



## Bladen County, North Carolina

by Terry Moore, CG

Bladen is another of North Carolina's burned counties. It suffered three courthouse fires: one in 1765, one in the early 1800s, and the last in 1893.<sup>1</sup> Marriage, estate (probate), court minutes, and deeds were destroyed. Deeds were re-copied from volumes that were only partially damaged and others were brought in by landowners to be re-recorded. Because of this, the deed books cover a wide range of dates and some deeds have been recorded as many as three times. The earliest recorded deed is from 1784, although there are a very few earlier, original deeds at the North Carolina State Archives. Only three marriage bonds have survived and there are no county court minutes before 1866. When dealing with a burned county, it becomes very important to know what few county records have survived and what other records the people of early Bladen County could have created or were created about them.

Bladen County was formed in 1734 from New Hanover County. Anson, Orange, Cumberland, and Brunswick counties were later created in part or completely from Bladen. Because of border disputes between North and South Carolina, some records of Bladen County residents may be recorded in the South Carolina counties that it bordered.

### Original Bladen County records at the North Carolina State Archives before 1850

- Will index, 1761-1961 (Images are on FamilySearch.)
- Record of wills, 1766-1892 (Images are on FamilySearch.)
- Loose estate records, 1761: this three-page record is for Cyprian Sheperd (Images are on FamilySearch.)<sup>2</sup>
- 1761-1762 Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, execution docket, 1761-1762
- Superior Court Minute dockets begin about 1869, Civil action papers begin in 1893
- Very few county account records: 1789, 1791, 1809, 1823
- 1846 advertisement for mill repair by John T. Dodson
- List of Justices of the Peace, 1760-1763, 1765-1766; Justices and Militia officers 1800-1810; Justices 1815[?]-1821
- Officials' records, 1770
- Undated lists of Justices of various counties
- Land entries, 1778-1780
- A few original deeds, 1738-1779
- Deeds and grants, 1759-1804
- Account of recorded deeds, 1785-1787; land grants and surveys, 1770, 1850
- Marriage bond of Alex J. Troy and Maria J. Smith, 24 March 1846
- List of commissions to be made out for the Bladen Regim<sup>t</sup> on back, "Rowan Recommendat. Of officers" penciled at top," ca. 1760s
- 1782 "Descriptive list of the Men of Bladen County Deliver'd Aug<sup>t</sup> 20th 1782" and "Descriptive list of the Delinquents 25<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> 1782"
- 1800-1810 Militia Officers; Lists of Justices
- 1763, 1781, 1784, 1788 tax lists

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<sup>1</sup> Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bladen County, North Carolina Abstract of Deeds Volume II (Contains all of Deed Books 1, 11, 23)* (Elizabethtown, NC: by the author, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> See the "Guide to Locating Probate and Other Records on FamilySearch" on the NCGS website for directions on how to access the records section of FamilySearch. (To view the guide, go to the NCGS website at <http://www.ncgenealogy.org>, click on Resources in the menu bar across the top of the page, then select "Tools of the Trade Articles." The link to the guide is near the top of the page.)

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- “A List of the mob raitously assembled together in Bladen County Oct. 13, 1773.” A list of free black and mulatto people who were in the mob. (See the reference to the abstract in the *NCGS Journal* below.)

### Published abstracts for Bladen County

Wanda S. Campbell, *Abstracts of Wills, Bladen County, North Carolina 1734-1900* (Elizabethtown, NC: by the author, 1962).

Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bible and Family Records of Bladen County, North Carolina, Volume 1* (Elizabethtown, NC: Bladen County Historical Society, 1982).

Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bible and Family Records of Bladen County, North Carolina, Volume 2* (Elizabethtown, NC: Bladen County Historical Society, 1983).

Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bible and Family Records of Bladen County, North Carolina, Volume 3* (Elizabethtown, NC: Bladen County Historical Society, 1983).

Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bible and Family Records of Bladen County, North Carolina, Volume 4* (Elizabethtown, NC: Bladen County Historical Society, 1992).

Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bible and Family Records of Bladen County, North Carolina, Volume 5* (Elizabethtown, NC: Bladen County Historical Society, 1999).

Charles F. McKee, *Vital Records of Bladen County, North Carolina 1753-1915* (Gastonia, NC: by the author, 1995). The vital information was taken from Fayetteville, Wilmington, and Raleigh newspapers; the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, 1803-1898; Bladen County marriage records 1868-1872; and

from the record of Charles McKee’s grandfather, who married couples in Bladen County between 1879 and 1906.

