

# Daviess County Poor Farm

By Jerry Long  
c.2023



**History of Daviess County, Kentucky,**  
**Inter-State Publishing, Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, p.296:**

## POOR-HOUSE.

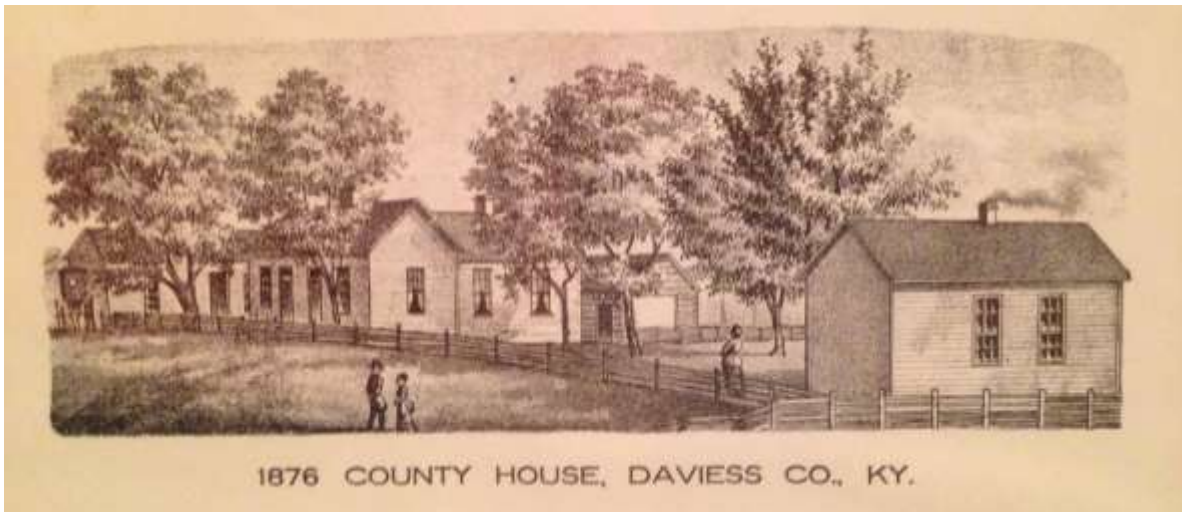
About 1845 Geo. W. Triplett was appointed by the County Court to purchase a piece of land for a poor farm. Accordingly he bought 170 acres about five miles southeast of Owensboro, on the Miller's Mill Road. He employed John Locke as the first man to take charge of the place. There was a two-story hewed-log house and a cabin or two on the premises. All went down during the war.

In 1868 a frame house, with four rooms and a kitchen, for the family, and two other frame houses, with two rooms each, were built for paupers. One of these is situate on the southwest, and one on the southeast, of the main building, Stables, barns and other improvements were also made. This is about the extent of the improvements there at present.

The annual average of paupers is about eight to ten. Colored paupers are kept by private individuals. All paupers are let on special contracts, rates being fixed for each individual case.



**An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY.**  
**Leo McDonough & Co., 1876, p.19 (picture of Daviess County**  
**House) and p.39 (map of Upper Town Precinct):**





Map of part of Upper Town Precinct – County Poor Farm is on left; double line that bisects the farm is Millers Mill Road; Philpot on the Leitchfield Road is on the right.



**A History of the Daviess County Poor Farm,**  
Daniel Smith Fulkerson (1917-1992), Owensboro, KY, 1991, pp. 1-2, 7-14, 56-60:



## INRODUCTION

This is essentially a history of the Daviess County poor farm, but as research continued and as stories unfolded it was obvious that the research itself was taking over and the story of a pioneer people and their tribulations was emerging.

The purpose of this book is to determine who these people were, what causes contributed to their being in the poorhouse and what life was like as compared to other poor people who lived in Daviess County. Some events are of minor importance, but add to the feeling for the people and the times in which they lived.

All the inmates who died at the poor farm and who were buried there lie in unmarked graves. However the graves of many poor people who were buried in church cemeteries were marked only with mounds decorated with bits of colored glassy pieces of milk glass and sometimes with mussel shells. A sign of people who cared and revered their dead was made evident by the well rounded graves and the distinctive decorations.

Stories and verification of records were obtained from the microfilm records of newspapers, cemetery lists, and directories in the Kentucky Room of the Daviess County, Public Library.

Bits and pieces of stories and information were garnered from many sources. Most of the credit for these must go to the descendents of families who once lived at the poor farm and were its caretakers. Their's was most certainly not an easy life, but most remember it as a happy time. None seem to have bad memories of the place.

Special credit is due Mr. Don Horn - Mr. Rollie Norris Jr. - Mrs. Amy Norris - Mr. Arthur Hale - and Mrs. Charlotte Norris Jones.

No doubt there will be some who are interested in history who will read this account, and will find nothing herein which they could not have done and surely done better. My reply is simply that no one has done it before.

### Chapter - 2 THE POOR FARM PURCHASE

About 1845 Mr. George W. Triplett was appointed by the fiscal court to purchase a piece of land for a poor farm. Accordingly he bought one hundred seventy acres about five miles southeast of Owensboro, on Millers Mill road, from Mr. Simpson Stout (by deed dated December 10, 1848 in deed book "I" page 239 in Daviess County Court house.) He employed John Locke as the first man to take charge of the place. There was a two story hewed log house and a cabin or two on the farm. All of these went down during the Civil War. While the war was going on Elijah Griffin and Robert Sharp were the poorhouse commissioners. Benjamin S. Whalen was the keeper of the poorhouse farm. He was succeeded by George Jones and then by Thomas Johnston.

There is a record of \$30.00 having been paid for hauling logs from the farm to a sawmill and hauling planks to the farm. These were evidently used to repair the log structures. After a short time the repair program was abandoned.

A frame house with four rooms and a kitchen was built for the family of the keeper and two other frame houses, with two rooms each, were built for the inmates. One of these was situated southeast of the main building and the other was southwest. Stables, barns, and other improvements were made.

The entire farm was, for the most part, timberland with stocks of oak, gum, poplar and all the usual varieties indigenous to the area. Logs were hauled from the farm to a sawmill to be made

into lumber suitable for buildings that were needed to replace the log structures. Usually, the lumber was used immediately with no time for seasoning. This would later result in a building with large cracks between the planks. The boards on the outside were installed in a vertical fashion and were called "boxing". The cracks were covered with a narrow plank, usually four inches wide, called "stripping." A well constructed log house was much warmer in the winter since the dead cells in the log were an excellent insulator, and the walls were about six inches thick. The frame house also had the disadvantage of having knot holes which had to be patched.

Boxing was one inch thick and nailed to headers placed between the studding. The inside was sometimes left as it was, but in a better house the same kind of planks were used for the inside walls. These planks would not be stripped but would be covered with a felt like paper. A rosin impregnated paper was sometimes used, secured with nails and metal washers. Since the insulating properties of the frame house were so poor, these houses were extremely hard to heat in the winter. A wood or coal burning stove was usually used in the frame house.

The number of paupers, kept at the poorhouse, at any given time was about eight or ten although as many as forty were living there during some of the depression periods. Colored paupers were kept in the homes of individuals. All paupers were let on contract. Rates were fixed for each specific case.

Mr. Peter Tichenor was the caretaker for the poor farm in 1874. He served until October 1875. He did not receive a salary. He was permitted to farm the land and keep the profit.

The first fiscal court records show that Mr. Tichenor had a thousand split rails made and put up. He also had logs from the farm hauled to a mill and planks taken to the farm for building. At this time Mr. George Triplett was still judge.

In 1879 W. H. Scott was county judge and T. R. Gore was caretaker of the poor farm. Two to four dollars was being paid for coffins. They were bought from Miller and Milne Burial robes (shrouds) were purchased for \$5.00. Dr. J. W. Mcarty is listed as one of the doctors for paupers. Dr. C. Hale treated one pauper for dropsy. Dr. I. G. Drury was paid \$50.00 for medical attention for two paupers.

1879 was the year of the great whiskey boom in Daviess County. When the spurt was over there were over nineteen distilleries in and around Owensboro. There were twenty-three tobacco factories. A gallon of whiskey sold for forty cents and probably helped increase the number of paupers.

In 1887 a total of \$1900.00 was disbursed for the care of the paupers. On March 21, 1888 a rule was adopted by the court of claims to refuse aid to people who claimed to be paupers unless they were willing to go to the poorhouse. Many of the indigent applied, not having learned of the change in the rules, but the larger number of them went to work to make a living for themselves. It was a rare thing that self-confessed paupers would submit to being sent to the poorhouse. This resulted in a great saving to the county.

J. D. Atchison was fiscal court judge in 1888. S. H. Jesse was the commissioner of the poor farm and T. G. Gore was appointed poor farm caretaker. A pauper tax of three cents per hundred was levied on all taxable property for the year 1890 to defray the cost of pauper care. Coffins were listed for \$5.00. Digging graves for paupers cost \$2.00. People who caught floaters (victims of drowning) were paid \$5.00 each. Dr. A. J. Harris was paid \$103.50 for medical expenses at the poorhouse. There were a great many paupers in that year.

