

" Manchester's Whit-Monday Celebration, 1900"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Following the universally observed Memorial Day holiday was Whit-Monday, observed in only a few local communities at the turn of the century. The holiday fell on the first Monday after Pentecost. Manchester selected the day as a festival day for the town; the 1900 celebration was reported by the Manchester correspondent to the Westminster American Sentinel in the June 9 issue of the paper:

"Manchester has scored another red letter day. Whit-Monday, which for some years has been our festal day, was all that could have been desired as regards the weather, although very threatening conditions appeared in the early morning and continued at intervals all the day but did not bring rain, nor seem to dampen the ardor of the crowd which came pouring in from all sections of the country, bringing the uncles, aunts and cousins, who enjoyed the day in a generally happy manner. The firemen had employed the services of the Alesia, Carroll County Reed and Pleasant Hill Bands, and true to their calls they were early on hand and about the square and public places treated the crowds to some fine music, which elicited applause on all sides. By the time the parade formed — 2 p.m. — the space about the I.O.O.F. Hall and square was filled with people, while all along the street porches and doorways were occupied by eager eyes to enjoy the different features. The procession was headed by a corps of marshals, Mr. Nelson Warehime chief, followed by the Alesia Band, which preceded the home department with engine and truck, the junior department following next captained by Mr. John Houck, of Baltimore. The Hampstead Drum Corps and Carroll County Reed Band were next, followed by the Hampstead truck drawn by four grey horses which were driven by Ex-Sheriff Murray and followed by the members of the department in full uniform making a display of which they well may be proud. The Jr. O.U.A.M. of Snydersburg, was next in line, and for a new organization made a creditable showing. The Pleasant Hill Band followed next and served as an escort to the Rat Killers who were A1 in get up and general conduct. These were followed by riders and a wagon load of young men with banjo, who had a general good time. A bicycle race was the next attraction. There were 5 entries and a single dash, 1/3 of a mile. J. Brighthaupt, of Germantown, was an easy winner, with Miles Sterner second, and — Stansbury third. 1st prize, medal; second, cyclometer; third, electric bell. When the riders had covered about 1/8 the distance the rim of the front wheel on the bicycle of Howard Leese came apart causing the inner tube to burst with a loud report and throwing the rider some ten feet away. Will Merkle, who was just behind, struck the broken wheel of Leese and was thrown to the ground. Neither rider was hurt. The festival department was well patronized during the day and until late at night. The landlords were kept busy all day, yet we are glad to say that good nature predominated and the officers had an easy time. Our home company as well as the citizens in general appreciated the efforts of the Hampstead company to be present as an organization and give to this 16th festivity, the initiatory of their new outfit which certainly is A1 in every respect, and of which members scan be justly proud, and the citizens in general of their town grateful to the enterprising young men for their push and energy. The truck is first class in every respect and was purchased for about 1/3 its value, the uniforms are dark blue, and of the latest style. The organization has 30 active and 20 honorary members. It intends to hold a festal day in the near future. We are glad to know that our former citizen, W. C. Stick, proprietor of the Green Spring Hotel, stands at the helm of this enterprise and is giving it his time and usual push."

Whit-Monday observance continued in Manchester until about 1923 when the local fire department began sponsoring a carnival.

Photo caption: Two costumed participants posed in their decorated buggy at a turn-of-the- century Whit Monday celebration in Manchester. The community hosted an annual Whit-Monday celebration until about 1923. Greenbury Everhart Collection, Historical Society of Carroll County.