

## BACK IN TIME



### 1894 parade honored Civil War vets

*(This is one of an occasional series of articles highlighting events and people in the North Penn Valley's history).*

There's nothing like a good parade to show off a community's civic pride. So much the better if you throw in a healthy dose of patriotism.

Back in 1894 – almost 30 years after the end of the Civil War – Union Army veterans and memories of battlefield heroism were still plentiful.

It seemed only natural that the bustling Borough of Lansdale host a Grand Army of the Republic Day parade that would be remembered for decades to come. And the town's residents didn't disappoint.

*Here are excerpts from a May, 1894 story that appeared in the Lansdale Reporter. The writing style reflects the Victorian Era but the excitement the parade generated is clearly evident:*

\* The demonstration was a success. It was a great big success. Lansdale broke all former records and fairly outdid herself in a united effort to show the thousands of strangers who swarmed our streets that patriotism is at home here, that our people love Old Glory and have grateful remembrance for heroes dead and heroes living.

\* The threatening weather happily did not interfere, to the great delight of the people who made elaborate preparations by the erection of triumphal arches and the decoration of their houses business places with flags and bunting and flowers. The people were never happier. The crowds were never bigger nor in better humor.

\* Citizens and businessmen in general forgot to count the cost and decorated their respective houses and stores with a lavishness hardly expected. There were three handsome triumphal arches gaily decorated and festooned – one at

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**THREE** ceremonial arches were constructed for the parade. This one, on Main Street at Susquehanna Avenue featured bunting that was later given to the Fairmount Fire Company.



**SHORTS** were not an option for women attending the Grand Army of the Republic Parade.

## A grand parade that displayed town's pride

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Broad and Main, one at Main and Green and one at Main and Susquehanna avenue.

\* The day began with a baseball game between the Lansdale Juniors and the Ironclads of the Cox stove works, won by the Juniors 22-10 at Edgewood (Whites' Road) Park.

\* At 12 o'clock, the strains of martial music by the Lansdale Military Band indicated that the parade ranks would start forming. Then came the prancing of horses, the sounds of more bands and drum corps, the marching of divisions to their starting points, and a general scurrying of marshals and aides with orders and directions for the marchers.

\* The parade was advertised to start at 2 o'clock. If you were a close observer you would have noticed that that it started exactly at the time mentioned – something unusual for large parades.

\* Marshal Rauch looked every inch a soldier and knows how to do the graceful at the head of the parade. He is particularly courteous to the ladies, many of whom were not aware that the good-looking marshal is a bachelor.

\* There were more visitors in Lansdale, outside the paraders, from adjacent districts, than were ever known to be here. The sidewalks were lined with people and when the parade reached the park it was greeted by a mass of humanity such as has never been seen in the grove.

\* Nothing looked nicer than the 44 young girls of the public schools who represented the States of the Union by letters on their golden crowns.

**As a footnote**, Marshal Rauch may have been a hit with the young ladies but his horse was less impressed.

After the parade ended, Rauch stopped at the Tremont House, presumably for some liquid refreshment. When he came out of the Tremont, his horse and buggy were missing. *The Reporter* says he proceeded to his home in Chalfont with another team, not knowing if he had been the victim of a practical joke or whether his team had been stolen.

The next day the mystery was solved by one of Rauch's neighbors. The team was found along the road outside Chalfont. Apparently, the horse got tired of waiting for its owner and headed home without him.