

Shelia Brown Heflin

By Jerry Long
c.2025



Shelia Heflin – 2009

Daviess County, KY native, Shelia Brown Heflin, is a graduate from Owensboro's OHS and Kentucky Wesleyan College. In 1984 she received her Master's Degree in History from Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, KY. Upon her marriage in 1982 she became a resident of McLean County, KY. For her native and adopted counties she has become a premier historian, a leading source for answering or shedding light on questions of the area's history.

Shelia in May 1978 began working as an assistant in the Kentucky Room, a special history-genealogy department, of the Daviess County Public Library in Owensboro, KY. In June 1981 she was appointed director of the Kentucky Room (Daviess County Public Library Board of Directors Minute Books 1978 and 1981). For thirty-three years she continued as an employee of the library retiring in 2012. At the library she also held the positions of Information Services Manager, who directed the work of the Reference Department and the Kentucky Room, and Public Services Head.

As director of the Kentucky Room Shelia has researched and answered thousands of inquiries. She has been quoted in a multitude of local publications. She has conducted numerous programs, meetings, classes and walking tours related to historical topics. She has been a member and chairperson of many committees. She has published several articles on history in the Daviess County Historical Quarterly and the Owensboro and Calhoun newspapers. In 1992 she was editor & co-author of the book McLean County Pictorial History, 1854-1992. She served on the Daviess County Bicentennial Committee and was the author of several sketches in their publication, Daviess County, Kentucky, 1815-2015, Celebrating Our Heritage.

Shelia has served as – long time secretary of the Daviess County Historical Society; first president and founding member of the McLean County Historical Society; regent and vice-regent of the Capt. William Rowan Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She has been the regional representative for the Historical Confederation of Kentucky and served on the Kentucky Archives and Records Commission.

Shelia has also been active in public service serving on the following boards and committees – secretary of the Green River Area Development District Tourism Committee; Livermore Community Library Board; Livermore Planning & Zoning Board; McLean County Planning & Zoning Board; steering committee for the Battle of Sacramento Civil War Reenactment; Long-Range Planning Committee of the McLean County School System. In 1995 she received the Livermore Citizen of the Year Award and was the designer of McLean County’s first tourism brochure.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 11 April 1982, p.9D:

Brown - Heflin

Shelia Eileen Brown and Michael L. Heflin are engaged to be married at 7 p.m. June 4, 1982, at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Owensboro.

She is the daughter of Reathel W. Brown of 505 Jeff Place, Owensboro, and the late Mrs. Francine Whitten Brown. Miss Brown, of 919 Locust St., is a graduate of Owensboro High School, has the bachelor of arts degree from Kentucky Wesleyan College where she was a member of Phi Alpha Theta history honor society and Alpha Chi honor society, and is working on a master of arts degree in history at Western Kentucky University. She is employed as supervisor of the Kentucky Room at the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library.

He is the son of Mrs. Gladys Heflin of Route 3, Calhoun, and the late J.L. Heflin. Heflin is a graduate of Livermore High school, has the bachelor of science and master of arts degrees from Western Kentucky University, where he has completed Rank I postgraduate work and is a fifth grade teacher at Livermore Elementary School.

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 7 June 1982, p.3B:

Weddings: Brown – Heflin

The wedding of Shelia Eileen Brown and Michael L. Heflin took place at 7 p.m. June 4, 1982, at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Owensboro.

She is a daughter of Reathel W. Brown of 505 Jeff Place, Owensboro, and the late Francine Whitten Brown, and is supervisor of the Kentucky Room at the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library. He is a son of Gladys Heflin of Route 3, Calhoun, and the late J.L. Heflin and is a fifth grade teacher at Livermore Elementary School.

Maid of honor was Peggy I Dennison of Owensboro. The bridesmaid was Cathy Carpenter of Livermore. The junior attendants were Gretchen Ward and Patricia Ward, both of Owensboro.

Best man was Mark Heflin of Route 3, Calhoun. The groomsmen were Roger Gorham of Drakesboro, Rickie Brown of Owensboro, Robert Heflin of Buck Creek and Wayne Harper of

Lexington. Junior attendants were Shannon Troutman and Scott Troutman, both of Sacramento. After a wedding trip to the World's Fair, the couple will live on Route 3, Calhoun.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 10 May 1984, p.12:

News From Livia

.... Congratulations to Mrs. Shelia Heflin who received her masters degree in history from Western Kentucky University on May 6. Mike and Andrea Heflin and Reathel and Nell Brown attended the services in Bowling Green....



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 17 May 1984, p.5:

College Notes: WKY

Out of 2,484 graduates in the Western Kentucky University spring class 11 students were from McLean County....

McLean Countians receiving degrees were: Shelia E. Brown Heflin, Rt. 3, Calhoun, Master of Arts...



Daviess County



Historical Society

Owensboro, Ky. 42301

November 15, 1985

The Daviess County Historical Society will meet Friday, November 22, 1985, at 7:30 p.m. at the Owensboro Area Museum. The guest speaker will be Shelia Heflin, the Society secretary and Supervisor of the Kentucky Room at the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library. She will present a short paper on Kentucky Women. The second half of the program involves YOU! Please bring the memory of your favorite Christmas to share with the group. Read Susan Newberry's article, "Christmas in Owensboro in the Early 1900's," in the last Quarterly for inspiration. Come and bring a friend!

It's renewal time again! Individual membership is \$5 per year. Family membership is \$7. Please send your renewal in care of Shelia Heflin in the Kentucky Room or to Marge Schauburger / 409 Maple Avenue / Owensboro, KY 142301.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 4 April 1986, p.4A:

READERS WRITE

Genealogical help

Editor:

The newspaper does not abandon those seeking genealogical help. Letters seeking family information have been turned over to the Kentucky Room of the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library on many occasions. Our staff attempts to provide some information for the letter writer. However, we can only do limited research for mail patrons because of the great number of people using our department.

