

SADDLE & SIRLOIN CLUB PORTRAIT COLLECTION
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW



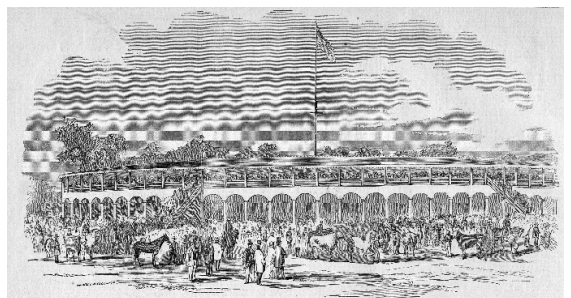
The "Durham Ox" was bred by CHARLES COLLING in 1796, following the breeding techniques of ROBERT BAKEWELL. The giant animal earned celebrity status while touring England in a custom carriage, thereby helping to establish the standards for the Shorthorn breed. This best-selling print of the bull hung in the Saddle & Sirloin Club at the Chicago Stock Yards.

The Foundations of the American Livestock Industry

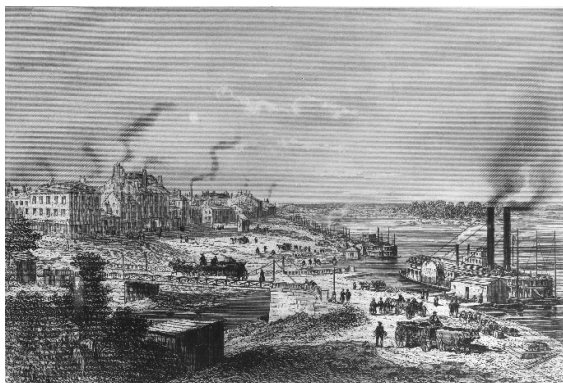
UPPER CASE LETTERING in the following overview indicates individuals inducted into the Saddle & Sirloin Club.

Livestock were among the most valuable possessions of American pioneers, who kept free-ranging animals on their lands. Cattle, swine, sheep, and horses provided food, fiber, labor, and transportation. The American foundation stock were imported from Great Britain, where landowners such as ROBERT BAKEWELL, "CAPTAIN" ROBERT BARCLAY, and BEN TOMKINS began to selectively breed and record livestock in the eighteenth century. U.S. Speaker of the House and envoy to Britain, Henry Clay, brought the nation's first Hereford cattle to his Lexington, Kentucky, farm in 1817; CAPTAIN JAMES N. BROWN, FELIX RENICK, ROBERT AITCHISON ALEXANDER, and others accomplished similar landmarks for other breeds, and soon American herd books and records associations were founded.

Cattle auctions on county court days inspired the first agricultural fair, held in Massachusetts in 1811. Kentucky's oldest continuously operated fair, the Bourbon County Fair, followed soon after, in 1816. As county, regional, and state fairs were established across the nation, the goal of showing, judging, and selling livestock remained primary. Livestock was showcased on an international level at world's fairs as well.



Centrally located livestock pens and slaughterhouses were established to provide fresh meat for the citizens of each regional community in the growing American republic. By the 1830s, two major inland ports, Louisville and Cincinnati, were in competition to become the nation's principal meatpacking center, exporting processed meat to Pittsburgh, New Orleans, and other major cities via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.



Several early livestock fairs were organized in Louisville, Kentucky, a river city that was a commercial center during the steamboat age.

Packing operations in Louisville's Butchertown neighborhood continued to expand when the Bourbon House—later the Bourbon Stock Yards—opened in 1834, a business eventually distinguished as the oldest continuously operating stockyards in the United States. Rail transportation blossomed in the 1850s, expanding from 9,000 to 30,000 miles of track in that decade; and the burgeoning railroads promised the fastest possible transportation of livestock and processed meat. The local packing industry continued to grow during the Civil War, as Louisville packers earned major contracts to supply meat to the troops.

When wartime blockades all but stopped commerce along the Mississippi River, and President Lincoln signed legislation to advance the railways westward, thereby connecting western cattle ranchers to eastern markets, centrally-located Chicago quickly emerged as the hub of the nation's new transportation industry. Soon thereafter, Chicago also became the livestock capital of the United States. Louisville's status shifted from a national to a regional packing center, with Chicago-based companies (Swift and Armour) establishing plants in the River City, alongside local, family-operated businesses such as Fischer.

