

Early Land Patents in Kentucky

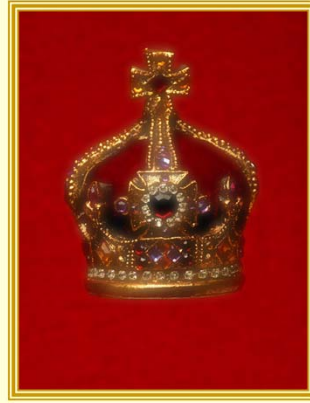


Trey Grayson
Kentucky Secretary of State

Welcome to the "Land Patent Workshop" sponsored by the Kentucky Historical Society & the Kentucky Genealogical Society.



King George III of England



Kentucky's system of land appropriation was established by King George III of England.

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King's Proclamation of 1763

PROCLAMATION OF 1763
BY ENGLAND'S KING GEORGE III

GEORGE R.

WHEREAS, we have taken into our royal consideration the extensive and valuable acquisitions in America, secured to our crown by the late definitive treaty of peace, concluded at Paris the 10th day of February last, and being desirous that all our loving subjects, as well of our kingdoms as of our colonies in America, may avail themselves, with all convenient speed, of the great benefits and advantages which must accrue therefrom to their commerce, manufactures, and navigation; we have thought fit, with the advice of our privy council, to issue this our royal proclamation, hereby to publish and declare to all our loving subjects, that we have, with the advice of our said privy council, granted our letters patent, under our great seal of Great Britain to erect within the countries and islands ceded and confirmed to us by the said treaty, four distinct and separate governments, styled and called by the names of Quebec, East Florida, West Florida, and Grenada, and limited and bounded as follows, viz.

FIRST. -- The government of Quebec, bounded on the Labrador coast by the river St. John, and from thence by a line drawn from the head of that river, through the lake St. John, to the south end of the lake Nipissim; from whence the said line crossing the river St. Lawrence, and the lake Champlain, in forty-five degrees of north latitude, passes along the high lands which divide the rivers that empty themselves into the said river St. Lawrence, from those which fall into the sea; and also along the north coast of the baye de Chaleurs and the coast of the gulf of St. Lawrence, to cape Rosieres; and from thence, crossing the mouth of the river St. Lawrence, by the west end of the island of Anticosti, terminates at the aforesaid river St. John.

SECONDLY. -- The government of East Florida, bounded to the westward by the gulf of Mexico, and Apalachicola river; to the northward by a line drawn from that part of the said river where the Chatahouchee and Flint rivers meet, to the source of St. Mary's river, and by the course of the said river to the Atlantic ocean; and to the eastward and southward by the Atlantic ocean, and the gulf of Florida, including all islands within six leagues of the sea coast.

THIRDLY. -- The government of West Florida, bounded to the southward by the gulf of Mexico, including all islands within six leagues of the coast, from the river Apalachicola to lake Pontchartrain; to the westward, by the said lake, the lake Mauripas, and the river Mississippi; to the northward, by a line drawn due east from that part of the river Mississippi which lies in thirty one degrees north latitude, to the river Apalachicola or Chatahouchee, and to the eastward, by the said river.

FOURTHLY. -- The government of Grenada, comprehending the island of that name, together with the Grenadines, and the islands of Dominica, St. Vincent, and Tobago.

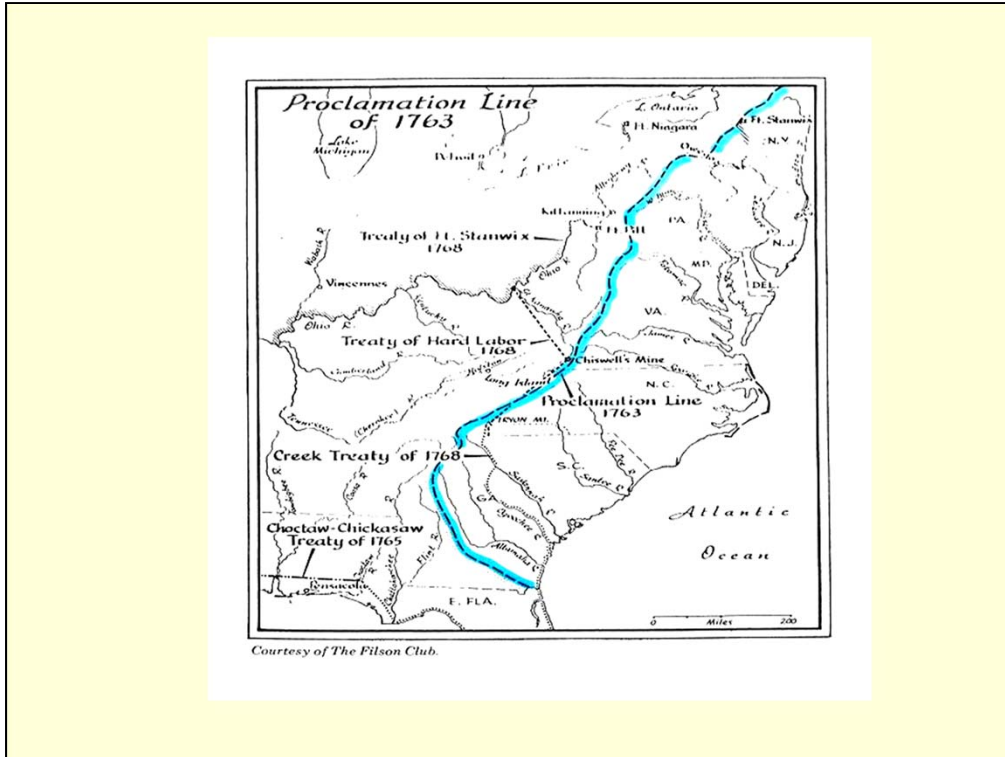
And, to the end that the open and free fishery of our subjects may be extended to, and carried on upon, the coast of Labrador, and the adjacent islands, we have thought fit, with the advice of our said privy council, to put all that coast, from the river St. Johns to the Hudson's straits, together with the islands of Anticosti and Madelaine, and all other smaller islands, lying upon the said coast, under the care and inspection of our governour of Newfoundland.

