The Post Offices of
Daviess County, Kentucky

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Following the suggestions in *Names* (September, 1992) and
elsewhere, this article shows what can *be* done with the systematic
study of a county's post offices. Daviess County's 71 post offices
are located, with brief histories and descriptions of the communities
they serve, along with the derivations of all known names.

Daviess County is located in the northern end of the Western
Kentucky coal fields. Its 463 square miles are home to an estimat-
ed 87,000 persons, making it the state's 5th largest county in
population. It is bordered on the north by the Ohio River, across
which is Indiana, while the Green River, one of the Ohio's
principal navigable tributaries, forms part of its western border.
Owensboro, the county's seat and its largest community, is on
the Ohio, 75 air miles southwest of downtown Louisville.

Two thirds of the county is drained by the main stream and
two head forks of Panther Creek, the Green River's first major
tributary. Once a meandering stream some eighty miles long, the
Panthers were "straightened out" in the 1920s as a flood control
measure, reducing their length by two-thirds.[1] Many Daviess
County post offices are herein located in terms of this creek, its
two forks, and their many branches. Other major Ohio River
tributaries — the Yellow, Pup, and Blackford Creeks — also serve
as reference points for the location of post offices and settle-
ments. Blackford Creek forms the county's northeast border
separating it from Hancock County. Kentucky's 58th county in
order of formation, Daviess was created by legislative act on Jan.
14, 1815 from the northern part of Ohio County. It was named for

Col. Joseph Hamilton Daveiss [sic] (1774-1811), a native of Bedford County, Va., who early moved to the Kentucky bluegrass and later distinguished himself as U.S. Attorney for Kentucky when he prosecuted Aaron Burr for treason. By the time of his death at the Battle of Tippecanoe, he had acquired extensive landholdings on Panther Creek and along the Ohio River, above Owensboro. His name was misspelled in the act creating the county and was never corrected. Either spelling notwithstanding, the name always has been locally pronounced as though it were spelled *Davis.* Daviess Counties in Indiana and Missouri and Jo Daviess County, Illinois were also named for him.

In 1829 Daviess, along with Ohio and Breckinridge Counties, gave up some of their territories to form Hancock County; and in 1854 McLean County, which borders Daviess on the southwest, was created from Daviess, Ohio, and Muhlenberg Counties.

This article will deal only with the 71 post offices located within the present limits of Daviess County which has been divided, conveniently and arbitrarily, into 11 geographic areas, conforming to the county's nineteenth century precincts.

I. *Owensboro.* Daviess County's seat is a second class city with an estimated 53,500 residents. Its site was known to Ohio River travelers by the mid-1770s as *Yellow Banks,* referring to the yellowish appearance of the three to four mile long Kentucky bank, but more precisely to the place where William Smeathers (Bill Smothers or Smithers), a hunter and Indian fighter, had made the first settlement in the area. On July 1, 1806 a post office was established by James Meed to serve a developing community and it was called *Yellow Banks.* In 1816 an eighty-acre town was surveyed and platted by Col. James W. Johnston as the new county's seat. In its petition to the Kentucky legislature for the town's official establishment, the Daviess County court proposed the name *Rossboro* (or *Rossborough)* for David Ross, a wealthy Virginia landowner-merchant, who had some holdings in the area. But the Legislature, in its Feb. 3, 1817 act of establishment, gave it instead the name *Owensborough* which the post office had assumed in March 1816. This honored Col. Abraham Owen (1769-1811), a legislator from Shelby County who, like Daviess, had fallen at Tippecanoe. His name was also to be given to Ken-

tucky's Owen County (1819) and its seat, Owenton, and (also in 1819) to Owen County, Indiana. The name of the Daviess County seat was later simplified to *Owensboro,* a spelling the post office officially adopted in 1893.

II. *The Post Offices of the Lowertown Precinct.* Nineteenth century Daviess County was divided into ten precincts. *Lower-town,* whose name evidently referred to its being just below (down river from) Owensboro, west of the present US 431 and north of Panther Creek, included six post offices: Bonharbor, Herrwood, Sorgho(town), Chalybeate Springs, Lyddane, and Rome.[2]

Just below Owensboro's present northwest city limits is the site of a projected manufacturing city and Ohio River port called *Bon Harbor.* The initiator of this enterprise was a Virginian, Robert Triplett, who had arrived in the county early to handle the David Ross estate. He was soon involved in the mining of coal in what became known as the *Bon Harbor Hills,* less than a mile south of the river. In 1826 he built the first railroad west of the Alleghanies to haul coal to a landing on the river where it could be shipped by steamboat to the New Orleans market. On a 2,000-acre tract, centering at the landing, he laid out, in 1842, a town he named for the natural harbor and built several textile mills and homes for their workers. A post office called *Bonharbor* was opened here on April 17, 1848 with Francis Dickson the first postmaster. After only two years the post office closed and by 1860 Triplett's plans for a great industrial metropolis had clearly failed. By then the mills had closed and the homes were abandoned.

