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*“Over  
The Years”*

*of the*

*Dresden*

*Agricultural Society*

A history of the Camden and Dresden Agricultural Societies  
from its inception in 1875 to the present day

Published in Conjunction with the 100th Anniversary  
of the Dresden Exhibition

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*A message from the president  
of the Dresden Agricultural Society*



As President of the Dresden Agricultural Society in this centennial year of our exhibition, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the history of our society.

It was only through the dedicated service of community minded people that the Agricultural Society as we know it today has grown. The dedication and interest of those former directors, officers, and members have made the exhibition and raceway grow to its present state.

On behalf of the 1975 Board of Directors, we sincerely thank Mrs. Helen Watson Burns for compiling the history of Dresden Agricultural Society's first 100 years.

The first eighty years of history was completed by Mrs. Burns in 1954 following the centennial of the town of Dresden, and is published here in its original context. The last twenty years of history was completed by Mrs. Burns in this centennial year, 1975.

MURRAY McKERRALL  
President — 1975  
DRESDEN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

## Presidents who served the Society since Incorporation

The following is a list of presidents who have served the Dresden Agricultural Society since its incorporation in 1891:

1891 - 1895	- Robert P. Wright	1940	- William Foster
1896 - 1900	- Walter Clapp	1941	- Robert Latimer
1901 - 1903	- H.J. French	1942 - 1943	- Lorne Hughson
1904	- Lemuel Hughson	1944 - 1945	- Everitt Boylan
1905 - 1906	- Thomas N. Wells	1946 - 1947	- Wilfred Shaw
1907	- E.H. Devor	1948 - 1949	- Roy E. Carscallen
1908	- Thomas Elgie	1950 - 1951	- R.D. Stevenson
1909 - 1912	- Thomas N. Wells	1952 - 1953	- Harry Pels
1913 - 1914	- H.J. French	1954 - 1955	- Andrew Houston
1915 - 1917	- John Holmes	1956 - 1957	- Jack Latimer
1918	- M.S. Blackburn	1958 - 1959	- Walter Higgs
1919 - 1920	- William George	1960 - 1961	- Glen Martin
1921 - 1924	- Ernest Sharpe	1962 - 1963	- William Boyle
1925 - 1926	- Roy N. Houston	1964 - 1965	- Ray Unsworth
1927 - 1928	- Morley Myers	1966 - 1967	- Jack Martin
1929 - 1930	- C.J. Craven	1968 - 1969	- Robert Langstaff
1931 - 1932	- R.G. Tyhurst	1970 - 1971	- Wilfred Brown
1933 - 1935	- Verne Robinson	1972 - 1973	- Arthur Cracknell
1936 - 1937	- George Lawrence	1974 - 1975	- Murray McKerrall
1938 - 1939	- R.F. Houston		

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### Secretaries of the Society since Incorporation

The list of secretaries that served the Camden Agricultural Society and later in 1946 when the name was changed to the Dresden Agricultural Society is as follows:

1891 - 1895	- John Chapple	1948 - 1953	- Alex Blackburn
1896 - 1900	- Arthur Smith	1954 - 1957	- Aaron Boak
1901 - 1912	- John T. Bridgewater	1958 - 1973	- Andrew Houston
1913 - 1922	- H.J. French	1973 -	- Mrs. Shirley Hawkins
1927 - 1947	- R.F. Houston		

# Over The Years

of the

## Dresden Agricultural Society



### "The First 80 Years"

1875 - 1954

When attending a convention in the summer of 1950, I found that the name of Dresden on my registration tag meant something to a surprising number of my fellow-delegates. To a judge from Goderich, it meant a baseball team; to a woman from Stratford, it meant the horse show; but to most, especially those from our neighbouring counties, it meant Dresden Fair!

We in Dresden could go a step farther and tell them what Dresden Fair means. It means over 70 years of planning and work; disappointment if too much rain comes; great expense for buildings and for prizes; but most of all, it means a group of men who work together. Read the list of directors year after year, the old stand-bys; the younger men coming in; lady directors for the feminine side of things; and always, some man ready to move up to the president's shoes, even though knowing the great amount of work and interest this position entails.

Still, what is hard work when they are accustomed to it in daily toil? What is expense, when they have their buildings and track to show for it, remembering the volunteer labour and donations that helped to build them? And what is rain, when there is another year coming? But how did it all begin?

The Kent County Agricultural Society dates from the year 1843, although before the Rebellion of 1837, an organization had been in existence, under the name of the Chatham Agricultural Society, but which became dormant until 1842, when it was revived, and a fair held on October 22nd; followed by another on a larger scale, and at which prizes were given, on January 27th, 1843.

Immediately afterward, the Kent County Society was begun, with a board of directors having James Smith as president; Dr. A. Robertson, secretary; and William Cosgrave as treasurer. In the list of presidents for the ensuing years we find proof of the agricultural nature of the society in the names of two holders of the office, for 1848, John Goose; and for 1849, Francis Drake!

The Kent County Almanac of 1883 supplies us with a description of the first County Fair. It was held on a common, now the site of the Rankin House, with the blue sky overhead and the frozen ground under foot. No board fence separated it from the outer world; free to all! The cattle and swine, of lanky and angular lines, stood round in isolated groups of two or three, moored to a convenient stump, rail fence or cart wheel. Interspersed with these, the more attractive sheep were penned against the carts and fences; while tied to vehicles or held by attendants, were fair-looking horses, many

showing the blood of the Indian ponies. Surrounding the whole and lining the street, stood ox-sleds, French carts and other vehicles, with saddled horses more numerous. In the palace (a shanty), or on the ground, stumps or boxes, stood a few bags of grain, a butchered hog, a few samples of cheese and butter, and the inevitable web of home-made flannel. Patchwork quilts, implements or vegetables were not yet present. The prizes were furnished by donations previously secured, with no grants yet given; and the total prize list for 1843 was 21 pounds, 10 shillings, about \$86., with 45 prize winners named.

Interest in fairs spread throughout the county, and soon among others, a Camden Fair was held at Dawn Mills in the Kent militia drill shed, whose military days were past. Then, in 1873, the drill shed was moved to Dresden, and set at the middle of the street along the west side of Market Square, about where the home of C. W. Somers stands today.

In Soutar's Western Counties Annual and Almanac of 1887, we are told that the Camden Agricultural Society was organized on April 26th, 1876, with John Chapple named as secretary. However, the first mention of a fair in the minute book of the council of Dresden was on August 13th, 1878, when a petition, signed by Alex Watson and 81 others, asked the council to take necessary steps to establish fairs for the sale of horses and cattle. It was moved that J. W. Sharpe and R. P. Wright be a committee to make the necessary arrangements for holding a sale fair in Dresden.

At the council session of February 13th, 1879, it was moved by these two gentlemen that the whole council be a committee to take charge of the semi-annual fair on the second Tuesday in March, and to arrange for a free market day. This motion carried, and the market clerk was later given compensation for the free market day.

On August 23rd, 1881, a delegation from the Camden Agricultural Society, comprising Messrs. Stephens, Switzer and Rudd, made application for a grant in aid of said society, and it was voted that a grant of one hundred dollars be given. It is very creditable that the fair had never been allowed to lapse since its inception in 1876, as is proven by the 1882 file of the Dresden Times, which speaks of the fair that year as the 'seventh Camden and Dresden Exhibition.'

## The Early History of the Fair Grounds

### Lot 2, Concession 4, Gore of Camden

When a parcel of land is involved in any transaction, it is necessary to search the title, which means a study of all instruments or papers relating to past ownership. Correctly, any such transaction should have been registered at the county registry office, so, if any of the documents involved are missing, one can go to the aforesaid office and ascertain from the books there the true situation in regard to the land in question. By writing to the office too, one can obtain a written synopsis of all conveyances there recorded. Such a synopsis is called an abstract or extract.

We can trace the early history of Dresden's fair grounds from such an abstract among the papers belonging to the Camden Agricultural Society. This abstract, dated September 12th, 1881, and signed by P. D. McKellar, Registrar of Kent, is written on a form with a beautiful watermark, showing the maker's name, "A. Pirie and Sons, Register Paper, 1880," and his coat of arms with a crown and Fleur-de-lis. The purpose for which the abstract was prepared is shown by the notation on the outside: "Re Livingstone's Mtge., \$500 to J. Henson, assigned to the Henderson estate. Signed by J. W. Sharpe."

Though we may seem to digress, one cannot but remark the impact of the notation. To anyone cognizant of Dresden's past history, it recalls three careers: Charles Livingstone, a banker where the Dominion Bank is now in business; Josiah Henson, who needs no explanation, thanks to his life and Harriet Beecher Stowe's story; and J. W. Sharpe, another banker, lawyer and notary, at one time occupant of the building preceding the present Bank of Commerce.

The first transaction involving the fair grounds, described as the east half of lot 2, concession 4; Gore of Camden, was the Crown deed. By this, the Crown, on February 23rd, 1827, gave a patent or gift of this 100 acres to Joel Skinner. No registration data is given for this grant, nor any more information about Joel Skinner.

In a little over a year, April 26th, 1828, Joel Skinner, by a bill of sale, and for the sum of fifty pounds, conveyed the same 100 acres to one Matthias 'Misner. This was registered over 15 years later, and Misner owned the land for seventeen years.

On June 13th, 1845, Matthias Misner sold the farm to Hiram Wilson, for 175 pounds, it being described as part of 200 acres. The indenture for this transaction describes 'Matthias Misner as a yeoman of Crowland Township, Lincoln County, Niagara district, Canada West. From the story of Josiah Henson, we know that Hiram Wilson was a Quaker, and that he taught in the school that Josiah Henson built near the present site of O. & W. McVean's mill. On the indenture, he is described as a minister of the Gospel. The witnesses to this sale were David Misner and James McMullin.

There is another interesting paper relating to the sale of this land to Hiram Wilson. This is called "The Affidavit of George Long that Lot 2, Concession 4, Camden Gore (was) wild and therefore no dower therein." This was not drawn up till 1875, and was probably after the death of Hiram Wilson, when his estate was being settled. The affidavit read as follows: County of Kent, to wit: I, George Long, of the Gore of Camden, in the County of Kent, yeoman, declare:

1. That I am well acquainted with lot number two, in the fourth concession of said Gore of Camden, and have lived within two mile of it for the last thirty-eight years.

2. That I remember when the sale of said lot was made to Hiram Wilson by one Matthias Misner, being about the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-five, and that at the time of the said sale, the said lot was in a state of nature, and had no improvements whatever, but was in fact a wilderness.

Signed: George Long.

Sworn before me at Dresden, in the County of Kent, this 1st day of March, A.D.

J. W. Sharpe, Commissioner.

George Long's script is quite legible and showed that he must have had some education. If he lived in the neighbourhood for 38 years, it would set the time of his coming as 1837. This date may not be early in the history of Canada, but in the history of Dresden, the first settler, Gerard Lindsley, did not come till 1825, and the town was not surveyed till 1850. In the Kent County Almanac of 1883, George Long is mentioned as living along the Base Line, and a map of Chatham Township in an 1881 atlas shows his name on lot 21, in the 10th concession of Chatham Township, fifty acres, which would be part of the farm now occupied by Norman Hasson.

The next transaction shown in the abstract is the sale by Hiram Wilson of the south part of the lot, 80 acres, to Josiah Henson, for the sum of 54 pounds, on the date of September 30, 1845. This document was drawn up at Dawn (as the district was then called, Dresden not being even surveyed till 1850). It was between Hiram Wilson and his wife, Hannah Maria, of Dawn aforesaid, of the one part, and Josiah Henson, of the Township of Dawn also, Free Wesleyan minister, of the other part. It was signed by Hiram Wilson and his wife, but not by Josiah Henson; and was signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of Peter B. Smith, William P. Newman and George Johnson, who made his mark. It was not registered till 1847, as certified by the deputy-registrar, John A. Fraser.

In 1849, Josiah Henson gave to John Snider a mortgage for 125 pounds on the east part of lot 2, concession 4, 80 acres; but was able to discharge this mortgage in 1854. This was however, just the first of seven mortgages which Henson was obliged to put on this property; the subsequent ones being due to the litigation with John Scoble.

Scoble was sent from England to investigate conditions in the British American Institution, and remained as overseer for several years, having a free living from it, but doing nothing to build it up; and even pulled down the existing school on pretext of building a better one, which never materialized.

When Josiah and others associated with him finally obtained a court order to dispossess Scoble, he entered a suit against them for wages for the period in which he

was overseer. This action continued for about nine years, during which Scoble had re-established himself in Yarmouth Township, Elgin County, and Henson was obliged to mortgage his own land, lacking authority to draw upon the Institution property. It is indeed remarkable that Henson, an escaped slave and self-educated (not learning to write till he was past fifty years of age, with his shoulders broken and deformed from a beating) as his signature on these documents attests, should have been able to weather these financial difficulties and finally discharge all the mortgages.

A circumstance which enabled Josiah Henson to extricate himself entirely was that Banker Charles Livingstone became aware that the Camden Agricultural Society was desirous of purchasing a new site for their fair. He bought 15 acres on the south-east of the property, from Henson in 1880, for \$1000, giving a mortgage for \$500 (which Henson later assigned to John Henderson, Toronto). Livingstone then drew up an agreement with the Agricultural Society to buy this land for a fair grounds for the sum of \$950., with the society to pay the mortgage for \$500 given by him to Josiah Henson, to pay all taxes on it, and to insure all buildings on it for at least \$300. The \$950 was to be paid four months after date with interest at 8 per cent per annum on all renewals; they meanwhile to occupy and enjoy the said property until default should happen to be made, and to receive a free deed on fulfilment of all these conditions.

The agreement stated that "it is expressly understood that time is to be considered the essence of this agreement and unless the payments are punctually made, these presents shall be null and void, and the party of the first part shall be at liberty to re-sell the land." The agreement was signed by the president of the Agricultural Society, R. P. Wright; and by the secretary, John Chapple, in the presence of J. W. Sharpe.

In December, 1884, Charles Livingstone made an assignment to Benjamin Bridgewater who in June, 1885, granted the land to the society, as they had paid all monies and done all things and fulfilled all conditions. In 1892 another indenture was drawn up whereby Benjamin Bridgewater again conveyed the property to the Agricultural Society, because (according to this paper) doubts had arisen as to the legality of the (previous) incorporation, and as to their power to take a conveyance of lands in 1885. So it was again incorporated in 1891, with all legal precautions, and backed by fifty charter members.

## Incorporation of Camden Agricultural Society

The first meeting of the Camden Agricultural Society, of which there are records, was held on the afternoon of Saturday, July 11th, 1891, in the Dresden town hall, and was called by the Reeve of Camden, Alex Mason, "for election of officers, and consideration of a resolution that the Society desires to be incorporated." These records are in the first of several minute books held by the Society's present secretary, Alex Blackburn.

At this meeting, Mr. Mason occupied the chair, with John Chapple as secretary, as nominated by J. W. Sharpe and seconded by William Paling. After the Reeve had spoken at some length, Mayor J. W. Sharpe was called to the platform to give some information concerning the incorporation of the society. A list of fifty charter members was drawn up, (of whom Mr. George Forshee is the only one surviving today.) After paying a membership fee of one dollar each, they subscribed to the following declaration: "We, whose names are subscribed hereto agree to form ourselves into a society under the provisions of the Agriculture and Arts Act, to be called the Agricultural Society of the Township of Camden; and we hereby severally agree to pay to the treasurer the sums opposite our respective names, and we further agree to conform to the by-laws and rules of the said society."

It was then moved by J. W. Sharpe, and seconded by Robert Aikin, that the society was desirous of being incorporated. Carried. Officers were nominated and elected, then the auditors named and voted for, in another motion. A final motion

adjourned the meeting to the call of the president. These three motions were all made by J. W. Sharpe and seconded by R. Aikin.

The officers for 1891, as elected were: President, Robert P. Wright; Vice President, L. V. Peters; and nine directors, James Blackburn, D. V. Hicks, Thomas Wees, Samuel Sharpe, William Paling, Walter H. Clapp, Francis Gifford, John Turner and Henry Weston. The auditors were Simeon Wallace and Arthur Smith.

The President, R. P. Wright called a directors' meeting immediately after the adjournment, and the directors appointed John Chapple as the secretary of the society, and N. B. Carscallen, treasurer. Directors Weston, Clapp and Peters were appointed a committee in charge of the fair grounds. They were authorized to borrow money to pay liabilities incurred by said committee, not exceeding \$60.

Further directors' meetings were held in the Dresden council chambers, at the end of July, the end of August, and the first part of September, to make preparations for the fair, to be held early in October. A membership canvas brought the total up to 171, with the later ones paying a fee of \$1.50 instead of a dollar. The prize lists were revised, and judges were chosen for each section of the exhibits, with one director in charge of each section. The Dresden Band was to be employed for the afternoon of the second day, providing the band would take \$15.00 for their services.

