

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

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According to the colonel, the creek got its name as follows:

"The rain had swelled the creeks until they were past fording; those who could swim had to do so.

"They came to a large creek in the north end of Monroe County. A man by the name of Bean Blossom, in attempting to swim the creek, came very near drowning, and Tipton (a general of the rangers) named the creek 'Bean Blossom' after his name — and so it is called to this day."

Now that story sounds a little fishy, but given the eccentricities of names, it is just barely possible. Confirmation of Ketcham's account turns up some serious discrepancies.

FOR INSTANCE, Ketcham implied that Blossom was a member of one of the companies of mounted rangers. His name, however, does

not appear in the list of officers and men provided by Ketcham in his reminiscences.

Furthermore, no family by the name of Blossom appears in the 1807 census for the Indiana Territory or in the 1820-1850 censuses for Monroe County.

Admittedly that does not necessarily prove that Blossom didn't exist. It is possible that he left Indiana before the 1820 census was taken. Another explanation exists in Ketcham's account. In the continuation of his narrative about the Indian troubles, the colonel wrote:

"At another time, General Tipton and Captain Bean with perhaps 20 men, made a scout to the West Fork of White River. Before they got to the river, they crossed a beautiful stream that empties into Bean Blossom near its mouth."

ONE IS LEFT wondering if elderly Ketcham slipped a memory cog and got the ranger's name reversed. Unfortunately, Captain Bean's

name does not appear in the ranger list. There is a Michael Beam, but he was a private, not a captain. The only person by the name of Bean that appears in the index of the *Histories of Morgan, Monroe and Brown Counties, Indiana* was a man with another Christian name.

Was Ketcham having his own private joke at the expense of a future Monroe County historian? After he had built the second courthouse here, he had considerable trouble collecting payment from the commissioners for his services. He served on the board of trustees of the Indiana Seminary in its fledgling years. His service to his adopted Indiana home is legendary.

Let his explanation stand as is. It is a little mystery every bit as intriguing as why the commissioners chose to put a fish on the weather vane atop the courthouse.