

# Old-Fashioned Fourth



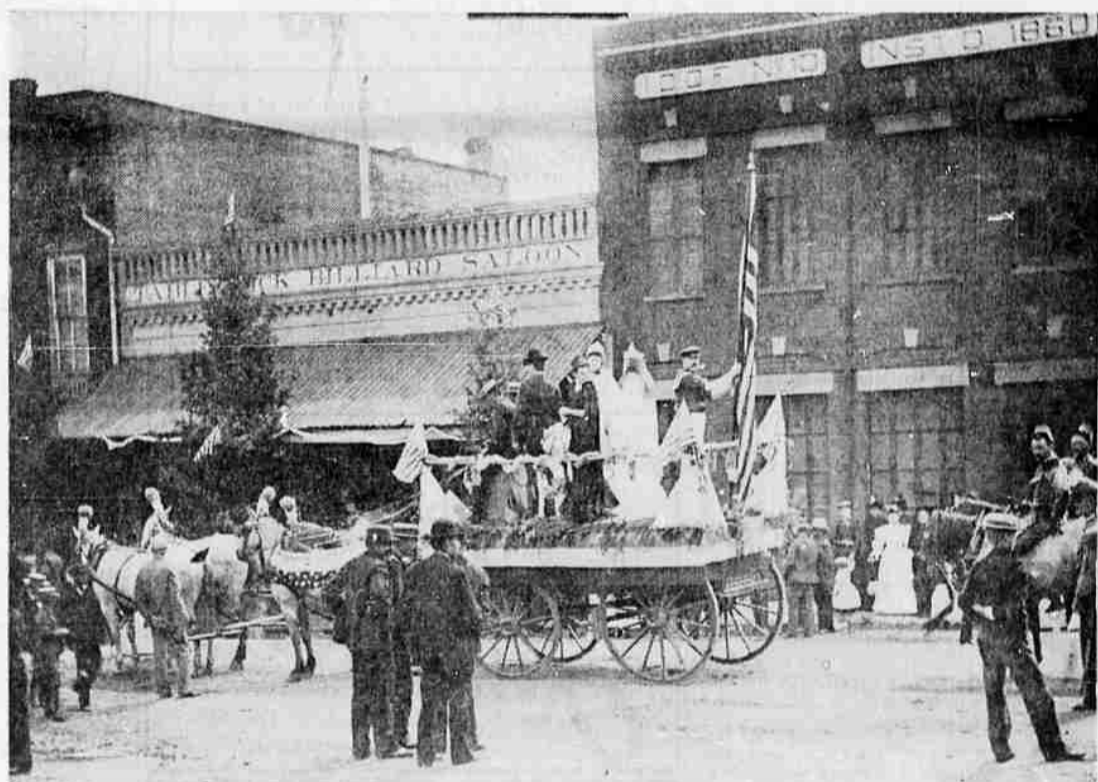
For nearly three hundred years Americans have celebrated Independence day. Although we still observe it as a national holiday, the excitement and festivities that marked the "Glorious Fourth" seem to be a thing of the past. People traveled for miles around to hold picnics in the park. There was horse racing, pie eating contests, watermelon feeds, sack racing, pageants, and, best of all, fireworks that streaked through the sky and burst in an awesome cascade of fire.



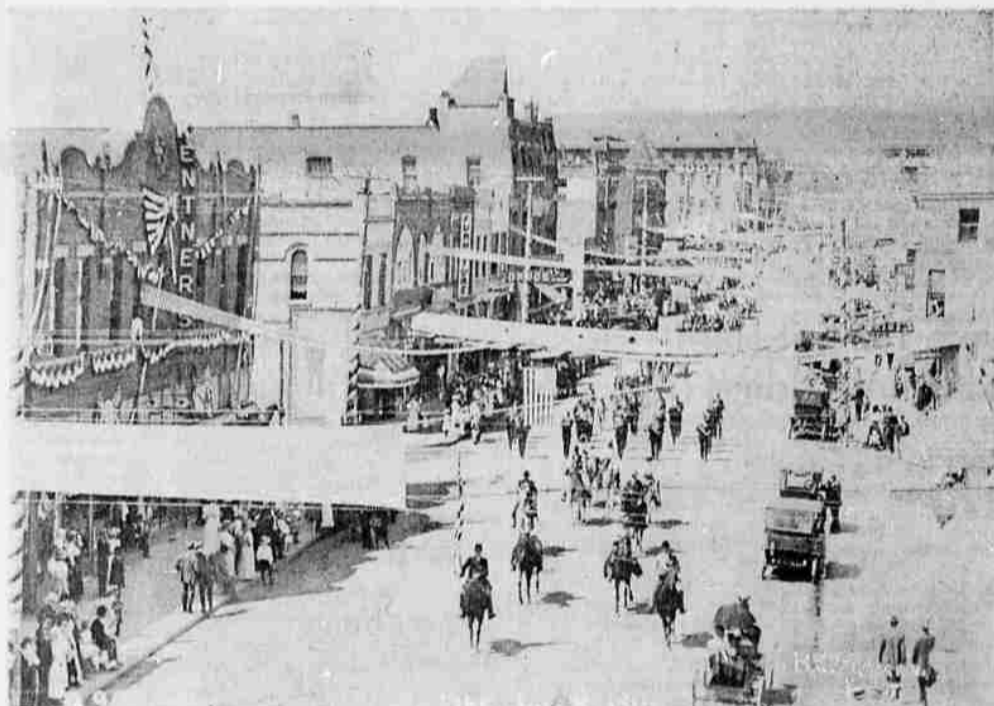
Early-day patriotic pageants in Oregon called for elaborate costumes such as these worn by Miss Liberty and Peace. The crimped hair was achieved with rags, tightly braided locks or an iron heated in the chimney of an oil lamp. This picture by Peter Britt, pioneer photographer, is from the Jacksonville Museum.



