

## **HISTORICAL NOTE:**

With the Watauga Purchase on March 19, 1775, the Watauga Association arranged with the Cherokee chiefs to secure the land along the Watauga, Holston, and Great Conaway Rivers. This negotiation solidified the hold the settlers had on the area and further legitimized their burgeoning experiment in democracy and self-government.

This volume containing the treaty and recording the Watauga Purchase grants provides the earliest record of the Watauga settlement and proves to be the first land grant book created for the area which became Tennessee. The original ledger book kept by Trustee Charles Robertson was used to record the grants. James Smith served as Clerk for the Land Office opening in Watauga on April 1, 1775; the office was probably located at the residence of John Carter. This volume was transferred to Jonesborough with the formation of Washington County and used to record Washington County grants issued by the State of North Carolina.

The presence of a “copied by” notation in TSLA’s volume and its designation as “Old Book A” indicate that this book is most likely a copy of the original and that the original resides in the old land office papers held at the Archives in Raleigh, North Carolina. The volume housed at TSLA was furnished by Washington County for the Tennessee Historical Society exhibit at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in 1897. The book remained with the Tennessee Historical Society, eventually coming into the custody of the Tennessee State Library and Archives.