H.P. VISSMAN
M.A. DOWNING
J.E. BELL

BOURBON HOUSE

AND

STOCK YARDS

Cor. JOHNSTON & MAIN Streets.

LOUISVILLE,

KENTUCKY,

We take pleasure in stating to the public that we have completed our

NEW & COMMODIOUS HOTEL & STOCK YARDS

And we are now prepared to furnish Accommodations to

DROVERS AND SHIPPERS OF STOCK,

Superior location in the city. Our location has been specially selected for the business. With an experience of twenty years we have been in the country here that will be made of the stock, and have no more to say to that effect.

THE LOUISVILLE, CINCINNATI AND LEXINGTON RAILROAD

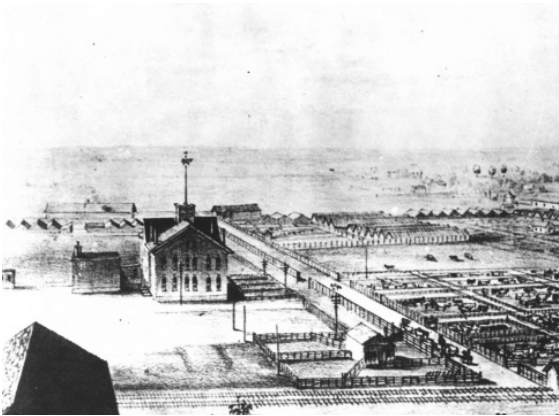
Bourbon and Union all their Stock lots and Yards. We are also prepared to furnish and Transport Stock to the various Shipping Points in and about the City at all times. Our Yards are **Roofed and Floored**, with plenty of **Light, Water and Air**. We are situated in the center of the City Trade, and persons would do well to give us a trial, as we guarantee satisfaction.

December, 1869.
VISSMAN, DOWNING & CO.
PROPRIETORS.

This 1869 broadside advertising the hotel at the Bourbon Stock Yards in Louisville notes the regular shipment of livestock by railroad. The Louisville, Cincinnati & Lexington Railroad opened with 175 miles of track that year.

Chicago: Crossroads of the Nation and “Slaughterhouse to the World”

Chicago was firmly established as the transportation crossroads of the nation in 1865, when an ambitious manager of two small railroad livestock operations, JOHN B. SHERMAN, envisioned consolidating all of the city's small stockyards into one common market. Sherman organized a consortium of nine railroad companies to form the Union Stock Yard and Transit Company, and he rallied investors to convert a tract of Chicago swampland into the new center of the American meat packing industry.

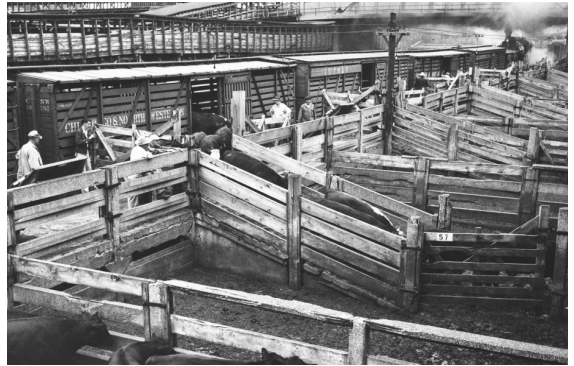


One of the earliest images of the Union Stock Yards, dating to 1866, shows the expansive site which eventually grew to occupy 475 acres.