Some were in the poorhouse; others were in the homes of individuals. These people were paid \$20.00 per year for taking care of the destitute. When the county learned that some of these people were actually residents of other counties, or had relatives who could take care of them, the

court furnished transportation to other places. There are records of train tickets to Philadelphia and steamboat tickets to Evansville, Indiana. Cave City and Spottsville, Kentucky were other destinations. One person was paid sixty-five cents to take a pauper from Owensboro to Spottsville, a distance of about eighteen miles. In 1891 it was determined necessary to raise the pauper tax to seven cents per hundred of taxable property. The poorhouse committee was instructed to have built a house, consisting of two - sixteen foot rooms each, on the poor farm.

J. D. Karn was the county judge in 1893. R. D. Bryant was the poor farm commissioner and T. G. Gore was the poor farm caretaker. There is a record of the Kentucky Legislature being petitioned to pass an act enabling Daviess County to dispose of its burying grounds, and to convey the same by deed and to acquire by gift or exchange, suitable grounds for said purposes and to take title thereto. [\[note by Jerry Long – this burying grounds was located along Kelly Lane in what is now the Trinity Hills subdivision in the city of Owensboro\]](#). B. T. Dawson was appointed as special committee. Later, Dr. A. C. Wood contracted to remove the paupers, buried in the pauper's burial grounds, to the place where the same was then located at the poor farm. He was paid \$400.00 on April 5, 1893. Dr. Wood came to Daviess County in 1852, a young man, and engaged at once in the practice of medicine. He had a thorough education and was soon well known and was one of the leading doctors. At one time he was the president of the Green River Medical Society.

R. D. Bryant was instructed by the court to have new buildings and repairs made at the poor farm as he deemed necessary. The cost was not to exceed \$700.00. R. D. Bryant was replaced by J. D. Burton. His salary was set at \$50.00 per year. A meeting was held and committee appointed to form rules for poor farm behavior. The following rules were put into place.

- (1) No profane or improper language will be tolerated.
- (2) All inmates shall keep their clothing and persons clean and intact.
- (3) The inmates shall render a cheerful obedience to the lawful authority of the keeper in all ways.
- (4) The inmates shall labor as many hours per day as their physical condition will permit.
- (5) Any conduct of any unusual character shall subject the party or parties to immediate dismissal.
- (6) Any inmate that persistently refuses to obey these rules shall be dismissed at once.
- (7) In case of persistent disobedience of any of the rules the keeper of the poorhouse may inflict humane corporal punishment upon the offender with the concurrence of the commissioner.
- (8) It shall be the duty of the keeper to, at once, report to the civil authorities, any violation of law within the poorhouse or on the premises and to see that all offenders are punished.
- (9) That no firearms or deadly weapons of any kind shall be kept by inmates.

J. A. Clark was appointed poor farm keeper in June 1897. His term was for two years. The records show that he was to have use of that portion of the poor farm on the west side of Millers Mill road but only twenty acres was to be cultivated. The other eighteen acres was to be sowed in grass, the county to furnish the seed for pasture and no stock to be run or pastured in the orchard. The farm was to be kept in a good and husband like manner.

## Chapter - 8 THE LAST YEAR

Mr. John Hale was made superintendent of the poor farm in 1955. His salary was increased to \$225.00 per month. He became ill and resigned February 29, 1956. His wife, Elizabeth Hale, was employed as caretaker effective March 1st, 1956, at a salary of \$225.00 per month payable out of the general fund.



On October 9, 1956, with T. B. Birkhead, Marshall Hale and Joe Paul Warren present, the commissioners agreed that further use of the county infirmary was no longer needed. T. B. Birkhead made a motion that the county infirmary, or farm, containing 136.65 acres and recorded in fiscal court order book #12 at page 345, and all equipment, be sold at public auction on October 17, 1956 at said farm.

The farm and equipment was advertised in the Messenger Inquirer and listed as follows:

1 Ford tractor and equipment - 1 Frigidaire refrigerator - 1 maytag washer - 1 Large gas stove - 15 gas heaters - 1 television set - 1 Electrolux sweeper - Chairs - bedsprings - 100 bales Korean hay - and other things too numerous to mention.

Bids were opened on the poor farm they were as follows;  
Edward Little - \$5000.00 - Isaac E. Finley - \$11000.00 and E. W. Richmond \$13000.00. All bids were rejected.

There was a deed made and entered into January 21, 1958 between Daviess County, party of the first part and Windridge Country Club, party of the second part.

For and in consideration of the sum of \$1.00 cash in hand paid, the receipt of which is acknowledged, and other good and valuable considerations, has sold to Windridge Country Club etc. Contains 106.11 acres, being the same land conveyed to Daviess County by Simpson Stout by deed dated December 11, 1848 and recorded in deed book "I" at page 239.

Party of the second part is not to disturb a graveyard located on the premises. Resolution to be found in fiscal court order book #17. Authorized by judge T. B. Birkhead, The full price paid by Windridge Country for the poor farm was \$ 6000.00

#### OTHERS REMEMBER

Mr. Charles Goodaker has been a member of Windridge Country Club since its beginning. He and several others, joined forces and bought the old poor farm property. The buildings were still there. The caretaker's house was used as a pro shop. The kitchen and dining room was used for pot luck suppers and the dormitories were used for storage. The farm was mostly a corn field. Several large trees had fallen and had to be cleared away, Shortly after the property was bought lightning destroyed one of the buildings.

Mr. Goodaker described the buildings as being built of rough sawn lumber. The walls of the caretaker's house was papered over with a heavy felt paper that had been nailed on the rough lumber.

The caretaker's house had five rooms and a bath. The toilet was of a frostproof design and had a water tank, with a chain operated flushing valve, fastened to the wall above the toilet. This was necessary because of the danger of freezing.

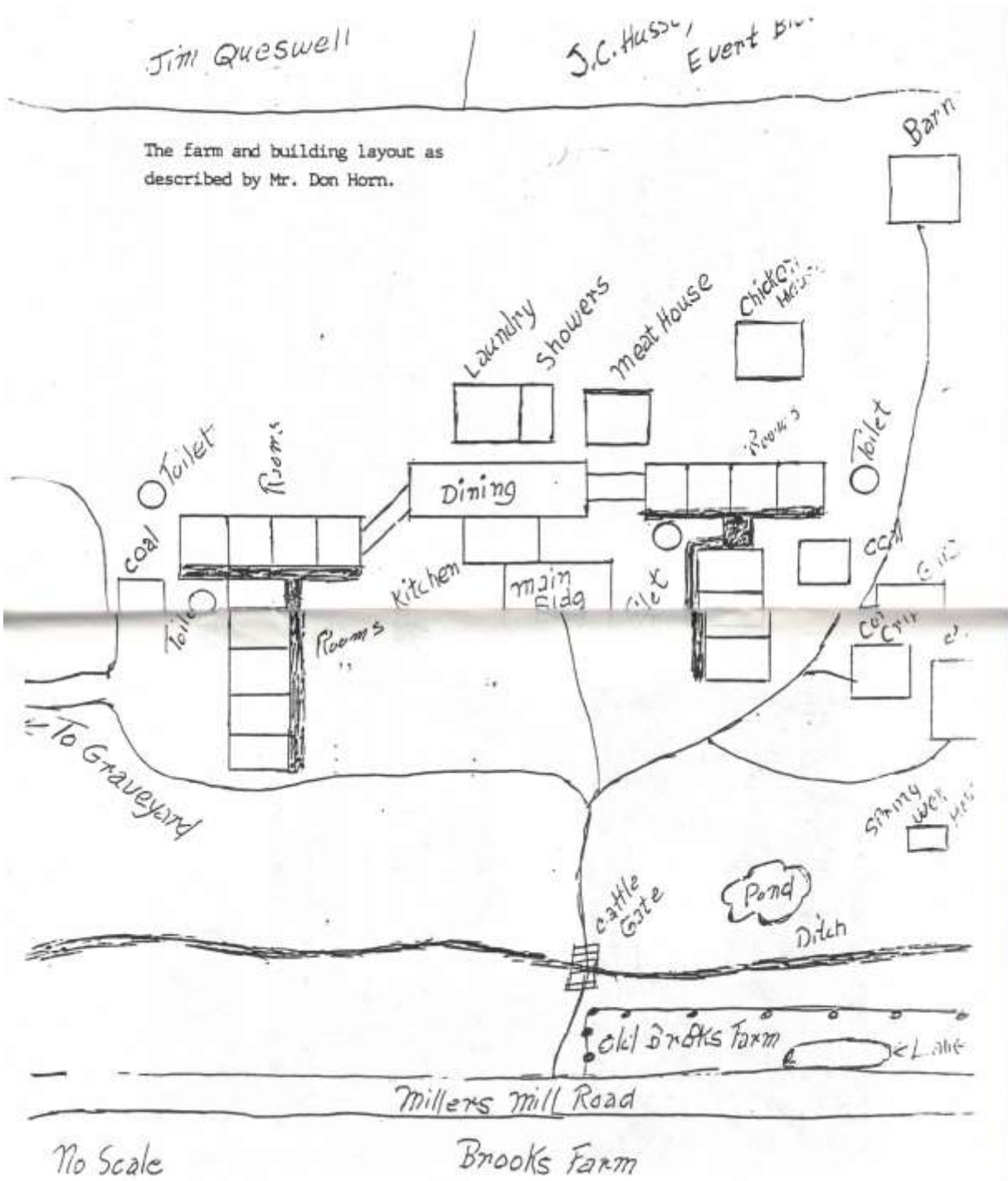
In 1959 the buildings were demolished, the wild cherry trees that Don Horn remembered were uprooted, grading and landscaping was started.

