

1812 Property Dispute

The following is a particular item from the *Gordon Family Papers* collection that is of general genealogical and historical interest. It involves the dispute of a property claim in Mason County in February of 1812. As the introduction to the paper indicates, property disputes were all too common in the early history of Kentucky, due to the methods of surveying that were in use, and to various forms of invalid or fraudulent claims.

In this case, a group of people who had bought land from a person named John Prior were apparently being challenged by someone who claimed previous title to Prior's land. The names shown here might be of interest to anyone researching early Mason County history.

The piece of land in question is located toward the west end of the formation that is still known as *Jersey Ridge*, particularly the area just to the west of the major roadcut that was made to accommodate the road that leads from Rte. 9 down to the new bridge. In fact, the road that leads up to the top of the ridge near that point is named *Pickett Road*, and John Pickett happens to be the person who is being named to represent the landowners in the pending suit.

For what it is worth, they must have been successful in their defense against the *writ of ejectment*, as I know for certain that several of these landowners maintained their property going forward from this date.

Doug Gordon

GL33: Property Dispute

15 Feb 1812

Unlike the newer territories where property was being laid out in neat, square sections, Kentucky stayed with the old method of “metes and bounds,” which used often vague landmarks such as trees and creekbeds for establishing property lines. This led to many claims and counter-claims when property was being bought and sold. This paper seems to be related to some sort of property claim dispute. It looks like the signers of this document had bought land from a John Prior, and there is a question whether Prior had clear title to the land that was sold. It is notable in that Lewis Gordon is the first signer of the document, possibly because he was involved in the surveying of the land. However, he did not write this paper, as the handwriting is different and the spelling is mostly correct.

Text of Paper

Whereas a writ of Ejectment is brought in the mason county court against several persons living on Jn^o [John] Priors claim by Overtons heirs describing title from Raglins claim by which the title of Priors claim is called in question, and we the subscribers living on said claim are desirous to Join in one common body for the defence of said Priors claim being all deeply interested in said claim, and we not only agree to defend against said Raglins claim but all and every other claim or claims whatever to advance sums of money in equal proportions to the land we hold by said prior claim.

For the purposes above specified we and each of us agree and bind ourselves our heirs Executors and administrators to pay or cause to be paid to John Pickett the sum hereunto subscribed in trust for the purposes of employing council and defraying all necessary expences that may accrue in prosecuting and defending the said suits & we further agree and bind ourselves our heirs &c that If at any time hereafter any other suits should be instated against any part or parcel of Priors claim of 6000 [acres] That we will in like manner and in the same proportions contribute to the defence of the same and should the sum now subscribed and to be paid to John Pickett be found insufficient to defray all necessary costs and charges and likewise to compensate said John Pickett for his extraordinary trouble and expenses in attending to the business, we promise and oblige ourselves our heirs &c to pay what shall be adequate and sufficient

For the true performance of which we bind ourselves our heirs Executors and administrators to the aforesaid John Pickett and the survivor or survivors of him the said John Pickett in the final sum of two thousand dollars Witness our hands and seals this 15th day of February 1812

Lewis Gordon
John Pickett
Stephen & Ezra Bayles
Benjamin M Lee
John Sentency
Jn^o Holton
James Posatroe [?]

Tho^s Hanson [?]
Lefford [?] Thompson
George Hamilton
Timothy Downing
Stephen Pierce
Walter Leach
Isaac Key

Amos Corwine	King Crusan
Geo Corwine	William Cheesman
Tho ^s Thend [?]	Tho ^s Longley
Andrew Marys [?]	Jacob Sentency
Matthew Wright for the heirs of T Bennett dec ^d	
John G. M ^c gouen	

The following is written on the back of one of the pages. These were written by the writer of the paper itself – they are not signatures. Some name spellings vary from the above.

John Pickett	280 acres of Land in Priors claim		
Andrew Thorp	120 a	William Grimstead [?]	50
John Sentency	75 a	B Watts	100
John Holton	91 ¼ a	Higgins	65
Geo. Corwine	91 a	James Scott	
James Porter	64 a	Joseph Forman	
William Cheesman	196 a	Bennett heirs	320
Jacob Sentency	96 a	William Tebbs	
Amos Corwine	230 a	Stephen Pearce	65
Stephen & Ezra Bayles	210 a	Rch ^d [Richard] D Lloyd ¹	
Thomas Kern	60 a		
Tho ^s Hensen	200 a		
Lefford [?] Thompson	41 ¾ a		
John Sentency			
Joseph Stevenson	32		
Jacob Peddiord	84	Picket Sothers	
Robert Downing	94	agreement	
Timothy Downing	150		
John McGowan	1072		
Thomas Longley	53		
Peter Mayloth	49		
King Crusan	50		
Geo Hamilton	100		
Isaac Key	32		
Lewis Gordon ²	61		
Walter Leach	104		
Smith	112		

¹ Peter Gordon later married Richard Loyd's daughter, Clarissa.

² A deed has confirmed that Lewis Gordon purchased these 61 acres from John Pickett a few years earlier.