

# **Publication of the 1883 “History of Daviess County, Kentucky”**

By Jerry Long  
c.2025



## **HISTORY OF DAVIESS COUNTY, KENTUCKY.**

**TOGETHER WITH SKETCHES OF ITS CITIES, VILLAGES AND TOWNSHIPS,  
EDUCATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, CIVIL, MILITARY, AND POLITICAL HISTORY;  
PORTRAITS OF PROMINENT PERSONS, BIOGRAPHIES OF  
REPRESENTATIVE CITIZENS.**

**AND AN OUTLINE  
HISTORY OF KENTUCKY**

**CHICAGO:  
INTER-STATE PUBLISHING CO.  
1883.**



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 3 November 1882, p.4:**

### **A History of Daviess County.**

The want has long been felt by our citizens of a full and elaborate history of Daviess county, from its earliest settlement to the present time. Many of the counties of Kentucky have had their early settlement and growth thus recorded in permanent form, but, until recently, no move has been made towards the compilation and publication by reliable parties of the history of this county. Daviess has a very interesting history. It has been in the past one of the chief counties in this part of the State, and as every one sees, it has a glorious future before it.

The Inter-State Publishing Company, one of the principal publishing houses in Chicago, have for some time been engaged in the publication of local histories, and after looking over the ground, have undertaken to compile the history of Daviess county. If sufficient encouragement is received, the work will be issued within a few months.

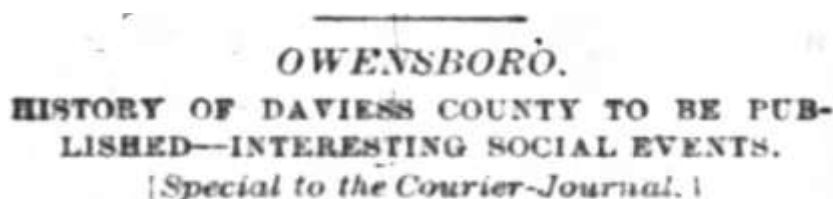
This firm has a force of ten experienced writers, all of whom will soon be here. The work is divided among these compilers, so that each can push his own department. A history of Daviess county, containing eight hundred pages, as this promises to be, ought to be a treasure in every household, and will certainly be so considered by those at all interested in the past and present of this beautiful section of Kentucky.

This history is not designed as a mere record of first things in the county, or of personal reminiscences, or of transactions in the county offices, but a full and reliable account of the early settlement of this region, pioneer life, organization and divisions of the county, the courts, the bar, all the wars – so far as they concern this county – the most noted criminal cases, railroads, agriculture, statistical matters, census, schools, churches, secular societies, roads, bridges, post-offices, court-house, jail, anecdotes, etc., etc.

The headquarters of the historians are established at the Planters' Hotel. They would be glad to meet and receive suggestions from any citizens interested in the enterprise. They have in their office samples of their work in other counties, and numerous letters written voluntarily by prominent parties in those counties after the histories had been published and had undergone the crucial test of public opinion and newspaper criticism. These may be seen by any who desire. Messrs. S. T. Lewis and Milo C. Summers are already in the county, and the remainder of the corps will arrive in a few days.



**Courier-Journal, Louisville, KY, Saturday, 4 November 1882, p.3:**



OWENSBORO, Nov. 3.--The history of Daviess county is to be published this winter in handsome octavo form by the Inter-State Publishing Company, of Chicago.



