

Winter 2017

Negotiating Community Values: The Franklin County Agricultural Society Premium Lists, 1844-1889

Chris Burns

University of Vermont, cburns@uvm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/libfacpub>



Part of the [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Burns, Chris, "Negotiating Community Values: The Franklin County Agricultural Society Premium Lists, 1844-1889" (2017).
University Libraries Faculty and Staff Publications. 55.
<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/libfacpub/55>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Libraries at ScholarWorks @ UVM. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Libraries Faculty and Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UVM. For more information, please contact donna.omalley@uvm.edu.



Negotiating Community Values: The Franklin County Agricultural Society Premium Lists, 1844-1889

The creation of agricultural fairs was originally intended as a way to achieve agricultural and economic reform. Once they took shape, however, the meaning and impact of the fairs was shaped as much or more by those who attended the fairs as it was by the organizers.

By CHRIS BURNS

Agricultural fairs date to the early nineteenth century in the United States, and while they have undergone many changes, the core structure and key elements of the fair experience remain. At their heart is a series of juried competitions, outlined each year in a premium list.¹ Competition was originally introduced to encourage farmers to adopt scientific methods of agriculture and better business practices. The rationale was that competition would serve as an incentive to modernize farming and as an educational instrument, a demonstration of the latest and best practices. While the structures put in place by fair organizers certainly influenced the development of these competitions over time, as well as agriculture itself, a number of other factors had an equal, if not greater, impact.

This article explores the dynamic tension at play between fair organizers, local community members, and larger commercial and cultural forces through an examination of selected premiums at the Franklin County Fair in northwestern Vermont. A record book held at the University of Vermont's Special Collections documents the Franklin County

.....

CHRIS BURNS is Curator of Manuscripts and University Archivist at Special Collections, University of Vermont Libraries.

Vermont History Vol. 85, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2017): 20–42.

© 2017 by the Vermont Historical Society. ISSN: 0042-4161; on-line ISSN: 1544-3043

Agricultural Society and its successor, the Franklin County Agricultural and Mechanical Society, from its founding in 1844 to 1889.² This study illustrates how the relative importance of agricultural and domestic labor were highlighted and renegotiated in the premium list for this community during the second half of the nineteenth century. As Leslie Prosterman, in a study of modern agricultural fairs, has noted, “by locating in a time and space dedicated to a special purpose related to but removed from everyday life and by adopting stylized procedures, judging and exhibition reorder, highlight, and comment on the everyday occupational and domestic experiences of fairgoers’ lives.”³

ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL FAIR

Two agricultural reform developments led to the modern agricultural fair. First, individual gentlemen farmers held events at their estates to bring the agricultural community together and to promote new reforms: Thomas Coke held festive sheep shearings in England in the late eighteenth century; Thomas Ruggles led the creation of a Worcester County fair at Hardwick, Massachusetts, in 1762; and George Washington Parke Custis in Virginia and Robert Livingstone in New York held large sheep-shearing festivals in the early nineteenth century. Central to these events were competitions. One visitor to a Livingstone event was Elkanah Watson, who borrowed aspects of the event when he created the Berkshire County livestock exhibition in 1811.⁴ One of Watson’s critical contributions was the attempt to get broad community participation through entertainment, speeches, and competitions. The combination of education and entertainment, and the ongoing tension that exists between the two, is what defines the American agricultural fair.⁵

The second reform development was the establishment of agricultural societies. Central to the mission of these societies was the notion of progress and advocacy for scientific agriculture.⁶ In America, agricultural societies spread quickly after the Revolution. After the Berkshire society started holding fairs, other societies soon followed suit.⁷ Fairs became popular with reform leaders when other efforts to educate and influence farming practices proved unsuccessful. The intention of these societies in holding fairs was to find a way to get farmers to pay attention to new methods, by appealing to their competitive nature and by making the fair entertaining as well as educational. Competitions were seen as the key to getting new progressive ideas to wider audiences: “Exhibitions were the oats that hid the bridle, the school that did not seem to teach.”⁸

ORIGINS OF THE FAIR IN VERMONT

Attendance, membership dues, and state subsidies funded these fairs and the premiums awarded. State subsidies in particular proved essential to the success of fairs, but state funding only became consistent in the 1840s and 1850s. In Vermont, the General Assembly passed “An Act, To Encourage and Promote Agriculture” in 1843. The act provided that the state treasurer would determine when a county society had been “duly organized” and would then pay a sum “as will be in proportion to the population of the county where such society is organized.” Those funds, after covering “incidental expenses,” were to be used for “premiums,” the sums and manner to be determined by each society, for “live animals, articles of production and agricultural implements and tools, as are of the growth and manufacture of the county; and also on such experiments, discoveries, or attainments, in scientific or practical agriculture, as are made within the county where such societies are respectively organized.”⁹

The act laid out the template for these societies—how they would be formed, funded, and governed, and what aspects of agriculture they would promote through premiums. Since the state was the funding source, the county societies had to adopt the model spelled out in this legislation. It set the standard for agricultural societies in Vermont and accounts for why the societies formed when they did and why the fairs all followed the same basic structure. The United States *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1867* lists the county societies in Vermont and their dates of formation. The impact of this law is clear: Windham County formed an agricultural society in 1843; Addison and Caledonia Counties in 1844; and Windsor County in 1846.¹⁰ Society record books also document that Franklin County formed a society in 1844,¹¹ and Bennington County did the same in 1848.¹² By 1872, the state lists agricultural societies for all but two counties, Orange and Grand Isle.¹³ This followed a nationwide trend: “After 1840 hundreds of state and local associations sprang to life, at once reflecting the expansion of American agriculture and constituting important agencies in its development.”¹⁴

The Franklin County Agricultural Society formed on September 13, 1844, when six gentlemen gathered at Campbell’s Hotel in St. Albans. They adopted a constitution and elected Eleazar Jewett, president, Michael F. Palmer, vice president, Charles W. Rich, secretary, and Alfred H. Huntington, treasurer. In order to receive monies from the state, the Society needed to commit an equivalent amount of money. On October 8, Rich noted, “The requisite amount of money having been paid in by five of the six persons whose names are attached to the constitution

.....

making thirty-five dollars per share, a certificate of the same was made out and order drawn by the Treasurer on the Treasurer of the State for the Society's portion of the State appropriation." At the December 9, 1844, meeting, after having received the appropriation from the state, the following premiums were awarded:

- Eleazar Jewett—Best acre of wheat, 35 bushels—\$35
- Erastus Jewett—Best yearling colt—\$35
- C. W. Rich—Best maple sugar—\$35
- Lucius Green—Best bull calf—\$35
- A. H. Huntington—Best ½ acre of corn, 44 bushels—\$35¹⁵

These five founding members thus quickly recouped their investment through some non-competitive premiums. Never again would the prizes be so high.

VERMONT, FRANKLIN COUNTY, AND AGRICULTURE IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of great change in Vermont. Agriculture was being reshaped in response to economic pressures, and dairy farming became the primary focus. Franklin County shifted early and vigorously from sheep to dairy farming. Census data for the period 1850-1890 show a number of factors that are important in examining Franklin County and its agricultural industry. The population in the county remained around 30,000 during this period, and remained about the fourth or fifth highest in the state. In many of the categories measured by the agricultural census, Franklin County ranked in the middle compared to the other thirteen Vermont counties. A few important exceptions to this norm are illustrated in the following table.¹⁶

	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890
Cash value	4,284,070 (8th)	9,794,401 (3rd)	16,663,492 (1st)	10,781,045 (4th)	8,429,880 (2nd)
Milch Cows	16,217 (3rd)	25,995 (1st)	27,624 (1st)	29,426 (1st)	32,088 (1st)
Sheep	58,509 (7th)	32,578 (7th)	20,054 (10th)	12,699 (10th)	9,016 (10th)
Butter <i>pounds of</i>	1,399,455 (2nd)	2,498,298 (1st)	2,984,520 (1st)	4,066,249 (1st)	3,127,042 (1st)
Cheese <i>pounds of</i>	1,196,660 (3rd)	1,091,641 (3rd)	510,226 (4th)	24,971 (13th)	15,255 (10th)
Hay <i>tons of</i>	78,619 (4th)	88,589 (4th)	104,075 (4th)	105,338 (3rd)	124,756 (1st)
Maple Sugar <i>pounds of</i>	684,511 (3rd)	937,483 (6th)	830,344 (5th)	1,307,343 (1st)	1,970,946 (2nd)

Raising sheep became dramatically less important in Franklin County, with a loss of 50,000 sheep over 50 years. Despite the fact that the number of sheep continued to drop, the county's rank remained about the same, due to the fact that the total number of sheep in Vermont was also dropping (1,014,122 in 1850 to 333,947 in 1900). Dairy farming and maple sugaring took the place of raising sheep. The census shows that a commitment to milk cows was made in the 1850s, and, thanks to the arrival of the railroad and refrigerated cars, a commitment was made to butter rather than cheese. In addition, Franklin County's maple sugar production rose significantly over the period studied. The reorganization of Franklin County agriculture resulted in consistently high rankings in cash value and value of farm productions, despite continuing to rank near the middle in total number of farms.

Railways opened in Vermont during this period, and connected the state to larger markets in New York City, Boston, and Montreal. This is important in relation to agriculture in a two ways. First, the sheep market in Vermont crashed due to the availability of cheaper wool brought in by rail from the west. Conversely, the dairy industry grew as railroad cars took butter and milk to these larger markets, as Vermont farmers were able to stay competitive on the price of these products, although fear of competition from the west was never far from their minds. The change in Franklin County agriculture was aided by J. Gregory Smith's move of the Central Vermont Railroad headquarters to St. Albans.¹⁷ Smith also served as president of the Franklin County Agricultural Society from 1868-1872, as well as governor of Vermont from 1863-1865.

FOUNDING OF THE FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIR

In February 1845, the Franklin County Agricultural Society began in earnest, electing a board of managers representing the fourteen towns of the county. A constitution spelled out the roles of the society, its officers, the board of managers, and committees "to inspect the various agricultural productions."¹⁸ Article 2 stated that "the object of the Society shall be the improvement of agricultural productions, useful domestic animals and domestic manufactures." What domestic manufactures were and how to improve them was an area of shifting emphasis over the period. Article 3 described how funds would be raised to match the state appropriation: Annual membership dues of \$1 per person were to be paid by the first Tuesday of September.¹⁹

The role of judging premiums fell to appointed committees. Article 10 spelled out how the committees were to operate: "It shall be the duty of such committees as shall be appointed to inspect agricultural productions—in making their reports on the same, to take into consideration the skill, industry, and economy, with which the same was produced, and

accurately note and specify the individual merits and demerits of the principal animals and articles inspected by them, and clearly describe the points in which the preferred animal or article surpasses the others.”²⁰ The judges were instructed to document clearly their decisions to ensure fairness and limit disputes, and to base their decisions on the criteria of skill, industry, and economy. These were the values being promoted. The winners needed to display not only skill, but also innovation and efficiency. This was the language of progress. These fairs and competitions were designed to move agriculture forward at a time when the farmer’s innovation or adopted innovation might be a beneficial example to others.

Fair contestants and judges established a dialogue that set community standards for the various categories, as well as in everyday life. The basis for these standards was—and remains—shared experience. As Leslie Prosterman has noted in her study of late-twentieth-century fairs,

Most participants agree that experience rather than book learning serves as the basis for many of the standards. They tacitly acknowledge that they share this experience. Exhibitors in the region hold common assumptions that enable them to make and accept judgments without too much deviation. The notion of a standard is one that is necessary to those who exhibit, not only in the county fair but in their everyday lives. Common experience permits neighbors to judge each other and themselves.²¹

HOUSEHOLD MANUFACTURES

An early entry in the record book is an advertisement for the first annual fair of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, held on September 25, 1845, in St. Albans. The advertisement prominently featured the premium list, a series of competitions with cash prizes grouped under broad categories: field crops, cattle, horses, sheep, swine, farmers’ implements, household and other manufactures, miscellaneous, dairy, and ploughing match. The premiums ranged from \$.50 for the best pair of knit stockings to \$10 for the best bull of two years old and upwards.²²

The second annual Franklin County Fair was held in 1846. The advertisement for the fair pleaded, “To the Ladies of Franklin County, we appeal to exert their powerful influence in promoting this great interest. Come to the Fair, ladies, and by your presence and the exhibition of your handiwork, add greatly to its interest and influence.” The fair organizers had quickly come to the conclusion that female attendance and participation were essential to the success of the fair. The report on this fair, however, noted that the number of entries still “was not as large as desirable.” The advertisement for the third fair thus contained a similar appeal, and a few of the premiums were increased from \$1 to \$2.²³ Such

advertisements were not unique to Vermont. In Minnesota in 1854, a flyer "particularly respected women to send 'specimens of their industrial work.'"

