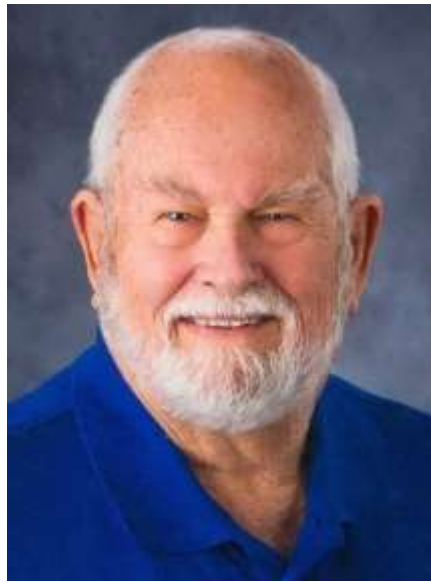


# Dr. Lee Allen Dew (1931-2018)

By Jerry Long  
c.2024



Dr. Lee Allen Dew, son of Lee Allen Dew III & Irene Frances Boyd. Professor Emeritus Kentucky Wesleyan College, Owensboro, KY.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 12 May 2018, p.3C:**

Lee Allen Dew

Lee Allen Dew, Kentucky Wesleyan College professor emeritus, local historian, and environmental activist died on May 10, 2018 at 1 pm. He was 86 ½ years old. Dr. Dew was well-known for his intellect and wit and will be remembered by generations of students.

Dew was born on the island of Aruba on September 22, 1931, to Allen Dew and Irene Boyd Dew, and came to the United States in 1942 to his family's home in Missouri after German submarines threatened the food and water supplies on Aruba.

He was a graduate of the University of Arkansas, Kansas State University Pittsburg, and held a PhD from Louisiana State University where he studied under Dr. T. Harry Williams. His main expertise was in transportation and Interstate Commerce regulations. He taught at Murray State College, Arkansas State University, and Kentucky Wesleyan College. He was a member of First Christian Church. He was a member of the Sierra Club, served on the board of the Pennyrile Group Sierra Club; was past president of the Daviess County Historical Society, was the founder and editor of the Daviess County Historical Quarterly.

The author or co-author of eleven books and many articles in professional journals, he was also a popular speaker on a variety of subjects, particularly on the history of his adopted home of Owensboro and Daviess County, including Owensboro: The City on the Yellow Bank; Daviess County Kentucky—Celebrating Our History; The Pursuit of the Dreams: A History of Kentucky Wesleyan College; and History of the Pinkerton Tobacco Company.

After his retirement from KWC in 1994, he took up a second career as a field water tester and director of Sierra Club Kentucky Water Sentinels program. He helped organize and train volunteers to sample creeks and streams in the lower Green River basin for a variety of chemical and agricultural pollutants.

Dew was also an accomplished cook and baker, called the “Cookie God” by his grandsons who enjoyed his “tinkering” in the kitchen. He also enjoyed making jam which he gave to friends and family, gardening (including the planting of many trees), brick laying and carpentry, includes the building of two sailboats.

He and his wife Aloma were organizers for the “Always a River” festivals in the early 1990's, co-authors of the book “Owensboro: The City on the Yellow Banks” They were co-chairs of the 2015 Daviess County Bicentennial Celebration, and worked together on many environmental issues, often testifying before government committees on such subjects as power plant construction permits and the dangers of coal combustion. They were awarded the Mayor's Award for Excellence in 1988. Among other awards and recognitions, Dew received the Commonwealth of Kentucky Environmental Quality Committee Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011.

In addition to his wife, Aloma Williams Dew, he is survived by his children Dr. Spencer Dew (Cristina Caldari) of Newark, Ohio ; Hillary Dew Cravaack (John) of Madeira, Ohio; Dr. Stephanie Dew, Danville, KY.; and Dr. Chris Field (Alison Tinsley) of Caen Minervois, France; grandchildren—Claire Cravaack, Jack Cravaack, Carson Cravaack, Conner Cravaack, of Madeira, Ohio, Nico Farren of Newark, Ohio.

A celebration of Dr. Dew's life will be held June 2, 2018 at 2 p.m. at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Dr. Dew will be cremated and his ashes scattered in the Caribbean near his childhood home of Aruba. In lieu of flowers, Dr. Dew requests that tokens of remembrance be donations to the Daviess County Farmers Market, University of Chicago Disciples House, the Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club, or Hospice of Western Kentucky.

Dr. Dew's family thanks Dr. Angela Jarvis, our dedicated and comforting physician, and Hospice workers with Hospice of Western Kentucky and staff of Heartford House. They all made his final days so much easier, as did his beloved cat, Bella.



Lee A. Dew – left: 1951 yearbook of Missouri Southern State University, Joplin, MO, sophomore class; right: 1962 yearbook of Murray State College, Murray, KY, staff, social science teacher.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 27 April 1969, p.1C:**

***Wesleyan Names  
Professor Of History***



Dr. Lee A. Dew

The appointment of Dr. Lee A. Dew as professor of history at Kentucky Wesleyan College was announced Saturday by Dr. Howard L. Ramsey, vice president for academic affairs at Wesleyan.

Dr. Dew comes to Wesleyan from Arkansas State University where he has been a member of the faculty since 1963. A former professor at Murray State University, Dr. Dew is married to an area native, the former Nancy Kay Keown of Beaver Dam, Ky.

In the last two years, Dr. Dew has had three books and two articles published. His books are "The History of an Arkansas Railroad," "The Catholic Missions of Northeast Arkansas," and "The ASU Story, A History of Arkansas State University."

In 1967, Dr. Dew received an Institutional Research Grant at Arkansas State, which was used for the writing and the publishing of the history of Arkansas State University.

Besides the institutional grant, he received the F. Lee Wesson Grant in Arkansas History in 1968 and was the recipient of the award from the American Association for State and Local History.

He has presented papers at meetings of the Southern Historical Association, the Louisiana Historical Association, the Arkansas Historical Association and the Missouri Valley Conference of Collegiate Teachers of History.