In the 1890s coal mining was resumed in the Hills and a small miners' settlement, also called *Bon Harbor Hills,* was established between the hills and Owensboro. This and the nearby Rocky Springs Distillery were served from April 4, 1894 through December 1900 by the *Herrwood* Post Office, ¼ mile south of the river and 1½ miles west of the Owensboro post office, probably on J. M. Herr's farm and thus within the present city limits.

In 1868 the Drs. Stirman and Stewart opened a factory in a settlement called *Dogwalk* (centering at the junction of the present Ky. 56 and Old 54, eight miles west of Owensboro) to manufacture sugar from locally grown sorghum. The village that grew up around the factory was named *Sorghotown,* as was its post office,

established on July 15, 1869 with Martin Mattingly the first postmaster. Within ten years the name had been shortened to *Sorgho*. Factory and village failed to survive more modern means of extracting sugar from cane. The post office closed in Oct. 1918.

John H. Settles operated a post office called *Chalibiate* (or *Chalybeate) Springs* from Sept. 11, 1872 to Oct. 1873 on the north bank of Panther Creek, in the vicinity of the present Kentucky 279, some 8½ miles southwest of Owensboro. It is presumed to have been named for local springs containing iron salts, but it is not known if, as with other such named springs, they were ever developed as a health resort. Also on the north bank of Panther Creek, near the Chalybeate Post Office, was the shortlived *Lyddane* Post Office. William Goode, its only postmaster, from January 23, 1901 until June 1903, probably named it for the family of John A. Lyddane, a farmer and businessman, whose name is still borne by the two Lyddane Bridge Roads on either side of Panther Creek.

Almost nothing remains of the community of Rome on the present Ky. 81, six miles southwest of Owensboro. Its post office was established on Oct. 2, 1886 with W. S. Tharp as postmaster. It was named for the Italian capital, perhaps because of its longstanding Catholic population. The office closed in July 1938.

III. *The Post Offices of the Oakford Precinct.* Nine post offices — Oakford, Loopee-Stanley, Birk City, Grissoms Landing, Dunbarton, Elfrieda, Gaw, Newman, and Griffith — served the Oakford Precinct, the northwest section of the county, between the lower reaches of the Green River and the Ohio. The earliest of these was *Oakford* itself. Established on Oct. 22, 1858 with George N. Holmes, postmaster it was located some ten miles west of Owensboro, at or near the junction of the present Ky. 1554 and Hagan Lane. It closed in Aug. 1871. At or very close to this site, Robert Miles Hagan established a post office on March 31, 1886 which he named *Loopee* (for reasons unknown) though the community it served continued to be called *Oakford*. In May 1889 Hagan moved his office nearly one mile northeast to serve the community recently founded by Nat Stanley on the newly arrived Louisville, St. Louis and Texas (later L&N) Railway, and renamed it *Stanley*. This post office, just east of US 60, still serves a viable community, 9¼ miles wnw of Owensboro.

The *Birk City* Post Office was established on April 20, 1864 to serve a developing Green River port town, some 22 miles above the Ohio and nine miles west of Owensboro. It was named by and for its first postmaster, Jonas Adam Birk (1814-1877), a German immigrant miller, who settled there in 1857 and shortly thereafter laid out the town he first called *Birk's Mill.* His ambitious plans for the town failed to survive the century. The post office closed in Dec. 1903 and the site today is merely one of trailers and small cottages of weekend vacationers.

On the Ohio River, over a mile northeast of the present Stanley and 9½ miles northwest of Owensboro, was the village and post office of *Grissoms Landing.* Alfred Grissom (1807-1883) is said to have moved to this site (that may first have been called *Bunch's Bend)* from Owensboro in 1856 and built a steamboat landing. Thomas J. Monarch launched a successful distillery and established the *Grissoms Landing* Post Office on May 18, 1868. In Dec. 1895 the post office became simply *Grissom* though the community it served continued to be called *Grissoms Landing.* The post office closed in Nov. 1899 and nothing remains to mark the site.

A post office inexplicably called *Dunbarton* operated from April 14, 1886 to Oct. 1894 on the north bank of the Green River, less than ¼ mile from the Henderson County line and 13½ miles wnw of Owensboro. Ben D. Mitchell was its first postmaster. There were no known Daviess County families of Dunbarton or Dunbar for which it could have been named. Another Green River post office close to Dunbarton and in operation for only ten weeks from its establishment on May 3, 1886 was *Elfrieda.* John W. Cummins, its only postmaster, later also served as a Dunbarton postmaster. The origin of this name is not known.

In 1886, when postal authorities rejected John Gaw's proposed name *Plum Grove* for a post office, one mile south of the Ohio River and near (or on) the anticipated Louisville, St. Louis, and Texas Railway, he was instructed to find another. He chose his own. The *Gaw* post office operated from June 21, 1886 to Oct. 1891, some six miles northwest of Owensboro.

