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LOOKING FOR CATTLE KNOWLEDGE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CREEK AND SEMINOLE COUNTRY

In 1736 a Creek (Muscogee) woman named Senauki gave a gift of wild honey and milk to English leaders in the new colony of Georgia. Senauki's milk was not cow milk, but hickory nut milk, which she paired with grievances conveyed by her husband, Tomochichi, to complain about colonists' trespassing cattle. By 1797 the merchant responsible for Creeks' trade with the Spanish in Florida was trying to secure tariff-free export of cattle hides but not beef by arguing that these 'Cueros de Buy' were a Creek commodity commensurate with deerskins. Cattle and the meat, hides, and other products that they yielded are consistently discernible in Creek history, but the presence of cattle (*ganado*) did not necessarily indicate Indigenous peoples' consumption of beef (*buey*) or dairy milk. People could possess knowledge about cattle without eating them. Senauki and Tomochichi relied on a cattle-trading Creek named Mary Musgrove, and the end of the eighteenth century was characterized by Creek and Seminole disagreements about cattle ownership. This essay argues that historians must learn to recognize *and* rule out evidence of Indigenous knowledge of cattle as food. This ability will better equip scholars to distinguish between Indigenous and non-Indigenous food knowledges and make them less likely to interpret animals as food in instances where Native Americans consumed neither animals nor their byproducts. This essay examines the ways that Creeks and Seminoles treated these ungulates: as invasive pests that destroyed Indigenous crops and wild plants; prestige gifts; beef on the hoof; and the raw material of inedible trade goods.¹

¹ Francis Moore, *A voyage to Georgia. begun in the year 1735 . . .* (London, 1744), 34–36; John Wesley, *An extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's journal from his embarking for Georgia to his return to London*, 2nd edition (Bristol, 1743), 10; *The journal of the earl of Egmont: abstract of the trustees proceedings for establishing the colony of Georgia, 1732–1738*, ed. Robert G. McPherson (Athens, GA, 2021 [1962]), 131–32; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *Historical sketch of Tomo-chi-chi, mico of the Yamacraws* (Albany, NY, 1868), p. 104; Steven C. Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove* (Gainesville, FL, 2012), pp. 103–104; James Taylor Carson, *Making an Atlantic world: circles, paths, and stories from the colonial south* (Knoxville, TN, 2007), p. 83; Julie Anne Sweet, 'Senauki: a forgotten character in early Georgia history', *Native South* 3 (2010): pp. 65–88, at 77; [William Pantón to Juan Ventura Morales], Pensacola, 15 Feb. 1797, Archivo General de Indias

Current scholarship deals with Native Americans' conflicts with domesticated animals and with the hybrid African knowledge and labour necessary for cattle ranching. In colonial Mexico an ungulate eruption of sheep disadvantaged Indigenous communities by facilitating soil depletion, water disputes, and the creation of enormous ranches. Justin Blanton deals with one such ranch further east, in Florida, by reinterpreting the Timucuan rebellion as a cattle-related labour shortage that manifested in the killing of cattle, enslaved Africans, and a Spanish soldier. In the places that the English colonized, pigs and cattle were 'creatures of empire' that heralded the arrival of colonizers, ate Indigenous cornfields, and sparked legal conflicts and wars.²

According to work about Muscogees, Creeks adopted cattle slowly because of these conflicts and others. Robbie Ethridge cites the trader James Adair's comments about West Floridian Native Americans in 1767. Adair credited them with believing that cattle were polluted animals whose flesh would inflame one's face, throat, and testicles.³ A new set of pro-cattle Creek leaders nevertheless emerged at the end of the eighteenth century. Men including Alexander McGillivray used the cattle and slave trades to gain power, portraying themselves to American and Spanish officials as representatives of a centralized Creek nation.⁴

(AGI), Audencia de Santo Domingo (SD), 2670, C_02634, fo. 128v (qu.). AGI sources are in English and Spanish; Spanish translations are mine.

² Elinor G. K. Melville, *A plague of sheep: environmental consequences of the conquest of Mexico*, revised edition (Cambridge, 2008 [1994]); Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of empire: how domestic animals transformed early America* (New York, 2004); Rayna Green, 'Mother corn and the dixie pig: Native food in the Native south', in John T. Edge, Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, Ted Ownby, and Sara Camp Milam, eds., *The larder: food studies methods from the American south* (Athens, GA, 2013), pp. 155–65, at p. 158; Justin B. Blanton, 'The role of cattle ranching in the 1656 Timucuan rebellion: a struggle for land, labor, and chiefly power', *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 92 (Spring 2014): pp. 667–84, at pp. 667, 670, 674. Andrew Sluyter has worked on cattle in Cuba and Louisiana, but does not include in his case studies the places of Creek and Seminole country that constituted Georgia and the Floridas. Andrew Sluyter, *Black ranching frontiers: African cattle herders of the Atlantic world, 1500–1900* (New Haven, CT, 2012), pp. 61–97, 169–210.

³ Ethridge, *Creek country*, pp. 158–61; Kathryn E. Holland Braund, ed., James Adair, *The history of the American Indians* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2005), p. 171.

⁴ Claudio Saunt, *A new order of things: property, power, and the transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (Cambridge, 1999); Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins & duffels: the Creek Indian trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815*, 2nd edition (Lincoln, NE, 2008); Claudio Saunt, "'Domestick . . . Quiet being broke': gender conflict among Creek Indians in the eighteenth century", in Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute,

In order to distinguish between knowledge of cattle as food and knowledge of cattle as other things, this essay diverges from this work in its interest in continuities in Creek and Seminole cattle-holding across the long eighteenth century, in its emphasis on women's cattle-related activities, and in its interest in water. I synthesize work on animals and Native American history and archaeology and use a deliberately eclectic array of sources in the early modern archive of land and water, broadly conceived. Recent modern histories of beef in North America, Korea, and Japan are framed as hoof-to-table histories, but several aspects of early modern North American history make it impossible to discuss many aspects of breeding, slaughtering, preparation, and tableside presentation that characterize this scholarship. Lacunae in cattle population records, and what Andrew Sluyter casts as colonizers' consistent elision of the enslaved Africans responsible for managing herds, require different sources and methods to write the history of earlier cattle knowledge.⁵

Over the last decade, a growing body of work has attended to watery borders; doing so in semi-aqueous Creek and Seminole places illustrates myriad manifestations of cattle knowledge.⁶ This article takes up Tiffany Lethabo King's call to explore the 'analytical

eds., *Contact points: American frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750–1830* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998), pp. 151–74; Brent R. Weisman, 'The plantation system of the Florida Seminole Indians and Black Seminoles during the colonial era' and Susan R. Parker, 'The cattle trade in East Florida, 1784–1821', in Jane Landers, ed., *Colonial plantations and economy in Florida* (Gainesville, FL, 2000), pp. 136–49, 150–67; Robbie Ethridge, *Creek country: the Creek Indians and their world* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003); Joshua Aaron Piker, *Okfuskee: a Creek Indian town in colonial America* (Cambridge, 2004); Steven C. Hahn, *The invention of the Creek Nation, 1670–1763* (Lincoln, NE, 2004); Rachel B. Herrmann, *No useless mouth: waging war and fighting hunger in the American Revolution* (Ithaca, NY, 2019), pp. 1–37, 65–85, 157–77; Clara Sue Kidwell, 'Native American systems of knowledge', in Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., *A companion to American Indian history* (Malden, MA, 2002), pp. 87–102; Michael A. LaCombe, 'Subject or signifier?: food and the history of early North America', *History Compass* 11/10 (2013): pp. 859–68.

