

Ascension burying ground. The body of Lt. Gibson was afterwards claimed and removed to Virginia. Lt. Murray rests where he was placed over a century ago. Reprint from "Centennial Program of Ascension Church," 1944.

98 North Court Street  
**7. OLD JAIL 1837**

The masonry of this stone structure was the work of Ephraim Swope and Thomas Durbin. The jail was built for \$4,000 in a style commonly seen in the countryside - the Pennsylvania-German farmhouse. However, its scale was much larger - two stories tall, five bays long by two bays or windows deep. The stones were quarried at the site of the Farm Museum a mile south of here. Notice the very large stones that were used, perhaps to intimidate would-be criminals with its fortress-like appearance and to reinforce Dante's "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." Someone called "Big Tom" did. Not only did he lose all hope, he lost his head, literally. The state of Tennessee breathed a sigh of relief as this desperate character made his way north only to be jailed once again for disturbing the peace. Within these walls, this hulk of a man cut his throat with a knife rather than be sent to the penitentiary in Baltimore. The coroner, a man interested in phrenology (the study of bumps on the head and their relationship to character) seized the chance to take Tom's massive head for research. As the years passed, people began to report seeing a large headless man roaming about the jail, hands outstretched, as if in search of something that belonged to him.

**8. COURTHOUSE 1838**

The cornerstone for the Courthouse was laid by Andrew Shriver on June 13, 1838. He was assisted by Colonel Joshua Gist, brother to General Mordecai Gist of Revolutionary War fame (Long Island and Camden). James Shellman, the first burgess of Westminster, was the architect and Swope and Durbin, the two men responsible for building the jail, also laid the masonry for the new Courthouse. The Courthouse was constructed for \$18,000 and originally consisted of the center portion of two stories, seven bays, and gabled roof. Soon after completion, an ornamental cupola, the steps, and a two-story Greek Revival portico were added. Greek Revival architecture had become popular in the U.S. during the 1830's and 1840's, so it was only fitting that a newly-formed county seat would want to show how progressive it was by conforming to national trends. In 1882, the one-story wings were attached and in 1935 they were rebuilt and made larger by adding a half story.

**Interior of Courthouse**

The Courthouse that was erected in 1838 is the central portion of the present structure. One enters through double doors leading into an expansive foyer. The floors and steps are marble, most of which was quarried from within the state (Harford County). Note the exquisitely

designed moldings encircling the original gas lights which have been converted for modern use. In the earliest part of the building are four fireplaces like the one which can be seen in the Law Library to the right from the entrance hall. None of them are in use today. Civil cases are presently tried in this Courthouse while criminal cases are heard in the Courthouse Annex on N. Court Street. Civil cases include adoptions, paternity, accident, damage, and divorce proceedings. Adoption and juvenile cases are closed to the public.

Another room on the ground floor is allocated to the Juvenile Master who handles all juvenile proceedings. The Juvenile Master hears all cases and recommends a final disposition to the judge. The other two large rooms on the ground floor are multi-use office, conference, and waiting rooms.

Upstairs, on the first landing is the door to the upstairs portion of the Law Library (admittance on ground floor level only). A doorway to a perfectly preserved mid-19th century Hall of Justice is found at the top of the stairs. The ambience of the place takes one back in time. Envision a trial set here in early 1800's.

*The court clerk calls court from the balcony - "Oyez, Oyez, Oyez. All manner of persons having any business before the Honorable, the Judges of the Circuit Court for Carroll County, draw near and give your attendance, for the Court is now sitting." The lawyers arrive, one from the Law Library behind the door on the left and the other from his reading at the fireside downstairs. Spectators begin to wander in taking seats on the wooden benches (original) in this room.*

