

The Indian Place Names of Kentucky

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KENTUCKY IS CONSTANTLY YIELDING CLEAR EVIDENCE of long occupation by a succession of Indian cultures. Is it possible that the last Indian occupation and the beginning of white settlement had enough overlap and contact to allow the continuation of some Indian place names into the contemporary world? A casual survey of the state map creates a large measure of pessimism. Only Ohio County and the city of Paducah are evident possibilities. The Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi rivers are of certain Indian origins. Beyond this point the search must become involved with the mass of names of neighborhoods, streams, hills, historical sites and some folk lore.

The Department of Anthropology of the University of Kentucky has estimated that during the pioneer period there are recorded only a few over one-hundred white-Indian contacts. As evidence of how slight the contact actually was, a Mr. Ficklin writing from Lexington in 1847 said: "... I have myself an acquaintance with the Indian history of the State from the year 1781..."

"There is one fact favorable to this State which belongs to few, if any, of the sister States. We have not to answer, to any tribunal, for the crime of driving off the Indian tribes, and possessing their lands. There were no Indians located within our limits, on our taking possession of the country."¹

Due to differences in the geographical areas referred to as Kentucky, the complete record does not allow such positive statements as those made by Mr. Ficklin, but the sense of his statement is essentially true. There is evidence that close to the time of his arrival in Kentucky there were some Shawnee villages on the Kentucky side

¹ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Information Respecting the History, Conditions and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, Part I*, Lippincott, Gumbo & Co., 1853, p. 300-301.

of the Ohio up and downstream from the mouth of the Scioto River.² A village site which was occupied as late as the historical period was located at Hagerhill in Johnson County.³ The record of a displaced band of Shawnees and their camping ground in eastern Clark County is recorded on the Gist map of 1751.⁴ In the western and southern parts of the state random and refugee bands from the south, Chickasaws, Creeks, Choctaws and Cherokees paused long enough to leave some memory of their passing. For an example instance Collins reports, "... Red Bird Fork and Jack's Creek [named] from two friendly Indians bearing those names,..."⁵

Early in the career of Mr. Ficklin there were attempts to clear the Cherokee from the general area bounded by the Cumberland River on the north and the present Kentucky-Tennessee state line on the south.⁶ In 1795 the Shawnees were confined, by treaty, to lands north of the Ohio River.⁷ Such accounts clearly show why Mr. Ficklin would not be impressed by such Indians as were present, as none were legally at home in Kentucky.

The unsettled state of the Indians at this time also is in part explained in a statement by Morgan; he wrote, "As early as the opening of the 17th century the League of the Iroquois launched a period of intra-Indian warfare which reached westward to the Mississippi and southward to South Carolina and the Tennessee River. By 1700 most of the encompassed groups were, 'According to the Indian notion they were made women...'"⁸ This general disruption resulted in the lack of permanent Indian settlements in Kentucky. And this condition when combined with land cessions and land purchases reduced the pioneer-Indian contacts, friendly or hostile, to meetings on grounds which were the home territory of neither.

² *Christopher Gist's Journal with Historical and Ethnological Notes and Biographies of Historical Contemporaries*, J. R. Weldon Co., Pittsburgh, 1893, p. 44.

³ W. S. Webb and W. D. Funkhouser, *Archaeological Survey of Kentucky*, publication of the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Kentucky, Sept. 1932, p. 206.

⁴ Gist, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁵ R. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, Collins & Co., Covington, 1882, p. 141.

⁶ C. C. Royce, "Indian Land Cessions of the United States," *18th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Smithsonian Institute, 1899, p. 648.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 654.

⁸ L. H. Morgan, *League of the HO-DE-NO-SAU-NEE or Iroquois*, Vol. I, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1851, p. 14.

The pioneers were truly foreigners in the land and the Shawnee were only hunters on the neutral ground between their Ohio home and the Cherokee lands to the south in Tennessee.

