prisoner was a man of sense and a man of prudence, and never would have sought an encounter with a giant, whose physical force was so great that he had never found an equal; and who had a host of thirty comrades who would have rushed to his call and staked their lives in the quarrel. That the deceased was the aggressor in the beginning, and it was a fair inference that he so continued to the end. That unbidden he had invaded the sacred precincts of the prisoner's home, and in return for civility and hospitality, had offered insult and injury. That his foul false tongue had aimed to fix the seal of infamy upon the spotless tablet of a maiden sister's fame. That when his companions impelled by repentance and remorse, had left the house, like a fiend of darkness he lingered upon the spot. That if Smothers had slain him, he slew him in the holy cause of religion and of virtue, and that the King of Heaven had strengthened the arm that drove the pointed steel to his heart.

He paid an eloquent and glowing tribute to the brave pioneers, who, by their toil and sweat and blood, had won the great valley of the Mississippi from the Indians, and consecrated it to agriculture, to commerce and to the arts. That a golden crown had been tendered to Julius Caesar for his victories in Gaul, and for the addition of that province to the Roman Territory. That these men had conquered an Empire thrice as great and thrice as fertile as Gaul, and neither the charity, nor the bounty, nor the justice of the Government, had ever induced it to bestow upon one of them so much as an iron skillet. That a Representative of that Government was here to-day, appealing to a jury of the country for the blood of one of the bravest, because he had stood upon the threshold of his rude hut, which was his castle in the eye of the law, and had defended his family against the licentious and wanton insults of a blackguard and a ruffian. He said that if Smothers had to die, it was meet and appropriate that he should die at Hartford. Hartford had been the theatre of his valor, and Hartford should be the scene of his execution. That he came with the party that erected the first fortification; that his hand dug the ditch and planted the palisade; and when the Indians besieged, and fired upon you from stump, bush and tree, whose aim was deadliest and whose rifle rang clearest in your defence? And when they were defeated and turned their backs in retreat, who was fleet-footed enough to lead the van in the pursuit; who hovered around them like a destroying spirit until he had dyed the waters of your rivers in their blood? Who trailed them to their homes beyond the prairies, and restored your stolen property without ever receiving one cent in compensation? That whatever falsehoods may have been invented and circulated against his client, the forked tongue of slander itself had never charged that his soul had been stained by the sin of avarice. That with ample opportunities of securing an immense landed estate, there was not a foot upon earth that he could call his own. That whilst others had enriched themselves by speculation, speculation, violence and fraud, the poverty of Smothers was a vindication of the sterling integrity of the man.

In his charge to the jury, Judge Broadnax approved himself the able lawyer and the upright man. Forgetting the many annoyances of Smothers, he exhorted the jury to look in mercy upon the



prisoner, and to give him the full benefit of every reasonable doubt. The jury, after a retirement of ten minutes, brought in a verdict of "Not Guilty."

Smothers invited his counsel to go home with him, and Daveiss accepted the invitation. He was so well pleased with the country around Yellowbanks, that he settled the place known as Cornland, now owned by James Rudd, and planted the orchard which stands upon the slope of the hill. His brother, John Daveiss, not long afterwards commenced opening the farm upon which the Crutchers' long resided and lived there for many years. Smothers not long after emigrated to Texas, where he ended his life.

### **OTHER EARLY SETTLEMENTS,**

The following recollections of the early settlers of the County are from the pen of Judge George W. Triplett: All of the now County of Daviess once belonged to, and was a portion of Ohio County, except a small tract in the N. W. some four miles wide on the Ohio River, and extending South a few miles to Green River, which was taken off of Henderson and added to Daviess some twenty years ago. Also the greater portion of McLean lying on the north side of Green River and taken from Daviess to form McLean, was originally part of Ohio County. All of the earlier settlements of old Daviess were made whilst the Territory was part of Ohio, a large proportion of the first settlements being in the region around Vienna, now Calhoon. The first settlement of the present Daviess County was made by Bill Smothers, as already stated, not later than 1799, 1800 by Felty Husk and James Smothers; followed by Roger Potts in 1802; by John and David Leman, in 1804; Matthew Rogers, William Galloway and some others in 1805. Mrs. Ann Moreland, now residing in Owensboro, an excellent old lady, is a daughter of Roger Potts. Mrs. Moreland has resided in the present limits of Owensboro for upwards of seventy years. Wm. Galloway in a year or two settled about four miles west of Owensboro in what was then and is still called the Buzzard Roost Hills. He soon had neighbors, Bill Wornall, James Romine, the Asterberrys and a few others. They were all squatters, settling where they chose, on and among the rich hills.

The owners of the lands resided in Virginia. The whole country, Hills and River bottoms, was almost a dense cane brake, and filled with Bear, Deer, Walrus, and other wild animals, also Turkeys in great abundance. The hollow trees seemed to be infested with Raccoons and Honey Bees; but little labor was necessary.

To clear a patch of ground on which to raise bread and potatoes, kill Bear, Deer, &c., for meat, cut down coon and bee trees, dress deer skins for clothing and moccasins, constituted the general occupation of the earlier settlers.

This mode of life was continued by many up to 1833, when the writer was first through this neighborhood, when he was shown a poplar tree, full eight feet across the stump which had been cut down on 25th December, 1830, as a Christmas frolic by the neighbors.

The result was the catching of nineteen Raccoons and fourteen gallons of strained honey, after thirty persons had satisfied themselves by eating all the honey they desired. The weather being cold the honey had to be warmed in iron pots before straining. This tale looks big, but I was assured by men who were of the party that it was true and the parties were reliable, truthful men.

These old people are all gone, having left the country or died, and but four of their descendants remain. They were backwoods people and hunters. Yet most of them were men of noble traits of character. Brave and fearless, hospitable in the full sense of the word, they took no advantage of each other; or of strangers. They would go ten to twenty miles to help a new comer to raise his cabin. The rifle was always taken along, and they would kill and take in the game for

provisions at the raising and for a supply for the new comer until he could get about and help himself. They would stay until all was ready for the new comer to move in.

There were no locks to meat houses or corn cribs in those days. One end of a deer skin cord was fastened to a rude latch on the inside of their cabin doors, and the other end of the cord was always hanging outside. There was no pilfering, backbiting or slandering. If a difficulty took place, there was no shooting or cutting, and if the matter could not be settled without a fight, their rifles and butcher knives were laid aside and a fair fist and skull affair settled the fuss. No biting or gouging or foul holds were allowed.

What has been said of these people applies in a great measure to the earlier settlers generally. The early settlers, however, in other portions of the county were more thrifty, paying more attention to clearing farms, raising horses, cattle and hogs. The pioneers in the eastern portion of the County were Ben. Duncan, on Pup Creek in 1801, a prominent man in his day, father of Maj. Ben. Duncan, lately deceased, and father-in-law of Asa Smeathers and James Griffin, two of our oldest and best citizens.

Ben Duncan at an early day represented Ohio and other counties in the House of Representatives and Senate of Kentucky. C. Head in Pup Creek in 1803, was an early pioneer as was also the Bells, Adams and others on or near Pup Creek in 1803 or 1804.

