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## The Editor's Page

As Owensboro looks forward to the opening of the new Museum of Science and History in the former Anderson's Department Store building at Second and Daviess streets, it is fitting that we commemorate that event with a front-cover illustration of the building as it was originally built for Owensboro's Temple Theater. Obviously the building has undergone dramatic changes and expansion since this sketch was made, probably in the 1880's.

We are honored to have as our lead article a paper by the distinguished Homer Socolofsky, professor of history at Kansas State University. If any of our readers has ever wondered how the town of Sorgho got its name, that question will be fully answered in this article, which reflects the continued search by area farmers for a "sure-fire" cash crop which would rival tobacco in its profitability.

Kendall Burgess, a voice performance major at KWC, has written a charming article on music in Owensboro at the beginning of the century. This was originally done as a term paper in the class History of the United States, 1900-1945.

Grady Ebelhar's article on the flood of 1945 not only provides a valuable documentation of that traumatic event in Daviess County's history, but serves as an excellent example of the kinds of important historical information that all of us have in our memories. Thanks, Grady, for reminding us that we all need to be writing more things such as this.

The Strange Story of Sorghum-Sugar  
by Homer E. Socolofsky

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The town of Sorgho in Daviess County began in the winter of 1868-69 when a company was formed for the manufacturing of sugar from sorghum cane. The project never materialized, the costs being too great to compete with sugar-cane or beet sugar, but the town founded around the possibility of the factory survived. By 1874 the population had grown to the point where it was recognized as a separate voting precinct, known as Sorghotown. Today the name of the town commemorates a long-forgotten industrial scheme which might have turned Daviess County into a major sugar-refining area, but these dreams, like the dreams of the people of Marion, Kansas, which Dr. Socolofsky describes in the following article, disappeared in the cold reality of economic competition.

In the 1930s when I was growing up in Marion, Kansas, children in our neighborhood enjoyed playing in the old sugar mill. This abandoned, limestone building, larger than anything around, except the schools we attended, was like a huge barn built into the crest of the creek bank, the second floor even with the ground on one side, for vehicle access. A one story lean-to was at one end and a few yards away was a rotting scale-house and abandoned wagon scales. As I first remember the building, red-painted wooden shutters closed each opening. Later, one of these obstructions fell out of a window about ten feet above ground level. A tree about a foot from the building provided access to the window ledge and we got into the building to view strange, old machinery and to notice several open sacks that contained something that looked like coarse, gray cement. To my knowledge no one in our neighborhood gang ever questioned the identity of the "old sugar mill." Not until many years later did I learn that the building, in fact, was erected in 1880 as the Marion County Pioneer Sorgho Sugar Factory at a cost of \$3,000 and that the company went out of business in 1881.<sup>1</sup>

This small sugar making enterprise was extolled in the local newspaper and frequent references to the sugar mill were published during the construction phase, but a strange silence followed its completion. Production in 1880 was 5,000 gallons of molasses and no sugar. No activity was reported in the 1881 harvest season.<sup>2</sup> An explanation, published in 1883, merely stated, "Sugar-making did not succeed with them."<sup>3</sup>

By the time Marion's Pioneer Sugar Company folded, efforts to produce sugar from sorghum cane in various northern and some southern states had been tried for more than a quarter of a century. Indeed, advocacy of sorghum cane as a potential source of merchantable sugar had peaked during

the Civil War and had declined to almost no notice in the years immediately following. Then, in the 1880s interest in sorghum sugar was revived, with new experiments and widespread encouragement from the federal government; support that was dropped in the early 1890s. The sugar shortage imposed by World War II brought a renewal of sorghum sugar research, which waned in the 1950s. Since 1965, an on-going USDA sponsored project on sweet sorghums has solved many of the problems which kept sorghum from gaining recognition as a viable sugar source.

Contemporary information about the first sweet sorghums in the United States of the 1850s is confusing and contradictory with notices of Chinese Amber sorghum coming from China by way of France.<sup>4</sup> An additional importation in 1857 brought many varieties of sweet sorghum from Natal, South Africa, adding to the confusion of the sorghum brought from France.<sup>5</sup> But until about 1880 all of the sweet sorghum varieties in the United States came from either Chinese Amber or the South African introductions.<sup>6</sup>

One of the chief early promoters of Chinese Sugar-cane was Orange Judd of the American Agriculturist, who distributed almost a million packets of sorghum seeds to interested farmers.<sup>7</sup> Isaac Hedges, of St. Louis, became the leading visionary on behalf of sorghum-sugar, optimistically booming the advantages of the new sugar crop.<sup>8</sup>

The Patent Office also described sorghum's use for fodder and sugar, in an era when most Americans were farmers or residents of rural areas and the anti-slavery abolition movement was reaching its zenith. Maple syrup, maple sugar, and honey were the most common sweets in northern states. Cane sugar, from slave areas, was an expensive product available only in stores, and beet-sugar production was still in its infancy. Because of the limited area where cane sugar could be raised it was viewed as a monopoly. "Store-bought" sugar, was a scarce item in most families' diets. Development of a new crop which could provide a product formerly obtained by laborious work or by purchase, was viewed favorably in that ante-bellum do-it-yourself economy.

*DeBow's Review*, of New Orleans, cynically reviewed the claims of the agricultural branch of the patent office, after describing "the deficiency in the operations of the Agricultural Bureau." The *Review* noted that sorghum was "already a favorite with abolitionists, who fervently hope that it will deliver them from the necessity of using the slave-made sugar from Louisiana and Texas." The journal concluded that the South had heard this story of great discoveries before and "she instinctively doubts when they are mentioned or presented from the usual sources."<sup>9</sup>

Sugar-makers and manufacturers convened in many northern states to impart the sorghum-sugar story. Reports of sugar-making progress were widespread. Sugar prices were extremely high during the late 1850s and through the Civil War, ranging from ten to twenty-six cents per pound, thus the territory of Nebraska paid a bounty of five cents a pound for

merchantable brown sugar made in the territory in 1861 and large premiums were offered for the best sugar and molasses made in Iowa.<sup>10</sup> Other incentives for sugar production from sorghum were developed in northern states.

The *Sorgho Journal and Farm Machinist*, published in Cincinnati, was edited by William Clough, over a period of almost eight years, 1863 through June 1870. In a long article on, "Sorghum or Northern Sugar-Cane," in the 1864 annual report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Clough dealt with the background of sorghum, the method of growing, machinery, apparatus, cane mills, evaporating, filtering juice, and refining syrup.<sup>11</sup> Other commentary in the 1860s was optimistic about future prosperity for sorghum-sugar. After all, millions of dollars had been saved by use of molasses. "The manufacture of large quantities of beautiful sugar has proved that what was at first regarded as a doubtful experiment has become a fixed and most important fact, . . ." was altogether typical of early reports.<sup>12</sup> Some noted that it was difficult to crystalize sorghum juice, but the general impression existed that a solution was imminently expected.

Much of this early confidence was due to the granulation of pale yellow or light brown, unrefined sugar by many northern farmers. There were accidental sugaring of sorghum molasses in the barrel, some farmers reporting granulation taking place within one to ten days, others saying that it occurred over winter or through the next summer. But other farmers reported that they could get no sugar even though their technique was identical to that of a neighbor.

The long history of development of sugar from beets was cited frequently to illustrate similar problems that were overcome to produce that commercial crop. The collapse of high sugar prices with the end of the Civil War reduced the economic incentive for producing sugar from northern cane. Interest in obtaining low cost sugar from northern crops almost disappeared. Very few stories surfaced in the late 1860s and through much of the 1870s. Memory of the potential of sugar from sorghum and the subsequent disillusionment of easy recovery of this valuable product retreated from the public mind. Enthusiasm for sorghum-sugar was not dead, it was merely dormant.

Key to the revival of farmer interest in producing sorghum for making sugar was a better price for the product as well as renewed public comment and especially prolonged support from certain agricultural leaders, such as leading editors and the Commissioner of Agriculture. William G. LeDuc, who became Commissioner of Agriculture on July 1, 1877, considered the entire area of American agriculture and focused attention again on sorghum-sugar. LeDuc's support, along with that of agricultural editor Norman J. Colman, of the St. Louis based *Colman's Rural World*, and the timely experiments of H. A. Weber and M. A. Scovell, chemistry professors at the University of Illinois, led to widespread renewal of sorghum-sugar activity.

LeDuc asked the chiefs of the agricultural bureau's Division of Chemistry, to use the new analytical skills in chemistry to carry out sorghum-sugar experiments. Dr. Peter Collier, in that position, attracted attention with an announcement that "one-tenth of the corn acreage of Illinois would suffice to raise all the sugar used in the United States if devoted to sorghum . . . . The cost of the raw sugar, . . . should not exceed three cents a pound." LeDuc fully supported Collier in his sugar investigations and he also visited sorghum-sugar mills and echoed his chemist's enthusiasm.<sup>13</sup> Collier's annual reports, 1878 to 1882, were devoted largely to sorghum-sugar.

In 1879 Colman created a new "Sargo" department for the *Rural World* and installed Isaac A. Hedges, affectionately known as "Old Sorghum," as a special columnist in a page one position. Colman had often warned farmers of agricultural manias or crazes, which he regarded as expensive and ill-conceived fads, but to the editor from the "Show Me" state sorghum was different. The "Sargo" department was unique among agricultural journals and the *Rural World* editor refused to consider it a passing fancy. He confidently "predicted that within ten years more sugar would be made north of Louisiana than south of its northern boundary." Continuous experimentation on refining sugar from sorghums was urged, and regional sorghum associations were organized. These groups urged agricultural colleges to provide special training in sugar manufacturing.<sup>14</sup>

Professors Weher and Scovell experimented with the manufacture of sorghum-sugar in the late 1870s and were among a group to establish the Champaign Sugar and Glucose Company to enter the sugar manufacturing field commercially.<sup>15</sup> Weber maintained that in the Illinois "experiments with making sugar from sorghum, we have no such extensive failures to chronicle as in the case of the sugar beet." Even with imperfect manufacturing methods he maintained that costs of sorghum-sugar would be around eight cents per pound.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the stage for promoting sorghum-sugar moved from the private, frequently accidental experiments of the farmer, to the government chemical laboratory where costs were borne by the public. Commissioner LeDuc's leadership on behalf of sorghum-sugar and Weber and Scovell's experiments promoted the premature development of the Marion County Pioneer Sorgho Sugar Factory and its construction was duly recorded in *Colman's Rural World*, although its failure made no impression at all on these leaders in the field.

After George B. Loring became Commissioner of Agriculture on 1 July 1881, Collier lost the moral support for sorghum-sugar research provided by LeDuc. An estrangement between Loring and Collier led to Collier's dismissal as chemist, creating the general impression that Loring was either opposed, or at best indifferent, to sorghum-sugar prospects.<sup>17</sup> Loring announced that Collier's Washington experiments for manufacturing sorghum sugar cost nearly \$52 per pound, a price "so expensive and

unsatisfactory that the work can be conducted better elsewhere." The New York *Times* held that Loring's remark "savors of sarcasm."<sup>18</sup>

Collier did not give up his commitment to sorghum-sugar. He sought through political influence to get Loring deposed and a return to his position as chief chemist. In desperation he published in 1884 a 570 page hook, *Sorghum: Its Culture and Manufacture, Economically Considered as a Source of Sugar, Syrup and Fodder*. Collier, no longer restrained by the Bureau of Agriculture, gave unlimited endorsement of sorghum-sugar. He expected sorghum-sugar to cost only two cents per pound. Collier wrote that, "It may appear somewhat hazardous to venture any prediction; but I think such a result will be accomplished within the next decade, and that, by 1900, we shall export sugar produced from sorghum to Europe." For every detraction Collier had an answer; his optimism for sorghum-sugar was unconditional and his emotional involvement with sorghum-sugar got the better of his scientific reasoning.<sup>19</sup>

In December, 1882, Commissioner Loring addressed the annual meeting of sorghum growers in St. Louis, where he said, "The foundation and development of a new industry in this country is entitled to all the respect and admiration which are won by great achievements and more prominent and conspicuous fields of action and thought."<sup>20</sup> At St. Louis he met Purdue chemistry professor Harvey W. Wiley, whom he named to the post of chief chemist for the Bureau of Agriculture in mid-June 1883.

Wiley's appointment ushered in the most active period of government-sponsored research on sorghum-sugar. During the next eleven years Wiley's Division of Chemistry prepared forty bulletins for publication. Fourteen of the nineteen that dealt with sugar had application, wholly or in part, to sorghum-sugar. Wiley took a personal interest, although with a more practical orientation than Collier, in sorghum-sugar experiments. He conducted many experiments himself, and at times, nearly the entire professional staff of the division was engaged in sorghum-sugar research.

Commissioner Loring, prompted by a resolution of the U.S. Senate, asked the National Academy of Sciences for a feasibility study of the sorghum-sugar industry. The Academy's response in 1883 cited the conflicting opinions on many essential points and the "Repeated failures in the cultivation of sorghum for crystallized sugar as a commercial undertaking." But their report put no bar in the way of further experiments, suggesting merely that the approach of the state of New Jersey in paying a bounty for sorghum-sugar production might be necessary.<sup>21</sup>

Renewed activity in Washington on behalf of sorghum-sugar spawned a host of sorghum-sugar organizations in many northern states. Their annual meetings were watched closely by the local press. Delegates from some state associations were sent to national meetings.<sup>22</sup> National newspapers still watched Collier's experimental results and his announcements after he left the Bureau of Agriculture.<sup>23</sup> Reports of sorghum-sugar activity came

from states such as Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Illinois, Ohio, and Kansas.<sup>24</sup>

Harvey W. Wiley continued Collier's sorghum growing experiments near Washington and he sought areas more congenial for production in his home state of Indiana. Because he was completely unable to crystallize sugar from the sorghum grown near Washington, but got sixty pounds of sugar per ton of sorghum raised in Indiana, Wiley concluded that, "The results of the experiment with the Indiana cane was in every way encouraging, and served in a manner to diminish the disappointment which attended the work in other directions."<sup>25</sup>

In the meantime, substantial developments in producing sugar from sorghum had taken place in New Jersey, following the enactment of a five-year bounty law. The legislature in 1881 agreed to pay to each farmer \$1 per ton of material from which "merchantable sugar was actually extracted," and one cent per pound to the manufacturer of such sugar. A sugar house was erected at Rio Grande, in Cape May county, for an initial outlay of \$62,000, and contracts were made with farmers to produce 700 acres of sorghum for which they would receive \$2 per ton for stripped and topped cane. The first year sorghum production was much less than expected, the machinery broke down, and brought financial failure. So land was purchased to assure a crop for the mill and the total investment increased to \$250,000. In 1882 almost a thousand acres of sorghum produced 6,200 tons of stripped and topped cane, from which 320,000 pounds of sugar and 40,000 gallons of syrup were made. Sugar production declined in 1883 while syrup showed a slight increase. Output levels were about the same during the remaining three years but no other sorghum-sugar factories were built in New Jersey because of low sugar prices.<sup>26</sup>

Between 1884 and 1894 the federal government spent \$509,000 on sugar manufacturing experiments. Almost half of that amount, a total of \$223,737.51, was spent on materials and machinery for experiments carried on in twenty-two locations other than the laboratory in Washington, D.C.

Thirteen of the twenty-three locations for this significant investment in federal sugar research were in the state of Kansas, and these stations accounted for almost 75 percent of the total expended for materials and machinery. Three Louisiana stations, where the research was on cane sugar, expended slightly more than 14 percent of the total while the remainder was divided between six other states and the District of Columbia. Three reasons probably account for skewing the non-salary federal research monies in favor of Kansas. *First*, Senator Preston B. Plumb, from Kansas, more than any other member of Congress, was active in securing the needed legislation; *Second*, the Kansas legislature developed an aggressive program of cash bounties to assist the infant sugar industry and it permitted local units of government to issue bonds to build sugar mills; *Third*, Harvey W. Wiley, a central figure in the federal sugar program, concluded that



sorghum-sugar production was more favorable in Kansas or possibly in Indian Territory (later Oklahoma).

In 1893, when Cleveland became president for the second time, he appointed J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska City, Nebraska, as his Secretary of Agriculture. All federal sugar experimentation, whether with sorghums, beets, or sugar canes, came to an end. Even earlier most northern sugar societies were dying a natural death. *Colman's Rural World* downgraded its "Sargo" department by moving it off page one and eventually dropping it.<sup>27</sup> Senator Preston B. Plumb died suddenly in Washington on 20 December 1891, and the sorghum-sugar industry lost its primary Congressional spokesman. The McKinley Act of April, 1891, encouraged the domestic sugar industry with a bounty of two cents per pound for sugar testing over 90 percent purity. But the Act of 28 August 1894 abolished the bounty and admitted cheap foreign sugar.<sup>28</sup> In Kansas the state bounty was cut to 3/4th cent per pound and then abandoned. An incisive commentary in 1900 said that,

Nearly fifty years ago the agricultural interests of this county became greatly interested in the prospects of a new sugar-producing plant, and since then much time and money have been spent in efforts to obtain sugar from sorghum cane on a profitable commercial scale. Containing a large percent of sucrose and a small percent of glucose, it would seem to be a more valuable sugar producer than either sugar cane or sugar beets. But this theory has failed of demonstration, owing to the fact that the juice of the sorghum cane, as extracted at the mill, contains in addition to sugar and water, a large proportion of starch dextrin, and kindred elements which operate against its being successfully worked for sugar. From the results, obtained by the process of diffusion it was discovered that a foreign substance is extracted from the leaves and sheets of unstripped cane which renders the product almost unsaleable. Machines have, in consequence, been devised by which the stalks are stripped, cleaned and shredded, and these have been operated with such success as to make possible the extraction of sugar on a paying basis.<sup>29</sup>

Another explanation (in 1897) for what went wrong with sorghum-sugar says it "makes dismal reading from a commercial standpoint." The first faint suspicion of a sugar-raising craze was perceptible in Kansas in the year 1880. The fever grew worse and the end of that decade saw factories in Kansas which had sprung up as if by magic. These factories, as for example the one at Topeka, were built of substantial material and employed the very finest machinery. But it was not the sugar-making machinery, nor the

withdrawal of federal bounty that caused interest in sorghum-sugar to wane, says this source, but the fact that farmers could profit more from feeding sorghum to cattle than they could by raising it for a potential sugar market.<sup>30</sup>

Also lost, with the decline of the sorghum-sugar possibilities, was the earlier fervor that a farmer could make his own sugar, gain independence from foreign sugar, and at the same time fight the "Sugar Trust." Sugar mills proved to be expensive undertakings, more so because their machinery was idle most of the year.

The Kansas connection in the sorghum-sugar story is a long one and for lack of time not appropriate now. Neither do we have space for twentieth century developments. Needless to say at least twenty-three Kansas communities had sorghum-sugar mills between 1880 and 1900. The federal involvement in sorghum-sugar experimentation through the Division of Chemistry in the Department of Agriculture greatly expanded that agency and enhanced the role of Harvey W. Wiley in subsequent watch-dog activities in the early twentieth century.<sup>31</sup>

When Alice climbed into the rabbit hole she had no expectation of the "Wonderland" awaiting her. When I climbed through the window of "the old sugar mill" I had no comprehension of the beleaguered story of sorghum-sugar.

1. A. T. Andreas, *History of the State of Kansas*, Chicago, 1883, p. 1257; *Marion County Record* (Marion, Kansas), 26 March 1880. "Sorgho" was often used synonymously with sweet sorghum. It was a "name of convenience applied to the juiciest, sweetest stemmed variants" of sorghum. See *Yearbook of Agriculture, 1943-1947: Science in Farming*, p. 344.
2. *Marion County Record*, 28 November 1879 - 10 June 1881.
3. Andreas, p. 1257.
4. Sen. Ex. Doc. 42, 33d Cong., 2d Sess., pp. xxii, 220. According to the 1936 *Yearbook of Agriculture*, p. 526, Chinese sugar-cane was collected on the island of Tsungming in the mouth of the Yangtze river. Presumably the ultimate origin of the Chinese seed was some place in Africa.
5. Leonard Wray, an English merchant, sugar planter, and supplier of these seeds won a silver medal at the 1856 Parish exhibition for imphee (sorghum) sugar, alcohol, seeds and plants. See H. R. Ex. Doc. 78, 37th Cong., 3d Sess., pp. 508-540. About an equal number of sources use 15 or 16 as the number of Wray's varieties. Previously Wray had written *Practical Sugar Planter* and had sought a patent on his sugar making process. See Noel Doerr, *The History of Sugar*, London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1950, Vol. 2, p. 513.
6. John H. Martin, p. 526.
7. George F. Lemmer, *Norman J. Colman and Colman's Rural World: A Study in Agricultural Leadership*, Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Studies, 1953, p. 55.
8. William M. Ledbetter, "Isaac A. Hedges' Vision of a Sorghum-Sugar Industry in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review*, April 1927, Vol. 21, pp. 361-369.
9. *DeBow's Review*, (New Orleans, 1857), XXIII, pp. 77-85, as seen in Wayne D. Rasmussen, ed., *Agriculture in the United States: A Documentary History*, New York: Random House, 1975, Vol. 1, pp. 577-578. The first introduction of sweet sorghum at the height of the abolitionist fever would naturally produce emotional responses about slave-produced sugar. See Andrew Van Hook, *Sugar: Its Production, Technology, and Uses*, New York: Ronald Press Co., 1949, pp. 122-123; English Quakers, because of their anti-slavery bias, supported beet sugar. See L.A.G. Strong, *The Story of Sugar*, London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954, p. 130.
10. Everett Dick, *Conquering the Great American Desert: Nebraska*, Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1975, p. 146; *Eighth Annual Report of the Iowa State Agricultural Society, 1861-2*, Des

- Moines, 1863, pp. 8-9; *Ninth Annual Report of the Iowa State Agricultural Society, 1863, Des Moines, 1863*, p. 4.
11. Edna Titus Brown, ed., *Union List of Serials in Libraries in the United States and Canada*, New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1965, 3rd ed., Vol. V, p. 3997; William Clough, "Sorghum, or Northern Sugar-Cane," *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1864*, pp. 54-87.
  12. *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1864*, p. 11.
  13. *Scientific American*, 13 December 1879.
  14. Lemmer, pp. 56-57, 81.
  15. H. A. Weber, "The Sorghum-Sugar Industry," *Annual Report of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, 1881*, p. 493. Weber and Scovell resigned their academic positions at the University of Illinois to devote full time to the new commercial venture which failed. Weber went to an agricultural chemistry position at Ohio State University. Scovell, after working as a day laborer in agricultural experiment stations in Kansas and Louisiana, became director of the agricultural experiment station in Kentucky. See *Harvey W. Wiley-An Autobiography*, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1930, p. 176.
  16. H. A. Weber, "Sorghum," *Transactions of the Illinois Department of Agriculture*, 1880, pp. 417-432.
  17. *Harvey W. Wiley*, pp. 163-164; Magnus Swenson, "The Northern Sugar Industry and Experiment Stations," *Fifth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*, Topeka, 1886, p. 194; E. B. Cowgill, "The Sorghum Sugar Industry in Kansas," *Record of Experiments Conducted by the Commissioner of Agriculture in the Manufacture of Sugar from Sorghum and Sugar Canes, Division of Chemistry, USDA, Bulletin No. 17*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888, p. 26.
  18. *New York Times*, 2 June 1882. Loring offered a reward of \$1,200 for each of ten best sorghum-sugar reports and the two best beet-sugar reports.
  19. Peter Collier, *Sorghum: Its Culture and Manufacture, Economically Considered as a Source of Sugar, Syrup, and Fodder*, Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1884, pp. 19, 417. Collier predicted that manufacturing costs would be one and one-quarter cents of the two cents per pound total.
  20. George B. Loring, "The Sorghum Sugar Industry," *United States Bureau of Agriculture, Special Report-No. 54*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883.
  21. National Academy of Sciences, *Investigation of the Scientific and Economic Relations of the Sorghum Sugar Industry*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884, O.C. Marsh, professor of paleontology at Yale, was acting president of the academy, while

- Benjamin Silliman, professor of Chemistry at Yale, was chairman of the sorghum committee. Some reports credited the Academy of Sciences with absolute endorsement of the sorghum-sugar prospects.
22. For instance, the Topeka *Daily Capital*, 31 December 1881, told of the organizing meeting of the Kansas State Cane Growers' Association in Sterling and *Scientific American* 25 January 1884 report the fourth annual Minnesota sorghum cane growers meeting in Minneapolis.
  23. *Scientific American*, 19 October 1878, 17 April 1880, 19 January 1884, and 25 April 1885.
  24. *Ibid.*, 15 March 1879, 8 September, 6 and 20 October, 8 and 15 December 1883, 15 February 1884 and *Ohio Farmer*, 4 March 1882, 1 and 8 December 1883.
  25. *Ibid.*, p. 429.
  26. *Second Annual Report of the New Jersey State Agricultural Experiment Station, 1881*, pp. 42-43; *Fifth Annual Report of the New Jersey State Agricultural Experiment Station, 1884*, pp. 86-87; *Ninth Annual Report of the New Jersey State Agricultural Experiment Station, 1888*, pp. 133-134; According to William McMurtrie, *Report of the Culture of the Sugar Beet and the Manufacture of Sugar Therefrom in France and the United States, USDA Special Report-No. 28*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880, bounties to promote sugar beet culture had passed in 1838-9 in Massachusetts, 1869 in California, and 1878 in Maine.
  27. Lemmer, pp. 57, 82.
  28. George M. Rolph, *Something About Sugar: Its History, Growth, Manufacture and Distribution*, San Francisco: John J. Newbegin, Publisher, 1917, p. 155.
  29. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census Reports, Twelfth: Agricultural Part II, Crops and Irrigation*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902, pp. 464-465.
  30. Topeka *Daily Capital*, 26 December 1897, as seen in Dan Gutleben, "Kansas: Garden City: Sorghum Sugar."
  31. A. Hunter Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government: A History of Policies and Activities to 1940*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1957, pp. 176-181.

