

# Philip Triplett (1799-1852)

By Jerry Long  
c.2026



**Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971**  
**(Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971) p.1831:**

TRIPLETT, PHILIP, a Representative from Kentucky; born in Madison County, Ky. [see note below], December 24, 1799; attended the common schools of central Kentucky near Franklin, and in Scott County; studied law in Owensboro, Daviess County, Ky.; was admitted to the bar and commenced practice in Owensboro in 1824; member of the State house of representatives in 1824; presidential elector on the Whig ticket of Harrison and Granger in 1836; elected as a Whig to the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Congresses (March 3, 1839—March 3, 1843); was not a candidate for reelection in 1842; presidential elector on the Whig ticket of Clay and Frelinghuysen in 1844; delegate to the State constitutional convention in 1849; died in Owensboro, Ky., March 30, 1852; interment in Elwood Cemetery.

[Note by Jerry Long – Philip Triplett’s place of birth was mistakenly given as Madison County, Kentucky. It should be Madison County, Virginia, which is given in the book, An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY. (Leo McDonough & Co., 1876, p.41). Virginia is confirmed as his nativity in the 1850 Daviess County, KY Federal census; in the book, A Biographical Congressional Directory, 1774-1911 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913, p.1064); and in the 1880 Daviess County Federal Census his place of birth was reported as Virginia in the entry for his daughter, Harriette Triplett Johnson.]



**Daviess County, KY Tax Lists:**

In Daviess County, KY’s annual tax lists Philip Triplett is first listed in the year 1820.

The 1821 Daviess County, KY tax list was the first to have a separate listing for the residents of Owensboro. Phillip Triplett appeared in a list of thirty-six white males over 21 living in the town.



**Daviess County, KY 1820 Federal Census, p.370:**

Triplett, Phillip 1 male 26-45



**Daviess County, KY 1830 Federal Census, p.209:**

Triplett, Philip	1 male 0-5	1 female 0-5	15 slaves
	1 male 30-40	1 female 10-15	
		1 female 20-30	



**Daviess County, KY 1840 Federal Census, p.24:**

Triplett, Philip	1 male 20-30	1 female 0-5	20 slaves
	1 male 30-40	1 female 5-10	11 persons employed
		1 female 10-15	in agriculture
		1 female 20-30	2 persons employed
		1 female 30-40	learned professional
			engineers



**Owensboro, Daviess County, KY 1850 Federal Census, p.352:**

Triplett, Philip	50 m	lawyer	born Virginia
		owned 28 slaves, real estate value \$22,000	
Triplett, Eliza H.	45 f		born Kentucky
Triplett, Laura A.	12 f		born Kentucky
Triplett, Ella Louise	7 f		born Kentucky
Hopkins, Lucy W.	18 f		born Kentucky



**Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, Frankfort, KY, Monday, 2 February 1852, p.3  
and Louisville Evening Bulletin, Louisville, KY, Saturday, 31 January 1852, p.3:**

OBITUARY

Died in Owensboro, K., on Saturday, the 24th January, 1852, of erysipelas, Mrs. Eliza H. Triplett, wife of the Hon. Philip Triplett, in the 47th year of her age.

In the full maturity of her intellectual and physical strength, the destroyer came, gathered her home to the Heaven of rest and the presence of the God whom she delighted to serve. She had been for many years a most meek and devout Christian, and having attached herself to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, her walk and conversation at all times evinced her fitness, not

only for that station, but for the society of Heaven, constituted as it is, of the presence of God, the adorable Redeemer, and the spirits of the just made perfect through the grace and favor of God.

A husband and children are deeply penetrated with this inscrutable decree of Providence, the community in which her life of good deeds, charitable offices, and eminent Christian devotion were exemplified, must turn their thoughts and affections to Heaven, for she is not now of this earth – God has called her, and she has gone into his presence, where her spirit, well refined, must dwell for evermore.