Jim Gentry settled all along from Rough Creek, in Ohio County, to the mouth of Blackford on the Ohio River. Gentry was the great hog raiser of his day; he would examine the country in the spring time for long distances and climb the trees, ascertain where the best mast crop would be, and in due time take possession and move in his hogs. When Gentry's mast privileges began to be interfered with he crossed over the Ohio River into Indiana where few settlements had been made, and where he had ample range. Gentry settled and gave name to what is now the thrifty village of Gentryville, Indiana.

General John Daveiss, a brother of Jo. Daveiss, was an early settler and prominent man.

A few years later Thomas Clay, a Virginian by birth, and a Revolutionary soldier, settled seven miles above Owensboro on the present Hawesville Road. Thomas Clay, and his brother, Green Clay, first settled in Madison County, Kentucky, from which they were both members of the Convention which established the second Constitution of Kentucky, and finished their labors at Frankfort, Ky., on the 7th day of August, 1799. Thomas Clay and Green Clay were both men of wealth. Thomas purchased several thousand acres of land of the best quality, and settled in Ohio County, now Daviess, and was Grandfather of U. S. Senator T. C. McCreery. Green Clay was father of Hon. Cassin M. Clay.

Richard Hawes, Robert McCreery, Elijah McCreery, Enoch Kendall, Amos Riley, the Roberts and others were early settlers in what is called the Beech Woods, and in the neighborhood of the present village of Yelvington. They were all good citizens, and men of wealth, or by industry became wealthy. Robert McCreery was the father of Hon. T. C. McCreery, Richard Hawes raised eight sons to be grown, four of whom survive. Gov. Richard Hawes resides in Paris, Ky.; Walker Hawes, lives in Texas; Edwin Hawes is now a resident of Owensboro, and W. F. Hawes, of St. Louis, Mo. The Hawes family was a wealthy one, the sons all prominent men, and would have been prominent men in any part of Kentucky. Richard and Albert, were each some six years in the United States Congress. The "Beech Woods" was for many years known far and wide for its unpretending, yet magnificent, hospitality.

The early settlers in the present county of Daviess, South of Panther Creek, were Ben Field, Joshua Griffith, Reuben Field, and others. Col. Wm. Newton and Warner Crow, were early settlers, but at a later date than Field and Griffith. Ben Field was born in Culpepper County, Va., was a

captain in the Revolutionary Army, was with Gen. Geo. Rogers Clark, in the Expedition against the British, that captured Kaskaskia, Illinois, and Vincennes, Indiana, then an Indian country under the control of the British. From 1781 to 1790, Ben Field was a surveyor in the wild portions of Kentucky, making frequent trips to his home in Virginia, in the Winter. He finally settled about 1803 or 1804, in Ohio County, now Daviesss, on a tract of land lying ten miles south of Owensboro, and which he had surveyed about twenty-three years before.

Field was witty, genial and hospitable, and raised a large and respectable family. All of his children are dead except Capt. Wm. Field, and all are highly respected citizens of Ohio County.

Many of Ben Field's grand children and great-grand children reside in Daviess County. Joshua Griffith came from Maryland and first settled at Hartford, and afterwards about ten miles south of Owensboro, then Ohio County. Joshua Griffith was the father of Remus Griffith and William R. Griffith, both of whom were prominent men. His daughters married Wm. Hanford, Moses Cummins, Warner Crow and John H. McFarland. All of Joshua Griffith's children are dead, but many of his descendants still live in Daviess. Joshua Griffith was a peculiar man, very much like a Quaker in his dress and appearance. Remarkably fond of the company of those he liked, and full of fun. He was a great man for eggs, and always had plenty of them on hand. We could always, at meal time, tell who he liked or thought most of. He would put the question to each one. Do you like eggs? How do you want them cooked? Each guest's eggs would be cooked as ordered, and placed on the table, and each guest directed to his proper place. If he did not fancy the guest, only the number of eggs named by him or her was placed. If he thought well of the next, an additional egg or two was served, but if he fancied, or was specially fond of any particular one, then double the number was placed for that person. He was fond of children, and amused himself much at their pranks, and sometimes played pranks on the children and larger persons,

He had his coffin made twenty years before he died, and kept it in a room up stairs immediately above the room occupied by him, and generally under a bed immediately above. He always during fall, winter and spring kept good apples in the coffin for convenience, and also kept some of his egg gourds under the same bed, and whenever youngsters or children came he would ask if they wanted apples or eggs. Of course all said yes. He would say you are young, and must wait on yourselves; just go up stairs and look under the bed and push the lid off of that box, and get as many apples as you want and bring me some; and you who want eggs look in the big gourd behind the box and get some. The result may be well imagined, for as soon as the bed-clothes were raised, the light dimly revealed the coffin, and then there was "such a getting down stairs," without many apples or eggs, and after his laugh was over, he would then call in his faithful body servant Red," and have as many apples and eggs brought down as the youngsters and others could devour. In 1840, he exhibited to the writer a tea-kettle in good serviceable condition, which he had purchased in Baltimore the day before his marriage, more than sixty years previously, and had continuously used the kettle the whole time.

Col. Wm. Newton and Warner Crow settled in the same neighborhood, whilst yet Ohio County. Newton was from Culpepper Co., Va.. and married a daughter of Ben Field. Warner Crow was born in Maryland and raised at Hartford. They were both men of note, each was sheriff of Daviess, and each represented the county in the Legislature of Ky.

Three brothers McFarland settled in what is now McLean county, a short distance from Field and Griffith, and about 1805. The McFarlands were from North Carolina, near the Yadkin River, and from Daniel Boone's old country. They were of large stature, and men of great power, in good circumstances and made good citizens. Many of their descendants have filled prominent

positions in the County of Daviess, and their descendants are more numerous in Daviess than the descendants of any other half dozen men who ever settled in the county.

The early settlers of the South-west portion of the present Daviess Co., were David Glenn, with his boys, William, Duke, and David from North Carolina, all good and true men. Many of their descendants live in the section of country settled by David Sr. John Galloway or "Three Plait." as he was called, on account of wearing his hair long and hanging plaited down his back, also settled near Glenn. He was an upright, honorable man, and made little change, during his life, in his original primitive, or backwoods, habits.

George Calhoon, a little later settled about seven miles south-west of Owensboro on the same farm, owned and occupied by his son, Rev. Samuel Calhoon. He was at one time assistant Circuit Judge of the District. He raised a remarkable family of boys, all of whom became men of note, and with the most limited means for an education, only what the wilderness afforded. John Calhoon was the first Deputy in the Daviess County Clerk's Office. He studied law at odd times, commenced practice at Hartford, was a member of the Legislature and for six years was a member of Congress, again a member of the Legislature and then Circuit Judge. He afterwards settled at old Vienna, on Green River, and when McLean County was established, the writer had the honor of naming the County Seat, Calhoon, in honor of Judge Calhoon. Three of the other brothers, George, Henry and Mitchell, became lawyers, one of whom was a Judge in Mississippi: Samuel became a preacher of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and has continued to preach for more than fifty years. He is quite infirm in body but his mind is still strong. Ralph Calhoon was a man of fine mind, a fluent talker and of vast information. He died some twenty years ago at what is known as Calhoon's Ferry on Green River.

Of such names and men were the original settlers of Daviess County, and from such men are many of our people descended. In 1834, the voters of Daviess County, then including half of McLean, only numbered eight hundred. Now in 1875 with McLean voting separate, Daviess County has forty-eight hundred white voters and eight hundred colored voters.