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Owensboro, Kentucky has had quite a rich musical past, especially in the years 1900-1910. Even a cursory glance at the *Daily Messenger* newspaper of those times shows various and sundry items from extensive piano ads - "Melodious music is always obtainable from our pianos . . . A good piano will make your spare time pass delightfully, please your wife and child," and articles on local theatrical and societal events, and of course news of the big shows at the local theatres and at the Seven Hills Chautauqua.<sup>1</sup>

In the muddy, bumpy, buggy, mulecar and electric streetcar days before the advent of the radio or TV, fairs, concerts, and meetings were very important socially. Music played a big role in these occasions. During these turn-of-the-century-years what was to become the third oldest music club in the state of Kentucky was formed-the Saturday Musicale.<sup>2</sup>

Formed in 1895 by eight talented women musicians, this branch of the National Federation of Music Clubs has as its objective in its constitution, "to promote the study of classical music and standard musical compositions and literature and for the encouragement of a wider and more liberal patronage for the art."<sup>3</sup> One of the original members, Mrs. Virginia Smith Duncan, also had access to the media and information as she held a job at the Owensboro *Inquirer* on the editorial staff and she eventually covered every department except court reporting.<sup>4</sup>

One of the important things the Club did was to bring in many guest artists from New York managers, and the roster of names looked like a musical Who's Who of the times.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, it was said in a November 2, 1901 editorial:

Owensboro is not Chicago, nor Louisville, nor Cincinnati, but compared with them as to time and space and quantity and quality of population, she has without a doubt made even better progress musically. There are really competent teachers here. The best methods are being employed. The ladies of the Saturday Musicale have recently enlarged upon their plans. Better quarters, supporting patronesses and a series of concerts.<sup>6</sup>

Owensboro also had its own College and Conservatory of Music, a school that claimed to cover all branches of music. It also prided itself on being "renowned for its healthfulness and it is an unusual occurrence if students do not leave its doors enjoying better health than when they entered."<sup>7</sup>

However, Owensboro had several other advantages. Location on the

Ohio River was one, as water routes were well traveled by steamboats - a much depended upon form of transportation. This was even a greater advantage around the turn of the century because of a yellow fever epidemic in the deep South, especially New Orleans, which was the United States' first opera capital.<sup>8</sup> As artists, musicians, and actors had to avoid these areas, acts were heavily scheduled on the Ohio River between St. Louis and Louisville.<sup>9</sup> This was responsible for some of the classical acts, but mostly these were shining times for what the Saturday Musicale ladies were probably not seriously interested: Vaudeville!

Vaudeville had not the complexity and structure of classical music, truly, most of the songs and pieces were made up of the simplest chord structures and patterns, yet its significance lies in that it reflects the interests, thoughts, and entertainments, of the people of the time. These were generally self-contained happy times and the music reflected this. Pick up any songbook collection from around 1890-1920 and pretty much everything is in a major key and had directions to play brightly, lively, in march tempo, or in waltz tempo, with not a depressive piece in the bunch. Even "Frankie and Johnny" ended in a major key - a happy sound, as even the slightly sour was sugar coated. Most songs were upbeat and about love and dancing and socializing like: "Hello! Ma baby, Hello! ma honey, Hello! ma ragtime gal, Send me a kiss by wire, Baby, my heart's on fire! If you refuse me, Honey, you'll lose me, then you'll be left alone; Oh! baby, Telephone and tell me Honey I'se your own." - a turn of the century song that is also familiar to the "Bugs Bunny-Looney Tunes" generation, as crooned by a dancing frog with a top hat that turned into a depressed normal croaking frog when the owner tried to show him to anyone.<sup>10</sup>

Of course some pieces with more classical or operatic leanings were interspersed amongst all this. The meaning and value of Owensboro existing on a main waterway show route was the communication with others of the time, spreading of ideas, and expanding boundaries of acceptance while broadening horizons.

In Owensboro between 1900-1910, the main theatres, the Grand and the Temple and also the Chautauqua park drew in varying degrees from light vaudeville banter songs to heavy dramatic opera and everything in between. During this time there were some minor theatres like People's and the Orpheum that offered vaudeville and motion picture reels for a dime, and one place even threw in free ice water and updates on baseball scores as part of the package deal. A March 15, 1909 schedule of People's Theatre in the *Daily Messenger* lists a special three day extravaganza of "the Dare Brothers, Acrobatic Hand Balancing; Watson and Duyer, Comedy Singing and Dancing Sketch; Hottman and Cook, a very clever singing act; two reels of motion pictures; 10 cents-Admission to all."<sup>11</sup>

Another minor theatre was the Buckingham Theatre, built in 1884, which "genteel society did not frequent," as it was a males-only burlesque

club.<sup>12</sup> This and the fact it was owned and operated by a black man, Bill Hunter, and also used later as a black theatre makes it difficult to obtain information on the acts and artists.<sup>13</sup> However, rag-time music surely was played there—a black invention that grew out of the slaves' old style of syncopated banjo playing, only now transferred to the piano.<sup>14</sup> Rag peaked at the turn of the century and was ironically introduced in 1896 to the New York public by a white man, Kentuckian-horn Ben R. Harney with his "You've Been a Good Old Wagon."<sup>15</sup> And of course these were also Scott Joplin's ragtime hey-days, especially with "The Maple Leaf Rag."

In 1880, the Temple Theatre was built, and rebuilt in 1892, as the original one had burned in the 1890's.<sup>16</sup> This time it was built fireproof with the seating capacity of 1200 and A.J. Casey wrote in his book *Theatres—From a Glimpse of the Progress of Owensboro* in 1892, of the temple "Its manager is A.G. Sweeney whose judgment, tact, and good humor have made him so universally popular. Under his management it may be safely assumed that from the stage of his theatre nothing will be heard offensive to the moral and intellectual taste of the most refined. . . ."<sup>17</sup> Surely this statement pleased the Interchurch World Movement which later, in 1920, published *A Review of the Sociological and Religious Survey of Owensboro, Kentucky* including a chapter with sections on "Licensed Places for Amusement" and "Public Amusements."<sup>18</sup>

For awhile the Temple Theatre was Owensboro's chief theatre and had lectures, entertainers, as well as some religious services.<sup>19</sup> Stars such as the Four Cohans, a family group with son George Cohan's and his famous unabashed Grand-ole-Flag, Yankee-Doodle patriotism, and also Al Field and his minstrel company. However, the downfall of this theatre was competition.<sup>20</sup>

The Owensboro Businessmen's Association met on July 9, 1904 and decided that Owensboro needed a larger, more modern theatre, and construction begin that autumn.<sup>21</sup> The Grand, as it was to be called, was actually a previous hall, Hall's Theatre, only renamed and reconstructed.<sup>22</sup> It opened Friday May 5, 1905 with the E. Hopper Opera Company performing "Wang" with a company of seventy artists, prices ranged from fifty cents to five dollars. Very quickly the Grand started hosting Al G. Field and the Four Cuhans in even bigger more festive shows, along with musical comedy, musical theatre, opera and concerts so that by 1908 the Temple theatre went out of business and the building was sold to S.W. Anderson, who later opened Anderson's Department Store on the same location.<sup>23</sup> The Grand was a success for 18 years, indeed epitomizing the height of Owensboro's "Show-town/live theatre" years before travel turned away from waterways towards the railroad and radio, phonograph, and movies started drawing more attention.

Of course the Grand was a multi-purpose facility and hosted many graduations, talent shows, revivals, political rallies, and other societal



gatherings in it, second only in popularity to the great Chautauqua Tabernacle at Chatauqua Park.<sup>24</sup>

The Seven Hill's Chautauqua, whose papers were filed in the county clerk's office by December 1901, and opened in July 1902, running in the summers of the first third of the century is a behemoth subject in itself.<sup>25</sup> One of the main attractions at the festivals were the large variety of musical programs from the daily solo and instrumental recitals, and acts like the Dunbar Hand Bell ringers with "big bells, little hells, violincello, various wonderful combinations and charming voices", concert bands, the Round's Imperial Ladies Orchestra of New York City, music festival chorus, great German solo violinists, the Hinshaw Grand Opera Company, Mexican Serenaders, etc.<sup>26</sup> In 1906, The Comus Club presented themselves as "Variety's the spice of life. Two readers, a basso, a violinist, a pianist, and a soprano should offer a "spicy" program under any circumstances," and the Featherstones: "the entire stage will be filled with new and wonderful instruments, many of which have never been heard in this vicinity and the varied and weird combination of musical sounds produced lend enchantment to the beautiful stage setting."<sup>27</sup>

The musical events listed above are just a few of the many, many acts that came as part of the summer Chautauqua exhibitions. These social gatherings no doubt helped influence passing of ideas, connectedness of community to some extent, and people experienced a wider variety of music and ideas during these times than in the rest of the year.

The Owensboro *Daily Messenger* published the daily schedules of the Chautauqua, and also had several other columns that were concerned with the arts. "Notes about the society" often showed the college's music recital times and programs - which consisted mostly of pieces of that era that were largely of European-influenced American composers.<sup>28</sup> There were also an "At the Theatre" and a "Plays and Players" column which contained local area events as well as New York City concerts, especially opera. There must have been a large interest in New York City shows, because they were regularly covered, especially in the Sunday paper.

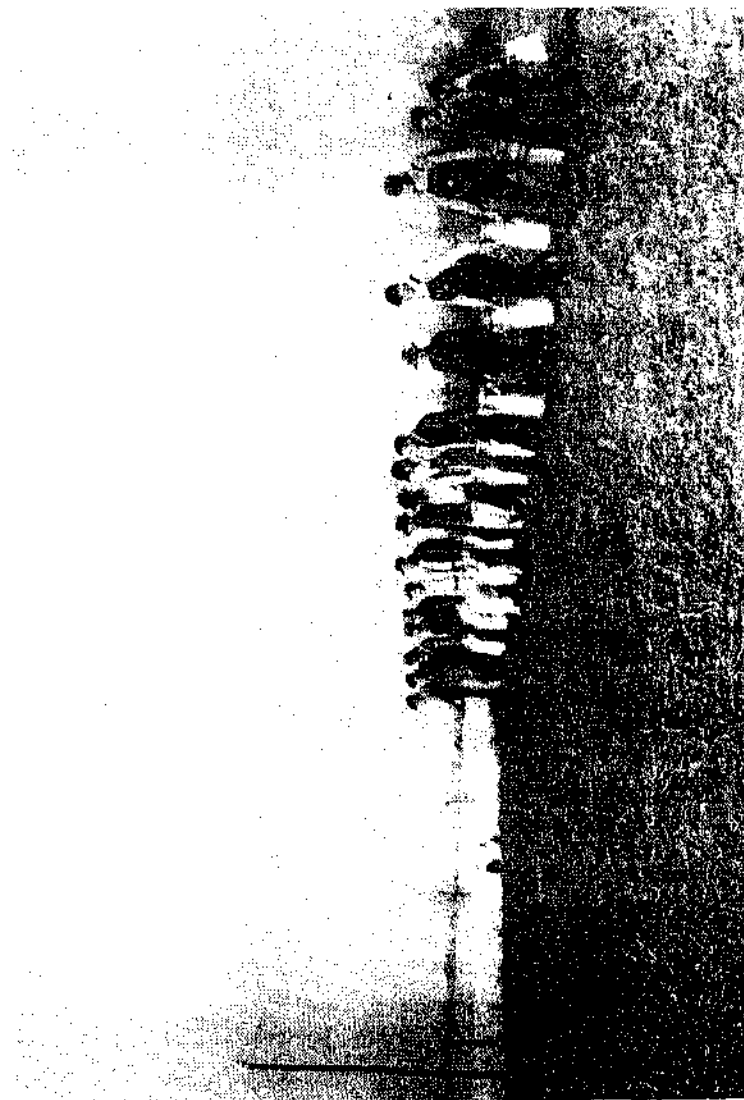
Although Owensboro did not have a formal symphony until the one in 1919 under George Vestal, an Owensboro violin teacher, there are several listings in the newspaper of a Philharmonic Orchestra appearing.<sup>29</sup> One of these was on July 24, 1904, as "Music in the afternoon by the Philharmonic Orchestra at Hickman Park" and went on to describe the program which smacks of more of the European-influenced American composers, with a little more patriotically inclined, and also shows definite influence of the native American movement in music of Wa-Wan Press, in such titles as "Princess Pocahantas" and "Navajo."<sup>30</sup> Another advertisement tells of the Philharmonic Orchestra giving a concert at the opening of Pierson's Department Store from 2 to 5 in the afternoon on Monday, October 2, 1905, and again much of the same type of program with crowd-pleasers but minus

the Indian-influenced names.<sup>31</sup>

All of this points to the definite "aliveness" of music during 1900-1910 with Owensboro's wonderful location on the second most traveled waterway of the time, the Ohio River; and this rich past indeed must be the reason that Owensboro today has more going on in the Art Community than most towns its size.

1. Owensboro *Daily Messenger*, July 10, 1904.
2. M.E. Snyder, "History and Highlights of the Saturday Musical, 1985-1970" (Kentucky Room Vertical Files:KRVF 79-5491), 2.
3. *Ibid.*, 1 Virginia Duncan, "Saturday Musical (sic) Is Second (3rd) Oldest Music Club in State." (KRVF 79-5488).
4. M.E. Snyder, 5.
5. *Ibid.*, 3.
6. *Ibid.*, supplement.
7. Advertisement in Chautauqua guide of 1908 (KRVF-Chautauqua Park).
8. Ronald L. Davis, *A History of Opera in the American West* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965), 1, 2, 14. Owensboro *Messenger-Inquirer*, Don M. King, "Owensboro's Past" Series (KRVF 82-725).
9. Shelia E. Brown Heflin, "To Be Or Not To Be: the Stage in Owensboro" (KRVF-Owensboro, KY History) 3. and John F. Nichols, Jr., "the Grand, the Beginning of an End" (KRVF-the Grand Theatre), 4, 5.
10. "Hello! My Baby," words by Ida Emerson, music by J.E. Howard.
11. Heflin, 5.
12. *Ibid.*, 6.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Edward Jablonski, *Encyclopedia of American Music* (Garden City, NY, 1981), 102-113.
15. *Ibid.*, 113.
16. Owensboro *M&I*, Dan M. King.
17. "Theatres" - from *A Glimpse of the Progress of Owensboro*, A.J. Casey, 1892 (KRVF 79-5747)."
18. "A Review of the Sociological and Religious Survey of Owensboro, KY, 1920," Interchurch World Movement (KRVF 79-5753), 5, 6.
19. William Foster Hayes, *Sixty Years of Owensboro, 1883-1943* (Owensboro, (no date), 44.
20. Heflin, 3.
21. Owensboro *Daily Messenger*, July 10, 1904, and John F. Nichols, Jr., 1, 2.
22. Heflin, 2.
23. Owensboro *Daily Messenger*, May 5, 1905; April 25, 1905. Owensboro *Daily Messenger*, October 8, 1905; November 27, 1907; December 29, 1907; January 11, 1910; March 13, 1910, etc., Heflin, 3.
24. John F. Nichols, Jr., 16-17.
25. *Ibid.*, 7; KRVF "Chautauqua Park Program, 1902."
26. KRVF "Chautauqua 1903," 11; 1907, 16; 1909, 13; 1906, 8.
27. *Ibid.*, 12. (1906); 11.
28. Owensboro *Daily Messenger*, November 10, 1907.

29. Lee A. and Aloma W. Dew, *Owensboro, the City on the Yellow Banks* (Bowling Green, Kentucky, 1988), 213.
30. Owensboro *Daily Messenger*, July 24, 1904.
31. *Ibid.*, October 1, 1905.



Cows had to be milked and the milk delivered to the dairies of Owensboro even during times of flood. Here farmers are shown in the Birk City area carrying milk cans to the boat landing in 1945.

Remembering the Big Flood of 1945  
by Grady Ebelhar

\*\*\*\*\*

Over the years as the saying goes, we have heard our parents and our grandparents tell of the big floods in history. All too soon the first flood mentioned was the 1937 flood. Stories do not add up to what we can really visualize until we have been through a flood or have witnessed on television when the 1993 Midwest flood occurred in the Mississippi River Valley. These floods were described as of biblical proportions. Let us hope that these never happen again. But when half of the average rainfall falls within a single month, it can happen. The people along the Mississippi River put a lot of confidence in their levees which fell like dominoes in 1993. In the Ohio Valley in 1937 there was hardly any such thing as a lock and dam for flood control. They were mainly for navigation.

The corps of Engineers has built 78 reservoirs along the Ohio's tributaries since 1937. In one area of the state, dams on the Rough, Green and Barren are designed to help hold back and control floodwater. Cities like Hawesville, Cannelton and Evansville have levees or floodwalls to hold back the water higher than the 1937 flood.

The record high river stages for Owensboro and Daviess County area on the Ohio river at Lock and Dam 46 are as follows:

1937	54.85 feet
1945	49.7 feet
1964	49.5 feet
1913	48.9 feet
1933	48.0 feet
1884	47.9 feet

Flood stage at Lock and Dam 46 is 41 feet.

Many lessons were learned by residents of the Ohio Valley in 1937. The Messenger reported in 1945 that the lessons will speed the arrival of the era when man made devices and man's ingenuity will completely harness "Old Man River" and render him harmless even in his most turbulent moods. I personally don't believe that statement 100%.

One of the biggest lessons learned during the 1937 flood was the people were slow and some were reluctant to leave their homes in the bottomland until the muddy floodwaters were coming through the kitchen door. They insisted on remaining for a few hours or maybe another day hoping that the river would crest before they had to move out. The rescuers who drove the boats up to the front porches would move on and return the next day to find them standing on the kitchen table or maybe on top of the roof. A good percentage of residents in the bottomland purchased a good boat for standard equipment.

On March 9, 1945, the *Messenger* warned that "people in threatened areas should move now!" It reported that a few days earlier a crest of 44 feet at Owensboro. After three more days of rain, the river had reached 49 feet and was still rising. A 50 foot crest was predicted, but if this figure were to exceed as much as the original prediction, the flood would be a repetition of the 1937 flood.

Walter E. Johnston, Red Cross Disaster Relief Chairman, said that it is better to be safe than sorry. He reported that the manpower simply was not available in the city and county to undertake a mass evacuation comparable to that of the '37 disaster. The reason being was that most of the young men who took part of the '37 mission were in the Armed Forces and the older men have eight more years to carry on their shoulders. Many of them were not physically able to work night and day to evacuate the flood stricken people. The red Cross said that any farm that was affected by the '37 flood should be abandoned at once.

On March 9, 1945, the Ohio River had reached 49.3 feet at Dam 46, breaking the second highest mark in 1913. Water had crept into Frederica and St. Ann streets. At one of Owensboro's lowest points, Third and Poplar, water began to rise from a drain about a foot deep.

German prisoners from Camp Breckenridge were filling sandbags and placing them along the shoulders of the Indiana approach to the Owensboro bridge. A total of 51 prisoners and several guards were quartered at a barracks at the municipal airport because the floodwaters had cut the roads off on both sides of the river.

Several local plants were shut down as the river crest was near. The flood waters had cut off rail service and truck transportation. Glenmore Distilleries shut down due to lack of supplies and lack of shipping facilities. Fleischmann Distilleries couldn't get raw materials and tank cars in.

Murphy Chair Company had made arrangements for the storing of the finished products and had sufficient supplies on hand for two weeks, provided the river did not go over the 50 foot stage and cut the coal supplies from nearby mines. The Owensboro Wagon Company reported a good supply of coal on hand as well as the V. E. Anderson Manufacturing Company. Other companies such as the Owensboro Forging Company, Owensboro Milling Company, Modern Welding, Owensboro Foundry, Hodge Tobacco and American Suppliers Inc., all reported that the plants had plenty of supplies and would be able to make shipments.

All railroad passenger service into and out of Owensboro ended because of water over the tracks at Hawesville preventing them from passing through. It was possible to go by highway to Evansville from Owensboro but would be 95 miles instead of the usual 32. West U.S. 60 was closed between Reed and Spottsville bridge and between Owensboro and Stanley. East U.S. 60 was closed east and west of Maceo. U.S. 81 was open to Calhoun but was closed at Rumsey. U.S. 54 remained open but all the

ferries on the Green River were closed. Trucks from Louisville coming into Owensboro, traveling by way of Seymour, Indiana, had to travel a distance of 240 miles.

Airplane service picked way up. Planes were being flown by L.S. Cox Jr., Mrs. Greenwood Cocanougher and Nohle Ayer. The planes were being used mainly by Army and Navy personnel trying to get home on furlough. A trip was made to Bowling Green carrying General Electric Company mail from Owensboro.

More than 75,000 acres of land in Daviess County had been flooded by the time of the crest of 49.7 feet on March 11, 1945. In the 1937 flood, 93,000 acres of land was under water.

Over 300 people were evacuated by boat crews. Most stayed in the homes of friends and relatives. Twenty people were quartered at the Salvation Army Lodge on Frederica Street. Schools in the Stanley and Macco areas were the first to close. Sorgho, West Louisville, and Sutherland were soon to follow.

Hugh O. Potter, Manager of WOMI, offered the facilities of the radio station to the Red Cross for use to whatever extent necessary for the protection of life and property in the flood. WOMI was not in existence during the '37 flood, but a transmitter was erected by the Ken-Rad engineers and proved to be a great assistance for the flood victims.

Walter Johnston, Red Cross Chairman, stated on the day the river crested, that no livestock was lost in the '45 flood due to the extensive preparation and work the people performed when they were warned. Mr. Johnston stated, "People learned the hard way in the 1937 flood and they got out in time this time." One hoat worked bellow Owensboro under the direction of William F. Birk.

Probably the closest anybody came to drowning in the '45 flood was when a hoat of five overturned in Rhodes Creek near Sorgho. My grandfather, Peter J. Ebelhar, his sons, Vincent J. Ebelhar and Dennis Ebelhar, who later became Daviess County Commissioner in 1987-89, and neighbor, Arch Harris had gone to Sorgho from French Island Road to buy groceries and supplies. Upon their return, the heavily loaded hoat encountered difficulty as it entered the channel of the creek where there was a strong current. The front end of the boat plunged under the water and the five jumped into the creek. They hung on some tree limbs while William McCann and Hugh Ebelhar, who saw them jump, could get a boat and rescue them.

After 19 years had passed, another flood was on its way up. In March, 1964, the rain fell hard for almost one full week when 14.50 inches of water fell. The previous record was set in March 1943 when 11.48 inches fell for the whole month. A 24 hour rainfall record for the month was set at 5.40 inches in 1943. The all time monthly rainfall record was set in January 1937 when a total of 17.29 inches fell.

A large number of homes in the Owensboro area had to be evacuated because of headwater. Water got in the basements where the furnaces were located and the temperature took a dip. James W. Cooper, Owensboro Civil Defense Director, reported that 35 persons had been evacuated from their homes and 16 of them were furnished quarters at the National Guard Armory. The Kentucky-Indiana Citizens Band Radio League and the Owensboro Amateur Radio League set up at the Armory. The local Boat and Ski Club and Civil Air Patrol provided volunteer workers and equipment. Also Kentucky Wesleyan College students helped the Civil Defense and Red Cross workers.

The weather bureau predicted that the Ohio would crest at 49.7 feet, the same level as the 1945 flood-the second highest flood on record. But on March 15, 1964, the river made its crest at 49.5 feet.

Civil Defense Director, James Cooper, requested 20 boats, 14 foot or longer. Civil Defense teams conducted a house to house search and survey of the flooded areas of Petit, Maceo, Mosleyville, Stanley, and Birk City. Daviess County highway departments, familiar with the entire area, helped in the search boats. A National Guard airplane criss-crossed the high water region looking for trouble.

