

THE STATE FAIR IN KANSAS

by

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B. S., Kansas State College
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1947

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of History and Government

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1949

PREFACE

Many people know that the site of the Kansas State Fair is at Hutchinson, Kansas; however, others do not know definitely which fair is the State Fair--the one at Topeka or the one at Hutchinson. Probably the outstanding question concerning the Fair is this: "Why is the Kansas State Fair located at Hutchinson?"

It has been the purpose of the writer to present an accurate history of the State Fair in Kansas. No one aspect of the Fair has been singled out for particular attention, but, rather, every aspect, including political, economic, and social, has been given consideration. The primary consideration, if any, has been given to the agricultural aspect. Agricultural fairs grew out of the conception of men that comparison was a necessary element in forming judgment; that by comparing things with like things, a better judgment could be obtained than by any other method. In this manner, it was possible that the many breeds of cattle and livestock were generally improved. With the exception of the speed ring, all departments of the fairs were developed in this way.

It is apparent from the circumstances of the early attempts to establish a state fair that this state, at that time, had neither the wealth, the population, the transportation facilities, nor the commonness of interest necessary to maintain this institution.

It was not until the early 1900's that the project of establishing an official state fair was accomplished. The bitter

struggle which accompanied the selection of the Fair site is an interesting story in itself. Contrary to the fears of many persons at that time, the selection of Hutchinson as the site of the State Fair did not cause the ruination of either the Topeka fair or the Hutchinson fair. Admittedly, a rivalry between the two fairs did exist, and for a time there was a question of whether both could continue their exhibitions successfully. That question has been answered satisfactorily, and at the present time there are actually two state fairs in Kansas, the Kansas State Fair at Hutchinson, Kansas, and the Kansas Free Fair at Topeka, Kansas.

The writer appreciates the assistance of the many persons who helped in any way to locate the sources which made this research possible. Especially to Dr. A. Bower Sageser go the writer's sincere thanks for his suggestions and comments, which have been quite helpful.

S. M. K.

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CHAPTER I
EARLY STATE FAIRS IN KANSAS

Soon after Kansas became a state, the Kansas State Agricultural Society, which was organized in 1857, inaugurated the project of sponsoring annual state fairs. Locations for these annual exhibitions were determined by financial bids which were received by the Society. A bid submitted by Leavenworth was accepted, and the first annual state fair was held there October 6-9, 1863. This fair, with James L. McDowell as the General Superintendent, was considered to have been a success although the disbursements exceeded the receipts by approximately \$250. This deficit was liquidated as the result of an appropriation of \$1,000 by the legislature to the Society.¹

Although plans were made by the Society to hold exhibitions in 1864 and 1865, these plans were not completed because of the unsettled conditions which existed during the Civil War. In 1866 a proposal by the citizens of Garnett and Anderson county to pay the Society a sum of \$2,000 to have a state fair held at Garnett was considered. However, the Lawrence Fair Association offered the use of its grounds and facilities with a sum of \$2,006 to the Society in exchange for a fair at Lawrence, and this proposition was accepted. In the selection of the Lawrence proposal, consideration was given to the transportation facilities which made that city more accessible to the people of Kansas. This fair was con-

¹ A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 259.

sidered to be a grand success, and the total receipts of the fair exceeded the disbursements by one dollar--\$4,459 being the receipts and \$4,458 the disbursements.²

The state fair of 1867 was also held at Lawrence, and this fair showed an improvement over those which preceded it. Classifications of livestock included those requiring pedigrees for Shorthorns, Devons, and Ayrshires. Another class was formed for other breeds, grades, and crosses, pedigree furnished as far as possible. Flour, starch, butter, cheese, honey, bread, cake, doughnuts, crackers, pickled cucumbers, gherkins, peaches, catsup, and browned coffee were all grouped together as "Lot 42", and the premiums were awarded accordingly. "Lot 53" included plowing and spading matches, canned fruits, butter, cheese, and native wines.³

Some improvement was found in the classifications for the state fair at Leavenworth in 1868. The premium list provided a class for "Alderneys and other breeds, grades excluded." As had been the case in the three previous fairs, approximately two-thirds of the prize money which had been offered was actually awarded.⁴

The state fair of 1869 was held at Fort Scott, September 27-30, and in 1870 and 1871 the annual exhibitions were held at

² Kansas State Board of Agriculture, Annual Report, 2:41, 1873. Hereafter cited as K.S.B.A., Annual Report.

³ I. D. Graham, "The Kansas State Board of Agriculture," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, 17:788, 1928.

⁴ See Table 2, page 10.

Topeka. Early in 1872 the Kansas State Agricultural Society was replaced by the Kansas State Board of Agriculture. The latter's constitution contained a provision for sponsoring the annual state fairs. Accordingly, the Board accepted the offer of the Shawnee County Agricultural Society for the use of its fairgrounds and a cash guarantee of \$2,000, and the state fair was held at Topeka in 1872. In 1873 the annual exhibition, under the supervision of the State Board of Agriculture, was again held at Topeka.⁵

The Kansas State Board of Agriculture decided to hold its tenth annual fair at Leavenworth during September, 1874; however, in July and August the depression which resulted from chinchbugs, dry weather, and locusts was so great that the Board decided that to hold a fair would be detrimental to the agricultural interests of the state. Many prominent exhibitors advised the abandonment of the undertaking, and the members of the Board were of the opinion that more important work than the conduct of a state fair required the attention of the Board. Yet, because the people anticipated an annual competitive exhibition of the various products and industries of the state, the decision was made to hold a fair as had been planned. This decision was influenced by the common belief that the failure to hold a fair would have been an authoritative acknowledgment that drought and grasshoppers had left the state nothing from the soil to exhibit. As a result, the State Board of Agriculture appealed to the people of Kansas, and asked them to give their support to the conduct of a successful exhibi-

⁵ K.S.B.A., Annual Report, 1:68, 1872.

tion.⁶

A previous examination of the Board's books had revealed that the three preceding fairs had been financial failures, and in view of this condition, with the approval of the Board, the legislature enacted a law which forbade the Board of Agriculture to incur any debt not provided for by existing appropriations. Consequently, the fair of 1874 was held on a financial basis by which premiums were offered according to the amount of the net proceeds of the exhibition. This exhibition, the best display of the products and manufactures ever held in the state to that time, had a disappointing attendance. This low attendance was explained by the fact that the legislature had, by law, excluded the selling of liquor and race-track gambling from the fairgrounds of the state, and the exclusion of the "liquor interests" and the "horse interests" resulted in an antagonism which affected the success of the fair.⁷

In view of the financial losses which had resulted from sponsoring the fairs since 1871, the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, in 1875, decided to discontinue its annual exhibitions. The emancipation of the Board from the "show business" proved to be a satisfactory relief, and it allowed that body to perform other valuable work which had not been possible before. It was the opinion of the Board that state fairs were of as little value to

⁶ K.S.B.A., Annual Report, 3:65, 1874.

⁷ Ibid., p. 68.

agriculture as a circus would be, and that because of the preceding circumstances the state could no longer sponsor a fair.⁸

No serious attempt was made to change this policy until January, 1878, when the Board appointed a committee to confer with citizens and associations of the state in order to determine whether there was any general demand for a state fair. This committee reported that a general indifference and a lack of interest toward the fair existed throughout the state. Consequently, the Board finally decided that there was no general desire for a state fair; however, as Alfred Gray, secretary of the Board, described the Fair:

It commenced with the year 1878, by a field exhibition of 1,730,812 acres of beautiful lands, carpeted in green with growing wheat. The fair lasted the year 'round. It did not interfere with local exhibitions. Admittance was free, and competition open to the world. There was a full attendance from within and without the State. No dividing of time nor pooling of earnings with horse associations.

Eight-hundred thousand of our people have been constantly in attendance together with representative men from all parts of the world upon the fair grounds containing 52,043,520 acres, of which 6,538,727 have been charmingly improved. They were well pleased with the grounds in all their appointments, as well as with the wonderful display on every hand. No subscriptions have been asked for with which to conduct this exhibition. None were needed. As for the dates for subsequent exhibitions, the State "claims" each successive year as its own for the renewal of these annual displays.⁹

Although there was no official state fair for many years after the annual exhibition in 1874, many local fairs were held in Kansas; and the majority of these were sponsored by county agri-

⁸ K.S.B.A., Annual Report, 5:6, 1876.

⁹ Kansas State Board of Agriculture, Biennial Report, 1:25, 1878. Hereafter cited as K.S.B.A., Biennial Report.

cultural societies. There were twenty-eight fairs held throughout the state in 1874, and the largest fairs were held at several of the principal cities. The Kansas State Fair Association was organized at Topeka in 1879 for the purpose of holding a fair there in 1880 and for each succeeding year¹⁰; however, because the Western National Fair, known as the Bismark Fair, was held at Lawrence, the Topeka fair was cancelled for the year of 1880.¹¹ Previous fairs at Topeka had been successful, and at the fair of 1879 there were exhibits of wagons, windmills, sulky plows, a steam thresher in operation, a stubble plow, and other agricultural implements. The contrast of these tools with those used in earlier years was remarkable to the spectators at the fair.¹²

Other state-wide fairs were held at Wichita and Hutchinson. The State Fair Association at Wichita sponsored a fair in 1894, and the Central Kansas Fair, located at Hutchinson, was recognized as a state-wide fair by 1900.

¹⁰ Topeka Commonwealth, October 23, 1879, n. p.

¹¹ Ibid., October 7, 1880, n. p.

¹² Ibid., October 2, 1879, n. p.

EXPLANATION OF MAP I

A map of Kansas showing the railroad facilities, the density of population in the counties, and the centers of population.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 represent the centers of population for 1860, 1870, and 1875.

(*) represents counties with a population of 5,000 to 10,000.
(1875)

(#) represents counties with a population of 10,000 or more.
(1875)

MAP I

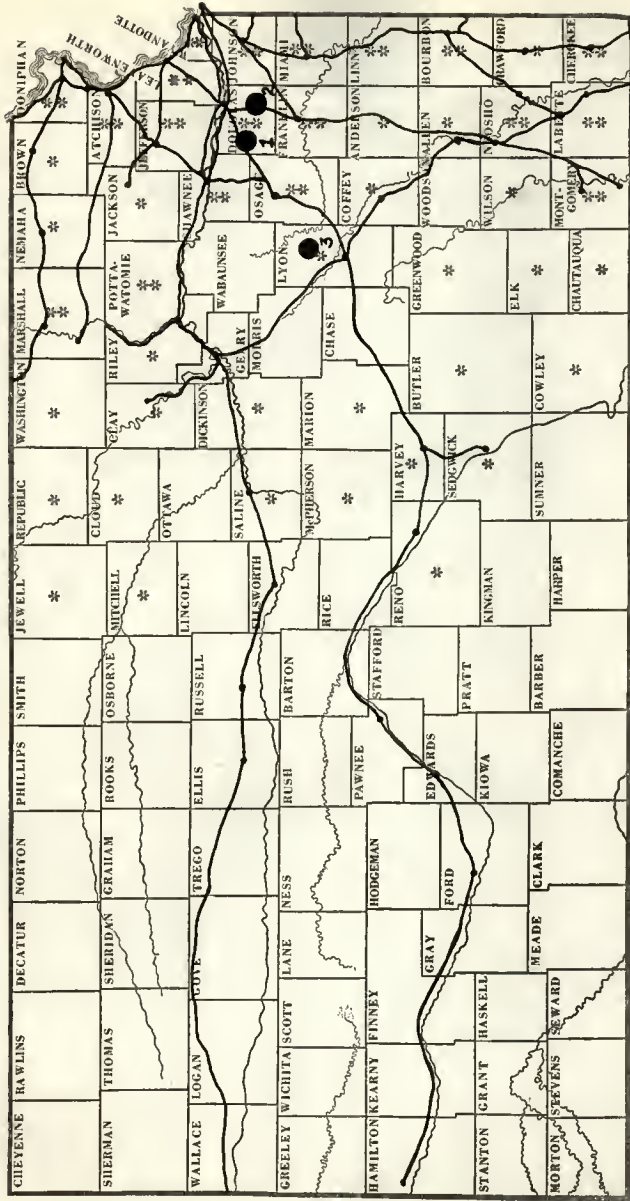


Table 1. Premium lists of early fairs.

Articles	Premiums 1863		Premiums 1866	
	Offered	Awarded	Offered	Awarded
Shorthorn Cattle	\$ 174	\$ 164	\$ 224	\$ 214
Devons	128	...	194	...
Ayrshires	...	...	194	...
Grades and Crosses	74	82	230	167
Milch Cows	30	30	30	85
Herds	45	45	105	...
Fat Cattle	41	38	60	...
Work Oxen and Steers	30	10	124	15
Sweepstakes	133	88	55	55
Thoroughbred Horses	160	30	293	123
All Work "	76	51	226	194
Roadster "	76	52	276	115
Draft "	...	...	229	112
Matched, Light Harness, Saddle	70	89	272	191
Sweepstakes	105	85	215	185
Speed (by the Society)	...	...	80	55
Equestrianism	...	...	...	...
Jacks and Mules	159	86	180	255
Sheep	241	173	376	218
Swine	182	42	215	118
Poultry	13	6	19.50	...
Agricultural Implements	5	5	26	...
Mechanic Arts	40	...	105	5
Farm Products	46	24	704	245
Horticultural and Floral	165	127	560	115
Textile Fabrics	55	53	471	204
Natural History	93	...	150	40
Plowing Matches	36	...	90	30
Honey	...	...	82	...
Total	\$2,187	\$1,280	\$5,895.50	\$2,661

Table 2. A summary of premiums offered and awarded at state fairs.

Articles	Premiums, Offered	1863-1874 Awarded	Percent Awarded
Shorthorn Cattle	\$ 3,038.00	\$ 2,863.00	94
Jerseys	1,003.00	759.50	75
Holsteins	265.00	...	..
Herefords	491.00	160.00	32
Devons	1,861.50	305.50	16
Ayrshires	1,774.50	218.00	12
Grades and Crosses	1,444.00	981.00	68
Milch Cows	320.00	150.00	47
Herds	1,000.00	695.00	69
Fat Cattle	312.00	199.00	63
Work Oxen and Steers	384.00	45.00	11
Sweepstakes-Cattle	648.00	803.00	93
Thoroughbred Horses	3,110.50	1,742.00	56
All Work Horses	3,267.50	2,858.50	87
Roadsters	1,811.00	1,296.00	71
Draft Horses	2,023.00	1,402.00	69
Matched, Light Harness, Saddle	1,618.00	1,218.00	75
Sweepstakes, etc.	1,270.00	1,050.00	82
Speed	6,603.00	6,544.00	99
Equestrianism	124.00	124.00	100
Jacks and Mules	1,714.00	1,241.00	72
Sheep	2,531.00	1,914.00	75
Swine	4,024.00	3,142.00	78
Poultry	688.50	431.00	62
Agricultural Implements	346.00	190.00	55
Mechanic Arts	1,945.00	933.00	48
Farm Products	3,696.50	3,740.50	65
Horticultural, Floral & Pomological	6,371.50	3,546.50	56
Fine Arts	527.50	465.00	88
Textile Fabrics	3,557.50	1,832.00	57
Natural History	953.00	355.00	37
Flowing Matches	700.00	210.00	30
Honey	232.00	120.00	51
Essays	350.00	100.00	28
Boys and Girls	146.50	109.50	74
Total offered and awarded, and average percent	\$61,951.00	\$41,663.00	67

CHAPTER II
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICIAL STATE FAIR

A change was discernible in the policy of the State Board of Agriculture shortly after the turn of the century. On January 10, 1902, the Board adopted a resolution which recommended that the next session of the legislature vote favorably on a state fair proposition. The Board pledged its support to a state fair and suggested that the Central Kansas Fair should be recognized as the state fair for 1902.¹ In January, 1903, the Board of Agriculture again voiced its support of an official state fair by adopting another resolution which stated:

By the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, in its thirty-second annual session, that while it has heretofore been and is now the policy of this Board not to court duties and burdens incident to the promoting and holding of state fairs, we nevertheless recognize the great benefits resultant from such exhibitions, and we do therefore urge and recommend to the legislature now sitting that a wise law be enacted creating a state fair commensurate with the magnificent productive resources of our state, and that adequate provision be made for its promotion and maintenance.²

The attention of the legislature was directed to the state fair issue by other sources. Citizens of Hutchinson believed that Kansas should have a state fair and that it should be located at Hutchinson for these reasons: its superior railroad facilities, a dual telephone and telegraph service, adequate hotel accommodations, and the close proximity of the fairgrounds to the city. Hutchinson business men contributed money to a state fair

¹ K.S.B.A., Biennial Report, 18:834, 1902.

