

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

Carroll's Yesteryears  
29 May 1994

Carroll women were heroes on the homefront  
By Joe Getty

"Up from the fields of memory,  
Green with the flight of years,  
The names of our fallen comrades  
Come tenderly to our ears.  
Heroes and early martyrs  
Offered at Freedom's shrine,  
When slavery's chains were broken  
And blood poured out like wine.

"Down through the twilight stillness,  
Upon the evening air,  
Their names are wailed to us,  
For all our boys are there  
Burns, Grogg, Royer, Ocker,  
Sullivan, Zentz and Gist,  
Shaeffer, Lawyer, Oursler, Wolf,  
And all the martyred list.  
Shriver, Webster, Rooney, Dell,  
Lemon, Frazier, Butler, too.  
Whose hearts have ceased from beating  
Under their jackets of blue.  
Carroll County, remember thy boys,  
Weep for each martyred, patriot brave,  
Over the graves where they sweetly sleep,  
Let the old flag of Freedom wave."

I recently had the opportunity to give a program at the annual meeting of the Carroll County Extension Homemakers Clubs. I began with this excerpt from a poem that I quoted four years ago in the first column that I wrote for this series in the *Carroll County Times*. The poem was donated to the Historical Society by Henry Kimmey. It was written by his grandmother, Mrs. Emily Gorsuch Buckingham Herr, and delivered as part of a speech for the Westminster celebration of Memorial Day on May 30, 1905.

Our discussion at the homemakers meeting focused on the role of women as depicted in the local history of Carroll County. In addition to traditional domestic activities, the club members

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suggested that women in our heritage have undertaken many different roles including educator, historian, artist, dramatist and religious leader. Women have also served important roles as advocates providing the catalyst for social change in our communities.

Emily Gorsuch Buckingham Herr's speech, however, recounts another historical role played by women. While Memorial Day orations frequently focus on the men who served their country, her 1905 presentation describes the role of Carroll County women as heroines:

"After these husbands, fathers, sons, brothers and lovers had received the patriotic and inspiring good-bye, we remember how the women of Maryland and Pennsylvania gathered themselves together and, through the blinding tears, sewed the havelocks and blankets made by the housewives, and, with many a sigh, the bandage rolls. Gray-haired grandmothers whose tottering steps were near the journey's end sat up all night to help get the boys off, feeling sure that when they came back she would be beyond the veil. Or if they never came back, she would be on the other side to greet them.

"As we talk of this picture, one comes up before each one of you in memories of glory that are your own. How you left home amid the tears of the loved ones. How they tried to be brave while the heart almost bursted in its grief. I can go back in memory to one scene of this kind. Here in our own town the hero of which but a short time ago you laid to rest beside the gray-haired mother who lived to see him return – but he was not the ruddy boy she sent forth. A soldier brave and true but the marks of the soldier's life upon him which he carried to his grave. I speak of Captain Kuhn. His mother Mrs. Kuhn had cared for a baby girl whose young mother's spirit left the world when she came into it. And as I grew in years, I always was bound to her home by this link of kindness, as I learned it of others. So when it came for Mrs. Kuhn to send her only child Charlie to the war, do you wonder that I often stole into her home to speak a word of cheer and comfort. If I were an artist with either a brush or pen, I should like to put on record the brave struggle between love and duty that I saw fought by Mrs. Kuhn when she said goodbye to Charlie. This is only one mother's tears out of thousands.

"You who have spent most of your life here as I have, remember 1863 when upon the hills of Gettysburg was being fought that bloody struggle. How our grandmothers, mothers and sisters cooked, baked and made coffee for four days and nights without rest for both the blue and the gray. How the women of Pennsylvania and Maryland gathered themselves again together to pray for those who were in this strife. The thunder of the battle falling upon their ears as they prayed. And we believe their prayer was heard by the Great Father above the din of the strife. Women's words and smiles of love [MISSING] brave soldier faced the cannon's mouth.

"An instance of this courage and loyalty was given me by an eyewitness. When marching to Gettysburg as one young soldier passed his home, his father and sisters were standing by the gate

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watching the regiment march by. Before they could realize it, the son and brother had left the ranks, kissed each one, and rejoined the rest of his regiment. Not a discouraging word fell from the lips of those sisters, but rather they would have said, "Fight brother, bravely and well. The enemy is on your native soil." We know not whether those lips ever again kissed those loved ones. They may have been silenced forever and lay with the thousand 'neath his native soil in the National Cemetery in Gettysburg.

"Let me give you another home picture. When the troops were marching on to Gettysburg, as they passed near Manchester, one strayed into a home and asked for something to eat as it was being prepared. He and the mother of that home engaged in conversation. She had a tear for the soldier boy as she told him she had a son wearing the blue. He asked his name. She told him Samuel Herr. 'I know him,' he replied. 'He is now on his way to Gettysburg.' Can you picture that mother's feeling! For even then she could hear the heavy firing as it reverberated through the mountain passes of western Maryland from those bloody fields. The mother and sisters of that home were entitled to tears but not a word of disloyalty; rather a prayer that the Gods of Battle would be his shield.

"But the women at home had not only the privations of separation but also many of them had not enough to satisfy the needs of home. Oft times, the small pittance that the private in the ranks could spare to send home did not keep away the wolf of hunger from the door. As the husband and father rushed in to battle with what must have been the sting as the thought would flash through his mind 'If I fall who will care for home.' This same care rested upon the inmates of the humble home, but not a word of discouragement came to his ears from those anxious hearts. All wished the war was over, but none said, 'Come home.'

"I have heard the soldier say one of the saddest things to him was the loneliness and needs of the women and children left behind in the country through which the army was fighting. The sufferings were particular to devastated homes, cropless fields and empty barns, but they suffered and were patient in hoping that success would come to their cause. A friend who helped to bury the dead after the smoke had cleared away from Gettysburg told me in the clinched hand of a dying man was found a photograph of three beautiful little girls. The last comfort he had – the last thought was a look at them. When [MISSING] back to the home with a statement from where it was found, what do you think was the measure of that wife's sorrow?

"I should like to be able to tell you of the sacrifices and the noble women who formed the hospital corps. After the great battles these women nursed back to life many a brave boy and folded the hand and closed the eye of many more. Thus they stood in the place of the loved ones far away. Nursing in those days did not mean what nursing means today. Conveniences were not at hand but it was to do the best with the least. Many of these women had to be the surgeon's helper and stand by the amputation tables and dress the ghastly wounds. But they faltered not."

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Mrs. Emily Gorsuch Buckingham Herr

*Photo credit: Historical Society of Carroll County*

*Photo caption: Mrs. Emily Gorsuch Buckingham Herr delivered the oration for the 1905 Memorial Day celebration in Westminster. In this turn-of-the-century photograph, she posed with her son Emory Gorsuch Buckingham.*