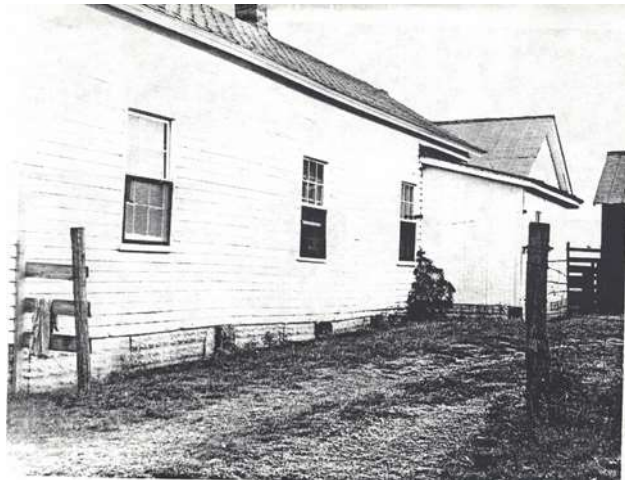
#### CONCLUSION

Some have asked, "Why did they close the poorhouse? Where did the people go?" And the answer is progress, or maybe just change. Our present methods of Medicaid, Welfare, food stamps, section eight housing, housing projects, and many other programs have been devised to take care of the poor. Sane programs have been tried and then discarded. Other plans have taken their place.

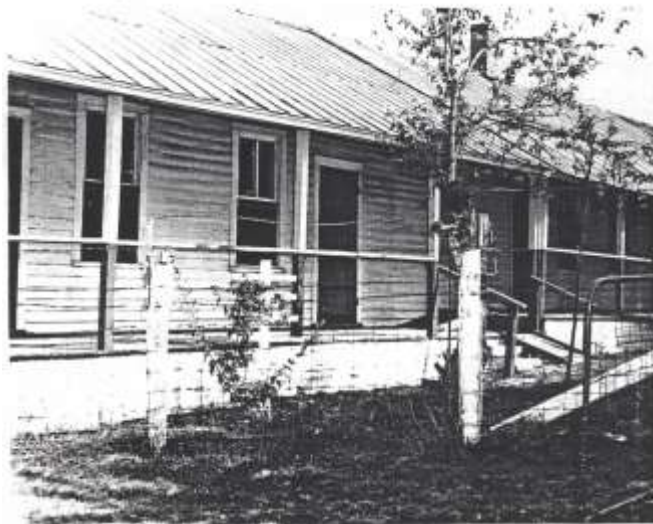
Even as this little book was being finished the Welfare League was discontinued and its duties have been taken over by others.

There are still the have - nots In society. They are everywhere and in ever increasing numbers. They deserve our attention and consideration just as they did In the reign of King Hammurabi four thousand years ago.





The Buildings



The Living Quarters



The Dining Area



Daniel Smith Fulkerson (1917-1992) also published "A Fulkerson History" (McDowell Publications, Utica, KY, 1989, 104 pages). A copy is in the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library, Owensboro, KY (library call #KR G Fulk).



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 16 March 1992, p.1C:**

County's poor farm possesses rich history  
Land on which Windridge Country Club is built once home to paupers

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer



Possibly hundreds of unmarked graves of Daviess County's poor lie beneath the ground where Daniel Smith Fulkerson kneels between the 10th and 17th tees at what is now Windridge Country Club. Fulkerson, a retired electrical contractor, has documented the operation of the Daviess County Poor Farm between 1848-1958 in his book, "A Poor Farm History."

It is perhaps life's ultimate irony.

Just beyond the swimming pool at Windridge Country Club, possibly hundreds of Daviess County paupers rest in unmarked graves.

On the hill between the 10th and 17th tees, overlooking the lush golf course, the nearest thing to a monument in this one-time pauper cemetery is a concrete picnic table.

For more than a century before it became a country club, this land was the Daviess County Poor Farm - an early attempt at providing social services for life's less fortunate.

Daniel Smith Fulkerson, a retired Owensboro electrical contractor, has documented the institution's operations between 1848 and 1958 in his new 67-page paperback book, "A Poor Farm History."

"The main house and dining rooms were where the (Windridge) clubhouse is," he said. "When the country club was built, it used the caretaker's house as the clubhouse for a while. The swimming pool is where the garden was."

To modern Daviess Countians, the idea of moving the handicapped, the aged and the poor to something called a "poor farm" may sound insensitive. But Fulkerson's book shows it was a step up from the system that preceded it.

In the early 19th century, orphans with no estate were indentured to farmers or other businessmen to work in exchange for room and board until they were 21 years old.

Others in the community were paid \$20 a year to house paupers. And local governments would buy paupers tickets to other counties if they would move.

To get help, the poor had to appear at public meetings and explain their problems to the magistrates. For fiscal court members, Fulkerson said, "Paupers got to be a helluva nuisance." Around 1845, he says, George W. Triplett was appointed to buy land for a county poor farm. He found 170 acres of timberland covered with oak, gum and poplar 5 miles southeast of Owensboro on Millers Mill Road.

It was purchased from Simpson Stout on Dec. 10, 1848. John Locke was appointed as the first overseer. And a two-story log house and a cabin or two were built on the farm.

Fulkerson said he got the idea for the book while visiting his wife's mother in a nursing home. "I was talking to some people over 90 years old," he said. "People of that generation think of nursing homes as poor houses no matter how nice they are."

A barn from the latter days of the poor farm is still in use at Windridge, Fulkerson said. The cistern behind the clubhouse was dug in 1909. And the paupers that were buried in the farm cemetery through the years remain there today.

"There had to have been a helluva lot of people buried here," he said.

When Windridge bought the poor farm in 1958, the deed said the graves were not to be disturbed.

"There were never any headstones," Fulkerson said. "At one time, there was a fence to keep the cows out."

Some were buried two to a grave, he said. Fulkerson also has written a horror story about the cemetery. In the story, two men in the same grave don't get along with each other.

Coffins in the early years cost the county \$2.50 for children and \$5 for adults. Men were buried in a clean pair of overalls, women in burial shrouds.

There are no records listing the names of those buried in the abandoned cemetery, Fulkerson said.

The poor farm raised its own food, he said. Corn grew below the hill where the golf course is now.

All the buildings on the farm were razed during the Civil War. Later, a frame house with four rooms and a kitchen was built for the family of the keeper and two other frame houses with two rooms each were built for the "inmates."

The houses were poorly built and hard to heat. Although the poor farm sometimes bulged with up to 40 residents, it housed an average of eight to 10 at a time, Fulkerson said.

In the early years, blacks were not allowed to live there. They were housed by other black families in the community.

And little money was appropriated for those sent to the poor farm. Peter Tichenor, the 1874-75 overseer, did not receive a salary. He made his living from farming the land and keeping the profit.

On March 21, 1888, after spending \$1,900 on pauper care the previous year, Daviess County instituted a rule that no aid would be given to the poor unless they lived on the poor farm. Most refused the shame.

A pauper tax of 3 cents per \$100 was levied in 1890 to help pay for the care of the poor. A year later, it was raised to 7 cents.

That year, the county ordered a house with two 16-foot rooms built on the poor farm. In 1893, all pauper graves in the county were moved there.

"The commissioners would come to inspect sometimes and order them to fill the graves a little better," Fulkerson said. "The caretakers were hired for their political connections. How well it was operated depended on the commissioners."

In 1903, fiscal court members decided they had too much property at the poor farm and approved selling the 55 acres east of Millers Mill Road.

The budget never improved much. In 1917, the allowance for meals was raised from 10 cents to 15 cents per meal.

In the '30s, Fulkerson said, there were four dormitory buildings for inmates. One for blacks, one for white women and the others for white men.

Long after Social Security and other federal programs began taking care of the poor, the Daviess County Poor Farm continued to exist.

Finally, on Oct. 9, 1956, Daviess Fiscal Court voted to close the poor farm and sell it at public auction. All three of those bids were rejected, however.

It all ended on Jan. 21, 1958, when Windridge Country Club bought the remaining 106.11 acres for \$6,000.

Fulkerson said he spent about eight months researching the book. Only 100 copies were printed. Copies are on file at Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library and at Kentucky Wesleyan and Brescia colleges, he said.