The new Wesleyan history professor was born in Aruba, Netherlands Antilles (his father worked for a company in the Netherlands at that time) but graduated from Webb City, Mo., High School. He completed the B.A. at Arkansas State, the M.S. at Kansas State College and the Ph.D. from Louisiana State University in 1960.

His first teaching experience was in the high school ranks at Joplin, Mo. He served as a graduate assistant at LSU while working on his doctor's degree and became an assistant professor at Murray State in 1960. After three years at Murray, he moved to Arkansas State, where he has served as a professor since 1967.

Dr. Dew will join the Wesleyan faculty for the second session of summer school. The Dews have two daughters, Stephanie and Hillary.

The addition of Dr. Dew is the fourth new faculty member announced by Dr. Ramsey this spring.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 24 January 1971, p.2A:**

## ***Railroad Buff Merges Hobby With Historical Researches***

Dr. Lee A. Dew, professor of history at Kentucky Wesleyan College, has had articles published in the January issue of two scholarly publications.

Dr. Dew's articles were in the Arkansas Historical Quarterly and the Midwest Quarterly.

"The Lynching of 'Boll Weevil'" is the title of the nine-page article in the Midwest Quarterly, which is published by Kansas State College of Pittsburgh, Kan.

His other article is entitled "The Arkansas Tap Line Cases: A Study in Commerce Regulation." His 15-page story appeared in the winter issue of the Arkansas Historical Quarterly published by the Arkansas Historical Association.

Dr. Dew joined the Wesleyan faculty year after serving on the faculty of Murray State University and Arkansas State University. He did his undergraduate work at the University of Arkansas, completed his M.S. at Kansas State College and the Ph. D. at Louisiana State University.

He and his wife, the former Nancy Kay Keown of Beaver Dam, reside at 3875 Lewis Lane in Owensboro.

In his article in the Midwest Quarterly, the story is described as "a blunt, unvarnished analysis of a southern lynching." Dr. Dew's story points directly to the participation of "best" citizens and community leaders in a perversion of justice usually played down as the work of an ignorant white lower class.

Dr. Dew gained the material for the article while doing research for another story and was able to talk to an eyewitness to the event.

This is his second article in the Midwest Quarterly. His other article, "The Reluctant Radicals of 1866" appeared in the April, 1967 issue. Dr. Dew's work on the article in the Arkansas Historical Quarterly was done while he taught at Arkansas State University.

The material is on the different types of railroads in Arkansas, and specifically the "tap" which were lines that began as industrial roads, serving the timber area of the state, but expanded to become separate corporations with common-carrier status. The story contains 18- pages of copy, pictures of two turn-of-the-century logging trains and a map listing the routes of the tap lines.

In the spring of 1968, Dr. Dew had another article published in the Arkansas Historical Quarterly. His initial article was on "The JLC & E R.R. and the opening of the 'Sunk Lands' of Northeast Arkansas."

Dr. Dew is presently engaged in research work on two papers. His main concern right now is on narrow gauge railroading in the Mississippi Valley.

The Wesleyan professor describes himself as a "railroad nut" and his KWC office is filled with railroad rails, ties, couplers and many other items relating to railroads.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 24 January 1983, p.1B:**

**New historical magazine rolls off the presses**

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

A new Owensboro magazine makes its debut this week with the publication of the first issue of "The Daviess County Historical Quarterly."

Lee Dew, editor of the new publication, said it is designed to "stimulate the historical consciousness of the people in Daviess County. Owensboro has never been very historically oriented."

Dew, who also is chairman of the department of history and political science at Kentucky Wesleyan College, said other Ohio River towns in Kentucky have made efforts to preserve their past while bulldozers have claimed many historical structures in Owensboro.

There also are few markers in Owensboro to tell tourists and newcomers about the points of historical interest in the community, he said.

The new quarterly magazine will be published by the Daviess County Historical Society in January, April, July and October, Dew said.

It will deal solely with Daviess County history. No genealogical articles will be published, he said, because there already are genealogical magazines in the area.

The first edition includes three articles – one by Shelia Brown Heflin, the secretary of the local Historical Society, and two by Dew. Dew is hoping for more contributions from other members of the community in the future.

The new publication will be on sale at the Owensboro Area Museum and in the Kentucky Room of the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library. Two hundred copies of the first edition are being printed, and Dew said he expects this to be an average press run for the future.

Single copies sell for \$1.50, but subscriptions are included in the \$5 membership fees of the Historical Society, Dew said. The idea is to increase the membership of the society beyond its current 60 to 70 members, he said.

The first copies will be presented at the Historical Society meeting at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the Owensboro Area Museum.

Articles in the first edition are about the old Owensboro Chautauqua, the Whig Party in Daviess County and the history of the western Daviess County community of Curdsville.

April's edition is already planned. and the articles scheduled to appear in it are by three different writers, Dew said.

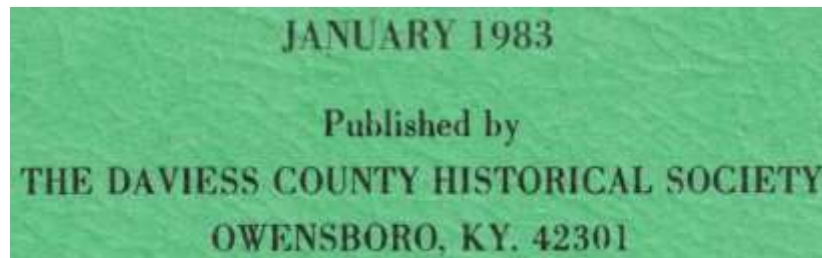
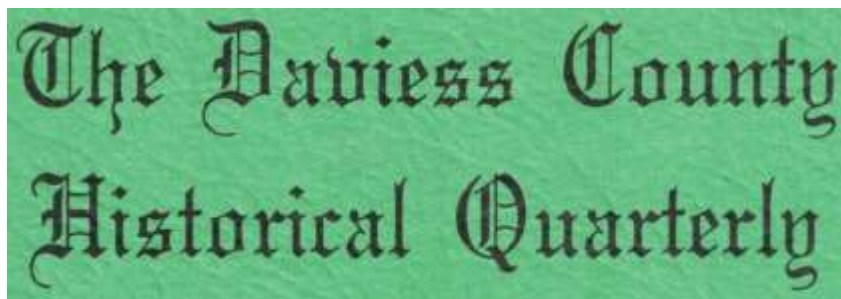
He said he would like to see articles with short descriptions of old buildings that no longer exist in the county – particularly theaters, retail businesses and corner grocery stores.

