

Naples Grape Pie History

“Yesterday and Today” by Trish Lambiase

Yesterday (from articles and papers in the archives of the Naples Historical Society)

The first Naples Grape Festival took place in 1872, the year Naples Memorial Town Hall was completed as a memorial to the 225 Naples boys who served with the Union Army. The first event held in Memorial Hall was the 1st Annual Naples Fair and Grape Festival.

When the Naples Agricultural Fair was established in the 1880's the grape festivals become a part of that fair usually held the first complete weekend in September. The Naples Fair was a victim of WWII as were the grape events. In 1961, the Village of Naples created the Naples Public Relations Commission to promote two local activities: the Naples Creek Rainbow Trout Derby and the Naples Grape Festival. Some famous people who were part of the festival in the 1960's included Robert Kennedy, Paul Harvey and Emmett Kelly, Jr. The grape festival was discontinued after 1971 due to unruly crowds, traffic and parking problems, and the destruction caused by “hippies” that attended. After a 16-year absence the Naples Grape and Wine Festival was revived in 1988. The event was brought back to herald the 100th anniversary of Widmer's Wine Cellars and to serve as the start of the town of Naples' bicentennial celebration. In 1989, Naples Bicentennial year, the festival was made a two-day event featuring arts and crafts, music and a grape pie contest.

The grape pie contest was a great attraction. Rochester food writers and editors judged the first contest. After the contest, the winning pies were auctioned piece by piece to benefit the Naples Library. There were thousands of pies baked throughout the village by people who all had “a secret recipe”. However, none of the top ten bakers entered the pie contest because they all thought they were number one!

Today

Our thanks to *Joseph's Wayside Markets* for being the Sponsor of this activity. Over the many years of having the Naples Grape Pie Contest an integral attraction to the many offerings of the Naples Grape Festival, the excitement grows each year!! Pie bakers from many parts of the finger lakes region and beyond take part in entering their homemade grape pie.

On Saturday of the festival, September 23rd, 2023 bring your entry or entries (you can enter more than one pie) to the pie contest booth, along with your application for submittal. Starting at noon, our panel of judges will start the tasting and determine the winner(s) of the best pie entered.

It is never too soon to turn your home baking skills into creating the best grape pie!!