

## **JUDGE SUMMARIZES HISTORY OF FAIRS**

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN: 2 September 1957

By Judge Luke Medley

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MY FELLOW CITIZENS: it is with a humble spirit and with great humility of soul that I appear here to welcome and greet you, collectively and individually, in what is said to be the finest and best planned fair facilities in the south, and you, my fellow citizens, are due the honor of providing these grounds, buildings, and this magnificent Coliseum with its many exhibit and display rooms underneath. The two large cattle barns which house the prize animals from our dairy and beef farmers; the large sanitary barn, with its judging ring for our hog and sheep growers; the two modern horse barns, - the pride of horsemen who are known in Tennessee to own and produce the best walking horses in the world. And our finest building was erected for the women of our county who have so faithfully worked and shared equally, or more, with our men in their struggles to bring our civilization to its present status. This building is for our homemakers and future homemakers to display their fine accomplishments in culinary, home canning, needlecraft, dress making, flower growing, and all other phases of domestic science where they have made great progress.

And now, I want to pay honor to the Board of Directors of the Fair, its Executive Committee, the County Court, and the overwhelming co-operation of all the people, and the building committee, its superintendent, and the workmen, for their untiring efforts since May in order that you could be here on the date which was set many months ago.

The practice of holding fairs can be traced back to antiquity. Fairs are of much economic, cultural and social import, - they diffuse knowledge in every field of human relationship. One hundred and one years ago, Putnam County held its first fair in the vicinity which is now know as Dixie Avenue, and since that time there has been many fairs, some under private ownership and others under public control, and all of them have been beneficial in helping to develop our county as the foremost and leading county of the Upper Cumberland area.

Fairs are as old as the recorded history of man, using them to portray his attempt for organization to build order out of chaos, based upon the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. In biblical times the Prophet Erckiel portrays the great fairs of Syria, Judah, Damascus and Dan, recording in his writings the fine works of art, grains, wool, embroidered work and fine purple. The modern fair is a special kind of gathering for buying, selling, and displaying, and for holding contests with our youth in their organizations, such-as 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers, and Future Home Makers, and the Midway. The name "Fair" comes from the Latin word meaning a holiday of feast day. Fairs were held before the time of the Romans. Thousands of years ago, groups of savage people would come together in certain spots to exchange goods. The savage people were often at war with each other, but when they met at the fair grounds for trade they declared a truce. This peace was never broken. The fairgrounds was a religious holy

place. To fight or cheat there was believed to make the gods angry, and it was thought that they would punish any offender.

One of the largest ancient fairs in the times of the Phoenicians, beginning about One Thousand B. C. was held in the Arabic city of Mecca. The fairs of ancient Egypt and Ireland were held at tombs and burying grounds. Perhaps religion was linked with fair in order to make sure they would remain places of peaceful and honest dealings. The fairs of ancient Greece were held along with the festival honoring the gods; but goods on display were not trinkets, they were the finest glassware, cloth, spices, carpets and armor. The famous Olympic games were held at one such fairs. In Italy, there was a yearly festival or fair in honor of Jupiter. It was held from before the founding of Rome until the fall of the Roman Empire.

Special officials were chosen at all fairs to see that business was done in an orderly, peaceful, and honest way. A whole set of business laws grew up out of the rules that were made for the conducting of fairs. People who came to the fairs were protected from harm; in fact, nobody could be arrested at a fair for a crime that he had committed elsewhere. And I now implore our officers to adhere to this ancient rule. The famous explorer Marco Polo, in the year about 1200, brought to the people of Europe news of the great fairs of Kinsai, the Capitol City, ruled by Kuhlage Khan. The fair of Kinsai took place in ten great squares, four miles apart, down the City's main street, and as many as half a million people attended this fair. The French, Scottish, Irish and Russian fairs have played an important role in the lives and history of their respective people.

The earliest fairs in North American had their beginning probably in Mexico. The greatest one took place in front of the temple in Mexico City. In the United States, the Berkshire Agriculture Society which was organized by a man named Watson who put on a cattle show, and our modern agricultural fairs of today are an out-growth of his society organized in about 1810.

The Agriculture Fair has done much to improve the economy of our time, and has become popular all over America, in addition to the educational exhibits and choice livestock, horticulture, and women's departments displayed, and to this we have added the amusement department with its midway, its side shows, ferris wheels and machines giving thrilling rides.

But all along the road there have been fairs, creating small, temporary worlds in which people can enjoy the actual experience of being at peace with strangers, trading ideas, goods, and hopes. These fair worlds are in a sense artificial because they are cut away from the great world outside the limits of their special peace, because they somehow make the world's goods seem more wonderful than they actually are, because they make people more attractive and better behaved than at home. Everything is brought up to a higher than ordinary pitch, lighted up, made desirable. That is the magic of the peace of the fair, which creates within certain limits of space and time the experience of what a really secure world could be. But it does not create a mere illusion of a world at peace it accomplishes an actual peace for this place and time.

The impulse of friendliness and good will that generated fairs did not get weaker when men ceased to fear the punishment of the gods. It has on the contrary been getting more powerful and more disciplined. It has already widened the narrow limits of the fair peace into ideas like free trade and the cooperation of the nations in world's fairs. And at world's the nations actually entertain the hope of some day trading under an eternal truce.

And it is now a great honor that you and the people have given to me, to be privileged to open for you, officially, these new facilities for the conducting of the thirty-first Putnam County Agriculture Fair.

THANK YOU

Judge Luke Medley

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