

Fair

pulls or demolition derbies, but cars jammed Ohio 104 from Infirmity Lane to the federal reformatory — now Chillicothe Correctional Institute.

At the peak of the traffic jam, a section of cars covering a mile or more was admitted to the grounds without admission to ease the situation, but those just behind them still waited an hour to reach the parking lots.

The food stands did such a "hand-office business" that they completely sold out of sandwiches and refreshments, according to the Gazette.

The Dry Run Methodist Church operated one of the first sit-down booths with a tent purchased in 1945 for \$100. The benches and stools were set inside the tent just far enough for protection from the rain — if the rain came straight down, Eunice Waters remembers.

The tent with its dirt floor covered with sawdust or wood shavings was used until 1960, when the church built a booth to Ross County Health Department regulations with vents, screens and a cement floor.

The booth was sold to the Rotary Club for \$5,000 in 1981 when the church had too much trouble finding workers. Unlike 1945, most of the young women worked away from home and couldn't be at the fair every day.

But as long as there's a fair, there will be work to be done there every day. Virginia Kuhns moved to Chillicothe with her husband and three children in 1949 and attended her first fair that August.

Waking through an art building, she offered to help an overworked woman for a while. She ended up working every day of the fair that year and was named superintendent of adult paintings the following year — a post she held until 1965.

Superintendent was a big name for a position that included lots of little jobs — washing and ironing the building's curtains, sweeping cobwebs, hanging pictures and bringing fans and fly swatters from home.

Folks in the 1940s decided any monotonous jobs involved in putting on a fair were worth the effort.

Where else in Ross County could one see a death-defying hangman's loop from a 60-foot pole, like the

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Marking 50

These organizations have participated in the Ross County Fair all 50 years of its existence:

- Pomona Grange
- Adelphi Community Band
- Boy Scouts
- Girl Scouts
- Ross County Schools
- Kwanza Steer Club
- Farm Bureau
- We Feed 'Em Well 4-H Club
- Hallsville Friendly Neighbors 4-H Club
- Concord Blue Ribbon 4-H Club
- Ross County Cooperative Extension Service
- Chillicothe Gazette

Great Gregoresko's in his show on the last day of the 1945 fair?

Where else in Ross County would a steer sold for slaughter bring 28 cents a pound — 8 cents a pound over the top price at the Chicago stockyards? Roger Free of Bainbridge received about \$200 for his top-selling steer — about \$80 above market price.

Where else in Ross County could one see so many parades? There were livestock parades of 4-H animals, equipment parades by the farm implement dealers, even hat parades by the federated garden club that convinced about 50 women to compete in categories such as most beautiful and most comical.

And how many would have bet that this fair — unlike all the others in the past 120 years — would last.

That it would last until 1994, when the only remaining building from the old youth camp would house the antiques and the fair board would spend \$225,000 on a show arena that seats 800 people.

That it would last until a day when 684 families would spend a whole week camping at the fair and the fair board would still have a waiting list of people who want a camping spot.

That it would last until no one thought twice about buying a time capsule of mementos from the 1994 fair to be dug up in another 50 years — at the fair of 2044.



The honey display from 1945.

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