He would also like articles about jobs that no longer exist in the community. "What was it like being a streetcar conductor in Owensboro, for instance?" he asked.

Dew said he would also like articles about Daviess Countians who have done significant things.



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



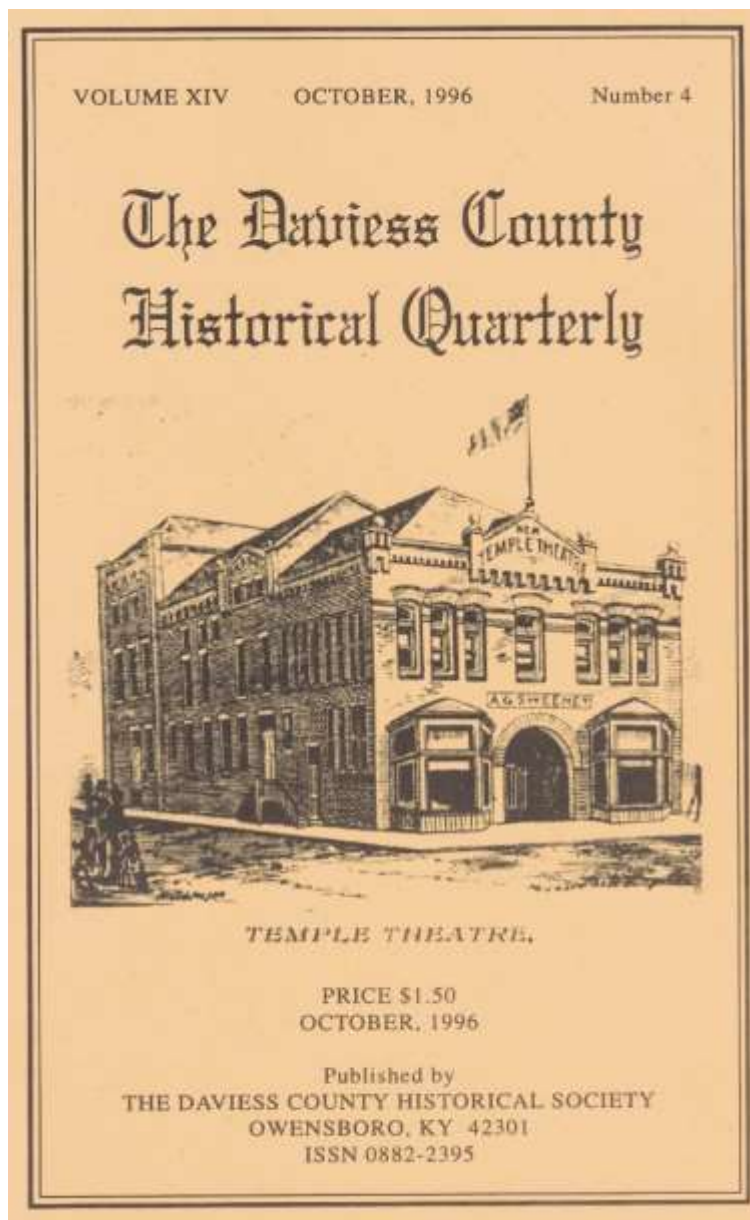
Lee A. Dew

EDITOR

Ky. Wesleyan College  
Owensboro, Ky.

### The Editor's Page

The first issue of the Daviess County Historical Quarterly marks the beginning of a new era in preserving the history of the County by making available an instrument for the publication of serious research on the County's history. All contributions are welcome, and all persons interested in the history of the area are invited to submit manuscripts for consideration.

