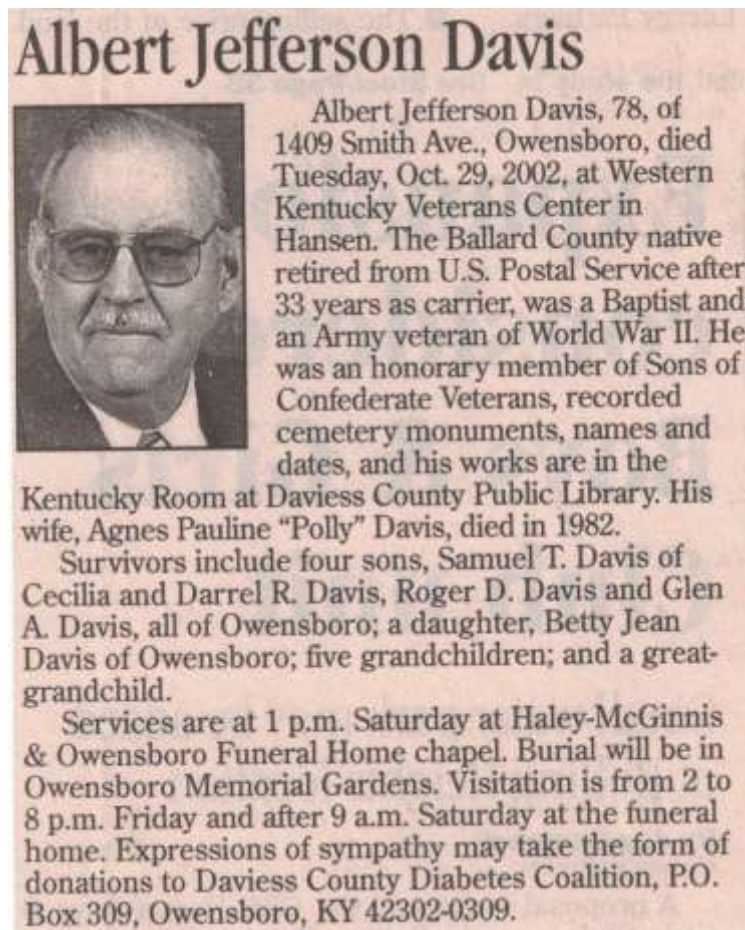


Albert Jefferson Davis (1924-2002)

By Jerry Long
c.2024



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY,
Thursday, 31 October 2002, p.2B:**



Albert Jefferson Davis

Albert Jefferson Davis, 78, of 1409 Smith Ave., Owensboro, died Tuesday, Oct. 29, 2002, at Western Kentucky Veterans Center in Hansen. The Ballard County native retired from U.S. Postal Service after 33 years as carrier, was a Baptist and an Army veteran of World War II. He was an honorary member of Sons of Confederate Veterans, recorded cemetery monuments, names and dates, and his works are in the Kentucky Room at Daviess County Public Library. His wife, Agnes Pauline "Polly" Davis, died in 1982.

Survivors include four sons, Samuel T. Davis of Cecilia and Darrel R. Davis, Roger D. Davis and Glen A. Davis, all of Owensboro; a daughter, Betty Jean Davis of Owensboro; five grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

Services are at 1 p.m. Saturday at Haley-McGinnis & Owensboro Funeral Home chapel. Burial will be in Owensboro Memorial Gardens. Visitation is from 2 to 8 p.m. Friday and after 9 a.m. Saturday at the funeral home. Expressions of sympathy may take the form of donations to Daviess County Diabetes Coalition, P.O. Box 309, Owensboro, KY 42302-0309.



