

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

"Carroll Record Photographs"

Carroll County Times article for 27 March 1994

By Joe Getty

WANTED: Turn-of-the-century photographs of towns, farms and people in northwestern Carroll County. In particular, photographs of the following local history authors: Dr. Clotworthy Birnie, Frank J. Devilbiss, Jesse P. Garner, James H. Koons, J. William Reck, E. H. Sharetts, J. H. Taylor, Samuel Weybright and Daniel Wolfe.

For its major publication of 1994, the Historical Society is publishing a book containing a series of community histories from northwestern Carroll County that were originally printed by The Carroll Record newspaper as a weekly series. In their original printing, the articles were not illustrated because of the newspaper technology of the time.

These articles will be published for the first time in a book format and the Historical Society would like to find photographs to complement the historical text. If you have old photographs that you would like to share with the publication project staff, please call the Historical Society at (410) 848-6494.

Each community history was written by a long-time resident of that community. Photographs and biographical information about the authors is especially needed to provide background for readers of the book. The Carroll Record Histories will contain the following series of community histories:

Taneytown by Dr. C. Birnie; New Windsor by F. G. Devilbiss; Linwood by J. P. Garner; Middleburg by Jas. H. Koons; Double Pipe Creek by Jas. H. Koons; Bruceville by E. H. Sharetts; Middleburg District by Samuel Weybright; Union Bridge by Daniel Wolfe; Harney by J. W. Reck; McKinstry Mills by J. P. Garner; Keysville by J. H. Koons; York Road by J. H. Koons; Uniontown by J. J. Weaver; and Trevanion by J. H. Taylor.

The community histories provide many facts about early families, businesses, churches, organizations and other topics of local history. Each history is written in a different style based upon the knowledge, experience and personality of the author. As a combined publication in book format, the histories offer a diverse view of Carroll County's heritage seen from the perspective of 100 years ago.

Each author strived for authenticity while recognizing the limits of his capabilities. For example, Dr. Jacob J. Weaver, who wrote "The History of Uniontown," began his series with the following passage:

"The value of all history is dependent upon its correctness, and its interest is proportionate to the authenticity of its details; this is especially true in the matter of local history. General events pertaining to the community as a whole, are matters of general record, and are easily to be obtained, but the circumstances and events which enter into the formation of the history of small settlements, are very difficult to be obtained, as comparatively few of them are matters of such public interest as to make them matters of record, and the writer must depend very largely upon tradition which becomes unreliable as the period is remote."

In a similar vein, Dr. Clotworthy Birnie commented on his responsibility for compiling an accurate Taneytown history :

"I am afraid the Editor of the RECORD has given too large a title to this series of articles, when he calls them a History. Reminiscences, would be a better name; Taneytown has no distinct history apart from

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

the history of the state and county, and in the absence of written records all that I can hope to do is to record somethings that have happened in the past, either from my own knowledge, or as they may be remembered by others, and they will only be of interest to those who now, or have in times past, lived in Taneytown. The first idea was only to publish Mr. Luckenbach's address of July 4th., 1876. In this paper I will give some further account of the persons and things mentioned in that address. Stories or legends that come down to us by word of mouth and are not written, are often of doubtful authenticity, and are so liable to be altered by frequent repetition that even when they have a foundation of truth, it is hard to tell how much is truth, and how much tradition."

The final product of this series is a unique and fascinating document that records many facts and traditions of our early history that otherwise would have been lost. By publishing this series, the Historical Society will insure the preservation of this document for posterity as well as offer our gratitude to the authors and editors of 100 years ago.

The Historical Society is publishing "The Carroll Record Histories of Northwestern Carroll County Communities" during 1994. The book will include a supplement of family, business and organizational histories prepared by donors to this publication project. If you would like additional information about this project, contact the Historical Society at (410) 848-6494.

Cutline: Dr. Jacob J. Weaver (1848 - 1937) was the author of the "History of Uniontown" in the 1890s series of community histories published in The Carroll Record. The Historical Society is searching for photographs of the other authors as well as turn-of-the-century views for publication in their 1994 book about northwestern Carroll County history.