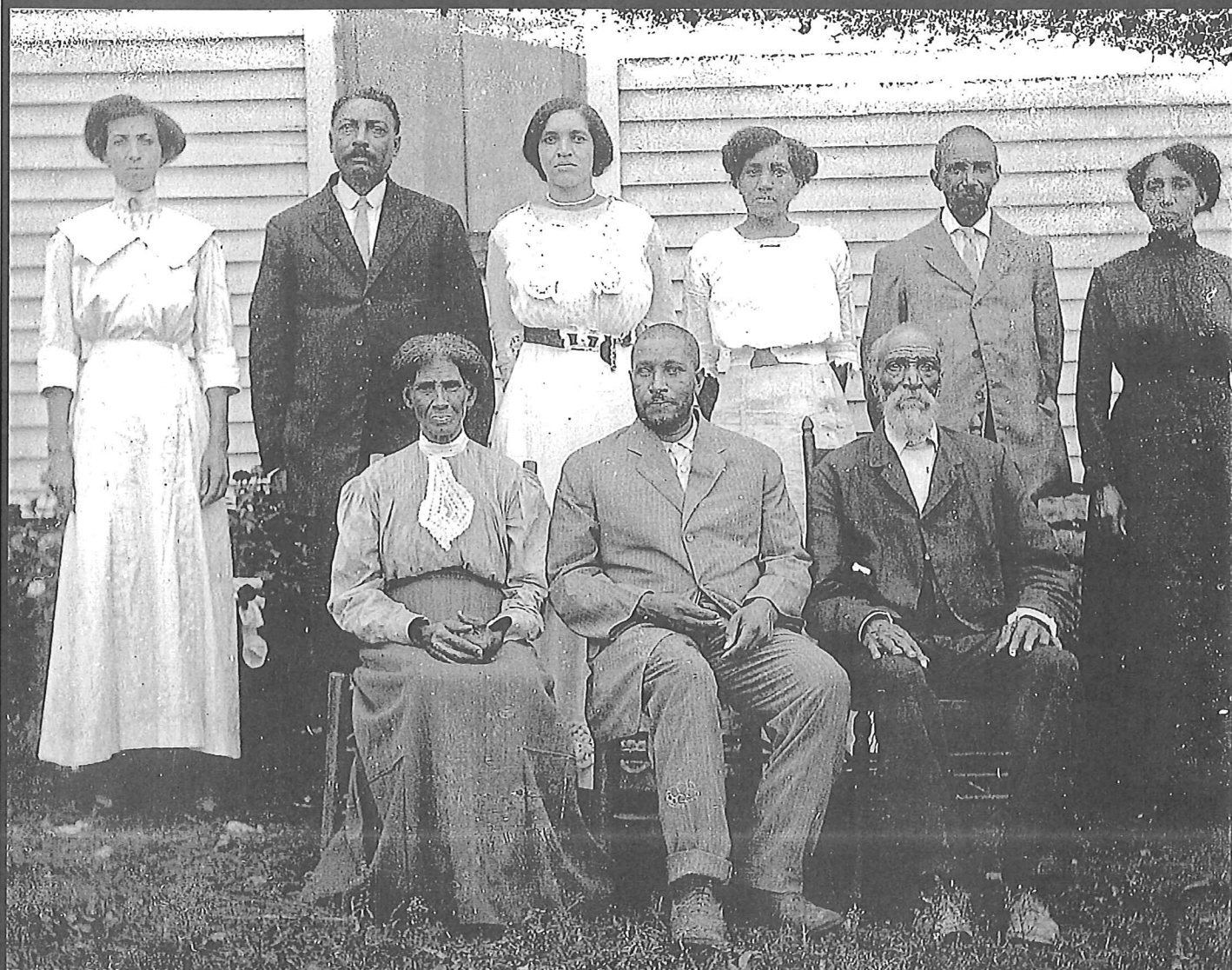


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Sleettown: The Birth
of a Community

Revolutionary War
Warrants Database

Oral History and
Genealogy: Yes, There
is Something For You!

