

## THE POST OFFICES OF HARDIN COUNTY

Hardin is the fourth largest Kentucky county in both area (629 square miles) and population (87,200). Elizabethtown, the county's seat and one of its six incorporated cities, is thirty six miles south of downtown Louisville.

Hardin was organized (with Clark and Green Counties) on December 15, 1792 in the new state's second legislative session. It was taken wholly from Nelson County and named for Col. John Hardin (1753-1792), a Revolutionary War veteran and surveyor, who later served in George Rogers Clark's Ohio campaigns and was killed on a peace mission to the Ohio Indians. Hardin's original territory comprised the area between the Salt and Rolling Fork Rivers, the Ohio and the Green Rivers, and the eastern border of what became LaRue and Hart Counties. From this area twelve other counties were taken, in whole or part. Hardin's present boundaries were assumed by March 1, 1843 with the formation of LaRue County.

The county is drained by the main stream and branches of four important river systems. The Ohio River borders the county for three miles on the north. The Salt and Rolling Fork Rivers form its northeastern boundary with Bullitt County, while the Rolling Fork and key tributaries--Mill, Cedar, Clear, and Younger Creeks--drain the county's northern third. The Nolin River (in the Green River system) and its main Hardin County branches--Shaws, Freemans, Middle, Buffalo, and Severns Valley Creeks--drain the southern half of the county. Another of Green River's main branches, Rough River and its Hardin tributaries--Meeting, Linders, and Vertrees Creeks--drain

the western part of the county.

The first permanent settlements in the county were made in 1779-80 when three stations were established by Andrew Hynes, Thomas Helms, and Samuel Haycraft within a mile of each other on the site of what was to become Elizabethtown. Collectively these were called The Severns Valley Settlements for their location on the twelve mile long Severns Valley Creek which was named for and probably discovered by a Fort Harrod surveyor, John Severns.<sup>1</sup>

In 1793 Hynes, anticipating the permanence and growth of the Severns Valley settlements, had thirty acres of his land surveyed and laid out for the new county's seat and named it for his wife, the former Elizabeth Warford from Maryland. Elizabeth-Town first appears in court records in May 1795, and in this name the town was chartered on July 4, 1797. The post office was officially established as Hardin Court House or Elizabethtown on January 1, 1804 with George Helm, the first postmaster.

Today this fourth class city with a population of some 18,000 has a diversified economy. In addition to being the marketing center of a several county area between Louisville and Bowling Green, it is noted for the manufacturing of auto parts, electrical and mechanical equipment, insulation, copper and ceramic products, and cheese. The city is now often referred to as Etown and enjoys the nickname Hub City for its site at the junction of several major rail lines and highways (US 31W, US62, I-65, and the Bluegrass and Western Kentucky Parkways). Most of the other Hardin County post offices will be located by road miles from the court house at West Main and Dixie Avenue.

Post office records list a Grangersville in Hardin County from May 12, 1813 to 1828. Arthur McGaughey, the first postmaster, was succeeded in 1820 by Ralph Tinker. But its location is not known. It might have been in the vicinity of the future Sonora, possibly in the area that, in 1843, became a part of the new county of LaRue. I base this suggestion on the location in this area of the 64,184 acre Grangers Great Tract that had been acquired early in the nineteenth century by Postmaster-General (1801-1814) Gideon Granger and later settled by his Ontario, New York neighbors. Among the latter (according to Louis Ansel Duenmyer) were John Smith and his sons who owned much of the Sonora site before the railroad came in.<sup>2</sup>

An example of the fouled up Kentucky land claims of the late eighteenth century--with several patents being issued for the same land--may be found at what became the fifth class city of West Point. In the summer of 1776, Samuel Pearman and a party of Virginians arrived on the Ohio, just below the mouth of Salt River, and began clearing the land for settlement. Pearman's ownership of this 1,000 acre site, acquired in 1783, was shortly challenged by James Young for some of that land was included in the 308 acre John May military grant, entered in 1781, which Young had purchased four years later. By joint effort in 1796 Pearman and Young had 150 acres of this site laid off and chartered as a town. No explanation of its name has been recorded; it is simply assumed to refer to its being, at that time, the westernmost point of Salt River area settlement. An 1816 court decision officially determined the site's ownership in Young's favor, and, as was uncommon in Kentucky, he was to hold proprietary rights to the town till his death in 1849.

Meanwhile, across the Salt River, in what remains Jefferson County to this day, another town was established in 1792 and named Williamsville for its site owner and founder, William Johnston. West Point and Williamsville soon became essentially a single community, collectively known to early settlers as The Mouth of Salt River. Williamsville itself never amounted to anything. An 1832 flood destroyed most of its buildings and nothing survived the Civil War.

By March 1, 1819, when the West Point post office was established (with James W. Hall, postmaster), the community's strategic location had made it an early rival to Louisville as a center of commercial activity on the Ohio River. It was the first major shipping point for Salt River area farmers and the nearby (Bullitt County) salt works, as well as the major port of entry for goods to the Hardin and other central Kentucky area markets and a fueling stop for early nineteenth century steamboats. In 1873 the Cecilian Branch of the Elizabethtown and Paducah (now Illinois Central Gulf) Railroad was completed to West Point which, in 1889, also became the eastern terminus of the Louisville St. Louis and Texas Railroad (later a part of the L&N system). Excessive flooding precluded the town's continued commercial development. Today, West Point with its active post office and some 1,200 residents, twenty four miles north of Elizabethtown, is, like so much of the northern half of the county, dependent on Fort Knox which all but borders it on the south. It is, though, undergoing revitalization as a tourist and crafts enter.

One or more Lawson families probably gave their name to the post office of Lawsonville that operated from January 8, 1826 through 1842. John H. Wiseheart was its first postmaster. Little more is known of this office than that it was four miles south of Big Spring (where Hardin, Meade, and Breckinridge Counties meet), near the Breckinridge County line.

