

Tuesday – August 3, 1886
Evansville Courier
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The Knights of Labor at Princeton
First Grand Demonstration

The City Attired in its Holiday Dress to Welcome Five Thousand Visitors

Grandest Parade Ever Witnessed in Gibson County, Composed Only of Sons of Toil

Fine Speeches, Good Music and an Enjoyable Time the Order of the Day

About four or five months ago the laborers and tradesmen of Princeton, Ind. met and formed unions the laborers and workingmen of the different trades. The troubles then existing on account of the strikes throughout the country caused the representatives of toil to be rather cautious in their actions in this direction; quite a number of men of the different trades, however, formed organizations representing the several branches of industry of that thriving little city, and as the weeks and months passed, new members were added to their lists, until the numbers of names enrolled caused them to feel proud of the work accomplished in so short a time. To further the duty they felt they owed to their families they resolved to give a grand celebration, in which they could present speakers of ability to give the objects of their organization to their more timid brothers of labor, who seemed to fear the consequences of joining hands with the tradesmen on account of their more fortunate neighbors. Accordingly, about three weeks ago the several unions held a meeting, at which they appointed committees for the purpose of soliciting subscriptions and for perfecting different plans for a grand union celebration. Within one week the amount asked for - \$6.00 - was subscribed by the citizens, who notified the unions more would be given if necessary. The committees on arrangements then proceeded to perfect plans to make the proposed celebration a success. Letters of invitation were addressed to all the prominent members in the various parts of the country. Invitations were also sent to all towns and cities in Southern Indiana requesting the Knights of Labor and their families to be present and participate in the affair. Dodgers were also printed and freely distributed where lodges existed. Yesterday, the day set for the grand celebration for the toilers of Gibson County, was as bright and pleasant as could be wished for, and corresponded with the appearance of the unusually happy laborers, the participants in the grand affair. At an early hour yesterday morning vast numbers of people arrived in the city from the surrounding country by wagons, carriages and buggies. The southbound train on the E&T.H. with four coaches comfortably filled with people from stations north of that place, arriving at 3:30 a.m., who were met by the Princeton band and escorted to the fair grounds. At about 10 o'clock the train from Evansville arrived with six coaches well filled with Knights of Labor, representing the local assemblies and trade unions: Star assembly, 2,695; Unity assembly, 2,695; Crescent City assembly, 6,589; Lady Curry assembly, 6,581; Lone Star assembly, 6,818; Guiding Star assembly, 1,647; Iron assembly, 7,900; Miners' Guide assembly, 6,592; Lincoln assembly, 5,837; Trevellick assembly, 7,899;

Mechanics' assembly, 5,352; Evansville assembly, 5,233; Vanderburgh assembly, 7,897; Evening Star assembly, 7,899; The Furniture Workers, Tailors, Bricklayers, Carpenters and Joiners; Harness and Saddle Makers; Brickmakers; Painters, Mutual Aid; Iron Molders; Central Labor union; Plasterers; Typographical, No. 35, and Shoemakers Union, and a number of their families accompanied by Warrant's Crescent City band and Schmidt's band, arrived at Princeton at 10 o'clock and were met by the Princeton band who escorted them to the fair grounds. At 10:30 o'clock they formed in line as follows:

City marshal and police on horseback.

Speakers, representatives of the Princeton press, mayor and city council, and county officials, in carriages.

Colored Knights of Labor, of Evansville and neighboring places.

Warren's Crescent City Band.

Delegations of Evansville, local assemblies and trades unions.

Delegations of trades unions of neighboring places and Princeton.

The following business establishments of Princeton fitted up floats representing the several branches of business:

J.S. Ware, groceries.

Colored Glee Club, by J.S. Ware.

R. Riggs, blacksmith shop.

R. Riggs, buggy manufactory.

Hackman Harness Establishment.

Stone quarries, two floats.

Marble Cutters' union.

New Home Sewing Machine Company.

Colored Glee Club.

L.H. Wheeler, bustles.

R. Emerson, furniture works.

Princeton Band.

