

# Daviess County Historical Society

By Jerry Long  
c.2024



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 18 August 1923, p.10:**

## To Preserve Relics Of Historical Value

A meeting of several members of the Woman's club was held with Mrs. W. T. Lafferty, of Lexington, while in the city as a lecturer for Kentucky history at the Junior agricultural camp at Sorgho, and she went into plans with them for preserving Daviess county records of value for Kentucky history. Mrs. W. T. Lafferty is state historian of the federation of women's clubs.

A number of valuable relics were ?entraenated by Miss Cora Webb, among them the desk on which the Declaration of Independence was drafted, owned by Misses Frances and Rosa Todd, and a number of interesting articles owned by J. Hunter Bell and others, that she and her coworkers had cataloged while securing a list of treasures to be added to the state catalog being compiled.

Mrs. Lafferty outlined a plan to preserve these relics similar to those already planned by the Daviess County Historical society, organized a short time ago. She asks that a duplicate of each tag bearing the name of the owner and the history of the article be sent her that she may keep it in her catalog of Kentucky history.

[ed. note: The society recently organized referred to in the preceding article was the “Green River Museum & Art Society” not the Daviess County Historical Society.]



**Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 28 September 1923, p.1:**



The Green River Museum and Art society organized and filed articles of incorporation Thursday afternoon with the following as incorporators: G. V. Triplett, Dr. D. M. Griffith, E. W. Smith, Mesdames Ward Pedley, John Gilmour and Miss Cora Lee Webb There is no capital stock. The corporation is to have 50 years of life and the indebtedness is not to exceed \$1,000.

At the meeting of the organization committee and others interested at the Chamber of Commerce the following seven directors were elected to have charge of the affairs of the society: Dr. D. M. Griffith, Miss Cora Lee Webb, G. V. Triplett, Mrs. Ward Pedley, Mrs. John Gilmour, E. W. Smith and Charles C. Mitchell The directors were chosen by ballot. They will meet at 5 o'clock this afternoon at the Chamber of Commerce to elect officers.

The purpose of the society will be to collect and display permanently relics works of art, curios and other objects of historical interest pertaining to or connected with the Green River section of the state of Kentucky. The cooperation of the public library management is had, and the library will be the depository for the collection to be made.



**Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 21 April 1929, pp.1A & 4A:**

**Small Museum Interesting at Public Library**

**Green River Society Has Collected Many Objects of Historical and Artistic Worth.**

Housed in the lobby of the Owensboro Carnegie library, is a small museum the value and interest of whose' display far exceed its size. This is the collection, for the most part loaned, of Green River Museum and Art society and its treasures are such as preserve the art, handicraft, history of the generations passed away. Most visitors to the library go by with scarce a passing glimpse yet a study of the contents of the few glass cases will reveal much that is worth while. In the pottery cabinet is a platter made for and used by George Washington while he was president; in the armory flint guns such as the Pilgrims brought from Holland in 1620; the gun of Col. Joe Daviess for whom this county was named; an Indian case with many relics of the Red man who first lived in the country; examples of fine textiles, old papers and quaint books, some curios from foreign countries as well as America.

The museum collection is due to the labors of the Green River Museum and Art society organized In October, 1923. Its officers are as follows; President, Miss Cora Lee Webb; vice-president, Dr. D. M. Griffith; secretary and treasurer, Mrs. Ward Pedley. These with the following directors compose the executive board; Mrs. W. L. Mills, Mrs. Elijah Steitler, Mrs. John Gilmour and F. W. Smith.

Some of the contents of the different cases are as follows:

**Armory Case**

Flint lock pistols, gun used in Holland 1620 years ago, gun of Joe Daviess for whom this county was named; gun used to fight the Indians; guns used in the wars of 1812, 1846, 1861, 1898. Cannon balls, poinards, daggers. Philippine war relics and other implements.

**Indian Case**

Most of the collection in the Indian case was donated by IJ C. Reynolds, of Louisville, formerly of Owensboro. It is an unusual display of arrow heads of numerous kinds, tomahawks and many objects used by the Indians in warfare and every day life, also examples of pottery, baskets, weaving and moccasins.

### Textile Case

The textile case contains baby dresses, waists, fans, combs, veils, jewelry, wedding bonnets, wedding shoes worn by late prominent people. Among these are a baby dress worn by Dr. W. D. Stirman father of the late Dr. W. F. Stirman, also a baby dress worn by Mrs. Gray Haynes' grandmother; this was beautifully embroidered by nuns in a New Orleans convent.

### Pottery

Included in the pottery case are meat platters of Burniah ware, willow ware, one made for and used by George Washington while president; spoon and fish knife made from Confederate money; dental instruments with hand carved ivory handles set with jewels; some pieces of Spode ware, a steamboat cup and saucer of 1850. Wedgewood ware, perfume bottle of 1800, doll dishes of 1825.

