

= Ypsilanti Heritage Festival =

The Ypsilanti Heritage Festival is a festival in Ypsilanti , Michigan . Held each year on a late @-@ August weekend , the festival sprawls across Frog Island Park , Riverside Park , Depot Town , and downtown Ypsilanti . The festival includes events such as a parade , vintage base ball , a bed race , a hot dog eating contest , a rubber duck race , and a spoof of the Woodward Dream Cruise called the " Nightmare Cruise " .

= = History = =

The festival was first held on Saturday , July 15 , 1978 , " from noon ' til nightfall " . The sidewalks and streets in Depot Town had just been re @-@ paved , and the Depot Town Association held a " Sidewalk Celebration " . The poster advertised a noon sidewalk promenade led by the Honorable George Goodman " Hizzoner " the mayor of Ypsilanti and exciting ribbon cutting ceremonies , dedications and plain or fancy walkin ' . The Sidewalk Celebration was such a success that a decision was made to repeat the event , to be known as the " Ypsilanti Yesteryear Heritage Festival " .

According to other reports , a motivating factor was the desire to establish a historic district in Ypsilanti , to prevent the city from replacing historic buildings on North Huron Street and in Depot Town with new construction . A group of Ypsilantians applied to the state for funding to publish a guidebook to the city 's historic homes , and were told that no money was available for that purpose , but that there was funding available to stage a festival . A \$ 15 @,@ 000 grant from the state helped to fund the 1979 Ypsilanti Yesteryear Heritage Festival .

In 1979 , the festival drew 50 @,@ 000 attendees , continued to grow quickly in subsequent years , and the name was soon shortened to the present name . By the mid @-@ 1980s the festival was attracting attention from non @-@ local newspapers ? a June 1985 edition of the Toledo Blade referred to it as an " Old time circus , arts and crafts , and historic home tour " ? and later that decade the festival was drawing more than 250 @,@ 000 attendees a year , though attendance subsequently declined , and in recent years the festival has drawn about 100 @,@ 000 attendees .

= = Activities = =

The Ypsilanti Heritage Festival includes and has included a wide variety of activities and events .

The Ypsilanti Historic Home Tour , held annually during the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival , began , like the festival proper , in 1979 . A beer garden and gambling tent anchored the center of the festival from 1979 through 2010 . In 2011 the gambling was eliminated for financial reasons , while the beer garden continued with an expanded food and drink selection ; however , in January , 2012 , new festival director Andrew Clock announced that " the casino will be back , set up right next to the beer tent , where it belongs . " A bed race through downtown Ypsilanti was added as an annual event beginning in 2009 .

The Ypsilanti Heritage Festival Parade began in 1979 , and has been held every year . In 2007 , the parade attracted wider attention when parade organizers approved the inclusion of a group protesting a proposed city income tax and subsequently revoked the permission . Festival coordinators explained that their rule was to exclude groups marching to represent controversial or political issues , and that the initial approval was an error .

Because the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival has often been the same weekend as the Woodward Dream Cruise , festival coordinators " decided it would be a blast to have something that was the direct opposite of the Dream Cruise " , and the Nightmare Cruise , a spoof of the Woodward Dream Cruise , was born in 2005 . The only rules are that " [t] he car has to be legally driveable , and fluid leaks should be at a minimum . "

Other events have included a pole vault competition sanctioned by USA Track & Field , live theater , antique cars and fire engines , vintage base ball sponsored by Greenfield Village , " Precious Pets " and " Beautiful Babies " contests , a rubber duck race , a living history encampment , a high wire

performance by one of The Flying Wallendas , and a circus .

= = = " The Game That Never Was " = = =

In 1973 , Carolyn King , with support from the Ypsilanti City Council , became one of the first girls in the country to play Little League Baseball . When they found out that she was playing , Little League International officials pulled the Ypsilanti American Little League 's charter , and the 1973 All @-@ Star game between the rival Ypsilanti American and National Little Leagues was never played . Thirty @-@ seven years later , with most of the participants aged 48 to 50 , the game , billed as " The Game That Never Was " , was held in Frog Island Park as part of the 2010 festival . The American League All @-@ Stars won .