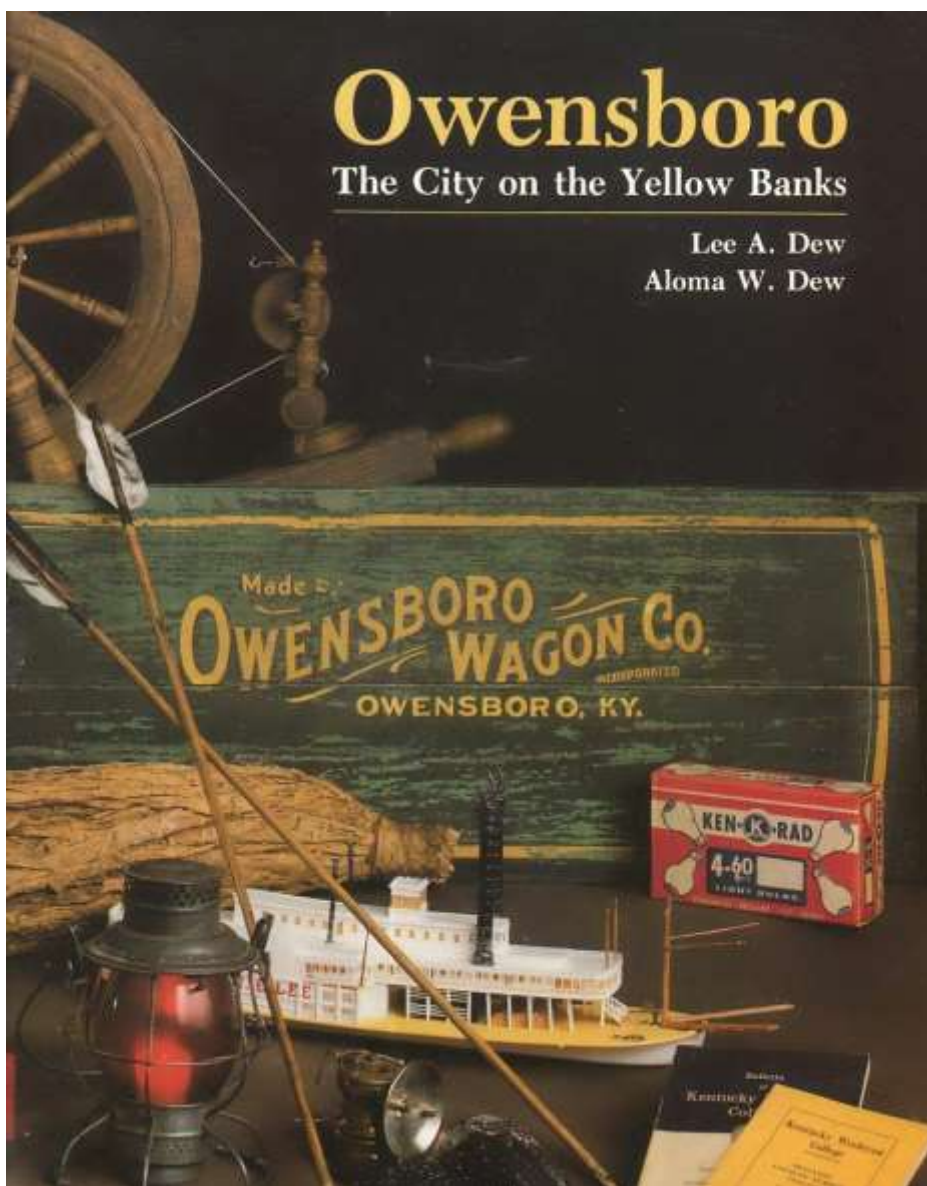


## The Editor's Page

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!



**Owensboro: The City on the Yellow Banks**, co-author with Aloma W. Dew,  
Rivendell Publications, Bowling Green, KY, 1988, 240 pages:







Lee and Aloma Dew

Lee A. Dew has been a resident of Owensboro since 1969, when he became Professor of History at Kentucky Wesleyan College. He holds the Ph.D. from Louisiana State University, as well as degrees from the University of Arkansas and Pittsburg State.

He is the author of three previous books, and some fifty published articles. He is the chairman of the Department of History and Political Science at K.W.C. and president of the Daviess County Historical Society, where he also serves as editor of the *Daviess County Historical Quarterly*.

Before coming to K.W.C., Dr. Dew served on the faculties of Murray State and Arkansas State universities. He is also a former member of the Owensboro Board of Education, serving from 1977 to 1980.

Aloma W. Dew is a native Owensboroan and a graduate of Daviess County High School and is an adjunct instructor in history at K.W.C. She holds a bachelor's degree from Murray State and a Master's from L.S.U., where she wrote a thesis on the history of Owensboro during the Civil War.

She has five published papers, and has made several presentations to history societies. A past president of the Daviess County Historical Society, she is much in demand as a speaker to civic and community groups.

## Foreword

A HISTORY OF Owensboro is above all a history of Owensboro's people. The people have been placed together in a community by birth, by circumstance, or by choice; and together,

have forged a life for themselves. Now years later, we look back to those before us, trying to learn from their stories and experiences.

This history is an exciting attempt to do just that: to look back and to learn from the ones who lived beside the Ohio River before us.

When we stop and remember that Abraham Lincoln lived as a teenager just a few miles from Owensboro and very possibly tossed rocks off the riverbank where downtown Owensboro now stands, we have to wonder about another youngster standing there now, tossing rocks and giggling with his buddies. How important is he? How important could he become?

When we read about the young newlywed who died in a plane crash at Ninth and Frederica streets in a flying machine he designed and hoped to manufacture in Owensboro, we have to consider what difference one person's talent might have meant, or could mean today, to our community's growth and prosperity.

Every chapter of history is a story of human potential—potential that was realized or potential that was lost. Sometimes as we read these chapters we catch a glimpse of our own potential to contribute and to make a difference in the history of our families, our churches, our neighborhoods, and our community.

The people of a community are at all times engaged in a struggle, a struggle that involves working, risk-taking, investing, creating struggling to survive and perhaps prosper. The people of Owensboro have struggled beyond survival, toward prosperity. Learning from our history will prepare us for our struggle to attain fulfillment, prosperity and a bright future for our children.

I congratulate Lee and Aloma Dew for helping us recall our past, interpret our present, and plan our future. Everyone who reads this history will certainly benefit, as I have, from their work.

- Wendell H. Ford United States Senate

## Introduction

ONE CANNOT write, or even think, about Owensboro without including the Ohio River. Its presence is responsible for the founding of the town, and much of its history has been shaped by this powerful, fluid ribbon throbbing through time and history. The broad Ohio, curving past the high yellow banks where Bill Smothers built his cabin, symbolizes so much about Owensboro—it is the thread that runs through our history, and with strength and determination continues rolling into the future pulling us with it.

It was the river that brought people, news, entertainment, and luxuries to this town. It was also the river that brought Union gunboats, blockades, competition, challenging new ideas, and, sometimes, people too willing to exploit its resources because of the river. Change is a truth of history, but the river has been our constant—always there, flowing ever onward—sometimes calm, sometimes turbulent, often the cause of adversity.

Owensboro's history is of a town overcoming adversities. Whether the banking crisis of the 1820's which inhibited growth, or the collapse of the vacuum tube business, Owensboro has struggled to overcome the traumas in its economic life. It is a history of problems—the sectional controversy of the Civil War in which Owensboro was a microcosm of the problems which split the nation, a border city in a border state beset with guerrillas and Union troop occupation; the problems of slavery and families divided by politics. In recent decades the city has been confronted with the collapse of major industries and the realization that the old ways are gone and new approaches must be taken; of grappling with concerns for jobs which often seem at odds with concern for the environment and the high quality of life in the mid-size town. But the city of Bill Smothers, Tom Pettit, Roy Burlew, and Frank Sheehan keeps its faith in the future, keeps growing

and prospering and developing sources of pride. This tenacity is a source of profound hope for the future. This resilience is Owensboro's "tap root". . . it is this which we share in common with those who went before, it is this anchor upon which we rely.