There is room in this case for more pottery and the directors of the museum would be glad to receive any contribution of old porcelain, pottery, pewter, or silver, or any new, such as Bybee, Rookwood, Van Briggie, Newcomb, Paul Revere, or pieces of any worth while pottery.

### Papers and Books

The papers and books are specially interesting including a Chinese newspaper, London Times, of 1814, telling of the Battle of Waterloo. Niles' Weekly Register containing one of Henry Clay's Speeches; Southern Shield; Owensboro, Monitor, 1862; Union Volunteer 1865; New York Herald of April 16, 1865, with the account of Lincoln's assassination, papers of the, death of Presidents Washington, Garfield, McKinley, Harding, Wilson; History of Daviess county; Atlas of Daviess county; Federal calculator bought In Yellow Banks. It deals with tare and tret, and vulgar fractions; an old arithmetic, written before any printed arithmetic was here; four volumes containing the name, rank, etc., of every Federal soldier in Kentucky; a diary written while in the army in the war between the states, by John Yewell, also the Bible which Mr. Yewell carried during the war; a miniature book on marriage published in 1858, and a miniature life of Christ published In 1854, and many other Interesting old books.

Among the foreign items are Chinese shoes, gin jug, opium pipe, chop sticks, hair ornaments, ring \_\_\_\_? old worn only by the Germany, France, Greece Egypt, Holy Land and Japan.

Of interest is part of a battle flag made by the women of Bowling Green in 1861 for the 4th Kentucky Regiment Co. K. At the beginning of the war its roster contained the names of 150 men at the end only 15. These divided the battle flag among them. The stripes were red and white, the star white.

Some interesting old handwoven coverlets are also to be found in the museum.



**Sixty Years of Owensboro, 1883-1943, William Foster Hayes,  
Owensboro, KY, Messenger Job Printing Co., 1943, pp.308-309:**

THE GREEN RIVER MUSEUM AND ART SOCIETY

Anne Taylor Brown – C. Stewart Todd

In the summer of 1923 the writer had the pleasure of preparing at the request of Mr. E. W. Smith, then secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, the articles of incorporation of this important but perhaps not well known organization. The articles were executed by Mr. Smith, Dr. D. M.

Griffith, Miss Cora Lee Webb, Mrs. Ward Pedley, Mrs. Mary F. Gilmour and George V. Triplett, and were filed for record September 27, 1923. The ambitious and comprehensive objects of the society were stated to be:

to collect, preserve, and exhibit works, objects and articles of art of various kinds including paintings, pictures, sculpture, statuary, ceramics, and any and all other kinds of works, objects, or articles of art or virtu or of artistic interest or value, and relics, curios, or other objects of historical or local interest or value; to accumulate, preserve, publish and disseminate information, literature and criticism bearing on all such objects and articles as are here contemplated; and generally to promote and foster public and individual interest, study, and research in and of the fine arts, and works, subjects and objects of art and history.

A visit to the lobby of the Carnegie Public Library, where the collection or exhibit of this society is kept shows that to a substantial and interesting if still partial and limited extent, the purposes of the society have been attained. The place is in part a sort of old curiosity shop, and many quaint and curious articles are gathered there; such as Indian relics, shells, antique queensware, old weapons, and curios of various kinds, even a stuffed owl that reminds one of the one that looked on while "the barber kept on shaving."

But there are also real objects of art. Among these are beautiful specimens of fine needlework made by different persons.....



**See also articles:**

- "Museum At Public Library Is Center Of Much Interest For Many Owensboroans, Founded in 1923, Repository Has Grown Steadily; Miss Cora Webb Has Been Organization's Only Head," Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 6 December 1941, p.1B.
- "From Snakes To Stars, Art And Natural History Museum Being Rejuvenated At Local Library," Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 24 July 1955, p.5D.



**Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 8 March 1931, pp.1B & 9B:**

**Daviess County Historical Society  
Is To Be Organized Thursday Night**

A meeting of the Green River Museum and Art society will be held at the library at 7:30 o'clock Thursday night, March 12, to organize a Daviess County Historical society. A constitution and bylaws will be presented for acceptance by a committee appointed at a meeting held a short time ago to discuss the feasibility of such an organization for Daviess county. This committee includes Sam Morton, chairman, E. W. Smith and Charles Mitchell.

Officers will be elected A discussion will be held as to whether the Green River Museum and Art society shall be merged with the historical society, or whether there shall be two separate organizations, the museum and art society continuing its work as at present.

#### To gather Records

Purpose of the historical society will be to gather historical records on the county, old trails, early settlers, and to study the laying out of the county and history incident thereto. These records when written up will be verified for accuracy.

