

WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS



1926-1976

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Compiled by

The Soroptimist International of Willits

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The Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital as seen in 1948

FRONTIER DAYS

1926-1976

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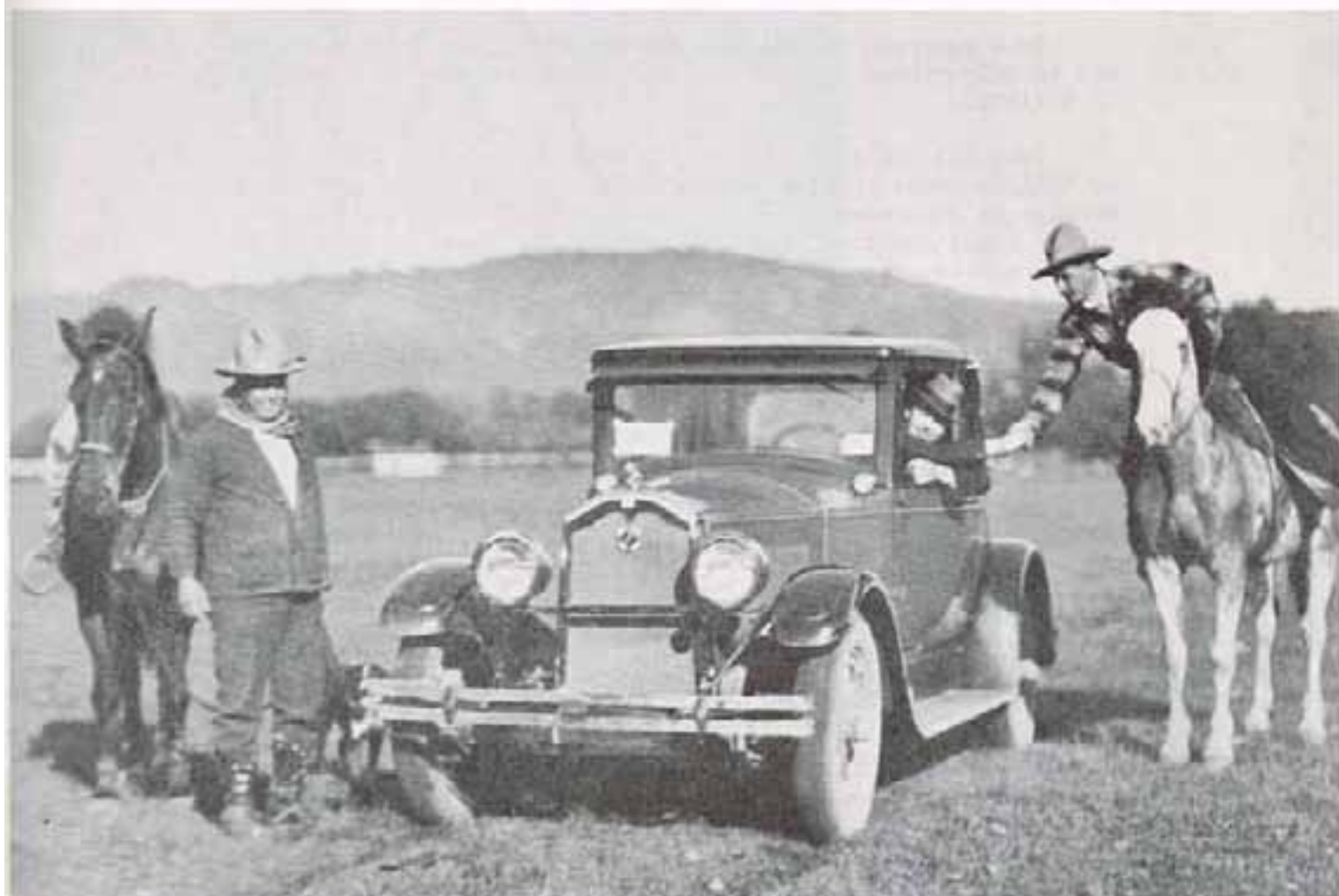
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WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS 1926 - 1976.....

It is now, as it was from the beginning, when a group of civic-minded men, with a concern for the need of a community hospital, met and originated an Independence Day celebration. This became known as Willits Frontier Days and proceeds continue to benefit community betterment.

In recognition of the people past, present, and future who give and devote so much of their time with no personal gain but with interest and love for their community that the Soroptimist International of Willits dedicates this book.

IT WAS FIFTY YEARS AGO, IN 1926



Deed Wimmer

Dr. Raymond Babcock

W.F. "Bill" Whitney

the Willits Post 174 American Legion,
the Willits Development Association,
and local businessmen joined together
to sponsor an annual affair over the
Fourth of July

- FRONTIER DAYS!

Profits would go to help equip the new community hospital to be built in 1927 by Charles S. Howard, of the Ridgewood Ranch south of here. The hospital would be donated to the people of Willits.

Earlier that year, in May 1926, Mr. Howard's 15-year-old son Frank R. Howard was killed in an auto accident.

In a generous gesture despite his grief, Mr. Howard reached out to help others and contracted for the building of a hospital in Willits.

Grateful and enthusiastically wanting to help, the people of Willits under the leadership of the "Legion boys" with Frank Whitney as Commander joined together to produce a rodeo to help outfit their hospital, and decided then and there to make it an annual affair over the Fourth of July to benefit civic improvement.


Legion members solicited donations - any person wishing to donate could contact Frank Whitney or Fred Foord.

In October of 1926 the celebration was named Frontier Days, and businessmen and members of the Willits Development Association thronged to help as the Frontier Days fever mounted.

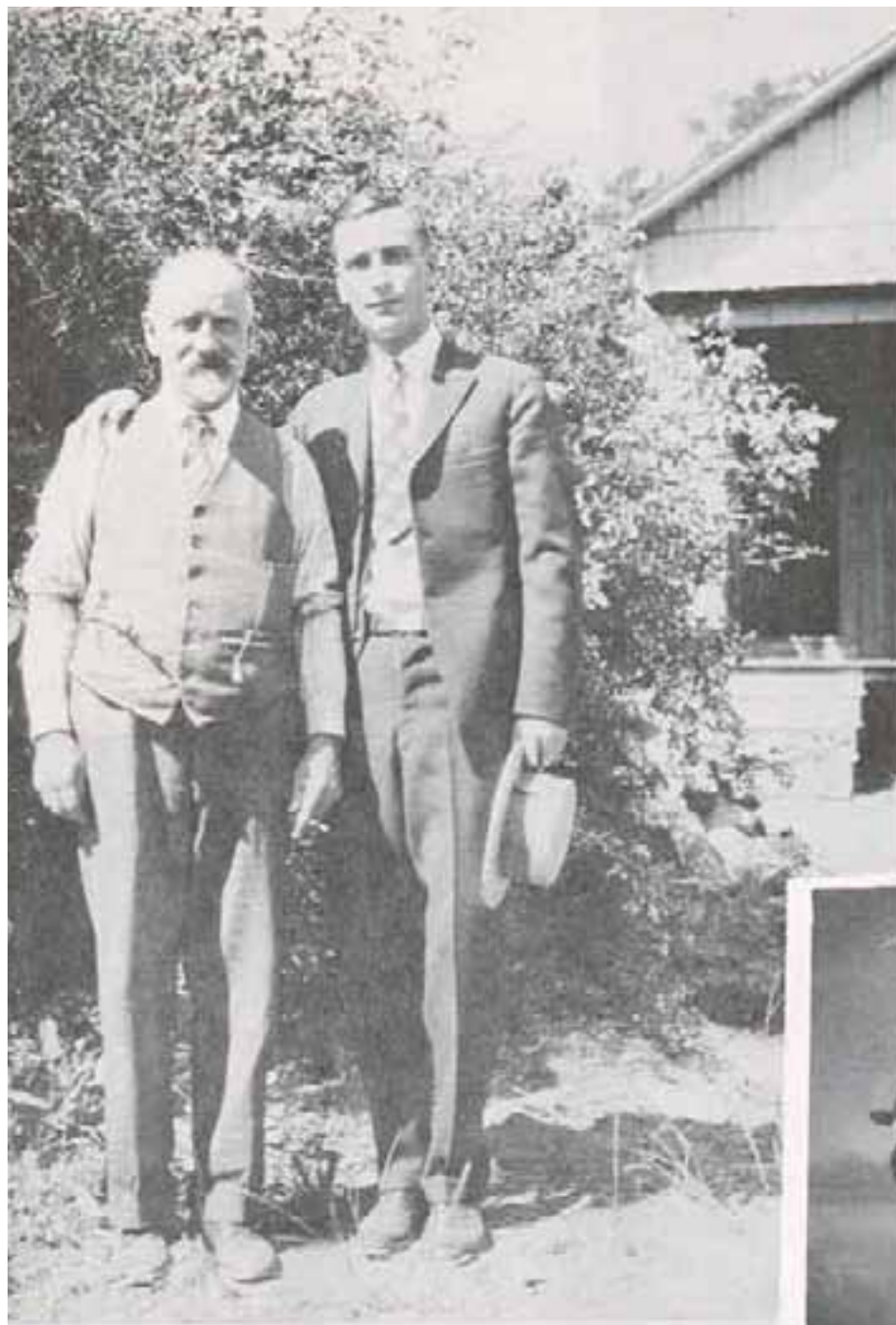
Committees were appointed with such names as Frank Whitney (general manager), C.A. Larson, William Baechtel, Edward Morris, W.F. "Bill" Whitney, Deed Wimmer, Fred Foord, Carl Edenfeldt, Allen Sacry, Judge E.M. Whitney, Dr. Raymond Babcock, and Frank Taft.

In December of 1926, the American Legion decided to hold a special fund-raising celebration in January 1927 to get together some money for Frontier Days the following July. The January show was to be called Frontier Nights at Slippery Gulch, a four-day show which would be held indoors at the high school auditorium!

Already beginning to practice in December of 1926 for the July 1927 show was the Willits Municipal Band under the direction of Fred L. Sowash.



I
Was Pinched
IN SLIPPERY GULCH
FOR GAMBLING



Judge E.W. Whitney and W.F. "Bill" Whitney



Fred Foord and Mrs. Charles Ebsden



Charles Foord

Left to right standing: unidentified,
Louise Foord, Velma Mego.
Seated: Amy Foord and Barbara
Foord Holmes.



1927



SWEETHEART

Maria Schloegel

A smashing success in January 1927 was Frontier Nights in Slippery Gulch, the four-day indoor show to raise funds for the Frontier Days July show.

Mexican Pete's Resort, Ike's Hot Dog Hotel, Si Perkins' Dance Hall and other such attractions were the hit of the affair. There was dancing every evening, whiskers, prizes, and eleven ladies entered the Queen contest. Miss Marie Schloegel was Queen and net receipts were \$544.

Plans for the July show got into full swing then with a Whiskerino Club started with a charter membership of eight men: Deed Wimmer, Carl Edenfeldt, Frank Whitney, C.A. Larson, Bill Whitney, Fred Foord, T.J. Nunnan, and Charles Zbinden.

In May it was announced that the American Legion Park would be Frontier Days' home. Dr. Raymond Babcock was practicing horseback riding and the story was circulated in June that he would make his house calls either by horseback or auto.

There were 14 graduates in the senior class of Willits High School in June and the Frontier Days grandstands were finished that same month.

Taking shape were costume contests, a women's Frontier Days Club, a baseball game, trick horses, races, and airplane rides!

The show was off to a flying start! It was slated for July 2, 3, and 4 in 1927.

Also, breaking of ground for the hospital was set for 9 a.m. on the morning of the Fourth. Events scheduled were:

For the dedication of the Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital, July 4, 1927 -

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| 9:30 Assembly at hospital ground | | Boy Scout Bugler |
| Flag Raising | | Boy Scouts |
| To the Colors | | Bugler |
| Star Spangled Banner | | H.S. Band |
| Invocation | | Rev. F.C. Lovett |
| Song | | Mesdames Tuck & Haskett |
| Dedication Address | | Judge Preston |
| Exercises: Ox team with plow | | William Lewis |
| Christening | | Jane Babcock |
| Plowman | | Dr. H.C. Warren |
| Benediction | | Chaplain Jones |
| Stars and Stripes Forever-March. | | H.S. Band |
| Baseball | | 10:15 a.m. |

The show was called a huge success and it was reported a large sum was raised for the hospital.

DAILY EVENTS OF FRONTIER DAYS, JULY 2, 3, 4.

Baseball Game 10 A. M.
 Parade 1 to 2 P. M.

Events Daily From 2:30 to 5

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| WILL RACING | COWBOY RACER |
| WILSON RACING | COWBOY RACER |
| WILD MULE RIDING | CALF RIDING |
| WILD MULE RACING | HORSE RACER |
| CHAMPION RACER | GREASED PIG |
| RELAY RACER | BUCKING HORSE |
| Band Concert | 7 P. M. |
| Dancing | 9 P. M. |

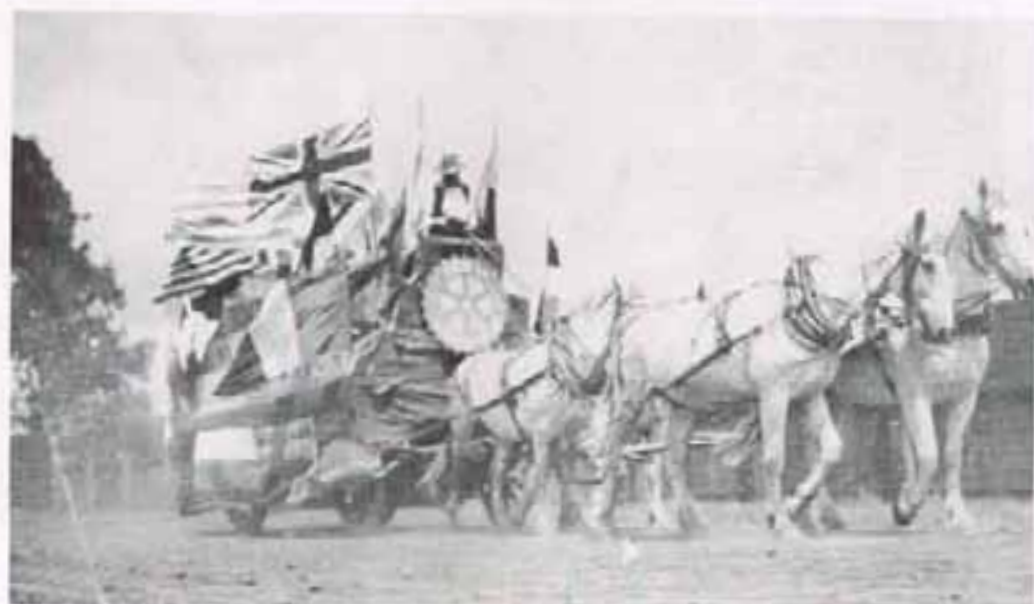
Special Daily Events

Miss Una Boylen Trick Horses
 Airplane Rides by American Legion Aviator

Special Events

Saturday, 1st day Wild Mule Riding
 Sunday, 2nd Day Wild Cow Milking Contest
 Monday, 3rd Day, 25 Goats given 20 kids that catch them





1928



SWENTHEART

Martha Mae Warner

An American Legion and Frontier Days Costume Dance on Saturday, May 26, at the High School Auditorium to raise money for Frontier Days had a special feature: at 9:15 sharp was the marriage of Frank Whitney and Frances Washburn by Rev. A.H. Mc Kellup, a real old-fashioned wedding of the days of '49. Bride and groom were dressed in Frontier Days costume. As soon as the wedding was over, dancing began and continued until the "wee small hours" of the morn. All profits from the dance went to Frontier Days Finance Committee. De Motte's Orchestra played.

The Frontier Days show was not a rodeo alone but a real old-fashioned Wild West celebration featuring events of Early California.

Features: bull teams, ox teams, covered wagons, hoop skirts, horse and chariot races, Indian pony races, cowboy and cowgirl riders, native Indians and floats of the '49 nature.

The parade on July 2, 3, and 4 was over one-half mile long with only one automobile in the line. Parade chairmen: Fred Foord and Deed Wimmer.

The rodeo had more than 200 head of stock with the best bucking horses and bulls that can be secured in California.

Girls running for Queen of Frontier Days: Eleanor Dill, Josephine Darrow, Georgia Bulle, Josephine Rhelle from Willits; Frances Clark from Longvale; Dorcas Nyhen and Martha May Warner from Twin Rocks and Bernice Seely from Laytonville.

The winner was Martha May Warner and she was crowned in Happy Canyon.

During the three days of Frontier Days the local Aero Club operated two planes from the local airport. Single passengers rode for \$3.00, or \$2.50 each for two. Handbills were dropped from the planes and those finding a pink one were entitled to a free ride.

Mrs. Annie Dickey won Best Dressed Cowgirl and Wynn Powers Best Dressed Cowboy.

The San Francisco Boys' Club members were guests of the committee. They put on a fine acrobatic act in front of the grandstand, and took an active part in a goat-catching contest. A truckload of goats was turned loose on the track and the boys could keep any they captured.

Given in prizes for Frontier Days: \$1,000.00. New grandstand completed. Admission \$1.00 adults and 25¢ additional for reserved. Santa Rosa American Legion 39-piece Drum Corps marched in the parade - the best in California - uniforms cost more than \$2,500. Duane Cook did fancy trick riding and so did Leandro Persico.

News- gasoline 23½¢ per gallon; Willits may have a Junior College!



Frank Whitney and Frances Washburn
Married at Frontier Days Costume Dance
on May 26, 1928



1929



SWEETHEART

Lola Butts

With just a few shows behind them Frontier Days already owns several thousand dollars in property including grandstands, stages, coaches, stock and other valuables.

In the line of march for parade, termed the best in the west, were stage coaches, bull teams, covered wagons, ox teams, chariots, cowboys, cowgirls, native Indians and relics of California history.

Daily programs included rodeo events, bucking brones, rampant bulls, steer roping and riding, chariot and stage coach races and other sports symbolic of the carefree days of the past.

Charles S. Howard, owner of Ridgewood Ranch, again manifested his good will for Willits and Frontier Days by appearing in the parade and the shows and donating a fine silver mounted set of spurs and bit to the winner of the bucking horse contest. Also, much of the stock for the rodeo was loaned to Frontier Days by Ridgewood Ranch.

Leandro Persico gave a fine exhibition of Roman riding; Persico, Duane Cook and Harry Underhill gave exhibitions of fancy riding and Cook's educated horses were a popular novelty.

The San Francisco Boys' Club came in from their camp over 200 strong and after marching in the parade, occupied a section of the grandstand where they entertained the crowd with their yells and a number of acrobatic stunts.

Luther Rape and his Hoboes and The Knights of Pythias Clown Band furnished comic features and Fred Foord did his clown stunts.

The Willits High School Band reinforced by many bandmen in town, under the leadership of Fred Sowash, furnished music for three days and played a concert in the city park each evening. The Willits Fire Department entertained with their famous water fight.



Parade Winners: William Lewis with covered wagon and bull teams; Royal Neighbors of America float with old hand loom; American Legion Auxiliary float with old coffee mill.

Special Awards: Mrs. William Moore and Mrs. E.M. Fish for their old-time cart and 100-year-old dresses. Best sustaining character prizes to Mrs. Annie Babcock and William Moore.

Bucking Horse Winners: Lem Smith, Sam Howe, Frank Perrish. Roping Contest: E.E. Safford, Edgar James, Lem Smith. Bull riding: Monte Montgomery, Harry Underhill, Edgar James. Wild Cow Milking: Ben Mast, Smoky Moran, H.F. Brown.





Elvin Byrd on King Tutt

1930



The young and the old - all take part at the
Willits Frontier Days celebration - fourth
annual - July 4 - 5 - 6, 1930.

The famous string of Eden Valley bucking horses owned by Dr. E.C. Bennett, Dr. T.B. Ricks, and J.R. Hill were secured for the Frontier Days show in 1930. H.A. Reynolds arranged for a herd of 25 of the largest and toughest bucking bulls from Mendocino and Humboldt Counties, and Charles Howard of Ridgewood Ranch donated purebred ponies for the boys' bucking contest.

The Frontier Days committee asked that citizens and businessmen wear loud-colored shirts and cowboy hats during the celebration. Frank Corbett and Fred Foord, in charge of street decorations, saw to it that streamers were draped across Main Street.

The automobile was taboo in the parade, with only floats depicting the days of old allowed. Lions Club parade trophy cup winners: M. Cooper of Dos Rios, American Legion Auxiliary float, and Willits Post 174 horse-drawn streetcar.

A Shetland Pony, donated by E.E. Safford of Ridgewood Ranch, was given free to some lucky child. Bill Whitney is shown riding it in the picture.

Ladies in hoop skirts and gentlemen with whiskers danced at the Wild West Frontier Days Dance sponsored by the Willits Farm Bureau as a benefit dance, with music by the Mendocino Melody Makers. Another dance was held at Longvale to raise funds.

Henry Haehl was appointed manager of livestock and track events by General Manager Frank H. Whitney to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Deed Wimmer, who handled this position for the previous three years.

The American Legion, which sponsored Frontier Days, was under the direction of Commander T.G. Nunan and Adjutant C.R. Foord in 1930.

Newspaper accounts invited visitors to Frontier Days in Willits, "a thriving little city of 1500 population located in the heart of Mendocino County midway between Eureka and San Francisco."

Home-made hoopskirts and sunbonnets were popular dress for the three-day celebration.

W.T. Saxon was chairman of the parade committee. Some of the local men competing in the rodeo were "Dink" Persico, George Bowman, "Rupe" James, and "Doc" Sutton.

In 1930 Frontier Days gave more than \$1,000 in prizes.





Kangaroo Court - Judge L.P. Anker

1931



Roman Riding

New grandstands were completed just before the 1931 show, along with four new modern bucking chutes, plus several large and better corrals.

The three-eighths-mile dirt race track was in first class shape and was declared one of the best dirt tracks of its kind in California.

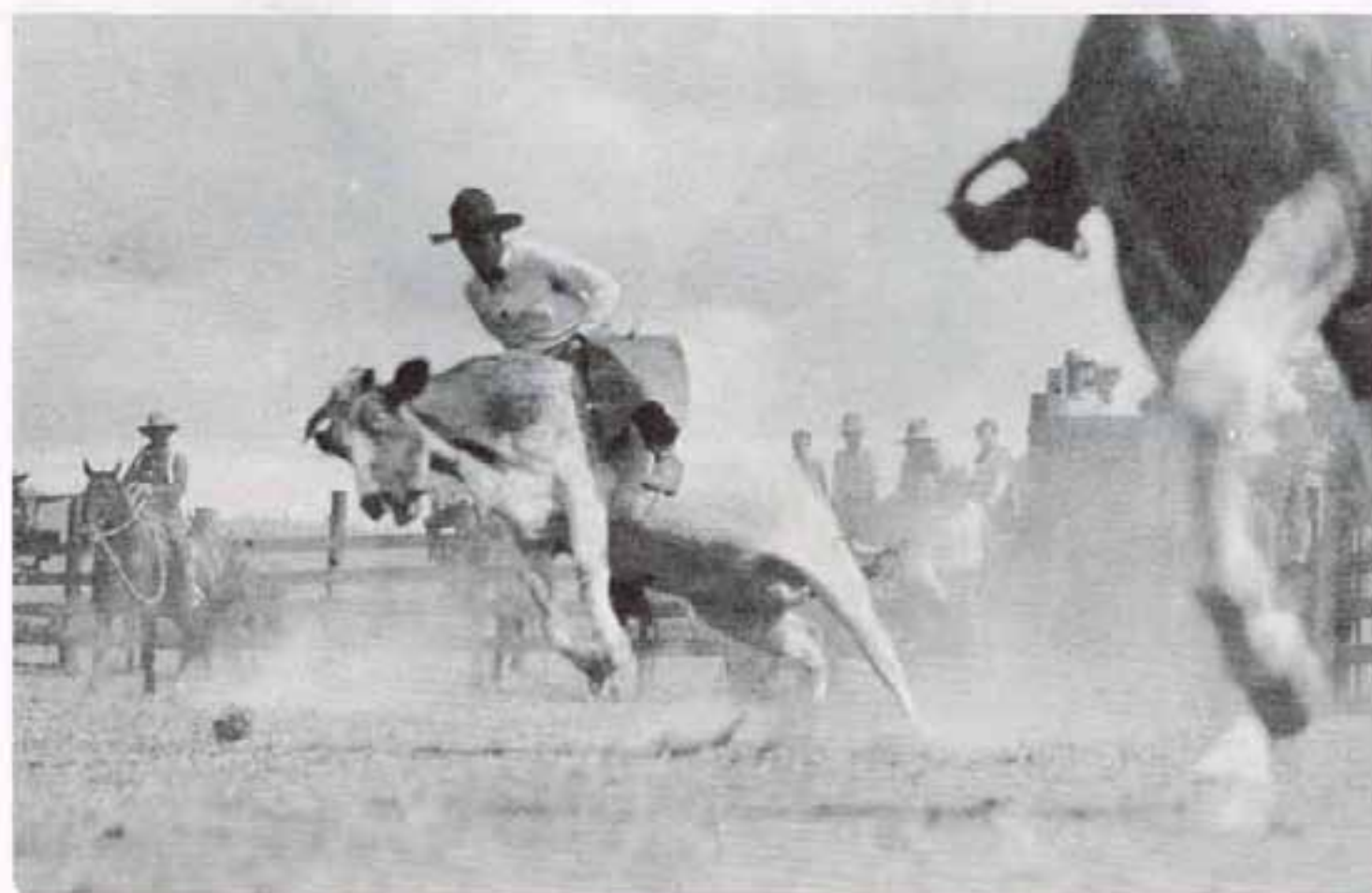
Events highlighting the three-day show were the dances in the City Park on each of the three nights. A baseball game was held on the Fourth of July between Willits and the Sherwood Indians.

Some of the events were relay race, ladies free-for-all, men's free-for-all, steeple chase race, stake race, cowgirl and cowboy horse races, chariot and Roman races, bulldogging, steer roping, and wild horse races.

The California Western Railroad and Navigation Company announced a special Frontier Days Fete Excursion rate of \$2.00 round trip between Willits and Fort Bragg for the show.

Again in 1931 the Frontier Days show was sponsored by the Willits Post 174, American Legion and had not veered from its original purpose of being a show for community benefit.





1932



SWEETHEART

Enola McKenzie

In 1932 the Willits Fire Department took over the sponsorship of Frontier Days. For five years the American Legion assumed all responsibility for the show but this year they asked to be relieved of the burden. Merrill Williams, former Chief of the Department, will be the general manager of the show with Leandro Persico as Assistant Manager. Both have been active with Frontier Days since the beginning.

Advisory Board: L. Persico, John Heap, Ray Johnson, M. Williams, H.E. Rogers, A.M. Gunderson, and J.A. Bondeson, who was the advertising manager. I.T. Hall-concession manager; A.M. Sacry-secretary; M.H. Haskett-treasurer. Finance committee: A.M. Sacry and A.M. Gunderson; tickets - Ray Johnson; parades- V.W. Haselswerdt; entertainment-Fred Sowash; dances-H.E. Rogers.

It was later decided that Haselswerdt would be chairman of the night parade and Heap chairman of the day parade, each to be one mile long. The night parade started at 8:30 p.m., at California Street and Main, passing the length of Main and halting on Commercial Street near the park where the "Growlers" put on their stunts. Merchants were to make their best window displays and keep their windows lighted until midnight during the celebration. The day parade was devoted mostly to livestock and riders.

The Fire Department put up street decorations and building decorations. The boys were willing to assist any businessman in decorating his place of business and would put up or take down the decorations without cost to the businessman except for the materials used.

Season tickets were \$2.50 covering admission to all events. The money received from the advance sale was used to cover all preliminary expenses and no contributions were to be asked from the businessmen of the town.

