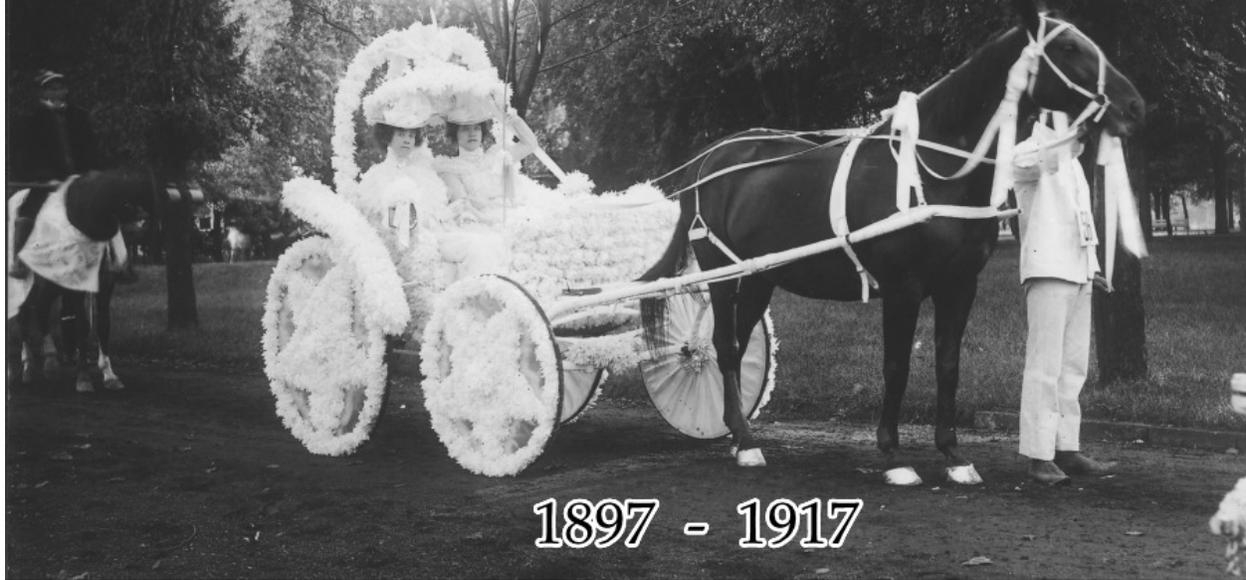
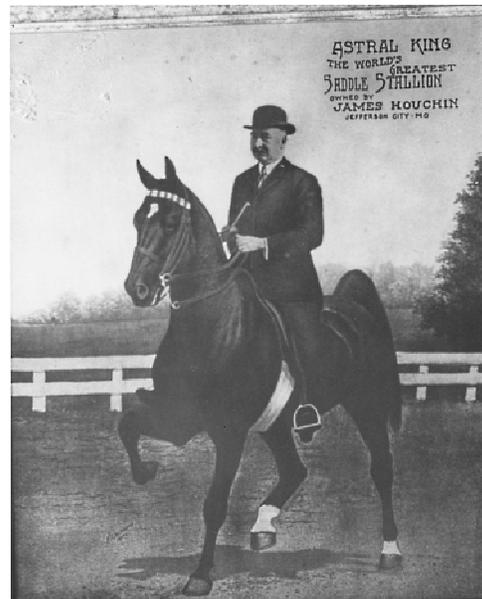