Three Hardin County post offices established in the 1830s are, like Lawsonville, all but unknown to modern historians. Even their locations have not been determined. The first and longest running of these was Howell's Springs. Operating from May 17, 1833 through November 1869, it is known to have been on the road due east from Big Spring and on or near Otter Creek. It could thus have been at or near the earlier Howell's Station, two miles northwest of Rineyville, the site of Claiborne Howell's store. It was in this vicinity that William P. Nall, in 1858, built the famed Howell Church. Among Howell's Springs' postmasters were John Stith, Jr. (the first), William Neff, William Tarpley, and James L. Nall (the last).

A Coombsville post office operated somewhere in Hardin County from June 26, 1834 till early the following June. John Stephenson was its only postmaster. It was certainly named for one or more members of the influential Coombs family which included Asa Coombs, an Elizabethtown tavern keeper and Hardin County J.P. and Adin Coombs, an early state legislator.

Similarly, we have no idea where the McMurtryton post office was located, though we do know it operated between November 1, 1837 and January 1843, with William McMurtry and John H. Harris as its only postmasters. William may have been one of the ten children

of pioneer John McMurtry (1782-1847).

Twelve stations on what became the Illinois Central Railroad served communities and their post offices. These will now be considered in the order of their post office establishment.<sup>3</sup>

The village of Stephensburg, more precisely what has long been called Old Stephensburg, was founded sometime in the 1820s. Its post office, established as Stevensburg on December 23, 1829, was probably named by and for its first postmaster Stephen Southern. The spelling was later corrected to Stephensburgh, and in 1893 became Stephensburg. In 1871, with the arrival of the Elizabethtown and Paducah (later the Illinois Central) Railroad the post office was moved half a mile north to the tracks where it occupied several buildings in the vicinity of the depot till it closed in October 1992. For some years the Stephensburg community has taken in both sites. Old Stephensburg marks the section on the present US 62, eleven miles southwest of Elizabethtown, with two stores and one of the county's five high schools. For much of the late nineteenth century, that part of the community on the railroad had, besides its post office, wagon, harness, saddle, and boot makers, a tobacco house, depot, hotel, and at least one general store. All are since gone.

A community named Red Hill was founded in the mid 1840s. Its post office was established on April 18, 1846 with Nicholas Tull, postmaster, and operated till June 1880. Meanwhile, the tracks of the Cecilian Branch were being laid a short distance west. A station was opened at a site some fourteen miles nnw of Elizabethtown (at the northwest edge of the present city of Radcliff) and it too was

called Red Hill. But since that name was still in use by the first office, the new post office established on March 29, 1875 to serve the station and small settlement growing up around it was named Fairleigh. Storekeeper-railroad agent Gustavus A. Meyers was appointed postmaster, The office at the station took the Red Hill name in February 1891 but closed in July of the following year. It was re-established on June 23, 1894, not as Red Hill or Red Bird, as requested by Ernest Bloom Meyers, its new postmaster, but as Huber. This lasted only through April 1896.

Whence these names is not known. It may be assumed that Red Hill referred to the red clay on the slight elevation at its original site. Fairleigh may have been named for the pioneer Fairleigh family (whose name was usually pronounced fahr/lee).<sup>4</sup> Huber is not to be confused with the Huber post office that served another railroad station in Bullitt County which was named for a local family. But no Hubers are known to have lived in the Red Hill area in the 1890s.

An Otter Creek post office was first established on January 22, 1856, with Ignatius Bryan, its postmaster, somewhere on or near the creek for which it was named. It closed in September 1859, but was re-established on July 6, 1874, with the coming of the Cecilian Branch, where Pawley Creek joins Otter, three miles south of Vine Grove. Henry Clay Hays was soon succeeded as postmaster by the station agent Virgil Long, but the office closed for good in April 1883. Nothing remains at the site today and it is unmarked on current maps. The aptly named stream heads about a mile east of Rineyville and joins the Ohio River in Meade County, two miles above Rock Haven.

The fourth class city of Vine Grove, with its active post office and a 1990 population of some 3,600, centers at the junction of Ky 144 and the railroad tracks, about fifteen miles northwest of Elizabethtown. It was first located where Ky 144 crosses Otter Creek, at the Meade County line, 1½ miles west. Here, in 1850, Mike Flaherty opened the community's first business, a blacksmith shop, and on August 26, 1856 a post office was established with Anthony Swabentham, postmaster. The many grapevines growing wild in an oak forest at the Otter Creek site gave the town its name. In the late 1860s, anticipating the coming of the railroad, the town (with its post office) was moved to its present site where it soon became an important shipping point for locally produced lumber, livestock, and tobacco. Nearby Fort Knox continues to employ many Vine Grove residents, and the town still hopes to maintain its identity before its rapidly encroaching neighbor, Radcliff, to the northeast.

The family of Col. Charles Cecil gave its name to the village of Cecilia whose founding also preceded the coming of the railroad. It is not really known when this village, as such, was founded, but the site is believed to have been first settled in the very early nineteenth century. It is also not known when the Cecils arrived there, nor when their name was first applied to the place. Charles' three sons, Henry, Thomas, and Ambrose D. started the local Cecilian College around 1860.<sup>5</sup> The station built here when the Cecilian Branch was opened was first called Cecilian Junction. It is where the present Ky 86 crosses the tracks, a mile northwest of US 62 and six miles wsw of Elizabethtown. It soon became a major supplier of farm produce for the Louisville area. By then, the community itself and

its post office, which was established on January 17, 1871 (with John English, postmaster), were known as Cecilian. Sometime after the turn of the twentieth century the station's name was shortened to Cecilia as was that of the post office and community in 1912. This is still a viable community with an active post office, but the railroad no longer dominates its economy.

