Maceo –
Reflections of the Past

By Jerry Long
c.2026

Picture from Daviess County KY Genealogy Facebook website

<u>Owensboro Messenger</u>, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 26 June 1891, p.4:

Postoffice at Powers

A postoffice has been established at Powers, a station on the L., St. L. & T. railroad two miles from Yelvington. Mr. E. P. Taylor, who has received the appointment as postmaster, was in

the city yesterday for the purpose of filing his bond and forwarding his papers to Washington. The office will be ready for business in a few days.

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Kentucky Gazetteer And Business Directory For 1895-1896,
(Detroit, MI & Louisville, KY: R. L. Polk & Co. & A. C. Danser, 1895:

POWERS STATION. On the L/. St. & T. Ry., in Daviess county, 10 miles fron Owensboro, the county seat and banking point. Exp. Adams. Population 50. E. P. Taylor, postmaster.

Applegate, C. L., distiller.
Bell, Hillery, general store.
Grifith, J. L., blacksmith.
Perkins Z. T., general store.
Petri, Wm., general store.
Taylor, E. P., leaf tobacco.

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Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 7 April 1897, p.1:

Postoffice Change.

The name of the postoffice at Powers has been changed to Maceo, in honor of the Cuban hero who was slain by Spanish treachery. The change was effected several days ago, but the postal clerks have failed to find it out, as all mail sent there thus far has been returned from Louisville marked no such office in state named.

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General Antonio Maceo (1845-1896)

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Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 15 July 1934, pp.1b & 2 B:

TOWN OF MACEO GOT NAME FROM MULATTO HERO

Captain Antonio Maceo Made Cuban History; First Name Of Village Was Powers Station.

Maceo – reminiscent of an era of large plantations and . quiet gentility – a typically Southern small town which, like "Topsy" apparently, "just growed," by some ironical twist of bears a name synonymous in another land with that of bloodshed, stormy revolt and heroism. It was Captain Antonio Maceo, a Cuban mulatto who was killed in leading the native revolt against the tyranny of Spain, whose memory is thus so signally honored by the small Daviess county settlement.

Antonio Maceo

Antonio Maceo, remembered in Cuban history as a martyr to his country, was a mulatto of high education. During the years preceding the intervention of the United States, it was Maceo, under the command of General Gomez and other Cuban leaders who was responsible for the growing tide of native patriotism and desire for freedom. With a small band of followers he swept from end of the island to the other lighting the flame of revolution, encountering and often defeating large bands of Spanish soldiers with little more than the native machete for weapons. Before making the Spanish uncomfortable it was the expressed desire of Maceo and the other leaders to keep alive the revolution with the end in view of making it necessary for the recognition if not the intervention of the United States. But he was killed before he saw his ambition realized. Toward the close or the year 1896 Maceo began a march eastward to the Pinar del Rio region. It was in this section during a chance encounter with a handful of Spanish soldiers that he was slain. His death, however, served to intensify the revolt in Cuba and gained the cause many more sympathizers in the United States. He was buried with honors and his service to his country is remembered by a monument in Havana – and, of course, the town in Daviess county which bears his name.

Rosebud Blooms and Wilts

But long before days of either the town or the soldier, Maceo was known by other names. Railroad officials of the L. H. & St. L. once went so far as to lay out and plan a town a short distance from where Maceo is now. Accompanied by all the civic pride and spirit of a Florida land boom, the town of Rosebud was born. Some land speculators thought it an opportunity to get rich. But a difficulty in gaining clear title to the station and the town site, and the fact that small towns just aren't man-made or planned. Rosebud just didn't exist, even in name, after a few years.

Powers Station

But after a time with the steady influx of pioneers and their families seeking new land, a small town which was later to bear the name Powers Station sprang up. Land which before had been virgin forest was gradually cleared and the fertile land offered a bounty to the entertaining settlers with energy and ambition. When the small town reached the size meriting an official name, Col. J. D. Powers, then an official of the L. H. & St. L. railroad serving the town, was the recipient of that honor. A few scattered industries sprang up and the town began to take on life. A Mr. Hudson is remembered as the first man to operate a general merchandising store. Judge E. P. Taylor, formerly county judge of Daviess county and now a retired of near Maceo, operated a small tobacco warehouse which sometimes employed as many as fifty men. The Beechwood distillery, operated by C. L. Applegate & Co., was situated between Powers Station and Yelvington and for a number of years the "Beechwood" brand made a strong bid for lasting fame. As the enterprising little town continued to grow inhabitants older and larger town of Yelvington changed their residence to the new fertile section Ohio. A postoffice was established about 1890. Judge Taylor was the first postmaster. But Powers Station, adequate enough as the name of a small settlement, caused too much confusion as the name of a potsoffice. It was difficult to distinguish in the hand writing of that period the difference between Powers Station and Powers Store, then a small postoffice near Whiteville. Near the close of the century the post office department at Washington after receiving many complaints, decided it was time the little town should have new name. Interested citizens were asked to submit to Washington prospective names. Judge Taylor claims the distinction of submitting the name Maceo, which was then figuring prominently in the news.

Slave Holding District

Tourists traveling through often remarked at the number of Negro inhabitants in Maceo. For the most part, it is explained, these Negroes are direct descendants of the large number of slaves who lived in the neighborhood before the War Between the States, and have lived and cultivated the same sections of land that their early forefathers once received as farewell gifts from their masters. They are well behaved and industrious citizens.

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<u>Owensboro Messenger</u>, Owensboro, KY, 21 March 1943, p.5B:

Hawes And Taylor Families Prominent
In Early Yelvington Community History:

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

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

In later years, a small settlement grew at Powers Station, which was built on the L. and St. L. railroad between Yelvington and the river. A community called Rosebud, farther up the road tried to have the railroad station moved, but officials decided against this. A post-office, Powers,

was established. However because there was another Powers in Kentucky, thus resulting in much confusion between the towns of Powers and Powers Station, the government decreed the name must be changed. Being at the close of the Spanish American war, Judge E. P. Taylor suggested the name of Maceo in honor of the famous Cuban hero. The government accepted the name, and Maceo it has remained to this day.

