

Richmond Black and White Days Centennial Celebration

For 100 continuous years, Richmond City, loyal supporters, and a troupe of dedicated volunteers have hosted the annual Richmond Black and White Days. Pessimists have predicted the events demise for many years. However, months and even years of planning are now being finalized as we anticipate the centennial celebration May 12-16.

I have in my possession a short history of Richmond Black and White Days, written by Amos Bair. Bair reports that Clarence L. Funk, who ran a dairy southwest of Richmond, read about the Parrish Dairy Show in an issue of the Hoard's Dairyman magazine. A meeting was held on March 17, 1913 in the room above the Richmond Bank to discuss the possibilities of organizing a dairy show in Richmond. Twelve men attended the meeting.

J. L. McCarree suggested that everyone bring their cattle into town and drive them, as a herd, down Main Street where everyone could see them. His motion did not carry. After additional discussion, it was decided that exhibitors would put their animals into a corral by the Tithing Yard west of town, where the Harris farm stands today. As such, in the spring of 1913 local dairy farmers ran their cattle into one large corral, and the judges rode through them on horseback pointing out the better animals. The show was not held for the next two years because of the flu. Foot and mouth disease was also prevalent at that time.

The show began in earnest in 1915 and for the next three years was held in an open field west and north of the present library building. In 1916, an auctioneer by the name of Colonel Walters, stood on a flat rock at noon and announced they were going to hold an auction sale. It turned out no one wanted to sell their cattle, so the auction was a total bust.

In 1918 the show was moved to a public square located between First and Second West on Main Street, just below where the old Tabernacle used to stand. The area had a six-foot board fence on three sides and served as an excellent place to exhibit dairy cattle.

A 1923 publication titled, "The Milk Pail", printed by the Sego Milk Products Company, was perhaps the first premium list for the show. Included in this publication is an excellent photo titled "Only a bird's eye view", showing the Richmond Black and White show being held on the public square. The periodical reports "it was a beautiful day, the crowd was large, and it was an interesting one. Exhibitors were jubilant, whether they lost or won. The cattle were contented, perfect harmony prevailed. If one complained, no one heard him.... It was a great day for Cache Valley."

The publication continues; "Richmond, Utah is the Holstein-Fresian center of the intermountain country. It is the home of a very large number of well-bred and good

producing animals. Someday, Richmond will furnish the farmers of Utah and surrounding states, herds of registered and well-bred animals and, in addition, will furnish thousands of pounds of milk to the Sego Milk Products Company. ...It is home of Marathon Best Burkes the 25th, the greatest Holstein bull in the world.”

Today, the Richmond Black and White Dairy Show has become one of the premier dairy shows in the entire world. This highly competitive bovine beauty contest, now known as the Western Spring National Show, has been designated national status by the Holstein-Friesian Association. As such, we attract some of the finest Holstein dairy cattle from multiple states and Canada. This year we anticipate distinguished visitors from all over the nation, including a visit from Utah Governor Gary Herbert and Utah Agricultural Commissioner LuAnn Adams. We always host international visitors, too.

Today each animal is individually identified with a certified pedigree and washed, clipped and handled, often by professional fitters. Official placings are immediately available worldwide at www.holsteinworld.com. Judges for this year’s event come from California and Wisconsin. Anyone who has an appreciation for quality dairy cattle is awe struck as near perfect, high producing, Holstein dairy animals are methodically exhibited in the show ring and valuable consignments are sold at the annual Heritage Sale.

Honors for the annual Dairy Heifer Contest will be awarded at 1:30, Tuesday, May 12th, followed by the Junior Dairy Show (4-H and FFA). The Western Spring National Judging Contest, involving teams from several states begins at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, May 13th. Awards for winning teams and individuals will be presented just prior to the 6 p.m. Heritage Showcase Sale that evening. Thursday, May 14th, begins with a National Holstein Judges Conference at 8 a.m. Dairy heifers, and dry cows will be judged Thursday afternoon with milking cows showing on Friday. The Horse Show and Horse Pulls will be on Saturday, May 16th. County residents are invited and will enjoy participating in any and all of these historic events.