

**Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives  
Public Records Division  
Archival Services Branch**

## **LAND DISTRIBUTION IN KENTUCKY**

The Treasurer of the Commonwealth received payment for land. The Auditor of the Commonwealth prepared a voucher showing the quantity of land to which a person was entitled.

### The Warrant

A person entitled to land because of military service, settlement, purchase, or headright, received a warrant. These warrants were of four types:

1. Military warrants issued by the land office on the basis of a military certificate.
2. Pre-emption Warrants issued by the land office for actual settlement on the land or the raising of crops.
3. Treasury Warrants issued when a voucher was given for land purchases.
4. Exchange Warrants issued when it became necessary to exchange an original military, pre-emption, or treasury warrant.

Some warrants were issued for headrights. A headright was given to a person who paid the transportation costs for persons desiring to settle the land.

The warrant could be assigned.

### The Survey or Plat

The warrant was presented to the surveyor who listed the name of the warrant holder and the date of entry in the surveyor's record book. The entry date was very important if there were conflicting claims.

It was the responsibility of the county surveyor to keep accurate records to prevent duplication of surveys. However, because of poor markings and the surveying of huge tracts of land in the early years, as well as shifting areas of responsibility, many duplicate or overlapping surveys were made.

Surveys could be assigned.

## The Grant or Patent

When the survey was completed a copy was sent to the Governor's Office. The Governor, Virginia's before June 1792, Kentucky's after June 1, 1792, then issued a patent or grant.

The grant or patent could not be assigned.

NOTE: Unless land was sold outside the family, no deed was required. Heirs, if they kept the property, could retain ownership for generations without having a deed made. However, if there was litigation for an estate settlement, deeds were made.

Virginia pre-emption rights required a purchase price unless a settler could prove to the satisfaction of the County Court that he or she could not pay the stated price. The court could then give a pre-emption of 400 to those settled in Kentucky by 1780.