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 15 November 1882, p.2:**

The history of Daviess county is to be published soon by a Chicago Publishing house. The Messenger says a company of ten experienced writers are expected soon in Owensboro to commence gathering material for the history. It is to contain eight hundred pages. Why cannot some one write the history of Ohio county? We are sure it would furnish some very interesting reading, as this is one of the earliest settled counties in the State, and its county seat one of the oldest towns in the State. However, we should think a native of the county would be the most

suitable person to write the history. There are a great number of persons who have been born and reared in the county and are identified with the county's interests familiar with its early history who could write a history both interesting and instructive. The facts connected with the early settlement of the county, reminiscences and anecdotes of her distinguished men would form a volume of thrilling interest to the rising generation and also a store house of information which should not be suffered to be lost. Many facts and incidents could be obtained from old settlers now living which have never been recorded, that in a few years will be lost to history. We have home talent sufficient to carry out the enterprise if only it could be directed to that channel. Who will write it? The HERALD will do all in its power to assist in the matter, and open its columns to communications on the subject. We would suggest Mr. W. H. McHenry as a man whose general knowledge and personal familiarity with the history of the county eminently qualify him to write such a history as is needed. We respectfully commend the matter to his attention, and hope he will write the history.



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 17 November 1882, p.4:**

### The History of Daviess County.

The historians in the employ of the Inter-State Publishing Company are getting to work in earnest. Four of them are now here busily engaged in compiling, and in ten days their whole force will be on band. Their history of Clayton county, Iowa, has just been delivered to the subscribers, and the local papers of that county contain very favorable reviews of the work.

Says the McGregor News, concluding an exhaustive and critical notice of over four columns in length: "The Inter-State Publishing Company have rendered Clayton county an invaluable service by sending their force of men here to fix the facts of our early settlement in this reliable, popular and substantial form. It was done promptly, gentlemanly and in a business-like manner. The book, though large, contains not a line of "paid matter." The sketches of subscribers are valuable: as each person's life is a drop of water in the clear fountain of real history. The general history, the departments and details are, each, severally and collectively, well written and arranged. It is the only way to write such a history, and the managers and publishers understand their business thoroughly."



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 12 December 1882, p.4:**

### Book Wanted.

E. Summers, room 40 Planters' House desires the use, for a few days, of a copy of Norwood's Geological Report of Kentucky, in compiling the forthcoming History of Daviess County. Any one having a copy to spare can very greatly oblige him. sw



**Messenger and Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 20 December 1882, p.3:**

Mr. E. Summers, chief compiler of the Daviess county history, is still at work arranging questions and planning the work preparatory to interviewing public men and old residents.



**Messenger & Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 10 January 1883, p.3:**

**History of Daviess County.**

Most of the men connected with this work have recently been away, spending the holidays, but have now returned with renewed spirits to push forward the enterprise. The force now in the field are thus stationed: E. Summers, , general historian, room 40, Planters' Hotel, Mrs. S. F. Summers, assistant; F. M. Sperry and J. O. Sanford, the city of Owensboro; W. W. Boulware, Upper and Lower Town precincts; W. M. Bucklin, Murray precinct, and Geo. T. Mason, Knottsville precinct. Mr. S. T. Lewis, one of the publishers, is also on the ground superintending the work.

The managers report that their labors in the county are about half done, and find sufficient encouragement to go on and complete them.

The compilers find so great an amount of interesting matter in this county that they have to follow the plan of condensation; but such a necessity does not excuse any one from contributing his share, as the history must be impartial at whatever cost. It is quite natural for each one to think that he does not know as much about any given subject or line of history as does some one else; but if one every were prompt to communicate what he does know, it would not only lessen the labors of the historians very materially, but prevent too frequent visits from them and considerable annoyance



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 6 April 1883, p.4:**

**Red Hill**

Mr. W. M. Bucklin was here last week in quest of information for the proposed history of Daviess county.



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 11 May 1883, p.4:**

**Finished.**

After more than eight months of arduous and painstaking effort we have at last completed the history of Daviess county. The work is an attractive, well-bound volume of 870 royal octavo pages. Having used every endeavor to make the history as thorough and complete as possible, the

publishers feel sure it will fully meet the expectations of every citizen of Daviess county. The work of delivering the book to subscribers will be begun on Tuesday, May 22, and we ask all our patrons to be prepared to receive and pay for it when the agent calls.

Very respectfully,  
INTER STATE PUBLISHING CO.  
Sam. Lewis, Sec'y. my11sw2t



**History of Daviess County, Kentucky**  
**Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, 1883:**

PREFACE.

After months of unremitting labor the "History of Daviess County" is ready for our patrons. None can better understand than those who have assisted us, the difficulties to be met in the preparation of a work of this kind. Public documents have been examined, newspaper files have been reviewed, old settlers and prominent men have been visited for the purpose of making the record as complete as possible and gaining information of interest and value to the subscribers. The incompleteness of the public records and the conflicting statements have tended to perplex the compilers, but we trust in the main the work will prove satisfactory. Members of a family often differ as to the spelling of names, contradict each other's statements as to the dates of birth, settlement in the county, and nativity; we, therefore, have tried to give preference to the majority. While errors must necessarily occur under such circumstances we feel that we have fulfilled our promises and have given as correct a record, historically and biographically, as it is possible to obtain. Whatever may be the verdict of those who do not realize the extent of our work, and therefore make no allowance for the many ways in which errors may occur, we feel sure that all thoughtful and just persons will appreciate our efforts, will recognize the great public benefit that has been accomplished, and will value the book as a memorial in the years to come of the lives and adventures of the early pioneers, of the lives of men prominent in political and business circles, and of individuals less prominent but none the less necessary to the county's history, that would otherwise have passed into oblivion.

We tender our thanks to the pioneers, county officials, pastors of churches, officers of societies and members of the press for their kind assistance in the collation of data for this history. Especially are we thankful for the aid given us by those who have subscribed for the work, and trust that the pleasure they will have as the years go by, in recalling incidents that are related in its pages, will more than compensate for their untiring efforts to make it a perfect history of Daviess County.

For Chapter II., entitled "Bill Smothers," so replete with reminiscences of early settlement, we are indebted mostly to the story published by Colonel Thos. S. [sic] McCreery, in the *Monitor* several years ago. ,

INTER-STATE PUBLISHING CO.  
Chicago, May, 1883.

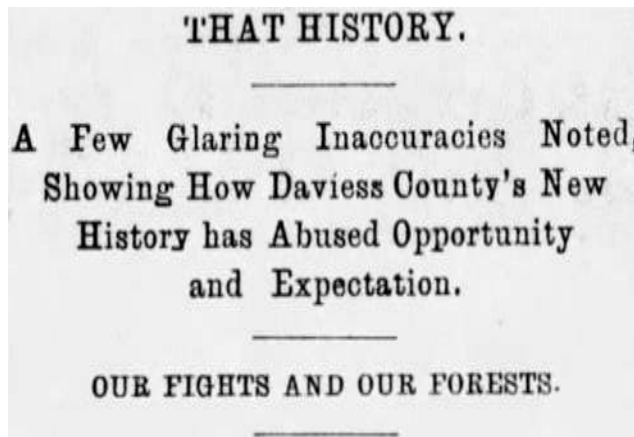


**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 25 May 1883, p.1:**

"The History of Daviess County," in a volume of 870 pages, is being delivered to the subscribers in Owensboro. It is neatly printed and substantially bound, but contains a great many typographical errors that ought not to have been allowed to appear in the work. The subject matter evinces some care in its preparation and moderate talent for compilation. The historians were not as accurate in the collation of facts as they might have been, nor as the subscribers had a just right to demand. The work shows clearly that it has been prepared with haste, and that the attention was not given it after it was put into the hands of the printers that it deserved. Of. course, it contains some excellent features and valuable history, and will serve a good purpose. But we confess to a decided disappointment in the work.



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 29 May 1883, p.4:**



Since our last issue we have seen somewhat more of the "History of Daviess County." Our examination, incomplete though it has been, reveals a work fearfully and wonderfully made considering the good material furnished by some of our citizens. This material is thrown in with matter taken from Collins' History of Kentucky, information from the State Geological Reports, election returns and bits of biography. The result is a chaos of literature frescoed all over with mistakes both ludicrous and mischievous.

