

## County Fairs and Summer Afternoons

Henry James wrote, “Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.” For me that sentence conjures up an image of drinking ice tea at the kitchen table, while a breeze blows lazily through the screen door.

Now try this one: County fair. What comes to mind? For me, that same breeze is blowing, but this time I am sitting at a picnic table concentrating on consuming an ice cream cone before it drips all over my hand. In the distance I hear the sounds of kids on carnival rides and a band playing on a stage across the grounds.

Wanting to get closer, I stroll down the lane taking in the sights and smells of the food vendors. I grab a quick bite and continue my journey where I am once again distracted; the barns are beckoning me. Inside these comfortable cathedrals I can see all sorts of God’s creatures up close. There are horses, cows, pigs, sheep, goats, and rabbits.

Stepping outside, I pause for a moment before I explore more of this treasure. A thought occurs to me, “what a great way to spend a summer afternoon – at a county fair.”