Our first priority is to serve the people of Owensboro and Daviess County.

Shelia Heflin
Supervisor, Kentucky Room
Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 12 November 1987, p.6:



The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) are looking for people interested in history and patriotism. To join these organizations you must be able to prove your own blood line back to an ancestor who gave military service or helped the American cause in the Revolutionary War.

The DAR was founded October 11, 1980. At that time there was a desire to honor the men and women who fought and sacrificed to form our nation. The women who founded the DAR wished to honor their ancestors and keep their dreams of freedom alive and thriving.

Many people think the DAR is just a bunch of little old ladies sipping tea. This is far from the truth. DAR women band together for historical, educational, and patriotic purposes. Nationally, the DAR sponsors essay contests to promote citizenship, awards scholarships, volunteers in Veterans Administration Hospitals, and supports several schools. The local chapter of the DAR, is very active. The Captain William Rowan Chapter DAR organized April 16, 1949, with Irene

Barnes serving as the first Regent. The current Regent is Edith Bennett. During the past year these ladies held a genealogy workshop, sponsored writing contests, presented good citizenship awards, awarded plaques to two outstanding history teachers, participated in the Livermore Sesquicentennial, and marked the grave of a Revolutionary War soldier. If you are interested in becoming a part of this organization just express your interest to a member, who will gladly invite you to a meeting.

Patriotic organizations exist for men also. The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution was founded in New York City during 1889. The local chapter of the SAR is named for Lt. Robert Moseley. His descendent, Malcom Moseley of Whitesville, KY, is the current Secret Our very own McLean County News editor, Stephen M. Vest, serves as the President of the SAR. I am sure he will gladly answer your questions concerning membership in this chapter.

The following Revolutionary War soldiers are buried in McLean County: Pvt. David Glover, NC 1761-1820; Pvt. Adam Shoemaker, PA 1759- 1827; Charles Hansford, VA 1759-1850; Pvt. Benjamin Taylor, PA 1757-1841; Cpt. George Little, SC 1735-1815; Phillip Taylor 1750-1814; James Lynn, PA 1740-1833; Sgt. Anthony Thompson, PA 1759-1834; Pvt. Joseph Pitt, NC 1762-1836; and Pvt. William Worthington, PA 1761- 1845.

If you know of any other Revolutionary War soldiers buried in this county please let me know.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 26 November 1987, p.7:



Did you ever wonder why all the names of your ancestors seem to just keep repeating? It was a common practice to name the first son after the wife's father. The second son received the name of the husband's father. And, son number three was named for the wife's oldest brother.

Census records and legal documents are difficult enough to read simply because of the writing's style. When they add their abbreviations for names it's even harder.

Dan/ is Daniel

Eliz usually is Elizabeth

Jas stands for James Jno is John (Why even abbreviate this name?)

Jos is Joseph

Sam l'equals Samuel

Virg or Virga represents Virginia

Xr or Xofer should be read Christopher

Jr. and Sr. may simply indicate which of the two men with identical names is the older or younger person in the area

Long s is, the term used to describe what appears to be a f or p in the middle of a word. It is really a mark used to indicate the word is spelled with a double s (ss).

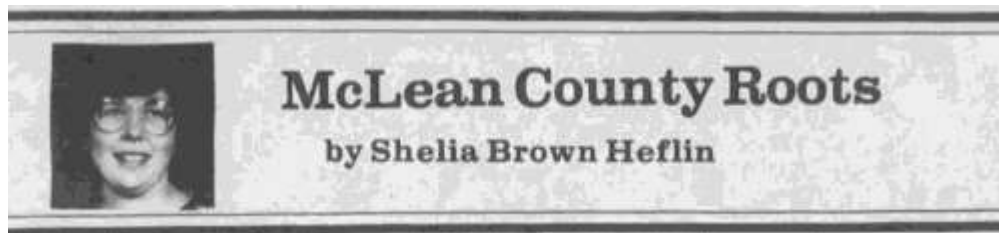
Early census takers traveled from house to house recording the names and ages of all the people living in each household. I do not believe the job requirements for census taker included the ability to write plainly or spell correctly. When doing research in census records remember to check every conceivable spelling of the name you are hunting. For example: Beatty may be Beatty, Betty, Baty, or Batty. Although you spell your name only one way, the census taker could write it down many other ways.

Do you know of a veteran's grave which is unmarked? In the Kentucky Room at the Owensboro Public Library we have a Veterans Administration form, "Application for Headstone or Marker", on which you can request either a white marble stone or bronze marker for those unmarked veteran's graves. The U.S. Government will provide, at government expense, a marker or stone for the unmarked graves of those who received an honorable discharge or served with certain Reserve, Guard, or ROTC units. Union and Confederate dead are also eligible for these markers. The form goes on to state that "an applicant need not be a member of the deceased's family." However, you must know the grave is unmarked and that the family wishes to have a government marker rather than a privately purchased marker.

Q-3 Need all information on Rebecca Ellis born 1826, Married May 23, 1844, Daniel Scott, the son of Colgate G. Scott and Pareby Parker. The couple lived at Rumsey according to 1860 census. Janice Scott Thorpe, 724 Lightfoot Lane, Madisonville, KY 42431.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 10 December 1987, p.15:



As you probably know, I work in the Kentucky Room of the Owensboro Library. We have students coming in all the time asking for historical information. It always saddens me when they request a history of McLean County. The information we have on McLean County is spread out in vertical file materials, unindexed Owensboro newspapers, and scattered in a few history books. This makes it very difficult for anyone to do research. Recently, a college student from Island asked me why someone didn't write it down and publish a McLean County history?

