

WILLIAM WILSON, SR.

* In 1737, at the age of fifteen, William with two cousins, John and William White, left protestant Ulster of Ireland and came to America, landing at Philadelphia. Both of the Whites were later killed by Indians in Randolph County, now West Virginia.

We next learn of William with many others of Scotch-Irish descent coming to the lower or north end of Shenandoah Valley near Winchester, Va. in 1742. This statement is found in an article written by his great, great, great, great grandson Claude Wilson Maxwell (1877-1940) of Elkins, W. Va., January 31, 1935, and published in magazine number 11 of Randolph County Historical Society of 1954.

Shenandoah Valley, traversed by Shenandoah River flowing northeast into the Potomac River, was very fertile and at this time was being rapidly filled with settlers.

In 1746, he married Elizabeth Blackburn, daughter of Archibald Blackburn, also of Scotch-Irish descent. She also was born in Ulster Province, Ireland, February 2, 1725.

In those days it was a general custom for a man to make a "lease and buy" contract when buying land. The rental was a mere token, often only an ear of corn each year.

From many sources we read that William and Elizabeth permanently settled on Trout Run near Wardensville, then Hampshire County, Va.

The family Bible of Noah E. Corley, whose wife Louise Wilson (D2#3) (1805-1884) was their great granddaughter through Moses Wilson, (D1#2), son of William Wilson, Jr. (D4#1), states that William Wilson, Jr. was born February 8, 1754 in Hampshire County. From this statement it is conclusive that William, Sr. and Elizabeth had settled on Trout Run near Wardensville prior to this date. They probably had acquired their land on a "lease and buy" contract, previously described. They would have good reasons for locating in a sparsely settled new county as the land was virgin and much cheaper than that in the Shenandoah Valley, where it had been improved by removal of the timber and with fences and buildings. The location is only about 25 miles from Winchester, their trading center.

Hu Maxwell, in his 1898 History of Randolph County, W. Va., says the records of the Virginia Land Office at Richmond show William, Sr. and sons, excepting Benjamin (A1#1), patented or entered numerous tracts of public land in what is now Hardy, Hampshire and Grant counties.

The following is a certified copy of a land grant or deed issued by the Governor of Virginia to William Wilson, Sr. for public land he had patented.