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History of Summers County, West Virginia from the Earliest Settlement to Present Time

James H. Miller (author)

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The author is well matched to the task; James Miller was reared in Summers County and became one of its prominent citizens, being a judge and businessman involved in many of the events detailed in this book. The author includes in his history aspects of pre-colonial habitation by aboriginal peoples, early settlement and pioneer times, geography and topography, conflict with hostile Indians, the Spanish-American War and the Civil War, growth and development of the county, railroad disasters, churches, schools, elections, courts, hotels, businesses and industries, roads and railroads, murders, lynchings and celebrated court actions. Most of the county residents at the time this book was written were descendants of a few pioneer families, and the author has amassed an impressive collection of family tree information, including thousands of names which are listed in the twenty-one page surname and subject index. While the author relates more than one litigation in which he was directly involved, his greatest pleasure seems to be in writing about the early times and settlers. He repeatedly returns to the theme of the simpler, purer time, when "Congress had not then broken through the bands of the Constitution; the miners and sappers of that constitution had not then begun their work; monopolies had not been fostered; personal liberty had not then been curtailed; 'government by injunction' had not been invented..." He writes longingly of the time before distant out-of-state capitalists owned any property in the county, and people did not need to lock their doors ("The latch-key was always out"). More than half of the book comprises biographical sketches (wherein resides most of the genealogical information, as well as nearly one hundred illustrations). This is a large and detailed history of Summers County, told with fondness and nostalgia by one of its sons. (1908, 1997), 2012, 5½x8½, paper, index, 2 vols., 1032 pp.

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