

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

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Jordan's 'Time Flies' tells of county's past
by Jay A. Graybeal

Over the past year the staff of the Historical Society has written a weekly guest column on local history for the *Carroll County Times*. We have explored a wide range of topics including local social life, architecture, Pennsylvania Germans, archeology and historical photographs.

Nearly 50 years ago the *Carroll County Times* featured a column on history in the making and local happenings titled "Time Flies," written by assistant editor J. Leland Jordan. Jordan's column began on July 7, 1942 and ran almost weekly for a year.

J. Leland Jordan was the adopted son of I. Scott and Henrietta Boring Jordan of Westminster. Mr. Jordan was a partner in the department store firm Nusbaum & Jordan located at 11 E. Main Street. A photograph taken by J. D. Mitchell of Westminster shows Jordan in about 1910.

Jordan's later writing were shaped by his military experiences as a young man. In June 1916 he was among 106 local members of Co. H, and the Regimental Band, First Regiment of Infantry, Maryland National Guard ordered to the Mexican border by President Woodrow Wilson. The Marylanders spent nearly five months in the vicinity of Eagle Pass, Texas guarding the border against excursions by Pancho Villa. Jordan and his comrades in arms returned without loss to an enthusiastic welcome in Westminster.

The warm homecoming was short-lived. In April 1917 America entered World War One and Jordan once again answered the call to duty. His old Unit Co. H was mustered into Federal service as part of the 112 Machine Gun Battalion. Jordan was later transferred to the Army's Ordnance Department and served overseas with the First, Second and Third American Armies. He participated in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Campaigns and returned home safely in October, 1919.

Jordan's military experience may have influenced his interest in local history. He became an avid collector of Carroll County newspapers, Civil War manuscripts, historical photographs, booklets and broadsides. A number of items in his extensive collection particularly his copies of the Westminster *American Sentinel* newspapers, became the source or subject of his column "Time Flies" and other writings.

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After Jordan's death in 1955 the collection was purchased for the Historical Society by the Commissioners of Carroll County. Instrumental in arranging the gift were Dr. Theodore Whitefield of Western Maryland College and Dr. Arthur Tracey of Hampstead. The foresight of these men and the public spirited action of the commissioners kept the Jordan Collection intact for later generations of countians to use and enjoy.

Jordan inaugurated "Time Flies" on July 3, 1942 with a brief history of the Westminster Forest and Stream Club:

"With the annual camp of the Westminster Forest and Stream Club scheduled for July 10-19, it brings to mind a bit of the early history of the club. Early history of any organization reputed to be the oldest of its kind in the United States should be of slight interest. We touch upon it briefly.

"It was on Monday evening, May 11, 1874 that several men of the town met in the office of Dr. George Yingling in the building where the Westminster Savings and Bank now stands, for the purpose of organizing a club for the better protection of fish and game in Carroll County. George W. Matthews was named chairman and Drs. Yingling and William H. Rippard were named to purchase a tent which they did for \$15.00.

"At a second meeting, on May 18, a subscription was taken to cover the cost of the tent. It was at this second meeting that the club was organized and given the name it carries today. Dr. Rippard was elected the first president, and Dr. Yingling, secretary and treasurer.

"The first camp was set to open July 8 on the farm of Jushua Dutterer along the Monocacy River near Detour. Camp opened with excellent attendance. The tent recently purchased had been dubbed the 'Blue Mountain House' and was the only sleeping and dining quarters this first year. "On an average of 20 men slept in the tent each night. For beds, straw was placed on the ground and blankets laid over the straw. They slept in a single row 'like sardines in a can,' and when one turned the others had to turn also.

"The dining table was a barn door; the cooking was done on a spider, they ate from tin plates and drank from tin cups, and they caught fish."

Countians can look back with pride to another event which occurred in the same month, the great baseball game between Westminster and the Baltimore Orioles:

"Not being particularly interested in baseball, do not follow the daily scores of the major and minor leagues very closely, but do look occasionally at the standing of the Baltimore 'Orioles.'

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We note that in recent years they have kept themselves in the second-half of the league standing. Why all this chatter? Well, back in 1885, Westminster's 'famous' baseball club defeated the Orioles, and to top off the season defeated the great Washington team of its day.

"Let's examine the facts. In that year, the year previous and the year after, Westminster had a ball club that was known far and wide. It had most all the games in its win column, and with such a record, felt as though it could challenge the best. And they did! The Orioles were invited to spend the day in the country – and they accepted, expecting a frolic. They did not leave their best players at home, no indeed, they brought them right along to enjoy Westminster's hospitality. This was on Monday, June 22.

"The umpire, B. Frank Crouse (and he was considered a good one, even by Baltimore) called the game. Westminster took the field with Zecker at shortstop; 'Bob' Miller, second base; 'Eddie' Greer in left field; Schweitzer, third base; Frank Nicholas behind the bat; John Driscoll, pitching; Erek, first base; Granville Bankard, right field and 'Vallie' Anders in center field. Foreman pitched for Baltimore, with Trott behind the plate.

"Baltimore failed to score in the opening inning, but Westminster rung up three runs. Neither scored in the second, but Baltimore scored one in the third, three in the fourth, one in the fifth and two in the sixth. Not to be outdone, Westminster scored one in the fifth and three in the sixth to tie the score seven all. Then came the hectic seventh. Baltimore failed to score, but Westminster put over two runs to lead 9 to 7. Neither team scored in the eighth and ninth inning.

"Westminster had 2 left on bases, Baltimore 11. According to a press account of the game, the local club played a brand of ball that at times bewildered the city team.

"Clabaugh and 'Santa' Gist were substitutes; 'Jack' Baumgartner was the team manager, and William Seabrook was substitute umpire.

"This game received considerable newspaper comment, especially in the Orioles home town, where it was suggested that the two cities might exchange teams to Baltimore's advantage.

"The win over Baltimore did not end the season – Westminster was invited to Washington to meet the league club of that city – and they accepted.

"Washington's great battery – Fulner and O'Day were at their best, and so was Driscoll and Nichols of Westminster. The game was a 'rip-snorter' right through the eleven innings Both teams were at their peak and took advantage of every break. The score was 2 to 2 going into the

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eleventh, Washington failed to score. Nicholas came to bat, let two go by for strikes. The third ball was wild, but Nicholas struck at it, causing the catcher to miss. Nicholas gained first base, the catcher throwing wild to first; Nicholas advanced to second and then to third. Then the climax – Harry Clabaugh struck a sharp liner to right field, scoring Nicholas.

“The local diamond was on Willis Street, where the Thomas, Kriel and Eckenrode properties are located. It is said that on game days boys in upper grades in school took their ‘liberty’ and formed part of the ‘rooting’ section; merchants close their stores, and on one occasion the court adjourned so that the officials and prisoners could see the game. Every available hitching space in the town was taken and the vacant acres near the ball park were crowded with buggies, surreys, wagons from nearby sections of the county.

“Many of our older folks will remember this great team, and some of later years. Well, do I remember Westminster’s ‘paid’ team of about thirty-five years ago, when they played on the John Street grounds.

“One writer of these events calls them ‘Westminster’s Red Letter Days.’ Now to get Westminster in the public press requires a triple murder – more red letter days.”

Jordan’s interest in local military history surfaced frequently. He devoted his first piece on this topic to the death of Sgt. Hampton Smith of Smallwood, the first American soldier to die on Cuban soil during the Spanish-American War:

“According to the inscription on the monument erected over the grave of Sergeant Hampton Smith in Deer Park Methodist Cemetery at Smallwood, and from existing accounts, he was the first American killed on Cuban soil in the Spanish American War.

“Smith enlisted in Company D, First Battalion, U.S. Marines at Washington in August 1893. He was killed in a skirmish near Guantanamo on June 11, 1898. His body was interred temporarily where he fell.

“In April 1899, Smith’s body along with 355 other soldiers, sailors and marines who had lost their lives on Cuban soil were shipped from Santiago to New York on the funeral transport Crook. Many of the bodies were taken to Arlington Cemetery at Washington, while the others were consigned to their respective families. The body of Smith arrived here on May 1, and was interred on May 7.

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"Services were conducted in Deer Park Methodist Protestant Church, with the Rev. Dr. Walter R. Graham of the Westminster Methodist Protestant Church delivering the funeral discourse. According to newspaper accounts of the day, between 3000 and 4000 persons attended. It is to be understood that only a very small percentage of the crowd gained admittance to the small church.

"At the graveside, the deceased received full military honors from Burns Post No. 13, G.A.R. of Westminster, which were in attendance. Several patriotic and fraternal organizations, from different sections of the county, sent large delegations.

"Smith was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Thomas Smith of Smallwood. He was aged 31 years at the time of his death.

"Before enlisting in the Marines Smith had been employed with a large insurance firm in Baltimore and was assistant superintendent of the office at the time resigned."

The last installment of "Time Flies" appeared on July 23, 1943. Jordan chose the topic of war memorials, a subject on which he had strong feelings.

"The recent meetings in the interest of a War Memorial for Carroll County, brings to mind two previous attempts to erect a memorial to the men from Carroll who served their country – *after* the Civil War and *after* World War I. The originators of the present 'agitation' have at least taken one step forward – to plan it *before* World War II is over.

"Going back to the period following the Civil War there was some talk of erecting a monument to the over 600 men from the county who had served the Union Cause. But discussions on the subject soon died down because the *public* was not interested and lacked the appreciation of the service rendered by these men.

