

DICKINSON COUNTY HISTORY – MILITARY – WARTIME STORIES FROM THE HOMEFRONT

[Compiled and Transcribed by William J. Cummings]

SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

WORLD WAR I

The Current, Norway, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 34, Number 42 [Saturday, November 16, 1918], page 1, column 2

THE PEACE JUBILEE

Norway Runs Wild With Enthusiasm, Young and Old Vie With Each Other In Demonstrations of Joy.

Early Monday the wires brought assurances that our armistice had been signed and with this assurance came a renewal of the demonstrations of pleasure and satisfaction so freely evidenced on two previous occasions.

While a few "Doubting Thomases" hung back to "make sure" the report had come from an authentic source, the majority accepted it, and proceeded to show their joy in every noisy manner their ingenuity could suggest.

During the day the streets were filled with people and vehicles displaying the Stars and Stripes.

Soon after noon the fire truck loaded with about thirty young ladies with City Marshal Thomas Thoreson on the running board and followed by a long line of autos, [sic] started for Iron Mountain.

Arriving there they were cordially welcomed by what must have been the entire population of the sister city, everything movable being on the move and everything that would make noise, [sic] doing its full duty. Music, parades,

speeches and cheers were the order of the day.

After a short time spent in mutual congratulations, the Norway people returned home to rejoin their fellows in the general rejoicing.

Soon after supper the city was the Mecca of many Vulcan people, the City Band led thousands in parade through the streets and the multitude was augmented by a large number from Iron Mountain, accompanied by a band that made up in inspiring music what they lacked in numbers. Later, when the people of the three towns and those from the country who came in to celebrate, [sic] had become one heterogeneous mass. Judge O'Hara[,] of Iron Mountain, was introduced by ex-mayor Gordon Murray and made a stirring address.

At the solicitation of several of Iron Mountain's sedate citizens, the City Band mounted the band stand and began the playing of up-to-date dance music and from that time on until the "wee sma' hours ayant the twal," joy was unconfined and Iron Mountain, Norway and Vulcan people vied with each other in trying to wear out their shoes on the stone streets.

All in all Norway celebrated – and then some.

WORLD WAR II

The Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 23, Number 225 [Wednesday, January 5, 1944], page 2, column 2

\$999 Spent In '43 From Cigaret Fund

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Eighty-one cents less than \$1,000 – or \$999.19 – was spent during 1943 from the Dickinson county service men's fund, World War II, for cigarets [*sic – cigarettes*] and candy for departing soldiers and sailors, according to Harold Lindholm, city clerk and deputy treasurer of the fund.

Elmer Hicks, fifth ward alderman and city finance chairman, is the fund treasurer.

Cigarets [*sic – Cigarettes*] and candy are given the men when they report to the draft board on the day they leave for Army and Navy induction centers, for outfitting and assignment.

On Jan. 1, 1943, the fund balance was \$34.02. During the year \$1,314.12 was paid in and on Dec. 31 the balance was \$375.95.

Coins dripped into bottles at stores and other collection centers are responsible for most of the income, although a small amount has been paid in cash to the treasurer or his deputy. Checks or cash will be accepted by mail or in person at Lindholm's office in the city building, east Ludington street.

Although most of the money comes from the Iron Mountain-Kingsford area, collections are made also in Norway, Channing, Sagola and elsewhere in the county.

Men Are Grateful

"We believe the service men are grateful for these gifts, as much for the thought as the value of the items they receive," Hicks said today. "The committee wishes, also, to express appreciation to the men, women and children who have dropped their quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies in the collection bottles.

"We want to continue this work in 1944, and as long thereafter as there is need for it. We ask continued support. We have not conducted any drive, and do not intend to. We depend on voluntary contributions and we urge everyone to slip an occasional coin

into the bottles as they receive their change over the counter at the stores, postoffice [*sic – post office*] and elsewhere.

"Checks or cash will also be accepted at the city clerk's office. This is the last small tribute we can pay our men as they leave for service. We must keep it going."

Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, _____ Year, Number _____ [Friday, August 10, 1945], page 2, column 3

News Of Jap Offer Brings Great Joy

Report this morning that Japan had proposed to surrender, if the retention of Emperor Hirohito is assured, brought joy to this community today – but particularly to the wives, mothers, fathers and other relatives of fighting men now in the Pacific theater.

