Henry Scott Berry (1864-1948) Recalls

By Jerry Long
c.2025

Contents

Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 10 December 1933, p.5A:

Old Time Distilleries Of Daviess County Recalled

Fortunes Made and Lost On Kentucky Bourbon; Monuments Left To Failures; Green River Brand Most Widely Advertised Brand In Country.

By Henry S. Berry

The two things uppermost in the minds of the people of the United States today are the dollar and the repeal of the Eighteenth amendment, possibly the liquor question predominating. "Up to the War Between the States and for some two years after anybody could manufacture liquor without a permit and without paying any tax, and in many counties in Kentucky whiskey was made and sold to neighbors or in some cases was hauled into the cities and villages and sold for some 25 cents per gallon. Whisky, as well as coffee, sugar, salt, and a few other things, could be found in the pantries of nearly all homes.

Sometime between 1865 and '1867 the national government put a tax on whiskey of 70 cents per gallon and to safeguard the interests of the government had the whisky put into a government warehouse and put a man in charge who gauged the whisky, cut the amount and proof on the barrel and put an internal revenue stamp on the head of the barrel, giving each barrel a number, also the contents and proof. The whisky was put into a government warehouse and a government storekeeper packed the key.

First Distillery Here

On the ground that is now occupied by the County Road department, Locust Street at the river, one Henry Reed built a small distillery just before the government put on the first tax.

In the fall of 1867, E. C. Berry bought the R. G. Moorman pork packing property and converted it into a distillery, the first one in Daviess county to be operated under the new tax law with a capacity of some five barrels per day. Mr. Berry, who was a practical distiller, having made whisky for his father in Nelson county, came to this county after the Mexican war in 1848. Whisky was regarded as liquid gold and others soon came on the scene to help harvest that crop of gold. In this day of the automobile we find a gas station at nearly every corner and back in those days we found a distillery in nearly every good location, especially on the river bank and in searching my memory of the past I can count some 25 to 30 distilleries all silent as the dead phoenix, but like that fabulous bird, the ashes of the past are springing into life and we see old locations being revived and other ones being sought to again start the flow of liquid gold.

Other Distilleries Spring Up

"About 1869-70 several other distilleries were built. One James Bailey built a distillery near the old water works. Dan Monarch built a distillery on West Fifth street but soon died and was succeeded by Richard Monarch. M. V. Monarch built the Old Sour Mash on the Hardinsburg road just east of town. T. J. Monarch built a distillery at Grissom's Landing, ten miles west of town

on the Ohio river, afterwards known as the Eagle Distillery. W. S. Stone built a distillery some five miles northwest of Owensboro near the Ohio river afterwards bought and operated by M. P. Mattingly and Nick Lancaster.

John Hanning built a small distillery near Pup creek, eight miles east of town. Mort Field worked at his father-in-law's distillery and about 1871 bought the Reed distillery (it had in the meantime been moved to a farm two miles west of Owensboro) and moved it to a site on the Pleasant Valley road some three miles southeast of town.

Daviess County Plant

About 1870 W. L. Berry built a small distillery on his farm four miles west of town and used a warehouse made of logs to store the whisky. In 1873 Cunningham and Trigg, of Louisville, came to Owensboro and bought the land on which was built the Daviess County Distillery company on the Ohio river just below town.

All seemed to prosper for a while but soon they began to feel the effects of over production and soon the whisky people were in hard times. In those days the government allowed the whisky to stay in the warehouse for twelve months, but at the end of that time the tax, 70 cents per gallon, was due and had to be paid right now and the whisky moved out of the government warehouse.

Just to show how low whisky values had fallen in some five or six years: E. C. Berry died in 1877 and in settling up his estate in that year, the distillery that had cost $10,000 in 1876 to remodel was sold to Hill and Perkins for $2,700.

Extension Law Passed

In 1879, the distiller in his distress appealed to congress and the extension law was passed, giving him three years to pay the taxes. I think at this time the tax was raised from 70 to 90 cents per gallon. This act caused a wild expansion of old and building of new distilleries. Every distiller increased his output and many new ones built.

We soon saw the John Thixton, the Hill & Hill, the Glenmore, the J. T. Welch, in addition to the Sour Mash just east of town, the Applegate near Yelvington and the Gerteisen Brothers on Pup creek.

The Hanning Distillery having gone out of business, Gunther & Crutcher bought that brand and built a big distillery across the road from the E. C. Berry Distillery. Abe Berryman formed a partnership with Hill & Perkins and built a new E. C. Berry Distillery about one-half mile west of the old site. Nick Lancaster dissolved partnership with M. P. Mattingly and in company with others bought the old Burge Mill just west of Daviess County Distillery company and turned it into a distillery.

Later, A. Rosenfeld bought the Hill & Hill Distillery near the present water works, but soon bought the old Burge Mill property from Lancaster and others (I think Alex Thompkins was associated with Lancaster) and turned it into the Rock Springs Distillery company. M. P. Mattingly with J. M. Herr and others built a distillery on J. M. Herr's farm across the ravine from Rock Springs. A Mr. Boulware built a small distillery about three miles southwest of Owensboro on the Lyddane Bridge road. A small distillery called the Cliff Falls was built at Birk City. Ed Murphy built a small distillery at Newman, also Pat Dunphy later at Newman and sold his output by the quart at the distillery.

Trouble To Distiller

But the more abundant liquid gold became the more trouble it brought the distiller. Meetings were held to limit production, but like a bunch of farmers, some went in, too many stayed out. The 3-year extension had failed to meet expectations. At the end of three years they were no better able to pay than when under the one-year plan. Then the idea of exporting whisky was

originated. An arrangement was made with the government by which whisky could be shipped under the guise of opening up a foreign market, but the whisky so exported was always the property of the government until tax was paid.

Thousands of barrels were exported principally to Bremen, Germany, and imported whenever the distiller could find a sale for it at home. But this did not solve the distillers' troubles and many were on the verge of bankruptcy. They again appealed to the government and got an eight-year extension with tax raised to $1.00 per gallon. This, I think, was sometime in the late eighties or the early nineties. None of these expedients was lasting and soon we saw distilleries' fires, some few dismantled, some distillers being sued in the court on notes. Interest rates were eight and ten per cent and we saw one firm pleading usury to the amount of $50,000. Then we heard of trusts and many distilleries were bought by trusts and consolidated.

J. W. McCulloch Arrives

About this time J. W. McCulloch came to Owensboro as gauger, soon became interested in the whisky business, bought the Cliff Falls at Birk City, soon moved it to a site on the railroad west of the city and produced the famous Green River, the whisky without a headache, the most widely advertised whisky ever made. And sold his plant, brand and stocks to a New York firm for, it was said, some four millions, and out of the many who made liquid gold was the most outstanding. In these later days M. P. Mattingly sold the site of the Old Stone and moved the distillery to the site of the present Owensboro Clay Products plant. Following the three-year extension and boom, T. J. Monarch remodeled and enlarged his distillery at great expense, replacing the modest wooden building with brick. On top of the main building he placed a large eagle with extended wings and from then until now it was known as the Eagle Distillery Co. He, at great expense, replaced the old wooden fermenting tanks with glass ones, an experiment which proved to be a failure and was soon replaced with the regulation wooden ones. In the late nineties or early nineteen hundreds, the Eagle passed into the hands of strangers, out-of-town people, and was managed by O. H. Williams in its closing days.

Most Tragic Case

To me, the most tragic event of these days was the case of R. Monarch. He was a man very quiet, reserved, whose only diversion was work and attention to business, amassed a fortune of liquid gold, had an invalid wife, no children, a palace for a home, which is the present site of the Daviess County High school. His wealth melted like snow, and in his last days he bought a part of the Bon Harbor farm, and the Ed Murphy distillery at Newman and moved it between two hills on his farm and operated it for a year or two, but the “liquid gold” refuse to flow and soon died, but he never lost his courage and died fighting.

Old Fever Returns

After thirteen years, whisky has again become legal and the old fever to make gold liquid has got in people's systems and it remains to be seen whether distillers will profit by the memories of wrecks that strew the roadside in those days. It has been claimed that Daviess county whisky owed its superiority to the water in these parts. Yet, while deep wells furnished the most of the water, several distilleries, with great reputations got their water from ponds in which catfish swam and cows, horses and hogs drank and bathed.

Some expert tasters have claimed that they could pick out certain brands from a dozen unlabeled and unmarked bottles by the taste. A story is told of two Kentucky Colonels who were sampling whisky. One said he could detect a taste of iron, another said he could detect a taste of leather. To prove their contention, the barrel was emptied and in it was found a tack, the kind we used to buy that had a piece of leather on the head. Both were right.

In the days of the early distilleries, it was common for people to go there, to get a free drink. Two gentlemen went by a certain distillery and got a quart. On their way home they met the proprietor and asked him to take a drink out of their bottle. He acceded to their wishes and after he had drank, asked him what he thought of the whisky. He said, "after your hospitality. I do not like to criticise, but I think you have got a hold of some pretty damn mean whisky."

A new generation of boys and girls have grown to manhood and womanhood since these scenes were enacted, but few who lived in these times are still amongst us and this is written for the benefit of the new generation.

[Note: Parts of the preceding article, with a few edits, was published in the book, A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky, by Hugh O. Potter (Montgomery, AL: Herff Jones-Paragon Publishing, 1974) pp.119-121.]

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Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 3 November 1935, p.2A:

Henry S. Berry Gives His Reasons For Favoring Repeal Of Dry Amendment

Recently Henry S. Berry, 72-year-old Owensboro farmer who has lived on the same farm for 60 years, "a leader in cooperative marketing, one who has not touched intoxicating liquor for fifty-five years, one who has never run for office," gave an address over radio station WHAS, Louisville, telling why he "believes prohibition by law as has been exemplified is a failure" and why he believes in "handling the liquor question in a practical way." Excerpts from his address follow:

"When the United States entered the World war the slogan was: 'Food will win the war.' The Allies looked to the United States to furnish them with food. The war aroused the American people almost to frenzy of patriotism and they responded to the cry of more food to win the war. Millions of bushels of grain were being used every year to make alcoholic drinks and to conserve this grain for food for ourselves and the Allies, the idea of National Prohibition was born. Many, through patriotism and a desire to win the war at any sacrifice, joined the element who talked, had always talked temperance, and the Eighteenth Amendment was adopted by a majority of the states.

. . .

After many years of agitation by what seems to have been impractical theorists we had a trial from 1918 to 1933 of prohibition. I want to ask is there anybody who is satisfied with prohibition as exemplified during these years? Would you like to see conditions as they were during those days continue, or would you go back to the old way, as far as it was from an ideal condition?

A new word was coined, 'boot legger.' He was the distributor for those who, under the cover of darkness in some hole, made the liquor instead of the licensed distillers, and made it and sold it without paying any tax. The profits of this illicit trade became so great that little armies, generaled by some mastermind, were formed to manufacture, sell liquor, and to fix the courts and the officers of the law. In short, prohibition paved the way for the greatest criminal record the world ever saw and branded the United states as having the greatest number of criminals of any country on the globe.

. . .

"The government spent many millions to put a stop to this so-called rum-running. Under prohibition we never suffered for alcoholic drink, and had all the bad conditions and worse than we had before prohibition and did not get a cent of the four or five hundred million dollars that we collected before prohibition in the way of taxes on distilled spirits.

"Has prohibition been a success? If so, why were 50 per cent? of our criminal courts busy trying bootleggers, and why aid bootleggers make up 50 per cent of our jail population? Since the prohibition theory of handling the liquor question has placed that solution in the hands of the bootlegger and the underworld, by which we have had disorder, and without a cent of revenue from the government, is it not time for the logical, practical, thinking people to gain control? Since people will drink, why not pay the government the tax instead of the bootlegger?

. . .

"In 1934 the distillers bought ten million dollars worth of grain. They made some 800,000 barrels or whiskey and paid the State of Kentucky more than $3,600,000 in taxes. The 800,000 barrels used, cost more than two and a half million dollars, and were made by Kentucky labor and Out of Kentucky oak. These distillers also used 200,000 truck loads of coal that took 2,000 miners a month to mine. They also gave work to more than 30,000 men and women at good wages. Many of these men and women were on relief and bless the business that gave them bread and shelter.

"But as a farmer I am speaking from the farmers' viewpoint, and what It has meant to the farmer in these distressing times. The millions of bushels of grain used in manufacture of liquor have undoubtedly contributed toward raising the price of grain, thereby adding to the scanty income of the farmer. The by-product of the distillery is the slop. and the dry feed made from the slop. This slop is sold to the farmer at a low price, ten cents per barrel. This gives the farmer a chance to sell his grain and use this cheap slop for feed, thus adding to his income.

. . .

"At the November 5th election you will be asked to vote ' Yes' or 'No' on repeal of the state prohibition amendment. Kentucky voted by a majority of 152,000 for repeal of the Eighteenth amendment, but this vote did not repeal the Seventh or state-dry amendment,

"Prohibition by law is a theory that has been proved impractical and impossible by trial and by experience. Remember the states about you. Some 40 others have for repeal and will flood our state with liquor Th bootlegger will spring into life and your county will be flooded with vile liquor, will not pay a cent to either county or state.

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Messenger & Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 8 December 1935, p.1B:

Freaks of Weather Man Are Recalled by Henry S. Berry

Freaks in the weather in this vicinity were recalled the past week by Henry S. Berry, official weather observer for this district. Mr. Berry started his reminiscences with the winter of 1870-1871, which he said was one of intense cold. The ground was covered for weeks with deep snow, and there was much below zero weather. The year 1874 was a very dry year, with a very short crop

being grown. Tobacco sold for $20 a hundred. The following year was a very wet year. A promising crop was in prospect until the floods of July and August came which caused the lowlands from Cincinnati to the gulf to over flow and ruined the crops. The decay of the rank vegetation caused an outbreak of chills and fever and quinine at 50 cents an ounce was as common on the table as the molasses stand and sugar bowl, Mr. Berry stated.

Record Drop

A record change in temperature occurred in 1876. On December 8, of that year at 3 p.m. the temperature stood at 75 degrees and by the next morning there was a heavy snow storm, with a temperature of 15 degrees below zero, and much ice in the river.

On November 2, 1879, it snowed enough to whiten the ground, melted in 24 hours, snowed again on November 6 and from that time on until March 1, the ground was never without snow and much below zero temperature was experienced. In 1885 and 1886 extreme cold weather was experienced and Mr. Berry stated that many western range cattle starved and froze to death. On January 1. 1890, a heavy sleet covered the ground and until the middle of February it was a common thing for cattle in hilly sections to slip from hills to bottoms, and having to be fed there for weeks. He remembers that men and boys had a great time skating as the length of the skating ground was unlimited for it was all covered with ice. On Christmas day, in 1894, he remembers the sleet fell so heavy that countless trees were broken down and telephone and telegraph wires were a complete wreck. Not a telephone was in operation here and it was April before the entire service was restored.