After the fair was over, another directors' meeting was held on November 5th, to deal with any unfinished business in regard to it. The gate receipts had been not quite \$200.00, and the amount paid out for prizes alone was nearly \$500.00, so it was voted to borrow \$400 from Mr. Walter Thompson, to be repaid in January, 1893.

While it would be tedious to the reader, as well as to the writer, to compile too many details of the subsequent history of the Camden Agricultural Society, it is felt, nevertheless, that a comparative resume of certain periods and features would not be too irksome. Moreover, it would not be out of place here to give a slight description of the Society's oldest minute book. The entries for the first two years are made in the handwriting of the secretary, John Chapple, large and flowing, and with a rather coarse pen. Early in 1893, a script entirely different appears, which we subsequently learn is that of Arthur Smith, who succeeded to the position of secretary when ill health compelled Mr. Chapple's retirement in 1897. Mr. Smith's writing was beautiful English script, small but very legible; done with a fine pen, but of a perfection to bring tears to the eyes of any teacher of today's modern generation. For the first ten years after the society was incorporated, the minute book contained an annual list of the names, addresses and fees of the members, on pages ruled, numbered and balanced as perfectly as the writing itself. When failing health came in 1909 to Mr. Smith, the appointment of John Bridgewater as secretary pro tem. was considered advisable by the fair board, a tenure rendered permanent by Mr. Smith's death in 1911. The handwriting of Mr. Bridgewater, much like that of Mr. Chapple, continued to the end of the first minute book, 1917.

## The First Decade After Incorporation

1891 - 1900

The first ten years after the Camden Agricultural Society was incorporated, 1891 to 1900, was a very important period in its history, for, in it, sometimes by the method of trial and error, they laid the foundations on which their present successful organization rests. All previous experience had to be made official, to meet the approval of the board of directors as well as that of the executive officers; and more important, the society took on democratic form, when the balance of power depended on the vote of the majority, as exemplified by the directors, and the responsibility was theirs, even if opposed to the private convictions of the president or other leaders. Adherence to such formality was no doubt necessary in order that the society might be eligible for grants from the townships or from the county, and occasioned much vigilance in their methods of procedure.

For instance, revision of the prize lists seemed to be required before each fair, for different reasons, the most vital being the question of finances. By combining general purpose and agricultural classes, they did away with one group of prizes. Though this sometimes had repercussions, as when one member demanded the refund of his subscription because there was no class for which he proposed to compete, on the prize list; and another had an exhibit recommended by the judges as worthy of a prize, though no such class was listed.

Another reason for revision was to replace out-of-date varieties by ones newer and more popular, such as when White Star and Early Rose potatoes were struck off and Empire State and Rural New Yorker substituted; and Nicker wheat was put in place of Clawson. In the fancy work, pillow shams were to be shown without the pair of sheets that had formerly been required; and, in 1897, it was decided that painting on moleskin should be added to the Fine Arts classes!

In 1898, the committee to revise the prize list recommended that all third class prizes be struck out, and other reductions made. They also discontinued giving prizes in certain classes that had been included previously, some, as named in 1899, being implements, vehicles, drain tile, furniture and tobacco. Reminiscent of a military past was one amendment to the classes for horses: "that there be a class each for cavalry, artillery and mounted infantry, to be shown under saddle, and judged according to government standards, prizes for each class, \$4.00 and \$2.00."

Appointment of judges was also a necessary consideration. At first, there were three judges for each class except the ladies' department, for which there were six. These judges were usually outsiders, but for grain and seeds, three millers officiated, Peter Powell (and later, his partner, W. A. Johnson) whose mill was on the site of the present Taylor's elevator on Water St., J. H. Fleming, who ran a flour mill on the corner now occupied by the home of W. O. Wees; and Sandy McVean, former owner of St. Clair Grain and Feed property. Two other names that appeared at the turn of the century as judging seeds were Thomas Ennett and G. Pelucci.

For implements and manufacturers, the judges at first were blacksmiths, and later implement dealers, James Pavey, Sam Bentley, Harry Pake, Tuperville; and later, Sam Peters, P. E. Shambleau, D. W. Newcomb, Charles Gage and John Robinson. By 1900, these names had been replaced by B. Clapp, R. Harrington, Chatham; and Frank McKim.

In 1897, it was voted to have local grocers as judges of dairy products, and those whose name appear during this decade were J. C. Tassie, in Bill Johnston's present location; J. Burnie, two doors east of the Bank of Commerce; R. Aikin; and H. Waddell, in Glen Wicks' store near the bridge.

By 1893, the directors had decided that one judge was sufficient in most classes instead of three, and these were still usually outsiders in the livestock classes; though the cattle were judged in 1898 by M. Mahoney, and in 1899 by J. R. Boylan. The fine arts had been separate from the fancy work, but in 1898, these were combined, with ladies still as judges.

By-laws and rules in any organization are gradually evolved through the years as a result of circumstances, and are of value for reference and moral support in future problems and decisions. We find in the first minute book of the Camden Agricultural Society many such items, some important, some amusing, and all interesting, in that they reveal the spirit of the times.

In 1891, it was moved by Hicks and seconded by Paling, that no gambling games or games of chance be allowed on the grounds (Carried). Then it was moved by Paling, and seconded by Sharpe, that all refreshment stand, etc., be placed inside the horse ring; also carried. In 1892, it was recommended that some means be taken to stop the practise of passing tickets through the fence, thus defrauding the society.

In 1899, two very important by-laws were instituted. It was moved by D. V. Hicks, and seconded by L. V. Peters, that "all prize winners of one dollar or over, shall pay out of such prize their next year's membership fee." Carried. Also, it was moved by Mr. Blackburn, and seconded by Mr. Carscallen, that "no produce or other articles shall be

exhibited in any manner, or with any marks thereon, or attached thereto, by which the owner or exhibitor can be identified." Also carried, needless to say.

An incentive to higher membership was a motion passed in 1894: Carscallen-Peters. "That each member of the board be paid ten per cent of all membership fees collected." (By himself). An unfortunate circumstance occurred in 1897, when two men holding positions in the society were declared to have been informally appointed, and were replaced, thus leading to the election of directors by ballot.

While deprecating an alteration in old saying, no one can deny that "Money makes the fair go," and the officials of the Camden Agricultural Society found it the sad truth. At each annual meeting they were faced with certain inescapable expenses: prizes, printing, judges' dinners, gatekeepers, constables, etc., for the fair; maintenance of the grounds and buildings; the secretary's salary and postage; and payments on money they had borrowed previously. During this first decade, the highest amount paid out for prizes was \$503 in 1892; and the lowest, \$340., in 1898. In 1891, they paid T. N. Wells, of the Dresden Times, \$10 for advertisements, prize lists and tickets, but it increased afterward to as high as \$37 during this period.

The visiting judges got their dinners at the different hotels in town free, but probably bountiful, even if they apparently cost the Society only 25 cents each. Some hotel keepers named were Mrs. Ryan, Wescott, G. Graham, George Lewis and G. McIntosh.

The annual financial statements of the society showed that it had been necessary at various times to borrow money from different persons, as, when at the end of 1891, they voted to borrow \$400 from Walter Thompson. Their expenses for that year already included a payment of \$83.41 principal and interest to A. McVean (father of the five McVean brothers). There was usually due to the treasurer, N. B. Carscallen, an amount which varied from \$75 to \$25. R. P. Wright, president for half this decade, had also advanced them money; and two others to whom the society paid \$28 each for interest, were Joseph Wells and Mrs. Bobier.

It is said that Dresden Fair was moved from the Market Square to land owned by a Mrs. Bobier, on the site of the present Canadian Cannery factory, but since the first book of the Camden Agricultural Society was not available, this could not be verified.

Another expense was to provide entertainment, such as the band, though the Dresden Band cost only \$15, and Tupperville Band, \$12.50, with the added expense for the latter, in 1897, of \$5.00 for their railroad fare, and \$6.25 for their dinners at the Clifford House. Another new expense that year was "telephoning, 50 cents."

Revenue to cover these expenses came from different sources, and one of the most dependable of these was the amount obtained from fees for membership, usually one dollar, though for a year or two, members joining late were charged \$1.50. The number of members enrolled in 1891 was 171, which dropped to 127 in 1897, then rose to 212 by 1900. The gate receipts were the largest source of income, the highest being \$390 in 1893, and the lowest, \$142, in 1898.

Grants were received each year from the Ontario government, which rose during the decade from \$50 to \$83.; and from the county for three years out of the ten, a grant of \$50 was obtained. By 1899, it was voted to ask the Dresden council to grant them \$25, Camden council having promised to do likewise should Dresden consent.

Another source of income was renting the grounds and the track to the Dresden Driving Club, for races; and in 1894, the Bicycle Club paid \$40 for it, which must have been beyond their means, because for the next year they paid on a percentage basis. Commercial exhibits and refreshments stands paid a fee, though in 1899, the society refunded Sid McWha \$5 for losses on his refreshment stand. Though to us it seems amusing, the grounds were also rented during the year for pasture, the highest annual return being \$40; and one year the president was offered free pasture there for his cow, in recognition of his services to the society.

The building program of the society was modest as yet, with only the one main hall, which was insured with D. V. Hicks, in 1894 and thereafter at a premium of \$16.50 for 3 years. Of interest is a motion made in August, 1894, by Paling and Sharp, "that

the grandstand now being erected by private individuals on the fair ground, shall, when completed, become the property of and be paid for by the society." The expenditures for that year give the cost of the grandstand as \$73.28; and the receipts show that \$33.28 rent was received for it, which made it quite a bargain at \$40 net cost.

In 1897, we see that L. Adkin was paid 75 cents for drawing water, and Sanford Sager, \$6.00, presumably for a pump as he built wooden pumps in his shop near the west end of Queen Street. Then, in 1899, the committee in charge of the fair grounds was authorized to engage some person to bore or dig for water, at an expense not exceeding \$5, as a test, and if successful in obtaining water, to proceed and complete a well. At the next meeting, they reported that Mr. Amasa Wright had offered the use of his machine for one day's test for water; the society to pay cost of help, etc. No definite arrangement was made.

This account of the first decade, after incorporation of the Camden Agricultural Society would not be complete without some mention of the officers who headed it. In recapitulation, we see that for president, R. P. Wright and W. H. Clapp divided the decade equally, in terms of four, three, one and two years. The holders of the office of vice-president was added. The secretary was first John Chapple, then Arthur Smith; and the treasurer was N.B. Carscallen for eight years and Walter D. Wiley for two.

## The New Century's First Decade

1901 - 1910

By the turn of the century, the Camden Agricultural Society seemed to have reached good footing, and proceeded through the next decade without too much misfortune, except that the 1902 fair was cancelled. This was probably on account of the weather, which caused alarm in 1903; also, as the president was given authority to set a new date if rain caused postponement. During this period, the fair was still being held in the first week of October or the last week of September.

The prize lists remained much the same, but the influence of the Dresden sugar factory is seen in a motion in August, 1901, by T. N. Wells - Bilton Snary, that prizes of two dollars and one dollar be given for the best bushel of sugar beets for manufacturing purposes. At the same time, Alex Cuthbert was awarded first prize for single harness, shown the previous year. A little difficulty in the feminine department was shown in 1903, when Mrs. Scott was allowed \$2.00 recompense for soiled quilt; also second prize on yarn, 50 cents, omitted by the judges.

In 1905, it was decided to show single sheep instead of pairs. Another belated prize of 75 cents was paid in 1905 to Thomas Elgie, on a turkey shown at the previous fair. In 1907, the society extended a hearty vote of thanks to G. A. Miller (the high school principal) for his interest in and exertions for the children's exhibits; and a committee was appointed to meet him and discuss future arrangements in that department. Evidence of a modern trend is shown in 1910 when H. J. French - S. P. Sturgis sponsored a motion that the society enter the standing field crop competition. On letters relating to seed fairs, horse shows and affiliation with the provincial organization, they took no action.

The necessity of obtaining judges was always a question to be considered so in 1904, they had the secretary write to the agricultural department at Toronto for expert judges on horses and cattle, and in a year or so, for pigs and sheep. The directors in charge of the other branches of exhibits were each supposed to obtain one judge for his group. Some of these local judges during this period were: for roots and vegetables, James Anderson; horticulture, J. R. Boylan; poultry, W. Butler, Croton; dairy products, Grant Smuck, Tupperville (who ran the Dresden cheese factory at one time); and for fine arts, Mrs. Griffin, wife of an Anglican rector stationed in Dresden at that time.

Not many new rules and by-laws were required in this decade, although a rather important one was instituted in 1903, when it was voted that all prizes should be paid within ten days after the fair, and any not collected by January of the next year should

become the property of the society. It was voted in 1906 to procure a gate register, if such could be obtained at a cost of less than \$50.00. In 1907, the word "Township" was added to the name of the society. Possibly on account of congestion of parking space, but more probably with the intention of assisting the society's finances, it was voted in 1908 (Alex Cuthbert - T. N. Wells) that an entrance fee of 25 cents be charged all rigs entering the fair grounds.

The maintenance of the fair grounds called for considerable work and expense, even at this early date in its history, and one very necessary requirement at this time was a well. At the annual meeting in 1901, it was moved by director Morley Carscallen, and seconded by Thomas Elgie, that the president, H. J. French, vice president, S. P. Sturgis, and directors, J. J. Northcott and T. N. Wells, be a committee to sink a well on the fair grounds. In August, the committee reported that the tender for boring a well was awarded to H. Bresett; but no water was found in sufficient amount.

The same committee, with the addition of Lamech Hughson, was named as a building committee, with authority to construct such buildings and fences as they deemed advisable. The secretary was instructed to correspond with the D. & L. E. R. R. (Dresden and Lake Erie Railroad) asking for a grant toward building a new fence. At the next meeting the answer was read, apparently unfavorable, as no further mention is made of it. Nor is the fence mentioned again either, until 1908, when it was to be repaired; then in 1940 when the grounds committee was given power to make arrangements with Mr. Charles Stephens regarding the west fence.

The land in the fair grounds required considerable work, so the grounds committee was instructed in 1903 to plow up and otherwise work such parts as they might deem advisable. In 1904, it was voted that the society pay one-half the expense of laying tile from the railway to the St. George St. award drain. In 1908, the committee was given power to lay a tile drain around the inside of the track, with 4 inch tile, and 6 inch tile in the outlet.

Also in 1908, the committee was empowered to advertise for tenders for painting the building, and putting on a new roof; tenders to state the price of roof with steel shingles and also corrugated iron. At the next meeting, the secretary was instructed to write Bird & Co., re Paroid, roofing for the building, so apparently the metal roofing was too expensive for the society's budget.

In addition to soliciting grants, the fair board also began the practise of canvassing for special prizes. To ensure good attendance, a committee was appointed to obtain special attractions, and they were allowed usually about \$100 to cover expenses in this connection.

During this decade, those who held office in the society were no less zealous than in the past. H. J. French was president for the first three years, followed by Lamech Hughson for one year. T. N. Wells then led the society for two years, succeeded by E. H. Dever and Thomas Elgie for a single term each. For the last two years of the decade, T. N. Wells was again president, J. B. Carscallen was treasurer all this ten years, and Arthur Smith secretary, but J.T. Bridgewater acted for Mr. Smith during the last two years.

### THE YEARS 1911 - 1920 Building and Maintenance

As before mentioned, the array of buildings at the fair grounds up to this time was modest, we might even say meagre, with only a main hall, a grand stand, and a ticket office. Evidently the livestock must have been confined in open pens or corrals, and the fowl in coops. It is not at all surprising then, that after the payment of the last note outstanding against them, the society felt the need of improving their situation.

In July, 1911, it was voted (John Holmes - Lamech Hughson) that the Grounds Committee be granted \$350., to improve the grounds and to build a poultry house. This was apparently not done that year as it was again voted for in 1913, along with a cattle shed, which was not built till later; so, Laird's bill of \$607. for lumber must have been for the poultry house. In 1917, they purchased 40 cages for fowl and 10 for turkeys.

In April, 1912, the grounds and property committee recommended that a cattle shed be built, probable cost \$350. - \$400., and that the main building be repaired, so they were given power to spend \$350 for the shed and \$200 for the main hall. In August, they were instructed to proceed with the building of the cattle shed, and to have it complete in time for the fair. However, at a meeting in September, it was voted that the building of a cattle shed be laid over for another year. As for repairing the main building, there is nothing in the minutes to show that \$200 was spent on it; the only entry at all respective to it being: "J. Courtney, for fixing lock, 35 cents." We can in charity assume that this procrastination was occasioned by the prospect of an unusually large balance at the end of the year: \$1,042.

