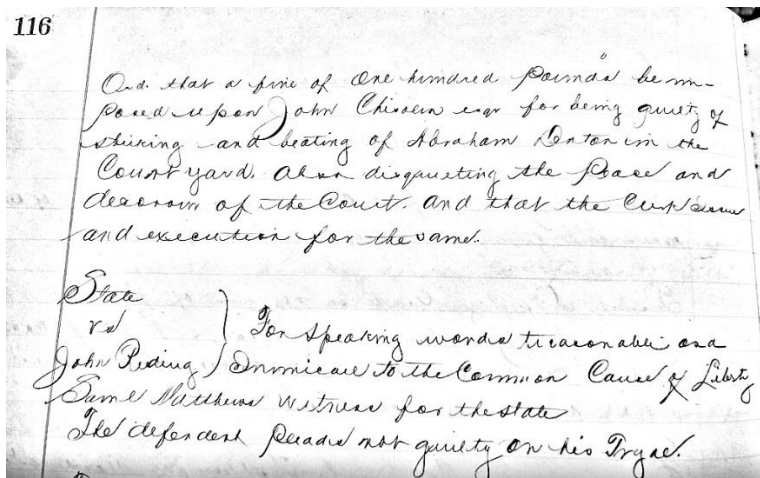


John Chisholm – From Virginia to Washington County to the Chisholm Trail in Texas

John Chisholm was born around 1755. It is believed his father's name was William Chisholm, Sr., and the family was of Scottish descent. He was an early settler in the Washington District prior to 1777, possibly traveling to the area with Jacob Brown and John Irvin, as they all came here from South Carolina.

He was a private during Lord Dunmore's War of 1774. He served in several capacities within the Washington District—a justice in 1777, a justice of the first court in 1778, deputy surveyor in 1780, as well as holding other offices and commissions. Chisholm held the office of justice until after the Battle of Kings Mountain. The record of the last court held before that battle shows that Chisholm was fined 100 hundred pounds for beating Abraham Denton, who stood charged with being an active Tory.

Washington County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Volume 1, page 116, 23 August 1780



23 August 1780, Washington County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Volume 1

“Ord. that a fine of one hundred pounds be imposed upon John Chisholm esqr. for being guilty of striking and beating of Abraham Denton in the Court yard. Also disquieting the peace and decorum of the Court. And that the Clerk issue and execution for the same.

