

Photo of the Month

Apple Blossom Festivals



Fayetteville's Apple Blossom Float, 1926. (Neg. #N008996)

In 1922 local orchardist W.R. Cady attended a peach festival in Georgia and returned to Rogers determined that his community should similarly celebrate the apple. His suggestion met with enthusiastic approval. While the first Apple Blossom Festival in 1923 was a local affair, those that followed involved all of Northwest Arkansas and attracted as many as 35,000 people to Rogers. With lovely floats decorated in paper blossoms and automobile tours of blooming orchards, the festivals were as much a celebration of spring as of the apple industry. The festivals also offered an ideal opportunity for area towns to express community pride, brag about local progress, and promote tourism in Northwest Arkansas.

The festivals were plagued by rain. Organizers tried varying dates, but by 1927 the memory of previous downpours kept so many visitors away that it was decided to discontinue the event. In addition, it had become difficult to find volunteers for the massive undertaking. As disease and late frosts began to plague the orchards, there soon was little of the apple industry left to celebrate.