The pioneers, unlike the Indians, were in the process and possessed of the means to make Kentucky their home. They proceeded to name the physical and cultural features of their habitat in a distinctly American manner. As Speed stated, "The various stations or forts which were dotted all over the level lands where the great army of immigrants spread themselves were principally named in honor of the leading pioneers. The memory of the Indian was seldom perpetuated in the names of mountain or stream, village or fort, and never in the roads and traces of the country."⁹

In Speed's statement there is left a thread of hope that some Indian place names did survive. Certainly this could not have happened often or accurately. Assuming that some of the pioneers may have wanted to perpetuate an Indian place name, there are reasonable possibilities why this did not happen in a form which can be positively identified today. Even though the Indian name for the place was known the name was really a compound word i. e., "Alantowamiowee," the Buffalo Path,¹⁰ or, "Nepepentine Sepe," the Salt River.¹¹ Such names would be difficult to incorporate into an English vocabulary. Thus, "Wepepocone-Cepewe," the Big Sandy, "Milewakene-Cepewe," the Kentucky River, "Lewekeomi," the Falls of the Ohio and other such names were never carried forward.¹² The pronunciation difficulties of such Indian names was complemented by a distaste for Indian culture and a preoccupation with the myriad problems of pioneering. It is to be expected that the continuation of an Indian name will be accompanied by some degree of alteration from the original spoken word. What are the expectations of such words as Schochoh, Ouasioto, Tyewhoppety, Helechawa, Thealka and Dango?

With the statements of Speed and Ficklin well in mind, with attention to the caution of Beeler¹³ and an awareness that results

⁹ T. Speed, *The Wilderness Road*, John P. Morton Co., Louisville, Ky., 1886, p. 68-69.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 69.

¹¹ ———, *Trans. & Collections*, American Antiquities Society, Vol. I, p. 229.

¹² Speed, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹³ M. S. Beeler, "On Etymologizing Indian Place-Names," *Names*, Vol. V, no. 4, Dec. 1957, p. 236 et seq.

would be inconclusive, a search for the Indian place names of the state was undertaken. The product of this search is the object of this paper.

The basic data used in the search for the Indian place names was contained in a card file of over thirty thousand place names compiled from various sources. The primary sources for this compilation were the topographic maps at a scale of 1:24,000 covering the entire state, 1:62,500 topographic maps covering one-half of the state, two series of county highway maps and a series of community and neighborhood maps produced by the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station.

For the first screening of the thirty thousand place names an "open door" policy was established. About four hundred names were selected for further consideration. A second and third review combined with research reduced the list to about one hundred and fifty "possibles." The fourth screening had as its objective the elimination of those names which were of Indian origin but which have become common property in American usage. Only if the name had strong Kentucky connections was a common Indian name retained. Removed from the list were such words as: persimmon, terrapin, hurricane, kinniconick, Mississippi, Tennessee, Cherokee and Tso-non-pow-aka. No consideration was given to any place names in English e. g., Indian Creek, Indian Fort, Yellow Creek, Eagle Creek or Blue Licks. Sample research indicated a lack of source material in this area. The end result of the several screenings was a list of about ninety place names which strongly suggested Indian origins or about which there was an uncertainty.

The research on these ninety place names revealed that about thirty had some close Indian connection or were still unaccounted for. The following twelve names were deleted: *Catawba* (Kuttawa) (Cuttawa), a borrowed Siouan word which in the first two instances was applied by whites to their own settlements and in the last instance went out of use before 1780; *Elkataka*, which is possibly a corruption of the name of the "Prophet" Ellskwatawa; *Peedee*, a borrowed Siouan word of recent use in Kentucky; *Panola*, a borrowing of the Choctaw word for cotton as a place name; *Atoka*, a word said to have been borrowed from the Choctaw but which has no meaning in that language; *Okolona*, a word in the Chickasaw language which is descriptive of an Indian who impressed the whites;

Dango, possibly a Cherokee word but unsupported by local information, if Cherokee it would mean "ground;" *Yamacraw*, a name taken from a book which referred to this band of Creeks and applied to a railroad station; *Watauga*, which was transported to Kentucky from east Tennessee and applied to two villages, in Cherokee the word means "broken water;" *Bayou*, an Indian-French generic term derived from Choctaw which is correctly and incorrectly used in at least six instances of stream names; *Chenowee* (Chennoweth) (Chenneth) (Chenoa) (Chinoe), probably a transported Cherokee place name from Tennessee, (if Cherokee it might mean "bitter," possibly it is Choctaw in origin and if so would mean "gap,") *Wasio* is possibly a Cherokee personal name but the use in Bell County is unsupported by reliable information.

