

"History of Keysville"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Carroll's communities frequently trace their names to an early settler or to a geographic feature. Keysville in the Middleburg District is named for a local family, however, not for the nationally known member of the family. James B. Koons wrote a brief history of the community in 1895:

"Keysville is a small village located in the western part of Middleburg district on a 1,000 acre tract of land taken up originally by John Ross Key, father of Francis Scott Key, author of the Star Spangled Banner. The village derives its name from the Keys.

The first house in the place was built by Francis Scott Key in 1824 or 1825. The second house was in 1865 by Abraham S. Zentz. Since that time quite a number o buildings have been erected including stores, churches, schools, etc.

The first school house was built in 1828 on land donated by Francis Scott Key for church and school purposes. This was used until 1867 when the present brick building was erected. The first building, built of logs was a famous place for singing schools and debates, as well as Sunday School since in the new building any exercise other than regular day and Sunday School is prohibited. This has caused unfavorable comment in the neighborhood. Probably about the same time the first school house was built, a log church was built, which was used for holding union services for many years. In 1870 the present brick church was built and used by the Methodists, Lutherans, Reformed, and United Brethren. Later the United Brethren sold their share to the Lutherans. The Lutherans then owned a half interest and the Reformed and Methodists the other half. Charles F. Roop a well-known citizen of the place, has in his possession the original deed of this property for 'school and preaching purposes, and no other, from Francis Scott Key and Ann Phoebe Key of the first part to Jacob Marring of Frederick. Jacob Marring of George, John Snook, and Frederick Dutterer of the second part.' The deed was made September 5, 1828 and acknowledged before Abraham Shriver on September 24, 1828. In 1895 Keysville has two general stores, a post office, a blacksmith shop, and twelve dwellings with a population of forty-three.

The surrounding country is excellent for farming purposes, and the farmers are generally prosperous an intelligent. One of the troubles of the section used to be a scarcity of water in a dry season, but Artesian wells and wind pumps have remedied this very much, yet a good business in this line might be done here.

Benjamin Poole, deceased, kept a general store for many years. This store is now kept by George P. Ritter, a son of Peter L. Ritter a prominent farmer of the vicinity. Joseph L. Sharrer is the proprietor of the second store.

John Weybright, an early settler, and father of Samuel Weybright, owner of the Weybright farm, built in Keysville after the Civil War and lived there until he bought the C. B. Anders property in Double Pipe Creek [Detour], to which he removed, and which is now owned and occupied by his daughter Mrs. Emma Powell. Mr. Weybright was prominent in many ways and a members of the German Baptist Church, which has a large membership here. Other families are Roop, Fox, Dern, Stonesifer, Clutz, Weant, Wilhide, Stuller, Shorb, Baumgardner, Young, Stover, Stansbury, Kiser, Nelson, Angell, Birely, Knipple and others."

The above history was first published in the Taneytown Carroll Record newspaper as part of series of community histories that appeared in 1894 to 1895. The Historical Society of Carroll County reprinted these histories in a book The Carroll Record Histories of Northwestern Carroll County Communities in 1993.

Photo caption: The spring house was a novelty for visitors to Terra Rubra, Keysville at the turn of the century. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, bequest of Thelma Shriner, 1994.