

CONTENT OF **KENTUCKY** GRANT RECORDS

Kentucky granted **land** under several different acts during its early history. The discussion below outlines each of the major programs and discusses the terms of the grants as well as who was eligible for the **land**. There are a number of relevant indexes for searching these records including Jillson's **Kentucky Land Grants** (1971) and *Old Kentucky Entries and Deeds* (1978). For a complete listing of references for **Kentucky land** grant research, see table 5.4.

VIRGINIA GRANTS 1782–92.

These grants were issued for service in the French and Indian and the Revolutionary Wars. Grants of **Kentucky land** prior to statehood are housed in the **land** office in Frankfort, even if the grant was issued by the Virginia government. There are approximately 10,000 **patents** in this series.

To locate these records, two references must be used. First, consult the *Master Index to Virginia Surveys and Grants, 1774–91*, (Brookes-Smith 1976) to obtain the patent number. Next, consult Jillson to obtain the actual grant book and page number.

OLD KENTUCKY GRANTS 1793–1856

These 7,600 grants were made by **Kentucky** under a plan similar to Virginia's grants. These grants include military, seminary, academic, treasury warrants, and preemption grants. Some of the grants in this series were based on warrants and surveys originally issued by Virginia. Searching these records involves finding the grant book reference in Jillson's *Index to Kentucky Land Grants* (1971), then obtaining the patent number in the left margin of the grant. The **Kentucky** Historical Society has a cross index for grant name and survey name that should be used in case of errors in Jillson (Adkinson 1990, iii).

GRANTS SOUTH OF THE GREEN RIVER 1797–1866

Virginia had designated these lands for distribution to Revolutionary War soldiers prior to 1797. Settlers arriving after 1797 were required to be twenty-one years of age, a resident on the property for at least a year, and have planted a crop or built a cabin.

These grants were also known as headright claims because after 1797, anyone over twenty-one years old could claim 200 acres of headright **land**. The terms of the purchase were attractive since families did not have to pay the purchase **price** at once. The provisions of purchasing this **land** were \$30 per 100 acres, with a maximum of 200 acres per householder. Once the **land** was paid for, the title passed to the landholder.

There are over 16,600 **patents** filed in this series on **land** generally bounded by the Green River on the north. Many of these claims, however, were located outside the northern boundary of the Green River military district; some as far north as Pendleton County.

Due to repeated time extensions granted by the General Assembly to pay filing fees, many of these **patents** span decades from the time of the warrant until the grant was made (Adkinson 1990, iii).

TELLICO GRANTS 1805–53

The Tellico Grants were for lands ceded to the United States by the Cherokee Indians under an 1805 treaty. In 1810, the **Kentucky** General Assembly passed an act appropriating the **land** under the patent system. The nearly 600 **patents** in this series are primarily in the Big Sandy Valley and in eastern **Kentucky**. These grants were issued on a treasury warrant.

Residents who had lived in the area at least six months were entitled to warrants of 100 to 200 acres of **land** at \$40 per 100 acres. The money generated from this fund was used to produce weapons for the state militia. In 1831, the cost was reduced to \$5 per 100 acres.

KENTUCKY LAND WARRANTS 1816–73

In 1815, **Kentucky** passed an act that offered for sale all vacant lands within the state. This act consolidated the three existing series of **land patents** (Old **Kentucky**, south of Green River, and Tellico) into one **land** warrant system. All **land** west of the Tennessee River (with the exception of **land** in the Jackson Purchase) was eligible for patenting through the purchase of a treasury warrant from the **Kentucky Land** Office. The original **price** was \$20 per 100 acres.

There are over 26,000 **patents** in this series issued under various types of warrants: warrants purchased from the **land** office, warrants issued to poor widows under the 1820 Act, and warrants issued by the general assembly to trustees and commissioners overseeing educational institutions, building roads, or constructing bridges (Adkinson 1990, iii).

GRANTS WEST OF THE TENNESSEE RIVER 1822–58

In 1818, the United States obtained from the Chickasaw Indians all lands between the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers in what is now Tennessee and **Kentucky**. This area, known as the Jackson Purchase, includes **land** in the present

counties of Calloway, Graves, Fulton, Hickman, McCracken, Carlisle, Ballard, and Marshall.

At that time, there were settlements of Revolutionary War soldiers in the area who had come to protect the western frontier. These soldiers had to register their entries with the Military Land Office prior to 1 May 1792. In 1820, the land was officially opened up for settlement and veterans were advised to apply for warrants on their land as soon as possible. Four thousand acres were donated by the state to establish a town near the Iron Banks for "the benefit of the soldiers." There were 242 patents issued for Revolutionary soldiers in the West of Tennessee River Military Series (Hathaway 1974, 26-27; Adkinson 1990, iii).

In 1821, lands that were not patented by the veterans were ordered sold at public auction if a minimum price was met. As a result, there were also nonmilitary patents in this area. These patents were issued on a receiver's office receipt. Sales were held at Princeton and Waidborough. The 9,308 patents in this west of Tennessee River series show the receipt including the amount of money paid for the land (Adkinson 1990, iii).

GRANTS SOUTH OF THE WALKER LINE 1825–1923

Due to a surveying error, the Kentucky Land Office became responsible for patenting lands in a small area of northern Tennessee located between the present state line (Walker's line) and the thirty-sixth degree parallel. These 4,327 grants were originally issued on a treasury warrant.

COUNTY COURT ORDERS 1836+

An act of the Kentucky Legislature passed on 28 February 1835 gave all unappropriated lands to the county courts in the county where the land lay. The money generated from the sales of the land was used to fund roads and bridges. The price was set at not less than \$5 for 100 acres. Later legislation set the maximum acreage at 200 acres per warrant.

The warrant, survey, and affidavit declaring the land to be unappropriated were sent to Frankfort where the grant was issued. This series of over 70,000 land patents is currently being microfilmed by the Kentucky Historical Society and a computerized index is being generated to facilitate access (Adkinson 1990, iv).

Common abbreviations used in the Kentucky land patent documents can be found in table 5.3.