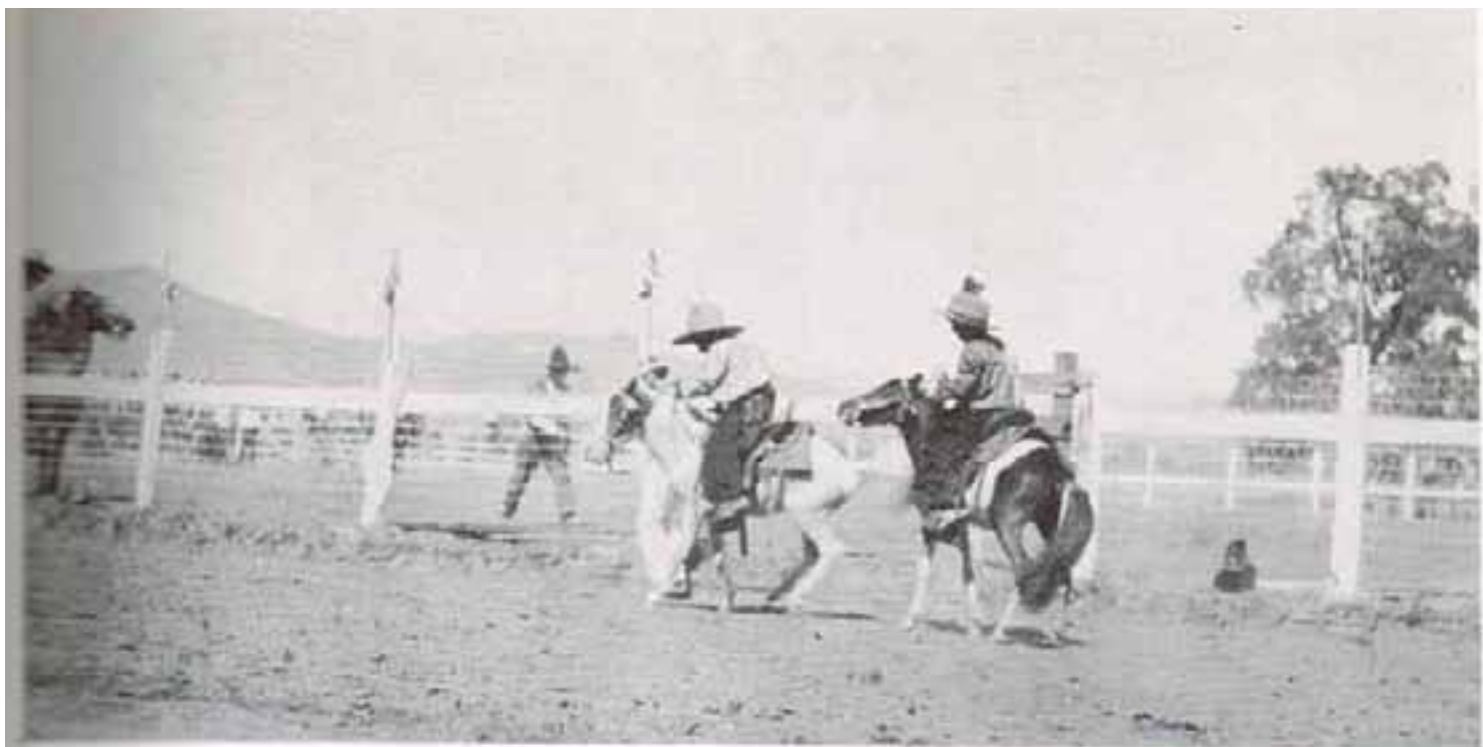
Competing for Sweetheart were Enola McKenzie, Virginia Larsen, and Peggy McPhillips. Miss McKenzie won the title and was furnished a gorgeous costume and a purebred Arabian saddle horse for use in the parade and on the track.

On July 3, a flock of carrier pigeons was released by the Sperry Flour Company from in front of the grandstand. Prizes were given to the best guess on the time it took the birds to fly from Willits to their home lofts.

Frank Corbett again had concession stand for cold drinks and ice cream.

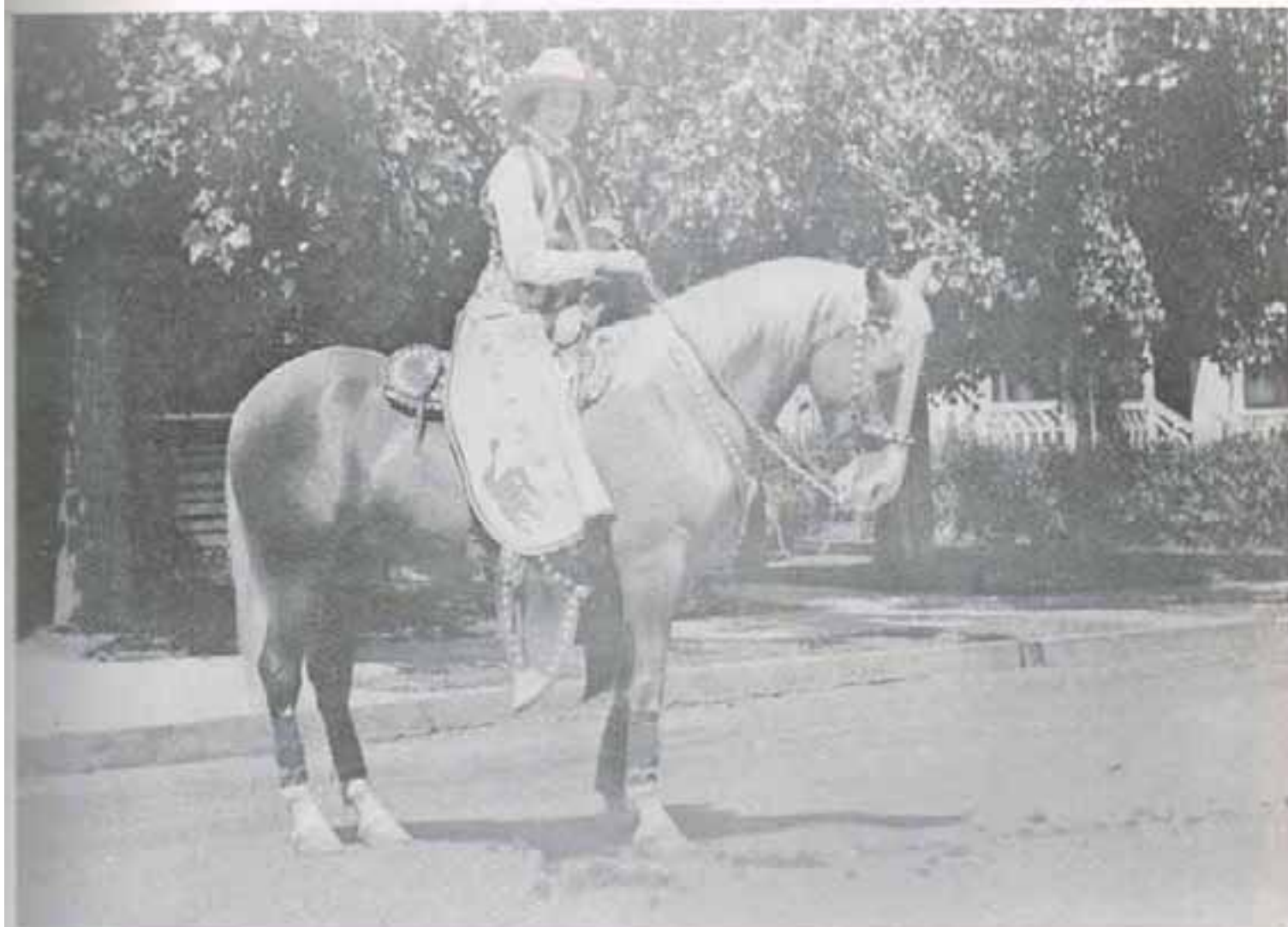
The rodeo was a purely local affair but professionals were not barred. Animals were obtained from Mendocino and neighboring counties, plus some longhorn Mexican cattle. Cowboy bucking contest carries largest purse of \$400. Steer riding had \$150 prizes; steer roping \$145 prizes.

Bulldogging was prohibited by law and instead there was a steer decoration contest. The rider simply catches his steer and ties a large rubber band over its nose, the winner doing it in the shortest time.





1933



SWEETHEART

Betty Akins

In 1933 the Sweetheart of Frontier Days was Betty Akins.
Judges of the rodeo were Eck Safford of the Ridgewood
Ranch; Merrill Williams, and George Bowman of Laytonville.
Trick riding was performed by Duane Cook and Lee Persico.



In Frontier
Day dress:
left,
Louise Foord;
right,
Wave Whitney.

1934



SWEETHEART

Amy Gardner

Color Guard, left to right: Bill Walters, Leta Inez Walters, Amy Gardner,
and Al Payne

1934 is the year that Frontier Days acquired the rodeo grounds - purchased from the bank in San Francisco.

The Sweetheart was Amy Gardner and Ex-Governor C.C. Young had a place of honor riding on the lead fire truck.

A famous horse - Steamboat - appeared through the courtesy of Merrill Williams.

One new feature this year was the hog race.



Sweetheart Amy Gardner and Glenn Christenson



1935



SWEETHEART

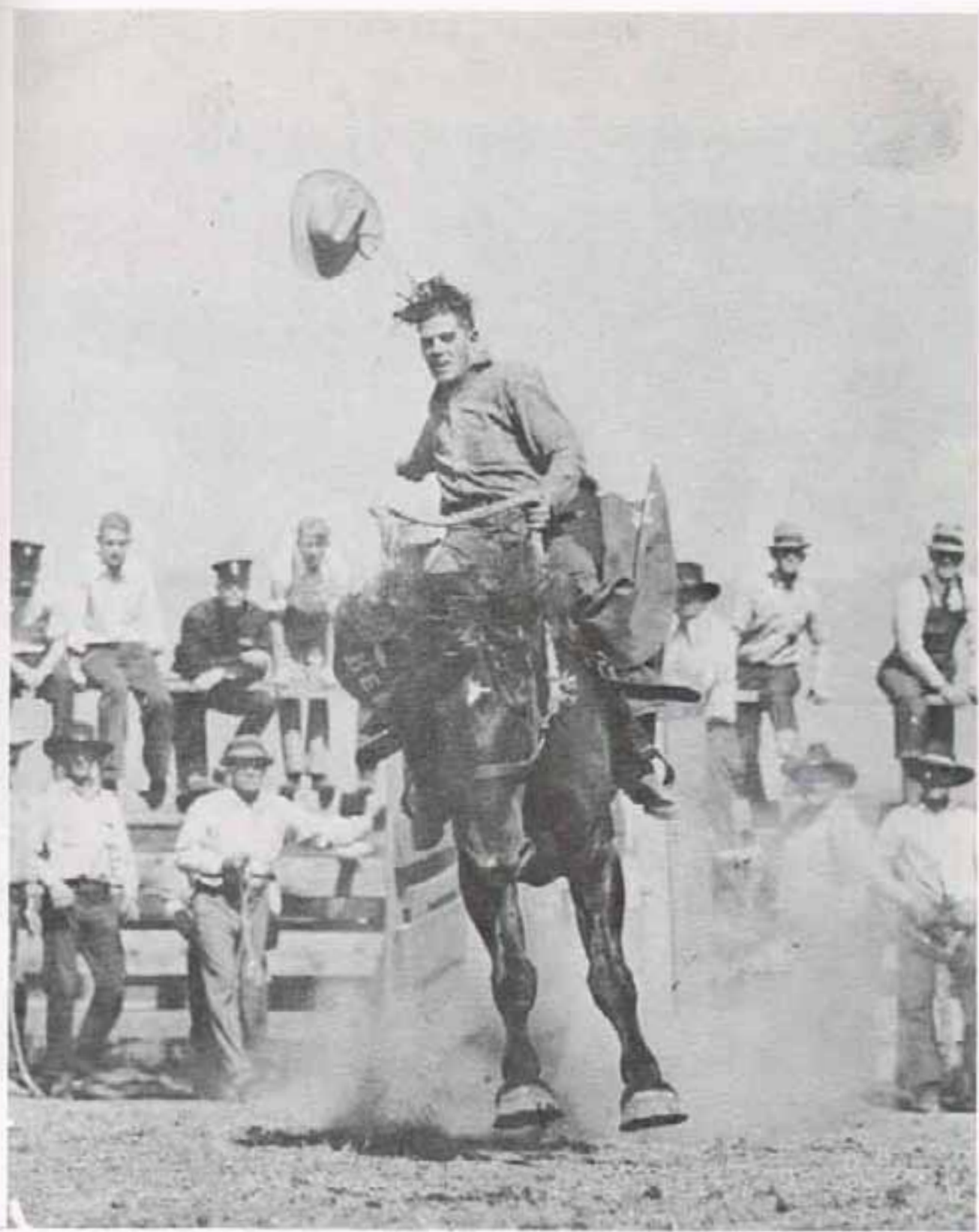
Jenna Pedroncelli

In 1935 there were two parades and dancing in the park.

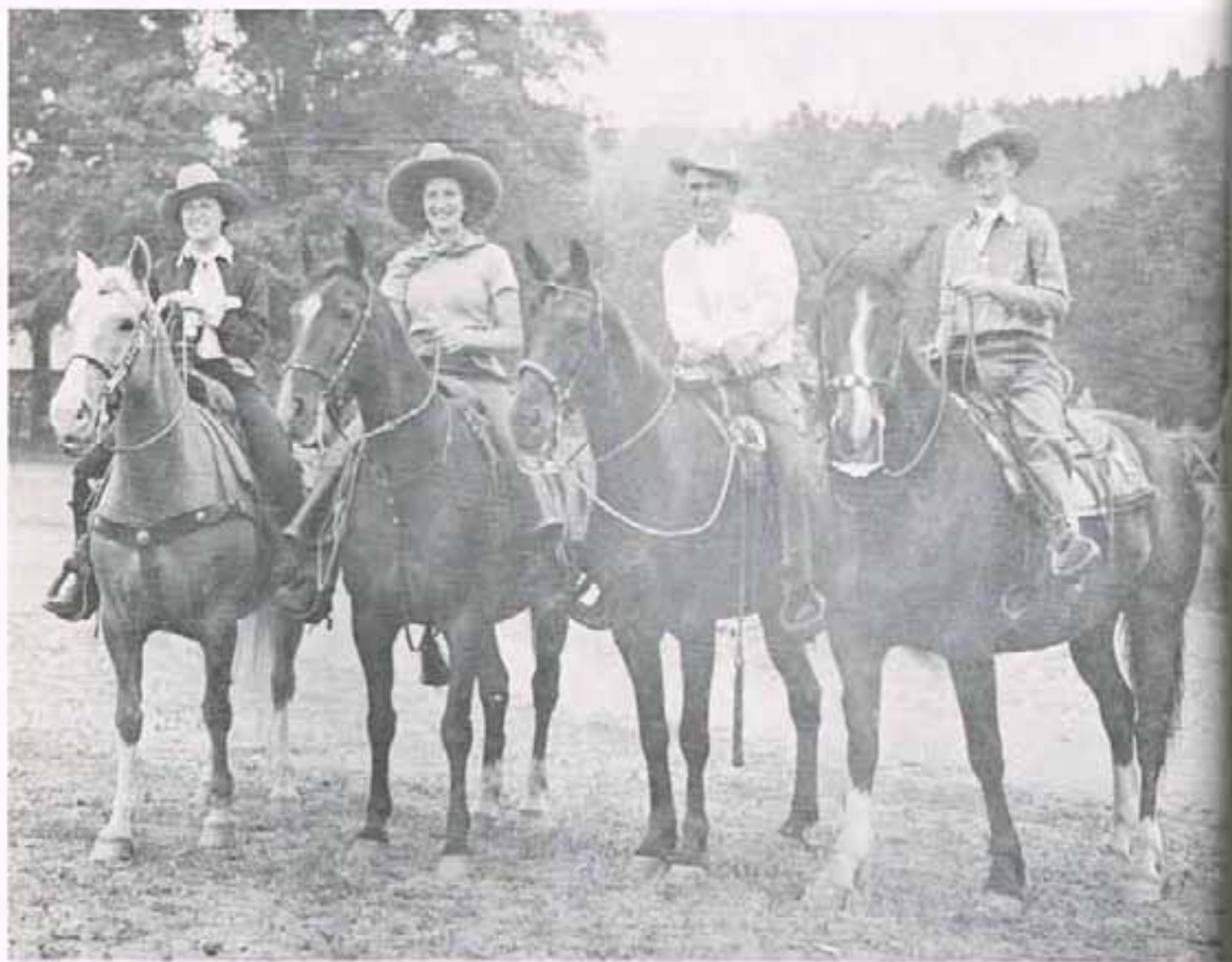
The Jumping Steer was a new feature when Monte H. Rigar on a Texas longhorn leaped over an automobile.

Jenna Pedroncelli was Sweetheart this year.

And the old Pony Express was featured. Dr. F.W. Derrick, the last living express rider and companion of William Cody, was the headliner. He had met Buffalo Bill in 1862 at the age of 10 in Montana.



Fred Johnson



Left to right: Florence Persico, Jemma Pedroncelli, E.E. "Eck" Safford,
and Petie Coleman

1936



SWEETHEART

Elizabeth Wendt

1936 was the 10th annual Frontier Days.....

The sponsor was the Willits Fire Department and the Sweetheart Chairman was Lottie Houx.

Features were auto racing on opening days and Steve Shannon as Clown. Jim Doss, a professional announcer from San Jose, was here for the occasion.

The parade was scheduled for two days and "Kay Dee" Reynolds handled the outside publicity.

Dutch Haselswerdt and Bob Potter were in charge of the parade committee, with Fred Sowash directing the band.

Strings of lights decorated Main Street.

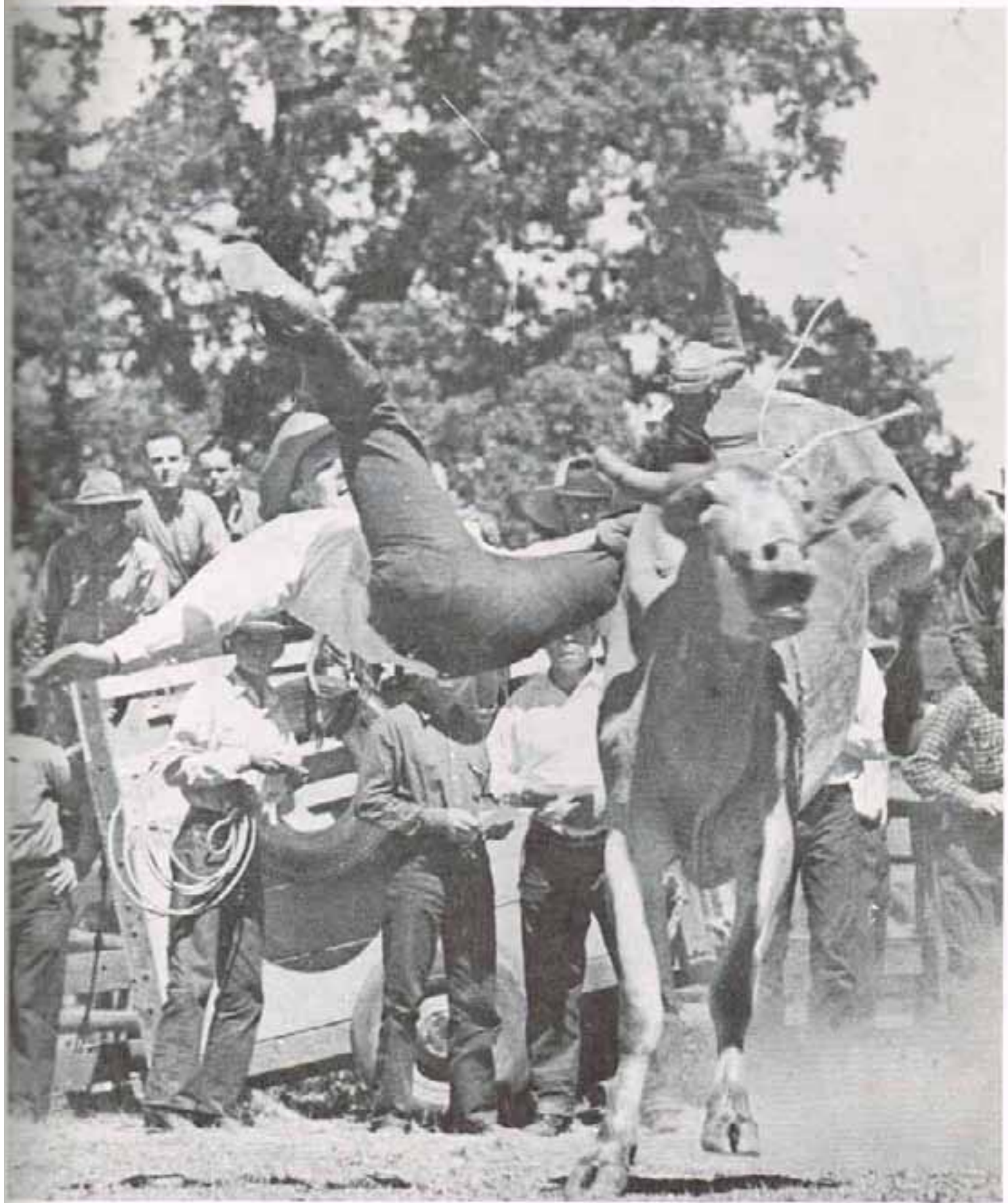
C.A. Gibbens, age 85 years, one of the most enthusiastic boosters of Frontier Days, donated \$1.00 even though his means were very limited.

Bus Carson, famous trick rider, came here from Utah for the show.

Sweetheart contestants were Elisabeth Wendt, Laytonville; Millene Potter, Willits, and Miss Johnson, Lakeport. Winner was Elisabeth Wendt.

The Fire Department showed a profit of \$500 from the dances at the Park Pavilion, and Jean Williams, a 1936 graduate of Willits High School, won a Plymouth auto.

On July 8, 1936, Willits had its first rain in July since 1920.



Wesley Woodley



A. Bon



George Bowman



Roland Williams

1937



SWEETHEART

Alice Gibellini

The Willits Fire Department raised money for new grandstands to be completed July 1.

Sweetheart Alice Gibellini reigned and Norman Sawyers was announcer and also sang a few cowboy songs.

Don Coleman was chairman of the parade with 40 prizes offered. He was also in charge of track events at the rodeo.

Merrill Williams and Heino Hendrich were in charge of arena events. Two loving cups were presented for the best whiskers. The Ridgewood Ranch donated silver spurs to the winner of the bronc contest.



Gross receipts from
tickets on the Fourth
of July - \$2,800.00
- said to be the largest
over.

Estimated gross from all
sources - \$6,000.00 .

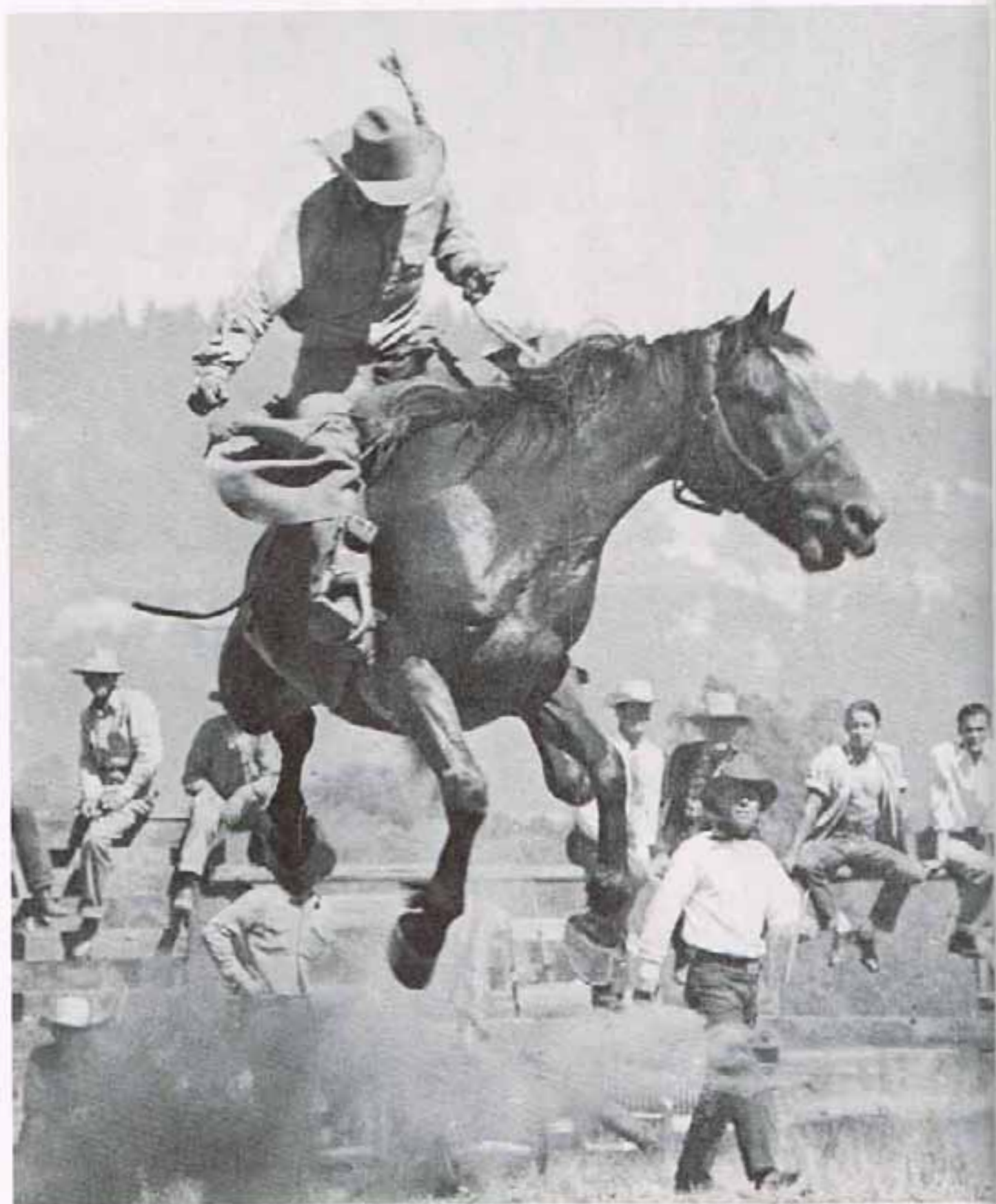
Net - \$1,200.00.

Rough House Lewis

July 4, 1937

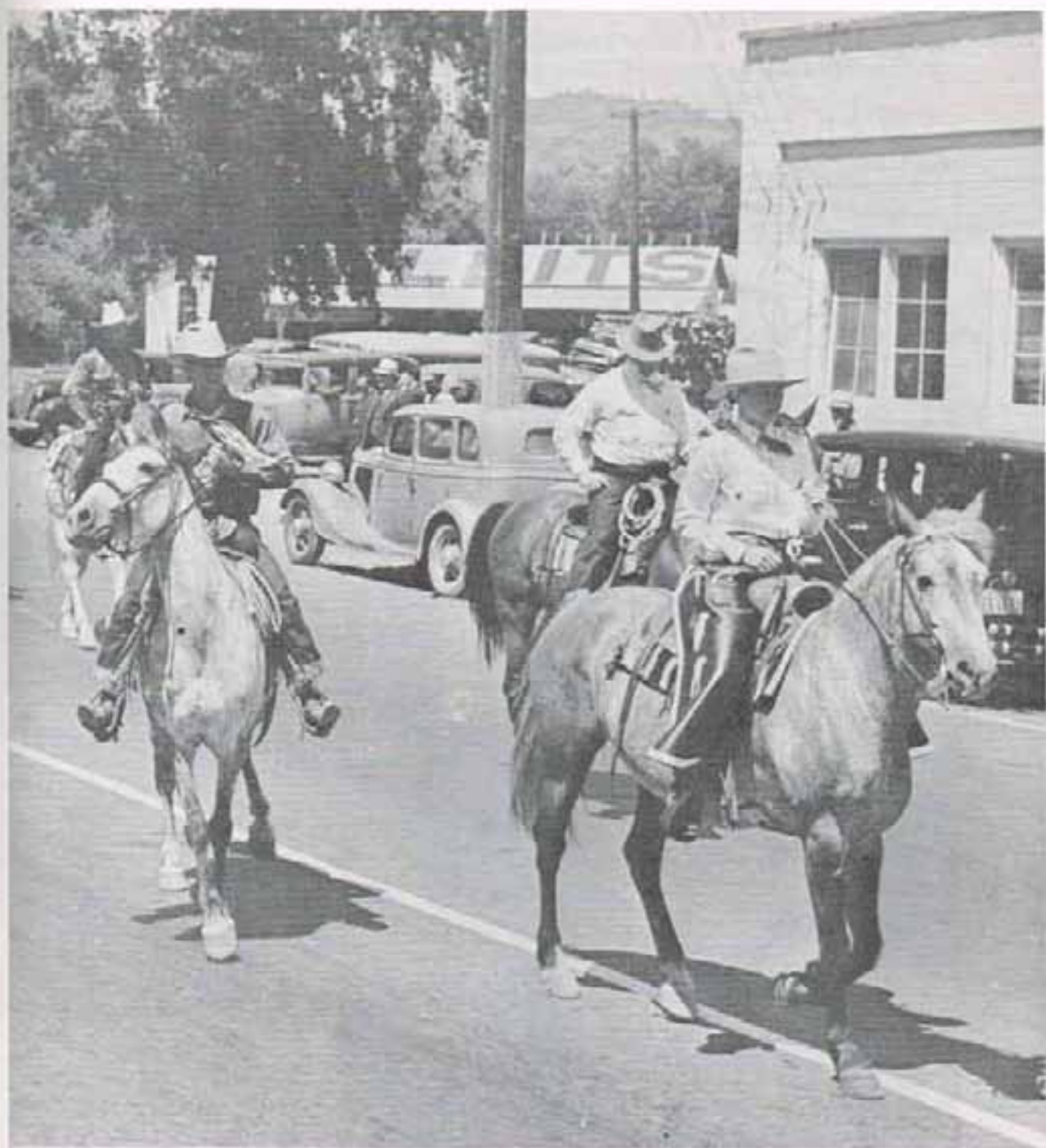


Sweetheart Alice Gibellini in a night
parade on fire department engine



Gene Rambou

1938



SWEETHEART

Dorce Brown

This 12th annual Frontier Days in Willits 1938 was held on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of July with new bleachers at the north end of the grounds to accommodate 600 persons.

The show featured a cowboy orchestra from San Rafael managed by Roscoe Squiers, a former Willits resident.

Sam Garrett, world famous champion trick roper was here. He won seven times at the famous Cheyenne Frontier Days and performed for four Presidents.

The show honored Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Allen of Willits, who had been married 55 years. Mr. Allen was 77 years old and Mrs. Allen was 74.

The Sweetheart was Dorce Brown of Laytonville and Lee Persico, Jr.,



at the age of 2 years, 2 months, and 18 days, was a big hit of the celebration. As a coming champion rodeo performer and future bronc rider, Lee already had "Buck," his own personal pony well in hand. Little Lee has never at any time been strapped or tied on his mount and in all his riding and in all photographs performs with an absolutely free seat in the saddle.

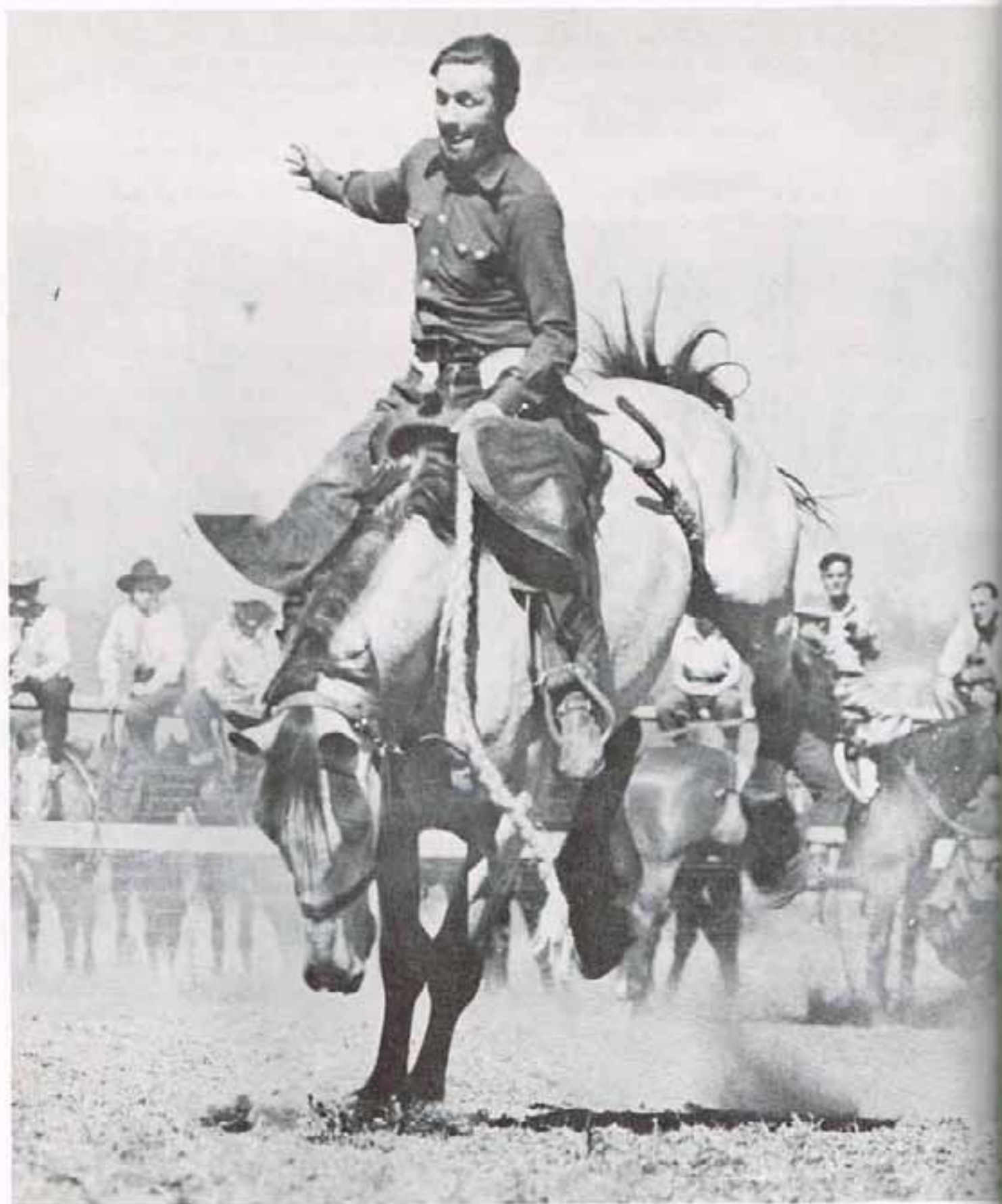
He is the son of Lee F. Persico, professional rodeo performer and trick rider, and Florence E. Persico, active participant in many rodeos.

In 1938 the take at the gate was \$501.30 on Saturday; \$1,706.75 on Sunday, and \$2,026.50 on Monday.

Total gross was \$7,256.05.



In the lead left to right: Barbara Corbett, Jim Silva, and Fred Powers. Barbara and Fred won the prize (6 show tickets) for the prettiest pintos.



Smokey Morgan on Yellow Jacket

1939



SWEETHEART

Ernestine Casteel, left

Runner-up Kathryne Kenworthy, right

Merrill Williams was Director of Frontier Days in 1939 and committee chairmen were Harold Rogers, music; William Ford, dance, and Fred Sowash, parade.

Caravans were held on June 18 and 26, when residents travelled to towns all over Mendocino, Lake, and Sonoma Counties to advertise Frontier Days (see picture below).

The budget was lowered this year to \$5,325.00 and Sweetheart contestants were Ernestine Casteel and Kay Kenworthy. Ernestine was named Sweetheart.

O.S. Howard was Grand Marshal. The Rainbow Swingaroo played for the dancing. June 10 was the deadline for western attire but no beards were required. It was decided to have an amateur night instead of Kangaroo Court this year.

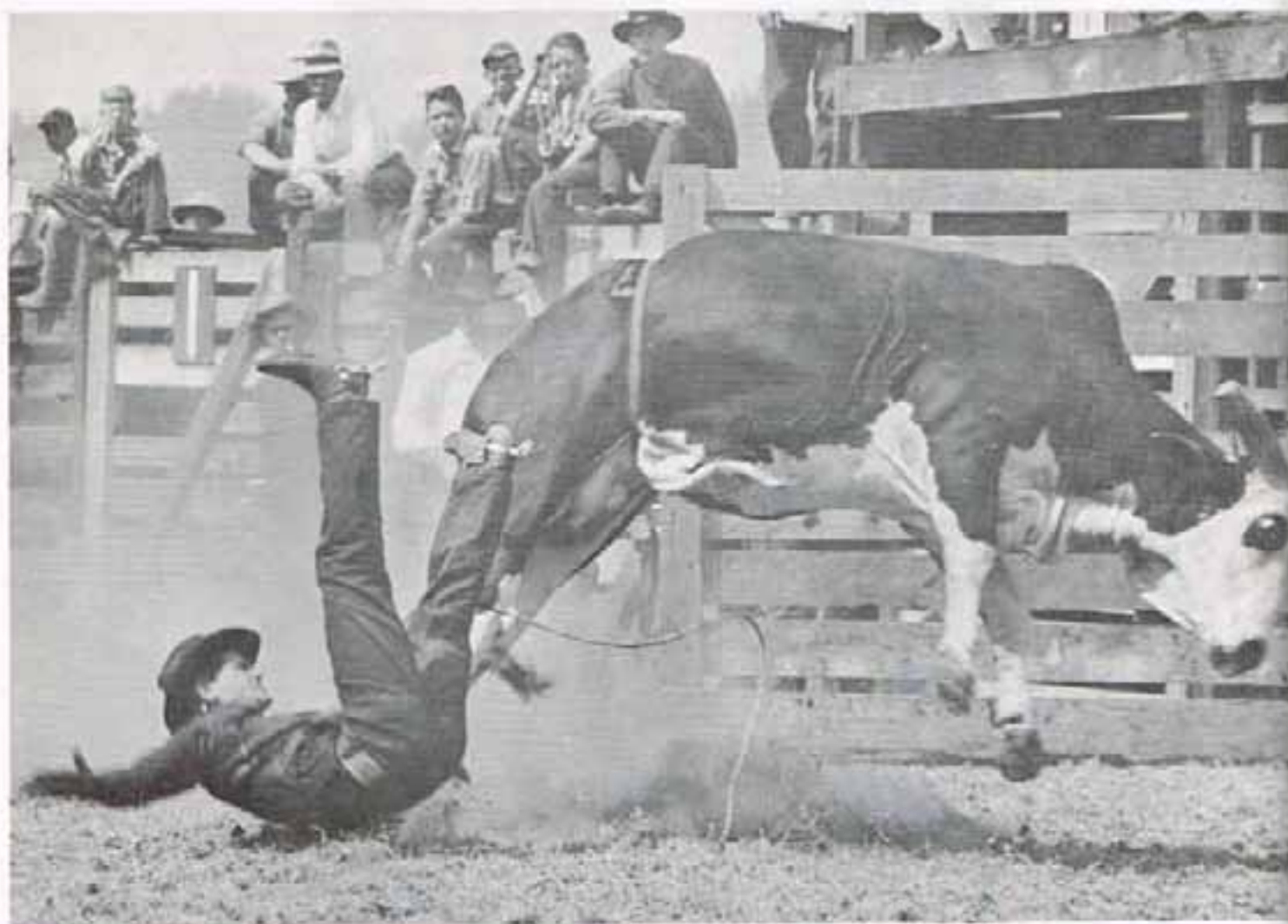
Lee Persico, Jr., performing at the World's Fair Rodeo in San Francisco, publicized Frontier Days by an appearance at the Redwood Empire Building on Treasure Island on May 13.

Trick riders, fancy ropers, and special entertainers were Leo Persico, Jr., Lee and Christy LeRoy, Gene Hall, and Dick Griffiths. Shorty Cisco will be the clown. Silver Dollar, a trained giant Brahma, was the feature attraction. Profit was \$400.00. Two new restrooms were built at the rodeo grounds and a flag pole was installed.



Willits Frontier Days Caravan on the Old Court House steps-Santa Rosa





1940



SWEETHEART

Evalyn Robley

The Willits Firemen sponsored Frontier Days in 1940 and also handled the Sweetheart Contest. Evelyn Robley won the Contest and Rozetta Drew, Mae Steen, and Ethel Gunn were runners-up.

Busy running the show this year were chairmen Gus Green, Leo Conard, Jim Powers, Merrill Williams, Mrs. Harold Rogers, Mrs. Elwin Van Cleemput, M.E. Potter, Frank Whitney, W.D. Ford, J.A. Bondeson, and A.M. Sacry.

The caravans made their first booster trek to Covelo with Cliff Iversen furnishing the music and Howard Bobbitt supplying the loud speaker.

Four-year-old Baby Lee Persico again captivated the crowds at the rodeo, along with Shorty Cisco, cowboy clown and Verne and Myrtle Goodrich, trick riders and fancy ropers. Bud Bentley announced for the rodeo.

Field events were steer riding, single steer roping, bronc riding, calf roping, bull dogging, and local steer roping.

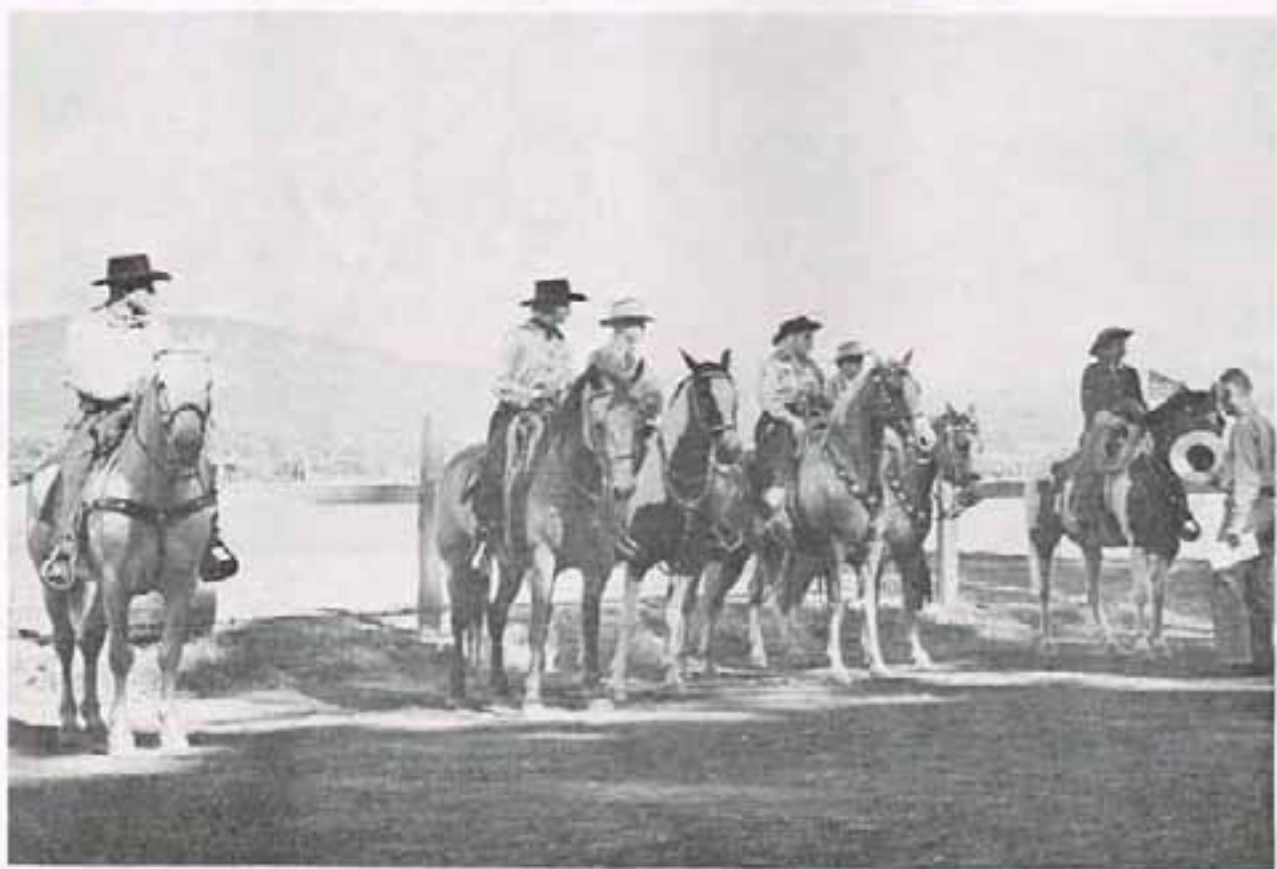
Track events were ladies mounts, local cowgirls' race, local stock horse class, trick riding, hackamore class, flat race, trick and fancy roping, western color class, stake race, trail horse class, relay race, local cowboy race, free-for-all race, and pig race.

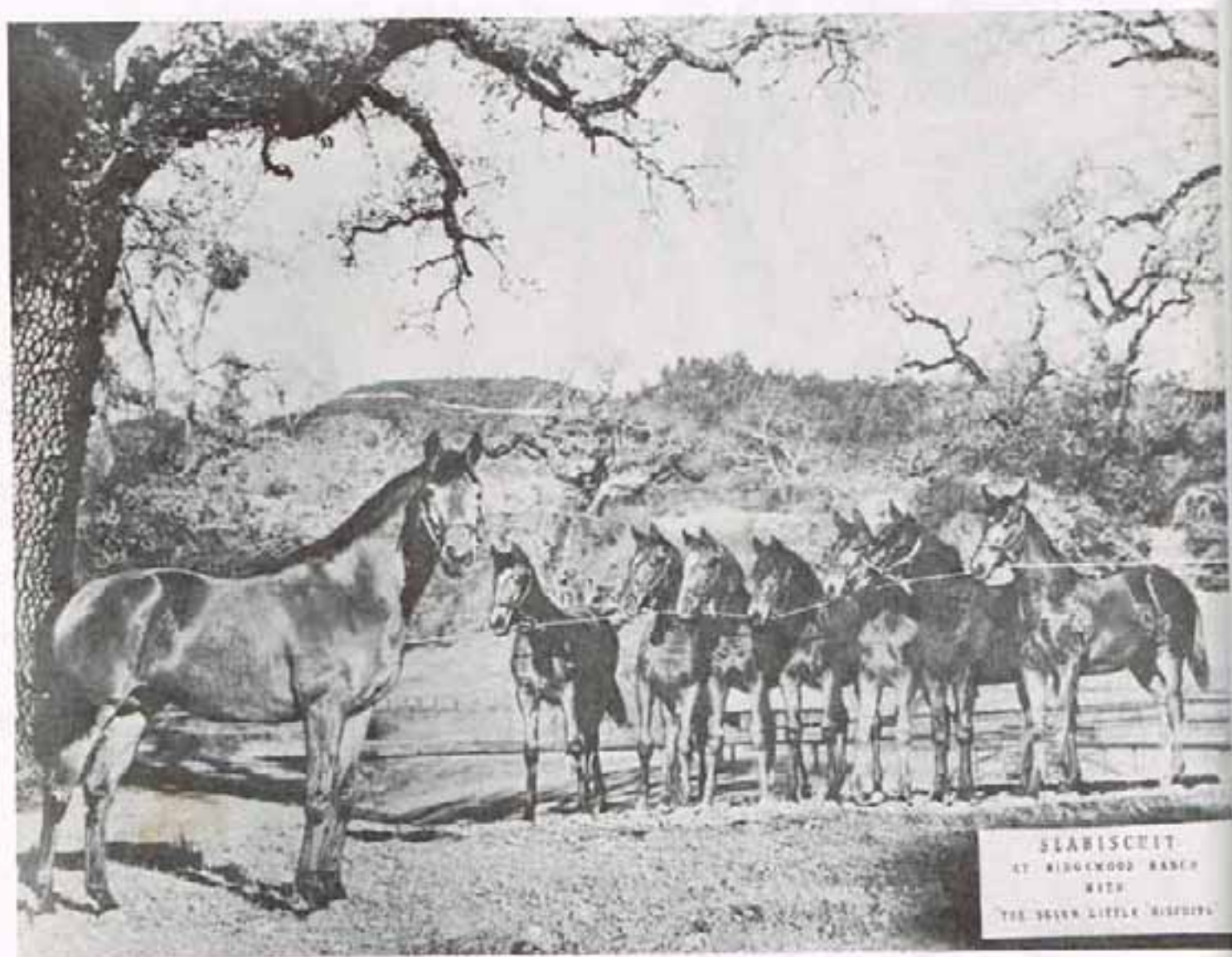
On each day of the show, July 3 and 4, there was a parade, rodeo, dance and carnival, with fireworks an added attraction one day.

The carnival was Martin's United Shows and Bob Baumby of Sacramento supplied the stock.

The Woman's Improvement Club won the cup for the parade entry.

In this year of 1940 Frontier Days cleared \$700.00.





SLABSCUIT
AT RIDGWOOD RANCH
WITH
THE SEVEN LITTLE HISSERS

1941



SWEETHEART

Pauline Standloy

Merrill Williams managed the show in 1941 with help from Gus Green, John Merrow, and W.D. Ford. Gus Conrad assisted Merrill in his added duty as arena director.

Feature attractions were the O'Neil Brothers as clowns, Dick Griffith as ace trick rider, and 5-year-old Lee Persico.

The Goodwill Tours went to Covelo on June 8 and to Fort Bragg on June 22.

There were eight girls competing for Sweetheart: Thelma Ferguson, Pauline Standley, Jennie Lilly, Evelyn Mitchell, Ruth Houx, Mary Lou Silva, Mary Elaine Casey, and Betty Jane Clark. Pauline Standley was the winner.

Tex Hunt's orchestra played for the dances and though there was no whiskerino contest all men were to wear western attire starting June 1.



Kangaroo courts were held on June 30 and July 1 and an added attraction was an air show.

Bud Bentley was announcer.

Timers were Gordon Beachtel, Henry Haehl, Logan Anker, Lt. L.M. Cox, DDS.

Judges were Jack Myers and Phil Winegar.

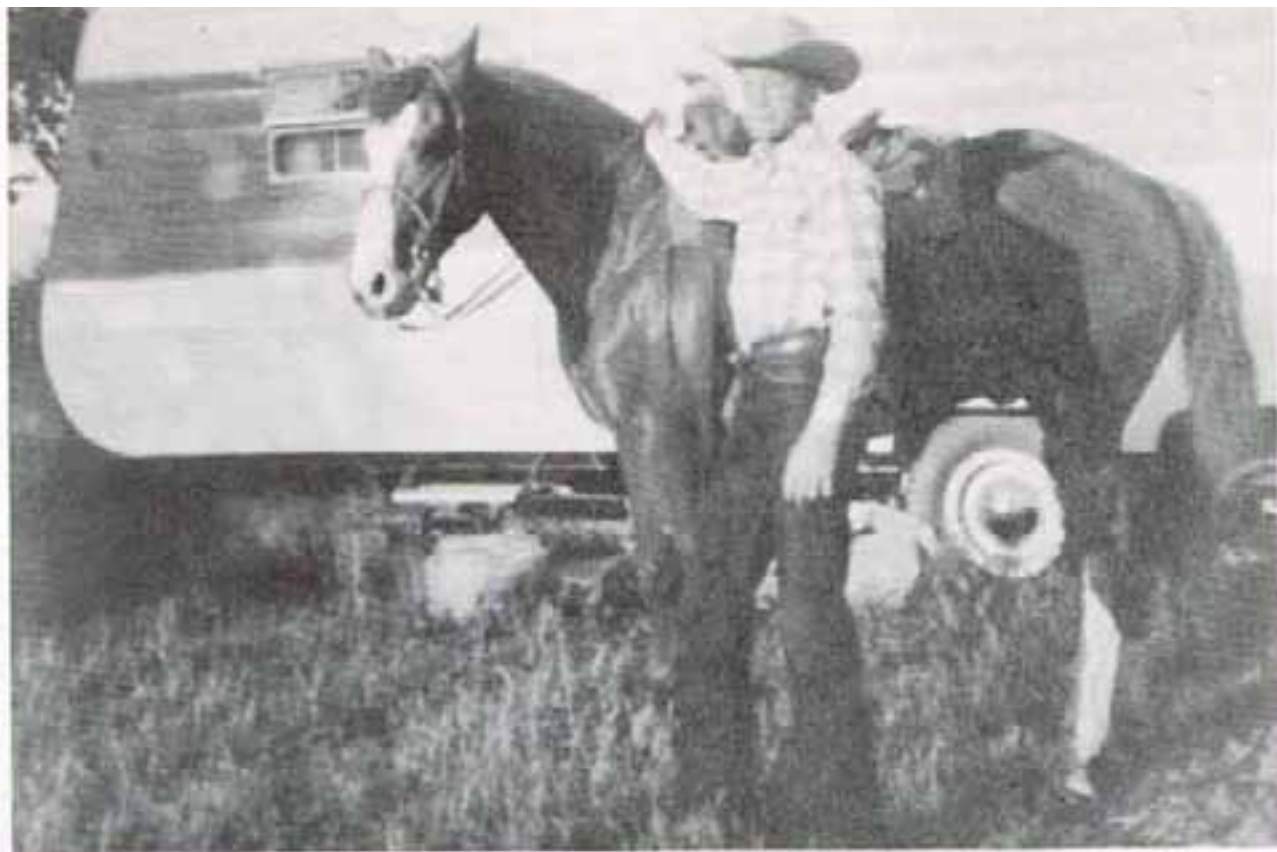
Norman Buhn was track event director.

Frontier Days cleared \$1,000.

At left, young Lee Persico, Elwin Van Cleeput, and Merrill Williams, in July 1941.



Left to right: Beverly Clay, Metze Page, Dorothy Casteel, Freda Willburn, Virginia Casteel, Pauline Standley, Mildred Sanders, Mariel Vinton, Marie Van Clompet, and Ethel Gunn.



Herb

Belden

and

Sadie

Frost



1942



SWEETHEART

Melba Dempsey

Permission had to be obtained to have Frontier Days in 1942 because of the war. A plan for traffic control was submitted one month in advance to Headquarters, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army. It was approved.

The Willits Firemen sponsored the show again and once again Merrill Williams was manager. Gus Green and W.D. Ford were among his helpers.

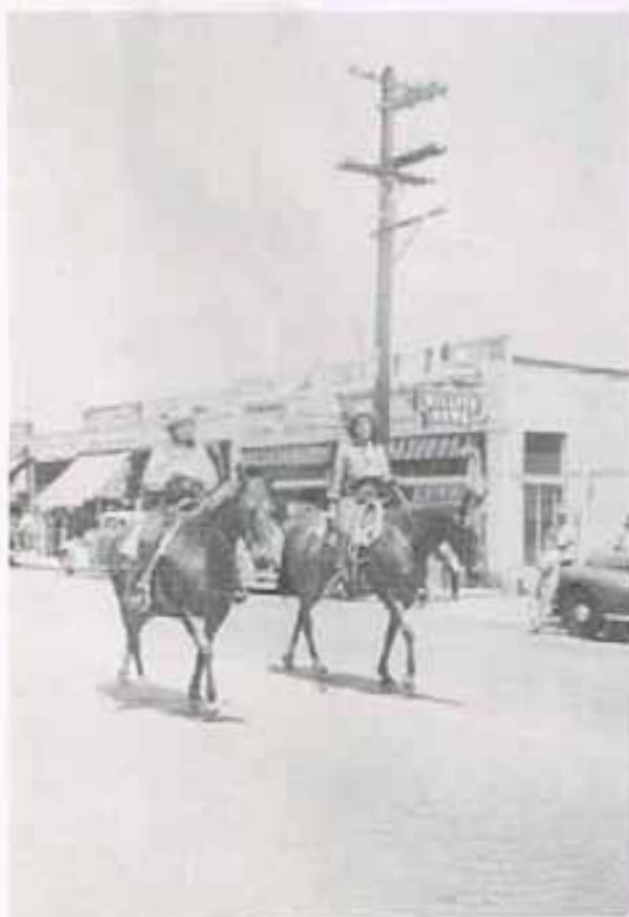
Because of the tire shortage there was no travelling caravan but there was a publicity train trip to Fort Bragg on June 21.

