

THE POST OFFICES OF BREATHITT COUNTY

At the western edge of the Eastern Kentucky Coal Fields is the 495 square mile Breathitt County. The 89th in order of formation, it was created by legislative act on January 30, 1839 from parts of Clay, Estill, and Perry Counties and named for Kentucky's eleventh governor (1832-1834), John Breathitt (1786-1834) of Russellville. In 1843 Breathitt County lost ten of its original 620 square miles toward the establishment of Owsley County, but acquired ten square miles from Perry County (the Longs Creek and Morris Fork watersheds) in 1846. In 1860 it lost another twenty square miles to Owsley, and shortly thereafter another ten toward the formation of Wolfe County, and another ten toward Lee County's formation in 1870. Another seventy square miles were taken by the new Knott County in 1884, and ten more square miles were acquired by Wolfe County in 1886. Breathitt assumed its current boundaries in 1890.

The central and eastern sections of Breathitt County are drained by the Kentucky River's North Fork and its Frozen, Cane, Quicksand, South Fork of Quicksand, Troublesome and Lost Creek branches. The western part of the county is drained by the river's Middle Fork and its main tributaries, the Lower and Upper Twins, Puncheon, Shoulderblade, Turkey, Canoe, Turners, Long, ^{and} ~~and~~ Bowling Creeks. Nearly all settlements and post offices in the county's highly irregular terrain are or were in one of the stream valleys.

Until almost the turn of the twentieth century Breathitt was one of the state's most isolated and sparsely populated counties. Subsistence agriculture, salt making, and commercial logging were the earliest sources of economic support. Only with the arrival of

the Kentucky Union Railroad in 1890-91 and the expansion of the Ohio and Kentucky Railroad up the Frozen Creek and Boone Fork valleys toward Wolfe County in 1903 did the county become a major coal producer and begin to enjoy real economic development. By the mid 1920s, however, most of its marketable timber was gone.¹ Agriculture is now of little significance due to soil depletion and erosion, and coal remains the mainstay of the county's economy. The 2000 Census counted some 15,800 county residents, down eight per cent from 1980.

Breathitt's ninety seven operating post offices will be described below according to their sites in the principal river and creek valleys, and will be located by road miles from the court house in Jackson or other offices in the same valley. Jackson is on the Kentucky River's North Fork, thirty two road miles northwest of Hazard (by Ky 15) and eighty eight road miles southeast of downtown Lexington (via the Mountain Parkway and Ky 15 from Campton).

TWO POST OFFICES OPERATING ENTIRELY BEFORE THE COUNTY'S CREATION

✓ The first post office established in what was to become Breathitt County was also the first established in what had just become Perry County in the winter of ¹⁸²⁰⁻²¹ ~~1920-21~~. This was Alexander Patrick's Patrick's Salt Works which Patrick, Lewis Bohannon, and Patrick's son Alexander, Jr. operated between May 9, 1821 and May 12, 1837 to serve their salt works at the mouth of Lick Branch of the North Fork, twelve miles above (south of) Jackson.²

✓ The second was Cane Creek, at the mouth of this North Fork branch, less than two stream miles below Jackson. This was established on

✓ February 21, 1833 with John Haddix (who was shortly to serve Perry County in the state legislature) as its first postmaster. In June of that year he was succeeded by William Allen who probably maintained it in his home. Though it was closed in mid May 1834, it was reopened on February 19, 1835 by Jeremiah W. South, a timberman, who was considered Breathitt County's "founding father", but closed for good in October 1836.

A POST OFFICE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THE CREATION OF BREATHITT COUNTY BUT CONTINUING TO OPERATE FOR SEVERAL YEARS THEREAFTER

The county's third post office was Strongville which operated between December 2, 1837 and August 19, 1847 at some point at or near the future Copland, perhaps at the mouth of Lick Branch itself after the close of Patrick's Salt Works. Its only postmaster and probable name source was pioneer Edward Strong (1791-1869) who had settled in the Copland area and owned land on Georges and Lick Branches.

THE COUNTY SEAT

✓ The fourth class city of Jackson with some 2,500 residents, was founded in early 1839 as the county seat on ten acres donated by Simon Cockrell. It was first called Breathitt Town and its post office, established on October 15, 1839 by Jeremiah Weldon South, was Breathitt Court House. By March 25, 1845 the town and post office had been renamed for the ex U.S. president Andrew Jackson. The

commission to locate the new county's seat first considered the Nick⁻⁴⁻ Hays farm, opposite the mouth of Quicksand Creek, but an "irregularity" in the property title led the commission to accept Cockrell's offer. By that time, his property, some three miles down the river, was all but unoccupied, and the new town literally grew up around the court house. The site's first resident was John Hargis who later served the new county in the Kentucky legislature. In 1840 Thomas Sewell opened the first local store, and the town was incorporated on March 10, 1854.

Until the arrival in the early 1890s of the railroads, Jackson was little more than a small village with the court house, a mill, a hotel, and several stores serving barely a hundred residents. By the turn of the century it had become the major shipping point for that section of the North Fork country, the southern rail terminus of what was to become the L&N's main thrust into the eastern Kentucky coal field, and a major timbering center with mills, a brickyard, and stores. The extension of the rail line to Hazard and Letcher County in 1912 and a devastating fire the following year ended the town's growth for years to come. By the 1960s with highways 15, 30, and 52 connecting the town with other parts of the region and the Bluegrass, it again assumed its importance as a regional center. A most notable development was the impoundment of the North Fork in 1963 and the rechanneling of its course creating the seventy acre Panbowl Lake.³

POST OFFICES IN THE VALLEYS OF THE NORTH FORK BELOW FROZEN CREEK

√ Between July 31, 1879 and mid July 1886 Nathan B. Day maintained the aptly named Apple Tree post office a mile north of the North Fork and half a mile east of White Oak Creek, eight miles below (northwest of) Jackson.

√ The War Creek post office occupied several sites on its 5½ mile long name source that joins the North Fork in the northwest corner of the county. It was established on October 27, 1908 with Andrew J. Johnson, postmaster, and when it closed in 1975 it was at the mouth of Trace Branch, 1.6 miles up the creek and 10¼ miles wnw of Jackson. According to tradition, the creek had been named for the many local fights in its valley.

√ Near the mouth of Rock Lick Creek, across from Spencer Bend and a mile from the Lee County line, were the several sites of the inexplicably named Key post office. With J.R. McIntosh and Floyd Spencer its first two postmasters, it operated between April 11, 1910 and 1942.

√ One of the two Breathitt post offices named for descendants of county pioneer and Revolutionary War veteran Henry Hurst, Sr. (1760-1844) and his wife Elizabeth (nee Kiser), Hurst was one fourth of a mile up Lower Crooked Shoal Branch of the North Fork, and one air mile east of the Wolfe-Lee-Breathitt County convergence. It served one or more stores over forty years from January 14, 1925, with Lelia (Mrs. Ray) Hurst, its first and longtime postmaster.

√ Lawson, on Ky 541, between the North Fork and one of its Mill Creek branches, was established on February 28, 1925 by Jasper G.

✓ Lawson and named for the descendants of area settler John Lawson. It was the site of a once growing village of this name and its Mt. Carmel Church and schools, roughly midway between War Creek and White Oak Creek. The office closed in 1966.

✓ On June 16, 1926 Floyd Spencer, who had run the Key post office from 1911 to 1917, established another post office two miles below Key to serve the Burton Bend neighborhood near the Lee County line.⁴ His first proposed name Sparks for area families was replaced by the inexplicable Wide Creek. His office's authorization, however, was soon rescinded, and it was not re-established till May 15, 1929 by A. Porter Reynolds. When it was suspended at the end of December 1989, the office was on Middle Creek (a North Fork branch), half a mile from the North Fork, and only 500 feet from the Lee County line.

THE FROZEN CREEK POST OFFICE

✓ The eleven mile long Frozen Creek heads just short of the junction of Rts. 378 and 1094, on the Wolfe County line, and joins the North Fork six miles below (northwest of) Jackson. The stream was probably named by early settlers on its lower reaches for the ice that formed there every winter, so slick that it had to be sanded before the creek could be crossed. The account of Daniel Boone's refuge in the hollow sycamore is aprochryphal. According to this tradition, the giant tree which stood at the creek's mouth sheltered Boone and several companions one night in a heavy snowstorm. The next morning, nearly frozen, they named the creek.⁵

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✓ The Frozen Creek post office was established by Benjamin F. Sewell on April 9, 1850 at some point about two miles up the creek. It was discontinued in July 1863 and re-established on March 6, 1866, probably by Hardin Hurst, but closed again at the end of 1869. Andrew Hurst had it re-established some eight miles up the creek on February 7, 1876. This would place the office somewhere in the vicinity of what would become the Paxton post office in 1890. By December 28, 1885, when John C.M. Day had the name changed to Hargis for an important Breathitt County family,⁶ the office was serving a store at the mouth of the creek. In April 1886 it again became Frozen Creek, but according to then postmaster William Shackelford's Site Location Report, it was back to its site eight miles up the creek. When it closed again, in mid July 1887, its papers were sent to Gillmore (in Wolfe County), 4½ miles north. The office was re-established at the mouth of Frozen Creek on January 25, 1894 by Nathan B. Day, Apple Tree's postmaster from 1879 to 1886, and it again took the creek's name which it retained at several locations in that vicinity till, in 1947 and through its final closing in 1983, it was on the south side of the North Fork, one mile above its name source.

