

Carroll Yesteryears
26 January 2014

Look Back with the *Engine of Liberty*
By Mary Ann Ashcraft

The Historical Society of Carroll County recently republished a fascinating little book entitled “Abstracts from the Engine of Liberty and Uniontown Advertiser 1813-1815.” Editor Joe Getty combed copies of that early newspaper printed in Uniontown (then part of Frederick County) and extracted articles mentioning many people and events. Now it is back for the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

You’ll read that local resident Captain Upton Norris called for a muster of the militia of the 20th Regiment on Saturday, April 30, 1814, at the Uniontown tavern run by Enoch Taylor in order “to perform military duty as the law directs.” Four months later, that same militia group undoubtedly marched off to Baltimore to answer the threat of a British invasion.

There is an interesting article in the November 25, 1813, paper regarding a petition by the residents of Uniontown to the Maryland General Assembly. Perhaps in response to a recent fire, the inhabitants asked permission for a lottery to raise money to purchase a fire engine. It is hard to believe the Maryland legislature was asked to address such issues in those days. Was a fire engine from this period much more than a carriage with a reel of hose?

People who love antiques will discover that “Jacob R. Thomas, Windsor Chairmaker, Respectfully informs his friends and the public in general, that he always keeps on hand, Windsor and Fancy Chairs, and does Sign and House Painting, Gilding, &c. on moderate Terms. Uniontown, March 24th (1814).”

Considerably less expensive than Windsor chairs were the “segars” which Michael Fry began manufacturing in Uniontown about the same time. He promised he would always have a large quantity on hand and would “sell by wholesale or retail to Storekeepers and others, on reasonable terms.”

On June 15, 1815, the paper noted the following: “On Friday last a man by the name of George M’Daniel, went into the barn of Capt. Upton Norris near this place; he appeared to be very sick, and though great care was taken of him, he died on Saturday night following – the next day a Coroner’s inquest was held, and gave in their verdict that he came by his death by bodily infirmities. It appears from a certificate that he had in his pocket, that he was born in this county, and was upwards of 60 years of age. He said he had relations in Liberty-Town and Creagers-

Town – he was by trade a whitesmith – had some money with him, and was tolerably well clad. On the Sunday following he was decently interred on the farm of capt. Norris.”

As someone interested in genealogy and family history, this short article in an obscure newspaper only printed for two years struck a chord. Would a M’Daniel descendant ever find this reference to his death and burial? Did Upton Norris have a graveyard on his farm? If so, does it still exist, or has it disappeared like so many family graveyards in this area? It’s unlikely Norris ever erected a headstone for George M’Daniel, so he will be very difficult to trace.

Mary Ann Ashcraft is a library volunteer at the Historical Society of Carroll County.

Engine  *Liberty,*
AND
Uniontown Advertiser.

UNIONTOWN (MARYLAND) PRINTED BY CHARLES SOWER—PRICE TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM, PAYABLE HALF-YEARLY. IN ADVANCE

VOL. I—No. 7.]

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1813.

[No. 7

Photo credit: Historical Society of Carroll County

Photo caption: The front page of one issue of the “Engine of Liberty and Uniontown Advertiser” serves as the cover of a book recently republished by the Historical Society of Carroll County and available at The Shop at Cockey’s. It covers many local events during the 1813-15 time period.