

# Local History Articles By Ida F. Cockriel

By Jerry Long  
c.2023



Ida Frances Graber was born 11 February 1902 in Adams County, Indiana. She was the daughter of Joseph L. Graber & Mary Hoffman. She is listed with her parents in the 1910 and 1920 federal censuses of Adams County, IN.

Ida married first Dore Howard Parr (1896-1935) on 25 May 1926 in Adams County, Indiana. Shortly after their marriage they located in Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, where they are listed in the 1930 federal census.

In Owensboro on 21 June 1936 Ida married John Everett Cockriel (1883-1950). They are shown together in the 1940 and 1950 federal censuses of Owensboro, KY.

Ida Cockriel about 1927 became a proofreader for the newspaper, Owensboro Messenger. The city directories of Owensboro during 1930-1941 reported her occupation as a proofreader for the Owensboro Publishing Company, who published the Owensboro Messenger newspaper. The 1943 and 1945 Owensboro city directories record that she was a society editor for the Owensboro Publishing Company. She left the employee of the company about 1946. During 1942-1945 Mrs. Cockriel was a staff writer for the Owensboro Messenger. Among the articles she penned were the thirty-one articles on local history that are transcribed here.

In 1950 she was an employee of the Kentucky Convalescent Home in Owensboro, KY. Shortly after 1950 she left Owensboro and moved to Indiana.

Ida married third Edwin David Vitz (1899-1963), 17 April 1955 Poland, Clay County, IN. In 1963 she was residing in Berne, Adams County, IN. Ida F. Vitz died on 15 October 1987 in

Wabash, Wabash County, IN. Her death certificate reported that she was a practical nurse. She was buried in the MRE Cemetery in Berne, Adams County, IN. She left no surviving children.



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- “Curdsville Precinct Replete With Historical Lore Of Pioneer Daviess Countians: In Early Days District Covered Much of This County and Part of Territory in Adjoining McLean ”, Owensboro Messenger, 10 January 1943, pp.1B & 5B 51
- “River Tragedy Brought Owensboro Its First Educational Institution: Noted Teacher Who Survived Sinking of Boat Located in Yellow Banks and Opened School in Log Cabin”, Owensboro Messenger, 17 January 1943, pp.1B & 2B 56
- “Vanover Precinct First Settlement In County To Go Dry, In Last Century: Pioneer Residents Were For the Most Part, Deeply Religious; Built Churches and One of First District Schools”, Owensboro Messenger, 24 January 1943, pp.1B & 8B 59
- “Old Murray Precinct Was Scene First Distilling Activity In Daviess County: Walter McFarland, Pioneer Resident, Manufactured First Whiskey and Brandy in Year 1805”, Owensboro Messenger, 31 January 1943, pp.1B & 2B 63
- “Murray Precinct Gave Daviess County Its First Passenger Railroad: Owensboro and Nashville Line Was Built After Many Obstacles and Difficulties Overcome By Residents”, Owensboro Messenger, 7 February 1943, pp.1B & 2B 68
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- “Old Indian Trail Guided The First Settlers Of Knottsville Section In The 18th Century”, Owensboro Messenger, 14 March 1943, p.2A 90
- “Hawes and Taylor Families Prominent in Early Yelvington Community History: Richard Hawes Came to County in Year 1820”, Owensboro Messenger, 21 March 1943, p.5B 93
- “Descendant of John Alden Was Thruston Pioneer”, Owensboro Messenger, 28 March 1943, pp.1B & 5B 96
- “Story Of Indian Encounter With Pioneers And Saving Of Man From Burning Told In Letter”, Owensboro Messenger, 4 April 1943, p.1B 99
- “Bon Harbor Hills Saw Many Early Business Ventures Including State’s First Railroad”, Owensboro Messenger, 11 April 1943, p4A 100
- “Owensboro Rotary Club Was Pioneer In State-Wide Movement For Treatment Of Crippled Children , Correction Of Their Deformities”, Owensboro Messenger, 18 April 1943, p.1B 102

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- “Communities Oldest Industry Operating At Capacity: Output Sold Far In Advance”, Owensboro Messenger, 18 February 1945, pp.1B & 8B 108



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- “Henry Berry Recalls Period When Roads In Daviess County Resembled Mere Mud Paths”, Owensboro Messenger, 22 January 1939, p.3A
- “Henry Berry Recalls That Ponds Once Covered Large Part Of City, County”, Owensboro Messenger, 29 January 1939, p.5B
- “Henry S. Berry Remembers Building Of The First Railroad In Owensboro”, Owensboro Messenger, 5 February 1939, p.5B
- “Henry Berry Recalls Cannel Coal Formerly Mined In Daviess County”, Owensboro Messenger, 12 February 1939, p.2B
- “Many Private Schools In Early Owensboro, Henry Berry Recalls”, Owensboro Messenger, 19 February 1939, p.3B
- “Henry Berry Recalls Early History Of Making Of Sour Mash Whisky In Daviess County”, Owensboro Messenger, 26 February 1939, p.3B
- “Henry Berry Recalls Early Owensboro Plants”, Owensboro Messenger, 5 March 1939, p.2B
- “Camp Breckinridge Nurses Like Army Want To Drill; Express Their Determination To Win”, Owensboro Inquirer, 7 October 1942, p.4
- “Home of 98th Nears Completion: Huge Training Center Near Morganfield”, Owensboro Messenger, 11 October 1942, pp.1B & 7B
- “Youthful Owensboroan, Survivor of Ill-Fated Carrier Yorktown, Glad of Pre-Combat Training”, Owensboro Messenger, 13 October 1942, p.3
- Young Owensboro Seaman Who Saw Plenty Of Action In The Pacific Is Survivor of Astoria Sinking”, Owensboro Inquirer, 14 October 1942, pp.1 & 11
- “Talented Young Musician Interrupts Colorful Musical Career To Serve With Coast Guard”, Owensboro Messenger, 16 October 1942, p.5
- “Wife Of Coast Guard Chief Takes Her Home Along”, Owensboro Messenger, 18 October 1942, p.8B
- “Youth Strived Untiringly, And Without ‘Must’ Schooling, Near Day When Wings Will Be His”, Owensboro Inquirer, 21 October 1942, p.5
- “Coast Guardsman Here Served With Marines In Nicaragua”, Owensboro Messenger, 23 October 1942, p.9
- “Coast Guardsman Here Dined With The Kaiser, Vouches For Gold In Dome Of Czars – He Saw It”, Owensboro Messenger, 28 October 1942, p.4
- “Nurses’ Aides Are Helping To Relieve Shortage At Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital Here”, Owensboro Inquirer, 30 October 1942, p.5

- “Pearl Harbor, Coral Sea, Midway, Solomons – All Real Experiences Of Young Owensboro Seaman”, Owensboro Messenger, 1 November 1942, p.2B
- “Camp Breckinridge Provides Well For Recreation Of Men”, Owensboro Messenger, 4 November 1942, p.4
- “Owensboro Must Do This Job”, Owensboro Messenger, 29 November 1942, p.4B
- “Owensboroans Take Rationing As Necessary: Little Johnny Is Motorist’s Biggest Travel Problem”, Owensboro Messenger, 6 December 1942, pp.1B & 5B
- “Owensboroan Thought Planes At Pearl Harbor Were U.S. Craft Doing Special Work For Films”, Owensboro Messenger, 8 December 1942, p.5
- “Young Owensboro Sailor Hasn’t Missed Much In This War – Vet Of 5 Big Battles: Elwood J. Travis, 21, Was Member of Aircraft Carrier Crew During Long Chain of Exciting Naval Engagements”, Owensboro Messenger, 13 December 1942, pp.1B & 12B
- “Coral Sea, Midway, Solomons – All Part Of Life Owensboro Youth Experienced In Battling Japs”, Owensboro Messenger, 15 December 1942, p.4
- “Young Sailor Thought Mostly Of Sharks, Bombs, Baracuda And Strafing At ‘Abandon Ship’ Order”, Owensboro Messenger, 16 December 1942, p.10
- “Scouts Of Western Kentucky Area Under War Footing”, Owensboro Messenger, 2 May 1943, pp.1B & 5B
- “19 Aides Serve At Owensboro Hospital”, Owensboro Messenger, 30 May 1943, p.1B
- “Total War Bond Purchases Of Daviess Countians Exceed Quotas By Nearly \$2,000,000 Since May 1942”, Owensboro Messenger, 6 June 1943, p.1B
- “American Have Marched, Lived And Fought Under Many Flags”, Owensboro Messenger, 13 June 1943, p.8B
- “Family Budgeting Boosts Bond Buying”, Owensboro Messenger, 3 July 1943, pp.1B & 2B
- “Victory Gardens Will Result In Many Well-Filled Larders”, Owensboro Messenger, 25 July 1943, pp.1B & 2B
- “Ken-Rad Executives Sparked Employe Organization That Sold More Than \$700,000 In Third War Laon Bonds”, Owensboro Messenger, 3 October 1943, p.2B
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- “WOMI Wins Commendation Of Leaders Of Armed Forces, Groups Of National Repute For War Service”, Owensboro Messenger, 26 December 1943, p.1B
- “Completely Revolutionized System Of Education Has Appeared In Last Decade”, Owensboro Messenger, 30 January 1944, pp.1B & 2B
- “Four Ken-Rad Women Have Service Records Of More Than 50 Years”, Owensboro Messenger, 16 April 1944, p.1B
- “Largest Crippled Children’s Clinic Since Start Of Program Is Held Here”, Owensboro Messenger, 23 April 1944, p.1B
- “New Physical Education Program Adopted In City Schools”, Owensboro Messenger, 14 May 1944, p.1B
- “Record Attendance At Daily Vacation Bible Schools”, Owensboro Messenger, 11 Jun 1944, pp.1B & 2B
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- “Woman War Worker Gets News Of Son From Invasion Film”, Owensboro Messenger, 29 June 1944, p.3
- “Farmerettes Combine Work And Vacations”, Owensboro Messenger, 23 July 1944, pp.1B & 2B
- “Ken-Rad Employes Quests Of Company At Picnic, Barbecue”, Owensboro Messenger, 30 July 1944, pp.1A & 4A
- “Children To Benefit From Lions Club Charity Horse Show”, Owensboro Messenger, 13 August 1944, p1B
- “Federal Works Agency Gift Augments Owensboro Nursey School Equipment”, Owensboro Messenger, 27 August 1944, p.1B
- “Owensboro School System Includes Many Features Found Mainly In Far Larger Cities”, Owensboro Messenger, 10 September 1944, p.1B
- “Y.M.C.A. To Seek \$7,500 In Drive Sept. 26”, Owensboro Messenger, 17 September 1944, p.1B
- “Indian Lake Recreation Spot Known Far And Wide For Its Natural Beauty”, Owensboro Messenger, 22 October 1944, ppp.1B & 5B
- “County’s Last One-Room School To Be Abandoned”, Owensboro Messenger, 29 October 1944, ppp.1B & 2B
- “Owensboro’s Younger Generation Will Help Get Out Vote Tuesday; To Have Elections”, Owensboro Messenger, 5 November 1944, p.1B
- “Owensboro Youth Centers Popular With Young People”, Owensboro Messenger, 12 November 1944, p.1B
- “Refugee From Germany Tells Of Nazi Persecution Of Jews”, Owensboro Messenger, 17 November 1944, p.3
- “Owensboro’s Version Of Ruth Is Pretty, Brown-Eyed Irish Lass”, Owensboro Messenger, 10 December 1944, p.4A
- “Many Of Battle Scenes Seen On Motion Picture Screens Filled By Husband Of Local Girl”, Owensboro Messenger, 21 January 1945, p1B
- “Catholic Missionary Tells Audiences Here Of Jap Atrocities In Philippine Islands”, Owensboro Messenger, 18 March 1945, p1B
- “100,000 Pounds Of Waste Paper Sought Here; Army Trucks To Aid Scouts In Collection”, Owensboro Messenger, 25 March 1945, p1B
- “Owensboro Survivor Of Bataan ‘Death March’ Tells Of Atrocities Committed By Japanese”, Owensboro Inquirer, 1 April 1945, p.1B
- First Owensboroan To Receive Distinguished Service Cross Home On 30-Day Sick Leave”, Owensboro Messenger, 27 May 1945, p1B
- “Home Construction On Increase In Owensboro”, Owensboro Messenger, 10 June 1945, p1B
- “Butter, Cheese Making Being Taught In County”, Owensboro Messenger, 15 July 1945, p.1B
- “Domestics, Housewives Both To Have New War-Born Ideas”, Owensboro Messenger, 23 August 1945, p.1B
- “New Structures, Improvements Planned Here; Vast Sums to Be Spent In Unprecedented Construction Program”, Owensboro Inquirer, 23 September 1945, p.1B

- “19-Year-Old Soldier Returns To Home Here After Three Years In Japanese Prison Camp”, Owensboro Messenger, 30 September 1945, p.1B
- “Postwar Household Equipment, New Gadgets May Render Obsolete Adage, ‘Woman’s Work Is Never Done’”, Owensboro Messenger, 7 October 1945, p.1B
- “Boy Who Left Central Junior High School At 15 To Enter Army , Survived Death March, Returns”, Owensboro Messenger, 18 November 1945, p.1B
- “Methods Of Christmas Observance Different in Other Lands”, Owensboro Messenger, 23 December 1945, p.1B



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 30 August 1942, p.1B:**

**Owensboro Overlooked By Historians:  
State Sesquicentennial Fails to Note Significance**

By Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Despite the fact that about the only mention made of Owensboro in the Kentucky Sesquicentennial historical book published recently, is the mere recording of the date of Owensboro's birth and a picture of the Ohio river miles above Owensboro, this city was a center of civilization and social advancement in this section long before recent historians give it credit for being important historically. Men died from Indian tomahawks, attempting to open up a new country and the Indian was felled by the white man's gunpowder when he resented intrusion on his hunting grounds. Children were born, men married, and men died all for the sake of Owensboro – not for honor and glory.

Long before historians give it credit, and long before courts were instituted so that legal documents could be filed and kept for posterity, Owensborough was. Owensborough, before 1815, lived in the hearts of those pioneer men and women who by the sweat of their brows, and their brawn, their faith in mankind and their trust in Providence hewed down the mighty forest and cleared the small plat of ground upon which Owensborough was laid in 1815. And even though today there are no historical shrines dedicated to the Abraham Lincolns, the Daniel Boones, the George Rogers Clarks, Owensboro stands as a monument to those hardy pioneers. And, although Owensboro may not have gained any prominence in Sesquicentennial literature, the national recognition and honors heaped upon it and its sons and daughters, make it a shrine upon which is emblazoned the valor and romance of those pioneer men whose deeds vary only in degree with the Lincolns, Clarks and Boones, even though history fails to record them and Kentucky historians deem Owensboro unimportant from a historical viewpoint.

**County Records Give Picture**

Life in Owensborough as this city was known at its inception after an existence for years as Yellow Banks, is best depicted by records in the Daviess County Court house. Those prized sheets, on which is recorded the life of the thriving community are faded now, and the ink so dimmed that reading is difficult.

Life in Owensborough was not without its romance. For instance one early pioneer in Eastern Daviess county wrote his brother in Pennsylvania: "I am still without a wife. Women are scarce in this new country. If perchance any of your neighbors with daughters of marriageable age

come this way, urge them to stop here. This is a fine country." Whether the early settler was a one-man Chamber of Commerce trying to sell Owensborough, or get himself a wife, is left to the imagination of the reader.

The first deed in the record book in the office of County Court Clerk Katherine Griffin is one dated June 12, 1815 in which Adam Jordan deeded to Moses Guyn 100 acres of land for \$350. The land was on the West Side of Knob Lick creek. William Griffith was the county clerk.

The first slave transfer listed was on June 9, the same year when Terry Thorp sold to James Gentry "1 negro boy called Bob, 19 years old" for \$450.

#### Yearly Rent One Peck of Corn

A lease recorded that same year indicated that James Trotter, agent for heirs of Joseph Trotter, leased to John May a total of 400 acres of land, including a plantation, for six years, the "yearly rent to be one peck of corn." Needless to say May got a bargain.

On another lease listed about the same time, Henry White acting as agent for Richard A. Maupain entered into the agreement with William Roberts whereby the former agreed to "leave or rent" to Roberts a parcel of land on Pup creek on the road leading from the mouth of Blackford and part of a 1,000 acre tract. Roberts was to have peaceful and quiet possession of the land for 10 years and agreed to put 20 acres in cultivation at once, to plant 25 apple trees and 30 peach trees and to care for them. He was to make no wilful waste of timber and to prevent trespassing to the best of his ability. He was not to take in any subtenant and to return the place in good tenable repair. For all of this the owner of the land was to receive 1,000 bushels of corn after the first five years in the month of November and each year thereafter for five years, and to return the land peaceably at the end of the 10 years.

The Pup Creek tenant was not quite as fortunate as John May. A story without an end is found on another page of that old ledger. An agreement was recorded on August 14, 1815 in which "James Humphrey Primus, a man of colour, of the County of Daviess and State of Kentucky ... for and in consideration of the sum of \$100 in hand paid by Charles Worthington ... hereby agrees and binds himself to serve Charles Worthington in servitude for two years from March 10." Worthington agreed to provide "sufficient coarse clothing and diet" during the servitude. Just why Primus sold his freedom was not revealed. Whether the money went to purchase the freedom of a beloved wife, or aged father or mother, who had fallen into the hands of a Simon Lagree, remains forever a mystery.



#### **Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 6 September 1942, pp.1B & 5B:**

#### **Name Of Daviess Given County Through Typographical Error; Other Early Events Are Recalled**

Files of County Court Clerk Give an Interesting Picture of  
Life Before and Immediately Following Erection of County.

By Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Long before courts were erected in Daviess county for the convenience of residents in Owensboro, business was transacted, and documents were made and signed by interested persons.



Even though deeds and other instruments could not be filed they were drawn up and signatures affixed, according to early recordings in the office of County Court Clerk Katherine Griffin.

On December 12, 1815, there was filed in the office of the county clerk an instrument that had been written on December 4, 1807 – eight years previous to the erection of Daviess county. And peculiarly, too, the instrument was made between the man who gave his name to the county, Joseph Hamilton Daveiss, and Joshua Griffith, venerable ancestor of the late Josh Griffith.

There was no court to record the deed, so the two men, trusting in each other's honesty, and not having time to go to Hartford to record it, wrote an agreement which amounts to the same thing as a modern bill of sale in which Joseph Hamilton Daveiss sold to Joshua Griffith for \$500, a tract of land numbering 500 acres "beginning on Rhodes creek on the road from Shoemakers to Glens, being the same land which Benjamin Fields once viewed with us ... deed with general warranty to be made by me as soon as the land can be laid off, being me, my heirs, executors ... to said Griffith, said deed under penalty of \$10,000. Signed, J. H. Daveiss. Witnessing the signature were Walter McFarlin and Robert Wall.

#### Error Changed Name

Of particular interest is the fact that when Daveiss signed his name he signed it by spelling his last name "ei." However, when the deed, or instrument was recorded on Dec. 12 1815, errors were made and the name spelled Daviess – the name the county bears. A similar error in recording the name in Frankfort, resulted in the name of this county being spelled differently from the way the man after whom it was named, spelled it. In fact the name was spelled several ways in the recording, the records shows, another being Deaviess.

It was Daveiss, the eminent attorney, who defended Bill Smothers, Daviess county's first settler, when he was tried for the murder of a man by the name of Norris. Norris, said to be of Herculean proportions had come ashore from a keelboat which he and six others had anchored at Yellow Banks, near Smothers cabin, and entered the cabin. Norris failed to leave. The lengthy speech of Jo Daveiss before the jury at the trial which was held at Hartford (Daviess county at that time not having been erected) extolled the virtues of the pioneer Smothers and swayed the jury and even the judge to such an extent that he exhorted the jury to look in mercy upon the prisoner and the jury returned a verdict of "not guilty."

It was that trial that brought Jo. Daveiss to Yellow Banks, for his client invited him to go home with him after the trial. Daveiss accepted the invitation and he was so well pleased with the country that he settled here shortly afterward.

This deed, filed in 1815, is the first time in which the name of Jo Daveiss appears in the county record book.

#### Soldiers Ask Pay

About the same time, the last of 1815 and the first part of 1816, men who had volunteered and served under the eminent Colonel Isaac Shelby in his battles with the British, sought pay for their services. The first such effort recorded in Daviess county is one that was entered on January 11, 1816. It was signed by John Travis on September 2, 1814, and delegated to Samuel Hancock, "of the county of Ohio (of which Daviess was then a part) for value received . . . all my rights, title claim and interest to what pay is due me for my services for serving in the United States Army as a Mounted volunteer under the command of Captain James Tyler in Company C, Philip Barbour's regiment on a tour to Lake Erie, commencing on August 19, 1813 and ending November 14, same year. The whole was commanded by his excellency, Isaac Shelby."

Philip Coffee, according to another recording also appointed Samuel Hancock of Ohio county as "my true and lawful attorney to demand and receive of the paymaster of the Tenth regiment of Kentucky Mounted volunteers, all pay and wages coming or due as a private in Capt. James Tyler's company of militia attached to Col. Philip Barbour's regiment in the expedition to upper 'Canady' in 1813." The word 'Canady' evidently had reference to Canada.

#### Renounced Will

Wills were made, changed and broken in the early days of Owensboro, as well as they are today. The first such incident is that of an agreement between the executor and heirs of John McFarlin, one of Owensboro's first settlers, and his widow. The widow, Francis, was well provided for, even though she renounced her rights to provisions made in the will.

According to the Instrument as recorded, "between William McFarlin and William Glenn, executors of the estate of John McFarlin, deceased, and Francis, his widow, whereas the said Francis . . . has this day . . . renounced the provisions ... of the deceased husband, the executor agrees that the widow shall have the negro devised to her by her husband ... The executor also agrees to give the widow one horse saddle, and riding chair and \$250 in cash. The widow also was to receive 500 pounds of good merchantable pork; 500 pounds of merchantable corn; one-half dozen common chairs; one-half dozen knives and forks, one cupboard, equal to the one in the house of the late John McFarlin (which would indicate the widow was leaving home of her late husband) also two cows worth \$10 each, four head of sheep, one large kettle, one pot, one tea pot, a spice mortar, one large earthen dish, one-half dozen plates, one square table, one-half of the geese on the farm, the cotton in her possession and the flax on the farm to be received in lieu of her dower."



#### **Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 13 September 1942, pp.1B & 8B:**

Teachers Tell Happenings of Yesteryears  
Tales of Interest Related by Four Owensboro Veterans  
By Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

"She teaches' of numbers and  
language,  
"She teachers of grammar and  
history,  
"Of morals, of goodness  
of heart."

Thus wrote Miss Lettie Boyd, many years ago, concerning the efforts of school teachers, and many thousands of children have come under the uplifting influence of the four Owensboro teachers who were retired from their profession by the teachers' retirement plan this year. The four include Misses Boyd, Jennie Cosby, Mame Harrison and Mary Conway.

Miss Cosby, the oldest of the quartet, began her teaching career in 1884, Miss Conway in 1892, Miss Boyd in 1898 and Miss Harrison in 1899. The four have a combined teaching service of nearly 200 years.

## Relate Experiences

Miss Cosby began her career in the lower ward school, in what is now Walnut street school. "I began teaching with a practical high school education. My certificate was granted on examination. My grade was low, but still it was higher than any of the rest. I'll never forget that first morning when I experienced my most embarrassing moment of my entire career. I took my place behind my desk, and who should come up and sit down beside me but Ike Sutherland, father of our Ike Sutherland, who was one of the trustees. I started enrolling the children, and being new in the work, I presume I was slow, at least Mr. Sutherland remarked shortly, "Well if you don't get along any faster than that it will take you a whole week to enroll these children." Mr. Sutherland was a good friend of my family and said he came to school that first morning just to see 'how good a teacher Jennie would make.'

"My pupils have always been a joy to me and the source of my greatest happiness. My mother once remarked to a friend 'Jen never had an ugly class. Miss Laura Hughes was my ideal of what a teacher should be and it was my ambition to be as fine a teacher as she was and whatever success I have made in my work is largely due to her wise counsel and help. Owensboro was extremely fortunate in having such a noble woman, such a splendid character as Miss Hughes."

## Origin of Colored Schools

Miss Cosby has among her recollections, one unique experience, the incident upon which was based the origin of schools for colored children, in Owensboro. In fact Miss Cosby is probably the only person living now that witnessed the little drama. It was in 1882, while she was attending high school in the upper ward, which is now Washington school. For weeks prior to the opening of school, colored citizens had been demanding the right to send their children to the public schools. "The situation was tense," Miss Cosby stated. "On the first day of school in the fall of that year, I was in the hall of the building. Prof. A. C. Goodwin was superintendent of schools, and he too was in the hall awaiting the anticipated arrival of a colored delegation, when suddenly from the main street entrance a colored man, a preacher, fittingly dressed, came up the walk to the building, accompanied by two small colored boys, both attired in brown suits, wearing small derby hats and twirling their little canes. Prof. Goodwin met the preacher at the door with a friendly, "Good morning. What can I do for you?" The colored preacher came back with a demanding, "I want, to enter these children in the public schools." Miss Cosby, frightened, retreated down the hall, as she heard Goodwin's firm voice come back with, "They cannot enter." The colored preacher turned and left with his charges, and it was shortly after that petitions were filed by the colored residents, which eventually brought about public schools for the colored children.

Miss Cosby fondly recalls members of her own graduating class. Among them were Maggie McGoodwin, now Mrs. Tim Pedley of Colorado. Mary Payne, Vannie DeHay, Lina Terrill, Lorena Neicam, now Mrs. Grant Rich, Virginia Payne, the late Mrs. J. D. Reeves, Sue Conway, who later became Mrs. Frank Smith, Cora Webb, Alfred Luckett, Charles Nourse, Addie Murphy, who later became Mrs. James Louis, Effie Long, who later became Mrs. Otis Parrish, and Birdie Cary, who married a Mr. Bennett. Post graduates with that class included Judith Frayser, who later became Mrs. E. L. Duke; Forest Lee. now Mrs. A. G. Sweeney; Maggie Tompkins, Carrie Wilhite, who was the mother of Mrs. Newton Parrish. It was probably the first public graduating class and the crowd was so great that many parents of graduates could not gain admittance to the hall where commencement was held.

## Humorous Experiences

Miss Harrison, who began her career in the Harris school near Birk City, entered the city system in 1900, the same year McHenry Rhoads became city superintendent. She began at Franklin school, and closed her career there as principal. When asked to recount some of her amusing experiences. Miss Harrison obligingly remarked: "In those days we had to account on the annual report at the close of the term for every pupil who left school. One of my boys left school in March, so when I turned in my final report, I added after his name, 'This boy went out to look for the cow in March, and he may still be looking for it, for all I know.' The boy's mother had sent a note the day the boy failed to return, stating he had gone out to look for the cow."

Asked to reminisce further, Miss Harrison continued, "I remember distinctly when Frank Queen, as a child, was in one of my classes. One day he brought me a luscious peach, which I placed on my desk. The spelling lesson came up, and I marked a word wrong on Frank's paper. What did he do but come up to the desk and ask for the peach. So I had no peach that day. Another incident that happened during my early years was when I was forced to engage wits with one of my young charges, a boy, who was just entering the age of 'spit,' an age every boy passes through. I had noticed excessive moisture beside his desk many times, and one day accused him of expectorating. He denied the charge and came back with 'Miss Harrison will you please tell me how you can tell my spit from someone else's spit?' The entire school burst out in laughter and I joined them. There was nothing else to do."

#### Wages \$32.50 Monthly

When asked as to the early wages of school teachers, Miss Harrison said, "In the county I received \$50 a month for five months, but my first year in the city system I received only \$32.50 for nine months." Ever thoughtful of the schoolroom, Miss Boyd, affectionately called Miss Lettie by her children and friends, is making pillows for a couch in Washington school, where she didn't report Monday for the first time in many years. When queried further about the pillow Miss Boyd explained, "Well, you see we were given a couch for our teachers' room, but there was no pillow, and a couch without a pillow is uncomfortable. As long as I was teaching I did not have time to make the pillow. Now, well, now I have time, and I'm making the pillow for the comfort of those who remain at Washington school."

When asked about her teaching experiences, Miss Boyd was reticent to proceed. "I loved my work and my children. I never had anything unusual happen to me. In fact I prefer to remain out of the limelight, and enjoy the peace and quietude of my retirement." Urged to give at least one incident of her many years, Miss Boyd recalled, "Well, I do remember William Guenther as a boy was very mischievous. But he was very fond of reading, and if I could keep him reading, he would be good, so would the rest of the children. Those were the days before supplementary readers were supplied in schools, so I brought books to school for William to read, but, I would have to take William with me in my chair at my desk where he would read by the hour, and be the best little boy. But at his desk – well William just couldn't resist the temptation to do something funny. And William seemed to enjoy sitting with me in my chair."

Miss Boyd resides in her home which was also the old Hart residence, built by Professor Henry P. Hart, who was the head of the famous Hart school in Daviess street, adjoining the residence. The Robertson clinic is now located on the lot formerly occupied by the Hart school. Mrs. Hart was an aunt of Miss Boyd. In fact Miss Boyd states that this fall is the first fall in more than 75 years when some person has not gone forth from that home to the city schools, either as a

pupil or teacher. Miss Boyd insisted that she had only the most pleasant of experiences during her long career and closed with "In fact every class I had, kept getting sweeter and sweeter."

Miss Mary Conway, who retired from Wilson school, expressed only the highest regard for the teaching profession.

The four retiring teachers may have gone unsung, unhonored and unwept, but their influence upon the several thousand young children who have come under their direction will remain always a living tribute to their efforts in this community, for as Miss Boyd continued in that poem many years ago, the teacher:

"Strives to bend minds ever upward,  
"Always the right path to" pursue:  
"She strives to make good men and women  
"With characters sturdy and true."  
[article is accompanied by 6 school group pictures]



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 20 September 1942, p.1B:**

**Third Terms Not Unknown In Early History Of County,  
Old Daviess Court Records Reveal**

First Circuit Judge Served Twenty Year; Court Held Initial  
Session in 1815, Amusing, Interesting Happenings Given

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Third terms are not an institution of the New Deal or the Twentieth century, but were already known back in the early Nineteenth century in Daviess county, shortly after the county was started when Alney McLean served three terms as circuit judge, according to an intensive research covering the early records in the office of Circuit Court Clerk Ben S. McCormick. And for good measure, McLean served two years more than the eighteen allotted in a three-term period.

The first circuit court ever held in the county was held at the home of Thomas Moseley, Sr., at Yellow Banks (Owensboro) on October 8, 1815. Present, according to official documents were the Honorable Henry P. Broadnax, George Calhoon and Anthony Thompson, esquires.

Broadnax, who was the county's first judge was the same judge who conducted Bill Smother's murder trial in Hartford several years previous. And who forgot the many annoyances of the Indian hunter and exhorted the jury to look in mercy upon Smothers and give him the benefit of a reasonable doubt. This, as related in a previous article, was done when after only ten minutes of deliberation a verdict of not guilty was returned.

**Calhoon An Early Settler**

George Calhoon was one of the county's earliest settlers, settling on a farm about seven miles southwest of Owensboro. He raised a remarkable family of boys and was at one time assistant circuit judge of the district. Calhoon came here shortly after the arrival of David Glenn with his boys, William, Duke and David, from North Carolina, who settled Southwest of Owensboro.

Anthony Thompson, the third member of the erecting court was a pious Methodist, and of him is told an interesting tale. It was in the year 1811 when this section experienced a great earthquake. Articles suspended from the wall and ceiling were swung about like a bell and especially those persons inclined to superstition, were excited. It was Thompson, who, thinking the world was coming to an end, met with his neighbors and prayed and sang. It is said that one of the excited neighbors, not quite satisfied with Thompson's explanation, appealed to Byrd Wall who replied, "Oh you needn't worry. This earth hangs on axles like a horse-mill shaft and I insure its running safely for a thousand years yet to come."

#### First Clerk Appointed

The court at that first meeting in 1815 proceeded to appoint a clerk, a majority concurring therein and George Handley was named first circuit clerk of Daviess county. Handley took several oaths, the oath required by the federal constitution, the oath required by the constitution of this state, the oath of office and the duelling oaths, all of which were administered by the court. He gave bond of \$10,000 with the following as his bondsmen: Joseph Allen, Benjamin Duncan, Anthony Thompson, Charles Y. Duncan and William R. Griffith.

An order on the same day admitted the following attorneys to the practice of law: Joseph Allen, Moses Cummins, Phillip Thompson, William R. Griffith and a Mr. Wilson, his given name not being legible in the old record.

The first two complaints entered were for ejection orders against Jean Smeathers and Valentine Husk. Ejection was sought by Samuel Oldham, but was later dismissed and the court was ordered adjourned.

#### Surveys Overlapped

Ejectment orders were common complaints in those early days due to laxity in surveys and claims of settlers. The original surveys of lands in this part of the country were made when the state was still a part of Virginia. Virginia from time to time granted lands to her ex-soldiers and especially officers in the Revolutionary war, such lands being known as military lands. Then there were certificates, or land warrants, that were granted for a stipulated fee.

Each owner was required to bear the expenses of the survey and as a result surveying became careless. Thus, as settlers poured into this section, conflicts over boundary lines of farms became numerous, and there is little wonder that most of the suits in the circuit court in those early days were ejection suits filed by owners and would-be owners.

Sometimes good farms were developed, and later lost entirely by new surveys which made them parts of other tracts. In fact, historians state that as many as four surveys covered one- piece of ground, in each survey the ground belonging to a different tract., A survey south of Owensboro, known as the Delpport survey was made by a Frenchman of that name, who it is said fell in love with an actress before he completed his work. He became so enamoured with his new found love, that he followed her to Philadelphia and never completed his task. He even abandoned surveying. Another surveyor was running a line along a section of what is now Main street in Owensboro, thinking he was five miles from the Ohio river.

#### Grand Jury Sworn In

The next court session was held on Monday, April 8, 1816. A grand jury was sworn in at this time and included George Calhoun, foreman; Amos Riley, James Bales, Thomas Jones, Wright

Taylor, John Galloway, Isaac Wayne, William Lumpkin, Andrew Kelly, Willis Odom, James Johnson, Isaac Hoomez, James Smith, Samuel Kirkham, Abraham Myers, John Field, William Nelson, James Jourdan, Sr., Abner Basset and Edward Arterberry. Joseph D. McFarland, Samuel Hancock ' and Abner Adkins evidently failed to appear for an order was entered that they must show cause for failure to appear as ordered.

The first person fined was a Terry Thorp who had to pay damage in the sum of 30 pounds, 18 shillings, 9 pence half penny. The plaintiffs were Edward Haydon and Joseph Atwill, but what the complaint was based on was not given.

The first lunacy hearing was held at this time and the mother of the lunatic was allowed the sum of \$60 per annum to care for him.

On the following day a number of boundary suits were filed, and in each case a surveyor was ordered to survey the lands in question. Among those involved were Benjamin Berry, Richard Roe, William Trotter, N. B. Neal, James Bales, John Handley and William Everly. Later most of them were dismissed, agreements having been reached apparently by the contesting parties.

The grand jury in its first report made presentments against John McCollum for vagrancy, David Glover for swearing fifteen oaths and one against William Clarkson for same.

#### Man Fined For Swearing

During the term more than twenty-five suits for debts were instituted in which persons sought to collect amounts owed them. Later during the term, the records revealed that David Glover, whom the grand jury indicted for swearing fifteen oaths, was fined 75 shillings. Joseph McFarland and Abner Adkins who failed to attend court after they had been summoned as grand jurors were fined fifty cents and costs for contempt of court. At the July term, the grand jury returned two indictments, both for swearing profanely. The presentments were against Elijah McNamare and William Berry.

At the April term in 1817, a Mr. Potts was allowed the sum of \$3 for supplying the court for three days with water, and sweeping the court house. George Handley was allowed \$10 for a seal of office.

