

Watsonville is well-known for its grand parades on Fourth

By BETTY LEWIS

“Watsonville prepared Friday to entertain the largest crowd in the history here at its finest Fourth of July celebration, as the three-day fete was scheduled to get underway Saturday. A patriotic program at the Fox Theater at 9:15 a.m. Saturday was scheduled to launch the festivities.”

— *Register-Pajaronian*, July 2, 1948.

This year of 1948 people were humming such tunes as “You’re Adorable,” “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” and “Buttons & Bows” plus attending such movies as “Fuller Brush Man” with Red Skelton and “Seven Sinners” with John Wayne. A three bedroom house, furnished, was available for rent at \$45 a month and C.H. Baker was the mayor of Watsonville while Harry Truman was the nation’s president.

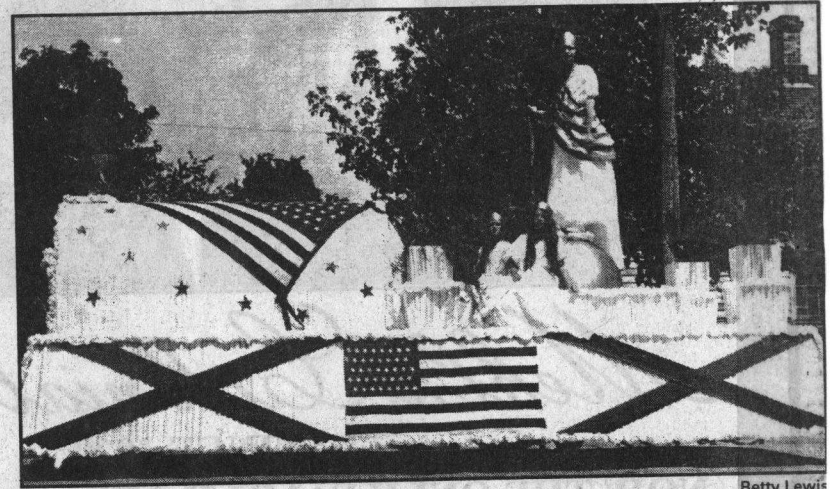
Manuel Silva was chosen to be grand marshal of the Old Timer’s Parade on Sunday with Tom Arano, the oldest cowboy in the county, also a participant. The parade ran from Ford and Main Streets down to Bridge (Riverside). Also on display was the old hose cart where Ed Ferguson, the only surviving member of Watsonville’s championship hose car team, was riding. Many participants dressed in gay nineties costumes as they rode in buggies and wagons. The Pajaro Valley Historical Association held their annual reception at the Resetar Hotel after the parade with Judge C.R. Taylor as master of ceremonies.

Monday featured the “Big Parade” with an estimated 20,000 people lining Main Street to see the festivities. Entered were many gaily decorated floats including the VFW which featured a South Pacific jun-

gle fighting position with soldiers among palm trees, manning a machine gun. The women’s auxiliary had a marching unit of 13 women wearing mauve uniforms under the leadership of Mrs. Lola Connor.

Some of the parade winners were: Best float — Filipino Community; best band — Sciots drum and bugle corps and Donald Seely of Aromas was crowned the Pajaro Valley Whisker King. Out at Pinto Lake, where the Pajaro Valley Horseman’s Association’s event was taking place, this contingent won the group entry. Winner of English pairs was Louise Blanchard and Harold Kane and winning the ladies stake race was Marge Rice.

Also on the agenda for the three-day event were dances, barbecues, fireworks, aircraft show, baseball games and a folk dance festival. The baseball game was held at the



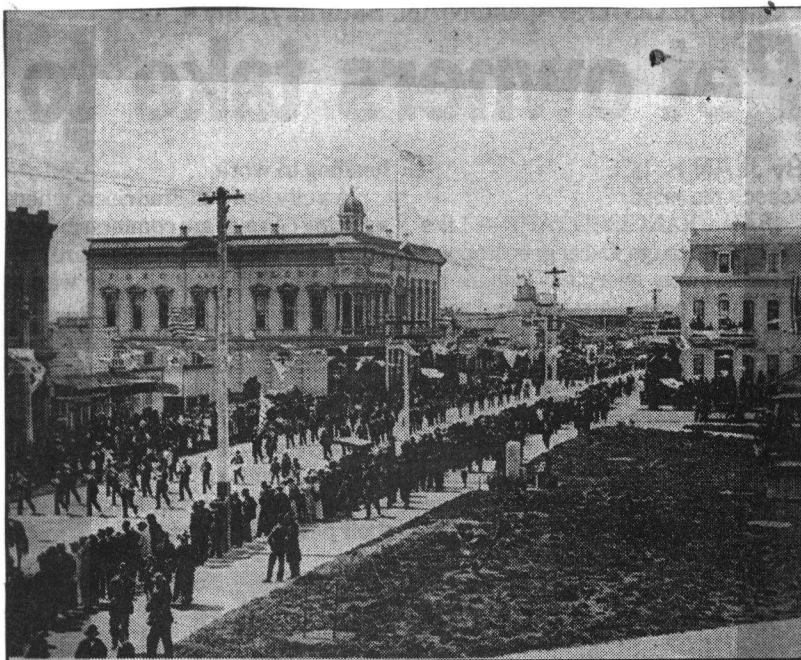
Betty Lewis

In 1916, Lois Leslie was the Goddess of Liberty in the Fourth of July parade.

high school with the Watsonville Packers and Los Gatos Grill competing. Another horse show, spon-

sored by the Sciots, was held at the fairgrounds with 2,500 people at-

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Bands paraded down Main Street past the Charles Ford Co. and the Plaza (foreground) in 1895.

HISTORY

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tending.

The unusually heavy traffic throughout Watsonville was handled by the police department, headed by police chief Frank Osmer, with the help of Boy Scout Troop 98:

"Main Street — gigantic stage for Watsonville's two-mile long Fourth of July parade Monday — was just another busy thoroughfare Tuesday. Gone for another year were the spectacular floats and strutting majorettes; the drill teams and trained horses; the band music and colorful marchers; the decorated automobiles and horse-drawn carriages." — Register-Pajaronian, July 6, 1948.

Watsonville has been known



**Betty
Lewis**

**That was
Watsonville**

down through the years for its great and grand observances of America's Independence Day. Back on July 4, 1776, we gained our independence from England and democracy flourished throughout the land. As Patrick Henry said — "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

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