

HAGERSTOWN LANDMARKS RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties # WA-HAG-184

Property Name/Address: Washington County Agricultural and Mechanical Association
Fairgrounds, 400 Block North Mulberry St., Hagerstown, Maryland

Description/Significance: Development of the Fairgrounds began in 1880, at a time when the Agricultural and Mechanical Association held one of the largest fairs in the East. Among the surviving early buildings is the early 20th century entrance pavilion, an example of Classical Revival style architecture which retains a high level of integrity.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

- I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland
- II. Chronological/Developmental Period(s):
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
- III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):
Agriculture; Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
- IV. Resource Type
Category: District
Historic Environment: Urban
Historic Function(s) and Use(s):
RECREATION AND CULTURE/fair
Known Design Source: Unknown

Form Prepared by: Peter E. Kurtze
109 Brandon Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21212
August 15, 1991

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Washington County Agricultural and Mechanical Ass'n Fairgrounds

and/or common Hagerstown Fairgrounds

2. Location

street & number 400 block, North Mulberry Street not for publication

city, town Hagerstown vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Washington

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse liber

street & number 95 West Washington Street folio

city, town Hagerstown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title n/a

date federal state county local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. WA-HAG-184

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Description Summary:

The Washington County Agricultural and Mechanical Association Fairgrounds, located in the vicinity of North Mulberry Street and North Cannon Avenue in the northeast section of Hagerstown, is a 65-acre tract comprising a variety of exhibition buildings and related structures representing the period ca. 1890 through the mid-twentieth century. The Association acquired the property in 1880 and began to develop it to accommodate their annual exhibition; by the turn of the 20th century, the "Great Hagerstown Fair" had acquired fame as one of the largest agricultural exhibitions in the East. Among the early buildings and structures surviving on the property are a group of ca. 1890 two-story frame buildings located at 412-416 North Mulberry Street which served as the former Superintendent's House and Secretary's Office; a ca. 1890 two-story, two-bay frame house located at the northeast corner of North Mulberry Street and Fairgrounds Avenue; an outstanding Classical Revival entrance pavilion constructed ca. 1910 at 418 North Mulberry Street; a 114-unit frame stock shed, fully two blocks long, which parallels the western boundary of the Fairgrounds for nearly its entire length; a small garage with a clipped-gable roof located near the North Cannon Avenue entrance to the property; a one-story frame building near the entrance; and a one-story frame Poultry Hall, constructed in 1892, near the northwest corner of the property. Also on the property is the Cost Memorial, a granite monument erected in 1913 to recognize John L. Cost, the promoter who developed the Fair into the nation's premier poultry exhibition.

General Description:

The Superintendent's House and Secretary's Office is a two-story frame building located at 412-416 North Mulberry Street. The principal facade faces west, and comprises two gable-fronted sections spanned by a central hyphen. The southern gabled section is three bays wide; a transomed entrance is located in the north bay of the first floor, with the remaining bays on both stories holding 6/6 sash (boarded at first floor level). A small four-pane oculus is centered in the gable. The eaves are boxed, and have a considerable overhang. A set-back wing, two stories high, projects to the south. The north section is similar, except that it is two bays wide, and has no entrance. The hyphen is two bays wide, with two windows on the

(see Continuation Sheet 7.1)

8. Significance

Survey No. WA-HAG-184

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1880-early 20th C. Builder/Architect unknown

Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or

Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The early buildings and structures on the Hagerstown Fairgrounds property are significant for their architecture, and for their association with an era during which Hagerstown and Washington County gained national prominence as the site of one of the largest agricultural exhibitions in the East and the largest poultry show in the country.

The Agricultural & Mechanical Association of Washington County was chartered in 1854, following a series of unsuccessful attempts to create an agricultural society earlier in the century. The first fairs were held at a site on Williamsburg Pike; in 1871, the Association purchased a 14-acre tract on Cearfoss Pike for its fairgrounds, and fairs were held there until 1880. The numerous track crossings which fairgoers had to negotiate in order to reach the grounds west of Hagerstown caused the Association to seek a new location, and it purchased 30 acres at the present fairgrounds site in 1880. Additional acreage was purchased in later years; the tract now comprises over 65 acres.

Charles W. Humrichhouse, who was elected president of the Association in 1881, is credited with developing the Fair from an exhibition primarily of interest to farmers into an entertainment experience with broad appeal for the general public. Humrichhouse reasoned that by attracting a wider audience, the Fair could increase its revenues; funds raised through the Fair were used to promote agricultural improvements. This was especially important in the late 19th century, when local farmers faced increasing competition from agricultural products shipped from the Midwest; education in improved methods helped Washington County farmers to remain competitive.

In the 1880s, the first exhibits of agricultural machinery took
(see Continuation Sheet 8.1)

WA-HAG-184
Fairgrounds
Hagerstown, Washington County, Maryland

Continuation Sheet 7.1

second story and a single central door below. Early illustrations show that this section was originally open at ground level, forming a broad passage or drive-through that was closed by picket gates. The building is sheathed in German siding; windows throughout are 6/6 sash, framed in crossetted surrounds with peaked heads and small consoles below the sills. The door frame in the south section has similar crossetted trim with a peaked head. The roof is covered in standing seam metal; brick interior chimneys rise from the midpoint of the ridge on both the north and south sections.

At the east (rear) elevation, the H-shaped configuration of the building is clearly expressed; it comprises two, two-bay gable-front sections, two bays deep, with a second-story hyphen or bridge connecting them at the rear bay. A two-story wing projects to the south, flush with the east wall of the south section.

Attached to the north side wall of the Superintendent's House and Secretary's Office is a grand Classical Revival Entrance Pavilion, built about 1910. Predominantly of frame construction sheathed in German siding, its west facade comprises six cast-iron fluted columns, two stories high, supporting an entablature surmounted by a modillioned cornice and a parapet. Centered in the parapet is a pressed-metal sign carrying the name of The Agricultural & Mechanical Association of Washington Co. in block capitals. A flagpole above the sign originally carried the American flag, and banners flew from two shorter poles on either side. At the second-story level, the columns are spanned by framed walls holding groups of four tall diamond-paned casement windows; below this, the west wall is set back from the plane of the columns, and comprises five groups of four square four-pane windows above two sets of wide entrance gates. The building is three bays deep, with stepped parapets on the north and south end walls. The shed roof is covered with standing-seam metal.

On the rear elevation, the facade is continuous on the second story, but is interrupted twice on the first floor for drive-throughs corresponding to the gates. Fenestration is irregular. Windows on this side, facing the Fairgrounds, are large 9/9 sash throughout; the second-story windows also have three-light transoms.

Immediately inside the North Cannon Avenue entrance to the Fairgrounds, a one-story garage with a clipped-gable roof stands on the east side of the driveway, facing north. It is sheathed in

(see Continuation Sheet 7.2)

WA-HAG-184
Fairgrounds
Hagerstown, Washington County, Maryland

Continuation Sheet 7.2

German siding with a corrugated metal roof, and features unusually-shaped windows defining the four bays of its side walls: these comprise two horizontal rows of six panes each, with the upper corners clipped on a diagonal.

Opposite the garage on the west side of the driveway is a small one-story gable-roofed German sided frame building, with two doors in its north gable. The east elevation is three bays wide, with a door in the southernmost bay and windows in the others. The building rests on a concrete foundation. The roof is covered with asphalt sheets; the eaves are unboxed, and purlins are exposed in the overhang.

North of the entrance pavilion, a 114-stall open frame stock shed stretches to the north along the west side of the driveway. This structure is nearly two city blocks long.

At the northwest corner of the property is a one-story, gable-roofed frame Poultry Hall, with a perpendicular clipped-gable-roofed wing near the rear. Sheds line its east and west walls; the east shed remains open, but the one on the west has been enclosed. The building has an overscaled Classical entrance on its south gable end, comprising three sets of double doors below a large three-part lunette; the entrance is flanked by pairs of pilasters framing a single, 12-pane window. The pilasters have molded bases and caps, and support a heavy molded cornice.

At the extreme northwest corner of the property, outside the present fence, is a small two-story frame house, two bays wide by two bays deep, with a gable facade facing west to Fairgrounds Avenue. This building is similar in form and detailing to the Superintendent's House and Secretary's Office, and likely was constructed as part of the original Fairgrounds complex.

WA-HAG-184
Fairgrounds
Hagerstown, Washington County, Maryland

Continuation Sheet 8.1

place at the Fair; commercial fruit growing also began in the county in this period, and the products were exhibited at the Fair. The Fair grew rapidly during this period. In the 1890s, the annual exhibition of the Agricultural & Mechanics Association of Washington County was combined with the Maryland State Fair, and included exhibitions by the Associations of Franklin and Adams counties, Pennsylvania, Carroll County, Maryland, and Jefferson and Berkeley Counties, West Virginia.

The extensive network of railroads converging in Hagerstown was important to the success of the Fair; it enabled agricultural products and machinery to be shipped readily for exhibit, and also brought visitors and exhibitors from neighboring counties and states. On one Thursday in 1904, for example, excursion trains carried 13,200 patrons to the Fair. The railroad companies offered special rates for this service. Trolley service was also increased while the Fair was in session.

After the turn of the 20th century, electric service was installed at the Fairgrounds. In previous years, the Fair closed at dusk; electric lights enabled Fair activities to continue after sunset. The Fair had traditionally been held in mid-October, but the cooler evening temperature prompted the organizers to reschedule to September. Rides and harness races were among the amusements enjoyed by patrons.

