

WATSONVILLE HISTORY 1990-2000

Apple Annual was major event in town



Betty Lewis

That was Watsonville

For four years, from 1910 through 1913, the Apple Annual ran supreme in Watsonville with thousands of people from all around the state coming to the week-long festivities. When Queen Ruby of Tehachapi arrived in October of 1913, she was met at the train depot by representatives of the apple show and the city band. The dignitaries were traveling in a decorated automobile and the group then paraded through town to the Appleton Hotel which was to be her headquarters for the week.

Serving on the entertainment committee were: Mrs. J.E. Gardner, Mrs. E. Steinhauser, Miss Bessie Neal, Miss Ethna Day and Miss Florence Walling, Miss Lillian Cowles, Miss Dorothy Bay, Miss Jopson and Miss Winifred Jewett. Ruby Brite was crowned on the night of Oct. 6, 1913. There were over 3,000 people in the Auditorium on Second Street (now the site of the fire station) both on the main floor and in the balcony.

The Industrial exhibits were held in a large tent next to the auditorium. Neustadter Bros. of San Francisco featured an exhibit which

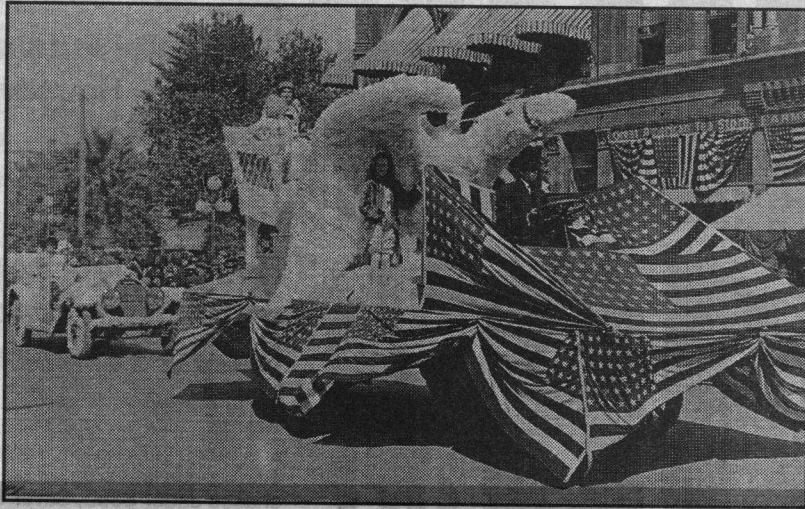
“showed various figures clad in overalls, backed by a representation of the State seal; the Sacramento river, the rising sun, the woman’s figure — even the sheaf of wheat are shown.”

Mrs. Gough of Santa Cruz exhibited the Little Wonder Talking Machine and sat in the booth playing records and explaining the workings of the machine — some called it “a passing fancy.”

