

Records Are In Raleigh

BY WILLIAM PRICE

The Moore County Courthouse—where you can find your birth certificate, records of wills, land grants, estates, various bonds—any official records you'll ever need. Right?

Wrong! Indeed, the Moore County Courthouse is the repository of many records you'll need, but due to a fire in the courthouse a century ago, the Department of Cultural Resources' County Records Management system and the State Archives in Raleigh are the custodians of some of the records you may need.

Today's Moore County Courthouse, poised high on a hill in the middle of Carthage, is the fourth courthouse to occupy the hill. Moore County, created in 1784 from the western part of Cumberland County, in that year chose Carthage as the county seat and built a courthouse.

The original courthouse was replaced in 1820. A tragic fire in 1889 destroyed the "new" building and a third courthouse was erected in 1890. The 1890 building was torn down in 1922 and the present three-story, semi-fireproof structure put up in its place.

Moore County Courthouse holds original records since the 1889 fire.

Another set of Moore County records on microfilm is safe from fire or other disaster in the vault in the Archives and History-State Library Building in Raleigh.

The Moore County records in Raleigh are part of a statewide microfilming effort begun in July, 1959, after the realization that valuable and irreplaceable original county and local documents were being stuffed into attics, basements, rafters and under pigeon roosts as records outgrew storage space.

Obviously, many were being lost.

Many records were being carelessly treated. "What to do with them was rarely considered until county and local offices were hopelessly out of available space," explained Ron Youngquist, who is the Department of Cultural Resources Assistant Records Administrator. Only then did officials begin to think of what to do with the ever-increasing mounds of documents.

"Some employees were afraid to discard anything, while others

discarded everything—even to setting records out on the lawns for anyone interested to take away," he said.

Many concerned county and local officials all over the state, along with county historians, realized the inestimable value of the resources being lost. With their interest and support of the Division of Archives and History efforts emerged today's program. North Carolina's county records management program is among the earliest pilot programs in the country for saving records and proved to be a model for many other states.

Its main purpose, Youngquist pointed out is to determine for counties answers to the questions: "What do we have? and what do we keep? or throw away?"

In addition to providing the microfilm teams to preserve records, the local records program since 1981 has begun providing county and local officials outreach services in the form of records management workshops and consultant help.

"We can conduct workshops here (in Raleigh) or there (in the counties)," Youngquist said. The consultant services also include evaluating the counties' own microfilm equipment and systems (for those that have it) and vendors' services to ensure archival standards, he added.

More than 859 rolls of microfilm for Moore County are stored in the Record Services Branch of the Division of Archives and History. These records are not available for any other purpose than to replace lost or damaged original records. In 1965-66 and 1975, Archives and History microfilmed records into Moore County to record the permanent records in the offices of the clerk of court, register of deeds and other county officials to provide security copies of the original documents.

At that time, the teams copied such records as apprentice, bastardy and official bonds; court records, deeds, deeds of trust and other land records; estate records; births, marriages and deaths; tax records; wills;

armed forces discharges; corporations and minutes for the various county boards such as county commissioners and boards of education.

These records go back to the formation of the county in 1784, Youngquist said.

Court records such as civil and criminal cases, estate records, special proceedings, wills, deeds, deeds of trust and corporations are some of the records currently being recorded.

The Records Services Branch is presently storing the Moore County Schools records to be microfilmed at a future time for permanent preservation.

So, the answer to the inevitable question, "Will the records I need for my genealogy (land, estate, wills, etc) research be available?" is "Yes!"

For the use of the public, Moore County original and microfilmed records are available in three places: at the present Moore County Courthouse, in Sandhills Community College, and in the State Archives in Raleigh—forever!



Moore County Courthouse was built in 1923.



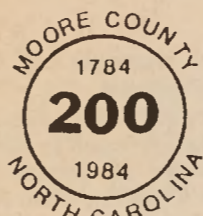
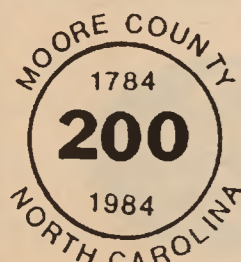
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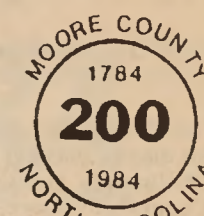
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