

# Nebraska's State Fair an Important Factor in Farm Life



NEBR. STATE FAIR - LINCOLN, SEPT., 1898



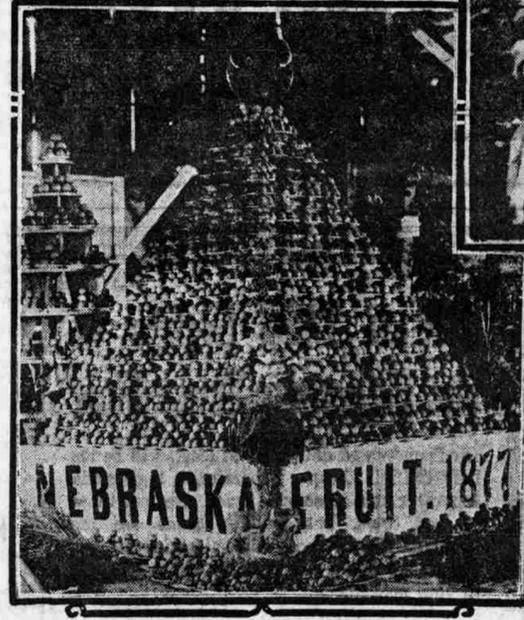
PARADE OF PRIZE WINNING CATTLE AT NEBR. STATE FAIR



W. R. MELLOR



SHOWING THE SHETLANDS



The group of officers of the Nebraska Agricultural society in 1878 is made from a valuable photograph in possession of the secretary at present. The men shown are: From left to right—W. R. Bowen, Omaha; Edwin McIntyre, Seward; Martin Dunham, Omaha; R. H. Henry, Columbus; Milton Doolittle, Atkins; Governor R. W. Furnas, Brownsville; J. B. Dinmore, Sutton; George Furnas, Brownsville; S. M. Barker, Silver Creek; Charles A. Dunham, Omaha; Sam Bassett, Gibbon; Ed Grinnell, Calhoun, and Austin Humphrey, Lincoln.

By W. R. MELLOR.  
HEN Robert W. Furnas, John M. Thayer, A. D. Jones and a few other kindred spirits gathered together at the Herndon house in Omaha, October 30, 1858, for the purpose of organizing the Territorial Board of Agriculture, passing resolutions to hold a fair beginning the third Tuesday of September, 1859, which fair was held at Nebraska City, resulting in such a disastrous financial failure that no further efforts were made to hold a state fair until September, 1858.

they were pioneers, not only of a great state, but also of one of our great state institutions, which is now one of the recognized great fairs of the United States. Nebraska, although the twenty-eighth in population, had the seventh largest receipts of any of the large fairs last year, and 12,739 people passed through the gates. When we consider that within a ten-mile circle of the state fair grounds the population is probably 60,000, this is indeed a remarkable showing. For a number of years prior to 1901 the fair was "rotated" between

Omaha and Lincoln. The 1901 legislature passed a bill appropriating \$25,000, with which to purchase a permanent location for the state fair, and the present tract of 122 acres was purchased and a beginning made toward permanency of the institution. The state is the owner of this land, which together with the permanent improvements made from state appropriations, total an investment to date of \$123,000. Out of the profits of the fair, after paying premiums, all expenses connected with the office, aiding financially in publicity, corn shows, agricultural education, etc., the board has furnished toward permanent improvements in the twelve years a total of more than \$10,000. The improvements made by the board this year, included in above amount, aggregate \$20,000, and consist of the grading of the machinery section, the erection of a portion of the new machinery hall, 122x120 feet, which when finally completed will cover 400x740 feet, the building of a brick and iron entrance gate, 16x28 feet, at Seven-