**Daviess County, KY 1860 Federal Census  
District 1, p.813:**

Poor Farm

Whalen, B. J.	40	m	farmer	Kentucky
“ Catherine	36	f		Kentucky
“ John B.	16	m	farm hand	Kentucky
“ E. W.	15	m	“	Kentucky
“ Susan E.	13	f		Kentucky
“ Lucy A.	9	f		Kentucky
“ Ben	7	m		Kentucky
“ Joseph	4	m		Kentucky
Woods, Archibald	74	m	pauper	Kentucky
Carney, Alcy	72	f	pauper	Virginia
Peyton, David	50	m	pauper	Kentucky
“ David, Jr.	10	m	pauper	Kentucky
“ John	5	m	pauper	Kentucky
“ Phebe	14	f	pauper	Kentucky

“ Mary	12	f	pauper	Kentucky
Dean, Joseph	72	m	pauper	Kentucky
McPherson, Humphrey C.	27	m	teacher common school	Tennessee



**Daviess County, KY 1870 Federal Census  
Upper Town Precinct, p.313:**

Tichenor, Peter	52	m	poor house keeper	Kentucky
“ Eliz. M.	47	f	keeping house	Virginia
“ Thomas	15	m	laborer	Kentucky
“ Peter	9	m		Kentucky
“ Jacob	7	m		Kentucky
Howard, Martha	36	f	pauper	Kentucky
“ Geo. W.	10	m	pauper	Kentucky
“ Francis	8	f	pauper	Kentucky
“ Mary	2	f	pauper	Kentucky
“ Orelina	3/12	f	pauper	Kentucky



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 6 April 1893, p.1:**

THE PAUPER STIFFS

The fiscal court yesterday morning at 9 o'clock...

Dr. A. C. Wood made a proposition to remove the bodies of paupers from the present pauper burial ground to the poor house farm, to build a neat fence around the new grounds and decently reinter the bodies, paying \$200 for the ground now occupied by the graveyard. There are now about 200 paupers in the cemetery, which is on Dr. Wood's farm, and he is anxious to get rid of them.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 3 April 1895, p.1:**

THE NEW FISCAL COURT

... The county judge was directed to make deed to E. W. Wood for the old pauper burying ground, upon payment of \$200.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 2 June 1895, p.8:**

BROUGHT A GOOD PRICE.

Fifty Acres of Timber Sold at the Poor House Farm.

The fifty acres of timber on the poor house farm was sold at auction Friday to John Kopp, representing a Louisville firm, for \$680, The lot consists mainly of white oak. This part of the timber was first put up and brought \$500. The remainder brought only \$50. The whole lot was then put up and brought the amount stated. The bidding was quite spirited. The price is considered very good. When the timber is cut away, there will be quite a lot of good firewood, consisting of laps, limbs and small timber, which the county judge offers to anybody who will agree to haul it away.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 7 April 1899, p.5:**

**COUNTY POOR FARM.**

**ITS EXPENSE TO THE COUNTY FOR LAST FISCAL YEAR.**

Esq. J. D. Burton, poor farm commissioner, has made his report to the fiscal court of maintaining the poor-farm for the last fiscal year, beginning April 1, 1898, and ending March 31, 1899. The total cost for the year was \$2,234.41, and the various items are as follows: Board for paupers, \$1,621.87; clothing, \$135.13; medicine and medical services, \$2.40; sundries, \$31.45; wire and nails, \$13.76; for new dining room, \$140; veranda, \$25; paints, \$27.20; total, \$2,234.41. The cost per inmate for food, clothes, medicine and medical attention for the year, \$93.25.

The number of paupers in the poor-house for each month during the year is as follows: For 1898 - April, 21; May, 21; June, 21; July, 22; August, 23; September, 21; October, 21; November, 23; December, 15. For 1899 - January, 23; February, 32; March, 29. It will be seen that the lowest number was for December, several of the inmates going away for that month to enjoy the holidays outside the poor-house, and the highest number in February, which is due to the extremely severe weather for that month making it necessary for some poor people to seek more comfortable quarters than their own miserable homes. The average per month is nearly 22.

The following are the paupers at present at the poor-house. T. M. Harley, Clayton Smith, Peter Snaft, Wm. Wright, J. T. Leonard, Jackson Travis, Henry Boehm, W. E. Mitchell, Susan Burton, Mary Jane Wright, Liza Henning, Henry Henning, Nora Thompson, Mary Jane Watterson, Matilda Bogard, James Knight, Annie Knight, Blanche Knight, Annie Cecil, Todd Cecil, John W. Onan, Louisa Onan, Wm. Cecil, Nannie Page, Wesley Clifford, Wm. Price, Alfred Wells, George Davis and James Allen. A total of 29.



**Daviess County, KY 1900 Federal Census  
Upper Town Precinct, p.393A:**

Taylor, John M.	Jul 1863	poor house keeper	Kentucky
“ Harriett	Sep 1866	wife	Kentucky
“ Roy B.	Dec 1896		Kentucky
Cook, Virgil Lee	Jun 1886	adopted son	Kentucky
Omer, Frank	Aug 1863	farm laborer	Kentucky
Gardner, Clara	Oct 1857	cook	Kentucky
Knight, George	Apr 1827		Kentucky



Smith, Clayton	Apr 1847		Kentucky
Snaff, Peter	1832		Germany
Rice, E. W.	Mar 1834		Ohio
Leonard, J. T.	1837		Ireland
Rodgers, James	Jan 1834		Kentucky
Onan, John W.	Oct 1826		Kentucky
Onan, Louisa A.	Dec 1825		Kentucky
Fitzgerald, William	Dec 1825		Ireland
Cecil William A.	Jul 1857		Kentucky
Burton, Susana	Nov 1818		Kentucky
Galloway, Martha A.	Jul 1816		Kentucky
Page, Nannie	Jan 1856		Kentucky
Knight, Annie	Jul 1862		Indiana
Right, Mary J.	Apr 1853		Kentucky
Knight, James	May 1820		Kentucky
Knight, Pearl	Feb 1898		Kentucky
Boehm, Henry	Nov 1846		Kentucky
Harris, Jim	1802	Black	Kentucky
Bogard, Matilda	Aug 1839		Kentucky
Henning, Eliza	Jun 1842		Kentucky
Henning, Henry	May 1834		Kentucky
Price, William	1810	Black	Kentucky
Thompson, Nora	Jun 1874		Kentucky



**Weekly Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 14 March 1902, p.1:**

A DEFICIT

... Judge Haskins says that the poor farm Is a great drain to the county, and that it is constantly getting worse. There are now forty inmates in the county poor house, and it costs \$300 a month to run it...



**Daviess County, KY 1910 Federal Census  
Magisterial District 8, p.233A:**

Daviess County Almshouse – Millers Mill Road

Vessels, Franklin J.	33	manager almshouse	Kentucky
“ Josie F.	35	wife	Kentucky
“ Harold	9	son	Kentucky
“ Myrtle	5	daughter	Kentucky
“ James	2	son	Kentucky
Hazelrigg, Vadie	16	cook	Kentucky
Moran, William	95	boarder	New York

Cummings, William	20	boarder	Kentucky
Smith, Nick	87	boarder	Germany
Rogers, James	75	boarder	Kentucky
Terrell, William	65	boarder	Kentucky
Sprinkler, Dave	72	boarder	Kentucky
Cauley, James	77	boarder	Kentucky
Piper, John	64	boarder - Black	Kentucky
Smith, Jessie	52	boarder - Black	Kentucky
Hayden, James	38	boarder - Black	Kentucky
Allen, James	95	boarder - Black	Kentucky
Wilborn, Hayley	62	boarder - Black	Kentucky
Boregard, Tilda	64	boarder	Kentucky
Henning, Lila	84	boarder	Kentucky
Henning, Mary	86	boarder	Kentucky
Smith, Clayton	64	boarder	Kentucky
Burch, Riley	34	boarder	Kentucky
Burch, Polly	65	boarder	Kentucky



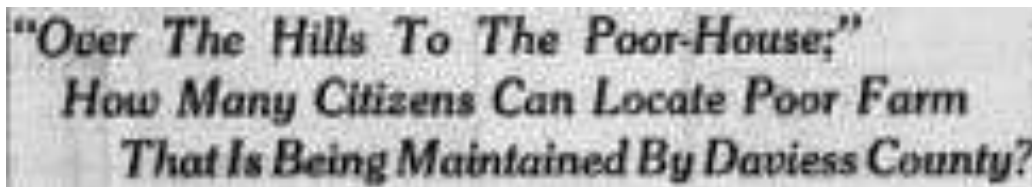
**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 16 June 1912, p.1B:**

**CHANGE THE NAME OF THE COUNTY POOR FARM**

[at Fiscal Court meeting yesterday morning] ... By the unanimous vote of the court, the name of the county poor farm was changed to the county infirmary and it was directed that the sign over the gateway at the farm be changed so that it will read "County Infirmary."



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 16 March 1919, p.1B & 5B:**



EVERY one who has gone to the public schools, or who has ever helped with the programs at the rural schools, at some time or other has become familiar with Will M. Carleton's poem, "Over the Hill to the Poor-House." A glance at the opening lines will refresh the memory.

"Over the hill, to the poor-house I'm  
trudgin' my weary way.  
a woman of seventy, and only a  
trifle gray –  
I, who am smart and chipper, for all  
the years I've told

As many another woman, that only  
half as old.

"Over the hill to the poor-house – my  
children dear, good-bye!  
Many a night I've watched you when  
only God was nigh,  
And God'll judge between us; but I  
will always pray  
That you shall never suffer the half I  
do today."

