

Special Fair Edition.

GRANGE VISITOR

"THE FARMER IS OF MORE CONSEQUENCE THAN THE FARM, AND SHOULD BE FIRST IMPROVED."

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State Agricultural Society.

Its History and Work.

HON. I. H. BUTTERFIELD, EX. SEC'Y OF THE SOCIETY.

The Michigan State Agricultural Society was organized at Lansing, March 17, 1849. The call for such organization was made as follows: "The undersigned, executive officers of the state and members of the senate and house of representatives, would respectfully recommend that a meeting be held at the capitol, on Saturday evening next, for the purpose of taking measures to organize a State Agricultural Society." The call was signed by state officers and members of the legislature to the number of 63, Gov. Ransom heading the list. The State Agricultural Society is, in effect, the child of the state, Gov. Ransom being its first president.

An act of incorporation was immediately passed, and also an act granting an annual appropriation of \$400 to continue for five years. J. C. Holmes of Detroit was elected secretary, and John J. Adam of Lenawee county, treasurer, with an executive committee of ten members, and a president and a corresponding secretary from each county. The first fair was held at Detroit, September 25-27, 1849. \$1,000 was appropriated for premiums, of which \$808.50 was awarded and paid. The entries of live stock numbered 208 and of other articles 426. In the premium lists, cattle were classified as Durham, Devon, native, working oxen and fat cattle. Horses were draft and all work. Sheep; long wool, middle wool, Merino and Saxon. Swine had but one class. Premiums were also offered for farm implements, butter and cheese, domestic manufactures, needle and fancy work, fruits and flowers, vegetables, flour and grain. A plowing match was also held and premiums were paid for the best plowing. It is also noted that a premium of \$10 was awarded for the best essay on agricultural subjects.

The gate receipts of this fair were \$2499.10. The citizens of Detroit contributed \$523 toward local expenses. Much interest was taken in this first exhibition by the farmers of the state, as well as by public men and citizens of Detroit.

The act of incorporation and the constitution of the society made it the duty of the executive committee "annually to award premiums on such articles, productions and improvements as they may deem best calculated to promote the agricultural and household manufacturing interest of the state, having special reference to the most economical or profitable mode of competition in raising the crop or stock, or in the fabrication of the article offered." It also provided that before premiums were awarded, the person claiming the same should "deliver to the president of the society, in writing, a statement giving the costs and method of growing the crop, the character of the soil, including labor employed; also the kind and quality of food used in feeding the animal, including the total expense in producing the crop or animal with a view of showing the exact resulting profit."

The main idea of the work of the society at its organization seems to have been, to make it an aid to the farmer and producer, by introducing better and more economical methods in the growing of farm products, including stock, and it seems that during the early years of the society a great impulse was given to the agricultural interest, especially in the line of improved live stock.

We find in the early reports of that society that these statements of costs of production were made by exhibitors and a large number of them are published in the second volume of the transactions, that for 1850. Premiums were also awarded on farms, taking into consideration the arrangement of buildings, the quality of live stock, the condition of fences and crops, and general appearance of the farm. The great impetus given to live stock growing is shown by the list of premiums for the fair of 1859, ten years after the organization of the society, in which we find premiums offered for the following breeds of cattle: Shorthorn, Devon, Hereford, Ayrshire, cross-bred; for horses for all work, Black Hawk and Morgan, Thorough-

bred, Draft horses and trotting stock; for sheep, Spanish Merino, French Merino, Saxon, Silesian, Southdowns, Leicesters, and Cotswolds; for swine, Essex and Suffolk. The list of farm implements had also greatly increased in variety and quality, showing that the growing and cultivation of crops could be much more cheaply done than ten years previously.

