

Reading for Lesson Plan #5

Old Christian Weller

Old Christian Weller, one of the best and earliest mechanics of this village, who impressed his mechanical genius upon the town, who did not care much for abstruse mechanics, but only for the experimental and practical, as is usually the case with those whose knowledge has been self-acquired by hard industry, often used to say that he was taught many a useful lesson by the constant toil of the industrious ant. In the spring time of the year he used to repair to the mountain, in the neighborhood of Chimney Rock, and there sitting on an old log he used to observe the work of the industrious ant toiling at their work with incessant labor. The idea and the example gave Mr. Weller courage. It was soon bolted into his mind, and when he returned to his shop on the following morning, it seemed that he could turn out a better horse shoe or make a better edge tool, an axe, an adze or drawing knife, and temper it with more power and durability. As a blacksmith Mr. C. Weller was known to stand at the head of the mechanical art, and this town takes its name * in a great measure from his genius and skill as one of the forged sons of Vulcan.

We mention these circumstances to show that there is much, very much indeed, in the animal and vegetable economy, if properly studied, to guide our mechanics, farmers and miners in beginning the pathway of life. The ant, studied from a practical point of view, may be said to be a natural Geologist and Mineralogist. It is like the screw in mechanics which holds on to all it gets, and at every turn gains a little more.

From "One Hundred Years Ago"
Catoctin Clarion, March 4, 1871

*The original name of the town of Thurmont, Maryland was Mechanicstown. Tradition states that the town was named for the large number of mechanics who worked there.

National Park Service

Man's loss of intimate contact with nature has had debilitating effects on him as a being which can be alleviated only by making it possible for him to escape at frequent intervals from his urban habitat to the open country ...He must again learn how to enjoy himself in the out-of-doors by reacquiring the environmental knowledge and skills he has lost during his exile from his natural environment.

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
'A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States'
Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1941