

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

"Carroll County in 1880"

Carroll County Times article for 30 October 1994

by Jay A. Graybeal

In 1880 Judge William P. Maulsby wrote an introduction to the Carroll County section of The Maryland Directory. During Col. Maulsby's time, Carroll County's economy was based on agriculture. The rich soils, which had produced bumper crops for generations, still offered opportunity for those willing to invest "honest labor."

CARROLL was created by an Act of the General Assembly passed at the session of 1835-36, and was organized early in 1837. It was named in honor of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and was formed from the eastern portion of Frederick and the western portion of Baltimore counties. The soil of a large part of the county is of singular fertility, and especially in the regions known as Pipe Creek, Sam's Creek, Wakefield and Bachman's Valleys, is unsurpassed as to productiveness, probably by an equal area in the world. The community is essentially agricultural; perhaps, it is more entirely an agricultural county than any other in the State. A large number of considerable fortunes have been amassed by patient industry and prudent economy, by farmers. In population it is fourth in rank, being exceeded only Baltimore, Frederick and Washington. In the moderate, comfortable, competence of the people, it is believed to be equal to that of any county in the State. There is very little of overgrown wealth, and very little aching poverty. The aggregate wealth is distributed amongst the mass with remarkable comparative equality. It has not one millionaire to curse or bless it as the case might be. Steady moderation is a peculiar characteristic of the people. The juries are distinguished for giving moderate verdicts. The county authorities never subscribe for railroad stocks or bonds; and display not taste for grand undertakings in architecture, or other of the huge arts. The products are mainly cereal, and of the dairy. In the southern part of the county the land is adapted to tobacco, and formerly large quantities were produced and smaller quantities are still produced. Limestone is superabundant, and facilities for the improvement of the soil are all that can be reasonably expected or desired. The lands of Carroll, like those of all other counties, in all other States, have shrunk in salable value; consequently there is more or less opportunity for men of moderate means, and who desire to increase them by honest labor, to come in and make homes, and raise their own corn, bacon and grapes. Nature has not exhausted her beneficence, in Carroll at all events, and keeps in store even grapes, for those who will plant and tend the vines. The soil is of great variety, but each variety is yielding to the touch of labor. The surface is rolling and variegated, no flat lands or standing water, nor mountainous heights, but a succession of valleys and hills, all of easy cultivation from base to summit, and yet presenting sceneries of much general beauty. The principal streams are Little and Big Pipe Creeks, Sam's Creek, Morgan's Run, and the North and South Branches of the Patapsco, each affording fine water-powers. The North Branch of the Patapsco has its rise at Westminster, and within two miles of its head, acquires large proportions, increasing in volume steadily until it reaches Finksburg on Western Md. R. R. This road runs immediately by the side of the stream from this station to its head, about 9 miles. The attention of manufacturers will assuredly, in time, be attracted to the peculiar advantages offered by the succession of powers, within this short distance; one amongst which is an entire immunity from destructive floods, growing out of the fact that the head of the stream is too near to permit sudden large accumulations of water. In healthfulness this county is unsurpassed. There are no local causes for diseases of any kind; chills and fevers and mosquitoes are unknown.

The Western Maryland College, under the general patronage of the Methodist Protestant Church, is located at Westminster, and is a vigorous institution of most respectable standing, with an able, careful

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

and laboring faculty. The public school system is in healthful condition, at an annual expenditure of about fifty thousand dollars. At Union Bridge are the workshops of the W.M.R.R., and several minor manufacturing establishments; so also at Manchester are some manufactories, and at New Windsor. At Westminster is located a very extensive and important establishment, the "Taylor Manufacturing Company," which does a large business in the manufacturing of vertical, horizontal and stationary engines, which are in demand in all parts of the country, from Maine to Texas. The engines manufactured by this company have some peculiar excellences not yet attained by other establishments; this at least is the inference from the much extended demand for its products from almost all other localities. The agriculture of the county is in an advanced state, with room, however, for improvement by added labor. The capacities for manufacturers, especially the water-powers, strongly invite more enterprise. The men of the county are perhaps equal to the average of their neighbors of the State, but are not pretentious, and in fact possess no title to superiority over the mass of mankind; and if there be any, the number is very limited, who conceive themselves to be above the common average of their neighbors. Moderation is a characteristic of Carroll County.

Following Col. Maulsby description of the county, the directory included a list of public officials and a list of craftsmen, manufacturers, and merchants in the county.

Photo Caption: Steam engine manufactured by the Taylor Manufacturing Co. of Westminster. Col. William P. Maulsby noted the firm in his 1880 description of Carroll County. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection.