

Richard August Weiss (1932-2026)

By Jerry Long
c.2026



Richard A. Weiss (1932-2026)





Richard Weiss – left 1967 & right 1970
Kentucky Wesleyan College Yearbooks



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 6 January 2026, p.3A:



Richard A. Weiss passed away January 3, 2026 at the age of 93. He was born December 23, 1932 at Richmon County Hospital in Staten Island, N.Y. to the late August Weiss and Addriana Bendt Weiss. He graduated from Tottenville High School 1949 and received his BA in Latin and Greek from New York University, PHD in German from New York University, and Professor Emeritus Kentucky Wesleyan College. Richard taught German, Latin, Greek, and some French and Classical History from 1955 to 1995. Retiring from teaching, he continued as KWC's Archivist until 2019. Richard also received a Fulbright Scholarship in 1963. He spent a year in Germany studying the German language.

Richard had many and varied interest. He enjoyed the origin and meaning of names and words. History was a special interest to him. He loved to research hard to find information. This aided him to author his own book on John Littlejohn and research two books on Kentucky Wesleyan College with Lee Dew. Travel was a big part of Richard's life. He would travel in Europe during the summer breaks from KWC. Richard collected stamps from the age of seven until his passing. He was a long-time member of the Owensboro Stamp Club. His stamp collection is to be envied. Richard loved to collect antiques and collectible pieces. He spent many a Saturday night at Timmy Kinison's Auction House.

Anyone that knew Richard knew he loved to talk. You didn't just stop by to see Richard, it was going to take a while. He could take you around the world with his stories and they will be missed.

Richard was bachelor and leaves no living relatives. He did have friends that loved him and looked out for his welfare, Jim and Darlena Cook, Donald and Lisa Trent and Doreen Harney.

Visitation is from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Friday, January 9, 2026 at James H. Davis Funeral Home and Crematory. A time for sharing will be at 6:00 p.m. on Friday at the funeral home.

Expressions of sympathy may be directed to Kentucky Wesleyan College Library, 3000 Frederica Street, Owensboro, KY 42301.

Tribute by Kevin Clark

I'm a 2006 grad of KWC and I thought the world of Dr. Weiss. He was always kind and interested to chat... And specifically interested in the person he was speaking to. I went on the New York Trip in 2003 with Dr. Weiss and I remember it fondly. So it goes and Godspeed, Dr. Weiss.

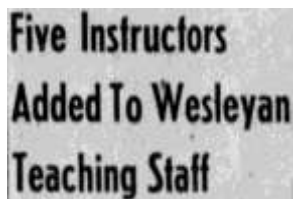


**Richard August Weiss – Ancestry.com
Biography & Genealogy Master Index (BGMI):**

Directory of American Scholars. Sixth edition, Volume 3: Foreign Languages, Linguistics, & Philology. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1974. (DrAS 6C) Directory of American Scholars. Seventh edition, Volume 3: Foreign Languages, Linguistics, & Philology. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1978. (DrAS 7C) Directory of American Scholars. Eighth edition, Volume 3: Foreign Languages, Linguistics, & Philology. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1982. (DrAS 8C)



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 6 September 1958, p.3:



Five new appointments to the Kentucky Wesleyan College faculty for the coming 1958-59 school year have been announced by Dr. Oscar W. Lever, president. New appointees, their position and education, are as follows:

.... Richard A. Weiss, instructor in classical languages and German; A.B., Washington Square College of New York University; and A.M., New York University....



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 3 June 1964, p.8A:

**Professor Returns
To KWC To Teach
Modern Language**



Richard A. Weiss

The appointment of Richard A. Weiss as associate professor of German and acting chairman of the department of modern languages at Kentucky Wesleyan College was announced recently by Dr. Harold P. Hamilton, president of the Methodist College.

Weiss will be returning to Wesleyan with the opening of the fall academic term after serving as German instructor at the Owensboro school from 1958 to 1960.