Rev. John "Raccoon"
Smith Marriages

The Kentucky Secretary of State's Land Office Revolutionary War Warrants Database

(The first in a series of articles regarding the Internet availability of Kentucky Land Office records)

By Kandie P. Adkinson
Land Office Division

For over 200 years one of the “best kept secrets in Frankfort” was the existence of records pertaining to Kentucky land claims by Virginia’s Revolutionary War soldiers. Researchers who accessed the “Military Warrants” chapter in Willard Rouse Jilison’s *Old Kentucky Entries & Deeds* could find veterans’ names, warrant numbers, acreage allotments, summaries of military service, and warrant issuance dates, but more extensive research was needed to determine if the warrants were actually used in Kentucky (and by whom).

In October 1998, research became easier when the world gained access to a new online database that identified the veteran (and immediate assignee), his military warrant number, and the file number(s) for patents authorized by his military warrant. Even more exciting was the inclusion of a black & white

image of the warrant scanned from the *Military Warrants Register*. The “Revolutionary War Warrants Database” was officially launched in March 1999 by then-Secretary of State John Y. Brown III and State Historian Dr. Thomas D. Clark. By 2004, the black & white images from the *Military Warrants Register* had been replaced with color scans. Researchers could view documents in actual format!

The patent number identification enabled researchers to request patent files containing the veteran’s warrant (if available), the survey depicting the tract being patented, and the governor’s grant finalizing the patenting transaction. In June 2004, Secretary of State Trey Grayson announced color scanned images of all documents in patent files had been linked to the “Revolutionary War Warrants Database.” The official announcement of the enhanced website occurred 5 June 2004, at the Flag Day meeting of the John Marshall Chapter, NSDAR, in Louisville. In his announcement, Secretary Grayson said “We are uniquely celebrating Flag Day by providing additional information to researchers studying the Revolutionary War period of our nation’s history. It seems only fitting that this announcement be made with the Daughters of the American Revolution as they take such pride in our country and its history.”

Although we cannot provide the exact number of “hits” on the “Revolutionary War Warrants Database” since the original launching, we are aware of numerous individuals who found their ancestors listed on the website then enrolled in heritage organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution. One visitor to our website notified us he had accessed the RW Database and found a possible ancestor. He



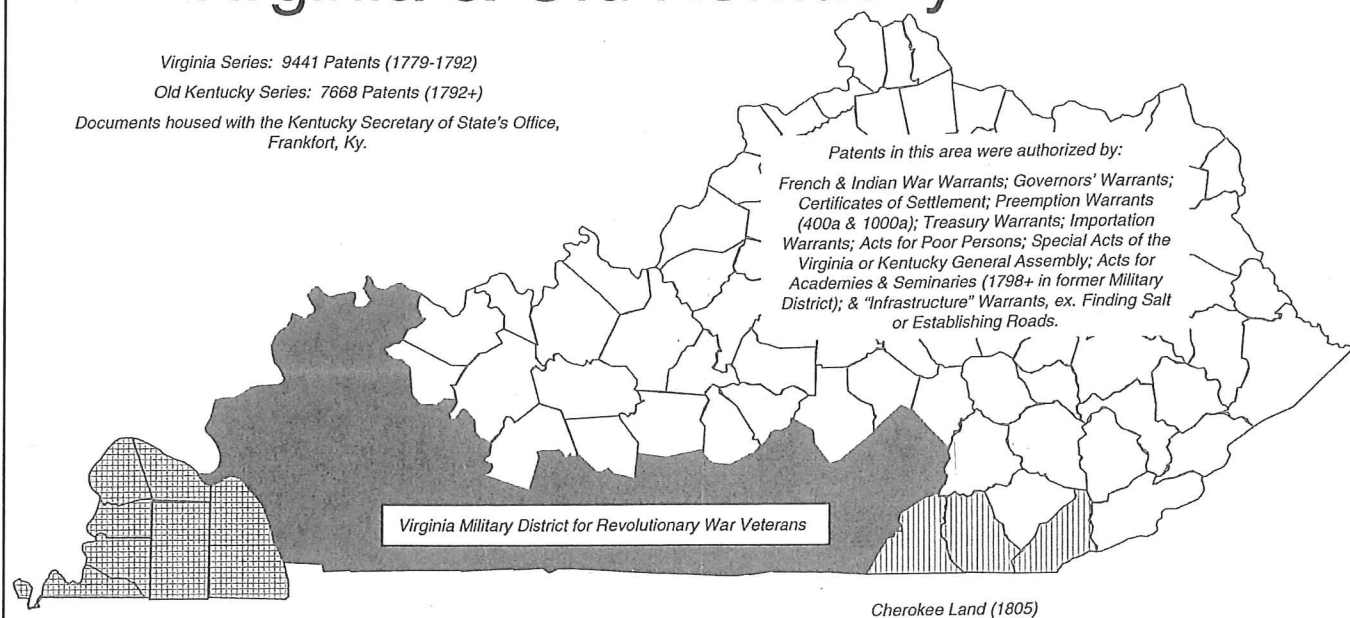
After the Revolutionary War each state paid veterans with land in their western frontier—if the state was not border-locked. Virginia veterans (heirs or assignees) used their military warrants in the Kentucky Military District and the Ohio Military District.

