

THE POST OFFICES OF BOYLE COUNTY, KENTUCKY

The mostly agricultural, 182 square mile, Boyle County lies at the southwest edge of the Outer Bluegrass. The Highland (or Muldraugh) Rim, an escarpment extending west-east across the county just south of the present Ky 34, separates the Bluegrass from the hilly "Knobs" section of central Kentucky. Some 25,640 persons were counted in the county's 1990 Census. Danville, the county seat, is thirty five road miles ssw of the Fayette County court house. The county is drained by the Dicks River in the east and the headwaters of the Salt, Chaplin, and North Rolling Rivers in the west and south.

Though Boyle's territory was one of the earliest settled west of the Alleghenies with cabins built in the vicinity of Danville as early as 1774, it was not until January 15, 1842 that the county itself was formed by legislative act from the southern half of Mercer County¹ and a small section of northwest Lincoln County. At its inception this county, Kentucky's ninety fourth ~~xxxxx~~ in order of formation, assumed its present boundaries. The county's name source, the Virginia-born and Garrard County-raised John Boyle (1774-1834) had represented that area in the U.S. Congress and served as Chief Justice of the Kentucky Court of Appeals (1810-1826) and then, until his death, as U.S. District Judge for Kentucky.

Danville is a third class city of some 12,400 residents centering on the junction of US 127 and 150 and Ky 33,34, and 52. The town was founded by (and probably named for) Walker Daniel in 1783/4 on the site of pioneer John Crow's Station which Daniel, as an officer of the newly established (March 1783) Kentucky District Court, had just acquired for its seat. It is not known if Daniel, a Virginia attorney, had moved to

the site before his official appointment as the District's first Attorney General, but it was probably not before his tenure, in 1781-82, as Halifax County's delegate to the Virginia legislature. From November of that year till June 1784, he is known to have acquired over 50,000 acres of Kentucky land, mostly in what was then Jefferson County, probably as an agent for fellow Virginians. Some time in 1783 (it is not known precisely when) he arranged for the purchase of seventy six acres of the Danville site from John Crow and began laying them off into lots. However, it was not until June 18, 1784 that his acquisition was sanctioned by the Virginia legislature. It was in this deed of conveyance that the tract was first officially referred to as Danville. Daniel may also have opened the first store on the site.

While some have questioned whether the town was actually named for Walker Daniel, no convincing alternative source of the name has been found. It is not likely to have been named for the Virginia town in Pittsylvania County, adjacent to the county that Daniel had represented in the Virginia legislature. The town was not founded and named till 1793.²

After Daniel's untimely death in August 1784, his brother and heir, Robert, completed laying off the town and began selling the lots. Its plat was officially recorded in September 1785 and the town itself, as Danville, was chartered by the Virginia legislature on December 4, 1787. Kentucky's first constitution was framed and adopted in Danville in 1792 following a series of conventions held there from 1784. On August 20, 1792 Thomas Barbee, a local tavern keeper, was commissioned by the new U.S. Post Office Department to establish the local post office. Though he may not officially have assumed his duties before November of that year, Barbee's post office was, indeed, the first established in Kentucky and west of the Alleghenies.³

With the arrival of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad in the 1870s, Danville became a major transportation and trade center for that section of the Bluegrass and ushered in the county's only significant industrial development. Danville's present industries include chemical, clothing, furniture, floor care products, wire and cable, and conveyor belts.

Boyle's second oldest town, Perryville, is now a fifth class city of some 800 residents centering where US 68/150 crosses the Chaplin River, 9½ miles west of Danville. The site was first settled in 1781-2 by a party led by James Harberson and was called Harberson's Station and later Harberson's Crossing (for here was the junction of the main roads between Danville and Louisville and between Harrodsburg and the Green River settlements). The town was laid out in 1815 by Edward Bullock and William Hall on thirty two acres of their land and honored Oliver Hazard Perry's Lake Erie victory of 1813. Bullock established the Perryville post office on February 12, 1816 and the Legislature chartered the town the following December. About two miles northwest is the site of the decisive Civil War battle of Perryville (October 8, 1862), now a state shrine.