He is presently completing work on his Ph.D. in German Literature at New York University. Weiss received a Fullbright Grant for study of German language and literature at the Rheinische - Friedrich - Wilhelms University at Bonn, Germany, in 1962-63.

After taking a leave of absence from Wesleyan in 1960, Weiss served as a graduate assistant in German at Washington University, of St. Louis, Mo., for two years. While at Washington University, Weiss organized and conducted a table in the dining hall at which only German was spoken during the lunch hour.

The new Wesleyan professor received his A.B. from New York University and his A.M. from the Graduate School of Arts and Science at NYU. He is a graduate of Tottenville High School, Staten Island, N.Y.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 18 November 1984, p.2E:

**Picture post cards making slight
comeback as a collectors' items**

By Joe Ford, Director Owensboro Area Museum

.... Dr. Richard Weiss of the Kentucky Wesleyan College staff, has an extensive collection of Owensboro pictorial cards which he has recorded on slides so they can be shared with large groups. These two collections provide a pictorial history of Owensboro as it was a century ago.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 29 June 1989, p.9A:

Readers Write – Library needs funding

Editor:

The board of the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library is to be commended on its drastic, but necessary, step of Sunday closings beginning July 2. It is hoped that this move will help make the city and county administrators and the public more aware of chronic underfunding of this vital service and community asset.

The administration and staff of the library must be praised on their constant efforts at keeping this facility among the best in the state. It is to be hoped that future funding will allow it to continue to be so.

The enormous public use of this library – thousands of persons per week – would indicate the public's passive appreciation. Such a vital information source would not be one which needs to be "struggled over" or be a "grappling hook" in power struggles. It is a resource to which the whole community turns when necessary, and should "be there" for its constituencies, and as a matter of local pride as well.

Thus the city (and county) should see to adequate funding of the public library, so that future progress of the city may be predicated on, and assisted by this resource.

Let us hope that the day will come shortly when the Sunday closing situation will be a thing of the past.

Richard A. Weiss Owensboro



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 29 May 1992, pp.1C & 4C:



125 and counting
Authors of Kentucky Wesleyan history
wanted book to be fun, readable

By Steve Vied, Messenger-Inquirer

When Lee Dew began the three-year process of writing the history of Kentucky Wesleyan College, he held fast to a pair of central objectives.

First, he wanted it to be relevant. Then he wanted it to be readable.

The result is "In Pursuit of the Dream: A History of Kentucky Wesleyan College."

Dew, a history professor at Wesleyan, and Richard Weiss, the school's archivist, librarian and German teacher, are the authors. Dew did the actual writing while Weiss researched thousands of historical documents and materials.

In its more than 300 pages, the book is a chronicle of the college's 125-year history. Its publication is designed to coincide with KWC's 40th year in Owensboro.



Kentucky Wesleyan College professors Richard Weiss, left, and Lee Dew, co-authored a book on the history of the Methodist-affiliated college.

It traces the school's opening in Millersburg in 1866, when it was known as Methodist College, through its move to Winchester in 1890 and, 61 years later, to its present home in Owensboro. It also describes the development of Methodism in Kentucky beginning in the late 1700s.

But more than a chronology, the book traces the financial and enrollment problems KWC has endured, along with clashes involving students, faculty, administration and the Methodist church over issues such as academic freedom, censorship and the definition of the college's mission.

"History needs to have two basic elements," Dew said. "One, it has to be relevant, which means the history of an institution, whether it be a college, a business, or whatever, can have meaning only if it is tied together with the events of the times.

"... But history has to have something else. To me, it has to be readable. It has to have a literary quality about it. With this particular book I've tried to structure the book in such a way that each chapter ends with a cliffhanger.

"I like to compare the book to an old-fashioned Saturday afternoon movie serial with every episode ending with some great crisis."

Weiss spent about 10 years organizing 750,000 items in the college archives. When he had them in usable condition in late 1988, Dew was able to begin the actual writing of the first history of the school. Old Methodist records supplied much of the information about the school's beginnings.

