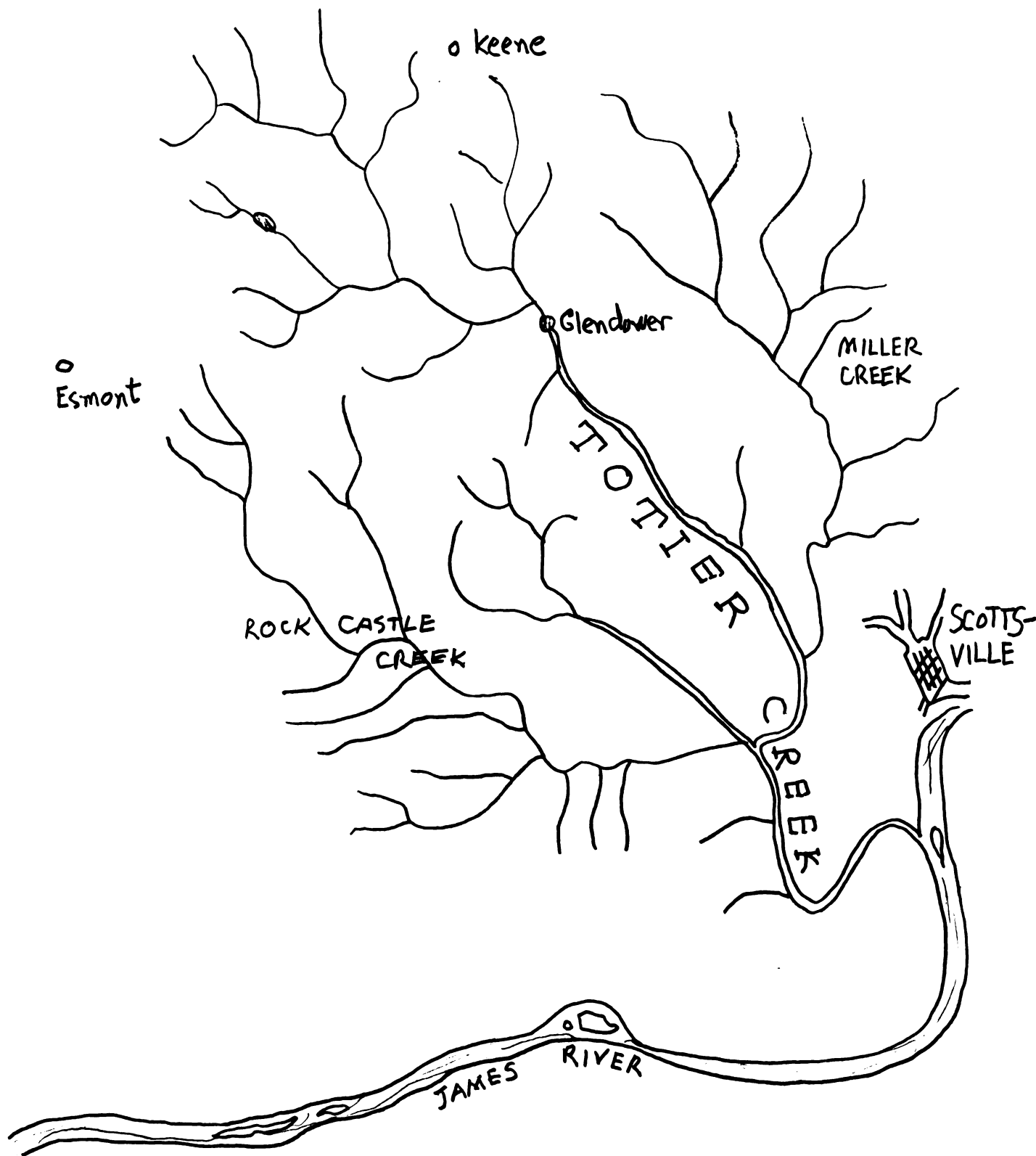


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TOTIER CREEK, ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VA., ONE INCH TO ONE MILE, THE HOME AND HUNTING GROUNDS OF THE TOTERO INDIANS TO 1676.

TOTIER CREEK, A FIRST-FAMILIES-OF-ALBEMARLE PLACE NAME

One of the oldest place names in Albemarle County is Totier, the name of a creek which empties into the James a mile upstream from Scottsville, at the southern tip of the county. It has had not fewer than three spellings, three pronunciations, and three derivations.

