

DISCOVERING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

BY

GRADE V

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BRISTOL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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DISCOVERING OUR COMMUNITY

The community of Bristol (formerly called Pig Point) is situated on a piece of high ground bordering on the east side of the Patuxent River in Anne Arundel County. It is about twenty miles or more southwest from Annapolis, and 3 to 4 miles from Upper Marlboro. This section of the County is quite an old place, having been laid out for a town in early Colonial days, the exact date unknown.

The land upon which the town of Pig Point was laid out was taken up by Ishmael Wright and patented to him in 1659 for 235 acres for transporting to the colonies himself and wife, Anna, his son Ismael, and Anthony Le Compt. He called and named the land Wrighton. Wright sold to Anthony Le Compt 75 acres which he surveyed and named Compton. These lands by several deeds were transferred to Robert Browne of Able, and were held by his heirs for quite a while. Finally, these two pieces of land were purchased by Nicholas Terratt, who had them surveyed November 12, 1684 into one tract and found it contained 715 acres. It ran from Pig Point down the east side of the Patuxent River for a mile or more. Nicholas Terratt was a member of St. James Church at Herring Creek, and by his will dated 1698 devised all the land to St. James Church, and it became the globe or church lands. The large marsh adjoining this land on the east side of the Patuxent River, and running from Pig Point for a mile or more down the river was called the globe marsh. The vestrymen of the church did not find the land remunerative, and by an Act of the Legislature about the year 1787, they were authorized and empowered to sell this land and buy elsewhere. On September 6, 1787 a number of lots were sold to Rev. Thomas John Clagett, Joseph McConey, Abraham Sollers, Henry Roberts, and others. These lots were of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre each and were sold for 10 pounds, 13 shillings and 6 pence per lot. They were on the north side of the main road, running east and west through the town. Among the first settlers on Pig Point was Samuel Lane who owned the lot and built a part of the house that was recently owned by the late Samuel Gardner. Additions were made to said house by Charles Hodges and Esax Estep.

As there were a very few if any country stores in that day the people far and near came to the stores in Pig Point to buy their dry goods, shoes, groceries etc. The prices for goods were as follows: calico \$.37 $\frac{1}{3}$ per yd. striped domestic, \$.67 per yd. twilled cotton handkerchiefs, \$.75 Malasses \$.85 per gal, coffee \$.34 per pound, brown sugar \$.19 per lb. loaf sugar \$.27 per lb. clover seed, \$13.20 per bu. And tea \$1.75 per lb. The merchants who tried their luck in Pig Point were Esax Estep, James Kent, Hodges and Landdale, Wm. G. Mackall, Levin Gardner, Henry Roberts, John R. Hill, Samuel Gardner, and William R. Sunderland.

On lot No. 24 stood the inspecting House. This house was for the reviewing or inspecting of tobacco. All of the tobacco raised throughout this section of the county was taken to Pig Point for inspection. The remains of the Inspection House can yet be seen. Most of the tobacco inspected in Pig Point was sent direct to Europe by the ship, Polla, commanded by Captain Child. The tobacco was shipped by Esax Estep, agent, to Daniel Crommelin and Sons, Amsterdam, Holland.

The brig G. P. Stevens brought and carried freight to Baltimore and other nearby places. These sailing vessels continued their trips up to the time the steamboats made their appearance and the inspection of tobacco was moved to Baltimore.

The marshes around about Pig Point, and for miles up and down the river have always been favorite places for sportsmen. Large quantities of wild ducks, geese, and even swan make their appearance on these marshes during the late fall and remain there all winter, and up to early spring. Several kinds of fish are caught in the waters also.

