

“Cattle Aplenty and Other Things in Proportion”
The Agricultural Society and Fair
in Franklin County, Massachusetts, 1810-1860

Mark A. Mastromarino

Nineteenth century farmers in the fertile Connecticut River Valley in Massachusetts were not the first Americans to develop societies devoted to the qualitative and quantitative improvement of agriculture. Agricultural societies, composed of educated urban gentlemen, who set up expensive experiments and published their proceedings, existed in the eighteenth century. But in the early nineteenth century these societies underwent changes in focus and appeal. The influence of “gentlemen” farmers gave way as farmers gave up subsistence for commercial farming. A vast network of markets developed and county fairs became distinctly commercial and recreational in character. The agricultural societies and fairs in Franklin County and its neighboring counties reflected the socio-economic changes taking place in New England, especially during the years 1810 to 1860.¹

The victorious leaders of the American Revolution realized that in challenging old political forms, they had evoked a climate in the new country that encouraged acceptance of new ideas. Forward-looking agriculturalists like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson saw far beyond the political implications of this receptiveness to change. The great men of the new nation hoped that they could transplant the European agricultural revolution to the United States and nurture it in the fertile seed-bed of post-Revolutionary America. At the same time, they wished to weed out the unscientific folk customs which characterized the old tradition-bound system of American farming.²

Mark Mastromarino received his B.A. from Boston College and is currently working on his M.A. degree at the College of William and Mary.

The Founding Fathers planned to guide the infant American movement for agricultural improvement themselves through the formation of agricultural societies modeled after contemporary British associations. These unions generally consisted of large landowners, wealthy merchants, and gentlemen farmers who possessed enough money and leisure time to dabble in agricultural experimentation. Such men were usually well educated enough to report on the results of their elaborate experimentation and to intelligently discuss the implications with their peers.³

The American equivalent of these societies were associations of the urban elite, who dominated agricultural organization throughout the thirteen colonies in the closing years of the eighteenth century. They were soon challenged, however, in the early nineteenth century by a second generation of American agricultural societies, grass-roots associations organized by progressive community leaders along a local or county-wide constituency. These new societies responded to the interest in increased agricultural production, which had been stimulated by favorable market conditions. Yankee farmers began practicing surplus over subsistence farming on a grander scale than ever before. They wanted to learn more about crop rotation, the use of new fertilizers, modern farm implements, and selective breeding of livestock in order to increase their profits. Unlike the first American agricultural societies which preached agricultural improvement in patriotic and altruistic terms, the county societies translated the movement for scientific agriculture into dollars and cents gains which Yankee farmers more readily appreciated.⁴

Once agricultural improvement was removed from the realm of lofty ideals and nationalistic abstractions, it began to be considered in the practical terms of individual self-advancement. No longer could the farmers' growing impatience with the first learned agricultural societies be held in check. The new societies which sprouted up across New England and the Old Northwest all ultimately derived from the efforts of one man. In Berkshire County in western Massachusetts, Elkanah Watson, a New York entrepreneur who had retired "from the city in pursuit of rural occupations and felicity," developed a practical system of agricultural organization and education. His program, unlike that of the learned societies in Boston and other cities, took into account the entire rural experience of the farmer and his family. Watson's new "Agricultural Societies on the Modern Berkshire System" were not based upon expensive experiments, agricultural libraries, or erudite publications, all of which were alien to most rural agriculturalists. Elkanah Watson created the first modern agricultural fair, the first successful institution of agricultural education which appealed to the rural masses.⁵

Watson's fairs were more than mere educational institutions. Like most Yankee farms, the agricultural fair was multi-functional. Watson had a

keen grasp of basic human nature, and he appealed to the deep-rooted feelings of the country-folk, such as traditional conservatism, self-pride, love of competition, need for company, thrift, and ardent patriotism. The earliest local and country fairs combined social, recreational, education, and commercial features. Therein lay the success, and the later troubles, of agricultural fairs founded upon Watson's principles.

Watson's fairs and agricultural societies were popular because they provided participants with a sense of communal fellowship in an age of growing economic individualism and political polarization. With the rise of commercial agriculture, farmers began to compete with each other for access to the same markets. Party differences between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans overflowed the political arena. But Watson's Berkshire Agricultural Society, organized in 1811 by men of both parties who believed that agricultural improvement could be effected only by a unified community, was neutral ground unprofaned by "the rage of parties."

The sociality of community fairs, as well as the shared sense of purpose and the communal harmony evoked by Watson's earliest exhibitions, also attracted the rural population to the fairgrounds. Farming was usually a lonely occupation. But the agricultural fair drew the farmer out of the seclusion imposed by rural distances and constant labor, and brought him into contact with his sod-busting colleagues. Such contact also engendered a sense of solidarity, and it enlarged and liberalized an individual's views. In conversations with his neighbors, as well as in addresses and reports treating upon subjects of immediate interest to him, the farmer at the fair found abundant food for thought. While he met old friends and made new ones, the farmer gained pride in himself and in his profession.

His social, political, and economic leaders instilled in him this professional pride by insisting that the survival and prosperity of the new nation rested upon his shoulders. They told him that the rural life of the yeoman made him uniquely productive and important to American society. His close communion with nature gave his life a wholesomeness, integrity, and a moral well-being which was the central source of civic virtue. As the national economy became less agricultural and more commercial during the nineteenth century, such sentiments conformed less with American realities. The annual fairs at first played an important role as perennial manifestations of the tenacity of the agricultural myth, but even they eventually began to succumb to the rise of commercialism and industrialism in America.⁶

Occurring every autumn at the close of the farmer's busiest season, the fair had always been regarded essentially as a latter-day harvest-home festival, a celebration of rural life. Fair day brought relaxation and a reason for social intercourse, and provided an opportunity for the entire

farm family, including women and children, to enjoy the ends of their honest labors. The amusement features of the early fairs represented the same type of communal recreation that pleased the participants in barn-raising, log-rolling, and husking bees. The hawkers and vendors who had previously haunted only militia musters and Fourth of July celebrations set up booths for the sale of refreshments and Yankee notions at Watson's very first Berkshire fair. There were also new components. The rides and amusements of later midways were represented at this first fair by a hot-air balloon, or "aerial phaeton."⁷

By representing agricultural improvements to people distracted by all sorts of pleasantries, the agricultural fair became the most effective form of agricultural education in the first half of the nineteenth century. Although Watson's fairs started out as exhibitions of merino sheep, which taught the public about the advantages of raising this improved wool-bearer, farmers soon became introduced to improved breeds of other types of farm animals, to better agricultural implements, to new crops, and to more efficient farming practices. The awarding of premiums for the exhibition of superior animals and products spurred them on to greater efforts. Because the fairs presented, not scientific theory, but concrete illustrations of agricultural improvement, the farmers' interests were easily engaged. Scientific agriculture assumed for them everyday proportions and became a part of their rural existence.⁸

Another important reason why the agricultural fair became a viable institution was because it was one of the few surviving islands of traditionalism awash in the boiling sea of perpetual change of the antebellum era. The fair celebrated the simple life of the farmer at a time when farming was beginning to be seen more as a business than as a way of life. Although the sponsors of the fairs advanced new scientific ideas and progressive agricultural techniques, men like Elkanah Watson looked nostalgically to the old days when life seemed quieter and less complicated than to the hectic future. They were steeped in the traditional values of New England, which centered around the family, the community, and the nation. At a time of growing individualism and rampant materialism, the Berkshire Agricultural Society and the other new agricultural societies reflected past ideals. The fair provided a safe sense of stability and a consistency with comfortable yesterdays, thus appealing to a society largely uncertain of its tomorrows.

Watson's fairs evolved from European and American urban commercial fairs, and from the very beginning of the modern American agricultural fair there existed a tension between its educational and commercial aspects. Even Watson admitted that his institution would degenerate into mere "regular annual fairs. . . for the interchange and sale of animals, and domestic manufactures" if lack of funding prevented premium prizes

from being awarded. The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, which followed Watson's lead and began to hold annual fairs near Boston in 1816 in the important cattle market center of Brighton, had always emphasized the commercial benefits of cattle shows and fairs whenever it advertised its exhibitions.⁹

Watson hoped, that economic motivation and commercial exploitation would be only a temporary part of his fairs. Measures such as premium awards and auctions of goods and animals would serve only to kindle an interest in agricultural improvement. Once lit, the fire would continue to burn, fed by community interest and national patriotism. Watson wrote in 1820 that "After a few years... when excitements are no longer necessary to lead the people to a knowledge of their true interest... no further efforts will be required, as all will move in harmony and system, from year to year."¹⁰

But, as seen by the experiences of Franklin County farmers, a new era was dawning in America in the first half of the nineteenth century. Mills, manufactories, and forges dotted the New England countryside. Railroads began to crisscross Berkshire, Franklin, and other counties of western Massachusetts. People other than farmers went to the fair to enjoy themselves, and not necessarily to learn about the principles of scientific agriculture. Merchants and manufacturers began to attend the county fairs and started to use them to their own advantage. Watson's optimistic vision was proven inaccurate. Although he had been an ambitious entrepreneur himself, and was part owner of a woolens factory in Pittsfield, he failed to foresee the long-range consequences of "touching a *string which never fails*... to vibrate in unison with all, viz--self-love,-- self-interest..."¹¹

The transformation of the agricultural fair in Franklin County from a basically agricultural forum to a commercial and recreational event serves to illustrate the transitory stage of the agricultural improvement movement in the first half of the nineteenth century. This transformation, of course, was intimately interconnected with the general economic trends of the time. The history of the fair in Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties located along the Connecticut River in Massachusetts reflects the shift of the American economy from predominantly agricultural to a chiefly commercial and industrial one.

Franklin County with its two main population centers, the towns of Deerfield and Greenfield, which were located on major routes of travel—the important north-south avenue of the Connecticut River and an east-west system of roads and turnpikes—was subject to outside influences. The county's remoteness, as well as the general conservativeness of rural populations, ensured that the process of agricultural improvement was excessively selective. Farmers were more inclined to leave the county to find new improvements in agriculture than to have these new ideas reach

the Connecticut Valley. It was more than ninety miles to Boston, home of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, and to Brighton, which after 1816 was the site of one of New England's largest and most popular agricultural fairs. The Franklin County farmers, who drove their stall-fed oxen to the Brighton cattle market and who entered animals for premiums at the Brighton Cattle Show and Fair, returned to their valley with news of the latest advances in scientific agriculture then being made by the British and being publicized by the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture. Pittsfield was less than forty miles to the west, one of the chief population centers of neighboring Berkshire County and home after 1811 of Elkanah Watson's Berkshire Agricultural Society.¹²

On February 1, 1814, a notice appeared in the *Franklin Herald*:

The public are hereby informed. . . that . . . the "FRANKLIN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY" has been lately instituted at Deerfield, the most prominent designs of which are improvement in the whole management and economy of a farm, together with the mutual contribution of all new and valuable discoveries.¹³

This association probably took as its model the respected Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, and developed as a learned agriculture society on a local, instead of a statewide, basis. Its membership was selective. Gentlemen were required to submit applications for approval before being admitted. Like the Massachusetts Society, it looked to the benefits which would accrue to the nation from agricultural improvement. The society planned on "procuring new and rare plants and seeds" and on "exhibiting remarkable productions. Like other learned agricultural societies of the day, the Franklin Agricultural Society provided an exclusive borrowing library consisting of such volumes as Mills's *On Cattle*, Davy's *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry*, Bordley's *Animal Husbandry* and the 1799 and 1810 communications of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture. Membership was open to the neighboring towns of Franklin County, only sixteen of the Society's seventy-two members did not come from Deerfield.¹⁴

Most of these same gentlemen also became members of the new Farmers' Association, which replaced the financially ailing Franklin Agricultural Society in 1821. This second society fell heir to the Franklin Society's agricultural library, but the ideological foundation of the two societies differed significantly. The membership of the Farmers' Association still consisted primarily of Deerfield's most prosperous folk and of such community leaders as Epaphrus Hoyt, a Major General of the Massachusetts militia, his brother Elihu, who served for thirty years as a

state legislator (both brothers were nominated to the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture in 1818), and Orlando Ware, store proprietor and Deerfield selectman.¹⁵ But the new society encompassed a wider geographical area and, more importantly, a greater democratic spirit than the first Franklin society. A public notice announcing its first meeting amply illustrates this egalitarianism:

A PUBLIC MEETING will be held. . . for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of forming an Agricultural Society for this County [It] is desirable that every town. . . be represented by as many as can conveniently attended . . . in order that there may be a full expression of the public sentiment in regard to this important subject. . .¹⁶

This new society, modeled on Watson's Berkshire society, was more in tune with the spirit of the times. Most New England farmers resented the patronizing attitude of the older agricultural societies, and felt that they could profit more by exchanging facts and ideas based upon personal experience than by being preached to by their second superiors. The Farmers' Association, therefore, sincerely sought popular support and strove to present itself as a society of the people. Its first official act was the organization of an annual agricultural fair, like those of Watson's, in Pittsfield.

Watson's early fairs were very popular because he catered to popular sentiment: the love of competition, country, ceremony, and socializing, which inspired most New England farm families. The first morning of the two-day fair was taken up with registering farm animals and setting up the exhibits of vegetables, farm implements, and domestic manufactures, which probably influenced American agriculture more than any other aspect of the fair. Farmers were introduced to new breeds of animals, to superior plants, to improved agricultural implements, and later, to new inventions. They came away from the fair with ideas for improving farm operations, and some either purchased new stock or contracted to hire the stud services of premium winning animals. The comparison of one man's produce with the superlative example of another's was intended to spur all on to greater efforts through healthy competition. The awarding of premiums to best entries in all categories was therefore imperative

After the judges had examined all the entries on the first day, a plowing match took place. This match not only tested and demonstrated various types of plows, but readily developed into an exciting sporting event.¹⁷ The remaining daylight hours were spent by the judges in committee meetings, deciding who deserved premiums and inscribing the elaborate prize certificates. The second day of the fair usually began with a

procession of the society's members led by a band, marshalls, and sometimes the local militia unit. Then exercises were held at the local church. These consisted of a religious sermon or patriotic address, the singing of agriculture hymns and pastoral odes, a speech by a guest speaker, and a ceremony during which premium certificates and engraved silver cups were awarded. The day usually closed with a purely social affair, an "Agricultural Ball," where dining, drinking, dancing, and other "innocent festivity" occupied the members of the society and their wives and other invited guests.¹⁸

The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, refusing to provide any financial assistance to Watson's Berkshire Agricultural Society, adopted his system and held its first fair in 1816. Its example was followed by Northampton, the county seat of Franklin's neighbor, Hampshire County, in 1818, and by Worcester in 1819. Yet, in Franklin County, the first agricultural fair did not occur until 1850.