⁵ Parker, 'The cattle trade in East Florida', p. 156; Sluyter, *Black ranching frontiers*, pp. x, 70; For an expansive view of the periodization and actors who constituted American knowledge see Cameron B. Strang, *Frontiers of science: imperialism and natural knowledge in the Gulf south borderlands, 1500–1850* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2018), pp. 6–7; For hoof-to-table histories see Joshua Specht, *Red meat republic: a hoof-to-table history of how beef changed America* (Princeton, NJ, 2019); Tatsuya Mitsuda, 'From colonial hoof to metropolitan table: the imperial biopolitics of beef provisioning in colonial Korea', *Global Food History* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/20549547.2022.2159708>, pp. 1–20, at 3.

⁶ Lissa K. Wadewitz, *The nature of borders: salmon, boundaries, and bandits on the Salish Sea* (Seattle, WA, 2012); John R. Gillis, *The human shore: seacoasts in history* (Chicago, 2012); Ernesto Bassi, *An aqueous territory: sailor geographies and New Granada's transimperial greater Caribbean world* (Durham, NC, 2016); Michelle Currie Navakas, *Liquid landscape: geography and settlement at the edge of early America* (Philadelphia, PA, 2018); Thomas Wickman, 'Our best places: gender, food sovereignty, and Miantonomi's kin

possibilities for thinking about Blackness as exceeding the metaphors and analytics of water and for thinking of Indigeneity as exceeding the symbol and analytic of land.’ It avoids what Simone Müller and David Stradling call the ‘container’ problem—the creation of artificial divisions between land and water—by considering islands, rivers, and river mouths on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.⁷ Between coastal ports and trading houses and the Native and non-Native towns situated on rivers were Black cattle drovers; on islands enslaved people raised crops to feed the Creeks who raised herds there; and on waterways of Seminole territory Black Seminoles constituted towns to produce live cattle for sale to Spanish soldiers. The semi-aqueous places in this article reveal Creeks and Seminoles with hybrid Indigenous, African, and European cattle knowledge.⁸

The first part of this essay shows historians how to orientate themselves in these places of cattle knowledge in order to identify the spaces where cattle ranged and to describe the food-related forms in which knowledge manifested. It begins with an overview of how Apalachees, Timucuan, and Creeks raised cattle before the 1730s in the places that are currently Georgia and Florida, and then draws on scholarship on maps to show readers how to imagine cattle in geographic space.⁹ As this section moves forward to the 1750s while

on the Connecticut River’, *Early American Studies* 19 (Spring 2021): pp. 215–63; Ethridge, *Creek country*, pp. 32–53, 158–74.

⁷ Tiffany Lethabo King, *The black shoals: offshore formations of Black and Native studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019), p. 4; Simone M. Müller and David Stradling, ‘Water as the ultimate sink: linking fresh and saltwater history’, *International Review of Environmental History* 5 (2019): pp. 23–41, at 27–29, 30.

⁸ Sluyter, *Black ranching frontiers*, p. 60; James Taylor Carson, ‘American historians and Indians’, *The Historical Journal* 49 (2006): pp. 921–33, at p. 928; Andrew K. Frank, ‘Red, Black, and Seminole: Community Convergence on the Florida Borderlands, 1780–1840’, in Andrew K. Frank and A. Glenn Crothers, eds., *Borderland narratives: negotiation and accommodation in North America’s contested spaces, 1500–1850* (Gainesville, FL, 2017), pp. 46–67, at 49.

⁹ Gregory A. Waselkov, ‘Indian maps of the colonial southeast’, in *Powhatan’s mantle: Indians in the colonial southeast*, revised edition (Lincoln, NE, 2006), 435–502; Juliana Barr, ‘Geographies of power: mapping Indian borders in the “borderlands” of the early southwest’, *William and Mary Quarterly* 68 (Jan. 2011): pp. 5–46; Juliana Barr, ‘Borders and borderlands’, in Susan Sleeper-Smith, Juliana Barr, Jean M. O’Brien, Nancy Shoemaker, and Scott Manning Stevens, eds., *Why you can’t teach United States history without American Indians* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2015), pp. 9–25; King, *The Black shoals*, pp. 79, 83, 90, 93; Julie L. Reed, ‘Thinking multidimensionally: Cherokee boundaries above, below, and beyond’, in *The power of maps and the politics of borders: papers from the conference held at the American Philosophical Society, October 2019: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 110, no. 4 (Philadelphia, PA, 2021), pp. 57–70.

considering cowpaths, rivers, towns, and islands, readers will meet Lower Creeks, Yamacraws, and Yamasees in the towns of Coweta and Yamacraw, and Yuchis from Palachacolas or Mount Pleasant. Islands feature as cattle ranches that because of distance operated beyond the reach of English law. The Savannah River emerges as a corridor of corn-destroying, treaty-breaking, wild water plant-wrecking cattle, site of diplomatic protest featuring nut milk, and location of a pork barbecue that protected Indigenous peoples' lands, regardless of their feelings about livestock.

The second part of this essay considers cattle knowledge on several waterways that flowed between Georgia and the Floridas. The St. Johns, Coosa, and Wakulla rivers connected Creeks, Seminoles, and Black Seminoles to ports, forts, and trading houses. People from the town of Little Tallassee on the Coosa River met the traders who would take over factories on the St. Johns. Through intermarriage Creeks educated the Spanish about the commodity exchange economy in deerskins; this knowledge informed later Spanish tariff policy about the Creek and Seminole beef and leather trades. The St. Johns and Wakulla rivers, which became sites of expanding Seminole cattle production, provide evidence of additional knowledge of cattle as tribute, beef on the hoof, and leather.

I

Generalist readers, to orientate themselves in time and space, should—counterintuitively—embrace the idea of disorientation. Creek history features a disorientating array of people and places because politics happened at the town level and because towns regularly moved. Muscogee leaders called *micos* and their advisors represented a single town (*talwa*). Leaders relocated their towns from one river to another when so doing was advantageous: to distance the town from a particular set of colonists, or to form a daughter town comprised of ethnic minorities or refugees. A town was thus a specific place, but it was also a place that appeared and disappeared on imperial maps. The Spanish, English, and American people who

misunderstood Creek politics and towns frequently debated claims to Indigenous lands and waterways, but the borders their negotiators drew on maps were aspirational.¹⁰ The Creek

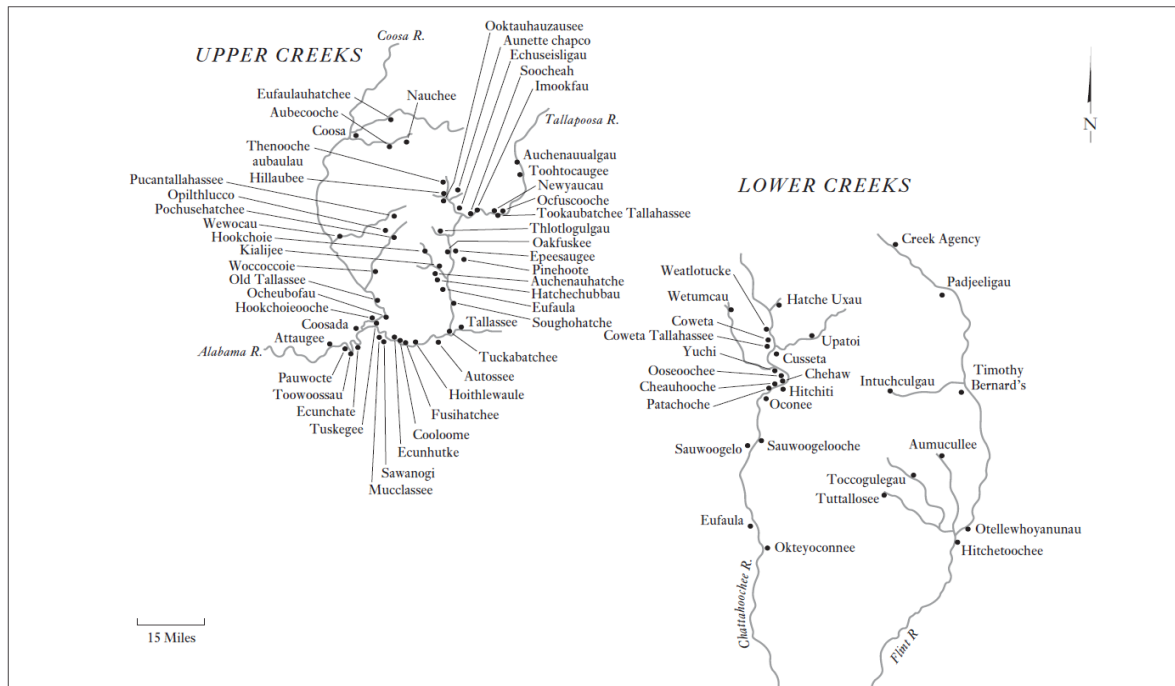


Figure 1. Rivers and towns of Creek Country c. 1800. Ethridge, *Creek Country*, p. 29. Off the map, readers may wish to imagine Yamacraws and English colonists to the east on the Savannah River c. 1730–50, and Creek and Seminole towns on the St. Johns and Wakulla rivers, to the south and east in the late 1700s.

towns that emerged at the end of the seventeenth century were nearly always located on river systems in what became Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee.