On May 22, the Sweetheart contest opened with Jeanann White, Vivian Conrad, and Melba Dempsey competing. Melba Dempsey won the honor.

The community got into gear with cowboy outfits to be worn starting June 1 and several Kangaroo Courts.

The Willits High School Band volunteered to furnish music for the show and the crowds enjoyed a water fight early in the evening on the Fourth of July.

Added attractions were Frank and Bernice Dean, trick riders and ropers; Steve Shannon, clown; Lee and Christy Le Roy, trick riders and ropers; Isabel Belden, girl jockey; Dorothy Pieper, calf and steer roper; and Mickey Stickney, bronc rider. The stock was furnished by Bob Baumby and Bud Bentley was announcer.



Frontier Days was the only rodeo on the Fourth of July in this part of the West.

There was such a big crowd that some of the restaurants ran out of food.

Total prize money was \$2,393.60.

It was estimated that the visitors spent about \$40,000.

Frontier Days' profit was \$500.

Helen Smith (right) and
Lottie Houx (left) on
July 4, 1942.



Merrill Williams



Dorothy Piper



1943



SWEETHEART

Ann Cox, far left

On May 1st the Frontier Days Committee announced that permission to hold the show for 1943 had been received from the State of California and from the Western Defense Command, but with the dim-out the carnival was not lighted.

The Sweetheart Contest opened May 18 with contestants Ann Cox, Jessie Lawrason, Georgia Casteel, Ruth Page, Haroldine Hansen, and Ann Ford. Ann Cox won the title.

Merrill Williams again was manager of the Firemen sponsored show and Charles Howard was Grand Marshal.

Committees got underway with chairmen Robert Alcott, Louis Zanella, and Richard Exley.

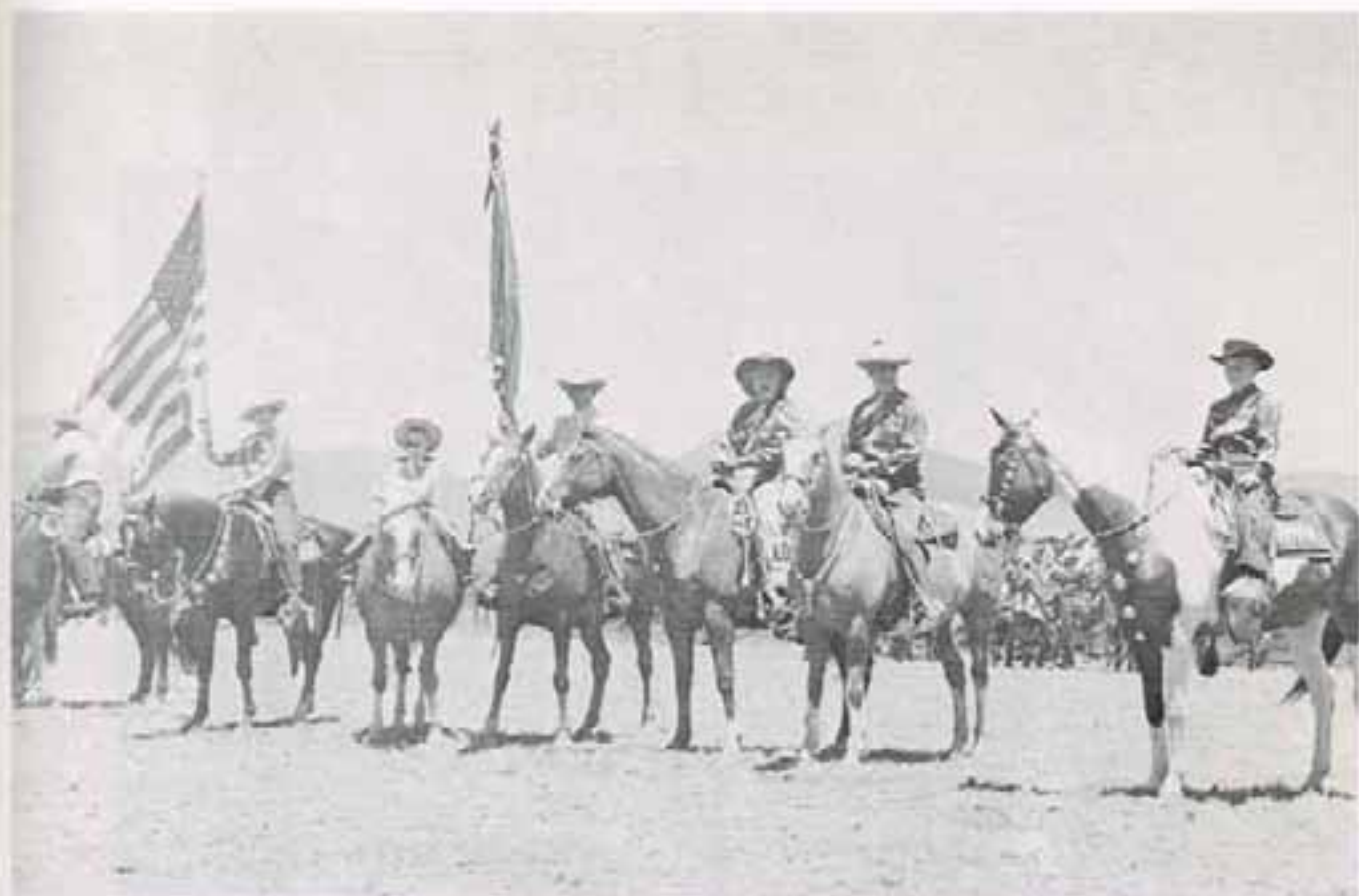
Food in 1943 was a problem because of rationing. The restaurants were getting barely enough food for their regular customers. A.P. Dane and his son from the White Cottage set up a sandwich stand in the City Park.

This 1943 crowd was the greatest yet and Frontier Days was said to have the largest gate receipts since it started.

A profit of \$3,136.98 was reported.



The United States Army, 29th Engineers, stationed in Willits





1944



SWEETHEART

Anna Ford

The lights went on again in 1944, the dim-out was lifted, and the carnival lights once more added to the Frontier Days festivities.

Five girls competed for Sweetheart and Ann Ford was chosen. Runners-up were Fay Shoemaker, Jessie Lawrason, Audrey Dean, and Catherine Simmerley.

Even larger crowds than the year before were on hand for all the events including dances on four consecutive nights and two parades and two rodeos. A water fight was held on July 3rd.

One prelude was the Business and Professional Women's Club dance on June 24 after which western apparel was to be worn.

Robert Alcott and Louis Zanella were again among the active chairmen and Shorty Wrightsman operated the carnival. Charles Howard was Grand Marshal.

Profit for Frontier Days was \$4,000.00.



Willits High School Band with Drum Majorette Colleen Graham



Left to right: Clayton Gunn, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Gunn

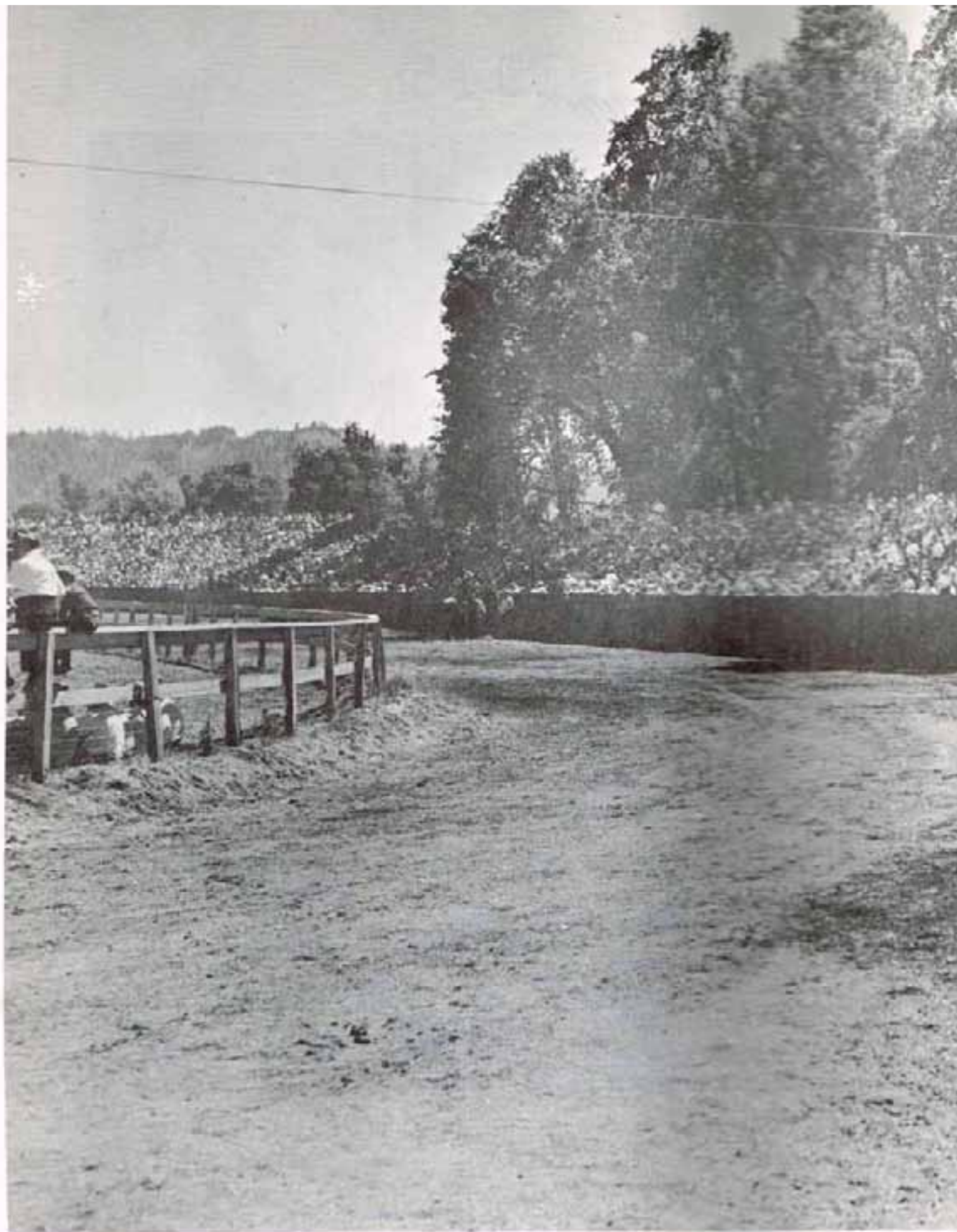


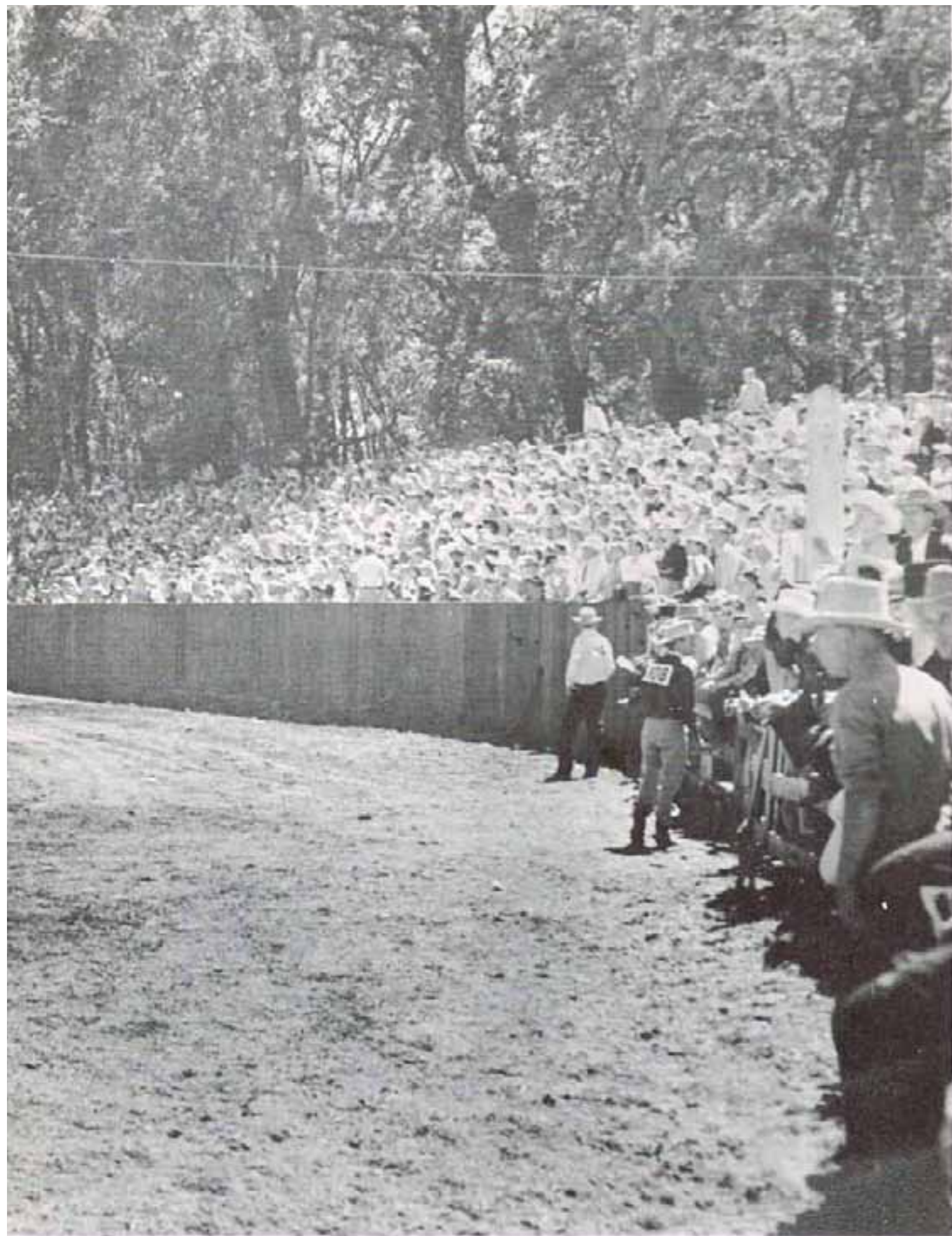
1945



SWEETHEART

Lillian Kroh



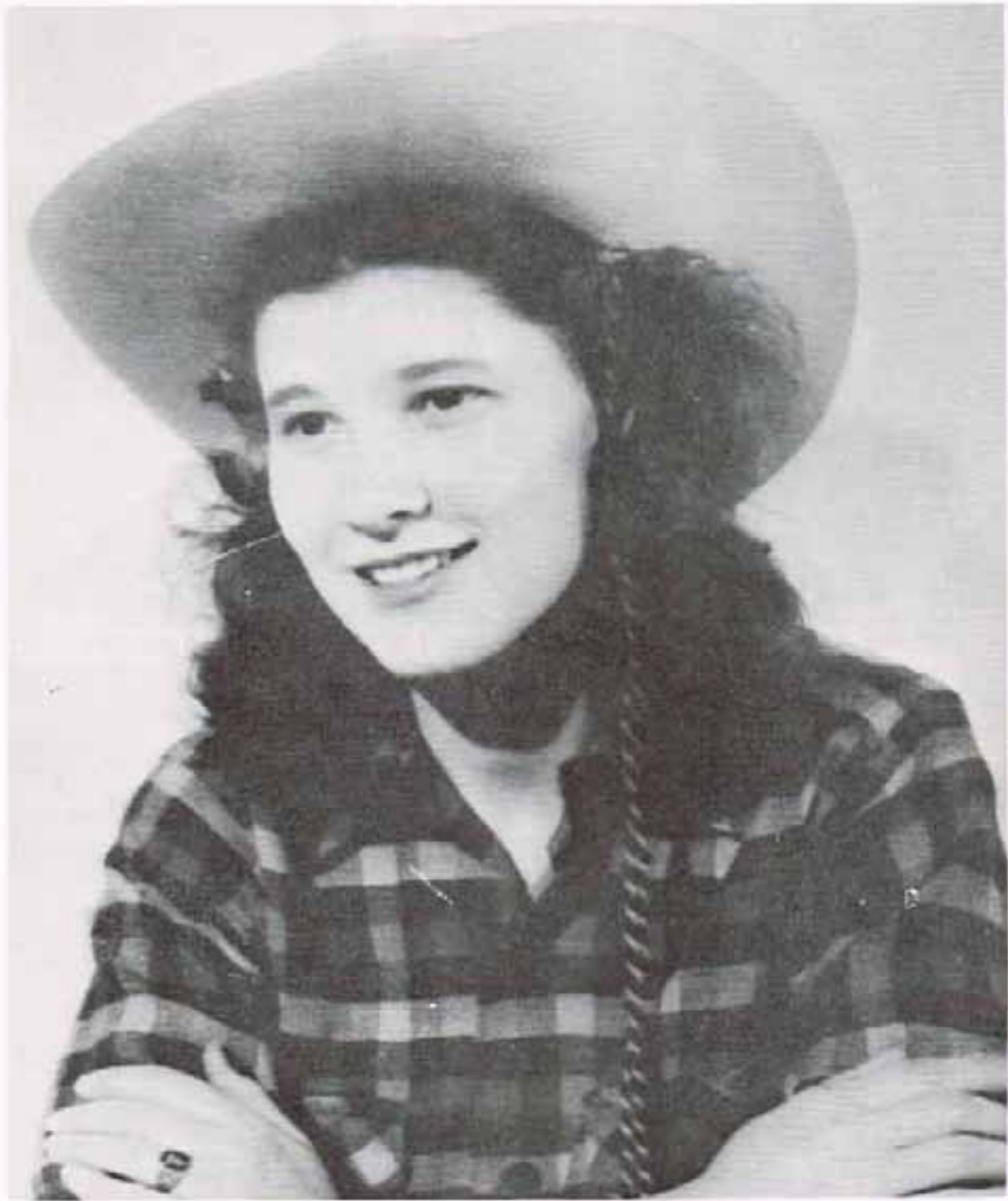




Left to right: Florence Persico, Little Lee, Lee and Chuck Persico



1946



SWEETHEART

Georgia Stovall

The 20th Frontier Days in 1946 drew 8,400 spectators at the gate in two days, 1,000 more than the year before.

The Sweetheart Contest was the closest race ever held here for this honor. Georgia Stovall, winner, polled a total of 5,567,500 votes. Runners-up were Joyce Sawyers and Metze Page. Allan Sacry was chairman of the contest.

Seating was increased by 500 with new bleachers at the south end of the grandstand.

Whiskerino contest winners were Don Ciancio, first, and Frank Recagno, second. Western dress was worn beginning May 24.

The rodeos gave \$2,400 in purses, double the amount of the previous year, and new events were the children's class and the pinto class. Features were trick riders Ken Williams of Newhall with his wife and daughter, Louis Cabral and wife, and Lee Persico, Jr., with his pet pony Buck, who went through a series of riding and roping stunts.

Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Harton, of the Ranch Ednita, were on hand as enthusiastic supporters, as were Mr. and Mrs. Carl Edenfeldt of Sausalito, one of the original founders of the show.

The Sweetheart Contest prize was a saddle leather bag with the winner's name engraved on a silver plate which was mounted on the bag.

Parade manager was Wilbur Pullen; track events were managed by Norman Buhn; announcer was George F. Brooks, and Merrill Williams handled the arena with the assistance of Gus Conrad.

Net profit to Frontier Days was \$4,500.00.





Charles S. Howard

Ridgewood Ranch

1947



SWEETHEART

Ann Crabtree

As early as June 21 in 1947 a Pre-Fourth dance was held in the Park Pavilion, sponsored by the Business and Professional Women's Club, and western dress had already sprung up all over town.

For the 15th year, Merrill Williams was rodeo manager. The Fire Department managed again, and those playing important roles included: Chief Bob Alcott, Louis Zanella, Bob Harrah, Don Cameron, Louis Bertain, Austin Gray, Jerry Collier, Gordon Hill, Bill Pullen, Allen Sacry, Merrill Williams, Bud Harms, George Chase, Jack Crocker, Henry Krch, Ken Garrett, Pasilio Quadrio, Luther Wonacott, Bill May, Fred Lawmason, Marvin Glover, Charles Maun, and Lloyd Elliott.

"Buzzy" Persico, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Persico, was an added feature this year, performing with brother Len.

Sweetheart candidates were Mary Brown, Alice Chapman, Jeannette White, Melba Downs, and Ann Crabtree. Winner of the title was Ann Crabtree.

Whiskerino Contest winners were Mr. Orr, first place, and Bill Woolley and Royal Rose, second and third places, chosen by applause.

Ten thousand people saw the Frontier Days rodeo, with more than 180 winners in rodeo events. Rodeo grounds crews were under the direction of Louis Zanella and Bill Pullen. Frank Alberti of KWBK bay city radio station, was handling publicity. For three days' arena events the cash prizes totaled \$3,600. Some of the performers were trick riders Vern and Myrtle Goodrich of Newhall, Lee Persico, Jr., Jimmie Dickenson as clown, and Bud Bently as rodeo announcer.

Rucking horses, Brahma bulls, and roping stock were furnished by Bob Bamby of Sacramento.

The parade was handled by Don Cameron and his committee. In the evenings the music of Lenny Rapose's orchestra drifted out of the Park Pavilion where the dances were held.

Willits' celebration was honored this year by the presence of the Peruvian Consul of San Francisco who officially accepted an invitation to bring his party here for the fete.

On the first day of the celebration, water fights between the teams of Willits, Fort Bragg, and Santa Rosa were staged on Commercial Street at the City Park.

The show this year netted about \$1,300 for Frontier Days, which, as always, went toward civic improvement for Willits.

1948



SWEETHEART

Lillian Kroh

The only girl to be Sweetheart twice

(See 1945)

Willits went on the air for the first time in history on Friday, May 20, 1948, according to newspaper reports, when the American Legion, assisted by the Chamber of Commerce and Willits Fire Department, sponsored a radio breakfast over KNEC. Dorothy Rankin, known in rodeo circles as "Jane Lee," was in charge of and directed the unique local broadcast around Willits and its colorful Frontier Days history.

Five girls vied for the title of Sweetheart of Frontier Days: Jeannette White (20-30 Club sponsor); Lillian Kroh (Lions Club sponsor); Barbara Evans (Post 174, American Legion sponsor); Joy Ann Wise (independent), and Marian Bogue (Horseman's Association sponsor).

Sweetheart winner was Lillian Kroh with 883,450 votes and Marian Bogue was second with 409,015 votes. A three-day trip to San Francisco was one of several prizes for the winner.

Mayor Russell Ellis made the opening speech to the spectators and the festivities began, with a crowd-pleasing display of fireworks by the Shell Oil Company, Kangaroo Court, and an amateur night sponsored by the Willits Lions Club with Erma Davenport assisting Ward Young.

Tap dancer Phyllis Vincent of Laytonville won top honors in the amateur show, and Barbara Rayne and Erma Davenport were also winners.

Charles Stickney and Lew Bassett were two casualties in the Frontier Days rodeo, attended by more than 8,000 persons on the two days.



More than \$4,000 made up the prize list for the track and arena events at the rodeos.

Whiskerino Contest winners were Frank Recagno, Bill Woolley, and Eugene Bussey.

First honor and trophy winner in the parade was the Business and Professional Women's Club of Willits with their float, "Home on the Range."

Zeke Bowery was the clown; Marjorie Roberts and Anna Lee Patterson were trick riders.

Mack Barbour furnished the rodeo stock. Added this year were children's pig race and wild cow milking contest.

Net profit: \$3,000.00.

.....
Left: Colleen and Perry Smith





Mike Desiano on Amigo

1949



SWEETHEART

Betty Mast

1949 was to be the last year the Willits Fire Department would sponsor Frontier Days.

But in this final year they staged one of the most unusual publicity stunts in many years. In June firemen staged a mock hold-up to exploit the coming Frontier Days celebration.

The firemen treated 400 passengers of a special Redwood Empire Excursion train to an entertaining half hour. Many of the passengers were loaded into one of the old stage coaches and given short rides.

Tod Powell, Field and Game Editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, was Honorary Mayor of Willits during the festivities. He was author of the "Woodswoman" column which appeared daily in the San Francisco paper.

Sweetheart contestants were Marian Bogue, Virginia Camp, Betty Mast, Wilda Mae Wagner, and Dolores Strickland.

Winner was Betty Mast and the prizes were a weekend at Hoberg's Resort, a trophy, and 10% of the ticket sales.

Specialties were Dick Griffith, world champion trick rider; Rosa Larimer, trick and fancy rider; Lee and Chucky Persico, clever young trick riders, and Chuck Larimer, rodeo clown. Cash prizes for arena events reached \$4,000. Mack Barbour again furnished the rodeo stock. Bob Calen did fancy roping.

Approximately 7,000 persons watched the rodeos. Ticket sales by the Sweetheart contestants totaled \$2,000. Again, popular events were baseball game, parades, rodeos, dances, fireworks (by Shell Oil Company), water fight, carnival.

Some of the Frontier Days' workers names this year were George Kline, Wilbur Pullen.

Lanny Rapose and Wesley Tuttle furnished the music for the dances which also featured the Frontiersmen and "Three Shiftless Skunks."

Whiskerino winners were Don Bogue and Sidney Black. Capturing the rodeo cash were 77 arena and 51 track entries.

Net loss this year, because of permanent improvements to the rodeo grounds, was \$1,323.65.

In late August firemen resigned and in November a new Frontier Days, Inc., was formed with directors: Dr. Raymond Babcock, Al Greenberg, George Stempel, Ed Marton, Merrill Williams, William Stringer, Harold Jorgensen, Lee Persico, and Louis Bertain. Later that month Chet Griffith and Harold Casteel were added.



Louis Zanella
President of Frontier Days



The Rainbow Rangerettes



1950



SWEETHEART

Wanda Lane

Early in 1950, in February, the new slate of directors, with two new ones added, Bill Whitney and Don Coleman, began arrangements for Frontier Days.

Before the end of the previous year they had elected officers:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Dr. Raymond Babcock | President |
| Lee Persico | First Vice President |
| Al Greenberg | Second Vice President |
| Ed Harton | Third Vice President |
| Harold Jorgensen | Secretary |

Chairmen of activities were named as follows: Chet Griffith, general manager of the rodeo with Merrill Williams and Lee Persico as his assistants; Ed Harton, parade; Al Greenberg, carnival and concessions; Harold Casteel, Sweetheart Contest; Louis Bertain, dances; Bill Stringer, advertising; Harold Jorgensen, ticket sales and financing, and Bill Whitney, street decorations.

One committee appointed to rehabilitate the grandstands at the rodeo grounds consisted of Don Coleman, Louis Bertain, and Merrill Williams. Another committee was formed to "iron out various activities during the rodeo." Members were William Stringer, Ed Harton, and Harold Jorgensen.

Assistant Parade Master was John Kiraly and daily parade marshal: Charles S. Howard. The rodeo program was handled by Chet Griffith.

Sweetheart Contest prizes were \$150 Keepsake diamond ring from Gunlander's Jewelry of Willits, plus riding outfit, trophy, a weekend trip for winner and chaperon, plus 20% of her ticket sales.

