

# **Pioneer Era Roads in the Lower Howard's Creek Nature & Heritage Preserve**

Prepared for the Bluegrass Heritage Museum

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In August 2009, the Federal Highway Administration awarded a grant for a Transportation Enhancement Project (hereafter “the Project”) of \$601,000 to Clark County Fiscal Court on behalf of the Lower Howard's Creek Nature & Heritage Preserve (hereafter “the Preserve”). Due to funding and other issues, the Project did not receive official “notice to proceed” until March 2013. The purpose of the Project is to restore portions of several pioneer era (pre-1800) roads in the Preserve with a major focus on the Salt Spring Trace, which ran from Boonesborough to the Lower Blue Licks and was one of the first roads in Kentucky. Other significant roads within the Preserve include Holder's Road, Bush Mill Road, Athens-Boonesboro Road and others. One of the Project tasks is to document the historic road system in the Preserve. This article was prepared in partial fulfillment of that task. Part I covers the Salt Spring Trace, Part II deals with other roads in the Preserve.

## **Part I Salt Spring Trace**

Boonesborough, Kentucky's second oldest European-American settlement, was established in the year 1775 by Col. Richard Henderson's Transylvania Company. Daniel Boone led a party of 30 road cutters from Long Island on the Holston River (now Kingsport, Tennessee) through the Cumberland Gap to Kentucky. They reached the mouth of Otter Creek in present-day Madison County on April 1, 1775. Henderson arrived with the main party several weeks later. The men set about clearing ground and building a fort. Henderson had the site surveyed and laid out in lots, which the company arranged to sell by lottery. Food supplies were limited, so high priority was given to raising corn and hunting.

Kentucky abounded in wild game at that time. Deer, bear and turkey were plentiful, but hunters especially sought out buffalo for its meat and hide. Buffalo and other animals tended to gather at Kentucky's many salt licks, which made these favored hunting spots. These licks also provided a valuable source of salt that was critical for preserving meat.

### **Lower Blue Licks**

Lower Blue Licks on the Licking River, about 45 miles from Boonesborough, was one of the closest of the major salt licks and well known to the pioneers. The sulfur-saline waters of this spring were a notable feature from prehistoric times until the late 19th century. Animals in the Pleistocene epoch (about 100,000 to 10,000 years ago) became trapped in the mire around the spring. Their fossilized remains were observed as early as 1784, and a number of skeletons were excavated in 1897. Geologist Willard R.

Jillson reported on an excavation in 1945 that extracted several mastodon limbs and vertebrae. The dig culminated with the discovery of a seven-foot mastodon tusk.<sup>1</sup>

Another geologist, David Dale Owen, provided a physical description of the Lower Blue Lick:

The principal spring, of this locality...is situated near the banks of the Licking river, flowing out about twenty feet above low water in that stream. It rises in a hexagonal basin of stone, which has been built for it, which is six feet two inches in diameter from one side to the opposite parallel one, and about five or six feet in depth. The quantity of water which flows out varies in different seasons. When the water for the present examination was obtained, June 6, 1850, it was low in the spring, and not running.... In the winter the stream which flows out of it would fill a pipe three inches in diameter.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Robert Peter (1805-1894), a noted Transylvania University chemistry professor, made a detailed analysis of the spring water. He found the spring “emitted 678 gallons per hour, equal to 26,272 gallons in the day of 24 hours.” He calculated that “the amount of salt brought out in one hour would be more than 58 pounds avoirdupois.” That was equivalent to 1,392 pounds or 28 bushels of salt per day. Obtaining one bushel of salt, however, required boiling down about 1,000 gallons of water.<sup>3</sup>

## Discovery of the Blue Licks

While Native Americans had long known and used the spring, Europeans first discovered it on the Thompson expedition in 1773. Capt. William Thompson led a large party of Pennsylvanians to Kentucky in search of land promised for military service in the French and Indian War. More than 60 men left Pittsburgh and descended the Ohio River by flatboat. They landed at the mouth of the Scioto River to await the arrival of Thomas Bullitt, a Virginia surveyor. While waiting, Thompson sent James Smith and a number of woodsmen into the interior of Kentucky in search of good land. Smith returned with news that his party had found the Blue Lick country, which they pronounced the finest they had ever seen. Thompson divided his company to explore three areas and put a surveyor in charge of each group. On July 26, the party on Licking River—with John Finley, James Perry, James Hamilton and Joshua Archer among them—reached the Upper Blue Lick, which they first called “Big Blue Lick.” While the surveying was going on there, some of the party went down the Licking and found an even larger lick, whereupon they assigned the names Upper and Lower.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl B. Raitz and Nancy O'Malley, *Kentucky's Frontier Highway: Historical Landscapes Along the Maysville Road* (Lexington, KY, 2012), p. 228; Willard R. Jillson, “Notes on Excavations for Big Bones at Lower Blue Lick Spring,” *Filson Club History Quarterly* (1946) 20:3-9.

<sup>2</sup> David D. Owen, *Third Report of the Geological Survey in Kentucky* (Frankfort, KY, 1857), p. 364.

<sup>3</sup> Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky, Vol. 2* (Covington, KY, 1874), p. 655; Robert Peter, *Lower Blue Lick Spring, Quantitative Chemical Analysis of the Water of the Lower Blue Lick Spring, in Nicholas County, Ky. with Remarks on Some Other Salt Springs of the Blue Limestone Formation* (n.p., 1850); Arthur McFarlan, *Geology of Kentucky* (Lexington, KY, 1943), p. 429.

<sup>4</sup> R. S. Cotterill, “Thompson Expedition of 1773,” *Filson Club History Quarterly* (1946) 20:179-184; Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky, Vol. 2* (Covington, KY, 1874), p. 655.

Thompson's men surveyed some 200,000 acres of land. After their return to Pennsylvania, agents for the veterans formally applied to have the surveys validated by Virginia. Repeated attempts failed to have any of the surveys accepted. One of the participants in the venture, John Finley, did eventually secure a claim to an improvement he made at the Upper Blue Licks. Finley moved there in 1796 and spent the rest of his life farming his 1,000-acre tract.<sup>5</sup>

Lower Blue Licks was the site of a number of historic events. In January 1778, Boonesborough was almost completely out of salt. Daniel Boone led a company to Lower Blue Licks with packhorses carrying large iron kettles necessary for salt making. On February 7, Boone, who was out hunting, was overtaken by a party of Shawnee. They took him to their camp, where Blackfish and more than 100 warriors were gathered on their way to attack Boonesborough. Boone convinced them to settle for capturing the salt makers instead, and some 28 to 30 men were surrendered and taken to the Shawnee towns. Boone escaped in June, but some of the men remained captive for much longer.<sup>6</sup>

In July 1782, British Capt. William Caldwell led an army of more than 300 Indians to Kentucky, and on the evening of August 15 they surrounded Bryan's Station which had 44 militiamen defending. Two days later, with little hope of taking the fort, the Indians left. By that time, word of the siege had reached Lexington and a relief force was assembled, which reached Bryan's Station the day after the Indians left. Col. John Todd led the force of 182 men in pursuit. On the morning of August 18, the militia crossed Licking River at the Lower Blue Licks and ascended the hill. Caldwell's army was concealed in the ravines on the other side, and as soon as the militia approached they unleashed a devastating attack at close range. After a few minutes, the militia fell back and were soon in full retreat. The Indians followed them all the way back to the river. The losses were stunning. Seventy-seven men were killed and 11 captives taken. Among the dead were colonels John Todd and Stephen Trigg; Col. Daniel Boone survived but his son Israel was killed. It was the worst defeat for the Kentuckians during the frontier war.<sup>7</sup>

In 1784, Daniel Tanner began a commercial salt-works at Lower Blue Licks. He started out with four kettles which he enclosed in a stockade surrounding the lick—Tanner's Station. George Michael Bedinger acquired the lick in the 1790s. In addition to salt making, Bedinger built two gristmills, one on either side of the river, a sawmill, blacksmith shop, tobacco warehouse and general store. Later developers erected large resort hotels, and the licks became a noted spa, which the well-to-do visited to "take the waters." Shortly before the end of the 19th century, the springs failed. When the waters dried up, the area receded into the mists of history.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cotterill, "Thompson Expedition of 1773"; Site of Finley Home, Kentucky Historical Marker #789 on KY 57 near Flemingsburg.

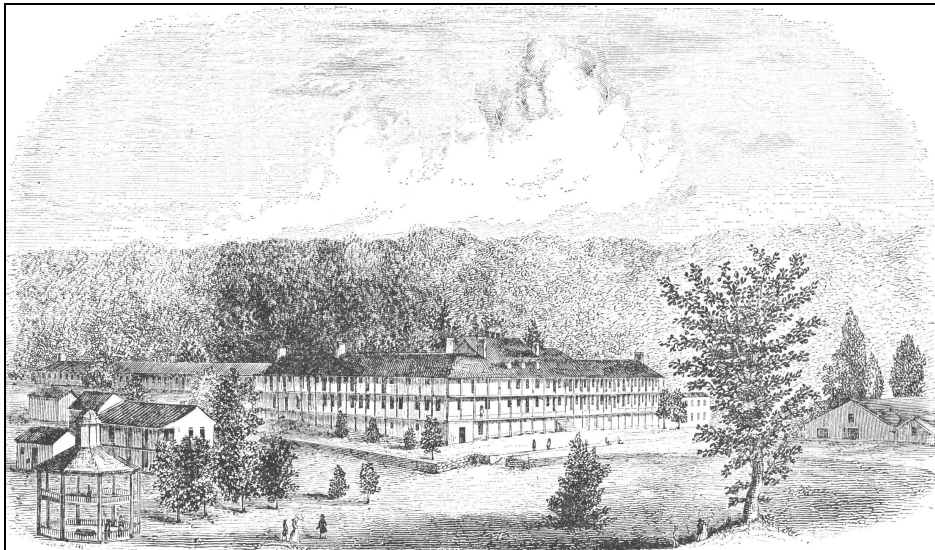
<sup>6</sup> William D. Brown, "The Capture of Daniel Boone's Salt Makers: Fresh Perspectives from Primary Sources," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (1985) 83:1-19; Lyman C. Draper, "Life of Boone," Draper MSS 4B 194-201, Ted F. Belue, "Terror in the Canelands: Fate of Daniel Boone's Salt Boilers," *Filson Club History Quarterly* (1994) 68:3-34.

<sup>7</sup> Neal O. Hammon, *Daniel Boone and the Defeat at Blue Licks* (Minneapolis, MN, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Karl B. Raitz and Nancy O'Malley, *Kentucky's Frontier Highway: Historical Landscapes Along the Maysville Road* (Lexington, KY, 2012), pp. 228-231.



**George Michael Bedinger house at Blue Licks** (From Conley, *History of Nicholas County*)



**Arlington Hotel destroyed by fire in 1862** (From Collins, *History of Kentucky*)



**Thomas Hunter's store at Blue Licks** (Photo courtesy of Garnetta Letcher)



**Surviving portion of the Blue Licks Hotel** (Photo by the author)



**Salt boiling kettle at the Lower Blue Licks Pioneer Museum** (Photo by the author)



**Tanner Station Historic Marker** (Photo by the author)

The buffalo were gone much earlier. Population pressure and over hunting reduced the once great herds to a novelty before the close of the 18th century. As William Clinkenbeard lamented:

They did destroy and waste them then at a mighty rate. If one wasn't young and fat, it was left, and they went on and killed another. Like with the cane. I thought they never would get it out off this country when I came, but now it is scarce and a curiosity.<sup>9</sup>

A visitor to Kentucky, Rev. James Smith, described Blue Licks in 1795.

We passed over a ground rendered memorable by reason of a battle fought here in 1782.... After passing this aceldama, or field of blood, we soon reached the Blue Licks, the country around which remains a monument of barrenness. As you approach the Licks, at the distance of 4 or 5 miles from it, you begin to perceive the change. The earth seems to be worn away, the roots of the trees lie naked and bare, the rocks, forsaken of the earth that once covered them, lie naked on the neighboring hills, and roads of an amazing size, in all directions, unite at the Licks, as their common center. Here immense herds of buffalo used formerly to meet and with their fighting, scraping etc., have worn away the ground to what it is at present.<sup>10</sup>

Today, the lick is honored in the Pioneer Museum at nearby Blue Licks Battlefield State Park. The museum tells the story of the Blue Licks area from Ordovician times through 1928, when the park was dedicated. There you can examine mastodon bones, Native American and pioneer artifacts, which include salt kettles as well as Revolutionary War memorabilia.

## **Tracking the Salt Spring Trace**

Numerous buffalo traces led to Lower Blue Licks. The largest of these roads led from Lexington to the lick and then on to Limestone (now Maysville). Pioneers called this the "Big Buffalo Road" to Lower Blue Licks. It became the basis for Limestone Road, followed by the Lexington-Maysville Turnpike and present-day US 68.

More important for residents of Boonesborough was the buffalo trace that led up Lower Howard's Creek and tied into the Big Buffalo Road about 8 miles west of Lower Blue Licks. This road was called by several different names during the pioneer era, most frequently the Salt Spring Trace or Salt Lick Trace. It was also known as the Hunter's Road, Blue Lick Trace, Boonesborough Trace and, later, Strode's Road after a wagon road was cut from Strode's Station to the lick.<sup>11</sup> Although the road from Boonesborough

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<sup>9</sup> Draper MSS 11CC 61.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. James Smith, "Tours into Kentucky and the Northwest Territory," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* (1887) 16:371.

<sup>11</sup> All these different names used for the Salt Spring Trace appear in depositions taken in the lawsuit *Peter Henry's heirs v. Daniel Sturgis et al.*, 1814, Fayette County Complete Record Book D:173-346. Throughout this report, I used a microfilm copy of the original to make transcriptions of depositions from this case. Abstracts of the Fayette County cases have been made by Charles Staples in the *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, Volumes 28-33 (1930-1935); these convey essentially the same information

was heavily traveled by men and horses, the segment through the Preserve was not improved for a wagon road in the pioneer era.

The mouth of Lower Howard's Creek on Kentucky River was only a mile downstream from Boonesborough. The men at the fort learned of this trace shortly after their arrival in 1775, as described by William Bush, one of Boone's road cutters.

I have been acquainted with the lower Salt Spring trace ever since the Spring of the year 1775 and it leads from Boonsborough to Howards creek and to the said Indian encampments and crossed the north fork about thirty or forty yards above the mouth of said north fork, thence up the north fork...and on to the said lower blue Licks.<sup>12</sup>

The many crisscrossing buffalo roads made it difficult for the hunters to follow the trace. Thus, Robert McMillan and his brother marked the route in the winter of 1775-76. They started marking at the point where the trace left the Big Buffalo Road. McMillan described the process in a deposition, in which he began by stating that he

came to Kentucky in the latter part of the summer 1775 and settled at Boonsborough in the same year. And on the last day of 1775 and the first day of 1776, he and his brother marked the trace from the lower blue lick to Boonsborough. We commenced marking about eight miles on this side of the blue licks at a place where a man since lived called by the name of ready money Jack, on the Buffalo road that led from the lower blue lick to or near the place where Grants Station was since erected. And this deponent and his Brother marked said trace from the place where said ready money Jack since lived and crossed the two main forks, a creek that has since gone by the name of Brushy fork of Hinkstons, and so crossed Hinkstons fork and by the Flat lick and near to a lick he has since heard called round lick, and crossed the dividing ridge between the waters of the flat lick creek and the waters of Harrods lick [creek], and passed by Harrods lick and crossed Stoners fork and crossed Strouds creek at the rocky ford and crossed said creek again at the many crossings, and passed through the Sycamore forest and so on to Boonsborough.<sup>13</sup>

The pioneer surveyor, Enoch Smith, came out in 1775 in the party with William Calk. They joined Richard Henderson en route to Kentucky and arrived at Boonesborough on April 20. Smith claimed that the Salt Spring Trace was one of the earliest marked roads in Kentucky.

In the year 1775, he came to this country in company with colonel Henderson and settled at Boonsborough and remained in this country the greater part of that summer. One of the first or nearly the first of the roads that was marked was the road leading from Boonsborough to the lower Salt Spring on Licking and was known by the name of the Hunters road or

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with some subtle and important differences. In my transcriptions, some punctuation was added for clarity, as well as capitals at the beginning of sentences.

<sup>12</sup> *John Patrick v. William McMillan*, 1812, Clark County Circuit Court, in Complete Record Book of Clark County Land Trials, 1817-1818, p. 477.

<sup>13</sup> *Peter Henry's heirs v. Daniel Sturgis et al.*, 1814, Fayette County Complete Record Book D:226-227.

the trace to the Lower salt spring and was a road of as much notoriety as any in the country.<sup>14</sup>

A number of pioneers testified that the trace was well known and marked. For example, Abraham Scholl, who came to Kentucky in the fall of 1779, reported that an ax or tomahawk had been used to mark the trace.

We called a large buffalo road by the name of Buffalo road, and a trace marked with ax or tomahawk was called a trace. The road that led from grants Station to the lower Blue licks...was the largest buffalo road I knew of. The salt lick trace that led from Boonsborough by the Sycamore forest, the many crossings, the Rocky ford, Harrods lick, the Flat lick to the lower Blue lick was marked with tomahawk or ax from Boonsborough to where said trace intersected the big buffalo road that led from grants Station to the lower Blue licks.<sup>15</sup>

Even though it was marked, many newcomers had difficulty following the trace. David Williams testified, “There was many places of said trace that was hard for a stranger to find only by chops made in trees and broken bushes.”<sup>16</sup>

Nearly fifty years later the Salt Spring Trace was still recognized. For example, the trace was cited in a case before the Kentucky Court of Appeals in 1818 in a reference to Strodes Creek: “That it [Strodes Creek] is large and was generally and well known. That a buffalo road leading from Boonsborough to Harrod’s lick, and thence to the Lower Blue lick, passed down it and crossing frequently.”<sup>17</sup>

Traveling from Boonesborough, the general route of the Salt Spring Trace was as follows: The trace crossed the Kentucky River at Blackfish Ford, ascended Lower Howard’s Creek to the Indian Camp near the present municipal reservoir, then ascended the North Fork to its headwaters and crossed the dividing ridge between the waters of Kentucky River from the waters of Licking River. The trace next crossed Hancock Creek, passed through the Fallen Timber and Sycamore Forest, crossed Johnson Creek (sometimes called Wolf Creek) and striking Strodes Creek (sometimes called Rocky Ford Fork). The trace then crossed Strodes Creek five times—the first four were known as the Many Crossings and the last as the Rocky Ford. From there the trace went by Harrod’s Lick, Round Lick and Flat Lick before striking the Big Buffalo Road near Ready Money Jack’s place. Finally, the trace followed the Big Buffalo Road 7 or 8 miles east to Lower Blue Licks. The pioneers provided considerable detail about the trace in their numerous depositions and interviews.

