

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89002099

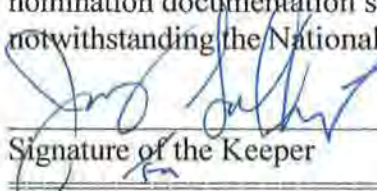
Date Listed: 2/1/2017

Property Name: Peabody-Fordson Historic District

County: Clay

State: KY

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

2-1-2017  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Period of Significance

The period of significance is hereby changed to 1924-1966, as reflected in the narrative statement of significance. The period ends with the purchase of the property by the US government in 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_  
The USFS FPO and Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office were notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION: National Register property file/Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Peabody-Fordson Historic District  
other names/site number CY-176

### 2. Location

street & number	<u>91 Peabody Road</u>	NA	not for publication
city or town	<u>Big Creek</u>	X	vicinity
state	<u>Kentucky</u>	code	<u>KY</u>
county	<u>Clay</u>	code	<u>051</u>
zip code	<u>40914</u>		

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

     national      statewide X local

[Signature] /Forest Service Federal Preservation Officer Date 01/10/2017

**United States Forest Service/Department of Agriculture**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register criteria.

[Signature] / Title Craig Potts, SHPO Date 6-22-16

**Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register      determined eligible for the National Register

     determined not eligible for the National Register      removed from the National Register

     other (explain)     

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 2-1-2017

Peabody-Fordson Historic District  
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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	6	buildings
		district
1		site
3	6	structure
		object
7	12	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

NA

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/business

Government/Government Office

Commerce/professional

Agricultural/barn

Transportation/air-related

Domestic/residence

Agricultural/barn

Domestic/residence

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Classical Revival

foundation: Stone; concrete

walls: Wood weatherboard

roof: Asphalt; corrugated metal

other: Stone steps

**Narrative Description**

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## Summary

The Peabody-Fordson Historic District (CY-176), also known as the Redbird Ranger Office Complex, is located at 91 Peabody Road in Big Creek, Kentucky. The district is situated adjacent to State Route 66, about 2 miles south of where SR 66 joins the Daniel Boone Parkway. The entire area, including the historic components, is currently utilized by the U.S. Forest Service as the District Office for the Redbird Ranger District of the Daniel Boone National Forest. The Redbird Office Complex is nine miles east of Manchester in Clay County, Kentucky. The Peabody-Fordson Historic District is being interpreted as a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century commercial operation centered upon extraction of timber and minerals from this portion of eastern Kentucky. While each building had its own function and architectural expression, collectively they were integral to each other. The area proposed for nomination is 23 acres, and includes 3 contributing buildings, 3 contributing structures, 1 contributing site, along with 6 non-contributing buildings and 6 non-contributing structures.

## Ownership and Development of the Site

Ownership of this complex can be generally understood within three development phases. These are discussed in much greater detail in the Section 8. Phase I stretches from 1814 to 1890, when the site was owned by individuals who farmed and timbered only small portions of the nominated property. From 1890 to 1966, the site was owned by industrial companies and utilized as a headquarters for operations. From 1966 to the present, the site has been owned and operated by the U.S. Forest Service, functioning as an administrative headquarters of operations for that District.

**Name of the Site:** The site is named for the two corporate entities who owned it during the period, defined below, as Phase II. Following National Register convention, the district's Period of Significance begins with the year that the earliest extant resource appears on the landscape—1924—which post-dates the Peabody Company's ownership. The decision to retain the Peabody name on the district recognizes the strong influence that the site's non-local owners exercised upon it. This theme—non-local corporate owners reshaping the physical landscape—characterizes not only this site, but much of the eastern Kentucky cultural landscape. The extensive land records, completed by the Peabody Company surveyors prior to 1924, remain within the district's Clubhouse. That effort, and those records, made this a site that the Fordson Company believed to be worth developing for their corporate interests.

## Phase I

The resources extant today help illustrate these phases, although little beyond the natural site itself remains from Phase I. The lack of resources from Phase I is emblematic of that period of the site's development – very little was actually developed, either because the land was in active agricultural use, and/or the property owners lacked the funds to shape and mold the site within a building campaign. The isolated story of the 19<sup>th</sup> century property owners of this site is also the story of much of eastern Kentucky, where an appreciable deficit of investment meant that development was small-scale and often temporary, at least where mineral extraction and exploitation of natural resources is concerned.

## Phase II, Part I: Peabody

Phase II represents the beginning of outside interests moving into Clay County in hopes of taking advantage of the rich stands of timber in the area. Both Peabody and Fordson are covered in this phase. The building campaign during the Peabody period is not, like many of the aspects of this part of the district's history, well-

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documented. A historic photograph (circa 1910) and information gleaned from oral history interviews provides most of the evidence of this phase of construction.<sup>1</sup> The post office was established during this period; believed to have been closed in 1978, the building, which sat to the west of the clubhouse, was sold to a Forest Service employee by the name of Lester Sumner. Mr. Sumner “moved the building to his home, which is located just across the Red Bird River from the Redbird Ranger District Office Complex.”<sup>2</sup> There is no indication that this undertaking underwent Section 106 compliance; no records regarding the removal of the structure are on file at the SHPO office.



**Current Site Plan, showing extant and demolished features**

Also during this time, around 1907, an office building (no longer extant), referred to as the “Engineering Building,” and a stone vault were constructed.<sup>3</sup> The description of the office building from the Conron and Muths documentation, is less than straightforward, but the structure was a one-story, frame, rectangular building on a stone foundation. Fenestration and other architectural details can only be drawn from photos, which show a six-bay-wide building with a window/window/window/window/door/window pattern. The building was removed by the Forest Service in the 1980s.

<sup>1</sup> Conron and Muths. *Historical Documentation, Measured Drawings and Statement of Significance. Redbird Ranger District Office, Daniel Boone National Forest.* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Conron and Muths, February 1984). Report on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 21.

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The stone vault which housed the all-important Peabody land records was attached to the left side of the office building. The metal vault door from the Engineers Office Building was incorporated into the new vault built within the Club House in 1986.

### **Phase II, Part II: Fordson Builds**

All of the contributing and extant buildings from the district date from the Fordson period. Due partly to the efforts by Peabody to wade through the quagmire of land records, Fordson was able to make significant improvements to the site, including new construction and the re-purposing of existing buildings. The Club House, Horse Barn, and Garage were built during Fordson's tenure.

These buildings helped cement Fordson as part of the surrounding area, even as they sought to remove resources to support operations outside of Kentucky. Neither architect-designed nor high-style, the Club House and Barn are remarkably similar to vernacular buildings in the nearby community of Big Creek. This design choice, of blending in with the local built environment, runs counter to the design choices made in the coal camps owned and managed by Fordson. Perhaps this difference occurred because the Fordson administrative complex existed in a different plane, as will be explored further in Section 8.

### **Phase III—Forest Service; Site Character Today**

The Redbird Ranger District Office Complex of the Daniel Boone National Forest is located at Peabody, Clay County, Kentucky. Currently the U.S. Forest Service owns over 10,000 acres immediately surrounding the office complex, part of the 110,000 acres purchased from Fordson.

