



# **A Brief History of Middletown Valley**

**1849-1890**

by **Harry M. Gross, 1932**

Presented by  
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Ocean City, Maryland

Reprocessed by  
**Dorinda Davis Shepley**

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# Foreword

This brief history of the Middletown Valley in Frederick County, Maryland was researched and compiled by Harry M. Gross in 1932, as a paper for the Rhodes or Kellogg scholarship in his senior year at Columbia University. Much of this research was derived from interviews with the local town folks and articles from the local newspaper of that time period. John Brown's Raid at Harper's Ferry and The Civil War are highlighted in addition to agriculture, industries and church and school history. One added surprise is a list of the occupants in Middletown in 1865 provided by one of the local citizens.

Harry M. Gross, the author, was the first husband of Elizabeth [Flook] Gross MacGregor, daughter of Cyrus Flook, a Myersville banker and businessman, and his wife, the former Elizabeth Eby. Cyrus Flook lived in Myersville at 511 Main Street, next door (513) to his sister Elizabeth Delana Flook Horine, wife of Alvey J. Horine.

John D. Barrett has been in possession of this manuscript since 1973, a gift from his aunt Elizabeth. John and his wife, Linda, wish to share this with all who have an interest in Middletown Valley.

Because of the faded print, the document has been reprocessed. Many of the pictures have yellowed but have been scanned and included.

Note: Numbers appearing in parenthesis serve as a cross-reference to the Bibliography located in the back. Footnotes are designated alphabetically on each page.

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## **Below You Lies the Happy Valley of the Hills**

I gaze from Braddock towards the glowing West,  
Where with a matchless brush, the sun paints Old South Mountain crest,  
‘Neath beetling crag and dark ravine, ‘neath bush and hoary tree,  
Thro’ dasied meads and poppied fields Catoctin hunts the sea;  
I look across a valley entrancing in my eyes,  
As lovely as the gardens fair of storied paradise –  
Not lovelier than Canaan old which Moses saw afar  
When he led God’s chosen children under Orient sun and star.

I see beneath my restless feet a highway leading down  
To where arise with sacred pride the spires of Middletown.  
Deep in the Valley like a gem set in some crown of old,  
And round it in their beauty lie the harvest fields of gold;  
The turnpike, winding in and out, now peeps, now disappears  
Until beyond the town it finds the mountain rich in years –  
Rich in years and old in story, burdened with its ghostly lore,  
Crowned with legends wild, pathetic, that will live forevermore.

I see the gap among the hills, blue-circled, far away,  
Where Harper’s Ferry nestles ‘neath its towering walls of gray –  
Where Shenandoah’s crystal tides and Potomac’s ripples wed  
And Maryland Heights in grandeur rise above nuptial bed;  
I turn away a moment to a landscape lovelier still  
Where bloom the fields that circle ‘round historic Myersville,  
And far beyond the village fair the mountains lift again,  
The blue peaks rising high above the rich and fruitful plain.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (28), T. C. Harbaugh – Middletown Valley in Song and Story, pages 55-56

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## Chapter 1 - Below You Lies the Happy Valley of the Hills

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In 1850, a tired and dusty traveler was making his way slowly along the National Highway to the West, the land of fortune. He had passed through old Fredericktown and headed across the Valley towards Catoctin Mountain, a wooded portion of the Blue Ridge Range. As the creaking Conestoga wagon lumbered up the elevation, the man stopped to gaze upon the Valley behind him. What awaited him beyond the crest of this ridge? He stopped for a cooling drink at old Braddock Spring, where years and years ago General Braddock stopped for a moment to quench his thirst. Once again he began the ascent until, finally, the tops of the trees heralded his arrival at the summit.

A panorama of natural beauty met his eye. The wagon halted and the traveler remained gazing in silence upon the Valley below. He felt as did Andrew Jackson when years ago he beheld the same view, "This is one of the most favored and delightful spots upon the earth." (12) The Valley was completely surrounded by mountains, the gentle slopes of which had been cleared and planted in grain. The fields below formed a huge checker board, each block representing a planted field, a green meadow, or a patch of woods. A more delicate touch of beauty was added by the shocks of corn, laid out in perfect rows.

The traveler moved on down the mountain, across the undulating Valley floor he had seen from the summit, and then through the pass in South Mountain to his future home in the West.

This lovely little valley, which the westward-moving pioneers traversed in their steady drive to new homes, is located in the western part of Frederick County, Maryland. It is bordered on the east by Catoctin Mountain, on the west by South Mountain, and extends from near the Mason-Dixon Line on the North to the Potomac River on the south. The Valley is about thirty miles in length, and varies from about two miles in width in the north to eight miles in the southern part. With the exception of a few small flood-plains along the streams, there is almost no level land. The topography is one of rolling hills, gently sloping southward to the Potomac at the foot of the Valley.



**Catoctin Creek**, from its source in the north, cuts through the heart of the Valley and enters the peaceful Potomac. This little stream and its many tributaries furnish the moisture for successful utilization of the land. A moderate rainfall plus excellent climate make agriculture and dairying predominate as industries.

As one stands in the middle of the Valley and gazes at the mountains enveloped in a blue haze, a multitude of legends and stories come to mind. To the north of the Catoctin Gap, where the highway makes its winding path downward, you can see High Knob. Here the dome-like structure gives way to rugged cliffs and bare rocks which jut out like stone monuments. Legend has it that a box of gold was buried somewhere near the Knob.

General Braddock, being burdened by too much equipment, was forced to seek a hiding place for his wealth. Taking two Indian guides for helpers, he selected a spot and buried the chest. The General never returned, and both men who went with him were killed. Thus the treasure remains hidden to this day, adding a cloud of mystery to High Knob. The village boys still vow to find the gold, and many of them dream about the day when they will become rich by the discovery.

Beside the roadway at Catoctin Gap, a summer resort has developed. Braddock Heights, famed for its marvelous view, is inhabited each summer by hundreds of city dwellers seeking the peace of mountain scenery. From the

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observatory placed at the highest part of the mountain, one can see into three states, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Following on down the ridge, we come to the gap cut into the mountain by the mighty Potomac. High walls of rock, too rugged and high to climb, mark the source of the river. Just beyond the river gap, where the Potomac and the Shenandoah converge, Harper's Ferry has risen. Here, in the pre-war days, John Brown made his famous stand.

Turning, and coming north again, we reach Crampton's Gap - during the Civil War, the scene of a bloody battle, but now the site of the ruined estate of George Alfred TOWNSEND. This man was a famous Civil War correspondent and author. He wrote under the pen name of "Gath". Mr. Townsend had realized quite a large fortune from literary successes and, being of the type who loved a magnificent home, spent his money freely in developing a great estate. The structures were large in size and typical of the eccentricities of wealthy people. There was a big dining room, a mansion for Mrs. Townsend, and Mr. Townsend's den. In the latter building, "Gath" did his work and spent most of his time. All of the buildings exhibited life-size statues imported from foreign countries which the builder stuck in every imaginable place. The grounds were covered with shrubbery, a large part being imported. The last building was a small vault constructed as the last resting place for the author. Perched on top of it was the figure of a dog, and carved over the entrance were the words "Good Night Gath".<sup>a</sup>

The estate was the scene of many great revels. Many of the diplomats would spend the weekends upon the mountain as guests of "Gath". The parties, although as a whole rather well-conducted, witnessed quite a bit of drinking.

Mr. Townsend had erected in the middle of the Gap a large stone tower in honor of the war correspondents. It remains today in fine condition and is visited by many interested persons.

The abode of Gath is in an advanced state of ruin and decay due to neglect, abandonment, and vandalism. Much of the sculpture and shrubbery has been stolen, windows have been broken, roofs leak, floors are rotten, and even the vault is in a terrible state of neglect.<sup>b</sup>

Again moving northward, we come to Fox's and Turner's Gaps. Both were the scenes of horrible conflicts in the Battle of South Mountain. At the last mentioned point is the DAHLGREN Estate, the former site of a tavern. The estate is now practically abandoned. It included a beautiful stone house, a stone barn and the small family chapel.<sup>c</sup>

### **The War Correspondents Memorial**



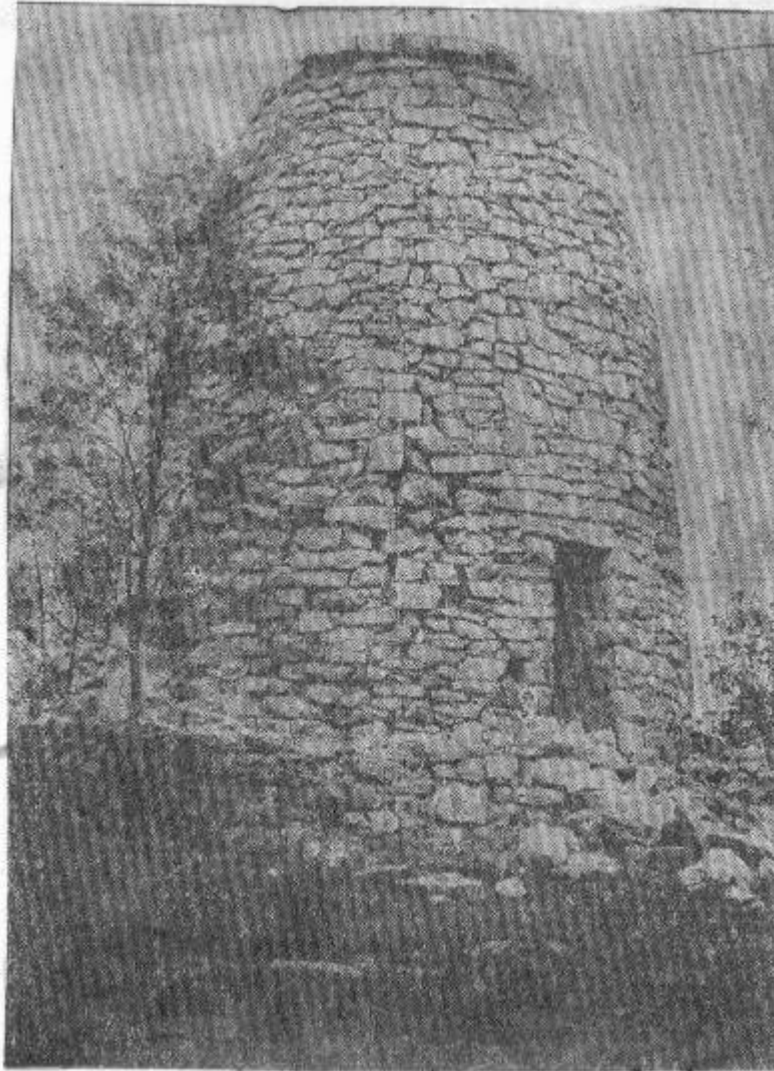
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<sup>a</sup> Much of my material for this discussion was obtained from visits to the estate, talks with the caretaker, and short discussions with friends of Mr. Townsend.

<sup>b</sup> My knowledge about this estate was obtained from several visits to the Gap, conversations with men who have known much of the local history, and from discussions with men who knew the Townsend family and visited at the home.

<sup>c</sup> Described to me by my father.

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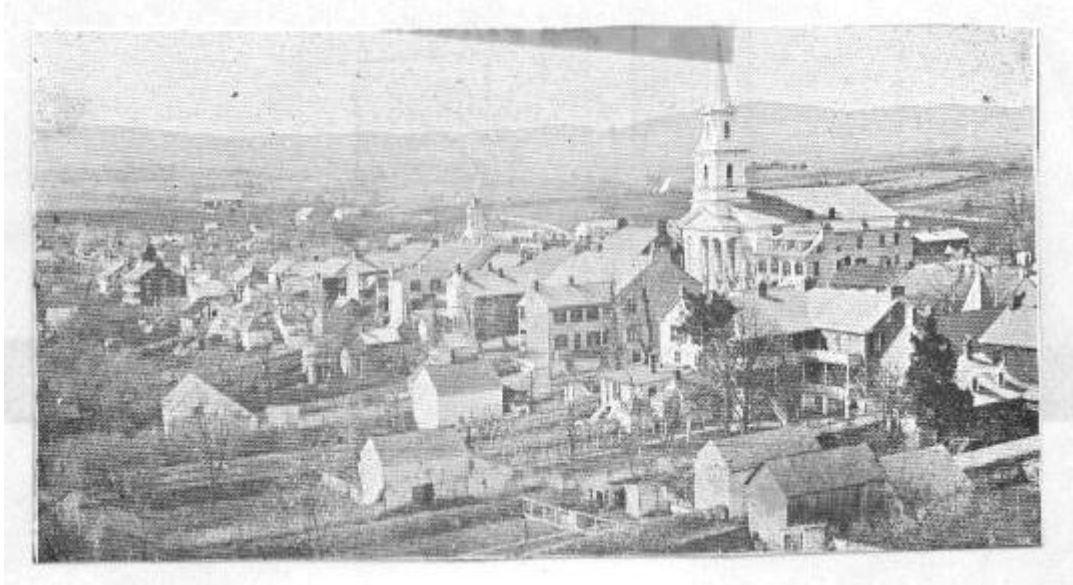


THE FIRST MONUMENT ERECTED TO WASHINGTON

On a knob North of Turner's Gap, still partially standing, is the first monument erected to the memory of George Washington. It was built in one day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1827, by the men of Boonsboro and constructed of mountain stone. (2) Rumor claims it was used as a hideaway for munitions during the war; the opposing army, stumbling upon it, saw to it that the place would not be used again. Although the top has been blown off, it still affords a beautiful view of Hagerstown Valley.



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Practically in the center of the Valley, skirting the National Pike for about a mile on each side, and with a few side streets, is Middletown. Its name was derived from its central location. The town was laid out shortly after the Revolutionary War by Mrs. Margaret CRONE, the owner of the land. (12, page 7) German settlers, realizing the fine location for trading, flocked to the village. It grew quickly into the most important community of the Valley and was incorporated on March 4, 1834, Jacob HOFFMAN becoming the first burgess. (12)

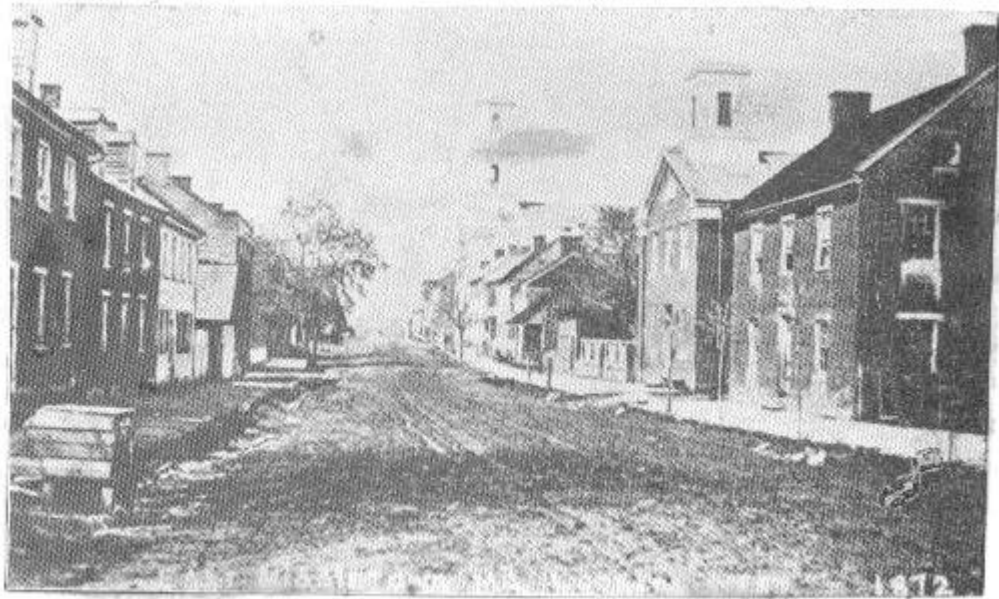
The town quickly became a trading center. Stores of all descriptions appeared; small manufacturing industries, taking advantage of cheap raw products, setup factories; religious groups built churches for their worship; schools were created to train the young. Retired farmers, after turning over the land to a hard-working son, moved into the village and swelled the population. The unending train of Conestoga wagons, passing along the main road, helped the trading of the community. From its earliest history, the town has been quite successful. Mr. John CASTLE, a very well-known citizen of Middletown, gave the following description of the town and the people who lived in it in 1865. He has listed almost all the names of the residents and located where they lived –

I will commence on the left side of the street, going east –  
Stephen HAGEN, a large cooper shop; Warren WILLIAMSON; Edward REMSBERG; Augustin ENGRAM; David SHEARER; Alfred BURGONIA; Jacob WISE; Mrs. Amanda HAUPT; David BOLLINGER; Ezra MINNICK;  
Dr. Wm. E. BOTELER; Mrs. CANNON; Joseph POWERS; Jacob NEIGH; Andra POFFINBERGER; Joseph GAVER; BISER; NEIMEYER; Dr. SPRINGER; BOILEAU; Samuel BOWLUS; Lawrence WRIGHT; Samuel GISSINGER; BECKWITH; M. E. Church.

The next house belonged to MICHAEL, Lloyd HERRING lived in a part of it and conducted a harness shop of considerable size in the storeroom. Mr. Christian REMSBERG kept the Post Office in the basement room with his son William REMSBERG. Harry BOYER had a tin shop in the next room.

The next building owned by George BEARD also housed *The Register* printed by George C. RHODERICK. BRANDENBURG, Perry LEVY, Lutheran Church, Dr. BAER, Jacob ROUTZAHN, Robert THOMAS, Thomas WILLARD, Joseph LORENTZ, Lutheran Parsonage (Rev. STRUBLE), Odd Fellow Hall, Joshua CORRICK, Pollie LINCOM, Jacob ROUTZAHN, Washington HERBERT, Joseph BRANDENBURG, Nathan MILLER, Jacob T. C. MILLER, Tytus BARTGIS – that was the last house on the street.

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A VIEW OF MAIN STREET IN MIDDLETOWN , 1872

Commencing on the right-hand side, going east –

George KESSELRING, Arthur McQUAIDE, William DANNER, Jacob RUDY, Lawson ALEXANDER, John ALEXANDER, John FINK, SCHLOSSER's Tan yard, John BISER, Peter SCHLOSSER, Old Aunt Betsy APPLEMAN, John APPLEMAN's Tannery, Hanson RUDY, Rev. Washington EVERS, Elizabeth BARRICK, CUNNINGHAM; where the MAIN residence stands Adam KELLER had conducted a large tannery; Edward HERRING Hotel run by Cap. YOUNG, John HERRING; Lewis ROUTZAHN, Peter SHAFER Jr., Perry LEVY, Peter SHAFER Sr., John LORENTZ, John and Bob LINTHICAM, Assie BOWLUS, BRANDENBURG, NORENSES, John DERR, Wesley WACHTEL, Reformed Cemetery, William LORENTZ, Joseph WISE, Mrs. Laney SMITH; and MILLERS, and that was the last house on that street in that year.

On the street called Canaan –

James CHAMBERLIN, Henry FEETE, Joshua RIDGELEY, John TRACEY, Mahlon CASTLE, VAN ANDAHS, COONTZ'.

On the KELLER's street, commencing on the east side and coming toward the square – Rachel RUPLEY, Alan SPARROW, Thomas SPARROW, and George KEFAUVER.

On the street running south (across) –

Reformed Parsonage (Rev. RUPLEY) and Harrison FEETE.

On the west side of Keller Street lived the families –

SNURR, SHEARER, BOWLUS, CRONE, WEAVER – and further on south, the colored settlement.

Where the Railway is (back of town) –

Adam KELLER, School House, and the Old Methodist Church – named “The Martin Box”.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Written for me by Mr. Castle.

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Five miles North of Middletown is Myersville, a town similar to Middletown. Like the latter, it has served as a trading center for the farmers of the northern part of the Valley. The town takes its name from the MYERS family, one of the first families to settle in the vicinity. Around 1865, it was made up of the road with a few houses placed close to it. On the western side of the road was a large woods used by the citizens to muster the Mohawks. The following families were among the citizens around this time: HAYES, METZGERS, WACHTELS, GROSS', MOSERS, ZIMMERMANS, ROUTZAHNS, FLOOKS and the DOUBS. The village was not incorporated until 1904. (12) In the town were three blacksmith shops, a wagon maker's shop, Mr. BISER's Tavern, a Post Office, a small school built in 1865, two churches and several general stores. Before 1864 the town was noted for the lack of temperance. Constant troubles over conduct and behavior were noted. In 1864, (12) thanks to Mr. BUHRMAN's efforts, the town became dry. A law was passed whereby no liquor could be sold within three miles of a church.

Since 1865, the town has witnessed constant change. The latest improvements came in due time: the telephone, electric lights, a good road, and the trolley line. <sup>a</sup>

Of the other communities in the Valley, we will make brief mention. Four miles north and to the east of Myersville is the village of Harmony. This at one time was a busy industrial section, possessing woolen mills, a distillery, a lumber mill, etc. Besides this town, in the northern part of the Valley are Wolfsville, Ellerton, Garfield, Foxville, and Sabillasville.

Six miles south of Middletown is Burkittsville, another typical country town with its general stores, situated at the foothills of South Mountain. Here was established in 1866, a seminary for young ladies, and conducted for twenty-five or thirty years. The buildings are now used as residences. Further to the south are Jefferson, Brunswick (a railroad town), Petersville, and Knoxville.

The National Highway, which traverses the Valley from mountain to mountain, is rich in history. The work upon it was officially begun in Baltimore in 1804. It passed through Frederick, Middletown, Boonsboro, Hagerstown and on to Cumberland, a distance of about 140 miles. It was completed as far as Cumberland by 1812. (38)

It took a wagon seven days to make a round trip between Baltimore and Hagerstown. (11) It was along this road that Conestoga wagons made their slow way, followed later by the dashing stage coaches. The faces of famous people were not unknown to the villagers who eagerly watched the travelers. The road was constantly busy. Life as seen by the local people was gay and happy. The old stage coaches would go dashing up to the old taverns, change horses, and then dash on again before one could fully grasp what had happened. At some of the taverns the coaches stopped to permit the passengers to eat. The standard price of a meal was twenty-five cents, and the charge for a glass of whiskey was five pennies. (11)

Mr. HARBAUGH describes well the old turnpike:

Yonder's the turnpike winding down  
Over the mountain to Middletown,  
Fringed with daisies that laugh and nod,  
Crimson poppies and golden rod,  
Fields and orchards on either side,  
And woodlands stretching far and wide,  
Through the summer's sun and winter's snow,  
Wanders the trail of long ago.

Olden way, in the dim past trod  
By many who sleep beneath the sod,  
Over thy stones in the years agone,  
The old stage coaches rattled on;  
Many a lass in a bride's attire

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<sup>a</sup> Related to me by Mr. Horine, a native of Myersville.

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O'er the swept to her heart's desire,  
And on the cheek of many a miss  
In the old, old stages burned a kiss.

Over the pike in days of yore  
Rumbled the wagons to Baltimore,  
Six-horse teams to the creaking wain  
With the jingling bell at the leader's mane,  
With a sturdy farmer astride the back,  
And the roan alert to the whip's sharp crack,  
Dear Old Pike! What tales untold  
Linger around the days of old.

