

Andrew Stoecklein family To be Fair guests Monday

By Hank Ernst

"Don't worry about the dogs," a woman assured the visitor, "raise the wire loop from the fence post and come on in."

Three coon hounds sniffed the car, cows grazed in the nearby pasture, chickens scratched in the dirt and a cat jumped at a grasshopper. Sitting around the dining room table were nine persons from age two years upward, who had enjoyed supper with homemade butter, with lettuce and tomatoes from the garden, in addition to the main course of meat and potatoes.

A farm family, yes, but not any farm family. . . the Andrew Stoeckleins of Pilot Grove have been chosen to represent Cooper County as the Cooper County farm family at the State Fair on Monday. An extension committee made the selection on the basis of interest and participation in agricultural projects, events and organizations and other innumerable criteria.

The Stoeckleins will register

at the "Farm Family" center and then explore the fairgrounds at their leisure until the noon meal, furnished by the "Farm Family" group. They will then attend the harness and running races in the afternoon, after which they will receive recognition as the Cooper County farm family.

Known to the majority of the Pilot Grove community as "Gump and Fat", Andrew and Francis have lived in the area all of their lives, Gump being born and reared in a house on their present farm.

They were married in 1939, and have seven children ranging in ages from 12 to 28. Joan, the eldest, now Mrs. Ken Mallr of Salina, Kan., is a registered nurse, who plans to come to the State Fair to be with the family. Gene, 26, and his wife, Janet and their two children, Kem and Brad, will be there too. Gene is a construction worker, presently working on the Elkhurst airport in Columbia. Other members of the family, Joe Ed, 24, Steve, 19, and Billy, 12, are at home and help "Gump" with the farm work as well as with the gravel plant on the Lamine River. Dennis, 22, works with a loan company in Columbia. Linda, 17, will be a senior in Pilot Grove High School this year. She helps with the house work at home as well as being a sewing instructor for the beginning sewing class in 4-H.

"We're about the only family left that still has children in 4-H who started when Joan did 21 years ago," Mrs. Stoecklein says. All of the children participated in 4-H from the time they were old enough, and have bushel baskets full of ribbons and awards they have won. Billy entered three garden products in the Cooper County Youth Fair and received two blue and one white ribbon. His steer received a blue ribbon. Mrs. Stoecklein was the garden product project leader for the Pilot Grove 4-H club, and Gump was the beef project leader.

In the "good size" one-fourth acre garden, Mrs. Stoecklein raises tomatoes, sweet corn, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, onions, muskmelons, watermelons, etc. "No one likes green peppers, and we've never had any luck with horseradish, although we do like it," Mrs. Stoecklein says. The Stoeckleins eat a majority of the garden as they come from the garden and Mrs. Stoecklein cans most of the remainder.

"I'm not neat enough to work in the garden. I get chased out before I start," Gump said. He is busy enough, anyway, he says, running the 300 acre farm, doing custom work and working the drag-line gravel operation. Each year, if time permits, he makes some homemade wine

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