"My job was doing the writing," Dew said. "I would essentially tell Richard what I needed and he would provide the materials that we had in the archives. I would ferret around and do some supplementary work. Then I would write and Richard would edit and make suggestions for changes.

"Had I not been working with Richard, with his encyclopedic knowledge of the archives, heaven only knows how long it would have taken, "

Weiss gladly accepted the researcher's role.

"I don't have a historic perspective," Weiss said. "I'm a German teacher and few other things. ... But one thing I'm not is a historian. "

That was Lee's creation, to give this thing a broad perspective. ... I would have loved to have written it myself, but I couldn't"

A recurring theme of the book is the many financial and enrollment problems the school has encountered. The move to Winchester and the move to Owensboro were both made necessary by declining enrollment and lack of money. Clashes between presidents and faculties are recorded.

Dew and Weiss didn't shy away from recent problems. The final chapter is titled "Dancing on the Precipice." It begins by characterizing the final days of December 1978 as "dark days" for the college, which was weighed down with a \$900,000 operating deficit and a severe cashflow crisis.

"Certainly finance, enrollment and church relations have been some of the major themes," Dew said. "The college has had to struggle against secular competition, but it also has had to struggle against anti-intellectualism. There are many people in Kentucky and in the country and in the Methodist church who see higher education as negative and threatening, are uncomfortable with any institution, whether a professor, a preacher or a politician, that challenges their complacency or their fixed ideas."

While the college has never completely separated itself from financial and enrollment woes, Dew paints a picture of an institution determined to survive.

"I wouldn't want it to obscure one other fundamental thing that comes out in the history, and that is the tenacity of the college," he said. "The fact that the college has survived has given it a sort of toughness and built in its supporters a particular kind of loyalty."

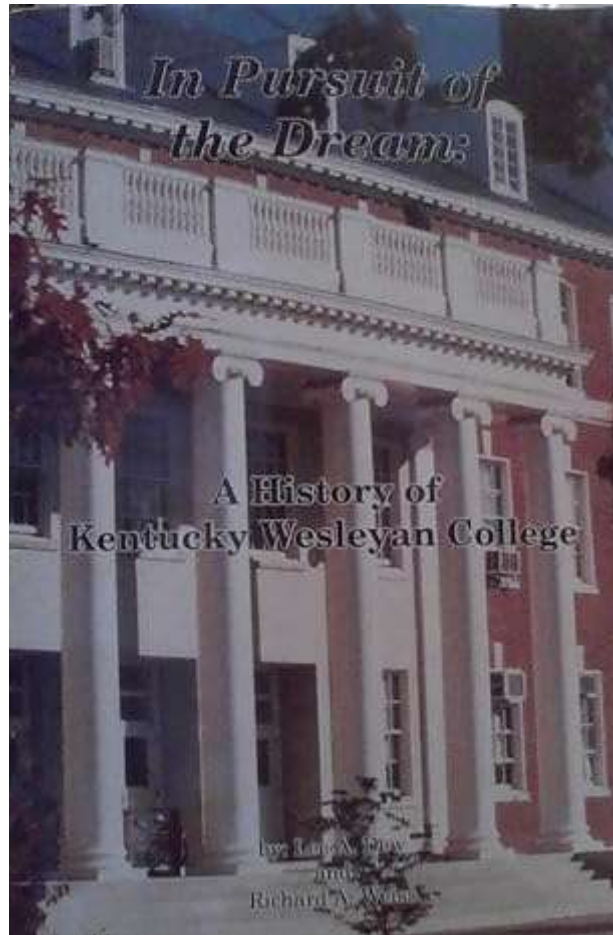
Of particular interest to Owensboro readers is Dew's account of the \$1 million campaign that brought the college to Owensboro in 1951. It reads almost like a thriller as the fund-raising campaign went down to the final minutes before the goal was reached. Dew noted that the books weren't finally closed on the campaign until 1970.

Dew said another chief goal he had in mind was to set the record straight, a challenging goal considering the many controversies KWC has encountered over the years.

