

Let's Gather Together

Grade Level: 4-8

Lesson Overview

Have you ever thought about the types of events that bring large numbers of people together throughout history? In this lesson, students will explore some of those events, fairs, and shows.

Student Objectives

1. Identify major agricultural events/activities historically and today that bring people together for a common purpose.
2. Compare and contrast major agricultural events/activities with other events/activities that also bring people together for a common purpose.
3. Trace the development of 4-H and the Illinois State Fair.

Materials

- ✓ Internet access
- ✓ Information sheets (included in the lesson)
 - The Oldest County Fair
 - Illinois State Fair
 - Corn Husking Contests
 - Farm Progress Show History
 - Illinois 4-H History
 - World Expos/Fairs
- ✓ Worksheets (included in the lesson)
 - Event Report
 - Let's Gather Together
- ✓ Corn Husking primary resource images 1-5
- ✓ State Fair images 1-9

Vocabulary

- **premium** – prize money received from the exhibition of a project (beef, swine, corn, quilt, etc.) at a fair.

Procedure

1. As an interest approach, use pictures located in this lesson (Example Corn Husking primary images 1-3). Making sure to cover title and caption, show a picture to start the discussion. Ask students to write down what is going on in the picture and when they think it is taking place.
2. Divide students into groups to research some of the following agricultural events or activities historically and currently that bring people together for a common

purpose. Some information is provided within this lesson along with websites that may be of interest. Each group should complete Event Report student worksheet.

- a. County fairs – A brief information page on the oldest county fair is included. For more information about county fairs and to locate a fair close to you, please check out <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Fairs/CountyFairs/Pages/default.aspx>

- b. Illinois State Fair – Information pages on the history of the Illinois State Fair along with pictures are provided with this lesson. The fair website, <https://www2.illinois.gov/statefair/Media/Pages/History.aspx> offers a little history, lots of information on this year's fair, a virtual tour, web cams, video footage from past fairs, and more. The Illinois State Fair Museum Foundation website has lots of pictures along with information <http://www.statefairmuseum.org/History.html>.

Additional information about the fair is woven into the timeline provided in this lesson. The *Illinois State Fair: A 150 Year History* book (ISBN 0-943963-87-7) which is full of lots of pictures and information may be available at a nearby public library. An Illinois State Fair History DVD may be available from your IL Agricultural Literacy Coordinator (<http://www.agintheclassroom.org/AGLitCoord/Coordinator%20Directory%20website.pdf>).

- c. Corn husking contests – Information on these contests along with a five primary resource images are provided with this lesson. For more information about historical and present day cornhusking contests, please visit the Illinois Corn Husking Website <http://www.illinoiscornhusking.com> There are some firsthand stories and pictures on that site under "Corn husking in the Past."
- d. Farm Progress Shows – An information page is provided in this lesson. For more information, please visit <http://www.farmprogressshow.com>.
- e. 4-H – Information pages about Illinois 4-H History is provided within this lesson along with pictures. To view additional 4-H history, pictures and a short video, please visit the following website https://www.4-hhistorypreservation.com/Index_Data.asp
- f. Other topics students may choose.

Then each group should present their findings to the class. The goal of each presentation should be to share the information about the topic in a manner that will help the audience remember it. Encourage students to be creative, use visuals (pictures, posters, flyers, etc.), and be dramatic. It is up to you how long you wish to let them research and create their presentation.

As groups give their presentations, encourage the students to take good notes. After all the presentations are done, have each student complete Let's Gather Together student worksheet using the notes they took.

3. Compare and contrast major agricultural events/activities with other events/activities that also bring people together for a common purpose. These could also be researched by the groups. A Venn diagram would work well for comparison.
 - a. World Expos/Fairs – A student information page is provided with this lesson. For more information, please check out the following websites:
<https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en> Bureau International des Expositions
<http://expomuseum.com/history/> World Expos history
 - b. Home & garden shows
 - c. Auto shows
 - d. Festivals
 - e. Other topics students may choose.

Extension Activities

1. Interview a family member such as a grandparent or great-grandparent who attended a historical event such as a fair, festival, etc.
2. Trace the development of 4-H, the Illinois State Fair, and other events of your choice and construct a timeline showcasing such events. A partial timeline showcasing a few events is provided in this lesson.
3. Create your own exposition. What would you plan?

Standards

Illinois Social Science Standards

SS.H.1.6-8.MdC. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

SS.G.2.6-8.MdC. Compare and contrast the ^{[[[]]]}_{[[SEP]]} cultural and environmental characteristics of different places or regions.

SS.CV.3.6-8.LC, MdC, MC. Compare the means by which individuals and groups change societies, promote the common good, and protect rights.

The **M**ultidisciplinary **A**gricultural **I**ntegrated **C**urriculum (mAGic) was created in 2004 under the leadership of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education Project (FCAE). Funding was made available through the FCAE grant budget from the agricultural education line item of the ISBE budget. This revision, as printed, was developed in January 2021.



These mAGic lessons are designed to bring agriculture to life in your classroom. They address the Illinois Learning Standards in math, science, English language arts and social studies.

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Name _____

Event Report Worksheet

What was the event or activity?

When was it held?

Where was it held?

Who was the audience?

Why was it held (purpose)?

How did it bring people together?

Share 2-3 interesting facts about the event or activity.

Name _____

Let's Gather Together Worksheet

1. Where and how did 4-H begin in Illinois?
2. What congressional act helped advance 4-H efforts?
3. Are World Expos/Fairs held today?
4. When and where was the last World's Fair held in the United States?
5. When was a World's Fair held in Illinois?
6. Where were the early Illinois State Fairs held?
7. When and where did the Illinois State Fair find a permanent home?
8. What county has the oldest county fair?
9. Are corn husking contests held today?
10. Corn husking contests lead to the development of what event?
11. Why did people gather at the following events?
 - county fairs
 - state fairs
 - corn husking contests
 - Farm Progress Shows
 - World Expos/Fairs
 - 4-H events
12. How are the agricultural events/activities similar and/or different from other events?

Let's Gather Together Answer Key

1. Where and how did 4-H begin in Illinois? **Macoupin County with Bill Otwell furnishing seed corn to 500 farm boys to grow and show at the Farmer's Institute in 1899.**
2. What congressional act helped advance 4-H efforts? **Smith-Lever Act creating the Cooperative Extension Service**
3. Are World Expos/Fairs held today? **Yes**
4. When and where was the last World's Fair held in the United States? **1984 in New Orleans**
5. When was a World's Fair held in Illinois? **Chicago in 1893 and 1933**
6. Where were the early Illinois State Fairs held? **Twelve different cities - Alton, Centralia, Chicago, Decatur, DuQuoin, Freeport, Jacksonville, Olney, Ottawa, Peoria, Quincy and Springfield**
7. When and where did the Illinois State Fair find a permanent home? **1894 - Springfield**
8. What county has the oldest county fair? **Macoupin County**
9. Are corn husking contests held today? **Yes**
10. Corn husking contests lead to the development of what event? **Farm Progress Shows**
11. Why did people gather at the following events? **Answers will vary.**
 - county fairs
 - state fairs
 - corn husking contests
 - Farm Progress Shows
 - World Expos/Fairs
 - 4-H events
12. How are the agricultural events/activities similar and/or different from other events? **Answers will vary.**

The Oldest County Fair

Macoupin County Fair is one of the oldest county fairs in the state, having an original charter in 1852. The present day Macoupin County Fair and Agricultural Association is the direct descendant of the Agricultural, Horticultural and Mechanical Association of Macoupin County. The first county fair was held on the Carlinville public square and consisted of a few horses, oxen, cows and some butter.

With occasional interruptions (the site was used in 1862 to train recruits for the Civil War), the fair was an annual event through 1929. It failed to survive the crash of 1929 and for eight years of the Depression no fair was held. In the 1920's the fair was held in October and school was dismissed during the fair. While it had been held in the fall for many years, since 1975 it has been held during the summer.

