THE POST OFFICES OF GALLATIN COUNTY

Gallatin, with its ninety nine square miles, is the state's smallest county. It is drained by the Ohio River, its twenty one mile long northern boundary, and Eagle Creek, a branch of the Kentucky River, which separates it from Owen County to the south. Other historically significant streams are the South Fork of Big Bone Creek, forming part of Gallatin's northeast border with Boone County; Steele, Big and Little Sugar, Dry, Craigs, and Stephens Creeks (of the Ohio); and Indian Camp Creek and the upper half of Lick Creek (of Eagle).

Gallatin was established by legislative act on December 14, 1798, the day after the formation of Boone and Pendleton Counties. It was taken from sections of Franklin and Shelby counties and named for Swiss-born Albert P. Gallatin (1761-1849), then a Congressman from Pennsylvania who had impressed the American public by his advocacy of government land for family settlement, and was later to be US Treasury Secretary (1802-1814) and our country's minister to England and France.

Since Port William, at the mouth of the Kentucky River, was then the only town in the new county it became its first seat. But its distance from newly emerging population centers led to the later organization of new counties. In 1819 part of Owen County was taken from Gallatin's territory south of Eagle Creek, and some of Gallatin's western land became part of Trimble County in 1837. Also in 1837 a small section of Boone County was added to Gallatin. In the following year the western half of what then remained of Gallatin became Carroll County and its seat was moved to Warsaw, leaving Port Williams, by then known as Carrollton, as Carroll's seat. Gallatin

assumed its present boundaries in 1874 when a small area around Sanders in the southwest corner of the county was added to Carroll.[1]

Gallatin is still nearly altogether an agricultural county with over eighty per cent of its land area used for this purpose. Through Warsaw on the river and later from the railroad stations at Sparta and Glencoe it became a major outlet for regional farmers. The few non-farm activities in recent years have been limited to sand, gravel, and limestone mining, furniture manufacturing, and auto parts assembling. As with the other small Ohio River countries over half of Gallatin's workforce commute to out-of-county jobs. The 1990 Census counted 5,400 residents.

Several of Gallatin's earliest post offices were in what became Carroll County and will be considered in that chapter. Most of the fourteen post offices described below will be located by road miles from the junction of US 42 and Ky 35 in downtown Warsaw.

Warsaw is a fifth class city of some 1,200 residents, thirty seven road miles (via US 42) southwest of downtown Covington and sixty three road miles (via I-71) northeast of downtown Louisville. It was settled around 1800 on part of the John Hawkins Craig grant that had been acquired by Col. Robert Johnson of Scott County. By the time it was laid out as a town in 1815 by Johnson and Henry Yates it had achieved some repute as the Ohio River port of Great Landing or Johnson's Landing. Its post office was established by Yates on June 10, 1816 and named Fredericksburg for either (or both) Johnson's Virginia home town or Adolphus Frederick, a local boat builder who had arrived in the area by 1809.

The town was incorporated as Fredericksburg on December 7, 1831 but only five days later a legislative act had its name changed to Warsaw to avoid confusion with Frederickstown in Washington County. On July 18 of the following year the post office too became Warsaw. The new name is said to have been suggested by either (or both) Benjamin Franklin Beall or a retired riverboat captain, John Blair Summons, for a favorite book, Thaddeus of Warsaw, Jane Porter's well acclaimed fictional account of Tadeusz Kosciouzko, which had been published in 1803.[2] By a legislative act of December 18, 1837 Warsaw replaced Port William as Gallatin's county seat. Until the construction of the railroad along Eagle Creek and the opening of stations at Glencoe and Sparta after the Civil War, Warsaw was a leading trade center between Cincinnati and Louisville. With the railroad and later highway development came the town's decline from which it never really recovered. Some revitalization of Warsaw's economy has begun only in the last few years.

A store and some homes on Ky 16, just south of I-71, and the nearby Tenmile (Baptist) Church are all that remain of the nineteenth century town of Napoleon. Settled shortly after the start of the nineteenth century[3], it was laid out around 1821 by Joseph Spencer Lillard, a local merchant. Though some wanted to call the new town Madisonville for former President James Madison, others wished to show their gratitude for France's aid in the American Revolution by naming it for that country's recent leader.

The post office that would serve this community till mid April 1912 began as Conners in 1824 but likely at some point closer to the Ohio River. This office is located on the 1838 Burr map at the

mouth of Sugar Creek, on the road due east of Warsaw that later became US 42, and four road miles north of Castleman's. Its first postmaster and probable name source was Samuel Conner (1777-1863). It is not known when it was moved to the Napoleon site (7½ miles ese of Warsaw), but it took the Napoleon name on January 30, 1841, 2½ weeks before the town was incorporated. Its late nineteenth century economic decline was also occasioned by the railroad some three miles south.

