



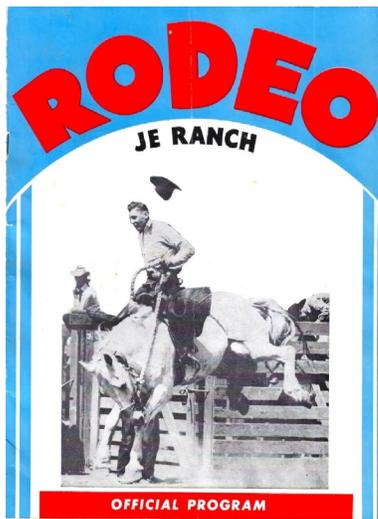
Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

November 2023

78 Years And Counting

The Gerry Rodeo recently completed it's 78th annual event, a truly outstanding accomplishment. Below is a history of the popular Chautauqua County summer spectacular using material excerpted from 2017 CSHOF inductee Paul Cooley, the long-standing publicity director of the rodeo.



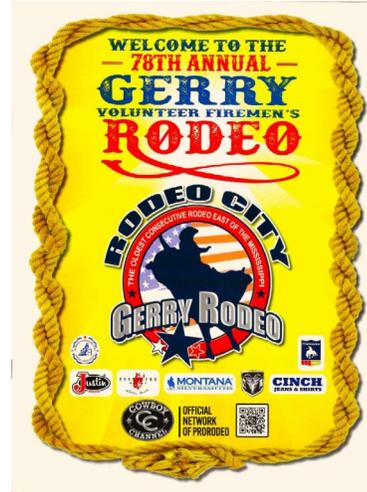
Many people thought that the idea of a rodeo wouldn't succeed for even one year, but the doubters were certainly wrong because for 78 consecutive summers, the tiny hamlet of Gerry, just north of Jamestown, New York, has celebrated the longest running Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeo east of the Mississippi. For four days each year, the quiet little village of Gerry becomes "The Rodeo Capital of the East" as approximately 200 professional cowboys and cowgirls roll into town and pay their entry fees to compete for more than \$50,000 in prize money in four performances.

LEFT: Program cover from the very first Gerry Rodeo in 1945 (Greg Peterson Collection)

The event, sponsored by the Gerry Volunteer Fire Department, got its start in 1945 when a former working cowboy named Jack Cox moved from the West to Gerry and suggested a rodeo as a way of raising money for the newly formed fire department. In spite of the doubters, his dream became a reality as members of the department and other volunteers in 70 days turned four acres of swampland into an arena and parking lot in time for the arrival of the renowned Colonel Jim Eskew and the livestock that first year. Bleachers were borrowed from area schools and portable lights were rented.

In those early days the stock arrived by train in the middle of the hamlet, traffic was stopped, and the animals were herded down the middle of Route 60 to the rodeo grounds by volunteers, making for some exciting moments. Today the stock arrives by modern semi trucks, but the excitement of rodeo time still fills the air. Several hundred volunteers of all ages pitch in to make the event possible each year, filling jobs from painting fences to serving the famous beef barbeque dinners. Many residents take their vacation just to volunteer, and others who have moved away return to help.

The Gerry Fire Department felt from the beginning that their rodeo should be "top-notch" so they have always contracted for a rodeo sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys' Association (PRCA). Participants pay an entry fee, and money earned in Gerry counts toward qualification to the annual National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas in December.



Over the years, constant improvements have been made to the rodeo facilities. Additional land has been acquired, permanent bleachers have been installed in an arena seating 4000, new lighting turns night to day, and the old dining hall has been enlarged, refurbished, and air-conditioned to accommodate the hundreds who come each year just to enjoy the world-famous beef barbeque dinners.

Today the rodeo consists of the same competitive events it did 78 years ago: bareback bronc riding, tie-down roping, saddle bronc riding, bull riding, steer wrestling, team roping, and cowgirls' barrel racing, with all the entrants competing for cash which counts toward qualification for the National Finals Rodeo. In addition, there are specialty acts such as trick riding, animal acts, and clowns. A recently added feature allows young spectators to enter the arena to compete for prizes as they chase ribbons tied to calves' tails.

Over the years, the profits from the rodeos has enabled the Fire Department to purchase modern fire and rescue equipment for the protection of the residents of the town. Today the Department has two pumpers, a tanker, a rescue truck, an ATV with trailer, and a state-of-the-art ambulance to respond to more than 300 calls per year.

All the charter members who planned the first rodeo are gone, but the dream that began 78 years ago is still alive and well, proving what can be accomplished when neighbors have a common goal and work together to meet that goal.

Below are pages from the original 1945 Gerry Rodeo program. The advertising businesses present a stroll down memory lane. How many are still in business 78 years later?