There has been vast progress and improvement in population and wealth, social position, polish, and education. But with all our progress and improvement, increase in wealth and population, can we congratulate ourselves that our manhood and integrity is an improvement on the manhood and integrity of the old settlers?

### **EARLY PREACHERS.**

Thomas Downs and William Downs, brothers, were among the early Baptist preachers, both entirely self-made men and reared in the wilderness. Their father was killed by the Indians near the old stockade fort at Vienna, now Calhoon, on Green River. Thomas was a man of fair capacity, great piety, and indomitable energy in his holy mission. He devoted his life to his Master's cause, was always poor, and for many years traveled on foot from ten to forty miles to meet his appointments and attend the sessions of the Association. Every person loved and respected Thomas Downs. William Downs differed much from his brother. William was a man of splendid intellect, fond of religious controversy. Being what was known as a hard-shell Baptist, he warred with the United Baptists as energetically as with Methodists, Presbyterians, or Catholics. At one time John Calhoon and others secured a challenge from Downs to a Catholic priest, and its acceptance, for a religious debate. At the time and place named Downs was on hand, having traveled on foot about seventy miles. Great preparations had been made, and fully 2000 people were around the rude stand erected in the dense birch grove. At the hour, Downs mounted the stand, took a seat, and after waiting near an hour, raised himself up to his full height, and after minutely surveying the

immense crowd for some ten minutes, (and no priest being in sight), broke forth in tones which echoed far and wide through the forest.

"Where? oh, where is that uncircumcised Philistine who assumes the power of the living God?"

The excitement was intense. The air was rent by the shouts of the multitude. Downs quietly took a text, preached an able sermon, never alluding to Catholics. Downs did not walk home. He returned home superbly dressed, and for some time seemed to be flush with silver dollars, halves, and quarters. Uncle Billy, with all his ability, seems not to have been heavily burdened with piety, was bitterly opposed to total abstinence organizations.

Jasper Bristow was an old fashioned Baptist preacher, on the hard shell plan, \_\_\_ ever, good, and industrious citizen. Some of his children and many grand children reside in the County.

Reuben Cottrell, from near Richmond, Virginia, was of the United Baptists. He was a preacher of note, and was bitterly opposed to Free Masonry. He was opposed to members of the church belonging to any secret organization. Some of his children and many grand children reside in Daviess County.

Samuel Calhoon, a Cumberland preacher over eighty years of age, having been a minister in his denomination for over fifty years, still resides where his father settled near seventy years ago. He is and always has been highly esteemed.

General John Daveiss, John Pinkston, and Jo Miller were the early located Methodist preachers. Daveiss was a brother of Col. Jo Daveiss. John was a Lawyer, Farmer, Politician, and Preacher. The lawyer, politician and preacher parts did not seem to harmonize very well, so he quit the law, but being of a warm Irish temperament, he could not entirely ignore politics, so his political aspirations somewhat interfered with his usefulness as a minister of the gospel. He was a man of ability, with most wonderful conversational powers, witty, genial and sociable in a high degree.

John Pinkston was an old-fashioned pioneer Methodist preacher, earnest, zealous, and efficient, and the early builder up of the Methodist church in this County.

Jo Miller was of German origin. He had removed from Shelby County, Kentucky, and settled on North Panther Creek. Uncle Jo was a low, heavy, powerful man as to muscular strength. When he preached he put forth his whole physical and intellectual strength, and was more of an exhorter than preacher. He was fond of camp meetings, where he was always in his element. He could do more crying, and have more crying done, and more tears shed, than any man of his day. He was an industrious, hard-working man. Uncle Jo seemed to have a passion for saw-mills and improvements of that character. He spent almost a fortune on saw-mills and mill dams on both North and South Panther Creeks. Uncle Jo was frequently in the dilemma in which Ex-Governor an Ex-United States Senator Nye of Nevada was found by the agent who was sent out to Nevada to see how Nye was getting along building stump mills and dams. The agent is said to have found a dam by a mill site, but no mill by a dam site. So it was with Uncle Jo. His creeks were without rocky bottoms or banks, low, sluggish streams. He frequently had a mill by his dam site, but no dam by his mill site. Hence we must conclude that preaching and saw-mills are about as incompatible as politics and preaching. Jo Miller was a worthy and good man. Others, and more prominent ministers, have followed the old pioneer preachers, men of more learning, greater ability, and polished manners, but not more faithful, pious, or energetic, than the old preachers who lifted up their voices in the wilderness to proclaim the tidings of salvation.

### **PHYSICAL FEATURES.**

The extreme length of the County from east to west is about thirty-five miles, average length twenty-six miles, average width north to south sixteen miles, containing about 422 square miles, or 280,000 acres. The County-seat is on the northern border and on the Ohio River, equidistant between the upper and lower corners of the County, and although on the northern border, is within four or five miles of the Geographical centre of the County, owing to a great Southern bend in the Ohio River.

Almost every variety of soil is embraced in the County, from third to first rate, the greater portion being or approaching the first quality of farming land. One half the area is river bottom and level land. Many thousand acres of rich black land lie so level as to badly need ditching, much of the best lands in the County in various localities being of this character. The greater portion of the broken or hilly land lies along the eastern border of the County, Much of the broken land is rich, and but a small portion too steep for cultivation. The Buzzard Roost hills, west of Owensboro, covering some 7000 acres, is all farming land of the first order, a small portion only being too steep for the plow. Some of the best farms in the County are on and among these hills. A strata of coal over five feet thick underlies this portion of the County. The Timber consists of yellow poplar, black walnut, honey locust, black locust, mulberry, red and white oak, black ash, sugar tree, birch, &c., &c.

Another broken or hilly portion of the County is embraced in Vanover and Curdsville Precincts, some twelve to eighteen miles south-west of Owensboro, But a small portion of this land can be classed as poor, and all is covered with excellent timber, poplar, white, red and black oak, hickory, dogwood, &c., and some of the hills in this section with sugar tree and beech. The poorer the hills. the better the white oak. Coal of good quality and in workable veins, or strata, is found under all the hilly portions of the County. The class of soil denominated third rate is found along some of our creek bottoms, being too low, and frequently covered by the overflowing of the creeks and back water from Green River. Much of this low land, however, is covered with the forest oak, hickory, and gum timber.

### **RIVERS AND CREEKS.**

The Ohio River for thirty miles is our northern boundary. Green River touches the County for about twenty miles on the west, and Blackford Creek about twelve miles on the east. The other principal streams are North and South Panther Creeks. North Panther has its rise in Hancock County. South Panther, the larger of the two, in Breckenridge County. They unite about six miles south of Owensboro, making Main Panther Creek, which winds and crooks nearly through the middle of the western half of the County, and unites with Green River at the town of Curdsville, about fourteen miles southwest of Owensboro. The other creeks are Pup Creek, rising in the east end of the County, and flowing north west into the Ohio River. Yellow Creek is a stream of limited strength which flows north to the Ohio River, two miles below Pup Creek. South Rhodes Creek rises in McLean County, flows north into Panther Creek, entering it six miles due south of Owensboro, Knob Lick flows north into Panther Creek, two miles above the mouth of Panther. Delaware rises in McLean County, flows north west, and enters Green River half a mile below the village of Delaware. North Rhodes Creek has its head in the Roost hills, flows west into Green River, which it enters ten miles west of Owensboro.

### **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS.**

The great staples are corn and tobacco. About 1,500,000 bushels of corn would be considered a full crop for a good season. The largest crop of tobacco ever grown was raised in

1872, and marketed in 1873. It is known by tobacco men as the crop of 1873, and amounted to 12,087,000 pounds. The same year the corn crop was 1,300,000 bushels. In a fair average season the tobacco crop averages about ten pounds of tobacco to each bushel of corn.

The land is peculiarly adapted to Timothy, red clover, red top and orchard grass, and the rich hilly lands produce fine Blue grass. In fact, Blue grass seems to be spreading, or spontaneously growing, over nearly every part of the County. Wheat, Rye, Oats, and Barley generally do well; the wheat crop occasionally averaging twenty bushels per acres and not unfrequently an individual crop runs over thirty bushels per acre. Potatoes and all vegetables of the climate are cultivated with success. About 900 pounds of tobacco and forty bushels of corn are fair average crops per acre. W. S. Stone once raised 123 bushels of corn per acre, on a field of twelve acres, thirteen miles below Owensboro, on the Ohio River. The ground was accurately surveyed and the corn correctly measured by the writer.

### **OWENSBORO.**

Owensboro, the County site of Daviess County, is located on the south bank of the Ohio River, at what was known to the early keel and flat boat men as the Big Yellow Banks. The name was given because of the deep yellow color of the river bank, composed of yellow clay, extending about six miles along the river, and from ten to twenty feet above the highest floods in the Ohio. The site was selected as the County seat in 1815, by Commissioners appointed by the first County Court, held in April of that year. The survey of the first plat of the town extended from the Ohio River and a ravine on the north, to Fourth Street on the south, and from Lewis Street on the east to Walnut Street on the west. The survey and plat thereof was completed by Captain James W. Johnson, the first County Surveyor, on the 23d day of March, 1816, and approved by the Commissioners and Court with the name of Rossboro, and ratified by the agent and owners of the land, George Hanley being agent for Ross and other proprietors. Later the name was changed to Owensboro, in honor of Colonel Abram Owen, formerly of Shelby County, Kentucky. Colonel Jo. H. Daveiss and Colonel Owen were both officers serving under General W. H. Harrison at the bloody battle with the Indians under Tecumseh at Tippecanoe, now Indiana, but then Indiana Territory. Both fell in the thickest of the fight. The County had already received the name of Daveiss, and the old settlers, some of whom had been in the same battle in which Daveiss and Owen were killed, determined, as a mark of respect, to link the names of the two together for all time to come. They had been associates and friends in life, fell together in battle, and it was appropriate that their names be joined after death.

The old name of "Yellow Banks," however, still clung to the place, and the town was hardly known by any other name, even by the citizens, until about 1839 or 1840. The post-office bore the name of "Yellow Banks" up to the time of 1837 or 1838. In 1833 the population was scarcely 200 all told, and not a single church edifice or organization. The increase in population was small until 1850. A branch of the Southern Bank was located in Owensboro about that time. The power of the Trustees land been enlarged by Legislative action, and those officials began to drain and improve the streets. The action of the Trustees, and the fact that the Bank was one of the institutions of the place, gave assurance that there was some money in town, and seemed to infuse new life into the citizens, even the old foggy part of the population, which had been averse to enterprise. Improvements began to be made. Better houses were commenced, new-comers poured in and a steady growth was maintained until 1861, when the war put a stop to all enterprise and public improvement. The population decreased, and not until 1866 did improvements begin again or was

an increase of population noted. A moderate but perceptible degree of progress and growth has continued until now in 1875, when the population is estimated at about 8,000.

Owensboro contains churches of the following denominations: Baptist, Cumberland Presbyterian, Catholic, Methodist, Southern Presbyterian, Northern Presbyterian, Christian or Campbellite, Baptist, Episcopal, German Catholic, German Lutheran. The above have been named in the order of their establishment. There is also a colored Baptist, and a colored Methodist, church. All, except two, of the houses of worship, are substantial brick structures, with a capacity of seating over one half of the entire population.

There are three banks – the Deposit Bank, Planters' Bank, and Savings Bank. The public schools are two in number, each with a full roll of professors and teachers. The school buildings are large and commodious brick edifices, with a capacity for 900 to 1000 pupils. The Catholic Sisters have a female school with about 100 pupils, and the Vaughan Female Seminary, of which Mrs. E. S. Phillips is proprietress, is an institution richly meriting the patronage of the community. There are several other private schools in the city, altogether accommodating from 1000 to 1100 pupils. There are also one or two schools for colored children.

Prominent among the other institutions of the city are sixteen stemming and prizing tobacco establishments. The smallest has a capacity for handling 600,000 pounds, whilst several of the largest have each a capacity for handling 2,000,000 pounds of tobacco each season. All of them together have a capacity of about 20,000,000 pounds. There are also two planing-mills, one furniture factory, a wheel, hub, and handle factory, chair factory, stave and barrel factory, with quite a number of wagon and carriage factories, blacksmith shops, carpenter shops, cabinet shops, &c., &c.

In the "professional" class of the community is numbered twelve or thirteen physicians, some of them quite eminent in their professions. About thirty practicing lawyers constitute one of the strongest bars in the State. Merchants, grocers and all the trades are well represented.

### **COUNTY ORGANIZATION.**

Daviess County was formed in the year 1815. The County received its name from General Jo Daveiss, whose residence for some years was on the Ohio above Owensboro. The name should have been spelled "Daveiss," but through a mistake in enrolling the bill during its passage through the Legislature, the name was spelled "Daviess," and from that time down this way has been adopted of spelling the name of the County.

The following embraces the persons who have filled the various official positions in connection with the government and organization of the County:

### **JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT.**

Henry P. Brodnax, 1815-1822.	James Stuart, 1856-1867.
Alney McLean, 1822-1842.	James L. Johnson, 1867.
John Calhoon, 1842-1851.	George W. Williams, 1867-1870.
John P. Devereux, 1851.	Martin H. Cofer, 1870-1874.
Jesse W. Kincheloe, 1851-1856.	James Stuart, 1874.

Beside these, special Judges were appointed at various times, among whom were John H. McHenry and George H. Yeaman.

### **CLERKS OF THE CIRCUIT COURT.**



George Handley, 1815-1827.  
Horace Allen, 1827-1832.  
John S. McFarland, 1832-1845.  
William B. Wall, 1845-1856.  
John P. Thompson, 1856-1862.  
Ward Payne, 1862.

Joseph Thomas, 1862-1868.  
M. L. Ogden, 1868.  
John P. Thompson, 1868-1872.  
Jo. Thomas, 1872.  
John G. McFarland, 1872-1874.  
Frank F. Conway, 1874.

The first Clerk, George Handley, is still, or was recently, living at Hodginsville, Kentucky. He retained the position till April, 1827, when he resigned duties of the office. Horace Allen, who had previously acted as Deputy, became Clerk. Allen died while in office, and was succeeded by John S. McFarland, who resigned the position October, 1845. John P. Thompson died while serving as Clerk.

### **SHERIFFS OF DAVIESS COUNTY.**

Charles Y. Duncan, 1815-1821.  
William Glenn, 1821-1823.  
John Piles, 1823-1825.  
Remus Griffith, 1825-1827.  
J. Leman, 1827-1829.  
Warner Crow, 1829-1831.  
John Daveiss, 1831-1833.  
R. C. Jett, 1833-1835.  
S. Hawes, 1835-1837.  
E. McCreery-1837-1839.  
William Newton, 1839-1841.  
William B. Baird, 1841.  
Joseph M. Potts, 1841-1843

John G. Howard, 1843-1845.  
H. Dugan, 1845-1847.  
Abner Lea, 1847-1849.  
C. D. Jackson, 1849-1851.  
Thomas Landrum, 1851-1855.  
Joseph G. Harrison, 1855-1859.  
John Locke, 1859-1863.  
Joseph G. Harrison, 1863-1866.  
W. H. Perkins, 1866-1868.  
H. W. Scott, 1868-1872.  
W. H. Perkins, 1872-1874.  
H. W. Scott, 1874.

### **COUNTY SURVEYORS.**

James W. Johnson, 1815-1833.  
Rich. F. Bilt, 1833-1834  
Geo. W. Triplett, 1834-1850.  
S. D. Shepherd, 1850-1854.  
R. R. Coomes, 1854-1858.

H. W. Scott, 1858-1868.  
M. Sutherland, 1868-1874.  
Robert Frey, 1874.  
E. Turner, 1874-1875.  
C. W. Gordon, 1875.

### **COUNTY JUDGES.**

Thos. W. Watkins, 1850-1854.  
Geo. H. Yeaman, 1854-1858  
A. G. Botts, 1858-1866.

Geo. W. Triplett, elected  
1866, 1870

### **JO. DAVEISS.**

Colonel Joseph Hamilton Daveiss, or Jo. Daveiss, as he was popularly known, who gave his name to Daviess County, was one of the most remarkable men of his day. He was born in Bedford County, Virginia, March the fourth, 1774. His parents were natives, of Virginia; his father of Irish, and his mother of Scotch, descent. When young Daveiss was five years old, the family

removed to Kentucky, then an almost unbroken wilderness, and settled in the immediate vicinity of the town of Danville, then in Lincoln County. An incident, which occurred in the journey to Kentucky, illustrates the character of his mother. In crossing the Cumberland river, Mrs. Daveiss was thrown from her horse, and had her arm broken. The party only halted long enough to have the limb bound up, with what rude skill the men possessed; and pursued their route, she riding a spirited horse and carrying her child. and never ceasing her exertions to promote the comfort of her companions when they stopped for rest and refreshment. Daveiss was sent to school as occasion allowed. He attended grammar schools taught by a Mr. Morley, and a Dr. Brooks, and made considerable advances in a knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages. At school he evinced unusual capacity, always being at the head of his class. He was particularly remarkable for his talent for declamation and public speaking. The sudden death of a brother and sister recalled him from school, and he returned home to assist his father in the labors of the farm. There is a tradition that young Daveiss was not particularly distinguished by his devotion to agricultural pursuits, frequently permitting the horses of his plow to graze at leisure, in a most unfarmer-like way, while he. stretched supinely on his back on some luxurious log, indulged in those delicious dreams and reveries so sweet to young and aspiring ambition.

In the autumn of 1792, Major Adair, under government orders, raised some companies of mounted men, to guard the transportation of provisions to the forts north of the Ohio river. Daveiss, then in his eighteenth year, volunteered in the service. On one occasion, when Major Adair was encamped near Fort St. Clair, he was surprised early in the morning by a large body of Indians, who, rushing into the camp just after the sentinels had been withdrawn from their posts, killed and wounded fourteen or fifteen of the men, and captured and carried away about two hundred head of horses. These were taken within the Indian lines and tied. After the whites had sought shelter in the neighborhood of the fort, young Daveiss, discovering his own horse at some distance hitched to a tree, resolved to have him at all hazards. He accordingly ran and cut him loose, and led him back to his companions amid a shower of balls. This exploit nearly cost him his life. A ball passed through his coat, waistcoat, and cut off a small piece of his shirt. His horse was the only one retaken out of the two hundred. When his time of service expired, he returned home, and spent some time reviewing his classical studies. He ultimately concluded to study law, and entered the office of the celebrated George Nicholas, then the first lawyer in Kentucky. Daveiss entered a class of students consisting of Isham Talbott, Jesse Bledsoe, William Garrard, Felix Grundy, William Blackbourne, John Pope, William Stuart, and Thomas Dye Owings, all of whom became distinguished at the bar, and noted in the public history of the country. Nicholas was profoundly impressed with the striking indications of genius of a high order, manifested by Daveiss while under his roof. His opinion of the strength of his character and the firmness of his principles was equally as exalted, and at his death, which occurred a few years after, he appointed him one of his executors. As a student he was laborious and indefatigable. He accustomed himself to take repose on a hard bed; was fond of exercise in the open air, and was accustomed to retire to the woods with his books, and pursue his studies in some remote secluded spot, secure from the annoyance and interruption of society. In connection with his legal studies, he read history and miscellaneous literature. His mind, therefore, when he came to the bar, was richly stored with various and profound knowledge, imparting a fertility and affluence to his resources, from which his powerful and well-trained intellect drew inexhaustible supplies. He began the practice of the law in June, of the year 1795. The following August he was qualified as an attorney in the Court of Appeals. In his first case he had for an antagonist his old preceptor, over whom he enjoyed the singular gratification of obtaining a signal triumph. Daveiss settled at Danville, and soon commanded a splendid business

in all the courts in which he practiced. On the abolition of the District Courts and the substitution in their place of the Circuit Court, he removed to Frankfort. He had been appointed United States Attorney for the State of Kentucky. In the year 1801 or 1802, he visited Washington City, being the first western lawyer who ever appeared in the Supreme Court of the United States. He here argued the celebrated case of Wilson versus Mason. His speech is said to have excited the highest admiration of the bench and bar, and placed him at once in the foremost rank of his profession.

During this trip he visited the principal cities of the North and East, and formed an acquaintance with many of the most distinguished men of America. In 1803, he was united in marriage to Anne Marshall, the sister of John Marshall, the Chief Justice of the United States. Miss Marshall seems to have shared none of the qualities of her celebrated brother. After residing at Frankfort a few years, he removed to Cornland, the farm on the Ohio a mile and a half above Owensboro. He lived here till 1809, and then removed to Lexington, where he resumed the practice of law. While acting as attorney for the United States, he acted as prosecutor against Aaron Burr in his famous trial for treason. He had noticed the movements of this person for some time before the prosecution was begun. Satisfied from his observations that he had some unlawful design in view, he caused him to be apprehended and brought before the court. From a failure of evidence, as is well known, the prosecution was ultimately abandoned. In the fall of 1811, Colonel Daveiss joined the army of General Harrison in the campaign against the Indians on the Wabash. He received the command of major. On the seventh of November, 1811, in the celebrated battle of Tippecanoe. he fell in a charge against the Indians, made at his own solicitation. He survived from five o'clock in the morning till midnight, retaining to the last the full command of his faculties. The personal appearance of Jo. Daveiss was commanding and impressive. His bearing was grave and dignified. His manner was bland and courteous to those he loved, but haughty and repulsive in the extreme to those he disliked. He was nearly six feet high, with a form athletic and vigorous. He was eccentric in his habits, allusion to which may be found elsewhere. At the great trial of Aaron Burr, at Richmond, it is said he made his appearance in a suit of buckskin. As an orator he had few equals and no superiors. Competent judges unite in declaring that he was the most impressive speaker they ever heard. In conversation he was unequalled, and the life of every circle in which he was thrown.

