



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
(Sherman, CT)

Insider Memories Into “The Life and Times of The Great Danbury State Fair” Written by Last Owner’s Family

“The reason I wanted to publish this new book,” stated John “Jack” H. Stetson, “is because my late grandmother, Gladys Stetson Leahy, wife of the successful entrepreneur and showman, John W. Leahy, wrote a wonderful book about the Danbury State Fair.

“Her manuscript, which she wrote at the ‘behest of her husband,’ was entitled ‘All This New Corn.’ In it, she wrote that one day John Leahy told her of a book he was reading about a couple working a cucumber farm on Long Island. He said, ‘A person doesn’t have to be very smart to write a book like that. It’s just a straight-forward story of what happened, told in a light, amusing way-all little short words.’

“She finished writing her manuscript in 1956, but it was never published. When I discovered it buried among the treasures in my grandmother’s attic after her passing in 1981, soon after the last Fair, I needed to put it aside at that time. However, in 2015, at the age of 71, I decided to complete the history my grandmother had started and added my firsthand experiences growing up in and around the Fair.

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“The result is our combined recollections of what we experienced living within the enormity of the iconic Danbury State Fair, plus what led up to the sale of the fairgrounds in 1982. Bad feelings about the sale still remain strong today for some folks. To this day, I still get letters from people asking me why I sold it. Truth is, I never sold it. It was never mine to sell.”

On Saturday, October 1, 2016, Stetson will formally introduce his newly-published book, *The Life and Times of The Great Danbury State Fair* (Emerald Lake Books, 2016), at a book launch and signing event at the Danbury Museum & Historical Society in Danbury, Connecticut.

This year marks the 35th year since the closing of the Fair, and the first Saturday in October was traditionally its opening day. So it seemed fitting to both the publisher and the author for the book to be released on that day.

Stetson commented that, “Many people in Connecticut and New York still miss the Fair. They say to me, ‘Oh I remember such and such, and this and that.’ People have such a deep longing for the happy memories of a time when they were young, carefree, and their entire families and carloads of friends would go to the Fair. For decades, thousands of people throughout the entire New York metro region really enjoyed their big family outings to the Danbury State Fair.”

Brief History of the Danbury State Fair

While the Danbury Fair began in 1869 as a place for local area farmers and horsemen to share their respective arts and trades, it grew to become one of Western Connecticut’s most famous and spectacular attractions. It multiplied to legendary proportions under the unique influence of John W. Leahy, last owner and general manager of the Fair. With his enthusiastic imagination, the Fair saw the addition of extraordinary displays, stunning performances, musicals, thrill shows, rides and races, while continuing to remain true to its rich agricultural heritage.

John W. Leahy’s veneration for Connecticut’s own P. T. Barnum, co-founder of the Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth, and his own personal desire to keep up with the changing times led him to exuberantly and fearlessly attempt new things, “some successfully, and others not quite so,” as the book’s publisher noted with delightful humor.

The Life and Times of the Great Danbury State Fair

The Life and Times of The Great Danbury State Fair is being officially released on October 1. The book itself is presented in two parts.

Part 1, written by Gladys Stetson Leahy back in the 1950s, is entitled “All This New Corn,” and contains “...among other things a History of the Great Danbury Fair from the Presidency of General Grant to that of General Eisenhower.”

Part 2, written by Stetson in more recent years, is entitled, “America’s Most Unique Fair.” He describes this section as, “the embodiment of my effort to complete what my grandmother had begun. Given that the Fair was not just an event, but an extension of our family, both parts (of the book) share our personal recollections and firsthand narratives of the Fair we knew and loved so well.”

New Book Launch and Signing Event October 1

The Book Launch and Signing event will mark the official release of *The Life and Times of the Great Danbury State Fair*, published by Emerald Lake Books in Sherman, CT.

Jack Stetson will share a few words about the making of the book and will sign purchased copies during the event. A portion of all sales on the launch date will be donated by Stetson to the museum.

Copies of *The Life and Times of The Great Danbury State Fair* are also available now for pre-order (emeraldlakebooks.com/DanburyFair) and can be picked up at the event.

The event will be held on Saturday, October 1, at the Danbury Museum & Historical Society located at 43 Main Street in Danbury starting at 4:00 p.m. The author will speak briefly at that time and again at 5:30 p.m. Parking is available in the museum’s parking lot, on the street, and in the front and back parking areas of the neighboring PriceRite shopping center.

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Press release distributed by Emerald Lake Books. To schedule an interview with Jack Stetson, visit <http://emeraldlakebooks.com/stetson>.