POST OFFICES IN THE BOONE FORK VALLEY OF FROZEN CREEK

✓ Boone Fork, Frozen's first major tributary, heads just south of the Wolfe County line and extends for eight miles to a site only one mile above the North Fork. Five post offices served its valley and branches.

✓ The first office was the aptly named Peartree, a short distance up the Hurst Fork of Johnson Fork, three miles north of the future Wilhurst at the mouth of Johnson Fork of Boone. In other words, it was on what used to be the route of Ky 15 and is now 1812 before that road meets Ky 205 coming south from the Mountain Parkway. Lizzie, Lucinda, and Samuel H. Hurst were among its postmasters from November 13, 1889 through August 1916.

✓ Two miles up Johnson Fork, where William S. Shackelford had his store, was Paxton. This office was established on June 30, 1890 by William's wife Zerildia (nee Taulbee) whose first name choice was Wills for her uncle, the late John Wills Taulbee.⁷ Whence Paxton is not known. The office closed in 1954.

✓ On August 1, 1901 John L. Sewell established a post office near the mouth of Johnson Fork (four miles up from the North Fork). Since his first preference Funston was in use in what would become McCreary County, he called his office Boxer. Neither name has been explained. Within a year or so the office was serving the O&K Railroad's new Wilhurst Station which had been named, it's now believed, for William L. Hurst (1829-1920), a Jackson attorney, who had moved to Campton.⁸ On September 30, 1907 Hannibal Hurst, one of William L's. sons, who ~~had~~ became postmaster the year before, had the office name changed to the station's.⁹ In December 1907 William K. Wilson succeeded Hannibal ^{Wilhurst's} as postmaster. In December 1939, following a severe flooding of much of Boone Fork's valley, the office was moved 0.8 mile north, onto Johnson Fork. But in the summer of 1944 it was moved two miles south to a point 2½ miles from the North Fork where it closed in 1954.

✓ Some three miles up Boone from Johnson Fork and the first Wilhurst site were the several locations of the Simpson post office. Established on September 26, 1901 by Isaac Scott Miller, it was soon serving the O&K's Hampton Station. Miller's first name choice was Miller. The station was probably named for the family of James Hampton, a local resident born in November 1832, but Simpson has not yet been derived. From 1934 till it closed in 1968 the office was in a store 0.3 mile above (east of) the mouth of Peggs Fork.

✓ Vancleve is the only office still serving the Boone Fork valley or, for that matter, the entire Frozen Creek watershed. It was established on November 6, 1903 by Samuel H. Kash as Calla (derivation unknown) to serve a mining town and the O&K station of Vancleve, two miles up Boone from the North Fork. The area Vancleve (sometimes Vancleave) families were descended from North Carolina-born Ebenezer F. Vancleve and his Tennessee wife Elizabeth. Andrew S. Vancleve is known to have had a flour mill in this area in the early 1880s. The office closed in late April 1905 but was re-established, also as Calla, by Nathan Pelfrey on April 8, 1907. On June 7, 1923 it took the Vancleve name¹⁰ which it retains to this day at the mouth of Little Frozen Creek, 0.6 miles below (south of) the last Wilhurst site. Vancleve is best known today as the home of the Christian radio station WMTC.

OTHER FROZEN CREEK POST OFFICES

✓ Taulbee, the earliest office established on main Frozen, began on February 26, 1886 pretty much where it ended, in 1964, at the

✓ mouth of Negro Branch, 8½ miles from the North Fork. Its first name preference was Wills, which was also to be proposed for the future Paxton (see above), and would also honor John Wills Taulbee, the brother of the local storekeeper and postmaster-designate Samuel Elsberry Taulbee. By the mid 1890s this office was serving a flour mill, store, cooperage, lumber and other businesses mostly owned by Taulbee family members. For awhile after 1908 the office was at the mouth of Clear Fork of Frozen, three-fourths of a mile east of Negro Branch.

✓ The post office of Robbins (name derivation unknown) was established on October 23, 1902 with Lipscomb Parrot, its first postmaster. According to early maps it was then on Frozen, some 2½ miles above Taulbee, and a short distance beyond the future Rock Lick. In 1907 postmaster Alfred L. Hagins had the office moved three miles south to serve the 300 residents of the Kentucky Hardwood Company's Camp Christy, about five miles up Cope Fork of Frozen.¹¹ Here it closed in mid July 1911.

✓ A mile or so below the Robbins-Camp Christy site, perhaps at the mouth of the Flat Branch of Cope, was the first site of Keck. This office, established on September 27, 1916, with Joseph E. Spencer, postmaster, is said to have been named for a man who earlier lived in Newport, Kentucky and may have bankrolled part or all of one or more area lumber operations. He (or perhaps another of that name) also ran a hardware store in Jackson just before the First World War. In 1935 this office was moved two miles down Cope to the mouth of Strong Fork where, after several shorter distance moves, it closed in 1955.

J It is very likely that, at or near the mouth of Strong Branch, ^{-1/-}
Lula Strong had maintained her Marble post office between March 30,
1898 and July 1899. Her proposed name Mable may suggest its name
derivation, but we have no idea who Mable was. In any event, in
her Site Location Report Ms. Strong placed her office about midway
between the Frozen Creek, Jackson, and Taulbee offices, which suggests
the location I tentatively have for it.

✓ In 1922 another Frozen Creek office, some three miles above (east
of) Taulbee, would have been named for a local man Taylor King but
his family name was already in use in Knox County. So Caroline (Mrs.
Arbury) Burton, perhaps inspired by scenic sunsets, named the office,
on June 24, Sky. By the time it closed in 1949, the office had
occupied several sites on Frozen Creek between the Rock Lick and
Mountain Valley post offices, including one just above Joe Ward Fork,
and for awhile served the Magoffin Institute at the mouth of
Taulbee's Fork, two miles from the Magoffin County line.

• Two miles up Davis Branch, which joins Frozen Creek seven miles
from the North Fork, Morton Halsey, on September 30, 1922, established
a post office. Davis, his first name choice, gave way to Moct, another
unexplained name. There is no evidence that it had been mistaken
by postal clerks for Mort. It too closed in 1955.

• A local Sewell family gave its name to an office that operated
from 1935 to 1967 at several Frozen Creek sites just above the mouth
of Cope Fork. Angie Sewell was its first postmaster.

✓ The Rock Lick post office was in the vicinity of the 1½ mile
long Frozen Fork tributary for which it was named. It was just below
the first Robbins site and less than a mile below Sky's first

/ location, serving the area two to 2½ miles above (east of) Taulbee from 1936 to 1955. Press Taulbee was its first postmaster.

✓ Closer to the head of Frozen, two miles from the Magoffin County line, was the aptly named Mountain Valley post office. Established in 1938 with Raymond Taulbee, postmaster, it was soon only three-fourths of a mile above Sky. When it closed in 1975 it was just east of Taulbee Fork. On current state maps the two names are juxtaposed.

WOLVERINE AND THE CANE CREEK POST OFFICES

✓ Cane Creek, at least 9½ miles long, joins the North Fork one mile above Wolverine. Other than Cane Creek itself (see above), the earliest of the post offices serving its valleys was Elkatawa [Ehl/kə /tah or ehl/kə/toy]. This name is said to have been applied to its local station by the Kentucky Union Railroad, which had arrived in that vicinity in 1890, and to the mine around which a company town was being built. On April 21, 1891 the anxiously awaited post office was opened with Eli C. Jones, postmaster, and also given this name. The office, which closed in 1982, was always a short distance up Lindon Fork of Cane, two miles from the North Fork and three (rail) miles west of Jackson, within a few hundred feet of several businesses on the present Ky 52 and the now defunct station.

✓ Whence the name Elkatawa remains enigmatic. Though there seems little doubt it was named by the railroad, some have questioned the idea that it was named for Elskwatawa, the so-called Shawnee prophet. According to those who accept this derivation, Elkatawa was corrupted from Elskwatawa, supposedly a variation of Tenskwatawa,

✓ the name roughly meaning "open door" that had been assumed by Lalawethika (the noisemaker), the half brother of Chief Tecumseh, after he had envisioned the destiny for his Indian brethren. But, again, whence Elskwatawa? This was the spelling of the Prophet's name given in D.G. Brinton's "The Shawnees and Their Migrations" in The Historical Magazine (Vol. X (1), January 1866 Pp. 14) which may have derived from the novel "Elkswatawa, The Prophet of the West" known only by its excerpt in the New York Mirror of July 9, 1836. But why a railroad station and, later, a post office would have been named for The Prophet, in any rendition of his name, is most curious for he was never an exemplary character to early white settlers of the Ohio valley. So maybe there's something to the other possibility that it was named for one Ellen Katherine Walsh, the oldest daughter of the engineer who had surveyed the route for the Kentucky Union.¹²

✓ In 1899, the Ohio and Kentucky (O&K) Railroad was chartered, and construction began from what became the O&K Junction (with the L&E, later the L&N, Railroad), just above the mouth of Cane Creek, for some forty miles north to the Licking River. At that time, the area below the mouth of Cane was called Bowman Branch. In 1902 the O.B. Robinson Company built a sawmill here and some cabins and a commissary for the workers on land leased from George Hays. From February 5, 1908 through July 1914 the mill and camp were served by the local Hays post office. William K. White was its first postmaster.

