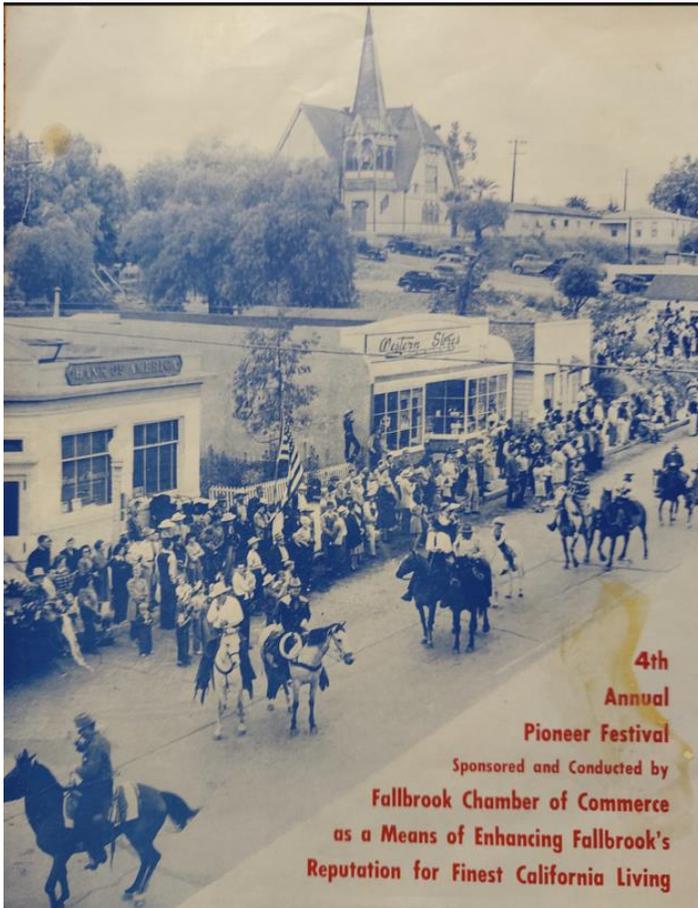


The Historian

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PIONEER DAYS FESTIVAL IN OLD FALLBROOK



1948 Pioneer Parade. Riders shown arriving at reviewing stand at Alvarado & Main. Notice Bank of America and Western Stores on the left, with the Baptist Church overlooking the town. More than 300 horses participated in the 1948 rodeo. Many of the horses were unloaded directly at the old festival grounds on Ammunition Road.

Before the Avocado Festival, there was the annual Fallbrook Pioneer Days. As World War II wound down and hopeful rumors swirled that the troops would be coming home soon, the Fallbrook Chamber of Commerce organized a community festival. Fallbrook's first Pioneer Festival was held on Saturday May 26th, 1945.

Hundreds of horses, marching bands, and dozens of floats participated in the Pioneer Day parades that grew bigger each year. BBQ picnics with games, hay rides, and music were held for the whole town, either at Live Oak Park or at the festival grounds, depending on the year. In the evening there was dancing at Potter Hall to one or more orchestras. The post-parade shows of the 1950s evolved into an annual two-day championship rodeo sponsored by the Fallbrook Riders at their Riders Field in the 1950s.

The whole town was encouraged to participate in the festival by dressing in Pioneer garb for the week. Some men stopped shaving to enter the Wiskerino contest for best facial hair. Prizes were also awarded to downtown merchants for the best old-time window display in the week leading up to the festival. Prizes were also awarded to the oldest couple in costume at the dance, and to the best dancers. The whole town voted for the Pioneer Day Queen from one of the nominated high school girls. Ballot boxes were set up in several shops around town.

The Fallbrook (VFW) led memorial services and the decoration of graves with flags and flowers at both the Odd Fellows and Masonic Cemeteries. (Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day).

As the solemn memorial services were taking place in the morning; marching bands, floats, cowboys and horse drawn wagons formed up at the Elementary school on Elder Street, while spectators lined the route along Elder and Main. As the parade passed by, most of the crowd followed the procession to the high school fields “Avocado Bowl,” to watch horsemanship demonstrations and contests and to enjoy an afternoon BBQ picnic.



May 26, 1945 First Pioneer Parade. Looking south on Main from Hawthorne St. The Fallbrook Elementary School Band marches north on Main. Woodbury's store is at the left. The parade traveled north from Elder St to the Ivy St High School the first two years only.



1947 Pioneer Day Parade looking north on Main from Alvarado St. Texaco station and Dodge dealership at Hawthorne St. is the white building further back at street level in front of trees. The old Veterans memorial is marked with the flag at lower left.



