

Summer a time for Washburn celebration

Three holiday observances marked the passage of summers in Washburn — Memorial Day on May 30, Independence Day on July 4, and Labor Day on the first Monday in September. Memorial Day was established in 1868 to honor the Union dead soldiers of the Civil War, but is now dedicated to the soldiers who died in all of the nation's wars.

Memorial Day was first celebrated in Washburn on May 31, 1891 in the town hall. The Washburn News reported that the "Hall was beautifully decorated, and on the speakers' platform, which was covered with beautiful green grass, was a little grave, erected over which was a monument 'to the memory of our Soldier Dead.' " The program included addresses, recitations and songs, a "Decoration Exercise" in which flowers were strewn over the mock grave, followed by "Hanging Wreaths in Memory of the Dead," during which several wreaths were placed on the grave with suitable remarks, all done by girls. The "closing service, 'Peace and Good Will,' consisted of the decorating of the grave and singing by the flower girls and the North and South joining hands in Peace and Good Will over the grave of the soldier, while the 'Nation' with her hand on the Monument viewed the scene

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**Lars
Larson
Guest
columnist**

with admiration and satisfaction."

Memorial Day observances were held almost every year thereafter, with Civil War veterans, and after 1898, Spanish-American War veterans, in charge. Thankful that the terrible Great War had at last ended, the celebration in 1919 was particularly elaborate. Ceremonies began in the afternoon of May 30, with the "singing of 'America' by the audience . . . followed by a short talk by Rev. George Waters, who called the roll of the seven soldiers and sailors buried at sea or across the seas. Young ladies of the Red Cross, dressed in white and wearing white crowns, acted as flowers girls. As the names of the seven men were called a young lady carried a wreath of flowers to the water front and cast them upon the waters." Then a prayer was offered "for the boys whose lives had been given in the service of their country." A parade "wended its way to the cemetery," headed by a drum corps, Civil War veterans, par-

ents of the boys killed in the war, Spanish-American and Great War veterans, Boy Scouts and other groups, including a large contingent of soldiers in uniform. There, more speeches were given, prayers offered, and graves decorated with American flags and strewn with flowers.

During the 1920s Memorial Day observances were sponsored by the Great War veterans in the American Legion. The day's activities usually began with a parade along Bayfield Street, with the veterans of the Civil War, now reaching the end of their lives, those of the Spanish-American War in middle age, and those of the Great War at the peak of their manhood, marching together.

The high point of the summer was Independence Day, celebrating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4 1776. The first reported celebration of the "Glorious Fourth" was in 1891, and included a parade, "patriotic exercises," and games. According to the Washburn Times, the July 4th celebration in 1915 "was one of the biggest and best . . . ever held in Washburn." Rain turned the streets to mud, but the parade, "over a half mile long and . . . a grand sight," went on anyway. There were numerous floats "drawn by four, six or eight horses," while "Washburn autoists . . .

turned out" with many decorated automobiles. One float, which "attracted a good deal of attention," represented "a human flag with a 'Goddess of Liberty' at the top. The flag was made by children dressed in national colors. On the banners at the side of the wagon were the words 'We appreciate Du Pont.' " When the parade was over there were speeches at the Carnegie Library and then a dinner, after which there was a baseball game with Washburn winning over Ashland. Music was provided by the Washburn City Band. "Hundreds of people . . . came down from the Harbor City by boat and train, while "Thirty automobiles, neatly trimmed and loaded with people" from Bayfield joined the parade.

The celebration in 1922 was anticipated by the Times "to be Biggest Ever," with "something doing" every minute, "From nine o'clock in the morning until the break of the day the following morning." Festivities began as usual with a "Monster street parade," followed by the obligatory July 4th oration, and then automobile, sulky, motor cycle, and other races, games, and a water fight between the Washburn and Ashland fire departments. The program ended with a dance on Bayfield Street and Washington Avenue.