A complete list of the circuit judges since the beginning of the county together with the years they served, follows:

|                    |         |                  |           |
|--------------------|---------|------------------|-----------|
| Henry P. Broadnax  | 1815-22 | Martin H. Cofer  | 1870-74   |
| Alney McLean       | 1822-42 | James Stuart     | 1874-80   |
| John Calhoon       | 1842-51 | Lucius P. Little | 1880-93   |
| John P. Devereux   | 1851    | W. T. Owen       | 1893-1904 |
| Jesse W. Kincheloe | 1851-67 | T. F. Birkhead   | 1904-16   |
| James Stuart       | 1856-67 | R. W. Slack      | 1916-22   |
| James L. Johnson   | 1867    | George S. Wilson | 1922-40   |
| George W. Williams | 1867-70 | Sidney B. Neale  | 1940-     |

A complete list of the circuit court clerks who have served the county, and which was obtained by carefully checking old order books, follows:

|                   |         |                  |         |
|-------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| George Handley    | 1815-27 | William B. Wall  | 1845-56 |
| Horace Allen      | 1827-32 | John P. Thompson | 1856-62 |
| John S. McFarland | 1832-45 | Ward Payne       | 1862    |

|                   |         |                  |           |
|-------------------|---------|------------------|-----------|
| Joseph Thomas     | 1862-68 | S. W. Bedford    | 1898-1910 |
| M. L. Ogden       | 1868    | Tandy Harl       | 1910-22   |
| John P. Thompson  | 1863-72 | George F. Haynes | 1922-28   |
| Jo Thomas         | 1872    | Tandy Harl       | 1928      |
| John G. McFarland | 1872-74 | Mrs. Tandy Harl  | (Aug. 18) |
| Frank F. Conway   | 1874-86 |                  | 1928-1934 |
| J. A. Lyddane     | 1886-98 | Ben S. McCormick | 1934-     |



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 27 September 1942, p.5B:**

**Early Daviess Jurist Was Outstanding:  
Judge James Stuart One of Nation's Most Prominent**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Despite the fact that Daviess County has received practically no recognition in the sesquicentennial observance of Kentucky, Owensboro and Daviess county possessed among their residents one of the nation's most prominent personages when this section was in its infancy.

James Stuart, one of its early circuit judges, and one of the most able lawyers in the state, was so talented as a jurist that his services as judge were much sought after throughout Kentucky. Early writers state that the venerable man in his day decided more cases than any other judge in America, averaging about 1,000 a year, during the zenith of his career.

Stuart was born in 1821, on March 22, within three miles of the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. His father was a son of Alexander L. Stuart whose parents were fugitives from Scotland, the father dying on shipboard and the mother a few months after reaching the state of Virginia.

**Rendered Seven Capital Sentences**

Stuart's early education was obtained in field schools and his professional education was commenced in the office of the noted Jo Allen. As a judge, Stuart sat in seven capital cases and rendered several capital sentences. In two of these the condemned committed suicide the night before they were to die.

One of our more recent circuit judges, who is still actively engaged in the practice of law, found it his duty to sentence two men to hang. He is Judge T. F. Birkhead, dean of Owensboro lawyers. Judge Birkhead sentenced Roy Green, a negro, for the slaying of a man in the old fair grounds. Several months later he sentenced Bob Mathley to the gallows. When asked how a judge feels when he condemns a man to death, he answered "Chills crept up my back."

Attorneys were plentiful in this section in the early days, all the sons of wealthy families frequently educated in the offices of eminent lawyers. Pay of attorneys was often in produce, and even officers of the county were not always paid in money. It is said that the first circuit judge, Henry P. Broadnax was compensated, with approximately \$600 to \$800 worth of corn a year. The judge wore the accustomed garb, short breeches with knee buckles and plaited hair tucked in with a comb.

**Commonwealth's Attorneys**



There is no record of the first commonwealth's attorney of Daviess county. An early history mentions Henry Davidge as being the first one, however his name does not appear on any court records in the office of Circuit Clerk Ben S. McCormick. Mr. McCormick, who inspected the records of more than 100 years ago, found that John P. Oldham was the first commonwealth's attorney recorded, his name appearing in connection with some cases in 1816.

A list of commonwealth's attorneys, complete from 1816 on for Daviess county, follows:

John P. Oldham, 1816-22; John H. McHenry, 1822-39; William W. Wall, 1839-41; Alfred Allen, 1841-52; O. F. Stirman, 1852-56; B. Hardin Helm, 1856-58; Cicero Maxwell, 1858-62; John Chapeze, 1862-68; Baker Boyd, 1868-74; Jo Haycraft, 1874-80; Joseph Noe, 1880-92; J. E. Rowe, 1892-1904; Ben D. Ringo, 1904-16; Claude Smith, 1916-22; Glover Cary, 1922-31; Elmer Brown, 1931-32; Herman , A. Birkhead, 1932-40; Beckham Robertson, 1940.

### Many Sheriffs

Daviess county has had many sheriffs. The first Kentucky constitution provided that the term of the sheriff should be only two years. Hence in the early days a sheriff was elected every two years. Sometimes, however, when they were unable to collect the taxes assigned to them, they resigned, and as many as three sheriffs were found to serve in one year. The Kentucky constitution in 1891 changed the term of sheriff to one of four years. A list of sheriffs of Daviess county follows:

Charles Y. Duncan, 1815-21; William Glenn, 1821-23; John Piles, 1823-25; Remus Griffith, 1825-27; J. Leman, 1827-29; Warner Crow, 1829-31; John Daveiss, 1831-33; R. C. Jett, 1833-35; S. Hawes, 1835-37; E. McCreery, 1837-38; R. C. Jett, 1838-39; William Newton, 1839-41; William B. Baird, 1841; Joseph M. Potts, 1841-43; John G. Howard, 1843-45; Henry Dugan, 1845-47; Abner Lee, 1847-49; C. D. Jackson, 1849-51; Thomas Landrum, 1851-55; Joseph G. Harrison, 1855-59; John Locke, 1859-63; Joseph G. Harrison, 1863-66; W. H. Perkins, 1866-68; H. W. Scott, 1868-72; W. H. Perkins, 1872-74; H. W. Scott, 1874-76; J. H. Gates, 1876-78; Ed. C. Davis, 1878-82; A. B. Miller, 1882-84; W. W. Owen, 1884-86; Jas. M. Holmes, 1886; B. E. W. Stout; 1886-88; Jos. W. Jones, 1888-93; J. S. Mullican, 1893-98; Joseph W. Jones, 1898-1902; William I. Short, 1902-06; Jesse B. Harl, 1906-1910; I. C. Winstead, 1910-14; Bushrod J. Milton, 1914-18; George W. Bales, 1918-22; John D. Howard, 1922-26; Len Dawson, 1926-30; Charles L. Roby, 1930-32; Robert M. Stuart, May, 1932-34; Everett Thompson, 1934-36; Mrs. Florence Thompson., April 11, 1936-38; Simon Smith, 1938-42; W. P. Morris, 1942.



### **Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 4 October 1942, p.2B:**

#### **Early Records Reveal Amusing Contracts**

**Marriages Were on Purely Business Basis in Many Instances**

**By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer**

Pioneers of Owensboro and Daviess county had inventive trends and patents were granted and rights sold early in the history of this section according to papers recorded in the office of the Daviess county clerk, Mrs. Katherine Griffin. In addition to patents and rights, many interesting papers and contracts were filed for record.

Probably one of the earliest patents was one granted on February 21, 1815, to a William Potter for a type of slate roofing. And plastics were not unknown even then for the company controlling the distribution of the roofing was known as the Plastic Slate Roofing Joint Stock company. Two years later the old record book reveals, outside interests, a B. J. Huff and associates from New Albany acquired title to the company.

Among the early contracts was one drawn up between J. Schacht, agent for St. Thomas orphans asylum and Frank Seifried and "an orphan boy named Patrick as an apprentice to serve him faithfully and who was in no manner to damage or waste goods." The boy was "to carry out commands," and Seifried in turn was to provide him with food, clothing, lodging and two winter sessions of schooling, "and to give him \$200 when of age." Seifried's profession was not given nor is it known for what the boy was being apprenticed.

Sarah Shumake gave and bound her son, Christopher Monroe Alexander, to her brother-in-law W. H. Alexander. Alexander was to "rear the boy as his own, give him the benefit of the district school and when of age give him a good suit of clothes, a horse, bridle, saddle and \$100 in money.

Another contract reveals that John Usher, a father, bound out to L. O. P. Howard, his son Elisha Usher, age 10, as an apprentice to learn farming. He was "to be taught reading, writing and common arithmetic and at expiration of apprenticeship, at the age of 21, to get \$100 in money, a good horse, bridle and saddle and a good new suit of clothes. The boy shall have proper medical attention and be treated with humanity as one of the family."

Apprenticeships were the common method by which trades were learned in the early days. Boys were bound out to tradesmen, living in the homes as members of the family.

Marriage contracts were frequently filed in those early years as well as later days, specifying what the contracting parties expected of each other, including "wealth and love and affection." Some of the early contracts were quite lengthy, several specifying that the husbands and wives reserved the right "To manage their property and carry on their business as though they were not married" and that the about-to-be-acquired spouse was "to have no interest whatever in what I own at the time of the marriage." One man agreed to give his wife \$1,500 a year "for her love and affection."

In the same interesting record book is a contract by which James C. Rudd leased to M. V. Monarch a building formerly used as a "hay press" together with three and one-eighth acres of ground for five years for the purpose of running a distillery one mile above Owensboro on the Ohio river." This was in October, 1878.

Nine years prior to that date, another page reveals that "Citizens of Ohio, Daviess and McLean county" drew up an agreement not to sell or let land except with the following restrictions: "That no spirituous or malt liquors be sold on the land in question. Anyone violating this agreement was to pay \$200 to the rest of the signers. The contract was equally binding on executors. The instrument was signed by John Kigel and Gordon Robinson and was recorded in 1869.

Many county clerks have had charge of the records in the office but Mrs. Griffin, the incumbent clerk, is the first woman to serve in that capacity here. A list of the clerks of Daviess county since 1815 follows :

|                     |         |                  |         |
|---------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| William R. Griffith | 1815-19 | Graham Hughes    | 1856-58 |
| George Handley      | 1819-28 | James B. Watkins | 1858-60 |
| Horace Allen        | 1828-30 | M. L. Ogden      | 1860-62 |
| J. S. McFarland     | 1830-45 | Jesse Moore      | 1862    |
| William M. Wall     | 1845-56 | John O'Brien     | 1862-66 |

|                 |           |                        |         |
|-----------------|-----------|------------------------|---------|
| Thomas C. Jones | 1866-74   | I. C. Sutherland       | 1922-30 |
| M. S. Mattingly | 1874-90   | Guy A. Aull            | 1930-38 |
| J. T. Griffith  | 1890-1906 | Henry M. Griffin       | 1938-41 |
| E. P. Taylor    | 1906-14   | Mrs. Katherine Griffin | 1941    |
| James Weir      | 1914-22   |                        |         |

Daviess county had no county judges until 1850 when the new constitution of Kentucky made provisions for county court judges. Following is a complete list:

|                    |           |                    |         |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|---------|
| Thomas W. Watkins  | 1850-54   | H. M. Haskins      | 1902-04 |
| George H. Yeaman   | 1854-58   | George V. Triplett | 1904-06 |
| A. G. Botts        | 1858-66   | W. W. Owen         | 1906-14 |
| George W. Triplett | 1866-79   | R. L. Lancaster    | 1914-18 |
| H. W. Scott        | 1879-82   | C. W. Wells        | 1918-22 |
| J. D. Atchison     | 1882-90   | R. L. McFarland    | 1922-30 |
| J. B. Karns        | 1890-98   | James R. Wilson    | 1930-42 |
| H. P. Taylor       | 1898-1902 | J. Everett Long    | 1942    |



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 18 October 1942, pp.1B & 5B:**

**Early Daviess Physicians Recalled  
County Had Many Outstanding Doctors to Care For Citizens**

(Ed. Note: This is the first in a series of three articles relating to the early physicians in and around Owensboro.)

By IDA F. COCKRIEL, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Prevalence of fever due to the swampy lands along the Ohio river may have given the area surrounding Yellow Banks a reputation as an unhealthy place in which to reside, nevertheless, the health of the community was looked after by physicians from the very beginning. Even before 1820, there were two practicing physicians in Daviess county, according to old records, and reminiscences of Dr. D. M. Griffith.

Dr. John Roberts, ancestor of the late Robert Karn, is said to have been the first physician to settle in Owensboro, practicing here for nearly 40 years. He came here in 1811 and married Miss Alice Mary Moseley, a relative of the Griffith family. Dr. Roberts mixed politics and medicine and for several terms after 1817 represented his district in the state senate.

**Dr. Gilbert Was Nationally Known**

Dr. Samuel Haynes was said to have practiced here about the same time as Dr. Roberts. A younger brother of the pioneer Roberts, Dr. John [ed. mote: be Henry] Roberts came to Owensboro later and joined his brother in practice. The physicians were sons of Dr. John Roberts, Sr., of Frankfort, with whom they studied medicine. Dr. Henry adhered to the Baptist church and Dr. John became an ardent Presbyterian. About the same time a man by the name of Aaron Ayer practiced in the southern section of the county, in what is now McLean county. A descendant of his, Dr. Alfred Ayer, died several years ago at Glenville. A Dr. J. W. Compton practiced here during the

War Between the States and prior to that time, as did a Dr. Thomas Crutcher. A Dr. Henry d'Huy, a German physician, had an office in Owensboro in the early days.

Bringing early fame to Owensboro physicians and their ability was Dr. R. B. Gilbert, who won recognition as a pediatrician, being one of the first in that field. He went to Louisville where he became one of the leading physicians and later professor of pediatrics in one of the Louisville colleges of medicine.

Dr. David Glenn, ancestor of the present Glenn family of Daviess and McLean counties, practiced medicine in the Curdsville precinct, where he was born, lived and died. He was a grandson of the David Glenn who helped found this county, being one of the first three men to settle in this section.

### Many In Small Settlements

Outstanding in early medical annals is the unusual number of physicians located in the small settlements in the county. There was Dr. Thomas W. Blandford, who enjoyed a splendid practice in West Louisville, where members of his family still reside; Henry P. Carpenter, who practiced in Masonville; J. T. Byrne, in Knottsville; L. B. Childs at Lewis Station, now Utica; Taylor Crigler, Whitesville; Calvin E. Cottrell, Owensboro; J. P. Cox, Ohio and McLean counties, and L. A. Crinnian, at Grissom's landing, where he had a great reputation for treatment of pneumonia.

Dr. Ignatius Drury practiced for many years in Knottsville; he was an immense man physically, and practiced his profession without consideration of remuneration. He was considered the Good Samaritan of Knottsville, and never married, being too busy taking care of the sick. He had for a partner, Dr. Wm. Holmes.

Dr. H. C. Fleming practiced at Delaware and Curdsville and Dr. W. Scott Gilmore, who practiced at Sorghotown, later moved to Chicago. Coming back to Owensboro he specialized in eye, ear, nose and throat work.

### Dr. Hale Studied In Europe

Dr. Josiah Hale, who came to Owensboro from Hartford, was the first man from this section to study in Europe. He was not only outstanding in his profession, but outstanding in his appearance. A veritable Chesterfield, he wore at all times and upon all occasions, a Prince Albert coat and a silk top hat. Subsequent to his return to Owensboro, he went back to Hartford, as all true Kentuckians did, to attend the county fair of his native county. Sitting in front of the hotel in conversation with a crowd of friends, who were enthusiastically praising the county, one, who had worshipped at the shrine of Bacchus too freely, called out, "Dr. Hale, don't you think Ohio county is the finest in the world?" The distinguished looking Hale glanced disgustedly at the youth, and answered, "Yes sir, young man, is the finest in the world ... to leave." Needless , to say the youth departed. Eminently successful Dr. Hale was, the father of Mrs. J. A. Dean, Sr.

Dr. S. J. Harris was to Philpot what Dr. Drury was to Knottsville. Very generous, he was solicitous of mankind. Although he at one time enjoyed one of the largest practices in the county, because of his love for suffering man, he collected less money than most any other man, it was said. He was known to have borrowed \$50 from an Owensboro bank with which to pay the hospital bill of a poor patient who could only be saved by an operation.

### Brotherly Cooperation

Dr. Edward Hawes, of the Haweses of Yelvington, practiced at Grissom's landing. Dr. J. P. Heavrin practiced at Hartford, then Curdsville, then came to Owensboro where he was equally as interested in religion as medicine and helped to establish the Third Baptist church. Dr. C. Hale practiced at Whitesville; Dr. Benjamin Harralson, Delaware; Dr. D. V. Higdon, Knottsville; Dr. Wm. E. Holmes, Murray precinct; Dr. I. E. Johnson, Curdsville; Dr. Philip T. Johnson, who was a son of the venerable Judge James Johnson, one-time congressman and whose home was located where the Mary Kendall home is now; Dr. Burr H. Hobbs, who practiced general medicine and lived in Crittenden street, just a few doors south of Rhinehart's store, Fifth and Crittenden; Dr. R. C. Kenner, Birk City; Dr. John F. Kimbley, who practiced first at Sorghotown, then came to Owensboro and was said to have been one of the few physicians to practice and amass a fortune; Drs. James S. and William R. Knox, brothers, who practiced at Whitesville. They were considered great country practitioners and their professional unity established a record of brotherly cooperation. There was old Dr. Lockhard, who in the first days had a home this side of Ensor. He had two sons, Dr. C. J. and Dr. Simon Lockhard, practitioners at Thruston. Dr. Simon died early. Dr. Charles later came to Owensboro and had an office in the old Wood building which was located at Third and Allen in an office where Lashbrook realty office now stands. He was the father of Dr. Robert Lockhart, who is now with the state board of health in Ohio.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 25 October 1942, p.1B:**

**Browns Valley Revealed As Site Of Early Health Resort;  
More Pioneer Doctors Recalled**

**Crowe's Station Was Famous For Its Medicinal Springs;  
Interesting and Some Amusing Happenings Among First Physicians Revived**

**(Second In A Series)**

**By Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer**

Crowe's station, which preceded Hickman station, a point that later became Browns Valley, was one of the earliest health resorts in this section. It was in the early days of Daviess county that springs said to have medicinal value, were discovered there. A hotel was erected to accommodate the crowds that sought the curing effects of the spring water. The springs were alum, sulphur, brick and yellow. The alum waters were so highly astringent, it was said, that they were too strong for internal use without dilution. Early physicians prescribed the waters from the various springs according to needs of their patients.

The first hotel burned in 1860 and it was this fire that brought into prominence Dr. W. A. Hickman who came here around 1850 from Bardstown. In 1865 Dr. Hickman erected a large frame hotel near the springs. Playgrounds were fitted up and Crowe's Station became a favorite resort. The hotel closed around 1880. The buildings have long since disappeared, but one of the springs still remains, being now a part of the W. J. Mitchell farm at Browns Valley.

**Father of Mayor Hickman**

The late Billy Griffith, former secretary to Gov. Simon Bolivar Buckner, and a writer on the Inquirer, married the elder of Dr. Hickman's daughters, Miss Areulia, and with her and her

mother lived on the farm many years before W. J. Mitchell, the present owner, acquired it. Dr. Hickman, was the father of Dr. James H. Hickman, who gained more fame as a mayor of Owensboro and a civic leader than a physician, devoting most of his time to public work.

Dr. Wm. D. Stirman came to Owensboro in the 1860's and a short time afterwards built one of the finest homes in Owensboro in Locust street, which is still standing, being the residence of the late Sam Ewing. This home was built by the first contractor of Owensboro, Barney Tribble, who was the uncle of Miss Jennie Cosby. Dr. Stirman had a splendid practice and combined the practice of surgery with general medicine.

#### Father And Son

Dr. W. F. Stirman was a son of Dr. W. D. Stirman and practiced with his father until the elder man's death. He, too, was a surgeon. He was a very assertive man which oftentimes created friction between himself and conferees. He was a physician of many of Owensboro's citizens now living, and resided in Griffith avenue in the home now occupied by the Sandidge family.

Dr. Emmett Griffin was born and reared near Philpot, practiced medicine several years at Rome, this county, later coming to Owensboro and forming a partnership with the late Dr. W. F. Stirman. He was a captain in the first World war and had a legion of friends. He was a brother of A. S. Griffin.

Dr. Hardin K. Orsburn practiced in St. Joseph, later moving to Owensboro, where he had his office over the Karn and Carpenter store, Fourth and Frederica. His brother, Dr. Vincent Orsburn, was a Confederate soldier and practiced at West Louisville. Both of the men were consistent Catholics. The latter was one of the first patients in Daviess county operated on under a local anesthetic by one of his fellow physicians.

#### Operation Performed In Home

Dr. Orsburn was said to have had a horror of general anesthesia and although in need of surgery, did not consent to an operation until he heard of the return from Europe of a young physician who was having success with cocaine. Approaching the young physician, Dr. Orsburn said, "Young man, they tell me you operate without putting people to sleep." The young doctor nodded and the older man came back with, "Well, then, young man, I want you to perform an operation on me," and the operation was performed at once, in the country at his own home. Dr. Hardin Orsburn's widow and daughter still reside in Owensboro, the daughter, Miss Orene, works at the First Owensboro Bank and Trust company. Another brother, Dr. George Orsburn, practiced a short while at Sorghotown, then returned to Sebree where all were born and reared. He died 36 years ago.

Dr. G. A. Hardwick practiced in Riley station, now Livia, for many years and efficiently served a great area, that had at that time a great deal of sickness. Malaria, pneumonia and typhoid fever were said to constitute 70 per cent of the ailments of that time. Dr. Hardwick was a very reserved, and non-communicative man. A Dr. McMurtry practiced in the Vanover precinct in the early days, the precinct being that area now included in the Panther neighborhood. Dr. Mason C. Pate practiced at Whitesville and Dr. M. H. Rose practiced at Sorghotown.

#### Dr. Russell Was Prominent

Dr. J. D. Russell practiced in Yelvington. He was the father of the late veteran banker, J. D. Russell. Dr. Russell was a man of great size; had a decided and attractive personality and had a

legion of friends. Yelvington, in those days, was one of the outstanding sections of Daviess county, it being in the heyday of the Haweses and Taylors, two pioneer families of the county. Dr. B. G. Gilpatrick, Dr. A. C. Haynes and Dr. Samuel Haynes were also among the early practitioners.

Dr. J. Q. Stewart practiced for many years at Sorghotown. He was the father of Dr. John Stewart who died recently at Frankfort. He lived and practiced at Main and Crittenden streets in a one-story house, built five or six feet off the ground. He was known for his personal polish and medical ability. Dr. James Weir, whose tenure as a physician was short, was a very gifted man mentally, the writer of several books on neurology and at one time was offered a professorship in the Denver Medical college, which he turned down, so he could remain in Owensboro.

#### Dr. Holmes Very Successful

Dr. Wm. E. Holmes practiced at Lewis station, now Utica. He was the son of Colonel James M. Holmes, one of the first two men prohibitionists in the county, the other being Bailey Tyler, cashier of the old Deposit bank. Colonel Holmes lived north of Utica, where Dr. Holmes was reared. Dr. Holmes was one of the most lovable and companionable men and one of the outstanding and successful practitioners in the county. He moved from Utica to Gunnison, Colo., where he practiced a few years, amassed a fortune, then returned to his old home in Utica where he practiced for several years, then moved to Owensboro where he maintained an office over Karn and Carpenter. Incidentally, he was one of the best bird shots in the county and a great lover of hunting. His daughter, Miss Josie, is now residing in Owensboro. He was an uncle of Mrs. Simon Smith. He died several years ago.

One of the most prominent doctors in this section and distinctly one of the most outstanding in his profession far and wide, both as to mental ability and uniqueness of personality, was Dr. Gus B. Tyler. He held an enviable reputation as diagnostician for which reason he was perhaps called in consultation more often than any other doctor. The outstanding distinction of his unique personality was his characteristic phrase, "Wish and be damned," which could be referred to as his byword and which was always the starting of a story, or an expression when enjoying conviviality.

#### Expression Embarrassing

There were occasions when the expression was repeated to his embarrassment, as one incident is told in which, when saying "Wish and be damned" in the presence of a very prominent woman, he returned to the home to apologize, and used the expression four times in apologizing.

Many stories are credited to the old doctor who owned one of the first side bar, latter called hug-me-tight buggies in Owensboro. Known almost as well as the doctor was his famous mare, Puss. The story, as told by Dr. Tyler to a friend follows: "Wish and be damned sir, I was on my way to Sorghotown, post haste, sir, my horse Puss was very fleet of foot. Wish and be damned sir she could do a mile in four minutes. The buggy passed over a snake coiled in the road, and the wheels revolving threw the reptile in the buggy in front of my feet. I immediately said 'whoa' to Puss and stepped out saying: 'Wish and be damned sir, Mr. Snake, if you ride, I walk.'"



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 8 November 1942, pp. 1B & 5B:**

Many Names Have Long Been Connected  
With County's Medical Circle:

## Writer Recalls Prominent Part Played By Doctors in War Between the States

(Editors Note – This is the last in a series of articles on early physicians of Owensboro and Daviess county, prepared with the assistance of Dr. D. M. Griffith.)

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

For nearly a century a Dr. Watkins has figured prominently in medical circles in Kentucky. The first, Dr. Samuel S. Watkins, was born in Breckinridge county on Dec. 4, 1824 and at the age of 10 his father sent him to a seminary in Hardinsburg. He also attended Mount Merino, a Catholic school in Breckinridge. He began the practice of medicine in 1845. In 1855 Dr. Watkins moved to Owensboro where he at once gained a good practice and reputation as a skillful practitioner being distinctly eminent in obstetrics.

During the War Between the States Dr. Watkins served a while as a surgeon in the Confederate Army under Governor Simon Bolivar Buckner. For his ardent Confederate utterances, Dr. Watkins was arrested by two Union soldiers in Owensboro. As he was being taken from his home, the window of an adjoining house swung up and a feminine voice called out shrilly. "Good morning Dr. Watkins. You look like Jesus Christ between two thieves." The soldiers hurried away with their prisoner, and took him before the provost marshal where they complained of the feminine tirade from the neighbor's house. The Union provost marshal was Judge George Ray. He answered, "I'm sorry gentlemen. I can do nothing about it. You see that woman was my wife." The provost marshal's wife was a genuine Confederate. It was said that she caused him much embarrassment.

### Imprisoned at Louisville

Dr. Watkins was taken to Louisville and lodged in prison and while there his physician son, Dr. Sam Watkins, Jr., was born. The story is told that straws were drawn in Louisville as to who should be executed, and that Dr. Watkins drew the lucky straw, and by which fortunate favor he was enabled to return to Owensboro and live out an eventful life. He was a man of great convictions and was an ardent Methodist. When organs first made their appearance, Dr. Watkins was greatly opposed to their use in church, feeling that it lowered the dignity and sacredness of services and when the first organ was installed in Settle Memorial church, which was at that time located in Second street near Daviess, the doctor considered it such a great wrong and injustice to his church that for several years he did not enter the building. Intact, not until he was fully convinced that he had erred in his convictions did he again set foot into his own church.

The eminent Watkins was a man of unusual size. More than six feet tall, he weighed in the neighborhood of 300 pounds and because of this it was difficult for him to obtain a suitable horse that could bear his great weight. In later years, while on a call, he rode a new horse. The animal, unaccustomed to the great weight gave way, throwing the doctor backwards, the injury resulting in his death.

### Son Practiced Here

His son, Dr. Sam Watkins practiced in Owensboro for 50 years, building jointly, with Dr. D. M. Griffith, the office building which has since then and still is being occupied by Dr. Griffith. Dr. Watkins moved to Wallace, Idaho, where he practiced until his home burned when he returned to Kentucky, locating at Cloverport, taking the practice of Dr. Brown, father-in-law of Arthur Ford,



former editor of the Inquirer. He practiced there and in the 1890's came back to Owensboro where he practiced until his death in 1935. His unusually sympathetic nature and his constant solicitation for his patient's welfare combined with his ability bound his patients to him as would bands of steel.

Dr. Watkins studied under Dr. David Yandell, nationally famous surgeon of Louisville, accompanying him on various trips. Dr. Watkins was the second physician to apply plaster of paris casts here. His widow, Mrs. Rose Watkins and daughter, Mrs. Sue Roberts McCulloch still reside in Seventh street, as do the grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the fifth generation of the first Dr. Watkins. The third generation of Drs. Watkins is being carried on by Dr. Shelton Watkins, Louisville, grandson of the first, and nephew ,of the second Dr. Watkins, who himself is a prominent physician.

#### Dr. Todd Recalled

Back in the 1870's Dr. Hubbard Taylor of the Taylor family of Winchester, where the Yelvington Taylors came from, located in Yelvington, where he practiced a short time, later returning to Winchester. He was small as a man, but singularly able as a physician, and soon acquired a large clientele and formed a legion of close friends who greatly regretted his return to his native town, where, in later years, became one of the outstanding physicians of that section of the state.

During this same era a Dr. J. C. Scott came to Owensboro and formed a partnership with Dr. Charles H. Todd, father of Miss Fannie Todd who still resides in Owensboro. Dr. Scott was referred to as an accomplished individual and physician.

Dr. Charles H. Todd was an efficient surgeon and physician and a polished gentleman. He was a surgeon in the War Between the States and a scrap book of the physician, now in his daughter's possession contains the original commission signed by General Robert E. Lee.

During his service with the Confederate army, a Union surgeon, Dr. R. F. Weir, New York, was captured at Johnson Island, and Dr. Todd placed him in charge of a camp hospital. The Union army recaptured the point and Dr. Todd became a prisoner of war. For his kind treatment of the Union physician and officers, Dr. Weir then placed him in charge of the hospital.

#### Long, Successful Career

During much of the war he had charge of a hospital at Bedford City, Va. The hospital was nothing more than an old tobacco factory. In his reminiscence of the war, Dr. Todd often remarked that frequently the only medicine Confederate physicians and surgeons were able to obtain was turpentine and when arms and legs were amputated, the patient had to be strapped to a tree trunk.

At the close of the war Dr. Todd was given a horse valued at \$250 and fifty dollars in money. He rode the horse from Virginia to Owensboro, a distance of 600 miles, in 22 days, traveling much of the time through thick woodlands. His career as a practitioner in Kentucky was as brilliant as that in the army. He was a nephew by marriage of the world renowned ovariotomist, Dr. Ephraim MacDowell, was president of the state medical society, being one of the three men from this section ever to serve in that capacity, the other two being the late Dr. J. W. Ellis and Dr. D. M. Griffith still in active practice. Dr. Todd died shortly after he was honored with a dinner by the Owensboro Medical society upon his retirement after practicing medicine for 50 years. He was a pillar of the old Daviess county fair, and long served as president of the association. During his presidency the fair became not only a regional success but one of the outstanding, if not the most outstanding, in the state.

## Dr. Ellis Practiced 50 Years

Dr. J. W. Ellis, whose widow still resides in Owensboro, practiced for 50 years in Daviess county, during which time he lived on a large farm near Masonville. Dead only a few years, the character of the doctor is best expressed in the closing sentence of a tribute paid by an Owensboro physician in a memorial to Dr. Ellis : "The immortal Osler might have had him in mind when he said in his farewell address, 'Develop into that of our calling the cultivated general practitioner.'" A gifted speaker, the physician was a brother of the late Capt. W. T. Ellis, himself a great orator.

Dr. Sam P. Oldham, who died in Owensboro several years ago, came here from Sorgho. He was a captain in the first World war and after coming back from the army was one of the first men to practice spinal anesthesia in childbirth in Owensboro. He was invited to read papers on his work at national medical association meetings. He was the father of Dr. John S. Oldham, now practicing in Owensboro.

Dr. Louis G. Armendt, father of Miss Mai Armendt, prominent Owensboro musician, was born, in Lawrence county and spent his boyhood in Hartford, Ohio county. After graduating from the Louisville Medical university in 1876, he located in Owensboro and later Masonville. He was one of the county's prominent physicians in his day.

## Dr. Luckett Well Known

Dr. Thompson W. Bedford, who practiced in the county many years ago was the father of Samuel Bedford, for many years circuit court clerk. A Dr. Wall practiced in Owensboro prior to 1850 as did a Dr. Matthew Willims.

Dr. Edward H. Luckett was one of the well known physicians of Owensboro enjoying great practice especially among the elite and gained much prestige as a doctor for children. In young manhood he was Walker's regimental physician in the Nicaraguan insurrection. He married Miss Hartley Murray, a half-sister of Dr. Gus Tyler and they formed the partnership of Tyler and Luckett, which was outstanding in the field of medicine for many decades in the last century. He was exceedingly abrupt, but greatly beloved. Dr. Luckett was the father of the late Will Luckett, who married Miss Marian Eagles, sister of Hawes Eagles and who now lives in New York.

Dr. Thomas E. Lamping practiced hi Owensboro in the 1870's. Dr. John Sieber also was among the nineteenth century practitioners in the city. Dr. W. J. Springfield practiced in the Vanover precinct and Dr. Charles Tyler Thomas in the Murray precinct. Dr. A. S. Lambert was another of the physician-mayor combination. Dr. W. H. Boston practiced at Fifth and Lewis streets and his son-in-law, Dr. Fireline was also a physician here.

A man who studied to be a physician, but who ended up a county official was Frank F, Conway. A native of Virginia, he was orphaned at 11, sent to New Albany to be educated, and later graduated from the school of medicine in Louisville. He came to Daviess county and began the practice of medicine at Oakford. After 14 years of riding horseback over woodland trails, all hours of the day and night, rain or shine, to bring succor to the ill, his health failed and he relinquished medicine to become Circuit Clerk of the county, in which capacity he served faithfully. His daughter, Miss Mary Conway, still resides in Owensboro.

Dr. George W. Dawson was born near Yelvington and practiced at Stanley for many years, then moving to Texas where he died recently. He was a son of old Brother Dawson, famous Baptist preacher of this section many years ago.

## Dr. Fields A Pioneer

Dr. J. W. Fields practiced for many years in the Smith and Bates building and was the first genitourinary specialist in Owensboro. Dr. E. B. McCormick came to Owensboro from Masonville, enjoying a good practice. Dr. J. L. Early, born in Pellville, began practice in Knottsville, then moved to Stanley and in his later years to Owensboro where he died in 1936.

Dr. Ed Barr, was born near Rome, member of the pioneer Barr family of that section. He practiced at Rome for many years with his brother, Dr. George Barr, who, now retired, lives in Griffith avenue. Later he came to Owensboro to practice. He died several years ago. His widow is a daughter of the late Dr. J. W. Ellis.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 15 November 1942, p.8B:**

**Early Life In County Given In Old Diaries:  
Erysipelas and Cholera Epidemic Claimed Many Lives**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Life in early Owensboro centered around the Ohio river, politics, deaths, with fires and murders thrown in for excitement, according to an old diary kept for many years by the late Joseph Thomas, a well known pioneer, some of whose kin still live.

Owensboro was not a mere out of the way place west of the Alleghanias. It was important enough to provide a minister to Denmark at one time, according to Mr. Thomas's recordings.

Another diary kept by the pastors of St. Lawrence church, one of the first, if not the first in this section of the country, duplicates many of the Thomas recordings especially on reports of health. Outstanding are notations on cholera. In July, 1849, there were two deaths from cholera in Owensboro. The following year the total jumped to 12, in Owensboro although there were probably many more in the county. According to the diaries every other year, cholera deaths were more marked, and a total of 41 were recorded by Mr. Thomas.

**Fatal To Many**

An erysipelas epidemic made its appearance here in 1852 according to Mr. Thomas and there were 10 deaths, to his knowledge, probably many more. The first case of cancer was reported in 1867. There was spotted fever in 1873.

Cholera no doubt, was brought here by travelers, boats carrying travelers from New Orleans to Louisville, Cincinnati and points north, stopping in Owensboro regularly. There is one notation of a man dying of cholera shortly after he was taken from a boat, and several deaths following here, days later.

The diary kept by priests and others at St. Lawrence covered a good portion of the time from 1830. to 1872. Mr. Thomas started his diary on January 22, 1844, the Monday after his marriage to a Miss Watkins, an aunt of the late Phil Watkins. He kept it up to 1883. For many years Mr. Thomas was associated with the old First National bank, which at that time was located on the Southeast corner of Third and Frederica streets.

**Earthquakes Recalled**

Both priest and banker made notations of the severe earthquakes, this section of the state experienced in those early days, the populace being greatly frightened.

Mr. Thomas built a beautiful home, the ruins of which remained until about a year ago, just east of the Owensboro Milling company. The house was torn away recently to make room for corn. When Mr. Thomas built the home, it was quite a distance from the river. During the intervening years the waters of the Ohio kept eating closer until the river finally reached the house.

Among Mr. Thomas' prized possessions was a hand carved bed, built by the city of New Orleans for General Lafayette, when he visited that city. The bed, in which the general slept during his visit in New Orleans, was immense, being wide enough for four persons.

Excerpts from the diary follow:

#### 1844

March 12 – The steamers Sultana and Alexander Scott arrived in Owensboro at 5 p.m. from New Orleans. Made the trip in 4 days, 17 hours and 20 minutes, the quickest trip ever made.

May 25 – Military muster.

June 1 – The S. B. Montgomery made the trip to Louisville in four days 23 hours and 50 minutes the first boat to make the trip under five days.

August 5 – Election day. Much excitement, a great many drunk but only one or two fights. Much sickness. River low and rats bad.

Oct. 2 – Whigs raise flag pole 120 feet high. On following day great barbecue, addresses by McHenry, Letcher, Calhoun and Dixon. Ladies were present, who sung, shouted and waved their handkerchiefs.

#### 1845

Feb. 11 – Triplett's fine barn burned. On following day Athy's stable burned with horses. A fire company was organized immediately but the enterprise "fell through."

April 7 – Dr. Conway's house burned.

Nov. 20 – Thanksgiving.

#### 1846

March 26 – Dr. William Morton, Jr. died.