Albert Jefferson Davis was born on 7 July 1924 in Ballard County, KY. He was the son of James Samuel Davis (1880-1955) & Lottie Gertrude Terrell (1903-1967). Albert, age 5, is listed with his parents in the 1930 federal census of Ballard County, KY. His parents moved the family

during 1935-1939 to Daviess County, KY, where they are listed in the 1940 census. During World War II Albert J. Davis enlisted in the US Army on 30 March 1943. He served overseas in the European Theatre and was discharged from the Army on 14 February 1946. He married Agnes Pauline ('Polly') Roark (1823-1982) in Owensboro, Daviess County, KY on 3 July 1948. They had five children – Betty Jean (1949-2016), Samuel Terrell (1951-2024), Darrel Ray (1955-2021), Roger Dale (1956-) and Glen Alan (1962-).

Upon his retirement as a mail carrier from the US Postal Service in 1976 Mr. Davis became interested in genealogy. He soon with his wife embarked on coping cemeteries in Ballard, Daviess, McLean, Muhlenberg and Ohio Counties. In 1977 the genealogy group, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, of Owensboro, KY, published his listing of Owensboro's Rose Hill Cemetery (Daviess County, Kentucky Cemeteries Volume III, McDowell Publications, Hartford, KY, 147 pages). The following volumes of (unpublished) cemetery listings by Albert J. Davis can be found in the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library, Owensboro, KY – Ballard County, KY Cemeteries, Daviess County, KY Cemeteries (4 volumes) and Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY,
Tuesday, 6 August 1968, p.1B:**

Local Mail Carrier Collects Books, Watches Television

By John Alexander
Messenger-Inquirer Staff Writer



One Among Many – Albert Davis holds one book in his hands from among the 18,000 shown in part behind him. No, he's not standing in the public library. They're all his.

"When I was in high school, one of my teachers asked me what I would like best in the whole world and I told her a big private library of my own."

If this was the special dream of Albert J. Davis, an Owensboro city postal carrier, then his dream has certainly come true. He now possesses 18,000 books, ranging from medical and law reference works to easyreading American literature.

But, just to show how time sometimes changes even a dream, Davis now spends his evenings surrounded by his wife, one daughter, four sons, and 18,000 books; and they all (except the books) watch television.

Davis admitted slyly that he is a 'fanatic TV fan'.

In reality, the books are a major symptom of the 'collector's bug' which he claims he acquired 12 years ago quite accidentally.

"I was attending an auction and they put up this box of books for sale and nobody would bid on 'em, so I just bought it for a quarter."

Then, according to Davis, there was a second auction and a third and the first thing he knew, well . . .

The bookroom would surely be overwhelming to a lesser collector.

Davis added modestly that he collected other items besides books and waved his hand dramatically over a stamp collection which numbers over 100,000. "Of course, some of them are duplicates, you understand."

Davis does do some reading, however in his work. In fact, symbolically, perhaps, his work has always had to do with reading. Before he was a city mail carrier, he worked with the Messenger & Inquirer. And even when he was a boy, he carried a paper route.

But, Davis did express a live interest in his history books. He also expressed a fond preference for Mark Twain.

His boys were also questioned concerning their father's books but they said quite candidly that they also were TV fans.

When asked of his one book that he felt might have great value, he named a religious book entitled 'Milton's Treatise of Christian Doctrine.'

Among the books are a couple of sets of the works of Bret Harte and a set of the famous McGuffey readers and a rare biography of Washington Irving by his nephew.

This reporter isn't just certain where Davis is going to put them, but he's still collecting.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY,
Monday, 27 November 1989, pp.1C & 2C:**

Man learns from tombstones

By Dan Heckel, Messenger-Inquirer

Albert Davis never knew who his grandfather was and he didn't know how to find out.

So in 1976, Davis, who had retired with a disability from the U.S. Postal Service, went to the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library and talked to someone who taught him to use the U.S. Census.

"I found out his birthdate and then found his grave in the Barlow Cemetery in Ballard County," Davis said.

But Davis did not stop there. He decided to log the names, birthdates and death dates of every person in all Daviess County cemeteries, as well as cemeteries in Ballard, Muhlenberg, McLean and Ohio counties.