As near as we can determine, Boyle's third post office, the shortlived (May 31, 1848 through July 1849) Spragens [spraegh/ nz] was in the home of its name source and only postmaster William Spragens. In 1845 William moved from his family's South Rolling Fork farm (in Casey County) several miles north to the North Rolling Fork which forms the Boyle-Casey County boundary. While maintaining his home on the Boyle County side (in the bottom just west of the junction of Ky 37 and 243, twenty miles southwest of Danville), he opened a store on the Casey side, just west of the mouth of the Little South Fork. In 1850 Spragens returned to the South Fork country, selling the store to Gabriel Jackson Penn. This store was later (1886) the site of the Casey County post office of Rollings.

The first of the seven post offices to serve Boyle County stations on the Knoxville Branch of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad (between Lebanon and Sinks) was Mitchellsburgh. Its establishment on February 19, 1853, however, preceded the railroad's arrival by thirteen years. The town was founded on the old Lebanon Road (now Ky 34), some twelve miles wsw of Danville, around 1846 and named for its first postmaster and the county's first judge, James Payne Mitchell (1794-1871) whose family owned much of the vicinity. Through the second half of the nineteenth century the town flourished with flour, woolen, and saw mills and factories making shingles, wagons, harnesses, and shoes. In 1894 the name of the still active post office was simplified to Mitchellsburg.

Parksville, another small village with an active post office, is centered at the junction of Ky 34 and 300, three rail and road miles east of Mitchellsburg. Founded around 1856, its post office was established on February 12, 1859, with James L. Stockdell, postmaster, and named for James Parks (1823-1888) who is said to have donated the site and was to provide the land for the L&N station built there in 1865.

The first post office established after the arrival of the L&N in early 1866 was the inexplicably named Aliceton. Just one-third of a mile from the Washington County line and $4\frac{1}{2}$ rail miles west of Mitchellsburg, it served the North Fork station from April 26, 1866 till 1941. Richard Survant was the first postmaster. The village (with two sawmills, several stores, a hotel, and other businesses) that grew up around the station and post office was also called Aliceton, and the station took this name too after the turn of the century. Some homes and a trailer camp are all that remain.

The name South Danville was applied to the next post office established (on April 26, 1866) to serve a station on the Knoxville branch. The latter was Danville Station for it was, for a brief time, to serve the city of Danville, four miles north. On March 3, 1867 the town that was developing around the station was chartered as Shelby City. The following month, while Stephen H. Coppage was still postmaster, the post office name was changed to Shelby City and this it remained till ~~August~~ ^{August} it closed in/1926. The station also took the Shelby City name for its proximity to Isaac Shelby's (Kentucky first governor) Knob Lick Farm. This community may early have been nicknamed Briartown by a resident, an ex Confederate officer, W.E. Grubbs, for a heavy growth of wild briars in that vicinity. In 1953 the US Board on Geographic Names approved a local request to rescind its 1940 approval of Shelby on the basis of continued local use of Shelby City.⁴

Meanwhile, a community that may have been called Goresburg at least by 1874 had been founded a mile northwest of Shelby City in anticipation of the extension of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad south of Danville. An item in Danville's newspaper, The Kentucky Advocate, refers to such a named place, as does the Beer's county map of 1876. On October 4, 1880 Thomas Weston Gore who, with his brother James, had recently moved to this site from Shelby City where they ran one of the local hotels, established another post office. When Danville Junction, the name of the local L&N station was rejected by the Post Office Department, the office was named Gore. In April 1882 it became Goresburgh but the following month was given the name Junction City for the crossing of the two railroads by that time.⁵

A rivalry soon developed between the two neighboring towns. By the turn of the century, Junction City had eclipsed the other town in most respects, and on August 4, 1971 it annexed Shelby City to form the present fifth class Junction City. It is now Boyle County's second largest community with an estimated 2,000 residents and an active post office. Shelby City's residents, however, still refer to their section of town by this name.

On May 22, 1866 the post office of Brumfield Station was established 1 3/4 rail miles west of Mitchellsburg (or at the junction of the present US 68 and Ky 34). Obadiah and James Brumfield were the first two post-masters, and the station and office (and the small community that grew up around them) were undoubtedly named for their several related pioneer forebears. One of these, Obadiah I (1785-1836) had married the daughter of "Blue Springs" Jacob Crow, who may have been the first settler of this site, part of his 1,000 acre grant for Revolutionary War service. William Brumfield and several other late eighteenth century members of that family had also secured grants to land at the head of Doctors Fork in that section of the county. In 1880 the post office dropped the Station from its name and operated, intermittently, till 1938. Only a few homes now mark the site.