² K.S.B.A., Biennial Report, 19:739, 1904.

fund in an effort to put the Central Kansas Fair Association out of existence and to replace it with a state fair. The reputation of the Central Kansas Fair was indicated by its receipt of contributions from the American Shorthorn Breeders' Association to the premium funds for 1902 and 1903, and in 1902 the national associations for the Hereford, Angus, and Galloway cattle breeds contributed to the same fund.³

Representative U. S. Griffin, of Jefferson county, introduced a fair bill in the House of Representatives on January 21, 1903, but this measure provided no location for the fair.⁴ The Hutchinson interests were hopeful despite the long senatorial contest which had nearly eclipsed all other legislative proceedings that year. On January 28, another bill was introduced in the legislature. It was the most complete fair bill that had been proposed, but it provided that the state fair should be a separate institution, not under the control of the State Board of Agriculture.⁵

Topeka supporters were making an earnest fight for the fair, but a bill which was favored by Topeka was killed by the House Ways and Means Committee, and a short time later the Hutchinson-supported bill was defeated. The failure of these proposals was explained by the argument that the State could not afford to create any new institutions; however, a new Topeka bill was brought

³ Hutchinson News, January 28, 1903, p. 5.

⁴ Ibid., January 22, 1903, p. 5.

⁵ Ibid., January 29, 1903, p. 6.

up for consideration.

Late in February, 1903, a state fair bill was approved by the Senate. This bill provided that a board of directors, composed of seven members, should conduct the fair. These members were to be chosen in the following manner: two by the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, one by the Improved Stockbreeders' Association, one by the dairymen, one by the horticulturists, one by the Poultry Association, and one by a miners' union. The location of the fair was to be determined by this board, and an annual appropriation of \$10,000 was to be provided for the maintenance of the fair.⁶

The State Dairy Association, which was assembled at Manhattan, Kansas, early in March, adopted a resolution which declared that organization to be heartily in favor of such a state fair plan. However, this bill, which had been approved by the Senate, was given unfavorable consideration by the House Ways and Means Committee. This produced critical comments from supporters of the bill because the action of the committee was considered to have been a direct rebuff to the various state organizations which represented the farmers and stockmen of Kansas.

Hutchinson supporters, realizing that there was no chance of getting a state fair appropriation, decided to concentrate their efforts on a plan to have the Hutchinson fair legally recognized as the state fair. This plan was successful in that an act of the legislature, passed on March 11, 1903, provided that the

⁶ Ibid., February 27, 1903, p. 5.

premiums of the Hutchinson fair should have the same standing as those of other state fairs.⁷ The Hutchinson group believed that this provision had done all that was necessary to give the Central Kansas Fair the right to be known as the Kansas State Fair, and the Topeka group admitted that Hutchinson had "stolen a march" on them by securing the passage of this bill. As J. U. Brown, author of the bill, said:

This little statute, although insignificant looking, is worth more to Hutchinson and Reno county than two Reformatories. It makes our fair the only fair in Kansas. It puts us on an equal standing with Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and other states, and means, if the fair has the unanimous backing of the community, that in two years from now we will be recognized more fully by the state and become an established state institution, supported and assisted by the state, like any other institution.⁸

The legislation which gave recognition to the premiums of the Hutchinson fair did not settle the problem permanently. Contrary to the hopes of the Hutchinson supporters, the succeeding legislatures did not take action to recognize their fair as a state institution. Annual meetings of the State Board of Agriculture continued to produce resolutions which favored the establishment of an official state fair. A controversy over the state fair occurred during each legislative year. Offers were made by the representatives of several cities by which those cities were to give their fairgrounds to the State in exchange for appropriations equal to the value of the fairgrounds.

Early in January, 1909, A. L. Sponsler, secretary of the

⁷ Kansas Session Laws, 1903, Chapter 239.

⁸ Hutchinson News, March 12, 1903, p. 5.

Central Kansas Fair Association, sent letters of inquiry to numerous livestock exhibitors and asked for their opinions concerning the establishment of a state fair at Hutchinson. Among the replies to his inquiry was a letter from H. L. Brooks, a breeder of Poland China hogs at Iarned, Kansas, who said:

Dear Sir:

Received your letter requesting me to write and give a few reasons why the State Fair should be held at Hutchinson. I think the State Fair should be held at Hutchinson for the following reasons:

1. Because it is near the center of the State
2. To help settle Western Kansas
3. To induce people to buy land in Western Kansas
4. For the accommodations of the town and railroads
5. The success of last year's fair

Hope this will be satisfactory to you, I am

Very truly yours,

H. L. Brooks⁹

Sponsler also received letters from exhibitors in Oklahoma, Missouri, Nebraska, and Iowa in which the writers expressed their support for a state fair at Hutchinson.

In addition to the letters which favored the Hutchinson location, Sponsler and H. S. Thompson, president of the Central Kansas Fair Association, declared that Hutchinson was only thirty-four miles from the geographic center of Kansas and that thirty-four counties were within a radius of seventy-five miles of that city. This area included approximately one-third of the State's population and produced about fifty per cent of all the

⁹ H. S. Thompson and A. L. Sponsler, Letters from Exhibitors, p. 20.

field products of Kansas. These supporters claimed that this area provided the following: 65½ percent of all the wheat, 43.4 percent of all corn, 46.3 percent of all the alfalfa, 40 percent of the horses, 41 percent of all the mules, 35 percent of all the milk cows, 44.3 percent of all other cattle, 50 percent of all the butter (outside of the Topeka Creamery), 39 percent of all animals slaughtered and sold for consumption, 38 percent of all poultry, 38 percent of all the railway mileage, and paid 38.2 percent of the taxes. In addition, there were twenty-three counties to the west of Hutchinson which were growing in population and wealth and which would be best served by a state fair at Hutchinson.¹⁰

The directors of the Central Kansas Fair Association decided to offer a site of 126 acres, located at Hutchinson, to the State of Kansas if the State would locate and maintain a state fair there. The State Retail Merchants' Association, by a resolution at a convention in January, 1909, declared that Hutchinson was the ideal place for a state fair.¹¹

More than two-hundred letters were sent by farmers and stockmen from all parts of the State to H. A. Heath, of a state fair promotion committee at Topeka. One letter expressed favor for Lawrence or Manhattan as the site of a state fair because, since large schools were located there, the buildings of a state fair could also be used for purposes other than those during the week

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

¹¹ Hutchinson News, January 21, 1909, p. 1.

of a fair. Other letters declared that the capital city was the only proper location for a state fair.¹² Heath emphasized the value of a state fair to Topeka by declaring that a fair was worth more to the merchants and property owners of the city and would attract more manufacturing industries to the city than any other institution.¹³

Many interested parties believed that this legislative year would be a good opportunity to get an appropriation for a state fair, although it was thought best not to specify its location. The State Board of Agriculture adopted a resolution on January 15, 1909, recommending an appropriation of \$100,000 for the purpose of establishing a state fair.¹⁴ "Kansas must have a state fair, and now is the time," was the comment of many who supported the movement for a fair. Many of the other agricultural states were successfully maintaining state fairs, and it was unfavorable for Kansas to be without one. Farmers and stockmen, who paid a considerable amount of taxes, wanted a fair and expressed the warning that there would be an upheaval of those who were responsible for the failure to create one. It was declared that county fairs were beneficial to the counties and that a state fair would be beneficial to Kansas. From Eldorado, Kansas, came the comment that the location of the fair could be postponed but that a fair

¹² Topeka Daily Capital, January 16, 1909, p. 1.

¹³ Ibid., February 7, 1909, p. 7

¹⁴ K.S.B.A., Biennial Report, 22:779, 1910.

should be decided on at once.¹⁵

Two bills were introduced in the legislature on January 22, 1909, for the establishment of a state fair. One was introduced by Senator Avery, of Shawnee, to provide for a state fair, the location of which was to be fixed by a joint session of the House and the Senate and to be managed by a commission appointed by the Governor. This bill, known as the Topeka-Wichita bill, provided for an appropriation of \$150,000 for the following two years. The other bill, the Hutchinson bill, which was introduced by Senator Emerson Carey, of Reno county, provided for a donation of 126 acres of land near Hutchinson, and the buildings located there, to the State, and a state fair was to be located at this site. The bill asked for an appropriation of \$50,000 for the first year and \$40,000 for the second year. Management of the fair was to be placed in the Kansas State Board of Agriculture.¹⁶

Public hearings relative to the state fair bills were held by the legislature. Much of the opposition to the bills came from those who believed that the State could not afford a fair. However, supporters of a fair stated that the value of Kansas farm products in 1908 was \$275,000,000 and that the value of Kansas livestock the same year was \$200,000,000. These figures were quoted as evidence that the State could afford a state fair. Kansas had a wide variety of products which were of sufficient

¹⁵ Topeka Daily Capital, February 22, 1909, p. 1.

¹⁶ Hutchinson News, January 21, 1909, p. 1.

value to be displayed, and this would be a great advertisement for the State.¹⁷

It became apparent that the passage of a state fair bill was unlikely, and the representatives of the three counties concerned, being apprehensive of the situation, preferred to leave the situation stand. The opinion was expressed in Wichita that the legislature was justified in side-stepping the issue since the parties concerned, Hutchinson, Topeka, and Wichita, had shown no inclination toward a compromise. Supporters of Wichita decided that if the legislature selected the best city for the site of a fair, as other states had done, Wichita would be the winner.¹⁸ However, the state fair bills were killed early in March, 1909, when the House adjourned without completing its consideration of the bills.

The legislative year of 1911 began with a great deal of attention centering around the establishment of a state fair. The Kansas Improved Stock Breeders' Association approved a motion which recommended that state fairs should be located at both Topeka and Hutchinson.¹⁹ On January 27, 1911, a bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator E. Carey, of Reno county, which provided for an official state fair at Hutchinson with an appropriation of \$50,000 a year for two years for the conduct of the fair and for improvements on the Hutchinson fairgrounds. Reno

¹⁷ Topeka Daily Capital, February 22, 1909, p. 1.

¹⁸ Wichita Eagle, March 9, 1909, p. 4.

¹⁹ Topeka Daily Capital, January 12, 1911, p. 1.

county was to purchase the property of the Central Kansas Fair Association, and this property was to be deeded over to the State.²⁰

J. M. Davis, of Bourbon county, introduced a bill in the House on January 30, 1911, to create a state fair board, but no provision was made for a fair. This measure provided for an appropriation of \$25,000 for a revolving fund which was to be divided annually among twenty-five outstanding fairs in Kansas. It was anticipated that the larger fairs would compete against each other, and whichever fair was successful in drawing the best exhibitions would ultimately be selected as the state fair.²¹ The situation looked favorable to Hutchinson interests when the Senate Ways and Means Committee reported the Hutchinson State Fair Bill for passage. Meanwhile, supporters of a Topeka fair advertised the superior advantages of the Topeka location. An advertisement in a Topeka newspaper indicated that the valuation of the site offered by Topeka was considerably more than that offered by Hutchinson. Another advertisement included the comments of exhibitors who favored a fair at Topeka. Among these was a statement by A. A. Hoverson, of Moray, Kansas, an exhibitor of Shorthorns at the Topeka fair the preceding year. He said: "I have been treated better here than at any other fair in the State, and the excellent premiums have been another means of making me go to the side of Topeka in the state fair location

²⁰ Hutchinson News, February 2, 1911, p. 1.

²¹ Topeka Daily Capital, January 31, 1911, p. 1.

fight."²² Many comments expressed satisfaction with the previous success, fair treatment, and the good accommodations at the fairs of Topeka.

The Topeka fair bill, which had been introduced in the legislature, provided that the fairgrounds located at Topeka, evaluated at \$150,000, should be given to the State with a request for an appropriation of \$25,000. A third bill, the Wichita bill, offered a cash sum of \$100,000 in return for the establishment of the state fair at Wichita.

The three fair bills were sent by the House Ways and Means Committee back to the House for consideration. Interested observers predicted that none would pass, although it seemed that such a failure would be illogical for this great State. On February 10, 1911, the Senate passed a fair bill which provided for an appropriation of \$100,000 and located a fair permanently at Hutchinson, by a vote of 27 to 9. However, the progress of the Hutchinson bill was disturbed when the Mercer resolution was adopted 69 to 49. This resolution provided that the question of a state fair would be submitted to the people in the next general election, and it settled the question of a state fair for the 1911 legislative session.²³

Meanwhile, the Wichita and Southwestern Fair Association at Wichita abandoned its fairgrounds. It was thought that the state fair would be located at Wichita eventually, and no efforts were

²² Ibid., February 5, 1911, p. 20.

²³ Topeka State Journal, February 14, 1911, p. 1.

made to locate other grounds at that time. Representatives from Hutchinson visited Wichita and suggested that Wichita should withdraw from the contest for the fair, but this suggestion was disregarded by the Wichita group. Both groups agreed to wage a fair campaign through their respective lobbies at Topeka.²⁴

Following the approval by the Senate of the Hutchinson bill, Dave Leahy, private secretary to Governor W. R. Stubbs, charged there was "political crookedness" in the Senate. Sources in Topeka suggested that there was evidence of a "pork barrel" which was resulting in the trading of support for normal schools, state fairs, experiment stations, and other institutions. The Wichita interests charged that they had been promised an insane asylum for supporting an appropriation of \$100,000 for a state fair at Hutchinson. Leahy was called before the Senate to explain his charges, and when he was questioned, he concluded that the failure of the Senate to pass party pledges constituted "political crookedness."²⁵ This inquiry was dropped, and the hearing ended substantially where it had begun. William Allen White was subpoenaed by the Senate to explain his editorial referring to corruption in the Senate, but this inquiry revealed no substantial information.²⁶

To completely defeat the possibility of adopting a state fair bill, the House voted 73 to 47 to strike out the enacting clauses of the Hutchinson, Topeka, and Wichita fair bills. The Hutchin-

²⁴ Wichita Eagle, February 12, 1911, p. 2.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

²⁶ Hutchinson News, February 16, 1911, p. 1.

son supporters declared that a combination of representatives of Wichita, Topeka, and those who were opposed to any state fair had consolidated to defeat the Hutchinson bill in the House Committee of the Whole.²⁷

State fair supporters again concentrated their efforts as the legislature of 1913 convened. Some charged that there were indications of another "pork barrel" session. In the meantime, the business association of Wichita, having decided that Wichita could do without a state fair, declared that it had decided to drop entirely its agitation for a fair at Wichita.²⁸

On January 29, 1913, Senator J. A. Troutman of Shawnee county and Senator Carey of Reno county introduced bills in the Senate. Senator Troutman's bill offered the Topeka fairgrounds, valued at \$250,000, and a cash donation of \$20,000 for the biennium to the State in exchange for the establishment of a state fair at Topeka. Senator Carey's bill offered the fairgrounds at Hutchinson, valued at \$175,000, and requested an appropriation of \$15,000 for the biennium. According to Senator Frank Nighswonger of Sedgwick county, Wichita had withdrawn from the contest. Senator Carey was quoted as having said: "I came here to the legislature to get that state fair for Hutchinson," and there were indications that he had strong support.²⁹

²⁷ Wichita Eagle, February 15, 1911, p. 1.

²⁸ Ibid., January 24, 1913, p. 3.

²⁹ Topeka State Journal, January 29, 1913, p. 1.

Members of the Senate found literature on their desks on the morning of February 5, 1913. This literature, consisting of folders or circulars prepared by J. W. Kelley, secretary of the Topeka Commercial Club, and H. L. Cook, of the State Fair Association, advertised the advantages of the Topeka fairgrounds as a location for the state fair. The supporters of both Topeka and Hutchinson were "lined up" on the issue as the Senate Committee on State Affairs began to consider action on the fair bills. The alternatives of this committee were to favor the Topeka or Hutchinson bills, to advise that the proposition be decided by a popular vote, or to suggest that all cities be declared to be out of the contest, precluding the recognition of any official state fair. This committee of five was expected to favor the Hutchinson bill since two of its members were from districts near to Hutchinson, and two others were from counties which were nearer to Hutchinson than to Topeka.³⁰

Chances of an appropriation for a state fair were hurt by a proposed bill to appropriate \$150,000 for a Kansas exhibition at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, California, to be held in 1915. However, the Senate Committee recommended the Hutchinson State Fair Bill for passage. The Topeka bill was killed by this committee, but, by a vote of 13 to 11, Senator Troutman succeeded in bringing this bill out as a special order for future consideration. The House Ways and Means Committee

³⁰ Ibid., February 6, 1913, p. 1.

recommended that both bills should have a fair chance and reported both bills for consideration, automatically killing the Hendricks bill which would have submitted the state fair question to the voters in 1914.³¹

Hutchinson won the first round when the Senate Committee of the Whole, by a vote of 20 to 19, defeated a bill to leave the question of the location of a fair up to a vote of the people. Opponents of the Hutchinson bill charged that "pork barrel" trades caused this victory, and on February 20, 1913, Hutchinson was virtually assured of the fair when the House passed the Hutchinson bill, without appropriation, by a vote of 68 to 43.³² Again its opponents charged that there was evidence of a "pork barrel" when a motion to indefinitely postpone consideration of the fair bills was defeated by a final vote of 54 to 57. This motion had been unofficially approved 58 to 54, but a delayed official roll call enabled Hutchinson supporters to affect a change of votes.³³

A quick approval of the Hutchinson bill was expected in the Senate since a senate committee had previously recommended it for passage; however, immediate action on the bill was halted when a resolution to consider rejection of the state fair bills, one at a time, was adopted by the Senate.³⁴ Topeka supporters declared

³¹ Ibid., February 18, 1913, p. 1.

³² House Journal Proceedings, 1913, p. 554.

³³ Topeka Daily Capital, February 21, 1913, p. 1.

³⁴ Ibid., February 22, 1913, p. 4.

that there was no evidence of any general demand or desire by the people of the entire State for a state fair. Some expressed the opinion that the fair should be abandoned for the time being as the State could not afford it, and to decide on one state fair would ruin either the Topeka or the Hutchinson fair. Topeka seemed to be the choice of the residents from the northern, eastern, and central parts of the State because of its location and superior railroad facilities. More than one-hundred farmers and stock raisers signed a resolution at Smith Center stating that, in their opinion and judgment, Topeka was the proper place for the permanent location of the state fair.³⁵

H. L. Cook, secretary of the Topeka Exposition, stated that, if the state fair was located at Hutchinson, poorer fairs would be the result since the State would not have a representative fair. He expressed his fear that the senators had not considered the problem seriously. Since the Hutchinson bill did not provide for any appropriation, the state fair would have a very poor start, and it would also result in making the Topeka fair a local proposition. Cook declared that he could not understand why the legislature refused to consider the Topeka offer which included facilities that would be a credit to any state fair.³⁶

A Topeka newspaper, indicating that several senators had promised their votes for the support of Senator Carey's bill, described Senator Carey as the best trader in the world because of

³⁵ Topeka State Journal, February 22, 1913, p. 4.

³⁶ Topeka Daily Capital, February 24, 1913, p. 1.

his amazing ability to get votes. This source declared the Senator's vote was:

One destitute, derelict, meaningless vote--one little slice of the pork barrel packing--one trade--this magic ballot was able to swing back and forth across the senate chamber with a score and ten senators clinging to its pendulum.³⁷

On February 25, Senator Carey, rising to a question of personal privilege, called the attention of the Senate to slander by the Topeka newspapers against himself, other senators, and the people of Hutchinson. He denied the "pork barrel" charges and read the roll of senators who had supported the Hutchinson bill. He criticized the Topeka supporters for their methods used in trying to, what he termed, "work the state in all directions."³⁸ Senator Troutman of Shawnee county answered Senator Carey and declared that he had knowledge of the "indications" of a "pork barrel" deal.

The Bowman resolution to strike all fair bills from the calendar was voted down without a roll call on February 27, 1913.³⁹ Senator E. C. Logan of Beloit offered a substitute fair bill which provided for a popular vote, but this proposal was defeated by the Senate 25 to 15. The Hutchinson bill was then approved by the Senate by a vote of 25 to 15,⁴⁰ and Governor George H. Hodges gave his assurance that the bill would be signed without delay. A Hutchinson newspaper expressed the opinion that

³⁷ Topeka State Journal, February 21, 1913, p. 1.

³⁸ Hutchinson News, February 25, 1913, p. 1.

³⁹ Senate Journal Proceedings, 1913, p. 521.

⁴⁰ See Map II, p.32.

Topeka had had the real truth told to her regarding Topeka's desire to "hog" everything and make the State pay for the fun and amusement of it.⁴¹

Senator Carey was so happy over the Hutchinson victory that he purchased all of the chewing gum possessed by the state-house fruit stands and passed gum to all persons in the Senate chamber. He presented carnations to every senator and employee, and sent bouquets to the press.⁴² The victory caused much excitement in the western part of the State, and the people of Hutchinson were so excited that business was practically suspended in that city. Despite the lack of an appropriation, the Hutchinson representatives believed that the permanency and growth of their fair were assured. Before, there had always existed the possibility that successive unfavorable seasons might put an end to a fair under private ownership.⁴³

However, some observers believed that the legislature had made a regrettable decision. The Kansas Farmer expressed the opinion that the state fairgrounds did not contain sufficient facilities for the conduct of a state fair and that it would be necessary for the succeeding legislatures to appropriate considerable funds for the construction of adequate facilities. This same source stated that Kansas should not have gone into the state fair business until it was prepared to spend a sum of

⁴¹ Hutchinson News, February 25, 1913, p. 1.

⁴² Topeka Daily Capital, February 28, 1913, p. 5.

⁴³ Hutchinson News, February 28, 1913, p. 3.

five-hundred thousand dollars, over a period of five years, to equip and maintain the institution.

The Kansas State Fair Bill, as passed by the legislature, provided for a Board of State Fair Managers composed of five members. Of these members, four were to be selected from the members of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, and the other member was to be the secretary of the State Horticultural Society. In actual operation, the Board appointed an executive committee which assumed active control and local direction of the State Fair. This procedure was altered by a legislative enactment in 1925 which provided that the State Board of Agriculture was to become the Board of State Fair Managers.⁴⁴ Since that date, the Kansas State Board of Agriculture has constituted the Board of State Fair Managers, and five members of this group were chosen as the Executive Committee which supervised directly the conduct of the Fair. These members elected for a period of one year a president, a vice-president, a treasurer, and a secretary who was not a member of the Board. The Executive Committee was responsible to the Board of State Fair Managers for expenditures and the general operation of the State Fair.

During Fair week several members of the Board were given the responsibility of supervising various departments, such as being Superintendent of Admissions, Traffic, Grandstand Attractions, Livestock Exhibits, etc. The maintenance of peace and order was assured by the appointment, by the Board, of a Chief of State

⁴⁴ Kansas Session Laws, 1925, Chapter 252.

Fair Police, Gate-keepers, and Policemen as sworn-in-conservators of the peace, whose duty it was to arrest anyone creating disorder or violating the rules of the State Fair or the laws of Kansas. Both the Hutchinson Police Department and the Kansas State Highway Patrol cooperated with the State Fair Police in keeping order and traffic problems under control. In addition, the Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce provided for a committee which coordinated its activities with those of the State Fair.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Correspondence with Virgil C. Miller, secretary of the Kansas State Fair, March 28, 1949.

EXPLANATION OF MAP II

Senatorial vote on state fair bill

Fig. 1: Represents counties with senators who voted for a state fair at Hutchinson.

Fig. 2: Represents counties with senators who voted against a state fair at Hutchinson.

MAP II

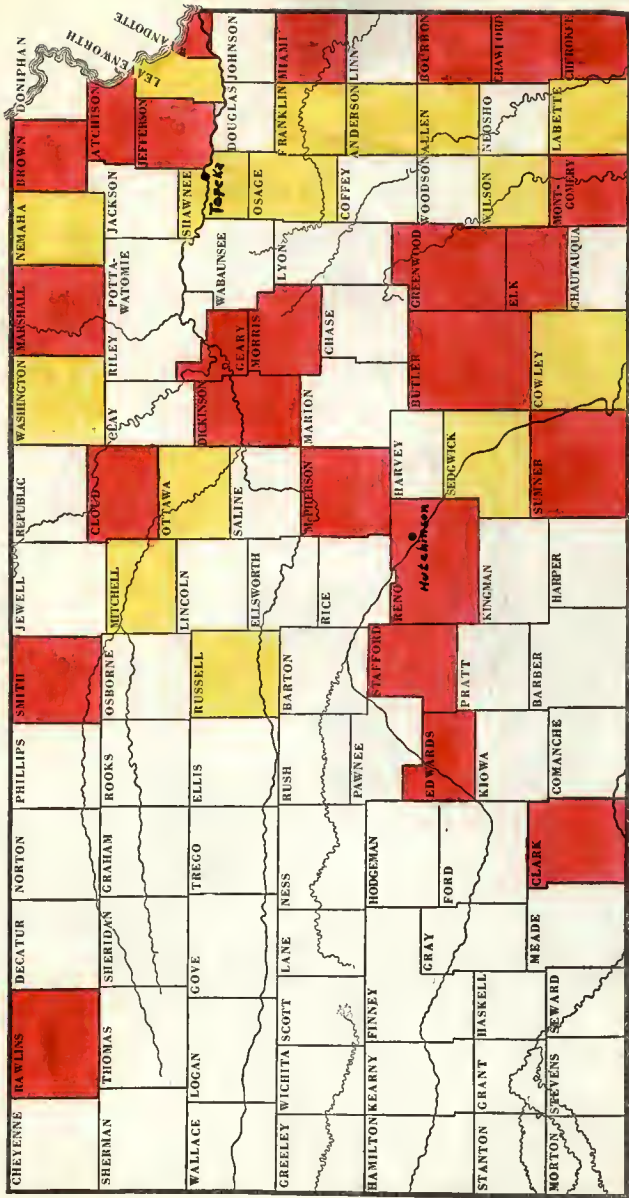


FIG. 2



FIG. 1

CHAPTER III
THE STATE FAIR, 1913-1929

In accordance with the act which provided for the annual State Fair, the Kansas State Board of Agriculture convened at its offices in Topeka, May 14, 1913. Deeds and an abstract of title, conveying the "tract of land and all improvements thereon," were presented to the group. The deeds had been properly recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of Reno county, and the title had first been approved by the State Attorney General, John S. Dawson. These documents were accepted by the Board and were to be placed on file in the office of the Secretary of State.¹

The State Board of Agriculture then elected four members from the members and officers of the Board. These four and the secretary of the State Horticulture Society became the Board of State Fair Managers which, in turn, elected its own officers. A. E. Asher read a letter from the Hutchinson Commercial Club and the Committee of Guarantors which presented a contract of guaranty signed by a large number of citizens of Hutchinson and its vicinity. The contract guaranteed the Board against any losses which might be incurred by the State Fair during 1913 and 1914 by placing a sum of \$20,000 available for the use of the Board.

The Board of State Fair Managers formally took over the State Fairgrounds at Hutchinson on May 15, 1913. That group ap-

¹ Board of State Fair Managers, Biennial Report, 1:1, 1914. Hereafter cited as B.S.F.M., Biennial Report.

pointed an executive committee which assumed active local direction over the State Fair, under the supervision of the Board of State Fair Managers. Certain officers and superintendents for the Fair were appointed, and a prize list was adopted and published. Under the authority of a law of 1913, the superintendent of the Industrial Reformatory at Hutchinson was authorized by the Board of Correction to detail such men as could be spared from that institution to work on the fairgrounds. These inmates did a very satisfactory job which was beneficial to the Fair and to the workers.

Four cattle barns were destroyed by fire on July 16, 1913, but practically no loss was sustained since the Board had these buildings insured. New barns were constructed at a cost of \$4,746, and the insurance on the old barns amounted to \$4,608.41. J. L. Pelham succeeded Walter Wellhouse as secretary of the Horticulture Society, and he appeared and participated in the meetings of the Board on September 14, 1913.

The attendance at the Fair of 1913 was unfavorably affected by rainy weather and muddy roads. Adjutant General C. I. Martin did much to make the Boys' State Corn Contest a success by causing a camp of military correction to be organized under the prescribed rules. This camp was under the command of F. L. Lemmon, Captain, Co. E, Kansas National Guard. Boys representing various counties were instructed in camp sanitation, camp equipment, and many other points of a military character, aside from additional time for observing the exhibits. Cordial support was received from Kansas State College in the matter of exhibits and a judging

force. The State Industrial Reformatory, the School for the Blind, and other State institutions contributed exhibits for the display.²

There was no change in the administration of the Fair until January, 1914. George B. Ross resigned from the Board, and his place was filled by O. O. Wolf. H. S. Thompson was elected as president of the State Fair. The Fair of 1914 was more fortunate in regard to weather conditions; however, the weather was not ideal. A definite indication of that improvement over the Fair of 1913 was shown by an approximate increase of \$10,000 in the admissions for 1914.

State appropriations were first available to the Fair after April 7, 1915.³ An amount of \$20,000 was made available for a revolving fund, \$3,000 for a sewer system, and \$3,000 for each of the years 1916 and 1917. At a cost of \$950, a connection for a sanitary sewer system was completed and legally connected to the general sewer system of the city of Hutchinson. The Board purchased materials, employed labor, and built a sewer, two-thousand feet in length, for \$2,098.63. Other expenses were incurred from painting buildings, planting trees, building concrete walks, etc. Three coin turnstiles were purchased at a cost of \$434.50. The Board of State Fair Managers expressed its attitude toward the policy of the Fair by stating: "It has been the aim

² Ibid., p. 3.

³ Kansas Session Laws, 1915, Chapter 9.

and ambition of this Board to make the State Fair an educational institution of real value to the people of Kansas."⁴

A prize list similar to those of other state fairs was published for 1915. Prizes and general expenses were figured on the basis of probable receipts, which resulted in smaller prizes than those at older state fairs. Yet the prizes did bring out an educational exhibition which, in its breadth and scope, was very satisfactory to the public. Exhibitors, numbering 2,615, exhibited 14,864 entries that year. Each forenoon during Fair week was devoted exclusively to educational features, and amusements and attractions were in operation soon after midday. Nearly sixty percent of the daily attendance was on the grounds each day by ten o'clock in the morning, consisting of farmers from the vicinity of Hutchinson and of people from distant points. The majority of the latter came by passenger trains which arrived at the grounds shortly after nine o'clock. Attendance in 1915 by people coming in automobiles exceeded all previous records, although the railroads noticed little difference in their receipts as only those nearby to Hutchinson could come by automobile.

In recognition of the effect of the Fair upon children's later life, the Executive Committee raised the free admission to include those of ten years. Some 3,500 children of an approximate total attendance of 125,000, from nearly every county in the

⁴ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 2:2, 1916.

State, attended this Fair. There were more Kansas livestock exhibitors than ever before. It was the ardent hope of the Board to build the Fair to a point where it would be truly representative of the great diversified interests of the people of Kansas, although it acknowledged that any fair was primarily an optimistic proposition and institution because its work and success depended largely upon the weather during one week of the year. The financial reports of the Fair showed the importance of good weather to a successful fair.⁵

Record crowds attended each day of the 1917 Fair, and the weather was nearly ideal. Many visitors attended the show "The War of Nations" which was a portrayal of the current world conflict. A huge automobile show was exhibited in the old Agriculture Hall. The existence of a "fast age" in which the people were living was demonstrated by Clyde V. Cessna's new improved monoplane which outperformed his previous model. Cattle and swine exhibits were larger than ever before, although the Horse Show and the Poultry exhibit were not as large as usual. In the Agriculture Hall there was a fine display of farm products, but the dry growing season had caused a reduction in the number of entries.⁶

Previously, the legislature of 1915 had made appropriations to the Kansas State Fair and the Kansas State Fair Association at Topeka. Because of the rivalry which still existed between

⁵ See Appendix, p. 97.

⁶ Hutchinson News, September 17, 1917, p. 1.

the two institutions, in the appropriating acts of 1917 the legislature provided that the Topeka fair should never, thereafter, make use of the word "state" in the conduct of its business. In addition, these legislative enactments prohibited the existence of any gambling or gambling device of any kind on the grounds of either fair. No appropriation was to be made available if this provision was violated by the fair which was concerned.⁷

The State Fair of 1918 was again favored by fine weather, but the crowds noticeably lacked the many young men who had gone away to the war. A Government exhibit of army and navy equipment was very impressive. There were fewer cattle in the livestock departments because of the high prices for feed. The State Agriculture exhibit contained a display of Kanred wheat, which was a new grain, and the Sheep Department exhibition was the finest ever assembled in Kansas. Only the handiwork of Kansas women was shown in the Textile Department, the result of a new rule adopted by the Fair Management. Payments of cash prizes in the Better Babies Contest were resumed this year. The police had very little trouble in keeping order on the fairgrounds, and there were very few arrests made during the week of the Fair.⁸

During 1919 the Board undertook the task of constructing additional buildings on the fairgrounds in spite of the extraordinary conditions which were due to the scarcity of both labor and materials and the extremely high price of both. No contrac-

⁷ Kansas Session Laws, 1917, Chapter 5.

