

XXXIX. BLOOMER COSTUME

The bloomer costume for ladies, which created much excitement throughout America during the year 1851, was just then being introduced in the then backwoods town, of Plymouth. On this topic the editor of the Pilot delivered himself as follows:

“New Dress. The bloomer costume is decidedly an improvement upon the dress of the female portion of the community. It is light, graceful and seraphic, well suited to the female figure. It will be welcomed by all the lovers of taste and refinement in the fashionable world. The Orientals have long been celebrated for their beauty, polished manners and splendid attire. Our rivers will now be the 'Golden Horn' ; our valleys the 'Valley of Sweet Waters,' and our seas the Bosphorus of the Turkish capitol. A voyage to Constantinople will be useless. We may now take our siesta in the gay kiosq, and glide over the moonlit waters in the light caique! Come, ladies, step forth in your gorgeous apparel, decked with rose of gold and leaves of silver, and gladden our hearts with sweet smiles !”

Evidently that was a facetious way the editor had of poking fun at the "costume" and killing it before the fad got a fair start. At any rate, that was the result of it. Only one or two Plymouth ladies had the courage to procure bloomer suits and attempt to introduce them by wearing them as they would other female apparel. When they appeared on the streets they were objects of as much curiosity as if they had been the untamed animal from Borneo. There is no easier way to kill anything the people do not take very kindly to than to make fun of it just as the editor of the Pilot did in his hifalutin' article above quoted. At least that was what happened the bloomer costume. It disappeared from the social horizon like the morning mist before the rays of the rising sun.

A grand celebration of the Fourth of July was indulged in on that day, 1851, and that was probably the first public celebration that had, occurred in Plymouth or in the county. Those taking part in the celebration were as follows: Rev. George H. Thayer, chaplain; C. H. Reeve, orator; Thomas Sumner, reader; J. S. Dodridge, standard bearer; Joseph McElrath, marshal; John C. How, assistant marshal.

The citizens were ordered to meet in front of the Dunham House at 10 a. m. and form in the following order of procession :

1, military music; 2, standard bearer; 3, soldiers of the Revolution and last war; 4, military companies; 5, thirty-one ladies in uniform; 6, chaplain, reader and orator; 7, committee of arrangements; 8, Daughters of Temperance; 9, Odd Fellows; 10, Sons of Temperance; 11, Cadets of Temperance; 12, Sunday schools; 13, Washingtonians and citizens generally.

All that took part in that, the first celebration of Independence Day, are long since dead. From the order of procession it seems that there were at that time still some Revolutionary soldiers living, as well as some Mexican war soldiers. Now there are no Revolutionary soldiers living and only one Mexican war soldier still living in Plymouth Nelson McLaughlin and probably not more than one or two others in the entire county. The thirty-one ladies in uniform what kind of uniform is not stated were to represent the number of states then composing the United States. The Dunham House, where the procession was to start from, was the old Plymouth hotel on the corner of Michigan and La Porte streets kept at that time by Wm. M. Dunham.

The patriotic editor of the Pilot introduced a lengthy article on the celebration of the Fourth of July in the following grand eloquent style :

"Fourth of July.-Glorious day. The bright-winged bird of liberty ushers in the moon with songs of triumph. Shades of our forefathers appear and guide us on the true spirit of love and praise in freedom's cause. What sweet, hallowed associations cluster around the brow of this sacred day! Myriads of joyous hearts are gathering around the altar of liberty to lay their offerings upon her shrine. Clarion note and trumpet blast echo through the vales, greeting the rising sun as he mounts the eastern wave."

That settled the whole matter. The celebration was reported to have been a grand affair, and, from the ability of those having charge of it, there is no doubt that it was. An editorial item in connection with the celebration said: "A melancholy accident occurred at Rochester on the Fourth. A Mr. Perry, while in the act of loading a cannon, had both of his hands blown off by a tender, fingered knight of the touch-hole."