Coldest Weather

The coldest weather Mr. Berry remembers was February 14, 1899, when a temperature of 21 degrees below zero was reached. Another freak In variety, Mr. Berry states occurred in 1917. On December 6, of that year, at 3 p.m. the temperature was 75 degrees. On the morning of December 7, a violent snow storm was raging and on December 8, the temperature was 11 degrees below zero, with 16 inches of snow on the ground. Within a week the snow was gone and the weather had moderated. On January 5, 1918, it again turned cold with an 18-inch snowfall and 20-below-zero temperature. There was much below zero temperature until about February 10.

On July 6, 1930, the thermometer stood at 106 degrees.

A record rainfall occurred in 1923 when 59.62 inches was reported. This was about 15.62 inches above the average of 44 inches.

High, Low Readings

High and low temperatures for the last 10 years , were reported as follows by Mr. Berry:

Year	Degrees High	Low
1926	101	8
1927	96	4
1928	93	6
1929	97	-5
1930	106	-20
1931	101	11
1932	95	1
1933	100	3
1934	96	1
1935	97	1

<u>Owensboro Messenger</u>, Owensboro, KY, 15 January 1939, p.3B:

Henry Berry Describes Owensboro In Days When Town Was Without Railroad

By Mrs. J. E. (Ida) Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger staff

Owensboro now leading as an industrial center and point of business activity was not always one of the most progressive cities in the United States. In fact a few of the older residents can recall when Owensboro was only a small town without even a railroad, and when the Ohio river and horseback furnished the only means of transportation. And even more interesting is the fact that Owensboro was so isolated at that time, that in winter months when the river was frozen, thus barring boats, the only way in which supplies could be secured was by bringing them via wagon or horseback from Louisville.

Henry Berry, one of the few remaining residents who have memories of the 1860's, vividly describes Owensboro when the Ohio river was in its heyday. Mr. Berry's early boyhood was virtually spent on the banks of the river for when he was four years old in 1868 his parents moved to their home at a point near where Dam No. 46 is now located. In telling of his early home Mr. Berry reminisces:

"This was a good residential section. All of the traffic from the western section of the county came into Owensboro in this neighborhood. A road followed the river and came up to a point where Plum street now joins the river, then came one square south and then into Walnut street, and then then Main street and down town. That road along the river was abandoned about the early 70's. There was a heavy growth of timber along the river bank at that time, but cave-ins that followed heavy rain storms, forced this road to be abandoned.

"A deep ravine extended from where the canning factories are now located up to Walnut and Cedar streets, and then to the river at a point where the county stables are now located. A foot bridge had been built between Cedar and Walnut streets, to permit people to cross the ravine into Main street.

No Railroads

"At that time the only mode of transportation was the river or horseback. This was before the days of the railroad. Every farm had a wagon, but few had buggies or carriages. Sleds were very common. Oxen at this time were more common than horses.

"Transportation was very uncertain. The river, during winter months, was frequently frozen over until early Spring. Our principal point of contact was Louisville. All transportation with Louisville, at times when the river was frozen, was by horseback or wagon. Little freight was hauled in those times.

"The boats, in those days, were large and of heavy tonnage. In summer the river frequently was so low that these heavy boats would hang on sand bars and would be held there, sometimes, for several days. The boats would be pried loose with spars — long poles — if they were not too badly hung. Otherwise boats would come to their rescue and pull them off the bars. This reminds me of one trip to Louisville by boat, when on returning the boat became grounded at Portland, just outside of Louisville. We were hung up for 24 hours and I well remember how the railing of the

boat on which I was riding, was pulled loose by the rescue boat, as it attempted to pull our boat off the sand into deeper water.

Russellville Line Built

“Then the first railroad was built, from Owensboro to Russellville. This relieved the situation to some extent, but people shipped freight by boat.

“At that time we had three of boats, one line running from Cincinnati to New Orleans, another from Cincinnati to Memphis and the Louisville to Evansville boats. I remember vividly the Robert E. Lee and the Natchez, that took part in that famous race between New Orleans and St. Louis These two boats passed cut of the picture in the early 70's, having served their purpose.

"On the Louisville-Evansville line were the sidewheel steamers, Tarascon, the Morning Star and Gray Eagle. The Tarascon had a famous whistle. This whistle had taken from a boat that burned in earlier years, in the Mississippi. The whistle of the boat was so distinctive and so sweet, that everybody knew it, it was like knowing someone's voice. The owners of the Tarascon prized this whistle so highly that when the boat finally was dismantled, the whistle was saved and put on other boat. This whistle passed out of our memory, when steamboating was abandoned in later years.

Large Steamer Sinks

"The Cincinnati-Memphis line had stern-wheel boats. The steamers were immense in size. On a Sunday evening in 1884, in February, I think, the steamer Carrier, during a heavy fog, ran into Ewing Island. The boat was broken in two and completely wrecked. The boat sank, as the river was very high at that time. Everything that could float, floated on down the river. There was no loss of life although there was a heavy passenger list. Ferryboats, skiffs and the like rescued the passengers. The people in those days loved to travel. Fare on the steamers was sumptuous.

“Sometime near the time the Carrier sank, the De Soto, a steamer of the same line, anchored near where Dam No. 46 is now located. It caught fire early in the morning and burned. The entire cargo was destroyed. It was a big stern-wheeler and was loaded with all manner of freight. All passengers on the boat of course was able to get to land and there was no loss of life.

“The wreckage of the carrier remained on Ewing Island for many many years, in fact I think it has been gone only about 15 years or so. It eventually just disappeared rotted away, returning to its own in Mother Earth.

“In those days there was an active line of small stern-wheelers. It was owned by Hawesville and Cannelton interests and the boats plied between Hawesville and Evansville. This line also had a famous steamer ,the Judelle that had a strange whistle, one that everybody remembered. It could be heard for miles."

Railroads In later years, the uncertain of the river and modern civilization finally wrote finis for all of these old boats — boats that were as real friends and of which people spoke affectionately in those days for they were the river homes of the traveling public.

Navigable River Needed

The coming of railroad traffic in about 1900 changed transportation ideas somewhat. Fare to Louisville by boat was $4 This however included “bed and board.” Fare on the railroad was around 3 cents a mile or nearly $3.50. This was regarded as oppressive by the traveling public and immediately there was a demand to make the river navigable at all times of the year. A sentiment was born at this time to put the river back in use in opposition to the railroads.

In the early 1900's people began to appeal to Congress for aid, and Congress made vast appropriations to make the river navigable the year round. Of this Mr. Berry stated:

“In 1907, as a director of the Owensboro Chamber of Commerce, I was appointed to represent Owensboro in a meeting of deep-waterway interests at Memphis. Theodore Roosevelt was then president. The lock and dam situation was discussed and everybody approved it enthusiastically. A year later I went to Wheeling, W. Va., and in 1909 attended a deep waterway in Cincinnati.

“The river never came former pomp and glory. But why?

