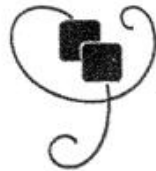


There's Something in a Name

HOW THE COUNTIES AND COUNTY SEATS OF
THE FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF
KENTUCKY GOT THEIR
INTERESTING NAMES



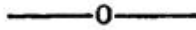
MARTHA GRASSHAM PURCELL

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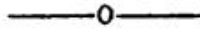
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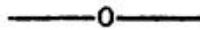
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HOW THE COUNTIES AND COUNTY SEATS OF
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MARTHA GRASSHAM PURCELL



From time immemorial we have heard on every hand, "There's nothing in a name," but we believe if you'll think with us a while you'll agree there is a great deal in a name.

Felicia Brown Hemans, the English writer, says:

"There's beauty all about our paths,
If but our watchful eyes
Could trace it midst familiar things
And in their lowly guise."

Begging the pardon of Mrs. Hemans, we would say, there's history all about our paths if only we would pause to consider. Every day we see places,

use familiar household words that are teeming with interest, beauty, romance, history, and none are quite so full of them as names. When we hear of a new invention, we immediately look up the etymology of the word to see why it is so called. When a baby is christened we wonder why it is so named, especially if the name be a new or odd one. So it is with places, and these place-names are not mere words, words, words that fell by chance upon a certain locality as rain from the heavens. Time was when no place of our American continent, not even the continent itself, was the proud possessor of a name. Then how and why did certain names come to be affixed to certain places? We loyal Kentuckians long ago read that the name of our state meant "Dark and Bloody Ground," but more recent research has disclosed a more beautiful, more promising meaning. Conquering the Ohio Valley, yet not daring to occupy it, the Iroquois Indians held it in reserve, so if they were driven from their present home as so many Eastern tribes had been, they could take refuge in this, their land in the West. So saving their possessions here for that purpose, they spoke of them as "The Land of Tomorrow," that is, the land where they intended to live in the future. They sent the Wyandots (Iroquoian) to live in it and manage it. So our state has a name derived from the Wyandot's dialect of the Iroquoian tongue.

"Land of Tomorrow"

The Wyandot (Iroquoian) Kah-ten-tah-teh means

a day, shortened to Ken-tah-teh, it is "The coming day," or "Tomorrow." Thus was fixed upon the Iroquoian possessions, both north and south of the Ohio, the name which meant the land where we will live tomorrow or in the future. It was only a step from Ken-tah-teh to Cantockey, Cantuckee, Kaintuckee, on through many changes, until we have the name we love so well—Kentucky, "The Land of Tomorrow."* Somehow it seems a promise, a prophecy that our state will yet forge ahead of anything she has yet done; that more than ever before her sons and daughters will be in the vanguard of all good works and we can truly sing,

"The sun shines bright in my old Kentucky home."

Bringing the subject of names nearer home, we know our own First Congressional District was dubbed "The Old Gibraltar," because it proved impregnable to the assaults of Republican visions and votes, and gave for so many years a handsome Democratic majority in all elections.

A part of this district was owned by the Chickasaw Indians until on October 19, 1818, the United States, through its commissioners, General Andrew Jackson and Governor Isaac Shelby, purchased it, hence "The Purchase," or "Jackson's Purchase." The nickname, "The Pennyroyal," comes from the abundance of pennyroyal growing in this section. The thirteen counties comprising this section of west-

* "History of Kentucky"—Judge Charles Kerr, Editor.

ern Kentucky, in the naming of both counties and county seats, present a panorama of historical happenings of wide range.

The same year that marked the birth of our nation saw the county of Fincastle in Virginia (our mother state) divided into three parts, one of which was called Kentucky county. Four years later, the march of civilization continuing westward, it became necessary that the seats of justice should be nearer the people, so this county was divided into Jefferson, Fayette and Lincoln. These were divided and subdivided until nine counties had been created which, on June 1, 1792, were admitted into the union as a separate state bearing the name of the original county, Kentucky.

