

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

### "World War II Victory Celebration"

Carroll County Times article for 20 August 1995

by Jay A. Graybeal

Fifty years ago the world entered the atomic age with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. While the decision to drop the bomb has been hotly debated in recent years, there was only excitement and joy when the news came of Japan's surrender in August 1945. The front page of the August 17, 1945 issue of this newspaper carried the long awaited headline, "JAPAN SURRENDERS; WAR ENDS" and a news story about the surrender.

The war with Japan ended on Tuesday evening, August 14, when President Truman made the announcement from the White House that the Japanese had accepted the allied unconditional surrender terms. At the time the news officially broke here, other Allied capitals throughout the world were hearing a similar announcement. With news of surrender, also came word that General Douglas MacArthur, Commander of the United States Army forces in the Pacific area, had been named as Supreme Allied Commander to accept the formal surrender of the Japanese. Since this was made known, Manila has been selected as the place for the signing of the official surrender document by representatives of Emperor Hirohito.

Since last week when the first surrender offer of the Japs was made to the Big-4, and their rejection of the terms, the world has awaited the final note that would bring peace. In this first offer, Japan proposed that their Emperor's position should not be compromised. This the allied Powers would not accept, but did agree that Japan could retain Hirohito only as a puppet under Allied control.

A second article, "Westminster Crowds Celebrate Victory; Boisterous Parades," described the local celebration.

Citizens of Westminster and nearby communities "let loose" and really gave way to their pent up feelings when news came officially on Tuesday evening that Japan had surrendered and that second World War was at an end. As previously arranged, Mayor Joseph L. Mathias gave the signal to sound the siren, and ring the church bells. It was only a few minutes after the first signal was given that hundreds of motorists formed an impromptu parade sounding horns and making noises with every handy device. Where all the cars came from so quickly is still a mystery. It is fortunate that the gasoline rationing was eliminated, for certainly there would have been none left for Wednesday.

Large decorated trucks loaded with children and boisterous adults soon made their appearance. On the arrival of the Westminster Band and two large noise making devices on trucks of Thomas, Bennett and Hunter, the tour of the town began, and they were still at it at 1:30 A.M. Wednesday morning.

Thousands lined the streets to join in the celebration; others went to the several churches that were open for prayers. Victory Services were held in the several churches on Wednesday evening.

Not altogether satisfied with the celebration of Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, the whole affair was revived on Wednesday evening and the noise started all over again. The Westminster Band again appeared and the informal parade toured the town. Later the band gave a concert in front of the firemen's building.

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Federal offices here were closed on Wednesday and Thursday, while all other business houses closed Wednesday only. The two day holiday was marked at the Post Office. Members of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Local No. 427, resumed work today, after a two-day holiday.

There is a certain satisfaction in knowing that the great crowds were orderly here and no accidents or acts of violence were reported.

The end of the war meant that local men and women would soon be coming home to their loved ones. For the Jospeh L. Mathias family, it meant that sons Maj. Joseph, Maj. F. Kale and Cpl. William would soon return to Westminster. At the time the war ended, Joseph was assigned to the War Department in Washington and his two brothers were serving overseas.

Photo Caption: Mayor Joseph L. Mathias, Sr. signaled the beginning of the victory celebration in Westminster on August 14, 1945 marking the end of World War II. Courtesy of the Mathias Family.