To her, God had been peculiarly bountiful; to a strong physical constitution. He added a power of intellect rarely, if ever surpassed by any of her sex, and these great blessings she used and enjoyed not in idleness, but, like the servant to whom his master had given the highest talents, she used and improved the talents bestowed upon her by her God, and like that servant, her reward was – “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”



**Louisville Daily Courier, Louisville, KY, Wednesday, 14 April 1852, p.3:**

HON. PHILIP TRIPLETT died at his residence at Owensboro', in this State, on the 29th ult. Only a short time since his wife died, and her death was soon followed by that of her daughter Laura, aged 14.



**Daviess County, KY Will Book C, pp.14-16:**

Philip Triplett wrote a final will on 7 February 1852 and it was probated in April 1852. In it he named – daughters, Harriott N. Johnson, Laura Triplett and Phillipa Louise Triplett; deceased wife, and deceased daughter, Eliza. He appointed his son-in-law - James L. Johnson, brother - Robert Triplett and friend - James Weir executors of his estate.



**Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 3 September 1875, p.1:**



**THE TRIPLETT BROTHERS.**

Robert Triplett, the older of the two brothers, was an extensive land owner in Kentucky. He lived in Frankfort for some years, and afterwards moved to "Haphazard," a farm two miles above Owensboro, on the river, and which he afterward sold to Mr. William Bell, and which is yet

owned by Mr. Bell's heirs. Mr. Triplett then moved to town and lived on the river bank in a house since owned by Thomas Pointer and others. Mr. Triplett was a man of large mind, great enterprise, extensive knowledge of men and things, but too far ahead of his time to be extensively successful in a county as new as ours was then. He died of cancer in Philadelphia. His wife was a sister of Mr. William Pegram, of Owensboro. She was a fine, stately, handsome, and dignified looking lady, and highly regarded by those who knew her well. The only man living capable of giving a correct and extensive memoir of Robert Triplett is Mr. Jas. Weir. He was the executor of his estate, and fell into the possession of all business, books and papers. The history of the Barnharbor estate would show how a man of lofty honor who looked upon the mean and despicable with contempt was made the victim of a wealthy sharper. The remaining members of his family are his three daughters, Mrs. White, of Virginia, and Mrs. Yeaman and Virginia Triplett, of New York.

The other brother was Philip Triplett, who, as a lawyer, settled in Owensboro after his brother Robert came West from Virginia. He was the leading lawyer of the place for years. William Anthony was also a lawyer of standing for years in the same place. The visiting lawyers of the Owensboro court were Archibald Dixon and Edmond Hopkins from Henderson; Judge Calhoon from what is now McLean; John McHenry from Ohio, and Judge Kincheloe and Frank Peyton from Breckinridge. This, as a matter of course, made the Bar of Owensboro a very able one. But these men have all passed away except Dixon and Kincheloe. James L. Johnson and James Weir were then a young and promising law firm in the town. Johnson soon afterward ran for Congress and was elected. Mr. Weir has always kept out of public life. Mr. William R. Griffith, the father of Dan and Clint, did not live in town, but near it. He and William Triplett were in partnership as extensive land owners and sellers. Of this land firm the writer never heard a disrespectful word spoken. They were always generous, forbearing and compensative where that could be done to the slow and incompetent purchaser. This was wholly different from another man in the county of the same business, but of whose business cruelty some men spoke with hated breath. Yet the writer is disposed to think that Mr. Stout was hard and relentless only upon the idle and the thriftless, and that he was forbearing and even kind to those who were doing their industrious best.

But it was the family of Mr. Triplett and Mrs. T. were admirably adapted to each other. They had hearts and purposes alike in the exercise of a generous, easy and polished hospitality. As a specimen of the easy readiness with which they entertained strangers, the following was stated to the writer by Senator McCreery: On a certain occasion several gentlemen left the Beech Woods early, designing to take breakfast in town. But hotels were very poor and slow teams in Owensboro in those days, and after waiting a tedious time one of the gentlemen proposed that they would go to Mr. Triplett's and get breakfast. This was agreed to, and all proceeded to Mr. T.'s house, where they were received and breakfasted most cordially, without any apparent surprise or inconvenience. This was a rare instance of that superior family sense and management that cannot be taken at a disadvantage.

Mr. Triplett was a gentleman of extensive reading and varied information. He was a fine talker and always ready to communicate. He was liberal and generous toward all good objects that demanded his aid. It was those who knew Mr. Triplett best that honored and respected him most highly. They saw and felt what the stranger did not see and feel. Though dying comparatively young, he had provided well for his family.

The winter of 1851-2 was a sad, gloomy and memorable winter to Owensboro. It was the time of the visitation of the deadly erysipelas. And among its death's doings was the extinction of the light of the Triplett family. The united head passed away by the same fell destroyer's blow. It was a loss which Owensboro could but poorly and mournfully afford. Mrs. Triplett had for years

spent much of her time and care at the sick bed of the afflicted in the town, and yet when she came to die herself the hands were few that were stretched out for her relief. The phantom of contagion stalked abroad everywhere and frightened away even the best and most tenderhearted of the people. The most affecting scene we ever saw was when Mr. Triplett, lying upon his own deathbed, had the corpse of his daughter Laura brought into his room, laid on his bed and then taken out for the grave. It was a picture which the eye that saw it and the heart that felt it could alone receive and retain. It was such a scene which no poetry could describe and no canvas represent. The mother was gone - the providing hand in household affairs and the tender and beloved partner of years had recently entered upon her long sleep in her long home, and now here was the daughter just turning the point of womanhood as the last vision of departing joys presented to the devouring eye of paternal grief. The children left were two daughters, Mrs. James L. Johnson, then not long married, and her younger sister Illa, who died after marriage some years ago. "What shadows we are!"



**An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY.**  
**(Leo McDonough & Co., 1876) p.41 from biography of James L. Johnson:**

[... James L.] Johnson was married to Miss Harriotte N Triplett, the daughter of Philip Triplett, his old preceptor at law. Mr. Triplett was the second resident lawyer of Owensboro, Phil. Thompson alone, of the legal fraternity, outranking him as to the date of his residence in the town. He was an able lawyer, and achieved success both in civil and criminal practice. He represented Daviess County in the legislature, was a member of the convention which formed the present Constitution of the State of Kentucky, and served two, or three, terms in Congress. For many years he was the partner of William R. Griffith, and was instrumental with him in securing the settlement of vacant lands in Daviess County. He was a fluent speaker, but known for his logic rather than his rhetoric. He was lively in his disposition, generous and open-hearted, and as a business man he was famed for his liberality. Mr. Triplett had been born in Madison County, Virginia, and was raised in the City of Richmond, where he lived before coming to Kentucky.



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

Page 44: Representatives in [U.S.] Congress – Philip Triplett. 1839-41

Page 107: [Ky.] Representatives – Phil. Triplett, 1824

Page 157: Phil. Triplett, a younger brother of Robert, commenced the practice of law in Owensboro about 1824, in an office owned and fitted up by his brother. He came to be a leading member of the bar in this Judicial Circuit, following the Judge around, who made his tour twice a year. In 1826 he was elected to the Legislature, and afterward twice to Congress; in 1849 he was elected to the State Constitutional Convention. He married Betsey Hopkins, of Henderson County, and had twelve or more children, but only two of these lived to be grown and married. One married

John Green, who died during the war, and the other married James L. Johnson, and died last fall, leaving only one child, Dr. Phil. T. Johnson, as the representative of the family.

Page 354: First National Bank — This is the newest by name but the oldest in business, of all the banks in the city. The first bank in Owensboro was a branch of the "Southern Bank of Kentucky," and was established here Aug. 5, 1850, with the following Directors: Wm. Bell, Simpson Stint, Christopher D. Jackson, Junius B. Alexander, Samuel M. Wing, James H. Blair, Wm. T. Short, S. M. Moorman and Philip Triplett.

Page 412: Jan. 24, 1852 death of Mrs. Philip Triplett of erysipelas; March 30, 1852 Philip Triplett of erysipelas.

