

"Countians Have a Long History of Voluntary Service"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

The volunteers who work in our communities and organizations are contributing to our county's long history of volunteer service to those in need. Voluntary service has taken many forms throughout county history beginning with early settlers helping one another build structures, clear land for farming and planting and harvesting crops. The development of towns in the mid-eighteenth century eventually led to the formation of volunteer fire departments and other civic groups. By the late nineteenth century, local residents participated in national organizations and reform movements. The accompanying images show only a sampling of the kinds of volunteers who have generously contributed to the quality of local life and to national and international causes.

Photo caption 1

Prior to America's entry into World War II, Great Britain stood nearly alone against Nazi Germany. The bombing of British cities led to great numbers of needy evacuees. Carroll County residents responded generously to the October 1940 national call for warm clothing and personal items known as "Bundles for Britain." Donated items were taken to the former Westminster Armory where volunteer members of the British War Relief Society of Carroll County sorted and packed them for shipment to Great Britain. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of John Byers.

Photo caption 2

The threat of fire was ever present in all communities composed largely of wooden structures heated by fire and illuminated by candlelight. Volunteer fire departments organized in the early to late nineteenth century and purchased fire fighting equipment to protect their towns. Members of the all volunteer Manchester Fire Department posed with their equipment at the turn of the century. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of Mrs. Roy Kindig.

Photo caption 3

Local residents mobilized in 1957 to collect money to fight polio. The Westminster Civitan Club raised money by asking donors to "HELP FILL THE BOTTLES FOR POLIO" in a sidewalk display on East Main St. in January 1957. Volunteers Thomas Senseney (left with microphone) and Myron Upperco staffed the booth for part of the drive. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.

Photo caption 4

Local American Red Cross chapters formed throughout the county during the First World War to help with war and relief efforts. During peacetime they raised funds for a variety of local, national and international needs. The outbreak of World War II created new demands and a new generation of volunteers, such as these women working in room with blackout curtains, stepped forward to help. Historical Society of Carroll County collection. Gift of J. Leland Jordan, 1954.

Photo caption 5

Peacetime military service has been volunteer for much of our county's history. Members of the 1st Maryland Infantry Regiment Band, Maryland National Guard, posed with their instruments on a dirt street about 1910. In June 1916 the bandsmen accompanied the infantrymen to the Mexican Border to guard against Pancho Villa. The following year, some of them were federalized for service in World War I.

The band, along with community bands from throughout the county, played a significant role in our rich musical heritage. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.