

Baltimore Herald, June 3, 1881

[TRAPPE]  
TALBOT COUNTY

Brief Description of an ancient town  
on the Eastern Shore

Tradition as to the Origin of its name ---  
A Village of Churches --- Its Business  
Men and their Enterprise

Correspondence of the Herald.

TRAPPE, Md., June 3 --- As many other Eastern Shore towns, Trappe is quite an old place, dating its beginning considerably over a century back. Having grown by slow degrees, there are no fully authentic accounts of its early history nor is there certainty as to where it procured its name. It is probable, however, that the name Trappe was given by a French refugee, who was an ardent admirer of the monks of La Trappe, France. But tradition gives another origin to the name. It is said over a century ago a French widow lady kept a tavern in the only house that stood on the present site of the town for the accommodation of travelers going up and down the peninsula. At a time when railroads and steamboats were scarcely dreamed of, this tavern was much patronized. In those days people got tipsy and not much was thought of the matter, when her patrons became helplessly drunk, the old lady stowed them away into a little room she kept for the purpose. This room acquired the name of "trap." and wives whose husbands got belated [sic] were in the habit of saying that they had been caught in the old woman's trap. How the extra "pe" was added is not conjectured, unless some refined resident afterwards thought it would add somewhat a tony appearance to the name. It was incorporated with the name of Trappe in 1856.

On the corner-stone of the old Methodist Church, built here in 1803 (lately torn down) was the name "Lebanon M.E. Church." It is stated by some old citizens that about that time there was an effort to give the village the name of Lebanon, but the habit of years retained the present name of Trappe.

Trappe is certainly a picturesque town, with nearly 400 inhabitants located in the centre of a neck of land made by a bend in the Choptank river, which can be reached southwest and east by a ride of five miles. Since its incorporation it has been greatly improved. Its streets are shelled and pavements are laid at the expense of the corporation. As there have been considerable improvements of late, the taxes are up to the legal limit of 25 cents on the \$100. The streets are lighted by lamps. There is much commendable local pride, and if the question was asked in what part of the world was the Garden of Eden situated, some citizen would be likely to reply "Right here in Trappe."

THE CHURCHES

This can be denominated truly "the town of churches." There are five ---Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, Methodist Protestant, Protestant Episcopal, and African Methodist Episcopal. The churches have an aggregate seating capacity for over 1,500 persons. The presence of so many churches in a small town is truly fortunate, yet it may be stated to the credit of these various worshippers that the greatest fraternity exists between them and also between the ministers, three of whom have their homes here. The colored minister also lives in Trappe. The people are sorely taxed for religious purposes, but the churches seem to be in a flourishing condition, and the denominational feeling is evidenced by the existence of four white Sunday-schools. These combined into one or two would make first-class schools. As it is they are all weak and consequently impaired in efficiency; it may be excepted, the Methodist Episcopal school, which is the largest, as this is the predominant denomination.

The pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church is Rev. F.C. McSorley. In addition to his Trappe appointment he has two others in the country. He is a good preacher and an energetic pastor. He is busily engaged at present in the erection of a new church. It will be quite a neat structure, with a side tower and Gothic roof. This style is being generally adopted by the Church Extension Society. The bricks of the old church are used and the edifice will therefore cost something less than \$4,000. The old church, at the time of its erection, was considered one of the finest on the peninsula.

The Methodist Protestant Church was built in 1844. The pastor is Rev. J. Earley Maloy. He has his residence at Oxford. The church is quite weak at this point, and their church is an unpretentious frame structure. They hold preaching services every other Sunday. The members at other times worship freely in other churches.

The Southern Methodists have quite a fine church edifice, built in 1866. It owes its existence to dissatisfactions created by the war. The pastor is the Rev. B. Highley, a young widower, who from present indications will not remain so very long, as he is paying very special attentions to a young lady a short distance in the country.

While the Methodist Episcopal brethren are erecting their church they are worshipping with the Southern Methodists, the two pastors preaching alternatively. This is a pleasing instance of the close fraternity existing between the two churches at this point.

The Protestant Episcopal Church is quite a neat building, under the rectorship of Rev. A. Walker, who is a gentleman of high standing in his church. He married the daughter of Bishop Boone, the first missionary Baptist to China. Mrs. Walker was born in the latter country. During Mr. Walker's rectorship the church has greatly prospered. A very fine memorial window has lately been put in, and others are expected to follow. Mr. Walker has also charge of the church at Oxford.

The African Methodist Church has a hard struggle to keep up an existence, and has been in considerable debt.

## BUSINESS PLACES

Trappe has four general stores which carry heavy stocks. These are Messrs. I.D. Clarke, Stephen & Bowdle, James Gorsuch, and A.J. Whiteley; Mr. R.N. Lloyd keeps a grocery; Mr. R.H. [should be R.T.] Mullikin, who is postmaster, also keeps groceries and notions; confectionaries are kept by Mr. Daniel Chapman and Mrs. S.C. Haddaway;

there are two [probably should read three] fashionable milliners, Mrs. M.E. Lloyd, Mrs. J.H. Mullikin and Mrs. Handy Seymour. Squire Jump and son are running a small grocery at the southern limit of the town. The trades are well represented by Messrs. William Mullikin and David Chapman, shoemakers; Mr. (probably should be Mrs.) [this insertion with parenthesis is in the typed copy] William Mullikin, tailor; John S. Sullivan, painter; William H.H. Pastorfield, blacksmith; J.P. Holmes and Thomas Summers, carpenters.

I must not neglect to mention the fact that Trappe has two very fine drug stores, conducted by R.H. Kemp and Samuel B. Merrick. Quite a tinning and stove business is conducted by Mr. Philip Sch[uh]mann. The town has two undertakers, who make their money by wheelwrighting, as the neighborhood is too healthy to furnish them with many coffins to make. There is located here an extensive steam saw mill, operated by Jump & Son. Mr. Rufus Frampton is the butcher, and they say he is so conscientious that he never palms shoe leather off for tender sirloin. Lastly comes the barber --- a real necessity in Trappe, where there are so many tidy young men, with mustaches struggling for existence and looks to be combed with artistic precision to charm the tender sex. Where is the town that does not have a supply of physicians? Another question may be asked --- Where is the town that has better ones than Trappe? They are sociable, intelligent gentlemen. This may be because they have so much leisure. As an indication of the public health of this part of the country, I will state that when the last census was taken, the census-taker for the northern half of Trappe district did not find but two sick persons in his territory outside of Oxford.

#### NEAT RESIDENCES

The Protestant Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal parsonages are quite fine buildings, with large shady yards. The finest residence in town is that of Mr. I. Davis Clarke. Messrs. Robert Kemp, Squire Jump, Dr. Chapman and others have fine residences. There is much care taken of the front yards, which are generally large and shady.

#### SCHOOLS

Trappe has good schools. Professor William Hardcastle is principal of the high school; with Miss Nettie Martin, assistant. Miss Henny Merrick has charge of the primary department. The colored people have a neat little school building, lately erected. It is taught by Mr. Daniel Fry who is quite an intelligent colored man from the North.

#### FARMS AND FARMING

Maryland cannot boast of better farmers than are found in Talbot county. Dilapidated fences, rotten barns, and rickety dwellings are seldom found here. Everything bears the impression of thrift. Every farmer has his whitewash brush, and uses it freely. There seems to be a commendable emulation as to which can make their farm present the neatest appearance, and hence they all succeed in making their farms attractive. This is the champion year for wheat. If nothing prevents the yield will be

immense. I have failed to see yet in the county a poor field of wheat. So much cannot be said of the corn, as in other sections, especially in the low lands, there has been considerable replanting. If the weather continues warm a few days the corn will make wonderful headway.

Yesterday I took a stroll over the farm of Capt. Shedrach B. Mitchell, near Trappe. He has a lovely field of wheat; on a level it is nearly five feet high and finely headed. He purchased this farm a few years ago when it was in a dilapidated condition. The fences were down and soil worn out. The first season he got only thirty-five bushels of wheat off fifteen acres. It is now one of the best farms in the neighborhood. By building a porch the whole extent of the dwelling, and planting shade trees and other attractions, he has a most beautiful and comfortable home. He has lately erected a barn worthy of description. It has three floors, with a wing, which has only two floors, the lower of which is used for a corn house, the upper for the storage of blade fodder. On the first floor of the main building is a horse stable and a large room for the storage of wheat and other things. From this apartment, the horses can be fed without entering the stable by means of trap-doors on hinges, which can be kept open or closed, as suits the farmer....

Among the other leading farmers of the neighborhood may be mentioned Messrs. A.J. Barnett, N. Willis, Thomas J. Bartlett, K.T. Welsh, R. Bartlett, St. Clair Watts, Alex Bowdle, W.H. Valiant, C.C. Bowdle, George Tarbutton, J.D. Bradford, J.T. Stevens, R.A. Butler, W.T. Simpson, James H. Cannon, S.A. Simpson, William Collins, T.T. Seymour, J.H. Dawson, L.S. Seymour, J.O. Dickinson, A.P. Ross, G.W. Frampton, William N. Powell, G.C. Graham, B. Parrott, J.W.S. Helsby, John F. Mullikin, E.W. Hopkins, G.A. Mullikin, H. Hopkins, S.B. Merrick, S.S. Hopkins, T.H. Matthews, W.R. Hughlett, John W. Martin, J.W. Kirby, J.L. Martin, W.A. Kirby, L.M.B. Long, C.H. Leonard, William H. Leonard, E.H. Leonard, J.A. Leonard, S.K. Leonard, John H. Leonard, James H. Leonard and L. Leonard.

[copied from the typescript found in the Mullikin Papers in the Maryland Room, Talbot County Free Library, Easton, MD. The article is unsigned, but due to its similarity with a shorter version printed in the Trappe *Index* in 1874 (and reprinted in the *Trappe Enterprise* in 1883), the same author, probably R.T. Mullikin, wrote both.]