

ARMISTICE DAY in CHERRY VALLEY

“My earliest memory of an exciting historical event was the Burning of the Kaiser in 1918. All the townspeople congregated downtown for this huge bonfire to burn the effigy of the Kaiser. The great World War I was over.

Tanks rambled into town into which we children scrambled to examine and have our pictures taken. Many, many troop trains went through the village on the way to Camp Grant, loaded with returning soldiers, singing and waving enthusiastically to us children and throwing candy bars to us.

Each Memorial Day, or Decoration Day, as we called it then, all the townspeople congregated downtown and formed a parade. We children, dressed in our fanciest Sunday clothes, carried flags and large bouquets of our garden flowers - lilacs, iris, bridal wreath, violets, etc.

Many Civil War Veterans arrived to march and play in their Fife and Drum Corps. To their music the crowd marched up to the cemetery, stopping at the bridge for a brief ceremony during which time we cast our flowers into the river in memory of those who lost their lives at sea.

At the cemetery, I recall chairs filled with many people, a stage covered with banners, speeches, prayers, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (by a local high school student memorized), the Pledge of Allegiance, and the firing of the cannon. Children remained quiet, full of awe and respect. Each year the number of veterans decreased. Finally there were two or three, and then all were gone.”

Written by
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