

## "The First Armistice"

Carroll County Times Article for 10 November 1996

By Jay A. Graybeal

Tomorrow is Veteran's Day, a holiday originally known as Armistice Day since 1918. After four years of fighting, "The Great War" ended at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of that year. Armistice Day was last observed in 1953; President Dwight D. Eisenhower declared that the holiday would become Veterans Day beginning in 1954.

The first Armistice Day was selected as the topic for the Historical Society of Carroll County's annual dinner meeting held, appropriately enough, on November 11, 1954. Board members or their representatives from each county election district were asked to share their recollections of that memorable day. A. Earl Shipley, a former officer in the 111th Field Artillery and the Historical Society's President from 1947-1951, presided over the meeting. Speakers representing most of the county election districts read personal recollections or local newspaper articles about how the first Armistice Day was observed in their area. The following descriptions of activities in Winfield, New Windsor, and Union Bridge are representative of local reaction to the Armistice.

### Armistice Day in Franklin District

We in Franklin District received the word about 5 in the afternoon that the War was over, and what a wonderful message that was. We had at the time 23 lovely young boys in the service and 5 of them were from our little village of Winfield. Mr. A. J. Stem had a new truck so he said gather up a crowd and we would all go out to the Armory in Westminster where they were holding a celebration, of course as you know that was a horse and buggy day. Not so many people had cars and trucks and looking back the speed was about 25 miles per hour and one felt they were almost flying. Upon arriving in Westminster everyone was on the street it seemed, and there was an overflowing crowd at the Armory but we managed to get inside where they had a wonderful meeting. I shall never forget it. I am so glad we changed the name of November 11 to Veterans Day, because we have an awareness of our debt to all veterans of World Wars I and II and we want to honor these men also on November 11 and trust in God there will be no more World Wars in the future.

Mrs. Edgar Pickett,  
Franklin District, No. 9

### Armistice Day in New Windsor

When the church bells suddenly rang out on November 11, 1918, panic reigned in New Windsor. The first thought that entered everyone's mind was the fear of disaster. The doors of the houses flew open and the men, women and children rushed into the streets to find out what terrible thing had happened. A short while before that day a false rumor of an Armistice had set New Windsor wild with joy. When the people learned that their celebration was premature, deep gloom settled over the town. Perhaps it was due to this great disappointment that the parents, relatives and friends of the "Boys" overseas became panicky and could think of only tragedy when they heard the bells. As telephones were few at that time many country people were alarmed, too, when the sound of the church and school bells reached them. However, when the good news that the war was finally over reached New Windsor and everyone was convinced that it was really true, the day ended joyfully and the only tears shed were tears of relief and deep happiness.

Mrs. Robert S. Cairns, Jr.

New Windsor District, No. 11

Armistice Day in Union Bridge District

Many persons were awakened early Monday morning by the masterly rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" on a slide trombone by I. J. Corman, night operator here, who had upon hearing of the signing of the Armistice, threw open the windows in the office and notified many in this way, while a little later a "double header" passed through here and with both whistles awakened nearly all those who were not awakened by the music.

Union Bridge Pilot

November 15, 1918

Submitted by Miss Pauline Fuss,

Union Bridge District, No. 12

A. Earl Shipley closed the meeting with a personal statement:

Praise those who lived for ideals of

liberty, freedom, democracy-

Hope springs eternal-

The 1st Armistice showed that hope.

Photo caption: A. J. Stem published this post card "View Looking North, Winfield, Md." in c.1915. The residents of Winfield celebrated the end of World War I on November 11, 1918. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection.