

Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the legislative session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All historical publications are reproduced here with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

April 23, 2014

THIS WEEK:

Palaces of Iowa

BACKGROUND:

Crops and resources have always been an important part of Iowa's economy. Markets, county, and state fairs had been traditional ways of advertising those products. In the mid to late 1800s, a "new" way of advertising became popular and palaces were used to promote Iowa's many resources. These were temporary structures built of wood with the exteriors finished with local products: coal, corn, flax, or grasses. The interiors held displays, and visitors came by the thousands to view the palaces.

Palaces of Iowa



Ottumwa Coal Palace, 1890-1892

The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette

August 28, 1893

**IT SEEMS DESTINED TO OUTLIVE ALL
ITS COMPETITORS.**

FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING.

It opens at Creston Today and Continues for Five Days—No Public Speeches or Political Days This Year, the Exposition Being of a Purely Agricultural Nature—The Southwest Iowa Fireman's Tournament to Commence Tomorrow—Iowa's National Cemetery—John H. Gear to Work for an Appropriation—Other Matters of Interest.

CRESTON, Aug. 28—The fifth annual Blue Grass Palace exposition and fair began here today and will continue five days. Heretofore the exposition has been held ten days, but on account of the World's Fair it was thought the better policy to reduce the time one half.

The Creston Blue Grass palace seems destined to survive all its contemporaries. The Ottumwa Coal palace has been razed to the ground and this year Sioux City has abandoned its corn palace enterprise. In 1891 the managers of the Creston Blue Grass Palace exposition remodeled the exposition building thoroughly and made it a permanent structure. Every year the building is re-decorated, but there is little change in the interior. It is in all respects an admirable exposition building. The floor space for exhibitors is ample, and the auditorium for concerts and public meetings will hold fully 1,000 people.

There will be no public speeches and political days this year on account of the extra session of congress occupying the attention of the people and most of the available public men being in congress. The exposition this year will be almost purely agricultural and Major R. H. Hanna, the efficient secretary, says the entries indicate the finest exhibit of live stock and agricultural products ever seen in Iowa not even excepting the state fair at Des Moines.

The entries in the speed ring indicate a fine field of horses, and some of the best races ever seen on the famous Creston track.

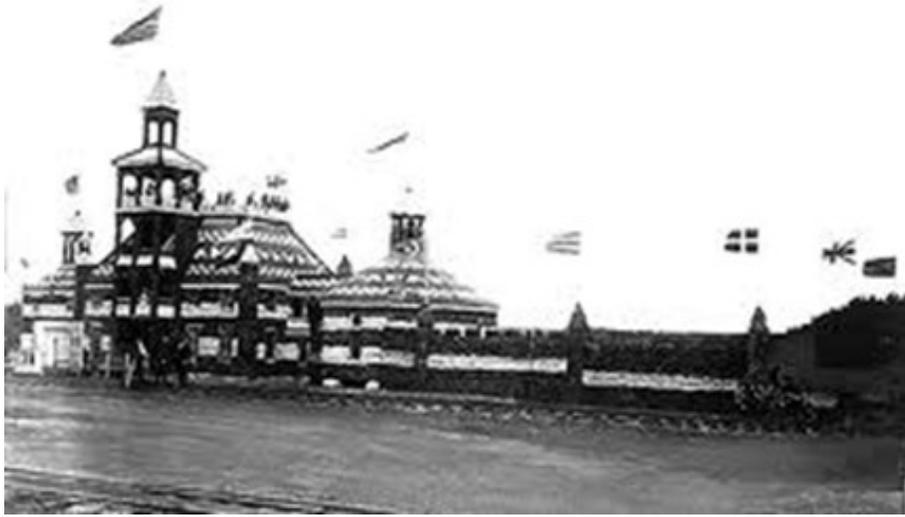


Creston Blue Grass Palace

The firemen's tournament for southwest Iowa will draw a great attendance tomorrow. Every fire company in southwest Iowa will be present to contest for the handsome presents offered by the exposition management.

One reason for the success of the Blue Grass Palace exposition and the fair is the way it is managed. Its officers are practical business men and farmers who despise hippodromes and fakes, and take personal pride in giving the patrons of the exposition and fair full value for their money. The officers are: President, O.H. Bacon, farmer, Cromwell, Iowa; secretary, Major R. H. Hanna, lawyer, of Creston; treasurer, A. E. Keith, merchant, of Creston; general superintendent, L. Banks Wilson, the famous dealer in Shire and Clydesdale horses; board of directors, Ed. A. Aldrich, George A. Ide, Chas. L. Bullard, Ed. Graham, George A. Ide, Sam A. Smith, L. N. Conway and S. N. Wilkins.

The Blues Grass Palace exposition and fair is a typical exhibition of the products of one of the richest agricultural regions in the world. It has the prestige of four successful years, and it is confidently expected that many visitors from the old world, who have taken in the wonders of the great Columbian exposition, will take advantage of cheap rates to visit one of the finest agricultural expositions in the west.



Winnebago County Flax Palace, 1890



Ringgold County Blue Grass Palace, 1890



Sioux City Corn Palace, 1887



Sioux City Corn Palace, 1888



Sioux City Corn Palace, 1889



Sioux City Corn Palace, 1890



Sioux City Corn Palace, 1891