Elsbeth Heaman, in her study of Canadian fairs, notes that agricultural fairs were designed for economic purposes, and women's work on display showed both how a household could save money by manufacturing some items at home and how "their husbands' work, found in the implements shed or the cattle stalls, enabled genteel women to devote themselves to domestic and fancy-work."

AGRICULTURAL FAIR.

The Annual FAIR of the SOCIETY will be held at ST. ALBANS, THURSDAY, SEPT. 25, 1845.

OFFICE OF THE SOCIETY.
J. V. FLEMING, President.
W. H. BROWN, Secretary.
R. B. BROWN, Treasurer.
R. B. BROWN, Secretary.
C. W. WOOD, Secretary.

CONSTITUTION.
ART. 1. The Society shall be known as the Franklin County Agricultural Society, and shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 2. The object of the Society shall be to promote the interests of agriculture, and to exhibit the products of the soil, and to promote the interests of the community.
ART. 3. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

MEMBERSHIP.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 4. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

REGULATIONS.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 5. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

EXHIBITIONS.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 6. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

PRIZES.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 7. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

EXHIBITIONS.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 8. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

PRIZES.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 9. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

EXHIBITIONS.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 10. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

PRIZES.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 11. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

EXHIBITIONS.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 12. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

PRIZES.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 13. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

EXHIBITIONS.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 14. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

PRIZES.
The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.
ART. 15. The Society shall be organized for the purpose of promoting agriculture, and of exhibiting the products of the soil, and of promoting the interests of the community.

It is hoped that the farmers of the richest and most exclusively agricultural county in the State will feel a deep interest in the Fair of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, to be held on the 25th day of September next. They are all earnestly invited to attend, with mechanics, and indeed every class in community, all of whose interests are indissolubly connected with the success of the cultivators of the soil. Nor should any neglect to compete for the numerous and generous Premiums offered for rivalry.

Franklin County Fair Advertisement, 1845. Special Collections University of Vermont Libraries.

This renegotiation was greatly influenced by the culture in which it took place, although historians of agricultural fairs offer slightly different analyses as to how. One line of interpretation holds that the categories reinforced limitations imposed on women. A study of North Carolina fairs concluded, “categories open to female exhibitors reflected . . . the Victorian-era belief that a woman’s place was in the home and, preferably, in the kitchen.”²⁶ A study of the Western Fair Association in Canada concurred: “Programs, competitions, and exhibits at fairs reinforced women’s place in society—and that their proper place was the private sphere of the home where women’s work and lives could be supervised and directed by men.”²⁷ But Heaman has countered that exhibiting could be empowering, because “the very act of exhibiting opened up new opportunities for communication and action within the public sphere.”²⁸ While the categories themselves did represent a limited view of women’s roles in society, being able to exhibit their work publicly was groundbreaking.

The development of this category over the period studied here was initially slow, but eventually it swelled to become one of the largest categories at the fair. The first fair had twenty-three premiums in the category of “Household and other Manufactures”: maple sugar, fulled cloth, flannel, wool carpeting, linen diaper, tow cloth, sewing silk, linen thread, knit stockings, fur hat, wool hat, straw hat, calf skin boots, cow hide boots, calf skin shoes, horse harness, saddle, sole leather, upper leather, dressed calf skin, pleasure wagon, pleasure sleigh, and specimen of the art of painting. Nonetheless, the report of the first fair noted “that the manufactures presented for premiums were not as numerous as they had hoped to see and were deficient in the more substantial fabrics.” Despite the pleas of the fair organizers, this continued to be a problem for a number of years.

1850—“the number of household manufactures exhibited was not large”

1854—“the number on exhibition was not a twentieth, nay, not a fortieth part as large as it should have been.” Only 8 premiums were awarded.

1855—“We regretted to see so small an exhibition of household manufactures. The display was better than that of last year, but still came very far from being so good an exposition as our County is capable of making.”

1856—“The exhibition of household manufacture was more creditable to our County than that of last year, but still fell far short of what it ought to be.”

1857—“The exhibition of household manufactures was not so full as at some former fairs, the state of the weather contributing largely to such a result.”²⁹

In 1858, there was finally a favorable report about the number of entries: “a slight survey of the numerous articles on exhibition would convince any one, that the industry which formerly characterized New England, still animates the present active generation.”³⁰

For the 1850 fair, the governing committee had made two important changes. It created two distinct categories: Household Manufactures and Miscellaneous Manufactures. In addition, for the first time women participated as judges for the Household Manufactures category. A man still chaired the committee, but the other members were all women. This arrangement was typical of agricultural fairs.³¹

The 1855 committee report of George F. Houghton, Mrs. E. D. Hyde, and Mrs. Burnell, minced no words in pointing out why this category had not been as successful as hoped for and how it could be improved.

Before announcing their decision, however, the committee would respectfully suggest that in their opinion the show ground is very poorly adapted for the exhibition of needlework. Such manufactures should be exhibited in a clean and decently furnished room, of good size where no cattle of any kind can frighten exhibitors, or to deter visitors from being present. Your committee believing that household manufactures should receive more attention at the hands of the Society, and should constitute the most attractive feature in the annual Fair of the Society, further recommend that many additions to the premiums on household manufactures should be made. Exhibitors then, under these improvements, would feel assured that their specimens of needle-work and handicraft would not be injured, or unnoticed, and that opportunity would be afforded to test the excellence of such articles as may come under the critical inspection of a committee.

Your committee insist that household manufactures should constitute the leading feature of the Society, that the skill of the needle-woman and the laborer at the spinning wheel should not be less noticed than other mechanic arts, and above all should not be compelled to yield precedence to horses that trot, and beasts that perish, and vegetables that decay.

They insist that a larger amount of premiums should be offered and a better premium list should be prepared, if the Society wishes to secure the aid and countenance of the ladies of Franklin County. Your committee making these suggestions offer no apology, but think that the time has arrived when practical suggestions are needed, and should receive proper weight from those having the management of a Society, which was created under a Statutory Law, providing for the “encouragement and promotion of agriculture, domestic manufactures, and the mechanic arts.”³²

The tone and message were clear. This category had been treated as

second class, it should not have been, and here was a plan to reverse that inferior treatment. However, it is unclear if the report had much of an impact. The positioning of this part of the exhibition may have been improved the next year but the number of premiums and their values were about the same.

