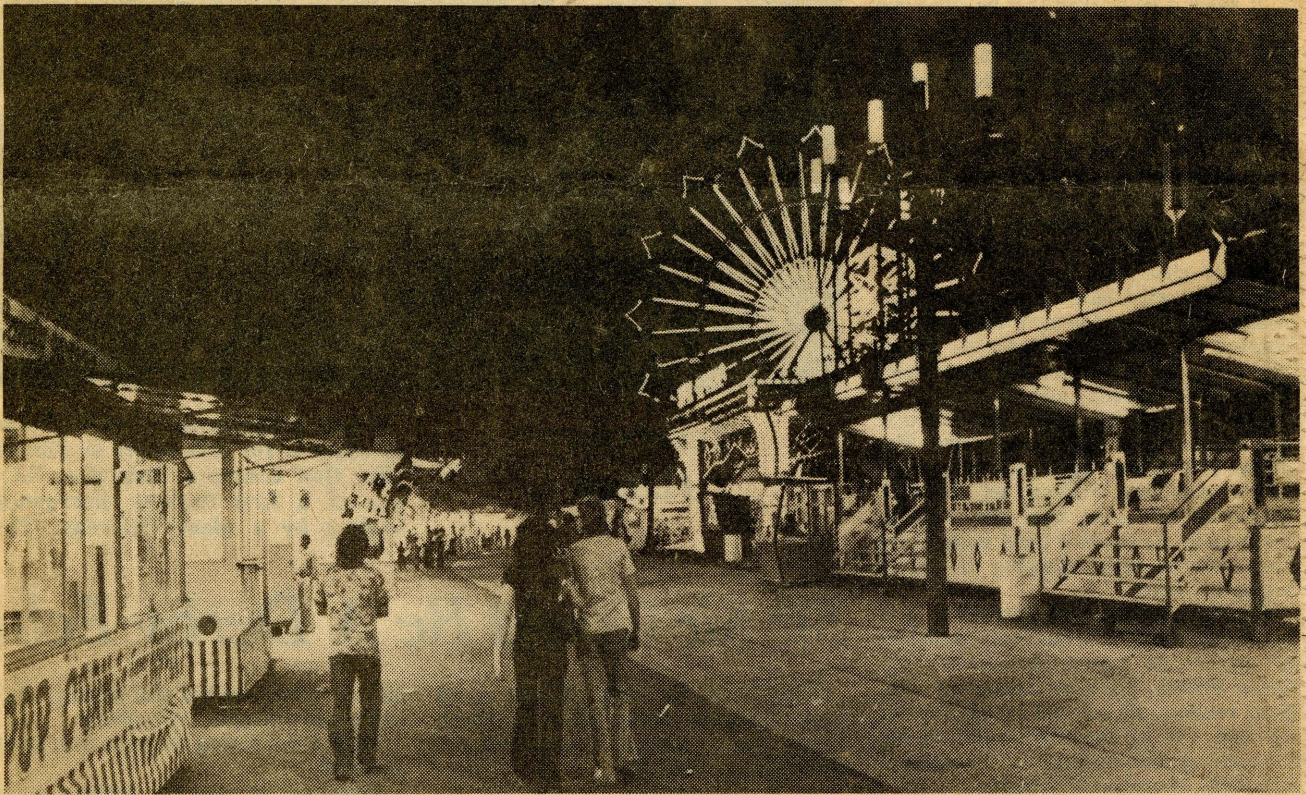


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## "Concerns Cited In Cash Crunch Caused By Carnival Competition"

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By James Shearin

Business Was Light After Dark On The Cotton Carnival Midway

# Concern Cited In Cash Crunch Caused By Carnival Competition

By LEWIS NOLAN

The casualties in the modern version of the Battle of Midway are attendance figures and gate receipts as Memphis and area towns compete for dollars.

In recent days, persons could sample rides at the Cotton Carnival midway at the Mid-South Fairgrounds, the Cotton Makers' Jubilee midway on the riverfront, Libertyland, a small carnival set up at Whitehaven Plaza and two carnivals at Millington.

Additionally, at least some persons who could be expected to visit Memphis from West Tennessee could stay close to home and still take in festivities as Paris paid homage to fish, Dyersburg to soybeans and Humboldt to strawberries.

Attendance at Cotton Carnival attractions at the fairgrounds is down 25 per cent from last year. Libertyland officials plan to meet today to discuss ways of cutting overhead for the coming weekend because last weekend's crowd count was below the break-even point.

Attendance at the Memphis Pink Palace Museum last weekend was half that of the previous weekend. The only public attraction sampled where admission is charged which had a normal or better crowd over the weekend was Overton Park Zoo.

"It's a matter of cutting the pie a little too thin," said Bob Howard, general manager of Libertyland.

He said the attraction took in \$6,745 over the weekend even though prices were reduced to \$3 in a joint promotion with carnival, where admission is \$1 for adults and 50 cents for children under 12.

The break-even point for Libertyland at a \$5 admission charge is \$18,000 to \$20,000 a day, he said.

"We can't keep regular operations going with the money we are taking in. We have to make ends meet" to pay salaries and bonded indebtedness, Howard said.

William Morton, manager of carnival, said the crowd count Friday through Sun-

day — when weather conditions were nearly ideal for outdoor activities — was about 39,000.

"Our attendance was down significantly, over 25 per cent, from last year," he said.

"There has been a lot of things going on. Last Saturday there was a heavily attended picnic at Riverside Park (a radio station promotion), the Thunderbirds at Millington, the Law Day parade and the river pageant."

He attributed the sag in attendance to the abundance of area midways and attractions, including Memphis in May observances.

"It's good in one respect. We are trying to put together an effort through different organizations in the city for a strong entertainment package. But it is very likely that some of the individual organizations are going to notice some decreases in attendance, particularly when you have real strong events going on at the same time. . . . But once established, hopefully they will all pull people into the city and we will all reap some benefits."

Threatening clouds and high winds, which forced cancellation of the 7 p.m. performance of the Spartans' stunt act did little to augment Fairgrounds attendance last night. Crowds appeared light and some of the midway game operators were playing one another's games to pass time.

Mrs. Ethyl Venson, chairman of jubilee, said preliminary figures from her organization's midway indicated "we are not doing as well as last year."

The jubilee midway, moved to a parking lot west of City Hall from its former location at Fourth and Linden, has more space than ever. Mike Williams, midway manager for Farrow Amusements, said the pavement allows for larger and heavier rides than the "mud and dust" of the former location.

He said he was satisfied with the

crowds but so far they "haven't been spending a whole lot," at least partly due to paychecks not being given out in many businesses until yesterday.

Milt Kaufman, president of Goodings Million Dollar Midway at the fairgrounds, said the timing of pay day was probably not as important to his operation and that visitors have been spending well although not as many people have been on the midway as last year.

In recent days personnel at the Memphis Naval Air Station at Millington were able to spend their money at a carnival in town or at one on base, said Joe Dugger, base director of recreation.

The one on base, Century 21 Shows, closed Sunday and moved to Humboldt for the town's annual Strawberry Festival, which started yesterday. There were also carnivals at the fish fry at Paris and the soybean festival at Dyersburg last week.

Robert Sullivan, director of the Pink Palace, said 609 persons visited the museum last weekend, compared to 1,083 the previous weekend. "We were expecting a drop because of carnival. There are just more things to do in and around Memphis this week."

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