

Kinsman, Ohio in the Gilded Age

The Final Flowering of a Small Town

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With a renewed entrepreneurial spirit in the 1880's, the town of Kinsman saw the addition of several commercial structures both on the square and along Main Street, three for the first time in brick. The Kinsman Fair also began in 1883 and became an important August three day event, drawing multitudes by rail and buggy. The facilities were also used for Fourth of July galas and for school athletic meets.

Several private homes of note were built during this period by the same local businessmen behind the new commercial structures. Others were the 1881 summer house for a former Kinsmanite who made Chicago his home; and the 1887 mansion of James McGranahan, famous at the time for his composition, publication and performance of gospel hymns, often in association with evangelist Dwight Moody.

In 1877, annual Moody Meetings began to be held in a natural amphitheater near the Kinsman Fair Grounds. The site was filled to its capacity of 5,000 by people arriving either by rail or buggy. Electricity became available in 1905, and the first Ford dealership, still owned by the original family today, was started in 1914.