



Fair Game

BY JEREMY W. NAIDUS

The idea of a New York State Fair began in 1841, with an \$8,000 subsidy given by the state legislature to hold the event in Syracuse, a bastion of New York's farming community. An estimated 10,000–15,000 people attended and listened to speeches, cheered at races, enjoyed livestock shows, and sampled food and goods brought for display. The fair proved so popular that it became an annual event in Syracuse under the aegis of the State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Today, the State Fair is one of the biggest promoters of agriculture and industry in New York. By 2008, the fair's attendance had grown to nearly one million visitors and participants

each year over a twelve-day period. Hence, over the decades, such a massive event needed increased contributions and publicity. Pictured here is a young girl posing for a State Fair publicity photograph, circa 1970. Holding a "Food Expert" sign in one hand and a collection tin for the "Bank of Consumer Protection" in the other, she helped turn the fair's popularity into a chance to advocate for better standards in agricultural production and sales.

Similar publicity photographs were used in Department of Agriculture and Markets publications and exhibits, in State Fair annual reports, and in advertising pamphlets directed at both vendors and consumers. ■

SERIES 14457-85, BOX 1, FOLDER 4, NEW YORK (STATE). DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS. DIVISION OF AGRICULTURAL PROMOTION SERVICES. PUBLICITY PHOTOGRAPHS, 1913-1975. BULK 1964-1975.