Castleman's post office, mentioned above, is shown on the Burr map as just north of Eagle Creek and a short distance (probably less than a quarter of a mile) from the Grant County line. It was likely on the old Boone Road (now Ky 467) that parallels the railroad tracks. It was named for and by its only postmaster, John Castleman, and operated from February 11, 1831 through August 1838.

Beech Park was another little remembered antebellum post office. Established in 1825 by Edward A. Turpin, it is said to have been in the vicinity of the old Turpin family cemetery, about where the present Ky 35 and 465 cross, 1½ miles north of Sparta and seven miles south of Warsaw. The office served that area through November 1844. It may have been named for the local trees.

On June 8, 1831 William Hughes established a post office in the Boone County area that, in early 1837, was added to Gallatin County. It was called South Fork Big Bone for its site on that stream. From the Burr map its location can only be aproximated, as seven road miles west of Verona and six road miles northeast of Conners. Thus it was somewhere between what became US 42 and the later Ryle post office. It closed in mid March 1842.

Glencoe, one of Gallatin's two sixth class cities, has some 250 residents. It centers at the junction of US 127 and Ky 467, just north of Eagle Creek, and 8¼ miles southeast of Warsaw. The town was established in the early 1860s in anticipation of the completion of the Louisville Cincinnati and Lexington Railroad (in 1869). It was named for the Glencoe post office which had been serving, albeit intermittently, a couple of stores and a grist mill since Philip O. Turpin established it on March 16, 1848. The still active office was named for the Glencoe Valley in Scotland, the scene of the infamous MacDonald massacre in February 1692.

The many sugar maples on the banks of Sugar Creek, some five miles above Warsaw, and molasses making, one of Gallatin's earliest industries, gave name to the creek, and thus to the community and post office just above its mouth. The office was established on August 10, 1858 with storekeeper Jonathan Howe as its first postmaster. In 1894 it became simply Sugar, and lasted till December 1906.

Another aptly named stream gave its name to the Walnut Lick post office established by Ambrose D. Whitson on December 30, 1866 at the mouth of this branch of the South Fork of Big Bone. In early 1885 Simeon Clement Ryle had the name changed to Ryle, though the community, centering on a store or two, continued as Walnut Lick. In 1928 the post office was moved a third of a mile east to where it is shown on current maps, twelve miles east of Warsaw, and here it continued to operate till mid January 1931.

Gallatin's other sixth class city, Sparta, is one of Kentucky's few current intercounty communities. Eight and a half miles south of Warsaw, it is centered at the junction of Ky 35 and Eagle Creek

which forms Gallatin's boundary with Owen County. The 1990 Census counted some 130 residents on both sides of the creek.

The earliest settlement (ca. 1800) of what became Sparta was on the Owen County side of the creek, at the mouth of Two Mile, by several families from Virginia's Holston Valley. While this area, in retrospect, is known as Old Sparta, it was first called Ross's Mill and then Brock's Station. By 1806 David Ross's grist mill had been joined by a tanyard, distillery, several cooperages, taverns, and other businesses. Granville Brock arrived around 1818 and opened a rest stop for commercial travelers on what was then (and still is) a main route betwen Georgetown and the Ohio River (at Warsaw). It is not known when the name Sparta was first applied to the community. It is believed to have been the name of an antebellum grist mill (perhaps Ross's) and is known to have been the name by which the community was incorporated on January 3, 1852. It was given to its first post office, established by Jedediah Jones on February 19, 1853.

With the location of the railroad through southern Gallatin County in 1869, Sparta's businesses began to shift to the area north of the creek. The railroad's depot was built on land owned by the descendants of a Robert Bond. Here or in a nearby store building a new post office (with Florian Cox, postmaster) was established on January 13, 1870 and was called Sparta Station. The original Sparta post office was closed the following May and the new office was renamed Sparta in November 1882. The community around the station developed rapidly and soon had a stockyard, lumber yard, fertilizer and coal yards, hotels, stores and shops, all the features of a

successful rail shipping point. The replacement of rail dominance by roads and truck transport led to the inevitable decline of Sparta's economic base.

