

A HISTORY OF
PLEASANTS COUNTY
WEST VIRGINIA

BY
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THE ORACLE PRESS
ST. MARYS, W. VA.

1929

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PREFACE

In writing the history of Pleasants county a great difficulty was that of winnowing out traditions and getting absolute facts. The unwritten history of any locality abounds with extraordinary legends which, in the course of time, have become accepted as literally true, and this has happened even in the short space of time since the first settlement of this county. In looking over the work I find several passages which should have been expanded by giving more nearly complete details, but it was impossible to obtain them, and in some instances impracticable or foreign to the design of the book.

Yet, in spite of the difficulties, I have thoroughly enjoyed gathering the facts and putting them into what I trust is a readable shape. In performing this work I have gone into the official records of the county; much of interest has been derived from the letters and journal of Thomas Browse, recourse has been freely had to the files of the St. Marys Oracle, which are almost complete from the year 1881, and for about the same period of time I have been enabled to supply something from my own recollection.

The general plan of the book has been to trace the gradual advance that has been made from the life of the hardy pioneer to the present age of comparative affluence and comfort—an advance that has been very marked within the last forty years, and which is perhaps not so

appreciated as it should be. Few of the present generation can realize the hardships their parents were forced to endure, the meager subsistence derived from farms in the days when the chief products were hoop-poles and tanbark, or the hand-to-mouth existence of the laborer who sought to rear a family on the pittance of a dollar a day. Yet I take this opportunity to observe that, despite the tremendous improvement in physical welfare, it is very doubtful that a greater degree of happiness exists today.

It has been my effort not only to bring about a better regard for the men and women who ventured into the wilderness and prepared the way for the pleasure and ease of future generations, but also to give due credit to the founders and builders of the county and town. Wisdom and strength of character are displayed equally well in a small as in a large community. It is not the stage, but the actor, that commands admiration.

Robt. L. Pemberton
St. Marys, W. Va., March 9, 1929