

7-3-08

And a grand old time was had by all

BY C. W. LATTIN
Orleans County historian

From a clipping found in an old scrapbook going back to 1897, we find an interesting account of how Independence Day was celebrated in 1847. It is as follows:

"Mr. Editor: In the year of 1847, the 4th of July came on a Sunday, the same as it did in 1897, consequently the celebration occurred on the 3rd of July in 1847 in Medina. The firemen of Albion were invited to participate with the people of Medina. At that time, there was no railroad running through this place and consequently we had to travel by canal.

"The committee chartered the state scow and Sam McGuffy was the steersman. We had fiddling and dancing on the boat and a general good time. That was conceded, as the after-cabin was used as a bar to keep liquor in. But all went well until we sat down to the table, where the fish smelt old and the turkeys were half cooked and covered with dust. They got their pay for the dinner just the same, but (there was) a good deal of growling," and some thought about swearing.

"After the celebration was over, we returned to the boat. Then came the speeches from the Medina pettifoggers aimed at our company on the boat, which were answered by the pettifoggers on the boat from Albion. After which, the drivers started up their horses, six in number.

"Then the fiddling was resumed on the boat for a general good time, until we



place, we took a turn around the village, calling at the grocery kept by a man who had but one arm, by the name of Wm. Fuller.

"We patronized him liberally for beer and cigars, after which one of our company stepped forward to pay the bill. Then a voice called from the outside to Mr. Fuller that the money from

the gentleman from Albion was not good. But he had some good money and would pay the bill as soon as he found out what it was.

"Then there was a motion to give three rousing cheers, which was done, with some pleasant jokes. We then got aboard of the boat and resumed the fiddling and dancing until we arrived in

Albion, all feeling well and sober.

"I will give the names of those on the boat as far as I knew them at that time: Dr. Mills, W. Gere, H. J. VanDuzen, Howard Abeel, Horace B. Burleigh, Sanford E. Church, Lorenzo Burrows, Jack and Jesse King, T.

McAllister, Gen. John B. Lee, Wm. and Horace Motehouse (living the last I knew of

them West), Wm. Cummins, Thomas J. Clark and James VanDuzen. There were very many I did not know.

"That was 50 years ago, and the 3rd of this month and they are all dead except the two Morehouses. It hath pleased God to spare my life until this fiftieth anniversary for which I am very thankful."

—C.W. Hotchkin