The cattle shed is mentioned again in 1913, when the regulation track was being laid out; but the minutes do not tell us that such was then built. However, in May, 1920, it was again voted to build a cattle shed, if the cost did not exceed \$1000. The committee presented their specifications at a meeting in July and were ordered to proceed with the building. In September, Laird Brothers, presented an account for \$602 for lumber for the cattle shed. The Dresden Farmers' Club also presented a bill for \$11.90 for roofing cement for repairing the roof of the main building.

A new matter arose in May of 1913, when a special meeting was held to consider a petition with 68 signers, asking the directors to have the race track made into a regulation track. The board then adjourned to the fair grounds (from the Dresden council chambers) to look over the track and see what location could be found for the buildings. When they resumed business, it was voted (R. D. Black - Thomas Leatherdale) that the offer of the Dresden Driving Club to pay one-half the surveyor's fees for surveying the track be accepted, and that the grounds committee arrange to have the track surveyed as soon as possible.

At a meeting three weeks later, a deputation from the Driving Club was heard, offering to pay \$100 toward the cost of making a regulation track. Their offer was accepted and the grounds committee was empowered to build a regulation track and to fix up the grounds as they deemed necessary. It was then moved (Wm. George - R.D. Black) that the north fence be rebuilt as soon as possible. After discussion, it was moved by Roy Carscallen, and seconded by T. N. Wells, that the grounds committee be given power to build a stable, cattle shed, sheep and hog pens, a chicken house, and to move the grandstand to the track.

In May, George A. McCubbin was paid \$12 for surveying the race track. In August, accounts were presented from Laird Brothers, for lumber, \$607.16; W. J. Jeffs Hardware, \$81.76; and Wells and Wells Hardware, \$113.83; so there had evidently been considerable activity at the fair grounds. After these accounts were all paid it was necessary to borrow \$200 (from J. R. Champion), which was repaid in 1914.

After the 1913 fair, the grounds committee was given permission to plough and reseed the grounds where necessary, and an account paid afterward was "N. B. Carscallen, timothy seed, \$2.75."

It was necessary to increase the size of the fair grounds to accomodate a regulation track so, in January, 1914, the president, H. J. French, was asked to interview Mr. Chas. Stephens on the matter of purchasing land from him. At the next meeting, the president reported that Mr. Stephens could not sell the land, but would lease it for his lifetime at an annual rental of \$20, with the use of a pasture field for four days each year. It was left with the president to make the best possible terms with Mr. Stephens, and the grounds committee was ordered to spend not more than \$500 on the buildings and grounds during 1914.

In 1915, a committee of president John Holmes, secretary J.T. Bridgewater and director H. J. French was appointed to see if the society could purchase the land then rented from Chas. Stephens. In 1916, a special meeting was called to authorize the purchase of certain piece of land owned by Chas. Stephens, and occupied by the society as a portion of the race track. Arthur Wicks, William Holmes and H. J. French were to be a committee, but they reported having seen Mr. Stephens, and the land was not for sale at that time.

We learned in the previous decade of efforts made to secure a well on the fair

grounds, but with no success. Now, in 1915, an account was received from Jas. A. Brown for boring a well: "6½ days at \$15, \$97.50; 54 2-3 feet pipe at 28 cents, \$15.37." It was ordered paid, and the matter of completing the well was left with the committee.

In 1917, the society agreed to pay one-quarter of the cost of a four foot granolithic side-walk from the southern limit of the corporation of Dresden along the Agricultural Society grounds, to a point 160 feet more or less south of the southern limit of said grounds, on condition that the town of Dresden, Camden township and the P. M. Railway contribute an equal amount.

At a meeting in 1918, a motion was made (T.N. Wells - Wm. George) that, providing a fair was held that year, a new fence be built across the front of the grounds; the other fences be repaired with material from the old fence; and the sidewalk be repaired along the fair grounds, with Camden Township to be asked for aid in repairing said sidewalk. The secretary was instructed to notify the P.M.R.R. that the society had sustained a loss to the fence by fire caused by said railroad.

In 1919, the grounds committee reported having thirty-eight dead trees cut down and replaced by young ones. For several years, Dann McClure had been allowed to use the fair grounds for pasture for a small sum, on condition that he kept them in good order. In 1919, the committee recommended that he be allowed to use inside the track for pasture for one or two cows, and to cut the hay outside the track for \$33. At the same meeting, the committee was ordered to build a ticket and secretary's offices. The old office was later sold to T. N. Wells, who had tendered \$17 for it; with Ben Smith offering \$15; and Wm. George, \$16. The roof of the main building was also re-touched in 1919.

The Dresden Gun Club had been using the fair grounds for their meets, but in 1920, it was voted that the secretary notify them to remove their trap at once and do no more shooting on the fair grounds (H. J. French - J. T. Holmes). Canny bargaining is seen in an offer by the Fair Board to make a grant of \$25 toward cost of sprinkling the 4th concession, from the town limits to the P.M.R.R. tracks, if the residents who benefit procure fifteen new members for the society.

## THE OFFICIALS

We must not omit mention of the officials of the society during the decade, 1911-1920. The presidents were, for consecutive terms: T. N. Wells, 2; H. J. French, 2; John Holmes, 3; M. S. Blackburn, 1; and William George, 2. The secretary for the whole period was J. T. Bridgewater, his tenure of the position being made official in 1911, Arthur Smith being deceased. The treasurer was J. B. Carscallen for 1911 and 1912, succeeded in 1913 by Roy Carscallen. He resigned in March of the same year, and J. T. Bridgewater was given the combined position of secretary treasurer.

The matter of sending delegates to the Ontario Fair Association meetings in Toronto, varied in different years, but it was finally ratified that two delegates should go, at the society's expense, if the directors so decided ( and the budget so provided!). During revision of prize lists in 1918, the directors voted that a rule be placed in the regulations, requiring pedigrees to be produced if asked for by the judges, in livestock classes. We gasp at a motion in July, 1917, that the secretary put a notice in the Dresden Times that any person or persons burying the carcasses of any dead animals on the fair grounds would be prosecuted.

## FINANCES

For the Camden Township Agricultural Society, the second decade of the twentieth century was one of progress, as they were then in a financial position to make long-needed repairs; also to erect some very necessary buildings. In 1911, they paid, with interest, the note for \$200 which had been outstanding for several years. The financial statements at subsequent annual meetings usually showed a balance on hand of about \$300, except in 1913, when the balance was \$1,042. On two occasions they were forced to borrow a small sum, due to heavy expenditure for buildings, but these loans

were quickly paid off. The amount paid out annually for prize money increased during the decade to nearly \$800 in 1918.

Each year tenders were called for the rent of the track, usually by the Dresden Driving Club, for as high as \$65 a year; for the rent of the pasture and for the sale of the hay, which brought as high as \$50, in 1917, from Henry Talbot. An innovation is seen in a motion in 1913, by T. N. Wells and seconded by William George, that the price of advertising space on the pole fence be \$2 for 16 foot lengths opposite the grandstand, and \$1 for 16 foot lengths on the balance of the fence.

At the annual meeting in 1911, a communication was read regarding protection against rainy weather or snow storms at exhibitions, and the society voted in favour of this kind of insurance. Apparently the 1914 fair was disrupted by rain, as the directors voted to grant \$10 to the baseball club and \$5 to the football club to defray their expenses in connection with games on fair day. In 1916, a letter was received from the treasury department of Ontario, enclosing a grant of \$300 for wet weather insurance.

We are reminded that the First World War was in progress at this time, when we read in 1917 of a grant by the society of \$25 to the British Red Cross. Other interesting expenses were: dinners for the Oungah ball team (if they played ball); livery hire, to A. Paupst; bus fare to G. Pelton and to B. Barber; and fifty complimentary tickets for representatives of neighbouring fair boards and municipal councils.

A mystery is indicated in the minutes by this motion: H.J. French - W. Holmes. "That in recognition of his past services and owing to the fact of his having volunteered for active service that we shall not be able to have him with us during this year, he be elected honorary president of this society." Carried. Elected, he was, but no where in the minutes is he named!

## REVISION OF PRIZE LISTS

During the decade from 1911 to 1920, the prize lists remained practically unchanged, though a few details are of interest to us, in retrospect. In 1911, the secretary received a communication from the Central Business College, Toronto, suggesting that the society offer prizes for penmanship; so they decided to give two prizes to Third Book pupils for handwriting. At the next meeting they rescinded the motion, and changed it to three prizes for pupils of Third and Fourth Books. (Probably to placate perturbed pedagogues!)

The position of corn in today's crop picture is presaged when the society, in entering the Standing Field Crop competition, stipulated in 1911 and thereafter that the crop grown be corn. In 1912, the secretary was instructed to write to the Ontario Agricultural College, at Guelph, and enquire the best variety of potato to grow in Kent County. Evidently the answer named the Rural New Yorker, for all other potatoes were struck off the prize list, and prizes of \$5, \$3, and \$2 were given, along with a special prize of \$5 for the recommended kind. In 1916, however, Rural New Yorkers were themselves struck off the prize list, and prizes given "for the best early and best late varieties."

When the prize list was revised in 1912, one recommendation of the committee was that "a pair of fat steers" be struck off the list; but this did not meet with the approval of the other directors, and was voted down on a motion by James Langstaffe and S. P. Sturgis. Then, after the 1913 fair, a pair of fat steers figured in a protest by Chester A. Watson against the award of the prize for the same to Albert Elgie. The protest was sustained, and Mr. Watson received first prize; but it must have been for the glory, for the first prize was only \$2, and the second prize, \$1!

The society had three expert judges each year, for livestock, with local judges in other departments. Some of these were during this period: poultry, Allan Hornick; grain, Sandy McVean; roots, Frank Watson; horticulture, Joseph Ripley; dairy, John S. Baker.

The first mention of a baby show at Dresden Fair, was in 1915, when the president, John Holmes, was appointed director in charge of it. All reminiscent of those

war years was the buying in 1915 of a flag, to be flown on the main building; the I.O.D.E. having a booth in 1915, and a tag day in 1916; and among applications for attractions for the fair, a letter from the Bishop-Barker Aeroplane Co., Ltd.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

The rules and regulations of Camden Township Agricultural Society, having been evolved and established by circumstances, were, in most cases, well-founded and permanent. But experience gained through the passing years sometimes indicated a need for their revision and amplification. In 1913, a committee of five was appointed to revise them and to report at the next meeting. Their report required few changes to be made, and largely confirmed existing practises. However, one important recommendation was that in the fine arts and fancy work classes, no article be allowed to be exhibited at more than two annual exhibitions. In the next year, a further stipulation was made in the afore mentioned classes: that exhibits in it be only from the usual three townships, with the addition of Sombra Township, and from the towns and villages in these townships.

## THE YEARS 1921 - 1930 A New Main Hall Arises

In studying the minute books of the Camden Township Agricultural Society, we notice and deplore in each succeeding decade increasing trend to brevity. This is partly because in the natural culmination of events, plans become accomplished facts, requiring no explanation or comment. But it is also undeniably to the modern tendency of using words merely as tools, not as instruments, as our fore-fathers handled them, creating harmonies of sound and thought. To them, writing was a talent no less pleasant than reading, and it is indeed a discordant note that we, while priding ourselves on the mechanical accomplishments of this age, fail to discern how inept we are in manual skills. This brevity serves to make increasingly difficult the presentation of this account in an interesting form and without repetition of details from past decades. However, the decade between 1921 and 1930, would seem to have been a twice-favoured period, with the Great War and its tensions over, and the Great Depression not yet begun.

The Dresden Fair Board of directors found this an opportune moment to take stock of their assets, and found that the most pressing need was to repair the roof of the horse stable at the fair grounds. This was followed by the renewal of the insurance on the buildings, which were named and valued as: stable, \$600; cattle shed, \$200; and the main hall, \$500; with no mention of a poultry building.

A modern fair building now seemed to be the next requirement, and at the directors' meeting following the 1921 fair, this motion was made: "Russel Holmes - Sam Sharpe. That the directors for 1922 sell the main building and erect an up-to-date hall." Early in 1922, Frank Watson, Sam Sharpe, the president E. L. Sharpe, and the secretary, H. J. French, were named as a committee to sell the main building. A week later they reported having sold it to Charlie Hasson for \$500. Another committee of six members was then instructed to view some buildings at other points, to decide what kind of hall it would be best to erect. In May tenders were called for a building 36 x 120 feet, with the foundation to be put in as soon as possible, and the earth for raising the floor put in first. Tenders were received for the cement work from A. Hoyles for \$710, and from George Clark for \$840, with the tender of Art Hoyles being accepted. Sam Sharpe was appointed inspector to see the foundation and floor put in according to the agreement.

The tender of Laird Bros. was accepted for lumber and other material for the building and the grounds committee was given power to erect the hall and complete it

according to the plans submitted. At a meeting in July it was moved by Alex Blackburn and seconded by Laurie Wells that two cement chimneys be built on the agricultural building. It was to be lit by electricity, and arrangements were made to have the wiring done. Another motion that was carried unanimously was that we forward a vote of thanks to A. A. French (architect) for his generous donation of the plans for the new building. A cement approach was built in front of the hall, and shelves and partitions were put in. The glass over the east end doors was to be plain and double thick; a stove was purchased at a cost of \$18 and Caister Bros. were hired to do the painting.

We read of the hall being used for a dance put on by the I.O.D.E. in 1924; by the Business Girls in 1925, and by the Dresden Ball Club in 1926, but thereafter the Fair Board used it themselves for fair night dances, with two orchestras mentioned being the Lambton Serenaders and Jubilee Boys. The hall was rented to the school board for use on field days, and in 1910 was rented to the Dominion Cannery as additional storage space.

In 1925 a lot was sold on the north-east corner of the fair grounds to Mr. Walter Steeper for \$300. The next year they agreed to purchase half enough wire to put up a line fence between Mr. Leeper and Mrs. L. Vandusen. In 1927 a committee was appointed to see about building another cattle shed 'in anticipation of a three-day fair.'

In 1928 a deputation from the Dresden Baseball Club asked for the use of the diamond at the fair grounds, and this was granted, on condition that they give the Society one ball game free of charge. They were allowed to level the outfield to their satisfaction, and to re-arrange the diamond. A carload of crushed stone was purchased by the fair board in 1928.

## REVISION OF PRIZE LISTS AND PROGRAMS

The prize lists for Dresden Fair were reviewed each year and if necessary, revised, although few changes are mentioned during this period. However, the year 1922 saw the beginning of a feature that became very popular: a garden display by schools in Chatham, Camden and Dawn Townships, with prizes of \$5, 4, 3 and 2 for any section exhibiting and not sharing in the prize money. Thomas Skinner was appointed director for this class, other later directors being Morley Myers and G. V. Robinson, for this decade. In 1924 it was moved by D. G. Sturgis - Roy Houston, that no prize money should be retained (as membership fees) from school fair exhibits.

Of interest is a motion made after the 1922 fair by Fred Steeper - Alex Blackburn, that Clem. Gordon be paid 50 cents as a special prize for sweet potatoes grown in Dresden in 1922. After the 1924 fair it was voted to pay Jas. Bedell \$1.25 as a prize on horse shoes.

The society entered the Field Crop competition nearly every year, at first in corn, but in 1926 two kinds of grain were to be grown, oats being added. In 1927 it was suggested that the secretary write the Department to see if tobacco could be selected as one of the crops; and if not, to grow barley along with oats.

Another annual consideration was to obtain judges for the different classes. Up to now, three departmental judges had been hired, and in 1923 departmental lady judges were requested for fine arts and ladies' work. In 1925 the number of departmental judges was increased to five, though for horticulture, John Gibson was chosen, with Mr. Thomas Coneybear for roots.

For entertainment at the fair, a committee was appointed each year, with a grant of money to cover expenses. In 1923 it was moved (E. L. Sharpe - D. G. Sturgis) that the society should try to obtain a merry-go-round for the fair, and that a band should be hired, for not more than forty dollars, either from Dresden or Turnerville. In 1930 a horse shoe pitching contest was mentioned.

Pulling matches for teams of horses were first mentioned in 1926, when James Currie and Sam Wallace were put in charge of them. In 1926 it was decided to offer a trophy for a tug-of-war from Camden, Chatham and Dawn Townships. This must not have been too successful, as it was later proposed to give the trophy to the softball champions of Kent County.

Always popular were the baseball games, also softball; a game of the latter being voted for (James Currie - J. G. Harries) between Kent and Lambton County Councils.

Very amusing was the novelty car race first mentioned in 1928 (J. C. Craven - C. Sturgis) for cars of a value of \$100.00, to change a tire (in front of the grandstand) each half mile, till all four tires are changed. Also mentioned that year was a bicycle race for New Canadians, and a midway put on by the Palmer Shows Co. A committee each year canvassed the citizens and merchants of Dresden for special prizes, for which they tendered a vote of appreciation; also one of thanks for municipal grants.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

At the annual meeting, 1922, it was voted that the president, E. L. Sharpe, and the vice-president, Roy Houston, be captains of two teams to try to get more members for the society; losers to feed the winners. Each director was to take three books of membership tickets to sell. In 1923, permission was received from J. Lockie Wilson for the appointment of three additional directors to the board, bringing the number allowed to 12.

