
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

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1929 August 29

Syracuse, NY - Dedication of Witter Museum

Dedication Exercises
and
Unveiling of Memorial Tablets
at the
**Witter Agricultural
Museum**



THE DANIEL PARRISH WITTER AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM

State Fair Grounds, Syracuse
August 29, 1929

Dedication Exercises
and

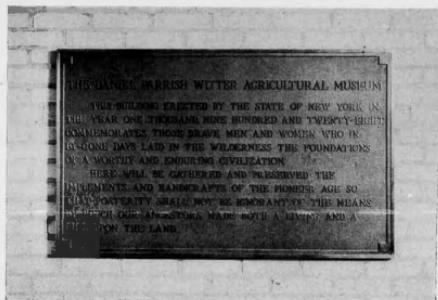
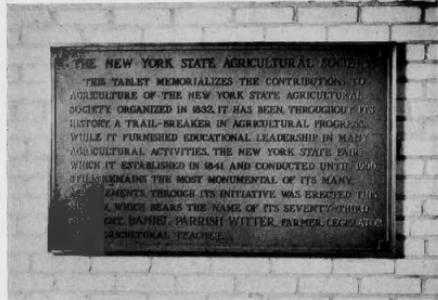
Unveiling of Memorial Tablets
at the

Witter Agricultural
Museum

State Fair Grounds, Thursday,
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MEMORIAL TABLETS IN THE DANIEL PARRISH WITTER AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM

DEDICATION EXERCISES

AND

UNVEILING OF MEMORIAL TABLETS

AT THE

WITTER AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM

Honorable Berne A. Pyrke, Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, presiding.

COMMISSIONER PYRKE: Ladies and Gentlemen: The interesting ceremonies in connection with the unveiling of the tablets upon the walls of this room of memories are about to begin. Due to circumstances, the ceremonies will be divided into two sections. The first section will consist of an address and of a dedicatory service, by His Excellency, the Governor. The second section will consist of addresses by other speakers.

The Governor would like to remain here throughout the ceremonies, but owing to the great demands upon his time, it is necessary that at the close of his address he leave for other parts and departments; so, at the conclusion of Governor Roosevelt's address, there will be a brief intermission while the Governor and his party withdraw. I will suggest that all remain in their seats for the balance of the program.

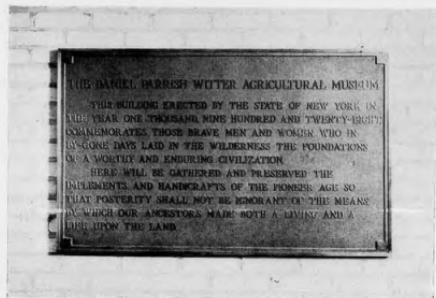
It is my pleasure now to present to you His Excellency, Governor Roosevelt.

HON. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Governor of New York State

Commissioner Pyrke, Mr. Witter, and my friends: I am very happy and proud to be able to take part in this little ceremony today. I have known for many years of the history which has led to the building and creation, permanent creation, of this museum. We do not need to dedicate a tablet to the one man who, more than any other, is responsible for this building. I refer to my old friend, Mr. Witter, the President of the New York State Agricultural Society, who I am happy to say is with us today to take part in the christening of his child. A part of the child has been christened before, and now we are going on in completing the ceremony.

There are two tablets which we are particularly to unveil, but before we come to that part, may I say a brief word in regard to the State Fair itself.



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This morning I had to talk along more or less set lines in regard to a big State-wide question that affects the lives of all of us. This afternoon I want to have an opportunity to say a few words about the fair itself.

All of us who have seen the fair, who have been in touch with its progress and its growth during the years, have been impressed with the splendid accomplishments, and I think that this year, not only from personal observation, but from talking with a great many people, we are very certain that this year's fair is literally bigger and better, more important, more useful to the people of the State than any previous fair.

That brings up a question that is of interest to the people of the State. As you know, a large part of this fair is composed of old buildings, with antiquated facilities; buildings and structures that were put up a generation or more ago, and that have decreased in their usefulness. These buildings ought to be replaced with modern structures, more up-to-date, in which to exhibit the products of the State, both agricultural and, I think, industrial.

That brings up the economic question as to whether or not the people of the State have any right to go on putting a great deal more money into the physical end of the fair grounds which, after all, are used only about six days out of the entire year—one week out of fifty-two—and remain closed, lying idle during the other fifty-one weeks of the year.