⁸ Hutchinson News, September 16, 1918, p. 1.

tor would make a bid for the construction within the amount which had been appropriated for that purpose. Consequently, the Board began the task of building by purchasing material and employing labor directly, according to the plans and specification of the State Architect. Bricks were obtained from the State Penitentiary, and labor was performed by the inmates of the Industrial Reformatory. During the summer of 1919 it was not possible to obtain labor at any price; so, by a joint resolution of the legislature, it was possible for Superintendent Herr of the Reformatory to furnish 1,426 days of labor, most of which was applied to the buildings. An addition one-hundred feet long was completed on the grandstand, and additional swine and sheep buildings, including a judging pavilion, were ready for use in 1919. One wing of the Mines, Clay Products, and Good Roads Building was constructed and used in 1919.

The cattle and horse barns were built during the summer of 1920, for which Superintendent Bigelow of the Reformatory furnished 1,464 days of labor. This proved to be a tremendous help as these buildings were constructed at an actual cost of \$43,000 as of June 3, 1920, and the lowest bid for the same had been \$55,507.00. Plans for a new footman's entrance to the grounds were furnished by State Architect Gamble. It was anticipated that this construction could be accomplished at a cost of five or six thousand dollars. However, every bit of old material which was available, several kinds of bricks, and old lumber were used for the job at a cost of approximately \$1,530. The Reformatory again furnished the common labor. At that time the total

valuation of the institution, as inventoried by J. B. Talbot, superintendent of the grounds, and A. L. Sponsler, was \$306,500.⁹ In its reports the Board called the Fair a "State Institution of Practical Education" which served all people alike--young or old, rich or poor. All pure-breeding business grew out of fairs, and the improvement of livestock depended on the perpetuity of these fairs. Supporters of the fairs claimed that these exhibitions preceded agricultural colleges and that such colleges did not supplant the work of the fair. The fair was a visual demonstration of progress.

The Board of State Fair Managers acknowledged the cooperation which it had received from various organizations in the conduct of the fairs of 1919 and 1920. A display which occupied 5,000 square feet of floor space was exhibited by the Federal Department of Agriculture. Another Government exhibit displayed tanks, artillery, and other heavy munitions which were used during World War I. In 1920 there was a display of field artillery and military maneuvers. There were 1,320 exhibitors and 7,624 entries at the State Fair in 1919, and for the next year there were 1,419 exhibitors and 8,010 entries. Approximately 125,000 people attended during the Fair week of 1919, and nearly 160,000 were estimated to have attended the Fair in 1920.¹⁰

The legislature appropriated \$27,500 for the State Fair for

⁹ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 4:7, 1920.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

the biennium ending in 1922.¹¹ Improvements of the facilities were continued, and a total of 2,979 days of labor were furnished by the Reformatory. A new sheep barn was constructed at a cost of \$5,246.22. Chairs for the reserved-seat section in the grandstand were purchased for \$1,034.91. Other expenditures were for a fence and coin turnstile entrance, the painting of several buildings, a light apparatus for the grandstand, and the installation of fire hydrants. The Boys' and Girls' Demonstration Building, which had been destroyed by fire, was replaced, and an addition was built to the Industrial Arts Building.¹²

The need for more permanent facilities was constantly stressed, and the Board of State Fair Managers recommended that the legislature should increase the appropriations for 1924 and 1925 for such facilities. A lack of adequate facilities was confusing and had the effect of disappointing the exhibitors at the Fair. Since it was conducted economically, the Fair was the least expensive method of disseminating information. Progress could be seen, and if fairs were to discontinue, agricultural ambition and pride in and for the occupation would expire because of the lack of an opportunity for comparison.

Due to the curtailment of attendance by bad weather in 1923, the receipts of the Fair were exceeded by expenses. However, the Fair continued in the usual manner. A citizens' fund of \$4,850

¹¹ Kansas Session Laws, 1919, Chapter 11.

¹² B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 5:5, 1922.

was provided to pay every exhibitor and every item of expense. The Fair of 1924 was very successful because of excellent weather, and the exhibits were outstanding in every department. As a result, there was sufficient money to liquidate the deficiency fund of the preceding year. The Fair Management was quite pleased with the support which the Kansas press had given to the Fair, and progressive farmers, breeders, and business men of the State commended the satisfactory management of the Fair.¹⁵

Prize money in all departments went to Kansas people except in the livestock departments where approximately sixty percent went to Kansans. Kansas exhibitors won all of the prize money in the Horse Department, but they did not fare as well in the Sheep Department. In the Beef and Dairy Departments, the Kansas entries were very successful. A style show, Poultry Demonstration Work, and Boys' and Girls' Club Work were features of the Fair. The Reformatory again furnished ample common labor during that year. Many shrubs and flowers were planted, and these became a feature attraction of the grounds.

The exhibits for the Fair of 1925 were up to standard and quality, but rain cut the attendance. The Fair of 1926 was a great success in every way, and good weather, good roads, and a large attendance contributed to the success. There were 11,189 entries shown by 2,174 exhibitors. In the Better Babies Department 230 exhibitors showed 268 entries. The total attendance

¹⁵ Ibid., 6:5, 1924.

for 1926 was estimated at 210,000 persons. As evidence of the value of the State Fair as an educational institution, the Board declared that this attendance was equal to ten weeks of college study for 3,500 students--a good return on an investment.

For the first time, only registered animals were shown in the livestock departments during the Fair of 1926. The fine types shown were the result of careful breeding and feeding, and indicated that animal husbandry was benefiting significantly by the modern fair. The Fair supplemented the agriculture colleges by giving the whole public an opportunity to see and learn. However, the lack of adequate and proper facilities hampered the exhibition. Many people were turned away from the grandstand performances. It was the Board's suggestion that the lack of shortages could only be remedied through State action. The people had demonstrated in favor of expansion of the Fair by their remarkable attendance. Again the Fair Management acknowledged the favorable publicity by the press. During the season, 408 Kansas newspapers made favorable mention of the State Fair in their news items, and editorial columns amounted to 56,500 inches of space.¹⁴

During this biennium the building for the Better Babies Department was remodeled. The Pet Show was changed so as to add a classification for dogs, although there was not enough room for all entries. An exhibition of harvester-threshers and grain separators was the greatest in the country, and these, with a great display of road-making and other machinery exhibits, re-

¹⁴ Ibid., 7:7, 1926.

sulted in the most magnificent and useful machinery exhibition the State Fair had ever produced.¹⁵

On June 3, 1926, the barns for the Cattle Department were destroyed by fire. The barns had been occupied by the First Battalion of the First Kansas Field Artillery, Kansas National Guard, but the origin of the fire was never determined. A meeting of the Executive Committee was held to consider ways and means for rebuilding the facilities of the Beef and Dairy Departments. The Governor was consulted, as were members of the legislature and the Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce; and a solution was found when George E. Gano, a faithful supporter of the Fair, provided the needed funds. Plans and specifications were supplied by the State Architect, and a fire-proof cattle building was ready for the 1926 Fair. By using common labor from the Reformatory, this fine building was constructed at an approximate cost of \$35,000, and the cost would have been nearly \$64,500 if this common labor had not been furnished. This cattle barn, 120 feet by 272 feet, built for 480 cattle, was probably the finest such building to be found, although it was admitted that some might have been larger.¹⁶

An irrigation plant demonstration, built at a cost of approximately \$1,000, created a great amount of interest and was one of the outstanding features of the 1926 Fair. Cooperation from the Farm Bureau, Kansas State College, and other State institutions

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁶ Loc. cit.

helped make the Fair a success.¹⁷

The report for the biennium of 1927 and 1928 was the most favorable to that time, and this improvement was evidence that the Fair was a growing institution. Since almost all people learned by actually seeing, it was a great school for young and old. In order to be successful, the Fair had to be educational; and it had to provide good, clean entertainment for a public which demanded both.

Beautification of the grounds had progressed, and thirty varieties of ornamental and useful trees, as many shrubs, a variety of roses, and other flowering bushes and vines were planted. All of this was done in cooperation with the Izaak Walton clubs of the State and supplemented the work of the college at Manhattan.

The Board expressed its awareness of the progress being made in livestock breeding by stating:

Twenty-eight years ago when this fair was started by private men and means, it was a common sight to see yellow-backed cattle in our pastures, others with a stripe, from head to tail, while others were still more elaborately decorated by being brindled. Now the improved type is to be found everywhere. At that time hogs were sent to market as yearlings and upward--now we show them at a weight of 200 pounds and upward at the age of 180 days. Livestock is being bred and fed now-a-days for particular markets.¹⁸

There was a great exhibition this biennium of improved harvesting and threshing machinery, probably more than at any other

¹⁷ B.S.P.M., Biennial Report, 7:8, 1926.

¹⁸ B.S.P.M., Biennial Report, 8:6, 1928.

point in the country. Facilities were still inadequate, and the new cattle barn was only half large enough. It was necessary to use tents to provide shelter for some of the livestock.

As provided for by law, the Board contracted with a corporation with a capital of \$25,000 to build an automobile show building. Brick was obtained from the State Penitentiary, and labor was furnished by the Reformatory. Contracts were let for the steel, cement, face brick, and other materials, and the plans and specifications for the building were supplied by the State Architect. Construction began in June, 1927, under the management of E. E. Frizell, superintendent of the State Industrial Reformatory, and the building was completed for the Fair of 1927. This splendid, permanent building was evidence of what could be done by the use of Reformatory labor. In a similar manner, a sum of \$50,000 was spent for a fire-proof grandstand, and again labor from the Reformatory was used. This new building, with part of the old structure, was ready for use for the Fair of 1928.¹⁹

The exhibits in the Agriculture Building were very fine in 1927. A new feature of the County Project exhibit, as suggested and managed by Dr. L. E. Call and assisted by Professor R. I. Throckmorton, both of Kansas State College, attracted much attention. The Boys' and Girls' Club exhibits and facilities for making a study of the educational features of the Fair were augmented by the use of the generous appropriation made by the leg-

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

islature of the preceding year. A large building on the grounds was properly transformed in a "Camp" and was provided with comfortable sleeping apartments, a kitchen and dining room, bathrooms, etc. These facilities were adequate for the purposes of 1927, but they were insufficient for the needs of 1928.

The Horse, Swine, Poultry, Pet Stock, Domestic Science, and the Domestic Arts Departments were all worthy of special mention, as were the Floral and Horticultural Departments. In 1928 the entire Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus was employed for entertainment. The attendance that year was the largest in the history of the Fair. A fashion review, free acts, and a fireworks spectacle were appreciated by the public. The total attendance for 1927 was 205,000 and for 1928, 280,000.²⁰

The weather for the Fair week of 1929 was good except for Thursday and Friday. Rain north of Hutchinson caused bad roads, and the attendance was cut considerably for the last two days and nights of the Fair. However, all attendance records through Wednesday night were broken. For 1929 there were 2,510 exhibitors and 11,451 entries. There was a notable increase in the Boys' and Girls' Club Work with 1,019 exhibitors and 3,010 entries.²¹

Additions had been built to the swine barns for an increase of forty pens, and a paddock was constructed with a capacity of eighteen horses. An appropriation of \$5,000 by the legislature

²⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

²¹ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 9:5, 1930.

was used to purchase additional land, with understanding that there would be more funds for that purpose in the future. Following this policy, Attorney General W. A. Smith brought condemnation proceedings, upon the request of the Board, to secure eighty acres of land north of the fairgrounds. The judge of the District Court of Reno county appointed an appraisement committee which reported the assessed value of the land to be \$25,000. This total, of which \$20,000 was loaned to the Board by George E. Gano, was paid into the court which issued a decree granting the land to the State for state fair purposes. The owner of the land, Alexander B. Crane of New York City, accepted the conditions without demur.²²

²² Ibid., p. 13.

CHAPTER IV
THE STATE FAIR, 1930-1940

The Kansas State Fair of 1930 exceeded all preceding fairs in the matter of exhibits. Every department was filled to its capacity, and in the Agriculture Department some of the county displays had to be placed elsewhere. There was a total of 2,821 exhibitors and 12,813 entries. An outstanding feature of this year was the Dairy exhibit which was authorized by a resolution of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture. A total of twenty-three county exhibits, more than ever before, were on display. Again there was the greatest display of power-harvesting machinery ever displayed in the country, including tillage tools and implements, corn-harvesting machinery, grain grinders, and others.

The Missouri Pacific Railway Company displayed an exhibit of Mexican products which was very unique and educational, and a Mexican band played music at intervals throughout the week of the Fair.¹

Conditions prior to the Fair of 1930 had been good, but ten days before the opening the State Board of Health sent out an alarming notice of the prevalence of infantile paralysis throughout the State. M. H. Coe, State 4-H Club Leader, notified the various 4-H Clubs and Vocational Agriculture teachers of the State about the situation and advised them not to attend the Fair. As a result, the attendance was considerably reduced.

¹ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 9:18, 1930.

The Board was somewhat critical of this effect upon the Fair due to the alarming notices sent out by the Board of Health since the theatres and schools continued to function despite the circumstances. Other state fairs in Nebraska, South Dakota, and Minnesota had been very successful, and the Board was certain that the low attendance at their fair was due, not to hard times, but to the notices of the State Board of Health.²

In view of the depression's effect on future receipts, the Fair Management planned an approximate reduction of \$25,000 for the expenses of 1931. These reductions were made possible by trimming expenses and by reducing prize money. Receipts from the Grandstand for 1931 were reduced by \$34,270. Rains, storms, and the depression hurt the Fair despite the planned saving. All fairs, large and small, in the United States and Canada suffered losses in 1931, indicating that fairs were business institutions which had to battle the prevailing depressed conditions. Yet no preceding Fair was more educational than the one in 1931. There was a total of 3,251 exhibitors and 14,574 entries in the various departments. Professor R. I. Throckmorton of Kansas State College was in charge of the Agriculture Department. He said that the State Fair had one of the best agricultural exhibits in the country and that: "Another very noticeable change is the interest taken by visitors in studying the entries and in asking questions concerning various crops and their adaptability to

² Ibid., p. 19.

different regions or conditions."³

A Hay and Broom Corn Grading exhibit, prepared by the Hay, Grain, and Feed Division of the Bureau of Standards, attracted the attention of many people. Another new feature was an exhibit which was prepared by the State Grain Inspection Department and the Hutchinson Board of Trade. The 4-H Boys' and Girls' Club Work broke all former records in that department with 3,164 entries from all sections of the State, indicating an interest which was universal. There was need of more and better facilities for the work of the clubs. The Home Demonstration exhibit attracted considerable attention. In the grandstand there were exhibits prepared by Kansas University, Kansas State College, the State Parent-Teachers' Association, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the Kansas Child Welfare League, and the State Dental Society, all located on the second floor. On the first floor of the grandstand were the State Dairy exhibit, the Dairy Bar, the Federal Department of Agriculture exhibit, the State School for the Blind exhibit, and other exhibits of dairy machinery and equipment. It was necessary to use tents to house the overflow of certain exhibits.⁴

Receipts were again lower for the Fair of 1932. The general admission price to the grounds was reduced from fifty to thirty-five cents in consideration of the hard times. In spite of the

³ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 10:6, 1932.

⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

circumstances, the Fair Management was confident that fairs would emerge from this hectic period in due time and continue their work for the good and growth of the states and communities. All departments were well filled. There was a fine exhibition of beef cattle and an extraordinary one of dairy cattle. There was some evidence that the saddle horse was becoming more popular. An added feature of a Dairy Production Requirement exhibit attracted widespread interest and inquiry. The Automobile exhibit was somewhat depleted.

The Fair of 1933, from the standpoint of exhibits, attendance, and financial results, was one of the most successful in comparison with preceding years. The public expected high-class entertainment, and the Fair Management endeavored to produce it. Expenses of the Fair were again reduced, and the prize and purse offerings were lower. The general admission was again reduced, and for the first time automobiles were admitted to the fairgrounds without charge; this proved to be very popular with the public.