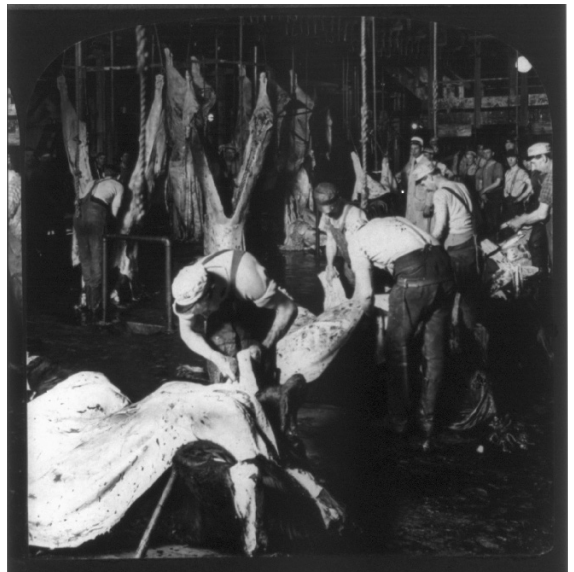


A limestone gate, topped with a carving of “Sherman,” a prized steer named for the stock yards founder, marked the entrance to the Union Stock Yards. Built circa 1875, it was an early project of famed architects Burnham & Root, whose careers were launched by John Sherman. The gate, now on the National Historic Register, is one of only two Union Stock Yards structures still standing.

By 1900, Chicago’s “Packingtown” employed 25,000 workers who produced 82 percent of all domestic meat consumed in the United States. This city-within-a-city was home to dozens of packinghouses and by-product factories, as well as financial, social, and residential resources to support them. Entrepreneurial men such as PHILIP DANFORTH ARMOUR, GUSTAVUS SWIFT, NELSON MORRIS, and GEORGE HAMMOND led the way.



Due to an extensive network of railroad tracks, trains could unload livestock directly into pens, as this photo from the 1940s shows. There were 2,300 livestock pens on the grounds.



Social reformers and the publication of Upton Sinclair's 1906 muckraking novel, *The Jungle*, raised awareness of detestable working conditions and unsanitary production processes in Packingtown. As a result, organized labor, settlement houses, and social programs were created to benefit workers, while the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act were authored to protect consumers.

Photo: Library of Congress

The livestock industry headquartered at Union Stock Yards established Chicago's early identity, but it also dramatically transformed American commerce. The division of labor and the specialized meat processing stations that developed at Packingtown became the primary model for the assembly line, eventually impacting the automobile industry and all mass production. The transactions of "The Yard" influenced the development of the commodity exchanges and futures market as well. Boosted by the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the introduction of early refrigeration soon thereafter, the Union Stock Yards gave rise to some of the first truly global corporations in the United States.



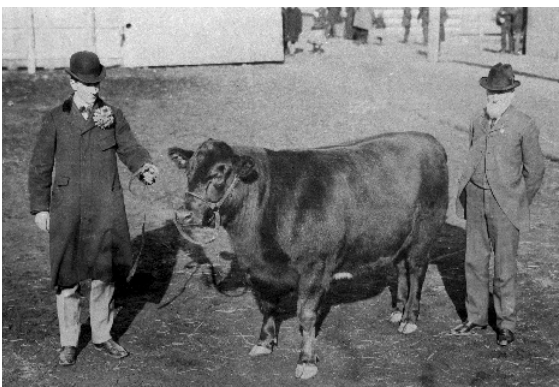
In 1954, Union Stock Yards celebrated an amazing milestone: the sale of its one billionth animal.

The International Live Stock Exposition "The Largest Exhibition of its Kind in the World"

In 1878, with the support of the Illinois State Board of Agriculture, LAFAYETTE FUNK and COLONEL JAMES W. JUDY started the Chicago Fat Stock Show, also known as the American Fat Stock Show. This annual, autumn market animal event emulated the historic Smithfield Club Cattle Show in London, England. The Fat Stock Show's exposition building was demolished after the 1892 show, to make way for the construction of the World's Congress Auxiliary Building on the World's Columbian Exposition grounds (a building designated to be the new home of the Art Institute after the world's fair). With the venue lost, the Chicago Fat Stock Show ended.

Six years later, at a livestock show in Toronto, ROBERT B. OGILVIE, MORTIMER LEVERING, WILLIAM E. SKINNER, and DR. G. HOWARD DAVISON crafted a plan to bring a major stock show back to Chicago. Under the leadership of Union Stock Yards manager ARTHUR G. LEONARD and Union Stock Yards president JOHN A. SPOOR, the first International Live Stock Exposition opened in 1900. Funded through the sale of lifetime subscriptions, the show broadened its international reach with foreign judges.

