

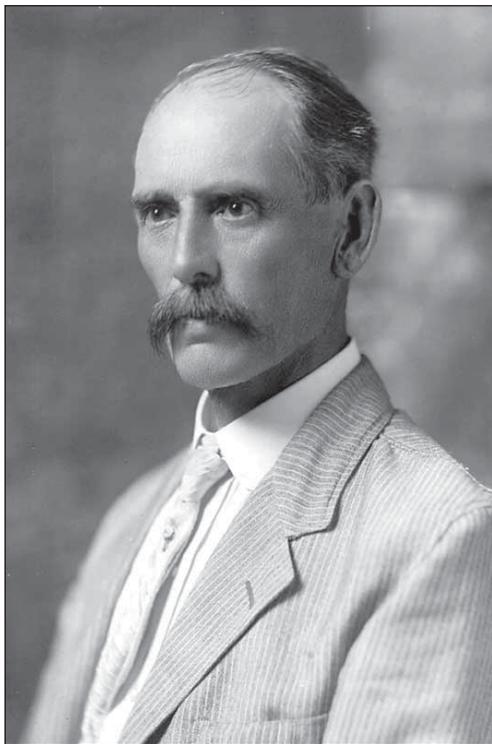
## A Step Back in Time By Bobbie Sue Shelton-Lonas

The article from a early 1905/06 newspaper describing our "Hometown – Eagleville" was printed in its entirety in the April edition of the Eagleville Times.

*Eagleville's biggest and most important single industry viewed in dollar and cents is the Eagleville Tobacco Works, manufacturers oft twist and smoking tobacco. Mr. U. R. Owen is sole proprietor of the tobacco works. It is well worth knowing this gentleman. He is a self-made man, modest and unassuming, but public spirited and progressive. Mr. Owen is a native of Williamson County. He was quite a youth when the Civil War broke out and the days of reconstruction found him in the formative period of his life, wrestling with the adverse forces of nature, for a bare subsistence. He had been deprived of early school facilities and was illy equipped for the battle of life. However, nature had given him indomitable perseverance and he slowly made headway. In 1890 he established a small tobacco factory at Allisona, Williamson County and in 1902 moved to Eagleville and invested \$700, all he had in the world, in his present business. (Excerpt from the previous article)*

Urban J. Owen, son of John Green and Frances Christman Owen was born in 1856 and died in 1926. He was married to Fannie Elizabeth Brittain, daughter of Joseph F. and Elizabeth C. Reynolds Brittain. No Children. After the death of Urban, his widow, Fannie, married Bill Hurt who was associated with the Hurt Department Store in Chapel Hill, Tn. Fannie died in 1954.

U. J. Owen purchased ninety-seven + acres of land from the Executors of the estate of Chesley Williams. J. C. Williams, J. F. Brittain, and R. E. Williams signed the deed, dated December 28, 1896. (J. C. and R. E. Williams – sons of Chesley Williams and J. F. Brittain – a cousin). The purchase price was \$2,046.45. Owen built the tobacco factory on a lot next to the creek where the Eagleville Community Center and Library



Urbane J. Owen

is presently located. In 1912, he sold the rest of the 97 + acres, which included the farm presently owned by Don Lamb and also the lot between the Community Center and the United Methodist Church, which is now church property. This land borders the McCord Property on the North and Highway 99 on the South.

When Pinkney Elmore, who ran a family type tobacco factory in Eagleville on Allison Road, discontinued operation, he sold his formula to U. J. Owen for \$300. George Johnson, a trusted employee of U. J. Owen and later Owen Tobacco Works Inc., who lived on Allisona Road, Eagleville knew the formulas, but did not reveal them until the last years of Owen Tobacco Works, Inc. operation. At that time, he revealed them to Mr. Tom Jordan who was then a shareholder in the company. Mr. Jordan was an employee and served in a supervisory capacity during the last years of U. J. Owen's operation.

U. J. Owen continued to manufacture tobacco until he sold the plant to Owen Tobacco Works, Inc., ten months prior to his death. He produced plug, twist and smoking tobacco. One of his brand names was "Eagle Twist". "Our Pride" was the best-known brand of smoking tobacco. He sold quite a few of his products to wholesalers, filling orders by mail to companies, which included C. B. Ragland and M. E. Derryberry.

K. H. Dodson, S. E. Wallace, Fyke Farmer, Elmer D. Davies and Cecil Sims formed the Corporation for the purpose of buying, manufacturing, and selling tobacco and doing and performing all acts necessary or incidental to such business. The Corporation was authorized to have Capital Stock of \$60,000.00 divided into 600 shares of the par value of \$100.00 each.

The Charter for the Owen Tobacco Works with Acknowledgement and Registration were filed and recorded with Ernest N. Haston, Secretary of State, on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of December 1925.



Fannie Brittain Owen

## U. J. OWEN TOBACCO FACTORY EAGLEVILLE TENNESSEE

For the consideration of \$20,000, Owen Tobacco Works, Inc purchased the U. J. Owen lot and tobacco factory. Also included in the sale was all the fixtures, machinery and other equipment contained in the two and three story frame building located on the premises in question and used by U. J. Owen in the manufacture of tobacco including one tobacco granulator, one cleaning machine, one mixing machine, three packing machines, three plug presses and one form, one steam engine and boiler and all shafting hangers, pulleys, belts, etc., one licorice boiler, one stove, desks, chairs, two tables for rollers, three scales, dumping tables, tobacco boxes and all other similar equipment in said plant. The deed was signed by U. J. Owen and Fannie B. Owen on January 11, 1926.

A Deed of Correction to correct the description of the tract of land was executed and signed April 19, 1926.

The Corporation stock was sold to Leslie Cheek and Associates of Nashville, who operated the factory for about three years. A warehouse was built sometime during the time the Owen Tobacco Works, Inc was manufacturing tobacco.

The stock was then bought by Dr. E. L. Williams, N. N. Dryden, W. T. Lowe, and Thomas B. Jordan who continued the operation until 1936 when the property was conveyed to W. H. Dyer, Sr. and the business equipment and right to use the company's brand names were sold to the R. C. Owen Tobacco Company of Gallatin, Tennessee.

W. H. "Buck" Dyer opened a feed and seed business in the tobacco warehouse in 1938 and began full time operation

on January 1, 1945, after selling his grocery store in downtown Eagleville to Russell and Sue Puckett. He sold Purina Feed, bought and sold grain and also sold coal until about 1967/68 at which time he accepted a full time State job.

Also in 1938, about the same time W. H. Dyer, opened the seed business, his brother, J. Robert "Doc" Dyer opened a feed mill in the old tobacco factory building. He did custom grinding until about 1965 or 1966 when he began work full time as owner of Eagleville Lumber Company. The old tobacco factory building was torn down by W. R. Ralston.

On October 6, 1975 W. H. Dyer sold this property to John Hill for \$5,500. The old tobacco warehouse was razed while Mr. Hill owned the lot.

Lanny L. Turner, Gordon Lamb and Joe King, Trustees of the Eagleville Community Center and Library Association, purchased the lot for the Community Center and Library Building from John Hill, Jr. on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1977 for \$6,200.

Thanks to Miss Marianna Meek, a former Eagleville resident, for her research and recording of the above Eagleville history.



The U. J. Owen Tobacco Factory



Inside of the Owen Tobacco Factory