

**FILSON CLUB PUBLICATIONS NO.
27: PETITIONS OF THE EARLY
INHABITANTS OF KENTUCKY TO
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
VIRGINIA 1769 TO 1792**

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Filson Club Publications No. 27: Petitions of the Early Inhabitants of Kentucky to the General Assembly of Virginia 1769 to 1792 by James Rood Robertson

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JAMES ROOD ROBERTSON, M.A. Ph.D.
Member of the Filson Club.

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PETITIONS OF THE EARLY
INHABITANTS OF
KENTUCKY

TO THE

General Assembly of Virginia

1769 to 1792

BY

JAMES ROOD ROBERTSON, M.A.Ph.D.

Member of the American Historical Association, the Filson Club,
the Ohio Valley Historical Society, and the Oregon
Historical Society; Professor of History and
Political Science in Berea College.

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DEDICATED TO
THE PIONEERS OF KENTUCKY

Men and women whose courage, endurance, and integrity
laid well the foundations of our first common-
wealth west of the Alleghany Mountains.

PREFACE

THE petitions here printed are offered as a contribution to the early period of Kentucky history. During a visit of the editor to Richmond, Virginia, in the summer of 1910, they were found in the archives of that State. The archivist had recently segregated them from a large mass of other material and an examination of the contents showed their value as a source of information on the beginnings of Kentucky.

The petitions are printed verbatim, with the thought that they will be more useful and interesting to the student of history in the language of the pioneer inhabitants of our first Commonwealth west of the Alleghany Mountains. The editor has added foot-notes which may help to explain the purpose, the subject-matter, and the effect of the various petitions.

The names attached to the petitions have been separated from them and arranged in alphabetical order, with numbers referring to the petitions on which they appear. This saves considerable space, as many of the names are signed to two or more petitions. It also makes reference to them more easy.

The appearance of the original material from which these petitions were copied may be seen in the facsimile

Preface

of a petition from the settlers of Lincoln County. This is, however, better than the average in form and state of preservation. Many of the petitions are worn, the writing faded, and the style not so good as the illustration given.

The wording of the petitions, though formal, is full of life and spirit, and in some cases reflects quaintness of expression. There is always a respectful deference for the authority of the Commonwealth of Virginia at the same time that freedom of speech is indulged.

The petitions are printed in chronological order rather than topical, with the thought that the development of community life can best be seen in that way. The first petition is dated 1769 and the last 1831. Only two are earlier than 1776 and six later than 1792. Thus they are seen to pertain to the period when Kentucky was a County of Virginia and those of earlier and later date are logically connected with that period. Thus the collection presents a unity that is valuable.

The collection does not include petitions which were sent to the National Government at Philadelphia or New York which have been used extensively in the printed histories of Kentucky, as they have been more accessible than the ones here printed. Nor is the collection entirely complete, as there are some laws, passed by the Assembly of Virginia, evidently based on petitions which have not been found. The collection, however, is essentially complete, and is fully representative of the activities of the pioneer population.

Preface

I desire to express appreciation to the following for assistance rendered me in the preparation of this book: To William G. Frost, President of Berea College, for encouragement and financial aid in gathering the material; to the late Colonel Reuben T. Durrett, formerly President of the Filson Club, for use of his extensive library; to R. C. Ballard Thruston, President of the Sons of the American Revolution, for his cordial interest and support; to the Filson Club and its officers for publication; to Doctor H. R. McIlwain, Librarian of the State Library of Virginia, and Doctor H. J. Eckenrode, Archivist of State Library of Virginia, for courtesies in use of source material in the Virginia archives.

JAMES ROOD ROBERTSON.

Berea College,
Berea, Kentucky.