On Thursday, which was always known as Governor's Day, Governor A. M. Landon was present at the Fair and made an entertaining and instructive address. Another pleasing feature was a visit by the McPherson High School Band. The Agriculture Building was filled with high-quality exhibits despite the unfavorable growing season. These exhibits constituted a real educational feature which inspired greater confidence and certainty in the productiveness of Kansas. The Horticulture display was very fine as were the twenty-one county exhibits and the five county projects. An exhibit pertaining to marketing was prepared by the

Chicago Board of Trade, and the wool exhibit of the Midwest Wool Marketing Association was one of the leading features. The latter showed the various kinds and qualities of wool and tended to induce more farmers to keep useful and profitable flocks of sheep--a phase of farm industry sometimes overlooked.⁵

The exhibits of the 4-H Clubs and the encampment of those groups, under the supervision of M. H. Coe, were very successful although facilities were inadequate. Since a special legislative session was inevitable, H. W. Avery of Wakefield was appointed by the Board of State Fair Managers to conduct a campaign for a new 4-H Club building. It was decided to ask for \$70,000 from the State and \$30,000 from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works for the construction of the new building. Through the efforts of Avery, Coe, and Club members, the project was successful, and the new 4-H Club Building was completed for the Fair of 1934.

The Dairy Exposition and the Dairy Bar deserved special mention for the 1933 Fair. An excellent show of handiwork was displayed by the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and the United States Department of Agriculture and the Kansas State Board of Agriculture exhibits attracted continuous attention. It was obvious that any person could get practical information at the Fair.

Harness racing, although somewhat lessened, was spirited and thrilling, and the open-auto races attracted many entries and spectators. The night entertainment was superb and contributed

⁵ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 11:6, 1934.

to the good reputation of the Fair. As usual, the Concession Department was a very satisfactory source of income. E. Hutton, Superintendent, had been in charge of that department for thirty years.⁶

The farm machinery exhibit of up-to-the-minute equipment showed the greatest increase of any department over the preceding year. High prices for feed and low prices for livestock resulted in a lower than usual number of entries of cattle and swine, although there was a fair exhibit of sheep. The horse barns were filled to capacity with stock, many of which had won at other fairs. The quality of the cattle and swine was of the highest order, and the Hereford Cattle display made by Robert H. Hazlett went on to win the grand champion prizes at Kansas City and Chicago.

A fine educational fair was conducted despite lower prices, and the people appreciated the first-class entertainment as was evidence by their attendance. A new feature in 1933 was the "Hall of Champions." All champion animals from both the dairy and the beef breeds were singled out and presented to the public in one exhibit arena.⁷

The Board declared that Kansans were believers in fairs because Kansas had more fairs than any other state. H. W. Avery, secretary of the Fair, stated that:

The Kansas State Fair has nothing to sell but good-

⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

will. Its highest ambition is to merit support of the people of Kansas because of its value as an educational institution promoting the agricultural and industrial interests of Kansas, and measuring in an accurate and visible manner the annual progress of the State.⁸

A. L. Sponsler, who had served thirty-one years with the Fair, eleven years with the Central Kansas Fair Association and twenty years as secretary of the State Fair, was responsible for much of the history and success of the Fair.

The outstanding achievement of the biennium was the completion of the finest 4-H Club building in the United States. This fire-proof structure, to house eight-hundred boys and girls, was located near the center of the fairgrounds. It was difficult to estimate the possibilities of this annual pilgrimage of the outstanding youth of Kansas through the halls of the various departments of the Fair from year to year. As young Kansans they were the most important product of the State. Bringing with youthful enthusiasm the prize-winning achievement of a year's work from every part of the State, they made a most valuable contribution to the State Fair. From the many new things seen at the Fair, they were able to take back to their homes and communities the inspiration necessary to carry on their club work and ultimately bring annual dividends of a better and more prosperous citizenship for Kansas.

The Fair of 1934 surpassed all previous Kansas State Fairs from the standpoint of attendance and net proceeds, despite the most severe drought in the history of Kansas and all the sur-

⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

rounding states. The Fair was held in September just after the climax of the drought. Yet the livestock, garden, orchard, and field crops, and the spirit of the people caused Governor Landon to remark: "The crops and stock on display at the Kansas State Fair in a year like this are worth more in advertising value to Kansas than the State Fair has ever cost."⁹

There was the largest exhibit of fine horses ever seen at the fairgrounds. Displays of dairy cattle were unprecedented, and the Poultry Department had an increase of one-hundred percent over previous years. A large and varied exhibit of farm machinery exceeded anything ever seen in the central part of the United States. The Automobile Show displayed practically every important model and type of modern motor car. All other departments were up to the normal standards. Four-hundred vocational students from fifty Kansas schools attended class-room instruction at the Fair. These students studied and compared the various kinds of machinery which were exhibited. This instruction was conducted under the supervision of professors from Kansas State College and with the cooperation of special representatives of the various factories which manufactured the machinery.¹⁰

The night show, again a high-class feature of the entertainment, was an inducement which brought more visitors from greater distances to the Fair. The purpose of the Board was to maintain the Fair on a high moral plane that would merit the approval and

⁹ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

command the respect of the citizens of Kansas. As an additional feature, the Master Farmers and Homemakers of Kansas, who together represented nearly every section of the State, were special guests at the Fair.

The Board of State Fair Managers became apprehensive of the lack of appropriated funds for the maintenance of the Fair during this biennium. The Fair was a product of the legislature, and the Board and others who had helped build the Fair were only agencies and individuals who had been brought into the institution after the legislature of 1913 had decided to definitely establish a State Fair. Appropriation for maintenance had been reduced, and there was none since 1933. The failure to maintain the buildings and grounds of the Fair added to the ultimate expense which necessarily followed when the property of the State became delapidated. The Board also requested more money for premiums to be given to exhibitors. These premiums had been decreased by forty percent since 1929 while the expenses of the exhibitors had recently been increased, and, consequently, the payments for labor and premiums by the Fair did not compare favorably with payments by other fairs. During the Fair of 1934, employees on a Public Works Administration project received \$1.10 per hour, while only a few blocks away employees of the state of Kansas were receiving from 10 to 20 cents per hour. The outstanding livestock breeders of the State, who had successfully competed with those of other states, could not afford to show their livestock when such low premiums were offered at the Kansas State

Fair.¹¹

The management of the Fair, being outside of party, factional, or local and commercial influence, was distributed geographically so that the entire State would always be represented by the Board of State Fair Managers. The threat of a changing political organization had not hindered the progress of the Fair, and the policy for the operation of the Fair had continued essentially the same since the date of its establishment.

Since the main purpose of the State Fair was to promote and to give recognition officially to the progress and outstanding achievements that had contributed to the advancement of the State, it was the policy of the Board to reject commercial methods of promoting the Fair as such methods did not justify the expenditure of public funds. In addition, the chambers of commerce and trade organizations accomplished everything possible in the matter of commercial demonstrations and sales campaigns. However, the State Fair did things which were not expected or required of others. It gave freely of its space and much of its funds to educational and charitable institutions such as these: 4-H Club Work, Vocational Training, Better Babies, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Fish and Game Department, Highway Department, farm organizations, Federal and State Departments of Agriculture, college extension work, and other federal and state agencies. Another service was the establishment of standards of perfection and the trends in standards from year to year, which was a val-

¹¹ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 11:18, 1934.

uable service in almost every important statewide activity.

In spite of many such accomplishments, the opinion still prevailed that the Fair was a promotion enterprise. Another impression was that fairs, besides being commercial, had almost every kind and character of entertainment and amusement. Being a State institution, it was to some extent the property of every citizen of Kansas and must of necessity have the confidence and support of the public as well as the legislature which provided appropriations for its support. There was some evidence that the legislature and the public were considering and acting on the needs of the Fair on representation or through a failure to understand the purpose of the Fair or to what extent it efficiently filled that purpose. The management of the Fair desired that the legislature should give the Fair the time, consideration, and judgment of men who knew not only the purpose of a state fair, but also were to some extent familiar with the problems of its successful operation. The Kansas State Fair had the foundation and framework to carry out in an ideal way the purpose of a state fair.¹²

For the first time in history, the entire Fair week for 1935 was a period of perfect State Fair weather. The 4-H Club Building was dedicated on Tuesday by Governor Landon. The new irrigation plant, constructed during the year according to plans of State Engineer Knapp, had a capacity of 10,000 gallons of water per hour. The Agriculture and Domestic Science exhibits were

¹² B.S.P.M., Biennial Report, 12:6, 1936.

exceptional as dust storms and drought were severe this year, and the growing conditions were not ideal. The total prize offerings of the departments were five percent higher than in 1934. On Saturday, the opening day, the attendance was four times greater than that of the opening day in 1934. Four new, brick eating houses were completed and in use by church organizations. Between five-hundred and seven-hundred students and teachers spent two days attending the Fair, during which they conducted judging contests on livestock. Instructors from Kansas State College gave assistance to a careful study of the farm equipment exhibit. It was of importance for these vocational students to get the latest and best information as to the approved types and trends in animal breeding as well as the progress made by manufacturers of modern farm equipment. The majority of the farmers and many of the city people visited the farm machinery display, and by the end of the Fair week many machinery companies had sold their stock.¹³

Since the Better Babies Department was begun, nearly seven-thousand babies had been examined, and in 1936 there were four-hundred and eighty-five entries in that department. The State Fair and thousands of parents were indebted to Dr. Louise Richmond of Hutchinson and her staff of physicians who had given continuous and splendid service to this department.

The Fair had become an investment of \$815,000, and there were prospects for increasing that amount. A new 4-H livestock

¹³ Ibid., p. 8.

building was to be completed for the next year's fair. The Kansas State Fair was one of the first fairs to start a 4-H Club department. In 1921 and 1922, \$3,687,000 were paid out of the Fair's own funds for premiums in that department. An appropriation for 4-H premiums was made by the legislature in 1923, and in the period from 1923 to 1936, the legislature appropriated \$60,000 for premiums and expenses of the 4-H Club Work at the State Fair.¹⁴ There were ninety-three Kansas counties represented by 4-H members in 1936.

Farm Organizations Day, on Tuesday, became a new feature in 1936. Need of an educational building was definitely apparent since many of the exhibition buildings were overcrowded. In the Poultry Department there was a large increase in the number of entries.

In 1935 Professor J. W. Linn of Kansas State College had presented a plan designed to interest many dairy exhibitors at the Kansas State Fair. This plan was designed to encourage the smaller and younger breeders who had not become professional in preparing and making exhibitions on fair circuits covering a territory of several states. In both the beef and dairy breeds there were outstanding herds that had made successful fair tours and had ranked high against all competition. These veteran exhibitors came back to the State Fair and took practically all of the premium money. This discouraged the smaller breeder who could not afford to compete, although he desired a rating on his

¹⁴ Kansas Session Laws, 1921-1935.

stock which would result in favorable publicity and an acquaintance with prospective customers and other exhibitors. The result was that the same group of breeders, and to some extent the same cattle, were present at the Fair to the exclusion of the new and younger breeders who could not contend. Professor Linn's plan provided for a series of district shows in centers where a community or district had given special consideration to a certain breed. In these shows the breeders were invited to participate in a local show at which time the animals giving the most promise of show-ring qualities were selected from different herds to make up a unit of ten animals to be shown in the different classes at the State Fair. The amount of prize money was doubled and distributed over eight or twelve awards in each class. As a result, the cattle departments of 1936 were increased by nearly 100 percent, and there were many new exhibitors present for the first time. Additional credit for the success of this plan was given to the American Shorthorn Breeders' Association and the Hereford Breeders' Association for the contribution of funds to encourage these exhibits. There were twenty district herds of cattle at the Fair in 1936.¹⁵

The sanitary sewer system at the fairgrounds proved to be unsatisfactory as a larger outlet was needed to connect to the Hutchinson city outlet. The Board requested an appropriation for this improvement in their budget request for 1936. Complaint was made about the lack of financial support of the State Fair

¹⁵ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 12:18, 1936.

by Reno county. The Management declared that Reno county, one of the largest and wealthiest in the State, was the only one with a fair that did not contribute any money to the support or aid of that fair. The State Fair brought more than 100,000 desirable visitors from outside of the county to Hutchinson, and these visitors, asking no special privileges, paid for their accommodations. In addition, the State Fair spent from \$25,000 to \$40,000 each year for maintenance, construction, improvements, and operating costs in Reno county. In 1915 the legislature had provided that in counties with over 30,000 population, where a state fair or a state-wide fair was held, the county commissioners should issue warrants for \$1,500 payable to such fair.¹⁶ These payments were made for three years, but an amendment, submitted in 1923 by a Topeka senator, struck from the law the provision for such a payment. Since that year no money was received from Reno county, although the 4-H Club people of Reno county were furnished with the facilities of the Fair without charge. Both Shawnee and Sedgwick counties made contributions to their fairs.

In 1936 the State Fair had five times as many buildings and floor space as it had in 1913, almost twice as much land, many of the streets and thoroughfares had been widened, new culverts and sidewalks were constructed, and some of the water lines were changed. Many buildings had been repaired, repainted, and re-roofed, and other types of maintenance and improvement were accomplished. The labor which had been supplied by the State In-

¹⁶ Kansas Session Laws, 1915, Chapter 177.

dustrial Reformatory was a tremendous factor in these accomplishments, but for the first time in twenty-three years, when the help was most needed and without warning or explanation, this source of common labor was closed. The Fair could not have been so successful without this reformatory help, which was equivalent to \$100,000 of legislative money. A frequent argument for the location of the Fair in 1913 was that this labor would be available and desirable for the inmates of the Reformatory. The Fair Management did not feel that this labor had been competing with workers because no money or funds were provided for such work.¹⁷

The most successful Fair since 1929 was held in 1937, despite a severe summer drought which curtailed the supply of pasture, hay, and other forage crops; however, there was an excellent small-grain crop which contributed to the excellence of the annual exhibition. There was a decrease in the number of beef and dairy cattle due to the scarcity of feed and grain crops and the high price of choice feeds at that time. Yet there was an over-all increase in the number of exhibitors of cattle which reflected the popularity of the provision for a classification of Kansas-bred cattle. The Cattle Department was definitely overcrowded, and many exhibitors were disappointed because their animals were housed separately.

A noteworthy achievement was the erection of the new 4-H Club Livestock Building, which was begun on March 22, 1937, and completed for the 1937 Fair. The Fair contributed approximately

¹⁷ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 12:22, 1936.

\$33,000 from its funds for the total cost of approximately \$70,000. During the year the Management arranged for improvements in the facilities of the Encampment Building and the 4-H Club Exhibit Building. Much of this work was done within the Fair's own workshop on the fairgrounds.

One change was made in the entertainment of the Fair by the inclusion of a rodeo which was very successful. The Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce assisted in providing for the care of visiting high school bands. A new mark for total attendance was set with an estimated number of 270,000. There was an absence of any but the most minor law infractions due to the presence on the grounds of a large detail of Hutchinson Police, the State Highway Patrol, and peace officers from every section of the State, who were present by the invitation of the State Fair Police Department. These visiting peace officers were assigned special duties at particular points on the grounds to check and report the presence of suspicious characters or those with known police records.¹⁸

The weather for the Fair week of September 17-23, 1938, was nearly ideal, although the first two days of cool weather limited the attendance somewhat. The greatest array of farm machinery ever assembled on the fairgrounds was on display and occupied a great amount of space. Demonstrators of this equipment demonstrated the actual operation of the machinery from normal plowing and cultivating operations to the movement of earth on a

¹⁸ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 13:7, 1938.

commercial scale.

The 4-H Club Department, as usual, was the center of interest for many visitors. In February of 1938 the new livestock building had been completed, a Works Projects Administration project which had not cost one cent of State tax money. A new cattle barn, as a federal project, was completed during the year, and this improved conditions for the Cattle Department at the 1938 Fair. All livestock departments showed large increases, and the Sheep Department increased by more than one-hundred percent. Great interest was shown by Fair visitors in the county, district, and parish show herds of cattle.¹⁹

In the women's division, the Clothing and Textiles Department showed the greatest gain, due partly to the participation by the State Fair in the National Crochet Contest. Winners in ten crochet classifications at the Fair were eligible to compete in the national contest at New York City. The Agriculture Department was completely overcrowded, which prevented a proper exhibition. This abundance of exhibits was due to a more normal growing season and better moisture conditions. There was a definite need for a new and larger agriculture building to remedy the situation. Educational exhibits completely filled all available space in the grandstand. All of the exhibition space on the second floor was completely taken over for the first time.

