

Granville Land Grants in Chatham County

by Jim Wiggins*

Curious about early Chatham County landowners¹—who they were and where they owned property—I decided to see what I could learn about early colonial land grants. The most accessible information on colonial grants in our area pertains to the Granville grants made between 1751 and 1763.² Although there were earlier grants, most of the records for those have been lost, so I limited my attention to the Granville grants.

Aspirations: A Map of Chatham County Granville Grants

My initial aspiration was to identify those Granville Land Grants (GLGs) in what is now Chatham County from the list of the more than 800 grants in Chatham's parent county—Orange—and to show these landholdings on a map of Chatham County. I had seen a map by A. B. Markum³ that plotted early land grants for the New Hope basin between 1743 and 1810. Although Markum's map is thought to have a number of errors, it is a useful tool for locating early settlers. Why not do the same for Chatham, I thought.

Not willing to spend a lot of time at the state archives to look at the original grants, I based my research on two sources: the abstracts of the Orange County land grants that are provided in Margaret M. Hofmann's *Granville District of North Carolina 1748-1763*, and in William D. Bennett's *Orange County Records* (both cited more completely at the end of this

article), using one as a cross-check for the other.

Hofmann provides a brief abstract of each grant, including grantee's name, grant date, survey date, number

2137 pg. 31 JOHN ROE 5 January 1763 425 acres in Orange County on both sides of Great Creek of Rocky River, joining a Rock and AARON HARLIN OR: /s/ (mark) Wits: JAS WATSON, CHARLES ATKINSON examined by: THO BLOUNT and W CHURTON surveyed 25 March 1762 SCC: THOS HAM, CORNEIS ROE W CHURTON Surveyor

Figure 1: Example abstract from Margaret M. Hofmann's *Granville District of NC 1748-1763*, p. 88.

776. 5 January 1763, John Roe, planter, ten shillings, on Great Cr. of Rocky R., begin at a rock cor. of Aaron Harlen's, his line E 40 ch. crossing creek to a white oak saplin, S 50 ch. to a hickory, W cross creek 65 ch. to a black oak, N 90 ch. to a stake, E 25 ch. to a white oak on Harlen's line, his line S 40 ch. to first station, 425 acres, seventeen shillings rent per year, surveyed 25 March 1762, Thos. Ham & Cornus. Roe, SCC. (SSLG 99-F)

[Ed. note: see also N. C. Patent Book 12:21]

Jas Watson
Charles Atkinson

John Roe
mark



Figure 2: Example grant summary from W. D. Bennett's *Orange County Records*, Vol. 6, p. 118.

of acres, adjoining land owners and natural land features. (See Figure 1.) Bennett's volumes also include a rough transcription of the grant, consisting of a property description and a facsimile of the grant,⁴ as well as in most cases a plat or surveyor's drawing of the parcel. (See Figure 2.) It was these drawings that made me think that it might be possible to plot the grants on a map. As the example in Figure 2 indicates, the plat shows the shape of the property, and gives a description for each boundary line in metes and bounds,⁵ using measurement units of chains and links.⁶ The plats often also show the location and shape of waterways, and sometimes identify adjoining landowners. How hard could it be, I thought, to put these various puzzle pieces together? Short answer: really hard. Too many of the puzzle pieces are missing.

Which Orange County Grants Were in Present-Day Chatham?

The first step in the process—the task of identifying which of the more than 800 Orange County Granville Grants fall within the borders of present Chatham County—proved difficult. Orange County was formed in 1752 from Bladen, Granville and Johnson counties, and was itself later divided. At the time of the Granville Grants, Orange County included the present day counties of Orange, Chatham, Caswell, Person and Alamance. There were also portions of present-day Durham, Wake, Guilford, Rockingham, Randolph and Lee.

The only consistently available data in the abstracts that tie a property to the geography of any particular county are waterways. Nearly all of the grants reference at least one waterway. So I set out to develop a comprehensive list of creeks and rivers in Chatham County. I did this by starting with present-day maps and also looked at all of the historical maps of the county that I could find. I quickly discovered that there are duplicate creek names (two Lick Creeks—three if you count Lick Branch, for example) even within Chatham's borders, and many more within the much larger Orange County of the time. As well, creek names have changed over time (*e.g.*, Landrums Creek has been called Mill Creek, and Beaver Dam Creek) or are used inconsistently (*e.g.*, Gulf or Goffs). I dug into old deeds and other sources to work out some of these puzzles.