We have also, with the advice of our privy council, thought fit, to annex the islands of St. John's and Cape Breton, or Isle Royale, with the lesser islands adjacent thereto, to our government of Nova Scotia.

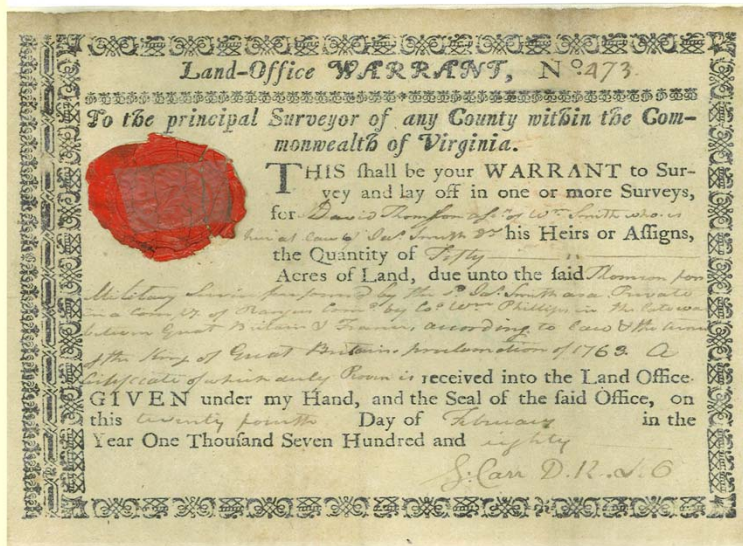
We have also, with the advice of our privy council, aforesaid, annexed to our province of Georgia all the Lands lying between

Internet 100%

The King's Proclamations of 1754 & 1763 are included on the Land Office Website in the Legislation Section of the Reference Library.

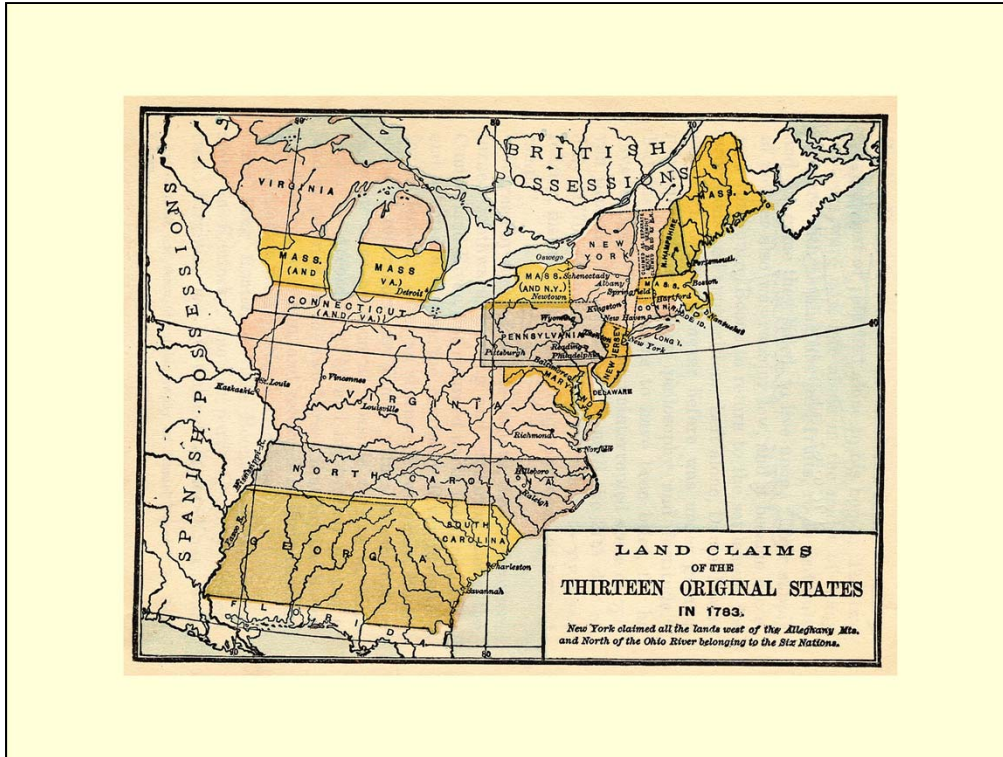


According to the Proclamation of 1763, settlers would reside east of the Proclamation Line. Native Americans would reside on the West.



To research French & Indian War Warrants used in Kentucky by veterans, heirs, or assignees, access "A Calendar of the Warrants for Land in Kentucky, Granted for Service in the French & Indian War", abstracted by Philip Fall Taylor.

Also in 1763 the King established a bounty-land system for paying soldiers. This Warrant is part of a Kentucky patent file.



Revolutionary War Warrants issued to Virginia soldiers, heirs & assigns had to be used within the Kentucky or Ohio Military District. To research Military Districts for other states, access "Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants" by Lloyd D. Bockstruck.

LAND CLAIMS PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VIRGINIA LAND OFFICE



As “various & vague claims to unpatented land under the former and present government may produce tedious and infinite litigation and disputes, and in the mean time purchasers would be discouraged from taking up lands upon terms lately prescribed by law, whereby the fund to be raised in aid of the taxes for discharging the public debt, would be in great measure frustrated”, the Virginia General Assembly approved legislation in May 1779 that addressed early land claims prior to the establishment of the land patenting process. *(See complete text of Land Law 1779 (A) in the Legislation portion of the Secretary of State’s Land Office Reference Library at <http://sos.ky.gov>)*

Following the King’s example of governmental land appropriation, the state of Virginia adopted Land Laws to: (1) settle land disputes; (2) encourage land settlement; and (3) enhance the tax base.

EARLY KENTUCKY LAND CLAIMS

Key Provisions of Land Law 1779 (A):

- **All surveys upon any of the western waters prior to January 1, 1778, based on Entries filed with the county surveyor prior to October 26, 1763, would be honored. There was a 400 acre limit. Authorizing Warrants had to be: (1) issued under the King's Proclamation; (2) issued by any former Governor of Virginia; or (3) purchased as Treasury Rights. (*Section I*)**
- **Future Proclamation claims were limited to Virginia veterans or Warrants issued by Virginia Governors. This law excluded land claims for service in companies or militia detachments. (*Section III*)**

Land Law A may be read in its entirety in the Reference Library of the Land Office website.