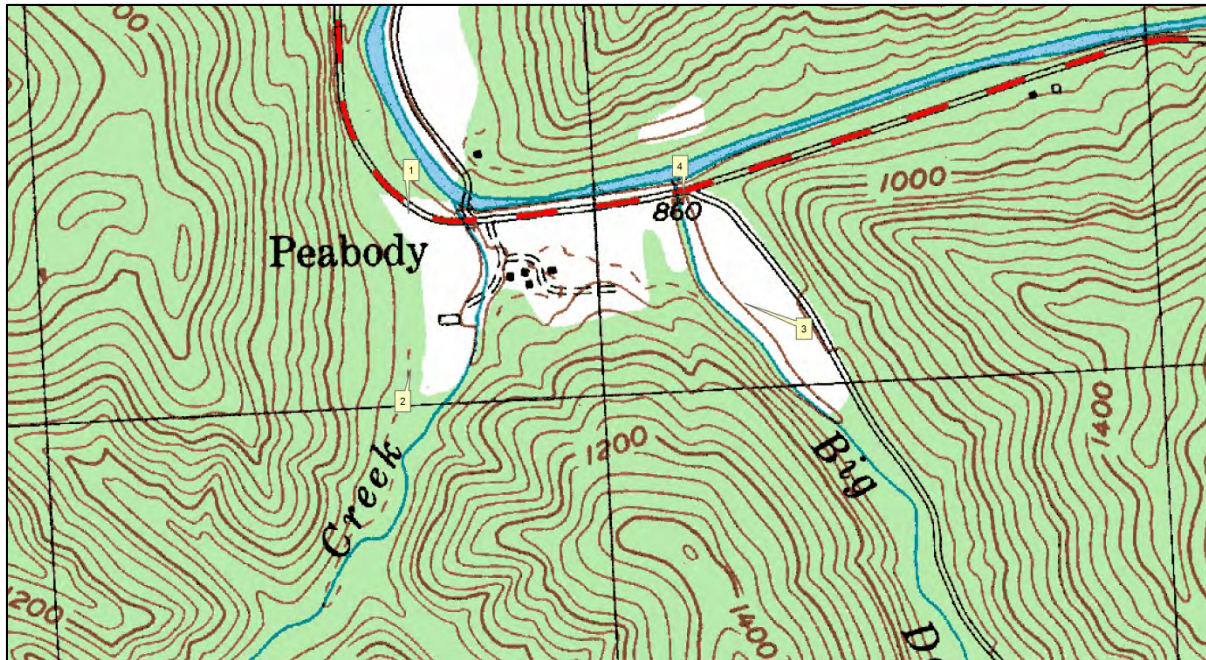
The site is split by Little Double Creek, so that most of the contributing elements lie east of the creek, while one contributing building is west of the creek. The vegetative landscape is a mix of mowed grass, paved and gravel driveways and forested areas. Peabody, never an incorporated town or village, was at one time a Post Office, as well as an office headquarters for the administration of approximately 110,000 acres of surrounding hardwood forest and coal deposits. Originally called Annalee, ownership of Peabody has passed from private owners who controlled small tracts and sold resources on a small scale, to corporate giants who intensively developed the natural resources, and finally to the United States of America, which manages the area as a natural resource of national value.

The surrounding country is characterized by low steeply-sloped mountains with narrow stream valleys. The highest range is approximately 2,560 feet above sea level on the Harlan-Leslie County line; the elevation at the Redbird Complex ranges from 850 feet to 888 feet above sea level. The Red Bird River lies immediately north of Highway 66. The office complex is flanked on the right by Big Double Creek, while Little Double Creek cuts through the complex on the east, between the Horse Barn and the other elements of the property.

Although the U.S. Forest Service has razed historic buildings and erected new ones, three important buildings remain from previous owners. Two of these remaining buildings are the Club House (Ranger's Office) and the Horse Barn located across Little Double Creek, west of the Club House. The third is a Fordson-era garage located south of the Clubhouse. Its style mimics the Horse Barn, and while currently used for storage, the garage retains many original elements, including an in-floor bay for mechanic work under vehicles. Three structures also remain from the Fordson era and include two sets of stone stairs and a water well encased in a well head of concrete block. Finally, the grassy area north of the building complex was formerly used as an air strip and is still open and unobstructed, just south of Highway 66.

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USGS quad map showing site location. The four plotted coordinates are identified.

## Feature Descriptions

### 1. Club House/Ranger's Office (1924) Contributing Building

Built by local craftsmen, the Club House is a blending of the Colonial Revival and Dutch Revival architectural influences. The two-story frame building rests on a drylaid cut-sandstone foundation; the stone was cut from a quarry along Little Double Creek. The foundation is randomly coursed and features mortar in isolated spots. The mason for the foundation and the three fireplace surrounds in the Club House was Burley Wagers; according to oral histories, Wagers dressed and laid the stone.



The four-bay-wide dwelling has a window/window/door/window fenestration pattern, with paired four-over-four double-hung sash windows at either end, and a triple four-over-four double-hung sash window beside the multi-light entry door. Sidelights composed of a single light over a rectangular recessed panel flank the entry

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door. A large, gambrel roof porch with with a concrete floor on a raised sandstone foundation spans the two central bays. The porch has square wooden supports.

Straight-sided square wooden columns support two offices above it and a gambrel roof. One louvered roof vent is centered under the roof ridge at each end of the gambrel roofs, to ventilate the attic space. The offset front entrance is balanced by a grouping of three windows, each four-over-four double-hung wood sash. The 15-light wooden front door is flanked by two recessed panels, with a clear glass panel at the top and a single recessed wood panel below.



The Club House is clad in narrow poplar clapboards, with flat corner boards and a flat board roof trim. Roofing is asphalt shingles, similar to the original according to the original carpenter. The main portion of the building measures 60' 3" from east to west and 25' 11½" from north to south. Projecting west from the main building is a one-story former sunroom, now an office, with a flat parapet walled roof. This room is 15' 1" wide and 15' 2" long. The clapboard-sided parapet rises above an asphalt-shingled pitched roof overhang. The parapet wall is capped by a protecting sheet metal cover. The slightly sloping roof over this room is asphalt roll roofing.

Originally the building was erected to house Fordson Company employees, including survey crews, engineers, and draftsmen. It contained three separate offices, a kitchen, a small storage area, a bathroom, and entry and a large reception/secretarial area. In 1986, an addition was built on the south and east sides, and the building was fitted with modern electrical and heating updates. A new vault for the original Peabody and Fordson survey records was part of this addition. The work was coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The metal vault door from the Engineers Office Building was used for the new vault.

The original interior finishes were inspired by both local tradition and the Colonial Revival Style. The wood paneling on the first floor exhibits a degree of sophistication, while the upstairs, which was originally finished in flush boards, was more like a mountain or forest lodge. The surrounding hardwood forest gave the builders a variety of woods from which to construct the paneling; chestnut in the first floor room (Rangers Office), walnut in the living room (Conference Room), oak in the dining room (Office Space) and maple in the entry hall. Stone for the foundation and fireplaces was quarried locally.

The building underwent additional renovations in 2011-2013. The work consisted of the addition of another room to the south side, attaching to the 1986 addition, to create additional storage space. Other work uncovered



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original flooring, windows, and other original finishes obscured by modern carpet and wallpaper. This work was all coordinated with and approved by the State Historic Preservation Officer.

## **2. Horse Barn (1927) Contributing Building**

The Horse Barn is located to the west of the Club House, across Little Double Creek. The barn was built by Oscar Bowling, a resident of nearby Big Creek, about three miles from the District. The wood frame building measures 30' 6" wide and 80' long, and has a transverse frame plan with 14 horse stalls flanking the central aisle and a full loft under a metal gambrel roof.



