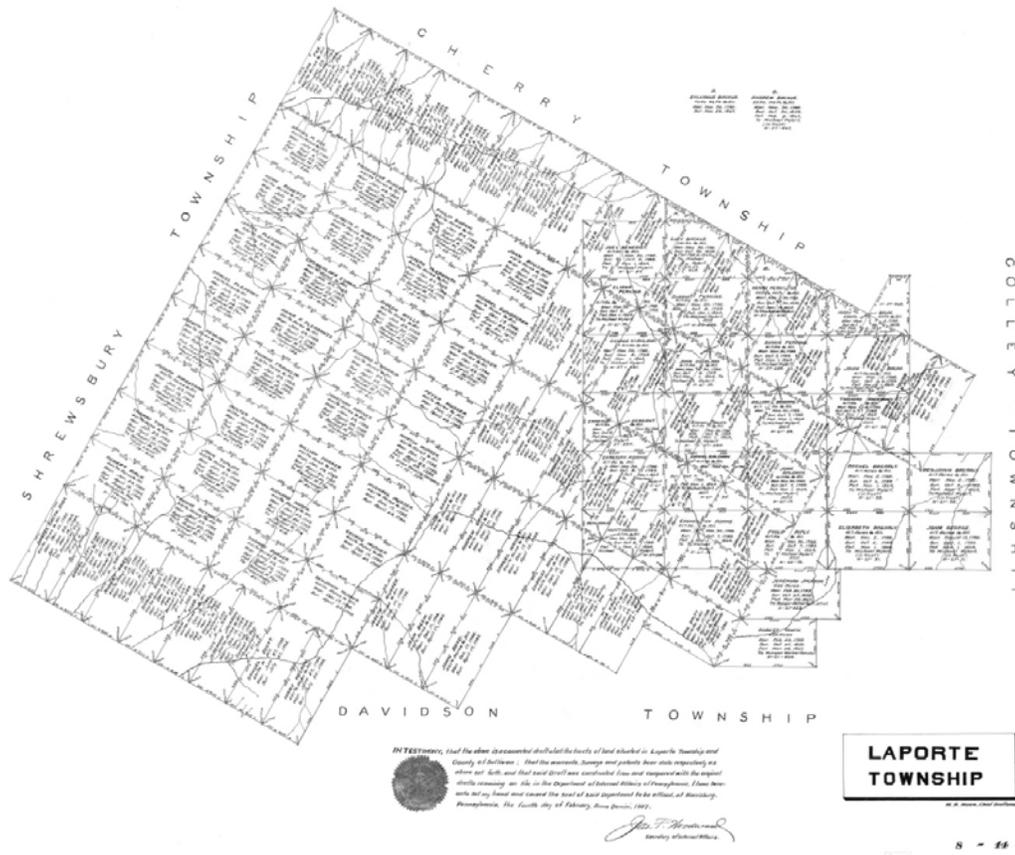


# Sullivan County, Pennsylvania Warrant Maps



## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LAND PURCHASE PROCESS (from Historical Society of PA - hsp.org)

The mass immigration of Europeans to the Americas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made the implementation of land laws and a patenting process one of the top priorities of William Penn's heirs. From 1732 to 1776, Penn's benefactors owned all of the unappropriated land in the Province of Pennsylvania and were responsible for its orderly disposal. The heirs of these lands were Penn's three sons, John, Thomas, and Richard, and Richard's sons, John and Richard. Lands inherited by the Penns were located in Bucks, Chester, Philadelphia, and Lancaster Counties. Along with this territory, they also inherited a land distribution system based upon proprietary principles and an obligation to continue the practice of purchase treaties with the Indians, which had been instituted by William Penn. The Penns encouraged rapid settlement of the colonies, adding to their territory multiple times through land purchases in 1749, 1754, and 1768, to make room for the influx of European immigrants that continued to come to this area during their proprietary period. With these purchases, their lands grew to include York, Cumberland, Berks, Northampton, Bedford, Northumberland, and Westmoreland Counties.

