

THAT WAS WATSONVILLE

The history of the Apple Annual in Watsonville

Events
 In June of 1908, E. A. Hall, President of the Watsonville Board of Trade, urged the board members to consider having an Apple Annual in Watsonville. He cited that Oregon had one and it had turned out to be very successful — why not Watsonville? The apple industry was booming in the Pajaro Valley. New packinghouses were built on Walker Street. By the largest was the James Sheehy Company located on the corner of Walker and Second streets. The structure covered 10,000 feet of floor space. The Stolich Brothers' shed was located near Walker facing Fifth Street. It covered 9,600 square feet; Novancovich & Stolich had built a packinghouse at the corner of Walker and Fifth Streets. Over on West Third near Walker was the packing establishment of Gurash & Stolich.

Down between Second and W. Third on Walker Street was a packing house belonging to J. D. Perry. On the lower end of Rodriguez Street, Secondo Brothers had built an addition to their packinghouse. Thus, one could easily see how the apple business was in full swing including picking, packing and shipping. The decision was made — Watsonville would have an Apple Annual and the Apple Annual Association was formed in 1909. The board of directors, headed by Otto D. Stoesser, had sent for and received a copy of the exhibit record of the National Apple Show at Spokane, Wash., and planned to model the Watsonville show after that one as much as possible.

Next on the list was to have a building erected to house exhibits and people coming to the show. A bond election was held in April of 1910 to pay for the Apple Annual building and was carried "hands down." Architect William H. Weeks was asked to draw plans for the pavilion and excavation started on July 22. The location for the structure was on Second Street now the site of the fire station. A very handsome forty four souvenir watch



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Betty Lewis

gram — "Apple Annual (Pajaro Valley) Watsonville, The Great California Apple Show October 10th to 15th, 1910" was published. This colorful and informative booklet has now become a very collectible item along with the very colorful stationery and envelopes.

Many postcards were made of all the exhibits in the pavilion; many produced by Steinhauer & Eaton a drug and phonograph store at 313-315 Main St. There were also many postcards produced by a San Francisco Company, Edward H. Mitchell. All these cards are very hard to find at postcard shows or on the Internet.

Inside the booklet are ads from local businesses plus many from around the state. It also shows all the activities for that year plus the list of the Apple Annual Association — Otto Stoesser, president and serving with him were A.W. Cox, J. W. Kavanagh, Edward A. Hall and J. A. Linscott. The first event in 1910 was the Religious Harvest Festival on Sunday, Oct. 9, in the plaza. The official events started on Oct. 10 with a long and colorful parade. Addresses were given by Mayor P. K. Watters and the Governor of California, James N. Gillette. Stirring music from the Watsonville Band plus the St. Francis Orphanage band followed these. The show slogan was "An Apple Show Where Apples grow."

The Native Daughters of the Golden West were busy making an 18 foot long flag to fly over the pavilion, posters and souvenir stationery were printed, souvenir watch

fobs and spoons were sold and Apple Annual buttons went on sale. Cost for these was 10 and 15 cents and they sold like "lemonade on the Sahara desert." Included in the weeklong show were box making contests, band concerts, vaudeville attractions, speeches, parades and Mardi Gras. This included humanity swarming all over Main Street with horns, bells, confetti — all having the time of their lives. The first apple show was a huge success with some 30,000 people attending from all over the state and nation. Admission to the pavilion was \$4 for the whole family, no matter how large and included two entries. There were also tents on the outside to hold more exhibits and special features. M. Grizich won the first Watsonville Apple Annual Award; a lovely gold medal that has stayed within the family.

During the 1911 Apple Annual show in October, 5,000 people from the county seat came over to the show on Santa Cruz Day. Almost every professional and business office in Santa Cruz was closed for the day. Even the post office and newspaper offices shut their doors. This contingent arrived on four special trains, 33 cars and the road from Santa Cruz to Watsonville was one continuous parade of automobiles. These "horseless carriages" hadn't been on the scene for very long so you can imagine how slow their progress was towards Watsonville!