In March, 1924, a communication was received re a county fair association, and the towns and villages of Kent sent delegates to an organization meeting in Harrison Hall, Chatham. A survey was made to arrive at some uniform fee to be charged at the gate; also to regulate the prices for privileges and attractions; and to establish average amounts for prizes.

Apparently by 1925, the voice of the tourist was heard in the land, because in that year it was moved that the Agricultural grounds be free to tourists for camping, south of the track; and no one was to camp across or on the track.

In 1926, it was moved (J. G. Harris - Walter Weese) that the society hold a 3-day fair; but at a meeting in April the same two directors moved that their previous motion in regard to a three-day fair be rescinded. However, a third day was added in 1927 and thereafter.

During this period the weather proved rather temperamental at fair time, as shown by the entry in October, 1928: "The secretary presented a partial statement of the fair in September, it being quite satisfactory, considering weather conditions." The matter of rain insurance was mentioned in 1927, when it was moved (W. Weese - A. Blackburn) that the society take \$400 rain insurance for two days, 3 hours each day, from noon to three o'clock.

Feminism seems to have attacked the society by 1929 judging by a motion at the annual meeting, (Roy Houston - Wilfred Shaw): "In reference to ladies being on the board of directors, that it be left to the new board to name a satisfactory member at our next regular meeting." Their choice was soon apparent when we read the list of directors and their classes, ending "Ladies Dept., J. George Harris; assistant, Miss Hannah Ellis."

## FINANCES

The financial standing of the Agricultural Society is rarely stated definitely in the minute book during this decade, except that in 1925, the balance was given as \$292.47; and in 1926, \$506.41. They still received a small revenue from renting the track to the Dresden Driving Club, and later to various men who were interested in horses: R. Farnsworth, James Elgie, Beecher Henson and Ed Bassett.

In 1921, we read that arrangements were to be made with Mr. J. T. Holmes regarding the note owing to him, and that another hundred dollars was to be borrowed to meet current expenses. The decision in 1922, to build a new main building, made necessary the borrowing of a large sum of money. The Finance Committee arranged to borrow \$4,000 from Mr. H.C. Burrows, but it was obligatory to hold a special meeting to ratify the transaction. After the finance committee had presented their report, it was moved by Dr. H. S. McDonald and seconded by Rainsford George, that \$4000 be borrowed from H.C. Burrows, at six per cent; the full amount to be paid up in five years.

Faced with this large debt, the society felt it expedient to do everything possible to add to their revenue. They planned an annual celebration, preferably on Civic Holiday. In 1925, it was decided to have the fair on July 1st, and a deputation was appointed to wait on the county council to request a grant, it being the society's fiftieth anniversary. For the same reason, they asked the municipal councils for double grants for 1925. Most ambitious was the Jubilee celebration on July 1, 1927, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Confederation.

In 1928, it was voted to get advertisements from different sources for the prize lists. Other sources of revenue mentioned in the minutes were race meets, ball games and dances. In 1928, it was moved by George Lawrence and seconded by George Harris, that the secretary write Jack Miner to see when he could give a lecture for the society, and his terms for the same.

## OFFICERS

During the decade between 1921 and 1930, the men who occupied the position of president of the Camden Township Agricultural Society were E.L. Sharpe, 4 years; Roy N. Houston, 2 years; and C. J. Craven, 2 years. For secretary treasurer, J. T. Bridgewater still held the position in 1921, with H. J. French as assistant, who became the official tenant of the office in 1922, continuing throughout the decade.

In 1924, the position of honorary president was established, with John Holmes the incumbent; and Wm. George in 1925. In 1927, two honorary presidents were named, Samuel Sharpe and John T. Holmes.

## THE YEARS 1931 - 1940 Prize Lists and Programs

In entering upon the decade between 1931 and 1940, we find it a period in direct contrast to the previous decade which we had termed most fortunate in that the First World War was past and the depression not yet begun. This new era, however, began with the depression and ended among the chaos of the Second World War, and yet, in it, the Camden Agricultural Society displayed ambition and accomplishment to a degree difficult to compress in the bonds of a narrative. If to some, these notes seem to reach a burdensome length, or to others, some remembered fact seems omitted, the explanation is that the minutes of the society for this ten years fill nearly three whole books, of over a hundred pages each.

In the prize lists and programs of the society during this era, we see the aspirations of the directors and members reach new heights, with many innovations and additions to their accustomed attractions. And to all who assisted in any way they accorded the courtesy of a vote of thanks - two persons mentioned in this connection in 1931 being Mrs. William King and Mr. Joe Saint. In this year they interviewed the Sarnia and Lambton Fair Association in respect to setting the fair dates, and later joined the association. In the celebration of Dresden's golden jubilee as a town in 1931, the society participated actively. Advertising by radio is first mentioned in July of that year.

A foal club was organized in 1932 with 21 entrants; and other attractions mentioned for that year were water sports on Civic Holiday, and pony races, calf races and car races at the fair. In 1933, a calf club was started, with 17 members. For the Field Crop competition that year, the crop grown was barley; the Brewers' Association having offered to sponsor the same. It was voted also, that sugar beets should form a special display by themselves. A motion (Morley Myers - Robert Latimer) was passed that there be a tandem exhibition of teams at the fair. The Department of Agriculture notified the society that they were no longer supplying expert judges and that the society should take steps to choose suitable ones. Mr. Sandy McVean offered a special prize for the best lamb on a halter, exhibited by a boy or girl under 12 years of age. A sawing match was also planned for the 1933 fair, with Alex Blackburn in charge and the

secretary was instructed to send programs to Muncey and Moraviantown. The efficiency of this idea is shown in the minutes of the meeting after the fair, which gave as winners of the sawing match: 1st prize, the Indians; 2nd (donated by the society), Lawrence and Blackburn; 3rd, Ed O'Neill and Jenkins; 4th, Lorne Richards and R. Hughson. For showing the lamb on the halter the prizes were: \$2.50 to William Myers Jr.; and \$3.00 to Harold Leeper's two girls. The secretary was instructed to write and thank the Reeves of Dover and Dawn for their assistance in helping to entertain the public, particularly in the tug of war contest.

In 1934, a communication was received in regard to a Bacon Hog competition, and it was signed with an attraction company to put on an evening performance on two nights of the fair, with fireworks on the last night. The secretary was to make arrangements to have the fair opened by J. A. Carroll, and, if possible, the Hon. Mr. Marshall, the new Minister of Agriculture.

A decided innovation was encountered in July, 1934, when it was decided to accept the Beauty Prize contest sent out by the Border Cities Star, and to have it put on in front of the grandstand at the celebration on August 6th, the committee in charge being Robert Latimer, Walter Dynes and James Currie. Mr. Morrison Irwin later sent the thanks of the society for his generous donation to all parties taking part in the beauty contest on Civic Holiday. A sound system was engaged for the 1934 fair at a cost of \$30 and the government was asked to send provincial police to attend the fair.

At the annual meeting in 1935 Mr. D. L. McCreary, who won the first prize in the Field Crop competition in 1934, gave a talk on the importance of good seed grain, and a letter was read from J. A. Carroll congratulating the society on having such a successful fair. The prize lists and programs for 1935 were much the same as in previous years, except that a prize of five dollars was offered for both days and evenings for the best

#### CAMDEN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY MEMBERS - 1931



This photo shows the officers and directors of the Camden Agricultural Society of an earlier time. Many of these men served on the board in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Seated, from left: William Johnston, Ben Clapp, J. Gibson, S. Sharpe, J. Holmes, S. Wallace, I. Bedford, H. French and R. Brandon. Standing, from left: E.W. Slaght, Verne Robinson, Wilfred Shaw, R. Tyhurst, C.J. Craven, G. Harris, R. Houston, G. Lawrence and Morley Myers.

clown, he to perform as he thinks best for entertainment purposes. The result of the contest is given in the minutes of the meeting following the fair, in the motion 'that we pay Alex Blackburn \$10. and Swift, Craig and Parker \$5. as entertainers at the fair'.

In 1936 J. A. Garner, Kent County Agricultural Representative, and G. W. Foster, of the Dominion Livestock branch addressed the society in regard to holding a Bacon Hog fair on one of the days of Dresden fair. The society voted in favor of holding it on the first day of the fair, and that (as the secretary expressed it, with unconscious humor), 'as many as possible of the pigs shown be requested to remain over for the two show days'. Later it was found that the proposed Bacon Hog fair would conflict with London Fair, so it was laid over for another year.

In 1934, we see the name of the society changed to The Camden - Dresden Agricultural Society, apparently by common consent, as no motion to that effect appears in the minutes, though in 1936, it was voted that the secretary write the Department in Toronto regarding the change of name.

At the meeting in April, 1934, a committee from Dresden council presented a report that they were authorized to reach an amicable settlement for the use of the council hall by the fair board and the use of the fair grounds by the town. R. E. Carscallen acted as spokesman and a verbal agreement was reached; each party to have the use of the other's property free of charge, for at least 3 nights for the hall, and the town to have the use of the fair grounds any time they want it, outside of times it might be required for the society's use.

In July, 1934, it was decided that associate directors should be added, and eight men were named as such. Another regulation put in force at this meeting, was that in the classes for poultry, no person or firm be allowed to show any more than 3 breeds.

Due to having experienced much rainy weather, it was moved in December, 1935, by F. Houston - Wilfred Shaw, that the board send a recommendation to the annual meeting, asking them to hold the fair one week earlier in 1936. At a meeting in June, 1936, held to discuss and revise the prize lists, the rule was made to limit the number of entries in the Ladies' Department to twenty articles, and to include this rule in the prize list.

There had been considerable discussion in the society in regard to renting the main building for different functions, and the amount to be charged for each. In June, 1936, it was moved by R. Carscallen - J. Currie, that the pavilion at the fair grounds be not rented for dances. The Dresden Band was given the use of the building for a mass concert on July 27th, and it was also used for a banquet sponsored by the Masonic lodge, and for one put on by the Kent Plowmen's Association. In 1937, it was decided to have entertainment on all three nights of the fair, and in 1938, they voted to no longer rent the fair grounds for pasture.

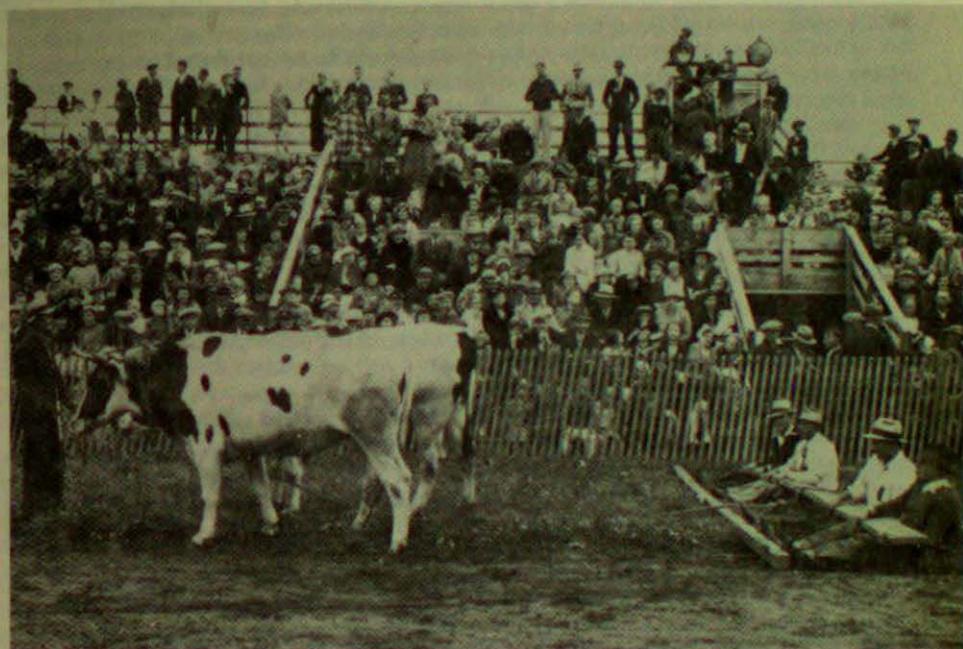
At the annual meeting in 1939, J. A. Garner, Agricultural Representative for Kent County, gave an address on the T.B. test for cattle, and after some discussion a committee was appointed, consisting of R. F. Houston and Verne Robinson. Several members offered to canvass and get petitions signed, in accordance with requirements of the Husbandry branch, Department of Agriculture, and thus bring Camden Township in with other townships, in order that the whole County of Kent might comply with T.B. requirements.

In July, 1939, recognition is given the town's other newspaper, in a motion by Amos Pegg - George Kerr, that the printing committee have the prize lists printed at the Dresden Times office, and the balance of the printing at the Dresden News office.

The continued expansion of the society is shown in 1939, when it was moved by R. Latimer - G. Lawrence, that the secretary write J. A. Carroll for the privilege of having 15 directors elected for the Camden Dresden Agricultural Society in 1940; which permission was received.

At a meeting in July, 1936, Mrs. S. Williams and Mrs. Dunlop were present, in the interests of the Women's Institute. They spoke of the work the Institutes were doing, and the Society granted 25 dollars toward awards for W. I. displays of 10 articles each, with Mrs. Williams in charge of the class. Two additions to the prize list for this year were yokes of oxen and twin colts.

## OXEN PULLING CONTEST AT DRESDEN FAIR - 1937



One of the highlights of the 1937 edition of the Dresden Fair was an oxen pulling contest as depicted in this photo. The man at the head of the oxen (presumably the owner) is unidentified, but the men on the other end of the pulling contest were, from left, Lorne Hughson, George Lawrence, Bob Latimer and Harold Leeper.

For 1937 the only items different from previous years was a donkey baseball game, and allowing the Rod and Gun Club to put up a trap on the fair grounds.

In April, 1938, we find the Society doing honour to two of its older members, John T. Holmes and J.B. Clapp, it being Mr. Holmes' 80th birthday, at a special meeting in the Dresden council chambers. After a short session of business, Mr. L.G. Wells, on behalf of the Fair Board, made a presentation to Mr. Holmes and Mr. Clapp, and a lunch was served by some of the members, assisted by police chief Archie Blackburn. One item of business at this meeting was the reading of a letter from Premier Hepburn, acknowledging receipt of their invitation to attend Dresden Fair, and promising to show his horses there. It was decided to invite also, Mr. P. M. Dewan, Minister of Agriculture.

Before the fair, complimentary tickets were sent to the papers in London, Windsor and Chatham, with the request for special reporters to attend. The minute book says that the 1938 fair was a success, financially and otherwise.

In the report of the annual meeting in 1939, one cannot help smiling when we read that G. V. Robinson, in speaking of the system of prices for hydro, 'stressed the beautification of Holmes'! In the field crop competition which that year was on corn, it was decided that each contestant should be required to enter a bushel of corn at the fair, or receive only half of any prize won on the field crop itself.

In 1939 it was voted to ask Wilfred Craven to exhibit his prize-winning mare, Betty B. 2nd, at Dresden Fair for two days, this mare having been judged one of the ten outstanding horses of America. It was also decided to offer prizes of 30 and 20 dollars for exhibits of six-horse teams, none of the horses to be exhibited in any other class. Prizes were again given for tobacco, both light and dark. Colonel Drew was invited to open the fair that year.

In 1940 the field crop sponsored by the Society was yellow hybrid corn. The District Fairs Association had been invited to hold their 1940 meeting at Dresden, and a committee was appointed to make arrangements. The Red Cross was asked to have an exhibit at the fair. A request for permission to sell tickets on a car at the fair was refused, but the Kinsmen were allowed to solicit a collection there, to buy comforts for the boys overseas. Beginning with the year 1938 an agricultural diploma was each year given by the Society to some member who had shown outstanding devotion to the Society's interests. At the annual meeting 1940 the president, R. F. Houston made reference to G. Verne Robinson being president of the Fairs Association of Ontario, as an honor to the Camden Agricultural Society.

### RULES AND REGULATIONS

Though it began in a time of depression, the decade between 1931 and 1940 brought to the Camden Agricultural Society a great burgeoning of enthusiasm and hopes. This was shown by the many additions and changes in the prize lists and programs, and was carried through into the rules and regulations by which the society governs its activities.

In 1931, at a meeting to revise the prize lists it was moved (J. B. Clapp - Clarence Webster) that a reduction of ten per cent be made in prizes for cattle, sheep and hogs, in classes where there was no competition. Also in 1931, it was decided to distribute free tickets to the schools in the locality, 2,500 tickets being ordered.

