

# Black Heritage

## What it is like in Owensboro

By Mary Fisher Morris  
(1975)



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 7 August 1975, p.8C:

*Prepared as part of Expo*

### Paper details black contributions

By Jack Lyness, Messenger-Inquirer Staff



MRS. MARY F. MORRIS  
Writes paper

Marshall McClain, a black and the father of a small family in Owensboro in the late 19th century, decided he wanted his children to have an education so he sent them to a school here –the first in the city's history to accept black students

Although the integrated school did not last long, two schools for black children eventually were established on either end of the community. Originally they were called simply Eastern and Western school. Eastern later became Dunbar Elementary School, in the building now occupied by the Opportunity Center at 725 Jackson St. Western was renamed H.E. Goodloe Elementary

School in July 1969, in memory of another black who made an outstanding contribution to his community as principal of the school.

Short sketches of the contributions to Owensboro history made by McClain and Goodloe as well as dozens of other blacks are included in a seven-page paper prepared for use in Black Expo '75 activities, under way this week.

The paper, titled "Black heritage - what it was like in Owensboro" was written by Mary Fisher Morris, of 729 Hathaway St.. who taught English at Western and Owensboro Senior high schools until her retirement after 45 years of teaching in 1969.

Mrs. Morris originally prepared the paper for display during the city's first Black Expo in 1973. It now has been updated and revised, she said.

"Unfortunately, the history of black citizens in Owensboro is limited to a considerable degree because it has not been recorded. In attempting to assemble historical data, one is compelled to rely upon hearsay and memory," Mrs. Morris explains in the opening lines of the paper.

Most of the information came from her own experience, and from accounts told her by her father, who died in 1950 at the age of 91.

"It is remarkable that so much was accomplished in the past with such limited opportunities and facilities," she suggests.

The largest portion of the paper is devoted to the late S.L. Barker, whom Mrs. Morris identifies as "the most outstanding black educator in the community." Barker was principal of both early black schools and an active member and officer of Fourth Street Baptist Church.

Barker was principal of Western School when Mrs. Morris attended. She believes he has been slighted by local historians, because no public facilities have been named for him.

Barker was a delegate to the 1948 Republican National Convention and a president of the Kentucky Negro Education Association.

Among other contributors to the local black heritage noted by Miss Morris was Miss Emma Edwards, now business manager of the Harding Home for homeless and indigent girls and women. Miss Edwards succeeded Barker as principal of Dunbar School in 1934, a post she held until 1962.

Miss Morris also mentioned:

- Mary Harding, who founded the Harding Home in 1909;
- Miss Nannie Locke and P.G. Walker, who are the namesakes of two local housing projects;
- Joseph Kendall, who was a teacher and coach at Western and Senior high schools; and
- Joseph Price Perkins, who remains active in government and civic affairs and was a teacher and coach here.

The paper also lists the names of many members of the black community of the past, including barbers, undertakers, grocers, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, attorneys and an ice cream maker.



## **“Black Heritage – What it is like in Owensboro”**

**By Mary Fisher Morris  
(1902-1997)**

Unfortunately, the history of black citizens in Owensboro is limited to a considerable degree because it has not been recorded. In attempting to assemble historical data, one is compelled to rely on hearsay and memory; then one must cull out those facts that bear sufficient verification

and authenticity to become eventually the written word. It is very likely that much will be omitted here and unintentionally overlooked, and perhaps some possible errors may occur.

The following categories relative to the history of the black citizens of Owensboro bear significant testimony to the worthwhile accomplishments of their predecessors which can instill pride in the hearts of succeeding generations. It is remarkable that so much was accomplished in the past with such limited opportunities and facilities.

### Professional

The black medical profession in Owensboro has been dependent upon the size of the population. In view of the fact that there is now only one black practicing physician in Owensboro, Dr. R.C. Neblett, it is quite revealing concerning the change of population from the turn of the century down to the present.

It is possible that some people can recall such names as Peters, Bell, Moreland, Washington, Linder, Simpson, Cornelius, and two dentists, Dr J.P. Carrington and Dr. W.H. Smith, all deceased.

Dr. R.B. White, proprietor of a drug store located on West Fifth Street moved to Louisville, Kentucky, after operating his drug store in this city for a long period of years. He was succeeded by M.R. Coffield who purchased and operated the drug store for a number of years until his death. This building was recently demolished.

Dr. P.G. Walker, a local black physician, demonstrated such outstanding leadership that a housing project located in the West end was named for him after his death. This project is known as the P.G. Walker Apartments.

Edward Watts was a member of the legal profession; also, Louis McHenry, a native of Owensboro, who moved to Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

### Education

Shortly before the turn of the century, educational opportunities for black children started as the result of efforts by Marshall McClain, a black father, who insisted that his children receive educational advantages and those efforts were rewarding.

Two schools for black children were erected in the eastern and western sections of the city. One school in the East end was a three-room five-grade elementary school; the other school located in the West end was a combination elementary-high school. Both schools were named according to their geographical locations; later, they were renamed Paul Lawrence Dunbar (East) and H.E. Goodloe Elementary School (West) in honor of a celebrated black poet and a former Owensboro principal, respectively.

The most outstanding black educator in this community was S.L. Barker who spent over fifty years in educational, civic, political, and religious activities. He became principal of both black schools. He was active in church work serving as superintendent of Sunday School and deacon at Fourth Street Baptist Church. He was an organizer of the Owensboro Negro Chautauqua, a glorious civic movement that had a strong cultural influence upon the community. He was once an elected delegate to the national Republican Convention. He was president of KNEA and an eloquent speaker. He was a patriarch, the father of nine daughters and he left at his passing 41 grandchildren, 73 great-grandchildren and 9 great-great grandchildren.

Another outstanding educator was H.E. Goodloe who came to Owensboro to serve as principal of the former Western School, which was subsequently named in his honor after his death. He was interested in civic affairs and took an active interest in church activities, especially

the Sunday School. He also served as president of KNEA at one time.

Miss Emma E. Edwards succeeded S.L. Barker as principal of Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School. She has been active in many civic and community affairs and continues to take an active part in church interests at Fourth Street Baptist Church. She was church organist at several churches for many years and worked in the Chautauqua movement. She is presently serving as superintendent at the Mary Harding Home, a charitable institution for the indigent.

Teaching has been the dominant profession among black women of this city. Integration of the public schools resulted in some adjustment in position and salary with the black teachers benefiting.

### Business and Trades

Business has been limited among the black citizens of Owensboro chiefly because of lack of capital and opportunity.

Among the early grocers were Zack Davis and Quiller Richardson who located in the West end on Fifth Street.

One of the outstanding barbershops of the city was operated in the Planter's House, a local hotel, by the Hathaway brothers. A relative, Stirman Wheatley, succeeded them and later operated a similar business in Hotel Owensboro. His successor was C.T. Owsley who later operated a shop on St. Ann Street. This shop was closed at his death recently.

Two well-known barbers in the East end were Cal Thomas and Dick Jackson, also a restaurant owner and proprietor of a movie theater which is now an apartment house.

Bud Murray was another well-known barber who operated in the West end on Fifth Street. His successor was Grant Talbott, Sr., recently retired, who operated the same shop for many years.

Dr. J.A. Agnew was the only black undertaker serving the black population for many years. His former establishment became the site for several successors among whom was his brother-in-law, Stirman Wheatley. At his death he was succeeded by William and Jack Griffith, who, in turn, were succeeded by the present owner, Harry Young.

Another undertaking establishment was founded by Haynes - father and son. At his death J.D. Haynes, the son, was succeeded by the present owner, Reverend R.L. McFarland.

Significant in the past was a blacksmith shop located on West Fifth Street owned and operated by the Woodard family. Its existence was affected by changing times with the attending innovations of modern science.

Another item of interest concerns a teamster, "Wes" Sandusky, who owned several teams of horses eventually replaced by modern machinery. An ice cream parlor supplied by its own factory in the rear of the building on Hathaway Street was owned and operated by Joseph Weaver. He was assisted in the operation by his son, William L. Weaver, who died recently. Two tanners much in demand until their death were Frank Harding and Harold Ware.

Business among black women has been chiefly in beauty culture, particularly hair dressing. One of the early prominent beauticians was Madame Zilla Simmons who operated a shop on Poplar Street. This trade still continues to be profitable in Owensboro.

Dressmaking, which once offered a profitable livelihood, was affected by the development of the "ready-to-wear" department stores. Catering continues as a trade to a moderate degree. Modern science has changed the mode of laundering from the home and hand to the machine. Professional cooking is affected to some extent by changed methods and modern facilities. Domestic work is still in demand and certain types of factory work have been very popular. The latter have been affected recently by the existing economy.

Opportunities for jobs in clerical and social work are being offered along with some limited executive positions with Mrs. Beverly Thruston, David Kelly and Monnie Hankins in office. New types of work have been created by the development of electrical technology as substantiated by Sherman Davidson and James Gordon.

The closing of a second-hand clothing store marked an era upon the retirement of its owner C.D. Davidson whose store was located on West Main Street.

Restaurant business continues to thrive under the management of Tige Williams who has adopted a new and modern line – the establishment of a cleaning plant and a modern laundry. New history is in the making.

### Fraternal

Although several fraternal organizations formerly existed, few remain active today. The Masonic Order and Eastern Star lodges are still in existence in Owensboro while several other lodges have disbanded. The U.B.F. and S.M.T. lodges, two of the oldest lodges, recently dissolved. Their property, one of the old landmarks in the city, has been demolished and is the site of a new business concern.

The Odd Fellows Lodge, a prominent order in its day once owned a beautiful wooded park at the end of South Breckenridge Street and a hall on West Third Street. The lodge dissolved and its property was sold.

The Knights of Pythias, another fraternal order no longer exists in this city.

### Churches

Fourth Street Baptist Church, one of the oldest churches in this area has great historical importance. The original edifice worn by time was replaced by a new and beautiful church, modern in every respect. Many people regretted the demolition of this grand old edifice because of its historical significance. There are a number of black churches of various denominations located throughout the city with each church sharing its historical significance.

### Citizenship

Whatever attributes this city possesses, the reason can be assigned to the quality and respectability of its citizenship with the black citizen included. Limited in many ways, educationally, financially and culturally, he still maintained high ideals and standards, moral courage and ambition for the young. These were men and women who exerted a strong influence upon their succeeding generations by setting examples which resulted in reward for their contributions. These people were the "solid citizens" among whom were J.P. Martin, "Ed" Wells, Moses Brodie, Junius Valentine, Henry Edwards, "Kit" Bean, T.P. Fisher, Reverend S.B. Locke, M.J. Sleet, father of Monita J. Sleet, Jr., a well known journalist associated with Ebony Magazine, a current Black periodical, and many others who made their valuable contributions.

In appreciation of their service to youth, two black former teachers were recently honored in the renaming of a city park located in the West end for them. Frederick Douglas Park named for the renowned black statesman, was renamed "Kendall-Perkins" Park honoring Joseph N. Kendall (deceased), a former teacher and coach and Joseph P. Perkins, a retired teacher and coach. Both honorees worked extensively with young people for many years and made enduring impressions upon their lives.

The "pay-off" or reward for the efforts of the black citizenry in helping to inspire and encourage the black youth of Owensboro is in their accomplishments. Many chose various professions and became successful. Unfortunately some have not chosen to remain in Owensboro. The greatest reward comes in their fulfillment of the confidence placed in them and the knowledge that they can and will develop their potential for useful and valuable service as good wholesome citizens wherever they may be.