As proprietors, the young Penns had absolute authority to dispose of their lands. Using the Land Office and land distribution policies instituted by William Penn, they updated surveying procedures to accommodate as many settlers as possible from 1732 to 1765. Two categories of land were established to reflect land settlement up to

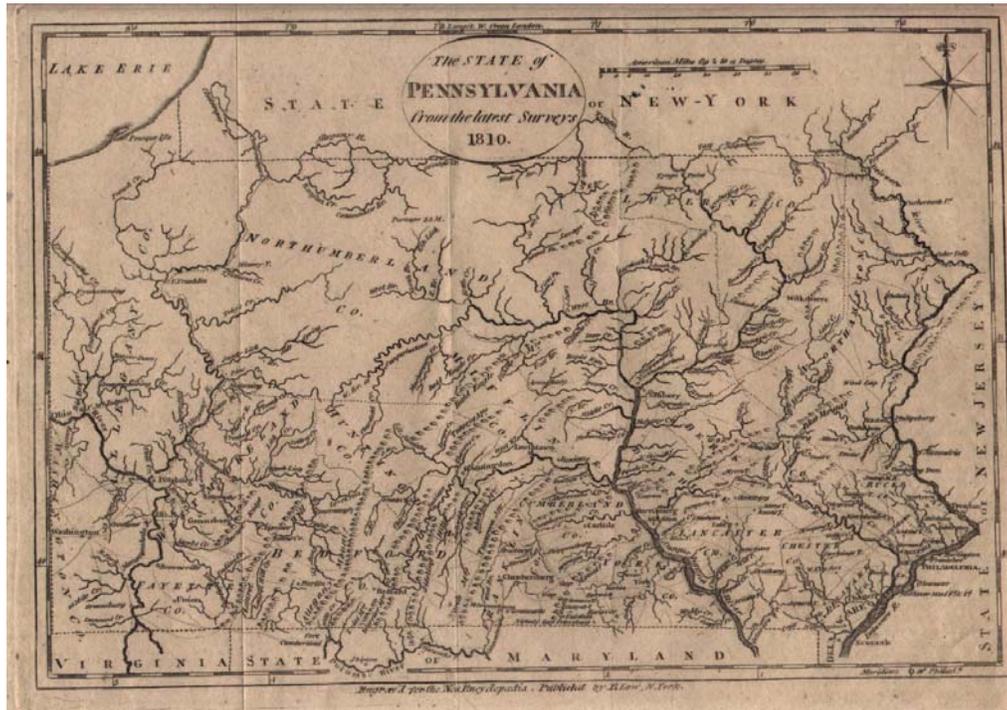
that point: improved and unimproved land. During William Penn's proprietorship, much of the land settlement was never recorded formally so squatting on land was common practice. Land that had been settled under this policy was considered improved land. All other lands vacant were considered unimproved lands. In order to regulate the settling of their lands and to retrieve payment from squatters who settled before 1754, the Penns further updated the application system, which consisted of a series of documents including application, warrant, survey, and patent. These records documented the name of the person applying for the land, the number of acres desired, county and townships in which the land was located, and an actual drawing of the boundary lines. The Penns also appointed four proprietary agents to administer the application process. These agents were secretary of the Land Office, surveyor general, deputy surveyor, and receiver general, listed in the order that their services were utilized in the land surveying process.

The first step in the land purchase process, application, consisted of a brief letter from the purchaser submitted to the Land Office. Applicants were required to provide information on the number of acres, general location desired, and reason for the application. The applications were submitted to the secretary with the appropriate fee. The secretary then issued warrants and orders of survey to the surveyor general to have the land in question surveyed. Under the policies of the Commonwealth, applications became a more formalized document but content in the applications changed little, except that land had to be specified as either improved or unimproved lands. Applications for improved land came to be known as entries.

Under the proprietorship of William Penn's sons, three types of warrants were issued compared to the one warrant to survey that was used under Penn's policy. These warrants include warrant to survey, warrant to accept a survey, and the warrant of entry. Warrants of survey are the most common type of warrant found in the documentary family collections. This document was granted to purchasers buying vacant unimproved land and was prepared by the secretary after an application was submitted. In most cases, warrants were issued to the surveyor general the same day that the application was submitted. Warrants list the person purchasing the land, the county and a general description of where the land was situated, property adjoining the land being surveyed, the purchase price (usually "15 pounds ten shillings for 100 acres and quitrent of one half penny sterling for every acre thereof."), and also the name of the deputy surveyor who would be ordered to complete the survey. Also stated are the terms of sale to be met within a given period, usually six months. These conditions remained the same under Commonwealth policies. After warrants were submitted to the surveyor general, an order to survey and the original warrant were sent to the deputy surveyor of the county listed on the warrant.

The deputy surveyor and his crew including axmen and chainmen, completed the surveys for lands being purchased. During the surveying process, axmen worked ahead of the surveying crew to clear trees and underbrush. Chainmen then measured distances by running horizontal lines along the ground according to directions given them by the deputy surveyor, who manipulated the compass. Survey maps were usually begun at a corner of an adjoining tract or at an obvious topographical feature. Tracts of land were measured along the ground, but corner markers were usually emblazoned on trees, preferably hardwoods such as hickory, chestnut, or oak. Stone piles and posts were also common land markers. Small depictions of trees or other markers are often included on survey maps. Under the policy of the Commonwealth, the diagram was also to include depictions of all streams, roads, railroads, canals, and a listing of township and county lines. In addition to landmarks, the surveyor also noted all adjoining owners and vacant lands on the map. Lines belonging to adjoining tracts that had already been surveyed were considered fixed and could not be adjusted. This information was imperative for preparing connected warrant tract maps.

