

KENTUCKY'S "NUMBER" NAMES

One of the more curious place naming traditions is said to have been the designation of places or geographic features by numbers instead of more conventional names. In Kentucky, however, this may not have been so unusual for nearly 300 such referents, exemplifying almost every kind of feature, have been identified in at least 80 of the state's 120 counties. Admittedly, nearly thirty per cent of these designations are extensions, or derivative applications, of those number names which, earlier, had been given to key referents in the area, usually bodies of water or elevations.

Although we can account for the application of most of the individual names to their referents, the idea of using numbers instead of words to identify places has never been systematically examined. Stewart's¹ contention that "people of systematic minds" took to using numbers after all the good names had already been given does not seem to apply in Kentucky (if, indeed, it applied anywhere); most of Kentucky's number names had been given to streams before 1800 when, it is safe to say, the pool of available names was more than ample.

Neither was there anything "systematic" about the pioneer's use of numbers for names; it was but one of the many ways early namers had of identifying places and features. We know that much early name giving was casual or impulsive when there was an immediate need for an identification (much as the Indians are said to have referred to a geographic feature for the nonce simply for the purpose of communicating some incident that had occurred there) with no thought that the designation would be affixed to the referent for all time. This may

explain why many features were identified in pioneer depositions and journals by several primarily descriptive or possessive designations only one of which, when it later became necessary to identify a place on a map or official document, was then arbitrarily selected as the name. I am of the opinion that many of Kentucky's number names were early appellatives (or simple designator terms) that later became permanently fixed to their referents.

In general, number names may be considered descriptive, most often locating the referent at a certain distance from some other point or relative to a number of distinguishing local features (springs, hills, buildings, trees, rivers, lakes, etc.) of significance to the namer, or as one of a series of similar places or features (usually expressed as an ordinal), or marking its size or that of some nearby feature of significance. Some number names applied to streams, roads, or islands indicate their length, though this is less common than one might think. (The pioneer's application of number names to streams was less for their stream's length--which was often not known--as for the distance from its mouth to some other point.) Some places took the names of local schools or school districts, which were usually numbered in order of establishment in the nineteenth century, or of area mines, which were identified by numbers in the early twentieth century. A few commemorated incidents that occurred in a particular year or reflected sentimental regard for certain numbers, or were imported from somewhere else and thus had no local significance. Then there are the so-called "pseudo-number" names--those that appear to be numbers but which are really family names (e.g. Million and Sixes).

Of the nearly 300 known Kentucky number names, over thirty per cent identify streams and hollows while another 25 per cent designate settlements, post offices, and rural and suburban neighborhoods. Nine per cent specify schools, eight per cent churches, and seven per cent roads. Other generics identified by number names are islands (four per cent), ponds and lakes (three per cent), hills and knobs (three per cent), springs, groves, camps, falls, mills, mines and quarries, caves, rocks, bridges, cemeteries, towers, houses, and vaguely designated areas. Over sixty per cent are double-specifics, the most frequent combinations being Mile (53 per cent), Fork (seven per cent), Spring (six per cent), and Lick (five per cent).

In the following analysis, those number names applied to key places or features in Kentucky are rendered as they appeared on the maps and in the published and unpublished references which furnished my sample. Except in very earliest times the numbers have been spelled out. The combining of the double specifics as a single word (Threemile or Twentytwomile) or their entry as two or more words (Three Mile, Twenty Two Mile) was discretionary and, in retrospect, is probably quite insignificant.

I. More Kentucky places or features bear number names for their distance from some other point than for any other reason. The most common and earliest of these were streams.

Fourmile Creek joins the Cumberland River some four miles nw of the original site of the Bell Co. seat of Pineville. (Since the creek is also about four miles long this too could have accounted for its

name.) Just below its mouth is the coal town, post office and L&N Railroad station of Fourmile. Another Fourmile Creek joins the same river four miles below Harlan Town in neighboring Harlan Co. The community at its mouth is also known as Fourmile though its post office is Keith. The mouth of Four Mile Branch of Little Poplar Creek is about four miles from the Mackey Bend Ferry, an important early Cumberland River crossing in Knox Co.

Several Ohio River tributaries have numbers for their names. Kinniconick Creek which joins the river at Garrison in nw Lewis Co. was identified on John Filson's pioneer (c.1784) map of Kentucky as Twelve Mile Creek ostensibly for its location twelve miles below and across from the mouth of the Scioto River. A series of number named streams enter the Ohio River in Campbell Co. Though only Fourmile, Tenmile, and Twelvemile are shown on contemporary maps, we believe that in early historic times there may actually have been a progression of named streams from One to at least Twelve. Yet it is not known to what particular points on the Ohio they refer. It could have been that the Kentucky streams followed somewhat different courses in pioneer times than they do now and thus joined the river at different locations. Fourmile Creek (early called Silama, Sellema, or Selma Creek) extends from the Campbell Co. seat of Alexandria to the river three miles above and across from the mouth of the Little Miami. Tenmile Creek meets the river ten miles above the Little Miami, and the mouth of Twelvemile (first called Wells Creek for two pioneer surveyors) is two miles above Tenmile. An unidentified stream is shown on most maps where an Eightmile Creek ought to be. The existence

of such a named stream is assumed since its two head forks seem to follow routes now identified as Upper and Lower Eight Mile Roads. This alleged Eightmile Creek is around 2½ miles below the mouth of Tenmile and 4½ miles above the mouth of Fourmile. The names of each of these Campbell Co. streams gave rise to a number of derivative names for neighborhoods, roads, schools, and churches along their respective courses.

Two more Fourmile Creeks flow into the Ohio River from the Kentucky side. One is about four miles above Carrollton, the Carroll Co. seat at the mouth of the Kentucky River, and the other (now called Little Bayou Creek), is four miles below and opposite Ft. Massac (now Metro-polis, Illinois), 12 miles below Paducah. Some 18 miles above Corn Island (the center of downtown Louisville) is the mouth of Eighteen Mile Creek, just below the Oldham Co. town of Westport and a mile above (the) Eighteen Mile Island.

Tributaries of the Kentucky River include Six Mile Creek which heads just nw of Bagdad in Shelby Co. and joins the river at Lockport in Henry Co. It was identified as Six Mile as early as 1786 when the famed Low Dutch Tract (a pioneer settlement of Dutch Reformed Huguenots) was purchased from Squire Boone and may have referred to its being some six miles north of his Painted Stone (or Boone's) Station, three miles north of Shelbyville. This station, established in 1779, was then the only protection from the Indians for white settlers between Harrodsburg and the Falls of the Ohio (Louisville).² An unlocated Six Mile Post Office (1857-1861) may have been at or above the head of the creek in the Christiansburg area, somewhere in the vicinity of a Six Mile Church

that had been organized in 1799. The Six Mile name was also applied to the center of the pioneer Low Dutch Colony, 1½ miles east of the present Pleasureville (Henry Co.), where another Six Mile Church had been established in 1806.

The Two Mile and Four Mile (aksa Muddy) Creeks, Kentucky River branches in Clark Co., are said to have been named by Daniel Boone for their approximate distance above Boonesborough. Ten, Fifteen, and Sixteen Mile Creeks are Perry Co. streams in the Kentucky River system named for their respective distances up Lost Creek from its Troublesome Creek confluence on the Breathitt Co. line.

Another Campbell Co. stream, Threemile Creek, is that distance long and joins the Licking River three miles from its meeting with the Ohio River opposite downtown Cincinnati. Magoffin County's State Road Fork, another Licking River tributary, has a Twentytwo Mile Branch. County historians agree that this one mile long stream must have been 22 miles from something but do not know what. An old name, it identifies one of the boundary lines in the legislation establishing Morgan Co. in 1822, and thus my guess is that it refers to its distance from Prestonsburg, until then the governmental seat of the large territory that included that stream.

At least five number name streams have been identified in the Big Sandy system in the extreme eastern part of the state. In Lawrence Co. (the) Twomile and Threemile Creeks join the Levisa Fork two and three miles, respectively, above downtown Louisa where the Levisa and Tug Forks join to form the Big Sandy River. Four Mile Branch in Knott Co. may have been named for its distance up Jones Fork of Right Beaver Creek from the Floyd Co. line town of Lackey. Main Beaver Creek is

another Levisa Fork tributary. Also in the Levisa system are Threemile Branch of Shelby Creek and Fiftyeight Branch of Raccoon Creek, both in Pike Co. The first was probably named for its being three miles north of Shelby Gap, and the other by a pioneer surveyor for its distance from some early but now unknown county line.³

While most numbered streams seem to have been named for the distance from their mouth to some other point, at least one, Tenmile Creek (in the Salt River system), may refer to the distance from its source to the center of the Spencer Co. seat of Taylorsville.

At least five Kentucky settlements have borne number names derived from distances. Fivemile, on the North Fork of the Kentucky River, is five miles ne of the Breathitt Co. seat of Jackson. Three Mile was a railroad stop on the old E.K. Railroad, three miles from the Ohio River town of Greenup, the Greenup Co. seat. Ten Mile, a Campbell Co. post office (1867-1910) on US 27, just north of Alexandria, the county seat, was probably named for its being ten miles from the Ohio River at Newport. Nine-Mile House, a stage stop on the old Louisville & Nashville Turnpike (c.1840s), just north of the present community of Pleasure Ridge Park, was named for its site nine miles ssw of downtown Louisville. Buechel, an unincorporated residential suburb of Louisville, was early called Two Mile Precinct or Two Mile Town for its northern limit was then two miles from Louisville. The community was renamed in 1883 when John Buechel established the local post office in his tavern and named it for himself.

Other distance-derived number names include the Six Mile and Twelve-mile Islands in the Ohio River at the upper end of Jefferson Co. which are, respectively, six and twelve miles above Corn Island, the original

site of Louisville; the Four and Ten Mile and Four and Twelve Mile Roads which extend between the Campbell Co. streams of these names; Threemile (House) School, three miles from downtown Henderson; and Eight Mile Baptist Church (Jefferson Co.) organized in 1891 at or near the site of Eight Mile House, an early nineteenth century inn on the Shelbyville Rd. (now US 60), eight miles from Louisville.⁴

Many places or features were named for the number of their distinguishing characteristics or components [a pond with four necks is thus Four Neck Pond or a three peaked elevation is Three Knob Hill] or for the number of other local features in terms of which the key referents were originally located or may still be identified [near four oaks, three springs, seven gum trees, two licks, etc.]

Springs are probably the most common local features giving rise to number names. A typical example is the church, community, and post office of Three Springs in se Hart Co. in the vicinity of three springs that rise from and almost immediately re-enter the ground and feed a large underground drainage network in the area. The post office, established in 1841 and later transferred to nearby Park, in Barren Co., was re-established as Three Springs in 1853 and closed in 1919. An unlocated Three Springs Creek in nearby ne Barren Co. may also refer to these springs or even originate with them.

Also aptly named were another Three Springs community just south of Bowling Green;⁵ Three Springs Knob in sw LaRue Co; the Five Springs neighborhood, school, and church two miles nw of Albany (Clinton Co.); Seven Springs (Cumberland Presbyterian) Church near the forks of the Little Barren River in nc Metcalfe Co; and Seven Springs School, an antebellum academy on the Mississippi bottom in old Columbus (Hickman Co.). The Seven Springs (Missionary Baptist) Church, one of western

Kentucky's oldest, was originally located near the Cumberland River, north of Dycusburg (Crittenden Co.). It was later relocated near the present Ky. 70, two miles ne, but on current maps is inexplicably identified as Seven Branch Church.

Several Kentucky spring complexes themselves are named for the number of separate springs that compose them. Among these are the Three Springs in the Mammoth Cave National Park (Edmonson Co.) which long furnished water for the local resort hotels; Two Springs on the South Fork of Beargrass Creek (Jefferson Co.); the Seven Sisters Spring (later the Allen Spring), the source of water for the Russell Co. town of Russell Springs;⁶ and Nine Springs which has served the Powersburg area of sw Wayne Co. Several miles separate two spring complexes near the banks of Green River in eastern Hart Co. with the hyperbolic names of Hundred Springs and Three Hundred Springs. In each case the name derives from the many crystal clear springs in the vicinity that emerge from limestone cliffs and, in the past, furnished water power for local mills and other activities.

Local salt licks have also provided names. Several Two Lick Creeks feed the forks of the Licking River in Mason, Harrison, and Menifee Counties; and Greenup Co. has a Two Lick Hollow. Washington Co. has a Three Lick Creek, while Muddy Creek in Ohio Co. has a Three Lick Fork, and Three Lick Branch joins the Licking River in Rowan Co. A hunters' paradise has long existed at the salt licks surfacing from Five Lick Creek, another Licking River stream in Robertson Co.

Several names were suggested by the number of hills and rocks in the vicinity of the referents. (The) Three Knobs in ne Knox Co. collectively identifies three elevations at the head of Roaring Fork of Stinking Creek. The Devil's Three Jumps are three hills west of Fearsville in ne Christian Co. Three Prong has been applied to a stream,

rural neighborhood and its post office, two schools, and a road in sw Greenup Co. (The Three Prong Branch which joins Tygarts Creek some 250 yards from the Carter Co. line, was named for the three prongs of a nearby ridge. The post office operated in Greenup and Carter Counties from 1857 to 1867.) An old Indian burial site called The Five Pillars are five large rocks on top of a hill overlooking the Cumberland River in ne Cumberland Co. Seven Hills was an aptly named community and post office (1901-1905), school, and church just se of Owensboro. Great plans for a turn-of-the-century metropolis to rival or even overtake its larger neighbor failed to materialize and the community was soon incorporated into Owensboro where it maintains its identity as an urban neighborhood. Overlooking the Cumberland River somewhere between Pineville and Harlan (the seats of Bell and Harlan Counties) are The Seven Sisters Cliffs. These, according to local legend, were named for the coincidence of the seven daughters of the Miracle family living so near seven large cliffs.

Several Kentucky mining communities have borne names denoting, at the outset, the number of houses there. The Ohio Co. coal camp of Ten Spot, just north of McHenry, was named for ten houses identical in shape, size, color, and every other detail that the Beaver Dam Coal Co. had built there for its workers. Neighboring Muhlenberg Co. has a Five Spot, on US 431, se of Central City, and an Eight Spot, a residential section of Martwick, a coal town near the Green River. Five bungaloes at Brookside (Harlan Co.) gave rise to the subdivision of Five Spot, while a Ten Spot, half a mile up Jones Creek from Clover Fork of Cumberland, in the same county, was named for its ten small homes.

The number of local trees at a given time accounted for several Kentucky names. The post office of Four Daks (1891-1903), two miles south of Falmouth (Pendleton Co.) was named for four oak trees there in the late nineteenth century. The name Seven Pines was applied to a neighborhood and school in the vicinity of the Dabolt post office in Jackson Co. Though the crossroads community and post office (1873-1905) of Seven Gums, four miles south of Morganfield, has been mistakenly identified on most maps as Guns, Union Co. historians are sure it was named for some local gum trees. Paul Semonin who developed the Jefferson Co. subdivision of Sevenoaks in the mid 1970s could not recall why he gave it this name but assumed it was for a cluster of seven oaks on the site.

One of the most curious of Kentucky place names is Thousandsticks, applied first to a creek and mountain 2½ miles nw of the Leslie Co. seat of Hyden and, by extension, to a post office, school, church, and one of the county's two weekly newspapers. Of several possible derivations of the name two seem the most plausible. According to eastern Kentucky historian Harry Caudill, "The mountaineer from earliest times applied the term (sticks) to the trunks of his great trees. Settlers on (this) stream...found hundreds of ancient trees which died of old age. There were so many of them that it was called the 'Thousandsticks Creek.'" ⁷ Or one may recall the early travelers who came upon the remains of a great forest fire--the charred trunks of thousands of dead trees standing for all the world like a pile of sticks.

Rivers, ponds, islands, railroad lines, and seams of coal have given/ number names to Kentucky features. The Three River Rock Quarry in Livingston Co. was named for its proximity to the Ohio, Tennessee, and Cumberland

Rivers. These three and the Mississippi gave their names to the Four Rivers Boy Scout Reservation on Kentucky Lake in nearby Marshall Co. Four connected ponds in Wayne Co. were collectively known as the Four Neck Pond until a large dam made it all one big pond. Three Ponds in Hickman Co. was aptly named for a string of three ponds less than a mile from the Mississippi River. They are bordered on the ne by the Three Ponds Bluff. Three Sisters Hollow in the ^{ne} section of Mammoth Cave National Park in Edmonson Co. drains into the Green River at the site of three islands for which it was named. In pioneer days the three islands in the Ohio River just south of Manchester, Ohio were collectively called The Three Islands. This name was also applied to a site on the Kentucky shore, probably in the vicinity of the Lewis Co. settlement of Trinity whose name, too, was derived from the three islands. The islands are now called the Manchester Islands though only two of them are extant.

The railroad bridge over the Ohio River between Louisville and Jeffersonville, Indiana is called The Big Four Bridge for its use earlier this century by the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railway, popularly known as the Big Four Road. The Perry Co. mining camp of Fourseam was named (c.1912-1915) for the four seams of coal in a local mine. Another Kentucky hyperbole is Hundred Dome Cave in the Mammoth Cave National Park which may have been named for the large number of "pit and dome formations" in the vicinity. It was first called Coach Cave and was operated commercially before the Civil War. Then there is the Four Sisters Run, a Scott Co. stream named for pioneer Robert McClelland's daughters.

A sizeable number of Kentucky places were named for their locations at the junction of several streams or roads. The Martin Co. post office of Threeforks (established in 1938 and current) was named for the three forks of Petercave, some three miles up from Pigeonroost Fork of Wolf Creek. The Three Forks of Greasy Creek neighborhood centers at the hamlet of Boons Camp in adjacent Johnson Co. About a mile above, Pigeon (Right), Middle, and Buttermilk (Left) Forks join to form the 6½ mile long stream that flows to the Big Sandy River at Offutt.