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## PRECINCT HISTORIES.

### **LOWER TOWN PRECINCT – No. 1.**

Lower Town Precinct, lies to the west of Owensboro, between the Ohio River and Panther Creek. It contains some of the best soil and finest improvements in the County. The section of the county known as the Buzzard Roost neighborhood is included within its limits. The term Buzzard Roost was first applied to a limited district of country adjoining the farms of the Berrys and Mattingly. The name is now given to all that part of the County north of the Henderson road, and extending west from Owensboro about twelve miles to the Green River. It contains some of the finest farming land to be found in the County, and is now thickly settled. The hills are underlaid with coal which has been mined to a considerable extent. A number of squatters settled early in this neighborhood, but never acquired actual possession of the land, and made but scanty improvements. As late as 1850 the whole region was undeveloped. A man named Galloway settled

on the farm now owned by Mr. J. I. Berry, a man named Oldham where Miles Mattingly now lives. Among the first permanent settlers who bought land and made improvements were Henry Reed, who owned the farm now occupied by Cole Fuqua; Miles and John Lancaster, John Bristow and Thomas I. Carico. John B. Berry bought land some years before the Mexican war, and his sons Edward C. Berry, J. I. Berry, and William L. Berry settled here and became permanent citizens. George Mattingly settled in the Buzzard Roost neighborhood in 1851. The Crabtree family were early settlers of this precinct, as also were the Calhoons, and others.

Bon Harbor, a small settlement, formerly of more importance than at present, is situated two miles below Owensboro. Thirty years ago the place was thought to bid fair to become a manufacturing town of some importance. The Bon Harbor coal mines were the first to be put in successful operation in the County. An old man named Bassett opened the first mine, and the Bon Harbor mine proper, three-fourths of a mile from the river, was next commenced to be worked. About 1830 a considerable quantity of coal was shipped to New Orleans from this point. A railroad ran from the mine to the river at the terminus of which the owners erected one of the largest cotton and woolen manufactories at that time in the West. Robert Triplett was the principal proprietor. At this point a town was laid off and several houses built, the population being principally composed of operatives and numbering two or three hundred.

### **UPPER TOWN PRECINCT – No. 2.**

Upper Town precinct adjoins the city of Owensboro, and some of the earliest settlements in the County were made within its limits. One of the first settlements was made by Valentine Husk, who after living two, or three years at Yellowbanks (according to his son George Husk now living north of Knottsville) moved to a point on the Ohio River, at the mouth of Pup Creek. There were then no settlements nearer than Yellowbanks. Valentine Husk had a family of seven children of whom the third was George Husk, born in October, 1800, on the Ohio River at the mouth of Pup Creek, seven miles above Owensboro. In 1809 Valentine Husk moved with his family to a point now included in Knottsville precinct. Robert Duncan, the father of Robert G. Duncan, was one of the early settlers of Upper Town precinct. He came from Nelson to Daviess County in 1816, and first settled on the banks of Yellow Creek, and lived there for some time, but finding the title to the lands not good, moved to the vicinity of Yelvington. Upper Town precinct embraces the farms of Jo. Daveiss, from whom the County received its name, and his brother General John Daveiss. Daveiss' farm was long known as Cornland, and was settled about 1806, or 1807. About 1807, or 1808, Thomas Clay, the grandfather of Senator T. C. McCreary and the brother of General Green Clay, who was the father of Cassius M. Clay, settled seven miles above Owensboro on the farm on the Yelvington road now owned by Senator McCreary.

### **YELVINGTON PRECINCT – No. 3.**

The village and precinct of Yelvington have their names from one Yelvington Overly, one of the earliest settlers of the town, who put up a shop and established himself as a blacksmith where now stands the village of Yelvington. The village is situated at the crossing of the old state road leading from Elizabethtown to Shawneetown. and an old road from Hartford, striking the Ohio River at the mouth of Blackford Creek. These were both originally old Indian trails, and the roads when laid out were among the first in the County. The first merchant to do business in Yelvington was Samuel Hawes, who put up a store there some time before 1830. The Roberts family were among the first settlers of Yelvington village. Willis Roberts occupied west of the village at an early date. Richard Hawes became a resident of the vicinity in 1819, and Enoch Kendall followed

shortly afterward. A post office was established at an early date. It contains two churches, Methodist and Baptist, the former the oldest, and one dry goods store, two groceries, one drug store, and two blacksmith and wagon shops. The population of the town is between two and three hundred.

Iceland is a steamboat landing on the Ohio River in Yelvington precinct. It is the only steamboat landing capable of being used in all stages of water for twenty miles above Owensboro, on the Kentucky side of the river. A considerable proportion of the soil included in Yelvington precinct is bottom land, bordering on the Ohio River and Blackford Creek, and is among the richest in the County and produces large crops of corn and tobacco. Away from the river and creek the land is more hilly and broken. This precinct formerly contained a large number of old families, most of whom have now removed. The Edwards family were early settlers and lived on the Ohio at the mouth of the Blackford. Richard C. Jett, who was born in Virginia, settled on Blackford creek in Yelvington precinct in 1809.

#### **KNOTTSVILLE PRECINCT – No 4.**

The first settlers in Knottsville precinct were families by the name of Smeathers, Duncan, Bell, and Adams. The Metcalfs and Winklers came afterwards. Valentine Husk, having first settled at Yellowbanks, and then living on the Ohio at the mouth of Pup Creek, in 1804 moved with his family to a point on the Knottsville and Yelvington road, three miles and a half north of the former place where he began improving the farm now owned and occupied by Henry Johnson. He was the first settler in this part of the country. Soon afterward Ben, Charles, George and Raleigh Duncan, came from Nelson County, and settled in what is now Knottsville Precinct. James Adams came about the same time and settled at a point four miles North-west of Knottsville. Eli and Nathaniel Bell, came from Maryland about the time of the Duncans. Eli settled on the farm now owned by W. B. Head, Esq., and the farm settled by Nathaniel Bell is owned by his grandson, John Bell.

The first school kept in this part of the County, was by a man named Walker, who happened to come through the country. It was found that he had some education, and was straightway employed to teach a three months' school. The school was taught along Pup Creek, on land now owned by John Bell, and the old log building in which it was held rotted to the ground some fifty years ago. George Husk, was one of the boys who attended Walker's school. One of the first preachers to visit this part of the County, was a Methodist minister by the name of Craig, who began preaching here about 1810. He held meetings in the school-houses, and a Methodist Church organized at the house of Esquire Ben. Duncan, was the first church established in this part of the County. George Husk, the son of Valentine Husk, is still living in the Precinct, and is now perhaps the oldest man living in the County who was born in its limits. He was born on the Ohio, at the mouth of Pup Creek, October 31st, 1800, and came to the vicinity of where he now lives four years later. He was married to Charlotte G. Kelly in 1828, and in 1835, moved on the farm where he now resides. Mr. Husk was a strong, active man in his youth, and there were few men of his time who could jump thirty-six feet as did George Husk on one occasion when a young man. He has lived a peaceable and quiet life, and has enjoyed the self respect of his fellow-citizens. Knottsville Precinct contains another old settler in the person of Asa Smeathers. The Bells are also still living in the Precinct Ben. Purcel came to the county in 1824. R. N. Wilson, the father of Robert T. Wilson, came to Daviess County in 1820 from Nelson County, Kentucky, and settled on the farm now occupied by his son four miles west of Knottsville. The Mays came also from Nelson County about 1820, and settled on the Hardinsburg road west of Knottsville.