The barn was constructed to house the horses and mules used by the surveying and engineering crews. Ten 4-paned windows pierce the north side of the barn, while the south side has only 8 windows, as the west end of that side has been built as a corn crib; small spaces have been left between the siding to allow air to circulate. The east end of the barn has three windows and a hanging gable above the window in the loft. Double doors for the main barn are hung on tracks and slide open while another set of double doors swing outward, giving access to the loft. Two smaller doors pierce the wall between the upper and lower doors. The west end also has three windows and double doors; however, the first floor is a shed addition with a hipped roof. Inspection of the barn interior reveals the addition was added sometime after original construction, however, the addition matches the rest of the barn perfectly in style and is underlain with native stone cut to match the rest of the foundation. The barn has a cut stone foundation.

While the construction foreman did not specify he built the barn from plans, it has been previously asserted by those involved in construction of the Clubhouse that it was inspired by Sears and Roebuck patterns. The same is possibly true for the barn, as it strongly resembles the "Honor Bilt" barn style in the Sears and Roebuck catalog under "General Farm."<sup>4</sup> Over the decades, due to the proximity of the Red Bird River, the area has occasionally flooded. Inside the Horse Barn the high water mark from the 1947 flood is marked with pencil on a wall.

## **3. Chemical Storage (c. 1980) Noncontributing Building**

Concrete block building with doors on north side. No windows. Asphalt shingle roof. Used for storage by USFS.

<sup>4</sup> Conrun and Muths, 31.

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**4. Fordson Garage (c. 1950) Contributing Building**

One-room frame, front gable building on concrete block foundation and concrete slab. Double doors on north side in same design as Horse Barn (Building 2). Clapboard siding on all sides. Three craftsman style windows and a door on the west side and one window on the south side. Replacement asphalt shingle roof, unknown original. A subfloor pit with iron doors inside. Original use by Fordson as a garage, used for storage by USFS.



**Garage**



**Garage**

**5. Other Storage Building (post 1950s, pre 1978) Noncontributing Building**

One-room frame building with metal doors on the west and south sides. No windows. Asphalt shingle roof. Concrete block foundation and vinyl siding. Used for storage by USFS.

**6. Pump House (ca 1970) Noncontributing Structure**

One-room concrete block building with a metal door on the west side. No windows. Asphalt shingle roof. Built to hold old water system equipment, currently unused by USFS.

**7. Single Family Dwelling/Manager's Residence (c. 1980) Noncontributing Building**

Brick residence with front door on north side, garage on west side, and rear door on south side. Asphalt shingle roof. Currently used as residence by USFS.

**8. Duplex Dwelling (c. 1980) Noncontributing Building**

Frame residences with front doors on north side, garage on west side. Asphalt shingle roof. Currently used as residences by USFS.

**9. Other Single Family Dwelling (c. 1980) Noncontributing Building**

Frame residence with front door on north side. Asphalt shingle roof. Currently used as residence by USFS.

**10. Fordson Well (ca. 1950) Contributing Structure**

Concrete block housing measuring about 4 feet on each side and about 5 feet tall. Wood and tin cover. Not currently used by USFS.

**11. Storage Shed (c. 1990) Noncontributing structure.**

Frame structure with asphalt shingles. Used for residential storage by USFS.

**12. Storage Shed (c. 1990) Noncontributing structure.**

Frame structure with asphalt shingles. Used for residential storage by USFS.

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**13. Gazebo (2011) Noncontributing structure**

Frame structure on concrete piers. Used as smoking shelter by USFS.

**14. Bus Shelter (c. 1990) Noncontributing structure**

Frame shelter with asphalt shingle roof. Not currently used by USFS

**15. Air Strip (c 1930) Contributing site**

Given the remoteness of the location, in the 1930s, Fordson added an airplane hangar and associated landing strip. The hangar was situated a few hundred feet northeast of the office complex and the grassy area directly north of the office buildings was used as the air strip. While the hangar was removed around 1967, the grassy airstrip in front of the complex of buildings remains as it was, a level grassy area north of the Clubhouse. The strip is not currently used by USFS.

**16. Stone Steps (c 1950) Contributing structure**

Stone steps south of the Clubhouse used after 1947 to access former structures in this area.

**17. Stone Steps (c 1940) Contributing structure**

Stone steps southwest of the Clubhouse used in the 1940s to access former structure in the area.

**18. Concrete Bridge (c 1990) Noncontributing structure**

Concrete bridge spanning Little Double Creek to access Horse Barn and Fire Building from main complex.

**19. Fire Building (c. 1990) Noncontributing building**

Frame building with metal siding and a metal roof. Used for fire storage and offices by USFS.



**Airstrip**



**Looking east toward complex**

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

Industry  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1924-1962  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1957  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Bowling, Oscar (builder)  
Bowling, Frank (builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance 1924-1966**

The Period of Significance begins with the year that the earliest constructed feature remaining on site was constructed, and ends in 1966, when the property's significant industrial function ended and the US Government purchased the land for conservation.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)** N/A

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## Statement of Significance

### Summary

The Peabody-Fordson Historic District (CY-176) is a complex of buildings currently known as the Redbird Ranger Station, and meets National Register Criterion A. The property's significance is evaluated within the historic context, "Ford Motor Company's Expansion into Appalachia, 1915-1930." The property served as the seat of administrative oversight for the Fordson Coal Company, as they sought to exploit the natural resources of the surrounding area in the years before World War II. While Fordson Coal Company had other locations in Kentucky, namely in Stone, Kentucky (Pike County, NRIS 03001226), the Peabody-Fordson Historic District demonstrates an isolated building campaign quite unlike any other during the Fordson period of expansion in Appalachia. The complex—which includes the Fordson Clubhouse, the Horse Barn, a Fordson garage, a well, two sets of stone stairs, a grassy airstrip and internal driveways—gives physical evidence of an important chain of events that defines the entire eastern Kentucky region: the efforts by national corporations to exploit the region's natural resources. Although Fordson operated "captive coal mines" in Pike County and in various locations in West Virginia, this is the only purely administrative outpost of the company's efforts to harness the natural resources of Appalachia for its factories in Michigan. The Peabody-Fordson Historic District illustrates the ways in which the natural resources were managed over a period of three developmental phases, from the Euro-American settlement period of the early nineteenth century through the post-Civil Era period; to the second phase of outside corporate interests by Peabody and Fordson; and finally, the management of the resources in the area by the Federal government, represented by the Forest Service.

### **Historic Context:** Ford Motor Company's Expansion into Appalachia, 1915-1930

### Research Design and Methodology

During the early 1980s, the Peabody-Fordson District possessed more extant resources. The Forest Service, of the United States Department of Agriculture, responsible for the management of its resources, solicited proposals to document and assess the district's cultural values. From the work of a Cultural Resource Management firm, the Forest Service concluded that the area possessed National Register eligibility. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) agreed to that conclusion of eligibility, and the property was officially determined eligible in 1984.

