

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

Carroll's Yesteryears  
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Carroll marked holiday with parades, sports, fireworks  
By Joe Getty

Patriotic celebrations of 100 years ago recognized the 116<sup>th</sup> anniversary of American independence. Communities throughout Carroll County observed the holiday with parades, speeches, contests and other public events.

A popular late 19<sup>th</sup> century sport was bicycling. "Wheelmen" from throughout the county cycled for pleasure or in races. The noted Westminster wheelman, John H. Cunningham, was a judge at a Fourth of July race at the Park track near Arlington.

Baseball was also a popular sport. In New Windsor, a special Fourth of July game was played with the married men challenging the single men of the community. The *American Sentinel* newspaper reported, "the Benedicts were victorious by a score of 33 to 13." A benedict is a newly married man who has long been a bachelor.

The Westminster Star baseball team traveled to Union Bridge on the Fourth of July and won 16 to 6. The Westminster King's Sons Baseball Club hosted the Myrtle Star Club of Baltimore at the college fields and were victorious by a score of 22 to 6.

The Westminster Forest and Stream Club celebrated the Fourth of July at its camp along the Monocacy. In addition to balloon ascensions and a fireworks display, "a three inning game of baseball was played by the members of the club, ending with a score of something over a hundred runs for each nine."

The young ladies of Westminster took the opportunity of 1892 being a leap year to sponsor a dance where the ladies invited the men. It was held at Winchester Place where the grounds were illuminated with Japanese lanterns.

Another late 19<sup>th</sup> century novelty was traveling outside of the county for summer holiday vacations. The influence of the railroads and greater middle class affluence led to the development of day trips and resort communities. Pen-Mar in Washington County was an attractive location as indicated by this Westminster newspaper excerpt:

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"It is estimated that ten-thousand persons visited Pen-Mar on Monday. Numbers went from this city. The day was fittingly observed with oratory and music, all necessary arrangements for the celebration having been provided by the Western Maryland Railroad Company. Some parties got into a row and a man named John Chrissinger was badly cut in the neck and face, and another named Mac Cost was slashed on the arm and hand. These men are not citizens of Westminster, as reported in a Baltimore newspaper. None of the visitors from Carroll County were implicated in the disturbance."

Manchester sponsored a daylong celebration that included a concert by the Manchester Band under the oak tree and a parade of firemen, musicians and young children with flags. A Fourth of July program was held in the I.O.O.F. Hall with music, recitations, and reading of the Declaration of Independence. In the afternoon there were foot races, wheeling contests, a balloon ascension and fireworks display.

The highlight of festivities in Gamber was the community parade led by the local band:

"The morning of the glorious 4<sup>th</sup> passed off quietly here. The stars and stripes were put up in front of Gamber's store early in the morning and floated across the road during the day. About noon our band made their appearance in their splendid new uniforms and drove through the town in their wagon, playing national airs. They went to the upper end of the town and returned playing. When opposite the store and under the flag they halted and gave the town a fine salute, after which they left for Oakland Church, where they had an engagement to play. They were followed by a line of carriages, buggies, wagons, carts, etc, fully half a mile long. I must here say that the boys in their uniforms made a very fine and imposing appearance and everybody praised them for the good music. After their return they played a few more pieces and then dispersed to their homes."

The most traditional Fourth of July activity is a fireworks display.

In 1892, the city of Westminster was relatively quiet until evening, as noted in this excerpt:

"The national anniversary was unobserved by a public demonstration in this city. Most of the business houses were closed and numbers of private residences and business places displayed the national colors. Many of the citizens sought diversion elsewhere and almost Sunday quiet reigned on the streets during the day. About nightfall, however, a series of pyrotechnic exhibitions, by private individuals, commenced in various sections of the city and continued during the evening, to the manifest pleasure of the old and young. Flaming rockets pierced the

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sky in every direction, colored lights blazed, fire balloons floated in the air, roman candles exploded and cannon crackers thundered along the streets, making a lively and inspiring scene. The private citizens who contributed by their generosity to these patriotic demonstrations deserve the thanks of the community for rendering the day other than a blank."

*Photo credit: Historical Society of Carroll County*

*Photo caption: Parades have been a traditional event for Carroll County Fourth of July celebrations. The float representing the Nusbaum and Jordan store won first prize in Westminster's 1925 parade.*