In 1938, a group organized a new fair board. The fair was held in downtown Carlinville for the old grounds had been lost. In the early days, there was a 4-H show, open class livestock show, and carnival. Art Halls and the grandstand came later. Again the fair moved around the county. Then in 1951, the County Board leased 25 acres of ground (which was a cornfield), one-mile North of Carlinville, to the fair board. (The grounds increased to 40 acres as the fair grew.) For the first fair held here, there were some tents to house the livestock and office but no buildings. In 1952, a racetrack was built followed by the grandstand a year later.

Today's fair is planned and conducted by a 37 member volunteer board and more than 40 superintendents in the various exhibit halls and shows. The fair's purpose is to advance the interest of agriculture in the county. The county fair experience is more than that. It is an opportunity for rural and urban people to come closer together, to educate and entertain the public, and to develop a broader sense of community. It provides food, fun and education for the whole family. The fair hopes to accomplish these goals through the exhibits, attractions, 4-H show, livestock shows, various contests, carnival, and grandstand entertainment.

The following is a historical comparison of a few fair facts.

Year	Premiums Offered	Gate Admission	Entertainment
1927	\$4,375	Adults \$0.50 daytime & \$0.25 night, kids \$0.25, cars \$0.50 day and \$0.25 night, horse w/carriage \$0.25	Better Babies contest, band concert, night horse show, free acts, judging jacks, mules and draft horses
1951	\$8,400	Adults \$0.35, kids \$0.15, cars \$0.25	free magician; amateur contests; horse pulling; tug-of-war; local contests – hog calling, husband calling, pie eating
1987	\$84,500	\$0.50	Conway Twitty (country music singer), Bigfoot added to truck pull, oldest farmer contest, twins contest, beef cook-off, goat show, 50's and 60's car show, antique tractor show
2007	\$86,600	\$2 per person or \$4 per carload	Country Gold Music tour, talent contest, queen pageant, Little Miss & Little Mister contest, truck & tractor pulls, demolition derby, carnival, harness racing

Note: This information came from Macoupin County Fair historical documents and newspaper articles by Alice Tostberg Drury. For more information, visit <https://www.macoupincountyfair.org/>.

Illinois State Fair

[Note: The following information was adapted from Illinois State Fair materials and includes excerpts and pictures used by permission from the *Illinois State Fair: A 150 Year History* book by Edward J. Russo, Melinda Garvert, and Curtis Mann. Published by G. Bradley Publishing in 2002]

Wandering Fair

Fairs in America are descendants of festivals of the Middle ages with their color, pageantry and excitement and entertainment of strolling jugglers, acrobats and musicians. But beyond entertainment, their purpose was a merchant's market-silks from the far east, furs from Russia and wool from Flanders. Our well-loved Illinois State Fair is a tribute to a remarkable institution that has adapted itself to needs and desires of the public through a century and a half of colossal change. At the fair's beginning in the 1850's agriculture was at the center of the state's economy and the majority of Illinois' population earned their livelihood from it. A great agricultural exhibit was then a major event. Even today, with only a small percent of the population living on farms, the State Fair is still a major event on our annual calendar. While true to its agricultural roots, the fair has managed to grow and adapt to include also an extensive carnival attraction, big name entertainment, auto and motorcycle racing, and a wide variety of food offerings alongside traditional animal husbandry and farming exhibits. While a 19th century rural population, with few entertainment options, could be expected to patronize a state fair, it is a tribute to the Illinois State Fair's staying power that, today, with gigantic private amusement parks, television, movies, internet, inexpensive travel and a thousand other distractions, hundreds of thousands still enter the grounds every August. The fair's history reveals its amazing ability to remain popular through changing times in Illinois and the country for 150 years. The Illinois State Fair has been responsible for helping educate farmers to new methods and equipment and contributed directly to Illinois' rise to become a leading agricultural state.

Until 1892 the fair was a movable feast, traveling around the state, with the idea of reaching wide audiences at a time when travel for rural families was difficult and expensive. The fair was founded as an educational institute at the time Illinois agriculture was first emerging. The 1830s marked the beginning of an incredible influx of settlers to the new state of Illinois. Virgin prairies were broken and turned to cropland. So great was production and vast the reach of these prairies that the term "corn belt" came to refer to the states of the central Midwest. During that same period the American Industrial Revolution was well underway, producing changes in agrarian life on a scale never before experienced. The primary change was the move from subsistence farming to highly productive acreage aimed at a commercial market. Illinois' flat prairie lands were ideally suited to newly-invented reapers, mowers, planters and other implements that ushered in modern mechanized agriculture.

It was in this revolutionary period that the Illinois State Fair was born. Agricultural fairs in the United States originated in New York in the early 1800s and the first State Fair was held in Detroit, Michigan in 1849. The idea quickly took hold in Illinois where, in 1851, a public meeting open to all state farmers was held. This led eventually to the founding of the Illinois State Agricultural Society, ancestor of the state Department of Agriculture. Society leaders were

deeply concerned that farmers were not advancing satisfactorily in their methods. They decided that the best remedy was continuing education partly through a new agricultural fair to encourage the "best in field and garden crops, livestock, labor-saving implements and new ideas." It would also "help to elevate the individual farmer's opinion of his profession."

Board members met in Springfield May 25, 1853 and voted to hold a fair that fall on the city's Sangamon County Fair Grounds. The first Illinois State Fair proved a great popular success and State Fair Historian Patricia Henry recounted the events of that first fair where "so many prized stallions, mares, colts, jacks and jennies cattle, sheep, swine and poultry were entered that additional accommodations were hastily built." Altogether there were 765 individual entries with attendance ranging between fifteen and twenty thousand people by the third day and "not one inebriated man was seen!" Awards went to the best yoke of oxen, dairy products, fruit, grain, field crops including Illinois hemp and tobacco, garden produce, flowers, needlework, butter, baked goods, wines, artwork and hair wreaths. The admission fee was twenty-five cents and up to 20,000 people attended the Fair on its third day.

The following year the fair began its annual migration around the state, playing a total of twelve cities until 1894 when it located permanently in Springfield. From the beginning the fair was such a prominent institution that there was hot competition among Illinois cities to play host. Fairs were held in Alton, Centralia, Chicago, Decatur, DuQuoin, Freeport, Jacksonville, Olney, Ottawa, Peoria, Quincy and Springfield. Exhibits of farm machinery, horses, poultry, livestock, grains, vegetables, household products and manufactured items continued to grow and made the fair the state's single largest public event and certainly the largest agricultural event in the state. Almost from the first days, popular amusements and entertainment vied with agriculture in drawing crowds. Horse racing, particularly harness racing, was the most important part of that entertainment early on. Early fairs were held in September and October, traditional harvest time.

By 1890, many state fairs in the country began to grow large, popular and tremendously successful, patterning their activities on the great international exhibitions of the 19th century. Though there had been earlier ones, Britain's Great Exhibition of 1851, held in London, was a milestone in attracting worldwide attention to a single fair. It was immense in scale, both in activities and in construction. Its famous Crystal Palace-the first large-scale, prefabricated iron and glass building-was the centerpiece. The Paris International Exhibition of 1867 originated the idea of numerous exhibition buildings in a park-like setting, and the Paris Exhibition of 1889 - famed for its Eiffel Tower -carried those ideas even further. But it would be Chicago's World's Fair of 1892-3, the World's Columbian Exposition or "White City," which would dominate all previous exhibitions in concept, design, scale artists, sculptors and landscape designers. Suddenly dreams of a permanent State Fair grounds of large-scale, classical exhibition halls set amid permanent landscaped surroundings emerged.

All of this was coming about as America urbanized and people leaving rural areas poured into cities. Frederick Jackson Turner famously stated that the "frontier" officially closed and there were no more pioneer places in the country. The country was described then as being on the one side "predominantly agricultural" with rural values, but rapidly becoming, on the other, "predominantly urban and industrial; inextricably involved in world economy and politics." And that emerging culture meant big changes for the Illinois State Fair.

As early as the 1870s, agitation began for locating the fair permanently in one place. Improving, inexpensive rail transportation, common by the 1880s, made it possible for more Illinois people to go greater distances to a fair. This, combined with increasingly prohibitive costs of setting up new fairgrounds every few years, made State Agricultural Board members conclude that finding a permanent location "seemed reasonable." In 1894, the fair was permanently located in Springfield. This brought about a period of remarkable growth with unprecedented amounts of money and attention lavished on the grounds. The Fair ran for six days with premiums totaling \$30,000. Admission was 50 cents for adults, 75 cents for one person on horseback, and \$1.25 for a carriage load of four.

The "new" Illinois State Fair would no longer be totally identified with agriculture, but, like the Columbian Exposition, would also promote manufacturing, scientific and industrial interests of an increasingly urban and industrial state. Marking its stylistic and physical connection to the Chicago exposition, were a large dome structure and four iron arches brought to Springfield from the Chicago fair. The arches were located in central Springfield and the dome re-erected at the fairgrounds. A new era had dawned for Illinois and its state fair.

Fair Today, Fair Tomorrow

The Illinois State Fair has adapted to a century-and-one-half of changing social, cultural, economic and, most importantly, agricultural developments. By constantly meeting new challenges and conditions and redefining its role and image, the fair has not only survived, but remained a thriving, vital Illinois event. Today's fair means tradition--farm machinery, contests, parades, horse shows and a midway. But it also means cutting-edge technology, Ethnic Village, Home and Garden workshops and high dive thrills. The sights, sounds and smells of the fair are many and familiar. They range from the warm, earthy smell of tack and horse barns and the aroma of French fries, elephant ears and corn dogs frying, to the ear-piercing scream of tires and roaring engines at the auto races and the laughter of baby races. The fair has a rich heritage but is also a celebration of today and tomorrow. Change and tradition go hand in hand at the Illinois State Fair.

Since 1854, the State Fair has entertained and educated visitors from Illinois and around the world. Its purpose is to promote ways of improving agriculture and to highlight the best in labor and industry, education, health, art, and science. The fair also provides wholesome entertainment for visitors of all ages. Today's Fair runs for ten days.

For so many Illinois people the fair is the biggest and best party of the summer. Husband or hog-calling, Decorated Diaper contests and children's games from the 1800s can be found around the corner from Main Street USA or an Elvis impersonator belting out Jailhouse Rock. 4-H exhibits, master gardener demonstrations, face painting, crafts, computer labs, Sand Castle, orange Dreamsicles and sideshow barkers all mix in the world that assembles for over a week every August then disappears in a flash.

A stroll through today's fair is amusing, educating, edifying, and exciting. All in all, from the Giant Slide to the closing fireworks, the state fair is a celebration in the best sense of the word.

Corn Husking Contests

Today corn is harvested by huge combines with the aid of Global Positioning Systems and computers. More than seventy years ago harvest was still being done with horses pulling the wagons, while a lone figure wearing a corn husking hook could pick only two to three rows at a time. With an almost musical rhythm each ear was hooked, cleaned of husks and flipped into the wagon. From sun-up until sundown it was the time of the corn husker.

The organized corn husking contest was originated in 1922 by Henry A. Wallace (later Secretary of Agriculture and 33rd Vice President of the U.S.) to demonstrate who was the best corn husker. When farmers gathered in the 1920's, tales were often told of a friend or neighbor who was an outstanding picker. Often, it was the last person to tell their story who actually could pick the biggest load. Picking over 100 bushels a day and scooping it off, was considered normal for the good huskers.

These early events lead to the present-day Farm Progress Shows. Corn husking contests continue to be held on the state and national levels.

The following is the forward from *Huskers Digest: Alleman to Tonica* by Leonard J. Jacobs found on the www.illinoiscornhusking.com website.



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Photo courtesy of Clayton Spratt

What is a corn husking contest? Well, perhaps we should first briefly describe corn by saying it is tall, cultivated cereal or grain plant bearing seeds or kernels on a large ear. These ears of corn are enveloped by husks (or shucks).

Husking corn is the act of an individual removing the ears from the husks. Corn husking is also called corn shucking or corn picking, depending on the area of the corn belt you are in, local jargon. In *Huskers Digest* we are interested only in corn harvesting done by hand: human hands.

The word contest has been defined as being a struggle for superiority between rivals in a competition in which entrants perform separately, and each rated by judges. So we can say a corn husking contest involves two or more individuals in competition to see who can husk the most corn in a given time, and subject to prescribed rules, and prescribed over by judges.

Unrecorded husking contest took place on many farms when the boss would challenge his hired-man to see who could get to the end of the field before the other. Occasionally, farmer-neighbors would declare over the fence: "I'll race you to the other end" and the race would be on! These friendly jousts help to take some of the tedium out of the wrist-hurting, back-tiring and arm-frazzling job of harvesting the farmer's biggest cash crop: corn.

A horse, or mule pulled wagon was at the side of the farmer to bring the harvested loads of corn up to the farm storage-building called the crib.

The primary object of the organized corn husking contest was to see who could husk the most ear-corn in a given time, from standing rows and thrown into a wagon, with each load subject to deductions. Therein lies the rub: "subject to deductions."

Deductions were the hallmark of the organized shucking contest. Merely husking the biggest load of corn did not automatically make it the winning load. But after deductions were made, the biggest load or the heaviest load was the winner.

Two deductions were made on each contestant's load at the end of the 80 minute contest. These two deductions were Husk and Gleanings. Gleanings are the marketable ears of corn (over 3 inches long) left out in the field by a contestant that included ears missed by the shucker in his haste (that were left hanging on the stalks) and the ears that missed the wagon when the contestant overthrew, or under threw them.

Husks left on the harvested ears took up valuable storage space in the farmer's corncrib. Therefore it was considered preferable to have "clean" corn, that is, a minimal amount of husks on each load. Shucks also tended to attract rodents who wanted to make a winter home in the crib. Rats and mice could eat a sizable amount of corn while "dining in" through a long winter.

Gleaners were assigned to each contestant to gather the missed ears (left hanging in the two rows, or that missed the wagon). The total pounds of gleanings were multiplied by three and then subtracted from the gross load. For instance, if the shucker left nine pounds of gleanings, then 27 pounds were deducted from his gross load. That amount constituted his Gleanings "duck". However in the early years of the organized contest, only 2 pounds were deducted for each pound of gleanings.

Farm Progress Show History

Prairie Farmer magazine, a flagship of Farm Progress Companies, was instrumental in the development of the Farm Progress Show.

From 1924 through 1941, *Prairie Farmer* sponsored corn husking contests. Early in 1953, *Prairie Farmer* joined forces with WLS-Radio in Chicago with the idea to host a farm event even better than the mechanical corn picking contests taking place around the Midwest at that time. It is this group who is credited with creating the idea of hosting a field day where farmers could see firsthand the progress being made in farming equipment, along with seed varieties and agricultural chemicals.

The first Farm Progress Show took place on October 2, 1953 on the Earl Bass farm in Armstrong, Illinois and hosted over 75,000 folks. This show offered visitors an opportunity to see equipment, seed and chemicals as well as firefighting demonstrations, sheep dog trials, stage entertainment, a fiddlers' contest and even the WLS Barn Dance. In subsequent years, the show evolved to include seed test plots and field demonstrations. While some of the programs evolved from the original program, they have stayed true to American Agriculture and to bringing the best of American Agriculture to their audience.

Today, the Farm Progress Show enjoys a long and rich history. The show welcomes people from across the United States and around the world at the nation's largest outdoor farm show event. Visitors have an opportunity to see everything from the latest in technology to seed to crop chemicals to field demonstrations to livestock handling and equine events to Ride 'n Drive to rural life programs to arts and crafts at this major agriculture event.

In 2005 they reached yet another milestone by hosting over 500 exhibitors at the permanent biennial site in Decatur, Illinois. Before this, the show moved to different sites throughout Illinois, Iowa and Indiana. The other biennial site opened in 2008 in Boone, Iowa.

[Note: The information and pictures were provided by the Farm Progress Show Companies. Visit <http://www.farmprogressshow.com> to learn more.]