Miss Nannie P. Locke, a devout black Christian active in missionary work, was one of the most highly respected women in the city. A housing project located in the eastern section of Owensboro has been named in honor of this good woman who exerted a strong influence upon the lives of many people.

Mrs. Mary Harding, wife of Frank Harding and a woman of compassion, felt the need to provide a shelter for the homeless and indigent of her race. She founded a home which is known as the Mary Harding Home and stands as a monument to her memory.

Mrs. Hattie L. Neblett, wife of the present black physician, Dr. R.C. Neblett, recognized a need for wholesome recreation, especially for young people. Through her efforts and those of others whose help she enlisted, the Community Recreation Center was established which has served a good purpose in helping to develop the individual physically, morally and socially.

Socialized activity has been and remains conditioned and limited by the cultural and economic status and the special interest of the black citizen in the community.

Attention is becoming more directed to the need for wholesome recreation, better housing, better jobs, improved working conditions and educational opportunities. This is compelled to show promise in an increased sense of racial pride and respectability.

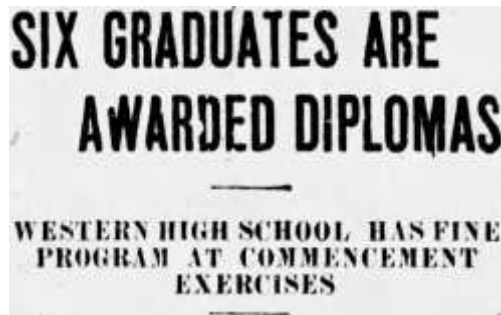
In retrospect and for the purpose of inventory Black Heritage suggests a pause for appreciation of that which we can be justly proud and which we should always cherish. It has pointed out that despite limitations in many respects, there is a counter balance evidenced in unerring faith and determination.

Black Heritage in Owensboro has a good and wonderful background. It has not only laid the ground work and set examples for others to follow, but it also offers a challenge and presents the torch to be carried on for greater attainment by each of its succeeding generations.



**About the author**  
**Mary Lee Fisher Morris**  
(1902-1997)

**Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 3 June 1919, p.2:**



The commencement of the Western High school was held Monday evening at the Fourth-street Baptist church with an attractive program consisting of choruses and orations by the graduates and address by Isaac Fisher, of Fisk University.

Diplomas were awarded William Henry Robinson, Queen Ella Glover, Lillian R. Gaines, Grant G. Talbott, Venitius Eugene Bradshaw and Mary Lee Fisher.

The following was the program:

Processional.

Chorus, "Moonlight on the Lake"

C. A. White).

Prayer.

Chorus, "Gloria" (G. A. Veazie).

Salutatory and oration, "The American Negro of Today" - Lillian R. Gaines.

"Song Life of Youth" (A. Geibel).

Oration and valedictory, "Woman's Part in the War" Mary L. Fisher.

Address – Isaac Fisher, University, Editor Fisk University.

Boys' chorus, "America, Our Motherland" (G. W. Contant).

Diplomas.

Closing chorus, "Good-Night, Good-Night, Beloved" (Pinsuti).

Class colors – Gold and green.

Class flowers – Marechal-Niel rose.

Class motto – "Onward and Upward".



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 1 June 1925, p.14:**

### **Local Laconics**

Mary Lee Fisher, daughter of Thomas Fisher, custodian at the city hall, has returned home from Durham, North Carolina, where she is a teacher of the academy grades of the Hill Side Park college.



**Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 20 November 1956, p.4A:**

### **Girl Inspired By Teacher Sends Word Of New Book**

Mrs. Mary F. Morris, teacher at Western High School, has been sought out by a former pupil from Durham, N. C.

In a letter to Owensboro Superintendent of Schools Kenneth Estes, the former student, Paula Murray, now of Brooklyn, N.Y., asked for information concerning the whereabouts of Mary

Lee Fisher, who had taught her Latin at the Hillside High School in Durham, and encouraged her to write.

