

Black Kentucky Pioneers:

Emily Marion Hall Holloway (1923-2021)

By Jerry Long
c.2021



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 26 August 2021, p.2C:



CINCINNATI — Emily H. Holloway of Cincinnati, formerly of Owensboro, passed away Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021, in Cincinnati. The Bloomington, Indiana, native was born to the late Milton T. Hall Sr. and Ethel C. Hall. Emily moved to Owensboro at an early age, where she graduated from high school. She attended Talladega College in Alabama and received her B.A. degree in education. It was during World War II, as she worked in Cincinnati for the government, that she met her future husband, Pete Holloway, at a dance and soon married. Later, she returned to school at the University of Cincinnati and received her M.A. degree in education. She became a teacher and supervisor of students with learning disabilities. She was an avid educator, who retired from the Cincinnati Public School System after 31 years.

Emily returned to Owensboro around 1994 and became involved in the Owensboro-Daviess County Historical Society working on getting recognition for her great-grandfather, Edward Claybrook, who worked to receive equal funding for Black schools in the area. He is now registered with the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. After becoming acquainted

with Wesley Acton, another former educator, they worked tirelessly as co-chairs on the Greenwood Cemetery Restoration Committee beginning in 1996 toward one goal: to reclaim and restore to dignity and respect the local historic cemetery. With the help of over 200 volunteers from the local community, that goal was accomplished. She remained in Owensboro until 2018 when she returned to Cincinnati to reside in assisted living and be close to her son.

In addition to her parents, Mrs. Holloway also was preceded in death by her husband, Norman “Pete” Holloway, in 1979; sister Maxine Kirkwood; and brother Milton T. Hall Jr., one of the first Tuskegee Airmen.

Those left to cherish her memory include her loving son, Peter B. Holloway (Jackie Penrod) of Cincinnati; her grandchildren, Milton Holloway, Emily Ann Holloway and Arya M. Russell; lifelong friend, neighbor and distant relative, Pam Smith-Wright; and a host of other relatives and friends.

A private graveside service and burial will be held later in her beloved Greenwood Cemetery.

Expressions of sympathy may take the form of contributions to Talladega College, 627 W. Battle St., Talladega, AL 35160.



Notes by Jerry Long

Emily Marion Hall Holloway was born 28 February 1923 in Bloomington, Monroe County, IN. Her parents were Milton Thurston Hall & Ethelyn (Ethel) Claybrook. Emily was listed in her parent’s home in the 1930 census of Bloomington, IN. Her father was born 13 June 1886 Lewisport, Hancock County, KY. In the 1900 census of Owensboro, Daviess County, KY Milton is shown in the home of his parents, Pierce Hall (born 1855) & Mattie (born 1860). Pierce Hall died 9 February 1940 and was buried at Greenwood Cemetery in Owensboro, KY; his death certificate lists his parents as Robert & Julia (May) Hall. Martha Ann (Mattie) Hall, wife of Pierce, died 18 August 1917 in Owensboro, KY; her death certificate gave her parents as John & Mattie Shaw and reported that she was buried at Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro (she was buried section B and has no marker).

Milton T. Hall, of Bloomington, IN, and Ethel C. Perkins, of Owensboro, KY were married in Evansville, Vanderburgh County, IN on 22 June 1916. Milton was a barber. By 1910 he was working as a barber in Bloomington and by 1917 owned his own barber shop there. In the 1929 city directory of Bloomington he is reported to be the proprietor of the Hotel Graham Barber Shop. He died on 27 April 1961 in Chicago, Cook County, IL, where he was buried in the Graceland Cemetery.

In 1938 Emily moved to her mother’s former home in Owensboro, KY. The 1940 census lists Emily, her mother, and brother, Milton, as living in the home of her step-grandfather and maternal, grandmother, George & Emma Perkins, at 2324 West Ninth Street in Owensboro, Daviess County, KY. George Perkins had married Emma Claybrook on 13 February 1902 in Daviess County, KY. At Greenwood Cemetery in Owensboro there is a monument for George Perkins (father, died 10 April 1949) & Emma C. Perkins (mother, died 29 July 1950); on the same marker is Elmo Claybrook (son, 18 September 1888 – 3 April 1934). The death certificate of George Washington Perkins reported that he was born 6 June 1870 at Yelvington, Daviess

County, KY to George Perkins & Martha Hawes. His obituary stated he was survived by his widow, Emma, and a stepdaughter, Ethel Hall (Owensboro Inquirer, 11 April 1949 p12).

Emma Claybrook Perkins died 29 July 1950 in Owensboro, KY. Her death certificate recorded that she was born 17 February 1875 KY to Edward & Julia Claybrooks and was buried at Greenwood Cemetery in Owensboro; the informant was her daughter, Ethel C. Hall. Emma in 1900 was working as a cook for the family of James M. Herr (1834-1908). The 1900 & 1910 censuses of Owensboro showed that Emma had two children who were born prior to her marriage to George Perkins. She was the mother of Elmo Claybrook (1888-1934, he died unmarried) and Ethel Claybrook Hall (1893-1982).