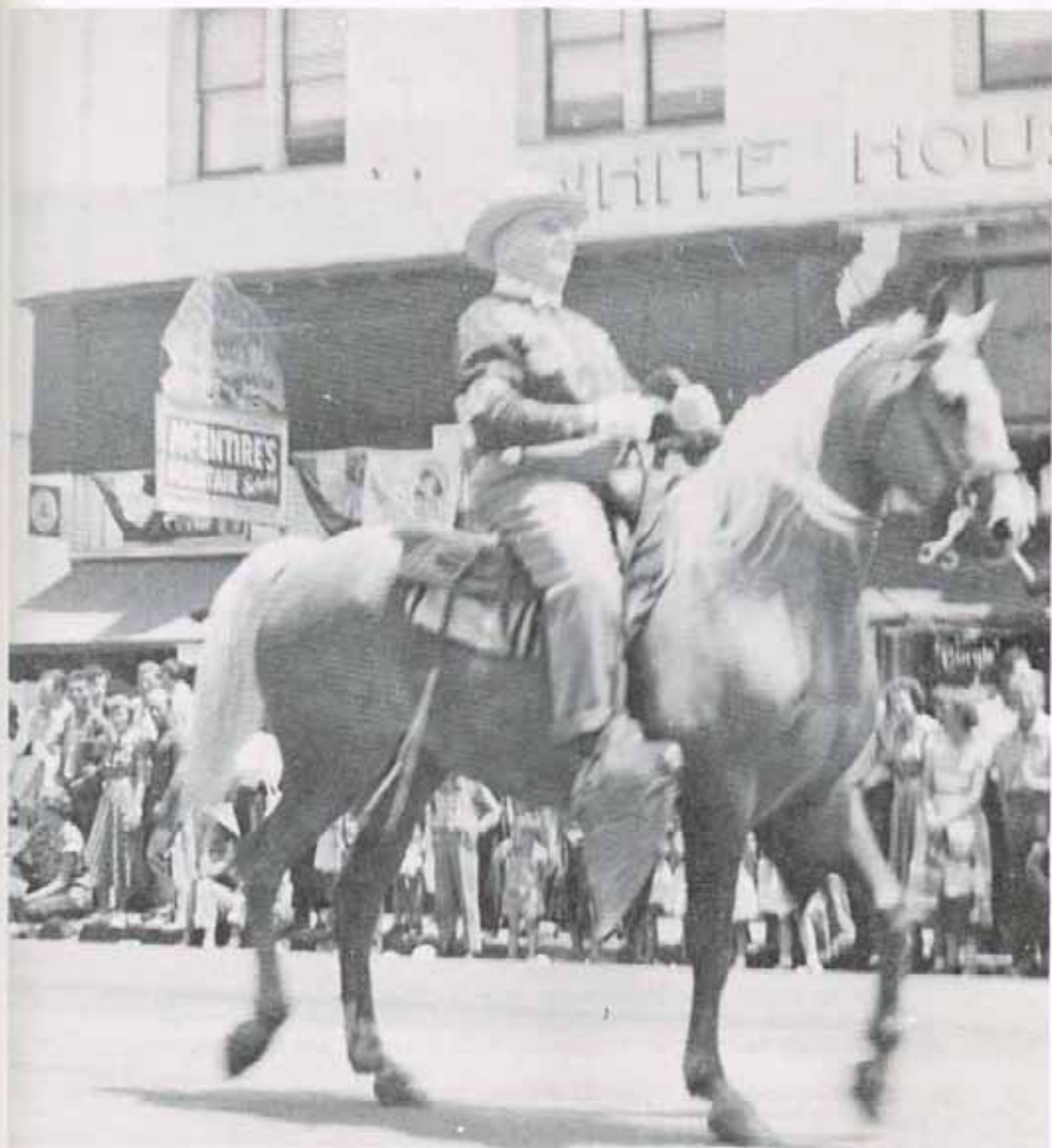
Contestants for the Sweetheart crown were Myrtle Barlet, Barbara Beekman, Evelyn Humes, and Wanda Lane. The girl who won the title was Wanda Lane.

Nightly amateur shows were held by Fred Sowash and his assistant, Jack Criss.

An announcement was made that usherettes were needed for the rodeos (three rodeos were held this year) and applicants were to contact Emma Lou Alcott.

George Klein was the rodeo announcer; a special rodeo attraction was Monte Montana and his troupe. More than \$7,000 made up the prize offerings for riders in three thrilling Frontier Days rodeos.

Lagunita Rebekah Lodge and the Cooperative Nursery were judged co-winners of the parade sweepstakes honors, and were given duplicate trophies.



Dr. Raymond Babcock
President of Frontier Days



Left to right: Harold Casteel, Merrill Williams, Al Greenberg,
Chet Griffith, Harold Jorgensen, Bill Whitney, Lee Parsico,
Bill Stringer, Don Coleman, and Dr. Raymond Babcock.

1951



SWEETHEART

Gretchen Millen

1951 came in with a theme:

SILVER ANNIVERSARY OF FRONTIER DAYS

Directors were Dr. Raymond Babcock, also president; Bill Stringer, Harold Jorgensen, Louis Bertain, Sr., Al Greenberg, John Kiraly, Lee Persico, Sr., J.E. Harton, Merrill Williams, Harold Casteel, George Stempel, Don Coleman, and William Whitney.

Sweetheart Contestants: Laurie Krench, Gretchen Mullen, Yvonne Moore, and Joann Ampiala.

The 1951 Silver Anniversary Sweetheart was

Gretchen Mullen.

Parade chairman John Kiraly conducted a two-day parade with Grand Marshal Dr. Raymond Babcock, president of Frontier Days. The Sweepstakes trophy was awarded to the Willits Chamber of Commerce for their float.

The two-day rodeo featured rodeo stock by Mack Barbour and the announcer was George S. Klein of Goldendale, Washington. Sherman Crain, known for his skills with Brahma bulls, was the clown and bull fighter.

Some of the rodeo features were Miss May Boss of Douglas, Arizona, making her first appearance in Willits with her trick riding act, and Willits' trick riders, Lee and Chuck Persico.

Frontier Days dances were held at the Park Pavilion to the music of Dude Martin.



Left to right: Al Greenberg, J.E. Harton, Don Coleman, Emma Lou Alcott,
Bill Whitney, Marge Moore, Bill Stringer, and
Lee "Dink" Persico



Ernestine Porro in a silver dress in the 1951 Frontier Days parade to commemorate the 25th (Silver) Anniversary of Frontier Days. Plans were to dress Ernestine Porro in gold for the 50th (Golden) Anniversary in 1976.

1952



SWEETHEART

Yvonne Dusseau

1952 was a good year for the Willits Frontier Days parades.

It was the first year here for the Aahmes Shrine Mounted Patrol, members riding matched Pinto horses during the two days of parades. All riders owned their own riding equipment and costumes, valued at \$75,000.

Parade Sweepstakes winner was the Methodist Guild.

Frontier Days had two bands in the parade that year: the Southern Pacific Band and the Willits High School Band.

One parade entry was Don Churchill and his specially-built \$15,000 automobile.

Four girls competed for Sweetheart: Yvonne Dusseau, Pat Wakeland, Jeanette Quehennic, and Barbara Beekman.

The Sweetheart was Yvonne Dusseau.

On the Board of Directors this year were Merrill Williams, Don Coleman, Bill Whitney, John Kiraly, Eddie Anderson, Bill Ford, Logan Anker, Bill Stringer, Elwin Van Cleemput, Robert Winslow, and Harold Jorgensen.

Two dances were held at the park pavilion with music by Barnyard Hoedown and Don Churchill and his Texas Mavericks.

Horsemanship trials for the Sweetheart were held at the rodeo grounds on July 3rd with the parade at 8:30 followed by coronation of the Sweetheart at the dance pavilion.

On July 4, the Southern Pacific Band entertained with a concert in the City Park at 11:30. The parade began at 2 p.m., followed by the rodeo at 3 p.m.

Following the rodeo, the water fight was held at 7 p.m., between Willits' and Fort Bragg's firemen.

Star attraction at the rodeo was Sany Black, a six-year-old trick rider who had performed since the age of 3.

The rodeo stock was from Mack Barbour again with George Klein also as announcer for the rodeo.

26th ANNUAL WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS



OFFICIAL
PROGRAM

JULY 4 and 5, 1952

27th ANNUAL WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS



OFFICIAL
PROGRAM

JULY 4 and 5, 1953

1953



SWEETHEART

Claire Huffman

Willits was to have two bands in the 1953 Frontier Days parade, the Navy Electronics Band and the Willits High School Band, however the Navy men had a mix-up in the transportation departure instructions from their base and most of the band members did not make it to the parade in time to march. The few who did borrowed instruments and marched with the Willits High School Band.

The parade Sweepstakes winner was the Willits Fire Department Auxiliary.

Our Sweetheart contestants were Claire Huffman, Arlene Crocker, and Jeanette Bradley.

The girl who reigned as Sweetheart was Claire Huffman.

The Grand Marshals for the parade were Mr. and Mrs. M.E. Dungan of Benicia, California.

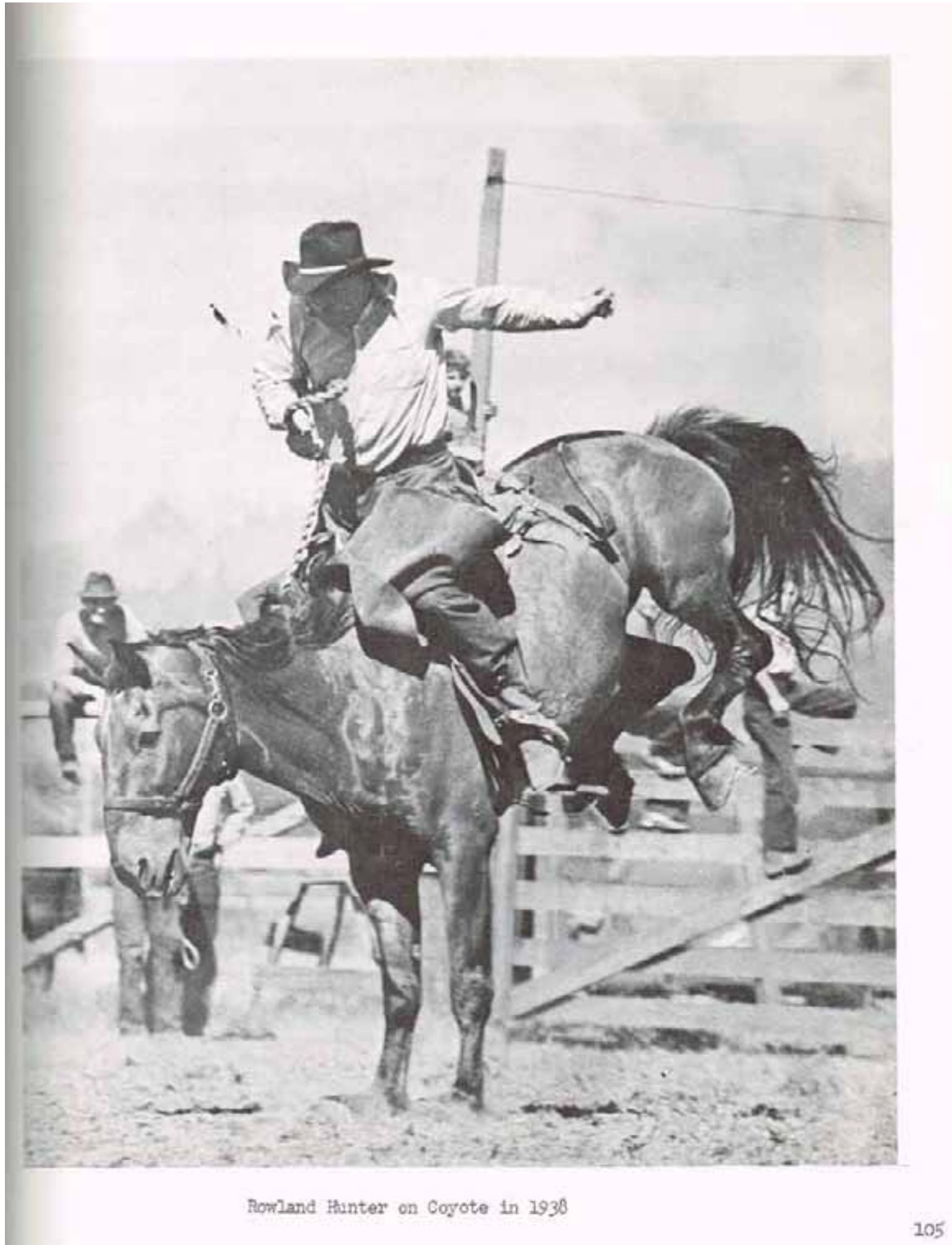
Gordon Lane was first winner of the Whiskerino Contest with John Hanson second and Lew Knapp third.

Best All-Round Cowboy at the rodeo that year was Cotten Rosser from Red Bluff.

Rodeo clowns were Ted Billings of Canby, California and his trained chimpanzee and his mule, which provided the crowd with lots of laughs. Bill Landis of Toppenish, Washington was also in on the clowning.

Board of Directors: Lee Persico, Sr., Merrill Williams, Don Coleman, Al Greenberg, Bill Whitney, John Kiraly, Eddie Anderson, Bill Ford, Logan Anker, Bill Stringer, Elwin Van Cleemput, Robert Winslow, and Harold Jorgensen.

Mack Barbour provided the stock and George Klein announced again.



Rowland Hunter on Coyote in 1938



Left to right: Nellie Moore and Helen Smith

1954



SWEETHEART

Joan Neary

In this year of 1954 the population of Mendocino County was estimated at 47,830 - said to be up 17.1% over 1950; Goodwin Knight was governor of California, and Henry Haehl was elected Mayor of Willits. Harvey Sawyers won the Supervisor's seat.

Willits High School graduated a class of 61 seniors on June 10, the Bank of Willits was paying 2% interest on savings accounts and celebrated its 50th birthday.

The rainfall total for the season was 55.63 inches; Willits water, distributed through Pacific Gas and Electric Company mains, was given top rating by the State Department of Public Health and the Federal Securities Agency and PG&E started construction of their new "yard."

Frontier Days in 1954, under the direction of President Harold Jorgensen, came up with a theme: "This is California."

The annual Business and Professional Women's Kick-Off Dance was held at the park pavilion to the music of Lotten's Orchestra and it cost 91¢ plus 9¢ tax for a total of \$1.00 admission. The Fire Department also sponsored dances on the nights of July 3 and 4 to the music of Peck Gregory and his orchestra at the pavilion.

Bma Lou Alcott handled tickets for the Sweetheart Contestants, who were required to sell \$500 worth of tickets to qualify. Point breakdown for winning was horsemanship 50 points; scholastic 25 points, and tickets 10 points.

Contestants were Joan Neary, sponsored by the Willits Business Boosters; Wanda McCosker, sponsored by the Ukiah Riding Club; Eldra Graham, sponsored by the Willits Lions Club; Irene Beltz, and Kathy Martindale.

Sweetheart Joan Neary was coronated on July 2 at a dance at the park pavilion. Second place went to Eldra Graham.

The Top Hand Barbecue was held on June 26. Admission was gained by presenting ribbons which had been sold ahead of time. More than 250 persons were expected at the barbecue, which began at 12:30.

The City of Willits was decorated with flags across Main Street and old time stage coaches and wagons were parked at various spots in town.

Grand Marshal was Max Kortum from Petaluma. The Shrine Aahmes mounted patrol from Oakland appeared here again and there were 50 entries in the parade, including the Willits High School Band.

The Sweepstakes trophy was won by the Willits Campfire Girls whose float featured California on gold paper background. Second was Willits Fire Department Auxiliary and third was the Women's Improvement Club.

Other parade winners were: Parade Horse Division: Jim Jones and Rex's Golden Slipper, first; Andy and Anna Mae Curtin, second; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Swift, third. Mounted Group: Potter Valley Riding Club, first; Willits Horseman's Association, second; Ukiah Riding Club, third. Junior Mounted Division: Willits Junior Horsemen, first. Working Cowboy: Louis Carbocci, first; Boy Tico, second. Working Cowgirl: Mary Dale Folsom, first; Wanda Lane, second.

At the rodeo, All-Round Cowboy was Johnny Mitchell from Fort Bragg.

1955



SWEETHEART

Shirley Merritt

Logan Anker was President of Frontier Days in 1955 and brought back such events as the amateur show under Bud Sowash and Logging by Garth Sanders. The parades, two of them, were headed by Nellie Corbett and her committee: Alma Albee, Elizabeth Kroh, Frances Pullen, Art Smith, Troy Thompson, Marshall Merritt, and Jack Cress.

Lee Kenworthy handled publicity, Eddie Anderson the barbecue, Harold Jorgensen the Sweetheart Contest, William Baechtel ticket sales, Al Greenberg and William Whitney finances, and Lee Persico, Sr., was general manager.

The theme: Life of Black Bart. Grand Marshal of the two parades was Jim Jones and his Palomino "musical horse" Golden Clipper from the East Valley. Three bands marched in the parade: The Willits High School Band, the Pine Street Junior High School Band, and the U.S. Navy Band, which also gave a concert in the City Park one evening.

Shirley Merritt was Sweetheart, sponsored by the Willits Horsemen's Association, coronated on July 3 at the rodeo grounds. Runner-up was Sharon Lon. The girls had horsemanship competition at the Top Hand Barbecue during the afternoon. Contest committeemen were Carl De Rego and Louis Serventi.

Sweetheart Shirley Merritt and her runner-up rode in the parade on the Chamber of Commerce float, done with a red velvet heart, on July 3. On the Fourth, they rode horses.

Parade Sweepstakes winners were Willits Campfire Girls float - Let Freedom Ring - and the runner-up Willits Firemen's Auxiliary with their Goddess of Liberty float.

More than 7,000 persons attended the two day show. The logging events contest, sponsored by the Willits Boosters Club, had log rolling, high climbing, chain saw, hand bucking, axe throwing, burling, speed chop, and an added attraction - women's hand bucking, won by Bessie Bennett of Willits and Catherine Allen of Upper Lake. These were held at the rodeo site.

Frontier Days cleared a profit of \$2,661.62 and after a funding advance was made on the year 1950 loss, they had a net profit of \$1,854.00.

In this year the traffic signal was installed and put into operation at the corner of Main and Commercial Streets.

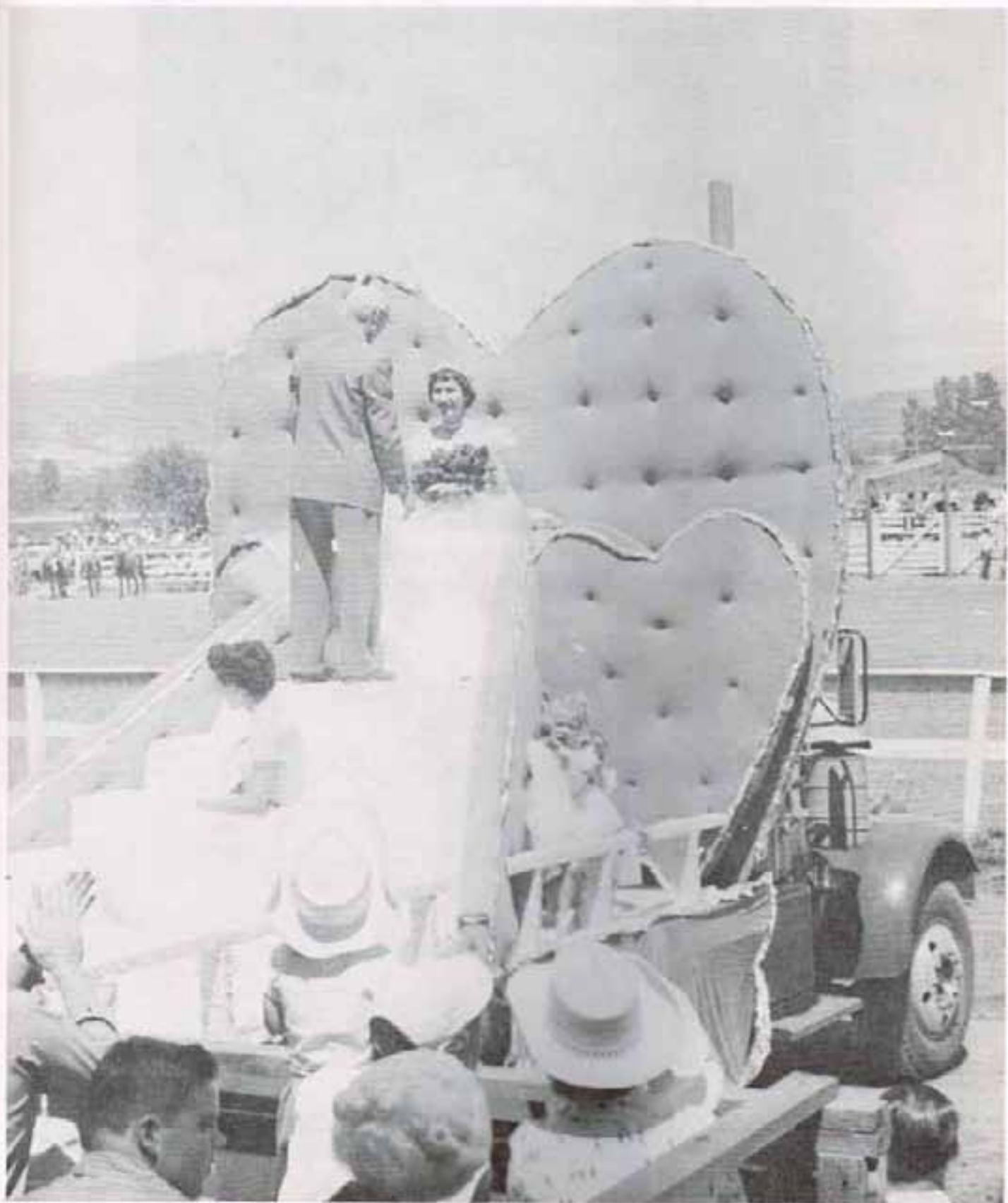
Northbrook Manor had open house for its first unit of homes in May.

Brooktrails Guest Ranch suffered a \$100,000 blaze which destroyed the main lodge and dining room. Eddie and Marie Anderson were owners.

Total season rainfall was 37.20 inches, 8 inches under normal. Nevertheless, a record 7.88 inches in 24 hours during heavy storms washed out 10 bridges in the area.

The Blood Bank was initiated by the Business and Professional Women's Club.

Eden Valley Ranch was purchased from the Henshaw Investment Company by local men - Robert Harrah, E.M. Mc Kee, Jr., Earl Maize, Jr., and Frank Crawford.



Mayor Henry Haehl presented Sweetheart Shirley Merritt with her crown at the rodeo grounds. Runner-up Sharon Long shared the Sweetheart float.



WHISKERINO CONTESTANTS

Left to right: Gordon Iane, Bud Sowash, and John Munson.



Gayle Zanella portrays Goddess of Liberty
on Willits Fire Department Auxiliary float.

1956



SWEETHEART

Betty Ann Stansberry

1956 was the 30th annual Frontier Days and was under the direction of Logan Anker

This was the first year the stagecoaches were not placed on the streets for decoration.

A new and fascinating entry in the parade was the San Francisco Chinese Girls' Drill Team.

Winner of the parade Sweepstake trophy was the Little Lake Grange.

First in the Junior Division was the Girls Scouts entry.

Sweetheart Betty Ann Stansberry and runners-up Deanna Sinclair, Patsy Southwick, and Donna Kaser rode on a float in both parades. Coronation took place at the rodeo grounds.

The Business and Professional Women's Club had their pre-Fourth dance to Chuck Straight's orchestra on June 23.

Fourth of July dances were held at the park pavilion and the Top Hand Barbecue was at Brooktrails.

Peck Gregory and his Dude Cowboys again provided some of the music for the dances and Mack Barbour provided the stock for the rodeos.



Left to right: Deanna Sinclair, Ellen De Rego, Patsy Southwick,
Betty Ann Stansberry, and Donna Kaser.

30th ANNUAL

Willits Frontier Days



JULY 3rd & 4th

OFFICIAL
PROGRAM

1957



SWEETHEART

Pat Moreno

Nellie Corbett was again chairman of the parade in 1957, as she was for many years. Many will remember her in her white hat with the wide brim, standing in the sun at the corner of Main and Commercial, seeing the entries off, down Main Street, clipboard and whistle in hand.

Logan Anker was president, holding meetings many nights through the years on the balcony of the Van Hotel.

Highlight of the parade was again the colorful and popular Chinese Girls' Drill Team of San Francisco, St. Mary's School. Another highlight was the Sixth Army Pipe Band from the Presidio, San Francisco.

The largest number of girls in history competed for the title of Sweetheart of Frontier Days in 1957 - fourteen in all.

Contestants were Judy Coleman, Janice Hall, Rose Kaiser, Pat Moreno, Carol Jean Sanders, Sharon Mott, Eloise Waldron, Sonja Powers, Gayle Zanella, Saxon Wells, Lorraine Wycoff, Elsie Stansberry, Diana Waterman, and Margaret Marek.

Winner of the title was Pat Moreno.

Eddie Anderson was chairman of the barbecue, assisted by Dutch Harms, Pete Nella, Buster Edwards, Al Greenberg, and William Whitney.

Music for the dances was by Chuck Ray and his Gang (Linda Roth and Willis Dahl) of San Jose.

Grand Marshal of the parade was Annie Oakley (Cordy Campbell) and horse "Target" from a Solano County sheep ranch.

The Sweepstakes winner was the Marri-Eds, Willits club.

Jack Middleton of Redding won Best All Round Cowboy.

Chuck Lorimer and Benny Bennefield performed as rodeo clowns.

1958



SWEETHEART

Letha Shumaker

Sweetheart contestants, eight in all, in 1958 were Letha Shumaker, Peggy Holmes, June Washburn, Francine Sanchez, Bonnie Tatum, Katie Smith, Arline Harmon, and Linda Sunday.

Letha Shumaker reigned as Sweetheart of Frontier Days in the contest directed by chairman Carl DeRego.

Nellie Corbett handled the parade. The Sweepstakes winner was the Willits Fire Department Auxiliary with their float - "River Boat" - done to the smallest detail.

One of the parade entries was the Winns Wings (eight majorettes from Ukiah).

Frontier Days president was Ralph Baker and secretary was Merrill Williams.

Rodeo grounds maintenance was managed by Pete Persico.