Up from Frederick, winding West,  
Over Catoctins rugged crest,  
Into a valley to mortal eyes  
As fair as the plains of Paradise,  
Whilst in the shadows deeply brown,  
Jingled the bells of Middletown,  
Upon whose heavenward pointing spires  
Rested the day-god's final fires.

Nevermore will human tide  
Over the old road swiftly glide.  
The rickety stage has had its day,  
The Conestoga has passed away.  
Where grandmother rode in the creeping wain,  
The trolley dips from mount to plain,  
And over the stones of the days gone by  
The mighty autos flash and fly.

Rich in legends of vale and hill,  
Dear Old Pike, I love thee still;  
Out of the years where the gray mists lie  
Come the laugh and lullaby –  
And the laugh of a maid and a mother's song  
As the olden vehicles jolted along,  
Till lost in the shades of the Past's dim day  
When the turnpike old was a famous way.

- T. C. Harbaugh <sup>a</sup>

One of the old taverns, for which Middletown Valley was famous, stood on the old Sharpsburg Road, about three miles west of town. The large stone building was constructed around the end of the Revolutionary War and is still standing. It was a large two-story affair of ten rooms. A large hall divided the building into two sections, on the left being two bar rooms, and on the right a parlor which ran the full length of the building.

The noisy group of travelers who visited the bar received their six-cent whiskey through a small window. A little color was added to the rooms by the custom of writing the names of visitors upon the white walls with red ink. George Washington was one of the tavern's famous guests.

Because of the close proximity to the battlefield at Fox's Gap, the building was used as a hospital during the war. In 1868, the use of the building as a tavern was discontinued. <sup>b</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (28), pages 90-91

<sup>b</sup> (2) Taken from an article written by Mr. John Castle for The Valley Register. Mr. Castle's scrapbook is a collection of such newspaper clippings.

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One mile to the west of Bolivar is another of these wagon stands and relay stations. This building is likewise standing and bears the name of the "Old White House". It was erected at about 1809 by Mr. Henry BEACHLEY. Mr. Henry MILLER was the proprietor of the tavern and his fame for turkey dinners drew many travelers to his table. (2)

In this brief essay, I have mentioned a few of the interesting places in the Valley. There are scores more which time and space will not permit discussion upon. As to the natural beauties, it is impossible for a writer to give a fair picture of them. Even in this fast-moving world in which we find ourselves, travelers stop in their rush to gaze down upon the sleeping Valley. A sign on the crest of the mountain greets them with the statement which has become famous all over the state: "Below you lies Middletown Valley, The Happy Valley of the Hills".

Today, the Valley is furnished with most of the modern improvements. A net of excellent roads replaces the old dirt trails of earlier days. Radio, telephone, the auto, and the newspaper bring it closer to the outside world. Nevertheless, it still holds much of the peaceful and happy atmosphere of the Nineteenth Century. Many men still feel about the Valley as did Henry CLAY when he remarked many years ago, "I could pass the remainder of my days on this estate if I owned it". (12)

## **Chapter 2 - Geology of Middletown Valley**

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From time immemorial, the peoples of the world have worshipped the natural beauties about them and praised the gods for placing them at their disposal. As the travelers went from place to place, they saw new and different scenes, strange topography, and unheard of freaks of nature. Many men began to wonder as to the reasons for such differences. In the words of Emerson, "Men love to wonder, and that is the seed of our science". (21) Students put these early thoughts to good use and handed down to us the science of Geology.

Undoubtedly, many lovers of nature have looked from the summit of Catoctin Mountain and wished to know how such a Valley came to be so lovely. It is my purpose, therefore, to discuss in this place some of the geological changes which may have occurred in the Valley. Our best books of study concerning the earth are the rocks which we see all around us. They form an incontrovertible series of records and we need but to decipher them.

Middletown Valley lies in the Cumberland Prong of the older Appalachian Province, the Prong being a northern continuation of the Blue Ridge of Virginia and a southern counterpart of the Highlands of the Hudson in New York and New Jersey. (7)

Underlying the whole Valley and the mountain section are rocks which geologists choose to classify as rocks of the Pre-Cambrian Period. It is impossible for one to conceive of the immense lapse of time since the period just mentioned ended, but let us set an arbitrary figure of about 600 million years. The Pre-Cambrian was much longer than the period which has elapsed since its close. It included the entire earth history from the time of its inception to the period of preservation of fossil remains. Radio activity assigns it an age in excess of 1200 million years. It was a period of great complex forces. Sedimentary material was laid down by rivers, inland seas, and continental land deposits; the water retreated and the land was lifted and folded by some dynamic force within the earth; rivers cut deep valleys, leaving jagged peaks rising high in the air; probably huge volcanic flows of lava were poured out across the landscape. The great complexity of the rocks of the Pre-Cambrian Period leads one to believe these actions were repeated time and again. The detailed events which brought about this complexity cannot now, after so many ages, be clearly learned, but the final result is quite definitely understood. (6) There was left a huge mass of rock, so intruded with igneous material and metamorphosed by nature's powerful agencies, the original characteristics were lost and it took on the forms of gneisses, schists, and granites. As mentioned before, no fossils or remains of any living plants or creatures have been found imbedded in them. The ancient rocks are the ones which appear at the surface in the Valley floor. Since they are high in feldspar content, they erode and decay easily, leaving a fairly rich soil suitable for cultivation. (6)

During the Cambrian Period which followed, the sea again covered a large portion of what is now the Eastern United States. It deposited material derived from the waste of older rocks of the high land mass on the East, called Appalachia. The sea retreated, leaving large deposits of Cambrian sandstones, shales, and quartzites. Among the earliest fossils which have been found are those imbedded in these strata. Both South and Catoctin Mountains are made up of Cambrian rock.

The cycle, as described above, was repeated time and again, with advancing and retreating seas leaving their records in sedimentary deposits. At the end of the Paleozoic, the seas withdrew for the last time. Mountains were thrust up, and a period of great crushing and folding occurred. The following table will show the geological periods which came one after another:

Pre-Cambrian
Paleozoic
Cambrian
Ordovician
Silurian
Devonian
Carboniferous
Permian

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Mesozoic

Jurassic

Triassic

Cretaceous

Tertiary

Recent

Of all these periods, only the Cambrian and Pre-Cambrian are really prominent in the deposition of rock in Middletown Valley and in the mountains on either side. Why, the reader may inquire, is the whole section not level? In later geological times, namely, in the Cretaceous period, which was at the end of the long era just preceding the present one, this region was level. It had been worn down during the Mesozoic era so that it was a flat plain, or, as geologists call it, a peneplain. Middletown region was a portion of the Schooley Peneplain. This was later raised by slow continental uplift and then cut downward until a second, or the Harrisburg Peneplain was formed. Rising above the level surface stood two monadnocks, South and Catoctin Mountains, made up of strong erosion resisting sandstone and quartzite. Fossils, although rather scarce, can be found in the mountain sections and the lands adjacent to them, since erosion work can carry many particles of rock for great distances.

In the Southern tip of the Valley, one can see the Potomac ribboned between two steep cliffs. At one time when the land was raised, the river was lifted upward with it. Gradually, therefore, the river began a down-cutting process, leaving, as one can see, two walls of rock on either side.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Mostly from (6), but very valuable information was secured from interviews with Professor A. K. LOBECK and Mr. William HEWITT.

## **Chapter 3 - John Brown and the Harper's Ferry Episode**

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For years the rumblings of discontent brought forth by the slavery question had echoed and re-echoed through Middletown Valley. Abolitionists had sent their fiery declamations through North and South. The question was a grave one for the government, but few people of this section expected any conflict which would end in war. The Valley was made up of the small farmer type, who, with the help of his family, raised crops which did not demand a big labor supply. Thus, it is easily understandable that a large slave population would not be found in the Valley. The few slaves owned in the vicinity were in the Southern portion of the Valley, and most of these served as domestic servants. Since the whole economic life was not bound closely to slavery, the people watched the ever-increasing conflict from afar, few perceiving how important it was to become. Little did they realize that a great abolitionist stroke would fall upon the peaceful community and turn the eyes of the world to Harper's Ferry. It was both a surprise and a shock to hear of an insurrection in the Southern part of the Valley, and, after realizing how terrible the affair might have been, the populace was fully awakened to the peril that faced their beloved country.

John BROWN, better known as "Old Brown" through Middletown Valley, was born in Torrington, Connecticut on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1800. (10)

His parents were Ruth and Owen BROWN, hard-working and religious people. Owen seemed obsessed with the desire to keep moving from place to place, and, shortly after the boy's birth, the family moved to the Ohio country. (10) He lived the hard life of a pioneer farmer's son, rising before dawn and working until dusk. In 1808, Ruth Brown died in childbirth and Owen remarried, furnishing John with a stepmother for whom the boy never held much love. (10)

The boy's early life was so influenced by his religious father that he determined to become a minister of Christ and preach the Gospel of his Lord. John's theological education was short-lived; inflammation of the eyes forced him to drop study and return home. Here he became foreman in his father's tannery. The tanning industry was a thriving business which demanded skill and hard work. Young Brown could provide both of these qualities fully. His main occupation from this time until his death at Charlestown was tanning. He was particularly well-known for the fine quality of his work. (10)

Brown married Dianthe LUSK in 1820, a woman one would not classify as the "Belle of the Village". Her own brother admitted that she was far from beautiful. Dianthe was a fine type to mate with John. She was a hard worker, very religious, talked little, and had almost no sense of humor. Mrs. Brown died in 1832 of insanity, leaving in John's care a family of five children, four boys and one girl. (10) In 1838, Brown married Mary Anne DAY, a sixteen year-old girl, who is described by Warren as rather awkward and uneducated, but a woman of great physical vigor. (10)

John was a very religious type. Although he seldom entered a church, the family altar was nobly preserved. Christ was the model by which he and his children should become better people. An atmosphere of severity seemed to reign about the home; no sound of children's laughter drifted from the windows and doors. Joy must come from reverence and worship. A background such as this seems to justify the sacrifice of home, happiness, and even life for the cause of slavery. Lying was one of the greatest sins a man could commit and punishment must be severe for such a wrong. Man must do good no matter what the cost. (10)

Like his father, John was imbued with the roving instinct. Before the family was thoroughly accustomed to one home, they would move to a new section. Life in the Brown family was toil and change. In 1854, they moved to Osawatimie, Kansas where they established a new home. (10) It was while in Kansas that the name of Captain John Brown, the abolitionist, was blazed all over the country.

Kansas was still a territory. Both North and South were fighting to win it to their side on the slavery issue. The section was definitely made up of two armed groups, the free-state men and the pro-slavery followers. The free-staters needed a leader who could give prestige and power to their cause. Brown, a most radical abolitionist, was



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soon chosen. Time and space will not permit us to follow the war which ensued. <sup>a</sup> Suffice it to say, Brown and his sons, in their burning desire to free the Negro and make Kansas a free state, used the most brutal means to gain their ends. (10) They murdered and plundered all through the country. Nothing was too base or low for them to commit. Fame did come to them, but at what a price! (10)

John Brown had bigger and better plans than a local war in Kansas. He had glorious visions of a nation made up of mingled races, all free and equal, working together in perfect harmony. The slaves, he maintained, were our equals but had had no chance to prove it. They hated their masters and would fight for freedom. God in His perfection had never meant them to be bought and sold as cattle. Some great leader must come to save them. Could not he become that leader? Life to him was nothing when such a noble cause was at stake. He must draw up plans to bring freedom to these down-trodden brothers. Men all over the North would support him. So it was, that he determined to dedicate his life to the holy cause of freedom.

Osawatomie Brown felt that no political action could abolish the institution of slavery. Only through the blood of martyrs could such a blemish be erased from the soul of man. In talking with Frederick DOUGLAS, a former slave, he explained his plan. Pointing with his boney finger to the mountains of Maryland, he said:

“These mountains are the basis. God has given the strength of the hills to freedom; they were placed here for the emancipation of the Negro race. They are full of natural forts where one man for defense will be worth a hundred for attack. They are full of good hiding places where large numbers of brave men could be concealed and elude and baffle pursuit for a long time. I know these mountains well; I could take a body of men into them and keep them there despite of all the efforts of Virginia to dislodge them. The true object to be sought is first of all to destroy the money value of slave property and that can only be done by rendering such property insecure. My plan, then, is to take about twenty-five picked men, and begin on a small scale, supply them with arms and ammunition, and post them in squads of five on a line of twenty-five miles. I would send the most persuasive and judicious of them down to the fields from time to time as opportunity offers, and induce the slaves to join them, seeking and selecting the most reckless and daring.” (10)

The plan was simple and well constructed. In the early part of 1859, he and his group of “picked men” were to enter the Blue Ridge Mountains of Maryland and they would hire or buy a small farm which would serve as headquarters and hideout. The slaves of the vicinity were to be approached and questioned. Slaves hated their masters and, when opportunity presented itself, they would flock to Brown who would arm and drill them until a veritable army was formed. Harper’s Ferry would be the ideal place to strike. From this point the slaves could easily be sent to Pennsylvania and safety. Besides, the poorly-guarded arsenal, armory, and gun factory would serve as a ready source of supply for ammunition and weapons. (1)

Brown felt, that to make his project a real success, he must organize this unit into a government. Accordingly, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1858, the “Provisional Constitutional Convention” was called to order in a wooden school house in Chatham, Massachusetts. (10) A constitution was drawn up and officers elected, all in very guarded secrecy. The Preamble to the Constitution reads as follows:

“Whereas, slavery throughout its entire existence in the United States is none other than a most barbarous, unprovoked, and unjustifiable war of one portion of its citizens upon another portion, the only conditions of which are perpetual imprisonment and hopeless servitude or absolute extermination; in utter disregard and violation of these eternal and self-evident truths set forth in our Declaration of Independence. Therefore, “We, citizens of the U. S. and the Oppressed People, who, by recent decision of the Supreme Court, are declared to have no rights which the White Man is bound to respect, together with all other people degraded by the laws thereof, do, for the time being, ordain and establish ourselves, following Provisional Constitutional Ordinances, the better to protect our Persons, Property, Lives, and Liberties; and to govern our actions.” (10)

The constitution proper provided for a complete governmental administration, including legislative executive and judicial departments. Rules pertaining to the functions and powers of the departments were carefully

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<sup>a</sup> For a study of the life of Brown up to this point, see any one of the following: (10), (34), (27), (26), (24), (18). Redpath and Warren are probably the best on the subject.

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specified. The constitution was ratified and officers elected. John Brown was selected for Commander-in-Chief of the Army; KAGI was chosen as Secretary of War; REALF as Secretary of State; George GILL as Secretary of the Treasury; Owen BROWN as Treasurer; and O. P. ANDREWS and A. M. ELLSWORTH as members of Congress. (10)

It is interesting to note that the new government was not very sound financially. The funds were to be obtained from abolitionist supporters in the North and from the confiscation of property belonging to slave holders. At one time the Treasury Department was so completely insolvent, Commander-in-Chief Brown was forced to borrow forty dollars from Lieutenant COPPIE in order to pay the freight on a consignment of arms. <sup>a</sup>

Early in July, 1859, the newly-formed government moved its capital, army headquarters, and citizens to Maryland. They needed a small farm house not too far from Harper's Ferry, but at a place sufficiently isolated to be free of the prying eyes of Valley gossips. After a short period of scouting, they obtained the KENNEDY Farm, about five miles from the village. Brown, in his statement to Governor WISE of Virginia, told about his early activity in the Valley: "I rented a farm from Dr. Kennedy of Sharpsburg and named it after him. Here, I ordered, to be sent from the East, all things required for my undertaking. The boxes and packages were directed to T. SMITH and Son. I never had more than twenty-two men about the place, but had it so arranged that I could arm 1,500. <sup>b</sup>

Brown expected the slaves to flock to him from all sections of the South, whites being recruited from abolitionist committees of the North. The free citizens were to be equipped with fire arms; the blacks with pikes, spears, and tomahawks. Should the supply of food and arms run low, he would appropriate property of slave holders. Hugh FORBES, an English soldier who had served in the campaign with Garibaldi in Italy, was hired at a handsome price to drill the future Brown Army. <sup>c</sup>

The first move of the new government was to send one of its best men, COOKE, to sound out the Negroes of the vicinity and to locate where most of them lived. In order to carry out the plan in the greatest secrecy, Cooke disguised himself as a book-seller offering Headley's Life of George Washington at the unbelievable price of one dollar per copy. Williams describes Cooke as "really a mere boy in appearance, short light hair, and delicate features". <sup>d</sup> He had been born of very fine parentage and was the brother-in-law of A. P. WILLARD, Governor of Indiana. <sup>e</sup>

On June 15<sup>th</sup> 1859, the Frederick Examiner gave the following article:

### "Headley's – Life of George Washington

This is the latest and designed to be the most popular biography of the 'Father of his Country'. Mr. STEARNS, the gentleman agent, has just completed a successful canvas of Middletown and in this city, and is, we believe, going through the county to receive subscriptions." <sup>f</sup>

It seems probable that Mr. Stearns, mentioned in the article above, was Mr. Cooke. While in Middletown Valley, he met and talked with Mr. John CASTLE. Mr. Castle was a young boy at that time and Cooke questioned him only slightly. He did ask him about the neighborhood and the location of slave holders. <sup>g</sup>

In the meantime, Brown and the rest of the men were making preparation for an attack upon Harper's Ferry. They spent the long days in making handles for pikes and spears. <sup>h</sup> They kept a very close watch for visitors

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Oct 21, 1859

<sup>b</sup> (15), Oct 28, 1859

<sup>c</sup> (1), pg 808

<sup>d</sup> (11), pg 350

<sup>e</sup> (11), pg 346

<sup>f</sup> (11), pg 346

<sup>g</sup> Event described to me by Mr. Castle

<sup>h</sup> (11) pg 349

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and, as far as I can find out, were never suspected of being revolutionists. Some of the Valleyites believed them to be mineral prospectors, since they received so many boxes of tools. Martha, John Brown's daughter-in-law, and Anne, his daughter, went to Maryland to live with the plotters. Martha did the housework and Anne was the sentinel.<sup>a</sup> Due to their diligent work, much of the activity on the Kennedy Farm was kept secret. The women left the rendezvous for the North a short while before the attack upon Harper's Ferry.

In October, "Old Brown" was convinced that the time to strike the mortal blow at slavery was at hand. When the first sounds of battle rebounded across the country, slaves would flock to his side. Northern friends were pledged to send more money and men. The stage was set for a tragic drama; the director gave the sign for the raising of the curtain.

On Sunday night, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1859, the army began its move on Harper's Ferry. It was a cold, raw night; the chance of meeting travelers was slight. Captain Cooke and one other man began the work of cutting the telegraph wires all over the Valley. A telegraph boy was sent out by his Hagerstown office to find the break. He located it near Middletown and repaired the wire. On his return trip, he stopped at the old tavern on South Mountain and much to his surprise, Captain Cooke faced him with a gun and demanded his immediate surrender. In the early morning, Cooke freed the young man and headed for Harper's Ferry where the attack had been underway for several hours.<sup>b</sup>

The men approached the old covered bridge over the Potomac between 11 and 12 o'clock. Two men were dispatched to capture the bridge watchman, William WILLIAMS, and the others, preceded by the cart bearing the arms, headed across the river and up to the government armory. Dan WHELAN, the guard on duty, was so surprised that he did not have a chance to fight or sound a general alarm. The gate was pried open and the little army entered.<sup>c</sup>

A second group of men, under Captain STEVENS, was sent out to capture some of the notables of the town who were to serve as hostages. The first home visited was that of Colonel Lewis WASHINGTON, the well-known descendant of George Washington. In an extremely rude manner, they took the aristocratic old Colonel from his home, and in his own carriage, drove him to the headquarters of Captain Brown. The household slaves were forced to follow; spears and pikes were placed in their hands; unwillingly they had joined the little army, soon to rush back to the home of their beloved master. The home of Mr. ALLSTADT was broken into, and the master and his son were taken into custody.<sup>d</sup>

The first casualty occurred when Shephard HAYWARD, a free negro, highly respected and loved by the people of the village, was shot down in cold blood. Hayward was the baggage master in the railroad station. On not finding the bridge watchman at his post, he began to investigate. When the command to halt rang out in the cold night air, he fled. His reward for faithful service was a mortal bullet wound.<sup>e</sup>

At 1:25 am, the train for Baltimore drew into the station. The order quickly came that it could not proceed. The continuance of its journey would have meant the broadcasting of the insurrection to the whole country. At 3:00 am, Brown changed his mind and told the conductor that he might continue his run. The latter, fearing some treachery, delayed the start until daylight.<sup>f</sup> The train should have arrived at Monocacy Junction at 2:00 am, but pulled into the station six hours late. The passengers told all kinds of stories and excitement ran high.<sup>g</sup> Telegraph wires hummed between the large cities. Frantic cries of revolution reached far and wide. Brown had succeeded in his first air: to broadcast the cause of freedom in vivid words to a dormant nation.

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<sup>a</sup> (11), pg 324

<sup>b</sup> (11), pg 348

<sup>c</sup> (10), pg 352-355

<sup>d</sup> (10), pg 356

<sup>e</sup> (10), pg 357

<sup>f</sup> (10), pg 357-358

<sup>g</sup> (11), pg 346

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When the news reached Frederick, the military companies of that city offered their services to the President of the United States and made preparations for an immediate march.<sup>a</sup> The President at the same time ordered three Companies of Artillery from Old Point Comfort and a corps of Marines from Washington Barracks to proceed to the scene of the insurrection. Two hundred and twenty-five men from Baltimore and part of the 55<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Virginia were also called out.<sup>b</sup> At 4:00 pm Monday, three Frederick companies: the United Guards, the Junior Defenders, and the Independent Riflemen, left the city for Harper's Ferry.<sup>c</sup> All of the troops were under the able command of Colonel Robert E. LEE, a man soon to become famous as a general and master of strategy.

At about 1:00 am Tuesday morning, the soldiers of Frederick, Baltimore, and Washington arrived. Already, the men from Shepherdstown, Winchester, and Charlestown had forced the insurgents into the armory. At 3:00 am, Colonel Lee appeared in front of the enclosure with Lieutenant STEWART, who with a citizen was deputed to bear a flag of truce. The conference was very long but nothing was gained. It is generally believed that Colonel Lee offered the insurgents protection until the pleasure of the President was known. Brown, a man who cared little for life when such a cause was at stake, politely refused the offer and fighting was resumed.

Major RUSSELL ordered Lieutenant GREEN and a file of Marines to force the door. This they did after several unsuccessful attempts, having to resort to the use of a ladder as a battering ram in the end. The marines rushed into the armory firing into the midst of the defenders and slashing their way right and left with swords, bayonets, and rifle butts. The whole affair took scarcely a minute.<sup>d</sup>

With the capture of the building, the hostages rushed out to safety. Two white insurgents, Watson BROWN and Edwin COPPIE, were brought out unharmed. There were five fatalities, one being Brown's son who had been killed the day before. Captain Brown was dragged out badly wounded and supposedly dying. He had been shot, bayoneted and slashed with a sword.<sup>e</sup> He begged that he be left to die in peace and asked to be treated in a humane manner. As fate would have it, the wounds, though serious, were not fatal. On his person, the sum of three hundred and five dollars was found. Major RUSSELL was given custody of the money.<sup>f</sup>

Early Monday morning, the cart, bearing several boxes of arms, had been seen to leave the city. The Independent Grays, under General EGERTON, were sent to find the destiny of this cargo and given the orders to capture it. In an old school about one mile from the Ferry, they found sixteen boxes of arms and some Sharp's Rifles. Taking the two horses left by the abolitionists at the school, they returned at 12:00 noon to the armory.<sup>g</sup>

Brown had stationed three men: Oliver BROWN, NEWLY, and William THOMPSON, at the bridge-head. Due to the strategic movements of the Jefferson Guards, the three men had been dislodged; and Newly, running for shelter, had been shot dead by a well-directed bullet. The body was left where it had fallen to be mangled and torn apart by the vengeance of the mob.<sup>h</sup>

The Jefferson Guard, by their rush from the Maryland side of the bridge, had cutoff the only practical alley of escape from the town. The position in the WAGER House separated Brown from contact with HAZLETT and ANDERSON in the Arsenal, and KAGI's men in the rifle factory.<sup>i</sup>

THOMPSON, who had returned to headquarters in the armory, had been sent out with a flag of truce. The citizens refusing to recognize the white flag, captured and locked him up. Somewhat later, he was brutally murdered. LEEMAN, trying to escape across the river, had been shot down in midstream. His body caught upon a rock and all afternoon the corpse was target for angry men. His black hair seemed to be floating on the water and waving with each ripple of the stream.<sup>j</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Oct 21, 1859

<sup>b</sup> (15), Oct 21, 1859

<sup>c</sup> (11), pg 346

<sup>d</sup> (15), Oct 21, 1859

<sup>e</sup> (11), pg 347

<sup>f</sup> (15), Oct 21, 1893. The complete story of the affair was carried in this issue. I have based a large portion of my discussion on this article.

<sup>g</sup> (15), Oct 21, 1859

<sup>h</sup> (10), pg 365

<sup>i</sup> (10), pg 365

<sup>j</sup> (15), Oct 21, 1859

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KAGI, LEARY, and COPELAND had been forced to withdraw from the rifle works. Their only path of escape was across the Shenandoah. When the refugees reached midstream, they were met with firing from both sides. Kagi and Leary were killed and Copeland captured. Anderson, Hazlett and several others were fortunate enough to escape.<sup>a</sup>

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, Cooke was captured near Quincy, in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and, like the rest of the prisoners, was held for court sentence.<sup>b</sup>

In a short time, the excitement brought on by the daring raid had subsided. All of the captives had been removed to Jefferson County, Virginia where they awaited trial in the circuit court. Many people believed that they would be found guilty and executed at once, since it was not necessary in an insurrection case to wait thirty days after sentence had been passed before the punishment could be meted out.<sup>c</sup>

Brown's trial was begun at Charlestown, Virginia on October 26<sup>th</sup> and was concluded by his conviction for treason, exciting slave insurrection, and for murder. The defense, furnished for Brown by faithful friends in the North, was made up of a very distinguished group. Messrs. HOYT of Boston and GRISWOLD of Cleveland, and Messrs. GRUDER and CHILTON of Washington were employed. Messrs. GREEN and BOTT were selected by the court as a defense and did an admirable job until relieved by the above mentioned in the middle of the trial.<sup>d</sup> The whole affair was really a mock trial. Few people, and Brown among them, believed that there could be any hope for the accused.

On Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the clerk of the court ordered Brown arise. He asked him if there was any reason why sentence should not be pronounced against him. The old man, weakened and pale from his horrible wounds, stood up and in a clear and distinct voice, said:

“I have, may it please the Court, a few words to say. In the first place, I deny everything but what I all along admitted: a design on my part to free slaves. I intended certainly to make a clean thing of the matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri and there took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed the same thing on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or destruction of property, or to incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.”<sup>e</sup>

I have another objection, and that is that it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved – for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case – and I so interfered in behalf of the rich and powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends, either father or mother, brother or sister, wife or children, or any of that class, and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right, and every man in this court would have deemed it worthy of reward rather than punishment.

This court acknowledges, too, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a Book kissed, which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that all things ‘whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them’. I endeavored to act up to these instructions. I say I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done, in behalf of his despised poor, I did no wrong, but right. Now if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children, and with the blood of millions in this slave country, whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I submit. So let it be done.

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<sup>a</sup> (10), pg 368-371

<sup>b</sup> (11), pg 350

<sup>c</sup> (15), Oct 21, 1859

<sup>d</sup> (15), Nov 4, 1859

<sup>e</sup> (15), Nov 4, 1859

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Let me say one word further. I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected; but I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated from the first what was my intention, and what was not. I never had any design against the life of a person, or any disposition to commit treason, or incite the slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind.

Let me also say, in regard to the statement made by some of those connected with me, I hear it has been stated by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness, there is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part at their own expense. A number of them I never had a conversation with till the day that they came to me, and that was for the purpose I stated. Now, I have done.”<sup>a</sup>

Brown’s statement at the trial seems to be very much in conflict with his actions. He must have realized that the use of armed forces against the people of the United States was an act of treason. Secondly, his plan to give the slaves pikes, spears, and tomahawks would indicate that he was working directly towards an insurrection of the Negroes. Thirdly, there can be little doubt of his efforts to recruit members for his army. I feel that his whole speech was false and untrue. There is no doubt in my mind that he was sincere in his purpose of freeing the slaves. Nevertheless, freedom must come at any cost. Many people all over the country feel that this man was insane. At any rate, his fanaticism must have been extreme to drive him to such acts of cruelty.

Judge PARKER pronounced the sentence of death upon “Old Brown” on November 2<sup>nd</sup>; he was to be hung in public on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, just thirty days from the day that sentence was passed.<sup>b</sup>

In Middletown Valley, many of the people felt relieved when sentence was passed. They fully realized how terrible the affair could have been. The very thought of the slaves, liberated and armed with pikes and spears, was enough to crystallize the sentiment of most of the people in the vicinity against the condemned man. A very good indication of this fact is seen in a certain write-up appearing in the Valley Register on December 2, 1859. A news write-up explained that certain societies in Pennsylvania sympathizing with Brown were going to have services of prayer. The bells in the town were tolled and a general mourning carried out. Below the article, the editor inserted the following notes:

“These people had better open their churches for the purposes of praying to the good Lord to save them from a like fate.”

Although the battle at Harper’s Ferry turned the minds of the people to slavery, little was really accomplished. The most outstanding feature was the execution. This made a martyr out of a fanatic. Some people who were out of tune with the policy of Brown could have been swayed to his side by this public punishment. Rev. Henry Ward BEECHER stated the case very well: “Let no man pray that Brown be spared. Let Virginia make him a martyr. Now he has only blundered. His soul was noble; his work miserable, but a cord and gibbet would redeem that and roundup Brown’s failure with a heroic success.”<sup>c</sup>

When a certain man suggested to Brown that an effort to rescue him could be attempted, the former himself stated: “I am worth now, infinitely more to die than to live.” (10) Emerson had said, and I feel that he was correct: “A new saint awaiting his martyrdom, and who, if he shall suffer, will make the gallows glorious like the cross.” (10)

On Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 11:15, Brown was standing upon the scaffold to pay with his life for the crime he considered a blessing. Twelve thousand troops had watched the old man leave the jail and take his place in a wagon drawn by white horses. He had taken a seat calmly upon the rough wooden casket which was meant for him. During his ride to the scaffold, he looked around at the beautiful hills and remarked about their grandeur. The wagon rumbled along until it came to the hill of execution. Soldiers in brilliant uniforms formed a hollow

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Nov 11, 1859

<sup>b</sup> (15), Nov 11, 1859

<sup>c</sup> (15), Dec 2, 1859

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

square about the scaffold. In that group stood two men soon to become famous, John Wilkes BOOTH and Stonewall JACKSON. The tired old hero walked up the steps and on to the trap. As the body hurtled into space and the rope tightened the calm words of Col. PRESTON rang out: "So perish all such enemies of Virginia, all such enemies of the Union, all such foes of the human race." (10)

The body of the victim was taken by his wife to North Elba, New York for burial. (11)

Although Brown and his new Government had passed on, certain lasting results can be discerned. The committee appointed by the government to audit and settle the expenses of the affair placed the money cost at \$185,567.<sup>a</sup> The lives of several respected citizens had been snuffed out. The feeling of animosity between North and South was made more intense. The question of slavery grew in importance. The reward for such a costly and foolish action was heroism.

John Brown kindled the fire that was to burn deeply into the soul of a mighty nation. Today he stands as a hero. Monuments mark the spot of his battle. The scaffold on which he was hung has been made into souvenirs and sold. (11) The Engine House was moved to Chicago for the Exposition of 1893; subsequently, it was returned. It is not situated in the same spot as it was in 1859, but a short distance away. It is a place for history-loving Americans to visit and ponder over the questions that faced John Brown.

"John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave.  
He will not come again with foolish pikes  
And a pack of desperate boys to shadow the sun.  
He has gone back North. The slaves have forgotten his eyes.  
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave."<sup>b</sup>  
- Stephen Vincent Benet

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Dec 16, 1859

<sup>b</sup> (20), pg 61 – John Brown's Body

## Chapter 4 - Pre-War Days of the Civil War

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Since the early part of the Nineteenth Century, the question of slavery had been looming like a cloud on the horizon. As the middle of the century approached, the rumblings of sectional discontent grew louder as the question became more clearly defined. The Dred Scott Decision and the John Brown insurrection were like the first flashes of lightning in a fast-moving storm. Threatening clouds of civil conflict seemed to sweep down upon the people, ready at any moment to deluge an unhappy nation with war. The government of the United States seemed powerless, in the face of this gathering storm, to avert a catastrophe. The North and the South were drawing farther and farther apart. With the election of Lincoln to the presidency, many slavery followers felt that the institution of slavery might be lost.

In Maryland, feeling ran high, and justly so. If war should occur between the two factions, the people of this state would be between two fires. Made up of elements both North and South, a dispute was bound to ensue as to which side the state would follow. Emancipation hopes ran high, but at the same time, a fair-sized slave-holding population lived in the state. With a division of the country along political lines, it seemed practical that Maryland would be a battleground. It was a border territory joining the industrial North and the agricultural South.

“Freedom is a new religion”, said HEINE, “the religion of our age”.<sup>a</sup> There is little doubt that a growing sentiment against slavery was felt all over the country. In the churches, ministers were fostering it and expressing the same feelings as stated by Heine. Emancipation societies had sprung up and these were making every effort to solve the problem. Some of these had sane and farsighted plans; others, particularly abolitionist societies in the larger cities, were so radical in character and make-up that they caused distrust among the more conservative elements. The North was not alone in its consideration of the problem. Many slave-owners were freeing their Negroes as they became of age. Others were seeking some plan to slowly emancipate all of these unfortunate creatures and give them a fair start in the modern world.<sup>b</sup> According to several citizens of Middletown at this time, the Valley, as a whole, favored emancipation. The slave-holding South surpassed the North in the number of emancipation societies.<sup>c</sup>

The activities of radical abolitionists in the North and the secessionist propaganda of the South frightened the people of the Valley. They realized that in their position they must take a conservative middle road. The actions of fanatics such as Brown would be detrimental to their interests, but at the same time, the Union must be preserved at any cost. Accordingly, a meeting was called in Myersville on January 12, 1861. A large enthusiastic crowd gathered at the old schoolhouse in the village. George LEATHERMAN was elected to the post of chairman and the meeting was called to order. A thrilling address was the first thing on the program. The speaker stressed the fact that Maryland was a border state and her position demanded that she maintain a conservative policy. All men must lay aside their party differences and come boldly as an unbroken phalanx to defend the Constitution and the Union. The following resolutions were passed:

1. Resolved, that Maryland strictly insist upon having the legal rights which are guaranteed to each state by the Constitution of the United States, namely, that of a republican form of government and protection from invasion.
2. Resolved, that we regard the act of secession upon the part of any state or states as revolution, dangerous to the best interests of our government, and no adequate remedy for the evil now complained of.
3. Resolved, that a rigid enforcement of the federal laws, affording to each state all the privileges and immunities guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, is the only means by which peace can again be restored to our beloved country.

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<sup>a</sup> (21), pg 200

<sup>b</sup> Newspaper articles tell of many of these cases.

<sup>c</sup> (1), pg 797



## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

4. Resolved, that we indignantly repudiate every effort that may be made by corrupt politicians and designing demagogues, to place our state in the attitude of secession or in hostility to the general government.
5. Resolved, that all persons who wage war against the United States Government for the purpose of destroying the Constitution and the Union, made sacred by the blood of our fathers, be regarded as dangerous men and enemies, directly or indirectly to our common country.
6. Resolved, that the Stars and Stripes, the National Flag, is property of the people, and that when legally unfurled, it shall and will be protected to the last extremity by America's bravest sons.
7. Resolved, that we have confidence in the strong arm of our government; that we rely upon the patriotism of conservative men in all sections of our country to stay the tide of revolution; and that we will never consent to any alliance with any state or states, other than the United States in Congress assembled, until it is satisfactorily demonstrated that our Union is a failure, and that man is incapable of self-government, and that the declaration of the Hero of New Orleans cannot be fulfilled, viz: that the Union must, and shall, be preserved.
8. Resolved, that the above resolutions be signed by the Officers of this meeting, and be published in all of the papers of the county, denying the right of secession”<sup>a</sup>

The meeting adjourned with three rousing cheers for the Union.

The Valley Register was at this time entering the gray in full force. The editor was bitter against the group advocating secession. At one time he accused the secessionists of resorting to false show of public sentiment by publishing the names of men who were in no way connected with secession movements.<sup>b</sup> At another time he published the following poem in one section of the paper:

Dissolve the Union! Role away  
The spangled flag of glory's day'  
Blot out the history of the brave  
And desecrate each patriot's grave;  
And then above the wreck of years,  
Quaff an eternity of years.

Dissolve the Union! Speak ye hills,  
Shriek out, ye streams and mingled rills,  
Ye everlasting mountains cry  
And oceans roar in agony;  
Dead heroes! Leap from glory's sod  
And shield the manor of our god!

Middletown, following the example of Myersville, designated Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, for a huge Union meeting.<sup>c</sup> According to newspaper accounts, the town had never been so crowded. Horses and buggies were everywhere. Hundreds of people hiked on foot into the town, all dressed in their Sunday-best. Between 2,500 and 3,000 people came to manifest their devotion to the Union and to Old Glory. At noon, a Liberty Pole, 102 feet high, was majestically hoisted; the Bolivar Union Band rendered a patriotic number. (15)

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm and Dr. Jacob BAER was elected Chairman. Dr. Baer introduced ex-governor Francis THOMAS to the people. For two and one-half hours, he addressed the crowd and not once did interest lag. According to The Valley Register, the American Band of Frederick was present and played

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<sup>a</sup> (15) The Valley Register, Jan 15, 1861. The officers who signed the above resolutions were: President, George LEATHERMAN; Vice-Presidents, Jacob SMITH, Jacob YOUNG, and John BUSSARD; and Secretary, Charles HOMERICK.

<sup>b</sup> (15), Jan 25, 1861

<sup>c</sup> (15), Feb 8, 1861

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several fine selections. The meeting ended after resolutions had been passed and the men had sung “The Star Spangled Banner in a superior manner”. (15)

“On the whole, it was a day long to be remembered by those present, everyone of whom seemed to partake of the general feeling of patriotism, clearly demonstrated that the citizens of our lovely Valley, irrespective of former political ties, with few exceptions, are loyal and devoted friends of the Union AS IT IS.”<sup>a</sup>

Before adjourning, the following resolutions were submitted to the people present and accepted:

“Whereas, past experience has demonstrated that the present form of government, framed by our wise and patriotic forefathers, has, under the favor of Divine Providence, secured for the American people innumerable blessings and privileges, and exalted us to the first place amongst the Nations of the World, securing their admiration and respect; and, whereas, there is now displayed a disposition by violent demagogues and fanatics, both North and South, to tear down this noble fabric by passing acts nullifying laws of Congress – Acts of Secession, absolving their people from allegiance to the Constitution and by marshalling armies in open array against the general government – therefore:

1. Resolved, that while we denounce the course pursued by the Republicans of the North as being unjust and unfriendly toward their brethren in the South, and by their Personal Liberty Bills, they are acting in open violation of the constitution – nullifying the Act of Congress – we still cannot look upon the course pursued by the cotton states as proper and calculated to remedy the difficulty, but as hasty and ill-advised, unjust to sister states, and to thousands of their friends in the North.
2. Resolved, that as Marylanders who have always been true to the Union, we look forward with great anxiety to an early settlement of the question as the only means of preserving the integrity of the Union, and upon the Crittenden Compromise as a fair and just basis this settlement can be made – giving equal rights to all sections of the country.
3. Resolved, that we fully endorse and approve the policy of our Governor, T. H. HICKS, and hope that the same sense of prudence will still continue to govern his future course, and we feel the utmost confidence that as soon as the honor and interests of Maryland require it, he will act with firmness and promptitude.<sup>b</sup>

Not every citizen of Middletown however was anti-slavery. In 1861, there were about 122 families in town. Of these, 105 were for the Union, leaving seventeen who sympathized with the secession movement. The homes of about half of the union followers were daily decorated with American flags.<sup>c</sup> A huge banner was strung between the hotel of A. POFFENBERGER and the saddle shop of John APPELMEN and Sons. The flag bore the mottoes of “Maryland True to the Union” and “The Union Must and Shall Be Preserved”.<sup>d</sup>

In conclusion then, one would say feelings ran high in Middletown Valley. Although the majority of the people did not favor the fanatical actions of radicals in the North, they did want to see emancipation accepted by the government. Revolution and war were not the means to bring it about. Nevertheless, when the dissolution of the nation was at stake, slavery furnishing the impetus for civil war, they wished to preserve the Union, by force if necessary. They realized that their position geographically demanded the use of a conservative policy. They intended to remain neutral as long as possible. A feeling of cooperation entered the community, thrusting aside former political ties, and bringing to the front the issue of preservation of the Union.

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Mar 1, 1861

<sup>b</sup> (15), Mar 1, 1861

<sup>c</sup> (15), Jun 14, 1861

<sup>d</sup> (15), Feb 8, 1861

## Chapter 5 - The Civil War in Middletown Valley

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In spite of the general unrest which apparently gripped the entire country, the firing of the first shot at Fort Sumter came as a distinct shock. A feeling of bitterness towards secessionists arose like a flame over the Valley. Although few people realized how far this conflict was destined to go in tearing out the heart of a great nation, many were frightened by the very thought of war. The editor of The Valley Register in commenting upon the siege and fall of Fort Sumter made the following comment:

“Our columns this week report the opening of civil war, which was begun by the traitors of the seceded states in opening their batteries upon the weak garrison of Fort Sumter, on Friday, April 12. This first, though fortunately bloodless battle, after a siege of thirty-six hours, was won by the rebels. When and where the horrible fratricidal strife thus commenced will end, no man can foresee, and it behooves every patriot to take an acting stand for the Union.”<sup>a</sup>

After the first mists of uncertainty, which had obscured the country for years, had drifted away and the reality of war faced the two governments, preparations were begun. Neither side was prepared.<sup>b</sup> Armies had to be raised and drilled into fighting units. Both North and South used the volunteer and conscription systems for building up armies. In the early part of the war, the patriotism and desire for adventure led many men to enlist. Men from the Valley went either to the North or to the South to offer their services for a cause they felt to be just. As the general aspect of a long and horrible war became more pronounced, volunteering dropped off and the governments had to turn to conscription.<sup>c</sup>

During the first few months of the conflict, there was little activity that would lead one to believe a great war was under way. The people of the Valley who did not enlist went about their daily work the same as before. No troops ravaged the Valley and carried away the riches prized by the populace. There was, however, a growing feeling of patriotism. Flags were constantly displayed. The newspapers carried detailed stories of the movements of troops. Editorials on patriotism marked almost every paper issued in the town. On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the First Rhode Island Regiment under Colonel BURNSIDE, numbering 1,250 men, passed through the town. A band of fifes and drums led the army through the streets packed with cheering men. During the fifteen minute stop in the town, the citizens furnished the men with refreshments. Since it was known that the encampment was going to be near Frederick, the people gathered about 100 loaves of bread and several hams to be distributed among the soldiers.<sup>d</sup> This type of hospitality was prevalent during the war. Those people who could not fight furnished helpful gifts that might make soldier life easier.

The women of the town determined to do their share in the war. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1861, a Soldiers' Aid Society was formed for the purpose of collecting such articles as would best promote the comfort of the soldiers during the approaching winter. Contributions were liberal; clothes, money, blankets, etc., were donated by interested citizens of the community.<sup>e</sup>

Other than the furnishing of a few men, and the growing and shipping of food, little was done in the Valley which can be considered as having been greatly influenced by the war. The editor of the town paper never stopped his work of molding public opinion to the side of the Union. Although his articles were at times quite humorous, he was rather successful in turning the town to his views. One of his favorite tricks was to dub the Southern sympathizers as the “peace party”. In one article he arranged the story in the following manner:

“Question: Who favored Secession?

Answer: The leaders of the peace party.

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Apr 19, 1861

<sup>b</sup> (23), Vol 1, pg 846

<sup>c</sup> (23), pg 846-848

<sup>d</sup> (15), Jun 21, 1861

<sup>e</sup> (15), Nov 15, 1861

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Question: Who started the war?

Answer: The peace party.”

In another article entitled, “Have We Any Secessionists Among Us?” - He bemoans the fact that the people are not wholeheartedly behind the Union. A Unionist should cheer when he hears that thousands of rebels have been killed and weep when there is a slight reverse for the Union. A Unionist must demand death for all rebels. Mercy could not be offered to them. Any man who did not hit the question from the same angle as did Mr. RHODERICK was, in his opinion, a traitor. <sup>a</sup>

In another article, Mr. Rhoderick condemned Mr. H. L. BRADY for his enlistment in the Southern Army. Mr. Brady had been the former editor of the Valley paper and, in recent conflict, had been captured by Union soldiers. In the paper of that week, Mr. Rhoderick commented in the following manner: “We wish that it might be otherwise, but if Mr. Brady was a volunteer in the Rebel Army, he has no sympathy from us in his present dilemma. We desire to see every Rebel bagged and the leaders hung as high as heaven.” <sup>b</sup>

It was in September 1862 that Maryland became a bloody battlefield of the Civil War. Shortly after the defeat of General POPE at Manassas, Lee and Jackson entered the state of Maryland. Portions of their ranks were filled with Maryland men whom Andrews (1) calls the “exiled sons”. These men had led the generals of the South to believe the Confederate ranks would be swelled by men from Western Maryland. <sup>c</sup> This may be considered as one of the reasons for the invasion. The South had a much smaller force than the North. For a successful campaign, more troops were needed. Besides that, the South was feeling the effects of economic pressure. The soldiers were ragged and often barefooted. The supply trains carried only a small amount of food. (1)

John Greenleaf WHITTIER describes, in an admirable manner, the approach to the City of Frederick:

Up from the meadows rich with corn  
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand  
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep  
Apple and peach tree fruited deep.