Page 821: While holding the latter office, March 18, 1824, he [William Newton] sold on the premises 1,950 acres of land, patented to John Mays, lying on the Ohio River, in this county, to the highest bidder. It was purchased by Philip Triplett, at 25 cents per acre. In the afternoon of the same day he sold at the door of the court-house in Owensboro the same representative's interest in 3,000 acres, patented to John Mays and D. Ross, and also said representative's interest in the town of Owensboro. Philip Triplett was the purchaser of the whole at 25 cents per acre, and 25 cents per town lot, he being the highest bidder.



**Owensboro Daily Tribune, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 20 October 1895, p.1:**

Old Court Hall

The recent demolition of a part of the building formerly known as the Court Hall, in order to replace it with the elegant building of the Odd Fellows, suggests to the older resident the history of the building. It was erected in about 1853-4, and on the corner formerly stood the office of Hon. Philip, Triplett. On the western end of the building upstairs was a large hall, which was used for a court room, while the courthouse was in course of construction. This hall was used for speaking, school exhibitions, etc. In this building was tried Richardson, one of the two men legally hanged in the county. Here Crockett, Wooley Kinney spoke pro. and con. the Know nothings. After the completion of the court house, court hall was converted into a theatre....



**Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 13 March 1898, p.5:**



Miss Harriotte Triplett Johnson

Abstract – Article on the genealogy of Miss Harriotte Triplett Johnson. Daughter of Dr. Philip Triplett Johnson and granddaughter of Judge James L. Johnson . She is a descendant in the sixth generation of Dr. Thomas Triplett, sub-dean of Westminster, who is buried in the famous abbey. Her great-grandfather was Philip Triplett, three times a member of congress and a member of the Kentucky constitutional convention of 1850. His wife was a daughter of Samuel Hopkins, a general in the revolutionary war and a major general in the war of 1812.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 3 December 1904, p.4:**

Is Sixty-Four Years That Capt.  
Frank L. Hall Has Resided In Owensboro.

.... The town extended only to Fourth street. Beyond that were corn fields and woods, and all of the land within what is now the city of Owensboro was owned by a few men. Philip Triplett owned all the land between Frederica and Triplett streets and from Fourth street to a line beyond what is now Hickman park....



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 10 December 1905, p.24:**



.... Shortly after settling in Henderson Audubon made his first trip to Owensboro. He was the guest of Philip Triplett, a scholar of considerable attainments, one of the pioneer lawyers of Owensboro, and subsequently member of congress. His house – the now delapidated old brick building just east of the federal building on Third street – was famed throughout this end of the state for its hospitality and Audubon became a regular visitor there. A room was fitted up for his work and many of his bird paintings were made there. The diary of the late Mrs. Harriett T. Johnson, a daughter of Philip Triplett, contains numerous references to Audubon....

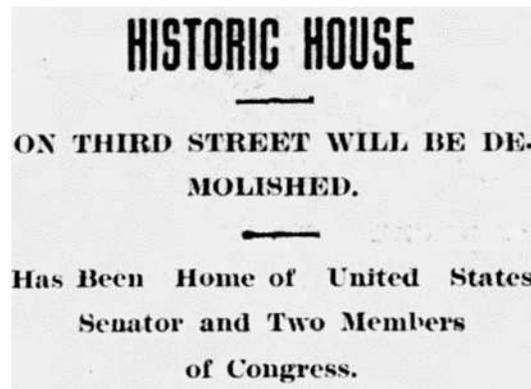


**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 22 September 1907, p.9:**

[Erysipelas epidemic of 1852 is described by Dr. C. J. Lockhart. Philip Triplett, his wife, Eliza, and their daughter, Laura died during the epidemic.]



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 25 March 1908, p2:



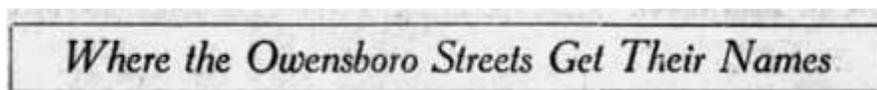
The old house on East Third street just east of the government building, will be torn down within the next few weeks. Mrs. Ann Herr, the owner of the building, has let a contract for its demolition. She will erect on the lot one or more business houses.

