

Buffalo Tales

July/August 2019

Buffalo County Historical Society

Mayor Joseph C. Tye's V-E Day Proclamation

By: Nathan Tye

V-E Day (May 8, 1945) marked the unconditional surrender of Nazi forces in Europe. Newspapers across the nation celebrated the defeat of Nazi Germany, but in Kearney the joy was muted. At 8 a.m. the laundry whistle and fire siren announced the end of hostilities. Many businesses closed and the high school band held a short concert downtown. A dusting of snow fell. The Hub reported, "few people were on the streets." Most of Kearney's citizens likely heard President Harry Truman's morning radio address. He called on the nation to bring the victory in Europe to the war in the Pacific.



Joseph C. Tye in WWII parade

Mayor Joseph C. Tye issued his own address after Truman on KGFW. In his address he makes clear victory in Europe is a large step towards ending the war but many trials and tribulations awaited the nation and Kearney as fighting continued across the Pacific. Many young men and women in Kearney were in uniform and the presence of the Army Air Field brought the entire community face-to-face with the conflict on a daily basis. For Mayor Tye this sacrifice was personal, his eldest son Joseph "Bud" Tye was preparing for deployment to the Pacific and would eventually partake in the occupation of Japan. First elected by write-in vote in 1943 and reelected in 1945, Tye's mayoral tenure was deeply tied to the war and continued afterwards when he spearheaded community efforts for the newly created Air Force to maintain its presence at the airfield. Although it was quoted briefly in the Kearney Hub that day, the entire address is reproduced here in its entirety for the first time since May 8, 1945.

"As we listened to the proclamation of our President this morning, spoken in true Midwestern, common sense style – plain, matter of the fact, sincere – a part of the weight lifted from the shoulders of our people.

This is V-E Day. Our President made no mention of celebration – or cessation of business.

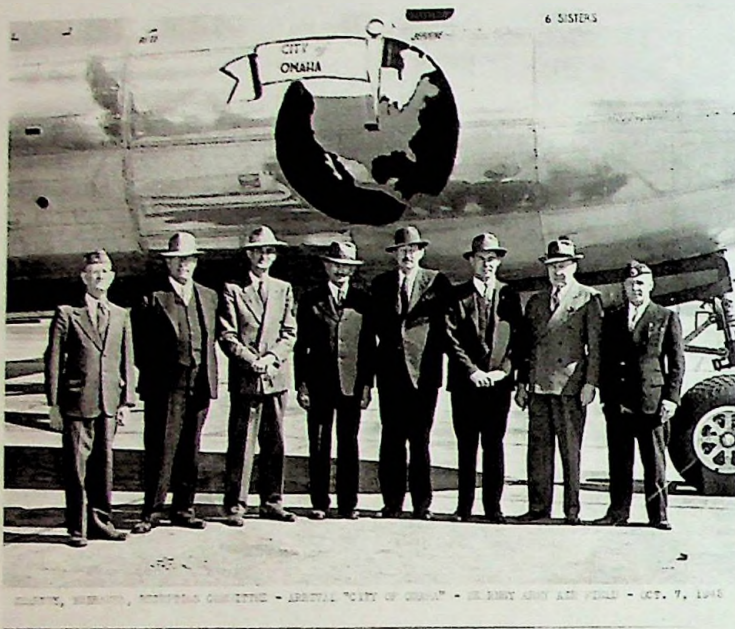
I am personally proud of Kearney and her people. We heard the news yesterday, as did many other people. All day our people continued business as usual; there was no trend toward celebration, hilarity or leaving the job upon news unconfirmed. Men and women going about their daily tasks gave expressions of desire and hope that V-E Day was here but their faces also gave clear evidence of solemnity, sincerity and determination.

As our President brought us the official news this morning, we all were relieved and happy but there came at the same time a realization of the stupendous tasks ahead. What is Gen. Eisenhower doing today? What of the job of our men in Germany at this hour? As they lay down the tools and implements of war, they take on the greatest task ever undertaken by any peoples anywhere – the handling of millions of surrendered troops, millions of civilians in enemy territory, thousands of prisoners – both of war and political – America – Nebraska – Kearney men are today taking part in a task never before undertaken – one which will not only permit hilarity and celebration, but which will DEMAND the greatest of human skill, ingenuity and soberness, if we are to do OUR USUAL Grand American job and bring a chaotic world back to orderly peace.