Eventually, I developed a working list of Chatham County waterways—the creeks and rivers that defined the landscape then as now—and which provide the tenuous link tying yesterday's land deeds to today's geography. (See Appendix A.1: Chatham County Waterways.)⁷ Comparing the waterway list to the descriptions of property in the old Orange County Granville grants, I encountered several difficulties. First, while some of the grants contained enough geographic references to precisely locate the parcel in one county or another, many did not. For example, some grants note the parcel's location relative to the mouth of a creek—an unambiguous clue to its location on the ground—while others just say that the parcel is “on the waters of”⁸ a particular waterway, with no additional clues to narrow down the exact location. Particularly troublesome are waterways that are very extensive, and even more so when they extend beyond Chatham's borders. New Hope Creek, for example, covers many miles in both Orange and Chatham counties,⁹ and the Haw River extends well into Alamance County.

Additionally, a few of the grants did not refer to any waterways. For some of these, as well as for some grants located on waterways that extend beyond Chatham's borders, adjoining landowners, along with property shape, can be used to determine whether the parcel falls within Chatham's boundaries. However, other grants list adjoining landowners who did not receive Granville grants,¹⁰ and about those parcels I had no additional information.

Already, I could see that the pieces of the Granville puzzle were not going to fall into place as easily as I had hoped. Nevertheless, I proceeded with the task of creating a database of the subset of Orange County Granville Grants that were for land in what is now Chatham County and locating them, as far as possible, relative to waterways or other land features.

Using the methods described above, I identified 203 grants that I thought likely fell within Chatham's current borders.¹¹ Next, I produced a database of these grants that includes the grantee's name (sometimes indicating various spellings), the date of the survey, the date of the grant, the number of acres shown in the deed, any waterways mentioned in the description of the grant area, other property descriptions or landmarks—such as roads, mountains, distances from a mouth or fork—and adjacent landowners mentioned in the deed. Reference numbers are also given that allow the grant abstract to be easily located in both the Hofmann and Bennett books. The database also includes a map code that, if my determination of the property's location is correct, indicates the general area of the county in which the property was located. See Figure 3, a map which divides the county into eighteen USGS quadrangles, each with a letter code.¹² A larger version of this map is in Appendix B.¹³

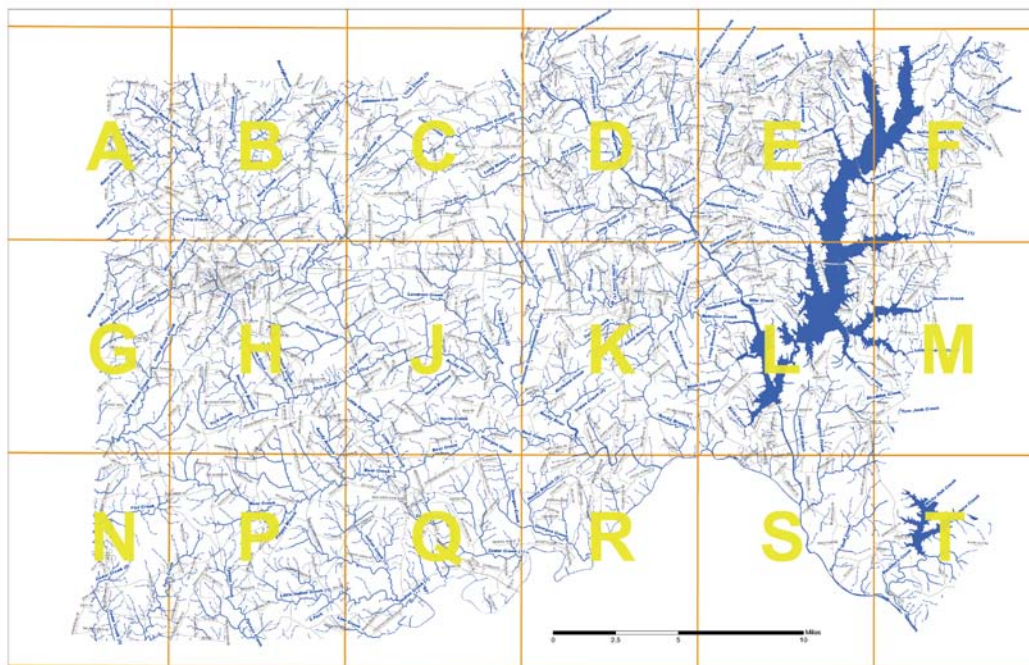


Figure 3: USGS Quadrangles and corresponding codes used to identify grant locations in Waterway Table and Granville Land Grant Tables.

The database of Chatham Granville grants that I developed is presented in this booklet in three tables in Appendix A. All three tables contain the same information, but it is sorted in different ways in each. Appendix A.2 is sorted by name of grantee, to facilitate research on particular landholders. Appendix A.3 is sorted by date of grant to show the progress of the settlement of the county. Appendix A.4 is sorted by map segment using the codes from the map in Figure 3 to help identify grants in geographic proximity to one another and relative to section of the county. Hopefully, these three formats will meet the needs of most users of the data.

