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The Curious Collector by Len Augsburger, LSCC #1271

In Washington's Footsteps

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In conjunction with the recent Baltimore coin show, capably hosted by Whitman from March 31 to April 2, a few of us visited Paul Kluth's latest venture, the Ambassadors general store and private residence club in Taneytown, MD. The drive from downtown Baltimore toward Taneytown is full of suburban strip malls, tract developments, and the like, but Taneytown is an older community with a more colorful, vintage downtown area. Ambassadors is situated at 6-8 Frederick St. on the site of the old Adam Good Tavern. A bronze plaque greets visitors with the fact that President Washington visited the Tavern in 1791 while traveling north to Philadelphia (where the federal government was seated prior to moving to Washington, D.C.).



Legend has it that Washington interpreted the name as “a dam good tavern”. Whether true or not, it’s a good story, even if the tavern was not “damn good”. In any case, Paul will be challenged to live up to Washington’s supposed assessment of “damn good”. The Adam Good Tavern was demolished long ago, and in the late 18th century a prominent citizen (Norman Hagan) erected a stately residence on the site, with a storefront, to the right, incorporated into the structure. Hagan operated the retail space as a general store. The foundation, visible in the cellar, retains some of the original stonework from Washington’s time.



The property today is massive, with an addition added behind the storefront in the 1950s, to accommodate a bowling alley. Graffiti from the pinsetters remains evident on the back wall of the addition, which today serves as workshop space. Paul notes the total size of the complex is 7,500 square feet, while my eyeball estimate was a bit higher. In any case, he has plenty of space to build the business.



The storefront previously operated as an antique store, until 2008, and has been vacant since. The store inventory was left behind, and Paul has been busily organizing the contents for a relaunch this month. He intends to initially open the store on the weekends. The residence portion of the property will be offered for non-profit use, group events, gallery space, and other purposes.

Paul hosted lunch for the three of us (Bill Bugert and Dennis Fortier were also in attendance) and a good time was had by all. I’m looking forward to seeing what Paul continues to do with the space and build the business. Check it out on your next trip to the Baltimore show, or if you are simply passing through the area.