*The gas is lighted in each of the four sconces in the room helping to break the gloom of this overcast day. The defendant takes his chair at the table closest to the jury along with his lawyer. At the table on the left sits the plaintiff and his lawyer. As the crowd gathers, the court clerk is thinking how wise it is to have John and Harry present. The two husky men have taken their places on the two high chairs at either end of the rail. They understand their job well - no one is permitted through the gates except those people allowed by the judge. The court clerk takes his place at the lower walnut bench along with the court reporter. The jury enters and sits on the ladderback chairs which were situated to the right of the bench. The judge enters and sits on the top-most level behind the bench (which was once located opposite the double doors). He has traveled by horseback, his saddlebags loaded with long slender documents which relate to various cases he must hear around the state. After only an hour in the saddle, he is relatively fresh and ready to begin the proceedings. The court clerk asks all those present to rise and the trial has now officially begun.*

*Witnesses are called by the clerk. They are sworn in, and take a seat at the chair below the court clerk's bench. The crowd remains quiet on this day. No one*

*tries to get through the gateway or over the rail. After all testimony is given, the jury adjourns to the room on the right (as you face the bench) to deliberate the outcome.*

Back in the present, we see that testimony is now recorded not steno-typed or taken down in longhand as in days of old. In 1937, for the County's Centennial celebration, reproduction Windsor chairs replaced the ladderback jury chairs. The gas lights were converted to electricity and beautiful solid brass chandeliers were imported from Holland in the early 1970's. The Law Library was moved to larger quarters on the first floor, while the old library stands as a monument to history, its leatherbound tomes holding the antiquated codes of Maryland.

34 North Court Street  
**9. EPISCOPAL RECTORY 1879**

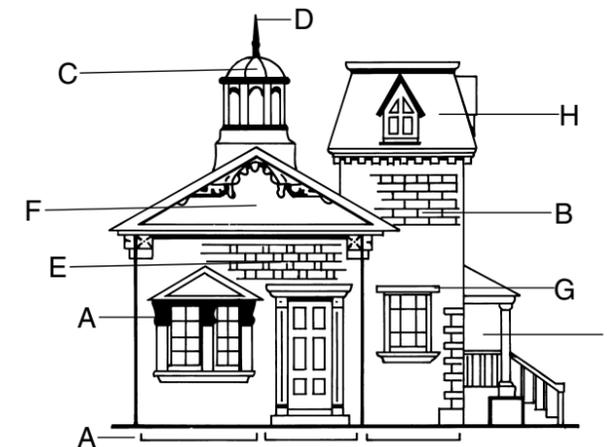
When the L-shaped rectory of the Ascension Church was built in 1879, the Episcopal Church continued building in the Gothic mode - steeply pitched roof, ornated gable arched windows, roof top finials and spikes - but it also combined the irregular features of the Italian Villa style - balconies, porches, bays and towers. The domestic use of the mansard-roofed tower embedded in the L of this house was quite an innovation for its day. Note the stained glass transom - and its repeat in the triangular pane in the upper left dormer window.

30 North Court Street  
**10. GOTHIC REVIVAL CHAPEL 1876**

Built in 1876 to house the black congregation which attended Ascension Church, this Gothic Revival Chapel was used as a parish school and for evening services. Due to a reduction in Church membership, the congregation was back in the main church by 1894. Since then, it has been a rectory, private school and now a private residence. Note the Gothic Revival theme is continued - pitched roof, brackets on the roofline and doorway, and standing buttresses on the sides of the building. The last traces of the chapel can be seen on the chimneys on which there are two raised crosses. Missing are a small peaked gable which rose from the present lower roofline over four front windows, a raised cross which once stood where two upstairs windows are located, and a rooftop belfry.

*Researched and written (1984) and revised (1989) by Diana Scott.*

The information contained in this tour represents many hours of research and writing by Diana Scott. The Building of Westminster in Maryland, by Christopher Weeks, was one major source of information. The Carroll County Office of Tourism expresses its appreciation.