The girl wished to inform her former teacher of the successful publication of her book, "Proud Shoes."

Mrs. Morris said she remembered the girl was an excellent student, and when last heard from, was practicing law in New York City.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 24 November 1969, p.1C:**

**Mrs. Mary F. Morris Is Honored  
For 25 Years' Teaching Service**



**SILVER SERVICE** - Mrs. Mary F. Morris, (center) was honored Sunday for 25 years of service as a teacher in the Owensboro Public School System. Also pictured are Dr. Braxton F. Cann and Mrs. Cann, a college classmate of Mrs. Morris.

Mrs. Mary Fisher Morris, who recently retired from the Owensboro Public School System 25 years, was honored with appreciation service Sunday at the Center Street Baptist Church.

Hosting the reception following the service, at which some 150 persons were in attendance, were members of the Community Recreation Council, St. Martha's Temple and fellow teachers.

A graduate of the former Western High School, the wife of Thomas G. Morris received the bachelor's degree from Wilberforce University in Ohio. She also completed graduate study at the University of Cincinnati, the University of Chicago and extension work at Indiana University.

Mrs. Morris' teaching career spanned 43 years. Before joining the Owensboro system, she was a teacher and girls' adviser at Hillside Park High School in Durham, N.C.

She held membership in the educational associations at all levels and in the Kentucky and National Council for Teachers of English. Mrs. Morris is a former secretary of the Owensboro Teachers Association and currently is a member of the Kentucky Retired Teachers Association.

The honoree's other interests include membership in St. Martha's Temple No. 8, NAACP, Delta Sigma Theta sorority, secretary-treasurer of the Community Recreation Council and member of the Center Street Baptist Church.

[Note – Mary Fisher Morris taught English and French at Western High School on West Third Street in Owensboro, KY. Her students were so inspired and motivated that they dedicated the 1960 Western Echoes to her for “unequalled devotion and interest.” She was the first full-time black teacher at Owensboro High School, joining the English department in 1965. See article, “School desegregation: Owensboro had smooth transition”, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 10 May 1984, p.2D.]



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 7 June 1981, p.3E:**

**people in the news**



Mary Lee Morris

An Owensboro woman, Mrs. Mary Lee Fisher Morris, was among the charter sponsors of Delta Sigma Theta sorority who attended the recent 50th anniversary celebration in Durham, N.C. Members of the Durham Alumnae Chapter were recognized at the anniversary event and more than 40 former students of Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Minnie Pearson Spalding of Durham, were recognized for their influence while teaching in Durham classrooms.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 19 November 1994, Community p.7:**

Members of Center Street Baptist Church, Owensboro, conducted a dedication ceremony July 10 for their recently completed parking lot. Special guests were Dr. B.T. Bishop and members of First Baptist Church of Elizabethtown.

Mrs. Mary Lee Fisher Morris, a member at Center Street Baptist, purchased two lots adjoining the church and presented the deeds to the church in 1986, for the specific purpose of providing a parking lot for the church. Mrs. Morris made this gift out of the goodness of her heart

and through her love for her church. Mrs. Morris always served her church well with her generous financial contributions and her many talents.



Mrs. Mary Lee Fisher Morris, seated at center, is honored at a ceremony dedicating the Center Street Baptist Church parking lot. Holding her hand is Clara Morgan, chairman of the parking lot committee; and standing immediately behind Mrs. Morris is Miss Camille Berkley, who taught with Mrs. Morris at Western High School. Next to her is Dr. E.S. Brooks, pastor of Center Street Baptist. Second from right is Dr. B.T. Bishop, special guest at the ceremony.

