

## *Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles*

### **"Business History"**

Carroll County Times article for 04 April 1993

By Joe Getty

The Historical Society administers a research library dedicated to preserving the history of Carroll County. We frequently receive research requests about the histories of old businesses that once existed in our communities.

Researching local business histories is difficult and challenging. Sources for such information are generally scarce and incomplete. A few publications from the early 20th century provide brief histories of some Carroll County businesses and biographical profiles of leading citizens.

Frequently these are the only documented references to people and businesses of the past. Recognizing the need for ongoing documentation of Carroll County's history, the Historical Society has created an opportunity for documenting local family and business histories of today as part of our Legacy Campaign endowment fund drive. Donors are eligible to contribute historical entries for a 1993 Carroll County Heritage supplement in a reprint of the historical Illustrated Atlas of Carroll County. The concept for these new historical entries is modeled on the early twentieth century publications that are such valuable historical documents today. One of the earlier publications was a series of articles in the American Sentinel newspaper entitled "The Merchants and Industries of Westminster" printed in 1912. An example is the early history of the Westminster Hardware Company that appeared in the October 18 edition of the newspaper:

"The Merchants of Westminster - The Westminster Hardware Company.  
Hardware, Plumbing, Steam and Hot Water, Tinning and Tin.

"The Westminster Hardware Company, of this city, was incorporated December 10, 1898, for the purpose of continuing the business which had been founded by the late Milton Schaeffer, because the latter knew that, by reason of his health, he would, sooner or later, be forced to quit the business. He had built up a good paying business and was reluctant to see it destroyed.

"Mr. Milton Schaeffer was the son of the late George Schaeffer and Catherine Diehl Schaeffer, of near Westminster, and was born on his parents farm, situated a short distance from Krider's Church, in the year 1853. His early life was spent on the farm and in the tannery which his father conducted in conjunction with his farming operations. He was educated in the public schools and in Rippard's Academy of this city. Like so many young men who have become weary of the life on the farm he sought employment as a teacher in the public schools and followed it until he was about 24 or 25 years old. The school room soon became too humdrum for young Schaeffer and in 1877 he came to Westminster and, with the aid of friends, embarked in the hardware business in one of the rooms of the John T. Orendorff building, the other part of the building being occupied by the late John Thomas Orendorff, who was engaged in the dry goods and notion business.

"It was not very long before Mr. Schaeffer's business began to grow. It was very encouraging to him because almost directly across the street the Reifsnider hardware store with all the financial backing necessary was making things lively for him. On February 5, 1878, about a year after he began business, Mr. Schaeffer married Miss Mary S. Zacharias, a daughter of the late Jacob Zacharias, and a niece of Mrs. Jesse Reifsnider, the wife of his only business competitor. Mr. Zacharias lived on the Littlestown turnpike in the first house beyond the tollgate and was one of the most prominent citizens of the county. His

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daughter and Mr. Schaeffer were married in his home and the event was celebrated by a dinner to which over two hundred friends and relatives were invited.

"Mr. Schaeffer's business kept increasing in volume and his popularity with the people kept pace with it. In 1886 he was elected Mayor of Westminster and reelected in 1887 and 1888, and again in 1895. He served as a member of the school board of the county during a part of the administration of Governor Lowndes and on September 1st, 1898 he became postmaster of Westminster under President McKinley. It was while filling the latter office that the dread disease diabetes began to manifest itself in Mr. Schaeffer's system and his friends, whom he numbered by the score, realized that his days on this earth were numbered. On September 16, 1902, surrounded by a devoted wife and loving children he passed away, aged about 49 years.

"The Westminster Hardware Company was incorporated and took over the business of M. Schaefer and Co., December 10, 1898 and immediately enlarged the same by leasing the large store room adjoining, which had been occupied by Orendorff Bros., sons and successors to John T. Orendorff, and also nearly all of the rooms on the second and third floors of the building. A wholesale department was added and a traveling salesman started on the road. The signal success of the business of the company is due in no small measure to the management of Mr. Nathan M. Albert, the general manager, who entered the hardware business with M. Schaeffer and Company, and who has had charge of the present company's business since its incorporation.

"Mr. Albert is a son of Rezin F. Albert and Hannah E. Buckingham Albert, his wife, and was born on the farm now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. John Richter, near Stone Chapel, this county, January 7, 1862. He began his business career by accepting a clerkship in the general store conducted at Medford, this county, by the late Henry Stewart Roberts and later on by Mr. David Englar Jr. He remained in the store until 1890 when he came to this city and entered the employment of M. Schaeffer and Company as a clerk and later on was made book keeper and general manager. Mr. Albert married Miss Margaret H. Bloom, daughter of Mr. David Bloom, of Mt. Washington, Baltimore county, Md., in December 1887 and they have one daughter.

"The present officers of the company are: President, T. Herbert Shriver; vice-president J. Ezra Stem; secretary-treasurer, Robert K. Myers, and directors, Harry F. Cover, Geo. W. Albaugh, Nathan M. Albert, Geo. K. Schaeffer and Lee C. Leister.

"The company carries about \$30,000 worth of stock and fixtures and has paid regular annual dividends ranging from 6 to 25 per cent on its capital stock. Beside the general manager, the following gentlemen constitute the working force of the company: Salesmen, Abram Price, Roy C. Lease and George I. Fisher; book-keeper, Robert K. Myers; assistant, C. Russell Schaeffer; plumber, Wm. F. Long; tinner, Jesse Stultz, and apprentices, Albert Stoner and Vernon Daly.

If you would like information about documenting your family or business history as part of the Legacy Campaign, call the Historical Society at 848-6494.

Photo caption: An undated photograph in the Historical Society's collection shows the employees of the Westminster Hardware Company during the mid-20th century. Left to right: Sterling Schaeffer, Abraham Price, George Jones and Harry K. Myers. J. Henry Koller, donor.