Conron and Muths, the restoration architect firm who prepared the documentation of eligibility, became thoroughly familiar with the property's archival records. These are housed in a building in the Peabody-Fordson District; Conron and Muths described the collection as "extensive." Indeed, the quantity of documents from those two periods of the district's history is staggering. The files, now situated in a room within the Clubhouse, contain "the accumulated work of land surveying, title recordation, forest cruise reports and the mapping of many properties that were purchased, first by Peabody and later by Fordson." These records fill some 7 filing cabinets, a map case, wood trunks and metal lockers. Yet among all that documentation, Conron and Muths found "neither plans, specifications nor references to the buildings."<sup>5</sup>

Conron and Muths also contacted Ford Motor Company, Peabody Coal Company, and Sears, Roebuck and Company, "in hopes of finding more information on the buildings or the builders."<sup>6</sup> The results of these

<sup>5</sup> Conron and Muths. *Historical Documentation, Measured Drawings and Statement of Significance. Redbird Ranger District Office, Daniel Boone National Forest.* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Conron and Muths, February 1984), 1. Report on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

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inquiries led the report authors to state “it was a surprise to us that no documents could be located which dealt with any of the buildings. Even the archives of the Ford Motor Company could produce nothing.”<sup>7</sup> Oral history interviews, then, provided the bulk of the background for Fordson Coal Company’s building campaign and tenure at the nominated site. Given their effort 30 years ago, this rich archival record was not expected to shed light on the current nomination. The archive would prove a treasure trove for a scholar of timber or land survey methods of the early-twentieth century. The materials, however, provide nothing from which to erect a historic context in which to understand the significance of this site. Accordingly, the research for developing this context has focused on prior documentation efforts by the Forest Service, nomination work conducted in both Kentucky and West Virginia, and knowledge of local building patterns in Clay County by the author’s own field work in the area.

A general history of the area and its development phases and land ownership tenures is necessary to understand the forces that shaped the political and economic landscape in which these outside interests operated, beginning in the late-nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The quagmire of land records, poor transportation networks, and even the local architectural vocabulary all influenced the physical manifestation of Fordson that remains on the site today. This section is followed by the context *Ford Motor Company’s Expansion into Appalachia, 1915-1930*, which explores the unique way in which the Peabody-Fordson Historic District illustrates both the overarching vertical integration of the Ford empire, but also the influence of popular national architectural trends as interpreted by local builders. This combination not only served Fordson well economically, but set the Peabody-Fordson District apart from the corporation’s other building schemes in Kentucky and West Virginia. Ultimately, this grand experiment would fail, but the survival of the key buildings of the Fordson tenure offers a singular look at a little-contemplated period of the mineral exploitation of Eastern Kentucky.

### **Phase I: Clay County Background**

Clay County, located in southeastern Kentucky in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains, dates to 1807, when the Kentucky legislature created the county from parts of Madison, Floyd and Knox Counties. Named for General Green Clay, an early Kentucky surveyor and large landholder in Madison County, the county was the 47<sup>th</sup> formed in the state. Euro-American settlement in the area predates the county formation; James Collins settled at the headwaters of Goose Creek, a tributary of the South Fork of the Kentucky River, in 1798.<sup>9</sup>

Bordered by Laurel, Knox, Bell, Leslie, Perry, Owsley and Jackson Counties, the original boundaries of Clay County shifted and shrank during the nineteenth century, as lawmakers continued to create additional counties. Eventually, seven other counties were carved out of Clay County, reducing the county by 1880 to its current 471 square miles.<sup>10</sup> The county seat of Manchester also dates to 1807. Originally christened “Greenville” in honor of Green Clay, founders quickly discovered that name belonged to a town in Muhlenberg County, and switched to Manchester. Industrial activity occurred in Kentucky’s Manchester, but never reached the levels in its British namesake. Located in central Clay County, the town lies on the west bank of Goose Creek, a tributary of the Kentucky River.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> This particular set of factors is not unique to Clay County, and indeed, can be applied to most of Appalachia.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Latta Lee. “Clay County,” in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed John Kleber. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 204.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Latta Lee. “Manchester.” in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed John Kleber. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 606.

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As with most Kentucky counties during the nineteenth century, agriculture dominated the local economy. After clearing enough land for cultivation, the first crop planted was usually corn, as corn could feed both people and livestock. The county was heavily timbered, which facilitated the construction of log houses.

During the settlement period and the first few decades of the nineteenth century in Kentucky, most people lived in log houses of one to three rooms, usually only one-story high. While log construction was supplanted by timber frame construction in the more populous and urban parts of Kentucky by the 1840s, in rural, heavily-wooded areas, such as Clay County, it could persist into the late-nineteenth and even early twentieth century.

The terrain and the slow growth of a reliable road network aided the development of crossroad communities; since travel was difficult, retail, commerce and public/government institutions sprang up every few miles, clustered along waterways, within easy walking distance for residents. Big Creek, nestled in a valley along that waterway, provided not only fertile, fairly flat soil for cultivation and for construction of homes, but also a reliable source of water and a means of transportation.

In 1810, there were approximately 330 families living in Clay County, with a total population count of some 2,398 people. Of that number, 1,202 were white males, 1,055 were white females and 141 were African Americans.<sup>12</sup> The population almost doubled in the next years, with the 1820 Census recording 4,393 residents in Clay County. The overwhelming majority of those of working age were engaged in agriculture, though there were 119 residents who cited manufacturing as their occupation and four residents were engaged in commerce.<sup>13</sup>

Manufacturing was an important part of Clay County's economy throughout the nineteenth century as the county was the state's leading producer of salt. The abundant natural salt reserves that attracted wild game also proved beneficial to trade in the antebellum period. The Goose Creek Salt Works, located on that waterway, provided the impetus for the location of Manchester. That salt "spring" began commercial development in the late-eighteenth century. By 1846, there were 15 salt makers in Clay County, "producing 200,000 bushels of salt annually."<sup>14</sup> Daniel Boone proposed a plan to reroute the Wilderness Road to travel by the Goose Creek salt works; the plan never came to fruition. Until the 1930s, Clay County's surface transportation infrastructure remained stunted and unreliable.<sup>15</sup>

Though the development of passable and reliable roads remained out of reach, navigation on the Kentucky River improved. The navigational channels to the confluence of Goose Creek and the Red River were open by 1811. During the 1820s and 1830s, the state made another effort to harness the commercial viability of the salt works in Clay County with a proposed canal that would link the Kentucky River (by way of the Ohio River) to the ports of Savannah and Charleston.<sup>16</sup> Railroad investors and industry insiders defeated the scheme.

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<sup>12</sup> Kelly and Hazel Smith Morgan. *History of Clay County, Kentucky, 1767-1976*. (Manchester, Kentucky: Morgan Book Company, 1987), 185.

<sup>13</sup> University of Virginia Library, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, Historical Census Browser, 2012. 1820 and 1830 Census Data. Online at: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Clark. "Goose Creek Salt Works." in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed John Kleber. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 378.

<sup>15</sup> Lee, "Clay County," 204.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

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Timber extraction provided extra income for Clay County residents throughout the nineteenth century, but the only way of transporting the logs was by rafting through the water. The rich stands of timber, then, mostly sustained only the local economy, and did not encourage growth within the county.

The county's population dipped slightly in 1830, with the census recording only 3,548 residents, including 348 of whom were owned by other residents. A rise in the population figures in 1840 signaled a trend that would continue until the mid-twentieth century. There were 4,607 people enumerated in the 1840 Census, and 5,541 in the 1850 Census. The Census of 1860 recorded 6,652 residents, with the number of owned workers tallied at 349.<sup>17</sup>

Though there were over 500 farms recorded in Clay County between 1840 and 1860, the majority of these farms tended to be a size – between 20 and 49 acres – that could be worked by a man and his family, making owned-human labor unnecessary for the most part.<sup>18</sup> Though the Agricultural Census of 1860 recorded 596 farms in Clay County, only a small percentage of the county's farmland could be considered "improved." Out of 254,896 acres in farms, only 27, 590 acres were deemed as improved. Subsistence agriculture, with any excess products sold locally, was the way most Clay County families lived.