Emma Claybrook is listed in the 1870 and 1880 censuses of Owensboro, Daviess County, KY. The listings appeared as:

<u>1870</u> - Claybrooks, Edward	black	33		KY
Julia	black	28		KY
James	black	8		KY
Archie	black	7		KY
Susan	black	2		KY
Emily	black	6 months (born November)		KY

[in the 1870 census of Daviess County two other black Claybrooks families were listed: Jefferson, 34 KY and Archie, 31 KY; both died in Owensboro – Jeff on 4 August 1888 & Archie on 9 October 1902]

<u>1880</u> - Claybrook, Ed	black	53	laborer	KY-KY-KY
Julia	black	42	wife	“ “
James	black	18	son	“ “
Archie	black	15	son	“ “
Sam	black	12	son	“ “
Emma	black	10	daughter	“ “
Frank	black	4?	son	“ “
Cornelia	black	1	daughter	“ “

[listed near the household of Jeff Claybrook, 44 KY]

In the 1860 census of Daviess County, KY there were two white Claybrook families that were likely connected to the African-American Claybrooks of Daviess County. Black families frequently assumed the names of their slave owners. Living in Daviess County in 1860 were Robert W. (29 KY) & James R. Claybrook (24 KY, in 1860 he was elected Daviess County Attorney). Robert & James were sons of Thomas M. Claybrooke (1809-1861) of Washington County, KY. Robert & James each owned 7 slaves according to the 1860 Census Slave Schedule for Daviess County, KY; both had male slaves in the age range of Ed, Jeff & Archie Claybrook. The 1840 census of Washington County, KY shows that Thomas Claybrook owned 27 slaves.

The death certificate of Felix Claybrooks (1885-1953) son of Edward & Julia Claybrook reports his mother's maiden name as Gangerfield. The 1889 Owensboro City Directory (p42) lists Edward Claybrooks, laborer, resident of 403 Elm Street; also at the same residence were his children, Samuel and Emma, she was working as a tobacco stemmer. This edition also shows Rev. Archie Claybrooks, “pastor Center Street Baptist Church”.

Documents are recorded in the US Freedmen's Bureau Records (1865-1878) show that Edward Claybrook had been a teacher in 1868-1869 at the Hopkins Farm school near Owensboro in Daviess County, KY. The following is a report he filed:

1869
Owensboro Daviess County Ky March 14th 1869
Hopkins Farm School
But Col Ben P Runkle
USA Louisville Ky
Respected Sir
I have the honor to in close
with my monthly Report my School
Is in good Condition though it has
Decrease 12 Scholars this month the School was
Compel to have this Children to prepare
for this Crop
I am very Respectfully
your Olt Servant
Edward Claybrook

Ed Claybrook on 30 April 1896 was committed to the Western Kentucky Asylum in Hopkinsville, KY, where he died on 22 June 1896, two days later he was buried in Owensboro (Owensboro Daily Tribune, Owensboro, KY, 30 April 1896 p4 & 24 June 1896 p1).

Edward Claybrook father of Emma Claybrook Perkins, grandfather of Ethel Claybrook Hall and great-grandfather of Emily Hall Holloway was prominent in the evolution of the Civil Rights movement. On 2 April 1883 a momentous decision was handed down in the suit of Edward Claybrook & others versus the city of Owensboro. The suit was filed due to the unequal distribution of tax funding between black & white schools. The Federal District Court ruled that the Kentucky laws allowing school taxes from white citizens to be used only for whites while black schools were supported only by taxes from blacks was in direct violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The case impacted the dual education system throughout Kentucky. As a result of this case, the black schools were improved rapidly over what they had been. Later in 1883 Western School was opened on West 3rd Street in Owensboro and continued as the county school for blacks until the desegregation of schools in 1962. Edward Claybrook in 2001 was elected to the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame. See articles, "Claybrook v. Owensboro: An Early Victory for Equal Educational Opportunity in Kentucky" (by Lee A. Dew, The Daviess County Historical Quarterly, Vol. VIII, No. 1, Owensboro, KY, pp3-15); "The Road to Civil Rights" (Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 20 February 1996, p1D); and "Claybrook inducted into Hall of Fame" (Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 19 July 2001, p1B).

Emily's mother, Ethel Claybrook was listed on her 1916 marriage license under the Perkins name, the surname of her step-grandfather, George Perkins. The gravestone of "Ethelyn Hall" at Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro, KY has that she was born on 27 January 1893 and died 2 November 1982. She was survived by two daughters, Maxine Kirkwood, of Chicago, IL, and Emily Holloway, of Cincinnati, OH, 6 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

Emily had two siblings, Maxine S. (born 19 May 1917 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY) and Milton Thurston, Jr. (born 31 October 1919 Bloomington, IN). Milton T. Hall, Jr. in 1940

was a janitor at the Malco Theatre in Owensboro. He entered the US Army Air Force on 9 April 1942. He subsequently was commissioned a second lieutenant, being the first Negro in the US to be so honored. He was a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. He was killed on 18 September 1947 in a plane crash at Grove City, Ohio, where he was attached to the Lockbourne Army Air Base near Columbus, OH. He was returned to Owensboro, where he was buried at Elmwood Cemetery.

Emily M. Hall and Norman Holloway (1927-1979) were married in May 1950 (license recorded in Kenton County, KY. They were divorced on 7 December 1973 in Hamilton County, OH. They had one child – Peter B. Holloway.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 2 March 1994, p.6C:

OWENSBORO CITY COMMISSION

In its regular meeting Tuesday night, Owensboro City commission:

Approved appointments to the Owensboro Human Relations Commission. Those appointed to one terms ending Dec. 31 were Charmaine Dugger, Emily Holloway, Michael Simpson, James Glenn, Donald Owsley, Sara Smith, Frank Hardesty and Edward.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 16 May 1995, p.7A:

OPINION – SPEAK OUT

The Owensboro-County Public Library is a treasure-trove of western Kentucky. It provides unlimited information, entertainment and service from its prestigious Kentucky Room on the lower level to the copying machine on the second floor. Our library is a powerful asset in attracting and keeping intelligent and productive citizens in the area. It influences in unknown ways the lives and fortunes of our families daily.

