

"George Washington Bicentennial Exhibition"

Carroll County Times article for 22 March 1998

By Jay A. Graybeal

The Bicentennial of George Washington's birth in 1932 rekindled popular interest in the first president and the Colonial era. Among the many local activities was a storefront exhibition of artifacts prepared by Alfred Nusbaum of Westminster. A newspaper article describes the objects:

"COLONIAL RELICS AT WESTMINSTER

Interesting Display is Made By Residents Of Objects

Recalling Period Of George Washington

WESTMINSTER-Alfred Nusbaum, Westminster, has arranged a display fitting for the 200th birthday anniversary of George Washington. Drapes of lovely silks of red, white and blue attract the eye immediately one passes by. In the front of one of the windows is a large white bust of George Washington on a white pedestal, the bottom of which is draped in the patriotic colors. In the front of the other window is a splendid portrait, in colors, executed by Edwin S. Gehr when he was attending the Westminster High school, and this picture was loaned for this display by the high school.

Among the most interesting pieces in the window is an account book showing entry of charge to William Winchester, who was the founder of Westminster, and which belonged to David Shriver, Sr., Avondale, Md. A letter from Governor Thomas Sim Lee sent to David Shriver, Sr., asking for money and supplies for the Continental Army. A political poster signed by Leigh Master is significant for the fact that Master was an Englishman whose land adjoined David Shriver, Sr., and ran for the Assembly against Mr. Shriver. The latter was elected.

Dueling pistols that belonged to Mr. Shriver are on exhibition. Mr. Shriver was a member of the Assembly during the revolution and was also a member of the Council of Safety for Maryland, and otherwise active in the Revolutionary War. These pistols and a flint lock gun, which was used in Washington's time, are now owned by John L. Reifsnider, Jr., this city, a direct descendant of David Shriver, Sr.

Interesting to the ladies is a hat box which has been loaned by Mrs. George Osborne. The hat box is unique for the reason of its almost perfect condition. Both the men and the women during the period of Washington kept their best hats in a special box. Most of these boxes were lined with newspapers and interesting events in history have been found recorded in the lining of these boxes. A glass plate with the busts of Washington, Lincoln and Garfield, while of later date, is interesting. This plate is the property of Mrs. Osborne.

The Continental currency displayed is money used during the Revolution and was printed by the different States, some in pounds and some in dollars.

The lovely colonial lamps and fine furniture seen in the windows would be a delight to the most fastidious connoisseur. They were used in this locality during the time of Washington. An exquisite snuff box is on view and is of the kind that was used at the time of Washington. There were a number of styles for both ladies and men.

There is also in the window a card issued by the United States Government in the form of an invitation to the dedication of the Washington Monument at Washington, D. C. This card entitled the bearer to a seat on the grandstand.

A revolutionary rifle attracts the eye of the militarist. This rifle is now owned by Walter H. Davis, Westminster."

The Washington Bicentennial and the 1937 Carroll County Centennial created a general interest in American and local history which contributed to the founding of the Historical Society of Carroll County in 1939.

Photo caption: A political handbill announcing the candidacy of Legh Master for the General Assembly in 1784 was displayed in a 1932 Washington Bicentennial exhibit in Westminster. J. Leland Jordan Collection, Historical Society of Carroll County.