

THE FIRST GREENLEES IN AMERICA

Tradition locates the Greenlees in England as early as the reign of Alfred the Great (871). Their names appear on the records as far back as the reign of Edward IV (1461). Later we find Greenlees settled around and about the parishes of Lochwinnoch, Beith, and neighborhood, in the time known as the twenty years of the killing time in Scotland. The Greenlees, like many other families, fled into Argylishire, thence to Ireland. Again, religious persecution was the prime cause which led them to leave the north of Ireland and emigrate to America.

MICHAEL GREENLEE of Kent County, Delaware, was born "about 1700" and came to this country from Ireland when he was "about 14 years old". As the lists of passengers from Ireland about that time were very incomplete and many records have been destroyed, nothing definite has been learned about his emigration. It is probable that he came with his father and other members of his family. He may have emigrated in 1718 when a number left Ireland "both ministers and people going off". A Presbyterian church had been established in Murderkill, Delaware, in 1714. The earliest known record of Michael Greenlee is February 12, 1754, when he bought land in "ye forrest of murtherkill Hundred" Kent County, Delaware.

JOHN GREENLEE, a brother of Michael, also settled in Delaware and had a son, Robert, born in Delaware in 1745.

ARCHIBALD GREENLEE of Washington County, Pennsylvania, was born in Scotland, about 1755, and settled in Washington County, Pennsylvania, before 1780. It has not been ascertained how long he remained there. His children emigrated to Ohio.

JAMES GREENLEE of Rockbridge County, Virginia, born 1707, came from the north of Ireland about 1727, landed in Delaware and soon after went to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where he married. In 1737 he settled in Rockbridge County, Virginia.

JAMES GREENLEE of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, was born in 1718 in the north of Ireland. The date of his emigration is not known but his name appears as early as 1738 on the tax list of Hanover Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where he spent the remainder of his days.

JAMES GREENLEE of Tennessee came from Ireland, spent some time in Pennsylvania, then settled on the Potomac River in Virginia. He was living in North Carolina in 1775. His descendants settled in Tennessee.

ROBERT GREENLEE of Pennsylvania was probably born in Scotland. His father came from Scotland and settled in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. The earliest definite place record of Robert is at Clifton, Allegheny County, near which place his granddaughter was born in 1797.

WILLIAM GREENLEE of West Virginia was probably a brother of Edward of West Virginia. He came from Ireland in 1766 and settled in Botetourt County, Virginia. He probably removed to what is now Mason County, West Virginia, with his sons John and Edward about 1800.

EDWARD GREENLEE came from Ireland sometime after 1771 and settled in what is now Mason County, West Virginia, about 1800. He was probably a brother of William of West Virginia.

A careful study of the subject leads to the conviction that all of the Greenlees mentioned above were closely related and that all the branches, both in this and foreign countries, sprang from the same parent stock, in Scotland.

The hardships endured by pioneers to the New World in making and guarding their homes, coupled with lack of facilities, gave them little opportunity for making and preserving family records. In many of the states no system of recording births, deaths and marriages was installed until a comparatively recent date. Thus it was very difficult and in some cases impossible to get the records desired.