

# Stratford History - Always Amazing

By David Wright, Editor  
Stratford Historical Society's  
UPDATE

One of Stratford's formerly famous annual festivals has largely disappeared from our collective memories. The Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was a huge festival that occurred, annually, in the Avon Park section of Stratford. Avon Park, likewise, has all but disappeared from our collective memories, but one Stratford resident, 105 year old Marge Jacaruso, has shared many of her fondest memories of Avon Park with us.

Recently, we ran across a July 1918 issue of the **Bridgeport Herald** which contained an article featuring the Lady of Mount Carmel parade. We believe this article does justice to some of Marge's recollections. You may read the article in its entirety at <http://feast.stratforhistoricalsociety.info>, however, we'd like to share tidbits from the article in the following.

**Bridgeport Herald**  
Sunday, July 21, 1918  
**Stratford Italians Observe Feast of Lady of Mt. Carmel As in Their Native Land**



**Mrs. Angelo Stavola—The Lady Bountiful of the Stratford Italians.**

*"What a magnificent banner, and what peculiar green fringe!" I exclaimed.*

*"That's not fringe, that's money—real bills, ones and twos and maybe tens," said Mrs. Stavola. "You see, the faithful, pin money on the banner as a sign of devotion."*

*We were watching the Mount Carmel parade in Stratford on Tuesday—a sight well worth looking at. Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the especial patron saint of the Italians,*

*and every year they have a celebration in her honor. The parade started at Avon Park, marched along Honeyspot road and Sedgewood [sic] avenue to Main street and so to St. James' church where High Mass was celebrated.*

*This parade was a strange mixture of the "old Country" and the modern American spirit. First came two small boys dressed as an American sailor and soldier, then a girl carrying the American flag and one with the Italian flag. Then followed the Mount Carmel banner, hand painted and decorated with bills. Eight flower girls accompanied the banner, and the motive power of the parade—the band—followed them.*



**Forward! March! - The Parade Forms (at the Avon Inn).**