Clay County, Kentucky's forty seventh, was created by legislative act on December 2, 1806 from parts of Madison, Floyd, and Knox Counties, and named for General Green Clay (1757-1826), a Madison County landowner and surveyor, who represented Kentucky in the Virginia legislature (1788-1789) and served in the Kentucky General Assembly (1793-1808). Included in its original 2,400 square mile territory were all of the future Owsley and Leslie Counties, most of Perry County, and some of Lee, Breathitt, Knott, Jackson, Letcher, Harlan, and Laurel Counties.

On March 1, 1812 Clay lost thirty square miles to Madison County. On May 1, 1815 it lost 120 square miles to Estill County (that later became a part of Lee County) and on February 26, 1921 lost 1,050 square miles toward the formation of Perry County. It lost 130 square miles toward Laurel County's formation on February 13, 1826 and lost fifty square miles toward the formation of Breathitt County on April 1, 1839. Another eighty square miles were lost to Perry County on January 12, 1843. Another 230 square miles became a part of Owsley when that county was formed on June 1, 1843. Another ten square miles were lost to Perry County on November 22, 1850. Twenty square miles were gained from Perry on December 19, 1850. Ten more square miles were lost to Harlan County on January 9, 1852 and another ten were lost toward the creation of Jackson County on April 25, 1858. Leslie County claimed 230 square miles toward its creation on April 15, 1878. Except for a few very small adjustments to accommodate local property owners, the county had secured its present 471 square mile area before 1880.

In the hilly Eastern Kentucky Coal Field, the county is drained primarily by the main channel and tributaries (Sexton and Bullskin Creeks).
of the Kentucky River's South Fork and that stream's two head forks, Goose Creek and the Red Bird River. Goose Creek's principal branches, including Laurel, Little Goose, Collins, Horse, Beech, and Pigeon Roost Creeks, figure prominently in the county's settlement history and economic development. Clay's northwest section is drained by the Rockcastle River (a main tributary of the Cumberland River) and its branches.

The first white visitors to Clay County, like the Cherokee Indians who preceded them, were attracted by abundant game that in turn had been attracted to the large salt reserves in the Goose Creek valleys. The first of the area's salt licks were discovered and developed by the hunter James Collins, the county's first known settler, sometime before 1790 at the mouth of White Branch of Collins (named for him). However, the first commercial salt production was undertaken by Samuel Langford in the early 1790s at what was first called Langford's Lick and later the Lower Goose Creek Salt Works. Shortly, families including the Whites and Garrards began operating salt furnaces in the Goose Creek area, while Francis Clark and John Gilbert were producing salt in the lower Red Bird valley. By the 1850s Clay County had become Kentucky's leading salt producer with shipments by riverboat and wagon to the Bluegrass and beyond. During the Civil War, salt production in Clay County was all but ended by the Union Army's deliberate destruction of its major salt reserves and production capabilities.

The county's second industry of any consequence was timbering from 1810 till depletion brought it to an untimely end a hundred years later. Today, however, 61,000 forested acres are in the Daniel Boone National Forest's Redbird Purchase unit. Coal mining was the county's main economic base in the twentieth century but it has been in decline since the Second World War.
As with most of eastern Kentucky, a lack of adequate transportation impeded the county's development till the arrival of the L&N Railroad in 1914 and the construction of the Daniel Boone Parkway in the 1960s. The latter crosses Clay just south of Manchester, the county seat, and now links the county to I-75 on the west and Hazard on the east. Within recent years some light industry (Midsouth Electronics and Kentucky Mountain Industries) has come to supplement mining, subsistence agriculture, and trade and services as the county's economic base, and Clay has a fairly promising future. From 1970 to 2000 a moderate thirty eight per cent increase brought its population to 25,556.

This essay will deal with the 102 post offices that ever operated within Clay's present limits. For our purposes the county will be divided into several geographic areas conforming to the two river valleys and their branches: the main South Fork below Oneida, Sexton Creek, Bullskin Creek, Goose Creek and its branches, Red Bird River and its branches, and Rockcastle River and its Clay County tributaries. Within these areas the offices will be grouped by the neighborhoods they served and then considered chronologically. The offices will be located by road miles from the Manchester post office, eighty one road miles sse of downtown Lexington (via US 421 from Richmond), or with reference to other offices in their valleys.

POST OFFICES IN THE KENTUCKY RIVER'S SOUTH FORK VALLEYS: THE MAIN SOUTH FORK CHANNEL BELOW ONEIDA

One of the Kentucky River's three headwater tributaries, the seventy five mile long South Fork, drains 736 square miles in Clay and Owsley Counties. Its entire course may first have been called Goose Creek, but by the early nineteenth century the latter name had been restricted to
its stretch above Oneida. At this point Goose Creek is met by the South Fork's other head tributary the Red Bird River. Seven post offices were on several branches of the South Fork's eleven mile stretch from the Goose-Red Bird confluence to the Clay-Owsley County line.

Upper and Lower Teges [tee/djas] Creeks join the South Fork from the west, 2½ miles apart at their South Fork confluences. They are said to have been named for a pioneer resident Adoniram Allen (1734-1838), a New Hampshire-born Revolutionary War veteran, who had settled in the area between the two streams by 1807 and was soon maintaining a saw and grain mill to serve his pioneer neighbors. According to tradition, Allen was so particular that his ways seemed tedious to others, thus earning him the nickname "Tedious" or "Tejus" Allen. The creeks were actually identified as Tedious on some nineteenth century maps and later assumed their current spelling. The first Teges post offices were not established till the early 1880s.

\[\text{Narrows}\]

The earliest of these, Narrows was operated between June 30, 1881 and December 1887 by James M. Baker just below the mouth of Lower Teges, some twenty miles northeast of Manchester. It was named for the rocky shoal in the South Fork extending for several miles below Oneida that's said to have been the most dangerous stretch of navigable water in Kentucky. Until the government cut a bypass, water craft often smashed into lateral rocks where they were totalled and their occupants often seriously injured.

On December 16, 1881 Levi Abner opened the Teges post office at the mouth of Upper Teges which was soon serving two area flour mills and a school. Shortly after the turn of the century it was moved to the old Narrows post office site. Sometime after the late 1920s it was moved back to the mouth of Upper Teges where, on the present Ky 11, it closed in 1980.
A man calling himself James T. Phelty (1823-1902) brought his family to Clay County in the early 1850s. After Civil War service he returned to Clay County as Felty, and settled on Lower Teges. On February 24, 1926 his granddaughter Leah Felty (through his son George W.) opened the Felty post office some three miles west of the Teges post office to serve the Lower Teges Neighborhood. It closed in 1974.

At the future site of Oneida, just below the Goose-Red Bird confluence, Levi Combs applied for the Combsville post office to serve a steam-powered gristmill and A.B. Combs' store. But it opened, on April 21, 1881, as Ammie [æ/mee], allegedly for a Combs family member. By 1892, when Oneida was established, Ammie had already been moved some three miles west to Crane Creek, a six mile long South Fork branch, above the Teges valleys. After several Crane Creek moves, it closed in February 1962 at the mouth of Court House Branch, 1½ miles up Crane.

The village of Oneida [ən/i/də , o̞n/i/də , o̞n/i/də] in the loop of South Fork and Goose Creek, just below their Red Bird confluence, grew up around Lewis Howard's (later Martha Coldiron's) farm. By June 25, 1892, when its post office was established by William Lunsford to replace the relocated Ammie, it already had several businesses and a population of 150. Though the community was probably named for the New York State Indian tribe sometime before the post office was established, its post office name was inexplicably spelled Onedia, an error corrected in 1906 by Mrs. Coldiron, then postmaster. In any event no one today can account for the name's unusual pronunciations. Oneida is best known as the home of the famed settlement school begun by the Rev. James Anderson Burns in 1898 in the belief that an educated citizenry would stop its incessant feuding and live in peace and harmony. First called the Mamrey Baptist College3 it was renamed for the community in 1904. The school, a public elementary school, a clinic (formerly hospital), and the
post office still serve this vicinity 14½ road (and twenty two stream) miles below (northeast of) Manchester.

Heading just short of the Owsley County line and flowing northwest to the South Fork, the 4½ mile long Newfound Creek [nu/found] is believed to have been named by early settlers from North Carolina for several Buncombe County features, or for its having been "newly found", the probable origin of the North Carolina name. The Newfound post office, established on March 27, 1907 by John W. Morgan occupied several sites on this stream till it closed in the summer of 1952.

