

1950

The fund drive was continued to support additional fairgrounds needs. Troy Lindley, Fair Secretary, became ill and was replaced for five months by Pete Decres, Extension Agent.

Pending construction of the race track attracted many followers. In June, the field Secretary of the WA Horse Breeder Assoc. came to help the newly formed Whitman County Horse Breeders Association. Officers were Hugh Huntly, Rodney Russell and E.J. Swanson. Members included R.V. McEwan, Fay Dickey, Bo Henry, Charles McSweeney, Bob Lauren and Dr. C.W. Hayward with another 200 members joining later.

The first barn was built and Mockonema Downs race track was completed in time for the first summer race. Members stated *“Any money taken in on this venture will be used to build new barns and improve the fairgrounds track to promote racing and breeding in the County”*. Guidelines set up by the Fair Board stipulated *“all building and improvements by organizations other than the Fair Board will become the property of the Fair Association”*.

The fairgrounds were more complete this year but tents were still used for some exhibits. Community floats participated and the 10 high school bands performed en masse in form of the arena grandstand. Over 10,000 people were there, the highest attendance ever. In December, a ham and bacon shoot was held at the Gun Club to raise money for a new Home Economics building.

Fair Queen: Collen Dyer, Tekoa

1951

Another horse barn was built by the Horse Racing Association. A rest room facility was built near the grandstands. More bleaches were added and the Home Economics building was started. When the concrete floor was finished, a dedication and Saturday night dance were held. Some exhibits were still held in the tents with night security hired. The program featured horse shows, chariot races, harness races, a tractor rode and fireworks. Rodeo champion cowboy was Syn Huntley. The Fair's "B" rating was increased to "A" status.

Fair Queen: Loise Palmer, Farmington

1952

Encouraged by the growth of the fair, the Fair Board, Whitman County Cattleman's Association, and the Whitman County Horse Racing Association sponsored a three-day July Jubilee to raise funds. Reserved grandstand seats were sold for the horse racing and Junior Rodeo program. Sherry Camp, Rodeo Queen for the event, and the Rodeo Champion Cowboy Bill Curtis were featured in the Grand Entry.

During the summer, there was a saddle horse auction and the Colfax J.C.'s sponsored an implement sale. These events were the beginning of many that continued and grew in proportion in the years to come.

A roof was placed on the grandstands in the summer and the Home Economics building was finished. Ticket booths were built at the entry gate. Queens, floats, and bands participated in the Grand Parade.

Fair Queen: Elenore Littleton, Oakesdale

1953

Theme: "Territorial Centennial"-chosen to celebrate

100 years of progress for Northwest Washington

The Fair management under the name of Whitman County Fair received a new name, becoming the **PALOUSE EMPIRE FAIR**. Booster Buttons were sold in place of tickets for the three-day fair.

Eagles Club Auxiliary women's group sponsored the Inland Empire Mother contest which was won by Mrs. Carrie Miller of Endicott, with Mary Lambert, of Dusty, taking second place. These ladies were dressed in "Territorial Centennial" style of garments in keeping with the Fair theme as were many others in different events.

Fair Queen: Betsy Odgen, Rosalia

1954

Troy Lindley, County Agent, was the Secretary and general advisor for the Fair. He was joined this year by Vilma, Golde, Home Extension Agent, who also was general advisor for Home Economics exhibits, Felix Entenmann and Clint Luce.

The facilities built in these first five years were:

Exhibition building – 100' x 60' (Display Building)

Home Economics building – 199' x 60'

Mother's Rest Room

Livestock building – 120' x 60'

Livestock building – 120' x 50' with concrete floor, adjustable pens, sales ring (heated)

complete with seats for 350 people

Livestock building – 100' x 32'

Well drilled to 95' with water o tap over the entire fairgrounds

Three concession booths Steptoe Firemen, Eagles, J.C.'s

Four horse barns with stalls

Two separate rest rooms

Grandstand (seating 1800) bought form the Spokane Indian Baseball Park

Bleachers seating for 200

Gun Club facilities including separate rest rooms

Parking area and landscaping

Half a mile track with a quarter mile straight of way

The Colfax Community study reported the following:

Fairgrounds Land..... \$ 24,735.00

Buildings/Facilities..... \$155,601.00

Total Investment..... \$180,336.00

The above list o f facilities written by Troy Lindley was also accompanied with the following observance of how it was accomplished:

"While the Fairgrounds present a beautiful sight to those passing by, the outstanding features are not visible to the eye. It is the cooperation of the large number of individuals and organizations who have given of time, ideas, and money to help the Fair Association and the County Commissioners in the development of this enterprise.

