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THE EARLY HISTORY OF IOWA.

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(Continued from page 309.)

THE STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

The State Agricultural Society of the State of Iowa has been recognized by the Legislature as a State institution; and the standing, which it has attained, renders it a matter of interest to know its origin and early history.

The first paper ever published in Iowa, entirely devoted to agricultural interests, was the *Iowa Farmer and Horticulturist*, a monthly periodical, published at Burlington, by Morgan, McKinney & Co., and edited by James W. Grimes and J. F. Tallant.

This paper was published in book form, of sixteen pages to each number, and was conducted by the editors with much ability.

The first number of this paper was published in May, 1853.

One of the leading objects of the editors seemed to be to excite an emulation in the organizing of Agricultural Societies.

At this time there had been but very little interest taken in agricultural exhibitions.

A few counties had organized societies, and made an attempt to hold fairs.

In February, 1851, the Legislature passed a law, by which

every County Agricultural Society in the State was authorized to draw from the State Treasury a sum equal to the amount raised by the society; provided such sum did not exceed fifty dollars a year.

This act elicited some interest, and a few counties availed themselves of the benefit of the law; but by an act passed in January, 1853, this law was amended, so that each county could draw from the State Treasury two hundred dollars.

This law gave a new impetus to agricultural interests; and most of the counties in the State, which had not done it before, immediately proceeded to organize, and put into successful operation Agricultural Societies.

Among the counties which first commenced to hold these exhibitions was Jefferson county; and by the energy of her citizens their efforts in this direction had attracted some attention abroad.

In the first number of the *Iowa Farmer and Horticulturist*, the editors of that paper, in speaking of Agricultural Societies, said: "In a year or two we hope to see an Agricultural Fair at some central point like Fairfield for the whole of Southern Iowa."

This notice seemed to meet with favor, and in the next number they proposed "that there be a meeting at Fairfield, Jefferson county, of all who felt interested in the subject, for the purpose of forming an Agricultural Society, and that this meeting be held at the time of the next county fair."

No one seemed to take any particular interest in this matter, and there was no meeting held as proposed.

But the last business done at the county fair of Jefferson county in 1853, on "motion of C. W. Stagle, it was resolved; that the officers of the society be instructed to take immediate steps to effect the organization of a State Agricultural Society, and use their influence to have said society hold its first exhibition at Fairfield."

At a meeting of the Directors of the Society on the 12th of November, 1853, the first business done "on motion of C.

✓Negus, it was resolved;—that the President, Vice-President and Trustees be constituted a committee, to act immediately in accordance with a resolution passed at the last meeting of the Society, in relation to the organization of a State Agricultural Society.”

In pursuance with this resolution P. L. ✓Huyett, President; C. B. ✓Baldwin, Vice-President, and J. M. ✓Shaffer, Secretary, on the 21st of November, 1853, published a card to the different Agricultural Societies of the State of Iowa, for the purpose of organizing a State Agricultural Society, respectfully inviting the societies “to be represented by delegates, nine in number, to meet in Fairfield on the 28th of the following December.”

The time for the meeting arrived; it was a pleasant winter day, but only Henry, Jefferson, Lee, Van Buren, and Wapello counties were represented, and not a full delegation from any county except Jefferson.

The meeting was held in the court house, and to a small extent was a pomaceous exhibition, for J. W. ✓Fraizer brought with him a large variety of apples, which he first exhibited for inspection, and then distributed for trial as to their quality among the members of the convention.

Besides the counties represented communications were read from Scott, Muscatine and Des Moines counties.

The meeting was organized by electing D. P. ✓Inskeep, of Wapello county, as President, and David ✓Sheward, of Jefferson county, as Secretary.

Sheward at that time was editor and proprietor of a newspaper establishment in ✓Fairfield, who had recently come to the State; but afterwards became extensively known among the craftsmen of printers.

