

In 1924 Fred Adolph, the agricultural teacher in St. Clair went to the local Grange meetings to start a 4-H potato club. Only boys were allowed to join. In 1926 Christine Kennedy (now Welser), seventh grade, joined a sewing club in grade school. Rose Kern, her teacher at Kennedy School, was her leader. Projects were judged at school by Mr. Wixon, a state 4-H leader. Gertrude Mitchell (now Bloink) won for her sewing and attended 4-H Week at Michigan State University.

In 1937 The St. Clair County 4-H & Youth Fair was held in Yale, Michigan. It was decided a larger place was needed the following year. The



park at Goodells was the logical place. In 1938 the 4-H Fair moved to Infirmary Park (now Goodells County Park). There were no buildings, except a pair of outdoor bathrooms. They tied animals to a long hay rope between the big trees. Of course this was unsatisfactory so a move was made to build a permanent home.

January 27, 1939, first meeting of the St. Clair County 4-H Council was held at the Bacon home. Howard Smith was elected president, Lucy Foley as vice president and Ruth Bacon as secretary. Mrs. Terry was appointed chairman to investigate a constitution and by-laws for the Council. Spring Achievement would be held in Port Huron on April 17&18, 1939. Due to an increase in the number of 4-H sewing members the number of exhibits will be limited in the Style Review. Livestock leaders would meet February 11, 1939. Motion was carried that a maximum premium fee of \$5 per member be established for our Goodells Fair to be held August 31 and September 1, 1939. A committee was appointed to find out the cost of a building to serve for fair purposes. Refreshments were served after the business meeting.

February 21, 1939, the second meeting of the St. Clair County 4-H Council was held. Ten regular members were present and nine guests. The constitution was discussed and will be rewritten to embody the changes discussed at the meeting. Mr. Wurzel from North Street told of plans of a building being built in Port Huron that could be used for a 4-H fair. The committee will extend their efforts to find plans for a suitable building. A finance committee was formed to find means to pay for a building.

In 1942 The Quonset Hut was built. It had taken three years before the first building took shape. It was at a 4-H Council dinner, held at the Goodells Church on February 10, 1942 they were treated to a trip through the building before the meeting. This was the year 4-H gardens were started to help food, during the war.

In 1945 the 4-H Service Club came into existence and all members who joined were initiated. At this time they started working on plans to hire a home demonstration agent. In 1946, in March, it was decided that another building was needed to house the growing number of animals. The county 4-H program was growing very rapidly. The Fair Book was discussed for the first time.

In 1947 Michigan State University gave approval for the plans for the second building. Once again Council sold food at every event possible, such as the 4-H Fair, the Plowing Match, Cattle Shows, etc. The Council and many interested men spent many days at Goodells on the project.

In 1954 Julia Spratt started a club in the Beach School in Smiths Creek. Her club was the first club to have both black and white children. In January of 1963 there was a motion by M. Weir, supported by A. Robbins that the Agricultural Society make plans to secure \$2,500 from the state to be used for erecting a beef barn and horse stalls. At the St. Clair County Agricultural Society's (SCCAS) May 6th meeting they approved the building of the barn in Goodells to be completed for the use at the 1963 4-H & Youth Fair. At a special meeting on June 10th, Howard Smith, President of the Fair Board, was directed to make arrangements from the Capac State Savings Bank to secure a loan in the amount of \$2,500.

The beef barn was almost complete in 1964. Stalls were built on July 28th. Mr. Fahs wished to give a piano to the Society to be used in the Community Building. The Board agreed to accept the piano if Mr. Melton feels it could be used. Mr. McCalla offered to truck the piano to Goodells. In 1965 the SCCAS contributed \$500 towards a roof.

In 1967 there was an announcement that the addition of the Roy Welt Barn will be built by the end of July at a cost of \$3,533. This will provide 36 stalls. In 1968 the horse project widened stalls in the horse barn, with materials that they supplied.

In 1970 a contract was signed for a new horse barn with EMC Construction Co. to be started in June. SCCAS paid \$7,850. for the construction and \$597 for the electric. Sand and paint were added at a cost of \$583. The sheep and swine barn was remodeled the same year. Posts and lumber were needed to build new horse stalls, as well as make repairs to the show ring.

In 1971 a horse barn was built through the financial efforts of the SCCAS, 4-H Council and 4-H Service Club. In 1972 a new exhibit barn was built and an addition to the sheep and swine barn. In 1979 plans were completed for the Service Club booth.

Throughout the 1980's various repairs and improvements were made throughout the park, including electrical upgrades, replacing sinks in the kitchen, adding box stalls, adding on to Horse Barn #3 and renovating Horse Barn #4. In 1988 the SCCAS representatives, Jerry Riddell and Lisa Carr met with Donald Dodge, county administrator, and was given the ability to use the fairgrounds for all 4-H related activities, including charging admissions at the gate during the fair.

In 1989 Fort Gratiot Lions donated 106 portable box stalls, and in 1992 additional sums were allocated from the 4-H Horse Leaders and Fair Board for horse stalls.

In 1994 St. Clair County passed a millage to fund parks and recreation in the county, and the Parks and Recreation Commission began. In 1996 the fairgrounds was renamed Goodells County Park.

In 1998 the SCCAS began leasing the Goodells County Park for the fair, and an additional 21 portable box stalls were purchased. In 2002 the 4-H Service Club building was turned over to Parks and Recreation, and all necessity for the SCCAS to maintain the facility.

In 2015 the Fair Board through a Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development matching funds grant updated the electrical service to the Show Arena and the swine barn. Later that year St. Clair County Parks and Recreation replaced the wood walls that had deteriorated over the years.

In 2016 the Fair Board through a Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development matching funds grant replaced all the electrical service and wiring to the four horse barns that had become dangerous due to age.

In 2018 the Fair Board through a Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development matching funds grant replaced the Show Arena roof at a cost of about \$47,000. The roof had many repairs over the years, but leaked heavily. At this time any rotted trusses were replaced.

Thank you to Raemi Kunath for putting together most of the history of the park from minutes of past meetings. If you have any history to add relating to the fair, or pictures, please contact the St. Clair County Agricultural Society at (810) 364-9100 or at P.O. Box 325, Marysville, Michigan 48040.