- **Bona fide settlers ‘upon the western waters’ prior to January 1, 1778, were entitled to 400 acres of land including their settlement. Proof of planting a crop of corn or a residency of at least one year was required. (Sections IV & V)**
- **Settlers could purchase a preemption warrant to patent an additional 1000 acres adjoining their settlement claim. (Section V)**
- **Persons who settled ‘upon the western waters’ after January 1, 1778, were entitled to a 400 acre Preemption Warrant claim which included their settlement. (Section V)**
- **Persons who had “marked out” claims and built any house or hut or made any other improvements prior to January 1, 1778, were entitled to one 1000 acre preemption warrant if the Land Commission approved their claim. (Section V) Note: This covered “chop claims” as well as lottery cabins.**
- **All locations (Entries) made by officers & soldiers upon lands of actual settlers were declared void. (Section V)**

Land Law A defines the requirements for 400 acre Certificates of Settlement (corn claims); and three types of Preemption Warrants, including Preemption Warrants issued for blazing trees (chop claims) & drawing lots for an improvement. (Those persons had not established residency by planting a crop of corn or they would have qualified for an additional 400 acres under a Certificate of Settlement.)

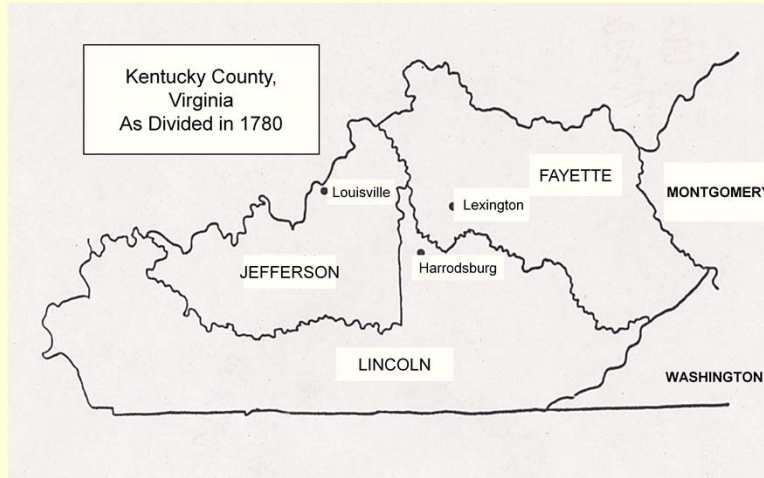
ESTABLISHMENT OF TREASURY & TREASURY EXCHANGE WARRANTS

Chapter XIII, Approved May 1779 by the Virginia General Assembly
(*To read the entire Act, see "Land Office Journal, Legislation,
Virginia & Old Kentucky Patents, Land Law 1779 B" on this website.*)

II.....And for creating a sinking fund in aid of the annual taxes to discharge the public debt: *be it enacted*, that any person may acquire title to so much waste and unappropriated land as he or she shall desire to purchase, on paying the consideration of forty pounds for every hundred acres, and so in proportion for a greater or smaller quantity, and obtaining certificate from the public auditors in the following manner: the consideration money shall be paid into the hands of the treasurer, who shall thereupon give to the purchaser a receipt for the payment, specifying the purpose it was made for, which being delivered to the auditors, they shall give to such person a certificate thereof, with the quantity of land he or she is thereby entitled to.

Land speculators (and others) purchased Treasury Warrants to patent land in Kentucky. See the Treasury Warrants Database on the Land Office Website for additional information.

Kentucky's Original Three Counties



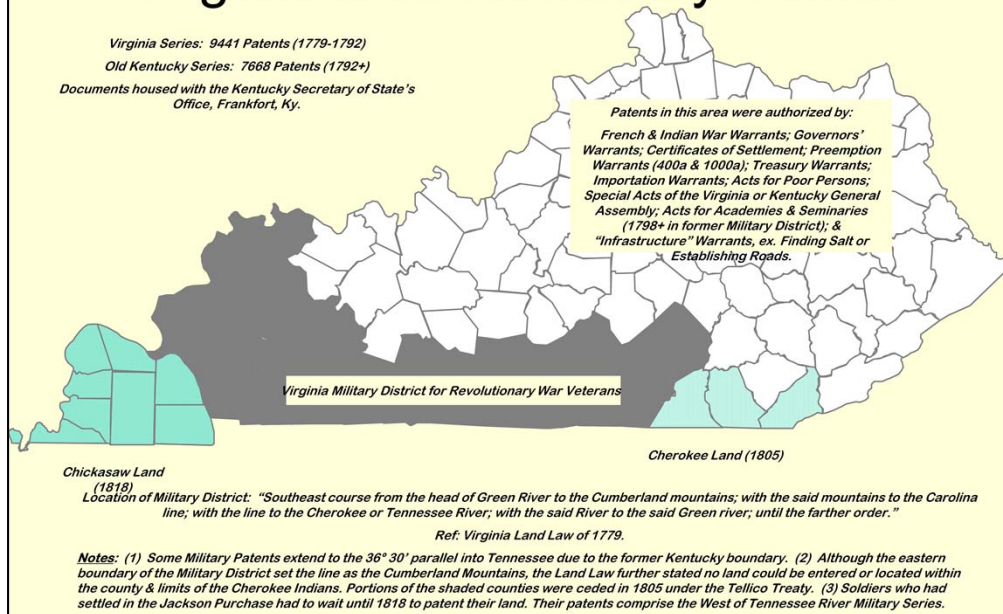
In 1772 Virginia created Fincastle County; in 1776, Fincastle County was divided into Kentucky, Montgomery & Washington counties. Researchers are reminded Kentucky has a Montgomery county and a Washington county within our borders. In 1780 Kentucky County was divided into three counties: Lincoln, Jefferson & Fayette. The three original counties converge in Frankfort at the junction of Benson Creek & Kentucky River. In 1795 Franklin County was formed out of Shelby County (daughter of Jefferson County), Woodford County (daughter of Fayette County), and Mercer County (daughter of Lincoln County).

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.