Before 1730 a combination of Indigenous peoples’ cattle knowledge, consumption, ownership, and hostility is discernible along the St. Johns River, the Suwanee River, and near Tallahassee in what was called Apalachee. As part of the process of making New Spain seem familiar, the Spanish introduced their cattle and knowledge of cattle as sources of meat in southeastern North America by 1521. During the Protohistoric period chicken, pig, and cow

¹⁰ Braund, *Deerskins & duffels*, pp. 19–23; James L. Hill, *Creek Internationalism in an Age of Revolution, 1763–1818* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022), pp. 9, 14; H. Thomas Foster II, ‘The Yuchi Indians along the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers (1715–1836): A synthesis’, in Jason Baird Jackson, ed., *Yuchi Indian histories before the removal era* (Lincoln, NE, 2012), pp. 101–22, at 114–15; William S. Belko, ‘Introduction’, in Belko, ed., *America’s hundred years’ war: U.S. expansion to the Gulf coast and the fate of the Seminole, 1763–1858* (Gainesville, FL, 2011), pp. 1–24; David Narrett, *Adventurism and empire: the struggle for mastery in the Louisiana-Florida borderlands, 1762–1803* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2015); Hahn, *The invention of the Creek nation*; Charlotte Biggs, ‘Aspirational designs, interdependency, and borders: an analysis of Muscogee border-policy. (1764–1790)’, (Master’s dissertation, Cardiff University, 2022).

remains were all present but not major resources for Indigenous people. Seventeenth-century missionized Native Americans, especially Apalachees and to a lesser degree, Timucuan, managed lots of cattle—more livestock than residents of Spanish towns—but they raised them for Spanish consumption. Colonists’ diseases, against which Native Americans lacked immunity, were devastating. By the mid-seventeenth century Indigenous populations had plummeted in this Mississippian ‘shatter zone’ of disease and slaving, and an outmigration from Spanish missions of people and knowledge of cattle occurred. Some people, and cattle formerly herded by Apalachees and Timucuan remained: Indigenous fields in fallow became prime cattle pasturage for the animals that bore the descendants of Creek herds.¹¹

In the early eighteenth century wars between the English, French, and Spanish allowed for the continuation of Indigenous cattle supervision as new multiethnic towns emerged. The Yamasee War prompted the relocation of Yamasees into proto- Creek and Seminole towns in what became Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. An 1837 U.S. history locates Yamasees, cattle, corn, and hogs to the south of St. Augustine and on the forks of the St. Marks (San Marcos) River in 1718, suggesting that Yamasees quickly took over herds. An eighteenth-century leader named Cowkeeper (Ahaye) inherited other animals descended from cattle abandoned at the La Chua ranch, the place of the Timucuan Rebellion. Sometime after 1716, a *mico* named Tomochichi left the town of Apalachicola on the Chattahoochee River to settle a *talwa* of Yamasees and Lower Creeks. They founded the town of Yamacraw on the

¹¹ Sluyter, *Black ranching frontiers*, p. 14; Earle, *Body of the conquistador*, p. 56; Barnet Pavao-Zuckerman, ‘Vertebrate Subsistence in the Mississippian-Historic Transition’, *Southeastern Archaeology* 19 (Winter 2000): pp. 135–44; Elizabeth J. Reitz and C. Margaret Scarry, *Reconstructing historic subsistence with an example from sixteenth-century Spanish Florida* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1985), p. 67; Paul E. Hoffman, “‘Until the Land Was Understood’: Spaniards confront la Florida, 1500–1600”, in Viviana Diaz Balsera and Rachel A. May, eds., *La Florida: five hundred years of Hispanic presence* (Gainesville, FL, 2014), pp. 69–82, at 77; Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, eds., *Mapping the Mississippian shatter zone: the colonial Indian slave trade and regional instability in the American south* (Lincoln, NE, 2003), 13.

Savannah River, where in 1732/33 they welcomed English men and women to the place that those colonists called Georgia.¹²

The townspeople of Yamacraw were a small, powerful group made more so through the intercession of a Lower Creek woman from the town of Coweta named Mary Musgrove (also known as Mary Mathewes, Mary Bosomworth, and Coosaponakeesa). Musgrove became the Georgia colony's most significant Creek cattle rancher, in addition to working as leader James Oglethorpe's advisor, interpreter, hostess, and recruiter for warriors on expeditions against the Spanish. She was what historians call a cultural broker or go-between, whom Native Americans recognized as Indigenous, whom colonists recognized as mestizo or mixed-race, and who lived in Native and non-Native worlds. Creek cultural brokers were common because Creeks were matrilineal, and women married outside of their clan. Musgrove's knowledge and labour forged trade connections—with Creeks and South Carolinians—on which English colonists depended in order to combat the frequent hunger that characterized their experiences and perceptions.¹³

Before colonists made their way to the Savannah River, South Carolinians gave them boats to transport people, provisions, and animals there. The South Carolina assembly also resolved to provide one hundred and four head of cattle and twenty-five hogs to their new neighbours. By February 1735/36 the South Carolinian William Bull had agreed to deliver

¹² Jane Landers, "'Giving Liberty to All': Spanish Florida as a Black sanctuary, 1673–1790", in Balsera and May, eds., *La Florida*, pp. 117–40, at 127; John Lee Williams, *The territory of Florida . . .* (New York, 1837), p. 180; James Cusick, 'King Payne and his policies: a framework for understanding the diplomacy of the Seminoles of La Chua, 1784–1812', in Belko, *America's hundred years' war*, pp. 41–53, at 42; Weisman, 'The plantation system', pp. 138, 141; Megan Kate Nelson, *Trembling earth: a cultural history of the Okefenokee Swamp* (Athens, GA, 2005), pp. 42, 133; Todd, *Tomochichi*, p. 10; Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, p. 87; Steven J. Peach, 'Creek Indian globetrotter: Tomochichi's trans-Atlantic quest for traditional power in the colonial southeast', *Ethnohistory* 60 (Fall 2013): pp. 605–35, at p. 609.

¹³ Green, 'Mary Musgrove', pp. 29, 32; Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, p. 14; Braund, *Deerskins & duffels*, pp. 11–13; Ethridge, *Creek country*, pp. 115–16; Andrew K. Frank, 'Taking the state out: Seminoles and Creeks in late eighteenth-century Florida', *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 84 (Summer 2005): pp. 10–27, at 23; Nancy L. Hagedorn, "'A Friend to Go Between Them': The interpreter as cultural broker during Anglo-Iroquois councils, 1740–70", *Ethnohistory* 35 (1988): 60–80; Saunt, *A new order of things*, 67–89; Herrmann, *No useless mouth*, ch. 1; Carla Cevasco, *Violent appetites: hunger in the early northeast* (New Haven, CT, 2022).