J.C. Kimball, stoves, tin ware and agricultural establishment.

Barbers union.

Well digger's float.

C.E. Mossman, groceries.

Butchers' union float.

Coopers' union float.

Draymens' association.

Agniel's Clydesdale horses.

The procession moved from the fair ground promptly at 10:45, marching east to Taylor's store, thence south to the Public square, thence west to E.&T. H. railroad track, then east on Main Cross street to Public square, thence north to Taylor's store, thence back to the fair grounds. Every citizen seemed to take a pride in making the little city appear at its best, nearly every business house and a large number of the dwellings along the line of march being beautifully decorated. The citizens put forth every effort to make the day a pleasant one for the visitors. At noon every table in the hotels, boarding houses and temporary stands were filled with hungry guests who received an excellent dinner at a reasonable price. At 1:00 o'clock the visitors and citizens proceeded to the fair grounds, and by half-past 1 it was estimated that there was between 5,000 and 6,000 people on the grounds, of whom nearly 5,000 of the number were visitors.

At a quarter of 2 o'clock Mr. H.A. Yeager called the assembly to order and introduced Mayor Gudgel, who was selected to make the welcome address.

MAYOR GUDGEL'S WELCOME

Ladies and Gentlemen: Today is the first occasion the city of Princeton has had to offer public welcome and entertainment to the laboring man on his day of recreation. Welcome! What does it mean?

In that book of books we have that old story of the prodigal son, who went into a far country from his father's home and spent his sustenance in riotous living. One day after the long absence of that son me thinks I see that father in his upper-bed-chamber, tossing to and fro on his bed troubled in both mind and spirit, and his body all aglow with fever, caused from the state of his mind concerning his boy. All at once a messenger is heard on his stairway, and in a moment it announced that his son is returning and is now in sight of his father's home. That father throws aside the feebleness of age, and passes quietly down the stairs and down the long walk in front of his house, and there far down he sees the form of his beloved son returning to his father's home. He ran toward him, and with out-stretched arms received that boy with joy and gladness. That father assisted his son to the house, killed the fatted calf, placed the ring upon his finger, called in his friends and neighbors and gave that son welcome.

That poor colored man of the South, who for years and years felt the lash upon his back, and saw and heard that lash applied to the back of his own dear children; who, with his wife and children, were placed upon the auctioneer's block and sold as any articles of personal property were sold, and was thereby separated as father, mother and child forever; who had no freedom except as distated by his master; who had no home, nor means or privileges to buy one. But on the first day of January, 1863 he received with joy and gladness the news of the action of that grand, good man, Abraham Lincoln President of the United States, in his emancipation proclamation. There can be no doubt that the day on which that emancipation proclamation took effect, was received by that poor colored man in the south with joy and welcome.

I saw a soldier once take leave of his family to go into the army for three years during the war. I saw the father tenderly kiss, one by one, his six small children, his youngest an infant daughter. I saw him turn and give the farewell kiss to his bosom companion, his wife, and pass down the long lane and disappear at its turn, to be absent for three years or perhaps forever, for sught they knew I saw the tears of love and affection mingled with tears of grief and sorrow stream down that wife's cheeks as she gazed at the form of her husband departing, and with her eyes all dimmed with tears, she turned with her little children into her then widowed home.

The days and months passed slowly by, and letter after letter came from that husband, partially telling of his hardships and sufferings, of his scarcity of food and clothing, and in each letter telling her to keep good cheer, that his time of service would expire after a while. When one day, after thirty-six long months had passed, to the great joy and satisfaction of that affectionate wife, there came a letter from that husband that said, I will be at home just as soon as I can be mustered out, for we now have order to that effect.

That wife and these children all alive and three years older than when he went away, set to making preparations to receive that husband and father. Something of everything that was good to eat was prepared, and all at once, without immediate notion, he was seen on the same spot where three years before, and there was joy and gladness in that family. The mother directed one of her children to go here, another there, and another yonder and ask the neighbors to fill up all the places at the table, and when all seats were filled every face then looked of joy and welcome, and that husband, father and neighbor was welcome.