Can we allow underfunding to destroy, tarnish or limit the library in our intercommunity relations? As an avid reader, an educator, I pray not.

Emily Holloway
3514 Christie Place, Owensboro



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 8 August 1996, p.1B:

Restoration:

Group planning to clean Greenwood Cemetery this Fall

By Tracy L. McQueen, Messenger-Inquirer

Abstract – Emily “Holloway and other, including Wesley Acton of Pleasant Ridge, plan to organize a cleanup effort. They are planning a work day for the fall.”



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 19 August 1997, p.5A:

Editorial:

Volunteers improve community

"This has been a dream of mine for 20 years," said Wesley Acton last October as volunteers started the hard manual labor of cleaning up Owensboro's Greenwood Cemetery. "I have just always thought that letting the cemetery go has been a bad reflection on the whole town."

Acton and Emily Holloway have served as co-chairs of the Greenwood Cemetery Restoration Committee. Last Tuesday, the Messenger-Inquirer's Tracy McQueen wrote about their effort to bring the cemetery back.

It was the burial place for many African Americans from the Owensboro area. The first burial there was in 1906, the last in 1974.

Holloway said there are hundreds of graves there, spread over approximately six acres. Many soldiers are among those buried – including at least one veteran of the Civil War.

More than 150 volunteers armed with chain saws and weed trimmers have spent the past year fighting through the brush to try to restore the cemetery to its former beauty.

The work is far from finished. Acton and Holloway are still recruiting donations and volunteers to keep the effort up and ensure that the cemetery remains a point of pride, rather than an eyesore and a haven for snakes and vermin.

But we think of the work that has already been done as a success.

It is an example - far from an isolated one – of the power of community-based action and leadership. Greenwood Cemetery wasn't Acton's problem. He has no family buried there. The dispute among heirs that is reportedly the cause of the cemetery's neglect did not involve him.

But he and Holloway – who has relatives buried there – have labored on their own time for more than a year to better their community. And the power of their commitment has attracted the admiration and active support of hundreds.

In the grand scheme, it is only a few acres of land. But preserving our history is an important task. The cemetery had become an insult to those who were buried there. Setting that right was an obligation that is too often ignored.

Our region has a fair share of old cemeteries – some with self-appointed and underappreciated citizen caretakers.

How much better we would honor the memory and beauty of our communities if more people followed the example of Acton, Holloway and the volunteers who have done so much for Greenwood Cemetery.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 16 November 1998, pp.1A & 2A:

Cemetery restoration finished Trash, brush gone at neglected Greenwood

By Tracy McQueen, Messenger-Inquirer

There were days when it seemed the work would never end and help would never come, but Wesley Acton would never give up.

Over the past two years, Acton of Pleasant Ridge has worked steadily to uncover the history of Greenwood Cemetery. He and others cut through tangled brush and snarled trees to restore the cemetery off Leitchfield Road.

After more than 100 Saturdays of work and help from more than 200 volunteers, the cleanup is complete.

"I'm very pleased," Acton said. "I'm very happy that so many people have helped out."

Greenwood Cemetery had been a forgotten place. The brush was so thick that it didn't look like a cemetery at all.

Emily Holloway of Owensboro said she spent three months searching before she even found her family's graves.

"My mother used to cry about this place, because it was in such bad shape," she said.

Acton, Holloway and others formed the Greenwood Restoration Committee with hopes that one day it would look as it does today.

The brush has been cleared. The trees have been thinned. The trash that littered some graves is gone.

"It is truly unbelievable," Holloway said.

The cemetery was the burial place for many African Americans from the Owensboro area. The first burial there was in 1906, the last in 1974. There are hundreds of graves there, spread over approximately six acres.

The lack of maintenance is attributed to a dispute among the heirs to the property and confusion about who actually owns the cemetery. There had been cleanup efforts before, but never like this one.

"I was determined that I was not going to let this project fail," Acton said.

The first cleanup day in October 1996 attracted about 50 volunteers. The Sons of Confederate Veterans formed an alliance with the restoration committee that would last throughout the cleanup.

"They were the first group who called," Holloway said. "They knew that we needed help, and it was major muscles that we needed."

Students from Brescia University, Owensboro Catholic High and other schools volunteered their time. Progress was slow but steady.

Sometimes Acton worked with an army of volunteers. Other times, he was alone.

"This has been a very long, hard struggle," Holloway said. "There have been times when the spirits were low and everyone was very tired."

The spring of 1997 was one of the low points. The brush returned faster than the volunteers.

"It came so fast," Holloway said.

Acton became discouraged.

"I told Emily, 'Either this thing is going to flop or we've got to get some help,'" he said.

Acton contacted Daviess County Jailer Harold Taylor, who sent community service inmates to help with the work.

"We're very proud of it," she said. "I just think that God has blessed us."



Wesley Acton and Emily Holloway receive Mayor's Award for Excellence from Mayor Waymond Morris on 26 January 1999 for their work in restoring Greenwood Cemetery.



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FAX: 502-687-8585



January 7, 1999

Mr. Jerry Long
Daviess County Library
Kentucky Room
450 Griffith Avenue
Owensboro, KY 42301

Dear Mr. Long:

The Mayor's Award for Excellence will be presented to ***Emily Holloway***, for her efforts to restore and maintain the Greenwood Cemetery. The awards ceremony will be held on *January 26, 1999 at 6:30 p.m. in the fourth floor Commission Chambers of City Hall in Owensboro, Kentucky.*

This Award for Excellence is the highest honor bestowed upon an individual, or organization, by the City of Owensboro and will be presented to eight individuals for their accomplishments that have brought a true sense of community to Owensboro.