‘some hundreds of Cattle’ to the Savannah River, and ‘the Prices of Cattle’ rose daily.¹⁴

Imperial maps promoting the colonization of Georgia can be useful for imagining the location of some of the above herds.

English author and Georgia trustee Benjamin Martyn co-produced maps about Georgia with Oglethorpe, including the frontispiece to the 1733 edition of Martyn’s *Reasons for establishing the colony of Georgia*. This map revised one of their earlier maps; both versions borrowed material from Thomas Nairne’s 1708 map to present an uninhabited Florida panhandle (figure 2). The 1733 composite map allowed them to claim more territory for Georgia and to deemphasize Spanish claims. The map identified at least two Creek polities—designated ‘Okesee nation’ and ‘Talavoossee’—but failed to record the Yamacraws, the colony’s nearest neighbours. Oglethorpe’s and Martyn’s editorial choices invite a more sceptical portrayal of the place with ‘no inhabitants’ that includes ‘Old Apalachee’. Readers

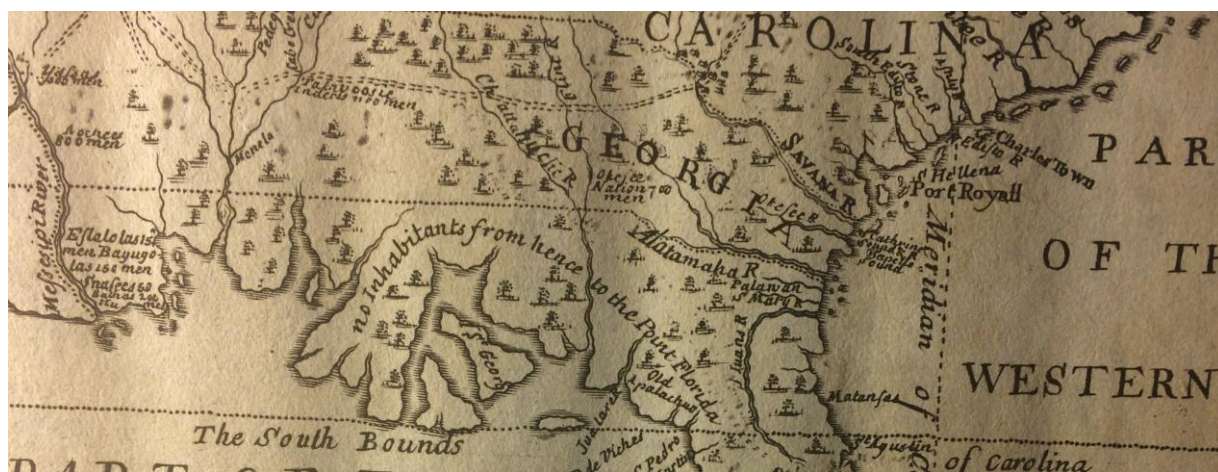


Figure 2. Benjamin Martyn, *Reasons for establishing the colony of Georgia*, inset before frontispiece, the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island. Permission needed.

now know that old fields were full of grazing Apalachee and Timucuan cattle herds in seventeenth-century Florida. Add to this the fact that Andrew Sluyter has mapped open-range cattle onto this stretch of the Gulf Coast before 1700, and the knowledge that Creek women opened fields in fallow to cattle to graze on wild grasses and weeds, and a counter-reading of

¹⁴ Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, p. 71; Benjamin Martyn, *Reasons for establishing the colony of Georgia* . . . 2nd edition (London, 1733), p. 47; Moore, *A voyage to Georgia*, qu. p. 47.

this map becomes possible: to locate Indigenous cattle knowledge, readers should interpret these uninhabited, old, and abandoned fields and towns explicitly as Indigenous cattle space.¹⁵

Creeks such as Mary Musgrove acquired knowledge of cattle from infancy from her matrilineal kin. Their expertise probably included knowledge of beef, property, and gifts. Musgrove's uncle, Brims, the *mico* of Coweta (on the Ocmulgee River) owned slaves and cattle, and served lavish beef feasts. Feasts have been interpreted as a form of hospitality, but as Carla Cevalco has recently suggested, they also served as a form of hunger knowledge. Brims's cattle knowledge existed in tension with that of English colonists, who put oxen to work pulling ploughs, used manure as fertilizer, and preserved beef and milk with salt. Colonists thought it strange when Creeks slaughtered many cattle at once, whether to gorge or to provide gifts for conspicuous consumption.¹⁶

Musgrove came to possess hybrid Indigenous, English, Spanish, and African knowledge of cattle. Her ranch and trading house was called Cowpen. She moved there with her first husband, John (or Johnny) Musgrove, who was also Creek, from the town of Tuckesaw on the Savannah River. He probably learned about cattle on the estate where his English father owned a couple hundred head. Before Cowpen, the Musgroves had lived in the multiethnic Yamasee town of Apalachicola, where John's uncle was the *mico*. That town's people sometimes joined English colonists on expeditions against the Spanish, but also stole their bondpeople and killed their livestock. The Musgroves brought livestock to Cowpen, where excavations from the trash pits uncovered a butter churn and animal remains of cattle,

¹⁵ Louis de Vorsey, Jr., 'Maps in colonial promotion: James Edward Oglethorpe's use of maps in "Selling" the Georgia scheme', *Imago Mundi* 38 (1986): pp. 35–45, pp. 35, 36, 38, 39; Sluyter, *Black ranching frontiers*, p. 6; Ethridge, *Creek country*, p. 169.

¹⁶ Green, 'Mary Musgrove', pp. 29–32, 34–35; Todd, *Tomochichi*, p. 80; Cevalco, *Violent appetites*, p. 80; Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, p. 213; Piker, *Okfuskee*, pp. 99–100, 123–24; Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, pp. 67–135; Herrmann, *No Useless Mouth*, p. 170; Jane Mt. Pleasant, 'A new paradigm for pre-Columbian agriculture in North America', *Early American Studies* 13 (Spring 2015): pp. 374–412, at 378–79, 382.

deer, chickens, and pigs. Mary Musgrove sold beef to colonists while John voyaged to England with a Creek delegation that included Senauki and Tomochichi. The following year John Musgrove and ‘his wife’ were granted rights as sole traders to the Yamacraws.¹⁷ From Tuckesaw and Apalachicola towns and time at Cowpen, Mary Musgrove acquired further knowledge of cattle as legitimate and stealable property, and sources of dairy, in addition to beef.

Mary Musgrove’s cattle-raising relied on enslaved knowledge while violating the colony’s prohibition against slavery. Although the trustees forbade slavery at the time of Georgia’s founding, colonists and Creeks became imbricated in the intercolonial trade in enslaved Native Americans and Africans. The people who raised South Carolinians’ herds were almost certainly enslaved, and the cowherders who drove them to Savannah could have been, too. Mary Musgrove’s beef, corn, peas, and potatoes were produced through the labour of enslaved Africans, enslaved Native Americans (possibly Yamasees), and Spanish prisoners of war. She and John Musgrove owned at least two slaves of African descent. By 1747 a remarried Mary Bosomworth would keep enslaved Africans on St. Catherine’s Island, two years before slavery became legal under English law.¹⁸

Enslaved Africans travelling on cowpaths new and old to Savannah, Darien, Macon, Pensacola, and St. Augustine acquired knowledge of European information and Indigenous wild foods, which they added to what they already knew about cattle from Fouta Djallon and the Senegambia and Niger River Valleys. Oglethorpe’s account of the 1739 Stono Rebellion explained that enslaved Africans had acted on Spanish proclamations of freedom because they ‘were Cattel-Hunters, and knew the Woods’. Because of seasonal flooding, cattle drivers

¹⁷ Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, pp. 56, 58–9, 65, 81, 84–85, 98; Sluyter, *Black ranching frontiers*, pp. 236–37.

¹⁸ Todd, *Tomochichi*, p. 82; Green, ‘Mary Musgrove’, pp. 32, 37; Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, p. 72; Joyce E. Chaplin, *An anxious pursuit: agricultural innovation and modernity in the lower south, 1730–1815* (Williamsburg, VA, 1993), pp. 117–19.

needed to learn where cowpaths crossed water; across Creek east-west trade paths most fall lines on rivers were the best fording places. Fall lines were ecotones where the ‘edge effect’ occurred, a process that probably created an unusual variety of wild foods. One example is river moss, which Creeks gathered to make a salty dipping condiment. Cattle were rounded up after summertime from mossy shoals, communal fields, salt licks, and nibbling the new growth from the wire grass that Creeks deliberately burned to manage it. Autumn roundups and springtime penning to deliver pregnant cows were rare examples of the moments when cowpens contained animals. Enslaved cattle ranchers managed the cattle of Cowpen and others like it by allowing cattle free range.¹⁹

The effect of wandering cattle on rivers was dramatic, and would have affected some food knowledges of the Yamacraws and their neighbours. Creeks who became active in the livestock trade purchased more salt, which may have mitigated concerns about cattle eating river moss. The major change was to river cane, which Creeks called *lap lako*. Its evergreen nature, enormous spread, and resilience made it a crucial wild water food. Creeks ate the seeds from smaller cane, harvested young shoots, and used it to forage their livestock. Cattle killed this difficult-to-kill cane because they are selective and patch grazers: they eat what they like best, congregate to feed, and then range to find more. Their tastes inhibited new growth, and their ranging compacted the soil.²⁰

Native American knowledge—of mobile enslaved cowherders, cattle as unwelcome, and treaties that dealt with the movement of ungulates across river boundaries—is discernible in February 1735/36, at the milk and honey meeting. Senauki and Tomochichi, Mary Musgrove, and a few other Indigenous women and children ‘came down’ to the Savannah

¹⁹ Carson, *Making an Atlantic world*, pp. 72, 78; Rodney M. Baine, ed., *Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe* (Athens, GA, 1994), qu. p. 253; Ethridge, *Creek country*, pp. 34–37, 121–23, 160–69; Braund, *Deerskins & duffels*, p. 19; Alejandra Dubcovsky, *Informed power: communication in the early American south* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), p. 15; Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, p. 72.

²⁰ Ethridge, *Creek country*, pp. 49, 50, 164–69.

River and boarded a 200-tonne ship to meet Oglethorpe and visiting English missionaries. On board, Tomochichi gave a gift of venison, a mutually recognizable meat symbolizing masculinity and status. Through Musgrove as translator, he then relayed grievances by Yuchis, who ‘complain’d that Cattle were pass’d over into their Country . . . and that Planters had come and settled Negroes there.’ Yuchis settled towns close to Lower Creek *talwas*, and on the Savannah River they came either from Mount Pleasant or Palachacolas. From Palachacolas, a German protestant settlement called New Ebenezer was about twenty-five miles away. According to Tomochichi, these colonists possessed the cattle. So did South Carolinians, whom he said owned the slaves. The accusation that South Carolinians had ‘settled’ Black people in Yuchi territory conveyed knowledge of a group of enslaved Africans experiencing a degree of seasonal autonomy. It also evinced Yuchi familiarity with a treaty agreed before Georgia existed, in which Creeks and South Carolinians had marked the Savannah River as a boundary. The agreement constrained South Carolinians’ settlement of people and livestock south of the river and pledged Creeks not to cross the river’s north bank. Yuchis complained about colonists’ violation of a Creek treaty because the cattle were eating Yuchi corn and because the Yuchis shared hunting territory with the Yamacraws.²¹

To strengthen the message, Senauki also made an argument that is easier to identify as an anti-cattle argument if one is familiar with Indigenous wild foods. Senauki gave the English ‘two large Jars, one of Honey, and one of Milk’. Jennifer Bonnell compares honeybees to ranging cattle in the era before barbed wire, pointing out that because they cannot be fenced in, they possess a liminal status between domesticated and wild. Creek

²¹ Moore, *A voyage to Georgia*, pp. 34 (‘came down’, venison), 35 (‘complain’d’, owners), 83 (corn); Wesley, *An extract of the Rev. mr. John Wesley’s journal*, p. 10 (Musgrove, children, women); Peach, ‘Creek Indian globetrotter’, pp. 621, 625; Daniel T. Elliott, ‘Yuchi in the lower Savannah river valley: historical context and archaeological confirmation’, and Steven C. Hahn, “‘They Look upon the Yuchis as Their Vassals’: an early history of Yuchi-Creek political relations”, in Jackson, ed., *Yuchi Indian histories*, pp. 73–99, at pp. 74–77, 123–53, at p. 135; Michael A. LaCombe, *Political gastronomy: food and authority in the English Atlantic world* (Philadelphia, PA, 2012), pp. 70–71, 86; Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, p. 63; Mulcahy, *Hubs of empire*, p. 107.

women foraged for honey in late autumn in the same places on the deerskin hunt where they gathered hickory nuts. In all likelihood one of Senauki's jars contained milk from these nuts, which appear in primary sources such as William Bartram's naturalist writings, and extensively in historiography. Oglethorpe resolved the complaint by requiring inhabitants to withdraw the trespassing cattle and slaves after receiving the gifts of wild Indigenous venison, honey, and nut milk.²²

Mary Musgrove's thoughts about the meeting do not survive. Senauki's biographer says that she and Musgrove were friendly. One wonders, as Musgrove translated the cattle complaints and failed or chose not to clarify the nature of the milk, whether she thought about her beef and dairy operations. Her herds were known to cross the Carolina-Creek boundary at the Savannah River to graze on fallow fields. It is difficult to say whether her cattle were considered Creek or English and therefore whether they violated the previous treaty. In any case, it is difficult to rule out the possibility that they consumed Indigenous crops and wild foods.²³

Tomochichi's adoption of Mary as his 'fictive niece' and her second marriage to Jacob Mathewes shed light on Mary Mathewes's use of marriage and reciprocal kin relationships to retain access to land and cattle. Creeks would have considered her part of a land-owning collective of women who were responsible for improved land and the food supply. English property law in Georgia, which is what required her to become Mary Mathewes, did not permit women to hold land. John Musgrove's will bequeathed their young sons their herds, and Mary the 500-acre plantation. The Georgia trustees recognized the

²² Moore, *A voyage to Georgia*, pp. 34–36, qu. at 36; Jennifer Bonnell, 'Occupational hazards: honeybee labour as an interpretive device in animal history', in Jennifer Bonnell and Sean Kheraj, eds., *Traces of the animal past: methodological challenges in animal history* (Calgary, 2022), pp. 49–72, at 52; William Bartram, *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida, the Cherokee country, the extensive territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek confederacy, and the country of the Chactaws . . .* (Philadelphia, 1791), p. 38; Braund, *Deerskins & duffels*, p. 19; Ethridge, *Creek Country*, pp. 56, 58, 116–17.