Albert Davis, whose hobby is documenting cemeteries, checks information from headstones in Mater Dolorosa Cemetery on Ninth Street in Owensboro Friday.

"People tell me it's a morbid hobby, but I like it," Davis said.

Davis, an outgoing, friendly man, was a mail carrier for 31 years until he was bitten by a dog so severely that it did permanent damage to his right leg. He retired in 1976, and admittedly "sat around, watched TV and got fat." He then began having trouble with his heart, so he decided he needed to get more exercise.

His wife and he began driving to Muhlenberg County, her birthplace, to research her family, the Roarks. "We'd take a lunch and go out to the cemeteries," he said.

When Davis' wife died in 1982, he continued his hobby to keep busy. He has recorded just about every cemetery in Daviess County, even a few that are not listed, and is almost finished with Muhlenberg County.

He now gathers much of his information from the Kentucky Room at the library and from obituaries he cuts out of the newspaper, he said. He has every area obituary since 1972, information that's vital to genealogists.

"He's a great deal of help," said Jerry Long, a library employee and member of the West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association. "We've referred people to him several times to locate an obituary."

Long, who's copied quite a few cemetery stones himself, said Davis has allowed the library to copy his cemetery lists.

On an average day, Davis will get up about 8 a.m., type some information for two hours on his old manual typewriter, watch his favorite soap operas, then type three more hours in the afternoon. "I live the type of life I enjoy," he said. "I'll do this till I turn up my toes."

The Kentucky Room has asked Davis to leave his many lists to them when he dies, he said. "If no one in my family wants them, I will. My kids aren't interested in this."

Davis, 65, said once he has gone through a cemetery, he never goes back because he can keep up with new burials through the obituaries. He has slowed down on his trips to the library also, because doctors have told him his eyes are weakening.

Davis' house on Smith Avenue is full of his collections over the years, including more than 10,000 books and several thousand movies he's taped. He cuts out interesting pictures and saves wedding announcements of people he doesn't know.

He even saves deaths from other states he sees in the newspaper, such as someone being shot in New York, he said. "I don't know why I'm so interested in this," Davis said with a laugh. "Maybe I am morbid."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY,
Thursday, 16 May 1991, p.7A:

READERS WRITE

Cemeteries need to be protected from vandals

I am very concerned about the preservation of history in cemeteries. It seems people are destroying old cemeteries just like it is the proper thing to do. In some of the burial spots cattle and horses have been turned in to graze. Sones have been broken by their hoofs and many stones have been turned over. The stones are covered with stock droppings, mud and dirt.

In the past few years several cemeteries in Daviess County have been destroyed. The Pleasant Ridge Cemetery at the corner of Foster Road and Pleasant Valley Road was vandalized in July of 1986. I suppose some warped person got a kick out of this vandalism.

A cemetery in Bon Harbor Hills was damaged by someone digging into the graves making it appear that grave robbers were at work. Another time vandals destroyed some old stones in beautiful Elmwood, but Bill and Brenda Little have repaired the damage and this cemetery is like a park with its beauty and solitude.

Greenwood, a black cemetery out on Kentucky 54, has history galore. I copied this cemetery a few years ago and now it is a dump. This cemetery has hundreds of black veterans of World War I but I'm sure you can't find them now for the garbage, trees growing on graves and poison ivy.

I would like to see an effort started to protect these cemeteries. Two cemeteries in Daviess County have been bulldozed.

I now hear that the Milton Cemetery out on Little Hickory Road is being damaged by motorcycles being ridden by young fellows. It seems stones are being knocked from their foundations. Some stones are being broken. It had some 40 markers when it was copied by M.J. Edgeworth.