Within a few moments after the first radio announcement, The News was besieged with calls for confirmation, which continued throughout the day. Among the earliest calls came from the Ford plant, where the report quickly spread through the several buildings, and the Iron Mountain-Kingsford chamber of commerce, which was waiting, momentarily, to announce a 24-hour cessation of business, in accordance with a recent agreement by the storekeepers.

There was general speculation here today – and no doubt everywhere else in the country – about the effect of Japan's answer on business, industry and particularly, the status of men now in the process of redeployment from the European to the Pacific areas, and civilians

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now qualified by selective service for examination or induction.

At The Ford Plant

At the Ford plant it was understood that, in the event of a conclusive and official announcement, manufacture of gliders would be stopped, and work towards reconversion started at once.

The plant is, it is said, heavily stocked with government material which will have to be disposed of before work on reconversion can begin. Ford officials were not prepared to go into detail on the procedure.

The effect of peace upon other plants, large and small, now in war production would, it is believed, depend largely on the type of product being manufactured. Production of material for use in combat would, it is thought likely, be halted at once. Production of clothing, food and other supplies will continue for the armies of occupation in conquered areas.

When official confirmation of the end of the war is received here, notice will be given on the city siren, or orders of Mayor Ivar H. Anderson, commander of the OCD. On hearing the siren, all auxiliary policemen, firemen and wardens are asked to report immediately.

Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 25, Number 107 [Wednesday, August 15, 1945], page 2, columns 1-2

Laughing, Shouting Crowds Greet News Of Jap Collapse

Setting out to prove that the end of war had not been robbed of its "punch" by delay in official announcement, residents of this community, starting shortly after 6 last night

– the hour when radio broadcasters broke the long silence – staged the most noisy and prolonged demonstration seen here since the Armistice of 1918.

It was a field-day for pent-up emotions, and the thousands of celebrants who stormed into the business district within a few moments after sirens and factory whistles heralded the good tidings, made the most of it. The lid was off – 'way off – and police confined their efforts to keeping some semblance of order as the cars moved, bumper to bumper, along Stephenson avenue and intersecting streets.

It was, obviously, no pre-arranged celebration. Impromptu throughout, it sprung from nowhere, and swelled into a rising crescendo of shouting, laughing pedestrians and motorists, to the accompaniment of the constant, shrill blast of sirens, whistles, horns and every type of noise-maker which could be grabbed up, in a hurry, and added to the deafening din.

Lots Of Parades

There were parades – lots of them. Hurriedly-organized groups of celebrants, young and old, formed long lines of marchers, pushing through the packed streets, unmindful of traffic hazards, ignoring warnings, dashing back and forth from the walks and curbs and bent on one principal objective – to make noise; any kind of noise.

One group of youngsters appeared early, fully-equipped for the "big show." Armed with drums, dish-pans, horns, wooden boxes and anything that would produce the desired result, they "snaked" in and out among the crowds, whacking their home-made instruments with all their youthful might – shouting and yelling at the top of their lungs.

One youngster, with a toy-drum and wooden spoon, quickly beat a great gap in the head of it, and then turned it sideways

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to pound with all his might on what was left. The girls were as noisy as the boys – and perhaps more so, for their voices rose to higher pitch. Adults forgot their age and joined in the wild acclaim with all they had to give.

It went on, like that, until almost midnight.

Over at the M and M smoke-shop, the pop-corn machine, in its accustomed place on the sidewalk, was quickly emptied – but not by cash-customers. Passersby simply reached in; scooped up handfuls [*sic – handfuls*] of the flaky confection and pushed on. Rudy Mahlberg, proprietor, pushed the machine inside – jamming his finger in the door as he fought for “gangway.” It was the first “casualty” of the celebration.

Mighty Uproar

Meanwhile, the city air-raid siren, atop the fire station; the Ford plant and locomotive whistles; automobile horns and sirens, and every imaginable contraption for producing the loudest possible noise, combined in the rising clatter. At intervals, shrill screams of unbridled joy rose high above the din as pedestrians slapped each other’s backs; shook hands; jumped up and down and just “let go” – all the way.

Automobiles were packed solid along the curbs, from C street north to the pit. Other hundreds of cars and trucks moved in a never-ending procession along every street in the business section. One versatile car-owner had installed a siren on the exhaust-pipe of his car, and he “revved” up the engine at regular intervals as he inched along, contributing his full share to the tumult.