Members of the museum and art society and all persons interested in the preserving of Daviess county's historical records, are asked to attend the meeting Thursday night. Those present at the last meeting of the society, and those attending Thursday night, will be considered charter members.

The Green River Museum and Art society was organized in 1923. Miss Cora Webb is the president; Dr. D. M. Griffith, vice president; and Mrs. Ward Pedley, secretary-treasurer. In addition to the officers the board of directors includes E. W. Smith, Mesdames W. L. Mills, John Gilmour and Elijah Steitler.

#### Old Treasures

The society has nine cases of treasures at the public library, including articles of great age and having to do with Daviess county's early history, and rare treasures owned by Daviess county citizens. Among some of the very old treasures are a land grant given by Patrick Henry before the Revolutionary war, and an old day book kept in days when Owensboro was Yellowbanks about 1815.

Miss Webb has a picture of the courthouse built in 1856, 1857 and 1858, and another just after it was burned by the Union soldiers in 1865. She is anxious to procure one of the courthouses before the tower and old town clock were removed, as well as one as it now is, all to be framed together for the museum.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 13 March 1931, p.3:**



Sam Morton was elected president of the Daviess County Historical society, which was organized with thirty-six charter members at a meeting of members of the Green River Museum and Art society, and people interested in preserving historical records of the county at the library last night. Other officers elected include: Vice president, Mrs. Lawrence W. Hager; secretary, Roy

Smith; treasurer, Dr. D. M. Griffith. These officers, with Henry S. Berry and J. M. Coffman complete the directorate of the society.

It was decided not to merge the museum and art society with the historical society, but for the two to operate separately. Otto Rothert, Louisville, secretary of the Filson club, was in attendance and assisted with the organization of the society.

The Filson club will print in its magazine authentic historical articles from Daviess county, upon submission.

Constitution and bylaws were read and adopted, submitted by a committee appointed at a recent meeting of the museum and art society. This committee included Sam Morton, chairman; E. W. Smith and Charles Mitchell. The society will have five meetings a year.

Miss Cora Webb, president of the museum and art society, which organization has been instrumental in the organization of a historical society, presided. Officers of the Green River Museum and Art society include: President, Miss Cora Webb: vice president, Dr. D. M. Griffith: secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Ward Pedley. These officers and E. W. Smith, Mesdames W. L. Mills, John Gilmour and Elijah Steitler, compose the board of directors.

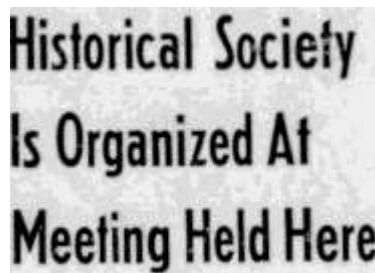


Notices of the following meetings of the Daviess County Historical Society were published in the Owensboro newspapers in 1931 and 1932:

- 21 May 1931 (Sam Morton gave a program on Bill Smothers)
- 12 November 1931 (Dr. Arndt M. Stickles gave the program “Incidents of Early Kentucky”)
- 14 January 1932 (J. L. Foust, Owensboro school superintendent, gave a program on “Kentucky and the Indians”);
- 10 March 1932 (Samuel H. Morton was reelected president and Miss Susan Starling Towles gave a program on “The Founding and Functioning of the Henderson County Historical Society and Possibilities For Organization of County Historical Societies in Western Kentucky”)
- Subsequent to the 10 March 1932 meeting notice there were no meeting notices or articles about the Daviess County Historical Society published in the Owensboro newspapers until a new organization was formed in 1963.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 27 February 1963, p.1B:**



The Daviess County Historical Society was organized and elected officers at a meeting held last night at Radio Station WOMI.

Mrs. G. Alton Nation, who was instrumental in forming the nucleus of an organization here, was named president, to serve until June 30. Dr. David Orrahood was elected vice president, and Miss Nina Jett, secretary-treasurer.

The organization was formed after a brief talk by Charles L. Atcher of Lexington, field representative for the Kentucky Historical Society.

Atcher explained that the state society was interested in seeing societies formed in counties throughout Kentucky, with the possibility they will affiliate with the parent organization.

He emphasized four basic programs that county units were urged to pursue. They included a young historian program for children of various age groups that would be developed further in state and region-wide organizations with the idea of promoting more interest in history and historical events and sites by younger people.

Other points included the high way historical marker program; sites and shrines preservation, and the encouragement of other counties to participate in the historical society activities.

Atcher in his talk, reported that the statue of Governor Goebel, long a controversial subject in Frankfort, was to be moved next Monday from in front of the new capital building to the old capital building and would be located in a spot about 25 from where Goebel fell when he was shot by an assassin.

Atcher also reported that June 1, nearly 400 highway historical markers would be erected in all parts of the state.

The local organization, which hopes to increase its membership within the next two or three months to a sizeable number, decided to elect officers only until June 30, and with added membership, to have an annual election at end of every fiscal year.

The society here is open to all persons interested in history and historical events of the area. The next meeting will be held March 26 at WOMI.



### **Meetings of the Daviess County Historical Society in 1963**

- 26 March 1963 (charter meeting)
- 26 April 1963 (Peter B. English gave program on Ohio River history)
- 28 June 1963 (W. B. Coleman gave program on the old Owensboro – Russellville Railroad)
- 26 July 1963 (Sidney A. Neal gave program on “The History of Aviation in Owensboro)
- 23 August 1963 (Hugh O. Potter gave program (“A Defense of Bill Smothers Character”)
- 20 September 1963 (Joe Ford gave program, “Indians of Daviess County From 5000 B.C.”)
- 25 October 1963 (Robert S. Triplett gave program “Early Reminiscence of Owensboro and Daviess County”))
- 21 November 1963 (Dr. Philip W. Kennedy gave a program on the South’s bid to win diplomatic recognition by Mexico during the Civil War)
- 27 December 1963 (L. M. Johnson gave a program about his career on the Green River)



**A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky, Hugh O. Potter,  
Daviess County Historical Society, Owensboro, KY; Herff Jones-Paragon  
Publishing, Montgomery, AL, 1974, pp.214-215:**

DAVIESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A history of Owensboro and Daviess county organizations would be amiss if it did not include the story of the Daviess County Historical Society, which is the sponsor of this publication. It was natural to turn to Mrs. G. Alton Nation, the first president of the society, for this contribution. Mrs. Nation wrote:

"On February 26, 1963 a group of interested people met at Radio Station WOMI for the purpose of organizing a Daviess County Historical Society. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Potter, Mrs. G. Alton Nation, Mrs. David Orrahood, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Shannon, Mrs. James Robb and Miss Nina Jett. Mrs. Nation, acting as chairman of the group, presided. Mrs. Nation introduced Mr. Charles L. Atcher of Lexington, Ky., who was the field representative of the Kentucky Historical Society. Four basic programs were discussed and decided upon. They were a Young Historian program, the Highway Historical Markers program, the preservation of Historical Records, Sites and Shrines, and the encouragement of other nearby counties to participate by establishing societies. The following officers were elected to serve until June 30, 1963 when the annual meeting would be held at the close of the fiscal year, President, Mrs. G. Alton Nation; Vice President, Dr. David Orrahood, and Secretary-Treasurer, Miss Nina Jett. Due to the small number attending this meeting it was decided to extend the charter membership to include those joining by the time of the second meeting. At that meeting we had 31 charter members: Mrs. Nation, Dr. and Mrs. Orrahood, Miss Jett, Mr. and Mrs. Potter, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Shannon, Mr. and Mrs. James H. Robb, Mrs. T. C. Rouse, Mrs. W. W. Kirtley, Mrs. E. J. Fitzgerald, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Robertson, Mr. and Mrs. P. B. English, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Westerfield, Henry Taylor, Miss Elisabeth Gasser, Joe Ford, Dr. William G. Ward, Sidney A. Neal, Mrs. W. E. Daniel, Michael J. Edgeworth, William Ira Wood, Mrs. Robert Croy, Mrs. Connie Phillips, Mrs. C. V. Claypool, Sr., and Mrs. Howard Cornette.

"Some of the accomplishments of the Society include: Procuring Kentucky historical markers for historic sites in Owensboro and Daviess county; organizing Young Historian chapters in schools in the city and county; obtaining the bell from the old Daviess county court house when it was demolished and having it permanently erected and marked in the court yard; the renaming of Riverside city park to Bill Smeathers Pioneer Park in honor of the first settlers of Owensboro, and sponsoring the state Young Historians' convention in Owensboro in 1964 with more than 700 in attendance.

"The largest project which the Society adopted was the establishing of a museum. Owensboro now has a museum. This was not acquired by the Society but we feel that we created and stimulated the interest that has resulted in the present one. This project was adopted and a committee appointed in May 1963 by the Historical Society.

"Those who have served as presidents of the Daviess County Historical Society up to and including the current club year, are: Mrs. G. Alton Nation, 1963-64; Sidney A. Neal, 1964-65; Rev. Wendell H. Rone, 1965-66; Stan LeMaster, 1966-67; Ben Field, 1967-68; Mrs. Robert Gillette, 1968-69; Joe Hagan, 1969-70; Mrs. Ruth Westerfield, 1970-71; P. B. English, 1971-72; Miss Elisabeth Gasser, 1972-73, and Commander Eugene Hayden, 1973-74."



