



The Chatham Fair Years

In 1953, the post borrowed money in order to bid the beer and soda concession at the Chatham Fair, which was awarded. Thanks to the hard work of members and many friends, a very successful year was realized. This was the beginning of a forty two year period during which time the Post operated the beer and soda concession at the fair in all but two years. It should be noted that the two years they were not active at the fair, the Post hosted the Mills Brothers Circus in 1962, which although it was not as successful as the Fair beer concession, raised a \$400.00 profit. Another interim fund raiser during those two years was a beer concession at the Chatham Bowl. In 1963 the Post and the Ghent Volunteer Fire Company operated the Chatham Fair beer and soda concession together. Fair profits during those forty years ranged from \$2,000 in the 1950's to \$22,000 in the 1990's, and this became the primary fund raiser for the Post each year. Many brands of beer were sold at the fair, some of which included promotional ideas supplied by the Brewery, such as the Budweiser horses and the Rheingold girls ! Bottled beer was sold from 1953 until 1972 when draft beer was introduced in all beer stands.



In the beginning the Post operated four beer booths at the fair. During the years numerous structural changes were made to these stands and some were replaced through new construction. One booth was eliminated during the 1960's and later a beer garden complete with musical entertainment was added as part of the the rebuilding of the grandstand booth. All of the construction on the booths was done by the Post members and friends with the cost shared equally between the fair association and the Post.

During the last few years the beer concession was reduced to the beer garden booth and the grandstand. In April of 1994 the Fair Association, by letter, advised the Post that it would no longer operate the beer concession. This brought to a close a very important chapter in the Post's history. The Chatham Fair over Labor Day weekend was a way of life for many comrades, family and friends. Some members who were active began their Chatham Fair days picking up soda and beer bottles at the fair grounds for their fathers who were then active members of the organization.