Financial reasons were not the cause for the delay in Franklin County. As a result of the lobbying efforts of Watson and others, the Massachusetts legislature passed the Act for the Encouragement of Agriculture and Manufactures in 1819, when over one hundred agricultural fairs operated across the country.¹⁹ Every incorporated agricultural society in Massachusetts with one thousand dollars in capital stock was entitled to receive two hundred dollars every October, which was usually used as premiums or for other cattle show expenses.²⁰ Each society would also receive a proportional annual sum of up to six hundred dollars if its capital stock was greater than one thousand dollars. The legislature authorizing these matching aid grants was renewable every five years, and Massachusetts agricultural societies received \$115,800 from the state treasury between 1819 and 1845.²¹ Only societies serving countries of at least 25,000 inhabitants, however, were eligible for the state grant.²² According to the U.S. Census of 1810, the total population of Franklin county amounted to 27,421.²³ On the basis of the country population requirement alone, the Franklin Farmers' Association was eligible for the state bounty in 1819. After the results of the 1820 census were made public, it was clear that Franklin County qualified for state grants which were given to any agricultural society owning at least one thousand dollars in capital.²⁴

Still, the first agricultural fair of the Connecticut Valley was held in Northampton in 1818 and was sponsored by a tri-county agricultural society rather than in Deerfield or Greenfield, and was not sponsored by the Farmer's Association at all. Joseph Lyman, first president of the Tri-county Agricultural Society, stated in his 1820 address to the society that the multi-county organization resulted from a genuine natural unity

and a harmony of economic interests. A local society such as the Farmers Association did not have a broad enough base of support.²⁵

Northampton, in Hampshire County, was also a more logical choice of locale than either Deerfield or Greenfield in Franklin County, since Northampton was centrally located in the middle of the three counties. Moreover, the gentlemen of Northampton possessed more business experience and capital than did their Franklin County associates. The success of the entrepreneur Elkanah Watson, suggests creating a viable agricultural society required not only a certain amount of community interest and capital, but also leaders who had time and experience enough to organize events like cattle shows and fairs. The failure of the Franklin Agricultural Society and the financial difficulties of the Farmers' Association (it was never able to raise the \$1,000 in capital to qualify for the state bounty) illustrated its lack of leadership and capital in Franklin County. Although men like Elihu Hoyt had local prestige and political experience, they apparently did not possess the organizational skills and managerial acumen needed to successfully run the business of an agricultural society. Henry Colman, the Agricultural Commissioner for the Commonwealth, noted in 1841 Franklin County's failure to participate actively in the Tri-County Society's affairs.²⁶

In the 1820s, Franklin County's economy was too raw to have yet generated a sophisticated level of interest, capital, and business acumen. The area was not poor, but it was young. Too much of its capital was invested in the building of farms and the economic infrastructure that would make these farms profitable operations. There were indeed a number of prosperous farms and farmers in Franklin County in the 1820s, but there was too little liquid capital to support such a project as a country fair. Northampton had already begun to pass from commercial agriculture to industrialization.²⁷ Northampton entrepreneurs learned from the Boston merchants with whom they dealt, and began to realize benefits from coordinating and rationalizing systems of production and distribution. Franklin County farmers had far less control over the variables that affected their livelihood. They were not as familiar with inter-community cooperation outside of kinship ties. Businessmen had no choice but to set up far flung networks and to work with a variety of people. But most farmers worked only with their families, their neighbors, and a few local shopkeepers. Working cooperatively with large numbers of people, most of whom they had never seen before, was a situation alien to their experience. Thus no agricultural fair was regularly held in Franklin County until the 1850s because too many farmers felt that it was easier to travel fifteen miles down the river to Northampton than to exert themselves by attempting to provide the organizational apparatus necessary for fairs of their own.

Commissioner Henry Colman chided Franklin County farmers for their neglect of progressive farming techniques. Many were very interested in agricultural societies and fairs and agricultural improvement; but only a few were able to take advantage of the distant Massachusetts Society's Brighton Cattle Show and Fair. Two who were awarded premiums at Brighton in 1819 were Judge Goodale of Bernardston and Dennis Stebbins, a Deerfield selectman for nine years and a major in the militia. The former won twenty five dollars for the second best native bull exhibited at the fair. The latter won thirty dollars for the best crop of potatoes grown in the state, raising 612 bushels on one acre of Deer field's fertile North Meadow. Neither of these men was a dirt-poor farmer struggling to scratch a living from the soil, rather they were comfortable enough to take time out not only to participate in politics but also to travel to Brighton with a prize bull or to experiment with crops and to write elaborate reports summarizing their results.

The Tri-County Agricultural Society, like the old Massachusetts Society, the old Franklin County societies, and even Watson's Berkshire Society, was founded not by average farmers, but by men who possessed business experience, organizational expertise, money, leisure time, and an interest in agricultural improvement.²⁸ In 1820, Joseph Lyman acknowledged that the Berkshire Society had influenced the Tri-County Society, but contrasted the new societies to the earlier ones.²⁹ The new societies were confident that they would succeed in bringing scientific agriculture to the masses, he suggested, because they had learned from the mistakes of the elite agricultural societies. The people must be taught the principles of scientific agriculture at their own level through media common to their own rural experiences, not through books and learned studies, which would become important later. He wrote:

After a few years . . . when excitements are no longer necessary to lead the people to a knowledge of their true interest, giving respectability to the honourable profession of a farmer . . . no further efforts will be required, as all will move in harmony and system . . . Books and science will then become all important, as an auxilliary aid. The great business, in the first stages, is to kindle up a spirit of ambition . . .³⁰

The Tri-County Society's fairs were supposed to stir up ambition in farmers. But only the ambitious of Franklin County ever really effectively participated, for it took both money and effort to travel the distance to Hampshire County. Of the seven original members of the society who hailed from Deerfield, six of them could afford to donate twenty five

dollars to become honorary life members. Most of these gentlemen, including the Hoyts, had been members of the Farmers' Association.

Epaphras Hoyt was one of the first vice presidents of the Tri-County Agricultural Society, incorporated on February 16, 1818, who saw from the start that the less affluent farmers of the upland communities of Franklin County's hill country, the people who most needed the knowledge of scientific agricultural improvements which the new society hoped to spread by means of a fair, would be unable to travel the thirty miles to Northampton. Unless something more was done, the Tri-County Fair would prove no more beneficial to these people than had the earlier unsuccessful efforts of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture.³¹

Even though agricultural fairs were successful educational institutions because they had mass appeal, not everyone travelled to Northampton on Fair Day. For instance, Edwin Nims was a Deerfield farmer and town clerk in his early forties whose real estate and personal property were valued at \$32 in the 1931 town tax lists.³² He never mentioned attending the Tri-County Fair, nor even made any passing references to it in the agricultural journal he assiduously kept. Neither did Zur Hawks, tanner, currier, farmer, and selectman, whose real and personal estate were valued at \$115 in 1820. Surely if these two men had attended such a novel affair as an agricultural fair they would have recorded their impressions of it in their diaries.

