

Carroll Yesteryears
10 April 2016

A Carroll County Mystery: Where was Brindletown? By Mary Ann Ashcraft

Where was the Carroll community known as Brindletown in the late 1800s? Evidence in at least three places shows it did exist, but I've exhausted the sources I can think of to pinpoint its location. Maybe one of the *Times'* readers has a clue and would let me know.

Old newspapers, especially the Union Bridge *Pilot*, had correspondents contributing news from tiny hamlets we never mention today – Porter's, Cover's Corner, Gypsy Hill, Eastview, Daysville, Waesche, Defiance, Stoner, and Germantown. Perhaps there is a development with one of these names, or a road, but no community. Brindletown doesn't appear on Carroll maps of 1862, 1877, or 1916. I'm beginning to think it may be like Brigadoon, the imaginary Scottish village that appeared out of the mist once every 100 years in the Lerner and Loewe musical of the same name. Did Brindletown exist only during the 1880s?

My curiosity was piqued by several references to Brindletown colored school in the minutes of the Carroll County Board of School Commissioners in 1887. Its teacher, John T. (or H.) Henderson, asked the board for a raise in pay. That was turned down. The same year there was a request for rent and repairs to the school and its trustees asked for desks. New desks were not granted by the board, but there were instructions to take used desks from the school at Sykesville, repair them, and send them to Brindletown. All of these references imply the school was not in good condition and probably run in a rented facility, perhaps someone's house. But where?

A book titled "Industries of Maryland" published in 1882 lists Brindletown with "mail Westminster" after the name. Another listing for Brindletown only shows it located in Carroll County. The evidence I've come across points to Brindletown being in the Freedom Election District - the southeastern part of the county. There's a colored school operating there in 1887 with John T. Henderson as teacher, but when the Carroll school board submitted reports to the Maryland State Board of Education, it never listed the names of the schools, just the name of the teacher and a number for each school. That doesn't help the search at all.

I found an African American named John H. Henderson in several census records, but never with the occupation "teacher." He lived around Taylorsville and was buried at Fairview United Methodist Church in 1918. If this is the person who taught at Brindletown, he would have been about 30 years old when he served as a teacher. Depending upon where in Freedom District the school was located, he could have commuted each day. If Brindletown was in the area of Marriottsville, however, he likely lived with a colored family close to the school. Looking at the census record for 1880, it appears there was a sizable African American population in the southeastern part of Carroll County where there were jobs in paper mills and quarries. John Henderson doesn't show up in any other listings of Carroll's teachers.

If you have a lead, please email me at ccgs1752@hotmail.com.

Mary Ann Ashcraft is a library volunteer at the Historical Society of Carroll County

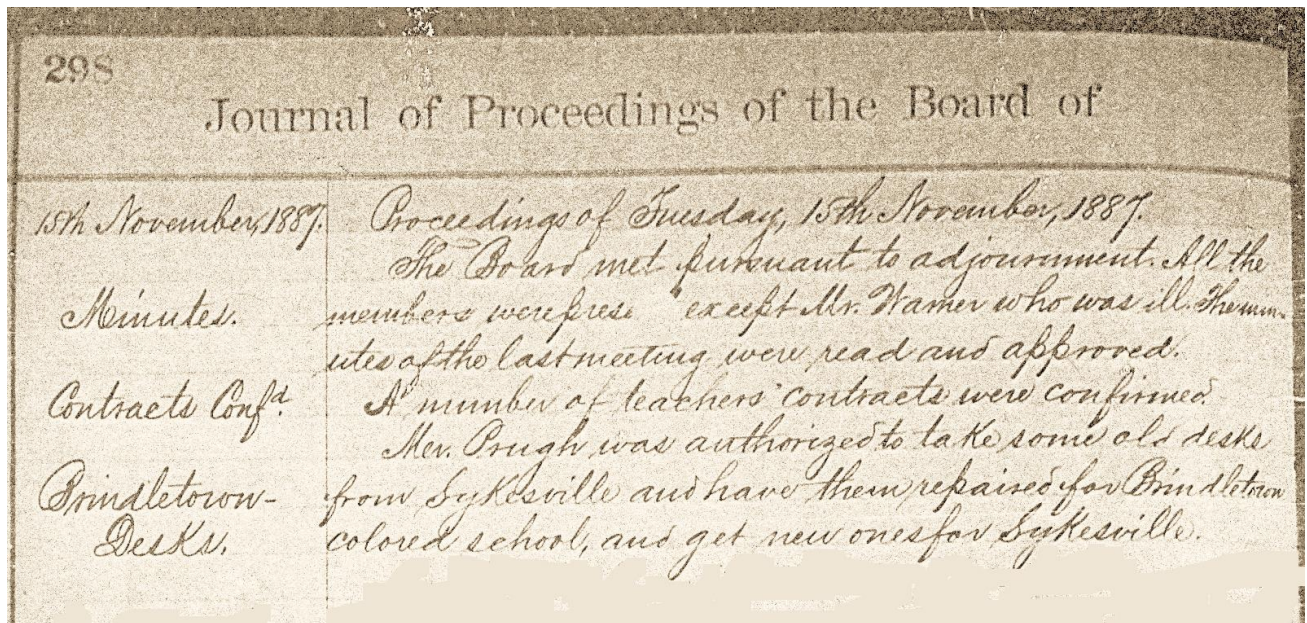


Photo credit: *Proceedings of the Carroll County School Board*

Photo caption: *This reference to the colored school at Brindletown in Carroll County appeared in the November 15, 1887, minutes of the Carroll County school commissioners who carried on all the business associated with Carroll's black and white public schools.*