Those who drive from Charlottesville to Scottsville today cross the headwaters of this creek numerous times below Keene. One of the six crossings of the stream under the Scottsville-Esmont road is conspicuously and properly labelled "Totier Creek" by the Highway Department, but all other road crossings are either unlabelled or else appear under the modern names of the easternmost of Totier's four main branches (Miller Creek) or of its westernmost branch (Rock Castle Creek).

No one living in the region now remembers the origin of the name, and the possibilities have even been suggested that the creek was named for a non-existent Frenchman, or that the word might be a corruption of "turtle" because the largest and most ferocious turtles seen in Albemarle in this century (with "shells three feet in diameter") still sometimes make their way midstream up this creek from the James.

The word "Totier" is in fact a corruption of another word, but the word was "Toteró," and it denoted an Indian tribe, not a turtle.

The Toterós (now commonly referred to by anthropologists as the Tutelos) were a Siouian tribe, like the Monacans, who

also left place names in Virginia; for example, Manakin Town, near Richmond. These Siouian tribes were blood enemies of the Powhatan Indians, and they fled steadily backwards into North Carolina, proceeding from the headwaters of one major river to those of another, near the recently man-made Kerr Reservoir.

The earliest use of the place name so far identified is in two 1732 land patents of Edward Scott (Patent Book 14, p.465, 468; all references to these Patent Books are from Watts, 'Colonial Albemarle'), which refer to "a place called Totier." In 1736 the Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (IV, 379) record the granting of a tract of land to this same Edward Scott on "Totero Creek," and these lands in Scott's will (dated Feb. 10, 1737 and proved April 10, 1738; see VIHB, XXXIII, 37) were referred to as "Totier" and the "acres on Totier Creek." This was the Scott who was the progenitor of all the Scotts for whom Scottsville was named.

In point of time, the next reference located is in William Stith's patent of 1740 (Patent Book 19, 652), but in 1741 there were not less than six patentees of land on Totier Creek: James Tulley (FB 20, 105), John Lewis (20, 148-9), Thomas Meriwether (19, 1017 and 1046), Christopher Clark (19, 1022), William Harris (19, 1052), and Mathew Harris (19, 1060).

By 1751, when the name for Totier Creek went into the survey for the Fry-Jefferson map, its form was firmly fixed

with its present spelling, and there has been no significant change during the ensuing two centuries except for one throw-back on the United States Geological Survey Buckingham sheet of 1892/1929, where the remarkable spelling "Tooters Creek" occurs. The 1961 Buckingham sheet avoids this mistake by no longer including the area involved, and the present edition of the Coveseville sheet has properly gone back to the original form of "Totier."

Half a century ago, Hodge (Handbook II, 856) compiled so many varieties of the spelling of the tribe's name that one is discouraged from retyping his list, but the creek name itself has progressed quite simply from Totero to Totier, Toteers, Toteer, Totter, Toten, Totere, to Totiers, to Tooters, and back to Totier.

So much for the spellings. The matter of pronunciations is more difficult to cope with.

Presumably the word started out being pronounced Too-tear (as in "to tear one's pants")--oh. It then progressed through Too-tier (rhyming with "new beer" or "true peer," or "pooh bier"), to Tooters, with a short side trip into Taw-tier, and wound up with what appears to be the ubiquitous present local pronunciation of Toe-tier, or a rapidly-spoken Tote-ear, which is doubtless the product of numerous Mrs. McGuffeys making their school-children pronounce "to" to rhyme with "go."

The maverick pronunciation of Taw-tier (which the present writer is guilty of having mistakenly recorded in the Charlottesville Daily Progress of August 5, 1963) came from an

echoic analogy to "Fauquier," and has its own etymological analogy in a folk derivation of the creek name from the patronymic of an early French surveyor of the region. The idea may have gained currency from the form of the place name on Bishop Madison's map of 1807-18: "Totiers Creek," which seems to be the possessive form of a personal name.

The fatal defects of this derivation are three: the fact that the name was on the land before any surveyor set foot there; there was no surveyor of the region who was French; and the inability of any historian or genealogist to produce from any county, colony, or mother country, of the 17th or 18th centuries, any patronymic of any person soever which remotely resembles "Totier."

The transformation of "Totero" to "Totier" is only a matter of swallowing a last syllable, but if anyone has a lingering doubt as to the correctness of this derivation from the 18th-century form of the name for the Tutelo Indians, he can resolve this doubt readily enough by tracking the index-references to "Totero" in the volumes of the Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia.

