

## *Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles*

"19th Century School Pranks from the Carroll Record Histories"

Carroll County Times article for 2 October 1994

by Jay A. Graybeal

Prior to the establishment of the modern public school system in Maryland, local communities undertook the construction and staffing of a school for their children. The local school often became a cornerstone of life in the community. Mr. F. G. Devilbiss' description of the history of New Windsor schools is representative of 19th century education in the county.

New Windsor, from its inception has manifested great interest in education. Mr. Atlee, the founder of our town was a man of intelligent bearing and influence, who naturally attracted men of higher culture hither. These influences have undoubtedly left their impress upon succeeding generations. The vigorous spirit of intelligent inquiry and of mental and moral culture existing today and for which our town has ever been noted, was born of these influences which have been nurtured and developed by the sunlight of time.

As early as 1825 Catherine Brawner opened a school just below Mr. Dielman's hotel. She afterwards taught in the building now occupied by Miss Mary Currey, and later still, in a part of the present hotel owned by Mr. Dielman. Her efficiency as a teacher became recognized, and the young from far and near all attended Miss. Brawner's school. For many years she very successfully conducted this school which gained in influence and members until in 1839, when, through the influence of Mr. Atlee, Rev. J. Carter, an Englishman was induced to locate here. He became pastor of the Union church, now in the rear of Jacob Frounfelter's and resided in the present residence of Dr. G. H. Brown. He soon started a select school in the present dining room of Mr. Louis Dielman, which was conducted with great success for several years. He then saw that a wider field of education was needed, and accordingly made an appeal to many Presbyterian clergymen for sympathy and aid in the new movement. A meeting was held and it was resolve to build an institution, to be called "New Windsor Institute." In 1843 a charter was obtained for this Institution, but unfavorable circumstances hindered the erection of the building; the project failed, and the charter became void.

In 1846, Andrew H. Baker, a graduate of Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, came here and took up the work of teaching, occupying the same room in which Mr. Carter began. He was a born teacher and disciplinarian and his school grew rapidly. It was soon found advisable to seek new quarters, and as suitable room could not readily be obtained, he finally concluded to accept the old Union church, above referred to, which was tendered to him by Mr. Atlee and others. Religious services were not held in it any more, as in the meantime the Methodist church had been erected. Mr. Baker took possession at once, and enlarged it by the addition of a wing containing four rooms. He then commenced operations with the following additional instructors: Louis Dielman, Wm. R. Curry, Jas. P. Nelson, and Dr. Futterer, a distinguished German. The school [has] not flourished beyond precedent. Its work was thorough in every detail. Mr. Baker soon afterward purchased the property now occupied by Mr. John Murray, from Isaac Blizzard, for \$1600. Many students secured apartments in this house, but it was soon filled, and Mr. Baker was forced to provide many more rooms in the adjacent residences.

This school continued until 1850. In 1849 Mr. Baker purchased a piece of ground from the late Josiah Hibberd, upon which to erect a college building. Operations commenced immediately and in 1850 it was completed and named Calvert College, after Lord Calvert of colonial times. In 1856 it was incorporated by an act of the Legislature. The incorporators were Andrew H. Baker, Louis Dielman, Prof. Theodore

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Blume, James P. Nelson and James Dougherty. This institution was carried on successfully for many years, and became recognized as one of the finest classical schools in the state. It was under the auspices of the Catholic Church, and was noted for the thoroughness of its instruction. Many of the leading men of the county and state were educated here, among whom are Hon. Charles B. Roberts, Westminster; Fielder C. Slingluff, Baltimore; Dr. Roberts Bartholow of Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia; Dr. Hanson M. Drach, Jos. A. Stouffer, Judge L. P. Slingluff; the Messrs. Hambleton of Baltimore; Charles Bohn Slingluff of Baltimore, and Frederic Dielman, the eminent New York artist.

In 1871 the first public school house was built. The citizens of the town felt the pressing need of a town hall, and they decided that a second story to the schoolhouse would be a suitable room, and at a much less cost, than a separate building. The school commissioners agreed to this project and \$1000 was raised by the sale of ten shares of stock at \$100. The stockholders were Jos. A. Stouffer, N. H. Baile, Dr. G. H. Brown, Jos. Hibberd, Job Hibberd, Elhanan Stouffer, Gustavus Barnes, L. N. Snader, and A. H. Englar; the enterprise did not prove to be a financial success but was incalculable value to the interests of the village.

Not surprisingly, the school often became the scene of numerous pranks and practical jokes. The stories of these events became part of the oral traditions of our local communities. James H. Koons described the regional tradition of "locking out" the teacher in his history of Middleburg.

At Christmas, if the teacher was not inclined to treat the school, the larger boys would lock him out, and if he could not get possession, he would lose his time. One of the teachers served in this style was Dr. Grove, a Thompsonian doctor, who had his home at the [Francis Scott] Key residence. Finding himself barred out, he loaded a pistol with cayenne pepper, and at a broken shutter, broke a hole in the window pane, and shot the pepper in the room, causing the boys to surrender. We remember seeing him stand four or five boys, larger in stature than himself, in a row, and flog them completely with a hickory rod. J. P. Garner wrote in his history of Linwood about how Priestland Valley teacher Philip Boyle handled a similar situation.

The early settlers were patrons of education. The original Priestland school was kept in a log school house on Philip Englar's farm. In this institution, the children were instructed in the problem of "the three R's -- readin', ritin'. and 'rithmetic." Among the early teachers were Mr. Yantis, Philip Boyle, George Jordan, Jonathan Plaine and the late Judge Hayden. Boyle and Plaine were ministers in the German Baptist church; Plaine was also a surveyor. The patrons of a school always built the house, and the salary of the teacher was in proportion to the number of his pupils. In the early history, it averaged about \$2.50 per head. It was a custom sometimes in those days to lock the teacher out about the Christmas holidays. It is related of Philip Boyle, that, in fear of this he would lecture his scholars a few weeks in advance upon the impropriety of such conduct. To use his own words "such things were only done when religion and morality were at a very low ebb."

The preceding descriptions of our early schools were selected from the Historical Society's new publication entitled, *The Carroll Record Histories of Northwestern Carroll County Communities* due out in early November.

Photo Caption: A group of New Windsor school children posed in front of their school building. Lightly scratched in the foreground of the image is "New Windsor Oct. 10, 1860." This is one of only a few extant local examples of outdoor ambrotype photography and is also the earliest local photo of a school class. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection.