



HISTORIC BELLE GROVE SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD

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Neighborhood Picnic July 23!

A History of Carroll County
Inside this issue, a look back at Col. John K. Longwell's history of Carroll County on the 100th anniversary of our nation's independence

Neighborhood Spotlight
July Notes From The Garden

Be sure to join us for the

Belle Grove Square Neighborhood Picnic / Potluck

Thursday July 23rd, 2009 7:00pm

in Belle Grove Square Park

See you There!

by Mitchell Edmondson

As the recent high temperatures have announced, summer has officially arrived in Westminster. When I think of summer, I think of fun times spent outside with family and friends. In just a few weeks, our neighborhood association will be having its first neighborhood picnic.

I would imagine that since our neighborhood can trace its roots back more than 140 years, there surely has been other neighborhood picnics - we know that George and Maria Matthews gifted our one-acre park to the city of Westminster 1877 and that in the many years since that time, countless events have been hosted in our park.

Originally our park was called Lafayette Square and it eventually became known as Belle Grove Park, named for G. W. Matthews' daughter Belle. As a part of the Bicentennial celebration in 1976, our park was restored with the help of the Woman's Club of Westminster and other local organizations. The

work included the restoration of the fountain, installation of flagpoles, and landscaping. Recently, the city held its Arbor Day celebration in our park and new cherry trees were planted. We all share in the park's beauty and enjoy the splashing fountain as we go about our daily lives. The park is the main thing that anchors our neighborhood and it serves as a reminder not only of our long history, but also of our commitment to ensuring that we and future generations will continue to have happy memories of times spent in our beautiful park.

So, I hope you will all join us for our picnic in the park on Thursday, July 23, 2009. At around 7:00pm, our neighborhood association will be serving up grilled hot dogs and hamburgers. Anyone interested is encouraged to bring a side dish or other item to share, but please don't hesitate to join us either way. After all, our main reason for the picnic is for a chance for neighbors to meet neighbors and have a great evening spent in the shade in our Historic Belle Grove Park.

See you all there Thursday, July 23!

Bond Street Patches

Along Bond Street, as some residents have noted, the city has this last month replaced the temporary asphalt patches on the



sidewalk with concrete and a new curb in these affected areas, after follow-up by the neighborhood association to questions from concerned Bond Street neighbors about the temporary patches still in place after recent road work.

The city has indicated plans are still in place to resurface Bond Street itself, but the timing of this has not yet been announced.

The History of Carroll County

Because this is the month we celebrate the birthday of our country, we are devoting this space to a speech given by Col. John K. Longwell. Below is an excerpt from an article published by the American Sentinel on July 15, 1876.

by Col. John K. Longwell prepared and read for Westminster's Centennial Celebration, July 1, 1876

This is a gala day in the United States. Millions of Freemen have assembled to commemorate the One Hundredth Anniversary of the American Independence, and no epoch in the world's history ever justified a people in a more joyous exultation than that which we celebrate today.

Congress and the President having recommended that in addition to the manifestation of a nation's joy on this memorable occasion, a Historical Sketch of the towns and counties be prepared and read, and this duty having been assigned to me, I conclude that it would scarcely be doing justice to the design of the recommendation if the early history of the region now embraced within the bounds of this comparatively young county is not given. Accordingly I have prepared a rather hasty and somewhat imperfect sketch of the period anterior to the organization of Carroll county, from such data as could be obtained, which proved to be very meager as well as from reliable tradition in addition to what has come within my own knowledge and from official sources.

Some where between 1730 and 1740, at least forty years before the commencement of the Revolution, settlements began to be made in this part of the Province of Maryland. The country was nearly all covered with timber and of course the labor of clearing it up to make homes for the settlers and

their families was very great, so much so that we, in this day, can scarcely form a conception of the severe trials they had to undergo. In the beginning the progress of population and improvement was very slow, the comforts of life were unknown, even the commonest necessities of life were difficult to be had. Mills were very rare and stores still more so. And then they had the elements to contend against with very indifferent shelter in log cabins hastily erected. As far as I have been able to learn they dwelt in comparative security from the inroads of the Indians who had retired across the South Mountain into the Cumberland valley. On this subject I will make the following extract from a letter from Dr. Jacob Shower, who had been asked for such information as had in his possession:

"There is one fact I would mention of the early history of this vicinity, which is probably known by only a few persons, and which is worthy of perpetuating. A remnant of Indians numbering about sixty or seventy, reside within less than a mile of Manchester, partly on land I hold, up to the year 1750 or 1731, probably the last Aborigines who resided in Baltimore county. After man efforts to ascertain to what tribe they belonged, I could only arrive at the supposition that they were the "Susquehannocks."

"At the period, without any commotion or apparent preparation for the event, they all, except two, disappeared during the night. The two exceptions were the chief and his wife, both being very old and infirm. They survived the departure of their friends only a few days. This information I received when very young from the old settlers, but mainly from my grand mother whose father resided only a small distance from their grounds. She was in almost daily intercourse with them, and spent

with them the greater part of the day preceding their departure."

"On account of similarity of names, the theory often presented itself to my mind – may not this little tribe have found its way into Florida, and the celebrated Florida chief called Miconopy, who years after gave the United States so much trouble, be a descendant of this old chief."

Speculators in land, at a very early period, obtained grants of large tracts, which were divided and sold to persons emigrating thither. The patents were recorded principally at Annapolis.

About the same period 1760 to 1740 or a little earlier, settlements began to be made in York county, then embracing what is now Adams county, by persons who left Lancaster, Berks, and Chester Counties, Pa. The western section of York county, including the region around Gettysburg was called "The Marsh Creek Settlement" made up almost exclusively of Scotch Irish, many of whom came over into Emmittsburg and Taneytown Districts, where some of their descendants are now living. The western section of the present York county and the section around Hanover, was settled nearly entirely by Germans, and many of them came over into this county and settled principally in Manchester and Myers' districts, where numbers of their descendants now live. Some few Friends of Quakers came over from Chester county, Pa., and settled on Little Pipe Creek, where their descendants are now to be found, living on the fat of the land. The early emigrants to the southern portion of our county were from the older counties on the Western Shore. St. Mary's, Prince George's and Anne Arundel.

The long dispute which existed

about the line between the Provinces of Maryland and Pennsylvania, gave the settlers on our Northern Borders a great deal of trouble. The Proprietary of Maryland claimed a strip of 6 or 8 miles wide over the present line and John Digges obtained a Maryland grant of 6800 acres about Hanover. Charles Carroll obtained a large Maryland Grant about Fairfield or Millerstown, and the tract now goes by the name of the Carroll Tract. Hanover, then called McAllisterstown or Kallisterstown, and being within the disputed territory, became a sort of refuge for disorderly characters and from that circumstance was called "Rogue's Harbor." On the final adjustment of the difficulty between the two great Proprietaries, by the running and marking of the line by Mason and Dixon, Penn became the acknowledged owner, and the settlers became more numerous, the county began to be cleaned up and the population began to multiply.

The population of this region of country having considerably increased and the business with the Courts of Frederick and Baltimore with it, complaints began to be made about the distance the people had to travel to reach seats of justice, and the question of having the conveniences of another county began to be talked about, which led to the establishment of "The Star of Federalism," a newspaper at Uniontown, and at different periods, three papers were published at Westminster by George Keating, a Mr. Burke and George W. Sharp. The later removed to Frederick and established the Frederick Citizen.

The support of these papers being small they were soon discontinued. Although the project was much agitated, the people were very much divided in opinion as to the particular mode of forming a county – some favoring a division of Frederick county alone, some in favor of separating Baltimore

county from the City and locating the Seat of Justice in a central part of the county, whilst the inhabitants of Westminster, which was on the dividing line between the two counties, were in favor of taking a portion of each of the counties and forming a new one with Westminster as the county seat. No definite action was had on the subject up to the year 1833, when William Cost Johnson, that brilliant son of Frederick county, introduced in the House of Delegates, and through his extraordinary ability and popularity had passed through both branches of the Legislature a bill to create Carroll County with the following boundaries, beginning at McKinstry's Mill, Sam's Creek, and running thence by a straight line to Parr's Spring, thence by the western branch of the Patapsco to its junction with the northern branch of the Patapsco, thence by said stream to the bridge of the Baltimore and Reisterstown Turnpike, thence by a parallel line then dividing Baltimore and Frederick counties to the Pennsylvania line, thence by said line to Rock Creek, thence by said Creek to Monocacy, thence by said stream to the mouth of Double Pipe Creek, thence by Pipe Creek to mouth of Little Pipe Creek, thence up said stream to Sam's Creek, thence up Sam's Creek to place of beginning. The law, however, was clogged with a provision requiring a majority of the voters in each segment of the two counties at the October election, 1833, by a viva voce vote. Soon after the passage of the bill your Historian was invited to come to Westminster to establish a newspaper in the interest of the new county. On the 28th of June, 1833, the Carrolltonian was first issued and it may be said, that even the opponents of the measure acknowledged that zeal and fidelity with which it was conducted, until in four years afterwards the efforts of its friends were finally crowned with success. As the fall election approached, a number of public

meetings were held for public discussion on the merits of the questions and a general meeting was held at Westminster, at which a committee was appointed of persons outside of the town and an able address issued which was published in pamphlets in the English and German languages.

The election came off, after holding many public meetings, and the result was that the new county failed to receive a majority in the Baltimore County segment, and was consequently defeated.

The friends of the new county did not anticipate a rejection of their favorite project. Eventually, the Constitution was amended and the confirmatory bill creating Carroll county passed the House of Delegates by a majority of 28 and by the whole body of the Senate except Elias Brown.

This long deferred victory was hailed with great delight by the citizens of Westminster and surrounding country, and celebrated by procession, arches, banners, and illuminations. An address was delivered in the old Union Church by James Raymond.

In March 1837 an election for Sheriff was held. A number of candidates entered the field. The contest between Nicholas Kelley, Isaac Dern and Basil Root, the principal candidates, was very close, resulting in the election of Nicholas Kelley as the first Sheriff of the county.

The first meeting of the Circuit Court, Orphans' Court and county Commissioners, was held at Westminster on the first Monday in April, 1837.

A number of places were suggested for the Public Buildings, including the present site, the lot now occupied by the Dallas Mansion and the ground on which the Reformed church is built. The Commissioners selected the present site, several acres of land

being donated for the purpose by Isaac Shriver and the heirs of David Fisher.

The jail was erected in 1837 by B. F. Forester and Johnzee Shelby at a cost of \$4000.00. since which time the jail yard and other additions have been made. In 1838 the Corner Stone of the Court House was laid by Andrew Shriver. The occasion brought out a large concourse of people, with four Military Companies commanded by Captains Skinner of Hanover, Swope of Taneytown, Bramwell of Finksburg, and Longwell of Westminster. Conrad Moul was the contractor and the mason work of Court House and Jail was performed by Ephraim Swope and Thos. W. Durbin. The Court House was built at a cost of about \$18,000.00, and notwithstanding it was erected nearly 40 years ago, it is at this day a credit to the county and to the Commissioners under whose administration it was erected.

Taneytown is the oldest town in the county. It was laid out about 1750 by Frederick Taney, who came over from Calvert County. The town is located on the main road from York to Frederick, and in the days preceding the Revolution and afterwards it was on the principal avenue of travel from the North to the South. General Washington frequently stopped there on his way to and from Mt. Vernon. The town made but little progress of improvement for many years. But since the construction of the Frederick and Pennsylvania Line Railroad, which passes through it, two large warehouses and several stores and dwellings have been erected and it may be said it is not yet finished. It contains a population of about 450, with three large churches.

Westminster, although not the oldest is by far the largest town in the county. It was laid out by William Winchester in 1764. the principal street was called King Street, showing that at the time it

was first located its proprietor had been loyal to the Mother Country. Its situation on the main turnpike from Baltimore to the West gave it considerable advantages. At the time it was selected as the County Seat of Carroll county, it did not contain more than 500 inhabitants with two or three stores. But, then as now, some of its good citizens imagined in their zeal that it was something of a place. Forty years ago it contained by two churches, now there are eight, some of the would be a credit to a city, not in name but in fact. The Western Maryland Railroad passed through it and since its construction its growth has been rapid. The population is now 2500, with at least 40 stores, 3 banks, a college, and several large manufactories and warehouses. The Westminster gas light company is one of the valuable improvements of the last ten years.

Manchester is the second town in size in the county. It is handsomely situated on the Hanover Turnpike. It was laid out about 1790, and now contains a population of about 800, with five Churches, Masonic Hall, Odd Fellow's Hall, and Academy, a number of Stores and Manufactories, and if the people are only successful in getting one of two projected Railroads, it will become a place of considerable importance.

Uniontown is a cozy little town with a population of about 400. it contains a number of Stores and three Churches.