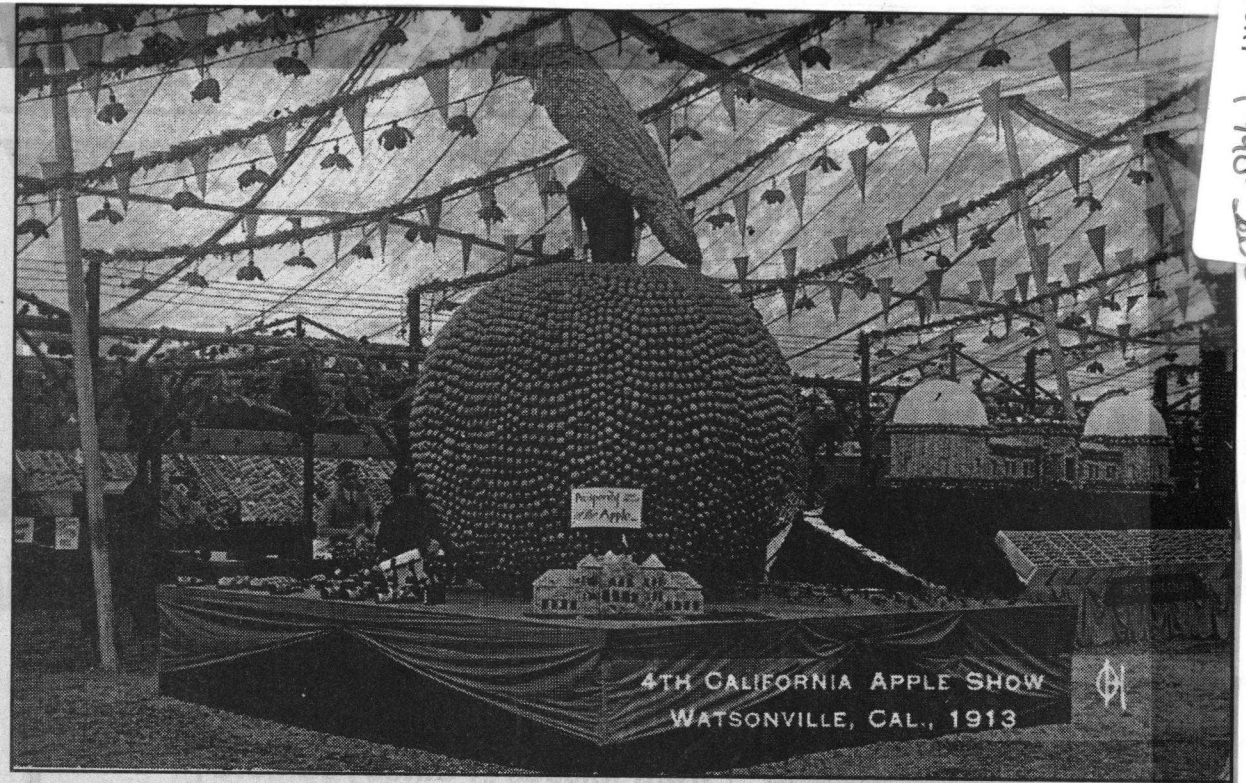
There were exhibits of apples from 32 counties and besides the many, many displays of apples and other fruits and vegetables, were the amazing exhibits built out of apples or apple products. First prize went to Mrs. Hugh McGowan for her replica of the Apple Annual Au-

ditorium — featuring 1,500 glasses of jellies; second prize went to the San Jose Merchants’ Association for their rendition of the Lick Observatory all in apples — other exhibits included, all replicas, the Watsonville High School, Santa Cruz Casino, electric fountain. The California Spray Chemical Company exhibited a 22-foot-high clock which stood on four big towers all covered with green apples while the Loma Fruit Company constructed a 24-foot-high Statue of Liberty — at night, the torch and base were lit up which made for a very impressive sight.

During the week there were parades, band concerts, dances, baseball games, contests, shows, etc. “The death of the 1913 show was



1913 float with Queen Ruby Brite on her throne in the back.



Apple display, circa 1913. Sign says “Prosperity of the Apple.”

celebrated in a blaze of music and fun and all joined in the fun-making. With all the fun and jollity there was no hoodlumism for the crowd was jolly and decent.”

In 1914, the Apple Annual was moved to San Francisco at the urging of the manager Harry Perkins. A statewide show was being held there and Watsonville products became a part of it. In 1915 the Panama Pacific Exposition was a big event in San Francisco and local men cooperated and displayed their

fruit at the county and state booths.

“A dastardly attempt to blackmail the landladies of the local tenderloin district as well as an attempt to discredit the local city administration was unearthed last Saturday by Alderman Henry P. Kane and through his efforts the would-be blackmailer, a man named J.E. Rocke, was ordered by Chief of Police Whitsitt to leave the city and was personally escorted by that official to the depot.” — Evening Pajaronian, Oct. 7, 1913.

Mr. Rocke had approached Gertie Goodwin of the local Alpine Club, telling her if she and two other landladies of the red-light district would contribute \$400 he would see to it that they would be allowed to sell liquor at the Apple Annual. Gertie didn’t like the sound of his proposition so she went to Alderman Kane and told him the story.

Betty Lewis, a local historian, is a contributing columnist to the Register-Pajaronian.

REFERENCE

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