"Somebody has to," he said. "Reality has to be something other than just what is proclaimed by the people in power, whoever they may be. Part of the job of a historian is to try to set the record straight because so much of the spoken word or the written report . . . tends to be propagandistic.

"That's why we have to have histories."





**The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 3, July 1993
(Louisville, KY: The Filson Club, Incorporated) pp.406-408:**

Book Review

In Pursuit of the Dream: History of Kentucky Wesleyan College, by Lee A. Dew and Richard A. Weiss. Owensboro: Kentucky Wesleyan College Press, 1992. Contents, Foreword, Notes, Index. pp. x, 370. \$15.95, soft cover; \$28.00 hard cover.

Dreams can be pleasant or nightmarish. The authors of *In Pursuit of the Dream* dredge up the nightmares and Interpret the dreams relating to the founding and development of Kentucky Wesleyan College. The school has a rich history of cooperation and conflict, beginning with the 1822 establishment of a Methodist school In Augusta, Kentucky, to the present campus in Owensboro. The school's religious affiliation forces the authors to examine its relationship with Kentucky Methodism and the denomination's commitment to higher education In Kentucky.

Augusta College, chartered in 1822 and opened In 1825, was the first higher educational effort of Kentucky Methodists. Supported by the Methodist Episcopal Church conferences of Ohio and Kentucky, Augusta College was destined for conflict. The controversy over slavery caused a polarization of the school's supporters. The Kentucky Conference transferred its financial support

to Transylvania University in 1842, and the Ohio Conference terminated its support in 1844; the Kentucky General Assembly revoked the school's charter five years later.

The church's next venture in higher education was Kentucky Wesleyan College, which was chartered in 1860. The Civil War delayed the opening of this new school at Millersburg until 1866. Its curriculum concentrated on the liberal arts and preparation for teaching and business careers. In 1890 the college moved to Winchester, Kentucky, because of better transportation connections; it shortly thereafter became coeducational. Never financially stable, the school welcomed new support from the Louisville Conference of Methodists in 1926. With an inadequate endowment, the college depended too often on tuition from enrollments, an uncertain base at best.

In 1951 Wesleyan moved to Owensboro, after the city raised one million dollars to build a new campus. In response to dwindling enrollments, the school introduced more vocational programs and organized sports to attract students. This shift, however, threatened Wesleyan's traditional liberal-arts program and ignited a faculty revolt. This situation was partially assuaged with the opening of Owensboro Community College in 1985 and the raising of the college's entrance requirements. Through creative financial practices, the school has built a lovely, planned campus. It has also developed an enviable athletic program, particularly in basketball. Wesleyan's teams have won five NCAA Division II basketball titles.

In Lee Green's collaborative history of the University of Tennessee he noted that interesting institutional history can be written only by those possessing a degree of intimacy with the institution. The authors of *In Pursuit of the Dream* enjoy a close association with Wesleyan. Dew has been on the history faculty of the college since the late 1960s and is an authority on the history of Daviess County. Weiss, a German professor at Wesleyan since the late 1950s, serves as the college archivist. Their intimate association with the institution lends an air of familiarity to the history and allows the later history to be more interpretive. This intimacy is demonstrated in the book's most intense chapter which deals with the Owensboro campaign to raise one million dollars to move the school to that city. The rhetoric of this stirring chapter causes the reader to cheer that such a feat was ever accomplished.

A good Institutional history must emphasize the moving figures in its development. Wesleyan has had a long list of interesting administrators, faculty, alumni, and supporters. The authors give each their attention, but they do not neglect the social aspects of the institution. Athletics, campus life, student and faculty unrest, student reaction to national events, and community activities and attractions have been interspersed with the more commonplace facts.

