

LILLIAN SHIPLEY

On June 20, 1962, Miss Lillian Shipley, described by **The Democratic Advocate** (June 28) as “one of Carroll County’ s beloved citizens,” was honored at a testimonial retirement dinner held on the lawn of the Shellman House. Almost 200 Society members and friends paid glowing tribute to her for her long service to the Society, especially the nine years she had served as the first curator.

Miss Shipley was born January 30, 1890, the daughter of Dr. Daniel Shipley and his wife Laura. She was the second of four children raised in the large corner home at 172 East Main Street. She became interested in county history when she accompanied her father on medical calls around the county in his horse and buggy, when he pointed out structures, noting their history and significance. After she graduated from Westminster High School in 1908, she moved to Georgia to study millinery, staying there for eight years before returning to Westminster to open a millinery shop at 14 West Main in the building now occupied by the Flower Box. She ran this shop for 11 years before selling the business and joining her brother Daniel in a poultry business, “LilliDan”, that he had begun north of Westminster in 1919. This business was sold in 1943 when Daniel went into the nursery business in Baltimore; Lillian bought a house at 144 Pennsylvania Avenue and moved there to live and take care of her mother, renting the two upstairs apartments for income.

In 1939 she was one of the group of concerned citizens who banded together to raise funds to save the Shellman House from demolition and to form The Historical Society of Carroll County. She shared her knowledge of the County and was able to fill in details gleaned from her trips as a child, helping to preserve the history of the County.

By 1953, the Historical Society membership had grown sufficiently to enable the organization to engage Miss Lillian as its first Curator and Hostess who welcomed visitors to the Shellman House, sometimes for tea. She lived upstairs in the house and boarded at Hoffman House two doors up the street. In this role, she was described as the motivating force behind the Historical Society, making it into a well-recognized source of information and repository of many collected artifacts. She also had served on all the Society committees over the years. In 1956 the Soroptimist Club of Westminster named her the Outstanding Woman of Carroll County, and at her retirement the Club originated an endowment fund in her honor for the upkeep of the Society and the Shellman House.

Lillian’s community involvement included the Westminster Methodist Church, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, Carroll County Farm Bureau, and Community Players. She also enjoyed traveling in the U.S. and abroad with the Tiffany Society, a group of about 30 community members including Dorothy Elderdice whom she met in 1915 on a trip to the American West. Her hobby was collecting sets of antique glassware, which have been passed down through the Shipley family of which she was a proud member.

Miss Shipley retired as curator because of the onset of Parkinson's disease, leaving the Shellman House and moving to West Green Street where she rented a room from Dorothy Elderdice for the next 17 years, until Dorothy's death in 1979. She then became the first resident of the Health Center at Carroll Lutheran Village, living there until her death at 99 on April 6, 1989. Even with her illness, she enjoyed rides, Sunday dinner with relatives, ice cream in Snyderburg, and shrimp dinners at Harry's.

The Society's first curator will always be remembered for her faithful service to the Society in its early years, her gracious manner in securing valuable data, documents, and artifacts, and her fund of legendary lore willingly shared.