Our dramatic critic discovered that it credited one of our most youthful business men, very recently married, with having a son already engaged in the tobacco trade and charged another with the youthful indiscretion of teaching school at the early age of three years. He concluded to sing its praises as a "Comedy of Errors," but in that light it began to stretch out so much like a Chinese play that he had to bid his muse hang up her harp. The best strung lyre couldn't reach the volume. As a record of public events our people had a right to demand that it should be faithful. But, if the muse of history ever weeps over a travesty of truth, she must have shed bitter, briny tears when her eyes first fell on the account of the battle at Sutherland's hill and the skirmish in which Col.

Netter was killed. It purports to give the Federal statement, and deals in assertions which the Federals had no means of verifying. It then professes to give the points in which the Confederate account differs, and discredits their real view by putting in the mouths of some of them the most improbable statements. It is grossly inaccurate as to the numbers on the Confederate side, as we learn from reliable participants, and besides greatly overstating their numbers, it characterizes the body of men under Lieut. Colonel Martin – really a part of the 10th Confederate cavalry – as guerillas. The party described as 225 under Capt. Taylor, consisted chiefly of his company and numbered really only fifty or sixty. The "240 under Capt. Merriwether," were in fact thirty-eight poorly armed Confederates. They resisted the advance of Col. Netter and his troops determinedly, and instead of being driven from the field they drove the Federals back in much less than half an hour, and held their position commanding the river road for hours without any further demonstrations from the Federals. This veracious history says that Col. Netter was killed with a squirrel rifle, but assumes that the story that James Faulds shot him is not probable. All the Confederates on the ground agree that Jas. Faulds did actually kill him, and that he was the only man among them who carried a squirrel rifle. Instead of the "routed enemy" being punished with "the death of twelve and the wounding of fifteen or twenty," investigation shows that the victorious thirty eight sustained no noticeable wounds and lost only one man – Richard Hayden, of Hancock county.

The account of the fight at Sutherland's farm is no nearer the truth in its estimate of the Confederates engaged, and very erroneous in some other respects, to say nothing of the singular circumstance that only "342 Federals were engaged in the battle," when to that number had been added, the day before, "400 or 500 soldiery from across the river," also "300 Indiana farmers" and "three companies of home guards." Now we are credibly informed that the Confederates were surprised and had no "six-pound cannon," but a single little gun of a caliber not much greater than a Belgian rifle, without suitable ammunition and not deserving to be ranked as artillery. That the same company of thirty-eight, or, at least, all of them that could get in line in time, were formed across the lane and resisted the Federal charge. After the fight, which was spirited on both sides in spite of the surprise, this company coolly covered the retirement, which was by no means a "scattering in every direction," but a retreat not at all unworthy, in its method, of a brave leader and gallant men. In spite of the rough ground and dense woods they lost neither toy cannon, horses, nor men, excepting, of course, those fallen in the field, numbering, according to physicians visiting the scene immediately, about twenty-one or twenty-two, of whom three or four were killed outright.

So much for the truth of history in that direction, and pity it is we have not space to pursue it further in some other directions. The many good citizens of Daviess who were engaged in the stirring scenes of the war, whether Federal or Confederate, had a right to expect in this book a fair report of all their noteworthy deeds, but when they find them thus mingled with false stigmas on their records, they might well exclaim for their contemporaries and their posterity, "Oh, history, what frauds are perpetrated in thy name."