**G • L • O • S • S • A • R • Y**

- A. Bay** - a vertical section of a building represented by an opening, such as a door or window, e.g., above house is 3 bays wide.
- B. Common-Bond** - courses of stretchers with each sixth course made of headers.
- C. Cupola** - small, often domed structure rising above a main roof.
- D. Finial** - decorative, terminal part at tip of a spire or gable.
- E. Flemish-Bond** - alternate stretchers and headers in each course, and centered over each other vertically.
- F. Gable** - triangular portion of wall under a double pitched roof.  
**Georgian (1700-1830)** - symmetrical composition enriched with classical detail.  
**Gothic Revival (1830-1860)** - steeply pitched roof, pointed windows, and curved lines.  
**Greek Revival (1820-1860)** - adaptation of Classic Greek temple front employing details of either Doric, Ionic or Corinthian order.  
**Italian Villa (1830-1880)** - short, heavy towers, wide cornices, brackets, asymmetrical plan.
- G. Lintel** - horizontal beam over a doorway, window, etc.
- H. Mansard Roof** - a double-pitched roof with a steep lower slope - the hallmark of the Second Empire style. Named for Francois Mansard, a French architect.  
**Nave** - central area of a church.  
**Pennsylvania Farmhouse** - regional style - L-shaped, two-story, three to five-bay symmetrical structure with a gabled roof.
- I. Portico** - an entrance porch.  
**Second Empire (1860-1890)** - French Second Empire style, named after the reign of Napoleon III, mansard roof, usually pierced with dormers, asymmetrical.  
**Fan Light** - a window shaped like a fan.  
**Side Light** - small vertical glass panels beside doors.

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A  
Walking Tour in  
Carroll County

**Courthouse  
Square**



Maryland

**W**estminster, founded by William Winchester in 1764, is the second oldest town in Carroll County. In its early days Westminster led a fairly quiet existence, a center for craftsmen plying their trades. Then after 36 years of slow growth, a new turnpike between Baltimore and Pittsburgh came through the town. As traffic and trade increased, Westminster was chosen in 1837 as the seat of newly created Carroll County. Administration buildings were now required to be built. The land was donated by two civic-minded families: the Isaac Shriver and the heirs of David Fisher. The jail was built first, followed by the Courthouse. Once these two large, impressive structures had been built, the door was opened for transition. The vernacular form of architecture, the Pennsylvania-German farmhouse, gave way to national architectural styles. Diversity in construction became evident as property owners showed their affluence and individuality in the structures they chose to build.

A Greek Revival portico was added to the Courthouse soon after it was constructed. The services of Robert Carey Long, Jr., were engaged to design a Gothic style church. Handsome residences-sophisticated versions of the Pennsylvania farmhouse, Gothic, Second Empire, and Italian Villa styles-arose along Court Street.

A renaissance had taken place.



The Official Seal of Westminster, Maryland

This tour takes approximately 40 minutes without interiors.

210 East Main Street

**1. THE KIMMEY HOUSE 1800**

Built in 1800, this is the oldest house on the Courthouse Square walking tour. It was originally a three-bay house, expanded to the five-bay version in 1811 by Dr. George Colgate, who created the space for an office adjoining his residence. To have an office or business either adjoining or as a part of one's home was a common occurrence in the early 1800's. Note the distinctive round-arched windows. They are a rarity in a town accustomed to flat topped windows. The house now serves as headquarters for the Historical Society of Carroll County, housing its administrative offices, research library and the Shriver-Weybright Exhibition Gallery. The gallery houses changing exhibits of various Carroll County historic artifacts.

206 East Main Street

**2. THE SHELLMAN HOUSE 1807**

This house, built in 1807, is one of the oldest homes still standing in Westminster. Jacob Sherman, a German who had migrated here from Pennsylvania had purchased the property from the town founder, William Winchester. He built a new home on the premises which he shared with his daughter, Eve, and his son-in-law, David Shriver. Shriver was the surveyor and superintendent of the Reisterstown turnpike (part of the Baltimore to Pittsburgh pike that followed Westminster's Main St. and continued along present-day Route 77, until it met the National Pike) and later, of the National Pike to Cumberland. In the 1860's the house was deeded to Katherine Jones Shellman, the widow of James M. Shellman, first burgess of Westminster and architect of the Courthouse. Mary Shellman, their daughter and a local reformer, inherited the house. After her death in 1936, the Historical Society of Carroll County was formed to save this house from demolition. Today it is open to the public as an historic house museum. Tours by appointment.

This two-story, Flemish-bond, five-bay residence became the prototype for future homes built in town. Its gabled roof and two-tier rear side porch housing the kitchen is typical of Pennsylvania farmhouse style. The columned entrance door shows the influence of Georgian architecture.

Walk past Shellman House to far corner of N. Court Street to cross Main Street.

23 North Court Street

**3. BENNETT-PARKE HOUSE 1843?**

In 1841, Isaac Shriver sold this land to Solomon Zepp for \$400. Zepp sold the same parcel two years

later to Levi Bennett for \$1,800. The explanation for this 4½ fold increase in price was the appearance of this Flemish-bond brick home on the property. This house has a fine original Georgian eight-panel door and seven-pane light transom. The windows have six-over-six panes, white sills and lintels (above windows) and black shutters which create an impressive appearance. The roof, a tin one, is not original and the porch is a later addition. The use of Flemish-bond on the front of their house and common-bond on the north and south walls is easily seen on the Bennett-Parke House. The Bennett family lived here until 1871 when it was sold to Joseph M. Parke, a Carroll County judge, for \$4,600-an extremely high price for the Westminster area. That such a price was paid shows the house was highly regarded for its architectural merit. In 1956, neighboring Ascension Church bought it to use as its rectory.

23 North Court Street

**4. ASCENSION CHURCH 1844**

Ascension Church was built in 1844 by Robert Carey Long, Jr., an architect of some renown from Baltimore City. He is responsible for designing Green Mount Cemetery Gate, St. Alphonsus Church, Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, Lloyd Street Synagogue and St. Peter the Apostle Church in Baltimore. State owner, Mr. Tate, provided Mr. Long free passage to and from Westminster, and Long, as if to reciprocate, charged but \$50 to draw up the plans and specifications for the church and to oversee construction. The church was built in a modified Gothic design of grey stone quarried just outside of Westminster. Two years later, on Ascension Day, 1846, the Church of Ascension was consecrated and the graveyard behind the building was blessed to become a place of Christian burial.

**Interior (by appointment only)**

Inside you will note the simplicity of the Gothic design-arched ceiling, windows and doorway, perpendicular lines, original flooring and pews, white walls. Notice, also, the Bishop's Chair of the 1840's and the other two Gothic style chairs. Most Gothic furniture remained within the confines of churches and related buildings and never gained popularity in ordinary households. The baptismal font is original to the church, but the marble altar was brought here in 1902 from a church in Baltimore City. Stained glass windows at the sides of the nave are hand painted and kiln fired, dating back to the late 19th century. Altar windows are a transition between Art Nouveau and Art Deco, resembling the Tiffany style. Memorial inscriptions on plaques, crosses, and stained glass windows bring the observer a sense of the town's history; Westminster townspeople figuratively live once more.

View Roberts House from the corner of Court Place & North Court Street.

