

# Indiana University 'secrets' revealed near close of war

As the war in the Pacific Theater was coming to a close, the *Bloomington World Telephone* revealed to its readers that secret research at Indiana University had contributed to the development of the atomic bomb. In the Aug. 8 edition, the newspaper also disclosed what it regarded as another secret.

"Charles Strout of Bedford sacrificed his life in experiments on the atomic bomb, which were conducted at Indiana University. The announcement by President Truman of the bombing of the Japanese city of Hiroshima by the new bomb brought to light that secret tests were conducted here, and it became known that Strout, who died in the Dunn Memorial Hospital in Bedford on Aug. 21, 1943, had contracted leukemia from exposure to equipment used in laboratory cyclotron tests."

An Associated Press article in the same edition quoted a Tokyo newspaper, the *Asahi Shimbun*, saying 60 percent of Hiroshima had been destroyed. That newspaper appealed to



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

the Japanese people to remain calm under the "inhuman bombing and pledge to fight through until the last."

Bloomingtonians had barely comprehended the magnitude of the atomic bomb when they were informed in the *World Telephone* that an Air Force bomber had dropped a second bomb on Nagasaki. That information was listed as a third development in the Pacific war after news of the Red Army troops' drive on Manchuria and 1,200 unchallenged bombers and fighters' mission over Japan.

Meanwhile, Captain Charles Darrell Houchin, husband of Irene Houchin of 316 E. First St., returned home on leave. A member of the Signal Corps, he had been a part of the

African campaign. After his leave, he expected to be shipped out to the fighting in the Pacific.

By Aug. 11, to Bloomingtonians, peace seemed only a few hours away. The Bloomington Chamber of Commerce V-J Committee was already at work, planning for a celebration and thanks-giving.

Explained the *World Telephone*, "Businesses in the city will close immediately upon receipt of official word from President Truman that the war with Japan is at an end. They will remain closed during the following day."

IU was going to get involved in the celebration, too. Final examinations were postponed, a change that didn't meet with any resistance.

One the face of it, one aspect of the Chamber's plans may not have had much appeal for the owners of local liquor stores and bars. "No intoxicants will be sold for a period of 24 hours after the word is received." (On the contrary, perhaps the edict prompted some local citizens to stock up early.)

Another part of the local plan involved the

National Guard. The newspaper reported that Capt. Robert E. Matthews had informed local members to "hold themselves in readiness for duty." All leaves were also canceled at Indiana's 10 State Police posts.

There was a bittersweet note in that Aug. 11 edition of the *World Telephone*. A wire service article reminded readers that the government had estimated some 5 million munitions workers alone would lose their jobs within 60 days after the Japanese surrender.

As recently as Aug. 3, the Bloomington RCA plant had published a full-page ad calling for 200 more female employees. Said the ad, the women were needed "to provide war equipment vital to the battle against Japan."

Another end-of-the-war irony appeared on the front page on Aug. 14. The article began, "Thirty-three men left here Monday for induction into the armed forces, 21 from Selective Board One and 12 from Board Two.

Next week: Bloomington and Monroe County celebrate

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