During these years the state and county fairs furnished the one week of the year in which farmers gathered for instruction or recreation. On one day of the fair at a certain hour all work was suspended and the people gathered at a central point to listen to an address by some person of state or national reputation. Up to 1864 the fairs, with one exception—that of 1850, were held at Detroit, Detroit being at that time the only city with sufficient population and means to aid the state society in providing buildings and grounds for its annual exhibits. With the growth of interior towns and the building of railroads there came demands from other sections of the state for the State Fair, and in 1864 it was held at Kalamazoo. From that time to 1889 it was moved from one town to another representing different sections of the state, with varying success as to financial receipts, but every year offering a large and attractive exhibit of live stock, farm products and implements, domestic manufactures and fruit. The premium awards gradually increased until they reached upwards of \$13,000 annually, divided among forty different classes of live stock, not including poultry, as well as grains, vegetables, domestic manufactures, art, needle work and horticultural products. As showing the extent and variety of exhibits at later fairs, the number of entries in the several departments: at the fair of 1892 are given as follows: Live stock 2,184; grain and vegetables 286; dairy products 57; bees and honey 63; manufactures 78; art 241; needlework 331; children's work 74; horticultural products 444; making a total of 3,774 entries for premiums, besides over 1,000 articles and implements on exhibition for which premiums were not offered.

The annual fairs of the society aided in the dissemination of agricultural knowledge and interest, not only by stimulating the production of the best articles and animals by the offering of premiums, but also in the opportunity it gave to the farmers and their families to examine and compare specimens of the different breeds of live stock, varieties of grain, vegetables and fruits, and particularly farm implements for various uses on the farm, thus encouraging the production of better crops, the growing of better stock and the use of better implements.

The earlier fairs of the state and county societies also brought the farmers together in a social way, enabling them to meet people from the cities and from other sections of the state, doing, in a measure, the work that has since been delegated to farmers' clubs, granges, farmers' institutes, and the like.

The transactions of the State Agricultural Society, published annually from 1849 to 1859 inclusive, were the beginning of a system of annual reports of the agricultural interests of the state and form a very complete history of agriculture in Michigan during those years.

We find among the early members and officers of the state society not only the foremost farmers of the state, but also professional men who seemed as greatly interested in the success of the society and the promotion of agricultural knowledge as any of the farmers.

The managers of the society have through its whole history been chosen from the most active, progressive and patriotic farmers and business men of the state. These men have given of their time freely and without reward, other than the consciousness of being a large factor in improving the farming and manufacturing interests of the state, and thus upbuilding the material, intellectual and moral welfare of the commonwealth.

The State Agricultural Society must also be considered the founder and promoter of the Agricultural College. In January, 1850, the executive committee presented a memorial to the legislature in which occurs

the following: "Having established successfully a State Agricultural Society with its annual fairs, it is hoped a great step has been accomplished towards perfecting our agricultural system. Still, all this must be looked upon only as a beginning and means for increasing the interest in and opening the way to the further improvement of which the subject is susceptible. The next most important step in this process is a founding of a State Agricultural College and model farm. That we may not be thought to be running too rashly into new measures, permit us to lay before you our views of the character and relation of such an institution, its importance to our state, and the means to sustain it." Then follow some most excellent reasons for the establishment of an agricultural college and of the advantages which would inure to the farmers of the state by its establishment. There can be no doubt that the provision in the constitution of 1850 which provided for an agricultural college was due to the interest awakened by this memorial, and the solicitation of prominent members of the State Agricultural Society. The society did not stop with procuring this clause in the constitution, but followed later by soliciting appropriation by the legislature until they succeeded, in 1855, in obtaining sufficient appropriation to begin work. And as showing the position of the State Agricultural Society in the view of the legislature, it may be mentioned that the executive committee were directed to select the site for the agricultural college, being limited in their choice only by the number of acres to be purchased and the distance from Lansing, the capital of the state. We believe that this action of the State Agricultural Society should be included in a resume of its work, as being one of the most important things that it has done for the state.

Agricultural College.

A State Fair.

What Should It Try to Accomplish?

