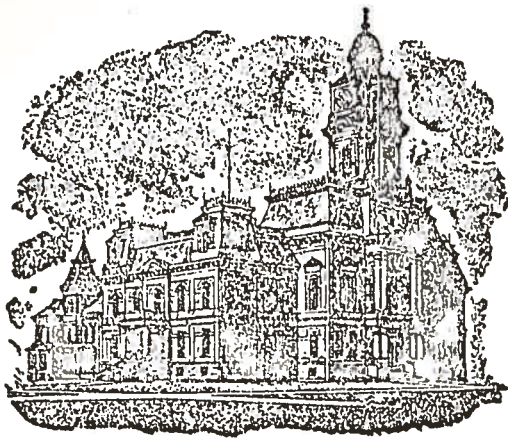




TECUMSEH'S DEER CREEK VILLAGE

(1795 - 1796)



ERECTED 1890

Madison County Commissioners

Courthouse, London, Ohio 43140

Phone (614) 852-2972

April 23, 1975

BOARD

John L. Sanford, CHAIRMAN

Robert Edwards

Lewis S. Overturf

Rebecca Yerian, CLERK

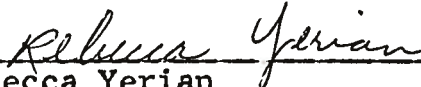
William Bauerly
Somerford Township Trustee
Rt. #2
London, Oh 43140

Subject: Resolution: Approving Indian History of Madison County

Upon presentation made by William Bauerly, Somerford Township Trustee, of a paper written by Dr. Rex Sparks, London, Ohio, documenting past Indian history of Madison County and titled "Tecumseh's Deer Creek Village"; Mr. Overturf moved to accept this paper as a written record of Madison County's Indian History, to recommend this paper be accepted by the Ohio Historical Center, and also to recognize Dr. Rex Sparks' efforts in preparing this document. With a second from Mr. Edwards, the result of the roll call was: Mr. Sanford, yes; Mr. Edwards, yes; and Mr. Overturf, yes.

A copy is on file in the Commissioners' Office.

I, Rebecca Yerian, Clerk of the Board of Commissioners of Madison County, Ohio, certify the above to be a true and exact copy of a portion of the minutes as recorded in Commissioners' Journal #37, Page 123, dated April 21, 1975.


Rebecca Yerian
Clerk of the Board

CHALMERS P. WYLIE
15th DISTRICT, OHIO

2447 RAYBURN HOUSE
OFFICE BUILDING
TELEPHONE: 225-2015

DISTRICT OFFICE:
FEDERAL BUILDING
85 MARCONI BLVD.
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
TELEPHONE: 469-5614

JACK M. FOULK
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 11, 1975

file

COMMITTEES:
**BANKING, CURRENCY AND
HOUSING**

SUBCOMMITTEES:
CONSUMER AFFAIRS
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SUPERVISION,
REGULATIONS AND INSURANCE

COMMITTEES:
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEES:
COMPENSATION, PENSION, AND INSURANCE
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. George W. Wuertz
President of the Board of Trustees
Choctaw Lake Property Owners Assoc.
Route 6
London, Ohio 43140

Dear Mr. Wuertz:

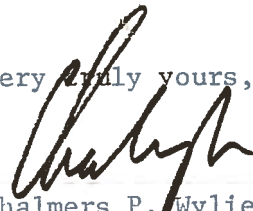
Dr. Sparks forwarded to me your letter and a copy of the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The nomination is now being reviewed by a staff archaeologist of the Ohio Historical Society, Dr. Bert Drennar, prior to its consideration by the State Historic Preservation Board.

Although the proposal must ultimately be approved in Washington, D.C. for inclusion in the National Register, the biggest hurdle is the hearing by the Ohio State Historic Preservation Board. The preliminary hearing before this board will come in late August.

Your project is a most worthy one. I have asked both Ohio and federal authorities to keep me apprised of it's progress.

Very truly yours,



Chalmers P. Wylie
Representative to Congress

CPW:pvb

TECUMSEH'S DEER CREEK VILLAGE
(1795 - 1796)

By Rex M. Sparks, D.D.S.
London, Ohio 1974

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing this manuscript I am deeply indebted to Ruth and Lou Redinbaugh for the countless hours of discussing, editing, typing and retyping this manuscript to its completed form. I wish to thank John Barscetti of the Ohio Historical Society History Department and Mrs. Lee Katz of the London, Ohio, Public Library whose assistance in getting material made it complete.