Jefferson City Flower Parade



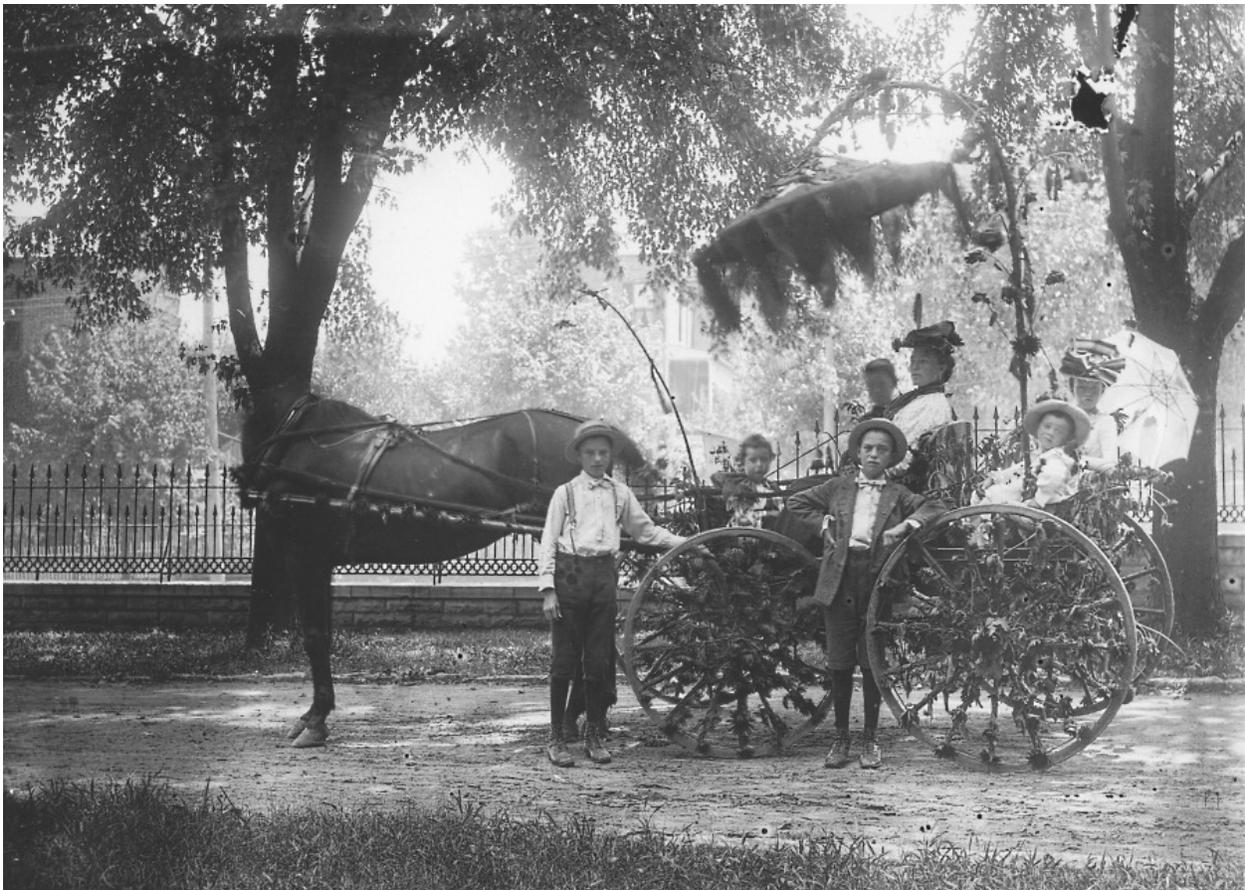
The early 1880's have been referred to as the beginning of the saddle horse era in Missouri. By the mid-1890's saddle horse breeding had become an important industry in the Show-Me State.



Astral King with James A. Houchins as rider – Courtesy of New Bloomfield Area Historical Society

The success of Missouri Breeders with their entries in the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago brought Missouri bred show horses to center stage. As a result, horse shows became fashionable in significant cities as well as county and state fairs. Jefferson City held its' first horse show in 1897 and annually for many years thereafter. The first show, in 1897, was not exclusively a horse show, but sufficient interest was manifested to encourage the organization of a strictly up-to-date Horse Show Association. The exhibition of 1898 was fully a complete and up-to-date horse show with many harness horses, high stoppers and saddlers, ordinary and high school, participating in the events.

Among the highly successful breeders and trainers was James A. Houchin. Mr. Houchin acquired extensive realty interests in Jefferson City. He operated widely known stock farms in Cole, Callaway, Morgan and Pettis Counties, becoming known as one of the leading breeders of fine saddle horses in America and was the owner of the famous stallion Astral King.



Carolyn (B.F. Oliver's Wife), Glenn, Faye, Hardin & Violet (baby), beside the carriage are Latour and Lewman
Courtesy of Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society

The previous meetings had been participated in chiefly by local horse fanciers, and prizes were awarded mostly to horses owned in Jefferson City, but the Program Committee of the 1899 show determined to widen the scope of the competition by increasing the amount of premiums and furnishing a greater variety of exhibitions. As an outgrowth of these activities, the street parades were on the program each day and were a very attractive and popular feature, with the citizens of Jefferson City as the primary participants. Consequently they became a very important feature of any horse show event.