Slightly less than three miles southwest of Cecilia was the rail station and small settlement of Hansbrough that was served by the Long Grove post office. The office, which was established on January 24, 1871 (with William Gilliland, its first postmaster) operated till 1940. One or more local Hansbrough families were undoubtedly the source of the station's name. Long Grove may have been derived from the Long Branch Creek, a wet weather stream later identified on maps as Black Branch. In addition to its station and post office, the community had a flour and sawmill and Mobberly's store, since gone.

Due east of a new station three miles southwest of Stephensburg was a 827 foot hill from the top of which, it is said, one had a good view of a wide area. Hence, it is also said, the station, the village that grew up around it, and its post office were called East View. The post office was established on April 6, 1871 with Howsam Duncan, postmaster, and became Eastview in December 1894. When the community, centering where the present Ky 84 crosses the tracks, was incorporated in 1890, it boasted of stockyards, mills, a bank, church, school, and several stores, as well as its post office and depot. It still has its post office and church, but little else.

The village of Rineyville centers just west of where Ky 220 crosses the railroad tracks,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles northwest of Elizabethtown. The area may have been settled first by John Wesley Pawley, for whom nearby Pawley Creek was named. But the village grew up around Riney Station which opened in 1874. Like the station, the local post office, established on June 23, 1874, with Mancil G. Riney, postmaster, was named by Mancil's father, Sylvester, who donated the land for the railroad's station and right-of-way. Sylvester's father, the family's Kentucky progenitor, was Maryland-born Zachariah Riney (1762-1859). He is said to have been Abraham Lincoln's first school teacher and moved to this area from Nelson County in 1830. The village's economy was first tied to the area's extensive timbering and later to its site in one of Kentucky's major apple producing regions. Its poor roads and relative isolation kept the community from developing beyond village status. It now has only one store, a school, church, and the active post office. Most of its work force commutes to nearby Fort Knox.<sup>6</sup>

Another rail station giving rise to a post office (though little else) was Saint John at the junction of the tracks and the present Rt. 1357,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  rail miles north of Cecilia and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  road miles west of Elizabethtown. The station and the post office (the latter established on June 23, 1874, with Robert B. English, postmaster) served Bethlehem Academy, a girls' boarding school,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles west, that was founded in 1830 by the Sisters of Loretto in the former home of Kentucky's future governor John L. Helm. They were named for the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, one mile northwest, that had been founded and built in 1812 by Fr. Charles Nerinckx and

is still active. The post office, depot, academy, and local grocery are not; the academy closed in 1959, the post office in 1967.

The site of the nineteenth century settlement and station of Stithton is now wholly within the built up section of Fort Knox, by the main Fort Knox traffic circle, 15½ miles nww of Elizabethtown. Here, at a stage coach stop on the old Louisville and Nashville Turnpike, the Cecilian Branch station was opened in 1874, and on August 19 of that year Benjamin A. Jones initiated postal services at an office named for either Thomas Stith, a local resident and Mexican War veteran, or the family of Milton Stith who had settled there shortly after his purchase of 1,000 acres in 1859. The village that grew up around the post office and station had a peak population of some 400 and one of the largest roller mills in Kentucky before the turn of the century.

The military reservation we know as Fort Knox began as a World War One artillery range of 40,000 acres called Camp Knox for Gen'l. Henry T. Knox (1750-1806), the head of the Artillery Corps in the American Revolution and our country's first Secretary of War. With the camp's acquisition of the Stithton site came the razing of its buildings and their replacement by military structures.<sup>7</sup> Many of the residents moved a couple of miles southeast and created a New Stithton, later to be moved again when the base extended its boundaries during the Second World War.

After the First World War the military functions of the camp were scaled back. Its artillery operations were moved to Oklahoma and, as Camp Henry Knox Army Reservation, it became a training ground for ROTC and National Guard units. The Stithton post office continued

to serve the base until May 15, 1925 when the office was officially renamed Camp Knox. On January 1, 1932, when the camp became a permanent establishment for the development and training of a mechanized cavalry, it took the name Fort Knox. Most of the base's military building was done in the 1930s, as was the U.S. Bullion Depository in late 1936.

Today the Fort Knox Military Reservation occupies 171 square miles in Hardin, Bullitt, and Meade Counties. Its built-up section, an unincorporated community, roughly between the Dixie Highway (US 31W) and Mill Creek (of Salt River), with its homes, stores, offices, post office, and other institutional buildings, has an estimated daytime population of some 40,000 (down from a peak 52,000 around 1970). The reservation is now the country's principal testing ground for new equipment and battle tactics. It is also clearly the county's chief source of civilian employment.

Summit's elevation (852 feet above sea level) is said to be the highest of any station on the rail line between Louisville and some point south (some say New Orleans). Perhaps this suggested the name of this station just north of US 62 and 17½ miles southwest of Elizabethtown. Its active post office was established on October 16, 1874, with Jesse St. Clair, the first postmaster.

Tip Top, the last of the Illinois Central station post offices to be established, has a similar name derivation though its altitude (783 feet) is somewhat lower than Summit's. It was the "top of the grade" on the rail line or, as some have said, "on the tip of the top of the hill" just north of Godman Airfield and within the Fort Knox Reservation. Its post office operated between April 12, 1878

and mid July 1919. William T. Mabourn was the first postmaster. It is still shown on contemporary maps as Tip Top Station, while the name Tip Top identifies the site at the junction of US 60 and 31W (Dixie Highway), half a mile west, over the line in Meade County.

Eight stations on the Louisville and Nashville's main line through Hardin County served communities which had post offices. One was Elizabethtown. The other offices will next be discussed, also in the order of their establishment.

The first was Boothe's Station whose post office was actually established as Booth's Store (sic) on May 2, 1854, several years before the line's main road was opened for business. However, its only postmaster, William H. Kamp was unable to keep the office open beyond the following May. It reopened as Boothe's Station on July

24, 1878 with Pius Boothe as postmaster, and became simply Boothe in mid December 1880 when James H. Kamp became postmaster. The office closed for good in October 1892. This office and the station it served was the L&N's northern entree to the county, a mile south of the Rolling Fork River and ten rail miles nne of Elizabethtown.

