

## Driving Park and Fair Association

The Hoosick Driving Park and Fair Association existed in the late eighteen and early nineteen-hundreds. Events were held on grounds located north of the village on the east side of Route 22. This land, then known as Webster Grove and later as Tomlinson Grove, had a quarter-mile racetrack, a grandstand, and a picnic area.

Entries for this fair were open to the world. All the exhibitors were charged \$1, which entitled them to a pass to enter the fair twice each day. When prize money was awarded, 10 percent of the premium was deducted unless the premium was \$10 or less. The entries were divided into seven divisions – Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Poultry, Dogs, Farm and Garden Products, and Implements. Each division was divided into classes.

Horse racing was a big attraction at all fairs. The Hoosick Driving Park and Fair Association provided a contest for Trotting and Pacing. The purses for the winners were from \$250 to \$500. The entry fees for these races were 5 percent of the purse.

During the years of the Hoosick Driving Park and Fair Association, three other local fairs were also popular. The Rensselaer County Agricultural and Horticultural Society Fair, then held in Lansingburgh, the Agriculture and Liberal Arts Society of Rensselaer County Fair held in Nassau, and the Cambridge Fair. Fairs made it possible to promote social events crucial to the exchange of ideas and goods. It gave the opportunity to engage in competition and the opportunity to enjoy entertainment otherwise seen only in large cities.

While it seems that our Hoosick Fair was relatively short lived, other fairs had hard times also. The Rensselaer County Agricultural and Horticultural Society had several high and low times, almost losing their charter in 1919, their centennial year. The Fair at Nassau continued until 1944. The Cambridge Fair closed in the early forties after more than 70 years. Some fairs closed because of changes in transportation, economic changes, and sometimes poor management. The reason that the fair at the Hoosick Driving Park closed is not known. However, its existence was important to the town.