

Carroll Yesteryears
25 November 2018
Setting the Record Straight on Historical Inaccuracies
By Mary Ann Ashcraft

Yes, the accompanying photograph appeared in this column on November 11 but with the wrong caption. Thanks to Ray Brown, it is now correct.

Surely this wasn't the first mistake in a Carroll's Yesteryears column, and it probably won't be the last. Being accurate is a challenge, particularly when you consider the responsibility that goes with writing something that ends up in a newspaper and ultimately on the internet. Trying to stop the spread of misinformation is challenging too. When anyone around the globe can view articles in the *Carroll County Times* on a computer, the responsibility of being accurate increases dramatically. So please note that Franklin Monroe Miller, teenage friend of Carroll Crawford and Glenn Miller, is the young man on the right side in the photograph, not the one in the middle. Exactly when the photo was taken is unknown, but since Frank worked for a photographer before he enlisted in the Navy in 1918, the photo likely predates 1918.

What fun it is talking to people like the above-mentioned Ray Brown and his wife Shirley who have decades of Carroll history in their heads and can straighten out people like me. Ray's father was a teacher in one-room schools, so Ray can share much information about them. Recently he chatted with one of his father's students, a woman aged 104! Shirley has done work on the collection of photographs taken by Pleasant Valley photographer Hollie H. Helwig (1880-1961). The Browns are just two of many local senior citizens whose knowledge of Carroll history is worth noting. They also are repositories of great stories that may not have historic value but are fun to hear.

What other bits of information about Carroll County or its residents have been spread far and wide but are incorrect? One of the "biggies" is that Westminster was once named "Winchester" and its name changed because there was already a town in Virginia with that name. Wrong! When William Winchester laid out the town of Westminster, he clearly wrote "Westminster" on the plan showing the lots and called the principal street "King Street." After the Revolution, the street became "Main Street," a name more fitting for the new republic. Some references to Westminster called it "Winchester's town," but only because of his role in laying it out. The correct information appears in Christopher Weeks's book, *The Building of Westminster in Maryland*.

Another error that deserves mention surrounds the death of Jerome L. Day. When the former Longwell Armory was rededicated in Day's name this year, it was said that Day was the first Carroll County man to die during World War I. In fact, he was born and raised in Howard County although he served overseas in the 112 Machine Gun Battalion with Carroll men. Records show several local men were killed in France before Pvt. Day's death on October 8, 1918. Westminster's Jerome L. Day Post No. 48, 29 Division Association, was named in his honor in 1932. This correction should never take away from Day's sacrifice, but is simply intended to set the record straight.

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



Photo credit: Courtesy of Virginia Ecker Hierstetter

Photo caption: Carroll Crawford (left), Glenn Miller (center), and Frank Miller (right) enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1918. Frank succumbed to lobar pneumonia while in basic training. His chums became well-known Westminster businessmen after their stint in the service. This photo likely predates 1918.

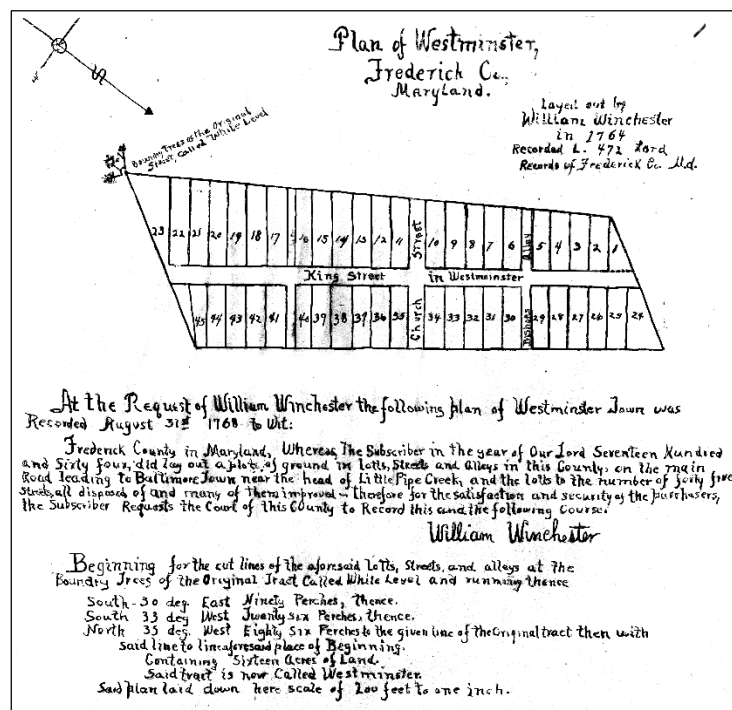


Photo caption: William Winchester's original plan in 1764 is clearly marked "Plan of Westminster" and the notation reads "At the Request of William Winchester the following plan of Westminster Town was Recorded August 31st 1764."