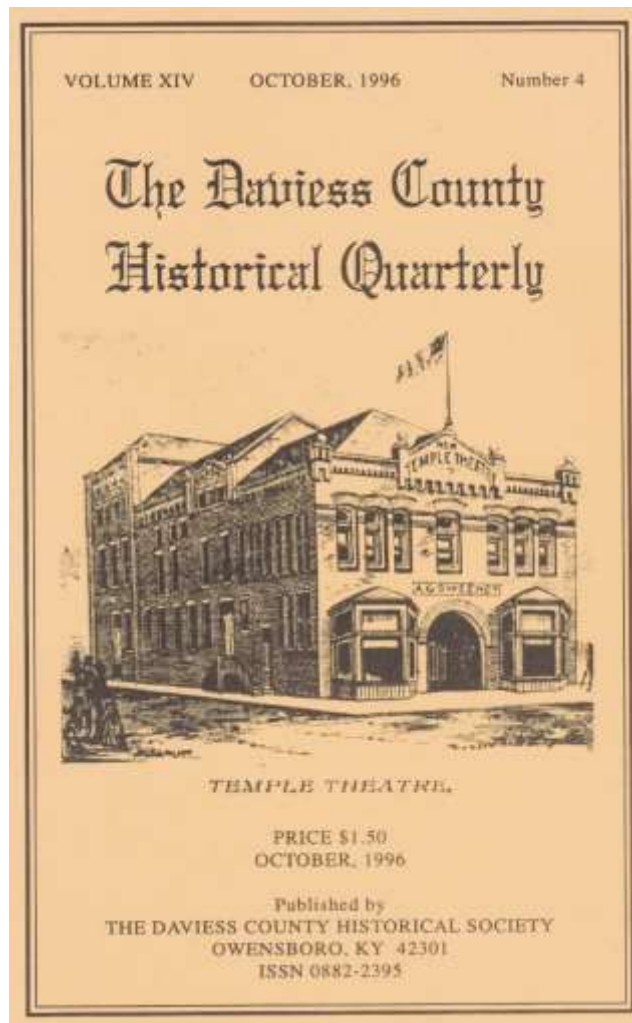
The Society also stimulated interest in and sponsored the observance of Daviess county's 175th anniversary in 1965. An elaborate parade with floats was held in the business district of Owensboro; a time capsule was planted in the court house yard, and the Society sponsored the publication of the Daviess County Sesquicentennial Historical Fact Book.

Each year since its organization the Society has held monthly meetings, except during the summer vacation period, at which programs of local historical interest are presented. The Society also maintains a local history room at the Owensboro Area Museum.

[ed. note – The subsequent terms as presidents of the Daviess County Historical Society were served by: Mrs. Chester Merchant, Hubert Mattingly, Lee A. Dew, Aloma W. Dew, Rev. Wendell H. Rone, Lee A. Dew, Doris Campbell, Aloma W. Dew, Edith Bennett, David Orrahood, and Lee A. Dew.]



**The Daviess County Historical Society published The Daviess County Historical Quarterly, Lee A. Dew, editor – Volume I, issue 1, January 1983 through Volume XIV, issue 4, October 1996:**



## The Editor's Page

This marks the last issue for me [Lee A. Dew] as Editor of the Quarterly, a task which I began fourteen years ago, and which I have enjoyed thoroughly. Your Society has been responsible for the publication of more than thirteen hundred pages of the history of our city and county; and, frankly, we have only scratched the surface of the possibilities which our rich heritage offers. I commend the members of the Society who have voted to use the financial assets of their Society to subsidize this effort. Thanks to all who made it possible!



**Daviess County Historical Quarterly,**  
**Daviess County Historical Society**  
**Volume V, Number 1, January 1987, pp.13-17:**

“Hugh O. Potter and the Early Years of the Daviess County Historical Society”  
By M. David Orrahood MD, and Edith Bennett

Hugh O. Potter's *History of Owensboro and Daviess County Kentucky- 1974* was tied closely to the activities of the Daviess County Historical Society established in late 1962. Mr. Potter died this past summer in Sarasota, Florida, at the age of 81. This article honors the members of the society and the work of Hugh O. Potter in their chief goal of preserving our history.

The charter members of the Historical Society were listed as Mrs. Alton Nation, Dr. & Mrs. M. David Orrahood, Miss Nina Jett, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh O. Potter, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Shannon, Mr. and Mrs. James H. Robb, Mrs. T. C. Rouse, Mrs. W. W. Kirtley, Mrs. E. J. Fitzgerald, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Robertson, Mr. and Mrs. Peter B. English, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Westerfield, Henry Taylor, Miss Elizabeth Gasser, Joe Ford, Dr. William G. Ward, Sidney A. Neal, Mrs. W. E. Daniel, Michael J. Edgeworth, William Ira Wood, Mrs. Robert Croy, Mrs. Connie Phillips, Mrs. C. V. Claypool, Dr. and Mrs. Howard Cornette.

