

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

"Easter Postcards"

Carroll County Times article for 11 April 1993

By Joe Getty

"Next Sunday is Easter and fashion day - Frills and feathers will be in evidence." Westminster Democratic Advocate, March 29, 1907.

While Carroll County's Easter traditions have been primarily religious in nature, a number of secular traditions, such as dressing in your "Easter best" or sending postal card Easter greetings, began to become popular during the late 19th century.

A secular tradition that may have a long tradition in Carroll County is that of dying eggs in many colors for Easter. It was a custom amongst the Pennsylvania Germans and may have been brought with these settlers into northern Carroll County in the 18th century.

One popular national tradition during the 19th century was the Easter parade. One of the first was held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1876. Also well-known was the Fifth Avenue Easter Parade in New York City.

Easter Monday parades were held in Westminster in 1884, 1885, and 1887. After a short lapse, a large parade was held in 1892 and the tradition continued into the 20th century.

Easter greetings in the form of postal cards became popular about the same time. They present designs and motifs that display both the religious and secular traditions of Easter.

The cards shown here were sent to Thelma Walden Littlefield when she was a youngster in Middleburg during the first decade of the 20th century. These cards were printed in Germany and sold world-wide. Miss Littlefield later married F. Earle Shriner and she has contributed a number of local artifacts to the Historical Society.

Photo Caption 1: A young child leading lambs with oversized Easter eggs symbolize the theme of rebirth celebrated during the religious holiday. Eating eggs was forbidden during Lenten fasts, thus the egg took on special meaning on Easter day. This card was sent by Antie Rie from New Haven, Connecticut, in 1906.

Photo Caption 2: The Easter lily became a prominent religious symbol and is held by a child in the reflection of a church window. The framing of this view within the snow-covered pine represented the end of winter and beginning of the spring season. The greeting to Miss Littlefield was written by hand on the front of the card, "Easter Greetings - George S. Walden," and the card was sent in 1907.