

"Westminster Business Interiors Photo Essay"
Carroll County Times article for 21 April 1996
By Jay A. Graybeal

Westminster businesses will be the focus of an upcoming walking tour sponsored by the Greater Westminster Development Corporation. The tour will be held from 1:00 to 5:00 on Saturday, April 27th and begins at the Historical Society's Kimmey House, 210 E. Main St. After visiting the Historical Society, tour participants can walk to Mathias Monuments, Union National Bank, Westminster Post Office, T. W. Mather & Son Department Store, Winchester Exchange, Sam's Bagels, Johansson's Dining House, White's Bicycles, Winchester West and Ain't That A Frame. The tour ends at the Westminster Fire Department where visitors can see the department's second-floor museum or watch a narrated video tour of the museum produced by Prestige CableVision, CV 3.

The Historical Society's photograph collection contains a number of images showing Westminster businesses, street scenes and events. Most show the exteriors of buildings because photographers were hindered by long exposure times and poor interior lighting. The advent of faster films and the introduction of gas or electrical lighting in the late nineteenth century, made it possible to more easily photograph the interiors of buildings. These interior images reveal a wealth of information about how businesses appeared and how they displayed the products they sold.

Photo Caption 1:

Two young boys found it hard to stand still for this c. 1890 photograph by J. W. Baldwin of the interior of the Albaugh Building at 9 E. Main St. George W. Albaugh advertised in 1887 that he sold ready made clothing, cassimeres, boots, shoes, hats, caps, trunks, valises, etc. The image shows a stuffed horse adorned with a full harness and a string of bells, a selection of trunks, a stack of buggy blankets, and a selection of whips on the display case. The sign attached to the light fixture advertised a gall cure for horses and cattle.

Photo Caption 2:

Employees of the Westminster Telephone Exchange posed in their room in the second floor of the Wantz Building in this image taken by James D. Mitchell in 1902 or 1903. Seated at his desk was manager John Knode and standing was night operator Harry Starr. Unfortunately, the names of the two female operators are not known. Gift of Mrs. Edward G. Little, 1967.

Photo Caption 3:

The clerks of the Westminster Hardware Store, formerly at 18 W. Main St., posed for James D. Mitchell in c. 1910. Standing in front of the counter was Abraham Price; the other men are unidentified. The store offered a profusion of items including hoses, curry combs, carbide lanterns, nails, bolts and screws. A sign on the counter advertised the Stewart Clipper for grooming horses. The store was destroyed by fire in 1982. Gift of Mrs. Leslie Waldorf.

Photo Caption 4:

Charles Valentine Wantz posed behind the counter of his tobacco store in the Wantz Building located at 25 E. Main St., in this c. 1890 image by J. W. Baldwin. Wantz advertised that he manufactured and sold the best 5 cent cigar in the county. His store walls were decorated by more than 8,000 cigar box labels. A lengthy description of Wantz's store (reprinted in last week's column) was published in the September 4,

1896 issue of Tobacco, a trade newspaper for tobacco manufacturers and dealers. Gift of Mrs. David Taylor, 1983.

Photo Caption 5:

The employees and customers posed in this c. 1925 image taken at D. S. Gehr & Son Hardware Store, formerly located at the corner of Main and Liberty Streets. Standing at the end of the center row of tables was Harry Helwig. The store counters displayed numerous small items, an electric lamp and a wicker laundry basket. Larger items including electrical appliances and carpentry tools were displayed behind glass doors. Nails, bolts, screws, etc. were stored in boxes on the shelves behind the right hand counter. The store is now the site of a city parking lot. Gift of Mrs. Dorothy E. Helwig, 1991.

Side bar copy: Historic Westminster businesses will be the topic of the Westminster Business Walking Tour from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 27th. The tour begins at the Historical Society (210 E. Main St.) and includes twelve historic sites on Westminster's Main Street. The event is sponsored by the Greater Westminster Development Corporation. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for Seniors; children are free. For more information call Doug Mathias at (410) 876-6664.