Dew and Weiss have written a fine history of Kentucky Wesleyan College and its association with Kentucky Methodism. Thoroughly documented, the work demonstrates the value and efficacy of an institutional archive. The book's typographical and printing errors are negligible in comparison to the fine writing throughout. The authors admit that the dreams of Wesleyan's founders for a "sound, vital, solvent, well-endowed institution of higher education" remain "only partially realized," but the visions "of greatness which have sustained it in the past" will "call it to further mission in the years to come."

Jonathan Jeffrey

Western Kentucky University



**The Register, Kentucky Historical Society, Vol. 91, No. 2, Spring 1993
(Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society) pp.206-207:**

Book Review

In Pursuit of the Dream: History of Kentucky Wesleyan College. By Lee A. Dew and Richard A. Weiss. (Owensboro: Kentucky Wesleyan College Press, 1992. Pp. ix, 370. Notes, index. Cloth, \$28.00; Paper, \$15.95. Direct inquiries to KWC Press, P.O. Box 1039, Owensboro, KY 42301-1039.)

Professors Lee A. Dew and Richard A. Weiss have written an attractive and interesting history of Kentucky Wesleyan College. They have made excellent use of the extensive resources in the archives of Kentucky Wesleyan. The history is about the struggle to realize a dream to establish a sound academic and well-endowed Christian college for the education of the Methodist youth of the Kentucky Conference. Many of the problems encountered for the realization of the dream—anti-intellectual bias of many clergy and laity; disputes between administrations, faculty and students; the ever-present need to secure an adequate endowment and to balance budgets—were common to Augusta College, Union College, Lindsey Wilson College, and others. Yet each had its own distinctive. An important distinctive for Kentucky Wesleyan was its rootlessness. To survive, it moved from Millersburg to Winchester and finally to Owensboro, where it is now located. The story of Kentucky Wesleyan is a part of the movement that saw the establishment of small Christian colleges on successive lines of frontier settlements, as population moved westward.

In retelling the historical struggle to realize the dream for Kentucky Wesleyan, Dew and Weiss give evidence of the spiritual, philosophical, and educational ideas that have shaped Kentucky Wesleyan. These concepts were embodied in the pioneers, who "exemplified in their lives and careers the ideal of John Wesley—the combination of 'learning and vital piety' which was to be the hallmark of a Kentucky Wesleyan education" [p. 48]. The precise manner in which this "ideal" was to be realized was basic to much of the struggle and controversy that surrounded the history of Kentucky Wesleyan. The title of the concluding chapter, "Dancing on the Precipice," indicates that the dream is not fully realized. Professors Dew and Weiss close with the assurance that "whatever the challenges of the future, the endurance displayed over the years would pull Kentucky Wesleyan through, and the dreams of greatness which have sustained it in the past would call it to further mission in years to come" [p. 327].

Professors Dew and Weiss are well qualified to write the history of Kentucky Wesleyan. Weiss joined the faculty in 1958 and Dew in 1968, and both have lived a part of its 125-year history. The criticisms are minor. A numerical typographical error occurred at the bottom of page 248. In the discussion of the "Wilderness revivals" in 1799 and 1800 on page 3, the brothers John and William McGee were present and participated in the meetings. However, the leader was James McGready, pastor of the Red and Gasper River Presbyterian churches. Along with the McGee brothers were William Hodge and Barton Stone, Presbyterians; William Burke and William McKendree, Methodists; and Louis and Elijah Craig and Moses Bledsoe, Baptists. John McKee's letter to the Reverend Thomas L. Douglas describing the 1800 meeting was published in the *Western Christian Advocate*, September 13, 1839.

The authors characterized John Wesley Hughes as the leader of the Holiness movement in the Kentucky Conference on page 62. While he was one of the leaders, Henry Clay Morrison, through his publication, *The Pentecostal Herald*, was more widely known, both in and out of Kentucky. Hughes did attend Kentucky Wesleyan, 1874-76. He also received a certificate in Moral Philosophy from Vanderbilt University. Hughes has been considered antagonistic to liberal arts education. This position is open to question in light of the fact that a major achievement of Hughes's life was his founding in 1890 of a liberal arts, coeducational institution, Asbury College.

