

Winder descendant provides best lead

By BRICE STUMP
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For decades attorney Harry C. Dashiell pursued his search for descendants of Gov. Levin Winder, even advertising in major metropolitan newspapers for help.

While he heard from several people, his best lead was Mae Waterman, a great-great granddaughter of the governor who was also interested in history.

It was she who had the so-called "missing fork" from President George Washington's camp chest and she also recalled seeing two early portraits of Winder and his wife that are now in the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Upon Gov. Levin Winder's death, the secure world his family had known rapidly deteriorated, hastened even more by his wife's death in 1822.

Their daughter, Mary Anne, (Marianna), described as "very much the lady" moved to Centreville, Md., by 1834, having married Thomas Emory, eldest son of Gen. Thomas Emory.

Left behind, investigators believe, was the grave of Winder and his wife Mary and that of the young daughter, Mary Anna or Marianna (the first to bear the name) who was "a beautiful, lovely little girl who died in childhood," according to Rider Henry Winder.

The Winder mansion and much of the farm was sold to Samuel Holbrook just a few years after the death of Winder's wife.

It was the end of an era in Somerset County history as well as that of the Winder family.

William Sydney Winder, Gov. Winder's son, served one year in the Maryland House of Delegates. He lived in Baltimore and then on a farm in Baltimore County. He died about 1852, according to relative Rider Henry Winder.

In 1864, Rider Henry Winder wrote a sketch on the Winder family, noting a most unusual recollection associated with William Sydney Winder.

According to the sketch: "Within the first four years of this century (19th), ere steamboats were, Levin Winder, his wife, Mary S.

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Winder descendant provides one of the best leads

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(Stoughton Sloss), their son Edward, and a niece or foster-daughter, Mary H. Winder, on their return from a visit to Mrs. Winder's sister Gantt, in the District of Columbia, took passage at Baltimore in the Cambridge Packet, (under the direction of) Capt. Mitchell.

"In the Choptank River, but a few miles from Cambridge, a sudden squall upset the Packet. There was danger; and besides some precipitate involuntary movement, considerable struggling; but eventually all on board were saved.

Mr. Attorney General Bayly, who was a passenger, said to me, that throughout the exciting scene, Miss Mary H. Winder seemed to be as self-possessed and serene as if she had been safe and at ease in a quiet parlor on land.

"Reaching my father's on their way from Cambridge, and there leaving Miss Mary, the rest of the Somerset party proceeded quickly to Monie, their home.

Next day a Phaeton (a light four-wheeled carriage drawn by one or two horses with front and back

seats and a folding top) came for Mary with a message, that speedily after her Uncle and Aunt were housed at home a child was born to them. I accompanied her to Monie. The child that thus escaped the waves to see the light was William Sidney Winder — still rather small when fully grown, but very well made: in principle, sentiment, tastes and habits, and all his life, a gentleman"

The governor's other son, Edward Stoughton Winder, "... was a handsome man and married Elizabeth, daughter of the late Gov. Edward Lloyd ... who was of an old, highly respected and very wealthy family ... Edward was appointed by General Jackson to a Captaincy of Dragoons in the Florida War; that he served to campaigns in Florida and finally returned to Maryland with his constitution and health so broken that it became necessary to remove him from his recruiting station in the City of Baltimore to his home in Talbot, where after lingering for some time, died early in the year 1840," according to Rider Henry Winder.

Several years ago Jeff Sarvey, formerly of Easton and now of near Wilmington, N.C., pursued

his interest in genealogy by thumbing through the telephone book hunting for particular names. He came across a Winder Hughes, by mistake, "and, I said to myself, 'Wait a minute,' that's an Eastern Shore name, so I called him up," Sarvey said.

By an almost unbelievable stroke of luck, Sarvey had found one of the few direct descendants of the early Winder family from Somerset County.

Hughes who was 98 in 1987, is now deceased, but Sarvey had an opportunity for repeated interviews with him. "His uncle was one of the sons of Gen. John Henry Winder (of the Civil War honored by a plaque on the lawn at the Wicomico County Court House in Salisbury).

"Winder Hughes was very Southern in manner, slender, with a large, well-formed head. He was very knowledgeable about his family history and when he claimed to be related to Gov. Winder, I was skeptical at first, but he knew all about his family tree and had documents and copies of old pictures and things to back it up. He was very helpful, but avoided references to the Winders involvement

in the Civil War, which was my subject of interest, especially the story of Andersonville."

Andersonville was a prison in Georgia to hold Union prisoners. Gen. John Henry Winder was in charge of all prisons east of the Mississippi and Andersonville was one of them.

The prison had gained an infamous reputation of cruelty and inhumane treatment to prisoners to such an extent that Winder's officer, Capt. Henry Wirz, was tried for war crimes after the Civil War and was hung. Winder, a brigadier general, also faced similar charges, but died before his trial.

David Grier, an authority on Winder history, said it has been speculated that Wirz did not get a fair trial because it was a military court that heard the case and because the Union victors wanted revenge.

Much of the information on the Winder (pronounced wine-der) family came from Rider Henry Winder. It was he who was on board the first steamer to enter the waters of Somerset County, while probably bringing back the body of his uncle and governor.

He was born in 1787 and died in 1866. He was the son of William and Charlotte Henry Winder of Somerset County (now Wicomico). Through his father he was a nephew of Gov. Levin Winder and through his mother a nephew of Gov. John Henry. According to his descendant, the late Honorable Philip D. Laird, John Henry Winder was "... a kindly, urbane polished gentleman, well informed, over-cautious in speech and guile-

less as a child ... He was noted for the accuracy of his memory, and the absolute and unvarying truthfulness of his statements ..."

Levin Winder, who was friends with some of the nation's most respected statesmen and governor of Maryland during what may have been the state's darkest hour, is only a memory and little remains to mark his presence on his beloved Bloomsbury plantation.