After the election of the officers at the annual meeting in 1933, a motion was made by W. Shaw - E. Thompson, "that the directors for 1933 bring in a recommendation of zoning of directors for next year, so that we may have a more equal division of our territory in regard to directors being located in different sections so that we may get more people interested; this report to be read before the next annual election." (Carried). As a result of this motion, at a meeting early in January, 1934, it was moved (R. Latimer - W. J. Foster) that a nominating committee be appointed, consisting of M. Myers, C. J. Craven, R. G. Tyhurst and the president, to recommend a number of directors from each of these municipalities: Chatham Township, Dresden, Camden, and Dawn and Sombra together, and report on the day of the annual meeting, January 20th. At the annual meeting, the nominating committee presented a list of names from each of the four municipalities, and three directors for each were elected from the lists presented. This was apparently successful, but at the annual meeting in 1935 it was decided to revert to the old system of electing the directors, i.e. with nominations from the floor and voting by ballot.

### BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE

In driving through any section of our beautiful land, we are prone to judge any farmer in the country, or any home in the town, by the appearance of his property, most especially his buildings. Likewise, it is not inaccurate to infer progress and prosperity for the Camden Agricultural Society from the fine array of buildings at the fair grounds. These have been achieved through years of hard work and co-operation by members, and even in the last 20 years, much had been accomplished. These changes are evident from the list of the buildings and their insured value, as given in the minutes of November 6th, 1934. It was moved by C. J. Craven and W. J. Foster, to insure all the buildings at the fair grounds as follows: on the main building, \$2500; large cattle barn, \$300; smaller one, \$200; grandstand, \$200; office, \$100; horse stable, \$500; sheep and pig house, \$200.

In July, 1931, the grounds committee was instructed to put on gravel from the road gate to the main building, providing it did not cost over \$50. Horse races were held on October 12th of that year, and a special meeting was called later to see about having the track put into better shape. This meeting began with a vote of thanks to Mr. Joe Saint and to the Hydro staff, with cigars to be sent later. After considerable discussion the grounds committee was given power to fix the track and to secure any help needed. The meeting closed with another vote of thanks to John Gibson Sr., for his liberal donation of melons, (the vote was carried by hearty applause).

In 1933, the ball diamond needed improvement, so an arrangement was made whereby the fair board was to repair the seats, and the ball club the diamond and nets; with no charge to the ball club for the use of the fair grounds, but they were to put on a free game on fair day. The lighting system was improved and extended on the grounds and in the buildings.

Attempts were made to increase the size of the fair grounds itself by trying again in 1934 and in 1940, to buy from Charles Stephens the acre of ground rented from him, in order to proceed with repairs on the fence. In 1935, a committee was appointed to interview the Pere Marquette Railway, releasing a portion of the railroad property between the fair grounds, from Highway 21 to the grandstand or farther.

Early in 1934, a very worthwhile project was initiated with the naming of a committee, consisting of W. J. Foster, G. W. Lawrence and C. J. Craven, to investigate the advisability of purchasing a seed cleaner for the district. The result of their efforts is shown in the speech of Mr. D. L. McCreary, who acted as chairman for the 1935 annual meeting, and who won the first prize in the Field Crop competition the previous year, and also in a talk by Mr. Robert Forsythe, congratulating the society on securing the grain cleaner established in the Dresden Flour Mill.

The grandstand was now in need of repair, as well as being inadequate in size. A committee was appointed by the president, G.V. Robinson, to ascertain the cost of building a new one, but their findings must have been unfavorable, as a piece was built on the east end of the old grandstand, in 1935. In 1936, another \$200 insurance was put on it; and in 1937, it was decided to enlarge the west end to conform with the piece put on the east end.

With the greatly increased number of entries at the fair, it was soon necessary to provide more accommodation; mention being made of the hiring in 1932, of three tents from the Windsor Tent Co., at a cost of \$81.50; and in 1934, of a tent 30 x 40, for chickens. In 1937, the grounds committee was empowered to proceed with the erection of an addition to the cattle barn; also to change the gate at the entrance, near the grandstand.

In October, 1937, a motion was made by James Skinner - R. E. Carscallen, that a committee be given power to look over some buildings on the old Thamesville fair grounds and to purchase same, providing price and quality were satisfactory. At the next meeting the committee gave their report and made a recommendation that the society purchase from T. Pat George the building 24 x 70, at the price of \$175. Their report was endorsed and it was voted to buy the building for a cattle barn, and to place it about 35 feet east of the existing cow barn. It was moved from Thamesville on January 25th, 1938, set on a cement foundation, and finished complete for cattle.

At a meeting following the 1938 fair, it was moved by William Foster - R. E. Carscallen, that the society erect a new horse barn, and make provision for a poultry house in the upper part of the same. Five members were named to find a suitable plan and the probable cost of a barn 32 x 100 feet. Their report was favorably received at the next meeting, and it was voted to erect a new horse barn east of the old stable, and shed a sufficient distance to make it convenient and handy to the show ring. For the poultry room upstairs, 50 new cages were ordered from the Watford Wire Works.

At the annual meeting in 1939, donations were made by various members, of cash and materials for the new horse barn, the cement foundation for which was already built and contractor paid. In April, it was reported that the progress of the work on the new barn was satisfactory.

The secretary, H. J. French, was given instructions to put \$1500 insurance on the new building, also \$500 on the contents of the buildings; the premium to run in opposite years to former insurance.

In May, the building committee was given power to put a second stairway on the new building, at the south west corner, five feet wide. When finished the building was painted, and repairs were made to the roofs of other barns. A free dance was held in the new horse barn, to which the retiring president R. F. Houston referred at the annual meeting in 1940, as "valued at \$2500 and all paid for through the generosity of the community in which we operate."

## FINANCES

Anyone who has read in the preceding chapters of the great progress of the Camden Agricultural Society, will not find it unreasonable to infer that the question of finances must have been to the society an omnipresent challenge. It is however, gratifying to find that they seemed to have the situation well in hand, being in this decade indebted only for the money borrowed from Mr. H. C. Burrows, with which they built the fine new main building. On this they were nearly every year able to pay the interest and to make a payment on the principal. At each annual meeting, the financial statement was read, showing usually a balance, though modest, the highest being \$422.00, as shown in 1931.

In beginning each year, the society's first income was from membership fees. In order to increase this, sides were chosen, with captains, and a drive for members held, culminating in the winning side being treated to a dinner by the losing side. For instance, in 1931, Amos Pegg and Laurie Wells were captains, with Mr. Wells' team winning by 143 to 54. Verne Robinson getting the highest number, 41; and John Holmes was second with 35. A chicken supper was put on at the Queen's Hotel, under management of Charles Nixon. The guests, in addition to the directors, being Mayor Weese, James A. Currie, Warden of Lambton County; Chief Cecil Babcock, and Robert Brandon, auditor.

Speeches by the above were optimistic and instructive, expressing the belief that Dresden Fair had a bright future. L. G. Wells sang and J. A. Currie recited. A short business meeting followed, with the most important item being that a deputation from the fair board was appointed to meet delegates from other organizations to see about a celebration for 1931, it being the golden jubilee of Dresden's incorporation as a town.

The society now felt justified in making charge for space used by non-competitive displays; also exhibits for advertising purposes. For the use of the fair grounds for celebrations put on by other organizations, a fee was set. Other sources of income from the fairs in this decade were the fee of 25 cents, charged for each automobile parked on the grounds; and the charge made for the grandstand at night as well as in the afternoon, when the society began having a program at night too.

The grants from the municipalities and the department were gratefully received, though it was felt that the provincial grant, a percentage based on the amount paid out for prize money should be increased, and a petition to that effect was sent in 1931. In 1938 also, they got down to brass tacks by nominating the president and vice president to interview Premier Hepburn and J. A. Carroll, in reference to the 1937 grant. In June, 1938, the fair grounds were leased by the Union Gas Company for \$25. a year and regular conditions.

## OFFICIALS

During this decade, we see established the pattern of the vice president moving up to the office of president, which ensured that each holder of the office was experienced in the business of the society. In these ten years, the presidents were R.G. Tyhurst, George H. Lawrence and R.F. Houston, for terms of two years each and G.V. Robinson for three years. For 1940, we find W.J. Foster elected as president in January. Following Mr. Foster's death, the vice president, Robert Latimer succeeded into office in March. For all this decade, the Camden Agricultural Society was still faithfully served by H.J. French as secretary-treasurer.

## THE YEARS 1941 - 1950 Prize Lists and Programs

As we turn our eyes to the new decade, 1941 to 1950, we see a world at war, to which, from many homes in the community, strong sons had gone to take their places in the armies of democracy, counting it fortunate that they could keep from their homeland the scourge of death and devastation which had so ravaged the lands overseas. And no less, those who stayed behind had their duty to perform in factory or on the farm, to keep arms and food moving to the scenes of action. While some might question the need for fairs in such grim times, it would have seemed ill-considered to let fall into disuse all that which the society had for so many years laboured, knowing as they did that those in the service cherished the hope of returning to an unchanged scene, to start their lives anew.

So, by planning only one year at a time, the show went on despite war-time restrictions. Moreover public morale reached a new high of courage and spirit as is inspired by the example of those who fought, and if the need be, died.

This resurgence of strength and accomplishment brought to the Camden Agricultural Society an ever-increasing rise in the quantity and quality of the exhibits at their fair, with consequent obligations for increased accommodation and improved service. To the society came a realization that Dresden Fair had grown up, and moreover stood alone in a large territory, with fairs no longer held in Chatham, Wallaceburg or Thamesville. To occupy such a position, it was necessary to go forward, and to do so it was necessary to "keep up with the Joneses," with buildings, programs and prizes comparable to those of other exhibitors.

Each year, delegates were sent to the meetings of the Ontario Fairs Association in Toronto, and in their reports after returning home, they told of the growth of fairs everywhere with recommendations for the improvement of Dresden Fair. One suggestion which they always made was the revision of the prize lists to bring them up to date with modern trends, by adding classes which were more popular or appropriate, and by cutting off exhibits which no longer fitted the times.

As early as 1943, it became increasingly evident that the amounts paid for prizes should be increased. Though this decision may not have been entirely responsible, we find in the minutes of the annual meeting in 1944, that the retiring president, Mr. Lorne Hughson, gave a very satisfactory explanation of the success of the 1943 fair, and praised the community spirit existing in the locality. This was followed by a motion that the prizes be still further increased wherever possible. The following year, the committee in charge of revising the prize lists gave a statement of proposed increases in prizes for various classes. Their recommendations were adopted with an additional \$150 voted for special additions for improving the fair.

All through this decade we see added to the prize lists many innovations which have since become popular. For instance, the baby show which has been very successful ever since it was begun, with a special award made in 1941 for twin babies.

(Omitted on advice of the Department of Health, in 1954, as a precaution against polio.) In the classes for horses an award was begun in 1942 for the best-decorated teams on the grounds; and in 1943, prizes of \$10, \$5 and \$3, were given for saddle horses. In the Ladies' Department it was voted in 1945, that the suggestion of Mrs. V. Robinson for exhibiting a plan for a farm kitchen be embodied in that year's prize list. For the children's classes for the same year, it was voted that arrangements should be made to have the different schools in the community have a parade at Dresden fair. A Hydro exhibit was held in 1947.

The Field Crop Competition was another contest which became very successful, with Camden Agricultural Society first in the province in 1942 in the hybrid corn competition, with 26 entries. Another crop grown for the competition was oats, with mention in 1945 of 200 bushels of seed oats being purchased by the society and handled by Mr. George Lawrence. In 1946, the variety of oats specified was Cartier. Also in this connection, a motion was made in April, 1947, by R. G. Tyhurst - R. E. Carscallen,

that the society accept the offer of the Greenmelk Company with regard to a Field Crop in hay and grass; and that the fair board donate \$35.00 to each of the two crops; 7 prizes for each class; not less than 5 acres to qualify; and there must be at least 10 contestants to enter.

The practise of having at the fair subsidiary shows of purebred livestock of various breeds, has been very successful, with different breeds featured in different years. In 1943, the Hereford Association offered one dollar for each Hereford calf shown in the calf club, the calf having been raised on the farm from which it was shown. In 1944, a committee was named to get in touch with Fred Sands in reference to the Hereford Association exhibiting at the fair, the society being responsible up to \$150 extra prize money for same.

In June of the same year, W. P. Watson, of the livestock branch, made a proposition in reference to having a special Berkshire exhibiton at the fair. It was voted to donate \$145 toward a Berkshire special show at Dresden Fair on same conditions as hog association rules and regulations as submitted.

In February, 1945, it was moved by Harry Pels - W. Shaw, that C. J. Craven try to arrange with the Holstein Association to hold their County exhibiton at Dresden fair. A canny idea was the motion made at a meeting in June of the same year by James Currie - Hugh Sturgis, that prizes of \$15 and \$10 be given for the best senior herd of Holsteins winning at Ridgetown fair, also \$15 and \$10 for the best junior herd, on condition they make a show from the Holstein Association of Kent County at Dresden fair. The association to receive the money from the Dresden fair board after the Camden fair was held.

There was no dearth of ideas for purebred shows at the annual meeting in 1946. Mr. Leonard Herbert spoke in reference to Ayrshire cattle, and Mr. Dan Wallace on Yorkshire hogs and some rules in connection with an exhibiton of the same. Mr. Archie McLachlan referred to the Black Cattle show, and Roy Stevenson spoke on the pony situation.

In February, 1946, the president, Wilfred Shaw, reported that the committee had been successful in arranging for the Shorthorn Association to have their exhibit in Dresden for 1946, the society to pay the sum of \$350 for prizes and also to pay the judge. At a meeting in February, 1947, it was moved that the Society try to have the Yorkshire show at the fair and to give them permission to hold their sale whenever they wished. In March, it was decided to have an exhibit at the fair by the Holstein Cattle Association, A. W. Dick, secretary.

For the 1948 fair, we find plans again being made to have a Yorkshire show, with a vote of thanks being tendered to Mr. Dan Wallace for the work he had done for the fair board for so many years. A communication was received from Mr. J. C. Steckley, secretary of the Yorkshire Breeders Club, requesting that two directors from the society be named on the management committee; and Harry Pels and Lorne Hughson were appointed. At the 1950 annual meeting, Mr. Dan Wallace thanked the society for the use of the grounds for the annual hog sale held in June, 1949, and hoped to have the same privilege in 1950.

Notice was received that the spring fair meeting for District 9 would be held in Belmont, and four delegates were named to attend. A slightly different request came from the National Department of Health and Welfare, asking permission to show at the Dresden Fair, at no cost to the society, a Family Allowance display.

Pulling matches have always been a popular feature at the fair, with a competition for teams weighing 3000 lbs., and under; and one for teams over 3000 pounds. In 1948 and 1949, the society engaged the Tilbury pulling machine, or dynamometer, but reverted to using a stone boat, as being less expensive. Other 1949 attractions for horse lovers were the rodeo show, put on by Adam Harris of Port Huron; and also a speed and action road race.

In 1949, a delegation of several Junior Farmers, headed by Murray Jack, representing the Dover-Chatham Calf Club, waited upon the fair board to ask that their club be allowed to show at the fair. It was voted that their request be entertained, and

that the society donate a prize of \$2 for each calf shown. Mr. Jack attended a fair board meeting in 1950, also, and reported that his organization was well pleased by the previous year's show, and would like to show again in 1950.

In May, 1950, the board gave permission to the Fat Stock show to use the grounds for their show in December, and a committee was appointed to look after the show, with power to act. Harry Pels and Milton Langstaff were delegated to attend the regional sheep meeting in Thamesville. They reported on it at the next meeting but no action was taken in regard to holding the regional sheep show in Dresden that year.

In June, 1950, it was moved by Wilfred Shaw - Harry Pels, that the Optimist Club be given permission to use the fair grounds for their annual soap box derby, and to use the gates as a race course, provided that they were stored away afterward exactly as they were found, since they are numbered. The generosity of the fair board was further shown in a ruling that any serviceman in uniform be admitted to the fair grounds free of charge. In 1946, the use of the grounds was granted to the Race Horse Association and to the Rod and Gun Club. In 1947, a motion was passed that the free use of the grounds be allowed to the Boy Scouts on May 24th, and to the I.O.O.F., if they needed it, in appreciation of their presenting a car to Roy Oliphant.

During this period, Dresden was honored by having many prominent individuals officiate at the opening of the fair. Some of those invited being Dr. Christie, of the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph; the Hon. "Bill" Gordon, Mitchell Hepburn, Harry Nixon, W. P. Macdonald and T. L. Kennedy. While Tory Gregg and Harold King were among those asked to act as announcer.

