

Old Photo Album

THE ERIE COUNTY FAIR

Celebrates **175** YEARS

By Douglas W. DeCroix

In 1819, the Niagara County Horticultural Society was formed with Dr. Cyrenius Chapin as its first president. The following year, the Society held its first fair on the present site of Buffalo's Donovan Office Building. Interest in this first event was low, owing to the poor situation of many of the region's farmers, but it went off as planned, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Chapin and a then-17-year-old assistant named Orlando Allen, who took great pains to drive some of Chapin's own livestock to the fair site. So began the 175-year history of what has long ago become known as the Erie County Fair, currently considered the third largest of its kind in the country.

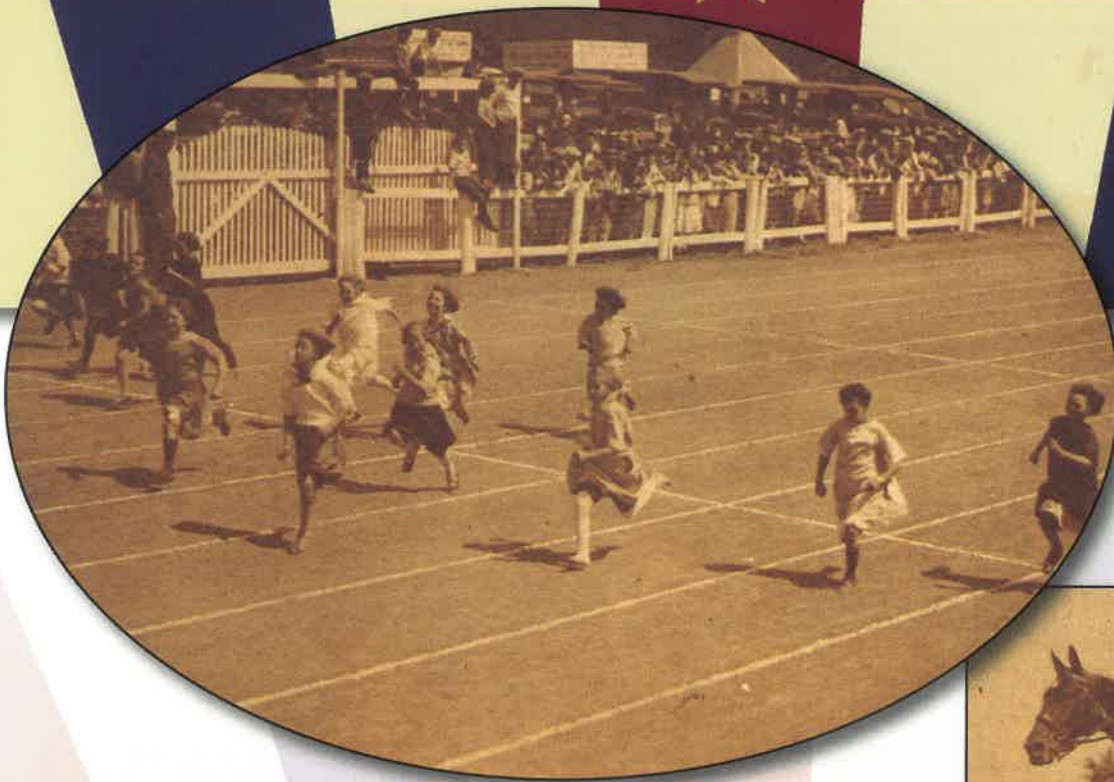
When Erie County was carved from Niagara in 1821, the Society also split in two and today's Erie County Agricultural Society remains the oldest civic, community member organization in the county. Though the Society fell on hard times in the early 19th century, the Erie County Fair has been an annual regional spectacle since 1841, with the exception of 1943, when rationing restrictions forced a hiatus. Though over the course of its long and colorful history the Fair has been held in Buffalo, Lancaster, Springville and other locations, the current Hamburg location has been in use since 1868.

To help celebrate the Fair's anniversary this summer, we have departed from the typical "Old" Photo Album practice and have combined period images from the 68th fair, held in 1924, with some spectacular modern photos, courtesy of photographer Steve Mangione. We hope you enjoy this taste of past and present – and that you enjoy this year's Erie County Fair.



Today's Erie County Fair features a packed midway with rides, games and traditional "fair fare."
STEVE MANGIONE PHOTOGRAPH, 2012

Racing on two legs, four legs and with wheels



(Top) Children's day in 1924 featured a girl's 50-yard dash which was won by Hamburg's Marcilla Reiman. (Right) Meanwhile, Virginia Yates put her horse through the jumper course. (Bottom) Harness racing was – and is – a popular fair event.

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A Plethora of Prize-Winning Pups



The Buffalo Courier sponsored a dog competition for its "Jolly Juniors." (Top) Judges William A. Thompson and Mrs. J. Homan Pardee pose with winners Justin Tobias, Marion Morris, Jack Erwin Morgan and Elvira Daut (and friend). (Right) Young Dick McFall and his dog "Punch" were awarded a Jolly Junior Cup, presented by William J. Conners, Jr. (Bottom) Awaiting the judges' decision are Jennie and Effie Patterson of 182 Florida Street, August Sauer of 390 Genesee Street and Elizabeth Markham of 2035 Bailey Avenue.

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A Bevy of Bovines



(Top) This trio of prize-winning cows was shown by Paul Posch and his two sons, Paulie and Paul II, of Erie County Farms. (Bottom) The Erie County Calf Club's Harry Donnelly, Magdaleni Heier, Joseph Jankowski and Harry Choate pose with their young critters.

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After 175 years, the Erie County Fair is still going strong.
STEVE MANGIONE PHOTOGRAPH, 2012

