

PETITIONS FROM THE WESTERN COUNTRY TO NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION

Accession Number 5
1775-1797 and undated (photocopies)
4 linear feet (2 boxes and 1 map folder)

Provenance:

The collection consists of photocopies of the original documents made c. 1970s by Pollyanna Creekmore at the State Library of North Carolina in Raleigh. Later, she and Loraine Bennett Rae transcribed and published some of the petitions in the *Watauga Association of Genealogists Bulletin*. When Rae moved to Oregon, the papers were given to Betty Jane Hylton of Johnson City, Tenn. Hylton donated the collection to the archives on January 17, 2017.

Access Note:

The papers are available for researchers use.

Historical Note:

A lack of local government on the Tennessee frontier of the 18th Century led to the need for settlers to often make requests through petitions to the state government in North Carolina to help address and remedy local matters affecting the frontier settlers and communities. Eventually, a petition of July 5, 1776 signed by many prominent figures of the Watauga Association of settlements led the North Carolina General Assembly to create the Washington District later that year to provide some local government. This led a year later to the district becoming Washington County, providing full local government with local officials. In 1779, the county seat was established at Jonesborough. Washington County's initial authority gave a functioning government to all North Carolina lands west of the Appalachian mountain divide. Further disagreements between local settlers and the state government at the close of the American Revolution led to a movement to establish a new state called Franklin from this western country in the mid-to-late 1780s. This effort eventually failed but led to the relinquishment of the land by North Carolina to the federal government, which then established the Territory South of the River Ohio (Southwest Territory) to govern the western lands until the formation of the state of Tennessee in 1796.

Scope and Content Note:

The material in the collection consists of photocopies of various petitions written by persons living on the western frontier to the colonial and state government of North Carolina in the last quarter of the 18th Century. Petitioners made numerous types of requests, including requests for the establishment of counties, towns, and local government offices; assistance in dealing with conflicts with the native tribes; and the opening of land offices, among other matters. Especially interesting are requests by inhabitants to separate from North Carolina and form a new state called Franklin. Petitions are arranged in chronological order with undated documents filed at the end of the collection. Oversized documents are filed in a map folder in the map cabinet. Where transcriptions exist for the documents, this is listed in the guide.

Important subjects include:

Cherokee Indians
 Davidson County (Tenn.)—History
 East Tennessee—History
 Franklin (State)—History
 Greene County (Tenn.)—History
 Hawkins County (Tenn.)—History
 North Carolina—History
 North Carolina—Politics and government
 Sullivan County (Tenn.)—History
 Tennessee—History
 Tennessee—Politics and government
 Washington County (Tenn.)—History

Box and Folder List

Box 1

1. Indenture between Attakullakulla, Thomas Price and George Lewis. 22 Nov 1775. (Document relating to the agreement whereby the Cherokee ceded land to Price and Lewis in payment for goods received from the Price store that was located in western North Carolina.) Also includes:
 - a.) Hugh Hamilton document. 5 Sep 1775.
 - b.) Deposition of Alexander McDowell. 30 Oct 1786.
 - c.) Deposition of Ephraim Lewis. 15 Nov 1786.
2. The Petition of the inhabitants of Washington District (Watauga Petition) asking to be annexed by the State of North Carolina. Oct - Dec 1776. [Better copy of this document in map folder.]
3. Unknown petition [only a small portion is in this file] with list of signees from Sullivan and Washington Counties. June 178_.
4. Petition to divide Washington County into two counties. 21 Apr 1783. [Oversized copy in map folder; for a full list of signatures, see copies in the map folder.]
5. Petition from Washington County relative to the division of Washington County. 2 Apr 1783, 21 Apr 1783. (LP 47)
6. Petition of the inhabitants of the Cumberland River to have government established with all its different branches. 30 Apr 1783. (LP 47) [Transcription in folder]
7. Petition of the people settled over French Broad River on the Pidgeon River asking for protection and land rights from North Carolina. 28 Apr 1784. (LP 50) [Two copies; transcription in folder]
8. Petition to not be separated from North Carolina. 2 Jun 1784. [State of Franklin]
9. Petition of the inhabitants of the Indian Territory to remain a part of North Carolina. No date, but ca.1786. (LP 89) [State of Franklin; oversized copy in map cabinet]
10. Petition of the inhabitants of Sullivan County to remain a part of North Carolina. No date, but ca. 1786. (LP 70) [State of Franklin; oversized copy in map cabinet]