We are drawing toward the close of finishing a splendid plant for the fair, which was worked out under the administration of my predecessor, Charles E. Hughes, in 1910. It was conceded at that time that it was an ideal program, and we have followed pretty well along the lines of that program for nineteen years, which is a tribute to the soundness of the Hughes' program for the fair. I think, however, that the changing conditions now make it important that we devise some kind of a new program, and one important question for all who are interested in the State Fair, is the problem of trying to devise some means by which this great acreage, these fine buildings, this great plant, may be of more use to the people of the State, especially during the other fifty-one weeks of the year.

There have been a great many plans suggested, some of them of great merit, but we want still further suggestions. We ought to hear from every section. We ought to hear from every man and woman, yes, every boy and girl, who is interested in the future of this great exposition. And so I am going to announce today, not for the value of the prize, but in order to focus public attention on the need of a plan—I am going to offer a prize, the character of the prize to be determined by the judges (I think that is the fairest way)—a prize to the man or woman, boy or girl, who will send in the best practical plan for the future development of the State Fair, the grounds and the buildings, with the idea in mind that they shall be used during the fifty-two weeks of the year, instead of one week.



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HON. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
Governor of New York State

And so from now on, the people of this State can use their brains, use their imagination, and I hope that they will all compete for this prize. It is my suggestion that letters which will be written and suggestions which will be made, should all be sent to the Commissioner of Agriculture, Berne A. Pyrke, in Albany. If he is willing to act as a clearing house, I am sure that this will be a very practical method.

I would further suggest that the jury to decide who has offered the best plan should be composed of the managers of the State Fair itself and the members of the Agricultural Advisory Commission. That combination would be a very happy one. There are men and women on these boards and we will get a fine cross section of the people who are interested in agriculture and in industry representative of the whole State.

So now we can go to it, and may the best man or woman, boy or girl, win.

We now come to the dedication of these tablets. I am told that one of them is to commemorate the people who were responsible for most of us being here today; in other words, the ancestors, the people who settled and developed the land known today as the State of New York, the people who came into the wilderness and turned the forests into farms.

The other tablet will be in commemoration of the work of one of the oldest societies, one of the oldest organized groups of people in the history of our State—the New York State Agricultural Society. I am very proud of the fact that personally I have an inherited as well as a personal interest in your society. I think that my grandfather was one of the original organizers. He was a member all his life and my father was a member all his life, and I became a member about twenty years ago and I still am.

In all the passing years of changing conditions of life through the agricultural part of the State, the New York State Agricultural Society has carried on, it has had its ups and downs, it has had its periods of great usefulness and of lesser usefulness, but today it is not only a going concern, but is worth keeping going, not for historical reasons, but because of its real usefulness to the State as a whole.

Under the presidency of a man who had a vision and a sticktoitiveness in making this building possible, Mr. Witter, it is very fitting that this tablet should be dedicated, and I understand that there are twin boys who are going to unveil the twin tablets. So, I think now we have come to the point where the twins can start their work.

(At this point, the tablets were unveiled)

Mr. Van Wagener, will you read the inscriptions on these tablets?

TABLET NO. 1

THIS BUILDING, ERECTED BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT, COMMEMORATES THOSE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO IN BYGONE DAYS LAID IN THE WILDERNESS THE FOUNDATIONS OF A WORTHY AND ENDURING CIVILIZATION.

HERE WILL BE GATHERED AND PRESERVED THE IMPLEMENTS AND HANDICRAFTS OF THE PIONEER AGE SO THAT POSTERITY SHALL NOT BE IGNORANT OF THE MEANS BY WHICH OUR ANCESTORS MADE BOTH A LIVING AND A LIFE UPON THE LAND.

TABLET NO. 2

THE NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY. THIS TABLET MEMORIALIZES THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO AGRICULTURE OF THE NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY. ORGANIZED IN 1832, IT HAS BEEN THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, A TRAIL-BREAKER IN AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS, WHILE IT FURNISHED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN MANY AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES, THE NEW YORK STATE FAIR, WHICH IT ESTABLISHED IN 1841 AND CONDUCTED UNTIL 1900, STILL REMAINS THE MOST MONUMENTAL OF ITS MANY ACHIEVEMENTS. THROUGH ITS INITIATIVE WAS ERECTED THIS MUSEUM, WHICH BEARS THE NAME OF ITS SEVENTY-THIRD PRESIDENT, DANIEL PARISH WITTER, FARMER, LEGISLATOR, AND AGRICULTURAL TEACHER.