Fred Taylor Burns announced that the county schools would close until further notice. Stanley, Sorgho, Snyder, Utica, Maceo, Sutherland, Daviess County High, and Daviess County Jr. High were affected by the transportation. Thruston, Whitesville, Philpot, Masonville, Tamarack, and West Louisville were not affected by the water, but to operate these schools would create a transportation problem.

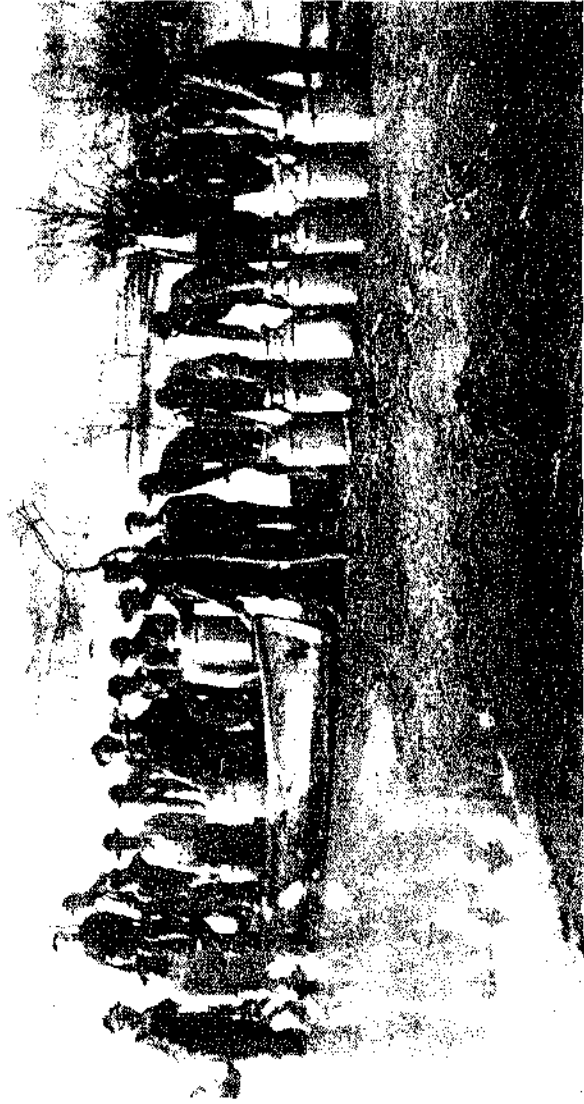
Monsignor R. G. Hill, Superintendent of schools in the Owensboro Diocese, stated that each pastor is responsible for school in his parish. The Catholic schools and the public school do not operate on the same schedules at that time. One thing that I remember most about the '64 flood was riding to Sorgho in the boat to go to school and in March, the early mornings were very cold to be riding over the open waters. One day the propeller on the motor got tangled in the fence under the water. You could not tell how deep the muddy water was so when you came to where a fence row was, it was hit or miss.

Things change when floodwaters are up. From my family's standpoint, when I was a youngster, you didn't waste water, even though there were millions of gallons right outside the house. My dad, Kenneth, had to haul drinking water in using 10 gallon milk cans because he had to pull the pumps out of the well house. He had to move livestock and machinery to higher ground. Just three weeks prior to the flood, he sold over 40 dairy cows after 25 years of milking cows. That would have been a big chore to milk that many by hand. He delivered some mail for the mail man in the Birk City area. Mail service was cut off for about 10 days for these residents. One other neighbor came down with pneumonia and had to be



taken out by boat.

I am sure that anybody that has lived in a flood has got plenty of stories to tell. Dams and watershed lakes, levees and control reservoirs, zoning and planning of housing away from the lowlands are ways of controlling flooding rivers. They have helped, but when Mother Nature says no, the rivers can get untamed and anything can happen as we know. People who settle by the rivers usually know what to expect but because of the fertility of the land, they take that risk.



Cans of milk being loaded aboard a boat for shipment to town during the flood of 1945. Photo courtesy of Grady Ebelhar.

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THE DAVIESS COUNTY HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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The Daviess County Historical Society is open to all who have an interest in the history of Daviess County, the Green River Valley, or Kentucky. The Society meets on the Third Tuesday of each month from September through May. Most meetings are held at the Owensboro Area Museum on South Griffith Avenue.

Monthly programs of the Daviess County Historical Society are open to all, and non-members are encouraged to attend and participate.

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Correspondence concerning contributions and other editorial matters relating to the QUARTERLY should be addressed to the Editor. The editors and the Society assume no responsibility for statements made by contributors. Addresses of the authors will be supplied upon request to the editor.

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The Editor's Page

March was officially proclaimed as Women's History Month by both the Owensboro City Commission and Daviess Fiscal Court, and to celebrate that observance we have a special issue of the Quarterly devoted to three quite different areas of women's activities which have had an important impact upon the history of our county. While dealing with different groups, different time frames, and different perspectives and motivations, these three articles tell the interesting stories of women who have made a difference in their community and county.

Clara S. Oldham, long associated with a variety of causes dealing with women's rights, tells the story of the Owensboro Women's Coalition and its efforts to improve the conditions of and raise the consciousness of women in a variety of areas. This article is not only good history, but it also serves as a documentary source because of the personal involvement of the author.

Brenda Little's story of the settlement movement in Owensboro reminds us of what life for the poor in our community was like in the days before federal welfare programs and other services, and serves as a poignant reminder that the "Good Old Days" weren't.

Mark Luckett, a KWC senior history major, writes of the Ursuline sisters of Mt. St. Joseph in an essay which shows how good local history can be gleaned from available sources, and how a good term paper should be written. This paper was done for Aloma Dew's "Women in American History" class at KWC. Good job, Mark!

A Brief History of the Owensboro Women's Coalition, 1975-1987  
by Clara Oldham

The Owensboro Women's Coalition was organized in 1977, although cooperative efforts among various organizations and individuals occurred prior to that time. There was a lapse of activity in 1980-81 and a reactivation in 1982, with many gaps in the written information available about the Coalition. Most of the minutes have been lost or misplaced, much work which has been done has not been recorded and the specific activities of some projects have been forgotten. Much oral history needs to be reviewed and recorded. Hopefully, this account will be expanded and revised where necessary.

The following sources were utilized in compiling this information:

Owensboro area NOW minutes and newsletters  
Kentucky NOW newsletters  
Memoranda of the Kentucky PRO-ERA Alliance  
Title 9 file at Kentucky Wesleyan College  
Center for Creative Choices file at Kentucky Wesleyan College  
Conversations with Margaret Britton, Allie Hixson,  
Juanita Kerrick  
Owensboro-Daviess County Coalition of Women Minutes  
1982 (February, March, April, May, June, August,  
September, November) 1983 (February, April)

The roots of the Coalition date back to events that occurred in the 1970's. Of great significance in 1972, was the ratification of the Federal Equal Rights Amendment by the Kentucky General Assembly. By 1975 efforts to rescind the ratification were in full bloom, spearheaded by Kentucky groups associated with Phyllis Schlafly's National Stop ERA campaign.

In 1975 several members of the Kentucky Commission on Women conducted a public hearing at the Daviess County Courthouse. The purpose of the hearing was to give local residents an opportunity to identify issues of interest and concern affecting women and children, with special reference to Owensboro. Clara Oldham, Margaret Britton, and Juanita Kerrick attended that meeting. We were unable to have a satisfactory dialogue on a broad range of issues because we were confronted by a group of people who wanted to discuss only the Equal Rights Amendment. They considered the Amendment to be legislation that threatened the fabric of society.

Following this meeting, a core group of women including Oldham, Britton and Kerrick thought it urgent to organize the pro ERA forces in Owensboro. We decided to found a chapter of the National Organization for

Women (NOW) because of NOW's leadership and visibility at that time in supporting the ERA. From 1975-82 much of the local NOW chapter activity was related to working with the Kentucky Pro-ERA Alliance, fighting rescission efforts in Kentucky and promoting ratification in other states, with special emphasis on Indiana. Much cooperative work was done with the local branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Owensboro League of Women Voters (LWV) and individual members of the local Federal of Business and Professional Women's Club (BPW). We also had an Owensboro Pro-ERA Alliance which met on an ad hoc basis and included individuals who were not representatives of any particular organization. Clara Oldham was chair person of that Alliance.

On 7/7/75 twenty-five Owensboro supporters of the ERA went to Frankfort for the Kentucky General Assembly Interim Committee hearing on the ERA. (Certain groups were hoping for the rescission of the Amendment and the legislature was to convene in 1976.) It was estimated that nearly one thousand people were in attendance. The pro ERA speakers represented twelve cities and towns with a total of twenty-four individuals. The con speakers represented seven communities with twelve speakers. Three of their speakers were from other states. Phyllis Schlafly represented the National Stop ERA, Owensboro and Henderson supporters were represented by Juanita Kerrick who spoke for over two hundred supporters. Elizabeth Vaughn, an attorney from Henderson, KY, was one of the rebuttal speakers for Kentucky ERA supporters. Those from Owensboro who had requested to testify but were unable to do so because of time limitations were Paula Basford (NOW), Lana Laminack (NOW), Clara Oldham (NOW & AAUW), Joan Robertson (AAUW), and Gloria Roinanceck (NOW). Judy Kapelson also attended this hearing.

The Interim Committee adjourned without taking any action. In 1978 the Kentucky General Assembly rescinded Kentucky's ratification of the ERA. In March 1978, Lt. Governor Thelma Stovall vetoed the rescission resolution and Kentucky's ratification still stands.

From 1975-79 various groups, organizations and individuals in Owensboro cooperated in developing programs around particular issues. Some organizations were more active on certain issues. These issues included:

- Ratification of the ERA
- Monitoring of Title IX regulations
- Women's History Week
- Appointment of Women to local boards and commissions
- Problems of domestic violence and rape
- Displaced homemaker problems
- Development of the Center for Creative Choices
- Monitoring of the local newspaper for sexist language in employment advertisements

The first reference to any formal structure of the Coalition was found in the NOW minutes of July, 1977 which stated, "A recent Coalition of NOW & AAUW was formed to deal with monitoring Title IX". Representatives of these organizations held personal interviews with the Superintendents of Owensboro & Daviess County school systems and the President of Kentucky Wesleyan College regarding enforcement of the Title IX regulations, progress made and problems encountered in the process. Telephone calls and follow-up visits were made. People involved in these efforts included Joan Robertson, Barbara Bittman, Sarah Haycraft, Suzanne Hovick-Fuller, Barbara Johnson, Margaret Britton, Clara Oldham, and Aloma Dew.

In February 1977, NOW sponsored the first seminar on rape held in Owensboro. Kelly Kurtz-Goetz was chairperson of the Committee which conducted this seminar. An advocacy group, Citizens Against Rape, grew out of this seminar. Members of this group served as support persons and court watchers for rape victims. Eventually, Rape Victim Services was established. Some of the most involved participants were: Kelly Goetz, Martha Aromotario, Shirley Davenport, Diane Houston, Sister Rosemary Dauby, June King, Reverend Sue Reid, Donna Clark, Clara Oldham, Margaret Britton.

In 1979, NOW identified the issue of domestic violence as a problem in the community and gave impetus to holding the first seminar on domestic violence in Owensboro. Del Martin, author of *Battered Wives* was the keynote speaker. NOW located a private home which was used as a temporary shelter for victims of spouse abuse. Additional work by the Coalition in collaboration with the Junior League led to the expansion in service and a permanent center. Participants in these projects included: Amy Frederickson-Wilkey, Margaret Ann Houston, Helen and Gus Gesser, Tom and Ann Eblen, Ruth Ann Hughes, Margaret Britton, and Clara Oldham.

Much cooperative effort revolved around the development of the Center for Creative Choices, established in July 1977 at Kentucky Wesleyan College. Beverly Byers-Pevitts, Margaret Britton and Clara Oldham were instrumental in initiating the project. Martha Lee and Nancy Bradshaw made important contributions. The purpose of the Center was "to provide an organization to help eliminate sexism in society and to help people realize their full potential as human beings." Office space and a telephone were provided by Kentucky Wesleyan College. The Center functioned as an information and referral center for the college and community with the help of volunteers who kept the office open on certain days. Some reading material was provided. Programs and discussions were held frequently on pertinent issues and topics such as non-traditional employment for women, women in religion, health problems, and special student concerns. The Center functioned until July 23, 1985 when money on hand was turned over to the Spouse Abuse Center.

The year 1977 was particularly significant for women in our country, state and community. That year the National Women's Conference was held in Houston, Texas. This was the first such conference in U.S. history charged under federal law to assess the status of women in the United States, measure progress made, identify barriers to full participation in national life and make recommendations to the President and Congress on ways to remove barriers. Its antecedent, historically, was the First Womens Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y., held in July 1848.

Each state held an International Women's Year Conference prior to the November meeting in Houston. Resolutions were taken from each state and the general conference approved the National Plan of Action. The Kentucky Conference was held in Lexington in July 1977 with Allie Hixon of Greensburg, Kentucky, serving as chairperson. Kentucky sent observers, twenty-four delegates and nine alternatives to the National Conference - all Pro ERA. Dorothy Slocum, Helen Hart, Clara Oldham, and Viola Melton attended the Lexington meeting. Clara and Bill Oldham were official observers for AAUW at the National Conference in Houston.

The Houston conference ended the psychological isolation that existed for many women. The adoption of the National Plan of Action was a catalyst for women's groups to reach a consensus on many issues. We felt the impetus in Kentucky and Owensboro.

The Kentucky Women's Agenda Coalition was organized in 1977, chaired by Hixon. The Agenda immediately developed a legislative package dealing with spouse abuse and the displaced homemaker, as well as legislation removing the prohibition of using one's "maiden name" on a driver's license.

In Owensboro, we looked to the Kentucky Women's Agenda as a model to improve our structure and to help focus any activities related to specific statewide concerns. The Coalition was reactivated in February 1982 and included the local branch of the American Association of University Women, Owensboro League of Women Voters, Owensboro Area NOW and individual members. Those present at the first re-organizational meeting were:

Nancy Erickson  
Christine Moody  
Anne Tully  
Barbara Bitunan  
Margaret Britton  
Clara Oldham  
Pat Reber  
Doris Denton

Ann Eblen was elected chairperson in March 1982, and the following statement of purpose was recorded:

"The Owensboro Daviess-County Coalition of Women is an



organization of local women's groups and individuals who have joined together to work for equality and justice for women. The goals are to:

1. Monitor Title IX regulations in local educational institutions
2. Implement an annual program for Women's History Week
3. Work to eliminate the use of sexist language in the media
4. Give moral support to programs for the abused spouse, rape victims, and displaced homemakers
5. Develop a talent bank
6. Support the Federal ERA and any legislation to implement equality for Women."

Since we were generally following the model of the Kentucky Women's Agenda, the presidents of local women's organizations were asked to name a representative to attend coalition meetings and to act as a liaison with their organization. Applications for membership for organizations and individuals were submitted to the Coalition. We adopted this procedure because we had an articulated agenda and agreed that applicants should be made aware of this agenda, assuming that they would not wish to join if opposed to our goals and activities. Voting procedures involved only individual votes.

The existent Coalition minutes of 1982 and 1983 show the following people in attendance at monthly meetings:

Eileen Jones, Barbara Bittman, Nancy Erickson, Christine Moody, Doris Denton, Pat Reber, Anne Tully, Clara Oldham, Margaret Britton, Ginny Laurence, Karen McIntyre, Ann Genz, Amy Frederickson-Wilkey, Beverly Byers-Pevitts, Jean Chavez, June Haislip, Ann Eblen, Diane Houston, Michele Johnson, Sarah Young, Van Hooks, Betty Sue Hill, Theresa Varner, Paula McKenzie.

Many other people were involved in and informed about Coalition activities by the representatives of the organizations belonging to the Coalition.

Committees worked to implement the goals of the Coalition. Some of the work included the following activities:

1. ***Women's History Week***  
Proclamation of Women's History Week was prepared by the Coalition, approved by the Mayor and read by a Coalition member at a City Commission meeting.
2. ***Portraits of Women***  
Co-sponsored with radio station WOMI, included verbal portraits by Coalition members and included contemporary local women. Paula McKenzie coordinated this project.
3. Posters and educational materials were placed at vantage points throughout the city.
4. The March 3-5, 1983 community celebration of Women's History

Week was coordinated by the marketing director at Towne Square Mall, with Coalition members providing assistance. Local Women's groups had information booths and displays. The overall project included:

- National multi-media display sponsored by MS Magazine
- Publicity by TV Channel 25
- Women of the Year contest which selected a winner in the categories of sports, business, arts and community service.

Awards granted were:

Sports - Barbara Johnson

Business - Rebecca Neal

Community Service - Clara Oldham

Overall Winner - Georgia Tangi

- Speakers from University of Kentucky on women's issues
- Art displays, dramatic readings by local college students and faculty
- Craft and dance demonstrations

#### ***Title IX Monitoring Committee***

We continued to monitor the Title IX regulations in 1983, 1984 and 1985 with visits to the public schools, Kentucky Wesleyan College and Brescia College. A particular concern was the decline in the number of female principals from 1961-1982. Karen McIntyre compiled a list of male and female principals and assistant principals in the Owensboro School system from public records for the years in question. We believe that this survey helped to raise the consciousness of the administrators in the educational system in regard to sex discrimination.

#### ***Talent Bank***

We monitored appointments to local boards and tried to act as a liaison with appointive bodies. We developed a resume form (sent primarily to individuals suggested by Coalition members) in an effort to identify women to serve in positions of leadership and decision making.

#### ***Spouse Abuse and Rape Victim Services***

We offered support for funding and incorporation of rape victim services with spouse abuse services. Several of our members volunteered at the shelter, others were support people and court watchers for rape victims. These included Sister Rosemary Dauby, Shirley Davenport, Martha Aromotario, Clara Oldham, Donna Clark.

#### ***Committee for ERA***

This committee had always been a standing committee and operated usually as a committee of the whole. ERA proponents faced an increasingly uphill battle. In 1978 three more states were needed for the thirty-eight total needed for ratification. Supporters rallied and an Extension March for Equality of approximately 100,000 people was held in Washington, D.C. on July 9, 1978. Congress granted an extension of the ratification period to

6/30/82. June King, Margaret Britton, two students, and Clara and Bill Oldham attended the march.

The Springfield, Ill. rally and march were held in 1982. Illinois was one of the three states striving to ratify prior to the expiration of the extension deadline. Clara and Bill Oldham, Margaret Britton, Ann and Catherine Eblen attended this march. "ERA Missionaries" coordinated by NOW and ERA America went from their home states to targeted states to render assistance. Clara and Bill Oldham served two weeks in North Carolina in this capacity, making door to door visits and participating in public meetings.

The period of extension expired in June 1982. On July 1, 1982 "A New Day: Beyond ERA" rallies were held throughout the nation to proclaim renewed effort and dedication to future ratification of the ERA. In Kentucky, a rally was held in Frankfort, sponsored by over fifty organizations. Various speakers addressed the crowd, including Clara Oldham, then co-chairperson of the Kentucky Pro ERA Alliance. Others from Owensboro attending the meeting were Bill Oldham, Ann Eblen, Margaret Britton and Diane Houston. Governor John Y. Brown announced the creation of a task force to study and recommend methods of implementing equality under the law in Kentucky. In April 1983, a regional meeting of the Governor's Commission on Full Equality met in Madisonville, KY. Clara Oldham, Paula McKenzie, Theresa Varnet and Ann Eblen gave testimony on proposed legislation on equal rights and the ERA, reproductive freedom, domestic violence and rape.

#### *Committee To Monitor Sexist Language*

We did not make much progress in this area beyond consciousness raising on the subject. On one occasion a press representative told us that the Associated Press code required certain usage which we considered sexist.

In the spring of 1985, Clara Oldham and Lexie Greene Hicks presented testimony on the Coalition Agenda at a hearing held by the Kentucky Commission on Women at the local public library. Activities of the Coalition again lapsed but resumed in 1987 with momentum created by the Kentucky Women Advocates. Among the leading participants in the re-organization and renewal were:

Forrest Roberts	Cheryl King	Barbara Belfiglio
Leta Decker	Diane Houston	Sue Shadborne
Ann Genz	Sara Derosier	Joy Campbell
Katie Keene	Diane Morris	
Jeannie Owen-Miller	Clara Oldham	
Jan Skaggs	Margaret Britton	
Barbara Bittman	Pat O'Conner	
Mary Barlow	Aloma Dew	
Nancy Eskridge	Ruth Ann Dearness	

Alma Randolph	Connie Rouke
Amy Frederickson-Wilkey	Barbara Bennett
Barbara St. John	Glenda Thacker
Jackie Kingsolver	Kathy Hornaday

#### A PERSONAL OBSERVATION

In reviewing the work of the Coalition, I have been impressed by the tremendous effort put forth by the members from 1975 to the present time. To most members, participation has meant "wearing several hats," a blur of meetings, innumerable phone calls and letters written, talks given, and many activities which are undocumented or forgotten. Above all I have been impressed with the threads of talent, dedication and humor intertwined in the work of the group. One example will suffice to illustrate the continuity of commitment which has characterized the work of the organization throughout all the years. In April 1982, when we were concentrating on various board appointments, a note in the Coalition minutes reads . . . "there are appointments coming up in 1983 but many require technical expertise. The most significant appointment is on the board of the hospital." The appointment of a Coalition member, Diane Morris, to the Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital board in 1992 is in itself an illustration of how long it may take to accomplish our goals. Above all, it is an illustration of our tenacious commitment to the goals of our equality and justice.

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#### Owensboro Women Organize, 1879

Susan B. Anthony visited Owensboro in 1879 urging the vote for women; she returned in 1895 accompanied by Carrie Chapman Catt and woman's suffrage society was formed as a result of their visit. Thirteen women came to the organizational meeting, but only 10 signed up as members. The next day an advertisement in the *Messenger* admonished: "There are more than 10 women in Owensboro who are advocates of female suffrage, and the others should come forward and join their brave sisters who have organized a club, or forever hold their tongues." Seven more women added their names to the roll of the Political Equality Club at the next meeting, as did three men. By 1914, the Daviess County Woman's Suffrage Association had nearly 200 members, and by 1920 counted more than 500 members. (from unpublished manuscript "The Long Struggle Toward Equality: The Woman's Suffrage Movement in Owensboro", Aloma Williams Dew)

Five School Marm's Spearheaded  
Owensboro's Settlement Movement  
by Brenda Bailey Little

It was 1884 when the Universities Settlement Association of Oxford and Cambridge set forth its aim:

To provide education and the means of recreation and enjoyment for the people in the poorer districts of London and other great cities; to enquire into the condition of the poor and to consider and advance plans calculated to promote their welfare.<sup>1</sup>

Soon to follow was the first American Settlement in New York City. Dr. Stanton Coit of the Ethical Society organized the East Side Neighborhood Guild in 1886 to address the plight of the suffering and struggling, mostly immigrant, inhabitants of the city's tenements. By 1900, in America, there were over 100 Settlement communities and by 1911 the movement had grown until 400 cities were, through somewhat different approaches, attempting to alleviate the sad conditions in which their poorest citizens lived.<sup>2</sup>

A Settlement community in Chicago named Hull House served as the model for Owensboro's Gospel Center Mission.<sup>3</sup> Hull House was organized by Miss Jane Addams who is revered as the most outstanding personality ever involved with this altruistic effort. Addams first exposure to the pain of poverty was near her home in Freeport, Illinois.<sup>4</sup> The impact of the back streets' despair struck her social conscience and stayed with her from her youth until the end of her life. She described the sight as 'horrid little houses' of the poor, where she believed life to be real. She refused the path of her peers who followed the wishes of their teachers and families and became clerics and missionaries.<sup>5</sup> She shunned a life filled with intellectual pursuits and aesthetic pastimes that she thought could only shadow the real life of the slums.<sup>6</sup>

On a trip to England's Mile End Road, Addams was taken by a missionary to watch starving people bid for stale and rotting produce from the carts of hucksters. She watched in disbelief as auctioneers mocked the suffering and threw their spoiled fruits and vegetables into the uplifted hands of the winners who had bid farthings and ha' pennies. The image of a man slumping to the curb and then biting into a rotten head of dirty, uncooked cabbage with the ferocity of a wild animal, stayed in her memory and inspired her to devote her life to making a difference in the appalling destitution of the uneducated, illiterate, sweatshop workers of Chicago's industrial abuse.<sup>7</sup> Jane Addams was unable to equalize the empathy she felt for the suffering of working women and children with the misery of the working man, although she tried.<sup>8</sup>

Addams had many doubts about orthodox religion. She belonged to no church; was never baptized.<sup>9</sup> In spite of her agnosticism, toward the end of her life, she honored requests to deliver eulogies and to 'preach' funerals for her passed-on stalwarts in Chicago's Settlement, Hull House.<sup>10</sup>

These lines spoken in Greek by Jane Addams at her 1853 graduation from Rockford College foreshadow her lifelong devotion to feminism: "we stand united today in a belief in beauty, genius, and courage. And that THESE (emphasis is the writer's), expressed through truest womanhood, can yet transform the world"<sup>11</sup>

It is likely that her suffering, disfigurement, and eventual sterility, caused by spinal tuberculosis in childhood, made her despair when she could do nothing to alleviate the conditions that she saw in the ghetto. Another resulting emotion was her resentment at the knowledge that she was not expected to do anything. In an atypical lapse into bitterness, Addams called the influence of old women a 'social menace'.<sup>12</sup>

Lectures on Positivism, the Universalism of the World Fellowship of Faiths, and the prototypic East End Settlement, Toynbee Hall, in London molded Addams' scheme to bring American college women 'into a more useful and mutually beneficial relationship with the harsher realities of life'.<sup>13</sup>

And now we come to the influence of Jane Addams and Hull House, on four teachers and an attendance officer in Owensboro, Kentucky. Seeking a remedy for some of the plight that they saw afflicting the young people who struggled to survive in Owensboro's East End, the educators began work to try to remove the causes of truancy. A newspaper article on July 7, 1918 categorized the needs these energetic ladies addressed. The Associated Charities of Owensboro reported that in the month of June, 388 people needed assistance from social workers:

"June was an unusually busy month for the Associated Charities. The monthly report now on file shows the number of persons affected by social treatment to be 388, with 385 visits in the interests of clients made. Many new cases have come under the supervision of the social workers which required service more frequently than relief. In each case a plan was made for that family or individual which solved the especial problem. Splendid industrial conditions exist for the clients, and it has been mainly those incapacitated for work of any kind that have required attention. Cases of juvenile delinquency are yet prominent and while some have required court action, many have been successfully adjusted out of court."