May – Exciting news from Mexican war and a volunteer corps of 93 foot formed with G. W. Triplett captain.

July – Several boats pass with volunteers from Mexican war.

Aug. 5 – Exciting election.

Nov. 24 – Dr. Williams died of fever.

Dec. – Two new packets, General Worth and Courier, running up Green river.

Dec. 17 – Three men, Harris, Pugh and Galloway, tried before a magistrate for murder of store-boat keeper, Roberts, on Green river. Latter dismissed, other two held.

#### 1847

Jan. 1 – Sons of Temperance have public march.

March 8 – First trip up river of Alex. Scott.

May 23-29 – Pugh cleared of murder.

June – Mexican volunteers of previous year return home; Thomas Field died.

July 11 – Steamer, Wheel of Fortune burned at 3 a.m. six miles below town.

Aug. 2 – Exciting election. Forty votes for Whig candidate, Finley Wall, came up from Bon Harbor in large cart with wheels 12-feet high drawn by nine yoke of oxen. Whigs, Democrats strain every nerve and even old and sick were married to polls.

Oct. 19 – Steamer Concordia makes first trip down river.

#### 1848

Jan. 30 – Mrs. Robert Triplett died. April 1. Karney & Thomas take possession of grist mill and run it.

Aug. 15 – Thomas Kelly died.

#### 1849

May 27 – Music in the Catholic church – the first ever in town.

July 1 – Two deaths from Asiatic cholera. Wheat crop destroyed by rust.

#### 1850

Jan. 5 – P. S. Anderson died;

28 – Capt. Sharp died.

March – Subscription for railroad.

April 4 – 8:25 p.m. Earthquake shock. All citizens alarmed;

29 – H. Kerr and Co., stemmers filled with tobacco burned;

14 – P. Triplett's cabin burned.

May 13 – Negro man died of cholera.

July 8 – E. Woodson, Hartford, got off steamer with cholera and died.

17 – A. Mr. Steyfel died of cholera;

24 – Mrs. H. Stanley died of cholera and next day her husband died of it.

Aug. – Six cholera deaths. Wheat crop again ruined by rust.

October – Much building, including banking house, Bargess' store, M. E. church, R. P. Aull's dwelling, a splendid stemmery and improvement of Main street.

#### 1851

May – Locusts abundant. Two deaths from cholera; fruit destroyed by frosts.

June – Charles Ogden drowned.

Aug. 16 – J. W. Lanham died. Howard T. Taylor, one of best farmers and citizens accidentally killed by discharge of gun in hands of Dr. Wilmot. Gun so near it set shirt on fire. He fell to floor exclaiming, "Lord have mercy on me; am killed" and was dead before those behind him could raise him up.

Aug. 27 – W. Murphy died of cholera.

Sept. 5 – Joe Stout and T. Kincheloe died of cholera;

7 – Mrs. Hall's sons died of cholera; P. Triplett's girl died of cholera. River exceedingly low. Many deaths rest of year.

#### 1852

Jan. 8 – Death of Mat Kickpatrick;

10 – Death of Robt. Triplett with erysipelas;

12 – of V. A. Pegram with erysipelas;  
23 – of Sarah Triplett with erysipelas, Mrs. P. Triplett, Mrs. Hathaway, Thomas Worley and others of same malady.  
Feb. – More erysipelas deaths including Miss DeLovell, a teacher:  
March 24 – First trip of the great steamer Eclipse. It was 360 feet long and probably the largest that has ever been built in the West. Cost \$135,000.  
March – Laura Triplett and Philip Triplett died of erysipelas.  
May – More cholera deaths. Oct. 15. Judge Calhoun died in Louisville; Joseph Thomas' steam flour mill and carding machine burned, loss \$8,000. Thought incendiary. A store adjoining with \$12,000 worth of goods also burned. No insurance.

#### 1853

Jan. 13 – A. L. Shotwell's first trip down. A fast boat.  
May 18 – Eclipse passed, only 3 days and 23 hours from New Orleans, with the A. L. Shotwell just behind, which was 16-20 minutes longer reaching Louisville.  
May 27 – Four white men enter Capt. Bob McFarland's house, dragged him from his bed at his wife's side, inflicted severe blows with axe and left him dead.  
June 15 – Dr. John Roberts died.  
July 4 – Joseph Thomas made arrangements in Philadelphia to introduce stereoscope in Kentucky.  
August-September – good fruit year. Town improving. Old courthouse removed to give place for new building. Wharf enlarged.

#### 1854

April 14 – Mrs. Emma Hawes Nicholas died. Several cases of cholera.  
Sept. 20. Dr. Macgruder died of cholera on board a steamer a few miles above town.  
Oct. – Hathaway's store and three other buildings burned;  
19 – T. Burgess shot D. Murphy and the latter died four days later.  
Nov. 1 – C. Richardson hung by T. Landrum, about 2,500 persons present;  
3 – W. Thornton and two others die of cholera;  
4 – Sydney Hewitt and J. Lambsen died of cholera;  
5 – J. Decker died. "Hard times" for want of money.  
Dec. 7 – Owensboro Gazette commenced.

#### 1855

Jan. 27 – In the evening at J. H. Daviess' mill, Alex. Mason, a young man, was killed. He was putting a belt on the drum attached to the flywheel, slipped and fell so that an arm caught in the wheel and drew him into the machinery. His head was mashed to a jelly. Times harder this winter than before. Provisions high and poor. Potatoes \$2 a bushel and hard to get. Flour \$8.50 a barrel. No vegetables save turnips and these were 80 cents a bushel whereas usual price is 12 to 15 cents.  
May 3 – Childers' brick store fell down.  
July – Cornerstone of courthouse laid.  
30 – Know-Nothings hold mass meeting; T. W. Watkins died.  
Oct. 16 – Fair. Receipts \$565. Major Ben Head died;

5 – Tom Sale shot his wife. (Next, from 1856 on).



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 18 November 1942, p.4A:**

**Parts OF City Built Over Old Cemeteries  
One of Last Resting Places Was Right Down Town**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

If a stray ghost is ever seen on the down-town streets of Owensboro, in the wee small hours of the morning, by a person who may have tipped the flowing bowl, too freely, the ghost may be real, nevertheless. I may be the spirit of an early pioneer, waiting for the resurrection morn in his resting place, Owensboro's first cemetery, which was right down-town.

It was sometime after 1810 that the first cemetery was laid out on a plot of ground which is now Third and Fourth streets from St. Ann to St. Elizabeth streets. Foundations of many buildings in that section now rest on the dust from the bones of those early men and women, for the graves were not all moved, when another cemetery was opened on the outskirts of Owensboro which was Fifth street, in the 1850's.

And if any ghosts ever flit about in the shadows of the small wooded plot on the north side of West Ninth street near the railroad crossing, they too are spirits of early pioneers who were laid to rest and are still resting there. For being a town cemetery, where its paupers were buried, the city did not bother to disturb the sleeping ones when other cemeteries were opened in later years, and those men and women still sleep on, waiting for Gabriel and that last trumpet call.

It was in 1840 when the business district of Owensboro encroached on Third street that the city decided to start a cemetery out on the Henderson road, outside of town. So a plot of ground was purchased. The Henderson road then, as now, was Ninth street, and the cemetery, which is now that shady plot, and the scene of many an ardent evangelist's exhortations, was then in the country.

Some tombstones remained there for many years, and some of Owensboro's present residents remember that cemetery as they well remember the one in the southeast section of Owensboro covering ground between Triplett and Center streets and Fourth and Sixth streets. The latter cemetery was opened in 1852, and remnants of tombstones are still visible in lawns of some of the homes in that section. This cemetery was a part of Rural cemetery which was started in 1856, when Owensboro had grown so rapidly that it was encroaching on the cemetery at Fifth street. The Rural cemetery was merely an expansion of the one opened in 1852.

Rural cemetery was used until in 1868 when, owing to the continued growth of the city which was rapidly encroaching on the cemetery's territory, it became apparent that more spacious grounds would be necessary. In that year 40 acres of ground were purchased on the Hartford road a mile southeast of Owensboro. The company's minutes show that it offered to move all persons buried in the old Rural cemetery, providing written consent could be secured from the families. Many were moved to their new grounds, but some families refused to consent to the removal, and in other instances no families could be found to give the consent, and hence the dead remained undisturbed and still remain with inhabited homes as their monuments. That section is now a residential section, with a house on every lot and little mention is ever made of the cemetery, or

the persons still buried there. In April, 1869, the name Rural Hill cemetery was changed to Elmwood which it has retained since that time.

John A. Bidwell, present sexton of Elmwood holds an unique record, having served in that capacity since May 7, 1901. Mr. Bidwell is the father of Police Chief Vernie Bidwell. The pauper cemetery is next to Elmwood, and contains more than two acres purchased by the city of Owensboro in 1868 from the Rural Hill company.

In 1861 the Catholic cemetery was opened on the Henderson road. The description given of it at that time was that it was a "half mile below town." Now the town extends beyond it.

Owensboro's newest cemetery, Rose Hill was opened in 1916. Containing more than 20 acres, the first burial was made on November 21, 1916, when J. Wesley Howard was laid to rest.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 22 November 1942, p.1B & 7B:**

**Change Was Scarce In City In Earl Days:  
More Rambling Through Old Diary Proves Interesting**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

(Continued from 15 November 1942)

So scarce was change in Owensboro in 1862, that merchants had to issue individual checks for amounts from 5 to 50 cents, in order to carry on business in their establishments according to the diary of Joseph Thomas, prominent pioneer of this section. According to Mr. Thomas greenbacks were abundant, but there was no change.

Mr. Thomas recorded many things of interest and historical value. He didn't forget to record the date on which the telegraph line to Louisville was started. According to Mr. Thomas the negro residents of Owensboro voted for the first time on April 4. 1870.

During the last half of the nineteenth century, there were numerous fires of mysterious origin in the downtown area according to the diary. Tobacco factories and distilleries, numerous here at that time, also suffered losses from fire.

A perusal of the writings of the pioneer reveals that feeding distillery slop to cattle was known in his day, and is not a present-day theory. The writer also recorded briefly, yet graphically, the collapse of a river front hotel and the burning of the old Hall Opera house, which caused much excitement, for rumor had it that people were trapped in the flames.

The diary from the year 1856 on, follows:

1856

Many deaths all year.

Aug. 6 – National American, a Know-Nothing paper, published in Owensboro. September Provisions high and difficult to obtain on account of drouth.

October – A very sickly month, with many deaths.

1857

May – Small-pox scare.



27 – G. W. Farrow died from kicks given by Hugh B. Lea. The small-pox was introduced by a German who came to Kenney's exchange. Several contracted disease. Public meetings forbidden.

June 7 – Nine cases of small-pox. Dull tone to business.

Nov. 20 – H. Manzy killed his wife and himself died in jail on Twenty-fourth.

#### 1858

Jan. 13 – J. H. Daviess died. Considerable sickness, typhoid fever, pneumonia and scarlet fever. J. S. Dawson lost four children by the latter disease.

March 9 – Three marriages at 4 p. m.

#### 1859

July 3 – Salmon's house robbed and burned by negroes.

Nov. 24 – Eliza Hibbs died 12 hours after Roselle, her servant from childhood died.

#### 1860

Jan. 30 – Mr. Pegram's house burned.

Feb. 22 – Spire of Baptist church, just finished, was blown down.

March 20. J. Mitchell's store, Dodson's stable and three or four houses burned.

Aug. 7 – Earthquake sensibly felt by everybody.

Sept. 16 – Baptist church opened for services for the first time.

Oct. 24 – Cumberland Presbyterian Synod commences.

Dec. 17 – Deposit bank in operation;

24 – Pat Enright froze to death;

31 – A street lamp lighted at night.

#### 1861

Jan. 4 – A day of prayer and fasting generally observed for the sake of reconciling the North and South. Stores all closed and churches all open. Business almost suspended during month on account of the pecuniary depression,

Feb. 2 – Methodist revival;

20 – Judge Stuart on petition determined to render no judgments for debt this term on account of the unsettled state and scarcity of money. There were 603 suits for debt on the docket.

April 15 – Crockett and Yeaman spoke on the occasion of surrender of Fort Sumpter;

22 – Speeches by J. C. Breckinridge and A. Dixon. Secession gaining ground.

May 28 – Dixie Guards left for Southern army.

July 17 – Home Guards sworn in by Judge Botts.

#### 1862

May 15 – Cumberland Presbyterian assembly convened.

Oct. 1 – Methodist conference commences. Imported groceries high and money scarce.

Nov. 30 – Earthquake;

29 – Willis Field murdered.

Dec. 6 – Another earthquake; Greenbacks abundant and small change scarce, merchants issuing individual checks for 5 to 50 cents.

1863

March – Solomon J. Howard's house fired twice this month by incendiary, but fire extinguished both times.

April 9 – J. Rudd's house burned;

Dec. 6 – J. H. Tarascon, a new packet.

1864

Jan. 7 – Mr. Campbell's house burned;

15 – S. Strauss, returning from Louisville, drowned;

23 – Sims' tobacco stemmery burned.

Aug. 18 – Q. D. Mitchell killed by negro picket.

Sept. 22 – Morning Star, new packet. First trip.

1865

Feb. 5 – First mail received in Owensboro since Jan. 25.

March – Many deaths in Owensboro, smallpox, erysipelas and spotted fever.

April 17 – Business suspended and crepe on doors on account of Lincoln's death.

May 15 – J. Nelson's store burned.

Aug. 26 – G. H. Yeaman appointed minister to Denmark.

Oct. 9 – Hon. G. H. Yeaman and family leave for Denmark.

1866

Jan. 30 – Steamer Missouri exploded some ten miles this side of Evansville. Hull sank instantly, while cabin full of water floated off. Among those lost was George A. Peters, citizen and merchant of Owensboro. Shock of explosions was distinctly felt in Owensboro.

Feb. 3 – Mrs. Noel killed by explosion of the W. A. Carter. A Mr. Johnson killed.

March 3 – Anthony Fuqua killed by stage driver.

May 21 – Tom, negro boy, hung on the courthouse square by a mob. Had been tried before City Judge Washburn and when on way to jail an unknown party placed one end of a rope over his head and threw the other end over a limb on a tree in the square. He was kept suspended for twenty or thirty minutes.

Oct. 26 – Three stores of Messrs. Kendall, Mose and Oppenheimer were burned.

Dec. 29 – Telegraph line to Louisville commenced.

1867

April – Latest Spring ever witnessed here.

May – Coldest May ever seen.

July 14 – D. Hamilton's coopershop burned;

15 R. Patrick's mill burned.

December – Commodities high, money scarce and business dull.

1868

July 6 – New courthouse ready for use;

17 – Negro woman killed by lightning at Bransford Institute;  
19 – Over 50 persons ill from drinking milk poisoned with some antimonial preparation.  
Sept. 2 – Cooperative association met.  
Dec. 12 – P. Lyddane fell off a horse and was killed;  
25 – Part of River hotel burned.

1869

Jan. 23 – Mr. Crutcher's house burned; 27. A negro man hung in courthouse yard for rape.  
March 17 – W. H. McKay's warehouse burned.  
May 6 – Three barges of ice land; D. Monarch bought 100 tons at \$10 a ton. Blocks of ice were curiosities to many.  
Oct. 11 – F. L. Hall's new dramatic hall opened.

1870

Jan. 21 – Roller skating rink opened.  
April 4 – Election of mayor and negroes voted for first time.  
July 17 – Mike Donahue murdered by Link Ballard. Murderer had accomplices.  
Dec. 31 – Locomotive Jo Daviess put on track and tried.

1871

April 15 – Wm. Berry's still-house burned.  
May 16. O. Cain killed Summers and wife;  
8 – First beer garden in county opened.  
Aug. 7 – Someone entered circuit clerk's office and stole docket of term. A similar robbery committed at preceding term.

1872

Jan. 5 – An actress died of smallpox at River hotel.  
Feb. 26 – J. G. Delker's furniture factory burned.  
April 14 – Fire of mysterious origin consumed buildings on Frederica street between Third and Fourth, belonging to A. R. Hathaway and Alvery Bros. A Mr. Kincheloe killed Mr. Throckmorton on a road west of Owensboro sometime during the year.

1873

March 31 – Boiler exploded at M. V. Monarch distillery and flew into river. Two negroes killed. Much excitement in town because of smallpox. May 26. Boiler in Rouse's mill exploded killing two men.  
Aug. – Joseph Allen killed by an unknown person.  
September – Several cases of cholera.  
Oct. – Jeff Underwood shot and killed by Bud Borie.

1874

May 12 – Burns' tobacco factory burned with 250,000 pounds of tobacco and adjoining building. Sol Wile and W. S. Britain also losers.

Aug. 3 – George W. Swoope shot and killed Perry Riley in the courthouse yard near polls on election day. Mr. Swoope finally acquitted on grounds of self-defense.

Dec. 12 – A block of buildings on the corner of St. Ann and Main streets consumed by fire. Buildings owned by W. N. Sweeney, D. M. Griffith, Chas. Kahler and a Mr. Driver.

1877

May 12 – St. Joseph's church burned.

1878

June – A man Lavator appeared on streets, shoeless, shirtless and a wretched wanderer. He asked for a violin and astonished bystanders with powers. Prominent citizens took up his cause and presented him on stage several times.

Oct. 11 – Nick Neal said to have killed Henry Gearhardt, two miles from Grissom's landing.

Nov. 17 – H. D. McHenry's livery stable and warehouse near First and St. Ann burn.

1879

Several fires this Spring. Southern Wheel and Handle Factory burned on June 22.

1880

April 10 – Stillhouse corn and cattleshed of John Hanning distillery burned.

13 – Hope mill burned.

Aug. 26 – Johnson & Cottrell's tobacco factory burned, also P. J. Miller's residence and cottages belonging to Messrs. Woolfolk and Tharp, loss over \$30,000.

Sept. 5 – N. M. Lancaster & Co's large new distillery destroyed by fire;

9 – J. S. Pottinger's large cooper shop in West end of city burned.

Dec. 4 – On account of some excavation near it, the old Wecker hotel building fell with a terrible crash accompanied with cries and shrieks of men, woman and children. No one was seriously injured. It was built in 1850 at foot of Frederica street.

1881

July 13 – Storm so severe it unroofed the courthouse.

Nov. 13 – Death of Thomas Monarch, one of prominent pioneers.

1882

Jan. 6 – Building known as Hall's Opera house discovered in flames in the evening. In tense excitement when rumor spread there were people in building. This however was untrue. Those who suffered losses included Robert Nunn, grocer, Parish book store, H. Washburn, proprietor of Planter's, house saloon. The Planter's hotel was almost torn to pieces, saved from entire destruction by fire-proof wall. The job office of O. T. Kendall, barber shop of Elijah Hathaway and dwelling of L. M. Ogden badly crushed by falling of north wall of Opera House which was built in 1870 at a cost of \$22,000.

Sept. 1 – C. W. Roby, somnambulist, walks from second floor window near Spoerri's hotel and is killed. During this month an itinerant family stopped in the suburbs of the city and one member of the family was said to be 122 years old.

1883

Jan. 16 – Major John H. Smith died. He built the first tobacco factory in Owensboro and probably the first west of the Allegheny mountains.

[ed. note: Ms. Cockriel selected only some of the entries from the original diary of Joseph Thomas, which was published in the book, History of Daviess County, Kentucky, Inter-State Publishing, Co., Chicago, IL, 1883, pp.408-429.]



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 29 November 1942, p.2B:**

**Some Of City's Early Firms Are Recalled:**

Fred W. Arnold Tells of "First Businesses" in Owensboro

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

"What can I remember about early business houses in Owensboro, that are now forgotten? Well, I remember some of the city's finest men and women, persons who erected the foundations for some of Owensboro's present business establishments. So, with the results of their efforts of years past, still in existence, have those men and women really been forgotten?" was the way Fred W. Arnold, Owensboro's oldest Main street merchant, in point of service, answered a query about business establishments in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Arnold, not so old in years, has been connected with Main street business for 58 years, all with one firm, now McAtee, Lyddane & Ray, but which in those early years was Phillips Brothers & McAtee. It was Owensboro's first large department store. S. W. Anderson founded the second, both stores still holding title to being Owensboro's two largest department stores.

**Worked For 1.50 Weekly**

"Yes, I started to work for Phillips Brothers & McAtee when I was only 13 years old. I was a bundle boy, another word for delivery boy, and worked for the magnificent sum of \$1.50 a week," Mr. Arnold explained. "Later I received a marked promotion. I was made a wrapper and increased to the huge salary of \$2.50 a week. That was a very nice salary for a boy my age."

"But to go on with early business houses and merchants, I wonder how many people "remember the Duncan dry goods company. That was a famous dry goods house and was located on the spot adjoining Turley Hardware company on the East. It was popular with the buying public until it was burned out. Fire gutted the building and also damaged Phillips Brothers & McAtee, which was located on the spot that is now the Turley hardware store. A. J. Duncan was the manager. That was at least 65 years ago.

"There was the A. Suntheimer store on the northwest corner of East Main street and Triplett street. A dry goods establishment, it was operated by the Suntheimer family, a good Jewish family, that lived on the second floor of the building.

**Other Old Establishments**

On the Northeast corner of Bolivar and East Main street, there was the old store of Mitchell and Haynes. This was a nice dry goods store, with a large clientele. It operated in the 1880's in a two-story building on the site that is now Mullen & Haynes. A. J. Mitchell was the manager. Mr.

Mitchell later opened a store in West Main street, between Allen and St Ann. Among the clerks were Campbell Gant, and the late H. Liter McAtee, who was the carpet man.

"I wonder how many persons remember the Nonheim Millinery company. Located at St. Ann and Third streets, on the spot now occupied by the Masonic temple, it was operated by a Mrs. Nonheim whose son, Herman Nonheim was employed in a bank that is now the Central Trust company. The Nonheim milliners made their own hats, of course.

"Another famous old lady, a Mrs. Hunter, I don't remember her given name, conducted a millinery and women's wear store in St. Ann near Third.

#### Mayor Hickman Owned Business

"There was also Phil Zulauf, who conducted a business in Frederica street, in a building that later became the Steitler jewelry store There was the old Williams and Berry notions and general merchandise establishment. This was later merged.

"Few people know that our late Mayor J. H. Hickman, in his early years was in the carpet business He had a carpet store in West Main street, between St. Ann and Allen and the late Martin Weber was his main man."

When asked about some of Owensboro's "firsts," Mr. Arnold obliged with: "Well there was Owensboro's not only first, but only brewery. It was operated by an Amiel Breidenbach, a genial German gentleman, who was a pillar in St. Joseph's church, and a window in that church was dedicated to his memory. He made only common beer, and put it in kegs – no bottles. The brewery was located at the foot of Pearl street and the river, with the entrance on the river front. There was a rathskeller in the basement with a relative of Breidenbach, a Mrs. Gastle, having charge. There were tables and chairs. The tables were unique, in that they were so constructed that cards could be played on the table, and there was a place under the top where the beer mugs were kept – no dampness on the top to interfere with the card playing.

#### First Fruit Stand Recalled

"Owensboro's first fruit stand was conducted by an Italian, Joseph Gentile, in a small store on the corner of Allen and Main streets, where later Wile Brothers was located. He kept all kinds of fruits, and had a good business.

"Owensboro's first nickelodeon, (picture house) was located on Frederica street where the Bleich theatre is now located. It was operated by Buddy Nunn. There were only silent pictures of course, and a man stood on a platform beside the screen and explained the pictures as they were shown. Later the nickelodeon was moved up in the next block for an open-air theatre in the location that is now occupied by Gene & Jimmie. The seats were arranged, circus-like. Obviously it only operated in fair weather. Gone and forgotten these many years, it was a great thing in its day.

"There was the woolen mill located in a shop on West Fourth street near what is now the Fourth Street Baptist church. It was owned and operated by a Mr. Steffen around the 1870's. Mr. Steffen bought the wool, washed, carded and prepared it and with his weavers, wove blankets. There were crude shuttle looms. Mr. Steffen died, and the woolen mill, too, passed on.

#### Entire Business Block Burned

"I wonder how many people re member that the south side of Main street, between Daviess and the railroad, was once completely filled with business houses. The entire block burned out when a fire started in the H. W. Miller undertaking establishment, and it was never completely

rebuilt. That fire crossed the street, and it too damaged Phillips Bros. & McAtee. Burned out in that fire was a livery stable, also Reed's saddlery shop."

Asked as to merchandising of those days compared with present day ideas Mr. Arnold said: "Well, for instance, Phillips Bros. & McAtee had a grocery store in the rear facing on Daviess street. In the rear of the grocery store was a big brick smoke house. You see there were no packing plants here then, so grocery stores bought pork carcasses from farmers, cut them up and cured their own meats. I remember one time Mr. Phillips went into the grocery to have a look around. He saw, on the shelves some axes. 'You will never sell those here in the grocery. Take them over to the dry goods store and put them up front,' he said. The axes were put up front yes in the front show case in Phillips Brothers & McAtee dry goods store. Jewelry and pretty things are now displayed there," Mr. Arnold concluded.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 20 December 1942, pp.1B & 6B:**

**Owensboro Has Long Boasted Many Beautiful Residences;**

**Waveland Often Publicized: Home of James Weir, Banker and Author,  
Gained Nationwide Attention; Many Other Early Edifices Recalled",**

**By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer**

Owensboro, known today for its beautiful homes, had famous homes almost from its very beginning. Probably the most noted one was the James Weir mansion, Waveland, located on property now covered by the area between the Eagles home, in the 1200 block of Frederica street and the Clarke home in the 1500 block on Frederica street, and extending back to Walnut street.

The home itself had 14 spacious rooms, each room 20 feet square. The kitchen, servants and slave quarters were in a building back of the mansion. The walls of the home were frescoed by the same artist that frescoed the walls the Congressional library. Genuine gold leaf was used on the elaborate handcarved woodwork throughout the house.

The library was noted for its lifesize handpainting of Washington size Crossing the Delaware. The painting was done on the ceiling of the room. On the library walls were actual paintings of famous artists and historians. Waveland was named after the girlhood home of Mrs. Weir, in Danville, and which is still in existence.

Almost as well known to early Owensboroans as the mansion, were Weir's park and Weir's pond, according to Miss Jennie Cosby. The park extended from the ridge off Griffith avenue, south of the mansion, back to Walnut street and north on Walnut street to what was then the W. B. Crosby property, and is now the home of Fred Walt. The park was in reality a virgin forest, and in summer time was the scene of church picnics and community gatherings for many years. It was said to have been the pride and joy of Mrs. Weir and was kept intact during her lifetime. Weir's pond was the scene of many skating parties in winter time, and a favorite of swimmers in summer.

**Was Founder of Bank**

James Weir was founder and president of the old National bank, and was a man of aristocratic mein and stately bearing. Mrs. Weir, charitable, gracious and lovely, always rode in

her own carriage, driven by her colored coachman. Her personal maid for many years, until her death, was Amelia Wheatley, mother of Stirman Wheatley, Owensboro undertaker.

Weir, in addition to being a financier was also an author, having written three of the first historical romances of Kentucky. Among them were Lonz Powers, Simon Kent, and Winter Lodge.

Descendants of Mr. and Mrs. James Weir include Mrs. Levy Hathaway, Mrs. Nora Weir Millican, James Weir, John Weir, and Weir Griffith, of Owensboro, and Mrs. Theron Sammis, Long Island, N. Y., who is spending the winter in Owensboro.

#### Torn Down, Land Sub-Divided

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Weir, the home was bought by the Parrish real estate interests, dismantled and the section subdivided much to the regret of the older residents of Owensboro who had looked upon the section as the most handsome spot in the city.

Reminiscent of the early days are memories of the old board walk along Griffith avenue south of the Weir home. From the W. G. Crabtree home on the avenue, east, was a low spot and water often stood three feet deep. To negotiate that section on foot, residents built a high board walk that raised gradually until it was three feet from the ground, a point where water was usually deepest. From that spot it sloped gently downward until it reached Frederica street. The walk was built by Judge James Stewart, John Weir, and Dan Griffith, so members of their family could cross that section in all kinds of weather.

Another famous old home was that of D. M. Griffith, the home having been built on the same knoll where Longfellow school is now located. Mr. Griffith, father of Dr. D. M. Griffith, and Mrs. S. S. Watkins, built the house around 1860. It was a handsome red brick edifice and faced Frederica street. It sat far back and a landscaped driveway led up to the house. The Griffith estate extended from Griffith avenue to Ford avenue and back to what is now McCreary avenue. Mr. and Mrs. Griffith, known for their gracious hospitality, entertained extensively.

#### Many Old Homes Still Stand

Mr. Griffith's father, William Ridgely Griffith had built a handsome home farther down the avenue in the early 1840's. It is still standing and is owned by Clint Griffith, of New York, Weir Griffith, living in the house.

Griffith's woods, another famous old landmark extended from the back yard of the D. M. Griffith estate down the avenue beyond Walnut street. In the orchard of the estate was a famous private school. It was supported by the Griffith, Johnson, Triplett and Weir families, and tutors were brought from Virginia to teach the children attending the school.

The home now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. S. T. Burns, in Lexington avenue, was the old Judge Stewart home. It was moved back on Lexington several years ago, when that avenue was opened.

On the corner of Griffith avenue where the home of the late Mr. and Mrs. Loren Whitely is located, was, in the early days, the home of Robert Triplett. Later the property was sold but the house retained and is still in the Triplett family, being the home of Mrs. George Triplett.

Just beyond the Griffith estate was the Crutcher estate, the original home of which is still standing in Hill avenue, being known now as the old Scherm home. The residence of Dr. O. W. Rash is located in what was the front lawn of the Crutcher home.

#### EARLY HOMES BROUGHT ATTENTION TO CITY

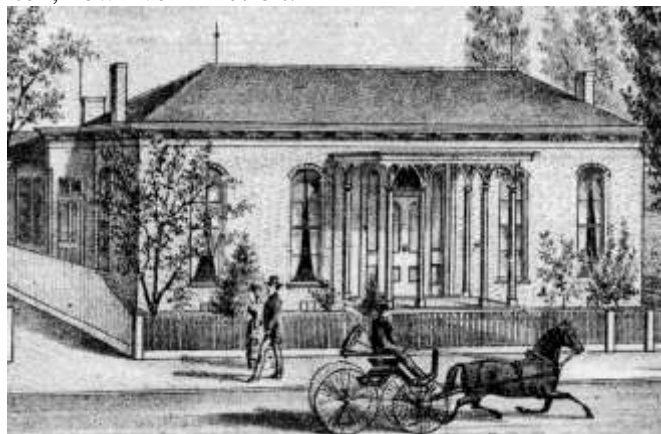




Waveland, the historic mansion of James Weir, founder of the old National bank, is shown above. The Waveland section of Owensboro, where the home was located, is named after the beautiful old home which was dismantled nearly 40 years ago. Waveland has been featured as one of the nation's most beautiful homes by numerous periodicals. Many of the unusual furnishings of Waveland are now in the homes of Weir's descendants.



The old David Hamilton home, shown above, was one of the beautiful old homes that stood on the banks of the Ohio river. The office of the Owensboro Milling company now occupies the site. David Hamilton himself was an Englishman. A tobacconist, he married a Miss Pegram, and built his home just east of the girlhood home of his bride. Two sons, William and James Hamilton, now live in Detroit.



The H. W. Scott residence, shown above, built somewhere around the 1850's, is still in use as a dwelling in Owensboro. Being a part of the C. L Morehead estate, it is located at 516-518 West Fourth street. It has been converted into a two-apartment house. One of the

features in the old house are the double transoms above each door. Each transom is in two separate sections.



Above is shown the Salem Ford home on the northwest corner of Fifth and Lewis streets. One of Owensboro's fine homes in the early days, the handsome brick edifice is still standing and is now owned by R. B. Flaherty. Mrs. Urey Woodson is a daughter of Salem Ford. Shortly before Mr. and Mrs. Woodson were married Mr. Ford sold the home to Kit Jackson, Jr. whose father was said to have been the wealthiest man in Daviess county.

#### Mary Kendall Home was Residence

Facing Frederica street in what is now Phillips court, was the handsome residence of Judge James Johnson, the present Mary Kendall home, being the Johnson house. The judge, a wealthy man, was a jurist and his land extended out Frederica street to the Panther Creek bottoms. Eighteenth street at that time was known as Johnson's lane.

The residential section of Owensboro in the early days was in what is now the downtown area. Where Hotel Owensboro is now located, was the old Porter home. Across the street was the old Moreland home, both houses being built high above the street level, with steps leading up to the ground floor.

Another famous old home was located in the center of the block that is now embraced between Third and Fourth and Allen and Daviess streets. It was the home of Senator Thomas McCreary. The large, square, gray brick edifice, with landscaped lawn, faced Third street. Sen. McCreary later traded homes with Dan Griffith, the McCrearys moving into the Griffith home and the Griffiths into the McCreary home. The house was later torn down to make way for business houses, the corner on which the present Messenger-Inquirer building is located, going to the United States government for a postoffice building.

#### Numerous Homes Along River

The W. N. Sweeney home at Fourth and Daviess was the scene of many lovely social events. The home is still in the Sweeney family, being now the home of Mrs. Forrest Sweeney, widow of Gilmour Sweeney, son of W. N. Sweeney.

Many old homes that figured prominently in Owensboro's early social life and whose owners were prominent pioneers, were built on the banks of the Ohio river, where they had their own boat landings. Among them were the David Hamilton home, located on the spot that is now the office of the Owensboro Milling company, the Samuel Wing home, the Charlie Tyler residence, and the Pegram home, east of the business district. West, was the Henry Herr home, ancestors of Mrs. D. M. Griffith. This home is still standing and is now the T. L. Tanner residence

in Woodford avenue. Farther west was the Gilmour estate. The home was built at the north end of Gilmour Court. It was purchased by Allen Gilmour when he married in 1866. A toll gate was located on the road, almost in front of the house. The home later burned, but part of the foundation still remains. There, were the Scarborough and McAllester homes, and the James Herr home farther out the River road where the Simon Smith home is now located. The old home burned and was later rebuilt by Mr. and Mrs. Simon Smith, Mrs. Smith being a granddaughter of the pioneer, James Herr.

Another home, still standing, that was famous for the gracious hospitality of its hosts, the late Mr. and Mrs. Phil T. Watkins, is at Eighth and Frederica streets. It still is the home of their children.

The old McFarland home was located where Central Junior high school is now, and the Ideal Pure Milk company was built on the site where Judge L. P. Little lived, Frederica court, or West Tenth street off Frederica street, having been the entrance to the Little grounds.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 27 December 1942, pp.1B & 2B:**

Number Of Small Towns Of Early Daviess  
County Have 'Gone With The Wind':

Not Even Memories Linger About Some, But of Others Much  
Is Known and Still Talked of Frequently By 'Old Timers'

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

A number of thriving little towns and busy communities of pioneer Daviess county have, like Margaret Mitchell's novel, gone with the wind. So completely have some of the towns disappeared, that not even memories linger, for those familiar with the spots have long since, too, passed on. Of others, there remain only names that have been handed down in legends from generation to generation. Of still others, tottering foundations and rotting timbers scattered here and there, are evidence that there have been more prosperous days. Still others remain, only a skeleton of their original selves, but still here, nevertheless, to give evidence of the faith in the future of those pioneer men and women who came to this section shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century.

Among one of the early communities along the Ohio river in the western section of Daviess county was Grissom's Landing. The town is gone, but the name remains. Grissom's Landing was founded by Alfred Grissom who came to the county in 1828. The site of the Eagle distillery, in its heyday, Grissom's Landing- boasted of two stores, a hotel, a postoffice and a U. S. Express agency. All that remains now are decaying foundations of one or two of the buildings.

Many "Firsts" Recalled

Near Grissom's Landing was Oakford, now known as Stanley. Among the early settlers there were John S. McFarland. Charles Hebbard, James Hill, James Allen, William and Gustavus Talbott, a Mrs. Stembridge and William Perkins. The section between Oakford and the Ohio river was known as Buzzard's roost, because of the peculiar birds that infested that region in the early days. Although there were some good farms at Oakford and Grissom's Landing, much of the time

of the men was spent in hunting and chopping cord-wood to supply the steamboats traversing the Ohio river, many of which stopped at the landing.

Among the first physicians who practiced in that section was Dr. Charles Wilson who resided on the Henderson road. He originally came from Hawesville and later formed a partnership with Dr. J. F. Kimbley.

One of the first preachers was Isham Allen who resided at Sorghotown but preached all along the Ohio river. He frequently held services hi the Wesley Galloway house. The first church erected in that vicinity was a union church at Oakford. It was occupied principally by Methodists and Presbyterians, and the land was given by Mrs. Stembridge and her daughter, Minerva, who took the most active part in raising the money for the church. It was to have been a Cumberland Presbyterian but it turned out union. Among early preachers were Obed Smith, Samuel Calhoon and Charles Gates.

There being many Catholics there St. Peter's Catholic church was built in 1873. The Baptist church was organized in October, 1876, in a house built by F. J. Birk.

