



# **Du Quoin State Fair honors first Bicentennial farm family as Twilight Parade Grand Marshals**

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DU QUOIN, IL – The Illinois Department of Agriculture is proud to announce that Gerald and Betty Brown of Jonesboro, Illinois, will be the Grand Marshals for the 2018 Du Quoin State Fair Twilight Parade on Friday, August 24.

The Browns were the first family to be honored with the Illinois Department of Agriculture Bicentennial Farm designation. Gerald Brown is the 5th generation in the same family to own the same farm land in Union County. His children and grandchildren will be the 6th and 7th generations to be part of this great tradition. The Brown family has also received sesquicentennial and centennial family farm designations from the Department of Agriculture.

“Illinois is full of proud, hardworking farm families. The Brown family is just one example of the dedication these families bring to Illinois agriculture,” Governor Bruce Rauner said. “We’re proud to honor them with the first Bicentennial Farm designation in 2018, and proud to have them join us as the Grand Marshals of the Du Quoin State Fair Twilight Parade.”

DU QUOIN - The journey for the Brown family started back in 1816 when Abraham Brown II, his wife, and three children made the trek from Rowan County, North Carolina, all the way to Union County, Illinois. Many other families were traveling west to southern Illinois, and since the land in North Carolina that the Browns were farming was worn out, they decided to join in the journey.

To leave everything and head to a new location at that time took a tremendous amount of courage and survival skills as it was not a short, nor easy, trip. After their arrival in Union County, Abraham and his family took shelter in a hollow sycamore tree until their cabin was finished. Shortly after that in 1817, Abraham registered his cattle and

land. That same land parcel has been passed down from generation to generation with at least one member of each generation staying and farming that very same ground.

“Our state was founded on the hard work and dedication of families just like the Browns,” said Director of the Department of Agriculture Raymond Poe. “Farm families will continue to sustain our strong agricultural traditions for generations to come, and we’re proud to welcome the Browns to the Du Quoin State Fair to help us celebrate those traditions.”

The Du Quoin State Fair Twilight Parade steps off Friday, August 24, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. New this year – the parade route is changed and will be contained within the fairgrounds property. The staging area for the parade will take place on the half-mile track, just inside the Main Gate along Route 51. The parade will step off from the south end of Pacer Avenue and make its way to Midway Drive. From there the parade will travel east towards the Grandstand, turning north on Grandstand Avenue to Main Street where it will march west to Trotter Lane and come to an end once it again reaches the half-mile track.

Also new this year, admission and parking fees will be waived on opening night August 24th. Fair officials encourage all of southern Illinois to check out the sights, sounds, and delicious concoctions that you can only find at the Du Quoin State Fair.

The 2018 Du Quoin State Fair runs August 24 – September 3 in Du Quoin, Illinois. Start planning your trip today by visiting [www.DuQuoinStateFair.net](http://www.DuQuoinStateFair.net).