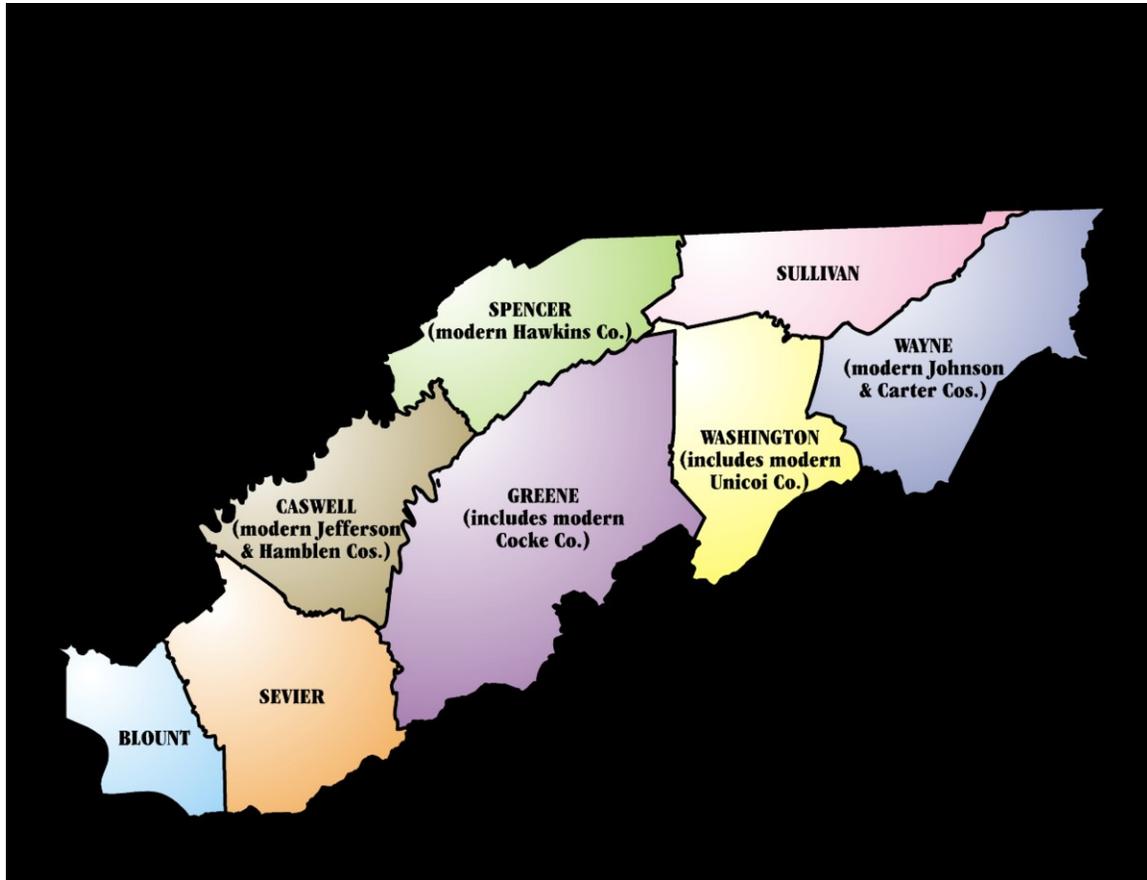


# What Happened to the State of Franklin (now Tennessee)

By Jeannette Holland Austin



## State of Franklin

I have an ancestor, John Smith, aged 50 when he served as a Minute Man during the Revolutionary War. His son, Alexander, stated that he was born in Sullivan County, North Carolina, which later became Sullivan County, Tennessee. A further study of the matter disclosed that this territory was once part of the State of Franklin.

I have not been successful in locating any records designated under the former State of Franklin; however, did learn that Sullivan County, North Carolina is now Sullivan County, Tennessee and those records do not begin

until 1792.

Persons who resided in the Alleghany Mountains of western Virginia were mountain people who traveled the old Wilderness Road from Pennsylvania, through North Carolina, into Western Virginia, and finally into Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana.

These were pioneers families frequently subjected to Indian attacks. In fact, a number of diaries have surfaced recorded by white women who were taken as slaves, and on the move with various tribes.

I recently read an old Virginia will where the testator said that his two daughters had been taken by the Indians, and thirty years later, he was remembering them in his will: " if they are ever found, I want them cared for." Imagine the heartache of this settler.

There is much unwritten history concerning the migrants westward. A good resource is the Inferior Court Minutes (of any county) which lists daily activities, such as working on the roads, etc. I could one entry wherein my ancestor was chosen to do road work (required of all persons aged 21 and upwards).

It was a complaint that the proposed road would not adjoin at the planned juncture. The complaint described the entire area, and I was able to zero in on the the location of a home which was built before 1730. Reading old wills and estates informed me that this same home was passed down to a grandson, who also passed it down to his son when he died in 1789. Thus, the entries contained in the Minute Book, although seemingly trivial, enabled me to have a broader picture of the necessary hardships and what was required of the early pioneers.

Incidentally, I discovered from the deed records, that this same home was first in Spotsylvania, then Orange, and finally in Botetourt County, Virginia. This is why we need to follow the deed records, tax digests, wills, estates,

etc. in court house records.

Why did John Smith remove his family from the mountains of North Carolina and go to Georgia?

Why, American was at war with England, at that time a campaign being fought in the Northeast. By 1780, the war had moved into the Carolinas and Georgia and was known as the Southern Campaign. Captain Smith enlisted and received a land grant for his service.

The next step in discovering more information, is to note the name of the officer who signed the land grant, then trace his participation in the war. That will help explain the sacrifices being made by our ancestors and what battles they fought in.