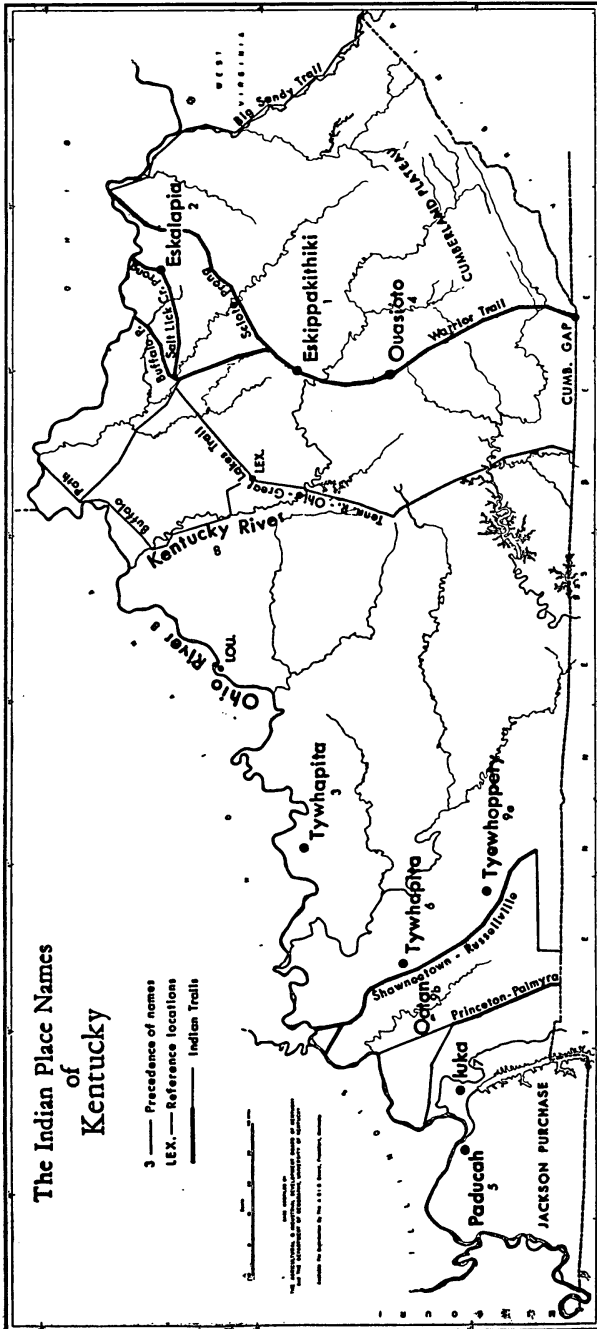
The following place names are unexplained either as words or names. They are presumed to have no Indian origin or reference: Cutuno, Datha, Nimmo, Nisi, Sano, Sketo, Vada, Wysox and Yealiss.

The possibility of classification of the Indian place names is limited both by the small number of names and the varying nature of the data supporting them. None of the names have escaped the effects of such erosional forces as crosscultural hazards in language always present. All are, in some measure, historically uncertain and some lose stature through disuse or uncertain revival. Because degrees of penalties are implied in the above statement the following list of Indian place names is presented in descending order of precedence (see fig. 1):

(1) *Eskippakithiki* — A historical site in Clark County. According to Becker the site covers an area of three thousand five hundred acres.¹⁴ The site lies on the eastern margin of the Outer Bluegrass region and is thus flanked to the east by The Knobs and the escarpment of the Cumberland Plateau. Geomorphic and geologic evidence reveals that this area is the strath of an ancient stream and is underlain by a succession of eastward dipping strata of Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian and Tertiary formations.¹⁵ The map reveals that much of the area is the divide between the south and west flowing Howard Creek and the south flowing Lulbegrud Creek.

¹⁴ W. M. Becker, *Indian Fields*, manuscript transcribed by G. F. Doyle, p. 1.