The first settlement in the town of Knottsville, was made by Leonard Knott, from whom the village received its name. James Millay opened the first store. The first buildings were the house and blacksmith shop put up by Knott.

B. J. McDaniel, William Higdon, Mrs. Mary Drury, and L. T. Brown, were other early settlers. Knottsville is situated thirteen miles east from Owensboro on the Hardinsburg road. It contains at present three stores, one blacksmith shop, a cabinet-making shop, wagon shop, hotel, &c. A post-office was first established on the Hardinsburg road, above the town at the house of Thomas Gore, and on Knottsville growing up was moved to the town about, 1830. St. Lawrence Catholic Church is two miles east of the town. The surface in Knottsville Precinct is hilly except in the creek bottoms.

### **BOSTON PRECINCT – No. 5.**

The South western corner of Daviess County is embraced in Boston Precinct. The town of Boston is a village of a very few houses thirteen miles and a half from Owensboro on the Litchfield Road. It was formerly a point of some importance before the neighboring town of Whitesville sprang into existence. Creed Burton, now a resident of Kansas, was one of the first settlers. Dr. Lockhart, the father of Dr. William Lockhart, now of Upper Town Precinct, came there and established himself as the first physician. Cornelius Westerfield, a farmer, was an early resident of the neighborhood, as also were Elisha Burton and William Haynes. Basset Burton, the father of Horace Burton, came from about Harrodsburg in 1810, and settled in Boston Precinct. He was one of the pioneers of this region. A post-office was kept at Boston till about 1859, or 1860, and was then moved to Whitesville. During the war, on account of the supposed disloyalty of the Whitesville post master it was again established at Boston. but remained there for only a short time when it was again taken to Whitesville.

Whitesville is a thriving business place on the Litchfield Road sixteen miles South-east from Owensboro. The population is three hundred and twenty. There are five dry goods stores, a drug store, two saddling shops, two blacksmith and wagon shops, and two Churches – Baptist and Christian. The Baptist church was built about 1854, and the Christian Church 1858. The new Christian Church was built in 1873. Hodge's lodge of Masons, No. 297, was instituted about 1854. A flouring mill was established in 1868. The town received its name from William Lee White, who settled here in 1844. He was a cousin to B. F. Ramsey, Esq., and the two entered into partnership and carried on the dry goods business for some time together. Wm. S. McMahan, another old merchant of the place, came to the Town in 1854. and describes the Town even at that date as being composed of two or three old houses, and surrounded on all sides by a perfect thicket. George Mattingly is one of the old residents of Boston Precinct. He settled here in 1832. In 1854, Frank W. Haynes, an old and highly respected citizen of the Precinct, moved to the farm he now occupies.

### **MURRAY'S PRECINCT – No. 6.**

The settlements made in Murray's Precinct were among the earliest in the county. Among the early pioneers reference has already been made to Captain Ben. Field, Joshua Griffith and John H. McFarland, all of whom were old and prominent citizens of this part of the County. The neighborhood of the Greenbriar Baptist Church was also the scene of a number of early settlements. The Howard family located here. Mark Howard came from North Carolina and settled here about 1803. He had fourteen children, and his descendants are still numerous in this part of the County. His land was purchased in 1800 of Harry Ennis, and was surveyed by Captain Ben.

Field. Eleven hundred acres were originally bought, but only four hundred could be obtained. In the vicinity of Greenbriar Church, the other early settlers were Samuel and James Johnson, Baxter Davis, Robert Talton, a man named Clifford, Adam Shoemaker, Andrew Barnet, Warner Ashley and others. The oldest church in the Precinct is the Greenbriar Baptist Church constituted in 1820. The first pastor was Thomas Downs, who had charge of the congregation till his death, which occurred after a pastorate of twenty-eight years. The church now has a membership of nearly three hundred, and in size is the second largest Baptist in the Green River country. A considerable part of the early settlers of this part of the County came from North Carolina, others from Virginia. The several families of the name of Johnson which early settled in the Precinct, were from North Carolina. William May came to the Precinct in 1830, and settled on his precinct farm a mile South of Panther Creek.

At the spot where come together the three Counties of Ohio, McLean, and Daviess, a little town has been opened by the name of Kigel's store, or Newville. The Evansville, Owensboro and Nashville railroad traverses the precinct, and several stations are found along the line of the road. The principal is Lewis station. This is located on the farm originally settled by Joshua Griffith on coming to the County in 1806. Pleasant Ridge is a town fourteen miles south-east of Owensboro, on the Hartford road, and partly in Ohio County, with a population of about fifty.

### **CURDSVILLE PRECINCT – No. 7.**

Captain Curd, a popular steamboatman on the Green river, gave his name to Curdsville. He was one of the earliest traders in this part of the County, and was accustomed to bring a boat up Green River to the mouth of Panther Creek, and to trade salt and whiskey to the inhabitants of the surrounding country. The farm on which the town of Curdsville is located was settled near fifty years ago by a man named Travis, but no town was laid out till about 1848. Aquilla Spray was one of the early merchants of the place. The town has grown to be a business point of some importance. It is situated on Green River, immediately above the mouth of Panther Creek, and about fourteen miles west south-west of Owensboro. The town contains three large tobacco houses, two taverns, several stores, church, blacksmith shop, and other establishments usually found in a town of its size. Population now in the neighborhood of three hundred. Joseph Welden and George M. Priest established a steam-mill.

Curdsville Precinct lies mostly south of Panther Creek, but a portion extends north of that stream. One of the earliest settlements in the precinct was made by David Glenn, the grandfather of John Glenn, who settled on the north side of Panther Creek three miles above its mouth before the opening of the century. The Glenn family have been prominent residents of the precinct. William Glenn, the father of John Glenn, was colonel of militia, representative in the legislature and sheriff of the County. The first man who lived in the vicinity of St. Alphonsus' Catholic church was Thomas Downs, who built a house on the hill half a mile south of the church and directly opposite the present residence of Dr. Blincoe. Adam Jordan came to this part of the County at an early date, and the first fall after his coming killed fifty-two buffalo. The last bear he killed was on a black oak tree then standing along the edge of the Calhoon road. John Wright is an old settler of Curdsville precinct. He settled on the Calhoon road in 1840, having previously lived at Beech Grove in McLean County where his father had located in the year 1807. A Catholic church was built on the site of the present St. Alphonsus' church in 1854. St. Joseph's Female Academy was founded in 1861. The present building was begun to be erected in 1873, and has since been completed at a cost of ten thousand dollars. The first practising physician in the vicinity of this

church was Dr. Blincoe, who came to the County in 1853, and practiced medicine over a territory now occupied by twenty-seven or twenty-eight physicians.

Delaware is a town which has sprung up since 1860, situated in the extreme south-west part of the County near the corner of Daviess and McLean Counties. It stands on the bank of Green River, and is about twenty-one miles from Owensboro. It takes its name from Delaware Creek which flows into Green River, a short distance above the town. A. M. Allen, a prominent merchant and business man of the place, was one of the founders of the town. West Louisville in the northern part of the precinct, and a short distance south of Panther Creek, fourteen miles from Owensboro, is another of the post offices included in the limits of the precinct. Curdsville and West Louisville are the voting places.

