

"Memorial Day in 1938"

Carroll County Times Article for 26 May 1996

By Jay A. Graybeal

The Memorial Day observances held throughout the county in 1938 followed a tradition established shortly after the Civil War. Local dignitaries, veterans, and guests paraded to the local cemetery and children decorated the veteran's graves with flowers. The Westminster event, described on the front page of the June 3, 1938 issue of this newspaper, was representative of those that took place in the county.

Main Street was thronged with spectators on Monday morning for the Memorial Day parade and at the cemetery approximately 1500 persons were present for the services. The day was clear but cool and windy, but it did not decrease the impressiveness of the events or number who gathered to participate in them.

The parade formed on West Green, Bond and West Main streets and moved promptly at 9:30 headed by state and city police, the marshals, Mayor and City Council, the speaker and clergymen participating. Following came the Color Corps of the American Legion, the firing squad of Company H, the Westminster Band, Company H, 29th Division Veterans, Uniform Rank Knights of Pythias, Carroll Post No. 31, American Legion; Carroll Unit No. 31, American Legion Auxiliary.

The second division was composed entirely of the Reserve Officers Training Corp battalion of Western Maryland College with colors and band.

William F. Myers Sons band, resplendent in new uniforms of blue and gold, led the third division, followed by the Kiwanis Glee Club in uniform, the Boy Scouts, and Girl Scout troops, and pupils of the sixth and seventh grades carrying flowers.

Ceremonies at the mound were most impressive with the past commander, Lloyd A. Bowker, presiding. The Kiwanis Glee Club opened the services with the singing of America and the Rev. Paul W. Quay, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, followed with a most beautiful prayer. Mr. Bowker recited the Legion memorial ritual and Commander Tyron M. Shepherd placed the flowers of memory at the urn. A minute of silence followed in respect of the dead of all wars.

The Rev. Fr. William E. Kelly, pastor of St. John's Catholic Church, was introduced as the speaker. Father Kelly impressed upon his audience the value of the U. S. Constitution, the necessity of every true blooded American to support it both in times of peace and in times of conflict and the honor due those who have supported it to the extent of giving their lives that we may still enjoy its advantages. The Rev. H. G. C. Martin, rector of Ascension P. E. Church, pronounced the benediction. The National Anthem was played by the Westminster Band; the salute was rendered by the firing squad of Company H and Taps were sounded. Flowers were then distributed by the school children.

Carroll Post was in charge of the events of the day.

Following services at the Westminster Cemetery, Carroll Unit conducted brief services at St. John's Catholic Cemetery with Father Kelly assisting.

One of the most notable speakers of the day did not speak in Westminster. Taneytown residents listened to U. S. Senator Millard E. Tydings who spoke from a podium at the Taneytown Reformed Church Cemetery. The senator was a World War I veteran who had served overseas with the 29th Division. He commanded the 111th Machine Gun Battalion was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and a 29th Division Citation for Gallantry for "his coolness under fire and utter disregard of personal danger" during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. His Memorial Day audience included a number of veterans who had served overseas in the American Expeditionary Forces.

Photo caption: Sen. Millard E. Tydings addressed the crowd at the May 30, 1938 Taneytown Memorial Day observances held at the Taneytown Reformed Church Cemetery. Left to right: standing Albert Smith, James C. Myers, B. Walter Crapster, James Salley, Louis Lancaster and Rose Crabbs. Left to right, seated: Dr. Chandos M. Benner, Mrs. Francis T. Elliott, Mrs. Louis Lancaster, Mrs. Millard E. Tydings and Father Joseph F. Lane. Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of B. Walter Crapster.