In May 2008 Secretary of State Trey Grayson announced the launching of additions to the Land Office website. Researchers may now access early Wills & color-scanned images of patent files for the Virginia Land Patent Series & the Old Kentucky Land Patent Series.



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Compact with Virginia (1789)

An Act concerning the erection of the District of Kentucky into an Independent State

Passed the 18th of December, 1789, by the Virginia General Assembly

WHEREAS it is represented to this present General Assembly, that the act of last session, entitled "an act concerning the erection of the District of Kentucky into an independent state," which contains terms materially different from those of the act of October session, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five, are found incompatible with the real views of this commonwealth, as well as injurious to the good people of the said district:

SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That in the month of May next, on the respective court days of the counties within the said district, and at the respective places of holding courts therein, Representatives, to continue in appointment for one year, and to compose a convention, with the powers, and for the purposes hereinafter mentioned, shall be elected by the free male inhabitants of each county, above the age of twenty-one years, in like manner as delegates to the general assembly have been elected within said district, in the proportions following: In the county of Jefferson, shall be elected five representatives; in the county of Nelson, five representatives; in the county of Mercer, five representatives; in the county of Lincoln five representatives; in the county of Madison, five representatives; in the county of Fayette, five representatives; in the county of Woodford, five representatives; in the county of Bourbon, five representatives; and in the county of Mason, five representatives: **Provided,** that no free male inhabitant above the age of twenty-one years, shall vote in any other county except that in which he resides, and that no person shall be capable of being elected unless he has been a resident within the said district at least one year.

SECTION 2. That full opportunity may be given to the good people of exercising their right of suffrage on an occasion so interesting to them, each of the officers holding such elections, shall continue the same from day to day, passing over Sunday, for five days including the first day, and shall cause this act to be read on each day immediately preceding the opening of the election, at the door of the court house, or other convenient place; each of the said officers shall deliver to each person duly elected a representative, a certificate of his election, and shall transmit a general return to the clerk of the supreme court, to be by him laid before the convention.

SECTION 3. For every neglect of any of the duties hereby enjoined on such officer he shall forfeit one hundred pounds, to be recovered by action of debt, by any person suing for the same.

SECTION 4. The said convention shall be held at Danville on the twenty-sixth day of July next, and shall and may proceed, after choosing a president and other proper officers, and settling the proper rules of proceeding, to consider and determine whether it be expedient for, and the will of the good people of the said district that the same be erected into an independent state, on the terms and conditions following:

SECTION 5. First, that the boundary between the proposed state and Virginia shall remain the same as at present separates the district from the residue of this commonwealth.

SECTION 6. Second, that the proposed state shall take upon itself a just proportion of the debt of the United States, and the payment of all the certificates granted on account of the several expeditions carried on from the Kentucky District against the Indians, since the first day of January, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five.

SECTION 7. Third, all private rights and interests of lands within the said District, derived from the laws of Virginia, prior to

The Compact with Virginia in 1789 established the foundation for Kentucky's statehood. Kentucky agreed to honor patents issued by Virginia's governors as one of the conditions for separation. Those warrants, surveys & grants comprise the Virginia Patent Series.

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KENTUCKY LAND OFFICE
KENTUCKY SECRETARY OF STATE
Trey Grayson

Secretary's Desk | Business Services | Elections | Administrative Services | Kentucky Land Office | Executive

Kentucky Secretary of State > Kentucky Land Office > Reference Library > Legislation > Miscellaneous > **Transfer of Land Records (1797)**

Transfer of Land Records (1797)

CHAPTER CCCV.

An Act Concerning the Original Title Papers of Land in this State remaining in the Register's Office in the State of Virginia.

Approved February 27, 1797, by the Kentucky General Assembly

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, That Edmund Thomas is hereby authorized and appointed to apply to the executive of the state of Virginia, for all the original papers in the register's office of that state on which the titles to land in this state depend, or in any wise relating thereto; and where the originals cannot be had, to take copies of all the warrants, plats and certificates, and also of all patents that have been issued for lands lying in this state, and enter the same in well bound books to be provided by him for that purpose. And the said Edmund Thomas is hereby authorized and empowered to demand and receive from the register of the land office in the state of Virginia, all monies by him received on plats and certificates for which the patents have not been issued, together with a list of their names, and the several sums paid by them as well on lands whereon the patents have not been issued as otherwise; and shall pay and account for the same to the treasurer of this state on oath, and lodge the said list with the register. The said Edmund Thomas shall secure all the books and papers that he is hereby directed to receive from the state of Virginia, in sufficient trunks, and transport the same to this state, and lodge them in the register's office, and take the register's receipt therefor.

The said Edmund Thomas shall enter into bond with sufficient security, to the governor of this state, for the time being, in the penalty of two thousand pounds, for the due and faithful performance of the duties that are enjoined him by this act, within ten months from the passage of this act. And the said Edmund Thomas shall be furnished with the sum of one thousand dollars out of the public treasury, to enable him to obtain and bring the said papers to this state; and he shall be entitled to a compensation for his services when performed.

The auditor shall grant a warrant to the said Edmund Thomas for the amount of the sum allowed by this act; and the treasurer upon the said warrant being produced to him, shall pay the same.

REF: "The Statute Law of Kentucky", Vol. I., by William Littell, page 652.

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Papers affecting Kentucky land title were transferred from Virginia to Frankfort in “sufficient trunks”. The records were maintained by the Register of the Land Office in Frankfort.



In 1934 the duties of the Kentucky Land Office were assigned to the Secretary of State. In the 1970's then-Secretary of State Ken Harper initiated a records preservation project for the historical documents.

Patenting Process: Step 1

WARRANTS

*syn. CERTIFICATES, COMMISSIONERS' CERTIFICATES, or
SPECIAL ACTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY*

FUNCTION: Authorize Entries

Samples: Military, Certificate of Settlement, Preemption Warrant, Treasury, Finding Salt, Clearing a Road, Poor Widows Warrant, Purchased from Kentucky Land Office, or Purchased from County Court. Legislation for Relief of Poor Persons, Certain Persons, or Establishing Academies/Seminaries

- WARRANTS MAY BE ASSIGNED.**
- WARRANTS MAY BE USED IN WHOLE OR IN PART.**
- WARRANTS DO NOT CONVEY TITLE.**

Researchers are encouraged to view the bounty-land-system as a four-step process. All documents in the patent file should be studied in sequential order to understand the various assignments that may have occurred before the Grant was issued.

Patenting Process: Step 2

ENTRIES

FUNCTION: Reserve Land for Surveying

Early Kentucky, Fayette, Lincoln & Jefferson County Entries are available from the Kentucky Land Office. Subsequent Entry Books are kept on the county level.

Entries include the date of filing, name of applicant, type of warrant(s) being used, warrant number(s) & the location of the land to be surveyed.

- **Entries may be withdrawn or amended.**
 - **Check marginal notations.**
 - **Entries do not convey title.**

Early Fayette & Lincoln County Entry Books are housed in the Secretary of State's Land Office. The Entry Book for Jefferson County, which includes Kentucky County Entries, is housed at the Jefferson County Archives. Visit the Lincoln County Entries Database on the Secretary of State's Land Office website for more information regarding early Lincoln County Entries.

Patenting Process: Step 3

SURVEYS

FUNCTION: Depict & Describe the Tract being Patented

Surveys include: Plat Drawing, List of Warrant(s) being used, Name of Person(s) for whom the Survey is being made, County, Closest Watercourse, Metes & Bounds Description, Surveyor, Deputy Surveyor (if applicable), Chain Carriers, Housekeeper/Pilot/Director, Marker, Magnetic Variation, and Date of Survey.

- **SURVEYS MAY BE ASSIGNED.**
- **SURVEYS DO NOT CONVEY TITLE.**

Early Kentucky surveys were measured by metes & bounds (distance to points). In 1820 the Jackson Purchased was mapped by the range-township-section method for surveying public lands.

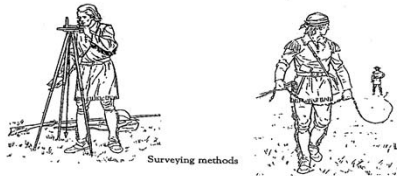
Surveying Measurements

Surveys for land patents in eastern and central Kentucky were mapped by the metes and bounds method. Surveys for patents in the Jackson Purchase area (far western Kentucky) were mapped by the surveying method developed for public lands, i.e. Ranges, Townships and Sections.



This table provides information regarding both systems of land measurement.

1 pole or 1 rod	= 16.5 feet or 25 links
1 link	= 0.66 feet or 7.92 inches
1 chain	= 100 links, 4 rods, or 66 feet
80 chains	= 1 mile, 320 rods, 1760 yards, or 5280 feet
1 acre	= 10 sq. chains, 160 sq. rods, 4840 sq. yard, or 43,560 sq. feet
1 square mile	= 1 section of land or 640 acres
Township	= 36 sq. miles (36 mile sq. sections)



The survey was made by the county surveyor or his deputy. Chaincarriers (also called chainmen) measured the length of the survey lines by using a four-pole chain (66') or a two-pole chain (33'). The same process of chain measurement can be seen at today's football games. Markers blazed trees used as survey corners. Often a housekeeper/pilot/agent/director was included as part of the survey team to oversee the surveying process.

Patenting Process: Step 3

GRANTS

FUNCTION: Finalize the Land Patenting Process

Syn: Patent, Patent Deed

Grants include: Name of Governor or Lt. Governor, Name of Patent Recipient(s), Type of Warrant(s) Being Used, Warrant Number(s), County, Watercourse, Metes & Bounds Description, Date of Issuance, Year of the Commonwealth (Virginia or Kentucky), & the Signature of the Governor or Lt. Governor (on original document). *NOTE: Original Grants, decorated with the Seal & Official Signature are sent to the Patent Recipient. The Land Office enters a copy of the Grant in the Land Office Grant Book.*

- **Conveyances after the Grant is issued are filed with the county clerk.**
 - **There is no central deed registration in Kentucky.**
- **Conveyances may be recorded as Deeds or included in Will bequests.**

Patent files in the Virginia Series include Grants issued by Gov. Thomas Jefferson & Gov. Patrick Henry. The most recent patent was signed in 2000 by Gov. Paul Patton.



PART TWO

WHAT'S NEXT?

RESEARCH !

Before initiating deed research, check the various patent series to determine if ancestral land was acquired by the patenting process. Jillson's "Kentucky Land Grants", publications by the Kentucky Historical Society, and the Secretary of State's Land Office website are resources for land patent names.

THE INTERNET



- Local researchers are adding land information to county history & genealogy websites.
- The Bureau of Land Management is an excellent resource for tracking land grants in federal public domain states. The site includes scanned images of the President's Grant.
- Many records pertaining to Kentucky Land are available on the Kentucky Secretary of State's Land Office website at <http://sos.ky.gov>.

Kentucky Secretary of State > Kentucky Land Office > Non-Military Registers & Land Records > Virginia and Old Kentucky Patent Series

Virginia and Old Kentucky Patent Series

Names in the drop-box listings are limited to recipients of the Grant (Grantees); names are not cross-referenced. To expand the search, we suggest researchers access the Kentucky Historical Society publications "Master Index: Virginia Surveys & Grants" and "Index to Old Kentucky Surveys & Grants." Use numbers in the "Original Survey Number" field in both publications to access patents on this database. Patents for which duplicate numbers were issued, such as 5079 are viewed as 5079#1 and 5079#2 in Historical Society publications. For this database, the numbers will be depicted as 5079.1 and 5079.2.

- To obtain images for a specific series, first select the series in the first combobox.
- Next, select the desired patent from the second combobox.
- Finally, you may view printable versions by selecting the print quality desired, or you may download full sized images.

Note: The print quality is provided to accommodate users with slower connections. High quality images and full sized images are typically 1-5MB in size.