We extend a personal invitation to you to attend this special occasion to honor Ms. Holloway for her achievements. The ceremony will be held from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. with a reception immediately following.

We hope that you will be able to join us on January 26.

Sincerely,

Waymond O. Morris
Mayor

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 27 January 1999, p.1C:

8 given city hall's highest honor

By Tracy McQueen, Messenger-Inquirer



A retired teacher, a doctor, a college student and a school superintendent were among those honored Tuesday during the 11th annual Mayor's Awards for Excellence ceremony.

Wesley Acton and Emily Holloway were honored for excellence in volunteer service....

The mayor's award is city hall's highest honor. Mayor Waymond Morris said all of the recipients have made outstanding contributions.

"It was very difficult this year. We had a lot of good nominations," Morris said. "There have been so many people in our community who have contributed." Acton and Holloway were honored for their "tireless and unselfish efforts" to restore Greenwood Cemetery, Morris said. The cemetery off Old Leitchfield Road had become overgrown and littered with debris to the point it didn't look like a cemetery at all.

Acton and Holloway organized a two-year cleanup. They mobilized volunteers from area schools, civic organizations, businesses and individuals. Many volunteers were former students of Acton, who is a retired teacher.

Morris said the restoration could not have happened without the dedication of Acton and Holloway....



Greenwood Cemetery – 1821 Leitchfield Road, Owensboro, KY

By Jerry Long (Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 2006) p.3:

... "With the formation in August 1996 of the Greenwood Cemetery Restoration Committee, under the leadership of Wesley Acton and Emily Holloway, great progress was made in restoring and caring for the cemetery. In the next couple of years the cemetery was reclaimed with more than 200 volunteers cleaning up the grounds and repairing gravestones (see Messenger-Inquirer - "Restoration: Group planning to clean Greenwood Cemetery this fall", 8 Aug 1996 p1B; "Cemetery workers uncover history: Group cleaning up abandoned site", 13 Oct 1996 p1C; "Cemetery repairs get 'gee whiz' reviews", 12 Aug 1997 p1A; "Greenwood Cemetery restoration continuing: Old tombstones to be repaired during Saturday seminar", 16 Sep 1998, p1C; "Volunteers fix history, tombstones", 20 Sep 1988 p1A; "Cemetery restoration finished", 16 Nov 1998 p1A). To handle donations and manage upkeep the restoration committee was

incorporated as the Greenwood Restoration Association on 24 June 1999 (Daviess County Corporation Book 115, p677).” ...

[Note – A database of documented burials at Greenwood Cemetery, compiled by Jerry Long, was donated in 2006 to the Greenwood Cemetery Restoration Committee. The committee published the book, Greenwood Cemetery – 1821 Leitchfield Road, Owensboro, KY in 2006. The database has subsequently been added to and the updated resource is available on the website West-Central Kentucky History & Genealogy]



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 16 December 2007, p.2D:

PUBLIC SECTOR

The Owensboro Human Relations Commission presented the following awards at its annual awards and recognition banquet on Oct. 18:

... R.L. McFarland Leadership Award was given to Cornelia J. Glenn, Emily Hall Holloway, Wesley Acton and Michael Walker....

.... Holloway and Acton were honored jointly for their work on the Greenwood Cemetery restoration project. They had worked together since 1991 to do historical and legal research while rallying the community about the importance of reclaiming the important landmark to the history of the black community.

Holloway is an Owensboro native who retired as teacher/ supervisor of special education in Cincinnati Public Schools.

Acton is a retired teacher from the Daviess County school system and a longtime community activist....



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 27 May 2012, p.2A:



Tributes held at cemeteries: "In 1996 we cleaned up a 'wilderness,' " said Emily Hall Holloway of Owensboro, left, as she recounted the recent history of the cemetery, and, along with Wesley Acton, thanked the many volunteers who helped restore the cemetery where 100 veterans are buried. "We were just doing our civic duty," Acton said.



**The Kentucky African American Encyclopedia, edited by
Gerald L. Smith, Karen Cotton McDaniel and John A. Hardin
(Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015) pp.216-217:**

GREENWOOD CEMETERY, cemetery in Owensboro, KY, that from 1906 to 1976 served as the final resting place for over 2,000 citizens, including Civil War, World War I, and World War II veterans. In February 1906, a group of 34 African Americans in Owensboro, led by attorney Edward Arnold Watts, purchased a 16-acre plot of land and formed the Greenwood Cemetery Association. The Greenwood Cemetery continued to serve the city's black community for the following 70 years.

The two oldest monuments in the cemetery predate its incorporation. Although their gravestones are at Greenwood, the obituaries for Kittle Ann Jones (died on January 13, 1905) and Benedict A. Hayden (died on August 13, 1905) indicate that they were buried elsewhere. It is unknown when their tombs were moved. Gravestones of many members of the military are located in the cemetery. Four of these (Richard Hardesty, George W. Robertson, Henry Michion Taylor, and Robert Woodard) were Civil War veterans; 48 were World War I veterans; and 14 fought in World War II. Many of Owensboro's most influential African Americans were also buried in the cemetery, including medical doctors, ministers, and teachers. Felix Wallace, an Owensboro native who was the owner and manager of the St. Louis Giants Negro League baseball team, was also buried at Greenwood.

In 1957, the Greenwood Cemetery Association was dissolved, but the United Brothers of Friendship, a fraternal organization, continued to maintain the cemetery until it dissolved in 1972. During the 1970s, Greenwood fell into a state of disrepair, and its last documented burial was in February 1976. The cemetery remained in poor shape, the victim of overgrown brush and vandals, throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Some family members even removed their loved ones' gravestones to protect them, and others were unable to locate family members' graves because of the tangled brush and tall weeds that had taken over the cemetery's grounds.