The first phase of the nominated property's development, then, is in keeping with development across Clay County generally. The first traceable patent for the site, dated November 10, 1814, is for 41 acres on the south bank of the Red Bird River issued to John Murphy and William Phelps.<sup>19</sup> These 41 acres encompassed the current location of the Redbird Ranger District Office Complex. William Phelps never claimed his portion of the land, and so, on February 24, 1816, John Murphy sold it to Thomas Murphy for \$25.00.<sup>20</sup> The farm was added to the 109 acres Thomas Murphy already owned, to create a single 150-acre tract located along Big Double and Little Double Creek and the Red Bird River. This would have been a large farm for Clay County, and likely fairly productive given the amount of bottom land.

The farm remained in the Murphy family until 1883, when the last inheritants sold it to Willis D. Sisemore for \$80.00.<sup>21</sup> Sisemore immediately sold it to William Ledford, who held the property for 7 years before selling to the New York and Kentucky Land Company.<sup>22</sup> There were probably no buildings located in the area at this time, since Granville Ledford leased the land from the Land Company in 1891 for the purpose of "pasturage, raising of corn and other annual crops."<sup>23</sup>

During the Civil War, control of Clay County shifted between the Union and the Confederates. There were no recorded conflicts within the county's borders, though the salt works prompted considerable interest from both sides. The owner of the Garrard Salt Works, Union Brigadier General T.T. Garrard, charged with raising a regiment, recruited a number of men from Manchester in 1861. The Third Kentucky Volunteer Infantry (later called the Seventh Kentucky Infantry) was comprised mostly of men from southeastern Kentucky.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> University of Virginia.

<sup>18</sup> University of Virginia, 1860 Census Returns.

<sup>19</sup> Clay County Deed Book A:85.

<sup>20</sup> Clay County Deed Book O:34.

<sup>21</sup> Clay County Deed Book J:131.

<sup>22</sup> Clay County Deed Book J:149 and O: 38 et seq.

<sup>23</sup> Lease Churchill to Ledford 1891, on file at the Redbird Ranger Office.

<sup>24</sup> Nicky Hughes. "Theophilus Toulmin Garrard." in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed John Kleber. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 364.



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Union troops passed through Clay County in September 1862 on their retreat across Kentucky from the Cumberland Gap to the Ohio River. To keep the valuable salt works from aiding the Confederacy, the Union ordered all production sites destroyed in October 1862.<sup>25</sup> Prior to the destruction of the salt works, local citizens were allowed to take “salt for their personal needs, and the owners were promised reimbursement for their losses.”<sup>26</sup> The promised reimbursement never transpired, a bill for compensation was vetoed by President Ulysses S. Grant in 1873, under the argument that “the destruction had been a military necessity.”<sup>27</sup> The salt works did not thrive again after the devastation of the Civil War. Four salt works remained in production during the last decades of the nineteenth century; one of the rebuilt salt works was the Garrard Salt Works. The last salt work in Clay County closed in 1908.<sup>28</sup>

### **Phase II: The Lure of Timber, or Peabody’s Foray into the Wilderness, 1895-1923<sup>29</sup>**

The purchase of the land by the New York and Kentucky Land Company in 1890 marks the beginning of the Phase II ownership, when the parcel ceased being held by farmer landowners and became part of larger holdings owned by corporate interests. It was also during Kentucky’s timber boom, when the wooded lands of the Commonwealth were worth millions of dollars. As mentioned previously, subsistence farmers in Clay County close to waterways could log their lands for ready cash, but this was a geographically-limited venture.

In 1892, the nominated land was sold to the Kentucky Mineral and Timber Company.<sup>30</sup> The land then sold to Kentucky River Timber and Coal Company. At some point thereafter, the land was acquired by Francis Stuyvesant Peabody for the Peabody Coal Company. It is not clear exactly when Peabody Coal purchased the land in Clay County, Kentucky; research conducted for a 1984 historic investigation of the property failed to locate any listing for the purchase of land by Peabody or Peabody Coal Company.<sup>31</sup> However, the deed from the Peabody heirs lists the deeds from the Kentucky River Timber and Coal Company. Given the absence of deeds, it seems possible Peabody Coal purchased the Kentucky River Timber and Coal Company, thereby acquiring all their holdings.

F.S. Peabody eventually amassed landholdings of over 110,000 acres in this portion of eastern Kentucky for the purpose of extracting coal resources. Born in Chicago in 1859, Peabody was a Yale graduate who entered the coal trade, establishing a business in 1883 that would later become the Peabody Coal Company. By 1920 Peabody was one of the largest coal companies in the United States; the company exists today as Peabody Energy, currently the largest private coal company in the world. Peabody Coal eventually operated mines in several states besides Kentucky including Indiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, West Virginia and Wyoming. F.S. Peabody served as president of the company from 1883 to 1917, afterward serving on the board of directors until his death in 1922. In 1917, during World War I, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Peabody Chairman of the Council of National Defense’s Coal Production Committee. He was also appointed assistant to the Director of the Bureau of Mines, serving as Chief of Explosives and while there, established a licensing system for the handling of explosives. In 1921, F.S. Peabody constructed Mayslake Hall on his 848-acre estate in Oak

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<sup>25</sup> Lee, “Clay County,” 204.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Since no clear date exists for Peabody’s acquisition of the District, 1895 was arbitrarily chosen.

<sup>30</sup> Clay County Deed Book P:383 et seq

<sup>31</sup> Conron and Muths, 8.

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Brooke, Illinois to serve as his primary residence; Peabody's Mayslake Estate is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRIS 93000836).

Due to the isolation of the area in the late 1800s, extracting the coal resources was near to impossible for Peabody. Moreover, when Peabody acquired the lands in Clay County, much of the area had never been professionally surveyed. In addition, due to the way land in Kentucky was historically surveyed and sold, many deeds had overlapping claims that had to be settled in court. Therefore most of the activity at the Peabody office headquarters in Clay County revolved around surveying and officially recording their holdings in the area.

In an effort to clarify and map their lands, Peabody hired surveyors and engineers to professionally survey the land and clear up the land claims. The Peabody Office and records vault, built around 1907, was designed to be an office for the professional staff working on surveying the land and as a vault to hold all the resultant maps and records. Peabody was forced to establish their own county clerk office to decipher the purchased land. It also appears that the attention of the Peabody enterprise shifted from a focus on coal to a focus on timber. Little information exists about the amount (if any) of timber actually cut and milled during the Peabody tenure. "Cruising reports" on file at Redbird indicate that Peabody personnel were traveling and making note of the type and quality of trees.<sup>32</sup>

Although no records have been located that detail the amount of timber extracted by Peabody, other operations in Kentucky were busy logging trees, resulting in state forestlands being "devastated without regard for the future."<sup>33</sup> As early as 1887, the governor urged the legislature to tend to the reforestation of land and to act to preserve what timbered land remained, but to no avail. Kentucky's timber boom continued from 1870 to 1920, with over a billion board feet of lumber sold in the year 1909 alone!<sup>34</sup>

Whatever building campaigns the Peabody Company undertook at the site are little-documented; no extant resources remain. The role of this owner was to unwind the tangled threads of land deeds and claims. It was also, however, to lay the foundation for an administrative complex that would later be fully developed by Fordson and inherited by the Forest Service. It appears that Peabody employees accomplished their tasks within a structure or structures that were not sufficiently permanent to have survived.

