

Boundary of Sullivan County

Sullivan County Land Grants issued by North Carolina
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Sullivan County: formed in 1779 from Washington County; named in honor of John Sullivan; first court held at Moses Looney's home. In 1787 court house was moved to Joseph Cole's home. County Border: a line beginning at the Steep Rock, thence running along the dividing ridge that divides the waters of Great Canawee [River] and Tennessee at the head of Indian Creek, thence along the ridge that divides the waters of Holstein [River] and Watauga [River] to the mouth of Watauga [River], thence a direct line to the highest part of the Chimney Top Mountain at the Indian boundary; all that part of Washington County which lies northwardly of said dividing line shall be erected into a new and distinct county named Sullivan County, and all that other part of said county which lies southwardly of said dividing line shall continue and remain Washington County. (NC State Records vol. 24 p. 300; NC Laws 1779 chapter 29; Whitney p.681).

The only complete records of Sullivan County between the time that county was settled and to the end of the Civil War are the records of land transactions, Deed Books. Extracting historical and genealogical from the deed books is a very time consuming task. A quick way to find information is to search the grantor-grantee index of deeds but there is more valuable information to be found by reading each individual deed book entry. The names of individuals living on the frontier can be found by carefully compiling the abstract of the land grants and deeds to include all names of persons named in the text of the document. This includes the grantee, chain carriers, witnesses, and assignees.

How land was acquired in Sullivan County

When using these records it is important that the terms to describe land transactions are understood and the process of obtaining a legal title be understood also. Often these terms are used incorrectly and confusion arises as to the dates a landowner actually acquires a legal title to his land. Many times the process was not completed. The claimant either dropped his claim or entry or he moved on farther west.

Sometimes land claimant would sell or assign his entry to another person and the assignee would complete the process.

The Process

The Entry – When settlers arrived in present day Sullivan County and desired to obtain legal ownership of property they needed to first file a land entry with the county land officer and if the county entry taker deemed the entry claim to be legal he in turn submitted it to the state land office. The entry was a brief

description of the land, how many acres it contained and where the land was located. The entry date of the land is important because it means the person making the entry had some knowledge of the land and most likely he already lived in the area. There are exceptions to this as in many cases land speculators would hire an agent to come into the area and stake out entries without ever seeing the land. So one must use some caution when using an entry date as the time a settler came into the county.

The Warrant - When the entry taker of the state land office received an entry he determined if the entry was free of prior claims. If the entry was legal he issued a land warrant which instructed the county surveyor to go upon the land and make a detailed survey and mark the corners of the survey.

The Survey - The surveyor usually with two local inhabitants employed as chain bearers would spell out the metes and bounds of the property and send the details of the survey to the land office.

The Grant - When the survey was received by the land office and all previous transactions were in order a land grant was issued and signed by the governor of the state. The grant was recorded in the land office and placed in a shuck (folder) along with the other documents. A copy of the grant was returned to the owner and was proof that he was the legal owner of the surveyed property. In Sullivan County the owner was required to have the grant recorded in the county deed books but in many instances this was not done.

Understanding the difference between a Patent and a Grant

Patent - The term patent is often used to describe ownership. A patent was a document issued by the crown or colony to an individual showing ownership.

Grant - A grant was issued by the State. Before the Revolutionary War land ownership was obtained by patent, after the war by a grant.

Sullivan County Land Grants

Type – Type of transaction, Survey, Grant, Patent, or Deed Ref-Where the document is recorded and the grant number assigned by the land office

Frm – The grantor. Usually the state in which the land was located

Re – Describes the location, the acreage, and other pertinent information about the document.

File No – The file number of the grant assigned by the land office of the State of North Carolina

http://www.historicsullivan.com/archives_manuscripts_0062_box002_item001.htm