Mrs. Nation, our first president, wrote that the society was formed in early February 1963 with eight members. The purpose of the club was to search out, preserve, compile and publish our history. Several event conspired to encourage the formation of the Society - the Civil War centennial, the 175th birthday of Kentucky, and the Sequicentennial of Owensboro. Mr. Potter had begun his WOMI editorials and through them had made contact with a number of people interested in local history. The Kentucky Historical Society was stressing the Young Historians program and the county historical marker program and the preservation of historical sites and shrines.

Mrs. Nation, a native of Butler County, inherited all those delightful Kentucky ways which Joe Creason of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* was making famous. Her style may be heard in this lead from her retiring address of 1964: "Friends, I wish to thank you for bearing with me in receiving portions of our past. I trust it hasn't been too tiring... I find I have mixed emotions every time I start reviewing the past."

The society at this time commissioned a "time capsule." The capsule would be buried in the front of the new county courthouse. Reflecting the serious purpose of the committee, items were secured in a screw-type capsule with a gasket seal for release in the year 2015, the bicentennial of the founding of Daviess County. Copies of instructions for the opening of the

capsule are deposited at Central Bank and Trust Company, the Filson Club and the Kentucky Historical Society.

The "Roll of Immortality" represents a scroll of the membership of the society at the time, and other items in the capsule include coins, maps and autographs. The record indicates a wide selection from the interests of the various members of the Society. A "wag" at the time remarked, "This is as close to immortality as most of us will ever come." Mrs. Joyce Orrahood was chairman of the capsule committee and made arrangements with Green River Steel Co. to cast the special steel vault used for the installation.

The social activities of the Society contributed to its success. Mrs. Orrahood remembers: "The entertainment activities after the meetings were as important as the meetings themselves." Miss Nina Jett, the first secretary, started the cookie and coffee hour after the meetings on a rotating basis, in which nearly every member contributed.

Field trips to Russellville, Hawesville and other locations were scheduled, as well as tours of the historic downtown area. Joint meetings with societies in surrounding counties were held, along with speaker exchanges. Several trips on the Belle of Louisville were also scheduled.

During the sixties the society obtained important contributions on the coal, river, distillery, and oil industry. These may be mentioned briefly.

Dr. Orrahood, a native of the Monongahela Valley in northern West Virginia pursued his coal interests as an active hobby. The result was a fine collection of "flickers" or coal-company scrip, much documentation of the coal industry of the area, and several finished papers.

The Ohio River was covered by Agnes Harralson, Dr. Victor Johnson, and Peter "Book" English. Mrs. Harralson, a native of Graham, Kentucky, had documented much coal, river, and central Kentucky history. A visit by the Society to her home in Central City revealed book shelves of carefully compiled binders. She shared her material and was an encyclopedia on names, dates and places.

Mr. English, a loyal and active member, shared "his" river with us. "Book" was born in Sacramento 82 years ago. He started on the Ohio River on April 1, 1924, moved to Hawesville, Louisville, and other locations, and returned to Owensboro. In a recent interview, "Book" stated that the success of the Society was do to "everyone's willingness to do something without taking credit."

The early oil industry of the area was brought up to date by Paul Bushong, an active member, and Tom Galey. Mr. Bushong's research is included in the Potter book.

The distilling industry was represented in the Society by both John Medley and Joe Hagan. Mr. Medley's article is in the Society minutes. He had a vast understanding of the history, manufacturing and marketing of bourbon whiskey. His collection of old wine-jugs was widely noted. Mr. Hagan, a former officer of the Society, pursues promotion at the Medley's distillery.

A number of active authors were involved with the Society in its early years. Hugh Potter's paper on Abraham Lincoln given at the Filson Club represented a lifetime study of Lincoln. The paper received high critical approval and was recognized as a definitive work. Potter had a premiere collection of Lincolniana including books, papers, and references. His favorite writing desk had been made from timber from the Pate House in Hawesville where Lincoln successfully argued his first legal case.

The Rev. Wendell Rone's *Historical Atlas* has gone through several reprints and is considered by the Kentucky Historical Society as their best sales producer. Mr. Rone used a 16 pica typewriter in the early 1960's and wrapped the formatted blocks of type around pictures, rare

maps, drawings, and other innovative presentations to produce a very attractive work which will be a Kentucky classic.

Stan Lemaster started writing shortly after joining the Daviess County Historical Society. He came to Owensboro with the talented group of engineers who worked at that time for General Electric. Born in 1925 in Oklahoma he has two patents, much civic activity, and an insatiable urge to write.