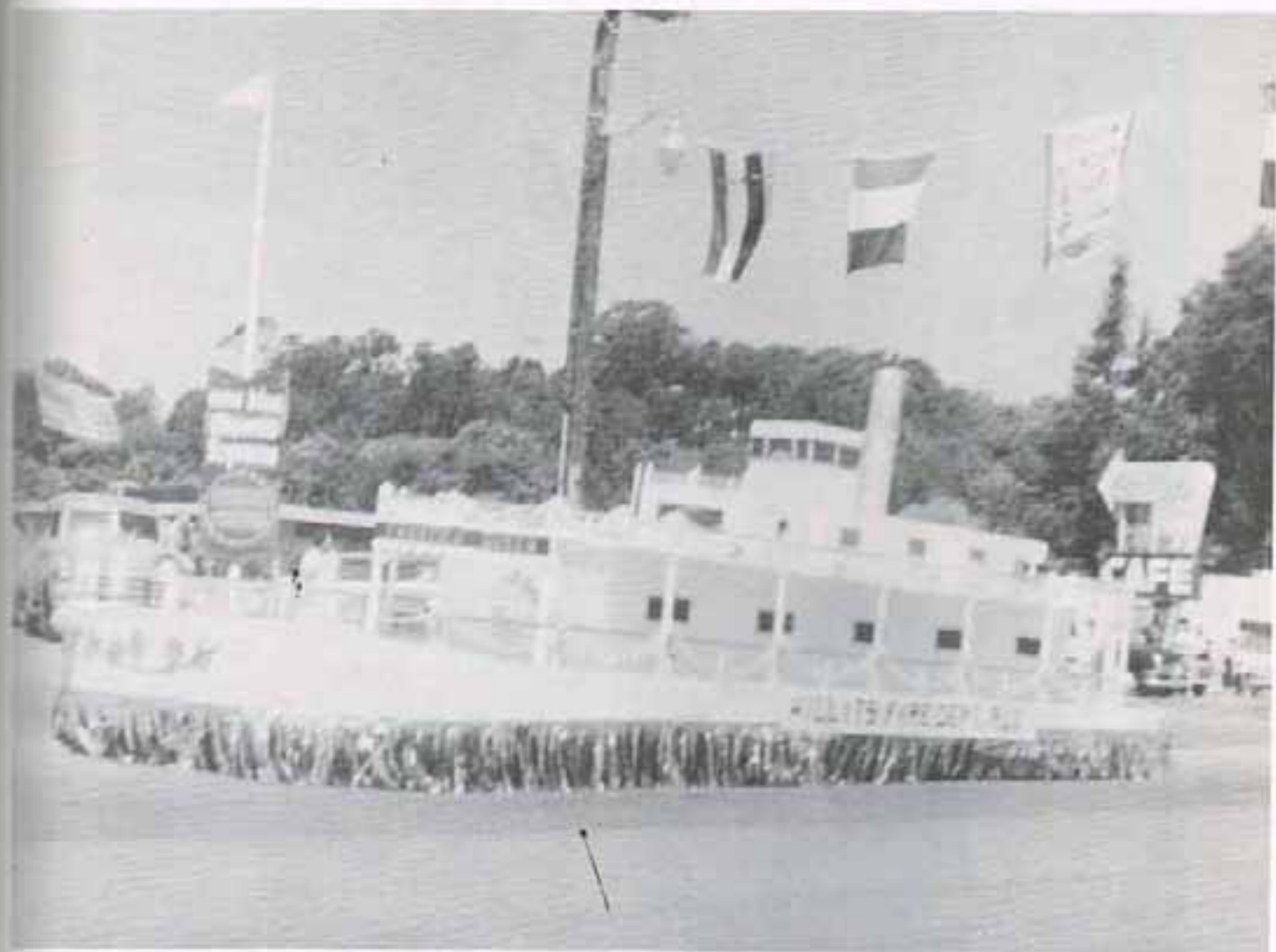
Dutch Harms was the barbecue chairman with the Willits Post 174, American Legion, in charge.

Stock for the rodeo this year was provided by Dick Hemstead of Red Bluff. Bullfighter and clown was Barney Calmes of Keno, Oregon.

Dick Luke of Broderick, California won the title of All Round Cowboy.

In 1958 the sheep dog trials were continued, as well as the wild horse race.

Music for the dances was by Phil Bovero of San Francisco.



1958 Parade Sweepstake Winner
by Willits Fire Department Auxiliary

Dutch Farms



Sweetheart Float

1959



SWEETHEART

Marian Whitely

Jim Jennings took over in 1959 as president of Frontier Days and the show this year was dedicated to Al Greenberg for his continued help and support through the years.

Donations Chairman was Ethel Clatty, as she was for many years, bringing many donations to the Frontier Days till.

Eight girls tried for the title of Sweetheart of Frontier Days - Pat Driscoll, Barbara Simmerman, Willie Thurman, LaRita Helen Tubbs, Marian Whitely, Karen Miller, Winnie Bryant, and Gertie Holsington.

Winner was Marian Whitely, Sweetheart for 1959.

Sweetheart Contest chairmen were Al Canepa and Frank Edwards.

Parade Chairman was again Nellie Corbett and one of the entries this year was the Woodland Riders, a very large group.

Sweepstakes winner was again The Marri-Eds.

Whiskerine contest winners were Frank Recagno for a full beard and Bob Kanig for the best handlebar mustache. Judge was Buddy Weber.

Music was supplied by The Knights for the dances.

Rodeo livestock came from Dick Hemstead of Red Bluff. Concessions were operated by Frances Porro and LaVerne Allen and volunteers.

Willits Post 174, American Legion, was in charge of the barbecue.

Proceeds this year from the show - 35,200.00.

1960



SWEETHEART

Carol Collier

Faris Whitney took over this year as President of Frontier Days. He is the son of one of the founders of this organization. It was 1960.

Ethel Clatty rode at the head of the parade, honored as Grand Marshal. Her family, too, had been active for many years in Frontier Days.

General Manager this year, working with Faris Whitney, was Mel Clatty.

Banners were on the streets, western attire was everywhere, and it was Frontier Days from out of the past! A trip to Las Vegas and other prizes were offered, totaling \$995.75. Mayor Leo Hulet welcomed and rode in the parade with Festus Okotie-Eboh, Nigerian Federal Minister of Finance.

Sweetheart Carole Collier, who was coronated at the dance. Runner-up was Maxine Bratsberg.

Sweetheart chairman was Frank Edwards. Prizes were given on Sweetheart tickets this year and Dr. Raymond Babcock won a trip to Mexico.

The parade started at 11 a.m. Sweepstakes winner was the Willits Fire Department Auxiliary with their Skunk Train. First in the Junior Division went to Job's Daughters.

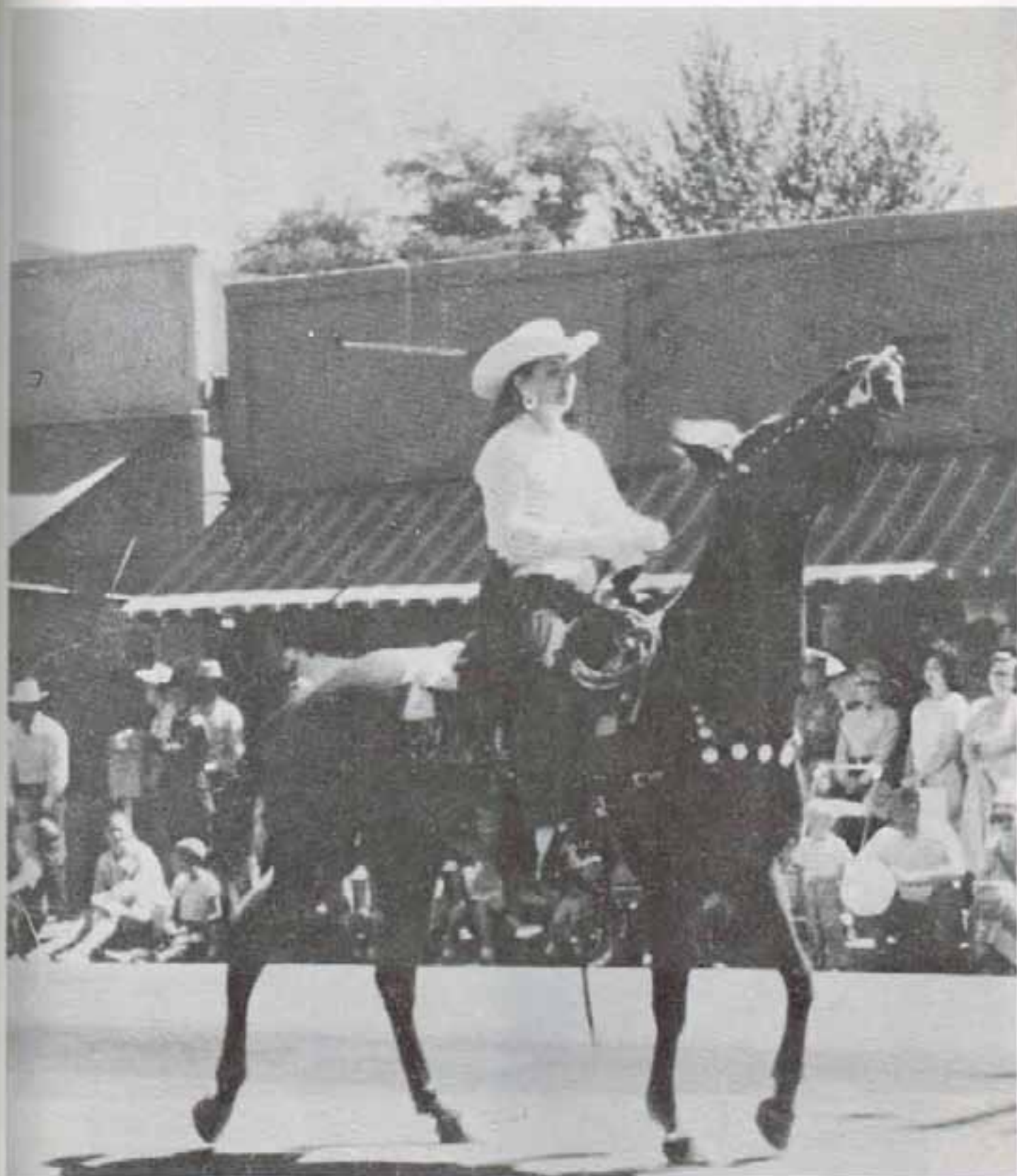
Nellie Corbett had the Air Force Band from Hamilton Field marching in the parade and they also played at the rodeo.

There were two barbecues - one by Willits Post 174, American Legion, and the other by the Willits Horsemen's Association.

June Bartow was dance chairman and arranged two dances at the park pavilion, one with music by The Knights, and the other with music by Ralph Rawson. June Bartow was also secretary of Frontier Days and Gayle Hunt was treasurer. The carnival was set up next to the Purity store on East Commercial Street.

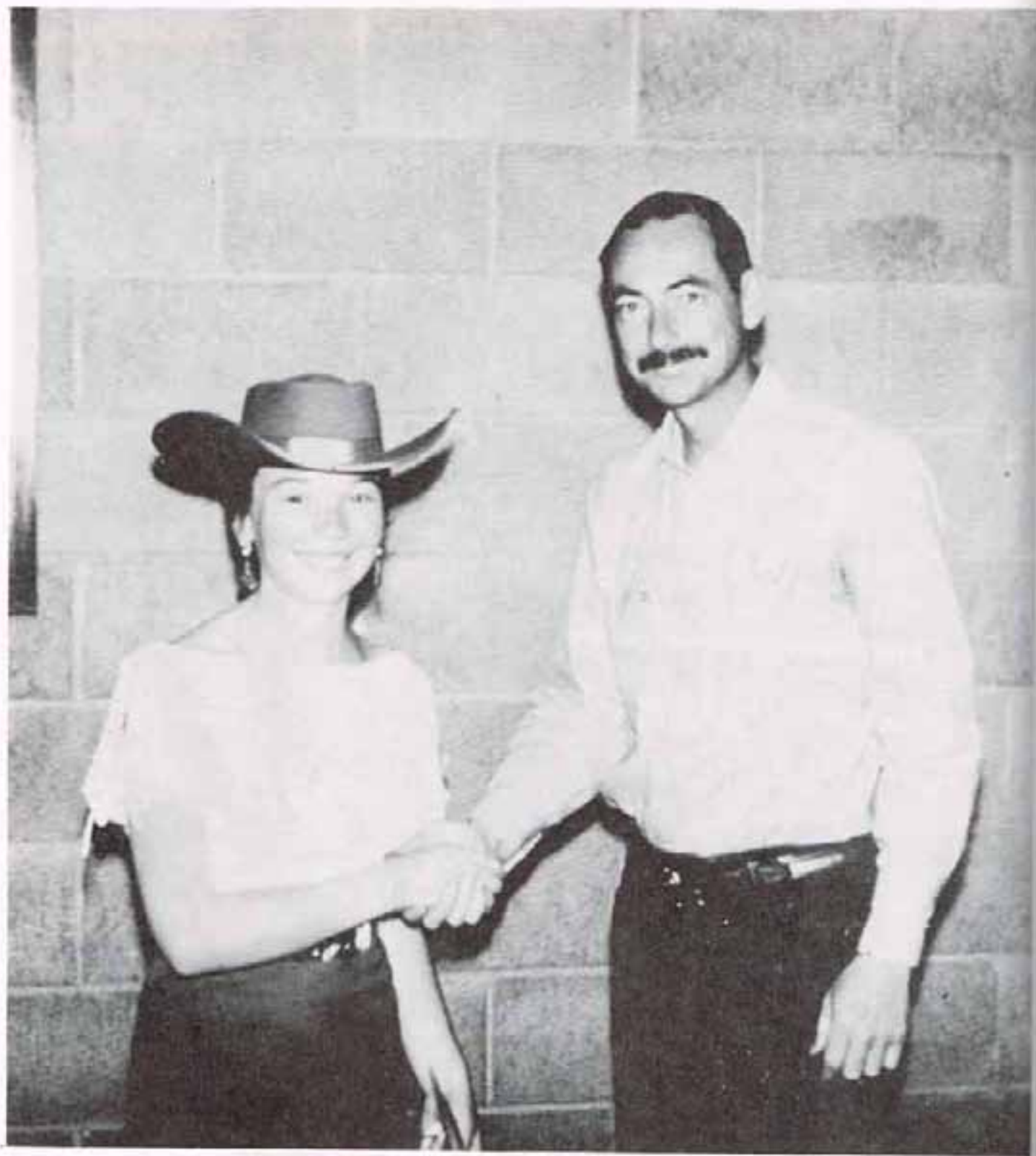
Girls' barrel racing was added this year and there was a high dive from an airplane by Peter Cerrutti.

Frontier Days showed a profit this year.



1960 Grand Marshall Ethel Clatty

1960 Grand Marshall Ethel Clatty



Sweetheart Carol Collier

Frontier Days President Faris Whitney

1961



SWEETHEART

Mardi Wilson

Jim McNeal was chosen president of this 1961 Frontier Days show and Grand Marshal was Robert Hamilton of Sunnybrook Ranch.

Ethel Clatty originated a contest for frontier-type dresses: dance hall, fancy dress, or everyday working calico dress.

Ladies were required to wear dresses Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday during Frontier Days celebration. First prize was \$25; second prize \$15; third prize \$10; material from the Fabric Shop for the best dressed. Winners were: Sherry Mahan, first; Mrs. Lee Persico and Sherrill Kaser tied for runner-up.

Sweetheart contestants were Karen Hunter and Mardi Wilson. Mardi Wilson won the title and was crowned at the Coronation Ball by Dick Wildberger, leader of the Blackwells on Sunday night at the dance. Both dances were handled by the Marri-Eds. Music Sunday was by the Blackwells - Monday by Ralph Rawson.

Winners in the Sweetheart Contest drawing: first - Jim Deffendall-free vacation trip for two; second - Olin Samples - \$100 savings bond; third through tenth winners received \$25 bond each - Fred Wolff, F.B. Sherman, Dick Meyer, O'Kean and Webster, Eureka; C.F. Maloney of Spy Rock, A.P. Wilson of Ukiah, B.P. Bransport, and Jim Jennings.

Parade winners were Senior division floats: Willits Fire Department Auxiliary, first place with their Chapel at Asti; second was Willits Business and Professional Women's Club; third was St. John's Lutheran Church.

Junior Float winners: Job's Daughters, first; Willits Campfire Girls, second; Willits Girl Scouts, third.

There was poor attendance at the rodeo on Monday but the second day had a capacity crowd - 3,000 in attendance.

The barbecue was held both days in the Recreation Grove with the Willits Post 174, American Legion in charge. The meat was cooked in a pit behind the Veterans' Building.

Directors were Roland Williams, Ralph Laswell, and Faris Whitney. Mel Clatty was again general manager. Merrill Williams was first vice president; Lee Persico, Jr., second vice president; John Stansberry, third vice president; Lois Mahan, secretary; Gayle Hunt, publicity.

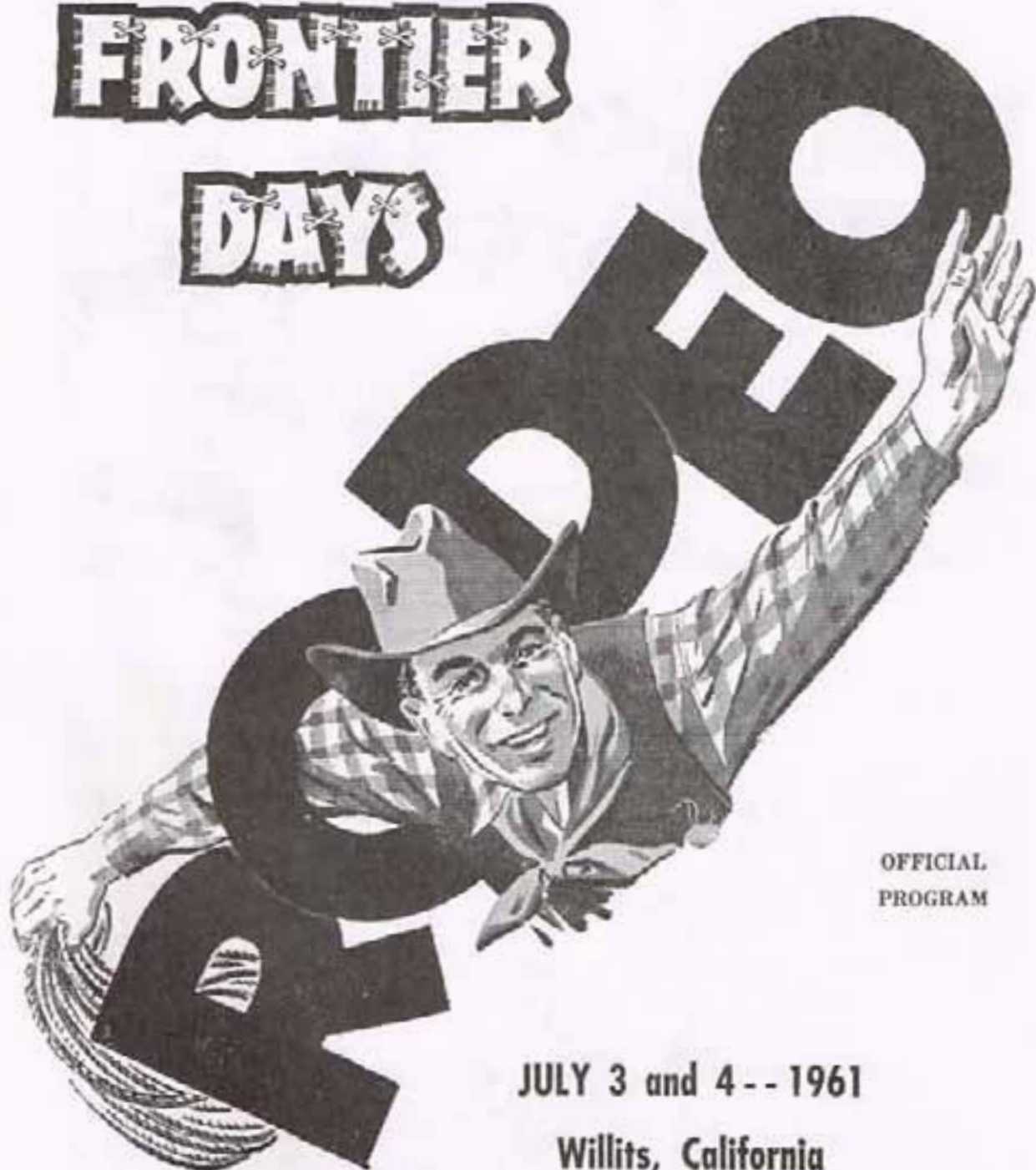
Concessions were handled by Red Allyn with the help of the Dilitantes. Jim Deffendall and Dick Wilson helped in the Sweetheart Contest. Florence Persico was track secretary. President McNeal first suggested giving money to the city if the show is a success, to be earmarked for new industry.



35TH ANNUAL WILLITS

FRONTIER

DAYS



OFFICIAL
PROGRAM

JULY 3 and 4 - - 1961

Willits, California

Sponsored by Willits Frontier Days, Inc.

1962



SWEETHEART

Linda Allen

The Sweetheart this year of 1962 received a \$35.00 formal gown and \$75.00. First runner-up received a corsage and \$50.00 - and second runner-up received a corsage and \$25.00.

Sweetheart contestants were Kristin Peterson, Fort Bragg; Linda Allen and Mark Daskam. Linda Allen won the title and was coronated by Martha Mae Kelton, a Sweetheart of earlier days.

Kenneth Jamieson was chairman in 1962, assisted by Logan Anker as Sweetheart Chairman; Ralph Reasoner as membership chairman; John A. Brown, parade chairman; Ralph Lagwell, parade director; Bill Blunck, physical director, aided by James Trapin, Louis Bertain, John Roberts, and Fred Van Bebbler, and Eddie Anderson, advisor to the parade committee.

Volunteers of the Young Women's Guild of the Methodist Church were in charge of records and assisting as secretaries.

Bill Blunck was Grand Marshal of the parade and trophies were made by Cliff Wynkoop.

Black Jack Wayne and his 8-piece orchestra played for the dance and he was also honorary grand marshal.

Robert Raymond Willits, a relative of Hiram Willits, donated a gold and silver belt buckle, engraved "Willits 1962" to John Brown as parade chairman as an annual award.

The water fight between Willits and Fort Bragg was won by the Willits Fire Department.

City Councilmen voted \$500 to Frontier Days for materials and repairs on the rodeo stands, which are city property. An anonymous donor gave 150 gallons of paint to be used on the rodeo grounds.

Parade winners in the senior division were: Frontier Twirlers, first; Willits BPW, second; Willits Fire Department Auxiliary, third. Junior division: Campfire Girls, first; Willits Junior Horsemen, second; National Rifle Association, third.

Sweetheart Linda Allen rode in a convertible belonging to Robert Willits. Princesses and Martha Mae Kelton followed in a Model T.

Frontier Days cleared \$5,000., and the Recreation Fund was started. Also, \$2,000 was spent for lighting at the rodeo grounds.

The Frontier Twirlers, winning first place in the parade, returned the win money to Frontier Days to go to a recreation fund!

1963



SWEETHEART

Susan Fonsen

Lou James, pioneer resident of Sherwood Road who is 81 years old, rode his own horse as Grand Parade Marshal the morning of the Fourth of July, 1963....the 37th year for Frontier Days with a Diamond Jubilee theme. It was Willits' 75th anniversary.

Parade Chairman was Carl Gallups, who received a buckle of burnished gold and silver, awarded by rancher Robert Willits, who bestowed a similar buckle on John Brown in 1962.

Kenneth Jamieson was Frontier Days president.

Sweetheart candidates were Sharon McGinnis, Susan Fonsen, and Janie Swops. Susan Fonsen was named Sweetheart.

Some of the parade winners were: Novelty Jr., Pete Mihelcic and Joe Ceratto; Clatty kids. Best antique auto, Ronnie Woodruff, 1st and 2nd. Commercial, Willits Creamery, Cox Motors, U.S. Navy, John Ardans. Club Float Sr., Willits Fire Department Auxiliary, Frontier Twirlers, Business and Professional Women's Club. Matched pair, Steve and Nina Tharp. Youngest Rider, Kim Cleary, Debbie Lauffer. Club Float Jr., Campfire Girls-Bluebirds, and Job's Daughters. Best Working Cowboys, Bruce Burton, Gary Anderson. Best Working Cowgirls, Catherine Gunderman, Elaine James, Mary Burris. Parade Horse, Linda Laughlin, Roy Moden, Heather Howard. Ranch Group, Jack Tharp Family, Willits Ranch, Lauffer Family.

Cottonseed Clark and his Channel 2 orchestra furnished some very danceable music at the Frontier Days dance at the park pavilion the night of July 3rd.

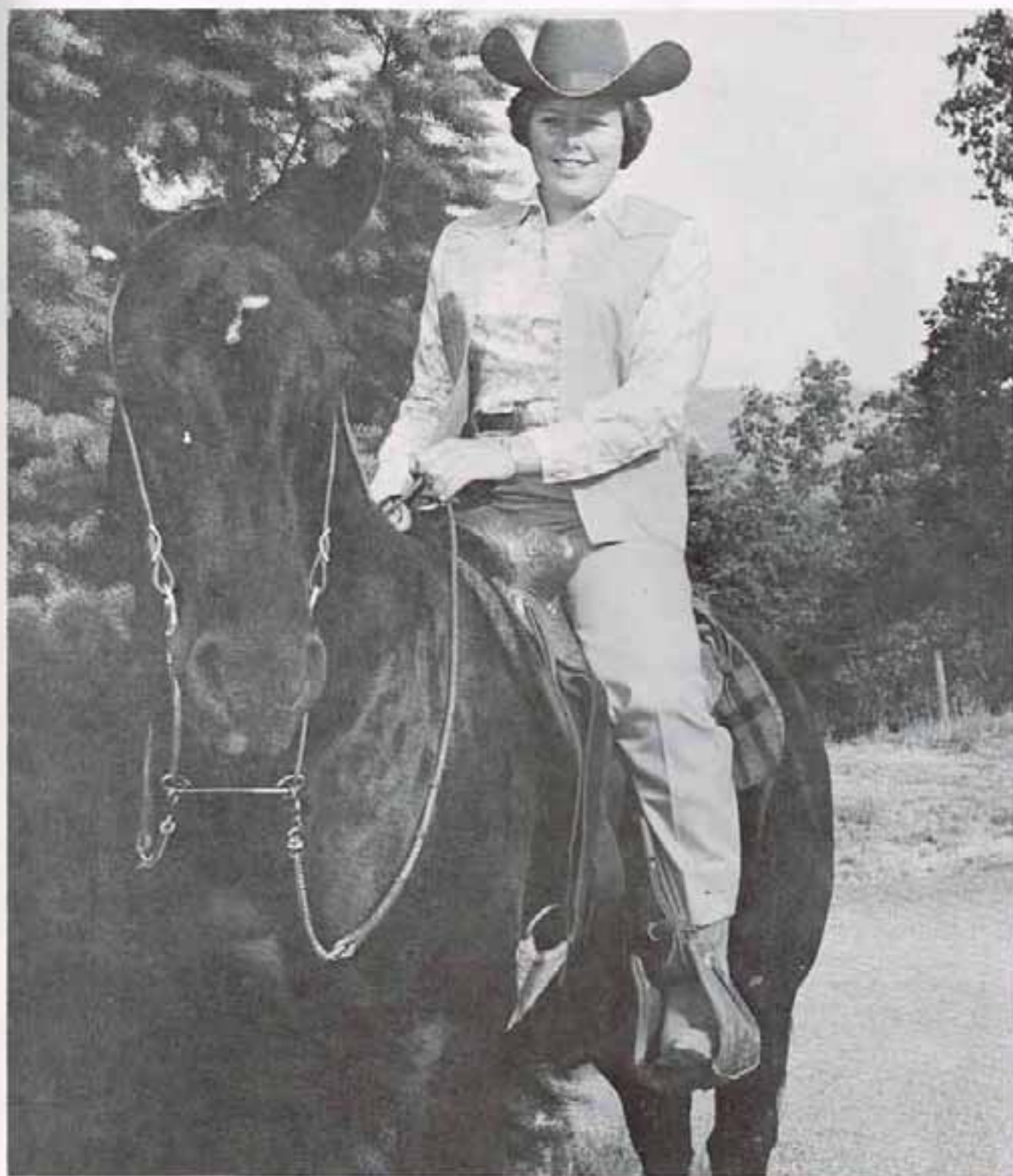
A feature of this year's Frontier Days celebration was the Diamond Jubilee program covers that were on the rodeo programs sold by the Willits Girl Scouts at both the rodeos.

In addition to containing the line-ups for each performance, the programs, done in bright red and blue on a shiny cover stock, will serve as souvenirs of Willits' 75th anniversary.

The concession stands were handled by the Parent Teachers Association under the direction of Mrs. Blanche Jay, president of the PTA. An art show at the rodeo grounds was conducted by the Willits Art Association with Bea Scott in charge.

For 1963 Directors were Ralph Laswell, John Brown, Logan Anker, Lee Persico, Don Fonsen, Merrill Williams, and Helen Wirta.

1964



SWEETHEART

Sue Hardaway

In 1964, the Sweetheart candidates were Linda Lipary, Sue Hardaway, Luann Wonacott, Della Lang, and Annette Ciancio. Marge Moore was in charge.