The LaRue County line extends along the main street (Dixie Highway or US 31W) of the sixth clas city of Upton, making this one of Kentucky's few intercounty communities. The site was a part of a tract purchased around 1812 by North Carolina-born Edward Upton (1774-1852). In April 1856 Edward's son, George Washington Upton, arranged for the transfer here of the Leesville post office which had been established in January 1841 by Silas Lee, just over the Hart County line, less than ~~two~~ miles south. He had the office, then on the

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LaRue County side of the line, renamed Uptonville. In early 1858, to assure rail service to his new community, George built a depot and sold the new L&N Railroad the right-of-way through his family's land. The local station was called Upton's and this name was given to the town when it was incorporated in January 1866. The post office, though, did not assume this shortened form of the name till May 1892. By then it had been moved to the Hardin County side of the line. The city of Upton, seventeen rail miles south of Elizabethtown, still has its post office, serving a corporate population of some 700 and several hundred neighbors in three counties.

Only a couple of churches and some homes remain of the once mill village and rail station of Colesburg between I-65 and Ky 434, eight rail miles northeast of Elizabethtown. This area is said to have been settled by Maryland Catholics in the very early nineteenth century and may have been named for pioneer William Cole. It is not known when his name was first given to the settlement but it was in use for the L&N's local station by 1858/9. Here, in later years, booster locomotives were maintained to propel trains up the formidable Muldraugh Hill between Colesburg and Elizabethtown. The first post office to serve this vicinity was established on August 19, 1856 as Robertsonville (whose name source remains unknown) with Querry Florence, the future station and express agent, as postmaster. A William Coles (likely a descendant of the name source) ran one of the local stores in the mid 1870s. The office was renamed Colesburgh, for the station, in February 1877, and became Colesburg in 1893. It closed in 1966.

The second of Hardin's sixth class cities, with some three hundred residents and an active post office, is Sonora [sɔn/awɪ/ə], now centered just west of the junction of I-65 and Ky 84, and bounded on the east by the Dixie Highway (forming the LaRue County line). It is four rail miles north of Upton and thirteen rail miles south of Elizabethtown. This or some place nearby may be the site of the earlier Grangerville post office (1813-1828). Also at or close to this site was the railroad construction camp of Buck Snort (or Bucksnot) with a post office run by Solomon Irwin from August 5, 1858 through 1859. A few days before this office closed another post office was established at the new station itself (with William Stuart, postmaster) and named Sonora for the station.

Two explanations have been offered for each of these names. One account of Buck Snort refers to a herd of tame deer and a construction train engineer who would blow his locomotive's whistle just to hear the bucks snort. In the other, early locomotives were compared with snorting bucks, and when the first train arrived at the station site, someone is said to have shouted "Hear that buck snort!" Sonora is said to have been named for the home state of either a railroad contractor of Mexican extraction or a Mexican cook who had been hired to feed the railroad work crews. The town was incorporated in March 1865, and by 1900 had become the main trading center for a large bi-county area, with its station the rail shipping point for area livestock and grain.

The Nolin Station [noh/lihn] was opened when the railroad came through and aptly named for its site on the southwest bank of Nolin River, two rail miles north of Sonora. The post office at or near

the station site was established on November 24, 1858 as Phillipsburg, for reasons as yet unknown. But the following April its postmaster, Ben Hardin, had it renamed Nolin, and as such it served the small mill town and station (at several local sites) till 1955.

But this was not the county's first use of Nolin as a post office name. A Nolen (sic) post office was in operation from May 25, 1836 through February 1859 where the present Dixie Highway crosses the river, just west of the LaRue County line and about 1½ air miles east of the railroad. Sidney Smith and Morris Savage were the first of its seven postmasters. This is what is shown on the 1839 Burr map as Nolensville, ten miles south of Elizabethtown. It was just north of Red Mills which, in the late 1850s, had several mills, two stores, and other businesses.

Something should be said of the river and its name. This stream heads in northeast LaRue County and follows a very winding course for some seventy five miles to the Green River just above Brownsville in Edmonson County. The name may have been applied as early as 1780, before which it was probably called Elk Garden and later Buffalo Creek.

It is traditionally accepted that the river was named for Col. Benjamin Lynn (or Linn), one of James Harrod's associates. In the summer of 1779 Lynn and his friends, while hunting near the site of the future Hodgenville (in LaRue County) made camp for a while on a two acre knoll. One night, the story goes, Lynn did not return as expected. His friends, as they arrived back at camp, remarked to one another "Here is the knoll, but no Lynn." It makes a good story but no other explanations have been offered for the name.

The stream's name, incidentally, was often spelled Nolynn in nineteenth century documents, while Benjamin's name was as often spelled Linn and even Lin in early family records.

The village of Glendale, centering where Ky 222 crosses the L&N tracks, three rail miles north of Nolin Station, grew up around Lewis B. Walker's store and was first called Walker's Station. Walker established the local post office on March 2, 1859 and named it for the recently built station which, it is said, had been named for the Ohio home town of one of the L&N's engineers. This once dying rail shipping point for area livestock was recently revitalized as a tourist attraction with crafts shops, two restaurants, a toy museum, and a B&B. It's home to one of the county's regional high schools and its active post office serves an area population of some 500. It is not to be confused with the relatively recent Glendale Junction, 2½ miles east on 222, where that road crosses the Dixie Highway.

The last Hardin County station on the L&N's main line to have its own post office was Tunnel Hill, three rail miles nne of Elizabethtown. The station and post office (the latter established on March 4, 1875 with James A. Keller, the local gristmiller, as postmaster), were named for the railroad tunnel through Muldraugh Hill, half a mile northeast of the station. In the mid 1920s this tunnel, like others built by the L&N, was eliminated and the tracks were rerouted up the big hill. The post office closed in 1934 and the small village is all but gone.