Illinois 4-H History

Will B. Otwell (pictured at right) became interested in the Macoupin County Farmer's Institute in the late 1890's. The officers of the Institute worked hard to increase attendance at the annual event without success. As president of the Institute, Otwell decided since he could not get anywhere with the farmers, he would work with the boys. He purchased the best seed corn he could buy, which cost him \$2 per bushel. Then, Otwell solicited \$40 in cash and divided it into \$1 premiums. For a sweepstake premium, a plow company gave a two-horse plow. He placed notices in the county papers saying that every boy under 18 who would send in his name and address would receive a package of seed corn – all that could be mailed for 1 cent postage. Otwell wrote,



“Five hundred boys sent for the corn and began contesting for the premiums. All summer long these boys were talking farmers’ institutes (where the corn was to be exhibited). They were comparing notes and exchanging ideas until our institute was a topic of general conversation. I decided not to advertise the institute in the papers any more than just to give the dates. The farmers were politely told they could stay away from the institute if they preferred. When I reached the courthouse on the morning of the institute there were scores of boys waiting for the doors to be opened. They had their prize corn with them, some of it in boxes, some of it in coffee sacks, tied up with binder twine, shoe strings, bedcord – anyway, just so they got it to the institute. When I called that meeting to order at the appointed time I was confronted by 500 farmers. And Professor Stevenson, of Champaign, who scored the corn, said he had never seen a nicer display of yellow corn. I knew I had solved the problem, and so did the farmers. The boys were in evidence everywhere, and their presence was an inspiration to the institute.”

The following year, prizes valued at \$300 were offered. Otwell wrote to farm implement companies and breeders of pure-bred livestock asking for donations that could be used as premiums. The response was more generous than expected. One implement manufacturing company sent cultivators, another sent windmills, an Angus breeder offered a \$500 cow, and other farmers donated hogs and sheep. The result was that over 1,500 boys were in the contest.

Otwell continued this work until 1903 when he was asked by Governor Richard Yates to prepare an exhibit for the St. Louis World's Fair. In the spring of 1904, 50,000 one-ounce packages of corn were sent out all over the state of Illinois. In the fall, a display was built at the St. Louis World's Fair. Ten-ear samples from 8,000 of these boys were exhibited in two huge pyramids. The corn was arranged in ten-ear pyramids on shelves on the four sides of each pyramid. Behind each ten-ear exhibit was a picture of the boy or girl who grew it.

Because of the success of the exhibit, Otwell decided to start the “Otwell's Farmer boy,” a newspaper for the rural boy. This was printed up until World War I.

After the World's Fair, the idea of a round-up of farm boys and girls was conceived by Otwell. He planned his program and asked Vice President of the United States Adlai Stevenson to speak to the boys and girls. He planned a horseback parade in which the boys wore a blue sash and the girls wore a gold sash. These colors were adopted for his boys and girls. Families migrated to Carlinville from forty counties in eight states. When the parade was

formed, it measured four miles in length. Otwell later said, "Mounted on a black charger, Governor Yates led the Boys' Horseback Brigade past the reviewing stand. Vice President Stevenson, with tears in his eyes, said it was the most inspiring sight he had ever seen. (See picture at right)

By 1910, pig, calf and canning clubs as well as the corn clubs, had generated much interest throughout the state. In 1911, the Illinois Livestock Breeders Association asked H.W. Smith, animal specialist at the University of Illinois, to supervise the club workers at the State Fair. The first circular for this program was issued by the U of I as a combined junior manual and fair premium list. At this time, club work was supervised by the county superintendent of schools and the members were enrolled in a statewide club rather than a local group.



But the real start of what would become known as 4-H came in 1914 when the Smith-Lever Act was passed in Congress. This legislation authorized the creation of a Cooperative Extension Service in each state's land-grant college of agriculture. Extension soon found that one effective way to reach rural men and women was by working with their children. Thus, Boys and Girls Club Work became an integral part of Extension's programming. Dr. James H. Greene was the first state leader for club work. In June 1915, Dr. Greene met with C.C. Coots in Palmyra to organize the first club in the state, the Union Pig Club. The 13 members exhibited their swine projects in August at the Palmyra Picnic where a man from the University of Illinois College of Agriculture judged each animal. Each member kept records and received a certificate of achievement for the accomplishments at the end of the year. The next year, 6,032 Illinois boys and girls were enrolled in 487 clubs. The club members learned about corn, pigs, calves, canning, sewing, and gardening.

One of the first state club activities was the Junior Club Show at the State Fair in Springfield. The first exhibit was held in 1916 where members displayed project exhibits and participated in demonstration contests.

Boys and girls club work declined after the end of World War I, until the idea of organizing the clubs under local volunteer leaders became accepted. At this time the local clubs became known as 4-H Clubs.

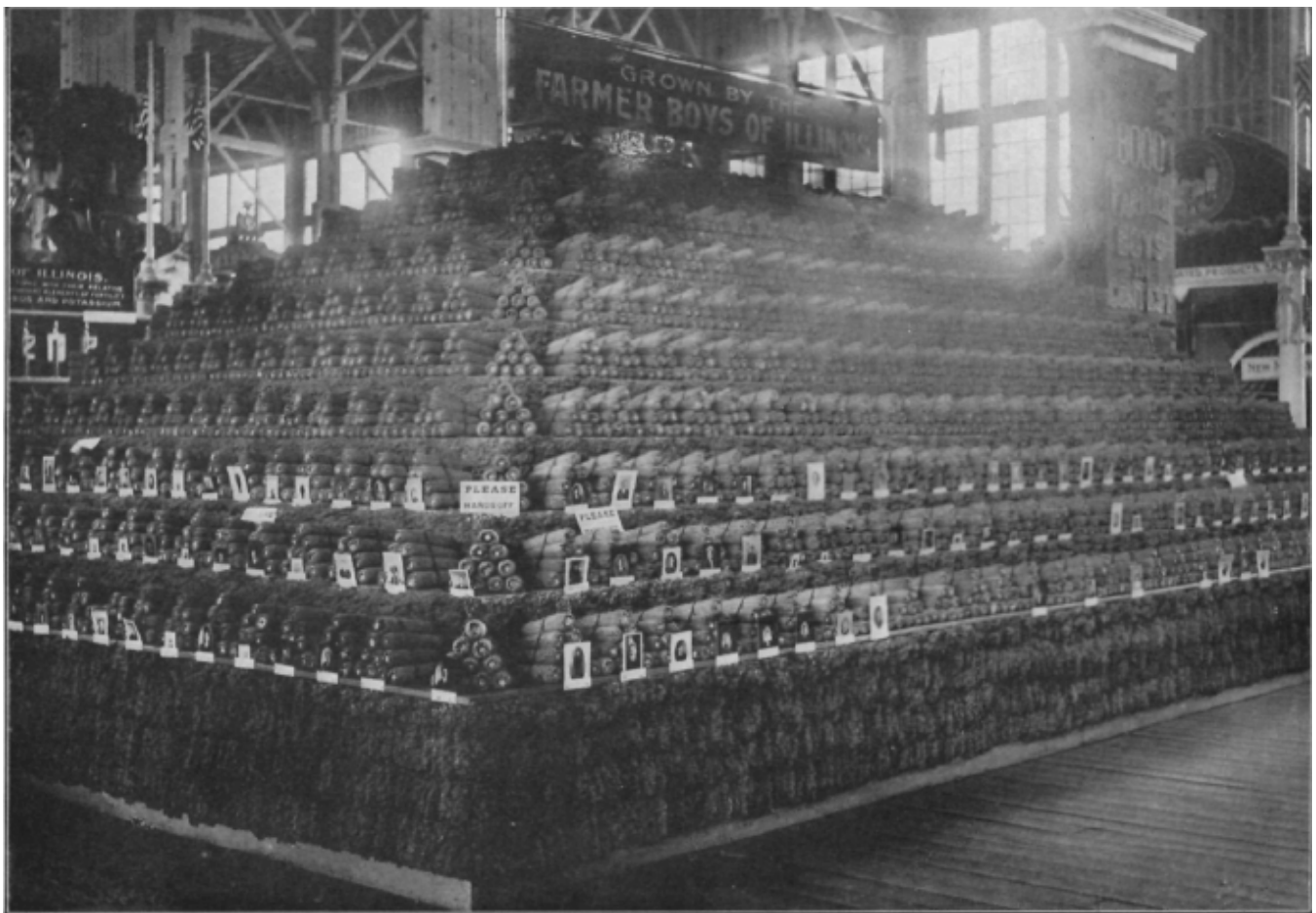
While this is a glimpse into the beginning of 4-H in Illinois, similar work was happening in other states. In response to young people and their need for better agricultural education, boys and girls clubs were created. Youth were engaged through the community club model of "learning by doing." No one individual is credited with originating the 4-H program. The National 4-H Program was founded through the collective efforts of several individuals over the course of a few years.

4-H historical information was gathered from the following sources:

Crosby, Dick. "Boys' Agricultural Clubs." *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1904*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905. (available online from the National Agricultural Library, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.)

"Macoupin County 4-H History." *You Make the Best Better 4-H Cookbook*. Carlinville: Macoupin County 4-H Foundation, 1990. 3-26.

Wessel, Thomas and Marilyn Wessel. *4-H: An American Idea 1900-1980 A History of 4-H*. Chevy Chase: National 4-H Council, 1982.



BOYS' EXHIBIT OF CORN AT THE ST. LOUIS EXPOSITION.

This picture came from the *1904 Yearbook of Agriculture* article "Boys' Agricultural Clubs" by Dick Crosby available online from the National Agricultural Library, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

World Expos/Fairs

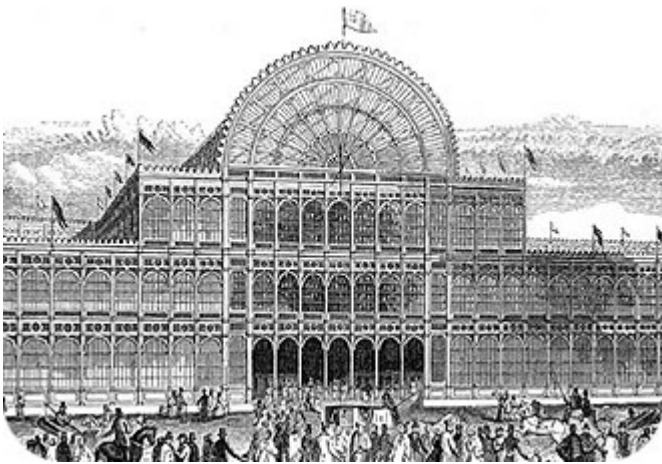
The following information was adapted from the <http://www.expomuseum.com/history/> website.

World's Fairs have excited and inspired people around the world by expressing the hopes and desires of their times. They provide a fascinating glimpse into the realities of those same times. They also allow people to explore the world outside of their everyday experience - outside cultures, new scientific advancements, and new inventions.

As times change, world expositions have changed to fit those times. They continue to reflect both the commercial needs of their times while presenting the ideals, hopes, and aspirations of people even as those evolve. Both the amusement zones and pavilions in world's fairs have evolved over time. As people have more and more entertainment options, world expositions have continued to find new ways to provide information and inspiration.

The following information was adapted from the <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en> website.

World Expos are a global gathering of nations dedicated to finding solutions to pressing challenges of our time by offering a journey inside a universal theme through engaging and immersive activities. World Expos welcome tens of millions of visitors, allow countries to build extraordinary pavilions and transform the host city for years to come.



Crystal Palace located in London was used for the first world expo in 1851.

The first World Expo – the Great Exhibition – took place in London in 1851. The concept became popular and was repeated across the globe, demonstrating an unparalleled power of attraction and a record of world-class legacies. World Expos have been organized around a theme that attempts to improve humankind's knowledge, takes into account human and social aspirations and highlights scientific, technological, economic and social progress.

In the modern era, World Expos are unrivalled among international events in their size, scale, duration, and visitor numbers. They are large-scale platforms for education and progress that serve as a bridge between governments, companies, international organizations, and citizens. They are usually held every five years.

The Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) is the intergovernmental organization in charge of overseeing and regulating World Expos since 1931. Their mission is to guarantee the quality and the success of these world events, protect the rights of their organizers and participants and preserve their core values of education, innovation and cooperation. From showcases of industrial innovation, they have become global discussion platforms aimed at finding solutions to the biggest challenges of humanity. From the 31 countries that created the BIE in 1928, the organization has grown to 170 member states or countries as a result of the success and the

appeal of expos. The BIE member states take part in all the decisions as they strive to continually improve the quality of Expos.

The following information was taken from the <http://worldsfairs.com/expos-ga/> website.



Inventions that first appeared at World's Fairs:

World's fairs have introduced many products and services to large audiences. The list of "firsts" includes the Colt revolver and the McCormick reaper (London, 1851); the elevator (Dublin, 1853); the sewing machine (Paris, 1855); the calculating machine (London, 1862); the telephone (Philadelphia, 1876); outdoor electric lighting (Paris, 1878); the Eiffel Tower, the gas-powered auto (Paris, 1889); the Ferris wheel (Chicago, 1893); motion pictures (Paris, 1900); controlled flight, the wireless telegraph, the ice-cream cone (St. Louis, 1904); Kodachrome photos, stunt flying (San Francisco, 1915); television (New York, 1939); atomic energy: model of a cyclotron (San Francisco, 1939); computer technology, Space Needle (Seattle, 1962), fax machines (New York, 1964); IMAX

movies & moon rocks (Osaka, 1970); advances in robotics (Tsukuba, 1985); large-scale outdoor air conditioning (Seville, 1992); new energy-efficient transit, green building techniques (Aichi, 2005).

Worlds Expos/Fairs held in the United States (according to <http://www.expomuseum.com/history/>):

1853 – New York, New York called Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations

1876 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania called Centennial International Exhibition

1893 – Chicago, Illinois called Exposition Universelle

1901 – Buffalo, New York called the Pan-American Exposition

1904 – St. Louis, Missouri called The Louisiana Purchase International Exposition

1909 – Seattle, Washington called the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific International Exposition

1915 – San Francisco, California called Panama-Pacific International Exposition

1933 – Chicago, Illinois called A Century of Progress Exposition

1939 – New York, New York called New York World's Fair

1939 – San Francisco, California called Golden Gate International Exposition

1962 – Seattle, Washington called Century 21 Exposition

1964/65 – New York, New York called New York World's Fair

1968 – San Antonio, Texas called Hemisfair '68

1974 – Spokane, Washington called Expo '74 (International Exposition on the Environment)

1982 – Knoxville, Tennessee called The 1982 World's Fair (Knoxville International Energy Expo)

1984 – New Orleans, Louisiana called Louisiana World Exposition

Time Line of Some Events and Activities

early 1800's – Agricultural fairs in United States originated in New York

1818 – Illinois became a state

1837 – Springfield became the capitol

1849 – First State Fair was held in Detroit, Michigan.

1851 – First World's Fair held in London, England

1852 – Macoupin County Fair began (one of the oldest county fairs in IL)

1853 – Illinois State Fair began (4 days long)

1853 – Illinois State Capitol was completed

1854 – The major attractions at this State Fair in Springfield was Senator Steven Douglas' speech and Abraham Lincoln's rebuttal the following day.

1860 – Abraham Lincoln was elected president.

1861-1865 – Civil War

1862 – No State Fair was held because the military took over the fairgrounds for training during the Civil War.

1893 – Columbian Exposition Chicago World's Fair held (No State Fair this year)

1894 – First State Fair held at its permanent location in Springfield (6 days long); the Exposition Building was built (still used today)

1899 - Otwell furnished an ounce of seed corn to 500 farm boys who were urged to show their corn at the Farmer's Institute in the fall.

By 1900 – Illinois State Fairgrounds had an 8,000-seat grandstand, exposition building, a one mile dirt track, 25 horse barns, swine, cow, poultry, and sheep exhibition barns, service buildings, and public dining hall.

1904 - Otwell helped with exhibit at the St. Louis World's Fair.

1908 - First round-up of farm boys and girls held in Carlinville which drew families from forty counties in eight states. A parade was held and Vice President Adlai Stevenson spoke to the boys and girls.

1914-1918 – World War I

1914 – Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act creating the Cooperative Extension Service.

(1915) - Will B. Otwell started the Illinois 4-H program in Macoupin County with the first group of youth called the Farmer Boys.

1915 - C.C. Coots in Palmyra organized the first 4-H club in the state. Known as the Union Pig club, it was made up of 13 members.