### **Boonesborough to Blackfish Ford**

The journey from Boonesborough to Lower Blue Lick probably began by climbing the hill west of the fort and descending to the river. This could have been accomplished by intersecting the present Combs Ferry Road (Madison County),

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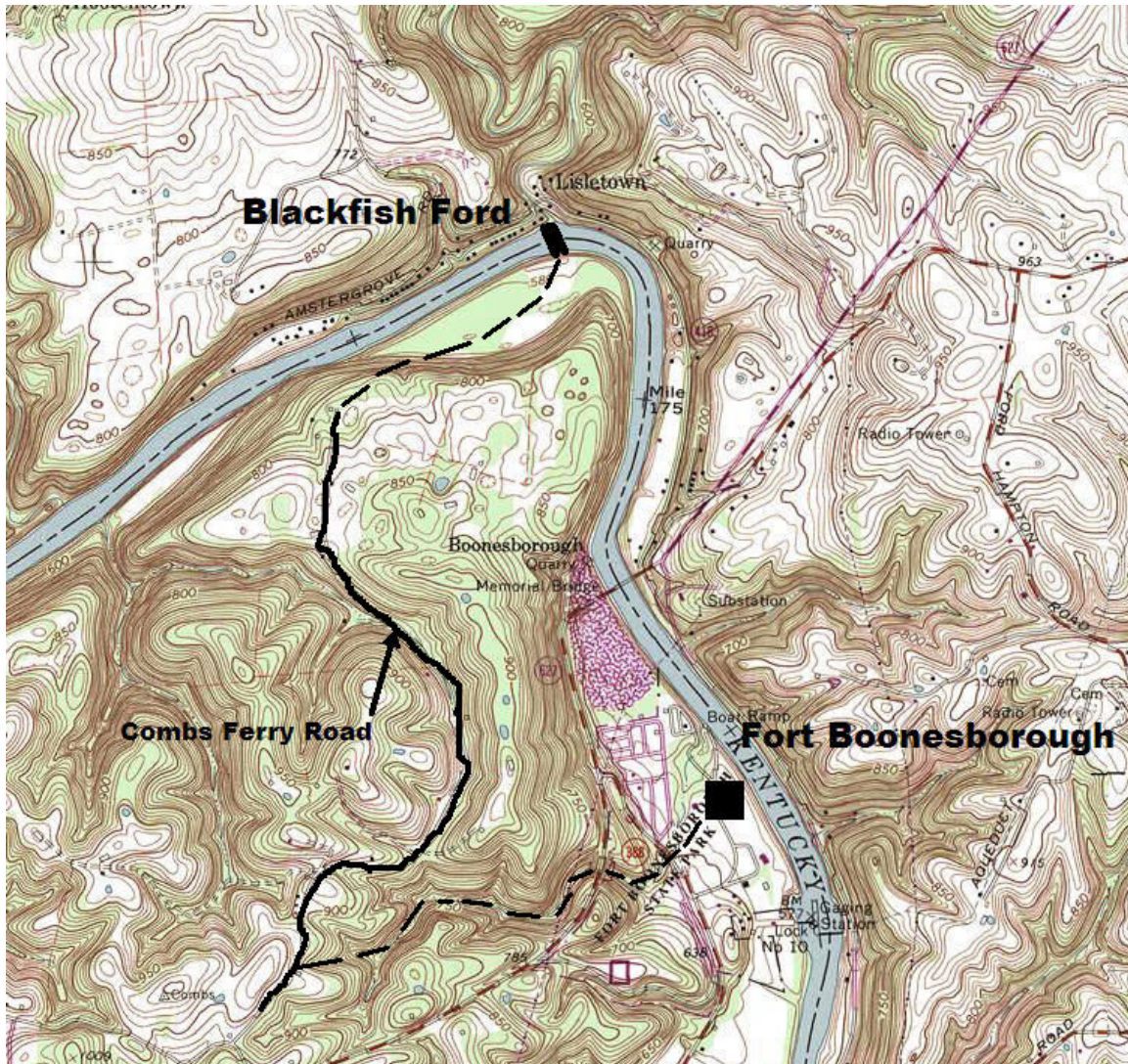
<sup>14</sup> *Henry’s heirs v. Sturgis*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>15</sup> *Henry’s heirs v. Sturgis*, pp. 249-251.

<sup>16</sup> *Henry’s heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 210.

<sup>17</sup> *Weathers Smith v. John Reed et al.*, 1818, in Alexander K. Marshall’s *Decisions of the Court of Appeals of Kentucky, Vol. 1* (Cincinnati, OH, 1848), p. 192.

proceeding north on the road to the edge of the river cliff, then descending the cliff to the Kentucky River, opposite the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek.



**Possible route from Boonesborough to Blackfish Ford**

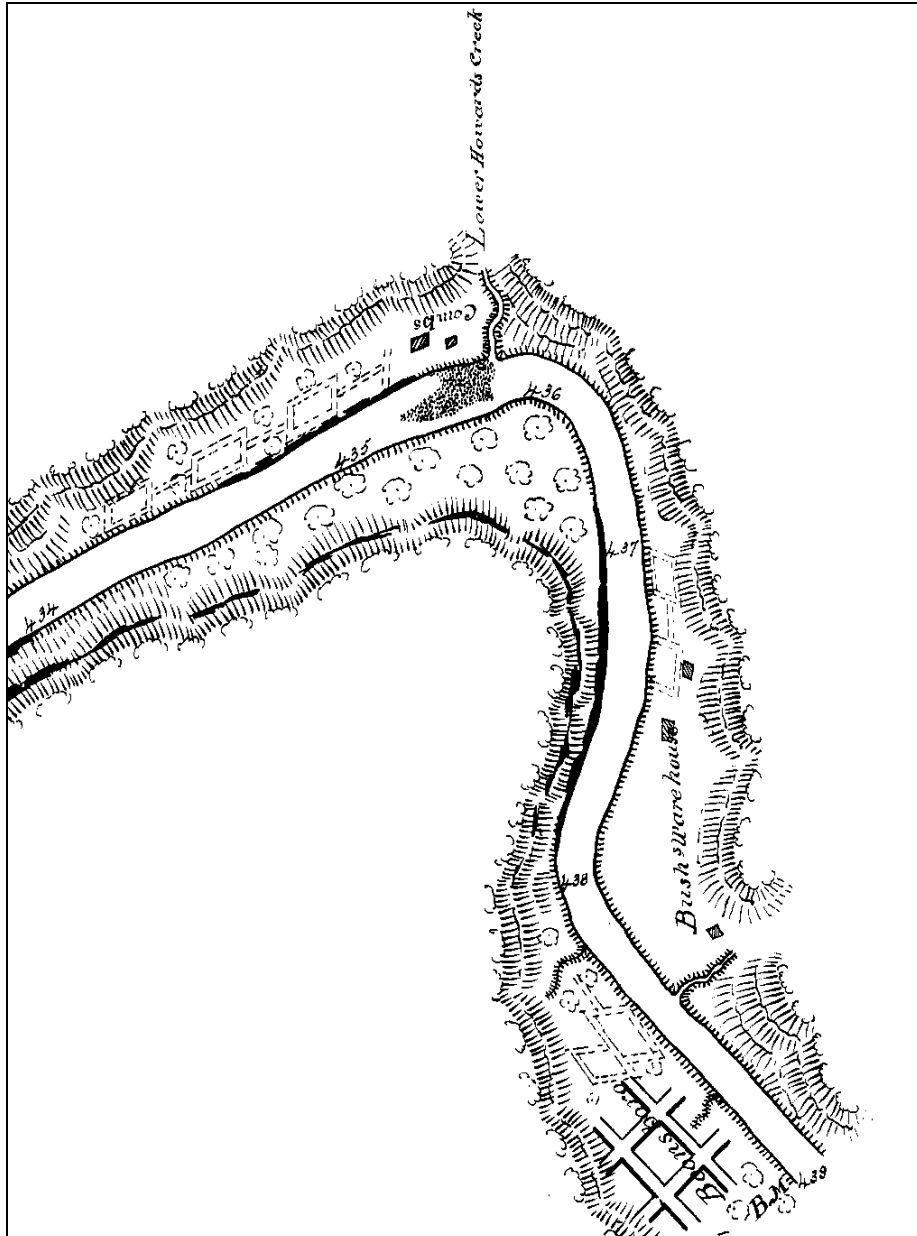
**Blackfish Ford**—This historic ford crossing Kentucky River at the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek was well-known in pioneer times. George Bryan gave evidence for this initial segment of the trace in his interview with John Dabney Shane. In September 1778, the Shawnee chief Blackfish led an army of 400 Shawnee, Cherokee and Wyandot warriors and 40 French-Canadians to Boonesborough. Bryan described the route Blackfish's army took to the fort immediately prior to the great siege:

Just below Boonesborough, at what twas called Blackfish's ford, Blackfish crossed the river, marched round the hill above the fort, and struck down the British colors at the edge of that Big bottom, right opposite to the fort, at the foot of the hill. A rocky ford.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> George Bryan interview, Draper MSS 22C 16(19).

When George Ranck wrote his book about Boonesborough in 1901, he said that the army crossed the river “at a point still known as ‘Blackfish Ford,’ climbed the steep southern bank, passed to the rear of ‘Hackberry Ridge,’ marched along its base until nearly opposite Boonesborough, and then crossing it, came down to a cover of trees and undergrowth within rifle shot of the fort.”<sup>19</sup>

What Bryan called “a rocky ford” is attested by a Kentucky River map drawn in 1829 that pictures the shoal extending nearly all the way across the river.

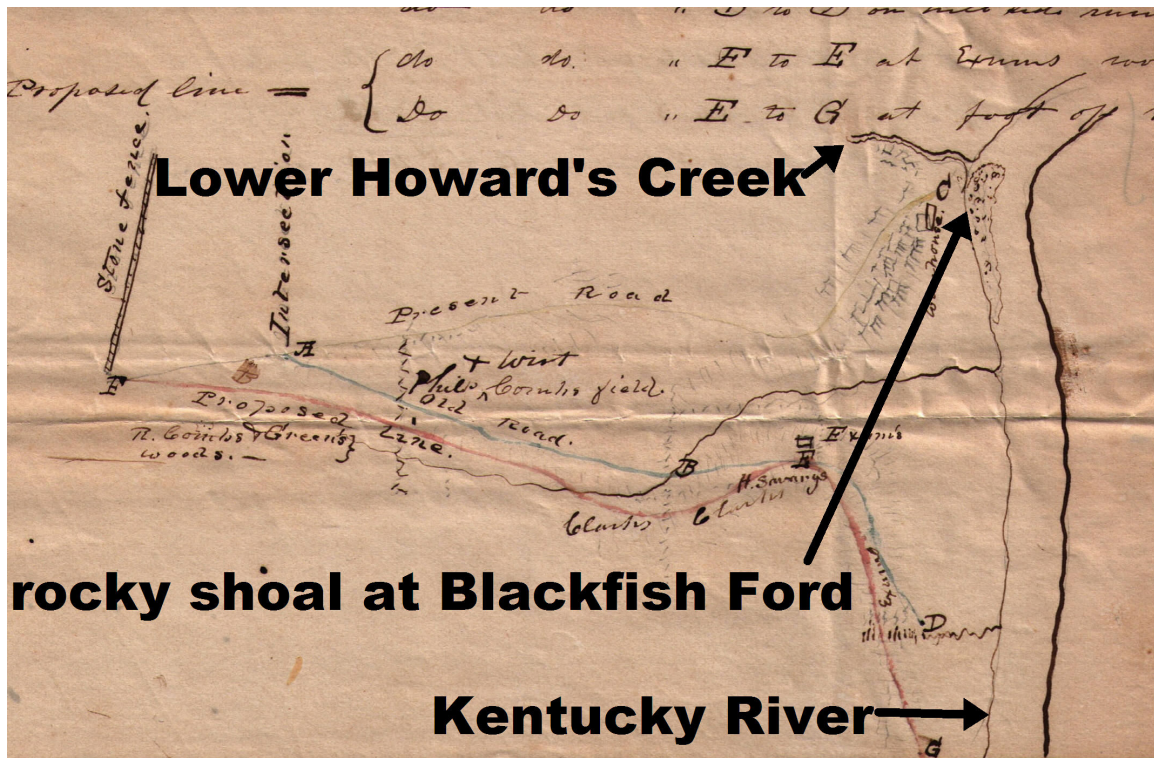


**Shoal at the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek (at the top of the map)<sup>20</sup>**

<sup>19</sup> George W. Ranck, *Boonesborough* (Louisville, KY, 1901), p. 76.

<sup>20</sup> Detail from Kentucky River Map No. 8 (1829), surveyed under the direction of Lt. Turnbull. Copy was obtained from Nancy O'Malley at the University of Kentucky. According to William M. Andrews Jr. at

Presence of the shoal is corroborated by an 1844 Clark County road order. On a map drawn to show the present and proposed roads to Combs Ferry, the shoal at that time was still a prominent feature at the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek.



Map from an 1844 road order found in the loose papers in the Clark County Courthouse attic

Blackfish Ford was a noted low-water crossing place on the river until the water levels were dramatically altered by the Corps of Engineers' construction of Lock and Dam No. 9, which was put into operation in 1903.

### Blackfish Ford to the Indian Camp

From the Kentucky River, Salt Spring Trace followed a buffalo road up Lower Howard's Creek to the confluence of the North Fork near a site pioneers referred to as the Indian Camp. A number of depositions attest to the existence of the buffalo trace that went up the creek. Jesse Hodges's answer to a question is typical.

I knew of no trace which led up Howard's creek past the Indian encampment and crossed the north fork of Howards creek, only a common Buffalow trace came up main Howard's creek, past the Indian encampment alluded to above, and crossed the north fork near the mouth where the trace forked. One fork led up the main creek [toward Winchester] and the other up the north fork and intersected the trace...near to where Col. [William] McMillan now lives.<sup>21</sup>

the Kentucky Geological Survey, the survey was performed in 1827 in anticipation of a lock and dam system along the Kentucky River. Personal communication, September 17, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> *John Patrick v. William McMillan*, 1812, Clark County Circuit Court, in Complete Record Book of Clark County Land Trials, 1817-1818, p. 476.

In Hodges's response, he seems to contradict himself. However, I think he is saying that he knew of no trace except ("only") a common buffalo trace.

Although we have an abundance of evidence that Salt Spring Trace followed a buffalo road up Lower Howard's Creek, no descriptions or maps have been found to show the exact path the road took. This is unfortunate as this is the section of road that went through what is now the Preserve. We have one pioneer who testified regarding the route up the creek. John Pleakenstalver made the following statement in 1812:

I became acquainted with the trace leading from Boonsborough to the salt spring at the lower Blue Licks in the month of June 1778 which trace was called the salt spring trace. After Leaving Boonsborough it crossed Howards creek three times thence crossing a small drain and up the west side of a stoney point and crossing the ridge over to the north Fork of Howards creek near to where William Collingsworths...Improvement was.<sup>22</sup>

Due to numerous palisades along the creek, it is difficult to conceive of a path that would only cross the creek three times. One can envision an overland route up on the ridges with only three crossings of Lower Howard's Creek, but then the road could not be said to follow the creek. Furthermore, an overland route would entail crossing numerous tributaries that would destroy the advantage of avoiding the palisades.

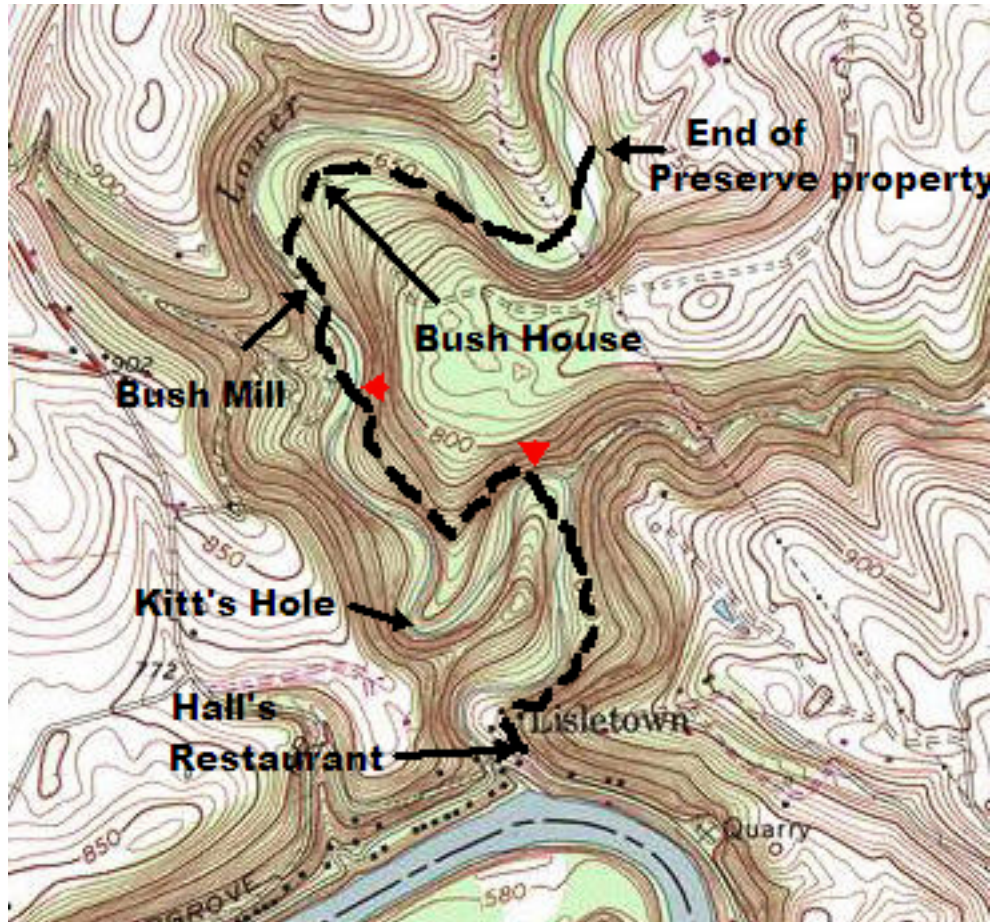
A likely explanation may be that much of the trace lay in the creek itself, obviating the need for crossings. The creek bed consists of limestone layers and much of it is flat, which would make it an ideal road for buffalo. There are a number of holes (i.e., deep places in the creek) that would have required going around on land, otherwise the road—being in the creek—could truly be said to follow the creek. This would have been an especially good route in summer months when water flow was low. We know that the mills later built along the creek typically operated only ten months a year, and several other months could have had flows low enough to allow travel in the creek. In support of this idea, most of the pioneer statements that give a date for using the Salt Spring Trace refer to travel in the summer months.

There is no longer a dry season to allow summer travel in the creek itself. This is the result of the dam forming the municipal reservoir. The west side of the dam abuts into a limestone cliff; that cliff has numerous channels and fissures, which allow water to continually leak out of the reservoir. This provides a relatively fast flowing stream in all seasons. Thus, the road to be restored in this Project will have to lie on the ground rather than in the stream. In the 1850s, a wagon road was constructed up the creek (see page 51). Much of this roadway is discernible today. Since the Project cannot restore a road in the creek, the alternative will be to follow historic roadways within the Preserve that ascended the creek parallel to the Salt Spring Trace.

Examining a topographic map, one observes that it would have been possible for the buffalo trace to go in the creek, or on the bank beside the creek, all the way through the Preserve, with one exception: the segment around Kitt's Hole, a deep pool surrounded by steep banks (see Trail Outline below). Here the buffalo would have had to go overland to the next crossing; this overland section is shown on the figure by the dashed line between the red arrows.

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<sup>22</sup> *Patrick v. McMillan*, pp. 481-482.



**Trail Outline for Restoration of the Salt Spring Trace through the Preserve**

The original buffalo trace through the Preserve could have followed in or beside the creek except in the area between the *red arrows*. Here an overland route was necessary to get around the deep pool at Kitt's Hole. The *dashed line* provides a land route for a trail paralleling the Salt Spring Trace. This trail uses historic roads and requires five creek crossings.

Since no maps of the Salt Spring Trace have been found for the lower creek area, we are forced to speculate that the route continued up the creek in the manner described above until approaching the Indian Camp at the mouth of the North Fork of Lower Howard's Creek.

**Indian Camp**—In 1778, Blackfish led his army of 400 Indians down Lower Howard's Creek on their way to besiege Boonesborough. On Sunday, September 6, they stopped for the night at a place afterwards called the "Indian Camp." The next day the army continued downstream to the mouth of the creek, where they crossed the Kentucky River at Blackfish Ford, and then proceeded to invest the fort in what became known as the great siege of Boonesborough (September 7-18, 1778). Jesse Hodges, who was present at the great siege, was questioned about the camp during a deposition:

Question: Do you know of any place called and known by the name of the Indian Camp on or near the said Salt Spring trace in the years 1779 or 1780?

