

What's a name? History, color, unique identity

Part of the unique identity of Monroe County can be found in place names.

NEWCOMERS to the county are puzzled by such names as That Road, Hartstrace Road (or Hartstrait Road) and Lost Man's Lane. Perhaps the most intriguing one is colorful Jack's Defeat Creek.

Students of Monroe County history don't have to look very far to find the origin of the latter name.

O n e
e x p l a n a t i o n
c a n b e f o u n d i n

t h e
r e m i n i s c e n c e s
o f C o l . J o h n
K e t c h a m ,
r e p u t e d t o b e
t h e s e c o n d s e t t l e r
i n t h e
c o u n t y .

Looking back

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By Rose H. McIlveen

He discovered this area while he and other frontiersmen belonged to a troop of U.S. mounted rangers. Their responsibility was to keep peace between settlers and Winebago, Kickapoo, Potawatamie and Delaware Indians during 1812-13.

In his account of that period, Ketcham told the most accepted story of the creek name — that of Trooper Jack Storm's horse foundering in the mud of the rain-swollen creek while the rangers were chasing Indians who had stolen some horses. Two other stories about the name include Storm, but purpose that his "defeat" was in a contest of throwing silver dollars across it or jumping over it.

THE NAME "Bean Blossom Creek" looks almost self-explanatory. One would assume that it was named for some wild or cultivated member of the bean family. Not so, according to Ketcham, whose explanation raises more questions than it answers.

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