11. Remonstrance of the Inhabitants of Washington and Sullivan and etc. Nov 1786. [State of Franklin; unknown Petition, only pages of signatures and outside folder; transcription in folder]
12. Petition of the inhabitants of the Washington, Sullivan and Greene to set up a government separate from North Carolina. 20 Nov 1786. (LP 70) [State of Franklin; oversized copy in map folder]
13. Petition of the Inhabitants of Sullivan County establishing the county line. 21 Nov 1786. (LP 70) [Transcription in folder]
14. Petition of the Inhabitants of Davidson County, for relief from the Chickasaw Indians. 23 Nov 1786.
15. Petition of the inhabitants of Davidson County and Sullivan County for relief from Indian attacks. 1787. (LP 75) [Contains a list of those killed by the Indians since 1 Jan 1787 - 21 Nov 1787]
16. Petition of the inhabitants of Sullivan County to separate from North Carolina. 1787. (LP 78) [State of Franklin]
17. Petition of the inhabitants of the Western County for separation from North Carolina. Dec 1787. (LP 70) [State of Franklin; contains a separate list of the names of German settlers; includes a copy found in the *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*; transcription in folder]

Box 2

1. Report of the Committee on the petition from the inhabitants of Greene County to form a new county. 1788. [Oversized copy in map folder]
2. Petition of the inhabitants south of the French Broad River to create a county. Nov 1788. [Oversized copy in map folder]
3. Petition of the inhabitants of the French Broad Settlement for the opening of a land office. Nov 1788. (LP 86) [Transcription in folder; oversized copy in map folder]
4. Petition of the inhabitants of the waters of Red River asking for a division of Davidson County. 7 Nov 1788. (LP 80)
5. Petition of the inhabitants of the French Broad River for the creation of a new county and to open a land office. 14 Nov 1788. (LP 80) [Portion of petition missing; transcription in folder; oversized copy in map folder]
6. Petition of the inhabitants of the lower part of Greene County to form a new county. 14 Nov 1788. (LP 83, LP 86) [Oversized copy in map cabinet only has signatures]
7. Bill to confirm and carry into effect the treaty of 1785 between John Sevier, Esquire and the headmen of Warrior of Cherokee Indians. 17 Nov 1788. (LP 83) [State of Franklin]
8. Petition of the inhabitants of Hawkins County asking for the division of the county. 18 Nov 1788. (LP 81)
9. Bill for the division of Hawkins County. 18 Nov 1788. (LP 81)
10. Petition of the inhabitants of Greene County for the creation of a new county. 20 Nov 1788. (LP 81) [Oversized copy in map folder]
11. Report on the petition of the inhabitants of Greene County, south of the French Broad River concerning the creation of a new county. 20 Nov 1788.
12. Report of the committee on the Cherokee Indians east of the Tennessee River. 25 Nov 1788. [Oversized copy in map folder]

13. Petition of the inhabitants (Memorialists) south of the French Broad River asking for assistance in dealing with the Cherokee. 1789. (LP 86) [Note: There are different copies of the same petition bearing different signatures; transcription in folder; oversized copy in map folder.]
14. Deposition of Anthony Foreman. 26 Jan 1789 [State of Franklin; transcription in folder]
15. Memorial of James Hamilton, citizen of Sullivan County. 22 Nov 1789.
16. Petition of the inhabitants on the unappropriated territory south of the French Broad River to establish a land office. 24 Nov 1789. [State of Franklin, mentions "laws of Franklin"; oversized copy in map folder]
17. Bill for the relief of the Inhabitants on the south side of the French Broad River. 12 Dec 1789. [Mentions "Treaty with Cherokee Indians, General John Sevier, General Charles McDowell"; oversized copy in map folder]
18. Petition of the inhabitants of Wilkes and Washington counties for the formation of a new county. Nov 1790. (LP 89) [Oversized copy in map folder]
19. Petition of the inhabitants of the Watauga Cove, south of Stone Mountain asking the General Assembly to confirm their land entries. 1 Dec 1797.
20. Petition of the inhabitants south of the French Broad asking that if land is purchased by the government from the Cherokee that a deduction be made in the payment to compensate for horses "taken" by the Cherokee. No date. (LP 86)
21. Unknown document - likely a portion of a petition [State of Franklin, mentions "Franklin"; large list of signatures.] No date. (LP 70)
22. Unknown petition from the inhabitants south of the French Broad, asking that a line be established between them and the Indians. Undated. [Contains only 28 signatures; may be tied to another petition]

Map Folder

Included in the folder is a scanned print of item 2 (Box 1) and oversized photocopies of the following documents described above: From Box 1, items 9, 10, 12; From Box 2, items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18.