The Trixie post office was established on January 26, 1931 in post-master Jobe Baker's store, just below the mouth of Newfound, and is said to have been named for his dog. In April 1940 Baker's successor Woodrow Baker had the office moved nearly a mile up the river to a site 3.7 miles below the mouth of Lower Teges, where it closed in April 1966.

From March 25, 1931 through 1933 Mrs. Etta Byrd ran the Road Run post office one mile up the 2.3 mile long aptly named branch of the South Fork. Part of the road along the stream, which heads two thirds of a mile northeast of the Felty post office's last site and joins the river across from Owsley County, is now a section of Ky 11.

POST OFFICES ON SEXTONS CREEK AND ITS BRANCHES

The twenty four mile long Sextons Creek heads 2.7 miles within Jackson County, about a mile above the most recent High Knob post office site, and drains eighteen miles of the north end of Clay County and 3½ miles of Owsley County before it joins the South Fork in Owsley County, two miles north of the Clay County line. In the nineteenth century Sextons Creek, named for one or more families there before 1815, extended up its (present) Bray Creek tributary that heads just southeast of
Fogertown. Joining it two miles north of Burning Springs was the stream's Right Fork, but now the main Sextons channel.5

The creek's name was given to the first of the watershed's eleven post offices though apparently not at the outset. It was established by Henry Clark on May 24, 1828 somewhere in the Clay County section of the creek, and was first called, curiously, Section Creek. On March 15, 1843 Clark had postal officials correct the obvious error, and as Sextons Creek, at different locations, it remains to this day. The Lloyds 1863 (Civil War) map shows a community called Clarkes (sic) on the west side of Sextons Creek, above the mouth of Little Sextons, suggesting that this was the community then being served by the Sextons Creek post office. By the early 1880s this office was the focus of a rural trading center with several stores and area mills, fourteen miles north of Manchester. In 1899 it was moved one mile west to a point two miles from the Jackson County line, probably onto Little Sextons. Most recently the office has been at the junction of Ky 577 (two miles up Little Sextons) and 1350, still fourteen miles north of Manchester.

Two post offices, one of which may have been the re-establishment of the other, were at one or more sites at or near the head of Bray Creek. The first, operated by Andrew J. Sams and Millard W. Ramsey between September 13, 1876 and late August 1878, was called Potters Choice. The Potters were a large family who acquired much land in Clay and Jackson Counties in the decades before the Civil War. But whence Choice is not known. It may have been someone's choice of a particular post office site over some other or, as in the case of a Shelby County, Texas post office, simply a choice place to live, or one that was chosen from a submitted list.6
In the winter of 1881-82 the Rev. Jesse Lewis applied for another Potters Choice post office which, in his Site Location Report, he located on Sextons Creek, nine miles west of Manchester, and 5½ miles southwest of the Laurel Creek post office (then at the mouth of Falls, now Morgan, Branch of Laurel). It would serve a village of some 600 residents, at least two area mills, and several stores and other businesses. Potter was dropped from the name and the office opened, on February 9, 1882, as simply Choice. It closed in September 1886 but was operated again by the Rev. Lewis between April 29 and September 19, 1890. It was re-established on March 8, 1899 by Cathern (sic) Cress at another unknown site, over two miles south of Sextons and four miles southwest of the Burning Springs post office, where it closed in June 1904.

On US 421, 1½ miles up the 4½ mile Burning Springs Fork of Bray, 8½ miles nnnw of Manchester, is the village of Burning Springs. A very early settlement, it was named for the ignitable springs of natural gas, in seemingly inexhaustible supply, discovered before 1800 at several area sites. On January 17, 1888 Lafayette M. Rawlings moved the Napier [ná/pyər] post office (established on September 25, 1884 somewhere in the Sextons watershed by John C. Napier) to his store at the Burning Springs site and renamed it for the community. The springs are no longer burning, having been captured some years ago by the Peoples Gas Company and piped to other area communities. The post office closed in December 1965, but several churches, stores (including a supermarket), and an elementary school at the mouth of Burning Springs Fork survive.

Susan Chesnut of a well-established area family started two Sextons valley post offices in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first, on the west side of Sextons, just south of the Sextons Creek
post office, would be called Chesnut Hill or simply Chesnut, but it opened, on August 5, 1886, as the inexplicable Dory. In the fall of 1889 her successor Thomas B. Murphy had the office moved one mile south, to a site eleven miles north of Manchester. After several more moves it closed in February 1912. On May 6, 1930 it was re-established by Albert Craft, and closed for good in November 1933.

On January 12, 1904 Susan established the Chesnutburg post office at the mouth of Sextons Creek's Chesnut Branch, 3½ miles up the creek from Dory. Over the years a "t" has inadvertently been inserted in the middle of the name of the stream, community, and post office, confusing everyone about its derivation. It was not named for the kind of trees that once grew in profusion throughout eastern Kentucky but for the area's Chesnut family, descendants of pioneer settlers Samuel and Benjamin Chesnut, brothers, there before 1810, and Samuel's sons William, Granville, and Thomas. The office survived till 1985.

William H. Murray's Adela post office operated from July 5, 1902 through July 1934 on Bray Creek, some three miles southwest of Burning Springs. Named for his two year old daughter, it served a rural neighborhood later called Murray and now known as Muncy Fork for its site at or near the mouth of this Bray tributary.

From January 15, 1891 through January 1934 the Malcom post office served stores at several sites on (the present) US 421, just east of the mouth of Robinsons Creek, and a little over a mile west of the mouth of Bray. James H. Clark was its first postmaster. Its name source too is not known.

At the mouth of the Cool Spring Branch of Sextons, less than 3½ stream miles from the Owsley County line, Lucy J. Hoskins opened the Alger [æl/dʒar] post office on August 10, 1900. Instead of Cool Spring,
her first name choice, it was named, allegedly, for an area family of whom nothing is known. After several moves on the 1.7 mile long Upper Fork of the branch, it closed in August 1964 just above the Upper and Lower Forks confluence, one fourth of a mile south of Sexton.

The Sacker Gap post office, operated by Cornelious S. Sawyer from April 28, 1928 through February 1935, may have been between the head of Sacker Branch (of Sacker Creek) and Reed Branch of Laurel Creek. Sacker Creek, probably named for an unrecalled family, joins Sextons Creek less than a mile above (south of) Chesnutburg.

William St. John proposed the names Ethal (sic) (said to have been for his oldest daughter), Smith (a local family), Poe, and Reese to serve the Little Sextons Creek community of Ethal, 2½ miles above the Sextons Creek post office. It opened as Ethal on August 22, 1890 but closed in November 1893.

It was re-established as Ethel by Ulysses S.G. Rice on March 8, 1894, but 2½ miles over the Jackson County line, probably on or near Buncomb Creek, a Little Sextons branch early settled by western North Carolinians. In June 1925 Isaac Pennington had it moved back to Clay County, to the mouth of Legeer Fork, one mile south of the county line, where it closed in December 1933.

Later in the 1930s local pressure pushed for the establishment of another post office to serve this growing intercounty area. When each name submitted by storekeeper Willie Bond, including Ethel, was rejected, he suggested Sourwood, for the famed fiddle and dance tune, and by this name the post office opened on May 15, 1941 in his Legeer Creek store, one mile from the Jackson line, and sixteen miles north of Manchester. On October 22, 1944 Isham Hensley had the office moved back to Buncomb Creek, 100 yards from the Jackson line. For the next few years it moved
back and forth between these two streams, serving homes on both sides of the county line. When it closed in June 1957 it was three miles up Buncomb, 1½ miles northwest of the Sextons Creek post office.

To serve the locality of Ivy at the head of Little Sextons, just yards from the Jackson County line, Elihu E. Estridge established the Vine post office. From July 1, 1902 through June 1957 it occupied several sites at or near the mouth of Falling Timber Branch, most recently one fourth of a mile up this stream and three miles west of Sourwood.

POST OFFICES ON BULLSKIN CREEK

Bullskin Creek heads in Leslie County, some two miles south of the Sizerock post office, and extends for about fifteen miles to join the South Fork across from Oneida and 500 yards below (north of) the Goose-Red Bird confluence. The mouth of Bullskin was settled in 1801 by Robert (Julius Bob) Baker, Sr. and his wife Elizabeth. Much of this area was later acquired by Francis Clark. The bull in question is said to have escaped from a farmer's coral and, invading a neighbor's turf, was caught by the latter and skinned. Others tell the story of the hunter who killed a buffalo bull and hung its skin on a branch of a tree where it remained to be seen by later travelers. Seven post offices served the Bullskin valley in Clay County.