Sue Hardaway was Sweetheart for the 38th Frontier Days celebration. Parade Marshal was Joe Daugherty, Director of the San Francisco Boys Club Band, which was the highlight of the parade. The year before they played at the World's Fair in Seattle.

The Fortels provided the music and Ed Burton was Master of Ceremonies for the Red, White and Blue Dance at the park pavilion.

A major feature of the parade, which had 6,000 spectators, was the precise San Francisco Boys Club Band, in tailored Royal blue and white uniforms, performing near the head of the parade.

Winners were: Club Float Sr.- Post 174 American Legion, Frontier Twirlers, Firemen's Auxiliary.

Club Float Jr. - Lo Del Theta Rho Club.

Commercial Parent: Willits Creamery's Clover Brand float.

Commercial Local - Willits Fabrics, Brooktrails Lodge, Thrifty Center.

Mounted Drill Team - The Ghost Riders, Willits Junior Horsemen.

High School Band - Willits High.

Novelty Sr. - Shifter's Car Club's magnificent "double-header" car; Ukiah Fire Department; Frank Boomer.

Novelty Jr. - Brookside Summer School; the Willits Hill Billies (Mel, Mousey, John and Jan Clatty); and Margaret Smith and Donkey.

Youngest Best Dressed Cowboy - Gary Willits.

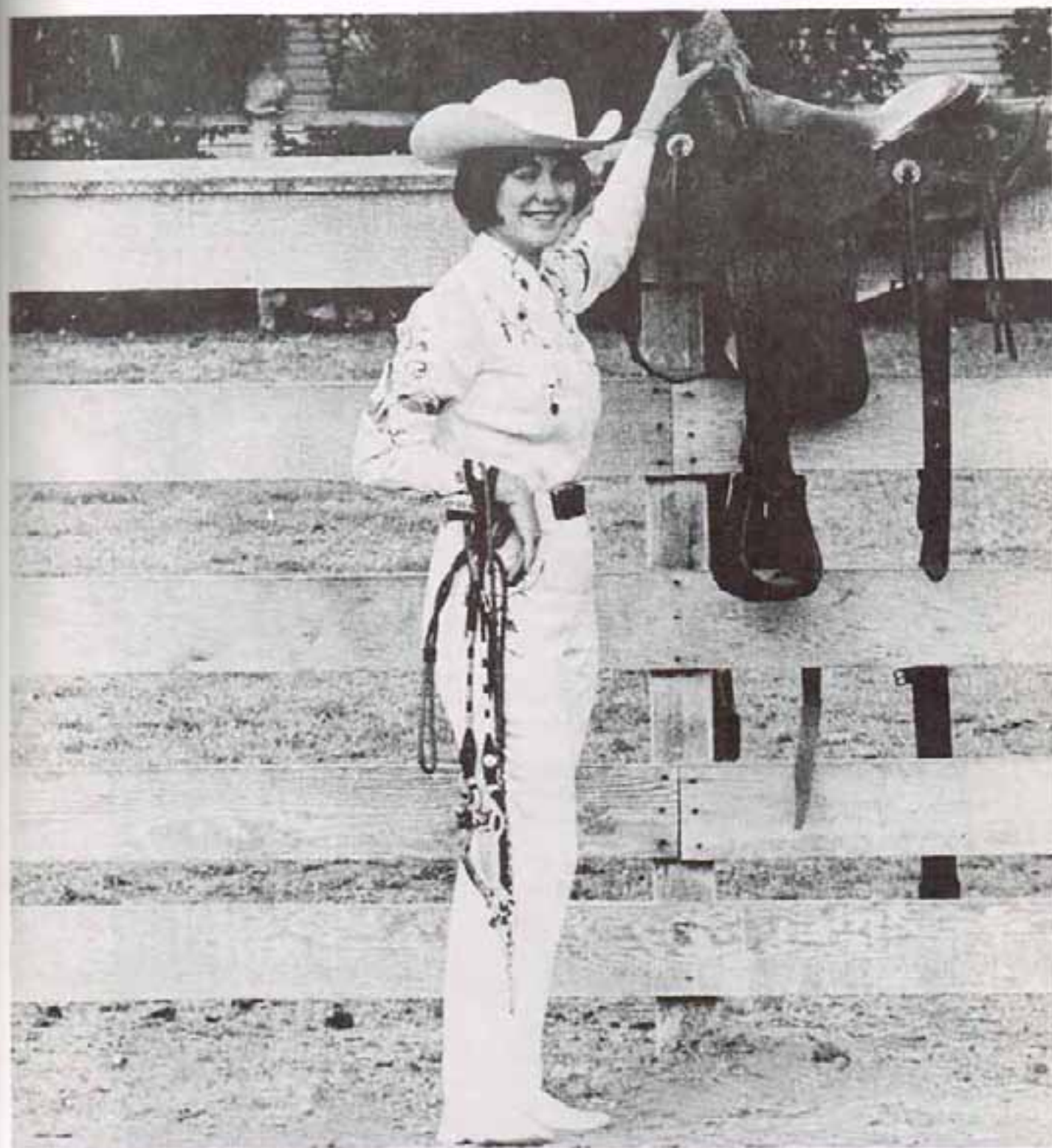
Youngest Best Dressed Cowgirl - Judy Rist, Janet Rist, Kim Cleary.

Best Religious Float - First Assembly of God Church.

Matched Pair - Ned Williams and Joan Simonsen.

Ticket sellers were Virginia Ciancio, Wave Whitney, and Barbara Recagno.

1965



SWEETHEART

Sharon Baker

The theme of the 1965 show was Pioneering to Progress.

Directors this year were Hank Lane, Merrill Williams, Ted Vieu, Eddis Anderson, Paul Davis, John Brown, Don Fonsen, John Stansberry, Carl De Rego, K.O. Johnson, Carl Callups, Lee Persico, Logan Anker, Jim Donaldson, Gordon Lane, Ethel Clatty, Al Canepa, Jr., Ron Woodruff, Jack Riddle, and Elvira Schlichten.

Chairmen were set up:

Whiskerino Contest - Gordon Lane
Sweetheart Contest - Jim Donaldson
Membership Drive - Ralph Laswell and Galen Hathaway
Parade Chairman - Al Canepa, Jr., on behalf of the
Willits Chamber of Commerce

Sweetheart was Sharon Baker.

Grand Marshal was Leandro Persico.

Ten usherettes helped out at the rodeo, all from the Willits High School. This year Frontier Days joined the Western Fairs Association.

President of Frontier Days for the year was Kenneth Jamieson; Ralph Laswell, first vice president; Ray Burris, second vice president; Galen Hathaway, secretary; Rollo Stowaser treasurer until his resignation at which time Jim Donaldson became treasurer.

Andy Amsbaugh again furnished the stock for the rodeo and the carnival was Roberts Amusement Carnival. Black Jack Wayne played the music for the dance.

In the membership drive \$900 came into the treasury. Profit for the year's show was \$950.

1966



SWEETHEART

Leslie Cogburn

Frontier Days entered into an agreement this year of 1966 with the City of Willits for rodeo grounds rental and for new stands.

Leslie Cogburn was Sweetheart and Jim Donaldson was in charge of the Sweetheart contest.

All officers and directors were re-elected from last year's lineup. Advertising was handled by Lois Mahan.

Grand Marshal was Frank Peterson.

Prices remained the same as the previous year and Frontier Days was again a member of the Western Fairs Association. Exception: BBQ now \$2.00.

In 1966, Frontier Days presented the City of Willits with a check for \$6,384.76. The check was printed on a huge sheet of plywood and given to Mayor Leo Hulett as a representative of the city. This was to go toward the cost of the swimming pool which was built on the Willits High School grounds.

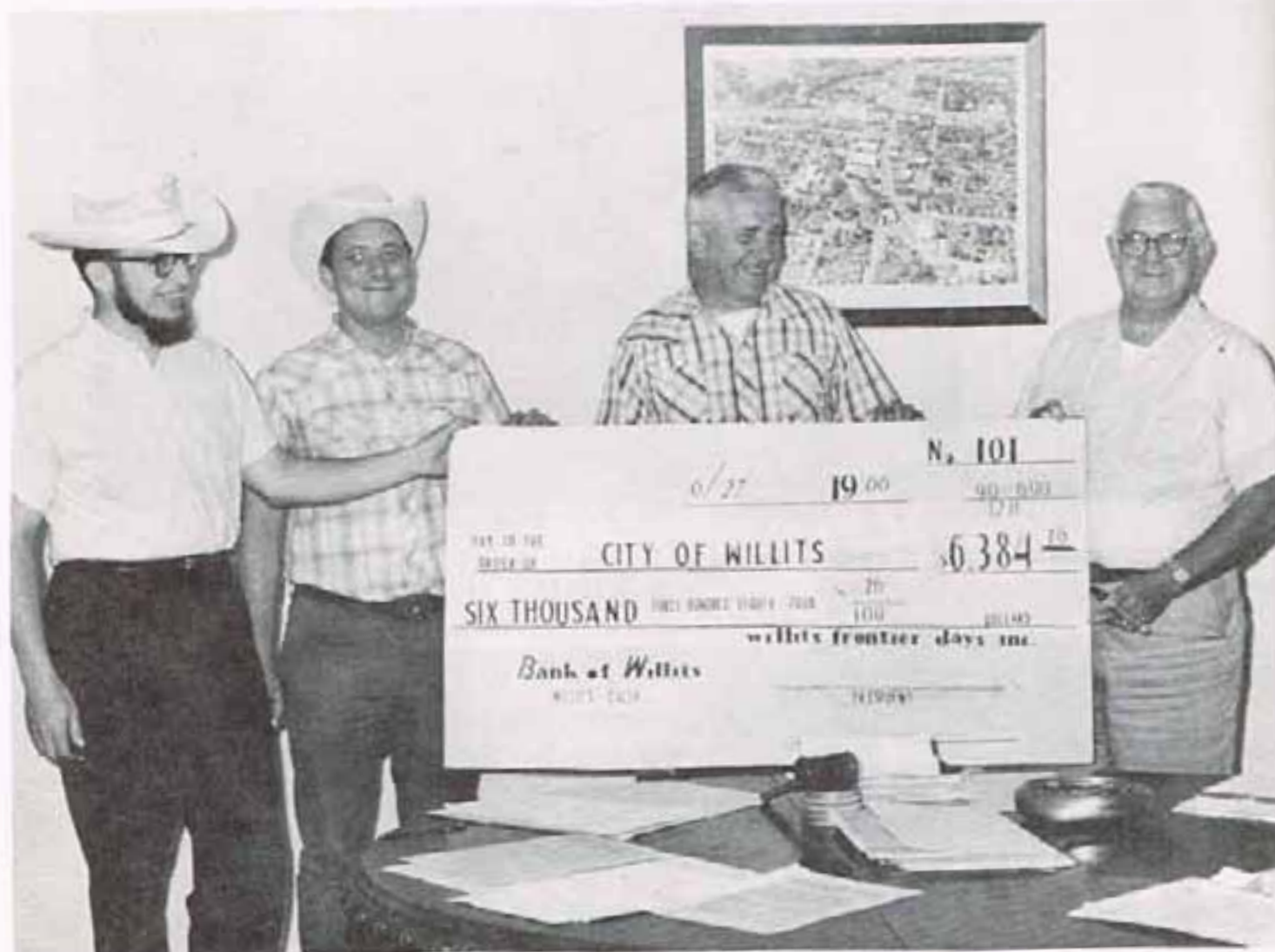
Frontier Days directors discussed the possibility of having the Willits Rotary Club take over the operation of Frontier Days and also the possibility of not having a parade this year, but neither one came about.



Congressman Donald Clausen, Sweetheart Leslie Cogburn, and Assemblyman Frank Belotti

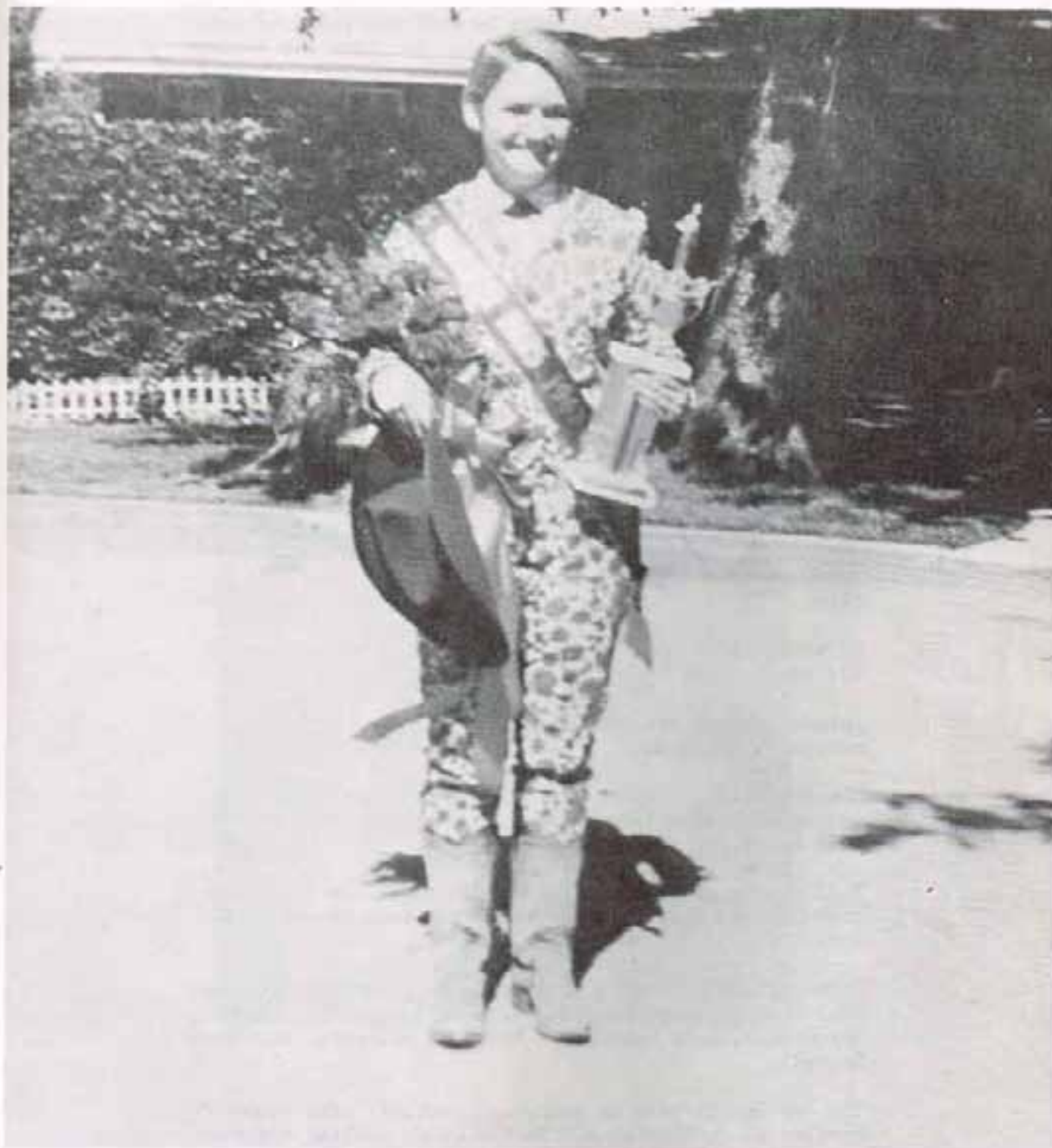


Bank of America



Left to right: Jim Donaldson, Galen Hathaway, Kenneth Jamieson,
for Frontier Days, and Mayor Lee Hulett for the
City of Willits

1967



SWEETHEART

JoAnn Schloegel

The 41st annual Frontier Days in 1967 was presided over by Glen Hathaway as president and the theme was Western Progress.

Frank Boomer was in the parade as a North American Plains Indian, dressed in Indian clothes he had made himself, just as the Indians would have done, from killing the deer to tanning the hide and sewing it together. His pants and tunic were made of tanned skins. He cut and made the fringe himself and beaded the bands on his outfit. The breastplate on his chest was made of buffalo bones. He also made the eagle feather headdress and moccasins of tanned skins.

The Giant Cowboy over 20 feet tall at the rodeo grounds entrance was furnished by Phillip's 66 Service and Phillips Petroleum plant.

Barbara Hamilton and Helen Hunt were co-chairmen of the Sweetheart Contest, sponsored by the Republican Women's Club. Sweetheart contestants were Karen Kaser, Mary Burris, Joann Schleogel, and Judy Kisling.

JoAnn Schloegel was Sweetheart and Mary Burris was first runner-up.

First place in the Senior Float Division of the parade was the Willits Fire Department Auxiliary.

Parade Marshal was Prescott Sullivan, San Francisco newspaper columnist.

The Whiskerino Contest was headed by Gordon Lane, who set up classifications: chops, handlebars, Van Dyke, full beard, trim, and novelty.

Bill Landis of San Jose, outstanding bull fighter, was rodeo clown. Bucking stock came from Andy Amsbaugh of Modesto.

Directors in 1967 were Al Canepa, Jr., Merrill Williams, Paul Davis, George Kincaid, Carl Gallups, Ralph Laswell, Ray Burris, Lois Mahan, Ted Vieu, Ed Gullette, and Grace Laswell.

The Boy Scouts were in charge of parking; Lois Mahan handled the advertising. At the gates selling tickets were Jim Tocher, Virginia Ciancio, and Wave Whitney.

One of the dance bands was Fred Hemphill's "The Pinkertons."

1968



SWEETHEART

Clydeen Smith

Grand Marshal of the 1968 Frontier Days was Don Coleman, former World's Champion Cowboy.

Sweetheart contestants Clydeen Smith and Bobbie Burris competed for the title and first place went to Clydeen Smith. The contest was headed by Barbara Hamilton of the Republican Women.

Bob Graves of G & B Motors donated a 1968 Datsun pickup as a door prize for a lucky ticket holder at the final western dance of the celebration. It was won by Mrs. Marvin Beers.

Big attractions were the Champions, colorful precision drill group from Santa Rosa, who were in the parade, and the Sing Out, Santa Rosa Youth Group which performed before and during the parade.

Whiskerino Chairman was Gordon Lane.

Rodeo stock came from Andy Amsbaugh, and the carnival was from Roberts Amusement Company.

More than 400 persons attended the Lions Club Breakfast.

Officers for the year were Galen Hathaway, president; Ken Jamieson, first vice president; Lee Persico, second vice president.

Added attractions this year were a Family Night Picnic at Brooktrails and a street dance in the parking lot at the Purity store, on East Commercial Street.

Directors were Ethel Clatty, Ray Burris, Merrill Williams, George Kincaid, Paul Davis, Ted Vieu, Ralph Laswell, L.C. Holder, Barbara Hamilton, Mac Ingraham, and Robert Dibble.

1969



SWEETHEART

Musey Clatty

Grand Marshal in 1969 was Leah Martin, champion trail horse rider, and Sweetheart was her granddaughter Moussey Clatty.

Runners-up in the Sweetheart contest were Patti Puschman of Willits and Karen Roark of Ukiah. Parade Director was Jim Donaldson. Sweetheart Director: Barbara Hamilton.

The Campions, national champion drill team from Santa Rosa, again performed precision drill maneuvers along the route of march in the parade, and the "biggest crowd ever" - estimated at many thousands, watched the parade.

The Willits High School Band was supposed to march but at the last minute the music was supplied by the Willits Summer School Band.

Fire Chief Robert Alcott announced that this year there would be no firecrackers, and no fireworks.

The barbecue was handled by the Rotary Club and the Cowboy Breakfast by the Lions Club.

The Willits Junior Horsemen sponsored a gymkhana two days at the rodeo grounds.

Championship stock was provided for the rodeo by Andy Amsbaugh again this year.

The Petaluma Junior Riders did a drill lasting 12 minutes in the parade. Parade judges were Bob Runnings, Jack Mandt, and Jim Rice.

Rodeo admissions were raised to \$2.50 general and \$3.00 for box seats. Ken Jamieson, Virginia Ciancio, and Wave Whitney were on the gate.

Lee Persico, Jr., was Frontier Days president; George Kincaid, first vice president; Jack Tharp, second vice president; Grace Laswell, treasurer, and Galen Hathaway, secretary.

Directors were Francis Porro, Ken Jamieson, Ted Visu, Grace Laswell, Ralph Laswell, Ray Burris, Paul Davis, George Kincaid, Lee Persico, Merrill Williams, Jim Donaldson, Bob Chase, Jr., Bob Whittaker, Perry Smith, Barbara Hamilton, K.O. Johnson, Lloyd Elliott, Galen Hathaway, Jack Tharp, Chuck Persico, Carl Gallups, Don Beach, and Eddie Bean.

1970



SWEETHEART

Kam Maize

The continuing success of Willits Frontier Days is a tribute to the men who began it all back in 1926. It is now called the oldest continuous rodeo in the west.

This year of 1970 saw Lee Persico again as the Frontier group's president.

Sweetheart contestants under the chairmanship of Barbara Hamilton were Kam Maize, Virginia Wilkes, and Shirley Lewis.

Kam Maize became Sweetheart.

Daryle Lamonica, quarterback for the Oakland Raiders, was Grand Marshal. Despite some difficulty with the horse, Lamonica made it through the parade with a little help from friends. He was introduced as Dave Lamonica. Evidently the announcer knew more about horses than football!

Parade Chairmen were Gordon Gebhardt with Carl Gallups, Jim Donaldson and the Willits Jaycees.

Also taking part in the parade were our United States Congressman Donald Clausen and California State Assemblyman Frank Belotti.

Prizes were provided by the Willits Chamber of Commerce for the best window and dress displays. Laney's Dress Shop won first place for window displays, best depicting the theme "Frontiers of the Future."

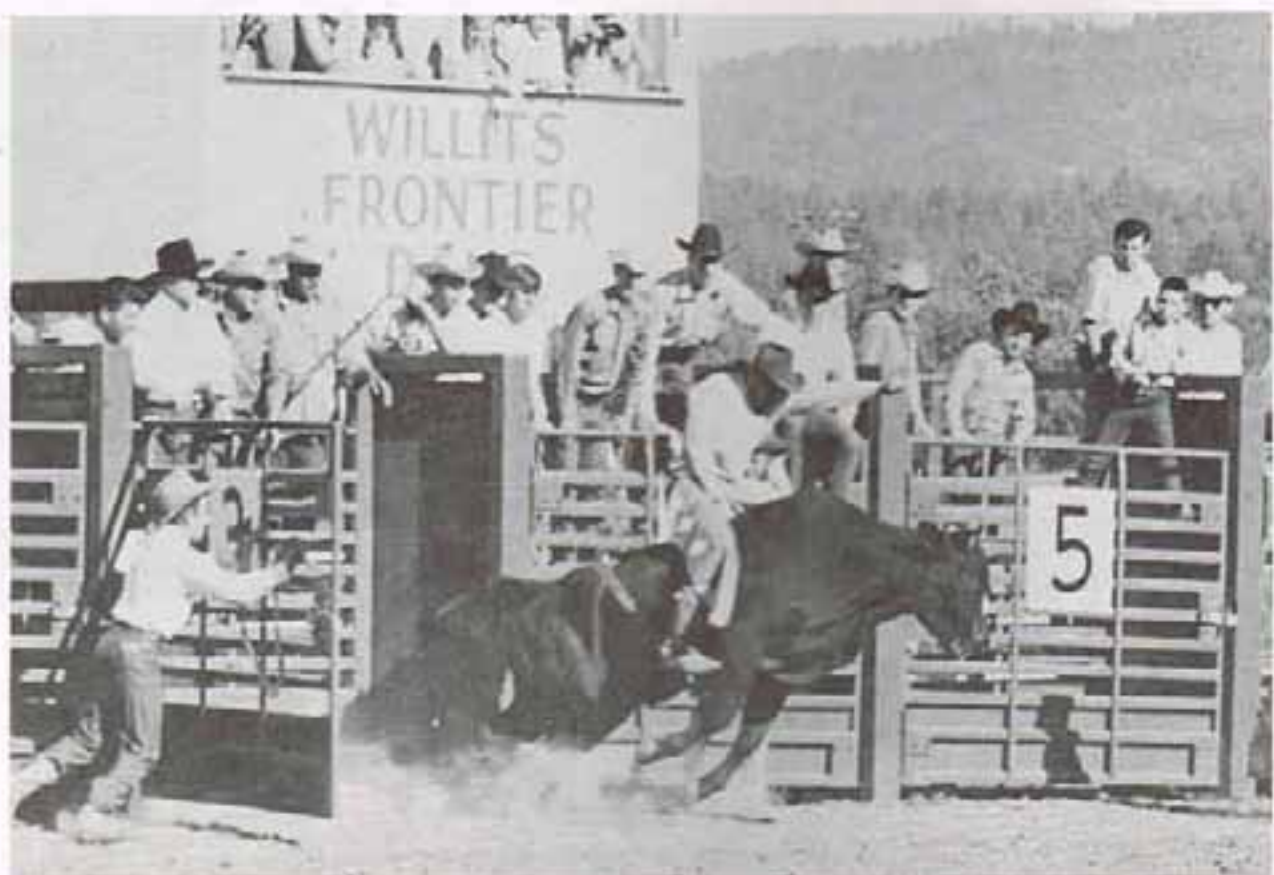
The Bank of America won first place for the best interior display.

Clydeen Smith, Frontier Days Sweetheart in 1968, was chosen Miss Blue Pacific Rodeo Queen on May 29 at the Cow Palace. She then went on to compete for Miss Rodeo of California in Sacramento in October. Clydeen is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Perry Smith of Willits.

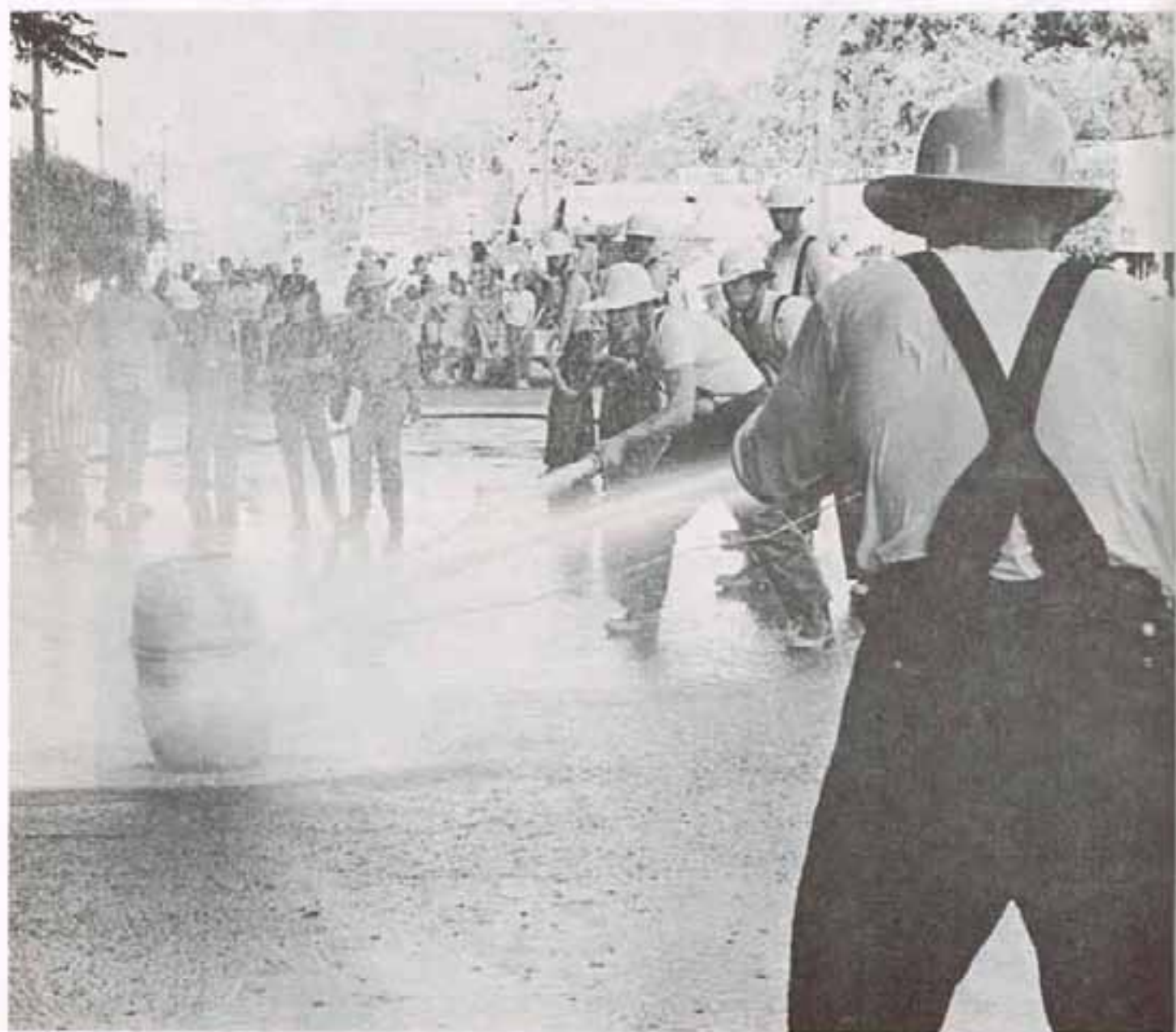
This year the stands were raised three feet for better viewing at the rodeo grounds.

