The towns and villages that are in and have been in Hart County, that we are able to find out why they were so named, and if not still in existence, why were they discontinued.

Hart County was the 61st county to be formed by the Kentucky Legislature in 1819 out of parts of Hardin and Barren counties. It lies on both sides of Green River, in the south-central part of the state, and was named in honor of Captain Nathaniel G. T. Hart, a son of Colonel Thomas Hart, who immigrated at an early date from Hagerstown, Maryland, to Lexington, Kentucky, which place became his residence, and continued to be that of most of his descendants. Captain Hart was born in Hagerstown, and was but a few years old when his father came to Kentucky. The Hon. Henry Clay and Hon. James Brown, so long minister at the French Court, were his brother-in-laws, having married his sisters. Under the first named gentleman, Captain Hart studied the profession of law, and practiced for some time in Lexington. Shortly before the war of 1812, he engaged in mercantile pursuits, and was rapidly making a large fortune. In the year 1812, being about twenty-seven years of age, he commanded a volunteer company called the "Lexington Light Infantry;" and Kentucky being in that year called upon for volunteers for the war in the north-west, he, with his company, enrolled themselves in the service of their country. His command rendezoused at Georgetown in the fall of 1812, and from thence proceeded to the seat of war. He served through the winter campaign of 1812-13, a portion of the time as a staff officer. At the battle of the Risin, on the 23d January, 1813, he commanded his company, and received a wound in the leg. When taken a prisoner, he found an old acquaintance among the British officers. This was Captain Elliott, who had previously been in Lexington, and during a severe illness there remained at the home of Colonel Hart, and was attended by Captain Hart and family. On meeting Captain Hart he expressed himself delighted of the opportunity to return the kindness he had received, and promised to send his carryall to take Captain Hart to Malden. Captain Hart relied implicitly upon the promise, but the carryall was never sent and he never saw Captain Elliott again. He started from Risin on horseback under the care of an Indian, whom he employed to take him to Malden; but had proceeded only a short distance, when they met other Indians, who had been excited by the hope of a general massacre of prisoners, and Captain Hart was then tomahawked.

Munfordville, the county seat, named after Richard Jones Munford, former proprietor, and incorporated in 1858, is on the north bank of Green River, where it is crossed by the Louisville and Nashville railroad, 73 miles south of Louisville. The county granted a permit to Richard Jones Munford and Dudley Rountree a permit to build and operate a warehouse, in which flour, hemp and tobacco had to be inspected before shipment, flatboats on Green River being the only means to reach an outside market.
In the late 1830's or early 1840's Frances Asbury Smith built an extensive slaughter house in which thousands of cattle, hogs and sheep were killed annually. As his method of reaching an outside market was the flatboat on the Green, Ohio and Mississipi rivers, he sustained several heavy losses as his product spoiled before reaching a market. This plant was burned in 1886.

Woodsonville just across the river from Munfordville was named after its founder, Thomas Woodson. Woodsonville was first known as Amos's Landing, as flatboats did quite an extensive business on Green River from this point. Here to was another slaughter house which did a large business in pork products and tobacco for many years. During the Civil War a battle was fought September 14-17, 1862, General Don Carlos Buell with his base in Tennessee was threatening Chattanooga. General Braxton Bragg, thinking that he could relieve the situation by invading Kentucky and gain much support from its citizens, slipped around Buell at Nashville, and the race was on as to who could reach Louisville first. Before Buell could reach Bowling Green, Bragg had reached Glasgow. Bragg ordered General J. R. Chalmers to proceed to Cave City with about 1500 men to intercept any trains that were carrying any soldiers or supplies for the Union Army, he being told that Woodsonville was being held by a small force, thought it would be a feather in his cap to capture the point, but on reaching Woodsonville he found a much stronger force, and they being in trenches and a strong fort and stockade, was easily defeated. The Confederates losses were listed as 35 killed and 250 wounded and the Union as 15 killed and 57 wounded and those missing in action and captured 3921. Fort Craig built here before the battle and the two forts built on the north of the river in 1863, are said to be the best preserved earthworks of the Civil War.