Three 1850s Hardin County post offices have not been precisely located and are all but unknown to contemporary historians.

Cofer operated from March 23, 1850 to September 1856 with only one postmaster Robert Funk. It was undoubtedly named for the Cofer family--Thomas, John, or Lawrence, descendants of Virginia-born pioneer William Cofer. Thomas's son, Martin Hardin Cofer (1832-1881) was later to become an Elizabethtown lawyer and newspaper editor and a Chief Justice of the Kentucky Court of Appeals.

Yagersville (sic) had two postmasters during its two short years. Philip G. Yunger (sic) established the office on February 13, 1856 and was succeeded the following October by Robert B. English who operated it till December 1857. It may have served a store and several homes on Nolin River, two miles east of the later Star Mills, and probably honored the descendants of the Rev. Josiah Yeager.

Claiborne Overall (1825-1893) was the only postmaster and the obvious name source of the Claiborne post office that operated between October 5, 1858 and July of the following year. This office was somewhere in the vicinity of Gilead Baptist Church on Nolin River, about a mile south of Glendale, where Overall is known to have lived. He and his family are buried in that church's cemetery.

Howe Valley is still a community of widely scattered homes extending for about a mile along Ky 86 and centering at a store 13½ miles west of Elizabethtown. The road cuts through the relatively broad valley of the same name. The post office was established as Howe's Valley on September 8, 1852 with George W. Tate, postmaster, and was named for the family of pioneer John Howe (died 1830), a Revolutionary War veteran from Pennsylvania who settled here before 1810. In 1894 postal authorities simplified the spelling to Howevalley, and as such it continued to operate till it closed in

1908. The community, however, is still Howe Valley.

On November 17, 1857 Samuel Franklin established a post office on the present Ky 86,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  miles east of Howe's Valley, and named it Franklin's Cross Roads for his family. They were the descendants of pioneer Bennett Franklin (1793-1865) and his wife Elizabeth, who are buried in the family's cemetery a mile south of the small settlement. After an intermittent existence, the post office closed permanently in 1905.

One or more post offices were named for Meeting Creek, a Rough River tributary that, for part of its run, forms the Grayson-Hardin County line for several miles. Undoubtedly referring to a pioneer church in that area, the stream's name has been in use since before 1800. The first Meeting Creek post office was established at an as yet undetermined site on June 5, 1862 with Zadoc L. Rogers, postmaster. It closed the following May. Another Meeting Creek post office was opened in Milton Cralle's store on May 17, 1876. This was just east of the head of Little Meeting Creek and three miles north of the main stream, probably on or just south of the present Ky 84. In a letter to the Post Office Department, postmaster-designate Cralle said that he named the office for the Meeting Creek Baptist Church  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles east. This was probably not the stream's name source. The post office closed sometime before 1892 for, on May 2nd of that year, it was re-opened at an unknown site by William H. Green to serve two stores, and operated through May 1916.

What remains of the small village of White Mills is centered where Rt. 1866 crosses the Nolin River, just east of the new Ky 84,  $15\frac{3}{4}$  miles southeast of Elizabethtown. It grew up around two mills,

the first a grist mill built by some unknown party in the 1830s and destroyed by a flood around 1853. A second mill was built there two years later by Daniel Ferguson Wortham and operated under several owners till it was torn down in 1965. It is not known if either mill was painted white or if they bore someone's name. George W. White and Martin E. White are known to have owned land in that vicinity in the early 1860s. The name predated by some time the local post office which was established on January 19, 1866 with Granville S. Hastings, postmaster. The post office still serves the one surviving store, a county school, and two churches.

Dorrett's Run is another stream that gave its name to a Hardin County post office. This four mile long branch of Mill Creek, now wholly included within the Fort Knox Military Reservation, was probably named for pioneer John Dorrett and was so identified before 1800. At two sites some  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles up the stream, and eleven miles north of Elizabethtown, the post office served a timber products processing town from February 1, 1869 till August 1906. Jonathan Owen was the first postmaster.

Four other turn-of-the-century and relatively short-lived Hardin County post offices were located within the present boundaries of the military reservation.

Easy Gap operated from February 13, 1890 through 1906 in a gap between Hooker and Scott Mountains, two miles northeast of the present buildup section of the Fort. Henry H. Carr was its first postmaster. The name derivation can only be guessed at.

Benjamin Wigginton gave his family's name to the post office he established on June 20, 1890 when he found his preferred name Pleasant View already in use in Whitley County. This office served two stores and three homes where the Old Court House Road joined the Old Louisville and Nashville Turnpike (now Wilson Road) just west of the Pleasant View Cemetery and four miles south of West Point. The office was discontinued in August 1906.

Ida May Lasswell fared no better with Rose Cottage when she established her post office on Rolling Fork River, probably just below and across from the mouth of Crooked Creek. Thus the Lasswell post office operated from April 29, 1895 through August 1897 with Miss Lasswell as its only postmaster.

Somewhere on the west bank of Cedar Creek, perhaps three miles south of its Rolling Fork confluence, was Close's Store. Here William E. Close operated the Cowley post office from December 11, 1901 through June 1906. This may have been named for one or both of the landowning Cowleys--Col. John (1802-1884), who had a distillery and grist mill at Falling Springs, or his son William Owen (1821-1892).

Some two miles east of Nallton Corner, probably just south of Fullove Hill, was the first site of the aptly named Grand View post office. This was established on May 16, 1870 with James W. Hopkins, postmaster, and for some 20-25 years served W.H. Yates' store, a steam-powered grist and saw mill, a school, and a couple of churches. In 1896 John H. Wortham had the office moved  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles south (sic) to an as yet unknown site where it continued to operate, as Grandview, through January 1901. The latter was probably not the site of the Grandview Church which was then (as now) more than  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles from

the original post office.