World War I brought about a temporary decline in patronage, but the Fair quickly rebounded; livestock exhibits increased in popularity, and other amusements were added. On the eve of the Depression, the Fair had again reached--and perhaps surpassed--its former magnitude: the program in 1929 offered a dog show, horse show, auto polo, stage acts, fireworks, the first horse races in ten years, and a circus. The Depression, and later World War II, again reduced its scope.

Many of the early buildings associated with the Great Hagerstown Fair have vanished, including the original grandstand and the Main Exhibition Hall, which was destroyed in a spectacular fire about 1950. The back cover of the Premium List (program) for 1893 carries a view of the Fair structures, including the buildings and sheds on North Mulberry Street, and a row of buildings located parallel to the driveway on the east. From south to north, these include two small one story buildings, one five bays wide and the other four, both of

(see Continuation Sheet 8.2)

WA-HAG-184
Fairgrounds
Hagerstown, Washington County, Maryland

Continuation Sheet 8.2

which appear to be depicted as covered with board-and-batten siding; a larger one-story, four-bay building; the Main building, comprising a three-story main block, five bays wide, with a hipped roof topped by a cupola, with two-story, six-bay-wide wings projecting to the north and south, each with two dormers on its gable roof; a two-story, five bay, gable-roofed building; and a large open pavilion, possibly for the exhibition of machinery.

Among the Fair's early exhibition facilities, the Poultry Hall, constructed in 1892, was one of the most visited. A contemporary source called this structure "the most commodious and complete building for the display of birds in the U. S.," but it soon proved inadequate to accommodate the increasing number of birds exhibited annually. The popularity of the Hagerstown Poultry Show led in 1908 to the construction of a new, "monster" Poultry Building; this giant frame structure had the capacity to exhibit 10,000 birds. Fowl were shipped to the fair by rail, often representing foreign countries as well as every state of the Union. The credit for developing the Hagerstown Poultry Show into the largest exhibition of its kind in the nation went to John L. Cost; in 1913, a granite memorial to Cost was erected inside the poultry building, replacing a duck pond which was filled in for the purpose. The Poultry Building, shown on a postcard dated 1910, was a very large hip roofed frame building with three tiers of poultry windows in its side walls. The entrance was located in an end facade, and featured Classical Revival detailing: it was three bays wide, with transomed double doors below a 3-part lunette; each bay was defined by paired Ionic columns, and the composition was capped by a dentil cornice and parapet. After World War I, the popularity of the poultry show began to wane; by the 1930s, the "monster" Poultry Building apparently had been converted to a convention hall. The Cost Memorial, a granite obelisk surmounted by a globe, still stands near the North Cannon Avenue entrance to the Fairgrounds. The 1892 Poultry Hall survives near the northwest corner of the Fairgrounds property.

The Classical Revival entrance pavilion facing North Mulberry Street was added about 1910. Illustrations made prior to that date show a pair of arched gates in the location of the present pavilion, adjacent to the Superintendent's House and Secretary's Office.

The open sheds which line the west side of the fair driveway parallel to North Mulberry Street contain 114 stalls. According to the Premium List for 1890, at that time the Fairgrounds included 167 stalls for horses, 230 cattle stalls, and 96 stalls for hogs and sheep.

WA-HAG-184
Fairgrounds
Hagerstown, Washington County, Maryland

Continuation Sheet 9.1: MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"History of the Fair: Over a Century of Progress," Souvenir Program, Hagerstown Fair, August 10-15, 1959.

Premium List of the Twentieth Annual Exhibition of the Maryland State Agricultural & Mechanical Association, in conjunction with the Great Hagerstown Fair . . ., October 10, 11, 12, 13, 1893.

Spitzer, Carroll F. A Pictorial History of Washington County, Md. Book #1. Hagerstown: Tri-State Printing, 1986.

Thirty-Eighth Annual Exhibition of the Agricultural & Mechanics Association of Washington County, including the 20th Maryland State Fair. Also Associations of Franklin and Adams counties, Pennsylvania, Carroll County, Maryland, and Jefferson and Berkeley Counties, West Virginia, 1893.

WA-HAG-184
Fairgrounds
Hagerstown, Washington County, Maryland

Continuation Sheet

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

- I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland
- II. Chronological/Developmental Period(s):
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
- III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):
Agriculture
Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
- IV. Resource Type
Category: District
Historic Environment: Urban
Historic Function(s) and Use(s):
RECREATION AND CULTURE/fair
Known Design Source: Unknown

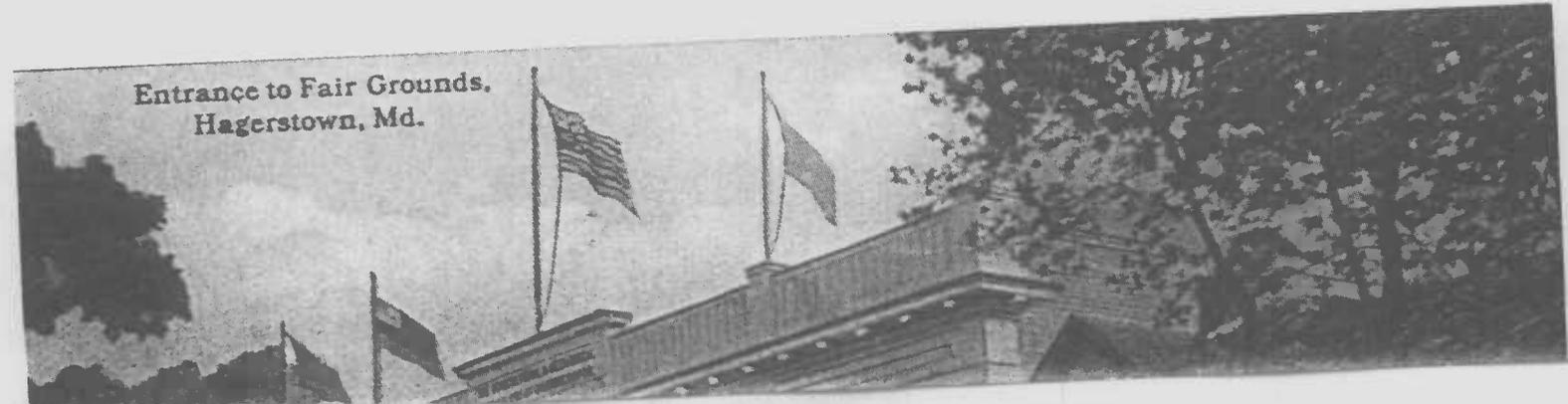


WA-HAG-184
 Washington Co. Agricultural &
 Mechanical Association Fairgrounds,
 400 Block N. Mulberry St.
 Hagerstown, Washington Co., Md.



1911

Feldstein, Albert L.
1984 Feldstein's Historic Postcard Album of Washington County, Maryland.
Commercial Press Printing Company, Cumberland, Maryland.



12



1911



1909

Entrance Pavilion
Great Hagerstown Fair
Hagerstown, Md.



1914

1923

Feldstein, Albert L.

1984 Feldstein's Historic Postcard Album of Washington County, Maryland.
Commercial Press Printing Company, Cumberland, Maryland.

Entrance Pavilion of Hagerstown Fairgrounds

POUL
WA-HAG-184
Washington
County
Fairgrounds

Grand Stand - Great Hagerstown Fair, Hagerstown, Md.



1911

1909

Entrance Pavilion
Great Hagerstown Fair
Hagerstown, Md.



Feldstein, Albert L.
1984 Feldstein's Historic Postcard Album of Washington County, Maryland.
Commercial Press Printing Company, Cumberland, Maryland.

WA-HAG-184
Washington Co.
Fairgrounds
Albert L. Feldstein



WA-HAG-184

WASH CO FAIRGROUNDS

HAGERSTOWN MD

7/91 P. KURTZE

STOCK SHEDS

VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST



WA-446-1E4

WASH CO. FAIR GROUNDS

LIGERSTOWN MD

7/91 P. KURTZE

GARAGE

VIEW FROM NORTHWEST



WA-HAG-184

WASH CO FAIRGROUNDS

HAGERSTOWN MD

7/9. P. KURTZE

ONE-STORY BUILDING

VIEW FROM NORTHEAST



WA - 226 - 184

VIA - CO FA GROUNDS

KAGERSTOWN MD.

7/91 - ROUTE

ENTRANCE (AV 200)

WEST FENCE



WA-HAG-124

WASH CO FAIRGROUNDS

HAGERSTOWN MD

7/91 P. KURTZE

SUPERINTENDENTS HOUSE & SECRETARY'S OFFICE

REAR (EAST) ELEVATION



POULTRY HALL

WA-WAG-184

WASH CO FAIRGROUNDS

HAGERSTOWN MD

7/91 P. KURTZE

POULTRY HALL

VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST



WA-446-184

WASH CO FAIRGROUNDS

HAGERSTOWN MD

T/O HURDLE

ENTRANCE PAVILION

REAR (EAST) ELEVATION



WA-4AG-184

WASH CO FAIRGROUNDS

HAGERSTOWN MD

7/9 P. KURTZE

SUPERINTENDENT'S HOUSE & SECRETARY'S OFFICE

WEST FACADE