

Grant Foreman

Director S-149

Goldie Turner,

Field worker,
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AGRICULTURAL FAIR .

The first Agricultural Fair in Pawnee County was held at the west edge of Pawnee City a couple of years after the opening. A large tent housed the small group of exhibits but the chief attraction was horse racing. Mr. Spinning, who was a prominent promoter in Pawnee at that time, owned several good race horses so a temporary track was laid out. The fair lasted a week with horse races every afternoon. The Indians did not take a very active part in the events but they attended in large numbers, camping close to the grounds, and attending the whole time. They were very enthusiastic over the races but didn't often enter horses for few of them owned racers. They did do a great deal of betting, however, on the races.

The next year, and for several years thereafter, the fairs were held at Blackburn where a race track was constructed and exhibits were taken from the Agency farms, as well as from all over the county. A building was constructed to house the exhibits and live stock. All kinds of races were featured as

well as Indian dances and barbecues. Many of the people camped close to the grounds in order to attend every day for the distance was too great in most instances for the people to drive back and forth in their buggies.

After a few years the fair concessions were bought by the town of Hallett and fairs were held there, but about Statehood a fair grounds with a race track was laid out at Pawnee. A big grandstand was built, as was a large building for exhibits, and the fairs were again held at Pawnee. The Agency usually entered a large number of exhibits and often carried off the prizes for the agency farms usually produced good crops.

A long string of barns was built to house the race horses and the race track constructed was one of the best in the state.

The fairs were held in Pawnee for many years but were finally discontinued. The barns were torn down and the race track made into a football field. Nothing is left now but the big grandstand which houses football fans instead of race track fans.