High Up was another post office with an uncertain location. Thompson Dever, its only postmaster, operated it from June 3, 1873 through January 1874 a mile north of Middle Creek and eight miles southeast of Elizabethtown.

One of Kentucky's noted nineteenth century watering places with mineral springs was Hardin Springs on the east bank of Rough River, just half a mile from the Breckinridge County line and twenty six miles west of Elizabethtown. The remedial springs (chalybeate, sulphur, and iron) were first developed in the 1840s as McRavian Springs. They were later known as the Rough Creek Springs, and became Hardin Springs (for the county) when the post office was established in that name on June 23, 1874 with Stephen H. Catlin, the first postmaster. The area's major development came shortly thereafter with John W. Walker, a local mill owner, who built a large hotel. By then he was calling the place Sulphurville. The hotel has since been torn down. The post office closed in 1963. Only a few homes now mark the site.

The last post office in the county to close (officially in February 1994) was Vertrees [ver/trees]. This office was just west of where Ky 86 crosses Rough River and 16 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles west of Elizabethtown. It was established on July 6, 1881 as Vertrus, an obvious error that was not corrected until 1895. George W. Taber was the first postmaster. For a number of years his successor, Milton A. Cralle, ran the office in his store which, with a water mill, a nearby church, and some homes is all the community ever was. Both the post office and the Rough River tributary, Vertrees Creek, one

quarter of a mile west, were named for an early family whose progenitor Joseph Vertrees (ne 1770) built a cabin between the creek and the river in 1810. His son Robert built the first local store. The site was a part of a Virginia military tract granted to Joseph's father Capt. John, one of the Severns Valley pioneers who lived in what became Elizabethtown and was an early county justice. Nothing remains at the Vertrees site but the church and some homes.

Three post offices in southwest Hardin County have curious names that still defy explanation. Limp was established on July 7, 1884 by Simeon L. Smallwood to serve his store somewhere near the confluence of Little and (Big) Meeting Creeks. His preferred name Oak Flat was replaced by Limp. In 1898 the office was moved one mile east to the Salt River Road (now Ky 920), 24½ miles southwest of Elizabethtown, where it closed in 1934. Could Limp have been corrupted from the name of second postmaster-storekeeper Gid L. Lampton?

Then there was New Fruit which Virgil Popham operated between February 15, 1888 and February 8, 1899 on the present Ky 347, two miles east of Limp's second site.

Solway, a post office begun in the Montgomery Brothers store on the present Ky 84, one mile west of what's now Western Elementary School, may have been named for a nearby distillery and orchard run in the 1880s by a Mr. Poplin. The office was established on December 9, 1898 with Jackson Lee Montgomery and his brother Alexander the first two postmasters. It closed in 1958 and the store too is gone. The country's two other Solways--a railroad station in Beltrami County, Minnesota and a township in St. Louis County in the same

state--were named for Solway Firth, the Irish Sea embayment between England and Scotland, leading the late Hardin County historian, Daniel E. McClure, to wonder if Kentucky's Solway could have had the same name origin.

Stampville, for an area family, was the name proposed by James B. Dyer for his post office half a mile south of Sandy Creek. But it operated, from March 6, 1888 till April 1903, as Melrose instead. Since there were no Hardin County families for whom the office could have been named, one may wonder if the Scottish town and abbey celebrated in Walter Scott's writings could have been its name source. Or the town in Massachusetts. Could there also have been a connection with the Melrose post office in neighboring Hart County that preceded the Bacon Creek-Bonnieville post office from 1834 to 1837?

From March 27, 1888 to September 1897 Jacob William Nall operated the Nallton post office in his store on the present Rt. 1073, 2½ miles east of Big Springs. This was shown on mid twentieth century maps as Nallton Corner.

The shortlived (June 6, 1890 till mid April 1891) Sand Springs post office, with William H. Miller, its only postmaster, may have operated on the old US 31W (now Rt. 1031), 4½ miles south of Elizabethtown. This is just west of Sportsman Lake. Nothing else is known about it.

Two post offices served the southwest corner of the county. The first, between June 18, 1891 and mid April 1903, was the inexplicably named Amity at two sites just east of the Nolin River (the Grayson County line). Solomon Kesinger, the local storekeeper, was its first postmaster.

The second, Spurrier, served Hughes Mill on the river, about a mile south of Amity's first site. It was established by John Ray Honey on February 6, 1902 and named for the White Mills area descendants of Richard or Joseph Spurrier, early Hardin County residents. The office closed in 1954.

To serve one or more flour mills on the north bank of Nolin River, about 10½ miles southwest of Elizabethtown, James Marriott operated the Star Mills post office between April 26, 1893 and October 1895. The office was again in operation between November 1901 and August 1904 as Warner. Neither name has been derived.

Hardin's Harcourt post office, operating from July 8, 1893 through 1907, has no apparent connection with the shortlived but slightly earlier (June 1890 to February 1891) Marion County office of the same name. Robert A. Jacobs established the Hardin County office on the north bank of Nolin River, a little over two miles east of White Mills. There are no known Hardin County families to account for the name, but one might ask if it could have derived from that of Ashton P. Harcourt who represented adjacent Bullitt County in the Kentucky legislature in 1869 and again in 1883.

The inexplicably named Arch post office was established on March 17, 1898 with Thomas A. Wallace, postmaster. Nearly two years later it was moved one mile south to the junction of the present Ky 86 and Rt. 2213, three miles northwest of Vertrees, where it survived till 1934.

When Jacob H. Kessinger was unable to call his post office Dewey, probably for the admiral-hero of the recent Battle of Manila Bay, he established it as Redcloud and operated it from March 29, 1900

through February 1903. It was at a site about 1½ miles north of Glendale Junction and six miles south of Elizabethtown. Could it have been named for the famed Sioux chief Red Cloud? No other explanation has been offered.