²³ Sweet, 'Senauki', p. 80; Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, p. 84.

widow Musgrove's value to them by permitting her temporary landowner status until her sons reached majority. But both sons died, so she remarried. At the 1737 barbecue where Tomochichi roasted a pig, he granted Mary Mathewes the right to own the Yamacraw tract that included his town at the point when other Yamacraws were no longer using it. He identified the couple's current cattle herds when he stipulated that any livestock not belonging to Mathewes and her new husband be removed. Tomochichi's barbecued pork, chosen instead of venison, can be read as a symbol of tolerance for Mathewes's activities selling animals on the hoof and a harbinger of Creeks' dependence on Mathewes to represent them in court in future.²⁴

After Jacob died Mary Mathewes married Thomas Bosomworth. In 1747 Malatchi, a new Coweta leader and old kinsman, granted to Thomas Bosomworth '& Mary his wife' St. Catherine's island and two others. In so doing Malatchi evidenced knowledge of colonizers' ideas about islands and laws about land and slavery. James Oglethorpe had long envisioned the small island that lay opposite Savannah as an English cattle ranch. Thomas Bosomworth followed a similar line of thinking about other islands when he moved a herd of cattle onto St. Catherine's, where Yamacraw cowboys tended the cattle, and where enslaved Africans managed the Bosomworths' agricultural fields and buildings. Malatchi's grant acknowledged that the Savannah court was unlikely to recognize a land sale to a Creek widow while facilitating the expansion of hybrid knowledge and labour necessary to raise cattle. It allowed Thomas and Mary Bosomworth to enslave Africans on an island of Creek rather than English jurisdiction—at least until other Creeks stopped recognizing their claims in 1757.²⁵

²⁴ Theda Perdue, "'A Sprightly Lover Is the Most Prevailing Missionary": intermarriage between Europeans and Indians in the eighteenth-century south', in Thomas J. Pluckhahn and Robbie Ethridge, eds., *Light on the path: the anthropology and history of the southeastern Indians* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2006), pp. 165–78, at 168–70, 170, 174; Lee Ann Caldwell, 'Foreword', in John Perceval, *The Journal of the earl of Egmont: abstract of the trustees proceedings for establishing the colony of Georgia, 1732–1738*, ed. Robert G. McPherson (Athens, GA, 2021 [1962]), pp. vii–x, at ix; Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, p. 93; Todd, *Tomochichi*, p. 87; Green, 'Mary Musgrove', pp. 33, 38.

²⁵ 'Deed of feoffment from Malatchi Opiya Mico to Thomas [and] Mary Bosomworth, 1747 Jan. 4 / sworn before J. Bullryne', *Digital Library of Georgia*, https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg_zlna_krc036#item, accessed 7

Readers now know where cattle were and were not. It is thus possible to say more about hybrid Indigenous knowledge of cattle as food and as not food by mid-century. Apalachee, Timucuan, Yamasee, and Creek cattle become discernible on depopulated coasts visible on imperial maps, and fording rivers imagined as impassable boundaries in treaties. Yuchis' complaints about cattle illustrate knowledge of animals as annoyances on the Savannah River. On a ship on this river Mary Musgrove defended the anti-cattle interests of people whose land, waterways, and wild foods cattle threatened. Later in life, she acquired a Creek island where colonial laws had no power, and where she learned to maintain ownership of land, beef cattle, dairy cows, and enslaved people.

II

Manuscript maps and letters that deal with trade on waterways are crucial for evidencing Indigenous cattle knowledge in the second half of the eighteenth century. Although towns were the most important places in Creek and Seminole geographies of knowledge, Atlantic- and Gulf-facing trading houses and forts on rivers loom largest in Spanish and American archives. Those on the St. Johns illustrate continuities in the Florida beef trade, and an increase through Creek intermarriage in the cattle population near trading posts. The Wakulla River connected to an important trading house at San Marcos de Apalache, and here and Pensacola were the places most relevant to discussions about Spanish tariffs on Creek *cueros*. These spaces illustrate evolving knowledge of cattle: as property produced on plantations by enslaved Black Seminoles; on the hoof as a trade good that attracted thieves and filled the bellies of Spanish soldiers; and processed into leather for Creek export.

Creeks continued to use marriage to protect their interests in the deerskin and cattle trades. Deerskins were the primary commodity that Mary Musgrove traded at Cowpen;

July 7 2023 (qu.); Martyn, *Reasons for establishing the colony of Georgia*, p. 42; Green, 'Mary Musgrove', pp. 34–39, 44; Hahn, *The life and times of Mary Musgrove*, pp. 186–88; Hahn, *Invention of the Creek nation*, pp. 261–63.

Creeks traded about half of all deerskins in the eighteenth-century southeast. James Carson has remarked on the similarities between deer-hunting and cattle-tending in the Creek towns of Little Tallassee and Coweta.²⁶ Metawney, like Mary Musgrove, was related to a Coweta headman. Metawney married George Galphin, another trader and agent who worked for the British with the Creeks. The couple made a place on the Savannah River at Silver Bluff, from whence the couple's intermediaries and enslaved boat pilots shipped deerskins, cattle, and other commodities. Metawney's kin relations explicitly limited Galphin's cattle droving to East Florida and its Atlantic ports. When the War for Independence began, he conducted diplomacy with Creek towns for the Americans.²⁷

The war also sparked a scramble by the British and Spanish for trade and other alliances.²⁸ In 1775 at Cow Ford, a toponymic crossing on the St. Johns River, the Scotsman William Panton secured the deerskin trade with Creeks for the British. With John Leslie and several others, he formed Panton, Leslie, and Company, and took over a riverine storehouse. Its previous owner identified for new Spanish administrators an important Upper Creek leader from the town of Little Tallassee on the Coosa River, who was 'partly conected with us in the trading busines'. Alexander McGillivray, the son of Sehoy Marchand, a member of the influential Creek Wind clan, was a go-between who cultivated British, Spanish, and American interests. Panton probably met McGillivray and his kin in the late 1760s or early 1770s as they were starting to accumulate cattle and slaves. Bernardo de Gálvez, who led the Spanish siege of British Pensacola in 1781, wrote that Creeks helped by supplying 'fresh meat', and his use of the word 'ganado' suggests an unknowable quantity of slaughtered cattle. By 1784 McGillivray had made the case to the Spanish that Panton and Leslie should

²⁶ Braund, *Deerskins & duffels*, p. 71; Carson, *Making an Atlantic world*, p. 1.

²⁷ Bryan C. Rindfleisch, *George Galphin's intimate empire: the Creek Indians, family, and colonialism in early America* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2019), pp. 40, 78, 117; Braund, *Deerskins and duffels*, pp. 45–46, 50–51; Herrmann, *No Useless Mouth*, p. 100.

²⁸ Hill, *Creek internationalism*, pp. 19–74.

continue to supply his people with necessary trade goods. His sister, Sophia Durant, started trading her cattle to the company, and Panton and Leslie's traders continued to marry Creek women.²⁹

The rivers where Panton, Leslie and Company opened trading houses—the St. Johns and the Wakulla—allow readers to continue to imagine Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge of cattle as beef. One of the trading houses on the St. Johns, which came to be known as Concepción, had fifty to sixty slaves and several hundred head of cattle, which it supplied to the Spanish garrison in St. Augustine. After 1783 the Spanish government's historically hungry soldiers were East Florida's chief beef consumers. This supply chain from Native Americans to Spaniards was not new; the Alachua Seminoles who traded at Concepción were called Alachuas after their town, La Chua, named for the seventeenth-century Spanish cattle ranch and led by the *mico* named Cowkeeper.³⁰ Panton and Leslie took over many other trading houses moving westward across the Gulf of Mexico.³¹

The Wakulla River became a corridor of enslaved peoples' cattle production for the beef trade. Panton, Leslie, and Company had a store on the Wakulla a little upriver from the Spanish fort San Marcos de Apalache, sited on a peninsula at the confluence of the Wakulla

²⁹ William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian traders of the southeastern Spanish borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783–1847* (Pensacola, FL, 1985), pp. 24, 27; [Charles McLatchy to Arturo O'Neill], Apalachee, 4 Mar. 1784, AGI, Papeles de Cuba (PC), 36, ED_143_R_082, fo. 664r; Bernardo de Gálvez, *Diario de las operaciones de la expedición contra la plaza de Panzacola concluida por las armas de S.M. católica, baxo las órdenes del mariscal de campo d. Bernardo de Galvez* (Havana, 1781), the Newberry Library, Special Collections, VAULT Ayer 150.5 .F6 G2 1781, pp. 19 ('carne fresca'), 20 ('quanto ganado'); Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, 95; Braund, *Deerskins & duffels*, p. 46; Green, 'Mary Musgrove', p. 30; Ethridge, *Creek country*, p. 161; [Arturo O'Neill to Bernardo de Gálvez], Pensacola, 24 Mar. 1783, AGI, PC, 36, fo. 326r; Frank, 'Taking the state out', p. 24.