ALVIN H. SANDERS, editor and publisher of *The Breeders' Gazette*, printed this glowing review of the inaugural International:



"Advance," Grand Champion steer at the first International Live Stock Exposition in 1900, was an Aberdeen-Angus owned by Stanley R. Pierce.

Stupendous beyond detail. Magnificent beyond description. This is the essence of the Chicago show. As one stands bewildered at the feats of the magician, so the creators of this exhibition gazed in amazement upon their own handiwork. Conjured up from the resources of a continent, the International Live Stock Exposition sprang full-rounded into an astonishing existence. All calculations were exceeded, all expectancy was surpassed...Never before has a single institution contributed so generously toward the advancement of an industry.

The first International attracted 300,000 visitors, to view more than 6,000 animals on exhibition. In time, the International established divisions for beef and dairy cattle, sheep, swine, draft and Saddlebred horses, grain and hay, and wool. Popular among the many educational displays was the "Meat Shoppe," where consumers could learn about meat cuts, cooking techniques, and livestock by-products. The International was a training ground for thousands of youth each year, participating in collegiate judging and boys and girls club activities, including 4-H livestock judging.



This team from the University of Illinois won the first National Collegiate Livestock Judging Contest in 1900. Winning teams received a trophy that featured a likeness of a bull sculpted by nineteenth-century French artist, Isidore Bonheur, brother of renowned painter Rosa Bonheur. The sibling artists were the most successful animaliers of their time. It was called the Spoor Trophy because Union Stock Yards chairman JOHN SPOOR provided the original bronze sculpture of a bull—cast by Tiffany & Co.—for the contest. The image of the "defiant bull" has served as the emblem of both the International and the Saddle & Sirloin Club.



Crowds gathered for the auction of the Grand Champion Steer, Loyal Alumnus, in 1941.

The continued success of the show through the First World War and the Great Depression demonstrated the importance of the livestock industry. During its run from 1900-1975, the International was cancelled for only two reasons, the devastating foot-and-mouth epizootic of 1914-1915 and the Second World War. The International remained one of the premier livestock events in the nation throughout its history.



The International Amphitheatre, built in 1934, was a state of the art arena for livestock shows.

Ironically, transportation trends—responsible for the founding of Union Stock Yards—also contributed to the exposition's downfall. The development of the federal highway system and refrigerated trucking allowed meatpackers to move their operations to less costly rural areas, away from the railroad centers. With this decentralization, Union Stock Yards closed in 1971, and the last International Live Stock Exposition was held there in 1975.



Few cattle remained in the livestock pens when Union Stock Yards closed for business on July 30, 1971.

A Fitting Successor to the International: The North American International Livestock Exposition

Just as the final chapter for the International Live Stock Exposition was closing, a new showcase for the industry was making history. The first North American Livestock Exposition (NALE) was held in 1974, at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville. The show had its origins in two previous Louisville shows, the Bourbon Beef Show founded in 1946 and the Louisville Fat Cattle Show which preceded it from 1922 to 1946.

The Louisville Fat Cattle Show was a cooperative project of the Bourbon Stock Yards Company, the Live Stock Exchange, and the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, to "stimulate the interest of farm youth and adults in the production of the finest quality beef cattle." Entries grew from 250 in the inaugural year of 1922, to over 1,500 in 1937. After the Fat Cattle Show's silver anniversary in 1946, the show ended, and its youth events transitioned into the 4-H and FFA cattle show at the Kentucky State Fair. Also in 1946, the Bourbon Beef Show was established, with both youth and open events.

By 1960, it was one of the largest shows of its kind in the nation and had outgrown the facilities at Bourbon Stock Yards. The show moved to the Kentucky Exposition Center for two years, but closed when the Kentucky Distillers Association proved unable to continue their sponsorship of the event. The short-lived Louisville Steer and Carcass Show then tried to take hold at Bourbon Stock Yards in the early 1970s. All of these shows served as predecessors of the North American.



Advertisement, Bourbon Beef Show, 1956.



Louisville Fat Cattle Show Grand Champion Carload 1934.