The first Post Office in this section of the county was established July 1, 1807 with Resin Estep postmaster. About this time there were few newspapers, no envelopes or postage stamps. The letters were written on fools cap paper and so folded as to make the ends interlap. This was sealed with sealing wax, and stamped while the wax was hot, making a secure fastening. The postage, which was charged according to the distance was stamped on the back of the letter and could be prepaid or paid by the receiver. Resin Estep, held the office of postmaster until October 31, 1818, reappointed May 11, 1820, and held the office until the appointment of Charles Hodges, December 18, 1822. Hodges was succeeded by Thomas Allen, who was appointed May 27, 1830. He held the office until the appointment of Jacob McCawley November 20, 1835. The next postmaster was Mr. Nicholas Owens, the father of the late Mr. James W. Owens, Attorney at law in Annapolis. He was succeeded by James Owens who was appointed September 4, 1837. He held the office for about a month and Mr. William J. Leitch was appointed in October 1837. Mr. Leitch was succeeded by William G. Mackall, who was appointed May 13, 1834 on January 16, 1840. The postoffice at Pig Point was discontinued and moved into an old storehouse near "The Oaks" and near the spot where the dwelling of Mrs. William Welch now stands, and William G. Mackall continued as postmaster. The office was called Bristol, named from the town of Bristol, England. William G. Mackall was succeeded by Thomas Mackall who was appointed December 24, 1842 holding the office until William B. Owens took charge of the storehouse and was appointed postmaster February 14, 1844 with Mr. Joseph Chaney assistant. About this time Mr. Henry C. Welch who owned the land in the vicinity of the new Post Office, built a large storehouse at "The Oaks." Mr. Chaney rented the storehouse from Mr. Welch and opened up for business, having been appointed postmaster June 9, 1848. He moved the postoffice to his place of business. The postoffice has been conducted by some member of the Chaney family up to this time. Mr. Milton Cartney (a grandson of the Chaney) is postmaster now.

In 1852 Mr. William B. Hill of Prince George's County built a bridge across the Patuxent River at Hills Landing, the present site of the iron bridge at that place, and now forming a part of the State road from Annapolis to Washington. It was there a mail route was established. All mail for this entire section of the county would come from Baltimore and other points to Washington, thence by stage to Upper Marlboro, from Marlboro via Bristol postoffice to Dunkirk, Calvert County, thence to Friendship, where the town mail from Millersville would meet and continue to Prince Frederick in Calvert County. All the mail from Upper Marlboro was carried on horseback and in bags not much larger than the old fashioned saddle bags. Today the mail makes two trips a day to Bristol Post Office.

The removal of the postoffice and also the removal to Baltimore of the inspection of tobacco crippled the business of Pig Point. Mr. Samuel Gardner bought the property of Levin Gardiner and opened up for business in the large storehouse in the western part of the town, and a better assortment of general merchandise could not be found in Southern Maryland. He also conducted a lumber and coal yard and supplied the farmers for miles around and others with lumber and coal. Mr. William B. Sunderland started a fishery, he and Mr. Gardner giving employment to quite a number of people of the town.

Not many years later the steambot made its appearance in the Patuxent River and landed goods, and took back freight from Pig Point, making weekly trips to and from Baltimore. As a steambot was something new in those days, the people for miles distant would come into Pig Point to witness the arrival of the boat, and while in town they would purchase their necessary supplies from the stores, thereby giving a lot of business to the people. A large strong wharf was built there, also a large warehouse to take care of the increasing freight, and in a few years thereafter Pig Point was the largest shipbuilding place on the river. During the height of the shipping season it sometimes took three trips a week by the largest steamers of the Keenan Line to take the freight from Pig Point. The opening of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad during the 70's diverted much freight from the steamboats. All the freight around the Green and Mill Landing went to the railroad at Upper Marlboro.

The trip to these points was discontinued and Pig Point became the end of the route. Business at Pig Point took a fresh start. A large school house was built. Messrs. Gardner and Sunderland opened up a canning factory. A grist mill and saw mill were in operation. Mr. Sunderland was shipping large quantities of fish during the fishing season to Baltimore and Washington daily by the railroad from Marlboro. A postoffice was again established in the town and called "Loco" and the future for Pig Point looked bright. Unfortunately, Mr. Sunderland died, his store in the town closed up, fishing stopped, and Mr. Gardner, unable to continue the canning business alone, closed up the business and sold the machinery. The Grist and saw mill were moved away. In building the Chesapeake Beach Railroad a bridge was built across the river about a mile below Pig Point. The draw in the bridge was not approved by the Steamboat Company so they thought it unsafe for their boats to pass through. They discontinued their trips to Pig Point. This forced the farmers and others to seek other places from which to ship their produce to market. Mr. Gardner finally sold all of his property in the town and went with his family to Baltimore. There being no other person in the town to take Mr. Gardner's place, the lumber yard, coal yards, and store, were all entirely closed.

The people of Pig Point have always borne the reputation of being quiet, law abiding citizens. From the beginning in 1659 to the present, no crime has been recorded.

The first Methodist Church erected near Pig Point was built about the year 1839 near "The Oaks" and named Wesley Chapel. The land upon which the church was built was conveyed by deed dated June 10, 1839 from Charles Trury to Alexander Owens, Charles Egan, Henry C. Welch, William Norvell, William H. Hopkins, William G. Jones, and Thomas Arwiger trustees.

Sollers Methodist Church was erected in 1874 and rebuilt in 1913. It was so named from the Sollers family who were faithful members.

The county road leading out of Pig Point via Pindell Station to Lyons Creek got its name in the following manner. It is said a gentleman by the name of Smith, who kept a country store near what is now Pindell Station, being unable to secure white bleached and unbleached muslin, laid in a big stock of blue denim. Nearly everyone in that neighborhood wore blue shirts, and when he went abroad it could be told what neighborhood he belonged to by the shirt he wore. The country around Pindell Station soon became known as Blue Shirt and the road above mentioned known as the "Blue Shirt Road" and is called by that name to this day.

The main road running easterly from Pig Point towards Mt. Zion and Annapolis was called the road leading to the "Rising Sun." The surveyors during the early days in locating points would fix a stone or post as a boundary near the road, and enter in their descriptions of said limits, as running to a stone or post on the north or south side, at the case might be, so many feet from the middle of the road to the "Rising Sun."

The only steamers that ran up the Patuxent River to Pig Point belonged to the Weems Line. This line is the oldest line in the United States, and probably the oldest in the world under one proprietorship. The founder of the line lived in Anne Arundel County and his descendants still own the Fair Haven Farm. In 1817 ten years after Fulton had succeeded in propelling a boat on the Hudson by steam power, the Weems Line was established by George Weems, who chartered the boat "Surprise" to run between Baltimore and the Patuxent River and landings on the Chesapeake Bay. This boat ran until 1821 when the steamer Eagle was bought. This steamer was built in one of the Eastern cities and came to Baltimore by sea, being the second steamer to ever venture out into the ocean. She was 130 feet long and 222 feet wide. The Eagle continued to run until 1824 when her boiler exploded while lying in harbor at Annapolis. By this accident Capt. Weems not only lost almost everything he had, but was himself so seriously hurt, that for a long time was confined to his room. This accident caused the death of one of the passengers, the only one ever killed on this line.

EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Today the white children in our community attend Owensville School. The Colored children attend Bristol Elementary School. There is Bus Service throughout the County. All children above the 6th grade attend high school.

In our school there is a Girl Scout Troop and a 4 H Club.

The Public Library of Anne Arundel County sends its Bookmobile to this community every other week, thus making it possible for the people to have access to all that the library in Annapolis has to offer. The closest movie house is at Upper Marlboro, about 5 miles from us.

In the village of Drury in our community (so called from Mr. George Drury, the owner of a store there) there are four stores, each doing good business. These stores are all on Route 4. At the junction of Route 4 and Route 416 are two restaurants - One owned by a Mr. Wayson. The corner is a good corner for business having three service stations.

Quite a number of the people still carry on farming, and there is a tobacco barn at Wayson's Corner, many of the farmers sell their tobacco, many of the farmers also sell their tobacco at Upper Marlboro.

Quite a few of the people of the community do government work at Suitland, Fort Meade, Andrews Field, and Washington. They travel by automobiles and bus.

A bus line from Washington goes through the community twice a day in winter, and oftener in summer. The West Transit bus passes through on the way to Baltimore every morning and return every evening. The roads are good so there is no difficulty in travelling.