KENTUCKY LAND PATENTS: Virginia & Old Kentucky Series

Virginia Series: 9441 Patents (1779-1792)

Old Kentucky Series: 7668 Patents (1792+)

Documents housed with the Kentucky Secretary of State's Office,
Frankfort, Ky.



Patents in this area were authorized by:
French & Indian War Warrants; Governors' Warrants;
Certificates of Settlement; Preemption Warrants
(400a & 1000a); Treasury Warrants; Importation
Warrants; Acts for Poor Persons; Special Acts of the
Virginia or Kentucky General Assembly; Acts for
Academies & Seminaries (1798+ in former Military
District); & "Infrastructure" Warrants, ex. Finding Salt
or Establishing Roads.

Virginia Military District for Revolutionary War Veterans

Chickasaw Land (1818)

Cherokee Land (1805)

Location of Military District: "Southeast course from the head of Green River to the Cumberland mountains; with the said mountains to the Carolina line; with the line to the Cherokee or Tennessee River; with the said River to the said Green river; until the farther order."

Ref: Virginia Land Law of 1779.

Notes: (1) Some Military Patents extend to the 36° 30' parallel into Tennessee due to the former Kentucky boundary. (2) Although the eastern boundary of the Military District set the line as the Cumberland Mountains, the Land Law further stated no land could be entered or located within the county & limits of the Cherokee Indians. Portions of the shaded counties were ceded in 1805 under the Tellico Treaty. (3) Soldiers who had settled in the Jackson Purchase had to wait until 1818 to patent their land. Their patents comprise the West of Tennessee River Military Series.

The Military District in Kentucky was reserved for Virginia veterans of the Revolutionary War, their heirs, or assignees.

used DNA to connect to known descendants of the veteran. The internet certainly has introduced more individuals than ever to the fascinating—and challenging—world of historical research.

Virginia's Revolutionary War Military District in Kentucky

Following the Revolutionary War, the newly formed republic needed a system to compensate soldiers for their military service. King George III of England had used a bounty land system to pay soldiers who had served in the French & Indian War and Lord Dunmore's War. As monies in national coffers could not meet the demand for cash payments to Revolutionary War veterans, the newly-formed states decided to use the same bounty land system for Revolutionary War veterans. Each state paid their respective veterans—usually with land in their western

territory. Soldiers who had represented border-locked states, such as New Jersey, had to wait for federal bounty land programs for land warrants or scrip. To research the location of military districts and the availability of records, we recommend *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants Awarded by State Governments*, by Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck (published by Genealogical Publishing Company).

