



DONATE

VOLUNTEER

HOME BLOG EVENTS DOWNTOWN TOUR DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DIRECTORY

GRANTS MEDIA ABOUT

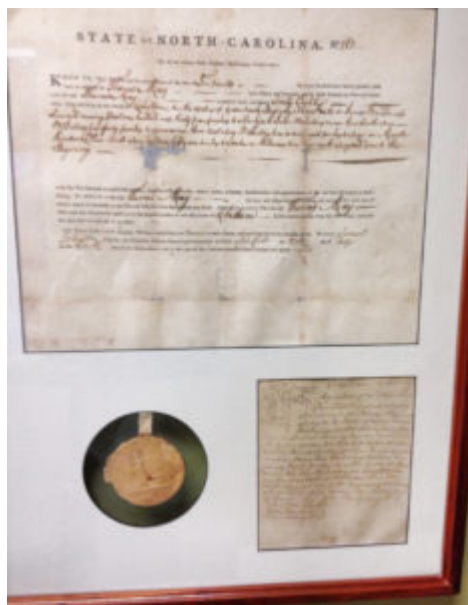
< Previous Next >



Historic Pittsboro: Chatham County Deeds

by Francis DiNardo

When you visit [Chatham County's Register Of Deeds](#) office in downtown Pittsboro you'll notice a framed set of historic documents hanging on the wall inside the front door. When I first saw them about 2 years ago I inquired about the nature of the documents but no one could tell me anything about them—apparently the framed piece has been on the wall longer than anyone has worked there.



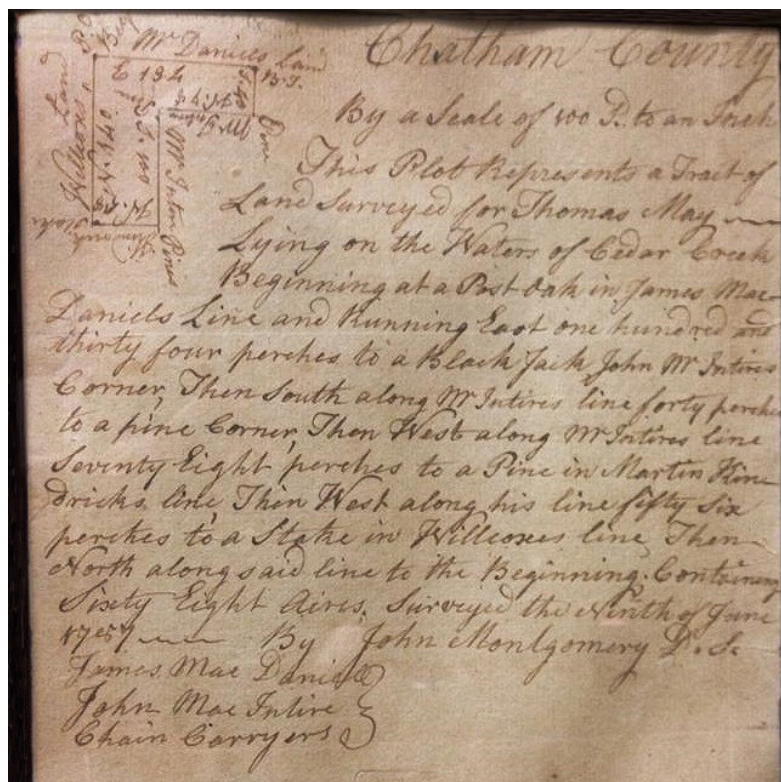
Chatham County Register Of Deeds framed display case with 1787 Survey, Deed and Clay Seal..

It's Chatham County history, so I took pictures of it in order to spend some time at home examining it.

In addition to a large clay seal, there are two documents; a primitive survey record from 1787 and the official deed document from 1788 (one of these two dates could be wrong) for a Chatham County property being registered by Thomas May. Here are a couple of very interesting things that I noticed:

1. I love the hand drawing on the survey. Note how the names at the bottom of the survey lines are written upside down.
2. The description of the location of the property is given in terms of the land owned by surrounding property owners and using trees as boundary markers, "... beginning at a post oak in James MacDaniels line..." .
3. The registration fee is specified as "10 pounds per 100 acres"— English Pounds were still being used, not U.S. Dollars.
4. The length of the boundaries is specified in a unit called 'perches' which was an old English unit of measurement, i.e. "running East one hundred and thirty-four perches...". According to Wikipedia, a perch was a very ambiguous distance which varied from place to place and time to time: "In England, the perch was officially discouraged in favour of the rod as early as the 15th century; however, local

- customs maintained its use. In the 13th Century, perches were variously recorded in lengths of 18 feet (5.49 m), 20 feet (6.1 m), 22 feet (6.71 m) and 24 feet (7.32 m)"
- The official document was witnessed by **"Samuel Johnston, Esquire, our Governor, Captain-General and Commander in Chief at Fairfield the tenth day of July in the XIIIth year of our Independence , and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight"**. That's quite a title! Where's Fairfield? XVIIth must be '12th' in some odd combination of Roman numerals and 'th'?
 - The clay seal says, "THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA"
 - The only objective reference to this piece of land is that it's "On the waters of Cedar Creek ...", which is in southern Chatham County. It runs into the Deep River near Cumnock.
 - Of the names mentioned in the documents, the only one for which I could find a reference (other than the Governor) was Thomas May who, according to an 1831 pension record, fought for the Patriots in the Revolutionary War. I also like the reference to 'Blackjack John McIntire'— a neighbor.