May our children and grandchildren come into this room—yes, and our great-grandchildren too—and be made better citizens by thinking of the work and the lives of those of our ancestors who have gone before, by thinking of our work which we do today, and may the New York State Agricultural Society be going in those days in the dim, distant future, until it celebrates its two hundredth anniversary as well as its century.

(Intermission)

COMMISSIONER PYRKE: I realize that it is not possible for all to remain in the room, but for those that have the time and the inclination, I can promise you a treat not inferior to that which has already been extended.

(Music)

COMMISSIONER PYRKE: Ladies and Gentlemen: We will now resume our program and execute the second section of it.

The name of Daniel Parrish Witter has been on the lips of all speakers who have participated in any of the ceremonies incidental to the dedication of this building. In monumental letters it is spread across the principal entrance to the building. I am sure that no one would feel that this ceremony was complete without having an opportunity to observe and listen briefly to the gentleman, the beloved gentleman, who bears this name, and at this point it is my privilege to present to you Mr. Daniel P. Witter, of Tioga County, New York. Mr. Witter.

HON. DANIEL P. WITTER

President of the New York State Agricultural Society

Mr. Chairman and Friends: In arranging for this program some time ago, while in conference with Commissioner Pyrke and Mr. Baldwin, our secretary, who has so ably worked with us during the entire year, it was decided that I should say a few words here.

You know it has been a busy week and I really have not made much preparation for what I desire to say, but I have thought possibly a few words in connection with what has transpired for the past year may be of interest to the people here.

A year ago when we dedicated this building, Governor Smith came into the building, looked around and asked where the exhibition was. He expected, I suppose, that he would see a large exhibition already here. The facts were, we had received the building on Saturday night and the fair began on Monday morning, and you will realize, of course, that there was not very much time for preparation. We had done what we could, and there were some exhibits here, but nothing of a permanent nature.

The plan has been to bring together materials into this building, and that they be gathered very carefully; that we should select those articles that have a history back of them. It has been quite remarkable how the people of this State have responded to requests for articles of that nature. Mr. Commissioner, I suppose that it would be somewhat of a surprise to you to know that all we have had to pay for what has been secured for this building would be less than \$250; the remainder has been donated. I went to see a man whom I had been informed had many old implements of the farm and home. He said to me right away: "If you were an antique hunter, I would not talk with you one minute, but if you will take the things I have to Syracuse and put them in the museum, where they will bear my name, I will deal with you very liberally indeed. We have articles here that are almost priceless in their value."

I wish to call your attention to the coverlet in the log cabin, presented by Miss Van Rensselaer and Miss Flora Rose, Directors of our College of Home Economics.



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HON. DANIEL PARRISH WITTER

When I arrived home last week I was told that a man had driven over twenty miles to my place and brought me a sickle. The sickle is now to be seen in the other wing of this building.

The arrangement of farm implements is as follows: There is the old Indian plow, in the making of which not a particle of iron was used. Next comes the plow with wooden mold-board. Next the plow that has not a bolt in it. So we go on until we reach the modern plow.

Next you will see the harrow made out of wood as it grew in the woods, made in the form of an "A," and the crosspiece is also as it grew in the woods. It is pinned together with wooden pins. Why did they make it in that form? They made it in that manner so that when drawn between or around stumps, there was not a corner that could catch on anything. The next was the two-section "A" harrow, with spike teeth, the kind I followed as a boy on the farm. When the stumps were cleared away, we find the square harrow, and next the spring-tooth harrow. That is the thought of the entire arrangement of things in the museum. Those in charge are endeavoring to select things that will carry out that idea, that those who shall come after may know something of the sacrifice that their ancestors endured, that they may have the inheritance in government and homes which we all enjoy today.

We are going to continue the work during the coming year. We have books in which we list anything people would like to present, or have kept here. We have had many such offers during the week, and if we have not already secured the article for the museum, they will be visited and we will endeavor by this means to have a more complete collection next year.

I want to speak here of the work of a former President of this Agricultural Society, President in 1922-23, Mr. A. L. Brockway. Mr. Brockway came to the front. We would not have had this building last year and perhaps not this but for his work. He contributed the drawing of the plans and directed the erection of this building. The rest rooms and secretary's office were obtained this year through his efforts and through the work of Commissioner Pyke. You will be interested to know that since this fair began this week we have already gathered enough pictures of ex-presidents so that we will soon be able to fill up many of these vacant picture frames.

We have never had anything that I have been connected with—and I have been connected with an exhibit of this nature since it started in 1924—that has taken better than the singing contest we have had two days this week. It has been put on the program for the purpose of improving the singing in rural meetings—Grange, Farm Bureau and Home Bureau. Sixteen persons have sung solos, many of which were of very high character. Strange to say, we have had a singer from Chautauqua, one from St. Lawrence, and one from Westchester counties. We are to have other contests today after this meeting adjourns.



HON. BERNE A. PYKE
Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets

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We expect we will be able to have such a contest every year. We not only expect to be able to give the people of this State opportunity to hear the songs, but we hope to give them something they can carry home that will be of benefit to them in all future time.

COMMISSIONER PYRKE: I believe it was the Psalmist who said: "There is nothing new under the sun," and like most generalizations, there is some truth in it. But it is also true that there is enough that is originative. We have to the credit of America one origination, at least, and that is that it was in the mind of an American citizen, a resident at the time of the State of Massachusetts, and afterward a resident of New York State, that the idea was born of an agricultural fair, a fair for the purpose of furthering and promoting agriculture through the medium of the exposition of the best that agriculture could present.

There are many worthy fairs upon this continent. I presume there are at least ten that compare favorably with the exposition now in progress upon these grounds, but there is one feature that distinguishes this exposition from all others, and that is the building in which we are now located. I venture to believe that as this building expands and as it continues to realize the purpose for which it was erected, it will continue to be the distinguishing feature of the New York State Fair. And let me say that, so far as my information goes, there is no place upon this broad continent where you can find the things going on that have been going on here this week. Where else can you find the artisans actually exemplifying the handicraft by which, in the language of the tablet "our forefathers made a living upon this soil"? It will not be long that you can even see that demonstration go on here, because, unfortunately, the artisans in these various trades are well along in years and when they pass on they will leave behind them no successors.

One of the purposes of this building is to hold in memory those things familiar to previous generations, and from which the present generation can profit. This room in truth is a room of memories. Crowded upon the walls are the pictures of those old worthies who for nearly one hundred years have guided the destiny of this ancient society with which the Governor's family has been so intimately associated. I am sure that the references that His Excellency made to this society have whetted your appetite to learn more about this ancient and honorable organization, and surely we are fortunate in having upon this platform at the present time a gentleman who is not only a discriminating student of history, but a brilliant interpreter of current events. It is my pleasure to present to you Dr. John B. Howe, of Syracuse, who will speak in reference to the history of this splendid organization. Dr. Howe.

DR. JOHN B. HOWE

Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, N. Y.

Commissioner Pyrke, Ladies and Gentlemen: Today marks the formal dedication of a State Fair building which will stand as a memorial not only to the New York Agricultural Society, in the evolutionary stages of its great public undertaking, but to the faithful and patient part it has played in the development of our imperial State. Surrounding this structure we see on all sides impressive evidence of the varied and wonderful products of the husbandman's toil and enterprise. But we can better appreciate the meaning and value of these concrete exhibits when we turn aside for a while from the farm realities of the present day, and take a backward look at the primitive methods and appliances whereby the pioneer farmers of New York won their earlier battles with the soil, and with splendid perseverance and often inadequate rewards, wrung from nature her choicest bounties. It was to encourage this species of retrospection that the agricultural museum was projected. Study is never so fruitful as when inspired and guided by sentiment. It was a great man who said that "history is philosophy teaching by example." Here, then, the future patrons of the fair can repair, and share the benefits of a historical review in which sentimental interest goes hand in hand with a pleasant form of education.

The museum building was finished last year before the date of last year's fair, but its equipment of exhibits was so incomplete at that time that the formal dedication was postponed to the present occasion. In its title, the name of Daniel P. Witter, president of the State Agricultural Society, whose services in the State Assembly for Tioga County spans two long periods, aggregating 18 years, and makes him the dean of that body, is fittingly honored. It was Mr. Witter, in his capacity of Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture, who was chiefly instrumental in obtaining the legislative appropriation for this welcome branch of the State exposition. In special recognition of his zeal in that regard, and for the broader reason that his public and private career has been a fruitful example and continuing inspiration to the farming industry of the State, the name of Witter will be linked in the coming years with the museum and its distinctive mission.

No better personal vehicle could be chosen for reminding all future visitors to the museum that the State Agricultural Society is the parent of the great Empire State Exposition now in progress. Long before the State Government had seriously considered maintaining an agricultural fair with its own money and under its own official direction, the society, in the face of discouraging obstacles and with scant public support, had nursed into life the child of its enterprise and foresight.