To serve Worthington, another station on the Louisville, St. Louis, and Texas Railway, a mile from the Henderson County line, the *Newman* Post Office was established on May 28, 1890 in the

store of its first postmaster, Edward W. Murphy, Jr. It was probably named for Nathaniel Newman, an area magistrate and business-man. Since the post office closed in 1972, the *Newman* name has been applied to a rural hamlet on US 60, twelve miles wnw of Owensboro.

The last post office established on the Louisville, St. Louis, and Texas Railway and the nearest to Owensboro was *Griffith.* It was 1.7 miles east of Stanley and 7½ miles wnw of the Owensboro post office. It was probably named for site owner Daniel M. Griffith and operated from March 29, 1893 to Aug. 1906.

IV. *The Post Offices of the Curdsville Precinct.* This precinct between Panther Creek and the McLean County line in the southwest corner of the county was named for its principal settlement. Eleven post offices were located here: Knob Lick, Effie, Curdsville, Delaware, West Louisville, Mt. Dallas, St. Joseph, Maple Mount, Browning, Jolly, and Ellendale.

The precinct's first post office, *Knob Lick,* operated from May 14, 1850 to Nov. 1851 at some as yet undetermined site on or near Knob Lick Creek, a Panther tributary. Jonathan Downs and William Musgrave were its only postmasters. Knob Lick Creek joins Panther Creek, nearly three miles above Green River.

Knob Lick, however, was rejected as the name for another post office which served this area from Nov. 15, 1892 to July 1893. Named *Effie* instead, this office was maintained by James Galloway in his store some 300 yards west of one of the head forks of the creek, close to the county line. *Effie's* derivation is unknown.

Some fourteen miles wsw of Owensboro, where Panther Creek joins Green River, are the remains of the once busy nineteenth century shipping port and manufacturing town of *Curdsville.* The town was laid out in 1848 on the site of a farm settled in the 1820s by a Mr. Travis. The post office was established on Feb. 19, 1855 by Aquilla Spray, the local storekeeper and leading citizen, who named it and the town for H. T. Curd of Louisville. Some say that Curd was a popular Green River steamboat captain who annually brought his boat up river to trade salt and whiskey with the Panther Creek farmers. Spray is also said to have been promised

a barrel of rectified whiskey if he named the post office for the steamboatman. How long the town itself bore the *Curdsville* name and whether, in its earliest days, it had another is not known. The post office and several churches, but little else, survive.

Even less remains of *Delaware,* another prosperous nineteenth century Green River port and factory town, in the southwest corner of the county, 18½ miles wsw of Owensboro. Landowner-storekeeper Andrew M. Allen established the post office on Dec. 1, 1860 and laid out the town three years later, naming both for Delaware Creek which joins the river just below the town. The office operated intermittently at several neighboring sites until it closed for good in June 1966. It is not known why the creek was so named.

The village of *West Louisville* with another of the precinct's extant post offices is centered at the junction of Ky. 56 and 815, two miles south of Panther Creek and 13½ miles southwest of Owensboro. James A. Stivers, who arrived at this site in 1854, built a log cabin and opened a store, is said to have named it for its being west of Louisville, his hometown. The post office was established on May 24, 1867 with Henry Rennart the first postmaster. Incorporated in 1880, the community became a fairly thriving trade center for area coal mines but soon declined when it was bypassed by the railroads.

Two post offices, *St. Joseph* and *Maple Mount,* still serve a religious community and neighboring farmsteads in the area just south of the forks of Knob Lick Creek and two miles west of West Louisville. The predecessor of these offices was the shortlived (Aug. 1857 to Oct. 1859) *Mt. Dallas* Post Office at the site of (or probably just south of) the later post offices. The origin of this name is not known; no Dallas families have lived in the county, and no known elevation bears this name.

The hamlet and post office of *St. Joseph* at the junction of Ky. 56 and 500, 15½ miles wsw of Owensboro, was named for the St. Joseph Academy founded there in 1861 by Fr. Ivo Schacht of the local St. Alphonsus Church. In 1874, after the building was destroyed by a fire, Ursuline sisters from Louisville re-established the school as the *Mt. St. Joseph Academy.* A *St. Joseph* Post Office opened there on May 4, 1886 with Emma J. Pike the first

postmaster. In 1912 *Mt. St. Joseph* became an autonomous community of Ursuline sisters.

In Dec. 1934 a separate post office some 300 yards away was opened on the Academy grounds and named *Maple Mount* for the maple grove planted there in 1875 by Fr. Paul Joseph Volk. The *Maple Mount* Post Office still serves a 725 acre farm, the Ursuline Motherhouse, and the Academy whose buildings were recently included on the National Registry of Historic Places. This community has locally been referred to as "The Mount."

