

Boundary between North Carolina and the Cherokee Nation, 1767

Treaty signed by royal officials and Cherokee leaders, June 13, 1767.

As you read...

PROTECTING CHEROKEE LANDS

In 1766 John Stuart, superintendent of Indian affairs for the southern colonies, pressed Gov. William Tryon to enter into negotiations with the Cherokees regarding extension of the boundary line. The delineation of the boundary dividing the western frontiers of the province from the Cherokee hunting grounds was work left to Tryon by his predecessor, Arthur Dobbs. After some initial resistance, Tryon appointed commissioners to conduct the survey and mounted a personal military expedition to take part in the negotiations. The Cherokees were flattered to receive the governor's visit and gave him the title "Great Wolf of North Carolina."

The commissioners began their work in June 1767 at the Reedy River in South Carolina. From there, with the assistance of the several Cherokees in their party, they surveyed a line fifty-three miles north to a Spanish oak atop the peak that the Indians called the "great Mountain" and that the commissioners renamed for the governor. It was agreed that the boundary would extend in a straight line to "Colonel Chiswell's mines" in Virginia, but that that portion would by necessity remain unsurveyed.

By public proclamation on July 13, 1767, the boundary was stipulated with the stated requirement that white settlers west of the line should remove themselves by January 1, 1768. Furthermore, anyone wishing to trade with the Cherokees was required to obtain a license from the governor. The Cherokee boundary agreement was the high water mark of the attempt of the British home government to control North Carolina's Indian affairs.

— North Carolina Historical Marker Program, essay for marker O-77

A SHORT-LIVED BOUNDARY

The boundary was difficult to enforce — as you might imagine. As you can see from this document, it was hard enough just to describe! Colonists resented British attempts to keep them east of the mountains, and once the Revolution began, they poured across this boundary.

There's no need to read this treaty closely, but look it over to see how the boundary was described. What kinds of markers were used? What do you suppose it would have been like to try to find this boundary again, or to know which side of it you were standing on?

An Agreement between Governor Tryon and the Indians in regard to the Western boundary.

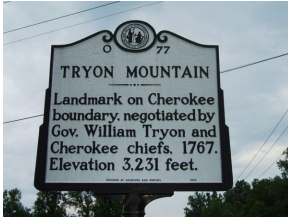


Figure 1. The historical marker for Tryon Mountain, one of the landmarks along the 1767 boundary with the Cherokee, stands along NC 108 at I-26 in Polk County.

Be it Remembered that on the thirteenth day of June in the seventh year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King George the Third by the Grace of God of Great Britain France and Ireland. King Defender of the faith &c. and in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven hundred and sixty seven it was agreed in Behalf of his Most Excellent Majesty of the one part and the head Beloved men and Warriors of the Cherokee Nation of the other part — Witnesseth that whereas by a Talk had between the head beloved men and Warriors of the Cherokee Nation and the Honorable John Stuart Esquire his Majesty’s Superintendant of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department Dated the 20th Day of October One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Five concerning the Boundary line Between the Frontiers of the Province of North Carolina and the Cherokee Hunting Grounds to avoid all further disputes, was unanimously agreed as follows, by the Prince of Chote Juds Friend and all the head Warriors and head Beloved men of the Over Hills Middle Settlements and Lower Towns that a Line on the North Carolina side should be Run. To commence where that on the South Carolina Terminates and to be run a North Course into the Mountains whence a Straight Line to the Lead Mines of Colo Chiswell should Fix the Boundary. In pursuance to which Talk His Excellency William Tryon Esquire Governor and Commander in Chief in and over his Majesty’s Province of North Carolina &c by commission, under his hand and seal, did appoint the Honorable John Rutherford, the Hon. Robert Palmer Esquire and John Frohock Esquire, Commissioners to run the said Boundary Line between the Frontiers of North Carolina and the Cherokee Hunting Grounds and the Commissioners aforesaid with Alexander Cameron Esquire Deputy Superintendant and the head Chiefs and Warriors of the said Nation (to wit) Juds Friend, Tufftoe Sallowee, or the Young Warrior of Estatoe, Ecoy, Chenesto of Sugar Town, and the Wolf of Keowee and others Met on the Fourth day of June One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Seven at Reedy River and Run the Line as follows, Beginning at a Waughoe or Elm tree on the South side of Reedy River Standing on the Bank of the River where the South Carolina Line Terminates and Runs thence a North Course about Fifty Three Miles into the Mountains to a Spanish Oak marked with the Initial Letters of the Commissioners names and several other Trees with the names and marks of Juds Friend Sallowee Ecoy and others standing on the Top of a Mountain called by us Tryon Mountain on the head Waters of White Oak and Packet Creeks, White Oak running into Green River and Packet running into Broad River and as it was found Impracticable that a Line should be Run and marked through the Mountains to Colo Chiswell’s Mines it is further agreed between the said John Rutherford Robert Palmer and John Frohock Commissioners as aforesaid in behalf of his Most Excellent Majesty and the said Alexander Cameron Esquire Deputy Superintendant as aforesaid and Juds Friend Tufftoe Sallowee Ecoy Chenesto and the Wolf of Keowee in behalf of themselves and the head Beloved Men and Warriors of the Cherokee Nation that the Line between the Frontiers of the Province of North Carolina and the Cherokee Hunting Grounds be continued as follows. Running from the Top of Tryon Mountain aforesaid. Beginning at the marked tree thereon by a direct Line to Chiswell’s Mines in Virginia—shall and is hereby declared to be the Boundary line between the said Frontiers of North Carolina and the Cherokee Hunting Grounds—and Commissioners aforesaid in behalf of his Most Excellent Majesty and the said Alexander Cameron Esquire, Juds Friend Tufftoe Sallowee

Ecoy Chenesto and the Wolf of Keowee in Behalf of themselves and the head beloved men and Warriors of Cherokee Nation, agree determine and conclude that the Boundaries as aforesaid herein described shall stand be and remain the Boundary Line between the Frontiers of the Province and the Cherokee Hunting Ground until his Most Excellent Majesty's pleasure shall be further known thereon. In testimony of which the several parties herein mentioned have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

JNO. RUTHERFORD

ROBT. PALMER

JOHN FROHOCK

ALEX. CAMERON

USTENUAH OTTASSATIC OR JUDS FRIEND his x mark.

ECOY or the Good Warrior of Estatoe his x mark.

SALUY or the Young Warrior of Estatoe his x mark.

TUFFTOE the Warrior of Keowee his x mark.

WOLF OF KEOWEE his x mark.

CHENESTO of Sugar Town his x mark.

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Figure 1 (page 2)

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