The Virginia Land Law & the Location of the Military District

Before 1 June 1792, Kentucky was a part of Virginia. A resolution approved by the Virginia General Assembly, dated 19 December 1778, proposed the location of the Virginia Military District (in Kentucky) as follows:

"That it is the opinion of this committee, that

The Land Office Revolutionary War Warrants Database, *continued*

a certain tract of country to be bounded by the Green River and a southeast course from the head thereof to the Cumberland Mountains, with the said mountains to the Carolina line, with the Carolina line to the Cherokee or Tennessee River, with the said river to the Ohio River, and with the Ohio River to the said Green River, ought to be reserved for supplying the officers and soldiers in the Virginia Line with the respective proportions of land which have been or may be assigned to them by the General Assembly, saving and reserving the land granted to Richard Henderson and Company, and their legal rights to such persons as have heretofore actually located lands and settled thereon within the bounds aforesaid." The Virginia Land Law of May 1779 confirmed the location proposed in the resolution. (To read the complete text of Virginia Land Laws A & B, visit the "Legislation" page of the "Land Office Reference Library" website.)

After separating from Virginia in June 1792 and becoming the fifteenth state in the Union, the Kentucky General Assembly opened the Military District to settlers meeting age and residency requirements. A 1795 law stated lands not claimed by the military before January 1796 faced forfeiture to settlers filing under the South of Green River Series of patents. (The January 1796 date was later replaced by legislation involving Entry filings with the Surveyors' Office for the Military District.)

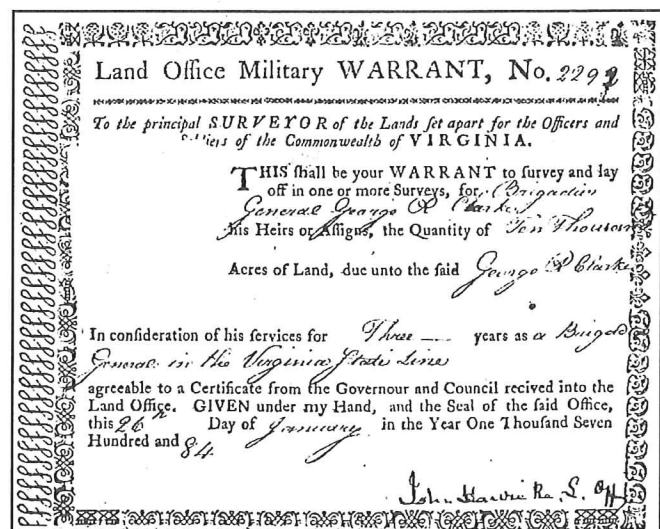
Virginia Revolutionary War veterans, their heirs or assignees, who had not used their military warrant (in whole or in part) in the Kentucky Military District prior to 1792 could "spend their warrant" in Virginia's Military District in Ohio. The Kentucky Secretary of State's "Revolutionary War Database" does not identify warrants used in the Ohio District. To research those warrants and subsequent patent files, contact the Ohio Historical Society, Velma Street, Columbus, Ohio. For additional information regarding Virginia Revolutionary War veterans, including those who received their bounty land warrants after 1792, we recommend *Revolutionary War Records: Virginia* by Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh.

In 1818, lands west of the Tennessee River were purchased from the Chickasaw Indians. A number of Virginia's Revolutionary War veterans had settled on the lands prior to the sale. On 20 December 1820, the Kentucky General Assembly approved an act for surveying the military claims west of the Tennessee River.

(For complete text, visit the "Legislation" page of the "Land Office Reference Library" website.) Records with the Kentucky Secretary of State's Land Office indicate 242 patents were issued to Virginia Revolutionary War veterans in the West of Tennessee River area (the Jackson Purchase). Complete files are color scanned and available on the Secretary of State's Land Office website under the heading "West of Tennessee River Military Patents." (Note: This series was omitted from Jillson's publications therefore public accessibility to the military patents in the Jackson Purchase had been limited prior to internet development.)

Key Points: Revolutionary War Warrants Database

- The website address for the Kentucky Secretary of State's Revolutionary War Warrants Database is: <http://sos.ky.gov/land/military/revwar/>. No subscription or payment is required to access this website.