Conclusions about Chatham Granville Grants and Grantees

A number of interesting conclusions can be drawn from the data in the tables presented here. For example, some of the earliest landowners in the county¹⁴ can be identified from the table that shows the grants organized by date. Early landholders along the New Hope Creek in the northern part of the county were Mark Morgan, Joseph Barbee and Henry Beasley. On the upper Haw River early grants were obtained by Timothy Terrell, William Johnston, John Jones and Richard Henderson. In the Cape Fear River basin early landowners were Enoch Lewis, John Bohannon and John Smith.

The sizes of grantees' holdings also can be estimated from the table. Mark Morgan had by far the greatest number of acres—some 5,552 acres in 11 parcels in what is now Chatham County, all in the New Hope basin. He had numerous holdings in other counties as well. Other large landholdings in Chatham were granted to Joseph Barbee, 2,500 acres along Panther Creek; Herman Husband, 2,129 acres along Love's Creek and the Deep River; Enoch Lewis, 2,881 acres on the Cape Fear River and Buckhorn Creek; Zachariah Martin, 2,084 acres, mostly in the northwest part of the county; and Timothy Terrell, 1,344 acres in the north central part of the county. The Landrum family—Benjamin, John, Joseph, and Reuben—together held 1,855 acres along what was then called Mill Creek, and is now known as Landrum Creek.

The table also shows that of the 146 grantees identified, two were women. Priscilla Barker, executrix of William Barker, deceased, was granted 450 acres in 1760 on White Oak, waters of Buckhorn Creek in December of 1761. Interestingly, the other grant made in a woman's name was also on White Oak, waters of Buckhorn. That grant was made in September 1762 to Mary MacClenny for 424 acres.

Among Chatham's Granville grantees are a number of some repute.¹⁵ John Brooks is said to have built a substantial two-story frame house with glass window panes three miles east of Ore Hill—later deeded to his son Isaac, a Regulator and one of Chatham's first legislators. John Stewart, Jr., whose father's GLG was on Robertson and Brooks Creeks, fought in the American Revolution under the command of Col. John Lutrell. It is said that Robert Marsh, whose GLG was eight miles north of what is now Pittsboro, was threatened with thirty lashes a month until he consented to join the Regulators. Court records mention Stephen Poe, at whose house Chatham Court was held until the first courthouse was built, and who was elected to represent Chatham in the Colonial Assembly of 1774, though he died before taking his seat.

Other Granville landholders were in Chatham for only a short time. Herman Husband is known for his association with the Regulator movement during the period before the Revolutionary War. The Regulators sought to change the corrupt system of taxation that was imposed at the time. After the Regulators lost the battle of Alamance in 1771, Husband fled the area. A similar fate seems to have befallen the Landrums, for whom Landrum Creek is named. The family, also Regulators, disappeared from Chatham County in the 1770s. Descendent Barbara Clark Pugh reports that they moved to South Carolina, probably to escape reprisal for their Regulator activities.

Difficulties in Putting the Grants on a Map

The final step of this project, as I initially envisioned it, was to locate as many of the Chatham Granville Grants as possible on a map of the county. I eventually concluded that most of the grants include too few clues that can be used to pinpoint geographic location precisely enough to map the grants and decided the mapping task would take considerably more time and energy than I was willing to devote.¹⁶

I will share here an example of my abandoned attempt to locate some of the Chatham Granville Grants on a map in order to illustrate some of the difficulties, as well as some of the clues that the data provide. I knew that successfully mapping the Granville properties would depend on two factors—first, how contiguous were the grant properties—so that their locations relative to one another could be determined, and second, the ease with which the properties could be located relative to geographic features that could be matched to the features of a current Chatham County map.

For my mapping experiment, I chose an area with which I had some familiarity—Roberson (aka Robeson or Robinson) Creek near Pittsboro, north to Brooks Creek, which runs west to east and enters the Haw River at the 15-501 bridge near Bynum. (See Figure 4.) Using property shapes, adjacent property references, boundary lengths and creek locations, I began piecing together the ten properties I had decided were most likely located in that area. An abbreviated presentation of the data for those properties is shown in Figure 5.

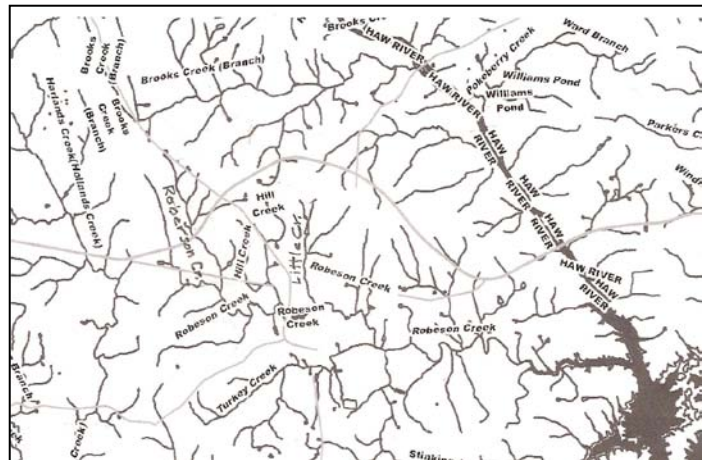


Figure 4: Map showing Roberson and Brooks Creeks, from Chatham County GIS.

