



Ohio State Fair

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

Introduction

The Ohio State Fair is an annual celebration of Ohio's agriculture, people, and events. The State Board of Agriculture decided to hold a state fair with the purpose of advertising and furnishing a market for saleable wares, particularly agricultural goods. Originally planned to be held on September 5-7, 1849 in Cincinnati, Ohio, the first state fair was postponed until October 2-4, 1850 due to a deadly Asiatic cholera outbreak. It was held in a different city every year from 1850 to 1873, stopping in Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton, and others until 1874 when it was held exclusively in Columbus' Franklin Park. In 1886, the fair moved to what is now called the Ohio Expo Center and State Fairgrounds, where it remains to this day. The Ohio State Fair is one of the largest state fairs in the United States.

Important Dates

- October 2-4, 1850: First Ohio State Fair held at Camp Washington in Cincinnati.
- July 1884: A race horse kicks over a lantern, burning over 100 stalls.
- August 31, 1886: The current Ohio State Fairgrounds in Columbus are dedicated.
- September 1894: A college football tournament is held at the fair. Ohio State University participates.
- August 1896: The state fair is the first with an electric lighting system, allowing for night-time racing.
- August 1903: The first Butter Cow and Calf are featured at the fair.
- August 4, 1922: Weeks before the fair opening, a large fire outbreak destroys several buildings.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), proximity or as phrases: state fair, state fairgrounds, state exposition, exhibit, entries, farmers, swine, cattle, horses.
- In later years, the Ohio State Fair was big news. Try searching for information in other states' newspapers, using "Ohio" as one of your search terms.
- Use specific date ranges if looking for articles about a particular event in order to narrow your results.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- "[Cincinnati Correspondence](#)" *Anti-Slavery Bugle* (New-Lisbon, OH), August 17, 1850, Image 3, col.1.
- "[Ohio State Fair and Industrial Exhibition](#)" *Hocking Sentinel* (Logan, OH), August 16, 1894, Image 3, col. 3.
- "[Ohio State Fair](#)" *Akron Daily Democrat* (Akron, OH), September 4, 1900, Image 7, col. 6.
- "[Preparations Complete for the Ohio State Fair](#)" *Ohio Democrat* (Logan, OH), July 28, 1904, Image 4, col. 3 & 4.
- "[Excellent Exhibit is Now Assured](#)" *Democratic Banner* (Mt. Vernon, OH), August 26, 1910, Image 2, col. 6.
- "[New Lineup of Exhibits at Fair Insures Success](#)" *Mahoning Dispatch* (Canfield, OH), August 25, 1916, Image 4, col. 1.