

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

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Baby faces: Carroll baby photos are treasures from past  
by Jay A. Graybeal

The birth of a child in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was cause for joy as well as a measure of apprehension.

In addition to providing joy to their parents, children served as an important part of the labor force in the household, farm or workshop. Children also became the caregivers for their parents in later years.

Complications from childbirth were a leading cause of death among younger women. Infants and young children were also highly susceptible to a variety of little-understood diseases.

The Historical Society of Carroll County's photograph collection contains a number of photographs of babies dating from as early as the 1850s. The invention of daguerreotype photography a decade earlier provided parents with a relatively inexpensive image. These earliest images served as a pleasant memento later in life or sadly, in many cases, as a poignant reminder of a child who succumbed to illness. In some households the only image ever taken of a child was a post-mortem view.

Beginning at the time of the Civil War, studio portraits were sent to family and friends for inclusion in family albums. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a professional or amateur photographer often recorded an image in the home. These less formal photos provide details about the everyday activities of caring for children.

When the earliest of these images was taken, parents had to choose from conflicting advice for universal problems such as teething. In some households babies were given a silver teaspoon or a whistle with an attached piece of coral or ivory.

An 1853 family guide book preserved in the historical society's collection provides advice which must have made more than a few mothers wince: "Leeches, or blisters, may be applied behind the ears. The gums ought to be divided crosswise by a lancet, or sharp knife, and any person can perform the operation as well as a doctor. If the bowels are costive, they should be kept regular by gentle physic, as oil, rhubarb, &c.; and if there is looseness, it should not be checked. Instead of anything hard, let the child nibble at a piece of wax candle." Happily the use of leeches fell out of favor shortly thereafter!

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*Photo credit: Courtesy of the Historical Society of Carroll County*

*Photo caption: Claude S. Gernand, c. 1865, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin K. Gernand Sr. of Westminster*

*Photo caption: Edwin K. Gernand Jr., 1871, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin K. Gernand Sr. of Westminster*

*Photo caption: Mary Brown Hughes seated with her great-grandmother Susan Brown, mother of former Maryland Governor Frank Brown of Sykesville, July 10, 1905.*

*Photo caption: Grace E. Fox in her white cast iron crib next to her parents bed in their Washington D.C. home, May 1900.*

*Photo caption: Arthur S. Winchester, wearing a cap which may have been made by his mother Elizabeth, a native of Waterford, Ireland, c. 1850.*

*Photo caption: William and Mary Englar sent their image of their son Eugene Field Englar as a Christmas present in 1902.*