

Dover Lodge No. 975

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## ORDER of ELKS

60 Years of Community Service in Dover

Chartered May 18, 1905

## Fairgrounds: A Mecca Since 1850

Daily Reporter Staff Writer Early fall is fair time and for the last 114 years Dover has served as the show place for Tuscarawas Countians'

"jawing session." Since 1850, hundreds of thousands of fair-goers have poured into Dover to see and have fun.

The County Fairgrounds, in ater years, also served as a circus and carnival grounds, an auto speedway, a picnic grounds and for numerous other activities.

Horse shows, cattle sales, football games, racing, concerts and more also are recorded in the Fairgrounds' colorful his-

That first fair in 1850 was held at Hayden's Grove, site of the present Dover High build- persons ing, and attracted some 5,000



COUNTY FAIR TRADITION. Sulky-racing at county fairs is a tradition which goes back many years, and is still continued at the annual event today, after having been temporarily abandoned. The half-mile track has also been the scene of motorcycle races, auto thrill shows, with the enclosed oval serving as the county's

Tuscarawas County Agri- windstorm. The storm also The present grandstand also culture Society and boasted a fine display of horses, cattle, sheep and hogs. Exhibits of flowers, needlework, fruits and grain were staged in a small school building located at the

Because of the enthusiasm. the need for a fairground became urgent and it was proposed to purchase a permanent site between New Philadelphia and Dover.

A proposal was submitted to the citizens of both cities that purchase grounds on which to alternate the fair. However New Philadelphia did not accept and Dover became the fair host.

Six years later Mrs. Margaret Deardorff, widow of Christian, one of the founders of Dover, deeded 3.20 acres of the present fairgrounds to the Agriculture Society.

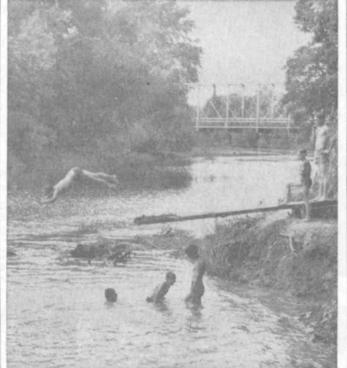
Soon after, the grounds were permanently located in Dover and 8 more acres were purchased by the society from the Deardorff heirs. Still later, additional acreage, purchased by the city of Dover, was donated to the society.

The present Fairgrounds covers a total of 28.95 acres, controlled by County Commission ers. The Agricultural Society turned the grounds over to the county in 1931.

A floral hall and other display buildings were constructed early in its history. In 1859 a one-third of a mile race track was constructed. The track was lengthened to a half mile in 1872. That same year a secretary's and treasurer's office was erected.

In 1874 a dining hall was

erected, but 3 years later it damaged several other build-The fair was organized by was demolished by a severe ings which had to be rebuilt.



THE OLD SWIMMING HOLE. The old Sugarcreek Roadside Park, near the Route 39 entrance to Dover, provided the opportunity for a cooling dip for Dover youngsters for many years. The park, with picnic facilities in a quiet setting, was the site of many family and organizational autthe site of many family and organizational outings.

was rebuilt when fire destroy-dustry and culture is annually ed the original one several reflected at the fair and it is

as a recruiting camp during the walks of life in the county.

something on the fantastic side. carawas Countians. Records of the 1853 fair show that expenses were \$42.21, with a total of \$53.13 being paid out as premiums. Grandstand admissions alone last year totaled \$16,645.

Progress of agriculture, in-

one of the few remaining insti-An interesting aspect of the tutions which draw attendfairgrounds is that it was used ance from all sections and all

early part of the Civil War. It was called Camp Migs, named after a governor of the state.

For this reason the Fair-grounds fill a still vital need as well as provide a show-Growth of the fair has been place and fun place for Tus-

> Dover, City For Growth

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