

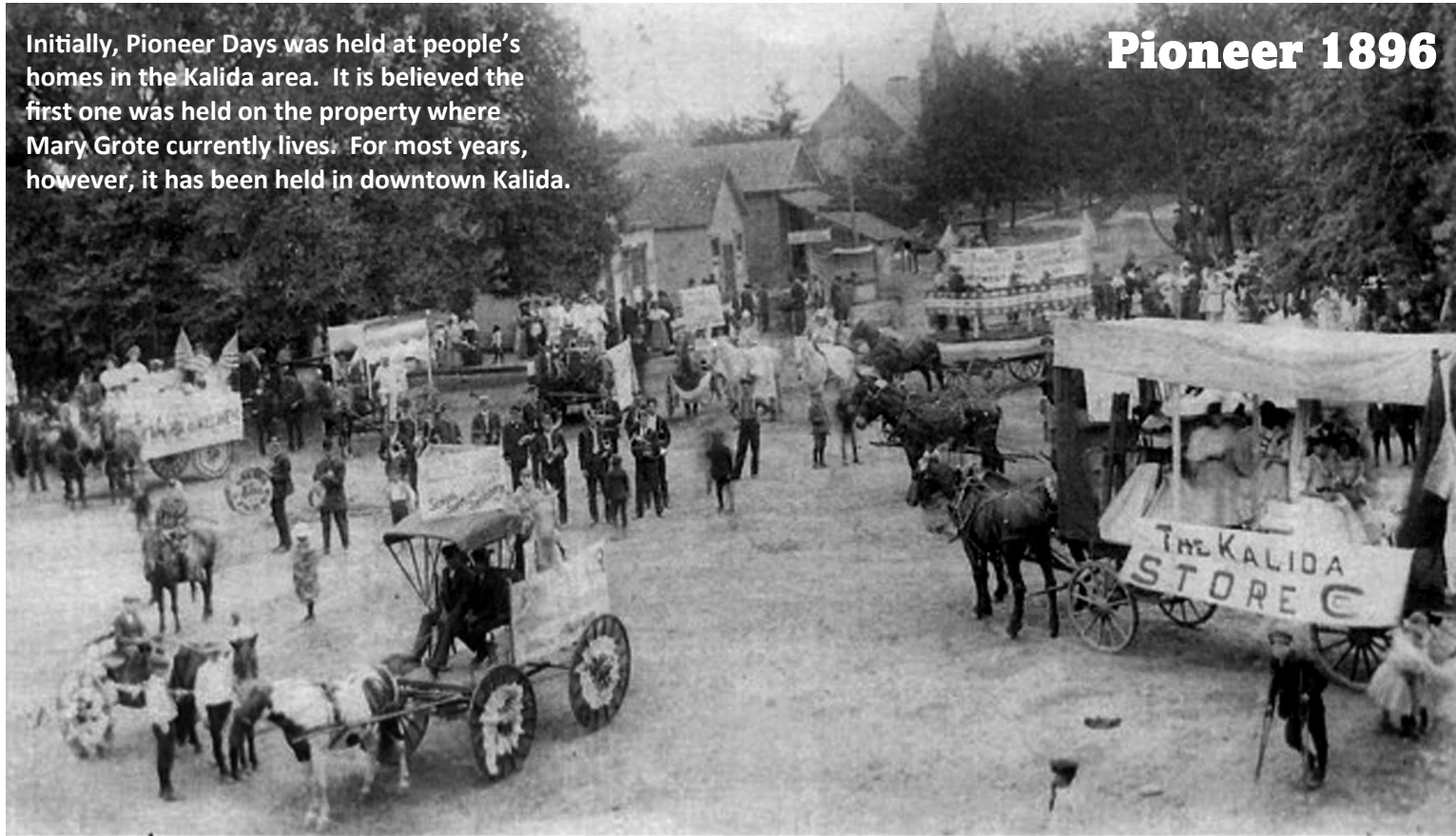
A Little Pioneer Days History

The following information will be on the historical marker at Pioneer Park in downtown Kalida. It's interesting to note that the Ohio History Connection only approves so many historical markers every year. The extensive application process was started three years ago. You need to have documentation on every fact you claim on the marker. This is only a portion of the wording on the marker:

"Pioneer Days had its beginnings in 1873 with the establishment of the Putnam County Pioneer Association. In addition to holding an annual meeting, activities were held which included tightrope walkers, balloon ascensions, merry go round rides and parades. In the early 1960's, the Pioneer Association turned over sponsorship of the festival part of the event to the Kalida Lions Club and Kalida Fireman's Association. In 1970, the Lions, with funds generated from the festival, purchased a former Church and for the sum of \$10 gave it to the Pioneer Association for use as a museum. In 1971, The Pioneer Association underwent a name change to The Putnam County Historical Society with the annual meeting continuing to be held during the festival."

Initially, Pioneer Days was held at people's homes in the Kalida area. It is believed the first one was held on the property where Mary Grote currently lives. For most years, however, it has been held in downtown Kalida.

Pioneer 1896



Pioneer 1934



The Clydesdales Operation gave Kalida the "Hospitality Award" (left) for going above and beyond in helping them and making them feel welcome. This award has only been given out four times in the last five years! From helping them set up the stables to detailing their vehicles to pressing their uniforms, volunteers did their best to make them want to come back. In fact, the Clydesdales don't normally come to small town festivals. But when they are treated like this, why wouldn't they?



Here, the Clydesdales are waiting next to the rectory to take their place in the Pioneer Parade.



Above: Residents of The Meadows were given an up close and personal introduction to the Clydesdales. Fact: To get the Clydesdales to come, you have to work with your local distributor (which is Anheuser Busch out of Lima). They didn't know until about a month before Pioneer that the horses were coming. The brochures were at the printer, ready to go, and at the last minute, they made a change with the addition of the Clydesdales...which are always a big draw. It's the fifth time they have been to Pioneer Days!