



The Urbana Free Library

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Champaign County Fair Association Collection,
1878-2017

Collection 149

Champaign County Historical Archives

Compiled by: Izzy Westcott, October 2020

Creator/Corporate name: Champaign County Fair Association

Inclusive Dates: 1878-2017

Physical Description: 2 boxes, 1 lin. ft.

Provenance:

Champaign County Fair Association Collection materials were donated to the Champaign County Historical Archives.

Access:

The records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

Historical Note:

The Champaign County Fair was first held in the early 1850s. Champaign County families began meeting every summer to compare livestock and grains and enjoy picnics. The first organized County Fair was held in 1852. Different associations have been responsible for the Fair since its beginning. Around 1905, the current fairgrounds were purchased, but the Fair was disbanded around 1922. In 1928, a fire, reportedly started by a cigarette during an auto show, destroyed the grandstand. The Fair was not held throughout the Depression as they were unable to rebuild the grandstand. A new one was acquired in 1939 and the Fair resumed. Though World War II caused some adjustments to the Fair's structure and scope, the Fair continued. In addition to agriculture, livestock, and auto shows, the Fair has grown to include talent shows, music, beauty pageants, vendors, and a carnival.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains County Fair annual booklets and programs detailing fair schedules, events, and vendors. Horse show and pageant programs offer event descriptions, schedules, and list of participants. Various newspaper articles and notes include information on the history of the fair. Other highlights include audit statements, tickets, ribbons, and photographs.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged into two series: (1) Booklets and Programs; (2) Documents, Ephemera, and Photographs, and then alphabetically at the folder level.

Related Materials:

- See also the following Photograph Envelopes: Champaign County Fair Association; Champaign County Fair; Champaign County Fairgrounds; Miss Champaign County Fair Pageant
- See also [The Corray brothers: Oral History, 1975](#).
- See also Champaign County Fairgrounds Vertical File



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Subject Terms:

Agricultural exhibitions
Beauty contests
Horse shows
Livestock exhibitions

Name terms:

Champaign County Agricultural, Horticultural, and Mechanical Association
Champaign County Fair
Champaign County Fair Association

Container List:

Box 1

Series 1: Booklets and Programs

Folder 1: Fair Booklets, 1878-1879
Folder 2: Fair Booklets, 1897, 1943, 1952
Folder 3: Fair Booklets, 1954, 1955, 1957
Folder 4: Fair Booklets, 1977-1978
Folder 5: Fair Booklets, 1980-1981
Folder 6: Fair Booklets, 1983, 1988, 1989
Folder 7: Fair Booklets, 1990-1991
Folder 8: Fair Booklets, 1992-1993
Folder 9: Fair Booklets, 1994-1995
Folder 10: Fair Booklets, 1996-1997
Folder 11: Fair Booklets, 1998-1999
Folder 12: Fair Booklets, 2000-2001
Folder 13: Fair Booklets, 2002, 2004

Box 2

Folder 14: Fair Booklets, 1998-1999
Folder 15: Fair Booklets, 2000-2001
Folder 16: Fair Booklets, 2002, 2004
Folder 17: Fair Programs, 1879-2007 (Incomplete)
Folders 18-20: Horse Show Programs, 1939-1951 (3 folders)
Folder 21: Miss Champaign County Fair Queen Pageant Program, 2017

Series 2: Documents, Ephemera, and Photographs

Folder 22: Annual Audit Statements, 1941, 1943, 1946
Folder 23: Champaign County Agricultural, Horticultural, and Mechanical Association Shares, 1870, 1875, 1877
Folder 24: Champaign County Fair Association versus Champaign County Board of Review, 1957-1958



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Folder 25: Fair Negatives, 1940s [prints of the photos featuring a man climbing a ladder in front of 2-story pavilion can be found in the Champaign County Fair Photograph Envelopes]

Folder 26: Fair Ribbons, 19??, 1942

Folder 27: Fair Tickets, 1943 and 1946, and Stationery, 1943

Folder 28: Newspaper Clipping Photocopies, 1940-1943, 1973

Folder 29: Notes on the History of the Champaign County Fair

Folder 30: Photocopies of Champaign County Fair Postcards and Images