BY WM. BALL, PRESIDENT MICHIGAN STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

A subject so important should receive more time and consideration than I can give to it. One of the objects to be obtained by a state fair is the education disseminated among its visitors as well as exhibitors, by bringing into competition the best products of the soil, the manufactures of various kinds, the results of scientific investigations, the improvements in educational methods and in art. In order to accomplish all this and make it self-sustaining, is a question that is taxing the thought and ingenuity of many good men and women all over the country. No plan has yet been devised that will insure all demands in all places and under all conditions. Every man and woman is benefited by a careful comparison of the best productions of the soil, the choicest collection of various breeds of stock, the exhibitions of the best products of the loom, the forge, or the painter's brush. This principle has for centuries been recognized and is being recognized in a greater degree as time moves along and brings so many new and wonderful developments in art, manufactures, education, science, and agriculture. The Columbian exposition was ample proof of the good done by bringing into competition and display the best of all the productions of the whole world, human beings included.

In order that the people of a state may have an opportunity of examining the results of all the industries mentioned, the state fair is a necessity. Its management should tend to develop the resources of the whole state by offering premiums liberal enough to induce those engaged in the different industries to bring out the best results of their labor. It should be broad gauged, liberal, moral, recognizing the fact that to make it a paying as well as an excellent exhibition attractions aside from the exhibition of the state's industries of a proper nature must be added. There is a great diversity of interest among the American people, and it should be borne in mind that if a fair is to be perpetuated something must be on exhibition to satisfy the great variety of desires and expecta-

tions. How this can best be done and at the same time be free from censure is the conundrum of the hour. To recapitulate: A state fair should be an educator in the broadest sense of that term. It should be so managed as to make it a self-sustaining institution. These two things being accomplished the destiny and object of a state fair is fulfilled by its yearly exhibitions.

A word or two relative to the Michigan State Agricultural Society, its history and aims, may not be out of place. The society is a creature of the state legislature of nearly fifty years ago. Its board of directors is elected by a vote of its members, which includes all who have paid a yearly membership fee of one dollar. Half the directors are elected each year for a period of two years. The president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer are elected each year and hold office for one year. The secretary and treasurer each receive a consideration for their services. All other officers receive their actual expenses while employed in the services of the society but no pay for time spent. It has to rely upon gate receipts and booth rents for its support. Unlike most states it has no state aid. In these times of depression when all branches of industry are partially paralyzed it is particularly essential that a state fair should be held annually. Anything that will stimulate an interest in the work of the farmer, the mechanic, the manufacturer, or citizen should be encouraged.

Hamburg.

County Grange Conventions.

EDITOR GRANGE VISITOR: At the county convention for electing delegates to the State Grange, held in Oakland county, last October, there was some dissatisfaction expressed about the manner of holding such conventions.

In our county, we have Subordinate Granges enough to entitle us to two delegates to the State Grange, so that from thirty to forty people gather at the county seat to perform the duties imposed upon them, but without any previous knowledge of where the meeting is to be held. After some hunting about, the members become known to each other, and a hall or some other suitable place is secured for the meeting.

Where there happens to be a Grange located at the place where the convention is to be held, their hall is, of course available for the occasion; but in our case the Granges are all located outside.

Then too, under the present system, no person is designated or authorized to call the convention to order, or make the necessary provision for the occasion.

In order to improve, if possible, on the present order of things, we arranged for a certain Patron, Bro. G. M. Trowbridge, of Pontiac Grange, to call this year's convention to order and aid in its organization for the work to be done. Also we appointed a committee to secure a place for meeting and arrange a program of literary exercises for the entertainment of the delegates and other members who might be present.

The delegates are to bring their baskets, if they choose, and have a picnic dinner. It requires considerable zeal in the cause to drive 20 miles or more as some of us have to, to do up a little business that is sometimes through in thirty minutes, without having a chance to get acquainted with Patrons from other parts of the county.

The opportunity this plan presents for extending acquaintanceship and exchanging views, I feel to be a matter worthy the consideration of the Patrons of Michigan. It is also educational and progressive and I hope may be given a trial in other counties and a report made of its result in the VISITOR. Fraternally, J. G. NOBLE.

Oxford.

It seems to us that Bro. Noble's suggestions relative to "County Grange Conventions" are worthy of thought and imitation by every Grange county in the state. How many will inaugurate this progressive move this autumn?

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