Dr. Orrahood, born May 3, 1923, in Clarksburg, W. Va., moved to Owensboro in 1957. His wife, a native of Evansville, wanted to settle near her home. Orrahood's direction has been writing, collecting, and professional activities. His work is reflected in works on coal, local and regional history, and medicine. He is a graduate of Harvard Medical School (1947).

Miss Edith Bennett, with roots in McLean County, has two impressive regional books to her credit. She assisted Hugh O. Potter and is the source of much of the background material used in Potter's works. An active professional woman, Edith continues a weekly religion program on WOMI radio.

Sr. Mary Carmel Browning will be remembered for her book Kentucky Authors. The work was chosen as the Book of the Year for the 175th birthday celebration of Kentucky by the Kentucky Historical Society.

The Daviess County Historical Society has had a very close relationship with the Owensboro Area Museum from its beginning in 1969. Mrs. Nation considered the museum "the largest project which the Society adopted. Joe Ford, director of the museum and curator for the historical society has housed our activities, supported our goals, and contributed to our programs."

Mrs. Robert D. Gillette, Jr., Commander Eugene Hayden, and Mrs. Orrahood designed, decorated and took care of the Daviess County Historical Society Room at the Owensboro Area Museum. The furnishings were gifts to the Society from the estate of Elizabeth M. Sammis. Mrs. Sammis's fine collection of nineteenth century Canton china is one of the prize exhibits in the room.

Mrs. Orrahood has worked on historical preservation, particularly on recognition of historic homes. These homes have been awarded certificates by the Kentucky Heritage Commission. Another special project was the preservation of the old iron bell which came from the old courthouse. A committee composed of P. B. English, Louise Kirtley, William L Wilson and Ed Shannon worked with the County Commissioners to bring this to a successful conclusion.

Mrs. Nation worked with the Young Historians organization, and was active in many projects, including preserving the courthouse bell, cleaning up cemeteries, and marking historical trails and homes. Richard Weiss and Dan M. King worked diligently cataloging a collection of rare books and Kentuckiana for the Library at Kentucky Wesleyan College.

In retirement after 1972, Hugh O. Potter spent the next two years coordinating the steps needed to publish his History. He felt that the History had been the combined efforts of the Society. In the preface and acknowledgements he cites those special contributors to the backing and initial financing, to those making individual contributions to the text, to the authors of special chapters, to others who made the project possible.

His manuscripts, written in longhand script, came in the mail, and few corrections needed to be made. Members of the Society met at Henry Etta Schauburger's home and farmed out the task of typing, editing, and indexing the chapters of the book. Ruth Westerfield and Marjorie Schauburger were in charge of these important tasks. Dr. Orrahood arranged to have the printing done by a publisher in Louisville.

Potter insisted that footnotes and citations be held to a minimum. He felt that these detracted from the reading of the text. His years of newspaper and radio experience allowed him to remember, cite, and write in a precise and directed manner. His work was limited to Daviess County and was not directed to the surrounding counties or to regional history. The account was factual, not critical.

The financial accounting for the work was the task of Mrs. Schaubeger. She joined the Society early and served as treasurer for thirteen years. In addition to accounting for the sales of some 700 of these histories, she set up a mailing department in her basement where the out-of-town sales were wrapped and prepared for mailing. Many copies of the work were sent to libraries all over the United States. Some \$7,000 was collected by these means which were donated to the Society for the on-going publishing program.



Hugh O. Potter in his office at WOMI  
in Owensboro in 1955

Hugh Oliver Potter, Sr., was an Owensboro native, born June 3, 1905. He died in Sarasota, Fla. On June 3, 1986. He attended the public schools of Owensboro, St. Frances Academy in Owensboro, the University of Kentucky and the University of Chicago. He worked as a reporter for the Owensboro Inquirer from 1924 to 1929; then served as city editor of the Messenger-Inquirer from 1929 through 1939 when he became general manager of radio station WOMI. He was instrumental in bringing WOMI-FM to the airwaves in 1948 and served as manager of both stations until his retirement in 1972. He was secretary of the Owensboro Broadcasting Company from 1957 until 1972.

He was founder of the Kentucky Broadcasters Association, and served as its first president in 1945 and as secretary-treasurer from 1948 until 1957. He and his wife Cliffordean received the coveted "Mike" Awards from the broadcasters in the early 1960's and were honored at "Old Timers" night when the state convention was held in Owensboro in 1981. From 1951 through 1954 he served as a member of the board of directors of the Mutual Broadcasting System's Affiliates Advisory Committee. He was a member of the board of directors of the National Association of Broadcasters from 1958 through 1962.

