



**At the Fair**

### **Origins of the Union County Fair**

The first Union County Fair was held in New Berlin at the county courthouse on October 13 and 14, 1854. Cattle were shown in the yard in back of the courthouse and agricultural products were displayed indoors, with 275 entries competing for \$150 in prizes. Jacob Gundy, an East Buffalo Township farmer, helped re-organize the county agricultural association (founded 1810) and planned the fair.

The 1855 fair was held for 3 days at the Academy (Taylor Hall) at the University at Lewisburg (Bucknell). Permission had been granted to use the university grounds on condition that horses and cattle not be taken into the woods on the property.

Hartleton hosted the fair in 1856 and Mifflinburg in 1857, with temporary buildings housing the exhibits, and animals penned nearby.

In 1857 the Union County Agricultural Association was incorporated. The following year, the association purchased 10 acres in "Brook Park," one mile west of Lewisburg. Livestock were supplied with water from Bull Run. Additional acreage was acquired and in 1859 several buildings were erected. In 1907 a racetrack was built and in 1917 a grandstand was constructed. The fair ran for 4 days with train excursions bringing visitors from nearby areas. In addition to agricultural displays and livestock shows, there were band concerts and parades, horse races, and other entertainment. The fair was held every September into the 1930's until finances closed the event. The site was then used for "The Auction" and is now the Wednesday Farmer's Market on Fairground Road.

### **The West End Fair**

In western Union County, the first Corn Festival and Homecoming was held in 1926 at the Hartley Township Consolidated Schools in Laurelton. The Sons of Union

Veterans of the Civil War sponsored the fair, devised by the Rev. J.W. Yiesley of Millmont. This reunion and festival grew in popularity over the years and the original site proved too small. The fair moved in 1944 to a field just north of Laurelton village, donated to the Fair Association by Mrs. Carrie Lincoln and named Lincoln Park.

Over the years the displays of homegrown vegetables, fruit, and grains, exhibition of baked goods, preserves, and textiles, and the show of cattle, pigs, and poultry have been a staple of the Fair. The original tents have been replaced by a series of buildings to house the agricultural and manufacturing exhibits, and livestock have moved from the fields to barns. Entertainment has changed from the early bands, parades, high acts, and parachutes to country music, tractor pulls, bingo, and rides. The Miss Union County Pageant was initiated in 1965. FFA and 4-H groups are enthusiastic participants.

### **Union County West End Fair**

Agriculture has always been important in Union County. What better way to appreciate our agricultural richness and reminisce with friends and relatives than at the County Fair? This year's Union County West End Fair is Sunday, August 2 through Saturday August 8, at Lincoln Park, Laurelton, PA. Go online to [www.unioncountwestendfair.com](http://www.unioncountwestendfair.com) for details.

### **Rural Heritage Days**

In celebration of our rural, agricultural traditions, the Union County Historical Society will host the annual Rural Heritage Days at the Dale/Engle/Walker House August 12 through 15, 2009. Visit the website [www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org) for complete schedule.