

Six Nations Fair featured 1988 new events

OHSWEKEN — This year's Six Nations Indian Fair was different in two ways from previous years. First, there was an Indian powwow on Saturday and Sunday. This was popular with those who come to this particular fair to see Indian dancing. The other difference was a motocross, which features motorcycles.

In addition there were the usual harness races and chuckwagon races on Saturday. Other features included the midway, Indian crafts and various other exhibits.

This was certainly a more varied line-up of events than when I was a boy more than 40 years ago. At that time there was a lot more emphasis on livestock, such as calves, sheep, ducks and chickens. The question of who grew the best oats, wheats, beans and barley was important then. Most people who attend a fair today couldn't care less.

We always dressed up to go to the fair. I can remember donning a clean pair of overalls (with a bib) and thinking that I was really dressed up. My dad would take off his work shirt and put on what we called his "fine shirt." My mother made sure our ears were clean. Also our socks and underwear, just in case we got into an accident. If any of us had

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to go to the hospital with torn or dirty underwear, my mother would have probably died of embarrassment. It was always too great a risk to take.

In the "Dirty Thirties" we travelled to the fair by horse and buggy. First Line, where we lived, was just a dirt road. Later on it became a gravel road. As money became more plentiful, we began to travel to the fair in style. My dad got a black Model A Ford when I was about 10. I'm sure the tired old horse was thankful.

After that, when we got ready to go, all my dad had to do was crank the car. If it got low on gasoline, coal oil worked almost as well. At the fair, I usually got a dime to spend. Most of

the time I was penniless, so this seemed like a good deal of money to me. I would walk around all afternoon with the dime and carefully consider all the goodies being displayed. I generally settled for candy.

I used to hang around the stand where the hamburgers were sizzling, with green peppers and onions. As the aroma swept past on the autumn air, I would think of a time when I was grown up with money in my pockets. Some small boys think of grownups as people with a mustache or a beard. I thought grownups were people who had money in their pockets. They were people who could afford to buy two or three hamburgers if they wanted them.

I don't particularly like hamburgers anymore but, now and then, when the wind is blowing a certain way at the fair, I'll buy one just to justify the little boy that is still within me somewhere.