The first of the two post offices named for the creek was at one or more unlocated sites in its valley from November 13, 1855 to May 29, 1857 and February 16, 1858 to January 25, 1859. Washington Roberts was the first of its three postmasters.

From December 30, 1889 through June 1895 the inexplicably named Panoone served the Burnsville locality, a thickly settled neighborhood
around a country store at the mouth of Little Bullskin Creek, 1½ miles above the South Fork. Andrew J. and William P. Burns were its only postmasters.9

Panco is not to be confused with Panco [paen/koh], an office that operated between May 21, 1926 and the winter of 1963-64 at several sites on upper Bullskin, half a mile from the Leslie County line. Bullskin itself was postmaster-designate Ida Hensley's first name choice. But Panco's derivation still eludes us. One guess it that it was named, for some reason, for an invented leather substitute.10

The Brutus post office that for much of its tenure between December 7, 1892 and November 22, 1977 served the Big Bullskin locality, roughly 6½ miles up the creek, was not, as some have suggested, named by English Lit. students at the Oneida Institute. It's been said that James Anderson Burns, the school's founder, was so into Shakespeare, requiring his students to study it, that some suggested naming the new post office Brutus. But the school wasn't opened till 1900, sometime after postmaster John Pace had submitted this name. Thus, we have no idea how and why it was applied. For much of the twentieth century the office was at the mouth of Crane Branch, half mile below its final location and four miles below Panco.

Neither is the name source of Seth known. Nelson S. Gay, who opened this office on May 14, 1900, three miles below Brutus, also first proposed Bullskin. It closed in August 1933.

Frank Barger (ne 1881) of a prominent Bullskin family maintained the Barger post office from July 12, 1911 through July 1913 on the creek, ca. half a mile below Seth.11

The second Bullskin post office served a locality called Fairview, just above the mouth of Danger Branch, midway between Brutus and Panco. James L. Hatton was its only postmaster from June 24, 1933 through July 1934.
POST OFFICES ON GOOSE CREEK AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

Goose Creek joins the Red Bird River at Oneida to form the South Fork of the Kentucky River. Though for most of the nineteenth century the creek was considered to head at the confluence of its East and Collins Forks, its name now applies to its entire forty-four mile length, including its East Fork which heads just north of Paint Gap on the Clay-Knox County line, and half a mile west of the Clay, Knox, and Bell Counties convergence. Forty-eight post offices served the entire Goose Creek watershed.

Manchester, the county's centrally located seat and only incorporated place, is on US 421/Ky 11, twenty-two miles up Goose Creek, and one and a half miles north of the Daniel Boone Parkway. In May 1807 the newly organized Clay County court authorized the establishment of the seat on a ten-acre tract at the mouth of Tanyard Branch, half a mile below the Lower Goose Creek Salt Works, and stipulated that it be called Greenville for General Green Clay, the county's name source. Another Greenville, in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, led to the name's replacement in December by Manchester, but the derivation of this name seems to have long been in dispute. The popular notion that it was suggested by Lucy Burnam Lees, the second wife of General Theophilus Toulmin Garrard, for her home town in England is unfounded. She was born in 1825, long after the name had come into use in Clay County, and it's thought she came from Virginia. The more credible explanation is that it was named by its founders, members of the White, Garrard, and Gilbert families, after the development of the nearby salt works, who had envisioned the genesis of an industrial city on the order of Manchester, England. However, due to the region's deficient transportation it remained, for its first one hundred years, fairly isolated from the state's other population and economic centers and never came near to achieving its goals.
The local post office, Clay's first, had been established by the first of January 1813 as Clay Court House or Manchester with John H. Slaughter, its first postmaster. By the time the town was incorporated on February 6, 1844, its center had moved half a mile north to the area between Town Branch and the mouth of Little Goose Creek where, as a fourth class city with a (Census 2000) population of 1,738, it remains. Its service-trade economic base was recently augmented by a textile factory and a Federal minimum-security prison opened in 1992.

From its name, if nothing else, Clay County's second post office Terre Salis (salty land) suggests its operation between March 11, 1837 and August 19, 1847 somewhere in the vicinity of one of the Goose Creek salt works. Its only postmaster, Gustavus B. Quarrier, is known to have acquired land on this creek in the 1830s. That's all that's known of it or him.

THREE BEECH CREEK POST OFFICES

Beech Creek extends for a little less than six miles north to Goose Creek, about half a mile below (east of) the mouth of Laurel Creek. At its mouth was Reuben May's shortlived (August 29, 1849 through July 1852) and inexplicably named Mount Welcome post office, six miles northeast of Manchester.

Opposite the mouth of Beech on (the present) Ky 11, James Franklin (ne 1843) and his wife Drucilla (Robinson) Tankersley established the Tanksley post office on July 31, 1882. James is said to have named it for his father, the Virginia-born Rev. John M. Tankersley (ne ca. 1810) or Tankisley (the spelling of his name in the 1870 Census). From the late 1920s and maybe through the 1930s the post office was 1½ miles down Goose Creek from the mouth of Beech, just below Hounchell Bend. By the
early 1950s it was back at the mouth of Beech, where it closed in 1977.

The third Beech Creek post office was **Cedral** whose name source is also unknown. It was established on April 10, 1901 with Thomas Jefferson Hounchell, postmaster, 3½ miles up the stream from Goose Creek and Tanksley. After a quarter of a mile move north it closed in 1905. It was reopened on December 8, 1909 by Lucy Hounchell half a mile above its former location, where the present Rte. 3432 crosses the creek, just below Combs Lake and the Beech Creek Wildlife Area (and 3½ miles northeast of Manchester.) It closed for good in November 1913.

**LAUREL CREEK POST OFFICES**

This 7½ mile long stream, mostly followed by Ky 11, joins Goose Creek three fourths of a mile above (west of) the mouth of Beech Creek, and some thirteen miles below (north of) Manchester. It was named for the abundance of mountain laurel on its banks.

The first post office on this stream was **Laurel Creek**, established on April 21, 1865 by Joseph Hubbard to serve the Hubbardsville community at the mouth of Falls Branch (identified as Morgan Branch on contemporary maps), six miles north of Manchester (via US 421). Sometime after 1880 it may have been moved two miles away but had returned to Hubbardsville in 1882. By 1902 the office had again been moved, three miles down the creek (east) to Collins Fork where, in June 1966, it became a rural branch of Manchester, three fourths of a mile up Collins, and closed for good two years later.

From October 15, 1902 through 1918 **Hubbardsville** was again served by a post office called **Caution**. George Hall, its only postmaster, would have named it for his five year old daughter **Cleo** but this name would likely have been confused with the Whitley County post office of Clio. Whence **Caution** is also unknown.
Less than a mile up Laurel Creek, John L. Campbell operated the Bessie post office between November 15, 1907 and June 15, 1909. He probably named it for his wife Elizabeth (1874-1914) but this has not been confirmed. On May 14, 1921 this office was reopened in postmaster Oscar Hornsby's store in the vicinity of the Lower Laurel School and church. Bessie, his preferred name, was replaced by Millpond. There's a lack of agreement on the kind of mill referred to and thus the kind of pond created by it. According to some, it was named for a big flour mill built by Joe Hornsby in the 1880s and the adjacent pond that "caught the water". Others recall an old sawmill whose pond was designed to wash the mud from the logs before processing. When the office closed in August 1963 it was on Ky 11, 1½ miles up Laurel, just below Mill Pond Hollow. Whatever mill was there is long gone.