We thought, as our President spoke, of that neighbor whose soldier will not return – even though there is peace on the Western front. This day will not be one of celebration in that home. Let us see to it that the day is spent to ease the pain and care of our people who have given such sacrifice. They are entitled to the deepest and sincerest of thoughts and consideration today. This day they shall never forget – let us see to it that their memory of it is solemn, sincere, prayerful.

We thought then as our President struck the key – note of his proclamation of that neighbor and friend whose boy today is sloshing his way ashore on some unknown Pacific Island. He is loaded down with his pack, he is walking into an unknown land against the most vicious, dastardly and treacherous foe – he is under murderous fire, cut off from home, yes – cut off from supplies – living on what he finds in this unknown land and what his buddies may be able to drop to him from the air – he is there to FIGHT or die. He fights for YOU – he fights for me. One side step by any of us at home may mean a slip for him – one moment wasted here may mean his life there – this day is not Victory for him. It is our task in recognizing V-E Day to think of him.

As I passed along the streets of Kearney this morning, there was no evidence of celebration. Kearney is sober, solemn, sincere, determined to finish the job ahead. Our amusement places and taverns are closed today. Voluntarily closed. I take this opportunity to thank those men, the owners and operators of these business places, for their fine judgment, their support of Kearney and her spirit on this V-E Day.




Today Kearney pauses – our schools are closed this morning, our business houses are closed until 1 P.M. We are giving THANKS – thanks from the depths of our very souls, for this Victory. In true Midwestern fashion, our thanks is sincere, sober and with a view ahead to the end of this war. All Kearney churches are holding appropriate services today – there are several such services beginning at 10 this morning – there will be others this evening.


Let us all go to the church of our choice and join in a solemn moment of thanks and prayer to our Almighty God. Thanks for our deliverance thus far and prayer for full and complete peace – prayer for a world peace – coming out of this war – that there may never be any more war.”

A Walking Tour

A Review of Downtown Kearney in 1950



Central Avenue 1950



Buffalo County Historical Society

2019

Kearney hosted the Humanities Nebraska Chautauqua August 2nd and 3rd. They were highlighting the 1950s. Elaine Batenhorst, one of our main archival volunteers, worked to update the downtown walking tour to focus on the 1950s. You can go to our website and download the booklet or go to the Kearney Public Library where they have a few printed off. We want to thank both Elaine and the Kearney Public Library staff for making this booklet possible. We hope that you enjoy it.

BCHS/Trails & Rails Museum Sponsor of the Day: August 15, 2019. Today is in memory of Macalene 'Mac' (Barnhart) Olson. Mac's granddaughter, Jennifer, is the BCCHS/Trails & Rails Museum Executive Director.

Honor and recognize a friend, family member, ancestor, special group or organization, or yourself, by sponsoring a designated day on the Buffalo County Historical Society calendar. Sponsorship can be a gift in the



name of someone or some organization and is a great way to support the good work of the Buffalo County Historical Society. If you are interested in sponsoring a day, you can email bchs.buffalotales@hotmail.com or call the Trails & Rails Museum at (308)-234-3041.

Director's Report—Jennifer Murrish

Please see the insert to learn more about the new Community Engagement Director, Broc Anderson.

As we reflect back on our journey, we want to do a special shout out to all of those involved in building and moving into the Family History Center. The amazing donors, dedicated BCCHS volunteers & staff, and the awesome friends at BD Construction have pitched in to make this building happen. If it weren't for the new Family History Center, our July 2019 'flood story' would have had a very, very different ending. We did lose a handful of boxes that remained in the depot basement, but only a small amount of the contents couldn't be saved. Our staff and volunteers have been working tirelessly to save what we can and document what we couldn't.

Please reach out to your local Museums and Historical Societies to see how you can help. Consider donating to their general fund to help offset the miscellaneous expenses that have occurred. Also, please print off your stories and images and donate those to your local Museum. Most Museum's don't have the resources to print off all of the individual accounts that tell the overall story of what this area is going through. This needs to be documented and saved for future research.

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“Kearney Cultural Partners”.

Not a Society member yet? Join Today!

Volunteers, chairpersons, and
sponsors are still needed.

Please contact the office

for more information on supporting your
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BCHS Gold Engineers

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Arby's & Motel 6-Kearney	Jerry J & Tami J Hellman	Dale & Janet Pohlmann
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**A Huge Thanks to our Silver and Gold Engineers
for their support of the BCBS/Trails & Rails Museum**
(Contact Trails & Rails Museum for more information on becoming an Engineer)

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Trails & Rails Museum

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