¹⁵ R. P. Meacham, A. C. Munyan and G. R. Wesley, *Geologic Map of Clark County, Kentucky*, U. of Ky. Geological Survey, series IX, 1950.



The Evans-Pownall map gives an accurate location of this site early in the English period.¹⁶ This location was occupied by Indians, to some extent, from the beginning of the Christian era until 1755.¹⁷ Historically it is known that the site was occupied by a band of Shawnee in 1745–48 and was last occupied by a similar band of Shawnee in 1755.¹⁸

A Dr. T. Michaelson is quoted as saying that the first four syllables of the name undoubtedly contain the Shawnee word meaning “green.” Prof. A. C. Mahr furnishes a more complete statement regarding the etymology of the name. He says, “. . . and [they] gave those lands the name *Shkipakethiki*, ‘place where it is green all over’.”¹⁹

On the geologic map of Clark County²⁰ the name *Kentak* is parenthetically added to the original *Eskippakithiki*. This name is from the pioneer tradition that the Cherokee name of the site was *Kentak*, a word translated by the settlers as “meadow land.”²¹ H. Kenny quoting several sources says that the word *Kentucky* is an Iroquoian word and is variously rendered as “head of the river,” “prairies,” “among the meadows,” “big swamp,” and “river of blood.”²² The last entry above could easily be in reference to the nearby Red River and the others, in spite of some conflicts, appear to say that *Eskippakithiki* and *Kentucky* are expressions of the same thought, “the place where it is green all over.” Thus the appellation “Dark and Bloody Ground” appears as an erroneous translation of *Kentucky* and the regional use of “Bluegrass” appears as a projection of the original descriptive intent. (For further comment on *Kentucky* see the entry of that place name below.)

(2) *Eskalapia* — The use of this Shawnee name in western Lewis County is rather extensive. The topographic map records *Eskalapia* Mountain and *Eskalapia* Hollow. The county history adds by tex-

¹⁶ T. Pownall, *Map of the Middle British Colonies in North America*, 1776 and possibly 1775, reprinted in *the Horn Papers*, Vol. II, W. F. Horn, Green County Historical Society, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa., 1945, p. 784–785.

¹⁷ Estimate given by the Department of Anthropology, University of Kentucky.

¹⁸ C. A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail*, G. P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1911, p. 240–242.

¹⁹ A. C. Mahr, private correspondence of 6 Dec. 1958.

²⁰ Mecham, Munyan and Wesley, op. cit.

²¹ Becker, op. cit., p. 1.

²² H. Kenney, *West Virginia Place Names*, Place Names Press, Piedmont, W. Va., 1945, p. 347.

tual and map reference "Esculapia" Springs and "Esculapia" neighborhood.²³ The immediate area in which these names occur lies directly astride the Salt Lick Creek Prong of the Warrior Trail.²⁴

Mahr states that *Eskalapia* is a Shawnee word.²⁵ His etymology of the word indicates that it means, "over and over, long stretch." The location of the Warrior Trail and the nature of the local topography strongly suggest that this name, as used for the area, is "in situ."

(3)(6)(9a) *Tywhapita* (Tyewhoppety -9a) — The first entry is the name of a neighborhood in northwestern Hancock County which is located in the bottom land of Blackford Creek.²⁶ The second entry, the spelling of which is uncertain, was used in northern Hopkins County for what is now the village of Manitou.²⁷ The third entry is the name of a community in northern Todd County.²⁸ This same word, Tywappity Bottoms and Zewapeta, occurs in Missouri.²⁹ In Hancock County a folk etymology is given, the conclusion of which is as follows: ". . . the male occupants of the cabin rushed to the spot and found only a log with water slapping against it, making the sound of 'Tywhoppity-tywhoppity-tywhoppity'."³⁰ Mr. Boone states that the use of this word in Todd County is of uncertain origin but is locally believed to date from the 1890's.³¹

Prof. Mahr has studied this word with regard to its possible derivation from Shawnee stems. He writes as follows: "Unless otherwise documented, the Shawnee trekking from across the Ohio River to Kentucky and the West, may have given three or more different locations in Kentucky that name of 'place of no return.' It is im-

²³ O. C. Ragan, *History of Lewis County, Kentucky*, Jennings and Graham Cincinnati, 1912, p. 25-489.