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<u>Kentucky Place Names</u>, Robert M. Rennick (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1984), p.183:

Maceo (Daviess): This village with post office and railroad station stretches over 8 miles northeast of Owensboro. The community was settled just after the Civil War by freed slaves on land given to them by their ex-masters. There the Louisville Henderson & St. Louis (now L&N) Railroad laid out a town and established a post office in 1890 or 1891 named Powers Station for Col. J. D. Powers of Owensboro, a railroad official. To avoid confusion with Powers Store, another Kentucky post office, postmaster Edwin P. Taylor suggested that his post office be renamed Maceo for Capt. Alonzo [sic] Maceo, a Cuban mulatto then in the news for having been killed in the early stages of the Cuban revolt against Spain. This change was effected on Feb 3, 1897. [Sources – "Towns and Villages of Daviess County," Cecilia M. Laswell, WPA manuscript, 19 June 1936, Kentucky Archives, Frankfort, KY; and David & Joyce Orrahood , Owensboro, KY, 30 September 1977.]

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<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u>, Owensboro, KY, 3 September 1991, p.3C:

Maceo named for black Cuban revolutionary

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

Maceo is in the spotlight these days as the hometown of new MCA recording artist Marty Brown. "M-A-C-E-O," he spells it out on one of his videos.

But what kind of word is "Maceo"?

A name, says Glenn Hodges, a Maceo historian.

According to Hodges' history of Lewisport – "Daybreak on Old Fortification Creek" - Maceo was named for Gen. Antonio Maceo, a black Cuban revolutionary who led an insurrection against Spain in the 1890s.

Why?

Hodges has never found the reason, he said.

Maceo was created by the Louisville, St. Louis and Texas Railroad when the track was built in 1888. It was originally known as Powers Station, named for Col. Joshua D. Powers, a prosperous Owensboro attorney and businessman who masterminded the financing of the railroad.

Around 1897, the railroad moved the station half a mile east and renamed it Rosebud, Hodges' research shows. A lawsuit forced the station's return to its original location.

Hodges said he's heard that the town's original settlers were ex-slaves.

But few blacks are among the 300 or so residents of the unincorporated community today.

The Maceo Bank closed in 1908 when its parent bank, the State Bank of Kentucky, was absorbed by the U.S. National Bank of Owensboro. Trains haven't stopped for decades. And the town has lost most of its businesses.

"It used to be a big town," Jessie Riley, who owns the lone grocery store, recalled earlier this year. "It had dance halls and taverns. When I moved here in '57, it had three grocery stores and two restaurants. But it didn't seem like it was much bigger then."

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 15 May 1993, pp.1A & 2A:

History marches on in Maceo mural

By John McGary, Messenger-Inquirer

For a small town, Maceo sure has a big mural.

Work began Thursday on a historically flavored mural that will cover the entire 30-foot by 80-foot post office wall. Lance Hunter, Brescia College assistant professor of art, designed the mural and will be working on the giant painting until the dedication ceremony in early July.

After little more than one complete day of work, Hunter, three college students and Maceo volunteers already have the basic form of the mural complete.

The next three or four weeks will be spent on detail work such as blending and shading, Hunter said.

The Maceo Concerned Citizens group commissioned the work and raised $6,000 for the painting.

For Hunter, a Texas native, the Maceo mural will be his 12th such project. Most of them revolve around a community's history or image, he said. Only one – a mural in a park in Lufkin, Texas – is bigger than the Maceo mural.

"I let the environment and the goals of the patrons help determine what it will look like," Hunter said.

Already visible are the basic themes of the mural: An Indian, signifying the Native American stronghold of the past; the famous ex-slave and abolitionist, Josiah Henson, who traveled near the area on his way to freedom; a steamboat; a train; Cuban war hero Antonio Maceo for whom the community was named following the Spanish-American War; a church surrounded by water from a picture taken during the flood of 1937; five Maceo residents rendering lard from a 1943 photograph; and a farmer working a tobacco field.

Hunter said he reviewed 100 to 150 pictures for inspiration. He said he thought the lard-rendering portion of the mural symbolized community togetherness.

One of Hunter's local volunteers Friday was Caroline Wedding, whose grandfather, great-uncle and great-aunt were among the five people rendering lard that day 50 years ago. She said she planned on doing as much of the detail work on her grandfather as possible.

Art students Sylvia Nittis from Larnaca, Cyprus, and Kim Wathen, an Owensboro native, will be working alongside Hunter through next week when Brescia's two-week intensive session

will be over. Also helping is John Mountjoy, a graphic arts student from Western Kentucky University.

The painters stood Friday on scaffolding donated by Estes Painting and battled the 80-degree temperature. Hunter said he enjoyed the special challenges that outdoor murals present.

"It gives me a chance to do something really big," Hunter said. "There's a large percentage of people who will never enter an art gallery who will see this. Your reach is longer."

Hunter also praised the community for its support and said already people are honking their horns as they drive by on U.S. 60, and even stopping to chat.

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 11 July 1993, pp.1A & 2A:

By Laura Skillman

Images of Josiah Henson and Antonio Maceo watched over the crowd gathered Saturday morning beside a mural depicting Maceo's history.

For nearly two hours, more than 100 people listened to pieces of the community's past and to music as the mural was dedicated.

"We're just so proud of it," Margaret Hawes said. "It just portrays everything about Maceo.

"We're a close community and I just think it brought us a little closer," said Hawes, who helped feed the painters and helped with painting too.

"I had to do a little, so I could say so," she said. "It was so fun."

The mural covers an 80-feet by 30-feet brick wall on the side of the Maceo Post Office. Lance Hunter, Brescia College assistant professor of art, designed the mural and worked with three college students and community volunteers to paint it.

Hunter said he was happy with the mural and the community involvement in the project was wonderful.

"In almost every effort, they exceeded my expectations," he said.

The Maceo Concerned Citizens Group commissioned the work and raised $6,000 for the painting.

Images on the wall reflect historical developments of the area. By starting at the left of the mural, one can walk through time beginning when Native Americans canoed along Blackford Creek and ending with a farmer standing in his tobacco patch.

Eight images are depicted in the mural. The image of Josiah Henson, a slave who spent time on a farm near Yelvington and was the basis of the character Uncle Tom in the book that Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote, is prominently displayed on the mural.

In the play "Josiah!," "We're trying to do Henson's legacy as much justice as you have today," said John Harris, the play's producer. "Based on what I see today, we have a tough job ahead of us."

Antonio Maceo, the Cuban revolutionary hero for whom the town is named, also can easily be seen by motorists passing by on U.S. 60.

"The founding fathers of this community selected a good name, Maceo. Be proud of it," said Fina Simpson, a Cuban-American historian from Bowling Green. She gave a brief history of Maceo's life.

A riverboat and a train are represented on the mural to reflect their importance to the community. A church surrounded by water from the 1937 flood is on the wall along with a group of people rendering lard, which represents the community spirit. The tobacco farmer at the end represents agriculture's prominent role.

Clara Hall lives just across U.S. 60 from the new mural and recognizes the tobacco farmer as her brother. Since the mural has been painted, lots of lookers have come by, she said.

"A lot of times I look out and there'll be cars parked along the highway or they'll drive over here and look at it," she said.

For Doris Estes, the mural is a work of art.

"I think it's so unique and the way it was put together is special," she said.

Getting the mural from an idea to reality took the whole community, said Susan Foster, president of the community group. But many in the group give her the credit for making it a success.

"Without her we would not have this," Hawes said. "When she goes after it, she really gets things done."

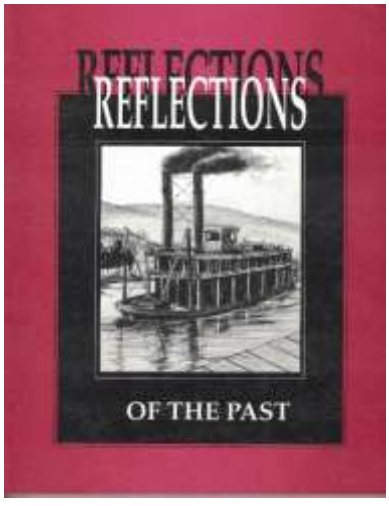
Rick Roberts, one of several singers at the dedication, agreed that Foster was the driving force.

"She's a force," he said. "I don't think there's anything that she couldn't do."

Roberts, who lives at Yelvington and farms in Maceo, said getting the mural completed was indicative of how the community comes together.

"When somebody is sick or lost a family member, they come to your aid," he said. "We've got a real nice community here. I'm proud of where I live. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else."

<u>Reflections of the Past</u>, Maceo Historical Society
(Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 1993) pp.iii-viii:



Preface and Acknowledgements

In late December of 1991 the Owensboro Municipal Utility Company (OMU) purchased options to buy over 400 acres of land in the Maceo community to landfill anticipated by-products from a coal-scrubber being installed. In January of 1992 the Maceo Concerned Citizens Group (MCCG) formed hoping to reverse this decision. As a result of our group's efforts, along with assistance from locally elected officials OMU decided to abandon the Maceo landfill site. Kentucky State Representative (Speaker of the House) Don Blandford, Daviess County Judge Executive Wilbur "Buzz" Norris and Fiscal Court Members, Fred Marksberry, Gary Boswell and David Warren were instrumental in helping the community with this issue. Mayor David Adkisson and the Owensboro City Commission graciously allowed MCCG to express our views at their City Council meetings. Although MCCG's main objective for organizing was resolved, members felt the community needed a group of this type to address other issues and chose to remain intact.

One of MCCG's first projects was an Arbor Day presentation in March for the Maceo Elementary School. Trees were distributed. A Bradford Pear tree donated by Pat O'Brien's IGA store in Lewisport was planted at the school. Horticultural agent, Mike Klahr spoke about the Kentucky Coffee Tree and Bert Powell, local environmentalist spoke about the importance of trees. Another project taken on by Patsy (Hawes) Gordon was the monitoring of EPA clean-up activities of a Super-fund site on Kelly Cemetery Road. This effort continues. The state highway department sent representatives to one meeting to discuss the new Maceo Bridge. In August we held an appreciation dinner for our volunteer firefighters. In June of 1992 a mural for the Maceo post office wall was proposed and a committee formed to pursue this idea. Doris Estes began an informative newsletter which has been published quarterly and is distributed to over two hundred community members and interested persons. For the Earth Day celebration in April of 1992 and 1993 the group initiated a clean-up of Carpenter's and Kingfisher's Lakes. Trash barrels were placed at the lakes and our County Commissioner, Fred Marksberry continues to aid in having these emptied. In November over thirty community members presented a "Heritage Days" celebration for the students at Maceo Elementary School. Members of the Maceo-Yelvington community as well as other areas brought toys, tools, demonstrations and other abstracts (such as storytelling) to the school. Students and teachers alike enjoyed this look into the past. A booklet was also published and distributed.

One of the most significant committees formed within the MCCG was the Maceo Historical Society. This group began meeting on a regular basis in March of 1992. Members contributed knowledge, memories and information about the history of the community. Assignments were made and fact finding missions were begun. One enjoyable outing was made to the Rockport Library where librarian, Becky Middleton, provided help in locating information about the Maceo-Rockport connection prior to the last run of the Rockport Ferry. Shelia Heflin, Bettie Spratt and Jerry Long spent many hours with committee members at the Kentucky Room of the Owensboro-Daviess County Library. With their assistance, group members searched through old newspaper articles, records, files and history books in order to retrieve as much information as possible. We would like to thank all of these people who so kindly assisted us in researching our book

A mural committee was formed in July, 1993 and by early December, 1993, the MCCG had chosen Lance Hunter, a professor of art at Brescia College, to paint an historical mural on the post office wall in Maceo. The mural depicts scenes from the community's past – a Native American, representing the hunters who roamed this ground for many centuries; Josiah Henson, a slave who escaped from a local plantation and became the I for Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" a riverboat representing the importance of river travel in the early history of the

community; a train which signified the beginning of Maceo; Antonio Maceo, a Cuban Revolutionary War hero, for whom the town was named; a church in the 1937 flood, representing the importance of churches as well as the impact of the '37 flood; a farmer in his tobacco, representing the agricultural commitment of the community; and a group of neighbors working together to render lard, representing the community spirit of the area.

Knowing the historical mural would be completed and dedicated on July 10th of 1993, the Maceo Historical Society decided to put together the information we had gathered and have a book published to coincide with this event.

Information and photographs were consolidated and placed in files. These files were distributed among members and each person took one or more files which were developed into chapters. As time progressed, writers delved more deeply into their subjects and the writing commenced. In conjunction with written materials, photos were collected and assembled from Maceo-Yelvington residents as well as from other residents who had left the community. Anne Taylor McNeilly from Mayfield sent a photo of the Taylor home, probably the oldest house in East Daviess County, Mrs. Edna Gordon contributed the oldest known photo of the original Maceo Elementary School (taken before the turn of the century). Another important aspect of our research involved interviews with senior members in and from our area. A special thanks goes to all of the people who so graciously shared their memories with us. You will find their thoughts to be the most interesting part of our finished product.

One source of information which proved invaluable were the previous research books and articles written by local historians. Every effort has been made to ensure each of these authors received proper credit for their contributions. Thanks are offered to Dr. Lee and Aloma Dew, Keith Lawrence, Hugh Potter and Joe Sparks for the books and articles they have written which contributed to our final manuscript. We would also like to thank Dr. Bruce Beck, a local archeologist who graciously wrote the first chapter of our book about the Native American population in our area.

As the chapters from the different authors began to appear on my doorstep and I began typing them into the final form, it became apparent that information was being duplicated or portions from one chapter would be better suited for another chapter. In order to assure that this book would be the best we could possibly make it, I found it necessary to find someone to edit it. Kaye (Wilhoyte) Brown, an MA candidate in English literature, graciously volunteered to help with this formidable task.

Hour after hour Kaye snipped and sewed, cut and pasted, plucked and pieced portions from one chapter and inserted them into more suitable chapters. The time Kaye spent on this project was long and arduous, but well spent, as the result is truly a reflection of our community's history put together in a very readable text. A heartfelt thanks to Kaye and her family who gave her the time to work on this project.

Generations to come will be able to read about our community and know "from whence we came" thanks to those who contributed their time, ability and perseverance to this project. Listed in the Table of Contents beside each chapter the reader will find the name of the person (or persons) who wrote, compiled, or composed that chapter. Bear in mind that, while trying to keep each writer's chapter in his/her own words and with as few changes as possible, changes have been made and chapters credited to one person may contain contributions from another writer. Without reservation, it can be said that this book was truly the work of dedicated community members who were willing to work hard as a team in order to preserve our heritage.

Members of the Maceo Historical Society include: Doris (Eubanks) Estes, who spent many hours interviewing people, collecting numerous photos found in the book and spent many hours researching and writing a variety of chapters in her own clever and often amusing style. Lena Blunk who took a special interest in the schools and churches of the area and contributed many interesting stories, including one about her experience in the '37 Flood. Margaret (Green) Hawes, whose father, Carl Green, was a ferryman, researched for many hours in order to find as much information as possible about the Rockport Ferry. Lena and Margaret also provided delicious treats for our meetings! Shirley (Estes) Prather and Doris Estes began collecting photos and newspaper articles many years ago in anticipation of the day when a book would be published – they graciously contributed this for our book. Shirley also went from place to place photographing current sights in the community, many of which appear in the text. Patti (Thompson) Miller and her mother, Thelma Thompson, searched through old family barrels in order to find as many old documents and letters as possible. Rosalie (Thornberry) and Harry Berkshire searched and researched past and present businesses; and the number of businesses they were able to locate was astounding! They also babysat and brought delicious food to the "final compilation group." Betty (Carlton) Wilhoyte interviewed local people in order to provide maps of the Maceo, Yelvington and Maceo Black Community around 1920-1930. Bert and Millie Powell were faithful members of the group, researching the founding of three important recreational facilities in our area. Dorthy Moser and Lora Hawes contributed many wonderful photos from their scrap books and attended meetings where they brought delightful memories! Anne Henderson not only babysat for the "compilation group" but worked relentlessly with Mr. McDowell in order to get our final book together.

Last, but hardly least, I would like to thank my wonderful family, husband, Jim, and children, Carrie, Travis, Jamese and Hadley, for their patience and understanding while we worked until the wee hours of the night for many nights in order to get this publication to press.

Susan W. Foster, President
Maceo Concerned Citizens' Group

NOTE

It was not the intention of this book to be used as a history book. While we have attempted to historically document each piece of information, we acknowledge that some information which has been handed down from one generation to another may not be acceptable to all as the gospel truth. Memories for the same subject can be recalled differently by two different people. As careful as an interviewer tries to be, quotes can sometimes be mis-recorded. With these facts in mind, we also realize that despite our efforts to include as much information as possible, there are probably omissions and errors. However, the Maceo Historical Society offers this book, to you, the reader, as a reflection of our community's past.

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<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u>, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 21 August 1993, pp.1B & 8B:

By Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer

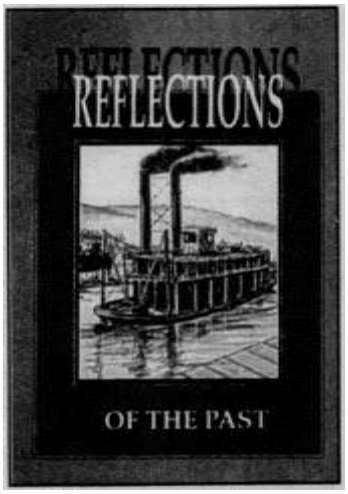
In the spring of 1992, Doris Estes, Shirley Prather and other members of the Maceo Historical Society were thinking about the plans to build the new bridge over the Ohio River at Maceo, and considering how it would change their community - possibly permanently.

They realized the time had come to try to record a history of both Maceo and Yelvington.

"We thought it would be good to put it all down, find out about the community and write a pamphlet," Estes said. "The more we got into it, the bigger the pamphlet got."

The historical society – a spinoff committee composed of several members of Maceo Concerned Citizens group – went to work, looking at newspaper microfilm at libraries in Bowling Green, Owensboro and Rockport, Ind., interviewing older residents and scrounging for photographs needed to tell the story.