Directors this year were Gordon Gebhardt, Ray Theeringer, Val Dryden, Bob Williams, Carl Gallups, Ray Burris, Lee Persico, George Kincaid, Barbara Hamilton, Ted Visu, Mac Ingraham, Merrill Williams, Galen Hathaway, Ben McMakin, L.C. Holder, Glenn Swope, and Chuck Persico.

Pete Petersen provided ambulance service for the rodeo.



Mal Clatty



1971



SWEETHEART

Margaret Smith

1721

In 1971, three local girls announced their candidacy for Sweetheart: Margaret Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth O. Smith; Billie Underhill, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Underhill, and Debbie Fischer, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Fischer.

Margaret Smith won the title of Sweetheart. Barbara Hamilton was again in charge of the contest.

The cutting horse competition was brought back, under the auspices of the Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association.

The Willits Jaycees handled the parade with Larry Buzzard and Carl Gallups in charge.

Mike Desiano, former Grand Marshal in 1960, added a Spanish flavor to the parade riding his Palomino in his beautiful silver attire as Don Gaspar de Portola.

Gun Fighter for Hire, a fast-draw exhibition as might have been seen in shoot-outs and barroom brawls, was staged by Phil and Mike Hughes and Ed Drew.

Scotty Turner, secretary-manager of the Redwood Empire Fair, was announcer for the rodeo attended by a near-record high of 3,500 persons on the Fourth of July.

John Samuels, Denny McEntire, Bob Petty, and Robert Thrillkill, were winners in the Whiskerino Contest.

Sidney's won the contest for the best western store decor.

Boy Scouts took charge of parking and selling programs.

The Soroptimist Club of Willits was organized in April of this year under President Carley Chase and handled the concessions at the rodeo for Frontier Days along with the Sigma Omega Sorority.

Grand Marshal of the parade was Ed Hart, newscaster from KRON television station.

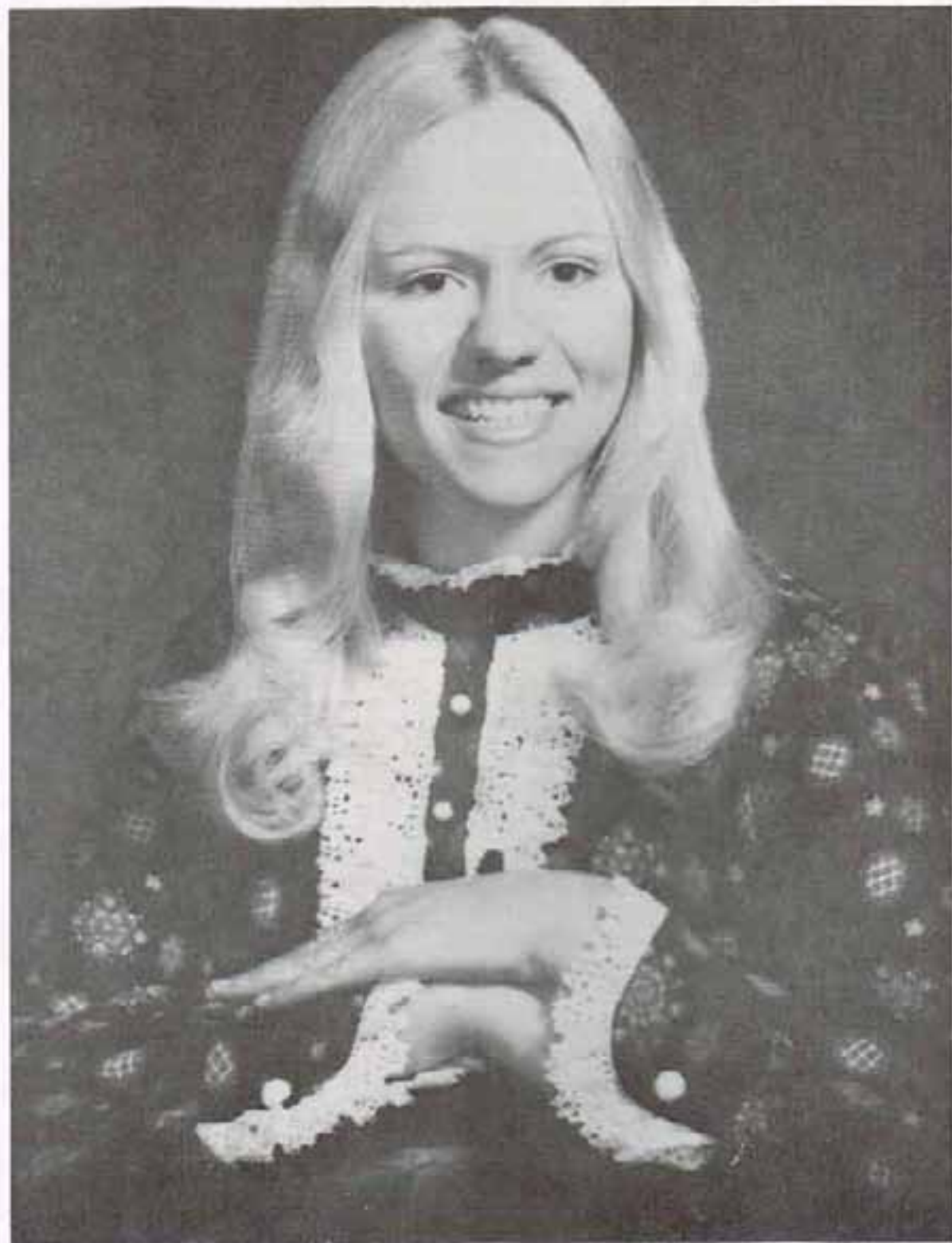


Rodney Wood





1972



SWEETHEART

Paulette Willcutt

Harvey Sawyers, Willits rancher and Supervisor of the Third District, was Grand Marshal of the Frontier Days parade in 1972.

All-Round Cowboy was Jeff Barnby of Sacramento. Stock was furnished by Andy Amsbaugh.

Future Farmers of America showed their stock behind the grandstands and some of the features of the show were a junior rodeo and the return of the cutting horses.

Mark Barr and the "Black Powder Gang" staged several gun fights at the rodeo. Donald Jiroch ran a scale model "Wells Fargo Stage" from the depot to the museum and rodeo grounds.

This year the Sweetheart Contest was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Willits and the winner was Paulette Willcut. Runners-up were Pam McCaa, Kathy Kroh, and Denise Brimhall. These girls sold \$5,067.50 in tickets to Frontier Days events.

The theme of this year's celebration was "Days of Yesteryear."

Parade winners were: Frontier Twirlers for club float senior; Willits Summer School for club float junior; 12th District Fair for club float commercial; Frank Boomer as a Plains Indian for novelty; Vicky Huffman and Leo Wharton for best dressed.

Willits merchants had buttons that read, "Willits Frontier Days."

Bill Obershaw and Mr. Borman (trainer) put on a police dog show.

In early 1972, representatives of the various service clubs decided that 50% of the 1971 profits, or \$850.50 would be set up in a special account for Willits Frontier Days 50th year (1976) and that the same thing should be done with profits for the next four years. The remaining \$850.50 went toward completion of the octagon building at the recreation grove. Clubs represented were Soroptimist, Chamber of Commerce, Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotary, as well as Frontier Days.

One of the highlights of the parade this year was the 12th Naval District Band. Val Dryden, with the Jaycees, handled the parade.

David Frost was clown for the Junior Rodeo.

In November of 1972 representatives of the Soroptimists, BFW, Chamber of Commerce, Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, Xi Omicron Rho, PTA, and Frontier Days voted to set aside \$450 for building a second barbecue pit at the recreation grove. \$200 was given to the Chamber of Commerce for the Christmas decorating contest and the rest rooms at the recreation grove got \$549. Half of the 1972 profits, or \$1,179.00 - went toward the 50th year - a fund now totaling \$2,029.00.



FRONTIER TWIRLERS



Melvin Dick
CCA All Around Champion Cowboy

1973



SWEETHEART

Jan Clatty

Jan Clatty was proclaimed Sweetheart of Frontier Days in 1973, making the Clatty sisters, Mousey and Jan, the only sisters ever to be Sweethearts in the history of Frontier Days. Mousey Clatty was Sweetheart of Frontier Days in 1969. Runners-up were Cindy Jenkins, Bonnie Corley, Denise Brimhall, and Jennie Johnston.

This year for the first time the Sweetheart Contest was co-ordinated by the Soroptimist Club of Willits, with Colleen Smith and Ernestine Porro in charge. This group started the annual Sweetheart Dinner this year.

Reno Bartolome, Sheriff of Mendocino County, was Grand Marshal of the parade and Gail and Scotty Turner announced.

The Cutting Horse event was co-sponsored by Chet Dennis of Healdsburg and Jack and Jane Mundt of Potter Valley.

Lee Persico, Jr., was president of Frontier Days in 1973; Ted Vieu and George Kincaid, vice presidents; Galen Hathaway, recording secretary; Mike Kostanecki, corresponding secretary; Fred Steele, treasurer, and Merrill Williams in charge of track events.

A free street dance was held at North Main Street with live music. Location was Gregg's Wolverine.

Profits in 1973 were reported to be larger than any other year. The barbecue served 2,262 persons. Funds in the amount of \$2,119 - to be matched by the city - were set aside for a Community Tot Lot to be made in the City Park.

There was no Whiskerino Contest this year.



Coby Dick, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old, who won the parade award in 1973 for "Youngest Cowboy."

Shown here with his mother, Clydeen, former Sweetheart.

127-1



These are Frontier Days' only sister-Sweethearts. Left to right: Mousey Clatty, 1969, and Jan Clatty, 1973, shown with their mother, Ethel.



FIRST ANNUAL SWEETHEART DINNER

Former Sweethearts, left to right: JoAnn Schloegel, Leslie Shuster, Clydeen Dick, Mousey Clatty, and Kam Maize.

1974



SWEETHEART

Kathy Persico

Kathy Persico, granddaughter of Lee and Florence Persico, who have been in Frontier Days for many years, won the title of Sweetheart of Frontier Days for the year 1974. The contest was again handled by the Soroptimist Club of Willits. Runners-up were Debbie Goforth and Bobbie Belvin.

Dr. Robert Smalley was Grand Marshal of the parade this year. The theme for the show was "Pride in our Pioneers" as suggested by Arlene Wear. Parade Chairman was Francis Porro.

Barbara Hamilton and Florence Persico handled the book work for track events, directed by Merrill Williams. Arena events were under the supervision of Chuck Persico.

K.O. Smith was in charge of the cutting horses, and two of them were reported to be rated in the top ten in the nation.

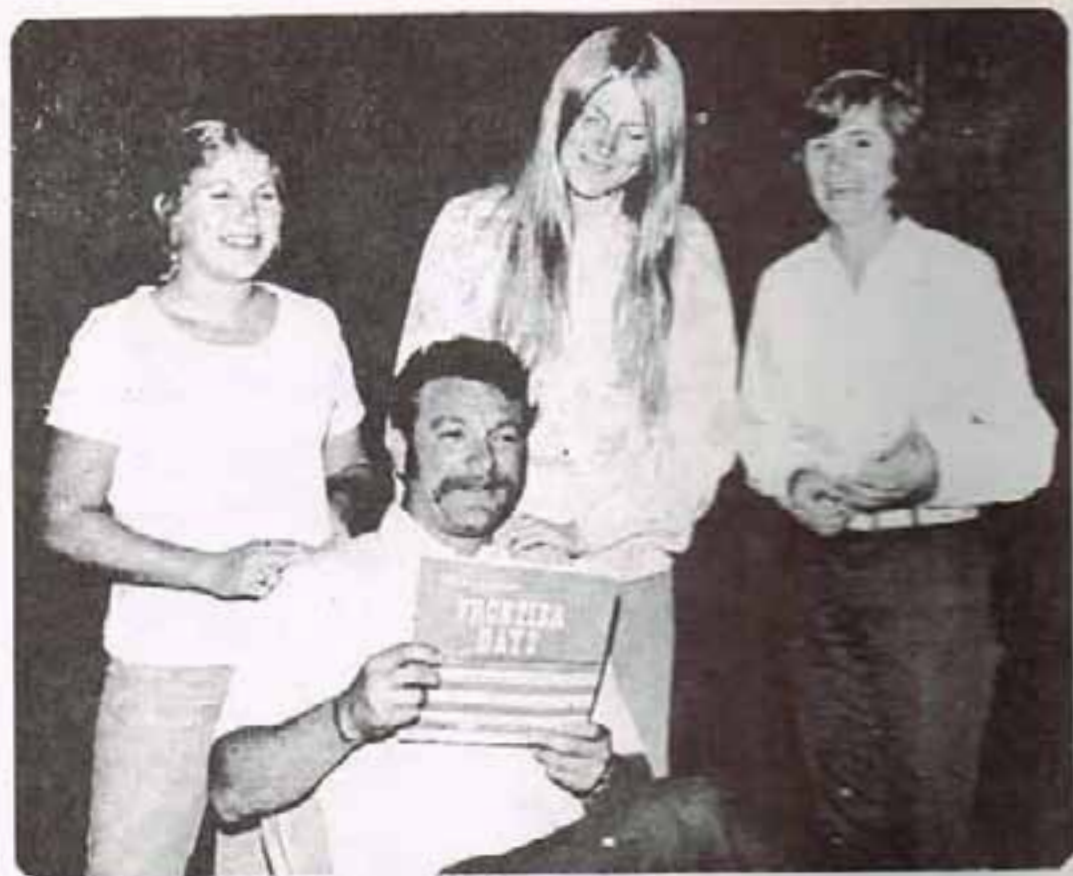
Lee Persico was president of Frontier Days; George Kincaid and Ted Vieu, vice presidents; Bette Rains and Joanna Kostanecki, secretaries, and Fred Steele, treasurer.

The barbecue fed 2,400 persons and between it and the Cowboy Breakfast a good profit was made.

The Sweethearts alone sold tickets to Frontier Days events in the amount of \$6,685.25.

Frank Boomer





President
Leo Persico
and
1974
Sweetheart
Contestants



1974 Frontier Days Grand Marshall Dr. Bob Smalley and his family



1975



SWEETHEART

Lorraine Scalliere

Lorraine Soulliere was named Sweetheart of Frontier Days in 1975 in the contest again conducted by the Soroptimist International Club of Willits, chaired by Roberta Yokum.

Runners-up were Debbie Songer, Shannon Phillips, and Sharon Anderson.

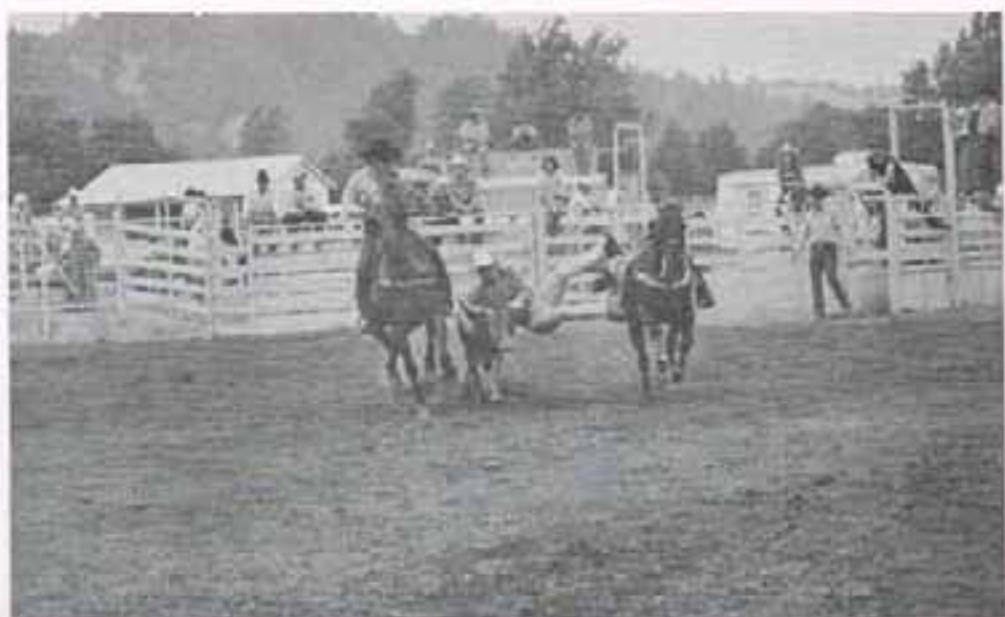
With a theme of "This is My Country," the parade was said to be one of the best, though there were no bands to provide music.

Grand Marshal was William (Bill) Pullen, who has been active in Frontier Days for many years.

During this year, Frontier Days retired the old American flag that has flown over their activities to the Mendocino County Museum, directly across the street from the rodeo grounds, there to be on display.

At work in the ticket booths were Virginia Ciancio, Betty Akins, and Alita Persico. Dance Chairman was Frank Boomer. Parade chairmen were Francis Porro and Carl Gallups.

Plans were already underway this year for the 1976 Frontier Days 50-year celebration.

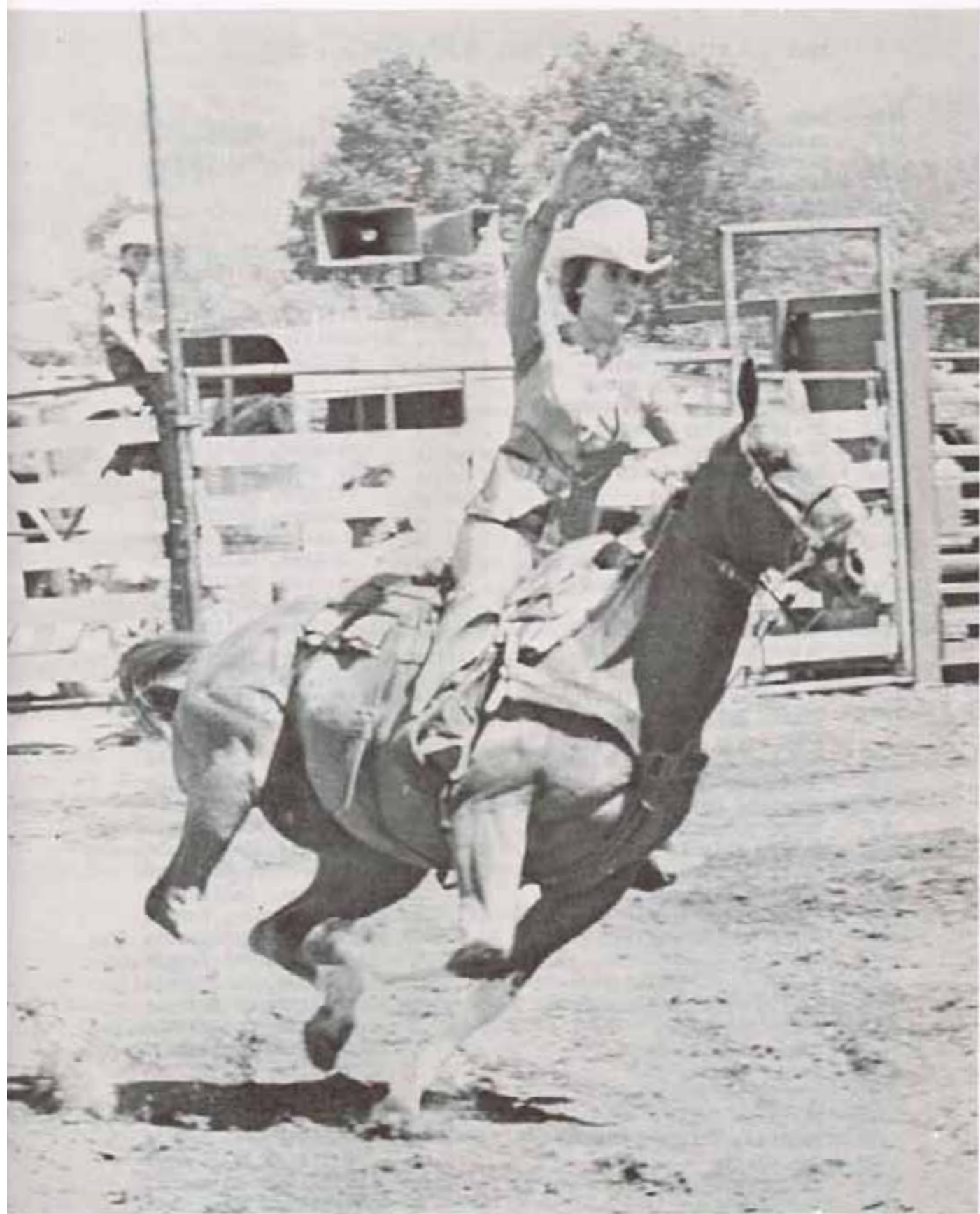






1976

SWEETHEART



Rodeo Salute to 1976.....



Medallion designed by W.P. "Dusty" Whitney II,
fourth generation member of Frontier Days family



Five hundred commemorative bottles were issued in late 1975 for the 50th anniversary of Willits Frontier Days, designed by Harry Moore

1926 - WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS SWEETHEARTS - 1976

| | | | | | |
|------|------------------------------|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| 1926 | - None | | | | |
| 1927 | - Marie Schloegel Novaglia | . | . | . | San Rafael, California |
| 1928 | - Martha Mae Warner Kelton | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1929 | - Lola Butts - deceased | | | | |
| 1930 | - None | | | | |
| 1931 | - None | | | | |
| 1932 | - Enola McKenzie Reed | . | . | . | Albany, Oregon |
| 1933 | - Betty Akins | . | . | . | Sacramento, California |
| 1934 | - Amy Gardner - deceased | | | | |
| 1935 | - Jemma Pedroncelli Serventi | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1936 | - Elizabeth Wendt Ferguson | . | . | . | Laytonville, California |
| 1937 | - Alice Gibellini Wade | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1938 | - Dorce Brown - deceased | | | | |
| 1939 | - Ernestine Casteel DeBoer | . | . | . | Walnut Creek, California |
| 1940 | - Evalyn Robley Bergson | . | . | . | Santa Rosa, California |
| 1941 | - Pauline Standley Perez | . | . | . | Monterey, California |
| 1942 | - Melba Dempsey Lewis | . | . | . | Santa Rosa, California |
| 1943 | - Ann Cox McGinnis | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1944 | - Anna Ford Hardwick | . | . | . | Whitmore, California |
| 1945 | - Lillian Kroh Nolan | . | . | . | Anchorage, Alaska |
| 1946 | - Georgia Stovall Welch | . | . | . | Orland, California |
| 1947 | - Ann Crabtree Henderson | . | . | . | Anderson, California |
| 1948 | - Lillian Kroh Nolan | . | . | . | Anchorage, Alaska |
| 1949 | - Betty Mast Campbell | . | . | . | Cloverdale, California |
| 1950 | - Wanda Lane Johnston | . | . | . | Ukiah, California |
| 1951 | - Gretchen Mullen Weber | . | . | . | Fullerton, California |
| 1952 | - Yvonne Dusseau Leever | . | . | . | Palo Alto, California |
| 1953 | - Claire Huffman Robertson | . | . | . | Fort Bragg, California |
| 1954 | - Joan Neary Olapham | . | . | . | Altadena, California |
| 1955 | - Shirley Merritt DeTata | . | . | . | Los Gatos, California |
| 1956 | - Betty Ann Stansberry Erbes | . | . | . | Santa Rosa, California |
| 1957 | - Patricia Moreno Door | . | . | . | San Leandro, California |
| 1958 | - Letha Schumaker Wiley | . | . | . | Burney, California |
| 1959 | - Marian Whitley Ireland | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1960 | - Carol Collier McClendon | . | . | . | Camp Springs, Maryland |
| 1961 | - Mardi Wilson Hinton | . | . | . | Santa Rosa, California |
| 1962 | - Linda Allen Banks | . | . | . | Minden, Nevada |
| 1963 | - Susan Fossen Neilson | . | . | . | Healdsburg, California |
| 1964 | - Sue Hardaway | . | . | . | Chester, California |
| 1965 | - Sharon Baker Blacknall | . | . | . | South Lake Tahoe, California |
| 1966 | - Leslie Cogburn Shuster | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1967 | - Joann Schloegel | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1968 | - Clydeen Smith Dick | . | . | . | Lakeview, Oregon |
| 1969 | - Mousey Clatty | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1970 | - Kam Maize Lalaguna | . | . | . | Red Bluff, California |
| 1971 | - Margaret Smith | . | . | . | Redding, California |
| 1972 | - Paulette Willcutt Sundahl | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1973 | - Jan Clatty | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1974 | - Kathy Persico | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1975 | - Lorraine Soulliere | . | . | . | Willits, California |
| 1976 | | | | | |

1976 FRONTIER DAYS OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

Officers:

Lee F. Persico, President (seven years)
George Kincade, First Vice-President
Marlene Brown, Second Vice-President
Betty Rains, Secretary
Fred Steele, Treasurer

Chairpersons:

Track Events: Barbara Hamilton, Florence Persico, Leandro Persico.

Arena Director: Chuck Persico

Sweetheart Contest: Soroptimist International of Willits
Colleen Smith, Ernestine Porro

Parade: Francis J. Porro - Carl Callups

Dance: Frank Boomer

Cutting Horse Events: K.O. Smith

Publicity: Lois Mahan, News Ventures

THEME: THIS IS MY COUNTRY

Ten eventful days are planned for the 1976 Frontier Days - ten days of riding, roping....rodeo!... dances, barbecues, carnival, special shows and programs... all for the great 50th celebration - from June 26 to July 5 in 1976.

SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT LEE PERSICO

This book in itself is an outstanding tribute to the Willits community and to the Frontier Days celebration. The tremendous effort spent in research and compiling is indicative of the spirit that has made it possible for the celebration to successfully continue for 50 years.

I feel a deep personal satisfaction in Frontier Days for I've been a part of it most of my life, thanks to my parents, who got me involved at an early age. I've also been a Director and for the past seven years, the President. Many people look upon Frontier Days as a time of homecoming, a reason to return to Willits and renew friendships. By continuing this celebration we provide our younger generation with an historical Frontier Days, brimming with a colorful past and an unlimited future.

I commend the many people and organizations who have supported this show. A special thanks to the Soroptimist International of Willits for this book and to those who provided pictures and information for it.

To the people of Willits and Little Lake Valley - this is your show - enjoy it, love it, and hand it on

Lee Persico

Willits Frontier Days, Inc., P.O. Box 800, Willits, Calif. 95490
Home of the oldest continuous rodeo in the State of California

