

# Parades

## Buffalo Tales

**November -December 2005 History Through a Camera Lens: Kearney's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade (1923)** By Mark R. Ellis

The floats – several powered by automobiles and showing off modern technology and products – reflect a city that is moving towards modernization. . . . Most of the buildings in the background (with the exception of the Opera House) are still standing. . . .

*Delco Light Products - The float depicts a woman in 1923 with all the conveniences of electric lights, running water, and electrical appliances. The woman in 1873 has none of those luxuries. Ironically, the float is built on a wagon bed and pulled by horses rather than powered by a modern automobile.*

*The Central National Bank's float displays a section of the original pontoon bridge used to cross the Platte River by soldiers from Fort Kearny.*

**October, 1982** A.T. ANDERSON, PHOTOGRAPHER by Marian Dettman Johnson

Father prospered as a photographer, and from a small studio south of the tracks he moved to an upstairs location on Central Avenue north of 21st Street. When a circus came to town eight little girls, aged four and upward, of our Kenwood neighborhood gathered in the studio. From there we were invited into Dr. Morrow's dental offices which had two large windows overlooking the parade - elephants setting down their big round flat feet in our very own dust, and striped tigers yawning lazily in bright blue carriages. After all the wonders, capped by the calliope, had passed, we went back to the studio and Father gave us ice cream under the skylight

**January, 1980** *THEY LOVED A PARADE Part I* by Margaret Ellen Nielson

Picture – Circus Parade on Central Avenue, Kearney, May 18, 1907

Political rallies were highlighted by torch light parades, culminating in long speeches by aspiring candidates. During the political campaign of 1890, the Farmer's Alliance announced they would have a parade and political picnic in Kearney, which was then "the real Metropolis of the Big Third district." Will M. Maupin, who later gained considerable recognition as writer and politician, wrote about it: "Will any one of us who saw that parade ever forget it? ... there were hundreds (of wagons), yes, thousands. About every tenth wagon was covered with cottonwood boughs and party mottoes, and aboard a cottage organ and a bunch of vocalists singing, 'Goodby, old

party, goodbye.' Long after the first wagon had reached the picnic grounds, those durned wagons were still coming over the top of the hill on Central Avenue."

Topping all these festivities was the Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, held in Kearney in 1888. Three parades marched down Wyoming (Central) Avenue, the largest of which featured 3,000 regular army troops, 3,000 men of military and civic organizations and twenty-two bands.

Dr. Frank O. Raasch, a lifelong circus buff, described the arrival of the circus, when small boys scurried for jobs carrying water or helping with the tents. Often the man who hired them disappeared before they could collect their free passes. Still, the show had begun long before the gates were opened, from the unloading of the cars to the hoopla and pageantry of the parade down Central Avenue, with the steam calliope bringing up the rear. As Dr. Raasch explained, "It was at the end of the parade because after it had passed everyone was full of smoke and cinders."

***July, 1980 THEY LOVED A PARADE Part II by Margaret Ellen Nielson***

A typical Fourth of July celebration in Kearney during the early years of the twentieth century included a parade, oratory and band concerts on the high school lawn. ...

The Kearney Retailers, in 1922, tried to corral wayward spirits by holding a day-long Halloween celebration. The crowd, lured to town by parades, free attractions and bargains in all the stores, was estimated at 12,000 at the morning parade and 15,000 at night.

The morning feature was a goat parade, "there participated 147 goats, each in costume, and each accompanied by his or her retinue of herders ... and their costumes were even more ludicrous than the goats."

The Halloween lighting scheme of the night parade gave a "weird and most appropriate touch of color". The floats and "scores of masked revelers moved up and down the parade area for over an hour. Then the street was turned over to those in costume who made merry in Halloween fashion. That show, once under way, nothing could check it until the orchestras at the various dances struck up 'Home Sweet Home'."

Eleanor Nelson Horner of College Station, Texas, writes of her chief impression of the Goat Parade, "Dr. (L.T.) Sidwell, Superintendent of the T.B. Hospital, who was about as wide as he was tall, wore a harem dancing girl's costume, full baggy pants, bra top, and the veil covering nose and mouth and hanging to his shoulders. He danced a sort of seductive dance, gliding up to some man on the

sidewalk and either tried to kiss him or give him a bump. People laughed until they cried he was so funny."

### *Armistice, 1918*

Whistles were blown when a flash came over the **Hub** wires that the Armistice had been signed. Then everyone went back to bed until "the fire whistle began its unearthly screeching at 5:00 a.m. and huge motor trucks went zipping around the streets, their occupants firing guns and yelling 'Get up, Get up' in historic Paul Revere fashion, the people of Kearney realized that this Armistice wasn't so phony after all." School was again dismissed, reason enough for the joy of the youngsters and the celebration continued "from before dawn until after dark"... The parade was organized this time, many flags were displayed, quantities of popcorn, and other refreshments were consumed.

