

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

"History of Bruceville"

Carroll County Times article for 1 May 1994

By Joe Getty

We would like to thank the people who have responded to our request for photographs that will assist the Historical Society in illustrating The Carroll Record Histories of Northwestern Carroll County Communities.

Originally, these histories were published serially in the Taneytown newspaper, The Carroll Record, and have never been compiled in book format. They provide a fascinating perspective about the early history of the following communities: Taneytown, Uniontown, New Windsor, Union Bridge, Double Pipe Creek (Detour), Linwood, Harney, Middleburg, Keysville, York Road (Keymar), Bruceville, McKinstry's Mills, Trevanion and Middleburg District.

Donors to this publication project will be entitled to contribute entries to a supplement of family, business and organizational histories. This supplement will be similar to the one produced last year in conjunction with the reprinting of the 1877 Illustrated Atlas of Carroll County, Maryland.

A photograph loaned by Luther Ritter shows a family portrait of Edwin H. Sharretts seated with his five sons. Sharretts wrote a history featuring the community of Bruceville for The Carroll Record series. The excerpts printed below show that Bruceville was a thriving center of industry and trade:

"Bruceville is a small village located on Big Pipe Creek, in Middleburg district, about one-half mile north of the junction of the Western Maryland and the Frederick and Pennsylvania Line Railroads. The town was laid out by Norman Bruce and named Bruceville about the eighteenth century. The earliest accounts of the history of Norman Bruce are that he emigrated from Scotland about the year 1762, and settled on Pipe Creek. In 1763 the state of Maryland granted to the above named Bruce, and Edward Diggs five thousand, three hundred and one acres of land, extending from Keysville along Big Pipe Creek, north of Bruceville - the whole region was called "Bedford." October 31st., 1767, they granted one thousand acres of that tract to Charles Neale. He sold it to George Neale, George Koons and others.

We find at this time, the land south of the creek belonged to John Ross Key. Norman Bruce desiring the Key property for the purpose of erecting a mill on Big Pipe Creek, entered into negotiations with Key, which resulted in an exchange of their estates. Norman Bruce married in 1764, Susanna Key, daughter of Philip Key, of St. Mary's county, the first settler of that name in America. Philip Key had six children. The third son was Francis, the grandfather of Francis Scott Key. Susanna received from her father by will, fourteen hundred acres of land being one-half of "Terra Rubra."

Bruce took up large land grants in Frederick county, (now Carroll) and became a large land holder . . . [his] property contains now several villages, about five flour and grist mills, several factories, shops of various kinds, two railroads passing through said land, with fine stations and warehouses. He was sheriff of Frederick county, an officer in the Revolution, one of the first Justices of the Peace, who formed the County Court of Frederick county, of the new government in 1777, and Justice of the Levy Court in 1803. He had three children; Upton Scott Bruce, who settled near Cumberland on land called the Glades; Charles Key Bruce, who went to Scotland, and the West Indies, and did not return until he was an old man; he brought with him valuable presents, some of them still belonging to the family. He never married and died on Long Island; Elizabeth Key Bruce, a beautiful girl who attended the assembly balls when her father represented his county in the Legislature in 1778. The dresses she wore are still

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preserved, together with china bearing the Bruce coat of arms. She married John Scott, the nephew of Dr. Upton Scott, of Annapolis.

Norman Bruce died April 25th., 1811. After John Scott married Elizabeth Bruce, he built the large stone house on the hill now owned by Edwin H. Sharets. It was built about the year 1812, and cost ten thousand dollars. They had five children. Upton Scott, Susanna who died in infancy, Mrs. John Brooke Boyle of Westminster, Mrs. Daniel Swope and Dr. Norman B. Scott, who still survives. John Scott died of sciatic rheumatism, Feb. 28th., 1841. Elizabeth Bruce Scott, his wife, died in 1864 in Westminster, aged 84 years.

After Bruce made the exchange of property with Key, he built a dwelling house, the same which is now owned and occupied by Frederick Mehring and sisters. He also erected a large stone mill, owned later by George Mehring, which stood until 1881 when it was destroyed by fire.

Nicholas Koons was the earliest blacksmith in the village, and Jesse Cloud kept the hotel where Frederick Mehring now resides. Dr. J. E. H. Liggett was the physician, and a Mr. Trego was the merchant. Hudson and Brooks were prominent farmers, residing near the mill at the time of its erection.

What was at one time quite an extensive cemetery, is at present a thick growth of underbrush (located on Mr. S. S. Weant's farm on the Hill, and contains only five graves, the inscriptions thereon being: Basil Brooks, eldest son of Raphael and Jane, died January 24th., 1829, ages 56 years; Robert T. Dodds, died April 17th, 1806, aged 74 years, a native of East Lothian county, Scotland, of Haddington of Aberloda; Selkirk Dodds, his wife, a native of Edinburgh, Scotland, died April 24th, 1825, aged 73 years; John Dodds, their son, died October 17th, 1810, aged 42 years; and John Scott, died February 28th 1841, aged 71 years. A number of graves may be found there with only common field stones, with no lettering thereon.

"Good Intent," the property on the hill, passed from Norman Bruce to his daughter Elizabeth Scott, then to her son Upton Scott, to Levi Buffington, and lastly to Edwin H. Sharets, who is now the present owner. In the south parlor several window panes bear inscriptions, and a list of names of the Scott family and others.

Bruceville affords many places of industry, giving employment to the inhabitants, and many others viz; The large phosphate mill of Frederick Mehring; the canning plant owned and operated by E. H. Sharets & Bro.; the cigar and ice cream factory owned and managed by S. Weant; the Blacksmith shop owned by Cornelius Koons, son of the earliest blacksmith of the village; shoemaking conducted by Benedict Knott; Wm. Kolb, a general store; and the Post Office conducted by Miss Mertie Weant. The school is at present taught by Miss Carrie Harbaugh.

The enterprising farmers and land holders surrounding the village are Jacob Sharets, James White, John White, Luther C. Sharets, Charles R. Wilhide, S. Weant, John Newman, Mrs. Mehring, E. H. Sharets and others."

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.

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Cutline: E. H. Sharretts (seated) was the author of the "History of Bruceville" in The Carroll Record Histories. He is shown in this photograph with his sons Albert, Edwin, Luther, Dr. Upton and Frank Sharretts. Photograph courtesy of Luther Ritter.