Since Manchester's population crept upwards at a sluggish pace, reaching only 150 residents in 1880, most of the county's population in the nineteenth century was considered rural. The establishment of a post office in rural Kentucky appears to function in tandem with the development of a crossroads community or hamlet. Citizens submitted a request to the Post Office Department for the creation of a post office in their locale, including reasons for its establishment, the number of "patrons that would be served and names proposed for the Post Office."<sup>35</sup> The Post Office Department then considered the proximity of other postal units in the vicinity, and how much it would cost to transport mail to the proposed Post Office.

The post office of Annalee (later to become Peabody, the site of the Peabody-Fordson District) was established in 1909, with the application made by Floyd M. Chadwell of nearby Big Creek. The post office was named for Thomas Bird's (a Peabody land surveyor) daughter. According to the application, there were 150 people who

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<sup>32</sup> Conron and Muths, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter. *A New History of Kentucky*. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 301.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> United States Postal Service website. <http://webpmt.usps.gov/pmt017.cfm#HowEstab> Accessed November 2011.

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would be served by the post office.<sup>36</sup> In addition to those residents living around the Peabody-Fordson District, the close proximity of a post office would enable even more efficient operation of Peabody's campaign to sort out land claims.

## **Phase II, Part II: Ford Motor Company's Expansion into Appalachia, 1915-1950**

The Ford Motor Company was incorporated in Dearborn, Michigan on June 16, 1903. Showing an interest in agricultural markets for sales of motorized vehicles, Ford began to build experimental tractors from automobile components in the company's first decade. Tractor development necessitated a spin-off company, Fordson and Son formed in Dearborn, Michigan, in 1910, when Henry Ford took his son Edsel as partner. Incorporation followed on July 27, 1917. Fordson was also a brand name, and the general-purpose tractor bearing the Fordson name was manufactured by Fordson and Son from 1917 to 1920, and by the Ford Motor Company from 1920 to 1964.

The success of Ford Motor Company depended in no small part on Henry Ford's skillful use of an ownership approach known as vertical integration, in which one company controls all components of the production cycle: raw material acquisition, production, distribution, and retail sales.

Fordson Coal Company, officially organized on February 7, 1923 as a Delaware corporation, existed to manage its parent company's (Ford Motor Company) coal property assets. There were four properties originally: Kentencia and Stone in Kentucky, and Nuttallburg and Twin Branch in West Virginia. The Fordson Coal Company purchased the Peabody tracts, but the funds came from Ford Motor Company. Among the records that Conron and Muths received from Ford Motor Company, were the financial details of that transfer, in which 27,830 shares of Fordson capital stock was issued to Ford Motor Company as reimbursement.<sup>37</sup>

Between 1920 and 1922, Fordson Coal Company acquired existing coal operations in Kentucky and West Virginia to support the operations of the River Rouge Complex in Dearborn, Michigan. In the summer of 1920, Banner Fork Company, which operated coal mines in Wallins Creek and Tisdale (both in Harlan County) was purchased by Fordson. Later in 1920, Fordson purchased the Nuttallburg mining operation in Fayette County, West Virginia.<sup>38</sup> The acquisition of these three mines could have "produced all of the fuel necessary for their major factories and the DT&I Railroad, although not quite all the varieties needed."<sup>39</sup> A fuel shortage in 1922, however, compelled Ford to acquire three additional groups of mines in late 1922 and the spring of 1923. These mines included the Pond Creek Mines in Stone, Kentucky (Pike County) and the Twin Branch mines in McDowell County, West Virginia.

Ford made immediate improvements after reopening the Nuttallburg Mine in 1923, including a new steel tippie, conveyor, and headhouse. These state-of-the-art structures and equipment cost over \$300,000, but the

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<sup>36</sup> Conron and Muths, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Conron and Muths, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Rita Walsh, *The Nuttallburg Coal Mining Complex and Town Historic District*. Listed in the NRHP 2005. NRHP #? The Nuttallburg Coal Mining Complex and Town Historic District is located on the east side of the New River at the north end of New River Gorge National River. The District covers 90 acres and includes the Mine Complex Colliery structures, a bank of 46 coke ovens, the town's residential and commercial areas at the bottom of the gorge including the piers of the foot bridge that linked Nuttallburg to South Nuttall on the west side of the river, and the sidings of the former Chesapeake and Ohio RR.

<sup>39</sup> Walsh, Section 8, 24.

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investment paid off in increased production. The Nuttallburg mines produced over 50,000 tons of coal a year before Ford – which increased to 90,000 tons in 1924 before peaking at 240,820 tons in 1925.<sup>40</sup>

Interestingly, at the same time Ford was “pursuing his highly celebrated activities to control and centralize flow and raw materials” he also sought to decentralize certain aspects of his operations. This included small factories in rural areas, which ran “exclusively on water power that produced automobile parts to supply his manufacturing plants and supplied alternative employment to farmers.”<sup>41</sup>

The heirs of F.S. Peabody sold the land in Clay County, Kentucky on March 23, 1923 to Fordson Coal Company, a subsidiary of the Ford Motor Company.<sup>42</sup> Value of the acquired property was set forth in Fordson records as \$553,241.00 for land, \$1,480,596.00 for timber, \$706,926.00 for minerals, \$1,600.00 for engineering equipment, 1,617.00 for office fixtures plus an additional \$3,217.00 for 2 horses, 1 mule, saddles, surveyor and ranger tools and tents, cots, blankets, camp equipment, office and drafting room furniture, steel document files and safe and 3 typewriters. The drafting table from the Peabody Office was included in this exchange; it is currently used in the Club House as a conference table for meetings.

Fordson acquired the land not only for the coal reserves, but also for the thousands of acres of hardwood timber. At this time, hardwoods were commonly used in the manufacture of automobiles—within wheel spokes, steering wheels, and dashboards. Purchase of the land in Clay County was like the purchase by Ford Motor Company of rubber plantations in South America and iron ore deposits in Michigan: Henry Ford wanted to own the raw materials needed to manufacture his automobiles so as to avoid being subject to a supplier’s pricing. In the years immediately after the purchase of the land making up the Peabody-Fordson District, existing buildings were remodeled and expanded and new buildings constructed. The Club House, Barn and garage all served the operating needs of this administrative outpost in the wilderness.

Fordson sold the surface rights of the land to its parent company, Ford Motor Company, on December 30, 1940, who intended to sell the US Government high grade timber for the War effort. Due to a lack of good roads, Peabody had been unable to sell much of the timber on the property. Staff working for Peabody had assessed the timber resources as being among the best of its kind in the nation, but Peabody had primarily held the timber as a valuable resource. However, as roads improved in the 1940s and 1950s, Ford began to sell quantities of chestnut and white oak. At this time, lumber mills moved into the area to mill the timber, including the W.M. Ritter Lumber Company, J. Walter Wright Lumber Company and the Gennett Lumber Company.<sup>43</sup>

Ford retained the timber rights until 1957, when they sold them to Potomac Industries, Inc.<sup>44</sup> Fordson retained the mineral rights. Two years later, Potomac sold the timber rights to the Red Bird Timber Company.<sup>45</sup> In 1966 over 110,000 acres of land and timber were purchased from Ford, Fordson and the Red Bird Timber Company by the US Federal Government.<sup>46</sup> The Redbird Purchase Unit of the Daniel Boone National Forest was officially established by the National Forest Reservation Commission in 1965. The mission of the Redbird Unit was to acquire lands lying on the headwaters of the Red Bird River, as well as the South and Middle Forks of the

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<sup>40</sup> Walsh, Section 8, 31.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>42</sup> Clay County Deed Book 47:400.