Answer: Yes. Below the junction of the north fork and Howard's Creek and between Major John Wilkerson's Mill dam and Mill where the

army of Indians camped in 1778 before the siege of Boonsborough which was the largest Indian encampment I ever saw on Howard's creek and the one I expected any person alludes to when they spoke of the Indian encampment on Howards creek after the said encampment was made.<sup>23</sup>

In the course of the lawsuit, William Sudduth, the county surveyor, prepared a map showing the location of the Indian Camp (see Sudduth's Survey Map below). Sudduth's notes give his explanation of the map:

The defendant [Zachariah] Field directed me to lay down the Indian Camps as proven in the suit *Crockett vs Trimble* and are designated thus ☒ on the connected platt and which are at the place where the log meeting house stands below the mouth of the north fork of Howard's Creek.<sup>24</sup>

The camp was located just below the Carroll E. Ecton Reservoir in the flat area around Lettie Lane, between Waterworks Road and Lower Howard's Creek. According to the deposition and plat, in 1812 the former camp was near John Wilkerson's gristmill and the log meeting house. The latter refers to Unity Baptist Church organized by Rev. Andrew Tribble and located on his 500-acre patent on Lower Howard's Creek.<sup>25</sup>

### **Indian Camp to Strodes Creek**

From the land controversy *John Patrick v. William McMillan*, we learn that Salt Spring Trace left the main fork of Lower Howard's Creek and ascended the North Fork. Testimony in the case reveals that there were two different paths the trace followed near the Indian Camp. The first path was the buffalo trace described in the deposition of William Bush:

the lower Salt Spring trace...leads from Boonsborough to Howards creek and to the said Indian encampments and crossed the north fork about thirty or forty yards above the mouth of said north fork, thence up the north fork...and on to the said lower blue Licks.<sup>26</sup>

Bush then described a second path called the "Hunter's trace," which he said the hunters at Boonesborough began to use in about 1778 or 1779:

It commenced at Boonsborough & so along the lower Salt Spring trace to the place where Capt. [Ambrose] Christie now lives, that is about 300 poles [about .9 miles] on a straight line below the mouth of the said north fork upon said Howards creek, thence across the uplands to the said place...where it intersected the said lower Salt Spring trace, crossing the said north fork Just before the intersection with the said Salt Spring trace.<sup>27</sup>

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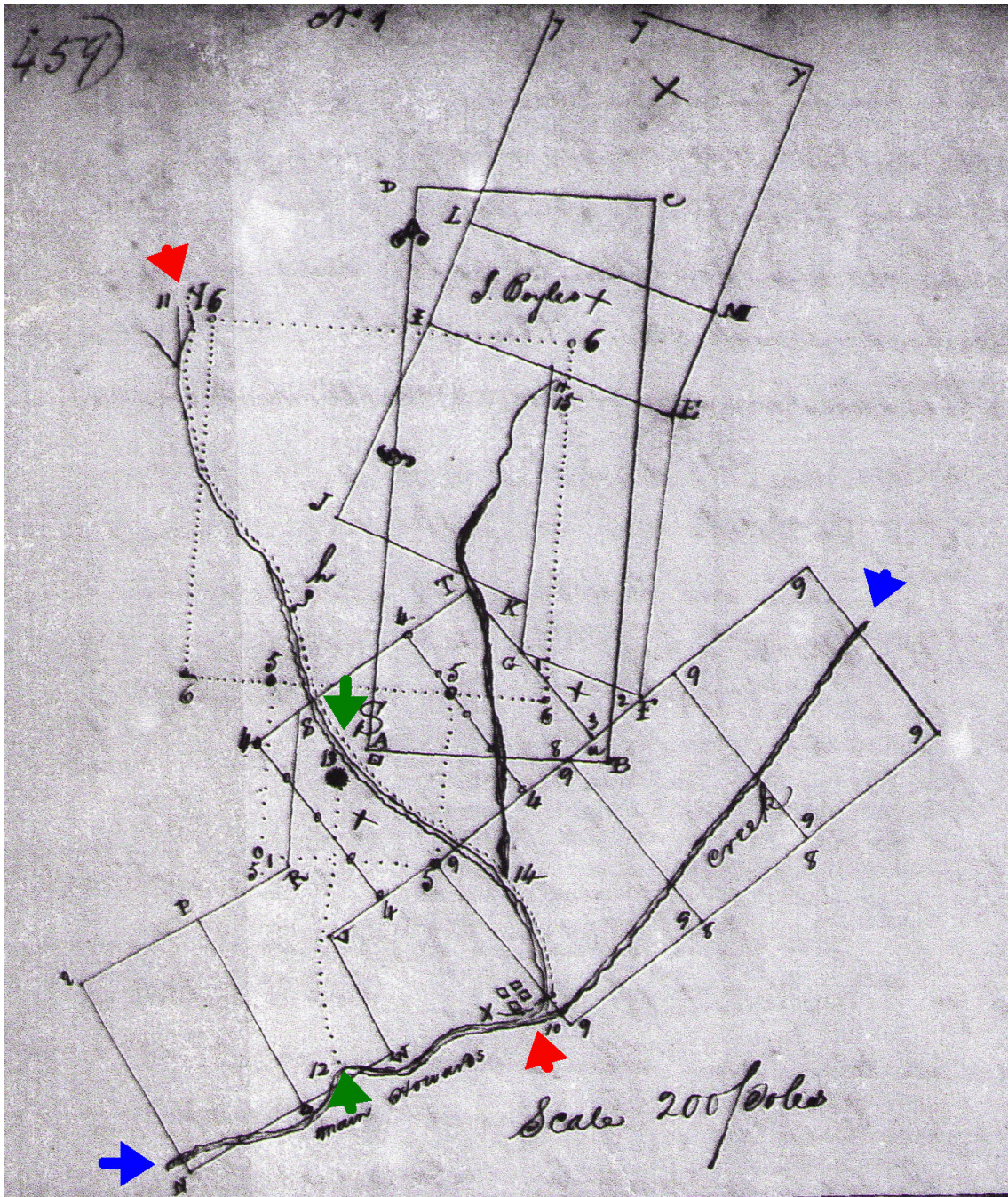
<sup>23</sup> *Patrick v. McMillan*, p. 475.

<sup>24</sup> *Patrick v. McMillan*, p. 461.

<sup>25</sup> Harry G. Enoch, *Where In The World? Historic Places in Clark County, Kentucky* (Winchester, KY, 2007), pp. 151-154.

<sup>26</sup> *Patrick v. McMillan*, p. 477.

<sup>27</sup> *Patrick v. McMillan*, p. 477.



**William Sudduth's Survey Map of the Indian Camp<sup>28</sup>**

The main fork of Lower Howard's Creek is indicated by the *blue arrows* and the North Fork by *red arrows*. The Salt Spring Trace is the *dotted line* on the east side of the North Fork. The Indian Camp is indicated by  $\square$  at the mouth of the North Fork. The Hunter's trace Bush referred to in his deposition is the *dotted line* that leaves Lower Howard's Creek at the *bottom green arrow* then crosses North Fork and intersects the Salt Spring Trace at the *top green arrow*.

<sup>28</sup> Patrick v. McMillan, p. 459.

John Pleakenstalver's deposition in the case also mentioned this shortcut used by the hunters. He described the path as "crossing a small drain and up the west side of a stoney point and crossing the ridge over to the north Fork of Howards creek."<sup>29</sup> Flanders Callaway stated in 1796 that the "said Trace crossed the North fork of Howards Creek within one Hundred Yards of the now dwelling house of Mr. William McMillan, to the best of his knowledge."<sup>30</sup>

In the course of the lawsuit *John Patrick v. William McMillan*, the county surveyor, William Sudduth, prepared a map showing the route of Salt Spring Trace up the fork. Sudduth's map shows the trace crossing North Fork near the Indian Camp and then following up the east side of the fork all the way to its headwaters (see figure above). The lower end of the North Fork is submerged today by Winchester Municipal Utility's reservoir. According to longtime Clark County resident, Doug Oliver, an old road along the North Fork is still in place under the water of the reservoir. Doug recalls that when the reservoir was drained to build the new dam (1984), a deeply rutted road and stone fence beside it were uncovered. This was no doubt a remnant of the Salt Spring Trace.

From the headwaters of North Fork, the trace continued in a northerly direction, crossing the dividing ridge between the Kentucky River and Licking River. The dividing ridge lies near present-day Colby Road (Hwy 1967). Creeks on the north side of Colby Road drain to the Licking River, creeks on the south side drain to the Kentucky.

Once over the dividing ridge, Salt Spring Trace crossed Hancock Creek, passed through the Fallen Timber and the Sycamore Forest, then crossed Johnson Creek before striking Strodes Creek. We are fortunate to have another map showing the trace in this area, a plat made in yet another land trial—*James Crockett et al. v. Richardson Allan*. Deputy surveyor William Latham's plat of several overlapping land claims that interfere with Samuel Henderson's 400-acre settlement also shows the route of the trace between Hancock and Johnson Creeks (see Sycamore Forest below). He was the brother of Col. Richard Henderson of the Transylvania Company. Henderson's improvement is shown at the green dot in the middle of the settlement, and the Sycamore Forest lay between the yellow lines.<sup>31</sup> In a deposition in the case, William Bush stated that Henderson's improvement

was shewn to him and twenty others at one time by Colonel Callaway in August 1777 as they were going to the lower salt springs on licking river for salt kittles.<sup>32</sup>

Henderson's settlement and improvement were located near Renick, north of present-day Van Meter Road.

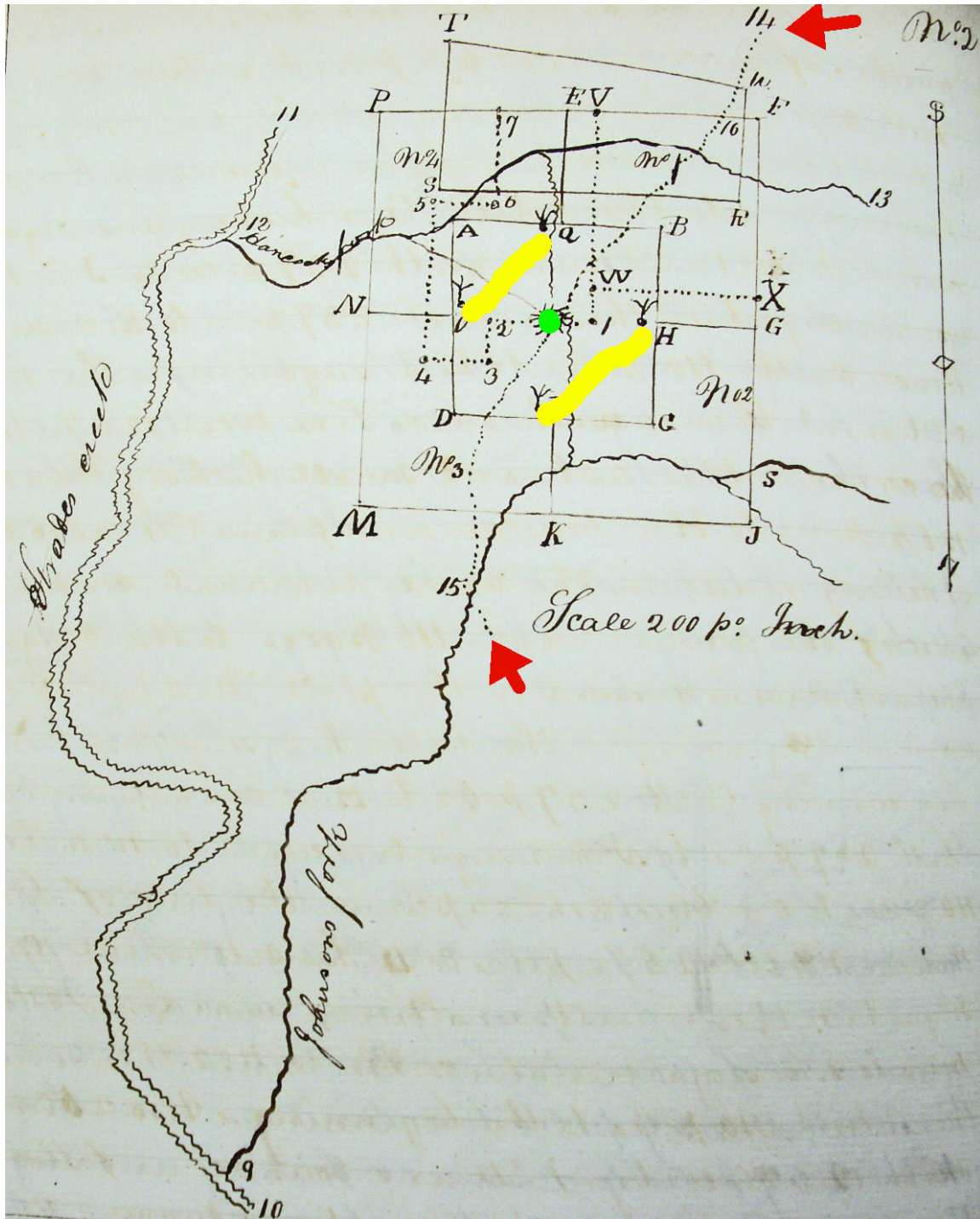
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<sup>29</sup> *Patrick v. McMillan*, pp. 481-482.

<sup>30</sup> Harry G. Enoch and Diane Rogers, *Deposition Book, Clark County Court Depositions, 1795-1814* (Winchester, KY, 2005), p. 146.

<sup>31</sup> *James Crockett et al. v. Richardson Allan*, 1810, Clark County Circuit Court, in Complete Record Book of Clark County Land Trials, 1809-1810, pages not numbered.

<sup>32</sup> *Crockett v. Allan*.



**Sycamore Forest between Hancock Creek and Johnson Fork**

Strodes Creek is shown on the left side of the map, with its tributaries Hancock Creek at the top and Johnson Fork at the bottom. The north arrow points toward the bottom of the picture, so the map is upside down. The dotted line from 14 to 15 between the red arrows is Salt Spring Trace. The Sycamore Forest lies between the two yellow lines, marked on the map by tree-like figures. Samuel Henderson's improvement lies on the Salt Spring Trace at the green dot.

**Fallen Timber**—This feature was mentioned in several pioneer accounts but never elaborated upon. From the available descriptions, we can determine that it lay on the trace near a branch of Hancock Creek. The earliest reference is in January 1780, when a session of the Virginia Land Commission meeting at Bryan’s Station approved William Forbes’s claim to a settlement and preemption.

William Forbes this day claims a settlement and preemption to a tract of land in the District of Kentucky lying on the head of Wolf Creek, a branch of Licking Creek, adjoining the falling Timber by raising a Crop of Corn in the Country in the year 1776.<sup>33</sup>

The claim was mistakenly identified as lying “on the head of Wolf Creek,” the name used at the time for Johnson Creek. That error was corrected in the survey made in 1782, which placed the tract “upon Hancocks fork, a branch of Strodes fork of Licking.”

The same mistake was made in another reference to Fallen Timber. In the year 1800, Jacob Starnes stated that

the trace leading from Boonsborough to the lower blue licks came down this Branch, that it crossed and recrossed the first branch that hit came to of this branch, before it came to this place. And that it did not cross said Branch until it came within half a mile or three Quarters of the Grove of sycamores called the sycamore Forrest. And that in 1778 this branch was called the long branch of the fallen Timber fork, and further that the Creek now called Jonston was then known by the name of Wolf Creek.<sup>34</sup>

Starnes’s deposition was given in support of David Shelton’s claim to 1,658 acres, which was situated on Hancock Creek not Johnson/Wolf. Shelton’s entry of this claim repeats the mistake, stating that it was situated

on a branch of Woolfe Creek that heads near the North forke of howards Lower Creek, being the first branch of Licking that the Trase from Boones Borough to the Lower Blew Licks crosses.<sup>35</sup>

This description clearly refers to Hancock Creek, which is the stream that “heads near” the North Fork of Lower Howard’s Creek.

David Lynch recalled in the summer of 1780 he accompanied Capt. James Estill and twelve to fifteen men on their way

to lower Blue Lick to make salt, and we went along the Salt Lick Trace by the falling timber, the Many Crossings...and so on to the Lower blue lick. Captain Estill told the company the names of the different noted places we passed, as the men under his command was from different stations in different parts of the country, and I remember the names of several of the noted places we passed after we left Strodes Station that Estill said they

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<sup>33</sup> Kentucky Historical Society, *Certificate Book of the Virginia Land Commission, 1779-1780* (Frankfort, KY, 1981), p. 121.

<sup>34</sup> Harry G. Enoch and Diane Rogers, *Deposition Book, Clark County Court Depositions, 1795-1814* (Winchester, KY, 2005), p. 168.

<sup>35</sup> Virginia Survey #4329, Kentucky Secretary of State, Kentucky Land Office, Virginia and Old Kentucky Patent Series, <http://apps.sos.ky.gov/land/nonmilitary/patentseries/vaandokpatents/Default.aspx>.

were known by, which was as follows. The first was falling timber, then the Many Crossings, Harrods lick and the flat Lick.... We stayed there seven or eight days and made a few bushels of salt and then returned.<sup>36</sup>

**Sycamore Forest**—This unusual “grove of sycamore trees”<sup>37</sup> was noted by the pioneers and became one of the landmarks along the Salt Spring Trace. In 1810, Robert McMillan stated that “the sycamore forrest is on the waters of Licking and was generally known as such in the years 1775 and from that untill this [day].”<sup>38</sup> Oswald Townsend stated that

some time in the Summer 1776 or 1777 that the deponant was in Company with Richard Calloway, Samuel Henderson, Nathaniel Hart and Thomas Hardgrove. On our Return from the Lower Salt Springs on Licking, we made a stop at the place then Cald the Sycamore Forris. At that time and place, this deponant Saw Samuel Henderson mark a tree on said trace to Boonsborough, and I have always known it Cald said Hendersons claim since.<sup>39</sup>

Further detail is provided in William Clinkenbeard’s deposition.

Question By Mathew Patton: Do you know that the trace from Boonsborough to the lower Salt Springs run through the center, or nearly so, of the Sycamore forrest?

Answer: I beleave it did.

Question by Same: Do you know of any other place on said trace that bore the name of the Sycamore Forrest?

Answer: I do not.

Question by Same: Was there not sycamores on each side of the ridge, both on the waters of Hancock and Johnson?

Answer: There was.

Question by Thomas Kennedy: Was not the sycamore forrest a Large body of wood extending from Hancocks fork to Johnsons fork with the salt spring trace runing through it?

Answer: It was a large body of wood, but I do not think they extended to either [fork].<sup>40</sup>

### **Strodes Creek to the Rocky Ford**

After Salt Spring Trace crossed Johnson Creek, the path continued in a northeasterly direction until it struck a branch of Stoner known as Strodes Creek. Some of the early surveyors—Enoch Smith, Green Clay and Benjamin Field—referred to Strodes Creek as the Rocky Ford Fork of Stoner. In fact, Smith’s surveys in the area

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<sup>36</sup> *Henry’s heirs v. Sturgis*, pp. 257-258.