"Around 1910 there began an agitation for good roads. A few years previous the auto had been born and this brought about not only an agitation, but a necessity for good roads for as the boats needed a navigable river, so the auto needed a passable road. Autos were made faster than steamers therefore good roads became numerous.

“In the early part of this century we saw railroads put the river on the side lines. I firmly believe it is only a matter of time until the motor trucks will put the railroads in the same position.

"It took good roads to make the automobile, and the automobile industry brought us a rising industrial civilization. From those early years when we had only mud paths, I advocated and saw this county build a system of hard roads, the year round. Adjoining counties and states built the same roads and now it is possible to reach practically any section of the United States any time of the year.

"I have seen transportation move from the mudholes in the earth and rise to the clouds in the sky during my lifetime. If the next three-quarters of a century sees as much progress as I have witnessed, I often wonder what civilization a hundred years from now will be privileged to experience.”

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 22 January 1939, p.3A:

Henry Berry Recalls Period When Roads In Daviess County Resembled Mere Mud Paths

By Mrs. J. E. (Ida) Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger staff

An ever-changing civilization that brought every possible from convenience in transportation from motor vehicles of the most practical type to good roads almost as smooth as the old parlor floor, makes one forget all too soon that not always did good roads exist, or even any roads. And in the not too-distant past automobiles were not even dreamed of.

Today when one can travel smoothly over highways to practically any portion of the country, at any time of year, few persons think of the hardships and difficulties of their ancestors.

Reflecting on his boyhood days, Henry S. Berry, of Owensboro recalls the type of roads in this vicinity as early as late 1860's. Narrow paths, called mud roads, over which residents walked, rode on horseback, or by wagon or sled, commonly called mud-boats by many were a problem, especially in winter months and during rainy seasons. In dry seasons they were also a problem for dust was as difficult to travel as deep mud.

After the era of the mudroads or lanes came the first good roads. Of these Mr. Berry states:

First Turnpikes Built

"The first good roads in Kentucky were called turnpikes. They were built by private capital. At the edge of the city was erected and a pole laid across the road to prevent anyone passing. A

tollgate keeper was stationed there and he collected toll from all who passed. Toll was paid according to the number of miles traveled. Horseback, wagon and other modes of transportation all had their specific charge.

"In the early 80's Mort Field, S. M. Deane and others built the first turnpikes in this county. The roads over the state at that time were being built generally out of limestone. However, limestone not being available here, the men used river gravel and bank gravel – gravel taken from the sand banks above town.

"The roads were cheap and often were in a bad state of repair. However, tolls were collected just the same. The roads paid good dividends and investments in gravel roads were considered a good investment at that time.

"In some sections of the state at that time people formed mobs and rebelled against the toll charges. Objection to the toll system became so great that the toll system was abandoned and the roads were taken over by the county. There were no mobs in this county.

Old Hardinsburg Road

"The first turnpike was built on what is now the Hardinsburg road or Highway 60, east of Owensboro. It was built out to Thruston and there forked into two roads just as it does now. The road extended five miles from Owensboro to the end of each fork. I don't remember the charges. A man by the name of Montgomery was toll keeper on this road. His home was located near the toll gate. The toll gate was located just a little beyond what is now the I. C. depot in east Fourth street.

"The next turnpike was what is now the old Henderson road. This road reached nearly to Sorgho. A branch off of this was the Calhoun road built where the old Calhoun road came into the Henderson road. The Calhoun road extended about five miles from the city limits. Joe Stewart was the early tollkeeper.

"Then we had a toll road from the city limits out three miles on what is now Highway 60, west of Owensboro. It was known as the Berry road and extended out to a point where the home of George Rudy is now located. The first toll keeper was John Devins and the toll gate was located at a point where Crabtree avenue is now located.

"Another short toll road extended out what is now called the Leitchfield road. The toll gate was located in the vicinity of what is now Chautauqua park.

County Buys Roads

"I was one of a committee of three named to buy these toll roads for the county in the early part of this century. I don't recall the names of the other two men on the committee.

"Prior to the building of turnpikes in Daviess county, the condition of roads was deplorable. In winter time the roads were little more than mud paths. In summer time there was deep dust, and often it was impossible to see more than 25 yards ahead of one's horse.

"Prior to the turnpikes I recall two plank roads. The Frederica street road was plank road out to a point where Utica is now located. This section was a swamp almost from the city limits to Panther creek and beyond. The plank road, made of planks laid crosswise, reached for about three miles beyond the city limits of Owensboro. On the Berry road we had a plank road of about a half mile in the vicinity of where the Fuqua farm is now located. There were other small stretches of plank roads in the county, but I cannot recall them.

"People grew tired of mud roads after purchase of the turnpikes and the county issued bonds to secure funds with which to build good roads. The first bond issue for roads, and by the way the only one issued to build roads in this county, was for $600,000. I think practically all of these bonds have been paid off now.

Auto Changes Roads

Between 1910-15 the auto made its appearance and road-building fever took possession of the people. Gas tax, auto tax, state appropriations and other means gave us roads that can be traveled any season of the year."

As an example indicating how rapidly the coming of good roads changed industry, Mr. Berry cited an Owensboro experience. "In 1924," Mr. Berry stated, "the Owensboro Forging company purchased the Courtland Buggy Co., of New York, a fine concern with a good business. Although automobiles were rapidly making their inroads in the buggy industry, it was our contention that there was an excellent field of business for output of a buggy factory in the South, as buggies continued popular in Southern sections of the United States. The factory was moved to Owensboro and within six months the demand for buggies had vanished completely.

"We got people out of the mud onto roads that can be traveled the entire year. And we are making the man that uses the road pay for it, a very commendable method. This method could well be followed as an example for the betterment civilization today.

"I firmly believe that my staunch loyalty to the cause of good roads was brought about by the hardships I had to endure as a boy. I was errand boy for my father and traveled the roads day and night, winter and summer, in all kinds of weather. In those days we did not have the warm clothes we now have. Only the very wealthy men had overcoats. As a boy, I had none, and other than my flannel underwear and suits, it was up to my bay mare to get me there in a hurry or else I suffered the cold of the winter days. I remember often riding behind my father and clinging to him under his great cloak. He had a cloak that reached to his ankles. This cloak was large enough to keep us both warm. Men in those days wore large woolen shawls instead of overcoats. I clearly remember seeing Daniel M. Griffith, Clinton Griffith, Camden Riley, James Sutton and others, all of whom have long passed on, appearing on the streets in cold weather, clasping these huge warm shawls about them to protect them from the elements."

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 29 January 1939, p.5B:

Henry Berry Recalls That Ponds Once Covered Large Part Of City, County

By Mrs. J. E. (Ida) Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger staff

Daviess county, now well-drained and practically free of large swamps and marshes, was many years ago, known throughout the state as being a very unhealthful section, a section of country where swamps abounded and where stagnant water stood throughout the year.

It is hard to realize that in the heart of Owensboro, in the vicinity of Daviess street, south from Fifth street, there was a large pond the year round, so large that it was fishing ground for boys in the summer, and provided skating for the young people in winter. So states Henry S. Berry, in recalling the vast change he has witnessed in the general topography of Owensboro and Daviess county.

In Owensboro fine residential sections now cover the territory that was once covered by ponds and marshes. In the county fine farming land was the result of early attempts at draining thousands of acres that were covered by water most of the 12 months in the year.

