

"Residents of the Kimmey House, Part 2"
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By Jay A. Graybeal

In last week's column, I wrote about the early residents of the Kimmey House, the Historical Society's administrative building at 210 E. Main St. in Westminster. This week's column traces the remaining residents of the house and its acquisition by the Historical Society in 1966.

Nathan I. Gorsuch (1820-1902) purchased the property from William Stansbury for \$2,000 on March 31, 1864. N. I. Gorsuch was born near Bird Hill, Carroll County, and was a merchant tailor by trade. He operated a store on the first floor of the two-story east addition. This room is now the Carroll County Tourist Information Center. During the 1880s, Gorsuch formed a partnership with his son Charles C. and operated a grocery, grain and feed business at 16 W. Main St. The former store room was converted into a parlor.

N. I. Gorsuch sold the property to his daughter Emily Ann Herr for \$2,500 on July 6, 1900; the sale probably represents Gorsuch's efforts to fairly divide his estate shortly before his death in 1902. Emily Ann Gorsuch had first married Henry Furlong Test Buckingham, a Civil War veteran and her second cousin once removed. After Buckingham's death, she married Samuel K. Herr, also a Civil War veteran and a partner in the Westminster carriage making firm of F. K. Herr & Bro.

The house passed to Mary Test Buckingham Kimmey, a daughter of Emily A. Herr and her first husband, Henry F. T. Buckingham, and her son Henry B. Kimmey. Test Kimmey married Henry M. Kimmey who was serving as Westminster's postmaster at the time of his untimely death in 1932. The property passed out of the family following the death of Test Kimmey in 1961.

Test Kimmey was a driving force behind the founding of the Historical Society in 1939. She and others had been deeply concerned about the fate of the next door Shellman House. The property was for sale and a potential buyer was thinking of demolishing the house to build a gas station. The group met in Test Kimmey's house and later incorporated as the Historical Society of Carroll County. The Shellman House was purchased at public auction in 1939 and has been operated as house museum ever since. During the mid 1960s, the Historical Society was in need of additional exhibit storage space; a room in the county office building being no longer available. The Commissioners of Carroll County decided to purchase the Kimmey House for the Historical Society. Although challenged in court, the purchase and presentation to the Society were completed in 1966.

The acquisition of the new property provided the Society with much needed space and the land to build an auditorium and a safe room to store the priceless collection of early records. The new auditorium was named in honor of Society President James M. Shriver and benefactor Victor Weybright. The Shriver-Weybright Auditorium has been the site of numerous lectures, exhibitions, and other special programs. The Society's priceless collection of manuscripts, local newspapers and historical photographs are safely housed in our research library which is open to the public on regular hours five days a week. The recently restored Kimmey House will continue to serve as the Society's administrative building. The renovations to the research library, collections storage rooms and offices will help the Society fulfill its mission of preserving and interpreting our rich heritage well into the next century.

Photo caption: The Kimmey House was the home of several generations of the Gorsuch/Buckingham and Kimmey families from 1864 to 1961. the property has been the Historical Society's administrative building, with a research library, auditorium and offices, since 1966. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.