Cottage Place Park, Assembling for Flower Parade - Courtesy of Cole County Historical Society

The parade attracting the most admiration was the “Flower Parade”, presented under the auspices of the ladies of Jefferson City. The grounds of “Cottage Place Park”, which lay on the west side of Lafayette Street, between McCarty and Miller Streets, was particularly well adapted to events of this kind. The land upon which it lay was low and flat and very close to the streets of the business district of Jefferson City of the late 1890’s and early 1900’s. The proximity to the business district placed the park as a special gathering place for the parade of horse drawn vehicles down High Street and equally well suited for disassembly following the parade.



Unknown Entrants in the Flower Parade - Courtesy of Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society

By 1900 and for many years thereafter, at least forty vehicles were in line and each vied with the other in beauty of design and decoration. The parade was recognized by visitors as comparing favorably with those of larger cities and many compliments were bestowed on the ladies for their taste in the decoration of handsome turnouts.



Unknown Entrant in the Flower Parade – Courtesy of Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society

The “*Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County*” had much to say about the upcoming event of 1900. “The prospectus of the coming 1900 show, to be held at “Cottage Place Park” on August 7th, 8th and 9th, promises to surpass in scope and magnitude, all former exhibitions and under the management of the following named officers will, no doubt, be a grand success. Judge W.C. Marshall, President; J.D. Start, Vice President; F.J. Wilberger, Secretary; W.A. Dallmeyer, Treasurer. Board of Directors: J.M. Wells, H.F. Priesmeyer, B.J. Kaiser, W.A. Moore, and C.A. Ware. The management is assured of the presence of the coming show of such horsemen as D.L. Parish of St. Louis, Missouri, Augustus Busch of St. Louis, Missouri, A.E. Ashbrook of the *Horse Show Monthly* of Kansas City, Missouri, all of whom are enthusiastic admirers of horse flesh and breeders of horses which have won fame throughout the country.”

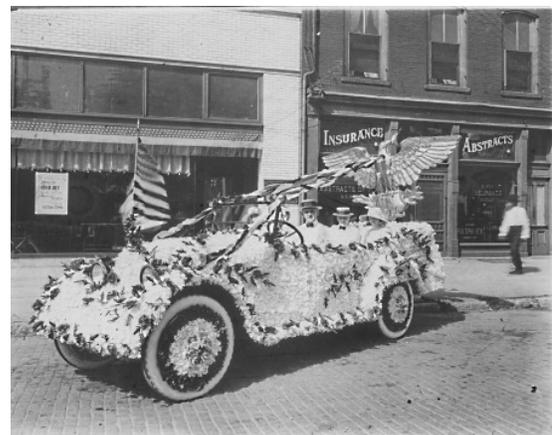


Flower Parade on High Street, Jefferson City - Courtesy of Cole County Historical Society

The horse show continued to maintain itself as a sizeable attraction throughout the first decade of the 1900's; but with the coming of the automobile in approximately 1913, there was a significant and rapid shift of the entrants in the Flower Parade from horse drawn carriages to the automobile. With the coming of World War I in 1917, interest in the Flower Parade rapidly diminished and not long thereafter it faded into the past. In its' passing, the Flower Parade established itself as a very significant part of the history of Jefferson City.



Myrene Houchin's Entry in the Early Automobile Years – Courtesy of Cole County Historical Society



Unknown Entrants During the WWI War Years – Courtesy of Cole County Historical Society

Yes, pictures are worth a thousand words and in the case of the Flower Parade of Jefferson City they almost say it all. For the images of the Flower Parade taken during the automobile era we are uncertain as to whom to credit these fine images. Probably professional photographers like Carl Deeg or Frederick Suden. These images from the automobile period were from scans of photographic prints and most certainly cover closing days of the Flower Parade in Jefferson City.



The images of the Flower Parade of the horse era were scans of 8" X 10" glass plate negatives known to have been taken by Benjamin F. Oliver, a professional photographer. Oliver had many studios in his professional career including ones in Ashland, Fulton and Jefferson City before he retired to his birthplace on a farm near Wainwright in Callaway County. At the age of twenty-five he began his career in photography by apprenticing himself to Sittler and Laney of Shelbyville, Illinois, to learn the art of photography. He owned studios in Sweet Springs for one year, Butler in Bates County for two years and then apprenticed to Latour Studios in Sedalia. He then accepted a position as a salesman for Chicago Supply House with the Kansas City branch. Oliver then briefly joined his cousin forming Babb and Oliver Studio in Ashland before starting a photographic and art studio in Fulton where he remained for seven years.