Roots—that is one purpose of this book, to define the community roots, to help us know what happened before us, the strengths and weaknesses of our predecessors; their accomplishments, sometimes against great odds. Roots—to help us know who we are and where we have been, to give us a sense of time and place so that we can plot our way into the future, together as a community, secure and proud of our history.

As Owensboro enters the last years of the decade of the eighties, it faces many new economic and social challenges and finds itself in a time of change and decision-making about the direction of the future. We have attempted to chronicle the major changes and decision-making of the past, as part of the road to the future.

Countless historians have warned that without a clear understanding of the past we can only repeat our mistakes over and over again. Let it not be said of us that "no one cared except some reporters and photographers and a few historically-minded persons. . . ." It is our fervent hope that this book will inform, enrich and inspire; and serve as a vehicle to build pride, based on knowledge, of Owensboro's past, to strengthen that tap-root connecting our past with the future. We are not antiquarians, submerged in the past, glorying only in its accomplishments. We see a knowledge and appreciation of the past, with all its mistakes, as essential for developing the future which must bring changes.

But change can be brutal. Faster than Owensboro's history can be recorded, it has been destroyed by bulldozers wearing the badge of Progress. Many of the illustrations in this book depict an architectural past that is now gone, preserved only in faded photographs and fading memories, memorialized with asphalt as parking lots. Masterpieces, which represented so much about the kind of people who built them and lived in them, have fallen to the wrecking ball and "no one cared. . ." except for a diligent few working in the community to save our brick and mortar past so that each new generation can marvel and look with pride at how we once lived and worshiped and the skill and beauty of forgotten craftsmanship. We are indebted to those who labor in our museums and archives, the efforts of the Preservation Alliance, Daviess County Historical Society, Downtown Owensboro, and the various neighborhood groups working to save their small corners of the past from oblivion. And to those who have recorded the past in newspapers and books, we are indeed grateful.

We sometimes fail to grasp that history is not just events of 100 years ago, 50 years ago, but yesterday, this morning; it is not just a collection of antiques, names and dates, but it is the actions of people in a community today which becomes tomorrow's history. The historian Tacitus suggested that the purpose of history is to record good actions, lest we forget, and to remind us that what we do or neglect to do will be held up to the perusal of tomorrow's historians.

The preparation of this book has been a labor of love and the realization of a long-time goal to co-author a history of our community. We believe it can serve to set us on our course and to instill an honest pride in our past as Owensboroans. Many of you will find omissions or less depth than you might wish in the treatment of some subjects. Be assured that this is not a comprehensive work and it is indeed selective and subjective in the topics covered. There is much left to be researched and written by historians, students, and others with a hungering for information. Because time and space did not permit including everything, we have tried to give our readers a sampling, an appetizer, if you will. We certainly intend to continue in our quest to find out more about this city on the Yellow Banks.

This book could not have been written without the help and advice of many people—from students who helped us with research to all those people who supplied us with photographs. Our publisher, Philip Henry, was always enthusiastic and encouraging, even when we supplied him with much more copy than he had requested. Invaluable aid was given by our research assistant, director of the Kentucky Room of the public library and former student, Shelia Brown Heflin and her colleagues, Bettie Spratt and Charlene Greer. We are also indebted to the authors of sidebar essays, who graciously contributed their knowledge and talents to provide information which enriched our text.

To former students whose research helped us in various areas, we are especially grateful. These include Micheal Hudson, Steven Crawford, David Kelly, Mitchell Corbin, James D. Cockrum, Leonard Rex, Lisa Bell and Shelia Heflin.

The photographs came from a countless number of sources, including the Owensboro Area Museum, Owensboro Tourist Commission, Owensboro Daviess County Library, Downtown Owensboro, Inc., Miss Elizabeth Gasser, Mr. Tom Laswell, the General Electric Company, Mr. Don Raines, Mr. Ray Russell, the Daviess County Historical Society, the Owensboro River-port, Mr. Hubert McFarland, S.W. Anderson Company, the Owensboro Parks and Recreation Commission, Dr. Richard Weiss, the Kentucky Wesleyan College Archives, The Filson Club, Judge David Brodie, the Owensboro Chamber of Commerce, Southern Tank and Manufacturing Company, Mrs. Nora Coleman and the Owensboro Independent Schools. Other materials were furnished by Dr. Bill Chandler of the Owensboro schools and Mr. Joe Overby of the Daviess County schools, by Sr. Ruth Gehres, president of Brescia College, and by Richard Weiss of Kentucky Wesleyan College.

The large number of photographs in the book would not be possible without the support of our business sponsors, whose financial commitment made this book possible. Their stories are told in Chapter 12, and are not only an important part of the economic history of Owensboro today, but will serve as a valuable resource for future historians.

A special thanks goes to our typists, Mrs. Peggie Greer and Miss Carol Bart, without whose patience and skill the manuscript could never have met its deadlines.

And to all the others who have aided this project through their support and encouragement, we say a special "Thank you!"

- Lee and Aloma Dew Owensboro, Kentucky September, 1987



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 29 May 1992, pp.1C & 4C:**

**125 and counting**  
Authors of Kentucky Wesleyan history  
wanted book to be fun, readable

By Steve Vied, Messenger-Inquirer

When Lee Dew began the three-year process of writing the history of Kentucky Wesleyan College, he held fast to a pair of central objectives.

First, he wanted it to be relevant. Then he wanted it to be readable.

The result is "In Pursuit of the Dream: A History of Kentucky Wesleyan College."

Dew, a history professor at Wesleyan, and Richard Weiss, the school's archivist, librarian and German teacher, are the authors. Dew did the actual writing while Weiss researched thousands of historical documents and materials.

In its more than 300 pages, the book is a chronicle of the college's 125-year history. Its publication is designed to coincide with KWC's 40th year in Owensboro.



Kentucky Wesleyan College professors Richard Weiss, left, and Lee Dew, co-authored a book on the history of the Methodist-affiliated college.