A historian friend who has written a four-volume history of a major university said, "writing a university or college history is not the most rewarding thing a historian can do." I congratulate Professors Dew and Weiss on their very readable and interesting contribution to the history of Methodist college education in Kentucky. The establishment and growth of the small church-related colleges during the years 1780 to 1900 marks one of the distinctive features of the development of higher education in America.

Joseph A. Thacker, Jr.

Dr. Thacker is an emeritus professor of history at Asbury College in Wilmore. Among his publications is a centennial history of that institution published in 1990.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 5 June 2002, p.2C:

Five honored during KWC alumni weekend

During the Kentucky Wesleyan College Alumni Weekend 2002 celebration April 26-28, the following awards were presented:

Christy Hocker Hall, Gus Paris and Richard Weiss were presented Honorary Alumnus awards. Established in 1996, this award recognizes people who are not alumni, but who have given unselfishly of their time and talents to KWC.

An interior design specialist, Hall volunteered her professional skills to help design and decorate the president's new home, and she selected colors and furnishings for the new Winchester Campus Community Center. Hall also dedicated many hours of service to the Changing Lives capital campaign and the kick-off event for that effort.

Paris, a retired longtime faculty and staff member, helped move the college from Winchester to Owensboro in 1951. In 40 years at KWC, Paris has served as a professor, academic dean, associate dean, director of development and registrar. He currently serves as professor emeritus of history and political science.

Weiss, a retired professor of German, began his career with KWC in the late 1950s. Weiss is an archivist for KWC and, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the college, co-wrote and published "In Pursuit of a Dream: A History of Kentucky Wesleyan College."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 21 December 2005, p.1D:

Professor publishes book on preacher

Richard A. Weiss, professor of modern languages emeritus, and archivist and historian at Kentucky Wesleyan College, recently published a book titled "Preacher and Patriot: The Journals and Memorandums of the Rev. John Littlejohn A Pioneer Preacher of American Methodism," with McDowell Publishing, Utica.

This book chronicles the experiences of Littlejohn through his journals and memos as an adopted American and Methodist.

Littlejohn was a native of England and was among the first three dozen itinerant preachers serving early congregations of Methodist sympathizers in Maryland and Virginia. He later moved to Kentucky where he spent the last two decades of his life in the Russellville area as a farmer and local preacher.

Weiss, who serves as archivist and historian of the old Louisville Conference of the United Methodist Church, co-authored "In Pursuit of a Dream – A History of Kentucky Wesleyan College" with former KWC history professor Lee A. Dew in 1992.

He earned a bachelor of arts in the classics, a master of arts and Ph.D. in German, all from New York University, and continued advanced work with a Fulbright Scholarship at the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Bonn, Germany.



Richard A. Weiss published the following two articles in The Daviess County Historical Quarterly (Owensboro, KY: Daviess County Historical Society):

“KWC: 1950 to the Present”, by Richard A. Weiss, Volume VI, Number. 3, July 1988, pp.60-65. (The Editor’s Page: Richard Weiss, author of our second article, is a long-time member of the society. He is Professor of German at Kentucky Wesleyan, where he also serves at the college archivist. Richard's extensive post-card collection includes many rare cards of Owensboro, some of which have been used to furnish illustrations for articles in the Quarterly).

“Evening in Owensboro”, by Richard A. Weiss, Volume XII, Number 3, July 1994, pp.61-64. (the Editor’s Page: Richard A. Weiss, long-time Society member and Professor at Kentucky Wesleyan, has contributed an essay describing his first day in Owensboro, and, in the process, telling us a lot about the community in 1958 as seen through the eyes of a person arriving in Owensboro for the first time.)



