

End of war cause of celebration, loss of 1,000 jobs

It was the bells in the tower of the First Methodist Church that spread the word that "the long death-watch on war was over — that peace and order were once more restored to a war-weary world."

The *Bloomington World Telephone* of Aug. 15 put it this way: Bloomingtonians were keyed to a high pitch of expectancy as they left the streets to go home for their evening meal. A sudden thunder shower at 6 o'clock drove them from the streets. It was too noisy to hear the radio reports. Then suddenly above the rumble of thunder came the tolling of the bells."

At the newspaper office the Associated Press wires "were clicking away with the biggest story of the century." Elsewhere, Bloomingtonians were overjoyed. The *World Telephone* described it. "Supper was forgotten. Many rushed into the streets in the blinding rain. Soon the square was a bedlam. More whistles blew. Car horns bout out the victory chant. People sang and cried with the same breath. Total strangers embraced each others. Others — a bit more sober — shook hands somberly."



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

Added the newspaper, "The celebration that was to last more than six hours was on."

Between showers there was an impromptu parade. It was lead by two women, carrying American flags. One was the mother of Pfc. Francis Harold Zink and Coxwain Roger E. Zink, sons of Ruth Gillespie of 509 W. 13th St.

Mary D. Taylor stood in front of Woolworth's Ten Cent Store, clutching a tattered American flag against her chest. When the reporter asked her if she was a service man's mother, she replied, "You bet I am." Her sons, Frederick and Richard were in Germany and the Pacific, respectively.

Taylor explained, "I promised them that when the war was over I'd come downtown and carry this flag around the square. I've had two heart attacks, and I didn't think I was ever going to live to see this day and keep my

promise, but thank God, I did. And ain't we all happy tonight?"

Jack Pickerel who was stationed at Crane decided he wanted to climb the flagpole on the south lawn of the courthouse. He got halfway up and decided not to press his luck beyond that point. He and two female friends disappeared into the crowd.

Other celebrants were spotted by the *World Telephone* reporter. "Into the auto parade which went around and around the court house swung a couple bearing a very wet sailor perched on each front fender. One was attempting the heroic feat of holding his girlfriend on his knee and lighting a wet cigarette at the same time. The cars were draped with festoon of toilet tissue."

Bloomingtonians did not forget to give thanks for the war's end. On Aug. 16, the *World Telephone* reported that more than 5,000 people responded to the Monroe County Ministerial Association to gather at the Third Street Park.

Noted the newspaper, "Gone was the mardi gras spirit of the night before. Reverently they took their places to await the opening

of the program."

Reporter Harriet Weaver described the thanksgiving service. "Forming a long line along the east side of the park, 150 officers and men from the Army Special Service School at Indiana University, commanded by Major F.T. Reed, stood at ease during the service."

Mayor Bruner introduced William E. Brown, state commander of the American Legion, who spoke to the crowd. Indiana University President Herman B Wells also spoke. He reminded the crowd that Monroe County had lost 149 young people in the war. "Their loss is a personal one to every citizen."

Wells said that during the war, IU had been the temporary home for nearly 13,000 men and women who received training on the campus. He added, "Indiana University sent a complete hospital to the European Theater. It was the first general hospital to be established on German soil."

On the following day, the *World Telephone* informed its readers that the Navy had cancelled its contract with RCA and the company had laid off some 1,000 employees.

The war was truly over.

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