### Birk City Founded

Birk City, an enterprising village in the early days was founded in the 1850's by Jonas A. Birk, of German and French descent, who came to the United States in young manhood with his wife and one child, his earthly possessions including a steamship passage for himself and family, a few clothes and the magnificent sum of \$2. He set foot on American soil on the afternoon of June 7, 1838, and after paying for supper and breakfast, the \$2 was gone. He immediately hunted for work, and in the course of a few hours landed employment, and so supported his family. Wages were low but in the course of a year he managed to save \$100. He moved to Pennsylvania where he engaged in business later as a shoemaker, and finally in May, 1851, sold out and came to Cloverport, Ky., at that time known as Clover Port, or the Port of Clover. He again engaged as a shoemaker, but kept on the lookout for a good farm, being intent on becoming a farmer. In the fall, of 1857 he purchased 355 acres of land along Green river, including that section that is now Birk City, for \$3,000. It was then a wilderness, and there was no settlement nearer than a mile, there was not even a clearing and the first tree cut became the spot of the mill that was later converted into a distillery and then the tobacco factory.

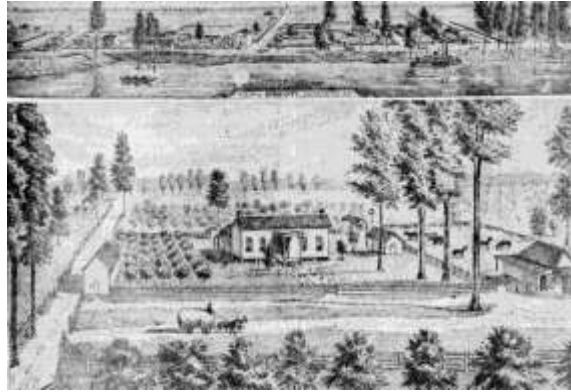
### Had Many Trials

Various misfortunes followed, his stock died, he could not obtain cash, for his lumber, and with heavy operating expenses, in a few years Mr. Birk found himself encumbered financially, although he had \$5,000 in money when he bought the farm. He suffered greatly during the War Between the States because of rebel guerillas and Union soldiers who occupied the territory around him. At length in 1866 he received \$2,000 for his tobacco crop. The following year he had another \$2,000-crop and he was on his feet. He bought more land and reared his family, his sons joining him in business and extensive farming.

Mr. and Mrs. Birk had seven children. However, the pioneer couple and their sons and daughters have long since passed on, but grandchildren are still living in this section.

Their eldest son, Ferdinand J. Birk, married Rena Smith, and operated a drygoods, grocery and drug store in Birk City. Ferdinand has three living children, Mrs. Louise Birk Pennington, Evansville; Mrs. Georgia Birk Anderson and Mrs. Helen Birk Crawford, Louisville.

## BIRK CITY WAS THRIVING TOWN YEARS AGO



Illustrating this article are reproductions made in the engraving department of the Messenger and Inquirer of pictures from old wood cuts used in an old Daviess county atlas. A panoramic view, top, shows Birk City as the thriving little Green River town appeared approximately 65 years ago. The various stores, residences, the mill, and tobacco factory buildings are shown. In the fore ground is Green river. The road on the right is at about the same place the road is located today, as it enters the town. The lower view shows the residence of Jonas A. Birk, founder of Birk Photographs City. It is still standing, although it has since been converted into a larger house. Located about 500 yards from Green river, at the end of Birk's lone, it is now owned by Jonas' granddaughter, Mrs. Mittie Birk Jagoe. One of Birk's best friends was John Jacob Astor, the New York millionaire. The two met when they were poor immigrants in the metropolis. Their friendship continued through out the years until Jonas died at the age of 56 years, both becoming wealthy, Birk, who owned land on both sides of Green river, built the first ferry there. The ferry is still in operation.



Above is. shown the store and residence of Ferdinand J. Birk, oldest of Jonas Birk's sons. Ferdinand built and operated a dry goods, grocery and drug store near his father's home. Later he moved to Owensboro and became one of Owensboro's well known tobacconists.



Above is shown residence Lewis P. Birk, another son of the pioneer Jonas Birk who was a merchant in the Green River town. Lewis was also an extensive farmer, growing large crops of tobacco. Loathe to leave the community of his boyhood days, Lewis came to Owensboro in 1886, but continued the operation of his store in Birk City.



Above is shown the grocery store and residence of Charles E. Birk, a son of Jonas Birk. Like his father and brothers, Charles was also an extensive tobacco grower. Three of his daughters still live in Owensboro.

#### Owensboroans Are Descendants

Another son, Charles, married Ruth Landrum. He operated a grocery store, farmed extensively and raised tobacco near his father's home. His living children include Mrs. Claude Jagoe, Mrs. Carrie Birk Long and Mrs. Josie Birk Sanders, all of Owensboro.

Lewis P. Birk, another son, married Mary Newman and he too engaged in business, operating a general merchandise store in Birk City, and farmed extensively, being a big tobacco grower, like all of his brothers and father. Lewis' only living child is Mrs. Sadie Evans, 2206 Frederica street.

Frank Birk married Hannah Crugher and has three living children, Mrs. Procter Smith, Louisville, Frank Burk, also of Louisville, and Mrs. Mittie Lee Taylor, Owensboro.

George Birk married Mamie Hawes, and of this family there are two living children: Mrs. Charles Deeter, of Dayton, O., and Louis Birk, Clinton, Ky.

Jonas had two daughters. Cecelia married Peter Rarick. Dead these many years, the Raricks have three living children, Mrs. James Cruse and Fred" Rarick, Owensboro, and Mrs. Frank Wright, of Evansville.

#### Oil Boom Hit Settlement

Amelia Birk married Josiah Gardner. A grandson, Arch Blocher, is the only immediate member of this family.

The cluster of farms and business houses on Green River, by virtue of their owners, naturally gave to the community the name of Birk City. It became an important stop for boats, and as more land was cleared and other farms opened up, Birk City became the shopping center for persons of that section of Daviess county, as well as the residents across the river.

The Birks left Birk City as years passed on and the community became a quite little spot on the river bank, that was only a skeleton of the original town. Then several years ago oil was found on the land of the Birks, and once again activity was rampant and the chugging sound of the drilling was heard 24 hours of the day. Oil wells sprang up in front yards and big tanks were built. Once again Birk City came into its own. Then came drilling restrictions as war advanced, and once again the community has become a quiet little spot on the banks of what residents like to refer to as the "Deepest river in the world."



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 3 January 1943, pp.1B & 2B:**

## Town Of Sorgho Had Its Origin In Early Venture In Sugar Manufacturing:

New Industry Was Short lived; But Village Remains;  
Section Of Daviess County Had Many Prominent Residents

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Many years ago enterprising residents of Daviess county, including two physicians, seeing a great future for sugar, took upon themselves the organization of a sugar company. It was some time after 1850 that Dr. J. Q. A. Stewart and a Dr. Stirman became interested in a process whereby sugar could be made from sorgho cane, now called sorghum.

In the winter of 1863-69 a company was formed and on January 20, 1869 a committee consisting of Dr. Stewart, J. Balee and E. Guthrie, after due investigation, reported that they had seen some excellent sugar made from sorgho cane, and that the process was practical.

A plant was built west of Owensboro at a point where the town of Sorgho is now located, and that town is all that remains of the sugar venture. For some reason or other, probably due to the process of whitening sugar, which the new company did not have, it was short lived. The few cottages of workmen connected with the plant, remained, and were the nucleus for a small town, Sorghotown, which with the passing years became our present Sorgho.

It was Sorghotown that gave its name to one of the first county precincts, Sorghotown precinct, being just south of the Oakford precinct. Although Sorghotown was its only town, the section had many prominent residents.

### Balee Was With Sherman

There was John W. Balee who came to Daviess county from Shelby before the 1850's. He was with Sherman all the way to Atlanta and in the siege of Knoxville and Buzzard's Roost. Upon his discharge from the army he went out to Kansas and the Indian country, before returning to Daviess county to settle down in the Sorghotown section after marrying Lillie Smith.

Isaac Bennett gave up a drugstore in the Curdsville precinct for a livery stable, and disposed of that for a farm near Sorghotown. There were also W. E. Clark, a prominent merchant of Sorghotown, and John S. Dugan who came to the Sorgho town precinct from Nelson county.

### EARLY DAVIESS FARMS HAD FINE RESIDENCES

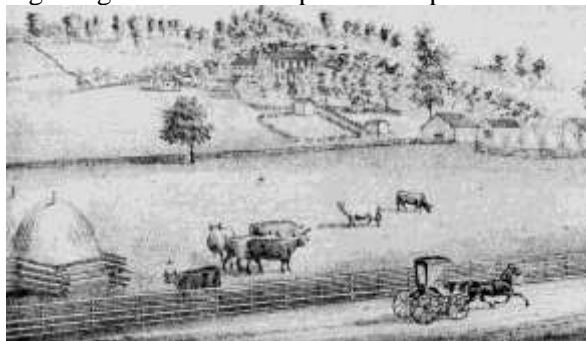


The Rev. Samuel Calhoun, Daviess county's first minister, and founder of the Pleasant Ridge Cumberland Presbyterian church, is shown above, left. At the right, is the residence of his oldest son, George Calhoun, located near the spot where the elder Calhoun's log cabin had been built much more than a century ago. The George Calhoun house is still standing, being one of Daviess county's attractive homes. Now owned by a granddaughter,

Mrs. P. H. Williams, it is located just off the Lyddane Bridge road, about six miles southwest of Owensboro. It was built 75 years ago by the minister's son. For many years it was occupied by George Calhoun, Jr. Mrs. Williams now resides there.



The farm of Judge George Washington Triplett, grandfather of the late Judge George V. Triplett, was located just south of Owensboro, on the east side of the Livermore road, and is now the I. R. Morgan home. Judge George W. Triplett's father was a personal friend of George Washington when the two men lived in Virginia, so it was only natural that his son should be christened George Washington Triplett. The home was one of the attractive residences of the county and its master was for 12 years county judge. R. S. Triplett and Beckham Triplett are great-grandsons of the pioneer Triplett.



The R. C. Fuqua farm, shown above, was one of Daviess county's early farms. Situated two and one-half miles west of Owensboro on Highway 60, it is now owned by Mrs. George Rudy and her brother, Frank Fuqua. Mrs. Elmer Guthrie, 87, who resides at 514 Walnut street, and Mrs. Willie Martin, Prescott, Ariz., are the only living children of Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Fuqua.



Above is shown the farm home of Jerry I. Berry, who was one of the early, well-to-do farmers of Daviess county. Berry was a brother of the distiller, Ed C. Berry, and the farm, located on the Berry road, just back of the present R. L. O'Bryan home, is now owned by Mr. O'Bryan. The residence burned in more recent years. The Berrys had no children of their own, but reared four orphans, one of them John Daily, residing in Owensboro. Jerry



Berry, with his two brothers, Ed C. and William Berry, came to Daviess county at the close of the Mexican war and the three brothers purchased adjoining farms.

The only doctor of Sorghotown in those early days was Dr. Winfield Scott Gilmore, who was born in Meade county, attended the Evansville Medical college, first practiced in Hopkins county and then settled in Sorghotown where he ministered to his fellow men.

#### William Glenn Was Pioneer

Another pioneer who is an example of the hardy stock of these early settlers was William Glenn. He was a son of David and Mary Jane Waltrip Glenn. His father died when William was 12 years old, and three years later his mother was killed when the floor above her cellar gave way. She was at home alone and had gone to the cellar to attend to some duties. Considerable wheat had been stored in a room over the cellar which was too heavy for the floor and while Mrs. Glenn was in the cellar the joists gave way, crushing her to death.

An orphan, but with plenty of ambition, William set about taking care of the farm himself. The first year he raised 600 bushels of wheat and \$300 worth of tobacco with no one to help him but an old colored woman. He became one of the leading citizens of that section, later marrying Margaret Louisa Calhoun.

The Calhoun family was one of the first families of the county, George Calhoun coming to this section in 1812, when Owensboro boasted of three log cabins and a small clearing. He arrived here two weeks after the last battle with the Indians in which the red men were chased across the Ohio river into Indiana and from there retired to the West. Calhoun settled six miles southwest of Owensboro where he built a cabin for his wife and eight children, six boys and two girls. One of the sons became the county's most famous minister, the Rev. Samuel Calhoun. As a child Samuel was delicate, and it was at first supposed that he would not live.

#### Turns To Religion

But he did live and started out on his religious life by hearing the first sermon ever preached in Owensboro. The Rev. David Lowry, a Cumberland Presbyterian, came through Owensboro expounding the gospel, and Samuel made it a point to hear him. After hearing the sermon Samuel became interested in his own salvation. Lowry left immediately and there being no other minister nearer than forty miles, there was no one to whom Samuel could go for assistance and the matter preyed heavily on his mind.

He often said the light came to him on the second Sabbath in April, 1821, as he was riding alone on the road leading from Owensboro to Calhoun, just when he entered the pass known as the Narrows of Panther Creek. Ere long, he decided he must preach. Being poor, and with no education he sought to defer the matter, but as he later explained, "the hand of God lay heavily on me." So he began his ministry by exhortation. He held meetings in private residences, there being no churches or school houses. His labors were said to have been abundantly successful and in 1826 the Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian church met sixty miles distant, young Samuel Calhoun was there and offered himself as a candidate for preaching.

#### Worked and Studied

When he returned there was the problem of caring for his family while he preached the gospel, so he labored by day for his family, and on his way home would gather sticks of wood with which to make a light so that he could study his Bible by night, for he was too poor to buy candles.

He had but one horse and this he would work during the week, then ride fifteen miles on Sunday to preach to a congregation. His preaching was without remuneration but it was from the heart, because he felt he had been called for that purpose.

Finally he decided to have services in his own house. This he did, and he had a good crowd, but half the congregation stayed for dinner to discuss religious questions with him in the afternoon. Thus did he not only have to provide food for the soul, but for the stomachs of his listeners as well.

Being a poor man, his friends predicted he could not go on. Nevertheless he continued. Always there were good sermons, and after the sermons he and his good wife somehow provided a meal for the congregation. His table abounded with food, the minister claiming this was possible only by the grace of God.

Commanding in appearance, yet humble, his soul seemed aglow with the burning lamp of salvation. He held Owensboro's first revival and was soon ordained in the Cumberland Presbyterian church. He loved mankind and taught a religion of love. At one of his first meetings 120 persons sought salvation.

### Refused Wealthy Corn

In 1850 he began a protracted meeting in the residence of the Rev. Joseph Weaver, southwest of Owensboro. In a few days the meeting grew to such proportions that it had to be moved to the Pleasant Ridge schoolhouse on the Calhoun road. There it continued for two weeks. Many souls were saved and out of that meeting came the organization of the Pleasant Ridge congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian church. A commodious edifice was erected 3 miles southwest of Owensboro at a spot where the present Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian church is located.

Rev. Calhoun never made a collection in his life, nor charged a cent for preaching. There were times when he would accept gifts. Nevertheless, his efforts were blessed and he reared a family of 10 children. He was very charitable. During the year 1855 there was a great scarcity of food. Rev. Calhoun had a quantity of corn left over from the previous year. Corn advanced to \$2.25 per bushel. He announced that he had corn for sale. But he would let only the needy have it. When a wealthy man would come to buy the corn the preacher would tell him he had money enough to have it shipped in, whereas the poor man did not.

### Builds New Church

In 1875 feeling that his labors were nearing an end, as his years were advancing, he advised his congregation that he would like to see a new permanent place of worship ere he departed this life. The people promptly responded and the kindly old preacher himself gave more than \$800. Very soon work on the new church was started. A line brick building was erected. Then came the day for dedication, but when the people gathered for the first service the church was draped in mourning. Betsy Weaver, aged and pious mother of the church, and wife of Rev. Joseph Weaver, had died suddenly the day before, and instead of a joyous dedication sermon, the venerable Calhoun preached a funeral oration for the departed sister as well as the dedication sermon.

When the aged minister arose to perform the last rites his voice trembled, his entire body shook, visibly, even the silvery locks of his hair. In a slow, deep voice, which broke at times from grief, he addressed his beloved congregation for the last time. The house was crowded to capacity and the windows and doors were opened so the multitude gathered outside, too, might hear. The sermon preached, the man of God spread forth his trembling hands in a final blessing and so ended his 50 years in the ministry. Present in that audience was one person, who had heard him preach his first sermon, 50 years before.

As he finished the dedicatory sermon, he apparently, had a premonition of the future, for he turned aside to a friend and said, "My mission is over." He died on January 22, 1879.

Though he was poverty stricken as a young man, and accepted no remuneration for his preaching, Rev. Calhoun left a fine, large farm and nearly \$10,000 in cash.

There are many descendants of the famous old minister, who reared large family, and whose children had large families. Impossible to innumerate all of them, some of the great grandchildren living in this section follow:

Mrs. W. G. Crabtree, Mrs. Ida McEuen, Mrs. Paul Williams, Roy Thompson, Wilbur Calhoun, Mrs. Sam Coots, Delbert J. Glenn, Mrs. W. A. Lashbrook, Thurman Barr, Dr. George Barr, Ham Glenn, J. C. Glenn, Mrs. C. E. Carpenter, all of Owensboro; Mrs. Hardie Leachman and Mrs. Walter Scott, Calhoun; Marvin Glenn, Winchester; Mrs. Sallie Dadd, Morgantown; Harry and R. D. Gabbert, Louisville.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 10 January 1943, pp.1B & 5B:**

**Curdsville Precinct Replete With Historical  
Lore Of Pioneer Daviess Countians:**

**In Early Days District Covered Much of This County  
and Part of Territory in Adjoining McLean**

**By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer**

Historical facts dating back to the Bill Smothers days, and the origin of Daviess county, mark the Curdsville precinct, which in the early days covered the entire southwest section of the county, including territory that is now a part of McLean county. Descendants of the early settlers of that section have figured prominently in life in this area since before 1800, for it was in 1797 that David Glenn, of Nelson county, came to this section and built a log cabin on the north side of Panther Creek, about three miles above its mouth at what is now Glenn's bridge. He selected that particular site because there was a large spring of fresh water there which provided sufficient power for a mill. Curdsville was named after a prominent Green river captain, Capt. Curd, who brought salt and whisky to this section from the upper reaches of the river.

Mr. Glenn, coming here when he did, was not only an intimate friend of Bill Smothers, but like the celebrated frontiersman, was also an Indian fighter, for in those days only the fit survived, and to be an excellent Indian fighter, added days to one's life. Mr. Glenn was said to have had many narrow escapes, but he always carried off his prize, the scalp of the red skin.

**Picked Site Of County Seat**

David Glenn was one of the six original commissioners appointed by the governor of Kentucky to select a place for the permanent county seat of the newly formed county of Daviess. The other five members were Benjamin Fields, John Daveiss, John McFarland, Edward Hayden and John Leaman. The commissioners were allowed \$2 a day for the time spent in providing for a permanent seat of justice. The first meeting was held at the home of Leaman.

Glenn was the father of nine children four boys and five girls. His oldest son, William was a colonel in the militia, a representative in the legislature in 1817 and sheriff of Daviess county

from 1821-23. Probably equally as important as his public life was the fact that his son, John Glenn, was a son-in-law of Daviess county's first minister, the Rev Samuel Calhoun, John marrying Sarah Calhoun.

Following the pioneer Glenn, John Galloway, William Faith and a Mr. Travis located in the same section. Mr. Galloway settled on a tract of land just south of Curdsville, and Faith and Travis nearby. Next came a man by the name of Adam Jordan. Mr. Jordan was handy with the gun, and during his first year in Daviess county killed 52 buffalo. He also acquired a reputation for hunting bears.

#### Daughter of Clark Aide

Thomas Downs was the first man who lived in the vicinity of St. Alphonsus Catholic church. He built a house on the hill half a mile south of the church.

A William Wright, who was born near Culpeper Courthouse, Va., in 1776, came to Daviess county in 1807. His wife was Betsy Brents, daughter of Captain John Brents, who joined George Rogers Clark at Louisville, when the latter was sent out by Gov. Dinwiddie to take possession of the Ohio valley. Capt. Brents helped build the first fort and made the first settlement where Louisville now stands. Brents, incidently, was drowned at the falls at Louisville, while passing over the rapids in a boat with his company.

When the Wrights settled near, what is now Beech Grove, there were only three families in that section. William and Betsy Wright were the parents of 11 children, a son, John Wright being one of the first settlers of Curdsville. John, for many years ran flatboats on the river to New Orleans. A man with a humorous disposition, he is credited with saying that "In the pioneer days a quart of whisky would roll logs for a man all day, but near the turn of the century it took two gallons." Wright was a deputy sheriff of Daviess county for 13 years, when a portion of the county was McLean county.

#### First Protestant Church

Pleasant Hill Cumberland Presbyterian church was the first Protestant church organized in that community. C. C. Boswell was instrumental in forming the organization in 1840 at a meeting held at the house of Stephen S. Winstead, on the north side of Panther Creek. For several years services were held in private homes, then the Knob Lick schoolhouse was used. In 1846 the church was built. It was a log structure, 26 by 20 feet and was built on the Beech Grove road, on Knob Lick, just beyond St. Joseph. St. Raphael's Catholic church was established in 1832 by Father Durbin.

The first schoolhouse in the precinct was built around 1820. It was a log structure, of course, with a puncheon floor and a clapboard roof. The chimney was in the center of the room. A log was left out for a window, almost the entire length of the building, and the window had a single sash with 60 panes of glass in it. It was the oldest schoolhouse in Daviess county. Several horse mills were erected, one near West Louisville, which was used within the memory of persons now living.

#### Curdsville Origin

Curdsville itself had its inception In 1818 when George Husk built his log cabin on ground that later became the little Daviess county town. Four years later John Eads came and cleared four acres. His wife died, shortly, and Eads broke up housekeeping; John Traverse purchased his place.

In 1842 Acquilla Spray built a log cabin. He kept a dram shop for several years, and also had the first general merchandise store in Curdsville. Two men, a Mr. Brown and a Mr. Allen built a house under the hill in 1852 and opened the second store. Six years later financial circumstances forced them to close. In 1852 the little community had its first blacksmith shop when Calvin Bennett built one. The Curdsville postoffice was established around 1860 and Acquilla Spray was its first postmaster. Twenty years later the village was a thriving little community with one general store, a grocery store, a hardware store, a drug store, two whisky shops, one blacksmith shop, two livery stables, three tobacco factories, one mill and one shoe shop.

The town also boasted of a physician, a lawyer, an undertaker, a police judge, a town marshal, five trustees and a calaboose.

The Curdsville ferry was established in 1855 by Madison Priest, of Henderson county.

### MANY PIONEERS SETTLED IN CURDSVILLE SECTION



Left: John Glenn, above, was a son of David Glenn, one of Daviess county's first residents, who lived near Curdsville. John Glenn was also the grandfather of a number of Owensboroans including Delbert J. Glenn, Mrs. Sam Coots, Ham Glenn, J. C. Glenn, Mrs. A. B. Lashbrook and Mrs. C. E. Carpenter, and Mrs. Walter Scott and Mrs. Hardie Leachman, of Calhoun. Right: R. C. Calhoun, 78, above, who resides with his daughter, Mrs. R. T. Fisher, at 504 West Seventh street, is a grandson of the pioneer R. C. Calhoun who operated the first ferry over Green river, at Hambleton's ferry. The pioneer Calhoun was a prominent resident of the Curdsville community and an extensive landowner.



The homestead of the McFarland family, another of the pioneer families of the original Curdsville precinct, is shown above. It was built more than 80 years ago by Mrs. Banister McFarland, on land formerly owned by her father, the Rev. Samuel Calhoun. Mrs. McFarland was the grandmother of a number of residents here, including Judge R. L. McFarland, Gertye McFarland and Mrs. Ira Taylor, of Owensboro, and Mrs. Leslie Sandefur, of Beech Grove, all of whom were reared in the above home. It is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Whobrey. Mrs. Whobrey's mother, Mrs. Jennie Waltrip, octogenarian, is shown above standing in front of the house.



When Mount St. Joseph college and academy was started in 1874 by the Rev. P. J. Volk, it was in the Curdsville precinct that the priest found suitable spot for the girls' school. When the founder and the first Ursuline sisters arrived to start the school, their first meal, served under the maple trees, some of which are still on the grounds, consisted of watermelon and buttermilk. The original building erected by Father Volk shown above, and although many buildings since have been erected, it is still in use.



Virgin forests are to be found today, in sections of the Curdsville community, the wooded areas today being much as they were when Bill Smothers hunted bears, and even Indians midst their vine-entwined trees. Above is shown the rustic lodge of Ravinia, one of the few spots in Daviess county that contains sections that remain just as they were a century ago. Giant bald cypress, the seeds of which are thought to have been brought to this section many, many years ago by a greet flood; huge ravines, that may have been the river beds in prehistoric times, go to make up Ravinia, which at one time was the summer home of the late W. A. Steele, and Mrs. Steele.

#### Delaware Laid Out

Delaware, another active community in the early days was laid out in 1864 by Andrew M. Allen, being a part of his farm on Green river. He named it after Delaware creek, which flows into Green river, a short distance away. The first settler on that particular spot, was really Colonel Samuel C. Harralson, who came to Daviess county in 1855. Mr. Harralson was murdered and robbed on the road between Delaware and Calhoun in August, 1859. This was not the first killing in the Curdsville precinct. Along about 1815 John Dickens killed Lem White. White, it is said, was trying to get into Dickens' house to kill him. Dickens having no bullets broke the handle from

a pewter spoon, rammed it down his gun and shot White through a crack in the wall. Dickens immediately gave himself up and was acquitted.

The first mill in Delaware was built by Hall, Moore & Burkhardt in 1868. It was a saw-mill and corn-cracker. For three years the company sawed for the penitentiary at Jeffersonville, Ky. In 1881 Turner, Day & Co., of Louisville, built the Delaware Handle factory. Run by Nathan Brumfield, it employed as high as 50 men during the peak period. It burned on November 17, 1882. The little town had three tobacco factories, one owned by A. M. Allen, one by S. C. Cook and another by N. B. Cook.

### First Store

The first store was opened in 1844 by Henry Fleming, the second by S. C. Harralson, in 1849, who also established Harralson's ferry, the third by H. C. Cosby who later sold out to A. M. Allen. Dr. B. F. Harralson was the first physician. The postoffice was established in 1862 and A. M. Allen was the first postmaster.

West Louisville was named after Louisville by James A. Sivers, who built the first log cabin at this point. He kept the first whisky shop, also built and kept the first grocery in 1854. The first drygoods store was kept by Stowers & Bosley in 1865. The first drug store was credited to N. M. Stowers about 1875. The first blacksmith shop was kept by John Clements around 1853. This was the second building erected there.

Dr. V. Orsborn was the first physician, coming to West Louisville in 1865. Dr. T. W. Blanford came in 1876 and Dr. H. A. Orsborn in 1880. The first school house was built in 1875 by a stock company and was first used as a private school. The postoffice was established in 1862, and was second only to Owensboro. The regular mail route was established in 1875.

### "Possum Trot"

Possum Trot, still referred to by older residents, was said to have been named by J. P. Waltrip who said that the narrow hollows, which are located about two miles south of Mount St. Joseph, were full of possum.

Blue Ruin was another early settlement. It has long since vanished, and New Macedonia church is built on the exact site of Blue Ruin. Cleveland was still another small community of Curdsville precinct. It was a couple of miles south of West Louisville.

There are sections along Green river, in the Curdsville precinct, that still remain virtually untouched by civilization, one of such spots being the acreage that went to make up Ravinia, the summer home of the late W. A. Steele, situated just east of Curdsville. Although of a more recent origin, it is the one spot in Daviess county that bears trees and vegetation, not native to this section. Giant bald cypress native to southern states abound, seeds having probably been brought there centuries ago in some great flood, according to naturalists who have visited Ravinia, so called because of the three immense ravines. Geologists claim the ravines were once the bed of Green river, probably in prehistoric times. The ravines were spanned by bridges, 130 feet long, that rise 20 feet above the rocky floor of the rock fissures.

The virgin forest of Ravinia was not molested, and the trees, mighty monarchs of the past, stand today as they did in the days of Bill Smothers and David Glenn. Mr. Steele built a summer home atop a high terrace, overlooking Green river which many years ago obtained its name from the green reflection of the tall trees that line its bank. In days gone by Ravinia was the favorite spot of Owensboro society. With the passing of the master of Ravinia, the estate passed on to other hands, and only memories of the past remain for his widow, who resides in St. Ann street.

Curdsville precinct was not only the scene of one of the first settlements of the county, and the home of the ancestors of many of Owensboro's prominent families, but it gave the county its first college, Mount St. Joseph, which was founded in 1874 by the Rev. P. J. Volk. There was also Ellendale, home of Rapiers, where the famous Ellendale fairs were held.

Many families whose names are familiar to present day residents of Owensboro and Daviess county are descendants of early Curdsville precinct settlers. There are the Blandfords, Boswells, Bryans, Carricoes, Clarks, Claytons, Clements, Cooke's, Crabtrees, Fulkersons, Galloways, the Glenns, Harls. Harralsons, Haydens, Heads, Hills, Lamberts, Lyddanes, McFarlands, Merimees, Morgans, Osbornes, Reynolds, Rodmans, Thompsons, Waltrips, Warrens, Wheelers and many others.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 17 January 1943, pp.1B & 2B:**

**River Tragedy Brought Owensboro  
Its First Educational Institution:**

**Noted Teacher Who Survived Sinking of Boat Located  
in Yellow Banks and Opened School in Log Cabin**

**By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer**

(Editor's Note: The following history on schools in Owensboro prior to the origin of the public school system in 1871, was prepared after intensive research and with the assistance of Miss Jennie Cosby, who taught in the Owensboro city schools for 51 years before she was retired last fall.)

Sinking of a passenger boat in the Ohio river, near Cloverport in the early part of the Nineteenth century, brought Owensboro its first school, for on that boat en route to Memphis was Mrs. Susan Tarlton, a teacher of note.

The boat hit a rock, ripped a gaping hole into the hull and the yellow water rushed in. It went under within a few minutes, many on board drowning. Mrs. Tarlton, however, managed to grasp a plank and floated down the river to Yellow Banks, where she was rescued. It was soon discovered that Mrs. Tarlton was interested in teaching small children and Philip Thompson, an ancestor of the Phil Watkins family, who was a civic minded resident of the little town gave her the use of a log cabin in West Second street, near the old ravine. There she opened the first school. In time, it was moved to a cabin on the southwest corner of Main and Allen streets. Later "Aunt Sukey." as Mrs. Tarlton was affectionately known to the populace, moved the school to a cabin of her own on the East side of Crittenden street between Third and Fourth streets where she continued teaching.

**Daviess County Seminary**

The first school building in Daviess county, called the Daviess County Seminary was said to have been erected on the ground occupied by the present day Washington school. Started about 1820, which was 22 years after Bill Smothers built the first log cabin here, the lot on which it was erected had been donated to the town for a school. The school was built by the public spirited Philip Thompson, who had provided the first building for Mrs. Tarlton. Thompson received a



number of city lots in consideration thereof from the trustees. For more than 30 years the seminary was one of the centers of education. Part of the time though the building stood vacant. No records of teachers are available. In 1837 a young man, George Scarborough arrived in Owensboro on a boat. A native of Massachusetts he was an alumni of Harvard and was a relative of Phil Watkins. He was engaged to take charge of the Seminary. New equipment was installed including desks with lids, ink stands, and instruments for the teaching of chemistry and astronomy.

Scarborough continued to teach until 1841 when the Smith Stemmery on the north side of Second street, opposite the Seminary burned. Fragments from the fire fell on the roof of the school and set it on fire, and although the blaze was extinguished, damage was severe and the Scarborough school was never resumed in the seminary. Instead the professor decided to start a school of his own and in 1843 built a stately structure on the old Thompson farm at the river near Orchard street. It was called Snowden Castle and in 1845 Prof. Scarborough opened his school there. He had as his assistant a young man named Philip H. Sears, who was tutor for advanced students. Snowden Castle was known in later year as the McAllister place. Later Mr. Scarborough moved from Owensboro to Kansas and then to New Jersey. When he left he conveyed a large collection of geological specimens to the Owensboro schools.

#### Owensboro Academy

The Daviess County Seminary discontinued and the Owensboro Academy started in the same building about 1853. Prof. H. P. Hart and a Mr. Palmer had charge of the new school. The Hart school is remembered by many older residents and was classed as one of the best schools Owensboro ever had. After some time Prof. Hart was assisted by H. M. Woodruff, who later edited the Owensboro Monitor.

After several years, Prof. Hart erected a building in Davis street, where the Robertson clinic is now located, and moved his school there. That spot is still referred to by older residents as the site of the old Hart school.

In 1857 Malcolm McIntyre was employed as an assistant in the school. Others in the academy included Prof. Burke, instructor of languages, Prof. Halbey, music; and Mrs. Lillie Singleton who had charge of the female department. George L. Reinhardt was also an assistant in this school. During the war the academy was under Col. John H Allen. The trustees were S. B. Wing, W. B. Taylor, D. M. Griffith, Ben Bransford, J. H. Branham, R. M. Hathaway and George Yearman.

Prof. Hart went to Texas in 1872, where he died. Later his widow and two children returned to Owensboro and Mrs. Hart became one of the most beloved teachers in the Owensboro public schools. The daughter, Miss Susie Hart, conducted a successful private school for some years. She became Mrs. E. W. Smith some years later.

#### Central Baptist College

Immediately after the War Between the States, the Baptists proposed to establish a college in Owensboro with, a charter and on February 13, 1866, an act of the legislature was passed authorizing the following board of trustees in behalf of the Central Baptist Educational Society to occupy the property that had formerly been used by the Owensboro Academy: Dr. J. F. Kimbley, C. A. Moorman, W. B. Tyler, J. M. Dawson, Rev. J. S. Maple, J. N. Peay and Dr. Joseph Otis. The society obtained the school grounds on condition they would erect another building at a cost of \$10,000. The building was erected and Prof. J. A. Gray was called to operate the school. He organized a school for men and conducted it successfully for five years. Assisting him at first was

Dr. Otis, and later Prof. Phil Pointer. The attendance ranged from 50 to 60 boys and young men. It was about this time that citizens of Owensboro made a move to establish free schools. As the college was supported chiefly by local patronage it could not compete successfully with free schools which started in 1871, so it was discontinued and the building sold to the city.

In 1843 a Mr. Morville came to Owensboro from the east. He was a teacher and opened a school in a frame building on the northeast corner of Third and Allen streets. A good teacher and splendid disciplinarian, his school was well attended. However, after three years he gave up and went to Mississippi. The house in which his school was kept, stood on the present site of the Y. M. C. A. After he left it passed into the hands of the Sisters of Nazareth who conducted a school there, known at the Sisters' school. Some years later they moved it two blocks south, to the site of the present St. Frances academy. Some of the teachers who taught three quarters of a century ago were Sisters Genrose, Secretia and Constantia.

#### Davenport School

Another school not often recalled was the Davenport school conducted in a building in Lewis street, near Fifth by a one-legged man named Davenport. He was said to have been very brilliant, but a man with a temper, and his pupils walked the "straight and narrow" path.

#### Walker School

In 1854 a school was started in a building just north of the present city hall, by Prof. W. J. Walker. It was diagonally across from the Cumberland Presbyterian church which at that time was located where the Troy Laundry now is.

There were from 40 to 50 boarding students in addition to about 60 from the city, and the school flourished for some years. It gradually declined though and was discontinued. In 1862, Benjamin Bransford purchased the Walker school property and erected on the north side a two story addition, opening a school known as the Bransford institute. The rooms were fitted up with modern equipment and the building was dedicated on Christmas eve, 1862, as the Bransford institute.

Prof. William Marriner, Lebanon university, was principal for three years. Rev. L. B. Crisman, Memphis, Tenn., succeeded him for one year and he was followed by a Professor Armstrong for two years. Mrs. A. B. Miller, wife of Rev. Miller, then had charge for two years. By this time the city had adopted the free school system and the institute was no longer a necessity. Mr. Bransford sold his institute building to the city in 1871 for \$10,000, at first used as a high school by the city and later as a city hall.

The American German school association was chartered and organized in 1863 for the purpose of instructing the German youth. A school house was built at Fifth and Clay streets and the school continued until 1871 when free schools were established. The German association had some money in its treasury when the school was abandoned. This amounted to about \$6,500 and was given to the city hospital in later years.

#### Vaughan Female Institute

In 1868 the Vaughan Female institute was chartered by the Kentucky legislature. It was located on the corner of Fourth and Walnut streets and was managed by Mrs. Sue Phillips. She was succeeded by Prof. William Wines, a Greek and Latin scholar. Prof. Thomas W. Mitchell was his successor. In 1883 was under the management of Mrs. M.- F. Ransselaer and Mrs. M. Klinger.