In 1996, Wesley Acton and Emily Holloway formed the Greenwood Cemetery Restoration Committee. Together, they promoted the historical importance of the cemetery and organized over 200 volunteers to engage in a massive two-year restoration project. Around the same time, a local genealogist, Jerry Long, pored through thousands of burial certificates for Daviess Co. and discovered that over 2,000 people had been buried at Greenwood, although only about 300 gravestones existed. He later compiled an exhaustive list of all known men and women buried in the cemetery.

In 2001, continued care of the cemetery was ensured after the Daviess County Fiscal Court purchased the property. Throughout the rest of the decade, Greenwood Cemetery, located

on 1821 Leitchfield Rd., joined other cemeteries in Owensboro as the site of Memorial Day observances that featured a military honor guard a 15-gun salute, and the playing of taps.

Long, Jerry, Greenwood Cemetery: 1821 Leitchfield Road, Owensboro, Kentucky, Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 2006.

Newspapers: "Greenwood Cemetery Association Formed to Provide Burial Ground for Colored People," Owensboro Inquirer, February 20, 1906, 1; "Greenwood Cemetery Is More Crowded Than Thought," OMI, March 3, 2005, Cl; "Cemetery Project in the Works," OML December 28, 2005,B1; "Services Honor Veterans, Others," OMI, May 29, 2011, Cl.

—Joshua D. Farrington



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 20 February 1996, p.1D:



Claybrook, a former slave, led African American parents in filing a lawsuit in 1882 that led to better funding of schools for black children in Owensboro. Photograph courtesy Kentucky Room, Daviess County Public Library. [Note: Edward Claybrook is the great-grandfather of Emily Hall Holloway]



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 19 July 2001, p.1B:

KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

**Claybrook inducted
into Hall of Fame**

Moore, Fields nominated

By Joy Campbell, Messenger-Inquirer

Owensboro's Edward Claybrook, well-known for his leadership in an 1883 landmark federal lawsuit that changed the way education for blacks in Owensboro was funded, is among 16 new inductees into the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame.

The honorees were announced Wednesday during a program in Louisville sponsored by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

Claybrook left his mark on education in Owensboro before his death in 1896. He was born a slave, according to his nomination biography, and 17 years after slavery ended he fought and won a suit challenging an Owensboro statute. The statute provided for white property owners' taxes to be used for white schools and for black schools to be funded with taxes from black property owners. Since few blacks owned property then, funds for education of black children were drastically insufficient.

In *Claybrook v. Owensboro*, U.S. Circuit Judge John Barr ruled that the funding method was unfair. The word "integration" was used in the case for the first time in a legal context. Claybrook's actions foreshadowed events that led to desegregation in 1954.

Claybrook was honored locally in 1990 when the Owensboro Human Relations Commission honored him posthumously with the R.L. McFarland Black History Award.

The KCHR inducted 22 legends of civil rights into the Hall of Fame in its inaugural ceremony last year. Selection was based on exemplary leadership and achievement in civil rights in Kentucky by people living or deceased.

The Rev. Bill Moore of Owensboro and the late Harry Fields also were nominated for inclusion in the Hall of Fame this year.

Other inductees for 2001 were: Ira Bell, Monticello; Anne M. Braden, Louisville; Carl Braden, Louisville; I. Willis Cole, Louisville; former Gov. Bert T. Combs, Frankfort; Bishop Robert W. Estell, Lexington; Rev. William A. Jones, Sr., Lexington; Julia E. Lewis, Lexington, Dr. Abby L. Marlatt, Lexington; Dr. Frank O. Moxley, Bowling Green; Sen. Gerald A. Neal, Louisville; Prof. Paul Oberst, Lexington; Dr. Samuel Robinson, Louisville; Lucretia B. Ward, Louisville; and Jesse P. Warders, Louisville.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 19 September 1947, p.5:



Lancaster, Ohio (AP) -- Maj. Andrew D. Turner of Washington, D. C., and First Lt. Milton T. Hall of 2324 West Ninth street, Owensboro, Ky., were killed yesterday in the crash of two AT-6 planes from Lockbourne Army airbase near Columbus.

The planes collided in the air and fell about ten miles northwest of here.

Note – See account of the crash in the Lancaster Eagle-Gazette, Lancaster, Ohio, Friday, 19 September 1947, pp.1A]



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 20 September 1947, p.8:

Negro Deaths

Lt. Milton T. Hall

The body of Lt. Milton T. Hall, Jr., 27, son of Ethel C. Hall, 2324 West Ninth, street, and Milton T. Hall, Paris, who was killed in an airplane crash at Columbus, Ohio, Thursday, will arrive in Owensboro tonight.

Hall was graduate of the Bloomington, Ind., high school, and entered the Army Air Forces on April 9, 1942. He subsequently was commissioned a second lieutenant, being the first Negro high school graduate in the United States to be so honored. At the time of his death he was attached to the Lockborne Air Base, Columbus.

Surviving are his parents; two sisters, Emily Hall and Maxine Miller; his grandparents, three uncles and an aunt.