The result of that labor is a 195-page book called "Reflections," which was released Friday.



The book spans the life of the two communities dating back to the days when Native Americans camped near Maceo and to 1781 when Joseph Blackford built a hunter's cabin on the creek that now bears his name. It recalls how blacksmith Yelverton Overby started a shop a few miles south of Blackford's cabin in the early 1800s at a crossroads and stagecoach stop where the town of Yelvington was born.

And it explains how the community changed after a fire destroyed most of Yelvington in April 1890. Businesses and residents began relocating a few miles north along the railroad at Powers Station, a community first settled by a small group of freed slaves after the Civil War. The new town was renamed Maceo in about 1898 to honor Gen. Antonio Maceo, a Cuban revolutionary who was killed by Spanish troops in 1896.

"Reflections" contains 23 chapters interspersed with about 130 photographs and illustrations. The book not only highlights the story of Gen. Maceo's death, but tells the Josiah Henson story, examines development of the highways and byways, and includes maps of Maceo and Yelvington in the 1920-30s showing where businesses and homes were located.

Older residents interviewed recall their memories of the 1937 flood and happier days when they used the Rockport Ferry to cross the river for entertainment and to shop.

There's a "Shall We Pray" chapter about area churches, capsule histories of schools, pictures of old homes and class photos of students of Maceo Elementary.

A chapter on slavery titled "The Tainted Past" contains excerpts from a circa 1950 interview with former slave Steve Hawes of Yelvington, who died in 1953 at age 113.

Members of the Maceo Historical Society who either did research, supplied photos or contributed chapters included Estes, Prather, Margaret Green Hawes, Lena Blunk, Rosalie and Harry Berkshire, Bert and Millie Powell, Patti Miller and her mother Thelma Thompson, Dorothy Moser, Lora Hawes and Anne Henderson.

Susan Foster, president of Maceo Concerned Citizens, directed the operation and organized the chapters in book form. Her sister, Kaye W. Brown, edited the manuscript and entered it into a computer for printing.

"It really was a community effort, what a lot of people wanted to see done," Susan Foster said.

"It was fun to do, but heartbreaking for me," said Foster, whose mother, Betty Carlton Wilhoyte, died July 7 after having worked on the project. A member of the Maceo Historical Society, Foster's mother interviewed local residents to supply the book with the maps of Maceo and Yelvington. The book is dedicated to her memory.

The editor's note of the book emphasizes that "Reflections" is not a definitive history of Maceo and Yelvington.

"While we have attempted to historically document each piece of information, we acknowledge that some information, which has been handed down from one generation to another, may not be acceptable to all as the gospel truth. . . . The Maceo Historical Society offers this book to you, the reader, as a reflection of our community's past."

"Reflections," released Friday, is a history of Maceo and Yelvington back to the 18th century. The book, printed by McDowell Publications of Utica, is $15 in paperback and $21 in hardback. Three hundred copies were printed in paperback, 200 in hardback. The mailing address is Maceo Concerned Citizens Group, Box 100, Maceo, Ky. 42355. A $3 shipping charge is added.

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 28 March 1995, Community p.12:

COMMUNITY HISTORIES: MACEO AND YELVINGTON

By Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer

Few men did more to establish the community of Maceo than Edwin Pendleton Taylor.

After Yelvington was destroyed by fire in April 1890, the merchants of that town, including Taylor, were so devastated by the disaster that they decided to abandon Yelvington as a business point. Taylor lost $12,000 in tobacco in the flames. But within two weeks after the fire, he launched the effort to start a new town at the railroad stop called Powers Station nine miles east of Owensboro.

Taylor, who owned a 600-acre farm on nearby Iceland Road at Powers, set an engineer to work laying out the town, graveling streets, planting trees, and building business houses and dwellings. Some of those former Yelvington businessmen who were able to rebuild decided to locate there.

By September of that year, the buildings were ready for tenants, and Taylor had started a new tobacco warehouse which eventually would employ 50 people. A post office was opened and "Pen" Taylor was named postmaster.

The new town by 1895 included general stores operated by Hillary Bell, Z.T. Perkins and William Petri. J.L. Griffith ran a blacksmith shop and D.L. Applegate had a distillery along the road to Yelvington. By the early 1900s, the town had a branch of the State Bank of Kentucky, a tile factory, another blacksmith shop and a doctor's office. Trains stopped there regularly for freight, mail and passengers.

E. P. Taylor

The town was close to where Pen Taylor grew up. He was born in 1850, one of the 11 children of Jonathan Gibson Taylor and Susan Hawes. He was raised at the Taylor home called Beech Hill, built in 1832 and still standing on Grandview-Yelvington Road east of Maceo. He was educated at the University of Kentucky, studied law at the University of Louisville, and in 1873 entered law practice in Owensboro with his brother Richard.

The emergence of the new town came at the time Taylor's political career was blossoming. Taylor was elected county judge in 1898 and served a four-year term. In 1906 he was elected county clerk and served eight years.

It was while Taylor was county judge that he made perhaps his most memorable contribution to the new town's history. He suggested that the name be changed to Maceo. The little railroad stop had been called Powers since the railroad opened in 1888, honoring Owensboro lawyer Joshua Powers, who had organized the financing of the new rail line. But the name Powers Station became a problem. There was difficulty distinguishing between Powers Station and Powers Store, a small post office near Whitesville. Because of bad handwriting sometimes, letters meant for Powers Station often wound up at Powers Store, and vice versa.

In desperation, post office officials asked Powers Station residents to suggest a new town name. There were some who wanted the town called Rosebud after the small community of residences just up the tracks from Powers Station, but Taylor's subsequent suggestion won out. The Spanish-American war had just ended, so he submitted the name of Maceo in honor of the Cuban Gen. Jose Antonio de la Caridad Maceo y Grajales.

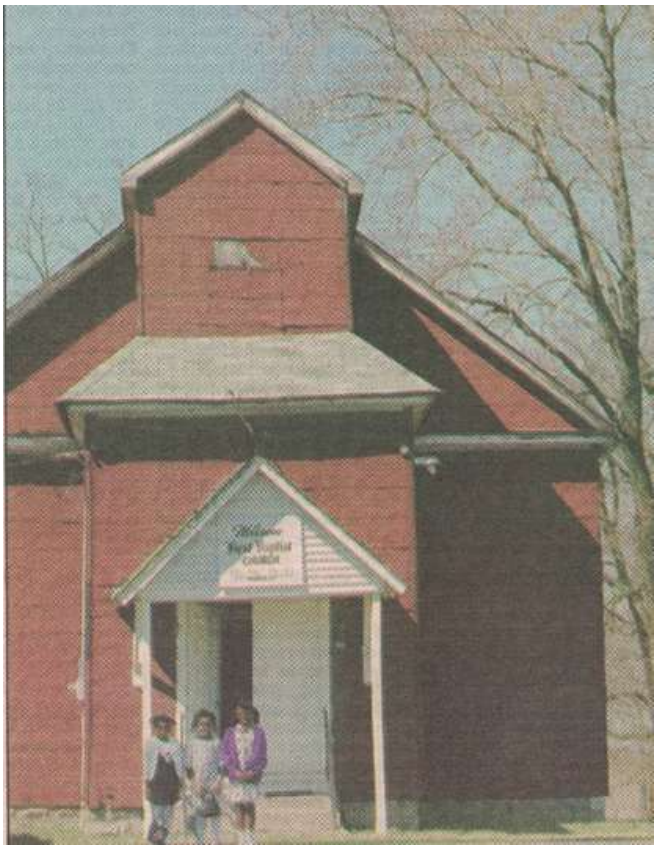
Gen. Maceo was the black Cuban guerrilla leader who died in his island nation's struggle to throw off Spanish rule a century ago. In the years before the United States intervened in the Cuban crisis, Maceo was among the leaders responsible for the growing tide of patriotism and desire for freedom in Cuba. He and a small band of followers fought their way across the island, encouraging revolution and sometimes defeating large bands of Spanish soldiers. His cause became popular in America and Gen. Maceo made at least one trip to the United States, visiting Washington, D.C., and New York City, seeking American aid. When he returned to Cuba, he began a march eastward to the Pinar del Rio region. He was killed Dec. 7, 1896. His death made the front page of the New York Times.

No one is sure why Judge Taylor proposed that the town be named after the Cuban leader. "General Maceo was the hero of the hour," said Doris Estes, a Maceo resident who in 1993 helped write a history book about Maceo. "Maceo (Ma-say-o in Spanish) was being called the George Washington of Cuba," she said.

Some think Taylor's suggestion of the name of the black general may have been offered as a courtesy to the community of freed slaves believed to be the first residents at the present site of Maceo.

Before the war, Taylor's father, Gibson, had owned 50 slaves and by 1876 farmed 1,400 acres, most of which covered the present plat of Maceo. The land was along the Iceland Road, which ran from Yelvington to the Ohio River across from Rockport, Ind.

By his death in 1886, Gibson Taylor had bequeathed land to the African Americans for a church and school house to be built near the future railroad stop. The First Baptist Church of Maceo, begun in 1870 in the homes of freed blacks, moved its church services to a log house on the Taylor land, and the school house was built.



Angela Long, Jasmine Cowherd and Whitney Hanley, from left, stand outside First Baptist Church of Maceo. The church was founded by freed slaves in 1870 on ground bequeathed to them by a former slave owner, Gibson Taylor, at his death in 1886. Photo by Gary Emord -Netzley, Messenger-Inquirer.

E.P. Taylor inherited part of his father's land there and it appears he began selling it to blacks after the turn of the century, Mrs. Estes said. "I believe there was an established black

community (at Maceo) around the turn of the century and it was beginning to die out," she added. "The children began to buy the property that their parents had lived on."

Judge Taylor died Nov. 26, 1934, at his home in Maceo. It was said that his secret was his trueness to friends. A newspaper article characterized him this way: "He could always be relied upon to do just what he said he will do and keeps his promises alike to friend and foe." He was always "upright and dignified" in the administration of his duties.

"Judge Taylor was highly respected and very influential because people were naming their children after him around that time," said Mrs. Estes.

At Taylor's death, the black community of Maceo was still living on the old Taylor land surrounding the church and school just west of the present intersection of Kentucky 405 and U.S. 60. Among the residents of the 17 houses were Ellis and Lizzie Williams, Mollie and Julius Hawes, Jane Yeiser, Henry Yeiser, Cal Howard, Frank (Bush) McCreary, Anderson Ford, John Taylor, Wallace Woods, Ed and Hettie Woods, Sophia Hanford, Abe and Tom Shauntee, Simon Yeiser, Bob and Mariah Jane Zoomer, Sue and John Wesley Taylor, Henry Jewell and Ches Carter.

The school building and a newer church are the last remnants of that first black community in Maceo. They still stand on the old Taylor land on Aubrey Road in Maceo. Worship services are held twice a month at First Baptist Church of Maceo.

Editor's note: Those who want to know more about the history of Maceo and Yelvington may read "Reflections of the Past," a history of those communities published in 1993 by the Maceo Historical Society. The book can be purchased at Maceo Market, $15 for paperback and $21 for hardback, or by mail by writing Doris Estes, 9631 Kentucky 405, Maceo, 42355. Add $3 for postage.

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 14 August 1999, p.1A:

Picture Perfect

Maceo mural stays in hometown hands

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

It's only 6 years old, but the mural on the north wall of the old Maceo post office has become a landmark for the town of roughly 300.

And when the post office moved to a new location earlier this year, people began worrying the century-old building's – and the mural's – days might be numbered.

But there's no need to worry any more.

Jim and Toni White of Maceo, who operate a heating and air conditioning service next door to the old post office, paid $10,000 for the property at an auction Thursday night.

"We haven't decided what we're going to do with it," Toni White said Friday. "We bought it because it's next door. But we use the mural to give directions to our business, so we don't have any plans to tear it down."

The town in eastern Daviess County started life in 1888 as Powers Station - named for Col. Joshua D. Powers, a prosperous Owensboro attorney and businessman who masterminded the financing of the railroad that built the town.

A few years later, the town changed its name to honor Gen. Antonio Maceo, a black Cuban revolutionary who led an insurrection against Spain in the 1890s.