But, remembering that Mercury rarely carried messages from Mars with fidelity, left the "war bulletin" to its time-tried mendacity and turned for refreshment to the beautiful botany of the book. We rambled with the author – whoever he might be – in the forests primeval, to say nothing of the wasted woods and deadenings of the day. We struck at once for "tall timber" and naturally turned towards the poplars." These monarchs of the forests, always reckoned among our chief timber trees, were dismissed with this remarkable bit of information: "The cottonwood is a well-known large swamp tree of but little account, and the quaking asp, or American aspen, is a true



poplar and is scarce." The beech fared no better. The book assures us that this "very common tree in the lake region and the East was formerly represented by a few specimens in this county." It had been supposed by our citizens that this tree was plentiful in several regions of the county, and so abundant in one large section as to give it the name of the "Beech Woods." But this book made such sad havoc with our forests that we were about to tune up with the mournful melody of "Woodman spare that tree," when the author dissipated the gloom with the comforting communication that "the umbrella tree may possibly occur here." The recollection that these other trees had sheltered us and our desire to protect them, were at once utterly lost in the potential presence of the pure possibility that we might perchance enjoy that perfect protection which the umbrella tree must necessarily afford in its "neck of woods."

These are a few of the distinguishing marks of this awful annal, which is as peculiar for some things it contains as for many it omits. But space – if not life – is too short to point them all out. There are, however, a few beautiful biographies, ignominiously squelched for a failure of consideration, which we may furnish as sort of second edition. And yet let us devoutly hope that this book is not the kind of history that repeats itself. Forbid it, Clio, and all the other muses!



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 5 June 1883, p.2:**

**MORE HISTORY.**

The facility with which the American people can be humbugged has become proverbial. But the most singular thing about it is, that it is the stranger who always has a patent on the process. Kentuckians rarely fail, in the sense, to "take the stranger in," and, in the worldly sense, to let the stranger "take them in."

This has been strikingly illustrated in more cases than one in this region. The Daviess county map furnished a subdued picture of this sort of "take in." But for a striking tableau of the subject, behold the new History of Daviess County.

They came among us with specious promises. We asked not whence they came nor who they were. They gave no evidence of natural qualification for the work, and were of course without the local information necessary even to the best qualified. Giving no guarantees of fidelity or fitness, they fished for information with pin hooks and dragged the whole stream for contracts with a desperate determination to let no ten dollar bill escape. When they got enough of these they seem to have tumbled their memorandums into a printing office pell-mell and promptly picked their history out of the "pi box."

Its errors are so glaring, its mistakes so ludicrous, its sins of omission and commission so audacious that it has been the laughing stock of our people. But the joke is expensive. The money wasted in its perpetration amounts to many thousands, and yet this is the least of the loss to our people. The fine material that should have been moulded into a faithful record of our people's deeds and our county's resources and productions is worse than wasted. Our cotemporaries are misled instead of being enlightened about us, and we are traduced before a posterity entitled, for our sakes and their own, to the sacred truth.

The great part Kentucky and Kentuckians have taken in the political progress of the Saxon race make her history of striking interest to every reader, and no annal of our country's matchless march at the head of the nations is complete without it.



In the story of Kentucky's deeds, in the record of her resources, in the forecasting of her destinies, the county of Daviess furnishes the subject of one of the best chapters. That chapter should be well written. In our midst are to be found the best agencies for so useful a work. We have talented and faithful citizens alive to every interest and aware of every resource of the county – men imbued with the spirit of our institutions and familiar with our traditions – their known abilities and character, their superior facilities and their responsibility at the bar of their own people's opinion would be the surest guarantees of the accuracy and completeness of the record. If such a work were needed before, it must be manifestly necessary now, and our citizens should not rest until error is corrected and truth established by a real history.



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 5 June 1883, p.4:**

A number of citizens of the West Louisville precinct have decided to refuse payment for their copies of the alleged "History of Daviess County," and have retained lawyers in event suit is instituted.

The Louisville Commercial says: "The people of Daviess county complain of having been swindled by an itinerant publisher of local histories, who visited their section, obtained their money and palmed off on them a book so full of inaccuracies and having so many omissions as to make it worthless as a history of the county. Such an experience is not new in any State in this county. Only last summer a pretentious history of Louisville, New Albany and Jeffersonville was printed, but its preparation had been so careless that many hundreds of subscribers refused to accept the book."