On the east bank of Steele's Creek, across the Ohio from the upper end of Patriot, Indiana (9½ miles northeast of Warsaw), James T. Brasher (sic) established a post office on August 1, 1881. His preferred name Steels Creek (sic) was disallowed (Steel had been given to a Knox County post office four months earlier). So he gave his own name Brasher to his new Gallatin County office. Steel's Creek had been named for its pioneer settler, Virginia-born Joseph Steele. The office, which closed in mid October 1887, was re-established at the same site on September 17, 1895 with Edward E. Gregory, postmaster, but this time as Brashear, probably the correct spelling of the name of another prominent Gallatin County family, the descendants of Belt Brashear (1791-1864). This office closed in mid 1931 and the community, by then still known as Steeles Creek, was all but washed away by the great 1937 flood.

When Thomas Ethridge established a post office on the Ohio River, midway between Craigs and Stephens Creek (and thus nearly two miles below Warsaw), he planned to call it Bladen for an area family. Instead it opened, officially on July 30, 1886, as Ethridge, the name of the local landing and country store. It operated through May 1911.

Two miles below Ethridge was the post office of Gex [djā] named for another local family, that of Corine and Louis Gex. Thomas Mylor, its only postmaster, operated it between May 5, 1898 and mid August 1906. Louis was the grandson of Anthony Gex (1794-1866), one of

several Swiss farmers who helped settle what was to become Switzerland County, Indiana with the hope of developing a profitable wine industry. After four years he moved across the river to Gallatin County.

A number of names were proposed for the post office that would serve Mulligan Station on the L&N, just yards from the Grant County line, and some two miles southeast of the present site of Ryle. Among the names were Mulligan, too close to that of a post office in Livingston County, Munk, and Webster. The latter, for the family of postmaster-designate Ina N. Webster, was also in use, in Breckinridge County. So the post office operated between May 9, 1900 and mid November 1939 as Munk. Ina's family were distinguished from other area Websters by their nickname Munk. Whence this nickname has not yet been learned.

The last post office to be established in Gallatin County was Drury on the west bank of Stephens Creek, midway between Gex and Carson. From June 20, 1900, when Thomas Grove began the office, through June 30, 1903, it served only a country store. The present Drury Chapel is about 1½ miles south. The name's origin is unknown; no such families are listed in county records.

Three of Gallatin's fourteen post offices are active, serving its three incorporated places. Only these and Napoleon, within the present county limits, could ever have been considered villages. Most of the other offices centered only on a store or two and a church or school.

Six offices were named for local or area people. One was named for a non local celebrity. Another was descriptive. A distant place gave its name to one office while three had names derived from those of nearby features (two streams and a mill). Warsaw was named for a literary work. The origin of one name remains unknown. One post office (South Fork of Big Bone) has not been precisely located.

Three offices had names not originally proposed for them. Two served communities with other names. Five had name-changes.

FOOTNOTES

1. The interesting story behind the cession of southwest Gallatin to Carroll County will be told in the Carroll County chapter.

2. The Christian County city of Pembroke is said to have been named for the Earl of Pembroke, a much admired character in Miss Porter's novel.

3. The Tenmile Baptist Church, the county's oldest, was organized in 1804.

REFERENCES

1. Bogardus, Carl R. Sr., The Early History of Gallatin County, Ky. 1948.

2. Ibid., "Fredericksburg to Warsaw: Some History and Genealogy" Bluegrass Roots, Summer 1987, Pp. 47-48.

3. "Early Days in Sparta" The Owen County Sesquicentennial Celebration Edition of the (Owenton) News-Herald, June 27 to July 7, 1969, n.p.

4. Gray, Gypsy M. History of Gallatin County, Kentucky, Covington, 1968

5. "Railroad Town—Sparta Settled in 1799" in Bicentennial Edition of the (Owenton) News-Herald, July 4, 1974, P. 11:1-3.

6. Rennick, Robert M. Kentucky Place Names, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984

7. United States Post Office Department: Site Location Reports —Gallatin County, Ky. Post Offices, National Archives (Washington,D.C.)

8. Wright, John G. Warsaw, Ky., letter to the writer, September 9, 1971

GALLATIN COUNTY POST OFFICES

[handwritten: 1825]

✓ 1. BEECH PARK- est. sometime before 1830.... Edward A. Turpin
was postmaster until it was disc. 3/13/1844; Re-est. 4/16/
1844, John O. Hamilton; Disc. 11/29/1844;

✓ 2. CASTLEMAN'S- 2/11/1831, John Castleman; Disc. 8/31/1838;

✓ 3. SOUTH FORK (of) BIG BONE- est. in Boone Co. 6/8/1831, Wm.
Hughes; to Gallatin Co. 1/8/1837, Wm. Hughes; 6/4/1838,
James Edwards; Disc. 3/15/1842;

[handwritten left margin: for moved of sanders (Carroll Co)]

✓ 4. EAGLE CREEK- 7/9/1832, George W. Sanders; Disc. 12/28/1835;

[handwritten: or where they find Port Wilson?]

