

THE OHIO STATE FAIR

The first state fair was held in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1850 at what was then Camp Washington in Hamilton County. Admission was 20 cents and the fair lasted for three days. The crowd was estimated at 25,000 people.

At the early fairs, grist mills, cattle scales, and artificial teeth were displayed. Awards were given for buggies, farm equipment, butter churns and beehives.

For several years, the fair moved from city to city. But in 1874 the state fair was permanently moved to the capital city of Columbus, Ohio and was held at Franklin Park, then owned by the Franklin County Agricultural Society. In 1886, the fair was moved to the present-day fairgrounds. In 1897, President William McKinley made an appearance at the fair. On September 3rd, he and Mrs. McKinley arrived at Union Station and were escorted with much fanfare down High Street to the Great Southern Hotel. After lunch the president attended the fair where he surveyed former President U. S. Grant's home, which was then housed at the fairgrounds. Then the president addressed the huge crowd that had assembled to hear him.

The only time the fair was not held was during World War II. The government leased the grounds and used them as an army depot from roughly 1942-45.

By 1969, the fair had reached a milestone, attendance had grown to two million, and Ohio was on its way to surpassing Texas' claim to being the biggest state fair in the nation. Yes, times have changed; but come August, the fair is still the place to be in Ohio.

SOURCES:

Shook, C. LaVon, *A History of the Ohio State Fair*, Mansfield, Ohio; Bookmasters Inc., 2000
Columbus Dispatch, July 14, 1918, p.1
Ohio State Journal, July 21, 1851, p.3
Ohio State Journal, May 15, 1884
Ohio State Journal, June 4, 1918 p.7

Website:

<http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=529>