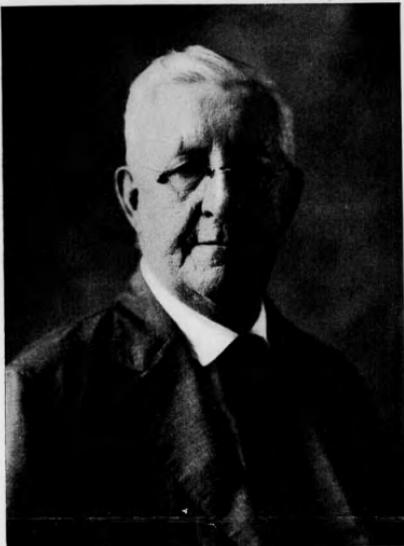
It is a far cry to that day in February, 1832, when "a few zealous and enlightened friends of agriculture" as they were

described, met in Albany and launched the State Agricultural Society. Its initial prestige may be judged from the fact its first president was LeRay De Chaumont, a name famous in the earlier annals of the State and long borne by a Jefferson County village. That meeting, assembled at a time when Andrew Jackson was still President of the United States, was the real cradle of our State Fair. The Society was duly incorporated, but nine years were still to elapse before its stated objects, namely, "to improve the condition of agriculture, horticulture, and the household arts," fructified in the first State Fair. Meanwhile, it met annually, but in this period, as the first published volume of its records informs us, "the funds of the society did not warrant the establishment of annual fairs."

But better times were ahead, and in the month of April, 1841, the executive committee met in Albany and resolved "that the New York State Agricultural Society will hold its annual fair in the village of Syracuse on the 29th and 30th days of September next." A month later the Legislature was induced to pass a bill for the promotion of agriculture, by which the munificent sum of \$700 per annum was placed at the command of the society for the purpose in view. The infant Fair thus took its first step in a two-day experiment, financed by the State with an appropriation that would now buy a rather modest automobile. That was, indeed, a humble beginning; but it was the forerunner of great things, thanks to the public spirit and dauntless perseverance of the State Agricultural Society, and incidentally to its Syracuse mascot.

Let me say here, by way of parenthesis, that in the year of the State Fair's advent in Syracuse, only one of the great Western States, which, according to the last Federal census exceeded New York in the total value of their farm products, had been admitted to the Union. The single exception was Illinois. All the others of that mighty agricultural block were then American territories or parts of the trans-Mississippi wilderness. In agricultural exposition and education, New York State was therefore a memorable pacemaker; and if Syracuse was the scene of its first venture in that time, the State Agricultural Society was the strong propulsive force.

The first State Fair was held in the then unsettled space in Syracuse village, bounded by North Salina, Division, Townsend and Ash Streets, under the shadow of the old Court House, destroyed by fire in 1856. It was visited by a crowd ranging from 10,000 to 15,000 visitors. The story of it, as told by the first volume of the society's reports, reads like a chapter of ancient history. Not only was it a free show, but we are told that the outstanding feature was a dinner served to 1,200 people by mine host of the Syracuse House, a fine Central New York hostelry of that day. Unfortunately, the attendance of the gentler sex was not large, and when we look for the cause we find a grim forecast of future State Fair troubles. In a word, the weather was bad during the two days of the fair. But nothing could dampen the



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enthusiasm or lower the pride of the society and its army of farm followers as they contemplated the results of their brave experiment nearly 90 years ago. It is needless to say that the exhibits of farm products represented the cream of the farm industry of the time; but we can easily imagine the village visitors gazing with special interest at the array of primitive mechanical wonders. First of these, in the order of importance, was the latest model of the threshing machine of the early forties; and beside it was an impressive assortment of straw cutters, farming mills, plows, harrows, drills, cradles, scythes, pitchforks and horse rakes. The plow was not only an honored symbol of grinding farm labor; it was a center of sporting rivalries in the earlier state fairs.

The plowing contest, as it was then staged, was a race that no athletic competition of modern days could match in the point of muscular strain and dogged endurance. The Syracuse plowing test was of necessity conducted outside of the Fair Grounds—on a location in Onondaga Valley. But the star exhibit of this kind in State Fair history was scheduled at Rochester two years later. There 18 plowmen entered the competition. A quarter of an acre was allowed to each team, and the time limit was an hour and a quarter. Under the prescribed conditions, the contest was between horses and plowholders, no drivers being permitted. History is mute as to the winner of the match; but we learn from the official annals of the society that "scarcely two of the spectators could agree as to the individuals to whom the premiums should be awarded."