Another L&N station and post office served the Alum Springs resort hotel, two miles west of Junction City. The post office was opened on June 19, 1874 by Joseph Maxwell, the proprietor of that establishment, and he called it Alum Springs. The office closed in April 1906. The resort is also gone, and only a church, a small grocery, and some homes remain.

Lysander W. Burdette was the only postmaster of the shortlived Syfax post office on Dicks River, probably at the site of the later Chenault Bridge, 5½ miles northeast of Danville. It served his mill, in whose building it was located, from April 24, 1883 through March 1884. The name source remains unknown.

With the coming of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad, which became the Cincinnati New Orleans and Texas Pacific in 1881, several post offices were established to serve new stations. Goresburg (Junction City), as we have already seen, was one of these. Another was Bishop. Its post office, established on February 6, 1885, with George Thomas Baker, postmaster, was Bishopton and it was half a mile south of the Mercer County line and 4½ miles north of Danville. The station had been named for the site's owner, Jacob K. Bishop. Three months after Elijah Prophet Faulconer became postmaster in September 1887, the station and post office were renamed Faulconer for his local family of lanowners and stockbreeders. In January 1906 then postmaster Elijah L. Rogers had the name changed again, to Shuttleworth, probably for R.A. Shuttleworth, an area farm developer and horsebreeder. But it closed at the end of July 1906. Soon the names Bishop and Shuttleworth became history, and nearly all twentieth century maps have identified the station and community as Faulconer.

Nearly five miles west of downtown Danville, where US 150 crosses Salt River, was the Atoka post office [ə/toh/kə] This was established on November 23, 1889 with George W. Stephens as postmaster to serve a small community then known as Knoxville, probably for a local landowner, T. Knox. The source of Atoka is not known. It has been suggested that it was early named for a small (now extinct) community and post office in

Fauquier County, Virginia,⁶ but this has not been confirmed. Boyle's Atoka post office closed in July 1892 but was re-opened five years later by James B. Seay and lasted till June 1907. A church and store survived.

The post office of Hedgeville served only a store, church, and school on the present Ky 52, five miles east of Danville, from July 25, 1890 to 1948. Clarence H. Smith was its first postmaster. Its name origin is also unknown.

Two relatively shortlived post offices serving the North Rolling Fork area were Gano and Hankla. Gano, which David R. Totten operated from September 3, 1891 to January 1893 was on the north bank of North Rolling, just above (east of) the mouth of Carpenters Fork. In fact, Carpenters Fork, Totten, and Boyle were the names first proposed for this office before Gano was officially given to it. Gano, the name of a prominent Bluegrass family, had no known nineteenth century Boyle County representatives so why this name was given to this post office is not known.

The last Boyle post office to be established, on May 22, 1900, was to have been called Goshen but was called Hankla instead. It was on the south bank of North Rolling, about where the present Ky 37 joins the road to Parksville (Rt. 1822), about half a mile above the Gano site and some 11½ miles southwest of Danville. James M. Harmon, its only postmaster, named it for a numerous family living mostly in the Parksville area. The office closed in June 1905.

Forkland is a name that has long been applied to the southwest section of the county drained by the North Rolling Fork River. It is that section, including the areas served the Spragens, Gano, and Hankla post offices, that had been settled before 1800 and was cut off from Casey County in 1820. A fourth Boyle County post office in this section was actually given

the name Forkland when it was established on November 27, 1891 (with William W. Taylor, its first postmaster) probably at the mouth of Hungry Neck Fork, nearly sixteen miles southwest of Danville. The office closed in October 1905. The viable, primarily rural neighborhood now centers at its community center, a converted school building on Ky 37, 1½ miles west of the old post office site. The Forkland Heritage Festival and Revue, held every October since 1972, helps keep the neighborhood alive.

From May 22, 1893 to May 1908 the inexplicably named post office of Enido served the northwest section of Boyle County at a site ¼ mile north of Doctors Fork (of Chaplin River) and 2½ miles west of Perryville, probably on or just north of the present US 150. John L. Powell, the first postmaster, was then the operator of the local store. Nothing remains at the site.

Five of Boyle's eighteen post offices (Danville, Junction City, Perryville, Mitchellsburg, and Parksville) are still in operation and serve viable communities; the first three are incorporated cities. Most of the other offices served small villages or railroad stations and all were at or in proximity to stores. Eight offices were named for local persons/families; one was named for a famous American; one may have been named for a place in Virginia; two were named for their geographic situations; the name of one was derived from a nearby feature (a resort); and six name origins are still unknown (though the name of one of these offices (Gano) was that of a well known Bluegrass area family. The names of five offices were not those originally intended for them, and four names were changed while the offices were in operation. Two offices served places with other names.

Note: The post offices are located by road miles from the court house in downtown Danville.

FOOTNOTES

1. In December 1820 the so-called "Greater Forkland Community", a small section of northwest Casey County, was transferred to Mercer County at the request of its Casey residents.
2. Since it is almost certain that Daniel did not lay off the town until after he had acquired the site from John Crow, the 1781 date given in Collins' history and other, derivative sources, is incorrect. The Virginia town, incidentally, was named for its site **on** the Dan River, which was named by Col. William Byrd while he was directing the survey of the Virginia-North Carolina boundary in 1728. He mentions this in his History of the Dividing Line but does not give an explanation of or reason for the name. It may have had an Algonquian derivation similar to that of the Rapidan River, a branch of the Rappahannock.
3. William Jennings Price, "Danville Was the First Post Office Established in Kentucky and the Territory Beyond the Alleghenies" The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. 14 94), October 1940, Pp. 191-204
4. Robert M. Rennick, Kentucky Place Names, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984, Pp. 156-57
5. Thomas and James Gore were the sons of Maryland-born Christopher Gore who had moved to then Mercer County in 1811. For years he was the Chairman of Danville's Board of Trustees and could have been the name source of the original Goresburg name.
6. Kentucky Ancestors, Vol. 5 (1), July 1969, P. 37

REFERENCES

1. Balden, Mrs. William, of Danville, Ky., interviewed by the writer on August 23, 1978
2. Brown, Richard C. History of Danville and Boyle County, Ky., Danville, 1992
3. Ibid., "Robert Daniel's First Town Plat" The Kentucky Advocate, Bicentennial Edition, June 10, 1984, P. 4
4. Ibid., "Shadowy Figure of Walker Daniel" The Kentucky Advocate, Bicentennial Edition, June 10, 1984, P. 4
5. Edmiston, Mr. and Mrs. C.E., of Danville, Ky., interviewed by the writer on August 5, 1978
6. Fackler, Calvin M. Early Days in Danville, Louisville, 1941
7. Forkland Heritage: Its People Past and Present, 1793-1988, Vol. 1
Published by the Forkland Community Historical Committee, 1988
8. Harmon, Geraldine Crain, Chaplin Hills: History of Perryville, Ky.
Danville, 1971
9. Rennick, Robert M. Kentucky Place Names, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984
10. United States Post Office Department: Site Location Reports--Boyle Co., Ky. Post Offices, National Archives (Washington, DC)

BOYLE COUNTY, KY. POST OFFICES

8/20/92 or

- ✓ 1. DANVILLE- (in Mercer Co.) (3/20/1793, Thomas Barbee; 7/1/1795, Walter Edward Strong.... 10/1/1832, David G. Cowan; 7/30/1833, Wm. L. Williams.... (into Boyle Co. on or before 7/1/1842); 7/1/1842, James T. Johnson; 3/27/1844, Amanda F. Greenwood; 5/29/1849, Wesley R. Orear.....

AP0

Est. 1810 (P+G) - 2

- ✓ 2. PERRYVILLE- (in Mercer Co.) ^ 2/12/1816, Edward Bullock.... 8/19/1829, John A. Burton; (into Boyle Co. ~~xxxxxx~~ in 1842); 1/14/1851, John B. Latimer; 1/12/1852, John A. Burton;

AP0

Rollings Forkland? ✓

- 3. SPRAGENS'- 5/31/1848, Wm. Spragens; Disc. 8/1/1849;

- ✓ 4. MITCHELLSBURG- 2/19/1853, James P. Mitchell; Disc. 9/17/1861; Re-est. 1/21/1863, Wm. Minor (sic-?); Disc. 5/17/1863; Re-est. 1/27/1864, Robert H.C. Mitchell; Disc. 11/30/1865; Re-est. 1/4/1866, John L. Caldwell; 9/6/1867, Wm. B. Johnson.... (soon after, it began to be known as Mitchellsburgh).... 7/30/1890, Susan J. Hudson; name changed to Mitchellsburg, 2/19/1894, John H. Webb; 1/5/1898, John R. Wharton....