teenth and Fair streets, the erection of a modern steel judges' stand at the race track and the construction of 100 feet of bleachers at the east end of the grandstand. In the erection of the steel for the new machinery hall one of our Omaha construction companies were the successful bidder. When I appeared before the congressional agricultural committee at Washington last spring, I dwelt at length on the educational advantages of state fairs, using in part these words: "The state fair is recognized as a beneficial institution in a great number of our states, and as such receive legislative support. Some of the causes for such action are that no single institution of learning has contributed to such a great extent in accentuating the desire for pedigreed stock as has the state, district and county fair. Here are seen the best methods of rotation of crops, the balanced and finished product, which every farmer is striving to attain. Here are seen the best fowls for farm use, the best products of the soil, the best methods of cultivation, the best arrangement for farm buildings and fields, the balanced ration for feeding, the various methods for the water supply, the best lighting plant and many other educational features. Here also are seen all kinds of farm machinery, so that should a farmer have the purchase of any particular machine in view by attending any one of our great state fairs he can see all of the leading makes exhibited side by side, with an expert in charge who exemplifies its particular merits, making it possible for him to make a judicial selection for the uses desired. Some say that such instruction at most of the fairs only lasts five days each year. We will grant that such is the case. The persons who attend are the busy men, the men of affairs, the men who provide the sinews to carry on the affairs of the country, state and nation, the men who have no time for extended schooling at the experimental stations of schools, but must gather their information from object lessons, the press and actual experience. The school holding 120 days each year must have about 500 students to equal that number in about 100,000, and we think that this number is about the average attendance for all of the state fairs. Many of them have several times this number, therefore as an educational institution it is just to compare its efficiency with that of the school with like attendance, and we believe it is superior from the fact that an object lesson is the very best from which permanent instruction can be obtained." If this position be true, the Nebraska state fair of 1911 equalled the educational value of a school with an average daily attendance of about 1,400 pupils. The management of the state fair has contracted with the Moisant International aviators for the services of Harold Kantner, a licensed aviator in Europe, Great Britain and America, who is termed "the speed demon of the air," for the reason that he has won all the great speed trophies for flying machines in this country and Europe. The company promises that he will introduce aside from the great flights each afternoon the famous solo-plane exhibition, which is accomplished by the aviator ascending thousands of feet in the air, shutting off his motor and gliding gracefully back to the earth with all the gyrations of a graceful bird. The machine used in these flights will be the Moisant seventy-horse power monoplane, which has a capacity for speed of 104 miles an hour while flying through the air. This style of air craft has but two wings, and the motor draws it through the air like the biplane, which has upper and lower wings and drives from the rear. The monoplane is much the more beautiful of the two machines while in flight and much the easiest to handle. The flights are scheduled for every day. Liberati's concert band and grand opera company of New York City needs no introduction to a Nebraska audience. This organization was assembled and has existed continuously since 1872 under the personal direction of the world-renowned concert virtuoso and bandmaster of America, Alexander Liberati, founder, owner and impresario all these years. The distinctively new feature in the attractions of the fair will be the Irwin Bros' wild west show brought in its entirety from Cheyenne where it is the feature event of the great plains country, and to which Denver sends a special train every thirty minutes on certain days. That which causes "red blood" to course through the veins of the old stand-by attraction at the fair for the last forty years, has been the exhibition of speed by the best horses found in this part of the country. The entries to the early closing races this year are very promising, as 197 horses were named in the seven events; four of these events are for purses of \$1,000 each. The late closing made August 12, include 2:25, 2:18, 2:14 and 2:10 trotting, and 2:30, 2:20, 2:17, 2:10 and free-for-all pacing, each for a purse of \$500. Three harness races and two running races will be programed for each day. The ten-mile relay race, two miles each day, changing horses in front of the grandstand each half mile, promises to be hotly contested, as from present indications six strings of horses will compete, and it is quite likely to take the last day's racing to decide positions. The one and one-eighth-mile Nebraska derby will occur on Tuesday. The Wortham & Allen United shows have been secured for the midway this year. It is the first trip of this company in the west, heretofore they have furnished the carnival attractions for Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and the great state fairs of the central east, from whom they come with splendid recommendations. They carry their own electric lighting

(Continued on Page Eleven.)

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