With the Syracuse Fair of 1841 the curtain rose on a series of annual expositions by which the State Agricultural Society steadily enhanced the value of its educational service, dignified in a popular way the industry of the farm, and, as its auxiliary fair attractions were expanded and diversified, contributed much to public recreation as well as enlightenment in its circuit of New York communities. One of the best proofs of the importance of its enterprise in the distant years is seen in the array of American celebrities who honored the Fair with their presence and utterances. The Syracuse Fair of 1841 was signalized by an address by President Eliphalet Nott of Union College, an educator of encyclopedic distinction; and he was the initial figure in a long procession of State Fair notables, which included former President Martin Van Buren, President John Tyler, the historian, George Bancroft, Silas Wright, Vice President Millard Fillmore, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Governor William H. Seward, Stephen A. Douglas; and, in our time, Theodore Roosevelt, William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson. Webster's speech was delivered at the Rochester State Fair of 1843; and in it he voiced his admiration of New York's enterprise in supplying the transportation needs of farmers by constructing the Erie Canal.

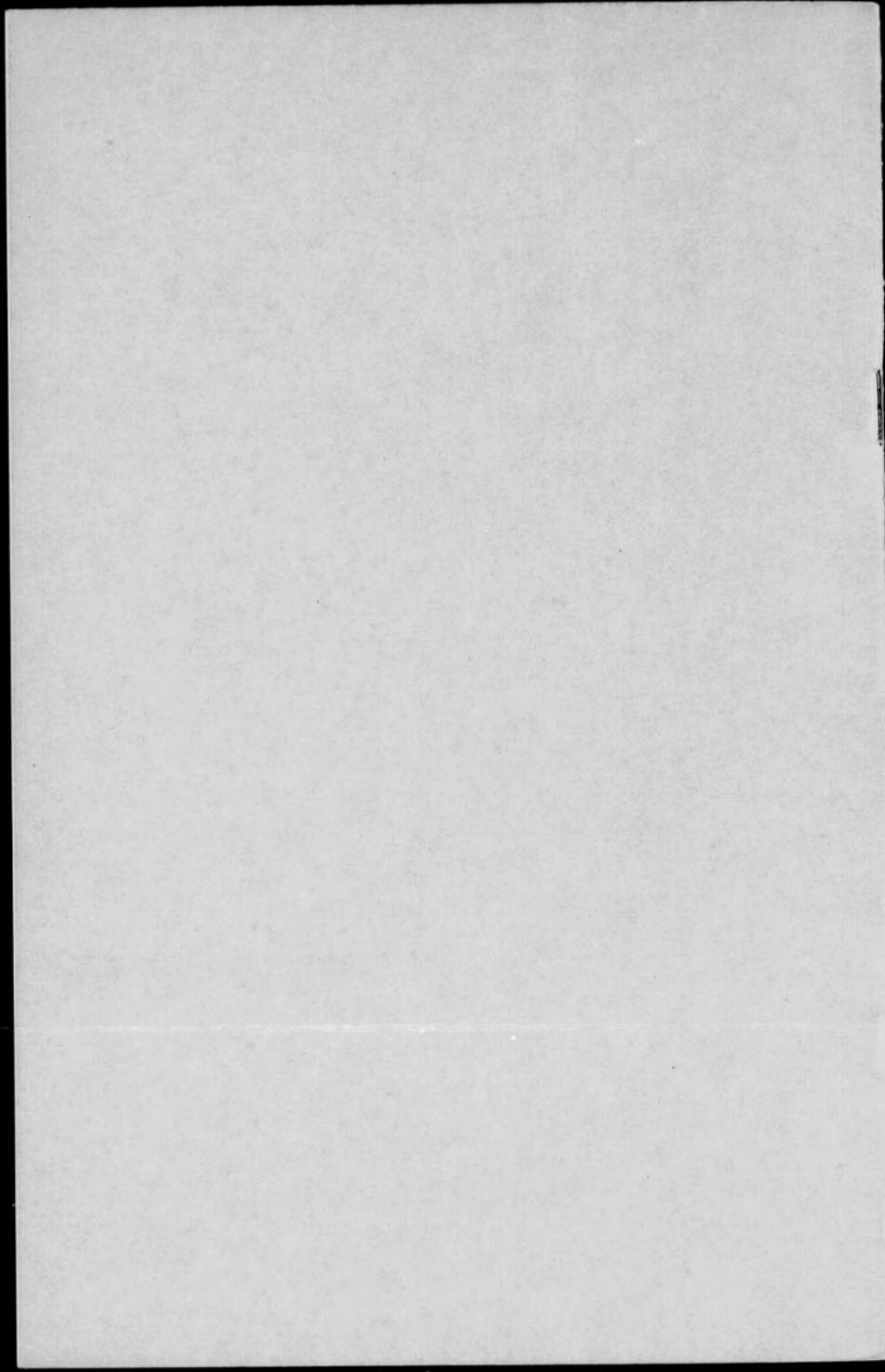
By the Federal census returns of 1920, the last reliable and available records pending the census of next year, New York ranked 13th among the states in the total value of the farm