Livingston Came First

Of these nine counties, we of the western part of our commonwealth are more directly interested in that section bearing the name of Lincoln, because from Lincoln in 1792 came Logan, from Logan in 1796 was carved Christian, and from Christian in 1798 was formed Livingston, the 29th county created in our state, but the first in "The Old Gibraltar." The name of this county perpetuates that of Robert R. Livingston, of New York, who was one of the committee that prepared that immortal document, the Declaration of Independence, and who was also one of its courageous signers. Appointed by Thomas Jefferson as Minister to France, he, in conjunction with James Monroe, conducted the treaty by which

we acquired the Louisiana Territory, a tract of 1,000,000 square miles, and the control of the great Mississippi River and its tributaries. Well did Mr. Livingston say, as they arose from signing the treaty of cession, "We have lived long, but this is the noblest work of our whole lives."

The first county seat of the original county of Livingston was called Salem, an abbreviation of the name of the Holy City—Jerusalem. Many of the surrounding counties were formed wholly or in part, from Livingston, the last division being in 1842, which left the boundary of the county as at present. The county seat was then removed to Smithland, which owes its name to old Smithland which flourished for a few years a mile or more below the mouth of the Cumberland. This was named for Col. James Smith, of Pennsylvania, who had many thrilling experiences with the Indians who called him Scouwa. Col. Smith, with three other white men and a mulatto slave, explored the Cumberland for many, many miles till they reached its junction with the Ohio. Here the others separated from Col. Smith and the mulatto boy, who were for a long time alone in the wilderness. It is very fitting that the county capital, situated at the junction of these rivers, should bear the name of the first white man to explore southern and southwestern Kentucky.

Caldwell is Created

In 1809 a new county, the fifty-first in the state, was created from Livingston and called Caldwell in

honor of Gen. John Caldwell, of Virginia, who served as a subaltern under Gen. George Rogers Clark in the campaign of 1786 against the Indians. Gen. Caldwell was later a member of the conventions held at Danville and in 1804 became Lieutenant-Governor of Kentucky. The seat of justice was first fixed at Eddyville, so named from the eddies in the Cumberland River near there. The county seat was later transferred to Centerville (being near the center of the county) ; later it was returned to Eddyville ; again removed, and permanently fixed at Princeton, named in honor of its pioneer settler, William Prince.

In 1820, the 66th county of the commonwealth was formed from parts of Christian and Caldwell, and given the name, Trigg, for Col. Stephen Trigg, of Virginia, who came to Kentucky in 1779. He settled Trigg's Station near Harrodsburgh and fell at the bloody battle of the Blue Licks, 1782, while leading his men in a charge. Cadiz, the county seat, bears a trans-Atlantic name from Cadiz, Spain.

From parts of Caldwell and Livingston, in 1821, Hickman, the 71st county came. It perpetuates the name of Captain Paschal Hickman, who migrated from Virginia, was distinguished for his activities against the Indians, was commissioned a captain in the War of 1812, and fell at the memorable battle of the River Raisin. Columbus, the first county seat, was named for the great navigator (some say at the suggestion of the Governor of Virginia). It has been told that the projectors of this town cherished

a dream of building at Columbus a city that should be not only the commercial center of the United States, but eventually the capital of our country. Desiring the seat of justice nearer the center of the county, the commissioners appointed for that purpose selected a new site and called it Clinton, in honor of DeWitt Clinton, of New York, who, as an active untiring advocate, pressed the adoption of the Erie Canal scheme, and who, while Governor of New York, opened the canal in 1825.

Named for Col. Calloway

Out of a part of Hickman, in 1822, was erected the 72nd county in Kentucky and called Calloway, for Col. Richard Calloway, who migrated to Kentucky in our Independence Year, was one of the first two burgesses to the General Assembly of Virginia while Kentucky county was yet a part of that mother state, and was one of the trustees appointed to lay off the town of Boonesborough.