"Of the 163 cases handled, 135 were old and twenty-eight new cases; 97 city cases, 66 county cases and 5 non-resident cases. Of the 388 persons receiving treatment 25 were negroes. The social problems have included: illiteracy, 3; drug users, 2; civilian relief, 6; old age, 11; neighborhood quarrels, 6; illness, 17; tuberculosis, 11; pregnancy, 5; insanity, 1; paralysis, 1; defective vision, 3; epilepsy, 5; domestic relations, 4; blindness, 5; non-

employment, 2; accident, 3; immorality, 3; mental defect, 6; cripples, 6; social disease, 3; intemperance, 2; suspected immorality, 4; juvenile delinquency, 25; death of bread winner, 7; invalid, 2; shiftlessness, 3; known conviction of crime, 1; neglect of children, 4; non-support of children and aged parents, 13; feeble-mindedness, 2."

"In three cases support from relatives has been secured and a nurse supplied in one case. Employment has been found for three clients, and in three cases also the employment was refused. Three homes for children were secured and support from the father in two cases. Three cases of domestic relationships have been adjusted and juvenile court action has been had in thirteen cases."

"The services of a physician have been given when necessary and medicine supplied those needing care. Hospital treatment in one case was continued and one case sent to the county infirmary. Two investigations for out-of-town social agencies were made and foreign agencies have made investigations for the local association in five cases."

"Material relief was supplied as follows: groceries, 42; coal, 12; clothing, 9; rent, 5; shoes, 1; medicine, 3; layettes, 1; allowance, 14. Cooperation has been had from the Mary Kendall home in two cases; employees in 3 cases; doctors, 5 cases, and relatives, 4 cases."

Franklin School, currently named Mattingly School, was and is located on East Seventh Street. In the early 1900's, the school served students from a problematic neighborhood called Porter's Corner which today is at the intersection of Breckenridge and Ninth Streets.<sup>15</sup> The juvenile delinquency, drunkenness, murders, and truancy that were typical behavior patterns in this area concerned teachers, Misses Milton Boulware, Florence Pendleton, Prentice Farmer, Sarah Morrison and the city schools' attendance officer, Mrs. Erma Bartlett. As she visited in homes and counseled with both children and their parents about school attendance, Mrs. Bartlett learned that a great deal of the absenteeism that concerned the four Franklin School teachers was caused by poverty. The children did not have shoes or decent clothing and chose to stay in their homes or hang out in the streets rather than risk ridicule from classmates.<sup>16</sup>

It is interesting that Owensboro's Porter's Corner in 1920 was plagued with problems (juvenile delinquency, drunkenness, murders, and truancy) that are weighed today as worse than Chicago's Ward #19 described in Jane Addams' time as having:

'dirty streets, a number of schools inadequate, sanitary legislation unenforced, bad street lighting, paving miserable or nonexistent, foul stables, houses without water-only a faucet in the back yard . . .' All this amidst a disproportion of what American society categorizes as good and evil in Ward #19 and its seven churches, two missions and 255 'drinking saloons'.<sup>17</sup>

The Owensboro educators' first approach to their dilemma was to organize sewing classes for girls and women who lived in the vicinity of Franklin School. Used clothes were collected and altered to fit needy children. The ladies took a different view of religion from Miss Addams who distrusted organized religious bodies. They met with ministers and lay leaders of the Owensboro churches. They convinced the male church leaders of the need to open a settlement house similar to the famous Hull House which had been chartered 25 years earlier in Chicago.<sup>18</sup>

In May 1921, at Eighth and Hall Streets, the Owensboro Gospel Center Mission opened its doors, promoting 'Christian Religion (Interdenominational), morality, (and) as a Community Center having social, recreational, industrial, and religious betterment training'.<sup>19</sup> The building cost \$2,500 which was donated: \$1,500 by the Christian Men's League and \$1,000 by business, professional and civic minded men.<sup>20</sup>

On April 11, 1922 The Owensboro Gospel Center Mission incorporated as a non-profit, charitable organization. Nine men who were prominent in business and civic organizations were asked to make up the Mission's board of directors.<sup>21</sup> In 1922 it was rare for a female to serve in a position of leadership or management.

The Gospel Mission's acceptance in the community was a success by any measure. The number of people served surpassed all expectations. The breadth of social service spanned all ages. Instruction was offered in homemaking, Christian values from an interdenominational viewpoint, athletics and recreation. During the Great Depression, a soup kitchen fed 300 each day. The mission was a shelter with open doors for transients and those known as down-and-outs. A kindergarten served youngsters who previously might have roamed the streets or wasted time alone at home while their mothers worked. For the first time, a library became accessible at the Mission to all from this low income area.<sup>22</sup> Boy and Girl Scout Troops served children of the neighborhood and accepted juvenile court referrals into their activities.<sup>23</sup>

The Mission grew in attendance and in physical plant. Building expansion was to the North in 1931 and to the East in 1938. In July 1963, the Gospel Mission's name was changed to honor Miss Boulware who continued to work at the Gospel Mission without pay until her health failed as she neared 80 years of age. Known affectionately as 'Miss Mitt', she rode the city buses from her home on 21st Street near Frederica Street to the Mission where she loaded up food and clothing for families she knew needed help. Again she boarded a bus to shuttle her as near as possible to those in need and walked with her arms full of donated goods and her heart full of compassion to the gloomy, drafty wooden hovels that housed her people. The only complaint on record from Miss Mitt is that she tired before she finished her work<sup>24</sup>

What began as a settlement house in Owensboro's East End is now



called The Milton Boulware Gospel Center Mission and is a recreational facility for the elderly and a temporary shelter for homeless men. Today the rate of crime in the city's East End in comparison to the town's West End, where the economic situation is comparable, is strikingly lower.<sup>25</sup> Without scientific research to support a thesis, it can only be offered as a supposition that the vision and work of five women in the 1920's has improved the quality of life for thousands of people for over 70 years.

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#### Reaction To The 19th Amendment

In August 1920, after Tennessee ratified the 19th Amendment making it the law of the land, the *Messenger* interviewed 27 women. Here are some of the responses:

"I think women will help to clean up politics when they study the question." "Every vote I ever cast will be for a Democrat."

"My party isn't for it (the League of Nations) and I'm with my party whatever it believes in. Oh, I don't know anything about it, but my husband is a Republican and I'm one too and will vote for Harding."

"I will not vote, I don't think women should vote. I do not feel it is right nor a woman's place . . . I do not believe God intended women to take part in political affairs . . . I shall not vote."

"Some women fought, bled and died for the vote but I have never fought for it. Now that women have the vote though I think they ought to do their part and help . . . I'll vote all right." (*Messenger*, Aug. 24, 1920; from "The Long Struggle Toward Equality . . .")

1. *Jane Addams of Hull House 1860-1935 A Centenary Study*, by Margaret Tims, p. 49.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
3. *A Short Historical Sketch of the Gospel Center Mission*, by Paul D. Bushong, 1971, p. 1.
4. *Jane Addams of Hull House*, p. 20.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
6. *Twenty Years at Settlement House*, by Jane Addams, NY Mcmillan, 1910, p. 64.
7. *Jane Addams of Hull House*, p. 31.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
10. *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*, by Allen Freeman Davis, Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 175-205.
11. *Twenty Years at Hull House*, p. 5.
12. *Jane Addams of Hull House*, pp. 29-31.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
14. *The Messenger*, morning, July 7, 1918, "June Very Busy Month For the Associated Charities".
15. Interview with Betty Spratt, Owensboro Public Library's Kentucky Room Staff, March 1, 1995.
16. *The Owensboro Messenger & Inquirer*, May 1971, exact date not photocopied in "Gospel Center Mission" History file in Kentucky Room of Owensboro Public Library.
17. *Jane Addams of Hull House*, p. 43.
18. *A Short Historical Sketch of the Gospel Center Mission*, p. 2.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. "A Radio Editorial on WOMI May 19, 1971", by Paul Bushong.
23. Interview March 1, 1995 with Joe Hagan of Biscayne Drive, a member of the Know-Nothing Club who served on the Scout Committee and who lived at 1010 East Third Street in his youth.
24. *Sixty Years of Owensboro History*, by Wm. Foster Hayes, 1941.
25. *The Owensboro Messenger & Inquirer*, June 21, 1987, Section A, p. 1 & 10.

Throughout the history of the Ursuline community at Mount St. Joseph, the Sisters have dedicated their hearts and souls to a sacred mission.<sup>1</sup> Their purpose has centered around education, an institution that the Sisters have cherished since their founding in sixteenth century Italy.<sup>2</sup>

Amidst the age of enlightenment Ursulines sent missionaries throughout the world to formally educate Catholic children. As a result, a Catholic academy was established to serve Western Kentucky in the late nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> With time, the sisters dedication and hard work would blossom into Mt. St. Joseph Academy, one of the finest Catholic schools in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The history of Mount St. Joseph finds its roots with a German immigrant, Father Ivo Schacht.<sup>5</sup> In 1861, Father Schacht was assigned to serve the Catholics of the Panther Creek Settlement at St. Alphonsus Church.<sup>6</sup>

At the time of Schacht's appointment as the first priest of the small parish in southwestern Daviess County, a great Catholic education movement was spreading throughout America.<sup>7</sup> Catholicists were appealing for Catholic schools to educate their children, and Father Schacht made plans to establish such a school.<sup>8</sup>

Despite many obstacles, such as insufficient finances, Father Schacht somehow purchased five acres next to the church.<sup>9</sup> Here, he built a small log house, almost single handedly. Once the school was erected, Schacht persuaded two lay women from his congregation to teach girls in this modest Catholic school in 1861-62.<sup>10</sup> "Enrollment was minimal, probably only four or five girls attended the school that year."<sup>11</sup>

Through Father Schacht's continued work the school flourished. By its second year of its existence, he had convinced the Sisters of Loretto, from Marion County, to staff the school.<sup>12</sup>

Five sisters travelled across the state to provide young girls with a formal Catholic education.<sup>13</sup> Their formal mission was "to form young ladies to virtue, ornament their minds with useful information, accustom them to early habits of order and economy, and to cultivate in them those qualities which render them both amiable and attractive, not only in the family circle, but in society likewise."<sup>14</sup>

The sisters quickly realized that they would have to dedicate a lot of time and effort to fulfill this mission, considering that most of the girls had little or no previous education.<sup>15</sup> For the first five Sisters and their successors, "conditions were primitive and life was hard."<sup>16</sup> Parents paid for their childrens tuition and board in any way possible. Their means for doing so took the form of a barter system as they paid with meal, flour, spinning

and shoe making.<sup>17</sup> However, the school expanded through the rest of the 1860's as the staff and student enrollment increased each year.<sup>18</sup>

After nine years, Father Paul Joseph Volk replaced Father Schacht at St. Alphonsus.<sup>19</sup> A German immigrant, Father Volk had come to the United States as a missionary and served a year as an assistant pastor in Louisville.<sup>20</sup> Just a few weeks after his arrival at St. Alphonsus, an early morning fire totally destroyed the log schoolhouse and convent in December of 1870.<sup>21</sup> The thirteen Sisters escaped without injury. All was lost and the Sisters returned to the Loretto motherhouse.<sup>22</sup> For the next four years, the school remained nothing but a pile of ruins.

However, Father Volk was determined to rebuild. He was granted the approval of the Bishop of the Louisville Archdiocese, and the promise of the Louisville Ursulines to staff the school.<sup>23</sup> Father Volk was able to raise about \$6,000 for its construction.<sup>24</sup> Nearly half of the money came from Ursuline Sisters, some from the settlers of Panther Creek, and some out of his own pocket.<sup>25</sup>

When enough money had been raised, Father Volk and several workers began reconstructing the school. This time the school was located in a more sturdy brick structure. To quicken construction, Father Volk built a brickyard on the same site.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the push for quick reconstruction in 1874, the building was not finished when the first Ursulines arrived in August.<sup>27</sup> Throughout most of the school year, the Sisters and students had to "make do" with numerous improvisations on things such as furniture and teaching materials.<sup>28</sup>

At first, the school's growth was slow. But enrollment steadily increased in the 1880's.<sup>29</sup> The steady increase stemmed from its incorporation by the Kentucky State Legislature as St. Joseph's Female Ursuline Academy in 1880.<sup>30</sup> Also in 1880, the school celebrated its first graduate. The next year there were forty students and two graduates.<sup>31</sup>

In 1882, Mother Augustine Bloemer was appointed local superior at the academy.<sup>32</sup> A strong leader and educator, she led the school and religious community into a period of expansion.<sup>33</sup>

The number of students and teachers continued to increase. That same year, a south wing was built to accommodate this growth in numbers.

The farm also enlarged, primarily through land and equipment donations, allowing the academy and convent to remain mostly self-sufficient, which in turn led to low costs of maintenance.<sup>34</sup> In 1892, the farm had become so large, that the Sisters hired a farm manager to oversee its operation.<sup>35</sup>

Steady growth continued throughout Mother Augustines tenure as local superior. In 1905, Mother Aloysius was appointed local superior to replace an ailing Mother Augustine, who died the next year.<sup>36</sup>

Over the next several years, Sister Aloysius guided the academy into its most prosperous period. Under her leadership, the Academy "educated

young ladies in mind, body, and spirit."<sup>37</sup> Scholarship was the focal point as the school became a first class literary institution.

Sister Aloysius invited several well-known writers and speakers to the Mount. Among these was C. E. W. Griffith, the renowned Shakespearean reader who made annual visits for over a decade which halted with his death.<sup>38</sup>

Mother Aloysius, determined to be a progressive educator, always kept informed to remain ahead of the times. She and the other Sisters were always willing to try new teaching methods to improve their methods of teaching.<sup>39</sup> Each year the Academy held a model training session, which usually lasted two weeks. These model training sessions served as forums for the exchange of new and progressive teaching philosophies.

Perhaps the most progressive theory to be adopted by the Ursulines was their adaption of the Dalton Plan.<sup>40</sup> Using this plan, the Sisters placed great individualization on teaching the girls. Students in the primary division advanced at their own pace and were not given grades.<sup>41</sup>

This teaching method gradually spread throughout other academies across Kentucky and other parts of the U.S. as well. The Academy was recognized several times as a top Ursuline Academy by the Plenary Board in Baltimore.<sup>42</sup> As has been proven over time, the Ursuline Sisters' teaching methods were very much ahead of their time, especially the Dalton Plan, having been included in the Kentucky Education Reform Act.

Mother Aloysius also established Normal Schools to stay in touch with the progressive speed of education.<sup>43</sup> Summer Normals were held at the Institution for the benefit of the teaching body. Visiting professors in Music, Literature, Art, Elocution, etc. from the best institutions in the country were employed to conduct these sessions. The schools proved to be so successful that they soon became a requirement for all of the teachers at Mt. St. Joseph.<sup>44</sup>

In the early 1920's, these Summer Normals were continued under the auspices of the Western State Normal and given full credit and the State Department of Education consequently authorized the Normals.<sup>45</sup>

At this time the academy was separated into three divisions: the senior, junior, and primary divisions. Subjects taught included Christian Doctrine, Grammar, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Music, German, Calligraphy, Hair Work, Embroidery and Elocution among many others.<sup>46</sup> All of this was offered amid "fresh mountain air and the quietude of the country" that would be conducive to both physical and intellectual progress. The pupils, mostly from Daviess, McLean, Hancock, and Union Counties paid fifty five dollars for a five month session as was quoted in a 1903 advertising brochure.<sup>47</sup>

The low tuition provided each student with "board and tuition in the entire English course, bed, bedding, washing, stationery and books. Instrumental music and languages were extra charges."<sup>48</sup>

Even the poorest families in the area found the tuition to be very fair and many people came from families with modest incomes. The Sisters

often worked with these families so that their girls could receive an education. Many parents tended the farm or helped maintain the academy's grounds to pay the tuition.

The sisters then began expanding their mission to other parts of Kentucky, responding to the requests of priests for Ursuline educators to teach in their parish school.<sup>49</sup> Between the years of 1906 and 1912, Sister Aloysius sent fifty-one Sisters to teach in thirteen elementary parochial schools.

In the fall of 1912, Mount St. Joseph became independent as it was granted autonomy from its parent foundation in Louisville. Mother Aloysius, who had been a student, teacher, principal, and directress of novices was chosen as the first Superior General of the independent community at the Mount.<sup>50</sup> By 1920, the two hundred and ten member community was serving thirty Kentucky schools as well as schools in other states such as Nebraska, New Mexico, and Indiana.<sup>51</sup>

Sadly, also by 1920, Mother Aloysius had passed on. At the time of her death, Mount St. Joseph had been accredited to offer post graduate course for women to take the state teachers' examination. In the next few years state guidelines increased and the post graduate division underwent expansion.

In October 1923, Mother Agnes O'Flynn, a Mount St. Joseph alumna and Owensboro native, replaced Mother Aloysius as Super General of the Ursuline order. In concurrency with Mother O'Flynn's appointment, the Louisville archdiocese was calling for Ursulines to become certified in higher learning institutions. So, Mother O'Flynn negotiated with Mr. William S. Taylor of the University of Kentucky to enroll Ursuline teachers at the University for the following summer term. "That is, if there is a possibility of having the Sisters' credits of the past five summers at Mount St. Joseph accepted by the University," she bargained. The Sisters were accepted for one hundred and fifty dollars per Sister per month plus fifteen dollars for service. Several Sisters went to the university to participate in higher studies. By 1924, the transition from evangelism to professionalism was clearly underway.

In 1925 Mount St. Joseph Junior College for women was opened. It immediately sought and gained approval from the state education department to grant two-year liberal arts certificates of graduation, and both standard and provisional elementary teacher certificates.

At the first college commencement exercises in 1927, six Liberal Arts Certificates, five Standard Elementary Certificates, and three Provisional Elementary Certificates were conferred. Throughout the 1930's and 40's, the junior college played a large role in educating young ladies for teaching and other positions.<sup>52</sup>

By the 1940's the college expanded by offering coeducational classes in Owensboro, fifteen miles away. A very sophisticated Bulletin published for

1940-43 revealed the college's impressive growth and success:

Mount St. Joseph Junior College . . . is approved as a Junior college of the First Class by the State Department of Education. The college is accredited by: The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and Kentucky Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.<sup>53</sup>

Higher Professional training for the Ursulines teachers of Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse now seemed possible. While the younger Sisters were receiving elementary certificates through study at home, older members sought avenues to earn secondary certificates, which were required for teaching in parochial as well as public high schools at this time.<sup>54</sup> Those teachers missioned in city schools overwhelmingly took advantage of in-service study opportunities, evenings, Saturday, and summer classes offered in nearby and sometimes distant colleges and universities.

By 1950, strict accreditation guidelines and the huge financial burden of sending nearly three hundred Sisters to obtain higher education degrees, forced the development of Mount St. Joseph Junior College into a Senior College.<sup>55</sup> The Senior College was established Owensboro in 1950, at which time it became co-educational and changed its name to Brescia College, in honor of the city in Italy where Ursuline Order had originally been founded in 1535 by St. Angela Merici.<sup>56</sup> Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools followed in 1957.

Throughout much of the fifties and proceeding decades, the Ursulines worked closely with Brescia College.<sup>57</sup> The Sisters helped to secure admission and financial aid for many of the academy's graduates thus helping increase the college's enrollment. Sisters serving in other schools supported Brescia by promoting it at their high schools and at college fairs.<sup>58</sup> Sisters also supported Brescia by teaching both full and part time and often guest lecturing for no fee at all.

Since this transformation had taken place, the Ursulines were able to devote much more attention to the academy and their other missions throughout the United States.<sup>59</sup> Mount St. Joseph peaked in the early 1960's as its enrollment reached its highest number at one hundred and thirty nine students. It also offered its largest and most diverse curriculum.

The professionals at the Mount also reached an all time high with four hundred teachers staffing sixty nine American schools.<sup>60</sup>

In 1965 the Ursulines achieved one of their greatest accomplishments by spreading their mission work to another continent. That year a school was established in Santiago, Chile to serve poor South American children who previously hadn't had the opportunity for any sort of education.<sup>61</sup>

At this time the Sisters also extended their educational services to the community. In the early 1970's the sisters hosted "Music at Maple Mount."<sup>62</sup> The camp was and continues to be offered in June and runs for two weeks. Children from Daviess and surrounding counties are bussed

daily to the Mount to receive musical instruction from distinguished musicians such as conductors of the Boston and Chicago symphonies.

Another annual event started in the 70's was the annual barbecue festival. Each year the Sisters cook tons of pork, beef and mutton to serve the thousands that attend each year. The Sisters also sell home-made crafts and goods at the festival. While most of the proceeds go to fund the infirmary at the Mount, portions are distributed to area charities or used to purchase Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving baskets which are distributed to needy families.

Another hallmark of that decade occurred in 1976. The Kentucky General Assembly officially recognized Maple Mount as a town and ordered it to be put on all maps issued by the State Department of Transportation.<sup>63</sup>

Although the Sisters were achieving great things and seemed to be thriving throughout these years, this period proved to be the beginning of the end for the academy. The membership of the order was rapidly decreasing. In 1977, over half of the community was retired. Enrollment of the Academy had also drastically dropped. Finally in 1983 Mount St. Joseph Academy shut its doors for good citing drastic decreases in students.<sup>64</sup>

Even though the Academy closed, the Ursuline Sister continued educational opportunities at the Mount. The Mount St. Joseph Center was established just a short time after the academy's closing. The Center was founded to serve as a spiritual, cultural and educational enrichment center. "The goals of the Center then and now are:

1. To sponsor personal enrichment and spiritual formation experiences for religious and laity
2. To provide offerings that develop personal Christian growth and encourage Christian leadership
3. To offer hospitality, assistance and accommodations to groups of all denominations."<sup>65</sup>

Each year, thousands of people participate in various workshops, leisure and prayer days, retreats, marriage and engaged encounters, small and large group meetings and gatherings of Mount St. Joseph alumnae. The Center staff sends out publications on a regular basis about programs and facilities that are presently available.<sup>66</sup>

Today's Ursulines still staff girls' academies and parish schools, "but they also follow the challenge of Church into other areas -- as directors of religious education; as pastoral ministers to the handicapped, in prisons, in hospitals, in parishes; in work with the poor, with senior citizens, with refugees -- whenever the needs of God's people call them."<sup>67</sup>

Throughout the history of the Ursuline order at Mount St. Joseph, seemingly unsurmountable obstacles have been met by the Sisters with courage, determination, and vision to carry out their sacred mission of literally educating the children of the world. Thanks to the warmth and caring of the Ursuline Sisters at Mount St. Joseph, Daviess County has reaped the benefits of unparalleled formal and spiritual education.