Series: Sort By:

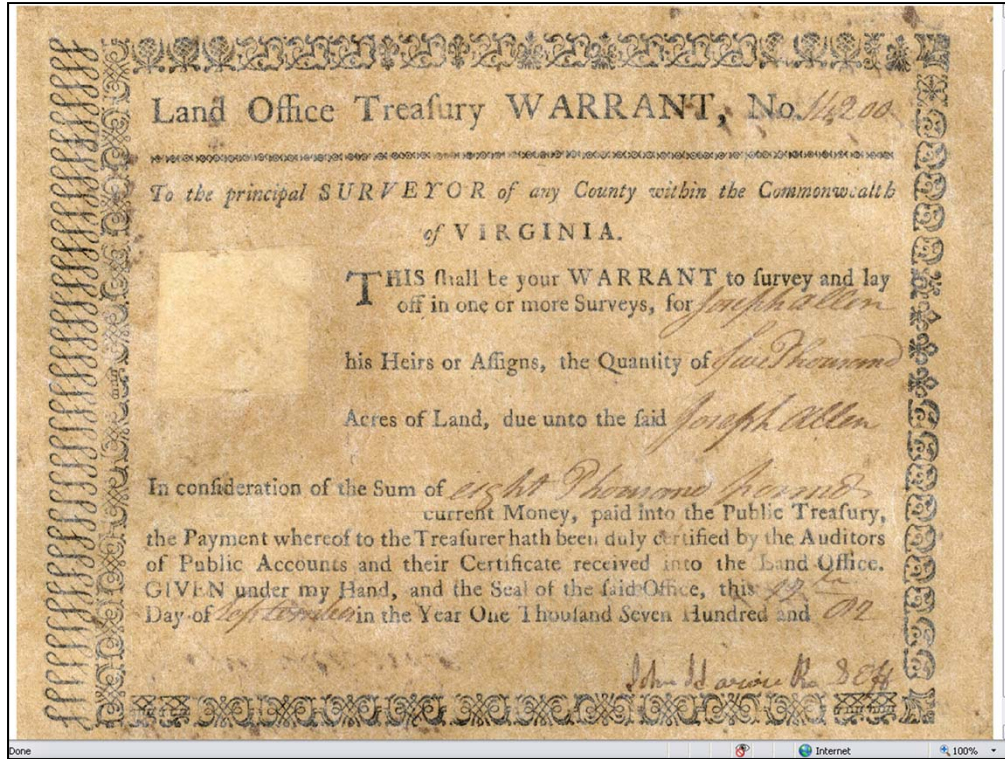
Scanned Patents:

Patent: OK 1060.0
Description: ALLEN, JOSEPH; POPE, BENJAMIN; PATTON, JAMES; & SAUNDERS, JOSEPH

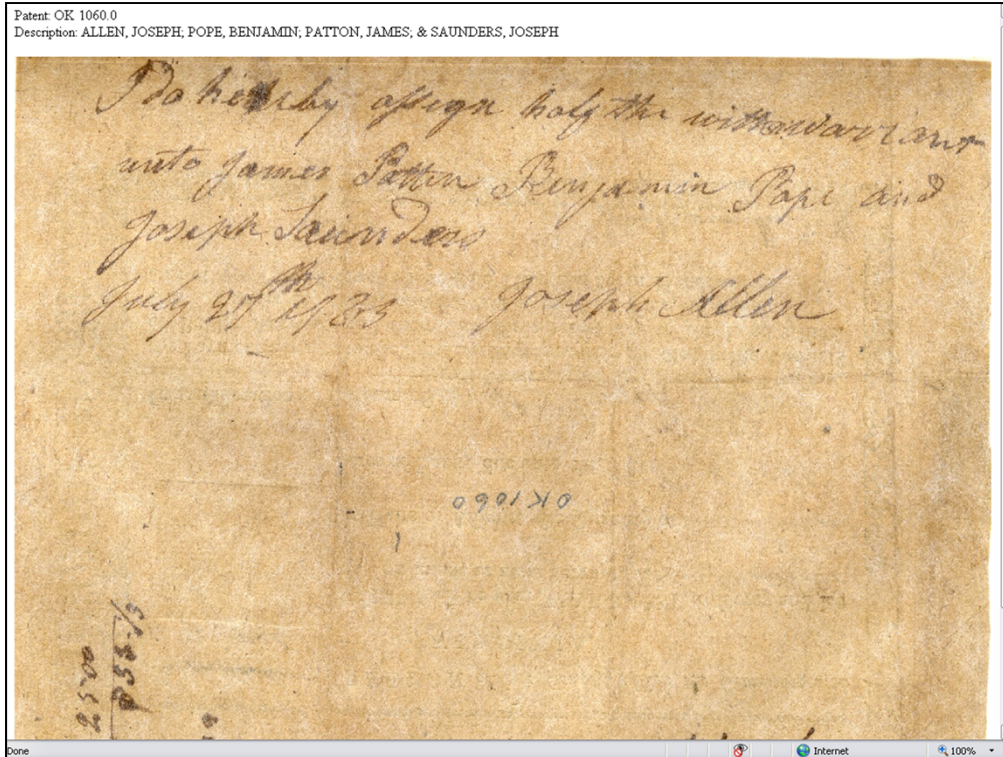
[Advanced Image Viewer](#) | 5 Pages

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Virginia and Old Kentucky Patent Series' page. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with links such as 'Kentucky Land Office Home', 'Kentucky Cities', 'Military Registers & Land Records', 'Non-Military Registers & Land Records', 'Certificates of Settlement & Preemptions', 'Virginia Treasury Warrants', 'Lincoln County Entries', 'Kentucky County Formations', 'Jackson Purchase Land Locator', 'Patent Series', 'County Court Orders', 'Land Office Order Form', 'Database Searches', 'Land Office Journal', and 'Reference Library'. The main content area features a search interface with dropdown menus for 'Series' (set to 'Old Kentucky Patent Series') and 'Sort By' (set to 'Patent'). Below this is a search results section showing 'Scanned Patents' with a dropdown menu displaying 'OK 1060.0 | ALLEN, JOSEPH; POPE, BENJAMIN; PATTON, JAMES; & SAUNDERS, JOSEPH'. The selected patent details are shown as 'Patent: OK 1060.0' and 'Description: ALLEN, JOSEPH; POPE, BENJAMIN; PATTON, JAMES; & SAUNDERS, JOSEPH'. A link for 'Advanced Image Viewer' indicates there are 5 pages. The bottom of the page displays three thumbnail images of scanned document pages, labeled 'Page 1', 'Page 2', and 'Page 3'. The document pages contain handwritten text and a diagram of a rectangular plot with a diagonal line. The browser's address bar and taskbar are visible at the bottom.