The Veterans Warrant was a printed form (with seal affixed) that was given to Revolutionary War veterans, heirs and assignees as payment for military service. The document was presented to the Principal Surveyor for the Military District when Entries were being filed reserving land for patenting. Notice the Warrant does not identify a specific tract location thus allowing the veteran, heir, or assignee to patent land in different areas and multiple parcels. Warrant #2292, issued to Brigadier General George Rogers Clark, authorized eleven patents in different areas of the Military District. To research the usage of this warrant, access the "Revolutionary War Warrants" page of the Kentucky Secretary of State's Land Office Website. Search for Clark or 2292.

The Land Office Revolutionary War Warrants Database, *continued*

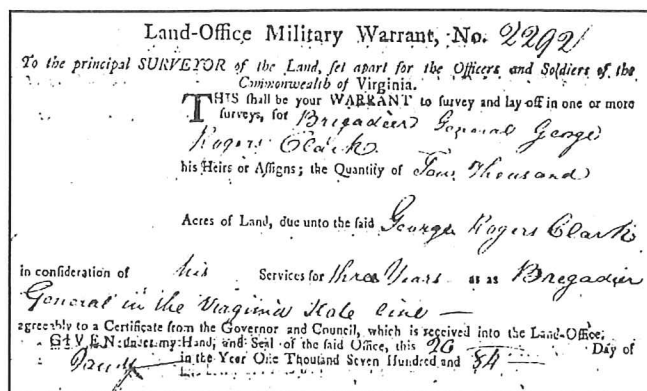
- The only military warrants that could be used in the Kentucky Military District were issued to Virginia Revolutionary War veterans, their heirs or assignees; the database does not include veterans from other states such as North Carolina. Although Revolutionary War veterans from all states could settle in Kentucky, they could not use their military bounty land warrants to acquire land within the Commonwealth. To research veterans receiving pension benefits, their types of Revolutionary War service, and their Kentucky county of residence, see *Revolutionary Soldiers in Kentucky* by Anderson Chenault Quisenberry (ISBN 0-8063-0283-6).

- The Revolutionary War Warrants Database includes warrants issued from 8 August 1782 (Warrant #1 issued to James Askew) to 29 October 1793 (Warrant #4627 issued to Henry Bedinger). During that time, 4,748 military warrants were issued by Virginia. Three numbers were skipped and there were 121 duplicate numbers issued. Brumbaugh's publication (previously mentioned) includes the 4,627 warrant numbers plus warrant numbers in the higher range.

- Warrants do not specify tract location. Notice the wording on the Warrant directs the Military District Surveyor to "survey and lay off in one or more surveys" the quantity of acres due the said veteran as payment for his military service. The Warrant does not specify where the land had to be located within the Military District.

- Warrants do not convey title. As with all Kentucky Land Patents, warrants are the first step in land ownership. Under the authorization of a warrant (or combination of warrants), an entry reserving land for patenting must be filed with the surveyor. For Revolutionary War Warrants, a survey depicting and describing the tract must be made by the Military District Surveyor or his deputy. The governor's grant finalizes the patenting transaction. Subsequent conveyances are recorded on the county level with deeds/wills/court judgments.

- Warrants were assignable in whole or in part. The lack of a designated tract location allowed warrants to be sold or assigned, particularly to land speculators. Researchers must access patent files to determine the individual(s) who used the military warrant issued to a Revolutionary War ancestor. Additionally, one warrant could authorize multiple



Military Warrant #2292 was issued to Brig. Gen. George Rogers Clark for his service in the Revolutionary War. Depicted is the entry in the "Military Warrants Register" documenting the issuance of the Veteran's Warrant. The reverse side of this document is the entry for Military Warrant #2289.

patents. Example: The 10,000 acre bounty land warrant issued to Brigadier General George Rogers Clark authorized eleven patents—not all of which were granted to General Clark. (See the "Revolutionary War Warrants Database" for images of patent files.)

- Military Warrants were not limited to commissioned officers. The Virginia General Assembly allotted 100 acres as the minimum acreage for soldiers and sailors who served a three-year enlistment "to the end of the war." A Major-General received a warrant (or warrants) allowing 15,000 to 17,500 acres in land patents. (See "RW Military District" on the Revolutionary War Warrants Database website for a complete listing of allotments by rank.)

- To search the Revolutionary War Warrants Database, enter surname OR warrant number (four digits: 38 would be keyed 0038), OR the surname of an assignee. Only one field needs to be entered. There are no numbers higher than 4627 on this database. Duplicate warrant numbers are identified as .1 and .2.

- If the search is productive, you will see information regarding the veteran's rank, acreage allotted, military service, and any patent number files associated with the warrant. An asterisk * indicates the Veteran's Warrant (a printed document with seal affixed) is included in the patent file.

- An image from the Military Warrants Register is included on the search results page. This document was scanned from a book that is similar to a receipt book. The only information on the back of the

The Land Office Revolutionary War Warrants Database, *continued*

document is a warrant recording for another veteran. To print the image, follow the instructions to enlarge the image. By clicking "Hide all options", printing instructions are removed. Many researchers save the image as a picture then print with photo software.

- If the "Authorized" field does not identify any patent files, we could not find any usage of the warrant in Kentucky by the veteran. Click "No (identified) Patents in Kentucky" for more information and research suggestions. The information on the database and the scanned image from the Warrants Register is the extent of our holdings for that particular warrant. Check other patent series to determine if an ancestor acquired land by authorizations other than his military warrant. Tax lists are another resource to identify how much land an ancestor owned (if any) and the names of persons involved in the original patent on the property.

- Land patents authorized by the military warrant are listed in the "Authorized" field. Patents may be recorded in the Virginia Series (VA), the Old Kentucky Series (OK), or the West of Tennessee River Military Series (WTRM). Click the patent designation(s) to link to scanned images of patent files. Original records are housed in the Kentucky Secretary of State's Land Office Division, Capitol Annex, Frankfort, Kentucky.

- The patent file may include multiple Veterans' Warrants so the first page may not be the warrant you are researching. Follow the documents through the patent process until you find the particular warrant you want to access. You may find a signature on the back of the warrant that indicates the veteran sold or transferred his land right. Does the signature match other records in your file, such as a marriage bond? This could help confirm ancestral military service. The last few pages in the patent file should be the Survey depicting the tract and the grant finalizing the patent.

- With the exception of the Land Office copy of the Grant, documents are color scanned. For optimal printing results, we suggest copies be reproduced by color printers.

- There is no master map that depicts tract locations for Kentucky Land Patents. Tract location must be determined by the researcher. Contact local

historical societies to determine if local residents have constructed patent maps that might be applicable to your research. Military surveys were mapped by metes and bounds rather than the public land surveying system, therefore we cannot provide range and township coordinates for patent locations.

- Use the online Gazetteer to match many of the watercourses in survey descriptions to their county locations.

- If the watercourse is not included in the Gazetteer, access the County Court Orders Database, open Advanced Search, and search by "Watercourse". Researchers are reminded the same watercourse name may be used in different areas of Kentucky. When researching conveyances of military patents, be sure to limit the counties for deed/will/court judgment research to those counties that would have fallen within the Military District.

- Conveyances after Grants are issued are filed on the county level with the county clerk. There is no central deed registration in Kentucky. See the "County Formation Table" in the Reference Library of the Land Office website to determine the year a particular county was formed. County records, such as deeds/wills/court judgments are also available from the Kentucky Department for Libraries & Archives in Frankfort. Visit their website at <http://www.kdla.ky.gov/> for more information.

- Virginia Revolutionary War Warrants could not be used (in Kentucky) outside the Military District. If a patent is identified as a military claim outside the district, such as Fayette county, the authorizing warrant was issued for service in the French & Indian War, Lord Dunmore's War, or by a Governor's Warrant for military service.

- The "Revolutionary War Warrants Database" does not include bounty land claims for the War of 1812, Mexican War, or Civil War.

- To report problems with the "Revolutionary War Warrants" website or if you need additional assistance, please contact Kandie.Adkinson@ky.gov or call 502-564-3490.

Next article in this series: "Certificates of Settlement & Preemption Warrants Database"