



# HISTORIC BELLE GROVE SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD

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## Spring Around The Corner

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**Next Belle Grove Square Neighborhood Meeting:**

**Thursday  
April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009  
at 7:00pm**

**St. Paul's UCC,  
Bond & Green Sts.**

**Join us and meet your great Belle Grove Square neighbors!**

*by Mitchell Edmondson*

It seems hard to believe that it is already March. It seems like only yesterday I was putting up holiday decorations. Time has a way of marching forward whether we choose to acknowledge it or not.

With spring later this month, it is a great time to do a little house cleaning. I don't know about you, but I have a lot of stuff that has been accumulating at my house. In May we are hoping to organize a neighborhood garage sale and this will be a great time to get rid of some things that others will find very useful. I am going to use any money I raise from our garage sale to help spruce up my house.

Speaking of our house, you know your projects are behind schedule when your permits for construction have expired. Luckily we have been given an extension and I hope to finally get our bathroom projects finished this month. As most of you know, remodeling projects always seem to take at least twice as long

as expected. In our old house we took one of the bedrooms upstairs and converted it into the master bathroom. We have also converted the old patients' examining room downstairs into a half bath. Needless to say everything in our house is covered with dust.

I have discovered that there are two schools of thought on old house remodeling. One group thinks that when you are remodeling, you should try to match trim work and styles so that the new stuff blends seamlessly with the existing features of your house. The other school of thought is that any alterations should be very evident so others will know what is original and what has been added. I tend to pattern my remodeling after the folks who think everything should blend together. Consequently, I have learned that it is very hard to reproduce old trim work and surfaces. I have certainly tried to make our new bathrooms look like they belong in our house.

Our next project is the kitchen and

another half bath upstairs. I hope to start this project in April. When we bought our house we were told it had a new kitchen. Those of you who have seen our house know that saying the kitchen was remodeled was a real stretch. Currently our kitchen has no receptacles and has a drop down office ceiling. The four base cabinets that were installed are not exactly built to last and the peel and stick flooring is already starting to crumble. My challenge will be trying to incorporate some of the old existing built in cabinets with the new ones. I hesitate to even start thinking of all the electrical, plumbing, and demolition that will be required. Right now I am just hoping that our earlier bathroom project will pass its final inspections. Luckily the city and county have been great to work with and have always been there to help answer any questions we have had about code requirements.

I guess I had better stop writing this article and get back to working on the house. December will be here before we know it.

# Westminster originally named Winchester

The man who laid out the original 45 lots of Westminster remains an enigma 200 years after the plot was recorded at the Frederick County Court House.

It is believed that William Winchester was born in the Westminster section of London on December 22, 1711, the son of James and Jane Winchester. But his ancestors, his education, the environment of his youth and the occupations he followed as a young man are the subject of research.

Perhaps his life will be well documented next month or next year, but now we know him only as the founder of Westminster, a man who apparently became a father image in his community. He could be called the founding patriarch of a town that became a county seat some 40 years after his death.

The 19-year-old William arrived

aboard the H.M.S. Hume when it docked at Annapolis, then a bustling city of the new World, in March of 1729. It is thought that he became a surveyor, and this is supported by the fact that he laid out Westminster in a professional manner. The original deed is detailed and precise.

Some historians claim that he was in all probability a merchant as well, although there is no proof as such, except that he did manage to accumulate some wealth.

He was 36 when he married the auburn-haired Lydia Richards of Baltimore County. Lydia, whose homestead was just south of Hampstead, was just 20 years old at her marriage. Lydia was Quaker and Winchester was probably Church of England.

Seven years and three children later, the Winchesters came to

White's Level.

John White had been granted land by the King of England in 1733. He called it White's level and it was located on the border of Frederick and Baltimore Counties. A stone marker still bears witness to the beginning of the plot at the rear of 295 East Main Street, Westminster.

William Winchester bought a parcel of land from White, and began to tinker with the idea of dividing his land into lots, selling to new-comers.

In 1758 his work was interrupted by a brief stint with Captain John Norris' Company as a clerk. The French were stirring up the Indians on the other side of the blue mountains that could be seen from the top of the ridge on a clear day, and the British army was sending out messengers warning of possible surprise attacks along the frontier.

Winchester earned one pound and ten shillings for 30 days.

In 1768 Winchester took a trip to the Frederick Town Court House and recorded his deed to 17 and one half acres of land divided off into lots.

The deed showed one main street, called King Street, and two perpendicular side streets, called Bishop and Church. It took in both sides of what is now called Main Street from Washington Road to Court Street.

