

SEARCHING FOR WILLIAM BARTRAM'S BUFFALO LICK¹

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The writings of Philadelphia natural scientist William Bartram are among the best sources on the ecological and geographical conditions that prevailed in the Southeast in the years immediately preceding the Revolutionary War. In this essay, particular attention is paid to his colorful and detailed description of an important but somewhat unusual landmark on Georgia's Indian frontier. It was a buffalo lick, a place at which buffaloes and other large herbivores were known to lick and eat clays in the soil. The lick under investigation, termed the "Great Buffalo Lick," was such a singular place that it was designated to be a boundary-line checkpoint in an important treaty negotiated to allow the Colony of Georgia to acquire a huge cession of land from the Cherokee and Creek Indians in 1773. Although the Great Buffalo Lick remained a well-known place in the decades immediately following that date, with the passage of time its location was lost from memory. In the 1930s, researchers began to employ cartographic evidence to augment Bartram's colorful but imprecise description. At least three different specific sites were described by researchers who argued that they had found the place Bartram had visited and described. These sites did not agree with my own analysis, first published in the 1960s. Presented here is further analysis, based on late 18th-century land survey plats and deeds, that has allowed me finally to precisely locate Bartram's Great Buffalo Lick on the present-day landscape.

Key words: Bartram, buffalo lick, ceded lands, Cherokees, Creeks, New Purchase, original land survey plats.

INTRODUCTION. In this essay we are concerned with the rediscovery of an important but unusual landmark, a buffalo lick that served as a key marker on the 1773 Georgia-Indian Boundary Line. It came to the attention of a wide audience in America and Europe in 1791 when it was described by respected Philadelphia-based naturalist William Bartram in his influential book *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws, containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of Those Regions, together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians* (hereafter referred to as *Travels*).² Although this landmark was shown on many small-scale printed and published maps in the late 18th century and through the 19th, its exact location on the developing landscape had been forgotten by the early 20th century when local historians and other researchers tried to locate it. In the 1960s, while undertaking research for my book on Indian boundaries in the southern colonies, I determined a location for the Great Buffalo Lick described by Bartram first in a 1773–1774 report to his sponsor (1943, p. 140) and later, in 1791, in *Travels* (Harper, 1958, pp. 25–26). I soon found, however, that others did not agree. In light of their disagreements,

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I was drawn into a detailed study that spanned decades and resulted in fixing the exact location of that natural landmark on the greatly altered present-day landscape.

“William Bartram continues to fascinate,” enthused historian Edward J. Cashin in his recent review essay subtitled “New Approaches to William Bartram” (Cashin, 1997, p. 663). In backing up his statement, Cashin stressed the fact that at least nine scholarly books and articles about Bartram, as well as Charles Frazier’s widely acclaimed novel *Cold Mountain*, had appeared in the 1990s. Novelist Frazier’s protagonist, Civil War veteran Inman, probably put Bartram in the public eye to a far greater extent than all of the scholar–authors combined. In the novel, Frazier wrote that, to Inman, Bartram’s *Travels* was a book that “was concerned with this very part of the world and with everything that was important in it . . . that it stood nigh to holiness and was of such richness that one might dip into it at random and read only one sentence and yet be sure of finding instruction and delight” (Frazier, 1997, p. 415). While Inman’s story is centered on his own painful odyssey away from the horrors of war to his home in the sheltering mountains of western North Carolina, anyone who knows the Southeast or is interested in its geography and history can share in his enthusiasm concerning William Bartram’s book. Most recently, *National Geographic Magazine*, in its March 2001 issue, brought Bartram to international attention through a lavishly illustrated article titled “William Bartram: A Naturalist’s Vision of Frontier America.” It is complete with a map of his travels through the pre-Revolutionary Southeast.

William Bartram was a well-educated naturalist-artist, a Pennsylvania Quaker, who lived from 1739 to 1824. His portrait by Charles Willson Peale hangs in Philadelphia’s Independence National Historical Park. In his calling as a natural scientist, Bartram followed in his father John’s footsteps. John Bartram (1699–1777),³ although of limited formal education, was well-regarded in a circle of Philadelphians that included Benjamin Franklin. In 1742 he joined Franklin and others in founding the American Philosophical Society. The elder Bartram, while a farmer by profession, gained his standing and reputation as a botanist. In the late 1720s he purchased a small house and farm overlooking the Schuylkill River outside of Philadelphia, and it was there that John Bartram began what is often cited as the first botanical garden in America. William grew up on the farm and, unlike his father, enjoyed an excellent formal education at the newly formed Philadelphia Academy, where his teachers included William Smith, founder of America’s first literary review, and classicist Charles Thomson, who served as the first secretary of the Continental Congress. In his father’s home and world-renowned garden, Bartram met most of the leading scientific lights of the day, from Franklin to Sweden’s Peter Kalm. Today the house John Bartram enlarged and his reconstructed garden are open to the public and a popular resort for botanists, gardeners, historians, and Bartram buffs from the world over.

When William was only 14 years old, he began accompanying his father on extended botanical field expeditions, one of which took them to the Catskill

Mountains of New York and a meeting with Cadwallader Colden, then regarded in Europe as the best scientific thinker in the New World. In 1755, John and William traveled into New England in the company of a certain Dr. Alison, a College of Philadelphia professor of the higher classics, logic, metaphysics, and geography who was described by one contemporary as “the greatest classical scholar in America.” On these trips and in the intervening years, William spent much of his time studying the plants, birds, and animals he encountered. The quality of his drawings attracted the favorable attention of socially well-connected plant collector Peter Collinson, who shared them with other influential London collectors, including physician John Fothergill, who would later play a crucial role in financing William’s own botanical expeditions across the Southeast.

Shortly after receiving his appointment as botanist to King George III in 1765, John Bartram was able to undertake a long-anticipated collecting expedition through the southern colonies and into “the Floridas,” which had passed from Spanish to British control in 1763. Accompanied by son William, his route took them through present-day North and South Carolina and Georgia and into Florida’s St. John’s River basin.⁴ Their successful exploratory gathering expedition lasted 10 months, from July 1765 to April 1766, and resulted in a large quantity of seeds and specimens being forwarded to England for the King and for Peter Collinson.

John Bartram returned home to his beloved garden and Philadelphia associates, but young William decided to remain in Florida and try his hand as a rice and indigo planter in the new colony. As his father had feared, William’s venture failed disastrously, and within the year he had returned home, wretched and crestfallen. From 1767 to 1772 William worked none too successfully at supporting himself in a number of agricultural and then mercantile occupations in and around Philadelphia and in North Carolina. Shortly before the benevolent Peter Collinson died, he was able to secure commissions for William to draw mollusks for the Duchess of Portland and turtles for Dr. John Fothergill. In 1772 Dr. Fothergill, despairing “that such a genius should sink under distress,” advanced the proposal that William undertake a collecting trip to Florida under his sponsorship and patronage.

INTO THE SOUTHEAST. On March 20, 1773, William Bartram sailed for Charleston to begin his nearly four-year-long peregrination across the Southeast, through the Carolinas, Georgia, and East and West Florida, and along the Gulf Coast to Louisiana, at a time when the interior of this vast area was still under Indian control. His sponsor, Dr. Fothergill, had written to instruct: “It will be right to keep a little journal, marking the soil, situation, plants in general, remarkable animals, where found, and the several particulars relative to them as they cast up . . . Mark the places [the plants] grow in, under shade or in the open country.” In addition to his written reports, Bartram forwarded seeds and specimens as well as artistic drawings of the noteworthy birds, animals, and fish he encountered. Nor did he ignore the Indians and White frontier dwellers he came in contact with. The authors of a recent

monograph devoted to Bartram's treatment of the Indians begin their work by stating, "William Bartram's writings are among the most valuable primary historical sources on the Muscogulges—commonly known as the Creeks and Seminoles—and the Cherokees" (Waselkov and Braund, 1995, p. 1).