A committee was appointed to draft a Constitution and By-Laws, suitable for the organization of a State Agricultural Society, consisting of Josiah ✓Hinkle, of Lee; Timothy ✓Day, of Van Buren; P. L. Huyett, of Jefferson; Thomas Sibeter, and

J. W. Frazier, of Henry county, who in the afternoon made their report, which was unanimously adopted.*

*The following is the Constitution and By-Laws:

The style of this Society shall be "The Iowa State Agricultural Society." Its objects shall be the promotion of Agriculture, Horticulture, Manufactures, Mechanics and Household Arts.

SEC. 1. The Society shall consist of such citizens of the State as shall signify by writing or otherwise, their wishes to become members, and shall pay, on subscribing, not less than one dollar, and one dollar annually thereafter, which fee shall be paid on or before the 1st day of June, also of honorary and corresponding members.

SEC. 2. The officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, and three Directors from each County Society, who together shall constitute a Board of Control for the general management of the business of the Society.

SEC. 3. The Recording Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Society. The Corresponding Secretary shall carry on the correspondence with other Societies, with individuals and with the general committees in the furtherance of the objects of the Society.

SEC. 4. The Treasurer shall keep the funds of the Society, and disburse them on the order of the President or the Board of Control, countersigned by the Recording Secretary, and shall make their report of receipts and expenditures at the annual meeting. He shall give bond in the penal sum of \$3000 for the faithful performance of his duties and the payment of all moneys in his hands.

SEC. 5. The Board of Control shall take charge of, and distribute and preserve all seeds, books, medals, &c., which may be transmitted to the Society, and shall have also the charge of all communications designed or calculated for publication, and so far as they may deem expedient, shall collect, arrange, and publish the same in such manner as they may deem best calculated to promote the object of this Society.

SEC. 6. The Managers are charged with the interests of the Society, in the counties in which they shall respectively reside, and will constitute a medium of communication between the Board of Control and the remote members of the Society.

SEC. 7. There shall be a meeting of the Society at the place for the Fair on the 25th day of October, 1854, and at such time thereafter as the Board of Control may direct, at which time all the officers shall be elected by a majority of the members present, by ballot. Extra meetings may be convened by a call of the President at one months' notice. Nine members shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.

SEC. 8. This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members attending any annual meeting after two months' notice of such proposed amendment being given through the public papers of the State.

BY-LAWS.

ART. 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Control of the Society. He shall deliver all premiums and diplomas for articles exhibited at the Fair of the Society, to persons entitled thereto, and when the same are to be paid in money he shall draw orders there-

The Constitution and By-Laws, though not as perfect as they might have been, answered very well the purpose for which they were designed.

They provided, that the society should be managed by a President, Vice-President and three Directors from each county society in the State, who should be styled a Board of Control.

Thomas W. Clagett, of Lee county, was elected President.

Clagett was a native of Maryland, a man of wealth, and a lawyer by profession; but took great interest in agricultural pursuits, and became quite noted in Iowa as a man who took an interest in public affairs, and also as a newspaper editor.

D. P. Inskeep, of Wapello county, was elected Vice-President.

Inskeep had recently moved to Iowa from Ohio, was a man of capital, and extensively engaged in farming, and had given special attention to the raising of fine stock, and took great interest in any thing pertaining to agricultural pursuits.

J. M. Shaffer, of Jefferson county, was elected Secretary.

Shaffer was then quite a young man, a native of Pennsylvania, came to Fairfield, fresh from college, and commenced

for on the Treasurer. He shall also perform all other duties usually pertaining to such office.

ART. 2. The Vice-President shall, in case of the death, sickness, absence or resignation of the President, perform all the duties of the President till the next annual election.

ART. 3. All members of the Society, who have paid their annual fee shall be admitted free to all exhibitions of the Society, and the Board of Control shall each year fix the prices of admission to the exhibition, of all persons not members.

ART. 4. Competitors for crops shall state in writing the character of the ground, the time and method of preparing it, the time of planting or sowing, the mode of cultivation, the kind of seed, the time of reaping or gathering it, with the number of bushels to the acre, which must be certified to by at least two disinterested persons, or be duly authenticated by oath of the competitor himself, and no crop shall come into competition unless these regulations be complied with.