Mr. Berry, in recalling to memory early drainage and health conditions stated: "My mother frequently told me of a visit to Daviess county of her father, John Hagan, sometime during the 1850s. He came here from Marion county. His intentions were to survey prospects and make investments here for his children in farm lands. He investigated lands on the Henderson road at that time a choice section. The road has always been known as the Henderson road, being at that time the link between Owensboro and Henderson.

Recalls 1875 Flood

"He liked the land very much, but because of the unhealthful condition of this section at that time he did not make the investments. Daviess county was known as a very unhealthful section because a large part of it was undrained swamp land. In 1874 we had a very dry year. The year 1875 was a very wet year during the summer months. The Ohio river overflowed from Cincinnati to Paducah. This took place in August and was known as the "August rise." Corn was in the roasting ear stage. The decay of that vegetation was most damaging to health. We have had many wet summer, but that August was the wettest m all history. We had an epidemic for years of chills and fever as a result of that flood. Quinine was put on the table the same as the sugar bowl in most homes for years after that. There was hardly a family but what was afflicted with chills and fever. Many cases turned into typhoid. The weakened condition from chills made people more susceptible to the ravishes of typhoid and there were many deaths from typhoid. Quinine rose to the unheard of price of $7 an ounce with tariff. James McKinzie, our congressman at that time, won the favor of this section by removing the tariff from quinine.

"When I moved to my present home in March 1876, the big road was covered with water so deep that it came up and into wagon beds right in front of my house. There was no drainage. The section that is today drained by Panther creek and Green river, was at that time all swamp land. Only the higher lands were safe from water. The low lands were continuous risks.

"I tried for a good many years to get the people about me to join me in draining what was then the Persimmon pond that reached from the left of Main street at the western city limits to Green river. This was a level stretch of swamp lands that covered thousands of acres. It was fifteen miles long and about two miles wide depending on the amount of rain. Persimmon pond was a menace to farmers. In dry seasons it remained low but in wet seasons it would get up on the high land.

Compulsory Drainage Law

"Sometime in the 90s there was a compulsory drainage law in Indiana. I went to Rockport and bought the Indiana statutes, turned them over to R. G. Hill, Owensboro attorney, and had a law drafted similar to that and we presented and had passed in the legislature in the early 90s.

"After that I did not have to ask anyone to help me drain. Soon other drainage districts were established and soon we had the country dry and healthful. Drainage became a common thing. Before the late 90s, this county was drained and became as healthful as any section in Kentucky.

"Ponds that had been located all along the Ohio river, Green river and Panther creek disappeared.

"The skating grounds for Owensboro in those days was the section not far from the present site of the Third Baptist church on Daviess street south from Fifth two or three squares. This was a pond and we fished there in the summer and there in winter."

<u>Owensboro Messenger</u>, Owensboro, KY, 5 February 1939, p.5B:

Henry S. Berry Remembers Building Of The First Railroad In Owensboro

By Mrs. J. E. (Ida) Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger staff

In this age of well regulated train schedules, with train transportation to every section of the country possible, it is hard to realize that the time was, not so many years ago, when Owensboro was without a railroad. In the days before the railroad, the Ohio river served this section well, whenever the water was of sufficient depth for boats to travel.

Even with the coming of the first railroad, according to Henry S. Berry, the trains in and out of Owensboro did not run according to schedule, here but rather according to the trains with which they connected at Russellville. The first railroad Owensboro had was the Russellville branch of the L. & N. railroad. Of this early road, Mr. Berry says:

"In the late 60s the L. & N. Russellville branch was built Owensboro with Russellville. The passenger and freight service were combined in one train. There was one train a day out at 5 o'clock in the morning and it was supposed to come in at 9 o'clock at night depending on the L. & .N connections at Russellville. If the connection there was late, then the train into Owensboro was late. This was the first railroad into Owensboro. At this time I was about four years old.

Early Postoffice

"Several years later when I was only seven years old and we lived on Hanning avenue, just a block off of Main street. I had to meet the trains for the mails at 9 o'clock at night. When the train was late, I had to wait until it did come in and many nights I had to wait until 10 and 11 o'clock, get the mail and take it to my father. Then as it frequently necessitated an answer, my father would answer the mail and I was told to see that it got on the train that went out at 5 o'clock in the morning. Quite a task and responsibility for a seven year old boy. I had a little bay mare, fast as a bullet, that I rode to the postoffice that was at that time where the Masonic building is now located. It was a small one-story building. On mornings if I got to the postoffice after the mail had already gone out I would ride out to Lewis and Fourteenth street where they had a roundhouse and meet the train out there. I never missed catching the train. My father's instructions were to "Catch the train or kill the horse in trying." I always caught the train. I was known over town by the manner in which I rode that horse.

"The L. H. & St. L. was built in the early 90s by the McCracken brothers. It ran from Louisville to St. Louis, through Owensboro and Henderson, the St. Louis train being made up at Henderson. Evansville was added in later years.

"The first railroad station located at Lewis and the river. The train for years did not go to the station, but discharged its passengers at Fifth and Lewis streets. In the earlier years there was no station. Tickets were sold on the train. The station was built in the early 70s at a spot where the Ohio river bridge is now being built. Later the L. and N. built a modern stone passenger station at Fifteenth and Frederica streets.

"When I attended the Hart school we had few toys and it was my delight to take two pins, lay them crosswise on the tracks, let the train run over them and then pick up the pins which had been converted into a pair of scissors. It was in those early years that I learned to make my own toys. I at this time learned to make a jumping jack. I still make them, and only this last Christmas made a dozen that I distributed among children on the farm — and a few adults in Owensboro.

"In the late 90s the Falls of Rough railroad was built. It was built by M. V. Monarch and S. M. Deane and J. W. M. Field to give the people in Fordsville and Falls of Rough an outlet. It

connected with the "Texas" road at Hardinsburg. It started here, went to Fordsville and Falls of Rough and then to Hardinsburg where it connected with the L. H. St. L. ("Texas") road. On this road I think they had four trains, two each way a day. This road was later purchased by the I. C. and the three roads combined and built the Union station.

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 12 February 1939, p.2B:

Henry Berry Recalls Cannel Coal Formerly Mined In Daviess County

By Mrs. J. E. (Ida) Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger staff

Cannel coal, a coal containing much volatile matter, and burning a bright flame, was at one time mined in Daviess county, according to Henry S. Berry when he was asked to comment on early coal mining history of Daviess county. Cannel coal belonged to the early days of the county and was shipped to distant cities in the east where it was converted into gas, Mr. Berry states.

Almost from the very beginning of Daviess county coal has been one of its products and was used by passing boats as fuel. Then, as now, the Bon Harbor hills section contained the principal mines. In speaking of the early mines, Mr. Berry stated:

"In the early days forests abounded. There was wood everywhere. The homes were heated by wood fires. Food was cooked over wood, in a fireplace. Cookstoves were an unknown product to those early settlers. Every house had an immense fireplace and logs were used as a foundation to keep the fire going. In every fireplace was a crane, on which an iron pot was suspended and the bulk of the food was cooked in that pot. Hot coals were used to cook the bread and potatoes The pot was used to cook the meat and vegetables.

Cooking Methods Change

"I have often seen, in our home, quails dressed, seasoned, then wrapped in paper Mud was spread around the paper and the package placed in the hot coals. When done the quail was the most delightful morsel imaginable. It was delicious. although it was cooked quite contrary to the modern methods of roasting or baking and probably not quite in keeping with some ideas of our present day home economists.