Fair as a garden of the Lord  
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde.

On that pleasant morn of the early fall  
When Lee marched over the mountain wall,

Over the mountains winding down  
Horse and foot into Fredericktown.

Forty flags with their silver stars,  
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind. <sup>d</sup>

The people of this section believed the Army of Virginia, under General Lee, to be a band of desperadoes. They held the general impression that Lee would force every man in the region to join his army. As a result of this supposition, many men, and even whole families, made quick preparations to evacuate their homes and seek

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Aug 15, 1862

<sup>b</sup> (15), Mar 28, 1862

<sup>c</sup> (1), pg 866

<sup>d</sup> (39), Barbara Fritchie

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safety in Pennsylvania. Some people thought they would never see their homes again. All over Middletown Valley this general exodus was taking place. Many of those remaining at home expected to meet death at any moment. Work in the fields and town ceased. Plows were left standing in the furrows while excited farmers hid their valuables.<sup>a</sup>

The people of Frederick County were destined for a great surprise. Instead of a band of thieves and murderers, Lee and his men were found to be an army of gentlemen, the pride of Virginia. (2) Andrews describes the body as perhaps the most orderly army in history.<sup>b</sup>

While in Frederick the following proclamation was issued by the Confederate leaders:

“To the people of Maryland – The South feels that Maryland is bound to her with ties, political, economic, and social, and that now she is forcibly tied to the Union as a conquered province.

This army has come to help you throw off the foreign yoke and to enable you to again enjoy the inalienable rights of freedom and restore independence and sovereignty to your state. We know no enemies among you and will protect all of every opinion. The army will respect your choice, whatever it may be, and while the Southern people will rejoice to welcome you to your natural position among them, they will only welcome you when you come of your own free-will.”<sup>c</sup>

Despite the friendly tone of this proclamation, the Rebel Army received a cold reception. After the proclamation had been issued, they expected men to flock to their cause. Few citizens, if any, took advantage of the offer. This must have been disappointing to Lee and other Southern leaders; for it seems probable a re-enforcement in numbers might have changed the aspect of the coming battles.

After Lee's entrance into Frederick, the Federals at Harper's Ferry remained in their position. This came as somewhat of a surprise to Lee, since he expected an immediate withdrawal. It was necessary to dislodge these men before the campaign could be continued. With this object in view, Lee directed Jackson to go to Martinsburg and from there to march upon the Ferry. The divisions of McLAWS and ANDERSON were ordered to seize Maryland Heights and Brigadier-General WALKER was to take possession of Loudoun Heights.<sup>d</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, Jackson opened fire on Harper's Ferry with four pieces of artillery. In a very short time, the town was captured and MILES and WHITE surrendered without a struggle.

During Lee's visit in Frederick the famous Barbara FRITCHIE incident occurred. The heroic action of this old lady was so fascinating that it inspired Whittier to write the poem bearing her name. The writer is convinced this story is really true. However, many citizens of Middletown claim that the incident occurred in their own town. It seems practical that two somewhat similar occurrences might have taken place. On Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, a party of fifteen Confederate horsemen, led by Captain Edward S. MOTTER, a native of the Valley, visited the town. The soldiers were surprised to see a Union flag flying from the home of Mr. George W. CROUSE.<sup>e</sup> Mr. Crouse was a faithful Unionist and never hesitated to express his views. (2) The Rebels determined to tear down the flag. (15) According to one story, Miss Crouse grabbed the flag, defying the soldiers, and wrapped it around her body. Motter tore the flag from her body and carried it away.<sup>f</sup> The newspaper article describing the incident claimed that Motter tore the flag from its mast and ripped it to pieces. (15) Of one thing we are fairly certain, Miss Crouse did her best to protect the flag but she was over-powered and the banner captured.

These same men caused more trouble in the Valley. The attitude of the press had been so pro-Union that it was felt best to punish the editor. Consequently, they raided the office of The Valley Register. Mr. Rhoderick

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<sup>a</sup> (2), Castle, J. C., Reminiscences of the Civil War – taken from unpublished scrapbook owned by Mr. Castle

<sup>b</sup> (1), pg 867

<sup>c</sup> (15), Sep 26, 1862

<sup>d</sup> (1), pg 867-868

<sup>e</sup> (15), Sep 19, 1862

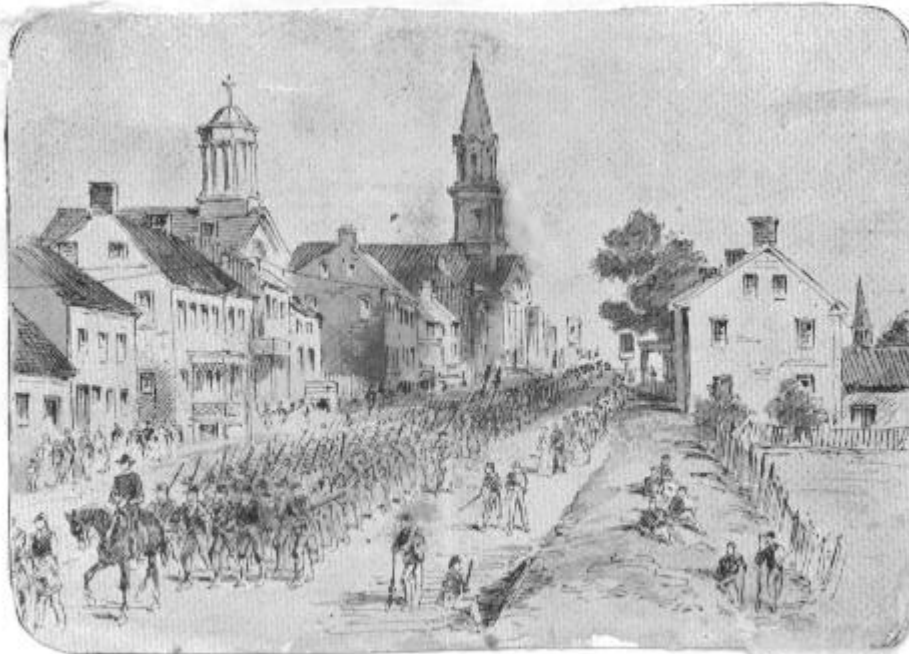
<sup>f</sup> (28), pg 23-24

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described the incident in a very interesting fashion. The title of the article was “Skedaddled” and it reads as follows:

“Not wishing to fall into the hands of a pack of drunken Rebels invited here and set upon us by S. R. RIDDLEMOSER and a few others of like infamous character, we skedaddled on Monday night. For this reason and because of no mail communication, we issued no paper last week and only a half sheet this week. We are yet without a regular mail and if present excitement continues, we will issue only a half sheet next week.

The Confederate raiders, after spending a few hours in the town, returned to the tavern of John HAGER which was within three miles of their own lines. Here they were having a gay time when Captain RUSSEL’s Calvary came up and captured fourteen of them, Motter being the only one to escape. One of Hager’s sons was among the party captured.<sup>a</sup>



THE UNION ARMY MARCHING TO MEET LEE  
AT SOUTH MOUNTAIN

Early on Wednesday morning, September 10<sup>th</sup>, the army of General Lee began its withdrawal from Frederick after an occupation of only five days. They headed over the National Highway through Middletown Valley, over the mountains and on towards Hagerstown. On Friday following, the advance guard of General McCLELLAN’s army occupied Frederick and on Saturday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, pushed forward rapidly and encountered the rear guard of the Rebels about one mile west of Middletown. (15)

Mr. Adam KOOGLER, residing along Catoctin Creek at the spot of the encounter, was probably the greatest individual sufferer in this county. Mr. Koogle’s home had been used as the headquarters of General STEWART. Upon his withdrawal, he had the turnpike bridge destroyed by fire. Sparks from this fire caused the burning of the Koogle barn, hay shed, blacksmith shop, wagon shed, and carriage and corn houses. The barn contained 1,000 bushels of wheat and the hay shed held forty tons of hay. The vandals dug 100 bushels of potatoes and burned nearly all of the fencing. It is estimated that the loss was around \$5,000.00. (15)

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Sep 19, 1862

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THE BURNING OF THE KOOGLE BRIDGE

During the engagement which had caused Stewart's withdrawal, one shell hit the Koogle home, doing little damage, and another fell through the roof and landed on a bed. Forty Confederate soldiers were captured. (15)

In the coming Battle of South Mountain, fate was to play a big role. Upon Lee's withdrawal from Frederick, McClellan took up the former's headquarters. It was here that he had the good fortune of finding a copy of Lee's orders to D. H. HILL. The orders were so important that it changed the whole aspect of the battle. McClellan ordered an immediate evacuation of Frederick and headed in hot pursuit of Lee. On Sunday afternoon, September 14<sup>th</sup>, the right wing of the Federal Army, under General Burnside, rested on Middletown, and the left, under General FRANKLIN, on Jefferson. (1)

The Confederate forces held an advantage as to position. They occupied the mountain and the three passes over it which could be used by the soldiers. From their high elevation, it was easy for them to bombard the oncoming Union forces with telling effect. The Federals had about 100,000 men and the Confederates near 60,000.<sup>a</sup> When one considers food and equipment, he will realize McClellan had a distinct advantage in this line. This was the general situation on Sunday when the forces met in a short but bloody battle.

The correspondent for the New York Times gives a fair description of the battleground before the forces met:

"The Rebel position was on the sides and summit of the Blue Ridge Mountains, on each side of the gap, known as Turner's Gap, through which the pike passes. The Gap is distant from town four miles. The mountains are steep and rugged, and rendered difficult to go up except by ordinary thoroughfares. From base to top, the mountains are covered with thick woods, thereby giving protection to the party in possession and making the attacking doubly hazardous. Bolivar, a village of six or eight dwellings, is situated on the main road and about one and one-half miles from the Gap. At Bolivar, a road branches off from each side of the main road, the two roads taking a circuitous course to the mountains and gradually ascending, they join the main road at the Gap. The early position of the Union Army was on a piece of rising ground, on the right and left of the main road between Bolivar and the mountain. The closer the Federal Army approached, the better the enemy could play shells upon their columns."<sup>b</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (12), pg 19

<sup>b</sup> (44), Sep 15, 1862

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In considering the battle it will be necessary to think of it as made up of three engagements, one directed at each of the three gaps. The most important of these being Turner's Gap where the pike crosses the mountain. Crampton's Gap is near Burkittsville and Fox's Gap is a mile or so south of Turner's Gap.

General Franklin directed the Federal attack upon Crampton's Gap. He was opposed by General COBB. The topography of this section is very similar to that of Turner's Gap. The confederates were on the ridge and sides of the slope. As the Union soldiers advanced, they emptied a furious rain of bullets upon them. The fighting was thick and steady for three hours.<sup>a</sup> Because of larger numbers, the Federals slowly forced the Rebels to the very crest. Here they made a last desperate stand but failed to hold off the enemy. In greatest confusion, they broke ranks and rushed down the mountain in the direction of Pleasant Valley. General FRANKLIN followed them at once, greatly endangering the rest of the Confederate lines to the north of the gap. The result at this point was a complete victory for General Franklin.<sup>b</sup>

At Fox's Gap, the fighting was equally as fierce as at Crampton's Gap, the battle lasting practically all day. The brigades of GARLAND and COLQUETTE were attacking the pass and COX was on the defensive. At about 10:00 am, Garland, still a very young man, was killed. A very short time after this sad casualty, Lieutenant-Colonel R. B. HAYES, in command of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ohio Regiment, was wounded while making a drive for the crest of the ridge.

By about 11:00, Cox's Division had arrived at the woods and a few minutes later had entered with the purpose of getting around the Rebel's right. Cook's Battery took an excellent position for firing shells into the woods in advance of the division. The Confederates retaliated with a fierce volley of musketry directed upon the cannoniers. This was repeated several times until at length the cannoniers abandoned their pieces and fled through the ranks to safety, followed by the drivers of the caissons and the two companies of cavalry. This left four pieces of artillery unprotected, the other two pieces being at another position. The Southern soldiers at once made an attempt to capture the guns. Confusion seemed to place the men under COX in an unfortunate position. They rallied, however, and determined to hold the pieces at any price. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Ohio and the 100<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiments marched to meet the enemy in perfect order. For a short time, the two exchanged shots at a distance of ten feet. The slaughter was horrible. Men were mowed down like wheat before a reaper. The 45<sup>th</sup> New York Regiment came to the rescue of the hard-pressed Union fighters and turned the tide in favor of the offensive. The Rebels retreated in great confusion and cheers of joy echoed through the woods.

For the next two hours the infantry firing diminished. During this time the cannons kept up a steady fire but little damage was done.

At 2:00 pm, re-enforcements were received in large numbers. These greatly strengthened the Federal troops at Fox's Gap. Nevertheless, the Southern soldiers maintained a stiff line. They had the advantage of pouring a steady fire upon the Union men as they crossed the open fields on the slope. According to one newspaper report, General RENO's Corps to the left did its part nobly. It took over one and one-half hours steady fire to chase the defenders from the crest of the ridge and down into the valley beyond.<sup>c</sup>

Just before sunset, General RENO, one of the most beloved generals of the Union force, fell mortally wounded. One story has it that he was shot by his own men. The Union soldiers had dislodged a section of the Confederates. As the latter withdrew, they fired a volley of shots. A regiment of untried soldiers was lying behind a stone wall to the rear of General RENO who had come forward to watch the retreat. These new men, not realizing that the volley was fired as the retreat was begun, fired back. It is thought that one of these bullets hit the General in the back.<sup>d</sup> The bullet struck Reno's spine, lodging in his breast.<sup>e</sup> When General RENO fell, General STURGIS was within a few yards of him. The two men were bosom friends, having graduated from West Point together. Sturgis ran to him and cried, "Are you badly wounded, Jesse?" Reno replied, "Yes, Sam, I

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<sup>a</sup> (12), pg 21

<sup>b</sup> (17), pg 136-140

<sup>c</sup> (44), Sep 15, 1862

<sup>d</sup> This story was told to the writer by Mr. John Castle. Mr. Castle visited the field shortly after the battle and received much of his knowledge about the affair from the soldiers who saw the incident.

<sup>e</sup> (44), Sep 15, 1862



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am a dead man.” As the General was carried off the battlefield, he said, “Boys, I can no longer be with you in body, but I am with you in spirit.”<sup>a</sup>

Reno was carried to the rear on a litter and taken down the side of the mountain. He was laid under a large oak tree which still stands in its majestic beauty, nature’s monument to a great general. Mount Reno School was built some years later and is across the road from the old oak.<sup>b</sup>



General BURNSIDE paid tribute to his fallen comrade in the following manner:

“The Commanding General announces to the corps the death of their late leader, Major General Jesse L. RENO. By the death of this distinguished officer, the country loses one of its most devoted patriots, the army one of its most thorough soldiers. In the long list of battles which General Reno has fought in his country’s service, his name always appears with the brightest luster; and he has now bravely met a soldier’s death while gallantly leading his men at South Mountain. For his high character, and the kindly qualities of his heart in private life, as well as for his military genius and personal daring which marked him as a soldier, his loss will be deplored by all who knew him; and the Commanding General desires to add the tribute of a friend to the public mourning, for the death of one of the country’s best defenders.”<sup>c</sup>

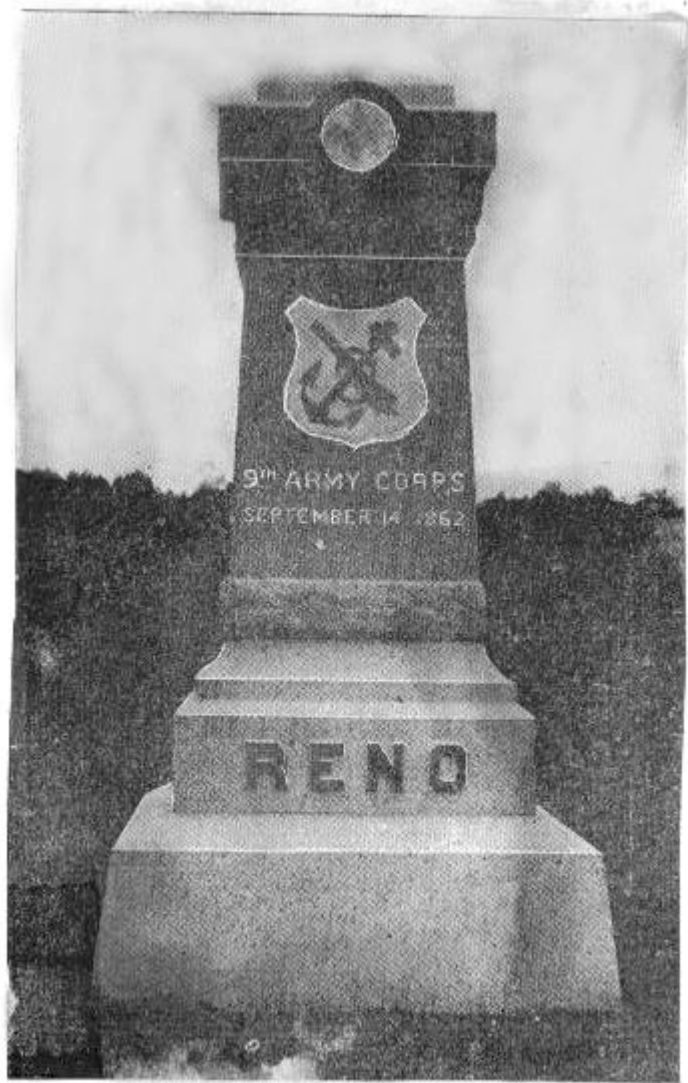
It is related by a prominent citizen of Middletown that the General rode to the battle in an ambulance. On the way, he remarked that it would be a strange coincidence if the same ambulance should haul him from the battlefield. Singular as it may seem, that was the ambulance which brought his remains to Middletown. (15)

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Sep 26, 1862

<sup>b</sup> (12), pg 20

<sup>c</sup> (17), pg 134



A MEMORIAL TO GENERAL RENO

Today, at the crest of the mountain in Fox's Gap, a monument stands to his memory. It is erected a short distance from the spot where he fell. (12)

### **The Death of Reno**

Amid the hill the tide of war  
Did ebb and flow in red,  
Among South Mountain's gorges lay,  
The dying and the dead;  
The stately pine trees, shattered, bent  
Before the leaden rain.  
And in their shadows brave men fell  
Who'd never march again.

By Reno led, a line of blue  
Pressed forward in the fray;  
Behind the stubborn walls of stone  
Crouched low the men in gray;  
A flash of fire the boulders fringed,  
O'er all the rebel yell  
Ascended to the Autumn sky  
And, stricken, Reno fell.

There on the ground in Wise's field  
With mortal wound he lay,  
And looked his last upon the sky  
As ebbed his life away;  
Undaunted on his soldiers pressed  
With blade and bayonet,  
Until, upon their banners fair,  
The sun of victory set.

They bore the dying general down  
The mountain's reddened slope.  
They knew the surgeon's vaunted skill  
With death could never cope;  
Beneath an oak's far spreading limbs  
And in its gentle shade,  
While onward rolled the tide of war,  
Was Reno softly laid.

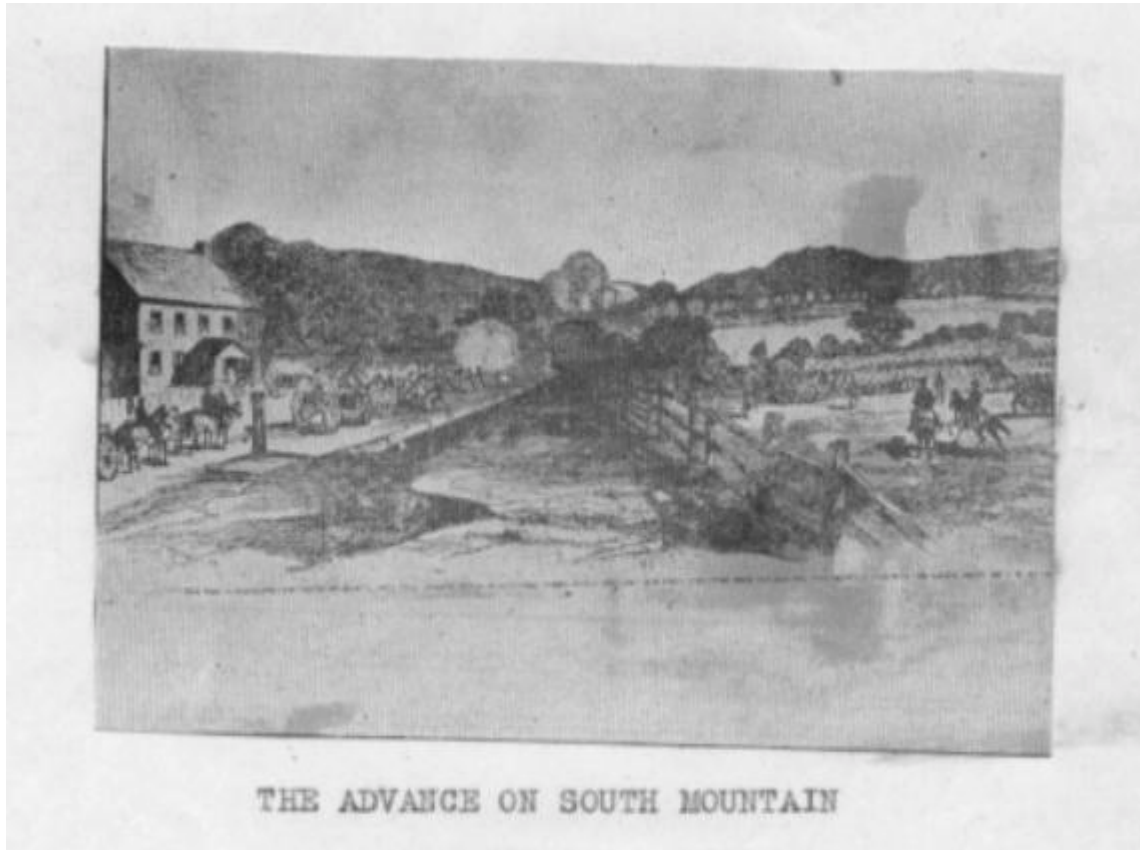
There like a child he fell asleep,  
The soldier brave and true,  
And many a tear that hour stained  
The uniforms of blue;  
The drums grew still, the battle tide  
Had suddenly ceased to roll.  
So that in peace unto his God  
Passed Reno's gentle soul.

Today the old oak throws its shade  
And many children play,  
Where in a crimsoned field of war  
A hero passed away;  
Fair Maryland's skies will softly bend  
Above the mountain's side,  
And Spring in green will clothe the spot  
Where gallant Reno died.