Some 4½ miles east of Beattyville is the Lee Co. village of St. Helens. First called Canaan, then Lewellen when its post office was established in 1883, it was renamed Three Forks City in 1889 with the arrival of the railroad and was incorporated in this name the following year. Shortly thereafter it assumed its present name. The forks are those of the Kentucky River which actually do not come together at one point to form the main stream; Middle Fork flows into North Fork about four miles above (east of) the mouth of South Fork at Beattyville. Moreover, the village itself is over a mile up Middle Fork. The area around Beattyville, the Lee Co. seat, has sometimes been called Three Forks Country and that town too may locally have been called Three Forks City. Another Three Forks settlement (in Garrard Co.) is at the point where the Middle and West Forks of Sugar Creek (a Kentucky River tributary) join the main stream, but a mile below the mouth of East Fork.

The Three Forks name was also applied to a Baptist church established in 1818 at the head forks of Bacon Creek, a Nolin River tributary in ne Hart Co. and to a US Forest Service overlook in n. McCreary Co. where the Hurricane, Middle, and Freeman Forks join to form Beaver Creek in the Cumberland River system. The Three Forks of Warix Run in Rowan Co. is also aptly named.

Among the places named for their locations at the junctions of several roads are the Warren Co. hamlet-post office of Three Forks; the Rockcastle Co. hamlet-post office of Threelinks; Everett Buhl's Whitley Co. store he named Three Point; Four Corners, a name applied to two crossroads settlements in Grant and Hardin Counties; the Lawrence Co. settlement of Five Forks; another Five Forks post office in sw Barren Co; Five Points at the west end of the State University in the city of Murray (Calloway Co.); and Seven Corners in Hardin Co.

Kentucky's best known Three Forks is now the Barren Co. town of Park City. This sixth class city, midway between Louisville and Nashville, was the site of a famed antebellum stage stop and tavern called Three Forks (later Bell's Tavern) where the Glasgow and Bardstown roads joined the Louisville and Nashville Pike. William Bell, a large landowner, established here in 1827 a post office he named Three Forks for his tavern. Part of his land was later divided into lots and sold to the founders of Glasgow Junction, the incorporated city on the L&N Railroad's main line from which a spur track was extended to the Barren Co. seat of Glasgow, 7½ miles east. The post office which became Glasgow Junction in 1863 was renamed Park City in 1938 for the nearby Mammoth Cave National Park.

III Another well established naming pattern is the application of ordinal numbers to a series of streams, islands, or other features. In some cases only one of these features retains its number name. In Pike Co. are the aptly named First, Second, and Third Forks of Big Creek and the First and Second Forks of Millers Creek, tributaries of the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River. First, Second, and Third Hollows are the first three off Bill Chain Branch of Montgomery Creek which joins Lewis County's Kinniconick Creek half a mile from the Ohio River. First and

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Second Creeks (Edmonson Co.) are the first two tributaries of Nolin River above its confluence with the Green River. Second Creek (Boone Co.) is the second Ohio River stream below and opposite the mouth of the Big Miami River.⁸ Second Branch of Cumberland River (Harlan Co.) may have been named for its being the second branch above the town of Mulus. The Second Fork of Wooton Creek (Leslie Co.), also aptly named, was first called Browning Fork. (The second stream on the left as one goes up Wooton from Second Fork is known as Big Two Branch.) Smith Fork, the first north side branch of Bent Branch (of Pike County's Johns Creek) was early called First Fork.

Some aptly named churches are Second Otter Creek Church (McCreary Co.), half a mile east of Otter Creek and just north of the Tennessee line, which refers to an earlier Otter Creek church three miles away; (the) Second Twelve Mile Baptist Church (Pendleton Co.), just east of the head of Twelvemile Creek (the first Twelvemile Church was downstream in Campbell Co.); and Freedom Number Two Baptist Church and Beech Grove Baptist Church Number Two, both in Monroe Co.

On the Mississippi River from the mouth of the Ohio to southern Louisiana are (or, in some cases, were) a string of 124 islands which once were numbered successively from north to south. In addition, several chutes and lakes on both sides of the main stream were named in progression, also from north to south. In Kentucky, Islands Number One, Three, Four and Five and Chutes Two, Three, and Four are still so identified.

Other rivers, like the Kentucky, Green, and Licking, had in the nineteenth century a series of numbered locks and dams proceeding upstream. Several of these gave names to communities and post offices at the sites. The Thirteen post office (1903-1914) on the Kentucky River in Lee Co. was

names for Lock 13. The L&N Railroad's station here was also called Lock Number 13, and later simply Thirteen for the post office. The Butler Co. post office of Woodbury on the Green River, 20 miles nw of Bowling Green, was established in 1847 as Lock Number Four. It was changed to Woodbury the following month to conform to the name by which the community has been known since the 1830s. Butler, a city seven miles north of Falmouth, was first called Fourth Lock for its site at the fourth lock and dam on the Licking River. The post office established here as Clayton in 1857 was renamed for then Congressman William O. Butler in 1860.

IV. Several streams, roads, and islands were named for their length. The streams include Fourmile Run (Bell Co.), Fourmile Creek (Boyd Co.), the Fourmile Fork of Turkey Creek (Breathitt Co.), Three Mile Branch of Crystal Creek (Lee Co.), Threemile Hollow (Pike Co.), Twomile Branch of Big Caney Creek (Breathitt Co.), Two Mile Creek (Johnson Co.), and Twomile Fork of Caney Fork (of Johns Creek in Pike Co.), now called Rockspring Branch. Two roads named for their length are Sixmile Lane (Jefferson Co.) and Four Mile Rd. (Madison Co.). One island that may have been named for its length is Three Mile Island in the Ohio River just below Newburgh, Indiana. (It is now somewhat less than three miles). In addition, two creeks were named, by extension, for the lengths of nearby features. Twomile Creek (Owen Co.) refers to a Twomile Rd. between New Liberty and Sparta which was two miles long in early settlement times.⁹ Four Mile Creek (Carter Co.) was named for Four Mile Long Rd.

V. The size of the feature or some nearby feature has accounted for a few names. Nine Acre and Big Four are aptly named fluorspar mines in Crittenden Co. Ten Acre Pond in Christian Co. and Hundred Acre Pond in

Hart Co. are said to have been those sizes at the time they were named though they have since shrunk. The Twelveacre Branch of Grassy Fork in se Lewis Co. was named for the size of a large cove near its head.

VI. Local schools, including those identified by numbers (usually indicating the order in which they were established or brought into the county system), often gave their names to the communities or neighborhoods that grew up around them. Among these are the Number Five Neighborhood in ne Christian Co., the Numbers One, Two, and Twelve Neighborhoods in Wayne Co., and the Ohio Co. hamlet of Nineteen.

The same can be said of local mines which were also numbered, often with reference to veins or seams.¹⁰ Sixth Vein and Sixseam were coal camps in sw Hopkins Co. Number one and Number Two Hollows in Knox Co. were named for the mines in each called, respectively, Coalport Number One and Coalport Number Two. Fifteen (or Number Fifteen) Hollow at McRoberts (Letcher Co.) is the site of the Consolidation Coal Corporation's #15 Mine. The Stearns Coal and Lumber Co. operated a number of mines along both sides of the Big South Fork River in McCreary Co. in the vicinity of its Blue Heron camp. To distinguish those on the west side of the river from those on the east, they were identified as One, Two, Three, etc. West. Three West Hollow survives as the name of a west bank stream. McCreary Co. also has a Mine Ten Ridge and a Mine Number Eighteen Arch, while Boyd Co. had a Number Eight Mines School on Number Eight Mines Rd.

VII. Several Kentucky communities that are usually included in national inventories of oddly named places have borne numbers for their names, and for equally eccentric reasons. Eighty-Eight in Barren Co. centers

on its still active post office which was established in 1869 by Dabney L. Nunnally, the local storekeeper and first postmaster. Nunnally's handwriting is said to have been so bad that only numbers could be recorded with any semblance of legibility. He came up with 88 when he reached in his pocket for his loose change. This account¹¹ is locally preferred to the one based on the site's distance of 8.8 road miles se of Glasgow, which it was. Anyway, the postal authorities early on stipulated that the name be spelled out.

Mrs. Martha Rowland is said to have submitted a list of 25 names for the Morgan Co. post office she was to manage. At the bottom she added a twenty sixth, simply the year--1926 in which her application was signed. The Post Office Department bypassed all her suggestions but the last. The post office of Twenty Six closed in 1957.

The Harlan Co. coal town of Three Point could have gotten its name from three nearby hills but it was more likely named for the Three Point Coal Corp. which ran the local mine. The company's name refers to the three virtues it claimed for its local operation--service, quality, and dependability. First Night Hollow on Big Renox Creek was the first camping ground of the pioneer Baker brothers in what became Cumberland Co. In SW Letcher Co. is the Four Square Church which was organized around 1959 and long pastored by a once member of Aimee Semple McPherson's famed Church of the Four-square Gospel in California.

Three explanations have been offered for Kentucky's most famous number name. The Clinton Co. hamlet and post office¹² of Seventy Six could have been named for the height, in pioneer times, of the nearby falls (though today, with the creation of the Wolf Creek Dam and Lake Cumberland, the so-called 76 Falls are but half that high.) But some area historians believe that the falls were named for the community

which had been laid out as a town in 1817 and named for the station number in the original land survey.¹³ Or it could have been named for the year of the Declaration of Independence.

