

HISTORY OF THE CHARLES COUNTY FAIR



THE CHARLES COUNTY FAIR was organized and incorporated in 1924. The first fair was held at Chapel Point which, at that time, was a bathing beach and amusement park owned and operated by the Catholic Church. After the First World War, several of the interested farmers began to think in terms of a fair for Charles County which would eventually own its own grounds with buildings. The group was to organize a stock company which sold shares of stock, with a par value of \$10 to any interested party, making no promises to pay any dividends but to consider the purchase a donation. The committee divided up a list of possible buyers and proceeded at once to canvas their list for purchase of shares. The

committee was to report back in two weeks. The report showed sales of \$1200, which was encouraging for the group. They decided to proceed with plans for holding a fair in the fall of 1924 and continued selling stock to provide money for operation.

In 1925, the board purchased the present Spring Hill site. The only building then on the property was appropriately a small tobacco barn near the present main entrance. It was used for several years to house poultry exhibits. All other departments were housed in rented tents. Electricity was unknown in the area and the fair used a generator operated by a farm tractor. "It was somewhat better than nothing," recalled one man.

In 1931, in search of entertainment, the fair decided to choose a lovely local girl as Queen Nicotina. This was the first recognition of tobacco as a prime factor in the economy of Charles County. With the exception of one year during World War II, Queen Nicotina was a trademark of the Charles County Fair.



During the depression years of the 1930's, the fair's survival was somewhat in doubt, but with the increasing prosperity of Charles County, the fair continued and even prospered. Over the past years, with the exception of one year of rain, the fair has operated at a profit.

Our fair has grown over the years. We currently have a farm museum, a one room school house, two commercial buildings (with heat and air conditioning), seven exhibit buildings, six livestock buildings, one poultry building and a storage building.

The profits have been put back into the fair by purchasing new equipment and construction of buildings.

The participation of other organizations has been one of the strengths of the fair. The volunteer Fair Board couldn't put on a fair without all the other volunteers in the exhibit buildings and other areas on the grounds.



Groups as diverse as the Charles County Concert Band, rock bands and gospel acts have performed on the stages at the fair.



Many demonstrations (such as this K-9 demo) and fun events have added to the fair experience over the years.



What would a fair be without good food and a carnival midway?