It traces the school's opening in Millersburg in 1866, when it was known as Methodist College, through its move to Winchester in 1890 and, 61 years later, to its present home in Owensboro. It also describes the development of Methodism in Kentucky beginning in the late 1700s.

But more than a chronology, the book traces the financial and enrollment problems KWC has endured, along with clashes involving students, faculty, administration and the Methodist church over issues such as academic freedom, censorship and the definition of the college's mission.

"History needs to have two basic elements," Dew said. "One, it has to be relevant, which means the history of an institution, whether it be a college, a business, or whatever, can have meaning only if it is tied together with the events of the times.

"... But history has to have something else. To me, it has to be readable. It has to have a literary quality about it. With this particular book I've tried to structure the book in such a way that each chapter ends with a cliffhanger.

"I like to compare the book to an old-fashioned Saturday afternoon movie serial with every episode ending with some great crisis."

Weiss spent about 10 years organizing 750,000 items in the college archives. When he had them in usable condition in late 1988, Dew was able to begin the actual writing of the first history of the school. Old Methodist records supplied much of the information about the school's beginnings.

"My job was doing the writing," Dew said. "I would essentially tell Richard what I needed and he would provide the materials that we had in the archives. I would ferret around and do some supplementary work. Then I would write and Richard would edit and make suggestions for changes.

"Had I not been working with Richard, with his encyclopedic knowledge of the archives, heaven only knows how long it would have taken, "

Weiss gladly accepted the researcher's role.

"I don't have a historic perspective," Weiss said. "I'm a German teacher and few other things. ... But one thing I'm not is a historian. "

That was Lee's creation, to give this thing a broad perspective. ... I would have loved to have written it myself, but I couldn't"

A recurring theme of the book is the many financial and enrollment problems the school has encountered. The move to Winchester and the move to Owensboro were both made necessary by declining enrollment and lack of money. Clashes between presidents and faculties are recorded.

Dew and Weiss didn't shy away from recent problems. The final chapter is titled "Dancing on the Precipice." It begins by characterizing the final days of December 1978 as "dark days" for the college, which was weighed down with a \$900,000 operating deficit and a severe cashflow crisis.

"Certainly finance, enrollment and church relations have been some of the major themes," Dew said. "The college has had to struggle against secular competition, but it also has had to struggle against anti-intellectualism. There are many people in Kentucky and in the country and in the Methodist church who see higher education as negative and threatening, are uncomfortable with any institution, whether a professor, a preacher or a politician, that challenges their complacency or their fixed ideas."

While the college has never completely separated itself from financial and enrollment woes, Dew paints a picture of an institution determined to survive.

"I wouldn't want it to obscure one other fundamental thing that comes out in the history, and that is the tenacity of the college," he said. "The fact that the college has survived has given it a sort of toughness and built in its supporters a particular kind of loyalty."

Of particular interest to Owensboro readers is Dew's account of the \$1 million campaign that brought the college to Owensboro in 1951. It reads almost like a thriller as the fund-raising campaign went down to the final minutes before the goal was reached. Dew noted that the books weren't finally closed on the campaign until 1970.

Dew said another chief goal he had in mind was to set the record straight, a challenging goal considering the many controversies KWC has encountered over the years.

"Somebody has to," he said. "Reality has to be something other than just what is proclaimed by the people in power, whoever they may be. Part of the job of a historian is to try to set the record straight because so much of the spoken word or the written report . . . tends to be propagandistic.

"That's why we have to have histories."



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 16 September 1994, p.1B:**

**Plaques expound on river's impact**

By Karen Owen, Messenger-Inquirer

A few yards from the spot where Owensboro's first schoolteacher washed ashore more than 170 years ago, city officials unveiled six plaques Thursday marking the Ohio River's role in local history.

One of the new panels at Smothers Park commemorates Susan Tarleton, who survived a riverboat accident near here about 1820. It tells the story, as local historian Aloma Dew put it, of "how our first schoolteacher drifted into town, literally."

The riverfront marker project has been talked about for years, Dew told about 50 people at the park on Thursday. "This is a real dream come true for us."

Five of the markers were financed with a \$7,500 grant to the city from the Kentucky Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The sixth was paid for by the Daviess County Historical Society with some of the \$2,500 a New York man willed the group about two years ago, member Shelia Heflin said.

The historical society's marker recalls the 1937 flood. The others cover the Civil War's impact, early education and industry, entertainment along the river and the arrival of the railroad.

"All these things are tied in with our lifeline, the reason we're here at all" - the Ohio River, said Dew, who with her husband, Lee, wrote the text on the markers and selected the drawings or photographs on them.

Getting the grant for the project is "fairly significant," Lee Dew said. The Humanities Council frequently funds speakers and other types of programs, he said, but "it's fairly unusual for them to sponsor something that is physical, tangible."

The council looks for projects that will serve a variety of people, particularly in areas that aren't being served already, said Owensboro member Jeff Fager. "We recognize this is a place all sorts of people come."

The new markers are made of laser-engraved porcelain. "This is the Lexus," said Lee Dew, referring to the luxury car. He then gestured to a more traditional bronze highway marker near the park's gazebo. "That's the Model T."



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 7 August 1995, pp.1C & 3C:**

**Cruise loaded with Ohio River history**

By Karen Owen, Messenger-Inquirer

[ed. note – During spring 1995 through October 1995 Lee Dew, retired Kentucky Wesleyan College history professor, narrated a brief history of Owensboro and the Ohio River, aboard the Executive Inn Rivermont's boat, the Executive Queen.]



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 21 June 2013, p.2A:**

**Daviess County Fiscal Court**

At its meeting Thursday at the Daviess County Courthouse, Daviess Fiscal Court took the following action:

.... Approved appointing Aloma Dew (co-chair), Lee Dew (co-chair), Amelia Stenger, Shelia Heflin, Glenn Hodges, Wesley Acton, Sarah Patterson, Forrest Roberts, Jerry Long, Ed Allen, Grady Ebelhar, Nancy Bradshaw, Kathy Olson, David Zachary, Larry Worth, Shirley Trunnel, County Commissioner Jim Lambert, David Smith and Ross Leigh to the Bicentennial Committee.