The first NALE was a beef show, but from its inception, plans were in place to expand to other species. After adding shows for sheep, dairy, swine, and quarter horses, the NALE was renamed the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in 1978, directly acknowledging the ties to the legacy of Chicago's International. The NAILE maintained the important educational traditions begun in Chicago as well, hosting the National Collegiate and National 4-H Livestock Judging Competitions. NAILE species continued to expand to include draft horses, dairy goats, llamas, alpacas, Boer goats, mules, and donkeys.

Today, the North American International Livestock Exposition is the world's largest purebred livestock show. In 2019, it boasted 27,076 livestock entries in ten divisions, with \$700,000 in premiums offered.



North American International Livestock Exposition, The All American Jersey Show, 2010.

A Portrait Gallery to Honor the Greats of the Livestock Industry

In 1903, two founders of Chicago's International Live Stock Exposition—ROBERT OGILVIE and ARTHUR G. LEONARD—along with livestock journalist and historian ALVIN H. SANDERS, envisioned a well-appointed space for meeting and entertaining visitors and business associates at the Union Stock Yards. The top floor of the Pure Bred Live Stock Records Building—where various national breed registry associations maintained offices, records, and meeting space—was designated for this purpose. Named the "Saddle & Sirloin Club," where livestock men could gather over a sirloin or a saddle of lamb, this top floor was renovated as a series of impressive Tudor- and Mission-style reception and banquet rooms.

The Saddle & Sirloin Club founders decided that their retreat should house a portrait painting collection, paying tribute to individuals who had made significant contributions to the advancement of animal husbandry. The Club quickly evolved into, as Sanders described in his 1915 published history of the origins of the Club, "a Pantheon" dedicated to honoring the great leaders of the livestock industry and inspiring "all who seek to follow in their footsteps."

The first portrait hung in the Club was of WILLIAM ARNON HENRY, the first Dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin. Ogilvie commissioned Wisconsin portrait painter, James R. Stuart, to create Henry's likeness, along with four portraits of 18th and 19th century foundational breeders from the British

Isles: brothers CHARLES and ROBERT COLLING, THOMAS BOOTH, and WILLIAM WETHERELL. Impressed with these initial installations, HENRY F. BROWN, a Shorthorn breeder and timber and iron ore baron, funded Stuart to paint several more portraits for the Club, mostly depicting "great men of the olden days."

The Club selected some of the finest portrait artists working in America to follow Stuart as its official painters, including ARVID NYHOLM and ROBERT W. GRAFTON, whose years of service to the Club overlap. It is uncertain when Nyholm painted his first Saddle & Sirloin portrait, but he continued until his death in 1927. Grafton was commissioned to paint between the years of 1915 and his death in 1936. These two painters were so significant to the collection that each was posthumously honored with their own portrait in the Saddle & Sirloin gallery, and both works are self-portraits.

Once the foundational breeders were honored, the Club began to focus on more contemporary industry figures. A formal process of nomination and review by a selection committee developed, with honorees usually inducted at a formal dinner (almost always held during the International). The gallery grew quickly, with several portraits added annually. When Armour and Company executive and International ringmaster, EDWARD WENTWORTH, himself an avid art collector, published the first catalogue of Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Collection biographies in 1920, he covered 127 men represented in the



The Saddle & Sirloin Club was located in the Pure Bred Live Stock Record Building, adjacent to the Stock Yards Inn. The portrait collection filled the walls of several rooms in the Club.

collection. An art magazine article the following year indicated that there were 147 portraits in the collection at that time, but numbers published about the Club can be deceptive, as the décor included many additional paintings, not just the Saddle & Sirloin honorees. Records indicate that a few portraits came into the collection other than by official nomination, but this published catalogue of biographies features inducted honorees.

On May 19, 1934, tragedy struck at Union Stock Yards: a fire quickly spread from the hay-filled, wooden livestock pens to surrounding buildings, engulfing all of the main buildings that housed the International Live Stock Exposition. The portrait paintings—at least 164, and perhaps as many as 200 of them—and records documenting the first three decades of inductees to the Saddle & Sirloin Club were destroyed. A newspaper reported that 300 paintings were lost, but this number included miscellaneous portraits, animal and landscape paintings, et cetera, as well as the official portrait gallery. Only a bronze sculpture of the Greek god of herdsmen, Hermes, and a few bronze plaques survived the blaze, and they remain with the collection today.