Permission was received from Dr. R.C. Downes to use his maps with this manuscript.

1790



Ohio County Boundary Lines in 1790.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of DEER CREEK VILLAGE

Deer Creek Village is significant historically because events that occurred on the banks of Deer Creek determined much of our American history for the following three decades. It is quite probable the War of 1812 would never have been fought with England and two famous Generals of that war (Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison) might never have been Presidents of our United States had it not been for Tecumseh and his dream of an Indian Confederation.

While residing at Deer Creek Village in the summer of 1795 Tecumseh declared himself a chief. Indian custom required a chief to be married, so after a short courtship Tecumseh married Mamate, one of the most beautiful women in the Shawnee Nation. Mamate was half white and in the spring of 1796 gave birth to a son called Pugeshashenwa. This is the only son Tecumseh is reported to have had, and it is of Pugeshashenwa that Tecumseh spoke shortly before the Battle of the Thames. The boy was raised by his mother until he was about seven, at which time his father and Aunt Tecumapese cared for him. The boy, like his father, was later commissioned an officer in the British Army.

At Deer Creek Village Tecumseh and his brother "The Prophet" began their many visitations to form the Indian Confederation which culminated during the War of 1812 and was terminated at the Battle of the Thames with the death of Tecumseh October 5, 1813.

EVENTS LEADING UP TO DEER CREEK VILLAGE

August 20, 1794 dated the decisive battle between the American troops under General Wayne and the combined Indian forces near the rapids of Miami of the Lakes (Fallen Timbers). Two young men in their mid twenties, one red and one white, were opposed in battle for the first time in conflicts that spanned 19 years and ended during the War of 1812. At the Battle of the Thames (Battle of Moraviantown) Tecumseh, a Brigadier General of the British Army, and William H. Harrison, General of the American Forces, met for the last time in battle.



Ohio County Boundary Lines in 1797.

Tecumseh fighting under Chief Blue Jacket distinguished himself as a hero at the Battle of Fallen Timbers by fighting a rearguard action against overwhelming forces of American troops, thus permitting many Indians to escape and avoiding a complete massacre. He mustered braves, wherever possible, and fought with such determination that many braves took heart and joined him to delay the advancing Americans. During the excitement of battle he loaded a ball into his rifle before the powder making the gun temporarily useless. Tecumseh then battled with tomahawk and knife with such ferocity that he unnerved his opponets and received the highest admiration from his fellow warriors.

Having returned to Chalagawtha on the Scioto in the fall of 1794 Tecumseh raised a party of hunters to supply the Shawnee towns with meat during the winter of 1794-1795. His success hunting rapidly earned him the reputation as the greatest hunter in the Shawnee Nation.

Tecumseh was not sympathetic with the Shawnee Council Chief's desires to cease hostilities with the whites. He believed the lands north of the Ohio River were given to the Indians by the Great Spirit, and that no individual tribe should be permitted to sell or barter these lands at the expense of all other tribes. The white settlers were approaching the area of Chalagawtha and the treaty of Greenville was pending. The Indians were preparing to leave the area in compliance with General Wayne's terms to be dictated the following August. Tecumseh was not permitted to sit in the Tribal Council dominated by Little Turtle, and a move by him and his sympathizers became necessary. In view of Tecumseh's stature as a great leader, hunter, organizer, orator and warrior his followers were increasing rapidly.

Tecumseh had long admired the beauty of a certain area near the head waters of Deer Creek and decided to settle there with a party of braves whose beliefs and convictions paralleled his own. In the spring of 1795 Tecumseh and his followers, including his brother the "Prophet", were established on Deer Creek.



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Ohio County Boundary Lines in 1799

Descriptions of Shawnee towns on the Miami indicate villages or towns there stretched for miles. The homes were as much as twenty poles or 330 feet apart. The Chief's house was generally on a beautiful but small elevation crowning the river or creek bank from which the eye could sweep a long section of the valley and survey the entire village, a portion of which lined each bank of the stream. The principle reason for this type of village was to protect the corn, beans and squash in the bottoms from wild animals, primarily deer which roamed in large herds. Deer Creek was so named by the Indians because it was the best hunting ground for deer anywhere.