Figure 5: Excerpt of Data for Properties on Robeson and Brooks Creeks

Grantee	Date of Survey	Date of Grant	# Acres	Waterway	Property Description	Map	Adjacent Landowners
Marsh, William	Mar 1756	Feb 1759	640	Little Cr. (2) & Brooks Cr.	both sides; S side of Haw R.	D	Jn. Martin's line
Stewart, John	Aug 1757	Jul 1760	640	Mullis Br.	both sides of; S side Haw R.	K	adjoining William Marsh [251] and John Marsh
Martin, Zachariah	Mar 1756 [for John Martin]	Feb 1761	520	Brooks Cr.	both sides; water of Haw River	D	
Marsh, John	Sep 1757	Aug 1761	640	Little Cr. (??)	both sides of; S side Haw R. ; against the Red fields	D	above Hercules Henderson abt 2 mi; includes his own and Jas. Younger's improvements
King, John	Jun 1761	Oct 1761	640	Robinsons Cr. [now Roberson Cr.]	both sides; waters of Haw R.	K	
Mullis, John	Oct 1762	Oct 1762	565	Robinsons Cr. [now Roberson Cr.]		K	adjoining John King [567], James Stewart, Robert Marsh
Corley, Robert	Mar 1762	Dec 1762	700	Robinsons Cr. [now Roberson Cr.]	both sides	K	adjoining Petty's line, C. Clanton [710], Stewarts line [292]
Clanton, Charles	Dec 1761	Dec 1762	700	Robinsons Cr. [now Roberson Cr.]	both sides; waters of Haw R.	K	adjoining Jno. Stewart [292] and Petty's line
Shiles, Thomas	Mar 1762	Jan 1763	546	Brooks Cr.	both sides; NE cor on bank of Haw R.	D	adjoining William Marsh [251]
Ray, James	Mar 1762	Jan 1763	325	Robinsons Cr. [now Roberson Cr.]	waters of Little Cr.	K	adjoining Wm. Petty and Rbt. Corley [699]

My next task was to see how well these various properties could be located relative to one another. For example, Zachariah Martin and William Marsh's properties were the earliest surveyed—both in 1756 and both said to be located on Brooks Creek (waters of the Haw River). Determining their relative locations was initially

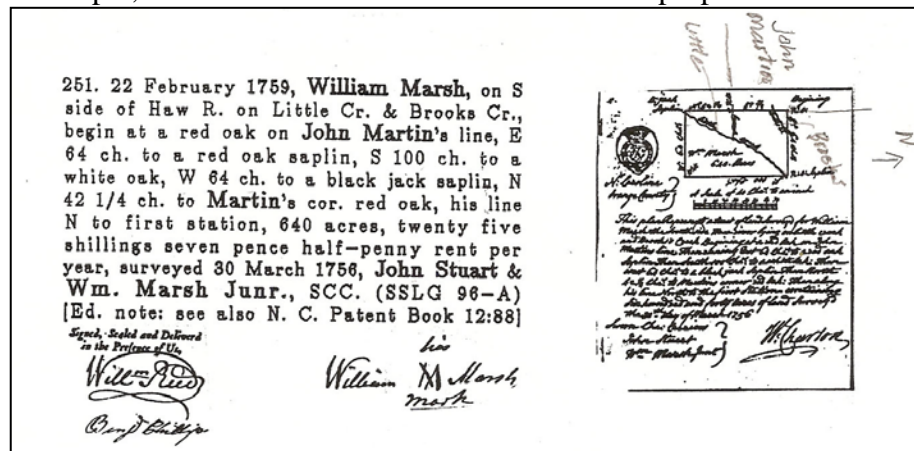


Figure 6: Survey for William Marsh, 1759. From Bennett, vol. 5, p. 86.

problematic because Marsh's survey indicates that part of his western boundary line is shared with John Martin's line—not Zachariah's. (See Figure 6.) However, Zachariah Martin's GLG deed shows that his property was surveyed for John Martin. (See Figure 7.) So, at the time of both surveys, Zachariah Martin's property was in John Martin's name. One problem solved!