## Owensboro Classical School

The Owensboro Classical school was conducted in a frame building Bolivar street, between Third and Fourth, by Prof. J. H. Gray who was the first city school superintendent, ending his term in 1873 and starting the Classical school in 1874. He taught the higher branches including a complete collegiate course.

Owensboro fostered a number of small schools. A Mrs. Raphael and daughter, Hettie, conducted a school in a brick building that fronted on Ninth street, just back the present city library. Miss Hettie afterwards married Major Hamilton Smith. They were the parents of Peter Smith and grandparents of Raphael Smith, Sr. This school was begun during the War Between the States and was said to have been outstanding.

Ed Wood taught a special school for several years, having a limited number of boys. It was located in a two-room building which stood in the orchard of the Griffith estate in Griffith avenue, just off Frederica street. It was one of the outstanding schools of Owensboro, and residents of that section who maintained it brought celebrated tutors here from the East to teach their children.

Miss Drew Venable taught a school in East Second street on the lot occupied by the Ross Tobacco company.

Dr. Joseph Otis, father of Miss Lillie Otis, taught a school at West Main and Poplar streets, continuing for several years after the public schools started.

Miss Viola Williams had a school in East Third street, between Crittenden and Clay streets. It was in progress before and after the start of the public school system. Miss Williams was a teacher in the lower ward school at the time Prof. Pointer was principal.

A Baptist minister, a Rev. Mr. Taylor and Miss Lizzie Weir taught school in the Kennady house, later called the Wandling home at the corner of First and Allen streets.

Miss Mattie Stuart taught a school for a while at the northeast corner of Third and Allen streets where restaurant is now located. Mrs. M. E. Klineer conducted a private school for several years in Crittenden street. She gave up though when the city schools started to become principal of the Upper Ward school. Among her pupils were Mrs. J. A. Deana and Mrs. John Reinhardt.

Last of famous Owensboro educational institutions was the Owensboro Female college, built in 1890 on the lot now occupied by the Owensboro Technical high school. Prof. W. H. Stuart came to Owensboro from Shelbyville to conduct the school which was attended by girls from Owensboro's leading families. Many of Owensboro's women received their early education there.

Later the name of the college was changed to Owensboro college and it became co-educational and continued as a private school of higher learning for several years. During its last years, the school was conducted by Dr. J. B. Larue and Mrs. Larue, who in 1915 sold the building to the city board of education for \$18,000. The first Longfellow grade school was conducted there until the present new building was completed in 1932. The old building was abandoned, only to be reoccupied later by the Trade school which grew to such proportions that a new building was necessary, and on February 17, 1940, razing of the old college building was started, thus passing into oblivion the last of Owensboro's famous private schools



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 24 January 1943, pp.1B & 8B:**

Vanover Precinct First Settlement In County To Go Dry, In Last Century:

## Pioneer Residents Were For the Most Part, Deeply Religious; Built Churches and One of First District Schools

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

A section of Daviess county that started the prohibition ball rolling long before the turn of the Twentieth century was that embodied in the Vanover precinct, which covered what is now Panther and the surrounding country. It was the first dry precinct in Daviess county. Whether this was due to the natural habits of the pioneer men, or to the influence of the three Baptist churches in that section is not of record, nevertheless the sale of liquor was banned early. The precinct, however, has not always been dry.

Shortly after the War Between the States, a man by the name of Austin was said to have conducted a grocery store at the exact spot where the New Macedonia Baptist church is now located. To increase his trade, he added whiskey to his stock of merchandise. The whiskey sold was of such bad quality, it is said, that the store and little community surrounding it acquired the name of Blue Ruin. And Blue Ruin it remained for some years. Joseph P. Waltrip was given the credit for the appropriate name. Some time later a man by the name of J. M. Buker began building a house at Blue Ruin. It was to have been a residence and dry goods store. But for want of capital, the building was not completed. Then Mr. Waltrip changed the name of the community from Blue Ruin, to Needmore – since more capital was needed to finish the building. At that time there were four families, a small grocery kept by J. W. Cravens and one grist mill at Blue Ruin which was two and a half miles east of Possum Trot in the Curdsville precinct, and was a part of that precinct before Vanover precinct was formed, it being one of the later precincts. Vanover precinct was named after the numerous families of Vanover who settled there during the '60s.

### Vanover's Settlers Were Virginians

The very first settlers, however, were the Crabtrees, four brothers, Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, coming to Daviess county from Virginia. Moses, the oldest, followed the example of the Biblical sage for whom he was named and led the Virginians west, to a better land where there were greater opportunities. Descendants of those Crabtrees still reside in this county. Also among the early settlers in the, Vanover section were the Potts family, Thomas Minton, Andrew Kelley and Abner Lea, all of them settling in the Western section of the precinct.

The Vanover community was credited with having one of the first district schools. It must have been built around 1810. A log building containing one large room, it was known through the country as "the district school house" and people from a wide area secured their education there. Its furniture was meagre, consisting of rustic benches, for the children, a blackboard, a table for the teacher and a stove in the center of the huge room. This log structure was used as a school and for all community affairs, including even church, until around 1890, when it was torn down and another building erected, and the name changed to the "Short' school. This building was used until near 1920 when the district was consolidated with Lick Branch.

### John P. Burns Started Panther

The town of Panther was started by John P. Burns, who in 1880 built a residence and a store building. He kept a complete line of dry goods, groceries notions, wearing apparel and also branched out into hard ware – anything the residents of that community needed. The Burns residence was the first building erected, and it is still standing there being now the home of Mrs.

Finley Wall, 95, whose husband died three weeks ago at the age of 97. In the same year that Burns built his house and store building, a postoffice was established in his store. The postoffice was named after Panther Creek, and that was the nucleus of Panther. There was no regular mail route at first between Owensboro and Panther postoffice and the mail was carried between the two points by residents as they "happened to go to town." With a postoffice and a store, others soon erected residences nearby and Panther grew, year by year.

### A Religious Community

Religious by nature, the early settlers of Vanover precinct organized several churches, which are still in existence. Brush Fork Baptist church was organized in 1846 by Revs. Downs, Allen and Howard, ministers of the Missionary Baptist church. The first meetings were held in a log house that had been built by the Presbyterians about two or three miles southeast of the present building.

During the winter of 1855-56 a revival was held by the Rev. W. R. Welch in the district school house and shortly thereafter the first church building was erected.

The Little Flock Baptist church was organized about 1847. Originally known as the Bristowites, the congregation was started by Jasper Bristow who disagreed with the missionary policy of the Panther Creek Baptist church, and who walked out of a meeting after his objections were overruled. As he strode out of the meeting, he called back, "All who believe as I do, follow me." Several followed him, and thus started the Little Flock congregation. The Little Flock people built their house of worship more than a mile beyond Blue Ruin.

### Overcome Early Hardships

Mt. Pleasant Cumberland Presbyterian church was organized August 17, 1844, in the Sand Spring school house on the John Moseley land near Glenville. There were 23 members at that time, seven of whom were members of the old Camp Ground Cumberland Presbyterian church, which has long since been discontinued. They first worshipped in the Sand Springs school house. In 1868 they built a hewed log house, on the Calhoun road. It was at that time that the name was changed from Sand Spring Cumberland Presbyterian church to Mount Pleasant church.

In addition to the Crabtree and Vanover families, William Short, who was born in Muhlenberg county in 1819, came to Daviess county in 1827, with his father, George Short. The family settled on Green river, and William walked four miles every day to the old district school, which was a subscription school, for his education. He had to walk through hollows, over flats, and hills, through wilderness inhabited only by bears, panthers and wolves, but he came through unscathed, and in 1847 married Mary Crabtree. Descendants of this union still live in this section.

### Other Older Families

There was also the C. M. Ruby family, Dabney C. Robertson, the Moseley families, Isaac, Jesse and Merit, John C. Kennedy, Peter and W. William Clark, Charles M. Cary, James Baird and Samuel C. Baughn who learned the blacksmith's trade without an instructor, and started a blacksmith shop near the Little Flock church in 1858.

William M. Cohen, was one of the first, if not the first physician in that section. He came to America from Germany about 1865, and settled down to farming and stock raising. He practiced medicine only a few years.

For the most part, the Vanover precinct natives, then, as now, devoted their time to farming and stock raising. Coal was discovered during the intervening years, and coal mines dot the section, but farming has been the principal livelihood.

### Scenes From Historic Vanover Precinct



**Top left:** Brushy Fork Baptist church, above, has one of the oldest congregations in Daviess county, organization taking place in 1846. The Revs. Downs, Allen and Howard sponsored the organization. The Rev. I. M. Morgan, Calhoun, is now pastor of the church. Inset, right, is Mrs. Mary D. Vanover, the oldest member of the congregation, and for many years one of the Sunday school teachers. Left, inset, is her husband, W. J. Vanover. **Top right:** The old Vanover mill, built about a century ago, is shown above. For many many years it served the farmers of the Vanover precinct, being located on Panther creek, near Windy Hollow, just over Dixie Hill. After it ceased to be used as a mill, it was a favorite picnic and fishing spot, and was thus used when the above photograph was made by Henry Parrish more than 10 years ago. Withstanding the elements for years, it was destroyed by fire some years ago. It was a small grist mill, operated by water-power, and was built by Jonathan Barnett about 1847. For several years he used it to grind corn and then sold it to Ebenezer Cawhorn, who rebuilt the entire structure and added a saw-mill before selling it to Samuel Vanover who in turn sold it to Henry Vanover. **Center left:** Above, Macedonia

Baptist church, which was built on the exact site of little pioneer community known as Blue Ruin, because of the character of whiskey sold there. **Center right:** The site of one of the county's first schools, known as the "district" school in the early 1800's, and later called Short school. An abandoned log cabin marks the spot of the once famous school of Vanover precinct. The "district" school was the community center for that section. Erected long before there were any churches, religious services were held there for many years by various denominations. Among the early speakers, whose orations stirred their listeners and who may be remembered by persons still living were Kinchell Hay, an ardent Baptist, and his son, Bill. Community gatherings and parties, too, were held at the old "district" school. **Bottom left:** The first house built in Panther, and still being used as a residence, is shown above. Erected in 1880 by John B. Burns, who built a residence and store building, it is now the home of Mrs. Finley Wall, 95. Mr. Wall died recently at the age of 97. After Mr. Burns erected his residence, and later a store building, which became the postoffice, people of that section went there for their supplies and mail. Others soon built homes nearby, and thus the little town came into existence. It was named after Panther creek. Built on the Ashbysburg road, at a spot convenient to the entire Vanover community, the little town became a bustling community. A mill was built, other stores were erected, later a telephone exchange was installed. **Bottom right:** The Charles Ling home on the Calhoun road, just beyond Union Hill, was the Presley Moseley homestead, in pioneer days, Moseley being a great-grandfather of Mrs. Ben Head, Freeman avenue, and Mrs. Price Gibson, Owensboro; Mrs. Homer Johnson and Allen Goode, Glenville; Mrs. William Dodson, Sutherland; Mrs. Jack Moseley, Moseleyville; Mrs. Dave Glover, Calhoun, and Lloyd Leachman, and Mrs. Nannie Gibson, Cleopatra. The Moseley family was a prominent family of that section, the original Robert Moseley coming to Kentucky from Virginia before 1800. One grandson of the original Robert, Isaac F. Moseley, had 12 children, all of whom lived to manhood and womanhood and were married by the some minister, the Rev. Frederick Tanner. In addition to Isaac, there was also the Jesse B. and Merit C. Moseley families, who lived near Presley Moseley



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 31 January 1943, pp.1B & 2B:**

Old Murray Precinct Was Scene First  
Distilling Activity In Daviess County:

Walter McFarland, Pioneer Resident, Manufactured  
First Whiskey and Brandy in Year 1805

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

(Editor's Note – This is the first of several articles on the history of Utica and surrounding territory, which In the early days was known as Murray precinct. Included in the territory was the ground between Sutherland and the McLean county line and east to a point just beyond Pleasant Ridge.)

Some of the largest and most widely known Kentucky distilleries have been identified with Owensboro and its immediate vicinity, but Utica, or Murray precinct, as that section was known in 1805, about the time that Walter McFarland distilled the first whiskey and brandy there, was the cradle of the industry in this part of the state.

Walter McFarland, whose son John was to become one of the county's most prominent citizens, came to Murray precinct shortly before he established its first distillery, about which is little known. The same year, Joshua Griffith, one of the most beloved pioneers of Daviess county, built his cabin on the spot where Utica now stands. McFarland and Griffith had three neighbors –

Captain Ben Field, Adam Shoemaker and William Tanner, who previously had built homes in the territory embraced in the area south of Owensboro to Hartford and west to McLean county.

The early history of the Utica neighborhood is one of interest and experiences of those pioneers vie with any historical romance. For many, many miles, the section was a wooded wilderness. Not only deer, bears, wolves, and friendly Indians inhabited that section, but there were beavers, too, that built dams, resulting in many ponds dotting the countryside. One exceptionally large one, Crane pond, was for many years a prominent landmark. It was located between Pleasant Ridge and Bells Run.

#### First Settler

The first settler in what is now the Utica section, was Capt. Field. Born in Culpepper, Va., Field was a captain in the Revolutionary War and was with Gen. George Rogers Clark in the expedition against the British that captured Kaskaskia, Ill. and Vincennes, Ind., which was in the Indian country at that time and under control of the British.

Following the Revolutionary war, Capt. Field was a surveyor in the Kentucky wilds, as he referred to portions of Eastern Kentucky. Finally in 1793 he came west, and in 1804 he built a log cabin 15 miles south of Yellow Banks, now Owensboro, the first house built between Hartford and Owensboro. He had surveyed that section 23 years before that time, and no doubt took a fancy to the area then.

Field was witty, genial and hospitable and raised a large and respected family, but all of his children with the exception of one, Capt. William Field, died early.

Along about the time Capt. Field came to Daviess county, which, incidentally, at that time was part of Ohio county, Walter McFarland, a respected citizen of North Carolina, decided to seek his fortune on the Western frontier. He put all his earthly possessions in a covered wagon, including his wife and young son, John H., and started West. It was a slow trip, and on November 3 of that year, the little family arrived in Yellow Banks. McFarland drove out a trail, which probably is now the Livermore road, through the Panther flats, then a swamp, and the fertile acres of the section that is now Sutherland struck his fancy. He bought 200 acres of land in that region, and built a log cabin for his family. Sutherland school is standing on a part of the McFarland estate.

#### Early School

Not only is McFarland credited with making the first whiskey and brandy in the county, but he was an industrious man and interested in the welfare of his family. Immediately upon his arrival in Yellow Banks, he searched for a school his young son might attend. Finding there was one about two miles west of Lewis station, he enrolled John, and son John walked the several miles daily. This was one of the county's early schools, and at that time was taught by an Irishman named Andrew Kelly.

Walter McFarland died in 1811, and John, then only 14, started farming. Five years later he married Elizabeth, daughter of Joshua Griffith. John and Elizabeth immediately set about the important business of building a home. John was an excellent and tobacco raiser, often realizing \$5,000 a year for his crop. Each year he planted about 130 acres of the weed. The McFarlands were blessed with eleven children during the first 17 years of their married life. Then Mrs. McFarland died. Not liking the life of a widower, John wooed and won Harriet Leaman, the first child born in the city of Yellow Banks. By this wife, he had seven more children.

McFarland was a very wealthy man when the War Between the States came. Then he suffered great financial loss. He had 130 acres or tobacco which he lost entirely, in addition to



\$40,000 in slaves. Guerrillas were said to have damaged his property extensively. On one occasion he saw a company of them approaching the house. He had at that time more than \$6,000 in money. The enemy was coming and nothing was safe, he knew, so he handed the money to a trusted negro boy. The boy rolled it up and hid it in a pile of rubbish, and thus it escaped the eyes of the guerillas, who searched the whole house.

Since necessity made every man a hunter, McFarland early learned to handle a gun. He was an excellent marksman and one fall killed 100 deer in the months of September and October, and wolves and other game in proportion. McFarland often made the remark to his grandchildren in later years, that for the first 17 years of his life, he never slept a night without being awakened by the howling of the wolves in neighboring forests. He said that many times the wolves would snatch and make away with little pigs.

A Henry Clay Whig in politics, McFarland served one term in the legislature. He is an excellent example of the men who reclaimed Kentucky from the wilderness and prepared it for subsequent generations.

### Joshua Griffith

Little is known of Adam Shoemaker who came to Murray precinct, about the same time, but history is full of the fourth man to arrive, Joshua Griffith. A respected and beloved citizen of Daviess county for more than a half century, Griffith was the grandfather of Dr. D. M. Griffith and Mrs. S. S. Watkins, of Owensboro.

A resident of the state of Maryland, Griffith came to Kentucky in 1804, settling in Ohio county, near Hartford, for one season, to raise a crop. The same year though, he bought up several thousand acres of land in the section of the county that is now Utica and surrounding country. He paid the munificent sum of five and ten cents an acre for it. When not busy cultivating his crop at Hartford, Griffith rode horseback to his newly purchased acres, cut down logs and erected a log cabin. It was a fine house, the first story and a half structure outside of Yellow Banks. No houses were built more than one story in height. Griffith, though, would have his home better. The upper story was fitted out into a bedroom, and a stairway was built leading up to it.

Griffith had two sons, Remus and William R. Griffith. His daughters married William Hanford, Moses Cummins, Warner Crow and John McFarland. He was a man of very strong convictions and had a keen sense of humor. He built his own casket twenty years before he died. Stories are told he loaned it to families, when there was death, and no casket at hand, for Griffith was always a friend to his fellow man. When the casket was not in use, it was kept under the bed, in that upstairs bedroom, and when there were apples in the Griffith orchards, they were stored in the casket.

### Lover Of Children

A man who loved children, their pranks amused him and frequently he played pranks on them. A favorite joke of his was to send children upstairs, to get some apples "out of the box under the bed." When the bed covering was lifted, revealing the black burial box, the children, frightened, would scamper down the stairway. Then Griffith would send his faithful body servant, "Red" to bring down the apples, always tasted good, even though they came from a coffin.

Griffith was a great fancier of eggs, and there were always a sufficient number of them in the Griffith menage. His affection and esteem for guests in his home could always be told by the number of eggs served them. Griffith was very hospitable, and there were always guests. To each he would put the questions, "do you like eggs, how many do you want and how do you want them

cooked?" The eggs were always cooked to each guest's liking, and placed at each particular plate. However, if he liked a guest, one egg or more than the number asked for, would be found at his plate. If he was particularly fond of a guest, then double the number asked for would be prepared, However, if he did not like the guest, then only the number of eggs the guest had asked for would be prepared, no more.

### MANY PIONEERS BUILT HOMES IN UTICA SECTION



Above is shown the beautiful country home of R. M. Lewis, built many years ago near Sutherland. An extensive farmer and stockman, Lewis took particular pride in his show horses, two of which are pictured above, Jim Cay, left, and Corbeau Chief, right. Lewis gave the right-of-way and ground for the railroad station at Utica, hence its name, Lewis station, which it kept many years before it gave way to the postoffice name, Utica, acquired from its first postmaster, Ute McKay. Five of Mr. Lewis' children are still living. They are, Mrs. Sanie B. Gipe, Mrs. Lea McCormick, Owensboro; Mrs. Kate Cooms, Habit; Mrs. Loreno Davis, Louisville, and William Lewis, Frankfort. Mrs. Cora Lucius now owns the old Lewis homestead.



Left: James Smith Coleman, who had the distinction of being the best parliamentarian in Kentucky, served most of the Baptist churches in Murray precinct. Six feet four inches tall and weighing 280 pounds, the minister of the gospel wore high top hat, frock-tail coat and carried a walking stick. He also served as pastor of First and Walnut Street Baptist churches. Center: Utica Baptist church, above, was organized as Oak Grove Baptist church in 1854 by James Dawson, John G. Howard and William J. Owen, at a meeting held in the Martin school house. The first church was built a mile and a half north of Utica. In 1886, while the pastor was away on a trip, a cyclone struck the community and wrecked the church. The new edifice was built in Utica. Right: Col. John Graves Howard, prominent resident of the Murray precinct, came to this county in 1816. He served as a Justice of Peace, sheriff of the county and was a colonel in the state militia. He was ordained at the

First Baptist church, Owensboro, in 1830. He was a deacon of the First Baptist church and moderator of the Goshen association.



Left: William Bennett, above, looked after the physical and spiritual welfare of the early residents of Murray precinct, being a physician as well as a preacher. He practiced medicine from 1847 until 1857, when he was ordained a minister. In later years, he resided in Utica where he died in 1910. Center: Old Buck Creek church, above, organized in what was formerly Tanner's Meeting house, and below. Buck Creek church. They house two of the older congregations in Murray precinct. Right: Mr. and Mrs. Kit Jackson, parents of Mrs. Gordon L. Burke, are shown above. The picture was made on their wedding day, and the bride, who was a daughter of Joshua Crowe, pioneer of Murray precinct, was gowned in royal blue taffeta trimmed with white lace. Mr. Jackson was a grandson of Kit Jackson, wealthiest man in Daviess county.



Left: Col. James M. Holmes, grandfather of James L. Holmes, Mrs. Simon Smith and Mrs. Josie H. Johnson, Owensboro, was one of the early settlers of the Utica vicinity. Born in 1821, he later moved to Owensboro where he opened Owensboro's first drug store. It was located in Frederica near Main street. A son, James L. Holmes, is still living and resides in the Gatewood community.

### Original Chamber of Commerce

Capt. Field, McFarland and Griffith, were the Chambers of Commerce for their section of the county, and each wrote to friends and relatives back East to join them in Kentucky. Capt. Field gave one friend 100 acres to come and live near him so he would have a close neighbor. The friend, accepted the offer, but stayed only a few years then moved on to McLean county.

There were no small towns in the Murray precinct in the early days they being of a later era. But Yellow Banks which, was from 10 to 20 miles away, served them very nicely. However, religion was provided for and in the early 1800's William Tanner started Tanner's meetinghouse, at a spot on the Livermore road, a mile beyond Livia, where Buck Creek church is now located. There he and other inspired pioneers preached the scriptures and led their neighbors to the light. The venerable Tanner, an ancestor of Judge L. P. Tanner, of Calhoun, and the many other Tanner

families in this section, was a respected citizen and his meeting house was the foundation for the Green Brier Baptist church which was constituted there in 1920. Thomas Downs, Baptist patriarch of this section, was its first preacher. Downs, a poor man too poor to afford a horse often walked from Green Brier, on Panther Creek, to Yelvington, a distance of many miles, to preach. A neat and tidy man, in summer time he would tuck his shoes under his arms on those long walks, so as to have, them clean, when he arrived at his church. Downs not only was Green Brier's first pastor, but he and Reuben Cottrell organized the First Baptist church in Owensboro in 1835. Other churches he is credited with organizing included Pleasant Grove, in 1835; Blackford in 1825; Mt. Liberty, in 1840; Brush Fork in 1866; Mt. Carmen in 1849; and Macedonia in 1849. His circuit covered more than 100 miles, most of which he covered on foot.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 7 February 1943, pp.1B & 2B:**

**Murray Precinct Gave Daviess County  
Its First Passenger Railroad:**

**Owensboro and Nashville Line Was Built After Many  
Obstacles and Difficulties Overcome By Residents**

**By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer**

(This is the second in a series of articles on historic Murray Precinct, the section of Daviess county surrounding Utica.)

Murray precinct, the early name for the Utica community, not only gave Daviess county its first - whiskey and brandy, but also its first passenger railroad, the O. & N. While it, too, carried freight, it was not the first freight line in the county, a short line having been built elsewhere more than a half century previously.

(A sketch of that early railroad which was one of the first, if not the first in the United states, will appear later in this series.)

Named O. & N., short for Owensboro and Nashville, this historic Murray precinct railroad was many year in being built to Russellville where passengers changed trains for Nashville. It is not improbable that the nation-wide interest resulting from the building of the first railway line across America in the 1860's was responsible in large measure for the interest in a railroad in this section. Although there were no Indians to impede the efforts of the workmen in laying the rails, there were nevertheless many obstacles, and the difficulties facing the early venture were as numerous to the Daviess countians as they were to the builders of the Union Pacific which eventually joined with the Central Pacific.

As early as 1848, a railroad to Calhoun through the Murray, precinct was proposed by a number of Owensboroans. The idea "took" and stock was purchased by many individuals. The road materialized no further than the stock-selling stage, however. When a proposition for the right of way was submitted to the people it was voted down. That ended railroad planning for many years.

Newspaper Takes Up Fight

On January 10, 1866, when the Union Pacific was forging ahead, the Owensboro Monitor, early newspaper, took up the fight for a railroad south to Calhoun as a means, not only of building up Owensboro, but, of keeping it up to the level it had attained among young pioneer towns. Two weeks later another news item urged a railroad. One after another, prominent residents took up the fight, and on Nov. 9, 1866, organization of a committee was perfected. Dr. W. D. Stirman was named secretary, and G. W. Ray secretary. The committee had as its first task the job of persuading the legislature to revise the old charter of the Russellville and Owensboro company approved on March 2, 1860.

On Dec. 3, at a meeting of Muhlenberg residents in Greenville, the fight for the road to come to Greenville was taken up. The people of Muhlenberg and McLean counties wanted to trade with Owensboro and a railroad would solve the problem.

Throughout the winter and spring the fight continued. Speeches were made. However, it took money to build a railroad. It was suggested that should the county vote to take \$250,000 in stock, the ball would start rolling. An election was held on April 15, and the suggestion carried, the vote being 921-437. A few days later the commissioners appointed a board of canvassers for every precinct and stock was sold at \$25 a share. The commissioners included Dr. W. A. Hickman, of Murray precinct, T. B. Hardin, H. W. Scott, George W. Swope and Dr. W. D. Stirman.

#### Court Refuses Assistance

But all was not smooth sailing. Hon. T. C. McCreary and Camden Riley, two influential residents, opposed the enterprise and in October, 1867, the county court declined to lend its aid. But the railroad minded people went right on. On Dec. 30 of that year a mass meeting was held in Owensboro to sponsor a bill before the legislature providing for state aid to railroads.

Stockholders were a little slow paying their assessments, which were generally five per cent, and much prodding on the part of workers was required.

On June 17, 1868, Chief Engineer N. M. Lloyd made a detailed report covering the two routes, one for a railroad to Russellville by way of Calhoun, which would cost \$1,059,554, and another by way of Livermore that would cost \$979,872.

The Calhoun route was for a distance of 47.36 miles, the Livermore route, 41.81 miles. On Sept. 8, the directors accepted the Livermore route and by November, a sufficient amount of stock had been sold to insure the completion of the road to Greenville.

People along the route became more interested now and bought more stock. On Feb. 27, 1869, Logan county voted \$500,000 for the road and other friends added another \$100 000. By the last of April, that year, \$1,425,485 had been subscribed.

#### Grading Started

On the .third day of May, 1869, grading was started on the Livermore route. That was a momentous day, and Mrs. W. A. Hickman, turned the first shovel of dirt. During the summer and fall of that year, construction went steadily on and in April, 1870. James Weir, who was president of the directory having charge of construction, went East and purchased iron, some engines and rolling stock. Track laying started in July of that year.

The group of men serving under Weir watched progress and funds alike. They included A. L. Ashby, secretary and collector; W. B. Tyler, treasurer, S. M. Wing, C. Riley, Ben Bransford, S. D. Kennady, F. L. Hall, W. A. Hickman and Clinton Griffith.

Probably the most momentous event in the history of the road was the arrival of "Jo Daviess," the first iron horse to be used on the road. It came from the Baldwin Iron Works,

Philadelphia, where President Weir had purchased it, and arrived on a boat at the Owensboro wharf on July 14, 1870.

That was a gala day in the history of the town. Weighing 49,000 pounds (locomotives now weigh 700,000 lbs.) it was built at a cost of \$11,325. The engine was the focal point of interest in this section and a large assembly of citizens gathered at the wharf to welcome the friendly stranger. Other equipment arrived on the same day. Work continued on the road and in the fall, on Oct. 5, 1870, the directors decided the road should go south of Green river by way of South Carrollton.

### First Passenger Coach

The next red letter day in the history of the road was on Feb. 15, 1871, when a fine passenger coach – only one – arrived at the Owensboro wharf. It was then that the populace knew that any day now the road would be in operation, at least part of the way. It was!

On March 2 of that year, the road was opened for 14 miles and an excursion was given carrying the passengers 14 miles south of Owensboro and return. A Mr. Ashburn was the engineer.

Speed of track laying had by this time picked up, and workmen were laying rails at the rate of half mile a day. A month later the track was completed as far as Livermore. Several more passenger coaches had arrived and on April 14 an excursion of 600 men and women was made to Livermore. This constituted the really formal opening of the railroad for business to that point. The excursionists took their lunch and made a picnic out of the trip. There was not an accident to mar the day.

Stations were then named. Lewis station (now Utica) was named after R. M. Lewis, who gave the right of way and ground for the first station. The first stationmaster there was a man by the name of Murray. A man of culture, he was described as "rather grouchy" with people, especially those who carried baggage. He couldn't understand why persons traveling on a passenger train should carry much baggage. He was a man of mystery. No one knew from whence he came, but he was a good stationmaster.

### Train Stopped Anywhere

A new road needed business to pay off bonds, and the train at that time would stop much as does the modern day bus, anywhere along the route that a passenger would care to get on or off. All one had to do was stand near the track.

With the coming of a real railroad station at Lewis station, it was not long until that spot became a mecca for the residents of that vicinity. Mr. Lewis, a wealthy farmer who donated the acre of ground for the railroad station lived nearby.

Born in Nelson county, Mr. Lewis came to Daviess county as a young man and married Miss Eliza McKay, only daughter of George and Angelina McKay, some of the earliest settlers of Yellow Banks. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis first settled on a farm that later became Lewis station. Later he sold that land and bought a farm at Sutherland, where he resided many years. A well known farmer, he also brought to this county the first and only breed of the famous Corbeau horses. Membrino Corbeau, the first of his line, was a large, spirited bay stallion, a fast pacer, in fact one of the fastest on the track. Mr. Lewis raised and trained many of his sons and daughters who proved to be very valuable in the racing world.

### Hid Horse From Soldiers

Another of his famous horses was Corbeau Chief, better Known as Black Corbeau. A beautiful, model stallion, black as a raven, the horse was not only a famous trotter, but equally as well-known among horsemen as a saddle and harness horse and a superb show horse. He was bred to mares from distant states. Mr. Lewis parted with him only a short while before his death.

An interesting episode in the life of Mr. Lewis occurred during the War Between the States. At that time Membrino Corbeau was a young horse, highly desirable by the Horse Guards of the army. For quite a while Mr. Lewis kept him hid away, but finally came a day when he learned Union soldiers were coming after the horse. Night came, a very dark night. Mr. Lewis locked one end of a log chain around the horse's neck, the other around a huge tree. Then he himself lay down in the hall of his home with his gun by his side, having sworn to shoot the first man who dared disturb the valuable horse. Lewis was deaf, so his wife kept watch by her husband's side. Midnight came, then the sound of thundering hoofs. She awakened her husband. The men went to the barn, opened the doors, and out ran the frightened horses, running, jumping and neighing. Membrino Carbeau never moved, and in the pitch black night, the soldiers failed to see him. He didn't even neigh an answer to his companions. It was as though the horse knew his safety, depended on his silence. The stallion was safe that night, but days later the soldiers returned, look the horse, rode him over into Indiana. They rode him too hard, then water-founded him and he was ruined. They turned him loose. Mr. Lewis hearing where he was, went after him and brought him home. He was useless as a stallion and show horse, but Lewis kept Carbeau until he died, blind, at the age of 24. He buried him on a green slope in the orchard of his home, "Rose Hill," which is now the home of Mrs. Cora Lucius.

#### Temperance Worker

A great temperance worker, Lewis was devoutly religious and his home was always open to preachers of all denominations. He was charitable and never turned a deaf ear to anyone in need. He went through life handicapped with deafness which followed an illness of typhoid fever which he contracted shortly after his marriage.

Ute or Utica, McKay, sometimes referred to as Uriah McKay, built the first house in Utica shortly after 1871, and lived there. A few months later a post office was established and McKay became the first postmaster. A popular man, he served the public well for four years.

Some confusion developed about that time. Lewis station, so-called because of its being a railroad station, contested for first honors with Utica, the name populace gave to the little community which had in the meanwhile added another building, a grocery store, conducted by James Thornton. For many years, and within the memory of many persons now living, the name Lewis station prevailed. However, eventually it gave way to Utica, in honor of the first postmaster, and Utica it remains today, Lewis station being forgotten except to those who have passed the half-century mark.

Thornton later sold his grocery store, the first to the section, to Joseph Birkhead, who carried on business for a number of years and then sold out to J. W. Lloyd. In the spring of 1882 a Mr. Allen opened up a general store.

The first wagon maker in Utica was James Fairfax. Later Jephtha Williams made the community's wagons. The first blacksmith was John McLary, who had a shop in connection with the Fairfax wagon shop.

Thomas May joined the little colony and became the first shoemaker.

Henry Haley, grandfather of Bert Haley, of Utica, and Mrs. T. L. Tanner and W. D. Haley of Owensboro, built the town's first grist and saw mill. Haley, who was born in 1828, a son of

Spencer and Nancy Weatherfoot Haley, of Virginia, came to McLean county and in 1850 moved to Daviess county. A year later ne was married to Miss Mary L. Talbott, daughter of James and Elizabeth Stone Talbott, a prominent family. After the wedding he bought a farm in Murray precinct, where lie lived for two years, then purchased another farm near Utica, part of which is now owned by a daughter Mrs. W. B. McCormick and Mr. McCormick, and Mrs. Kate Haley.

Haley was justice of peace for four years, and farmed extensively, in addition to operating the mill. He took much interest in the welfare of his community and was recognized as one of the foremost men of Murray precinct.

He came to an untimely death though, at the age of 47. It occurred about 7 o'clock, according to Mrs. McCormick, only living daughter of Haley. "Mother and we children were eating our supper. Father and my oldest brother, James, were at the mill. He had sent the other boys down to the house, with word for us to go ahead with supper, that he would be down later. Mother, shortly before, had had a dream that the mill would blow up and had pleaded with father to give it up. He had promised her he would operate it only until spring and then would dispose of it.

It was while we were eating. Suddenly the whole country-side shook. There was a terrific explosion. Mother jumped up – we all did. Horror and anguish were written all over her face as she cried: 'It's the mill. It's the mill,' and started running out the door in the direction of the mill. My brothers. of course, outran her, and finding what they did, hurried back and met her, taking her back to the house. They told us later the boiler had exploded and that every thing had been blown to bits. My father was killed instantly. My brother lived only a few hours. He was under part of the boiler when my brothers reached him. He tried vainly to tell us what had occurred, but was hurt too badly to talk."

Mrs. McCormick and her younger brother, Pete D. Haley, are the only living children of Henry Haley, who had eleven sons and daughters.

#### MURRAY PRECINCT IN THE HEYDAY OF THE O. AND N. RAILROAD



Left: The oldest home in Utica is shown above. Erected about 100 years ago, by James Thornton, it was the second house built in Utica. Although it has been remodeled, part of the residence is still the original Thornton house. Thornton sold it to Joe Birkhead, an uncle of W. T. Birkhead, who conducted a store there. Birkhead later sold it to J. W. Lloyd, who continued to carry on the business. The Raymond Martin family now occupies the house. Right: The home pictured above, one of the older residences of Utica, was built around 1887 by Ferdinand O'Flynn, father Rex O Flynn, from lumber that came from the old Oak Grove Baptist church that was, destroyed in a cyclone in 1886. The house stands today, just as Mr. O'Flynn built it, the only change being a new roof. It is now owned by Mrs. Louella Jennings, Owensboro, who taught in the Utica school a number of years ago.





Left: R. M. "Bob" Lewis, after whom Lewis station was named, was a prominent resident of the Murray precinct. A breeder of fine horses, he was very religious and many nights drove miles through hub deep mud to a "protracted meeting." Center: Mrs. W. T. Birkhead, above, is shown at her home in Utica with a "coverlid," pioneer term for the modern bedspread, that's more than 100 years old. With not a break in the yarn, it was hand-woven by a Mrs. Johnson, ancestor of Mrs. Birkhead's mother. The colors in the spread show no indication of fading. Sumac berries were used to dye the black yarn and analine dye for the red. The yarn was spun in the Johnson home after the wool had been carded. After the dyeing process, the yarns were woven on a hand loom by the pioneer Mrs. Johnson. Right: Mrs. Eliza McKay Lewis, wife of R. M. Lewis, was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George McKay, one of the first families of Yellow Banks (early Owensboro). The Lewis family has continued to the seventh generation, and many descendants live here.



