

KILLMACHRENAN

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The name 'Killmachrenan' (various spellings) has floated around the general area of Glade Spring and Chilhowie since before firm memory. Lewis Preston Summers in his History of Southwest Virginia and Washington Co. attested that it was an Indian name, and was connected to a stone fort near Old Glade Spring. An ancient log home formerly located on Main Street in Chilhowie has been known as 'The Town House' for as long as anyone could remember. Loose associations between these two entities have been made with Col. (also referred to as a ship's Captain) James Lynn Patton. Patton's will written in 1750 mentions an unnamed 3,000 acre tract in the "Old Indian Fields" where "Samuel Stahlacker lived", and willed it to his daughter Margaret. In 1773, Margaret Buchanan, daughter of Col. John Buchanan, married Joseph Drake in the Town House. Col. John Buchanan had been the chief surveyor of James Patton, and had married his daughter, Margaret. In other words, the Margaret who was marrying Joseph Drake in the Town House was the grand daughter of Col. James Patton.

In 1753 King George II patented 2,600 acres called Killmachrenan on the Middle Fork of the Indian River (Holston) to Patton (Land Office 32-181). One historian says that this tract was surveyed for Patton by Buchanan in 1746, but no one else has found a notation of this survey. No one has been able to graph the survey outlined in the patent to a modern map. If this were to be done, it could prove that all these references outlined above describe the same entity, and that the house on the Killmachrenan estate and the Town House are one and the same.

Col. (Capt.) James Lynn Patton

James Lynn Patton was born in Northern Ireland in 1692. His family was well connected, having originally been Norman French, whom generations later were moved by King James I to Ulster, and who had connections to the English royal family. His father was a ship builder and merchant fleet owner. His mother's mother was the daughter of the Laird of Loch Lynn, Scotland. Her brother lived in Fredericksburg, Virginia. His mother lived in the Barony of Kilmacrenan, County

Donegal, Ireland. Being a younger son, James was not to inherit anything in Ireland, and soon set his eyes on America. He took to the sea at an early age, and about 1728 he had become captain of his own ship, and began a business of carrying Scots-Irish indentures to Robb's Hole (current Tappahannock) on the Rappahannock River downstream from Fredericksburg. On his return to Britain he would carry a cargo of furs and of tobacco. He is said to have made over 20 such trips.

He married well into the First Families of Virginia. His wife was the daughter of Benjamin Burden (Borden), the former agent of Lord Fairfax, who owned the Northern Neck, or the land between the Potomac and Rappahannock in Virginia.

Many of the Irish immigrants he carried settled in Beverly Manor, the great settlement of Col. William Beverly that encompassed the entirety of modern Augusta County, Virginia. Beverly offered to give Patton a quarter of Beverly Manor in exchange for his bringing Irish settlers there. Patton leveraged these connections in England, Ireland, and in Virginia so that in 1738 the King gave to him the first of numerous land patents in Virginia. That year Patton and his family immigrated to Virginia.

In 1740 Patton received an additional patent on 100,000 acres in what was known as 'the Roanoke and James River Grant'. The only requirement was that the land be located on the west side of the Blue Ridge, and that it be settled by loyal British subjects. In 1745 he acquired the "Wood's River (New River) grant.

In the meantime, Patton had become very prominent in local and in colonial politics. He became sheriff of his county, held prominent positions in his church, and was chosen to be one of the signers of the Treaty of Lancaster, the very significant treaty between the British and the Iroquois.

In 1748 Patton led the first known formal expedition of exploration down the Wilderness Trail in order that he could come to know the nature of his land grants. No journal of this trip was kept, but records were reconstructed from the memories of its participants after the fact. He got at least as far as present Kingsport, Tennessee, and possibly as far as Middlesboro, Kentucky.

He made a point of getting patents for land along all the various versions of the Wilderness Trail, including the route down present US 11, I-81, the bottoms between Buchanan and Iron Gate, Craig's Creek, Catawba Creek, Mill Creek, and Wolf Creek. You could not easily get to Kentucky without passing over Patton's land.

He and his family moved to the center of his grants to Draper's Meadow, which was located on the watershed between the New and Roanoke River watersheds. The place is now the campus of Virginia Tech and State University at Blacksburg.

Probably in 1753 he built the two story log cabin on his Killmackrenan grant. To what extent he ever lived there is unknown. His family remained at Draper's Meadow. The Shawnee Indians of Ohio considered the New River Valley, which is part of the drainage system on the Ohio River, to be theirs. The settlements at Draper's Meadows and at Dunkard's Bottom at present Radford particularly upset them. They even felt threatened by the presence of Samuel Stahlacker at current Chilhowie. He was a trader with the Indians, primarily the Cherokee. Largely over these grievances, the French and Indian War broke out in 1754.

The Shawnee kidnapped Stahlacker, and held him captive in Ohio. They likely did not kill him because the Indians valued their traders. However, in July 1755 the Shawnee swept down on Draper's Meadow, and killed Patton and his wife, and carried several others, including Mary Draper Ingles, off to Ohio. The Dunkards had fled in terror to the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina. The treaty that ended the French and Indian War in 1763 required the abandonment of all the settlements west of the New River. The settlers who had paid King George II good silver money (Patton paid thirteen pounds of silver for Killmacheran) were not compensated. This policy of King George III was one of the root causes of the American Revolution.

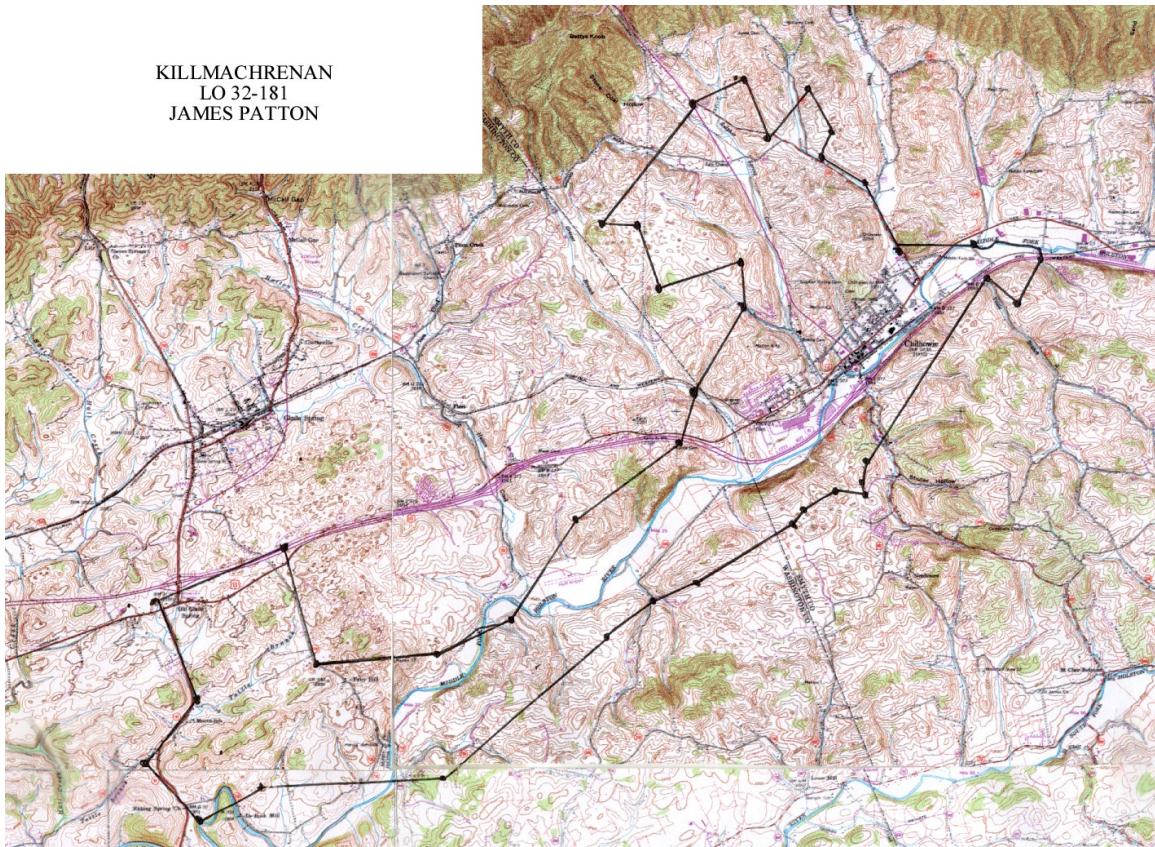
Thus, James Patton was the first European owner of the land along the Wilderness Trail from Buchanan to Kingsport. He was its first recorded explorer. His surveys document its routes through the Commonwealth. He became the most prominent American ever killed by the Indians in the United States.