The first fair after the Society reorganized as the Franklin County Agricultural and Mechanical Society, in 1866, had a smaller list of premiums: fulled cloth, woolen flannel, rag carpeting, linen diaper, pair of shirts, agricultural wreath, cut flowers, bouquet, dahlias, and floral design. The committee report for that year stated, "We noticed with pleasure a good show of Bed Spreads, Rugs, Woolen Yarn, Stockings, Mittens, &c, not on our premium list, which were duly reported to the Discretionary Committee as worth premiums." The Discretionary Committee reported that they were overwhelmed by the number of articles presented, and awarded premiums for rug, bedspread, knit bedspread, wool stockings, and wool mittens. They also recommended premiums, if funds were still available, for lamp mat, ottoman cover, pin cushion, tatting collar, lawn scarf, infant suit, tidy, needle book, infant dress, shell basket, shell frame, cone frame, crayon, penciling, oil painting, worsted table cover, and worsted chair.³³ The number and variety of entries at this fair were in excess of the potential premiums, the exact opposite of the situation before the war.

This time, the fair organizers responded quickly and greatly increased the number of premiums for the 1867 fair. In addition, a Committee on Flowers and Painting was created and sixteen women were awarded premiums in this category.³⁴ This adjustment of categories to meet changing demands has been, and remains to this day, a consistent feature of fairs.³⁵ What got the attention of the fair organizers in this case was not a blistering report from the judging committee, but a large number of competitors. Increased interest in household manufactures from Franklin County citizens meant a larger audience and therefore larger gate receipts.

Beginning in 1869, the premium list was reorganized, with the introduction of the term "departments" for the broad categories. Cattle became the First Department, horses the Second, and household manufactures became the Sixth Department. While the household manufactures committee began to note some progress in their reports, particularly in terms of the quantity and quality of submissions, they also continued to offer recommendations for rectifying what they felt was ongoing neglect by the Society. The 1870 committee highlighted the importance of household manufactures and the need for more and higher premiums.

The Committee report a very fair exhibition in this class. It is the opinion of the Committee that this is one of the most important and certainly one of the most attractive departments to the greatest number of people in the whole Fair and no department is more patronized by the public and more neglected by the Society. In those classes embracing painting, penciling, crayoning, flowers, floral designs, and fine needle work of all kinds, which form the chief attraction of Floral Hall, the premiums are ridiculously small. We earnestly recommend an increase in the list of articles to compete for premiums, and a liberal advance in the premium list itself. By such means a larger variety of articles and of better quality would be received and Floral Hall would be made doubly attractive.³⁶

In contrast with some of the earlier dispirited reports, fair organizers responded to these complaints, as several premiums increased the next year from \$1 to \$2 and from \$2 to \$3. The overall number of premiums grew significantly in the early 1870s, and continued to rise through the 1880s. In the late 1870s, however, the Sixth Department was reorganized and the value of premiums went down across the board. In the 1880s, the department's new sub-categories each had a set of judges and the premium values remained largely reduced.

Fifth Department.				
BUTTER.				
1st, C A Oliver		\$6	2d, Mrs A B Craft	50
2d, O Woodward	5		Chair cover, 1st, Mrs R W Nelson	75
3d, M L Jeffords	4		2d, Mrs M A Armstrong	50
4th, N H Martin	3		Table scarf, 1st, Mrs R W Nelson	75
5th, B B Oviatt	2		2d, Miss Angie Draper	50
			Etching on silk, 1st, Miss Carrie Noble,	75
CHEESE.			2d, Mrs J N Warner	50
1st, J S Northrop	4		Etching on cotton, 1st, Mrs P J Farnsworth	75
			2d, Miss Mamie Shedd	50
FRUIT.			Wall Banner, 1st, Mrs G F Nutting	75
Largest variety apples, 1st C R Keith	3		2d, Mrs P J Farnsworth	50
2d, W S Wing	2		Wash stand set, 1st, Miss Mabel Ford	75
Best five varieties of apples, 1st C R Keith	3		Carriage lap-robe, 1st, Mrs N A Sturtevant	1
2d, W S Wing	2		2d, Mrs P J Farnsworth	75
Grapes, 1st C R Keith	1		Ottoman cover, 1st, Mrs W L Hines	75
			Sofa pillow, 1st, Mrs R W Nelson	75
MISCELLANEOUS.			2d, Mrs W L Soule	50
Mill products, 1st C F Oviatt & Son	\$3		Knit winter hood, 1st Mrs P J Farnsworth	75
Peas, 1st A B Croft	75		Lamp mat, 1st Mrs C M Lawrence	75
Beans, 1st W S Wing	75		Carriage rug, 1st Mrs P J Farnsworth	75
2d, Willie Porter	50		Afghan, 1st Mrs L D Cross	75
Wheat, 1st A B Croft	75		2d Miss Mamie Shedd	50
Oats, 1st E G Dimon	75		Pillow sham, 1st Mrs J N Warner	75
Grass seed, 1st Curtis Wheeler	75		2d Mrs P J Farnsworth	50
Corn, 1st L D Cross	50		Macrame lace, 1st Miss Nellie Noble	75
2nd, F C Rogers	25		Table cover, 1st Mrs K B Garvin	75
Turnips, 1st Willie Porter	50		Chair cushion, 1st Mrs Willard White	75
2nd, F C Rogers	25		Worsted wreath, 1st Mrs Edith Jeffords	1 00
Beets, 1st W S Wing	50			
2nd, M L Jeffords	25		CLASS Z.	
Carrots, 1st E B Smith	50		Agricultural wreath, 1st Mrs R B Fanton	1 00
2nd, Willie Porter	25		2d Sarah E Gallup	75
Pepper, 1st P J Farnsworth	50		Agricultural bouquet, 1st Mrs R B Fanton	75
Potatoes, 1st D V Sunderland	50		Cut flowers, 1st Mrs M A Armstrong	75
2nd, P J Farnsworth	25		2d Mrs L P Marsh	50
Pumpkins, 1st E G Dimon	50		Bouquet, 1st Miss Carrie Noble	75
2nd, L D Cross	25		2d Mrs D R Oliver	50
Cucumbers, 1st M L Jeffords	50		Dahlia, 1st Miss Carrie Noble	75
Cabbage, 1st Willie Porter	50		2d Mrs D R Oliver	50
2nd, F C Rogers	25		Asters, 1st Miss Angie Draper	75
			2d Mrs M A Armstrong	50

*Selection from Franklin County Fair Premium List with Winners, 1886.
Special Collections University of Vermont Libraries.*

In 1889, the highest premium in the Sixth Department was \$3, for largest collection of flowers. That year the list of premiums was long and varied—Victorian culture in full bloom. With sixty-nine areas of competition, four distinct judging committees, and an emphasis on fancy work, it was a far cry from the limited offerings of the 1845 fair. While the value of the premiums had not increased much since 1845, the number of premiums had, and this was true for other departments too, such as cattle. Many more premiums were offered in 1889, but the prizes were not much higher in value, a strategy designed to increase the number of participants. The relative value of household manufactures in relation to some of the agricultural premiums also remained about the same, which is to say the inferior relationship continued despite some acknowledgment of the importance of this department as seen by the dramatic increase in the number of premiums.

ANIMALS AT THE FAIR: HORSES

The story of animals at the fair is about the popularity of horses and horse racing, the decline of sheep, and the rise of dairy. As can be seen in the agricultural census figures listed earlier, the main theme of Franklin County agriculture in the second half of the nineteenth century is the rise of the dairy industry. The number of sheep in the county declined from 58,509 in 1850 to 9,016 in 1890, while during the same period the number of milk cows grew from 16,217 to 32,088. The number of horses rose by about 2,000 while the number of working oxen decreased by about the same number, as horses took over a lot of the work once done by oxen, the result, as Howard Russell explained in his history of New England farming, of “the advent of better roads and the use of the four-wheeled wagon, the buggy, the iron plow, and cultivating machines.”³⁷

Unlike household manufactures, the animal categories generally had many competitors, led by horses. In 1854, “The display of horses was large, and formed by far the most attractive feature of the exhibition, and fully sustained the reputation of our County for raising well formed, strong and fast horses.”³⁸ Despite the rising economic importance of cattle, horses were taking over the fair, which was not universally welcomed, as noted in an 1855 Cattle Committee report. “On the whole we think that our cattle show is fast turning into a horse fair, to the exclusion of most everything else, and we consider this a good time for the friends of the Society to look about them and see if the evils under which the Society labors cannot be removed.”³⁹ Reports on cattle in subsequent years were more positive, although horses remained the category with the most entries. In 1858, competitors exhibited about 150 horses, 120 head of cattle, and 120 sheep of all grades, and the newspaper reported, “the competition on horses was particularly spirited.”

Horse racing was the most popular and the most controversial event at fairs of this era. Wayne Neely has written, “the development of speed and stamina in light-harness horses was a very real problem in an age of limited transportation facilities; in fact, it was no less a problem than the development of size and strength in draft horses in an age of limited power facilities. It was on such a basis that racing was introduced into the agricultural fair, a hybrid activity on the borderline between pure amusement and educational exhibit.”⁴⁰ Racing consistently drew the largest crowds, but fair organizers were tentative about fully embracing the event, especially as it had less and less to do with the agricultural mission of the fair. The trotting horses category opened in 1853, with five entered that year. That the event was new and the organizers were uncertain about it can be seen from the confusion as to what these horses were to be judged on: “The committee being directed to examine ‘trotting horses’ alone, naturally concluded, after much sage advice, that ‘trotting horses’ meant the ‘fastest trotting horses.’” The committee also noted, “It has become a source of profit to *raise* ‘fast horses,’ (as well as to *drive* them,) and we cannot urge too much on the breeders of horses, the necessity of thoroughly studying the mechanical and anatomical structure of Vermont trotting horses. There is a plain cause why one horse can trot a mile in less than three minutes, while another cannot in six. Ascertain that cause and we think you will agree with the Committee, that you must invariably breed from such horses as approximate nearest to what a ‘thoroughbred’ horse really is.” The tension continued the next year, when two premiums were offered: one for trotting, or



Horse Racing, Franklin County Fair, Sheldon, Vermont. Photograph by H. J. Soule, no date. Special Collections University of Vermont Libraries.

form, and one for gait, or speed. William Teachout took first place for both; A. N. Stevens took second in trotting but only third in gait, with second place in the speed category going to Harmon Northrop, who didn't place in the top three for trotting.⁴¹

While initially racehorses were considered an agricultural commodity and discussed in terms of their economic potential, it soon became clear that the spectacle of racing was the real draw and the organizers faced a difficult decision on whether to offer premiums for horse racing. At the February 1855 meeting, a motion passed to appoint a committee "to raise funds for the extra premiums for trotting on the second day of the next annual fair." The races that year were quite successful: "At 2 o'clock the trotting for premiums commenced. At this time the number in attendance was larger than at any time during the fair." But the organizers quickly soured on premiums for the event. At the February 1857 meeting, "[t]he premium heretofore offered on the speed of trotting horses was after a full and spirited discussion, struck out by nearly a unanimous vote."⁴²

The races continued, with the prize money coming from external sources rather than from the Society itself, and they continued to grow in popularity. On October 1, 1857, the *St. Albans Messenger* reported that on the second day, "the Fair ground was thronged to witness the speed of horses. The Society as such, had nothing to do with this part of the show, offering no premiums for speed, leaving it to those particularly fond of fast horses, to furnish the funds to call forth the entertainment."⁴³ When the Society was reorganized following the Civil War, it began to offer prize money for the races again in 1873. There does not appear to have been as much controversy from this point on, but an 1885 meeting did note in relation to horse racing, "The society is what it purports to be, an 'Agricultural and Mechanical Society,' and not a horse trot."⁴⁴

The tension between entertainment and education, as evident in the controversy over how to include and judge horses, has never been fully resolved at fairs and continues today, with shows and rides on the midway and events such as demolition derbies boosting attendance while competing with the agricultural offerings for the attention of fairgoers. Charles Fish devotes half a chapter of his study of late-twentieth-century Vermont county fairs to horse racing, and more than half of the book to the entertainment side, noting how these events not only compete with the education offerings, but also with each other. Horse racing at the fair is not the draw today that it was in the late nineteenth century. Although pari-mutuel betting was introduced to help boost interest, beginning with the Vermont State Fair in 1978, at least one long-time participant interviewed by Fish worried that it was a "dying sport."⁴⁵

ANIMALS AT THE FAIR: SHEEP AND COWS

For much of the nineteenth century, Merino sheep were the leading agricultural commodity in Vermont. In 1811, William Jarvis acquired Merinos from the royal Spanish flocks, and brought them to Weathersfield, beginning Vermont's sheep era.⁴⁶ Sheep raising flourished, but only with the help of tariff protections. Tariff changes in 1846 signaled the beginning of the end for the sheep era in Vermont. Justin Morrill, in his 1870 address to the Franklin County Fair, discussed the sheep situation and "whether sheep-husbandry in Vermont can regain its former prestige and profit."⁴⁷ Morrill suggested diversifying sheep breeds and ending an over-reliance on the Merino.