³⁰ David Narrett, 'William Panton, British merchant and politico: negotiating allegiance in the Spanish and southern Indian borderlands, 1783–1801', *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 96 (Fall 2017): pp. 135–73, at 136; Coker and Watson, *Indian traders*, pp. 34, 365; J. Leitch Wright, Jr., 'Foreword', in Coker and Watson, *Indian traders*, pp. ix–xiii, at xi–xii; Arthur Preston Whitaker, 'Historical Introduction', in *idem.*, transl. and ed., *Documents relating to the commercial policy of Spain in the Floridas, with incidental reference to Louisiana* (DeLand, FL, 1931), p. xxxiv; Parker, 'The cattle trade in East Florida', p. 152; Juneisy Quintata Hawkins, 'Victual connections: Anglo-Spanish food trade in the colonial American southeast, 1704–1763', (PhD dissertation, New York University, 2022), pp. 2, 3, 31; Cusick, 'King Payne and his policies', p. 41; Hill, *Creek internationalism*, p. 57.

³¹ Coker and Watson, *Indian traders*, p. 32.

and St. Marks River. Luis de Bertucat's 1791 plan of the fort, which he drew to seek funding for repairs, described the garrison's 'actual state'. The plan's legend (the 'explicacion')

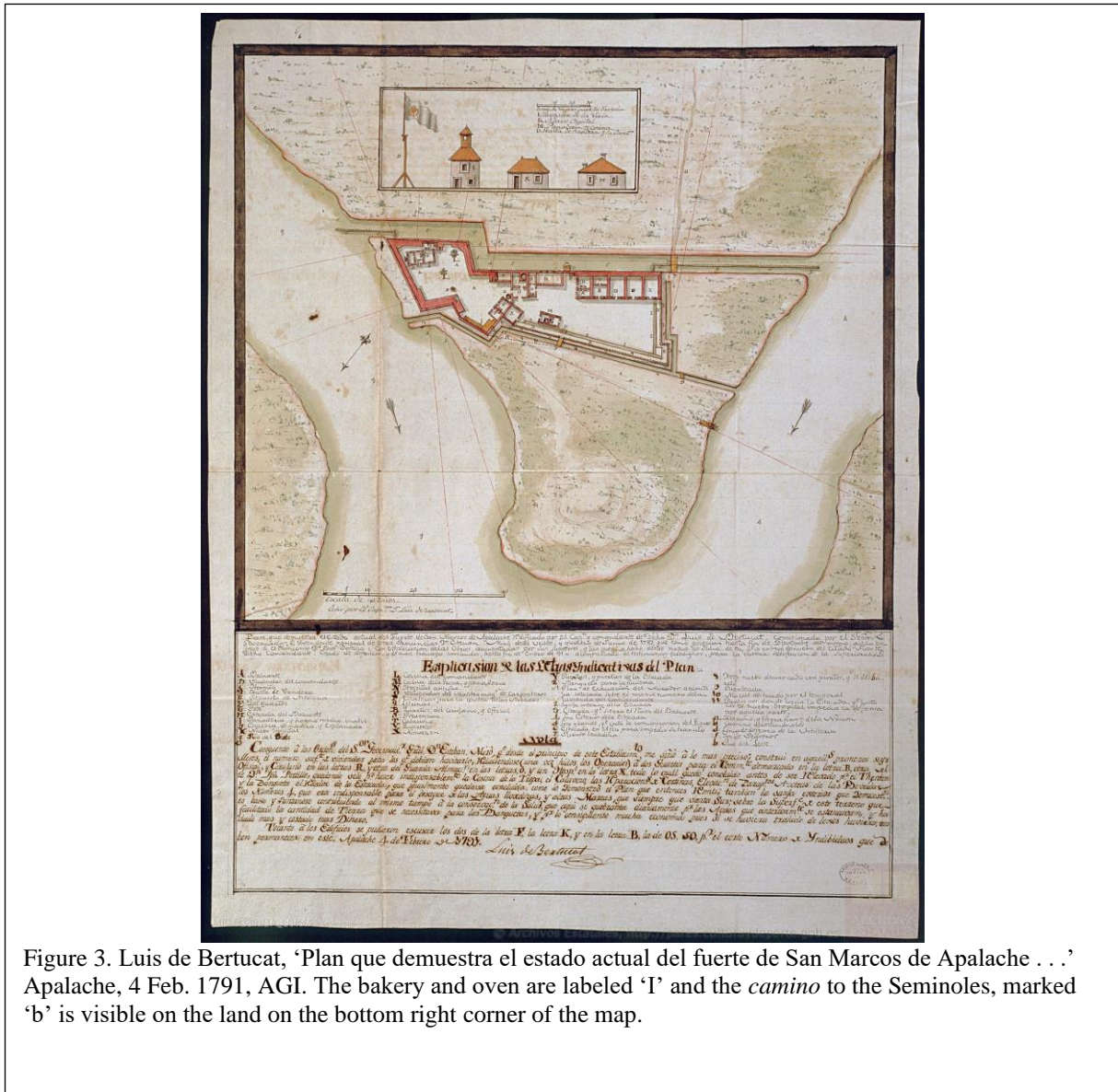


Figure 3. Luis de Bertucat, 'Plan que demuestra el estado actual del fuerte de San Marcos de Apalache . . .' Apalache, 4 Feb. 1791, AGI. The bakery and oven are labeled 'I' and the *camino* to the Seminoles, marked 'b' is visible on the land on the bottom right corner of the map.

described a 'bakery, and a half-useless oven', and paths to the Seminoles that could be interpreted as cowpaths (figure 3). Letters to officials at the fort offer evidence of Seminole conceptualizations of cattle as live beef raised in enslaved Black Seminole towns for Spanish consumers. Jack Kinnaird, a *mico* with several Wakulla River plantations, wrote about one such plantation in 1801 when he complained to the commandant at San Marcos because he had imprisoned 'one of my negroes'. Kinnaird hoped not for the man's liberty, but that the commandant would 'send him to the plantation to his work for as long as he is in the fort he

is no use to you nor me'. Kinnaird's message supports scholars' conclusions that although Black Seminole men and women were autonomous, Seminoles considered them property and expected their tribute of cattle for sale to the Spanish—who, with their faulty ovens probably needed them. Kinnaird tried to get the man working again by offering to apply to this plantation the old practice of relocating a town; he wrote that if the commandant disliked 'my having a plantation so near you', he would 'move my negros away'. Kinnaird linked this proposal explicitly to beef on the hoof. He promised the commandant that his loyalties remained as true as 'when I saw you Last', and asked 'what you will give for good beef Cattle'.³²

Other sources portray knowledge on the Wakulla as knowledge of cattle as the targets of raids and as symbols of alliances. Between 1787–92 and 1799–1803 the infamous filibusterer William Augustus Bowles harassed the Spanish, designated free ports for Creek exports, and issued proclamations of tariffs for revenue only at the outlets of various Gulf-facing waterways. Bowles, who treated Panton and Leslie as competitors, mounted an unsuccessful campaign against their St. Johns store in 1788, sacked their Wakulla River factory in 1792, and besieged fort San Marcos de Apalache for a month in 1800. He transported enslaved cattle-ranchers to the Seminole town of Mikasuki, but at least in 1800 he failed to steal cattle because the storekeeper moved the cattle as a defensive manoeuvre. Fort San Marcos, meanwhile, received beef from Creek allies. Following a positive update about efforts to apprehend Bowles in 1802, leaders from the towns of 'Tamafle' and 'Talasan' delivered deer, turkeys, chickens, and heads of 'wild' cattle. For the preceding three months

³² Coker and Watson, *Indian traders*, p. 32; Weisman, 'The plantation system', pp. 136–38, 141–42, 146; Luis de Bertucat, 'Plan que demuestra el estado actual del fuerte de San Marcos de Apalache . . .' Apalache, 4 Feb. 1791, *Mapas y planos de La Florida y La Luisiana*, MP-FLORIDA_LUISIANA, 139, ED_089_R_001, image 249, <http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/show/19293?nm> ('Panaderia, y horno medio inutil'); [Jack Kinnaird to the commandant at San Marcos de Apalache], Creek Nation, 8 Mar. 1801, AGI, PC, 2372, PC, 2372, ED_145_R_054, fo. 328rv; Cusick, 'King Payne and his policies', p. 47; Hill, *Creek internationalism*, pp. 92, 148–49; For an enslaved Black woman working for Creeks as a cattle rancher see [Josef de Ezpeleta to Bernardo de Gálvez], 8 July 1780, AGI, PC, 4A, ED_143_R_009, fo. 38r.