Mapping the Killmacheran Patent

It is no wonder that the survey of LO 32-181 has never been mapped. First of all, two of the calls are illegible in the existing microfilm. The other problem is that the surveying chain (a chain is 4 poles) used to measure out that grant had been fraudulently lengthened from 16.5 feet to the pole to 22 feet. Dale Carter, who has mapped much of Sullivan County Tennessee, and of Southwest Virginia in the Holston, Clinch, and Powell Valleys, had discovered that same fraud had been committed in another of Patton's surveys. This has the practical effect of increasing the acreage of the survey by 79%. Patton's 2,600 acre patent became 4,654 acres.

It would seem that the fraud was committed by Patton, himself, as the personal patent (LO 32-153 of 1753) Buchanan took for his own home, at Aspenvale just west of Seven Mile Ford, and which he surveyed, was done with the legal 16.5 foot pole chain.

As can be seen from the plotting on the map, LO 32-181 does include the entire town of Chilhowie and of Old Glade Spring, and most of the river bottoms in between. It conforms to Carlock Creek, Price's Bridge Road, and western Tattle Creek, as well as touching the river at the required places.

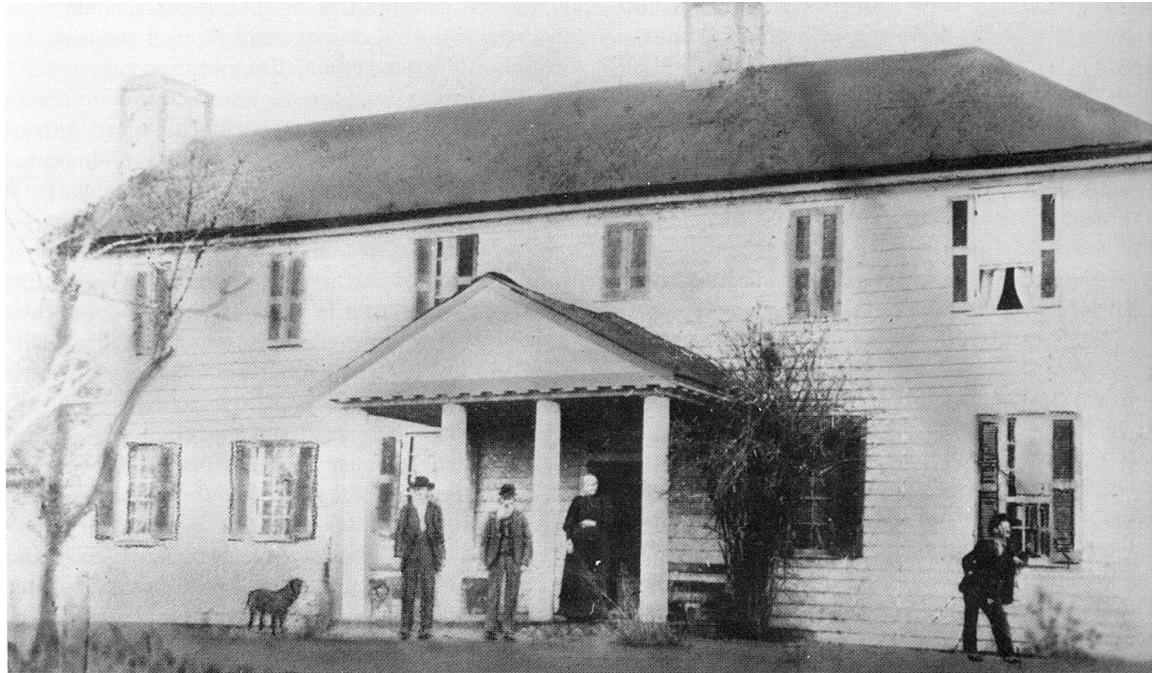


Town House

The picture of the Town House on the next page is of its most modern presentation. The original part is between the two chimneys to the left. The section to the right is a more recent addition. Note the entire structure has been weather boarded. From the appearances of the people in the picture, one would speculate that this photograph was taken after the Civil War. The house is entirely gone now.

Before the coming of the railroad, the community was simply known as "the Town House". Indeed, the creeks west of it were named by their distance from it. For example, the current Town Creek in Abingdon was named "Fourteen Mile Creek" for this reason.

Thus all the issues are resolved. The Town House of Chilhowie is the home that belonged to the Patton grant at Killmachenan, and whether or not there ever was a stone fort at Glade Spring named Killmachenan is a separate issue.



The Town House

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