Funeral services will be held at Fourth Street Baptist church at 2:30 p. m. Monday, the Rev. M. M. Porter, pastor of the Second Baptist church, Bloomington, Ind., officiating, assisted by the Rev. Q. L. Jones.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 23 September 1947, p.5:

News and Views

By W. E. Daniel

One day during the war I met a slender young man in the uniform of the Air corps. Some might have called him a Negro with emphasis on the pronunciation. I called him a soldier. Above middle height, he bore himself with an erectness one might have expected. He had a quick, infectious smile. His words and manner of conversation marked him a young man with education beyond many. I learned he had attended Indiana University, at Bloomington. And as war clouds lowered he was anxious to do his bit. He chose the Air corps, and was studying hard and practicing often that he might be ready for his wings. I saw him several times after that first meeting, and asked his mother about him. His zest for service grew with his training. His eyes sparkled with the experience of flying on a later visit.

That young man was Lieutenant Milton T. Hall, Jr.. who came home last Saturday night to stay. No more will his flashing smile be turned to me in greeting. No more will he stand

straight and clean before me, and modestly admit his record. No more will we meet and linger on the post office steps, as I inquire about his work. Never again will Lieutenant Hall step briskly along with his mother, his soldierly figure bespeaking his own and her pride. I saw in him the promise of making a name for himself. I saw the years stretching ahead after the war when he could put aside the tools men used to kill other men, and train his expressive mind and hands to help people. Fated to serve during the war, he was denied what I wanted him to do-become a teacher among his people, who would have responded to his call.

When I read about the Lieutenant's death it was a personal loss to me. And Sunday morning I went to the home of his mother to tell her I was sorry for her and those who knew Lieutenant Hall. I didn't say that I was sorry for the young officer. His had been the end that all soldiers face, and death is not the worst that can befall one who went willingly, gladly to defend the Flag. His country needed young men, educated young men like Lieutenant Hall, who could evaluate the meaning of what he wanted to do, and did it with cumulating thrills. And high up above the earth he rode the uncharted spaces of the air, as he told me he wanted to do when he was accepted in the Air corps. I hadn't seen him for several months. I kept on the watch for him.

His mother was brave when I entered the home Sunday morning. She was braver than I could have been under the circumstances, and I know it would have pleased the son. He would not have her grieve for him, for he was a soldier. She was arranging the front room to the west as I arrived, where friends could leave the son with her for a little while in the uniform he wore so proudly, and which made her prouder of him. I can see them now, walking along the street from that home where shade trees protect it when the sun shines brightest, and flowers bloom. There was a neatness about the home that Sabbath morning. Lieutenant Milton T. Hall, Jr., was coming home and everything must be ready when he arrives. He was a soldier whose fate was that of so many Owensboro soldiers.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 25 May 2005, p.1A:

Tuskegee historian keeps memories alive

By Beth Wilberding, Messenger-Inquirer

The Tuskegee Airmen were more than just another band of men fighting in World War II. They were the country's first black military pilots – a group who fought abroad against the Axis powers and at home and in the military against racism.

For Emily Holloway and her family, however, the Tuskegee Airmen were an avenue for fulfilling dreams, providing an opportunity for her brother, Milton T. Hall, to take to the skies – something that long seemed improbable.

Hall grew up in Bloomington, Ind., and moved to Owensboro in 1939. Prior to the Tuskegee Airmen, blacks weren't permitted to be pilots, but that didn't stop Hall from dreaming, his sister said.

"My brother was very intelligent and wanted to be in the Air Force very badly," Holloway, who still lives in Owensboro, said Tuesday.

Hall passed the tests necessary to join the Air Force, but the military did not immediately send for him. Instead of waiting, he wrote to the president and was finally able to join the Air Force in April 1942. He became a second lieutenant in December 1942.

"Everyone tried to rise to the occasion. We were in war and this was a very frightening thing," Holloway said. "This was a time when people were doing wonderful things."

Ron Spriggs wants to make sure people don't forget about men like Hall and other members of the Tuskegee Airmen. Spriggs has turned his collection of Tuskegee Airmen memorabilia into a traveling exhibit that is being shown at the Aviation Museum of Kentucky at Lexington's Blue Grass Airport. The exhibit will come to Owensboro in October, but local residents got a sneak peek at the collection Tuesday.

Spriggs, along with Rep. Tommy Thompson, a Philpot Democrat, spent two hours at the Daviess County Public Library showing photos, models and other memorabilia of the famed World War II airmen.

Spriggs also travels to schools and other organizations to talk about the men and women who served. But it wasn't until about 10 years ago that he first learned about the Tuskegee Airmen.

"I was a grown man and did not know what the Tuskegee Airmen were," Spriggs said.

An Air Force veteran, Spriggs decided to learn more about the group. As his collection of memorabilia grew, so did his desire to share the story of the Tuskegee Airmen with others, especially children. He first began speaking about the airmen in January 2004.

"Anytime I talk to kids, I appoint them torch bearers," Spriggs said.

Spriggs was first proclaimed a torch bearer by former Airman Charles "A-Train" Dryden, who told him he was as important as the airmen themselves because Spriggs would be able to tell their story to future generations.

The Tuskegee Airmen were formed on Jan. 16, 1941. While they were often looked down upon in the United States because of their race, Spriggs said, overseas they were feared by the enemy. The Germans nicknamed them "Schwartzte Vogelmenschen" – Black Birdmen.

Eventually American bombers began to request to be escorted by the Tuskegee Airmen because they were known for never losing a plane, Spriggs said.

Though Spriggs began and owns the Tuskegee Airmen exhibit, he also has a \$50,000 grant given to him in March by the state legislature. Seven of the 12,000 World War II Tuskegee Airmen were from Kentucky. The state wanted to support an endeavor that would showcase a lesser known aspect of American history, Thompson said.

Holloway says it is important to learn about the Tuskegee Airmen because people "need to know what some people" did for the country. Her brother died in service five years after joining the Tuskegee Airmen.