5. WARSAW- 7/1/1810, Henry Winslow; 2/12/1812, John B. Bernard....

[handwritten: Fredericksburg (1816-1832)]
*[handwritten: 7-1/18/1832 Wm. H. Clifton, 7/2/33, John F. Pegas (....)→RPO
1824, Sam'l. Cpyner; 4/6/31, Sam'l. Landrum (....)
1/28/52, ...]*

6. CONNER'S- 7/26/1832, Myrix J. Williams; 6/22/1835, Wm. H.
Lillard.... 9/26/1840, Gabriel Reed; changed to <u>Napoleon</u>,
1/30/1841, Philip P. Hanna; 7/28/1841, W. Turley; Disc.
10/15/1842; Re-est. 7/8/1847, Absalom B. Chambers; 2/17/
1848, Myrix J. Williams.... 1/11/1910, Horatio Wood; Disc.
4/15/1912 (mail to ?); *[handwritten: F.]*

[handwritten left margin: (Carroll Co.)]

✓ 7. BIG LICK- 4/21/1836, Robert Sanders; Disc. 12/18/1837;
[handwritten: This was later Sanders]

✓ 8. GLENCOE- 3/16/1848, Philip O. Turpin; Disc. 7/31/1848;
Re-est. 8/28/1849, Philip O. Turpin; 1/29/1858, Wm. Ellis;
Disc. 9/10/1864; Re-est. 4/24/1867, Mrs. Louisiana
Castleman; 5/29/1871, Wm. T. Williams....

[handwritten: APO]

✓ 9. SUGAR CREEK- 8/10/1858, Jonathan Howe; 5/11/1885, Francis
M. Howe.... 3/7/1894, Wm. H. Beall; changed to <u>Sugar</u>,
8/14/1894, Harvey W. Beall; 1/27/1906, Horatio F. Wood;
Disc. 12/15/1909 (mail to Glencoe);

[handwritten: P+g. has it as 1891, not 1894]

10. WALNUT LICK- 12/30/1866, Ambrose D. Whitson; 4/15/1875, Mrs. H. Klepper.... 12/30/1884, Simeon C. Ryle; changed to Ryle, 8/24/1885, Simeon C. Ryle; 11/1/1886, John M. Bagby.... 7/6/1928, Nina B. Whitson; Disc. 12/29/1930, effective 1/15/1931 (mail to Zion Station);

11. DUDLEY- 10/21/1869, George W. Rosell; Disc. 8/23/1870;

(carroll Co)

12. SPARTA STATION- 1/13/1870, Florian Cox; 6/24/1878, John Samuel; 5/10/1881, Benjamin F. Turley; changed to Sparta, 11/29/1882, Benjamin F. Turley; 1/4/1883, John B. Grant....

A 80

13. BRASHER- 8/1/1881, James T. Brasher; Disc. 10/15/1887 (papers to Ryle);

14. ETHRIDGE (sic)- 7/30/1886, Thomas Ethridge (sic); 8/17/1886, Thomas B. Ethridge.... 11/22/1901, Jasper W. Brown; Disc. 5/31/1911 (mail to Sanders);

15. BRASHEAR- 9/17/1895, Edward E. Gregory; 8/21/1897, John W. Eubank.... 6/18/1928, Mrs. Lena Stewart; Disc. 4/15/1931, effective 5/15/1931 (mail to Glencoe);

16. GEX- 5/5/1898, Thomas Mylor, Jr.; Disc. 7/31/1906, effective 8/15/1906 (mail to Sanders, Carroll Co.)

17. MUNK- 4/9/1900, Ina N. Webster;

Disc 1939

18. DRURY- 6/20/1900, Thomas Groves; 6/24/1901, Owen Bethel; 5/16/1902, Lillie Alsup; Disc. 6/18/1903, effective 6/30/1903 (papers to Sanders);

GALLATIN COUNTY

CITIES (incorporated)   Warsaw *
                        Sparta *
                        Glencoe *

JUST PLACES   Napoleon *
               Sayersville
               Rossville
               Bramlett
               Gex
               Ethridge
               Munk, or Munk Station
               Concord
               Oakland
               Vera Cruz *
               Brashear *
               Fish Trap
               Valley View
               Ryle
               Jackson's Landing
               Hixon Hill
                 MYERS CUT