The first and last verses contain worlds of pathos. The story continues how all of the children having left the home nest find their poor old mother a bit in the way after Father John's death. Charlie married a woman from the city, and Susan's home was small, and something interfered with this poor old mother living at the homes of Rebecca, Thomas and Isaac so this poor old mother, nearing seventy summers and winters, one day trudged "Over the Hill to the Poor-House" and there lived out, her life, but as she was dying she prayed the children might have space in their hearts for her, old and gray, and the coming back from, the poor-house after all had found their way over the hill to bid her a last goodbye occasioned the writing of the. poem "Over the Hill From the Poor-House," by May Mignonette, who says:

Over the hills to the poor-house, sad  
paths have been made today  
For sorrow is near, such as maketh  
the heads of the young turn  
gray.  
Causing the heart of the careless to  
throb with fevered breath –  
The sorrow that leads to the chamber  
whose light has gone out in  
death.

Yet how many people of Owensboro, familiar all their lives with the story of "Over the Hill to the Poor-House" have ever visited the Daviess county farm for the indigent and aged, blind, and helpless, or know the road which leads over the hill to the poor-house. Possibly since the recent controversy about reclaiming land around the county infirmary a few have asked where it stands or how many patients there are and possibly marveled they had thought of it before.

The Daviess county infirmary lies over the hill about two miles off the Leitchfield road turning to the right at Dermot. High and dry above the winding roadway it stands with a winding roadway leading to the last home of those who are friendless, moneyless and without hope or home. Four, white cottages of four rooms each and one long dining room standing directly back of the – caretaker's – home house the county's indigents. One cottage is used by negroes, one by the women and the other two by the men. At present but nine of the rooms are in use, the patients doubling up in the winter time that there may not be so many stoves to take care of and less wood to cut. Each room has its own stove.

At present there are six colored men, three women, one boy and ten men in the county infirmary. Two of the men are blind. Three men are housed in one of the rooms, but only one of

them can see to read one can barely see light and says "I thank God I can see the light. The light makes you happy don't you know it? I can't see you over there but if you are standing between me and the light I can tell someone is there and it is a great comfort. I can follow a lantern at night and no one has to lead me. I can sing. I always was of a cheerful disposition. Trouble never worries me. Whats the use to worry! Yes we are as happy as we could be expected to be here. Our friend in the next room comes in and reads to us and we listen and are glad to have company. We are all of us very glad you came."

The people living in the home care for their own quarters. Some are neat as a new pin. Others not much can be said for. One motherly woman can read at times when her eyes do not hurt and she has a neat pile of magazines and books stacked up on a shelf for a rainy day. Her room is neat and orderly and 'tis evident she has been someone careful mother who has gone "over the hill to the poor-house."

Each room has a stove and one or two beds, some chairs and some tables. Usually when able the women and sometimes the men help with the kitchen work. The men are unable to help with the farm work. Some of them are irresponsible – some glad to have a smile from visitors or from their fellow inmates – yet if they should stop to tell their story, their faces express much and they might tell of green fields, and homes in the past, children who have gone before or are forgotten.

To the left of the county home a few tillable acres and much woodland, picturesque, yet pathetic to think of the aged and infirm infirm living there hopelessly on dreams of past. To the right is rolling pasturage. There are some 130 acres in the farm, with sixty acres overrun by the Panther creek overflows which should be drained for productive ground. About twenty acres can be cultivated and is cultivated by the caretaker. The remainder is in woodland, pasture and unclaimed land. The caretaker does not receive a salary for caring for the county patients but is allowed the use of the farm for what he can make of it and the county pays 45c a day for meals for the patients, and with clothing given them, the county pays out \$20 per capita for. each patient per month.

Some kind of running water system would greatly benefit the institution. Some of the inmates it is true would not use conveniences if they had them. As is the custom in the country lamps and candles furnish the lighting system. But the question uppermost now is would it be a better plan to sell the farm and purchase a new site than to spend money fertilizing and reclaiming the old site and putting it on a new basis wherein it would pay the cost of its upkeep. The present. Caretaker has been on the farm for the past seven years, his term expiring this year. At one time he states he asked that he might be given the manure from the city stables for the hauling to put on the land. The land fertilized he states would grow splendid tobacco. He has had very good success with tobacco he has grown on the land he has reclaimed since he. has been on the place.

During the past week the Woman's club sent quite a number of books and magazines from the drive last spring which were not shipped overseas to the county farm and the clients are very grateful. They will have one or two of their number, who can see to read aloud.

The subject of the best way to better existing conditions at the county farm will be again brought up at the fiscal court Tuesday when County Agent Whitehouse and Commissioner Wilson will report their week's research work and what they would recommend.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 24 October 1919, p.2:**

**STATED SALARY WILL BE PAID**  
**Superintendent of County Poor Farm To Get \$1,200 a Year.**

The county poor farm will be put in the hands of a salaried superintendent next year instead of one paid a stated sum per meal for the inmates, as heretofore. This course was decided on at a meeting of the court, held Thursday.

Warden Riddle will become the keeper of the poor farm for a period of one year, beginning January 1, 1920. at a salary of \$1,200 for the year, with meals for his family. Mr. Riddle is to furnish three head of horses, two milk cows, reasonable number of chickens and such farming implements as he now has.

Mr. Riddle is required, under the contract, to give the patients ordinary nursing care and is to take care of such juvenile delinquents as may be put in his charge. He is to cultivate the county poor farm and use the products produced for the use of the inmates. It is stipulated in the contract that Mr. Riddle and his wife may not leave the premises without putting them in charge of a proper and suitable person.

The sanitation of the premises will be under the supervision of the county infirmary physician, who shall have full authority to order changes improvements in matters affecting the sanitation of the premises.



**Daviess County, KY 1920 Federal Census**  
**(Upper Town) Magisterial District 8, pp.245A & 245B:**

Daviess County Almshouse – Millers Mill Road

Riddle, Worden	42	manager farm	Kentucky
“ Emma	34	wife	Kentucky
“ Verble L.	14	daughter	Kentucky
“ Susie E.	10	daughter	Kentucky
“ Charles W.	8	son	Kentucky
“ Robert K.	2	son	Kentucky
Hall, Nancy C.	75	lodger	Kentucky
Pate, Ellen	45	lodger	Kentucky
Clark, Martha	40	lodger	Kentucky
Travis, Westley	70	lodger	Kentucky
Wiggins, E. R.	72	lodger	Kentucky
Ridley, Henry	40	lodger	Kentucky
Watson, Walter	44	lodger	Kentucky
Gayne, Gus	70	lodger	Kentucky
Schenbalel, Louis	65	lodger	Germany
Cummings, Willie	30	lodger	Kentucky
Mcfresk, Martin	60	lodger	Kentucky
Jarvis, John	70	lodger	Kentucky
Burns, Samuel B.	77	lodger	Kentucky
Brown, George	77	lodger - Black	Kentucky
Johnson, Henry	86	lodger - Black	Kentucky





**Daviess County, KY 1930 Federal Census  
Magisterial District 8, p.168A:**

County Infirmary

Norris, Rollie	38	superintendent county infirmary	Kentucky
“ Nancy Ann	33	wife	Kentucky
“ Nancy L.	5	daughter	Kentucky
“ Rollie E., Jr.	4	son	Kentucky
“ Will Sam	2	son	Kentucky
Raley, Henry	45	inmate	Kentucky
Reed, Charlie	71	inmate	Kentucky
Mills, J. W.	50	inmate	Kentucky
Scherale, Leris	77	inmate	Germany
Hamsen, John G.	74	inmate	Kentucky
Morris, J. A.	81	inmate	Kentucky
Parriot, T. Y.	62	inmate	Kentucky
Caster, Albert	64	inmate	Kentucky
Head, J. E.	63	inmate	Kentucky
Deggs, Chas. C.	70	inmate	Kentucky
Hurt, Geo. W.	60	inmate	Kentucky
Westerfield, Emlas	43	inmate	Kentucky
Hemmingway, William	75	inmate	Kentucky
Robertson, Dan	50	inmate	Kentucky
Skillman, W. R.	76	inmate	Kentucky
Travis, Wesley	82	inmate	Kentucky
Bestwick, Louis	56	inmate	Kentucky
Watson, Walter	46	inmate	Kentucky
Weaver, George	50	inmate	Kentucky
Owen, Mat	57	inmate	Kentucky
Felen, Emma	71	inmate	Kentucky
Walker, Sallie	76	inmate	Kentucky
Driskell, Cathrine	72	inmate	Kentucky
Ezell, Monroe	74	inmate	Kentucky
Emberton, J. T.	64	inmate	Kentucky
Williams, Sam	71	inmate	Kentucky
Jones, Thomas	65	inmate	Kentucky
Roberts, J. E.	82	inmate	Kentucky
Kennedy, Mary	33	inmate - Black	Kentucky
NafI, George	60	inmate - Black	Kentucky
McClaren, Paul	50	inmate - Black	Kentucky
Hardesty, Charlie	75	inmate - Black	Kentucky
Brown, George	80	inmate - Black	Kentucky
Willis, J. T.	80	inmate - Black	Kentucky