✓ In 1916 Robert T. Gunn (ne ca. 1868) arrived in the area, by then or shortly thereafter called Three Mile for its distance below

✓ Jackson, and began mining coal on some 2,000 acres leased from the KU Land Company. On February 13, 1920 he re-established the area post office at the mouth of Sugar Tree Branch, a mile below (north of) Hays and called it Gunn. By then the local O&K station, which had been Riverside for Gunn's mining company, was renamed Gunn. In March 1928 Gunn was succeeded as postmaster by his partner Joseph E. Stivers. Yet, in 1926, Gunn's Riverside Coal and Timber Company was bought out by the Wolverine Coal Company of Flint, Michigan, and two years later Stivers was running the Wolverine [wool/vor/een] post office. When it closed in 1985, the office was still serving a hamlet of this name on the west side of the North Fork, one mile below Cane Creek and four miles above the mouth of Frozen.

✓ Glee and Curt were post offices serving the upper end of Cane Creek. The former, run by John S. and Malury (?) Hollon from May 19, 1916 through November 1917, was on the creek, some 3½ road miles west of the river at Howard Creek, and seven miles above (south of) Elkatawa. Whence Glee is not known. The Hollons first proposed their own family name.

↓ On April 28, 1928 a post office called Curt for Curt Turner or, possibly, Curt Spicer, local men, was established by John Hall near the head of the creek. It was moved in 1945 some two miles down the creek to a site near the Drew Memorial Church, where Glee is thought to have been, where it closed in 1973.

POST OFFICES IN THE VALLEYS OF THE NORTH FORK ABOVE JACKSON: QUICKSAND CREEK AND ITS BRANCHES

✓ The thirty nine mile long Quicksand Creek heads at Decoy, on the Knott County line, and joins the North Fork opposite the present Quicksand community, 3½ miles above (southeast of) Jackson. It is traditionally believed to have been named for the soft sandy surface near its mouth, a most hazardous condition for nineteenth century travelers. In more imaginative accounts, horses and their riders drowned when they sank so deeply they couldn't get out. Twenty one post offices have served residents of its main valley and principal branches.

✓ Its first post office, Hunting Creek, was established on January 21, 1878 by landowner Charles B. McQuinn probably at the mouth of Tackett Fork of the Quicksand branch for which it was named. The 6½ mile long Hunting Creek heads just short of the Magoffin County line, and joins Quicksand at the last site of Rousseau (see below), eighteen miles east of Jackson. The office closed in June 1881. The creek's name origin is merely assumed.

. The second office on Quicksand Creek was established on March 18, 1878 less than two months after Hunting Creek. It was then some three miles up the creek, probably in the Round Bottom, a mile above the future Noctor. It was called Quick Sand Mills (sic), suggesting that it was or would be serving one or more early mills of which we know nothing. Fletcher McGuire was the first postmaster. In June 1888, with L.W.P. Back as postmaster, it became simply Quicksand. In November of that year it was discontinued. It was re-established,

probably at or near the same site, on May 24, 1890 with Eli Roark, postmaster, but closed again in May 1895.

✓ On May 23, 1906 Mike Robison (sic) re-established the Quicksand post office at the mouth of the creek where it lasted through December of the following year. Then, on December 14, 1910, after the railroad extended its tracks above Jackson, Robison re-established the office, still as Quicksand, where it would serve the largest hardwood sawmill complex in the country. Three mills were built for and operated by the Mowbray and Robinson Lumber Company on land acquired from the Back family shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. The company town that grew up here just before the First World War soon boasted a population of over 5,000. With the inevitable depletion of the area's timber by 1923, the company moved out, dismantling the mills, abandoning the other local buildings, and relocating most of its workforce far and wide. In 1924 the University of Kentucky acquired some 15,000 acres of company land for its Robinson Agricultural Experiment Station to develop and foster new agricultural and forestry methods.¹³ Though the post office in Ed Combs' store was suspended in November 1992, the station and its U.S. Soil Conservation program, plants material center, forestry school, and tree nursery continue to support the area's economy.

POST OFFICES IN THE SOUTH QUICKSAND CREEK VALLEY

✓ The South Fork of Quicksand Creek extends over eighteen miles to join the main stream less than half a mile above the North Fork. The first of its six post offices was the unremembered and unaccounted

✓ for Sikes. From January 31, 1888 to October 1896 it may have operated on Press Howard Creek which joins the South Fork $8\frac{1}{4}$ miles from the main Quicksand. The first name proposed for the office was Green for its first postmaster Green V. Williams.

✓ Smith Branch, the $2\frac{1}{2}$ mile long first south-side tributary of Quicksand's South Fork, gave its name to an office established at its mouth on June 6, 1890, with Kit C. Hardin, postmaster. By 1896 it may have been a mile up the branch, but in 1907 it was back to its mouth, $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the main Quicksand. When it closed in November 1911 it was one third of a mile up the Branch.

✓ Portsmouth, the post office that was to serve the area around Smith Branch in more recent years, was opened on January 14, 1911 by Andrew D. Jackson. He and others from Portsmouth, Ohio had come to the Quicksand valley to establish the Rehoboth Mountain Mission. His office was first located at the mouth of Press Howard Creek (where Sikes probably had been)¹⁴ but by 1920 it had been moved at least three miles down the fork and was followed three years later by another, $1\frac{3}{4}$ mile, move. By 1926 it had arrived at the mouth of Smith Branch where it continued to serve the nearby mission till it closed in 1975.

✓ Replacing Portsmouth at the mouth of Press Howard was Press, established on December 9, 1919 with Bell (sic) (Mrs. Floyd) Napier, postmaster. By then this office was $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles above Portsmouth. Within three years it had begun its own moves along the Fork, probably reaching the mouth of Poll Branch in 1926. By 1939 it had moved nearly two more miles down the Fork to serve a small settlement of some 300 persons known as Big Orchard, just above Lower Open Fork

✓ (now known as Dumb Betty Branch), two miles above Portsmouth. By 1946 it was moved $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles back up the Fork, and in 1947 it reached its final site, at the mouth of the present Ben Smith Branch (formerly known as Brickey Branch) where it closed in 1954. Press was, of course, named for Press (or Preston) Howard who, in the 1840s and 50s, had acquired several tracts of land on South Fork and its Higgins Fork branch (which may have been Press Howard Creek's first name).

✓ Two more South Fork post offices whose several sites also served areas served by Sikes, Portsmouth, and Press were Clemmons and Wilstacy. In fact, today, all of these sites are essentially one large neighborhood on a Jackson rural route.

✓ Clemmons, named for the area descendants of Virginia-born Benjamin Clemons (ne ca. 1795) and his wife Polly, early Quicksand Creek settlers, was established on July 1, 1905 with George Prater its first postmaster. It was then on South Fork, three fourths of a mile below Brickey Branch, roughly halfway between Smith Branch and Press Howard Creek. It probably remained in that vicinity, with Henry C. Clemons, postmaster, from November 1906 till it closed in April 1916. In the 1930s it was the site of the Press post office and, most recently, that of Wilstacy.¹⁵

✓ Before it ended its days just above the Clemmons site, the Wilstacy [wihl/stās/ee] post office had occupied sites on the upper reaches of the South Fork and possibly some of its branches. It was established on June 21, 1927 and named for its first postmaster William M. Stacy. According to his Site Location Report, it would be on the South Fork, nine miles west of Press post office (then probably at the mouth of Poll). Also, according to this report,

✓ its first proposed name was Lewis. In 1928 Johnny Grigsby, by then postmaster, had it moved three miles up the Fork to a site probably at its very head, only 3½ miles from Decoy, on the Knott County line. In February 1931 Robert Lee Howard had it moved three-fourths of a mile down the Fork where it closed on May 14, 1932. In late 1936 Harlan Fugate had the office re-established over ten miles down the Fork, at the mouth of Press Howard, and later it was moved to its last site, below Clemmons. It ceased being an independent post office in March 1968, and was a rural branch till 1972.

OTHER POST OFFICES ON MAIN QUICKSAND CREEK AND ITS BRANCHES

✓ About half a mile below (west of) the mouth of Hunting Creek, Jeremiah McQuinn, on February 28, 1882, established the post office of Rousseau [rūs/aw]. Though he is said to have named it for the operator of a local windmill, there's no record of such a person owning a mill in the county; nor is anyone of that name listed in any of the late nineteenth century census records. Yet Rousseaus lived in other sections of the state. There's the remote possibility that it was named for Lovell Harrison Rousseau (1818-1869), the Lincoln County-born, Louisville attorney, Kentucky State Senator (1860-61), and Union Army general who, from 1865 to 1867, represented Louisville in the U.S. Congress. He's best known for having received "the transfer of Alaska from the Russians" in 1867.¹⁶ In any event, the office closed in mid May 1895, but was re-opened early the following February by Buckhanon McQuinn, probably at or near the first location.¹⁷ In fact, it stayed at this site till 1934 when

✓ it began the first of its several vicinity moves, arriving in 1974 very close to where it began. Here it remained till it closed for good in 1996.