Permanent aquarium tanks for the display of fish and pens for Kansas wildlife were constructed during the year by the State

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

Forestry, Fish, and Game Department. Added attractions of a rodeo, stage entertainment, and fireworks attracted many visitors. Again the Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce assisted in entertaining a large number of high school bands as guests of both the State Fair and the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce was also host to banquets for the Master Farmers and Farm Homemakers and the visiting herdsmen.

The Fair Management requested additional maintenance appropriations for the Fair because the increased building program had increased the cost of upkeep. Undue depreciation of the buildings and equipment had occurred because of the lack of funds for maintenance. Of other appropriations requested, the Board asked for an appropriation of \$3,500 for publicity purposes. Included in this request for funds was the following condensed statement of the valuation of the Kansas State Fair:²⁰

Condensed Statement of the Kansas State Fair, 1913-1938

Total of legislative appropriations.....		\$860,000.00
191 acres of land @ \$500.....	\$95,500.00	
Buildings and equipment.....	<u>779,500.00</u>	
Total plant valuation	875,000.00	<u>875,000.00</u>
Plant valuation over appropriation.....		14,501.00
	* * * * *	
General premiums paid.....		668,274.49
Additional premiums for 4-H Club Work.....		<u>83,990.43</u>
Total premiums paid.....		752,264.92

²⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

Additional funds were requested for the construction of new horse barns as the old barns had passed the useful state. It was stated that the demand for horses and mules justified better accommodations for that department.

There was a large increase in the number and quality of entries in the Cattle and Horse Departments in 1939, and the displays in the Division of Agriculture were outstanding. Many departments were again overcrowded. It was necessary to use tents to shelter cattle and horses, and the Board noted that such a practice was dangerous for the care of valuable animals. Facilities were lacking for the field and garden crops. The 4-H Encampment, which housed approximately eight-hundred boys and girls, was adequate for the needs of 1934, but by 1939 these facilities were inadequate and could not suffice for all of the club members who had participated and were qualified to attend the Fair. The divisions of vegetables, farm crops, horticulture, bees and honey, and the County Collective and Project exhibits had outstanding and attractive displays.²¹

A new idea was featured in the display of wheat. In addition to the regular method of judging wheat samples on the basis of external appearances and physical characteristics, the new display was based on the bread-baking qualities in a wheat quality class which required the elimination of samples to a maximum of twenty-five samples. These samples were given milling and baking tests at the Kansas State College mill and the regional ex-

²¹ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 14:6, 1940.

perimental laboratory at Manhattan. The results were determined prior to Fair week, and small lots of the samples were on display at the Fair. The purpose of the display was to demonstrate to wheat growers that certain varieties of wheat did not produce the quality demanded by commercial bakeries. Because of the success of this feature, the Board of State Fair Managers voted unanimously to authorize the continuation of this work at the 1940 Fair.²²

The entertainment for the Fair consisted of seven nights of musical revue and interlude acts, two afternoons of auto racing, two afternoons of harness and running races, three afternoons for the rodeo, and the last afternoon was devoted to an auto thrill program. There were splendid educational exhibits on both floors of the grandstand building. Thirty-two high school bands were entertained by the Fair and the Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce. School officials and band directors were eager to bring their bands to the Fair, and this trend affected the inclusion of music in the programs of other schools. The farm machinery display was unusually attractive, and the aggregate was larger than that of preceding years. There was more and more emphasis placed upon the actual operation of the machinery.

The stage was set for the largest and best Kansas State Fair in history when an epidemic of infantile paralysis struck nearly every section of the State in 1940. The Kansas State Board of Health recommended that all schools be closed. Consequently, the

²² Ibid., p. 7.

4-H Club Encampment was cancelled; yet there were two-hundred and fifty-eight more entries and only eight less exhibitors in the 4-H Club department than the year before. The high school band activity was affected since, of the fifty bands which had been invited, only five attended the Fair. Although the total attendance was reduced by approximately 25,000, the financial results were not too discouraging. There was a large increase in the livestock departments, and three large tents were used to house the overflow of entries. The Fair Management criticized the necessity of renting tents because the rental costs were lost after the usage of those articles. This rental money should have been used for the construction of permanent facilities which would have future value. In the request to the legislature for appropriations, the Board stressed the necessity of funds for the construction of a new cattle barn.²³

Many out-of-state herds of cattle and other livestock entries were in evidence due to an adjustment of fair dates which had eliminated some of the competition among fairs during previous years. A successful innovation in the Swine Department was the Market Barrow Carcass Demonstration. Barrows from both light and heavy weights in six breeds and a separate class of crossbreds and grades were entered in the usual classifications, judged on foot, and awarded premiums. All blue ribbon winners of fourteen classifications were taken to a Hutchinson packing plant and slaughtered. Then the carcasses were displayed in a

²³ Ibid., p. 20.

refrigerated meat case in the grandstand building for the rest of the Fair week. These carcasses were judged by an expert from the National Livestock and Meat Board of Chicago, and additional awards were given. Owners of the animals received the top Kansas City market price plus a bonus of fifty cents per one-hundred pounds. Much credit for this feature was given to C. G. Elling, superintendent of the Swine Department.

The fifth successive record for farm machinery exhibition was established in 1940, and the emphasis was again placed on the actual operation of the equipment. Opposite the grandstand, the new concrete stage, with its basement dressing rooms, was in use. This construction was accomplished as a federal project. The need of more facilities in the Agriculture Department was apparent as in the Horticulture division the entries were so numerous that prize-winning apples were displayed on the floor beneath the display tables. The Floriculture display was extraordinary, but it was overcrowded. There were 4,223 exhibitors and 15,983 entries at the Fair of 1940.²⁴

²⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

CHAPTER V
THE STATE FAIR, 1941-1948

The 1941 State Fair was the most successful in the history of its existence. All previous records for the number of exhibits and exhibitors, attendance, and total receipts were shattered. Except for a rainstorm on Monday, the weather was ideal. The outstanding feature of the Fair was the tremendous livestock display. All permanent and temporary facilities were crowded with the finest beef and dairy cattle, swine, and sheep ever assembled in one group in Kansas. A new innovation in the Dairy Cattle department was the "Court of Dairy Queens" where twenty-four of the most outstanding cows from six major dairy breeds were shown together so that laymen might have an opportunity to study the breed characteristics.¹

A sheep-shearing contest was the afternoon feature for five days of the Fair. Four shearers competed each day, and the four finalists competed for the championship on Friday afternoon. This contest was both educational and highly entertaining. Dr. O. O. Wolf and C. G. Elling, by use of a microphone, added to this feature by pointing out the value and the uses of wool and by explaining the art of shearing to the spectators. Uniform, well-wooled market lambs were purchased at Wichita for this contest, and these lambs were resold as shorn lambs. The wool was sold through the Midwest Wool Marketing Cooperative of Kansas

¹ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 15:5, 1942.

City, and the proceeds went to the Fair. Four electric-powered shearing machines were furnished for the contest by the Chicago Flexible Shaft Company.

The Market Barrow Carcass Demonstration was held again, and a Lamb Carcass Demonstration was established for the first time; however, all breeds competed together. Lambs in two classes, those under ninety pounds and those over ninety pounds, were judged on foot and then taken to a local packing house for slaughter. The carcasses were placed in a refrigerated display case in the grandstand building and judged according to their commercial value as meat for human consumption.²

The farm equipment and machinery exhibition again outclassed the shows of previous years. Manufacturers and distributors of machinery valued the State Fair as a show and a sales location because of its tremendous drawing power. Actual operation of the equipment was again continued. The high school band program was very successful, and a total of fifty-five organizations attended from all parts of the State.

A society horse show, the first in many years, was attempted on Sunday, September 14. Many of the middlewest's finest stables were represented, and interest centered around the three and five gaited saddle classes. Business firms of Hutchinson and Dodge City and a breeder from Wichita supplied an array of trophies for the show. The newly organized Kansas Saddle Horse Association furnished a trophy for the Fine Harness Horse class and assisted

² Ibid., p. 6.

in the conduct of the show at no cost to the Fair. Tuesday was Master Farmers' and Master Farm Homemakers' Day, and on Wednesday all livestock owners and herdsmen were given a banquet by the Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce. Press Day was held on Friday, and editors from all over the State were guests of the Fair Management. A state spelling contest was conducted, and fifty-four counties were represented by the contestants.³

During the year a workshop and a storage building were constructed as federal projects, and both the grandstand and the Automobile Building were reroofed. Several of the dining halls on the Midway were given new roof coverings.

Despite adversities, the thirtieth annual State Fair was quite successful. Cloudy, rainy, and cold weather made conditions unfavorable throughout most of the week. The quality of the livestock departments was outstanding. Recognized authorities said that the beef cattle show was the best of anywhere in the United States. Dairy cattle entries were reduced from those of the preceding year because of the shortage of labor on the dairy farms. The usual large display of farm equipment and machinery was missing, and many exhibitors displayed only token exhibits. Six weeks before the opening of the Fair, the Board of State Fair Managers authorized the leasing of the Automobile Building to a building contractor for the manufacture of war materials. Consequently, many changes were made in providing for additional exhibition space.⁴

³ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 15:16, 1942.

The Swine Department was the only department to show any increase, and in that case there was an increase of from forty-one to forty-five exhibitors, although there were one-hundred and forty fewer animals than in 1941.

The outstanding classification in the Department of Domestic Science and Home Economics was the "Governor's Cookie Jar." Governor Payne Ratner was presented with the first prize jar of cookies during his visit on Governor's Day. There were five entries in this classification despite the rationing of sugar. Emphasis was placed on the use of sugar substitutes in the baking of cakes, cookies, and other delicacies. The Fair encouraged this program by making available recipes and information on the use of corn syrup, honey, and molasses to those who requested them. More than one-hundred persons took advantage of this service, and many won first's on their entries made from those recipes.⁵

Activities of the 4-H Club Department were near to normal. On the last day of Fair week, an auction was held of the baby beeves, fat barrows, and fat lambs in the 4-H Livestock Building, and 39 calves, 22 hogs, and 4 lambs were sold for \$6,165.

Booth space was given to the Business and Professional Women's Club for the purpose of selling war stamps and bonds, and space was given to the United States Navy Department for recruiting services. A salvage iron and rubber drive was conducted on Scrap Day, Tuesday. Visitors were admitted to the Fair at one of the automobile entrances by exchanging scrap metal for admission tickets--100 pounds of metal for 1 adult ticket and 50

⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

pounds of metal for 1 child's ticket. More than thirty-two tons of scrap metal were collected. The Horse Show consisted of three performances, and 49 exhibitors entered 80 horses in 162 events. The automobile and motorcycle racing programs were cancelled because of the ban on racing by the Office of Defense Transportation, effective July 31, 1942. These programs were replaced by harness and running races and the "Circus Olympia," but this source of revenue was reduced because of the change in entertainment. Navy Day on Friday was climaxed with the formal induction of all men who were recruited during Fair week; however, this ceremony was halted by a rainstorm. Only twenty-two high school bands attended the Fair in 1942, and only thirty counties were represented in the state spelling contest because of the reluctance of car owners to use their tires.⁶

The State Fair of 1943 was considered successful in spite of the unfavorable conditions. In August, 1943, a very serious epidemic of infantile paralysis swept the State. In Hutchinson alone there were more than forty cases and six deaths from the disease. This epidemic, plus two days of bad weather, curtailed the attendance and receipts of the Fair drastically.⁷ The Swine Department was the only department to show an increase of entries although the Sheep Show was exceptionally good with seventeen breeders showing one-hundred and three animals. This was an in-

⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

⁷ See Appendix, p. 97.

dication of the growing sheep industry in Kansas. Some increase was shown in the Agriculture exhibit, and there was an increase in the exhibitors in the Domestic Science Department. The latter was the result of the emphasis placed upon Victory Gardens during the war. Because of the polio epidemic, the State 4-H Club Encampment was cancelled; yet entries in this department were sent or brought by the young people who then returned to their homes. Some improvement was evidence in the farm machinery and industrial equipment as one manufacturer, through a district distributor, displayed a complete line of tractors and farm equipment. Many of the well-known manufacturers were not represented.

The Fat Lamb and Fat Barrow Carcass Demonstrations were conducted, but the carcasses were displayed at a local packing house since there was a shortage of a refrigerant gas. No horse show was attempted as there was no material for temporary stalls and because of the shortage of labor for construction. The high school bands were absent because of the polio epidemic.

In September of 1942, the Board of State Fair Managers made an agreement to lease the 4-H Club Encampment Building, the 4-H Livestock Building, and several smaller buildings to the United States Navy for housing and training air cadets while the United States Naval Air Station was being constructed south of Hutchinson. The Navy took over these buildings on October 2, 1942, and occupied them until June 30, 1943, when the group was moved to its new location. As a result, the program of training for the air cadets was advanced by six months, and the Navy officials

expressed their appreciation for the use of these facilities.⁸

The Fair contributed space for the display of several carloads of captured German and Japanese war equipment, and this display was combined with the sale of war bonds and stamps by the local bond committee. Space was given to the recruiting services of all of the branches of the Armed Forces which requested such space.

No building projects were accomplished this year because of the shortages of building materials. Some material for maintenance was available on the State's priority.

Except for rain on the last night, the weather for the State Fair of 1944 was ideal. New records were established for attendance and gross receipts. The Agriculture Building was again overcrowded. Many of the departments showed increases over the results of 1943. This was an indication that the facilities would be definitely inadequate after the war. There was a spectacular gain in the number of entries in the Swine Department, partly due to the new breed of "Hereford" hogs which was listed in the premium list. It was the first time for a full classification of this breed which was prompted by the record association's offer to hold its national show at the 1944 Kansas State Fair. The national association for this breed pledged \$1,000 toward the payment of a total prize offering of \$1,500. This show was highly successful and it attracted breeders from many states.⁹

⁸ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 16:8, 1944.

⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

There were encouraging signs at the Fair of a speedy return of farm machinery manufacturing concerns to the exhibition field after the war. Several firms, absent for two years, were back with limited displays. A company which manufactured wind electric plants set up a complete display of its equipment. The Hutchinson Naval Air Station Command was responsible for one of the largest and finest educational exhibits ever placed on the fairgrounds. Practically all of the first floor of the Automobile Building was devoted to this display which included all of the working parts of a giant four-engine Liberator Bomber. Parachute folding and rigging was demonstrated by Navy personnel, as were the link trainer and the automatic pilot. Bombs, from the five-hundred pound size to "block-busters" and side arms used by the Navy were displayed. This exhibition was combined with the WAVE recruiting program. A booth for the sale of war bonds was located in the same building. The remainder of the Automobile Building was used for displaying captured enemy equipment which was furnished by the Army Seventh Service Command at Omaha.¹⁰

High school bands, twenty in number and from within a shorter radius of Hutchinson, visited the Fair again. Governor Andrew Schoepel visited the Fair on Thursday and was presented with the "Governor's Cookie Jar" by Mrs. Frank M. Swirles of Hutchinson. The Old Mill Water Ride, the only amusement device owned by the Fair Management, proved to be very popular as 43,790 persons passed through the channel during the week. The assist-

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

ance of the Hutchinson Police Department, the Kansas Highway Patrol, and the Hutchinson Auxiliary Police, composed of voluntary business men, was required in handling the huge crowds during Fair week. Entertainment features were superior to recent years despite the loss of talent to the armed services and the USO Camp Show units.

The State Fairgrounds were rapidly becoming popular for pure-bred livestock shows and sales. After the 1944 Fair, there were eight such sales conducted on the fairgrounds before January of the following year. Facilities of the Livestock Judging Pavilion were completely remodeled after the 1944 Fair to include new equipment and such features as showers and a sales lunch room. A sand-pumping project, which was begun before the Fair, produced excellent sand from the bed of a lake west of the fairgrounds for the purpose of surfacing the roads on the grounds.

Very little had been done by the State Fair to promote the vital rural youth program represented by the Future Farmers of America movement, which was under the direct supervision of the State Vocational Education Department. Consequently, the Board of State Fair Managers requested funds of the legislature for the purpose of establishing an FFA classification and for the payment of its premiums.¹¹

At the Fair of 1945 another all-time record was established in spite of poor weather. The exhibits were assembled on an "overnight" notice without the aid of a premium-list booklet.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 28.