**Daviess County, KY 1940 Federal Census  
Magisterial District 8, p.797A:**

Inmates of County Infirmary

Raley, Henry	56	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Parret, T. Y.	72	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
McKinley, Joe	78	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Holmes, Liza Jane	75 – Negro	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Roberson, Liza Jane	80 – Negro	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Hollinsworth, Daisy	60 – Negro	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Jones, Noah	74	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Head, Jim E.	75	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Miller, Elisha L.	78	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Lowber, Albert	65	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Weaver, George	59	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Morris, Jim E.	90	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Hall, John	84	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Irvin, Warren W.	74	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Willard, Ambrose	79	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Givens, William	28	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Hollis, Luther	70	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Spratt, Oscar	64	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Algood, Ira	55	Texas	also at Infirmary in 1935
Bestwick, Lewis	45	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Atkinson, George	62	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Crabtree, Noah	48	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Watterson, John H.	69	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935
Ralston, Jim	77	Ohio	also at Infirmary in 1935
Whistle, Elnora	53	Kentucky	
Whistle, William	64	Kentucky	
Wilson, Lula	54	Kentucky	
Gilbert, Minnie	64	Kentucky	
Shauntee, Elvy	65 – Negro	Kentucky	also at Infirmary in 1935

Upper Town Precinct – Millers Mill Road, p.691A

Horn, Thomas	34	Kentucky	caretaker County Infirmary on same farm in 1935
“ Marjorie B.	31	Kentucky	wife
“ Donald R.	9	Kentucky	son
“ William Thomas, Jr.	7	Kentucky	son
Early, Bennie	24	Kentucky	hired hand



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 13 January 1946, p.2B:**

**Birdie’s Breezy Bits by L. D. “Birdie” Gasser**

Old, feeble, homeless and on the way to the "Poor House," or the Daviess County Infirmary, (so called, but anything else but that).

Won't you come with us and see where, but for the Grace of God, you and I might have to go?

On a side road leading west from Dermot, you see perched on a ridge a group of white buildings, and you think, this does not look so bad, but wait. Drive into the place and your eyes are opened. There lies before you a bleak triangle of tiny one window rooms, one after another, without running water and modern toilet facilities. Each opens on a porch which faces north and east. There is no other way for these unfortunates to get their meals, except by going out on this wind and rainswept porch. A small stove in each room is fed by coal and wood piled on the floor.

Now Just stop for a minute and try to imagine with us, some tottery old soul attempting to fix his fire on a bitter winter day and perhaps dropping a live coal on the ancient and dry floor of this wooden shack. Nothing on earth could stop such a fire and though some might say that death even under such circumstances would be preferable to the way they have to live, that does not relieve us of our responsibilities for allowing such things to be.

This place is a veritable "poor house" and has been for two decades, and it is getting more run down each year. There is no provision for the sick. We need a decent, modern home on a highway, which interested taxpayers can visit with a special room for the sick and some one to care for them.

This is not too much to ask of a county like Daviess. We are not a pauper county. If you blame the county officials, you are wrong. We, the indifferent citizens, are the ones at fault. These officials are our duly elected representatives and what we need and want will be done, if we definitely make our wants known.

All of this is the prayer and the project of the Daviess County Federation of Women's clubs, which wants a modern county infirmary – a place where poor, unfortunate old people can have comfort, cleanliness and a real resting place, when their worn out bodies can no longer drag along the weary road.

A "Club Member" who gave us this Bit says: "We have thought about this and talked about it, much too long. Now for the sake of humanity, let us do something about it!"



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 17 February 1946, p.1B:**

**Daviess County Federation Of Women’s Clubs  
Would Change Meaning Of Term, ‘Poor House’**

By John W. Potter, Owensboro Messenger

"Over the hill to the poorhouse" is an expression that would lose much of its disagreeable inference, as far as the Daviess County Infirmary is concerned, if plans being formulated by the Daviess County Federation of Women's clubs meet with the success the sponsors hope for.

For years the infirmary, casually and indiscreetly referred to as "the poor house," has been home to Daviess county's unfortunates, and it was not until recently that conditions there, described as "deplorable," were brought to the attention of the general public.

When these conditions were brought to light through a visit by representatives of the women's organizations, the Federated Women clubs, headed by Mrs. F. Miller Haynes, began working on plans which they hope will bring about construction of a new infirmary and a new era in the care for the county's citizens who are unable to care for themselves.

### Infirmary Home To 20

Now, with news of a recent fire which took the lives of twelve persons in a similarly constructed home for the aged at Cleveland, Ohio, even more fervor is being put into the plans by the sponsoring organizations.

Located a mile south of Dermot in Eastern Daviess county, the infirmary is home to twenty elderly men and women. While the number of inmates there varies, it seldom drops below its present figure, and it has run as high as 52. Daviess county spends more than \$7,000 annually for their care.

During the 1944-45 fiscal year, the county spent \$7,183.06 for the operation and maintenance of the infirmary, including salaries of Supt. Thomas Horn, Dr. A. Kirk, medical attendant for the inmates, and other part-time farm workers, and in the 1943-44 fiscal year 7,375.10 was spent. Supt. Horn is now paid \$115 per month, and Dr. Kirk receives \$125 quarterly.

The expenditures for these last two fiscal years were divided as follows:

	1943-44	1944-45
Salaries	\$1,857.41	\$1,820.40
Food, clothing and medicine	2,754.06	3,217.71
Utilities (including fuel)	676.34	452.80
Renewals and repairs	275.97	64.08
Miscellaneous	1,811.32	1,597.07
Total	\$7,375.10	\$7,183.07

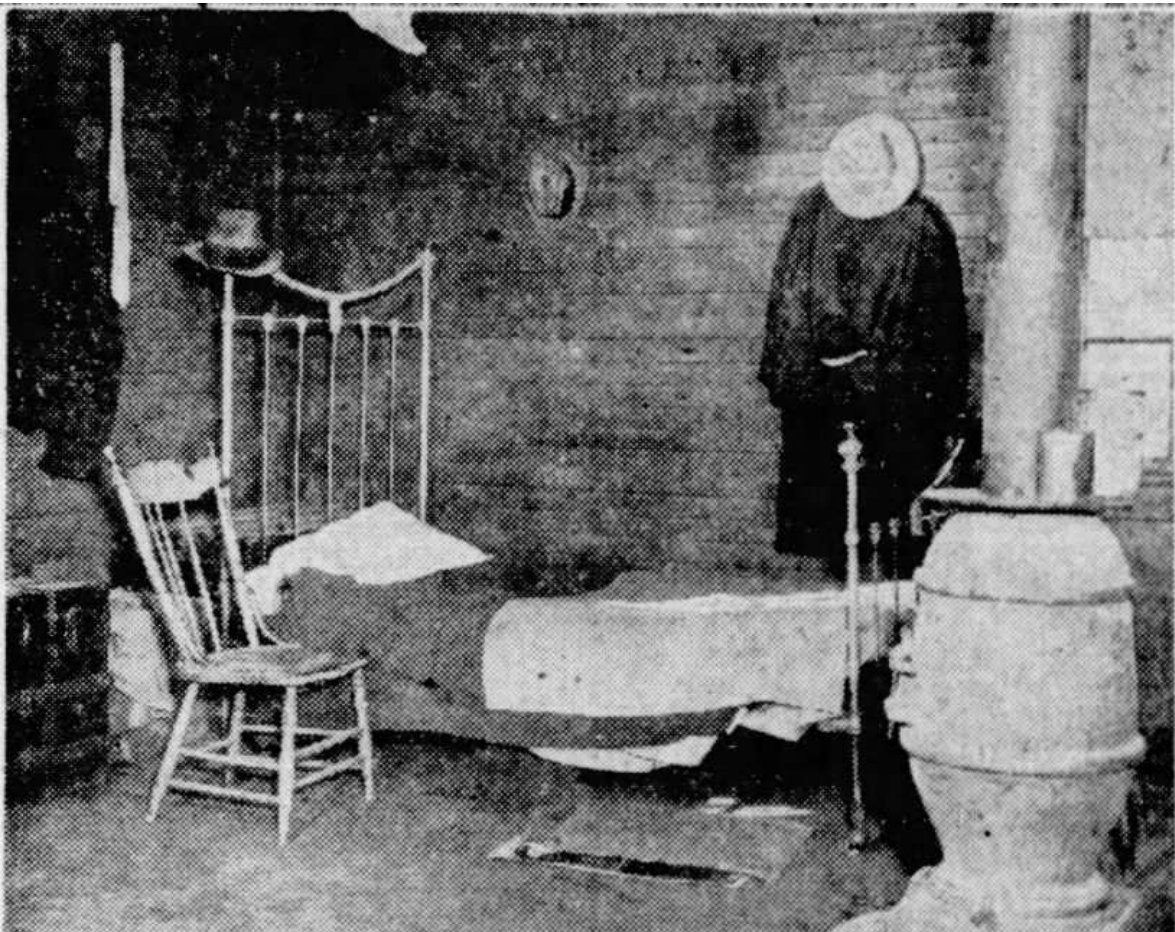
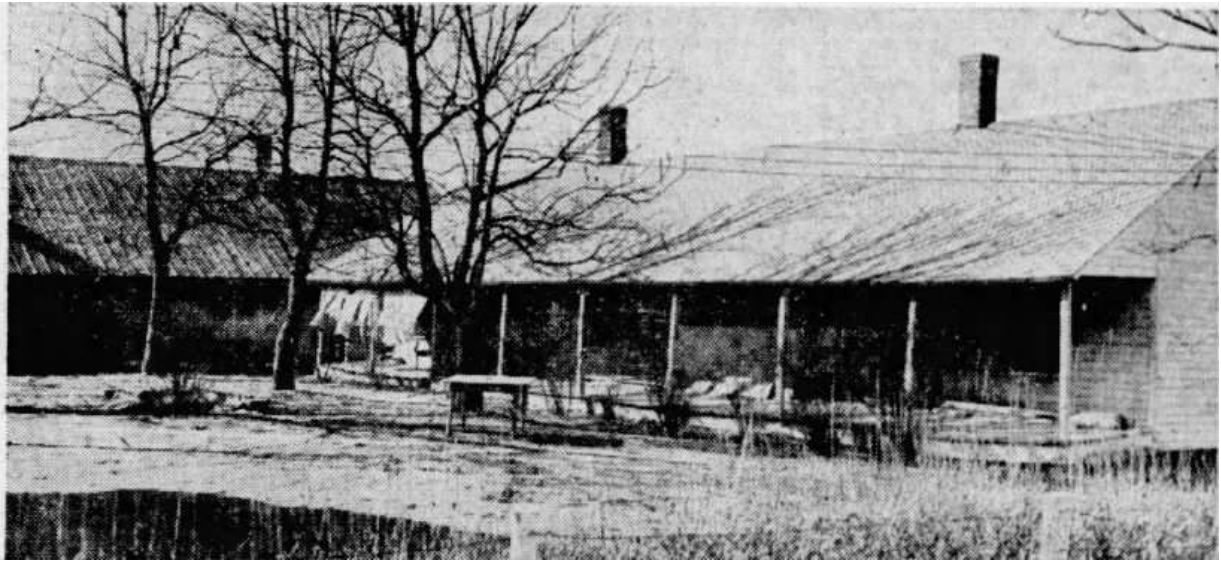
(Miscellaneous expenses include feed for animals, seed for planting on the farm, disinfectant, electric light bulbs and other sundry items.)