It's a great question. First, the information needs to be collected, and preserved, Who can do that? We can!!! We can form a McLean County Historical Society to help preserve our county's history. If you are interested in McLean County, history, or genealogy please make an effort to attend an organizational meeting to form a McLean County Historical Society on next Sunday afternoon, December 13, at 2 p.m., in the cafeteria of Livermore School.

Mrs. Elizabeth Cox wrote to tell us of another Revolutionary War soldier who is buried in McLean County. Cpt. John Handley, born about 1745 and died 1815, is buried in Van Meter

Springs Cemetery on Hwy. 81 about 1½ miles north of Calhoun. Revolutionary War soldiers: George Little and Anthony Thompson are also buried in this cemetery.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 3 March 1988, p.11:

Historical Society meets

The McLean County Historical Society met Sunday and elected officers. Shelia Heflin was elected president; Martha Thomasson, vice-president; Sarah Hulsey, Secretary and Mike Heflin, treasurer. The three board members selected were Virginia Davis, Glen Taylor and Gina Hancock. To date, 25 people have joined the society. The group will meet every fourth Sunday of each month at the Calhoun-City County Center. The membership fee is \$5 for individuals and \$7 for families. The group plans to work on a Fort Vienna Days celebration. The next meeting will be on March 27.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 19 May 1988, p.10:



Interested in buying an historic bridge? CSX Transportation, Inc. is offering the Livermore Railroad Bridge for sale. Because the bridge is potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, CSXT is required to solicit offers to purchase it in hopes of preserving the site. Sealed offers must reach Mr. F.C. Edmonds/CSX Transportation, Inc./500 Water Street/Jacksonville, FL 32202, on or before June 15, 1988.

A detailed description of Bridge No. 13½-14 is as follows: The bridge consists of a 254 foot long thru truss swing span (two arms continuous) over the channel and two 129 foot long thru truss spans supported o.: three masonry piers and two masonry abutments and stem walls.

The 254 foot long thru pin connected truss swing span was fabricated by the Louisville Bridge and Iron Company about 1908, and the two 129 foot long thru riveted truss approach spans were fabricated by the Virginia Bridge and Iron Co. about 1923. The truss spans are supported by a stone masonry pivot pier, two stone masonry rest piers encased with concrete and two stone masonry abutments and stem walls repaired and raised with concrete. The original stone masonry piers and abutments were raised with concrete in 1923 and the south rest pier was partially encased with concrete in 1957. The machinery for turning the swing span was installed in 1907 and was

rehabilitated about 1957. Steel sheet pile cells and steel beam rub rails were installed upstream and downstream of the center pivot pier by the Corps of Engineers about 1956 as aids to navigation.

As long as Livermore has already been mentioned, I will relate some more Livermore facts. The "Kentucky Gazeteer and Business Directory" for 1895-1896 lists the following professionals and business people in the thriving city of Livermore, population 650: Buckley, H.T., marshal; Cowyell, A.W., watchmaker; Criu, John, barber; Crouch, John R., carpenter; Crow, Augustus W., physician; Davis, S.A., machinist; Davis & Hackett, Flour Mill; Davison, Rev. L.B. (Methodist); Dreskell, Albert J., cooper; Ellis, Walter P., physician; Geary, William T., railroad and exp. agent; Gore, Robert O., general store; Hackett, Edgar B., dry goods; Hackett, Roland E., saw mill; Harris, F.J., wagonmaker; Hayden, S.D., hotel; Hicks, G.S., drugs; Hicks, Rev. Joseph P. (Presbyterian); Hicks Sisters, milliners; Highly & English, saw mill; Hillsman George A., physician; Howard, Maggie, milliner; Hudson, A.M. & Sons, livery; Hudson, H.Z., brick mason; Moseley, James R., general store; Mosely & Gieseki, shingle mill; Newton, W.G., lawyer; Nuckles, Neff F., livestock; Quigg Bros (Benjamin F. and James W.), general store, Rowan, Stephen W., leaf tobacco; Rowe, J.B., lawyer; Scholl, George F., cooper; Smith, George, blacksmith; Stevens, Wilbur P., teacher; Smith, J.F., drugs; Taylor, John P., justice; Taylor, Mrs. S.A., boarding house; Trunnell, William S., general store and post master; Wilson, James, shoemaker and Wint & Co., hoop mill.

If you have pictures of any of these locations or stories about these people please let me or any McLean Historical Society member hear from you. The McLean County Historical Society will meet Sunday, May 22, 1988, in the City-County Center at Calhoun at 2 p.m. Mark Sipes of Taylor Publishing will be presenting some information to us concerning the possible publishing of a McLean County History/Genealogy Book. All interested persons are invited. to attend.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 20 October 1988, p.5:



Boynton Merrill, Jr., well known Kentucky historian and author of Jefferson's Nephews, will, be the guest speaker at the Sunday, October 23 meeting of the McLean County Historical Society. I urge you not to miss this opportunity! Everyone is invited to meet and hear this man on October 23 at 2 p.m. in the City-County Center at Calhoun. See you there!

Have you ever wondered why the railroad went through Livermore and not Calhoun? In February 1867, the state legislature passed an act which issued a charter for the Owensboro and Russellville Railroad Company. Daviess Countians gladly bought stock in this new venture, which proposed to run the line through Calhoun. By the end of the summer McLean Countians had purchased only 28 shares.

In 1868, railroad engineers surveyed McLean County for alternate routes--finding the Livermore route to be shorter and a little bit cheaper. But, the railroad directors gave both Livermore and Calhoun time to think it over and show their support of the new railroad by buying

stock. By September 1868, the people of Livermore had purchased more stock than those of Calhoun, thus assuring that the line would run through Livermore. Calhoun and Livermore were river towns-Calhoun put all her hopes on the continued success of Green River as a method of trade and transportation. Livermore took a chance and supported the railroad.

Work on the grading and the placing of ties and rails in McLean County took place 1870-1871. On April 14, 1871, 600 guests celebrated the opening of the line from Owensboro to Livermore. The trip was reported as, "a grand and joyful picnic, unmarred by accident." By Summer, 1872, the tracks were completed to what we now call Central City. In January 1884, the line reached its final point--not Nashville as the name Owensboro & Nashville Railroad indicated, but Adairville in Logan County, Kentucky.

Livermore took a chance and via the railroad found a faster way to market its products and agricultural goods. The railroad not only allowed people better access to markets, but brought the world closer to them. You could travel to Owensboro, shop all day, and return home in comfort and safety. Passenger train service through Livermore continued until 1941. And, until just a few years ago freight trains rumbled through the county. Now, the tracks between Owensboro and Livermore are gone and even the Livermore train bridge is gone. All that remains of that exciting period in history are memories!

A special thanks goes to Dr. Lee A. Dew. The above information came from his article on the Owensboro & Nashville Railroad published January 1978, in the Eilson Club History Quarterly.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 17 November 1988, p.11:



The McLean County Historical Society will meet Sunday, November 20 at 2 p.m. in the Calhoun City-County Center. Everyone is invited to attend. The last day that you can join the society as a charter member is December 31. The cost of membership is only \$5 per year.

Veteran's Day brought to mind the story of a World War I casualty with McLean County roots. I'm sure most of you are familiar with Beech Grove native, James Bethel Gresham, the first American killed in action on November 3, 1917, but have you ever heard of Floyd May?

On one occasion, the Owensboro Messenger listed Floyd May as the first Daviess County soldier to fall in France, however the funeral notice listed him as the first boy in McLean County to die in World War I.

Corporal May died November 27, 1917, from accidental gunshot wounds while serving under General Pershing in the field artillery unit. How could he be the first McLean County boy when Gresham died first? Answer: Gresham had moved to Indiana and enlisted from that state.

May was claimed by Daviess County because he was born near Masonville on October 23, 1892, to Isabelle and Tom May. Floyd grew up in Daviess County, but shortly after Tom's death, Mrs. May moved her two sons and seven daughters to Livermore.

Floyd May volunteered for military service at age 18 and I left Livermore as a member of the Third Kentucky Infantry. After notification of Corporal May's death, Mrs. May stated, "I am proud that my son was a volunteer in the U.S. Army and that he was not a 'slacker.' I regret his death, but had rather that he died in France than shirk his duty to his country."

Floyd May died in November 1917 and was buried in France. His body came home three and a half years later. Services were held at the Livermore Baptist Church on June 8, 1921. Graveside services included a firing squad and the playing of 'Taps.' Now you know the story of Corporal Floyd May who rests in the southwest section of Oak Hill Cemetery in Livermore.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 3 March 1992, p.6A:



Shelia Heflin of the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library talks with Walnut Street Baptist Church librarian Ruth Miller, front, and Heflin's sister, Mary Ruth Ward, rear, Monday about the church scrapbooks that were found after the fire Sunday night. Miller said the books date back to 1876. When the books were

brought out from the ruins, Miller exclaimed, "Praise the Lord."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 6 April 1992, pp1C & 2C:

Man retraces tracks of city transportation

By Dan Heckel, Messenger-Inquirer



A model of one of the city's original street cars is exhibited on the first floor of the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library.

That green vehicle that cruises Frederica Street and hits the stores is called the "River City Trolley."

But don't ask Bill Mattingly to call it that. "It's just a bus with a trolley body. I haven't ridden on it," he said. Mattingly doesn't need to ride Owensboro's lone trolley to relive the days when street cars were the main form of transportation. He rode the city's original trolleys.

"I rode on the old open-air car. We rode to Hickman Park to watch ballgames," said the 84-year-old Mattingly.

Once when Mattingly was chairman of a local civic club about five years ago, the speaker for the day was Shelia Heflin, director of the Kentucky Room, where historical information for the area and state are kept at the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library.

Heflin wrote a history of the trolley system and spoke about its origins that day, Mattingly recalled. The talk inspired him to research the street cars and build a model so children could understand a little of the city's history.

The model is on display on the first floor of the library, and its bright colors and detail are said to be exact replicas, Heflin said.

Public transportation took its first form in Owensboro Feb. 16, 1887, when the first mule-drawn street cars rolled out under the name of the Owensboro City Railroad, according to Heflin's research.

It was a gala event. The lone car was decorated with flags, bunting and banners and a brass band welcomed it. There were even flags draped over the mules.

Regular service began the next day, with the original line running from Main (now Second) and Triplett s streets to Frederica and Fifth streets. The fare was 5 cents, and more than 600 people rode the first two days. An extra mule team was hired after that.

Almost immediately the company began extending its tracks, and by 1889 the streetcar line consisted of 3.75 standard-gauge miles of 20-pound rails, Heflin reported. There were 19 mules to pull seven cars.

Owensboro joined the age of electric transportation when its City Council voted Feb. 8, 1893 to use motorized street cars, although their speed could not exceed 10 mph. The system included 10 cars, eight motors, two boilers, two 100-horsepower engines and two generators. The powerhouse was at Sixth and Hathaway streets.

On June 3, 1893, the first electric car rolled out of the Sixth and Breckenridge barn. Public service began June 7, running from 6 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. The electric cars cut the running time in half.

The cars had a pole that followed a guy wire. According to newspaper reports, the streetcar lines ran from the Elmwood Cemetery on Breckenridge Street to the city limits and as far west as Sycamore Street and the city limits.

The cars were tempting to young pranksters. Boys would pull the trolley from the wire as they bicycled by, which often broke the guy wire. Some even soaped the tracks so a trolley turning to go uptown would spin its wheels.

Some cars and their motormen seemed to be jinxed. Owensboro residents called car No. 15 the "Jonah" car, because within one month the car killed two dogs and a boy. The motorman was fired for leaving his car unattended while buying drinks for two female passengers, Heflin's report said.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 30 May 1992, p.32:

“Kentucky Portrait, 1792-1992, 76 page supplement

These people helped paint our Kentucky Portrait

◆ THE MESSENGER-INQUIRER would like to thank everyone who provided assistance or source material for production of Kentucky Portrait, our bicentennial section. They include Shelia Heflin and Jerry Long of the Kentucky Room at the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library and area historians Rose Pell Henderson of Hancock County, Virginia Davis of McLean County, Margarete Smith and Virginia Hinton of Breckinridge County and Paul Camplin of Muhlenberg County.

◆ FOR MORE THAN THREE months the Messenger-Inquirer staff has been collecting information and photographs for this Kentucky Portrait, marking the state bicentennial. Credit for writing the area stories goes to Keith Lawrence and Glenn Hodges. Tommy Newton, Ben Sheroan and Anne Wooten Green are responsible for the editing. Graphic design and headline writing was done by Mike Goheen and Jerry Busser. Photographs were coordinated by Bob Bruck and Jim Baumgarten.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 6 July 1992, p.1C:

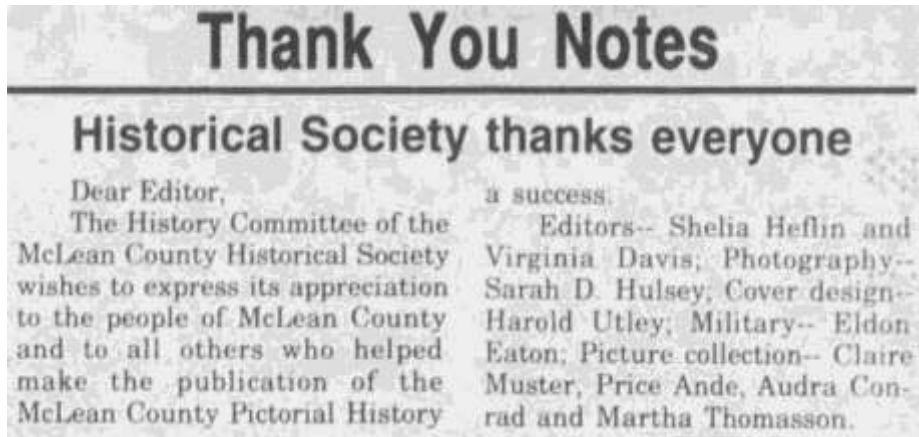
Scandal rocked Chautauqua Park

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

.... Shelia Brown Heflin, supervisor of the Kentucky Room in the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library, wrote the definitive article on Owensboro's Chautauqua days for the Daviess County Historical Quarterly's first issue in January 1983....



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 21 January 1993, p.5:



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 11 February 1993, p.9A:

READERS WRITE

Award-winning historical series will be missed

Congratulations on your award-winning bicentennial series! Keith Lawrence, Glenn Hodges, Tom Ross, Karen Owen, Steve Vied, and Laura Skillman are to be commended for their excellent work. The photographers did a great job, too! I really miss the Monday morning history articles. They certainly brightened my Monday morning!

I have worked in the Kentucky Room of the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library for 13 years. I am very familiar with local history, but you even managed to find some topics that were new to me. It would be wonderful if these articles, along with the special bicentennial edition, could be published in book form. Many of our Kentucky Room patrons have voiced this same wish!

I know this series took a tremendous amount of hard work. Now that you've had a month off from writing it, how about making it a biweekly or monthly series?

Shelia E. Heflin, supervisor
Kentucky Room, Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library



Shelia Heflin, supervisor of the Kentucky Room, Daviess County Public Library, at the dedication on 27 July 1994 of the James H. Hickman – Legion Park historical memorial. She worked on preparing the dedication program.

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 28 February 1995, p.28:

THE KENTUCKY ROOM

By Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer

In its small, quiet way, the Kentucky Room at the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library has gained a national reputation of being among the top centers for historical and genealogical research.

"We're one of the best kept secrets in Owensboro," said Shelia Heflin of Livermore, who has worked in the Kentucky Room for 15 1/2 years and been its director since 1981. "Many people aren't aware of the historical material that we have here to do research," she said.

Started in 1935 in a tiny room on the second floor of the old city library at Ninth and Frederica streets, the Kentucky Room continued as a part of a new library built on Griffith Avenue in 1968 and has been in its present space in the lower level of the library since 1976.

More than 6,000 people sign in at the Kentucky Room register each year to do research, and many more write or telephone the room's staff for information or guidance, Heflin said.

Kentucky Room visitors include authors researching material for books, high school and college students doing special projects and individuals tracing their family trees.

Researchers have come to the Kentucky Room from as far away as Hawaii and Canada and from all over the continental United States.

"We even once received a transatlantic telephone call from someone in England researching local distilleries," Heflin said.

A couple from Wichita, Kan., stayed in Owensboro two weeks in November researching genealogy in the local library, and a woman from Canada was in the Kentucky Room while her husband was in town to speak to the Rotary Club, Heflin said. "She had been searching for a half sister for 30 years. We were able to put her in touch with other connections in Florida and she was able to find her (sister).

"The biggest joy I receive in this job is connecting people with information they need," Heflin said.

The Kentucky Room has more than 5,000 books, periodicals and microfilm on local and Kentucky history and genealogy. There also are nearly 300 oral history tapes, vertical files with newspaper clips of many phases of history of Daviess and each of the surrounding counties, and a photograph collection that was used recently in the pictorial history of Daviess County produced by the Messenger-Inquirer.