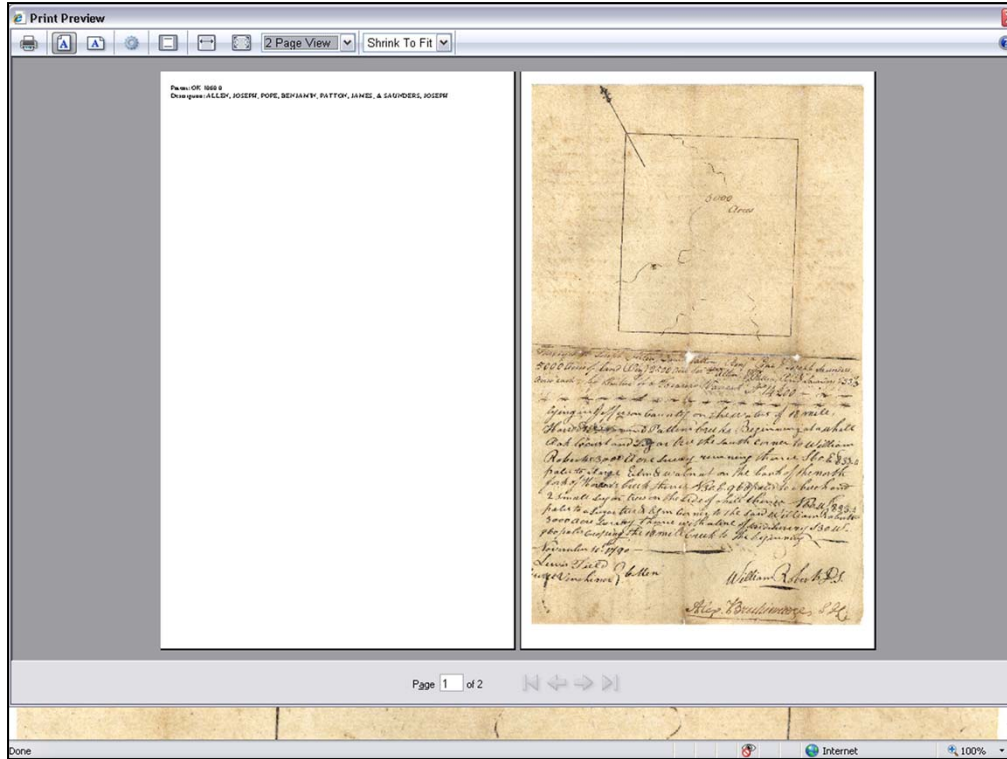
The Virginia Patent Series & the Old Kentucky Patent Series are now available on the Secretary of State’s Land Office in the “Non-Military Registers & Land Records” channel. Open “Patent Series” to access the documents associated with these series, the West of Tennessee River Military Series, and the County Court Orders Database (with over 8200 scanned patent files).



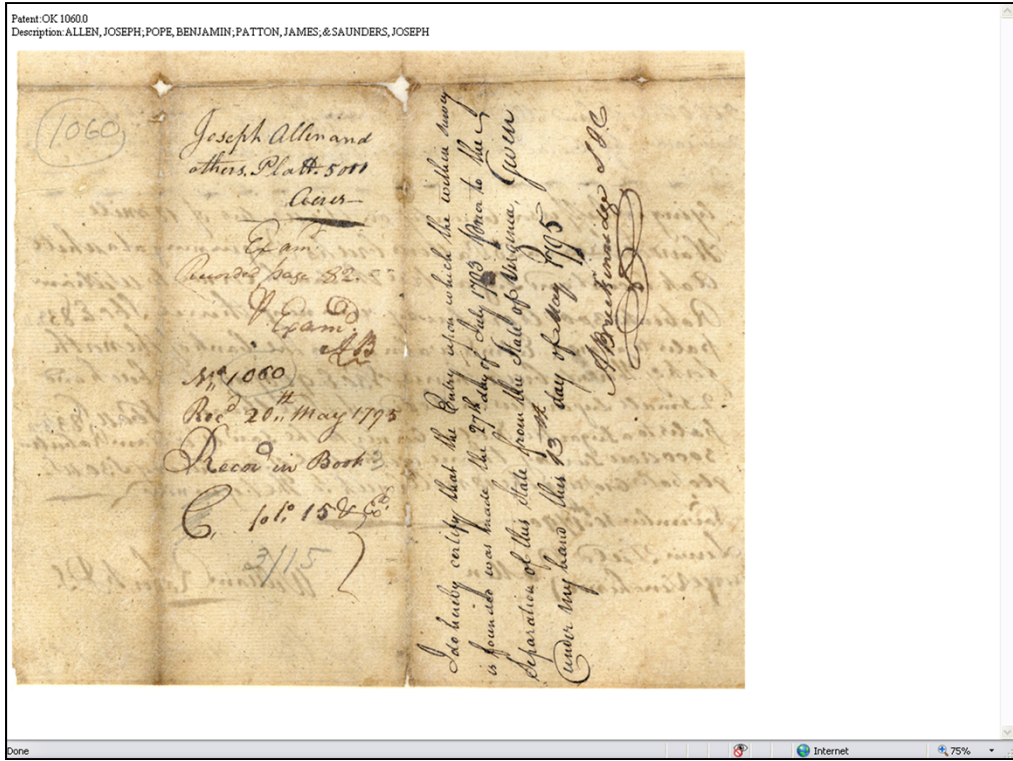
For the KHS/KGS Workshop, researchers studied one of four patents later plotted by speaker Betty Warren. This Warrant authorized one of the patents on 18 Mile Creek. The image is included as part of Old Kentucky Patent File 1060. To print the document, select low, medium, or high resolution on the preview pane, then print. Resetting paper size from letter to legal may be required for some documents.



Researchers are encouraged to study the reverse side of all documents associated with a patent file. Although warrants & surveys may be assigned to other persons, researchers may find signatures on assignments helpful as they match signatures on marriage bonds and other documents.



See the "Printing Tips" article on the Virginia & Old Kentucky Patent Series website for other printing suggestions.