Mrs. Morris is a former teacher in the Owensboro school system. As a young woman, she accepted a position in Durham, N.C., where she taught for 18 years, after completing studies at Wilberforce College in Ohio. She then returned to Owensboro to care for her elderly parents and taught at Western High School. Her tenure there covered several years. When public schools were integrated, she transferred to Owensboro High School and served for 25 years in the Owensboro school system before retiring.

Besides her classroom contributions to the community, Mrs. Morris taught piano in her home for many years. She played for the choirs at her church as well as for Asbury United Methodist Church in Owensboro.

Mrs. Morris resides in Hermitage Manor Nursing Home.

Mrs. Morris was escorted to the dedication service by her attendant, Mr. Wesley Acton, a former teacher in the Daviess County school system. Mrs. Morris witnessed the installation of a dedication marker, which reads: "Center Street Baptist Church, parking lot donated by Mary Fisher Morris, 1986, in loving memory of her parents, Dicie Piper Fisher and Thomas Pompey Fisher."

The Rev. Elias S. Brooks, pastor, and members of Center Street Baptist Church are ever grateful to this wonderful and generous lady whom God has sent their way.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 16 March 1997, p.2C:**

## Mary Lee Morris

HARTFORD – Mary Lee Fisher Morris, 94, of Professional Care Home, Hartford, formerly of 729 Hathaway St., Owensboro, died Saturday, March 15, 1997, at Ohio County Hospital. She was born in Owensboro and was a retired teacher for the Owensboro public school system. She was a member of Center Street Baptist Church in Owensboro where she was a pianist for the church choir. She was also a pianist for Asbury United Methodist Church. Her husband, Thomas Golden Morris, died March 15, 1974.

Survivors include three cousins.

Services are pending at Young's Funeral Home in Owensboro.

[Note – buried 19 March 1997 at Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro, KY. ]



## Fisher family notes

By Jerry Long

Mary Lee Fisher was born 17 July 1902 in Owensboro, Daviess County, KY. In Louisville, KY on 31 August 1951 she married Thomas Golden Morris, son of William Morris and Lina Beauregard. He was born 22 September 1896 in Murray, Calloway County, KY and died 15 March 1974 in Owensboro, Daviess County, KY. He was buried at the Murray City Cemetery, Murray, Calloway County, KY. He was survived by his wife, Mary Fisher Morris, two nieces and four nephews.

Mary Lee Fisher was the daughter of Thomas Pompie Fisher and Dicie J. Piper, who were married in Daviess County, KY on 31 December 1891 (Daviess County Negro Marriage Book G, p.190). Mary's father was born 24 December 1858 in Henderson, Henderson County, KY. He was the son of Lee & Amelia (Cosby) Fisher.

The following obituary appeared in the Owensboro Messenger (23 March 1926, p.5):

### **Aged Colored Woman Is Called To Her Last Rest**

Amelia Fisher, 90, an aged and respected colored woman, died at 3:15 o'clock Sunday afternoon at the home of her daughter, Mary Fisher, 706 Hathaway street. She was born in Henderson county, June 30, 1836, and was the mother of twelve children, eight boys and four girls, six of whom, and her husband, preceded her in death. She was widely known throughout her section and because of her kindly and charitable disposition was much loved by her people. Thomas P. Fisher, custodian of the city hall, is a son. Funeral services will be held at 2 o'clock Wednesday afternoon from the Center Street Baptist church, the Rev. S. P. Locke, in charge. Interment will be in Greenwood cemetery.

Amelia Fisher's death certificate records that she died on 21 March 1926 at the age of 86 years, 9 months & 20 days; she was born on 30 June 1839 in KY, was a widow, and her parents were Dr. & Annie Cosby. The informant for her death certificate was her son, Tom Fisher (certificate 1926 - #6219). Amelia's tombstone lists only her birth and death years (1858-1926). Her age in the 1870 & 1880 Henderson County, KY censuses was 25 and 42 respectively and the

1910 & 1920 Daviess County censuses gave 69 and 81. The most reliable birth year appears to be 1839 which would make her about 18 when her son, Thomas, was born in 1858.