Among the early settlers of Calloway county were the Wades—the first mentioned being Banester Wade. This name is perpetuated in the first county seat, Wadesboro. This was for a time a prosperous place; a land office was opened here and land sold from 12½ cents to \$1.25 per acre. When the public land had been disposed of, Wadesboro became "The Deserted Village," and the capital of the county was transferred to a plot (adjoining Pleasant Hill, or Pool Town) near the center of the county. This was named Murray in honor of Hon. John L. Murray,

a leading lawyer and a member of the United States Congress for a period of eleven years.

The year 1823 saw the forming of another county from Hickman, making the 75th of our commonwealth. This was called Graves, in honor of Major Benjamin Graves, who migrated to Kentucky from Virginia and settled in Fayette county. Mr. Graves was active in both civil and military affairs (receiving his appointment as major in Col. Lewis' regiment during the Second War with Great Britain), and made the supreme sacrifice at the Battle of the River Raisin.

Mayfield is Named

The naming of the county seat, Mayfield, is closely connected with tragedy. Tradition points to Mill's Point (now called Hickman) as a scene of great interest in horse racing about the year 1817. Many came from a distance to view this sport of a day gone by; among them one frequent visitor was a moneyed-man named Mayfield, of Mississippi. For some reason several men were bent upon disposing of him, and finally kidnaped him, carried him to where Mayfield now stands, and for a while, kept him captive. While being held a prisoner, he carved his name on a large tree, then one day, while making a dash for liberty, he was shot and drowned as he was crossing a log over the creek which was ever after to bear his name, and from which the town afterwards was called the same.

On December 17, 1824, the legislature voted to

erect a new county from a part of Hickman (making the 78th formed in the state). The actual organization of this county, however, did not take place until January, 17, 1825. This was named McCracken for Captain Virgil McCracken, a native of Woodford county, Kentucky, and who was the son of Cyrus McCracken, who fell while serving under Gen. George Rogers Clark, in his expedition to avenge the battle of the Blue Licks. Captain McCracken followed in the footsteps of his famous father and gallantly gave his life at the head of his company at the River Raisin, January 22, 1813; so his proud patronym we bear.

McCracken's First Capital

From Delaware to North Carolina, we find that a favorite name in the early annals of our country was Wilmington, so called for the Earl of Wilmington (Spence Compton). As many of our early settlers in McCracken were of Carolina descent, very probably the love of the name cherished in their native state lingering in their bosoms caused our first county capital to bear the name, Wilmington. In a few short years this place lost its pristine glory; but meanwhile Pekin had grown by leaps and bounds, and General William Clark (the younger brother of George Rogers Clark) had become the owner of this vast tract near our three rivers, and remembering kindnesses from savage hands, had changed the name from Pekin to Paducah, which, in their tribal language (with many various spellings) means "tall,

upstanding chestnut tree." This, in 1832, became our county seat.

As before stated, the last county cut from the original Livingston was formed in 1842, making the 91st, and named Crittenden in honor of John Jordan Crittenden, a native of Woodford county, who was noted as an orator and statesman; a one time Attorney-General of the United States and an ardent advocate of peace. He it was who offered in the United States Senate the "Crittenden Propositions," by which he hoped to adjust the difficulties between the North and the South. He was President of the Border States Convention at Frankfort, in May, 1861, when again mediation was attempted; was also an active participant in the Old and New Court controversy; and was distinguished in military as well as civil affairs, serving with gallantry under General Shelby at the battle of the Thames.

For "The Swamp Fox"

The county seat of Crittenden, Marion, perpetuates the name of a Revolutionary Soldier, "The Swamp Fox"—Gen. Francis Marion. William Cullen Bryant aptly has his fearless followers sing—

"Our band is few, but true and tried
Our leader frank and bold;
The British soldier trembles
When Marion's name is told."

Out of Calloway in 1842 was formed the 92nd county of our commonwealth and named Marshall,

in memory of Chief Justice John Marshall, of Virginia, who served as a Lieutenant of Minute-Men in the Revolution, took part in the battles of Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth, but whose undying glory was his unsullied dignity and unusual ability as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States for nearly thirty-five years.

