

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

Carroll's Yesteryears
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Despite war worries, movies and sports popular in 1940s
by Jay Graybeal

Although the tragedy of World War II dominated life in the 1940s, Carroll countians still found time to enjoy uniquely American pursuits. Movies, sports, radio and other forms of popular culture are documented in the local newspapers of the '40s.

The showing of motion pictures on Sunday became a controversial issue in the early 1940s. The November 3, 1942 general election ballot included a statewide referendum vote to amend the Public Laws of Maryland article on "Sabbath Breaking." The October 23 issue of the *Westminster Democratic Advocate* carried a one-quarter page advertisement in favor of Sunday hours for the following reasons:

"A VOTE FOR MOTION PICTURES ON SUNDAY: is patriotic as it means the conservation of tires, gasoline and other transportation facilities, by furnishing recreation and amusement nearby your home; is an aid to our safety problems, as it will avoid travel accidents for those seeking a place of amusement; will give clean morale building entertainment to those workers who cannot go to see motion pictures at any other time; means a saving of money, as it will furnish the best and latest pictures at moderate costs right here in your own home town; means supporting your local theaters, which are trying to help the people and industries of Westminster."

The Times did not take a stand on the issue but stated, "It is not believed that the voters of Carroll County will approve Sunday movies." The paper also carried the same advertisement but under the heading of "Political Advertisement."

The majority of Carroll County voters were not in favor of Sunday hours – the vote was 4,584 against and 3,471 in favor. Only the four Westminster precincts had a majority in favor out of the twenty-seven precincts in the county. Despite the Carroll County vote, the referendum passed in Maryland and Sunday movies became a reality.

Here is a short list of highlights of the decade:

Academy Awards, Best Pictures: 1940, *Rebecca*; 1941, *How Green Was My Valley*; 1942, *Mrs. Miniver*; 1943, *Casablanca*; 1944, *Going My Way*; 1945, *The Lost Weekend*; 1946, *The Best Years of Our Lives*; 1947, *Gentleman's Agreement*; 1948, *Hamlet*; 1949, *All the King's Men*.

Prior to the beginning of professional football in 1940, college football was highly popular. Since 1924 various groups have chosen the champion college football team. During the 1940s the Association Press polled sportswriters. They chose the following teams:

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1940, Minnesota; 1941, Minnesota; 1942, Ohio State; 1943, Notre Dame; 1944, Army; 1945, Army; 1946, Notre Dame; 1947, Notre Dame; 1948, Michigan; 1949, Notre Dame.

In Maryland, the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico has been the third part of the Triple Crown of thoroughbred horse racing since 1930. Since then only eleven horses have won all three races. Four of them, Whirlaway, 1941; Count Fleet, 1943; Assault, 1946; and Citation, 1948 won in the 1940s.

Preakness Stakes:

1940 Bimelech 1:58.3 \$53,230
1941 Whirlaway 1:58.4 \$49,365
1942 Alsab 1:57.0 \$48,175
1943 Count Fleet 1:57.2 \$43,190
1944 Pensive 1:59.1 \$60,075
1945 Polynesian 1:58.4 \$66,170
1946 Assault 2:01.2 \$96,620
1947 Faultless 1:59.0 \$96,005
1948 Citation 2:02.2 \$92,870
1949 Capot 1:56.0 \$79,985

The first World Series held in 1903 was scheduled for nine games; Boston beat Pittsburgh five games to four. Beginning in 1905 the series became the best of seven games. During the 1940s there were four "cross town" series in cities which had both an American and National League team.

World Series:

1940 Cincinnati over Detroit 4-3;
1941 New York over Brooklyn 4-1;
1942 St. Louis over New York 4-1;
1943 New York over St. Louis 4-1;
1944 St. Louis over St. Louis 4-2;
1945 Detroit over Chicago 4-3;
1946 St. Louis over Boston 4-3;
1947 New York over Brooklyn 4-3;
1948 Cleveland over Boston 4-2;
1949 New York over Brooklyn 4-1.

The Historical Society will host its fundraiser, the Celebration of the Fabulous Forties, on May 11. For information, contact the Historical Society at 848-6494.

Photo credit: Times photo

Photo caption: This Nov. 6, 1942 newspaper shows an ad for the first time Sunday movies were shown in the county.

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