

THE WADDILL FAMILY IN EAST TENNESSEE AND A DESCENDANT'S QUEST TO FIND THEIR PROPERTY

THE SEARCH

In late September, a researcher from Oklahoma (Trina) contacted the archives hoping to find where her ancestor's property was in Washington County. She listed a couple of deeds that she had received from the Register of Deeds office but hoped to find assistance in locating where the property was located within the county.

Her ancestor was John Waddill, Sr. (ca. 1736 – 1827) and his wife's name was Rachel. Family lore stated that everyone knew him as "John the immigrant." There were two extremely helpful hints that helped us locate the area where the Waddills had lived. The first was the location of a now lost Waddill Cemetery. The second hint came from the deeds, and indicated that her ancestor had lived on or near the Nolichucky River.

In 2005 the Cemetery Survey Team, headed by Betty Jane Hylton had found the location of the cemetery, but no markers remained. Her records indicated that the cemetery was "behind a barn, underneath a large tree at the end of Bent Road, Limestone, TN." Older cemetery records stated that a soldier of the War of 1812, Jonathan Waddell was buried here.

There are two land grants listed in Deed Book A for John Waddell. The first, dated 24 Oct 1782 is North Carolina land grant #23, for 270 acres, "on the south side of Nolachucky River, on Cornelious McGivin line...on William Williams' line." The second is later, dated 24 Oct 1808. This is North Carolina land grant #225, for 170 acres "on the south side of Nolichucky River, a corner in Samuel Sherry's, a corner in Francis Hughes' line."

One of the deeds mentioned the "bent" in the river, thus the road name. We confirmed the location on the map, and within three weeks, Trina had travelled to Tennessee and put her feet on the property!



Trina standing on her ancestor's property with the Nolichucky River in the background.

These maps on Google Earth show the property and labels it as “The Bent.” Notice the damage caused by Hurricane Helene to the landscape in the maps below.



NOTE - the circled area does not show the exact boundaries of the Waddill property.



FAMILY HISTORY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Trina told us that the Waddells originated in Scotland, migrated to Ireland, and later came to America, where they eventually settled in northeast Tennessee.

Once we had some details, we found that John Waddell, Sr., was here at the beginning of the settlement here in northeast Tennessee. John was listed as, “John Waddel” on the first tax list taken in this area in 1778. He was also listed on the next tax list (1779) in Captain Wilson’s Company.

Brought Forward Cont		(4)	
Persons Married Ant. of their Estates Paid to Geo. Smith Esq. for the King			
Andrew Pro. Bond	L 2635 6 19 10	F.	L 273 6 19 10
John Waddel	212.12.8	212.12.8	212.12.8
Henry Earnest	186. 1. 0		186. 1. 0
Benjamin Williams	174. 1. 0		174. 1. 0
Phillip Sherrill	Ditto		3. 6. 8
John Sevier	1872. 12. 8		19. 4. 0
John Waddel	100. 0. 0		100. 0. 0

The first tax list was taken in this area in 1778. John Waddel is the bottom entry in this image.

According to John’s will, written in 1823, he was married to “his beloved wife, Susannah,” and his will mentions a grandson, John Waddill, Jr., and children, Hester [Sheilds], Charles, Peggy [Gann], Samuel D., Jonathan, Rachel [Shields] and Abigail [Wilson]. It is very likely that he, and others in the Waddill family, were buried in the family cemetery in “the Bent,” area of the Nolichucky River.



The Waddill Cemetery, Bent Road,
Washington County

Notes from the older cemetery lists states that the cemetery was underneath a large tree behind the barn. The tree is no longer standing, and due to frequent flooding of the river, no tombstones remain.

John signed his will with his mark, an “X”