May Day at Northern
People are familiar with Homecoming, a major Social event held each Fall.
Starting in the 1920’s, however, Northern held a celebration in the Spring – Mayday.
Early floats were sponsored by one of the local boarding houses which were occupied by students prior to the construction of dormitories in the late 1940’s.
Festivities on front lawn in front of Lehr Memorial
May Day 1919

University Archives - Heterick Memorial Library
During WWII, May Day was suspended. After the war it was resumed and included practical activities like a campus clean-up.
May Day and Campus Cleanup - 1945

University Archives - Heterick Memorial Library
Cleaning Lamp Globes - 1945

University Archives - Heterick Memorial Library
By the 1950’s, a more celebratory atmosphere had returned with a parade of floats and a May Day King and Queen.
1960 – The Queen cuts the ribbon - Let the parade begin!

University Archives - Heterick Memorial Library
Dr. Meyer cuts the ribbon and the parade is begun.
Parade on North Main – 1966?
May Day 1971 celebrated the theme of “One Hundred Years of a Thousand Dreams” in recognition of the university’s centennial program underway at the time.

The festive parade that year featured some 30 units including the Ada and Payne High School bands and a mounted unit of seventeen riders from the Allen County Sheriff and numerous floats.

Although it was not obvious at the time, May Day 1971 marked the end of this campus tradition.
The May 24, 1971 issue of the *Northern Review* announced that the start of Spring Quarter final exams would be on May 8. The week before exams was used for studying, and Commencement was May 14, 1972.

This change effectively eliminated May Day since the only alternative would have been to move May Day back into April.
A last
May Day

... and the last Queen of the May