

HISTORY & FOLKLORE



1951 TVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MAKE FINAL PLANS - Members of the Trinity Valley Exposition Executive Committee go over last-minute plans for the October 8-9-10-11 event. J.M. Rich of Liberty, executive committee chairman and three-time Expo president, is seated looking over fair papers. Standing, left to right, are Grover Chambliss, 1951 and 1952 president; J.B. Sterling, 1953 and 1954 president; Hubert Taylor, 1956 president; Wyatt Bell, former TVE manager; Paul Crutchfield, 1955 president; J.W. Trousdale, president in 1949 and 1950; and Dempsie Henley, present president.

– Photo by Crystal Studio

From Chambers County Museum, October 2021 –

Post World War II Trinity Valley Exposition

by Marie Hughes, Editor, The Age

After the war, in 1946, the citizens of Liberty and Chambers counties were ready to swing back into action to make the first TVE in four years the “biggest and best” ever.

The lumber used for the POW camp was used to repair the building, with roads and sidewalks covered with shell for the first time, bringing the Exposition grounds “out of the mud.” New lights in the buildings and grounds were strung to brighten up the fairgrounds.

Vernon F. Poole, the secretary-manager of the TVE, said that on the first day of the fair, school children would be admitted free of charge and the rides and shows would only cost a nickel. There

were 10 big shows and 10 big rides available that year. Rodeo tickets were \$1.50. E.B. Buchanan of Buchanan Radio Service provided the public address system.

The first TVE Calf Scramble was held that year with 12 boys going after six calves. The queen was June Steusoff and the king was Harry Lloyd McGuire.

In 1947, the first auction of purebred livestock and quarter horses was held, along with auctions for the 4-H Club boys and the previous year’s calf scramble winners. The top price for the calf scramble champion was \$1,245 paid by Price’s Liberty Cafe to the winner, Troy Abshire of Anahuac.

In 1948, Evelyn Hol-

brook was named queen with Nelson Waldrop being king.

Throughout the next 60 years, dignitaries and celebrities were included in the opening day parades and featured during the rodeo. In 1949, Houston oilman Glenn McCarthy led the opening day parade. Texas Attorney General and U.S. Senate nominee Price Daniel officially opened the TVE parade in 1952. Movie star and singing cowboy Monte Hale performed at the rodeo that same year.

In 1953, Bill Potter, popular KPRC-TV singing cowboy, star of the Milkdrop Moe TV Show, was the feature attraction of the rodeo.

Making the opening day address in 1954 was State Representative Bill Daniel. TVE President Jim Sterling introduced other guests in the parade including U.S. Representative Jack Brooks, State Senator Mrs. Neville Colson, and Democratic nominee for State Representative Zeke Zbranek. Dempsie Henley narrated the different parade features as they passed by the grandstand. The special feature at the rodeo was the 30-man Pasadena

Mounted Square Dance Troupe.

In 1955, the popular Houston Children’s TV personality Kiriak led the opening day parade. The first TVE Trail Ride was organized in 1956.

In 1958, television and movie star, Robert Culp, was part of the festivities and crowned the TVE Rodeo Queen. Also in 1958, a boxing match between Heavyweight Champion Contender Roy Harris of Cut and Shoot and Benny Rusk of Liberty was held and ended in a draw.

Justin Wilson, Cajun entertainer, performed at the rodeo in 1969. The opening day parade in 1974 was lead by Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe. In 1980, the Boyt Rodeo Arena was replaced with a \$1 million, 4,000-seat, covered arena, still in use today. Many more celebrities have participated in the TVE activities including the late Eyewitness News Marvin Zindler and Houston Astro J.R. Richard and many more will come in future years.

Over the past years, many changes have occurred with the Liberty County Fair and the Trinity Valley Exposition. Starting with just an idea in September 1909 among

several business leaders of Liberty County, this event has blossomed into the huge and successful exposition we have today.

Through the livestock auction, hundreds of area school children have been awarded college scholarships totaling over \$1 million.

It takes a lot of work by scores of volunteers to prepare for the TVE. They work the entire year to plan and organize for the week-long fair and rodeo and they deserve a big “pat on the back.”

The fair and the TVE have always been about bringing the citizens of the Trinity Valley together, to show their livestock, display their handiwork, share prize recipes, ride carnival rides, play games,

eat different kinds of food and just have fun. In addition, the fairgrounds are used throughout the year with different events held there.

Just remember, it all began 117 years ago with the first Liberty County Fair held on the courthouse grounds in October 1909. The plan was to make each year “bigger and better” and when you attend the TVE Fair and Rodeo this year, you will see that this tradition has been continued and you will not be disappointed.

Sources: The Liberty Vindicator, various years, and compilations by Robert Schadt and Chas. W. Fisher Jr., courtesy of the Sam Houston Regional Library



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