✓ Bays was the third post office to serve the Hunting Creek valley. ~~It still does.~~ It was established on March 30 1898 by Alley M. Bays and may have been somewhere on Mud Lick Branch of Licking Fork, four to five miles above Quicksand Creek, and less than a mile above Licking's confluence with Hunting, for Bays' first name choice was Mudlick. But as that name was then in use in Monroe County, Bays gave it instead his own family name. By 1912, however, the office, with Mintie Holbrook in charge, had been moved to the mouth of Licking, 2.3 miles from Quicksand Creek. In 1947 it was moved two miles up Hunting to its ~~present~~ site in a store at the mouth of Wells Branch, 1½ miles from the Magoffin County line, *where it closed 7/13/2012.*

✓ ~~Then~~ there's the post office of Daisydell whose history and name source remain enigmatic. Though postal records have it established in Magoffin County on August 13, 1884, first postmaster Elliott Howard's first Site Location Report indicated that it would be (and probably was) on Quicksand Creek, ten miles above (east of) Rousseau, about where the Howard School is shown on mid twentieth century topographic names. This makes it clearly in Breathitt County, about 1½ miles below Lambric and the mouth of Spring Fork. It closed in late April 1896.

✓ When, the following year, Leck Mann re-established the local office on Quicksand, just below the mouth of Spring Fork, he suggested that it too be called Daisydell. It wasn't, and the equally enigmatic Lambric was given to the office when it opened on July 7th. In early

✓ 1927, postmaster and storekeeper Adam D. Carpenter, probably at the behest of the Dawkins Log and Mill Company railroad, which had extended its line south from Tiptop, moved the office and his store three miles up Spring Fork to the mouth of Hawes Fork. The local station was thus called Carpenters Store, though the post office remained Lambric. By 1930, however, the office was back near Quicksand, and when it was suspended in October 1992, it was just above Spring Fork's mouth.

Est. 1921

✓ The Hawes Fork area had another post office, at the first of its two sites. This was Betsmann which its petitioner Fannie (Mrs. Ashford) Joseph located on the Fork, six miles above Lambric and two miles from Magoffin County. It may have been on the three mile long stream for which it was named which heads just south of Tiptop (in Magoffin County) and joins Hawes Fork a mile from the latter's Spring Fork confluence. This stream was the route taken by the Dawkins rail line. (Yet, an early 1920s map shows Betsmann on Hawes Fork itself, about where it's joined by another Mud Lick Branch, a mile above the Hawes Fork School.) The Betsmann name had been applied to that stream at least by 1910 and undoubtedly honored one of the area's Betsy (or Betty) Manns. It was possibly the Betty Mann (nee July 1881) who, by 1900, was married to Nath Mann (ne October 1863) and who, according to the 1910 Census, may then have been married to a Dick Mann. In any case, in the spring of 1923, first postmaster Susie (Mrs. Thomas) Minton had the office moved three miles south to Spring Fork to serve a lumber camp and its rail station where it closed in February 1924.

✓ On September 4, 1884 John L. Hagins, a descendant of another Pioneer Breathitt family, established a post office on Quicksand, five miles below (west of) Rousseau, and named it Haginsville [hāgh/anz/vihl]. It closed in late January 1895.¹⁸

✓ Two miles above (east of) Haginsville was Stevenson. This post office was established on April 24, 1895 by local grocer Hiram D. Back to serve a village of nearly 1,000 residents at the mouth of Meatscaffold Branch. In the fall of 1916 it was moved three fourths of a mile up the Branch where it remained till 1940 when, to be on the new highway (now Ky 30), it was moved one mile southeast to the mouth of Andy's Branch. In this vicinity it closed in 1965. Whence its name is not known. Since there were no known Stevensons in Breathitt County in the late nineteenth century, one has to wonder if it could have been named for then Vice President Adlai Ewing Stevenson (1835-1914) who, only six years before, had been President Cleveland's First Assistant Postmaster-General.

✓ Two post offices served the residents of Lower Caney Creek which joins Quicksand 4½ miles above (east of) Rousseau. The first, McQuinn, began on Quicksand one mile above the mouth of Caney on July 26, 1904. According to early twentieth century maps it may have moved to the mouth of Caney before it closed in October 1907. Its only postmaster Cattie McQuinn is said to have named it for her grandfather Charles Brooks McQuinn (1820-1905) of a family that owned much land on Caney, South Fork, and the main Quicksand valley.

✓ Just before McQuinn closed, Thomas B. Sturdevant opened (on April 2, 1907) an office he called Guage [gādj] which is said to have been two miles from Cattie McQuinn's office. In his Site Location Report,

✓ Sturdevant mentioned that his office would be serving a community called Rich (Ritchie?) which suggests that it was a couple of miles up Little Caney Creek, the first major branch of Caney. This makes sense since, at that time, a narrow gauge rail line extended up that creek to haul timber from the Magoffin-Breathitt County border country.¹⁹ The Guage post office likely replaced McQuinn at the mouth of Caney shortly after the older office closed, for it's shown at this site on maps from 1908 till at least 1915. By the early 1920s it had moved a mile down Quicksand to the mouth of Collins (identified on contemporary maps as Calico) Creek. Here it was suspended in October 1989.

✓ The Lunah post office occupied several sites on Quicksand between its Winnie and Russell Branches. On March 31, 1910 James W. Stacy opened the first, probably at or close to the mouth of Russell Branch, four miles above Caney Creek and five miles below the Lambric post office. According to one account,²⁰ it was named for a local resident Mahala (nee Miller) (Mrs. Andrew) Ritchie (1837-1922) who was called "Lunah". It closed on March 1, 1913. On June 25, 1925 it was re-opened by John W. Clemons opposite the mouth of Winnie Branch, three-fourths of a mile below the Russell Branch site. By 1933 it had returned to Russell Branch where it closed in 1957.

✓ Then there was Noctor, a post office established near the mouth of Roark Branch, 2½ miles up Quicksand from the North Fork, whose name source still eludes county historians. No such families are found in county or Census records. It was once claimed that first postmaster Willard Roark had intended it to be named for a John Langley Nocton, a governor of somewhere or other, but the Post Office

✓ Department acknowledged it as Noctor, and this was never corrected. But who was this Gov. Nocton? The office served the lower Quicksand valley from January 11, 1911 till its suspension on October 1, 1992.

✓ Nor is it known for whom (or what) the shortlived (December 24, 1914 through January 1916) Gill post office was named. This office was at the mouth of Slate Branch, five miles below Stevenson and five miles above Noctor, which accounts for postmaster John L. Roberts' first name choice Slate Branch.

✓ Breathitt's most recently established post office Evanston was eight miles up Spring Fork from Lambric, at the mouth of Little Fork, 1½ road miles from the Magoffin County line. From 1950 to 1974 it served a coal town founded in 1950 by the Pond Creek-Pocahontas Coal Company and named for Everett J. Evans of Paintsville, Kentucky who was instrumental in acquiring the property. Rolla D. Campbell, a company employee, was its first postmaster.

POST OFFICES IN THE TROUBLESOME VALLEYS

The forty mile long Troublesome Creek, whose main channel heads at Hindman in Knott County (see below), is said to have been named by Colby Haddix, an early settler of the area where it joins the North Fork, 9¼ miles above Jackson. How old a name it is is not known, but the stream was so identified in the 1820 act creating Perry County. It was most likely named for the many twists and turns in its lower section impeding travel in either direction. Nine Breathitt post offices served its main valley and two important branches.

✓ The first of these branches, Lost Creek, heads in Perry County, 3½ miles north of Hazard, and extends for about twenty miles to join Troublesome just opposite the Lost Creek post office. This is less than two miles from Troublesome's North Fork confluence and eleven miles above Jackson. Lost Creek's valley was quite isolated in pioneer times and stories have been told of hunters and other early travelers getting lost when straying too far from its banks. According to one account, a family suffered a bad accident on a particularly icy stretch and lost all of their possessions. In other traditions, while hunting, Colby Haddix, Ned O'Grady, or Barney Russell (or, possibly, all of them) got lost on the stream and weren't found by their North Fork settlement companions for several days.²¹

✓ Breathitt's first Troublesome valley post office was Lost Creek, established by Joseph B. Haddix on October 11, 1849. By the 1880s it was serving a village and rural neighborhood known locally as Troublesome, with several businesses, including Day and Sallee's general store and postmaster F.M. Day's steam-powered saw and grist mill. The office survives.

✓ Some seven miles up Lost Creek, in his home at the mouth of Cockrell's Fork, Jeremiah Combs established a post office which, contrary to popular assumption, he did not name for his son-in-law Edward P. (Ned) Turner. Turner was only twelve years old when the post office was established in 1886 and was living with his family on Middle Fork. He did not marry Combs' daughter Mary Elizabeth till 1891. It seems more likely to have been named for Combs' neighbor Edward "Ned" Sizemore.²² Anyway, Ned was opened on February 26, 1886, and by the mid 1890s was serving at least three stores, including

✓ Jeremiah's, two mills, and some other businesses. In 1923 Jeremiah's son John H. had the office moved half a mile up the stream to the mouth of Perkins Branch. It was back at the mouth of Cockrell's when it closed in 1984.