In the heyday of the O. & N. railroad – the first passenger line in Daviess County – which was built through Murray precinct, a passenger train such as the one shown above, operated over the route. In later years a passenger coach on the end of a freight train carried the travelers. The small engine is quite a contrast to the large ones now in use on the road which carry only freight. Passenger service was entirely dispensed with in February, 1941. Although agitation for a railroad from Owensboro to Calhoun was first started in 1848, it was not until 1866, when the Owensboro Monitor began a campaign for a line to McLean and Muhlenberg counties as a means of building Owensboro, that the proposal met with general support. Grading of the right-of-way actually started on May 3, 1869, and construction began the following fall. In 1870 the first locomotive, "Jo Daviess," arrived by boat from Philadelphia and on March 2, 1871, the first excursion was given to a point 14 miles south of Owensboro, the road having been completed that far. James Weir was president of the directory that had charge of the building of the road.



Left: Another of the first houses built in Utica was the old Magruder shown above. It was built around 1860. Who first occupied it is not known, but in 1883 Dr. F. M. McGruder bought it and moved there with his family from Bethabara. Upon the doctor's death in 1907, the house was bought by Mr. and Mrs. P. C. Martin, who are shown with their children, Ben, riding the horse, and Mansfield. With the family, was Miss Mamie Cosby, now Mrs. Raymer Curtis, of Lexington. Around 1910, the late James Yeiser purchased it, and shortly thereafter had it torn down. Mr. and Mrs. Martin now reside on one of their several farms on the Leitchfield road near Philpot. Right: Dr. F. M. Magruder and his wife, Nannie Mobberly Magruder, are pictured above. Dr. Magruder, a practicing physician in Daviess county, moved to Utica in 1883 and practiced there until his death in 1907. Mrs. Magruder died at the age of 44, in 1890. The doctor was especially noted for the treatment of typhoid fever and was called far and wide to treat patients ill of that malady. A son and two daughters of the Magruders still reside in this section. They are O. N. Magruder, president of the Owensboro Federal Savings and Loan association, and Mrs. Nora Haley and Mrs. Lula Haley, Utica. Another daughter, Mrs. Mamie Kelley, resides in Louisville.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 14 February 1943, p.1B:**

**Utica Community Once Was Scene Of Internecine Strife  
War Between The States Engagement Was Fought In Old Murray Precinct**

**Battle of Sutherland's Hill Only Clash Between  
Union, Confederate Soldiers in Daviess County**

**By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer**

(This is the third in a series of articles on historic Murray Precinct, the section of Daviess county surrounding Utica.)

Not only did Murray precinct, the Utica community, provide Daviess county with its first passenger railroad, but the section was the scene of the only battle that occurred in the county during the War Between the States.

Known as the Battle of Sutherland's Hill, it took place on the rolling slope that now extends from the Livermore road to the home of Dr. C. L. Medley and Mrs. Medley, at Sutherland.

The Battle of Sutherland's Hill, fought on Sept. 20, 1862, really started the previous day in Owensboro. The Union soldiers under Col. Gabriel Netter were stationed at Camp Silas F. Miller, located at a point called Paradise Gardens, now bounded by Henning avenue, Main street, Dublin Lane and the Ohio river in Owensboro. Col. Netter, a Frenchman and native of Ohio, had arrived at Camp Miller from Hartford some time previous to take charge of the Union soldiers.

On Friday morning, Sept. 19, 1862, a Confederate regiment in three detachments, under the command of Lieutenant-Col. Robert M. Martin, of Muhlenberg county, converged on Owensboro. One detachment was commanded by Major Joseph S. Scobee, a presiding elder of the Methodist church. Major Scobee was well known throughout this entire section and the story is told that when he marched into Owensboro, a pious Methodist woman, recognizing him, cried out, "Thank God, my Savior has come." About 8 o'clock on that Friday morning, Major Scobee sent a flag of truce under Capt. H. Clay Meriweather, to Col. Netter at Camp Miller, and demanded his

unconditional surrender. The Union leader's reply was, "Never till the last man of us lies low in the dust." A shout arose from his men and they marched to meet the Confederates. Col. Netter was killed as he climbed a fence nearby.

When Capt. Meriweather had been sent to bear his superior's message, Major Scobee withdrew his men to Panther Creek, south of Owensboro, The Union soldiers followed and a running battle started on Panther Creek and was concluded on Sutherland's Hill, where the Confederates made a stand. They were defeated, after a heroic fight. The killed and wounded on both sides numbered about 80. Some of the wounded were taken to a cabin on Sutherland Hill, where they were treated. That cabin is still standing on the Medley farm.

### Stave Factory Built

On Panther Creek, near where the two armies met, there was located in 1875; a stave factory. It was built by Messrs. Pettit and J. A. Munday. Five years later, during the winter of 1880-81 a lumber and planing mill was erected nearby by Levi W. Marble and Mr. Munday. Twenty-five to 50 persons were employed, depending on the season. In the planing mill employes ranged from 25 to 100. The company manufactured staves, shipping by barge to Pittsburgh, Pa., as high as 2,000,000 annually. Dressed lumber was shipped to Louisville, Jeffersonville and even to Rock Island, Ill.

Another early community, just beyond this point was Crow-Hickman, or Crow's station, now Browns Valley. So called because of Dr. W. A. Hickman, father of Mayor J. H. Hickman, who had established a sanitorium at the springs found there, and Joshua Crow, prominent farmer of that vicinity.

Crow represented the county In the legislature several times, was trustee of the county several years and served as high sheriff and police magistrate in Owensboro, holding the latter office at the time of his death in 1866.

Southwest of Crow-Hickman was Newville, now called Maxwell, a thriving little community laid out in 1867 by James Robison and son Gordon, who erected the first log house which was used as a store and dwelling combined by J. S. H. Kigel. A house and shoe shop was erected and occupied by William Hunter, the first shoemaker there. There was a blacksmith, Joseph Brown, who was followed by William Smith and Riley Sumner.

The first school house in Newville was conducted by J. H. Shackelford, who tried to establish a permanent educational institution. He taught for about a year, then sold out and left. He was a Baptist minister, and it is presumed went back to preaching, the gospel. Dr. J. B. Cox was the first physician. Dr. Wm. Barnhill followed later In 1882.

In 1877 an attempt was made to incorporate the village, but this was impossible, since it lay in three counties, Daviess, McLean and Ohio.

### Mercantile Business

J. H. Davis, prominent resident, established a mercantile business in 1867. It passed from merchant to merchant until in 1895 W. G. Hayden established a large general merchandise store there, operating it until 1920. At that time the little town was the trading center for territory extending 15 miles away in several directions.

Shortly after 1890 a post office was established In Newville, and the government changed the name to Maxwell, there being another post office named Newville. Since that time the little town has been known as Maxwell.



Above is an old picture of Swindler's store, the first business establishment of Riley station. It was built in 1870. The woman wearing the black dress was Mrs. Jonathan Tanner, mother of Attorney L. P. Tanner. The man at the extreme right was James H. Davis, the depot agent.



Left: Aunt Sallie Coke, daughter of the Livia pioneers, Stephen and Scythia Coke, is shown above looking at a gun that was used by ancestors in the War of 1812. Aunt Sallie, 83, makes her home with a niece, Mrs. C. W. Tanner, in Owensboro. Right: Above are shown the two oldest homes of Livia. Top is pictured the old Coke home and, bottom, the Riley home. The former was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Coke, and the latter that of Higdon Riley, for whom the railroad station was named.



Left: Riley station, on the O. & N. railroad, was so named because Higdon Riley, one of the first settlers, gave the ground for the station. Later the name was changed to Livia, in honor of Miss Olivia Hansford, now Mrs. Tom Bell, who resides in Memphis, Tenn. The station and a group of passengers awaiting the train are shown above. Right: Above is shown the old Livia mill. Owned and operated by Thornton S. Coke, it served the community many years. Staves also were made there. Lumber already cut is shown in the foreground and to the right of the building. Immediately in front is a bell for use in emergency.



Left: In the years when Riley station, or Livia, was the trading center for a large area, a tobacco factory was operated by Thornton S. Coke. The building shown above long since was abandoned as a factory. It is now used as a stock barn by Baxter Coke. Right: The first school of Livia is shown above. One of the first teachers was Miss Mary Hansford, sister of the beautiful Olivia. The early log benches in later years were replaced by more modern seats. Children of early families in that section attended Livia. school.

West of Utica, the Tanner family played a prominent part in the early days, and the pioneer Cal Tanner was probably the first resident of the community that later became Riley station and still later Livia, named after Olivia Hansford, daughter of Dryden Hansford, and probably the most beautiful girl in that entire section.

Cal Tanner came to Daviess county in the early 1800's and farmed extensively on a large farm near the Livermore road beyond Utica. Higdon Riley came later, and he too had a large farm. He built a large tobacco factory on the Livermore road just across the road from the present H. R. Johnson farm. The burning of this factory about 70 years ago created much excitement in that section. The fire occurred at night and was visible for miles.

It was about that time, or possibly earlier, that another tragedy occurred in that vicinity. Two young men who resided in what is known as the old Mitt Tanner home, several miles beyond where the old Antioch church was located, and which house is now on the H. R. Johnson farm,

killed the sexton at Antioch church, and they themselves left for parts unknown. The story varies, one version being that the two men accompanied two girls to Antioch church, horseback. In those days women wore riding skirts, a long flowing black or blue calico skirt that was buttoned over the wearing apparel of the woman rider. When she dismounted the skirt was unbuttoned and removed, leaving her dress fresh and clean. The two girls, according to the story, had placed their riding skirts behind a door, at Antioch church, and, after services, some dispute arose between the men and the church sexton, a Mr. Wiggins, over the skirts. A fight ensued, and the sexton was killed. The two men left the country and were not heard from again.

Many years later, a resident of that community is supposed to have met one of the men in Texas, where he was then a prominent and successful rancher. The other version of the story is that Mr. Wiggins was killed accidentally, by the two men, who had a feud with another family, and mistook Mr. Wiggins for a member of that family. When they found out the next day they had killed the wrong man, they left for parts unknown, never again returning to Daviess county, and supposedly were never heard from.

Another early settler of Riley station was Stephen Coke, who came to Daviess county in 1863, coming to Owensboro from Nelson county with his family. A daughter, Miss Sallie Coke, is still living, as are two sons, J. W. and T. S. Coke. Among the grandchildren are Mrs. H. R. Johnson and Baxter Coke, who still reside at Livia; Mrs. H. W. Nall, Mrs. C. W. Tanner, Mrs. Mary Collins, Owensboro; Herbert Pate, Island; Mrs. Vara Hunt, Glendale; Mrs. Eunice Coke and Mrs. Lucie. Taylor, Island, and Mrs. Bevvie Harle Coke Robard, Louisville.

When the O. & N. railroad sought right of way through that community, Mr. Riley gave the ground for the station, hence the name Riley station for the little town. Later, when a post office was established the name was changed and the beautiful daughter of the Hansford family was honored and the town called "Livia," short for Olivia. Olivia Hansford, who later became Mrs. Tom Bell, is still living. Now a resident of Memphis, Tenn., she visited the little village, her name sake, two years ago.

Livia, during its early days, was an active town, with its tobacco factory, its several stores, school, blacksmith shop and other businesses. In recent years automobiles and good roads have taken the shoppers of that community elsewhere. But now with gasoline and tire rationing, Olivia Hansford's little town may once again come into its own.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 21 February 1943, pp.1B & 2B:**

**Early Land Grant Started Ancestor of  
Daviess Pioneer To New World:**

**Queen Catherine, Wife of Henry VIII, Gave James Webb,  
Antecedent of Mrs. James Howard, Tract In Virginia**

**By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer**

(This is the last in a series of articles on historic Murray precinct, the section of Daviess county surrounding Utica.)

A descendant of a family that came to America in 1544 when Queen Catherine Parr, of England, gave it a tract of land in Virginia, was among the first and most important settlers of the Murray precinct in Daviess county.

It was in the Sixteenth century, while Queen Catherine's famous husband, Henry VIII, was away at the siege of Boulogne that the queen, under whom a regency was established during the king's absence, issued a grant for land to a beloved subject, James Webb, a merchant of Wales. James came to America and established residence on the Isle of Wight, Virginia.

Moving West with the frontier, descendants of the original James Webb settled in North Carolina. There was born to one of the Webb families, a daughter, Rachel who, when she grew up to be a beautiful young woman, married Mark Howard, of the famous Howards of Virginia. Rachel was a talented girl, and was well educated in medicine, which stood her in good stead when the family chose its next home.

Mark Howard had a body servant, Squire, a pure African, of whom he was very proud. Squire's father and mother had been captured in Africa by slave traders and brought to North Carolina, where their son later was acquired by Mark. Early one day in 1804, Mark Howard decided to take Squire and go in search of a new home. He left behind his wife and their small children, who were to await his return. Mark and Squire left North Carolina on foot. They walked many moons, in the vernacular of the Indians that infested the country through which they, traveled, and finally reached Green river near Beaver Dam where Mark found land that apparently was just what he wanted. He bought a farm, then started back to North Carolina, in the same way he had come here – on foot with Squire following. There they got ready the covered wagons and moved the family which included the wife, Rachel, and six children, to Kentucky.

In this state eight more children were born. Mark and Rachel lived on Green river only a short while, The couple bought land at a point that is now on the Harmon's ferry road, near Green Brier.

### Establish Home

There Mark and Rachel Howard established the Howard home that was one of the landmarks of the country before it was torn down in recent years. The Howards were not long in Kentucky before Rachel's knowledge of medicine and the ailments of the human body was put to good use. and she became a famous pioneer physician in this area, leaving her own home at all hours of the day and night to ride horse-back through the wolf-infested forests to minister to the sick. At her side, ran her body servant, a faithful negro. Rachel Howard, on her big bay horse, and her negro were a familiar sight in the backwoods of early Ohio and Daviess county.

Of the fourteen children of Mark and Rachel Howard, all grew to manhood and womanhood, married and lived within a radius of six miles of Green Brier church. All were staunch Baptists and a writer once referred to the Howard men as "men of the strictest integrity, plain in manners and they acted candidly. They were remarkable for their firmness of character and their every act was governed by their fixed principles. They were Godfearing men, kind, sympathetic and above all, most charitable." Of the fourteen children, James Webb Howard was probably the best known. He lived on the farm on which his father settled, until his death to 1881. James was married to Mary Ann, daughter of Samuel and Sallie Johnson, known with affection in later years as Aunt Polly. One of James' granddaughters, Mrs. J. W, Tompkins, 1729 Frederica street, was named after her grandmother. She had been christened Mary Ann, but was' called Polly until she reached young womanhood.

## Ten Children

James and Mary Ann had ten children, all of whom are dead, but many of their grandchildren are still living, including in addition to Mrs. Tompkins, an eminent descendant, David Thomasson, who was with Ambassador Grew in Japan when that country declared war on the United States. Mr. Thomasson was interned with Ambassador Grew and returned to the States with him on the Liner Gripsholm. Because of his diplomatic ability, he was immediately sent to the U. S. embassy in Mexico where he is now serving. The others are Miss Annie Howard, Henderson resident, many years a prominent teacher; Nester Howard, Owensboro; Mrs. A. A. Westerfield, Mrs. Rex O'Flynn, Mrs. Bert Haley, all of Daviess county; Blanchard Howard, Henderson; T. L. Tanner and Angus Tanner, Owensboro; Mrs. Robert Benton, Calhoun road; Mrs. George Brooks, Owensboro, and Charles Howard, Utica. One of James' sons, Albert G., married Alice Lee Blanchard, of the Lee family, of Virginia, made famous by Robert E. Lee.

Another one of Mark Howard's sons, Samuel D. Howard, who later married Sarah Ann Felix, had no children of his own, but the couple reared 13 who had been left father less. Sam and Hugh Smith, of Owensboro, are among the grandchildren of one of the 13.

Many ancestors of present prominent Owensboro and Daviess county families resided in Murray precinct. Among them were George Bailey who lived on the Green river road, James H. Bennett, who lived at Green Brier, Samuel Wilson Bennett, who lived near Livermore, Orville C. Brown, James M. Blandford, Larkin Burnett, John T. Carrico, Bryant T. Cundiff who was a Baptist, preacher, Alexander A. Davis, who was on the building committee of the Pleasant Ridge Methodist church which, like the Pleasant Ridge Cumberland Presbyterian was built on the Calhoun road, southwest of Owensboro, near a little village called Pleasant Ridge. This Pleasant Ridge later gave way to the larger Pleasant Ridge on the Ohio-Daviess county line, on the southeast side of Murray precinct.

There were also Amos Davis, a physician; Dudley Ford, who was a prisoner of war in the War Between the States; Reuben Gill, father of the late Jed Gill, and William T. Hewlett, large land owner.

Another prominent pioneer was Miner Hall, whose grandfather came to Kentucky in 1798 from Virginia. One of his sons, C. L. Hall, conducted a general merchandise store at Crow-Hickman, later called Brown's Valley, for more than 30 years. C. L. Hall, a grandson of Miner Hall, is a member of the Owensboro police department. Another grandson, Bob Hall, is in the United States Army and prior to that was prominently identified with the Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Among others were: Henry J. Hunter, Robert Jackson, William H. Johnson, Samuel B. Lashbrook, who has many descendants here; Almarian, William, Junius and Richard May, ancestors of the May families; Alexis McAtee, Charles Mobberly, Eugene O'Flynn, grandfather of Rex O'Flynn; Charles A. Owen, Philander Read, grandfather of Misses May and Pearl Read, and who was instrumental in establishing the lower ward school in Owensboro; James and John Russell, George W. Talbott, grandfather of Mrs. O. L. Fowler; Josiah Trunnell, who was born in 1826 and who has a daughter-in-law, Mrs. John Trunnell, still living; John H. Wilhite, Jephtha Williams, Jourdan G Wells, who lived near Green Brier church and Daniel E. Yeiser who was a prominent Baptist pastor.

Born in 1825 in Todd county. Ky. Yeiser came to Daviess county to farm with an uncle, Richard Walker, Yelvington, in 1847. At that time, his earthly possessions included his clothes, 50 cents and a horse. The next year, he worked with another uncle, John Roberts, and the following year 1849, married Helen K. Newton. The couple moved to Murray precinct, and there through



hard work and perseverance accumulated several hundred acres of good land. In 1864, at the close of the year they built a new home on their farm, and that house is still standing, being in an excellent state of preservation.

### Ordained to Preach

Yeiser's father was an Episcopalian and his mother a Methodist, but he himself joined the Baptist church in 1858. Two years later he was ordained to preach and on the same day baptized five converts. He was most successful as a minister and, pastored many of the early Baptist churches in Daviess, Ohio and Hancock counties. Three of his children, M. D. Yeiser, Red Hill, W. C. Yeiser, of Utica. and M. N. Yeiser, of Evansville, are still living.

Another of the early residents of Murray precinct, was Horatio Ashby, who settled on a farm near the Livermore road, about two and a half miles west of Utica. The farm is now owned by Will Howard. Mr. and Mrs. Ashby were the parents of four children, Mr. Ashby coming here from Virginia, being a member of a prominent family. He married a Miss Field relatives of Ben Field. Great grandchildren include Mrs. John D. Howard, Mrs. John Frank, Mrs. E. R. Bennett, Mrs. Ella Benton, William and John Ashby, Mrs. Tim Bennett, Mrs. Wade Riley, Mrs. Gladys Rummage and Raymond and Robert Martin.

Many papers, letters and records of historical interest, as well as value, preserved by Horatio and one of his sons, Stephen, are now in the possession of Mrs. Howard.

One particular piece of paper was a note for \$45.50 given by the elder Ashby to John Fields, guardian for the heirs of the William McFarland estate. The note was for the hire for one year of a negro girl.

In the note Ashby not only promised to pay the \$45.50 at the end of the year but also to provide well for the girl, see that taxes were paid on her, and give her a blanket and a "hat of a boy."

### Old Papers

Among the Ashby papers are many bills of sale of tobacco, indicating that the prices ranged from 2 to 9 cents a pound. The tobacco was sold in New Orleans, by agents who took the weed there by barge, and a year's supply of sugar, coffee, cotton and the like purchased and returned to Ashby, together with an itemized statement of the various grades of tobacco, as well as of the various purchases for the Ashby household.

One bill, dated, 1843 showed that with the money obtained for the tobacco, the Ashby agents purchased in New Orleans, 10 pounds of cotton, for \$1.00; 27 pounds of coffee, at 14 cents a pound, and 147 pounds of sugar at 6 1-4 cents a pound.

A tax receipt dated 1845 and signed by E. L. White, deputy clerk, indicated Ashby's taxes for the year were \$540. The receipt was written on a small piece of paper – there being no printed forms at that time. Faded from age, the writing was still legible.

A muster roll of old Company A, of the first regiment of Kentucky, in the collection of Mrs. Howard, contains the names of a number of men of prominent families including W. O. Jones, J. H. Bozarth, Cornelius Mosely, S. D. Lashbrook and J. H. Westerfield, W. J. Taylor was captain of the company. Company A was often referred to as the "Orphan Brigade" because it was long without a commanding officer after its captain was killed.

A book containing company accounts including purchases of the various members, is of interest. It shows that the soldiers outfitted themselves. For instance, J. H. Bozarth purchased

among other things a jacket for \$12; a shirt for \$3, a pair of pants for \$12, a pair of socks for \$1 and two pairs of drawers for \$6.

Captain W. T. Ellis made many purchases, and apparently went well dressed. A long list, under his name in the account book shows that his purchases included a pair of pants for \$9, another for \$12, a jacket for \$12, a cap for \$2, another pair of pants for \$12, another jacket for \$14, another pair of pants for \$14, several shirts, a blanket, shoes, saber belt other things.

#### HANSFORD SCHOOL WAS BUILT IN EARLY 1800's



The old Hansford school and some of its pupils are shown above. The school was erected during the early 1800's, the above photo having been made in 1880 and the building was old at that time. It was built on the farm of Hammond Hansford, three miles west of Utica. The pupils shown are, first row, left to right – Pansy Roberts, Mary Ashby, now Mrs. E. R. Bennett, Annie Sosh, now Mrs. Allen Hale, Miranda Whittaker, unidentified, Henrietta Whitaker, the late Mrs. Sam McGruder, Annie Collins, Florence Clayton, Lena Hardwick, T. L. Tanner, Wilson Collins, Alex Ashby, Arthur Gore and Homer Sosh. Second row – Ethel Ashby, Della Higgs, Zilla Jarnigan, Burnett Higgs, Lida Gore, the late Mrs. Will Davis, Clayton Reynolds, the teacher, Hettie Ashby, now Mrs. Wade Riley; Clemmie Hoover, Mary Berry, Clyde Whittaker and Mary Tanner. Third row – John Hansford, Clinton Higgs, Charles Collins, Gus Hardwick, Allie Ashby, now Mrs. J. D. Howard; Fannie Ashby, now Mrs. John Frank; Lee Miller, Lillie Sosh, Mary Hansford, now Mrs. Albert Fjiset, of Denver, Colo.; Alda Jarnigan, and a Greenlee girl. Top row – Herman Ashby, unidentified; William Ashby, Ernest Berry, Henry Berry, Charles Whittaker, Lonnie Collins and a Greenlee boy.



Left: The home of Wilson Underwood, Daviess county pioneer, is still standing on the Livermore road beyond Livia, and still is in the Underwood family. It is more than 100

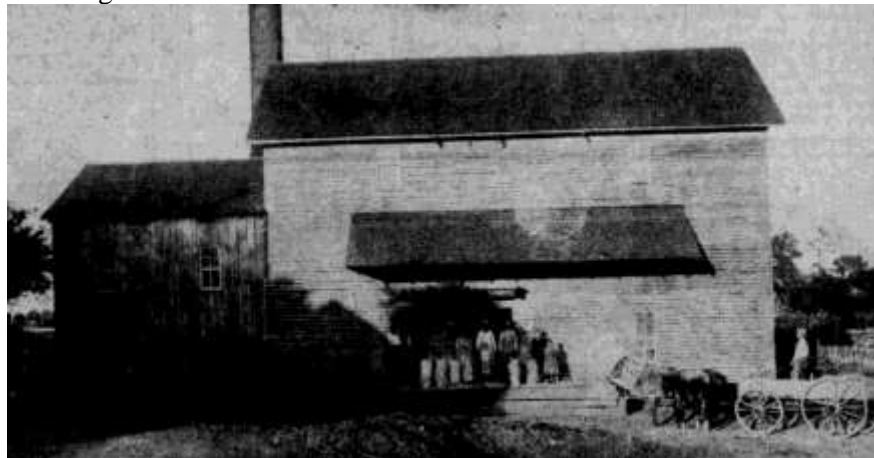
years old. Right: Near the Underwood home, on the opposite side of the road, is the home of Jonathan Tanner, father of L. P. Tanner, of Calhoun. It, too, is one of the county's eldest residences.



Left: The old home of Dr. G. A. Hardwick, prominent physician, is shown above. Built by the doctor on the Livermore road near Livia, it is now the home of the Baxter Coke family. Right: The one beautiful Mitt Tanner homestead is shown above. It is now owned by Howard Johnson, Livia merchant. A large veranda was blown down by a storm, which changes the appearance of the old house.



A picture made the day d Buck Creek church, on the Livermore road, was dedicated in 1895, is shown above. Insert, James Webb Howard, pioneer of Murray precinct of the Green Brier neighborhood.



The Wilhite & Leet grist mill, Utica, which replaced the grist and saw mill of Henry Haley that was destroyed by the explosion of a boiler in 1877 is pictured above. J. H. Wilhite and Aaron Leet were the owners and it served people from Daviess, McLean and Ohio counties who could not reach Owensboro, Hartford or Calhoun, where the only other mills in this section were located.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro Messenger, 28 February 1943, p.5B:**

## Early Annals Of Masonville Precinct Tell Of First Settler And Record Last Killing Of Bear

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Stories of the arrival of the first settler and of the killing of the last bear in the vicinity are found in the early records of the Masonville precinct. The first settler in the Masonville precinct was a man named Wiley, his first name having been forgotten in the intervening years. He supposedly came to Daviess county in 1815, and settled on a farm that later passed into the hands of Kit Jackson.

The last bear was killed in the fall of 1833 by John Hazelrigg, an ancestor of the Hazelrigg families now living in this section. Hazelrigg was out in a corn field in the fall of 1833, when his dog treed an animal that turned out to be a bear. While the dog kept the quarry at bay, Hazelrigg ran home for his gun, came back and shot the bear.

Masonville precinct was the home of the richest man of Daviess county, Christopher Jackson, called Kit Jackson. Born on March 13, 1813, ten miles East of Hartford in what was then Nelson county. Jackson, a distant relative of "Old Hickory" Jackson, moved to Daviess county in 1827 and bought the land of the pioneer Wiley, South of Masonville. The Kit Jackson home is now owned by Allie Lashbrook. Some of Jackson's descendants still live in this community. An uncle of his, Hugh Crawford, was an old Indian fighter of Daniel Boone's time. He was captured while on a scouting trip with several others. One man escaped, to tell of the fate of his companions all of whom were burned at the stake.

### First School

The first school in Masonville precinct was known as the Tribbel school because it was built on the Tribbel farm and the first teacher was Jack Tribbel. Built in 1820, it was a log structure, located on a spot that is now occupied by the Bethabara church cemetery, near Habit. It was called a "blab" school, because everyone studied aloud, and the confusion and din was said to have been worse than blab."

The second teacher was "Cut-Nose' Jones, so called because there was a large scar across his nose. He was said to have been well educated and served for some time as an assessor.

The village of Masonville received its name from a Mr. Mason, who owned the land on which the village was built, it having been laid out by Judge George W. Triplett. It was not until 1857 that the post-office was established, with Henry F. Carpenter as the first postmaster. He served four years and was followed by John Lee. During the War Between the States, the postoffice was discontinued, to be reopened when peace came.

The earliest church in the precinct was Bethabara Baptist, which was constituted on October 5, 1825, in a log house built by the citizens of the neighborhood for a meeting house not far from where present Bethabara church now stands. It was from this church in 1849 that Macedonia Baptist church was started. The following year the Salem Methodist church was started with the Lashbrooks and the Hales supporting members. Sugar Grove Baptist church was started

in 1861, the Yewell, Noel and Dawson families being prominent charter members. The Christian church, in Masonville was organized in 1859.

Of more than passive interest in the early history of Bethabara church was the fact that the church at one time had a woman clerk. When it was organized most of its members were women. A few years later some trouble arose and the minister resigned. The clerk also moved away, and only two male members remained. The prospects for the future were gloomy – with no pastor, no clerk and no member willing to act as clerk. On the verge of dissolution, Polly Stout saying, "We cannot give up the ship" volunteered to serve as clerk and her proposition was accepted. Elder W. Downs was called as paster and the church weathered the crisis.

Masonville precinct was the home of many prominent families. Neighbors of John Hazelrigg, who killed the last bear, were Richardson Jones and his son Reuben Jones, whose daughter, Mrs. John Crady now resides in Habit. Other families of those early days were the Barnhills, Bristows, Bryants, Burtons, Squire A. Camp, who was a politician, and office holder and who was in the battle of Sutherland Hill in the War Between the State; other Camps, Henry Ellis, many of whose descendants now reside in this section; the Kite's, Thomas J. Howard of the Virginia Howards; the Kirks, Lacklins, Lashbrooks, Millers and Mobberlys.

Reminiscent of those early days is the old home of Captain Charles T. Noel, M. D. Located on the Hartford road, South of Owensboro, near Masonville, the home now is a mere shell of the former Noel mansion, when large kitchens and servant quarters in the rear were connected with the main structure by a large open porch. Born in Hancock county in 1819, where he studied medicine, Captain Noel later moved to the Masonville community. He raised Company K., Kentucky Confederate Cavalry, and was commissioned a captain. A brave officer, he was killed in a skirmish in Alabama on May 11, 1862. Among the grandchildren is Mrs. William Barron, of Owensboro. Capt. Noel was credited with organizing and building Sugar Grove church.

There were also the Taylor families John T., Joseph, Thomas R., William P. and Captain William J. Taylor, who was in the battle of Monterey, Mexico. While there he was detailed to escort a wagon train loaded with provisions. Enroute to their destination all were captured and the wagon train burned. The men were stripped of their coats and shoes and made to walk 900 miles to Mexico City. It was said they could have been tracked all the way by the trail of blood left by their feet. On their arrival they were thrown into an old prison where they were forced to sleep on stone floors without blankets. They later were sent to the mountains where they remained until after the war when they were able to return to the States. Capt. Taylor was a first lieutenant in Capt. Noel's company in the War Between the States, during which he was wounded five times and had a horse shot from under him.

Another of the early residents was Joseph N. Wollmon, an ardent Confederate,, who with a number of other Daviess countians during the War Between the States started South as Volunteer cavalrymen. They never got out of the state though, because of skirmishes and hardships. Most of the men were captured by Capt. Bridgewater's company of U. S. Cavalry. Mr. Wollmon and another escaped, and hid in the brushes. At night they made their way to a farmhouse, where, the next morning at breakfast Union soldiers came upon them. Wollmon hid in the chimney of a fireplace and thus escaped. Cold weather, set in and the following several nights he had to hide in corn shocks, and thus froze his feet He finally made his way to friends in Shelby county, but was unfit for any further military duty.

As ardent a Confederate as Wollmon was Adam R. Yeiser, ancestor of many of the present Yeiser families. He enlisted in the well known Company A. He was in the battle of Perryville, Ky., and Bentonville, N. C; in engagements with Morgan, also with Bragg's advance and retreat in

Kentucky. He was captured and spent one month in the Camp Chase prison in Ohio and 19 months in Douglas prison in Chicago.



Top, the old home of the Rev. Daniel E. Yeiser, built in the Red Hill community at the close of 1864, is as well preserved today as it was when the above picture was made many years ago. In the picture, left to right, are a son, M. D. Yeiser, Red Hill, who resides in the old home; a grandson, William Magruder, now of Lexington; Mrs. Yeiser with the family goat. Rev. Mr. Yeiser and his faithful horse, Waxey, which for many years carried him to churches throughout the county, and another grandson, Dan Yeiser, now in California. Three children are still living, M. D. Yeiser, Red Hill; W. C. Yeiser, Utica, and M. N. Yeiser, of Evansville. Center:

[middle] The Pursell home near Red Hill. Built 100 years ago, in 1843, by Larkin Field, it was purchased in 1878 by Lindsey Pursell. It is now owned by heirs and is the home of Lindsey's son, Robert Pursell. The immense stone chimneys were made from hand picked rocks and the weatherboards were hand - planed. A beautiful stairway in the center of the house has a two-story ceiling. The house stands today, just as it was built by Field, except that a log dining room and kitchen annex has been torn away and replaced with a modern addition. The interior of the house is finished in white pine throughout. In addition to Lindsey's son, Robert, a daughter, Mrs. Ida B. Bennett, Louisville, is still living.

Bottom, what remains of the old home of Capt. Charles T. Noel, M. D., on the Hartford road near Masonville, a Confederate captain and prominent Masonville resident. Captain Noel was killed in a skirmish in Alabama during the war. His five children are all dead, but a nephew of Mrs. Noel, Charles "Bunk" Kennady, inset, who was reared by Dr. Noel and Mrs. Noel, is still living in his own home, near the old Noel estate.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 7 March 1943, pp.5B & 8B:**

**Basset Burton Was First Settler Of  
Boston Precinct, Now Whitesville**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

When Basset Burton, the first settler of Boston precinct, later called the Whitesville community, came to this section in 1810, from near Harrodsburg, there were so few settlers where he decided to build his home, on what is now known as the Leitchfield road, that he brought help from Harrodsburg to raise his log cabin. Burton purchased a large amount of land on the Leitchfield road, nearly three miles west of what is now Whitesville. It was not until a year later, in the fall of 1811, that Burton and his wife, Polly Carter Burton, who like her husband had been born in Virginia, had any neighbors. John Ward and John Cooper, ancestors of the present Ward and Cooper families, joined the Burtons and built homes nearby.

Shortly thereafter, some one erected a store building near Burton's farm, and in 1822, Burton built a horse mill on his farm. People within a radius of 15 miles brought their corn and wheat to have the grain ground into meal and flour. With four horses hitched to the mill, it could convert a bushel of corn into meal within six minutes.

Three years later, because a number of families in the meantime had come to that community, and there were children that needed to be educated, a schoolhouse was erected on Burton's farm. The first school teacher was a well-educated Irishman by the name of William Maxwell, he was followed by James Jones.

Name 'Boston' Selected

Now with a store, a mill, a school house, a church, and several residences, the community gave promise of becoming a little town, and the name of Boston was selected. However, Burton died several years later in 1832, and his son, Horace Burton, took over the farm, operated the mill, and in general followed in his father's footsteps. When Horace died, years later, the farm passed on to his son, James Basset Burton.

Great grandchildren of Basset Burton still living include Miss Mary Lucy Burton, bookkeeper at the Owensboro-Daviess County hospital, Richard and James Basset Burton, Owensboro, and William Arthur Burton, of Texas.

Twelve years after Basset Burton's death, Robert Triplett, of Owensboro, formulated plans for a little village East of Boston, as more families were moving to that section. The first house was built by a physician, Dr. William Lee White and his cousin, Ben F. Ramsey. It was used as a store building and general merchandise business was carried on by the two men, White dividing his time between looking after the physical ailments of the people in that community, and their material wants. He also taught school in the building a short while. One after another, families came to that section. A wagon-maker, William Miller came to follow his trade.

### Blacksmith Arrives

Shortly thereafter came William Dillahay, a blacksmith and J. T. Kelley, a shoemaker. Naturally, the center of business changed from Boston, to the new village, first called "Cross Roads" but which later, in recognition of the popularity of the first resident, Dr. White, was changed to Whitesville.

Natural resources were many, among them being a small coal bank at Ford's Knob, about a half mile northeast of Whitesville. Dillahay would carry the coal for his blacksmith's forge from the coal bank, to his shop, in his leather apron.

In 1853, the first schoolhouse in Whitesville was erected by Isaac E. Day on land given by James Eddy. Eddy's property comprised two lots which included the land on which the present Whitesville Baptist church is located, and the lot adjoining on the east. A school house was erected thereon and Upton W. Hawkins taught a six-month school. He was followed by James Nall, Mason Haynes and George Baggott. After five or six years, the old building was found inadequate and the Templars of Honor, a lodge, removed it and substituted a new two-story building. The lower floor was used for a school building and the upper story for a lodge hall. A stock company was formed to operate the school. This building was used for many years, in fact until the Baptist church was erected on the adjoining lot.

### St. Mary of the Woods

In 1845 R. W. Barrett donated two acres of land for a Catholic church and the original structure of St. Mary of the Woods Catholic church was erected. In 1855, the Christian church was moved from Boston to Whitesville.

A tobacco house was built by Taylor White in Whitesville in 1854-55. In later years, it passed into the hands of James L. Stinnett and then P. H. Haffey. It had a capacity of 150,000 pounds. Stinnet later operated the tobacco house that had been built by M. D. Wells and operated by Neal Mattingly and J. C. Ashby before passing into Stinnett's hands.

George W. Mullins, father of Cicero Mullins, Griffith avenue, Owensboro, for many years operated a flour mill that had been built in 1868 by Jesse Haynes. The mill was capable of grinding 150 bushels each of wheat and corn in 10 hours. Coal with which to operate the machinery came from a coal vein nearby, the shaft being only 20 feet from the furnace.