PROGRAM

GERRY RODEO STADIUM

ON ROUTE 60

The Gerry Volunteer Fire Department

PRESENTS
The J-E Ranch Rodeo
Produced and Personally Directed by
Col. Jim Eskew

July 31, thru
August 5, 1945
Eve. 8 P. M.

Matinees
Sat. and Sun.
2 P. M.
Wed. 2:30 P. M.

RENCKENS HOTEL
CASSADAGA, N. Y.

Club Atmosphere
Noon Day Lunches
Best Quality Liquors
Package License

"Route Sixty's Finest Village Hotel"

ARENA OFFICIALS
Col. Jim Eskew
Arena Director
Charlie Aldridge
Judge
Bill Parks
Judge

Event No. 1
Concert—Cowboy Band, Al Lay, Director

Event No. 2
Grand parade of the parade and other
peoples made led by the charming
California drum majorette Bobbie
Lynch followed by introductions of
artists and special characters.

Compliments of
**CASSADAGA FARMERS
COOPERATIVE ASSN**
FEED FLOUR
FERTILIZER
SEEDS

Cassadaga, N. Y.
(on Route 60)
Phone 60F11

THE HANDY GROCERY

Compliments of

Route 60 at
KIMBALL STAND

Grocery and Meat Market

Open Nights and Sundays
Phone Jamestown 74-272

"Success to your Rodeo,"
Gerry Firemen

Ben Nichols

Premier and Royal Vacuum Cleaners
Edison-G. E. Electrical Appliances

MODERN HOT POINT KITCHENS
—Sales and Service—
For the Best see

PIFER HOME APPLIANCE CO.
Opposite City Hall
JAMESTOWN, N. Y.

Maytag Washing Machines
Phone 3703
Third Street

"Congratulations
GERRY FIREMEN
on a well
Production"

Event No. 4
BARBACK BRONC RIDING
Buck Dowell
Speedy Dosamore
Buck Dowell
Johnny Chapman

Event No. 5
FANCY RIDING
Featuring Buddy Mcford and April
Lynch, the two of America's greatest lar-
at artists.

Event No. 6
Rodeo Varieties, Jack and Bobbie
Knapp

Event No. 7
COWGIRLS BRONC RIDING
Am gresley - Mary Parks
Allen's Border Collies

Event No. 8
Event No. 9
CALF ROPING
Time

Name _____
Johnny Chapman
Buddy Mcford
Ralph Collier
Buddy Mcford
Jack Jackson
Irby Mundy

Event No. 10
Tom Hunt, Nosed Rodeo Clown, and
his educated mule.

Event No. 11
COWBOYS SADDLE BRONC RIDING
Horse _____
Name _____
Red Daugherty
Jack Jackson
Clayton Hart
Bud Kessler
Bobby Mcford
Jack Talbot
Bucky Brennan
Red Hammerschmidt

INTERMISSION
"Pepsi-Cola Hits the Spot"
PEPSI-COLA BOTTLING CO.,
Of Jamestown

Arch Peck

Compliments of
Anderson Milker Co.
Manufacturers
MILKING MACHINES
and
FARM EQUIPMENT
Phone 3390 1372 East Second St.
JAMESTOWN, N. Y.

MA'S and PA'S
1/2 Mile South of
RODEO STADIUM
ALL LEGAL BEVERAGES
"World's Finest Spaghetti"
Rodeo
Visit us on your way home from the

Event No. 12
WILDE OIL CORP.
Phone
SINCLAIRVILLE 38

CARY'S HOTEL
Route 60
LILLY DALE, N. Y.

FISH FRY — Friday & Saturday Nites

We're Well Stocked With
ALL LEGAL BEVERAGES

PACKAGE LICENSE

**SINCLAIRVILLE
MOTOR SALES**
C. E. Livermore, Owner

FIRST CLASS MECHANICS
of Cars
GAS WELDING
Phone Sinclairville 43F2
WRECKER SERVICE

Compliments of
KIMBALL STAND INN
Route 60

ALL LEGAL BEVERAGES
Herman Nelson, Prop.

METERED SERVICE

PRINTED RECEIPT

FUEL OIL

KEROSENE

Miller's Auto Repair
Complete Auto Service
CASSADAGA, N. Y.
Route 60 Phone 101
WELDING

Event No. 17
COWBOY AND COWGIRLS' TRUCK AND FANCY RIDING
Aldis Shaw, Buckey Brennan, Benny Jackson, Beverly Shaw, Johnny Chapman

Event No. 18
FINALE
" Pepsi-Cola Hits the Spot"
PEPSI-COLA BOTTLING CO.,
Of Jamestown

Miller's Auto Repair
Complete Auto Service
CASSADAGA, N. Y.
Route 60 Phone 101
WELDING

Compliments of
Red and White Store
Gerry, N. Y.