This house is one of the oldest in Owensboro and has been the Home of at least three prominent men. It was built by Philip Triplett, the pioneer lawyer of Owensboro and later congressman from this district. After his death it was occupied for a while by Judge James L. Johnson, also a member of congress. Later it became the home of Thomas Clay McCreary, who was for two terms a United States senator from Kentucky and was probably the most unique public man that Kentucky has produced, with the possible exception of Ben Hardin.

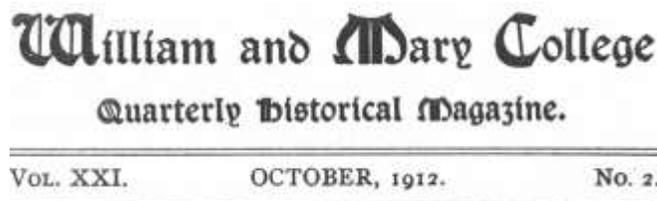
For a number of years past the old house has been rented. Few repairs have been made on it in recent years and it has grown dilapidated. The business section of the city has encroached upon it to such an extent that the property is too valuable to be rented as a cheap residence.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 21 March 1909, p10:



.... Triplett street was named for Philip Triplett, one of the pioneer lawyers of , Owensboro, and representative in congress from this district from 1838 to 1844....



Genealogy of the Triplett Family

By Rev. Arnold Harris Hord

PHILIP TRIPLETT – 5 (Daniel - 4, Francis - 3, William, - 2, Francis - generation 1) was born in Madison County, Ky. [should be Madison County, Va.] Dec. 24th, 1799; educated for the law; moved to Owensboro, Davis County, Ky. about 1824. He married in 1825 Miss Eliza Harwood Hopkins, daughter of General Stephen Hopkins of Henderson County, Ky. and niece of Major General Samuel Hopkins of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. Philip Triplett was Presidential elector in 1836; U. S. Congressman from Kentucky, 1839-43; Presidential elector 1844, and a delegate to form the Constitution of Kentucky in 1849. He was a remarkably handsome man and was widely known as "the blue-eyed Kentuckian." He died in the Spring of 1852, leaving twelve children, only four of whom survived, viz:

(112.) Eliza Triplett.

(113.) Laura Triplett

(114) Phillipa Triplett; married Gustavus Green of Danville, Ky. about 1861.

(115.) Harriet Triplett.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 14 February 1926, p.1B:**

How The Streets Of Owensboro Received Their Names  
Triplett Named For Old Family

.... Triplett street, the long thoroughfare stretching from the extreme south to the far northern part of Owensboro was named for the Triplett family, of which Robert, Phillip, and Judge George S. Triplett came to Owensboro in about 1816. Phillip Triplett acquired the property extending from Fourth street out to where Legion park now stands. The Phillip Triplett home was what is now the Mary Kendall Home in Phillip's court. Robert Triplett's home which was named "Haphazard," is now the Hunter Bell farm while he home of Judge George S. Triplett is what is now known as the Morgan or Morehead farm on the Livermore road....



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 29 May 1927, pp.1B & 7B:**



.... Two tragic events are the vivid in my recollection of Owensboro – the killing of Philip Thompson and the drowning of little John Triplett....

### Triplett Drowns

"The drowning of little Johnny Triplett occurred about three years after. He was nine years old, the only son of Hon. Philip Triplett, a leading lawyer in Southern Kentucky, and a prominent and popular citizen. He and I were about the same age and playmates, and on a warm summer day, were in swimming in the river just below the mouth with the ravine – several other boys with us, among whom I remember my brother, John, and Henry Brady.

"Johnny Triplett and I could swim a little and were jumping into the water and by half a dozen strokes reaching the blade of a big flatboat oar lying some twenty feet out, and from there taking a plunge back and reaching the shore. We were getting along very well until little Johnny became confused, and was seen to be struggling with his hands out of the water. The bigger boys swam to him at once and tried to bring him in, but they were too small for the task, and the little boy slipped out of their hands and sank out of sight. We were all stunned with horror, and Henry Brady slipped on his breeches and ran with all his might up town and gave the alarm. Circuit court was in session and Mr. Triplett was there, busy with a case. In an instant all was confusion. Court adjourned and the lawyers thronged to the river. Mr. Triplett threw off his coat and would have joined in the search of the river for his lost child, had he not been held back by his friends.

