

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

"Weybright- Education in Middleburg District"

Carroll County Times article for 8 May 1994

By Joe Getty

Samuel Weybright contributed a history of the Middleburg District that he wrote in 1895 for The Carroll Record series. Weybright's style is that of a story-teller as he describes the community's history through a series of anecdotes.

The entire series is being printed for the first time in book format by the Historical Society of Carroll County this year. The book will also include a supplement of family, business and organizational histories prepared by donors to the publication project. If you would like to receive a flyer describing how you can submit an entry to the publication, please contact the Historical Society.

Weybright begins his anecdotal history with a nostalgic reference to stories about Native Americans as told by a previous generation of residents: "As we advance in years, our minds wander back to the days of our childhood, when we sat around the log fire listening to the old folks' tales of the early settlers along the Monocacy, where we feel sure the curl of smoke from the wigwam and camp fire brightened the night, as the old folks used to tell us. In the field joining Jesse C. Weybright's buildings, which was then a swamp, there was a spring to which the deer came to drink, and lick salt, and there also the braves came to hunt, but now the poor Indian has departed, and left us to enjoy his former lands."

One area of history that particularly interested Weybright was local education. He explained the format of 19th century education in a description of the Keysville schools: "The first teachers at Keysville, we are informed, were, William Harris, Jacob Wickert, Henry Six, David Roop, William Collier, Dr. Juilett Grove, Andrew Ickes, Samuel Fuss and Andrew McKinney. The latter was the first teacher under the primary system. Our schools were conducted then under quite a different system from now. The desks were placed around the wall, with a bench to sit on, without a back. The charts to look at, were from one to a half dozen switches, lying on nails against the wall to dry and at the teacher's command to straighten our wearied backs, or remind us of our studies, and when we were disobedient."

He also documents the students following a popular Pennsylvania German tradition of barring out the schoolmaster at Christmas: "Our schools were subscription; the teacher served as principal and directors of the school. At Christmas, if the teacher was not inclined to treat the school, the larger boys would lock him out, and if he could not get possession, he would lose his time. One of the teachers served in this style was Dr. Grove, a Thompsonian doctor, who had his home at the Key residence. Finding himself barred out, he loaded a pistol with cayenne pepper, and at a broken shutter, broke a hole in the window pane, and shot the pepper in the room, causing the boys to surrender. We remember seeing him stand four or five boys, larger in stature than himself, in a row, and flog them completely with a hickory rod."

Grammar and singing were major parts of the curriculum in the one-room schoolhouses and Weybright describes his own experiences at school: "In the winter of 1850, David Roop taught school in John Weybright's tenant house, at the end of the lane. Those who were in the grammar class were, James W. Troxel, Levi Frame, Daniel Sell, B. D. Biggs and the writer. Each one, or nearly so, had a different grammar. We all parsed in one class, each one giving his rules according to their author. Kirkham's Bull's, and Well's grammar were used. It can be seen that one of the chief objects of the parents then, was to plan some way to partly educated their children. Edward O. Norris of Middleburg was also a school teacher, and taught writing school at night. Some of our best singing school teachers, were, Mr.

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Everetts, William McCoy Overmyer, John P. Peck, and John Phelps. John P. Peck taught in 1848. He was a dwarf, not more than three and a half feet in height. He had a very strong pair of lungs, and could sing night and day. He would elevate himself in singing, by standing on a platform, so the people could see him, and was fond of gallanting the ladies home after singing."

Samuel Weybright is one of the authors in The Carroll Record Histories of which we do not have a portrait photograph. If you know of any photographs of Weybright that should be shared for an illustration in our upcoming publication, please call the Historical Society at 848-6494.

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: One of Samuel Weybright's favorite topics in preparing his "History of Middleburg District" was the early traditions in education. The Bruceville School in Middleburg District is representative of the one room schoolhouse of the region. This photograph is from 1906 when Harry B. Fogle was the teacher. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, Wilbur A. Kolh, donor.