

BRINGING DEFINITION

AND EXAMPLE TO —

“THE MAINE SPIRIT”

EXPLORING MAINE’S AGRICULTURAL FAIRS
PEOPLE, PLACES, EVENTS, ORGANIZATIONS & ANIMALS
AN INITIATIVE

BY

THE LOST TROTTING PARKS HERITAGE CENTER



INTRODUCING THE 2017 LAUNCHING OF THE 19TH CENTURY STYLED PERIODICAL:
— S. DEXTER’S THE MAINE SPIRIT OF THE TURF —

This document can be downloaded at <http://losttrottingparks.com>.

The Lost Trotting Parks Heritage Center — <http://losttrottingparks.com>

— S. DEXTER'S MAINE SPIRIT OF THE TURF —

<http://mainespiritoftheturf.com> (under construction)

In 2017, the Lost Trotting Parks Heritage Center will launch its 19th Century styled periodical, S. Dexter's Maine Spirit of the Turf. In the 19th century it was stated that "harness racing is at its best when it is part of a greater event." In Maine that event is an agricultural fair. Today in Maine there are more than 25 these fairs and related events. Nine fairs offer pari-mutuel harness racing and three fairs/events offer demonstration racing.

Beginning in 2009 I started my research into Maine's lost trotting parks and Maine's early agricultural societies. In April of 2009 I helped my cousin Clark Thompson, author of *Maine's Trotting Horse Heritage Trail*, further his research on the fairground of the North Kennebec Agricultural and Horticultural Society. This fairground with trotting park was built in Waterville in 1855 and at its time one of the most successful agricultural societies. Unfortunately, it was so successful that it became the model for other agricultural societies in Kennebec County. With the emergence of other agricultural societies with fairgrounds in Kennebec County, the North Kennebec Society was unable to continue. In the late 1880's, Charles Horace Nelson, owner of the world trotting champion stallion, purchased the fairgrounds. In 1893 a financial crisis led to the downturn of the breeding, training and racing of the Standardbred. In the late 1890s, Nelson sold the fairground to the City of Waterville, and the City sold the fairgrounds to the Pine Grove Cemetery Association. In 2009 Clark and I visited the Pine Grove Cemetery and toured its grounds with the head groundskeeper. As I stood within the cemetery, I asked myself "If this fairground became a cemetery, what happened to others within the State of Maine?" As my work continued, I found that over time more than 100 Maine communities supported trotting parks. Each county had at least one.

Becoming a rather overwhelming project, in 2012 this research led to the establishment of TheLost Trotting Parks Heritage Center as a charitable nonprofit organization.

The Center is an online museum which includes the following web sites:

<http://losttrottingparks.com>

<http://losttrottingparksne.blogspot.com>

<http://losttrottingparks.blogspot.com>

<http://maineharnesshorsemen.blogspot.com>

<http://kennebeccounty.blogspot.com>

<http://mainespiritoftheturf.com> (under construction)

During the 2014 fair season, a major initiative of the Center is Maine history on top of the

bedsides of a 1967 C-10 Chevy Pickup. This pickup holding many memories was my father's (Keith M. Thompson) last pickup that he purchased for working on his Sawyer Road farm in Limestone, Maine. The pickup was refurbished in 2014 and that year set up and displayed at several Maine fairs. With five inch deep frames atop each bedside and two 2.5 by 7 feet hinged presentation boards, the pickup became Maine's Starting Gate Museum. In addition to the Starting Gate Displays, the Center can set up permanent displays throughout Maine.

For the last five years I have worked at eight of the nine fairs offering harness racing. My work as the video patrol officer has provided me with the opportunity to follow harness racing from the farms, the stables, in the paddock before the races and from the top of the grandstand. In addition to panning the races, I have also dedicated the time to take photos of Maine harness horsemen, horsewomen, their families, and young men and women as they have entered the harness racing industry in a variety of roles. To date I have taken more than 25,000 photos, not only of harness racing, other competitions, stable areas, the midway, exhibitions, and museums located on the fairgrounds.

What I have sensed from this work is what I call, "*The Maine Spirit.*" This spirit reflects an authentic way of life that dates back to the 19th century. It is this Maine life that is dedicated to agricultural pursuits that require commitment, dedication, hard work and sacrifice. It is the Maine Spirit, the spirit of independence, that I want to explore with each of you and publish our stories and images in a digital publication titled,

S. DEXTER'S THE MAINE SPIRIT OF THE TURF.

This periodical will include contemporary and historical accounts of events and of the people who are workers in Maine's varied agricultural industries. Features will focus on families and individuals who exhibit at our agricultural fairs.

