1944

The Citizen State Bank reached the million dollar mark for the first time at the close of business in 1943. At the beginning of 1944, the bank's capital was well over the million dollar mark and the deposits were exactly $1,063,267.16.

Driver education classroom instruction was offered to eleven students in the high school. It was offered as a unit with biology, and the instructor was C. H. Hageman.

Marlon Wallom wed Jack Adams.

In March, Mickey Rooney passed his physical for the induction in the armed services.

In the spring election people were asked to vote on a state referendum ballot which read, "Do you favor the levying of an annual tax on all general taxable property not exceeding two mill on each dollar of the assessed valuation for high school aid?"

A baby girl was born to Pvt. and Mrs. Leland Kuhl.

Lt. Edwin Saxer was riding a bicycle down a road in England and the driver of a truck parked at the side of the road kept honking at him. He decided to return to the truck to see what the tooting was all about, and there he found Irving Gillette.

A total of 116 ballots were cast at the spring election in the village. P. A. Genin was again elected president of the village board.

President Roosevelt made a plea for every possible victory garden and set a national goal of twenty-two million. Governor Goodland was
quoted as saying, "Victory gardens are more important this year than ever if we are to continue on the road to victory."

In April PFC Ray Sherman, 21, had been reported missing in action in Italy. The report marked the fifth casualty for Belleville. Killed were Verle Smith, Jack Roberts, Bernard Babler, and Sgt. Donald Keegan was also missing in action.

It was decided in May of 1944 that practically all stores and offices in Belleville would be closed on Thursday afternoon. This was arrived at by the circulation of a petition among business and professional men in the community.

That spring a recreation center was opened for the first time. There were games in the gymnasium at the high school from 7:30-9:00. A canteen service was set up in the ag room where youngsters could buy pop and candy bars. At nine o'clock young people from seventh and eighth grades and high school students enjoyed dancing by music from a jukebox.

Village people expressed a desire that they would like garbage pick up.

There were 200 present at the mother-daughter banquet at the Swiss Reformed Church.

The following letter appeared in a May issue of the Belleville Recorder in reference to closing of business's on Thursday afternoon.

"Mr. Printer,

I see in last week's paper Belleville will be closed up tighter than a drum on Thursday afternoon. I suppose it is all right. The business men want a day off in the middle of the week, but most farmers can't do it. Belleville is a farmer's town, and they shouldn't take
on city ways unless they want to go the route that one other town near here went. Half their stores are closed."

That May it was reported that Ray Sherman was a prisoner of war in Germany.

A great deal of enthusiasm was generated at the June Community Club meeting. "Plans should be made at once for an airport or landing strip at Belleville." This from a Mr. Vic Bloyer, a friend of Reverend Oscar Stanke, at the June meeting. The speaker did not urge the immediate establishment of an elaborate airport right away. He suggested that land, for at least a landing strip, should be gotten underway so that if state aid were available later on, it could be secured.

The important long awaited invasion in western Europe started in early June when the United Nations troops established a beach head on the Normandy coast in France.

The fifth war loan began. Belleville's quota was $34,000.00. The drive began June 12 and would end July 8. Belleville went over the top and raised $38,112.50. Approximately $4,000 over the quota.

Richard Bong, war ace, had downed twenty-seven Japanese aircraft.

In June, Lt. Richard Adams became engaged.

The girl scouts offered to babysit so mothers could help with Red Cross work.

Otto. Weber sold his stock and business to his sons Robert and Frederick.

The presbytery of Madison offered for sale the Belleville Presbyterian church building.

Matziner bakery offers homemade ice cream for seventy cents a half gallon.
Neil Luenschloss, principal of Belleville schools, was commissioned a lieutenant junior grade in the United States Navy that summer. Alvin Krohn was named to take his place as principal of the schools.

Brodhead played the opener in football. Forty-two boys reported for practice. Belleville was competing in the suburban six man football league. Bob Beich and Paul Ryan were leftover from previous years sextet. The line up for the game for Belleville:

Left end - Ken Flanagan, Center - Rich Francois, Right end - Floyd Viney, Quarterback - Bob Beich, Left Halfback - Ted Spellman, Right halfback - Paul Ryan. Belleville had won the game with the score of thirty-five to twenty-two. Paul Ryan was the star of the game.

A miscellaneous bridal shower was held in honor of Miss Gloria Sardeson.

Lucius A. Ross, well known auctioneer and resident of the village, died.

Five local men were injured north of Middleton when their car and a semi-trailer truck collided as they drove to work at Badger Ordinance.

The lack of housing for servicemen's wives and families was also felt in this area. That fall the women's relief corps of this village did a good deed. A wife of a soldier at Truax Field could not find any light housekeeping rooms to house her two small children and herself while her husband was stationed at Truax Field in Madison. There were no light housekeeping rooms in Madison and it was an almost impossible situation. A few of the ladies of the local corps got together and secured
an upper apartment in the Carter home. The young woman rented the apartment and the ladies of the relief corps, together with their husbands, gathered enough furniture from their homes to make a comfortable home for these young people for a few months. It was not an act of charity. The young soldier and his wife with two small children were able to maintain their home but naturally for a few months residence could not buy furniture. The local ladies were more than glad to help the young couple.

At the close of 1944, the village set the tax rate for the coming year at twenty-four dollars per thousand valuation.