



Moore County, North Carolina

by Terry Moore, CG

We have all heard the expression “more is less” and nowhere is that more appropriately applied than to Moore County, North Carolina, where a courthouse fire in 1889 destroyed most of its records. As recorded in the 12 September 1889 newspaper, *The Carthage Blade*, “The loss from this office [clerk’s office], was about 500 judgment rolls, all probate papers, most of the old court minutes and dockets, all guardian books and bonds, all administrator’s bond books, all Supreme Court Reports and Acts of the Legislature. All other books and papers are saved. Every paper and book in the Register’s office, including the 1889 tax books (which had not yet been quite finished) was lost. So was everything in the County Superintendent’s office also lost.” A full account of the fire can be found in the May 1989 issue of the *NCGS Journal*.¹

Moore County was formed in 1784 from Cumberland County. In 1850 and before, Moore County bordered Cumberland, Richmond, Montgomery, Randolph, and Chatham counties. Although somewhat bleak, below is a list of the records before 1850 that survived. Other early records of Moore County residents can be found in public and church newspapers, early divorce records, runaway slave advertisements, Supreme Court cases, federal tax lists, and other compilations of records that were not in the Moore County Courthouse that somber night. Many of these are abstracted in the *NCGS Journals*.

Original records for Moore County at the North Carolina State Archives:

- Wills Index, 1793-1965, Vol. A-K (Images are on FamilySearch.)

- Wills Index, 1793-1965, Vol. L-Z (Images are on FamilySearch.)
- Wills, 1818-1852, Vol. B (Images are on FamilySearch.)
- Wills 1831
- Will in the miscellaneous records, for Duncan Blue 1815 (This is a CRX file, which means it was out of official custody for a time period.)
- Record of Estates, 1820-1833, 1837-1851, 1856-1862
- Loose Estates Records 1828-1921 (Images are on FamilySearch.)
- Administrator, Executor Cross Index, 1787-1819 (Images are on FamilySearch.)²
- Guardian’s Accounts, 1834-1857
- Guardian Records for 1847 (This is a different collection than the Guardian accounts.)
- Deeds, 1 fibredex box filed alphabetically B-W 1797-1923
- Mortgage Deeds and Deeds of Trust, 1 fibredex box 1834-1926
- Miscellaneous land records, 2 fibredex boxes, 1798-1926 and no date
- Land entries, 1784-1795

Although the early Moore County court records have not survived, some court dockets have. The docket is a list of court cases to be heard on a particular day. Not a lot of detail is given but the names of the parties involved, what type of case, and sometimes a few details are provided.

continued on next page

¹ Ransom McBride, “The Courthouse Fire of 1889 in Moore County, NC” *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 15, number 2 (May 1989): 110.

² 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.)

Moore County, North Carolina

continued from previous page

- Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions Minute Docket, Aug 1784-Nov 1795, Aug 1823-May 1831, Apr 1844-Jan 1847, Apr 1847-Jul 1849, Apr 1851-Oct 1858
- Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions Appearance Docket, 1841-1854
- Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions Execution Docket, 1818-1826; 1833-1841; 1842-1849; 1854-1856
- Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions Trial and Appearance Docket, 1798-1819, 1830-1845, Index to trial docket 1785-1868
- Superior Court Appearance Docket, 1835-1869
- Superior Court Equity Trial Docket, 1850-1868
- Superior Court Execution Docket, 1834-1847
- Superior Court Recognizance Docket, 1836-1844, 1849
- Superior Court State Docket, 1834-1851
- Civil Actions, 1829-1915
- In the Miscellaneous files there is a copy of two pages of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions records, 1784-1785.
- 1815 tax list
- A tax list in Miscellaneous records, District no. 1, Thomas M.D. Reed, January 1827
- Tax lists in Miscellaneous records, District 7 for 1832, 1833, 1834, and 1836
- Tax list in Miscellaneous records for the amount of taxable property, 1791
- Insolvent taxables, 1788-1790
- Justices of the Peace, Militia officers, 1800-1810
- Justices of the Peace, 1811-1821
- Justices of various counties, with no date
- County accounts, 1796-1841 (probably county business records)
- Election certification for Malcolm McNeill, Sheriff of Moore County, 1799

copy of the microfilm or a digital copy of the microfilm for a minimal cost from the North Carolina State Archives. Microfilm can be read at any library with a microfilm reader and at a local FamilySearch (Family History) Center.