Members of the county OCD, in uniform, summoned by prearrangement, helped maintain order along Stephenson avenue and elsewhere. In the early evening, Heinie Munch, manager of the Ford cafeteria, at the glider plant, appeared with sandwiches

and coffee for the OCD workers, who today offered him a vote of thanks for the welcome “lift.”

Meanwhile, windows on all floors of the Commercial Bank building were popping open, and the first barrage of paper was sent down onto the milling crowds. From then on, paper of every shape and description poured down in an unending stream. Wastebaskets were dumped of their contents, without stopping to tear the paper into bits; adding-machine rolls were tossed out, the narrow strips wrapping about the necks of the marchers, and wash-rooms were raided of their supplies.

Few Mishaps

Despite this almost uncontrolled demonstration, there were few mishaps. Here and there a car-bumper folded up quietly as an unseeing driver came plunging on, waving both arms, forgetful of brakes and all else but the job at hand. Moving along, only inches apart, there were frequent, minor bumps and collisions. Nobody cared. No one was hurt.

At about 1:30 this morning, however, Arthur Paquette, 513 Mayview avenue, in Kingsford, driving along US-141, at the west end of Breitung avenue, lost control of his car, and it hit the ditch, rolling over. His passenger, Claude Carpenter, 16, of 504 Sagola avenue, suffered a cut on the arm. Paquette was summoned to appear next Friday, in municipal court, for speeding.

Lloyd Kipp, 603 West B, this morning reported the theft, sometime last night, of his 1936 Ford coupe, painted blue.

Only a few celebrants got out of hand, according to city, county and state police – but none was arrested. Instead, they were bundled in police cars and trundled off home, to sleep it off. All in all, there was surprisingly little drunkenness, police said. “Actually,” said Chief Hassell, “they didn’t have time to get started, because shortly after the news was broadcast, all taverns,

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clubs and other establishments where liquor is sold, were closed, by previous order of the state liquor commission. They either 'loaded up' at home, or brought it along with them." A few, scattered "empties" on the street this morning attested to the latter expedient.

Business Suspended

All production at the Ford glider plant was suspended today, until Monday, according to Walter G. Nelson, superintendent. Only a skeleton crew was called out, mostly to maintain the hydro-electric plant, on the Menominee river, the chemical plant, and plant-protection. Factory-service employes [*sic – employees*] reported, as usual, for the day-shift today.

Last night, Ford factory-service employes [*sic – employees*] reached every tavern and other gathering place in the city and district, with word that production employes [*sic – employees*] were not to report today.

Nelson did not indicate the program for next week. This, it is believed, will depend on orders from the company at Detroit.

Work at the Security Sportswear company, East Grand Boulevard, now on full war-production of field-jackets for men overseas, was suspended for today only, and will be resumed tomorrow, according to Louis Horwich, member of the firm. Union members at the plant today were notifying the workers to return on Thursday.

Some confusion resulted from President Truman's announcement, last night, of a two-day "legal holiday" for Federal employes [*sic – employees*]. Employers having war contracts, for instance, were doubtful about the application of the program to their operations. Similarly, municipal and county workers were uncertain about it.

Closed For Today

Meanwhile, all city, county and Kingsford village offices, road crews and

other departments, and all stores, offices and shops were closed today, but it was understood all would re-open tomorrow. Clarification today of the President's announcement of the two-day legal holiday narrows the layoff to persons directly employed and paid by the U.S. Government. Even in these cases, most department managers today were awaiting direct orders from their immediate superiors on the work-status for tomorrow.

Most of the churches in the area, by previous arrangement, were opened promptly by their pastors, after the news broadcast. Hundreds of parishioners went at once to give thanks for Victory, and the end of fighting. Many of them were wives or parents of service men, whose hearts, for the first time in more than three years, were light with hope and joy.

In their homes, too, thousands of grateful persons knelt in silent gratitude, as they heard the news. Everywhere, at home and abroad, the joy and relief of peace-at-last welled up in a great chorus of thanksgiving.

H.V. Kaltenborn, famous radio news-analyst and commentator, said it all when, opening his broadcast last night, he shouted: "The war is over! The war is over! The war is over! Peace has come! Peace has come! Peace has come!"

KOREAN WAR

VIETNAM WAR

OTHER CONFLICTS