- T. C. HARBAUGH (28), pages 90-91)

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Turner's Gap was probably the most important of the three gaps because of the fact that the pike ran through this spot. Generals LONGSTREET and HILL were defending the pass. While the other engagements which we described were going on, a constant battle was being waged here. Until 2:00 on Sunday afternoon, the fighting had been principally with artillery. ROBERTSON's United States Battery of four light field pieces fired the first shot at about 7:00 am. This battery was placed at a spot 600 yards to the left of the turnpike and directed its shells to the woods above with the idea of drawing the fire of the Confederates. They were not successful in this until a large group of men appeared in the road. At this point the Southern guns opened fire from the Gap. Robertson replied with his guns and with the re-enforcement of HAYNES Company with six pieces on the left of the road. In a little while, enemy guns began firing on the right and left of the Gap but ceased when they realized that little damage was being done. Only the artillery in the Gap proper continued to direct their fire upon the advancing troops.



At 3:00 pm, the line of battle was drawn up from right to left as follows: One mile North of the turnpike, Rickett's First Brigade; the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps to the left of Rickett; the Second Regiment United States Sharp-Shooters on the road branching off of the turnpike to the right; Rickett's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigades between the branch road and the pike; King's Division at the left of the road. Behind these were several regiments of reserves.<sup>a</sup>

Somewhere between 2:00 and 3:00, the battle line began to move forward. A thick artillery fire fell about them but little was lost by this. Most of the shell fire passed over the heads of the troops. The right wing managed to get to the wooded section of the mountain. Here they came into contact with the enemy pickets. Immediately after this first skirmishing, they met with the main body of the Rebel right. The Pennsylvania Reserve Corps and Rickett's 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade hotly engaged the enemy. In a contest lasting thirty minutes, the Union Soldiers slowly

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Sep 29, 1862; (12), 9920-21; (17), Chapter XI

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

managed to drive the Rebels back until the summit was reached. Here they wavered for a moment, then broke ranks in great confusion and fled.<sup>a</sup>

“Fighting Joe” HOOKER led the attack on the left. Here the mountain was very rugged and hard to cross. All along the line, the utmost enthusiasm was manifested for the general. “Every man in the corps was impressed with the belief he had a General able and willing to face the enemy.” Somewhere around 4:00 in the afternoon, Hooker, after firing many volleys into the ranks of the enemy, reached the top of the mountain.<sup>b</sup>

The center column was the last to come into action. Led by HATCH, they managed to make a slow climb to the Gap. An engagement of three hours was necessary to dislodge the stubborn defender. At 6:00 the victory was complete. (15) The last Confederates evacuated their positions and fled into Hagerstown Valley. Some Union troops gave pursuit for several miles but gave up the chase after dark. That night they camped upon the bloody battlefield of South Mountain.

The losses in the battle as tabulated by Messrs. WOLFE and RHODERICK were:

“Crampton’s Gap – Union Forces – 113 killed, 418 wounded, 2 captured. Confederate losses: 70 killed, 289 wounded, 603 captured.

Fox’s Gap – Union forces – 167 killed, 712 wounded, 44 captured. Confederate losses: 248 killed, 1,013 wounded, 662 missing.

Turner’s Gap – Union: 157 killed, 691 wounded, 41 captured. Confederates: 600 killed and wounded and as many captured.

Total for the whole battle: Union: 438 killed, 1,821 wounded, 87 captured. Confederates: 318 killed, 1,292 wounded, 1,225 captured.” (12)

It is interesting to note three future presidents of the United States fought in this battle. Lieutenant Colonel R. B. HAYES in command of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ohio Regiment, and Majors McKINLEY and ARTHUR. (2) Hayes, who had been in the conflict at Fox’s Gap, was taken to Middletown and cared for in the home of Captain Jacob KOOGLE. This house is now occupied by Mrs. Martin SHANK and is located at the western end of the town. (12)

Immediately after the first rumblings of the battle could be heard in Middletown, preparations were made for caring for the wounded. The town became one vast hospital. All churches, lecture rooms, school rooms, and many private homes were used as hospitals. (15) The women of the town were untiring in their attention to the unfortunates, both Union and Rebel, while the resident physicians rendered all the aid in their power to mitigate the sufferings of the wounded. Quite a number of volunteer surgeons from various cities in the state rushed to the scene and offered their services. (15)

Mr. Rhoderick was quick to give his support to such a charitable venture and printed the following editorial in The Valley Register on September 19, 1862:

“The brave troops have expelled the Rebels from our soil and firesides. In this dreadful conflict, many of them have fallen far from their friends and homes, never to return. Many of the wounded are suffering for want of food.

Let every man and woman, in whose bosom is a heart of flesh and whose barn is full of the bounties of God; who sits up to a full table and sleeps upon a good bed, remember these poor, suffering, helpless soldiers. Do all you can to relieve their suffering and supply their wants. Commence now! Stop your work, no matter how important, and prepare something for their comfort. Let no person who has not the heart of a brute turn a hungry soldier away without dividing his last morsel.”

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Sep 19, 1862

<sup>b</sup> (12), pg 21

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On September 25<sup>th</sup>, all of the buildings used as hospitals for wounded soldiers, except the Lutheran Church, were vacated. The men who were in condition for travel were sent to Frederick, while the others were sent to the Lutheran church. <sup>a</sup> This latter building was vacated around the first week in January. <sup>b</sup>

Over 130 soldiers died in the hospitals of Middletown. Most of these died without giving their names or identification. A few bodies were claimed by friends and relatives, but the majority were buried in the Academy yard adjoining the Lutheran and Methodist burying grounds. <sup>c</sup> The bodies of men killed on the battlefield were either buried in long shallow trenches or carried away by friends. To this day, people of the valley can find the unmarked graves of unknown heroes scattered over isolated spots of the mountain.

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1864, the legislature appointed a committee to visit the battlefields of South Mountain and Antietam for the purpose of finding a suitable spot or spots for a memorial cemetery. The Committee reported that twenty acres had been obtained at Sharpsburg. On South Mountain, they secured a plot of three acres for a monument to General Reno. <sup>d</sup>

The Valley Register published an interesting story about a certain soldier who fought at South Mountain. The young man, a member of the Army of Potomac, became exhausted from constant hardship and toil during his march into Maryland. He was forced to drop behind and, after a short rest, fell in with another regiment. He marched with these new comrades to the battles of South Mountain and Antietam, where he was horribly wounded. When his own regiment discovered him, they arrested him, court-martialed him, and gave orders for his execution. President Lincoln heard of this affair and intervened. The result was not death for the brave young man, but rather, honor and esteem. <sup>e</sup>

One Union Soldier never forgot the courteous treatment he received in Middletown on the march to battle. In 1864 he wrote a letter to the editor of the town paper thanking the people for their kindness. He reminds the people of the hardships of the soldier. He offers his thanks to the ladies of the town, especially the young ones, who smiled upon and helped the tired and dirty soldiers. The buckets of cold sparkling water which were handed to them were like gifts of God. He states, "We entertain high opinion of your beauty, loyalty, and wholeheartedness. Roman and Grecian ladies could not have been more gracious, nor could Roman or Greek soldiers have been more appreciative than we right-minded men. Soldiers fight best defending their homes, but Middletown's lassies can rest assured that their sympathy, smiles, and sparkling eyes added strength to many an arm and made us fight with uncommon zeal. Those women can claim a goodly share of whatever glory was won at South Mountain. No women can show nobler spirit than the women of Middletown." <sup>f</sup>

With the passing of the armies from the Valley, life returned to the normal routine. Farmers went back to their fields. The evenings were spent discussing the war in general or in relating the thrilling tales of the battle. Each week the town paper was read and re-read. The war was not ended. Each battle was discussed in detail. Men prayed that it all might end soon. Soldiers still passed through the town. At times the rumblings of battles could be heard. It reminded the people of the horrors they had witnessed. The Rebel deliverance of down-trodden Maryland had thus nearly proved their own destruction. <sup>g</sup> Lee had gained but one thing from the battle, namely, time to fortify his stand at Antietam.

"They held the grand old mountain, the heroes clad in blue,  
Till every leaf and every stone received a crimson hue.  
They rolled the gray-hued billows back from off the bloody crest,  
They met the foeman hand to hand heroic, breast to breast;  
And when the blushing morning dawned to show the battle's soars  
The flag that topped the mountain peak had eight and thirty stars,

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Sep 26, 1862

<sup>b</sup> (15), Jan 9, 1863

<sup>c</sup> (15), Oct 4, 1862

<sup>d</sup> (15), Jan 8, 1864

<sup>e</sup> (15), Jan 8, 1864

<sup>f</sup> (15), Mar 11, 1864

<sup>g</sup> (15), Sep 18, 1864

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And somewhere towards Antietam's plain, but not in victory,  
The tattered banner floated o'er the silent tent of Lee.

Oh, there are lonesome bivouacs where fair Catoctin runs  
And there are deep gaps in the ranks of Southland's bravest sons,  
And many a young wife waited, and many a sweetheart sigh'd  
For those who in their cherished gray upon the mountain died;  
And roses sought the valley when came once more the spring,  
And to the meadows clad in green and robin came to sing;  
The tuneful bells of Middletown in steeples white and tall,  
Sent forth a holy song of peace that touched the mountain wall."

- T. C. Harbaugh<sup>a</sup>

Middletown suffered twice more during the war. The first of these was on June 1863. Between 8,000 and 10,000 Union soldiers marched through town. They carried themselves in a very commendable manner. They seemed to have plenty of money and bought all the tobacco, cigars, shoes, and hats in town. The citizens of the town willingly baked bread for these men. However, the next week the army returned, they were like a different group. No respect was shown the people. Ripe wheat was cut and fed to the horses and fences were torn down for firewood.<sup>b</sup> The writer knows of two women in the Valley who were forced to bake bread all night to feed a regiment camping on their farm.<sup>c</sup>

In the meantime, the press continued its attack upon the South. Mr. Rhoderick admitted that the South had put up a stiffer fight than they had expected. Nevertheless, he claimed that the Union Forces would soon convince the Rebels that Uncle Sam was much stronger than one third of his sons, united.<sup>d</sup>

As the war progressed, it looked darker and darker for the slave-holding south. Northern citizens began to think of punishment for the leaders. In March 1862, The Valley Register carried the following story:

### “WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH THE LEADERS?”

The general attitude seems to be that rebellious leaders should be punished, but as yet no definite plan has been figured out. Nobody has the desire of seeing the Southern people as a whole suffer anymore. They are not traitors at heart. But the leaders, --'Hand the Traitors'. If this is done, no others will follow their conduct without knowing what will happen. They caused all of the sorrow, pain and death. Now the widows and orphans cry to Heaven for vengeance. The public good, our duty to society, and the demand of security for our government demand their execution.<sup>e</sup> When certain men suggested a compromise with the South in order that the war might end, Mr. Rhoderick became quite excited and demanded the defeat of the South with punishment for the leaders. To compromise with "Jeff Davis and Breckenridge would be sacrilege."<sup>f</sup> "The verdict of the nation is already pronounced: let them suffer for their great crimes. Mercy to them would indeed be cruelty to THE PEOPLE. We look, then, for their trial and punishment, and that accomplished, we may indeed feel that we have a GOVERNMENT."<sup>g</sup> "It is a poor business to try to create sympathy and admiration for General Lee. He is a perjured traitor who turned against the government that educated and nursed him into a position, and he used the education that the people paid for to slay them. Thousands of dead patriots who sleep in unknown graves were sent there by orders of this military head of the great plot of treason. A truly loyal man can look upon him with no other feeling than that of abhorrence."<sup>h</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (28), pg 63-65

<sup>b</sup> (15), Jul 3, 1863

<sup>c</sup> This incident happened to Miss Amanda DEAN, later Mrs. A. GROSS.

<sup>d</sup> (15), Apr 17, 1863

<sup>e</sup> (15), Mar 7, 1862

<sup>f</sup> (15), May 30, 1862

<sup>g</sup> (15), Jun 23, 1865

<sup>h</sup> (15), May 19, 1865

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In 1863, the United States Government found it necessary to use the draft for increasing the number of men in the army. Before taking this last step, both central governments had offered bounties as a stimulus. <sup>a</sup>

In May, 1864, Middletown District was called upon to give its share of men in the draft. It was provided, however, that any drafter man could escape this requirement by furnishing a satisfactory substitute or by paying the government a fee not to exceed \$300.00. <sup>b</sup> On May 27, 1864, The Valley Register listed the following names as needed for duty in the United States Army:

Charles KOOGLER	Henry BISER
G. C. RHODERICK	John WALDECK
Richard SNODER (free Colored)	Daniel KOOGLER
Daniel S. KEPLER	Daniel McBRIDE
Edward ROUTZAHN	Tilman AUSHERMAN
J. H. BEACHLEY	David H. MARTZ
Joshua AHALT	Charles T. REMSBERG
Henry K. YOUNG	Peter PETERS (slave)
Horatio ZITTLER	R. C. KEFAUVER
Lewis Z. WHIP	Charles COBLENTZ
John H. SULCER	M. C. KEFAUVER
Samuel C. CRONE	John H. BOYER
Benjamin AHALT	George W. MARTZ
Lewis McBRIDE	Daniel BECHTOL
Sandy Johnson (slave)	Isaiah MAIN
Hanson BUSSARD	Columbus BOYER
Joshua ARNOLD	Henry J. DARNER
Hanson REMSBERG	Ezra DERR
Hiram RIDGLEY	George J. REMSBERG
Martin GROVE	Daniel BRADENBERG
Charles E. SKINNER (free Colored)	George MOORE
Samuel THORNE (free Colored)	William S. GROVE

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1864, General EARLY, in command of a detachment on some 12,000 Confederates, entered Middletown on a raid. Most of the soldiers were ragged and many of them shoeless. <sup>c</sup> One portion of his troop was made up of Maryland volunteers. These men came in search of necessities which the destitute South could no longer furnish. The General levied a war indemnity of \$15,000 upon the citizens of the town, with the threat that the village would be burned if the money were not raised. <sup>d</sup> An attempt was made to collect the money but not all of it was raised before Early had to move. He was constantly being pushed forward by the advancing Union Forces. (2) The force of Rebels had come from Shepherdstown carrying with them all of the horses that could be found. (2) General Early was not a desperado, but a highly cultured man who held a firm commanding hand over his troops. His men did not loot homes and carry off everything within their reach. The stragglers, who followed in the wake of the Army, were the ones guilty of the worst crimes. These men would break into peaceful homes and, at the point of a gun, demand the complete wealth of the family. (2) Shortly after the withdrawal of the army from town, they marched to the Battle of the Monocacy where the Union Forces, under Wallace, opposed them. <sup>e</sup>

With the coming of the news that Richmond had fallen into the hands of the Federal Army and subsequently the surrender of Lee to Grant had taken place, a feeling of relief and joy gripped the war-tired people. Bells of the old churches rang clearly across the Valley from mountain to mountain. Business was partially suspended. In

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<sup>a</sup> (23) pg 847

<sup>b</sup> (23), pg 849

<sup>c</sup> (1), pg 885

<sup>d</sup> (11), pg 322

<sup>e</sup> (11), pg 385



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the night, bonfires and rockets lit the sky. "This news went everywhere like an angelic visitor. It will heal the sick and fill the land with Thanksgiving." <sup>a</sup>

On the evening of Good Friday, the new-found joy was again turned to sorrow. Lincoln had been assassinated by John Wilkes BOOTH while attending the theater in Washington. On Saturday all the business establishments in Middletown were closed. Every dwelling in town displayed emblems of mourning. The bells were tolled. In the night, special services were held in the Methodist Church and on Monday all of the congregations met together in the Lutheran Church to pay homage to the great leader. Mr. Rhoderick, in an editorial, expresses well the feelings of the people:

### "Our Nation's Grief

There are times when thoughts flow too deep for utterance. Such a time is this. Our beloved and fore-bearing President has fallen a victim to the red hand of a foul assassin. Our readers have already been apprised of the circumstances of this sad and terrible calamity. Four years ago when leaving his quiet home in the distant West to assume the momentous responsibilities to which we had called him, had such an event transpired, we might have felt less sorrowful; but at this juncture of our national affairs, when after a long term of faithful service and upon the very eve of an honorable and permanent peace, to be removed of his usefulness, is a shock that we can hardly endure.

Could we but trace the hand of Providence in his removal, this would enable us to bear the affliction with submissive hearts, but when, through the malice and hellish sprit of a vicious murderer, he is cut down, it only begets within us indignation, tempered with deep sorrow. The bitterest foes of Abraham Lincoln will not fail to acknowledge his humanity, integrity, and honesty. He was intensely loyal to truth, and his honest convictions were followed with unswerving fidelity. While we pause and mourn sadly his loss, we must reconsecrate ourselves to his unfinished work, and cease not until freedom's flag shall float in triumph over every state in this glorious Union." (15)

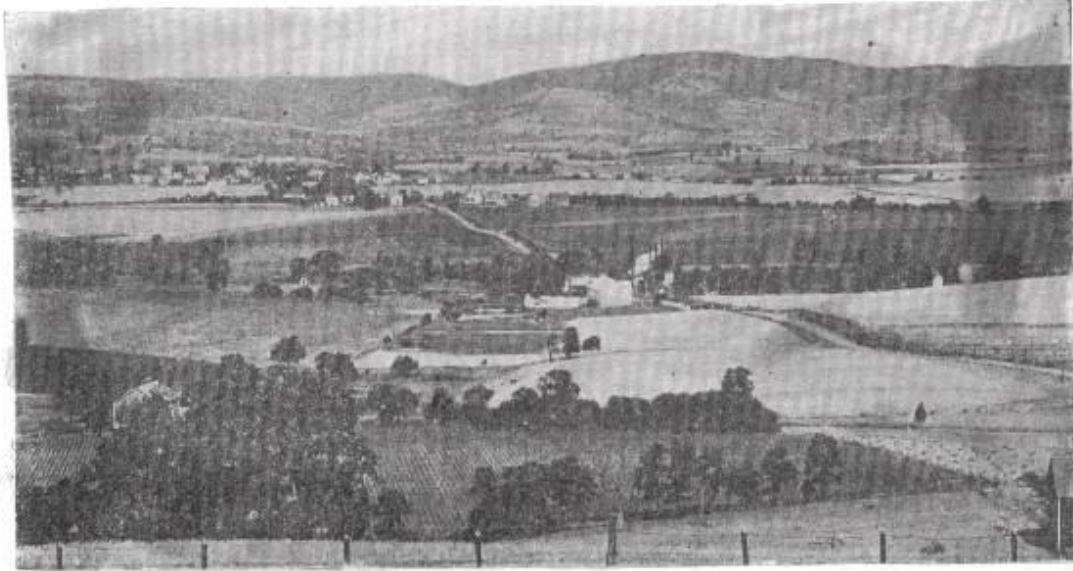
The end of the war saw a vast change economically, socially, and politically. The farmers went back to their farms and tried to repair the damage left by the war. Soldiers, broken in body and spirit, returned home to build a new life upon new standards. Once more the Valley took on the atmosphere of peace and calm. The war must now remain only as a bad dream to be put aside and forgotten if possible.

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Apr 21, 1865

## Chapter 6 – Agriculture and Farm Life

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MIDDLETOWN VALLEY FROM CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN

“Give fools their gold, and knaves their power;  
Let fortune’s bubbles rise and fall;  
Who sows a field or trains a flower  
Or plants a tree is more than all. <sup>a</sup>

- Whittier

Middletown Valley familiarly known as the “Garden Spot of Maryland,” <sup>b</sup> has always been primarily an agricultural community. The Valley has boasted many thriving industries, but in importance, all have been outstripped by the Valley’s agricultural enterprise. In fact, these industries, which have successfully grown to power in the community, owe their strength to agriculture, being only second industries. In the town, the stores carried equipment and supplies needed on a farm. Harness shops, wagon makers, and blacksmith shops depended upon the farmers for a market. Tanneries obtained bark and hides from farmers of the Valley. The distilleries secured the needed grain from the same source, while Valley mills depended entirely upon the local agriculturist. Thus it seems we should consider the art of farming, as practiced, at this particular point.

Up to the middle of the Nineteenth Century, little advancement had been made in agriculture. <sup>c</sup> With the coming of the industrial revolution and the change in industrial life, there was a breakdown in the self-sufficient farm system. People began raising a few crops instead of many. <sup>d</sup> The essence of the former system was production

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<sup>a</sup> (21), pg 12

<sup>b</sup> (12), pg 5

<sup>c</sup> (22), Vol 2, Chapter 5, pg 1

<sup>d</sup> (4), pg 256

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for home use rather than for exchange and profit.<sup>a</sup> The farm of the early Nineteenth Century was much like the manor of the Middle Ages, where almost everything that the master and serf needed was produced. Since capital was scarce and little information on scientific farming was available, the farmer tended to follow the same rut his father and grandfather had followed. (22)

The industrial cities, which were quickly mounting in number and size, brought increased markets and ready money. (4) These in turn, led to changes in agriculture which furnished more comforts and a higher standard of living.<sup>b</sup> The question of labor was yearly becoming greater. The farmer was forced to depend more and more upon his neighbors, along with his own family, for help during certain busy seasons. (22) When the husking, thrashing, or butchering season drew near, he invited friends and neighbors to his farm to help with the work. These gatherings held a two-fold purpose: they acted as a social function or get-together, and they were the means by which the labor problem was alleviated.

The labor situation became more acute when the sons and daughters, drawn by the idea of high wages and adventure, left the farms and went to the cities.<sup>c</sup> Free and cheap land added another incentive for the movement away from the Eastern farms. Many of the children of Middletown Valley left the section to seek their fortunes in Ohio.<sup>d</sup> One might be led to believe that immigration balanced this withdrawal. Such is not the case. The majority of the immigrants, drilled in the methods of the Old World, had no desire to take up life on an Eastern farm. If the farmer did obtain labor, it was at a high cost. (22)

The result of such a movement is easily discerned. Land was more plentiful than labor, and it was natural that labor-saving devices should come to supplant this loss. (4) The idea of an increase in yield per man, rather than per acre, became prevalent. Men interested in agriculture began experimenting in machinery and tools. Hoes, shovels, and rakes became lighter. Four-wheeled wagons replaced the two-wheeled ox-driven cart.<sup>e</sup> Up to 1840, the implements had been crude and often homemade. (4)

There seems to be little doubt the factor which first alleviated the labor problem was the advent of new and improved machinery.<sup>f</sup> Each year saw new implements, easier to handle and better applied to scientific farming. We should consider, at this point, a few of the improvements which were destined to revolutionize agriculture.

The old plows were made of strong wood, but there was constant trouble of the snapping of tips on hidden rocks while plowing rough ground. In 1819, Jethro WOOD, of New York State, developed a metal plow with interlocking parts. This plow permitted the replacement of parts when broken.<sup>g</sup> Formerly, the breaking of one piece meant the buying of a new plow. Wood's plow was made of several castings joined together by lugs and inter-locking parts.<sup>h</sup> In 1830, John LANE produced a plow with steel moldboard; but to Charles NEWBOLD of Burlington, New Jersey, belongs the credit of taking out the first American patent on a cast-iron plow.<sup>i</sup> The Newbold Plow of 1830 was not very successful, says Professor Harry J. CARMAN, "partly because the farmers believed that this new fangled implement 'poisoned the land, injured its fertility, and promoted the growth of weeds.'"<sup>j</sup> One great fault of the Newbold plow was its lack of interchangeable parts.<sup>k</sup> If one part became worn out or broken, it could not be replaced. (22) In 1837, John DEERE, an Illinois blacksmith, built the first steel plow and in 1869, James OLIVER of South Bend, Indiana, gave to the world the chilled-steel plow. This eliminated blow holes, and made the plow less brittle. (4) It was light and durable, and was made available at a low cost to the farmer accustomed to the back-breaking drudgery of older days.<sup>l</sup> The development of the plow

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<sup>a</sup> (19), pg 273

<sup>b</sup> (22), pg 2

<sup>c</sup> (22), pg 5

<sup>d</sup> (40), Article also printed in Valley Register in Oct 1906

<sup>e</sup> (22), pg 8

<sup>f</sup> (22), pg 22

<sup>g</sup> (4); (8), Chapter 1

<sup>h</sup> (22), (8)

<sup>i</sup> (4), (8)

<sup>j</sup> (22), pg 7

<sup>k</sup> The best description of most of this material is found in (8), Rogin, Farm Machinery in Relation to Labor, pg 1-66

<sup>l</sup> (19), pg 273

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

was accompanied by the improvement of harrows. <sup>a</sup> Although the triangular harrow with wooden pegs continued in use, the rectangular, hinged harrow came into use upon level land. <sup>b</sup>

Until the middle of the century, grain was sown by hand. The corn was covered by use of hoes, and the wheat by use of plows and harrows. Such a job demanded extreme care and long dreary hours in the field. Around 1850, the hand planters and the one and two-row drill machines appeared. Probably the most outstanding of these was the Billing One-Row machine which dropped the grain and covered it as fast as the horse could walk. This machine is very similar to the one-row drills of today. It is interesting to compare the work accomplished by these machines with the hand labor of earlier days. Two men with hoes could plant about one acre per day, while two men with a two-row drill machine could plant between twelve and twenty acres. <sup>c</sup>

For many years the farmers of the section had been prejudiced against book farming. They felt the methods of former generations had furnished them with plenty and certainly would continue to do so. Such an attitude was greatly deplored by the newspapers and periodicals of the state around 1850. Farmers were asked to use better methods and to fertilize the land. <sup>d</sup> The science of pedology, the study of soil, was maturing into a well-defined field of research. <sup>e</sup> Crop rotation was increasingly practiced. According to one resident of Middletown, a rotation of corn, wheat, and clover was generally practiced. <sup>f</sup> Better utilization of manure was urged. The fact, that manure could only be obtained in proportion to the number of cattle on the farm, emphasized the need of fertilizers. <sup>g</sup> Lime was introduced into the Valley around 1865 and gypsum and marl somewhat later. <sup>h</sup> The far-sighted farmer realized the value of such soil foods and did not hesitate to invest in them with a view to increased output.

The revolution we have just witnessed in cultivation and planting was just as great, if not greater, in the harvesting branch of agriculture. (5) In 1834, a young Virginian, Cyrus M. McCORMICK, patented a reaper which he had successfully used near his home in the Shenandoah Valley. <sup>i</sup> Before the invention of the reaper, the wheat crop was cut with cradles. Of all the hot and tiresome jobs on the farm, this was probably the worst. In 1859, the wage of a cradler was between \$2.00 and \$2.50 a day. A binder was paid between \$1.50 and \$1.75. (11) McCormick, a member of a Scotch-Irish family, spent most of his early life around Staunton. The principle upon which he worked was quite simple. A number of blades or wipers swept the grain against the blade surface. It was then pushed on to a receiving table and held until enough grain for a sheaf was gathered, then being released for the binders following the machine. It was not until after 1860 the reaper came into general use. <sup>j</sup> It permitted nine men to do what fifteen had formerly done. It prevented waste by speeding up harvest and increasing acreage. (4)

After the harvesting was completed, the problem of threshing became paramount in the mind of the farmer. The early system was to use a wooden flail which beat the grain from the straw. One could easily tell from a distance when threshing was in progress by the constant beating of the flail upon the barn floor. Between eight and sixteen bushels per day was the average production for one man. (4) An older method was to let cattle trample out the grain. <sup>k</sup> The first American threshing machines appeared around the "thirties" and simply separated the grain from the straw. By 1840, fans or cleaners appeared, making the return for farm investments much more profitable. All of these, until a good while after the war, were horse-driven. Since the machines were expensive and hard to run effectively, it became the custom for threshers with machines to hire out their work by the day,

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<sup>a</sup> (22), pg 22

<sup>b</sup> (22); Also explained to me by local farmers; (8), pg 36-65

<sup>c</sup> (22), pg 22; (8), pg 192-214

<sup>d</sup> (11), pg 279

<sup>e</sup> (43); also Reprint from "Annals of the Association of American Geographers", Vol. XV, Nov 1, 1925.

<sup>f</sup> Mr. John BUSSARD

<sup>g</sup> (22), pg 9; A good discussion of soil conditions was found in A. O. Craven, Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland.

<sup>h</sup> This material furnished by Mr. John BUSSARD.

<sup>i</sup> (22), pg 24; (8), pg 69-145, and excellent description of the development of the harvester.

<sup>j</sup> (4), pg 279

<sup>k</sup> (22), pg 29

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going from farm to farm. (22) The output of the new thresher and four or five men was estimated to be between twenty-five and thirty bushels per hour. <sup>a</sup>

Prior to the agrarian revolution, hay was cut with scythes. The first improvement came in the form of a single drive wheel and rigid cutter-bar mower. This had distinct disadvantages. It clogged when it came into patches of fine grass; on rough ground the mowing was distinctly wasteful; the driver was forced to dismount at every corner to avoid digging up the ground. <sup>b</sup> In 1856, Cyrus WHEELER patented a double-wheel mower which possessed a flexible cutter bar. Although the general adoption of the mower was slow, (22) few men could doubt its value. The next step was improved hay rakes. The spring-tooth hay rake was generally used throughout the Valley by 1855, <sup>c</sup> and really accomplished the work of eight or ten men. (4)

With the introduction of such improvements, much of the drudgery associated with the tilling of the soil was removed. By this, I do not mean a farmer's life was a bed of roses, far from it; he still rose early and worked hard, but his hours were more profitably spent and less back-breaking. Let us keep in mind, however, the purchase of new machinery, which was often very expensive, was hampered by the lack of ready capital. The banking facilities of Middletown, where ample credit could be obtained, were not firmly established until the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. <sup>d</sup>

The principal crops of the Valley were wheat, rye, a little barley, oats, corn, and hay. In the first half of the Nineteenth century, flax was raised, but the crop declined in acreage until it completely disappeared as an important product. Each farmer raised his own crop of vegetables and used them for home consumption. The vegetables not used in season were jarred by the farmer's wife and saved until the winter. If one could view the shelves of the farm home and see them fairly sagging from the weight of the jarred fruit and vegetables, he would certainly envy the farm family during the winter. Every woman prided herself in presenting beautiful specimens of fruit, especially when visitors came to dine.

Besides these crops, almost every farm had its grove of fruits. Apple, cherry, peach, and pear trees abounded. The pastures contained small herds of cattle, usually numbering between eight and twelve heads. From this herd, enough milk and cream was obtained to make a good supply of butter. Butter dealers, traveling from farm to farm bought up the excess quantities, carrying it to the city market or peddling it from house to house in the larger communities. The farmers themselves did very little in peddling their own butter. The dealers bought the butter for about twenty-five cents per pound and sold it at a huge profit, the retail price at times reaching as high as fifty-five cents. The lowest price I can find paid to the farmers was six cents.

In the pigpens could be found fine herds of swine. These were raised for home use and a number butchered each year.

Many of the farmers had large quantities of lumber. During the crisp cold winters, the men would spend their time cutting this valuable fuel for home consumption and market. Timber was hauled from the woods by six-horse teams. Hickory could be sold in Frederick for about \$5 per cord, while oak only brought \$4. Each wagon would carry about two cords with each trip. Oak bark was another profitable product. This brought between \$9 and \$10 at the local tanneries. It was hauled to town in loads varying in size from five to ten cords. <sup>e</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (22); Probably the finest discussion on threshing is found in Rogin, op cit., pages 148-182.

<sup>b</sup> (22), pg 27

<sup>c</sup> (11), pg 279

<sup>d</sup> (11), pg 528

<sup>e</sup> Described to me by Mr. John BUSSARD

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A few sheep were raised and their wool sent to local mills. <sup>a</sup>

The farms ranged in size from 120 to 200 acres. Although the soil was yearly becoming less fertile because of constant use, it can be classified as reasonably productive. The utilization of manure and fertilizers was destined to rejuvenate the soil to a considerable degree of its former fertility. As a whole, the Valley is well-drained, being dissected by the Catoctin Creek and its many tributaries. In the Southern portion of the Valley, the Potomac River helps to make the soil rich and moist. Mountain streams served as water supply, refrigerators, and irrigation branches for the local farms.

Considering all of these factors, one might conclude that the economic condition was rather favorable for the farmer. He had plenty of wholesome food, was assured of fuel for the winter, and still managed to save a little money. Often the father would retire after a small fortune had been achieved, move to the village, and turn the farm over to his son or sell it to another farmer for continuation of the work.

Leisure was almost an unheard of thing on the farm. The whole family had a definite plan of work for the entire year. During the spring there was the planting; the summer saw the long days crammed to the last minute with cultivating and harvesting; fall witnessed corn cutting and husking, butchering, and preparations for winter. Even the winter had its shares of labor. Fences were built, harness had to be mended, wood had to be cut, machinery needed repairing, and furniture for the home needed replenishing.

The women had a life just as hard and dreary as did the men. Families were large. Many of the necessities which we now buy at the local grocery store had to be prepared by the housewife. Soap and yeast had to be made; bread had to be baked; fruits and vegetables for the coming year dried or jarred; the cream had to be churned into butter and cheese; even the problem of making clothes fell to the hands of these hard-working women. <sup>b</sup>

Today the farm is equipped with many conveniences, few of which our grandfathers ever saw. The houses were large and often poorly arranged. The farm woman was over-zealous in her cleaning. She hesitated before opening the windows lest dust should collect. Before visitors came, every corner and nook had to be made to shine. Although the game of dust hunting probably was seldom indulged in by visitors, the wife played it to her best ability in her own home. Parlors were kept closed and dark, only to be opened on special occasions.

Water was obtained from the nearest spring or well. One bucket, placed on a table in the corner with a dipper beside it, served as the drinking water, while large pitchers and basins were kept handy for washing. Modern toilets were unknown and the outside "privy" was common on every farm. These were many times poorly located with regard to springs and drinking water.

Light was obtained from the tallow candle or oil lamp. Wood fire heated the house. The Holy Bible, Pilgrims Progress, Almanac, and a few other books were practically the only reading matter. No telephone connected the homes of friends and bad roads hampered communication.

In spite of all of the disadvantages and hardships, the farmer had much for which to be thankful. He was his own boss, had a happy social life, and he lived in the healthy out-of-doors. The natural beauties which surrounded him were almost enough to make him completely happy.

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<sup>a</sup> It might be interesting to consider at this point a few of the prices received for farm products.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Wheat</u>	<u>Corn</u>	<u>Whisky</u>
1846	\$.70-.75 per bushel	\$.25 per bushel	\$.21 per gallon
1849	.80-.90	.40-.45	
1852	.80-.90	.52	.22
1853 (Oct)	1.37-1.40		
1857	1.80		
1858	1.00	.75	.28

(Taken from (11), pg 277)

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<sup>b</sup> (22), pg 52

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

The social life of Middletown Valley was wrapped up in agrarian interests. There were practically no social functions which could be classed as distinctly divorced from the farm. The first of these functions may be considered as ways of helping with the work. There were butcherings, apple butter boilings, peach pearings, quilting parties, and barn raisings. The neighbors would take turns at helping each other. The work would begin early in the morning and while one group was busy the other would discuss "my corn crop" or "Sally's new baby". At noon the farm bell would joyously ring out the message that the meal was prepared. It is almost impossible to describe such a dinner. Nero may have had great feasts, but such farm gatherings were rivals in size and quantity. The meal did not commence until the visiting preacher – for the local minister was always invited – had thanked God for his bounteous gifts. If it were possible for a table to groan under the weight of food, these tables certainly must have. There were three or four kinds of meat, the finest of jarred fruits and pickles, and several kinds of pie and cake. After dinner while the women washed the dishes and gossiped, the men smoked their pipes and talked about their new farm machinery. Later in the afternoon the work was continued until it was finished.

The corn huskings were of extraordinary interest. Some night after the corn had been cut and hauled to the bar, the group would gather. While husking they sang and talked. The man lucky enough to find a red ear could kiss the girl next to him. Later in the night there would be dancing and, occasionally, some drinking.

"Devil cards" were considered a curse to any man. A crook, thief, or gambler was associated with the very word. Nevertheless, some people managed to sneak away and enjoy a good game in the seclusion of the hay mow or garret.

The school house furnished an excellent center for social gatherings. Spelling bees and singing at schools were popular. After the chores were finished, one might see a young man hitch his horse to the buggy and set out for the school house with his "best girl". One member of the singing school was selected as conductor, and by use of the tuning fork they began singing the popular old hymns. Sometimes the young people would meet at homes for corn poppings, dances or parties; the surprise party was the most popular of these. Such games as "Go in and Out the Window", "Drop the Handkerchief", and "Blind Man's Bluff" were played. Square dancing furnished an enjoyable evening. As the party progressed, the games would deteriorate into kissing duels such as "Post Office", etc. Just before leaving, a supper would be served, made up of what each person brought in his or her basket.

The Christmas season was a period of great festivity. The women would begin preparations early by baking six or eight three-layer cakes. Everybody would exchange baskets of cake. New Year's Day was particularly chosen for making social calls. On Christmas night, the whole community would go to church. This was the night that the children furnished the entertainment. All of the children, from sixteen-year-old Eddie, who stumbled through his five-minute welcome address, to little Mary, who bashfully whispered her one-line recitation, took part. Happy fathers and mothers sat back and watched their offspring with beaming faces and thumping hearts. There is no doubt that Christmas was a season of good will and Joy.

The Outdoor activities were just as numerous as the former gatherings. There were the picnics and family reunions. Each year the Sunday Schools would hold a big reunion and everybody, dressed in his "Sunday best", attended. At some of the picnics there were riding contests for the ladies and tournaments for the men. The object of the tournament was for the rider to catch a suspended ring on the end of a pointed pole. Running races, sack and potato races, wrestling matches and jumping contests drew the interest of the young folks. Then again, there were rifle matches to decide the Valley champions. At times, these friendly contests ended in free-for-all battles with fists and clubs flying freely.

There is little doubt in my mind that the advantages of such a life far out-balanced the disadvantages. The farmer worked long and hard, he lacked the conveniences of the city, and he had little means of changing his station in life; but at the same time, he had a simple and pure country life, he had a feeling of safety and security, and he had a social life that for genuine pleasure can be equaled but by few. <sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> I have based this discussion upon interviews with the following men who have spent most of their lives in the Valley and seen the many changes which I have described: John BUSSARD, John CASTLE, Jacob HORINE. I have also taken into consideration the stories told to me by my father and grandfather. I have used the discussion presented by Professor Harry J. CARMAN in his book as a general guide. Beard's Rise of American Civilization also furnished a general background.

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James Whitcomb Riley describes this feeling of security and happiness very well in the following poem:

“When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder’s in the shock,  
and you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin’ turkey-cock,  
and the clackin’ of the guineys, and the cluckin’ of the hens,  
and the rooster’s hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;  
O, it’s then the time a feller is a-feelin’ at his best,  
With the risin’ sun to greet him from a night of peaceful fest.  
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder’s in the shock.

They’s something kindo’ harty-like about the atmsufere  
When the heat of summer’s over and the coolin’ fall is here –  
Of course we miss the flowers and the blossoms on the trees,  
And the mumble of the hummin’ birds and the buzzin’ of the bees;  
But the air’s so appetizin’; and the landscape through the haze  
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days  
Is a pitur’ that no painter has the colorin’ to mock –  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder’s in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,  
And the raspin’ of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;  
The stubble in the furries – kindo’ lonesome-like, but still  
a-preachin’ sermons to us of the barns they grewed to fill;  
the strawstack in the meeder, and the reaper in the shed;  
the hosses in theyr stalls below – the clover overhead! –  
O, it sets my heart a clickin’ like the tickin’ of a clock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder’s in the shock.

Then your apples all is gathered, and the ones a feller keeps  
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yeller heaps;  
And your cider-makin’s over, and your wimmern-folks is through  
With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr sauce and sausage too! –  
I don’t know how to tell it – but if such a thing could be  
As the angels wantin’ boardin’, and they’d call round on me –  
I’d want to ‘commodate ‘em – all the whole – indurin’ flock –  
When the frost is on the punkim and the fodder’s in the shock.

- James Whitcomb Riley<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (37), pg 73-74

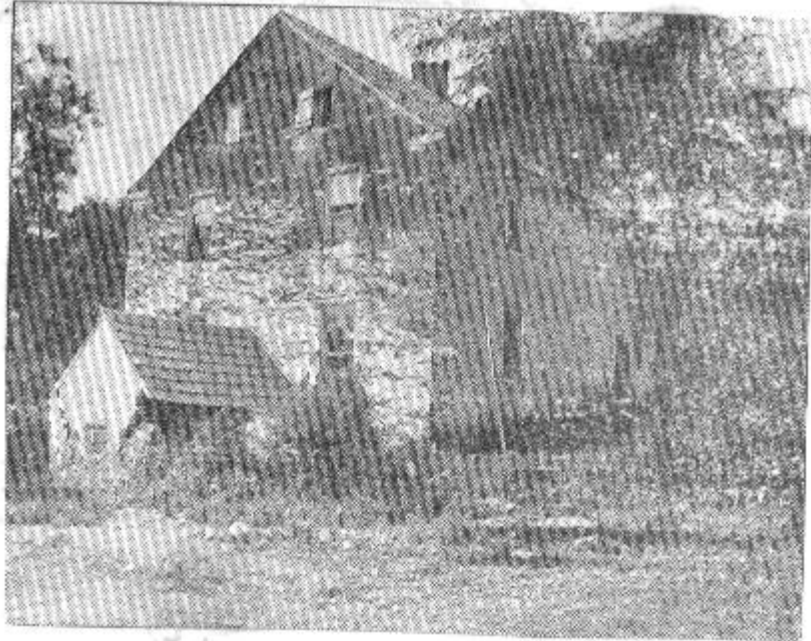


## Chapter 7 - Industries

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Middletown Valley was primarily an agricultural community. Nevertheless, the demand for farm and home supplies and equipment led to the development of certain industries. The supply of raw products which could be obtained at low rates from the farmers added another incentive to the industrial development. The fact the region was devoid of good transportation facilities made it necessary to have manufacturing practiced in the Valley or in the nearby communities. Probably the most outstanding of the industries was milling.

The Valley grist mills obtained the grain from local farmers. The farmer received part of his pay in the form of flour, the rest being in currency. The source of power by which most of the mills could grind the flour was derived from Catoctin Creek. This important little stream rises in the upper part of the Middletown Valley and winds its way slowly through the center of the district, constantly being increased in size by the mountain streams descending from the hills until it reaches the Potomac. Upon the Catoctin were fourteen dams and fourteen mills.



ONE OF THE OLD VALLEY GRIST MILLS

<sup>a</sup> The old water wheels, which turned slowly around, hour by hour, furnished the power for grinding. One of the wheels is known to have been twenty-four feet in diameter. Spring floods were a constant menace to the millers; for when the waters rose above the ordinary height, they swept the wheels aside and carried away much valuable equipment.

A great deal of the machinery was handmade, often carved from hardwoods. The man who constructed such machinery was a master at his trade. With the introduction of cheap metals and ready-made parts, most of the newer mills employed use of iron in place of wood.

Today nearly all of the mills have disappeared. A good market in nearby towns helped to diminish the need for them while fire and floods were responsible for removing others. There are still a few standing, but most of these are no longer in use. Dams in the stream mark the location of many which have disappeared. Although the mills no longer greet the passers-by, the tales surrounding them will live long in the minds of those who dwell in the Valley. About each one, a group of legends, always connected with ghosts and murders, has sprung.

Scattered throughout the Valley beside the flour mills, were a group of woolen and lumber mills run by the same source of power, the Catoctin. The wool was obtained from the local farmers and made into yarn, cloths, and

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<sup>a</sup> John Castle's Old Water Mills. This article was written by Mr. Castle and printed in The Valley Register. One copy of this article, along with articles on various other interesting places in the Valley, is found in a scrap book (unpublished) owned by Mr. Castle. I am basing my description of the mills upon the writings of this man.

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fine woolen blankets. A local market was sufficient in size to take care of the production. The lumber for the saw mills was derived from the mountain tracts owned by farmers of the Valley. <sup>a</sup>

### “The Old Valley Mills

There comes to me now o’er the mountain of blue  
The music of burrs that our grandfathers knew –  
The splash and the dash of the old waterwheels,  
Half choked in the dawn with a bevy of eels;  
I see the trim millers in garments of white  
Who took in the harvests from morning to night,  
And the teams with the bells which come over the hills  
With many a grist for the Old Valley Mills.

They stood in their strength by the rivers that run  
Thro’ the shadow of oak to the oceans of sun,  
Behind them the mountains that stared at the sky  
Before them the vistas of corn and rye,  
I see the young urchins who, long ago rode  
Hatless on top o’ the lumbering load;  
And the horses that drank from the depths of the mills,  
As they paused on their way to the Old Valley Mills.

Tho’ some are in ruin and their usefulness gone  
Their fame of the ages goes quietly on.  
The races that fed the old wheels in their day  
In the mists of the past have all vanished away;  
The owl hoots at night in the willows that grew  
Where the miller took toll that was honest and true,  
And the millers who ground in the shade of the hills  
Are sleeping not far from the Old Valley Mills.

Aye, where are the farmers that drove the great teams  
That back to me come even now in my dreams?  
They’re gone with the miller who took in the grain,  
The crack of their whips we shall hear not again;  
Catoctin flows on where the burrs sang their song,  
And the frogs croaked their music the tail-race along,  
And the miller’s good wife unaccustomed to frills,  
Is seen never more at the Old Valley Mills.

The few that are left standeth ancient and lone,  
With moss on the shingles and stone upon stone;  
But Memory comes with her beautiful thrall  
To crown the old spots that are dear to us all.  
The grasses may grow where the old millers sleep,  
The silences reign where the tall willows weep,  
And no boy whistles in the heart of the hills,  
As he carries the grist to the Old Valley Mills.”

- T. C. Harbaugh <sup>b</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (2), (40)

<sup>b</sup> (28), pg 7

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The tanning industry was another of the important business enterprises of the community. Hides could be bought at about fifty cents per pound from the local stock farmers. The bark from oak forests, needed for the tanning process, was cheap and easy to obtain. Each winter loads of this bark, hauled in six-horse wagons, come to the local tanneries.<sup>a</sup>

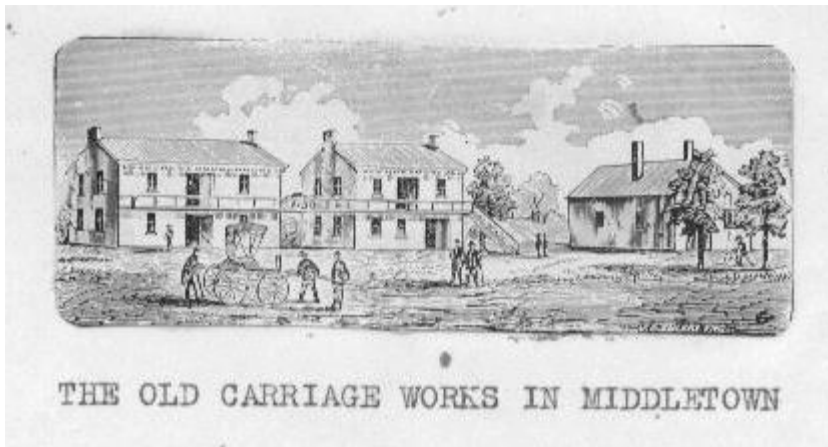
One tannery, equipped with six large vats, was located near Jerusalem and run by a Mr. SCHILDNECK. A large part of the finished product came in the form of sole leather. An eighteen-month period was needed to turn out the quality desired. The leather was noted for its fine grade and its durability. County shoemakers received their supplies from the local tanneries.<sup>b</sup>

Mr. Harbaugh describes very well the tannery in Middletown: "The building, as many will remember, was a long, rambling two-story structure. The basement contained the vat room, bark shed, engine room, etc., and went out level with the back yard, in which there were also vats. The second story came out level with Canaan Road and was the storage and finishing department. The place was rather "spooky" after dark, and timid people frequently gave it a wide berth."<sup>c</sup> The vats numbering between fifteen and twenty, each about nine-feet deep, were used for cleaning, removing the hair, and tanning. The plant employed fifteen or twenty hands during the busy season.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, there was no such thing as a prohibition law, nor was there a W. C. T. U. which could dictate to the people about the evils of drink. There were then, as there are today, those who realized the harmful effects of drinking; but these people emphasized the practice of temperance rather than abstinence. Although certain parties did end in somewhat of a drinking brawl, the majority of the people of the Valley were sane in their indulgence in liquor. One of the most flourishing industries of the time was distilling; and Middletown Valley had its share of distilleries. Two of them were outstanding, the Horsey Distillery near Burkittsville and the Horine Distillery near Harmony.

The Horsey Distillery was famous – for its Golden Gate whiskey. It received its name for the fact that much of it was aged by the boat trip to the Golden Gate of the West. The Horsey Distillery was established by Outerbridge HORSEY in 1849. The establishment was made up of the main distillery and two bond houses. Most of the rye needed in the preparation of the whiskey was hauled from Knoxville by teams. The selling price at the distillery was listed at \$4.00 per gallon. Such a thriving business brought much wealth into the Valley.<sup>d</sup>

Besides these industries, there were such businesses as harness making and carriage building. One carriage factory was run by a Mr. KALL and a Mr. BOWLUS. Sometime after the formation of their joint ownership, the firm fell into the hands of Mr. Lloyd HARREN. He employed six or eight hands almost all the time, and obtained a large part of the material used in the construction of the carriages from Baltimore.<sup>e</sup>



In the town were harness makers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, coopers and farmers' supply stations. One of the most outstanding institutions of the town was the general store. This carried almost everything a person could want. The proprietors were generous in their extension of credit and really acted as a sort of farmers' bank. In the corner of the store stood the old stove with its large

<sup>a</sup> The material for this discussion was obtained from Mr. Castle, Mr. Horine, Mr. Bussard and Mr. Harry Gross.

<sup>b</sup> This was described to me by Mr. Horine.

<sup>c</sup> (28), pg 9

<sup>d</sup> Described to me by Frank RUDY and John CASTLE.

<sup>e</sup> I obtained this information from Mr. Castle.

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wood box nearby. All during the winter, it was surrounded by loafers or occasional visitors who persisted in chewing tobacco, each trying to improve his spitting air by directing his tobacco towards the dingy wood box. Yarns and legends were told and retold thousands of times, and occasionally, a story which was slightly risqué would make its way into the conversation. At nights, for the stores were forced to stay open until about nine or ten o'clock to get the country business, politics and current events furnished most of the entertainment. On certain evenings one might have seen a soiled checker board appear and the town champions settle down to a determined battle.

Although not primarily an industry, the Middletown Publishing Company should by no means be overlooked. Since 1844, Middletown has been fortunate enough to have a newspaper. When transportation facilities were poor and news traveled slowly, this weekly paper kept the farming community in touch with the happenings of the rest of the world. No radio could inform the people what was happening, and the only source of news came through the pages of the newspaper.

On August 2, 1844, a stock company organized The Catoctin Whig. The paper was a Henry Clay campaign weekly and intended to mould the public opinion along political lines.<sup>a</sup> The news was meant to be of minor importance and editorials were nothing but political propaganda.<sup>b</sup> In December of the same year, the publication was purchased by Mr. H. L. BRADY and Mr. Mahlon RHODERICK. (45) In 1856, the paper was taken over by Dr. Edward BOWLUS and Mr. J. Carlton RHODERICK, Sr. These men were responsible for changing the name to The Valley Register. (45) On May 7, 1858, Mr. Rhoderick, who had started work in the office of the paper as an apprentice at the age of nine and one-half years, became the sole proprietor. His long experience fitted him well for the position of editor. Yet, in 1855, the paper had less than 200 subscribers. The editor ran the following ad in his columns:

“A family newspaper published weekly by G. Carlton Rhoderick at the low price of \$1.25 per annum, payable in advance, \$1.50 if not in advance.”<sup>c</sup>

The periodical was made up of four pages; one column on the outside sheet was devoted to poetry, while most of the front page sported articles on subjects somewhat as follows: The Ideals of Motherhood; Follies of the Rich; Work, The Brighter Side of Life; Live for Good; and Stick to It. Usually there appeared a few quotations similar to the one which follows: “The coat of a horse is the gift of nature. That of an ass is often the work of a tailor.”<sup>d</sup>

One column entitled “Wit and Humor” gave a few jokes, while only a few short paragraphs told the news. There was often the report of the Maryland Legislature or business of other neighborhood governments. The most important part of the paper, as far as the financial end was concerned, was ads. Two full pages were completely devoted to informing the farmers what they should buy and where the best stores were located. At one time, Mr. Rhoderick was forced to apologize to his readers because he had been forced to limit the news space in order to print all of the advertisements.

Patent medicines were very popular at the time, and it seems to me that one-half of the advertising space was covered by statements of eminent doctors on the best way to cure everything with one pill. A good example of this can be found in the Hollaway Pill advertisement – This pill was guaranteed to cure the following:

Bilious complaints	Blotches on the skin	Bowel complaints	Ague
Constipation	Fever of all kinds	Consumption	Indigestion
Stones and gravel	Inflammation	Liver complaints	Worms of all kinds
Dysentery	Dropsy	Erysipelas	Gout
Fits	Headaches	Sore throat	Jaundice
Tumors	Lumbago	Piles	Rheumatism
	Ulcers	Asthma	

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<sup>a</sup> (45), pg 91

<sup>b</sup> Much of the material for this discussion was obtained from G. Carl RHODERICK, Jr., present editor of the paper.

<sup>c</sup> (15), (heading each paper), 1860

<sup>d</sup> (15), Apr 6, 1862

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

Mr. Rhoderick was reporter, editor, type-setter, and printer, all at the same time. He set all of his type by hand and often worked late into the night by candle light, using an old Washington Hand Press. In one issue, the following apology appeared:

“The editor met with an accident while working on the outside of this issue by which he lost the first joint of his finger on the right hand; therefore, it has been impossible to give the attention to the inside of the paper it should have received. We therefore hope that our readers will overlook all defects.”<sup>a</sup>

The editor never hesitated to state his political views. He did much to turn the public opinion to the side of the Union during the war. Due to such activities, his office was sacked by Rebels during the Maryland invasion.

In the opinion of many, The Register was one of the finest papers in the East. For example, the Frederick Examiner gave the following commendation in 1865 upon its political loyalty: “The paper is second to no paper in the state in genuine loyalty and patriotic adherence to the Government.”<sup>b</sup> Another proof of its popularity can be seen in the advance in subscriptions. It grew from 200 to 2,200 within a period of a few years.<sup>c</sup>



THE VALLEY REGISTER OFFICE

The publication of Middletown’s popular weekly paper did not cease with the death of Mr. Rhoderick. His work has been continued by his sons, George C. and Charles K., and by his grandson, G. Carlton Rhoderick, Jr. Today it has a large circulation which reaches subscribers all over the world. It boasts a liberal and constructive editorial column, carries news in a thorough-going fashion, and follows a progressive policy. Almost every home in the Valley has one copy which is read and reread by the whole family, not so much for the national news, but rather for the local news. It is one of the few ways by which people, who have left their homes in the Valley, can keep in touch with local happenings.<sup>d</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> (15), Jan 31, 1862

<sup>b</sup> (15), Mar 10, 1865

<sup>c</sup> (45), pg 91

<sup>d</sup> This discussion is based upon my own experiences and upon talks with the present editor.

## Chapter 8 – Church History

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“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work.”<sup>a</sup>

In Middletown Valley, Sunday was a day of rest, and scarcely any work, other than the daily chores, was done. The loud ringing of the bells from the church spires ushered in the day. The family arose early in order to get the morning feeding and milking done before church time. Then, after everybody had changed to his “Sunday best”, the horse was hitched to the buggy and they left the farm for morning worship. The town was usually crowded; horses and buggies were hitched along the street; men and women were congregated in groups along the street talking; chattering children hurried to Sunday School clutching their pennies. Only a snow storm or a flood, which prevented use of the roads, kept these people in their homes on Sunday. Although I have not been successful in establishing any figures as to church attendance for the Valley, it is well-known a very large majority of the people attended church regularly. The man who refused to worship his Lord was looked down upon with scornful disdain.<sup>b</sup>

The people not only attended the regular preaching service each Sunday, but also many of the other services of the church. There was Sunday school, prayer meeting, choir practice, funerals and marriages. The Sunday night meetings were ideal places for young couples to spend the evening.

Nevertheless, church was not the only place where religion was expressed. Most of the homes respected the family altar and held home services. No meal could commence without the prayer of blessing. The Bible was the constant companion of young and old. Sunday afternoon’s were either spent in reading God’s word or in walking. Games and fun were restricted to the other days of the week, while Sunday had to be quietly observed.

It is my purpose to follow the history of several of the churches in the Valley and, by this method, to get a view of the religious activity and conduct manifested in the region.

**Lutheran Congregations of the Valley** – The credit for establishing the first churches in the Middletown Valley is due to the German immigrants.<sup>c</sup> About 1710 and 1711 these Germans, following the old Indian Trail, crossed the Catocin Mountain at Fishing Creek Gap, and entered Middletown Valley.<sup>d</sup> This region, then on the very outskirts of civilization, was still roamed by Indian hunting parties.<sup>e</sup> The first settlement was made about two miles north of what is now Myersville and named Jerusalem. Work was immediately begun on a log fort which the pioneers intended using, not only as a stronghold against the Indians, but as a place of worship. (11) The families, which made up this settlement and were its leaders, are today prominent: ROUTZAHNS, GAVERS, LEATHERMANS, HARPS, RENNERS, STOTTLEMEYERS, and others whose names we cannot discover. (38) The history of the church is rather obscure, but the general belief prevails that a small edifice was erected around 1716, (11) and another, somewhat larger, around 1740. (38)

These buildings have disappeared, along with the records. Williams asserts that the “Stone Church” near Ellerton is the descendant of the old church at Jerusalem. (11)

In the central part of the Valley, a second group of Germans appeared, settling in the vicinity of what is now Middletown. In 1755 a small church, thirty by thirty-three feet, was built upon the land of Mr. Daniel AHALT, about two miles southwest of Middletown. The little log sanctuary, constructed by the group of God-fearing

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<sup>a</sup> The Holy Bible, Exodus 19, 8-10

<sup>b</sup> The discussion of the first part of this chapter was obtained from interviews with several residents of Middletown. Other material is based upon my own experience in the section and upon the stories told me by my father and several other men with whom I lived.

<sup>c</sup> (15), Dec 1, 1899

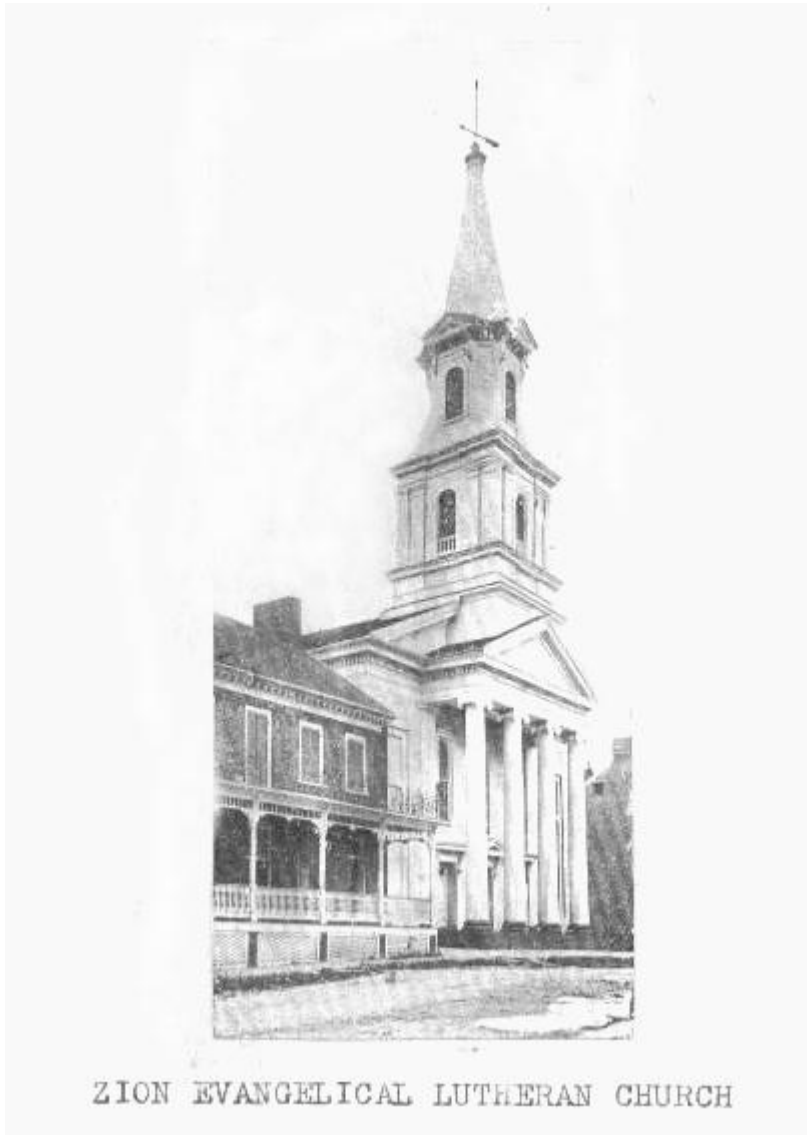
<sup>d</sup> (38), pg 23

<sup>e</sup> (11), pg 499

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

people, was located upon a fifty-acre plot of land. <sup>a</sup> Since the community was still very small, the edifice was used as a meeting place for both Lutheran and Reformed groups. (15) The fifty acres were deeded in trust to Jacob FLOOK of the Reformed group and Conrad YOUNG of the Lutheran group. Since there was a law in Maryland prohibiting a church from holding more than two acres of ground, forty-eight acres fell into the hands of a Jacob SHAWN. Suit was brought against him for the land, but the court maintained he was legally right. <sup>b</sup> Shawn later sold the land for eighty dollars per acre. (9) The church was used until 1790, although part of this time it was used as a parochial school. (15)

In 1775, the Reformed group determined to build a structure of its own. It chose a site near the location of the present church and constructed a log building much like the former one. This group gave the Lutherans the privilege of worshiping in the new structure and the latter accepted. When the building fell into ill-repair, it was abandoned as a place of worship and turned into a school. Shortly after the building of the second Reformed Church, the Lutherans decided to construct their own House of God. (15)



Mr. Conrad CRONE was the generous donor of the land for the first Lutheran church in Middletown Valley, the present Lutheran Church standing on the same spot. <sup>c</sup> Mr. Crone agreed to donate one-half of the necessary logs if the building were completed within one year. Work was started in 1783. <sup>d</sup> The result of their efforts was very satisfactory. The sanctuary was sexangular in shape, rather large, and surmounted by a tower. (11) In the tower hung a bell donated by Mr. Conrad YOUNG. This bell had formerly been on a man-of-war, but, due to Mr. Young's careful search, had been purchased at a very reasonable price. (11)

During the pastorate of Reverend George GRAEBER, the first church was torn down and a new brick edifice was erected at a cost of \$9,000.00. (15) The dedication took place on September 24, 1815 and a crowd of some 1,200 people were present. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Reverend Benjamin KURTZ of Baltimore, <sup>e</sup> his text being: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honour dwelleth."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>a</sup> (15), Dec 1, 1899

<sup>b</sup> (9), pg 575

<sup>c</sup> (9), pg 576

<sup>d</sup> (11), pg 500

<sup>e</sup> (38), pg 24

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

The steeple for this church was made in Shepherdstown, Virginia (West Virginia), and hauled to Middletown on wagons by Messrs. George and Michael BOWLUS and Jacob CRONE. During the pastorate of Reverend SCHNEE, two bells, which weighed over 1,100 pounds, were purchased in Philadelphia. Due to the lack of proper adjustment in hanging, they cracked. The metal was recast and one bell made out of the two. Somewhat later another bell was purchased and hung beside the first. These two are still in use. (15)

During the ministry of Reverend Michael WACHTER, between 1836 and 1843, repairs and improvements were made to the church at a cost of \$2,000.00. (15)

By 1859, the congregation had grown so in size, the building could no longer comfortably accommodate the people. Accordingly, additional property was purchased and a new building erected. The original cost was fixed at \$25,000. It was constructed of brick, 60x90 feet, had a large steeple, and boasted a fine set of bells. It was estimated that it would seat 1,400 people. During the construction, Mr. Samuel LEAZER of Middletown fell from one of the windows and was severely injured.<sup>b</sup>

Two years after the erection of the church, the Civil War was raging through the Valley. Because of the location of the building, and due to its size, it was turned into a government hospital. Here the wounded of both Federal and Confederate Armies were cared for by citizens of the town and volunteers from nearby cities. The church was not evacuated until several months had passed. During the war period, the building had been damaged and was badly in need of repair. Through the aid of a government appropriation, the necessary remodeling was completed. (15)

In 1870 the church was the scene of a horrible tragedy. Contractors were at work strengthening the steeple. Three men working on the front of the church, Mr. H. G. WILES, Mr. George CHAMBERLAIN, and a Mr. SMITH, were injured when the scaffolding gave way under them. Wiles managed to save himself by catching one of the front columns and sliding down. Smith and Chamberlain were hurled to the ground, the former landing on a metal picket fence. One of the pickets pierced his body, fatally wounding him. Smith managed to stagger to his feet and withdraw the dart, but the injury was so serious he died within ten minutes. The other men escaped with minor injuries. (15)

Since that time the church has seen many improvements and changes: as in 1899 when a pipe organ was installed costing \$3,000.00. (15) Today it stands as a monument to the founders of Lutheranism in Middletown Valley.

As one gazes down into the Valley from the mountains, he sees the white spire rising high in the air above the rest of the buildings. It lends a feeling of serenity and peace to the gazer.<sup>c</sup> The Zion Lutheran Church is not the only Lutheran Church in the Valley. In 1910 there were twelve churches with a total membership of over 2,000. The church property was estimated to be worth \$115,000.00.<sup>d</sup> Time and space will not permit a study of each of these charges. Nevertheless, the history of each one is somewhat similar. They all started as a branch of an earlier church. As the population increased, they separated and built their own churches, and obtained their own ministers. All kept up a program of increase in numbers. Each

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<sup>a</sup> The Holy Bible, Psalms 26, 8

<sup>b</sup> (11), pg 501

<sup>c</sup> The following is a list of the pastors who served Zion Lutheran Congregation; the list is taken from the Church Record: "The first Lutheran preacher known to have been located in the Valley was Rev. NICODEMUS, but there is no record of the time of pastorate or place of residence. The second pastor was Rev. Frederick GERRESHEIM and he lived in Middletown. He arrived Dec 16, 1779 and resigned in July 1782, about the time the Revolutionary War closed. Rev. J. A. KRUG, who arrived at Frederick on Sep 18, 1782, located there, but served the Middletown congregation. Rev. Jacob GOERING, who lived at Hagerstown, was the fourth pastor; he served one year and was called to York, Pennsylvania. The name of the sixth pastor, who remained six months, is not given in the church record. Rev. J. G. SCHMUCKER then was the sixth pastor. The seventh was Rev. J. G. GRAEBER, 1796-1819. Rev. Johannes KACHLER, 1819-1821; Rev. Jacob SCHNEE, 1821-1829; Rev. Adam RECK, 1829-1836; Rev. Michael WACHTER, 1836-1843; Rev. C. A. HAY, 1843-1845; Rev. David BITTLE, 1845-1852; Rev. John ROSENBERG, 1852-1853; Rev. John McCRON, 1853-1855; Rev. Peter RIZER, 1855-1857; Rev. Charles KLINK, 1857-1861; Rev. Lloyd KNIGHT, 1861-1862; Rev. W. D. STROBLE, 1862-1867; Rev. M. J. ALLEMAN, 1867-1869; Rev. Daniel STECK, 1870-1875; Rev. John HAWKINS, 1875-1876; Rev. L. A. MANN, 1876-1887; Rev. Peter BERGSTRESSER, 1887-1893; Rev. M. L. BAER, 1893-1906; Rev. William BROWN, 1906-1910; Rev. J. W. GENTZLER, 1910-1914; Rev. W. A. HARTMAN, 1914-1918; Rev. C. M. TEUFEL, 1918-1920; Rev. C. A. COOPER, 1920-1924; Rev. William C. DAY, 1924-1930; Rev. L. Ralph TABOR, 1931 to present time.

<sup>d</sup> (11), pg 501



## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

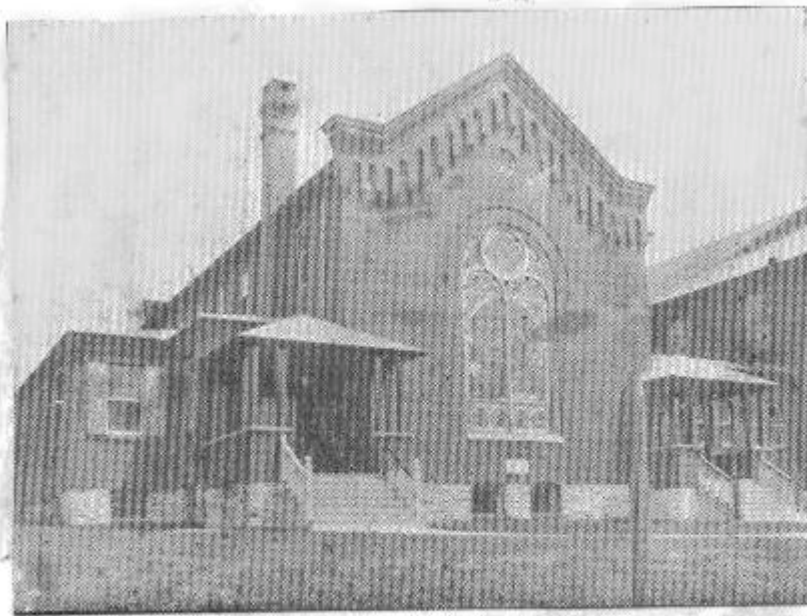
church had its share of improvements and misfortunes. Today they are a part of a well-knit Lutheran body. Credit is due the founders of these congregations for their constant interest and desire to spread their religion to all sections of the Valley. They have never hesitated to accept the changes which were necessary for better church organization.