EVENTS AT DEER CREEK VILLAGE

The most famous event at Deer Creek Village was Blue Jacket's visit in the fall of 1795 conveying to Tecumseh the terms of peace which had been concluded at Greenville with General Wayne. Blue Jacket, a white chief, journeyed from his town of Urbana to visit Tecumseh. Tecumseh had declared himself a chief and was considered a man of influence, although he refused to attend Wayne's council at Greenville. His rise to leadership was typical of the Shawnee custom of letting a man earn by his deeds rather than by election the right to lead them.

Tecumseh traveled extensively during this period and the "Prophet" (Tenskwatawa) became his spokesman as governing agent of the village. Many have asked if the great chief truly believed his brothers powers as a prophet. Judge John Law in his "Colonial History of Vincennes" says, "It is doubtful whether Tecumseh himself was gulled by the charlantry of his brother. His own natural good sense must have taught him, that whatever his own opinion might have been on this subject, policy would require that he should not divulge it. Well instructed in the Indian character, he knew full well that fanaticism was one of the strongest impulses to reckless bravery and daring. Born to command himself, he used all means to stimulate the courage,



Ohio County Boundary Lines in 1803.

nerve and valor of his followers".

JONATHAN ALDER AND TECUMSEH

Jonathan Alder, the first white settler in Madison County, had been captured and raised by the Mingo Tribe. His sympathies were Indian and in the fall of 1795 following General Wayne's treaty with the Indians at Greenville he and his Indian wife settled on Darby Creek just 1½ miles southeast of Plain City, less than fifteen miles from Tecumseh's village. They saw each other frequently and became very close friends. He mentions the "Prophet" and tells what a scoundrel he was. In speaking of Tecumseh he says, "I was well acquainted with him. I sold him a keg of rum one day for a horse, the horse got sick and died, and shortly afterward I told him he ought to give me another horse. He said he had drunk the rum up and it was all gone, and he supposed I was about as well off as he was. He said the rum was of no use to either of us and that he had suffered all the bad consequences of drinking it. He reasoned that the horse had done me as much good as the rum had done him and perhaps more, but as it was if I was satisfied we would quit square, and so we did." In later years Alder says, "There had been kept up a communication through the Indians from Tecumseh's town to me, all the time so that I had no fear of the uprising of the friendly Indians of Ohio."

One occasion witnessed by Jonathan Alder, a brave was boasting of the number of scalps he had taken. Tecumseh turned upon him angrily and told him many of his scalps were from women and children. He then stated that he had taken nearly forty scalps in combat and none were from women or children. At the time he was twenty-seven years of age.

Alder tells of the "Green Corn Feast" which was a time for courting and festive games of skill. Prizes were awarded to the best competitor of each event. The harvest came early and the yield was often 35 - 40 bushels per acre. Corn grew fast and roasting ears were to be had by the 4th of July



Ohio County Boundary Lines in 1806.

some seasons.

In times of peace the Shawnee Indians observed a "Feast of Love" which was originated by their ancestors. The purpose of this Feast was to distribute fairly the grain, seed and planting land to various families of the tribe in a manner that would not create bad feelings among the villagers. "No people" says Mary Jemison (a captive) "can live more happy than Indians in times of peace."

While at Deer Creek a group of braves challenged Tecumseh's reputation as the greatest hunter in the Shawnee Nation. This was a friendly wager among the braves which included one of Tecumseh's brothers. The objective was to see who could bring back the most deer skins in a three day period. Tecumseh remained behind smoking his pipe by a campfire until all the braves had hurridly departed. Three days later the first brave to return had ten deer skins and found Tecumseh where he had last seen him smoking his pipe. The most deer skins any brave returned with was twelve, however, Tecumseh had nearly thirty and his reputation was greatly enhanced.

"HISTORICAL CONFUSION"

Many authors and historians have recorded the existance of Deer Creek Village. These include Benjamin Drake the biographer of Tecumseh, Henry Howe who wrote the history of Ohio in 1841 by visiting 77 counties on horseback, then nearly forty years later repeated this task and revised his history in 1888 - 91, a few years before his death. Lyman C. Draper collected volumes of manuscripts which are located at the Wisconsin archives. These have been microfilmed and are available at the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus and are also available in most states.

Henry Howe, Benjamin Drake and Beer's History of Madison County all mention Deer Creek Village as being in Champaign County near the site of Urbana. This is refuted by Joshua Antrium in his "History of Champaign and Logan Counties"



Ohio County Boundary Lines in 1810.

published in 1872 at Bellfontaine, Ohio.