Not all the operation and maintenance of the infirmary results in a cash outlay on the part of the county, however, for Supt. Horn keeps and milks six cows which provide the milk and butter needs of the inmates. At the same time, he raises hogs, sheep and chickens which provide a meat and egg supply. Seven hogs were slaughtered last fall, and eighty laying hens are kept on the farm now.

### Foodstuffs Grown On Farm

During the growing season, the 120 acres of the farm which surround the central buildings are planted with foodstuffs and provide hay for the cows and the horses that are used for the farm work.

Constructed on the quadrangle plan, with the home of Superintendent Horn located in the center, the infirmary buildings were erected many years ago. Residents there are quartered two to a room, and it is the responsibility of the occupants of the cubicles to attend to the firing of the stoves which supply the heat that fights against wintry winds that sweep across the ridge on which the eleemosynary institution is located.





HOME FOR UNFORTUNATES – One portion of the quadrangular Daviess County Infirmary, which has drawn unfavorable comment from the Daviess County Federation of Women's Clubs, is shown above. One of the points to which spokesmen for the Federation have called attention is the open porch onto which the various rooms open and along which residents at the infirmary must walk in fair or foul weather to reach dining and toilet sections. Stoves in the individual rooms, which must be fired by the occupants, are another feature that has not met with the approval of the women's group. While only one bed is visible in the typical infirmary room shown [above], each of the two occupants of this and other rooms have separate beds. Construction of a new infirmary which would include the features that the present one lacks is a project on which the Federation is making plans.

The living conditions for the unfortunates who make their home there came to the attention of the Federation of Women's clubs when they delivered their Christmas baskets. What they found was described by one of the visitors in a recent letter to the Sunday "Breezy Bits" column of The Messenger as "a veritable 'poor house ... getting more run down each year."

The fact that there is no central heating plant was deplored when the stoves in the individual rooms were noted by them. "Try to imagine some tottery old soul attempting to fix his fire on a bitter winter day and perhaps dropping a live coal on the ancient and dry floor of the wooden shack. Nothing on earth could stop a fire and though some might say that death even under such circumstances would be preferable to the way they have to live, that does not relieve us of our responsibilities for allowing such things to be."

It was with that statement that the Federated group of women indicated that it is their opinion that county officials are not to be blamed for the conditions at the infirmary, but rather that, "We, the indifferent citizens, are the ones at fault."

#### Working On Plans

As a result of their feeling that "indifferent citizens" are responsible, the Federation is working on concrete plans for a new infirmary and will present its plans to the Daviess county fiscal court when it has perfected them.

Working with Mrs. Haynes, who is president of the Daviess County Federation of Women's clubs, are Mrs. John Friedman, president of the Garden club; Mrs. E. H. Lovell, head of the city Parent-Teachers association and Second district governor of Federated Women's clubs; Mrs. V. M. Gibson, president of the Younger Woman's club, and Mrs. C. L. Van Da Griff, president of the Newcomers club.

County Judge J. Everett Long has been contacted by representatives of the group sponsoring the plans, and has indicated the county's willingness to cooperate with them. It is estimated by Judge Long that expenditure of approximately \$25,000 would be required to construct a modern building that would be more of a true home for the unfortunates, and which would have incorporated in it features that the present layout does not provide.

Under the present set-up, in addition to the fact that central heating is not provided, it has been pointed out that while the infirmary does have sanitary toilets it is necessary for the inmates to go out into the elements, protected only by a porch that stretches from the rooms to the toilet sections, to reach them. At meal time it is also necessary for them to walk the length of the porch to reach the dining section.

Judge Long and County Commissioner T. B. Birkhead, under whose supervision the infirmary falls, do not deny that conditions there are what the Federation of Women's clubs say,

but Judge Long explains that past environment and physical conditions of the patients are to be blamed to some extent.

### No Quarters For Sick

"No matter how clean we try to keep the infirmary, the old folks there don't give much cooperation," he said. "Quite often it is necessary for Mr. Horn to wash some of the people himself, and when they get to the table for their meals some of them are not able to feed themselves because of their feeble condition or because their minds do not allow them to. It is not a case of them being subjects for committal to the Western Kentucky hospital at Hopkinsville, but rather in many instances a result of senility."

Lack of separate quarters at the infirmary for the sick is also pointed out by the women's group, which would include such quarters in the layout of a new institution.

Central heating ... Central and interior location of dining and toilet facilities ... "a place where poor, unfortunate old people can have comfort, cleanliness and a real resting place when their worn out bodies can no longer drag along the weary road."

These are the things the Federation of Women's clubs would see that a new infirmary has.



### Daviess County, KY 1950 Federal Census Magisterial District 8:

#### Daviess County Poor Farm – Millers Mill Road

Hale, John M.	56	Kentucky	caretaker county poor farm
“ Mary Elizabeth	52	Kentucky	wife
“ Murry O.	21	Kentucky	son
“ Sue Elizabeth	16	Kentucky	daughter
Weaver, George	70	Illinois	inmate
Irwin, Warren	84	Kentucky	inmate
Irwin, Elmer			inmate
Lowber, Sidney	67	Kentucky	inmate
Jones, Noah	70	Kentucky	inmate
Jones, Walter			inmate
Jolly, Robert	84	Kentucky	inmate
Thompson, Edgar	84	Kentucky	inmate
Ambros, William	67	Kentucky	inmate
Goff, John	68	Kentucky	inmate
Driskell, John	79	Kentucky	inmate
Knott, Henry	64	Kentucky	inmate
Wathen, Charlie	70	Kentucky	inmate
Sweat, Goldie	57	Kentucky	inmate
Miller, Lena	57	Kentucky	inmate
Mackey, Mattie Myrl	53	Kentucky	inmate
Fulkerson, Reva	87	Kentucky	inmate
Goode, Anna	82	Kentucky	inmate

Evans, Richard	85	Kentucky	inmate
White, Hattie	38 – Negro	Kentucky	inmate
Hawes, Eliza	90 – Negro	Kentucky	inmate
Hollinsworth, Daisey	74 – Negro	Indiana	inmate
Shauntee, Elza	65 – Negro	Kentucky	inmate



**A Partial List of Daviess County, KY Poor Farm (Infirmery) Caretakers  
(also referred to as keeper and superintendent):**

1848-1859	John Locke (1812-1877)
1860	Benedict J. Whalen (1818-1901)
1864	George Jones (1811-1869)
c1869	Thomas Johnston
1870-1875	Peter Tichenor (1819-1905)
1879-1889	Thomas L. Gore (1833-1889)
1895-1899	James Albin Clark (1846-1919)
1900-1904	John Morgan Taylor (1863-1945)
1904-1907	Joseph Samuel Taylor (1853-1911)
1908-1912	Frank James Vessels (1876-1932)
1912-1919	William Duncan Williams (1879-1960)
1920-1922	Wordan Riddle (1877-1962)
1923-1929	Virgil Evans (1891-1965)
1930-1933	Rollie Edward Norris (1891-1966)
1934-1949	William Thomas Horn (1906-1986)
1950-1956	John Murray Hale (1894-1971)
1956	Mary Elizabeth Oldham Hale (1898-1975)



**Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 1 July 1956, p.12D:**

**Birdie's Breezy Bits by L. D. "Birdie" Gasser**

"Over the Hill to the Poor House."