More than 150 years of Owensboro newspapers are on microfilm, dating back to several editions in October 1842, plus Civil War editions of the Owensboro Monitor from 1862-1865, and all city newspapers from 1879 to the present. Also available on microfilm are Daviess County marriage records and property deeds dating back to 1815, and wills from 1815 to 1909. The room has many of the same kinds of records for Ohio and McLean counties.



Shelia Heflin helps Dwayne Flynn of Springville, Ind., find reference material Friday afternoon in the Kentucky Room of the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library. Flynn and his wife came to Owensboro to work on a genealogical research project. Heflin, who

has been the director of the Kentucky Room since 1981, said, "We're one of the best kept secrets in Owensboro."

The Kentucky Room is a small-town mecca for people wanting to find their roots. It has histories and county records from Virginia, South Carolina, Maryland, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, from where so many Kentuckians came. Also on file are local family histories, diaries, cemetery records, maps, and Owensboro city directories going back to 1871. There are obituary indexes dating from 1890 to the present, many of which have been computerized.

Perhaps most important, the Kentucky Room has all the Kentucky censuses from 1810 to 1920, with the exception of 1890.

"Having census records for the whole state of Kentucky is a great drawing card for us, because people can come here and research eastern Kentucky, Louisville or Lexington and don't have to make that drive," Heflin said. "They can get census information from anywhere in the state right here."

In addition to her duties as Kentucky Room director, Heflin has written several articles on local history, has conducted historical tours of downtown Owensboro and has lectured on history at community meetings. She has a master's degree in history, is regent of the McLean County Daughters of the American Revolution, president of the McLean County Historical Society and secretary of the Daviess County Historical Society.

The Kentucky Room staff also includes Bettie Spratt, who has been there 15 years; and Jerry Long, a professional genealogist and researcher, who has worked in the Kentucky Room for six years. They are assisted by two volunteers, Larry Worth and Elsie Thomas.

The staff gets some unique requests for information, Heflin said. Once a writer for People magazine flew into Owensboro and spent a day at the Kentucky Room gathering facts for a story on Owensboro-born actor Johnny Depp. In another instance, an Owensboro woman who had found a high school ring came to the Kentucky Room to try to trace its owner in high school yearbooks.

"She used the initials on the ring to find the former student in the annual, looked up his name in the phone directory and was able to return the ring to him," Heflin said. "Turns out he had lost the ring over 20 years ago."

Military veterans also come to the Kentucky Room trying to trace former army buddies in the area. Currently, Owensboro High School students are helping football coach Gerald Poynter compile a 100-year history of OHS football teams.

"People like coming back here because the staff is so friendly and helpful, and we're all very knowledgeable in history and genealogy," Heflin said.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 21 December 1995, p.2A:

Livermore citizens honored by city council

[Among those honored] Shelia Heflin, for her work on the city and county zoning boards, library board and as president of the Historical Society....



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 22 April 1999, p.4B:

Irish genealogy seminar Saturday at Brescia

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

Genealogy is a major hobby in Owensboro. Shelia Brown Heflin, who oversees the historical and genealogical archives in the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library, says more than 7,000 people signed the guest book there last year, saying they were researching their family trees.

"And that doesn't even begin to count all the phone calls, letters and e-mails we get about genealogy," Heflin said. "We've had visitors from every state and several foreign countries, and they stay several days."



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 26 August 1999, p.2A:



The city of Livermore and the Island Heritage Council received a donation of \$2,000 apiece from the McLean County Historical Society last week. Island is working on restoring their wooden bridge and Livermore is working on a railway museum in Depot Park. Presenting the donations was historical society member Eldon Eaton, front left, and president Shelia Heflin, back left. Livermore Mayor Jerry Zuehl, front right, and Island Mayor Charles Strole, back right, were on hand to receive the donations.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 28 July 2002, pp.1C & 3C:

Local librarians handle treasures from across state

By Dylan Sullivan, Messenger-Inquirer

She only gets paid for one job, but Shelia Heflin really has three.

The Daviess County Public Library's information services manager is in charge of the Kentucky Room and functions as a librarian, archivist and curator.

Heflin said the room is a "treasure trove," and it's home to objects one would not normally expect to find in a library.

One is a scale model of a trolley from the long-defunct Owensboro system.

"It was built by Bill Mattingly and Jim Eaton," she said. "Everything is to scale."

The model is indeed impressive. Even the complex undercarriage of the trolley is rendered in shiny metal.

But why isn't this model in a museum?

"Because they donated it to us," she said.

And Heflin has tried to create a mutually beneficial relationship with area museums since she arrived at the library 23 years ago. Several pieces of donated artwork are on "indefinite loan" to the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art.

The Kentucky Room is also home to a large wooden clock, built by Owensboro handyman A.A. Averitt in 1898. It's about 4 feet tall and is much more wood than watch.

Until a few years ago, it was still ticking. But the person responsible for its repair left Owensboro.

The clock and trolley are kept on display, but other items are kept in a back room.

One such item is an ashtray from the once-famous Owensboro Ditcher and Grader Company, whose products were used throughout the nation.

"We've had people from out West restoring these and wanting to know more about the company," Heflin said. For these purposes, she keeps files on Owensboro businesses. She also has information on the Green River Distillery Company, makers of "The whiskey without regrets."

She has a number of tokens featuring the company's advertising symbol, a smiling black man standing side by side with a mule carrying a jug of whiskey.

"They had an incredible number of items they would give out to advertise their product," she said.

She got the tokens from someone who was doing research on the distillery. After his project was done, he sent her the tokens as a thank-you gift.