ART. 5. No animal or article on exhibition, which has taken two premiums at previous Fairs of the Society, in the same class, will be allowed to be entered.

ART. 6. Members neglecting to pay their annual fee till the day of exhibition will be charged twenty-five cents in addition to it.

the practice of medicine. He had a strong inclination for natural history, and had devoted much time to the collection of the various kinds of snakes and birds that were found in Iowa, and preserving them in their life-like appearance.

He was for many years connected with the State Agricultural Society, and collected and published many valuable statistics relating to the State of Iowa.

C. W. Slagle, of Jefferson county, was elected Corresponding Secretary.

Slagle was a native of Pennsylvania, a lawyer by profession, but a man who took much interest in public matters.

W. B. Chamberlin, of Des Moines county, was elected Treasurer.

Chamberlin was a native of the New England States, a celebrated physician, and by his energy and industry accumulated much wealth, and took great interest in horticulture and literary pursuits.

Besides these officers there were thirty-nine directors elected; three from each county in which societies had been formed.*

To further aid in making the society a success, George W. McCleary, George S. Hampton, of Iowa City; David Rorer, of Burlington; Ralph P. Lowe, of Keokuk, and George Gillaspay, of Ottumwa, were appointed a committee "to memorialize the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, for the purpose of

*The Directors were as follows:

Lee county.—Arthur Bridgman, Reuben Brackett and Josiah Hinkle.
 Van Buren.—Timothy Day, Dr. Elbert and William Campbell.
 Henry.—Thomas Siviter, Amos Lapham and J. W. Frazier.
 Jefferson.—P. L. Huyett, John Andrews and B. B. Tuttle.
 Wapello.—Richard Warden, Gen'l Remsey and Uriah Briggs.
 Mahaska.—Wm. McKinley, Sr., John White and M. T. Williams.
 Polk.—Dr. Brooks, Thomas Mitchell and Wm. McKay.
 Des Moines.—J. F. Tallant, Henry Avery and C. C. Nealley.
 Louisa.—George Key, Francis Springer and Joshua Marshall.
 Muscatine.—J. H. Wallace, James Weed and John A. Parvin.
 Dubuque.—Hon. W. Y. Lovell, O. McRaney and L. Langworthy.
 Johnson.—R. H. Sylvester, Hon. Le Grand Byington and C. Sanders.
 Scott.—J. A. Buchard, J. Thorington and L. Summers.

a bill rendering pecuniary aid to the furtherance of a permanent establishment of a State Agricultural Society."

Any citizen of Iowa could become a member of this society by signifying in "writing or otherwise their wish to become a member, and pay on subscribing not less than one dollar."

The first person who signified his wish to become a member, and paid his dollar was Charles Negus, of Jefferson county.

Clagett, immediately upon being notified of his election, took a deep interest in the society, and issued an address to the farmers of Iowa, setting forth the importance of the organization, and the necessity of raising money to successfully put it into operation, and as an inducement to others, he proposed "to give fifty dollars in aid of the first Fair, to be expended in the following manner: Twenty-five dollars for the best five ears of Indian corn in the State; fifteen dollars for the second best, and ten dollars for the third best."

On the 6th of June, 1854, the Board of Officers of the Iowa State Agricultural Society held their first meeting at Fairfield, and "adopted a premium list, and made the necessary preparations for holding a State Fair.

For the first State Fair the Legislature made no appropriation, and the society was dependent on its own resources.

And for want of funds the premiums offered were small, and for some things which other State societies had offered premiums there was not any thing offered.

And among the causes of dissatisfaction in this respect, a correspondent to the *Iowa Farmer*, who signed her name Laura, complained that there was no premium offered for female equestrians.

To this complaint Clagett replied that his "gallantry would not permit this complaint to go unconsidered," and at his own expense he offered "a fine gold watch to the boldest and most graceful female equestrian who would enter for the prize."

