

Poor Persons Act 1781

CHAPTER XVIII.

An Act for the relief of certain persons now resident on the western frontier.

Approved May 1781 by the Virginia General Assembly

WHEREAS a number of poor persons with their families have removed to the Kentucky country, and by reason of great hardships they have encountered and expenses incurred by them in their removal to that distant place and the parts adjacent, they have become unable to advance ready money to pay the state price of vacant lands. For relief of such poor persons, **be it enacted** by the General Assembly, that the courts of the counties of Lincoln, Fayette and Jefferson, be, and they are hereby empowered and required to issue their orders to the surveyors of the said counties respectively, commanding them to lay out and survey for such poor settlers any tract of land in the said counties or either of them which shall be vacant. And the surveyor shall proceed with all possible expedition to survey such vacant land and make out plats and certificates for the same in the usual manner; and the register of the Land Office and all other officers of government, shall proceed in the usual manner for completing the titles of such lands as in similar cases. **Provided**, that no persons shall be entitled to lands under this act, except such as are now actually resident in that country or the parts adjacent, and the masters and mistresses of families there at this time, and have not acquired a right to land there either in law or equity, and are too poor to procure lands in the ordinary method. And the courts of the said counties are hereby required diligently to enquire into the circumstances aforesaid, and to grant no order of survey to any person except as before excepted. No order of survey under this act shall exceed the quantity of four hundred acres for each family, and the surveyor shall lay out the same in one tract, the greatest length of which shall not exceed the breadth by more than one third. All persons claiming under this act, besides the usual office fees, shall pay into the public treasury after the rate of twenty shillings in specie, or the value thereof in paper money, for every hundred acres, within two years and an half from the date of the survey, as the state price, and in default of making such payment, all right and interest to such surveys shall be forfeited to the Commonwealth, and the lands subject to the claim of any person who shall pay the said state price for the same, and prosecute by the way of caveat in the manner prescribed by law. All orders of survey and proceedings contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act shall be void and of no effect or avail to the persons claiming under them. This act shall continue to be in force two years, and no longer.