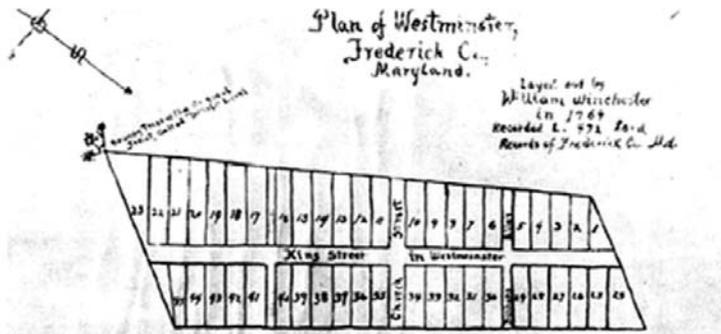
Winchester Served on a committee to observe the resolves of the American Congress and Provincial Convention. He was one of the agents for the "Pipe Creek Hundred," and helped raise \$10,000 for arms and ammunition and relief to the poor of Boston.

And he changed the name of his main street from King Street to Main Street when he severed his allegiance to England.

Winchester died an old man for his time, living to the age of 79. He was buried in 1790 near the Union Church, which he helped convert from a log cabin to a brick structure the year he died. His grave and



The clock tower of the 1896 Westminster Courthouse shown as it appears today in downtown Westminster.



At the Request of William Winchester the following plan of Westminster Town was Recorded August 31st 1768 to wit:

Frederick County in Maryland, Whereas The Subscriber in the year of Our Lord Seventeen Hundred and Sixty four, did lay out a plot of ground in lots, streets and alleys in this County, on the right hand side of the road leading to Baltimore Town near the head of Little Pipe Creek, and the lots to the number of forty five, with half a dozen of and many of them improved - therefore for the satisfaction and security of the subscribers, the Subscriber Requests the Court of this County to Record this and the following course.

William Winchester

Beginning for the cut line of the aforesaid lots, streets and alleys at the boundary lines of the original tract called White Level and running thence

South 30 deg East Nine, Perches, thence

South 33 deg West Twenty six Perches thence

North 33 deg West Eight, Six Perches to the given line of North, and then with said line to the intended place of Beginning.

Containing Sixteen Acres of Land.

Said tract is now called Westminster.

Said plan laid down here scale of 20 feet to one inch.

Founded in 1764 and originally named Winchester, the town changed its name to Westminster in 1768 because the mail was often delivered in nearby Winchester, Virginia.

## When Time

Restoration work continues on the clock atop the old Westminster Fire Hall.

As originally designed by Jackson Gott, the Fire Hall was a three story structure fronting on the south side of East Main Street for a distance of 40 feet and running back perpendicular to the street for a depth of 70 feet. Built of buff brick laid in common stretcher bond with trimmings of white brick and Baltimore County marble, the building is topped by

Lydia's rest on the mound at Westminster Cemetery.

*Editor's note: originally published by the Hanover Evening Sun, October 15, 1964.*



Westminster Fire Company Building is downtown Westminster.

## Has Stopped

a tower which gives the structure a total height of 92 feet, easily the most dominant feature of the Westminster skyline. The tower is topped by a large domed roof that covers a tall Seth Thomas Clock, donated (at a cost of \$1040) by Mrs. Margaret Cassell Baile. The bulk of the building was built in 1896; in 1927, another three story bay was added, giving the building a more cubic appearance. The Westminster Fire Department used the building from 1896 to 1998.

## Home Tour Coming Up Dec 11th!

As announced in the City of Westminster's News and Notes, historic Belle Grove Square has been chosen to host the 2010 Holiday House Tour.

For those of you who are interested in having your home in the December Holiday Home Tour, there is still plenty of time to include your home in the tour. We still need a few more houses to add to the tour list. Please call Bruce DeVault with the neighborhood association at 443-293-7203 or Tim Rogers with the city of Westminster at 410-848-4628 and get your registration forms turned in as soon as possible.

It is also a good time to start thinking about who you want to help you during the tour. For those of you who are including your home on the tour list, you will need volunteers to help guide folks through your home. You also want to start thinking about how you want to stage your home and start thinking about the preparations necessary to make your home its most appealing for the home tour.

If your home is not on the home tour, you can still be a big part of the tour by volunteering to help with the event. We will need volunteers to work at the tour ticket booth, decorate homes and be guides at neighbors' homes. We will also be looking for folks to provide music at the churches during the tour. Weather permitting we may even have folks singing carols in the park. As you can see, there is a lot of work to be done and many opportunities to work with your neighbors to help make this an outstanding home tour.



St. Patrick's Day was an occasion for postcards in Victorian times.

## St. Patrick's Day

On March 17th, many of us will be celebrating St Patrick's Day by wearing green, attending a parade or perhaps joining friends at the local Irish pub. (How luckily, O'Lourdan's is around the corner!) On this one day in March, folks of Irish ancestry and many others will be paying tribute to St Patrick the patron saint of Ireland.

The person who was to become St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Wales about AD 385. His given name was Maewyn, and he almost didn't get the job of bishop of Ireland because he lacked

the required scholarship.

Far from being a saint, until he was 16, he considered himself a pagan. At that age, he was sold into slavery by a group of Irish marauders that raided his village. During his captivity, he said he became closer to God.

He escaped from slavery after six years and went to Gaul where he studied in the monastery under St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre for twelve years. During his training he decided that his calling was to convert the pagans to Christianity.



# German Influence: Lutheran, Reformed Immigrants Built Several Area Union Churches

by Mary Ann Ashcraft

As eighteenth century German immigrants moved south and west from the East Coast ports where they landed, they brought along their religious preferences whether Protestant or Catholic. Carroll County was strongly influenced by German Baptists, also known as Dunkards and later as Church of the Brethren, and by two denominations which worked closely together during those early years – Lutheran and Reformed (now known as United Church of Christ). In the less populated areas of Maryland, the two groups established “union” churches with services held for both faiths at different times. This pattern can be seen throughout the northern and western parts of present-day Carroll County where Pennsylvania Germans settled in significant numbers – Taneytown, Uniontown, Manchester, Silver Run, and Westminster. After building unpretentious log structures when they first arrived,

the congregations began erecting attractive brick churches in the early nineteenth century. The architecture is very similar, so it is difficult to differentiate between ones in various communities in grainy old photographs. Unfortunately, not a single union church building from the first half of the nineteenth century has survived.

St. Mary’s Union (Lutheran and Reformed) Church in Silver Run was established in 1762 and followed the pattern of being a log structure that was replaced by a brick building in 1821. The congregations worshipped together until the 1890s when they constructed separate churches about one block apart, but continued to share the same cemetery. Photographs and descriptions document the interior and exterior of the old union church which was demolished in 1902, although some parts were saved.



The Lutheran and Reformed congregations of St. Mary’s in Silver Run built this union church in 1821 in the architectural style of many other union churches in the area. It was demolished in 1902. Collection of the Historical Society of Carroll County.

From the exterior, the church appeared rectangular and two and a half stories high. Worshippers entered through a door on one of the long walls; directly opposite was the handsome, wineglass-shaped pulpit. A canopy-like sounding board hung from the ceiling over the pulpit to amplify the minister’s voice. At St. Mary’s, the iron rod holding the sounding board was uniquely decorated with tin flowers attached by long metal stems, reputedly the artistic creation of an itinerant tinsmith. When the church was dismantled, the flowers were distributed among local families as keepsakes.

Pews occupied the ground floor and steep galleries held additional worshippers on three sides surrounding the high pulpit. During the early days, there were separate sections for older men, older women, younger men and younger women. As late as 1884, German was still being spoken at some services. Heat came from several wood stoves, but there was no chimney; the stovepipes simply ended in the attic!

Dr. Lee Brumback, current pastor at the Lutheran church, described the worship services surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the oldest and most sacred of the Christian tradition. Last year’s Holy Week at St. Mary’s was observed in much the same way as in Lutheran churches across Germany that are recovering their historic roots. The Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services were centered around the Stations of the Cross, celebrating the Last Supper, foot-washing and stripping the altar of its cross and appointments. Dr. Brumback wore a simple black cassock on Good Friday in keeping with the somber occasion. Children who attended

Saturday’s Easter egg hunt learned the significance of Easter symbols derived from both Christian and pagan traditions.

On Easter Sunday, the somber mood gives way to joyful celebration as the appointments are returned to the altar, the cross is adorned with lilies and flowers of every sort decorate the sanctuary. Just how the residents of Silver Run celebrated Easter two hundred years ago is uncertain, but church traditions do not change quickly. Fresh lilies may not have been available to the congregants at old St. Mary’s Union Church, but the spirit of the occasion must have been very similar.

*Editor’s note: published in Carroll County Times on March 23, 2008 for the series Carroll’s Yesteryears.*

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Letters to the editor are welcomed. Letters submitted may be edited for space or clarity.

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