The Avon Double Jubilee: The Celebration of the Century

Our community knew how to celebrate - even back in 1935! From June 13-16, 1935, the greater Rochester area celebrated our Double Jubilee - the 100th anniversary of Avon Township’s (Rochester Hills) founding. The four-day celebration was packed full of parades, contests, concerts, and pageant performances. Hundreds of township pioneers and current residents came together to create the celebration of the century.

Downtown Rochester transformed during the festivities. Amusement rides were set up in the middle of Main Street. A Century of Progress exhibit took over one of the downtown shops. Relics from early settlers were on display in the Ye Old Curiosity Shoppe on West Fourth Street. Street dancing took place on Fifth Street every night, except Sunday. The newly developed Avon Township Park, dedicated during the celebration, became the one permanent addition to Rochester’s landscape. Today, this park is the Rochester Municipal Park.

Activities centered around the theme of each day. Thursday was Farmer’s Day, Friday was School Day, Saturday was Mardi Gras Day and Sunday was set aside for back to back baseball games. Three different parades took place during the celebration: a pet and doll parade, a mummers parade, and a big historical parade of progress, which included a 300 piece band and floats from all over the state. Every evening ended with the Double Jubilee Historical Pageant in the ball park. With a local cast of 500 people, the Historical Pageant included 10 episodes reenacting important events in the community’s history, such as the first school, transportation, and the Civil War.

Sarah Van Hoosen Jones devoted a whole chapter to the Avon Double Jubilee in her book, *Chronicle of Van Hoosen Centenary Farm*. After almost a decade of running the Van Hoosen Farm, Sarah had become a dedicated member of the local community. During the celebration, she participated in the historical parade and the Ye Old Curiosity Shoppe. Through Sarah’s words, readers are transported back to the clear and cool Friday afternoon of June 14, 1935, when the historical parade made its way through Rochester. Here is what she had to say: “The parade consisted largely of floats representing the various business firms of Rochester, as well as some of the nearby farms. Now was the time when attics were ransacked for old clothes, as were the lofts of barns and tool sheds for old buggies, carts and wagons. We brought forth our famous surrey, a double-seated vehicle with ‘the fringe on top’ and, since we had horses on the farm, one was singled out for driving it.... Close observance was quite possible as the pace was set by the horse-drawn vehicles, the great automobiles made in Michigan conceding the pace out of respect to the era being honored.”

When the Avon Double Jubilee came to a close, excitement for local history lingered on. This renewed appreciation initiated the formation of the Pioneer Society of Avon Township. Nearly
150 people attended the organization’s first meeting in June of 1936, a year after it was established. While the Avon Double Jubilee lasted only four days, it sparked a passion for local history that lives on in the greater Rochester community to this day.

Step back in time (virtually) with Avon Double Jubilee memorabilia & photos

Avon Double Jubilee Program Booklet
Every page of this program booklet is chock-full of local history. From the historical summaries to the business advertisements, it’s nearly impossible to not learn something new about this community.
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=210895

Avon Double Jubilee Program of Events
This single page list of events shows just how much the community fit into four days.
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=210894

Wooden Nickels
These wooden nickels issued during the celebration were redeemable at the Avon Double Jubilee office until 3pm on Monday, June 17th, 1935
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=210890

May 3, 1935 Rochester Era Newspaper
Printed on the front page are “A Few Suggestions For a Parade at Avon Township Double Jubilee” from Adin Burkholder
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=205736

June 14, 1935 Rochester Era Newspaper
Published during the Avon Double Jubilee, the front page of this newspaper is dedicated to the celebration and recounting the past.
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=205740

Photo of Amusement Rides at Third and Main Street
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=210896

Photo of Rochester Women’s Club Parade Float
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/awarchive?item=210898

Photo of Horse Drawn Carriage in Parade
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=210904
Photo of Sarah Van Hoosen Jones in Costume
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=210905

Photo of Van Hoosen Farm Float
In her book, Sarah describes the float, which “consisted of the big farm truck, decorated in alfalfa and carrying one of our finest purebred Holstein-Freidan cows, together with a crate of white Leghorn hens and four of our barn employees dressed in white coveralls.”
http://www.oaklandcountyhistory.org/awweb/pdfopener?md=1&did=210893