

Max Kaemper's Unique Selection of Place Names for His 1908 Map of Mammoth Cave

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Abstract

In this paper we present Max Kaemper's unique selection of Place Names for his 1908 map of Mammoth Cave. He realized the importance of Place Names and they became a feature on his map. His sensitive selection of Place Names provides a greater cultural emphasis, when compared to the previous maps.

Max Kaemper (23years old) was from Germany, came to America and visited Mammoth Cave.¹ He took tours in the cave, and for some wonderful unknown reason became "influenced" by the cave. Perhaps, similar to the reason we have gathered here today. We suggest this "influence" made some interesting changes in his ideas about map making. His interest in the cave was stronger than that of a casual visitor. He wanted to see more cave, especially those areas off the normal tourist routes. One goal was to conduct a survey and produce a map. In this manner he could use the expertise in map making he had acquired as an engineer and use it to see more of the cave. He presented a proposal to the cave management to make a map of Mammoth Cave. It was accepted. In return the cave management gave him free room and board and assigned Ed Bishop, guide, to assist him.² It is important to point out that Mr. Kaemper instigated the project rather than the cave management. It was a project Kaemper wanted to do. I do not think financial gain or professional status was his motive, but the "influence" of the cave.

An important part of a map is the Place Names that identify specific features represented on the map. Place Names have evolved over the years due to the influence of visitors with various degrees of education, backgrounds, interests, etc. The guides also created, contributed, and endorsed Place Names for their presentations to the visitors. Early visitors had a "clean slate" and relied on their personal experiences to give descriptive Place Names to the formations and features. Visitors with a

"classical" education often presented references to Greek Mythology and Historical Legends. A cave being an entrance to the underground was ideal for referring to Old Testament stories of Hell and Damnation. Place Names were also chosen for political and practical purposes such as honoring a guide, a cave operator, or an owner of the cave. The Place Names are an integral part of the historical heritage of Mammoth Cave and reflect the ideas and attitudes from the various periods of time.

A Place Name on a map has a degree of authority because it has been published. The authors assigned the Place Names with a great degree of knowledge, thought, and responsibility to insure that the map will be respected as a factual presentation. The Place Names will achieve a form of permanence as long as the map is respected.

The Place Names have evolved from the earliest Lee Map to the later Kaemper Map. For example, the Lee Map indicates "Little Bat Room," the Bishop Map also indicates "Little Bat Room," and only changes slightly to "Little Bat Avenue" on the Kaemper Map. A more drastic change occurs with the "Giant's Coffin." It is indicated as the "Steam Boat" on the Lee Map, "Giant's Coffin" on the Bishop Map, and "The Giant's Coffin" on the Kaemper Map. The strangest change in Place Names occurs in Gratz Avenue. The feature is a small shallow pool of water that maintains a rather constant depth and volume. The Kaemper Map indicates "Pool" but in parentheses indicates "Formerly Lake Purity." The Bishop Map indicates "Lake Purity." The

Lee Map indicates “Pool of Clitoris.” This Place Name is rather shocking. None of the other Place Names have any reference to anatomical details. We looked the word up in several dictionaries. The word is derived from the Greek *kleitoris*, which many sources translate as “little hill.” *A Dictionary of Medical Derivations*, however, translates this literally as “the man with the key” or “the gatekeeper.” A playful origin of names for the clitoris is repeated in many languages. For example, a British folk term for the clitoris is “the little man in the boat.”³ Whether this or some other folk term is the reference for the “Pool of Clitoris” is unknown and the origin of this Place Name is a puzzle.

The comparison of Max Kaemper’s map with those produced earlier by Edmund F. Lee, 1839, and Stephen Bishop, 1845, will be the basis for illustrating what we suggest are interesting differences. These differences are due to the personality of the individuals and the conditions they had to work with. In order to compare the differences between the Place Names on the three maps, we needed to find an element that was present in each of them. Our examination produced the following categories:

- Female
- Male
- People (gender non-specific)
- Features

We examined each Place Name on the three maps. Each Place Name was placed in one of the four categories. For example, the name “Catherine City” on the Lee Map was considered Female. The name “Wilkin’s Arm Chair,” on the Lee Map, was indicated as Male because Charles Wilkins was once one of the owners of Mammoth Cave. The name “Washington’s Grand Dome,” on the Lee Map, was indicated as People because gender is not determinable. The name “The Church”, on the Lee Map, was indicated as a Feature because it is a physical place and not related to Female, Male, or People.