products and livestock. But this proud fact must be contemplated in connection with New York's unrivaled primacy in finance, commerce and manufactures combined, and also in urban population. Considering our pre-eminence in this respect and the attendant drift to our cities, the high rating of New York as an agricultural State is a distinction that matches, in its way, the other elements of New York's greatness. It is a distinction we could not boast if the foundations of our farming industry had not been laid deep and strong in the long years when the State Agricultural Society was marching at the van of our agricultural associations, and stimulating and enlightening the army of farm workers through its state fairs and allied undertakings. For nearly 60 years from the date of the initial Syracuse Fair until the first Syracuse Fair held under State auspices in the administration of Governor Theodore Roosevelt, the annual State exposition was a constantly increasing demonstration of the devotion of the society to the cause that inspired its original organization. In estimating the agencies and influence which, within the last fourscore years and ten, have contributed to New York's merited renown as a great agricultural State, we must assign a large share of the credit to the pregnant record of the State Agricultural Society.

It must be a source of genuine satisfaction to all patrons of the State Fair, as I know it will be to the Syracuse public, to reflect that this memorial building and its interesting contents will stand as a reminder to the hosts of future fair visitors of the truly patriotic and productive services of the State Agricultural Society in the years that have passed.

COMMISSIONER PYKE: These interesting ceremonies will be brought to a close in this manner: Quite without the permission or knowledge of the individual to whom I am referring, I am going to call to his feet the 70th President of the State Agricultural Society, a man who has shown his love for agriculture as well as his professional technique as an architect, and I will present my friend, Mr. A. L. Brockway, of Syracuse.

This brings, my friends, this interesting service to a close.



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At Dedication and Unveiling of Memorial Tablets—Witter Agricultural Museum, State Fair Grounds, Syracuse, N. Y.,
August 29, 1929

Commissioner Pyrke, Mr. Witter, and my friends; I am very happy and proud to be able to take part in this little ceremony today. I have known for a good many years of the history which has led to the building and creation, perhaps the creation, of this museum. We don't need to dedicate any tablet to one man who, more than any other, is responsible for this building. I refer to my old friend, Mr. Witter, the president of the New York State Agricultural Society, who I am happy to say is with us today to take part in the christening of his child. A part of the child has been christened before, and now we are going on in completing the ceremony.

There are two tablets which we are particularly to unveil, but before we come to that part, may I say a brief word in regard to the State Fair itself. This morning I had to talk along more or less set lines in regard to a big state-wide question that affects the lives of all of us. This afternoon I want to have an opportunity of saying a few words about the fair itself.

All of us who have seen the fair, who have been in touch with its progress and its growth during the years have been impressed with the splendid accomplishments, and I think that this year the fair is literally bigger and better, more important, more useful to the people of the State than any previous fair.

That brings up a question that is of interest to the people of the State. As you know, a large part of this fair is composed of old buildings, with antiquated facilities; buildings and structures that were put up a generation or more ago, and have decreased in their usefulness. Those buildings ought to be replaced with modern more up-to-date structures, in which to exhibit the products of the State, both agricultural and, I think, industrial.

That brings up the economic question as to whether or not the people of the State have any right to go on putting in a great deal more money into the physical end of the fair which, after all, is used only about six days out of the entire year, one week out of fifty-two, and remains closed, lying there idle during the other fifty-one weeks of the year.