For the fair grounds, about five acres were inclosed with a rail fence, made by setting two rails together a few inches apart, perpendicular in the ground at intervals of about nine

feet from each other, and fastened together at the top, between which other rails were laid, one upon another, till they made a fence about eight feet high.

Within the inclosure a handsomely graded circular track, some thirty feet wide, and about a fifth of a mile around, was prepared for the accommodation of the equestrians; around which was stretched a rope.

Stables for horses and cattle, and pens for hogs and sheep were made like the fence—with rails.

A display room, committee room, and a stand for the judges were prepared with rough boards, and covered with canvass.

The effort to organize a State Agricultural Society met with better success than the warmest friends of the enterprise had expected.

All parts of the State were represented, and it was estimated that ten thousand persons attended the exhibition.

Jesse C. Ware acted as Chief Marshal, who, with several assistants, caused every thing to be conducted systematically, so that the best of order prevailed; and it was a noted fact that during the three days' exhibition there was not an intoxicated man seen in town.

Ware was a physician by profession, one of the early settlers of Iowa, and took great interest in agricultural fairs.

There were some things which attracted much attention. Among these was a cheese, which weighed three hundred and sixty pounds.

This cheese was made on the fourth of July, at Denmark, in Lee county, by a large number of the farmers contributing their milk for this purpose.

At the election previous to the Fair there was a change in the political policy of the State; and James W. Grimes had been elected Governor; and in token of respect for his political success, his friends purchased this mammoth cheese, and made him a present of it.

J. P. McKinney, from Dubuque, had on exhibition a large number of neatly executed daguerreotype pictures, which

attracted the attention of large numbers of spectators.

Mr. Moore, of Ft. Des Moines, had a large variety of stuffed birds, preserved in such a way that they presented a life-like appearance, and the only thing that admonished the observer that they were not actually alive, was that they did not move.

Dr. J. M. Shaffer's museum of snakes, lizards, toads, &c., attracted the attention of every body, there being upwards of a hundred of them, which he had preserved in spirits, so that they appeared natural, and it contained a specimen of every variety of snakes found in the west.

G. O. Dixon, of Keokuk, delivered an eloquent address, giving much valuable information, which was listened to with great attention.

But the equestrian feats of the ladies attracted the greatest interest of any thing at the Fair.

For the fine gold watch offered by Clagett there were ten competitors.

The committee to conduct this contest and make the award consisted of some of the most prominent persons in the State.

They were James M. Morgan, (Chairman), of Des Moines county; Judge R. P. Lowe, of Lee; Col. Thomas H. Benton, of Johnson; Col. H. H. Trimble, of Davis; Mrs. Huyett, of Jefferson; Miss Albertson, of Lee, and Miss Inskeep, of Wapello.

The ladies were mounted on fine horses, dressed in the most splendid style, each attended by a cavalier, and their first appearance on the fair grounds seemed to call forth the admiration of every body present. The committee directed, in order to test their skill, that each lady, accompanied by her cavalier, should in a gentle gait ride once around the circle, when the cavalier was to retire into the center, and then each lady could ride four times around the track at any speed she might choose.

After receiving their instructions the riding commenced. Miss Minton was the first on the list.

Miss Minton, of Van Buren county, was "a fair rider, but

unfortunately mounted; her horse rough and somewhat unmanagable."

The next competitor was Miss Eliza Jane Hodges, of Iowa City, and with her appearance a deep and enthusiastic interest commenced, and she seems to be the lioness of the occasion. She was a poor young girl, only about fourteen years old, and on her way to the Fair the horse she intended to ride died, which created a sympathy in her behalf.

Having lost the horse she was accustomed to ride, she was furnished with a fine looking, spirited animal, which had been kept as a race horse.

On it coming her turn to ride, she started off a short distance ahead of her cavalier. To overtake her he started his horse in a lope, and when he came by her side the horse she was riding, doubtless thinking he was to run a race, started off at his swiftest speed.

