

"Mountain Named for Carroll County Native"
Carroll County Times article for 6 January 2002
By Jay A. Graybeal

Carroll's landscape is, not surprisingly, filled with geographic names derived from surnames. Of the eight incorporated towns in the county, Sykesville and Taneytown were named for their founders. Numerous other villages, crossroads, geographical features and other places were named for local people. Growing up in my childhood neighborhood near Manchester, I was intrigued by a number of back roads like Bert Fowler, Harvey Gummel and Albert Rill that had been named for aged residents. Many other town streets and roads around the county were named in honor of men and women.

A few Carroll Countians who found their fortunes elsewhere also put their names on the map so to speak. Lecompton, Kansas owes its name to one-time Westminster attorney and politician Samuel D. Lecompte (1814-1888). A biographical sketch of his life was published in A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans compiled in 1918 by William E. Connelley, Secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society:

"Samuel D. Lecompte, first chief justice of the territory of Kansas and afterward prominent on the bench of Leavenworth County, and a representative in both houses of the Legislature, was born in Dorchester County, Maryland, December 13, 1814. After graduating from Jefferson College, Pennsylvania, he studied law in Maryland and, upon being admitted to the bar, began practice in Carroll County, that state. He had served one term in the Maryland Legislature and became quite prominent politically, when he moved to Baltimore in 1854.

In October, 1854, President Pierce appointed Mr. Lecompte chief justice of the territory of Kansas, which position he held until March 9, 1859. Upon retiring from the bench he located in Leavenworth and opened a law office. At the close of the Civil War he renounced his democratic beliefs and became a republican. Judge Lecompte served four years as probate judge of Leavenworth County; represented the county in the State Legislatures of 1867-68, and on April 15, 1874, was elected chairman of the Republican Congressional Committee of the First District. In 1887 he went to Kansas City to live with his son and died there on April 24, 1888."

Sixty years ago, this newspaper informed readers that a mountain in Oregon had recently been posthumously named in honor of a Carroll County native. The January 2, 1942 issue of The Times reported the story under the headline of "Honors Native of Westminster":

"The United States Board on Geographical Names recently approved the name of Mt. Billingslea for a peak in the Siskiyou Forest in Oregon. This recognition and tribute comes for the years of faithful and loyal service given by the late James Howell Billingslea, son of the late Dr. and Mrs. James H. Billingslea, of this city. Mr. Billingslea devoted more than 20 years to this work and served as assistant supervisor of the U.S. Forest Service in Western Oregon. This peak is located on an Indian range in the Olympic mountains.

During the World War he served as a lieutenant with the Engineer Corps and volunteered early, arriving over seas in the early stages of the war. At the conclusion of the war he began his work with the United States Forest Service and remained devoted to his work until his death two years ago. Mrs. Billingslea has continued to live at Grant's Pass, in Oregon.

Her husband was born and reared in Westminster. He was a graduate of the University of Washington State. Dr. C. Levine Billingslea, Robert K. Billingslea, Leeds K. Billingslea, and Mrs. Wesley Brooks of Westminster, are brothers and sister of Mr. Billingslea. A map showing the location of the peak has been sent to the family here."

While the origins of most local place names are known, examples like Lecompton and Mt. Billingslea were found by chance. The writer would welcome information about place names outside of Carroll County that were named for former county residents.



Carroll County native James Howell Billingslea (1887-1939) posed near his home in Grant's Pass, Oregon on April 30, 1927. Billingslea wrote on the back of the image, "I am not half as mad as I appear. The emblem on my radiator is the Forest Service Shield." Mt. Billingslea in the Siskiyou Forest in Oregon was named in his honor in 1941. Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of Mrs. Ruth Billingslea Weller, 1988.