Brent H. Holcomb, CALS, *Bladen County, North Carolina Abstracts of Early Deeds 1758-1804* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1979).

Dr. A. B. Pruitt, *Abstracts of Land Entries, Bladen Co., NC 1778-1781* (No place: by the author, 1989).

Dr. A. B. Pruitt, *Abstracts of Land Warrants, Bladen County, NC 1802-1935, Part 1* (No place: by the author, 2001).

Dr. A. B. Pruitt, *Abstracts of Land Warrants, Bladen County, NC 1802-1935, Part 2* (No place: by the author, 2005).

Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bladen County, North Carolina Abstract of Deeds Volume I (Contains all of Deed Book 7)* (No place: by the author, 1977).

Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bladen County, North Carolina Abstract of Deeds Volume II (Contains all of Deed Books 1, 11, 23)* (Elizabethtown, NC: by the author, 1980).

Wanda Suggs Campbell, *Bladen County, North Carolina Abstract of Deeds Volume III (Contains all of Deed Books 8 and 10)* (Elizabethtown, NC: by the author, 1980).

William Byrd III, *Bladen County, North Carolina Tax Lists, 1768-1774, Volume I* (No place: by the author, 1998).

William Byrd III, *Bladen County, North Carolina Tax Lists, 1775-1789, Volume II* (No place: by the author, 2000).

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The following source can be helpful in finding Bladen County folks during the mid-1800s:

Elizabeth Ellis Robeson, *The Diary of Elizabeth Ellis Robeson: Bladen County NC, from 1847-1866* (No place: by the author, 197-).

### Online resources

- Mother County Genealogical Society, for those interested in Bladen County history and genealogy: <http://www.ncgenweb.us/bladen/mcgs>.
- Genealogy Inc. has links to genealogical records and historical information about Bladen County at <http://www.genealogyinc.com/northcarolina/bladen-county/>.
- Many links to genealogical records and individual family records, which are mostly printed from Family Tree Maker but worth looking at: <http://www.ncgenweb.us/bladen/>.
- FamilySearch Wiki lists online links to genealogical information about Bladen County and its records: [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Bladen\\_County,\\_North\\_Carolina](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Bladen_County,_North_Carolina).
- Checking the card catalog of Ancestry.com, only one book was found with information about Bladen County:  
Pearle Trogdon Love, *The Love Family of Gadsden County, Florida, Descendants of Alexander Love, who lived "On the Side of the water called Drowning Creek-Three Miles above Bettes Bridge, Bladen County, North Carolina."* Also *Allied Families* (No place: by the author, 1941).
- Newspapers.com (<http://newspapers.com>) has many North Carolina historical newspapers including those from Fayetteville, Raleigh, Wilmington, and Robeson as well as some religious papers including the *North Carolina Christian Advocate*. All may contain information about Bladen County residents.

- There are several manuscript collections about Bladen County and its early residents at the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University: <https://libcms.oit.duke.edu/rubenstein/>.

### Moore County abstracts in the *NCGS Journal*

Wanda S. Campbell, "Bladen County, N.C.: Its History and Records," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 2, number 2 (April 1976): 85-88.

"Marriage License Purchase Lists for Bladen County (1789) and Burke County (1787), North Carolina," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 5, number 4 (November 1979): 245.

Ge Lee Corley Hendrix, "Abstracts from a Survey Log Book, Bladen County, N.C., 1753-1754," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 6, number 2 (August 1980): 167-174.

Morris F. Britt, "Bladen County, NC, Land Records, 1758-1775; Memorials of Land Titles Filed in South Carolina," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 8, number 1 (February 1982): 15-17.

Teresa Hicks, "Thomas and Elizabeth Ivey of Bladen County, North Carolina," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 9, number 4 (November 1983): 259.

"Duncan Campbell of Argyll, Scotland, to Bladen Co., NC, 1739," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 11, number 3 (August 1985): 169.

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William L. Byrd III, "Some Bladen County Petitions 1769-1785," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 30, number 2 (May 2004): 198-209.

Jeffrey L. Haines, "Petition of the Adjoining Inhabitants of the Counties of New Hanover, Duplin, and Bladen, 23 October 1779," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 33, number 3 (August 2007): 244-249.

Larry W. Cates, "A Case of Conscience: Archibald Maclaine and the Bladen Courthouse Riot," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 40, number 3 (August 2014): 226-232.

### **Conclusion**

As always, when searching in a North Carolina county with record losses

- search records of the surrounding counties and, in the case of Bladen County, search the South Carolina counties that border Bladen County;
- search the state and federal records;
- search district court records; and
- search private records.