Spriggs and Thompson spent Tuesday morning at two local radio stations talking about the exhibit. Since they were in the area, they decided to put up a small portion of the exhibit in the library, even though they could only share it for a brief moment, Thompson said.

"I just think it represents such a significant thing in U.S. history and Kentucky history," Thompson said. "They were true pioneers in aviation."

The Tuskegee Airmen won two victories during World War II, Spriggs said. First, they won the war for the Allies; then, they won a battle against racism in the military. Three years after the end of the war, President Harry Truman signed legislation desegregating the military.

Spriggs said he is now fighting for a third victory – a victory over people's ignorance to the airmen's existence.

"There's a real need to continue their story," he said.

While Spriggs said he hopes to add the Tuskegee Airmen to Kentucky's school curriculum, he gained a new student Tuesday. Robin Nalley, who brought her children to the library, said her 7-year-old son, Will, picked up a book on the airmen after visiting the exhibit.

"I just think it's good for children and even adults," she said. "It's also neat to see it up close."

Spriggs will take his exhibit to Williamsburg later this summer, then will attend the Tuskegee Airmen Convention Aug. 15-20 in Orlando.

"I'll get baptized in history," Spriggs said.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 9 July 2016, pp.1D & 3D:



Emily Holloway, left, holds a photograph of her late brother, Tuskegee Airman Milton T. Hall, with City Commissioner Pam Smith-Wright, right, at Wright's home in Owensboro. Smith-Wright, who is a cousin of Hall and Holloway, will host an exhibit at the airport later in July to honor the airman.

‘LIKE HE’S OUR OWN’

Tuskegee Airman to be honored with airport display, memorial highway

By Angela Oliver, Messenger-Inquirer

The Great Depression was lingering. The 1936 hanging of Rainey Bethea – the nation's last public execution – and the flood of 1937 were fresh on the minds of many people in Owensboro. And they were worried about what would happen next, said Emily Holloway, who moved to Owensboro from Bloomington, Indiana, in 1938.

She and her mother, whose parents lived here, were first, and her brother, Lt. Milton T. Hall Jr., arrived the next year.

"When we came to Owensboro, people had things – material things. But they were short on hope, short on inspiration," said Holloway, who is in her early 90s and moved back to Owensboro from Ohio in 1991. "He came and somehow, he had just the thing people needed."



Tuskegee Airmen Instructor Milton T. Hall, right, teaches other airmen during training at Tuskegee, Alabama. The photograph is from the U.S. Army Air Forces, AAF Training Command, during World War II, which is now the U.S. Air Force.

On Dec. 13, 1942, Hall was one of eight men in the ninth class to graduate from pilot training at the Tuskegee Army Airfield in Tuskegee, Alabama. His class, SE-42-K, was one of many deemed Tuskegee Airmen.

A permanent display about Hall will be unveiled at 11:30 a.m. July 29 in the main lobby of the Owensboro-Daviess County Regional Airport, 2200 Airport Road.

"This one really strikes home because he was an aviator," said airport Manager Bob Whitmer. "It's another opportunity to highlight a community hero. The staff and the board were so pleased with the idea; it was unbeknownst to us that a Tuskegee Airman had an Owensboro connection."

City Commissioner Pam Smith-Wright, Hall and Holloway's cousin, came up with the display idea. It will feature photos, a model red tail plane, a letter to Hall from the Chicago Tribune, a replica pilot's helmet and goggles.

"I'm a veterans' person; I work to make sure all veterans are recognized," Smith-Wright said. "And I see it as another learning opportunity. People need to know that there are black people who did great things – we should credit everyone who has done great things, especially for our country. I hope teachers will bring their classes and that all people will learn from it."

Smith-Wright said she is grateful for Whitmer's support as well as that of state Rep. Suzanne Miles, who sponsored the amendment of Hall in House Joint Resolution 5. Among other memorials throughout Kentucky, the bill, signed into law in April, designates Kentucky 2118 (Airport Road) as the Tuskegee Airman Milton T. Hall Memorial Highway.

TAKING FLIGHT

While black people served the U.S. military in every theater of World War II, there were no black military pilots, a symptom of the fight for higher roles for blacks in the military, from the Revolutionary War and on. The National Park Service website states that there was a prevailing attitude that blacks were not intelligent, capable or skilled enough to go to combat.

According to "A Short History of the Tuskegee Airmen" by Daniel L. Haulman, chief of the Organizational Histories branch of the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, the Tuskegee Airmen idea came about in 1940, during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's campaign for a third term – he'd promised to permit blacks to become military pilots and the War Department followed the next year.

Though they were yet untrained as pilots, the first black flying unit was the 99th Pursuit Squadron, later redesignated as the 99th Fighter Squadron, activated at Chanute Field, Illinois, in March 1941, the history states. Black pilots were trained on segregated bases and served in segregated units.

Since the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) was already a training ground for black civilian pilots – a few other historically black institutions also offered civilian pilot training and was in a segregated area, it was chosen for the military pilot training. Primary flight training, the first of three training phases, took place at Moton Field, which is now the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site.

Having read a lot, and having delivered black press publications, Hall, "Followed this idea of a pilot training program for black men," Holloway said. "It was highly controversial. But he learned of preparations being made and he started getting everything he would need (to enlist)."

Hall had worked for 18 months in the Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal work relief program for unmarried and unemployed men, so he "came to Owensboro with impeccable references," she said. And though the first black pilots were college graduates, high school graduates were accepted as the war continued.

"He didn't have a college degree, but he passed the education component, he was in good health, he was everything the service was looking for," Holloway said.