Motorcycle racing at Jackson county fairgrounds was one of the attractions of the Fourth of July celebration in 1912. A cloud of dust can be seen as the riders race their engines for the start. The half-mile dirt track, located at the old fairgrounds site, where Timber Products Co. is now, had treacherous turns. Traveling at speeds up to 70 miles an hour, motorcycles had to skid the corners to maintain speed, much to the delight of the crowd. Auto racing was also held at the track. (H. E. Vroman photo)



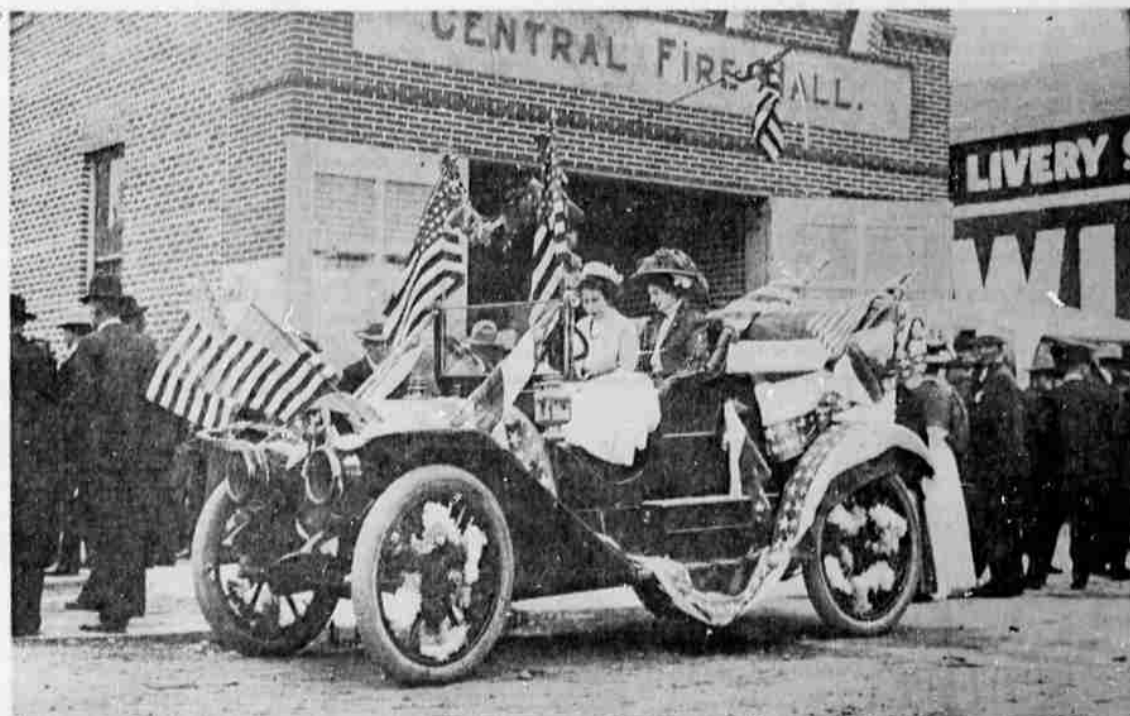
This Britt photo taken on South Oregon street in Jacksonville shows an Independence day horse and carriage float and typical street scene of about 75 years ago. The three buildings in the background are all still standing. The partly shown building at the left is the historic Masonic lodge hall; that hall and the IOOF hall at the right are both still in use by these orders.



The Fourth of July parade in Medford in 1911, pictured above, shows buildings decorated with bunting and large streamers stretched across Main street. According to a newspaper article in the Mail Tribune, thousands of merrymakers from all over southern Oregon, jammed Medford's streets to celebrate the "natal day of the republic," and cafes and vendors were kept busy supplying the trade. After the parade crowds headed for the race track, ball park and city park and other places where amusement could be found. The photograph was taken by H. E. Vroman, who now lives in Prescott, Ariz.



Many families, even as they do today, spent the Fourth of July holidays at some camp spot away from the heat of the valley. In the 1920's car owners often formed groups and traveled caravan style. The early day autos often chugged and rattled over the rough roads; flat tires or over-heated engines were common. The group pictured above had stopped for a rest on the way to Dead Indian Soda springs. The attraction there, besides the cool and pleasant countryside, was the sparkling mineral water that bubbled out of a rock tub.



With the advent of the "horseless carriage," these became popular for parades and were lavishly decorated with red, white and blue bunting, flags and crepe paper. This picture, taken in front of the fire hall and showing part of the old Nash Livery stable at the right, is owned by Mrs. H. A. Stanley, 35 Crater Lake avenue, and a copy is in the extensive collection of Eugene Thomas.