

It's Fair Time !

A couple weeks ago, a gentleman visited the museum, carrying with him an album containing pictures from the 1922 Snohomish County Fair. He said he lived in Shorewood, and one of his neighbors was moving into a senior living center and wanted to “downsize” their collection of “stuff”. The album was among the items for which they were seeking a good home, and since he also has a vacation home in Verlot, thought that the album marked on its cover “Snohomish County Fair . . . 1922 . . . Granite Falls, Wash . . . Jewell Studio “ might be of interest to our museum.

We were ecstatic to see the pictures . . . the only ones we’ve seen that show exterior views of the fairgrounds that were on the east end of town throughout the late ‘teens and 20s. They included pictures of the crowds, the exhibits, and even the traffic at the time. To make things even better, on display in our front lobby was already a premium booklet . . . from the 1922 Snohomish County Fair in Granite Falls!

According to the 1906 “History of Skagit and Snohomish Counties” and the 1927 “History of Snohomish County”, a county fair had been tried off and on since the late 1870s (starting in Snohomish). The financial success, and therefore the longevity, of the resultant fairs was mixed. Finally, in 1916, Granite Falls started to host the fair and built an outstanding county-wide committee for its management. It grew continually until the last fair in Granite Falls was held in 1929. The momentum has carried through the years, so when you attend the Snohomish County Fair in Monroe, you can be justifiably proud of the foundation that was laid by the stalwarts of Granite Falls! If you’d like to read about the details of each fair through the 1920s, you can browse the newspapers in the museum electronically, just by typing in “county fair”.



The fairgrounds had a nice formal entryway, but parking must have been somewhat limited, given the number of cars parked along N. Alder St. By 1926, the local newspaper bragged of a “new, three-way entry” guaranteed to eliminate traffic problems, along with parking for 1,000 cars!



The buildings in 1922 were impressive, and later fairs bragged of a Grange building with 3500 sq ft of display space!



The Ashe Garage had long been a part of Granite Falls, early sellers of Model T Fords and Excelsior motorcycles. Perhaps the most interesting part of this picture is that the new car on the left is a Chevrolet, and the new car on the right is a Ford . . . ultimately, the Ashe Brothers had to choose which way to go, and in 1926 they built a new dealership building . . . all GM . . . which today is Mark's Country Store.

The grand prize from the fair committee in 1926 was a new automobile, so it paid to go to the Fair!

Inside the buildings were tremendous displays of handicrafts and gardening results. There was a Red Cross booth, which in later years expanded to "well baby care". There were dozens of livestock categories, with impressive entries from across the County.



Quilts, blankets, clothes, canning jars, fruits, and vegetables lined the walls and shelves.

Introductory

Snohomish County's Sixth Annual Fair will be held during September 28, 29, 30 and October 1st, inclusive.

After careful consideration of the matter, the directors have chosen this date, feeling confident they will be favorable to Exhibitors.

Keep this in mind—All money received will go to the Association to build up a better Fair, after all premiums and actual expenses are paid.

The directors feel confident that the 1922 Fair will surpass those of preceding years, and they earnestly ask the support of every citizen of the county.

This is a County Fair for all the people of the County. IT IS YOUR FAIR.

Respectfully yours,

ALEX WHEELER
 D. D. PLANTS
 C. E. WILLOUGHBY
 J. F. MELANG
 JAMES ASHE
 H. HUFFMAN
 BERT CHAPPELLL
 J. H. CURTIS

The premium booklet introduction from the 1922 County Fair listed the officers and board members of the Snohomish County Fair Association. President Alex Wheeler was from Snohomish, D.D.Plants a Granite Falls grocer, C.E.Willoughby a GF hardware store owner, J.F.Melang a GF dairy farmer, James Ashe a GF car dealer, H.Huffman an Arlington rancher, Bert Chappell a GF general store owner (and GF's first mayor), and J.H.Curtis, the GF creamery owner (and bank officer).