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2. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
4. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born to Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 58.
5. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order Of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 48.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
7. Browning, Sr. Mary C. *A Mustard Seed - The History of Brescia College*, Owensboro, Kentucky: Winkler Co., 1972, p. 40.
8. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 90.
9. Browning, Sr. Mary C. *A Mustard Seed - The History of Brescia College*, Owensboro, Kentucky: Winkler Co., 1972, p. 45.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
11. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born To Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 60.
12. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 86.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
14. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 76.
15. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 122.
16. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born To Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 89.
17. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 76.
18. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born To Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 67.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
21. Browning, Sr. Mary C. *A Mustard Seed - The History of Brescia College*, Owensboro, KY: Winkler Co., 1972, p. 112.
22. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 67.
23. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born To Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 84.
24. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 79.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
26. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 97.
27. Browning, Sr. Mary C. *A Mustard Seed - The History of Brescia College*, Owensboro, KY: Winkler Co., 1972, p. 99.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
29. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W. B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 97.
30. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 76.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

32. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born To Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 67.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
34. Browning, Sr. Mary C. *A Mustard Seed - The History of Brescia College*. Owensboro, KY: Winkler Co., 1972, p. 132.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
36. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born To Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 102.
37. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 90.
38. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born To Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 117.
39. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 95.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
41. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 84.
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43. Browning, Sr. Mary C. *A Mustard Seed - The History of Brescia College*, Owensboro, KY: Winkler Co. 1972, p. 147.
44. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 104.
45. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 142.
46. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 75.
47. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 162.
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49. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
50. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 153.
51. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 162.
52. Browning, Sr. Mary C. *A Mustard Seed - The History of Brescia College*, Owensboro, KY: Winkler Co., 1972, p. 145.
53. Scherm, Sr. Eugenia. *Born To Lead*, Maple Mount, KY: 1970, p. 92.
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56. Browning, Sr. Mary C. *A Mustard Seed - The History of Brescia College*, Owensboro, KY: Winkler Co., 1972, p. 156.
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61. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 121.
62. "Music at Maple Mount-June for Two Weeks" *Messenger-Inquirer*. June 22, 1975.

63. "Kentucky General Assembly recognizes Maple Mount as a Town," *Messenger-Inquirer*. March 4, 1979.
64. Barrow, Sr. Mary Michael. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 175.
65. Dehey, Elinor T. *Religious Order of Women in the U.S.*, Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Co., 1930, p. 175.
66. Barrow, Sr. Mary Margaret. *Candles of the Lord*, p. 143.
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### Women in Public Office

Mildred Summers Lucas became the first woman jailer in Kentucky on July 14, 1884. She earned her footnote in history when her husband, jailer W. J. Lucas, was gunned down while protecting a black prisoner from a lynch mob. Mrs. Lucas, with a family to support, filled his vacancy after being appointed by the county judge to take charge of the job and feed the prisoners until a special election could be held in August, when the approval of the voters showed their confidence in her. One of her opponents, Sam T. Duncan, contested her right to the office and the next month, the contesting board held that Duncan was the rightful jailer. But Mrs. Lucas refused to vacate the office and continued to carry out her duties throughout a 16-month court fight. The State Court of Appeals ruled, in the case of *Atchison v. Lucas* that since she could not vote in Kentucky, she could not legally hold elective office. She was paid \$294 for feeding the prisoners during the interim, but not for other duties performed. The Court further ruled that she had no right to appeal since she was ineligible for office. The ruling judge pointed out that "... being a citizen does not necessarily entitle one to the right of suffrage or the right to hold any Constitutional office." Thirty-six years after Lucas was removed from her office because she could not vote, the Kentucky General Assembly ratified the 19th Amendment which would soon guarantee the right to vote and hold office to all women. Forty-three years after women secured the vote, Owensboro got around to electing a woman in her own right to public office with the election of Louise Gasser Kirtley to the Kentucky House of Representatives. (from unpublished manuscript, "The Long Struggle Toward Equality: The Woman's Suffrage Movement in Owensboro", Alöma Williams Dew)

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## THE DAVIESS COUNTY HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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The Daviess County Historical Society is open to all who have an interest in the history of Daviess County, the Green River Valley, or Kentucky. The Society meets on the Third Tuesday of each month from September through May. Most meetings are held at the Owensboro Area Museum on South Griffith Avenue.

Monthly programs of the Daviess County Historical Society are open to all, and non-members are encouraged to attend and participate.

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## The Editor's Page

This is a special issue of the *Daviess County Historical Quarterly*, taking an in-depth look at our town as it was 130 years ago in the summer of 1865 in the weeks and months just after the end of the Civil War, from the pages of Thomas S. Pettit's newspaper, *The Owensboro Monitor*.

Pettit had been arrested by Union Army authorities in the fall of 1864 on a charge of disloyalty because of his opposition to President Lincoln and the policy of emancipation of the slaves. His frequent critical editorials were deemed subversive, and Pettit was exiled to the Confederacy under armed guard. He was later exonerated by a personal order of President Lincoln and allowed to return home, arriving in Owensboro in May 1865 just as the war was ending.

He found his newspaper office in a shambles, having been taken over by the military and used for a while to print a military newspaper, but he was able, on May 31, to resume publication, with his verve, biting wit, and political opinions unabated. Much of this issue is in Pettit's own words, quoted directly from the pages of the *Monitor* and representing the very subjective style of journalism common in the nineteenth century.

Editor's Note: Thomas S. Pettit, editor of *The Owensboro Monitor*, celebrated his return from enforced exile in the Confederacy in the first issue of the newspaper to be published in the six months since his arrest for sedition by the Union occupation authorities.

His front-page editorial expressed his amazing lack of bitterness regarding his arrest and exile and does not even mention the vandalizing of his property and the great personal economic hardships suffered as a result.

Rather Pettit uses the occasion of his return to attempt to set the mood for the community which, with the end of the war, now confronted the unknown problems of the post-war era while still under the control of the Union occupation forces.

This is Pettit the diplomat, with his back to the past, ready to face the future convinced that good would have to come from the chaos of war and that Owensboro would survive and prosper in the years to come.

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### SALUTATORY

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Through the columns of the *Monitor* this morning, after an absence of more than six months, we send a greeting to our kind friends and patrons, and trust that time has dealt more gently with them than it has with us during the absence from the chair editorial, and that in the future our communion may be pleasant and uninterrupted; and that though that fickle dame, Fortune, may not have been so lavish with her favors and smiles during the bloody drama of the past few years, and now upon which the curtain of oblivion has, we trust, forever dropped, that the goddess will again empty her cornucopia and shower her richest and rarest gifts upon each and all of our good readers.

Since our long absence (at least to us), from them, and, the scenes through which we have passed, and the many advantages of seeing the true condition of the country, our mind, as regards the great fundamental principles for which we have contended in the past –

“A Union of hearts, a Union of hands,

A Union that none wish to sever” –

remains the same, and we see no reason to add thereto, either to amend or modify. We are still for that Government devised by the wise and patriotic sages of the better and purer days of our once united and prosperous Republic. The position of ourselves, as enunciated in our paper, has always been the conservative stamp, with the Union of the States under the

Constitution ever in view, and have opposed the radical means of prosecuting the war, believing that if the sword was to settle the difficulties existing, that a constitutional method would have accomplished that object more speedily and satisfactorily – certainly in a spirit partaking more of civilization and christianity, and becoming the age in which we live.

We believe little in war, and think that great National questions can be settled through the agency of statesmanship, without an appeal to the sword. Our minds should revolt against such barbarian means of arbitration, and prove to the world that this great nation of ours can govern itself upon more enlightened principles. Questions, if not "identical," of equal moment, have to be settled at the termination of wars in council, and why not dispose of them before such calamities overtake people by such methods.

Our views in relation to State and National questions will hereinafter be referred to at greater length, in a more appropriate article, and as the occasion may arise.

With these views briefly expressed, and reiterating the happiness of continuing with the good people of this country, we again tender our warmest salutation to one and all of our readers.

\*\*\*\*\*

Pettit's brave words belied the reality of Owensboro in the late spring of 1865. Owensboro was an occupied town, with Union forces still in firm control, as it had been through much of the war. At the time of Pettit's arrest in November 1864 the town was occupied by troops of the 31st Ohio Infantry Regiment. They were later succeeded by the 27th Kentucky, which in turn was relieved by the 185th Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

In his first issue Pettit commented upon the occupation troops and their commanders, holding forth an olive branch which he surely hoped would be grasped by all of the community's citizens, including the many who still saw the "bluecoats" as the enemy.

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PERSONAL – Capt. Edmiston, commanding a company of the 185th Regiment, Ohio Vol., and for some time commander of this post, is expected soon to leave here for some other point. We are but uttering the common sentiment of the people when we say that Capt. Edmiston has conducted himself while in command here in such a manner as to secure the good will of the entire community. Quiet, unobtrusive, and gentlemanly in his deportment, offending none, but treating all with respect, he has gained and will carry with him the respect of our people. The same may be said of the other officers in his command. The men comprising the company have, with rare exceptions, conducted themselves with great propriety, and the



exceptions are so rare, and the offenses so slight, as not to mar the good name of the command as a company. On the street and in the churches their conduct has generally been quiet and gentlemanly. We wish them all a safe return to their homes.

While bestowing a word of commendation of the parting Ohioians, we feel that it is a duty incumbent on us to say something of the estimation in which Colonel Ward and the 27th Kentucky Regiment was held.

Col. Ward was in command here during our forced visit to Dixie. He came and left while we were absent.

The regiment, composed entirely of Kentuckians, for the most part from counties not far from the Green river, has the reputation in this community of having been a model regiment – and in this expression officers and men, from the Colonel down, are included. They carried with them the good will of the people, and they are remembered and spoken of with great respect by our people.

The reign of Col. Ward and his regiment here did more to soften the hostility of the people to military reign and make loyal citizens of the disloyal than would a thousand years of rigorous rule.

The new recruits succeeding the 17th, under command of Major Vanpelt, are said to have conducted themselves better than was hoped for from so many youths but recently brought into the army, and Major Vanpelt, the commander, aside from the supposed too frequent issue of needless orders, was well regarded, being esteemed a polite and courteous gentleman in his deportment with citizens generally.

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Pettit's optimism was ill-founded, however, because the Ohioians did not depart, and units of the 17th Kentucky returned early in the summer of 1865, as the Radical Republicans in control of the Congress determined that the South, including Kentucky, would be held as a "conquered province". The harshness of Reconstruction came as a shock to Pettit, and quickly evaporated the spirit of optimism and good will which he expressed in May. By September things were quite different, as this item from September 13 indicates:

Col. Johnson and his Kentucky troops, along with Captain Edmiston, with a company of Ohioians, who have been on duty at this point for some months past, have been removed by orders from headquarters, and one or more companies of the dusky sons of Mars have now the possession of the city. There is an effort, however, we learn, on foot to have these ebony troops also removed, which we trust will prove successful.

In our community there are already enough of

worthless and thriftless negroes, and the influence these soldiers exert tend in a great measure to their further demoralization.

There is little or no need, as we can see, of any soldiery lauding it over this part of the State; but if those in authority will place troops among us, show some compassion and give us free white men in preference to the negroes that, in most instances, rightfully belong to our own people. It looks better to say the least of it.

Captain Edmiston, by his urbane and gentlemanly manners toward our citizens, has endeared himself to every lover of peace and good order in our midst, and in his departure from us he carries along with him the good wishes and esteem of every citizen, without, we believe, a single exception.

Some of Colonel Johnson's officers and men also have the best wishes of this community, and trust that in their future lives their course may, as doubtless it will be, characterized by the same humanity and gentlemanly deportment that has been exhibited while on duty here.

\*\*\*\*\*

The arrival of Black troops in the late summer of 1865 must have been a particular blow to the many Confederate veterans in Daviess County. In the May 31 issue *The Monitor* noted that "many paroled soldiers are daily returning to their homes in this country". They were described as "comfortably, if not gaudily, clad, and "seem to be in the enjoyment of the best of health," the paper noted.

The same issue of the paper commented on the scarcity of news but noted a "vague report" that General Kirby Smith, commanding the last Confederate army, had surrendered. It also noted to confinement of Jefferson Davis at Fortress Monroe, Va., and that the trial of the Lincoln assassins "drags its slow length along . . .".

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## POLITICS

Tom Pettit's first love was politics, and it did not take him long to enter the political fray. The first issue of *The Monitor* was non-political, but this "honeymoon" period soon ended. By the next issue, on June 7, Pettit was up to speed, fully engaged in the political struggles centering around the upcoming congressional and senatorial elections.

He proudly placed the names of the nominees of the Constitutional Union (Democratic) party at the masthead of his editorial page, endorsing B.C. Ritter of Christian County for Congress and Dr. A.D. Cosby of McLean County for the Senate. His own position was made abundantly clear in his endorsement editorial and the accompanying story about the Constitutional Union Party's nominating convention at Calhoon (sic).

\*\*\*\*\*

We hoist at the head of our column this morning the name of the Hon. B.C. Ritter of Christian county, as the candidate of the Conservative (sic) Union party for Congress in this district, deeply regretting that our talented fellow-citizen, the Hon Geo. H. Yeaman, has assumed such a political position that we cannot support him without doing violence to our own conscientious convictions of the proper course for Kentucky to pursue in the approaching election. We regret this difference more especially for the personal favor shown us by Judge Yeaman in a time of need, and we shall always respect him as a gentleman of talent and great worth.

We congratulate the people of this district that in the opening canvass they have two such gentlemen as Mr. Ritter and Judge Yeaman to choose as their representative in the Halls of the next Congress, and that the discussion of the questions thrust into the canvass will be presented in a manner becoming the dignity of the men and the importance of the occasion.

The name of Dr. A.D. Cosby, of McLean, who received the nomination by the Senatorial Convention at Calhoon, is also run up on our mast head, as a gentleman worthy the support of every conservative Union-loving voter in this district.

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Editor's Note: George H. Yeaman of Owensboro was elected to the United States Congress in 1862, and generally supported the Union side, except for his vigorous opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation and the freeing of the slaves in Kentucky. At the end of the war Yeaman was perceived as supporting the reconstruction policies of the Radical Republicans, and he was defeated by Ritter in the election of 1865. He was then appointed by President Andrew Johnson as United States Minister to Denmark, where he served until 1870. He then became a professor of constitutional law at Columbia University, where he served until his death. See Gregory S. Kuhn, "George H. Yeaman: Owensboro's Civil War Congressman," *Daviess County Historical Quarterly*, VI:4 (October, 1988), 74-79.

The following story appeared immediately below Pettit's endorsement editorial:

## CONGRESSIONAL CONVENTION AT CALHOON

We had the pleasure of attending the Convention which met at Calhoon on Thursday last, and meeting with and forming the acquaintance of a number of the delegates from the different counties.

We have never attended a meeting where everything passed off so pleasantly and so harmoniously as was the case at Calhoon.

There were but two persons placed in nomination – Mr. B.C. Ritter, of Christian, and Col. John H. McHenry, of our town. Mr. Ritter was nominated on first ballot, and when called to the stand accepted the nomination in a graceful manner and by a very appropriate speech of twenty of thirty minutes.

He spoke of his former admiration of the course pursued by Hon. Geo. H. Yeaman in Congress, and of the support he gave Mr. Y in consequence of the principles enunciated by that gentleman in his speeches contended that the Emancipation proclamation of the President was wrong and unconstitutional; of his opposition to the freeing and arming of slaves and putting them into the army, of his voting against the Constitutional amendment the first session of the last Congress, and then going for it at the last. Mr. Ritter gave an assurance that he was utterly hostile to the proposed amendment, and that he would violate no pledge that he made to the people, that he had always been a Union man, but at the same time was wholly devoted to the Constitution of our fathers, and was opposed to changing it.

Mr. Ritter has some very fine arguments upon the Constitutional amendment. His manner of bringing them before the people has a strong effect upon a sensible man's mind who is trying to form an impartial opinion. He demonstrates and proves that it is the policy of the abolitionists to enfranchise the negro, which is the only way they can perpetuate their power. He says that these persons who have recently gone over to the support of the abolitionists, on the ground that slavery is dead and is played out, and that they had better adopt the Constitutional amendment in order to settle the matter, are like the girl who married a man she despised in order to get rid of him. Mr. Ritter "can't see it in that light". He pledged himself against it; was in favor of retrenchment, reform, curtailing National expenses. Mr. Ritter was of the opinion that with a free election he would beat his competitor "so bad he would not know himself", and there appeared to be a hope expressed generally that such would be the case. Mr. Ritter's remarks were well received and frequently applauded.

Mr. R is a man about fifty years of age, apparently, pleasant countenance, dark skin, hair turning grey, fine eye and expressive, quiet and pleasant in manner and such a man as no doubt will be very acceptable to the people of the district.

After the conclusion of his speech, Col. McHenry addressed the Convention, having been solicited by the meeting to do so. He extended his hearty congratulations to the Convention for the unanimity and harmony which had characterized their proceedings; desired to say that he submitted cheerfully to the decision of the Convention, and that no man in the district would give a more zealous, warm and earnest support to the nominee, whom he considered to be a much better man than he himself. He paid Mr. R. a just and high compliment in alluding to his own knowledge of Mr. R's early and active support of the Union cause in Kentucky, his devotion and attention to the soldier, and the careful disbursement of a large sum of money to soldiers of the 17th Kentucky regiment, and said that he would to God that all the men who had fingered the money of the Government could show as clear conscience, clear record and clean pockets as Mr. R.

Col. McH. takes the ground that so far as Kentucky is concerned she is done with the Constitutional Amendment. The Legislature has rejected it, and it is no longer a question before the people, but that he is uncompromisingly hostile to the amendment and to its ratification by the people of the State. We had gone into this war to save the Union, put down the rebellion, and uphold the Constitution. We had succeeded in doing so, and it should be the proudest moment of our lives when we saw our ship of State move off again upon her voyage of destiny among the waters of the earth, after having breasted and braved the war of the elements that had rocked and lashed her four long years, with the same flag at her mast head, with not a mast shivered nor a sail rent. Mr. McH. said he had always opposed the wholesale robbery of the Southern people and confiscation of their property; that he was not one of those who not having sanctioned this robbery proposed how to pass a retroactive amendment to the Constitution to legalize this robbery, and to cover up a folly, a fraud, and a crime committed under pretense of military necessity, and in violation of every principle of law and justice.

He opposed the heavy taxes upon the country to pay the heavy debt of the nation presupposed an impoverished people for all coming time, whilst repudiation would leave a blot upon the national escutcheon that the crumbling touch of time would never efface; the honest child of toil had before him spread out the dim domain of poverty, and behind him the footsteps of the tax gatherer were heard.

He was in favor of treating the people of the South with kindness, consideration and conciliation, and as he believed it was the intention of the abolitionists to vote the negroes, he was in favor of voting the white men, and was in favor of repealing the expatriation laws of Kentucky and the confiscation laws of the General Government.

Hon. J.B. Bruner, who presided handsomely over the meeting, dismissed the Convention with a few very appropriate and timely remarks. He urged the people to go actively at work and stand up battling against this party who

were now endeavoring to lead Kentucky against her time-honored and cherished principles. Said he had heard it intimated and threatened that there was to be military interference in the next election. He did not believe it, but if it did come he admonished the people to do nothing to bring it about. If they were determined to strike us down, let them do it without cause, and let us go down with the Constitution in one hand and the flag of our country in the other. – Mr. B. said that he had never seen a Convention whose proceedings were more harmonious than the present one, and it was indicative of a determination expressed all over the State to stand by the Constitution, and resist this fanatical attempt to change it.

After the general Convention had adjourned, the delegates from Henderson, Daviess and McLean, met together and nominated Dr. A.D. Cosby as a candidate for the Senate from this district, now represented by Mr. Wm. Anthony, of this town.

Col. S.P. Love, formerly Colonel of the 11th Kentucky, was nominated as a candidate for the Senate from the counties of Ohio, Muhlenburg and Butler. Col. Love is regarded as a very strong man, and his election considered certain.

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The national political climate deteriorated as the days of summer 1865 dragged slowly by. The policies of punishment initiated by the Radical Republicans against the states of the former Confederacy were reflected in Owensboro. The occupation troops remained, and relations between the citizens and the "bluecoats" deteriorated, especially after the arrival of Black troops.

On election day an atmosphere of tension gripped the town as the Union army made its presence known at every voting place, determined to enforce a newly-enacted law which required that only those whose loyalty was unquestioned could vote, and placing the determination of that loyalty in the hands of the military officials assigned to each precinct. The results were predictable, especially when the volatile Pettit approached the polls:

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#### An Incident Connected with the Election Aug. 9, 1865

To give an inkling of the unjustness that was practiced at the election on Monday, we will merely cite the individual case of the editor of the *Monitor*, whose loyalty cannot be successfully questioned, and we refer to our demeanor and course editorially as a test. This case, however, is but an instance of the many outrages perpetrated on voters, and in some cases

without the excuse urged against us.

It will be remembered by our readers that in November last, an order was issued, by General Burbridge, arresting Lt. Gov. Jacob, Colonel Woolford, and others, who were to be sent beyond the lines, and that extract No. V. of the same order banished South the editor of this paper. The order was an unjust one, and was duly attested by the interest manifested by the Union men of this city and elsewhere, in urging its revocation, and when the facts were made known to President Lincoln, he drew a card and pencil from his pocket, and with his own hand rescinded it, with the remark "that it was exceedingly unjust".

Not for an instant doubting our right, with scarcely a thought that we would undergo catechizing at the polls, we presented ourself at the upper precinct to exercise our privilege. The following dialogue ensued:

Clerk - "There's a voter".

Judge No. 1 - "You are not entitled to a vote".

Editor, (not knowing this Judge) - "Are you one of the judges?"

Would like to have the opinion of the other officers."

Judge No. 2 - "I reckon, Mr. Pettit, you have no right to vote".

Editor - "Upon what grounds do you debar me the right, sir?"

I claim it as such".

Judge No. 2 - "You were sent South for disloyalty".

Editor - "True; but there was no evidence to substantiate the charge.

President Lincoln rescinded the order and pronounced it unjust".

Judge No. 2 - "No right to vote, sir".

Editor - "But I am perfectly willing to take the oath prescribed by the laws of the State, or even the one put forth by the Governor. Can do so, sir, without committing perjury or violating our own conscience.

Judge No. 2 - "We reserve the right, sir, to discriminate as to who we will permit to take the oath".

Editor - "That is your decision, is it gentlemen?"

Judges - "Yes, sir".

Editor - "That is all we desire to know".

Exit editor.

Stopping on the street about fifteen minutes, when we arrived at the office, we learned that a Lieutenant had been in quest of our distinguished self, with a document in his hand, which probably was an order for our arrest, and intended giving us quiet repose in the guard-house. We remained at our place of business all day awaiting the return of his call, but for some reason, we rejoice to say, he did not make his appearance. Whether the guard house was so full that it could not accommodate us, or the military were in search of other game, we have not inquired, but are glad they "gave up the chase," without placing us to any unnecessary trouble. We have got nothing against the military, and don't want them to have anything against

us; we are a peace man, and hope now that the election is over, they will be permitted to enjoy the pleasure of that delightful sensation. We intend placing up in our office two notices: One "No Credit Here"; the other, "All military officers, with hostile intentions, are positively prohibited admittance," both of which we hope will be obeyed, not only in spirit, but to the very letter.

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Pettit's bitterness at being denied his constitutional right to vote was somewhat appeased by the results of the election. He had every right to rejoice as his candidate swept to victory with a substantial majority, despite all the many frustrations and impediments placed in the way of supporters of the Democratic Party by the increasingly-belligerent and arrogant military occupation authorities.

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#### The Election August 16, 1865

Without having complete returns, sufficient is known to indicate that the Democrats have carried the State by a majority which may be considered large, under the circumstances. The majority of Democrats in the next Legislature will be two to one, thus securing Kentucky for two more years from the rule of fanatics and radicals. This is indeed something to rejoice at. The Constitutional amendment we now think is a dead thing so far as Kentucky is concerned.

In the 2nd District the majority against Mr. Yeaman is about 1,500, Ritter carrying nine out of twelve counties with Christian county as a stand off - the vote there being about equal. The vote cast in this district will not be more than a fraction over one half the vote it could have polled. This is of course attributable to the interference of the military authorities which so far as Daviess county was concerned was shameful in the extreme.

In the town of Owensboro, soldiers were standing on each side of the door when the voters were received at both voting points, from the opening to the closing of the polls. These soldiers themselves did not challenge voters, but their mere presence was sufficient to prevent persons from going to the polls, and was in direct violation of the recent act of Congress upon the subject of military interference with the election.

The judges of the election seemed to have things their own way in many instances, positively refusing to allow persons to vote after they had expressed a readiness to comply with all the requirements of the law. Several persons were arrested for merely offering to vote - others were



allowed to come forward and take the oath and vote and then arrested for so doing. This it appears to us to be the most unreasonable – what else can a man do than to comply with the law and with military orders and then vote – and how ridiculously absurd it is to arrest a person after he had complied with all that is required of him.

The arrest of Dr. McGill is an instance of this – Dr. M. had always been a Democrat and no man in Kentucky has conducted himself with more propriety during the rebellion than he has. We have no idea that ever a treasonable “word, act or deed” could ever be traced to him or that he has ever been guilty of disloyalty in the correct sense of the term. He presents himself at the polls, complies with arbitrary military orders, takes the oath prescribed, and votes, and in a short time is arrested for so doing. There is no reason or sense in such action on the part of the military. You prescribe a law to control the conduct of a man and when he has complied with your law, you punish him for so doing. To the honor of several gentlemen about our town who were inclined to support the amendment can dictate, be it said – that they publicly expressed their disapprobation of such proceedings and refused to approach the polls during the day. When in the name of Heaven will it be that the honest people of Kentucky can go to the polls as of yore and vote as freemen for the candidate of their choice and do so fearless of military espionage and regardless of – “government” opinion. The war is over, peace again spreads her wings over the country and “the voice of the turtle is heard once more in the land”. During the prevalence of a great war such as we have had the clash of military with civil authority may be excused under some circumstances, but now there is no excuse and woe the people must never cease to condemn it, and to resist it by every means in our power. May the day soon come when Kentucky may stand forth, proud and noble, as she once was, her laws respected, her rights maintained, exercising her civil functions in accordance with the spirit of our government. May the tread of armed men never be heard upon her soil and all the clouds that lower over her.

“In the deep bosom of the ocean buried”.

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## ECONOMIC LIFE

While Pettit filled many columns of *The Monitor* with political news and views life continued trying to get back to normal in Owensboro in the weeks and months following the end of the fighting. The economic lifeline of the little city on the yellow banks was the Ohio River – its sole effective link with the outside world.

The passenger and freight packets had continued to run throughout the war, but with the end of hostilities and the withdrawal of the navy gunboat

which had blockaded the Owensboro landing during much of the hostilities, traffic on the river returned to peacetime regularity.

A trip from Owensboro to Louisville by steamboat was not merely transportation – it was an adventure, as this letter from an anonymous correspondent to *The Monitor* testified:

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CORRESPONDENCE

6/14/1865

Steamer *Morning Star*, May 30th, 1865

MR. EDITOR: That is said to be an "ill wind that blows no one good". We have been forcibly reminded of this adage during our present trip from Owensboro to Louisville, on the fine steamer, *Morning Star*. Suggestive of this reminder is a vivid recollection of our last voyage up the river on the "Star Grey Eagle". On that occasion, the "Star" appropriately styled the "little eagle" received, on her arrival at Owensboro, a large influx of passengers to her already well filled cabin, crowding it beyond the capacity of state rooms to furnish resting places.

He who obtained a room congratulated himself as a most fortunate individual.

At other landings above, other passengers were added, in numbers great or small, a due proportion of whom were of the gentle sex, creating a necessity for dispossessing some of the "fortunate" ones of the rooms secured in the vicinity of the ladies cabin. This occurred about the time the eye lids of weary passengers were growing heavy, and "balmy sleep, tired nature's sweet restorer," began to woo the weary ones to repose.

The dispossessed unfortunates roamed around with baggage in hand in quest of a resting place for themselves and their possessions, like chickens suddenly ousted at night-fall from their resting places, knowing not, in their confusion, whether to go. All the "cots" were brought into requisition, but only partially accommodated the numerous passengers, many of whom were stretched on the floor and on tables, without blanket or comfort to lie upon or cover with, while many others, not even securing the "soft side of the floor" or the hard side of a table to repose (?) upon, sat up the whole night through, reminding one in the dreamy hours of the devotions of a sleep congregation under the ministry of a prosy divine.

Notable among the disappointed ones was a bridal party fresh from the marriage altar. But they came too late. The bridal chamber was not to be had, the rooms were all taken and the disappointed couple were about to leave the boat in disgust, strongly impressed with the conviction that bridal trips on the "little eagle" were all a humbug. They, however, remained, but vowing in their wrath they would never make another bridal trip on that

boat.

At bed time, the sliding doors cut off the blushing bride from her loving lord, and he, poor fellow, not securing a cot to rest upon, and unwilling to soil his wedding garments by falling on the floor, sat up or roamed around, all night long like "one possessed". A clerical gentleman observing his restless movements in the small hours of the night, whispered to a friend: "The bridegroom is like the unclean spirit spoken of in the scriptures, "He goeth about seeking rest and findeth none".

The indignation, not only of the aforesaid aggrieved bridal party, but of numerous other roomless and cotless passengers, was vented in outspoken utterances against the proprietors of the Louisville and Henderson Packet Company for continuing in the trade so incommodious a craft as the "little eagle", accompanied with the earnest wish that an opposition line would be established, and force the "old company" to introduce in place of the "eagle" a boat of sufficient capacity to meet the wants of the traveling public. No complaint was uttered against the officers of the eagle, they doing the best they could under the circumstances.

Well, at least the wishes of the people are being regarded. "The Peoples' line" of steamers is being introduced, small though the single opposition boat is, at present, it is having some effect on the "old company". They have taken the "little eagle" out of the Monday's trip from Owensboro to Henderson, (the trip most largely patronized by our people), and have put in her place the elegant "Morning Star"; and, however much other parties may have deplore the change, those who find it necessary to travel up the river by Monday's boat will agree with us that there is truth in the saying, "an ill wind that blows nobody good". The "wind" raised, (possibly it may increase to a storm) by the Peoples' line promises to "blow" the "little eagle", clear out of this trade, and "blow" in a more commodious and a safer boat. It has blown down the rate of tariffs for passengers and freight, and the signs are ominous of a heavier "blow" in the same direction, when the Peoples' line "shall have introduced their splendid new steamers".

Speaking of prices, the inquiry suggests itself, why is it that the Louisville and Cincinnati boats, in a trip of only ten miles less than ours generally charge only a little more than half that is charged by our packets. At the present time they charge only \$2, while our mail boats charge \$4.

On our present trip on the "Morning Star," we find everything agreeable. The boat not too much crowded for comfort, and room enough for all.

After supper a band of ebony musicians discoursed sweet music from violin, guitar and a "fiddle" of ponderous proportions beside which the performer presented a rather Tom Thumbish appearance. They varied the entertainment by several songs, some sentimental and others loyal and patriotic, in one of which the "Starry Flag," the "Free Darkey," and "Old Miss Abey," were the inspiration of the songsters.

One youth of nervous temperament was set in a "fidget" by the musical

strains of the ebonies, and searched the ladies cabin in vain for a companion in the dance. He then proposed in classic phraseology "to have a stag dance," but discovered to his disappointment that he was the only "stag" on the boat, and for the want of "a fellow" was constrained to forego the coveted pleasure of a "stag" performance.

At Rock Haven, we saw several barrels of Petroleum, the product of a neighboring well, yielding five barrels per day.

Another well had been dug, 600 feet; no oil has yet been found, but considerable "gas" was making itself manifest, inducing the hope of the "borers" that oil would some day be found.

The Falls City looms in view, and we close our hasty letter, written, you will please inform your readers, at your request.

Yours, Owensboro.

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The *Morning Star* was one of the boats of the Louisville & Henderson Packet line, which ran regular schedules between these two points, providing Owensboro with its most consistent service for passengers, mail and freight of all kinds.

The *Monitor* carried almost no news of the river in the summer of 1865. Later newspapers would carry a regular column of river news, including arrivals and departures of boats, but in the first few months of peace Owensboro (or at least Pettit) was still inward-looking, with apparently little interest in commerce and navigation.

*The Monitor*, by mid-summer, did begin carrying the following notice:

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The Elegant and Sumptuous Passenger Steamer, *Liberty No. 2*, J.T. Shirley, Master; Ep. H. Judge, Clerk, will leave Owensboro for Memphis every Sunday at 9 o'clock, a.m.; returning will leave Owensboro every Thursday for Louisville.

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The May 31, 1965 issue of *The Monitor* contained the announcement of the opening of a new grocery store by Ward Payne and Thomas C. Bridwell. Pettit saw this new enterprise as a great step forward not only for the entrepreneurs but for the community as well – a tangible evidence of commitment to a brighter and more prosperous future for the post-war years. Pettit welcomed the new business with a typically subjective news story:

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We are glad to see that our young, energetic, intelligent and well-known friends Payne & Bridwell have embarked in that tide which leads on to fortune. They have opened a large and complete stock of fresh staple and fancy groceries, &, and brought at panic prices. They are too well known to need commendation at our hands, but we will say they deserve a helping hand, and should have a good start in the battle of life. Many we are sorry to say are too prone to withhold their assistance and a kind word to young men. All young men need it – (that's me, as A. Ward would say). In this case in helping them you benefit yourself. Try them once, and we risk our tile that you will have no occasion for *payneful* regrets. To the ladies we would say they *keep no liquor*, and so there is no danger to go or to send your husbands, and to the young misses we would say Bud and Frank are always on hand.

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The new firm advertised its stock in a large advertisement (12-1/2 column inches) in which they offered a variety of stock including:

Hans, sugar cured and country,  
leaf lard; tea, all kinds; almonds, sardines, peaches,  
pine apples, rice, indigo, madder, mackerel, all kinds  
Best Java and Rio Coffee  
Fine chewing tobacco, cheese peppersauce  
Best article Smock's Flour  
Catsup, oysters, butter, eggs, bitters, rope, soaps, all kinds,  
vermacilli and macaroni.  
Cigars  
Star and tallow Candles, figs, tubs, starch, essence of coffee,  
brooms, washboards, salt in sacks and barrels  
Sugars, every kinds

"Our stock having been purchased at Panic Prices, we are determined to sell as low, if not lower, than any other establishment in this place, Evansville or Louisville, and to the trade we offer superior inducements".

A major inducement was to the farmers of the area. In hold type it was announced that the store would accept COUNTRY PRODUCE, which meant that farm and garden products "of all kinds" would be "taken in exchange for Groceries, allowing the highest prices".

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The partnership, unfortunately, lasted only six weeks. On July 19 a small notice appeared in the paper announcing the dissolution of the partnership. Bridwell withdrew from the business, leaving Payne in charge of the store "All accounts due the firm must be paid to Ward Payne, and all debts against

the firm will be settled by him," the notice continued.

In the same issue was the firm's advertisement, this time as Ward Payne, dealer in wholesale and retail groceries.

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Another new firm opened in August. Jo. W. Funk & Co., on Frederica street, dealt in china glass and queensware. "We invite the public to all and examine our stock before purchasing elsewhere, as we offer articles to please every fancy, a little cheaper than you can get at any other house in town . . ." the advertisement promised.

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The economic climate of Owensboro seemed relatively healthy, considering the disruptions of the war years. *The Monitor* carried a variety of advertisements in the summer of 1865, most of which were repeated from week to week. Barnes, Allen & Co., on Frederica Street opposite the Court House, offered competition to J.W. Funk's new firm in the china and glassware business, and also offered a full line of dry goods, including boots and shoes and hats and caps, as well as a full line of men and boys' wear, and dress goods of all kinds including silks, flannels, linseys, and ready-made products such as balmoral skirts, cloaks, hoods, and hosiery. Barnes, Allen & Co. also offered to exchange any goods in their stock for Jeans and Linsey (two types of homespun cloth) at market prices.

The biggest dry goods house in Owensboro was Wing & Peters, at the corner of Main and Frederica streets. This firm offered a "complete and elegant stock" including dry goods, carpets, men's and boy's clothing, hats, shoes, pocket and table cutlery, all sorts of dress fabrics and notions. "They are determined to make theirs the cheapest cash house of Owensboro," the advertisement declared in an editorial note, "and will not be undersold by any city market".

J. Rothchild, on Main Street near St. Ann, next to Littell's Saddlery, also offered a full line of dry goods, including Lawns, Berages, Organdies, Mosambiques, Poplins, &, &, "all very beautiful," as well as "a large a complete stock of fancy goods and notions," as well as a full stock of booths, shoes and hats. "Come, and if the Goods will suit you, the prices will be made to suit," their advertisement promised.

The needs of the home could also be met by shopping in Owensboro. J.G. Delker & Bro. offered a full line of furniture and mattresses, including lounges, cribs, stands, saves (sic), desks, wardrobes, side boards, chairs, sofas and divans and sociables. They also advertised a full line of "spring, hair and shuck mattresses". "Feeling well assured that we can satisfy all those who honor us with a call, (in quality as well as in price), we ask those

wishing anything in our line, to give us a call before purchasing elsewhere," their advertisement pleaded.

Brinkmeyer & Co., directly opposite the Court House on Frederica Street, offered a full line of "cooking stoves, parlor stoves, cannon stoves, monkey stoves and box stoves, in great variety," as well as sugar kettles, ovens and lids, skillets, dog irons, mantel and common grates, and castings of all kinds, as well as "a large assortment of Tin Ware for Wholesale and Retail trade, at city prices".

While all of these merchants sold what were basically essential staples, the presence in Owensboro of two photographic studios indicates that there was a demand for luxuries as well as necessities, and that citizens of the Yellow Banks were willing to pay good money for those things which would add beauty and emotional contentment to their lives. The firm of Almond & Steward, Photographers, "on Main Street, and next door to Dr. Ford's Dentistry," offered "all kinds of Photographic work executed in the highest styles of the Art". They copied and enlarged old and faded pictures, they declared, and expressed their thanks for "the very liberal patronage heretofore extended to us by the citizens of Daviess and surrounding counties . . .". By mid-July they had competition, with the opening of Whitton & McGill, Veteran Photographers. Pettit welcomed the new business: "Messers Whitton & McGill are old hands in the picture business, and we would especially recommend our friends desiring anything in their line to give them a call. We have just examined some specimens of a new style of picture made by the above gentlemen called the pearleotype, and they are the most beautiful pictures we have ever seen. They are made, we believe, on porcelain. Go and see for yourselves".

Other popular businesses of the day included a "splendid hilliard saloon" which had recently opened on Second Street. It was advertised as being "under the control of good managers". "Those wishing to while away an idle hour in pleasant and healthful exercise can do so by calling". "Everything conducted with propriety in the Saloon," the advertisement promised. After working up an appetite playing billiards the patrons could step around the corner to B.C. Murphy's Saloon, on Frederica Street between Main and Water streets, for an oyster supper. Mr. Murphy advertised "a large supply of Baltimore Fresh Oysters, by the can or dozen," which he offered "at the lowest market price . . .".

Both of these establishments were also at the disposal of travelers who might be spending a few days in Owensboro at the National Hotel, Thomas Averett, proprietor, while both travellers and local citizens could partake of the National's restaurant, which made special prices for "day boarders".

"The table is at all times supplied with the best the market affords," the patrons were assured. Others might stop at Mrs. Catharine Wipf's confectionary, bakery and toy store on Main Street for some light refreshment, and while their customers might browse her stock of stationery,

objections were urged by some outsiders against holding it there; but, it having been recently cleansed with a view to re-opening, and having never been used as a hospital, and there consequently being no cause to fear either ghosts or contagious (sic) diseases, the ladies determined to give the room another ablution, and hold the festival there; and visitors, on entering, immediately forgot, amid the beautiful ornaments, the odor of flowers, and inviting display of good things, that the rooms had ever been devoted to the uses referred to.

On Friday evening there was a large attendance of citizens, all of whom seemed to enjoy the company and the refreshments afforded. The evening passed pleasantly to all, with profit to the object for which the feast was given – nothing occurring to mar the pleasure of the evening.

On Saturday evening the rooms were opened at 6 o'clock for the reception of the "small fry" of the community, and they must have equaled, if not excelled the number of adults attending the first evening. The rooms were crowded with a merry juvenile throng. All seemed to be supplied with pocket change, and right freely did they spend it for ice cream and strawberries, the stock of which rapidly diminished under the repeated and vigorous assaults of the young assailants. By 10-1/2 o'clock the company had dispersed, and the net proceeds of the two evenings entertainments were found to be about four hundred dollars.

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#### The Circus Comes to Town

The highlight of the summer of 1865 for many Owensboroans was the arrival of the circus. Those who could come up with the 50¢ admission charge (25¢ for children) would gain memories which would sustain them perhaps for a lifetime.

*The Monitor* announced the coming event in its July 26th issue: "In our advertising columns will be found the announcement of the coming of this famous company, which will be here for one day only – Tuesday, August 1st. It bears a reputation of great excellence, and numbers among its host of performers many names quite celebrated in the annals of the arena. Their ring horses are said to be the finest of any company traveling, and never fail to challenge the admiration of the lover of that noble animal. No doubt they will meet a most liberal reception".

The advertisement for George W. DeHaven & Company's UNITED CIRCUS filled nearly two-thirds of a column in the newspaper. The show was "A consolidation of three companies into one colossal organization, forming the most complete congress of arenic artists on this continent," the advertisement announced. Doors would "open at 1-1/2 and 7 p.m. Performances commence at 2 and 8 o'clock p.m."



## EDUCATION

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## School Days, School Days

With the departure of the circus Owensboro settled down to endure the heat, dust and flies of August, while the children began the countdown to the beginning of the new school year.

It would be several years yet before public schools, supported by tax revenues, came to Owensboro. Schools in 1865 were private and for profit, operated by individuals either as day schools or as boarding schools, and at considerable costs. This meant that some of the town's white children, and all of the black children, remained uneducated, as these schools were far beyond the financial abilities of their families.

For primary-age children, the "Three R's" could be learned at Miss Meddie Stewart's school, opening on Monday, September 4th, for a tuition cost of \$12.00 for a twenty-week session, or at the Daviess Academy, which was scheduled to begin on August 28. At the latter institution, operated by The Rev. H.T. Morton, primary students were charged \$15.00 per term, "Tuition, half in advance, to be paid at the Deposit Bank of Owensboro". Both Miss Meddie's and the Daviess Academy were day schools, with pupils living at home. The Russellville Female Academy in Russellville offered primary instruction for \$15.00 per term, with sessions beginning on August 28, but also charged \$100.00 per term for room and board. Further, to get from Owensboro to Russellville involved an arduous trip on a Green River steamboat to Bowling Green where connections could be made by the L&N Railroad to Russellville. Another alternative was a steamboat trip to Evansville, where a train could be caught for Guthrie, Ky., and a connection with the L&N's line to the Logan County community. Direct rail service from Owensboro to Russellville was not available until late in 1883, so that it is likely that few primary age "young ladies" from the Yellow Banks enrolled at the Russellville Female Academy.

There were a variety of options for work past the primary level – grades which today would translate into middle-school and high-school level classes. Miss Meddie Stewart's school, for example, offered the following curriculum:

Reading, Spelling, Writing, Grammar,	
Mental Arithmetic and Geography	\$16 per term.
English Grammar, Written Arithmetic, Geography,	
First Lessons in Composition, etc.	\$20 per term.
Philosophy, Chemistry, Physiology,	

Physical Geography, etc.	\$25 per term.
German and French, each	\$10 per term.
Instrumental music, Piano, Guitar	\$20 per term.
Contingent charge to each pupil	\$1 per term.

The Daviess Academy's offerings were more succinct, with the "Grammar School Department" at \$20 per term, and the "Academical Department" at \$25 per term. The Russellville Female Academy had similar prices, with the Academic department at \$20, the Collegiate at \$25, and Music at \$25 per term. The Owensboro Male and Female Seminary, operated by H.P. Hart, offered Primary English for \$12, Ordinary English for \$16, the "Scientific Department" for \$20, Greek and Latin "with the above included," for \$25, and German and French for \$10 each per term. "The Female Department" was entirely separate from the Male, and in charge of a competent Female Teacher," their advertisement assured the anxious parents of potential students.

The Bransford Female Institute was the best-known of all the private schools of the city. Operated by Professors W. Mariner, M.A. and H.M. Merrill, M.A., this institution was headed by The Rev. Jesse Anderson, President, with Owensboro businessman Benjamin Bransford and William Shelby as trustees. The Bransford Institute's offerings included:

Primary Geography, Mental Arithmetic,	
Reading, Writing and Spelling	\$15.00
English Grammar, Written Arithmetic,	
First Lessons in Composition, etc.	\$20.00
Philosophy, Algebra, Rhetoric, etc.	\$25.00
Contingent Charge to each pupil	\$2.00
EXTRA	
Latin, Greek, French, Spanish,	
German, or Italian, each	\$15.00
Instrumental Music, Piano, Guitar, etc.	\$25.00
Vocalization, Regular Training of the	
voice, in class,	\$20.00
Musical Composition, in class	\$20.00
Use of Piano for practice	\$6.00

Professor J.H. Gossine, teacher of vocal and instrumental music, offered private classes in these branches of the "art divine" for those persons who wanted to study only music. He offered lessons in piano, guitar, organ, melodeon, violin, flute, etc., and "will devote special care to the Cultivation and Training of the Voice, and is prepared to take charge of classes in Musical Composition. Arrangements for classes with Prof. Gossine could be made by applying at B. Bransford & Co.

Thus, for those who could afford it, the beginning of the 1865 school year brought an astonishing array of rather sophisticated academic offerings. For the well-to-do of Owensboro the opportunity to prepare their sons for a

collegiate education or their daughters for the talents and accomplishments of a "lady" were to be had at a variety of costs and institutions. For the poor there was only work.

## DRY GOODS.

### SPLendid ASSORTMENT!

**J. ROTHCHILD,**

Main Street, near St. Ann;

HAS just opened, and constantly receiving a large and well assorted stock of

### DRY GOODS,

for Spring and Summer use, purchased since the decline in gold, and sold at the lowest prices, consisting of the latest and richest styles of—

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all very beautiful. Also a large and complete stock of

### Fancy Goods & Notions,

and every thing usually kept in a first class Dry Good establishment. Also, a good assortment of

### BOOTS, SHOES & HATS.

Come, and if the Goods will suit you, the prices will be made to suit.

Don't forget the place: Main Street, near to St. Ann, and next to Littlell's Saddlery.

**J. ROTHCHILD.**

June 7, 1865-n220f

A typical advertisement in *The Owensboro Monitor*, 1865.

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## THE DAVIESS COUNTY HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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The Daviess County Historical Society is open to all who have an interest in the history of Daviess County, the Green River Valley, or Kentucky. The Society meets on the Third Tuesday of each month from September through May. Most meetings are held at the Owensboro Area Museum on South Griffith Avenue.

Monthly programs of the Daviess County Historical Society are open to all, and non-members are encouraged to attend and participate.

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Correspondence concerning contributions and other editorial matters relating to the QUARTERLY should be addressed to the Editor. The editors and the Society assume no responsibility for statements made by contributors. Addresses of the authors will be supplied upon request to the editor.

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## The Editor's Page

We wrap up our thirteenth year of *The Daviess County Historical Quarterly* with two articles which cover subjects which fill major gaps in the county's history. While much has been written about the political and economic history of the county, subjects such as social, intellectual and religious history have been largely ignored. These two papers do much not only to shed light on their subjects but to point the way to the kind of research that is possible in local history.

Dr. Dwight A. Moody is the pastor of Third Baptist Church in Owensboro, and has done a magnificent job of presenting one of the most colorful characters in the history of American evangelism and his impact upon the city. While much has been done on the history of specific congregations, little work has yet been published on the impact of religious movements and ideas as a whole, and this is a real guidepost pointing in the direction that further researchers may take.

Robert A. Greene, a 1995 graduate of Kentucky Wesleyan College, has done a similar work in the history of recreation and entertainment. This subject, so often ignored, was pioneered by Shelia Heflin in her papers on Mulberry Street and the Chautauqua, and this paper adds much to our knowledge of the subject.

## SAM JONES COMES TO TOWN

Dwight A. Moody

On Sunday morning, April 25, 1893, page one of the *Messenger*, Owensboro's daily newspaper, ran the headline "Getting Ready."<sup>1</sup> The ushers were appointed, the prayer meetings arranged, the choir was organized, railroads were set to run from every outlying community, and the 5,000 seat tabernacle built on the corner of 11th and Locust lacked only the roof. But even with all that "getting ready" it is not altogether clear that Owensboro, Kentucky was fully prepared for what stepped off the train nine days later at high noon.

What stepped off the "Texas Special" was more than a man. It was an event, a religious, social, cultural, economic event. Few events in the history of this western Kentucky town can claim to have had the influence on as many individuals, institutions and popular attitudes as the eight day meeting that commenced on Thursday evening May 2, 1893.

## SAM JONES OF GEORGIA

The man's name is Sam Jones. He was born in 1847 at Oak Bowery, Alabama but spent most of his childhood and all of his adult life in Cartersville, Georgia.<sup>2</sup> He was reared in a Christian home. His mother was a spiritual woman who is reputed to have read through the Bible thirty-seven times on her knees! She died when Sam was nine years old. His father, John J. Jones, was also a godly man, and made his living as a lawyer. They were Methodists. Sam said in his autobiographical essay: "I am a Methodist just as I am a Jones; and if it is a sin to be either, it is a sin that is visited upon the children from the parents."<sup>3</sup>

The war interrupted everything. Sam's father went off to fight, rising to the rank of captain in the Confederate Army of Virginia. When the war came to Georgia, they all fled to Kentucky. In Henry County, Sam met and courted Laura McElwain. During and after the war, the family traveled from one state to another, but Sam finally settled back in Cartersville. He married Laura and was admitted to the Georgia bar.