Nor has any explanation been offered for Dailington, the name of an office operated by Milton Bledsoe between June 3, 1901 and July 31, 1902 about a mile up Youngers Creek, a Rolling Fork tributary.

One or more of the probable descendants of Henry Neff accounted for the Neff post office operated by James B. Wallace from July 30, 1904 to mid September 1908 somewhere very close to the Breckinridge County line, northwest of Arch.

The Laurel Ridge post office on its name source, some 18½ miles wsw of Elizabethtown, was established by John T. Duvall on April 20, 1909 and closed in 1935.

On July 2, 1921 Duvall who, by then, had relinquished his postmastership of Laurel Ridge to a relative, established the Fairfarm post office three miles west of the other office. Here it stayed till mid August 1925. Its name derivation is unknown.

Hardin's largest town has its most recently established post office. The fourth class city of Radcliff (with a 1990 population of nearly 20,000) is a sprawling community adjacent to the Fort Knox Military Reservation. With no city center to speak of it stretches along the Dixie Highway (US 31W) for several miles. It is one of Kentucky's fastest growing communities with the built up area between it and Elizabethtown moving so close together that by the turn of the century the two will likely become one functioning town. It

was founded in 1919 by Horace E. McCullum who named it for his friend, Major W.H. Radcliffe of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who was then supervising the construction of the camp's buildings. The community's name was originally spelled with the terminal "e" which, for some reason, was later dropped. The town was incorporated in 1956 and its active post office was not established till September 14, 1962 (with Jerry W. Davis, postmaster). As the home of many off-base military and civilian employees, it has long been mostly dependent on the Fort.

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Thirteen of Hardin County's sixty one post offices are still in operation. Six (Elizabethtown, Radcliff, Vine Grove, West Point, Upton, and Sonora) serve currently incorporated cities. Other communities (Fort Knox, Glendale, Cecilia, Eastview, White Mills, Rineyville, and Summit) still have their own post offices.

Twenty seven offices were named for local or county residents or their families. One honored a national figure who owned some Hardin County land. Eight had geographic references, while to nine were transferred the names of area features (six streams, a church, an elevation, and the county itself). Distant places accounted for two names. Two possible derivations have been offered for another. The sources of thirteen office names have not yet been determined. Seven offices have not even been approximately located.

The names of five post offices were not those originally proposed for them. Six served communities with names other than those borne by their offices. Eight had name changes.

## FOOTNOTES

1. This stream was known for much of the nineteenth century as simply Valley Creek. The Severns family name appeared in many early records as Soverns and Sovereigns.
2. "Early Kentucky Settlers From Ontario County, New York" Kentucky Ancestors, Vol. 4 (3), 1969. In 1817 Connecticut-born and raised Granger (1767-1822) moved to Canandaigua, Ontario County, N.Y.
3. The Elizabethtown and Paducah Railroad was chartered in 1867. It began laying track west from Elizabethtown in 1869, reaching Paducah by 1872. The forty six mile Cecilian Branch between that town and Louisville (via West Point) was completed two years later. Shortly thereafter the E&P went bankrupt and in 1876 was reorganized with the Cecilian Branch as the Louisville Paducah and Southwestern. The Cecilian Branch was acquired the following year by the Louisville and Nashville as a feeder and second track for its main line between Louisville and Elizabethtown. In January 1872 the L&N leased the Cecilian Branch to Collis P. Huntington "in perpetuity", and it soon, with the old E&P, began operation between Louisville and Memphis as The Chesapeake Ohio and Southwestern. On August 1, 1896 the latter was acquired by the Illinois Central Railroad.
4. This family's Hardin County progenitor was Pennsylvania-born Revolutionary War veteran Andrew Fairleigh, Sr., who had settled in the Elizabethtown area before 1797 and died there in 1829. His son William was the first clerk of the newly established Meade County courts.

5. The Cecils were descendants of Matthew Cissell, one of four brothers who came from Maryland and settled early on Hardins Creek (in what became Washington County). Cissellville, near the St. Rose Priory, was also named for this pioneer family. (Benjamin J. Webb, The Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky, Louisville: Charles A. Rogers, 1884, P. 46)
6. While the village and its post office have always been Rineyville, the station was never anything but Riney.
7. Actually, one of Stithton's structures, St. Patrick's (Catholic) Chapel, built in 1831, was spared, and is now a non-denominational church for Fort Knox personnel.

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12. Ibid. "Much History Surrounds Howes Valley" Elizabethtown Examiner, November 8, 1976, Pp. A1, A10
13. Ibid. "Railroad Responsible For Rineyville Progress" Bicentennial Edition of the Elizabethtown News, May 21, 1974, Pp. 8D,13D

Stations and Early Settlements in Ky.

✓ HELM'S STATION, HAYCRAFT'S STATION AND HYNES STATION - settled by  
Capt. Thos. Helm, in 1780, on the spot now occupied by the late Gov. John  
L. Helm's residence; the second, named after Samuel Haycraft, was on the  
hill above the cave spring; while Hynes; settled by Col. Andrew Hynes,  
occupied <sup>the</sup> by other angle

Ref.  
Collins Vol. 2.  
Hist.

Hardin Co.

GREAT WONDERLAND CAVE ✓ located in Hardin County. On account of being situated in what the "atives claim to be the wonder regions of Kentucky, it has been given the name of the "Great Wonderland Cavern." Discovered by the cave men's club of America, a national organization of nature lovers. In some sections of the cave the rooms were 100 ft. wide and so lofty that powerful spotlights were needed to reach the ceilings.