**The Daviess County Historical Quarterly, Volume XII, Number 3,
July 1994, (Owensboro, KY: Daviess County Historical Society) pp.61-64:**

**"Evening in Owensboro"
by Richard A. Weiss**

"Below are the lights of Louisville", the pilot announced as we began to circle – and sure enough, the patterns of a fair-sized city began to develop below us. It had been a good, smooth flight from New York, though I had heard that flights over land were often rough. It wasn't as though I hadn't flown before, but those were almost always over ocean – twice to and from Europe. In fact, the cool air of Europe was practically still in my lungs as I sat tensely peering out. I had been in Frankfurt- am-Main only the previous Friday, and this was just three days later. Those had been very busy days indeed!

Now we were landing at Louisville and I gathered my luggage to transfer. So far the trip had been familiar, but now I was transferring to what seemed to me to be an inauspicious airline:

Ozark. – that name had nothing very promising to communicate and I wondered what next. I even had the audacity to ask where the plane was. "Why right over there" the attendant replied, motioning to a DC 3 over to one side. I had supposed that it was there as an antique from some air show, perhaps, but now they were lighting it up and getting it started for our very flight. Out on the field I first became aware of the humid heat of the Ohio River valley in very early September and suddenly my bags weighed heavier and my feet felt the burden of all the activities in New York, preparing for this trip. Looking at the DC 3 I wondered how such a plane would ever make it anywhere with its two propellers and little tail wheel which caused the cabin to tilt up high at the front. "You can't take the bags on board," the stewardess informed us and so I checked my worldly possessions with her and climbed up into the cabin as into a time capsule. The tilt was even more noticeable inside and as a child up forward dropped a toy, it cheerfully jingled as it rolled all the way to the stem on top of us crawling in. All that remained for takeoff was to wipe the perspiration once more and take a stick of gum offered from a shiny tray. Then off into the complete darkness.

This allowed me more time to reflect on the adventures which had culminated in my arriving here. After all, I had a brand-new crackly Master of Arts degree from New York University, but I had had the temerity to have NOT searched for a job until I had the degree in hand – early June 1958. I had also had the temerity to have studied foreign languages and my degree was even in German Literature. Only one thing was wrong: no jobs were to be had at the time – well, almost none. The lady at the Teachers' Agency had told me there were really two available that June: one at a private school in New Jersey where I would teach Classics in the morning and "play with the boys all afternoon!" And then there was another "way down south" in Kentucky in a place called Owensboro and at a College called Kentucky Wesleyan. I had tried the latter first, with a letter to Dr. Lever, the President, answered by a polite one from him indicating that he would investigate me and let me know soon. After a week or so of waiting I had become tired of that, bought a ticket to Europe and spent June, July and August in France, Germany and the Netherlands. When I got off the plane in New York, I started to speak German to my mother who reminded me that she didn't know any, and didn't I remember that! My father was more positive because he informed me that he had had an hour's phone call from that "nice Dr. Lever" in Owensboro (where?), who offered me the job and I should be in Kentucky on Tuesday. In between he noted that he and Dr. Lever had made up my salary between them at \$3500 for the year, as that was just what he was making at the factory and that must be right. So I had a job somewhere and just needed to get there. In the turmoil of unpacking and packing, I managed to visit the local Public Library where I found an old guide to Kentucky which noted that Owensboro was in the Western Kentucky Coal Fields, produced tobacco and whiskey, and that the principal hotel was the Planter's, where Jenny Lind had stayed in the 1850's.

So, armed with all this information, I held tight to my seat as we circled yet another airport, which this time was invisible. Hopefully, the pilot could perceive it. We landed with a mighty DC 3 bump, and we were there. But where? Generally darkness, humidity and heat engulfed everything as I crawled to the terminal. Entering, I asked my first question, "Where is the limousine to the city?" The shocked silence was not helpful, but someone indicated that a taxi was "over thar" Yes, there was a taxi, with a driver in the greasiest, sweatiest outfit I had seen in my life: a veritable Charon on the River Styx. Two of us passengers were loaded into the springed back set. We knew there were springs because they were protruding from the upholstery – and that was all the upholstery there was in the back. Sides of the car were natural solid steel, and doors the same, with the mechanism visible. The only amenity was a two-way radio which the driver kept on the whole

time with unintelligible noise composed of nasal singing blatant speech and static. The driver asked us where to?, the other passenger said something, and I said "To the Planter's Hotel." And off we went in the heat with the hot air surging through the windows and vents, off into the utter darkness of the road "to the city".