A more socially prominent, and apparently wealthier group of Deerfield citizens not only regularly attended the Tri-County Fair at Northampton, but exhibited farm animals and products there, winning thirty-one premiums between 1818 and 1828.³³ Elihu Hoyt won four dollars for the best linen sheeting in 1919. Elija Arm's estate was valued at \$376 when he won the premium for the second best bull at the 1818 fair. Rufus Cooley owned real estate and property valued at \$263, part of which was a horse for which he won a ten dollar premium in 1821. Elija Williams' estate was valued at \$187 when he won two premiums for heifers in 1824. Elish Clapp won one for sows in 1826, when the value of his real estate personal property was entered as \$273 in the town tax lists. And Mr. Thomas Dickinson's estate was evaluated at \$468 when his wife won gratuitous premiums for hearth rugs and plaids in 1822. All of these people were significantly better off financially than Edwin Nims and Zur Hawks.

There were three different groups of agriculturalists, in Deerfield (and presumably in Franklin County and the rest of New England) although divisions between them were never totally distinct. At the top of society were socially prominent men like the Hoyts, participating actively in the affairs of the Tri-County Society. These men were not necessarily agricultural capitalists willing and able to invest large sums in new

experiments; but they felt a civic responsibility to bring agricultural improvement to their community. Their names appear not only upon lists of benefactors but also sometimes upon premium lists of the society.

The second, much larger, group of Deerfield farmers were generally passive members (if members at all) of the Hampshire, Franklin, Hampden Agricultural Society. Many supplemented their farm income by practicing a second trade, or vice versa. They were certainly interested in the latest agricultural developments exhibited at the new fair in Northampton and considered the three-hour trip there worth the time and trouble. Names like Elija Arms and Thomas Dickinson appear not only on the Tri-County Agricultural Society's membership list but also time and again on its premium lists.

Finally, there was a smaller group of Deerfield farmers less interested in scientific agriculture, or less able to cope with commercial farming, or who had less daring, capital, and imagination than more progressive farmers. They were content with planting their fields and tending their crops and flocks the same way their fathers and grandfathers had done. They felt that annual membership in the Tri-County Agricultural Society was not worth the two dollars of their hard-earned savings. If they traveled to the Northampton Fair, they did not leave their names on the premium lists to inform us of the fact. They were probably too busy with the time-consuming task of subsistence farming to keep diaries telling of their daily activities. They would have to wait for the Franklin County Fair to open in Greenfield in 1850 before they could reap the full benefits of the new agricultural societies. By then, however, the educational emphasis of the agricultural fair was beginning to become diluted by growing recreational and commercial considerations.

Manufactures gained a greater importance at the expense of farm animals and crops as time went on. The amount of money awarded in premiums for animals, including the plowing match, decreased from \$229.50 in 1818 to \$191.00 in 1826. The amount of premiums awarded for household and commercial manufactures increased from thirteen dollars in 1818 to \$263.00 in 1826. This change in emphasis reflected the growing importance of manufactures in the nation as a whole. As manufacturing establishments gained importance in the rural New England economy, commercialism in general began to play a more obvious role in the fairs. One of the advantages of Watson's fairs was that farmers could buy or sell animals or farm products on exhibit. This was also one of the most valuable aspects of the Brighton Cattle Show.³⁴ At the 1821 Tri-County Fair a "...public sale [also took place] at all convenient times during both days."³⁵ The Society, however, made sure that the fair never degenerated simply into a marketplace where farmers could part with whatever surplus they had at a considerable profit. The

fair's proprietors provided farmers with the services of an auctioneer free of charge, but animals and articles to be offered for sale had to be duly registered.³⁶ The society would allow only the best products to be sold to fairgoers. Commercialism became less subtle when commercial manufacturers used the exhibits as an opportunity to show their wares to the public.

Franklin County farmers were never entirely satisfied with the Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Agricultural Society. As early as 1820, some members voiced their discontent:

Though all agree in the expediency and importance of patronizing their societies, yet it is not to be expected . . . that the farmer will leave his plough or his field . . . to attend an exhibition that will cost him thirty or forty miles in travel. Time is money . . . An institution like this to have its proper and desired effect, should not cover so large an extent of territory, but that all may conveniently attend We believe that this County, would be better promoted by the formation of a County Society.³⁷

In 1821, therefore, members from Franklin and Hampden County formed a committee to confer with the Board of Trustees of the Tri-County Agricultural Society at its annual meeting. They suggested the Society should hold the annual show and fair alternately in the three counties, thus spreading its benefits more evenly. As a compromise, the Society decided to hold its first Horse Show, planned for the spring of 1822, in Greenfield. This exhibit "was very fully attended by citizens from all parts of the old County,³⁸ and from the neighboring towns in Vermont and New Hampshire."³⁹ It is interesting to note that Franklin County horses won twelve (or 82%) of the total premiums awarded, and Hampshire horses only two (or 13%) of the fifteen premiums awarded.

Franklin County members were so pleased with the results of the Greenfield Horse Exhibit that they again clamored for the removal of the Tri-County Fair to their town. In October of 1833, the Trustees of the Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Agricultural Society finally relented and held the Tri-County Cattle Show and Exhibition in Greenfield that autumn. Like the Horse Show of eleven years earlier, it was a great success. It had all the same features of the Northampton Fair: the exhibits, the plowing match, the procession to the meeting house, the meeting of the society, the awarding of premiums, and even the annual Agricultural Dinner, held at C. Smead's Hotel. The geographic pattern of premiums awarded at the Greenfield Fair repeated that of the 1822 Horse Show.

Again, Greenfield and Franklin County won more than their share of the prizes. Hampshire and Hampden counties suffered proportionately.⁴⁰

By holding the Tri-County Fair in Greenfield in 1833 the Tri-County Society heightened, rather than eased, tensions within its membership. Hampden members soon expressed the same discontent that Franklin members had, and the fair was accordingly held in West Springfield in 1834 and 1839. Although Henry Colman admitted that attendance at and interest in the fair at Northampton had not reached its full potential, the “. . . change of place for the annual show is attended with expense and inconvenience . . .”⁴¹ The Tri-County Society did not wish to lose one-third of its paying membership, but “. . . made this concession to the spirit of progress and the onward march of events. . .” in 1850 when the Franklin County Agricultural Society was finally incorporated.⁴²

The economy of Franklin County had slowly matured in the thirty years between the founding of the Farmers' Association in 1820 and the incorporation of the Franklin County Agricultural society in 1850. The coming of the rail road to Greenfield in November of 1846 played a major part in spurring the growth of industry and of commercial agriculture by providing easier and quicker access to markets. Not only that, but by then farmers had gained valuable experience in cooperative ventures and had learned much about agricultural organizations through their membership in the Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Agricultural Society. Prosperous Greenfield businessmen, such as Henry W. Clapp, were able to help the organizers of Franklin County's first successful annual agricultural society by offering financial assistance and their business expertise.⁴³

With Henry Clapp's help in 1849, a Superintending Committee of three of Greenfield's leaving citizen, George Grennell, L.H. Long, and P. P. Severence, was appointed to obtain subscriptions for the organization of a county society and fair. A notice in the *Gazette and Courier* announced the organization of a "Franklin Farmer's Jubilee," at which over 140 animals were exhibited.⁴⁴ But the lack of funds for prizes limited the effectiveness of this fair. There were few exhibits of superior animals and products, for men like Moses Stebbins of Deerfield were apparently more interested in winning premiums and broader recognition than in showing off the results of their hard labors for the mere admiration and edification of the general public. Stebbins brought a fine working oxen to Northampton that year where it won second premium of six dollars, but no mention is made of the beast at the volunteer Greenfield Show held one week earlier. This volunteer show, nonetheless, was the immediate precursor of the Franklin County Agricultural Society Fair which was first held on September 25, 1850.