39, 41, & 43 North Court Street

**5. ROBERTS HOUSE C. 1830, 1875**

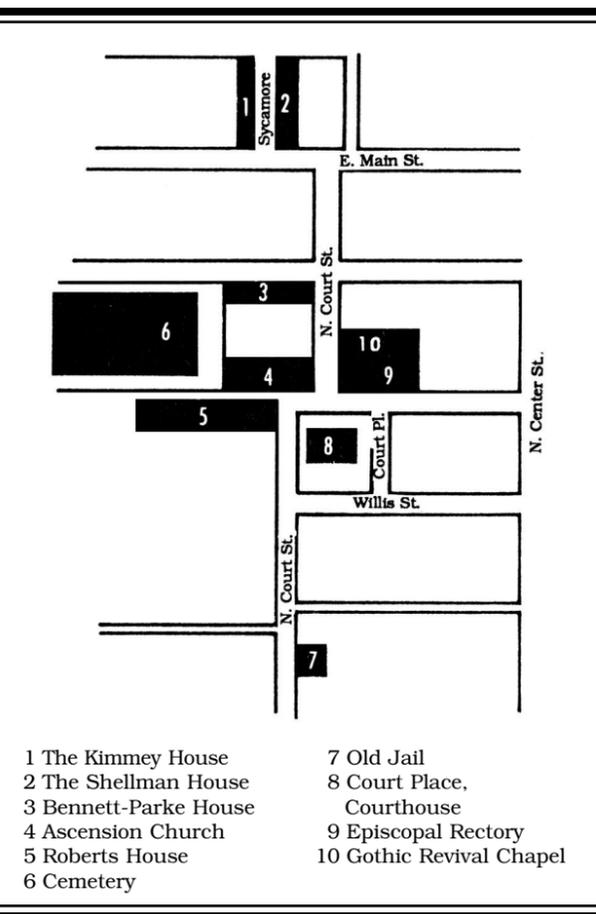
There is evidence to suggest a structure existed here in 1830, but the present house was built in 1875. It was considered a local showpiece in its day. Charles Roberts, the owner, a Uniontown native and lawyer, followed the lead of two other prominent Westminster families (Charles Reifsnider of 230 E. Main and Colonel W.W. Dallas of 154 E. Green Street) in breaking with the traditional Pennsylvania-German farmhouse style. He built his residence in Second Empire style, which had been made popular in France during the reign of Napoleon III. Note the unusual placement of the off-centered entrance door and mansard roof of original grey slate with the added feature of a corner pavilion (right side). The two-story section to the left, with steeply pitched gable roof was added later to function as a ballroom. The house has 22 rooms.

View cemetery from driveway between Church Yard and Roberts House.

**6. CEMETERY**

The burial ground behind the church dates back to 1846 and one of its more infamous "residents" takes his rest there (between the tree and stump to right near walkway). His name is Legh Master. This man from Lancashire, England, bought "Furnace Hills" for the purpose of "unearthing hidden treasures" and set his slaves to the task of mining iron ore. The master of the plantation, Avondale, blackened his name with his foul temper and ardent nature. Legend has it that Master, enamored with his black servant girl, was infuriated with the intrusion of Sam, her sweetheart, and had him thrown into the iron furnace. He then proceeded to brick the girl up in an oven, alive. When the kitchen in the house was torn apart due to a fire in the 1930's, it was found to contain the skeleton of a human being, lending credence to the legend. On the lighter side, this same man is credited with unintentionally importing the English daisy to Maryland - he thought he had imported clover seeds.

Stories are told of Legh Master's ghost who sits astride a grey horse that spouts fire from its nostrils. The ghost cries for God's mercy in pitiful tones. Sometimes the apparition is accompanied by three glowingimps. Another odd account of Legh Master tells how his body would rise continually to the surface of his plantation burial plot, until a group of concerned citizens carried it to consecrated ground in Ascension graveyard where it rests in peace above ground today. (Or does it? On close observation the marble slab on his tomb is cracked).



More upstanding citizens taking their rest here are the Van Bibbers of Avondale, who along with Reverend Hillhouse Buel, the first rector, helped raise funds for the church to be built, and James M. Shellman, first burgess of Westminster and architect of the courthouse. He and his wife, Katherine (also buried here) were parents to Mary B. Shellman, whose home is the museum belonging to the Historical Society of Carroll County.

*A reminder of the Civil War can be seen in the graveyard today: the tombstone of Lt. William M. Murray (under tree) who was killed on June 29, 1863, in a skirmish between advance units of General J.E.B. Stuart's Confederate Cavalry and about 100 troops of the First Delaware Cavalry. This prelude to the Battle of Gettysburg occurred in the eastern part of Westminster near the intersection of Washington Road and Baltimore Boulevard. Lt. Murray and another officer of the Fourth Virginia Cavalry, Lt. Pierre Gibson, as well as a Union corporal and private were killed. All four were buried in Union Church Yard by Reverend James Chrystal. Two weeks later, the remains of Lts. Murray and Gibson, having been found to have been Episcopalians, were reinterred in the*