

Augusta County, Virginia

In October, 1776, the legislature of Virginia passed an act to ascertain the boundary between the county of Augusta and the district of West Augusta, and to divide said district in to distinct counties.

The District of West Augusta

The preamble to the act, which embraces much historical information, is in these words:

Whereas, it is expedient to ascertain the boundary between the county of Augusta and the district of West Augusta-Be it therefore enact ed by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, that the boundary between the said district and county shall be as follows:

Beginning on the Alleghany Mountains, between the heads of the Potomac, Cheat and Green Briar Rivers (Haystack Knob, or north end of Pocahontas County);

thence along the ridge of mountains which divides the waters of Cheat River from those of Green Briar, and that branch of the Monongahela River called Tyger's Valley River, to the Monongahela River;

thence up the said river, and the west fork thereof, to Bingerman's Creek, on the northwest side of the said west fork;

thence up the said creek to the head thereof,

thence in a direct course to the head of Middle Island Creek, a branch of the Ohio,

and thence to the Ohio, including all the waters of said creek in the aforesaid District of West Augusta, all that territory lying to the northward of the aforesaid boundary, and to the westward of the States of Pennsylvania and Maryland, shall be deemed, and is hereby declared to be, within the District of West Augusta.

At a court of the District of West Augusta, held at Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh), September 18th, 1776, the court decided that on the passage of the ordinance, they became a separate and distinct jurisdiction, from that of East Augusta, and as such, West Augusta assumed and exercised independent jurisdiction over its entire territory.

After the thirteen colonies had declared themselves free and independent, the General Assembly of Virginia passed an act on the 15th of August, 1776, enabling the present magistrates to continue

the administration of justice until the same can be more amply provided for.

Justices' Courts

Justices' courts were organized by John Eare, of Dunmore, his majesty's Lieutenant and Governor-in Chief of Virginia, as early as December 1774. He also issued, the same year, a commission adjourning the county court of Augusta, from Staunton to Fort Dunmore. This fort was originally called Fort Pitt but in 1773 the British government abandoned it, and Dr. John Connelly took possession of it *in the name* of Virginia, and named it Fort Dunmore. It is evident, therefore, that as late as three years before the Declaration of Independence, Pittsburgh and the surrounding country was claimed as belonging to the district of West Augusta.

History Of Washington County, pp 12-13.

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