AP0

- ✓ 5. PARKSVILLE- 2/12/1859, James L. Stockdell (?); 5/7/1863, Charles B. Kirkland.... 3/29/1882, John Henry Hankla; 2/19/1883, Wm. D. Latimer.....

AP0

- ✓ 6. ALICETON- 4/26/1866, Richard Survant; 1/10/1868, Samuel Belden; Disc. 12/3/1870; Re-est. 6/19/1871, Samuel Belden; 5/6/1878, Wm. M. Rice.....

Disc. 1941

Xerox Forkland
✓ book pp 4-5
12-25

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- ✓ 7. SOUTH DANVILLE- 4/26/1866, Stephen H. Coppage; 4/16/1867 it became Shelby City, Stephen H. Coppage; 1/30/1868, Pearce Bodley.... 3/11/1908, Mary E. Simpson; Disc. effective 8/14/1926 (mail to Danville);
- ✓ 8. BRUMFIELD STATION- 5/22/1866, Obadiah Brumfield; 1/4/1869, James Brumfield; Disc. 10/7/1869; Re-est. 11/25/1869, James Brumfield; name changed to Brumfield, 12/13/1880, James Brumfield; 12/21/1880. O. Brumfield; 3/14/1884, G.A. Stewart; Disc. 10/23/1884 (papers to Aliceton); Re-est. 11/16/1885, George A. Stewart; 9/22/1893, Hattie E. Stewart....
*died 1891
a Brumfield was
son.* Disc. 1938
- ✓ 9. ALUM SPRINGS- 6/19/1874, Joseph Maxwell; 10/29/1885, Thomas E. Cosby.... 2/8/1898, James A. Frost; Disc. 12/22/1900, effective 12/31/1900 (mail to Junction City); Re-est. 4/10/1901, Nannie Carter; 3/2/1904, Jane B. Carter; Disc. 3/23/1906, effective 4/14/1906 (mail to Junction City);
- ✓ 10. GORE- 10/4/1880, Thomas W. Gore; name changed to Goresburgh, 4/17/1882, Thomas W. Gore; name changed to Junction City, 5/17/1882, Thomas W. Gore; 6/9/1884, Robert B. Turnbull....
APO
- ✓ 11. SYFAX- 4/24/1883, Lysander W. Burdett; Disc. 3/28/1884 (papers to Bryantsville, Garrard Co.);
- ✓ 12. BISHOPTON- 2/6/1885, George T. Baker; 9/9/1887, Elijah P. Faulconer; name changed to Faulconer, 12/5/1887, Elijah P. Faulconer; 8/22/1890, Thomas T. Meenach.... 9/30/1905, Elisha L. Rogers; name changed to Shuttleworth, 1/27/1906, Elisha L. Rogers; Disc. 7/6/1906, effective 7/31/1906 (mail to Harrodsburg, Mercer Co.);
- ✓ 13. ATOKA- 11/23/1889, Geo. W. Stephens; Disc. 7/28/1892 (mail to Danville); Re-est. 7/15/1897, James B. Seay; 12/15/1898, Wm. M. Seay; Disc. 7/15/1904 (mail to Harrodsburg); rescinded 8/11/1904; Disc. 5/11/1907, effective 6/15/1907 (mail to Harrodsburg);

BOYLE COUNTY, KY. POST OFFICES (3)

- ✓ 14. HEDGEVILLE- 7/25/1890, Clarence H. Smith; 11/27/1891, Eliza B. Smith....
Disc. 1948
- ✓ 15. GANO- 9/3/1891, David R. Totten; Disc. 1/25/1893 (papers to Junction City);
- ✓ 16. FORKLAND- 11/27/1891, Wm. W. Taylor; 5/23/1893, W.W. Taylor, rescinded 10/13⁷/1893; 4/14/1894, James A. Calhoun; Disc. 9/18/1905, effective 10/14/1905 (mail to Parksville);
- ✓ 17. ENIDO- 5/22/1893, John L. Powell; 7/30/1897, George W. Crane; Disc. 2/8/1898 (papers to Perryville); Re-est. 5/22/1901, Geo. W. Crane; 10/5/1905, Eugene Harmon; 11/30/1906, John A. Hollon; Disc. 4/16/1908, effective 5/15/1908 (mail to Brumfield);
- ✓ 18. HANKLA- 5/22/1900, James M. Harmon; Disc. 5/27/1905, effective 6/15/1905 (mail to Parksville);