The post office of Echo that served the Metcalfe Co. neighborhood of Big Meadow from 1891 to 1914 was established as Seventy Seven but no one in the county remembers this or can venture an explanation. Two antebellum post offices, Two Mile Creek (Daviness Co.) and Five Mile (Henry Co.) were named for nearby creeks but no one knows why the creeks were so named.

VIII. Finally, there are the so-called "pseudo-number" names--those that seem like numbers but really are family names. There's Million, a discontinued post office and L&N station in nw Madison Co., which began as Fain in 1881 and was renamed three years later for the family of B.B. Million, local landowner and merchant. Another Million family gave its name to a cemetery in the sw corner of Lewis Co. The J.W. Million School in Earlington (Hopkins Co.) was built in 1905 by the local coal company that then owned the town and was renamed in 1935 for the Rev. J.W. Million. Sixes Creek, which heads in Ohio Co. and joins Indian Camp Creek in Butler Co. was named for either Daniel Six (or his family) or Abe Six, the area's first settler.

IX. The following names(identified by their counties) are as yet unexplained. A search continues for their derivations: Onemile Branch of Beech Creek (Leslie); The One Eye Hollow (Wayne); First Creek (and School) (Perry); Upper and Lower Second Creek(s) (Perry); Two Notch Br. of Grapevine Creek (and School) (Perry); Two Mile Run and Three Mile Run (Fleming); Two, Four, and Five Mile Forks of Quicksand Creek (Breathitt); Salem Number Two Church (Bell); Two Springs (Barren); Third Elk Spring (Warren); Three Kiln Knob (Hart); Three Forks (of Eagle) Creek (Grant); Three Mile (community in Breathitt); Five Mile

Crossing (Campbell); Six Mile Grove (Warren); Six Mile Post Office (Union); Sixacre Branch of Clarks River (Marshall); Six Mile Creek (Barren); (The) Six Mile Grove (on the north side of the Big Barren River); Seven Sticks School (Graves); Eighth Branch of Red River (Wolfe); Figure Eight Branch of Puncheon Creek (Allen); Nine Right Hollow (Whitley); Ten Acre Fork of Spencer Fork (Owsley); Ten Acre Branch (Metcalfe); Ten Mile Creek (Grant & Gallatin); Twelve Mile Creek (which is now Little Sandy River that joins the Ohio River in Greenup Co.); Twelvemile Post Office (Leslie); Forty Acre Knobs (Nelson); Zero Post Office (Hart); and Lakes Number One, Six, and Thirteen (Grayson).

FODTNOTES

1. George R. Stewart, Names on the Land, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967, P. 359
2. Personal communication from V.J. Akers, Bargersville, Ind., Aug. 11, 1987. According to Akers, early settlers counted the distance from their new homes to Boone's Station very carefully for it was there they needed to flee in case of Indian troubles. But, says Akers, the Six Mile name may also refer to the "straight line" distance between the mouth of the creek and the mouth of Drennon's Lick Creek, another important location down the Kentucky River.
3. With reference to the Twentytwo Mile and Fiftyeight Branches-- it is not known whether distances in early settlement times were reckoned by stream or road, or what the road patterns were then.
4. On old maps this community was known as Howesburg.
5. The nearby Three Springs Park was recently renamed for the Warren Co. Judge-Executive Basil Griffith.
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FOOTNOTES-

1. George R. Stewart, Names On The Land, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967, P. 359
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With reference to the Twentytwo Mile and Fiftyeight Branches-- it is not known whether distances in early settlement times were reckoned by stream or road, or what the road patterns were then.
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41. Telephone interview with Paul Camplin, Greenville, Ky., Dec. 30, 1987
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72. Actually the creek is five miles long.
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77. Interview with Sherman Oxendine, Barbourville, Ky., June 23, 1978
78. Personal communication from William T. Cornett, Hazard, Ky., March 11, 1987
79. Personal communication from L.E. Perry, Whitley City, Ky., March 10, 1987
80. Attributed to attorney and state legislator Bobby Richardson, a native of Eighty-Eight and a direct descendant of Mr. Nunnally, A.P. release, July 31, 1988

FOOTNOTES (7)

81. Personal communication from Bertha Rowland, West Liberty, Sept. 6, 1980
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83. Interview with R.N. Smith, Burkesville, Ky., Sept. 22, 1978
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KENTUCKY'S "NUMBER" NAMES

One of the more curious place naming traditions is said to have been the designation of places or geographic features by numbers instead of more conventional names. In Kentucky, however, this may not have been so unusual for nearly 300 such referents, exemplifying almost every kind of feature, have been identified in at least 80 of the state's 120 counties. Admittedly, nearly thirty per cent of these designations are extensions, or derivative applications, of those number names which, earlier, had been given to key referents in the area, usually bodies of water or elevations.

Although we can account for the application of most of the individual names to their referents, the idea of using numbers instead of words to identify places has never been systematically examined. Stewart's¹ contention that "people of systematic minds" took to using numbers after all the good names had already been given does not seem to apply in Kentucky (if, indeed, it applied anywhere); most of Kentucky's number names had been given to streams before 1800 when, it is safe to say, the pool of available names was more than ample.

Neither was there anything "systematic" about the pioneer's use of numbers for names; it was but one of the many ways early namers had of identifying places and features. We know that much early name giving was casual or impulsive when there was an immediate need for an identification (much as the Indians are said to have referred to a geographic feature for the nonce simply for the purpose of communicating some incident that had occurred there) with no thought that the designation would be affixed to the referent for all time. This may

explain why many features were identified in pioneer depositions and journals by several primarily descriptive or possessive designations only one of which, when it later became necessary to identify a place on a map or official document, was then arbitrarily selected as the name. I am of the opinion that many of Kentucky's number names were early appellatives (or simple designator terms) that later became permanently fixed to their referents.

In general, number names may be considered descriptive, most often locating the referent at a certain distance from some other point or relative to a number of distinguishing local features (springs, hills, buildings, trees, rivers, lakes, etc.) of significance to the namer, or as one of a series of similar places or features (usually expressed as an ordinal), or marking its size or that of some nearby feature of significance. Some number names applied to streams, roads, or islands indicate their length, though this is less common than one might think. (The pioneer's application of number names to streams was less for their stream's length--which was often not known--as for the distance from its mouth to some other point.) Some places took the names of local schools or school districts, which were usually numbered in order of establishment in the nineteenth century, or of area mines, which were identified by numbers in the early twentieth century. A few commemorated incidents that occurred in a particular year or reflected sentimental regard for certain numbers, or were imported from somewhere else and thus had no local significance. Then there are the so-called "pseudo-number" names--those that appear to be numbers but which are really family names (e.g. Million and Sixes).

Of the nearly 300 known Kentucky number names, over thirty per cent identify streams and hollows while another 25 per cent designate settlements, post offices, and rural and suburban neighborhoods. Nine per cent specify schools, eight per cent churches, and seven per cent roads. Other generics identified by number names are islands (four per cent), ponds and lakes (three per cent), hills and knobs (three per cent), springs, groves, camps, falls, mills, mines and quarries, caves, rocks, bridges, cemeteries, towers, houses, and vaguely designated areas. Over sixty per cent are double-specifics, the most frequent combinations being Mile (53 per cent), Fork (seven per cent), Spring (six per cent), and Lick (five per cent).

In the following analysis, those number names applied to key places or features in Kentucky are rendered as they appeared on the maps and in the published and unpublished references which furnished my sample. Except in very earliest times the numbers have been spelled out. The combining of the double specifics as a single word (Threemile or Twentytwomile) or their entry as two or more words (Three Mile, Twenty Two Mlle) was discretionary and, in retrospect, is probably quite insignificant.

I. More Kentucky places or features bear number names for their distance from some other point than for any other reason. The most common and earliest of these were streams.

Fourmile Creek joins the Cumberland River some four miles nw of the original site of the Bell Co. seat of Pineville. (Since the creek is also about four miles long this too could have accounted for its

name.) Just below its mouth¹ is the coal town, post office and L&N Railroad station of Fourmile. Another Fourmile Creek joins the same river four miles below Harlan Town in neighboring Harlan Co. The community at its mouth is also known as Fourmile though its post office is Keith. The mouth of Four Mile Branch of Little Poplar Creek is about four miles from the Mackey Bend Ferry, an important early Cumberland River crossing in Knox Co.²

Several Ohio River tributaries have numbers for their names. Kinniconick Creek which joins the river at Garrison in nw Lewis Co. was identified on John Filson's pioneer (c.1784) map of Kentucky as Twelve Mile Creek ostensibly for its location twelve miles below and across from the mouth of the Scioto River.³ A series of number named streams enter the Ohio River in Campbell Co. Though only Fourmile, Tenmile, and Twelvemile are shown on contemporary maps, we believe that in early historic times there may actually have been a progression of named streams from One to at least Twelve. [Yet it is not known to what particular points on the Ohio they refer. It could have been that the Kentucky streams followed somewhat different courses in pioneer times than they do now and thus joined the river at different locations.] Fourmile Creek (early called Silama, Sellema, or Selma Creek)⁴ extends from the Campbell Co. seat of Alexandria to the river three miles above and across from the mouth of the Little Miami. Tenmile Creek meets the river ten miles above the Little Miami, and the mouth of Twelvemile (first called Wells Creek for two pioneer surveyors)⁵ is two miles above Tenmile. An unidentified stream is shown on most maps where an Eightmile Creek ought to be. The existence

of such a named stream is assumed since its two head forks seem to follow routes now identified as Upper and Lower Eight Mile Roads.⁶ This alleged Eightmile Creek is around 2½ miles below the mouth of Tenmile and 4½ miles above the mouth of Fourmile. The names of each of these Campbell Co. streams gave rise to a number of derivative names for neighborhoods, roads, schools, and churches along their respective courses.

Two more Fourmile Creeks flow into the Ohio River from the Kentucky side. One is about four miles above Carrollton, the Carroll Co. seat at the mouth of the Kentucky River, and the other (now called Little Bayou Creek), is four miles below and opposite Ft. Massac (now Metropolitan, Illinois), 12 miles below Paducah.⁷ Some 18 miles above Corn[^] Island (the center of downtown Louisville) is the mouth of Eighteen Mile Creek, just below the Oldham Co. town of Westport and a mile above (the) Eighteen Mile Island.

Tributaries of the Kentucky River include Six Mile Creek which heads just nw of Bagdad in Shelby Co. and joins the river at Lockport in Henry Co. It was identified as Six Mile as early as 1786 when the famed Low Dutch Tract (a pioneer settlement of Dutch Reformed Huguenots) was purchased from Squire Boone and may have referred to its being some six miles north of his Painted Stone (or Boone's) Station, three miles north of Shelbyville. This station, established in 1779, was then the only protection from the Indians for white settlers between Harrodsburg and the Falls of the Ohio (Louisville).⁸ An unlocated Six Mile Post Office (1857-1861) may have been at or above the head of the creek in the Christiansburg area, somewhere in the vicinity of a Six Mile Church

that had been organized in 1799.⁹ The Six Mile name was also applied to the center of the pioneer Low Dutch Colony, 1½ miles east of the present Pleasureville (Henry Co.), where another Six Mile Church had been established in 1806.¹⁰

The Two Mile and Four Mile (aka Muddy) Creeks, Kentucky River branches in Clark Co., are said to have been named by Daniel Boone for their approximate distance above Boonesborough.¹¹ Ten, Fifteen, and Sixteen Mile Creeks are Perry Co. streams in the Kentucky River system named for their respective distances up Lost Creek from its Troublesome Creek confluence on the Breathitt Co. line.

Another Campbell Co. stream, Threemile Creek, is that distance long and joins the Licking River three miles from its meeting with the Ohio River opposite downtown Cincinnati. Magoffin County's State Road Fork, another Licking River tributary, has a Twentytwo Mile Branch. County historians agree that this one mile long stream must have been 22 miles from something but do not know what.¹² An old name, it identifies one of the boundary lines in the legislation establishing Morgan Co. in 1822,¹³ and thus my guess is that it refers to its distance from Prestonsburg, until then the governmental seat of the large territory that included that stream.

At least five number name streams have been identified in the Big Sandy system in the extreme eastern part of the state. In Lawrence Co. (the) Twomile and Threemile Creeks join the Levisa Fork two and three miles, respectively, above downtown Louisa where the Levisa and Tug Forks join to form the Big Sandy River. Four Mile Branch in Knott Co. may have been named for its distance up Jones Fork of Right Beaver Creek from the Floyd Co. line town of Lackey. Main Beaver Creek is

another Levisa Fork tributary. Also in the Levisa system are Threemile Branch of Shelby Creek and Fiftyeight Branch of Raccoon Creek, both in Pike Co. The first was probably named for its being three miles north of Shelby Gap,¹⁴ and the other by a pioneer surveyor for its distance from some early but now unknown county line.¹⁵

While most numbered streams seem to have been named for the distance from their mouth to some other point, at least one, Tenmile Creek (in the Salt River system), may refer to the distance from its source to the center of the Spencer Co. seat of Taylorsville.¹⁶

At least five Kentucky settlements have borne number names derived from distances. Fivemile, on the North Fork of the Kentucky River, is five miles ne of the Breathitt Co. seat of Jackson. Three Mile was a railroad stop on the old E.K. Railroad, three miles from the Ohio River town of Greenup, the Greenup Co. seat. Ten Mile, a Campbell Co. post office (1867-1910) on US 27, just north of Alexandria, the county seat, was probably named for its being ten miles from the Ohio River at Newport.¹⁷ Nine-Mile House, a stage stop on the old Louisville & Nashville Turnpike (c.1840s), just north of the present community of Pleasure Ridge Park, was named for its site nine miles ssw of downtown Louisville.¹⁸ Buechel, an unincorporated residential suburb of Louisville, was early called Two Mile Precinct or Two Mile Town for its northern limit was then two miles from Louisville. The community was renamed in 1883 when John Buechel established the local post office in his tavern and named it for himself.¹⁹

Other distance-derived number names include the Six Mile and Twelve-mile Islands in the Ohio River at the upper end of Jefferson Co. which are, respectively, six and twelve miles above Corn Island, the original ^{the falls of the Ohio River at}

site of Louisville; the Four and Ten Mile and Four and Twelve Mile Roads which extend between the Campbell Co. streams of these names; Threemile (House) School, three miles from downtown Henderson;²⁰ and Eight Mile Baptist Church (Jefferson Co.) organized in 1891 at or near the site of Eight Mile House, an early nineteenth century inn on the Shelbyville Rd. (now US 60), eight miles from Louisville.²¹

Many places or features were named for the number of their distinguishing characteristics or components [a pond with four necks is thus Four Neck Pond or a three peaked elevation is Three Knob Hill] or for the number of other local features in terms of which the key referents were originally located or may still be identified [near four oaks, three springs, seven gum trees, two licks, etc.]

Springs are probably the most common local features giving rise to number names. A typical example is the church, community, and post office of Three Springs in se Hart Co. in the vicinity of three springs that rise from and almost immediately re-enter the ground and feed a large underground drainage network in the area. The post office, established in 1841 and later transferred to nearby Park, in Barren Co., was re-established as Three Springs in 1853 and closed in 1919.²² An unlocated Three Springs Creek in nearby ne Barren Co. may also refer to these springs or even originate with them.

Also aptly named were another Three Springs community just south of Bowling Green;²³ Three Springs Knob in sw LaRue Co; the Five Springs neighborhood, school, and church two miles nw of Albany (Clinton Co.); Seven Springs (Cumberland Presbyterian) Church near the forks of the Little Barren River in nc Metcalfe Co;²⁴ and Seven Springs School, an antebellum academy on the Mississippi bottom in old Columbus (Hickman Co.).²⁵ The Seven Springs (Missionary Baptist) Church, one of western

Kentucky's oldest, was originally located near the Cumberland River, north of Dycusburg (Crittenden Co.). It was later relocated near the present Ky. 70, two miles ne, but on current maps is inexplicably identified as Seven Branch Church.²⁶

Several Kentucky spring complexes themselves are named for the number of separate springs that compose them. Among these are the Three Springs in the Mammoth Cave National Park (Edmonson Co.) which long furnished water for the local resort hotels;²⁷ Two Springs on the South Fork of Beargrass Creek (Jefferson Co.);²⁸ the Seven Sisters Spring (later the Allen Spring), the source of water for the Russell Co. town of Russell Springs;²⁹ and Nine Springs which has served the Powersburg area of sw Wayne Co.³⁰ Several miles separate two spring complexes near the banks of Green River in eastern Hart Co. with the hyperbolic names of Hundred Springs and Three Hundred Springs. In each case the name derives from the many crystal clear springs in the vicinity that emerge from limestone cliffs and, in the past, furnished water power for local mills and other activities.³¹

Local salt licks have also provided names. Several Two Lick Creeks feed the forks of the Licking River in Mason, Harrison, and Menifee Counties; and Greenup Co. has a Two Lick Hollow. Washington Co. has a Three Lick Creek, while Muddy Creek in Ohio Co. has a Three Lick Fork, and Three Lick Branch joins the Licking River in Rowan Co. A hunters' paradise has long existed at the salt licks surfacing from Five Lick Creek, another Licking River stream in Robertson Co.³²

Several names were suggested by the number of hills and rocks in the vicinity of the referents. (The) Three Knobs in ne Knox Co. collectively identifies three elevations at the head of Roaring Fork of Stinking Creek.³³ The Devil's Three Jumps are three hills west of Fears-ville in ne Christian Co.³⁴ Three Prong has been applied to a stream,

rural neighborhood and its post office, two schools, and a road in sw Greenup Co. (The Three Prong Branch which joins Tygarts Creek some 250 yards from the Carter Co. line, was named for the three prongs of a nearby ridge. The post office operated in Greenup and Carter Counties from 1857 to 1867.) An old Indian burial site called The Five Pillars are five large rocks on top of a hill overlooking the Cumberland River in ne Cumberland Co. Seven Hills was an aptly named community and post office (1901-1905), school, and church just se of Owensboro. Great plans for a turn-of-the-century metropolis to rival or even overtake its larger neighbor failed to materialize and the community was soon incorporated into Owensboro where it maintains its identity as an urban neighborhood. Overlooking the Cumberland River somewhere between Pineville and Harlan (the seats of Bell and Harlan Counties) are The Seven Sisters Cliffs. These, according to local legend, were named for the coincidence of the seven daughters of the Miracle family living so near seven large cliffs.

Several Kentucky mining communities have borne names denoting, at the outset, the number of houses there. The Ohio Co. coal camp of Ten Spot, just north of McHenry, was named for ten houses identical in shape, size, color, and every other detail that the Beaver Dam Coal Co. had built there for its workers. Neighboring Muhlenberg Co. has a Five Spot, on US 431, se of Central City, and an Eight Spot, a residential section of Martwick, a coal town near the Green River. Five bungaloes at Brookside (Harlan Co.) gave rise to the subdivision of Five Spot, while a Ten Spot, half a mile up Jones Creek from Clover Fork of Cumberland, in the same county, was named for its ten small homes.

The number of local trees at a given time accounted for several Kentucky names. The post office of Four Oaks (1891-1903), two miles south of Falmouth (Pendleton Co.), was named for four oak trees there in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁴ The name Seven Pines was applied to a neighborhood and school in the vicinity of the Dabolt post office in Jackson Co. Though the crossroads community and post office (1873-1905) of Seven Gums, four miles south of Morganfield, has been mistakenly identified on most maps as Guns, Union Co. historians are sure it was named for some local gum trees.⁴⁵ Paul Semonin who developed the Jefferson Co. subdivision of Sevenoaks in the mid 1970s could not recall why he gave it this name but assumed it was for a cluster of seven oaks on the site.⁴⁶

One of the most curious of Kentucky place names is Thousandsticks, applied first to a creek and mountain 2½ miles nw of the Leslie Co. seat of Hyden and, by extension, to a post office, school, church, and one of the county's two weekly newspapers. Of several possible derivations of the name two seem the most plausible. According to eastern Kentucky historian Harry Caudill, "The mountaineer from earliest times applied the term (sticks) to the trunks of his great trees. Settlers on (this) stream...found hundreds of ancient trees which died of old age. There were so many of them that it was called the 'Thousandsticks Creek.'"⁴⁷ Or one may recall the early travelers who came upon the remains of a great forest fire--the charred trunks of thousands of dead trees standing for all the world like a pile of sticks.⁴⁸

Rivers, ponds, islands, railroad lines, and seams of coal have given/^{number} names to Kentucky features. The Three River Rock Quarry in Livingston Co. was named for its proximity to the Ohio, Tennessee, and Cumberland

Rivers.⁵⁰ These three and the Mississippi gave their names to the Four Rivers Boy Scout Reservation on Kentucky Lake in nearby Marshall Co.⁵⁰ Four connected ponds in Wayne Co. were collectively known as the Four Neck Pond until a large dam made it all one big pond.⁵¹ Three Ponds in Hickman Co. was aptly named for a string of three ponds less than a mile from the Mississippi River. They are bordered on the ne by the Three Ponds Bluff. Three Sisters Hollow in the^{ne} section of Mammoth Cave National Park in Edmonson Co. drains into the Green River at the site of three islands for which it was named.⁵² In pioneer days the three islands in the Ohio River just south of Manchester, Ohio were collectively called The Three Islands. This name was also applied to a site on the Kentucky shore, probably in the vicinity of the Lewis Co. settlement of Trinity whose name, too, was derived from the three islands. The islands are now called the Manchester Islands though only two of them are extant.⁵³

The railroad bridge over the Ohio River between Louisville and Jeffersonville, Indiana is called The Big Four Bridge for its use earlier this century by the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railway, popularly known as the Big Four Road.⁵⁴ The Perry Co. mining camp of Fourseam was named (c.1912-1915) for the four seams of coal in a local mine.⁵⁵ Another Kentucky hyperbole is Hundred Dome Cave in the Mammoth Cave National Park which may have been named for the large number of "pit and dome formations" in the vicinity. It was first called Coach Cave and was operated commercially before the Civil War.⁵⁶ Then there is the Four Sisters Run, a Scott Co. stream named for pioneer Robert McClelland's daughters.⁵⁷

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A sizeable number of Kentucky places were named for their locations at the junction of several streams or roads. The Martin Co. post office of Threeforks (established in 1938 and current) was named for the three forks of Petercave, some three miles up from Pigeonroost Fork of Wolf Creek. ⁵⁸ The Three Forks of Greasy Creek neighborhood centers at the hamlet of Boons Camp in adjacent Johnson Co. About a mile above, Pigeon (Right), Middle, and Buttermilk (Left) Forks join to form the 6½ mile long stream that flows to the Big Sandy River at Offutt. ⁵⁹

Some 4½ miles east of Beattyville is the Lee Co. village of St. Helens. First called Canaan, then Lewellen when its post office was established in 1883, it was renamed Three Forks City in 1889 with the arrival of the railroad and was incorporated in this name the following year. Shortly thereafter it assumed its present name. The forks are those of the Kentucky River which actually do not come together at one point to form the main stream; Middle Fork flows into North Fork about four miles above (east of) the mouth of South Fork at Beattyville. Moreover, the village itself is over a mile up Middle Fork. The area around Beattyville, the Lee Co. seat, has sometimes been called Three Forks Country and that town too may locally have been called Three Forks City. ⁶⁰ Another Three Forks settlement (in Garrard Co.) is at the point where the Middle and West Forks of Sugar Creek (a Kentucky River tributary) join the main stream, but a mile below the mouth of East Fork.

The Three Forks name was also applied to a Baptist church established in 1818 at the head forks of Bacon Creek, a Nolin River tributary in ne Hart Co. ⁶¹ and to a US Forest Service overlook in n. McCreary Co. where the Hurricane, Middle, and Freeman Forks join to form Beaver Creek in the Cumberland River system. The Three Forks of Warix Run in Rowan Co. is also aptly named.

Among the places named for their locations at the junctions of several roads are the Warren Co. hamlet-post office of Three Forks; the Rockcastle Co. hamlet-post office of ⁶²Threelinks; Everett Buhl's Whitley Co. store he named ⁶³Three Point; Four Corners, a name applied to two crossroads settlements in Grant and Hardin Counties; the Lawrence Co. settlement of Five Forks; another Five Forks post office in sw Barren Co; Five Points at the west end of the State University in the city of Murray (Calloway Co.); ⁶⁴and Seven Corners in Hardin Co.

Kentucky's best known Three Forks is now the Barren Co. town of Park City. This sixth class city, midway between Louisville and Nashville, was the site of a famed antebellum stage stop and tavern called Three Forks (later Bell's Tavern) where the Glasgow and Bardstown roads joined the Louisville and Nashville Pike. William Bell, a large landowner, established here in 1827 a post office he named Three Forks for his tavern. Part of his land was later divided into lots and sold to the founders of Glasgow Junction, the incorporated city on the L&N Railroad's main line from which a spur track was extended to the Barren Co. seat of Glasgow, 7½ miles east. The post office which became Glasgow Junction in 1863 was renamed Park City in 1938 for the nearby Mammoth Cave National Park. ⁶⁵

III Another well established naming pattern is the application of ordinal numbers to a series of streams, islands, or other features. In some cases only one of these features retains its number name. In Pike Co. are the aptly named First, Second, and Third Forks of Big Creek and the First and Second Forks of Millers Creek, tributaries of the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River. First, Second, and Third Hollows are the first three off Bill Chain Branch of Montgomery Creek which joins Lewis County's Kinniconick Creek half a mile from the Ohio River. First and

Second Creeks (Edmonson Co.) are the first two tributaries of Nolin River above its confluence with the Green River. Second Creek (Boone Co.) is the second Ohio River stream below and opposite the mouth of the Big Miami River.⁶⁶ Second Branch of Cumberland River (Harlan Co.) may have been named for its being the second branch above the town of Mollus.⁶⁷ The Second Fork of Wooton Creek (Leslie Co.), also aptly named, was first called Browning Fork. (The second stream on the left as one goes up Wooton from Second Fork is known as Big Two Branch.)⁶⁸ Smith Fork, the first north side branch of Bent Branch (of Pike County's Johns Creek) was early called First Fork.

Some aptly named churches are Second Otter Creek Church (McCreary Co.), half a mile east of Otter Creek and just north of the Tennessee line, which refers to an earlier Otter Creek church three miles away; (the) Second Twelve Mile Baptist Church (Pendleton Co.), just east of the head of Twelvemile Creek (the first Twelvemile Church was downstream in Campbell Co.); and Freedom Number Two Baptist Church and Beech Grove Baptist Church Number Two, both in Monroe Co.

On the Mississippi River from the mouth of the Ohio to southern Louisiana are (or, in some cases, were) a string of 124 islands which once were numbered successively from north to south. In addition, several chutes and lakes on both sides of the main stream were named in progression, also from north to south. In Kentucky, Islands Number One, Three, Four and Five and Chutes Two, Three, and Four are still so identified.