After we unloaded the other passenger somewhere the driver asked me, "Now, whar did y' want to go?" I repeated, "The Planters", imagining he was dead. "Ya sur?" "Yes" and we drove further down town to the court house square at the corner of Third and Frederica where we drew up in front of the awfulest place .I had seen since the Bowery in New York. It really looked like the set from an old Western movie with its iron-columned porch in front, its broad entrance and long bar on the left with rough looking characters drinking, and all the spittoons! I asked the driver "Is this the only place in town?" He replied, "no, there's the Rudd." "Well, I think you'd better take me there." and so we drove around the square to the East side, where he let me off in front of the Rudd Hotel, which seemed very quiet and sedate compared with what I had just observed.

The clerk at the Rudd assigned me a room and sent up the bell boy named something unintelligible. Dorris, he told me, who carried my bags very carefully, and also informed me that he was going to attend Kentucky Wesleyan in a couple of days. How reassuring – at least there really was a Kentucky Wesleyan. Dr. Lever had sent brochures and material to my father, but all the pictures seemed to be artist's renderings, and I was not certain that they were to be trusted. My room was far up and smelled greasy. Its chief ornament was an enormous Stromberg-Carlson stand-up radio which did not work. A carpet on the floor must have been there awhile, because the flower pattern was worn to the canvas in a track from the steel bed to the bathroom. The boy turned on an air conditioner in the window, which made much noise and vibration, but emitted little cool air. After having given him what must have seemed a colossal tip, I collapsed into the prickly overstuffed chair.

Having revived after awhile, I decided to find out whether the College really existed, since it would still be possible to get on the next day's plane, if it didn't. Perhaps some faculty member somewhere in the country had died, and a job would be available now! I went downstairs, out through the lobby, where I noted the painted iron figure of a black boy holding the ashtray, down the stone steps, past the Court House and Confederate statue, and asked a passer-by where Kentucky Wesleyan College was, getting a blank look at first. Then he said, "down there-" pointing down Frederica Street, and so I began to walk. After all this was "way down South," and the houses looked like mansions, and the trees overhanging the street named like something out of "Show Boat!" I only hoped that the tarantulas would not fall down as I walked under. However, the heat and humidity seemed very authentic. As I passed stores with overhanging porches and homes with lacy gingerbread decoration, the first thing which really struck me, though, was the number of "peculiar" names. Imagine a bell boy named "Dorris". Then I began to see names which I had encountered in Faulkner's writing, like Bunche's store and Burden's filling station. I remembered our professor going on a length about the symbolic use of these names by the author, and here they were just people's names! I walked and walked and thought that the Yokel downtown was making fun of me by sending me the wrong way. No one was on the street and not many cars were traveling Frederica St. that hot night. When I passed Booth Avenue I thought there really could be no more, and then rather suddenly, across corn and soybean fields, there Kentucky Wesleyan appeared, looking again like some stage set, from "Brigadoon," perhaps. And so I walked up to it and looked at the exteriors of the buildings, saw that indeed they did match the pictures in the brochures. There was the Administration Building with its elaborate portico, the Student Union Building with a lanthorn on top, looking like a Howard Johnson Restaurant, and the two dormitories. All in brick

and neat enough at that. The parking lots and south road were all in hot, dusty gravel, but Scherm Road was paved, but narrow. It seemed to go off into nowhere in the West. North of the campus corn and soybeans were growing lushly in the heat.

Having seen all this, I retraced my steps all the three miles back downtown where I slept very well indeed at the Rudd, in spite of the heat and the adventures of the day.



Kentucky Wesleyan College Administration Building, 3000 Frederica Street, Owensboro, KY ([A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky](#), Hugh O. Potter, 1974, p.46)