Spanish soldiers at the post had stomached salted rations ‘day and night’. The commandant estimated that the new supplies would last for a year; the townspeople had given cattle that could be conspicuously consumed as beef, kept alive to avoid the necessity of eating beef pickled, and slaughtered and salted for future rations.³³

When William Panton requested an exemption from tariffs on Creek cattle hides in 1797, Creeks and other Indigenous peoples had been supplying live beef to colonists for more than a century—but Spanish memories were shorter. Although Panton and Leslie won at least one share in the beef contract from the Spanish government in East Florida in 1790, 1791, 1792, and 1793, it became less profitable over time, and in February 1797 William Panton sought to diversify his trading interests by requesting an exemption under the Spanish policy known as *comercio libre*.³⁴ Beginning in the mid-1780s the Spanish Crown, as part of this Bourbon trade policy, made concessions based on their growing knowledge of the Creek deerskin trade. The earliest relaxations allowed more trade between Spanish ports and select foreign ports, such as England to sell deerskins or the West Indies to buy salt; the next allowed for the reduction in import and export duties; and the most generous changes allowed some people exemptions from import and export duties. Alexander McGillivray explained that Creeks gave salt ‘to their Cattle of every kind’. He advocated regularly for the royal privilege of tariff exemptions, which the crown granted to Panton’s company for his import and export of articles ‘of the Indian trade’ at factories in Pensacola and Mobile in September of 1789, and in San Marcos de Apalache in 1790.³⁵

³³ Gilbert C. Din, ‘William Augustus Bowles on the Gulf coast, 1787–1803: unraveling a labyrinthine conundrum [sic],’ *Florida Historical Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (2010): pp. 1–25, at 2; Cusick, ‘King Payne and his policies’, p. 45; William Augustus Bowles, ‘Proclamation’, Apalachicola, 26 Nov. 1799, AGI, PC, 2366, ED_145_R_048, fo. 431r; Coker and Watson, *Indian traders*, pp. 232, 237; [James Innerarity to William Panton, Fort St. Mark’s, 8 Jul. 1800], the Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, Louisiana documents from the National Archive of Cuba (Fondos Floridas), MF 6.1; [Jacob DuBreuil to Juan Manuel de Salcedo], San Marcos de Apalache, April 8, 1802, AGI, PC, 2355, fo. 92r (‘que el día y de noche’).

³⁴ Parker, ‘The cattle trade in East Florida’, p. 159; [William Panton to Juan Ventura Morales], Pensacola, 15 Feb. 1797, AGI, SD, 2670, fos. 127–30.

³⁵ [Alexander McGillivray to Esteban Miró], Pensacola, 26 Feb. 1791, AGI, PC, 184A, ED_106_R_009, fo. 543r (qu.); [Spanish translation, Alexander McGillivray to Arturo O’Neill], Pensacola, 24 Jul. 1785, AGI, PC,

In 1797 the question was whether Spanish policymakers believed that Creek cattle hides were a good constituting part of this trade economy. It was a somewhat hypothetical request: Panton remarked that he presently exported few Creek *cueros*. But the asking of the question indicates a search for access to other markets for byproducts of the beef trade. Panton insisted that cattle hides were ‘an article that must be counted’ as an item produced and traded ‘with the Indians’. He compared the *cueros* to ‘deer skins, or any other’. Panton acknowledged that the Spanish would give preference to their intercolonial beef trade; he requested to export hides but not beef, perhaps because he was aware that he could not compete with the burgeoning trade in *tasajo*, or dried, salt-cured beef, into Cuba and Brazil from other ports in the Spanish empire. In March, the Spanish granted permission: ‘The cow hides in Pensacola and Apalache can be considered as effects traded by the Indians’, and therefore must be exported ‘free from duties’, as their deerskins already were.³⁶ By making the case for another exemption from export tariffs, Panton evidenced for historians Creek and Seminole knowledge of leathermaking.

III

Today the Muscogee Nation is located in Oklahoma, but it was in eighteenth-century Georgia and Florida where it is possible to identify knowledge of cattle in Creek and Seminole towns and plantations, cowpens, hunting territory, fields in fallow, and mossy shoals. I have shown why historians must try to determine the forms that this knowledge took and to identify the

2352, fo. 1rv; [Translation of a letter from Alexander McGillivray to Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes, Little Tallassee, 6 Feb. 1789, sent by Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes to José Manuel de Ezpeleta, San Augustine, 3 Apr. 1789], AGI, PC, 1395; José Antonio Armillas Vicente, ‘La gran confederación India: interacción Hispano-Angloamericana con las naciones indias del sudeste norteamericano a fines del S. XVIII’, in Seminario de Historia de America, eds., *Estudios sobre política indigenista Española en América*, vol. II (Valladolid, 1976), pp. 249–66, at 251; Narrett, ‘William Panton’, p. 152; For ‘artículos del Comercio de Indios’ see [Juan Francisco Arnaud de Courville, index of royal orders and papers related to permissions granted to Panton and Leslie], Pensacola, 23 Dec. 1809, AGI, SD, 2670, fo. 280v.

³⁶ [William Panton to Juan Ventura Morales], Pensacola, February 15, 1797, AGI, SD 2670, fo. 128v; Sluyter, *Black ranching frontiers*, p. 173; [Baron Carondelet to Juan Ventura Morales, New Orleans, March 14, 1797] [sent by Juan Ventura Morales to Pedro Varela y Ulloa, New Orleans, March 31, 1797], AGI, SD, 2670, fos. 134–36, qu. 134v.

people who possessed them before explaining how (or if) that knowledge was food knowledge. At the milk and honey meeting Senauki demonstrated knowledge of cattle as invaders, rather than knowledge of cattle as dairy sources. Mary Musgrove raised cattle for consumption, but she also defended anti-cattle interests by translating Yuchi grievances. I have surveyed these activities to suggest to historians some interpretive strategies that encourage greater scepticism of colonial portrayals of empty territory, dairy milk, and treaties that proscribed the ranging of cattle across rivers. Watery spaces make visible some of the clearest places where cattle were food and where they were not. On the St. Johns and Wakulla cattle were live beef produced by enslaved Black Seminoles, and welcome fresh supplies to Spanish forts. On the Wakulla and in Pensacola they were also a processed export product: leather, consumable in desperate circumstances, but not normally a foodstuff. These places illustrate the distinctions between the local trade in beef and the export trade in leather.

Strategically reading a variety of sources makes it possible to recognize eighteenth-century place-based Indigenous cattle knowledge. European-produced maps and plans can be read as objects that made pro-colonization arguments, and which contain useful cattle keywords. These include toponyms indicating cowpaths or cow fords, and other places including forts with dysfunctional ovens, old and abandoned fields, paths, and rivers. Letters provide evidence of Black Seminoles' expertise and labour, which enabled Seminoles to supply Spaniards with beef; letters also evidence debates about whether inedible leather was a Creek trade good. These sources sharpen our abilities to say when knowledge was food knowledge, to say which foodstuffs constituted that knowledge, and to identify the Creek, Seminole, and African people who made and remade knowledge through their management of domesticated animals and water and terrestrial plants.