1916 - 6,032 Illinois boys and girls were enrolled in 487 clubs to learn about corn, pigs, calves, canning, sewing, and gardening.

1920 – First radio went on the air

1922 – Corn husking contests began

1922 – First National 4-H Congress was held.

1922 – First butter cow sculpted using 210 pounds of butter showcased in the Dairy building during the State Fair. (over 600 pounds of butter used today)

1924-1941 – Prairie Farmer sponsored the corn husking contests

1927 – First National 4-H Club Camp was held.

1927 – The National 4-H Pledge and motto were approved by state leaders.

1930's – Depression

1933 – A Century of Progress Exposition held in Chicago

1937 – State Fair attendance of more than one million people which was the largest of any state fair in the country

1939-1945 – World War II

1942-1945 – No State Fair was held for the U.S. Army used the fairgrounds during WWII

After WWI – Four-leaf clover with H's representing Head, Heart, Hands, and Health replaced a three-leaf emblem.

After WWII – 4-H moved rapidly to other counties.

1953 – First Farm Progress Show was held in Armstrong, IL

1954 – President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited the State Fair. He was the first president since Rutherford B. Hayes to speak at the fair while in office.

1955 – First nationwide television broadcast from the State Fair

1964 – State Fair was expanded to 11 days.

1982 – Illinois Department of Agriculture administration building located on the fairgrounds was completed.

2005 – Permanent biennial Farm Progress Show site was established in Decatur, Illinois

2008 – Permanent biennial Farm Progress Show site was established in Boone, Iowa

2020 – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Illinois State Fair, many county fairs, and the Farm Progress Show were not held. Some of those events had virtual offerings. The 2020 World Expo planned in Dubai was postponed to 2021.

State Corn Husking Contest primary resource image 1



According to the Illinois State Journal 85,000 gathered for the state corn husking contest on October 31, 1938 at Warren Moffet's Farm in Modesto (which is located South of Springfield in Macoupin County). Information & pictures provided by of Jim & Phyllis Moffet.

State Corn Husking Contest primary resource image 2



According to the Illinois State Journal 85,000 gathered for the state corn husking contest on October 31, 1938 at Warren Moffet's Farm in Modesto (which is located South of Springfield in Macoupin County). Information & pictures provided by of Jim & Phyllis Moffet.

State Corn Husking Contest primary resource image 3



According to the Illinois State Journal 85,000 gathered for the state corn husking contest on October 31, 1938 at Warren Moffet's Farm in Modesto (which is located South of Springfield in Macoupin County). Information & pictures provided by of Jim & Phyllis Moffet.



[Associated Press Wirephoto.]

Irving Bauman of near El Paso, Ill., who won Illinois state cornhusking championship near Modesto, Ill., yesterday.

CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE:

Crowd Follows Contestants.

When the starting bomb sounded and the county champions began slamming husked ears of corn against the bangboards in a steady rattle, the crowd tensed and followed the work as though all were in the contest. There probably were few on the scene who didn't know the familiar feel of tearing husks from corn ears.

The spectators crowded as close to the roped-off area as the state police

and 1,000 special deputies would permit. Partisans followed their favorites up and down rows although separated by the roped area.

When the last ear was husked, loads totaled, and winners designated, the happy spectators turned toward home and their chores—as soon as they could get through the inevitable traffic jams again.

FORMER CHAMP WINS ILLINOIS HUSKING CROWN

50,000 Watch Woodford County Entry Triumph.

Modesto, Ill., Oct. 31.—[Special.]—With a crowd of more than 50,000 persons looking on, Irvin Bauman of Woodford county today won the fiftieth annual Illinois corn husking contest. It was the second time in three years he had won the state title.

Bauman, who lives near El Paso, Ill., husked 32.759 bushels of corn in eighty minutes. He won the state championship in 1935 with a record of 36.52 bushels. In winning his county contest this year Bauman husked 41.28 bushels.

Ecus Vaughan Is Second.

The runner-up was Ecus Vaughan of Piatt county with 31.174 bushels. In third place was William Rose of Henry county, state champion in 1937. He husked 31 bushels. He and Bauman will represent Illinois in the national contest next Thursday near Sioux City, S. D.

Clarence Endress of Marshall-Putnam county took fourth place with 30.8 bushels. Donley Martin of La Salle county was fifth with 29.322 bushels. There were twelve contestants.

The battle of the corn rows started shortly after noon on the C. W. Moffet farm one mile north of this small central Illinois village. Weather conditions were ideal.

The contest was sponsored by Prairie Farmer, which gave \$200 in cash prizes for the first five places and a medal to the winner and will send the two top men to the national meeting.

A county fair atmosphere pervaded

over the Moffet farm as the rural folks' most engrossing sport was presented to them. For more than three hours before the starting bomb, spectators poured into the contest site. As the time for the contest neared a traffic jam clogged roads for several miles from the scene.

Thousands of persons swarmed over the grounds. They crowded around refreshment stands where concessionaires had ready for them some 5,000 pounds of hamburger, 3,500 pounds of weiners, 1,000 pounds of ham, 1,000 pounds of fish, 75,000 buns, 10,000 pies, 1,200 pounds of coffee, and 30,000 bottles of soft drinks.

Bets were placed as the twelve sturdy, overalled contestants drew lots for their places on the forty acre field of hybrid type corn.

STATE RECORD IN DANGER AT MODESTO MEET

Five of Twelve Qualifiers
Top Forty-Bushel
Mark.

Full page of pictures on the
corn-husking meet will be found
on back page.

BY ROBERT M. YODER.

Special Dispatch from a Staff Correspondent.
Modesto, Ill., Oct. 31.—The state
cornhusking contest drew thou-
sands here today to see if new rec-
ords will be set in this newest of
expert sports.

A new national record was pos-
sible; and the state record seemed
almost certain to fall.

The crowd, streaming to Warren
Moffet's farm on route 111 a mile
north of Modesto, was estimated
anywhere between 40,000 and 65,-
000 persons.

The huskers, some of whom
worked out yesterday to get in last
minute trim for the match, will
start at noon. It is the 15th annual
state contest sponsored by the
farm magazine, the Prairie Farmer.

Twelve men will compete, and it
is regarded as the fastest group
of entrants ever to match speed in
a state contest. Five of them husked
more than 40 bushels in their coun-
ty contests. One of them set an un-
official world's record far above the
preceding mark. Each of them is
the best in his neighborhood and
they are the survivors of 600 who
entered the county races.

Contest Opens at Noon.

The huskers start at noon with
fair weather promised, although
weather possibly a little too warm.
Each man has 14 rows of corn to
husk. They will rush through this
for 80 grueling minutes, husking
sometimes at the rate of one ear
a second.

It is a dash regarded by its fans
as calling for harder exertion than
any other form of athletics. Always
hard work, cornhusking has been
refined and boosted into an affair
of split-second skill, also calling for
great endurance and stamina.

World Mark May Fall.

Today's crowd has a chance to
see a young husker from Marshall-
Putnam County who threatens to
throw the old records into the dis-
card. He is Clarence Endress of
Wyoming, who husked 50.8 bushels
in the Marshall-Putnam County
match. The Wyoming man's per-

65,000 SEE HUSKERS TODAY IN MODESTO

(Continued from First Page.)

formance made the national record
look highly mediocre. He passed the
national record by more than eight
bushels.

The record, set in 1935 and never
seriously threatened, is 41.52 bush-
els, made by Elmer Carlson of Au-
dubon County, Iowa.

But Endress was not the only
speedster in today's match. Four
others have come close to the na-
tional record, or at least to the Illi-
nois record, and most of today's
entrants were unusually young
men, who may prove to have more
speed than the huskers of years
past.

Can Endress Repeat?