1945 or -46 Pioneer Parade. Lions Club Float at El Real Hotel. Zora's Coffee Shop is where Harry's Bar is today. Photo is dated to 1945 or 1946 because Parade is traveling north on Main. In all future years, Parade went south.



1947 Two cowboys riding by El Real. Notice the veterans memorial with flag in empty lot between the hotel and Lamb's building.



Early 1950s Looking north on Main at mile long procession. Sutton Pharmacy and the Jack & Jill store are visible on left. Both were gone by 1955. Notice Rexall sign at lower right, still on the east side of Main.



1955 Grand Marshals Tom & Maie Ellis. Tom was from a pioneer Fallbrook ranching family. Maie Ellis School is named for her.



About 1949 at corner of Main & Juniper (now E. Mission). Clarissa's is where Sunshine Realty is today. Photo can be dated because Joe's Barber Shop opened in 1948 but its name changed to Village Barbers in 1951. The popular Hitching Post Malt Shop was open 1947 to 1952.



1954 Havins Market float. The Fallbrook Pharmacy was formerly Sutton Pharmacy in 1953. Jack & Jill and BeaNita clothing shops were there from 1949 until 1955. Havins Market was at the corner of Aviation & Main, where Trupianos Restaurant is today.



Early 1950s Rider passing reviewing stand on the left in intersection of Main & Alvarado. Old hardware store on right burned down in June 1987. Vince Ross Square is at this location now.



1958 Parade float going south on Main. Used car lot next to Roy's Garage was across from the Mission Theater. CAST Academy of Dance is located there today.

The parade route reversed direction starting in 1948 to prevent wear & tear of the high school fields. The revised route formed up on Juniper St, and traveled south on Main to Ammunition Rd. The horse show took place in the vacant field where Albertson's grocery store is located today. The Fallbrook Citrus Association (FCA) owned this land in 1948. Unhappy with damage done to their field, the FCA wanted the festival to find a different place for future horse shows.

The Fallbrook Riders, a recently organized sport group, found a solution when they purchased 17 acres on Stagecoach Lane in 1950 to hold the Pioneer Days Rodeo. With the new Riders Field, the annual horse show became a two-day professional Rodeo event.

During the 1950s; veterans' groups, local churches and others objected to the large Memorial Day weekend celebration overshadowing the day meant to honor those lost in war. The Chamber of Commerce withdrew community sponsorship of Pioneer Days after 1960. However, the Riders Club continued holding the Rodeos throughout the 1960s and beyond. The Chamber began the Fallbrook Avocado Festival in October 1963.

-Tom Frew



Late 1950s Chamber of Commerce float passing Hawthorne St. Merry Go Round children's apparel shop opened here in 1955 after the Jack & Jill shop had closed.



1959 In 1959 Buy & Save Market was where ACE Hardware is today at the corner of Main & Fallbrook St. The Lions Club was very active in Pioneer Days.

References:

- 1) Archives of the *Fallbrook Enterprise* newspaper from 1945 to 1963 were extensively used for details of Pioneer Days Festival; planning by civic leaders, news reports of the actual events, plus information of the various Fallbrook businesses active during those years.
- 2) Fallbrook telephone books in Historical Society archives also were used to document Fallbrook's historic businesses since 1950.

Do you have a group that may enjoy a private guided tour of the Historical Society Heritage Center or of the Reche Schoolhouse?

We also take history on the road with presentations to local groups.



Fallbrook Historical Society takes history on the road. Jeff Duhachek, vice-president is shown presenting 'The History of Fallbrook' to Silvergate residents.

Fallbrook Historical Society

P.O. Box 1375, Fallbrook, CA 92088

The Mission of the Fallbrook Historical Society is to collect, preserve and display the history and artifacts of the Fallbrook area. The Historical Society accepts donations that are related to Fallbrook history and are of interest to the general public.

2023 Membership Invitation
 New Member Renewal

Date: _____ Name _____

Phone () _____ E-Mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS:

(Please note that Memberships are from January 1 to December 31)

Each membership has one vote. Patron receives a lifetime membership and has name placed on Patron Plaque. Business/corporate sponsors will have space for signage inside the Heritage Center fence. Business/Corporate patrons will have business signage as stated above plus their name listed on an Honor Plaque and ads in the Historical Society newsletters.

____ Family Membership \$30.00 ____ Lifetime Membership \$250.00 ____ Patron \$500.00

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Mail to: Fallbrook Historical Society

P.O. Box 1375 Fallbrook, CA. 92088

*Or join/renew online at: **FallbrookHistoricalSociety.org***

The Historical Society is a 501c/3 non-profit. Membership dues and donations are tax deductible.

Thank you for your support.

The Fallbrook Historical Society's mission is to bring history to life by educating the community and others about Fallbrook's rich heritage



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