For years there has been an alarming development of the great capitalistic corporations, which, if continued will inevitably lead to the pauperization of the toiling masses. The laborer has been treated as the

poor servant of the capitalist, and his wages have been so reduced that he is unable to share in the gains and honors of advancing civilization. What has often come to his door, and laid with him in his bed. His children have been forced into the shop and factories, because of his inability, from his low wages, to properly feed, clothe and school them, and thereby thousands remain uneducated.

There is coming a day, and it is hoped not far distant, when the capitalists and corporations will be required to justly and equitably divide with the laborer the wealth that laborer creates, and thereby give sufficient leisure in which he and his children may develop their intellectual, moral and social faculties; and to enjoy all the benefits of recreation and pleasures of association. That day, by the laboring man, will be received with welcome.

Ladies and gentlemen, and especially the laboring men present, we have illustrated to you our idea of welcome, and you can read it in our faces, and hear it from our voices, that you are welcome here today.

We hope your short stay among us will be full of pleasure and enjoyment, and that you will be able to say on your return home that the good people of the city of Princeton, on the day of our celebration, gave us a hearty welcome.

And, again here on this, the border of our little city, on God's green carpet, under the blue canopy of heaven we extend to you a hearty welcome.

Mr. Moses Smith, of this city, was next introduced by the chairman, making a brief address to all classes of tradesmen and laboring men, which, in substance showed he was opposed to dabbling in politics, but in favor of organizing and standing by their rights for the benefit of the mechanics and their families.

L.F. Mackey, of Sullivan, was next introduced, who, in a few words, endorsed the remarks of former speakers.

The chair then announced that Miss Mackey, of Sullivan, Ind., would address the Knights of Labor at the courthouse in the evening.

At the close of the address of welcome Mr. Yeager introduced Hon. Jesse Harper, of Danville, Ill., who is one of the leading lawyers of the Sucker state, where he confines his practice to the federal and superior court. He was for a number of years a leader in the greenback party, but for the past fifteen years has been an ardent worker in the cause of various industrial organizations. The gentleman was the principal speaker of the day, and in the course of his remarks gave all political parties a severe reprimand for their oppressive actions toward labor and for the advancement of the capitalists. In his speech of an hour and a half he used the most forcible language regarding the laws which favored only the wealth at the expense of the labor and lives of the workingmen. He took no political stand or made a remark by which it could be inferred he favored any particular party, but made a most eloquent appeal to the laboring men to cast their ballots only for men who would legislate in their behalf, and remarked that the day would come when the laboring men would have their rights, either by the ballot or the bullet. His speech throughout was of a forcible character and very entertaining.

Mr. Harper was followed by a short but appropriate address by W.H. Anderson (colored), of this city, whose address was directed principally to the laboring class of his own race.

The crowd dispersed from the fair grounds at 5 o'clock, going to the city where they passed an hour, pleasantly viewing places of interest and visiting friends. The visitors departed from Princeton at 6:20, arriving home at 8 p.m.

NOTES

719 in the procession.

Yesterday was Princeton's holiday.

The Knights of Labor at Princeton know how to make a successful demonstration.

Princeton has exhibited more enterprise than Evansville, it has had two disastrous fires since the big fire on First Street in this city. The buildings are being rebuilt at Princeton. Weeds are flourishing in the burnt district in this city.

Hon. J.E. McCullough, the democracy's favorite for congress, was in Princeton yesterday, circulating among the workingmen, for whom he has a deep an interest as any man in the state, and was warmly received by them. The people of Gibson County will give him a rousing majority.

The Courier is indebted to Col. G. Washington Hill for courtesies extended. No man in the Gibson capital is more hospitable, or is there one more highly esteemed than the former Evansvillian. Letters and telegrams of regret were received from the following noted persons not being able to attend: T.V. Powderly, of Scranton, Pa.; Fred Turner, Philadelphia, Pa.; R.F. Trevellick, Nejaunee, Mich.; ex-Senator Bruce, Mississippi; W.S. Holman, Washington, D.C..