### *College Hi-jinks*

Another "unofficial" parade provided Kearney with "one of its first exhibitions of college hilarity" on July 24, 1923, when a "shirt-tail" parade of "almost every boy in attendance" celebrated the end of the summer term. The **Hub** wrote, "the feat was planned quietly and as a result both the college authorities and the citizens were taken by surprise.

### *Kearney's Golden Anniversary*

The three-day Golden Anniversary celebration in 1923 brought an estimated crowd of 51,000 to Kearney. ...

The parade on Thursday was led by Colonel Curt Alexander of Hastings, who was reputed to look like Buffalo Bill, and by J. A. Boyd. It was a "review of historical comparisons and modern incongruities..."

## **Kearney Hub**

Aug. 15, 1889 – GAR parade

Aug. 24, 1889 – plans for a Labor Day parade – Kearney typographical union, cigarmakers union (who were forbidden from working that day) would be there. Also carpenters & stonemakers.

Aug. 28, 1889 – Planners met at Odd Fellows hall – Also include fire department, Industrial School boys, & children from city schools. Retail businesses would have displays [window?] and many planned display wagons [in the parade?] Also all the bands in the city

Aug. 31, 1889 – Lists order of parade

Officials in carriages

Choir in carriages

Kearney Typographical Union

Industrial School cadets

Bricklayers Union

Carpenters Union  
Cigarmakers Union  
Knights of Labor  
Stonecutters Union  
Lathers Union  
Plasterer's Union  
Fire department  
Kearney Baseball club  
Industrial school band

Parade route: Form on high school grounds (Longfellow School) at 2 p.m.  
23<sup>rd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> Ave  
1<sup>st</sup> South to 18<sup>th</sup>  
18<sup>th</sup> to Central  
Central to 25<sup>th</sup>  
25<sup>th</sup> to Ave A  
Ave A to 23<sup>rd</sup>  
23<sup>rd</sup> to Ave B  
Ave B south to rink where speakers would give their speeches.

Sept. 2, 1889 – day of parade  
Planned in a week  
Parade at 2:30  
People watched from street and from windows

Started with Marshals  
Kearney Military Band  
City police in uniform  
Carriages of clergy & city council  
Fire department in uniform  
25 Kearney Typographical Union – dusters, straw hats & canes  
    Lady members in carriages  
    Enterprise wagon with printing press display  
50 Bricklayers Union – overalls, white shirt, necktie, red, white, blue sash, straw hat  
    Wagon with two bricklayers laying brick  
Lathers Union & Plasterer's Union – carrying their tools  
50 Carpenters & Joiners Union – red striped aprons  
    Wagon with carpenters bench and 3-4 working  
40 Knights of Labor  
50 Dick Hibbard's brick makers – black pants, hats & neckties, white shirts  
Two carriages carrying members of cotton mill committee with banner "The Contract is Signed  
    for the Cotton Mill"  
Carriage of Troy laundry employees and washing machinery  
Kearney Stone Works (Stonecutters Union) represented by wagon pulled by 4 horses carrying  
    block of Colorado red stone  
Kearney Broom factory wagon

Few members of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers who had worked for the B & M Railroad before the strike, now working at other Kearney businesses

Weaver & Bond's Meat Market wagon with butcher shop replica

Brownell's ice cream parlor wagon with freezer

Ayers, an agricultural dealer with elevated hay stacker on which a drum corps was seated

They played occasionally as they proceeded down the street.

Woods, photographer, taking picture of a little girl

Phillips & Co., plumbers – wagon of appropriate equipment

Geo. Ellis, plumber, with heating & patent bath

Hooley's bakery wagon

Brunswick wagon bakery with cooks in hotel kitchen

Cook's Cigar store with cigar maker working in back of wagon

Cigarmakers Union in carriages

5 more businesses with decorated wagons

Clarks Baseball club & Kearney baseball club in uniforms

Industrial school cadets & 14-member band

100 boys & girls with red, white, blue sashes in Kearney Band of Hope

Singer Sewing Machine co. with man using machine in the wagon

3 Coddington Grocery Store wagons

Boston Shoe Store

Sizer's Coal wagon

Miller & Bradford tanners with man making tin dippers which were thrown out into the crowd

Chase & M Kuhn, clothiers

C. H. George, grocer

Nebraska Washing Machines displayed on a wagon

City scavenger's patent pumping machines

H. J. Mack's agricultural equipment

Party of merchants in old stage coach

Good Luck Grocery Store decorated wagon

C. H. Miller hardware

Stein's miniature display wagon of boots and shoes pulled by 2 goats

Sept. 21, 1889 – Successful county fair ended with a parade of fair officials, union band, prize winning horses and cattle.