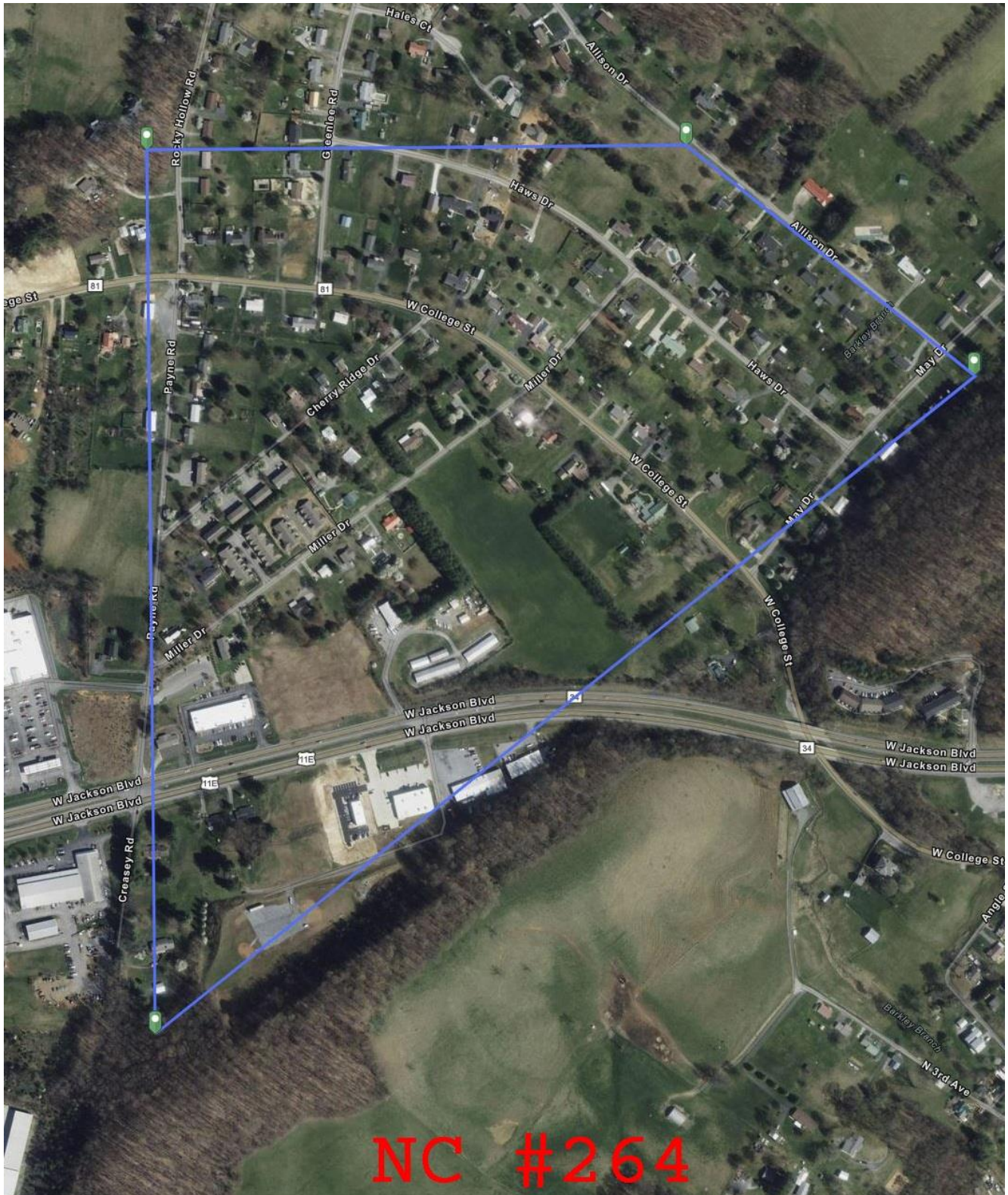
Second entry (not related, but interesting) – State vs. John Reding

He was accused of speaking words treasonable to the cause of Liberty. He plead not guilty.

In November of 1780 John Chisholm was appointed deputy surveyor for the county. Throughout the State of Franklin period, Chisholm was a strong supporter of John Sevier, and he signed the petition sent to North Carolina in 1787.

Chisholm's property was a relatively small, 90-acre land grant issued by North Carolina in October 1782. He made entry several years prior, in 1778. The property today is an area mostly on the north side of West Jackson Blvd., from Payne Road, running southeast on May Drive, and southwest along Allison Drive and down to the edge of the property line on Hwy 81. On this bordering edge of the property once stood an inn, opened in 1825 by Daniel Barkey, who identified it as, “at the sign of the Green Tree.” A large spring on the property was a favorite watering place for travelers.

© 2023 by Washington County, Tennessee Archives. All rights reserved.



When the seat of government was moved to Knoxville for the Southwest Territory, Chisholm moved there, where he built the first tavern. In 1792, Knox County was created, and Chisholm was named a justice of the peace. He also helped keep the peace with the Native Americans—the Creek and Cherokee.

© 2023 by Washington County, Tennessee Archives. All rights reserved.

In that same year he established a postal route running from Knoxville to Jefferson Court House, on to the Greenville Court House, to Jonesboro, then to Abingdon, to Sullivan County Court House, Hawkins Courthouse, and then returning to Knoxville. This route left once every twenty days for one year.

John Chisholm's grandson was Jesse Chisholm, the man responsible for blazing a trail from Texas to Kansas called the Chisholm Trail. This famous trail was one of the major routes used to drive cattle to the railheads in Kansas after the Civil War, and was used up into the 1880's.

Jesse Chisholm was a trader of half-Cherokee descent. He owned two trading posts, one being in northern Texas, the other was near Kansas City, Kansas. Together with a scout named Black Beaver, he mapped out the trail to transport his goods from one trading post to another. The two men were the first to drive cattle north along this route. An estimated 5,000,000 cattle reached Kansas by the Chisholm trail.

###