Members of Daviess County Bicentennial Committee, 2013-2015: front row, left to right: Sister Amelia Stenger, Aloma Dew, Lee Dew, Wesley Acton, Jerry Long. 2nd row, left to right: Kathy Olson, Nancy Bradshaw, Sarah Patterson, Shirley Trunnell, Isaac Settle, Shelia Heflin, Forrest Roberts. Back row, left to right: David Smith, Whaylon Coleman, Ed Allen, Jim Lambert, Glenn Hodges, David Zachery, and Grady Ebelhar. Not pictured: Ross Leigh. Photo by Wendell Thompson.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 23 August 2014, p.3B:**

**Presale underway for bicentennial history book**

By Stephanie Salmons, Messenger-Inquirer

In commemoration of its bicentennial next year, the history of Daviess County will be published as a book for the first time since 1883.

Preorders are being taken through Aug. 31 for "Daviess County, Kentucky: Celebrating Our Heritage 1815 to 2015." The book will be distributed around the county's June 1 bicentennial.



Once the book is released, only a limited number of copies will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis, said Kathy Olson, director of the Owensboro Museum of Science and History and a member of the Daviess County Bicentennial Committee.

According to a release, the 208-page book will be a topical history of the county from its earliest settlement to 2015, published as an 8.5-by-11-inch coffee table edition.

"Rather than following the story chronologically from the time of settlement to the present, each chapter will tell a specific part of Daviess County's story," the release states.

In addition to a forward by Judge-Executive Al Mattingly, the book will feature chapters on Daviess County people, places, agriculture, roads and highways, the river, the Civil War, railroads, coal mining, education, the Catholic church and schools, the library, government services, age of flight, Daviess County barbecue, women in the building of the county, and arts and culture.

Committee co-chairs Aloma and Lee Dew will edit the book.

According to Aloma Dew, about a dozen people are researching and writing the book. They're trying to cover history that hasn't been covered in earlier books.

"Part of the idea is that it's open-ended," Dew said. "We hope this book will inspire the next generation of historians to contribute and add more."

The new book will be a "wonderful addition" to the community, she said.

"Although the bicentennial is one year, this book will be around a very long time, we hope."

As a former history teacher, Dew said she feels strongly that people should know their history to make wise decisions for the future.

"I think it's important that we all have a sense of who we are, who we were, how we got here then to be able to, I believe, plan better for the future," she said. "We have a rich and exciting history in Daviess County."

The preorder price is \$69.95 for a bonded leather edition or \$37.50 for the deluxe standard edition. A digital edition is available for \$9.95 in conjunction with a preordered hardcopy purchase. Deadline to preorder is Aug. 31.

For more information about the book or to order with a credit card, visit [bit.ly/daviess200](http://bit.ly/daviess200) or call toll free 1-888-263-4702. Credit card orders will be kept on file and charged 30-60 days before shipping.

Customers may also pay by check or money order, made payable to MT Publishing Company. The order form and payment can be mailed to Daviess County Bicentennial Committee, c/o OMSH, 122 E. Second St., Owensboro, KY 42303. Order forms can be found at the Owensboro Museum of Science and History and at other locations in town.

To learn more about the bicentennial events being planned next year, visit the Daviess County Bicentennial Facebook page at [facebook.com/daviess200](http://facebook.com/daviess200).

Anyone interested in sharing old photographs or historic community information should call the committee co-chairs Lee or Aloma Dew at 270-685-2034 or David Smith at 270-685-8424. To schedule an interview or a speaker for your event, or for those interested in distributing order forms, call Kathy Olson at 270-687-2732.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 6 November 2015, pp.1C & 3C:**

County history book signing Saturday

By Bobbie Hayse, Messenger-Inquirer

Several authors of the book, "Daviness County Kentucky 1815-2015: Celebrating Our Heritage" will be at The Bakers Rack in Wesleyan Park Plaza on Saturday for a book signing and discussion of the county's history and bicentennial.

The event is from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is free. Books will be available for purchase for \$42.50 each. Daviness County Bicentennial coins will also be available for \$10 each.

Aloma Williams Dew, a co-chair on the Bicentennial Committee, said on Thursday that more than 24 people from around the community contributed to the book, which was developed more than two years ago.

This is the first compilation of Daviness County history since 1883, she said, and is a topical history, not a chronology.

It was a combined project with an authors' committee and the Bicentennial Committee.

"It's got some good information," she said. "We've tried to include things that were not necessarily in earlier (historical compilations)."

Ed Allen, former superintendent for Daviness County Public Schools, wrote a chapter devoted to the development of the schools in the county.

Allen, born and raised in Daviness County, spent several months researching and writing for his contribution to the book. He traveled to Frankfort a few times and spent a lot of hours in the Kentucky Room at the Daviness County Public Library, he said.

"One of the things that surprised me were how many one-room schools there were as late as the 1920 out in the county," he said about his research. "At the turn of the century, there were about 100, including white and African-American."

How the districts were organized in the early days also was of interest to him.

He gave a lot of credit for the consolidation process in the 1920s and 1930s to the superintendent during that time, J.W Snyder, who Allen said "really got the ball rolling."

"Consolidation would never had happened if there hadn't been better roads and transportation available, so that was interesting to learn," he said.

Jerry Long, a library associate assistant in Kentucky Room, wrote a 12-page historical chronology of 200 of the county's most historically significant events.

A few of those include the actual establishment of the county, and the first known church – Bethlehem Methodist Church – in the county, and presidential visits. In recent years, the closing of several significant institutions such as General Electric, and the dedication of the Owensboro Convention Center were also added.

"In relationship to the civil rights, there was a noted suit in 1883 about African-Americans and schools, and that helped to significantly improve the quality of African-American schools here," Long noted.

Civil War events such as the Battle of Panther Creek and the burning of the Daviness County Courthouse in 1865 were also listed.

Long spent about two months doing research "going page-by-page of every published history in the county looking for events that really, really stood out," he said.