This first annual Franklin County Fair, and the nine following it, took place on Greenfield's Main Street, with the exhibits of fruit, vegetables, fancy work, and miscellaneous articles in the Town Hall, with the oxen pull up Clay Hill, and with the plowing match on Mr. Alfred Wells's land. This last event according to the *Gazette and Courier*, attracted a crowd of 1,800 people at a time when the total population of the town was probably just a little more than that. After proceeding to the Brick Church, escorted by the Greenfield Brass Band, the society's members were blessed by the minister and listened to an address by the Honorable Joseph T. Buckingham, former editor of the *Boston Courier*. From there they then marched to the American House where Major Keith served the Agricultural Dinner at a cost of fifty cents per person.

The first reference made to any agricultural society or fair in the half-dozen Deerfield diaries examined was to this first annual Greenfield fair, and was recorded in Julius C. Robbins's weatherbook and diary. His experiences probably typify those of most Deerfield farmers, at least with regard to agricultural fairs. Since he never mentioned the Berkshire, Brighton, or Northampton fairs, the first one he probably attended was the 1850 Greenfield fair. On September 25, 1850, he wrote, "Clear. To Greenfield to the Cattle Show for the first time. Cattle plenty and other things in proportion." He again attended the fair the following year, when he mentioned in October 15's entry only the oxen pull, horse exhibit, and plowing match. Robbins naturally wrote only about those parts of the fair which most interested him. In October of 1852, the account book of the Franklin County Agricultural Society listed, "Received \$5 from Julius Robbins for subscription." On Thursday, October 30 of that year, Robbins wrote in his diary, "Clear and warm. The fair the second day. Address by Professor Mapes of New York." After he had become a part of that exclusive audience of farmers who were privileged as members of the society to attend the guest speaker's lecture, Robbins no longer mentioned the plowing matches and oxen pulls in his diary.⁴⁵

Since he made no mention of the Franklin County Fair in 1853 and 1854, he probably did not attend. On October 4, 1855, however, he recorded, "Cloudy and rainy throughout the day. Got the first premium on apples." Sure enough, this was reported in the *Franklin Democrat*: "J. and G. W. Robbins, Deerfield, won 1st premium of \$1.00 for APPLES NOT LESS THAN THREE VARIETIES."⁴⁶ Robbins did not even mention that year's agricultural address. His award overshadowed both the entertaining and educational features of the fair like the oxen pull and the plowing match and the informative lecture. Robbins, like others, became more concerned with the lure of the premium award than with the educational and entertaining aspects of the agricultural fair.

The growing number of purely social diversions at the Franklin County Fair from 1850 to 1856 suggests that the Franklin Agricultural Society saw it as their mission to entertain the farmer as well as to educate him. Henry W. Cushman of Bernardston, who was chosen president of the society in January, 1851, and then donated one thousand dollars worth of Franklin County Bank stock to its treasury, clearly stated this in 1853.

An agricultural society . . . like or own, has two great objects in view. First, to extend the area of a knowledge of practical farming [and] to show what can be done by the application of science in the improvement of the soil . . .

And a second object of this society, not less important . . . is to furnish a rational, well-conducted and improving holiday for the whole people The farming population of New England have not sufficient days of relaxation and amusement. . . A change of occupation, of employment, of place, as well as of air, are . . . necessary to our social and moral well-being, and to our health and happiness generally If rational amusements are at hand they will be gladly accepted. If not, then the young, the inexperienced, the gay and volatile will be drawn off to scenes far less improving than what we have witnessed the two days past.⁴⁷

Farm families had always looked forward to Fair Day as a day of fun. First, of course, there were the old plowing matches and oxen pulls. Fairgoers still enjoyed watching the oxen, and by the 1850s, the horses, pull cast iron plows or the new steel plows of the midwest through the earth. Wagers, of course, increased the excitement. There was hardly anything more impressive than witnessing the brute force of the oxen struggle with two ton wagons or stone boats up Clay Hill or the town teams of up to fifty-one yoke of oxen lumber down Main Street decorated with flags, farm and garden produce and usually carrying a full complement of school children.

Any type of athletic competition drew an excited crowd. At first these contests usually were spontaneous events such as foot races and impromptu wrestling matches.⁴⁸ Then boys and girls raced to catch a greased pig. Soon racing became more formalized.⁴⁹ Since they were so much faster and more graceful, horses became extremely popular at fairs. At first, people were satisfied merely with the exhibiting of horses, as the success of the 1822 Tri-County Horse Show demonstrated. As the years progressed, more premiums were awarded for horses, the categories became more specific.⁵⁰ In 1855, "Main Street was lined early the whole

length with an anxious, eager, curious, wet and excited multitude'' to watch the horses parade by.⁵¹

In that year, the Greenfield fair's exhibition of horses faced stiff competition in hold the crowd's attention and monopolizing equestrian excitement. On Cattle Show Thursday, the Welch and Lent Circus, "The two largest and most popular Equestrian Establishments in the world," came to town. "About noon, the Circus came poaching up Clay Hill with their horses -- wagons --tents -- . . . -- monkeys and music, to the great gratification of the boys and the great annoyance of the assembly in the Church."⁵² The assembly in the church was, of course, the Franklin County Agricultural Society, trying to listen to the address of the Honorable Charles L. Flint of Boston. No doubt the fact that the circus was drawing away paying customers from the fair also worried them.

The society began to realize more fully the money-making potential of the Fair, and felt that it had to compete with other popular forms of organized public entertainment, such as the circus or the Fireman's muster. The following quotation hints at the reason why: "There were 15 cars from the east well-filled with passengers on Thursday morning, and a good turnout from the south..."⁵³ The Franklin County Agricultural Society had to attract these train-transported crowds in order to make enough money to stay afloat financially. Serious farmers were members of the society and paid a one-time five dollar membership fee. For the rest of their lives they participated in the society's fair free of charge. Only non-members were charged admission fees (raised to ten cents in 1855) or had to pay to exhibit anything for premiums.