At the Franklin County Fair, evidence of an effort to encourage diverse breeds can be seen in the premium list. In 1867, premiums appeared for a few more sheep breeds, and the greatest number of breeds was listed in 1870: Merino, English Long Wool, Leicester, Cotswold, Lincoln, English Middle Wool, Down, Shropshire, Oxford, South Downs. However, the sheep industry in Vermont and in Franklin County was not able to regain its former prominence, and sheep premiums fell lower in relation to horses and cattle in the early 1870s. In 1876 the number of sheep breeds was reduced, in 1887 sheep premiums were lowered to \$2, and in 1889 no sheep premiums were awarded at all.

As the sheep industry declined in Vermont, the dairy industry grew in prominence. At the Franklin County Fair, the dairy premiums from 1844-1889 demonstrate the rise of butter in the region. We know from the census figures cited earlier that Franklin County became a giant in butter production during this era, growing from 1.4 million pounds in 1850 to 3.1 million pounds in 1890, peaking in 1880 at over 4 million pounds. Franklin County was the tenth most productive county in the United States in 1880 and the eighth most productive in 1890. By the 1880s, St. Albans also claimed to have the largest butter-making creamery in the world, the Franklin County Creamery. The Vermont Central Railroad and the Vermont and Canada Railway, and their refrigerated cars, were instrumental in the growth of butter production in Franklin County, taking butter from the market in St. Albans to Montreal, New York, Boston, and the growing factory towns of New England in a way that had not been possible before.⁴⁸

In a detailed 1872 account of the St. Albans butter market, Dr. R. R. Sherman described how much things had changed since 1840, when little butter was produced in the area, and only wintertime trips to Montreal on Lake Champlain and the St. Lawrence River were utilized for selling surplus agricultural products. The introduction in 1854 of rail cars supplied with ice led to a regular butter day on Tuesdays,

and Sherman painted a vivid a picture of the bustling activity in town on those days.⁴⁹

The premium list reflects the growing prominence of butter in the Franklin County economy. Butter premiums were high throughout the period and increased in relation to the premiums for cheese. The trend of favoring butter over cheese production was true all over New England beginning in the 1850s.⁵⁰ Further evidence of the increased importance of butter is found in the lengthy commentaries made by judging committees on how to make the best butter.

In 1845, \$8 premiums were awarded for the best 25 pounds of butter made before the 10th of July and for the best specimen of cheese not less than 100 pounds. Rules noted that “Competitors for premiums on butter and cheese will be required to lodge a full detailed specification of the process of manufacturing and preservation of the articles presented.”⁵¹ Because the fair aimed at being educational, documenting the process of how the butter or cheese was made was critical to showing other farmers how to improve their operations. At this early date, however, the judging committee was disappointed in the competition and in the reputation of Franklin County butter in general. The committee report noted,

the specimens of butter exhibited were but three in number and of a quality altogether too low to entitle them to favorable consideration. One lot was sweet, fair butter—nothing more, and the committee awarded it a premium. The most mortifying and discouraging subject in the whole range of our agricultural products is the fact that the great mass of the butter made in this section of the country is decidedly bad. What little good we do have suffers from the bad reputation our butter possesses, and hence the inducement to make a fine article is less than it should be. The committee would press this subject upon all the dairy people of the county and beseech them to wipe off this just reproach upon our character as an agricultural community.⁵²

Committee reports showed a slow progression in number and quality of entries, but still found a great deal of room for improvement and continuously remarked on the overuse of salt.

1854—“The show of Butter was not so good either in quantity and quality as that of last year.”

1861—“But your Committee would say that for a general thing we found most of the butter rather high salted, and would recommend salting a little less.”

1867—“Your Committee asks permission to add, that there are other samples which were good, with perhaps a single exception, for instance: one tub was good except that it had a smoky taste, another all right except a barn flavor, another except salted greatly in excess, and another except it had an oily flavor, probably imparted by the salt. In

closing their report your Committee would take the liberty to suggest that none but pure sweet salt be used in salting butter, for an ounce of poor salt will spoil a pound of good butter.⁵³

The 1871 and 1872 committee reports were remarkably long. No other reports from any other committee, in any year, were as detailed. In 1871, the advice was part pep talk, advising farmers not to get too discouraged if their neighbor's butter is found to be superior or fetches a higher price, and part market oriented, stressing the importance of presentation. It was not technical advice on how to make the best butter.

Your committee on butter beg leave to report that the quality of the 47 packages exhibited was very creditable indeed and beside those awarded premiums, there were many good specimens, none however, without some objectionable point, the leading one being *too much salt*.

We have endeavored to decide impartially according to our best judgment, and will offer a few suggestions that may be of interest to dairymen who wish to produce a good article and obtain the best prices.

1st. Discard the idea that you are now making an article just as good as your neighbor, who sells his butter 2 to 3 cts per pound more than you do and try to improve the quality by learning of him.

2nd. Do not depend too much upon making your buyer think your butter just as good as your neighbor's, but let your butter sell on its own merits if your buyer is a judge. You ought not to be offended if he tells you that your butter is inferior to your neighbor's. You may think it very fine and still there may be a chance for much improvement.

3rd. Be sure your butter is just right in all respects to suit the market, in color, grain and flavor, the last of which is the most essential.

We may describe to you what *we think* a fine tub of butter *should be* but we are not practical butter makers and therefore do not claim to be able to tell you just how to make it.

It should be of proper color, proper grain or consistency, properly salted, all milky moisture removed, and last and most important, it should have that perfectly delicious flavor which can only be produced by the most careful manufacture.

It should be packed in a new, clean and neat tub, properly prepared, covered with a piece of bleached cloth, *all in one piece*, trimmed to the proper size and sprinkled over with a suitable quality of pure white salt, and then the maker's name stenciled on the tubs in letters of suitable size.

All these minor points help to maintain the reputation of a dairyman in the market. Don't omit them on any account.⁵⁴

In 1872, the committee judging butter again had plenty of suggestions for improvement.