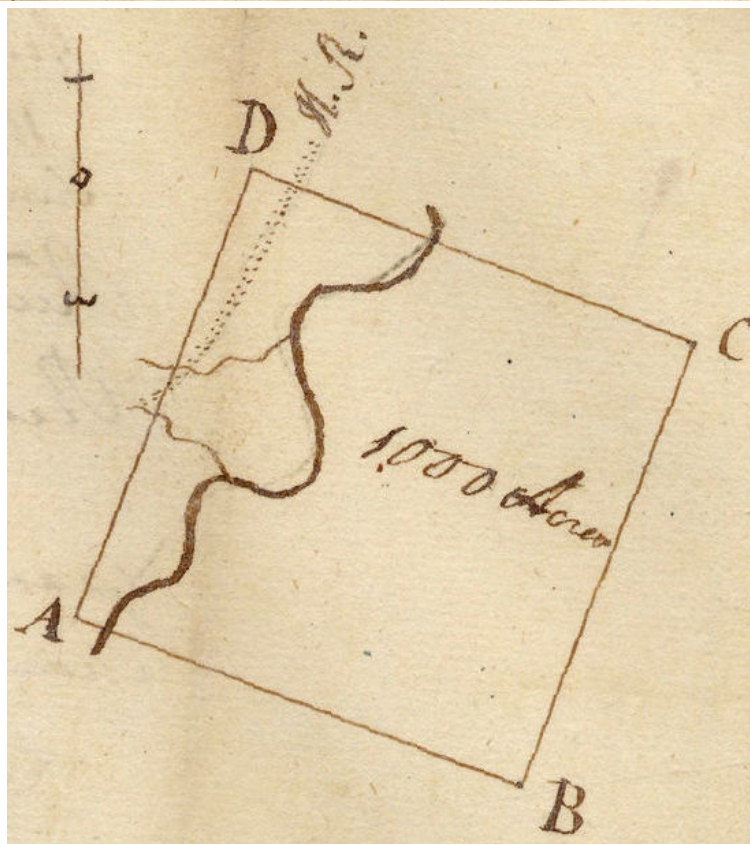
<sup>37</sup> William Bush deposition, in Harry G. Enoch and Diane Rogers, *Deposition Book, Clark County Court Depositions, 1795-1814* (Winchester, KY, 2005), p. 168.

<sup>38</sup> *Crockett v. Allan*.

<sup>39</sup> *Deposition Book*, p. 234.

<sup>40</sup> *Deposition Book*, p. 236.

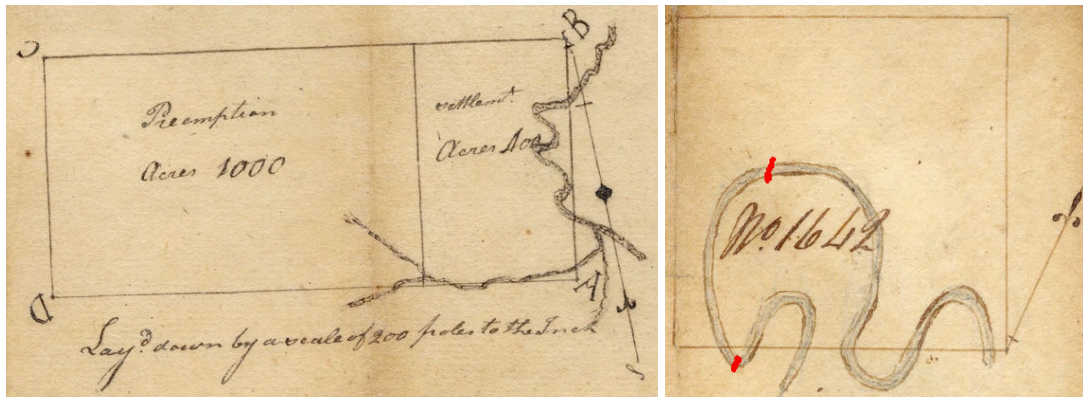
show the Salt Spring Trace, which he called the Hunter's Road (see The Hunter's Road on Strodes Creek below).



**The Hunter's Road on Strodes Creek**

Going from north to south (*top to bottom*), Enoch Smith's surveys of David Gass's 500 acres and George Smith's 1,000 acres. The double dotted lines and abbreviation H.R. represent the Hunter's Road. Virginia Surveys #1719, and 1013, respectively.

The southernmost surveys in this area, the first ones to strike Strodes Creek, were made for Henry Field and Benjamin Casey's heirs.



Surveys of Henry Field and Benjamin Casey's Heirs<sup>41</sup>

Field's tract was described in the survey as "Lying on the south fork of Licking at the many Crossings on the rode that Leeds from Boonsborough to the salt springs."<sup>42</sup> The stream shown on the east side of Field's survey is Strodes Creek, and the fork of Strodes near the letter A is Johnson Creek. The first two crossings of Strodes Creek were located on Field's tract. Benjamin Casey's entry for his claim states that it is "to lie on the second buffalo crossing" and the survey places it "on the Middle Creek of Stoners Fork of Licking Creek at the many Crossings."<sup>43</sup> The survey, made for Benjamin Casey's heirs, overlaps Field's. It shows the detail of Strodes Creek more accurately, which allows us to mark the two crossings (*red lines* in above figure). These two crossings of Strodes Creek were in an area that came to be well known as the Many Crossings.

**Many Crossings**—An excellent description of the Many Crossings appears in the findings of a land trial, *Weathers Smith v. John Reed et al.* (the case itself was a challenge of Benjamin Casey's entry).

That Stoner's fork of Licking is about twenty-five or thirty miles long, having many tributary streams putting in on both sides, with buffalo crossings passing up and down them. That the creek generally known by the name of Stroude's creek in consequence of its having erected a station on it in the fall of the year 1779...is large and was generally well known. That a buffalo road, leading from Boonsborough to Harrod's lick, and thence to the Lower Blue lick, passed down it and crossing frequently within a few miles of each crossing, which place obtained and was generally known by the appellation of the *many crossings*.<sup>44</sup>

The opinion further stated, "There are five crossings delineated" at the Many Crossings, and it was proven that the last crossing, when traveling from Boonesborough, was called

<sup>41</sup> Virginia Surveys #686 and 7717.

<sup>42</sup> Virginia Survey #686.

<sup>43</sup> *Weathers Smith v. John Reed et al.*, 1818, in Alexander K. Marshall's *Decisions of the Court of Appeals of Kentucky, Vol. 1* (Cincinnati, OH, 1848), p. 191; Virginia Surveys #7717.

<sup>44</sup> *Smith v. Reed*, pp. 191-192.

the Rocky Ford.<sup>45</sup> The first two crossings are shown on Casey's survey, and the last, the Rocky Ford, is shown on David Gass's survey. Since Enoch Smith's surveys on Strodes Creek show the location of the Hunter's Road, when these surveys are plotted using a deed mapping program,<sup>46</sup> the path of Salt Spring Trace can be tracked at the Many Crossings (see Salt Spring Trace at the Many Crossings below).

The Many Crossings was a landmark on the Salt Spring Trace frequently referred in the accounts of the early pioneers. For example, Moses Thomas described going to the Rocky Ford Fork in 1779 with Enoch Smith.

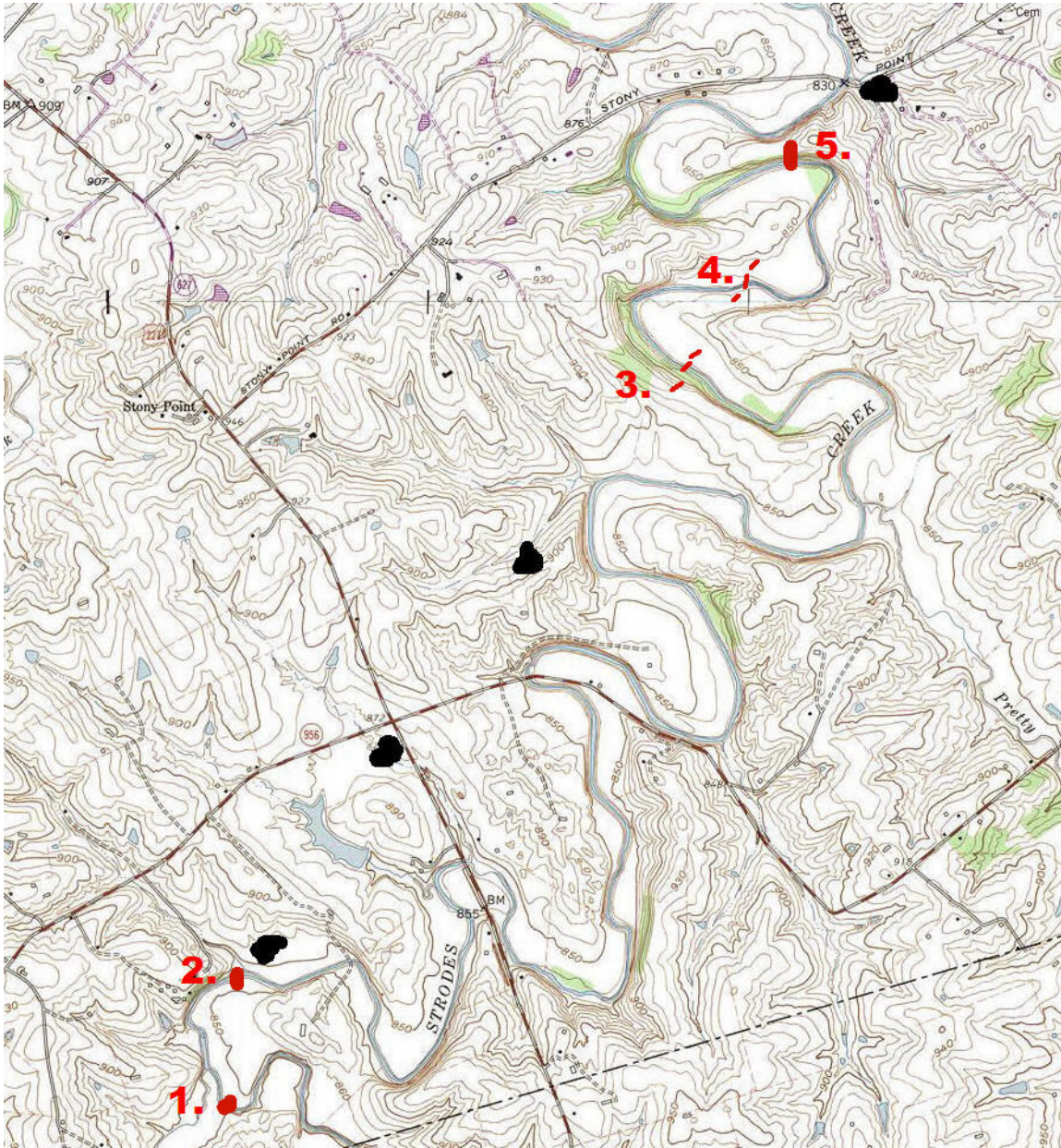
The deposition of Moses Thomas of lawful age taken at an oald improvement near the many crossings.... In the year 1779 he came in company to this country with Enoch Smith. We came out together to explore the land on the Rocky ford fork of Licking now called Strodes Creek. At the ford of the creek, I have this day showed Thomas Jones...the place where I saw Charles Beall mark a tree CB, near where Enoch Smith killed a buffalow. We went up a west branch to look for water and came to the place that I have this day showed Thomas Jones [the location of] Smiths camp in 1779, called for in Craven Peytons entry. The time we arrived there was on Saturday evening. We stayed there till Enoch Smith dressed leather and made mockasons for us.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Smith v. Reed*, pp. 194, 198.

<sup>46</sup> DeedMapper 4.0, 2007, Direct Line Software, Newton, MA.

<sup>47</sup> *Benjamin Ratcliff v. William Peyton*, Bourbon County Circuit Court, Case 146, transcribed by Bob Francis, <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/KYBOURBO/2002-08/1030501280>.



**Salt Spring Trace at the Many Crossings**

The *black marks* indicate the Hunter's Road as plotted in Enoch Smith's surveys for Craven Peyton, George Smith and David Gass. The *red marks* indicate the first two crossings of Strokes Creek at the surveys for Henry Field and Benjamin Casey's heirs (*lower left*) and the fifth crossing at the Rocky Ford shown on the survey for David Gass (*upper right*). The *dashed red lines* indicate the inferred locations of the third and fourth crossings.

### **Rocky Ford to Stoner Creek**

Enoch Smith's surveys marking the location of the Hunter's Road again prove valuable, this time for showing the route of the trace after crossing the Rocky Ford on Strodes Creek to Stoner Creek and beyond a ways. Smith's surveys show the Hunter's Road on James Garrard's and Moses Thomas's plats (see the Hunter's Road near Stoner Creek below). Garrard, who served as a colonel in the Revolutionary War, was a miller, distiller, Baptist preacher, and Kentucky's second governor. Thomas purchased the settlement and preemption originally claimed by Boonesborough pioneer William Cradlebaugh. Cradlebaugh was very familiar with the Salt Spring Trace. In an 1808 deposition, he stated that he

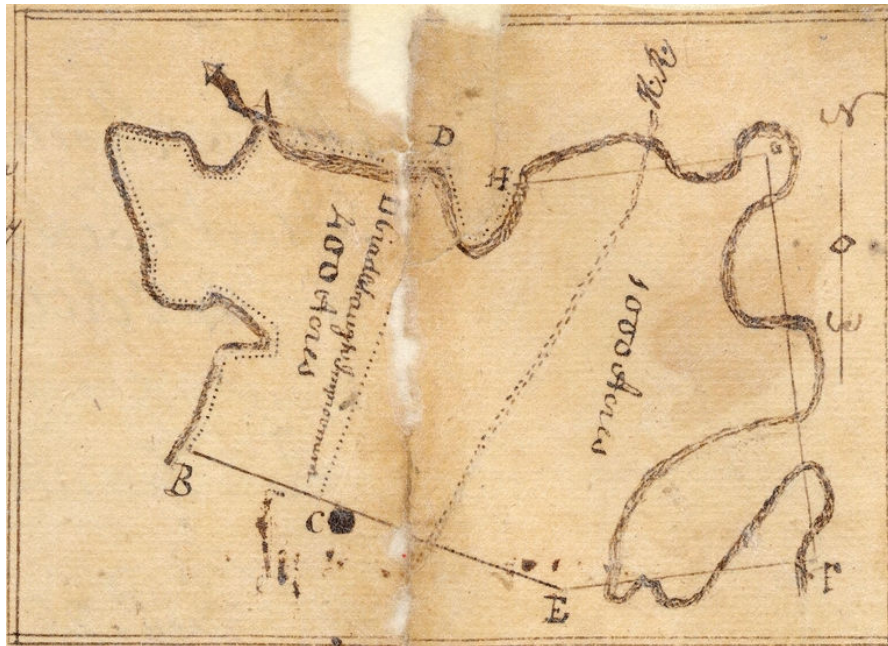
lived with Colonel Daniel Boone at Boonsborough in the year 1775 and continued to live at said station for several years after that time. In Winter of 1778, about first of February, this deponent went with Colonel Boone and others, in all about thirty men, to the lower blue lick on Licking River to make salt. We went from Boonsborough and traveled along the Salt lick trace...to the lower blue lick. A few of the men came home [including Cradlebaugh] and left Colonel Boone and the rest of the company at the blue lick to make salt, and Colonel Boone and his company was taken by the indians. [A] short time after Colonel Boone was taken by the indians, as stated above, this deponent and others, in all about twenty men, went to the lower blue lick to hide the kettles and all traveled the said salt lick trace.<sup>48</sup>

Cradlebaugh claimed a 400-acre settlement by virtue of an improvement he made near the Salt Spring Trace at the mouth of Strodes Creek.

When the Thomas and Garrard patents are plotted, the points where the Salt Spring Trace crosses the patent boundaries can be located, as well as the creek crossings. The figure Salt Spring Trace to Stoner Creek shows these points marked on a topographic map. The trace passed about two miles west of present-day North Middletown in Bourbon County and continued on in a north-northeasterly direction.

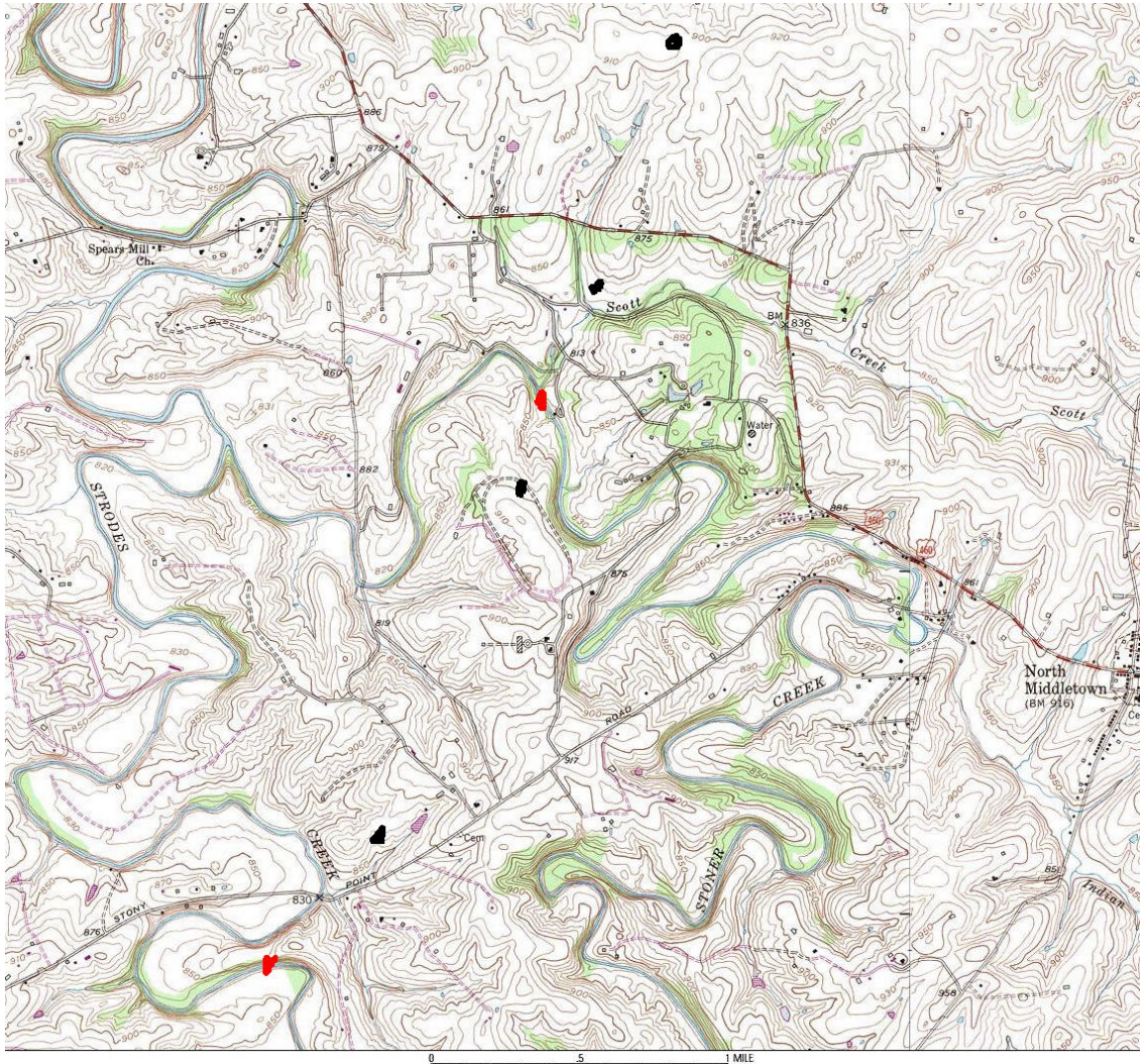
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<sup>48</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, pp. 224-225. William Cradlebaugh's Revolutionary War pension application (S.30354, VA) states that he came to Boonesborough from North Carolina in 1776.



**The Hunter's Road near Stoner Creek**

Going from north to south (*top to bottom*), Enoch Smith's surveys of James Garrard's 1,400 acres and Moses Thomas's 1,400 acres. The double dotted lines and abbreviation H.R. represent the Hunter's Road. Strodes Creek enters Stoner at A in both plats. Virginia Surveys #989, and 1005, respectively.