Other rivers, like the Kentucky, Green, and Licking, had in the nineteenth century a series of numbered locks and dams proceeding upstream. Several of these gave names to communities and post offices at the sites. The Thirteen post office (1903-1914) on the Kentucky River in Lee Co. was

named for Lock 13. The L&N Railroad's station here was also called Lock Number 13, and later simply Thirteen for the post office.⁶⁹ The Butler Co. post office of Woodbury on the Green River, 20 miles nw of Bowling Green, was established in 1847 as Lock Number Four. It was changed to Woodbury the following month to conform to the name by which the community has been known since the 1830s.⁷⁰ Butler, a city seven miles north of Falmouth, was first called Fourth Lock for its site at the fourth lock and dam on the Licking River. The post office established here as Clayton in 1857 was renamed for then Congressman William O. Butler in 1860.⁷¹

IV. Several streams, roads, and islands were named for their length. The streams include Fourmile Run (Bell Co.), Fourmile Creek (Boyd Co.), the Fourmile Fork of Turkey Creek (Breathitt Co.), Three Mile Branch of Crystal Creek (Lee Co.), Threemile Hollow (Pike Co.), Twomile Branch of Big Caney Creek (Breathitt Co.), Two Mile Creek (Johnson Co.), and Twomile Fork of Caney Fork (of Johns Creek in Pike Co.), now called Rockspring Branch. Two roads named for their length are Sixmile Lane (Jefferson Co.) and Four Mile Rd. (Madison Co.). One island that may have been named for its length is Three Mile Island in the Ohio River just below Newburgh, Indiana. (It is now somewhat less than three miles). In addition, two creeks were named, by extension, for the lengths of nearby features. Twomile Creek (Owen Co.) refers to a Twomile Rd. between New Liberty and Sparta which was two miles long in early settlement times.⁷² Four Mile Creek (Carter Co.) was named for Four Mile Long Rd.⁷³

V. The size of the feature or some nearby feature has accounted for a few names. Nine Acre and Big Four are aptly named fluorspar mines in Crittenden Co.⁷⁴ Ten Acre Pond in Christian Co. and Hundred Acre Pond in

Hart Co.⁷⁵ are said to have been those sizes at the time they were named though they have since shrunk. The Twelveacre Branch of Grassy Fork in se Lewis Co. was named for the size of a large cove near its head.

VI. Local schools, including those identified by numbers (usually indicating the order in which they were established or brought into the county system), often gave their names to the communities or neighborhoods that grew up around them. Among these are the Number Five Neighborhood in ne Christian Co., the Numbers One, Two, and Twelve Neighborhoods in Wayne Co., and the Ohio Co. hamlet of Nineteen.

The same can be said of local mines which were also numbered, often with reference to veins or seams.⁷⁶ Sixth Vein and Sixseam were coal camps in sw Hopkins Co. Number one and Number Two Hollows in Knox Co. were named for the mines in each called, respectively, Coalport Number One and Coalport Number Two.⁷⁷ Fifteen (or Number Fifteen) Hollow at McRoberts (Letcher Co.) is the site of the Consolidation Coal Corporation's #15 Mine.⁷⁸ The Stearns Coal and Lumber Co. operated a number of mines along both sides of the Big South Fork River in McCreary Co. in the vicinity of its Blue Heron camp. To distinguish those on the west side of the river from those on the east, they were identified as One, Two, Three, etc. West. Three West Hollow survives as the name of a west bank stream.⁷⁹ McCreary Co. also has a Mine Ten Ridge and a Mine Number Eighteen Arch, while Boyd Co. had a Number Eight Mines School on Number Eight Mines Rd.

VII. Several Kentucky communities that are usually included in national inventories of oddly named places have borne numbers for their names, and for equally eccentric reasons. Eighty-Eight in Barren Co. centers

on its still active post office which was established in 1869 by Dabney L. Nunnally, the local storekeeper and first postmaster. Nunnally's handwriting is said to have been so bad that only numbers could be recorded with any semblance of legibility. He came up with 88 when he reached in his pocket for his loose change. This account⁸⁰ is locally preferred to the one based on the site's distance of 8.8 road miles se of Glasgow, which it was. Anyway, the postal authorities early on stipulated that the name be spelled out.

Mrs. Martha Rowland is said to have submitted a list of 25 names for the Morgan Co. post office she was to manage. At the bottom she added a twenty sixth, simply the year--1926 in which her application was signed. The Post Office Department bypassed all her suggestions but the last.⁸¹ The post office of Twenty Six closed in 1957.

The Harlan Co. coal town of Three Point could have gotten its name from three nearby hills but it was more likely named for the Three Point Coal Corp. which ran the local mine. The company's name refers to the three virtues it claimed for its local operation--service, quality, and dependability.⁸² First Night Hollow on Big Renox Creek was the first camping ground of the pioneer Baker brothers in what became Cumberland Co.⁸³ In SW Letcher Co. is the Four Square Church which was organized around 1959 and long pastored by a once member of Aimee Semple McPherson's famed Church of the Four-square Gospel in California.⁸⁴

Three explanations have been offered for Kentucky's most famous number name. The Clinton Co. hamlet and post office⁸⁵ of Seventy Six could have been named for the height, in pioneer times, of the nearby falls (though today, with the creation of the Wolf Creek Dam and Lake Cumberland, the so-called 76 Falls are but half that high.) But some area historians believe that the falls were named for the community

which had been laid out as a town in 1817 and named for the station number in the original land survey.⁸⁶ Or it could have been named for the year of the Declaration of Independence.⁸⁷

The post office of Echo that served the Metcalfe Co. neighborhood of Big Meadow from 1891 to 1914 was established as Seventy Seven but no one in the county remembers this or can venture an explanation. Two antebellum post offices, Two Mile Creek (Davies Co.) and Five Mile (Henry Co.) were named for nearby creeks but no one knows why the creeks were so named.

VIII. Finally, there are the so-called "pseudo-number" names--those that seem like numbers but really are family names. There's Million, a discontinued post office and L&N station in nw Madison Co., which began as Fain in 1881 and was renamed three years later for the family of B.B. Million, local landowner and merchant.⁸⁸ Another Million family gave its name to a cemetery in the sw corner of Lewis Co.⁸⁹ The J.W. Million School in Earlington (Hopkins Co.) was built in 1905 by the local coal company that then owned the town and was renamed in 1935 for the Rev. J.W. Million.⁹⁰ Sixes Creek, which heads in Ohio Co. and joins Indian Camp Creek in Butler Co. was named for either Daniel Six (or his family) or Abe Six, the area's first settler.⁹¹

IX. The following names (identified by their counties) are as yet unexplained. A search continues for their derivations: Onemile Branch of Beech Creek (Leslie); The One Eye Hollow (Wayne); First Creek (and School) (Perry); Upper and Lower Second Creek(s) (Perry); Two Notch Br. of Grapevine Creek (and School) (Perry); Two Mile Run and Three Mile Run (Fleming); Two, Four, and Five Mile Forks of Quicksand Creek (Breathitt); Salem Number Two Church (Bell); Two Springs (Barren); Third Elk Spring (Warren); Three Kiln Knob (Hart); Three Forks (of Eagle) Creek (Grant); Three Mile (community in Breathitt); Five Mile

Crossing (Campbell); Six Mile Grove (Warren); Six Mile Post Office (Union); Sixacre Branch of Clarks River (Marshall); Six Mile Creek (Barren); (The) Six Mile Grove (on the north side of the Big Barren River); Seven Sticks School (Graves); Eighth Branch of Red River (Wolfe); Figure Eight Branch of Puncheon Creek (Allen); Nine Right Hollow (Whitley); Ten Acre Fork of Spencer Fork (Owsley); Ten Acre Branch (Metcalfe); Ten Mile Creek (Grant & Gallatin); Twelve Mile Creek (which is now Little Sandy River that joins the Ohio River in Greenup Co.); Twelvemile Post Office (Leslie); Forty Acre Knobs (Nelson); Zero Post Office (Hart); and Lakes Number One, Six, and Thirteen (Grayson).