"In the early 70s we began to improve conditions by using coal to heat our homes and cook our food. There were out-croppings of coal in this section, especially in the Bon Harbor section, and the person who knew coal could secure it without much trouble.

"The early steamboats were fueled by wood. It must have been in the early 60s when mines opened at Hawesville and Bon Harbor so I was told. The boats then turned from wood to coal for fuel at these places.

Tramway To River

"At Hon Harbor, a tramway was built from the river, all the way up into the hills, so that coal could be brought down to the river bank. This tramway remained there as late as the middle 80s. It was located on what was known as Bon Harbor farm that belonged to the Barretts, a very prominent and wealthy family, prominent both in Owensboro and Henderson. It reached the river just beyond the flat of the Bon Harbor hills.

“The mines at this time were all slope mines, that is, miners just dug into the hill. A wooden track was laid into the hill. Small cars, holding about 15 bushels were pulled out of the mines by mules. As long as I can remember Bon Harbor has been associated with the Barrett family, therefore I presume the Barrett family operated this first mine. My earliest recollections are that coal cost about 6 cents a bushel at the mine.

"Since that time there have been numerous mines opened and abandoned in the Bon Harbor hills.

Cannel Coal Early Product

“There were two kinds of coal mined, cannel coal and soft coal. Cannel coal was a very hard substance, highly inflammable, full of gas, and my recollection is that it was shipped to the big cities there to be converted into gas. I have often seen men whittling it into ornaments especially watch chain ornaments. It did not break up like our common coal. I don't hear of it anymore, therefore it must have all been mined, and shipped away.

"The next mines were opened by S. M. Deane. His first mine was located west of Bon Harbor, off what is now the Roost road. Then he opened a mine on what is new Highway 60, across the road from where the residence of Geo. Rudy is now located. This he operated until his death, and then it operated by his sons.

Later Mines

“C. L. Nall lived on what is now the Rudy home, and operated a mine on that farm. Then George Rudy and Henry Overstreet opened a mine in that vicinity. They disolved partnership and Mr. Rudy opened up a mine on adjoining land.

"The Walker boys opened a mine on the Berry road in the same chain of hills the other mines were operating. Later Lee Rudy opened a mine and in the same neighborhood, James Rudy had also opened a mine in that same chain of hills.

“In the West Louisville section there is a chain of hills in which many mines have been opened, and some are still being operated. Much of the land in the Moseleyville section is also underlaid with coal that is being mined and brought to the Owensboro market. In over a period of 50 years the railroad has brought much coal from the Muhlenberg county field and west Kentucky”

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 19 February 1939, p.3B:

Many Private Schools In Early Owensboro, Henry Berry Recalls

By Mrs. J. E. (Ida) Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger staff

Private schools in Owensboro that have been out of existence for many years, were recalled the past week by Henry S Berry, Owensboro, when he was asked to comment on the early institutions of learning in Owensboro

Most of the early schools were private. Of them Mr. Berry says:

“My earliest recollections are of attending Henry Hart school on Fifth street between Lewis and Daviess This was a private school. Hart was known as one of the most outstanding educators in this part of the country. I was seven years old and was the youngest child he taught.

"Mr. Hart taught upstairs. Mrs. M. E. Singleton taught girls on the first floor. This family has now passed on. She had one daughter that married J. J. Sweeney, an attorney. Another married Whit Clarke, tobacconist.

Old Hart School

"When Latin and other classes came on, the girls came upstairs and joined the boys' classes. All grades were in the same room upstairs and the girls all in one room downstairs. There were only the two teachers. Mrs. Hart used to aid Mr. Hart and took his place on various occasions.

"The old desks were large enough for a boy to walk under. I was hid from view, being a small boy sitting behind one of those large desks. It was easy for me to slip out and Prof. Hart would be unaware of mv absence. I delighted in going down to a grocery on Lewis street adjoining the Hart property. W. B. Cosby owned the store and it was attended by Lewis Dillman who told long tales of the Spokane gold rush that he had weathered. I liked to listen to his stories. One day one of my classes came up when I was out. Professor Hart of course missed me and sent a Fred Hager, father of our present Fred Hager, after me. Hager threw me across his shoulder, and carried me, kicking, to the school where Prof. Hart administered a leather strap while I was on Hager's back.

"Exhibition time came every June. This was an event in which every class participated. We had a song "Little Johnny Smoker" that I was going to sing at the exhibition. My voice had no tone but plenty of volume. One afternoon when I was running behind the buggy, on my way home—the buggy was too full for me to ride inside, so I ran along behind — I skidded and the buggy ran over my foot mashing it considerably. Came exhibition time and my song. My foot was all wrapped up in bandages and I sang that song, with full volume and bandages. S. T. Kenneday who lived at Fourth and Allen streets, and for many years was mayor and a prominent resident of Owensboro sat in the front row at the program. The combination of song, boy and bandages was to him a huge joke and until I became a grown man every time Mr. Kenneday met me he mocked my singing and my bandages, much to my embarrassment and consternation.

Only Living Pupil

"Of all the boys and girls who attended the old Hart school I am the only living survivor, as far as I know. Prof. Hart died in the 70s. Our E. W. Smith married into this well known old family.

"After several years that old Hart school properly was purchased by St. Stephen's and converted into a boy's school. The Sisters of Charity taught there for a number of years. This was followed by St. Frances at the present location.

"There was the old Columbian college, located in the Monarch residence that is now Daviess county high school. In order to get it established help was asked. I was one of eight men that bought that building. Professor John Cooney was head of the school. Lacking support, the school went out of existence after only a few years. The school was attended by both Protestants and Catholics.

"My first recollection of a public school was one located off Main street between Poplar and Elm. This was a two-room building and Prof Otis was teacher. Only a few pupils attended.

We saw sometimes in the late 60s a two-room brick school on the lot that is now the Third street school. The teachers were Miss Rachel Wandling and Mrs. May Ayers. In the early 70s the two-story building was built facing Main street on the same block.

Lower Ward School Built

"About that time the lower ward building was built on Walnut street now Woodrow Wilson school. At this time I was m the fifth grade in this school. Our class was conducted in the basement.

Our room had five windows. Outside of these windows, four other pupils and I each bad a flower garden, one pupil to each garden outside each window. During the noon hour and recess we took care of our gardens in connection with our classes in botany —botany in the Fifth grade

"Our teacher was Mrs. Viola Moseley, a most beautiful character. We loved that teacher as we did our own mother. After I left Miss Viola's room I went to Miss Valley Williams' room, one of three sisters all of them teachers. Their father was a Baptist preacher. This family passed away before the 80s.

"Owensboro always had its share of private schools. In the late 70s Prof. Wines and his daughter taught a private school on the corner of Walnut street. They taught languages. Following him was a Mrs. Phillips. That was her property and she succeeded Prof. Wines. She was followed by a Mrs. Van Rensalaer and daughter, Minnie, and Miss Mollie Howard. This school remained here for long years and was attended by the wealthier families and people from the country. It was the advanced school for the people from the country. The country schools at that time offered only a very meager education.

William Pottinger, who taught for several years in the old Hart school, and an old county teacher, conducted a school for several years in the old Hart building before the Sisters of Charity took possession of it.

Prof. Peay Has School

"Then we had Prof. Peay and wife who taught a select school on Main street between Lewis and Daviess.