The war brought another thing into the Jones' lifestyle, alcohol. It was social drinking for a while, then heavy drinking, finally drunkenness. Sam lost his legal practice, his health deteriorated, and his wife left him. It was out of the depression and desperation of a drunk that Sam Jones became a new man. He stood at the bedside of his dying father and heard these soulful words: "My poor, wicked, wayward, reckless boy. You have broken the heart of your sweet wife and brought me down in sorrow to my grave. Promise me, my boy, to meet me in heaven."<sup>4</sup>

Then and there, Sam Jones was converted. He gave up drink and took up Jesus. But in a deeper sense, Jesus was no stranger to Sam. And

likewise, drink followed Sam all the days of his life. It was never again in his body, but it certainly played a major role in his ministry, and nowhere more powerfully than in Owensboro, Kentucky.

Two things, other than the style and substance of his message, were uncommon about Sam Jones. Both were noted in the newspaper description of how the locals reacted upon first seeing the famous evangelist:

Few had ever seen him before and most refused to believe that the swarthy little man with the wandering black eye and the thin and straggling mustache was the man they were looking for until he began to preach. His first words were Sam Jones, and they all recognized it.<sup>5</sup>

Beyond his unusual appearance was the overshadowing power of his speech. Without further testimony, we might be tempted to imagine Sam Jones as the typical tent revivalist, with pounding voice, boisterous manners, and wild antics. But listen to an eye-witness, a lawyer, a Methodist. He is William Foster Hayes, whose 1944 memoir *Sixty Years of Owensboro: 1893-1943* offers a rare first-hand account of the Jones revival:

He had the advantage of one of the best of speaking voices, a voice that was clear and carried far without apparent effort. There was never any straining . . . Jones spoke nearly always in a conversational tone and slowly. There were of course times when he would become more impassioned and speak rapidly but they were rare; usually he was very deliberate. You got all that he said and it was what he said that counted.<sup>6</sup>

At his funeral, Methodist bishop Charles Galloway offered this assessment:

Were I called upon to state in a few words, the qualities that gave greatness to this master of assemblies, and enabled him to sway with the wand of a magician the vast thousands that crowded to his ministry, I should say they were his philosophical insight into the secret spring of motive, his power of lucid and luminous statement, his rare, congenial humor, the breadth and wealth of his genuine love for humanity, and the marvelous qualities of his wonderful voice – all under the domination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup>

### SAM JONES, METHODIST EVANGELIST

Within weeks of his 1872 conversion, Sam Jones began preaching in the rural Methodist churches of Georgia. By the time he came to Owensboro, he was famous. The style and substance of his preaching attracted enormous crowds. Beginning in the churches of the South and



extending to every major city in America, Sam Jones talked to the people about life, about truth, about sin (especially alcohol), about death.

After a stunning revival in Memphis, Tennessee, the hometown newspaper in Cartersville, Georgia wrote:

Sam Jones is the greatest revivalist the South has even produced . . . . He can go to the darkest corner of Pickens county and the most ignorant man in the congregation will understand and appreciate his sermon. He can stand before the finest city church, before the most intelligent audience and hold them spellbound . . . . He has loomed into importance as an evangelist and revival until he now stands second only to [Thomas DeWitt] Talmage and [D. L.] Moody.<sup>8</sup>

By that count that would make him third. But by any accounting, Sam Jones had made his reputation as a nationally known preacher. Historians of homelitics to this day rank him high. In volume six of the 13 volume series entitled *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching*, Jones is granted 46 pages in the company of Charles Spurgeon, Phillips G. Brooks, Washington Gladden, Alexander Whyte, Dwight L. Moody and F. B. Meyer.<sup>9</sup>

Jones' greatest success came in Nashville. His first preaching there was in the spring of 1885. Much of the ministerial establishment in that city opposed Jones. They were offended by his controversial style, by his incessant attacks on the liquor industry and by his equally unrelenting criticism of ministers. The controversy served only to arouse public interest and when the preaching finally commenced, no building was large enough to handle the crowds.

Among Jones' many converts during his numerous Nashville crusades was a wealthy riverboat captain named Thomas G. Ryman. His boats cruised the Cumberland River and were known as "floating palaces complete with saloons and gambling parlors." Ryman attended one of the Jones meetings and later said of his attendance: "I came here for the purpose stated by Mr. Jones, [that is to whip him] and he has whipped me with the Gospel of Christ. I want the audience to go to the river bank and see the liquor poured into the stream."<sup>10</sup>

Ryman then built a grand tabernacle to which Jones came every summer to preach. It was originally named Gospel Union tabernacle. When Ryman died in 1904, his funeral was held in the Tabernacle and the message was brought by Sam Jones. At the close of the service, Jones suggested the building be renamed Ryman Auditorium. This was accomplished by acclamation. This same building later housed Nashville's famous "Grand Ole Opry." When the "Grand Ole Opry" left for Opryland in 1974, Ryman Auditorium fell into disuse. After an eight and a half million dollar renovation in 1993, the building once again opened as a performing arts center. Part of the schedule during the fall of 1994 was a

## THE OWENSBORO TABERNACLE

Churches were not large enough to accommodate the crowds that wanted to hear Sam Jones. So the tabernacle became a standard feature of a Jones' revival. In Owensboro, as in other smaller towns, Sam Jones required as a condition of his coming, that the local people construct and finance a tabernacle.

The Owensboro tabernacle was built on the northwest corner of 11th and Locust. That was, of course, at the edge of town and also adjacent to a railroad spur. An alley ran from Frederica to the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a wooden structure with sides. Seating was on rough wooden benches. Sawdust was spread on the ground. There was no amplification, of course. It was paid for by Tuesday night of the crusade.<sup>12</sup>

The building would and did often seat 5,000 people. At the time when the population of Owensboro did not exceed 12,000 this is an astounding number of people, equal to more than 40% of the population. For comparison, 40% of the current population of Owensboro is more than 20,000 people. Imagine a religious meeting attracting 20,000 people. Like Owensboro a century ago, there is no place to accommodate such a crowd.

The tabernacle stood for many years. I have been unable to discover when it was torn down, but it was not long after the turn of the century. While it stood it was used regularly for religious meetings. George Stewart, B. Fay Mills, William E. Penn, Wilbur Chapman and others came to Owensboro and used the tabernacle for preaching services. The tabernacle was also used for other social and business events.<sup>13</sup>

## THE PREACHING SERVICES

The Sam Jones Revival was a preaching event. The newspaper ran this front page headline: "Sam Jones here. The Georgia Evangelist Preaching to Big Crowds at the Tabernacle. His first sermon full of spice and pepper preached in the afternoon. The night service, conducted on Old-Fashioned country lines, Get after the Sinners Pretty Warmly." and then in all caps: "THINGS WILL BEGIN TO BOIL TODAY."<sup>14</sup>

Pretty warmly? Those are weak words to describe what Sam Jones said in his opening message.

Anybody can be a Methodist in Owensboro on a mighty low plane. Now you Presbyterians, Baptists and Christians sit there and grin. I mean all of you. You are no better than the Methodists about that. You can be a good church member in Owensboro and not amount to much. If there is a tadpole in a mud hole and nothing else in there the tadpole is justified in

feeling pretty big. That's the way with you church members in Owensboro. You are good Owensboro church members, but Lord such church members as you are!!

People have asked if I would take well in Owensboro. I'll tell you I don't want to take with a set of people that would tolerate sixty saloons. Ain't you a nice crowd to ask how a gentleman will take in Owensboro? There ain't but two things that will take in Owensboro. They are whiskey and a free show . . . .

Now I want to say a word to you preachers. If you will hold while I skin for the next week hides will come down in Owensboro in a remarkable way. If I had been here as long as these good pastors and hadn't succeeded any better than they have, I'd be willing to hold for any fellow who came along for a change. Ain't I right, brethren?<sup>15</sup>

The newspaper records only one "amen" in response to the question put by Sam Jones. That may lead us to surmise that most of the area pastors were of two opinions concerning Sam Jones. On the one hand, he was preaching their message, supporting their work, recruiting new members for their churches. On the other hand he frequently spoke with disdain about ministers and their work. Here is an example from his famous "Sermon to Men."

If God almighty will get charge of the pulpits of this town and the preachers will quit talking about a New Jerusalem and preach about this old debauched city, we will make things hum. A little Methodist preacher up in the pulpit preaching about infant baptism and the whole town going to hell! What does the devil care about that kind of preaching? A little Presbyterian preacher up in the pulpit preaching about the final perseverance of the saints, and not one in a hundred of his gang has got anything to persevere on. The Baptist and Campbellites hollering water! water! and three fourths of their crowd going to where they cannot get a drop. O my God! Give us a gospel of backbone; a gospel of the ten commandments; a gospel that will make men sober and honest in their dealings, a good husband to their wives, a good father to their children, a good citizen in his community. Talking about the New Jerusalem! I never preached on heaven in my life. The few of the crowd that will get there can see for themselves, and the most of the crowd will never get there and would never know whether I told the truth about it or not. My Lord, give us a gospel of ethics – it is

reformation or revolution.<sup>16</sup>

It was vintage Sam Jones. Straight-talking, whiskey-fighting, soul-saving, story-telling, no-holds-barred sensation and he had come to Owensboro. And he had one question for the locals that had no doubt been put to listeners in tabernacles all over the South: "I'd like to know what there is this side of hell that's mean and wicked and lowdown that Owensboro hasn't got?"<sup>17</sup>

### SERMON TO MEN

Nowhere are these mean and wicked and lowdown things described so vividly and denounced so thoroughly as in his "Sermon to Men." He announced it like this:

On Sunday evening I am going to preach a special sermon to men. I promise you anything but a dull time. If you want to see blood, hair, and the ground tore up, come. It's going to be a big time, and we'll have lots of fun. Fun is the next thing to religion. I'm going to locate, situate and regulate some things in this town tomorrow night in a way that you will enjoy unless you get hit. Then you'll enjoy it after it quits hurtin'. It'll be good for you.<sup>18</sup>

With an ad campaign like that who could stay at home? What else was there to do in Daviess County in 1893, except visit one of the sixty-plus saloons scattered around town? They came, five thousand the paper said; six thousand as reported later in the preface to the printed version of the sermon.<sup>19</sup> A tabernacle full of men and boys arrived for the show, I mean, the sermon.

The sermon, very similar to other "sermons to men" preached in other Jones revivals, was taken down verbatim by stenographer, R. P. Miller. It was published in pamphlet form and sold for ten cents. To this day it is fascinating reading. He says in the introduction: "I am going to take up some of the cardinal sins so commonly practiced by men and talk about them."<sup>20</sup> Thus, he launches into profanity.

The old men swear, the middle-aged men swear, the boys swear. I think I have heard as much swearing among the young bucks of this town as any town I was ever in in my life . . . . You have been cussing Sam Jones down on the street, haven't you? I would just as soon a buzzard would puke on me. Let me tell you another thing, it is the height of ill-manners and bad raising to sit around hotels and in railroad yards and spew your oaths out in the presence of strangers and decent people. If you are obliged to cuss go to some retired place and cuss it out.<sup>21</sup>

He went on to sabbath desecration, then to gaming, by which he meant

gambling, horse-racing, Louisiana lottery tickets, betting, throwing craps and playing cards. Next came licentiousness.

If there is a deeper, darker hell for one man than there is for another, it is for the dirty, infamous scoundrel of a husband that will come home at night from a house of infamy and pillow his head by the side of his sweet, virtuous wife. You old married rips are at it too.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, Sam Jones got to the sin of intemperance. All else was preliminary to his long-awaited tirade against liquor. Describing the nasty effects of alcohol and referring to the Ohio River in the distance, Jones said: "O my God, down this river, from source to mouth, is lined with human wretches enough to make the devil himself hide his face and weep with horror."<sup>23</sup>

The alcohol industry was strong in Owensboro and included both distilleries and saloons.<sup>24</sup> Foster Hayes says there were sixty seven saloons<sup>25</sup> and that was a lot for a population of 12,000! Prior to the meeting, the Hopkinsville newspaper printed this observation: "It will be interesting to note how Sam Jones handles whiskey and gambling over in Owensboro, where whiskey is the leading product of the town, and card-playing is the favorite parlor amusement. If ever a place needed a Sam Jones, Owensboro is the very locality."<sup>26</sup>

The temperance movement was taking root all over the country, and had preceded Jones to Daviess County.<sup>27</sup> The first temperance organization in Owensboro was the Sons of Temperance and dates to 1846. They advocated total abstinence and the eventual eradication of the liquor business.

Jones knew which side he was on and so did everybody else. On Saturday, May 6th, the newspaper reported on the Friday night sermon with these headlines: "Torrents of Abuse. The distillers of the city catch it at Sam Jones' Hands. The preachers of the city made to vote them worse than train robbers. Drunkard saloonkeepers and other sinners come in for a libation from the vials of wrath. Regular hair lifting sermons."<sup>28</sup> Editor Urey Woodson made this observation about the sermon:

The distillers, wholesale dealers and whiskey speculators of Owensboro will not probably care much for what Sam Jones says of them but when they learn that a number of local ministers have declared them worse than train robbers they may go to wondering why they have been allowed to be church members, officers high in the church, as well as among the heaviest contributors to the church, all these years. Why not kick them out of the churches if they don't 'quit their meanness?'<sup>29</sup>

That report turned into a prophesy that has had century long ramifications for Christian folk in Owensboro.

Jones' opinion of liquor was, of course, shaped by his own experience, and his own experience is the very story with which this sermon ends:

At twenty-one years of age I was admitted to the bar of my state to practice law in the courts of our state. No boy ever started out with brighter prospects. At the very court I was licensed to practice law and the first week of my legal life I was full of business and the day after the court adjourned I boarded the train, came through Bowling Green and Louisville, took the short Line train, got off at Eminence, Kentucky, rode out four miles and married as sweet and pure Kentucky girl as I ever saw in this world. I carried her to my Georgia home and in the three long, dreary hopeless years that followed I saw the roses fade out of her cheeks, the light of hope fade out of her eye. I look back over those three years of debauchery and it seems a weird dream of the past that I do not understand. Many a night I have come home in the debaucheries of my wayward life and at midnight wake up from my stupor and find my wife kneeling at my side bathed in tears crying 'O God, save my poor, wayward, ruined husband.'"<sup>30</sup> He went on to detail the birth of his first child, then the deathbed plea of his father. He said, "I stood there quivering from head to foot and looked at my dying father a few moments; I rallied the last vestige of my remaining manhood and said 'Father, I make you the pledge.' That has been twenty years and six months ago, and I can look God and man in the face tonight and say that every step I have taken from that day to this has been toward the good world. Some of these days I hope to grasp my father's noble hand and say, 'Father, I have ever been able to keep the pledge I made to you in your dying hour, and here is my hand, to live with you in glory forever.'"<sup>31</sup>

The stern sermon and its final touching story did its work. The editor of the printed pamphlet added this footnote to the end of the text: At the conclusion of the sermon Mr. Jones asked those who endorsed every word of the sermon to stand up; instantly six thousand men arose on their feet. Then he asked those who would start a better life to come and give him their hands, and fifteen hundred men came forward and gave their hands. Thus ended the most remarkable religious service ever held in Kentucky."<sup>31</sup>

It must have been remarkable. One of those who stood that night was the young attorney, and later author, William Foster Hayes.

Sam's sermon that night was talked about for years and don't doubt is still remembered by many as it is by me . . . I have never seen so many men so powerfully swayed by any kind of

speech as on that occasion. Dr. Gilby C. Kelly, then pastor of Settle Memorial and a profound and scholarly preacher, said it was 'the sublimest hour in the history of Owensboro.'<sup>32</sup>

## THE ECONOMIC STORY

It may have been the most sublime hour, but for many it was the most profitable week. While there has been no study of the economic impact of the Sam Jones meetings, there is much evidence in the primary sources that it was a good week for business as well as for religion.

Prior to the arrival of Jones, merchants were using the event to promote their wares. Wile Brothers, claiming to be the largest exclusive clothing House in Kentucky, ran a quarter page ad in the Sunday *Messenger*. In big bold print it began: "Sam Jones, the great preacher will be among us this week." And then in smaller type:

And thousands of people will come to hear him from all over the country. A large tabernacle has been built for the accommodation of the masses. To people living at a distance and coming to our city, we extend an invitation to make our big and roomy stores their headquarters. We have made extraordinary large preparations for a big spring trade this season and have added many news lines in every department. Our doors are wide open to the public and an inspection is solicited from every one to visit us and see the largest and best selected stock of ready-made clothing in the state. Notwithstanding the fact that we have so far this season done 40 percent more business than we ever did before and 50 percent more clothing business than all other clothing houses in Owensboro we still have too many goods, which we propose to unload and beginning tomorrow Monday, May 1st, we will offer three thousand Men's shirts, all styles, all sizes. Not a suit of them that is not guaranteed all wool; not a suit that is not worth \$18, to \$22.50; go now at \$10, 12, 13.50 and 15 a suit.<sup>33</sup>

A. Levy, another local clothing merchant, countered with their own brand of revival business. "Quit Your Meanness, Sam Jones says! Get down to hard, earnest work. Now the best way to do this thing is to buy your dry goods, shoes and millinery from us and you will certainly be on the safe side." Thus they described their goods!<sup>34</sup>

Jones was good for the railroad. He, of course, rode the rail to town: and the tabernacle was built on the railroad.<sup>35</sup> This was apparently a deliberate strategy, anticipating much rail traffic during the week. They were not disappointed. On Sunday, May 7th, editor Woodson made these rail-related observations.

The Falls of Rough gives excursion rates today and a large delegation from that section is expected . . . . The Texas special from Stephensport will arrive at 9:30 this morning and return after the night service . . . . The O. and N. will handle twenty-five passenger cars today. The Russellville special will arrive at 9:30, the Bowling Green special at 10:30 and the regular at 11:00. The Bowling Green special will not start back until after the night service.<sup>36</sup>

On Tuesday (May 2), the paper estimated that train riders to the services totaled 1,500 a day;<sup>37</sup> and on Sunday (May 7) there were 1500 commuters from Bowling Green alone.<sup>38</sup>

But while the railroads made good money from these commuters, others did not. Note this *Messenger* editorial comment: "Notwithstanding there was such a large crowd in the city Sunday, the leading hotel had less than 200 guests for dinner and this was more than any other hotel had. They are not hotel crowds that are coming to the meetings."<sup>39</sup>

One business that reaped a financial harvest was the newspaper. On the same day that Woodson reported low traffic at the hotels, he wrote: "The *Messenger's* fine reports of the big revival meeting are bringing unprecedented sales for the paper."<sup>40</sup> Every day for nine days Sam Jones made the front page. These were generally four articles every day. A general article with extensive quotes from Jones' previous day sermon, a secondary article with descriptions of the other two meetings each day, a column entitled "Tabernacle Talk" and editorial comments from editor Woodson.

It is fair to say that the newspaper was good for Sam Jones and Sam Jones was good for the newspaper. Woodson wrote at the end of the crusade:

Sam Jones has found one good thing in Owensboro, and that is a newspaper, which as a matter of course means the *Messenger*. To a reporter of this paper yesterday he expressed his thanks for the fair reports of the tabernacle services made by the *Messenger* saying they had been accurate and concise and had represented him fairly in every way. This is what the *Messenger* started in to do and what it always does. It's religion is to tell all the news and tell it truly without prejudice or favor. Some people in this town, knowing the *Messenger* didn't take much stock in Mr. Jones, have been trying to find fault with its reports and pretending to believe that it was not properly quoting the evangelist. We have his own testimony to contradict them. Now what have you to say to that, "you mangy, lowdown, narrow-eyed, possum eared, knock-kneed, mumber-jinted, infernal, damnable old fools, devils, scoundrels, jackasses, billy goats,



you. If we hear anything more from you we'll get you all in a bunch and spit on you and drown you. Catch on bud?<sup>41</sup>

## THE LEGACY OF SAM JONES

The Sam Jones meeting was, by all accounts, a spectacular success in 1893. Crowds were large, churches gained new members, half of the saloons closed down for good. Hayes says it this way: "Because of these services Owensboro has ever since been a much better place; hundreds if not thousands of people have led higher purer lives; the churches took on renewed life, the impulse of which I am sure is still felt . . . One of the greatest effects of the meetings was to inspire and renew the zeal of the local pastors. When the second meeting was held Dr. G. Waverly Briggs was pastor at Settle Memorial [Methodist Church], one of the most eloquent and popular preachers Owensboro has ever had and I remember speaking at the time of the new Sam Jones edition of Dr. Briggs."<sup>42</sup>

Out of the Jones meeting the Young Men's Christian Association was organized.<sup>43</sup> One of the last efforts of the revival meeting was the raising of money to construct the new building for the YMCA. The newspapers printed the names of all who pledged \$100, or \$50, or \$25 or \$10 or \$5. During and after the meeting more than \$25,000 was raised for the building.<sup>44</sup>

Jones returned to Owensboro in 1895 for another revival. Hayes wrote: "The success of the first meeting was duplicated in 1895 . . . , the first one being the more important only or chiefly because it was first."<sup>45</sup> We can only guess at the precise date of the second meeting (summer, 1895) because newspapers for the summer of 1895 are not extant and other historical records do not discuss the event. Nevertheless, we know that it did have one result that has shaped the life and work of Baptist people in Owensboro from that day until this. It led to the division of First Baptist Church, the departure of her pastor and a host of members, and the formation of Third Baptist Church.<sup>46</sup>

The key player in this secondary drama was Fred Hale. Rev. Hale was a young man when he assumed the pastorate of First Baptist Church in February of 1893, just three months prior to Jones' first crusade. Hale himself was something of a revivalist, a strong personality whose preaching presented things in black and white and called for decision. He led First Baptist Church to support the work of Sam Jones, and scheduled special services before and after both the 1893 and 1895 tabernacle meetings.<sup>47</sup>

Sam Jones was Fred Hale's kind of preacher, and no preacher in the city took the Jones' message to heart quite like Hale. When Rev. Hale attempted to continue the Same Jones sort of direct, hard-hitting, name-calling preaching that drew such large crowds to the tabernacle, he

discovered that his Baptist congregation did not respond to him like the people had to Jones. The fact that Hale's city congregation was more sophisticated than those that came to hear Jones may also have had something to do with it.

During the first Sam Jones meeting in 1893, newspaper editor Urey Woodson wrote a somewhat satirical editorial challenging the ministers to follow-through on Jones' strong message. These were his words in an editorial entitled "Sic 'em, Sam; sic 'em!"

Sam Jones, having now roasted the progressive euchre-players, the theatre going preachers, the wine-bibbing preachers, the editors, the distillers, the saloon-keepers, the whiskey-selling druggists, and the men who were formerly in the whiskey business and still have the money they made in it, and having forced the local preachers that attend his meetings to endorse his bitterest utterances, should not allow the worst horned and hooved devils of the community to escape.

How could the saloon-keepers sell whiskey if somebody didn't rent them houses? And how about those who formerly rented houses to saloon-keepers and haven't disgorged their ill-gotten rents? How about the banks that have loaned money to distillers to make whiskey – and at usurious interest, at that?

How about those who once loaned money this way and have now reformed, but haven't disgorged their ill-gotten usurious gains?

How about the growers and dealers in the nasty tobacco, the use of which is the filthiest and, after whiskey, the most injurious and debasing habit?

How about the sellers of questionable literature, including the awful Sunday newspapers?<sup>48</sup>

If Brother Jones will now strike into this field and bulldoze the local preachers into endorsing what he says and make them promise to turn all such members out of the church unless they "quit their meanness" and give us the stuff they've gotten by these means, the last vestige of a male church member will be about wiped out of Owensboro and the churches can be reorganized on a different and Christian basis.

Sic, 'em, Sam; sick 'em!<sup>49</sup>

Pastor Fred Hale of Owensboro's First Baptist Church evidently took up the challenge from Sam Jones. In 1896, less than one year after Jones' second meeting, he led his church to adopt a resolution against alcohol. On Wednesday night, February 5, 1896, at the regular business meeting of the church, the following resolution was introduced by E. H. Maddox:

WHEREAS - The liquor Traffic, in violation of the Law of God, is, in many ways, causing much trouble in our Church, destroying the peace of Zion, and crippling her influence in the spread of the Gospel, Therefore,

RESOLVED, 1st. That no member of this Church shall be retained in its fellowship who sells intoxicating liquor, as a beverage; or 2nd. Who has money invested in the Liquor Traffic; or 3rd. Who rents his property for the use of saloons, or the wholesale liquor trade.<sup>50</sup>

This effort to position the church along the lines of Sam Jones did not go far enough for some members of the congregation. An amendment to the Resolution was offered which extended the exclusionary action to those:

Who loan money to any person or persons who engage in the manufacturing, buying, or selling of intoxicating liquors; or any Mayor or Common Council or other Officers that grant license to any person or persons engaged in the manufacturing, buying, or selling of intoxicating liquors; or any Insurance Agent who insures intoxicating liquors, either in the Saloon, wholesale Liquor House, or Bonded Warehouse; or any person or persons who engage in the Liquor Traffic either for wages or otherwise; or any person or persons who live in part or in whole on money or monies collected from any person or persons directly or indirectly connected with the Whiskey Business; or any person or persons who buy or sell cattle, hogs, or other stock to be fed in part or in whole on distilled slop.<sup>51</sup>

The motion passed by a significant majority; but it did not settle the issue in the First Baptist Church. In fact, the liquor issue, and perhaps more importantly, the leadership style of the pastor Fred Hale, produced significant discord among the people of the church. All records, including the church minutes and the newspaper articles indicate that the division of the church was a bitter dispute that threatened to end up in court. The matter was finally resolved in August of 1896 when Hale and a majority of the members left First Baptist Church, actually walking out of the building while those remaining sang, "God be with you till we meet again."<sup>52</sup> That was the beginning of Third Baptist Church of Owensboro, set to begin its

centennial celebration in the fall of 1995.