Fall Rock, one of Clay County's few remaining post offices, is on US 421/Ky 11, less than a mile up (the present) Morgan Branch of Laurel, and 5½ miles north of Manchester. The office was established on May 22, 1924, with John Campbell, postmaster, and named for a ten foot high falls that powered a grist mill and served for some years as a social gathering place. For much of the area's history the stream was known as Falls Branch or Fall Rock Branch, and the community it served and its school across the road from the post office were Pinhook. According to local tradition, probably an older John Campbell was an avid fisherman. But not able to find hooks small enough to catch the small minnows and crawfish he used as bait for his preferred catch, he took to making his own by simply bending safety pins he bought in the local store. He got so good at this his neighbors had him make hooks for them, and soon he was nicknamed "Pinhook" Campbell. The school and community were thus named for him. With school consolidation, however, the community now goes exclusively by its post office name.
The Hensley post office was on Goose Creek and (the present) Ky. 11, 3½ miles above (southwest of) Oneida and ten miles below (northeast of) Manchester. It began as Hacker on October 11, 1905 with the Rev. John H. Roberts, postmaster, but was renamed Hensley on January 11, 1906 with Roberts still as postmaster. The Hackers and the Hensleys were large and important nineteenth century Clay county families, descendants of Massie Hacker and James and Nancy Hensley, respectively. Members of both families were involved with several other Clay County post offices. This office was discontinued in 1965.

A little over a mile above Hensley, at the mouth of Wildcat Creek, was the Wildcat post office. According to tradition, the creek was settled early in the nineteenth century and named by 1815 for a favorite target of early hunters. The office, however, was not established till September 13, 1930, with Mrs. Lillie B. Hacker, its first postmaster, and closed in August 1985.

The Treadway family was involved with two lower Goose Creek post offices. The first, from July 21, 1887 to May 28, 1894 was maintained in their name by John H. and Peter R. Treadway, probably just above the mouth of Jacks Branch, five miles below (north of) Manchester.

In 1907 Elisha B. Treadway submitted the names of several family members, including daughters Bernice and Ethel, his sister Myrtle, and Ora for the re-establishment of the office at the mouth of Jacks Branch. As the other names were already in use in Kentucky, eight year old Bernice's was chosen, and her mother Sophia Jones Treadway, became Bernice's [birn/ees] first postmaster on November 15, 1907. By 1939 the office had been moved one mile up Jacks where it closed in 1955.15
On (the present) US 421, a little ways up the Right Fork of Island Creek, which joins Goose Creek 5¼ miles below (north of Manchester), was a place called Brooks. William Hollansworth established a post office there, but since Brooks was in use in Bullitt County he called his office Hollingsworth. The office served an area three miles south of Caution and four miles north of Manchester from October 15, 1901 through April 1905 and, with Elbert Hornsby, postmaster, from October 22, 1907 through September 1912.

POST OFFICES ON LITTLE GOOSE CREEK

Little Goose Creek heads over the Laurel County line and extends for 16½ miles to the main Goose Creek channel just below (north of) Manchester. Nine post offices are known to have served its valley and branches.

The 6½ mile long Raders Creek joins Little Goose 3½ miles from the latter's main Goose confluence. It most likely was named for the family of Henry Rader who lived near Ponders Mill, some three miles up its valley. The Raders of Jackson County also descend from him.

Probably near the mill and five miles wuw of Manchester the brothers John J. and Robert L. Ponder established the Ponder post office to serve what may then have also been called Pleasant Valley, the first name proposed for it. It closed in December 1887. On November 13, 1890 storekeeper Robert P. Rawlings re-established the post office about where (the present) Ky 638 crosses Rader Creek, and named it Sidell [sa:/dehl] for another area family. By 1917 it was serving Baker's Store, and for awhile after 1939 Granville Ponder maintained it a mile up Raders near the old Upper Raders School. It closed for good in 1974.

Two post offices served the 5½ mile long valley of Little Goose's Grays Fork. The Tinker post office was at two sites on the lower end of the one
mile long Tinker Branch which joins Grays near Bethany Chapel, 6½ miles northwest of Manchester. The stream is said to have been named for an old man who, according to local tradition, had buried somewhere on its banks a sack of gold which, like so many similar caches, has never been discovered. Francis M. Eagle, its first postmaster, first proposed his own name for the office and then named it for the stream. It operated from December 31, 1889 through July 1938.

The story goes that U.S. Congressman John D. White hired Grace Kelly, the teenage daughter of George Kelly of Goose Rock, as his housekeeper. He so admired her work that when a name was sought for a new post office, probably on or just above Tanyard Branch of Grays, 2½ miles above Tinker, he suggested hers. On March 9, 1898 the Grace post office was established with Dr. Iredell C. Wyatt as postmaster. In 1903 Grace (1880-1965) married Harry Jerome Nicholson and later moved to Indiana. (In 1936 the office was moved nearly one mile down Grays where it closed in 1975.) In 1912 Philip Fields moved the office to Goslin Branch but in 1936 it was moved nearly one mile down Grays where it closed in 1975.

The family of first postmaster Pleasant D. Seeley gave its name to a post office that began on February 10, 1898 one fourth of a mile west of Little Goose. In May of the following year Mary E. Thacker had the office moved one mile east, probably to the vicinity of the Lebanon Church on Little Goose, 2½ miles from the Laurel County line, and three miles south of Portersburg. It was discontinued in late January 1908.

Somewhere above the mouth of Grays Fork, Granville V. Philpot and his wife Millie established the inexplicably named Urban post office on March 17, 1898 to serve a thickly settled rural neighborhood. After a move or two it was one mile up Philpot Branch of Little Goose (now called Urban Fork) about where that stream is crossed by the present Daniel Boone Park-
way. Sometime before 1948 it was back on Little Goose, one fourth of a mile above (south of) Kinkead Branch, nearly two miles below its Philpot (Urban) site, and seven miles west of Manchester. It closed in 1980.

The Rockgap post office, established by Catharine Philpot on June 10, 1904, was probably named for its location at or near the Rock Gap which, according to early twentieth century maps, was somewhere between Urban, Marydell (in Laurel County), Seeley, and Byron, and west of Philpot (Urban) Fork. Selliers' 1914 Kentucky Geological Survey map shows "Rock Gap" as a half mile long stream that joins the Little Goose Creek one mile above Philpot Branch. The office closed in mid October 1915.

On April 6, 1905 Matilda L. Craft opened the Hooker post office. This was a mile up the three mile long Hooker Branch of Little Goose that probably honored the family of North Carolina-born James and Emily Hooker. Sometime before 1939 the office had moved about a mile and a half up the branch to about the route of the Daniel Boone Parkway, six miles west of Manchester, where it closed in 1974.

Near the mouth of Rader, on July 1, 1926, Margaret Bowling (Mrs. J.B.) Garrison established in her Little Goose Creek home (three miles west of Manchester and 3½ miles south of Sidell) the post office of Sory. This was not, as often assumed, the re-establishment of Dory, some distance away (see above), but is said to have been named for one of J.B.'s World War One buddies. Actually, Rader was Mrs. Garrison's first name choice. The two offices, in fact, were in operation together for three years till Sory closed in June 1933. 19

HORSE CREEK POST OFFICES

The 11½ mile long Horse Creek heads just short of the Laurel County line and joins Goose Creek one mile above (south of) Manchester. By
local tradition it was named for the profuse growth of local horseweed (a variety of fleabane) with some plants reaching as high as ten-twelve feet, which served as pasturage for early settlers' horses. At least eight coal companies later had operations in this valley and its several branches, with coal camps and loading stations in its lower section.

The earliest of Horse Creek's three post offices was Pigeon Roost, established on May 11, 1888 by storekeeper Jefferson D. Rowland at the mouth of this aptly named 2½ mile long branch. In 1894 the two words of its name were combined. The office occupied several sites in the Horse Creek valley and the present Ky 80, most recently (till it closed in 1974) two miles below Pigeon Roost and five miles southwest of Manchester.

At the mouth of the two mile long Crawfish Branch of Horse Creek, 2½ miles up the creek and three miles south of Manchester, Hugh Gregory, on March 29, 1907, opened the Crawfish post office. After the L&N's Horse Creek spur line was built through this vicinity it became a coal producer, and the local loading depot adopted the railroad-derived name Rima [haː/mə]. On May 4, 1920, with David Gregory, postmaster, the still active post office also assumed this name.

Half a mile above Rima, just below the mouth of Paw Paw Branch, was the coal town, rail depot, and post office of Sibert [saː/birt]. They were named for a local family, descendants of pioneer settlers Daniel and Sarah (Sallie) Sibert, through their sons William and Milton. The office, established on August 20, 1920 by Ellen Lewis, with James W. McNamara, its first postmaster, closed in 1974.
POST OFFICES ON COLLINS FORK

Collins Fork heads in Knox County and extends north for over nine miles to the Clay County line and another ten miles to Goose Creek, just above Garrard. It was named for its first known settler, the hunter and early saltmaker James Collins. For most of its route it is paralleled by (the present) Ky 11 and the twenty three mile Cumberland and Manchester Railroad. This line, between Heidrick (in Knox County) and Manchester, was opened on the first of January 1917, leased by the L&N ten years later, and has since been a part of this company's Cumberland Valley division.