The failure to charge members for attendance at the fairs guaranteed the decline of the importance of agriculture in the Franklin County Agricultural Fair. To increase its revenues, the society had to attract more outsiders to the fair. These crowds of outsiders consisted increasingly of non-farmers who were interested only in the more exciting diversions of the county fair. the result was that the fair's organizers concentrated their attention more and more upon such features as horse racing. In 1860, the Society purchased five acres of land, and developed this, and an additional five and one-half acres acquired for three thousand dollars in 1862, into permanent fairgrounds, giving first priority to a one-third mile trotting track.⁵⁴

The Franklin County Fair drew large crowds of people even before the society owned a horse track, when races were held in the street. The presence of Governor Gardner in 1856 boosted attendance to not less than six thousand persons. In 1852, the society collected \$141.31 at the door of the Town Hall exhibits. In 1855, receipts climbed to over \$193.11. President Cushman said at the Agricultural Dinner in 1855 that "...our Cattle Show and Fair has become a settled and permanent institution

among us. Within the last five years, it has nearly quadrupled the number of its members and has increased its permanent fund from \$1,500 to \$5,000."⁵⁵

People other than the fair's proprietors began to take advantage of the crowds which were annually generated in Greenfield every Fair Day. Merchants and manufacturers saw the fair's enormous commercial possibilities. These entrepreneurs were satisfied, at first, merely with showing their goods. The exhibits of "Miscellaneous Articles" were a cheap and effective way to bring their products to the attention of the public. This is illustrated by the *Gazette and Courier's* account of the first Franklin County fair held in 1850, which included a list of objects submitted for prizes and reported on by the Committee on Miscellaneous Articles. The committee members certainly did their best to plug each worthy product, many of which would never have been found at earlier fairs.⁵⁶ Many objects exhibited in 1850 were manufactured in places of business for sale to the public and not, as was the case previously, in the home for domestic consumption. In addition to the merchandising of commercial products at the fair itself, many merchants placed advertisements in the Greenfield newspapers to take advantage of the popularity of the Franklin County Fair.⁵⁷

Merchants and manufacturers were not the only ones who saw the commercial benefits of the Greenfield Fair. There were other fundraising activities. In 1856, the ladies of the town set up a table to sell refreshments, the proceeds of which were sent to the aid of the poor in Kansas.⁵⁸ Other efforts at the fair probably had even more obvious political implications than the fund-raiser to keep Bleeding Kansas free territory. The autumn fairs early on became a forum where campaigning politicians could address the crowds before election day.

As the Franklin County Fair developed in Greenfield during the 1850s, many different groups of people came to enjoy its benefits. In this respect, it differed from Elkanah Watson's original agricultural fairs of forty years earlier, which were founded to educate a rural population made up almost entirely of farmers, and from the Tri-County Fairs in Northampton, which still had at heart the basic interests of the farmer. As it evolved as an institution, the recreational and commercial aspects of the Greenfield Fair appealed to a growing number of non-farmers.

The Franklin County Agricultural Society had moved from the status of a volunteer association of farmers to a society headed by businessmen. In order to help the society navigate through difficult financial straits, the fair began to be regarded by the society's trustees as an income generator rather than an educational forum. How would the society be able to educate anybody about scientific agriculture if it was forced to dissolve because of financial difficulties, as had the two preceding Franklin

County agricultural societies? Why not attract the many people who paid to attend the fair by catering to their tastes, even if they sought entertainment more than education? The non-paying farmer member of the society would continue to attend the fair until a more effective institution of agricultural education appeared. Then they would still continue to attend the fair as it was one of the few rural institutions of recreation available.

The shifting emphasis of the Greenfield Fair in the 1850s reflected the changes taking place in the Franklin County Agricultural Society at that time. During that decade, the membership of the society expanded significantly. Many of the new members were still representative of the middle group of Deerfielders: farmers who socially, intellectually, and financially well-off. Over the years, however, an increasing number, were only marginally concerned with agriculture. In 1855, the following lines appeared in the *Franklin Democrat*: "Above all, let us hope to see an earnest response from our Manufacturers and Mechanics, as from these departments we are to look in future years for the backbone of our Society."⁵⁹

An editorial in an undated newspaper clipping at the Greenfield Historical Society superbly illustrates the declining influence of the farmer in a society founded in the first place for his benefit.

The fact is the people most interested in the welfare of the society -- the farmers -- have been doing their best to kill it. They are, most of them, life members -- which means they and their families don't pay admission except on benefit day . . . [when] they are absent . . . They are simply encrusted with selfishness and embalmed in antiquated ideas of the divinity of the farmer . . . The fact is that our society is now a rotting corpse which the enterprise of Greenfield businessmen has been carrying about in the annual coaching parade . . . The society is now \$3,300 in debt. A company of businessmen might perhaps manage the annual cattle show wisely and have the affair on a paying basis. But an unwieldy mass of long-lived life members from the farms of the hill towns -- never!⁶⁰

Franklin County's experience with agricultural societies in the antebellum era was not unique. All across the new nation as American farmers returned from the battlefields of the Revolutionary War to their own long-neglected fields, some desperately sought to learn what new agricultural techniques their former foes, the British, were then advancing. Farmers in the more remote agricultural regions, such as the

Connecticut River Valley in Western Massachusetts, became impatient with the ineffectual efforts of the first agricultural societies, made up chiefly of the leaders of the Revolution, to disseminate that knowledge. Instead of looking east to the Boston elite of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, these men turned their attention westward to Pittsfield in Berkshire County where more egalitarian agricultural societies were being founded by Elkanah Watson, who carefully considered the rural experience.

Franklin County farmers, however, could not immediately adapt the chief feature of the Berkshire Society, the agricultural fair, to their own existing local agricultural societies because they lacked in the 1820s the necessary liquid capital, business experience, and organizational expertise. For thirty years, therefore, they shared the Northampton Fair with the more economically mature neighboring counties of Hampshire and Hampden to their south. This was obviously a marriage of convenience. It is not surprising that a break-up occurred, but that it was so long in coming.

When Franklin farmers finally held their own agricultural fair in Greenfield in 1850, they soon discovered the pitfalls involved in sustaining an agricultural society through the support of the people instead of through the endowments of a generous elite. In order to preserve their agricultural association, they had to ensure that the fair, their only regular source of income, was a profitable venture. Businessmen in the society therefore saw to it that the fairs would attract paying customers, non-farming outsiders brought to Greenfield by the new railroad to enjoy themselves at the fair, and merchants and manufacturers interested in using the fair's exhibits as a showplace for their products.

The educational mission of the Franklin County Fair was taken over by other rural institutions in the second half of the nineteenth century. The United States Congress passed the Morrill Act in 1862, granting each state at least 30,000 acres for the endowment, support, and maintenance of a college. In 1863 Massachusetts received 360,000 acres of federal land and purchased four hundred acres in Amherst for the Massachusetts Agricultural College, which received its first class in 1867. In 1882 the State Agricultural Experiment Station was established also in Amherst to carry on extensive research in agricultural areas. It superseded the premium program for agricultural experimentation of the agricultural societies.

The process of agricultural innovation and diffusion, then, was effectively removed from the agricultural societies after 1860, and became institutionalized first in agricultural schools and academies and later in colleges and experimental stations. Naturally, the educational aim of the agricultural fair became somewhat muted, but it did not cease to exist

entirely. Just as Elkanah Watson had predicted in the early 1800s, Massachusetts farmers had acquired a degree of sophistication, and no longer relied upon the exhibits and lectures of the agricultural fair to inform them of scientific advances. Instead, they depended upon the new State Board of Agriculture which distributed the reports and papers of the institutions conducting agricultural experiments.