Document size may be enlarged (for research) or reduced (for printing) by changing the setting in the lower right corner of your computer screen.

281
1703
Jos. Allen &c
5000 ac
1060

Isaac Shelby Esq. Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky to all to whom these presents shall come greeting Knowye that by Virtue and in consideration of a Land Office Treasury Warrant No-10200 there is granted by the said Commonwealth unto Joseph Allen James Patton Benjamin Pope & Joseph Saunders a certain tract or parcel of land containing Five Thousand Acres by Survey Bearing date the Tenth day of November One Thousand Seven Hundred & Ninety lying and being in Jefferson County on the Waters of Eighteen Mile Run or Patton Creek bounded as followith ~~to wit~~ Beginning at a White Oak, Locust & Sugar tree, the South corner to William Roberts's 3000 Acre Survey running thence South Sixty degrees East eight hundred thirty three & four tenth poles to a large Old Walnut on the Bank of the North fork of Harrods Creek thence North thirty degrees East nine hundred & sixty poles, to a Birch tree Small Sugar tree, on the Side of a Hill

Ed. P. Bell to Wm Roberts the 23rd Dec 1776

The grant for Old Kentucky Patent 1060 conveyed title to Allen, Pope, Patton & Saunders. The "Unfinished Patents" page of the Virginia & Old Kentucky Patent Series website includes Warrants & Surveys that have not been matched to a Grant (at this time). As research continues, Grants may be located.



Tax Lists Identify Land Patent History & Family Information

Use Tax Lists for 1795 through the mid-1830's to determine the names of persons who originally patented the land owned by your ancestors. Construct a forward (past to present) or reverse (present to past) chain-of- title by studying land conveyances recorded in deeds, wills, & court judgments at the county clerk's office and Libraries & Archives. Remember county formation dates!

RESEARCHING TAX LISTS

- Tax Lists are available on microfilm at the Kentucky History Center, KDLA, and LDS Libraries. (We have found different repositories may have different information.) Some county tax lists include tithable reports prior to 1792.
- County tax lists from 1795 to the mid 1830's, may provide critical information regarding original land patent recipients.
- Tax lists should span from the year of county formation through the mid-1880's.
- Study Acts of the General Assembly to determine tax laws.
- Women, Free Blacks (40 years before the Civil War), & Pensioners are included on Tax Lists; occasionally they are listed as exempt.
- Tax Lists may include two or three districts.
- The "Company" header identifies the name of the Captain of the Militia Company receiving the taxes.
- Minors, if they are the head of the household, are included on tax lists.
- Tax Lists are available from KDLA for duplication; we recommend positive rather than negative microfilm.
- Tax Lists may serve as an "Annual Census"—"hiding from the tax man" had severe penalties.

QUICK GUIDE: KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- **The federal government does not issue land patents in Kentucky. Kentucky patents are authorized by Acts of the Virginia General Assembly (prior to 1792) or the Kentucky General Assembly.**
- **Warrants do not identify a certain tract or location.**
- **Neither warrants nor surveys convey title. Every step in the patent process must be followed. The Governor's Grant finalizes the patenting transaction.**
- **Military grants comprise a small portion of Kentucky land patents. Most patents were authorized by purchasing treasury, state, or county warrants/certificates.**
- **The only military warrants honored in Kentucky were for service in the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War.**
- **Kentucky did not honor warrants for service in the War of 1812, the Mexican War, or subsequent conflicts. Those warrants had to be used in federal public domain states, such as Missouri or Illinois. (This partially explains the move westward by some Kentucky veterans or assignees; they had to relocate to a state that honored federal bounty land warrants.) Contact the Central Reference Division, National Archives, Pennsylvania Avenue, 8th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20408 for information regarding military service, federal bounty land, and pension applications.**

- The Secretary of State's Office is the repository for over 100,000 patent files containing warrants, surveys, and grants. Researchers do not have to travel to Virginia to research Kentucky land patents prior to 1792. Those records were sent to Frankfort shortly after Kentucky became a state.
- Kentucky county formation must be considered when researching any facet of Kentucky history.
- There is no central registration of deeds in Kentucky. Deeds are filed on the county level with the county clerk along with wills and marriages. Courthouse disasters, such as fires or thievery, are just that -- disasters. Records not previously microfilmed or removed for preservation are lost. Check the Grantor AND Grantee indices; some conveyances may be recorded in one book but not the other.
- Be creative when researching land patents and all land records! Names were spelled phonetically in many instances. Tax Lists may be indexed by given name rather than surname!

- Patents were issued to women as early as the 1700s. In some instances, they were heirs finishing patents initiated by their husband or a family member. In 1820, the Kentucky General Assembly allowed poor widows to patent up to 100 acres of land without fee payment.
- African-Americans patented land in Kentucky prior to the Civil War.
- Land Office holdings are limited to land patents only. Although applications listing parents, family history, etc., were not required, there are instances in which wills, or other affidavits of descent, are part of the patent file.
- Not all Kentucky Patent Series are online. Contact the Kentucky Land Office for access to original patent files. The Kentucky History Center Library has printback books of Land Office Surveys and Grants. (These are ideal for researching an area rather than a family.) Microfilm reels of all original Warrants, Entries, Surveys, and Land Office copies of Grants are available at the Kentucky History Center.
- The Kentucky Department for Libraries & Archives is the state repository for county records, such as Wills and Deeds.

KENTUCKY LAND PATENTS

What is online?

(Secretary of State's Land Office Website)

- Virginia & Old Kentucky Series:
 - Patents authorized by: Revolutionary War Warrants; Certificates of Settlement & Preemption Warrants; and Treasury Warrants
- West of Tennessee River Military Series
- Jackson Purchase Locator
- County Court Order Series Database *(over 8200 patents link to scanned images)*

KENTUCKY LAND PATENTS

What is not online?

(Secretary of State's Land Office Website)

- South of Green River Series
- Kentucky Land Warrants Series
- Tellico Series
- South of Walker's Line Series *(Tennessee Land)*
- West of Tennessee River Non-Military Series *(use the online Jackson Purchase Locator to determine location of these patents)*



Thank you for
your efforts to
preserve our
history!

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We hope you enjoy the latest additions to the Kentucky Secretary of State's Land Office Website.