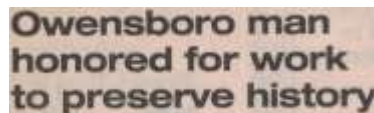
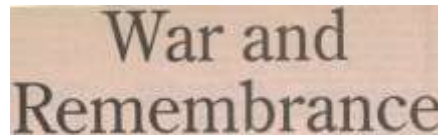
I wonder if there is a law against destruction. I know that you cannot dig in Indian burial spots. Not only will the local law officials get you but also the FBI will get into the act. Why does the FBI protect Indian burial sites but not other people's final resting places?

Albert J. Davis
1409 Smith Ave., Owensboro

Editor's note: According to the Kentucky Penal Code "A person is guilty of desecration of venerated objects in the first degree when, other than authorized by law, he intentionally excavates or disinters human remains for the purpose of commercial sale or exploitation of the remains themselves or of objects buried contemporaneously with the remains."



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY,
Sunday, 9 February 1997, p.1B:**



By John Martin; Messenger-Inquirer

Seeing a broken headstone gives Owensboro's Albert Davis a broken heart. To him, a bulldozed cemetery is the ugliest thing in the world.

"I hate it," the retired letter carrier said Saturday. "It's history that's totally gone and can't be replaced."

A local Civil War preservation group shares his view, and Saturday, it recognized him as a champion in their mutual cause of keeping history alive.

Davis was made an honorary member of Sons of Confederate Veterans' Forrest's Orphans Camp, based in McLean County. Commander Fred Wilhite gave Davis a plaque and a Kentucky Colonel certificate, which he said came courtesy of Sen. David Boswell, D-Sorgho.



If someone is buried in Daviess County, Davis has a record of it. He keeps all obituaries published in the Messenger-Inquirer, and family research groups frequently use him as a source.

Wilhite said Davis was instrumental in preserving the burials of five Confederate soldiers and three Union soldiers at Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery. Over the objections of descendants, the graves were moved in September from an old cemetery at the church to a newer one across Miller's Mill Road. But the new cemetery was dedicated with a full-blown Civil War remembrance with re-enactors in costume.

"I didn't like it one bit," Davis said of the decision to make a parking lot out of the old cemetery. He carried petitions opposing the move, but said he was pleased that a new home for the gravesites was found.

Davis traces his interest in cemeteries to 1976, when he was looking for information about his late grandfather. Using the U.S. Census, Davis tracked down his grandfather's burial site in Ballard County and found out that he was a Confederate soldier.

After cracking that mystery, Davis' interest in historical preservation snowballed. The World War II Army veteran has 40 books of cemetery listings, with military service noted where applicable.

"I went to every cemetery I could," he said. "Every time I hear of a cemetery, I try to get to it."

Davis, 73, accepted his accolades Saturday with a gentle smile. He said he's been in and out of the hospital for several months, and Saturday's presentation at Towne Square Mall came as a surprise.

The Forrest's Orphans Camp, along with Order of the Confederate Rose Emilie Todd Helm Chapter No. 5 of Elizabethtown, and the Fifth Regiment Tennessee Infantry, displayed Civil War costumes, photos and artifacts at the mall Saturday. The activity continues there today.

"They just kept calling me three or four times to make sure I'd be here," Davis said. "I didn't know anything about (the award)."

While few people go to Davis' extent, everyone should be conscious of history, according to members of the Civil War preservation groups.

Letting burial sites deteriorate is a slap in the face of history, said Darlene Mercer of Shepherdsville, president of Order of the Confederate Rose's Elizabethtown chapter. One of her group's missions is to rehabilitate the graves of Confederate soldiers.

"As long as you're remembered, you're not truly dead," she said.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY,
28 December 2005, pp.1B & 3B:**

Cemetery project in the works

Volunteers needed to work on list of burials at Greenwood

By Renee Beasley Jones; Messenger-Inquirer

Next year, historic Greenwood Cemetery turns 100.
Events slated for February, May and July will celebrate that milestone.

But before the Memorial Day event, two Greenwood Cemetery volunteers - Emily Holloway and Wesley Acton -hope to come up with a more accurate list of people buried at the cemetery, which stretches between Leitchfield Road and East Parrish Avenue. It is estimated as many as 3,000 graves may be there. Only about 170 have monuments.

