

## "Westminster Train Station Opened in 1896"

Carroll County Times article for 22 December 1896

By Jay A. Graybeal

In December 1896 the new Western Maryland Railroad Station in Westminster opened. Contracts were let in May and construction began shortly thereafter. The American Sentinel newspaper carried periodic articles on the new station and the former frame station that was moved to New Windsor:

May 9, 1896

"Contracts have been awarded by the Western Maryland Railroad Company for the erection of the new station building in this city, and work on the structure will be commenced at an early day. Mr. John Cowan, builder, of Baltimore, secured the contract, which was awarded on Tuesday. Messrs. Gilbert & Gehr, of this city, were awarded the contract for the hot water and heating fixtures."

May 23, 1896

"The Western Maryland Railroad has erected a temporary station building about fifty yards northeast of Main street, this city, which will be occupied until the new station shall have been completed. The work of taking down the old building was commenced on Thursday. It will be shipped to New Windsor and re-erected as a station building at that place."

May 30, 1896

"The materials in the old station building of the Western Maryland Railroad, in this city, were removed to New Windsor this week, and on Thursday the architect of the new station, with several surveying engineers, was here laying off the ground, preparatory to commencing work on the structure."

August 22, 1896

"The new railroad station building at New Windsor is nearly completed."

August 26, 1896

"Work on the new railroad station building in this city, which had been progressing very slowly for lack of materials, is now being pushed rapidly."

December 5, 1896

"The new station building of the Western Maryland Railroad, in this city, is at last approaching completion, and will probably be occupied by the middle of this month."

The new station was completed in mid December and the opening was described in a December 26, 1896 article in the Democratic Advocate:

"On Monday the new depot of the Western Maryland Railroad at this place, was thrown open for business, and a general smile of content and happiness distended the countenance of every railroad official in Westminster.

There is not a finer station in the State; built somewhat on the style of the Mt. Royal Station in Baltimore, of yellow brick with brown stone trimmings, the building is a conspicuous feature of the landscape.

The waiting room extends the entire length of the building, about 80 feet, the ticket and telegraph offices dividing the ladies room from that of the gentlemen, a narrow passage connecting the two. Hardwood trimmings, electric light and gas fixtures of handsome and ornate design add much to the beauty of the room.

Toilet rooms for ladies and gentlemen open from each of the waiting rooms, and overhead are storage rooms for the records of the station business. Entrances at each end and on the front, facilitate the handling of crowds. Handsome fireplaces surmounted with large plate-mirrors are in each room, and the mirror in the ladies' department is already in active operation.

The spaciousness of every thing about the station is a particular feature, from the wide covered platforms to the driveway around the building, and there is not longer any inconvenience felt from the meeting of the arriving and departing passengers which has so long been the most conspicuously objectionable feature at this station. The building is of modern architecture and is heated by steam."

The accompanying postcard photograph shows the busy station shortly after it was completed. The last passenger train left on October 3, 1960 and the station was demolished shortly thereafter.

Photo caption: This post card view shows the Westminster Train Station as it appeared shortly after it was completed in December 1896. Several horse drawn carriages await arriving passengers. The card was sent to a New Windsor woman on June 23, 1911 to let her know that her family had arrived safely in Westminster. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.