Buzzard Creek, which heads near the Knox County line, extends for nearly 7½ miles to join Collins Fork 2½ miles above its Goose Creek confluence. The earlier of Buzzard's two post offices was Willowdale, named for the many local willow trees. This was operated by Mrs. Ella White Pitman from September 7, 1901 through the following year, probably 1½ miles up the creek, at the mouth of Saplings Fork (then called Furnace Branch.)

The Lincoln post office was established on May 26, 1923 with Hughey L. Tanksley, postmaster, to serve what was then called The Old Theophilus Smith Place and later the Buzzard Neighborhood, 4½ miles up Buzzard. Tanksley's first name choice Harding may have been too similar to Hardin then, as yet, in use in Marshall County. He then suggested Lincoln presumably for the president for the area was very pro-Union and has since remained squarely in the Republican camp. In 1945 the office was moved nearly a mile down the creek where it closed in 1974.

A little recalled and shortlived (June 18, 1904 to April 15, 1907) post office called Safe was operated by Emmet Lee Walker in a store
probably at or just above Engine Branch of Collins, four miles above
(south of) Manchester. Its name source is also unknown.

One of several Kentucky blueholes, deep pockets of very clear water
that "always looks so blue" and are usually characterized as "so deep
you can't see bottom", was 2½ miles up Buzzard Creek. Here, about the
site of the Lower Buzzard School and a mile above Willowdale, Charles
S. Townsley established, on August 4, 1916, a post office he would call
Gladys. Since this name was then in use in Lawrence County, he called
it Bluehole instead. But in August 1917 it closed. On May 1, 1918
it reopened, with Ella Perkins, postmaster, two miles up Collins and
half a mile below the mouth of Buzzard to serve the new C&M flag station
of Rodonnel [roh/dahn/31]. It retained the Bluehole name at several
sites on Collins and Ky 11 till it closed in 1985. The vicinity is still
known as Bluehole rather than Rodonnel, whose railroad-ascribed name
remains underived.

To serve Jonsee [djahn/see], another C&M flag station, four miles
above Rodonnel, the post office of Cottongim [kaht/an/ghihm] was established
on July 3, 1918 just below the mouth of Whites Branch. It was named for
the family of its first postmaster Sallie Cottongim (Mrs. Luther) Hacker,
daughter of John Lucas and Susan Smith Cottongim and granddaughter of that
family's Clay County progenitor, the South Carolina-born (1792) Pierce
Cottengim. The first name proposed for the post office, which became a
rural branch in 1963 and closed for good in 1969, was Jonsee for the station
several hundred yards below. The station was named for John C. White from
whom the railroad had secured its right-of-way and depot site in 1916.

The village of Garrard [ghaer/3(r)d] with its active post office centers
on US 421/Ky 80, just north of the Daniel Boone Parkway and 2½ miles south
of Manchester. It was the site of the famed salt works at Buffalo Lick
established in 1806 by Col. Daniel Garrard (1780-1866), son of James Garrard, Kentucky's second governor, who had acquired the land in 1798. The Garrard name was not applied to the place, however, until the Cumberland and Manchester Railroad was completed through it in 1917. Until then it was generally referred to as the Goose Creek or Union Salt Works or maybe Buffalo Lick Salt Works, or simply (the) Salt Works. The post office, which James H. Brashear opened on April 28, 1917, was named for the Garrard family, or more specifically, perhaps, for William Toulmin and Edward Gibson Garrard, Daniel's grandsons, who then owned the right-of-way. Some say it was named for Daniel's son General Theophilus Toulmine (T.T.) Garrard, local farmer, storekeeper, saltmaker, and soldier (1812-1902) who had represented Clay County in the state legislature (1843-1845 and 1857-1861).

The 3½ mile long creek called Lockards for much of the nineteenth century, but also known as Whites Branch, joins Goose Creek from the east, midway (2½ miles) between Garrard and Goose Rock. The first settlers at its mouth were the family of Tennesseans Hugh and Catherine White (1804) who soon began making salt in the area. Lockards may have been named for the family of Patrick Lockhart who had acquired a thousand acre military grant on Goose Creek in the 1780s. (The creek's name was actually spelled Lockhart on 1889, 1913, and 1927 Kentucky Geological Survey maps.) The Lockards post office operated briefly (from October 29, 1931 through 1934) just below the creek's mouth, with H.W. Short, its only postmaster. His first name choice was White Hall.

The Goose Rock post office was established on August 11, 1891 by Charles W. Sevier across from the mouth of Schoolhouse Branch, eight miles south of Manchester. It's said to have been named for a big rock in the middle of the creek on which a wild goose had once built her nest, laid
her eggs, and raised her young. But some historians think the goose, if she existed at all, made her nest on the bluff above the post office site for no particular rock is known for which the place could have been named. Anyhow, the post office moved several times over the next one hundred years, to the mouth of and up Rocky Branch, a mile down the creek; on Grannies Branch; to The Cut (near its original location); and now on US 421/Ky 80, at the mouth of Grannies, seven miles south of Manchester, where it still serves a sizeable trade center and the Goose Rock consolidated school just below The Cut.

Joining Goose Creek one fourth of a mile below The Cut and the Goose Rock School and mostly paralleled by US 421/Ky 80 is the 2½ mile long Billys Branch, said to have been named for a Sevier. About a mile up the branch Mrs. Docia Morgan (Mrs. John C.) Asher requested a post office she would call May, but it opened, on January 14, 1868, as Botto, whose derivation has also never been explained. It closed in July 1964.

THREE MARTINS CREEK POST OFFICES

The 4½ mile long Martins Creek, named for Salathiel Martin, an early settler at its mouth, joins Goose Creek one mile above (south of) Billys. Just below its mouth and 9½ miles above Manchester was the Martins Creek post office that was operated between July 10, 1876 and September 20, 1878 by George D. Mahan and Marshall Comn.

Three miles up Martins, William Wages maintained the Wages post office from February 6, 1884 through November 1885. His first name choice was Martins Creek.

The Plank post office was established two miles up Martins on December 7, 1906 to serve J.B. Walker's store and one or more area lumber mills. George W. Walker was its first postmaster. The office, suspended in
September 1992, is said to have gotten its name from a plank propped against a local mill's wall to show that it was the largest ever sawed in that area.  

According to an unsigned Site Location Report (but probably that of one L.B. (Leander?) Cole (a blacksmith?) there would be a Goose Creek post office to serve a locality called Cole somewhere on the west side of this stream, ten miles south of Manchester. However, it opened on January 19, 1883 as Disappoint, but closed on February 15. Its postmaster Perry Jarvis is known to have unsuccessfully attempted another post office, he called Remedy, in 1899. Neither their name derivations nor their precise locations are known.

Clay County lawyer William O.B. Lipps (ne ca. 1869), the son of Nelson and Louise, was the grandson of Tennesseans Jesse and Hannah who had arrived in Clay County by 1850. In December 1901 William established a post office ten miles south of Manchester, at the mouth of Otter Creek (named for the many otters killed there by early settlers). But his authorization for the Lipps post office was rescinded in July 1902. On May 27, 1903 the office did opened, as Lipps, with Robert Woods, postmaster. By December 1934 it had been moved about a mile up Goose Creek to the mouth of Mud Lick Creek where it closed in October 1935.

The five mile long Otter Creek had another post office, the inexplicably named Ogle. This occupied several sites 2½ to three miles up the creek, between March 3, 1893 and 1980—most recently at the mouth of Baileys Branch, between March 3, 1893 and 1980. Moses Jackson was its first postmaster.

According to a family tradition, Knox Countains Wiley Bright (ne 1838, son John Bright, Sr.) and his wife Ester settled at the mouth of Otter Creek in 1862. In the front yard of their home and store stood three
large hemlock trees which, with their shade, served as a natural stopping place for travelers up and down Goose Creek. The site soon came to be known as Bright's Shade. This name was suggested for the post office established there on August 6, 1883, with Milton L. Albertson, its first postmaster, and accepted by the postal authorities who dropped the 's and combined the two words to make it Brightshade. In 1888 the post office was moved one mile up Goose Creek, and ten years later it was moved another 1\frac{1}{2} miles, probably to the mouth of Mud Lick (then called Timbertree) Creek. By 1906, though, it had reached the mouth of Mill Creek, four miles above Otter, where it remained till it became a rural branch in 1968, and closed for good in 1984.

On the upper end of Goose Creek, probably just below Grubb (earlier called Sams) Branch, and three miles above the mouth of Mill, was Smallwood. This office, with Jack Wages and John Lewis, postmasters, was named for a pioneer Goose Creek family. It operated between August 3, 1876 and February 13, 1879.

Then there was Eros, probably just north of Paint Gap, on the Knox County line, three miles above Smallwood, and just south of the head of Goose. Christopher Levi Harben established it on September 1, 1899 and first suggested that it be called Callahan, a family name. It closed in 1902. Could this have been re-established in 1909 as Erose on Pigeon Fork of Stinking Creek, in Knox County, three road miles (by Ky 718) south? Neither Eros nor Erose have been name derived.

POST OFFICES ON RED BIRD RIVER AND ITS BRANCHES

The other head fork of the Kentucky River's South Fork is the Red Bird River. Beginning 3\frac{1}{2} miles within Bell County it extends for about forty-five miles to join Goose Creek at Oneida. For nearly 6\frac{1}{2} miles it forms
the Clay-Leslie County line. Above the mouth of Phillips Fork, current maps show it as Red Bird Creek, another name for the stream's entire stretch for much of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{25} Ky 66 parallels the stream from Oneida to the Bell County line.

The river (creek) was named for the legendary Cherokee usually referred to as Chief Red Bird who, with his housekeeper and companion Jack, was befriended by early white settlers and permitted to live and hunt among them. According to a longtime area tradition, Red Bird and Jack were killed by a white man in the bottom just above the mouth of Hectors Creek. In revenge for his father's death allegedly at the hands of some other Indians, the white man had vowed to kill the first Indians he met. He and his companions came upon Red Bird and Jack asleep on the banks of the stream. Without warning or provocation they killed the Indians and threw their bodies in the river.\textsuperscript{26}

Seventeen post offices served the main valley and branches of Red Bird's Clay County section.

The first post office in this watershed operated as Red Bird from 1828 to 1831. It may have been on its name source, just above the mouth of Big Creek, or even on Big Creek itself. Nothing else is known of it.

The 4½ mile long Big Creek heads in Leslie County and is followed by US 421/Ky 80 and the Daniel Boone Parkway till it joins Red Bird 13½ miles above Oneida. Not really long as Red Bird branches go, its name probably derives from its fairly high water level and frequent flooding. In one of the earliest settled areas of the county, the Big Creek post office was not established till January 10, 1871 with James Marcum, postmaster, one mile up the creek, probably at the site of the earlier Red Bird post office. After several moves up and down the creek, the office is now three fourths of a mile above the Red Bird confluence and sixteen miles east of Manchester where it serves the extended village of Big Creek.
The nearly six mile long Spring Creek heads in a large spring (its name source) in the Sand Hills, east of Brightshade, and joins Red Bird across from the Leslie County line. At several sites at or just above the creek's Red Bird confluence, sixteen miles southeast of Manchester, was the Spring Creek post office. Established on July 10, 1876 by Jesse Mattingly, it closed on May 8, 1884 and was re-established by Christopher Bowling on January 16, 1885 probably at the mouth of Flat Creek (the site of the future Creekville post office.) It later moved back to its name source and there closed in October 1944.

At the mouth of the seven mile long Bear Creek, 6½ miles up Red Bird from Oneida, Elijah Herd, on March 7, 1900, established the Barcreek post office. This name may have been a vocal corruption of Bear Creek, though today most people tend to pronounce the stream's name "Bear Creek." According to tradition, the creek was named by early hunters (possibly Andy Hubbard) who killed a bear on its banks. But the office might have been named for a large sandbar formed at or near the site. In 1914 the office was moved by Green L. Langdon a mile or so up the river close to (or at?) the future Spurlock post office, in which area it remained till the 1920s when it returned to Bear Creek. When it closed in March 1969 it was half a mile up this stream.

On June 18, 1904 Green Arthur Sizemore established a post office in his home at the forks of Upper Bear Creek, three miles above the latter's Red Bird confluence. He named it Icecliff for an icicle-covered elevation across the road. (Upper Bear Creek was so-called to distinguish it from the other Bear Creek, above, which was sometimes identified as Lower Bear Creek). It closed in September 1909 after a destructive fire in the Sizemore home. It was not until November 30, 1929 that the office, as Ice Cliff, was re-established half a mile up Bear Creek in Green Arthur's
nephew Carlo T. Sizemore's small country store. Carlo's wife Allie L. was its only postmaster. She was widowed in November 1931 and closed the post office in August 1933.

On January 25, 1940 the office that had been Icecliff was again re-established, but two miles north, on Ashers Fork (of Goose Creek), and given the name of that stream. Daisy H. Schaffer was its first postmaster. The four mile long fork (including its Left Fork) which joins Goose Creek two miles above Brightshade, was named for some of the descendants of pioneer Dillion Asher (1777-1844) who claimed large acreages in the upper Red Bird and Goose Creek valleys and settled in 1800 in a hollow just below the mouth of Phillips Fork (of Red Bird). When the office closed in 1974 it was on the Weatherby Trail (Rte. 1524), at the head of Asher's Left Fork, nearly three miles from Goose Creek and some nineteen miles southeast of Manchester.

The Marcum post office was established on March 11, 1908 by Henry B. Marcum, Jr. who named it for the descendants of his grandfather Thomas Marcum who settled on Red Bird in 1812-13. It was originally located just below and across from the mouth of Sugar Creek, some 5½ miles south of Big Creek. By 1928 it had been moved about a mile up the river to a site just below and across from the mouth of Gilbert Creek, in which vicinity it remained till it closed in June 1984.

Sometime in the earliest years of the twentieth century some Manchester businessmen procured 43,000 acres of Red Bird land from local owners and in, or around, 1907, transferred them to Francis Peabody who was then acquiring land for mining and timber development. On June 11, 1909 a post office was established on the river, just below the mouth of (Big) Double Creek, which first postmaster and local storekeeper Floyd M. Chadwell named Annalee for the infant daughter of his new neighbor Thomas A. Bird.
Bird, a civil engineer, had come into that area to manage Peabody's new land holdings. On July 1, 1930 Jewell L. Galloway, who had become postmaster that March, had the post office name changed to Redbird River. On March 1, 1933 it was changed again to Peabody. By then the Peabody land had been acquired by the Ford Motor Company's Fordson Coal Company subsidiary to furnish timber from which to make auto bodies and wheel spokes. (The subsidiary was named for Henry Ford's son Edsel (1893-1943) who, from 1919 till his death, was president of the mother firm.) Bird was now managing the properties, including a large CCC camp, for Fordson. In the early 1960s the Ford land was sold to Potomac Industries which sold it to Red Bird Timber Company in 1965. On January 1, 1967 it was acquired by the federal government for its new Red Bird Purchase Unit of the Daniel Boone National Forest. The post office closed in 1982.

The curiously named Antepast post office was established on January 20, 1910 with Wilson T. Martin, its first postmaster, about 1\frac{1}{2} miles below (north of) the mouth of (Lower) Bear Creek. In November 1932 Howell T. Bowling had it moved two miles down the river to a site 2\frac{1}{2} miles above Oneida, and here it closed in November 1936. Now, how did it get its name? Jess Wilson, county historian, in his When They Hanged The Fiddler, tells of Andy Baker's irreverence in passing a local church during services. The preacher would stop to wait for "Andy's passing." Perhaps. But could it have been named for an Antipas somebody, bearing an occasional male given name taken from Scriptures? But no one by that name is known in that area. Or even (though less likely) for the food served before a regular meal, an appetizer?

When Herd was again disallowed as a post office name because this time it was in use in neighboring Jackson County, Sylvania Herd suggested
Spurlock for her new post office on the east side of Red Bird, one fourth of a mile above the mouth of Banks Branch, two miles above the mouth of Bear Creek, and a little short of nine miles above Oneida. This would replace the Barcreek post office that by then had returned to its original site. The Spurlocks were the many descendants of William Spurlock (1815-1855), a North Carolinian who had settled on or near Bear Creek in 1835. The office operated between October 2, 1928 and July 1988.

