

"Westminster Post Office, Part II"

Carroll County Times Article for 25 August 1996

By Jay A. Graybeal

In last week's column I presented an article from the August 24, 1934 issue of this paper that described the construction of the new Westminster Post Office. We continue this week with the last half of the article which includes an inventory of the items placed in the cornerstone and the completion of the building:

The bronze box which was placed in the cornerstone contained the following: Program exercises of laying of corner stone; name of President, secretary, Treasury, postmaster general, supervising architects and contractors, construction manger, names of acting postmaster and post office employees of the Westminster post office; brief notes concerning new post office building; names officers and directors of Chamber of Commerce; names of officials of Westminster; names of Carroll County officials; names of Carroll County Board of education and officers; "The Pioneers of Early Westminster," by Miss Mary Bostwick Shellman. Carroll County Society of Baltimore City deposited the following: Original list of members, constitution and by-laws of society, picture of Francis Scott Key, who was born in what is now Carroll County; address delivered before the Society by Francis Scott Key Smith, great grandson of Francis Scott Key; address on "Early Settlement of Carroll County," delivered before the Society by the late Joseph D. Brooks, Esq., January 1923; address on "Carroll County, Past and Present," delivered before the Society by the late Guy W. Steele, January, 1921; a copy of "The Times," "The Democratic Advocate," "The Hanover Sun," "The Baltimore Sun"; one stamp of each denomination on sale at Westminster post office Nov. 30, 1932; 1932 coins; names of Grand Officers of Grand Lodge Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Maryland; names of officers of Door-to-Virtue Lodge No. 46, Nov. 30, 1932.

Work continued rapidly under the bonding engineers. The building was under roof and the plastering was nearing completion when again work was stopped. This time the Bonding Company was in receivership.

Charles W. Klee, the present postmaster, assumed his duties on Thursday, March 15, 1934, succeeding Mrs. Harry M. Kimmey, acting postmaster.

Thursday, March 29, word came that Lewis Newman, government engineer had died in the Walter Reed Hospital. Mr. Newman had been taken there in the county ambulance several days previous suffering with pneumonia. It was also about this time that word was received that Robert Waldie, engineer for the bonding company had been killed on a construction job in Philadelphia.

The Fred Comb Company of Minneapolis, Minn., was awarded the contract to complete the job on February 5, at a contract price of \$22,505. Work began on March 5. Mr. M. C. Lund represented the company and Mr. R. A. McGarry the Government on the completion of the job. Mr. Lund completed his work on Monday, August 20 following final inspection by government engineers.

The building in which the post office has been located was erected in 1909 by the late Joseph B. Boyle. Previous to this the post office was in the building now occupied by T. W. Mather & Sons men's department. The postmasters serving in the present building were S. K. Herr (died in office), H. Peyton

Gorsuch, Dr. Thomas J. Coonan (died in office), Harry M. Kimmey (died in office), and the present Incumbent, Charles W. Klee.

The new building is 80x72 1/2 feet and is built of Beaver Dam marble, brick and steel and is a one floor structure of two story height. The lobby is finished in grey and ivory with marble floors and an all weather vestibule. The main floor contains the private office of the postmaster, a work room 80x50 feet, two steel and concrete vaults, lavatories, and a steel enclosed room for the handling of registered mail and money orders.

There are three entrances to the basement floor, one from the lobby to the Federal inspectors room, one from the work room and one from the exterior (janitor's entrance). The basement is complete in every detail and modernly furnished. There is a large rest and lounging room for the employees and carriers and adjoining is a large lavatory and shower baths. The boiler room, janitor's quarters and coal storage occupy the eastern portion of the building, the other rooms being set aside as storage and office space.

A concrete driveway enters from Main street and a large parking space is provided at the rear of the building for the carriers. A spacious loading platform will be a convenience and a marquee above will protect mails in exit in inclement weather.

The members of the local post office force are: Charles W. Klee, postmaster; Harvey A. Leister, money-order clerk; Elmer N. Caple and Henri des Garennnes, mail clerks; Fred S. Jenkins, registry clerk; Kenneth Robertson, sub clerk; Raymond Martz, City Carrier No. 1; Howell Royer, City Carrier No. 2; Ralph Conant, City Carrier No. 3; William H. Steele, parcel post truck; rural carriers; Harvey Miller, No. 3; Geo. Bell, No. 2; John Martin, No. 3; T. G. Kiler, No. 4; Nevin Coppersmith, No. 5; Preston Reed, No. 6; Harry Mathias, No. 7; Abraham Schaeffer, No. 8; William Zile, special delivery messenger; William Hoffman, mail messenger.

The staff and duties of the Westminster Post Office have grown considerably since it opened in 1934. Currently the Post Office handles twenty-four rural routes and eighteen city routes. On average the Post Office delivers 175,000 pieces of mail daily for a total of more 45 million pieces annually.

Photo caption: A Rural Free Delivery wagon was displayed outside of the Westminster Post Office during the Westminster Centennial Celebration in 1964. The Post Office was completed in 1934. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.