In the early 1990s, the Maceo Concerned Citizens Group raised $6,000 for a historical mural.

Lance Hunter, a Brescia University art professor, designed the work. He used three college students and several community volunteers to paint it.

More than 100 people turned out in 1993 for the dedication of the 80-foot-by-30-foot painting.

The mural depicts the history of the community - Native Americans in canoes; farmers in tobacco patches; Josiah Henson, who escaped from slavery on a Maceo plantation to become a leading educator in Canada; Antonio Maceo, the Cuban revolutionary for whom the town was named; a riverboat; a train; a group of people rendering lard; and a church.

Before U.S. 60 was moved north of Maceo, travelers used to stop and take pictures of the mural.

There's not as much of that now. But people who drive what's now Kentucky 2390 still stop occasionally to look at it.

An automobile passes a mural painted on the old Maceo post office building Friday afternoon on Kentucky 2830. The building was sold to Jim and Toni White during an auction Thursday night. They use the mural to give directions to their heating and air conditioning business next to the old post office and have no plans to raze the building.

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<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u>, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 28 August 2008, pp.1C & 6C:

Post office building, landmark demolished

Artist and residents painted mural in 1993

By James Mayse, Messenger-Inquirer

A track hoe operator with Yeiser Excavating Inc. pulls down the north wall of the former Maceo post office building Wednesday afternoon at Kentucky 405 and Kentucky 2118. In the process, the 30-foot by 80-foot mural depicting scenes of local history on the building came crashing down into a pile of rubble.

Wednesday afternoon, a scattering of Maceo residents gathered under the rain clouds near the old town post office, to watch as the building was demolished.

The building, one of the oldest in Maceo, had gone through various uses since its construction. Even after the building was vacated, it continued to serve as a community landmark, because of the 30 foot by 80 foot mural painted on the northern wall.

The property is owned by Jim White. Wednesday afternoon, a large track hoe knocked down the building with swipes of its blade. Residents watching the demolition said the old building had deteriorated.

"The bricks are more or less sitting on top of each other and what is left (of the mortar) is more or less rotted," said Ellis Prather, who came out Wednesday with a camera to get some final snapshots of the mural.

The mural was designed by Lance Hunter, who was then an art professor at Brescia University. Hunter's mural depicted important figures from Maceo's history, including Josiah Henson, the abolitionist who traveled near the area as an escaped slave on his way to freedom.

Later, when novelist Harriett Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin," she based the character of Uncle Tom on Henson.

Also pictured on the mural was Antonio Maceo, a Cuban war hero for whom the community was named after the Spanish-American war.

As residents watched, the track hoe through the mural, systematically cutting off the locomotive, riverboat and historical figures.

Shirley Prather had helped organize volunteers to help Hunter and his students paint the mural in 1993. Shirley Prather said she had a long history with the old building.

"When I was little, it was my aunt's grocery store and my mother worked there," Shirley Prather said. "One year, we lived upstairs during a backwater.

"We kind of have deep roots to it," Prather said.

Last year, a group of Maceo residents approached Daviess Fiscal Court, asking commissioners to purchase the building. The H.L. Neblett Center board also discussed purchasing the property at one time, but no decisions were made.

Susan Foster, who lobbied Fiscal Court to buy the building, said she didn't know the property was being demolished until she drove past it Wednesday afternoon.

"It was such a special part of our community for 15 years," Foster said. "It's sad to see it go.

"I don't want to even drive by there," Foster said. "It's a loss to the community. That was the one special thing the community had and now it's gone."

Ellis Prather helped paint the mural and said the work was done by painting in squares on a grid Hunter had outlined on the wall.

"You couldn't even tell what you were painting when you were up there," Ellis Prather said. " ... It was easy to do and you didn't realize how it was all coming together.

"It's a thing you hate to see go," he said. "It was a part of the community and it was a community effort."

Mural formerly on the entire side of the post office building (80 by 30 foot) at Maceo in Daviess County, KY; it was painted in 1993 and the building was demolished in August 2008; Josiah Henson and other symbols of the community were depicted. Picture by Jerry Long, 3 July 1994.

<u>Daviess County, Kentucky: Celebrating Our Heritage, 1815-2015</u>, Daviess County Bicentennial Committee (Evansville, IN: M. T. Publishing Company, Inc. 2015) pp.30-31:

Maceo (Powers)

By Glenn Hodges

When the Louisville, St. Louis, and Texas Railroad was built in the 1880's, a depot east of Owensboro was named Powers Station in honor of Owensboro attorney Joshua Powers who had organized the financing of the line. This community was first settled by a small group of freed slaves after the Civil War.

When downtown Yelvington burned in 1890, Edward Pendleton Taylor, who had suffered severe losses in the fire, determined to move to a new location along the railroad. He began laying out a new town which by the end of 1890 had several buildings completed. "Pen" Taylor built a tobacco warehouse that .would employ fifty people; and then a post office was authorized and he became post master. By 1895 the town included three general stores, a blacksmith shop, and a distillery on the road toward Yelvington. By the early 1900's the town had a branch of the State Bank of Kentucky, two blacksmith shops and a physician.

The name "Power's Station" was the source of confusion for the post office. There was another post office, Power's Store near Whitesville, and mail was often missent due to poor handwriting or sorting.

Taylor, who was elected county judge in 1898, the year of the Spanish-American War, decided to rename the town in honor of the Black Cuban guerrilla leader, General Jose Antonio de la Coridad Maceo y Grajles.

Taylor's father, Gibson Taylor, owned some 1,400 acres of land and 50 slaves. At his death in 1886, Taylor senior bequeathed land for the building of a church and school for blacks near what would become the new town. The First Baptist Church of Maceo begun in the homes of freed blacks, moved to the new church upon its completion.

Maceo continued as a black settlement, but increasingly whites moved into the area, especially as land prices increased in the early 20 h century. A white elementary school was established and white and black students were able to ride the "local" train to Owensboro— the blacks to Western High School and the whites to Owensboro High School.

With the paving of U.S. 60 through Maceo in 1930-31, the economics of the town began to shift, as employment and shopping opportunities in Owensboro became more accessible.

By 2010, Maceo was basically a suburban residential area.

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<u>Messenger-Inquirer</u>, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 2 December 2021, pp.1C & 3C:

Maceo has interesting roots

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

Maceo has the most unusual and interesting backstory of any community in the area.

The late Glenn Hodges, a former Messenger-Inquirer reporter and local historian, wrote in 1995 that the community was originally settled by former slaves.

And it is named for Cuban Gen. Jose Antonio de la Caridad Maceo y Grajales — "The Bronze Titan."

Antonio Maceo was a mixed race Cuban revolutionary, who was killed in battle on Dec. 7, 1896.

He was 51.

Maceo was so popular at the time that the New York Times carried his death on its front page.

Hodges wrote that that County Judge Edwin Pendleton Taylor was the man most responsible for naming the community after Maceo.

He wrote that fire destroyed Yelvington in April 1890 and the merchants, including Taylor, decided to start a new town at a railroad stop called Powers Station.

"The little railroad stop had been called Powers since the railroad opened in 1888, honoring Owensboro lawyer Joshua Powers, who had organized the financing of the new rail line," Hodges wrote.

"But the name Powers Station became a problem. There was difficulty distinguishing between Powers Station and Powers Store, a small post office near Whitesville," he wrote.

There were some who wanted the town called Rosebud, but Taylor wanted to honor Maceo, who was enormously popular at the time.

Maceo was among the leaders responsible for the growing tide of patriotism and desire for freedom that was sweeping Cuba.

Hodges wrote that some people believe that Taylor suggested the name of a mixed-race revolutionary "as a courtesy to the community of freed slaves believed to be the first residents at the present site of Maceo."

He wrote that Gibson Taylor, the judge's father, had owned 50 slaves.

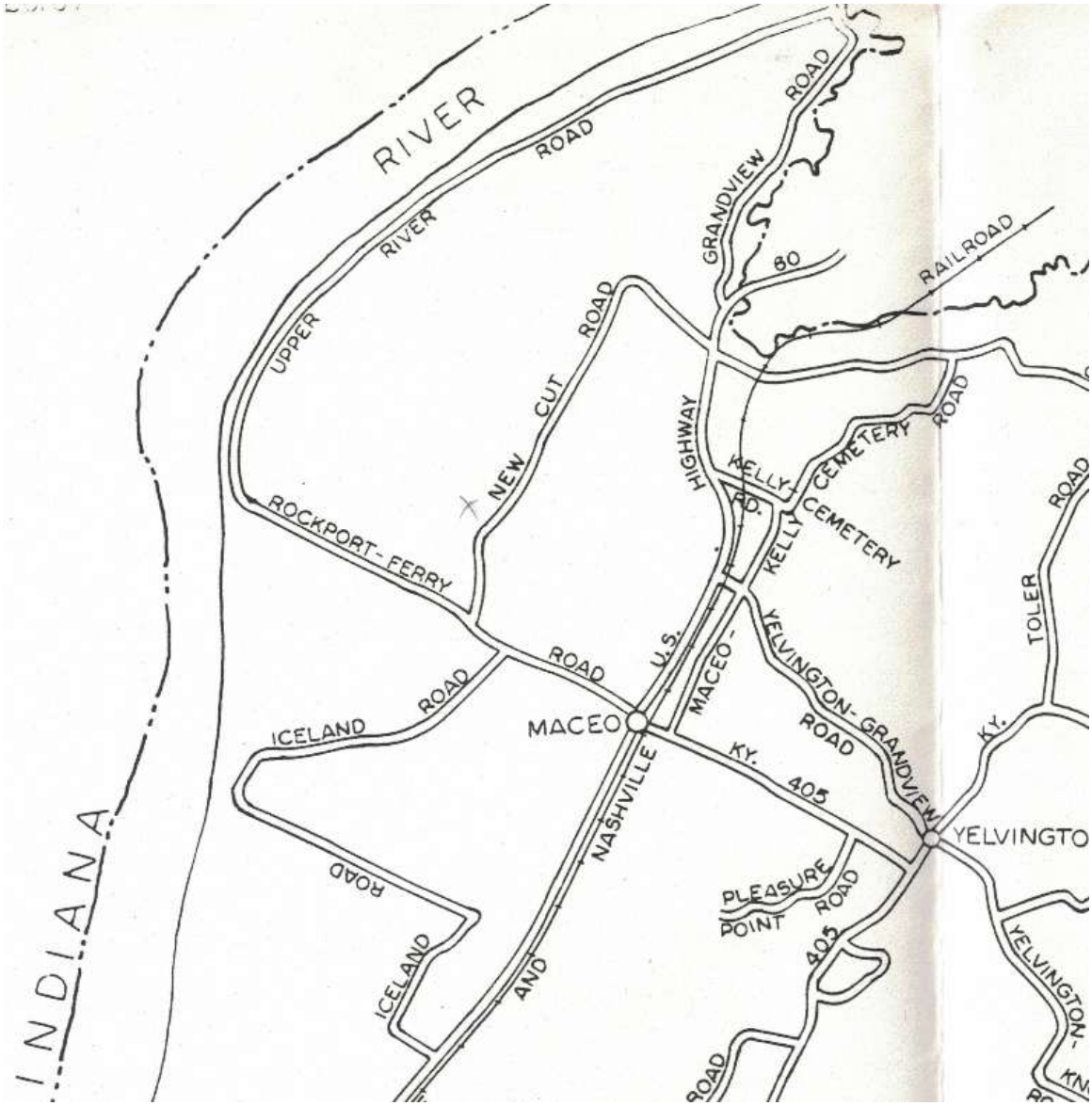
But Hodges wrote that by the time he died in 1886, Gibson Taylor had donated land to the African Americans in the area for a church and a school.

The First Baptist Church of Maceo, begun in 1870 in the homes of former slaves, he wrote.

It later moved to a log house on the Taylor land.

Hodges said Judge Taylor inherited part of his father's land there and began selling it to African Americans in the early days of the 20th Century.

He wrote that the school building and a newer church "are the last remnants of that first Black community in Maceo. They still stand on the old Taylor land on Aubrey Road in Maceo."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