

Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia, Volume 3: Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745-1800

Lyman Chalkley



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With large numbers of children who needed their own inexpensive farms, the Scotch-Irish avoided areas already settled by Germans and Quakers and moved south, down the Shenandoah Valley, and through the Blue Ridge Mountains into Virginia. In the year 1745, all that portion of the Colony of Virginia which lay west of the Blue Ridge Mountains was erected into a County which was named Augusta. In December of that year, the County Court was organized and held its first sitting. Prior to that time it had become the refuge and abiding place of a strong body of Scotch-Irish immigrants. The bounds of the new County were limited on the north by Fairfax's Northern Neck Grant and the boundaries of Maryland and Pennsylvania to the westward of Fairfax; on the east by the Blue Ridge Mountains; on the south by the Caroline line. On the west its territory embraced all the soil held by the British without limit of extent. For about twelve years the County Court of Augusta was the only Court and repository of records within that district. From the end of that period, at frequent intervals, its jurisdiction was restricted by the erection of other Counties as the demands of the settlers required. Its original constitution embraced all Virginia west of the Blue Ridge (with the exception of the Northern Neck Grant, whose southern boundary was in the present County of Shenandoah, and western, through the Counties of Hardy, Hampshire, and northward to the Potomac); the whole of the present state of West Virginia; a portion of the present Western Pennsylvania, including Pittsburgh, which was, at times, the seat of the County Court; and the lands on the waters of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

The value of this compilation of notes and abstracts will be determined by the extent of its contribution to the history of the early settlement of a great country and the acceptability of its form. It is not claimed that it is of equal value with the records themselves, or that it is perfect as a compilation. Nor does it constitute a history in the accepted sense. Yet, as the progressive record of the daily life, the needs, the trials, the struggles, the efforts, the labors, the implements and tools, the occupations and amusements, the aids and obstacles, the aims and longings, the achievements and failures, the forming and shaping, the beauty and ugliness, the riches and sordidness, the risings and declinings, the moral, physical, and spiritual evolution of an offshoot and a nucleus of a people whose characteristics have ever been truth, honesty, simplicity, singleness of purpose, and courage, it is believed that it presents history in its truest, most reliable and most attractive form.

This book is volume 3 of 3, containing extracts from original court records of Augusta County in the years 1745 to 1800.

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