CREEKS   South Fork (of Big Bone Creek)
          Sugar Creek *
          Little Sugar Creek *
          Steeles Creek
          Paint Lick Creek
          Ten Mile Creek
          Flat Creek
          Eagle Creek (many other counties)
          Indian Camp Creek
          Lick Creek
          Rocky Branch
          Stephens Creek
          Agniels Branch
          Stirmans Branch, or Lancis Hollow (Lance's Hollow?)
          Campbell Springs Creek
          Vera Cruz Creek *
          Snake Creek, or Branch
          Threlkelds Branch
          Deadening Branch
          Lost Branch *
          Dry Creek

POSTOFFICES   Sugar Creek *
               Brashear *
               Walnut Lick
               Berkshire

LANDINGS (source: Benjamin F. Klien, The Ohio River Handbook and Picture Album; 1969,
                   Young and Klien, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio, page 410).
       ⎧ Steeles Creek Landing   ⎫
   ∨ ⎨ Brashear Postoffice Landing ⎬ opposite sides, mouth of Steeles Creek
       ⎩ Jacksons Landing - mile 522.1
          Pratt Landing - mouth of Sugar Creek
          Baxters Landing - Rocky Branch Creek
          McDanells Landing - mile 526.8
          Allen's Landing - 1 mile west of Warsaw
          Ethridge Landing - 1 mile east of Markland Dam
          Turners Landing - mile 532.4, near mouth of Stephens Creek
          Gex Landing - below Corine/Louis Gex home
          Craig Landing - below Albert G. Craig home.
          Owen Landing - just east of Carroll County line

SCHOOLS (source: <u>Map of Gallatin County</u>, George R. Wesley, Series VI-1930, in Gallatin
County Court Clerk's office, Warsaw)
<u>Atlas, Carroll and Gallatin Counties, 1883</u>, also in Gallatin County
Court Clerk's office, Warsaw)

Carlisle School - Montgomery Road, Craig's farm (Bud Kinman home)
Gex School (colored) - Montgomery Road opposite Jessie Siler's home
Walnut Valley School - Walnut Valley Road, just past Stephens Creek bridge
Stone Lick School - Craigs Creek Road, 1/2 mile east of Scott-Winn Road
* Hamilton School - Sparta Pike, just north of I-71 (now Dobie Rider's service sta.)
Park Ridge School - Park Ridge Road, just behind church
Union School - Johnson Road about 3 miles south of Warsaw
Lowes School - Roone Road and old Lowe Road
Oakland School - Johnson Road, just south of Boone Trace (Peake Road)
Sleet School - Spencer Hill Road, about 1/2 mile SW of Rocky Branch Road
Sugar Creek School - U.S. 127 and Tapering Point Road
Eagle Tunnel School - Kentucky 16 and Eagle Tunnel Road
Steele's Bottom School - Steele's Bottom Road (gone, land now owned by Robt.
    Marksberry)
Hughes School - ~~1910~~ Baker Road, top of hill above Nub Mullins
Drury's Chapel School - southwest corner of Drury's Chapel Church property
South Fork School (Cow Branch School) - abandoned road between Hance Road and
    Steele's Creek Road at Florence Steen's) (Leroy and Warren Rider)
Concord School - Kentucky 16, just west of Concord Church
Jackson School - Jacksons Landing Road
Napoleon School - at Napoleon
ETHRIDGE SCHOOL - at Ethridge

ROADS Telegraph Road)
       Ambrose Road)) actually different, but names used interchangably
       Hance Road
       Ross Road
       Roberts Road
       Walnut Lick Road))
       Allphin Road   ))   actually same road
       Baker Road   Gridley Hill Road
       Ryle Road   Jericho Road
       Munk Station Road
       Little Sugar Road
       Tapering Point Road
       Spencer Hill Road
       Sayersville Road
       Dry Creek Road
     * Johnson Road
       Eagle Tunnel Road
       Rocky Branch Road
     * Boone Road   ))
     * Boone Trace Road)'   actually same road
       Lick Creek Road
       Craigs Creek Road
       Knox-Lillard Road
       Wheeler Road
       Sparta Pike
       Furnish-Bebout Road
       Kinman Road, or Thunderbird Lane
       Chapel Hill Road
       Montgomery Road
       Fothergill-Messick Turnpike
       Walnut Valley Road
       Craig Road
       Park Ridge Road
       Scott-Winn Road
       Steeles Bottom Road
       Gould Road