In 1965 he was voted Man of the year by the Civitan Club. He was president of the Owensboro Lions Club in 1953-54 and the district governor of Lions International in 1958-59. He was a charter member of the Daviess County Historical Society, and served as commanding general of the Vanderburgh Court House Civil War Round Table, Evansville. He was a member

of the Investigators Club; served in several capacities with the Kentucky Historical Society including the executive committee in 1967-71, vice president in 1971-1972, and president in 1973-1974. His publications include the Daviess County Sesquicentennial *Historical Fact Book: In the Beginning, the History of Settle Memorial United Methodist Church, 1836-1966; History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky*; and articles published by the Kentucky Historical Society, the Filson Club, broadcasting magazines, and new pictures to early issues of Life Magazine.

Hugh and Cliffordean Jø Hammond were married December 4, 1926. They had two sons, John Hammond, who died in infancy, and Hugh O. Potter, Jr., and three grandchildren, Donna Louise, Patricia and William Samuel Potter II, all of San Diego, California.



The Daviess County Historical Society disbanded in 1998. No volunteers were found to accept the positions of officers for the society. The board of directors decided to not continue as an organization. No formal announcement was made. The last meeting of the group was on 19 May 1998 at the Owensboro Area Museum of Science & History, 220 Daviess Street, Owensboro, KY.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 10 September 2016, pp.1B & 3B:**

## **Public meeting planned to resurrect historical society**

Group was originally founded in the 1960s

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

The Daviess County Historical Society, founded around 1964, faded into history a few years ago.

But Leslie McCarty, manager of the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library, hopes to resurrect it.

She and two other local historians -- Aloma Dew, a retired educator, and Kathy Olson, executive director of the Owensboro Museum of Science and History -- have scheduled a public meeting for 6 p.m. Sept. 20 on the first floor of the library for people who are interested in reviving the historical society.

McCarty isn't sure just when the historical society stopped meeting.

"Everybody was getting older and most of the work fell to Lee and Aloma Dew," she said.

"But we think there's a lot of interest in local history now," McCarty said.

Last year, Daviess County celebrated its 200th birthday.

Next year, Owensboro will celebrate its own double-century mark.

And the Facebook group History of Owensboro, KY has more than 9,100 members.

"Everyone who is interested in local history is invited to attend the meeting," McCarty said.

She said she hopes the new group will be active by the first of 2017.

McCarty said she envisions the group doing a lot of outreach to promote local history, culture and tourism.

The old organization published "The Daviess County Historical Quarterly" for two decades or more, beginning around 1982.

Each edition carried a half-dozen or so articles about local history.

McCarty said she'd like to see that revived, maybe as an online blog this time.

She said the city used to have a junior historical society as well.

McCarty would like to see that revived for high school students.

Anyone who is interest in more information can call her at the library -- 270-684-0211



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 21 September 2018, pp.1B & 6B:**

## Local historical society dissolves

By Jacob Dick, Messenger-Inquirer

The group dedicated to exploring and promoting the city and county's past has become history as well after a lack of participation from the community.

The Owensboro-Daviess County Historical Society announced earlier in the month that its members had moved to dissolve the organization at its August board meeting and would be giving its remaining funds and control of its online community to Daviess County Public Library's Kentucky Room. The group's Facebook page, where most of its activities were posted, has been changed to the Daviess County Historical Archives.

Christina Clary, the group's temporary president before it dissolved and an employee of the Kentucky Room, said the group continued to have an active community on social media but didn't have enough active members to accomplish programs in the community.

"Facebook-wise, we got a lot of response on social media, but it didn't lead to people showing up to meetings," Clary said. "Part of it is social media. It's great that you can reach throughout and outside of the community, but it makes it easier for people to ask 'Why do I need to go to a meeting?' "

The group's Facebook page currently has 689 followers -- active accounts that have opted to have the page's posts prioritized in their newsfeeds -- but Clary said the organization had only

about three or four active members including herself and another Kentucky Room employee, Savannah Warren.

An earlier iteration of the historical society also dissolved in 2007 before it was re-created in 2016. Clary said she and the other members wanted to create educational programs for children about local history, plan cemetery cleanups and organize historical markers.

"When I was a kid, we never really heard about the local history of the place we were growing up," she said. "We wanted to change that."

In May, the group held a program on the Owensboro sassafras tree, the largest known tree of its kind in the world, when it tackled the story of Grace Rash defending the tree from road contractors with her shotgun. Clary said tracking down the true story and letters between Rash and former Kentucky Gov. Albert Benjamin "Happy" Chandler Sr. inspired the group to debunk local myths.

The library's Kentucky Room has served as a source for most local history projects, and the organization also met there.

Leslie McCarty, director of the Kentucky Room, said the Kentucky Room would continue to offer a place for local history buffs to work together, and use of the historical society's online community could hold new opportunities.

"We will use it for outreach and as a marketing tool for the Kentucky Room," McCarty said. "As a page for the historical society, it had a narrow focus but now we can do lots of different things. It's opened a door for us."