"Then came the war with Spain, and with only between 40 and 50 men from the county in the several branches of the service, a memorial was not even suggested. We presume the *public* thought a memorial would not be required for so few.

"And then World War I. It ended with the Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918. Soon thereafter (Nov. 29) an article appeared in the local press with this very encouraging headline '**When Our Boys Come Home – Big Welcome and Lasting Memorial In Their Honor Suggested.**'

"At a meeting held three nights previous, certain action was taken which prompted this headline. Recording from a statement of that date, it said 'a lasting memorial should be erected in

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commemoration of the men from Carroll County who have died in their country's service and as a tribute of appreciation for all our fighting men.'

"Certain resolutions were presented and adopted and the permanent committee to be known as 'The Reception and Memorial Committee of Carroll County, Maryland' was organized. Section (C) of this resolution read 'To determine upon, and then procure, construct, or erect a memorial to all who served; and it will adopt such methods as will enable it (the committee) to obtain from the people of Carroll County, a full and free expression of all vies entertained, or suggestions made, as to the most appropriate way to commemorate and pay tribute to our sons who served in order that justice, liberty and humanity might be preserved to us and to posterity.'

"The County Commissioners had called this meeting of representatives from the several election districts, and they were all represented. A committee of fourteen was named, composed of the 14 chairmen selected from each of the 14 districts. These chairmen were then instructed to return to their respective districts and form a district committee. Wade H. D. Warfield was selected as general chairman, and Dr. Henry M. Fitzhugh, John H. Cunningham and Mrs. Robert Sargent Shriver were elected as additional members.

"At the meeting several suggestions as to the type of memorial was made: a hospital, library, an arch on Court street, a monument, a public square, bronze tablets to be placed in the State Armory, a public playground, and bronze plates showing the name of each of the 991 men and women who had served, to be placed in the main entrance hall of the Court House. The proposition of a hospital appealed to a few and they placed it before the public at every opportunity – but – they said it would cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000 – and then it must be maintained by public subscriptions on down the years.

"A few more meetings were held but interest was lacking, districts did not organize successfully, district chairmen showed no activity and the *public* in general felt as though the war was over and the boys were home, why bother with a memorial.

"The boys were home – and a great celebration and parade was held on July 4. Important among the events of the day was the planting and dedication of the memorial oaks along the Baltimore pike, at the entrance to Westminster. A fine gesture on the part of the Woman's Civic League. It received favorable comment throughout the country as being the 'first mile of memorial trees in America' to the dead of the War. But this project had short life – for within a few years the *public* had forgotten they were there. Without some care and attention, even trees will die. Someone had the presence of mind to salvage the metal plates (I do not recall who did this) and place them on a cross in the lobby of the State Armory.

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"It was not long before the memorial was forgotten and the local press took on such headlines as **'More Fish Put in Carroll County Streams.'** Those fish were actually put in the streams, because county fishermen wanted them put in.

"Then came the Carroll County Centennial of 1937, and there was erected at the Center Street entrance of the Municipal Playground, a stately and impressive memorial gateway, the gift of H. Peyton Gorsuch, Westminster. On one of the columns is found a bronze plaque with this inscription:

'MEMORIAL GATEWAY
Until This or Future
Generations Shall Provide
A More Fitting Tribute
This Simple Gateway
Is Erected As A Memorial
For The Dead
And Testimonial To The
Living Soldiers And Others
From Carroll County
Who Served In The
World War
And Other Wars
Since The County Was Founded
Presented
1937'

"The writer knew Mr. Gorsuch to be unusually patriotic, public spirited, and especially interested in the service man, and his welfare, but asked him just why he should take it upon himself to erect such a monument. His reply was 'I could not let an event like the Carroll County Centennial pass without some tribute to the men and women who have served so bravely in our wars these past 100 years. I felt the shame for all those folks of the county who overlooked paying a lasting tribute to our sons after the last war.'

"And now another committee will begin to function for a similar purpose. A coincidence, no doubt, but the set-up is quite general to that of 1918. Already numerous suggestions as to the type of memorial to be erected, have been made. It is hoped that among them will be one that can be adopted and seen through to completion, not wait until Carroll County celebrates its 200th

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anniversary and then permit some public spirited citizen to erect one out of shame for the folks of the county who forgot.”

J. Leland Jordan’s writings offer an important perspective on local history. His column title reminded his readers “As the clock strikes the hour, how often we say ‘Time Flies!’ *when it is we that are passing away*” His occasionally caustic remarks remind us of the consequences of forgetting our recent past.

Photo credit: Courtesy of the Historical Society of Carroll County

Photo caption: ‘Office Force, The Times Printing Co.,’ left to right, John Mitten, Marie Kimmey, Claude Kimmey, J. Leland Jordan, c. 1930

Photo caption: J. Leland Jordan, c. 1910

Photo caption: Hampton Smith, a subject of ‘Time Flies.’