✓ At the mouth of the 4½ mile long Leatherwood Creek, roughly midway between the mouth of Lost Creek and Ned, were the post offices of Leatherwood and Watts. Leatherwood was established on June 18, 1913 by Lewis Watts and closed in mid April 1919. In the winter of 1934-35 the office was re-established, also as Leatherwood, but in 1949 it became Watts for the local family, while the community it served remained Leatherwood. From 1965 to 1973 the post office was a rural branch of Lost Creek. Like the creek in Perry County, Breathitt's Leatherwood was named for the local trees.

BREATHITT COUNTY'S BUCKHORN CREEK POST OFFICES

✓ Not to be confused with the Buckhorn Creek in Perry County (see above) or other such named streams in Kentucky is this fourteen mile long stream that heads in the Grey Horse Hill in Knott County and joins Troublesome just north of the Perry County line and twelve miles from the North Fork.

✓ The first of its three post offices was called simply Buckhorn. This was established by John Harvey and operated between September 11, 1879 and early April 1881 just about on what became the Knott County line. In 1886, to again serve this area, Harvey established an office he called Buck half a mile within the newly organized Knott County (see below).

✓ The second Buckhorn office was Noble. This was established by James Hutson on October 28, 1889 on Troublesome, half a mile below (northwest of) the mouth of Buckhorn, and named for a pioneer family.²³ In 1923 the office was moved 2½ miles east, up Buckhorn to a site half a mile above Long Fork, where it closed in 1975.

✓ Buckhorn's shortlived (July 5, 1899 to June 15, 1900) Gomez [ghohm/ehz] post office was some four miles east of Noble, with Ballard Combs, the first of its two postmasters. Combs served in Cuba in the Spanish-American War and is said to have brought this name back with him.

OTHER TROUBLESOME POST OFFICES

✓ The other extant Troublesome post office is Clayhole, established on April 5, 1899, one mile up Riley Branch, and five miles east of Lost Creek. Dulana L. Allen was the first postmaster. It's said to have been named for the "sticky blue clay in (the local stream) bed."²⁴ In 1918 it was moved to main Troublesome, and later to several sites on that stream: the mouth of Russell Branch, the mouth of Barge Creek, the area below Riley, and now the mouth of Riley.

✓ Among the pioneer settlers of lower Troublesome were the sons of blacksmith Samuel Haddix. Their land included the area at the mouth of the creek, nine miles above Jackson, where William Haddix operated a salt well in the 1830s and coal was produced in limited quantities in the early 1850s. It was not, however, until the arrival of the railroad in 1911 that a town was founded there and, with its station, was called Haddix. On July 8, 1916 the Haddix post office

was established with Floyd Russell, postmaster. In November 1990 it was suspended, and postal services for the lower Troublesome were once again provided by Lost Creek, two miles east. While most historians agree that the community, station, and post office were named by the railroad for the Haddix family as a whole, at least one member, Tom, assumed credit on the basis of his having surveyed for the L&E through Breathitt and Perry Counties and his owning or at least living on the local right-of-way.

✓ The Hardshell Baptists had a church on Troublesome that gave its name to the post office established by Garvey Noble on August 11, 1917. This office was at several sites between Clayhole and Noble until it ceased as an independent office in 1959. From then through 1994 it was at the mouth of Caney Creek, as a rural branch of Lost Creek, 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles below.

OTHER NORTH FORK POST OFFICES SOUTH OF JACKSON

✓ The nearly three mile long branch and rural neighborhood named for the local family of the Lee County, Virginia-born Hugh Bush, gave its name to the Bush Branch post office half a mile up from the North Fork. It was opened on September 5, 1892 with Roderick R. Baker, postmaster, but in 1914 was moved to the new Altro [ael/troh] (rail) Station on the river, just above the branch, and twenty one miles south of Jackson. The station name given by the railroad has not been derived, but on September 16, 1916 the office took this name, and as Altro it continued to serve the south end of Breathitt's North Fork area through June 1996.²⁵

✓ Another North Fork branch to give its name to a post office was the two mile long Howards Creek, 12½ miles above (south of) Jackson. William E. Campbell maintained it at the creek's mouth from October 12, 1892 to 1915 when his successor William Russell had it moved across the Fork to the newly located railroad tracks. Here it closed in August 1916.

✓ The three mile long Georges Branch, five miles above Howards Creek, might have given its name to Rodger Spicer's office at its mouth but for its similarity to Lawrence County's George's Creek.²⁶ Instead, it was established, on July 6, 1894, as Strong to honor the important local family. Recall that Edward Strong had earlier (1837-1847) maintained the Strongville post office at the mouth of Lick Branch, three miles north.

✓ Though the Strong post office lasted only through April 1896, its site was shortly to have another office, called Whick. Established on August 21, 1901, with John P. Arrowood, postmaster, the new office was named for John Breckinridge "Whick" Allen (1855-1922), the proprietor of the local store, ^{first} owned by his father James Carver Allen. Until recently the office served the Whick rail station on the east side of the North Fork, at the mouth of Fishtrap Branch, directly across from Georges Branch. It still serves this area but from the west side of the river, just below the rail crossing.

✓ Deaton was William H. Deaton's first name choice for an office just below the mouth of the North Fork's Caney Creek, 2½ miles above (south of) Whick. But it was operated as Roosevelt by Deaton and several members of his family between March 3, 1902 and mid August 1916. Could it have been named for then U.S. president Theodore

Since Clyde was already in use in Wayne County, Thomas M. Davidson named his new office, on November 10, 1902, Woburn. But Woburn too has not been derived. There were no known Breathitt families with this name. But a fairly goodsized city north of Boston, Mass. has been Woburn since the 1660s.²⁷ Breathitt County's Woburn was first located $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the mouth of Bush Branch but, by 1910, it had been moved to a site half a mile below Strong Branch where it closed in October 1914.

✓ At the mouth of one of the North Fork's ubiquitous Big Branches, three miles above (south of) Quicksand, was the post office of Kragon. It was established on December 28, 1914 by and named for K. Ragon, the president of the Kentucky Wood Products Company, which had opened a plant there the year before. Fern Ragon was its first postmaster. It closed in 1933.

✓ The Wolf Coal post office, named for the coal produced by the Wolf Creek Coal Company on the North Fork branch of this name, was established on June 10, 1915 with Emma B. Arnett, postmaster. According to her Site Location Report, it was first $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles up the creek from the rail station that already bore this name. From 1918 till it closed in November 1989 it was on the North Fork, just below the mouth of the creek, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles below Altro and three miles above Whick.

✓ The L&N station of Copland [kohp/lən(d)], between Haddix and Whick, was established in 1912 and named for the local Levi Cope family. On July 9, 1919 the proposed Copland post office was opened by George Arrowood but called Saldee [sael/dee] allegedly for some local man's

girl friend; or for two local families, the Deatons and the Salyers or Sallees. In the late 1960s the office was ~~office was~~ moved across the North Fork to a store on Rt. 1110, three-fourths of a mile above the station. And here it closed at the end of 1989.

✓ The Barwick post office was established on March 1, 1920, with storekeeper Roscoe Shackelford, its first and longtime postmaster. It was at the mouth of Strongs Branch where it served the Barwick Station and, shortly, the Barwick Coal Company mine and camp. No one is sure how it got its name. There were no such local families. Stephen Bowling, the county's leading historian, thinks it might have referred to a rock bar in the river above Whick.²⁸ In 1944 the office was moved half a mile up the North Fork and one fourth of a mile north of the tracks that went through a tunnel on its way into neighboring Perry County. Here it closed in 1968.

✓ At the mouth of John Little Creek, named for a pioneer settler, son of Edmond, Jr. and Sallie Lindon Little, the L&N early established another station and called it Little. However, it was not to have its own post office until 1931 when Clifford J. Strong opened it near the station, roughly midway between Copland-Saldee and Whick. It was suspended in November 1991.

POST OFFICES ON THE KENTUCKY RIVER'S MIDDLE FORK AND ITS BRANCHES

The Kentucky River's Middle Fork, which heads in the southwest corner of Leslie County, joins the North Fork 2½ miles above Beattyville (Lee County)'s city limits. The main valley and ~~main~~^{major} branches in its Breathitt County stretch were served by 25 post offices.

✓ The first of these was the underived Crockettsville, established on July 7, 1849 to serve the newly founded town of this name on George Boling's land just below the mouth of Long's Creek.²⁹ George Boling (or Bowling) was its only postmaster for the office closed in August 1851. On July 21, 1874 Robert Johnson re-established the Crockettsville office on Middle Fork, one fourth of a mile above Longs Creek, to serve one or more stores and his own lumber business. By 1912, however, the office was on Longs Creek, 1½ miles west of the Middle Fork. In 1930 it was moved back to the mouth of Longs to serve a community also known as Longscreek. Five years later it was moved to a site just north of Bowling Creek and, in 1949, it was moved another fourth of a mile north to a site just above (south of) the mouth of Joes Branch, some twenty miles ssw of Jackson (via Ky 30 and 315), where it closed in January 1955.

