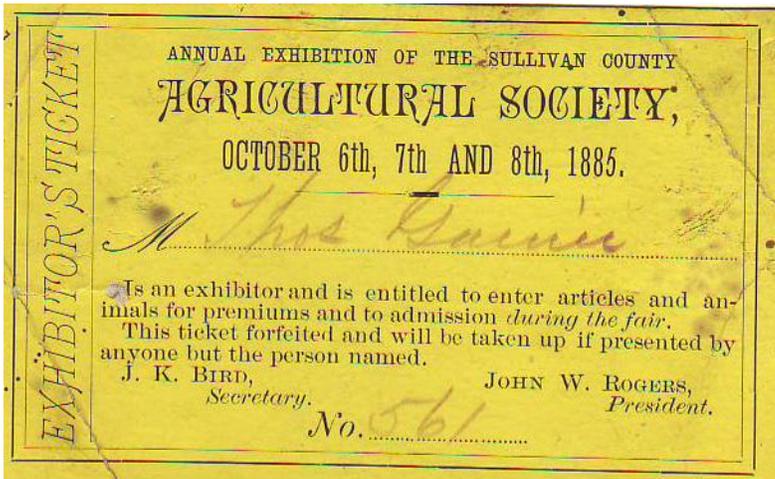


Aug 13, 2014

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM

... while dusting

It's time to start your plans to attend the Sullivan County Fair, which begins Tues. Aug. 26th and runs thru Labor Day. But for this writing, we're going to focus on the year 1893 for what was then called the Sullivan County Agricultural Society. Ulyses Bird was treasurer for the organization and reported the amount in his hands from last (year's) report of \$65.34.



Monies received were: from the county treasurer \$100, from sale of tickets 558.00, license \$69.50, life members \$90, sale of hay 15 cents and entrance fee for races \$11 – equaling income balance of \$893.99. Paid out amounts were: premiums \$339.93, taxes \$3.88, hay \$31.26, merchandise \$3.25, Officers \$103, Band \$50, superintendent \$40, police \$42, work \$24.25, miscellaneous \$16.60, printing \$27.50, work on fair grounds \$200 and cash on hand \$12.35. Examiners (auditors) were Ezra S. Little and Wm. Hart (grandfather of the William “Bill” Hart we know today). Highlights to our fair then were dairy, vegetables, canned goods, crop production (primarily hay and field corn), farm animal exhibiting and food vendors.

Small country fairs were becoming a rage, ours first beginning in at least 1878 but thought to have been even earlier. [Anyone having more information or even better, a missing minute book prior to 1895 – please notify us.] And although this and many other county fairs throughout all the states were growing in their popularity, it wasn't until 1893 when the World's Columbian Exposition came along that set the pace for ensuing years. Held in Chicago, Illinois, on the edge of Lake Michigan this event was to cover over 625 acres. It was touted as “having all that a farmer could want to see and have”, all for the admission of 50 cents. And, actually, this price was high for the time. Nineteen foreign governments and thirty-eight state government erected buildings for exhibits. Over two hundred buildings littered the grounds.

Local background connecting to the Exposition is that Col. Bruce Ricketts in early 1892 was freed up from his lumbering responsibilities to pursue private and public activity after Trexler & Turrell took over managing his operation. Back in 1890 the location for the Exposition was chosen to be Chicago over that of New York City. Each state was then asked to select a representative. Col. Ricketts was selected as and alternate commissioner for the Exposition Fair. Much of the information for this article about the Exposition Fair is from Peter Tomosak's In Command of Time Elapsed of 1893 because of the Col.'s involvement. Many citizens from our area traveled by train to attend this function and brought back with them memorabilia from it which is now housed in the museum with their own stories. America itself was changing; modernization beyond the scope of people's everyday lives began to evolve. This Fair opened the eyes of many to not only new things but also the advancement of improving methods coupled with the disbursement of those improvements to the populace in one location.