²⁴ W. E. Myer, "Indian Trails of the Southeast," *Forty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Smithsonian Institution, 1928, p. 787.

²⁵ A. C. Mahr, private correspondence of 14 Feb. 1959.

²⁶ *Community and Neighborhood Map of Hancock County, Kentucky*, Ky. Agri. Exp. Station, Ext. Div., U. of Ky. Lexington, mimeographed, ed. 1941.

²⁷ Correspondence with B. E. Boone III, editor, *Todd County Standard*, who obtained this statement from an elderly lady who was born at Tywhapita, Hopkins Co., 1959.

²⁸ *Community and Neighborhood Map of Todd County*, 1942.

²⁹ R. L. Ramsey, *Our Storehouse of Missouri Place Names*, University of Missouri Bulletin, Missouri Handbook no. Two, U. of Missouri, 1952, p. 42-43.

³⁰ Correspondence with Mrs. Dorsey Thompson, Lewisport, Ky., 12 Dec. 1958.

³¹ Boone, *op. cit.*

material, therefore, whether the English transcription of **TOW/haap/ite* today reads *Tywhapita* or *Tyewhoppety*.”³²

(4) *Ouasioto* — An uncertain Indian word applied as the name of a gap on the Warrior Trail between Manchester and Station Camp Creek in Jackson County.

Originating in the Carolinas and Georgia the “Athiamiowee” was funneled through Cumberland (Cave) Gap and thus through the extremely rough country of the Cumberland Mountains and Plateau. Ouasioto Gap is, in a minor way, the entrance to easier travel for the traveler from the south. The Evans-Pownall map shows this area as occupied by the Ouasioto Mountains, a name which is no longer used though no satisfactory substitute has replaced it. None of the current maps carry the name of this gap but the name is still known in the vicinity of Gray Hawk and Bradshaw.

The etymology of *Ouasioto* is vague; however a footnote by Johnston says that the word is Shawnee and that it means “Deer Pass.”³³ Prof. Mahr states that the word *scioto* is: Iroquoian (Wyandot), probably from the Wyandot *och/sk’onto* which mean “a deer,” and, in the category of trade-and-travel words.³⁴

The historical use of the word indicates an intent to perpetuate an Indian place name. The etymological difficulties do not alter its provenience from an Indian place name on the Warrior Trail.

(5) *Paducah* — A city on the south Bank of the Ohio River and the county seat of McCracken County. It is in the area of the Jackson Purchase which was taken over from the Chickasaws in 1818. Wilson records: “Its site was originally a portion of the land granted to Gen. George Rogers Clark [1752–1818], and it was William Clark, a brother of Gen. Clark, and one of the leaders of the famous Lewis and Clark exploring expedition, who founded the settlement. There is a dispute as to the origin of the name, whether from an Indian tribe or its chief, but the personal tendency finally prevailed, and Chief Paduke the head of the tribe carried off the honor.”³⁵

Some insight is gained in regard to Clark’s use of the word “Paduke” in the following excerpt: “Thus, Lewis and Clark, who identi-

³² Correspondence with A. C. Mahr, 7 Feb. 1959.

³³ J. S. Johnston, *First Explorations in Kentucky*, Filson Club, 1898, p. 122.

³⁴ A. C. Mahr, “Indian River and Place Names in Ohio,” *The Ohio Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 66, no. 2, April 1957, p. 140.

³⁵ S. M. Wilson, *History of Kentucky*, Vol. II, J. S. Clark Publishing Co., Chicago and Louisville, 1928, p. 620–623.

fied the "Cattar-kah" as the "Paducar" who came to trade at the Arikara³⁶ villages from the region to the southwest, apparently picked up the original meaning of "Paduca" as Apache, because the "Cataka" were the Kiowa-Apache."³⁷

Another approach and challenge to the foregoing is the research of Irvin S. Cobb, a native of Paducah. Using the works of H. B. Cushman, Cobb concluded, "... the name Paducah — and incidentally of the old chief — was derived from a compound word in the Chickasaw tongue meaning 'wild grapes hanging,' or, more properly 'Place where the grapes hang down'."³⁸

An examination of Byington³⁹ reveals that Cobb may have been very close to the etymology of the name. The name that Clark knew from the Missouri Valley and this Chickasaw (Choctaw) word were close in sound and thus possibly joined in spelling. If this assumption is correct Paducah, as with Eskippakithiki, is a corrupted but true Indian place name "in situ."

(7) *Iuka* — A town on the Cumberland River in Livingston County. This was once the name for what is now Tama, Iowa,⁴⁰ and is currently the name of towns in Mississippi, Illinois, Missouri and Kansas. In each instance the apparent intent was to perpetuate an Indian name the etymology and original location of which has been lost. In Livingston County the residents believe that this was the name of a refugee band of Chickasaws who camped in their locality.⁴¹

The prevalence of this place name suggests some substance though it is without evident historical support. Possibly the word means "place by the water." The inclusion of this place name is questionable.

(8) *Kentucky* — This familiar name is widely used in Kentucky and adjoining states and has spread as far as Southern Rhodesia and Australia; it is obscure as to original use and etymology. It appears to be of Cherokee origin. This conclusion is well supported when the

³⁶ Mooney states that they were one of three associated tribes resident along the Missouri River at the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

³⁷ F. R. Secoy, "The Identity of the 'Paduca,' and Ethnohistorical Analysis," *American Anthropologist*, Vo. 53, no. 4, part I, Oct.-Dec., 1951, p. 529.

³⁸ F. G. Neuman, *The Story of Paducah*, Young Printing Co., Paducah, 1928, p. 18.

³⁹ C. Byington, *A Dictionary of the Choctaw Language*, ed. Swanton & Halbert, Smithsonian Inst. Bureau of Am. Ethnology, Washington, 1915, p. 308.

⁴⁰ —, *A History of the Origin of the Names in Nine Northwestern States Connected with the C & Nw, C St, PM & O Railroad*, Chicago, 1908, p. 146.

⁴¹ Correspondence with H. Y. Martin, postmaster, Iuka, Ky., 1958.

word is associated with Eskippakithiki cited above. However, the research of a Tennessee historian presents equally interesting possibilities. He writes as follows: "The Emperor of the Cherokees, commonly called by the English 'Old Hop.' . . . various forms, due to the difficulty of reducing to English Cherokee guttural in Kanegwati have been found by the writer in the records: Cunnicatogue, Concaughto, Connoctte, Connecocartee, Conogotocke, Canackte, referring to 'Canacaught, the great conjurer,' . . ." ⁴²

A review of the literature circa 1780 would indicate that the name of the land to be settled by the followers of Boone was a matter of point of view and time. Pownall⁴³ and Hutchins⁴⁴ from the English point of view used the name Cuttawa for the land and the river. Other such names included Milley's (Millewakame), Cuttawba, Chenoka, Chenoa and Little Cunaway. By 1784 Filson⁴⁵ and the settlers moving from North Carolina and east Tennessee were using some variation of the word Kentucky for the same land and river. The chronicles of the time do not relay the philosophy which caused this change in usage.

Whether "Cuttawa" or "Kentucky," both names appear as inventions of the whites rather than true Indian names. Circumstance caused the strong Cherokee influence to turn the tide in favor of "Kentucky."

(8) *Ohio* — In this instance the word "Ohio" is considered as a river name only.

The French, viewing the river first at its mouth, caused considerable confusion in names. Winsor makes the following statement in this regard, "As to this eastern affluent of the Mississippi, the French had introduced a confused nomenclature, which needs to be borne in mind in reading the early narratives. What they often called the Ouabache (Wabash) was the present stream of that name, continued in the modern Ohio below their junction." ⁴⁶

⁴² H. Timberlake, *The Memoirs of Lieut. Harry Timberlake 1756-1765*, Annotation, Introduction and Index by S. C. Williams, The Watauga Press, Johnson City, Tenn., 1927, footnote p. 39.

⁴³ Pownall, op. cit.

⁴⁴ T. Hutchins, "A new Map of the Western Parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina, London, 1778.

⁴⁵ J. Filson, "Map of Kentucke," Philadelphia, 1784.

⁴⁶ J. Winsor, *The Mississippi Basin, the Struggle in America Between England and France*, Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston, 1895, p. 17.

The river name, as now used, is certainly of Indian origin. Though the Shawnee name was known in a variety of spellings and meanings⁴⁷ none ever "caught on." Mahr clearly relates the transmutation of the word into its present form; he writes, "This indicates that the name 'Ohio,' evidently pronounced O/hii/ó at that time, and regardless of its probable origin among the Wyandots, had become a term of interracial travel-and-trade lingo on the all-important waterway during that era of mutual acculturation between Indians and whites, and simply meant 'the Big River' to everyone concerned."⁴⁸

(9b) *Ootan* — The name of a creek which is tributary to Donaldson Creek in northern Caldwell County. This creek is on the evacuation route for southern Indians on their way to the West. This particular name appears only as a fragment of an Indian word. There is however, some memory of Indian words being used as place names in this immediate area. A local resident writes, "A creek north of Princeton was called 'Opicana' by the Indians that returned here to visit the graves of their dead. I have heard this stated by Mrs. Ellen Dixon, now deceased."⁴⁹ It must be considered more than coincidence that the Choctaw Dictionary gives "opitama" as a word meaning "passed by." The creek referred to by Mrs. Dixon is not specified to the degree that "opitama" could be related to "ootan." All that can be said is that "ootan" is an unexplained word used as the name of a creek in the immediate area of a past Choctaw (?) use of the word "opitama" to describe a creek in northern Caldwell County.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The pessimism engendered by Speed in regard to finding many Indian place names in the state was well founded. The effort however, did reveal some names that were nearly lost and the status of others was established.

The moment in history allotted to the French and English to enter the bounds of the state was a period of confusion and conflict. Archaeology indicates that had the colonial period occurred at an earlier date the history and resultant influence on place names would have

⁴⁷ J. S. Johnston in *First Explorations in Kentucky* records "Kitono-cepe" and John Johnston in *Indian Tribes* records "Kiskepila Sepe."

⁴⁸ A. C. Mahr, op. cit., p. 138.

⁴⁹ Correspondence with J. E. Mason, Princeton, Ky., 1958.

been considerable. As it was, the enormous wave of pioneer migrants into a nearly vacant land gave little opportunity for the continuation of Indian place names. Without the bridge of trade and mission activities it is somewhat remarkable that any form of place names of Indian origin has survived.

A partial reason for the survival of the listed names is found when these names are plotted in relation to the Indian Trails of the state (see fig. 1). The "Warrior Trail," the Shawneetown-Russellville trail and the river route of the Ohio were within the bounds of Shawnee influence at the time of white-Indian contact. It is thus the realization of a reasonable expectation that these routes would be dominated by Shawnee words used as place names today.

The area of the Jackson Purchase and as far eastward as the Princeton-Palmyra trail was the northern limit of the Chickasaw territory. This was also the evacuation route for both the Chickasaw and the Choctaw on their way to the West. Thus this general area is the exclusive domain of place names derived from these two languages.

The small measure of Cherokee influence at the time of settlement is amply demonstrated in the paucity of surviving Cherokee place names. Ouasioto is not clearly defined. It could be Wyandot from the north or Cherokee from the south. Other Cherokee names are either lost or have been revived by whites and used for the euphony of the word e. g. Watauga, Chenoa, Wasioto etc., rather than perpetuating Cherokee place names 'per se.'

The Siouan intrusion found in the historic use of "Cuttawa" as a name for the Kentucky River is unexplained.

The absence of place names of Indian origin along the Buffalo Path, the Tennessee River-Ohio-Great Lakes trail, the Scioto Prong, the Falls of the Ohio at Louisville and the Big Sandy trail demonstrates how slender a chance it was for any name to survive. Such prominent locations in Indian and pioneer times as Big Bone Lick and Blue Licks are not recorded in regard to their Indian names.

The fact is, that in an absolute sense, there are no Indian place names in the state. There is only the hazy memory that there were a few names existent at the advent of white settlement, a mixture of isolated ephemeral adjectives and adjectival phrases.