Several disastrous fires have been suffered by Whitesville, the most destructive being the one that raged all day on May 8, 1911. The fire was discovered at 10 a.m. on that day, in the warehouse of the A. P. Brooks store. For lack of water and fire fighting equipment seven buildings burned – the Brooks store, the R. E. Knox drug store, the adjoining building belonging to A. D. Mattingly, two buildings belonging to James H. Wheatley, one belonging to Hilary Rhodes, an old log house belonging to the latter. From there it crossed the street and destroyed the Christian church building, the adjoining Berry Evans building, the town lockup, and Dr. W. L. Miller's undertaking establishment. All that remained of the Whitesville business district was the P. H. Haffey store, the D. F. Brooks & Son store, the old hotel and the Whitesville bank.



THE MAIN STREET OF WHITESVILLE looking west on Leitchfield road before fires destroyed the buildings shown above. It was made the year the telephone line to Whitesville was completed. The first building was the P. H. Haffey store, which was originally the A. P. and D. F. Brooks general merchandise store. Next was the original Stinnett hotel, the first hostelry in Whitesville, but which, when the photo was made, was the A. P. Brooks store, and beyond, the R. E. Knox drug store. Across the street, on the right, were the stores of Pat McBrady and J. H. Wheatley. Telephone linemen are shown putting finishing touches to the line. On the wagon is Rommie Brooks. On the left, is the road leading to Oklahoma. Inset, left, is Isaac Day, who built the first school house in Whitesville, in 1853, and right, Dr. Caleb Hale, who practiced medicine in Whitesville for many years.

Many families residing here are descendants of the Boston precinct pioneers. Richard C. Barrett, the first lawyer in Whitesville, who was admitted to the bar in 1868, was one of the ancestors of the Barrett families. There was also Samuel Bartlett, a farmer, Joseph F. Birkhead, a blacksmith and farmer, George Brooks, among whose grandchildren are Rommie and George Brooks and Mrs. W. R. Cook, Owensboro, Eula Brooks and Mrs. Nina Harrison of near Dermot and Mrs. C. E. Street, Whitesville; Dr. T. Crigler and Dr. Francis M. Daly, Rev. Joseph P. Ellis

and Luther Ellis, ancestors of the many Ellis families; T. C. Floyd, one-time postmaster and business man; Charles L. Haynes, Henry R. Head, James F. Hite, a druggist.

A. G. Howard, Milton E. Jones, Wm. H. Karn, W. R. Knox, Geo. W. Litsey, a blacksmith, T. H. Lloyd, James H. Hay, Dr. James W. McCarty, father of Arnold McCarty, Owensboro; Wm. L. Miller, James Milton, John Wesley Moseley, Geo. W. Neel, Mason C. Pate, Franklin P. Purcell, George W. and George S. Rhodes, George Stephens, James L. Stinnett, Wm. A. Stone and Walter Ward.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 14 March 1943, p.2A:**

**Old Indian Trail Guided The First Settlers  
Of The Knottsville Section In The 18th Century**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

An old Indian trail leading from Vincennes, Indiana, to what is now Hartford, in Ohio county, and passing through a section that in later years became the Knottsville precinct in Daviess county, was this county's first road. Nothing more than a trail, it nevertheless guided the early settlers, and resulted in Knottsville and several small villages being built in the early 1800's. Some of the early settlements have long since passed into oblivion, not even foundation stones remaining to mark them.

Few residents remember the little town of Goreham, nevertheless it once existed. Built a mile and a half east of where Knottsville was later erected, it at one time had a postoffice – the only postoffice in this section except the one in Yellow Banks. A town was staked off, some building was done and the community was named after a Mr. Gore.

A voting place, the only one in the area except Yellow Banks, also was established there. However, interest in the community later lagged, and Knottsville took over.

Knottsville was laid out in 1836 by William R. Griffith and James Millay. However, the first house had been erected in 1827 by Leonard Knott. For the first few years, it went by various names such as "Heart's Delight," "Grocery" and the "Blacksmith Shop," but when Mr. Griffith got to the legislature, he had it called Knottsville, in honor of Mr. Knott, and thus it has remained throughout the years. James Millay operated the first store. Knott himself operated a blacksmith shop. Other early settlers included B. J. McDaniel, William Higdon, L. T. Brown and Mrs. Mary Drury. The first public school was built in 1854 and the first school was taught by Powahatan Ellis. In its heyday, the little village, in addition to numerous residences, also had two general stores, a drug store, a shoe shop, a blacksmith shop, a wagon shop, two undertakers, a flour mill, a saw and grist mill and three tobacco factories.

Many Indians inhabited that section in the early years, and a large hill six miles east of Knottsville, now in Hancock county, was named Indian Hill because of the stone houses, or huts that had been erected there by the red men. The foundations of the huts were deep in the earth, and the hill, which was high, provided a view of the entire countryside.

The first settler of Knottsville precinct was Valentine Husk, who came from Virginia and settled in Yellow Banks in 1796. He stayed here only a short while, however, then went up the river to what is now Pup creek, so-called because in the early days it was a favorite place to drown unwanted puppies. For while he stayed on Pup creek, then in 1804 followed the Indian trail in land

and picked out a spot several miles from Yelvington. He was reportedly the first settler in that section.

Shortly thereafter came George, Raleigh, Charles and Benjamin Duncan, ancestors of the Duncan families who still live in the Maceo-Yelvington community. They came from Nelson county. James Adams came about the same time, and he, a little more daring than the others, followed the trail to a spot about four miles from Knottsville. The Smeathers and Bell families came shortly thereafter, and descendants of all are still residing in that community.

The first school in the country outside of Knottsville, was taught on Pup creek on land later owned by John Bell. The first religious service was held by a preacher named Craig, in the house of Benjamin Duncan in 1808. The first priest to visit the section was Father Durbin, who made the trip to this section from Union county on horseback once a month. He had many narrow escapes from wolf packs at night, and one time, his spirited horse was all that saved him, the horse fighting the wolves all night long, until daybreak.

The first brick-kiln was burned in 1825 by Thomas Purcell and the first burying ground was started in 1806 on the land of Charles Duncan north of Pup creek on the Yelvington-Knottsville road. The first person buried there was Raleigh Duncan, a son of Charles Duncan. This was said to have been the first death in the precinct.

All of the pioneers in the section made their own sugar and syrup from maple trees that were abundant on Pup creek. They even sold sugar, and one man named Thomas Montgomery paid for an entire farm from the sale of maple sugar. He was known as "Sugar Tom" Montgomery.

Wolves and wildcats were numerous in the area and residents of the section for many years paid taxes with wolf and wildcat scalps on which the county had placed a bounty. Buckskin dresses were the every-day attire of the women. Their Sunday bests were checked cotton dresses.

Camp meetings were held frequently in later years and the Bethlehem camping grounds became popular with the religiously inclined residents of the section. Ministers who preached there were very bitter against the use of liquor, and accounts of many humorous incidents resulting therefrom have been handed down from generation to generation.

A close watch was kept on the grounds for jugs of the fiery fluid, and one time when a Rev. Palmer was inspecting the outskirts of the grounds he saw a man with a sack across his shoulder, supposing of course, that it was filled with whiskey jugs, he gave chase, catching him. The minister asked the man to carry the sack to the pulpit and open it, which he did, revealing instead of whiskey, pumpkins.





[top] The old Sansbury home in Knottsville is shown above. Built in 1862 by Thomas Brown, father of Mrs. LaVega Clements, the house is still standing. Shown in front of the house are Mrs. Clements' mother who after Mr. Brown's death married G. W Sansbury, shown with her and the three children, Sam Sansbury, left, who was fatally injured two years ago; his sister, Grace, who died at the age of 24, and Foster Sansbury, right, who died two years ago in Florida. The house is the property of the heirs or Mrs. Sophia Payne.

Below is a view of historic St. Lawrence church, made from a photo taken more than a half-century ago. At the left of the church is the old cemetery containing handmade tombstones with carved dates going back to the late 1700's.

It was during the same meeting that retrieved whiskey jugs were brought to the service and the ministers would throw them against trees, breaking them and destroying the whiskey. One minister threw a jug against a tree, but instead of breaking it only bounded off, remaining whole. A member of the congregation stepped up and offered to break it. The jug was handed him, but instead of breaking it, he made his way through the crowd and off the grounds, carrying his trophy with him.

Mount Zion Cumberland Presbyterian was constructed first as Shiloh congregation in 1821. In 1839 it was changed to Mt. Zion and was located three miles northwest of Knottsville. Bethlehem Methodist church was organized in 1808. Among the early families were those of Henry Able, Hillary Aud, Joseph B. Aud, Benjamin Aull, Ignatius Aull, James Aull, Thomas E. Aull, Reuben Barker, Jefferson L. Berry, Benedict J. Bowlds, James D. Bowlds, Pius J. Bowlds, Zachariah Bowlds, John A. Castlen, A Harvey Clements, Charles O. Clements, John H. Clements, Hillary F. Cooms, Jacob Crouse, William F. Drury, J. H. Early, John Evans, Griffin Gatewood,

Joseph W. Gore, Benedict J. Hagan, Richard Henry Hazel, Wm. S. Hazel, Thomas E. Hazel, Elisha Head, Wm. B. Head, Harvey E. Henning, James A. Henning, Charles H. Higdon, John A. Higdon, Richard Higdon, Isaac Lambert, Milton H. Mattingly, James M. May, Chrysostom, Henry and John McDaniel, Wm. D. Medcalf, Robert Miller, Wm. Muffett, David Monarch, John R. O'Bryan, John L., John T., and Stephen T. Payne, George W. Roby, G. B. Rowland, James Shouse, Henry B. Wathen, Dr. P. D. Wilson, Joseph F. Winkler and William Winkler.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 21 March 1943, p.5B:**

**Hawes And Taylor Families Prominent  
In Early Yelvington Community History:**

**Richard Hawes Came to County in Year 1820**

Although the Hawes families of the Yelvington precinct were not the first settlers, nevertheless, the activities of the two make up a large part of the early history of that community. Much of the land at one time owned by them is still held by their descendents.

Richard Hawes, a Virginian of note, came to Kentucky in 1810, settling in Jefferson county. With him came his wife, who was Clara Walker. In 1821, the couple came to Daviess county, purchasing 3,000 acres of land that extended from Iceland, 10 miles above Owensboro on the Ohio river, back to the hills where Kingfisher lake was built later. Richard built a frame dwelling and burned bricks, with which to erect a brick dwelling at Iceland which was the most important boat landing on the Ohio river within 20 miles of Owensboro. Although most of the freight for this section was unloaded at Iceland in pioneer days, nothing remains now to inform the modern generation of the important river landing.

**Amassed Fortune**

Hawes amassed a fortune, and on November 29, 1829, died after a brief illness. His wife buried him in the hills near Yelvington. After his death, she moved the brick from Iceland to the Yelvington hills, and built a large two-story dwelling, completing it in 1832 in time for the wedding of her youngest daughter, Susan Elizabeth. The manor house remained an important landmark until it was destroyed by fire on Dec. 20, 1928.

Kingfisher lake was a modern addition to the Hawes estate, having been built in 1900 by J. G. Taylor, a grandson of Richard and Clara's son-in-law, J. Gibson Taylor.

The Hawes homestead was near the intersection of two prominent cross-country pioneer trails, the Elizabethtown - Shawneetown trail and the road that led to Grandview ferry. Both had been Indian trails and had grown to be used by the covered wagon trains in their trek to the West country.

**Still In Family**

The estate is still in the Hawes family, a great, great, great grand daughter, Mrs D. T. Bolling and her husband now owning it. When the Bollings erected their summer home on the estate, they chose the location of the old manor house because, now, as a century ago, it is the natural building site.

One of the points of interest at Kingfisher lake is the old Hawes cemetery. The carving on the immense stone slabs that cover the graves is all but obliterated, the stones having been worn smooth by the elements in the intervening years.

Senators and persons of note sprung from the Hawes family. One son, Benjamin Walker Hawes, married Ann Taylor, daughter of the Samuel M. Taylor and sister of Jonathan Gibson Taylor of Winchester, who married Richard's daughter, Susan. Brother and sister, married brother and sister and lived on adjoining farms. Beech Hill, so named because of the vast beech woods, was the home of Jonathan and Susan and it is still standing on the old Granview ferry road and is still in the family, being now the home of their grandson, B. A Taylor, Jonathan Gibson Taylor and Susan Walker Hawes were the parents of Richard, Robert W., J. G., John, Benj. W., Judge E. P. and G. Edwin Taylor. Mrs. George . T. Hawes and Mrs. Henry C. Herr. Descendants are many including Mrs. Bernard Holinde, George M. Taylor, Gibson W. Taylor, Eleanor Taylor, Mrs. Virginia Haase, Dr. R. Moreland Taylor, with the Rockefeller foundation in Brazil, Mallory G. Taylor, Ben A. Taylor, Mrs. H. D. Sears, of New Mexico, the Misses Sue and Cary Hawes who died a few years ago, G. Taylor Herr and Mrs. D. M. Griffith.

Much of the Taylor land, owned by Jonathan Gibson and Susan Taylor is now owned by their descendants, including George M. Taylor, Mallory G. Taylor, Ben A. Taylor, Gibson W. Taylor, Eleanor Taylor, Mrs. Virginia Haase, Dr. R. M. Taylor, and Mrs. D. M. Griffith.

#### Many Descendants

Susan Taylor's brother, Benjamin, left the following descendants, B W. Hawes, S. T. Hawes, Mrs. Mary Thomas, wife of J. A. Thomas of Hawesville, and Mrs. Sarah Thompson, wife of George W. Thompson. Their oldest son, William Sterrett Hawes, died not so long ago.

Benjamin and Susan had another brother, Richard, who married Georgia Steel Adams, of Hawesville, Among their children were Mary Hawes, who married George W. Burk, and Adams Hawes, both of whom are dead. Mary left two children, Lewis Burks and Georgetta Burks.

Another of Richard's children Kate C. Hawes, married Albert B. Eagles, of Yelvington, whose son was the late Hawes B. Eagles. His widow now resides in Owensboro with her son, A. D. Eagles. Other children include the late W. B. Eagles and Mrs. Marion Eagles Luckett.

Another son, Benjamin W. Hawes, married Hannah Bright of Shelby county, who lived only a short while, After her death he married her sister, and they had one son, George Bright Hawes, who still resides on the old estate, Pleasant Hill, near Maceo, which name the ancestral home retains to this day.

Another son, Edwin, who married Cary Trotter had as his descendants the late James D. Russell, Dr. Marguerite Tyler, Mrs. Wm. H. Brannon, Jr., and Bailey T. Clarke.

Other Hawes descendants include Mrs. Elizabeth Boone, Mrs. D. T. Boiling, Mrs. Kitty Roby, Robert M. Stuart, Robert Keene, Mrs. Noble Tune, Mrs. Wm. Reno, Mrs. Stella Burke, Mrs. Marc Stuart, Kit Jackson, Mrs. James Barnhill, Tom Powers, of New York, Hawes Carlton of Maceo, and the late Miss Shing Williams.

#### Other Prominent Families

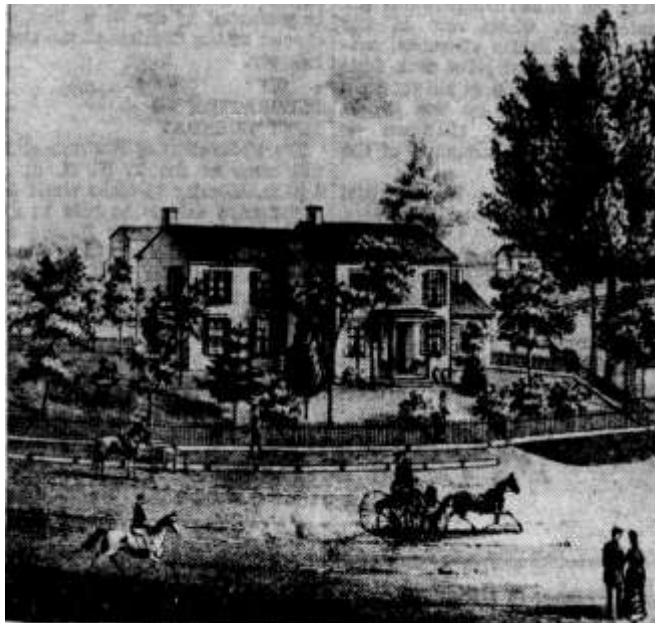
Another pioneer who came to Yelvington around 1810 was Robert Duncan. His son, William B. Duncan, who In 1841 married Celia Head and at her death married Anna Haygood, was the ancestor of the present Duncan families in the county. Among his grandchildren, of which there are many, are the following: Pierce Duncan, deputy county court clerk, Mrs. R. N. Castlen, Emma Duncan, Clayton Duncan, Maceo, W. N. Duncan, Owensboro, and Mrs. Jennie Hardin.

The Smeathers family, that moved into the Yelvington country in the early 1800's, was related to the famous Bill Smothers, who spelled his name differently, and the present Smeatherses are descendants of that pioneer family.

The Rev. William Dawson for many years was one of the outstanding residents of the section. Other prominent pioneers were Elijah Board, George W. Boswell, John C. Hathaway, whose son John still resides in Maceo, Joseph Kelley, Worden Riddle, the Roberts families, Dr. J. D. Russell, whose son, J. D. Russell, prominent Owensboro banker, died recently, Nelson Schenk, Benjamin Schadwick, William N. Spillman, William T. Walker. Simeon D. Webber and Emmett Wells.

### Interesting History

Not only did the families of Yelvington section provide interesting history, but the towns that remain provide their romance. The town of Yelvington was never laid out, as was the case of most Daviess county towns. Like the fabled Topsy. it just grew. It was around 1800 that Yelverton Overby, a blacksmith, built a home and blacksmith shop at the intersection of the two famous Indian trails, that Richard Hawes later selected for his home. Overby decided that with pioneer traffic crossing this point, it would be an ideal spot for business, so he sat up shop. Later a Mr. Oglesby bought adjoining land, and he opened a store, and a hotel. One of Richard Hawes' sons, Sam, opened another store, and so the village grew. Because of Overby's popularity and high standing, the village was named in his honor, but the name became distorted in the passing years, and instead of Yelverton, it became Yelvington. In its heyday, Yelvington boasted of two dry-goods stores, a grocery store, two hotels, two churches and two physicians, as well as two saloons. A postoffice was established there at an early date, so important was the little community.



The old A. J. Eagles Home, built near the spring at the foot of the hill in Yelvington is still standing. Eagles, who married Kate C. Hawes, daughter of the pioneer, Richard Hawes, is the grandfather of Dean Eagles, of Owensboro. The spring served the entire countryside with water, and although not used so extensively today, it is still there. Abraham Lincoln,

some historians claim, passed by the above house on his way to the Grandview ferry road en route to Indiana.

### Husk First Resident

Valentine Husk was probably the first resident of the Yelvington or Beech Woods country. He moved on land near the crossroads before 1800, but because there were no neighbors, he went farther inland to where Knottsville was later established. Richard C. Jett came in 1809 and moved near Blackford Creek. Hon. Benjamin Duncan, who died in the Kentucky Senate in 1824, also lived there as did Charles Duncan, Amos Shaw, Amos Riley, Gen. John Davis and Harry Willis.

In later years, a small settlement grew at Powers Station, which was built on the L. and St. L. railroad between Yelvington and the river. A community called Rosebud, farther up the road tried to have the railroad station moved, but officials decided against this. A post-office, Powers, was established. However because there was another Powers in Kentucky, thus resulting in much confusion between the towns of Powers and Powers Station, the government decreed the name must be changed. Being at the close of the Spanish American war, Judge E. P. Taylor suggested the name of Maceo in honor of the famous Cuban hero. The government accepted the name, and Maceo it has remained to this day.



### **Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 28 March 1943, pp.1B & 5B:**

#### Descendant of John Alden Was Thruston Pioneer

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

When the fair Priscilla Mullins in 1623 asked John Alden why he didn't speak for himself instead of his friend, Miles Standish, history tells us that the embarrassed John finally did speak for himself, married the girl and started the family from which after six generations came Manley Berry Tichenor, prominent Ohio and Daviess county pioneer of the Upper Town precinct which adjoined Owensboro on the East and South.

Tichenor. son of Jared Tichenor, one-time Ohio county sheriff, came to Daviess county near the year 1830. Settling first at Nuckols, he afterwards purchased 260 acres of land in the community that later became Thruston, in fact the town was built on his farm. The land was purchased from the Lostutter family. A large part of the farm is now owned by John Q. Stone, and various residents of Thruston. The house, which is still standing, is located on a small tract owned by Arthur Gist. Thruston school was built on a part of the estate of John and Priscilla 's descendant.

Two sons of Manley Tichenor are still living. They are, Charles Tichenor, who is seriously ill at his home in Orlando, Fla., and Arch Tichenor, of Owensboro. Among Manley's descendants are 37 grandchildren, including the Ashbys, Athertons, Soshes and Tichenors.

#### Capt. Ben Field

Another prominent resident of the Upper Town precinct was Captain Benjamin Field, who was born in Virginia in 1755 and came to Kentucky in 1786. He was made a captain in the Revolutionary war and in 1790 he was married to Mildred Slaughter, a native of Culpepper county, Virginia. Five years later, with his wife and three children, he started for Kentucky, making the trip in a pirogue, a "dugout" canoe. It took six weeks to make the trip and the family arrived in



Yellow Banks on Christmas eve in 1795. Field left his family in the pirogue, while he himself walked out into the country, 12 miles southeast of Owensboro and put up a log cabin. He returned for his wife and children, then ripped up the pirogue and used it as a roof for the house. Field's cabin was the first house between Yellow Banks (Owensboro) and Hartford. At that time, of course, there was only a fort at Hartford.

Captain Field's wife, Mildred, was a beautiful woman, and a talented dancer. So accomplished was she, that it is said she danced the minuet with a pint cup of water on her head, without spilling a drop. Inheriting her mother's beauty and talent, the Fields' oldest daughter, Elizabeth, too became a dancer, and she was sent to a dancing school at Hartford in later years. Elizabeth wanted a new pair of shoes when she went to Hartford, and her father promised them to her. The shoes had to be ordered from Bardstown, whence all such supplies for this section came at that time. (Moderns who complain about rationing, please note.) The time for Elizabeth's departure neared, and the shoes had not arrived. Lest Elizabeth be disappointed by failure of the shoes to get to Yellow Banks in time, Capt. Field had a sheep killed, dressed the skin, and himself made his daughter a nice pair of white slippers. Later the slippers became soiled, and Elizabeth dyed them with poke berries and they were as good as new, and possibly even prettier.

#### Daughter Talented Dancer

Elizabeth was not only a talented dancer, but she was taught to card wool, spin and weave. At one time there was to be a ball, and Elizabeth, of course, had to have a new gown. The only way to get one was to weave the material and then make the costume, which Elizabeth proceeded to do. The warp was so fine that Capt. Field drew it through a ring before putting it in the loom. Another story that has been handed down concerning the Field family is this one:

One time during high water, Captain Field, was riding his horse through Panther Creek flats when he came upon a sturgeon. How it got there is unknown, nevertheless Captain Field got the fish, it appeared lifeless, and he thought it dead, so he tied it to his horse and dragged it home. The family gathered round to view the oddity, which suddenly came to life, gave a violent plunge and knocked Elizabeth down. Capt. Field died in 1842 and was buried on the Fitts farm south of Owensboro.

Descendants of the pioneer Ben and Mildred Field include T. C. Field, of Owensboro, Mrs. Robert Downer, Hopkinsville, and Newton Field, of Miami, Fla., and their families, also the families of the late Mrs. C. O. Evans, the late John Field and the late Morton Field.

#### Feud In Section

History records one "Kentucky" feud in the Uppertown precinct, giving the location as a farm, six miles east on the Pleasant Valley road. The families of Ignatius Payne and William and George Turnbull lived on adjoining farms in that section and the question of a fence between the farms arose. The Turnbells wanted to join fences and Payne wanted a road left between the farms so that stock could pass back and forth. The Turnbells persisted and joined the fences between their farm, cutting off Payne's stock. Payne went out to move the fence, so his stock could pass. As he began the task the Turnbells came out and commenced an attack using butcher knives instead of feuding rifles. In the affray Payne and one son were killed and three more badly wounded. The women of the two families fought as violently as the men, a published account of the clash, related.

Other prominent residents who resided in the Upper Town precinct in by-gone days included William P. Baker, father of the Misses Alice and Ruth Baker, of Owensboro, who served as County Attorney of Hancock county for two terms, as well as county judge. It was while he was

judge there, that Mr. Baker built the present Hancock county courthouse. In later years he resided in Owensboro.



MANLEY TICHENOR, PIONEER OF THRUSTON, is pictured above seated in front of his home, which is still standing. With him is his daughter, Miss Mattie Tichenor. His grandson, Felix Tichenor is holding Tichenor's horse Ida. At the left in the photograph is Tichenor's servant, Horace Valentine, whom he reared. Horace, who was deaf and dumb, died several years ago. Dead many years, Tichenor himself was a direct descendant of John and Priscilla Alden, made famous by "The Courtship of Miles Standish."

#### Davis Family Prominent

Robert Milton Davis, born in Shelby county, was one of the early prominent residents of the community above Thruston, moving there around 1855. He died 20 years later leaving and only son, William H. Davis, who, had the distinction of being the first principal of Emerson school, the old Grand Avenue school. William was married to Ila Morris in 1895, daughter of A. V. Morris, of the Ensor neighborhood, but formerly of South Carrollton. In 1912 Mr. and Mrs. Davis moved to Utica, Mr. Davis turning from teaching to banking. He died in 1918, his wife to 1924. Their four children are Walter F. Davis, of the Guenther Hardware company, Mrs. Raymond Miller and Mrs. Catherine Arnold, Owensboro, and Robert M. Davis, Lima.

There was also R. B. Bell, John A. Brown, who had a successful record as a soldier in the War Between the States, and L. P. Castlen, whose descendants live in this section. Joseph A. Clark, who was born in Breckinridge county, but moved five miles southeast of Owensboro, was prominently known. His brother, Felix Thaddeus, started with 80 others under Lindsey Rhodes to join the Confederate Army. He was captured near Mammoth Cave, sent to Johnson's Island, exchanged and sent to Vicksburg, then Chattanooga, and was never more heard from. Benjamin D. Coomes who came to Daviess county, east of, Owensboro.

Another prominent farmer in Upper Town precinct was Isaiah C. Daniel, who was born in Shelby county and came to Daviess county with his parents, Leonard and Maria Cox Daniel in 1836. One of his children, Jacob Henry Daniel, is still living, residing at Ninth and Cedar streets, in Owensboro. A grandson, Howard Daniel, prominent Daviess county farmer resides on the farm on which Isaiah once lived. Another grandson in Owensboro, is Joe Cook who lives in Griffith Place, East.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 4 April 1943, p.1B:**

**Story Of Indian Encounter With Pioneers And  
Saving Of Man From Burning Told In Letter**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

(EDITOR'S NOTE – The accompanying story was brought to the attention of The Messenger by a reader of the historical articles that have been appearing in this newspaper on Sundays. It comes from a letter which the late Joseph Thomas Faith sent to a newspaper editor in an effort to learn the identity of two men who prevented a pioneer hunter being burned to death by Indians in Bon Harbor Hills. It was found among Mr. Faith's possessions when he died.)

Many romantic tales, true and otherwise, are to be found in the early history of Bon Harbor Hills, below Owensboro, on the Ohio river. Probably the earliest narrative is one found among the papers of the late Joseph Thomas Faith, after his death. It tells of the danger to the early settlers, from lurking Indians. Faith, who died years ago is a brother of Mrs. Jennie Waltrip, 87, of St. Joseph.

William Faith, great-grandfather of Joseph Thomas, came to Kentucky shortly after the Revolutionary war and took up 640 acres of land below Bear Grass Creek, on the Ohio river, which is now part of the city of Louisville. One day while William was out surveying, which was his vocation, he was shot and killed by Indians. His widow, because of the marauding bands of red men, sold her land and returned to Virginia with her young son, William, Jr.

**Indians Near Fort**

The son did not fear the redskins, and in 1790 young William came to Fort Vienna, now Calhoun. At that time the settlement included only the fort. ' It was considered very dangerous to hunt for game near the fort. Indians were always lurking nearby for the purpose of stealing horses, picking up women or children that might unfortunately fall into their hands, so when there was any hunting to be done the men would steal away into the distance before starting the hunt. In the year 1790, William Faith, grandfather of Joseph Thomas, together with two residents of the fort, Martin Vernada and Mr. Mucklemerry went down Green river to the Ohio river to hunt. They arrived at the hunting ground on a Sunday evening and camped for the night. At daybreak the next morning, Mr. Mucklemerry who was considered an old and successful Indian fighter, discovered the three men were surrounded by Indians. They succeeded in taking cover under the river bank, near the water, all the time trying to get a shot at the Indians, who were on the bank above them. They did not know how many Indians there were in the band.

While in that position, the Indians fired down the bank at the three white men, shooting Mr. Mucklemerry through the body. Mr. Faith was shot in the shoulder. Mr. Vernada, not knowing either man had been hit, advised them to swim the river as they were both expert swimmers, and thus make their escape. Vernada himself could not swim and he told them he would have to take his chances with the Indians. As the two men started into the water Mucklemerry turned and exclaimed, "My God, Billy, I'm a dead man," and he fell dead at the water's edge.



fell dead at river's edge

There being a heavy fog, Faith escaped by swimming the river, and making his way to Red Banks, which later became Henderson. Fever set up in his wound and he hovered between life and death for many days, but being young and vigorous he finally recovered. The Indians managed to draw the fire of Vernada's gun and making a charge on him, captured him. They relieved him of his gun and knife and all his equipment, then tied him to a tree with his back to it, in a sitting posture. They carried water to him in his hat, and made signs to him that they would be gone for three days. There were only two Indians, according to the story, so as soon as they were out of sight, Vernada started to free himself, which he eventually accomplished.

He started to make his way back to Fort Vienna, but there being no trails in the unending forest, after wandering for eleven days, he finally reached the fort where Hartford now stands. All that he had to eat during those eleven days was part of an o'possum's liver.

#### Indians Reach Bon Harbor

The two Indians after leaving Vernada, started in the general direction of Yellow Banks, coming onto the trail of a hunter who had gone out from Yellow Banks. They followed the trail until they came upon him as he was dressing a deer he had shot, just below Bon Harbor Hills. They captured him, then tied him to a tree and gathered dry brush and piled it about him. It was while they were setting fire to it that two white men from Yellow Banks who were out hunting and had come across the trail of the Indians, came in sight of what was taking place. The Indians were so absorbed in their fiendish work that they did not know a white man was near, until the report of the rifles of the two hunters. Both redskins fell dead, and the white man was rescued.

Joseph Thomas Faith who kept the story in his possession, tried in vain during his lifetime to find out the names of the white men connected with the Bon Harbor incident, but to no avail.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 11 April 1943, p4A:**

**Bon Harbor Hills Saw Many Early Business  
Ventures Including State's First Railroad**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

A hiding place for Indians in the days before Yellow Banks – later Owensboro – Bon Harbor Hills was the site of some of the early business ventures of this area, and the scene of the first railroad in Kentucky, if not the nation.

It was in 1824 that Robert Triplett, who was born in Virginia 28 years previously, came to Kentucky as an agent for May, Bannister & Ross, who held large tracts of military land. Triplett, a second cousin once removed of the late George W. Triplett, bought and sold the land and realized an immense fortune. It was during his early residence in this state, that a business trip in connection with some of the surveys of May, Bannister & Ross brought Triplett to Yellow Banks.

During his first stay here he was a guest in a tavern conducted by a Mrs. Adams. "The house was minus a brick chimney, but the proprietress had three pretty daughters, which might have added to the attraction of her hostelry. Her tavern was described by Triplett as neat and tidy and "her meals were well-cooked" and "her three pretty daughters set off the whole establishment to advantage." Shortly after his first trip, Triplett returned to make his residence here.

Despite the three pretty daughters, Triplett married a Miss Peagram about 1826. Prior to that, however, he had, in his explorings over the surrounding country, found coal in Bon Harbor hills. He purchased the land and opened a thin coal vein and started workmen mining the coal. One day a hunter came along and told Triplett he could show him better coal. Triplett followed the stranger back into the hills and there found coal at a depth of nearly five feet. Triplett started in earnest to mine the coal and had it carried down to the Ohio river where boats purchased it. This was said to have been the first attempt below the falls at Louisville to use coal as a steamboat fuel. So great was the demand for coal by the boats, and so much coal was there in the hills, that Triplett, a man of original ideal, decided there must be another method than slow carts of delivering coal to the river, which was three-quarters of a mile from the mine.

Finally he devised a railroad. In the latter part of 1826 Triplett had a road bed made connecting the mine and the river. On this he laid rails. Workmen built the cars and a "drum house." A big rope on an immense wheel, was operated from the hills. Being before the time of steam engines, nevertheless Triplett's idea was practical. The cars of coal were pulled down to the river by means of the wheel and rope, and after they were emptied, were pulled back in the hills again. The railroad was operated for many years and persons now living can recall seeing the ruins of the drum house, which remained long after the road was discontinued.

Even though his business interests lay in Bon Harbor hills. Mr. Triplett continued to live in Frankfort, to which place he had moved when he came to this state. And when he married, it was to Frankfort that he took his bride, even though he had purchased a home on the ridge east of Owensboro which he had called Haphazard. It was Haphazard that finally forced Mr. Triplett to move to Owensboro. Although the residence of Haphazard was high on the ridge, part of the farm extended down into the bottoms, and was swampy much of the time. The farm made no money, in fact it was an incumbrance. He couldn't sell it, for the people of this section knew its fault, so he moved onto Haphazard. He planned a drainage system for the farm, and during the ensuing years carried out his plans. Drained, the land became very productive, and the farm became an asset. Haphazard in later years was known as the Ewing Bell farm and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sam C. Coats and Mr. and Mrs. G. Wallace Thacker.

Mr. Triplett not only opened the first coal mine and built the first railroad, but he also fought the first duel. Triplett had an employee by the name of Thompson, whom he thought had cheated him. The accusation brought on a quarrel which was broken up by Triplett's brother-in-law who appealed to his sympathy, as Thompson was incapacitated to a certain extent, having a

crippled hip. The incident passed off, with joking, but only for a few days, when Thompson challenged Triplett to a duel. Thompson was known as one of the best shots in the country.

Triplett sent to Hardinsburg for a pair of pistols, said to have been the best known. But Thompson had beaten him to that draw, and had already purchased them when Triplett's buyer arrived. So Triplett sent two friends out to buy the needed pistols. One took a steamboat to Louisville, where he found a fine pair, and another went to New Madrid where he obtained a pair that Aaron Burr had used on the field with Hamilton. With the two pairs, Triplett practiced daily until he considered his aim and technique perfect. The day for the duel arrived, it was in February, there was snow on the ground. The designated time, 11 a. m approached as Triplett headed for the dueling ground, a place on the Indiana shore across from Yellow Banks. Both men, and their seconds arrived on time. Triplett, as he approached the spot aimed at a lump of snow on a wood pile. His aim was perfect.

Both men took their place, the word fire was given, and both men fired their guns almost simultaneously. For a moment Thompson stood erect then a black scowl came over his countenance as he cried out, "I am a dead man." He fell and his second ran to his aid, admonishing Triplett to stand where he was, that Thompson might wish" to fire another shot.

Thompson was wounded seriously, and it was not thought he would recover, nevertheless he did, weeks later, and when he arose from his bed his lameness was gone. Thompson termed Triplett "a first-rate surgeon, though a cruel operator."

Triplett made and lost one fortune after another. At one time he owned more than half the vacant property in Owensboro. He became reckless, so it is said, his creditors fearing he was going to ruin, sued him, and his property was all sold to satisfy judgments. Even Haphazard with its more than 1,000 acres considered among the best land in this section brought only \$13,000. He salvaged enough from his fortune at that time to build a small woolen factory for jeans and linseys in Bon Harbor hills. Later he also operated a cotton mill. He died in Philadelphia in 1853.

With a woolen mill, a cotton mill and coal mines, Bon Harbor was a busy community in the early days of Yellow Banks. A large tobacco factory was also built, and its manager, Alec Tompkins, received \$1,800 a year which was considered an exorbitant salary.

The various mills were built on land that later became the Ewing farms. The Island now called Ewing Island, and extending two miles down the Ohio river to Enterprise, was in the early days called Hurricane island, because many, many years ago, a hurricane swept over it, topping all of the trees thereon.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 18 April 1943, p.1B:**

**Owensboro Rotary Club Was Pioneer In State-Wide Movement For  
Treatment Of Crippled Children , Correction Of Their Deformities**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Another crippled children's clinic was held at the Mary Kendall home last week bringing hope to more than 100 youngsters from Owensboro and the surrounding territory whose lives have been blighted by physical deformities.