On June 1, 1945, the Director of the Office of Defense Transportation and Director of the War Committee on Conventions, Col. J. Monroe Johnson, issued an order directing that all state and regional fairs and conventions which involved the use of inter-city transportation were to be cancelled.¹² Prior to the publication of this notice the powerful horse and dog racing interests had succeeded in having the ban lifted from those types of racing, and on June 2 several race horses were loaded into a "critical" box car on the Santa Fe switch track on the fairgrounds for a New York destination at which a race meeting had been advertised. Numerous protests were sent to Washington by fair officials, livestock breeders, and others who were interested in the furtherance of agricultural education. It was believed that the fairs were being singled out for discrimination since horse and dog racing did not produce more food or more articles for the war effort. They were not classed as morale builders because racing was one of the largest contributing factors to absenteeism in war industries. It was pointed out that fairs had and would continue to contribute to the war effort by encouraging better production methods which, in turn, would increase the over-all food production. In addition, the fairs had cooperated to a great extent in the war bond sales campaign and had provided recruiting stations for almost every branch of the service.

After repeated efforts on the part of individuals and groups interested in fairs to have the directive rescinded or modified,

¹² B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 17:5, 1946.

the larger fairs began, one by one, to cancel their 1945 Fairs. On July 11, 1945, the executive committee of the Board of State Fair Managers authorized the announcement of the cancellation of the Kansas State Fair for 1945. Preparation for the Fair had continued until this final announcement. After the announcement of the Japanese surrender, August 14, 1945, the Executive Committee met and voted unanimously to proceed with plans for holding the Fair on the previously announced dates. With the lack of a premium list, the cancellation of entertainment contracts, and the termination of all commitments on judges, superintendents, and clerical help, the task of preparing for the Fair in thirty days seemed impossible. Through the marvelous cooperation and active assistance of individuals, officials of Kansas State College, county agents, the College extension staff, newspapers, radio stations, and many others, the task was accomplished and resulted in a Fair which was equal to many pre-war fairs in many respects. The end of the long war and the lifting of the travel restrictions were important factors for the success of the Fair.¹³

The Dairy Cattle division was the only major department to show an appreciable gain. There was a comparatively poor showing of beef cattle because many exhibitors had discontinued feeding and fitting their animals after the "no fair" order of June. Therefore, there was not enough time for the cattle to be properly fitted. No 4-H Club Encampment was held because of the lack of time for preparation of plans, but 1,451 club members brought

¹³ ibid., p. 7.

or sent 2,539 entries for that department. Except for the social life of the Encampment, many of the 4-H Club activities were carried on as usual.

The department for the Work of the Blind was completely cancelled as there was insufficient time for the blind to prepare their entries. This department was the only one in which articles were exhibited for prize money and were then sold to the visitors at the Fair. The farm and industrial machinery show was exceptional, and an almost unbelievable amount of machinery of all types was on display, including the exhibits of several specialty manufacturers. Many of these were exhibited by Kansas manufacturers, which was an indication that Kansas could develop into a leading industrial state. The commercial exhibit space of the grandstand was completely taken. Business men were aware that their advertising dollar bought more at the State Fair than by any other medium of advertising used.¹⁴

The Concessions Department had a difficult time in getting ready for the Fair, but after long hours of work a large percentage of the cancelled contracts were renewed. The high school band program was conducted on a larger scale than during the war, and twenty-eight bands attended the Fair. For the first time in the history of the Fair, no horse racing was presented on the program.

The Kansas State Fair of 1946, the greatest ever held, broke the all-time attendance record and set a new high mark for gross

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

receipts. The Dairy Cattle Department had six-hundred and twenty-two animals which were shown by one-hundred and seventy-three exhibitors. Some of the finest herds in the United States were represented in the livestock departments, and the judges had to work hard and late to complete their tasks. The Jersey breed ranked first in numbers shown with one-hundred and thirty-one animals and forty-four exhibitors, and the showing of one-hundred and nine Ayrshires was topped in that breed only by the great Dairy Cattle Congress at Waterloo, Iowa. A need for more premium money was stressed by the Fair Management because Kansas could become a great dairy and beef cattle state because of its good soil, climate, and ability to raise abundantly the proper feed crops. The State Fair was one of the principal reasons for the remarkable growth of the beef and dairy industries during the preceding years.

The 4-H livestock exhibits exceeded all previous numbers, and almost every other department showed a decided increase. There was no poultry show because of the ban on the exhibition of live poultry. This was due to the prevalence of the New Castle disease, and this ban affected all feathered fowl so no pigeon show was held either. The dry growing season during the summer and an acute grain shortage prevented more of an increase in some of the livestock departments. A lack of barn accommodations affected the Horse and Mule Department. The corn and sorghum shows in the Farm Crops division were outstanding, considering the drought which had affected nearly every section of the State. The F.F.A. and Vocational Agriculture Department was in-

cluded for the first time this year, and it made a very creditable showing.¹⁵

Plans for the new horse and cattle barns, drawn by the State Architect in the spring of 1946, with an application for authority to start construction, were submitted to the state office of the Civilian Production Administration, but this application was denied, and another application for such authority was sent to the same office after the Fair of 1946.

In the commercial exhibit section, farm and industrial machinery displays occupied a great amount of attention. Although parking lots were converted into machinery lots, some exhibitors were unable to obtain space for their exhibits. Electrical appliances were in evidence again this year and were grouped together in the grandstand as the "Household Furnishings Show." The Concessions Department established another record with an increase in receipts of approximately \$20,000 over those of 1945. The percentages from the carnival shows and rides and the receipts from the Old Mill Water Ride were classified under concessions.¹⁶

An innovation in the exhibits was the splendid display prepared by the Kansas Industrial Development Commission which was devoted exclusively to the exhibition of Kansas manufactured products. Approximately forty manufacturers participated in this display which was so successful that the Commission filed a for-

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

mal request for the use of the entire ground floor of the exhibition building for 1947.

Assisted by ideal weather conditions, the State Fair of 1947 set records for total attendance and gross receipts. The attendance was estimated at 350,000 people. A total of fifty-six high school bands visited the Fair between Monday and Friday.

It was necessary to use tents again to shelter livestock in both the open classifications and in the 4-H Club Department. The second application to the Civilian Production Administration for authority to build additional livestock barns had been denied, and a third application was filed in January, 1947. This application was approved in April, which was too late for the barns to be completed for the Fair of that year.¹⁷

Quality was the outstanding feature of the livestock departments which reflected the rapid advancement in the field of purebred livestock. In the Dairy division there were exhibited 126 Ayrshires, 108 Jerseys, 100 Milking Shorthorns, 87 Holsteins, 79 Brown Swiss, and 60 Guernseys, and in the Beef division there were 157 Herefords, 52 Aberdeen Angus, and 48 Shorthorn shown. The Swine Department had the largest increase with 466 as for 439 entered in 1946. The outstanding feature of the 1947 Fair was probably the large increase in the number of 4-H Club exhibitors and in the number of individual exhibits entered by them. Facilities for displaying these entries were inadequate, but remodeling of the 4-H Exhibit Building in 1947 made it possible for the

¹⁷ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 18:5, 1948.

officials to handle the situation. An Encampment was held again, and a governing body was organized with officials who, with the advice of the Club leaders, established rules and regulations for the conduct of the Encampment.

A distinct innovation was created with an independent Midway, consisting of rides, shows, and concessions, which replaced the usual railroad carnivals that had appeared for many years. An organized carnival had signed a contract in December, 1946, to appear at the 1947 Fair; however, this company reneged on its contract, and the Fair Management found it necessary to contact independent ride, show, and concession operators for the Fair. The result was a Midway for which the Management needed to make no apologies. This repudiation of the contract by the carnival company proved to be a favorable action because of the elimination of the gambling concession games. It had been virtually impossible to enforce the strict no-gambling clause in every carnival contract. Through the action of the Board of Appeals of the International Association of Fairs and Expositions, of which the Kansas State Fair was a member, damages were paid by the above-mentioned carnival company for its violation of the contract with the State Fair.¹⁸

The Automobile Building was remodeled during 1947 and was renamed the "Industrial Building" for the exhibition of manufactured products of Kansas. Approximately fifty manufacturers displayed pieces of merchandise and equipment. The Agriculture Pro-

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

duct exhibits of small grains, fruits, corn, vegetables, sorghums, and hay were extremely attractive, and the County Collective and County Project Booth displays were outstanding. In the Agriculture Building there were many samples of wheat on display. This was made possible through the efforts of the State 4-H Wheat Festival Committee. County wheat festivals were required by the Committee to enter their prize-winning bushel samples in the State Fair open competition classes. In the departments of Clothing and Textiles, Domestic Science, Fine Arts, and Floriculture, the numbers of exhibitors and entries were increased over those of 1946. The Floriculture Department had been moved from the Agriculture Building to the lower floor of the grandstand building. It was apparent from these exhibits that Kansas women were still interested in producing their own handiwork. Farm and industrial machinery exhibits were exceptionally large and interesting.

The entertainment features were of the usual high caliber, including six night shows, four afternoons of auto racing, one evening and afternoon of auto and motorcycle thrill shows, and one afternoon of motorcycle races. A men's chorus and a barber-shop quartet provided additional entertainment on Tuesday, and on Friday night a coronation ceremony was held for the State Wheat King and the State Wheat Queen of Kansas. The Concession Department's sales were the largest on record, and there was a definite lack of space for many displays. A DDT spraying program, under the supervision of the State Livestock Sanitary Commissioner's office at Topeka, had been very successful in the riddance of

flies and insects during the week of the Fair.¹⁹

The 1948 State Fair, September 19 to 24, shattered many records. There was an estimated total of 375,000 people in attendance, and on one day there was an attendance of approximately 80,000. Three new fire-proof livestock barns, although not entirely completed, were available for the sheltering of the dairy cattle. In the 4-H Club Department there were 3,203 exhibitors, an increase of 836 over the total for 1947, and 5,303 individual exhibits. The 4-H Club Livestock Building was overcrowded with baby bees, dairy and beef heifers, swine, sheep, and poultry. An auction sale for these animals brought a high average price for all offerings. A new feature begun was the State 4-H Poultry Judging Contest which was the first one for the State Fair. Although this contest created much interest, it did not carry the glamour which was attached to beef and dairy production. The 4-H Club Encampment was again a highlight of the Fair, but accommodations were actually available for about one-half of those who were eligible to attend.

Another improvement project was the complete remodeling of the Agriculture Building to provide a new and modern interior arrangement. The corn and sorghum exhibits were of the finest quality due to the perfect weather conditions during the year. Wheat exhibits were plentiful but were below par because of the wet harvest. The County Collective Booth exhibits were very attractive.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

A better arrangement of the groupings in the livestock departments was possible because of the additional barns, and no tents were used for stabling cattle in the open competition classes.²⁰

For the first time in nearly eighteen years, a complete classification was provided in the premium list for Red Poll Cattle, generally classified as a dual purpose breed. Forty-one of these animals were shown by twelve exhibitors. With the agreement of the Kansas Red Poll Association, these animals were judged as a beef breed along with the standard beef breeds, since Milking Shorthorns had been classified as a dairy breed.²¹

Lack of interest of horse and mule breeders had been shown by the diminishing list of entries for the preceding ten years, and the Board eliminated this classification from the premium list for 1948 and substituted in its place a complete class for American Quarter Horses, a breed specially adapted for use in handling cattle on the ranges and on smaller farms. However, there was a disappointing showing in this class as only twenty-seven animals were exhibited by ten exhibitors, but the officials of the organized breed association promised better things for the Fair of 1949.²²

In the Swine Department exhibitors, numbering eighty-four, showed 611 head of hogs of which there were 102 Spotted Poland Chinas, 94 Hampshires, 95 Ohio Improved Chester Whites, 87 Poland Chinas, 76 Berkshires, and 74 Durocs.

²⁰ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 18:19, 1948.

²¹ Loc. Cit.

²² Loc. Cit.

Windstorms in June and July caused extensive damage to the fairgrounds and resulted in the payment of more than \$12,000 for repairs. This amount was taken from funds which were intended for other purposes since no insurance was carried on the State property.

A total of seventy-two high school bands participated in the band program during Fair week, and the payment of fifty cents per band member, as before, was made to these bands by the sponsors, the State Fair and the Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce. An attendance by such a large number of bands was an indication that the communities concerned were sufficiently interested in this program to finance the other expenses of the bands, which undoubtedly remained.

The second year for the Independent Midway, as compared with the railroad carnival companies, proved the soundness of the idea, and the Board of Managers was lauded through the radio, the press, and by spoken word for keeping its word that gambling on the fairgrounds would no longer be tolerated. Credit for pioneering the Independent Midway in the "Fair World" was given to the Kansas State Fair. Fair officials from all over the nation came to observe the Fairs of 1947 and of 1948 in anticipation of adopting the Independent Midway at their fairs in 1949.²³

For the second year a record for acreage occupied by farm and industrial machinery exhibits was established. Sales of space by the Concessions Department for exhibition purposes were

²³ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 18:21, 1948.

increased over those of 1947 by nearly thirty percent. The Board of State Fair Managers, in anticipation of the future expansion of the Fair facilities, employed the services of the best expert in this field, Mr. R. J. Pearse, Fairgrounds Designer and Consultant of Raleigh, North Carolina. Mr. Pearse made three visits to the fairgrounds. His first visit was in February, 1948, at which time he consulted with the Executive Committee as to the location of new cattle barns, and the second visit was in July, 1948, for considering the proposed location of new buildings, the improvement of parking facilities, the relocation of entrances, and other problems. Mr. Pearse's final visit was for two days during the 1948 Fair when he studied traffic problems, crowd tendencies, entrance gates, and checked on building locations best adapted for intended purposes. About three weeks after the Fair, Mr. Pearse sent a master plan for the future expansion of the State Fair to the Executive Committee to be studied and used for future recommendations to the legislature for funds. This was the first long-range plan ever conceived and adopted by the Fair Management in the history of the Fair, and it was considered to be a valuable guide for the future expansion of the State Fair.²⁴

Entertainment features of the 1948 Fair included the Midway, night shows, special parades of livestock, high school bands, barbershop quartets, and fireworks spectacles. There were four afternoons of auto races, one afternoon of Hot Rod Auto races, and one afternoon of auto thrills. Television was brought to the

²⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

Fair for the first time, through the courtesy and cooperation of radio station KMBC of Kansas City, Missouri, and its affiliate station, KFRM of Concordia, Kansas. This feature was available to the public free of charge. On Thursday, Governor Frank Carlson made his visit to the Fair and was awarded the "Governor's Cookie Jar" by the maker of the first prize jar of cookies. Mr. Randolph Carpenter, candidate for governor of Kansas, was the guest of the Fair Management on Friday. This was the final day of the 1948 State Fair, the Fair which eclipsed any of its predecessors by far.

Since its establishment in 1913, the Kansas State Fair has become a large institution. The following table indicates the financial valuation of that institution in 1945:²⁵

Condensed Statement of the Kansas State Fair, 1913-1945

Total legislative appropriation, including 1945...	\$1,010,499.00
191 acres of land, buildings, and equipment....	<u>981,009.50</u>
Excess of appropriation over plant valuation.....	49,489.50
* * * * *	
General premiums paid to exhibitors.....	801,748.71
Additional premiums for 4-H Club work.....	<u>110,405.44</u>
Total premiums paid.....	912,154.15

This statement, however, does not present the actual value of the State Fair. It is difficult to determine in detail the benefits

²⁵ B.S.F.M., Biennial Report, 16:29, 1944.

derived by everyone of the thousands who attend the Fair. A fair inspires people to high ideals. Acting thus on the populace, the good it does cannot be told with any degree of accuracy.