FOOTNOTES-

1. George R. Stewart, Names On The Land, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967, P. 359
2. Personal communication from K.S. Sol Warren, Cannon, Ky., May 6, 1987
3. William Talley, "Salt Lick Creek and its Salt Works" Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, Vol. 64, April 1966, Pp. 85-109
4. William R. Stevens, "The Valley of the South Fork of Wells Creek" Falmouth Outlook, March 18, 1983, P. 16:3; Margaret S. Hartman, "Ten Mile Station" Falmouth Outlook, Dec. 21, 1979, P. 18
5. Personal communication from William R. Stevens, Ft. Thomas, Ky., June 17, 1987
6. Ibid.
7. Thomas P. Field, "Index to the Map of Kentucky and the Southwest Territory, 1794", 1966, P. 19 (manuscript)
8. Personal communication from V.J. Akers, Bargersville, Indiana, Aug. 11, 1987. According to Akers, early settlers counted the distance from their new homes to Boone's Station very carefully for it was there they needed to flee in case of Indian troubles. But, says Akers, the Six Mile name may also refer to the "straight line" distance between the mouth of the creek and the mouth of Drennon's Lick Creek, another important location down the Kentucky River.
9. John H. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists, Cincinnati, 1885, Vol. I, P. 434 and Vol. II, P. 49

FOOTNOTES (2)

10. Richard H. Shuck, manuscript account of "The Low Dutch Colony of Six Mile, Now Pleasureville", no date
11. "The Creeks of Clark County and Their Characteristics" Clark County Chronicles, reproduced in The Winchester Sun, June 17, 1981, P. 16
12. Personal communication from Connie A. Wireman, Fredville, Ky., June 12, 1987
13. Acts of the Kentucky General Assembly, 1822, P. 145
14. Leonard Roberts' manuscript notes on Pike Co. Place Names, ca. 1974
15. ^{Personal} Communication from Bob Sweaney, Shelbiana, Ky., Nov. 23, 1987
With reference to the Twentytwo Mile and Fiftyeight Branches-- it is not known whether distances in early settlement times were reckoned by stream or road, or what the road patterns were then.
16. ^{Personal} Communication from Mrs. Mary Francis Brown, Taylorsville, Ky., March 30, 1987
17. Personal communication from William R. Stevens, op. cit.
18. S.G. Boyd, "The Louisville and Nashville Turnpike" Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, Vol. 24, May 1926, Pp. 163-74, 170
19. Ward Sinclair and Harold Browning, "Beuchel's Rich Past Adorns What's New" Louisville Times, Oct. 5, 1965
20. Martha Alma Martin Mitchell in History of Henderson County, published by the Henderson Co. Genealogical and Historical Society, 1980, Pp. 248-9
21. On old maps this community was known as Howesburg. Ward Sinclair and Harold Browning, "For Lyndon, Incorporation as City Was Better Than Being Annexed" Louisville Times, Nov. 16, 1965
22. Roy A. Cann, manuscript history of Hart Co., 1971, P. 20

FOOTNOTES (3)

23. Personal communication from Bell Muth, Bowling Green Public Library, Bowling Green, Ky., May 7, 1987. The nearby Three Springs Park was recently renamed for the Warren County Judge-Executive Basil Griffith.
24. Personal communication from Dara London, Edmonton, Ky., May 11, 1987
25. Personal communication from Lucille Owings, Columbus, Ky., Aug. 18, 1987
26. Personal communication from Helen Moore, President of the Crittenden Co. Historical Society, Marion, Ky., March 26, 1987
27. Gordon Wilson Collection of Material on Mammoth Cave Area Place Names, in the Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University, Box 33
28. Willard Rouse Jillson, Pioneer Kentucky, Frankfort: State Journal, 1934, P. 116
29. This was named for seven little springs "surrounding the main big spring (that) bubbled up through the sand." (A.G. Bernard, "A Brief History of Education in Russell Springs" in The Lake Cumberland State Resort Park Edition of The Call of Kentucky, Spring-Summer, 1973, P. 41
30. Interview with Alonzo Hicks, Monticello, Ky., Aug. 8, 1976
31. Jillson, op. cit., P. 114; Jillson, "Excerpts from Three Hundred Springs" Hart Co. Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. IX, April 1977, Pp. 13-17
32. Personal communication from JoAnn H. Doyle, Officer-in-Charge, Sardis Rural Branch, Maysville Post Office, July 14, 1987, from information provided by Gordon L. Throckmorton of Mayslick, Ky.
33. Sol Warren op. cit.
34. William T. Turner, Family Histories--Christian County, Ky., Hopkinsville: Christian Co. Genealogical Society, 1986, P. 24
35. Russell Times, Sept. 25, 1942, Sect. II, P. 12:3

36. J.W. Wells, The History of Cumberland County, Louisville: Standard Printing, 1947, Pp. 9-10
37. Personal communication from Shelia E. Heflin, Supervisor, Kentucky Room, Owensboro Public Library, April 17, 1987
38. Leonard Roberts' Kentucky Place Name Collection, as collected from Katherine Liddle, Bell Co., Ky., 1955
39. Personal communication from Librarian, Ohio County Public Library, Hartford, Ky., July 16, 1987
40. Personal communication from Alexander R. Cather, Drakesboro, Ky., Feb. 14, 1987
41. Telephone interview with Paul Camplin, Greenville, Ky., Dec. 30, 1987
42. Personal communication ~~from~~ B.W. Whitfield, Jr., Brookside, Ky., Feb. 8, 1987
43. Ibid.
44. Interview with Mrs. Ethel Bell, Falmouth, Ky., Oct. 17, 1978
45. Interview with Earl Bell, Morganfield, Ky., Aug. 27, 1978
46. Personal communication ~~from~~ Paul Semonin, Louisville, Ky., Feb. 27, 1987
47. Harry M. Caudill, Night Comes to the Cumberland, Boston: Little Brown, 1963, P. 37
48. Ruth Huston, Observations of God's Timing in the Kentucky Mountains, Salisbury, NC: Rowan Printing Co., 1962, P. 53
49. Personal communication from Linda L. Ladd, Smithland, Ky., **April** 6, 1987
50. Personal communication from Ray Mofield, Benton, Ky., June 26, 1987
51. Interview with Grant Rice, Monticello, Ky., Aug. 13, 1976

52. Personal communication from F.D. Pridemore, Superintendent of the Mammoth Cave National Park, March 12, 1987
53. Mentioned by Andre Michaux in his "Travels West of the Alleghenies" edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites in Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Vol. 3, Pp. 35-7
54. Personal communication from Allen C. Kempe, President of the Kentucky Railway Museum, Inc., Louisville, Ky., March 9, 1987
55. Interview with Estill McIntyre, Hazard, Ky., July 7, 1977
56. Pridemore, op. cit.
57. Echoes of the Past, 1775-1975, Stamping Ground, Ky. Woman's Club, n.d., Pp. 9-10
58. Interview with Rufus Reed, Lovely, Ky., July 4, 1971
59. Interview with J.K. Wells, Paintsville, Ky., Aug. 30, 1980
60. Interview with Nevyle Shackelford, Beattyville, Ky. July 8, 1978
61. Rev. J.H. Brooks and H.H. Wilson, "Pioneer History of the Hammonsville Area of Hart Co." in Hart County Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. IV, Jan. 1972, Pp. 3-5
62. Personal communication from Opp Bussell, Jr., Mt. Vernon, Ky., April 11, 1987
63. Personal communication from Everett Buhl, Williamsburg, Ky., April 25, 1987
64. Personal communication from Keith Heim, Director, Pogue Library, Murray State University, Murray, Ky., Feb. 26, 1987
65. Louisville Courier-Journal, March 24, 1938; Virginia Mansfield, "Famed Tavern That Never Was" Glasgow Times, June 28, 1974, Sec. 3, P. 9; Deborah Slack, Glasgow Times, May 30, 1935

66. This was once called Ferry Creek for the nearby ferry to Lawrenceburg, Indiana
67. Personal communication from B.W. Whitfield, Brookside, Ky., July 20, 1987
68. Personal communication from Katherine Hamilton, Library Assistant, Leslie Co. Public Library, Hyden, Ky., July 28, 1987
69. Personal communication from Dennis L. Brewer, Beattyville, Ky., March 13, 1987
70. Personal communication from Paul T. Smith, Postmaster, Woodbury, Ky., April 30, 1980
71. E.E. and Mary Louise Barton, Place Names of Pendleton County, DAR manuscript in the Kentucky Historical Soc. Library, c. 1941, P. 14
72. Actually the creek is five miles long.
73. Personal communication from Christine McGlone, Grayson, Ky., Feb. 24, 1987
74. Helen Moore, op. cit.
75. Personal communication from Ruth G. Becker, Editor, Hart Co. Historical Society Quarterly, Munfordville, Ky., June 23, 1987
76. Veins are distinct strata or beds of coal; seams are thin coal strata.
77. Interview with Sherman Oxendine, Barbourville, Ky., June 23, 1978
78. Personal communication from William T. Cornett, Hazard, Ky., March 11, 1987
79. Personal communication from L.E. Perry, Whitley City, Ky., March 10, 1987
80. Attributed to attorney and state legislator Bobby Richardson, a native of Eighty-Eight and a direct descendant of Mr. Nunnally, A.P. release, July 31, 1988

81. Personal communication from Bertha Rowland, West Liberty, Sept. 6, 1980
82. Personal communication from B.W. Whitfield, Brookside, Ky., June 28, 1980
83. Interview with R.N. Smith, Burkesville, Ky., Sept. 22, 1978
84. William T. Cornett, op. cit.
85. The post office was established in 1830 as Goodson and renamed Seventy Six in 1834.
86. J.W. Wells, History of Cumberland Co. op. cit., Pp. 178, 188
87. Robert L. Ramsay, Our Storehouse of Missouri Place Names, Missouri Handbook #2, Univ. of Missouri Bulletin 53, #34, Arts and Science Series, 1952, #7, P. 112
88. Margaret Cook Green, Place Names of Madison County DAR manuscript, May 10, 1941 in the Crabbe Library, Eastern Kentucky University
89. Personal communication from Betty P. Dillow, Lewis Co. Historical Society, Vanceburg, Ky., June 22, 1987
90. Earlington: 1870-1970, Earlington: Earlington Centennial Commission, 1970, P. 49
91. Green River Republican, Sept. 11, 1952