"Ben Bransford, father of Mort Bransford, built a building on the ground now occupied by the city hall. In this building was located the Bransford School for Girls, a select private school. This stayed through the 70s as far as I remember. He was mayor of Owensboro for a number of years and was a prominent tobacco man in my father's early days.

"Prof. W. H. Stuart conducted the Female Academy where the Trade school is now located. This was built by stockholders in the 80's and 90's. Other instructors conducted the school after the death of Prof. Stuart. This property was later acquired by the public school system and became the Longfellow school and now the Owensboro Trade High School.

"In the early part of 1900, the Rapier Brothers opened Ellendale College for Boys near Curdsville. It was conducted for two years after which the Rapier's came to Owensboro and opened their mill and feed establishment.

"The select schools were attended in many cases by boys whom the public schools did not want."

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 26 February 1939, p.3B:

Henry Berry Recalls Early History Of Making Of Sour Mash Whisky In Daviess County

By Mrs. J. E. (Ida) Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger staff

A history of early Owensboro would be incomplete without a resume of the whisky industry In this section. Brands marketed by Owensboro distilleries have been famous throughout

the world for many years. Henry Berry's father E. C. Berry operated one of the first distilleries in this section. Mr. Berry when asked to tell of the early distilleries stated:

"My first recollections are when my father bought the R. G. Moorman pork packing plant located just below the dam. I rode into that building which had a low door that pulled me off my horse. That packing plant operated from 1865 to about 1867. In that neighborhood was a settlement of Irish. They had worked in the packing plant. My father, E. C. Berry, later turned this plant into a distillery. He made the first whisky that was made in this community under the tax law. It was known as the E. C. Berry distillery and was started in 1867. Everything was hand made sour mash whisky in those days. The foundation of whisky was cornmeal that was put in a barrel, with strap attached, and men packed these barrels to mash tubs. Then it was dumped into tubs and boiling water added. A stick with a hole bored into it called a mash stick, was used to stir up the mixture until was a smooth mixture. It stayed there 48 hours until it fermented. Then it was put into what was called a beer cistern. In 72 hours from the time it was started in the tub it was put in fermenting vats and distilled. Then it was placed into charred barrels and aged. It was placed in a warehouse and every 12 months had to come out for taxes. The warehouses were bonded warehouses under supervision of the storekeepers and the tax had to be paid every 12 months. Whisky at that time went into consumption at 12 months.

Distillery Building Starts

"Within two years time the apparent success of this distillery was instrumental in a number of distilleries starting up in this section and the expression they were common as gasoline stations would have been suitable.

"Father's whisky was sold before it was made. He started out at making five barrels a day. A number made from one to five barrels and later as the demand rose father increased the capacity of his distillery to ten barrels. The Monarch family went into the distilling business. Dan opened up down on Fifth street about two squares above Crabtree avenue. He died in 1871 and was succeeded by Dick Monarch. That distillery burned and then he bought what later was known as the Daviess County Distilling Co., that had been built by Cunningham and Trigg of Louisville in 1873, a little below where the Field Packing plant is now located, on the river.

"Tom Monarch in the late 60s built what they called the Eagles distillery at Grissom's landing, a part of the foundation of that distillery is still to be seen. All plants seemed to be prospering put soon operators faced the problem of making more whisky than they could sell. Then they appealed to congress and secured a law giving them three years in which to pay the tax. The effects of that law brought about the greatest boom the whisky industry has ever known.

"Distilleries were becoming as common as gas stations are now. We saw a great boom in Daviess county but soon the tax came due, and the stock had to move so the lax could be paid. Then they resorted to a law called the export law in which they shipped their whisky to Bremen, in Germany and other places under the guise of selling it. As quick as they could find a market it was reimported. That went on up until the late 90s by which time they appealed to the government and secured an extension of eight years in which to pay the tax. The same law was still in effect when prohibition came into effect.

First Distillery

"The first distillery we ever had here was up on the river near where the Rapier feed mill is located. A man by the name of Bailey operated it. I went to school with his daughter, Emma Bailey, but in later years lost contact with the family. It went out of existence after about 1870. Another old distillery was located where the county stables now are back of the Guenther warehouse. It was the Reed distillery which in after years was moved to the county on what was

later the Cole Fuqua land west of Owensboro on Highway 60. The land is now owned by the Keen estate. Then John Hanning, opened in the late 60s on the Yelvington road eight miles east of Owensboro on Pup creek. This distillery was in existence up until about 1875. About 1871 Mort Field married Mr. Hanning's daughter and worked with Hanning for a short while when he bought the Reed distillery and moved it out on the Pleasant Valley road. Some of the buildings are still to be seen today on the old site, near the C. O. Evans home.

“Another old distillery was located just off the Calhoun road on the Lyddane bridge road and operated by a Mr. Boulware who owned his own land there. This distillery operated until about 1875.

"Those were the old-time distilleries. My father died in 1877. Hill and Perkins bought my father's distillery. In 1876 my father spent $10,000 in rebuilding his distillery. A year later it was sold to Hill and Perkins for $2,700. Speaking about the storms on the river when the high waters come there is usually a severe storm from the northwest. On a February night in 1876 such a storm occurred and the bank caved in 60 feet and it was necessary to move the building to save the distillery. It was put on rollers and moved back. Then came the boom years of 79. We saw all these old distilleries tremendously enlarged.

"We saw S. M. Deane and Henry and James Herr and Nick Lancaster, convert a grist mill on the river where the Daviess County distillery now is located, into a distillery.

Old Stone Distillery

"One of the great distilleries was the old Stone distillery, operated by W. S. Stone. This was on the River road on the farm now owned by Sam Ewing. The main buildings of the farm now stand where the distillery stood from the late 60s for many years. Stone in a few years, sold this to M. P. Mattingly and Nick Lancaster. In a few years Mattingly bought out Lancaster. Then Lancaster went in with Deane and Herr in their venture.

"There was at this time, a distillery built across the ravine by M. P. Mattingly and J. M. Herr. This had a brief existence for two or three years possibly. In that boom John Thixton built a distillery on the ground where the water works plant is now located. A. Rosenfeld built another on adjoining property. The Thixton distillery burned and was not rebuilt. Then it was that Rosenfeld purchased the distillery being operated by Deane, Herr and Lancaster, and changed its name to Rock Springs, that became a well known distillery and operated up until prohibition.

“M. V. Monarch built a distillery on the Hardinsburg road just above the present Glenmore. The J. T. Welch Distillery Co., what is now the Glenmore was built during this '79 boom.

"The Gerteisen boys, Louis arid his brother, built a small distillery on Pup creek close to the river.

"When the Hanning distillery ceased operation its brand was purchased by Gabe Crutcher and another man whose name I do not remember and who operated it for a long time.

“Near the Field Packing Co., Hill & Perkins associated with Abe Berryman, a saddler, built another E. C. Berry distillery. That plant ceased operation long before prohibition.

Famous Green River Plant

“After the 1879 boom and before they got the extension nearly all the distillers were broke. They were being sued by the banks. Cleveland was defeated for his second term in 1888 and when the new administration came in in 1889, J. W. McCulloch came to Owensboro and served as gauger in the revenue service. In about a year he bought an interest in a small distillery, the Cliff Falls, on Green river. After a year he built the celebrated Green River distillery on the Texas railroad, just west of Owensboro .This operated up until prohibition. He made a tremendous success of the "whisky without a headache."