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 12 June 1883, p.1:**

Red Hill

Messrs. Editors, as you have given the MESSENGER readers a brief review of the "Daviess County History," that magnificent and invaluable (?) work which the future generations of old Daviess will refer to for information concerning their ancestry, let your scribe now disclose the manner in which the compilers, who wrote up the matter which this vicinity furnished to this great "Daviess County History," secured quite a number of subscribers here. While Mr. Bucklin was here getting up matter for the work he requested all who gave him a sketch to sign a certificate recommending the work. Several did so without taking the pains to read and see what they were putting their names to, and behold when the deliverer came he had ten-dollar notes on them. The result will be some tall lawing before the sum is paid; for these parties utterly refused to take the book, and only signed a certificate recommending the book as "a good thing."

FERNANDER.



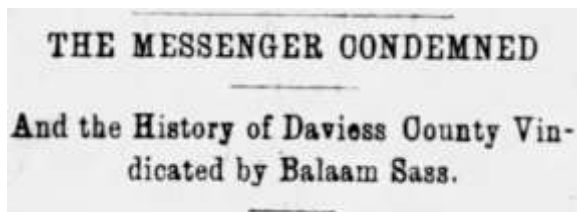
**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 12 June 1883, p.4:**

Dr. J. N. Knox subscribed for the alleged History of Daviess County and had his picture printed in it, the regular price for which was \$75. Like everyboody [sic] else, he was very much dissatisfied with the book, and protested against paying for it, but finally compromised with the agent for \$40. Mr. Geo. Mattingly compromised for \$45.

[Note: the noted subscriber in this entry was Dr. Wm. R. Knox, see *History of Daviess County, Kentucky* pages 540 & 573.]



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 15 June 1883, p.4:**



Messrs. Editors:

You have to submit to the following rebuke:

I must insist that nothing is more wanton or cruel than the criticisms you gave the History of Daviess county and its authors. You evidently penned the criticism without the slightest knowledge of the objects of modern history, or the duty of modern historians. I would not have arraigned you, but for the fear that your article may excite malcontentedness in the minds of those good citizens whose pictures appear in the history, and you have doubtless excited the curiosity of many to an extent which will induce them to read the book, and in such an event many heartburnings will be engendered, and jealousies excited toward the eminent men whose biographies are given. Now if the history is ever read by those whose pictures are in it, they being all of them truth-loving people, will fall into a rage toward the authors, who induced them, at considerable expense, to furnish their pictures to be associated with such a catenation of falsehoods, while all of us who read it must and do envy those of our fellow citizens whose educational career was so brilliant, but who, heretofore, have contented themselves in hibernating with we common fellows, on terms of intimate equality, though we were bred in "remote cities" or great colleges, both British and German, but cannot now stoop to us any further, and but for the history we would never have known to what serene heights they had soared. These jealousies may degenerate to affronts. and so will come on social war, and you are the cause of it. What business was it of your's, if there is no truth in the history? You should have known that it is not expected a historian of this age will write any truth. You might at least have guessed that was the very reason we sent for writers whom we knew had no knowledge of us or our county. In fact, what use do you think we could have for a book containing knowledge which we already had. And then, when it comes to biographic sketches, you should reflect that many of us (the writer of this for one) cannot afford to have it known "what manner of men" or women we have been. Why, sirs, if the writer of this were truthfully shown up in print, the hardest fight would occur which has ever been fought. After the example set by you, I have heard one man say the account given of the battle fought just below the city is utterly false – the one in which Col. or Gen. Netter was slain. Well, who disputes that? but both he and you know full well that no history can be written without a battle. Well, you see, these historians knowing this, took the names which figured in that Netter scrimmage, (because there must be names of men who command, and snort around as Major

Stout did, to make up a battle), and then they filled up with an account of the battle which will be fought in the next war, when Owensboro will be a great strategic city, and be the bone of contention between two great armies. It may be these historians had foreseen that Armagheddon will be fought about the old fair ground, and let me remind you that you were not there, and how can you go about denying that a most fierce and furious fight occurred, just as they have written it? Let me ask: Do you not credit portions of the history written by Herodotus? Well, you saw none of the things occur of which he gives an account. Now, I can show that he wrote a thing which is not true. He says, at one place, that Hercules was admitted among the gods seventeen thousand years before the of King Amasis, and he says that reign was five hundred years before he was born. Do you remember what Amasis did when he was summoned to lay down his arms and cease to oppose the reigning King? Well, if you don't I will not stop to inform such ungenerous a pair of editors. Also, some whom you have instigated to read the history, say that it will be offensive to Esquire Jackson, when he sees himself married to the wrong lady, but he should not, because when the squire was married to Miss Shanks, a most excellent lady, but unpretending, and only adapted to the duties of one of our common country homes, he was just beginning his career, having to labor to subsist; but when the sketch of him was written, and when these historians first knew him, he had grown to great opulence, so that the historians knew, and so ought you to know, that it would never do to give him one of our common country marriages, but that he must be haloed with some factions, and his life must conform by a sort of *nunc pro tunc* supposal to the squire, as he now is, and he not be insulted by a recital of any fact which occurred when he was as obscure as any of us. I will admit had I been consulted, in making up the sketch of him I would truly have given him a fictitious marriage; but, while I was at it, I would have married him to Diana, or Heloise, or Eva McMurrough, or maybe Pocahontas.

You censure them for the frauds by which they got many, if not all, the names to their covenant to take and pay ten dollars for the book they would make. Well, now, suppose they had resorted to no trick or falsehood to catch any of us, they would not have gotten over about three subscriptions, and they by insolvents, and you know everybody must do something a for a living. Don't you know that some or best lawyers tell some mighty tough things in their struggle for bread? Another fellow was induced by your criticism to read the history, and finding that it sends his father to the grave four years before he was born (which illegitimizes him,) he is found strolling about the streets, looking as grim as fate, and evidently carrying about his person a hundred pounds of weapons and inquiring for the writers, and finding none of them, it is said he is hinting that he will turn his attention to some of us who have taken the book, on the ground that we aided in the publication of the libel, and would you not feel sweet if some fine morning you were to find about six of your patrons, ourself included, flat of our backs, with death grins more horrible than that worn by Sir Walter Blount?

The next thing we will see, you will essay to criticise the veracity of our neighbor, Hon. Jas. Weir, as displayed in his admirable history of Lonz Powers. But I need not menace you, because Mr. Weir can take care of himself. But our historians made no agreement to write a syllable of truth. They only undertook to write a book, and might, therefore, have stolen every as they did plagiarize much of it; some, I am informed, from Senator McCreery's story of "Bill Smothers." They would never have contracted to write as insipid stuff as the truth, for they knew they were not capable of such rare powers.

No one complains of the size of the book. It is not as large as the Bible, or perhaps Plutarch's lives, but I knew and so did the most of you, that they could not invent matter enough to make a book as large as these, as neither of them was ever a liar laureate. From this out, however, with their experience in making this history, they can safely contract for any amount of fabrication. It is now

thought that they are at least first cousins of Joe Mulhattan. Surely you must admire the art of these historians in getting subscriptions for their book (I would by way of episode detail a few of the most taking incidents, but most of us were caught by the same dead minnow,) and in the quaint collection of fictions, so that there should not appear in book that dimension the slightest inuendo of a truth, but you do not even credit them by that fine display of art. Let me say your love of truth does not warrant you in expecting it at the hands of gentlemen who have no taste for it, who set no value upon it, and who possess no style in which the truth can be written. From this history it strikes me that these historians, or one of them, is the author of the sacred lyric beginning:

"This world is all a fleeting show  
For man's Illusion given."

