

## *Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles*

Carroll's Yesteryears  
01 March 1992

Leap year birthdays let youth last longer  
By Joe Getty

Today's article is about the people who are (or were) younger than the rest of us. These are people whose birthday occurs only once every four years. Turn-of-the-century newspapers in Carroll County enjoyed commenting upon citizens whose birthdays were Feb. 29.

From the *Democratic Advocate* of March 1, 1912: "Mr. Ford's Leap Year – Birthday Every Four Years. Walter A. Ford, who was born on February 29, 1872 in St. Louis, Mo., celebrated his tenth birthday last night. Mr. Ford is now in his 40<sup>th</sup> year. Having been born in leap year makes his birthday come every four years." The article continued by describing the elaborate menu, entertainment and guests at his party.

From the *American Sentinel*, March 6, 1908: "Unique Birthday Party. Mrs. Virginia Armacost, Belle Grove Square, gave a party last Saturday evening, February 29, to celebrate the sixth birthday of her son, George H. Armacost. As this occurs only every four years, its uniqueness is apparent. According to the wishes of the hostess, the guests came attired in children's costume. The young ladies, with short dresses and hairs in plaits, and the young men, with short trousers and shirt waists, reminded one of scenes of the past. And those feelings of childish days, that had been pent up, were let loose to be expressed in pranks most characteristic. The presents included music boxes, jumping jacks, wooden wagons and such things as were suitable to a boy of six. But that which created the most intense excitement was a large wooden box brought by four of the young men. After it had been appropriately presented by one of them, the box was opened by Mr. Armacost and to the amazement of all there was taken out a six year old young lady, Miss Marie Shaw."

From the *American Sentinel*, March 1, 1912: Born February 29, 1824, John W. Murray, father of five children, grandfather of 21, and great-grandfather of six, celebrated his twenty-first birthday yesterday at his home in Hampstead. Though the law of Maryland provides for the leap-year day, making February 29 the same as February 28, Mr. Murray was not aware of the fact and in his opinion he has missed 67 birthdays. In a letter from him to a relative in this city, a few days ago, he announced the celebration of his twenty-first birthday."

From the *Democratic Advocate*, March 7, 1896: "On Saturday, the 29<sup>th</sup> of February, there assembled at the residence of Mr. Richard Owings, near Warfieldsburg, a most pleasant and

## *Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles*

congenial company of little folks, the occasion being the leap-year birthday party of Effie, the twelve-year-old daughter of Mr. Mrs. R.L. Owings...Mirthmaking and games were indulged in, all taking an active part. None enjoyed the games more than our worthy host, especially a game at the crokinole board, which was one of the many gifts Miss Effie received from her associates..."

From the *American Sentinel*, March 7, 1924: "Mr. Wilson's birthday is February 29. The hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Wilson, near Freedom, was the scene of quite a large gathering of Mr. Wilson's many friends on Friday evening, February 29, it being the occasion of a birthday surprise, given in honor of Mr. Wilson's 56<sup>th</sup> birthday who has the distinction of being the only one as far as known, of this community of having been born February 29, and consequently has had but 14 birthdays in fifty-six years."

From the *American Sentinel*, March 6, 1908: "Mrs. Conrad Rusher, of Cherrytown, Myers' district, was given a birthday anniversary party, at her home in that village last Saturday evening, 29<sup>th</sup>. Having been born on that day of the month of February, it will be seen that an opportunity to celebrate the event only occurs once every four years, and Mrs. Rusher's friends entered heartily into this year's party in her honor, making the affair quite a success. The usual games and diversions were indulged in. Music of the graphophone was furnished by Mr. C. Shubkagle."