Notwithstanding most of those who were exhibitors have succeeded in producing a good article, there are many dairymen who under the most favorable circumstances, produce only a fair article and under ordinary or unfavorable circumstances, produce a very inferior article of butter.

This latter class being quite large in this county, we feel that those are the ones that should be stimulated to improvement. We will give a few reasons why, we think, so many fail in the manufacture of fine butter.

First,—Too little attention is paid to feed and care of cows.

Second,—Too little attention is paid to *cleanliness*.

Third,—They are not acquainted with all the details which should be observed in process of making, or are not particular that they are all carried out. *No fine tub of butter was ever made without attending to the details.*

Much money is lost every year by the farmers of this county by not attending to details. Many of those who would class themselves among the best dairymen of this county, have some of the details to learn yet. We notice several packages on exhibition that were not properly packed.

We mean by this that the butter was not packed in the tub when at the proper temperature, the cloth and paste on the top of the tub not properly prepared and applied. All these, we consider are items of importance. Some may ask what difference it makes what the particular temperature of the butter is when it is packed? Experience has taught us that unless it is handled at about a temperature of 58 degrees that that beautiful, glossy appearance so noticeable upon every *fine* tub of butter, cannot be retained.

Those ideas which are important in the art of making butter, should be circulated and made known through the papers and otherwise, by all those who are competent to give one single idea that will tend to improve the quality and sale of this staple product of our county. We know there are many farmers who are qualified to give instructions in this important branch of business. Let us hear from you all and often.⁵⁵

In general then, the quality of butter produced on farms from the 1840s through 1870s, at least as seen through the eyes of the fair judges, remained mixed at best.⁵⁶ Sherman's account of the St. Albans butter market in 1872 presented a similar analysis of the quality of the region's butter. "About one tub in three is prime, one fair, and one poor."⁵⁷ Committee reports throughout this period repeatedly advised farmers on how to improve quality, and this attention was due to the economic role butter played in the regional economy. The attention paid to this category by the judges, with lengthy remarks published in the local newspaper for all to see, is vitally important in understanding how seriously members of this community were taking the production of butter. There were major economic implications for the county. While the

.....



Painting Exhibit Franklin County Fair, Sheldon, Vermont. Photo by H. J. Soule, no date. Special Collections University of Vermont Libraries. Note the sign in the background that appears to say Butter Salt.

market for butter was growing, there was also competition from other areas of the state, other states in the northeast, and from states in the west as well. Furthermore, beginning in 1873, there was also competition from artificial butter, or oleomargarine.

The fair and the premiums on butter presented an opportunity to educate farmers and promote agricultural improvements. The results of these efforts in relation to butter quality appear to have been mixed. While commentaries appeared on the improved quality of the butter exhibited, many of the same criticisms appeared over and over again, especially that too much salt was used. The tension between fair organizers and fair contestants in this category was different from the tension around household manufactures. The tension here resulted from agricultural and business reformers attempting to get practitioners to modernize their methods, which was the original purpose of the agricultural fairs. The individual farmers, in turn, had their own production concerns, emphasizing the preservation of butter with salt over the flavor of butter.

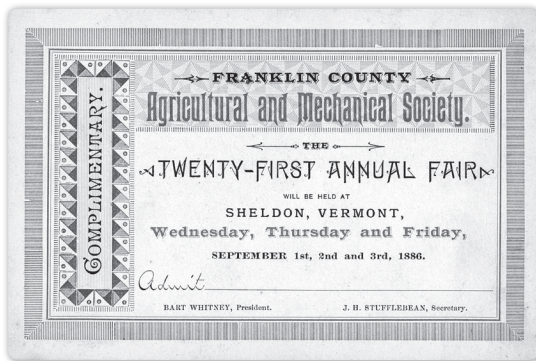
The experience detailed in the Franklin County Fair reports shows that the impact of education and competition on farming practices was clearly limited, which ultimately raises the question of how successful

fairs were in meeting their original goals. While these efforts generated some improvements, the consolidation of butter making from individual farm to creamery may have been more important to achieving consistency in the quality of butter. This may have been particularly true in Franklin County, with a St. Albans creamery, reportedly the largest in the world, producing 2,060,000 pounds of butter in 1892.⁵⁸ In the first decades of the twentieth century, Vermont farmers turned away from butter and cheese and toward fluid milk production, making the debate about butter quality produced on the farm a less important economic issue; but it was the most important issue of the day during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

The creation of agricultural fairs was originally intended as a way to achieve agricultural and economic reform. Once they took shape, however, the meaning and impact of the fairs was shaped as much or more by those who attended the fairs as it was by the organizers. Heaman has contended that the organizers gave up authorship altogether: “the organizers of exhibitions were not their authors in any historical sense. The paying visitors determined the success or failure of these events. Historical agency, in other words, lay with the audience rather than the organizers of exhibitions.”⁵⁹ I would contend that historical agency was in the hands of many, including fair organizers. The organizers of the Franklin County Fair were forced to co-author these events, not just with fair audiences and fair competitors, but also with distant markets and consumers of agricultural products who influenced trends and events that had an impact on the fair.

When sheep fell out of favor due to competition from western farmers and the elimination of tariffs, and therefore fell out of favor with



Franklin County Fair Ticket, 1886. Special Collections University of Vermont Libraries.

both local farmers and the Agricultural Society, their role at the fair diminished. Horse racing was popular but controversial at agricultural fairs across the country. Resistance to, and promotion of, horse racing in Franklin County was influenced by similar debates elsewhere, but the solution to how to conduct horse racing at the Franklin County Fair was a local compromise. The fair organizers introduced premiums for women's work in large part to boost attendance. However, the individuals who participated in these competitions, as judges and as competitors, significantly reshaped the categories, prize values, and the location on the fairgrounds for the display and judging of entries. All of this took place in the context of an increasingly industrialized and mechanized culture, where women's labor in general was changing.

The historical development of a premium list demonstrates how a particular community negotiates a variety of tensions related to agricultural life. These tensions are not just about agricultural methodology. They are also about gender: the roles and functions played by men and women, and variations from these roles. They are about economy: attempts to manipulate farmers to increase the overall economic efficiency of a region. Butter was the primary agricultural commodity in late-nineteenth-century Franklin County, and the amount of time and energy fair judges spent trying to educate farmers about how to produce a high-quality product was significant and in direct proportion to its economic importance. These tensions are also social and moral, especially regarding entertainment at the fair. In late-nineteenth-century Vermont, as elsewhere in the United States, horse racing was immensely popular and equally controversial. Horse racing still occurs at fairs, but it is neither as popular nor as controversial as it was a century ago.

Different tensions existed in different communities and different communities dealt with those tensions in varying ways. Premium lists demonstrate how fairs developed, but also how communities developed. Agricultural fairs are a rich area of study because they did not develop uniformly. Rather, they started from a common concern, and often with a common initial structure, and then evolved with unique responses to pressures that were local, state, national, and global in nature. Agricultural fairs provide a valuable lens for examining the issues and values that were important to rural communities, and how they developed over time. The impact of fairs in the late nineteenth century was not entirely as intended by their promoters, but their structure and rules provided a general outline and starting point from which meaning was created by various actors. The push and pull that occurred within that defined structure are essential to understanding fairs and their roles in their communities.

NOTES

¹ Wayne Neely wrote in his seminal history of the agricultural fair, “The essential feature is, of course, the competitive display of agricultural products; it is that which distinguishes the agricultural fair.” Wayne C. Neely, *The Agricultural Fair* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), 251.

² Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book” (1844-1889), University of Vermont Libraries, Special Collections, Small Bound Manuscripts.

³ Leslie M. Prosterman, *Ordinary Life, Festival Days: Aesthetics in the Midwestern County Fair* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 16.

⁴ Donald B. Marti, *Historical Directory of American Agricultural Fairs* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), 2-4; Mark Mastromarino, “Fair Visions: Elkanah Watson (1758-1842) and the Modern American Agricultural Fair” (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 2002); Neely, *The Agricultural Fair*, 41-50.

⁵ Donald Marti has written, “Fairs could be entertaining as well, nobody ever denied that, but the founders believed that amusement should subserve progress. Their fairs were intended to be instruments of ‘modernization.’” Marti, *Historical Directory of American Agricultural Fairs*, 1.

⁶ Chris Rasmussen has concluded that scientific agriculture “was predicated on the belief that farmers ought to adopt the same goals as other businessmen: maximizing profits, minimizing costs and labor. Thus science and capitalism were conflated by agriculturalists, and ‘book farming’ finally rested on the account book.” Chris A. Rasmussen, “State Fair: Culture and Agriculture in Iowa, 1854-1941” (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1992), 32.

⁷ Marti, *Historical Directory of American Agricultural Fairs*, 5-6.

⁸ Elsbeth Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 22.

⁹ State of Vermont, *Acts and Resolves Passed by the Legislature of the State of Vermont at Their October Session, 1843* (Montpelier: E. P. Walton & Sons, 1843), 14-16.

¹⁰ United States Department of Agriculture, “Report of the Secretary of Agriculture” (Washington, D.C.: The Department, 1867), 400-401.

¹¹ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

¹² Bennington County Agricultural Society, “Record Book” (1848-1864), University of Vermont Libraries, Special Collections, Large Bound Manuscripts.

¹³ *Report of the Vermont State Board of Agriculture, Manufactures and Mining, 1872*, Vermont State Board of Agriculture, 712.

¹⁴ Neely, *The Agricultural Fair*, 81.

¹⁵ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

¹⁶ United States, Bureau of the Census, Minnesota Population Center, National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 2.0. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota 2011, (cited); available from <https://www.nhgis.org/>.

¹⁷ Michael Sherman, Gene Sessions, and P. Jeffrey Potash, *Freedom and Unity: A History of Vermont* (Barre: Vermont Historical Society, 2004), 303.

¹⁸ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Prosterman, *Ordinary Life, Festival Days*, 131.

²² Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Karal Ann Marling, *Blue Ribbon: A Social and Pictorial History of the Minnesota State Fair* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1990), 95.

²⁵ Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, 265-266.

²⁶ Melton A. McLaurin and North Carolina Office of Archives and History, *The North Carolina State Fair: The First 150 Years* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources; North Carolina State Fair Division, Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 2003), 152.

²⁷ Inge V. Sanmiya and Western Fair Association, *A Celebration of Excellence: The History of the Western Fair Association 1867-2000* (London, Ont.: Western Fair Association, 2000), 38.

²⁸ Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, 259.

²⁹ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ At the Minnesota State Fair, “although a woman was usually in charge of arranging the display of homemade articles, the general supervisor of the division—and the person who allocated the prime spaces to manufactures and merchants—was always a man.” Marling, *Blue Ribbon*, 97.

³² Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

.....

³⁵ Leslie Prosterman noted, “Officials examine existing categories for entries and calculate which are doing well and which are less popular. Sometimes they find that the name of the category is out of date or that the category itself, such as crocheted tatting, is obsolete. Sometimes they notice an omission or a gap in a classification that might draw participants, like zucchini breads.” Prosterman, *Ordinary Life, Festival Days*, 73.

³⁶ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

³⁷ Howard S. Russell, *A Long, Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1976), 362.

³⁸ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Neely, *The Agricultural Fair*, 191.

⁴¹ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Charles Fish, *Blue Ribbons and Burlesque: A Book of Country Fairs* (Woodstock, Vt.: The Countryman Press, 1998), 94.

⁴⁶ Russell, *A Long, Deep Furrow*, 291. [Ed. note: See also, Rebecca Woods, “Green Mountain Merinos: From New England to New South Wales in the Nineteenth Century,” in this issue of *Vermont History*, 85:1 (Winter/Spring 2017), 1-19.]

⁴⁷ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

⁴⁸ Edwin C. Rozwenc, *Agricultural Policies in Vermont, 1860-1945* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1981), 121.

⁴⁹ R. R. Sherman, “Origin of the St. Albans Butter Market,” *Report*, 1872, Vermont State Board of Agriculture, 158-165.

⁵⁰ As Howard Russell noted, “If, in the 1850s, New England dairy women decided to press less cheese, the amount of butter they churned grew by 7½ million pounds—the largest increase, 30 percent, being in Vermont.” Russell, *A Long, Deep Furrow*, 355.

⁵¹ Franklin County Agricultural Society, “Record Book.”

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Howard Russell has noted, “it was likely to be heavily salted to make it keep, and of poor quality.” Russell, *A Long, Deep Furrow*, 355.

⁵⁷ R. R. Sherman, “Origin of the St. Albans Butter Market,” 163.

⁵⁸ *Report of the Vermont State Board of Agriculture*, 1894, Vermont State Board of Agriculture, 275.

⁵⁹ Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, 265-66.