Now, if this is poetry (and who questions it,) and it may be tolerated to affirm in a sacred song that that the whole world is illusory, why may not historians (and, too, when they are writing in a subject where there is such a dirth of historic facts as ours had) why may they not make a book equally as illusory. My gents, so striking is the matter and the manner of this book that I have not been able to write any truth in this review of your ungenerous criticism. I must, however, admit that I have not read a line in this history, but have refrained from policy; because from what I have heard of it I am satisfied that no one who reads it will ever be able afterwards to write or utter a word of truth, and I have not been famous for truth hitherto, and cannot afford to weaken further in that respect. Your excessive love of truth is unbecoming, and it is to be hoped that you will hereafter modify at least so ill-mannered a fanaticism. With very slight sentiments of respect, I am yours,

Balaam Sass.



**Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 6 November 1883, p.2:**

OUTSIDERS FALSIFYING KENTUCKY'S HISTORY.  
[Louisville Commercial.]

The work of falsifying the history of Kentucky still goes on through the efforts of outsiders who come into the State, write "county histories" to sell and disappear. Daviess county had an experience of this kind recently. We do not know that the Northern firm now at work in Bowling Green will prepare such a worthless book as these county histories usually are, but it is certain that a citizen of any county ought to be better prepared than a stranger to write its history. The history of all the counties ought to be written fully, but if incorrect statements are perpetuated in print harm instead of good will done. Besides, if any money is to be made, it should be the reward of some painstaking local historian in every community.



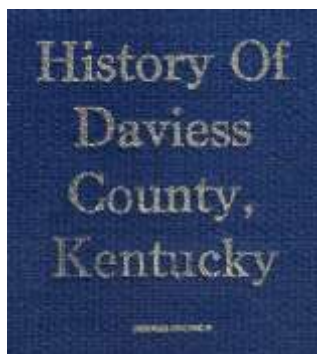
**Sixty Years of Owensboro, 1883-1943, William Foster Hayes  
(Owensboro, KY: Messenger Job Printing Co., 1943) Preface p.ix:**

The point of departure in the present work was determined by the fact that in 1883 was published the History of Daviess County by the Inter State Publishing Company of Chicago. No author is named and from the preface it appears to have been simply a business undertaking, based

on subscriptions taken in advance. It is introduced by an excellently written epitome of the history of Kentucky, with excursions into earlier and more general American history. There is no indication of the writer of this chapter. Obviously it could not have been written by a publishing company. From internal evidence I hazard a guess that it was the work of our late distinguished and accomplished Judge Lucius P. Little, whose portrait is inserted in the midst of it. A chapter on the early settlement of the county was written by Judge Geo. V. Triplett of that day, and portions of two other chapters by Robert Triplett and Col. Thomas C. McCreery. The rest of the book was no doubt prepared by compilers sent into the field. Though poorly arranged and containing some unnecessary padding it is yet an interesting and valuable compilation. Several copies, perhaps a substantial number, are extant.

It seemed suitable to begin the present work where that volume left off, so that the entire history of the city to the present year may be found, however partially and imperfectly recorded, in the two volumes.

W. FOSTER HAYES.



### Rebuttal By Jerry Long

I believe the Owensboro Messenger's review of the 1883 History of Daviess County, Kentucky is an unbalanced and unwarranted appraisal. Their motivation in presenting such a negative review is to be questioned. In this instance it can be said that it is to the advantage of a news media, such as a newspaper, to create an issue or controversy – part of their mission is to generate sales in order to survive. A positive review would have warranted no further commentary.

True there are errors and inaccuracies to be found in the History volume. Due to the fallibility and inaccuracies of primary sources any outline of historical events that is set forth is to contain errors to some degree. The question is to what degree is the outline erroneous. In the case of the History of Daviess County, Kentucky I believe the errors are minimal and do not outweigh the value of the whole. When the accuracy rate is high why is it beneficial to degrade the whole? The true and accurate facts contained on the 870 pages of the Daviess County historical outline would not have been preserved if the effort had not been made to capture and set forth those events of our history. If the Inter-State Publishing Co. had not created their history so much would have been lost!!

