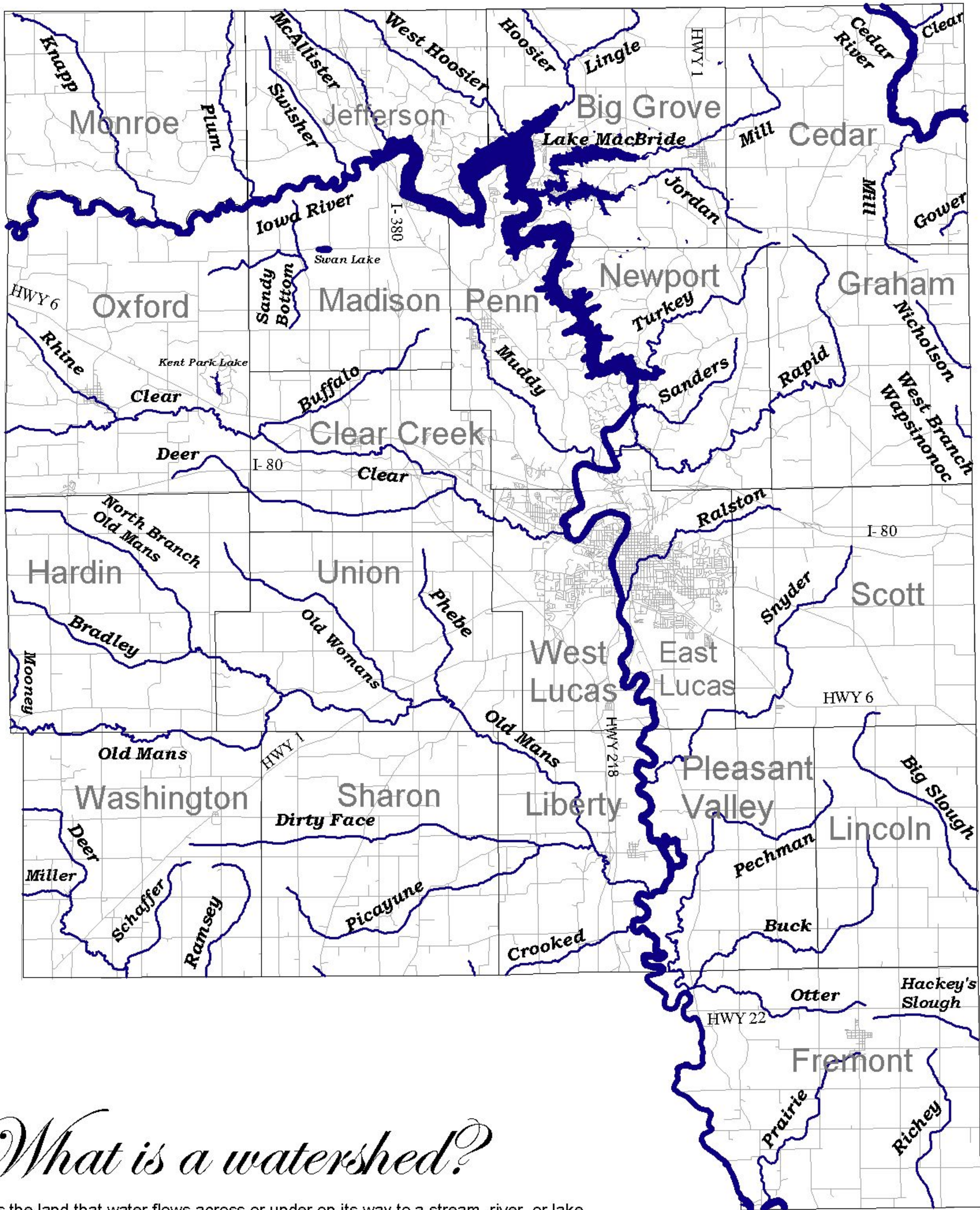


# The Creeks of Johnson County



## What is a watershed?

It's the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river, or lake.

### We all live in a watershed.

Everything we do in our watershed affects the soil, water, air, plants, and animals. Let's work together to keep our watersheds healthy.

### Here are some things you can do to protect your watershed:

#### On the Farm

- Keep plant residue on the surface of sloping cropland. This reduces runoff and prevents sediments, fertilizers and pesticides from entering streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds.

#### At Home

- Landscape your yard with native plants that need a minimum of water and fertilizer.
- Use only the amount of fertilizers and pesticides that plants need.

#### In your Community

- Discover ways you can help the creeks become and stay healthy.

### Johnson County Soil & Water Conservation District

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# HISTORY OF THE CREEK NAMES

## BIG SLOUGH

A slough (slew) is a marshy wetland area, part of a "back water" system in a watershed.

## BRADLEY CREEK

Stephen and Mary Bradley settled in Hardin Township in 1869 and engaged in farming. Stephen taught school and filled offices of township clerk and assessor, secretary and treasurer of Harding Township school board, and served as district and circuit clerk of Johnson County. He made many warm friends by his kind and courteous manner and the people spoke in his favor at the ballot box by a handsome majority.

## BUCK CREEK

C. H. Buck was the first treasurer for the city of Iowa City in 1853.

## BUFFALO CREEK

Named for an early four legged resident of the prairie lands, also known as "bison."

## CLEAR CREEK

Called in Indian tongue "Capi-hammet"- clear water, a beautiful stream taking its rise in Iowa County and dividing the township in two parts in very nearly the middle. Named by Sheriff Trowbridge because of its clear flowing water. Two creeks in Johnson County have this name. One flows into the Iowa River, the other flows into the Cedar River.

Mark Clear, an early settler, owned 200 acres of land bisected by Deer Creek, a tributary of Clear Creek.

## CROOKED CREEK

Left on its own, a creek meanders through level land.

