

"A History of Western Maryland College"
Carroll County Times article for 9 April 2000
By Jay A. Graybeal

During the Carroll County Centennial in 1937, numerous articles about local history were published in the local press. History also became the topic for local civic organization meetings. The 26 February issue of this paper presented an article about a meeting of the Woman's Club of Westminster where the members heard about the history of Western Maryland College:

"Mrs. Charles E. Forlines had charge of the program for the meeting of the Woman's Club held Tuesday afternoon at the residence of Mrs. Frank W. Mather on Longwell Ave. Her topic was 'Western Maryland College and Its Relation to Carroll County'. And it was presented in a thorough and informative manner, showing a great deal of research. Mrs. Forlines told of the start of the college, the original projector being Fayette R. Buell. A loan from John Smith, of Wakefield, and Isaac C. Baile enabled Mr. Buell to start building and the first stone was laid August 27, 1866. College exercises were begun September 4, 1867. Mrs. Forlines, whose connection with the college dates back to 1900 when she was preceptress paid a well deserved tribute to the former presidents of the college, Rev. Dr. J. T. Ward, first president and the father of Mrs. Thomas H. Lewis, wife of the second president, and Rev. Dr. A. Norman Ward. She also spoke of the high regard in which were held Rev. Dr. James W. Reese, Dr. Joshua W. Hering and many others influential in the first days of the institution.

Mrs. Forlines gave interesting facts about Western Maryland Alumni, many of whom were native Carroll Countians and who have achieved distinction outside of their county and others who have stayed in Carroll County, mainly due to the influence of the college. There are about five hundred alumni living in Carroll County, three hundred and twenty-five of whom live in Westminster. There are about one hundred and thirty-eight families represented in this group, and foremost in any movement for the good of the county are to found these representatives of Western Maryland College. About fifty of the high school teachers in the county are graduates of the college, while twenty-one out of the fifty-four members of the faculty of the college are graduates.

The speaker told of the influence of the college, through its president, Dr. A. Norman Ward, upon the musical program inaugurated in the public school system of Carroll County by its late superintendent, Dr. M. S. H. Unger, himself holding a degree from Western Maryland. Many talented musicians, obtaining a start in the public schools of Carroll County, have continued their preparation at the college. Included in the influence of the college in the musical life of the community must be mentioned the oratorios sponsored by this institution in which music lovers could participate and obtain additional training. The first of these was given in 1921 with Mrs. Harry M. Kimmey as accompanist. In 1934 Earl Lippy was one of the soloists. She spoke of many well known musicians of the County who owe their early training to Western Maryland and who, like Professor Howard L. Benson and others, have helped to make our section music-conscious.

Another influential group going forth from our college is its teachers. Noteworthy among these is Miss Jewel Simpson, who started her educational work in Carroll County and is now Assistant State Superintendent of the state. Mention was made of the doctors now practicing here who are graduates of Western Maryland and they form a large and influential group in the Carroll County Medical Society, the list also including many who were residents of the county and who have now sought broader fields. A check-up from the old Test Book of the Circuit Court for the Carroll County reveals the fact that many

of the lawyers at this bar have attended Western Maryland. There are also a number of former residents who graduated and now practice elsewhere.

Miss Carrie Mourer, a graduate of this college and a former teacher, paid a tribute to Dr. William R. McDaniel, who besides teaching a number of subjects when he first came to Western Maryland, was also athletic director and the author of a guide for setting-up exercises set to music. Miss Mourer told of the dinner given in honor of Dr. McDaniel in 1930 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation, when the love, admiration and esteem of the alumni found expression. Mrs. Frank H. Sidwell, also a graduate told some facts in the early history of the college.

An addition to the program was the group of songs sung by Mrs. Raymond. S. Hyson, her clear, lyric soprano voice being particularly pleasing. The selections were 'Maid of Ganges,' Mendelssohn, and 'By the Bend of the River,' Clara Edwards. She was accompanied by Miss Evelyn Mather in a sympathetic and impressive manner.

Mrs. George K. Mather, president of the club, presided at the meeting and presented to the club the request that its members help to sponsor a movement to buy the Shellman mansion on Main street for a community club house. This movement has been the outgrowth of a growing sentiment that the Centenary of Carroll County should produce something lasting in the preservation of its historical treasures. The club went on record as favoring this project."

Since its modest beginnings, Western Maryland College has grown to become a leading academic institution and an important part of Carroll's heritage. The Historical Society of Carroll County formed in 1939 and purchased the "Shellman mansion" in that year.

Photo caption: Dr. and Mrs. (Ellen Baile) Fayette Buell, the original "projector" of Western Maryland College. Historical Society of Carroll County copy photograph collection.