



Big Tex and the State Fair

In 1886, a group of Dallas businessmen established the State Fair of Texas. By 1916 over a million people had attended the fair, including two U.S. presidents (William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson). The fair has always featured exhibits from agriculture, industry, and the arts, as well as entertainment and sporting events. In 1930 a sports stadium, later named the Cotton Bowl, was built. In 1936 the fairgrounds hosted the Texas Centennial Exposition, which celebrated the 100th anniversary of Texas independence and attracted six million people over a six-month period. In conjunction with the Centennial, new buildings and other improvements costing \$25 million were built. In the 1950s, a talking, fifty-two-foot-tall cowboy named Big Tex was built on the fairgrounds. He has now welcomed visitors to the fair for half a century and is one of the most recognizable symbols of the Fair. The Fair runs for three weeks every October.