

**This Is How It Was: "*So that our children may tell their children.*"**

The origin of Memorial Day seems to be credited to several communities according to official accounts. For me "Decoration Day" celebration begins in Mount Joy on May 30, 1910 with a little red white and blue bunting dress, still preserved in a chest among other mementoes. Mamma made it, not much bigger than a doll's dress. A snapshot taken by Papa records the occasion. I recall my mother telling of my comment when I saw the picture, "I can tell that is me by the coping." There was always a Memorial Day parade. It was a grand occasion in Mount Joy. My father sometimes rode on his horse Joe as an Aide in the parade, wearing a white satin ribbon badge topped with a rosette and in gold letters the date and occasion. I vividly recall stepping to the curb to hand him a bouquet which I assume mother had prepared from garden blooms.



We had a town band, the Schickley men were always prominent in it. There were many bands from neighboring towns, as far away as the Spring Garden Band from York County. That was an especially fine one. Organizations and fire companies were well represented. I was delighted by the Red Men from Columbia in costume with feathered head dresses, painted faces, and tomahawks. They would step out of line and appear to threaten folks on the sidelines. We knew it was all in fun.

There were always a scattering of old men from the Grand Army of the Republic, one, Mr. Deeter, lived next door to us. There was also a group of younger men the Sons of Veterans. The Civil War had been history for about 50 years, not as far in the past as World War I is now when I write this.

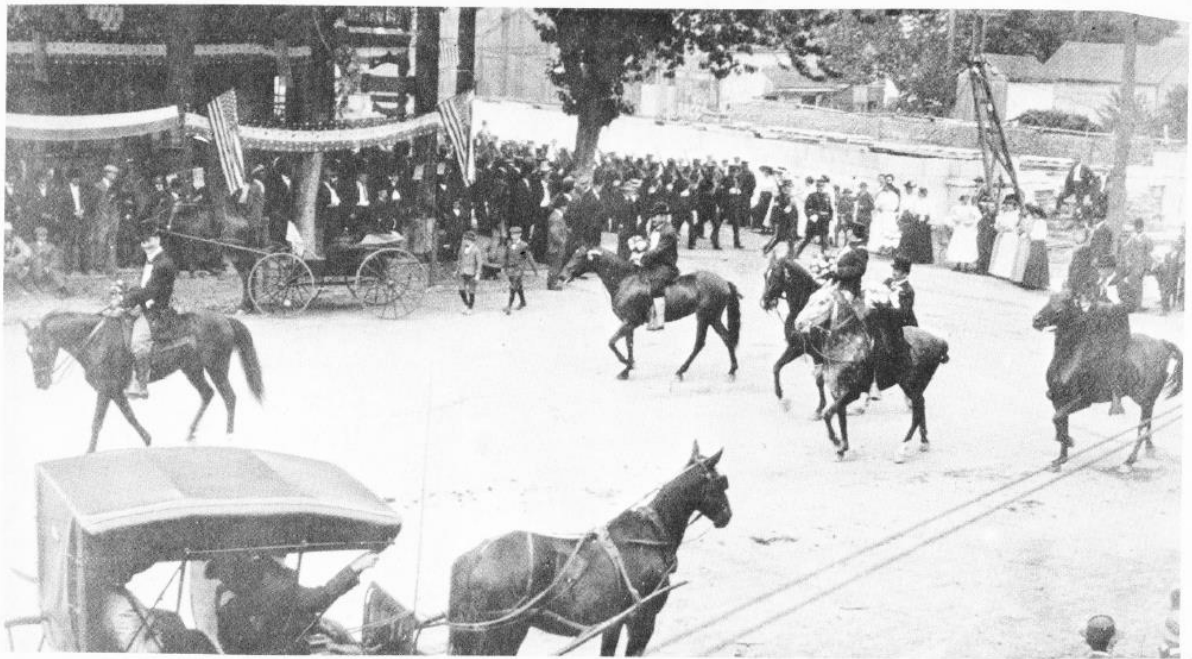
From first grade on, the school children participated in the parade. The tiny tots were loaded into hay ladder wagons, and older children marching or accompanying decorated float. As we became older, the Campfire Girls might march in uniform or the Boy Scouts. Later our high school band would be in the line of march. From the time I was an observer I can remember a tightening in my throat and tears welling up in my eyes as the bands played and the little children were going by. This was embarrassing to me as a teenager.

This day as early as 1864 had been set aside for decorating the graves of Civil War veterans. Many families in my day chose to decorate the graves of any deceased loved ones. However, our mother impressed upon us that it was for war veterans. We had a Great Uncle Harry who had fought in the Grand Army of the Republic. So, we cut greens and flowers and covered his grave with them as with a blanket. Then we would put a rose as a token of loving remembrance on each of the other graves.

It was a homecoming time and often at the cemetery Mother would meet friends from former days in Mount Joy who had returned to decorate family plots. One day, returning from the Henry Eberly Cemetery on Marietta Street we met an open roadster with two men sitting up in the moving vehicle unaware that the rear of the car was a mass of flames. We shouted and motioned. They were out in a hurry to put out the fire.

After World War I, the American Legion would go to each cemetery and place previously prepared bouquets, one on each grave, where a flag was flying in a metal holder to mark the soldiers' graves, after which they would sound taps and give a 3-gun salute. These flowers had been prepared by women and girls the previous day at the fire house. Ladies Auxiliary of Legion and Fire Company, Girl Scouts, etc., worked backing with ferns an arrangement of peonies, iris or whatever was available from the home gardens.

Of course, everyone came to town for the occasion. Our porch being large and facing on Main Street, many cousins and friends were welcome to congregate there to watch the parade go by. After the parade, Mother always had a kettle of clam chowder keeping hot on the back of the stove and a quantity of sandwich spread so that she could comfortably provide hospitality for all who cared to partake. There must have been other things to eat but, those are what have kept a place in my memory.



THE PARADE (1911 or 1912)

The scene not only shows a parade turning around at the intersection of Barbara and Main Streets, but it also shows the Exchange Hotel in the background. The Union National Bank's construction is just beginning on the right side of the picture.