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SOME IRISH SETTLERS IN VIRGINIA.

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Perhaps the most distinguished man of Irish birth who identified himself completely with Virginia was **Gen. Andrew Lewis**, who was born in Ireland about 1720 and came to Virginia with his parents in 1732. John Lewis, the father, was the first white man who fixed his home in the mountains of West Augusta.

Andrew Lewis served as a major in the regiment commanded by Washington in the Ohio campaign of 1754 and 1755. He served with valor in the French and Indian wars and was highly regarded by Washington, at whose suggestion he was appointed a brigadier-general in the Continental army. Four of his brothers served in the Revolutionary War, one of them, Col. Charles Lewis, being killed at Point Pleasant. No better evidence of the value which Virginia placed on the services of this Irishman could be wished than the fact that she has deemed his effigy worthy to stand for all time besides the immortal group of Henry, Mason, Marshall, Nelson, and Jefferson, which surrounds the heroic equestrian statue of Washington in the Capitol Square at Richmond. This celebrated work of Crawford is pronounced by critics to be one of the finest in the world.

Descendants of John Lewis, the father of Gen. Andrew Lewis, are numerous in the state to this day. Some of them have been very distinguished men: John F. Lewis, who died recently, was lieutenant governor of Virginia, and a senator of the United States. Lunsford L. Lewis, his half-brother, was president of the supreme court of appeals of Virginia for twelve years, retiring from that office a few years ago. Dr. Lewis Wheat is a well-known practicing physician of Richmond. Judge John Lewis Cochran, whose mother was a great-granddaughter of John Lewis, father of Gen. Andrew Lewis, and whose great-grandfather, with his wife, née Susanna Donnelly, came to America about 1742, was a gallant soldier in the Confederate army, and a distinguished lawyer and judge. James C. Cochran, brother to the foregoing, was a colonel of the Confederate militia in the late war. Henry King Cochran served as a surgeon in the Confederate service throughout the war. William Lynn Cochran was a major in the Confederate service and a lawyer by profession. Howard Peyton Cochran was a captain in the same

service. It is claimed that there were one hundred and five of the Lewis family in the service of the Confederate states.

Another Irishman who came to Virginia and left his impression was **John Daly Burk**, of Petersburg, Va. He was born in Ireland and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. Because of his political opinions and affiliations, he was compelled to leave the country (1797) while yet a student at college. He first tried his fortune in Boston, and afterward in New York. But he received no encouragement. His love for Ireland and his ardent democracy made against his success at the North, and he finally came to Virginia. Here he became the friend of Jefferson and John Randolph, both of whom encouraged the brilliant young refugee.

He was a lawyer, poet, dramatist, and historian, and was undoubtedly one of the most accomplished men in the state during his day. His history of Virginia in four volumes was the first comprehensive history of the state written and is regarded as one of the best ever compiled. He also wrote "A History of the Late War in Ireland," with an account of the United Irish Association, from the first meeting in Belfast to the landing of the French at Killala (8 vols., 1779, Philadelphia). Before he completed the fourth volume of the history of Virginia he was killed in a duel with a French gentleman at Campbell's Bridge, Chesterfield county, Virginia, on the 11th of April, 1808.

The **Preston family** in Virginia is a distinguished one. Its propositus John Preston was born in Ireland and came to Virginia in 1735. He married Elizabeth Patton before coming to America. She was a sister of Col. James Patton, also of Irish birth. The latter was killed in Virginia by the Indians in 1753, leaving two daughters, from whom descended John Floyd and John B. Floyd, governors of Virginia; Hon. James D. Breckinridge of Louisville, Ky., and Col. Wm. P. Anderson of the United States army.

John Preston left one son, William, and four daughters, from whom are descended some of the most distinguished men in American history. Dr. R. A. Brock in his "Virginia and Virginians" says, "Scarce another American family has numbered as many prominent and honored representatives as that of the yeoman-founded Preston, with its collateral lines and alliances." In support of this claim, he continues: "It has furnished the National government a vice-president [Hon. John Cabell Breckinridge], has been represented in several of the executive departments and in both branches of congress. It has given Virginia five governors—McDowell, Campbell, Preston, and the two Floyds—and to Kentucky, Missouri, and California, one each, in Governors Jacobs, B. Gratz Brown, and Miller; Thomas Hart Benton, John J. Crittenden, William C., and William Ballard Preston, leading molders of public sentiment; the Breckinridge's, Dr.

Robert J. and William L., distinguished theologians of Kentucky; Professors Holmes, Venable and Cabell, of the University of Virginia, besides other distinguished educators.”

Nor is their battle roll less glorious. It is claimed that more than a thousand of this family and its connections served in the contending armies during the late Civil War. Among the leaders were Generals Wade Hampton, Albert Sydney Johnston, Joseph E. Johnston, John B. Floyd, John C. Breckinridge, and John S. and William Preston. When is stated that besides the names enumerated, the family is connected with those of Baldwin, Blair, Bowyer, Brown, Buchanan, Bruce, Cabell, Carrington, Christian, Cocke, Flournoy, Gamble, Garland, Gilmer, Gibson, Grattan, Hart, Henry, Hughes, Howard, Lee, Lewis, Madison, Marshall, Mason, Massie, Mayo, Parker, Payne, Peyton, Pleasants, Pope, Radford, Read, Redd, Rives, Seddon, Sheffey, Taylor, Thompson, Trigg, Venable, Watkins, Ward, Watts, Winston, Wickliff, among many others, as well-esteemed, some idea may be formed of its mental characteristics and social influence.