Almost all of these were replacements for the ones lost. Grafton based many of the replacements on the same photograph as the original portrait, and of course, a few originals had been painted by Grafton the first time around anyway. At least two Grafton works in the current inventory, however, were new inductions in the years immediately following the fire: ERNEST FORBES (1934) and WALTER COFFEY (1936). Given the timing, it is likely that Grafton painted Forbes twice, right before and right after the fire.

With Grafton's heavy workload, repainting so many portraits, Othmar Hoffer stepped in as one of the new artists of record for new honorees, just a few months before Grafton's death. He may have also painted some of the replacements, although missing records regarding induction dates make that difficult to determine. Ernest Klemptner was hired to pick up where Grafton left off, completing at least a dozen of the replacements and at least one new induction portrait.



300 FAMOUS PAINTINGS LOST IN CHICAGO FIRE

*Saddle and Sirloin Club, Known
to Prince and President,
May Not Be Rebuilt.*

CHICAGO, May 26 (AP).—The ashes of a famous collection of portraits are buried in the remains of a basement at the Union Stock Yards, one of the irreplaceable losses of last week's fire.

The fire that destroyed the Saddle & Sirloin portrait gallery was not as tragic as the historic 1910 Union Stock Yards fire which killed twenty-one firefighters and three Yards workers, but one cowboy and several hundred head of livestock did lose their lives in the 1934 blaze. Eight square blocks within the complex were destroyed, including the Stock Yard Inn, pictured here. Next door, the Pure Bred Live Stock Record Building, which housed the Saddle & Sirloin collection, was also destroyed.

After the fire, the facilities were quickly rebuilt, with financial support from Union Stock Yards chairman FREDERICK H. PRINCE, and Robert Grafton began the daunting task of repainting the Saddle & Sirloin portraits. By the time of his death in December 1936—in a mere two-and-one-half years—Grafton had painted an astonishing 164 portraits for the collection.

Seven portraits painted prior to 1934, which presumably were not a part of the collection at the time of the fire, are now the oldest works in the gallery. The oldest of these seven is a rather small portrait by the English artist Thomas Weaver. In 1811, Weaver painted the celebrated British livestock promoter, John Day, perhaps from life. It is likely that the painting

was donated to the collection sometime after the fire.

The undated portrait of President ULYSSES S. GRANT (1822-1885) is by Oliver Ingraham Lay, who died in 1890, so the painting predates the Saddle & Sirloin Club itself. Grant is one of five American presidents recorded in the 1920 published guide to the collection, and the only one of that group to still be represented in the gallery after the fire. The portraits of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt, presumed destroyed, were never replaced. (Five other subjects from American history—the only other honorees not directly related to agricultural interests—were also believed to be lost in the fire and not replaced in the collection: Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, William Penn, Daniel Webster, and Chief Justice John Marshall.) According to a plate affixed to the back of the frame, President Grant's portrait was presented to the U.S. Grant Post No. 327 of the GAR, Brooklyn, New York, in 1911. Presumably, a different portrait of Grant perished in the fire, and the work by Lay was brought in to take its place.

The 1904 portrait of *The Breeder's Gazette* founder JAMES HARVEY SANDERS and the 1908 portrait of packing company giant NELSON MORRIS are very special to the collection, as they were painted by the first Saddle & Sirloin artist, James R. Stuart. Alvin Sanders provided the Club with the 1904 Sanders portrait, as well as a portrait of himself, to replace those lost in the fire. Both had been hung in Sanders family residences. Although the records are incomplete, the Stuart portrait of Morris was not likely to have been the official induction portrait,

for a different portrait of Morris (one without a hat) is pictured in the 1920 catalogue of the collection. There are two portraits of Morris in the collection today: the one by Stuart and the post-fire replacement by Robert Grafton, similar to the original induction version (sans hat). Interestingly, the first published list of portraits in the collection, dated 1948, indicates that there were two paintings of Morris then, one hanging in the Library and one in the Banquet Hall.