## OFFICIALS

In 1941, Robert Latimer was president of Dresden Agricultural Society, he having succeeded to the position in March, 1940, after the death of W. J. Foster. Then, following with a two-year term apiece were: Lorne Hughson, Everett Boylan, Wilfred Shaw and Roy Carscallen. In the last year of the decade, 1950, Roy Stevenson succeeded to the office.

The secretary-treasurer for the first five years of this decade was Mr. H. J. French. He succeeded to the position in 1922, which gave him the record of longest service to the society - 24 years. He just narrowly surpassed the tenure of John Chapple, who became secretary when the society was organized in 1875, and was in 1897 succeeded by Arthur Smith, who had been acting secretary during the last years of Mr. Chapple's life.

Mr. French was followed by R. F. Houston, who held the position for about two years, but, due to the pressure of business, relinquished it in 1948 to J. Alex Blackburn, who completed the decade.

## BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE

As we have seen in other phases of the work of the Camden Agricultural Society in this decade, an urgency and an acceleration no doubt engendered by the atmosphere of war, so in the building and maintenance required in this period there was an ever-present compulsion. Task succeeded task, all brought to the fore by the expansion of the society's program, meet-as it did with continued success, and accomplishment of many ambitions.

One ambition accomplished in the initial year of the decade was the acquisition of the acre of land which the society had for so many years rented from Charles Stephens, and had so many times tried to purchase. Apparently Mr. Stephens was deceased by February, 1941, for the secretary was asked to write to Mrs. Carrie Bowen in reference to the purchase of this land. In May, the secretary was instructed to write to a Mr. F. Elliott, regarding the renting or purchase of the land (north of the track), and to send a copy of the agreement with Mr. Stephens. In June we see a further motion that in the matter of securing the land formerly rented from the late Charles Stephens, the society take the necessary steps to appropriate enough for Fair purposes, under the Act dealing

with such matters, and secure a solicitor to take it up and look after the society's interests. This apparently had the desired effect, because at a meeting in July, the committee in charge gave their report in reference to purchasing the F. Elliott property, and were empowered to complete the transaction.

Even with the afore mentioned purchase completed, the fair was still cramped for space, and sought to remedy this by trying in 1941 and 1945, to lease a portion of the Pere Marquette Railway, facing the east and near the station. In November, 1948, it was moved to request from Mr. C. Hartsell, Divisional Engineer of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, the lease of a portion of the railway land, adjoining the Agricultural grounds, namely: a portion of approximately 100 feet frontage on the highway, and 500 feet west from the highway line, to run just north of the well on the C. & O. property; also to request number of years lease and the yearly rent, and to get the sanction of the Railway Co. to place a barbed wire on the top of the fence adjoining the two properties in question. In March, 1949, we read a very brief motion, that the society do not rent any land from the C. & O. Railway; so the price was probably not to their liking.

At the 1942 annual meeting the previous year's fair was described as the best ever held by the society. This encouraged the directors to go on with many improvements, as well as the necessary upkeep, such as re-roofing the south side of the main building in 1947; painting the buildings with 30 gallons of paint purchased from E. McKay at \$3.50 per gallon; piping water to the buildings; running a gas line to the booths under the grandstand; and improving the stables by the addition of stalls (some paid for by Lambton-Kent Horse Breeders Association), and by having them sprayed usually by James Anderson. Fair time itself brought special requirements such as renting tents, hiring a sound system, putting up flood lights, and purchasing a new flag in 1948. In 1942, it was decided to build a judges' stand; and in 1950, a new fence of five foot pickets was built along the front of the fair grounds.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

One would imagine that an organization like the Camden Agricultural Society would have its rules and regulations fairly well established, after nearly 70 years of existence. But time brings changes; so we find in 1941 a major amendment in their system of electing an executive body. Formerly, the president and vice presidents were elected first, then the directors, but in 1941 and thereafter, a board of 15 directors was elected at the annual meeting, and at the directors' meeting immediately after, the officers were elected from the board of directors.

In 1945, the fair board changed the place for their meetings from the town council chambers to the office of the North Kent Mutual Insurance Company. When delegates were being named to the 1946 Fairs Association meeting Toronto, it was moved by R. Carscallen - W. Sands, that a lady delegate also attend the meeting; and Mrs. L. G. Wells and Mrs. V. Robinson were the ladies chosen to go.

In March, 1946, there is recorded a motion by R. Latimer - R. G. Tyhurst, that the name of the Society be changed to the Dresden Agricultural Society, and that the secretary write J. A. Carroll, of the Department, for permission to make the change.

It had been customary to give three free admission tickets with each membership, but in 1948 it was voted to cut the number of tickets to two. Also not to issue free meals to anyone at the fair. The society had felt it necessary at various times to raise the admission fee to the fair, it reaching 40 cents by 1948, though public school children were still admitted free.

In 1949, W. J. Steadman wrote to ask that some of the Dresden fair directors act as judges at Wyoming Fair. His request was granted and W. Shaw, R. Latimer, M. Langstaff, H. Pels, C. Craven and others being appointed. At the same meeting, the question of reserving the seats for the night performances was discussed, with the directors deciding against it. With a view of ensuring that directors would be available in the future, it was moved in 1950 that each director bring in names of two Junior Farmers to act as associate directors at the fair.

A source of revenue which in this decade reached considerable proportions was

the midway, a group of amalgamated shows which pays for the privilege of setting up their stands on the grounds at fair time. They usually presented a bid for the concession to the delegates from the society who attend the annual convention of the Ontario Fairs Association held in Toronto, early in the year. In 1949, the contract which the delegates presented for the approval of the directors granted to Gray's Greater Canadian Shows the midway concession for that year's fair for \$1,300 plus \$100 for the hydro used. However, there is a lull in our enthusiasm when we read of a second contract presented by the delegates. This was an agreement with a theatrical agency to provide entertainment for the two afternoons and two evenings of the fair, for which the fair board was to pay, not receive, the sum of \$960. Some may vouchsafe, disapproval, but the fair, like any other business, must give the customers what they want, and it is undeniable that the entertainment features of a modern exhibiton tend to over-shadow the original agricultural aspects of the fair.

## FINANCES

As in every other feature of the work of the Dresden Fair Board during this decade, 1941 to 1950, the question of finances was met with optimism and an emulation of effort in excess, if possible, of any previous endeavour. The directors had by this time achieved the realization that a thing is worth only what one pays for it, so being desirous of great success in their fair, they prepared to pay the price with quiet pride in their ability to do so.

For instance, at the annual meeting in 1941, the president Mr. Robert Latimer gave an outline of the board's accomplishments during the previous year, when current expenses were met, \$600 paid, for improvements, and a balance of \$400 was left, showing that the society had gone ahead about a thousand dollars, which was a very creditable achievement. Similarly, at the 1942 annual meeting, the good financial standing of the society permitted the payment of \$800 and the interest on the mortgage. This unusual opulence must have caused a feeling of diffidence, for it was voted in 1942 that the financial statement be not printed in the press. By 1947, however they had acquired more confidence and voted that the financial report should be made public, realizing that they were dependent on the public, that the fair was public business, and that the public had, by participation, earned the right to be interested.

During half this decade we were at war, which was reflected in many ways in the society's activities. In 1941, comforts were sent to 41 boys from Dresden and district, in appreciation of a cablegram sent by them, wishing the Fair a success. In May, 1942, Mr. McLaren and Mr. J. A. Garner waited on the board in reference to putting a number of Japanese farm laborers in the fair buildings, which was permitted on condition that satisfactory arrangements should be made and an agreement signed. In 1943, after the final payment was made on the mortgage, it was voted to purchase a \$500 government bond; and in 1944, they invested \$800 more in bonds. In the eighth bond issue (1945) another \$500 bond was purchased. In 1944 the society voted to sponsor the expense of the next Red Cross blood donors' clinic, and after the fair, they paid the IODE and Red Cross \$5 extra apiece on prizes they had been awarded for displays at the fair.

The society now enjoyed a period of ever-increasing financial success. After the 1942 fair, it was voted to discontinue at future fairs the hither-to customary 10% deduction from prize money won by exhibitors. At the 1943 annual meeting, even though the grounds were in good shape, new buildings erected and paid for, and the main building painted, there was still a balance on hand of \$1,524.50, which was largely applied on the mortgage. After the fair that same year, the secretary was instructed to pay Mr. Harry Burrows the mortgage and interest in full.

Though only a formality, the security bond of \$1000 taken out on the treasurer in 1944 seems a great contrast to conditions for several years after the society was incorporated in 1891, when there was usually a small balance owed to the treasurer. There was also a contrast in the salary paid, with the secretary to receive \$200 in 1945, whereas in 1891 he got \$23.50.

The receipts during this period were augmented by various small items, such as

rent of booths to several organizations. One mentioned being the Dawn Mills Ladies' Aid, which in 1942 paid the society 10% of their net profits, with the hydro extra. In 1944, the expense of their booth was \$61.25, of which their share was \$48. In 1945, it was moved to charge Dawn Mills Ladies' Aid the sum of \$35 for their stand, or 10% of their sales.

Commercial displays such as machinery exhibits were also charged for the space they occupied, at the rate of \$5 for 30 foot frontage and \$10 up to 50 foot frontage, the depth in no case to exceed 25 feet. In January, 1950, it was voted to grant permission to the Finley Transport to park trucks on the fair grounds as per agreement made in 1949, with R. E. Carscallen, president. The Union Gas Company paid \$25 per year to lease the grounds for gas, oil and oil rights.

In 1950, the society agreed to accept from the Lambton - Kent Horse Breeders' Association the sum of \$300 for the use of the grounds for 1949, a similar amount for 1950, and would appreciate more, if possible.

Last and definitely not least among the sources of income for the Dresden Agricultural Society is the admission charged at the gate to those who attend. Even with free tickets for children, these prices are admittedly higher than in 1891, but this is understandable when we consider how prices have risen for commodities and labour. It costs us more than grandfather paid, but no wonder, because we have scorned his way of life and have established what we consider higher standards of living. And, finally, no one can deny that the society has fashioned wisely and well, when we see the array of good buildings at the fair grounds, by which the passer-by cannot but be favorably impressed.

We have already read of the erection of these buildings, the most outstanding of the decade being the new grandstand, in 1949, financed by a mortgage, the sale of bonds, and a bank loan. This entailed a great monetary responsibility for the society, but like all previous obligations, they faced it with logic and resolution, and in 1950, began discharging this debt by a payment of \$5000 on the mortgage.

At this point, it is a pleasure to do honour to another organization, which like the Dresden Agricultural Society, is a credit to the town and district -- Dresden Community Band. At a fair board meeting in August, of 1950, there was read a communication from the Band, offering their services free to play at the fair that year (no doubt in realization of the debt incurred by the society in building the new grandstand). However, it was moved by C. J. Craven - Lorne Hughson, that the generous offer was greatly appreciated and that they be engaged to play at the fair, but that they be paid \$125, the same as in 1949, and that the secretary write the band of this resolution.

### NEW GRANDSTAND - 1949

With the attendance at Dresden Fair steadily increasing, it was found that the seating accommodation was not sufficient, especially for the evening performances. A piece had been built on each end of the grandstand, yet it was still not capable of seating the crowds. In 1944, a new method was tried as most of us remember. Gates were built and set up to enclose a part of the track in front of the grandstand, and in this area benches were placed in rows to seat the surplus of spectators who could not be accommodated on the grandstand. This is mentioned in the minute book in June, 1944, when R. F. Houston was empowered to order whatever seats were necessary from Bresett and Tew; and Harry Pels was to order whatever he needed to build the gates. A year later, the grounds committee was instructed to have more benches made.

At the annual meeting in 1944, Mr. John Gibson made some suggestions re improving the grandstand, and at the 1945 annual meeting he spoke on the same subject, urging the extending and covering of the grandstand. The matter was not mentioned in the books again till April, 1947, when a committee was appointed to get prices on a new grandstand, but in July repairs were made to the old stand. After the fair in September, the same committee was again instructed to get prices on a new stand.

At the 1948 annual meeting, Mr. R. G. Tyhurst presented plans for a new steel and concrete stand, from the Sarnia Bridge Company, to cost when completed about

\$25,000., and to seat 2,000 people. On January 31st, the president, Roy Carscallen, appointed R. G. Tyhurst, Roy Stevenson and Morley Myers as a committee to arrange for financing and to get materials for a new grandstand. In March, they presented a plan for a stand of wood framework, steel roof and cement buttments, with a seating capacity of about 2000 persons, and costing about \$20,000. After considerable discussion, the said committee was authorized to get blue prints of the plan as presented.

In June, the old grandstand and the road fence were again repaired, but nothing more is mentioned about the new one till February, 1949. At that meeting, an architect, Mr. J. W. Storey, presented and explained to the board of directors the blue prints for the new grandstand; and he was paid \$400 for preparing them. Then the secretary was asked to advertise for tenders for building the grandstand, such tenders to be handed in within two weeks time. Those who tendered were to be required to deposite \$50 for the use of the blue prints in estimating their tenders, the money to be refunded when the plans were returned in good condition. Another committee was then appointed to wait upon local Members of Parliament, re a grant from the government toward building a grandstand.

Tenders were received from three contractors, and were read at a meeting on March 14th. After a lengthy discussion, it was voted that the executive interview the three contractors, also arrange for financing the building of the stand. It was then moved to advertise the old grandstand for sale by tender. Five days later another meeting was held, at which the contract for building a grandstand, 208 feet in length, was let by ballot, being awarded to the Huron Construction Company. The president and secretary-treasurer were given authority to mortgage the fair ground property for \$10,000., at the rate of 4½ per cent per annum. Clarence Craven, Morley Myers and Harry Pels were elected to be a building committee, to get the main building moved, and to build the grandstand.

On March 28, it was moved that the contract be let to the Huron Construction Co., at the tendered price, plus \$378, making a total of \$21,930.; and the former motion was rescinded. The old grandstand was sold to Harvey Dunlop, at the tendered price of \$575, he to have the stand moved in three weeks. Hugh Carter was engaged to move the main building west the required distance, at a cost of \$350, and later to complete the main building with a wall and a floor.

A general meeting of the directors and members of the society was held, when there was read a resolution formulated by the directors, whereby the society was authorized to borrow the sum of \$12,000 from James A. MacAuley and to execute a mortgage bearing interest at 4½ per cent. The resolution was ratified, approved and confirmed by the meeting, and the secretary was instructed to send all necessary information to J. A. Carroll, re permission to borrow the money to build the grandstand.

On the afternoon of April 29, the directors met at the fair grounds to instruct Mr. W. H. Watson, of the Huron Construction Co., as to the exact location for the new grandstand, the front to be 12 feet from the fence along the race track. On June 17th, the directors again met at the grounds to inspect the nearly-completed stand; and it was decided that the bays at each end of the stand should be left vacant, and that the booths be extended not too far south, in order to leave a thoroughfare under the south side. Ticket booths were to be built at each end with two wickets in each. It was necessary for the building committee to meet Mr. Watson in July regarding the steps for the grandstand; also to get a statement from the architect, Mr. Storey. The president and secretary-treasurer were later empowered to borrow \$4,000 from the Dominion Bank in Dresden and to sell bonds held by the society and valued at \$1,300. It was agreed to hold back \$1,000 of the contracted price till the grandstand was completed to the satisfaction of the society.

At the annual meeting in 1950, the retiring president, Roy Carscallen, thanked all the members and the directors of the 1949 fair board for their untiring efforts in making the fair such a success and in building a new grandstand. Untiring efforts, two short words, yet how much meaning they contain, of the loyalty and co-operation which

inspired these efforts, and brought to successful culmination another outstanding project of the Dresden Agricultural Society.

### **THE YEARS 1951 - 1954 Prize Lists and Programs**

We resume our study of the Dresden (formerly Camden) Agricultural Society, incorporated in 1891, but actually founded in 1875, (and come now to the decade in which we are at present living.) We stand among familiar scenes, and feel a not-unwarranted pride in the accomplishments of the past. The prize lists and programs for Dresden Fair are, by this time practically the same every year, but any worth while innovations are added. The quantity and quality of the livestock show have been enhanced by holding special stock shows in connection with the fair.

Hereford and Holstein shows are mentioned in 1951; and in 1953, a committee was appointed to contact Mr. Jack Parking and to get the Angus Regional show for the fair. Other organizations invited that year were the Yorkshire Club and the Dover and Chatham 4-H Calf Club. In 1954, the Regional Berkshire Club was asked to participate. Another feature still successful is the Field Crop competition, for which 30 signs were ordered in 1953.

A favorite attraction at the Dresden Fair every year is horse racing, for which increasingly good purses and a good track ensure plenty of entries. The use of the starting gate has made a great improvement in getting the field away; and many get great enjoyment also from the spirited and amusing chariot races. Finally, a fact not hitherto mentioned, and perhaps not realized is the wide spread publicity secured for the fair by the distribution of hand-bills in other districts; eight neighbourhood municipalities being named in 1951, in which various directors volunteered to distribute several thousand handbills each.

