Precincts

by Lindley S. Butler, 2006

Precincts exist in North Carolina as voting district subdivisions of both cities and counties. In the Proprietary province of Carolina, however, precincts were administrative and judicial districts of the counties or colonies. Corresponding to the modern county, each Proprietary precinct—governed by a court of justices chaired by a steward—had a sheriff as its chief law officer. The precincts also were used in determining representation in the Assembly and organizing the militia. Since the colonial Assembly first met in 1665, precincts may have been established at that time, but the earliest documentation is a 1668 commission that confirms that Pasquotank Precinct was in existence. It is likely that Chowan, Currituck, and Perquimans Precincts were created at the same time. These four governmental units are North Carolina’s oldest extant counties.

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