Book Reviews


The author has gathered together a tremendous amount of facts covering every possible source of life in Iredell County, North Carolina. Many of the pieces may not tie together smoothly, but they produce a mass of information. Fortunately there is a detailed index consisting of some 3,600 listings which will help the reader to find those specific accounts for which he may be searching.

Although there are no footnotes, the author indicates that these were sacrificed for the sake of cost. He attests that every statement was carefully documented, many times twice, and if documentation was missing it was labelled as tradition. He noted where the source materials may be found to document this study. Knowing other studies written by this author, we can be sure that he has been meticulous in documenting his statements.

The account of Iredell County is divided into four periods in the Table of Contents: the Frontier Period, the Back Country Period, the Trading Era, and the Twentieth Century. However, the author refers to a full-blown Manufacturing Period as part of the Twentieth Century, which could possibly serve as an additional division. All of this is preceded by a section on geography, which is probably the least interesting to the average reader because of its more scientific nature, but it helps to portray the broad background and thorough nature of Homer Keever.

A study of the list of source materials enable the reader to readily see the tremendous scope of resources used: land grants, legislative, military, census, federal, church, county and local government records, as well as newspaper files. The author gathered this wealth of information over a forty-year period of his life.

There is a very fine collection of maps that locates streams, land grants, voting patterns in creation of the county, grist and
tub mills, post offices, churches and schools. For the stranger to Iredell County, these maps help to place concentrations of any of these subjects for more effective understanding of the county’s development.

We are not very favorable to county histories, since they need to be detailed about material that has little interest to the non-resident. This book is far about average as a county history and afforded us much more interest than we had anticipated. It could serve as a good example for future county histories to follow, breaking away from the style of unrelated smorgasbord of ideas, of which so many earlier county histories were guilty.

— John H. Ness, Jr.