



06.1962.1 Patrick H. Sullivan 1794-1879
Boone County
Marker Text Review Report
1/18/2012

Marker Text

Patrick H. Sullivan 1794-1879 was the first white settler in Boone County, 1823, and built the first log cabin. In 1857, he bought this site and lived here until 1872. He served in the War of 1812. Erected by the Zionsville Historical Society 1962.

Report

This marker topic does not meet current guidelines for state or national significance. The Indiana Historical Bureau no longer marks topics with only local significance. IHB now avoids the use of subjective and superlative terms such as “first,” “only,” and “most.” Such claims are often not verifiable and/or require extensive qualification to be truly accurate. That is the case with this marker’s claims that Sullivan was the “first white settler” and his home was the “first” log cabin.¹

The text of this marker is misleading. French and British claimed the land prior to U.S. settlement of the territory that would eventually become Boone County. The text ignores the perspective of American Indians, who lived on the land before any white settlement began.

Regarding the accuracy of the remainder of the marker text:

- Patrick H. Sullivan *did* serve in the War of 1812.²
- Census records disagree regarding Sullivan’s birth year.³
- Obituaries from regional newspapers do not confirm the year of his death, though there is some suggestion that he was deceased by 1879.⁴

To learn more about topics of local interest, IHB staff recommends exploring local resources, such as public libraries, historical societies, and museums. In the case of Boone County settlers, the [Boone County Historical Society](#) would be an excellent place to start. For more information about American Indians, the War of 1812, and Indiana Territory and Statehood, [Explore Indiana History by Topic](#) on the IHB website for bibliographies, timelines and links to reliable web resources.

¹[Early Life and Times in Boone County Indiana](#) says of Sullivan: “We have been unable [sic] to get only few facts in regard to this pioneer.” IHB finds itself in the same situation. The *Combination Atlas Map of Boone County (Chicago, 1878)*, 14 reads, “so far as I have been able to learn after making diligent inquiry from every accessible source, I find that the first white man who made a settlement within the limits of the county (the French traders at Thorntown excepted) was Patrick H. Sullivan.” Primary and secondary sources located do not definitively support the assertion that he built the *first* log cabin or bought the site in 1857 and lived there until 1872.

² Virgil White, comp., *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files* (Waynesboro, TN, 1992), 2:1676. Entry lists “Sullivan, Patrick H., Sarah WC-29225 SC-2624 srvt. Capt. Samuel Henderson’s Co. SC Mil as a Pvt.”

³ A Patrick H. Sullivan is listed in the 1830 Census residing in Boone County, Indiana with age estimated as “Of thirty and under forty.” Patrick H. Sullivan next appears in the 1850 Census for Boone County, age 49 years, born in South Carolina. The 1870 Census lists Patrick H. Sullivan age 75 years and born in Virginia.

⁴ No obituary for Sullivan was located by IHB in a review of the *Lebanon Patriot*, *Lebanon Pioneer*, and the *Zionsville Times* for July-August 1876 through 1879. Sullivan was alive in 1876, as the *Lebanon Patriot*, July 6, 1876 reported, “Patrick H. Sullivan, who is still living and who is here to-day, and who yet resides in eagle township” attended a Centennial celebration. In 1879, *The Lebanon Patriot* published a list of men over seventy years of age residing in the county, and Sullivan is not listed.