An old saying, but with federal old age assistance and Social Security, the "Poor Farms" are fast passing from the scene of our daily lives.

In recent years the "Poor Houses" have been operated as "County Infirmery" or "Home for the Aged, Infirm and Dependents."

All of these facts are brought to light through the advertised sale of County Infirmery and its 136 acres, more or less, located on the Macedonia Road, a short distance from Dermot.

Now former patients of the County Infirmery are placed in various moderately priced convalescent homes in Daviess County, affording them better facilities and care than they received at the infirmery.

Under the old age assistance and Social Security acts, the County did not receive any of its benefits in the keep and care of the inmates of the infirmery. However, under plans worked out by

Mrs. Gertrude Weill, supervisor of the Welfare League, former patients of the Daviess County Infirmary have been placed in convalescent homes, at a saving to the county and at the same time assuring patients better care than could be given in the infirmary.

Expenses on the care, upkeep and repairs of the local County Infirmary, and of providing a superintendent, have run anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 or more, according to Homer Ward, county treasurer.

A good move appreciated not only by the patient of the old infirmary, but by the majority of the folks of Daviess County.

And much of the credit for the passing of our Poor Farm is due to the idea advanced by Welfare Supervisor Gertrude Weill and her untiring efforts in putting it into actual operation.



**Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 17 October 1956, p.1A & 14A:**

**Whether or Not County Sells  
Infirmary May Depend on Bids**

The Daviess County Infirmary farm will be offered for sale at public auction Saturday, starting at 1:30 p.m. as advertised, members of the Fiscal Court declared yesterday.

Whether the highest and best bid is rejected or accepted still remains with the court, it was decided at a regular meeting of the county judge and county commissioners held yesterday.

A delegation representing various groups of Homemakers Clubs of Daviess County, the Daviess County Tuberculosis Association, and local civic clubs attended the meeting and suggested that the county retain the property as a tuberculosis site or a home for delinquent children.

County Commissioner T. B. Birkhead said that since the property had been advertised for sale at public auction, there was nothing to do but go ahead and hold the sale. Should the property bring a good price, and the highest bid be accepted by the fiscal court, he favored turning over the proceeds to the Daviess County Tuberculosis Association toward the purchase of a home or hospital elsewhere.

County Judge Norris B. Vincent said he would go along with the delegation opposing the sale and would favor rejecting the bid. He said the county could then hold the property in order to give the tuberculosis association time to determine whether it wanted to operate and maintain the farm as a hospital site for tuberculosis patients.

County Commissioner Joe Paul Warren stated that the county infirmary farm had been advertised to be sold at public auction and he was in favor of the sale going through. However, he added, he would make up his mind after the highest bid was made and if the to be paid for the property was a fair one to the county, would determine whether he would reject or accept the bid as made.

County Commissioner Marshall; Hale did not comment. The County Infirmary property consists of improvements and 136.65 acres of rolling, flat and low land. The fiscal court sometime ago declared \$100 per acre was too low.

The fair estimated value of the property was placed between \$20,000 and \$22,000.



**PUBLIC AUCTION**

**Saturday, October 20, 1956**

**1:30 P. M.**

**DAVISS COUNTY INFIRMARY FARM**

Located one mile southeast of Dermot, on Miller's Mill Road, consisting of 136.65 acres more or less, 6-room house all modern conveniences, natural gas, deep well, plenty of water, stable, corn crib, and barn. Possession at once.  $\frac{1}{3}$  down on date of sale balance to be paid 6 months at 6% with bond.

Also to be sold at Public Auction on premises: 1 Ford farm tractor and equipment, 1 Frigidaire refrigerator, 1 Maytag washer, 1 large gas stove, 15 gas heaters, 1 television set, 1 Electrolux sweeper, chairs, beds, springs, 100 bales Korean hay and other things too numerous to mention.

The Fiscal Court of Daviess County reserves the right to reject any and all bids offered at said sale.



*County Infirmary Farm Is  
Site Of New Country Club*

The new Country Club being formed in Owensboro has taken over the County Infirmary farm for \$22,000, on terms set out by the Fiscal Court. The farm is located four miles southeast of Owensboro, on the Macedonia Church Road, about a mile from Dermot.

The temporary board of directors approved of the transaction for the purchase of the farm consisting of 136 acres, with improved housing 20 acres of woods for a picnic area.

Ambrose Berry and Al Simpson were named on the swimming pool committee. Berry and Simpson will start making plans for building the pool to be ready by next summer.

Otha McElroy and Bernard Alvey were named on the house committee to study present building facilities and formulate plans to convert them into a club house, equipped with lockers, shower rooms, pro shop, and recreation rooms.

James H. Johnson will supervise the removal of fences, clearing ditches and removing other obstacles on the proposed golf course.

Floyd Jean, chairman of board, announced that memberships have been coming in faster than expected and from all indications the limited 400 membership will soon be attained.

Jean said the reason for the gain in the momentum of the membership drive has been due to the new budget membership plan being put into effect. Through the budget plan a share of stock at \$240, plus the 2nd quarter dues may be bought at \$43.00 on six monthly payments, with no interest attached.

After Jan. 1, 1957, the budget payment plan will be discontinued and a share of stock in the club will be increased to \$360.

Anyone seeking to become chartered members of the new club may contact Floyd Jean, Dennis Dodson, Charles Hayes, Winfred Dill, C. T. Brown, Roy Settle Jo McKinney, Hilton Snyder, Florence Davit, Ralph Biggers or Hugh Sullivan.



**Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 23 January 1957, p.12:**

**Windridge Country Club  
Name For New Organization**

Windridge Country Club has been selected by the members to be the name of the new country club which is being constructed on the site of the old county infirmary about four miles from Owensboro.

The members selected the name Sunday at a meeting held at the Daviess County Courthouse. The new club will be incorporated under the name Windridge Country Club.

The board of directors for 1957 also were elected and is composed of the following members:

Wilton Darby, Larry Depp, Dennis Dodson, Charles Hayes, Floyd Jean, Melvin Hagerman and Ben Johnson.

The board has called a meeting and will set up committees immediately to formulate plans for the construction of the club house, swimming pool, picnic grounds, golf course, game rooms and other recreation facilities. ...





### See Also:

- Daviess County, KY Deed Book I, p.239. Simpson Stout, of Daviess County, KY, sold to the Daviess County Court, for 170 acres on Burnetts Fork of Panther Creek, for \$800, on 11 December 1848; same tract on which the Daviess County court has established a County Poor House.
- Daviess County Deed Book 272, pp.27-28. Daviess County Court sold 106.11 acres on Miller's Mill Road to the Windridge County Club on 21 January 1958. Deed contains clause "Party of the second part is not to disturb a graveyard now located on said premises."
- "Very Few Inmates at Daviess County's Poor Farm", Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 12 August 1905, p.3.
- "Daviess 'Poor Farm' Is Remade", Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 12 Aug25 September 1921, p.2B.
- "Cost of County Poor Farm Has Been Cut Much", Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 18 December 1921, p.1B.
- "Fiscal Court Votes \$10,000 To Build New Infirmary", Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 5 March 1946, p.1.
- "Fiscal Court Rejects High Bid of \$18,750 For County Infirmary", Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 23 October 1956, p.14.
- "Accounted For: Missing Land Mystery Is Cleared Up In Court", Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 5 January 1957, p.1A.
- "Students angered county sent teacher to poor farm", Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 4 July 1976, Part 3, p.15.
- Obituary of Daniel S. Fulkerson (1917-1992), Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 9 August 1992, p.2C, "author of "A Poor Farm History of Daviess County."
- "Smallpox, bawdy houses and mud on Frederica Street Owensboroans faced different issues in 1900, by Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 13 January 2000, p.1C. April 6, 1900 - There are 38 paupers at the county poor farm
- "Catalog of Daviess County, KY Cemeteries", by Jerry Long, Website – West-Central Kentucky History & Genealogy. The Daviess County Poor Farm cemetery is "underneath Windridge Country Club, on Miller's Mill Road, between the 10th and 17th tees of the golf course."
- "Visit to Cemetery at 1701 Kelly Lane in Owensboro Leads to Discovery of County Pauper Cemetery", by Jerry Long, Kentucky Family Records, Vol. 27, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association (Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 2003), pp.1-25; Kentucky Ancestors, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, Winter 2001), pp.78-89 & 94-97; and Website – West-Central Kentucky History and Genealogy.
- "Pauper burial costs hit funeral homes", by Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 21 February 2010, p.1B.
- "Poor Farm history all but forgotten", by Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 23 October 2014, p.1B
- "Owensboro's Potter's Field Cemetery", by Jerry Long, Website – West-Central Kentucky History & Genealogy, 2023.
- "Daviess County Poor Farm Cemetery", by Jerry Long, Website – West-Central Kentucky History & Genealogy, 2023.



Windridge Country Club (Golf Course), 5044 Millers Mill Road, Daviess County, KY, opened in 1957. The Daviess County Poor Farm graveyard lies above the pond between the 10th and 17th tees of the golf course. Millers Mill Road is on the left.