I invite you to join me in this work. To do this it will take the work of many who will lay the groundwork for what will be shaped and shared through *The Maine Spirit.*

Hopefully, these stories will build throughout Maine a greater appreciation for and an understanding of Maine's agricultural landscape and the people who dedicate their lives to agricultural pursuits.

I will be displaying at the convention in Portland at the end of January. I hope that you will meet with me to discuss this new venture — *Exploring the Maine Spirit!*

Please print and complete the form found on pages 4 and 5 of this document. The questions from this form will also be found in the e-mail that delivered this document. If possible please complete through e-mail and return your text to me.

My contact information: Stephen D. Thompson, Creative Director, Lost Trotting Parks, P.O. Box 263, Hallowell, Maine 04347.

Home Telephone: 207-623-3076 — Cell Phone: 207-242-7774.

E-Mail: lifework50@gmail.com.

S. DEXTER'S MAINE SPIRIT OF THE TURF

EXPLORING THE MAINE SPIRIT

Key Data — Maine Agricultural Fairs

Please complete each item:

Your Name:

E-mail Address:

Position:

Name of Fair:

2017 Fair Dates:

Date of First Fair:

Location:

Please provide the history of your fair:

Please provide a description of key elements or events at your fair:

What are the more popular events at your fair?

Provide examples of what exemplifies the "*Maine Spirit*" at your fair?

S. DEXTER'S MAINE SPIRIT OF THE TURF

EXPLORING THE MAINE SPIRIT

SUBJECTS FOR ARTICLES REFLECTING THE MAINE SPIRIT

Without a doubt there are many individuals whose agricultural pursuits reflect the Maine Spirit. It is the intention of this periodical to develop articles that will feature the organizers, the exhibitors, and the competitors at Maine's Agriculture Fairs. Please provide a suggested title, an individual or family name, a short description of your rationale for featuring the individual or family, and their contact information. Note: You may suggest more than one individual/family.

Suggested Title of Article:

Name of Individual/Family:

Describe why this person/family is a good subject for an article.

What are the competitions or exhibits entered by this person/family?

Contact Information:

Name of Individual/Family/Farm:

Mailing and Physical Address:

E-mail Address:

Web Site:

Home Telephone Number:

Cell Phone:

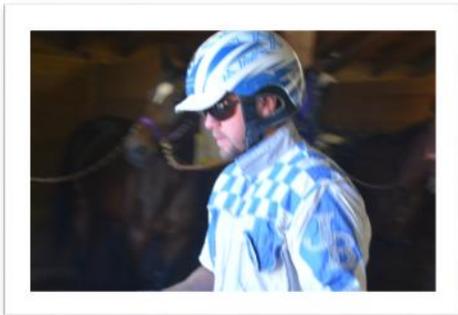
MAINE'S STARTING GATE MUSEUM



WINDSOR FAIR 2016



CUMBERLAND FAIR 2016



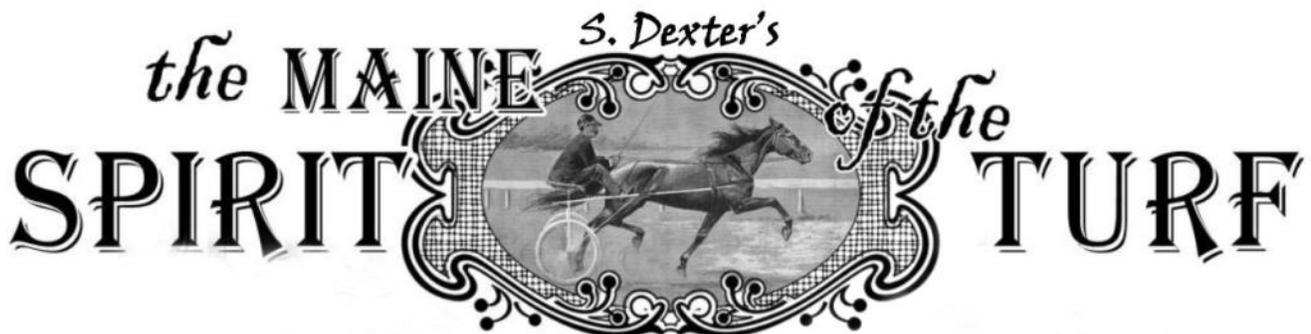
AT THE FRYEBURG FAIR 2016



AT THE UNION FAIR 2013



THE MAINE SPIRIT BANNER



Published by the Lost Trotting Parks Heritage Center

AUGUSTA FAIR AT CAPITOL PARK — 1909

THE AUGUSTA DRIVING PARK ESTABLISHED IN THE MID-1800'S



Storyboard Copyright 2013 — Lost Trotting Parks Heritage Center — Hallowell, Maine



LOST TROTTER PARK RIGBY PARK SOUTH PORTLAND, MAINE

GRAND OPENING RIGBY PARK.

REGULATION MILE TRACK. FAST AND SAFE. GOOD STABLES.	\$15,000 In Purse and Specials.	ENTRANCE FIVE PER CENT. 5 per cent. addition- al from winners.
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*Horses Owned and Leased at the Park, S. & M. R. R.
Passenger Station 500 feet from Grand Stand, S. & M. R. R.*

The Maine Mile Track Association

Announce the following Purse and Specials to be Trotted and Paced at the
Grand Opening of Rigby Park, Portland, Maine,

OCTOBER 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th, 1893.

Entrance to Purse close Tuesday, Sept. 19th, 1893, at 11 o'clock P. M., excepting 2.40 class to which horses are eligible Aug. 15. Records made on those days as far as possible.

FIRST DAY—Tuesday, October 3d.	
2.40 Class—Trotting.....	Purse \$600.00
2.27 Class—Trotting.....	Purse 500.00
2.30 Class—Trotting.....	Purse 600.00
SECOND DAY—Wednesday, October 4th.	
2.24 Class—Trotting.....	Purse 600.00
2.14 Class—Pacing.....	Purse 500.00
The Stallion NELSON (2.09), will start, weather and track proving favorable, for a special of \$5,000, to lower the present Stallion Record of 2.07½. If not started this day, for above reasons, he will start either Thursday or Friday.	
THIRD DAY—Thursday, October 5th.	
2.35 Class—Trotting.....	Purse 600.00
2.30 Class—Pacing.....	Purse 500.00
2.18 Class—Trotting.....	Purse 600.00
FOURTH DAY—Friday, October 6th.	
2.30 Class—Trotting.....	Purse 600.00
2.25 Class—Pacing.....	Purse 500.00
2.15 Class—Trotting.....	Purse 600.00
RESERVED FOR SPECIALS.....	\$3,000.00

CONDITIONS.

Five per cent. to enter and start; five per cent. additional from winners. No conditional entries submitted.

National Trotting Association Rules to govern.

Purses divided 20, 25, 25, 10 per cent. Five to enter and four to start to fill. All class races to be mile heats, three in five to harness.

Horses distorting the field, or any part thereof, entitled to first money only.

The Association reserves the right to change the order of this Program as may be necessary, and to declare any or all races off on account of bad weather or any other unavoidable cause, by refunding entrance money.

"Old Distorted" Horses to Govern.

Horses will be called at 12.30 and started at 1 o'clock sharp.

All purses opened to the World. Stable, hay and straw free to starters.

All who may desire to start horses for a record over this fast track will be given an opportunity, according to rule, during this meeting, by notifying the Secretary the day before.

Rigby Park was constructed by Mr. Simeon Gosselin, the noted track builder, and is pronounced by him the *Fastest and Safest Exposition Track in the World*, and will be under his charge during this opening meeting, which is a guarantee that the track will be in every way first-class.

2.00 in the trotting record over this track before completed or in its best form, a record never before obtained upon any other track so recently constructed. Come and drive your horses over this track and see if it is not as claimed, the safest and fastest track ever constructed.

The large, beautiful double-deck grandstand, now under construction, will be completed in season for this grand opening.

The Frable House, Portland, Me., is Headquarters of the Association.

Remember entries to all purses close September 19th, and horses are eligible that day to all classes with exception of 2.40 class, to which horses are eligible August 15th.

For entry blanks and other information address the Secretary.

GEORGE BURMAN, Jr., President. J. F. BARRETT, Secretary.
S. F. FERRIS, Treasurer. P. O. See see.

Maine Farmer article courtesy of Clark P. Thompson,
Founder of Maine's Trotting Horse Heritage Trail



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Storyboard designed by Stephen D. Thompson
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