

## VIGO COUNTY FAIR HISTORY

- Pre Civil War**    small ag exhibits
- 1867**            **Indiana State Fair held at Terre Haute 4 Corners Racetrack**
- 1870-1920**      small "community ag exhibit fairs" held in several locations
- Late 1920's**     **1 county fair at Stadium - 4-H begins**
- 1930's**          **Orville Redenbacher expands 4-H**
- Early 40's**      **Paul Turner was President of Fair**
- 1947, 1948**      **Fair has difficulty scheduling Fair due to competition with baseball, etc at Stadium and begin to look for alternatives**
- 1948**            **had to change date of Fair, had to cancel several events and exhibits**
- Late 1948**      **Paul Turner, Everett Acree, Joe Quinn, the Unions and many others Begin planning for new fairgrounds - local businessmen donate for purchase of "Meadowbrook Farm". South of Terre Haute on 3<sup>rd</sup> St.**
- 1949**            **Bonds sold in all communities brings in \$30,000 for development of utilities and 1<sup>st</sup> buildings**  
**Exhibit Building disassembled at Pfizer Plant and moved to Fairgrounds**  
**Fair at new site, tents for livestock, heavy rain and pigs swam in tent no Thompson Ditch**  
**Rural Youth plant trees ( now mature ) members were Birch Bayh, Coen Hutchinson, Mary Francis ( Hewitt ) Hutchinson, Etc**
- 1949-50**        **Joe Quinn starts racetrack**
- 1950**            **Machinery Building built by Implement Dealers**  
**\_\_\_\_\_ Tygert was Fair Manager, Joe Quinn, Pres.**
- Late 50's**        **Racing becomes popular**
- 50's & 60's**      **Fairgrounds established and depreciation sets in**
- 60's**            **little improvements and upkeep done, big name shows lose money**  
**4-H and Ag low priority**
- 1970**            **ISU Driver's Training Center opens**  
**4-H Show Arena built**  
**Marque sign**

**Early 70's** continued costs overruns

**1976** consideration of alternatives to improve Fair and Fairgrounds

**Early May 1977** Fair membership meeting to elect new fairboard, SOF wins( Save Our Fairgrounds ) established Fairboard loses

**May 26, 1977** Fair Board resigns, except John Scott, Carl Hale, Don Myers, Ralph Livengood, and Max Miller

**May 30, 1977** The above 5 meet at County Highway Garage and contact 20 other People to reconstitute new Fairboard

**June 3, 1977** New Fairboard meets to make 2 decisions:  
 ■ Can Terre Haute & Vigo County support a fair?  
 ■ Can a Fair be conducted in 1 ½ months ?  
 There was no President, Treasurer, Fair Manager, or Superintendent of Grounds in place for the 1977 Fair  
 Vigo County Park Staff do custodial and manure (stayed on for 5 years)  
 All local goods and services were on a cash basis only - this was due to sizeable accounts overdue at Hulman's , Potter Electric, Moore- Langden Printing, Port-a-John's, Hillman's, ETC. =  
 Outstanding bills were around \$ 100,000  
 The interest on the old bonds (worth \$ 90,000) were 5 years unpaid

**Fall 1977** Decision made to 1<sup>st</sup> pay all current and past bills - This took 5 years

**1978- 1980** Depreciation continues with little or no improvements made, no \$\$\$

**Mid 1980's** After bills paid up to date, the bonds (\$90,000+) and the interest are paid

**Late 80's** 4-H complex a priority, new buildings, remodeling, and maintenance  
 Add to Show arena, sewer line to Thompson Ditch, water main to City, Roof and steel siding on Exhibit Building, Electric system redone, Beef barn, goat barn, poultry barn, bleachers, track, grandstand, horse Barn, horse arena, 4-H restrooms, ETC

**1990's** continued improvements

**Early 2000's** Restrooms, Hort building, bleachers, grandstand, implement building, ETC