<sup>43</sup> Conrun and Muths, 10.

<sup>44</sup> Clay County Deed Book 114:159.

<sup>45</sup> Clay County Deed Book 114:421-422.

<sup>46</sup> Clay County Deed Book 126:478-535.

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Kentucky River. These lands were located in Clay, Leslie, Harlan and Bell Counties of southeastern Kentucky. In the mid-1960s, this area was economically depressed and environmentally damaged. The forests had been heavily harvested, fires often burned large areas, denuded slopes, and dumped silts in streams and rivers.

### **The Built Environment of the Fordson Properties in West Virginia and Kentucky**

The foundation for Fordson's building decisions at the Peabody-Fordson District will always remain more conjecture than fact substantiated by written document. Certainly Ford had a clear understanding of the benefit of this property to the company's operations and profit. The administrative complex was a vital cog in the unraveling of the timber and coal interests in Kentucky that could supply the corporation. It was a public space, in a sense – but only in that perception by the local community, *not* in its occupation by those same residents. There was community ownership in the built environment if not use. The Bowling family of nearby Big Creek constructed the Clubhouse and Barn, in a familiar pattern mirrored in the buildings of their own homesteads. Interior finish may have been higher than the typical above-average home or commercial building in Clay County, but the exterior was approachable and unassuming, while still distinct and well-conceived.

In a sharp departure from Ford's building campaigns in coal company towns, the Peabody-Fordson District apparently had no architect, no plans, and as a result, fits into the landscape in a very different way than the physical structures of the company towns. The Fordson Coal Company Buildings in Stone were designed by Meanor and Handloser, a regionally-prominent architectural firm in Huntington, West Virginia. Additionally, Taylor describes the significance of the buildings as "illustrative of the paternalistic role which many coal companies assumed with respect to their employees and their families." These buildings were constructed not just for use by the corporation and residents of the company town and stood as symbols of the role of Fordson Coal in the area and in the lives of the workers. Ford provided "his employees not only with the company store, but also with a spacious leisure-time facility" that included a movie theater, post office, barbershop, and pharmacy. An office building and club house were also constructed for the town.<sup>47</sup>

During the twentieth century, many residents of Big Creek were closely involved with Fordson Coal Company. Several members of the Bowling family (namely Oscar and Frank Bowling) from Big Creek were involved in the construction of the buildings at the Peabody site, including the Clubhouse (now the main office building), the Fordson/Peabody Office, the Residence and the horse barn. These buildings utilize familiar forms with elements of nationally popular architectural styles, such as the Colonial Revival and Dutch Colonial Revival. The Club House is a larger and more expansive version of the Berthie and Oscar Bowling House (CY-389), a Dutch Colonial Revival frame house in nearby Big Creek – and the home of the man who presumably built the Club House.

Construction began in 1924, though no "construction drawings could be found for the Club House, either at the Redbird site or in the Ford Motor Company files and archives. Speculation as to the source for the architectural designs are interesting, to say the least."<sup>48</sup> One source recalled that the plans came from the New York Times, while another stated that the designs came instead from Sears, Roebuck and Company. According to Oscar Bowling, there were no plans for the building from which to work, and the lumber was not pre-cut. If it had truly been a Sears Roebuck and Company plan ordered from the company, the lumber would have been pre-cut and stamped. Conron and Muths investigation of the building found no signs of stamping on the building

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<sup>47</sup> David Taylor. Fordson Coal Company Buildings. *Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*. On file at the Kentucky Heritage Council. Listed 2002. Section 8, page 4.

<sup>48</sup> Conron and Muths, 12.

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members. Bowling believed that one of the draftsmen, E. H. Mould, working for Fordson at the time designed the Club House. The nature of the first occupants of the Club House is as much in dispute as the origins of its design. Intended for residential use, the occupants were either the survey crews for Fordson or the engineers and draftsman for Fordson. The truth is that probably both sets of workers used the Club House while in Kentucky.

Fordson realized the limitations of the space in which they were operating, but rather than shaping this administrative outpost into a symbol of corporate power, it took on the guise of another farmstead, even though it was managed by an international corporation. A barn was built to house the mules and horses used by Fordson employees. "At one time during the years that the Ford Companies occupied the property, they began experimental farming on the fields to the west, adjacent to the barn. They brought in a 'team of mules and a professional agriculturist.'"<sup>49</sup> Although the barn is large and well-built, in style, form and materials it is but an echo of similar stock barns found across Clay County. In particular, another transverse frame gambrel roofed barn (CY-388) is located just down the road in Big Creek.

### **Evaluation of the Significance of the Peabody-Fordson Historic District within its Context**

The industrial potential of Clay County was not discovered by the outside interests of Peabody and then Fordson. Small scale industrial works co-existed along with small scale agricultural and manufacturing interests. The success of such endeavors fluctuated depending on scope and ambition – and the ability of the state legislature to work together efficiently and across county lines in order to ensure economic development across the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, the aborted and thwarted plans to improve transportation networks across Kentucky's eastern counties in the antebellum period met with the same infighting and lack of cohesion that still stymies the region today.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Francis Stuyvesant Peabody's workers began to survey, collect information about, and map the Red Bird River area. A stone vault was built to protect and house this documentation. The Fordson Coal Company continued that effort. The records attest to the great quantity and fine quality of that work housed at Peabody in the vault and in the file cabinets located about the Redbird Ranger's office (Club House). Even today these files are a vital reference source for land title and deed research in the counties surrounding the Redbird Ranger's Office Complex.

The ownership of the Redbird property by the Fordson Coal Company recalls an important philosophy and stated goal of Henry Ford. He wished to establish ownership control of all the material resources for the manufacture of his motor car. The Redbird property contained hardwoods which at the time were extensively used in automobiles; further, the land had below it extensive coal reserve. None of these resources however were tapped for Ford automobiles, though timber was sold by Ford to other buyers. These buildings constituted a unique headquarters of a forest property in the wilderness of eastern Kentucky. Where other companies established a "company Town" as a basis for a coal mining operation, both Peabody and the Ford Motor Company established "Headquarters" for the overall administration of this large forest property.

Neither one of these outside interests chose to follow the archetypical architectural vocabulary found in coal towns. Instead, this administrative outpost followed the vernacular foundation seen elsewhere in Clay County, blending into this huge parcel of timbered land rather than imposing a new standard of building and meaning on the local landscape. Obviously, neither Peabody nor Ford lacked the funds for construction even in the remote hinterland that would have been Clay County at the time. The decision, however, to focus corporate interest and

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<sup>49</sup> Conron and Muths, 10.

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finances on deciphering land records, evaluating and grading timber, and finally selling that lumber, served the companies better than an obvious reshaping of the landscape, is what makes the Peabody-Fordson District so significant within the history of mineral extraction in Clay County.

