

**FAUQUIER  
COUNTY, VIRGINIA:  
HISTORICAL NOTES**

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Fauquier County, Virginia: Historical Notes by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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# FAUQUIER COUNTY VIRGINIA

## HISTORICAL NOTES



PUBLISHED AS A SUPPLEMENT TO  
THE MAP OF FAUQUIER COUNTY

WARRENTON, VA.

1914

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# FAUQUIER COUNTY VIRGINIA

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## FORMATION

Fauquier County was established May 1, 1759, by an Act of Assembly passed February 22 of that year, dividing Prince William "into two distinct counties, that is to say: All that part of the said county that lies above a line to be run from the head of Bull run, and along the top of the Bull run mountains, to Chapman's mill, in Broad run thoroughfare, from thence by a direct line to the head of Dorrel's run, and from thence by a direct line till it intersects the nearest part of the line dividing Stafford and Prince William counties, shall be one distinct county, and called and known by the name of Fauquier; and All that other part thereof below the said bounds shall be one other distinct county, and retain the name of Prince William."

Prince William had been taken from the counties of King George and Stafford in 1730, and King George from Richmond in 1720. Old Rappahannock County, formed from Lancaster in 1656, had passed out of existence on its division into the counties of Richmond and Essex in 1692. Lancaster existed as a county in 1652 and was probably taken from Northumberland, the original name of which was Chicawane. Northumberland, first mentioned in 1646, was established as a county in 1648, at which time it was declared to contain the "neck of land between Rappahannock River and Potomack River." Prince William's other parent, Stafford, was taken from Westmoreland in 1675,



and Westmoreland from Northumberland prior to 1653, although its boundaries were not defined until that year.

Fauquier County was named for Francis Fauquier, Lieutenant-Governor of the colony of Virginia from 1758 until his death in 1767. According to Mr. Jefferson he was the most intelligent and best beloved of the colonial governors.

### ORGANIZATION

The organization of the county was effected May 24, 1759. On this date certain of the gentry of the new county, to whom commissions had been issued, assembled at the house of John Duncan. Commissions of the Peace under the seal of the colony, bearing date at Williamsburg "the seventh day of May last," to Thomas Harrison, Joseph Blackwell, John Wright, William Blackwell, John Trogg, John Bell, William Eustace, John Churchill, William Grant, John Crump, Duff Green, Yelverton Peyton, Thomas Marshall, George Lambkin, Wharton Ransdell, Elias Edmonds, Thomas McClennahan and Richard Foote, Gent., were first read. Thomas Harrison, John Wright, William Blackwell, William Eustace, John Churchill, William Grant, Yelverton Peyton, Thomas Marshall and George Lambkin being present, the oath appointed by Act of Parliament, entitled "An Act for the Further Security of his Majesty's Person and Government and the Succession of the Crown in the heirs of the late Princess Sophia, being Protestants, and for extinguishing the hopes of the pretended Prince of Wales and his open and secret Abettors," was taken. The persons aforesaid having severally subscribed the "test," the oaths of a Justice of the Peace and of a Justice of the County Court in Chancery were administered, and the first court for Fauquier County was convened.

Of this court Humphrey Brooke was commissioned clerk and Joseph Blackwell qualified as sheriff, with Martin Pickett and Rhodham Tullos as under sheriffs.

Henry Churchill took the oath as county lieutenant, and William Elbzey, James Keith and Cuthbert Bullit, Gent., were sworn as attorneys to practice law in the county.

Thomas Marshall, Gent., then produced a commission "from under the hands and seals of the President and masters of the College of William and Mary," appointing him to be surveyor of the county and the following persons were appointed surveyors of the roads: George Cosby, of the road "from Town Run to the county line;" John Catlett, "from Brent Town to the Stafford line," and Alexander Bradford, "from Marr's Bridge to Coventons."

Other matters being disposed of, the court adjourned.

#### COUNTY SEAT AND OTHER SETTLEMENTS

On the records of the first court the following minute appears: "It being the opinion of the court that the plantation of John Duncan is the most proper and convenient place for the Court House of this county to be established on, it is ordered that it be certified to His Honor the Governor." In this recommendation, however, the governor apparently did not concur, for in a writ dated June 13, 1759, under the seal of the colony, he directed that the next court for the county be held "in the house of William Jones, on the lands of Richard Henry Lee, Esquire, in the Parish of Hamilton, in the said county." At this court (June 28, 1759), it was ordered that the sheriff advertise that the court at its next session would "agree with workmen" to build a court house of wood, and further that John Bell, William Eustace and Yelverton Peyton, or any two of them, should receive bids for building a prison for the use of the county of the same dimensions as the

prison of Stafford County. A site for the proposed buildings was provided at the next court when John Bell and Yelverton Peyton were appointed "to lay off two acres of land belonging to Richard Henry Lee for the court house and prison of this county to be erected on." After the sheriff, at the same court, had "protested against the court for want of a sufficient prison," Elias Edmonds undertook to construct such a building of wood, to be 12 feet square in the clear, with a brick or stone chimney, for the sum of seventy-three pounds and fifteen shillings, and to complete the same within three months. This building was accepted April 24, 1760, and although there is no mention of a court house being contracted for, a small temporary structure was evidently built, as on August 29 of the same year the sheriff was directed to pay John Bell twenty-four pounds, eighteen shillings and four pence, "being the sum the Court House was built for." In the meantime the construction of a permanent court house was under consideration and on June 27 the sheriff gave notice that at the August court, the court would agree with an "undertaker" to build a court house of brick, to be 36 feet long and 20 feet wide in the clear. Subsequently the advisability of erecting a frame building was considered and at the next court John Wright and John Bell were appointed to receive bids for a court house of clapboards, to be 24 feet long, 16 feet wide and 10 feet pitch, with a partition of 10 feet at one end, and to have a bench and a bar. Eventually, however, the justices decided to build a court house of brick and August 29, 1760, John Bell undertook to construct a building of this material, "26 feet long and 20 feet wide in the clear; the walls to be 18 feet high from the surface and 18 inches thick from the water table; 6 sash windows below, 14 lights in each, 12 by 10; two dormers, 18 lights in each, 12 by 10; a partition of 12 feet at one end for a jus-