✓ From April 21, 1915 through January 1921, Edward Deaton maintained the Deaton post office in the wide westside of the Middle Fork bottom some 500 yards north of Joes Branch, in the area later served by the Crockettsville office. But at that time the latter was still 1½ miles up Longs Creek, In his Site Location Report, though, Deaton mentioned that his office would be serving the Crockettsville community.³⁰

✓ In 1820 Virginia-born Stephen Jett (1772-1862) purchased 20,000 acres in a three mile long Middle Fork valley, and shortly thereafter the valley and a small settlement there took the name Jetts's Creek. From October 20, 1857 till late March 1860 Newton Jett maintained the Jetts Creek post office at some unknown site in that valley. In November 1870 Newton re-established the office at the mouth of

✓ the creek, twelve miles wsw of Jackson, to serve a small settlement also known as Jettsville with two stores and some other businesses. Over the next few decades several other Jetts were postmasters and local storekeepers. Sometime before the First World War the office was moved a mile or so up the creek, to a site probably just above its Right Fork where it closed again in May 1924. On September 10, 1926 it was re-established, with Golden Johnson, postmaster, back at the mouth of the creek, and here it remained till it closed for good in 1957.

✓ The descendants of the pioneer brothers James P. and Wiley Cope were another family that gave its name to a Breathitt stream, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of the mouth of Jetts Creek. Probably near the head of the two mile long Cope Branch of the Middle Fork was the Copebranch post office operated by Frank P., Alex P., and Arch C. Crawford from December 16, 1886 through January 1906.³¹ On April 24, 1915 Arch Crawford re-established the office at the mouth of the branch, where it closed in 1955.

✓ There are two possible, though traditional, name derivations of the four mile long Shoulderblade Creek, an east side Middle Fork tributary. It may have been named by early hunters for what resembled the shoulder bone of a very large animal found near their camp. Less likely was it named for the shape of the area between Shoulderblade Creek and Old Buck Creek which joins the Middle Fork two-thirds of a mile above the other stream. At least on the map it seems to resemble a human shoulderblade. Anyhow, on August 11, 1891 James T. Chadwick established a post office $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles up the creek and called it Shoulder Blade (sic). In 1904 it was moved at least half a mile

down the creek where it closed in February 1914.

✓ On March 9, 1910 another post office was established on Middle Fork, some 400 yards north of the mouth of Shoulderblade, and two miles below the Shoulder Blade post office. When Matthew J. Long, a Spanish-American War veteran, learned that his first preference Pinegrove was in use in Clark County, he called his new office Juan, it's been said, for the Battle of San Juan Hill. By 1922 this office was at the mouth of Old Buck Creek, but in 1938 it was moved to the vacated Shoulder Blade site on Ky 30, $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles southwest of Jackson where, in 1960, it became a Jackson rural branch. The community it has served is locally called Juan [wahn, though sometimes djū/aen], while Shoulderblade is applied only to the creek.

✓ The three mile long Canoe Creek joins the Middle Fork from the east, roughly midway between Shoulderblade and Longs Creeks. The first of its two post offices was established as Canoe Fork by Samuel Callahan on August 14, 1891, one fourth of a mile up the creek, at the mouth of Little Fork. William Little was its first postmaster. In June 1894 it became simply Canoe [usually locally kū/nū]. According to tradition, the creek waters once got so low that someone's canoe could not be floated out and had to be abandoned. In 1940 the office was moved to the mouth of the creek, but in 1945 it was back where it began, and here it ended in December 1990.

✓ Near the head of Canoe Creek, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles above the Canoe post office, was the Arrowood post office. It was named for a Middle Fork family, or for the Rev. Nathan Arrowood who had settled on Canoe in the 1850s and helped found Baptist churches in the area. James B. Turner began the office on January 6, 1919, but had first planned

to call it Cardinal. It was discontinued in 1932.

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✓ The Twin Creeks, distinguished as Upper and Lower, join the Middle Fork less than 500 feet apart at Athol on the Lee County line. Along the 6½ mile Upper Twin ran the Kentucky Union (later the Lexington and Eastern and ^{the} Louisville and Nashville) Railroad, and two of its stations had their own post offices. The first of these, the aptly named Oakdale, was established on June 20, 1892 with Floyd Day, postmaster, 3½ miles from the Middle Fork. It closed in 1957.

✓ Two miles up the creek (east) from Oakdale, and four miles west of Elkatawa, was the station, store, and post office of Chenowee [chehn/oh/wee]. This operated, from December 12, 1917, with Henry Drake, its first postmaster, through October 1922. It was re-established by Robert Turner in 1946, a short distance east of its first site, but closed in 1955. One may merely assume a Cherokee derivation of its name which was also applied to a place in Tennessee.

✓ One post office, the shortlived (October 2, 1928 to 1932) and all but forgotten Isolation, served the Lower Twin Creek. Jessie Creech Bowman was its only postmaster. Its precise location is not known but, according to Mrs. Bowman's Site Location Report, it was four miles north of Middle Fork, three miles southeast of Fillmore (a Lee County post office), and 2½ miles from the Lee County line, suggesting that it was at the upper end of Lower Twin, or even at the head of its Bean Fork branch. At that time this area was fairly isolated, but whether that accounts for the name we can't tell. The area it served is now locally called Smack 'em.

✓ In 1908 famed Presbyterian evangelist and educator Edward Owings Guerrant (1838-1916) established the Highlands Institute, a school,

church, orphanage, and hospital complex, half a mile up Puncheon Camp Creek which joins the Middle Fork 1½ miles below (north of) the mouth of Turkey Creek.³² This vicinity was already being served by the Herald post office, established on November 30, 1895 and named for the family of its first postmaster Breckinridge H. Herald. On February 31, 1911, however, the office was renamed Guerrant, and closed in 1988.

✓ Some four miles below (north of) the mouth of Longs Creek, the Middle Fork is joined by the three mile long Turners Creek. At the latter's mouth, on February 12, 1914, Talbert Nathan Turner (1890-1973) established the Talbert [tahl/birt] post office he is said to have named for himself or his uncle Talbert "Big Tall" Turner (1879-1966)³³. Other Turners, including his wife Easter and daughter Rutha, also ran this post office. In 1934 Easter had the office moved half a mile up the creek to the mouth of Pipemud Branch where it served a store till it closed in December 1993.

✓ On August 22, 1925, with Mrs. Mary T. Johnson, postmaster, a post office called Beech for the many area beech trees was established on Bowling Creek, an east side branch of Middle Fork that joins it half a mile below (north of) the mouth of Longs Creek. According to Mrs. Johnson's Site Location Report, it was 2½ miles from Middle Fork and would serve the village of Beech with a population then of some 200. Over the next twenty five years the office was moved down the creek several times till, when it closed in 1963, it was 1 3/4 miles up the creek from Middle Fork. On contemporary maps the Beech community is shown at the mouth of Duff Fork, less than two miles above the last post office site (sic).

√ The Middle Fork's most recently established post office was Sebastians Branch which served one or more local stores on Ky 315 and the west side of Middle Fork, just below (north of) the mouth of the stream for which it was named. The 1 and 1/3 mile long stream which joins the Fork from the west, had been named probably by the 1850s for John Sebastian (ne ca. 1783) who had acquired and settled on it in the 1840s. Old land records even identify the stream as John Sebastian Branch. The office, established in 1947 by Walter Sebastian, a descendant, was suspended in late June 1990.

POST OFFICES IN THE MIDDLE FORK'S TURKEY CREEK VALLEYS

√ The main Turkey Creek valley, which extends for nearly 6½ miles to Middle Fork, two miles northwest of the mouth of Shoulderblade, was once thickly populated by wild turkeys. Six post offices served this valley and its branches.

√ The first of these, Turkey, established on March 8, 1894, was at several sites on Terry Fork, the lowest of the creek's tributaries. On first postmaster-storekeeper Jacob Terry's Site Location Report. its first proposed name was Choctaw, and it would be two miles from Middle Fork. It was then, or would soon be, serving his store, a feed mill, and a distillery on the road to Owsley County (now Ky 30), some two miles from the county line. When the office closed in 1982 it was on Terry Creek and Ky 30, three fourths of a mile from Turkey Creek, serving the community officially called Turkey Creek but locally referred to simply as Turkey.

✓ However, the Terry post office, in service between October 20, 1897 and December 19, 1901, was not on Terry Creek but on the Middle Fork itself, just above the mouth of Turkey. It was named for the family of its postmasters Charles and Louraney Terry.³⁴

✓ Another shortlived (July 18 1900 to January 15, 1906) post office, the underived Wharf, was at two sites on Turkey. The first, with Andy Short, Jr., postmaster, was probably 3½ miles up that creek; but in 1904 Ellen Griffith had it moved 1½ miles down the creek.

✓ A locality that may then have been called Forest and Turkey Creek was a short distance above the mouth of Short Fork of Turkey, some five miles from the Middle Fork. On April 24, 1908 its post office was established with Breckinridge Herald's daughter Belle (Mrs. Harlan) Griffith, postmaster. Since Forest was then in use in Morgan County, it was called Houston. Local tradition has it that it was named for some man passing through of whom nothing is known. When it closed in 1975 it was at the mouth of Short.

