

James Sevier, Washington County Court Clerk for 47 Years (and Owner of a Tame, Gray Duck)

James Sevier was the second son of Tennessee's first governor, John Sevier. Born on October 25, 1764 in present-day Rockingham County, Virginia, James moved to our area with his family in 1773. As a teen, James followed his father into battle, and was the youngest to fight at the Battle of Kings Mountain. He wrote to Dr. L. C. Draper, "In all the Indian wars from the year '80 to the year '88, as well as to Kings Mountain and a campaign to South Carolina, I was with my father, shared in all the dangers and difficulties that awaited our thin situation."

He began his service to Washington County as County Court clerk during the State of Franklin. He wrote, "One warm spring night in 1786 this scribe sat alone in the court house, from which the justices of the State of Franklin had just been ejected by visiting North Carolina authorities. John Sevier was away fighting Indians on the border. The North Carolina sheriff was armed with a warrant for his arrest—but if he could serve it, it was certain that no witnesses would be found who would testify against their hero..." He felt that his father John Sevier was a hero. We here in the Washington County Archives see James as a hero.

He served the county as County Court Clerk for 47 years and signed more of the documents within our walls than any other single person. In the document below, notice the "C.C." after his name—County Clerk!



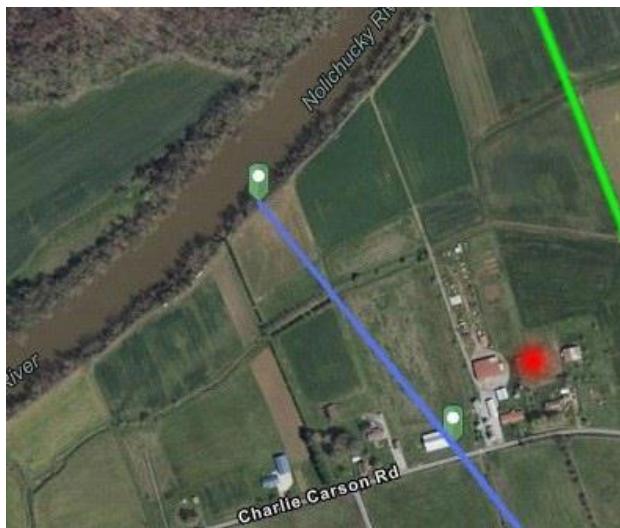
James Sevier owned three pieces of property in the Nolichucky River area. All three were land grants—only one of them actually granted to Sevier:

- North Carolina Land Grant #110 – Deed Book A, page 410; NC to Jesse Walton in 1782; Walton sold the property to James Taylor in 1785; Taylor sold it to James Sevier in 1796.
- North Carolina Land Grant #135 – Deed Book A, page 287; NC to Samuel Williams in 1782; Williams sold this property to James Taylor; Taylor sold it to James Sevier in 1796 – only the western triangle portion.
- North Carolina Land Grant #1237 – Deed Book 6, page 148; NC to James Sevier 1797



The property outlined in green shows Sevier's portion of three land grants on the Nolichucky River.

The red dot on the image below shows the location of the James Sevier Cemetery.



James Sevier owned a piece of property in downtown Jonesborough which makes perfect sense. It would have been quite the commute from Highway 107 on the Nolichucky River to the courthouse every day!

Sevier was not only the clerk for the county, he also instigated several lawsuits, including one against John Lasbrook for the theft of his “tame duck, gray of colour.” His will can be found here in the Washington County Archives, as well as a case where thousands of other documents bearing his signature.

James is buried in the cemetery bearing his name on Charlie Carson Road.



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