Thomas P. Fisher is listed with his parents in the 1870 and 1880 federal censuses of Henderson County, KY. Lee Fisher was born c1835 in KY and died during 1880-1910; his wife, Amelia Cosby, was born 30 June 1839 and died 21 March 1926 in Owensboro, KY. Lee & Amelia (Cosby) Fisher were the parents of 12 children – Thomas P., Sallie, Louisa, Sam, Albert, Henry, Mary F., Otey, Ben, Owen, Daniel & Byron.

Mary Lee Fisher's father, Thomas P. Fisher, appears in the 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 & 1940 censuses of Owensboro, KY. In 1900 he was working as a farmer, in 1910 as a grocery driver, 1920 as a janitor at City Hall, 1930 & 1940 as a janitor at a church. The 1905-06 Owensboro City Directory shows T. P. Fisher, driver, wife Dicie, residence 631 Hathaway. His obituary states that for many years he was in the employ of the Birk-Thornton grocery, and later custodian of the Messenger newspaper building, City Hall, and the Walnut Street Baptist Church.

Dicie J., wife of Thomas P. Fisher, was born 26 July 1868 in Henderson County, KY and died 12 April 1941 Owensboro, KY. Dicie was the daughter of Logan Piper & Jane Tyler.

Thomas P. Fisher was of one of 34 stockholders, who established Owensboro's Greenwood Cemetery, the city's African-American cemetery for over 70 years.

Thomas died 28 January 1950 in Owensboro, KY. The following were obituaries for Dicie and Thomas Fisher:

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 13 April 1941, p.4A:

#### Negro Deaths

Dicie Fisher, 71, wife of J. P. Fisher, janitor at the Walnut Street Baptist church, died at 12:30 a. m. Saturday at her home, 729 Hathaway street. Surviving are her husband, a daughter, Mary Lee Fisher, a teacher at Durham, N. C.. two sisters, both of whom reside in the west, two nephews and two grandnieces. Funeral arrangements have not been made.

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 29 January 1950, p.4A:

#### Negro Deaths

Thomas P. Fisher, 91, well known colored citizen of Owensboro, died at his home at 12:45 p.m. Saturday, following an illness of one week.

He was born in Henderson, but had lived in Owensboro for the last 50 years. He was a member of the Center Street Baptist church which he served as a deacon, and a member of the United Brothers of Friendship lodge.

For many years he was in the employ of the Birk-Thornton grocery, and later custodian of the Messenger building, City hall, and the Walnut Street Baptist church. He retired about six years ago.

Surviving are one daughter, Mary Lee Fisher, one brother, Samuel Fisher, of Henderson, and a niece, Mary A. Torain.

Funeral arrangements have not been completed. The United Brothers of Friendship lodge will have charge of services at the grave.

Thomas P. Fisher, his wife, Dicie J., his mother, Amelia Fisher, and his sister, Miss Mary F. Fisher (31 January 1872 – 20 September 1932), were initially buried in Owensboro's Greenwood Cemetery. In July 1979 Mary Lee (Fisher) Morris had their graves moved to Elmwood Cemetery. Another family member, John Lee Fisher, who was born 5 January 1864 in Henderson County, KY and died on 11 September 1930 in Mechanicsburg, IL was also moved from

Greenwood to Elmwood Cemetery in July 1979. Mary Lee Fisher Morris' relationship to John L. Fisher was not discovered. All five family members and Mary Lee Fisher Morris (1902-1997) were buried in lots 238 & 239 in section F at Elmwood Cemetery.



Graves of Amelia Cosby wife of Lee Fisher (1841-1926) and her son, Thomas P. Fisher (1858-1950, his wife, Dicie J. (1869-1941, and their daughter, Mary Lee Fisher Morris (1902-1997). The two monuments and two others (Mary F. & John L. Fisher) are in a row near the northwest corner of section F in Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY.

