

Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration Begins Tomorrow

Sixty-nine years in the making, the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration is an Old-South tradition.

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The 69th annual Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration takes place in Shelbyville, Tenn., beginning tomorrow and continuing through Sept. 1. The show is housed in its own 105-acre complex that features 63 barns, 1,650 stalls, an outdoor stadium that seats approximately 30,000, a covered warm-up ring called Champions Arena and a 4,400 seat indoor arena, all of which are well decorated and well manicured. But the event has very humble--and old--beginnings.

The idea for a Walking Horse "festival" is generally credited to the late Henry Davis of Wartrace, Tenn. It began in 1939 when Davis went to nearby Winchester and observed the Crimson Clover Festival. He was enthusiastic about what he saw and returned to Shelbyville with the idea that his home county should have a festival to celebrate its most important asset: the Tennessee Walking Horse.

The idea was cultivated into the first Celebration on Sept. 7, 8, and 9, 1939. It has been held every year since.

Today, nearly a quarter of a million Celebration tickets are sold to fans from across the country. More than 2,000 horses are expected to compete this year, with some 20 World Champions to be named and over \$650,000 in prizes and awards handed out. But the real excitement culminates on Saturday night, Sept. 1, when one horse will be named World Grand Champion Tennessee Walking Horse.

For more information, visit www.twhnc.com.