Mister Oliver had an unfortunate incident in which a nephew who worked in the studio accidentally killed himself. Two customers wished to have their photograph taken while wearing revolvers in holsters. While the two were changing after the photo session the youth removed one of the revolvers and supposing it to be unloaded, mockingly held it to his temple and pulled the trigger. It is believed that the loss of the boy that was so close to him caused Mr. Oliver to leave his business in Fulton and establish a new studio in Jefferson City in 1893.



In addition to the portrait work that was the substance of his studio, Oliver began taking photos of special groups and organizations. Ben Oliver discovered that he could take his studio camera out of his studio to capture buildings, events and landscapes and that there was a ready market for his images. He then began traveling around central Missouri taking landscape and street scene photos for sale to larger publications that were just beginning to print photographic images in those publications. Many of his images appeared in the "*Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County Missouri*", the year 1900. A recently discovered series of 45 images, taken over a period of eleven months, of the construction of the first bridge at Jefferson City crossing the Missouri River appear to have been taken by Ben Oliver. Mr. Oliver retired in 1903 to his farm in Wainwright in Callaway County, to the home where he had been raised.

(Ben Oliver images Courtesy of Kingdom of Callaway HS)

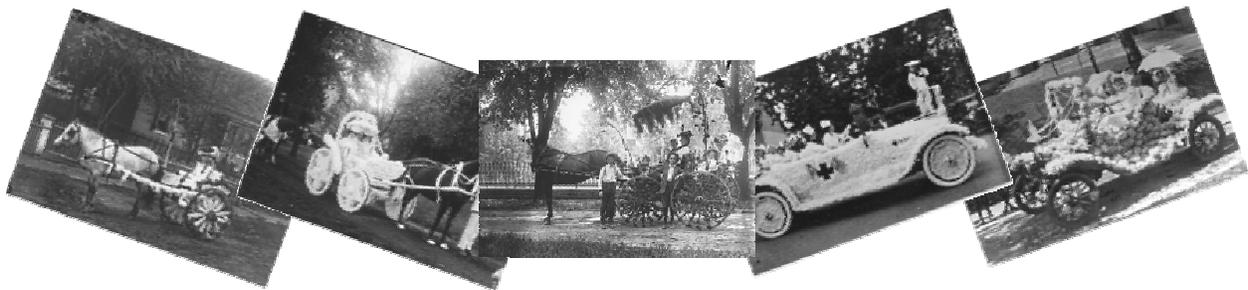
These glass plate negatives, one hundred fifty-four in total, were brought to the Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society in Fulton by Oliver's grandson who discovered them in the attic

of his Grandfather's home while cleaning it out for sale. When the negatives were received, they required extensive cleaning, taking care to be certain that the coat of lacquer that covered the emulsion side of the glass plate that protected the image was not disturbed or destroyed. After much consideration it was decided that these images were ones which were rejects, for one reason or another, and were not considered as salable. In the case of several, the subject matter was not significant or the content was questionable while those, particularly in the case of the Flower Parade images, were rejects because of movement of the animals. We are most fortunate that these images were not destroyed and we would be deprived of the history that they represent.

Photos frequently reveal insight into events that words can barely convey. Jefferson City has had a bevy of exceptional photographers, of which Ben Oliver is only one. To this day, there remain in seldom accessed drawers and chests in the attic, photos of the history of Jefferson City and the surrounding area that are yet unseen. It is incumbent upon all of the agencies of this area to actively seek to encourage the public to share their precious photos, either by donation or by allowing them to be scanned so that they may provide a wealth of visual history for current and future generations of residents of Jefferson City.

We know that the following agencies actively seek donation of our photographic history to be protected in their archives and made available to the public in the form of digital images.

Historic City of Jefferson	601 E. High St.	Jefferson City, MO
Cole County Historical Society	109 Madison St.	Jefferson City, MO
Missouri State Archives	600 W. Main St.	Jefferson City, MO
Missouri State Historical Society	605 Elm St.	Columbia, MO
Missouri State Museum	201 W. Capitol Ave.	Jefferson City, MO
Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society	513 Court St.	Fulton, MO
New Bloomfield Area Historical Society	313 Oak St.	New Bloomfield, MO
Miller County Historical Society	2005 MO-52	Tuscumbia, MO



Images Courtesy of Cole County and Kingdom of Callaway Historical Societies