Bartram arrived in Savannah from Charleston later in the spring of 1773 and, after exploring a bit of the coastal area to the south, he headed on horseback up the Savannah River Valley to the frontier outpost of Augusta. Before Bartram had left Charleston, Superintendent of Indian Affairs John Stuart had suggested that an exploration into the Indian country might be made easier were Bartram to attend the important Indian Congress scheduled to be held at Augusta in May and June. Bartram wrote that Stuart "had proposed, in order to facilitate my travels in the Indian territories, that, if I would be present at the Congress, he would introduce my business to the chiefs of the Cherokees, Creeks, and other nations, and recommend me to their friendship and protection; which promise he fully performed, and it proved of great service to me" (Harper, 1958, p. 6).

Within days of his arrival in Augusta, Bartram wrote:

The chiefs and warriors of the Creeks and Cherokees being arrived, the Congress and the business of the treaty came on, and the negotiations [sic] continued undetermined many days; the merchants of Georgia demanding at least two million of acres of land from the Indians, as a discharge of their debts, due, and of long standing; the Creeks, on the other hand, being a powerful and proud spirited people, their young warriors were unwilling to submit to so large a demand, and their conduct evidently betrayed a disposition to dispute the ground by force of arms, and they could not at first be brought to listen to reason and amicable terms; however, at length, the cool and deliberate counsels of the ancient venerable chiefs, enforced by liberal presents of suitable goods, were too powerful inducements for them any longer to resist and finally prevailed (Harper, 1958, p. 22).

Although in his *Travels* Bartram wrote that the land cession was made and treaty signed "in unanimity, peace, and good order," he indicated otherwise in a private communication to his patron in England. To Dr. Fothergill he candidly observed: "In a few days the business of the Congress was over but not terminating entirely to the satisfaction of the parties, on either side of the question, the superintendent told me he thought it not altogether safe to go then into the Indian countries" (Bartram, 1943, p. 138). Heeding the superintendent's caution, Bartram decided to delay his excursion into the Indian country until the party assigned to survey and demarcate the boundaries of the New Purchase, as the Indian land cession was called, was ready to begin its work.⁵

THE GREAT BUFFALO LICK. It was well along in the month of May when Bartram wrote:

The preparatory business of the surveyors being now accomplished . . . we joined the caravan, consisting of surveyors, astronomers, artisans, chain-carriers, markers, guides and hunters, besides a very respectable number of gentlemen, who joined us, in order to speculate in the lands, together with ten or twelve Indians, altogether to the number of eighty or ninety men, all or most of us well mounted on horseback, besides twenty or thirty pack-horses, loaded with provisions, tents, and camp equipage (Harper, 1958, p. 23).

Describing the mid-day temperatures as “insufferably hot and sultry,” the Pennsylvania naturalist continued:

We set off from Augusta, early in the morning, for the Great Buffalo Lick, on the Great Ridge, which separates the waters of the Savanna [alternate spelling] and Alatomaha [alternate spelling], eighty miles distant from Augusta” (Harper, 1958, p. 23).

What Bartram termed the “Great Ridge” would be recognized today as the divide separating the streams flowing east into the Savannah River drainage basin from those flowing west to the Oconee system, whose waters in turn flow into the Altamaha River before finding the Atlantic Ocean. (The Ogeechee River, mentioned below, belongs to neither the Savannah nor the Altamaha basin but makes its way independently to the Atlantic.)

After what he termed “four days moderate and pleasant travelling,” Bartram and the survey party arrived at the Great Buffalo Lick described in his *Travels* as follows:

This extraordinary place occupies several acres of ground, at the foot of the S.E. promontory of the Great Ridge which . . . divides the rivers Savanna [alternate spelling] and Alatomaha [alternate spelling]. A large cane swamp and meadows, forming an immense plain, lie S.E. from it; in this swamp I believe the head branches of the great Ogeechee [alternate spelling] river take their rise. The place called the Lick contains three or four acres, is nearly level, and lies between the head of the cane swamp and the ascent of the Ridge. The earth, from the superficies to an unknown depth, is an almost white or cinereous colored tenacious fattish clay, which all kinds of cattle lick into great caves, pursuing the delicious vein. It is the common opinion of the inhabitants, that this clay is impregnated with saline vapours, arising

from fossil salts deep in the earth; but I could discover nothing saline in its taste, but I imagined an insipid sweetness. Horned cattle, horses, and deer, are immoderately fond of it, insomuch, that their excrement, which almost totally covers the earth to some distance round this place, appears to be perfect clay; which, when dried by sun and air, is almost as hard as brick.⁶ (Harper, 1958, pp. 25-26)

What Bartram described was apparently not a salt lick of the sort that was common in Kentucky and other areas. Rather than saline he found the white clay the animals licked to have an insipid sweet taste. According to the 18th-century traveler John F. D. Smyth, such animal licks were fairly common. Smyth (1784, p. 142) described saline licks but went on to point out that “there is likewise another kind of lick here besides. These are also on the banks of rivers, lakes, streams of water, or large ravines and chasms, and consist of chalk; or calcareous earth, of a testaceous quality, which is greedily licked up and consumed by all those different animals I have already mentioned [deer, elks, buffaloes, horned cattle, and horses].” Smyth continued by explaining why animals were attracted to these nonsaline clay licks: “To the use of this latter kind they are prompted by nature and instinct, for salutary and medicinal purposes, to correct the acidity of the superabundant vegetable juices accumulated in the stomach, which would otherwise occasion severe gripings, strictures of the bowels, and many other painful disorders.” In the 1940s, A. S. Furcron (1949, p. 14), a former State Geologist of Georgia, argued that the white clays Bartram described as forming the buffalo lick were deposits of “primary kaolin produced by the weathering of feldspar dikes, thus not to be confused with the white kaolin of sedimentary origin...the basis for our extensive kaolin industry in Georgia.” In Furcron’s opinion, “These [primary] kaolins are surprisingly extensive and evidently represent clay preferred by the buffalo.”

To readers unfamiliar with the faunal history of Georgia, mention of buffalo and buffalo licks may seem a bit out of place, but to Bartram it was in no way surprising. Later, as he passed through the New Purchase on his way to Fort James at the confluence of the Broad and Savannah rivers, Bartram reported seeing “heaps of white, gnawed bones of the ancient buffaloes elk and deer, indiscriminately mixed with those of men, half grown over with moss” (Harper, 1958, p. 204). While Bartram did not report sighting any living buffalo and wrote that they were no longer to be seen on the Piedmont, there is an abundant literature that convincingly argues that bison, while rare, still ranged in the Southeast at the time of his explorations. Geographer Erhard Rostlund (1960, p. 405), who noted that “Buffalo Lick, Oglethorpe County, northeastern Georgia . . . is probably the best-known buffalo place in the Southeast,” concluded that the buffalo (*Bison bison*) range at its maximum, in about 1700 A.D., extended to the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and western Florida, to the latitude of Tampa Bay in peninsular Florida to the coast of Georgia, and to a line 80 or 90 miles from the coast in South Carolina

and North Carolina. The famous naturalist-artist Mark Catesby preceded Bartram by more than a generation in his own visit to the area where Augusta was later founded. Catesby was more fortunate in that he not only sighted buffalo but hunted and sketched them. Catesby's published drawing of a southeastern buffalo has been judged "a rather poor representation of the *Bison americanus*" (Frick and Stearns, 1961, p. 82). It may have been, however, a reasonable representation of the now-extinct eastern woodland buffalo that he encountered in the 1720s.