Judge Peter Lyons was born in Ireland and came to Virginia in his early life. He was made a judge of the general court in 1779, becoming also a judge of the first court of appeals. He served as such until his death, on July 30, 1809. As a jurist, he ranked high. Among his colleagues on the bench were Chancellor Wythe, Edmund Pendleton, St. George Tucker, and Spencer Roane. His descendants for several generations were eminent in the professions, and 164some of them are still living in Virginia. James Lyons, Jr., who was a colonel on the staff of Governor O’Ferrall, is the oldest male descendant in the direct line. He married a daughter of William Wirt Henry, grandson of Patrick Henry, and by her has several children living.

Another judge of the supreme court of appeals was **William C. Burks**, whose ancestors little is known except that they were Irish. He died recently, mourned by the profession which he had so signally adorned by the profundity of his juridical learning and the simplicity and spotlessness of his life. His opinions are as highly regarded as those of any man who sat upon the bench of that court within a half-century. He was of the weak frame and never enjoyed good health—“a creaking door,” was the expression he commonly used to indicate himself—and never held public office other than that mentioned. Yet his capacity for labor was truly remarkable. He was one of the early presidents of the Virginia Bar Association, which he was largely instrumental in organizing; and until the time of his death was one of the editors of the Virginia Law Register, the organ of the profession in this state.

Perhaps the ablest Irish lawyer in the state was **Thomas J. Michie**, whose reputation

extended throughout Virginia as a brilliant wit as well as an able jurist. Among the judges of the present supreme court of appeals of Virginia is John W. Riely, who was a major in the Confederate service, and whose ancestors were Irish. The speaker of the House of Delegates, session of 1897–8, was John F. Ryan. A late governor of Virginia was Philip W. McKinney, of Irish descent. His successor was Charles T. O’Ferrall, a man of Irish descent. Among the state officers of Irish descent may be mentioned P. H. O’Bannon, public printer; John Bell Bigger, clerk of the House of Delegates; Major B. W. Lynn, superintendent of the penitentiary, and the writer (Secretary of State Lawless), both of whose parents were born in Galway, and came to America after the “black famine.”

Gen. William Mahone was a descendant of an Irish progenitor who settled in Virginia in colonial days. Judge Anthony Kiely is of Irish lineage, and you know his history. After his appointment as minister to Austria by Mr. Cleveland, and the indication on the part of Francis Joseph that he was at Vienna persona non grata, Mr. Kiely was made one of the judges of the international court at Cairo, Egypt, and became its president.

Dr. Hunter McGuire, who was the medical director of Stonewall Jackson’s corps and the intimate friend of that great soldier, is of Irish lineage. His great-grandfather, Ed. McGuire, left Ordfest, County Kerry, in 1756, and settled in Winchester, Va.

The Dooleys, Pattersons, Glennans, Kevills, Barrys, O’Connors, Fitzgeralds, Keans, Rheas, Kendricks, Kellys, McChesney’s, Goolricks, Wards, Higgins, Doyles, Lawlers, Rafters, Ferriter’s, McKenney’s, McCrackens, Youngs, Coles, Macgills, O’Bannons, Irvings, Irwins, Nolans, O’Sullivans, Sullivans, Walshs, O’Neills, Kaness, Murphys, Ryans and a hundred others, came largely during the present century. Perhaps most of these families left Ireland in the great exodus which followed the famine of 1846–’47. Certainly Virginia received about that time the greatest number of immigrants who, unfortunately for themselves and for their race, have preferred for the most part to lead urban lives. But they and their progeny have not failed to leave the impression of their character upon the people among whom their lot was cast.

And it is not too much to say that in the years to come, when, in the expiring hours of the twentieth century, some chronicler pauses to consider the virtues and deeds of Virginians, he will dwell in loving admiration upon the talents and traits of those of Irish blood, who have already made bricks without straw, and won the confidence and esteem of their neighbors.

They are a people whose genius under the ægis of the Constitution enjoys here that

freedom of thought and liberty of action which have been denied their fathers for eight hundred years—who love the Republic and its institutions next only to their God, and who read their own happiness and the fulfillment of all their earthly hopes in the increasing and enduring glory thereof.

Capt. Page McCarty, of Richmond, Va., writes: “I learned something of Irish-Americans from the papers of my father, governor of Florida at one time, and member of congress in 1839. The ‘Scotch-Irish’ appear to have established a theory of pre-emption or monopoly, and of that, I learned but little. O’Brien, of General Washington’s staff, was from Alexandria, Va. Colonels McClanahan and Andrew Wagoner and Maj. Richard McCarty, of the Revolution, was a descendant of a small group of Irishmen who named the little town of Kinsale on the Potomac about 1662. Daniel McCarty, the speaker of the Virginia House of Burgesses 1715, was of this set of people, and grandson of McCarty, of Clenclare, though 1661 see that some of his kin are trying to Scotch-Irish him also. The main immigration of Irish was through Philadelphia and Charleston, S. C., and they penetrated to the mountains with the most adventuresome pioneers and met in the valley that extends from the Peaks of Otter to the headwaters of the Tennessee river.”

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