"In an instant the water was thronged with swimmers, dropping and sinking in the water trying to touch the little boy. It was an hour and more before the body was brought up. Every effort was made by chafing and rubbing to restore circulation – but all in vain. The bereaved father had to be taken with his dead son to a bereaved mother and a bereaved home."

Mr. Grissom was at one time editor of the Evening News and later assistant editor of the St. Louis Republic. But recently he gave an interview for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat magazine telling of "Front Page Stuff" of the 50s and 60s he recalled. Mr. Grissom survived the historic wreck of the first train to run from St. Louis to Jefferson City and attracted much attention when he published a daily St. Louis newspaper with only two assistants.

Mr. Grissom, for whom Grissom's Landing on the Ohio river ten miles below Owensboro was named, in former years periodically visited in Owensboro, but his old comrades are now all gone.

]Note by Jerry Long – John Roberts Triplett, "Johnny", was born 8 January 1830 and died 9 July 1839, his remains are interred in Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery.]



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 5 October 1965, p.8C:**

### **Two Daviess Countians Have Been U. S. Senators**

Less than 25 years after Daviess County was formed, Philip Triplett became its third member of Congress. His chief claim to fame as a congressman was his appointment of Simon Bolivar Buckner as a cadet to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Buckner became a lieutenant general in the Confederate army and later governor of Kentucky. Buckner's son, a lieutenant general in the United States Army, was killed in the Pacific during World War II.

Congressman Triplett came to Yellow Banks from Virginia and began practicing law in 1824 in an office fitted out by his brother, Robert Triplett, a pioneer Daviess County coal mine operator-distiller-industrialist. He was elected a member of the Kentucky Legislature two years later. In 1839, Philip Triplett was sent to Congress, where he served two terms. In 1849 he represented Daviess County in the state constitutional convention.

Philip Triplett married Betsey Hopkins of Henderson County. She died January 24, 1852, at the age of 46 and her husband died March 30 of the same year at age of the 52. Both are buried, along with several of their children, in Elmwood Cemetery.



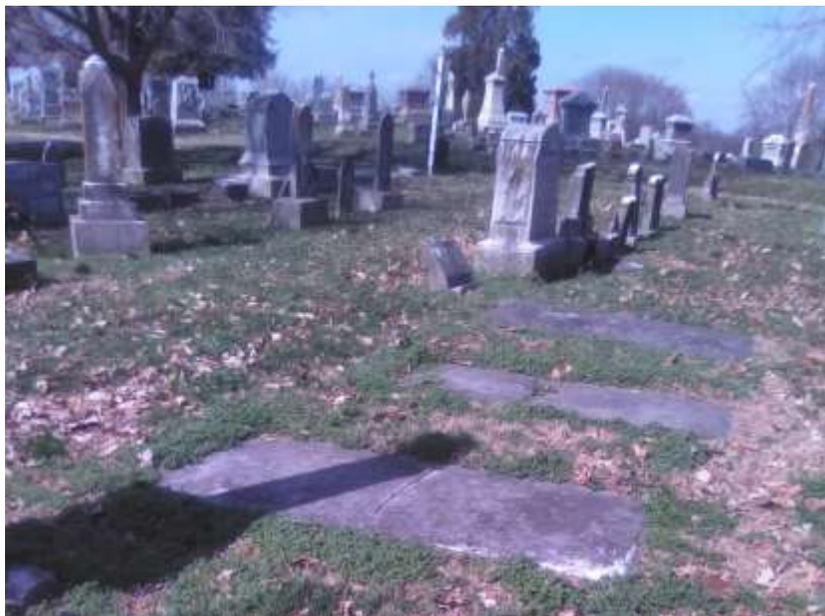
## **Record of the family of Philip Triplett**