A post office some three miles sse of "The Mount" (and 16½ miles southwest of Owensboro) was established on May 29, 1888, but postmaster Eugene E. Drury's proposed name *Enterprise* (already in use in Carter County) was replaced by *Browning* whose origin is unknown. This office closed in July 1895.

The post office of *Jolly* had at least two sites. It was established on Aug. 8, 1890 by Cornelius S. Smith on the road between Calhoun and West Louisville (the present Ky. 815), over two miles southeast of the latter. It closed in 1893. It was re-opened somewhere in the vicinity in July 1900, but postmaster Mary C. Murphy's proposed name *Murphy Store was* rejected and again it was called *Jolly*. In Oct. 1903 John C. Craven moved the office two miles west to a site by or close to the present New Macedonia Baptist Church (17 miles southwest of Owensboro) where it closed for good in April 1908. It was probably named for George W. Jolly (1843-1932), a prominent Owensboro attorney.

One mile south of Curdsville (near the junction of the present Ky. 456 and 500) was *Ellendale,* a post office which lasted for only four months. It was established on July 21, 1898 by Joseph D. Rapier on his family's farm and probably named for the local Ellendale Fair, an 1890s livestock and agricultural show. The source of the Ellendale name remains a mystery.

V. *The Post Offices of the Vanover Precinct. Vanover,* bounded on the west by the Curdville Precinct, on the north by Panther Creek, and on the east by Rhodes Creek, was named for several related families who settled there in the 1840s. Nine post offices served this precinct: Narrowsville, Narrows, Narrows Bridge, Moseleyville, Sand Spring, Panther, Corena, Tuck, and Wayne.

Three post offices may have served what has been called "The Narrows of Panther Creek," some ten miles wsw of Owensboro.[3] This was where the main road north from Calhoun (the McLean County seat) forked, the left hand fork going to the Green River settlements and the right hand fork going to the Ohio River. The precise location of only the third of these offices is known. The first, called *Narrowsville,* was established by Wesley M. Little and operated from July 16, 1842 to April 1845, and suggests there might have been a community there by that name. The second was *Narrows,* established on Nov. 28, 1850 with only one postmaster, William Oglesby, and closed in Dec. 1862. The third, *Narrows Bridge is* known to have been ¼ mile south of the bridge over which old Ky. 81 crossed the creek. This office was established by Joseph H. Hayden on Jan. 16, 1867 and closed in Dec. 1870.

Less than ¼ mile east of the Narrows Bridge Post Office site was the post office of *Moseleyville.* It was established on July 16, 1886 by Presley T. Moseley and named for the large number of local Moseley descendants of Virginia-born pioneer Robert Moseley. A hamlet by this name, strung out for half a mile along new Ky. 81, survives the closing of the post office in Dec. 1909.

A post office called *Sand Spring* operated from March 25, 1854 to Sept. 1860 at or near the site of the Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church (at the junction of the present Ky. 81 and 1514, 13½ miles from Owensboro). Amos Goodwin and William A. Oglesby were its only postmasters. It was named for the local school and the church that preceded Mt. Pleasant, which were located near a large sand spring.

Panther Creek gave its name to two Daviess County post offices. The first, called *Panther Creek,* was in operation at least by 1830 (with Samuel Johnson as postmaster) somewhere in Murray Precinct, perhaps near the head of Two Mile Creek, a Panther tributary. In early 1839, it was renamed *Howardsville* for one or more families descended from North Carolina-born pioneer Mark Howard. It closed in June 1843.

The second post office, called simply *Panther,* was established on May 12, 1881 in John P. Burns' store at the junction of the present Ky. 554 and 1514, twelve miles southwest of Owensboro.

Since the name *Burns Store* was unacceptable to postal authorities, postmaster Burns suggested the name of the creek which at that time was 2½ miles northeast.[4] This office closed in Oct. 1910.

Panther Creek itself, one of the earliest named features in Daviess County, is said to have been named at least by the 1780s after surveyors for George Mason of Virginia had spotted a large panther near its mouth.

In the southwest corner of the precinct, less than a mile from the McLean County line (13½ miles southwest of Owensboro) was a community originally known as *Blue Ruin* which had a post office called *Corena. Blue Ruin is* traditionally believed to have been applied by Joseph P. Waltrip around 1868 for the poor quality of whiskey sold by F. M. Austin, the local storekeeper. Sometime before 1880, J. M. Buker began another store but when a lack of funds prevented him from stocking it, Waltrip suggested it be called *Needmore.* On May 21, 1890 William A. Erwin established the post office of *Corena* which served the vicinity until Feb. 1903. The derivation of this name is not known.

From June 22, 1898 through Nov. 1902, Mary J. Nave operated the *Tuck* Post Office in her husband Robert's store at the junction of the present Ky. 554 and the Todd Bridge Rd. (7½ miles ssw of Owensboro). The enigmatic *Tuck* was proposed after the preferred name *Nave* was rejected by postal authorities.