✓ A little over two miles below (north of) Houston, at the mouth of the more or less aptly named Four Mile Fork of Turkey, was John Callahan's post office. Since Fourmile was then a Bell County office, he called his Conestoga and ran it, alone, from January 30, 1911 through January 1914. It's not been learned why he chose this name.

✓ Verneda, operated by Nannie B. (Mrs. Luther) Little from July 29, 1925 through February 1931, was named for her 18 year old daughter. In Mrs. Little's Site Location Report, the office was placed 2½ miles south of the Turkey post office, 5½ miles from Middle Fork, and half a mile from the Owsley Co. line, probably at or near the first Houston site.

According to late nineteenth century government maps, Longs Creek headed just east of the Owsley-Perry-Breathitt convergence and extended for some $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Middle Fork, a mile above (south of) Crockettville's final site. It still does, though modern maps identify it as Freeman Fork. Longs is said to have been named for an early Virginia hunter who, with a companion, was bringing home a slain bear when his (or the other's) gun accidentally fired, killing him. Freeman is said to have been named for Hiram Freeman (1819-1905).³⁵

✓ The first of the four Longs Creek post offices was operated as Gobelgap by Elihu Reynolds between November 13, 1915 and mid December 1918. Reynold's Site Location Report had it on Longs Fork (sic), $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Crockettville (which was then $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles up the creek). The name has not been explained; there were no Gobel or Goble families in the county at that time.³⁶

/ In the early 1920s the small village of Goble Gap (sic) was again to be served by a post office of this name. But instead John Helton opened it on January 29, 1923 as Dalesburg. After several moves successively up the creek it closed in 1962, about half a mile below the old Valjean post office site. Whence Dalesburg is also not known. The only Dale family in Breathitt County in the 1920s lived some distance away.

/ Valjean [vael/djeen], just below the head of Longs, operated from July 19, 1920 through July 1925 by Jerry J. and Hulda Morris. The first name proposed for this office was Shop. Whence Valjean is only a guess. Could it have been named for the hero of Victor

✓ Hugo's "Les Miserables"? Jerry Morris, incidentally, was Dalesburg's second postmaster (ca. 1931). -40-

✓ The hamlet of Morris Fork centers on the Forest Hill Community Center on the Longs Creek branch whose name it bears. From a remote and disreputable section of the county in the early twentieth century, this became one of the more progressive rural communities in eastern Kentucky following the arrival, in the mid 1920s, of the Rev. and Mrs. Samuel Vandermeer and the establishment of their Presbyterian mission. The Morris Fork post office opened at the mouth of what's now called Ingol Fork of Morris, three miles from Middle Fork, on May 25, 1931 with James Cornett, postmaster. It closed in 1983. The stream, first called Riley Fork for the family of Patrick and Nancy (Neal) Riley who had settled there in the 1820s became Morris Fork some years later for a family that had arrived in the 1850s.³⁷

✓ Finally, five offices were authorized by the Post Office Department but for some reason never operated. Nor have their locations been determined. Allen was officially established by and probably named for John M. Allen on July 5, 1893. An office called Parson was established on March 14, 1899 with Elizabeth Russell its first postmaster followed, on May 12, by George W. Barnett. No Parson(s) families are found in late nineteenth century county records. Could it have been named for an area pastor or for a Dr. Parsons, the Methodist minister and pioneer Jackson resident? On December 16, 1893 John Griffith was permitted to open a post office called Milan (derivation unknown) but his authority was rescinded on May 9 of the following year. John M. Roberts' Vanzel post office, officially

established on October 31, 1898, never materialized either. And we've^{- 7/-} already seen that John E. Helton's proposed Lonetree never opened its doors as such in 1906 though it might later have been the post office of Dalesburg.

Only six of Breathitt's ninety seven operating post offices (Jackson, Vancleve, Lost Creek, Whick, Clayhole, and Bays) are still active. Jackson serves the county's only incorporated place. At least thirty three offices were the centers of villages with more or less concentrated populations. Nearly all of the others served at least one or more churches, a country store and/or rail station, and maybe a local school.

Thirty six post offices were named for local or area people, while three honored well known national figures. Three were named for distant places while to seventeen were transferred the names of nearby streams and to another a local church. Local economic activities or the companies that carried them out gave names to five offices. One was named for an alleged local event. One may have been named for a person or place connected with the Spanish-American War. One name (Elkatawa) has several possible explanations. The name derivations of twenty one offices have not yet been learned. Three offices are still not precisely located.

The names of twenty seven offices were not those first proposed for them. Seventeen served communities, rural neighborhoods, or rail stations with other names. Ten had name changes.

1. Calculated reforestation in the University of Kentucky's Robinson Forest in the southeast edge of the county has led to a moderate resurgence of commercial timbering.
2. After serving as postmaster, Alexander, Sr., who had settled at the mouth of Lick Branch in 1820, was a Perry County court clerk and county judge, and later ran another salt works and a mill at the lower end of Troublesome Creek.
3. Charles Hayes, "Jackson" in The Kentucky Encyclopedia, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992, P. 459. As a flood control measure, the U.S. Corps of Engineers, in 1956, dug an "overflow channel through the neck of the Panhandle bend (which) shortened the river by four miles." In 1962 the Kentucky Highway Department "widened the cutoff to 350 feet." But Jackson still suffered flooding, especially in 1984. (Leland R. Johnson and Charles E. Parrish, Kentucky River Development: The Commonwealth's Waterway, US Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District, 1999, Pp.160, 200.)
4. Burton Bend was named for the many local descendants of James Burton (ca. 1830)
5. Until the Second World War, that section of the creek above Taulbee was identified on published maps as Sulphur Lick.
6. Day's first name preference was Lusk for another family.
7. John Wills Taulbee (1832-ca. 1860s) was the son of William Ashford and Angelina Birchfield Taulbee.
8. Some have said that Wilhurst was named for a Hurst and a Wilson, perhaps William K. Wilson, an early postmaster.

9. Postmaster Hannibal was the son of William L. and Isabella (Belle) Duff Hurst, and the grandson of Samuel Henry Hurst I (who had acquired land on Boone Fork in the early 1840s) and his second wife Sally (nee Landsaw). He was thus a great great grandson of Hurst family progenitors Henry and Elizabeth. The Hurst Fork of Johnson, on which Peartree was located, was once owned by a cousin, Judge Zachary Taylor Hurst, and was the site of the Premium Coal and Lumber Company's Hurst mine (ca. 1910). (According to the Hurst family's history published by J. Caesar Hurst, another of William's sons, and available in the Breathitt County library in Jackson.)
10. A little known Vancleave post office operated in Calloway County, Ky. between 1895 and 1905.
11. The 8½ mile long Cope Fork, not to be confused with the Cope Branch of Middle Fork and its post office namesake, joins Frozen Creek 3½ miles above the North Fork. It was named for the family of Wise County, Virginia-born James D. Cope (1798-1884) and his wife Elizabeth (nee Crawford) who had settled in that valley in the 1830s.
12. Suggested by Stephen Bowling, the editor of the Jackson Times, interviewed by the author on May 15, 2000.
13. E.O. Robinson of Fort Thomas, Ky. and his partner Fred W. Mowbray of Cincinnati long felt a sense of responsibility for the areas whence their timber had come. In addition to providing the land for the experiment station, their company funded the Homeplace Hospital and schools in Perry County (see above).

14. According to Jackson's Site Location Report, the first name proposed for this office was Bearl. -44-
15. Breathitt County's Clemmons post office is not to be confused with Perry County's Clemons (established in 1924) which had been named for another branch of that family. Why the Breathitt office name was spelled with two "m"s when the family always spelled their name with one, has not been explained.
16. Jack Deberry, Kentucky Encyclopedia, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992, P. 783
17. Days was the first name proposed for the re-established Rousseau post office.
18. William Hagins (1766-1833) and his wife Mary or Polly (nee Linville) Hagins, their family's Breathitt County progenitors, settled near Quicksand's Spring Fork. Their son Thomas soon acquired considerable acreage in the middle Quicksand valley and later served his county in the state legislature. Another son Daniel was the county's sheriff in 1842.
19. Unlikely was it named for a Guage Williams who was allegedly killed there for, as Stephen Bowling pointed out, in a July 10, 2000 interview, no such person appears in county records.
20. Stephen Bowling, interviewed by the author on May 15, 2000
21. "Origins of Names of Streams" Jackson Hustler, ca. 1893; "Creek Names" Ibid., November 18, 1890; and J.J. Dickey's July 21, 1898 interview with Edward Callahan Strong, respectively.
22. Stephen Bowling, interviewed by the author on March 2, 2001
23. Three sons (William, Nathan, and Enoch) of Richmond, Virginia-born William Noble settled in the Troublesome valleys. Nathan's

descendants were to succeed Hutson as Noble postmasters.