Correspondence from Arthur Leonard indicates that the Nelson Morris portrait was one of the first prioritized for replacement by Grafton, along with the one of his son, Edward, and portraits of P. D. and P. O. Armour, Gustavus Swift, Thomas Wilson, John B. Sherman, Edward White, Robert Ogilvie, G. Howard Davison, and John Clay. Leonard also indicated that Grafton would complete the portraits of college deans and those of the early breeders with particular urgency. The latter were hung in a special, shrine-like room known as the "Sanctum Sanctorum"—literally, the "Holy of Holies."

The 1913 portrait of rancher WALTER FARWELL, by the Russian painter Ossip Perelma, predates the fire as well. This artist's only contribution to the Saddle & Sirloin, it was not commissioned for the collection but was, rather, added to the gallery some years after it was painted. Finally, the only other works that predate the 1934 fire are both by Arvid Nyholm, the collection's second official artist, who died in 1927: the undated portrait of Saddle & Sirloin co-founder Alvin Sanders (mentioned above) and a self-portrait of Nyholm, dated to 1922. When the self-portrait was added to the collection is



unknown, but it was certainly before 1945, for the Saddle & Sirloin Club loaned it to the Art Institute of Chicago that year.

Reincarnated after the blaze, the Saddle & Sirloin Club continued to grow in the following decades, with new members inducted each year. For many years, several inductees were added annually, including honorees presented by the American Society of Animal Production (now the American Society of Animal Science)—primarily individuals representing the research and academic aspects of the industry. The new additions were almost always welcomed during the International in December. In 1955, however, the Portrait Committee announced that available wall space in the Club had become limited, so it would no longer accept nominations from the Society each year.



The collection depicts livestock breeders, association officials, judges, ranchers, packing industry administrators, financiers, journalists, educators, researchers, veterinarians, auctioneers, politicians, agriculture policy makers, and others. At the closing of the International in 1975, the Club had catalogued at least 333 portraits, 350 by some accounts. Some portraits mentioned in the records are no longer a part of the collection, including works that were not repainted after the fire or did not move with the collection to Louisville.

Before the Saddle & Sirloin Club was razed in Chicago, its members considered proposals from a dozen institutions interested in maintaining the

traditions and the perpetual care of the Portrait Collection. Club members selected the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center (now known as the Kentucky Exposition Center) as the new home for the collection. The portraits—just over 300 of them—were moved to Louisville in 1976, and with them, the legacy of the International was transferred to the North American *International* Livestock Exposition (NAILE), and the care of the collection was transferred to the Kentucky State Fair Board, a state agency in the Kentucky Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet.

Today, the traditions of the Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Collection continue, with new members inducted during the NAILE. The first inductee was added in Louisville in 1978, after a three-year hiatus; and since 1988, one new individual has been honored each year. The Kentucky State Fair Board, which manages the exposition and the facility, continues its work to care for, display, and research the collection. A major research and editing project was completed in 2013, to expand and update the background information and inductee's biographies. With the induction in 2020, the list of honorees throughout the Saddle & Sirloin Club's 117-year history now stands at 375 (counting the portrait that will be added in November 2020), with 364 portraits still physically represented in the collection (twelve of these are duplicates of works believed to have been lost at the Executive Inn in the 1980s, but later recovered).

If readers have access to resources that would shed additional light on the history of the collection, the International Live Stock Exhibition, or the lives of those honored, please contact the staff of the NAILE.

Thought to be the largest collection of painted portraits commemorating a single industry, the Saddle & Sirloin Club continues the heritage of its founders, to pay homage to those who have made the greatest contributions to the livestock industry.

The Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville

The Kentucky Exposition Center is one of the largest public facilities of its kind in the United States, with 1.2 million square feet of indoor space including historic Freedom Hall, an indoor arena which seats over 19,000 people. Originally constructed in the 1950s and opened in 1956, the facility has experienced frequent expansion and renovation projects. The facility's Class "A" exhibit space now totals 885,000 square feet, to accommodate an extraordinary spectrum of events year round. The Expo Center is the permanent home for the Kentucky State Fair, the National Farm Machinery Show, and the North American International Livestock Exposition.



The Saddle & Sirloin Club Portrait Collection is featured in various locations at the Kentucky Exposition Center, with most works on display on the second floor of the South Wing Conference Center and in the lobby and corridors of the West Hall. More than a dozen portraits are also hung in the Freedom Hall VIP Suite, also known as the Saddle & Sirloin Club.