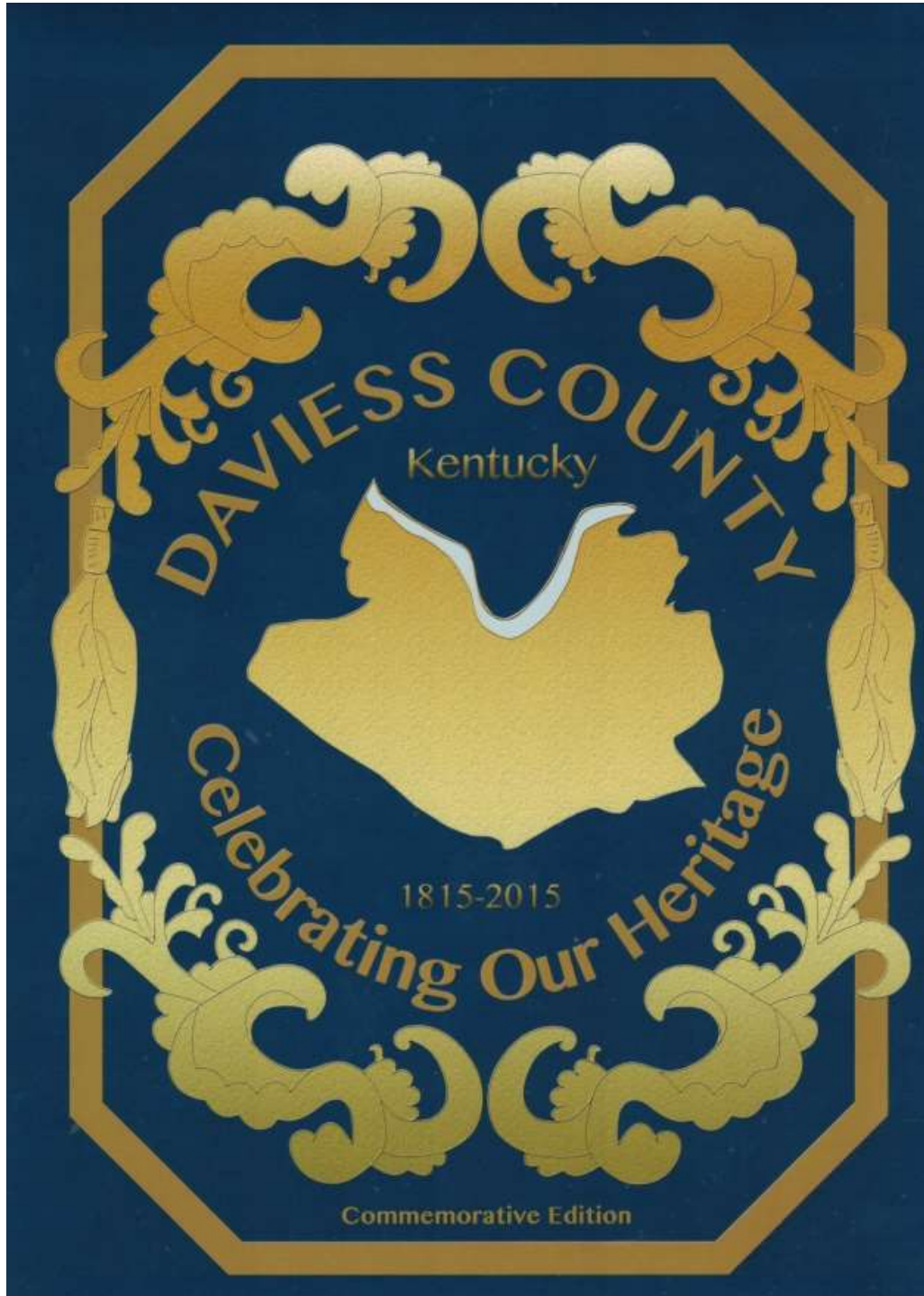
He said this book is important because it's a part of the county's history that everyone is being asked to honor and celebrate.

"That's what we're recognizing, and all of the great historical events that have took place, and the accomplishments," he said.

There will also be another book signing from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Dec. 5 at the Owensboro Antique Mall.



Daviess County, Kentucky: Celebrating Our Heritage, 1815-2015,  
co-author with committee , M. T. Publishing Company, Inc. Evansville, IN, 2015:





**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 11 May 2018, p.3B:**

## Historian, professor Dew leaves legacy of civic pride

He died Thursday afternoon at age 86

By Jacob Dick, Messenger-Inquirer

Lee Dew, best known as a local historian, Kentucky Wesleyan College professor emeritus and environmental activist, has died at the age of 86.

Dew passed away around 1 p.m. Thursday at his home.

Through his work as former president of the Daviess County Historical Society, various local history projects and the Pennyrile Group Sierra Club, Dew became a fixture in the community but had a winding journey to his adopted home.

Dew was born on the island of Aruba in 1931 and came to the United States in 1942 after German naval forces threatened supply chains to the island. He grew up in Missouri and was educated at universities across the country like the University of Arkansas, Kansas State College of Pittsburg and Louisiana State University.

Dew went on to teach at Murray University and Arkansas State University before teaching at Kentucky Wesleyan College until his retirement in 1994.

David Smith, Daviess County director of legislative services, was a former student of Dew's at KWC before the two eventually worked together on the county's bicentennial celebration, of which Dew was co-chair with his wife, Aloma Dew.

"He really was passionate about bringing history to the people where they were," Smith said. "He had worked and got grants to make history boards at Smothers Park that would tell visitors certain things about the area as they walked by. He enjoyed being able to bring those kinds of things to people."

Shelia Heflin, a former student and Daviess County Historical Society colleague of Dew's, said that his love for history encouraged her to become involved with her county's past.

"He really did care about his students and history," Heflin said. "I had a love for it anyway, and he helped me facilitate that throughout my life. He was a friend and professor."

A celebration of Dew's life will be held in early June at First Christian Church. His ashes will be laid to rest in the Caribbean near his childhood home of Aruba.



## **Lee A. Dew Bibliography of Local History**

Dr. Dew has published several books and numerous other articles that do not cover the Western Kentucky region

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