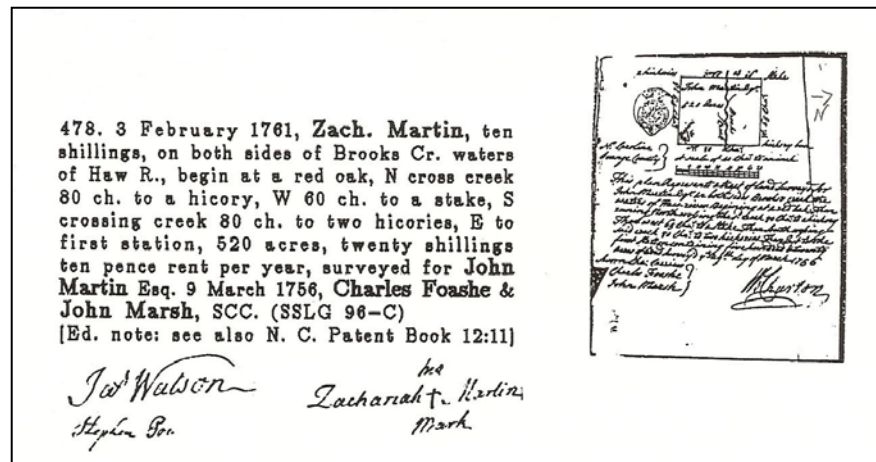


Figure 7: Survey for Zachariah Martin, 1761. From Bennett, vol. 6, p. 17.

In turn, John Stewart's 1757 survey shows his property sharing a north line with William Marsh, and parts of its north and east property lines with John Marsh's property that was surveyed about the same time. (See Figure 8.) Unfortunately, John Marsh's GLG is included only in Volume 1 of Bennett's work—loose papers—and that volume does not include facsimiles of the grant documents, so I have no copy of John Marsh's survey to corroborate this shared boundary.

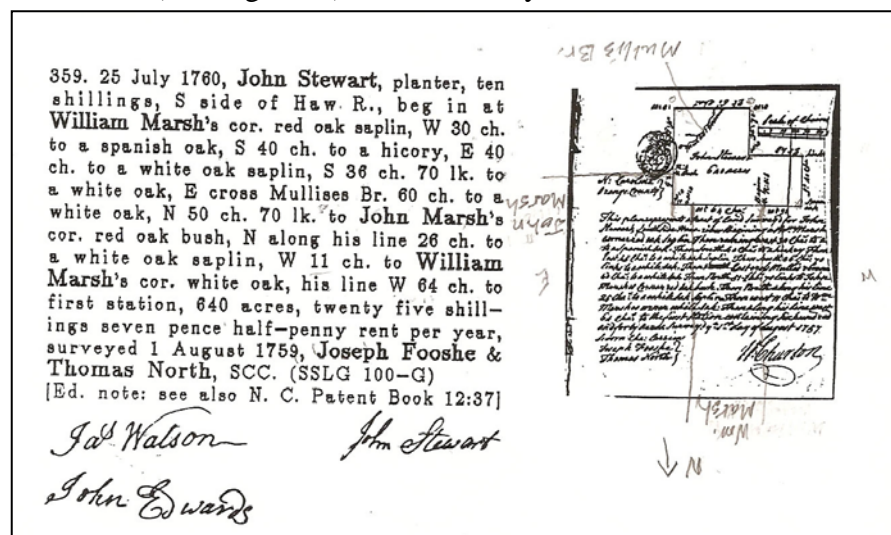


Figure 8: Survey for John Stewart, 1760. From Bennett, vol. 5, p. 122.

Using the procedure just described, I was able to identify two contiguous property groups which are shown in Figure 9. But I hit a snag when I tried to tie these two groupings together. The problem focused on John Mullis's property. (See Figure 10.) Two factors suggested that Mullis's property was located directly south of John Stewart's. First, the shape of Mullis's northern property boundary and Stewart's southern property boundary are almost identical. Second, Stewart's GLG survey indicates a Mullis Branch crossing his southern boundary, and Mullis's survey shows a creek running north-south on his property (though it is not referred to by any name).

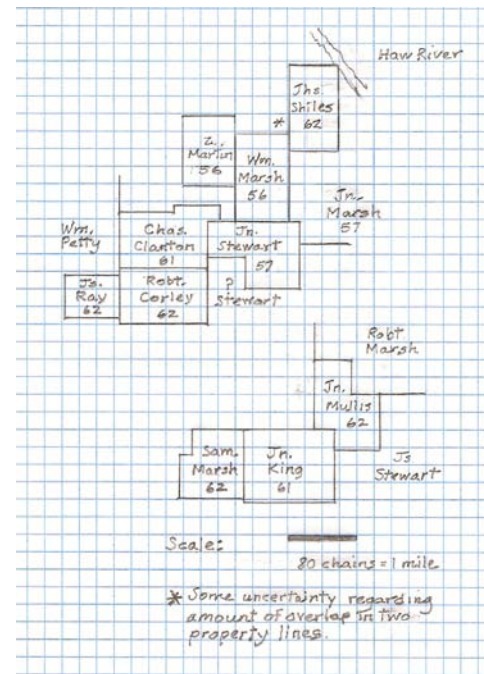


Figure 9: Sketch of adjacent properties on Brooks and Roberson Creeks.