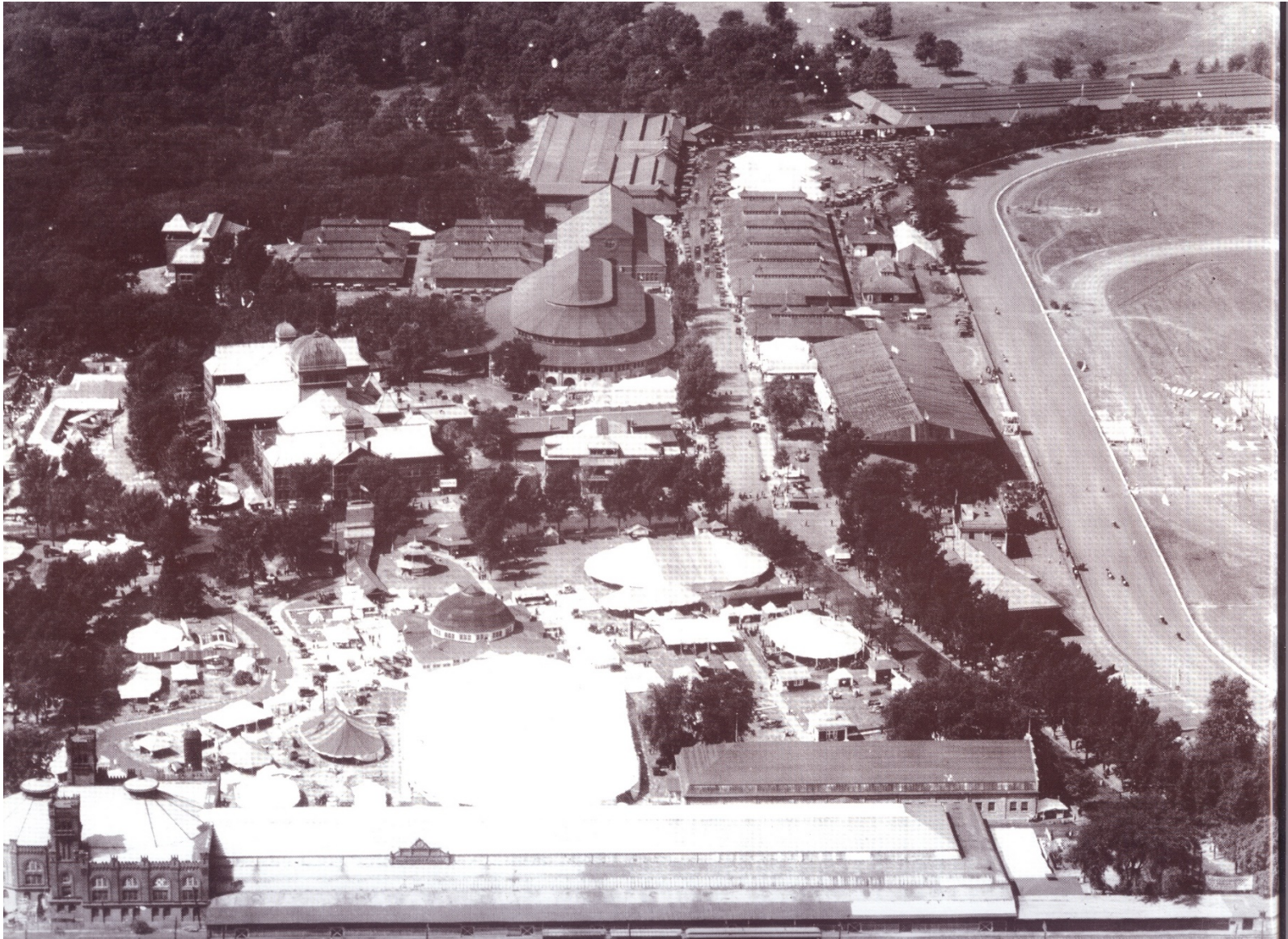
The question for the husking
fans, consequently, was whether
Endress can repeat. The corn he
will husk today, they pointed out,
is lighter than the field where he
reached his 50-bushel speed, and
may be slower to husk because it
has not had as much rain. This
corn is expected to run about 75
to 85 bushels to the acre, whereas
the field near Wyoming made near-
ly 100.

Even if the national record
doesn't fall, however, some of the
fans believed that today's crew of
huskers will set a new state rec-
ord. The present mark is 41.175,
set in 1936.

First and second place winners
in today's match will go to the na-
tional finals, Nov. 3, near Sioux
Falls, S. D. Today's winner will also
take a cash prize of \$100, with \$50
for the second man, \$25 for the
third, \$15 for the fourth and \$10 for
the fifth place.

According to the Illinois State Journal 85,000 gathered for the state corn husking contest on October 31, 1938 at Warren Moffet's Farm in Modesto (which is located South of Springfield in Macoupin County). Information & pictures provided by of Jim & Phyllis Moffet.

Illinois State Fair image 1



This 1921 aerial view shows the Illinois State Fairgrounds as they looked before the major remodeling project of 1927-28. Looking east from Sangamon Avenue, Machinery Hall is seen in the foreground. Picture used by permission from the *Illinois State Fair: A 150 Year History* book by Edward J. Russo, Melinda Garvert, and Curtis Mann. Published by G. Bradley Publishing in 2002.

Illinois State Fair image 2



People wait to board a bus providing rides around the fairgrounds. Others choose to walk the grounds. This crowded thoroughfare is lined with the flags of many countries. Pictures used by permission from the *Illinois State Fair: A 150 Year History* book by Edward J. Russo, Melinda Garvert, and Curtis Mann. Published by G. Bradley Publishing in 2002.

Illinois State Fair image 3



Over one million visitors attend the Illinois State Fair each year. Illinois flags line the drive outside the Exposition Building in this photo.

Free entertainment is provided all over the fairgrounds. This boy takes a shot at a basket held by very tall Gator the Clown.



Some parents prefer strollers while others choose backpacks but either method makes a useful way to transport children across the vast fairground acreage.

Illinois State Fair image 4

This 1921 aerial view shows the Illinois State Fairgrounds as they looked before the major remodeling project of 1927-28. Looking east from Sangamon Avenue, Machinery Hall is seen in the foreground.

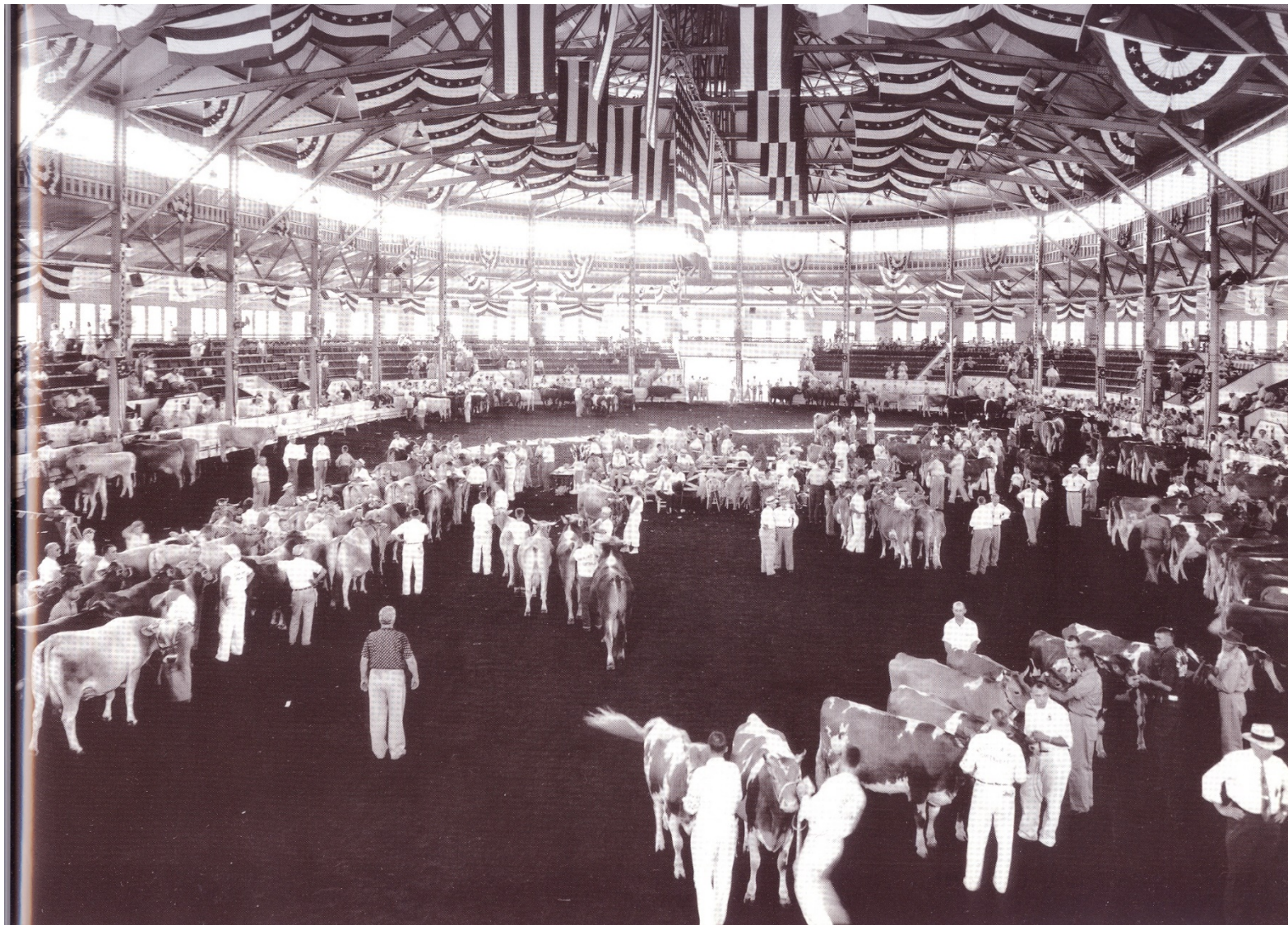
The premium was \$2.50 in the yeast bread category in 1947 but the look on this winner's face is the real prize—the joy of winning a blue ribbon.



Quilts and bedspreads along with afghans, embroidery, smocking, and crochet work filled display cases from the first days of the fair.

Poultry judges slowly work their way down the long row of cages, carefully inspecting each bird to determine a state fair champion.

Illinois State Fair image 5



Dairy cows and their handlers stand patiently beneath a field of colorful banners during a judging session inside the Coliseum building in the 1940s. Picture used by permission from the *Illinois State Fair: A 150 Year History* book by Edward J. Russo, Melinda Garvert, and Curtis Mann. Published by G. Bradley Publishing in 2002.

Illinois State Fair image 6

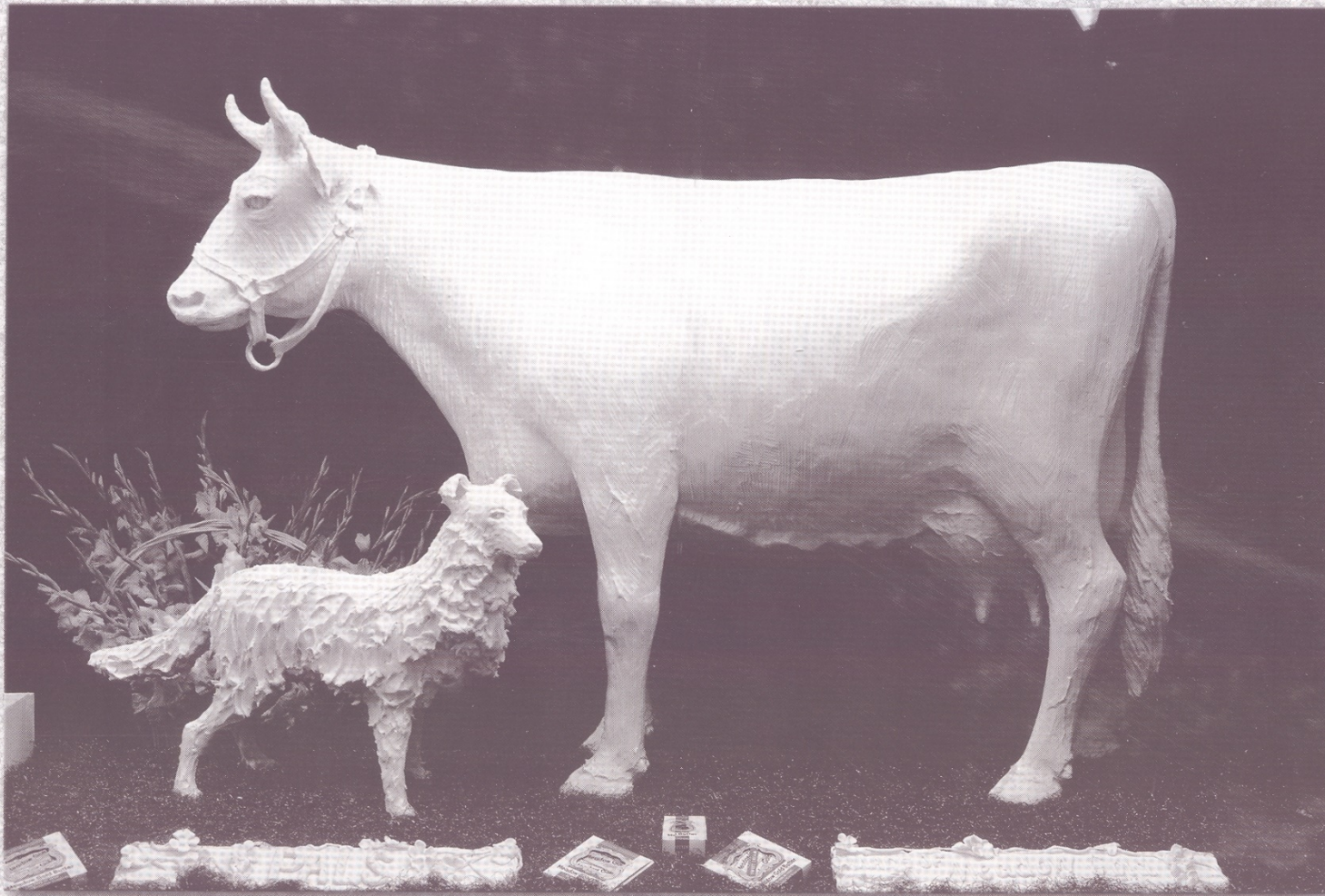


*L*ivestock judging competitions remain an important aspect of the state fair. Here mule draft teams are judged in the coliseum, swine in the Junior Livestock Barn and a boy receives an award in the Sheep Barn. Presenting the award is Joe Hampton, director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

*S*ince 1902 the Coliseum building has served as the main stage for livestock shows at the state fair.

Pictures used by permission from the *Illinois State Fair: A 150 Year History* book by Edward J. Russo, Melinda Garvert, and Curtis Mann. Published by G. Bradley Publishing in 2002.

Illinois State Fair image 7



The installation of a large refrigeration unit in the Dairy Building made it possible for an Illinois State Fair butter cow. In 1922, J.D. Wallace became its first sculptor. The sculpture has become somewhat of a folk tradition for fairgoers. Made over a wood and wire frame with close to 500 pounds of unsalted butter (salt would draw out moisture) the cow varies, but is always a dairy cow. Sometimes it has the addition of a calf or milkmaid, dog or cat.

In recent years two people in particular are remembered for their creative talents with butter while working two to three days in temperature near 38°F. Frank Dutt sculpted the cow for over ten years before Norma "Duffy" Lyon took over. Lyon's work has attracted visitors for over 30 years, completing her last cow in 2001 before retiring.

Picture used by permission from the *Illinois State Fair: A 150 Year History* book by Edward J. Russo, Melinda Garvert, and Curtis Mann. Published by G. Bradley Publishing in 2002.

Illinois State Fair image 8

*H*orse racing – harness and running – have been part of the fair from the first. Here harness racers cross the finish line in front of the original grandstand in the 1890s.



Pictures used by permission from the *Illinois State Fair: A 150 Year History* book by Edward J. Russo, Melinda Garvert, and Curtis Mann. Published by G. Bradley Publishing in 2002.

The fastest harness racing track in North America, with a speed rating today of 2.01, premiered at the 1894 State Fair, and has been a permanent part of the Grand Circuit since 1930.

Illinois State Fair image 9



A large crowd works its way past a number of tents pitched in front of the Woman's Building in 1905. Many of the tents provided food for the hungry visitors. Courtesy of Illinois State Historical Library



The wide choice of food at the state fair makes for tough decisions. These people stand in front of but a small selection of food stands located at the fair.