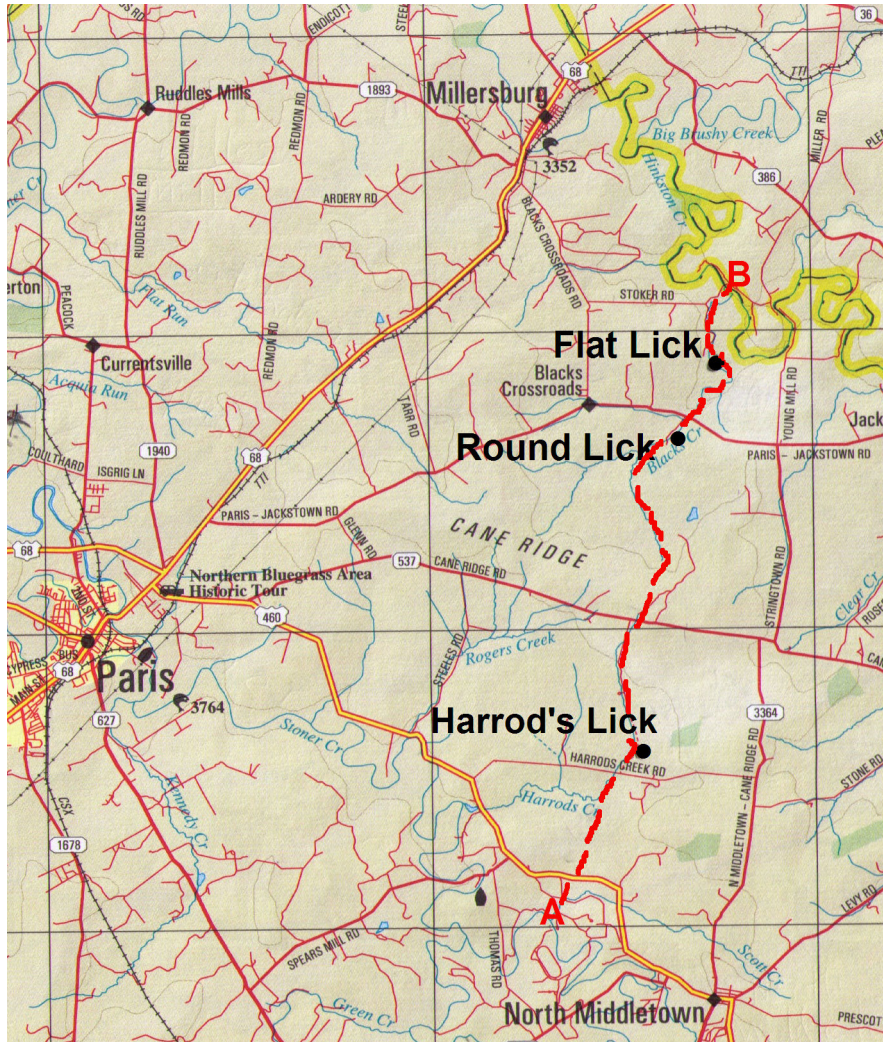


**Salt Spring Trace to Stoner Creek**

The *black marks* indicate the Hunter's Road as plotted from Enoch Smith's surveys for James Garrard and Moses Thomas. The lower *red mark* indicates the crossing of Stones Creek and the upper *red mark* the crossing of Stoner Creek.

**Stoner Creek to Hinkston Creek**

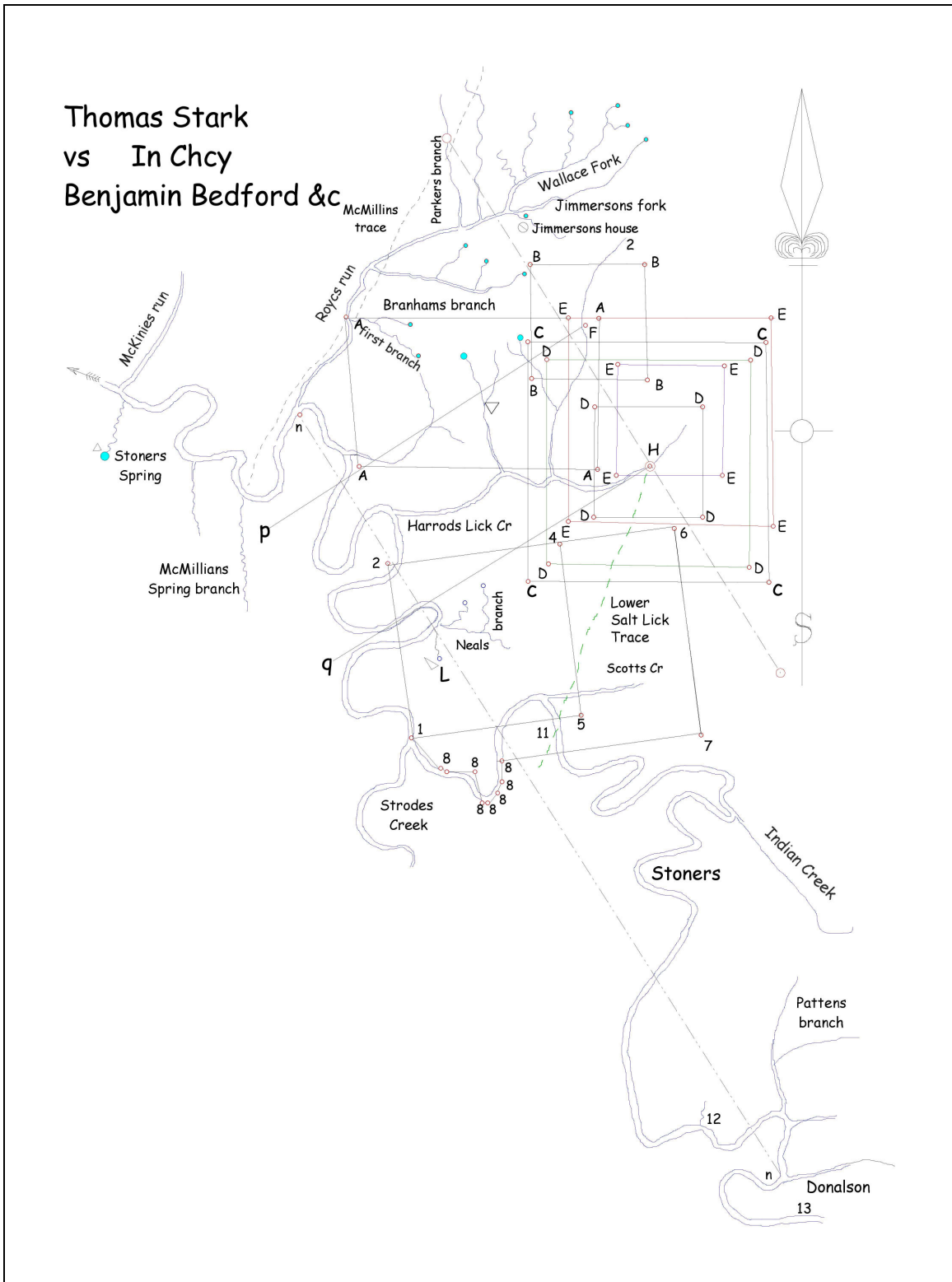
The figure above shows the trace crossing Scott Creek and then the ridge between Scott Creek and Harrods Creek. The trace went up Harrods Creek, passing Harrod's Lick; from there it crossed another dividing ridge and came onto the headwaters of Flat Lick Creek (now called Blacks Creek). Descending Flat Lick Creek, the trace passed Round Lick and Flat Lick then crossed Hinkston Creek. These licks are shown on the figure below.



**Stoner Creek (A) to Hinkston Creek (B)**

The route the trace took through this area is shown on several plats made in land trials, as shown in the following two figures. The first plat, from *Stark v. Bedford et al.*, shows the trace running from the crossing of Stoner Creek to Harrod’s Lick. In another court case, *Henry’s heirs v. Sturgis et al.*, a huge (approximately 4 foot x 6 foot) plat was prepared for the Bourbon County Court. Neal Hammon discovered this plat at the courthouse and reproduced it for his article on the pioneer roads of central Kentucky. A detail of Hammon’s map shows the trace passing through the lands of James Sodowski. Sodowski was awarded a settlement and preemption by the Virginia Land Commission for raising a crop of corn in 1775. His improvement was described as lying “on the west side of the Road leading from Boonsborough to the Blue lick and about half a Mile from Randolph lick.”<sup>49</sup> Randolph Lick apparently was an early name used for Round Lick.

<sup>49</sup> James Sodowski’s settlement certificate and preemption warrant on the Kentucky Land Office website, <http://apps.sos.ky.gov/land/nonmilitary/settlements/>.



**Harrod's Lick on the Salt Spring Trace**

The "Lower Salt Lick Trace" is shown by the *green dashed line* from near the crossing of Stoner Creek to Harrod's Lick at *H* on Harrods Lick Creek. (This map showing numerous overlapping land claims was created by Neal Hammon, 2006, from a plat in the chancery case of *Stark v. Bedford et al.*)



**Round Lick and Flat Lick on the Salt Spring Trace**

The Salt Spring Trace, shown by the *solid red line*, follows one of the forks of Flat Lick Creek, passes Round Lick on James Sodowski's land then Flat Lick, before crossing Hinkston Creek, at the top right of the map. (The map was prepared by Neal Hammon from a plat in the case of *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis et al.*<sup>50</sup>)

<sup>50</sup> Neal Hammon loaned me the tracings he made of this plat. He described the process of making the tracings in an email: "As for the big survey I used in that article ["Pioneer Routes in Central Kentucky"], it

After passing Flat Lick, the trace crossed Hinkston Creek at a ford much used by buffalo. According to Enoch Smith

The trace...crossed Hinkstons fork and the place where the said trace crossed Hinkstons was a very larg Buffaloe rode or trace and much trampled so that the banks of the creek was trod to pieces.<sup>51</sup>

**Harrod's Lick**—From several early Bourbon County lawsuits, historian Neal Hammon concluded that Harrod's Lick was located about one-quarter mile north of where Harrods Creek crosses present-day Harrods Creek Road.<sup>52</sup> The pioneer Oswald Townsend declared in a deposition that “Harrods lick and the said flat lick and the neighbourhood around said licks was on our maine hunting ground.”<sup>53</sup> And according to James Berry

In the year of 1780 and 1781 deponent continued to frequent Harrods lick and them parts of Licking waters as it was [the place] this deponent moust usually Used for hunting for Buffaloe and he considered them to be lick[s] of grate noteriety.<sup>54</sup>

While conducting his interviews in Bourbon County, Reverend Shane made several notes pertaining to the lick and creek that he listed under the heading “Memoranda.”

Harrod's Creek—running through Douglass Lewis' farm. The Lick that you pass going from Mr. West's to Lewis' house, to the left, called Harrod's Lick, is the point by which most of the entries in that part of the country were established. A sulphur Lick.<sup>55</sup>

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was a small-scale drawing I made of a very large survey that I found in the Bourbon Courthouse, many, many, years ago. I suspect it may now be in archives. I made a full-size tracing, and I think I still have it around here some place, but it is about 4 by 6 feet. You will not find any digital image of the original; it is too large for that sort of thing.

“I found my old tracing paper drawings of that Bourbon County survey, which are at a scale of one inch equals 2000 feet. I made them this way so that they could be placed on top of the USGS survey maps of the same scale. After looking at these drawings, I remembered how I did this. First, I used my old Nikon to photograph the original, then had the film developed, then I went to our darkroom and put the film in the enlarger. I turned on the enlarger, and kept cranking it up and up, all the time making the enlargement bigger, until it reached the proper size. Then instead of using printing paper, I used a roll of tracing paper, and traced off the roads and creeks, etc. by hand. The tracing paper was not wide enough to show the entire survey, so several different sheets were used. Apparently, I have all the sheets. This was done when I was in business and had the advantage of having a well-equipped dark room at my disposal.”

<sup>51</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 216.

<sup>52</sup> Neal O. Hammon, “Pioneer Routes in Central Kentucky,” *Filson Club History Quarterly* (2000) 74:133.

<sup>53</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 220.

<sup>54</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 223.

<sup>55</sup> Draper MSS 11CC 17.



**Harrod's Creek at Harrods Creek Road, just south of the old lick** (Photo by the author)

**Flat Lick**—William Clinkenbeard gave the location of Flat Lick as being “immediately on the said Trace about between a half a mile and one mile from where the said salt trace crosses Hinkstons.” He added that the lick “was much frequented by deer and buffalo and was a very noted place in 1780 and until 1784.”<sup>56</sup> Oswald Townsend recalled

In the year of 1786 deponent in company with about 100 men met at McGees station and went from there to flat lick and encamped at the lick all night. The said one hundred men was mostly from Madison County and was on our march to join Colonel Benjamin Logan on his campaign against the Shawnee indians and as we returned home from the campaign, a great number of the same company encamped at flat lick one night. The lick appeared to be well known both going and returning by the company by the name of flat lick.<sup>57</sup>

Many other pioneers talked about the good hunting around Harrod's Lick and Flat Lick. David Williams's statement is typical.

Harrods lick and the said flat lick was both places of grate notoriety then any other licks that this deponent knew of on the south waters of Licking, except the upper and lower blue licks, as the Hunters and Locators of Land

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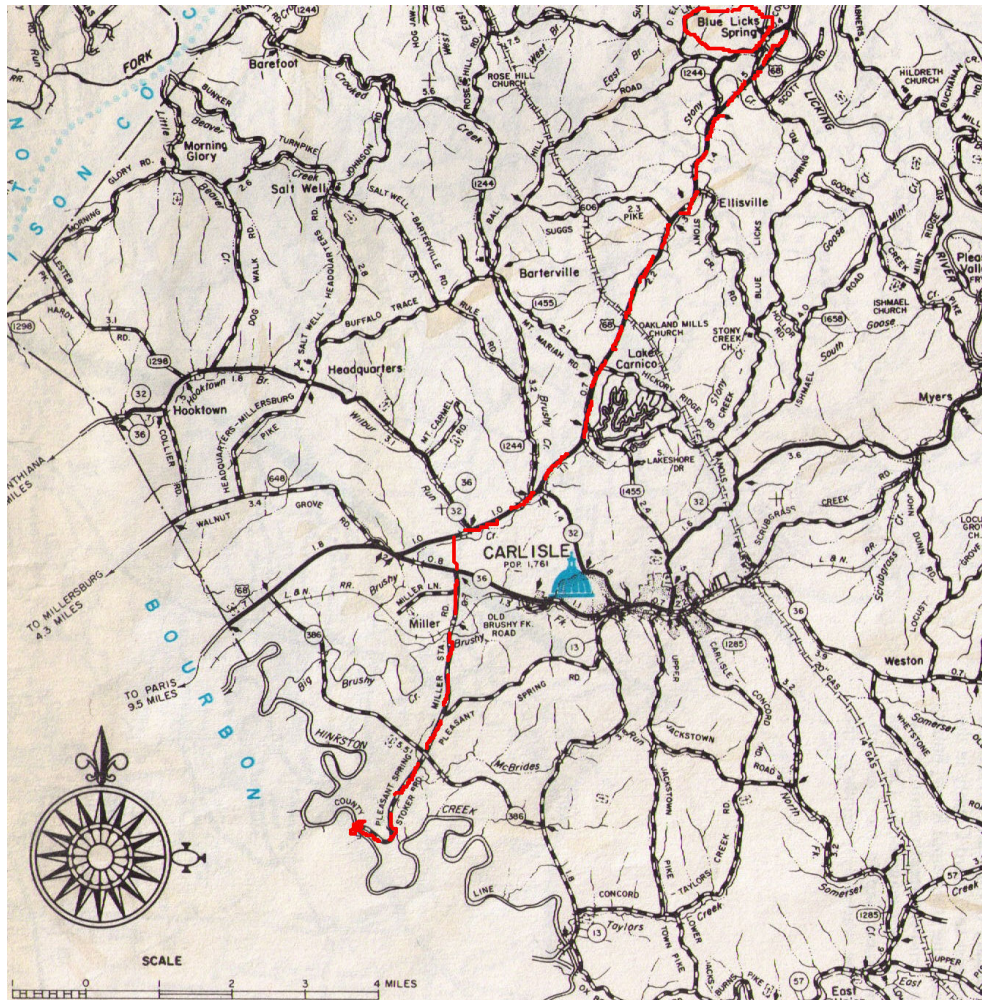
<sup>56</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 230.

<sup>57</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 221.

and the Surveyors frequented said licks in search of Buffalo and deer, as both of those licks was much used by both Buffalo and deer [and] well known to the people of all the above mentioned five stations [Boonesborough, Holder's, McGee's, Strode's and Boone's].<sup>58</sup>

### Hinkston Creek to the Lower Blue Licks

Turning again to the research of Neal Hammon, we find evidence that the trace crossed Hinkston Creek at the ford and then in Nicholas County followed near the route of today's Pleasant Spring-Stoker Road and Miller Station Road, crossing Brushy Creek (called "Brushy fork" in a deposition by Robert McMillan<sup>59</sup>), to an intersection with the Big Buffalo Road (modern US 68) about three miles from Carlisle. The trace struck the Big Buffalo Road at Ready Money Jack's, then followed modern day US 68 seven or eight miles to the Lower Blue Licks (see the figure below).



Hinkston Creek to Lower Blue Licks

<sup>58</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 210.

<sup>59</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 227.



**Miller Station Road today** (Photo by the author)

**Ready Money Jack**—A number of pioneers reported that the Salt Spring Trace came into the Big Buffalo Road at a place they called Ready Money Jack’s. Michael Cassidy, for example, recalled “where the road intersected a large Buffaloe rode about seven or eight miles before it came to lower Salt lick, at a place where a man called ready money Jack since lived.”<sup>60</sup> The pioneer John Hedge talked about this interesting character in his interview with Rev. John Shane.

One Ready-Money Jack had some cabins 5 or 6 miles this side of the Blue Licks, where one Holyday since kept a tavern, within a few hundred yards. Ready Money Jack was from Monongahela country. Was less afraid of indians. The people in that country were more accustomed to them. He kept a kind of tavern there and gave himself that name. People were afraid to encamp out of the settlements after leaving Mayslick.<sup>61</sup>

Holladay’s Inn, or tavern, is shown on an 1827 survey of the road from Lexington to Maysville (see the figure below). Comparison to modern maps places William Holladay’s Inn very near where present-day KY 32/36 comes into US 68 from the north. Hedge met Ready Money Jack, whom he referred to as “a negro,” when he was coming out to Kentucky in 1789.

Wind was a great deal against us, and we had turkey pot pie till I got so tired I never wanted to eat anymore as long as I lived. At this Ready Money Jack’s, we got some hot corn cake and milk, which ate admirable.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Henry’s heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 216.

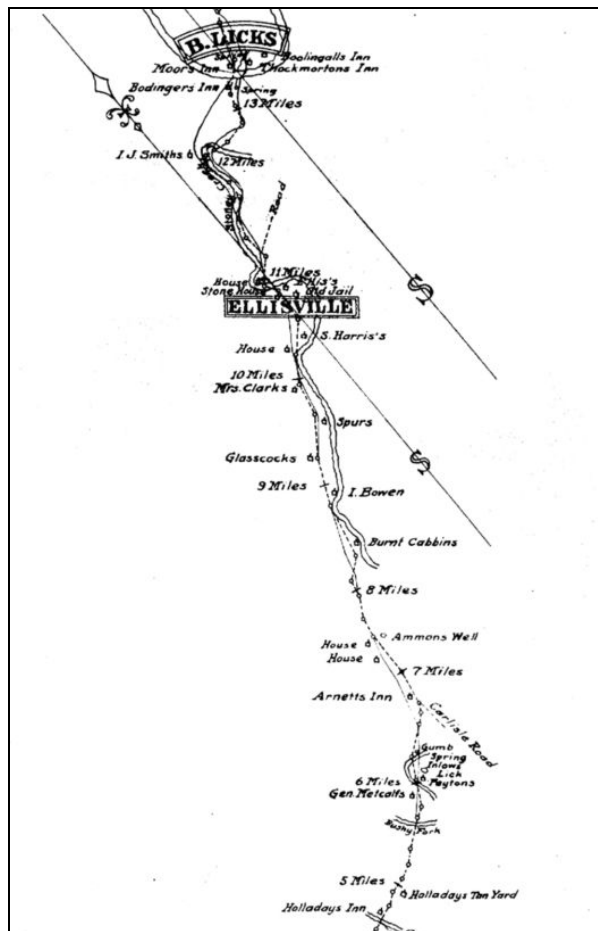
<sup>61</sup> Draper MSS 11CC 19.

