

July 4th celebrations of past lively, patriotic

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Avenue, near the public school-house."

At 3 p.m., the holiday crowd was treated to a "a Grand Street Parade." Unfortunately, the *Telephone* did not describe the parade units.

Perhaps it is the prospect of fireworks that sets the Fourth of July apart from other holidays. In 1896, Monroe Countians were not disappointed. The fireworks display in the Courthouse Square was followed by another very special event as reported in the *Telephone*: "A few minutes after 8 o'clock, Saturday, July 3rd, 1886, electric light illuminated the city of Bloomington. In the afternoon the machinery was put in motion and from the first worked like a charm. The electricity is generated from Ryors' factory, the large factory engine being used."

The actual holiday was not ignored. Several of the local churches had a combined service on Sunday evening, a gathering designed to remind the participants that patriotism (like cleanliness) was next to godliness.

At the service the minister of the

Methodist Church told the audience, "The average boy of the present day connected the Fourth of July with fire crackers, Roman candles, rockets, and all sorts of noises. The old idea of the Fourth has almost lost its significance by the influx of anarchists coming through Castle Garden — a thing which should have been prohibited years ago." (Presumably his audience understood the significance of "Castle Garden.")

An observer of the Fourth of July festivities, Theophilus Wylie, a professor at Indiana University, took note of the day in his diary. He commented: "Yesterday the 3rd was celebrated instead of the Fourth. A flaming well-printed handbill was circulated in town and through the country, promising wonderful things, a great procession, distinguished speakers — \$750 worth of fireworks and a sham battle by which lyings sheet great numbers were brought to town from the surrounding country. One of the authors of this sheet was said to be a drunken jailbird of town and the thing was probably got up in the interest of the liquor vendors — who as the 3rd was celebrated instead of the Fourth could not legally be interfered with."