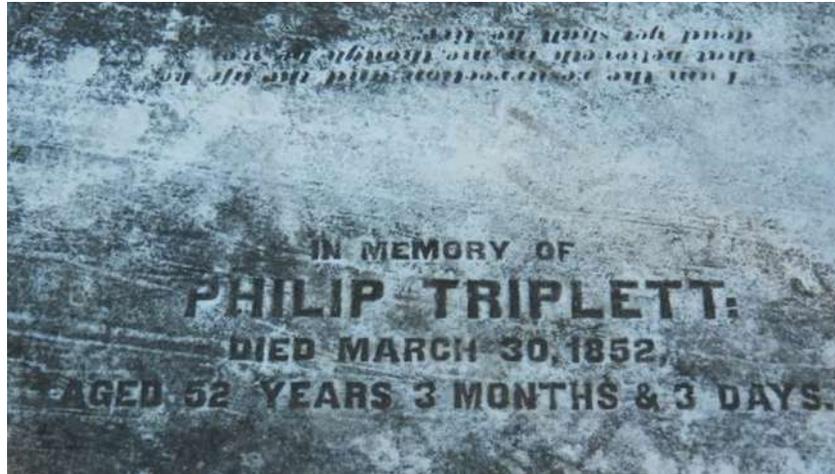
By Jerry Long

Philip Triplett was born 24 December 1799 in Madison County, Virginia. He was the son of Daniel Triplett & Elizabeth Richards. His father was a merchant in Stafford County, Virginia. Daniel & Elizabeth's children were – John Richards, Robert, Philip, Harriet, Elizabeth and Anne. Brothers, Robert (1794-1853) and Philip (1799-1852, were early settlers at Yellow Banks, now Owensboro, in Daviess County, KY. Both are listed in the 1820, 1830, 1840 and 1850 censuses of Daviess County, KY.

Philip Triplett married Eliza Harwood Hopkins on 3 November 1825 in Henderson County, KY. Philip Triplett died on 30 March 1852 at his home in Owensboro. Philip, his wife, and their daughter, Laura A., died during an erysipelas epidemic; his wife died on 24 January 1852 and Laura died 24 March 1852.

Philip Triplett and members of his family are interred at Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro, KY . Their remains apparently were removed from one of Owensboro's older burial grounds and reinterred after the establishment of Elmwood in 1868. The Triplett – Johnson lot is located in section E near the southeast corner of the cemetery.





The monuments of for Philip, his wife, Eliza H, and their son, John Roberts, are three large concrete markers that are in a row flat with the ground. In the picture on the preceding page Philip's monument is on top, his wife's is in the center and their son, John is below. The article, "Genealogy of the Triplett Family", by Rev. Arnold Harris Hord (William and Mary College Quarterly, October 1912, p.125) stated that Philip & Eliza Triplett had twelve children. Monuments for the following are buried in the family lot; the monuments are badly faded and are very difficult to decipher:

1. Eliza Richards Triplett born 23 June 1826 and died 14 September 1845, single
2. John Roberts Triplett, "Johnny", was born 8 January 1830 and drowned in the Ohio River at Owensboro on 9 July 1839 at the age of 9 years, 6 months & 1 day
3. Harriotte N. Triplett, born 12 June 1832 and died 27 July 1882 Owensboro, KY; she married James Leeper Johnson, 22 April 1832 Daviess County, KY; James Leeper Johnson (born 30 October 1818 and died 12 February 1877) and their son, Philip Triplett Johnson (born 1 August 1851 and died 19 August 1902), are also buried in the Triplett – Johnson lot
4. Laura A. Triplett born circa 1838 and died 24 March 1852 Owensboro, KY
5. infant daughter Triplett born and died in 1841
6. Philip R. Triplett born 1841 and died 1845
7. Phillippa Louisa Triplett, "Illa", born 9 February 1843 and died 11 August 1862 Danville, Boyle County, KY; married John D. Green, 21 May 1862 Daviess County, KY
8. infant daughter Triplett born and died in 1846
9. Robert Barnley Triplett – his name along with Martha Jones Triplett & Nora Patton Triplett are on one monument with no dates
10. Martha Jones Triplett
11. Nora Patton Triplett