The clinics are under the joint sponsorship of the Owensboro Rotary club, the Mary Kendall Home and the Kentucky Crippled Children's Commission. The examinations are given at the Home by widely-known specialists in orthopedics and pediatrics.

The Owensboro Rotary club was a pioneer in the now state-wide movement for the treatment and correction of physical deformities among children whose parents are unable to provide this costly attention for them. The first local clinic, held two decades ago at the club headquarters in the 300 block, Frederica street, was the second of its kind in the state.

### First Clinic

The idea had its introduction in Owensboro quite by accident. It was while Lawrence Hager was serving as president of the Owensboro Rotary club in the winter of 1922-23 that he chanced to hear of the work Rotarian John Sullivan was doing in Covington, where the first clinic was held in Kentucky. Sullivan was so interested in helping crippled children that he made it his life work a work carried on, unhappily at great sacrifice of his own health,

Sullivan himself was prompted to devote his time and talents to the alleviation of the lot of suffering children by the work of a wealthy Ohioan named Allen who, after his young son became hopelessly crippled, devoted his life and fortune to the assistance of children similarly afflicted. Incidentally, it was the Ohioan, affectionately known as "Daddy" Allen, who originated the idea of public assistance for such unfortunate youngsters.

Becoming interested in Sullivan's work in Covington, the Owensboro Rotary club voted to send a representative to Covington. It was the report the representative made upon his return from Covington, that resulted in the adoption of the project as a primary object, and plans for the first clinic were made.

### Objections To Overcome

Spring came, and the day of the clinic arrived. Being before the days of good roads, Rotarians went into the highways and byways, carrying crippled children in their arms to waiting automobiles to bring them to Owensboro to the club's headquarters for examinations by an orthopedic surgeon.

In many instances, getting a child to attend the clinic was more than a matter of providing transportation. There were fears and objections of parents to be overcome, and many a Rotarian had to do much talking to convince a doubting parent who had religious objections as well as others that only good could come from the examination, and that whereas his child was doomed to the life of a cripple, he might, if taken to the clinic, regain partial use of his limbs, and might even walk in time. Rotarians arrived at club headquarters, dirty and disheveled in many instances, from carrying their burdens down muddy lanes and roads. Tears streamed down the faces of others displaying unabashed their emotions as they brought for examination little children whose bodies had been horribly deformed by the dread infantile paralysis. Various methods of securing the names and addresses of the crippled children had been used, Miss Lena Bennett, school nurse, providing them with the names of those residing in Owensboro.

### Interest Became Intense

From that first clinic, interest became so intense that clinics were held regularly. However the club soon discovered that the interim details were as important as clinics, and that the lives of busy business and professional men were not adapted to closely watching the little afflicted

patients, taking them to an orthopedic surgeon at the proper time, returning them to their homes, adjusting their braces, and the like and thus it was in 1928 that the women of the Mary Kendall Home board became interested in the project and offered the use of their home for holding the clinics. The women, it was decided, would be better suited for those details that must be looked after between clinics, and so since that year, the clinics have been sponsored by the two organizations, the Mary Kendall home and the Rotary club. The Rotarians, now, as at that first clinic, still go out into the county, search out the crippled children and bring them to the clinics.

More than 2,000 examinations have been given crippled children from Daviess and adjoining counties in clinics conducted at the Mary Kendall home by the Kentucky Crippled Children's commission since 1928. Of this number, many who were hopelessly deformed, and facing a dark future, have been made to walk, thus enabling them to take their place, in society as normal citizens.

The clinics for cripples, however, are only one phase of the important work carried on by the Mary Kendall home since it was organized on April 10, 1904, by Mrs. Mary Kendall, wife of the late Dr. T. R. Kendall. The first organization was called the Woman's Christian association and the first home was purchased on November 11, 1904, and was located at 1124 West Third street. It was a "home for the friendless" women, girls and children.

The work grew so rapidly that larger quarters were found necessary, so that home was sold and another, located at the southeast corner of Third and Lewis streets, was purchased. The work continued to grow with the years and on May 31, 1919, the Hugh B. Phillips property, the present Mary Kendall home, in Phillips court, was purchased. The name of the organization was changed from W. C. A. to Mary Kendall Home, Inc., on September 4, 1935.

#### First President

Mrs. Mary Kendall was the first president. Mrs. E. B. Anderson is the present president.

The women who assist with the Mary Kendall home in caring for homeless women, swing girls and children, expanded their efforts in 1928, and added the clinics for crippled children to the work of the home.

Since 1928, about 30 clinics have been held and more than 2,000 children have been examined. The Rotary club assists the women in holding the clinics, providing transportation for those children without means of coming to the home. From 75 to 100 children are examined at each clinic by an orthopedic surgeon and treatment is recommended. Hospitalization when necessary is given children at Kosair hospital, Louisville.

Mrs. C. A. Beaty, visiting nurse for crippled children for the home, keeps in close contact with the patients, making regular visits, even taking them to Louisville when necessary.

Results of the clinics have been astonishing, Mrs. Beaty explained this week. "Had it not been for the clinics, we would have many hopelessly crippled children in this' section," she stated.

#### Much Good Accomplished

The nurse recalled one young woman, who when she came to the first clinic 15 years ago, was crippled so badly that walking was impossible. She came regularly, underwent the suggested treatments which included a number of operations at Kosair hospital. She not only finished high school, took a course in business college, and is now a secretary in a defense plant, but the cure has been so complete and the young woman walks so well, that none but the most experienced eye can detect that the girl had ever been crippled. She had infantile paralysis when four years old.



Another child, a young boy, who had infantile paralysis as a baby, is responding well to treatment. Though still wearing braces and using crutches, he can romp and play with his companions and attends school. Another child that had infantile paralysis last fall, and was critically ill, with both legs paralyzed, is actually walking now. The cure was so much more rapid in this case, Mrs. Beaty stated, because the Sister Kenney method of treatment was started as soon as possible.

"There have been so many children who have been helped that I could go on and on giving examples of the results. Of course not all children are enabled to walk, but the benefits that have resulted from the clinics are so great that they can't be valued in terms of dollars," Mrs. Beaty said.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 24 December 1944, p.2B:**

**Owensboroans Have Been Served By Gas Distribution System Since 1860**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Owensboro's gas distribution system, which is in the process of being sold by Associated Gas and Electric company, of New York, to Wm. T. Stevenson, of Owensboro, is this city's oldest public utility, the system or its forerunners having given uninterrupted service since 1860, according to old records of the company, found by J. W. Gilbert, manager.

The Owensboro Gas company was organized as the Owensboro Gas Light company at a meeting of prominent Owensboroans on June 1, 1860 for the purpose of providing "illuminating" gas for residents and the City of Owensboro. The capital stock was \$25,000. There were 250 shares of stock, which were sold at \$100 a share. The corporation was organized for the duration of 50 years.

The first board of directors of the Owensboro Gas Light company included J. H. Blair, S. M. Wing, T. H. Pointer, Allen Gilmour, and Capt. Frank L. Hall, who operated a steam boat and had a furniture store where the Sourbeer Furniture company is located in East Second street.

According to the minutes of that first meeting the corporation was formed through "an act to authorize the formation of corporations for manufacturing mining and transporting mechanical or chemical products," passed by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky on March 10, 1854.

**First Stockholders**

Among the first stockholders of the gas company were family names that are still prominent in Owensboro including: W. N. Sweeney, R. H. Taylor, M. J. Miller, N. B. Allen, J. J. Daviess, Wm. T. Smith, S. M. Wing, T. H. Pointer, Brotherton & Funk, George H. Yeaman, S. Greenebaum, John P. Thompson Allen Gilmour, Wm. Reinhardt John L. Neicam, John Long, C. Groscurth. W. H. Clements, David Hamilton, J. H. Blair, S. M. Moorman, B. Bransford, Daniel M. Griffith. Louis Weber, B. A. Wilhoyte, Wm. Sharp, Isaac Imes, F. L. Happ, Charles Green and James Smith.

The proceedings were recorded by Marcus L. Ogden, who was then county court clerk, and James M. Hughes, deputy clerk. Date of recording was June 8, 1860. Mr. Pointer was immediately named president and R. H. Taylor, secretary.

The first important transaction was the securing of a suitable lot. A committee was named which reported back on June 7 that the lot of Wing & Bransford which was designated as Lot No. 1, Scarborough Addition, (where the present home of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is located) was designated as the most suitable. The committee also reported the lot could be purchased for \$1,000 which the owners would take in stock in the new company. The deal was considered a good one according to the minutes, and the president was ordered to close it.

### Building Contracted

Another committee named at the first meeting to investigate the erection of a suitable building and securing of proper equipment for the manufacture of gas, since artificial gas was to be used, also reported at the same meeting that M. J. Miller, one of the stockholders had been contacted, as he was designated as a suitable contractor.

The minutes record that Miller said: "I shall commence the new building by July 1, 1860 ... and shall complete the whole within eight months." Miller was to erect fire-proof brick building, 40x24 feet and 14 feet high. He was also to erect a gas holder (storage tank) 28 feet in diameter and 14 feet in height with a capacity of 8,500 cubic feet of gas. This was much smaller than either of two that were dismantled by the Owensboro Gas company some years after it started using natural gas. Each of these held 150,000 cubic feet, which indicates that the consumption of gas when the company was first established was not very great. The manufacturing equipment included benches, retorts, purifying and washing equipment. Miller was also to lay 4,000 feet of main. For all of this he was to receive the sum of \$16,000. His contract was accepted on June 8. An ordinance by the board of trustees, the governing body of the city of Owensboro, at that time was passed to give the company right-of-way.

The initial meetings of the stockholders and directors were all held in the afternoon, as there was no illuminating system in Owensboro prior to that time.

### "Metres" Bought

On Dec. 6, 1860 the first load of coal for the plant arrived from Louisville. The boat held 9,365 bushels. Since the Gas Light company had apparently received more coal than was needed for the manufacture of gas, the directors decided to sell some of it at 15 cents a bushel.

An order entered on January 26, 1861, shows that the president signed a note for \$607.00 in payment of a bill for the first "metres." This was the entire bill, and would indicate that the company did not have very many customers at that time. After signing that note, the directors ordered 30 additional "metres," fifteen being two-light capacity. and 15 of three-light size.

It is apparent from the early minutes, that the social standing of Owensboro residents at that time was measured by the number of gas lights householders could afford. At the beginning no one had more than three lights.

The early regulations were very much like those that still prevail, attesting to the business sagacity of the first board. Applications for gas lights "had to be made in writing." This still holds true, for an application blank is now signed. A substantial "payment" had to be made similar to the present day deposit, to guarantee the payment of gas bills.

### Company Public Spirited

When the plant was ready to operate the board set the gas rates as \$3.50 per thousand cubic feet, "payable in bankable funds." They wanted no potatoes or eggs in exchange. In comparing the

early rates with present-day charges, the first test difference in the operation of the company is revealed. As against \$3.50 per thousand cubic feet, that consumers were required to pay in December, 1860, gas users now are charged only about 50 cents per thousand cubic feet. And the heat content of natural gas is double that of that first artificial gas it was stated.

The early company was public spirited, agreeing to "furnish all of the gas free of charge" for any meetings to be held in the courthouse for "public benefit" provided Mr. Miller "conduct the gas into the court house." Some member of the board had to investigate every meeting though, where gas lights were desired, to decide whether the meeting was of "public benefit."

Later in 1861, a fence was needed around the gas property, and the directors decided to dismantle the boat owned by the company and make it into a fence. Whether the boat had become "unseaworthy" was not stated.

The first employes, or "hands" as they are called in the minutes received the munificent salary of \$30 a month.

Several months after the plant was placed in operation, a Mr. Barbee was "engaged" to serve as superintendent. He was paid \$50 a month for "a term of one year."

Operation of the plant continued during the War Between the States. No mention of the war is made in the minutes. However, its effect is evident in an account of a meeting on November 7, 1865, where the directors decided that gas rates had to be increased in order to continue operation of the plant. The board of trustees of Owensboro sanctioned an increase from \$3.50 per thousand cubic feet to \$5.00. The board directed the secretary to "cause a notice to be published in the Owensboro Monitor" concerning the advance in the price of gas.

### Dissention In Company

The early stockholders were not very prompt in paying for their stock, according to minutes of various meetings. After all kinds of published notices asking stockholders to complete payments, on March 23, 1864, it was decided by the board that all unpaid stock would be forfeited. This included stock that had been partly paid for. At that same meeting the "stern" directors emphatically turned down a proposed of the "town of Owensboro" for a monthly flat rate for consumers of gas. The board decided a flat rate would be unfair to both consumers and the Owensboro Gas Light company.

There is evidence of some dissention in the latter part of 1863 and early 1864. Various investigations were ordered.

R. H. Taylor resigned as secretary in May, 1864 and he was succeeded by J. W. Coleman. Phil T. Watkins became secretary and treasurer on May 19, 1868, giving bond of \$1,000. He served for many years.

After operating for eight years, a report was made to the board by the new officers in 1868 that the "gas works were in bad repair and liable to stop any time." Consequently a general overhauling was ordered.

After that time things ran smoothly, and following the amending of the corporation laws in 1886, the company was organized according to the new regulations.

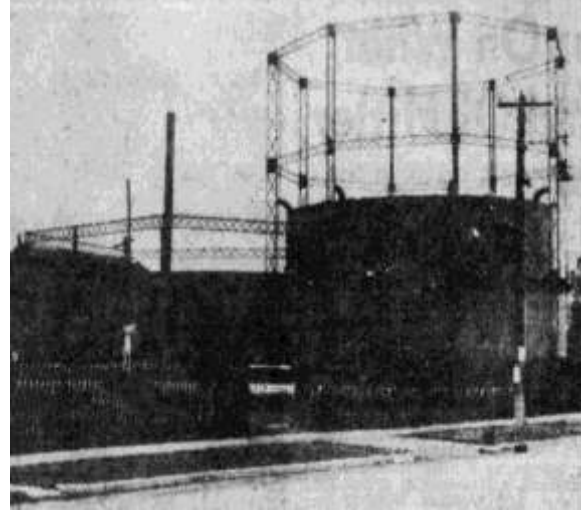
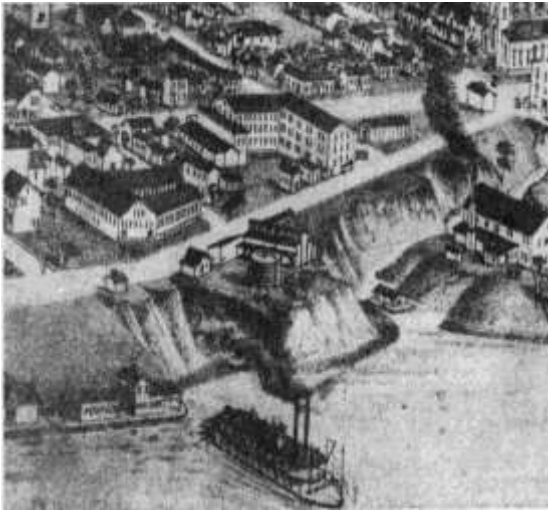
In October, 1887, the company purchased for \$1,600, property in West Third street, where it later erected a more modern gas plant. The property was purchased from E. T. White, A. C. Wood, Mary F. Wood, H. F. B. Pardon and Virginia E. Pardon.

### First Consolidation

The first consolidation occurred on January 29, 1912, when the Owensboro Gas Light company was united with the Capital Gas & Electric company of Frankfort, the Bowling Green Gas Light company and the City Light company of Hopkinsville into the Kentucky Public Service, company. The stockholders of the new company were T. L. Fitch, Louisville; H. D. Fitch, Bowling Green, R Fitch, Bowling Green, F. Austin of Frankfort and M. S. West of Louisville. At that time the Kentucky Public Service company acquired the original plant at Frederica and First streets, and the new plant in West Third street. The Owensboro Gas company was organized in 1928 by the Associated Electric Co. In 1942 the Bowling Green, Hopkinsvule and Russellville properties were acquired from the Kentucky-Tennessee Light and Power company.

Artificial gas was used in Owensboro until July 16, 1929, when natural gas was turned into the mains. At that time there were 1,300 customers. Now there are 4,100.

The large storage tanks that had been erected in West Third street for the artificial gas were dismantled seven years ago and sold for junk. The original building at that site is still owned by the company and used as a repair shop and storage place for equipment.



The photo, top, left, is a reproduction of a drawing that shows a portion of early Owensboro, with the city's first gas plant and its wharf in the foreground, center. At the right it is a picture of the second plant, in West Third street, which was used until natural gas was turned into the mains in 1929. The tanks in Third street were dismantled several years ago. The first plant was located at First and Frederica streets, where the Veterans of Foreign Wars home it now located.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 18 February 1945, pp.1B & 8B:**

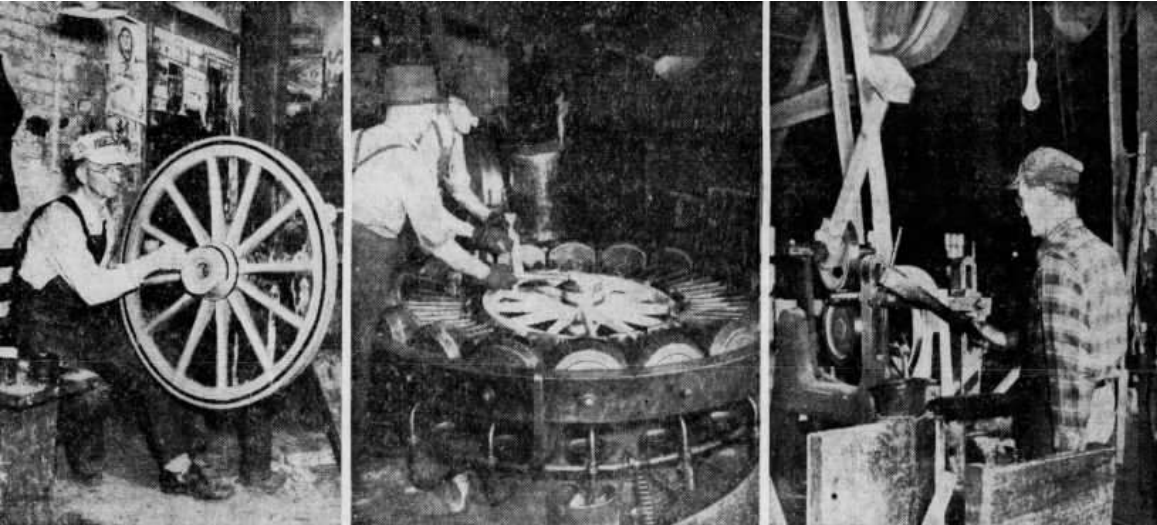
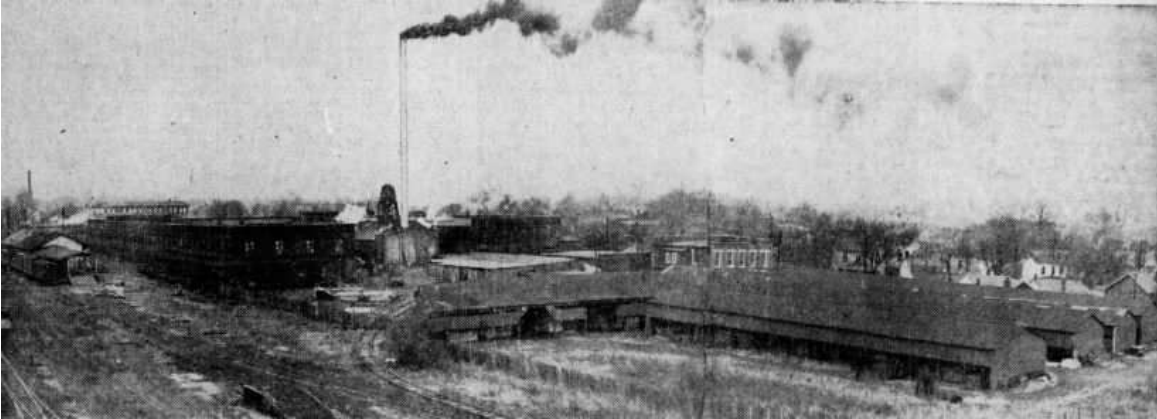
**Communities Oldest Industry Operating At Capacity:  
Output Sold Far In Advance**

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

Owensboro's oldest industry – the Owensboro Wagon company – this year is observing its seventy-fifth anniversary. R. Hal Compton is owner of the company which had its beginning in a blacksmith shop in East Fourth street. Mr. Compton also is a prominent oil man.

The company has been in continuous operation since its founders, J. P. Troutman and Peter Rarick, two blacksmiths, made their first wagon by hand in 1870 in their shop at Fourth street and the Leitchfield road.

Owensboro Wagon Company Celebrates 75th Anniversary





A blacksmith shop in East Fourth, operated by J. P. Troutman and Peter Rarick, who started making wagons, by hand, in 1870, was the nucleus for the Owensboro Wagon company which this year is observing 75 years of continuous operation in this community. Owned by R. Hal Compton, prominent oil man, the company is located just across the street from the site of the Troutman and Rarick shop, at Fourth street and Leitchfield road. Top is shown the more than six acres of buildings that go to make up the Wagon company grounds. In the foreground are the storing and curing sheds. Back of the sheds are pictured the large brick buildings that make up the factory proper and the office building.

Mr. Compton, who also is prominent in oil circles in Texas, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois, is shown, second row, left, looking over a map of the Wagon Company property which tells him where everything is located.

One of the most interesting devices in the Owensboro Wagon company plant is a skinning machine, installed in the Troutman & Rarick blacksmith shop in 1870 and still in use. It is one of only eight ever made and is shown second row, right, with William Hagan and Pete Mills operating it. The machine prepares the axle for the steel skins, fitted on the end.

Although Mr. Compton is owner of the plant, he holds the office of treasurer, having at his president and general manager, John A. Bransford, who has had many years of experience in the manufacture of wagons, and who was with the Florence Wagon Co., Florence, Ala., for 20 years before joining the Owensboro company. Mr. Bransford is shown, inset, second row, center.

George L. Hite's work at the Wagon company is colorful, in that he stripes the bright red wagon wheels. Third row, left, shows him placing the black stripes on a wheel. Mr. Hite holds the brush stationary, gives the wheel a twirl, and the stripe is made.

The Wagon company takes pride in another machine installed in the old Troutman & Rarick blacksmith shop in 1870 and which is still in use. It is the tire shrinking machine and is shown third row, center, with R. L. Walker and L. F. Roby putting a steel tire on a wagon wheel. The heavy, iron machine "shrinks" the tire on the wheel.

One of the fascinating machines in the plant is the spoke driver, which is shown, third row, right, being operated by Gene Morgan. A large swinging hammer, reminding one of a huge arm, swings into action as a spoke is placed into the hub, and pounds it solid.

Mr. Compton takes pride in the service records of the company's employes. Fourth row shows a group with long records. They are, left to sight: Joe Augenstein, 44 years; . C. C. Greenwell, 25 years; Frank Cooney, 32 years; Pete Mills, 24 years; G. O. Pate, 40 years; Ross Hill, 41 years; C. J. Clark, 47 years; W. W. Welchel, 43 years; E. O. Taylor, 27 years.

Troutman and Rarick started the shop in the late 1860s. The first building was a frame structure, on the southwest corner, wherein the manufacture of wagons was started. In 1874 fire destroyed the building. Immediately they rebuilt, but this time with brick, in an effort to prevent another such catastrophe. However, two years later they had another fire, but only part of the shop was destroyed. Again they rebuilt, and continued blacksmithing, and making wagons by hand, with only the aid of their forge and blacksmith tools. Their business grew and they expanded, adding the manufacture of wagon material and dealing in agriculture implements.

#### Incorporated In 1883

In 1881, M. V. Monarch, wealthy Owensboroan, who owned a distillery, just above the present Glenmore site, bought an interest in the Troutman and Rarick firm. With the added capital, new machinery was installed, more buildings were erected and the manufacture of hubs and spokes was started on a large scale, the payroll including 40 men. A 60-horsepower engine provided the power needed. So fast did the firm expand that two years later the company, which then became known as Troutman, Rarick & Co., had two, two-story brick buildings, a work shop and one two-story frame building besides the engine house and numerous sheds. The business had expanded to include also carriage painting and trimming.

At that time, Mr. Monarch seeing the possibilities of the wagon industry as the section became more thickly populated, suggested even wider expansion, and a corporation was formed, stock being purchased by many of Owensboro's leading citizens. So on September 12, 1883 the Owensboro Wagon company was incorporated, and the first board of directors elected. Members of the board were Mr. Monarch, president, C. W. Bransford, vice president; J. P. Troutman, W. T. Ellis, Lynch Gray, J. J. Williams and Thomas S. Pettit. Mr. Troutman was plant superintendent. Mr. Rarick was one of the stockholders.

#### Various Presidents

Mr. Monarch remained president until 1887, when J. J. Williams succeeded him. In 1888 C. W. Bransford became president, serving only a short time, until Dr. J. H. Hickman purchased a large portion of the stock, and became president. Dr. Hickman, who long served Owensboro as mayor, remained at the helm until November, 1904, when Col. J. T. Griffith became president. He resigned in 1931 and was succeeded by Dr. Robert Brodie. He in turn was succeeded by E. K. Short who was again succeeded by Dr. Brodie. Upon Dr. Brodie's death in 1940, Reid Brodie became president of the company, and remained at the helm until the plant was sold to Mr. Compton in 1943. Active with the wagon company during the early part of the 1900's was W. A. Steele, who for 20 years was manager. It was under his direction that a two-story brick building still in use was erected on the present site, in 1904. The company had purchased 20 acres of ground, across the street from Troutman and Rarick, when the corporation was formed in 1884 and the first unit on the newly-purchased ground was built shortly after the ground was purchased, the building standing at the end of Main street. The manufacture of carriages and buggies was started. That part of the plant later was destroyed by fire, and the ground was then sold to the Owensboro Milling company, and the new structure erected at Fourth street.

In later years the manufacture of buggies and carriages was discontinued, the company concentrating on the manufacture of wagons. The company now, as then, makes all of its own parts. Steel is purchased from mills, and in the company's forges is converted into the various metal

parts used in wagons. The company too, makes its own hubs, spokes, axles and beds everything that goes into the making of a wagon.

#### Machines Installed In 1870

Although the company has modern and new equipment, it boasts of two machines, in the present building and still very much in use, that were brought over from the Troutman and Rarick blacksmith shop. The machines were installed by those two pioneers, in their little shop when they made their first wagon in 1870. The one, an axle skinning machine which prepares the ends of the axle for the steel skins, is one of only eight like machines that were ever manufactured. The company that made them, after making eight, which went to various parts of the country, ceased to manufacture them. The other is the tire shrinkage machine, a huge steel device that shrinks the heavy steel tire on the wagon wheel, as the tire is taken from a hot forge.

#### Employes Hold Records

A number of the company's employes also have long records of service. Six of its men have worked for the company 40 years or more. They are C. J. Clark, who has been there 47 years; Albert Chappel, with a 46-year record; Joe Augenstein, 44 years; W. W. Welchel, 43 years; Ross Hill 41 years and G. O. Pate 40 years. Four more plant workers have long records. They are Frank Cooney, with 32 years to his credit; E. O. Taylor, 27 years; C. C. Greenwell 25 years and Pete Mills 24 years.

In the office, Miss Dorothy Smith, the present secretary of the firm, has been with the Wagon company for 33 years; Miss Lockie O'Bryan for 28 years and W. W. Yancey 26 years.

Among prominent Owensboroans who served as manager of the company over long periods were W. A. Ebbert, W. A. Steele and Dr. Brodie, who was manager before he became president. Among those who served long years as superintendent were J. M. Jesse and R. A. Lambert, who was with the company 55 years, retiring just a year ago. Geo T. Lamb retired in 1942 after 52 years of service. The present president and manager, who holds this position because, according to Mr. Compton, "He's had 40 years of experience in the wagon business while I've had none," is John A. Bransford. who came to the company in 1941 after more than 20 years with the Florence Wagon company in Florence, Ala. Harry Bottorf is the company's vice president.

#### Sold Ahead For 2 ½ Years

The company which now has on its payroll an average of 220 persons, manufactures 40 wagons a day. However, if it were not for the manpower shortage, it could manufacture 30,000 wagons a year. Farmers definitely need wagons, Mr. Compton states, a government survey showing that 12 per cent of the country's farmers are in need of them. For this reason the government has asked the Owensboro Wagon company to continue manufacturing wagons, and allocating it all the material needed. All of the company's output reaches the market through its 1100 dealers throughout the South. Wagons are rationed, in that each dealer is permitted a certain percentage of his 1941 sales, the manufacturer rationing them accordingly and the dealer in turn placing the wagons he gets, where he thinks they are most needed. In Owensboro the company has one dealer, A. Bresler and company. The company no longer has salesmen on the road, for as Mr. Compton explained. "We don't need salesmen, we're already sold up for two and one-half years ahead. We're taking no orders for delivery earlier than that."



The company has post-war plans too. Always on the alert for something new, Mr. Compton has brought an engineer to Owensboro, who is studying the company's equipment, and the connections of the 1,100 dealers, and trying to find out what farm machine the company could manufacture after the war, that could be produced in the present plant, and marketed through the present salesmen, without interfering with other implements the dealers may handle.

### Second Largest In U. S.

With the advent of modern machinery in recent years, wagon companies throughout the country have gradually ceased to exist, until now the Owensboro Wagon company is one of only 11 wagon manufacturers in the United States. There used to be 119. And of the 11, the local concern holds another record, it being second on the list, the largest being the John Deere Wagon works.

Unique in the company's history, is the fact that it has not always manufactured wagons, buggies and carriages. One of the interesting things made there were coolie hand carts, which the company manufactured for China, at the beginning of the war, under the lend-lease program. A native from China, Wang Lu, who represented Chiang Kai-Shek, remained at the plant while the carts, 30,000 of them were made for China.

For a time, too, the company made the Maxi-Load trailers, for trucks, and truck bodies. This was after modern motor vehicles supplanted old Dobbin and his wagon. However with the war, the horse-drawn wagon has again come into its own, and wagons are once again being made as fast as the Owensboro Wagon company can turn them out. Wagons are not assembled in the local plant, but are shipped, 30 to a car, knocked down, to the dealer, who assembles them for sale.

### Lumber From South

Lumber for making the wagons comes from Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky, being white oak, hickory and pine. Purchased by lumber buyers, it is shipped to Owensboro and put in sheds to season for about 18 months, before it starts on its journey through the plant. The sheds have a capacity of 1,000,000 feet.

### Compton Is Oil Man

Mr. Compton, who purchased the wagon company from the Brodie estate and the Central-Trust company, in May, 1943, is new in the manufacturing field, having been an oil man by occupation. He came to Owensboro in 1937 from San Angelo, Texas, where he had worked himself up from scout for the Texas and Canadian Oil Corporation, to vice president of the corporation. He was quick to explain that it was not an overnight promotion, but required steady advancement over a period of 22 years. It was the rich Birk City oil field that brought the Wagon company owner to this section, and he began operation of the Hal Compton Oil company. Later he went to the Illinois field, where he expanded his oil and pipe line interests. When the oil industry suffered because of manpower shortage, and other war exigencies, Mr. Compton decided to enter other fields, and the manufacturing of wagons appealed to him, "because farmers always have to have wagons," he explained. Mr. Compton still retains his oil leases, and owns the Ohio Valley Gas company, which serves Tell City and Troy, Ind.

Typical of members of the oil fraternity, who use maps extensively in their business, Mr. Compton had a map made of the Owensboro Wagon company as soon as he bought the plant. The map is complete, and at a glance the new owner can tell just how many feet of space and what

machines and supplies cover what area. His map shows him that the space covered by the buildings and grounds cover an area of 6.17 acres: that the floor space in the brick buildings is 161,000 square feet; while the shed space is 53,000 square feet.

He says he finds the manufacturing of wagons every bit as interesting and intriguing as searching for pay sand in the oil fields, or acquiring a lease that might make him a fortune. And when Mr. Compton took over the wagon plant he brought some of his oil field force with him – five oil well drillers, who now work at the forges in the wagon plant.

Mrs. Compton is active in social, club and civic ventures and is Owensboro Girl Scout Commissioner. The couple have a daughter, Elizabeth, and two sons, Hal, Jr., who is in the Army and at present is on Saipan, and Murph, who is a student at Texas A. & M. college.



87-039731

**INDIANA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH**

State No. \_\_\_\_\_

1280

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| DECEASED—NAME<br>1 <b>Ida C. Vitz</b>  |  | SEX<br>2 <b>F</b>   | DATE OF DEATH MONTH DAY YEAR<br>3 <b>10-15-87</b>                                     |
| RACE<br>4 <b>WH</b>  | AGE<br>5a <b>85</b>                        | UNDER 1 YEAR<br>5b <b>NOT</b>   | UNDER 1 DAY<br>5c <b>DAYS</b>   |
| CITY, TOWN OR LOCATION OF DEATH<br>7a <b>Wabash</b>  |  | HOSPITAL OR OTHER INSTITUTION<br>7b <b>Wabash County Hospital</b>   | IF HOSP. OR INST. (Indicate BSA, EP, State, Fed., Indian, Spanish)<br>7c <b>Inpa.</b> |
| STATE OF BIRTH<br>8 <b>IN</b>  | CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY<br>9 <b>U.S.A.</b> | MARRIED NEVER MARRIED<br>10 <b>Widowed</b>  | SURVIVING SPOUSE (Indicate full maiden name)<br>11 <b>None</b>                        |
| RESIDENCE—STATE<br>12a <b>IN</b>   |  | COUNTY<br>12b <b>Wabash</b>   | CITY, TOWN OR LOCATION<br>12c <b>North Manchester, IN 46962</b>                       |
| STREET AND NUMBER<br>13a <b>400 West 7th Street</b>  |  | IS RESIDENCE ON A FARM?<br>13b <b>NO</b>  | INSIDE CITY LIMITS<br>SPECIFY YES OR NO<br>13c <b>YES</b>                             |
| IS DECEASED OF SPANISH DESCENT? IF YES SPECIFY MEXICAN, CUBAN, PUERTO RICAN, ETC.<br>14a <b>NO</b>   |  |   |   |
| FATHER—NAME<br>15 <b>Joseph L. Graber</b>  |  | MOTHER—MAIDEN NAME<br>16 <b>Mary Hoffman</b>  |   |
| INFORMANT—NAME (Type or print)<br>17a <b>Dorothy Parsons Admin.</b>  |  | RELATIONSHIP<br>17b <b>Admin.</b>   |   |
| MAILING ADDRESS<br>18a <b>400 West 7th Street North Manchester, IN 46962</b>   |  | CITY OR TOWN<br>18b <b>North Manchester, IN</b>   |   |
| BURIAL, CREMATION, REMOVAL, OTHER (Specify)<br>19a <b>Burial</b>   |  | CEMETERY OR CREMATORY—FUNERAL HOME<br>19b <b>M.R.E. Cemetery</b>  |   |
| DATE (MONTH-DAY-YEAR)<br>20a <b>10-19-87</b>   |  | FUNERAL HOME—NAME AND ADDRESS (Street or R.F.D. No., City or Town, State, Zip)<br>20b <b>Bender 205 West Main Street North Manchester, IN 46962</b> |   |
| To the best of my knowledge and belief I declare that the data and facts are true to the best of my knowledge.<br>21a (Signature) <b>Parks M. Adams M.D.</b>             |  | DATE SIGNED (Mo., Day, Yr.)<br>21b <b>10/19/87</b>  | HOUR OF DEATH<br>21c <b>10:50 P.M.</b>  |
| NAME OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN (Type or Print)<br>21d <b>PARKS M. ADAMS M.D.</b>  |  | MAILING ADDRESS—PHYSICIAN<br>21e <b>1104 N. WAYNE ST. N. MANCHESTER, IN 46962</b>   |   |
| PHYSICIAN OFFICER'S SIGNATURE<br><b>Frederick C. Vaehle M.D.</b>   |  | DATE RECEIVED BY LOCAL HEALTH OFFICER<br>22b <b>Oct 21-1987</b>   |   |
| 23 IMMEDIATE CAUSE (CERTIFY ONLY ONE CAUSE FOR LINE FORMS 10, AND 101)   |  |   |   |
| PART I (a) <b>cardiac-respiratory arrest</b>   |  | Interval between onset and death  |   |
| (b) <b>cardiogenic shock</b>   |  | 2 days  |   |
| (c) <b>acute myocardial infarction</b>   |  | 2 days  |   |
| PART II OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS (Indicate conditions contributing to death by not reporting in cause given in PART I)<br><b>fracture (L) hip repaired 4 wks ago</b> |  | MULTIPLE? (Specify type of)   |   |
|  |  | 24 <b>no</b>  |   |

SBH 06-003 State Form 35430  
REV. 10/77



Ida Frances Graber Cockriel Vitz  
(1902-1987)



M. R. E. Cemetery, Berne, Adams County, Indiana