The Kentucky Room is also home to volumes of genealogical material, and prints of old Owensboro buildings line the walls.

For the genealogical material, Heflin has a clear organizational system. But for objects such as the trolley and tokens, inventory control is handled more through mental means than by physical card catalogs.

"I know where everything is," she said.

Heflin said she has had to refuse some items would-be donators tried to pass on to the library.

"There have been things I have referred to area museums," she said. "One man contacted the Kentucky Historical Society to give away all his silver pieces."

Heflin said there is little competition between the library and other possible repositories of historical objects.

"Things do need to be preserved," she said.

Kentucky Wesleyan College's library does not get offered items as often as the public library, but one collection of items does stand out.

"They came from the Winchester campus," said Julie Gilmore, technical services librarian, gesturing to a set of Stone Age implements protected in a glass case. "So they're not illegally dug as far as I know."

KWC moved from Winchester to Owensboro 51 years ago.

The collection contains stone marbles, axes, mortar and pestle sets and even drug paraphernalia in the form of stone pipes.

"They probably were using drugs of some kind," Gilmore said.

The glass case, in the rear of the library, also contains a basket and a hat, which look remarkably similar.

"I don't know why someone thinks that's a hat and not a basket; I don't know why someone thinks this was a basket and not a hat," Gilmore said, pointing to the brown and yellow woven objects.

Other than the fact that they were once housed in Winchester, little more is known about the implements. And the case has become a running joke among the college's librarians.

"We don't know where they came from or why they're here," Gilmore said.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 8 September 2003, Prime p.3:

Q & A – What was your first job?

By Doug Crowe, Prime



My first job was at Ray's IGA, where the Fraternal Order of Eagles is now. Ray Higdon was the owner, and Martha Waltrip Darrell and Michael's mother trained me on the cash register. I worked there four and a half years when I went through college, and made \$1.60 an hour. I couldn't recognize people by their faces, but I knew them by the color of their checks. I still see people out every once in a while.

- Shelia Heflin, McLean County



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 30 June 2005, pp.1A & 2A:

Clark remembered as 'gentleman scholar'
Kentucky historian laureate died Tuesday at age 101

By Joy Campbell, Messenger-Inquirer

.... Shelia Heflin, information services manager at the Daviess County Public Library, described Clark as a quick-witted, outspoken Southern gentleman with a Southern lilt to his voice. She served with him on the state archives and records commission. Heflin represented the Kentucky Library Board, and Clark represented UK. As soon as she heard of Clark's death, Heflin spotlighted his work in the Kentucky Room and in the first floor "In the News" display. "He was a prolific writer; I thought this was a good way to honor him," Heflin said.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 15 July 2007, p.7G:



Shelia and Michael Heflin

Mr. and Mrs. Heflin

Michael L. and Shelia E. Heflin of Livermore celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary at a surprise reception at their son's wedding rehearsal on June 1.

Heflin and Shelia E. Brown were married June 4, 1982, at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Owensboro, by the Rev. Larry Brown and the Rev. Carson Bevil. Attending the couple were Peggy Dennison Gray and Mark Heflin.

Heflin is a retired teacher from the McLean County Schools. He currently works part time with the gifted and talented program at McLean County Middle School. Mrs. Heflin is the information services manager at the Daviess County Public Library. They are members of Buck Creek Baptist Church.

They have three children, Jordan Heflin and Andrea Heflin, both of Lexington, and McKinley Heflin of Livermore.



**Kentucky Family Records, Vol. 31, West-Central Kentucky Family
Research Association (Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 2007), p. 21:**

Notes on the Ancestry of the Kentucky Room,
Daviess County Public Library, Owensboro, KY

By Jerry Long, Kentucky Room Assistant



Kentucky Room staff, Daviess County Public Library, Owensboro, KY: Jerry Long on left, Shelia Heflin in center and Bettie Spratt on right, with Anna & Maria, two visiting librarians from the Czech Republic. Picture was taken in the Kentucky Room in May 2000.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 20 May 2009, p.1A:



Shelia Heflin looks toward her son McKinley Heflin, a senior at McLean County High School, after McKinley received the Messenger-Inquirer 2009 Regional Academic All-Stars award English on Tuesday during the awards ceremony at Daviess County High School. McKinley was nominated four out of the seven categories recognized at awards ceremony. pictured is McKinley's father, Mike Heflin.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 2 January 2012, pp.1B & 2B:

Library to lose two longtime employees

By Megan Harris, Messenger-Inquirer

More than 65 years of combined experience will be lost this summer when Director Debbie Mesplay and Information Services Manager Shelia Heflin become the fifth and sixth retirees from Daviess County Public Library in the past two years.

The two said they see a lot of "me" time in their future.

Heflin, whose first grandchild – a girl – is due in May, said she plans to continue traveling. The 55-year-old has traveled overseas, to all 50 states and to all 120 Kentucky counties with her husband and three children.

A McLean County resident, Heflin started her library career in the Kentucky Room, a special collection featuring local and state history as well as resources for genealogists. She said she hopes to devote more time to that, a true love, while still remaining active in the community, giving historical talks and writing.

"I just love history," Heflin said. "I can't not be involved with it."

Mesplay, 58, said she plans to do a little less planning.

"There are many, many things I want to do ? travel, of course, and gardening ? but just the idea of having more than two weeks off at a time is liberating," Mesplay said. "And I'll finally have time to read."

She laughed, recalling the library industry during their earliest days at DCPL. From remodeling to groundbreaking, a technology boom, the bookmobile, community projects and the birth of e-readers, both she and Heflin have grown up around an ever-evolving trade.

"Just the fact that we work in libraries has helped us know a little bit about a lot of things, and now we'll have to pursue the things we love in depth," Mesplay said, turning to Heflin. "Won't that be fun?"