<sup>62</sup> Draper MSS 11CC 22.

Another Bourbon County pioneer, Joseph Luckey, was also familiar with this colorful character.

Ready Money Jack was a black man, set free by Colonel Lyle, a single man. Died at his place. Widow Barker lives there now. Must have the ready money.<sup>63</sup>

The last sentence suggests that the rather obvious nickname came from Jack's insistence on cash payment, no credit. The rest of the statement is a little confusing. I interpret it to mean that Jack was a single man who died at Colonel Lyle's place. "Lyne" was inserted as a margin note on Shane's manuscript, perhaps added by Draper. This may be a correction, as no Colonel Lyle can be found, but there was a Col. Edmund Lyne in Bourbon County (1791) who had patent on Flat Lick Creek, very near Ready Money Jack's place.<sup>64</sup>



Portion of an 1827 survey for the Lexington-Maysville Road<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Draper MSS 11CC 17.

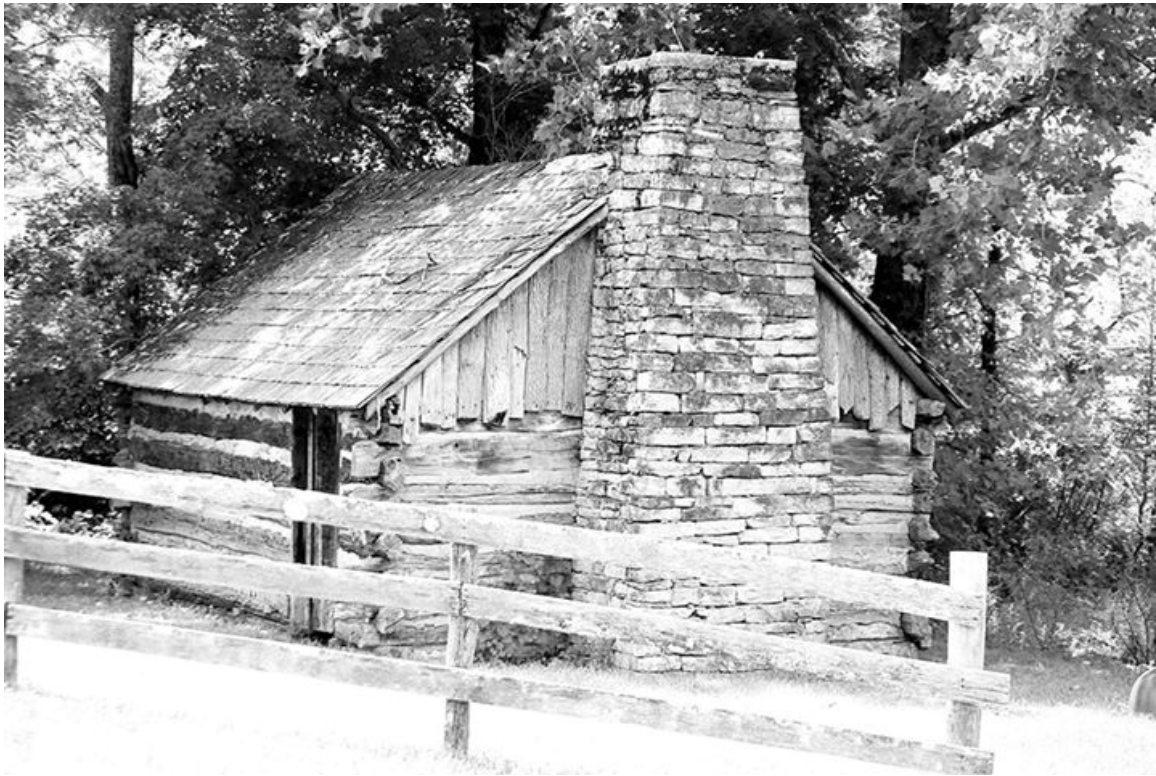
<sup>64</sup> 1791 Bourbon County tax list; Virginia survey #790. Curiously, in his novel *Bracebridge Hall* (London, 1851), Washington Irving created a character John Tibbets, who was nicknamed "Ready-Money Jack" Tibbets. The quirky Tibbets was an English farmer who wore coins as buttons on his sleeves and as ornaments on his watch chain.

<sup>65</sup> "Platt and Survey of the Road from Lexington to Maysville," by James Darnaby and William Ellis Jr., 1827, copy provided by Nancy O'Malley, University of Kentucky.

**Daniel Boone's Cabin**—When Daniel Boone left Point Pleasant and returned to Kentucky in 1795, he lived for a time on Brushy Creek, where his son held a patent for 1,000 acres. Boone's son Nathan described the move:

In the spring or summer of 1795, I came down the Ohio with my father and mother. We landed at Limestone and proceeded to Bourbon County, where we settled on a tract of unimproved land owned by my brother Daniel M. Boone. The little farm was on the waters of the Brushy Fork of Hinkston, about six miles east of Millersburg. We lived on land in the fork between Brushy Fork and Hinkston Creek in what is now Nicholas County.<sup>66</sup>

Their cabin stood a little east of Ready Money Jack's place on the Big Buffalo Road. The cabin reputed to be Boone's last residence in Kentucky now stands on a hillside on the south side of US 68. Several years ago the cabin was relocated out of the flood plain and restored.<sup>67</sup> Boone lived on Brushy Creek from 1795 until the fall of 1798, when he moved briefly to his son Nathan's place on Little Sandy River before leaving the state for Missouri.<sup>68</sup>



**Restored Cabin on Brushy Creek, reputed to be Daniel Boone's last home in Kentucky**  
(From the *Carlisle Mercury* Facebook page)

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<sup>66</sup> Neal O. Hammon, *My Father, Daniel Boone: Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone* (Lexington, KY, 1999), p. 101.

<sup>67</sup> Raitz and O'Malley, *Kentucky's Frontier Highway*, p. 218.

<sup>68</sup> Hammon, *My Father, Daniel Boone*, p. 104.

## **Decline of the Salt Spring Trace**

The Salt Spring Trace was used extensively by the early hunters at Fort Boonesborough and was traveled occasionally on salt making ventures to the Blue Licks. In 1779, John Strode and David McGee erected stations in what is now Clark County; more would follow. That same year, Virginia's General Assembly granted Richard Callaway rights to establish a ferry across the Kentucky River at Boonesborough. As the population grew and the area around the fort became more settled, the need for wagon roads grew and the hunters' traces fell into disuse. The once plentiful bison, deer, turkey, elk and bear that fed the pioneers soon disappeared, and settlers were forced to rely on agriculture for subsistence. Farmers needed the means to attend court, go to mills and transport goods to market. Kentucky's major market beginning in the late 1780s was New Orleans. Goods were shipped there by flatboats departing from numerous boatyards and inspection warehouses along the Kentucky River. Wagon roads were especially important for accessing these ports.

Unlike the Big Buffalo Road (Lexington to Maysville), the Salt Spring Trace could not be easily converted to a useful wagon road, especially the lower portion through Clark County. The Boonesborough ferry, Kentucky's first, provided a more convenient river crossing than Blackfish Ford, and a wagon road was established from the ferry to Strode's Station before Winchester was established. The road, mentioned in a survey made for Jacob Starnes in 1792,<sup>69</sup> began at the ferry landing on the north side of the river and struck Lower Howard's Creek near the Old Stone Church.

The pioneer depositions, previously cited herein, describe the Salt Spring Trace as a vital artery for travel from the time Boonesborough was established in 1775 through the end of the decade. There are few references to the use of the trace in the 1780s and after 1790 the trace was not mentioned, except for the segment that was converted to Strode's Road.

## **Strode's Road**

Strode's Station was built in the late fall of 1779. The hunters at Strode's—as well as Boone's and McGee's stations, also established that year—used the Salt Spring Trace in traveling to the various licks. New paths were marked to connect these stations to the trace. Robert McMillan, who had marked the Salt Spring Trace in the winter of 1775-76, mentioned these connections in a deposition: “Soon after Strouds Station, Mcgees Station and Boons Station was erected there was a trace marked that took out of the trace that I and my brother marked.” McMillan said that the new traces “come into the aforesaid trace that I and my brother marked near the round lick.” As further clarification, he added that

in the year of 1782 and 1783, as the mane leading trace from Boonsborough, Mcgees Station, Holders Station, Boons Station and Strouds Station all became one main leading trace before it came to the said flat lick and crossed Hinkstons fork and intersected the big buffalo road near eight miles on this side of lower blue licks.<sup>70</sup>

The station proprietor, John Strode, resided in Frederick County, Virginia, until the end

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<sup>69</sup> Old Kentucky Survey #447.

<sup>70</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, pp. 227-228.

of the Revolutionary War. Shortly after he moved to Kentucky, in about 1782 or 1783, he had a wagon road cut to access the road from Lexington to Maysville, the latter of which followed near the Big Buffalo Road. John Hedge referred to Strode's Road in his Shane interview.

Constant's Station was opened 2 or 3 miles this side of Stroud's [Station] on a road that had been opened to Maysville from Boonsborough and intercepting that one from Lexington about this Ready Money Jack's. This road was cut for Stroud to move up on, and for others to get salt, etc.

The trace that was a buffaloe trace from Strode's Trace to Harrod's Lick, on Stoner, was called the Salt Spring Trace. And the trace made by Stroud avoided crossing Stoner [should be Strodes Creek] so often. The buffaloe took a strait course.

When I first came here, the buffaloe bones covered all the grounds. Said that men used to come down from Stroud's and the interior, where the buffaloe were poor, and kill them for sport, and leave them lie. The trace that passed on to the upper and lower Blue Licks led through here, and they would kill them on it. It went from Strode's Station. There was very little cane through here. Mostly covered with wild-rye and pea-vines.<sup>71</sup>

Benedict Couchman testified about Strode's Road.

Question: Did the crossing place where the trace that led from Boonsborough to the lower Salt lick crosseth hinkstons fork continue to be a crossing place of great noteriety after 1783?

Answer: It did for many years afterwards, for there was a big Road opened from Strodes Station by the aforesaid flat lick and cross hinkstons fork at the same old crossing place, and continued with the old trace to the lower Blue lick.

Question: Was not the trace that led from Boonsborough to the lower Salt Springs frequently; called the Boonsborough trace:

Answer: It was called the Boonsborough trace, Strodes trace and Salt Spring trace, but not Strodes untill after the road was cut out.<sup>72</sup>

Couchman's statement was substantiated by Isaac Clinkenbeard, who testified, "I do not remember that it was called Strodes trace before it was cut out for wagons."<sup>73</sup>

John Bean, who lived on the road from Winchester to Paris, mentioned Strode's Road in his interview with Reverend Shane: "The trace from Stroud's station to Lower Blue Lick [went] part of the way on the Cunningham road." In 1828, Cunningham Road ran from Strode's Station to Hume's Mill, which was on Strodes Creek near the Clark-Bourbon line.<sup>74</sup> The surviving segment of this road, now called Van Meter Road, runs from near the former location of Strode's Station (US 60 at Caudill Drive) to Renick.

Strode's Road was shown on a plat prepared in the land case *Henry's heirs v.*

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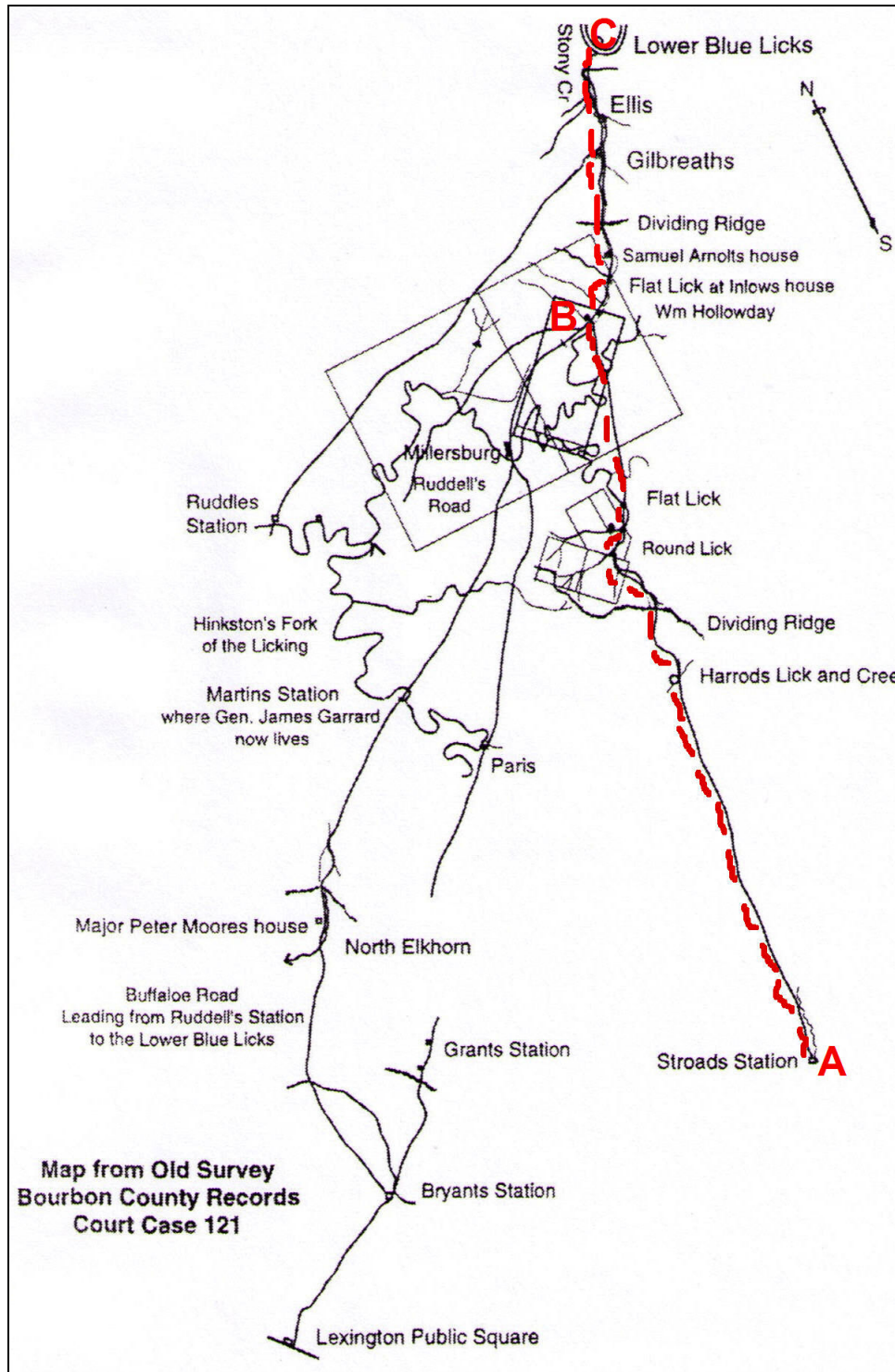
<sup>71</sup> Draper MSS 11CC 20.

<sup>72</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 241.

<sup>73</sup> *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis*, p. 247.

<sup>74</sup> Draper MSS 11CC 105; Clark County Order Book 9:177, 198.

Sturgis et al. (see Strode's Road below).



**Strode's Road**

The road ran from Strode's Station (A) to the Big Buffalo Road (B) to Lower Blue Licks (C)  
 (From a map made by Neal Hammon from the land case *Henry's heirs v. Sturgis et al.*<sup>75</sup>)

<sup>75</sup> Neal O. Hammon, "Pioneer Routes in Central Kentucky," *Filson Club History Quarterly* (2000) 74:133.

## Part II

### Other Roads in the Preserve

In addition to the Salt Spring Trace, there are several other historic roads located in the Preserve, some dating back to the late 1700s. A few of these are currently in use; others await future restoration.

#### **Holder's Road**

John Holder's plantation at the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek was the terminus of a number of roads. This was partly a matter of geography and partly a result of Holder's business establishments being located there. He was the proprietor of a ferry, tavern, boatyard, inspection warehouse and mill. His seat on the county court put Holder in a position to influence road-building decisions affecting his enterprises.

Roads could be built at county expense for the convenience of traveling to the county courthouse or to any public warehouse, river landing, ferry, mill, iron- or lead-works. The process began with the county court appointing three or more viewers to find the most convenient route for the road. Roads established on private lands required the owner's permission or the owner had to be paid damages. In practice, owners had much influence over the routing of roads. Once the court established the road, surveyors were appointed to open and maintain the roads. The surveyor, also called the overseer, was responsible for calling out the hands and superintending the work. Males over age 15 were subject to call for this heavy work, which typically involved clearing trees and brush from a path 15 to 30 feet wide, leveling the roadbed by cutting down high places and filling in low spots, and installing bridges over small streams. In the mid 1800s, the work got even harder when roads were macadamized by spreading rock and pounding it into a smooth surface.<sup>76</sup>

The best-known and longest-used route to Holder's boatyard and warehouse was known as Holder's Road. This road eventually became part of the main highway from Paris to Richmond. In Clark County, the road began at the Bourbon line and terminated at Holder's landing, ferry, warehouse and boatyard. It was also called the Bourbon Road.

The Madison County section of the road predates the formation of Clark County. In 1790, they opened a road that connected "Madison courthouse" and Boonesborough with Holder's ferry and boatyard. The Madison road terminated nearly opposite the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek.<sup>77</sup>

In August 1793, Clark County court ordered Hubbard Taylor, John McGuire, Richard Hickman and Neil McCann to view a new road "from John Holder's Boat yard towards Bourbon Court house as far as the County line." The road was established by the court at two sessions. In January 1794, the court opened the section from the county line to near the present day intersection of Becknerville Road and McClure Road. The section running from that intersection to Holder's Boatyard was opened in January 1795.<sup>78</sup> When put together, the two sections were long referred to as Holder's Road.

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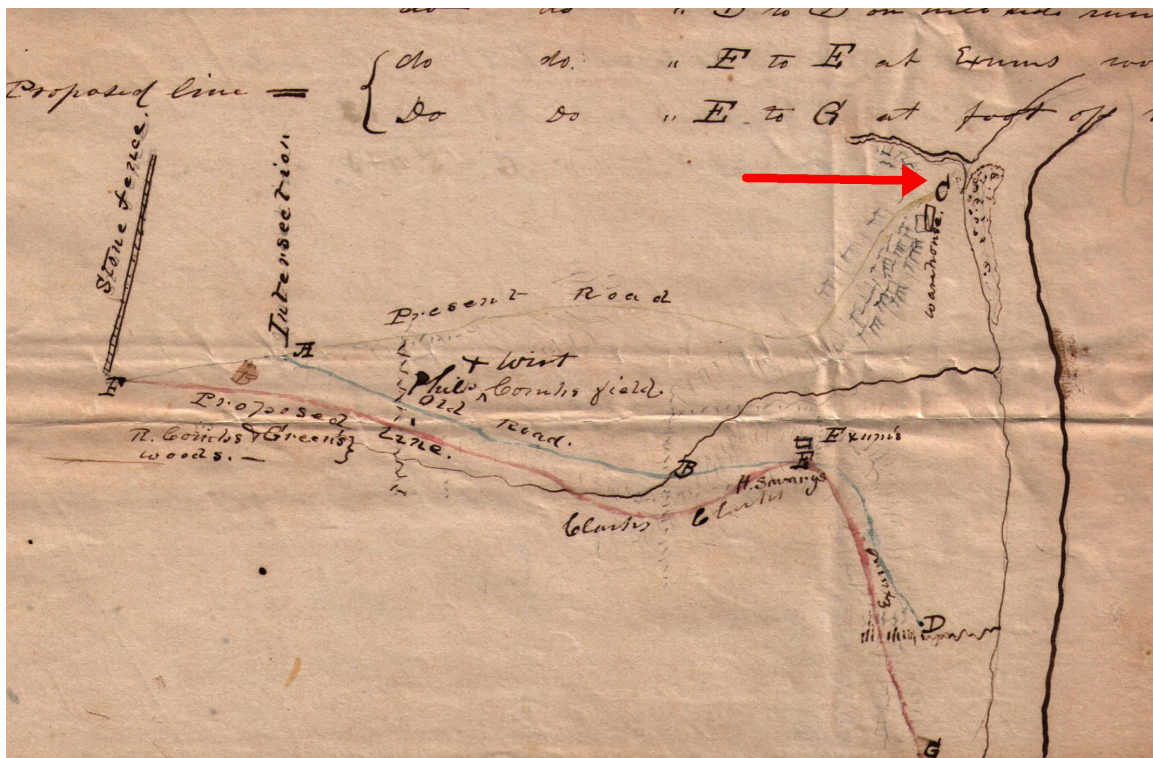
<sup>76</sup> William Littell, *Statute Law of Kentucky*, 1:371-377.

<sup>77</sup> Jackie Couture, *Madison County, Kentucky, Court Order Book A, 1787-1791* (Bowie, MD, 1996), pp. 84, 122.

<sup>78</sup> Clark County Order Book 1:49, 76-77, 159-160.

Holder's ferry and warehouse were at the southern terminus of the road in Clark County. Holder's son-in-law, Samuel R. Combs, took over these operations after Holder died in 1799. The section of Holder's Road leading from the bluff down to the river must have been a challenging hill for wagons to negotiate. In 1825, the county court appointed four men to see if a better route could be located to get down the hill to "Combs new warehouse." Their report stated that they examined the present road and "believe it to be the nearest and best way down the cliff to said new warehouse." The road needed some work done in 1851. At their November session, the court appropriated \$60 for "the Improvement of the River Hill at Combs Ferry." The money was spent "to Blow out and remove Such Rock as could Not be removed by the ordinary Hands that Work Roads."<sup>79</sup>

A map at the Clark County courthouse submitted with an 1844 road report shows the warehouse was standing near the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek. There is some hatching along the road to the warehouse to indicate the Kentucky River and Lower Howard's Creek cliffs. Judging from this drawing the warehouse was located at the base of the cliff down in the floodplain. This is confirmed by an elevation map (not shown) that shows the warehouse situated near river level. The "present road," shown on the map as F to A to C, was referred to in the road report as the "old dirt road" that ran down the hill to the warehouse and terminated at the ferry landing.<sup>80</sup>



**Map attached to a Clark County road report<sup>81</sup>**

"Present Road" is the original Holder's Road running between the letters C, A and F. The red arrow points to the "warehouse." North is to the left side of the picture.

<sup>79</sup> Clark County Court loose papers, 1825, 1852; Clark County Order Book 8:94, 118, 127.

<sup>80</sup> *Kentucky Gazette*, January 16, 1810; map and road order, Clark County Court loose papers, 1844.

<sup>81</sup> Clark County Court loose papers, 1844.

The “Present Road” on the map is the remnant road still visible in the Preserve. This road ran parallel to the stone fence along the parking area and is traceable for some distance down the hill. This was the early route of Holder’s Road, which began at Holder’s Landing and ran to the Bourbon County line. It was also called the Bourbon Road, a name used interchangeably with Holder’s Road.



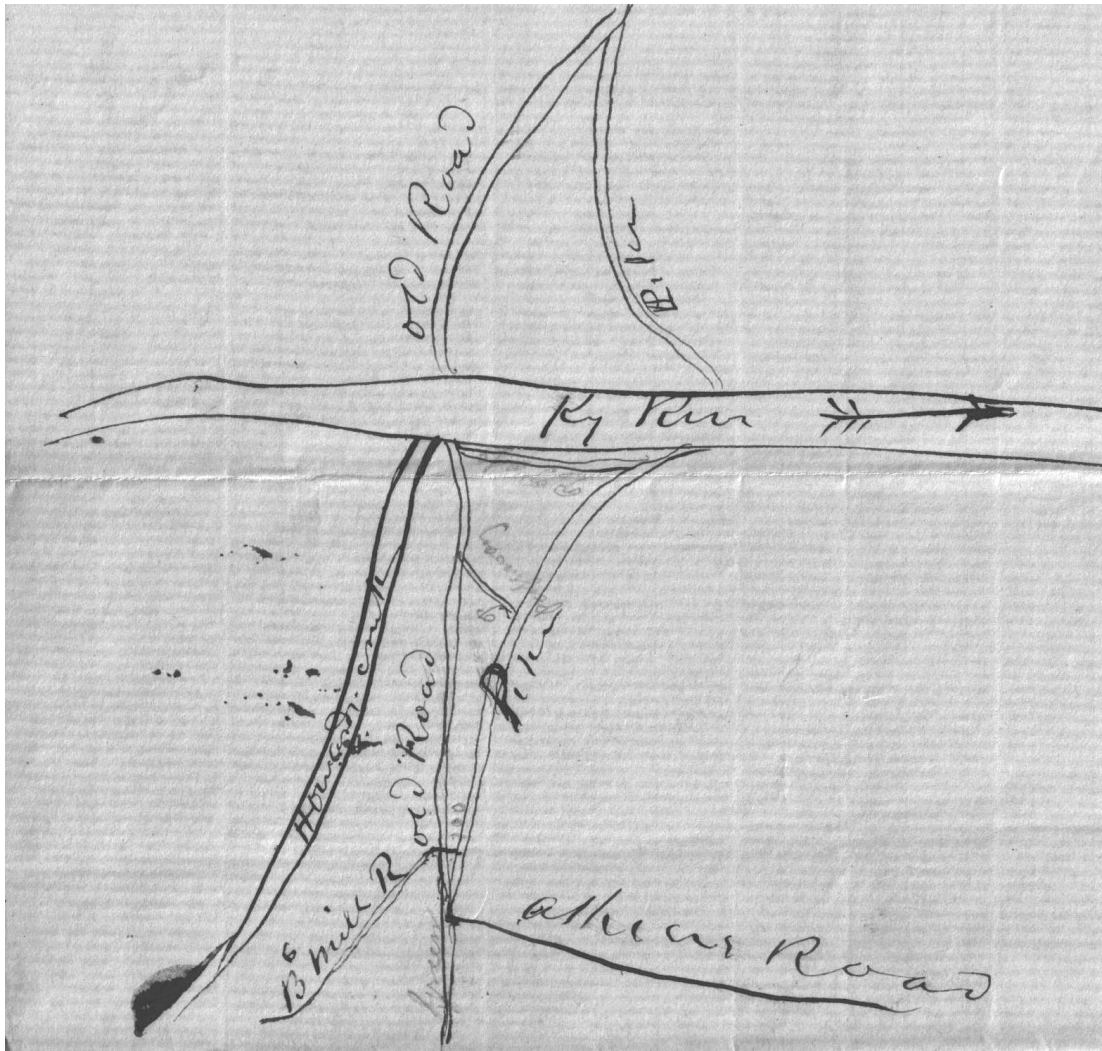
**Site of Holder’s Road in the Preserve (Photo by the author)**

Shows a portion of the road crossing the Preserve near the present parking lot.

In 1858, when James T. Woodward and Daniel Bently moved Combs Ferry downstream, they opened a new road to the ferry. The ferry landing was at the west end of present day Amster Grove Road. The report to the court stated that “Mr. Woodward does not intend to deprive the public of the ford on the old Road, on the Kentucky River at the mouth of Howard’s Creek.” The old dirt road was left in place and a cutoff, labeled “passway” on the map submitted to the court, was installed between the “Pike” and the “old road” (see Changes to Holder’s Road below). There was a gate at either end of the cutoff, one on Woodward’s land on the Pike and one near Benjamin Hieronymous’ house on the old road. (Hieronymous died in 1859 and was buried in the graveyard near the house.) From the Hieronymous place, Woodward “let the old Road be open down the Hill to the ford.” A second passway may be seen running beside the river. The map also shows that the turnpike continued on the Madison County side of the river, and the old road there was replaced by the turnpike.

In spite of Woodward’s assurance that the old road would be kept open, it was closed two years later. This was the era when turnpike companies were replacing many of the poorly maintained county roads with more convenient modern roads and charging a toll for using them. Holder’s Road was now operated by the Kentucky River Turnpike Company, and the terminus of the road had been rerouted to the new ferry landing. The company applied to the county to close the old road and posted notices at the courthouse

and other places in the neighborhood. The court appointed several men from the area to determine the inconvenience to the public, if any, of closing the old road. At January court in 1860, Edmund T. Taylor, James P. Lydanne and Willis Martin reported there would be no adverse effect to the public, and the court permitted closing the old road from the tollhouse (at the present intersection of Combs Ferry Road and Athens-Boonesboro Road) down the hill to the river at the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek. The old road is not shown on historic maps of Clark County published in 1861 and 1877. Out of habit no doubt, the court continued to refer to the Kentucky River Turnpike as Holder's Road for many years.<sup>82</sup> Although stretches of the old highway have been relocated over the years, you can still drive the general route of Holder's Road in Clark County (see Holder's Road Today).

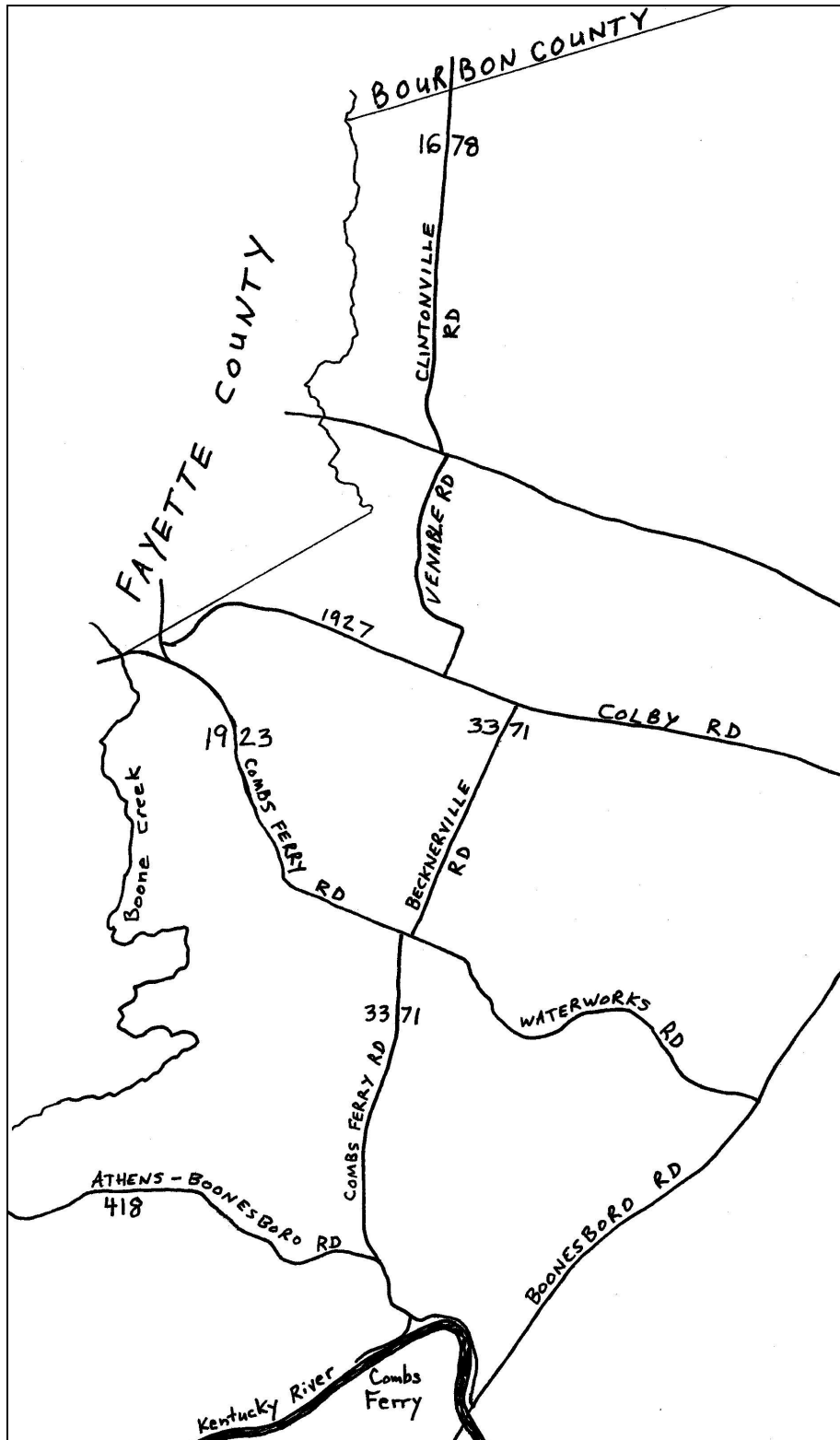


### Changes to Holder's Road, 1858<sup>83</sup>

North is to the bottom of the page, thus the map is upside down to our conventional view. Marked roads include the New Road ("Pike") to the Woodward-Bently Ferry; "old Road" to the Holder-Combs Ferry and ford; Bush's Mill Road; and Athens Road.

<sup>82</sup> Clark County Order Book 14:46, 63.

<sup>83</sup> Clark County Court loose papers, 1858.



**Holder's Road Today**

Beginning at Combs Ferry on the Kentucky River (bottom of the map), the road proceeds north on Athens-Boonesboro Road (Route 418), north on Combs Ferry Road (Route 3371), north on Becknerville (Route 3371), west on Colby Road (Route 1927), north on Venable Road, and north on Clintonville Road (Route 1678) to the Bourbon County line.

## Winchester to Holder's Boatyard

One of the first roads called for by the newly formed Clark County court in 1793 was to run from the courthouse to Holder's Boatyard. In July of that year, John Holder, William McMillan, John Frame and James Dunlap were appointed to view

the nearest and best way for a road from Colonel Holder's Boatyard to the place appointed for erecting the publick buildings for this County.<sup>84</sup>

It would have been logical for them to use the existing trail that descended Lower Howard's Creek. Getting to the creek by the most direct route from Winchester, one would have traveled along what is now Boone Avenue and Old Boonesboro Road, striking the creek near the present reservoir. This route is confirmed by a court order calling for the road to start at the south end of Main Street. At that time, Main Street ended near Fairfax (now Lexington Avenue). From there the road was to run southwest to James McMillan's plantation, which was near the present reservoir on Lower Howard's Creek. From there, the road may have run along the creek following the old buffalo road-Indian trail-Salt Spring Trace.<sup>85</sup>

Subsequent road requests indicate that the county did not succeed in opening a functional wagon road all the way to the mouth of the creek in 1793. The road from Winchester joined the road from Strode's Station at James McMillan's plantation, then followed the meanders of Lower Howard's Creek downstream as far as the Martin-Holder Mill. The road required many creek crossings. At its lower end, the creek becomes deeply entrenched and, near the mouth, a high cliff rises on the west side. A road all the way to the mouth of the creek would of necessity end on the east side of the creek. From that point, there was no way for wagons to cross the creek to Holder's ferry, warehouse or boatyard. For this reason, the lower end of the creek valley did not have a serviceable wagon road for many years (i.e., the 1850s). Thus, Holder's enterprises at the river had to be accessed from Clark County by way of Holder's Road or from Madison County by way of Holder's Ferry.

In 1799, Robert Clark Jr. and Matthew Patton acquired Holder's Mill. They applied that year to the county court to open a road from the mill to the Kentucky River.<sup>86</sup> The court appointed viewers to assess two different routes to the river:

Ordered that John Martin Sr., Orson Martin, Richard Hickman, Edmund Hockaday and William Martin, being first sworn, review the nearest and best way for a road from Patton's mill on Howards Creek to Combs boat yard [and] viewing also a way for the same down the said Creek.<sup>87</sup>

While one route was to follow the creek all the way to the river, the other was go overland to the boatyard, presumably leaving the creek valley and running up the hill to Holder's Road. It was two years (1801) before the viewers returned their report to the court. They were "of opinion that a road can be made down the Creek with Less Labour and to the Greatest advantage to the Publick."<sup>88</sup> It was not to the greatest advantage of

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<sup>84</sup> Clark County Order Book 1:36-37.

<sup>85</sup> Clark County Order Book 1:59, 115.

<sup>86</sup> Clark County Order Book 2:325.

<sup>87</sup> Clark County Order Book 2:353.

<sup>88</sup> Clark County Order Book 2:522.

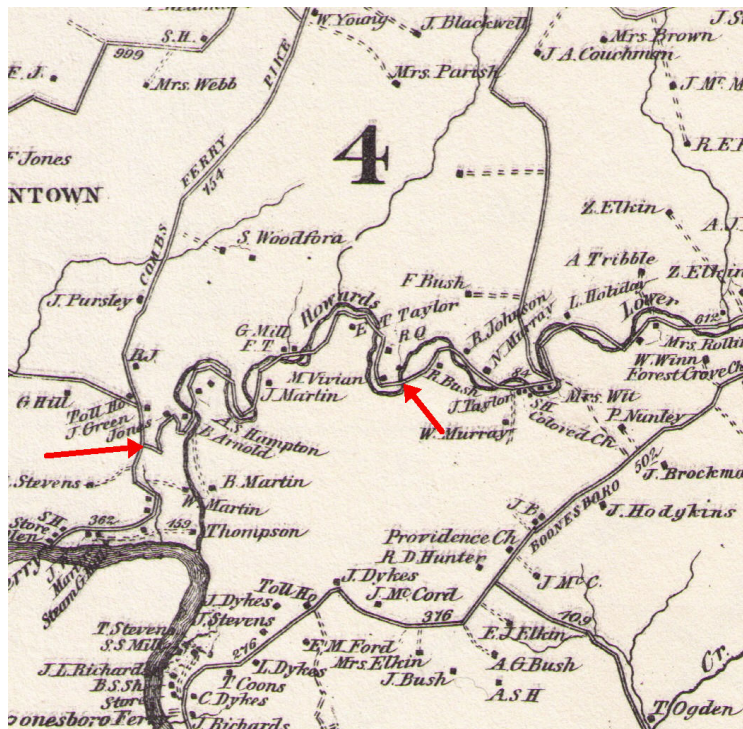
Matthew Patton or Samuel R. Combs, however, so the court did not establish the road at that time.

## Bush Mill Road

In 1806, Jonathan Bush acquired Holder's Mill.<sup>89</sup> From his efforts to get a road to the warehouse on the river, we surmise that Bush planned to enlarge the mill and change its operation from grinding corn for the neighborhood to manufacturing wheat flour for export. Farmers could bring sacks of corn to the mill on horseback for grinding, so a wagon road was not essential to a business on the scale of the original mill. If one is going to export flour, however, the whole scope of the business is expanded. Instead of sacks of meal, the mill would turn out barrels of flour. Wagons would be required to haul barrels of flour to the inspection warehouse on the river. Thus, in 1807 Jonathan Bush and Samuel R. Combs proposed to build a road from Bush's Mill to Combs' Warehouse. This time they specified the route and the court appointed viewers to mark out

a road from Martins ford on Howards creek down the creek to Jonathan Bush's mill and from there to Intersect the Bourbon road leading to Holders warehouse.<sup>90</sup>

Martin's ford was on Orson Martin's land, 25 acres where he had a mill in what was in early times called "Factory Bottom." Martin's tract was upstream from the mouth of West Fork, on the north side of the creek. The exact location of the ford was determined by plotting a deed that refers to "the old Martin ford."<sup>91</sup>



**Bush Mill Road from Martin's ford (right arrow) to Holder's Road (left arrow)**  
1877 Beers and Lanagan Map of Clark County

<sup>89</sup> Clark County Deed Book 7:282, 283.

<sup>90</sup> Clark County Order Book 4:194.

<sup>91</sup> Clark County Deed Book 2:113, 22:12.



