

"1923 Carroll County Society Banquet, Part II"

Carroll County Times Article for 31 January 1999

By Jay A. Graybeal

In last week's column, I reprinted part of a lengthy historical address by Joseph D. Brooks delivered at the Carroll County Society of Baltimore on the county birthday, January 19, 1923. The address touched on a variety of topics including the following sections on Roads and Politics:

Roads

Very often the roads in a community are an index to the character of the inhabitants. In Carroll county there is one road of which very little, or nothing, has been spoken or written. When the Germans and Scotch-Irish unwittingly invaded the Province of Maryland they constructed a road sixty feet wide from Littlestown, Pa., to Frederick, Maryland, and from the latter place down through Harper's Ferry to Winchester, Va. These people were the Lutherans and Reformeds who pushed their way to the Monocacy and founded the town of Frederick, naming it after one of their illustrious sovereigns in Germany. Philadelphia being then one of the most important seaports along the Atlantic coast an avenue of trade was soon built up between northern Maryland and that city. Before many years this highway became an important one. The towns of Lancaster, Wrightsville and Columbia where the Susquehanna River was crossed on a high bridge. York, Hanover, and Littlestown in Pennsylvania; Taneytown, Bruceville, Ladiesburg, Woodsboro, Frederick and Knoxville in Maryland; Harper's Ferry in West Virginia, and Winchester in Virginia were built on it and large stage coaches piled between Philadelphia and Winchester, Va. In many cases these towns possessed hotels, which, in their day, were considered comfortable stopping places for "man and beast." Among the most noted hotels, at that time was the one kept by John Good, in Taneytown, and another immediately opposite on Frederick street, which had been erected in 1769. Many travelers from Virginia used this road in going to Philadelphia, and when the Continental Congress met in York, Pa., George Washington, on his way from Mt. Vernon to attend its session put up for a night at John Good's hotel. The table from which he ate his supper and breakfast is now in the possession of Mr. John McKellip, over 90 years old, of Taneytown, and cannot be purchased from him for neither love nor money. This road from Philadelphia to Winchester, Va., is an improved one, save and except about six miles between Taneytown and the Pennsylvania line. Until about the beginning of 1800 it was the only one in and out of Taneytown and not until the then Baltimore capitalists awoke to the fact that by means of this very road and its tributaries Philadelphia was getting away with the business of southern Pennsylvania and northern and Western Carroll county. Then began a system of turnpike construction. About 1820 the Baltimore and Reisterstown turnpike was started and ultimately completed to Chambersburg where it connected with the great highway from the Pittsburgh region to Philadelphia, and later on diverted a large part of the wagon traffic south to Baltimore. Later on the Westminster and Emmitsburg plank road was built from Westminster to Emmitsburg and that brought more traffic (and incidentally more tolls) to Baltimore. Later on the Reisterstown turnpike was extended to Hanover, Pa., through the towns of Manchester and Hampstead, and that brought more traffic to Baltimore. The construction of the turnpike through the little hamlet which William Winchester laid out and died before it amounted to much, made Westminster grow and its central location in 1837 made it the county seat of the county, very much to the chagrin of Taneytown where in 1832 the propaganda for the establishment of a new county was started under the guidance of John K. Longwell, the then owner and publisher of the The Carrolltoni, afterwards called American Sentinel, a newspaper devoted to the establishment of a new county. In 1803, when some land owners in what is now Manchester realized that a turnpike was about to be built through the little hamlet they began leasing lots, at a small yearly rental, for 99 years renewable forever, and many comparatively poor

people accepted these leases, and the town began to grow. Among the early owners to create these rents was one Richard Richards of English descent who, in 1803, leased several lots to a man named Everhart. One may wonder why Manchester which was settled exclusively by the Germans was called by that name. It was laid out by an Englishman and an English name given it. Chester is an English word meaning city, or gathering place, and Manchester the dwelling place of man. The Romans introduced the word in England. During all these years Westminster, the meeting place of the Germans and English, remained dormant. Their ideas of living were different and there was no real work to build a town of any consequence. The town owes its growth to three things, all of which happened in spite of its residents. The building of the Baltimore pike, the central location in the county which made it the county seat, and the construction of the Western Maryland Railroad. In strictly turnpike days it was a wagon hamlet filled with barrooms and all that accompanied them. To-day like all other towns and the county at large, it is a quiet, genteel, God fearing, industrious, sober, and progressive community.

Politics

Carroll county being a strictly agricultural one and not given to following new and untried policies of government, has remained conservative. The closeness of the vote makes for good government. For many years a large majority of voters of Myers, Manchester, Woolery and Hampstead districts voted the Democratic ticket, and in all other districts a large majority voted, first the Whig ticket, and afterwards the Republican ticket. The political situation was a natural one. The Germans came to this country because they wanted to own their own land and, be he rich or poor, to have a say in the management of the government, a thing denied them in their mother country. They had no use for negro slaves nor for the Federalist followers of Alexander Hamilton, the bitter rival of Thomas Jefferson, who advocated a large property qualification for voters. In other words the creation of a landed aristocracy, who, with their slaves, would ultimately control the land. The Germans readily became the followers of Jefferson and his Hickory Tree, and during the Civil War they fought with Ziegler [sic] and voted with Jackson. The English were advocates of Hamiltonian doctrines because they owned large tracts of land and numerous slaves, but when the Civil War began they readily gave up their slaves and joined hands with Abraham Lincoln to save the Union. From that time the southern, part of the northern and the western part of the county has been Republican. In recent years, however, new issues having arisen, notable the "wet" and "dry" one, and many of the present day voters have changed so much that even the rock ribbed Democratic stronghold of Manchester recently was carried by a dry Republican candidate for Congress, and a Republican part of the county by a wet Democratic candidate."

In his closing paragraph on Carroll's politics, Editor Brooks referred to the Local Option issue that allowed Maryland counties to vote to ban the sale of alcoholic beverages. Carroll went "dry" before the passage of the Volstead Act in 1918 which banned the sale nationwide and ushered in the era of Prohibition. Photo caption: Taneytown was a major crossroads for Eighteenth Century travelers and had several inns on the town square. This turn-of-the-century view from the square looking south shows the New Central Hotel and the Elliot House. The Old Monocacy Road (now Rt. 194) , described by Joseph Brooks in his lecture, crossed present-day Rt. 140 at the center of town. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of Mrs. Robert K. Billingslea.