### **Evaluation of the Integrity between the Significance of the Peabody-Fordson District and its current physical condition**

In order for a site associated with the history of mineral extraction in Eastern Kentucky and the administrative oversight of that process to be eligible for the National Register, it must retain integrity of feeling, association, location and setting. While the primary integrity factors that support integrity of feeling are design, materials, and workmanship, all seven integrity factors of the Peabody-Fordson District are discussed here.

The Peabody-Fordson District retains a high level of integrity of **location**. The extant contributing buildings have not been relocated, and retain their relationship with Big and Little Double Creeks, Peabody Road, and the surrounding hills and forested land. This relationship with the transportation networks is a vital one, as it was transportation that both defined and defined the early attempts to harness the natural resources of Clay County.

The Club House, Barn, and Garage, retain integrity of **design, workmanship and materials**. Changes to the Club House have been carried out sympathetically, and all buildings retain original siding, windows, and interior finished. The high integrity of design, workmanship and materials in the buildings provides a strong sense of the focus of this administrative complex. Fordson deliberately chose a vernacular expression for its built environment, and this is remarkably intact.

The Peabody-Fordson District retains a medium level of integrity of **setting**. The natural environment is very similar to what the original setting would have been, and the circulation network of driveways and lands is very intact. The open, grassy area in front of the complex remains the same as it was when used as an air strip in the 1930s by the Peabody Company. In addition, the positioning of the main offices and supporting structures with the main offices to the north, facing the river, and the supporting buildings to the south, fit a pattern established during the Peabody ownership and still seen in the layout of the current Redbird Rangers Office Complex. Numerous non-contributing buildings have been added over the years, which changes the setting somewhat, but these buildings are following a pattern established by both Peabody and Fordson in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Peabody-Fordson District retains a high level of integrity of *feeling* and *association*. The view of the Club House from the road is virtually unchanged since construction, providing a sense of the understated prominence of the building in the remote area. Its association with the Fordson period is still apparent. The district retains features that produce the feeling of its historic era, and those feelings support our association with the district's history, and the layers of ownership that transformed this hinterland into a place of corporate activity which sought to harness the natural resources for the growth of an expanding industrial nation.

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County and State

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The University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center Historical Census Browser. Electronic document,

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html/>, accessed 2013.

Walsh, Rita. *The Nuttallburg Coal Mining Complex and Town Historic District.* Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Listed in the NRHP 2005.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)

\_\_\_ previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register

\_\_\_ designated a National Historic Landmark

**Primary location of additional data:**

\_\_\_ State Historic Preservation Office

\_\_\_ Other State agency

\_\_\_ Federal agency

\_\_\_ Local government

\_\_\_ University



Peabody-Fordson Historic District  
Name of Property

Clay County, KY  
County and State

\_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):           CY-176          

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acres of Property**   23 acres          

**UTM References**

**Quad Name: Big Creek**

**All Coordinates calculated according to NAD 83:**

1	<u>  17          </u> Zone	<u>  269689          </u> Easting	<u>  4113552          </u> Northing	3	<u>  17          </u> Zone	<u>  270271          </u> Easting	<u>  4113357          </u> Northing
2	<u>  17          </u> Zone	<u>  269678          </u> Easting	<u>  4113258          </u> Northing	4	<u>  17          </u> Zone	<u>  270176          </u> Easting	<u>  4113553          </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary encompasses the parcel of the Redbird Ranger Unit, owned and operated by the US Forest Service.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries follow the parcel of the administrative parcel utilized by Peabody, Fordson, and now the US Forest Service.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title   Janie-Rice Brother, UK with contributions by Cecil Ison; Wayna Adams/Forest Archaeologists            
organization   USDA-Forest Service, Daniel Boone National Forest           date   1989 (revised October, 2011)            
street & number   91 Peabody Road           telephone   606-598-2192            
city or town   Big Creek           state   KY           zip code   40914            
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Photographs:**

**PHOTOGRAPHY LOG**

**Same Information for All Photos:**

Property Name:   Peabody-Fordson District            
Location:   Clay County, KY

Peabody-Fordson Historic District  
Name of Property

Clay County, KY  
County and State

Photographer: Janie-Rice Brother (unless otherwise noted)  
Date of Photograph: 2014  
Location of Original Media: CD at Kentucky Heritage Council (SHPO)

1. **Façade of the Club House (north elevation), facing southwest.**
2. **Façade and west elevation, facing southeast.**
3. **Rear (south) elevation and east elevation of the Club House, facing northwest.**
4. **Interior of Club House, showing stair hall and staircase.**
5. **Interior of board room of Club House.**
6. **Barn, east and north elevations, facing southwest.**
7. **Barn, south and east elevations, facing northwest.**
8. **Garage, east and north elevations, facing southwest.**
9. **Garage, north and west elevations, facing southeast.**
10. **Air strip, facing northeast,**
11. **Looking east toward Club House and garage.**

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

---

name United States Department of Agriculture/Forest Service  
street & number 91 Peabody Road telephone 606-598-2192  
city or town Big Creek state KY zip code 40914

Peabody-Fordson Historic District  
Name of Property

Clay County, KY  
County and State



Aerial photo of site (north at top)











Fordson Coal Company  
Incorporated

















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Peabody--Fordson Historic District

Multiple Name:

State & County: KENTUCKY, Clay

Date Received: 1/13/2017      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day: 12/7/1989      Date of 45th Day: 2/27/2017      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: 89002099

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

<i>Submission Type</i>	<i>Property Type</i>	<i>Problem Type</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Period - <i>ND</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other		<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years

Accept       Return       Reject      2/1/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Resub from 1989  
Comments:

SLR to change POS

Recommendation/ Accept / A & C  
Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275

Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments Y/N      see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Forest Service

Daniel Boone National Forest

1700 Bypass Road  
Winchester, KY 40391  
859-745-3100

**File Code:** 2360

**Date:** October 6, 2016

**Route To:**

**Subject:** Redbird Office National Register Listing

**To:** Regional Forester, R8

Please find enclosed the National Register nomination for the Peabody-Fordson Historic District located on the Redbird District of the Daniel Boone National Forest. This District includes the Redbird District office and several other contributing buildings and structures on the District office compound. Included in this mailing is the original signature page and two compact disks with the nomination and digital photographs. The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copies of the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

It is our pleasure to submit this nomination with our approval and endorsement. If you require anything further from us, please do not hesitate to contact my Heritage Program Manager, Wayna Adams, at [wladams@fs.fed.us](mailto:wladams@fs.fed.us) or 859-745-3100.

  
BILL LORENZ  
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure(s)

cc: Melissa Twaroski, Regional Archaeologist; Bobby Claybrook, Redbird District Ranger







File Code: 2360

Date: JAN 11 2017

Paul Loether  
National Register Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed you will find the hard copy signature pages and accompanying digital compact discs containing the National Register nominations for three historic properties located on national forest lands.

- Bano Grande located in the Rio Grande municipality of Puerto Rico, on the El Yunque National Forest,
- The Peabody-Fordson Historic District located in Clay County, Kentucky, on the Daniel Boone National Forest, and
- The Carr Family Cabin located in Marion County, Florida, on the Ocala National Forest.

These nomination forms have been reviewed, approved, and signed by me and the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Melissa Twaroski, Regional Heritage Program Manager, at 404-347-7250, or [mtwaroski@fs.fed.us](mailto:mtwaroski@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,

TONY TOOKE  
Regional Forester

Enclosures (3)

cc: Jim Gabbert; Melissa Twaroski