**Jonathan Bush Mill ruins in the early 1900s**

At the time the road was proposed, Orson Martin had a flour mill in Factory Bottom and William Taylor had a flour mill at the mouth of West Fork, so the new road to the warehouse would have benefited them as well as Bush and Combs.<sup>92</sup>

In May of 1809, the county court ordered the road established along the specified route:

from Martins ford on Howards Creek down said Creek a path way already opened to Jonathan Bushes mill, from thence a path way crossing Howards Creek a little below the mill and near the foot of a hill passing through the Land of said Bush, from thence up the north side of said Hill by several windings to the top, and from thence the nearest way to Intersect the Bourbon Road near the River Hill at a Bridge on said road.<sup>93</sup>

The court assigned Jonathan Bush overseer of the road; Isaac Hockaday and Whitson George were to allot hands to do the work.<sup>94</sup> With the opening of this section, one could finally take a wagon from Winchester to Lower Howard's Creek, down the creek to Bush's Mill, up the hill to Holder's Road, then down the "River Hill" by way of Holder's Road to Combs' warehouse, boatyard and ferry.

The segment running from Bush's Mill "up the north side of said Hill by several windings to the top" was long known as the "Bush Mill Road." This road is still in use today in the Preserve, where it serves as the entrance road to the creek valley. It begins at

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<sup>92</sup> Clark County Deed Book 4:285; *Kentucky Gazette*, July 12, 1803; Clark County Order Book 4:327.

<sup>93</sup> Clark County Order Book 4:321.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

the Preserve parking lot at the top of the hill and descends the hill “by several windings” to the creek. While hiking along this steep road, one can imagine what the trip would be like in a wagon. Going up must have been hard work for the team pulling a loaded wagon; coming down must have been a harrowing ride for the driver.

### **Lower Howard’s Creek Road**

Holder’s mill on Lower Howard’s Creek and his business enterprises on the Kentucky River formed the nucleus for one of Kentucky’s earliest industrial areas. The steeply falling stream bed combined with Holder’s warehouse and boatyard attracted many water powered industries to the valley. Early wagon roads were built along the creek and connected to the warehouse and boatyard.

According to historian Robert S. Cotterill, this area eventually became one of the largest factory centers west of the Allegheny Mountains.

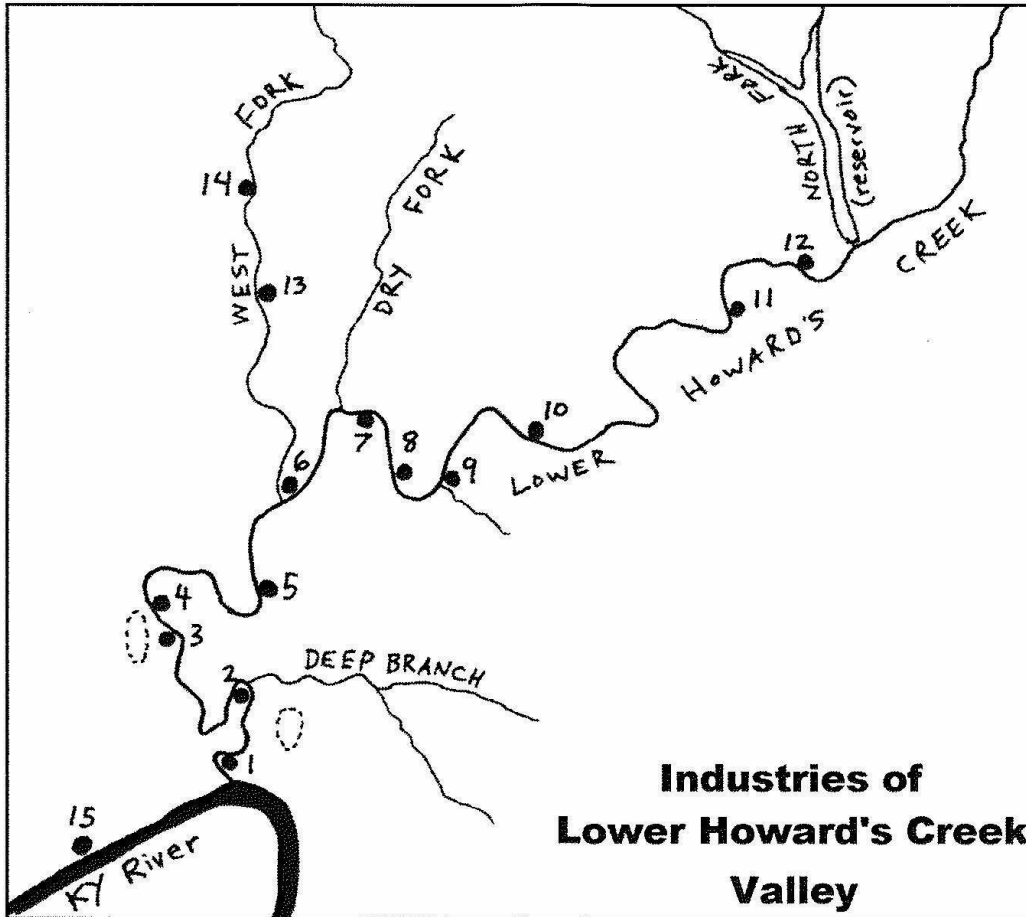
The main road to Boonesborough was down Lower Howard’s Creek. The industrial center of Winchester in 1812-14 was not in Winchester at all, but down along the aforementioned creek. Here were located factories, the fulling houses, the tanneries and the grain mills. This was one of the largest factory centers west of the Alleghenies in 1812 and had a wide reputation. The road from the now reservoir to the Kentucky river was lined with houses every hundred yards and the Howard’s Creek settlements promised great developments. The ruins of some of these places are still to be seen.<sup>95</sup>

There is ample evidence to back up Cotterill’s claim. Numerous factories were built in the valley and thrived until about the Civil War. They declined thereafter and died out completely around the turn of the century. The factories that have been identified are shown on the map below. These include 15 mills, 4 distilleries, 2 quarries, a woolen factory, stone shop and blacksmith shop on Lower Howard’s Creek and its tributary, West Fork. On John Holder’s land along the Kentucky River, there was a sawmill, gristmill and blacksmith shop. There were 7 mills, 3 distilleries and a blacksmith shop in the creek valley before 1800. And to support Cotterill’s statement above, we can identify 11 mills, 4 distilleries and a blacksmith shop on Lower Howard’s Creek before 1812. Many ruins still mark the location of these mills and factories. A continuing effort is being made to preserve them.

The road down Lower Howard’s Creek was a critical transportation link for the many industries located in the valley during the 19th century. The road began near the present reservoir, where the road from Winchester (now called Old Boonesboro Road) struck the creek. The road then descended Lower Howard’s Creek to just past the Jonathan Bush Mill and from there followed the Bush Mill Road out of the valley. This segment is shown on historic Clark County maps of 1861, 1877 and 1926. The road was used throughout the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century. The road, though county maintained, was never paved. We have several photos showing portions of the road in 1938. Although the section of the road that followed the creek fell out of use when the valley was depopulated in the mid 1900s, it is still easily traceable on the ground today. Portions of the road located in the Preserve have been restored.

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<sup>95</sup> Robert S. Cotterill, Clark County Chronicles, *Winchester Sun*, August 16, 1923.



**Filled circles:**

1. Benjamin Exum Sawmill
2. Samuel R. Combs Sawmill\*
3. Richmond Arnold Stone Shop
4. Martin-Holder Mill  
Jonathan Bush Flour Mill
5. William T. Bush Distillery
6. Edmund Taylor Flour Mill
7. Jonathan Bryan Gristmill  
William Taylor Fulling Mill and Distillery
8. Factory Bottom  
Orson Martin Sawmill, Flour Mill and  
Blacksmith Shop  
Isaac Hockaday Woolen Factory
9. William Trimble Distillery\*

10. Smith Sawmill
11. John Rees Gristmill
12. John Wilkerson Gristmill and Sawmill
13. Robert Didlake Gristmill
14. William Wilkerson Mill\*
15. Adams and Calmes Sawmill, Gristmill  
and Blacksmith Shop

**Dotted ovals:**

Richmond Arnold quarry (*left*) and Robert  
Martin quarry (*right*)

**Not located:**

Edmund Hockaday Distillery

\* tentative identification



**Ford near the Old Stone Church, 1938**  
Joe Kendall Neel University of Kentucky Master's Thesis



**Road down Lower Howard's Creek, 1938**

This picture was taken looking east, about one-third of a mile downstream from the Old Stone Church. The road is visible on the left (north) side of the creek. (Joe Kendall Neel University of Kentucky Master's Thesis)



## Road to the Mouth of Lower Howard's Creek

As mentioned above, the road to the Kentucky River by way of Lower Howard's Creek proposed by the county court in 1793 was never finished. It was proposed again in 1799 but was not built then either. The road was proposed as part of a larger project in 1853. The court appointed Edmund Taylor, Richard G. Bush and Smallwood A. Elkin to view "the way for a new road" beginning at Jonathan Bush's mill, running down the creek past Benjamin Exum's sawmill to the Kentucky River, and from there to run up the river to the Winchester-Kentucky River Turnpike at the Boonesborough ferry landing. The viewers did their job well and even returned to the court a detailed map of the proposed road prepared by John W. Martin, the county surveyor. The original map (pictured below) and road report were found several years ago among old documents boxed up in the courthouse attic.<sup>96</sup> The viewers stated they were of opinion that

said road is highly necessary and no inconvenience to any person on whose land said road runs, and a great convenience to the parties, neighbourhood and individuals, and also a great convenience to the public generally. The parties living between the mouth of two mile and Howards Creek are greatly benefitted by this road both in milling and traveling. And the travelling public generally, the said proposed road is giving an advantage both to the river and the Mills of Exum and Bush's. This road is comparatively more level than any other road leading to the above mentioned places, and we are of opinion that 15 feet would be width sufficient for said road.<sup>97</sup>

This statement was followed by the metes and bounds from the survey.

The documents reveal several interesting features. First, the map shows the location of Jonathan Bush's flour mill and Benjamin Exum's sawmill and dam, the four places where the road crosses the creek and one crossing (points 24-25 below Exum's Mill) where a bridge needed to be built. The survey identifies point 23 as being "by an old road." This could have been a road coming down off what is known today as Thompson Ridge. The map also shows a "Stone Shop" just downstream from Bush's Mill. Today this site is enclosed by a restored stone fence on the right side of the road approaching the swinging bridge in the Preserve. The Stone Shop belonged to Richmond Arnold, whose nearby home is shown on the historic 1861 map. In the 1850 and 1860 censuses, Richmond Arnold, stonemason, was living on Lower Howard's Creek. Finally, the survey map shows the house of William Hooten, just west of the Boonesborough ferry landing and turnpike road.

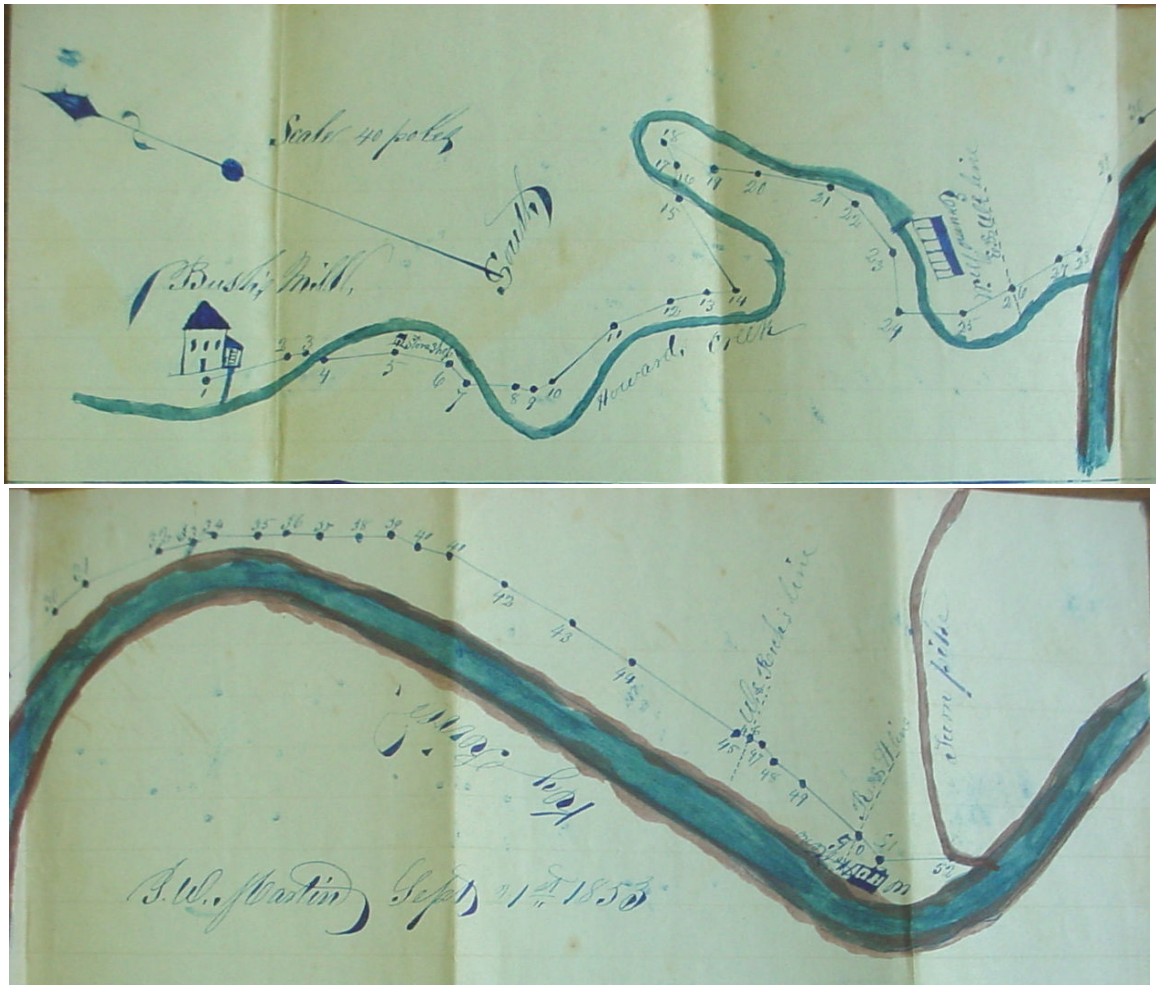
Unfortunately, Clark County's order book for this period is missing, so we do not have a record showing whether or not the road was completed according to the survey. There was no mention of the proposed road tying into a crossing at the mouth of Lower Howard's Creek where Hall's Restaurant is today. Although we take it for granted now, it would be several more years before a bridge was built there. The crossing is shown on a topographic map from 1890, but not on the historic maps of 1861 or 1877.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Clark County Court loose papers, 1853.

<sup>97</sup> Clark County Court loose papers, 1853.

<sup>98</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, Richmond, KY Quadrangle, 1:125,000, March 1897 edition from a survey in 1890, copy at the University of Kentucky Map Room, M. I. King Library, Lexington.



**Road from the Bush Mill to the Kentucky River (top) and from there to the Turnpike (bottom), 1853**

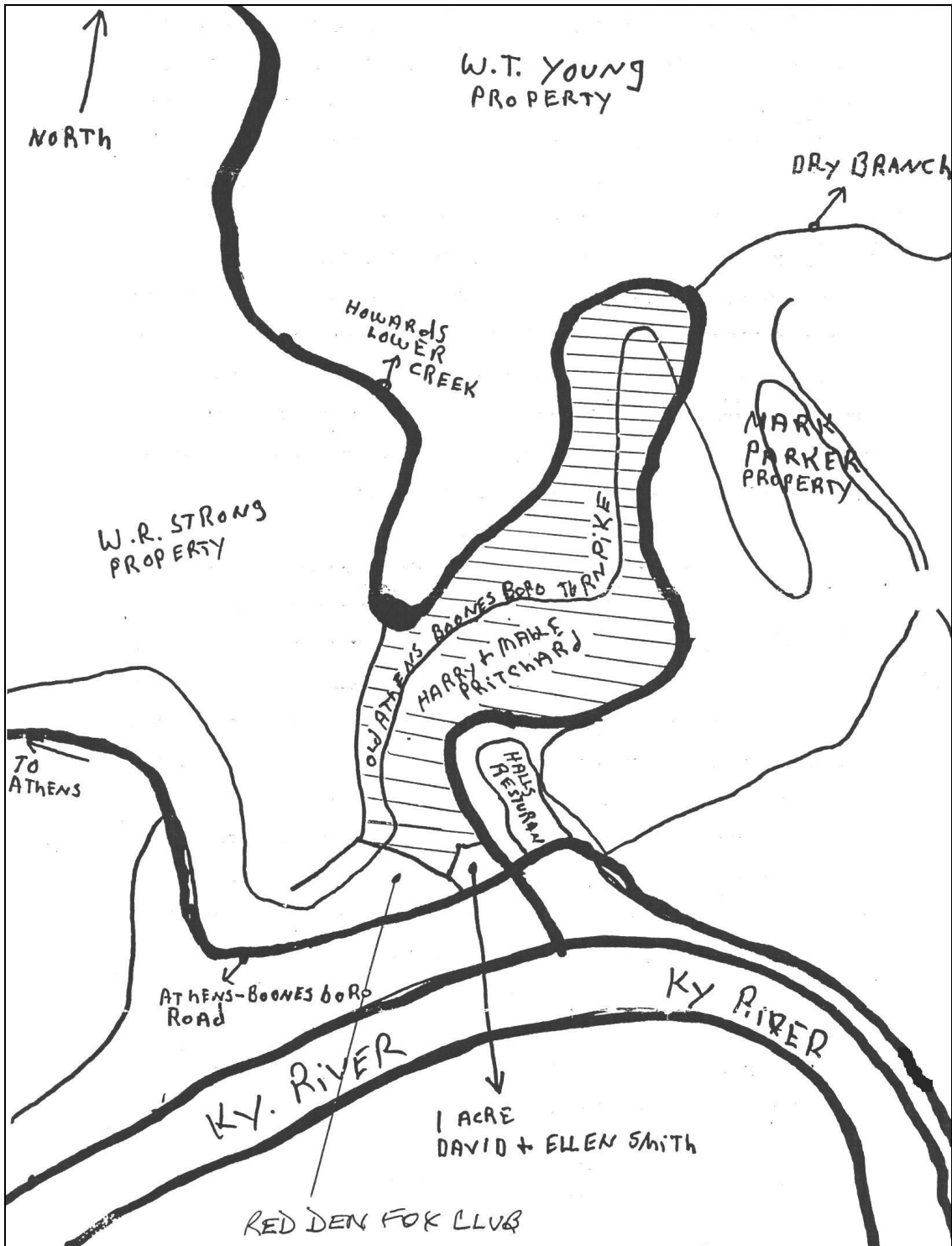
Original map found in the Clark County court loose papers

### **Athens-Boonesboro Turnpike**

The Athens-Boonesboro Turnpike was a dirt road that branched off from Holder's Road and ran through Thompson Ridge. At the end of the ridge the road forded Lower Howard's Creek and ascended the hillside by switchbacks up to Lisletown. From Lisletown the road continued east until it struck the Boonesboro Turnpike (now Old Boonesboro Road) at a toll house. The turnpike must have been established after 1876, as it is not mentioned in the county road book that goes through that year.<sup>99</sup> The road, or at least a portion of it, was in use until about 1970 when the last residents on Thompson Ridge—Harry and Mabel Pritchard—passed away. The map below showing the turnpike was attached to an affidavit for a deed made in 1993.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Harry G. Enoch and Larry G. Meadows, *Clark County Road Book, Index to Roads, Turnpikes, Railroads, Mills and Ferries in Clark County Order Books, 1793-1876* (Winchester, KY, 2005).

<sup>100</sup> Clark County Deed Book 322:502.



Athens-Boonesboro Turnpike

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