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APPENDIX

ENTRIES AND PRIZE LIST OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS
OF THE STATE FAIR

<u>Departments</u>	<u>1913</u>	<u>1914</u>
A. Cattle	470	387
B. Horses		
Light Horses, including Horse Show	176	283
Draft Horses, including Mules & Jacks	162	147
C. Sheep	296	39
D. Swine	585	560
E. Poultry	1,810	921
F. Merchants & Manufacturers Products	45	51
G. & H. Farm Products & Horticulture	583	1,033
I. Apiary	42	60
K. Kitchen & Dairy	452	396
L. Jellies & Preserves	482	923
M. Fine Arts	620	485
N. Textile Fabrics	1,122	1,111
O. Plants & Flowers	55	71
P. Educational (Boys' Corn Contest)	117	140
Q. Better Babies	...	248
Speed	<u>149</u>	<u>138</u>
Totals:	7,166	6,993

STATEMENTS OF PRIZE MONEY AWARDED

A Statement of Prize Money for 1930

<u>Departments</u>	<u>Amount of Prize Money</u>
A. Beef Cattle	\$ 5,107.00
A. Dairy Cattle	4,652.00
A. Div. 3 Dairy Products	323.00
B. Horses	4,132.00
C. Sheep	1,591.50
D. Swine	4,729.00
E. Poultry	2,222.00
G. Agriculture	3,897.19
G. Div. 3 Horticulture	948.25
G. Div. 5 Apiary	497.00
H. Domestic Science & Home Economics	892.00
I. Better Babies	142.00
K. Fine Arts	516.00
L. Div. 2 Boy Scouts	85.00
M. Clothing & Textiles	482.00
N. Floriculture	252.00
O. Pet Stock	172.65
P. Dog Show	91.00
Q. Boys' & Girls' Club Work	5,110.75
R. Work of the Blind	47.50
Total:	<u>\$35,889.84</u>

A Statement of Prize Money for 1948

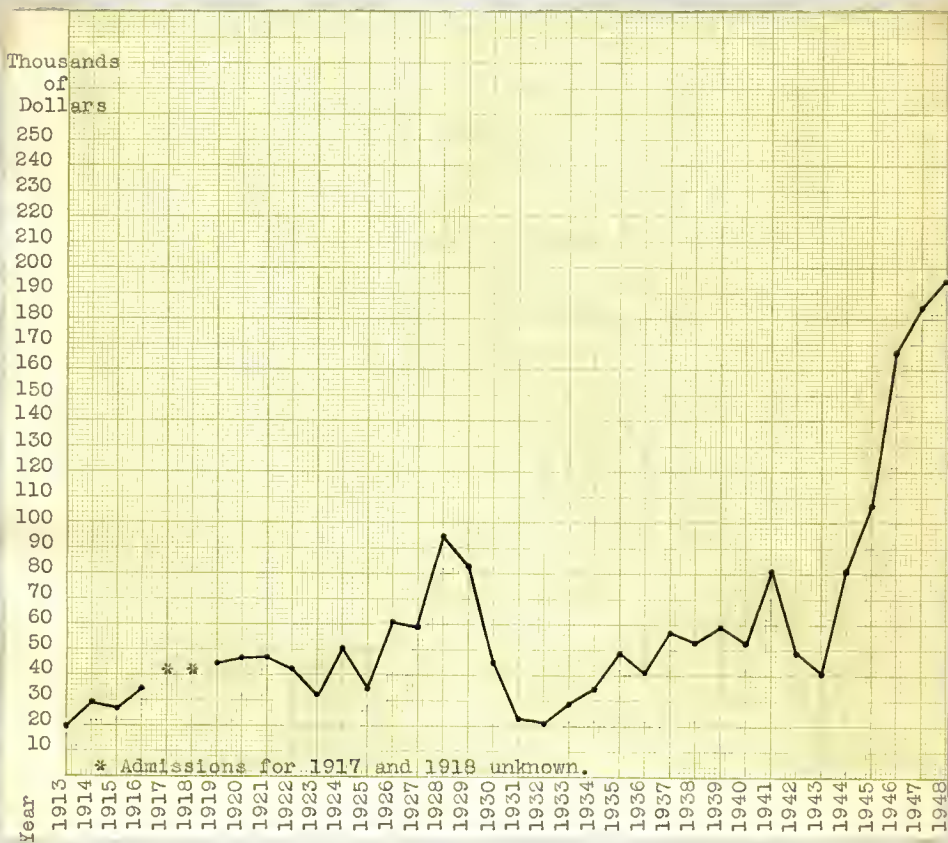
<u>Departments</u>	<u>Amount of Prize Money</u>
A. Cattle	\$16,391.83
A. Dairy Products	162.00
B. Horses	686.00
C. Sheep	1,205.30
C. Wool	184.00
D. Swine	4,073.20
E. Poultry	954.00
F. Pet Stock and Dog Show	336.12
G. Div. I Horticulture	1,048.00
G. Div. II Farm Crops	894.25
G. Div. III Bees and Honey	248.00
G. Div. IV Collective and County Project	2,674.65
H. Domestic Science	531.25
K. Fine Arts	316.75
L. Clothing & Textiles	362.75
M. Floriculture	264.50
O. Boys' & Girls' Club Work	6,075.30
P. Vocational Agriculture	576.25
R. Work of the Blind	60.00
S. Boy Scouts	98.75
T. Girl Scouts	83.50
Total:	<u>\$37,226.90</u>

ADMISSIONS FOR THE STATE FAIR, 1913-1948

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1913	\$ 19,789.65
1914	29,784.30
1915	26,755.25
1916	34,220.50
1917	*.....
1918	*.....
1919	44,472.55
1920	46,991.50
1921	47,715.10
1922	42,973.87
1923	32,099.12
1924	50,485.00
1925	34,826.08
1926	61,944.25
1927	58,838.15
1928	95,506.56
1929	83,588.40
1930	45,538.91
1931	22,879.49
1932	21,144.90
1933	29,085.65
1934	34,387.43
1935	48,539.17
1936	41,700.48
1937	56,743.83
1938	53,516.34
1939	59,119.22
1940	53,189.82
1941	80,464.75
1942	48,522.32
1943	40,761.16
1944	81,914.50
1945	106,461.58
1946	167,026.37
1947	184,955.20
1948	194,480.18

*Admissions for 1917 and 1918 unknown.

A Graph Showing the Trend of State Fair Admissions, 1913-1948



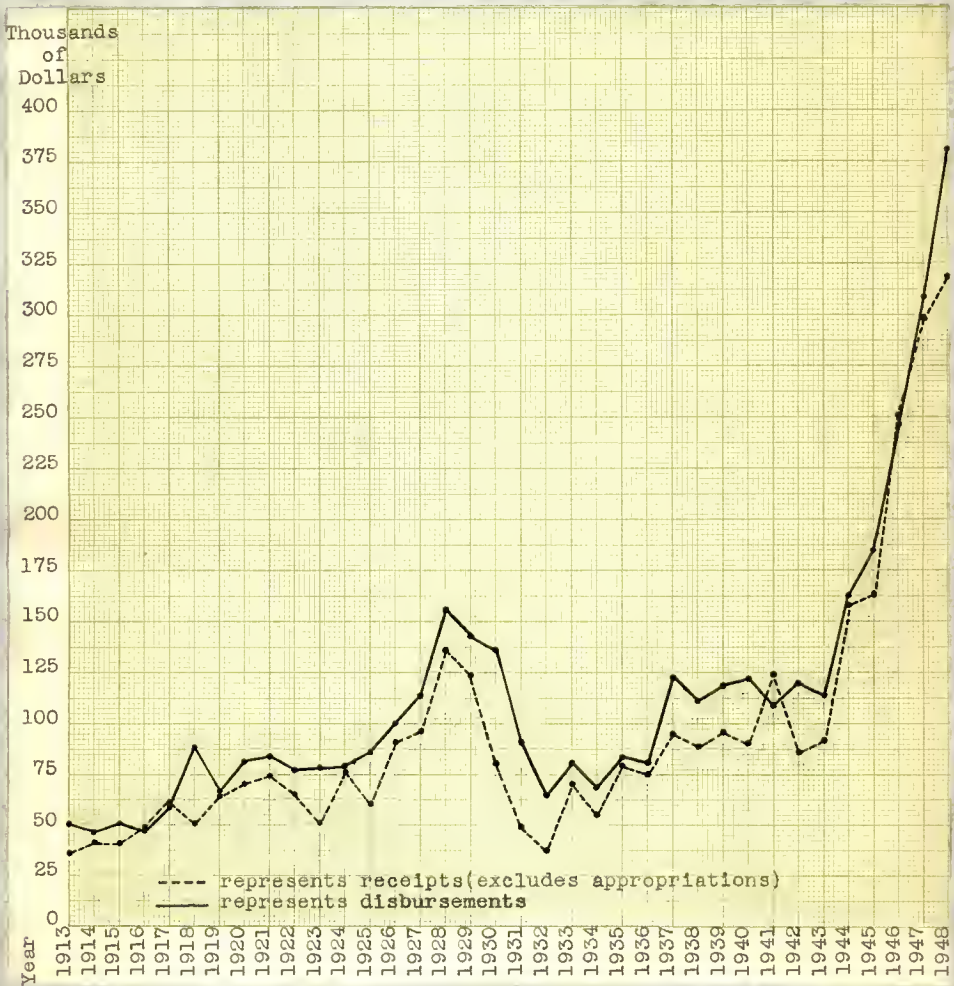
NET RECEIPTS OF THE STATE FAIR, 1913-1948
(Excluding Legislative Appropriations)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1913	\$ 36,843.26
1914	41,475.79
1915	40,758.56
1916	48,113.29
1917	61,395.93
1918	50,460.61
1919	64,719.35
1920	70,409.85
1921	74,764.24
1922	65,517.11
1923	50,825.51
1924	76,417.20
1925	60,207.82
1926	91,816.13
1927	98,048.86
1928	136,635.52
1929	124,038.28
1930	81,381.82
1931	49,340.10
1932	37,498.19
1933	70,144.69
1934	55,151.46
1935	79,241.79
1936	75,118.56
1937	95,671.77
1938	89,381.97
1939	95,808.59
1940	90,233.63
1941	124,845.37
1942	86,831.85
1943	92,558.27
1944	158,392.56
1945	168,421.39
1946	251,591.71
1947	298,317.55
1948	319,444.99

DISBURSEMENTS OF THE STATE FAIR, 1913-1948

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1913	\$ 50,349.81
1914	46,017.90
1915	50,095.27
1916	47,464.38
1917	59,458.42
1918	88,127.98
1919	67,051.56
1920	82,185.57
1921	84,747.43
1922	77,412.29
1923	78,127.67
1924	79,136.02
1925	86,323.90
1926	100,282.63
1927	114,915.04
1928	156,874.75
1929	142,894.38
1930	136,688.05
1931	91,185.12
1932	65,770.05
1933	81,487.54
1934	69,287.41
1935	83,050.04
1936	81,934.18
1937	122,509.77
1938	111,854.61
1939	118,267.22
1940	122,230.51
1941	109,418.63
1942	120,984.90
1943	114,154.40
1944	162,925.13
1945	185,946.27
1946	246,625.96
1947	309,362.47
1948	381,433.34

A Graph Showing the Relationship of Net Receipts
and Disbursements of State Fair



LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE STATE FAIR, 1913-1948

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1913	\$
1914	.....
1915	20,000
1916	6,000
1917	2,000
1918	32,000
1919	8,472
1920	61,250
1921	27,500
1922	17,500
1923	18,240
1924	43,000
1925	23,500
1926	33,500
1927	23,500
1928	113,075
1929	23,500
1930	89,500
1931	73,500
1932	23,500
1933	47,684
1934	17,500
1935	87,500
1936	22,000
1937	17,000
1938	18,500
1939	18,500
1940	26,500
1941	18,500
1942	21,000
1943	21,000
1944	21,000
1945	21,000
1946	24,500
1947	124,500
1948	31,500

KANSAS SESSION LAWS OF 1913

Chapter 293

PROVIDING FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF AN ANNUAL STATE FAIR

House Bill No. 409

An Act authorizing the State Board of Agriculture to hold an annual state fair at Hutchinson, Kansas; providing for the management and control thereof, and authorizing certain counties to participate therein.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

SECTION 1. That a state fair to be held annually in the city of Hutchinson, Kansas, at such time as shall be fixed by the board of state fair managers, is hereby created, as hereinafter provided for.

SEC. 2. When the county of Reno, through its board of county commissioners, or other parties for it, shall convey to the state of Kansas the tract of land and all the improvements thereon now used for fair purposes in said county for the uses and upon the conditions hereinafter set forth, together with an abstract of title showing a good and sufficient title thereto, said title to be first approved by the attorney general of the state of Kansas, the state of Kansas shall, by and through its board of state fair managers, hereinafter created, accept said tract as a state fair ground upon which shall be held annually a state fair; provided, said county commissioners shall not use any public money to purchase said tract until duly authorized by a majority vote of the people of said county voting at any election called

for that purpose. Said tract of land shall be held by the state of Kansas exclusively as a state fair ground and for such other uses as the board of state fair managers shall direct, and if at any time the state of Kansas shall fail to hold thereon a state fair in any one year then the county of Reno or any association in that county organized for the purpose of holding a fair, shall be permitted to use said grounds and buildings, free of charge, for the purpose of holding a state fair that year.

SEC. 3. The State Board of Agriculture immediately upon the taking effect of this act, and the conveyance of the state of Kansas of said tract, and upon call of the president thereof, shall hold a special meeting at which shall be elected four persons from the members and officers of said State Board of Agriculture who shall, together with the secretary of the State Horticultural Society, constitute a board of state fair managers, with such powers and duties as are herein prescribed; two of said members shall be elected and hold office until the next annual meeting of the said State Board of Agriculture in 1914 and until their successors are elected and qualified; two of said members shall be elected and hold office until the regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture in 1915, and until their successors are elected and qualified. At the regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture in 1914 two members of said board of state fair managers shall be elected for two years and every two years thereafter. At the regular annual meeting of the State Board of Agriculture in 1915 two members of the said board of state fair managers shall be elected and every two years thereafter.

SEC. 4. Said board of state fair managers shall immediately upon their election organize by the election for their own number of a president, who shall hold office until the election of the board of state fair managers in 1914 and until his successor is elected and qualified. Said president shall thereafter be elected biennially. Said board of state fair managers shall select and purchase a seal to authenticate all their acts and proceedings. Said board shall have power to meet for the transaction of business under the call of the president as often as shall, in its judgment, be necessary; to have full control and regulation of the times and manner of holding said state fair; the appointment and compensation and duties of all necessary subordinate officers, including secretary and treasurer, the offering of premiums, necessary printing for and advertising of said state fair, and all other matters in connection with the holding of said state fair.

SEC. 5. The members of the said board of state fair managers shall receive for their compensation the sum of five dollars per day for each day necessarily expended in their duties and their actual traveling expenses.

SEC. 6. The said board of state fair managers shall have power to make all needful rules and regulations regarding the holding of said state fair and the control and government thereof, which rules and regulations shall be published for the benefit of the public.

SEC. 7. A majority of said board of state fair managers shall constitute a quorum to transact business.

SEC. 8. For the purpose of aiding a more complete exhibition of the resources of the state at the said fair the board of county commissioners of each county is hereby authorized to expend annually not to exceed the sum of five hundred dollars out of the general revenue fund of such county for the purpose of making an exhibit of the agricultural and other resources of said county at said state fair.

SEC. 9. Any county with a population in excess of thirty-five thousand may erect upon said state fair grounds a separate building for the exhibition at said fair of the agricultural and other resources of said county, which building shall be maintained and kept in repair at state expense. All costs of making exhibitions therein to be paid by the county owning the building; provided, that before any such building shall be erected it shall be authorized by a vote of the people of said county at either a general or special election; said building to be paid for either by a special tax or by an issue of bonds as the board of county commissioners of such county may suggest and the people at such election approve.

SEC. 10. All money received for the sale of tickets, privileges, or from any other source through the operation of said state fair or from any other use of said grounds authorized by the said Board of State Fair Managers shall be paid to and held by the treasurer of the said board. Out of such sums shall be paid all the running expenses of conducting the said state fair, including all labor employed and other expenses in connection therewith, except as otherwise provided for in this act. Any

sums in excess of such payments shall be held by the said treasurer to be expended under the direction of said Board of State Fair Managers for the extension and upbuilding of the state fair. To provide for the safekeeping of said money the treasurer of said Board of State Fair Managers shall give a bond in such sum and with such security as the said Board of State Fair Managers shall require.

SEC. 11. The said Board of State Fair Managers shall on or before the thirty-first day of December in each even numbered year make a report, in writing, to the governor of the state, which report shall contain a full statement of all the acts and proceedings of the said board and a summarized account of the receipts and expenditures of said board, which report shall be by the governor transmitted to the Legislature at its next regular session.

SEC. 12. The board of county commissioners of Reno county, Kansas, the state of Kansas through the governor thereof, and the State Board of Agriculture, are hereby expressly authorized to do and perform all of the acts herein required and directed, upon the conditions and requirements hereinbefore provided.

SEC. 13. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the official state-paper.

Approved March 1, 1913.

Published in official state-paper March 6, 1913.