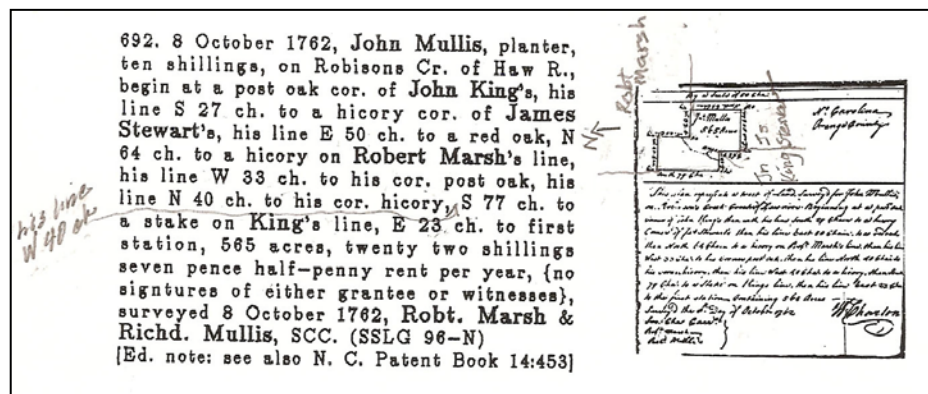


Figure 10: Survey for John Mullis

However, Stewart's GLG offers a tantalizing clue when it states that his property "includes the developments made by Robert Marsh," suggesting that Robert Marsh has lived on the property at some time and might be identified with it. A second factor suggesting that Mullis's property might not lie directly south of Stewart's is the fact that, if Mullis's property was south of Stewart's, then the survey of Robert Corley's property should have indicated that Corley's eastern border was shared with Mullis. Instead, it states that the eastern line borders a Stewart (no first name)—John Stewart being the only Stewart to acquire GLGs during that period, as far as our data indicate.

The final step in this project, as I first conceived it, was to locate the Granville Grant properties on a current county map. This step proved to be even more difficult than did locating the grants relative to one another, because I had only one kind of information on which to base my judgment. I had to match the locations of waterways on the grant survey maps with the waterway locations on current Chatham County maps. As previously noted, however, many of the waterways on the grant survey maps have been referred to inconsistently, or have changed names over the years—even during the relatively short period that the Granville Grants were made. In addition, the shapes and locations of waterways on the Granville surveys appear not to have been as carefully mapped as were the property borders.

The difficulty in putting the GLGs on a current map can be illustrated, for example, by William Marsh's survey, which cites both Brooks and Little Creeks. Adjacent landowner John Marsh's survey also indicates that his land is on Little Creek. Yet, current county maps do not identify a Little Creek adjacent to Brooks. Current maps do show a Little Creek running south into Roberson Creek (just west of Pittsboro's Rectory St.). Two clues suggest a possible location of the Little Creek on Marsh's tract. One is the relative locations of the two creeks on Marsh's survey map, and the other is the 1762 survey of Thomas Shiles' GLG. The Shiles grant indicates that Brooks Creek runs through the middle of the property, and that the property's north east corner is on the Haw River. At least some portion of its western border is shared with William Marsh (although there is some ambiguity about the portion of the border shared by Shiles and Marsh—making a precise determination of their relative positions difficult). These clues suggest that the Little Creek on Marsh's tract is indeed a branch of Brooks Creek.

Another example is illustrated by John Stewart's survey, mentioned earlier, which includes a Mullis Branch. This makes some sense, as John Mullis's property is thought to be to the south of Stewart and there is a creek running north to south through Mullis's property. However, current county databases identify no Mullis Branch. This branch might be the branch of Robeson Creek near Rectory Street in Pittsboro—now called Little Creek—or it might be Hill Creek, which crosses US-64 West near the Chatham County Community College campus.

The surveys of Clanton, Corley, Ray, King and Samuel Marsh all indicate that they include portions of both sides of Robeson Creek, which is shown running from the northwest to the southeast through their properties. But current Chatham County maps show at least two branches of Robeson Creek running in that direction—both between Hill Creek on the east and where US-64 West is joined by the US-64 By-pass on the west.

The only way to address these problems was to sketch the contiguous properties (using the identified adjoining landowners to position the properties relative to one another) and to scale this sketch to match a current county map, overlaying the sketch on the map to see where the surveyed creeks best matched the current creek locations. When I did this with the Brooks/Roberson group of grants, nothing met my intuitive definition of “best fit.” Nevertheless, it is possible to narrow down the location of this group of ten grants to the area indicated on Figure 11—an area covering about five miles north to south and four miles west to east.

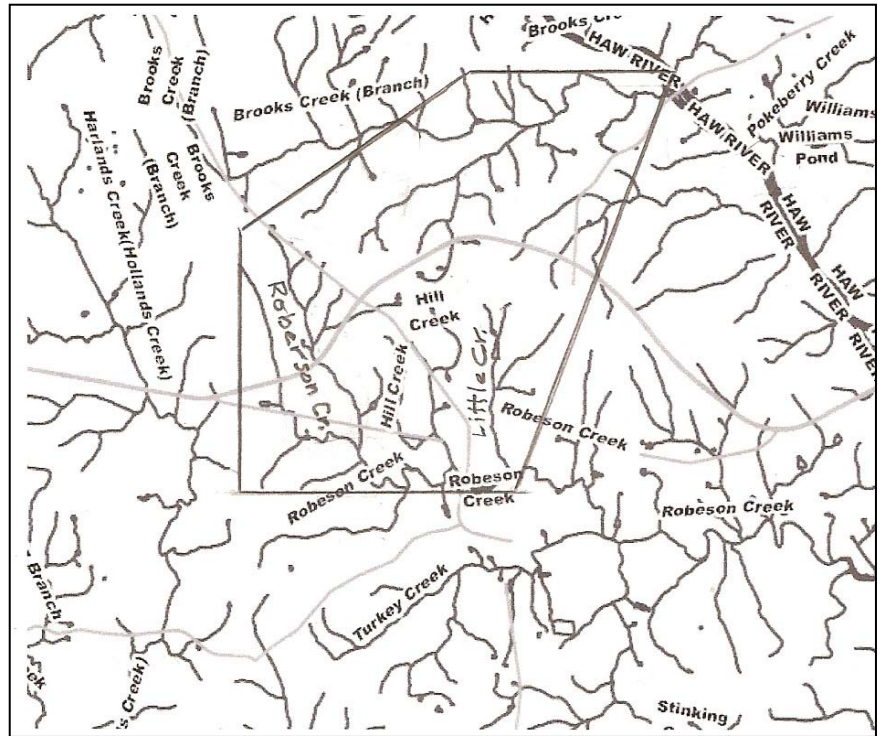


Figure 11: Map of Brooks and Roberson Creeks, showing approximate location of ten Granville Land Grants.

While this experiment quelled my aspiration to map Chatham’s GLGs, and may reasonably dampen the enthusiasm of others for this task, it does illustrate the possibility of locating some of the grants with reasonable accuracy. Additional sources of data can offer clues to such questions as precise locations of creeks or branches, or even parcels. More recent deeds, for example, sometimes reference a Granville grant (either directly or through chain of title) and go on to provide additional information regarding location (for example, east to the Haw River). Later deeds might also provide more complete information about adjoining properties, adding pieces to facilitate locating a parcel on a map. Looking for these clues is fun and sometimes rewarding. However, I quickly found myself being distracted. For example, I might be looking for clues about how John Stewart’s property changed hands, and see a reference to Robert Marsh that I thought would be useful for another map, and following that lead, see another name, and so on, until I couldn’t remember what I was searching for in the first place. It didn’t take me long to conclude that I wasn’t willing to do the research that would be required to produce even a rough map of all the Granville Grants. Instead, I will leave mapping to those whose interest in particular families or in a small section of the county will inspire them to follow all of the leads to the end.

Works in Progress

All of the several products of my research that are part of this booklet—the list of Chatham County waterways (Appendix A.1), the corresponding map identifying waterway locations (Appendix B), and the database of Chatham County Granville Grants that is presented in Appendices A.2 through A.4—are undoubtedly incomplete and most certainly contain errors.

I came to realize that I would never truly finish this project. Rather, I would always feel that I should collect more clues to decide if a property was really in Chatham County, and, if so, exactly where. My inclination was to put the project away and chalk it up as a failed attempt. However, others encouraged me to share what I had done—though we all agree that it is incomplete and far from perfect—because even in this form, others may find it of some use, and because wider use will very likely bring additional interpretations and further information to bear that will result in corrections and additions.¹⁸ So, all of the data presented here should be considered works in progress. These data are available on the CCHA website (www.chathamhistory.org), and will be revised periodically as additional information becomes available.

I encourage anyone wishing to suggest additions or corrections either the waterway list or to the GLG data to contact me via the Chatham County Historical Association. Send suggestions for corrections to Jim Wiggins, c/o CCHA, PO Box 93, Pittsboro, NC 27312, or via email to history@chathamhistory.org. Please include your contact information so we may ask you for more information if necessary.

Sources

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Notes

¹ I use the word “landowners” here deliberately, as these landowners were not necessarily residents of the county. Some may never even have visited the county.

² A brief history of the Granville District and Grants is included in Appendix C. Most grants for the area that is now Chatham County were made between 1753 and 1763, but it appears that a few grants were made even before Orange County was formed in 1752.

