

"The Baseball Invasion"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Some readers may be surprised to learn that Westminster was once considered a summer resort. The first Westminster city directory, published by Vanderford Bros. in 1887, included a section entitled, "[Westminster] As a Summer Resort"

Westminster has many advantages. It is 1,000 feet above tide, its altitude giving it a pure and invigorating air, free from all malarial influences and highly promotive of health. It is also free from mosquitoes, those almost universal summer pests, so annoying to the inhabitants of the lowland and along the water courses, to the dwellers by the sea and to the citizens of our chief cities. The surrounding country is one of surpassing loveliness, abounding in fertile valleys, and majestic hills, traversed with excellent roads leading to rural scenery that, like the ever-changing kaleidoscope, continually presents to the eye something "ever charming, ever new." Now where is the scenery more beautiful, the climate more healthful, or the water more pure. The drainage is perfect. On one side the water flows to the Patapsco and thence mingles with the waters of the Chesapeake, and on the other it flows through tortuous courses into the historic Potomac. The nights are pleasant, even in the hottest weather, the temperature being modified by the breezes from the Blue Ridge Mountains, that are plainly in view and form the background to the enchanting landscape on the west. The city is well supplied with hotels, large well-furnished and fitted up with all the modern improvements, while the rates are low as compared with those of many other places, with less attractions.

The project of putting up an exclusively summer hotel at Winchester Place, shown among the illustrations, which is about five minutes walk from the depot, has been talked of for some time past, and the matter will soon be considered seriously. The distance to Baltimore is short and railroad communication so frequent, it is believed that a first-class hotel would be a paying investment. Winchester Place comprises ten acres, with fine shade trees, and slopes gently to Green Street, which is rapidly filling up with handsome residences. Upon this place is a fine spring, the water of which was analyzed by Prof. William E. Aiken, of the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Westminster has all the delights of the country, coupled with many of the advantages of the large cities. It is oblong in shape, and it is but a few minutes walk from any point out into the open country.

Among the summer visitors of a century ago were the players and associates of the Baltimore Baseball Club. Their visit was covered in the June 20, 1896 issue of the American Sentinel newspaper. To-morrow, (Sunday) 21st instant, Manager Hanlon, Secretary Von der Horst, and a number of the star players of the Baltimore Baseball Club, accompanied by a due contingent of thirty-third degree rooters, will be the guests of Prof. James A. Diffenbaugh at the Maples. The party will arrive on the morning train at 11:12 and return on the Fast Mail in the evening, and will include, besides Messrs. Hanlon and Von der Horst, players, Robinson, Clarke, Hoffer, Pond, Corbett, Doyle, Jennings, Kelley and Keeler; and rooters Major A. K. Fulton, Prof. Thomas F. McNulty, Capt. George V. McGowan, Dorsey Guy of the Baltimore Sun, John H. Anderson of the Herald, Willie Watkins of the American, Frank F. Patterson, Official Scorer, F. D. Madeira of the Associated Press, Charles E. Ford of Ford's Opera House, Edward J. Silkman, Hon. John K. Cowen's private secretary, Capt. A. L. League of the Police Boat Lannan, Capt.

Louis H. Robinson, Immigrant Inspector, Capt. Charles W. Miller of the Western Maryland Railroad, Hon. Wm. J. O'Brien, Jr., Thomas F. McHugh, Henry Poske, Ernest Hasenbalg, B. A. Schneidereith, Frank H. Sterling, A. H. Kuhlman, Wm. J. Blair, George Wade, Jerome H. Joyce, and Harry W. Amoss.

The ball players and their friends went home on the Fast Mail train and the "invasion" was over.

Photo caption: Entitled "The Baseball Invasion of Westminster", this image by Baldwin of Westminster shows the manager and players of the Baltimore Baseball Club and other guests at The Maples on June 21, 1896. The only identified man is John H. Cunningham who stood sixth from the left. Historical Society of Carroll county collection.