Published abstracts for Moore County

Glenda L. Biggerstaff, *Abstracts of Moore County, North Carolina, Superior Court Minutes, Volume D, 1835-1839* (no place given, by the author, no date).

James Vann Comer, *Old Moore County, N.C. Vital Statistics (1784-1890/Part I)* (Sanford, NC: by the author, 1999). These abstracts were taken from bastardy records, county court minutes, marriages, deaths, and newspapers.

James Vann Comer, *Central North Carolina Vital Statistics: Old Moore County, N.C. Vital Statistics (1784-1890) Part II; (1891-1913) & "Central N.C. Journal" series completed* (Sanford, NC: by the author, 2001). The vital statistics were taken from various church newspapers and other sources.

James Vann Comer, *Gone and Almost Forgotten: Crain's Creek Community (1840-1892)* (Sanford, NC: by the author, 1986). (Crain's Creek Community / Town of Cameron, Moore County, NC area).

James Vann Comer, *The Bountiful Legacy of a Mother: Buffalo Presbyterian Church, Buffalo Community/Sanford, NC (1797-1997)* (Sanford, NC: by the author, 1997). Sanford is now in Lee County, which was formed from Moore and Chatham Counties in 1907.

James Vann Comer, *Moore County Bible Project (Volume 1)* (Sanford, NC: by the author, 1987).

Many of the original records found at the North Carolina State Archives are also on microfilm. If the records are not on FamilySearch, you can order a

continued on next page

This article originally appeared in the May 2016 issue of the *NCGS News*, the newsletter of the North Carolina Genealogical Society, volume 40, number 3.

© Terry Moore, CG. For personal use only.

Redistribution or commercial use requires express written permission from Terry Moore (moore.research@gmail.com).

Moore County, North Carolina

continued from previous page

Rassie Wicker, *Miscellaneous Ancient Records of Moore County, N.C.* (No place: by the author, no date). This book of abstracts contains Cumberland County land grants and deeds 1754-1784 (Moore County was created from Cumberland County in 1784), the 1815 tax list, census records, etc.

Patrick K. McDonald, *A History of Highland Scots Immigration into Moore County* (Franklin, NC: by the author, 2002). This book of abstracts contains a plat map of Moore County land grants near McLindon's Creek and the Juniper along with vignettes of Scottish families of this area.

Duncan McLeod and Barbara Kelly, *Emigrants from Parish of Sleat, Isle of Skye, Scotland to Moore County, NC, USA Circa 1802 and Their Descendants* (No place: no publisher, 1994). James Vann Comer sells this book.

Dr. A. B. Pruitt, *Abstracts of Land Entries: Moore Co., NC, 1784-1787* (No place: by the author, 1990).

Online resources

FamilySearch (<http://www.familysearch.org>) has images of the wills and estate records.

The FamilySearch Wiki page is the best place to go for many links to original Moore County documents and abstracts including links to the USGenWeb page. The FamilySearch Wiki can be found online at https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Moore_County,_North_Carolina or by going to <http://www.familysearch.org>, clicking on **Search**, then clicking on **Wiki** and typing **Moore County, North Carolina** in the search field.

Moore County abstracts in the NCGS Journal

Jeffrey L. Haines, CG, "Moore County 1815 Tax List," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 35, number 1 (February 2009): 19-44.

Kyle Wilson, "Some Early 19th Century Marriages in Moore County, NC," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 6, number 2 (August 1980): 203.

Conclusion

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

- search records of the surrounding counties,
- search the state and federal records,
- search district court records, and
- search private records.