³ A. B. Markum, *Land Grants to Early Settlers in Old Orange County, NC: Part of Present Orange, Chatham, and Durham Counties, Period 1743-1810*. Map © A. B. Markum, 1973. Copy in CCHA Museum.

⁴ The facsimile also shows the signatures of the grantee and witnesses. Many of the grantees signed their names, rather than making a mark, so these records can be a good source for finding a sample of a person’s handwriting.

⁵ Metes and bounds is a system for the description of land that uses physical features of the geography, along with directions and distances, to describe the boundaries of a parcel of land. From a beginning point, the boundaries are described in a running prose style, working around the parcel of the land in sequence, and returning back to the beginning point. References to adjoining parcels of land (often by their owners’ names) may be included. The term “metes” refers to a boundary defined by the measurement of each straight run, specified by a distance between the points, and an orientation or direction. In the Granville surveys, direction is given as a simple compass bearing. The term “bounds” refers to a more general boundary description, such as along a certain watercourse or a public road way. I learned that while the abstracts usually describe the orientation of the property—so many chains east and so many north, for example—the plats are not necessarily oriented with North being at the top, as is now our custom. It is necessary to read the description to determine the orientation of the plat.

⁶ In the 1600s through the 1800s a common land measurement device was the Gunter chain. It provided measurements in chains. A chain is sixty-six feet long, and consists of 100 links, or four poles of sixteen and a half feet. Why these odd units? Edmund Gunter’s device allowed either of two incompatible systems to be used—the traditional English land measurements, based on the number four, and the newly introduced system of decimals based on the number ten. An acre, for example, measured 4,840 square yards in traditional units and 10 square chains in Gunter’s system. Thus, if need be, the entire process of land measurement could be computed in decimalized chains and links, and then converted to acres by dividing the results by 10 (from Andro Linklater, *Measuring America*).

⁷ I hope this waterway list will be useful for other purposes as well, such as identifying current names of waterways found in other old land records.

⁸ This phrase, “on the waters of,” appears to mean “in the watershed of,” as we would say today.

⁹ When possible, I relied on Markum’s map (mentioned above), which plotted early land grants on New Hope Creek, to help distinguish those grants in present-day Chatham—some under what is now Jordan Lake.

¹⁰ This could mean that they were sold land by other Granville grant recipients, or that they had obtained land prior to Granville’s proprietorship.

¹¹ It should be noted that I did not include grants that were made in those parts of Chatham County that have since become part of Lee County (a section of Chatham lying South of the Deep River that was allocated to Lee County in 1907), or Alamance County (the northernmost section of Chatham that was allocated to Alamance in 1895).

¹² The letter codes assigned to the USGS segments are the same as those used in *The Gravesites of Chatham County*. This coding system was developed by the late Will Heiser to tie the gravesite codes to geographic location.

¹³ Many thanks to Jeremy Poss, Chatham County’s GIS and mapping specialist, for producing this map.

¹⁴ Excluding, of course, those who obtained land prior to the Granville proprietorship, and about whom we know little.

¹⁵ See Hadley, Horton and Stowd, *Chatham County 1771-1971*, for more information.

¹⁶ Examining references to Granville grants in more recent deeds, or tracing recent deeds back to Granville grants would provide additional clues to make specifically locating some Granville grants possible, but doing this for all of the grants was beyond the scope of my ambitions.

¹⁷ This points to the importance of looking at survey date, as well as the deed or grant date when trying to figure out the relative locations of GLG properties. Title for Granville grants (which are actually deeds) was obtained through a four-step process. First, a land entry, or application, for an unclaimed piece of land was made with the Granville Land Office. The entry included a rough description of the land: estimated acreage, references to land forms associated with the tract, and the names of other landholders whose lands bounded the entry. The second step was the issuance of a land warrant, or order to survey the land. Often, several years elapsed between the issuance of a warrant and the actual survey of a land claim. Step three was the land survey—in which the boundaries of the land were measured (in metes and bounds) and the tract platted—often showing waterways as well as the shape of the tract. Usually, surveys also identify chain bearers or chain carriers, who assisted the surveyor. It is not unusual to find inconsistencies between acreage given in the warrant and survey, or even to find warrants and surveys for which no grant was issued. This is often attributable to conflicting claims on the land. The final step was the issuance of the land patent or grant, which conveyed the land to the applicant. The grant gave the grantee absolute ownership of the land (although annual land use fees had to be paid by the grantee) and became effective when signed by the grantee before witnesses.

¹⁸ Thanks to Jane Pyle, David Peterson, Judith Peterson, and Bill Dow for encouragement, helpful suggestions, and for reviewing a draft of this document.

** Jim Wiggins is a long-time member of the Chatham County Historical Association. His interests are widely varied—ranging from particle physics to early global exploration, and now and again focus on Chatham history. He credits his wife Beverly with providing the gentle prodding, writing and editing required to transform his notes into a document that could be shared with others.*