Even so, they did not stop attending the county fairs. By the 1860s, the fair had become an indispensable part of the rural tradition each fall, and provided amusement, social diversion, and commercial opportunity. The educational aspect of the fair did not disappear entirely. It merely became more subtle. Today, the Franklin County Fair continues to teach, by celebrating the agricultural nature of rural living, and by showing that, in the midst of great technological changes, a natural continuity and simplicity based upon the land still exists. Julius C. Robbins would be happy to know that there are still "cattle aplenty and other things in proportion" every autumn at the Franklin County Agricultural Society's fairgrounds in Greenfield.

NOTES

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² For instance, Washington wrote that "It must be obvious to every man who considers the agriculture of the country (even in the best improved parts of it) and compares the produce of our lands with those of other countries...how miserably defective we are in the management of them; and that if we do not fall upon a better mode of treating them, how ruinous it will prove to the landed interest. Ages will not produce a systematic change without public attention and encouragement...If [eastern farmers]...were taught how to improve the old, instead of going in pursuit of new and productive soil, they would make those acres which now scarcely yield them anything, turn out beneficial to them...and to the community generally by the influx of wealth resulting therefrom." From David Matteson, "Washington the Farmer" in Albert Bushnell Hart, ed., *Honor To George Washington* (Washington, D.C., 1932), 38.

³ The First British association devoted to agricultural improvement, the Improvers Society of Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland, was founded in 1723. In 1777 the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society was organized, as was the Highland Agricultural Society. The latter became a national organization in 1784 under the name of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland; see Rodney H. True, "The Early Development of Agricultural Societies in the United States," in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1920* (Washington, D.C., 1925), 293-306.

⁴ The first American agricultural society was founded in Charleston, South Carolina in 1784, and the second was incorporated in Philadelphia in 1785. The New York Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Manufactures and the Arts, which counted among its members Elkanah Watson, later "Father of the Modern Agricultural Fair," was organized in 1791. Governor James Sullivan, Samuel Adams, Charles Bulfinch, Christopher Gore, and twenty-four other leading Bostonians were incorporated as the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture on 7 March 1792; see True, "Agricultural Societies" and pages 184-195 of Percy Wells Bidwell and John I. Falconer's *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860* (Washington D.C., 1925), a somewhat dated study of the agricultural economy of early America. Clarence H. Danhof's *Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820-1870* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969) is a more recent and more dependable work which considers the agricultural economy of antebellum New England. Other volumes indispensable to the study of early nineteenth-century agriculture include: Paul W. Gates, *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture, 1815-1860* (New York, 1960); Albert Lowther Demaree, *The American Agricultural Press, 1819-1860* (Philadelphia, 1974); Wayne Caldwell Neely, *The Agricultural Fair* (New York, 1935); Howard S. Russel, *A Long, Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England* (Hanover, N.H., 1976); Joseph Schafer, *The Social History of American Agriculture* (New York, 1970); and Alfred Charles True, *A History of Agricultural Education in the United States, 1785-1925* (Washington, D.C., 1929).

⁵ Elkanah Watson, *History of Agricultural Societies on the Modern Berkshire System* (Albany, New York, 1820), 364; Watson was interested most in promoting the importation and propagation of spanish merino sheep, a fine-wooled, long-fleeced breed, when he exhibited two of the critters on Pittsfield Common in 1807. In 1810 he organized a larger exhibition of livestock. This was so successful, it led to the formation of the Berkshire Agricultural Society in 1811, whose chief function was to organize annual animal shows and exhibitions of farm products and domestic manufactures. Watson was an effective publicist and he aided other communities in setting up their own agricultural fairs and societies by lobbying successfully for state support of the new organizations; see Neely, *The Agricultural Fair*, 57-71, Watson, *Agricultural Societies*, and Winslow C. Watson, ed., *Men and Times of the Revolution* (New York, 1856).

⁶ See Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955), 23-46.

⁷ Neely, *The Agricultural Fair*, 189-190; J.E.A. Smith, *The History of Pittsfield* (Springfield, Mass., 1876), 333.

⁸ Neely, *The Agricultural Fair*, 45-46.

⁹ Watson, *Agricultural Societies*, 131; The following notice was published in the *Massachusetts Agricultural Repository and Journal*, 4 (June 1816), 204: "This *Cattle Show* [at Brighton] will draw together a great collection of persons and thus will much facilitate the sale of. . . cattle and [it will] also [be seen] that the animals, which shall command the prizes, will sell at very much enhanced prices . . . at Boston market."

¹⁰ Watson, *Agricultural Societies*, 182.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹² In 1673 the town of Deerfield was founded under the name of Pocumtuck by settlers who continued to suffer at the hands of the French and Indians until 1746. See George Sheldon, *A History of Deerfield* (2v., Greenfield, Mass., 1896), 1, 280-312. Due to George Sheldon's respect for (or obsession with) the past and to the efforts of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (hereafter referred to as the P.V.M.A.), many valuable papers and documents, including agricultural

periods, proceedings of agricultural societies, and farmers' diaries and daybooks, were collected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and saved for posterity's sake in the P.V.M.A. Library in Deerfield.

¹³ *Franklin Herald*, 1 February 1814.

¹⁴ *Franklin Herald*, 30 August 1814. The original list of the library's holdings can be found in Franklin Agricultural Society, 5-VI, P.V.M.A. Library, Deerfield, Mass.

¹⁵ Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, Record Book 3, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

¹⁶ *Franklin Herald*, 7 November 1820.

¹⁷ Albert Lowther Demaree, *The American Agricultural Press, 1819-1860* (Philadelphia, 1974), 215.

¹⁸ See Watson, *The History of Modern Agricultural Societies*, 118-169 for his own account of the development of the first Berkshire Fairs. Neely, 51-82.

¹⁹ Elkanah Watson, *Agricultural Societies*, 138-9.

²⁰ From Daniel W. Baker's ms., "Legislation as to Bounties to Agricultural Societies," 1873, in Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture records, Box 33, Massachusetts Historical Society. Section V of Chapter 114 of the Acts of 1819 specifically states that "The societies shall offer annually by way of premiums or shall apply otherwise at their discretion for the improvement of agriculture or manufactures, a sum not less than that received...And must annually transmit to the office of the secretary of state a statement of expenditures of said money with such general observations concerning agriculture and manufactures as they may deem important or useful."

²¹ Bidwell and Falconer, op.cit., 189.

²² See Henry Colman, *Fourth Report of the Agriculture of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1841), 72.

²³ John Hayward, *A Gazetteer of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1874), 322-325.

²⁴ By 1820 Hampden's population had grown to 28,021 people, Hampshire's to 26,478 and Franklin's to 29,630. See Hayward, op.cit., 322-325.

²⁵ J. H. Lyman, *An Address Delivered Before the Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Agricultural Society*, 25 October 1820 (Northampton, Mass., 1820), "Our early association, the nature of our pursuits, and the topography of our territory, facilitate union of action. Intersected in the centre by a noble stream, furnishing of each side a rich interval for mowing and arable, and bounded east and west by ranges of towns admirably adapted to grazing and the raising of stock, our territory embraces the vender and the purchaser, and associates them in the same community."

²⁶ "The farmers of Franklin County...have been most censurably negligent...and have shown a culpable want of interest in the management and success of this society...so little labor or attention have they been willing to bestow on its concerns..." Colman, fourth report, 184.

