

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

Carroll's Yesteryears

11 October 1992

A century ago, Columbus was honored throughout country

By Jay Graybeal

Tomorrow is the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of Christopher Columbus in the New World. Unlike the last centennial celebration, this year's observation is clouded by a scholarly debate over the merits of Columbus' "discovery."

While some see his voyage as one of the epics in an age of discoveries, others point out that he opened the doors to those who, through colonization, would nearly destroy the Native American populations.

A century ago, Americans thought little of the negative aspects of the opening of the Americas to colonization. A joint resolution of Congress authorized and directed President Benjamin Harrison to issue a proclamation "recommending to the people the observance in all their localities of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of America, on October 12, 1892, by public exercises in their schools and other places of assembly."

President Harrison declared a national holiday and proclaimed "Columbus stood in his age as the pioneer of progress and enlightenment. The system of universal education is in our age the most prominent and salutary feature of the spirit of enlightenment, and it is peculiarly appropriate that the schools be made by the people the center of the day's demonstration. Let the national flag float over every school house in the country and the exercised by such as shall impress upon our youth the patriotic duties of American citizenship."

Local residents responded to the president's call and organized events at schools throughout the county. The exercised in Manchester, as described in the *Democratic Advocate*, were typical:

"Columbus Day will be one that will remain green in the memories of the rising generation here for a long time. Although the day was not strictly observed as a holiday, many persons laid aside their avocations and helped swell the crowd in attendance at exercised appropriate to the occasion. The day was ushered in by the ringing of the bells of the town at 6 a.m. At 12:30 p.m., the ringing of the school bell assembled the children and the firemen to their hall where, at 1 p.m., headed by the Manchester Band in full uniform, they formed the line of march, followed by the schools, to the north end of town, thence to the south end and thence to the school house, where the president's proclamation was read by Miss Katie Wareheim. The flag was then raised

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by the veterans to the staff erecting on the south side of the house, three rousing cheers were given, the Star Spangled Banner was sung, and the children of the schools saluted the flag. Then the line of march was again taken up to the I.O.O.F. Hall, where the exercises were opened with prayer by Rev. N.J. Miller. The following program was rendered: Singing, 'Columbus Day,' historical readings, by the intermediate scholars; singing 'God Bless our Native Land;' recitation, Our Country; singing, 'America;' historical readings, by grammar school scholars; singing, 'Red, White and Blue;' declamation, Meaning of the Four Centuries; singing, 'Columbia's Patriot School;' recitation, Columbia's Banner; singing, 'Beautiful Days;' address, by Prof. D. Denlinger, of Irving Institute, which, though short, was given with such feeling as to make it impressive to all; music, by the Band, a fine selection, which brought forth hearty applause. All joined in singing the doxology with which the large audience in attendance was dismissed."

The national celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary culminated with the World's Columbia Exposition held in Chicago. The exposition featured pavilions containing exhibits on electricity, machinery, manufacturers, mining and metallurgy, fine arts, liberal arts, transportation, textile arts and varied industries. From the surviving souvenirs in the historical society's collection, it appears a number of local people journeyed to the Exposition. Dr. Jacob J. Weaver Jr. described his visit in September 1893:

"Started on the Columbian Express with Florence and Beulah Darby for Chicago to visit the Great Worlds Fair – arrived safely and took rooms with Mrs. Elmer Wolf, no. 7801 Winneconna Ave., Ashburn Park. We spent seven days on the Fair ground busily examining the wonders. We could only exclaim wonderful! Wonderful!! No one can appreciate the extent and greatness of this magnificent exhibition to which all the nations of the earth have contributed. We started from Chicago for home in the Keystone Express Sept. 1 at 11:15 a.m. arrived at Uniontown this evening for supper. Our expenses to the Fair complete from Uniontown and return were \$132 that is \$66 each."

*Photo credit: Ken Koons photo illustration*

*Photo caption: A souvenir medal commemorates Maryland's participation in the 1892 World's Columbia Exposition. Other items include trade cards featuring illustrations of the exposition buildings and advertising 'Sunshine' stoves, distributed by the Westminster Hardware Co.; a commemorative half dollar produced by the United States Mint and admission tickets bearing the portraits of Columbus and Lincoln. From the Historical Society of Carroll County collection.*