The Place Names in each category on the three maps were counted producing a Category Number. The Category Number was divided by the total number of Place Names on that

particular map to produce a percentage. A percentage from one map could be used to compare the percentage of a Category Number from another map. It enabled comparisons even though each map had considerably different amounts of Category Numbers and total number of entries.

THE EDMUND F. LEE MAP, 1839

Edmund F. Lee was a 24-year-old Civil Engineer from Cincinnati, Ohio.⁴ He produced the first instrument survey or “chain and transit map,” including both horizontal and vertical dimensions of Mammoth Cave.⁵ It required 3-4 months to accomplish. George S. Gatewood, a guide, helped with the chaining.⁶ It was the first accurate map of Mammoth Cave. It became obsolete when Stephen Bishop crossed The Bottomless Pit and opened up a whole new section of the cave. Lee’s Map has 180 Place Names. It is a very beautiful map with profiles of passages, engraving of the entrance, and notes.

Lee’s Place Names are descriptive in a matter of fact manner consistent with his background as a Civil Engineer (Table 1). Features account for 91% of the total Place Names with only 1% and 3% for Female and Male names respectively.

THE STEPHEN BISHOP MAP, 1845

Stephen Bishop was an African-American slave whose duties were to guide visitors through the cave. He was knowledgeable about the cave and received very favorable reviews from the visitors: “Stephen, the best guide.”⁷ He was also very active in exploring the cave and made numerous discoveries. Perhaps his most important contribution was crossing The Bottomless Pit. This opened up new sections of the cave and greatly enlarged its length. During the winter of 1841–42, Stephen drew a map of Mammoth Cave.⁸ It is commonly believed that he used the Lee Map as a guide and added passages and features he discovered. His map is simpler in design than Lee’s. It also lacks a scale. A disappointing characteristic of his map is that it includes a lot more cave passage than the Lee map, but has 80 less Place Names (Table 2).

Stephen Bishop's Map has increased Female, Male, and Feature Place Names compared to the Lee Map, but is still heavily based on Features. The reason for so few entries will probably never be answered. One may speculate that the decision was out of Stephen's control.

THE MAX KAEMPER MAP, 1908

This map upon being finished was hidden from public view for many years. The cave management feared trouble with bordering landowners, because passages went beyond the boundaries of the land owned by Mammoth Cave estate.⁹ As a result, the map lacks a scale. The multi color cave passages indicate the different levels, which is very helpful when one passage goes under another. It is a large map enabling the passages to be easily seen. This map has the highest number of Place Names. A total of 333. The Place Names are divided into two groups. One group has the Place Names labeled on the map and consists of 221. There are also numbers on the map, which refer to an Index with a total 112 names. The use of the numbers and accompanying Index helps to keep the map from getting cluttered.

This map has a more even distribution of entries even though Features still has the highest percentage (Table 3). However, its percentage is much lower than the other maps. There is a considerable increase in percentage for Female

and Male. The increase in percentage for People is moderate. The three Categories Female, Male, and People now have closer percentages to each other. Kaemper's Place Names are in harmony with each other and do not express a bias. We do not think this harmony was perpetrated but natural due to his sensitivity and lack of a preconceived agenda.

Kaemper retained the traditional Place Names of the earlier maps, but presented a new direction with additional Place Names. A number of them refer to people from the local area. The honouring of local people, instead of famous personalities, creates a more democratic atmosphere. It diminishes the possible idea of snobbery or elitism. The names are more evenly distributed between women and men. A visitor is not required to have a "classical" education to understand the Place Names he selected. Names of ladies provide a soothing, warmer feminine quality rather than the he-man macho stereotype. The ideas of Hell and Damnation are reduced providing a calmer atmosphere. His additional Place Names relate to people and culture rather than geology, mythology, or theology.

We find it wonderful that Max Kaemper's choice of Place Names has a more human quality than the other maps. He followed what he felt was important from his experiences in the cave rather than relying on his previous training. He was "influenced" by the cave and the people he met at Mammoth Cave.

Table 1. Place Name categories on the 1839 Lee map.

Categories	Number of Entries	Percent of Total
Female	2	1.1
Male	5	2.8
People	9	5.0
Features	164	91.1
Total	180	100

Table 2. Place Name categories on the 1845 Bishop map.

Categories	Number of Entries	Percent of Total
Female	4	4.0
Male	8	8.0
People	14	14.0
Features	74	74.0
Total	100	100

Table 3. Place Name categories on the 1908 Kaemper map.

Categories	Number of Entries	Percent of Total
Female	66	19.8
Male	68	20.4
People	58	17.4
Features	141	42.3
Total	333	99.9

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