Sam Jones died in 1906, while on a train returning home from a preaching engagement in Arkansas. A memorial service was held in Owensboro attended by more than 1500 people.<sup>53</sup> Sam Jones lives on, in the memories, institutions, and, perhaps most importantly, in the moral traditions of many of our people.

#### ENDNOTES

1. *Messenger*, April 25, 1893, p. 1. It is important to note that the *Messenger* was the morning paper. The *Inquirer* was published each afternoon. However, microfilm copies of the *Inquirer* for 1893 and 1895 are not available.
2. Sam Jones, "Autobiographical Sketch of Sam P. Jones," published as an introduction in (among others) a volume of his sermons entitled *Sam Jones' Own Book: A Series of Sermons*, edited by Sam Jones (Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe, 1886) p. 10. There is no first class, critical biography of Jones available, although one is being prepared by Dr. Craig Skinner. A biography of sorts was written by his friend Walt Holcomb entitled *Sam Jones: Ambassador of the Almighty* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1947). A more interesting volume is Laura Jones [Sam's wife] assisted by Walt Holcomb, *The Life and Sayings of Sam P. Jones* (Atlanta: Franklin-Turner, 1907). There is also a good biographical sketch in *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching*, edited by Clyde E. Fant, Jr. and William M. Pinson, Jr. (Waco, Texas: Word, 1971), Vol. VI, pp. 323-327.
3. Jones, "Autobiographical Sketch," p. 17.
4. Laura Jones, *Life and Sayings*, p. 53; the full story is told, pp. 50-56.
5. *Messenger*, May 5, 1893, p. 1.
6. William Foster Hayes, *Sixty Years of Owensboro: 1893-1943* (Owensboro: Messenger Job Printing Co., 1944), p. 154.
7. Laura Jones, *Life and Sayings*, p. 358.
8. Quoted in James I. Warren, *O For a Thousand Tongues: The History, Nature and Influence of Music in the Methodist Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1988), p. 149.
9. Fant and Pinson, *Twenty Centuries*, pp. 321-365.
10. Warren, *Thousand Tongues*, pp. 149f. Cf. Holcomb, *Sam Jones*, pp. 60ff. and Jones and Holcomb, *Life and Sayings*, pp. 133-155.
11. William U. Eiland, *Nashville's Mother Church: The History of the Ryman Auditorium* (printed by Thomas-Paris Printing, Old Hickory Tennessee, 1992), pp. 5-23. The information about the program called "Sam's Place" was gathered on the author's personal trip to Ryman Auditorium in October of 1994.
12. Hayes, *Sixty Years*, p. 151. A good description of the tabernacle was given in the *Messenger*, April 25, 1893, p. 2; see also the *Messenger*, May 4, 1893, p. 5.
13. Hayes, *Sixty Years*, p. 155.

14. *Messenger*, May 5, 1893, p. 1
15. *Ibid.*
16. Sam Jones, "Sermon to Men." Pamphlet on file in James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, p. 12. A copy is in the files of Dwight A. Moody, Third Baptist Church, Owensboro, Kentucky.
17. *Messenger*, June 15, 1892, p. 1. This article was written by Keith Lawrence in a centennial series. I could not find the quote referred to in this article but a similar statement is recorded in the "Sermon to Men" page 16: "If there is anything this side of hell that Owensboro has not got a slice of, what is it?"
18. *Messenger*, May 7th, 1893, p. 1.
19. *Ibid.* Cf. "Sermon to Men," p. 26.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 9.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
24. Hugh Potter, *A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky* (Louisville: Herff Jones-Paragon, 1974), pp. 117-121.
25. Hayes, *Sixty Years*, p. 153.
26. *Messenger*, May 4, 1893, p. 5.
27. Wendell Holmes Rone, Sr. *Owensboro's First Church: 1893-1985* (Owensboro: Progress Printing, 1985), p. 182.
28. *Messenger*, May 6, 1893, p. 1.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
30. "Sermon to Men," p. 24.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
32. Hayes, *Sixty Years*, p. 152. See also the newspaper report, which ended with these words: "The meeting which, from a Sam Jones point of view, had bid fair to be a failure, suddenly became a thing of vast life and strength and some of the preachers were almost overcome by the sight." *Messenger*, May 9, 1893, p. 5.
33. *Messenger*, April 30, 1893, p. 4.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
35. For information on the development of railroads in Owensboro, see Lee A. and Aloma W. Dew, *Owensboro: The City on the Yellow Banks* (Bowling Green, Kentucky: Rivendell, 1988) pp. 65-79. Though in general the proximity to the railroad was a help, it also could be a hindrance. Note this entry in the paper: "When a freight train comes along business in the tabernacle has to suspend. Last night, the switching of the freight cars caused a good deal of annoyance." *Messenger*, May 7, 1893, p. 5.
36. *Messenger*, April 30, 1893, p. 5.
37. *Messenger*, May 7, 1893, p. 5.
38. *Messenger*, May 9, 1893, p. 5.
39. *Ibid.* This could be attributed to the fact that the hotels sold alcohol. Another reason is suggested by an editorial comment made in Thursday's paper: "The great majority of people who have attended the meetings were from the country. Most of the converts, also, were

country people." *Messenger*, May 10, 1893, p. 5.

40. *Messenger*, May 9, 1893, p. 7.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 4. How different this is from the relationship that Pastor Fred Hale had with Editor Urey Woodson; see note #48 below.
42. Hayes, *Sixty Years*, p. 155.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 228-233. Technically, this 1893 action was a reorganization. Cf. *Inquirer*, May 29, 1924, p. 1.
44. *Messenger*, May 10, 1893, p. 1.
45. Hayes, *Sixty Years*, p. 152.
46. The most complete description is Rone, *Owensboro's First Church*, pp. 183-204 who sites the primary sources. See also the printed booklet entitled *Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Third Baptist Church, Owensboro, Kentucky*, described as "a concise history of the church compiled and written by Ken O. Adkisson." A copy is in the library of Third Baptist Church. Ken Adkisson is preparing a complete history of the church in connection with the Centennial Celebration of the church.
47. *Messenger*, April 25, 1893, p. 1; May 9, 1893, p. 5; May 10, 1893, p. 4; May 11, 1893, p. 5. Cf. Record Book Six, 1893-1903, p. 103 (and elsewhere) in the archives of First Baptist Church, Owensboro, Kentucky.
48. The Sunday before the arrival of Jones, this notice appeared in the paper: "At the First Baptist Church Rev. Fred D. Hale will preach at 11 a.m. on "The Lord's Day," with special application to the reading of Sunday newspapers. This sermon is intended to show the origin and design of the ancient Jewish Sabbath, and the change from the seventh to the first day of the week. Also the origin and design of the Christian Sabbath, and how it is that the reading of secular papers on that day is a violation of the gospel law, and a grievous offense to our Lord." *Messenger*, April 30, 1893, p. 5. Please note that this sermon announcement advertising the Sunday worship service with a sermon against reading the Sunday paper was printed in the Sunday morning paper! For more on the relationship between Hale and Woodson, see *Messenger*, January 12, 1896, p. 1; January 25, 1896, p. 1; February 2, 1896, p. 1, February 4, 1896, p. 1; February 7, 1896, p. 1.
49. *Messenger*, May 7, 1893, p. 4.
50. *Ibid.*, May 11, 1893, p. 5. See Rone, *Owensboro's First Church*, pp. 184ff.
51. Rone, *Owensboro's First Church*, p. 185.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 186. Only two of thirteen deacons sided with Pastor Hale in the conflict which may say something about the congregational dynamics of the episode.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200. The *Messenger* does not report the actual division of the church in August of 1896, which is odd given its long term interest in the Jones-Hale episode. It is of some interest that in the same year that First Baptist Church of Owensboro divided, there was a similar split in the First Baptist Church of Evansville, Indiana. There, also, the precipitating causes were pastoral leadership style and reform efforts. *Messenger*, January 12, 1896, p. 1.
53. *Messenger*, June 15, 1992, p. 1.

## ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATION, AND SPORTS IN OWENSBORO BEFORE WORLD WAR I

by Robert A. Greene

Owensboro was growing. The year was 1912 and an optimistic euphoria hovered over the city. Owensboro was one of the most important towns along the Ohio river. Located between the Mississippi and Louisville, the town, often called Yellow Banks, was thriftily attractive. When Owensboro was incorporate as a town in 1817 it had been laid off into streets and alleys which were easily accessible and quite smooth. By 1912, many of those streets had been improved by asphalt and were lined with concrete sidewalks. The population had risen from 299 souls in 1839, to 3430 in 1870, and by 1912 over 16,000 people inhabited Owensboro.

Since Owensboro's population was steadily increasing there was a need for the city's infrastructure to expand. Equipped with water, electric, and gas serving facilities the city was very capable of supplying needed utilities to the citizenry. The town was also well equipped for natural and human hazards. Protected by three fire stations and a new set of fire alarms, the city was ready to tackle any blaze. The town's population also slept well at night knowing it was equipped with a police force that could rival any squad around.

Owensboro was also very proud of its schooling system. Said to be the "pride and boast of the town," the system included primary, secondary, and several excellent colleges. The only high school was fed by 9 ward buildings which were scattered throughout the city. Owensboro also had a single school for the colored children. Covering grades 1 through 12 the colored school was capable of giving its students a sound education. With the primary and secondary levels being well covered the Central Business College was probably the most attended with Columbia College coming in a close second.

The city was also well spoken of in the economic realm. Containing seventy-five manufacturing plans and six banks its total capital was over \$6,000,000. Numerous tobacco warehouses, shipping firms, and liquor distilleries made Owensboro an economically sound city. Following the economic scare of 1907, Owensboro had recovered quite well by 1912. It was even stated in the 1911-1912 city directory that Owensboro's economic base could very well support a population of over 100,000. Owensboro's strong economic base also allowed for excellent transportation of incoming and outgoing merchandise. Several miles of electric street railway made the business district very accessible to the three railroads which entered Owensboro. Served by the Illinois Central, the Louisville and Nashville, and the Louisville, Henderson and St. Louis, Owensboro was also well suited to receive and ship goods across to country.

Owensboro and Daviess County were also well supported by a rich agricultural society. Daviess County produced more tobacco than any territory twice its size. Controlling over 33,000,000 pounds annually, it was said to be the King of Tobacco in Kentucky. Not only did Owensboro and Daviess county supply a large amount of tobacco, they regularly produced corn, wheat, and other grain commodities.

Finally, by 1912, Owensboro was a soundly established community following a progressive path toward the future.

The location of the city is healthful and picturesque and no better place on earth can be found in which to live and be happy. There are many larger cities than Owensboro, and many cities or sections that can boast supremacy in some particular product or feature; but when it comes to finding at your door pretty much all that the temperate care can provide for man in the way of solid comforts, with extras thrown in, provided a man is willing to go after them in the right way, then you'll find these things right here in Owensboro . . . .

Obviously Owensboro was a prosperous city with many luxuries of a larger town. These luxuries were not only evident in services rendered to the community and citizenry, but Owensboro had many leisure activities to offer its' population. Clubs, Secret Societies, Churches, Public Entertainment, and an excellent parks and recreation system allowed the people of Owensboro to relax in their leisure time.

To begin with, Owensboro had many clubs which offered its' population opportunities to step-out and enjoy their leisure hours. Though it is hard to find exact numerical accounts of patrons, one can assume memberships ranged from a few to hundreds depending on the club.

The Rotary, Knights of Columbus, Moose, Shriners, Odd Fellows and Sons of Confederate Veterans allowed the gentleman folk of Owensboro to pass the time away. In many newspapers from the first ten to fifteen years of the twentieth century one can find articles pertaining to these organizations. Not to be denied their place in society, Women were included into the scene. Women had a choice from Daughters of the American Revolution, Eastern Stars, and Daviess County Women's Suffrage Association to name a few.

The Daviess County Women's Suffrage Association was the largest female organization in the county. From the beginning, this organization continued to grow into a membership of five hundred by 1920. During this span the women fought a long hard battle against alcohol and for the rights of women's voting. Though women continuously fought for their equal rights within society, they never forgot that they were the mothers, wives, and housewives that helped hold families together in early twentieth-century Owensboro.

While the Daviess County Woman's Suffrage Association was one of



the largest female organizations in the county, the Y.M.C.A. was the top male organization in the city. Founded in 1893, The Young Men's Christian Association made it possible for business men, students, boys, and young men to develop their mind, body, and morals within a gymnasium type atmosphere. The Y.M.C.A. also provided the male gender with reading rooms, a well versed library, and religious based activities to provide a well rounding of the whole body and mind. The number of members was consistently high and for \$5.00 a year membership was very accessible to the average male.

Having covered the male and female population we should also notice that colored individuals were not left out of society. Though the colored society never resembled that of Owensboro's white society, it did offer a place for men of color to unwind. The predominant colored organizations were the Masonic Temple, K. of P., and the U.B.S. Brother's Lodge. The Masons had three different chapters for their patrons to choose from. With the female, male, and colored population of Owensboro having their respected organizations there was also plenty of public entertainment for the remainder of the city.

The first major form of public entertainment in Owensboro came in 1900. The building of two large theatres opened up entertainment possibilities for the public's viewing. The Grand and Temple theatres were the first Nickelodeons to venture into Owensboro. Costing only 5 cents, the Nickelodeons heyday ran from 1900 to 1905. These theatres provided the public with grand opera, low burlesque, variety shows, and low comedy. The theatres were always busy and by 1901 Owensboro was sporting four full operating houses. The Grand at First and St. Ann, The Wonderland, The Majestic at 219 W. 2nd, and The Luna Airdome, which happened to be an open-air theatre, provided even more public entertainment. The top drawing theatre was the Grand at First and St. Ann. It was one of the first to show feature pictures. In 1909, George M. Cohan's "Fifty Miles from Boston," and the hit "Parisfal" attracted large crowds to the movie house. Movies were not only the drawing card for the theatres. A large hit of the day was the "Negro" Minstrel or Blackface. In 1909, Al. C. Fields brought his blackface minstrel to Owensboro. The 1,800 seat theatre was filled to capacity and all enjoyed a good show. The theatres also had drawing bills such as Norma Talmage, J. Berrymore, Dorothy Gish, and Charles Chaplin. With such a high level of entertainment one might think prices of admission would be high; not so. The prices of 15 cents for child, 25 cents for an adult matinee, and 50 cents to 75 cents for a night show allowed the biggest portion of Owensboro's population to attend and enjoy entertainment regularly. While the Grand presented large name entertainment on the movie screen, the Wonderland ran consistently funny comedies and in the warmer months the Airdome allowed patrons to enjoy an evening outdoors. With the four theatres

an evening outdoors. With the four theatres providing ample entertainment for Owensboro we might think there was little else to do. However, Owensboro had much more to offer its public.

Several circuses frequented the fairgrounds at 18th and Triplett. Small side shows and animal acts brought people to their tents, and being somewhat out of the main city, the fairgrounds were very accessible by electric line street car.

Floating steamboats frequently visited the docks of Owensboro. Ward's and the Island Queen were two prominent boats of the day. However, people also visited the Ohio for swimming parties or afternoon cruises to the docks at Rockport & Evansville. If theatres, circuses, a river boat party or cruise weren't enough, the city still had many other activities for entertainment and pleasure.

Some of Owensboro's best entertainment activities circulated around its growing parks system. Beginning in 1894, Owensboro began building its many parks facilities. Known today as Legion Park, Owensboro's Hickman park offered the first organized park facility. Located on 23.75 acres Hickman park provided a concession stand and an organized set of park rules. The park was built for the public's enjoyment and city officials made sure it remained a decent place for family picnics.

When Hickman park became a city owned facility in 1894, it was predominately white. It would be until 1906 before the city's colored population had its own facility. Douglas Park, which is today Kendall-Perkins park, was privately owned by J. W. Kendall and J. P. Perkins. Located on West Fifth Street, Douglas park allowed Owensboro's colored public to enjoy their own little realm of relaxation. Though the public had a "Black" and "White" park, both races were able to enjoy Owensboro's Chautauqua.

Located in the Seven Hills district of Owensboro, Chautauqua Park was home of the area's biggest yearly festival. Equivalent to today's Evansville Nut Club Fall Festival, the Owensboro Chautauqua provided fun and relaxation for everyone. Beginning in 1874, a wealthy corporation began organizing a festival to serve the public's entertainment needs. The very first Chautauqua was twelve days in length and consisted of beautiful landscaping, a merry-go-rounds for children, and a bowling alley. The Chautauqua festival gave the public an opportunity to leave the city and enjoy wonderful weather in a beautiful woodland setting. As interest in the Chautauqua continued to grow the festival also began expanding and offering even more for the public. By 1901, the Chautauqua committee had added a six thousand seat auditorium, several tennis courts, and a lagoon for swimming and boating. A year later the Chautauqua festival had grown onto an awesome spectacular. The festival's committee was headed by J. H. Parrish and John G. Delker. These two gentlemen had built Chautauqua Park into a thirty two acre wonderland covered with

an acre island surrounded by the meandering lagoon.

The festival of 1902 consisted of a fifteen day stretch which began in early August. A new post office, telegraph, and music hall had been added over the past year to provide even more luxuries for the festival's patrons. As the festival had grown there were many events to draw the thousands of spectators. A typical day consisted of devotional services beginning at seven thirty a.m. followed by a nine o'clock Olympic type event (Bruner 6). This event consisted of lawn tennis, croquet, bowling, rowing, sprints, pole vaulting, and badminton. Since Owensboro lacked serious organized sports, the Chautauqua offered young people an excellent opportunity to participate in sporting activities. Organized by Dr. H. E. Mechling, the festival's sporting events always drew enthusiastic participants and crowds.

After the sporting events concluded, the day continued to offer various attractions for the populous. At ten thirty a.m. a concert was given before Rev. H. W. Sears delivered his "Taffy Man" speech at eleven o'clock. Following lunch, the afternoon was kicked off by a musical concert filled with singing and dancing by Florence Pace. This concert was then followed by G.A.R. Day. The main attraction was General O. O. Howard's speech on "The American Volunteer" and his importance to our army. The day was finally concluded with a pyrotechnic display at LaRose's great electric fountain.

1903 was probably the greatest Chautauqua to date. Once again the festival's governing body had added even more luxury novelties to draw people to the festival. The addition of a lodge, several cottages, and a well-equipped library once again proved the committee was dedicated to providing the public with a top level form of entertainment. Lasting for fifteen days, that year's Chautauqua had exhibitions and displays housed by five hundred tents. The activities included lectures, Spanish-American war heroes, concerts, sports, and various other social pleasures. This festival was probably the most attended because it included a lecture by William Jennings Bryan.

For the next several years the Chautauqua continued to flourish and offer Owensboro's population the opportunity to enjoy the annual festival. Then in 1908, the depression brought hard times to the Chautauqua and its organizers. Though the 1908 Chautauqua included speeches by Governor John A. Johnson, Evangelist George R. Stuart, Senator Edward W. Carmack, and Mrs. Leonora Marie Lake's, "The Divine Rights of the Child" speech, the depression which plagued Owensboro hit the festival and its attendance rather hard. Though the planning committee brought in Cartoonist Pitt Parker, added a movie house, opened a school of expression ran by Mayme Miller, and presented the famous Chicago Glee Club, the financial depression which gripped Owensboro proved to be too much of a burden for the operators to overcome. This depression hit the festival so hard that it was 1916 before it was back on its feet. However, the park

hard that it was 1916 before it was back on its' feet. However, the park and festival were now owned by the Owensboro Parks and Recreation department. In fact, the entire Seven Hill's Chautauqua Company was bought out by the city. The city then added a second auditorium, a new telephone system, and the Four Gables Hotel. The hotel provided all the luxuries of home for \$1.00 a day or \$12.00 per week.

From 1916 until 1932 the city of Owensboro annually provided the people with the Chautauqua. The festival was always geared to offer the people an opportunity to leave the hustle and bustle of the city and unwind in a friendly atmosphere. So successful was Owensboro's Chautauqua that it was considered the nicest festival in the state of Kentucky. The city's Chautauqua was by far the number one contributor of intellectual stimulation in the first part of the twentieth-century.

One of the reasons the Chautauqua drew large crowds was its' easy access. Thanks to the Owensboro streetcar line, people could make the trip in twenty minutes. The streetcars system not only served the Chautauqua area, it had been extended in 1894 to Hickman Park allowing people transportation to family picnics and social gatherings. The city's railroad system was also an entertainment facilitator. Many trips to Louisville on the Illinois Central Railroad provided excellent sight seeing excursions. For \$2.00 patrons were able to make the round trip and spend the day in Louisville. The railway also had a stop at the Ohio River's ferry landing. This allowed travelers to cross the river and head North to Chicago. Finally, in 1906, three railway companies; the Owensboro and Nashville, the Texas, and Illinois Central combined their monies to build Union Station on September 7, 1906. The station handled up to eighteen trains a day by 1915, and provided even more economic and travel opportunities for Owensboro. Owensboro's desire for travel continued to flourish with the appearance of the automobile.

Around 1905, the people of Owensboro fell in love with the automobile. By 1907, a club was even founded for motor enthusiasts. These clubs were founded "for the protection of those owning automobiles." Since the clubs conducted outings around the countryside and in town, many non-auto owners raised a raucous. They complained the cars caused too much disruption and were a threat to society. However, the complaints were not addressed and many people continued to zoom around in their cars with reckless abandonment.

This infatuation with autos opened up even more economic opportunities for the city. Garages, repair shops, auto parts stores and dealerships began serving people's needs throughout the city. With the automobile, Chautauqua, movies and parks providing ample entertainment for the public none might believe citizens to be satisfied. Though they were satisfied, Owensboro began developing its' love for sports. Though organized sports were not yet introduced into the public, to a large degree

there were sporting events for public entertainment.

The prominent activity of the day was football. The best team around was Owensboro High School. Since 1895, O.H.S. had fielded one of the finest football traditions in the state. In the early 1900's the high school's football team dominated everyone. In an eight year span the team compiled a record of 45-13-1. Within this span O.H.S. fielded several powerhouse teams. The 1917 Red Devils put up statistics that will never be equaled. Undefeated in eight games, the team posted wins of 105-0 and 104-0 point outings. Averaging 74 points a game, that year's gridiron team humiliated teams from Henderson, Madisonville, Princeton, and Hopkinsville. Henderson players even hid in the stands before the game in fear of a trouncing. It is no surprise they won the state championship hands down.

As the tradition of football at O.H.S. continued to grow so did the crowds. Beginning around 1913, the Devils were lead to victories in front of large crowds by excellent coaches. Directing games in front of 1,200 to 1,500 spectators were Arther Acker, B. C. Evans, and Robert Altman. The coaches directed excellent players as well. Don Field and a player known as Snoddy dominated the gridiron for O.H.S. However, there was only one drawback in the team's program; it did not own a field. Since the only field available was at Legion Park the team had to practice and play games after a two mile walk. One can only imagine how tiring the players were before they ever played.

In all, O.H.S.'s domination on the football field provided excellent entertainment for local supporters. Posting victories against Evansville, Lexington, Central City, Rockport, and Bowling Green gave the people of Owensboro a sports team to be proud of.

With Owensboro supporting an excellent football team other sports may have been overlooked. Though not equal to football, Owensboro had an excellent baseball tradition. These ball games usually took place between club teams. Anderson's department store, Pierson's store, and McAtee, Lyddane, and Ray were several of the teams which played games on weekends. With information very sketchy and limited, it is hard to say how seriously baseball was taken.

In the first 17 years of 1900 Owensboro was very lucky to have such a wide variety of entertainment. Movies, Vaudeville, Clubs, Chautauqua's, and football games provided superb ways for people to relax and enjoy themselves. With America's involvement in World War I close at hand, citizens in Owensboro consistently enjoyed forms of entertainment that were rivaled by few cities in the state.

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## THE DAVIESS COUNTY HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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The Daviess County Historical Society is open to all who have an interest in the history of Daviess County, the Green River Valley, or Kentucky. The Society meets on the Third Tuesday of each month from September through May. Most meetings are held at the Owensboro Area Museum on South Griffith Avenue.

Monthly programs of the Daviess County Historical Society are open to all, and non-members are encouraged to attend and participate.

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