Worried that he would be drafted into the Army, he wrote a letter to the president expressing his interest in Tuskegee, and was able to join in April 1942. He wasn't assigned to combat.

"Our families, people in Owensboro, the community felt good to know he was an airman; we all felt like he was like he's our own," Holloway said. "We didn't feel that sense that the draft was looming over him. He made it to his dream."

People were proud of the Airmen, she said, but they were hurt to hear of how many were treated in service.

"It was a disturbing time," Holloway said. "They suffered a great many cruelties. ...even some of the generals, when they would pin (the airmen) , they would say things like, 'baboons can't fly' They were mistreated, yet many service groups wanted Tuskegee Airmen because they had a wonderful record."

The "red tails," as the airmen were often called due to their painted plane tails, were in demand among many American bombers; they requested that airmen escort them, or protect their planes from enemy aircraft, as the airmen had one of the lowest loss records of any escort fighter group, according to the National World War II Museum.

Holloway attended Talladega College, not far from Tuskegee, so she was able to visit her big brother and remain close. He took correspondence classes in the CCC camp and had learned to type in high school, so he "wrote us letters, one after the other. He always kept in touch."

On phone calls home, he would always ask his parents to invite all their friends and neighbors over so he could talk to everyone.

One September day, though, his mother received a telegram the family wasn't expecting. Hall died at age 27 on Sept. 18, 1947, in Grove City, Ohio, near the Lockbourne Army Airfield. He and another pilot, Maj. Edward B. Turner, who also died in the accident, were in practicing in AT-6 planes when they crashed, Holloway said.

"Naturally, it was a physical blow. It was devastating," she said. "Everybody was shocked, but after a little while, we had so many pictures of him, so many good memories, that we were satisfied. He was loved to a point where we couldn't carry that forever.

"At this stage in my life, it's hard to talk about," she said. "He had so much going for him. It was a horrible way to go, but it meant that he lived in this country, he was here."

Holloway said Hall's death reminded the community of other military men, who had died in service years before, and their families.

"It was not just one person, one race, one group," she said. "It happened to everybody. The world was much smaller then, even with just mail and telephones. So we all felt the loss, anyone's loss, from the war. Other people in Owensboro suffered, too. It was a hard time."

A total of 930 pilots in 44 classes graduated from advanced flying training at TAAF, the history states. Sixty-two more served as liaison or service pilots and 11 more were trained on bases other than Tuskegee. All of those pilots and the more than 10,000 military and civilian men and women who served in support roles are also considered Tuskegee Airmen.

Despite their fighting two wars against the nation's enemies as well as the nation's racism – the airmen silenced doubters by proving their abilities. They are often credited with laying the foundation for the 1948 integration of the U.S. military.

There weren't many jobs for black pilots after the war as most commercial companies hired white pilots over black pilots, both returning from the war. Many remained in the Air Force and three became generals.

A GEM IN OWENSBORO

For people who see the airport display and the memorial highway sign, Hall might solely be remembered as an airman.

For many in Owensboro – and in his native Bloomington he is remembered as a kind, cheerful young man on a mission to help people.

The Halls lived a middle-class life. Their father owned a barbershop inside of a hotel in Bloomington and their mother was a homemaker. As children Hall, Holloway and their oldest sister Maxine "had access to the library and a great many things that weren't here in Owensboro," Holloway said.

Hall was also a scout, an avid reader, an athlete in various sports and he "looked deeply into everything he attacked," she said.

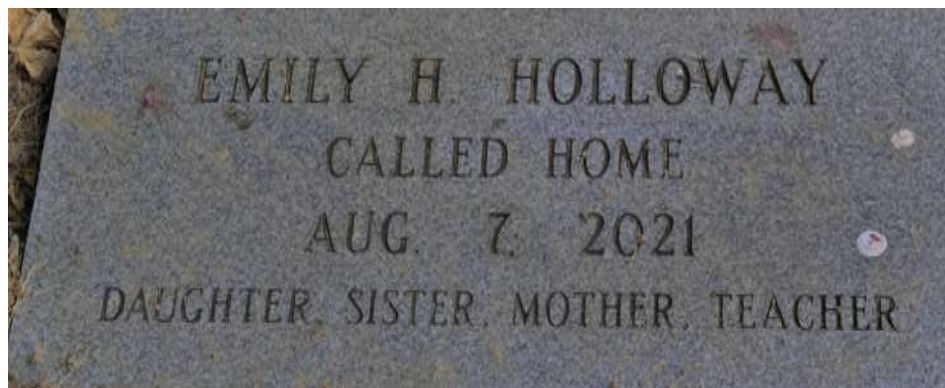
"He knew how to put people together," she said. "He would help organize rides to Evansville if people had jobs there. He would help people prepare for an interview. So many

were lost in the war and, for the men who had a lot of children and not enough food, he showed them how to ration. And he wouldn't embarrass anybody, he just taught what they needed to know. He had that kind of personality."

Hall was also highly involved in what is now the H.L. Neblett Community Center, founded in 1936. He was a friend of Dr. Reginald and Hattie L. Neblett, Holloway said, showing a typed letter from Hattie Neblett to Hall while he was in service.

And he helped organize the 20th Century Club, a group of young men and boys who "were there when she (Neblett) needed big help," Holloway said.

"He did a lot for the community," she said. "Owensboro is isolated, it's not a destination place; but it has a certain mystique. It always finds a way to get what it needs. I wouldn't say people were desperate at that time, but they were looking for something. They needed something. ... a lot of special people are here and he was a special person who came at the right time."



Greenwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY



Milton Thurston Hall, Jr.



Greenwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY