

**SUSSEX COUNTY, A TALE
OF THREE CENTURIES.
AMERICAN GUIDE SERIES**

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Sussex County, a Tale of Three Centuries. American Guide Series by Virginia Writers' Project

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VIRGINIA WRITERS' PROJECT

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SUSSEX COUNTY
A TALE OF THREE CENTURIES



SUSSEX COUNTY COURTHOUSE
(1828)

SUSSEX COUNTY

A Tale of Three Centuries

COMPILED BY WORKERS OF THE
WRITERS' PROGRAM .
OF THE
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA



Illustrated

American Guide Series

SPONSORED BY
The Sussex County School Board
TALMAGE D. FOSTER, *Superintendent*

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Foreword

THE NEED in our schools for a history of Sussex County has been evident for years. No serious effort has been made by anyone to record in one volume some of the many interesting events in the growth and development of this county.

In 1937, with this situation in mind, I began to collect material for such a history to be mimeographed and issued as a small bulletin. The principals and teachers throughout the county were very helpful in gathering data. Very soon, however, I realized that even this project required more time than I could take from my regular office work and duties as Superintendent of Schools. An application was, therefore, made to the Works Progress Administration for clerical assistance. Miss Rosa Coker, Miss Nannie Calder, secretary in my office, and I worked on the records in the library of the Virginia State Board of Education and the archives of the Virginia State Library.

What we had begun as a small project for our spare time grew and grew until, within a few weeks, we realized that we were not equipped to complete the task as it should be done. In a short time the Works Progress Administration funds were exhausted, and our aid from this source was discontinued. A school building program under the Public Works Administration, together with our regular duties, forced us to abandon the project entirely for a time.

Some time later, I heard of the fine work in the field of historical research being done by the Virginia Writers' Project under Mrs. Eudora Ramsay Richardson. Application was made for the Work Projects Administration, through the Virginia Writers' Project, to enlarge upon the original idea and complete the history of Sussex County with special emphasis on the growth of the school system. I am, therefore, greatly indebted to the workers on the Virginia Writers' Project and especially to Mrs. Richardson for the fine work they have done on this history.

I am indebted to the many Sussex County people who have contributed information contained in the following pages. I am grateful

to Miss Mary A. Stephenson and Miss Maria Parker for some of the local historical facts.

There are, no doubt, some errors and many omissions. I am sure, however, the reader will understand the tremendous task involved in compiling this history. It is my hope that from this effort the people of Sussex will become more conscious of the past and more alive to the future of their native county.

TALMAGE D. FOSTER

Superintendent of Schools

Waverly, Virginia

January 23, 1942

Preface

LIKE TOPSY, this book "just grew" and went on growing. When it was to be merely the story of public schools in Sussex County, the Virginia Writers' Project undertook the task of completing research competently begun by Talmage D. Foster, County Superintendent, and preparing the book for publication. At my suggestion Mr. Foster agreed to include sections dealing with statewide education, with private schools in Sussex, and with the historical background of the county. After the completion of a book we knew to be far from definitive, our sponsor's appetite for history began to take on such startling proportions as to cause me to regret having thrown Mr. Foster the first tempting morsel. Since much of his county's past lay buried in musty records, he argued, why not expand the historical sketch? The work was well under way when our sponsor thought up the appendices. One list, of course, called so imperatively for another that it once looked as though the tail would wag the dog.

The book is representative of many people's research. A former assistant state supervisor wrote the first drafts of Part II and Part III. I revised Part II; Mary T. McMullan rearranged and corrected Part III; and I wrote Part I and supervised the research basic to the book as a whole. Mrs. McMullan was my first assistant in gathering and checking material. Project research workers upon whose notes we depended were Alanson Crosby, Helen Leech, Bessie W. Tiller, Beulah Graves, J. Luther Kibler, J. B. Cook, Grant Jennings Smith, Maude Dewberry, and Catharine Horsley. H. Ragland Eubank served many times as consultant and brought the bibliography to its final form. The manuscript was typewritten by Edith Eanes and proofread by Elizabeth Kratz and Nora Moon, who can decipher my hieroglyphics, run down my insertions, and interpret my motives like a trio of Philadelphia lawyers.

Mr. Foster was an untiring sponsor. He furnished the lists of teachers and pupils and the data for the sketches of schools and read the manu-