To serve his Gardner (railroad) Station and the Bringardner Lumber Company offices then under construction on the west side of Red Bird, at the mouth of Lick Fork (two miles from Bell County and over thirty road miles above Oneida), Fred Bringardner of Lexington established the Gardner post office. This was maintained by Ray Kevil Carter from May 13, 1931 through August 1940.

**TWO FLAT CREEK POST OFFICES**

This stream heads at its head forks—Panther Branch and Mud Lick Fork—in the Sand Hills, and extends for 3½ miles e to Red Bird at the Leslie County line, two miles below (north of) the mouth of Springs Creek. Its earliest post office was simply Flat Creek at an unknown site, that Felix G. Gilbert alone operated between August 15, 1857 and September 6, 1861.

Sand Hills was first proposed for Jable L. Stewart's post office, 1½ miles up Flat Creek, at the mouth of Rocky Fork. But it operated from September 29, 1924 through September 1938 by Stewart alone as the inexplicable Van Camp.

At the mouth of Flat Creek was the Creekville post office whose first postmaster, area teacher and former Annalee postmaster Bascom C. Bowling, would have called Flat Creek. It operated between September 1, 1928 and 1972.
HECTOR CREEK POST OFFICES

Heading just east of Hector Gap, this stream extends for eight miles to join Red Bird one mile below (northwest of) Eriline. It’s followed by Ky 149 and now, in part, by the Daniel Boone Parkway. The creek is said to have been named by either the Rev. John Gilbert, one of Red Bird’s pioneer settlers, or his son Abijah, for a favorite hunting dog who was killed on its banks by a bear. 32

Hector, Hayes (a local family), and Burns Store were among the names first suggested for a post office five miles up the creek and 8½ miles east of Manchester. Harriet Burns operated it as Burns from June 20, 1892 through August of the following year.

On December 28, 1900 the Hector post office was opened about 3½ miles up the stream, with Miss Arazona Davidson as its first postmaster. In 1924 Jane L. Chadwell (wife of Floyd, Analee’s storekeeper-postmaster who had moved to Hector Creek in 1922) had the office moved 1½ miles up the creek to the mouth of Jim Hubbards (now Davidson) Branch, at or near the early Burns site. It was discontinued in 1977.

Eriline [ir/leyen] was one of several Kentucky post offices whose intended name was misspelled by postal clerks on Washington. According to local accounts, Eveline (or Evaline) Britton (1861-1939), daughter of James and Martha Bowling of Bear Creek, submitted an application for a post office to be named for herself, but her unclear handwriting led to a misreading as Eriline. It proved simpler to accept the error than to correct it. The office was established on December 19, 1902 in the Britton home at the mouth of Hector Creek with Mrs. Britton’s husband Van as the first postmaster. 33 The office was discontinued in 1911 and re-established on August 29, 1943 by George C. Hensley who, in November, had it moved one
mile south to the east side of Red Bird, just south of the mouth of Big Creek. In August 1944 Mrs. Mary W. Bowling had the office moved, again, two miles north to a point 500 yards west of the river, half a mile from Jacks Creek, and 2½ miles below the Jacks Creek post office. In 1949 another move took it one mile up the river. When it closed in 1988 it was at the junction of Ky 66 and the Jacks Creek Road, on the west side of the river, and eleven miles above Oneida.

Jacks Creek was named for the crippled Indian who lived with the legendary "Chief" Red Bird at or near the mouth of this 4½ mile long stream. It was early called Lower Jacks to distinguish it from Upper Jacks that joins the river nineteen miles above. Some 2½ miles up (Lower) Jacks was the Jacks Creek post office, established on February 26, 1932 with Mrs. Marion Hensley, postmaster, and discontinued in June 1954.

The Culton post office occupied at least two sites roughly 1½ miles up the six mile long Elk Creek. Since Spencer County already had an Elk Creek post office, Thomas Ledford named his Clay County office, at the mouth of Rice's Fork (fifteen miles east of Manchester), after the important Culton family. The office was established on May 7, 1928 and closed in April 1937. It was reopened on October 7, 1940 with Mrs. Shirley Smith, postmaster, but closed for good in November 1941.

POST OFFICES ON CLAY COUNTY'S ROCKCASTLE RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

The seventy five mile Rockcastle River heads at its South and Middle Forks at the Jackson-Laurel County line and joins the Cumberland River at the Laurel, Pulaski, and McCreary Counties convergence. It was first called the Lawless River by Thomas Walker in 1750 for Henry Lawless, a member of his exploring party. It was later renamed, probably by Isaac
Lindsay, of a South Carolina hunting party, for the large rock formations on its banks that seemed to resemble castles. For about seven miles its South Fork, which heads just within Laurel County near a point about one mile above (southeast of) Clay County’s Deer Lick post office, separates Clay and Laurel Counties. Nine Clay County post offices served the South Fork watershed.

The first post office in Clay County’s South Fork valley was House’s Store. It was established on February 15, 1865 by Thomas House and served Daniel B. House’s store at the forks of South Fork, just short of the Laurel County line.35 By the time the office’s name had been changed to the inexplicable Larue, with Daniel B. still the postmaster, it was serving a locality called Pleasant Hill, about thirteen miles northwest of Manchester. By the turn of the century Larue was serving several other stores and at least a pair of mills. Several moves east later brought it, at its closing, in October 1954, on (the present) Ky 638, half a mile up Martin Branch and a little over a mile east of the Fork and the Laurel County line.

When it closed in 1967 the post office serving the village of Benge [behndj or bihndj] was on Ky. 472, at the mouth of Alderson Branch of the six mile long Mill Creek, which joins the South Fork one mile within Laurel County. The office was established on August 1, 1881, probably at the mouth of Bridge Branch, half a mile above Alderson, for Bridge Branch was one of the first names proposed for it (another was Harmony Cottage). But the name by which it was always known was that of its first postmaster, a sometime school teacher and local storekeeper Elmira Jane Benge (1838-1911), the daughter of Thomas and granddaughter of “King” David Benge (1760-1854). David, a Revolutionary War veteran from Albemarle County, Virginia, is said to have first settled in Madison County in 1790 and then
moved to Clay County to seek a better range for his cattle. By 1900 the post office was serving several stores, mills, distilleries, and other businesses run by Elmira and other Benge's and their neighbors.

One and a half miles up Mill Creek from Benge was the settlement and post office of Fogertown. Several accounts have been offered for the naming of the post office, established on May 23, 1906, with James C. York, postmaster. Some say the place is pretty high up and would often be covered with dense fog leaving visitors to say it was one of the foggiest places they'd ever been to. Others recall the local man who smoked his homemade pipe while riding up and down the road on an old mare. People following him would know he'd been there first. They'd say "Mr. Fogger has passed by 'cause we can smell his smoke; he's just fogged up the whole town." And some remember the old lady they called Sal Fogger with her bushy hair she never took the time to comb. Anyhow, when the post office was established and a name was sought for it, it was called Fogertown [fahgh'or town]. It's not known why the name has always been spelled with only one "g". It closed in March 1902.

The unrecalled, unlocated, and shortlived Vaughn post office was established one fourth of a mile within Laurel County, some three miles above (south of) the Crawford post office on what was then called Muddy Gut. Levi H. Vaughn, its probable name source, opened it on April 15, 1898. But on February 23 of the following year Joseph W. Gregory had it moved to some site on the Clay County side of the Fork where he operated it through June 1905.

One of the movingest post offices in eastern Kentucky was Elvira. It was established in Clay County on March 30, 1887 by Jesse E. Westerfield (1837-1895) whose preferred name, his family's, was in use in Ohio County. Until September 26, 1890, when Etison Bowling had it moved
to Laurel County, it operated near the Clay-Laurel-Jackson County convergence, about one and a half miles up Terrells Creek from the South Fork. By October 1894 Westerfield's son Grant had it moved one mile east to a site 300 yards within Clay County. In December 1897 Grant's brother Joseph M. returned the office to Laurel County, but in May 1908 another brother Robert had it moved a half mile southeast to a Clay County site, 100 yards from the Laurel line, 1½ miles from the South Fork, half a mile south of Terrells Creek, and two miles northwest of Benge. Here (probably) it closed in December 1934. Its name source has never been determined. There are no known Elviras in the Westerfield family and no evidence to support the often heard contention that it was named for a Bowling.