### **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

In the rules and regulations for this decade we find few changes made, though a very major amendment was holding the fair much earlier, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, at the last of August and the first of September.

After the 1951 fair, it was voted that the secretary be instructed to apply to the Federal Department of Agriculture for the Dresden Agricultural Society to be rated as a Class B fair. Early in 1952, he was authorized to write to Mr. Hugh McKenzie M. P., for Lambton, and Mr. Blake Huffman, M.P. for Kent, asking their aid and assistance in securing a Class B rating for Dresden Fair.

We find in the minutes of March 1953, the first mention of another project in which the Dresden Agricultural Society joined with practically every organization in the community: the building of our fine arena. In this instance they offered to forego their capital expenditure grants for two years, to assist the community in plans for a Community Hall and Arena; and would sign an agreement with the arena committee, if they went ahead with the project. In May, they voted to donate \$500 toward the Lambton-Kent Memorial Centre, and in August they drew up an agreement with the arena committee. Since the arena was to be situated adjacent to the fair grounds, the fair board voted to purchase a roadway, thirty feet in width, more or less, from the arena property.

In 1954, the society donated \$25 for the Centennial celebration in Dresden, which ended in such a commendable financial condition that the donation was to be refunded to the society, but, at their wish, diverted to the arena fund. For the 1954 fair, the arena was available for the Black and White show. A very important regulation made in 1954 was that all cattle shown at the fair should be tested for brucellosis.

### **BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE**

Despite continued expansion, the society was still suffering from growing pains in 1951, so it was moved by Lorne Hughson and Bob Broad that "as the fair was growing each year, so that parking space was becoming quite inadequate, the secretary be instructed to write to the owner of the pasture land at the west end of the agricultural

grounds as to the possibility of the society purchasing this land to be used for additional parking space."

In April, 1952, a committee was appointed to rent or buy this land; but apparently without success, as a different committee was appointed in September. In February, 1953, the secretary was instructed to again contact the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway to get additional land adjoining the fair grounds, at the south-east corner, if possible. Two months later, the president and secretary were named as a committee to offer Cori Van de Veire the sum of \$300 for one acre of land more or less, adjoining the fair grounds to the west. On May 15th, it was moved that R. F. Houston be arbitrator to acquire one acre of land from Cori Van de Veire, with Sidney Clunis as solicitor for the society, and John H. Leeson as alternate arbitrator. The purchase of a roadway from the arena property was also completed; plus a small portion acquired from Donald Campbell and Peter Markham.

Even when no new building project was under way, the fair board found that repairs were continually required, to keep the fair buildings in good condition or to make them more convenient.

In April, 1952, Donald Spearman and Harold Shaw, on behalf of the Dresden Boy Scouts, proposed several changes to the dining hall under the grandstand, they to supply the labour if the fair board would supply the material. The matter was left to the building committee with power.

In April, 1953, the secretary was instructed to advertise for tenders to put eavestroughing on the south side of the grandstand; to cut a manhole in the roof; and to nail down any loose roofing. At the next meeting they accepted the tender of King's Plumbing at \$198. A 6-inch tile drain was put from the grandstand to the main drain at the west end of the fair grounds. It was voted that repairs and extensions be made to the pig pens and cattle barns; and that a wash rack be built in centre field, and one at the cattle barns.

In the spring of 1954, they made arrangements for painting the fair buildings, to cost \$1045 for two coats, to be paid after April 1st, 1955.

## FINANCES

An early source of revenue for the society had been the renting of the land for pasture, though this was later discontinued, but the buildings, and the track were rented to owners of race horses. Early in 1951, it was felt that more definite rules should be made, and it was decided that only horses training at the track should be stabled on the grounds, and that only the race horse barn should be used, at a fee of \$2 per month per horse. The main building was rented after the fair to Canadian Cannery as storage space for canned goods.

Other financial items mentioned were \$1,650 in 1952 from the midway, and \$6,000 and interest paid on the mortgage. The practice of canvassing for special prizes for the fair was another source of considerable revenue, as for instance in May, 1953, president Harry Pels and Glen Ronson reported collecting for special prizes in the Wallaceburg area \$99 in cash, plus several prizes in merchandise.

## OFFICIALS

It would seem an easy matter to name officials in the four years already past in this decade: Roy Stevenson, in 1951 completing his second year as president; Harry Pels following him for two years; and Andrew Houston for 1954 and 1955. Alex Blackburn, secretary-treasurer since 1948 has now resigned, and has been succeeded by Aaron Boak, of the high school staff.

And, having named them, it is not easy to bring to a close this narrative of the accomplishments of the Agricultural Society, for one must feel that a great deal of praise is due the officials who headed it, and yet their aspirations would indeed have been vain without the loyalty and co-operation of the members. For, like links in a chain, each is joined to the one before, bridging the gap between 1875 and 1955-80

years. Before each president, other presidents had given of their work and thought, but more important, before he was president, or secretary, or even a director, he was first a member.

And to be a member of the Dresden Agricultural Society is to stand in the ranks of an organization whose accomplishments compel our admiration for the past and our emulation in the future.

## "The Last Twenty Years"

1955 - 1975

The foregoing part of the history of Dresden Fair was written after the Old Boys' Reunion in 1954; and was printed in the local paper, requiring many instalments, and much patience and consideration, as it did seem to run on so.

Clippings were saved and mounted, but languished unused, until some members of the Dresden Fair board requested material. It is quite gratifying that they have decided to print it; and they have been given permission to make any desired change or correction; though it was taken directly from the minute books of the Agricultural Society. Had more time been available, it could have been shaken down somewhat, but to complete, and connect, the last twenty years of the century, will require all possible speed and skill.

One could say that to complete this history after the lapse of twenty years is a difficult undertaking; but, on the other hand, it is simple and logical, because of the continuity and system used by this organization in its first hundred years, (and in many more of them, we hope.)

Each year's beginning was the ending of the previous one - new officials and new ideas, or perhaps a second year of tenure, to profit by experience gained. Then, a reporting by each director, with suggestions for improvements, or for replacement. As in all walks of life, this led to the question of payments, and even the modern name 'finance' will not make it sweet. The members will feel that no fault is imputed to them by saying that they always subscribed to such maxims as 'A penny saved is a penny, or two, earned.' or 'Pay as you go, or don't go!' This caused careful consideration of past methods of monetary lubrication, with suitable reaction, or action.

After programs and finances, the theme of Building and Maintenance came next in the first part of this history; though, to look back, in reality, Maintenance preceded Building. However, or whichever, no one can dispute that Dresden Fair grounds and buildings present a very fine appearance to anyone driving past, and the members' years of effort have been worth it. Money was often an endangered species, but they felt it is bad enough to be poor, without looking poor!

The officials who guided the fair board in their century of bold endeavour rose from the ranks of members. We claim for them no special qualifications, except loyalty, and willingness to serve; and in turn, they received co-operation and respect from all. The expansion from a small fair in the militia drill shed, and on the Market Square, to the fine Dresden Exhibition of to-day is the result of many days and years of generous effort by the citizens of this community.

After the annual meeting, the new executive at once began to plan for that year's fair, retaining the best features of previous fairs, and endeavouring to improve any weak spots. "If you want something done well, do it yourself", was a successful adage.

but in areas dependent on outsiders, problems sometimes arose. This was most seen in obtaining entertainment features and midway concessions; and the difficulty was blamed on the influence of TV., etc., though it was just the 'Much wants More' syndrome growing. . . Then in 1955 a system was instituted whereby the delegates to the Fair Boards convention were given power to engage midway and grandstand features; a definite and improved idea.

Each committee, of which there were about twenty-five, filled by only fifteen directors, made representation to the members at the board meetings, and nearly always, with optimism. However, it was now becoming very evident that there was need for more accommodation, especially if some new attraction were available, such as 4-H Clubs on cattle clubs. . .

In 1956 it was moved to add a class for small hackney ponies. It is also interesting to notice the variation in numbers of the different kinds of livestock, with horses being reported as increasing in 1955 from 50 head to 120; then in 1960 termed 'hard to get; some coming 200 miles'. The cattle display was reported as 'fine', but in 1959, there were no dairy cattle shown. The county agricultural representative expressed interest in the field crop competitions, in corn and sugar beets. Two other items of note were the chariot races planned for the fair; also the need for a good Master of Ceremonies.

The ladies' department, with 3 directors and 7 ladies, was praised, but with the suggestion that better prizes should be offered. In 1958 a limit was set on the number of times an article could be shown in this division. In 1958 it was moved, (but not carried) that two of the associate lady directors should go as delegates to the convention. In 1959 the first official ladies' group was formed, with chairman and secretary; and these two ladies did go to the convention in 1959. Classes were set up for the Women's Association, like the ones for the Women's Institute, with the same prizes and space for exhibits.

In June 1958 it was announced that the Race Association had decided to stop sponsoring races, and that the Dresden Agricultural Society might have the Labour Day races. A secretary-treasurer for the races was hired, and a bank account set up for the race committee. Two Supertest races were allotted to the Labour Day Dresden race meet. A twilight race meet in June was sanctioned by the Board, but it did not break even. The Labour Day races must have been better, as the race secretary reported a bank balance of \$2500, of which \$2000 was turned over to the general fund.

In March, 1960, the name of the fair was changed to Dresden Exhibition.

The financial picture in 1955 opens with a deficit, which was liquidated, leaving a small cash balance. A grant for \$40,000 from the Ontario Legislature was immediately disbursed as a donation to the Lambton-Kent Memorial Agricultural Centre Arena.

The renting of the fair building to various firms was a source of revenue; some firms mentioned being C.I.L.; the Canada and Dominion Sugar Company for a barracks or hostel for workers; and Canadian Cannery for storage of canned goods. Also, in 1955, the fair board was asked to build box stalls in the horse barn, to be rented to race horse men, one owner agreeing to pay two dollars per month per head; in advance.

A very important group of committees took the responsibility each year, of getting donations and special prizes in the Townships of Camden, Chatham, Dover, and Dawn; and in the towns of Dresden, Thamesville, and Wallaceburg. We are not given any reports of their success, except at the 1957 annual meeting, when three of the collectors were classed as 'very good', and the other two as 'ditto'.

In citing the various expenses for different years, one must not forget the permanent ones, such as insurance, fees, tickets, hydro, judges, etc.

Buildings and Maintenance continued to be a primary ambition of the Dresden Fair Board, and their efforts were given a great boost when the town and neighbouring community joined together to construct the Lambton-Kent Memorial Agricultural Arena which stands by the fair grounds, and which has been a valuable asset to the Fair, providing more space for exhibits. Then in winter, it is the home for sports, enabling Dresden to compete with other centres who are hockey-minded.

1955 saw increasing growth in all livestock exhibits at the Fair, with resultant expansion. A race horse owner asked for box stalls to be constructed in the horse barn,

which he could rent as space for his stock. This led to the Fair Board raising the barn, extending it 50 feet, and adding a hundred-foot lean-to. Later, another owner offered to prepare the track for winter, if the Society would build stalls and winterize the horse barn. Result: more repair work on horse barn in 1956.

The grandstand roof was re-nailed, but still leaked, so, in 1956, it was replaced. Also in that year, a new roof was put on the north side of the 'Crystal Palace'; and a new ticket booth was built. Repairs were made to the booths in the front of the grandstand, where the Boy Scouts and other organizations had refreshment stands.

In 1957, the cattle barn was re-roofed, and a lean-to built on the hog and sheep building.

After the 1958 Fair a problem which occupied the attention of the Board was the fence around the fairgrounds. The north fence row needed to be bull-dozed and cleaned; and a committee was named to meet the railroad officials in regard to the south fence. This was completed in the following year; and applications were made for government grants on the fence. Continued need for space resulted in the purchase of two acres of land at the west end of the arena. (The price of the land was just a tenth of the cost of the fairground fence) . . . At the same meeting, May 15th, 1959, it was decided to build a new hog and sheep pen.

The increasing race activity led to the construction in 1960 of another horse barn, which must have been with good results, because, in September, the Race Association was able to transfer \$1700 to the Dresden Agricultural Society account. The arena roof was also replaced, and everything cleaned up before the Fair. In November the Board arranged to pay their share of the cost of re-roofing the arena.

And, with all this building and construction, it was still necessary to hire tents as extra accommodation at the Fair!

As the decade 1951-60 came to an end, many changes were evident in Dresden Fair, but not in the spirit of the men behind it. They looked ever forward, rejoicing in their successes, but learning from their errors. They worked in the areas they preferred, but could adjust to any necessary re-arrangement. From members they became directors, then moved up to the executive positions. Some went farther, and occupied regional and provincial places, using this experience to strengthen their home organization.

They increased the area of the fairgrounds by various purchases of land. They repaired, built, and re-built, with buildings painted and neat. The community arena which they helped bring into being now holds the exhibits and booths; and the former exhibition building was taken in 1957 for light horses.

The number of directors was in 1959 increased from fifteen to twenty-one. In 1957 we are told that there were already 200 paid-up members at the time of the annual meeting. A ladies' group was set up in 1959, and they were to have displays like those of the Women's Institute; and to send two delegates to the Fair Board convention in Toronto.

Sound systems are now much used; increased use of hydro has been very helpful; for the exhibits, the grandstand shows, and the races, as twilight meets lead up to night racing.

Not to be forgotten is the great co-operation with other organizations and people; The Arena commission, the service clubs, the then Chamber of Commerce, the Union Gas Company, who donated pipe for building stands; a mill owner who donated bags for grain exhibits; a business man who loans a sound system, and many more. And in some cases one might be member of more than one group in the community, yet had time for all.

And, as a fitting climax to another decade of achievement, the name of the Fair was, in 1960, changed to Dresden Exhibition.

## THE YEARS 1961 - 1970

The annual meeting in 1961 did not bring forth much that was new or startling, but the director in charge of cattle exhibits asked for a wash rack to be built some place close, so the cattle could be washed, and not leave a mudhole, (like the one in front of the henhouse, as the poultry director at once announced!) A committee was later set up, to have a wash rack built; to put a permanent top on the band stand; and to put water hydrants where needed at the barns. All of which was accomplished before the Fair.

Another necessary project was the building of wash rooms on the fair grounds. Plans and estimates were obtained, and tenders called, subject to the approval of the Department of Agriculture. In due time one tender was accepted, and the washrooms were constructed, with the further requirement for a caretaker to look after them.

Some painting was in order, on the grandstand, the picket fence, and the judges' stand; for which the president obtained an estimate, but the members moved to do the work themselves. Some of the other buildings were painted the following year.

In 1962, it is mentioned that the directors who had canvassed for special prizes turned in their donations, which were very good, for as to date (May 30th) they had collected \$514, besides merchandise.

The Board was told that the Hydro service was badly over loaded, and should receive prompt attention. A committee was appointed to see about necessary changes, with power to act; one being the booths under the grandstand needing heavier wiring.

Early in 1963 the chairman of the Building committee told the meeting that more space and more barn room was needed, and it would be in order to apply to the Department of Agriculture for a major capital grant to secure a building, approximate cost seven thousand dollars. The committee appointed to look into the possibilities, later explained at a meeting the procedure pertaining to the purchase of a building from Jack Lacey of Wally Enterprises; also the agreement with the Government regarding grants. All of which sounded favourable, the building to cost \$2500, with \$250 for moving, and \$350 placed on a foundation. The building was subsequently moved, and set up near the barns at the west end of the fair grounds, where it was fixed up, in readiness for the Fair.

1964 saw the setting up of the Dresden 2-year-old Pacing Stake. Word had been received that Dresden would not be getting the 2-year-old Supertest races, so it was decided to arrange a stake race for Dresden's Labour Day races, and to name it for Dresden. It has since become a very successful feature.

The ladies' department appeared to be making progress, though one of the two men with the ten ladies reported at the annual meeting, that as long as the ladies had their way, he didn't have any trouble!

A new idea appeared in 1965 for the annual meeting: beginning in the morning, with a dinner at noon, and completing the session in the afternoon.

The possibility of lighting the race track had been the subject of considerable discussion, and electrical experts were contacted, to explain to the members the details of such a step. One hundred poles were purchased from Bell Telephone Company, from their line south of Petrolia, along 21 Highway, and were moved to the Fairgrounds and piled. Lights were later put from the grandstand to the barns.

At a meeting on May 7th, 1965, it was moved to ask Miss Dominion of Canada to participate in the fair; she to receive a hundred dollars for being at the fair on Wednesday, September 1st. In 1966, she was asked to come for Tuesday night as well as Wednesday, and she became one of the permanent attractions, appearing year after year.

The district picnic was held in Dresden in 1965; and arrangements were made for tours of Uncle Tom's Cabin, also of the Canadian Cannery plant.

The race secretary reported that the Labour Day races had been a great success; and the subject of night racing received considerable discussion, with the result that, on September 28th, 1965, it was moved to put lights on the whole track, and to have night racing.

1966 began on a continuing note of optimism, the directors nearly all giving very

positive reports of success in the previous year, with increasing need for space, for increasing exhibits, being about the only complaint. The race committee had been active, getting light poles up around the track. Preparations were made to erect an eight foot lean-to on the north side of the old crystal palace, to store race night equipment, and to be used at other times as a place to sell tickets, if needed. An office was also to be built in the north-west corner of the crystal palace, using the space of two stalls.

Instead of having an outsider open the fair, it was decided in 1966 to have the mayor of Dresden officiate; also the wardens of the two counties were to be invited. The St. John Ambulance Association from Chatham were mentioned as having been on duty at the Fair, and were to be sent a cheque for their services. This has continued to the present, with men from Dresden's own St. John Ambulance corps now being on hand to aid.

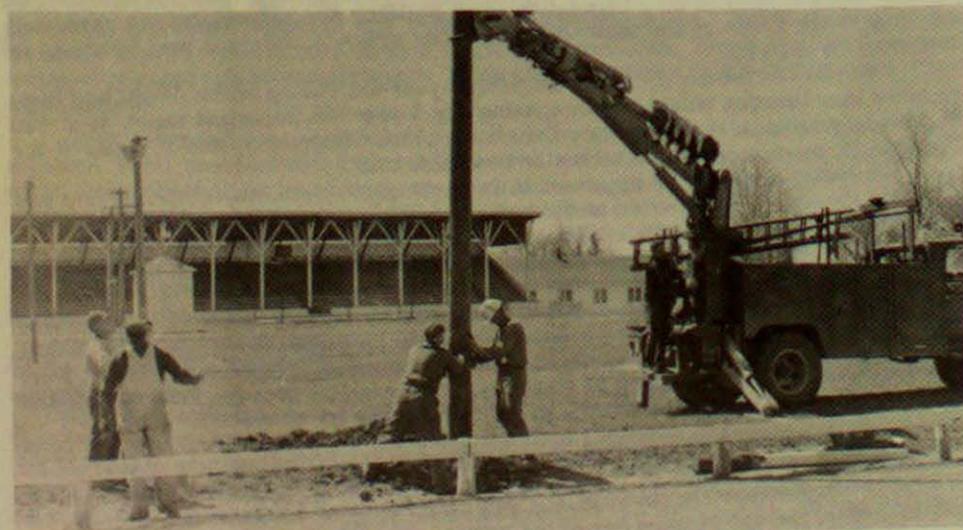
In December the board was asked to change the Fair dates to the last three days of the week, and this received an affirmative vote from the members.

Canada's centennial year 1967 found Dresden Fair board in a mood of optimism and inspiration. At the annual meeting the president spoke of the success of the previous fair, but said no one person could be singled out, as it was a joint effort of the directors, and of many people in and around Dresden, who came out and worked, to make Dresden Exhibition the best possible.

This was the year the Century Farm signs were put up, and it was reported that over two hundred signs were already out, in Kent and Essex Counties.

The respective directors reported the arena was very well filled; and it was an improvement to have concessions inside and outside divided between two directors. A

### RACE TRACK GETS LIGHTS FOR NIGHT RACING - 1966



The first major step in the development of the Dresden Raceway came with the installation of lights around the half-mile oval track. Night racing was first held in Dresden, on a regular basis, in the summer of 1966. This photo shows the workmen from the Dresden Utilities Commission as they erect the light standards around the track. Dresden Raceway, from a meagre beginning back in 1966 when less than 10 race meets were held, has grown in size and popularity, until today, in the centennial year of the Agricultural Society, night races are featured three nights a week for a total of 37 nights.

local exhibitor told the meeting that they exhibit at several fairs, and Dresden had the best accommodation of any fair around.

New classes for registered quarter horses and for Arabian horses had been well filled. Poultry classes were a full house, as usual, the director said, but not many people saw them, as they were still upstairs. The swine directors urged cement floors in the hog building, in order to keep the pigs cleaner.

The centennial theme for the Fair was very well carried out, with extra attractions, including the attendance of a "Miss Dresden Centennial Queen" as well as a Miss Dominion of Canada, and a float in the July 1st parade. The members of the ladies' group dressed in old style dresses and bonnets; also had another antique display; an old-fashioned bedroom.

Since racing had been so successful, it was decided to move the betting booths under the grandstand, and to have the Boy Scouts use the addition to the Crystal Palace. An agreement was made with the Boy Scouts as to sharing the cost of equipping their new locale. They were ready to give service at both the races and the Fair, and would like to serve meals in the arena.

The 1967 fair was a great success, as a result of much planning and hard work, and it was reported at the next annual meeting that the gate receipts were at an all time high.

The members of Dresden Fair board met January 20th, for their 1968 annual meeting in the North Kent Insurance building, and at noon, moved to the I.O.O.F. hall for a dinner served by the ladies of the Rebekah Lodge; returning at 1:30 to the North Kent building. Many minor, but important repairs were reported: the inside of the grandstand was re-built; a cement floor was put in the pig pens; a new fence put in front of the grandstand; and two flag poles erected in centre field.

That seemed to be just a beginning, however, as more new projects were suggested. The race committee felt that it was a must to move the judges' stand to the grandstand. A sketch was prepared, and two experts viewed the situation, both reporting that they could see no difficulty in putting the judges' stand on top of the grandstand. A committee was instructed to go ahead with the stand, and it was constructed under the supervision of the race committee.

Another project was to pave the driveway and around the grandstand. Estimates were obtained, and a contractor hired, with the members doing a great deal of the work preparing for the asphalt. On August 8th, the asphalt was reported as completed.

With more space still needed for horses, a new barn was discussed, but it was decided to build a lean-to on the south side of the Lacey barn. Work proceeded apace, and it too was reported at the August 8th meeting as all finished.

Also, there was discussion about a chain link fence on both sides of the arena. They were given a price on it; erected, and it was moved that the work proceed. Result at the next meeting: finished, but the old fence was not straightened, as had been agreed upon.

The directors at the 1969 annual meeting gave optimistic reports, though exhibits had in some cases been curtailed by the intense heat at the time of the fair. Changing times made changes in exhibits, too, as heavy horses were reported as almost a thing of the past, as there were no Clydesdales or Percherons at the 1968 fair. Dairy cattle, too, had become nearly a lost cause.

The president asked the members to discuss what they thought were the weak points of the Fair, and one that was mentioned was parking, as more space was definitely needed. A committee was named to see about renting the St. Clair Grain and Feed land south of the railroad tracks. The report was that it could be rented, to use for parking cars, though as in many cases, the price was higher than they had thought. However, it was decided to rent it for one year, and the fair board have the right to put lights and a fence up, and to remove them at the end of the lease.

Four acres more land was purchased west of the fairgrounds, and at once, arrangements were made to have it tiled. Negotiations were continuing with two other

owners along the north of the fairgrounds, but no favourable agreement had yet been reached.

In April, the building committee recommended giving a contract for the erection of two more horse barns. A meeting was held at the barns, and it was decided to build the new barns at the west end of the track. A third barn, of cement block construction, was begun later in the year.

The 1970 annual meeting continued a subject brought up the year before: moving the old Crystal Palace to the west end of the fairground, as it was in the way of people getting off the grandstand. Movers were contacted, to move the building, put in a foundation, and set the building on the foundation. A committee was empowered to see that this was done, though it would entail providing a new place for the Boy Scouts to serve lunches. At the next meeting, however, the building was reported as moved, and footing poured for a building for the Boy Scouts to use.

One change in procedure at this time was bonding the fair board secretary and the race secretary, as the Department of Agriculture had advised. It was also decided to discontinue the canvass for donations from the public.

The previous year there had been discussion about painting the roofs of some of the barns, also repairing and painting the grandstand. This was accomplished in 1970, adding greatly to the appearance of the Fair layout. It was suggested that the old judges' stand be moved from centre field, but it was decided to let it stay for the year. Later, it was reported that Petrolia Fair would like to purchase the old stand, and a committee was instructed to dispose of it.

In October it was moved to build another cement block horse barn like the two built previously. Also, a larger tractor was to be purchased for use on the grounds.

### THE YEARS 1971 - 1975

With 1971 began a new decade for Dresden Fair, and hopefully, a good one. At the first meeting of the new directors, it was moved to apply for a commercial feature in market steers; also one in market hogs. A 4-H calf club and a 4-H horse club were two other attractions planned.

The question of more land was discussed at great length, and a committee was named to investigate buying land from three owners next to the fair grounds. After necessary negotiations, approximately fifteen acres was purchased. The committee was also to see Dresden Council about a roadway from Park Street to this property. Finally, a roadway 66 feet wide was purchased, to be used by the Dresden Agricultural Society, and to be closed off in the fall; the fair board and the owner each paying half of the cost of stoning and grading the roadway.

The roof replaced on the Lacey barn, and a framework with a tarpaulin cover over the stage, as a protection from rain, were two more projects completed before fair time. It was moved to build another horse barn, and discussion arose as to the rent; it being finally set at eight dollars per month for the steady customers, and ten dollars for others, with free stall rent for July, August, and September.

At the 1971 fair, the attendance was down, owing to the rainy weather, but the exhibits were the largest on record. For cattle, an improvement was noted in dairy breeds, but none from Kent County. In fine arts the entries were doubled.

In 1972, we read of a board room at the fairgrounds, the first meeting held there being on March 8th, but it was decided to hold any future meetings there.

The cattle director had a sketch of a pole barn, and the secretary was to call Toronto, to see what grants are available for a barn like this. It was also moved to have a new steel roof put on the heavy horse barn.

Purchase of more property behind the barns was discussed, and it was moved to see the owner to the west about buying enough of his land to square up the fairgrounds. He was contacted, and wanted the same price per acre that the other three owners got. It was moved to buy from him.

The question of by-laws and a constitution came up, and the executive was asked to draw them up, present them to the board, and have them meet with the approval of the Department of Agriculture.

A letter of resignation was read from the secretary, for health reasons, and he was succeeded by his daughter who had helped with the books.

The 1973 annual meeting tells of the completion of two projects: a new horse barn, and a new roof on the heavy horse barn; also that a new fence had been put up on the far side of the track. The cement block building at the entrance had been cleaned up for St. John Ambulance.

It was reported as an improvement to charge \$1.50 at the gate, with the grandstand free, as there was a good attendance, and the grandstand was full all three nights.

There was an overflow exhibit of cattle, and the dairy classes had been of top quality. All other livestock exhibits were considered as very satisfactory. It was felt an asset to have races on one day, as this left the track for some of the show horse classes on Friday.

The need for another horse barn was discussed, and it was voted to get the price of a pole barn and also of a cement block barn, to compare. The race committee said there were approximately 150 stalls in use at the track (at the time of the annual meeting). In May the directors were empowered to go ahead with building a new horse barn.

Plans for a new grandstand were shown to the board, and it was discussed at length. In October it was moved to go ahead with building a new grandstand. Work proceeded slowly, and the rising costs of construction required the committee to be adept in arranging for financing.

At the 1974 annual meeting it was announced that four and a half acres more land had been purchased to the west of the fairgrounds, and new chain link fence put around it.

The director in charge of cattle at the 1973 Fair said that the showing was good, but the accommodation bad. He thought there should be better 4-H facilities, possibly a separate building.

The quarter horse show, the commercial feature cattle class, the tractor pull contest, and the hunter-jumper show had all been fairly successful, and would probably show improvement at future fairs.

The question of a donation to the proposed addition to the Arena was considered; and at a later meeting, it was moved to donate \$1500 to the Arena Fund.



Andrew Houston, a long time member of the Dresden Agricultural Society having served in the capacity of president as well as secretary-treasurer, had the distinction of being elected president of the A and B Division, Ontario Fairs Association in 1971. Mr. Houston held the office of president of the Dresden Agricultural Society in the year 1954 - 1955 and then in 1958 took over the duties of secretary-treasurer, a post he held until 1973 when the present day secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Shirley Hawkins, took over. Mr. Houston was the second man from Dresden to have served on the Ontario Association. Back in 1939, Verne Robinson was president of the Ontario Fairs Association as well.

And now, we close our history with 1974, and look ahead to 1975, Dresden Fair's Centennial year. Plans for several special activities are under way, beginning with a mammoth parade on the opening day, Wednesday, August 20th. Another popular feature will be the Fair Queen competition: Miss Dresden Exhibition, begun in 1974, with eleven contestants, from whom Wendy Babcock was chosen as the winner. This year, she will represent Dresden Agricultural Society at the Canadian National Exhibition, in the Sweetheart of the Fairs competition.

To further encourage junior interest and participation in the activities of the Fair, another contest will be held, for a Fair Princess. This contest was also begun in 1974, with Debbie Moorhouse as the winner, and is for girls in Grades 5 to 8, with the most points in Class 14 in the prize list.

This history is the story of dedicated service by the members of the Society; with admiration and congratulations for their achievements over the years. That it meets with their approval, and that of the public, is the hope of the writer, Helen Watson Burns.

#### LADY DIRECTORS OF THE DRESDEN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY - 1975



Playing an important part in the planning of the annual Dresden Exhibition are the lady directors of the Dresden Agricultural Society. The members of that group in 1975 include, kneeling, from left: Mrs. Bob (Janet) Langstaff, Mrs. Ron (Linda) Clements, Mrs. Garnet (Olive) Wilson, Mrs. Murray (Shirley) McKerrall, Mrs. Jack (Grace) Martin and Mrs. Allan (Sandra) McBrayne. Seated, from left: Mrs. Walter (Lyla) McFadden, Mrs. Garnet (Lily) Shaw, Mrs. Wilfred (Gladys) Shaw, Mrs. Reg (Mary) Tyhurst, Mrs. Morley (Marie) Myers, Mrs. Jack (Edna) Latimer, Mrs. Duncan (Jean) Cameron, Mrs. William (Mary) Boyle and Mrs. Glen (Helen) Martin. Standing, from left: Mrs. Everitt (Mabel) Coke, Mrs. Charles (Valera) Paling, Mrs. Harvey (Edna) Eves, Mrs. Cleo (Marilyn) McFadden, Mrs. Don (Jean) Simpson, Mrs. Belle McBrayne, Mrs. Murray (Bette) Northcott, Mrs. Richard (Barbara) Tyhurst, Mrs. Marvin (Connie) Unsworth, Mrs. Roy (Betty) Jackson, Miss Helen Latimer, Mrs. Walter (Sara) Higgs, Mrs. Arthur (Erma) Cracknell, Mrs. Allan (Dorothy) Cameron, Mrs. Ivan (Verlyn) Paling, Miss Janice Unsworth and Mrs. Dorothy Brown.

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY - 1975



The directors of the Dresden Agricultural Society for centennial year, 1975, include the following: seated, from left: George Deacon, race secretary; Allan Cameron, second vice-president; Mrs. Robert (Shirley) Hawkins, secretary-treasurer; Murray McKerrall, president; David Martin, first vice-president; and Arthur Cracknell, past president. Standing from left are the directors: Allan McBrayne, Donald Simpson, Ray Unsworth, Robert Langstaff, Jack Martin, Cleo McFadden, William Boyle, Gordon Duff, Ivan Paling, Glen Martin, Jim Whitson, Richard Tyhurst, Harry Pels and Roy Jackson. Absent when the photo was taken were directors Dick Dunlop and Harvey Eves.

## PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE DRESDEN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY - 1975



The past presidents of the Dresden Agricultural Society, many who are still active in the society in 1975 include: seated, from left: Lorne Hughson, William Boyle, Roy Stevenson, Harry Pels and Andrew Houston. Standing, from left: Glen Martin, Ray Unsworth, Jack Latimer, Robert Langstaff, Arthur Cracknell, Walter Higgs and Jack Martin. Absent when the photo was taken was Wilfred Shaw.

NEW BARNs PROVIDE ATTRACTIVE SETTING



Progress is more than just a word to the Dresden Agricultural Society: it means considerable planning and hard work with lasting benefits. Progress at the Dresden Agricultural Society grounds in recent years has been phenomenal in that several new barns have been erected for the stabling of horses which take part in the Dresden Raceway summer meet. This photo shows some early morning workouts on the half-mile oval with the present grandstand on the left and the attractive new horse barns in the background.

A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT - THE NEW GRANDSTAND COMPLEX - 1975



Undoubtedly the biggest, single undertaking of the Agricultural Society in its 100 year history is the constructing of a new grandstand complex. The grandstand will serve the Dresden Raceway for its summer meet, as well as the Dresden Exhibition in years to come. Now under construction, the complex is scheduled to be completed by 1976. The estimated cost of the structure, when completed is in the \$800,000 bracket.