²⁷ Only in 1822 had the first bank been organized in Greenfield. The first one in Northampton was organized in 1813. In 1833, there was still only one bank in Northampton, with a combined capital of over \$200,000. Joseph Lyman, first president of the Tri-County Agricultural Society, was also founding president of the Northampton National Bank. From John H. Lockwood, ed., *Western Massachusetts: A History, 1636-1925* (New York, 1926), 394-5, 664.

²⁸ The following article concerning the Tri-County Society was reprinted from the *Hampshire Gazette*: "Men of fortune and influence must lend their aid, and...they will erect a durable monument...whose base will be the prosperity and whose inscription the gratitude of their fellow citizens." *Franklin Herald*, 3

February 1818. Of the Berkshire Society, the newspaper wrote: "...two beautiful Heifers of the Devonshire breed [were] exhibited and although purchased at...the speculation may be a profitable one to the enterprising owner. It is extremely desirable that *the most wealthy and opulent farmers* in Berkshire may...appreciate the advantages...to the whole community, from similar exertions." *Franklin Herald*, 22 October 1822. (Italics mine).

²⁹ "The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, a similar society in Pennsylvania, and a few others, were early organized - but we witnessed little of their effects; and there still continued an extreme apathy among us, until our brethren in Berkshire...became the honorable and proximate cause of the interest which is now felt...To that society we are unquestionably deeply indebted..." Lyman, op. cit., 40.

³⁰ Watson best explained the philosophy of the new agricultural societies on page 160 of his *Agricultural Societies*: "[A] different organization, to seize upon the human heart, to animate, and excite a lively spirit of competition, giving a direction to measures of generality, became indispensable. To do this, - some eclat was necessary - music, dancing, and singing, intermixt with religious exercises and measures of solidity, so as to meet the feelings of very class of the community. . . ."

³¹ A close look at the lists of premiums awarded at the Tri-County Fair (as printed in the Greenfield newspapers for 1818 to 1828) and at the diaries and journals of several Deerfield farmers shows who from Franklin County participated in the Northampton Fair. It does not provide a wholly accurate representation, for obviously many more people attended the fair than those who won premiums. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify those who exhibited animals or products without having won anything for their efforts or the anonymous majority of fairgoers who did not enter any competitions.

³² These and the following valuations were taken from the "Tax and Valuation Lists of the Town of Deerfield," 1813 to 1850, on microfilm at the P.V.M.A. Library, Deerfield.

³³ The following figures show that the benefits of the Tri-County Fair were not spread equally between the three countries. Although Franklin County made up 33% of the total population of the three countries, only 13% of the total number of premiums awarded at the Fair between 1818 and 1826 went to Franklin County farmers. Hampshire County, on the other hand, although consisting of only 32% of the population, won over 73% of the premiums.

³⁴ The Fair's proprietors advertised that ". . . this *Cattle Show* will draw together a great collection of persons and thus will much facilitate the sale of their cattle, and . . .the animals, which shall command the prizes, will sell at very much enhanced prices . . ." *Massachusetts Repository*, IV (June 1816), 204.

³⁵ *Franklin Herald*, 9 October 1821.

³⁶ *Franklin Herald*, 16 October 1821.

³⁷ *Franklin Herald*, 31 October 1820.

³⁸ Hampshire County once consisted of all the territory of the three countries. Franklin County was formed in 1811, Hampden in 1812.

³⁹ *Franklin Herald*, 4 June 1822.

⁴⁰ Letters such as this appeared in the local newspapers; "The Show at Northampton is too distant for our farmers of the northern towns to drive their cattle, or conveniently convey other articles for exhibition. Hency they had seldom participated in it, and of course have been shut out from its benefits. Such an anniversary here would remove this difficulty, and engage the interest of very many first rate farmers and skillful mechanics." *Greenfield Gazette and Franklin Herald*, 2 November 1830.

⁴¹ Colman, *Fourth Report*, 184.

⁴² *37th Report of the Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Agricultural Society* (Northampton, 1855), 7.

⁴³ Clapp practically ran Greenfield in the late 1840s. "He never would accept political office, but was president of the Greenfield Bank...the Green River Cemetary Company, the Greenfield Gas Light Company, the Franklin Savings, Institution and of the Connecticut River Railroad Company." Francis M. Thompson, *History of Greenfield, 1682-1900* (Greenfield, 1904) 874-48.

⁴⁴ *Gazette and Courier*, 8 October 1849.

⁴⁵ Julius C. Robbins, *Diary and Weatherbook*, 25 September 1850, P.V.M.A. Library, Deerfield.

⁴⁶ *Franklin Democrat*, 8 October 1855.

⁴⁷ *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society for the Year 1853* (Greenfield, 1853), 30-31.

⁴⁸ Euclid E. Owen reminisced on page 1627 of Thompson's *History of Greenfield*, "In the earlier days when the County Fair were held on the Common, [I]...was a winner of many matches even when advanced in years." in 1856.

⁴⁹ "The race on the new Trotting Park on Petty's Plain caused considerable sport, as it was entirely a new thing...The race...was for \$5. There were seven who entered to run...the distance...[of] half a mile." *Franklin Democrat*, 6 September 1856.

⁵⁰ In 1820, the first year the Tri-County Society had a Committee Upon Horses and Colts, they awarded premiums for the best horse, the next best, and the best two year old colt. By 1856, the Franklin County Agricultural Society awarded twenty six premiums for a total of \$66.50 for horses in the following categories: Stud horses, breeding mares, three year old colts, two year old colts, one year old colts, saddle horses, draft horses, carriage horses, and geldings.

⁵¹ *Franklin Democrat*, 8 October 1855.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See entry for 6 February, 1856 in ms., Minutebook of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, located in the Franklin County Agricultural Society Offices, Greenfield, 1948).

⁵⁵ *Franklin Democrat*, 8 October 1855.

⁵⁶ *Gazette and Courier*, 30 September 1850.

⁵⁷ The first such advertisement appeared on September 30, 1850, in the *Gazette and Courier*: "At the late fair in this place, S.H. Colton of Worcester, offered for exhibition...choice Apples and...Pears...Now is the time to send in your orders." By 1863, those ads were no longer addressed specific ally to farmers: "Strangers visiting Greenfield on the days of annual cattle Show, are invited to call the *Cheap Cash Bookstore*..." *Gazette and Courier*, 3 October 1853.

⁵⁸ See the *Franklin Democrat*, 6 September 1856, and Thompson, *History of Greenfield*, 1171.

⁵⁹ *Franklin Democrat*, 24 September 1855. ". . . a case of most beautiful and natural looking teeth manufactured by Doct. J. Beals of Greenfield, surpassing in appearance and excellence too . . . anything we have ever seen. To any person in whom the "sound of the grinders is low," we would recommend Doct. Beals . . . life-like Daguerrotypes, taken by Popkins of the Franklin Daguerrean Gallery . . . These pictures for finish, shade and coloring, are unsurpassed, and we are not surprised his gallery is thronged . . . a beautiful assortment of Hats and Caps. . . exhibited by A. Pond and Co. of this town . . . [and] a large and well-filled case of

Gentlemen's furnishing Goods produced by Messrs. Rust & Clark . . . [who] draw their premiums constantly for a higher source than this society, to wit: directly from the people, in ready trade to satisfied customers."

⁶⁰ This excerpt probably dates from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, since it mentions coaching, a gentleman's sport popular between 1870 and 1920. However, the feelings expressed are relevant to this study of the late 1850s and early 1860s.