Once the surveys were completed they were sent back to the surveyor general who checked the calculations to make sure that the acreage agreed with the warrant. An entire tract was to include six percent allowance for roads and highways, so that an acre actually included 169.6 square perches rather than the standard 160 square perches. An overplus of more than 10 percent of the land listed on the warrant was not permitted.



#### OTHER SOURCES –

PA Historical & Museum Commission - [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us)

#### GLOSSARY (from Historical Society of PA - hsp.org)–

##### **Application**

A request for land, usually a certain amount in a particular place

##### **Brief of title**

A document tracing the history of a certain property. Briefs of title summarize information contained in deeds and other records and may cover a very extensive period of time. Briefs of title are not official records and could have been created by anyone interested in or associated with the property. They are not recorded in the Commonwealth or City office.

**Conveyance**

Synonymous with deed

**Deed**

1. A signed and usually sealed instrument containing some legal transfer, bargain, or contract.
2. Evidence of a person's legal ownership.

**Deed of Ejectment**

Removal of a right to be on a property

**Deed of Partition**

The grantor dividing up the land to sell, or the grantor selling to a group of people who will then divide it amongst themselves.

**Deed Poll**

A deed made by one party, in which the rights of the grantor are transferred to the grantee.

**Fee Simple**

Indicates that the fee was paid completely (no mortgage)

**Headright system**

The most common method of obtaining land during the 17th and early 18th century was the "headright." The system was designed so as to encourage emigration. Each individual who paid for the transportation costs of an emigrant received 50 acres of land. For someone to receive a patent through the headright system they would have to petition the county court for a "certificate of importation." The certificates were then recorded in the county court minute books. These certificates established relationships, approximate arrival time in the Colony and the locality in which the emigrant settled in. Once the individual had obtained the certificate of importation he took it to the Secretary of the Colony who then issued a "right" of 50 acres per headright. The "right" was then taken to a county surveyor where a plat and map was drawn along with the measurements. Once the survey was completed, the papers were returned to the Secretary of the Colony and a patent was issued. The issuance of the patent however was conditional:

Condition 1: annual payment to the Crown of 1 shilling for each 50 acres owned

Condition 2: within a three year period a house to be built and stock to be kept or the cultivation of at least 1 acre of land.

**Indenture**

1. any deed, contract, or sealed agreement between two or more parties.
2. (formerly) a deed drawn up in duplicate, each part having correspondingly indented edges for identification and security.



### **Lease/Release**

Holdover from the English way of selling land. A lease would be created for the lessee, and a release was made very shortly thereafter (often the next day), in which the grantor released all of his rights to the land. After the Penn period releases more frequently refer to heirs releasing their rights to be on the deceased's land. This enables them to receive a portion of the value of the land, instead of the land itself.

### **Mortgage**

An indenture using the same language as a deed, but that stipulates projected due dates for payments

### **Patent**

The final deed from the proprietor or the state passing clear title of a property to its initial purchaser.

### **Quitrent**

A rent payable by a freeholder or copyholder to his lord that released him from liability to perform services.

### **Return of Survey**

Written restatement combining the warrant and survey and signifies that the purchase price and all fees have been paid.

### **Survey**

The actual process of going upon the land, measuring and marking the courses and distances, and drawing a tract diagram.

### **Warrant**

A written order to survey and usually restates the amount and location requested in the application.

## PRICE LIST

Disk with scanned images of original maps

\$75

Disk with scanned images of original maps plus polygon shapefiles of warrant boundaries and information

\$200

Add warrant overlay to a small, printed map (letter 8.5x11, legal 8.5x14, or tabloid 11x17 size)

+\$5 to regular print price (\$8 - \$12 total)

\*PDF maps are available at these prices\*

Add warrant overlay to a large, printed map (arch c 18x24, arch d 24x36, or arch e 36x48 size)

+\$10 to regular print price (\$35 - \$50 total)

\*Please feel free to reply with any modifications, additions, etc that you may find in your own research!  
These were georeferenced by cross-referencing the original map image with the present-day parcel lines.  
The exact placement of the warrant lines were not all verified with the deeds. The shapefile's main purpose  
is an aid to your own research.\*