



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Fourth of July

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This picture was taken on the Fourth of July circa 1897 in downtown Albion. A huge crowd of people appear to be lined up on both sides of Main Street between Bank Street and the canal bridge. The photo is labeled "Hose Races on Main St."

No doubt various fire companies were putting on some kind of spectacle in competition with one another as entertainment for the July 4 celebration. My guess is there were more than a 1,000 spectators at this event.

Firemen were probably running as fast as they could while hauling a great length of fire hose off a reel. In this display they were showing how quickly they could respond to a fire call.

Upon examining the photo, we notice a couple of different horses in the lower left corner.

Several men with bicycles are standing with them in the back row of people.

Store fronts are lined with canvas awnings on the west side of Main Street. Several include advertising such as: James Bailey & Son — Grocer, Orville Taylor — Boots and Shoes and Sickels, Day & Collins — Dry Goods. A sign in the shape of a clock advertises J.D. Daniels Jewelry Store.

We also notice people hanging out of the second and third floor windows of some of these buildings. Several flags and bunting decorate business blocks for this occasion.

Notice the height of the telephone poles which line the east side of Main Street.

During the 19th century, the Fourth of July was certainly the biggest holiday celebration on the calendar. It was a day that crossed all boundaries and classes. It was a day that was looked forward to with great anticipation and excitement. Everybody participated even if the hay needed putting into the barn, work ceased to celebrate the conception of our nation, The Declaration of Independence.