

## "Carroll County in 1892, Part II"

Carroll County Times Article for 14 October 2001

by Jay A. Graybeal

Last week's column presented the first part of a Baltimore American newspaper article describing Carroll County in 1892. The article concludes with descriptions of waterpower, schools, churches and a low tax rate.

### "PLENTY OF WATER POWER.

The conformation of the surface affords much fine water power in almost every part of the county. Numerous streams, rising in Parr's Ridge, flow rapidly down its slopes and through its valleys on the east and west. Among these streams the most prominent are: Pipe Creek, Little Pipe Creek—forming by their junction Double Pipe Creek—Morgan's Run, the North Branch of the Patapsco, Cranberry Run, Sam's Creek, Gilliss' Falls, Beaver Branch, Meadow Branch and Silver Run. These streams and their branches, of which there are many, supply the power by which the grist and saw mills throughout the country are driven. Most of the great power has never been utilized for manufacturing purposes, but it is here, awaiting to reward enterprise.

The streams mentioned are not only prolific in power, but, with their tributaries, make this one of the best watered regions in the country. Few farms can be found, however limited in extent they may be, that are not supplied with never failing running water, an essential element to comfort and convenience in agriculture. Pipe Creek, in its course from its rise in Parr's Ridge, flows through the red lands in the northwestern section of the county, which is also bordered by the Monocacy. Piney Creek, another considerable stream, flows through this section, supplying abundant water.

The elevation, which gives the distinctive features described, at the same time is promotive of healthfulness in the climate. Most of the land is well drained, filth is washed from the surface and swept away, while the streams are purified by the rapid flow of their waters. A case of fever and ague, contracted through local causes, is rarely, if ever heard of. Such diseases as occur can seldom be traced to malarial origin.

### COLLEGES, SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES.

Educational facilities in the studies usually taught in the public schools are ample to meet the public requirements generally. Upwards of a hundred and fifty teachers are employed in the public schools, making one to about every two hundred of the population. The standard of capacity required in these teachers has been considerably advanced in recent years, and they now compare favorably with the teachers of most of the counties. There are a number of graded public schools in the county, and several private academies. There are two colleges in the county—The Western Maryland, located in this city, which is proving highly successful, and though young in years, already numbers among her alumni several ministers, lawyers and writers of distinction; and the New Windsor, which also ranks among the successful institutions of learning of the country.

Among the thriving and progressive towns in the county are Taneytown, on the Frederick and Pennsylvania Line Railroad, Union Bridge and New Windsor, on the Western Maryland; Hampstead, on the Baltimore and Harrisburg; Sykesville and Mt. Airy on the Baltimore and Ohio; Uniontown and Manchester. In addition to these, there are numerous villages in every part of the county, besides this

city, which is the chief place and the county town. In all the towns and villages some kind of merchandizing or manufacturing business is carried on. Prosperous merchants may be found in many of these communities, and thriving mechanics or manufacturers in a small way in others.

Churches abound in nearly every part of the county. Such places as Taneytown, Union Bridge, Uniontown, New Windsor, Manchester and Hampstead each have several denominations. Many of the smaller villages have more than one church edifice while many are to be found entirely outside of the towns and villages. These churches represent the Methodist Episcopal, Protestant Episcopal, Methodist Protestant, Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, United Brethren, Church of God, German Baptist, Friends, Catholic, and possibly other denominations, and every neighborhood is convenient to a place of worship of some of these sects.

The citizens of the county, as a whole, are frugal, moral and intelligent, and the general tone of society is pure and elevating. Educational facilities and church privileges, so freely afforded, have in themselves a tendency to develop the better side of humanity, and their effect is apparent in that direction in this county. Refined and intelligent people are to be found in every part of the county. In some of the country places as well as in towns and villages, literary societies, reading circles, musical organizations, &c., exist, as a means of social and intellectual culture and enjoyment. Class distinctions are but little known outside of the large towns. Character and conduct are the chief requisites to admission to the best society.

#### TAXATION IS VERY LOW.

The county boasts the lowest rate of taxation in the state for county purposes. The basis of taxation is about sixteen millions of dollars, and the rate fifty cents on the one hundred dollars, including sixteen cents for the public schools. The assessment upon which the taxes are levied is claimed by some persons to be excessive. It was made fifteen years ago, and there has been considerable shrinkage in values in the interim. Lands, as a rule, have fallen off fifteen to twenty-five per cent., farms being now purchasable at sixty to seventy dollars per acre which then sold at a hundred dollars, the same effect being noticeable also in lower-priced lands, some of which, without buildings, can be purchased as low as ten dollars, and possible even eight dollars per acre. These low prices afford abundant opportunities of investment, and for actual settlement of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits. Admirable opportunities to engage in some general business, outside of the agricultural, are also frequently found in the towns and villages throughout the county."

Several observations can be drawn from this article. Adequate waterpower and railroads were considered key elements by the writer in 1892. Shortly after the article was written, electricity would supplant waterpower as the predominant power source for local industry. Later in the twentieth century, the importance of railroads would be greatly diminished by improved roads, automobiles and trucks. Agriculture, of course, is no longer the leading segment of Carroll's economy. This writer, however, shares the Baltimore American writer's century old view that Carroll offers much as a place to live and work.



*The Koontz Mill near Union Mills was one of many water-powered mills that once operated in Carroll County. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of Mrs. Oscar Bowman.*