A large number of farmers, business, and professional people throughout het County made cash donations during the first two years of the development. A racing association was organized and the group-built horse barns and helped complete the rooms under the grandstand. They also helped with

maintenance of the trac, fencing, paddocks, and many other features. Gun Clubs financed an up to date facility. Various Home Economic and 4-H clubs helped raise funds for the Home Economics building. County Cattlemen planned and raised funds for the first large cattle barn. Swine and Sheep Breeders united to design and finance their barn. They also, along with the Cattlemen, joined to install a sales arena and washroom. Flower and Garden clubs united in grounds beautification. Granges and Farm Bureau assisted with fixture in exhibit buildings. Folk around the county purchased in advance enough ten-year seats in the grandstand to pay for two thirds of it cost. All in all, the Fair development has become "everybody's business". Working with the Directors, Commissioners, and the State Department of Agriculture, the citizens of Whitman County are working toward a fair worthy of the folks of the Palouse Empire".

Mary Doty was selected as Inland Empire Mother.

Fair Queen: patty Ackerman, Colfax

1955

Theme: "Partners in Progress"

Troy Lindley, County Extension Agent since 1942, was honored as "County Agent of the Year"

A new ladies rest room was built between the Home Economics and Display buildings. Area club groups landscaped the grounds.

The Fair closed on Saturday night with the Sunday show arranged by organizations other than the Fair Board. Minutes list a Sunday program of an arena show and professional acts preceded with a church service. It is not listed in the Premium book as a four-day event until 1963 and church services are not listed until 1976 as being held in the grandstand arena.

The Fair continued its development through the year sand changers in programming form year to year and shifts in entertainment emphasis. A Palouse Empire Kids Day was held with special stunts, races, contests, and calf scramble. Dial telephone systems were demonstrated during the fair. The telephones were scheduled to make their appearances in homes in the spring of 1956. Speakerphones which enabled people to talk to each other without lifting a receiver were also shown. Mable Jones, Princeton, was Inland Empire Mother with Elsie Archer, Colfax taking second place.

Fair Queen: Phyllis Shields, Pullman

1956

The Display Building, started in 1949 received a metal roof and concrete floor.

Directions were placed in the Premium Book of where to find exhibits and displays. Exhibits included community booths, grain & forage crops, fruits & vegetables, educational booths, home economics, livestock, commercial exhibits, and a carnival. The Fair office was located under the grandstand. Advanced auditions were held for the Talent Show with the winners performing on Saturday evening. A "Rodeocanna" for kids age 8-17 was held in place of a rodeo.

Mrs. Wil Nelson, Thornton, was selected Inland Empire Mother with Bertha Sauer, Lamont, as runner up.

Fair Queen: Carolyn Weitz, St. John

1957

This was the second-year three-day fairs (Thursday-Saturday) were held. This Sunday event, Ring & Hutsel Rodeo, was not sponsored by the Palouse Empire Fair. The Talent Show was held again on

Saturday evening. The centennial anniversary of the National Education Association was observed with local teachers engaged in action with musical numbers and a skit. A new feature was a mule pack race with owners participating. The first "Carson & Barnes Combined Wild Animal Circus" was added to the Thursday lineup.

Inland Empire Mother was Ethel Mettler, Colfax, second place was Mrs. Dave Hickman, Palouse.

Fair Queen: Joanne Morgan, Colfax

1958

Theme: "Diamond Jubilee"

A special feature was held this year honoring pioneers who had continuous ownership of a farm or business for 75 year or longer, researched by the Whitman County Pioneers association. Th Colfax Kiwanis Club sponsored this event. Troy Lindley stated the following:

"The Fair has always featured the best in farming enterprises, business and family living. The Diamond Jubilee adds to that record. The rapid progress made in developing the fairground and facilities has been made possible by liberal patronage form folks throughout the area, donations of time and money by individuals and groups, solid backing by County commissioners through the annual budget, splendid cooperation for the State Department of agriculture as evidenced by allotment of funds derived from the State Horse Racing program and aggressive, sound forward looking Fair Board management."

In nine years, the Fair Board was able to tear up the note held for \$5,000 borrowed to complete the hog and sheep barn. The total investment of land, buildings, and facilities totaling a quarter million was clear at that point.

The new Community Building, still in the completion stage was used. The 4-H girls dress review was held there. Previously it was held in different places such as the Sales Arena in the Livestock Building.

The Ring & Hutsell Rodeo was held on Friday and Sunday afternoons. The N.W. Roping School sponsored a Junior Rodeo. Inland Empire Mother was Jessie Morgan, St. John.

Fair Queen: Judy Lowe, St. John

1959

Carol Ann Sheffels took the place of Vilma Golde as Extension Agent and general advisor for the Home Economics Division. Troy Lindley resigned as County Agent and Felix Entenmann took over as General Advisor and Secretary of the Fair.

The Grand Parade was followed by presentation of all winners in 4-H, FFA, Community Booths, Wheat King Plaques, and Parade of Livestock Champions. Saturday night program featured the Pasco Drum and Bugle Corps followed by a Junior Rodeo. A Harvest Ball was held in the new Community Building. Rose Hays, Colfax was chosen Rodeo Queen. Inland Empire mother was Virginia Reisenauer, Colton.

Fair Queen: Karen Kimsey, Pullman