Mr. Antrium is quoted on page 10 of his book:

"Mr. Howe says in his history that Tecumseh in the spring of 1795 took up his quarters on Deer Creek near the site of Urbana, where he engaged in his favorite amusement hunting and remained there until the following spring. There never was any creek by the name of Deer Creek near the site of Urbana. I think there is a creek by that name in Madison County, but I do not think it reaches Champaign. I find Tecumseh's biographer makes the same mistake."

A book published by the Ohio Writers Project (Urbana and Champaign County) claims the creek was dried up by the white mans drainage operations.

All the preceeding writers are mentioned to illustrate the confusion, which has come about during the past 179 years, caused primarily by county boundry line changes. Urbana was used as a reference point for Deer Creek Village twenty miles to the southeast.

COUNTY BOUNDRY CHANGES

It is not true that Deer Creek Village was once located in Champaign County! From January 2, 1790 until 1797 (during the time Tecumseh had the village) the area was in Hamilton County. July 10, 1797, it became Adams County then Ross County August 20, 1798. The first year of Ohio statehood Franklin County was formed from Ross County (April 30, 1803) and the area remained in Franklin County less than a mile from Champaign County line until March 1, 1810 when the county of Madison was formed and named in honor of James Madison.

Champaign County was formed from Green and Franklin March 1, 1805 with a temporary county seat in Springfield. Previous to 1810 what is now Champaign County was included in two townships, (Mad River and Salem). In March 1810 the county commissioners divided Salem Township and made Union Township which included what is now Wayne, Rush, Union and Goshen Townships. Between October 11, 1814 and June 24, 1815, Goshen Township was formed from a part of Union Township. This now borders Madison County north of Clark County.



Ohio County Boundary Lines in 1818.

Lyman C. Draper's notes mention Deer Creek Village to be in Union County, which was mistaken for Union Township of Champaign County. Adding to the confusion is another Union Township in Madison County which once bordered Champaign County (now Clark), however, Deer Creek proper did not, nor does it now flow through any portion of Union Township in Madison County that was ever near or a part of Champaign County.

In 1818 an act was passed by the Ohio Legislature to originate the county of Clark. Chapter XIV vol. XVI page 33 Section I states "Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, that so much of the counties of Champaign, Madison and Green as comes within the following boundries be and the same is hereby erected into a separate county that shall be known as Clark." Chapter XXXVIII of the same volume (1818) is an act to attach part of Champaign County to the county of Madison. Section I "Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, that all that part of Champaign County east of the eastern boundry of Clark County be, and the same is hereby attached to the county of Madison." This area was a small triangle of land in the southwestern portion of what is now Madison County and not near Deer Creek.

January 22, 1827, an act was passed to alter and establish lines between Clark and Madison Counties. The creation of Union County in 1820 made it necessary for many laws to be passed between 1820 - 1827 governing the lines of Madison, Union, Logan and Champaign Counties. All these changes are recorded in the "Evolution of Ohio County Boundries" by R.C.Downes and the acts of Ohio during that period.

Somerford Township was formed from Deer Creek Township March 4, 1839. If an imaginary line is extended south from the Champaign County eastern border into Somerford Township, it becomes obvious reasons for confusion concerning Deer Creek in Champaign County. Actually the village of Tecumseh was located in a southeasterly direction 20 miles from Urbana along the Chillicothe to Urbana trace which passed through London, Ohio in a northwesterly direction.



Ohio County Boundary Lines in 1828.

This trace was later called the Deer Creek Road and followed generally what is now state routes 56 and 207 southeast to the Indian towns on the Scioto Trail.

FACTS ON DEER CREEK AND SOMERFORD TOWNSHIP

J. A. Cauldwell's "Atlas of Madison County", published in 1875, shows perhaps a hundred or more springs located in Somerford Township. It is the "Fountain Head" of Deer Creek which descends an average of 15 feet per mile for 20 miles across Madison County.

Beer's History of Madison County states "The only portion of Madison County that was entirely covered with timber is Somerford Township. No prairie land lying within that subdivision. Along the streams is principally white and black oak, hickory, beech, ash, maple and elm, interspersed with basswood, sycamore, white elm and walnut. The lands contiguous to the streams are generally rolling or hilly and in many places broken here and there with rich bottoms which are prized by the agriculturalist."

A great portion of Madison County was originally covered with water much of the year. These lands were called "Barrens" and looked upon as totally unfit for farming.

