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## Looking Back: Saturday night parades

**BY JACK GILLESPIE**  
 MUSEUM MEMBER

There were no rules, there was no planning, there was no real reason for it to happen but it was a spontaneous event that came around a few times during the summer months in downtown Albany in the late 1940s.

The event consisted of a number of cars getting in line on a warm Saturday night and parading up and down First Avenue between Washington and Main streets.

A six-day work week (or a least 5 ½) was not unusual for the workers during these years and Saturday night was a popular “get out and go” time. One could sleep in a little late on Sunday morning.

Come Saturday evening people would come into town and eat out and take in a movie at one of three theaters on First Avenue. Others would come to town to shop for the coming week. For whatever the reason downtown Albany could be very busy place on Saturday nights during the summer.

Some of us teenage boys with cars would

come to town just to drive up and down First Avenue. (It was sort of a man-boy thing.)

One Saturday night we were doing our “Cruising First Avenue Routine” when we noticed the line getting longer. Soon it became apparent that both lanes were filled with the cars going very slow.

It was quite a sight to see automobiles from the 20s, 30s and 40s parading east on First and turning around at Main and heading west to Washington. Part of the turn-around on Main Street was going through the Hancock gasoline station on the southwest corner of Main. The station has a sign offering 10 gallons of gasoline for \$1 and a quart of oil for 10 cents. (A ten-o-clock curfew-declared during World War II-was still in effect and a loud horn would blast meaning that everyone without business should head for home-thus breaking up our cruising.)

Of course, First Avenue is now a one-way street going west and there isn't too much cruising on Saturday nights in downtown Albany. But it wasn't always that way. I remember it well.

**Our mission statement:** “To preserve, exhibit and encourage knowledge of the history and culture of Albany, Oregon, and its immediate surroundings through collection of artifacts, documents and photographs.”