The archaeologists may hesitate to say where the tribe was in a given year, but the tribe's having been in Albemarle County before there was an Albemarle County is as certain as that all members of the tribe had left these parts before the 1740's. They not only left the county, they also left

in the soil the bones of their ancestors and some flint arrowheads, On our maps, they have engraved their name.

JOHN COOK WYLLIE

Bibliography

(The interest of Dr. John E. Manahan, Jr., Mr. R. E. Brill of Scottsville, and of Colonel Stuart A. Morgan of Totier are gratefully acknowledged).

Charlottesville Daily Progress, August 5, 1963.

A letter to the editor from the present writer, captioned "Totier Creek Names for Early Residents," in which the incorrectness of the present pronunciation as recorded is again hereby acknowledged.

Fry, Joshua. The Fry & Jefferson Map of Virginia and Maryland; a Facsimile of the First Edition . . . with an introduction by Dumas Malone. University of Virginia and Princeton University Press, 1950.

This map was based on 1751 surveys, and although it carries that date on its face, it was not actually published until about 1754. It is the earliest known map to designate Totier Creek. The Speed Map of Virginia of 1676, published in the last year the Toterros are believed to have lived on the creek, was drawn in ignorance of this part of the country.

Hodge, Frederick Webb. Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico. Washington, D.C., 1910. Vol.2, p.855-6. (Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30).

There are earlier and later works on the Tutelos, and on all the Siouian tribes of Virginia; for example, by Mooney, Bushnell, and Swanton, but none, for the present purposes, is more convenient than Hodge's Handbook. Those wishing to pursue the Tutelos in other aspects will find most of the best sources cited in Dr. C. G. Holland's excellent summary "Albemarle Before 1700," Papers of the Albemarle Historical Society, IX, 1948-49, p.5-12.

Madison, Bishop James. A Map of Virginia Formed Upon Actual Surveys, and the Latest as well as the most Accurate Observations. Richmond, 1807 and 1818.

This is the map on which the creek name appeared as "Totiers." For details of its publication, those interested should see entries 377 and 397 in E. G. Swem's Maps Relative to Virginia. Richmond, 1914. The title of the earlier edition differed from the later one, which is used here.

VMHB. The reference here is to the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. Vol.33, 1925, p.37.

U. S. Department of Interior. Geological Survey. Virginia, Buckingham Sheet, Scale 1:125,000. Washington, D.C., Edition of June 1892, reprinted 1929.

This is the "Tooters Creek" map.

_____. Virginia, Covesville Quadrangle. Scale 1:65,500. Washington, D.C., 1929 and 1935.

_____. Virginia, Scottsville Quadrangle, 15-minute Series. Scale: 1:62,500. Washington, D.C., 1946.

These two maps of the Covesville and Scottsville quadrangles are easier used through their consolidated offspring, the large Albemarle sheet of the Virginia Division of Mineral Resources (q.v.), because Totier Creek is divided between the two sheets, although the Covesville quadrangle includes all except the easternmost reaches of Miller Creek.

Virginia (Colony) Council. Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia . . ., edited by H. R. McIlwaine and Wilmer L. Hall. Richmond, 1930-1945. Vols.4-5. Hall, Vol.5, p.124, records six 18th-century spellings of Totier.

Virginia. Dept. of Conservation and Development. Division of Mineral Resources. Geologic Map, Albemarle County, Virginia, Geology by Wilbur A. Nelson. Scale 1:62,500. 1962.

Included as Plate I in Bulletin 77, Virginia Division of Mineral Resources: Wilbur A. Nelson, Geology and Mineral Resources of Albemarle County. Charlottesville, Va., 1962. The topographic part of this map is from the United States Geological Survey 15-minute series, q.v.

Virginia. Department of Conservation and Economic Development. Division of Water Resources. Index of the Surface Waters of Virginia. Richmond, Va., 1960.

From this invaluable work of General H. B. Holmes and his staff should be struck, except as a cross-reference to Totier, the happily extinct form "Tooters" Creek on p.61. I have not investigated the "Totaro" Creek recorded as being in Brunswick County, but on the face of it, this must have represented a way-station for the Toterros on their slow hegira to North Carolina.

Watts, Charles Wilder. "Colonial Albemarle, The Social and Economic History of a Piedmont Virginia County, 1727-1775." Unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1948.