1787 Chatham County Survey for a Chatham county property being registered by Thomas May.

Survey

"Chatham County
By a Seale Of {unreadable}
This Plot represents a Tract
of Land surveyed for
Thomas May -

Lying on the waters of Cedar
Creek beginning at a post
oak in James MacDaniels
Line and running East one
hundred and thirty four
perches to Blackjack John
McIntires corner then South
along McIntires line forty
perches to a pine corner
then West along McIntires
line eventy eight perches to
a pine in Martin Kindricks

line then West along his line fifty six perches to a stake in Willcoseys line then North
along said line to the Beginning

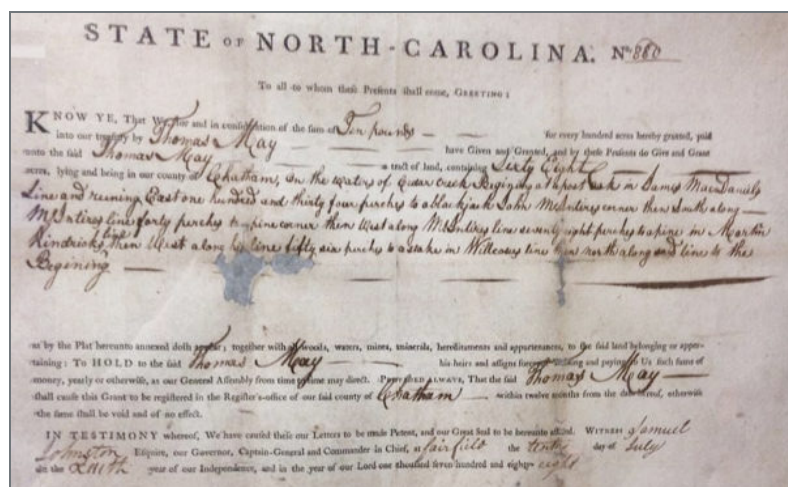
Sixty Eight Acres, Surveyed the Ninth of June 1787 By John Montgomery

{unreadable}

James Mac Daniell

John Mac Intire

{unreadable name}"



1787 Chatham County Deed for a Chatham County property being registered by Thomas May.

Deed

“STATE OF NORTH
CAROLINA No 880

To all to whom these
Presents shall come,
Greeting:

KNOW YE, That We, for and
in consideration of the sum
of 10 pounds for every
hundred acres granted, paid
into our treasury by
Thomas May have given and
granted, and by these

Present do Give and Grant unto the said Thomas May a tract of land, containing Sixty Eight acres, lying and being in our county of Chatham, on the waters of Cedar Creek beginning at a post oak in James MacDaniels Line and running East one hundred and thirty four perches to a blackjack John McIntires corner then South along McIntires line forty perches to a pine corner then West along McIntires line eventy eight perches to a pine in Martin Kindricks line then West along his line fifty six perches to a stake in Willcoseys line then North along said line to the Beginning

As by the Plat hereunto annexed doth appear; together with all woods, waters, mines, minerals, hereditaments and appurtenances, to the said land belonging or appertaining: To Hold to the said Thomas May his heirs and assigns forever {?} and paying to Us such sums of money, yearly or otherwise, as our General Assembly from time to time may direct. PROVIDED ALWAYS, That the said Thomas May shall cause the Grant to be registered in the Register’s-office of our said county of Chatham within twelve months from the date hereof, otherwise the same shall be void and of no effect.

IN TESTIMONY whereof, We have caused these our Letter to be made Patent, and our Great Seal to be hereunto affixed. WITNESS Samuel Johnston, Esquire, our Governor, Captain-General and Commander in Chief, at fairfield the tenth day of July in the XIIIth year of our Independence, and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundres and eighty-eight”

April 13th, 2018

Share This



4 Comments



Chris Dekaney April 18, 2018 at 10:59 am - [Reply](#)

This is great. I love the history. It also struck me that in Chatham County we still give directions like the ones outlining the May property. “To get to our place take a left at the metal building, then a right at the giant oak...”



Main Street Pittsboro May 30, 2018 at 3:05 pm - [Reply](#)

We agree! In the age of digital maps and smartphones, this is one of the many quaint and sweet things about Pittsboro and Chatham County.



Beverly February 11, 2019 at 3:36 pm - [Reply](#)

“Unreadable name” in survey above is “Chain Carriers.” Not a name. James MacDaniel and John MacIntire were the chain carriers for the survey. Great post! Thanks.



Main Street Pittsboro February 11, 2019 at 4:58 pm - [Reply](#)

Thank you, Beverly. Are you active with the Chatham Historical Association or the Museum?