The Byron post office, at several sites at the head of Martins Creek (the Left Fork of Rockcastle's South Fork), was probably named for the Manchester lawyer Larkin A. Byron (ne ca. 1826), who owned much land in the Collins Fork valley. It was established on June 2, 1888 by Louis F. Benge, who was succeeded by other Benges, and closed in 1937.

On March 9, 1898 Samuel T. and Emma Porter established the Portersburg post office, also at the upper end of Martins Creek, though about a mile west of Byron. When it closed in 1963 it was 1.7 miles up Baker Creek, a Martins tributary, and 3½ miles south of Larue.

Proffit was another little recalled post office, operated by Alexander Proffit between July 14, 1915 and July 15, 1916. According to his wife Martha Jane's Site Location Report, the first names proposed for it were Freeman and Chesnut and it would be on South Fork and the Laurel County line, two miles south of Crawford. Several related Proffit families then owned land on nearby Little Goose.

An office that would have been called Hunter if that name wasn't in use in Floyd County was named Rockcastle and opened on October 23, 1931.
In 1843, its first postmaster George W. Jones had it renamed Deer Lick, a descriptive name it bore through July 1965 when it closed.

Five Clay County post offices were authorized at unknown sites but never operated. None are even known by contemporary Clay historians. Bombay, established on December 29, 1890 by John Payne, Jr., was one of three such proposed Kentucky post offices that may have been named for the city in India. As I once pointed out, "while the nineteenth century precedent of naming places for newsworthy persons, places, and events in other parts of the world would suggest this origin, we know nothing sufficiently significant that happened in the Indian city that made it to the American media in the late 1880s or early 1890s that could have accounted for the application of this name to several American post offices shortly thereafter."36

William J. Roberts' authorization for the Herbert post office was issued on July 31, 1893 but, for some reason, his commission failed to materialize. Long after Perry Jarvis' shortlived Disappoint had closed, he tried again on January 9, 1899 with an office called Remedy. But it never operated at all. Neither did Andy Arnett's Gay; his April 6, 1905 authorization was rescinded on November 1. And Laura Ferguson's Larcum, established on November 8, 1915, never got off the drawing board. While Gay may have been named for an area family, the names of the others remain undervived.

Eight of Clay County's 102 post offices (Manchester, Fall Rock, Big Creek, Garrard, Goose Rock, Lima, Oneida, and Sextons Creek) are still active. Only one Clay County community, Manchester, is presently incorporated. At least fifteen were (and several still are) villages with more or less concentrated populations.
Thirty nine offices were named for local or area persons or their families, while one honored a famous non-local person. Twelve had geographic or descriptive names. While two were named for distant places, eighteen were given the names of local or nearby features (seventeen streams and two gaps). Local industries provided the names of four offices. A pet dog, a son, and someone's war buddy each accounted for a post office name. Four had more than one actual or possible name derivation. Twenty names, though, have not yet been derived, and six offices have not been precisely located.

Thirty six post office names were not those first proposed for them. Twenty offices had names different from those of the communities, neighborhoods, or rail stations/served. Seven offices had name changes.

2. In 1811 the South Fork became navigable at its Goose Creek-Red Bird confluence.

3. Mamre [maem/ree] was the Biblical name applied to the site of Hebron in the Holy Land where the angel appeared to Abraham foretelling the birth of a son.

4. According to Baker's Site Location Report, his first name preference may have been Funny.

5. Over the years the name of this creek and its main tributary has been spelled both with and without a terminal "s".


9. Burnsville was Pancone's first proposed name.

10. Marion Martin's manuscript on some Clay County place names.

11. The Barger family's eastern Kentucky progenitor was Abraham, a North Carolinian, who settled on the Kentucky River's Middle Fork in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

12. Historians agree that the family spelled its name Tankersley but that the middle syllable was dropped when the post office was named. John Tankersley, son of William, was born in Virginia, and with his wife Fannie (nee Boyd) came to Clay County before 1851.
2a. The first move of the *Ammie* post office onto Crane Creek came in October 1887 when Blevins P. Allen became postmaster. According to a local account (Ethan J. Allen of Oneida, Ky. in a letter to the author, December 31, 2002), Blevin Allen's wife Nannie, who ran the local store, didn't care for her name— it reminded her of a goat. By omitting the initial "N" and replacing the double "n"s by double "m"s, she renamed herself "Ammie" and that gave the post office its name. Perhaps.
13. The Hubbards were a large area family, descendants of Joseph and Rebecca of North Carolina, who settled in the Laurel Creek valley before the Civil War.

14. Collins Fork of Laurel must be distinguished from Collins Fork of Goose Creek.


16. This Clay County family variously spelled its name Hollansworth, Hollingsworth, and Hollonsworth.

17. John and Robert were the sons of Robert (ne 1820) who first owned the mill that, after his death in 1878, was heired by another son William Dekalb. Robert Sr. was a son of John (ne ca. 1792) who, with his brother Joseph, had settled at or near the head of Sextons (ca. 1818) and fathered this important South Fork family.


19. My special thanks to Jennifer Lynch, the postal historian, for clarifying this for me.

20. The Crawfish Branch was named for the many local crayfish, crustaceans called crawfish in eastern Kentucky.

21. One of Mrs. Lewis' first proposed names for her Sibert post office was Delora for Delora Lewis who was to marry Ray Broyles in 1923.

22. Cottengim was an earlier spelling of the Cottongim family's name, which was also spelled Cottingim. The name has nothing to do with cotton or cotton gins, but probably derived from Cottingham, the name of several North England communities.

23. Marion Martin, the former director of the Clay County Library in Manchester, Ky., interviewed by the author on March 24, 1979.
24. Ethel Smith, from the late Myrtle Wagers, in the Manchester Enterprise, Oct. 5, 1972, P. 58:5-8, and the Rev. Gerald R. Klinefelter of Brightshade, Ky. in a letter to the author, May 20, 1980. The community and post office were probably not named for Bright Short, another area resident, as some have suggested for he was born in 1865.

25. On Lloyd's Civil War map this stream is identified as Red Bird Fork.

26. The Rev. J.J. Dickey's 1898 interview with John R. Gilbert whose account of the murder came from his grandfather, the pioneer preacher John Gilbert. Jacks Creek, a Red Bird tributary, was named for the other murdered Indian.

27. Herd's first preference, his family's name, had just been applied to a post office in Boyd County.

28. In 1883 Francis S. Peabody, then 24, established Peabody & Co. and began purchasing and delivering coal to several Chicago area clients. His firm was incorporated in 1890 as the Peabody Coal Co. and it was soon mining its own coal instead of merely selling it. By the 1990s it had become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Peabody Holding Co. with headquarters in Henderson, Ky. (According to the International Directory of Company Histories, St. James Press, Vol. 10, P. 447).


30. Herod Antipas (4 B.C. to ca. 40 A.D.), the Tetrarch of Galilea, was one of the four sons of Herod the Great, who acquired one fourth of his father's kingdom after the latter's death. But why such a person would have been so honored by a Kentucky post office and nearby school remains a mystery. Perhaps the name was a shortened form of Antipater [aen/tihpə/ˈtɑr]. the name given in Revelations


32. The identity of the dog's owner and the stream's namer depends on which of John J. Dickey's 1898 informants, Abijah's son John (ne 1842) or the Rev. Hughes Bowling of Hector Creek we can credit.

33. Actually, the first name proposed for the Eriline post office was Britton, and it would be serving the Mouth of Hector Creek neighborhood, seven miles below the Hector post office. The Daniel Boone Parkway now passes just above it.

34. The Cultons were descendants of the Rev. James, a Knox Countian who had come to Clay County in the early 1830s as a Goose Creek salt-maker, returned to Knox County by 1840, and later represented Knox and Harlan Counties in the state legislature (1844-1858) before becoming Harlan County Judge (1859-1871). A son, Ambrose Y. (ne 1842) was a Clay and Knox County businessman and lawyer who served these counties in the state senate (ca. 1887.)

35. Early in the twentieth century the six mile long Martin Creek, which heads a mile south of Byron, was identified as the Left Fork of South Fork, while the present main South Fork stretch above the House's Store site was the Right Fork.

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23. Ibid. The Sugar Pond and the Fritter Tree, Berea, Ky: Kentucke Imprints, 1981 (passim)
24. Ibid. When They Hanged The Fiddler, Berea: Kentucke Imprints, 1978