Rowletta Station, located on the railroad about 2½ miles south of Munfordville, was named in honor of a Mr. Rowlett the first agent of that station. On December 17, 1861 a battle between the Confederate and Union Armies, was fought here. The 32nd Indiana regiment lost in this battle Lieutenant Sachs and eight killed and ten wounded, of which two or three died of their wounds, the Confederate loss was higher, but General Hindman's report admitted the loss of Colonel Terry and three men killed and ten wounded.

Horse Cave located on the railroad about 5½ miles south of Rowletta Station, was started about the time the railroad was being built in the 1850's, some time later the citizens changed the name to Caverna, but the railroad refused to change all of their supplies that had the name Horse Cave on them and the name was changed back to Horse Cave.
About two miles south of Horse Cave and about an equal distance, and just in Hart County was a railroad station known as Woodland. The railroad was built from Nashville to Woodland and from Louisville to Munfordville, in shorter time than it took to build the long, high bridge over Green River, it being about 1000 feet long and about 105 feet above Green River at its low stage, when the trains reached Woodland and Munfordville the engines were turned around and returned to the starting points, Woodland being closest to Horse Cave and Cave City was discontinued many years ago.

In 1816, Richard Jones Munford, Thomas Woodson and Thomas Monroe and William I. Adair, thinking they might be able to secure the county seat of a new county that was being proposed. Had a tract of land surveyed and platted with all lots numbered and the streets and alleys named, Munford's plat is recorded at Elizabethtown and Woodson and Monroe & Adair are recorded at Glasgow, they being in those counties at that time. Joshua Brents became the purchaser of all lots in the new town of Monroe and later became the owner of the remainder of the 80 acres laid out for the town, upon which he built a large two room and hall, log building with a shed room the full length at the back, in which he operated an Inn or Tavern for many years, it being on the old Cumberland Trace and the Lexington & Nashville trace, these two traces were traveled at a very early date by the pioneers settling this area and further west and south, later stage coaches were operated along these traces, and Mr. Brents did quite a successful business until the railroad was built, and these old traces was abandoned. The old traces crossed Little Barren River, Elk Lick crossing, the town being on higher ground about one mile west of the crossing. President Andrew Jackson was possibly the most prominent person to stop at the old Inn, he recorded in his diary that he spent the day at Brents Tavern at Elk Lick, Sept 27, 1832, this being the route he sometimes used on his way to and from Washington to his home near Nashville, possibly he was doing some lectioneering as it was near the end of his first term as President. The writer remembers well the old tavern, having been in it several times, nothing remains of it today.

Soon after the Civil War Thomas Young became the owner of a tract of land where the present town of Monroe stands, he built a new road, leaving the the above named traces, at the site of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and connecting with the old road at the branch at the foot of the hill, and at the crossing of the Defries - Three Springs road built a home and a large two story store, which he named Youngtown, but which was later changed to Monroe, possibly when the Post Office was located there.
Powder Mills located on Lynn Camp Creek, in the east part of Hart County, at a very early date two powder mills were in operation making powder, as page 334 Collins history Vol 11 is the following: "Powder Mill. - On Lynn Camp Creek, near the Green County line, was an extensive powder mill, which during the war of 1812, and for a number of years after, produced large quantities of powder. Tradition has it that powder made here was shipped by flatboat down Green, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and used by General Jackson in the battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1815. Powder made here for the Civil War, Mr. Thomas Gibson was the last man to make powder there, he died in 1867. Powder Mill here referred to was originally called Fountain Mills, in an advertisement in the Courier Journal dated Jan. 30, 1928: "Powder Mills, Hart County, advertised that much pains was taken to maintain his powder at high quality and that agents were required to sell it at uniform prices, $5.50 per keg of 25 pounds for rifle powder, $3. a half keg for artillery powder, whole keg $5., this powder answered well for musket, cannon or blasting," Powder Mills by Mrs. Charlie Wheeler

Powder Mills is a little village situated in a fertile valley, surrounded by high hills and tall cedar trees, encircled by Lynn Camp Creek, with the most wonderful water-power in all the country. One hundred years ago this same Powder Mills was the most thriving village in the county, consisting of a grist mill, carding machine, where wool was taken and carded into rolls, then spun into thread and woven into cotton cloth by our grandmothers, and an old time saw mill that sawed lumber with a crosscut saw. All these was operated by water power. This same saw mill sawed lumber that built the old powder mills at this place. The powder made here was used in the war between the states. The largest dry goods store in these days was owned by the Archer Brothers, did a large business at this same place. Just on top of the hill was a large tanning yard, where all the leather was made for making shoes and harness. First great vats were dug, then the hides fromcattle were soaked for weeks in these vats. Huge logs were split open and dug out for troughs and filled with water and different kinds of bark and the hides were kept for weeks in this solution, then dried ready for use. Near this place was the Old Furnace, of which my grandfather, John Davis was the foreman of the large plant molding kettles, skillets, ovens, leads and all kinds of iron ware, used in those days. Here is the oldest post office in the county. Today all that is left of the powder mills is the great water power and post office moved on top of the hill.

This is best of my knowledge of the history of Powder Mills.

/S/ Mrs. Charlie Wheeler
At the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century no enterprise in the Green River section of Kentucky was more interesting or more active than Aetna Furnace in Hart County, it was located on Lynn Camp Creek. It is believed that Aetna Furnace was the first furnace built west of the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains. Later and to some extent as an outgrowth from Aetna Furnace, came the Buckner Leedom and Churchill furnace established in 1812 on the banks of Green River, in Hart County, called the Henry Clay Furnace. Aetna Furnace was built by Jacob Holderman, Russels Whiting and Charles Wilkin, about the year 1816. Holderman was the guiding hand that made the furnace successful, he being of an iron family. Whiting sold his interest in the business to Holderman and Wilkins, July, 1818, later Holderman became the sole owner, which consisted of about ten thousand and five hundred acres of land, or approximately seventeen square miles, embracing much of the hilly and wooded territory in Hart, Larue and Green counties.

During the life of Jacob Holderman, Aetna Furnace was a notable success. While its records have disappeared and therefore no accurate account of the extent and volume of the business can now be given, it is well known that its products were distributed widely in Kentucky and adjoining states. In the settlements of substantial farmers in Larue county and other nearby counties, within the last forty or fifty years, the appraisement and sale of great iron kettles, and irons and various other cast iron products of Aetna Furnace has been of usual occurrence. Sales were largely made by traveling representatives. Perhaps the greater part of the articles sold were delivered by wagon, thought it is not improbable that shipments were also made by flat boats on Green River and the Ohio. It is tradition in this region that one hundred slaves were used in cutting timber, burning charcoal and digging the ore and other work connected with the operation of the furnace and the force on Brush Creek, in Green County, which was owned by Holderman.

I will copy an old sales bill found in the attic of the old log home of Thomas Gibson, the last operator of the Powder Mills, three or four miles further down the creek:
Aetna Furnace July 15, 1850
W. J. Bowman, Bot of Churchill & Holderman

2 large skillets & lids
11 Med. skillets & lids
2 Small skillets & lids
4 Med. ovens & lids
a small ovens & lids
1 large Pr. dogs
1 Med. dogs
1 small dogs
3 2nd size stew kettles & lids
5 3rd size stew kettles & lids
2 small size stew kettles & lids
4 large biscuit ovens & lids
2 small size biscuit oven & lids
26 odd lids
2 18 Gal. kettles
1 set wagon boxes

weight in all 2005 pounds at 3 cents

$20.15

$0.7

received pay by bill leather & saddles

balance due Bowman

payable in castings at 3 cents pr. pound

Churchill & Holderman, by
W. H. Middleton

Jacob Holderman died in 1827 and his son and Churchill
were conducting the business. Churchill ended in bank­
rupcy and his interest was sold in 1850, ending the busi­
ness.

copied from history of Aetna Furnace, published in the
Kentucky Historical Journal, in 1911, by Judge O. M. Mather,
whose wife was a descendent of Jacob Holderman.