The post office of *Wayne,* named for one or more area families, served the community of *Handyville* on the present Ky. 1207, twelve miles ssw of Owensboro. It was established on April 18, 1900 by Madison Moseley, and closed in Jan. 1902.

VI. *The Post Offices of the Murray Precinct.* This precinct, which included some of the earliest settlements in the county, was bounded on the west by Rhodes Creek, on the north and east by South Panther Creek, and on the south by the McLean and Ohio County lines. It is said to have been named for a longtime area storekeeper. These twelve post offices were included therein: Panther Creek (Howardsville), Masonville (Fillmore), Two Mile Creek, Hardscrabble, Pleasant Ridge, Utica, Livia, Browns Valley, Pettit, Sutherland, Andersonville, and Maxwell.

Panther Creek-Howardsville has already been discussed.

One of the county's two *Masonville* Post Offices (the second will be considered later) was located on the Hartford Rd., perhaps at or near the future *Pleasant Ridge or Hewletts Store.* It was established on July 16, 1842 with Samuel Haynes, postmaster. In Dec. 1850 it was moved and/or renamed *Fillmore* (with William M. Rogers, postmaster). *Fillmore* probably referred to Millard Fillmore who had recently become U.S. president. *Masonville* may have been named for either George Mason (1725-1792), the author of Virginia's Declaration of Rights who owned some 60,000 acres along Daviess County's Green River and Panther Creek or his grandson, George R. Mason, who lived at the site of the later Green River steel mill, at the upper end of Owensboro.

A post office called *Two Mile Creek,* operating from Oct. 12, 1852 to Feb. 1857, was named for the creek on or near which it was probably located. Its precise location is not known. The creek's name is assumed to have been derived from its being two miles from something. Daniel McCormick was the first of its two postmasters.

Another shortlived antebellum post office which has not been located but is believed to have been in this precinct was *Hard Scrabble.* Grayson F. Lashbrook, its only postmaster, established it on Oct. 12, 1852. It closed shortly thereafter.

The *Pleasant Ridge* Post Office was established on Aug. 3, 1859 by Elijah Hatfield in his store on the old Hartford Rd. (now Ky. 764), very close to the Ohio County line (and 14½ miles sse of Owensboro). It was named for the attractive view from the ridge on which it was situated. Though the post office closed in Aug. 1913, its name continues to be borne by a community that, over the past 30-40 years, has shifted to US 231, half a mile west.

Utica, the precinct's only extant post office, is now the center of a crossroads community at the junction of US 431 and Ky. 140, 13½ miles south of Owensboro. But for most of its existence it served the area around *Lewis Station* on the Owensboro and Nashville (later L&N) Railroad, half a mile west. In 1869 Robert M. Lewis, a farmer and horsebreeder, deeded an acre for the railroad's local depot which was named for him. The post office

was established on April 26, 1871 with Uriah McKay as its first postmaster. No one knows why the name *Utica* was given to the post office. There is no evidence linking it to the city in New York nor supporting a local tradition that it derived from Ute, McKay's alleged nickname.

Some 2½ miles south of Utica, also on US 431, is what remains of a community called *Livia.* This too had its origins with the railroad when it was founded, just over the McLean County line, in the early 1870s. Its post office was established on Feb. 28, 1872 with Benjamin F. Swindler, postmaster, to serve what was then called *Riley Station* for the family of Louis L. Riley, a local tobacco dealer. In Dec. 1897 Samuel T. Pate moved the Livia post office north to a point 65 feet within Daviess County. In early 1948 the post office again moved a third of a mile west to the highway where it closed in 1966. The origin of *Livia is* still unknown.

Another Owensboro and Nashville station, 2½ miles north of Utica-Lewis Station (where US 431 crosses the tracks) was variously called *Hickman, Crow,* and *Crow-Hickman Station,* honoring Joshua G. Crow and Dr. W. A. Hickman who were instrumental in getting the railroad through their properties. On June 9, 1887 carpenter and storekeeper Orville O. Brown established the local post office which he named *Browns Valley.* This closed in Oct. 1933.

Still another O&N station with post office was *Pettit.* This office was established on May 29, 1889 with James Lewis postmaster on the south bank of Panther Creek, four miles north of Browns Valley. In 1891 Robert F. Nave succeeded in having it moved one mile west to his store but not in getting the name changed to *Naves Store.* It closed in Dec. 1902 but reopened the following month at the O&N's *Pettit Station,* retaining the *Pettit* name. It closed for good in Oct. 1906. Some years later the community was moved about two-thirds of a mile west to the Livermore Rd. (now US 431), six miles south of Owensboro. The community and post office were probably named for Thomas Pettit, an Owensboro businessman who lost a close election for U.S. Congress in 1882.

Two miles north of Browns Valley, at the junction of Ky. 298 and the L&N Railroad, was the hamlet, station, and post office of *Sutherland.* The post office was established on Oct. 28, 1891 with

Alva C. Leach the first postmaster, and named for the site owner, Archibald C. Sutherland (1835-1895). It closed in April 1913.