Compliments of
William G. Prentice
Sindairville, N. Y.

Life Insurance
HUBERT D. TOMPKINS
General Insurance
Representing the Best Old Line Companies
Gerry, N. Y.
(on Route 60)
Phone Jamestown 74-278

Auto Insurance

LIST OF CONTESTANTS AND PARTICIPANTS

Name	Address	Name	Address
Col. Jim Eskow	Waverly, N. Y.	Jack Jackson	Houston, Texas
Dolly Eskow	Waverly, N. Y.	Bucky Brennan	San Angelo, Texas
Mary Fark	Walsenburg, Colo.	Speedy Densmore	Tokamah, Neb.
Nancy Dyer	Kissimmee, Fla.	Ray Collier	St. Louis, Mo.
Ruby Rea Collier	Hollywood, Calif.	Jimmy Walden	Maricopa, Okla.
Archie Knapp	Hollywood, Calif.	Red Daugherty	Kansas City, Kans.
Beryl Jackson	Houston, Texas	Clay Hochman	Strausburg, Va.
Beverly Shaw	Topsfield, Mass.	Johnny Chapman	Fort Worth, Texas
Mary Rogers	Tyler, Texas	Stanley Goode	Armore, Okla.
Helen Hammerschmidt	Tyler, Texas	Dickey Dyer	Armore, Okla.
Buddy Melford	Ft. Worth, Texas	Gay Dyer	Ft. Pierce, Fla.
Avril Gilliam	Amador, Okla.	George Brinkley	St. Louis, Mo.
James Rogers	Hollywood, Calif.	Lucky Hadden	Selma, N. C.
Steve Knapp	Hollywood, Calif.	Lea Vegas	Plains, Kans.
Brahma Rogers	Tyler, Texas	Arizona Kid	Phoenix, Ariz.
Frank Radie	Waverly, N. Y.	Jack Talbot	Ismay, Mont.
Robert Eisenhart	Waverly, N. Y.	Mary Mansfield	Denver, Colo.
Jimmy Rogers	Tyler, Texas	Jim Mansfield	Denver, Colo.
Charlie Aldridge	Colorado Springs, Colo.	Red Hammerschmidt	McLaughlin, S. D.
Lyde Davis	St. Louis, Mo.	Jeanne Mansfield	Denver, Colo.
Bill Parks	Del Rio, Texas	Curley Hatchel	Alpine, Texas
Buck Dowell	Gordon, Nebr.	Frank Prince	Las Vegas, N. M.
Tom Hunt	Sundown, Texas	Charlie Payne	Chapman, Mo.
Bobby Wilson	Hollywood, Calif.	Bob Clark	Billings, Mont.
Allen Vertum	Waverly, N. Y.	Lucy Hatchel	Alpine, Texas

The Official Watch for Timing all JE Ranch Rodeo Events is Longines

I think the only business from 1945 that is still in operation is Fredrickson's in Cassadaga.

"Good Weather for Your Good Show, Gerry Fireman!"

CASSADAGA MILLS
George C. Peck, Owner
Western New York's Largest Distributor of
WAYNE
Milk Producing
FEEDS

FLOUR — COAL — FEED
CASSADAGA MILLS
Phone 2872

Event No. 12
The Mansfield's Firearm and Knife Throwing Experts

Event No. 13
COWBOYS STEER WRESTLING
Name _____ Time _____
Jack Jackson _____
Buck Dowell _____
Speedy Densmore _____
Clayton Hart _____
Jimmy Walden _____
Red Daugherty _____
Dickey Dyer _____
Red Hammerschmidt _____
Arizona Kid _____
Bud Kessler _____
Jack Talbot _____

Event No. 14
Jack O' Diamonds, Champion Jumping Horse

Event No. 15
El Toro "v" Toradors, Jack and Bobbie Knapp

Event No. 16
COWBOYS' WILD BRAHMA BULL RIDING
Geo. Brinkley
Stanley Goode
Lucky Hadden
Bobby Chapman
Jimmy Walden
Frank Prince
Bob Clark

GERRY MILLING CO.
A. E. Dye, Prop.
FEED — COAL — CORE
SEEDS — FERTILIZER
AND ROOFING
Phone 74-275
GERRY, N. Y.

Hotel Sindairville
I. ZYNDA, Prop.
SINCLAIRVILLE, N. Y.
(On Route 60)
BEER
ALE
Retail
Package
License
WINES
LIQUORS

FREDRICKSON BROTHERS
Lumber Company
Phone 44
CASSADAGA, N. Y.
OPERATORS OF WOODWORKING FACTORY
AND SAWMILLS
We Buy Timber Lots and All Kinds of Logs

BOWENS GULF STATION
AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE
Rodeo Stadium
AUTO ACCESSORIES
"GOOD GULF"
THAT
GASOLINE