"Medals are ready — the Apple Annual medals which are to be awarded the various prize winners at the recent apple show, have been completed by George P. Martin, the jeweler, and are now ready to be turned over to the association. The medals are 157 in number and are made of gold and silver. Each medal is a prize worth having and not only does the emblem represent quality but the medals look well besides. The obverse side of the medal bears an allegorical figure typical of the fruits and flowers and the reverse side is reserved for the engraving of the holder's name. The medal is a fine piece of work and is even better than those medals received here by prize winners at the A. Y. P. Exposition." — **Evening**



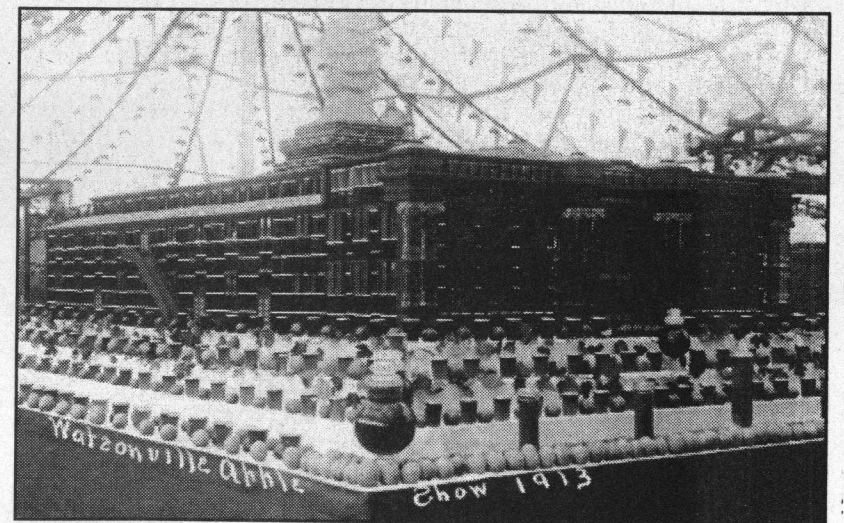
Photos courtesy of Betty Lewis

A postcard photo of an industrial parade during the Apple Annual.

price for a new car was around \$1,500! Selected the best-decorated vehicle was that of Alderman P. A. Callaghan, whose car was covered with brilliant red geraniums. Quong Sung Lung and Young Goon decorated their cars by covering them with dried apples — a painstaking task but a definite crowd favorite.

Tragedy struck when a visiting U.S. submarine F-1 was tossed about in the heavy surf down at Port Watsonville, now Pajaro Dunes, and two crewmen were drowned during the 1912 show. The cable connecting the anchor to the buoy broke and the sub was carried onto a sand bar. Eight days after the tragedy, the battleship Maryland and tugs Iroquois and Vigilante pulled out the F-1 into the bay. It was towed up to Mare Island Navy Yard to be completely overhauled and repaired.

During the 1913 Apple Annual, the last in Watsonville for some time, Ruby Brite of Kern County was elected queen and she won a \$425 Frederick piano. Coming in second was Miss Ruby Waite of Watsonville and she won two pianos in preliminary contests! In 1914 the Apple Annual was moved



A 1913 postcard — the winner of first prize in exhibits, Mrs. Hugh McGowan, used 3,000 glasses of jelly to make this replica of the Apple Annual building.

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. In 1916 the war in

Europe had taken its toll of the export market and the domestic crop was below par so the Apple Annual went into seclusion.

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An envelope from 1910 representing the Apple Annual.

engraving of the holder name. The medal is a fine piece of work and is even better than those medals received here by prize winners at the A. Y. P. Exposition." — **Evening Pajaronian, January 4, 1911.**

The Pajaro Valley Poultry Association was formed in 1911 with 190 members. During the Apple Annual festivities a poultry show was held in the old Jefsen skating rink building on W. Lake Avenue and it was a huge success. As the Oct. 9 opening date drew near, coops were being made for 600 birds, including hens, roosters, turkeys, geese, ducks and everything else in the poultry line — it was a very popular attraction.

The first automobile parade ever held in Watsonville was during the 1912 show with 135 autos chugging down Main Street — the average

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