

## "The Sheathing of The Sword"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

The era immediately following World War I was characterized by unprecedented reform movements in the United States. There was great optimism that the "War to end all Wars" would be worth the horrific cost. Constitutional amendments took away the right to drink alcoholic beverages and gave women the right to vote.

Perhaps the crowning event on the local scene was the presentation of "The Sheathing of the Sword: A Pageant of Peace" at Western Maryland College on June 10, 1922. The community event was written by Miss Dorothy Elderdice of Westminster. Her introduction provides an overview of her production:

"In The Sheathing of the Sword, I have endeavored to select from the different ages a few significant historical episodes that lend themselves to pageantry. Peace in panoply has been my quest---Peace heralded by song, attended by art, crowned by humanity."

The June 16, 1922 issue of the American Sentinel carried a front page article about the event which followed the dedication of the new athletic field:

"Although Saturday afternoon was very warm and the sun's rays scorching about 5,000 people gathered on the new athletic field of Western Maryland College, this city, to attend the dedication of the field and to witness the "Sheathing of the Sword," a pageant of peace, in which 1,000 persons took part.

The dedicatory exercises were brief. President Ward announced that the name of the new field would be proclaimed on commencement day and introduced Governor Ritchie, who made a short congratulatory address, expressing the hope that future men and women of the college would win many victories on the new field.

Charles R. Miller, an early graduate and an old ball player, presented a baseball and bat to Captain France of next year's team. W. P. Roberts, a former football player, presented a football to Captain Hafer of next year's team, J. Samuel Turner, class of 1909, one of the track committee, to whom, as stated by President Ward, more than to any other is due the success in obtaining the field, presented the symbol to track work to Captain Watsche of next year's track team.

A fanfare of trumpets to the four points of the compass heralded the coming of "Peace," in the person of Miss Margaret Lewis, who was attended by the four ages, "Ancient, Medieval, Modern and Future," they were Misses Helen Roop, Esther Marker, Alma Holliday and Myrtle Lankford. "Prosperity" and "Progress," presented by Misses Gwendolyn McWilliams and Olive Johnson, advance to the strains of march music by the Westminster Band to the dais in the center of the field. The messenger, George Adam Meyls, announced the coming of Apollo and the restoration of the Olympic games.

"Apollo," Carlisle Maclea, in his chariot and attended by Armor and the Houri, 12 beautiful girls and chorus of several hundred in Greek costume, chanting the hymn to the Delphic Apollo, circle the field.

The second victory portrayed the Roman Pax Augusta with a processional, George E. Matthews as Augusta Caesar, Pontifex Maximus, with the Urban guards, consuls, senators, priests and vestal virgins bearing the sacred fire.

In the third episode the chorus of 400 sang the Gloria in Excelsis, heralding the birth in Palestine of the Prince of Peace, and the "Four Ages" reciting "O! Thou That Bringeth Good Tidings Lift Up Thy Voice with Strength."

The fourth victory portrayed the meeting of Henry VIII, of England and Francis I. of France on the field of the Cloth of Gold.

In the episode of the fifth victory, 250 young girls entered singing the international hymn to the tune of "America." Forming a great circle clothed in filmy gowns of red, white and blue a beautiful dance was given, celebrating the century of good will between the United States and England.

In the second number of this episode, 100 girls performed a symbolical ceremonial dance, typifying the friendship of the two countries. As the third number, Chief Plenty Crops, James M. Stoner, with 50 members of various tribes of the Order of Red Men showed the last council fire.

The fourth number, with young ladies in costume of the 23 Pan-American Republics, portrayed the meeting of the waters in the Panama Canal.

The final victory proclaiming Peace Universal, was led by a joyous dance of school children, and a number of white doves were liberated. The climax was reached as the chorus marched to the dais and, encircling it, sang Edward L. Morris' "The World's Doxology of Peace."

Photo caption: The cover of the program to The Sheathing of the Sword featured classical figures celebrating world peace. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.