

Camp Springs, Kentucky – Part 2

Family Genealogy by Donald A. Baumann October, 2003

As I continue into Part 2, I plan to explore our families who emigrated from Germany to Four Mile Kentucky. From here they populated Campbell County in such places as Eight Mile, Twelve Mile, Alexandria, Cold Springs, Wilder, Newport and Dayton. Some of the rural roads in the county were named for families of early immigrants.

Four Mile Creek was a route to what is now known as Camp Springs. In those days of low water levels for the Ohio River, I am sure our ancestors traveled up the Four Mile Creek bed. It was the best way for them to arrive to the hilly country where they bought farms and renewed old friendships from Germany.

My study indicates that Four Mile, Eight Mile and Twelve Mile were so named by the creeks which emptied into the Ohio River at a mileage referenced to be up stream from the mouth of the Little Miami River. The old wagon roads and now the paved roads seem to follow along these creek beds. Early farm owners allowed these dirt roads to pass through their farms but the travelers had to pay a toll. Several toll houses have been preserved throughout the County.

I guess the origin of the point of reference, the Little Miami River, was a much larger stream and a good navigational land mark. If I were to research the history of Southern Ohio I would probably find that Five Mile Road and Eight Mile Road in Ohio was so named with the same point of reference.

My own introduction to Four Mile Creek came as a child when we would visit my Dad's sister and her husband. Uncle Pete and Aunt Julie Hartig lived on the other side of the creek from the road. In dry weather we could drive across the creek to their house in our 1928 Chevy. If the water was too high, my parents and the six of us would challenge the cable swinging bridge across the rushing water. The natural thing for us boys was to see how much we could make the bridge swing while our sisters were trying to make it across. Being the youngest brother, I guess I was a bit scared too.

My father, who was born in 1893, lived in Newport as a child and a young man. He spoke of walking to Four Mile from the end of the Fort Thomas street car line near River Road. He said he and friends would walk through the fields for the shortest distance. On one occasion he told me, they came upon a dead horse in the field. When they kicked it, a possum ran out of the belly. It must have been a scare for them since he still remembered the incident to tell me about it many years later. Now that is what you call “kicking a dead horse”. I don’t remember Dad telling me who was with him but I would guess it was his cousin Butch Fassler. He was Dad’s best friend who also had roots in the Cold Spring – Four Mile area.

About 1880, Camp Springs became the name of record but I have no knowledge of a spring or the location of a spring. My parents always called it Four Mile. Since most of my ancestors on all sides of the family arrived here in the mid nineteenth century, I believe this to be the name of choice for the early families. It has been recorded that Camp Springs may have been called Indian Springs at some time before 1880. I find that Camp Springs was serviced by a Post Office named Indian Springs until the Camp Springs Post Office was established between 1880 and 1883. The 1880 Census does record names in Indian Springs. I believe that to be a District or Precinct such as the Hayfield District which was the other side of Four Mile Road at Camp Springs.

As I continue into the genealogy phase of our families at Four Mile, I hope to be able to tell you how humble German immigrants populated the Campbell County area.

I hope to not only give you names and dates of family but a sense of how our people lived and died. How they brought their families to America and the hardships they endured brings real life to these people. The loss of so many of their children and the death of the mothers is in itself a story that should be passed to the next generations. For their love and determination we must thank them. For their weakness and failures, we must forgive them.

For those of us who have found the interest to accept the recording of our family history and genealogy, we have become the “**Story Tellers**”.

The following might describe how we attempt to preserve these records for those who will follow us.

THE STORY TELLERS

We are the chosen. My feelings are, in each family, there is one who seems called to find the ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again, to tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. To me, doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts but, instead, breathing life into all those who have gone before. We are the storytellers of the tribe. All tribes have one. We have been called, as it were, by our genes. Those who have gone before cry out to us: Tell our story.

So, we do.

In finding them, we somehow find ourselves. How many graves have I stood before now and cried? I have lost count. How many times have I told the ancestors, you have a wonderful family, you would be proud of us? How many times have I walked up to a grave and felt somehow there was love there for me? I cannot say.

It goes beyond documenting facts. It goes to whom I am and why do I do the things I do? It goes to seeing a cemetery about to be lost forever to weeds and indifference and saying, I can't let this happen. The bones here are bones of my bone and flesh of my flesh. It goes to doing something about it.

It goes to pride in what our ancestors were able to accomplish. How they contributed to what we are today. It goes to respecting their hardships and losses, their never giving in or giving up, their resoluteness to go on and build a life for their family.

It goes to deep pride that they fought to make and keep us a Nation. It goes to a deep and immense understanding that they were doing it for us, that we might be born who we are, that we might remember them. So we do. With love and caring and scribing each fact of their existence, because we are they and they are us. So, as a scribe called, I tell a story of my family. It is up to that one called in the next generation to answer the call and take their place in the long line of family storytellers.

That is why I do my family genealogy, and that is what calls those young and old to step up and put flesh on the bones.

(Author Unknown) Sent to me from a cousin also researching our family