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24. May Stone's DAR manuscript--Origin of Names of Places and Streams in Some Eastern Kentucky Counties, ca. 1941, in the library of the Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort.
- ✓ 25. For many years Altro Station, since closed, was the home of section gangs employed by the railroad to maintain its area tracks. To this day, the branch and rural neighborhood served by the Bush Branch post office has locally been called Bushes-branch.
- ✓ 26. George's Branch of the North Fork is said to have been named for old man George Miller of the Troublesome valley who died on it around 1803 while he was returning home from the Middle Fork area. (According to Green Trimble's typescript on Breathitt County stream names, found with the WPA (Federal Writers Project) Breathitt County manuscripts in the Kentucky Archives, Frankfort.)
27. Woburn, Massachusetts is known to have been named for a parish in Bedfordshire, England which was the estate of the Dukes of Bedford.
28. Interviewed by the author on May 15, 2000
- ✓ 29. The establishment of the town of Crockettsville was approved by the Kentucky General Assembly on February 23, 1847, but no mention is made in its authorization of the source of the name.
30. The Deatons of Breathitt County were descended from John Deaton and his sons William, Lewis, and John who came to Kentucky from Lee County, Virginia in 1815.
31. Frank Crawford's first proposed name Copes Branch was apparently unacceptable to the Post Office Department.

- 32. Guerrant, a Sharpsburg, Kentucky native and Confederate officer, later became a medical doctor and Presbyterian minister, and helped to organize churches in eastern Kentucky, including one in Jackson.
- 33. Talbert Nathan's first proposed name was Turner for his well established family for whom the stream had been named years before.
- 34. Charles Terry was probably descended from Ike Terry, ne 1820, who had settled on Longs Creek (ca. 1859) and later moved to Turkey. By 1900, Miles and Lourainne (sic) Terry, Charles' parents, were living at the mouth of Terry.
- 35. Stephen Bowling, op.cit.
- 36. Somewhere in this area John E. Helton, on May 1, 1906, received authorization to operate a post office called Lonetree, but this was soon rescinded and it never opened. If this office wasn't to be at the first site of Dalesburg, it may have been proposed for or at least referred to the Lonetree Branch of Burton Fork of Longs Creek.
- 37. Charles Riley of Jackson, Ky., interviewed by the author on May 18, 2000

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Breathitt Co. communities

- *1. Jackson (co. seat) (C)
- *2. Morris Fork (com.) (DPO) (C) (~~now in pocket - ?~~)
- *3. Strongville (dpo) ~~Streng-(dpo)~~
- 4. Crockettville (dpo) (com)
- *5. Lost Creek (po & com) (now Lostcreek) (C)
- *6. Frozen Creek (po and com) (aka Hargis) (C)
- *7. Jett's Creek (dpo) ngbr.
- 8. Hunting Creek (dpo)
- *9. Quicksand (po and com) (C)
- *10. Apple Tree (dpo)
- 11. Buckhorn Creek (dpo) Buckhorn (com)
- 12. Baker (dpo)
- *13. Rousseau (po and com) (C)
- *14. Duke (dpo) [knott co.]
- *15. Haginsville (dpo)
- 16. Daisydell (dpo) or p.o. est. but never in op. - ? ~~knott co.~~
- *17. Ned (dpo) (com) (C)
- *18. Taulbee (dpo) (com) X
- *19. Capebranch (dpo) (com)
- *20. Peartree (dpo)
- 21. Sikes (dpo)
- *22. Noble (po and com) (C)
- *23. Smith Branch (dpo)
- *24. ~~Athel~~ Oakdale (dpo) (com)
- 25. Paxton (dpo) (com) X
- *26. Fitch (dpo) (center co.)
- 27. Elkatawa (com. & po) (C)
- *28. Shoulder Blade (sic) (now Shoulderblade) (C) (dpo) (com)
- *29. Canoe (com. & po) (C)
- 30. ~~Altel (?) (dpo) (or could this be) Altro~~ (com. & po) had been Bush Br.
- 31. Lunah (dpo) (com) X
- *32. Howards Creek (dpo and com) (C)
- 33. Allen (dpo)
- 34. Milan (dpo) } never operated
- 35. Isolation (dpo)
- *36. Turkey (po and com) (C)
- *37. Verneda (dpo)
- 38. Wide Creek (dpo) widecreek (com)
- *39. Strong (dpo)
- *40. Lawson (dpo) (com)
- 41. Stevenson (dpo) (com)
- *42. Guerrant (po and com) had been Herald (C) now called Highland
- 43. Dalesburg (dpo) (com)
- 44. Lambric (po) (com) X
- *45. Terry (dpo)
- *46. Wolverine (po and com) had been Gunn (C)
- 47. Marble (dpo)
- *48. Hurst (dpo) (com) X
- *49. Bays (com. & po) X
- 50. Vanzel (p.o. est. but never in op.)
- *51. Curt (po and com) X
- 52. Parson (dpo)
- *53. Clayhole (po and com) never operated
- 54. Gomez (dpo)
- 55. Wharf (dpo)
- *56. Whick (com. & po) X
- *57. Wilhurt (dpo) had been Boxer (com)

- 58. Simpson (dpo) (com) aka Hampton # (1)
- * 59. Roosevelt (dpo) (com)
- * 60. Wilstacy (dpo and com) (1)
- 61. Robbins (dpo)
- 62. Woburn (dpo) (com)
- * 63. Vancleve (po and com) Had been Calla # (1)
- * 64. McQuinn (dpo)
- * 65. Juan (dpo and com)
- * 66. Clemmons (sic) (dpo)
- 67. Lonetree (p.o.est. but never in op.)
- 68. War Creek (po and com) (1)
- 69. Conestoga (dpo)
- * 70. Guage (po. and com) (1)
- * 71. Hays (dpo)
- 72. Houston (po and com) # X
- * 73. Talbert (po) (com) X
- 74. Key (dpo)
- * 75. Portsmouth (dpo) (com. & po) (1)
- * 76. Leatherwood (~~dpo or po in Perry Co.~~) (com) aka watt
→ watt po (dpo)
- 77. Gill (dpo)
- 78. Noctor (po and com) # X
- * 79. Kragon (com. and dpo)
- * 80. Deaton (dpo)
- 81. Glee (dpo)
- * 82. Wolf Coal (sic) (po and com) (rr name=Wolfcoal) (1)
- 83. Gobelgap (dpo) → Oatesburg
- * 84. (~~Mezz~~) Haddix (po and com) (1)
- 85. Keck (dpo) (com)
- 86. Chenowee (dpo) (com)
- * 87. Arrowood (dpo and ~~xxxx~~ ngr.)
- 88. Saldee (po and com) aka Copland* (1)
- * 89. Hardshell (com. & dpo) (1)
- * 90. Press (dpo) (com)
- * 91. Sewell (com) (dpo)
- 92. ~~Gunn (dpo)~~
- 93. Barwick (dpo)(com) X
- 94. Valjean (dpo)
- 95. Batsmann (dpo) or Betsmann
- * 96. Sky (dpo)
- 97. Moet (dpo)(com) X
- * 98. Beech (dpo) (com) X ~~glove~~
- 99. Camp Christy Ngr.
- 100. Elsome Ngr.
- * 101. Evanston (dpo and com) (1)
- 102. Fugate Fork Ngr.
- 103. Beech Grove Ngr.
- 104. Big Branch Ngr.
- 105. Big Caney Ngr.
- 106. Big Rock (com)
- 107. Caney Ngr.
- 108. Camp Lewis (com)
- 109. Cedar Ngr.
- 110. Davis Branch Ngr.
- 111. Four Mile Ngr.
- 112. Haddix Fork Ngr.
- 113. Hebron (com)
- 114. Highland Ngr.
- 115. Junction (popr)
- 116. Keith Ngr.
- 117. Laurel Fork Ngr.

- 118. Johnson Fork Ngbr.
- 119. Laurel Ngbr. (not 117, above)
- 120. Lick Branch Ngbr.
- 121. Lower Twin Ngbr.
- 122. Lower War Creek Ngbr.
- 123. Macedonia (com)
- 124. Meatscaffold Ngbr.
- 125. Mill Ngbr.
- 126. Morgue (com)
- *127. Mountain Valley (com) (DPO)
- 128. Mudlick Ngbr.
- 129. Old Buck Sch. Ngbr.
- *130. Pan Bowl (sic) Ngbr.
- *131. Sebastians Branch (com) (DPO)
- 132. Spencer Bend Ngbr.
- 133. Stray Branch Ngbr.
- 134. Sugar Camp (Ngbr.)
- 135. Upper Haws Fork Ngbr.
- 136. Upper Leatherwood Ngbr.
- 137. Upper War Creek Ngbr.
- 138. Walnut Grove Ngbr.
- 139. Wells Fork (com)
- 140. White Oak (ngbr.)
- 141. Williams Ngbr.
- 142. Wilson Fork Ngbr.
- 143. Rock Lick (com) (DPO)
- 144. Spring Fork Ngbr.
- *145. Little (com) (DPO)
- 065. Little Caney Ngbr.
- 146. Sulphur Gap (com)
- 147. Crim (com)
- 148. Dumont (com) (rr)
- 149. Five Mile (com)
- 150. Gambill (com)
- 151. Homestead (com)
- ~~152. Meert (com)~~
- 153. Progressive (com)
- 154. Puckett (~~com~~ com) (N.)
- 155. Riverside (com)
- *156. Three Mile (com) → wolverine
- 157. Tolson (com)
- 158. Yeadon (com)
- 159. five mile Ngbr.

159 + 60.

⊙ = sample
x = reserve

Ngbr = 37
POPR = 1
PO rest = 2 } excluded

NT = (119)