**Evangelical Reformed Church** – The Reformed Congregation, like the Lutheran, dates back to the early Eighteenth Century. A heritage of heroic advancement has been handed to the thriving congregation of today. The early German pioneers, who fought their way into this unsettled section, carried with them their desire to worship God, even in the face of direct hardships. Their first place of worship was the old log church on the AHALT farm, southwest of Middletown. An account of the church was given in the first part of this chapter. The records which tell the story of the first services have been lost. The pastors of the early churches lived in Frederick, making the journey from that city to conduct the services. It was not until 1830, the ministers took up their abode in Middletown.<sup>a</sup>

The church on the Ahalt farm was used jointly by the Lutherans and the Reformers. A parochial school was created in the same church and the records show that Mr. MUNTY was the first instructor. The “Gott’s Acker”, or the burial ground, was located beside the church.

After about fifteen years, the first log church was abandoned and the congregation moved to Middletown where they erected a log church near the site of the present building. The congregation thoughtfully offered the use of their church to the Lutherans who accepted and worshipped in it until the third church was erected near the same spot. Little data can be obtained which explains the conditions at this time.

The year 1818 saw work commenced upon the fourth church, which is the edifice still standing. Reverend Jonathan HELFENSTEIN was the pastor and to him much of the credit is due. Mr. Peter COBLENTZ was the man in charge of construction.<sup>b</sup> The corner stone was laid on July 2, 1818, the spire raised on October 27, 1818, and the whole structure completed by June 1819. The dedicatory service took place on June 27, 1819.<sup>c</sup>



THE REFORMED CHURCH IN MIDDLETOWN

Reverend John Conrad STEINER came as the first minister to Middletown. He accepted the call in March 1757, and remained the pastor until December of the same year. Since the Middletown congregation was small and had little money with which to maintain a resident minister, the religious advisor lived in Frederick and served both charges. Reverend Steiner made a trip of eighteen miles each month to deliver the sermon and to administer the rites to the worshippers of the old log church.

According to Williams,

<sup>a</sup> The discussion of the Reformed history is based upon the church Records which are in the hands of the present pastor, Rev. John S. ADAMS.

<sup>b</sup> (9), pg 577

<sup>c</sup> Church Records

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

the financial condition of the Middletown Church was very discouraging in 1829. The church was heavily in debt, and besides that, there was no minister to guide its faltering feet. Reverend J. C. BUCHER, then pastor of the Cavetown charge, was approached by members of the Middletown church, and asked to take over the ministerial post in the Valley. Reverend Bucher agreed to speak in the church but would make no other promises. On the day of his visit, the Lutheran Church suspended services in order that the interested Lutherans might hear the new man. A huge crowd packed the church, eager to hear what message of hope he might give them. After the sermon was completed, Bucher definitely stated that he would not consider the position until the debt had been cleared away. Accordingly, a plan for raising subscriptions was submitted. As Mr. Williams describes the work, "Father Peter COBLENTZ at once responded with a subscription of \$500.00, and with tears in his eyes, called upon his brother, John PHILIP, and John REMSBERG to come and save the congregation from destruction. In a few minutes, \$1,800.00 was subscribed." In less than two weeks the debt was wiped out and a surplus of \$1,600.00 had been raised for the purchase of a parsonage.<sup>a</sup>

The pastorate of Reverend Bucher is very important because it came at a time of transition. It saw the separation from the Frederick Church. During this period the first parsonage was built and the congregation increased by leaps and bounds. In Mr. Bucher's twelve years, he baptized 745 and confirmed 482. A sum of \$12,000.00 was donated to various benevolences. There is no doubt in my mind that Reverend Bucher was responsible for holding the Reformed Church together. A weak man, in the same position, might have caused its breakdown. Much credit is due this noble worker. In June 1842, he preached his last sermon as pastor of the church.

Since the period of Reverend Bucher's pastorate, the Reformed Congregation has witnessed a period of constant progress. It has been fortunate in having an excellent set of pastors as well as a fine group of church leaders. Improvements of all kinds have been instituted and additional land obtained.

The Reformed Church in Middletown today is an outgrowth of a Congregation of pioneers. It has fought itself up from a small group of about thirty members to a large and thriving congregation. The members are rightfully proud of the constant growth and success they have met.<sup>b</sup>

**United Brethren Church** - In 1760, this county witnessed the appearance of a group of people who preached a doctrine different from those of the established churches. Before this time, all of the people had worshipped together. With this turn of events, the small group withdrew from the other congregations and met together to worship as they saw fit. In Middletown Valley, shortly before the turn of the Century, one of these groups developed. It was to form the nucleus of the United Brethren Church. Prior to this time, the group was divided between the Lutheran and Reformed Congregations. For twenty-five years the new group met in the home and barn of Mr. Jacob TOMS.<sup>c</sup>

In 1827, upon the urging of Abraham and Jacob DOUB, the Brethrens built a church on the site of the old log church at Jerusalem. In 1851, they decided to rebuild in Myersville. The original plan was to let the old building stand for the use of funerals. The Maryland Assembly in 1866 decided otherwise, and, by means of a committee, the land, logs, and stone were disposed of at a good price.

The land, upon which the new church was to be erected, was donated by John HARP. The bill for construction was placed at \$1,744.50, and the whole amount covered by subscription. On April 25, 1852, Bishop J. J. GLOSSBRENNER dedicated the new edifice.

On September 18, 1857, a committee was selected to erect a cupola and purchase a bell for the church; this was done at a cost of \$535.59. In 1891, a terrible storm demolished the church built in 1852. A new building was

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<sup>a</sup> (11), pg 464

<sup>b</sup> The following is a list of the Reformed ministers taken from the Church Record: Rev. Charles LANGE, 1766-1777; Rev. Frederick S. HENOP, 1770-1784; Rev. Charles RUNKEL, 1784-1802; Rev. Daniel WAGNER, 1802-1810; Rev. HELFENSTEIN, 1811-1828; Rev. J. C. BUCHER, 1829-1842; Rev. A. P. FREEZE, 1842-1845; Rev. I. F. McCAULEY, 1845-1856; Rev. George GLESSNER, 1856-1861; Rev. T. A. RUPLEY, 1861-1876; Rev. T. F. HOFFMEIER, 1876-1897; Rev. J. W. PONTIUS, 1897-1907; Rev. J. B. SHONTZ, 1907-1908; Rev. George A. SNYDER, 1908-1924; Rev. John S. ADAMS came to Middletown in 1925 and is the present pastor.

The discussion for this chapter is based almost entirely upon the unpublished records of the Evangelical Reformed Church. These records are in the hands of Rev. John S. ADAMS.

<sup>c</sup> I am basing my discussion upon a paper written by the late Cyrus FLOOK of Myersville. The article was presented at the Eightieth Anniversary of the Church.

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

erected at once and the cost was \$3,196.86. Since that time the church has been remodeled and additional land obtained. Today it is a thriving charge and one of the larger congregations of the Valley. <sup>a</sup>

The United Brethren charge in Middletown was not as large as its sister church in Myersville, and for this reason, was served by the Myersville pastors. The congregation occupied the brick church in Middletown in conjunction with the Methodists, until the latter group erected another building. From then on until today, they have remained to worship in the old brick building. <sup>b</sup> The congregation, although active, is very small and seems to be dying out at the present time.

**The Methodist Church of Middletown** – Around 1800, the first Methodist Church was organized in Middletown. A small building was built, which met the needs of the people. Around 1830, this building fell prey to fire and a new building was needed to replace it. A brick church was constructed in the center of the town and occupied jointly by the Brethren and the Methodists. In 1833, the last church was built. It was sufficiently large to suit the congregation and very neat in appearance. In May 1855, the new church was dedicated.

Some idea of the church's strength may be gained when we consider the amount of money contributed on that day; the collection amounted to \$2,400.00. In 1858, there were 159 members. For many years the church continued to improve in all ways. <sup>c</sup> Nevertheless, towards the end of the Century, one could see the first sign of a weakening. Slowly it began dwindling in size until it was so small it could no longer hire a minister. Today the building has been remodeled and made into an apartment house. The members of the congregation who are still living have joined the membership of the other churches. Even the history of the church is lost in obscurity. The once powerful congregation has completely disappeared.



THE METHODIST CHURCH OF MIDDLETOWN

There are many other churches in the Valley, the history of each one inspiring. Nevertheless, since the general trend of events in each one is almost the same, I have seen fit to exclude them.

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<sup>a</sup> The following pastors served this United Brethren Church: Rev. W. T. LOWERY, 1852-1855; Rev. Theodore BRASHIERS, 1855-1857; Rev. I. K. STATTON, 1857-1859; Rev. L. M. MATHEWS, 1859-1861; Rev. Isaiah BALTZEL, 1861-1863; Rev. W. T. LOWERY, 1863-1865; Rev. C. T. STERN, 1865-1868; Rev. A. M. EVERS, 1868-1870; Rev. G. W. STATTON, 1870-1872; Rev. J. K. NELSON, 1872-1875; Rev. J. W. KUNK, 1875-1877; Rev. C. F. HOFF, 1877-1880; Rev. RUEBAUH, 1880-1881; Rev. C. H. COWELL, 1881-1884; Rev. I. M. UNDERWOOD, 1884-1887; Rev. J. W. HICKS, 1887-1889; Rev. W. L. MARTIN, 1889-1892; Rev. G. W. KIRACOFE, 1892-1894; Rev. S. F. BUTTS, 1894-1895; Rev. Rudolph BYRD, 1895-1899; Rev. J. G. ROUDEUSH, 1899-1900; Rev. F. M. GLENN, 1900-1903; Rev. Charles FISHE, 1903-1904; Rev. D. W. SOLLENBERGER, 1904-1905; Rev. F. B. PLUMMER, 1905-1907; Rev. E. A. STANTON, 1907-1909; Rev. H. W. ZUSE, 1909-1914; Rev. Paul KOONTZ, 1914-1915; Rev. George SMITH, 1915-1916; Rev. E. J. RENSHAW, 1916-1917; Rev. H. E. CROWE, 1917-1921; Rev. F. J. KOHLER, 1921-1924; Rev. P. E. RINEHART, 1924-1926; Rev. B. F. BLUBAUGH, 1926 to present time.

<sup>b</sup> (9), pg 577

<sup>c</sup> (9); I could not obtain any further records of this church. Even the members of the congregation who still live in the community can give little information.

## **Chapter 9 - Education**

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Cicero once said, "What greater or better gift to the state than to train the youth?"<sup>a</sup>

The settlers of the new world readily realized the value of education in the building of the democratic nation. They came here determined to better their economic and social life. With this in mind, they quickly built little log schools where their offspring, the America of tomorrow, could train themselves to meet the problems of the future. From amongst their number, the pioneers selected outstanding leaders to act as instructors and to guide the stumbling steps of children over the three R's. In each settlement arose the one-room school embracing a group of children ranging from six to twenty years old. School could only be run during the winter season, since the farm work kept many of them home during the spring and fall. These schools were crowded all winter, the children sitting on long wooden benches with their little slates upon their knees.

But the one-room school we hear so much about was not the only means of education. There were the church schools, the private schools for the more wealthy, and the newly- started universities. Although these schools were far from being the modern educational institutions, they did go thoroughly into the subjects they studied. Middletown Valley fits well into the general picture of learning.

The records which tell the history of education in Middletown are either lost or were never kept. For this reason we are forced to depend much upon the memory of people who attended these schools for our information.

Located throughout the Valley were several small grammar schools. Children, desiring to better their store of knowledge, had to walk many miles to attend the classes of the old schoolmaster. It was not a tempting fate to get up early on a cold winter morning and trudge through the snow to the schoolhouse miles away.

Most of these buildings were made of logs and chinked with mud to keep out the cold. In the center of the structure was a large wood stove, the only heat available. Desks could not be secured because of the lack of money. They were replaced by hard oak benches, supported by four legs. The benches had no backs and the discomfort of the student increased with each passing hour of the school day. A large board in the middle of the room served as a place to work, when the student was not using his small slate. Most of the buildings were crowded beyond belief. The schoolmaster had his hands full trying to keep order since the children were so crowded they determined to make the best of an unfortunate situation. The old hickory stick was the symbol of discipline which constantly hovered over their heads.

Modern sanitation was unknown, water being obtained from an old spring or pump. The toilets were nothing more than the cold outdoor "privies".

The number of students fluctuated with the season, the school being crowded during the Winter, and practically empty during the Spring and Fall. When the farm work was heavy, education was of secondary importance. All seven grades were crowded into one room and were taught by one man. The three R's were the most important subjects considered, and hygiene and physical education were not considered worth the time necessary for their study. The only playtime was during dinner hour and recess, when the children scampered over the grounds playing ball or conducting a friendly fight.

In Middletown, after the Civil War days, there were two classical schools, one in the Lutheran Lecture Room, and the other in the Reformed Lecture Room. Reverend HEAGES was instructor in the Lutheran School and Reverend KIEFFER and Mr. SHAFER in the Reformed. For some reason which I cannot discover, the Lutheran School closed and the Reformed took over its students.

Although there was much of which to be proud in this system of education, several men in the community began to feel the need of a more comprehensive school. Mr. Carl RUDY, Reverend MANN, Reverend HOFFMEYER, and Mr. George RHODERICK, together with several other men, decided to form the Middletown Classical

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<sup>a</sup> (21), pg 145

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

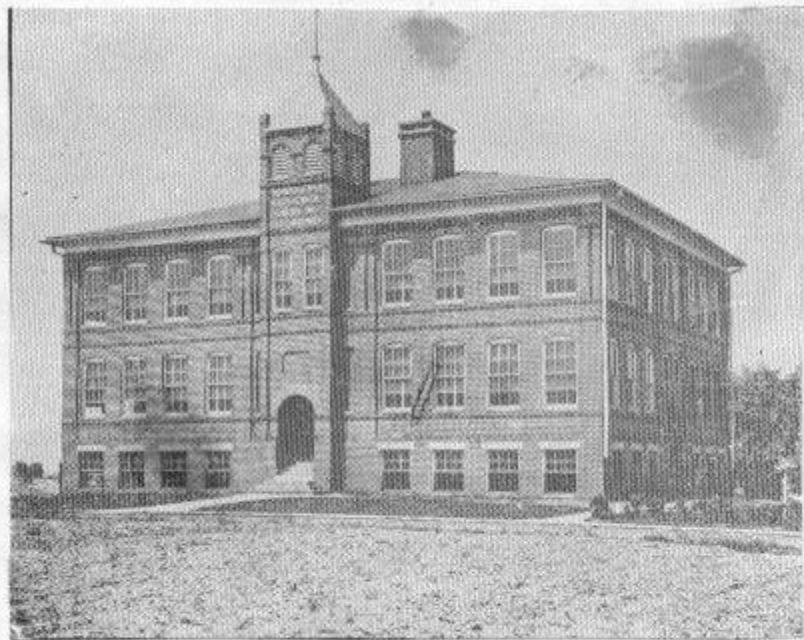
Academy. They hired Mr. William AVIS to be the teacher. He was guaranteed a certain sum of money in excess of the \$1,000.00 paid him by the school board. This money was to be raised from the tuition. The students were charged about \$20.00 the first year and about \$30.00 the last year. If the money fell short of the guarantee, the founders were to make up the difference. Part of the teacher's job was to go around the Valley and enlist students.



THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE

Mr. Avis was a strict educator. He permitted no student with a poor background in early study to enter the Academy. The courses studied were very difficult and a student with a meager amount of knowledge would have a hard time keeping up with the class. The course of study was so arranged that a boy could transfer from his study in the Valley to college classes. Mr. William MINNICK went directly to Gettysburg College and entered the Junior Class. The list of courses included: Latin, Greek, General Science, Mathematics, English, and German. One former student claims that he was required to read sixty lines of Greek and Latin per day. Classes were called to order every morning at 9:00 and remained in session until 4:00 in the afternoon.<sup>a</sup>

In 1888, the school board stepped in and formed the first public high school with Mr. Avis acting as principal. The high school, together with the grammar school, was located on the site of the present Lutheran Cemetery. The high school remained here only a short time, moving to the Catholic Church somewhat later. The grammar school remained in the old building until it was destroyed by fire in 1907. The present grade and public high school was erected in 1908. Since that time another building has been erected and the two schools separated once more.



MIDDLETOWN HIGH SCHOOL

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<sup>a</sup> This was described to me by Mr. HORINE, a former student in the Academy.

## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

The question of discipline was a big problem in the early high school. The boys, often as old as twenty years, were hard to handle. With the coming of Mr. R. E. KIENEY, the situation changed. Mr. Kiene – besides being an excellent instructor – was master of the art of discipline. He straightened out the troubles of the school and placed it upon a high and successful level. <sup>a</sup> Very much credit is due to him in his work, many people of the community even expressing the belief that he is responsible for the fine system of education we now have in Middletown.

Located in Burkittsville was the Female Seminary founded by Reverend W. C. WIRE. Reverend Wire was from Lovettsville, Virginia, and held a degree from Roanoke College.

The school was made up of about thirty-five boarding students and the same number of day scholars. Those living at the school came from all sections of the country. The primary grades, however, were made up largely of local girls. The school commenced each year about the first of September and closed the third Thursday of June. The tuition ranged from \$300.00 to \$400.00 per year, excluding extra expenses. The only recreation which the faculty supervised was the daily walk required of every student. <sup>b</sup>

The days of the old school have passed. Today we have an excellent system of public education throughout the Valley. Busses carry the children from the country districts to the new schools, well equipped with the modern conveniences. There is no doubt this system is a great advancement; nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the work of the earlier schools. They served the community admirably; they gave the student what he needed for his life as a good-thinking citizen. Many of the students of the old schools still claim their three R's were taught better, their time was better spent, and we must turn again to the old system. Although we must discard much of this, let us remember that the schools of yesterday are great steps in the march of education.

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<sup>a</sup> Told to me by Mr. E. L. COBLENTZ.

<sup>b</sup> Described to me by a former student in the Seminary.

SYSTEM OF GRADES

—IN—

Burkittsville Female Seminary.

GRADES IN SCHOLARSHIP.

HONORARY GRADE.

Pupils who have made no mistake or failure in any recitation, who have received no demerits, and who have not been tardy or absent, except on account of illness, during the month, will be promoted to the HONORARY GRADE, and receive prizes at the end of each Scholastic Year.

Pupils are placed in the FIRST GRADE who have made not more than five mistakes or failures in any one branch of study during the month; in the SECOND GRADE, for over five and not more than ten; in the THIRD GRADE, for over ten and not more than fifteen, and in the FOURTH GRADE, for over fifteen.

The average number of mistakes in all the studies will indicate the grade of the pupil for the month.

All recitations excused are regarded as lost.

GRADES OF DEPORTMENT.

Pupils are placed in the FIRST GRADE who have not received more than five demerits during the month; in the SECOND GRADE for over five and not over ten; in the THIRD GRADE, for over ten and not over fifteen, and in the FOURTH GRADE, for over fifteen.

For every violation of a rule, and for any unladylike conduct, one demerit is given. For continued violation of a rule, five. For being tardy, without a written excuse, five. For being absent half a day, without excuse, five. For being absent a day, without excuse, ten. For deception in reporting, and any other grave offence, ten. For willful neglect to prepare recitation or composition, five; and for every day's delay in preparing composition, one.

Literary and Musical Entertainment,

IN AID OF THE

Sunday-School of St. Paul's, Lutheran Church

GIVEN BY THE

Young Ladies of the Burkittsville Female Seminary,

Thursday Evening, June 14th, 1883,

At 7 o'clock.

PROGRAMME:

PIANO DUET—"Ocean Waves," - - - - - Streabog.

Miss LELA BOWERS, JOHN BOWERS.

CHORUS—"Night Shades no Longer," - - - - - Rossini.

PIANO SOLO—"Fra Diavolo," - - - - - Auber.

Miss LELA BOWERS.

SONG—"Marjorie's Almanac," - - - - - Dolby.

Miss J. WILLIAMS.

PIANO SOLO—"Marche de Nait," - - - - - Gottschalk.

Miss ANNA FOUT.

SONG—"London Bridge," - - - - - Molloy.

G. S. BOWERS.

READING—Miss F. A. DOREY.

VOCAL DUET—"The Hunter's Song," - - - - - Kucken.

Misses L. BOWERS, M. KREPPS.

PIANO DUET—"International Fantasie," - - - - - Epstein.

Misses MAMIE HORINE, PEARL AHALT.

SONG—"Who's at my Window," - - - - - Osborne.

Miss F. A. DOREY.

READING—Rev. M. L. BEARD.

VOCAL DUET—"Beautiful Moonlight," - - - - - Glover.

Misses L. POFFENBERGER, J. WILLIAMS.

PIANO SOLO—"Sweet Bye and Bye" Fantasie,

Miss MOLLIE YOUNG.

CHORUS—"In the Starlight."

PIANO DUET—"Marche de Tambours," - - - - - Saith.

Misses BOWERS AND FOUT.

ANTHEM—*Quartette*—"The Lord is my Shepherd."

LUTHERAN PUBLICATION HOUSE PRINT, PHILA.



## A Brief History of Middletown Valley - Gross

The other eve I climbed a hill  
    With thoughtful steps and slow,  
A hill whose summit oft I sought  
    In childhood's "long ago".  
And many a sweet thought came to me  
    As all alone I stood,  
Where once the old brick schoolhouse rose  
    Close by the wavy road.

It seemed to me that 'round me swarmed  
    Where thick the shadows lay,  
The forms of schoolmates loved and dear  
    And faces passed away –  
And there I heard, as oft of yore,  
    The voice of Bill or Joe,  
And felt the touch of cherished hands,  
    That mouldered long ago.

I heard the bell the masters rang,  
    (They sleep beneath the sod,  
Their only aim in life to serve  
    Their country and their God.)  
And then I thought how few remain  
    Of Valley belles and beaux  
Who climbed with me that little hill  
    So many many years ago.

Not one of all the playmates old  
    Seemed absent while I stood  
Where once we swung our sweethearts in  
    The shadows of the wood,  
And while I tarried on the ground  
    Their footsteps to and fro  
Kept time to loved and holy thoughts  
    Of life's sweet long ago.

The schoolhouse has been replaced  
    By one of statelier view,  
The playground of today is not  
    The playground that we knew;  
The children who with shout and song,  
    Run daily to and fro,  
Look like the boys and girls who were  
    Our schoolmates long ago.<sup>a</sup>

- T. C. Harbaugh

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<sup>a</sup> (28), pg 157-158

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