Distillery Fires

"Ed Murphy operated a distillery at Newman in the late 90s. It was a small distillery and was purchased by Dick Monarch and moved to his Bon Harbor farm.

"W. L. Berry had a distillery on what is known as the Berry road in those days, now Highway 60. This also burned. It was built in the early 70s and burned in '72.

"One of the famous distillery fires was the Green River distillery fire. The fire started in a freight car at 6 p. m. It spread to the bottling plant and then to a warehouse. There were about four warehouses and the distillery. It was strange that as each building burned, the wind shifted to throw the fire to adjoining buildings, and so on until every building on the premises was burned down. This distillery was not rebuilt. McCulloch had sold the plant to eastern interests and it was abandoned after the fire. All that marks that site is a warehouse that was built in later years used for many years as a storage warehouse by the tobacco pool."

<u>Owensboro Messenger</u>, Owensboro, KY, 5 March 1939, p.2B:

Henry Berry Recalls Early Owensboro Plants

By Mrs. J. E. (Ida) Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger staff

Almost since its beginning industry has played an important part in the affairs of Owensboro. In fact from the very beginning the founder of Yellow Banks, as Owensboro was first known, carried on his trading with passersby. Factories were located here as early as 1860 and possibly even earlier. From his own memory and from accounts of history as passed down from generation, Henry S. Berry gives a resume of the early history of industry.

"Probably one of the first plants in Owensboro was the R. G. Moorman packing plant," Mr. Berry stated. "It was built at the close of the War Between the States and was located on the Ohio river just below where Dam No. 46 is now located. It was a small concern.

"Tanneries were also among the early plants. I do not recall the name of the person who opened the original tannery in Owensboro, but it was located on the south side of where Field Packing plant is now located, in Dublin lane, and when the Field plant was erected, some of the foundations of the old tannery buildings were found. This was the first of several tanneries erected here. They purchased hides and converted them into leather. These tanneries supplied the local demand and also shipped to some extent. In those days we had many shoemakers. People had their boots and shoes made – we wore boots to a great extent. The tanneries prepared the leather for these shoemakers.

Early Tanneries

"There was also a great demand for leather for harness making. In the early 70's a tannery was built in Allen street, at the corner of Fifth street, on the Southwest corner. I don't remember the name of the man who built this plant.

"John G. Delker, S. R. Ewing and others converted an old tobacco factory in South Triplett near the railroad into a tannery in which they used a patent process that converted the hides into leather in about three days time. Previously leathermaking was a long drawn out process requiring

many days. The hides had to be steeped in tan-bark containing tannic acid for many days. The new process eliminated much of this tedious work. This factory passed out in a few years.

"When I was a small boy, probably the early 70s, I remember John Delker operating a furniture factory in Daviess street, about the 800 block. This building was destroyed by fire, and Delker, next, I think had saw mill at this point. When the demand for buggy parts became so great, he started to manufacture buggy wheels. Associated with him was the late John Reinhardt, whose widow still lives here, and others.

"Mr. Delker, a man who met many reverses, but lost his courage helped build the old street railway when mules instead of electricity provided the power used. He and Sam Ewing were on the city council and were the leaders in building the Owensboro municipal waterworks that brought great relief to the water consumers of Owensboro. Mr. Delker also had a harness manufacturing shop in Second street between, Allen and Daviess. He later, with his sons manufactured and sold bicycles at this location.

Woolen Mill Operated

"When the Monarch distillery, in West Fifth street burned, brick warehouse remained unscatched. In the early 90s a man by the name of Cates interested Tyler McAtee who was a partner in the H. B. Phillips mercantile company, in opening a woolen mill. The Phillips Bros. & McAtee came here in 1881 and opened up a large establishment in the buildings they built where The Turley Hardware Co., and the T. J. Turley Co., are now located. The buildings in which these two concerns are located are the original buildings of the Phillips Bros. & McAtee Co.

"Cates and McAtee bought the old warehouse from Monarch and started up a woolen mill. They manufactured woolen cloth. Much of the wool was purchased from the farmers in Daviess county, many sheep being raised at that time. The wool was carded and prepared for the looms and woven into cloth which was made into mens' trousers at this plant, which employed about a hundred men and women at the time it burned about the year 1896. The Woolen Mill was located in the 1700 block in West Fifth street.

"In the 1860's the Triplett family built a cotton mill in Bon Harbor hills. It was located near where the tramway led from the coal mine to the river. I don't know if this venture was successful, but it was abandoned and traces of that building were still in evidence in the late 70s.

"Owensboro early was known as a buggy manufacturing town. Many of the parts were made in distant cities. To fill the demand supplying these parts the Owensboro Forging Co., was built in 1901 at its present site. They not only supplied local, but also outside towns, of which Evansville was a large market.

"When the buggies went out, then the forging plant went to making automobile parts, in which it is still engaged. This factory, for years, operated day and night during the busy season.

Ames Buggy Co.

"On the spot where Haffendorfer & Brown Grocery Co., is now located Fred Ames Buggy Co., originated. A man by the name of Brotherton operated a small repair and blacksmith shop at this location. Later Ben Driver and Fred Ames took over this place and began to manufacture buggies in a small way. Their business prospered and they moved then to the location that is now occupied by Short Brothers Motor Co. Their business was a tremendous success. Encouraged by the success of this new firm, the Owensboro Wagon Co., enlarged its business and went into the buggy manufacturing business, building a buggy factory on the grounds now occupied by the Owensboro Milling Co. J. N. Grady built a buggy factory at Lewis and Ninth street. The building is still standing. Associated with him were W. S. Hazel and Zack Robinson.

"Out in the Seven Hills section, the Hoagland Buggy Co., was built. These buggy factories, created a big demand for buggy wheels and buggy parts. In the late 1860s Troutman and Rarick had a blacksmith shop on East Fourth street| near the Leitchfield road. They made wagons. At that time a stock company, called the Owensboro Wagon company was organized as an outgrowth of Troutman and Rarick. It was called the Owensboro Wagon company. In the early 1880s the Owensboro Wagon factory was built on the present factory site. The original factory was built near the river.

Owensboro Wagon Co.

W. A. Steele who had been engaged in the wagon business in the south, became interested in the Owensboro Wagon company and was instrumental in making it the great success that it was.

"Another wagon factory was built by Hickman & Ebbert. It was built on the ground now occupied by the Murphy Chair Co. It is practically the same building with additions remodelings, that the Murphy Co., now uses.

"The R. O. Evans Furniture company was located in early years in Seven Hills and was followed by the Forbes Co., manufacturers of office, church and other furniture. The Price-Klein Furniture company operated a plant in the east end of Owensboro.

"The Rapier family built the Rapier Grain and Feed company on East Main street. This business was most successful. They manufactured feeds for stock and poultry. For years this plant provided the farmers a market for their hay and grain.

"About 1914 W. A. Steele and others built the Ditcher and Grader company plant. Two other such organizations were formed and absorbed by the W. A. Steele organization. About the same time J. R. Pate, E. W. Smith and others operated a ditcher and grader plant for a few years in Elm street between Second and Third. J. W. McCulloch and others built the Shovel factory at Lewis and Thirteenth streets. It ran for several years. They were to make shovels to dig the Panama canal."

Henry Scott Berry
(1864-1948)

See biographical file of Henry Scott Berry (1864-1948) on website, West-Central Kentucky History & Genealogy, by Jerry Long:
https://wckyhistory-genealogy.org/biographies-collections-papers-of/