### **VANOVER PRECINCT – No. 8.**

Among the early settlers of Vanover Precinct were Abner Lea, Thomas Minton, Moses Crabtree, Daniel Humphrey, and James Beard. This part of the County was for a long while thinly settled, and it is only within the last twenty years that it has begun to be improved to any great extent. Part of the precinct is hilly and broken, but the hills are covered with good soil, and well adapted to farming. Narrows Bridge on Panther Creek, twelve miles from Owensboro, is the only post-office. The precinct was named after the numerous families of Vanovers who settled there about twenty years ago, coming to the County from East Tennessee.

### **OAKFORD PRECINCT – No. 9.**

The north-western part of Daviess County lying between Green River and the Ohio, and adjoining Henderson County, is embraced in Oakford Precinct. The Henderson County line formerly ran about four miles east of where it now does, but on account of the greater convenience of reaching Owensboro as a County seat, a part was taken from Henderson and added to Daviess County. Several fine farms lie along the Green River, and also the Ohio. Birk City, on Green River, twenty two miles above its mouth, and ten miles west of Owensboro, was founded by Jonas A. Birk, who came to this place in 1857. Amid many discouragements Mr. Birk succeeded in laying the foundation for the town, and is still living to see the fruits of his labors. The place is prosperous and growing, and Mr. Birk's sons are the prominent business men of the town. Grissom's Landing is on the Ohio River, nine miles below Owensboro. The Grissom family gave rise to the name. Esquire Alfred Grissom is still an old resident of the place. The distillery of Thomas J. Monarch is located here.

### **MASONVILLE PRECINCT – No. 10.**

Masonville Precinct lies between the forks of Panther Creek. Among the early settlers was Christopher D. Jackson who settled there in 1827. Mr. Jackson has since been one of the prominent citizens of this part of the County, and has assisted materially in its development. Among other early settlers were Thomas Taylor, who came from Shelby County in 1828; Joseph Martin, Simpson Stout, Price Shoemaker, John Lashbrook, Norris Lashbrook, Fleming Miller, Jasper Bristow, Francis Blansford, John May, William Gordon, Henry Johnson, Francis McCormack, the Widow McGee, and Joseph Miller. These were all residents of the precinct previous to 1828, some having made settlements several years before. Thomas M. Shoemaker, the father of W. W. Shoemaker, came from Shelby County, Kentucky, and settled on the forks of Panther Creek in 1832. Fleming Miller was the father of P. J. Miller, now of Owensboro, and was born in Virginia,

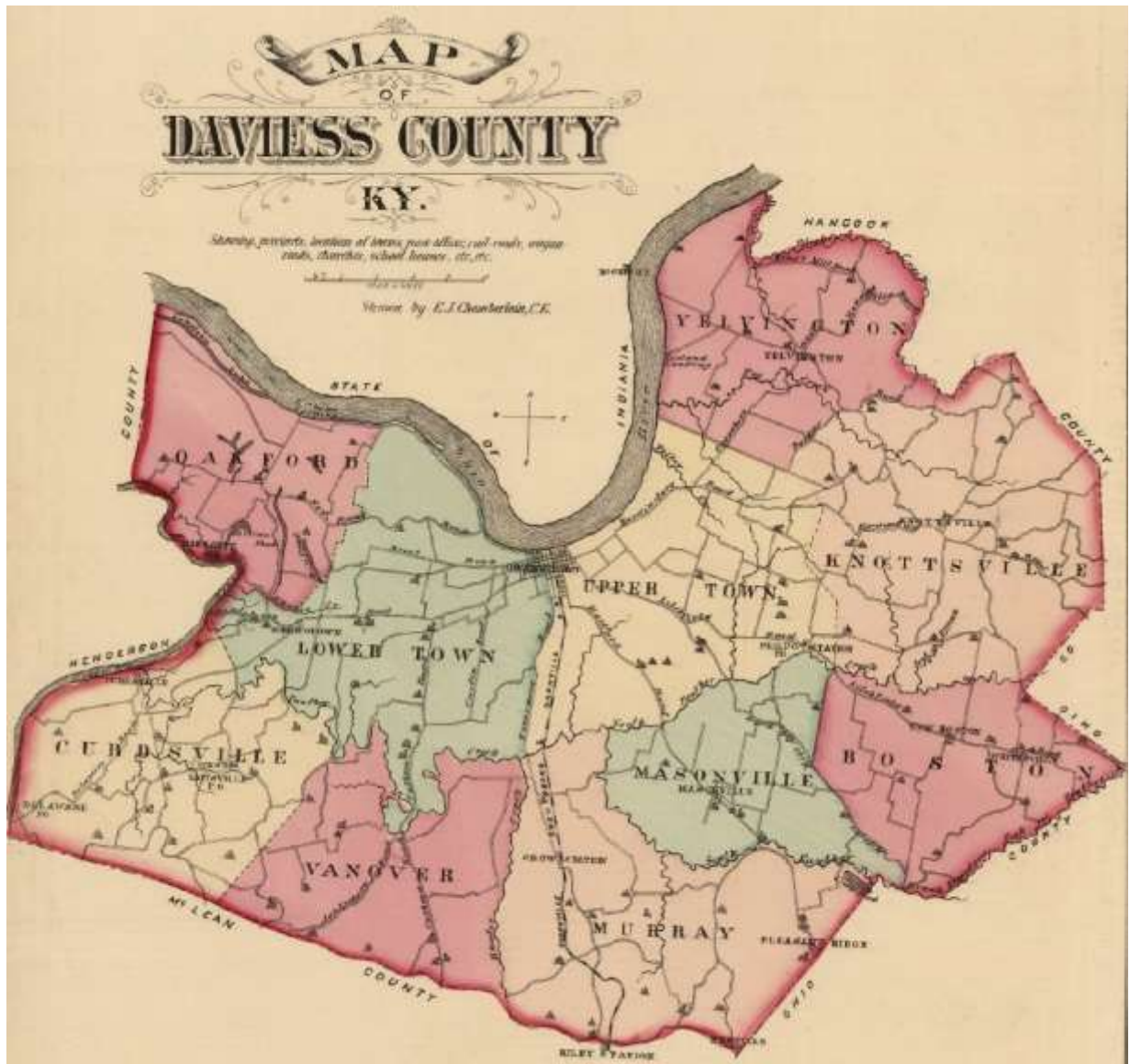


and came to Daviess from Spencer County, Kentucky. He settled in this precinct in 1825, on the farm now occupied by Absalom Miller.

The soil of the part of the precinct endorsed in the North and South Panther Creeks is among the richest in the County, and is well adapted to the growth of tobacco. A number of the farms are well improved, with residents of a better class than ordinary. The town of Masonville has about one hundred population, and contains a Methodist church, &c. Bethabara Baptist church, three miles north-east of Masonville, is the centre of a small settlement.



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On the internet site – “West-Central Kentucky History & Genealogy”, by Jerry Long, on the Daviess County page under Records see also these files:

- Daviess County 1876 Atlas – Biographies
- Daviess County 1876 Atlas – Patrons

