

City roared at the early 1900s Apple Annual festival

For four years, from 1910 to 1914, the Apple Annual — “An Apple Show Where Apples Grow” — held forth in Watsonville with thousands of people flocking into town for one week in October to see all the festivities. There were exhibits, performances, dances, contests, parades, concerts, speeches plus all types of souvenirs. These included colorful post cards, posters, programs, stationery, spoons, fobs, pillows, pins — just about anything that could be dreamed up for the local merchants to sell!

In 1909 the Apple Annual Association was formed with the following officers: Otto Stoesser, president; A.W. Cox, vice-president; J.W. Kavanagh, Secretary; Edward Hall, Treasurer and J.A. Linscott as manager. Architect William Weeks was hired to design an Apple Annual Building to be constructed on Second Street now the site of the Fire Department.

The opening day ceremonies were held on October 10, 1910 with patriotic music played by the Watsonville Band and a parade down to the new pavilion on Second Street. In the afternoon, harness races were held at the Watsonville Driving Park at the beach and in the evening, the Governor of California, James N. Gillett, gave a stirring address on “California.” Also on the program was a welcoming speech by Mayor P.K. Watters.

There were many fruit packers and shippers at this period of time in Watsonville, such names as: Cikuth, Kalich, Matulich, Gaspornitch, Quong Sung, Vlasich, Mihinich, Stolich, Secondo, Lettunich and others. Jones Bros. & Co. were advertising their “pure apple cider vinegar” while the Watsonville Coffee Club at 438-440 Main Street urged visitors to try their home made apple pie at “the best equipped lunch parlors in the city.”



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That was Watsonville

In 1911 there was a poultry show held in the old skating rink on West Lake Avenue. This was held in conjunction with the Apple Annual and the week-long festivities drew nearly 40,000 people into town. The 1912 show featured the first automobile parade down Main Street — 135 of those newfangled horseless carriages chugged along. The average price for each was \$1,500! Tragedy struck, though, when a submarine was visiting down at Port Watsonville and the heavy surf caused the death of two seamen.

Miss Ruby Brite of Kern County was elected queen in 1913 and won a \$425 piano. Mrs. Hugh McGowan won a first prize for her facsimile of the apple annual auditorium made of 1,500 glasses of assorted jellies — she made 4,000 glasses of jelly using 1,000 pounds of sugar. A statue of liberty was erected by the Loma Fruit Company standing 24 feet high. At night, the torch and base were lit up and this made for a very impressive sight.

For three more years the Apple Annual was held in Watsonville and then it moved to San Francisco in 1914 where the fair was held in tents along Market Street. There it was joined with other towns throughout the state in a

prelude to the Panama Pacific Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915.

“S.Martinelli’s Gold Medal Apple Cider — Made from Pajaro Valley Apples — The best cider

made from the best apples — Four Medals and seven diplomas of honor awarded — S. Martinelli, Sole Manufacturer, Watsonville, California.” — from the 1910 Official Souvenir Program

Apple Queen Ruby Brite of Kern County, Queen of the 1913 Apple Show. She was escorted to the opening ball by Joe Hopkins, a local man.



A replica of the YMCA building on Main Street made with dried and green apples.