We are drawing toward the completion of a splendid plant for the fair, which was worked out under the administration of my predecessor, Charles E. Hughes, in 1910. It was conceded at that time that it was an ideal program, and we have followed pretty well along the lines of that plan for nineteen years, which is a tribute to the soundness of the Hughes' program for the fair. I think, however, that the changing conditions now make it important that we should devise some kind of a new program, and one important question for all who are interested in the State Fair, is the problem of trying to devise some means by which this great acreage, these fine buildings, this great plant, may be of more use to the people of the State especially during the other fifty-one weeks of the year.

There have been a great many plans suggested, some of them of great merit, but we want still further suggestions. We ought to hear from every section. We ought to hear from every man and woman, yes, every boy and girl, inter-

ested in the future of this great exposition. In order to focus public attention on the need of a plan, I am going to offer a prize, the character of the prize to be determined by the judges. I think that is the fairest way—a prize to the man or woman, or girl, who will send in the best practical plan for the future development of the State Fair, the grounds and the buildings, with the idea in mind that they shall be used during the fifty-two weeks of the year, instead of one week.

Again, from now on, the people of this State can use their brains, use their imagination, and I hope that they will all compete for this prize. It is my suggestion that letters which will be written and suggestions which will be made, should all be sent to Commissioner of Agriculture Pyke in Albany. If he is willing to act as a clearing house, I am sure that this will be a very practical method.

I would further suggest that the jury to decide who has offered the best plan should be composed of the managers of the State Fair itself and the members of the Agricultural Advisory Commission. That combination would be a very happy one. There are men and women on these boards and we will get a fine cross section of the people who are interested in agriculture and in industry representative of the whole State.

So now we can go to it, and may the best man or woman, boy or girl win.

Finally we come to the dedication of these tablets. I am told that one of them is to commemorate the services of the people who were responsible for most of us living today; in other words, the ancestors, the people who settled and developed the land known today as the State of New York, the people who came into the wilderness and turned the forests into farms.

The other tablet will be in commemoration of the work of one of the oldest societies, one of the oldest organized groups of people in the history of our State, the New York State Agricultural Society. I am very proud to feel that personally I have an inherited as well as a personal interest in your society. I think that my grandfather was one of the original organizers. He was a member all his life and my father was a member all his life, and I became a member about twenty years ago and I still am. In all those many years of changing conditions of life through the agricultural part of the State, the New York State Agricultural Society has carried on, it has had its ups and downs, it has had its periods of great usefulness and of lesser usefulness, but today it is not only a going concern, it is worth keeping going, not for historical reasons, but because of its social usefulness to the State as a whole.

Under the presidency of a man who had a vision and a stick-to-it-iveness in making this building, Mr. Witter, it is very fitting that this tablet should be dedicated, and I understand that there are twins who are going to unveil the twin tablets. So, I think now we have come to the point where the twins can start their work.

(At this point, the tablets were unveiled.)
Mr. Van Wagener, will you read the inscriptions on these tablets?

TABLET NO. 1

"THIS BUILDING ERECTED BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT, COMMEMORATES THOSE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO IN BY-GONE DAYS LAID IN THE WILDERNESS THE FOUNDATIONS OF A WORTHY AND ENDURING CIVILIZATION.

"HERE WILL BE GATHERED AND PRESERVED THE IMPLEMENTS AND HANDICRAFTS OF THE PIONEER AGE SO THAT POSTERITY SHALL NOT BE IGNORANT OF THE MEANS BY WHICH OUR ANCESTORS MADE BOTH A LIVING AND A LIFE UPON THE LAND."

TABLET NO. 2

"THE NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY THIS TABLET MEMORIALIZES THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO AGRICULTURE OF THE NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY. ORGAN-

IZED IN 1832, IT HAS BEEN THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, A TRAIL-BREAKER IN AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS, WHILE IT FURNISHED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN MANY AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES, THE NEW YORK STATE FAIR, WHICH IT ESTABLISHED IN 1841 AND CONDUCTED UNTIL 1900, STILL REMAINS THE MOST MONUMENTAL OF ITS MANY ACHIEVEMENTS. THROUGH ITS INITIATIVE WAS ERECTED THIS MUSEUM, WHICH BEARS THE NAME OF ITS SEVENTY-THIRD PRESIDENT, DANIEL PARRISH WITTER, FARMER, LEGISLATOR, AND AGRICULTURAL TEACHER."

May our children and grandchildren come into this room, yes, and our great-grandchildren too, and be made better citizens by thinking of the work and the lives of those of our ancestors who have gone before, by thinking of our work which we do today, and may the New York State Agricultural Society be going in those days in the dim, distant future and celebrate their two hundredth anniversary as well as their centennial.
