

"Carroll Countians Founded Parkewood, NC"

Carroll County Times article for 21 January 2001

By Jay A. Graybeal

Marylanders, including a number of Carroll Countians, settled in communities throughout our nation. In a few cases they were the founders of small towns. During the late 18th Century, some local residents migrated to Virginia and into north-western North Carolina. There were later migrations to Ohio and points west. A century ago two Westminster brothers founded a small industrial community known as Parkewood in North Carolina. An undated, c.1930s article from the Fayetteville Observer was reprinted in a local paper under the headline of VILLAGE MARYLANDERS FOUNDED NOW LIES DESERTED:

"Hidden in a pine and dogwood forest a few miles beyond Carthage lies North Carolina's "ghost city" of Parkewood, once prosperous manufacturing center of grist mills and millstones, now completely deserted and all but forgotten—so forgotten that until recently many of the residents of nearby Carthage knew nothing of its existence.

The village lies along the banks of a creek in a beautiful valley over which its decaying factories and workshops stand guard like nodding sentinels of the past.

Pines and the dogwoods have sprung up and virtually overrun the place since the plant was closed down finally in 1895.

Several of the shops in which the North Carolina Millstone Company made a nationally famous line of grist mills and millstones have tumbled to the ground. Others stand, containing a jumbled mass of iron machinery.

The company was started by George and Edw. Taylor, of Westminster, Md., and enjoyed its greatest prosperity between 1880 and 1890.

The general store still stands and in it we found records of registered mail which indicated a business done with a large section of the country.

This clipping was sent us by George R. Babylon, Baltimore, who is always interested in anything that concerns the past or present citizens' activities or history of Carroll County.

Many of the older residents will remember The Taylor Manufacturing Co. that operated in Westminster, more than half a century ago, in a plant on Court Street, near the jail. The company's chief product was stationary and portable steam engines.

In the early 1880's the plant of the Taylor Mfg. Co. moved to Chambersburg, Pa., and a number of machinists and employees followed the plant and continued to work for the company.

George and Ed. Taylor, mentioned in the clipping as having started the North Carolina Millstone Co. were officers of the Taylor Mfg. Co., residents of Westminster for a number of years and took an active part in business and social affairs.

George Taylor married Miss Ella Norris, daughter of H. L. Norris a leading merchant of this city. He died a number of years ago and is buried in the Westminster Cemetery.

Edw. Taylor married Miss Josephine Parke, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Parke, prominent citizens of Westminster.

Lewis A. Haller, Green Street, this city, was a foreman with the firm for many years.”

Although the article failed to mention why the North Carolina Millstone Company failed, it seems likely that changes in the milling industry led to their demise. Small family-owned mills, such as those that once dotted the Carroll County landscape, found it hard to compete with larger operations. Many failed by the turn of the twentieth century and mill equipment manufacturers saw their market diminish.



*George A. Taylor, photographed in c.1880, co-founded Parkewood, North Carolina in the 1880s; the industrial community became a ghost town by the early 20th Century. Historical Society of Carroll County, Mary B. Shellman Collection, gift of Rev. Paul Reese, 1941.*