The post office of *Andersonville,* which was established by Americus F. Davis on June 30, 1892 (and closed in March 1906), was on Ky. 140, at the site of the crossroads hamlet now locally called *Red Hill,* thirteen miles sse of Owensboro. It is not known for which of the county's several prominent Andersons it was named. Samuel Anderson was a pioneer preacher; James B. Anderson (1808-1867) was the director of Owensboro's first bank (established 1850); and the brothers T. S. and W. K. Anderson, also bankers, served many county farmers.

At the junction of Daviess, Ohio, and McLean Counties, seventeen miles south of Owensboro, was a late nineteenth century trade center known as (John) *Kigel's Store.* In 1867 two landowners, James and Gordon Robison (or Robinson) laid out a town which they called *Newville.* It was not until May 9, 1893, however, that the local post office was established (by William V. Crow) as *Maxwell* which lasted through Dec. 1907. Perhaps, as some say, *Newville* was a "new community." But records in the three counties that claim this community fail to reveal families of New or Maxwell for which it could have been named. *Maxwell* still identifies the place.

VII. *The Post Offices of the Masonville Precinct.* The Masonville Precinct, located between the forks of Panther Creek and west of the Boston Precinct, was named for the first of its two post offices.

The county's second *Masonville* Post Office was established on Aug. 21, 1856 on or near the present US 231 with Henry F. Carpenter the first postmaster. After an intermittent existence, it closed for good in Sept. 1907. The community it served, which still bears this name, extends for nearly two miles on both sides of 231, from a point south of the Lashbrook Rd. (8¼ miles sse of Owensboro). As with the earlier Masonville, its name source was either George Mason or his grandson George R. Mason.

The precinct's other post office was *Habit* which, from July 30, 1884 through Sept. 1906, served a small settlement till then known as *Bethabara* [bɛθǽbərə] . It was centered at the junction of Ky. 142 and the Millers Mill Rd. (which forms the precinct's

eastern boundary), 10½ miles southeast of Owensboro. *Bethabara* (which literally means a town at the site of a ford and marks the place where John was baptized) was the name of the local church organized in 1825. When it was rejected for the post office, postmaster James C. Miller submitted the name of his neighbor, the local blacksmith Frederick Habbitt (1849-1908), an English-man, who had arrived in Daviess County in 1870. The name's spelling is believed to have been inadvertently simplified by the postal authorities.

VIII. *The Post Offices of the Upper Town Precinct.* This precinct, whose name refers to its being above Owensboro, included the territory north of North Panther Creek and between the present US 431 and the northeast precincts of Yelvington and Knottsville. The county's first settlements were here. Its seven post offices were: Pleasant Point, Philpott, Pee Wee Park, Cruseton-Dermot, Ensor, Thruston, and Seven Hills.

The precinct's first post office, *Pleasant Point,* was estab-lished on Jan. 7, 1854 by local storekeeper Tapley Maddox at some as yet undetermined site at the eastern edge of the precinct, a few miles northeast of Philpot. It closed in Nov. 1867.

The suburban community (with active post office) of *Philpot is* now centered at the junction of Ky. 54 and 142, half a mile north of North Panther Creek and 7¾ miles ese of Owensboro. The post office was established as *Philpott* on June 3, 1872 at a site 1½ miles east in neighboring Knottsville Precinct, and named for and by its first postmaster, Augustus J. Philpott. It closed a year later and reopened in 1875 as *Philpots Station* at the junction of the Leitchfield Rd. and what became the Illinois Central Railroad. Shortly thereafter it was in the Upper Town Precinct. In 1882 the post office name was shortened to *Philpot,* and after several more short distance moves, it arrived at its present location in 1944.

On the east bank of Yellow Creek, three miles up from the Ohio River (around 4½ miles east of Owensboro) was the post office of *Pee Wee Park.* It was established on Dec. 2, 1878 by Samuel L. Brashear to serve a blacksmith shop and grist mill, but closed after only thirteen months. The office and its name remain all but unheard of in the county, much less explained.

The post office of *Cruseton* was established on Jan. 12, 1886 with Frank D. Stone the first postmaster, at the junction of the present Ky. 54 and Millers Mill Rd. (4½ miles southeast of Owensboro). It was named for the family of local landowner Zachariah Cruse (1822-1908). It closed in Sept. 1895 but re-opened the following April as *Dermot* with Will S. Hays postmaster. Though the office closed for good in July 1902, a community of sorts survives but with its name inexplicably spelled *Dermont.* No such family name in either spelling appears in any county censuses.

On Feb. 19,1886 Edwin H. Jesse established the post office of *Ensor* in his store at the junction of the present Ky. 142 and 144, eight miles east of Owensboro. He is said to have named it for a Dr. Ensor of Virginia. Though nobody by that name was found in nineteenth century censuses, at least one such family has been listed in contemporary Owensboro telephone directories. The office was discontinued in 1904.

