

"1997 County Birthday Celebration"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Each year the Historical Society sponsors an observance of the County Birthday on January 19th. The event will take place from 1:00 to 4:00 p. m. in the Society's Shriver-Weybright Auditorium, 210 E. Main St., Westminster. The event is free and is open to the public.

This year's event will kickoff the year-long celebration of the Union Mills Homestead Bicentennial. Representatives from the Homestead will present some of the history of the site and their special plans for the Bicentennial year. Elected officials have also been invited to make some remarks.

A new brochure published by the Homestead presents some interesting history of the site:

"The Homestead began in 1797 when David and Andrew Shriver purchased a large tract of land along the Big Pipe Creek. The site was perfect for the enterprises that the Shriver brothers hoped to start. The Big Pipe Creek provided an excellent source of water for a mill, the fertile valley was good farmland and the surrounding rolling hills contained heavy stands of black oak which could furnish tanbark for a tannery.

Soon the brothers entered into a contract with Frederick County millwright, John Mong, to construct a set of mills, a grist mill and a saw mill. Jacob Keefer and John Eckert were contracted "to mold and burn a kiln of brick for the grist mill and to be paid one French crown for every thousand brick." Clay from the banks of the Big Pipe Creek was used for molding the bricks. While the Grist Mill and Saw Mill were under construction, David and Andrew Shriver also started the main part of the house. Henry Kohlstock of York County built a small double house with a connecting center hall and front porch for the labor costs of \$86. To these early endeavors, the brothers added a tannery, cooper shop and a blacksmith's shop. Now David and Andrew truly had the beginning of an early industrial park. The growing enterprises soon took the name "Union Mills" because of the partnership of the two brothers and their various businesses. This is the same name that the small settlement that grew around the Homestead took.

The original double house, built for David and Andrew Shriver, is now the center of the present day main house. As Andrew's family grew, so did the house, growing from 6 rooms to 23. Additions were first made to the west end linking the original out kitchen to the main house and then later to the east end.

Over the years, the house was continuously occupied by different generations of Andrew Shriver's descendants until the mid 1960s. Their unique lifestyle of young and old generations snaring the same house is the reason that the house is filled with a wide range of original family furnishings from the 1700 to 1900s. One can see an evolution of time when touring the house where a room will blend the styles of federal ante-bellum and late Victorian periods.

The weathered gray old house has experienced a lot of history over the years. Andrew Shriver was a loyal supporter of Thomas Jefferson and copied his small front balcony after Jefferson's home in Monticello. You can see the special Chinese Chippendale pattern around the outside of the porch. It was from this porch that local politicians would give speeches to the community gathered below. Often Andrew would translate into German since this area was heavily settled by Germans. Both Roger Brooke Taney and Francis Scott Key gave speeches from the Jefferson Balcony. Andrew's strong political support

earned the Homestead a post office which was set up in a downstairs room. To this was added a general store and soon you had a thriving crossroads settlement. Also, for a time the house was opened as a Stagecoach Inn with noted lodgers being Washington Irving and James John Audobon."

The new brochure also lists some of the special events that will be held during the Bicentennial Year. Copies of the brochure are available from the Union Mills Homestead and the Carroll County Tourist Information Center, 210 E. Main St., Westminster.

Photo caption: This year the Union Mills Homestead will celebrate its Bicentennial. The Homestead will be the topic of the Historical Society's County Birthday observance on Sunday January 19th from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection.