LOOKING FOR A GRAVE. The late Harry Dashiell of Princess Anne, right, is shown in this late 1960s photograph as he watched Robert Lord, left, and David Grier dig for the grave of Gov. Levin Winder on part of the governor's plantation, Bloomsbury, in Somerset County. For decades Dashiell and Grier searched for the grave of Winder who died in 1819.
Mystery surrounds lost grave of Gov. Winder

By BRICE STUMP
Daily Times Staff Writer

In the late 18th and early 19th century, Maryland's Gov. Levin Winder of Somerset County was lauded by his contemporaries for his statesmanship and leadership, especially for the governor's stance in keeping the British at bay during the War of 1812.

Gen. Winder, as he preferred to be addressed, had his plantation, Bloomsbury, near Venton which, according to tradition, was a showplace with a spacious lawn and extensive garden, brick walks and even fountains surrounded by favorite plants and trees of the Colonial period.

Numerous support buildings which may have included a blacksmith shop, dairy, ice house, smoke house as well as homes for his 57 slaves were part of the tobacco economy which supported daily operations on the 840-acre plantation along the Little Monie Creek.

Winder was born and married into the most prominent families in Maryland history. Political achievements were paramount to gentlemen of Maryland, and Winder took his place as the state's 14th governor in 1812.

Upon his death on July 1, 1819, Winder, a Mason and past grand master of Grand Lodge of Maryland, was given a lengthy and expensive funeral by fellow Masons in Baltimore.

Ironically, lauded and respected so much in life, Winder's material legacy has virtually disappeared.

His stately home has vanished, nothing remains of the manicured gardens and the plantation has been divided. Worse, Winder's grave, as well as that of his wife, Mary Stoughton Sloss and an infant daughter has been lost for almost a century.

For almost the same number of years a handful of individuals have pursued the mystery of locating the lost Winder graves. Winder is one of two governors whose grave locations have been lost. The resting place of Gov. John Henry who served in 1797 and who was tied to the Winder family through marriage, is unmarked in a field along the Nanticoke River south of Vienna. Winder's grave is believed to be somewhere on the Bloomsbury Plantation.

For decades the late Princess Anne attorney Harry Dashiell searched for the graves, but failed to find them. Prior to Dashiell's death in 1975 the search was shared and continued today by Salisbury businessman David Grier and Princess Anne historian Shirley Richards.

With new technology and resources unavailable to Dashiell, new clues have been found that may bring the search to a conclusion.

What follows is the first in a six-part series about the almost century-old search for the Winder graves and history of the family and the Bloomsbury Plantation.

It began simple enough. In the early 1940s Princess Anne attorney Harry Dashiell and resident Alice Mae Beauchamp were doing research on Anna Ella Carroll, a Somerset County resident influential in the course of the Civil War. They came across some information on Levin Winder, a Maryland governor who served during the War of 1812, and the attorney wanted to know more.

Dashiell came back to the Winder topic several weeks later and a few minutes of reading launched

Maryland's 'forgotten patriot'

By BRICE STUMP
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While Gov. Levin Winder is virtually an unknown name today, he lives with distinction in the annals of Maryland history.

Winder was born at the family estate on Rewastico Creek near Quantico, in what is now Wicomico County, on Sept. 4, 1757.

Winder studied law, but at the age of 20 he was a 1st lieutenant in the Fifth Company, Smallwood's First Maryland Battalion of the Flying Camp in January 1776. By December of that year he was a captain, 1st Maryland Regiment, and a held the rank of major, 4th Maryland Regiment in 1777.

While fighting in the Battle of Camden in 1780, according to the Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, he was taken prisoner, and exchanged in 1781 and served as a lieutenant colonel, 2nd Maryland Regiment in that same year.

Winder was transferred to 1st Maryland Regiment and discharged in 1783. He was commissioned as a major general, 2nd Division of the Maryland Militia in 1794.

On May 13, 1790 Winder, then 33 married Mary Stoughton Sloss of Somerset County. Through his wife he inherited a portion of Bloomsbury, an 840-acre plantation along the Little Monie Creek.
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him on a project of a lifetime that hints Winder's body was deposited in a vault in the First Presbyterian graveyard, corner of Greene and Fayette streets, and that they were afterwards removed to the family burying ground on the family estate 'Monie Creek,' two miles from Princess Anne, where the grave is pointed out to visitors.

An obituary in the Baltimore Pat
ticle, July 3, 1819 contains a nota

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In a letter written in 1948, Dashiell con