Union Bridge was for some time the terminus of the Western Maryland Railroad, and flourished in consequence. The Workshops of the Company are located there, giving employment to a large number of workmen. It is a stirring business place with a population of about 550, and is looking forward to greater improvement it is now incorporated.

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Neighborhood Spotlight

As written by Christopher Weeks in *The Building of Westminster in Maryland*, in 1898 this beautiful house at 32 Bond Street which sits across from Belle Grove Park was built for Elizabeth Bankard. In the early 1900's stacked summer porches were added to the rear of the structure. It is a very stunning three-bay, two-story pile displaying fine brick work with great attention to detail: the fine German plaques, the string course, the fine pelleted brackets at the cornice, and the segmental arched windows in the principal facade (echoed in the door's transom) all reflect a high level of style and taste.

According to information in the 1996 Holiday House Tour, The second floor of the house was partially gutted in the 1990's and rebuilt, incorporating a common



hall, three bedrooms and two baths.

The rear porches on both levels were incorporated as part of the living space by removing a large portion of the rear masonry wall.

The rear stairs to the first floor kitchen have been retained. In general the first floor remains as found; some door openings have been enlarged, and the walls, ceilings, floors, doors, windows, casings and base have been renewed.

July Notes From The Garden

According to the Maryland Cooperative association, perennials, like yarrow and salvia, can be cut back to encourage re-bloom. Deadhead the spent blooms of annuals like zinnias and marigolds. Pinch out the flower buds of asters, mums, goldenrod and other fall bloomers to keep plants bushy and prevent early flowering.

Although this is not the best time to divide and transplant perennials, it can be done if necessary. Divide and re-plant quickly in the early



evening, keeping the root system moist at all times. Water the new divisions daily until they are established. Tall plants that are flopping over in thunderstorms need some physical support from a tomato cage or stakes.

Prepare your lawn for the summer heat to come. Maintaining proper mower height is critical for a successful lawn and its survival through summer. Try not to remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade at each mowing. This can be difficult during rainy weather. After a wet period your grass may be excessively tall. In this case, mow your turf several inches higher than normal, then return several days later and mow at the proper height. An occasional mowing of tall grass is unavoidable, but routine close mowing will harm your lawn.

Cut your cool season turf to a height of 3-4 inches. Mow zoysia grass and Bermuda grass to a height of 3/4inch to 1-1/2inches.

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New Windsor, on the Western Maryland Railroad, is also a thriving town, with a Bank, College, three Churches, Warehouse, Stores, and a population of about 400.

The other villages of the county are Hampstead, Finksburg, Middleburg, Bruceville, Harney, Frizzelsburg, Warfieldsburg, Snydersburg, Myersville, Sykesville, Marriottsville, Franklinville, Winfield, Eldersburg, and Freedom.

During the administration of John Adams near the close of the last century, an excise duty was laid on stills. This created what was then called the "Whiskey Insurrection," by those opposed to the tax. The insurrection became so formidable, particularly in Western Pennsylvania, that

President Adams appointed Gen. Washington as commander of the forces raised to suppress it. The excitement extended to this region—the Whiskey Boys in a band marched into Westminster and set up a Liberty pole. The people of the town became alarmed and sent out to Col. Gist, who then commanded a regiment. The col. Who was known to be a brave man, mounted his horse, rode into town, drew his sword, ordered the pole to be cut down, and placing his foot on it, it was cut to pieces, when the Boys left. For this information I am indebted to his son, col. Joshua C. Gist, now in his 84th year.

In concluding this rather lengthy but imperfect sketch, allow me to say that our young county has exhibited a very material growth in prosperity. Her population has nearly doubled since 1837. The valuation of property then made showed as assessment

of \$4,749,000 and now it is \$17,289,432. A larger area of land has been brought under cultivation, the product of our Farms, have largely increased by the application of lime and other fertilizers, and the means of transportation to market greatly improved. The phlail has given way to the horse and steam thresher; the reap hook, cradle and scythe to the mower and reaper; the slow hand-rake to the rapid moving spring horse-rake; the mud roads to railroads; and the lumbering weekly and tri-weekly mail-coach to the rapid transit of the railroad car, and notwithstanding there is a great depression in business in many sections of our country, or county has no reason to complain, as almost every interest is protected and rewarded.

If the progress of the next century equals the one now expiring in

material improvement, conjecture will be lost in wonder and astonishment at its contemplation.

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