Bartram wrote that at the Great Buffalo Lick "the surveyors were to separate themselves, and form three companies, to proceed on different routes." It was at the Great Buffalo Lick before this separation that Bartram witnessed one of the most intensely dramatic cross-cultural encounters recorded in the account of his four-year journey across the pre-Revolutionary Southeast. It was an episode that threatened both the abrogation of the recently signed treaty and the resumption of Indian warfare on the frontier. In his *Travels*, Bartram recounted how:

We were detained at this place one day, in adjusting and planning the several branches of the survey [when] a circumstance occurred . . . which was a remarkable instance of Indian sagacity, and . . . nearly disconcerted all our plans and put an end to the business. The surveyor having fixed his compass on the staff, and about to ascertain the course from our place of departure, which was to strike Savanna [alternate spelling] river at the confluence of a certain river, about seventy miles distance from us; just as he had determined the point, the Indian Chief came up, and observing the course he had fixed upon, spoke, and said it was not right; but that the course to the place was so and so, holding up his hand, and pointing. The surveyor replied that he himself was most certainly right, adding, that the little instrument (pointing to the compass) told him so, which he said, could not err. The Indian answered, he knew better, and that the little wicked instrument was a liar; and he would not acquiesce in its decisions, since it would wrong the Indians out of their land. This mistake (the surveyor proving to be in the wrong) displeased the Indian; the dispute arose to such a height, that the Chief and his party had determined to break up the business, and return the shortest way home, and forbad the surveyors to proceed any farther. (Harper, 1958, p. 26)

Thousands of pounds sterling and months of arduous effort had been spent in persuading the Creeks to join the Cherokees in ceding to Georgia a territory approaching the area of Delaware. At that tense moment it seemed that the money and effort would be lost, all because of a surveyor's faulty compass. But cooler heads prevailed and, as Bartram continued in his account:

After some delay, the complaisance and prudent conduct of the Colonel [Edward Barnard, in charge of the survey] made them change their resolution; the Chief became reconciled, upon condition that the compass should be discarded and rendered incapable of serving on this business; that the Chief himself should lead the survey; and moreover, receive an order for a very considerable quantity of goods (Harper, 1958, p. 26).

The intervention of Colonel Barnard and destruction of the offending compass had saved the day and may well have averted the resumption of hostilities between the colonists and the Indians. Bartram concluded his account:

Matters being now amicably settled, under this new regulation, the Colonel having detached two companies on separate routes, Mr. M'Intosh and myself attaching ourselves to the Colonel's party, whose excursion was likely to be the most extensive and varied, we set off from the Buffalo Lick, and the Indian Chief heading the party conducted us in a straight line, as appeared by collateral observation, to the desired place (Harper, 1958, p. 26).

Clearly the Great Buffalo Lick was a place of considerable importance in the overall plan of the survey now getting underway, and the reason for its importance is not hard to discern when the text of the treaty negotiated with the Indians is studied. In the terms of that treaty, the boundary of the land cession Georgia was gaining from the Creek and Cherokee Indians was

to begin at the place where the lower Creek Path intersects Ogeechee River, and along the main branch . . . to the source of the southernmost branch . . . and from thence along the Ridge between the waters of Broad River and Oconee River up to the Buffaloe [alternate spelling] Lick and from thence in a straight Line to the Tree marked by the Cherokees near the Head of a Branch falling into the Oconee River (British Public Record Office, Colonial Office Records, 5/662, f53v).

The lick doubtlessly was a landmark well-known to the Indians and Georgia Indian traders who traveled regularly on the trading paths leading north and west from Augusta. Its prominence as a key landmark on the Indian Boundary and Indian trading path system served to guarantee it a place on the maps of the 18th and 19th centuries. But these maps were of small scale and general in their nature, and with the passage of time even local memories of the Great Buffalo Lick's location and historical significance were lost. Indeed, the lick itself may have undergone radical physical change as the country around it was cleared of its forest cover and row-crop agriculture was introduced.

TWENTIETH CENTURY RESEARCHERS. Francis Harper. When naturalist Francis Harper attempted to retrace Bartram's route across the Southeast, his study of the then-available maps led him to conclude that the Great Buffalo Lick was located near Philomath, a village in the southeasternmost corner of Oglethorpe County, Georgia (Fig. 1). Upon arrival there in 1934, Harper (1958, p. 344) found that "even the tradition of its having been a Buffalo Lick had been lost, but it was still known as a former Deer Lick." The owner of the land showed Harper the place where, 50 years before, "there was a knee-deep depression, about a rod in diameter, where the earth had been licked away." Although it was shallower by 1934, Harper could still make out the depression and "cattle still licked the ground thereabouts." Thanks to Harper's published annotations of Bartram's writings, Philomath gained the reputation as being the site of the historically significant Great Buffalo Lick.

T. G. Macfie. There was a serious problem with Harper's analysis that was not missed by Colonel T. G. Macfie, whose own analysis of Bartram's description led him to locate the Great Buffalo Lick about a mile east of the town of Union Point and about ten miles from Philomath (Fig. 1). Based on Col. Macfie's analysis, the Works Progress Administration in 1936 erected a granite marker at the side of U.S. Highway 278. It bears a bronze plaque containing the inscription: "GREAT BUFFALO LICK—This site is described in the treaty signed by the Creek and Cherokee Indians at Augusta, Georgia in 1773. Here began the survey of the ceded lands. W.P.A. 1936." It was doubtless the presence of this marker three-quarters of a mile east of Union Point that accounts for the fact that this is Georgia's only buffalo lick site to be included on a U.S. Geological Survey 7.5 Minute Series topographic map. It is shown on the *Union Point Quadrangle* (1965, photorevised 1985).

In his book *History of Greene County*, T. B. Rice (1961, p. 18) summarized the three "tests" Col. Macfie employed in determining his location of the site of Bartram's Great Buffalo Lick:

- (1) It was on the S. E. base of the last promontory of the ridge of hills; and there was a flat of three or four acres at that spot.
- (2) It was on the head waters of the Ogeechee (an old map of 1770 [date incorrect; actual date of map is 1775] by Purcell published with Bulletin No. 73 of the Bureau of [American] Ethnology shows it on the second or third branch of the Ogeechee).
- (3) A great cane swamp and meadows extend southeast from it.

Regarding Test 2, recall that Bartram described the lick as draining into a head branch of the Great Ogeechee River. In *Travels*, Bartram wrote that the lick lay between the Great Ridge water divide and "a large cane swamp and meadows . . . in this swamp I believe the head branches of the great Ogeechee [alternate spelling] river take their rise" (Harper, 1958, pp. 25-26; emphasis added). Similarly, in his report to Dr. Fothergill, Bartram wrote of how he walked from the lick down a gully for about a mile to a stream that "*is said to be* the head of Grt. Ogeechee [alternate

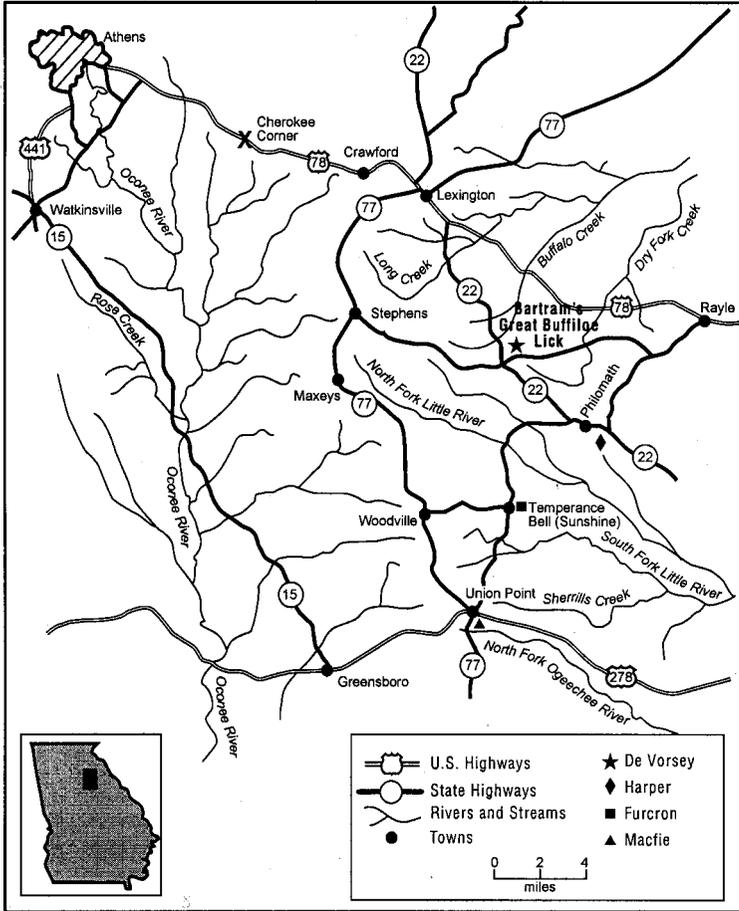


Fig. 1. General orientation map showing sites of Bartram’s Great Buffalo Lick as argued by F. Harper (Philomath); T. G. Macfie (Union Point); A. S. Furcron (Temperance Bell); and L. De Vorsey (Buffalo Creek) (using, at the site, Bartram’s 1773 spelling “Buffiloe”).

spelling] River” (Bartram, 1943, p. 140; emphasis added). It should be noted that in both of his descriptions Bartram is noticeably equivocal in placing the lick on the Ogeechee River drainage. His language makes clear that he was relying on hearsay.

If one ignores the tentativeness of Bartram’s verbal placement of the lick on the Ogeechee drainage, Macfie’s argument could have merit, had his reading of the facsimile of Purcell’s 1775 map not been in error. The facsimile in the Bureau of American Ethnology bulletin (Swanson, 1922) is a generalized small-scale tracing on

which the Great Buffalo Lick is identified by an incorrect caption reading "Lt. [rather than "Gt. "] Buffalo Lick" located between a head branch of the named Long Creek and another headstream tributary of Little River (both of which feed into the Savannah River). Furthermore, the facsimile shows a "Lick Creek" that is a head branch of the Ogeechee River. It is conceivable that these features confused Col. Macfie. As will be shown below, the Purcell map of 1775,⁷ whether in the form of a generalized tracing or in the original, is a thin cartographic reed on which to hang an argument for the location of Bartram's Great Buffalo Lick, be it Union Point or Philomath.

A. S. Furcron. A third location for Bartram's Great Buffalo Lick was proposed by former State Geologist of Georgia A. S. Furcron, in 1949. Furcron wrote that shortly after he read Bartram's description of the lick in *Travels*, he encountered a friend who was mining mica near a small community then called Sunshine (now Temperance Bell) in northeastern Greene County (Fig. 1). His friend mentioned deposits of white kaolin near his mine and, as Furcron wrote, "immediately it occurred to me that this must be the Buffalo Lick because these white Kaolin deposits are exactly where they should be according to Bartram" (Furcron, 1949, p. 14). The site of the former Sunshine community is located approximately four miles north of Union Point and is named Temperance Bell on the current *Woodville Quadrangle* 7.5 minute series topographic map published by the U.S. Geological Survey. As Furcron wrote, "From a study of Bartram and maps, I conclude that the Buffalo Lick was at a place several miles north of Union Point, which is at the headwaters of Ogeechee River about 1/4 mile east of Public Square, a little settlement now known as Sunshine" (Furcron, 1949, p. 13). Although Union Point itself is "at the headwaters of Ogeechee River," Temperance Bell, the former Public Square / Sunshine, can only be described as within the watershed of the Little River, which drains into the Savannah River, not the Ogeechee.

Like Harper and Macfie, who preceded him, Furcron consulted the tracing of Purcell's 1775 map published in Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 73 (Swanson, 1922). Unlike them, Furcron interpreted the Purcell map tracing as placing the Great Buffalo Lick "on a headwater tributary of Broad River, just west of longitude 83 and about 30 miles west of Lincolnton" (Furcron, 1949, p. 14). He went on to note, "There is a creek at this locality in Oglethorpe County called Buffalo Creek, which is crossed by the Lexington-Washington Highway." Sticking with his Sunshine kaolin deposit choice, however, geologist Furcron argued:

The name "Buffalo Lick" by no means indicates that the lick was near that stream, because many mountains, ridges and streams throughout the Appalachians bear this name; also this position is too far above the head of Ogeechee to have been a satisfactory starting point for the surveyors; moreover, this point is in the middle of an extensive area of rocks known as the Little River series, which rocks

are phyllites and schists weathering to red clay; there are no pegmatites in this formation of sufficient prominence to produce by weathering a buffalo lick (Furcron, 1949, p. 14).

John H. Goff. The mention of the frequency of the element “buffalo” found in toponyms across the Southeast serves to introduce the next researcher to enter the Great Buffalo Lick location controversy. He was Emory University Economics Professor John H. Goff, who was recognized as the unchallenged dean of Georgia placename studies when he died in 1967. In his article “The Buffalo in Georgia,” Goff noted:

Probably the most historic of the Buffalo places in Georgia was the Great Buffalo Lick, a noted spot in upper Georgia which was visited by game that came to lick a mineral deposit to be found at the site. Indian hunters frequented the locality to kill these animals, and the lick was so well-known that it served as one of the key points along the boundary line established between the Indians and the Georgians by the Treaty of Augusta in 1773. . . . Despite its former prominence, the location of the Great Buffalo Lick has been a matter of present-day disagreement. (Goff, 1957, p. 24)

In his research carried on in the Georgia Department of Archives and History, Goff had encountered evidence that, he wrote, “settles the question” of the Great Buffalo Lick’s location (Fig. 2). That evidence was a hand-traced copy of an original manuscript map in the collections of the British Public Record Office (PRO) titled *A Map of the Lands Ceded to His Majesty by the Creek and Cherokee Indians at a Congress held in Augusta the 1st June 1773*. The PRO original is inscribed “Survey Performed in the Year 1773 by Edward Barnard, LeRoy Hammond, Philip Yonge, Joseph Purcell, and William Barnard.” These are the surveyors with whom Bartram in caravan traveled to the Great Buffalo Lick to undertake the survey of the New Purchase Indian land cession in the early summer of 1773. There was probably more than one map prepared to show the results of the survey, since the one that survives in the PRO is marked “Copy delineated by Philip Yonge, Dept. Sr. [Deputy Surveyor].”⁸ Goff (1957, p. 25) wrote:

On the basis of this official document, the Great Buffalo Lick was on a divide above the extreme upper tips of the north fork of Little River and at the beginning of a south branch of Long Creek. . . . This location places the lick in the Bowling Green District of present Oglethorpe County, to the south of Lexington and to the east of the village of Stephens.

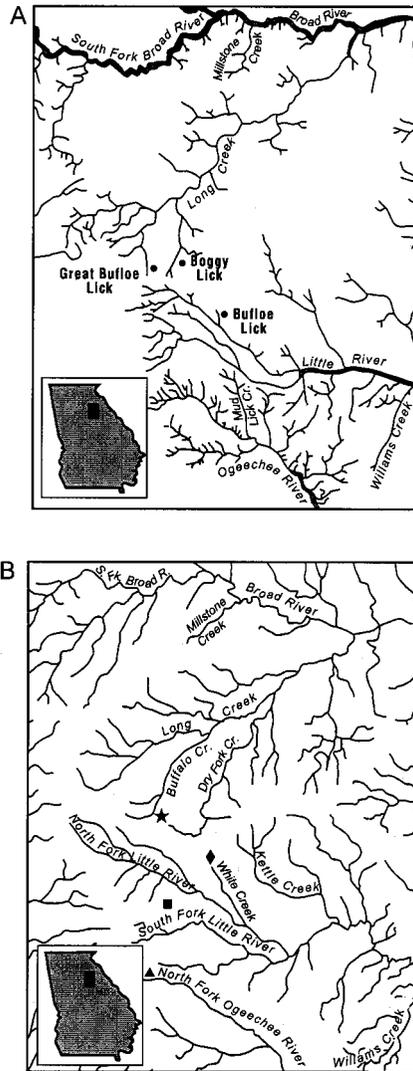


Fig. 2. Detail (A), traced from Philip Yonge's *Map of the Lands Ceded to His Majesty by the Creek and Cherokee Indians at a Congress held in Augusta the 1st June 1773*, compared with same area's hydrography (B) as it appears on modern topographic maps. The modern map (B) also indicates the various locations suggested for the Great Buffalo Lick: De Vorsey (star); Harper (diamond); Furcron (square); Macfie (triangle).

SEARCHING. My own interest in Bartram and the Great Buffalo Lick began in 1960 while I was engaged in a research project in London archives that resulted in my 1966 book *The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763–1775*. Among my goals in that research was included the reconstruction of the Indian Boundary Line with enough accuracy to allow it to be drawn on modern topographic maps. Only the vaguest of depictions of this important feature of pre-revolutionary frontier geography then existed in a few historical atlases and specialized texts. I was soon to discover that the challenge of placing the Southern Indian Boundary Line correctly on today's map proved to be no mean task (Fig. 3). As I wrote in my chapter on Georgia Indian boundaries (De Vorse, 1966, p. 180):

To anyone who has never made the attempt, the translation of data from eighteenth century maps to those of the present seems a simple and uncomplicated task. Only after making such an attempt and experiencing the frustrations created by inconstant scale, inaccurate azimuth, and contradictory toponymy would he perhaps concede that he shared an experience not greatly unlike that of Tantalus.

So it was in London and quite unaware of Dr. John Goff's work that I undertook the task of translating the boundaries of what later became known as Georgia's Ceded Lands to a modern topographic map. I was familiar with William Bartram's account of the survey party he accompanied in 1773 and Francis Harper's conclusions with respect to the location of the Great Buffalo Lick being in Philomath. However, as I began to study Philip Yonge's 1773 map of the Ceded Lands in London, I found Harper's analysis to be faulty. My interpretation of the original Yonge map placed the "Great Bufloe [Yonge's spelling] Lick" near Buffalo Creek in the area I later discovered Goff had described generally as "to the south of Lexington and to the east of the village of Stephens." Harper had lacked knowledge of Yonge's map and had relied chiefly on the very small-scale map compiled by Joseph Purcell, another of the Ceded Lands surveyors. Purcell's 1775 map was drawn for Superintendent of Indian Affairs John Stuart, to show the Indian Boundary across the whole of the Southeast from Virginia to Florida and Louisiana. As a consequence, the amount of topographic detail Purcell could show in the Ceded Lands was severely limited, and even that was further degraded in the tracing on which Harper relied.

It was not until I took a teaching position at the University of Georgia in Athens and became associated, in the early 1970s, with a group known as the Bartram Trail Society that I became fully aware of the controversy surrounding the location of the Great Buffalo Lick. I kept my peace when that group erected a wooden marker just outside the village of Philomath that reads "Bartram Buffalo Lick—Located On Boundary Of—Ceded Lands 1773" but vowed to work toward fixing the true site of the Great Buffalo Lick. One of the reasons I did not dispute the identification of the Philomath site was that the 1773 Yonge map shows a feature identified as "Bufloe

Lick” near the head of an unnamed small branch of the Little River now known as White Creek⁹ (Fig. 2). This would support the conclusion that the old deer lick Harper visited at Philomath was known as a buffalo lick in 1773. Significantly, however, it was not the Great Buffalo Lick, that once well-known feature that served as a key landmark on the important Indian Boundary Line throughout the period of the American Revolution and beyond.

Not long after joining the geography faculty at the University of Georgia, I became familiar with the extensive and well-managed collection of original land survey plats, documents, and maps under the care of Georgia's Deputy Surveyor General. My students and I made frequent and valuable use of those primary materials as we worked on a wide array of research projects designed to bring to light Georgia's fascinating historical geography. It should be understood that in the eastern one-third of Georgia, the area known as the Headright Region, the only systematic manner in which the original survey plats and documents can be accessed is by way of the original grantee's name. As a result, it is extremely difficult to find a plat showing an area under study in the Headright Region without first knowing the name of the original pioneer to whom the land was granted two centuries and more ago. This was why we became excited in the early 1970s when a 1796 plat for “96 acres of land lying on Buffalo Creek of Long Creek” came to light (Surveyor General of Georgia, Loose Plat File, Oglethorpe County). When the plat of the land surveyed for “David Witt” was studied more closely, it revealed that one of the corners of the survey was marked by an “Ash in Buffalo Lick.” Further, this ash corner tree was on the “Indian Line” forming the northeast boundary of David Witt's 96-acre tract.

Our initial excitement was justified, for here was near-contemporary primary evidence of a buffalo lick along Buffalo Creek where the 1773 Ceded Lands survey map (Yonge's) located the “Great Bufloe Lick,” and it was squarely on the Indian Boundary Line (Fig. 3) where I had placed it in my book, *The Indian Boundary Line in the Southern Colonies* (1966). While the plat placed David Witt's land close to Buffalo Creek in Oglethorpe County, it was not dispositive in an attempt to fix its location on the present-day map and landscape. To accomplish this would require further research. Our strategy was to collect the survey plats of a number of neighboring tracts and combine them into a mosaic which might contain sufficient site-specific data to permit Bartram's Great Buffalo Lick to be rediscovered after the passage of two centuries.