At this the entire assembly were held in awful suspense. At first a breathless silence prevailed, then here and there were heard a frightful scream, expecting every moment to see her dashed upon the ground and instantly killed.

But she showed herself suitable for the emergency. She kept her horse in the track, and after the first round she brought him down to a gentle trot; she then applied the whip till he was at his fastest speed, "which was fearfully swift" at the completion of the fourth round, and still at a full and fearful speed, "she wheeled gracefully from the track, and was greeted with an earthquake of cheers, as she brought her bounding animal to a graceful halt in front of the committee stand." Miss Hodges' example stimulated the others to daring feats, and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed through the whole contest.

Miss Turner, of Lee county, was "an easy, self-possessed and most thorough rider. She was finely mounted, showed consummate skill in the management of her horse, striking any gait at pleasure. The first round set every one to thinking and admiring, and each succeeding one only added to the interest which its predecessor had excited.

“Her elegant form, fine face and soft blue eyes also rather served to heighten the effect than otherwise.”

✓Mrs. Parks, of Lee county, was “a handsome rider, full of courage, and well accomplished in the management of the horse and whip.”

✓Mrs. Eckeart, of Jefferson county, was a “splendidly appearing lady, and a capital rider, but unfortunately her horse, though a fine one, was not gaited for such an occasion.”

✓Mrs. Green, of Lee county, was “a magnificent rider, spirited, confident and graceful, but badly mounted.”

✓Miss Pope, of Henry county, was “a fine young lady, full of life, full of spirit, full of fun, full of ambition, and naturally a fearless and first-rate rider. But she too had the misfortune to pick up a most malicious horse.”

✓Miss Porter, of Henry county, was “a lovely young Miss of fifteen, a charming little equestrian, tastefully arrayed and beautifully mounted.

“Her personal appearance, the exceeding beauty of her palfrey, the child-like naturalness and yet womanly grace which characterized her performance, called forth a general applause and commendation.”

“Miss H. Ball, of Jefferson county, was “a fine rider, self possessed, skilled and perfectly at home in the management of the rein.”

Miss C. Ball, of Jefferson county, was “an excellent rider; entitled to rank as number one any where. Her position was perfectly natural and extremely graceful, and her manner modest and fearless.”

The interest taken in the ladies' riding match was such that the committee was requested to withhold their decision, and require the competitors to again appear on the grounds and make an exhibition of their skill the next day.

At the appointed hour the grounds around the track were again crowded. Every body in town, that possibly could, was there, and the performances of the ladies, and particularly those of Miss Hodges, created more interest than on the previous day.

At the close of the contest Judge Lowe addressed the ladies, highly complimenting all of them for their exploits; when the committee commenced canvassing the claims of the fair competitors, and upon the first ballot the prize was awarded to Miss Belle Turner.

Miss Turner was called for; she, accompanied by her cavalier, George B. Wilson, came forward to the stand, when the watch was presented to her.

She "received the gift with a sweet smile, and a graceful inclination of the body, at the same time modestly expressing a doubt as to her merits; in reply to which she was informed that the committee had decided that question for her."

The author of this sketch was present, and witnessed the whole of this equestrian contest, and thought the award was properly made, but it did not meet with the approbation of the great mass of the spectators.

The popular sentiment was strongly in favor of Miss Hodges, and "spontaneously as if by concert, men sprung up in all quarters of the field," and in a few minutes there was raised one hundred and sixty-five dollars in money for her benefit, and six months tuition and board provided for her at school. And this closed the exhibition of the first State Fair in Iowa.

The success of the first State Fair was such that it created an interest in its behalf throughout the State, and the Legislature in January, 1855, passed an act authorizing the Society "to draw from the State Treasury in aid of its operations one thousand dollars per year."

This assistance, with the interest taken in it by the people, caused the State Agricultural Society to assume such a position that it was soon regarded as one of the established institutions of the State.

(To be Continued.)

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