Since the fall of 2010, four others have taken their leave. Susan McFadden, head of technology services, left first; Custodian Janet Hurley left in July 2011; Jane Fink, head of marketing and promotions, retired shortly after; and Belinda Halliburton, head of public services, retired last month.

Mesplay, who, as director, hires library staffers, said many of the duties and responsibilities of former employees have been eliminated or absorbed into other positions.

Heflin, for example, became Halliburton's acting replacement while nuggets of Fink's job fell to others. Her designs, Mesplay said, will probably be used by the library for years to come.

"When long-term staff members leave, we always take a step back and see how best to fill the void they left behind," Mesplay said. "We're still working on that, to some extent."

The library board will begin searching for Mesplay's replacement, which is likely to come from a national pool of applicants. It will fall to their selection to fill Heflin's shoes.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 23 October 2012, p. 4B:

Library to honor Heflin

Library administrators are hosting a reception for Information Services Manager Shelia Heflin from 2 to 4 p.m. Tuesday in the Kentucky Room. A McLean County resident, Heflin will retire from the Daviess County Public Library effective Oct. 31. She spent much of her 33-year career in the Kentucky Room, a special collection featuring local and state history as well as resources for genealogists.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 25 October 2012, p.3B:

Poplar Grove News

By Glenda Willis

.... Shelia Heflin of Livermore had her retirement get-together in the Kentucky Genealogy Room at the Owensboro Public Library last Tuesday. She had been a librarian and the head of the Kentucky Room for 33 years! I joined the group to wish Shelia a happy retirement and fun with her grandkids!



Kentucky Room staff , left to right – Jerry Long, Leslie McCarty, Shelia Heflin and Bettie Spratt. Picture taken at retirement reception for Shelia on 23 October 2012 in Kentucky Room, Daviess County Public Library, 2020 Frederica St., Owensboro, KY.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 21 June 2013, p2A:

At its meeting Thursday at the Daviess County Courthouse, Daviess Fiscal Court took the following action: Approved appointing Aloma Dew, Lee Dew, 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.



**Daviess County, Kentucky, 1815-2015, Celebrating Our Heritage,
Daviess County Bicentennial Committee (Evansville,
IN: M. T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2015):**

Page 5: Contributing Authors:

.... Sheila Brown Heflin Graduate of Kentucky Wesleyan College, MA in history from Western Kentucky University. Retired director of Kentucky Room at Daviess County Public Library, expert on Daviess County history....

Page 7: Bicentennial Committee:



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, Sheila 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, Saturday, 8 August 2015, p.3B:

To Do Today

.... "Reflections on the Past" is at 1 p.m. at Daviess County Public Library, 2020 Frederica St. Lee Dew, Shelia Heflin, Joe Castlen and Dale Warren give talks on Daviess County history in celebration of Daviess County's Bicentennial....



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 2 December 2015, p.1B:



Daviess County Bicentennial Committee chair members Nancy Bradshaw, left, and Shelia Heflin sort through materials Tuesday that will be added to a 50-year time capsule in the lobby of the Daviess County Courthouse. The capsule will be sealed inside a phone booth inside the courthouse and will be opened in 2065.



Bibliography of published sources by Shelia Heflin:

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- “The Works Progress Administration in Daviess County, 1935-1943”, Vol. II, No. 4, October 1984, Daviess County Historical Quarterly (Owensboro, KY: Daviess County Historical Society) pp.74-83. Article was part of thesis for Masters degree in History from Western Kentucky University.
- “READERS WRITE: Genealogical help”, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 4 April 1986, p.4A.
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- “McLean County Roots”, McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, 12 November 1987, p.6.
- “McLean County Roots”, McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, 26 November 1987, p.7.
- “McLean County Roots”, McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, 10 December 1987, p.15.
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- “To Be Or Not To Be: The Stage In Owensboro”, Vol. VI, No. 4, October 1988, Daviess County Historical Quarterly (Owensboro, KY: Daviess County Historical Society) pp.80-83.
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- Book Review – “Daybreak on Old Fortification Creek”, by Glenn Hodges, Vol. VII, No.3, July 1989, Daviess County Historical Quarterly (Owensboro, KY: Daviess County Historical Society) pp.69-70.
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- McLean County Pictorial History, McLean County Historical Society; Shelia Heflin, editor (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Company, 1992).
- “READERS WRITE: Award-winning historical series will be missed”, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 11 February 1993, p.9A.
- “@ YOUR LIBRARY: Use the library to learn about your family tree”, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 30 June 2004, p.1C & 8C.
- “@ YOUR LIBRARY: Reference department can help with any question”, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 4 August 2004, p.1D.
- “@ YOUR LIBRARY: Library databases available from home”, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 11 August 2004, pp.1C & 2C.
- Sketches of Daviess County Communities: Adlai (p.25); Andersonville (p.25); Ash Valley (p.25); Bon Harbor (p.26); Boswell (p.26); Cruse – Dermont (p.26); Ensor (p.28); Glennville-Glenville (p.28); Haynes (p.29); Herrwood (p.29); Lockhart (p.30); Loopee (p.30); Panther (p.34); Pleasant Ridge (p.35); Possum Trot (p.35); Rose Hill (p.35); Stringtown (p.38); Thompsonville (p.39); Tuck (p.39); Wolf Hill (p.41); and Yellow Creek (p.41). Daviess County, Kentucky, 1815-2015, Celebrating Our Heritage, Daviess County Bicentennial Committee (Evansville, IN: M. T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2015).
- “Daviess County Public Library”, Daviess County, Kentucky, 1815-2015, Celebrating Our Heritage, Daviess County Bicentennial Committee (Evansville, IN: M. T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2015), pp.180-181.