Another thriving late nineteenth century trade center and now but a hamlet at the junction of Ky. 144 and 405, five miles ene of Owensboro, is *Thruston.* Its post office, established on May 3, 1886 with Simon M. Lockhart postmaster, was named for Col. Algernon S. Thruston (1801-1864), a pioneer resident who fought with Sam Houston in the Texas war for independence and was later a member of his cabinet. The office closed in Sept. 1906.

Seven small hills just southeast of the then Owensboro city limits gave the name to a town established there in 1900 by James H. Parrish. This town was to be a manufacturing-residential rival to its larger neighbor. As *Seven Hills* it maintained its own post office in John T. Hubbard's store from July 29, 1901 through March 1905, with Hubbard its only postmaster. Financial setbacks killed Parrish's dream and his community was later incorporated into Owensboro where it "maintains its identity as an urban neighborhood."[5]

IX. *The Post Offices of the Yelvington Precinct.* Three post offices — Yelvington, Craig, and Maceo — served the county's northeastern-most precinct, extending along the Ohio River from just below the mouth of Pup Creek to Blackford Creek (which forms the Hancock County line).

Both the precinct and its first post office-community were named for Yelvington Overly (1800-1852), whose home and blacksmith shop early stood on the site of the future village, some ten miles northeast of Owensboro. This was at the junction of two of the earliest roads in western Kentucky, now Ky. 405 and 662. The post office, established on June 25, 1832 by Thomas H. Pointer, a local storekeeper, closed in Nov. 1913.

Somewhere in the vicinity of Spice Knob, a 600 ft. elevation just north of the junction of Ky. 1389 and Graves Lane (two air miles south of Yelvington) was the shortlived *Craig* Post Office. Parham G. Jones' proposed *Spice Knob* being unacceptable, the name *Pup* was adopted instead when the post office was established on June 30, 1881. *Pup* undoubtedly referred to the nearby Ohio River tributary of Pup Creek. After two weeks, Jones renamed his office *Craig* either for Robert Craig (1830-1912), a prominent Uppertown farmer, or the Rev. William Craig who had organized the county's first church near there in 1808. The office closed in May 1883. The *Spice Knob* name is now also applied to a hamlet at the junction just south of the knob, and this may have been the site of the post office. *Pup Creek* was originally called *Beaver Creek;* it is said to have been renamed at least by 1806 after hunters had drowned some puppy dogs there.

A community some 9½ miles northeast of Owensboro was settled just after the Civil War by freed slaves on a site donated by their former masters. Here the Louisville, Henderson & St. Louis (L&N) Railroad laid out a town and established a post office on June 10, 1891 which they called *Powers Station* for J. D. Powers of Owensboro, a company official. To avoid confusion with *Powers Store,* a Casey County post office, postmaster Edwin P. Taylor suggested the office be renamed *Maceo* for Alonzo Maceo, a Cuban mulatto then in the news for having been killed in an unsuccessful revolt against Spain. Since Feb. 3, 1897, the *Maceo* Post Office has served northeast Daviess County near the junction of US 60 and Ky. 405.

X. *The Post Offices of the Knottsville Precinct.* This precinct southeast of Yelvington, east of Upper Town, and north of Boston was named for its principal community and first post office. Other offices were Gatewood, Whalen, St. Lawrence, and Scythia.

On Feb. 13, 1827 Thomas Gore established in his home a post office which he called *Gorham.* In Dec. 1833 James Millay moved the post office 1½ miles west to his store in the vicinity of the junction of the Hardinsburg Rd. (Ky. 144) and the present Ky. 1513, thirteen miles east of Owensboro and renamed it *Knottsville* for Leonard Knott, a blacksmith who had built the first house there several years earlier. This post office, inexplicably recorded as *Nottsville* in contemporary records, closed after several months. The town of *Knottsville* was laid out by Millay and William Griffith in 1836 and the following June the post office was re-established in that name by William Higdon. It closed in Dec. 1915.

The precinct's next post office was not established until April 4, 1882. On that date Philip D. Wilson opened the *Gatewood* Post Office in his store in the *Asberry (Asbury) Chapel Community,* 5½ miles northeast of Knottsville and half a mile from the Hancock County line. It was probably named for the family of Griffin Gatewood, an area saddler. It closed in July 1906.

On Sept. 4, 1884, in apparent anticipation of the completion, three years later, of the Owensboro, Falls of Rough and Green River (later Illinois Central) Railroad, Joseph R. Whalen established a post office midway between Philpot and Whitesville. He called it *Whalen* and until April 1949 it served *Shorts Station,* 11½ miles southeast of Owensboro.

