

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

Carroll's Yesteryears  
20 December 1992

J. David Baile, Historical Society president, 1939-44  
By Joe Getty

Advertisements for the Medford Store were popular with Carroll County residents during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. People enjoyed seeing the diversity of items available and the special bargains offered at this well-known business establishment in Medford.

A national magazine once commented on the unorthodox advertising style of the Medford Store: "Hipo boots, rib roast, dynamite. And that's not all. Kerosene, Timothy seed, auto oil, alarm blocks and sliced bacon. Put this all together and add another raft of unrelated items and you have a new recipe for advertising copy. The kind of want-ad that can't be precisely classified, but put it in the section and it doesn't wait to be looked for, it picks up its customers itself. Once they buy, they buy again."

In addition to being a local advertising phenomenon, the Medford Grocery Company was a pleasure to visit with sale items spread throughout seven general store buildings and a post office. In the 1940s, an auction was held weekly on Saturdays. It is not unusual for visitors to the Historical Society of Carroll County to reminisce about shopping at the Medford Store.

"Carroll County's Largest Store" was owned and operated by J. David Baile. As a popular businessman, Baile's reputation was legendary. Customers proudly recalled that during World War I, when shortages and rationing allowed retailers to raise prices significantly, Baile kept selling the goods at the Medford store at the old prices.

Born in 1878, Baile began his storekeeping career when he was 12 years old and worked for his uncle, David Englar Jr., at the Medford Store. He expanded the business enterprise and eventually became the owner. Later in his career, he served two terms as Maryland state senator for Carroll County (1931-39) and was president of the New Windsor Bank.

He once told a reporter during World War II that it was his crazy ideas that worked: "You know, with all this government monkey-business, our store would go to dry rot if it wasn't for some of these crazy notions of mine. I use them to keep things going until the war is over and we can again carry on in a normal fashion."

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

In addition to serving as state senator, he used his leadership skills and business acumen to benefit the public through several local groups. He served as the founding president of the Historical Society and led the fledgling organization through its formative years. Under his able leadership from 1939 until his death in 1944, the Historical Society acquired and renovated the Sherman-Fisher-Shellman House and began collecting historic manuscripts and artifacts.

Sen. Baile died Aug. 6, 1944. The board of the Historical Society passed the following resolution at his death: "It was through Sen. Baile's love for Carroll County and his desire to serve and protect historical papers and antiques that this organization had its origin. His wise counsel, quiet leadership and gentle manner will be missed from our group."

He was the first of many volunteers who have helped guide the goals and programs of the Historical Society. The other presidents who have provided leadership towards the preservation of Carroll County's heritage were Dr. Arthur G. Tracey, 1944-46; A. Earl Shipley, 1947-51; Erman A. Shoemaker, 1952-53; J. Harry Koller, 1954-55; Dr. Theodore M. Whitfield, 1956-59; James M. Shriver, 1960-69; James C.A. Conner, 1970-72; Gerald E. Richter, 1973-74; Samuel Acree, 1975-76; William B. Dulany, Jr., 1977-82; Harry O. Humbert, 1983-84; Doris Pierce, 1986-87; Joseph H. Beaver, Jr., 1988-89; Alice G. Chambers, 1990-91; and Lester P. Surber, 1992.

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

*Photo caption: In 1939, John H. Cunningham, left, executor of the estate of Mary B. Shellman, presented the deed of the Sherman-Fisher-Shellman House to J. David Baile, president; Mrs. Charles O. Clemson, secretary, and Mrs. W. Carroll Shunk, treasurer, the first officers of the Historical Society of Carroll County.*