Although such a task may seem simple, it was anything but simple or straightforward. Changes in county jurisdiction, frequent land title transfers, unrecorded transfers, multiple surveys of the same tracts, inaccurate surveying technique, errors in plat drafting, and lack of standardized surname spelling are just a few of the difficulties that confront a researcher attempting to employ Georgia's original Headright land survey plats in creating cadastral mosaics. A great deal of effort was put forth in researching the records in the Georgia Surveyor General Department, the

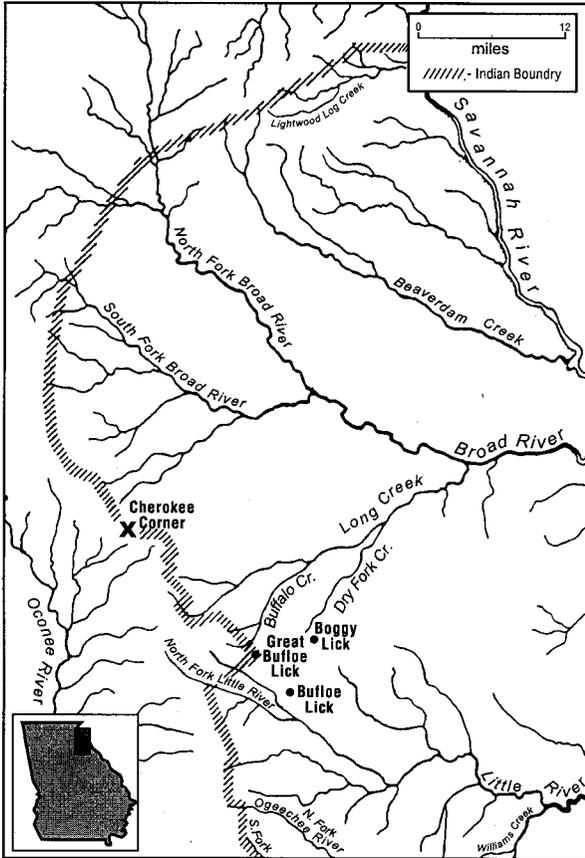


Fig. 3. The northern Georgia section of the Southern Indian Boundary Line, 1773, as adapted from De Vorsey, 1966, Fig. 21, with licks added from Yonge's map of 1773. Hydrography is from modern topographic maps.

Oglethorpe, Greene, and Wilkes County courthouses, and several libraries as we proceeded toward that goal.

The area surrounding the David Witt grant was traced back to the original landowners,¹⁰ and the plats of their surveys were employed to construct two mosaics: Mosaic 1, *Landholdings along Buffalo Creek 1783–1790* and Mosaic 2, *Landholdings along Buffalo Creek 1794–1798*. These plat mosaics were then rescaled to the 1:24,000 of the U.S. Geological Survey's 7.5 Minute Series topographic maps *Lexington Quadrangle* and *Maxey's Quadrangle*. Sufficient detail was present in the land survey plat mosaics to permit them to be overlaid on the modern topographic

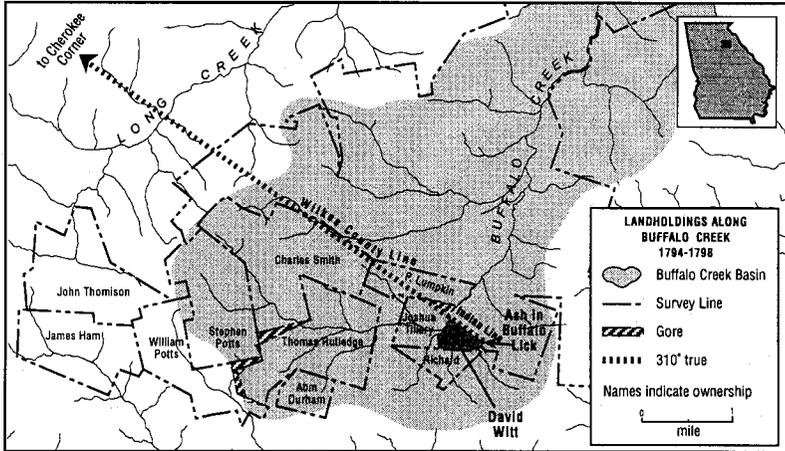


Fig. 4. Mosaic showing landholdings granted from 1794 to 1798 along the headwaters of Buffalo Creek. The plat of David Witt's grant on Buffalo Creek shows "Ash in Buffalo Lick" at the tract's easternmost corner and "Indian Line" as forming its northeastern side.

map base. Because of the limitations (discussed above) inherent in the plats an exact match was not anticipated nor was it achieved. Particularly useful in the process of matching the original survey plats to the modern map were the many stream courses. In similar earlier efforts it had been found that the position of a stream was usually quite accurately recorded and shown where it crossed the property lines being surveyed. Only Mosaic 2 showing the most informative original survey plats is reproduced here (Fig. 4). While the plat mosaics were not true maps, the plats shown on Mosaic 2 are placed on the map of today with a reasonably high degree of confidence.

Of particular significance are two of the property lines shown on Mosaic 2 (Fig. 4). These are the northeast line of David Witt's plat labeled "Indian Line," and the similar line on Charles Smith's plat labeled "Wilkes County Line." There is every reason to conclude that both lines are segments of the Indian Boundary surveyed by the party Bartram accompanied in 1773. For one, the "Buffalo Lick" on the Witt plat is on the Indian Boundary and answers to the "Great Bufloe Lick" on Philip Yonge's map, where the surveyors began marking that boundary in 1773. When Wilkes County was formed in 1777, it was formed of "the ceded lands north of Ogechee [alternate spelling]" (Candler, 1908, p. 284). Thus the "Indian Line" and "Wilkes County Line" in this area were one in the same. When connected, Witt's "Indian" and Smith's "Wilkes" line segments can be seen to maintain the azimuth of approximately north 60 degrees west, which is the same as the azimuth of the Indian

Boundary Line running northwest of the “Great Bufloe Lick” on Philip Yonge’s 1773 map of the Ceded Lands (Fig. 2). On Mosaic 2, this azimuth is indicated by the line marked “To Cherokee Corner.”

In addition to the land survey plats, deed records also produced evidence confirming the identification of David Witt’s “Ash in Buffalo Lick” corner as the site of the Great Buffalo Lick described by Bartram. For example, an 1804 deed of transfer between Job Callaway and Richard Moore included mention of “a tract or parcel of land Containing one hundred and twenty Acres Being part of a survey sold to the said Callaway on Buffaloes Creek joining Tillery said Callaway and said Moore including the Buffaloe [alternate spelling] Lick” (Superior Court Records, Oglethorpe County, Deed Book E, p. 87). This land parcel was traced back to the property originally surveyed for David Witt, so the “Buffaloe Lick” included in this 1804 transfer was the same one marked by an ash corner tree on Witt’s 1796 plat and labeled “Great Bufloe Lick” on Yonge’s map of 1773. In 1821 Richard Moore sold this tract to Thomas Nichols and Frail Pain. In the deed formalizing this transfer, the land is described as “all that tract or parcel of land, Situate lying and being . . . on the waters of the Buffolow [alternate spelling] Creek a branch of Long Creek. . . Beginning at a black oak corner, it being the corner of the old Wilkes Survey” (Superior Court Records, Oglethorpe County, Deed Book K, p. 142). (For convenience, these property transfers are summarized in Table 1.)

In view of the foregoing there can be little if any doubt that the Great Buffalo Lick shown on the 1773 Ceded Lands map and described by William Bartram is located close to where present-day highway Ga. 22 crosses Buffalo Creek in Oglethorpe County, Georgia (Fig. 1). An interesting question arose, however, when Mosaic 1, “Landholdings Along Buffalo Creek, 1783–1790,” was analyzed. It became apparent that neither the buffalo lick nor the Wilkes County line were present on that reconstruction. This was because the location of the line came into doubt during the 1780s. Questions had arisen concerning surveys made (illegally) beyond the Indian line. As Frank P. Hudson (1996, p. 3) pithily observed, “The uncertainty regarding the location of the boundary of the Ceded Lands with the Indians, later to become the boundary between Wilkes County and Washington County, created problems before the ink on the Treaty of 1773 was dry.” It is possible that some of the early Buffalo Creek surveys either were in fact or were feared to have been illegal. While there is no extant record of a resurvey of this part of the Indian/Wilkes County line, the references to it that are found in the later plats and documents indicate that one took place. For example, the 1794 plat of the survey for Charles Smith shows a “corner lost” midway along the side marked “Wilkes County Line.” To have noted a “corner lost,” the surveyor must have had some knowledge of a prior survey along the line he was following.

An additional source of evidence supporting this location of the Great Buffalo Lick can be found by relating it to the next boundary line marker mentioned in the 1773 Treaty signed at Augusta. In that document the Indian Boundary the surveyors

TABLE 1
PROPERTY TRANSFERS OF LAND INCLUDING THE GREAT BUFFALO LICK

Date	Owner	Source	Comments
25 Dec. 1784	George Lumpkin	Loose Plat File, Wilkes County	Original Grantee
5 Jan. 1789	Jessee Witt	Wilkes County, Deed Book HH, 55-57	400 acres
3 Feb. 1795	David Witt	Oglethorpe County, Deed Book C, 415-416	Grants David Witt power to sell land
26 Oct. 1796	David Witt	Loose Plat File, Oglethorpe County	Plat shows "Ash in Buffalo lick," and "Indian Line"
3 Apr. 1800	Job Callaway	Oglethorpe County, Deed Book D, 5	
9 Oct. 1804	Richard Moore	Oglethorpe County, Deed Book E, 87	"on Buffalo Creek including the Buffaloe Lick"
28 Sept. 1821	Frail Pain & Thomas Nichols	Oglethorpe County, Deed Book K, 142	"on the waters of Buffolow Creek . . . at . . . the corner of the old Wilkes Survey"

were to demarcate was to run "up to the Buffaloe [alternate spelling] Lick and from thence in a straight Line to the Tree marked by the Cherokees near the Head of a Branch falling into the Oconee [alternate spelling] River." An examination of the 1773 Ceded Lands map by Philip Yonge reveals that this segment of the Indian Boundary Line departs radically from what could be termed a straight line. It appears that the surveyors diverted their line to embrace the head spring branches of Long Creek. While this change is not explained on the map, it might have been a result of the compass controversy between the surveyor and Indian chief described by Bartram above.¹¹ The location of "the Tree marked by the Cherokees" is, however, indicated on the 1773 map by Philip Yonge. It is where the "Old Cherokee Line" terminates. A caption on the map reads: "nb This was marked by the Cherokees in July 1771." This point on the Indian Boundary Line, unlike the Buffalo Lick, was never lost from memory and is still monumented by historical markers on U.S. highway 78 at the Clarke–Oglethorpe County boundary. Modern "Cherokee Corner" and "the Tree marked by the Cherokees" mentioned in the 1773 Treaty are one and the same place (Fig. 1).

The azimuth of a straight line drawn from the "Great Bufloee Lick" to Cherokee Corner on the 1773 Philip Yonge map is 310 degrees true (Fig. 4). When a line is

drawn on modern maps from the site of the buffalo lick located near Buffalo Creek to Cherokee Corner, it also follows the azimuth of 310 degrees true. This, it should be noted further, is the same azimuth as given for the "Indian Line" shown on the 1796 David Witt land plat. On that plat a segment of that line is given as N 50 W or 50 degrees west of north, that is 310 degrees true. The other plat segment is N 60 W or 300 degrees true. The agreement of these contemporary 18th-century azimuths with the modern map azimuth of a line connecting the formerly lost Great Buffalo Lick and Cherokee Corner is further confirmation that Bartram's Great Buffalo Lick has been rediscovered and correctly located.

LOCAL TRADITION. While it is correct to say that, by the mid 20th century, the exact location of Bartram's Great Buffalo Lick had faded from memory, a local tradition of buffalo licks had endured in southeastern Oglethorpe County, where at least two sites were so identified. In her published history of the county, longtime resident Mrs. Florrie C. Smith provided the following:

Near George B. Lumpkin's former home is a peculiar rock known as Buffalo Lick. This immense boulder fifty feet high standing about five feet from a perpendicular precipice, rests on two pedestals probably a foot or so in circumference. Old settlers say the buffaloes licked the rest of its foundation away as the rock contained salt. There is also a large hollow on Dry Fork Creek called Buffalo Lick made by the Buffaloes licking the earth for salt. (Smith, 1970, p. 5)

When queried, Mrs. Smith revealed that the first lick had been described to her by John Bacon (now deceased). Bacon told her that the rock had been "licked slick by the buffaloes" and that it was located on his property along Buffalo Creek. Mrs. Smith noted that Mr. Bacon lived on the old Sam Lumpkin place along a since abandoned road. It is possible that this is the property identified with "T. H. Lumpkin" on the 1894 published *Map of Oglethorpe County Georgia, Surveyed and Drawn by Thos. B. Moses*. The T. H. Lumpkin residence is shown just under one-half mile east of where the road from Philomath to Lexington crosses Buffalo Creek. If this identification is correct, it would place the Lumpkin / Bacon property not far from where we have located Bartram's Great Buffalo Lick. An excellent candidate for Mrs. Smith's legendary "large hollow on Dry Fork Creek called Buffalo Lick" would be the "Boggy Lick" shown to lie just east of the "Great Bufloe Lick" on Philip Yonge's 1773 map of the Ceded Lands boundary survey (Fig. 2). It is doubtful, however, that the hollow would be saline in nature. In view of all that is known, it seems more logical to assume that it would be kaolin and base in nature.

The "peculiar rock known as Buffalo Lick" is indeed an "immense boulder fifty feet high standing about five feet from a perpendicular precipice." And, when visited in 1999, it still rested, as Mrs. Smith had described it, "on two pedestals



Fig. 5. Rock known as Buffalo Lick, described by Smith (1970, P. 5) as an “immense boulder fifty feet high resting on two pedestals.” Photograph by author, February 22, 1999.

probably a foot or so in circumference.” However, the pedestals were formed by the differential weathering of complex volcanic materials forming this striking feature. As may be seen in Figures 5 and 6, the weathering of softer rock in the area of the pedestals sometimes looks rounded as if it could have been licked out by animals, but it is highly unlikely that such has ever been the case. These rocks were not in any way salty to the taste nor were they primary kaolin.

MAGNETIC ANOMALIES. Before this discussion is concluded, it would be informative to re-visit the controversy that unfolded between the Creek Indian chief and the boundary-line surveyor described by Bartram as taking place at the Great Buffalo Lick. Recall, I termed it one of the most intensely dramatic cross-cultural encounters recorded in Bartram’s extensive writings. It would be easy, with the gift of hindsight, to write this episode off as yet another example of avaricious Whites



Fig. 6. Pedestals at the base of rock known as Buffalo Lick, believed by “old settlers” to have been left after “buffaloes licked the rest of its foundation away as the rock contained salt” (Smith, 1970, p. 5). Photograph by author, February 22, 1999.

attempting to cheat Indians out of their lands. Given what Bartram reported concerning the temper of the Creek Indians at the negotiations he attended in Augusta, such a reckless action on the part of the Whites demarcating the boundaries of such a hotly contested land cession is unlikely in the extreme. How then may we explain the sharp difference of opinion existing between the Indian leader and the boundary surveyor in striking a course to a prominent checkpoint obviously known to both? An answer may be revealed when attention is directed to the United States Geological Survey’s 1980 *Aeromagnetic Map of Georgia*, by Isidore Zietz, Frederic E. Ruggle, and Francis P. Gilbert, which makes clear the fact that a number of major magnetic anomalies exist in the general vicinity of the Great Buffalo Lick. With this in mind it may be best to assume that an honest mistake was made by the surveyor whose compass was being deflected by one or more of those anomalies.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. Georgia’s Great Buffalo Lick was a well-known landmark and point of reference in 1773 when colonial officials treated with leaders of the neighboring Creek and Cherokee Indian nations for a large cession of land. As the boundaries of that cession were surveyed, it became a prominent line marker, and the lick’s location was shown on the map drawn of the land the survey embraced. This alone, however, was not sufficient impetus to cause professional and lay researchers to search for its forgotten site in the 20th century. Their efforts were stimulated by reading the graphic descriptions of the Great Buffalo Lick

written by one of colonial American's most gifted authors, William Bartram. As might be expected, however, Bartram's verbal description of the lick's location, even when augmented by facsimiles of 18th-century maps compiled to show the New Purchase cession, proved inadequate as evidence in fixing the site of the Great Buffalo Lick. It was not until the map of the original survey itself was employed and augmented with the original land survey plats from the 1780s and 1790s that researchers could with confidence locate the spot in southeastern Oglethorpe County, Georgia, that William Bartram immortalized in his *Travels*.

In our search for the location of the Great Buffalo Lick described so colorfully by Bartram, we were led to the waters of Buffalo Creek through an analysis of the hydrography shown on the 1773 map (Yonge's) of the survey in which Bartram participated, even though that evidence seemed to be at odds with his verbal accounts. Our ability to move from this generalized location only became possible when an original land survey plat revealed that a surveyed corner was marked on a tree that lay in a buffalo lick near Buffalo Creek. Additionally, this corner tree was further identified as having been on the "Indian Line." By forming a mosaic of several adjoining original plats that were scaled and overlaid onto modern U.S. Geological Survey topographic quadrangles, we were able to fix the location of Bartram's elusive Great Buffalo Lick firmly on the present-day landscape. Our decades-long search was over.

NOTES

¹Deepest appreciation is expressed to four individuals who provided invaluable information and assistance as I carried on the research for this essay. Two were students, Gerald L. Holder, now deceased, and Jimmy Paul Hunke. Two were Deputy Surveyors General of Georgia, Mrs. Pat Bryant and Marion R. Hemperley, both of whom are also now deceased. I also thank Jodie Traylor Guy, University of Georgia, for her considerable editorial help, including her assistance in editing and correcting the figures, and Wendy Giminski, Campus Graphics and Photography, University of Georgia, for rendering the figures into final form. Portions of this article were published in 1999 in the *Athens Historian*, Vol. 4, pp. 3-13.

²Bartram's *Travels* has been reprinted many times, and several editions are currently in print. In 1998, the University of Georgia Press reprinted the exceedingly useful *The Travels of William Bartram*, Naturalist's Edition, annotated by Francis Harper. First published by Yale University Press in 1958, this has long been the preferred Bartram *vade mecum*, thanks to Harper's extensive commentary, annotated index to *Travels*, route maps, general index, and scholarly apparatus.

³For an informative treatment of the Bartram family, see Berkeley and Berkeley (1982).

⁴For the itinerary and routes followed by the Bartrams, see Lester J. Cappon (ed.), 1976, *Atlas of Early American History: The Revolutionary Era, 1760-1790* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), p. 33.

⁵For details and maps of this important land cession, see De Vorse, 1966 (pp. 136-180).

⁶The careful reader will notice that Bartram here referred merely to the “Lick.” Earlier, however, in this same 1791 account (Harper, 1958, p. 23) and also in his 1773–74 report to Dr. Fothergill (Bartram, 1943, p. 140), he employed the more descriptive term (“Great Buffalo Lick” in the former and “great Buffiloe Lick” in the latter). Also of note: in his 1773–74 report to Dr. Fothergill, Bartram estimated the area of the lick to be about an acre and a half rather than the three or four acres estimated in his 1791 *Travels*.

⁷For a photo reproduction of Purcell’s 1775 map, see Plate 68 in Cumming (1998). In Harper’s annotated edition (Bartram, 1943) of Bartram’s report to Dr. Fothergill, at page 179, Harper points out the errors in the Purcell map facsimile and concludes, “It shows the ‘G[rea]t Buffalo Lick’ at exactly the spot defined above.” The “spot defined above” is, of course, the deer lick he visited at Philomath.

⁸For a photo reproduction of Philip Yonge’s map, see Plate 66C in Cumming (1998).

⁹The Yonge map shows “Red Lick Creek,” “Clay Bank Creek,” and “Mud Lick Creek” as tributaries flowing from the east into the upper Ogeechee River. On the east side of Bartram’s Great Ridge, where streams flow to the Savannah River, the map shows “Bufloe Lick,” “Boggy Lick,” and “Great Bufloe Lick.” Clearly the area of Georgia that is today southeastern Oglethorpe County and adjoining northeastern Greene County was well endowed with animal licks at the time the Creek and Cherokee Indians surrendered their control to the Colony of Georgia.

¹⁰Headright plats in Georgia Surveyor General Department Records employed in reconstruction of original land grants in the upper Buffalo Creek / Buffalo Lick area: Plat Book A—Williamson, M., p. 187; Plat Book B—Stubblefield, S., p.219; Plat Book E—Williamson, M., p. 229; Plat Book G—Baird, J., p. 70; Bankson, D., p. 73; Mars, H., p. 266; Rutledge, T., p. 300; Stedham, J., p. 305; Plat Book H—Mairs, H., p. 124; Moore, M., p. 123; Parks, R., p. 136; Patrick, P., p. 139; Phillips, L., p.419; Rutledge, T., p. 155; Smith, P., p. 167; Plat Book I—Patrick, W. & Hawkins, N., p. 317; Plat Book Q—McCall, H., p. 187; Radford, R., p. 321; Thomson, J., p. 280; Thomison, J., p. 275; Loose Plat File, Wilkes County—Davidson, W.; Lumpkin, G.(2); Plat Book CC—Durham,A., p. 456; Ham, J., p. 462; Potts, S., p. 464; Potts, W., p. 467; Rutledge, T., p. 468; Loose Plat File, Oglethorpe County—Witt, D., p.471. Also consulted: Superior Court Records, Oglethorpe County, Deed Book A—Lumpkin, P., p. 52.

¹¹A close examination of the Ceded Lands map by Philip Yonge reveals a lightly drawn straight line from the head branch of the Ogeechee River to Cherokee Corner. A caption explains the line: “Nb. I intend if possible get this line extended & run straight as marked with a pencil which will take in about 30,000 acres of extraordinary fine land.” The caption and line were added to the map by Colony of Georgia Governor James Wright on August 12, 1773. Clearly, Governor Wright was hoping to get even more Indian land than had been agreed to in the treaty signed a couple of months earlier.

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