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GALLATIN PORTRAIT DEDICATED AT FORMER BANK BUILDING

Uniontown, PA – A portrait of the late Albert Gallatin now hangs in the county-owned building which bears his name.

Fayette County Commissioners on Thursday unveiled the portrait, donated by Independence National Historical Park (National Park Service), in the building that once housed the Gallatin National Bank, 2 West Main Street in Uniontown. The county purchased the property several years ago and formally renamed it Fayette County's Gallatin Building upon the portrait's dedication.

"Albert Gallatin made his mark in Fayette County, particularly in its southern end. A school district is named after him, and the town of New Geneva has his footprint on it. He was one of the historically famous people that came from Fayette County, Pennsylvania, and served as Secretary of the United States Treasury," Commissioner Vince Vicites said. "His Fayette County home, Friendship Hill, is a National Park Service Historic Site. He was a very prominent figure in our county's early history and founded the Gallatin National Bank. I think it's fitting that we keep his name on the building."

The late Albert Gallatin served from 1801-14 as U.S. Secretary of the Treasury during the presidential administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. His 13-year tenure is the longest anyone held the position.

According to the National Park Service (NPS), he is credited with reducing the national debt, completing the Louisiana Purchase, and funding the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition during his tenure. His restored country estate, now known as Friendship Hill National Historic Site, is located on New Geneva Road in Point Marion.

By overseeing the purchase of the Louisiana Territory, Gallatin played an instrumental role in opening access between the northern United States and an ocean port in New Orleans, La.

"Now, the residents of western Pennsylvania could easily ship their goods down river on keelboats to New Orleans," NPS states. "The port there also provided more customs duties, or import taxes, thus providing capital for the federal government."

NPS also credits Gallatin as "the very first man who ever suggested the plan for making the Cumberland Road," also known as the National Road, National Pike, or state Route 40; which runs through the heart of Fayette County and is maintained as the National Road Heritage Corridor for tourism purposes.

Gallatin was also known for his friendship with France's Marquis de Lafayette, for which Fayette County was named. The two became friends while Gallatin served as the U.S. Minister to France from 1816-23, and Gallatin later hosted Lafayette at Friendship Hill during his national tour.

According to Uniontown Public Library records, Lafayette traveled to Brownsville via barge and made his way to Uniontown via the National Road in May 1825. He then traveled to Uniontown via Main Street and met Gallatin at the Fayette County Courthouse, where the two addressed the crowd gathered to celebrate his arrival.

Following the courthouse festivities, library records state, the party retired to the nearby Walker Hotel, which later became the Central Hotel, and eventually the site of the Gallatin Bank Building.

"Having so many prominent figures and major events tied to one place weaves a rich tapestry through Fayette County's history. Our goal when securing grant funding to purchase and renovate the historic Gallatin Bank Building was to preserve a piece of history and allow it to serve our citizens for many years to come," Commissioner Scott Dunn said. "By paying homage to this building's namesake, even through something as simple as hanging a portrait, we honor both Albert Gallatin's legacy and the mark he left on Fayette County and the nation."

Gallatin founded the original Gallatin National Bank in 1829 in New York City, and later absorbed into the Hanover National Bank in 1912.

Locally, the bank's Uniontown branch became Fayette County's largest financial institution following the merger of two entities: Uniontown's Second National Bank and Connellsville's National Bank and Trust Company.

"Coming to America from Switzerland, this young immigrant boy of very modest parentage was not slow to recognize the wonderful opportunities offered and rapidly rose from the modest childhood to the stature of one of this country's leading citizen statesman, an accomplishment possible only in this great country he was so instrumental in making even greater," states an article from the former *Evening Standard* newspaper, written at the time of the bank's founding. "Guided by the mute lesson taught by Albert Gallatin's life, the Gallatin National Bank is sure to become an even greater institution than it now is and thus a tribute to the nationally recognized eminence of Fayette County."

Commissioner Dave Lohr said Albert Gallatin's story is "a lesson in history."

"Albert Gallatin's story is a great lesson in, 'Those who don't remember history are doomed to repeat it.' Our ongoing battle over how to fund government lies at the heart of American politics, and Albert Gallatin was an early champion in that fight. A rebel spokesman during the Whiskey Rebellion, Gallatin became the leader of the Republican opposition in Congress, eventually becoming Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, where he abolished internal revenue taxes, slashed federal spending, and repaid half the national debt," Lohr said. "He worked to constrain the federal government by restraining its fiscal power; his Treasury system lasted until the Civil War; and his culture of fiscal responsibility survived well into the 20th century. That's quite a legacy, and it's all rooted right here in Fayette County."

To learn more about Albert Gallatin and his Friendship Hill estate, visit www.nps.gov/frhi/index.htm.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

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