

Patrick H. Sullivan, 1794-1879  
Boone County  
06.1962.1

Prepared by the  
Indiana Historical Bureau 2010  
IN.gov/history

### **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.

### **Report**

In *Early Life and Times in Boone County Indiana* (1887) by Samuel Harden, the following was written about Patrick H. Sullivan, “We have been unable [sic] to get only few facts in regard to this pioneer.” Unfortunately, the same is true today.

There are many problems with this marker text. First, it is not at all certain if the dates for Sullivan’s life span are correct. A Patrick H. Sullivan is listed in the 1830 census as a head of household residing in Boone County, Indiana with the oldest male in the household listed as being “Of thirty and under forty.” Patrick H. Sullivan next appears in the 1850 federal census for Boone County, and his age is given as 49 years old and place of birth South Carolina. Twenty years later, the 1870 census listed a Patrick H. Sullivan residing in Boone County who was 75 years old, and was born in Virginia. Two out of the three censuses where a Patrick H. Sullivan is listed in Boone County would place his birth date before 1800, in which case the marker may be correct, but it is not at all certain.

His date of death is also unverified. The marker states he died in 1879. *Early Life and Times in Boone County* gave July 1876 as his death date. IHB researchers searched the *Lebanon Patriot*, *Lebanon Pioneer*, and the *Zionsville Times* for July-August 1876 and 1879 and located no obituary for Sullivan. However, he was evidently alive in early July 1876, because one Lebanon newspaper article acknowledged Sullivan’s presence at a U.S. Centennial celebration in Boone County. In 1879, *The*

*Lebanon Patriot* published a list of men over seventy years of age residing in the county and Sullivan is not listed, which indicates that he was deceased at this point.

Regarding the marker's other claims, the most problematic is the statement that he was the first white settler in Boone County. Even the county histories are not so bold as to definitively claim this. *Early Life and Times in Boone County* reads, "Mr. Sullivan was among the first, if not the first man, who made a permanent settlement in Boone County." The *Combination Atlas Map of Boone County* (1878) contains the following sentence, "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."

No source could be located which claimed that Sullivan built the first log cabin or that he bought the site where the marker stands in 1857 and lived there until 1872. The *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files* show that a Patrick H. Sullivan did serve in the War of 1812.