June 16, 1890 - Two circuses coming to Kearney on June 30. Their two parades to combine as one with four parts. [apparently it happened but was not reported after the Fact]

July 5, 1890 – People gathered downtown in windows and on the street at 10 a/m. to watch the parade. Nothing happened. Finally at noon people gathered at Kearney Lake near the pavilion for picnics and an afternoon program.

July 29, 1890 – Circus with parade. Good program but small crowd because of little advertising.

Sept 1, 1890 – Successful Labor Day parade assembled at the court house, ended at the high school grounds. Was a mile long. Displays by unions and businesses. No civic societies.

Oct. 19, 1890 – Independent movement [political] to have grand parade Oct 24

[event not reported if it happened.]

[Occasional reports of parades by traveling entertainment shows and politicians each usually with a band or two.]

Dec. 1, 1890 – Parade of workers marking completion of Hecht's meat packing plant. To butcher hogs.

Sept. 7, 1891 – another Labor Day parade like last year but slightly shorter.

May 31, 1892 – Memorial Day parade yesterday.

City police

GAR firing squad

Sons of Veterans

Midway Band

Carriages of city officials & clergy

500 school children

Theo. Miller's band

National Guard

Industrial school band

GAR posts & old soldiers

Prof. Draper's two bands

Knights of Pythias

Brigade of ladies on horseback

Started between 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> St. on Central about 1:30

North to 21<sup>st</sup>

East to Ave A

North to 25<sup>th</sup>

West to Central

South on Central to the Opera House where program of the day was held

Informal parade in morning of people in carriages to the cemetery to decorate graves of old soldiers

Sept. 28, 1892 – school was canceled for a parade and circus – Ringling Bros. Parade included elephants and camels

Oct. 4, 1892 – Co. fair parade again of cattle and horses

Nov 27, 1892 – Evening bicycle lantern parade of the city starting at 21<sup>st</sup> & Central tomorrow

June 16, 1893 – Circus parade

Race horses

Troupes in costume in chariots and donkey carts

3 bands & calliope  
Open “dens” of tigers, lions, hyenas, leopards and snakes  
Groups of camels  
2 elephants

Mrs. Archibald went to see the parade leaving the house empty but locked. 9-year old son came home and crawled in the window. Mother, returning home, saw the open window and called the police. When they entered the house the son thought they were tramps and his in the basement. Then he tried to sneak out and make a run for it but police, having surrounded the house, gave chase until mother recognized her son and “:explained the whole thing” and they all had a good laugh.

July 5, 1893 – best 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade ever  
10 a.m. formed at Avenue A  
Midway Military band  
Statue of Liberty float surrounded by 44 little girls representing the 44 states  
National Guard  
City officials  
Speakers of the day  
Union Sunday school  
Members of AOOW  
Modern Woodmen in straw hats  
Miller’s band  
Hook & ladder trucks, hose carts, & members of fire department  
Floats by businesses

Over a mile long ending at high school park

## **Flag Day - 1916**

June 3, 1916 – Plans nationwide to make Flag Day a big celebration.

Lincoln Highway Association planned to place flags all along the route from Boston to San Francisco

In Kearney the Commercial Club was in charge of plans. A flag was to fly from every house top.

June 9, 1916 – 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation was to be held the afternoon of June 14 at the Methodist Church. Their program was to be part of the Flag Day celebration in Kearney.

June 10, 1916 – The fill company of the Kearney National Guard, including members who live along the highline, were to be in Kearney for Flag Day.

June 10, 1916 – to be the biggest celebration in Kearney ever. 1500 people to be in the parade and the program to be held at Longfellow afterward.

(June 10 & 13) Parade to form at 2:30 – no later than 2:45 – on west 25<sup>th</sup>. Go east past soldier's monument, saluting as they go by, turn south down Central to 22<sup>nd</sup>, west to Longfellow. City officials, 4 bands, GAR men & women, National Guard, entire normal school student body and faculty, boy scouts and boys on decorated wheels, Sunday School children with flags, citizens and autos [anyone else who wanted to get in their car and join in?]

June 12, 1916 (Monday) – 8<sup>th</sup> grad exams are Wednesday afternoon so the Co. Superintendent issued a call for all country school children to come and join the parade. That would increase parade participation by several hundred.

June 13, 1916 – The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Club arranged for 50 young ladies to march in the parade representing all the states and territories. There would also be a Miss Liberty and an Uncle Sam.

The head of the parade which will form on west 25<sup>th</sup> will start at the Normal School.

8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation to be at 2 pm at the high school instead of the Methodist church so they have time to participate in the parade.

All businesses were asked to close at 3:25 and remain closed until Flag Day events were over.

June 15, 1916 – one feature of the parade was the young ladies from the normal school dressed to represent the stripes and “starry” field of the flag.

The celebration went as planned. The school ground was crowded for the program [all done without a P A system]