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Hardin Co. communities

1. ~~Big Spring (po and com)~~ (Creek Co.)
- \*2. Elizabethtown (co. seat) had been Severns Valley Station (C)
- \*3. Stephensburg (com. & po) (C)
- \*4. West Point (com. & po) (C)
5. Howell's Springs (dpo)
- \*6. Lawsonville (dpo)
7. Coombsville (dpo)
- \*8. Nolen (dpo) (or is this Nolin?) (C) later a po Nolin was est. had been Phillipsburg
9. McMurtryton (dpo)
- ~~10. Red Hill (com. & dpo)~~
11. Cofer (dpo)
- \*12. Howe Valley (dpo) (com) (C)
- ~~13. South's Store (dpo)~~
- \*14. Otter Creek (dpo) (com)
15. Yagersville (dpo)
- \*16. Robertsonville (dpo) had been Robertsville now Colesburg (Com) (C)
- \*17. Vine Grove (com. & po) (now a part of Radcliffe) (C)
- \*18. Franklin's Cross Roads (dpo) (com) X
- ~~19. Buck Snort (dpo)~~
- \*20. Claiborne (dpo)
- \*21. Glendale (po and com) (C)
- \*22. Sonora (com. & po) (C) ← Bucksnort ← Greensville (?)
- \*23. Meeting Creek (dpo) X
- ~~24. White Mills (dpo)~~
- \*25. Dorrets Run (dpo) or Dorretts Run ng rd.
- \*26. Grandview (dpo)
- \*27. Cecilia (po and com.) (C) ← Cecilia
- \*28. Long Grove (dpo) (Hansbrough Sta.)
- \*29. Eastview (po) (C)
- \*30. Uptonville later Upton (com. & po) (C) (see same co. material)
31. High Up (dpo)
- \*32. St. John (dpo) (C) ~~Red Hill seat~~ St. Johns ng br St. John (com)
- \*33. Rineyville (po and com) rr known as Riney (C)
- \*34. Hardin Springs (dpo) X
116. \*35. Stithton (dpo) (est. com) [see meade co. messenger, spec edit] (C)
- \*36. Summit (com. & po) (C) X
- \*37. Tunnel Hill (dpo) (com) (com)
- \*38. ~~Farleigh (dpo)~~ Red Hill (dpo), had been Farleigh ← Red Hill (po) (C) X
- \*39. Booth (dpo) had been Boothe's Station (com) + Booth's store (dpo)
40. White Mills (dpo) (C)
- \*41. Tip Top (dpo, now a part of Fort Knox) (com) (est. rr sta.)
- \*42. Vertrus (sic) (dpo) to Vertrees
43. Limp (dpo)
44. Melrose (dpo)
- \*45. Nallton (dpo) Nallton Corner (com)
46. Easy Gap (dpo)
- ~~47. Cash (dpo) (Hart Co.)~~
48. Sand Springs (dpo)
- \*49. Wigginton (dpo)
50. Amity (dpo)
51. Star Mills (dpo) X = waurey (dpo)
52. Harcourt (dpo)
- \*53. Huber (dpo) ← and Huber
- \*54. Laswell (dpo)
55. Arch (dpo) X
56. Solway (dpo)
57. Redcloud (dpo)
58. Dailington (dpo) ng br

- ~~59. Warner (dpo)~~
- 60. Cowley (dpo)
- \* 61. Spurrier (dpo)
- \* 62. Neff (dpo)
- \* 63. Laurel Ridge (dpo)
- 64. Fairfarm (dpo)
- ~~65. Camp Knox (dpo) had been Stithton~~
- 35. Homeland (com)
- 66. Osborne Ngbr.
- 67. Glendale Jct. (com)
- 68. Ireland (com)
- 69. Dugan (com)
- \*70. Howell Church Ngbr.
- 71. Miller School Ngbr.
- 72. Salem Ngbr.
- 73. Gaithers (com)
- \* ~~74.~~<sup>28</sup> Hansbrough (com) (long grove po)
- 75. Kraft (crossroads)
- 76. Red Oak Ngbr.
- 77. Watson Sch. Ngbr.
- 78. Old Glendale Rd. Ngbr.
- \* 79. Four Corners (crossroads) (not known as Miller Corners)
- 80. Ridge Springs Ngbr.
- \* 81. Perryville (com) (part of Etown)
- 82. Locust Grove Ngbr.
- 83. Round Top Ngbr.
- 84. Morgan (com)
- 85. James Chapel Ngbr.
- 86. Little Tokyo Village (mil. reserv.)
- 87. Chestnut Grove Ngbr.
- 88. Edlin Ngbr.
- 89. Eggen Ngbr.
- 90. Valey Creek Ngbr.
- 91. Crest (com)
- 92. Cedar Creek (com)
- 93. Carlisle Ngbr.
- 94. Plainview (com)
- 95. Rolling Fork Ngbr.
- 96. Sherrad Ngbr.
- 97. Sycamore Sch. Ngbr.
- 98. Crutcher (com)
- 99. Long View (com)
- 100. Mill Creek Ngbr.
- 10. Mt. Zion Ngbr.
- 101. Saunders ~~(xxx)~~ Ngbr.
- \* 102. Rogersville (com) (C)
- \* 103. Steele Crossroads (mil. reserv.)
- 104. Dietz Acres (com)
- \* 105. Radcliff (com & po) (C)
- \* 106. Ft. Knox Mil. Reserv. ← camp Knox (dpo) and Ft. Knox (com) (C)
- \* 107. Drippings Springs (com)
- ~~108. Ft. Knox (com) (C)~~
- 109. Howard (com) (C)
- 110. Goldville ~~(dpo)~~ (com)
- ~~111. New Stithton (com) (part of Knox)~~
- 112. Dombey (com)
- 113. Lilmay (com)
- 114. Vento (com)
- 115. Watric (com)
- 117. \* ~~116.~~ Cople mill Rd. Ngbr.
- \* 118. Seven Corners (com)

Ngbr = 23 (excluded)

NT = (88)

(C) = sample  
X = reserve.