

Article 17.

Title in State.

§ 146-79. Title presumed in the State; tax titles.

In all controversies and suits for any land to which the State or any State agency or its assigns shall be a party, the title to such lands shall be taken and deemed to be in the State or the State agency or its assigns until the other party shall show that he has a good and valid title to such lands in himself.

In all controversies touching the title or the right of possession of any lands claimed by the State or by any State agency under any sale for taxes at any time heretofore made or which hereafter may be made, the deed of conveyance made by the sheriff or other officer or person making such sale, or who may have been authorized to execute such deed, shall be presumptive evidence that the lands therein mentioned were, at the time the lien for such taxes attached and at the time of the sale, the property of the person therein designated as the delinquent owner; that such lands were subject to taxation; that the taxes were duly levied and assessed; that the lands were duly listed; that the taxes were due and unpaid; that the manner in which the listing, assessment, levy, and sale were conducted was in all respects as the law directed; that all the prerequisites of the law were duly complied with by all officers or persons who had or whose duty it was to have had any part or action in any transaction relating to or affecting the title conveyed or purported to be conveyed by the deed, from the listing and valuation of the property up to the execution of the deed, both inclusive; and that all things whatsoever required by law to make a good and valid sale and vest the title in the purchaser were done, and that all recitals in such deed contained are true as to each and every of the matters so recited.

In all controversies and suits involving the title to real property claimed and held under and by virtue of a deed made substantially as above, the person claiming title adverse to the title conveyed by such deed shall be required to prove, in order to defeat such title, either that the real property was not subject to taxation for the year or years named in the deed, that the taxes had been paid before the sale, that the property had been redeemed from the sale according to the provisions of law, and that such redemption was had or made for the use or benefit of persons having the right of redemption under the laws of this State, or that there had been an entire omission to list or assess the property or to levy the taxes or to sell the property; but no person shall be permitted to question the title acquired under such sale and deed without first showing that he or the person under whom he claims title had title to the property at the time of the sale, and that all taxes due upon the property have been paid by such person or the person under whom he claims title. (1842-3, c. 36, s. 3; R.C., c. 66, s. 24; Code, s. 2527; 1889, c. 243; Rev., s. 4047; C.S., s. 7617; G.S., s. 146-90; 1959, c. 683, s. 1.)

§ 146-80. Statute of limitations.

No statute of limitations shall affect the title or mar the action of the State, or of any State agency, or of its assigns, unless the same would protect the person holding and claiming adversely against the State. Neither the State nor any State agency, nor its assigns, shall commence any action for the recovery of damages for timber cut and removed from lands owned by the State or by any State agency or for any other act of trespass committed on such lands, more than 10 years after the occurrence of such cutting, removal, or other act of trespass. The provisions of this section shall not have the effect of reviving any cause of action which was, at the date of ratification of this Chapter, barred by any applicable statute of limitations. (1842, c. 36, s. 5; R.C., c. 66, s. 25; Code, s. 2528; Rev., s. 4048; 1917, c. 287; C.S., s. 7618; G.S., s. 146-91; 1959, c. 683, s. 1.)

§ 146-81. Title to lands sold for taxes.

The title to all land acquired by the State by virtue of being sold for taxes is hereby vested in the State of North Carolina. (1917, c. 209; C.S., s. 7615; G.S., s. 146-88; 1959, c. 683, s. 1.)

§ 146-82. Protection of interest in lands sold for taxes.

Whenever any lands in which the State of North Carolina or any State agency has an interest, by way of mortgage or otherwise, are advertised to be sold for any taxes or special assessment, or under any lien, the Department of Administration is authorized, if in its judgment it is necessary to protect the interest of the State, to appear at any sale of such lands and to buy the same as any other person would. For the purpose of paying therefor, the Director of the Budget is authorized to draw upon the State Land Fund. (1917, c. 246; C.S., s. 7616; G.S., s. 146-89; 1959, c. 683, s. 1.)