## DEER CREEK

A four legged resident that abounded in the area. Two creeks in the county have this name.

## DIRTY FACE CREEK

A family by the name of Morris lived upon it, and had so many children with frightfully dirty faces.

## GOWER CREEK

James and Borredell Gower came to Johnson County from Maine in 1840, settled at Gower's Ferry on the Cedar River. James represented Cedar County in the first constitutional convention of Iowa.

## HACKEY'S SLOUGH - Origin unknown.

## HOOSIER CREEK

Early Settlers in this area came from Indiana.

## JORDAN CREEK

A Mr. Clarkson fell into an unknown stream. He said laughingly that he had been "dipped in Jordan." The joke hitched on so well to the disputes about true Bible baptism that it was kept agoing; and that stream has been called Jordan creek ever since.

## KNAPP CREEK

Possibly named for an early settler in the township. A Joseph Knapp was killed in a Civil War battle in 1864.

## LINGLE CREEK

Mr. Lingle built a flouring mill on this stream in 1849. The mill was later known as "Bohemian Mill."

## McALLISTER CREEK

With W. M. Stewart, made the first settlement in 1839. James McAllister erected the first cabin.

## MILL CREEK

The first saw mill in the township was located on it in 1839. Previously known as Sells Creek after Anthony Sells, early settler who built a mill there. The mill was later known as "Hendricks Mill."

## MOONEY CREEK - Origin unknown.

## MUDDY CREEK

Perhaps the waters were clouded from water running through the limestone deposits in the area.

## OLD MANS CREEK

The Indians called it Pa-pa-to see-po; Mr. W. F. Smith of Washington township says this creek was a hiding place for the old men, women, and children when the braves went off "on the war path."...when the Sac and Fox were ready to make a foray on their upstream enemies, they would send their noncombatants out onto Pa pa to creek for concealment in case they should be worsted in the fight and be pursued down the [Iowa] river by their victorious enemies.

## OLD WOMANS

Flows into Old Man's. Perhaps an even more remote sanctuary for tribal noncombatants.

## OTTER CREEK

River otters are playful animals that live on fish. They slide down mud banks head first into streams. The habitat in this area of Johnson County was favorable for these swimming mammals.

## PECHMAN CREEK

William Pechman was an early settler and farmer in Lincoln township.

## PHEBE CREEK

Phebe Wilson was born in Tennessee 1808; moved to Union Township 1839 "when this much improved farmland was but wild prairie" as noted in her published obituary 1885. In 1844, Phebe married Edward T. Williams who came from Wales. They helped establish the Welsh Church of Old Man's Creek where they are buried in the church cemetery.

## PICAYUNE CREEK

Picayune was the name given in New Orleans to the old Spanish 6 ¼ cents and later to the American silver 5 cent piece, the charge for ferrying a man afoot across the river. Got its name from a business deal. A man on that creek charged his neighbor a picayune for salting his calf. The man was old Squire Figg, who paid the price, and out of revenge called the creek on which the family lived Picayune Creek.

## PLUM CREEK

Named for a native fruit tree found along creeks and the edges of woodlands.

## PRAIRIE CREEK

The "lone tree" in this area was a large white elm, and was the only tree on the PRAIRIE, and could be seen for many miles... no other trees for miles around except for some four miles toward the river.

## RALSTON CREEK

One of the three commissioners who were charged with selecting the site for the capitol building in Johnson County. From Burlington, Ralston was a member of the first territorial legislature.

## RAMSEY CREEK - Origin unknown.

## RAPID CREEK

Named by Sheriff Trowbridge on account of its roaring, rushing rapid character, especially at the part where Henry Felkner built his saw-mill in 1839-40.

## RHINE CREEK

Flowing into Clear Creek SE of Oxford, head waters in Iowa county near German settlement of Homestead. Sometimes called the "Raging Rhine." May have been called "Cook's Creek" after early settlers in the Oxford area.

## RICHEY CREEK

N. B. Richey came to Johnson County in December of 1864 where he lived and owned 240 acres of land, which he well improved.

## SANDERS CREEK

Cyrus Sanders, born in Ohio, settled in Iowa in 1838, his property a compass and staff and such portables as might be carried in saddlebags. It is possible he has broken down more hazel brush than any other man in Johnson County. He was elected as the first county surveyor in 1839. His wife was appointed to the committee to arrange tables at the first meeting of the Old Settler's Association in June of 1866. The festival was held in the grove at the east end of College Street in Iowa City.

## SANDY BOTTOM CREEK

Known locally as "that sandy-bottomed creek", the upland area of this creek is located in sandy dunes that run along the southern rim of the Iowa River valley as it transects the northern tiers of townships in Johnson County. Wind-reworked alluvium is the term the soil scientists use for these sandy features.

## SCHAFFER CREEK

Perhaps named for Erlis Schaffer. Flows into Deer Creek

## SNYDER CREEK

W.B. Snyder settled in Johnson County in the 1830's before the land had been surveyed by the U.S. Government. An organization known as the "Claim Association of Johnson County" was formed in 1839 by hundreds of settlers who had no land titles for the land they had selected and upon which they had built homes. The organization served "in lieu of statute law for the time and saved the settlement from many a fight, with murder and bloodshed, which would inevitably have occurred in the struggle for choice claims."

## SWISHER CREEK

Benjamin Swisher from Ohio settled in this township in 1841. His marriage to Elizabeth Whitmore was the first wedding in the township. They had eight children.

## TURKEY CREEK

Named by Sheriff Trowbridge, a good place to hunt wild turkeys.

## WAPSI CREEK

Head waters for Wapsinonoc Creek, flows to West Liberty then to the Cedar River.

## WEST HOOSIER CREEK

Settlers in the area came from Indiana, the "Hoosier State."