Original Jonathan Alder maps on page 91 of Orley E. Brown's "The Captivity of Jonathan Alder and His Life With the Indians" shows Deer Creek as beginning at the confluence of the North and South branches. There are only two miles of Deer Creek that were ever near Champaign County, therefore, Tecumseh's village HAD to be in the eastern portion of Somerford Township to where the early settlers came. Actually the village was located between George's Fork and a point just east of the confluence. This is the only area on Deer Creek near what was once Champaign County where enough bottoms were available to raise corn, beans and squash for the Indian Village.

Early settlers of Somerford Township settled on the banks of Deer Creek between 1802 - 1805. This was 6 - 9 years after Deer Creek Village had been vacated and evidence of Tecumseh's Village could be seen including acres of rich bottom lands where corn had been cultivated.

John Wilson and John Arbuckle built a double log cabin near George's Fork in 1805 and resided there for some time. Other early settlers included the Scott and Shield families. It is believed by some people that this site was originally intended to be the location for the city of London, Ohio.

George W. Hills "The Shawnees and the Capture of Jonathan Alder From the Alder Manuscripts" and Beer's History of Madison County, tell of Shawnee movements. A favorite campsite was on Oak Run used in travels between Franklinton (Columbus) and old Chillicothe just north of Xenia. Three campsites on Deer Creek are mentioned, two of which were in Union Township of Madison County and a third in Somerford Township just north of the junction of route 56 and Old Columbus Road. These campsites were located along various traces and used frequently for many years.

In the preceeding pages, I have quoted freely from others works with but one purpose in mind to find Deer Creek Village! At various stages of research, I believed the Village to have been in no less than five locations including Buck Creek (named by Simon Kenton).

The Downes' maps with the "Acts of Ohio" were the key to a mystery that has lasted many years, however, a ten minute flight over the two mile area of Deer Creek where the village could have been was the clincher. It is today just as beautiful as it could have possibly been when Tecumseh called it home as I do.

REFERENCE SHEET

1. Indians of North America Samuel Drake
2. The Frontiersman Allen Eckert
3. The Wanderings of the Ohio Shawnee
Facts on the True Birthplace of
Their Great Chief-Tecumseh Fred Marshall
4. Ohio Archives and Historical Society Publications Vol. XX p. 238
5. The Life of Tecumseh and His Brother the Prophet Benjamin Drake
6. Tecumseh Papers Series YY Lyman C. Draper Manuscripts
7. The Shawnee Prophet Edward and Lillie Seelye
8. Beer's History of Madison County
9. Howe's Historical Collections of Ohio Henry Howe
10. Beer's History of Champaign County
11. Captured by the Indians Howard Peckham
12. Boyhood of Tecumseh Marion Campbell
13. Evolution of Ohio County Boundries (Maps) R. C. Downes
14. History of Jonathan Alder - His Captivity
and Life With the Indians Doyle H. Davison recopied 1935
15. Colonial History of Vincennes Judge John Law
16. Tecumseh the Shawnee Chief E. Oviatt Randell
17. Tecumseh - His Career Lloyd E. Siberell
18. History of the Shawnee Indians From
the Year 1681 to 1854 Henry Harvey
19. History of the Late War in the Western
Country Robert B. McAfee
20. Sketches of Western Adventure John A. McClury
21. History of Champaign and Logan Counties Joshus Antrium 1872
22. The Shawnees and the Capture of Jonathan
Alder From the Alder Manuscripts George Hill M.D.
23. The Captivity of Jonathan Alder and His
Life With the Indians Orley E. Brown
24. Ohio Rufus King 1830

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|-----|---|---|
| 25. | Urbana and Champaign County | Ohio Writers Project
(sponsored by
Urbana Lions Club) |
| 26. | Ohio Archeological and Historical
Society Publication Vol. XXXVI | |
| 27. | Tecumseh and His Times | John M. Oskison |
| 28. | Shooting Star | William E. Wilson |
| 29. | Great Indian Chiefs | Albert Britt |
| 30. | History of Ohio Vol. II
The Frontier State 1803-1825 | William T. Utter |
| 31. | Acts of Ohio Vol. XVI | |
| 32. | Cauldwell's Atlas of Madison County 1875 | |
| 33. | Tecumseh: Destiny's Warrior | David Cooke |

* The original Franklin County Boundry Line with Green and Fayette Counties is now the Madison County Boundry with the same counties. A line North from a point 6 miles East of Green County on the present Fayette-Madison Boundry is the original Champaign County Eastern Boundry.