To serve the St. Lawrence Church, School, and Convent at the head of Pup Creek and three miles east of Knottsville, the post office of *St. Lawrence* was established on April 22, 1890 with Edward W. Long as postmaster. Its name source, the oldest Catholic church in the county, was organized in 1822 and still occupies a brick building completed in 1840. The office, though, closed in March 1904.

A post office called *Scythia* was established on Aug. 25, 1892 by Winkler in his store, half a mile south of Blackford Creek, fourteen miles ene of Owensboro, and operated to Sept. 1906. Its name source is unknown.

XI. *The Post Offices of the Boston Precinct.* Bounded by North Panther Creek, the Millers Mill Rd. (Ky. 762), and the Ohio County line, Daviess' southeastern-most precinct was named for an early

community that failed to survive in competition with neighboring Whitesville. Post offices were Whitesville, Laffoon, and Auds.

A village on the Leitchfield Rd. (now Ky. 54) was laid out in 1839. By legislative enactment the following February, it was given the name *Burtonsville* for either Basset Burton, who may have settled in the vicinity as early as 1810, or Creed Burton, in whose home the town's first trustees convened. In Jan. 1851 the post office of *Pleasant Green* that had been established on Oct. 1848 (with James W. Barrett, postmaster) just over the Ohio County line, several miles south, and had shortly thereafter moved here, was renamed *Burtonsville.*

Meanwhile, William Lee White and Benjamin F. Ramsey had opened a dry goods store at the junction of the present Ky. 54 and 764, two miles east, to serve a settlement then called *Cross Roads.* The Burtonsville post office moved to this site in Nov. 1852 and was renamed *Whitesville.* During the Civil War the office was again at Burtonsville but, by Dec. 1865, it had returned to Whitesville where it has been ever since. After its incorporation in 1867, Whitesville grew in importance, eclipsing its neighbor, until it is now a sixth class city (fifteen miles southeast of Owensboro) with an estimated 840 residents.

For much of the nineteenth century and even yet the *Burtonsville* community (though never its post office) was also, but inexplicably, called *Boston.* It was identified in the 1876 county atlas as *New Boston* and on topographic and state highway-county maps until the present as *Boston.*

The post office of *Laffoon* was established on Feb. 18, 1886 by Henry Peyton Taylor to serve a settlement called *Taylors Store.* This was on the Millers Mill Rd. (Ky. 762), one mile from South Panther Creek (the Ohio County line) and sixteen miles southeast of Owensboro. It was named for then Kentucky Congressman Polk Laffoon (1844-1906). It closed in Sept. 1906.

A shortlived post office (July 1, 1898 through Nov. 1899) served the settlement and Illinois Central Railroad station of *Haynes (Haynes Station),* midway between Whitesville and Whalen. As this name was already in use, the office was called *Auds* for its only postmaster, Atha Aud.

Two, possibly three, additional Daviess County post offices have not been located. *McLean's Retreat,* with John G. Calhoun, its first postmaster, operated from Nov. 17, 1853 through July 1863. Its name derivation is provocative, perhaps suggesting an association with neighboring McLean County which was created shortly after this post office was established.

Lanham's Post Office, operated from September to December 1867 by a Stanislaus(?) Beavin, was undoubtedly named for one or more of the descendants of John W. Lanham who, by then, were living in several sections of the county.

The Post Office Registers for Daviess County list an office called *Brownsdale,* with Elijah G. Brown, postmaster, which was established on March 25, 1891. Nothing else, not even a closing date, is given for it. County historians never heard of such an office and think its mention is in error.

Of Daviess County's seventy-one post offices, seven (Owens-boro, Whitesville, West Louisville, Curdsville, Yelvington, Knotts-ville, and Stanley) identify incorporated communities; only the first two remain incorporated. Thirteen served unincorporated villages, only a half dozen survive as viable concentrated settlements. The rest served rural communities, most with local stores. Ten offices (Owensboro, Whitesville, Curdsville, Philpot, Utica, Maceo, Stanley, St. Joseph, and Maple Mount) remain active. Not surprisingly, twenty-two of the discontinued post offices, some having been in operation over several decades, closed in the first decade of the twentieth century. This followed the advent of RFD and the considerable amount of road building throughout the county which provided easier access to larger towns.

Thirty-one post offices were named for local or area persons or families; five were named for non-local persons; ten referred to geographic features and conditions or physical processes in the area. To seven were transferred the names of nearby features. Two were named for distant places. One denoted a local econom-ic activity. The derivations of fifteen post office names are not known. Seven offices have not been located.

Prestonsburg, Kentucky

Notes

1. Distances given for post office locations are road miles from the main post office in downtown Owensboro.

2. *Louisville Post,* Nov. 29, 1924.

3. *History of Daviess County, Kentucky* 781. This was "Old Panther Creek" before the stream was straightened out in the 1920s. Thus it was three stream miles south of Panther's present course.

4. With the straightening of the creek, the *Panther* Post Office site is now four miles from the creek.

5. Rennick, "'Number'."

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