The county seat, Benton, bears the proud name of the noted United States Senator, Thomas Hart Benton, who served from Missouri with much distinction.

The year 1842 seemed a fruitful one for the formation of new counties in Western Kentucky, for in that year also, from Hickman and McCracken counties was formed Ballard, the third that year in this section, and the 93rd in the state. This county owes its name to Captain Bland Ballard, a Virginian, who after coming to Kentucky, served almost continuously under either Bowman, Clark, Scott, Wilkinson or Wayne from 1779 to 1794. When not engaged in regular campaign work, he was a trusty spy for General Clark, and in this capacity succeeded in killing three Indians in one morning, whereupon Gen. Clark gave him, among other small presents, a linen shirt, of which Captain Ballard was doubtless very proud, as it was the only shirt he had possessed for several years except those made of leather. In after years Captain Ballard was active and useful in civil life, as he had been in Indian warfare.

The Noble Wickliffe

The first county seat of this new county was near the center of the county, at Blandville, named from Captain Ballard's christian name, later the change was made to the present county capital, Wickliffe, named for Hon. Charles Anderson Wickliffe, a native of Kentucky, and a peer as citizen or soldier of the best brain and brawn of the state. Under Governor Shelby at the battle of the Thames, as Governor of our commonwealth, as Postmaster General in the cabinet of President Tyler, as a factor in securing the annexation of the lone star Republic, Texas, and as a commissioner to a religious convention, he ever upheld the record of Kentuckians for both moral and physical courage.

In 1845 Hickman county was again called upon to yield territory for a new county, the 99th in Kentucky, which bears the name Fulton, in honor of Robert Fulton, a native of Pennsylvania, whose boat, the Clermont, sailed the Hudson in 1807. While history generally concedes to him the invention of the steamboat, yet in 1813, when Fulton brought suit to establish his claims as the inventor of steam navigation, he was defeated by a pamphlet by John Fitch, which proved conclusively there were inventions antedating the Clermont. Fitch had in 1787, 1788, and 1789 built several boats that made from four to seven and one-half miles per hour between Philadelphia and Burlington. Fitch came to Kentucky from Connecticut, and is buried at Bardstown.

The county seat, Hickman, (formerly Mill's Point, so called in honor of a Mr. Mills who settled there in 1819), was later called by the maiden name of the wife of G. W. L. Marr, who at one time owned, not only the entire town, but also several thousand acres around it.

Named for Colonel Lyon

From Caldwell county in 1854, the 102nd county in Kentucky was carved, and was called Lyon, in memory of Col. Chittenden Lyon, who represented his district in the United States Congress for eight years. He was of as prodigious physical proportions as of mental, and fearless in either sense. He was a famous son of a famous father (the Hon. Matthew Lyon), who cast the deciding vote that made Thomas Jefferson President, and the same who was convicted, under the Alien and Sedition laws, fined and imprisoned on account of his attack on the administration of President John Adams. While serving his sentence he was re-elected to congress and years after the fine was returned to his descendants.

The county seat, Eddyville, so called from the eddies in the Cumberland River near there, has the unusual distinction of serving twice as the county seat of Caldwell and permanently of Lyon.

The year 1886 saw a division of Ballard county and the forming therefrom of Carlisle, named for the Hon. John Griffin Carlisle, a native of Campbell (now Kenton) county, Kentucky, who played a prominent part in the public affairs of both state and

nation, serving in both the upper and lower houses of the State Legislature, and of the United States Congress, as Lieutenant-Governor of Kentucky, and as Secretary of the Treasury in the Cabinet of President Cleveland.

This, the 119th county in our state, has as its capital, Bardwell. Some have thought it was named from the Bards who lived at one time near there, but the latest accepted tradition says there was in early days a bored well located in the town; this attracted a great deal of attention, so from the settlement with the bored well we have the corruption to Bardwell.

If each of the thirteen above named counties in the First Congressional District would erect at its county seat a tablet setting forth the origin of the names of both county and county seat, a lasting good would be done, for from local pride we must build national patriotism.