Holloway and Acton have a list of 600 names that came from three sources: the late Albert Davis' hobby of visiting cemeteries and copying gravestones, information from family members and heirs and information collected by staff members in the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library.

That list of 600 became obsolete earlier this year when state officials released certificates of burial for Daviess County from 1911 to 1954. Jerry Long, a staff member at the library, combed through them and found almost 1,800 show Greenwood as the burial site.

So Acton and Holloway started a project to make copies of those burial certificates, which would provide a truer glimpse of Greenwood's population. For a project so large, though, they need volunteers.

For the year 1911, for example, 48 certificates prove burials took place in Greenwood. To date, only 27 of them have been copied for the record.

That means a total of about 1,775 are left to go. And that doesn't count certificates from 1955 that are due to arrive in February. State officials wait 50 years to release records.

"If we got 10 people who would commit to two hours," Acton said, "that's what I would like to see."

The job requires some patience, said Shelia Heflin, Kentucky Room manager at the library. It's not something that can be done quickly - and accurately.

Generally, it takes 10 boxes of microfilm to hold a year's worth of certificates.

But Long's many hours of work have lessened the load. He copied the numbers of burial certificates. Now, all volunteers must do is use those numbers to find corresponding burial certificates. Then, they will print a copy of the certificate for the cemetery's record.

"It benefits the whole community," Heflin said. "It will be an advantage for people doing genealogy research."

Some of Holloway's family members are buried at Greenwood. She and Acton teamed up to reclaim the cemetery in 1996.

It took years to clear brush and mow. More than 200 volunteers worked on the project. But the work didn't stop there.

"There were so many things we did not know about the cemetery when we walked in and started cleaning up," Holloway said.

Later, the county bought the cemetery, which is believed to be the largest black cemetery in the area. Inmates at the Daviess County Detention Center maintain the cemetery now.

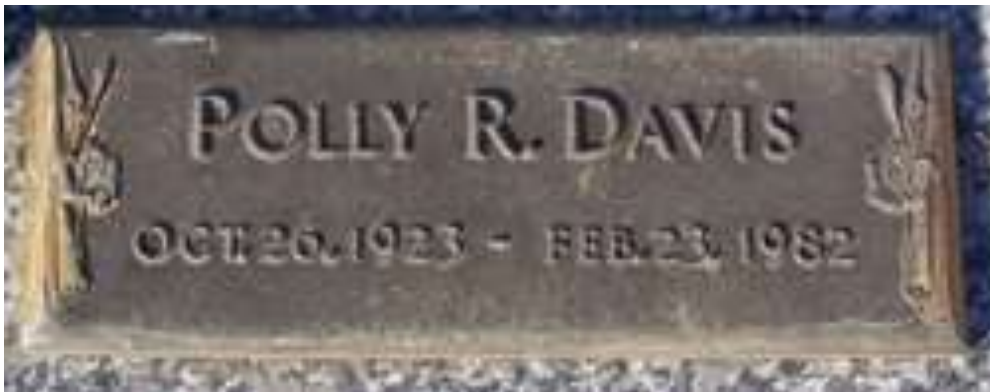
The state started keeping death records in 1911. Acton and Holloway will continue to use the cemetery's present listing for 1906 to 1911. Until new burial certificates are received and records are corrected, the same holds true of burials between 1955 and 1975.

After nearly a decade of working on the cemetery, Holloway is organizing a book about the experience. She'd like to finish it by the end of next year.

"This is a grass-roots project," Holloway said of reviving Greenwood. "We hope this will help other people in other communities."

*** To help – To help discover the names of people buried at Greenwood Cemetery, volunteers should go to the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library. Staff members

there will explain the process and provide assistance with microfilm machines. The Kentucky Room is open regular library hours.



Monuments at Owensboro Memorial Gardens
Cemetery, Daviess County, KY

