Abstract: This artificial collection comprises a variety of types of material documenting world fairs and expositions, spanning the dates between 1851 and 1967, with the bulk of the collection dating from the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Material consists of printed matter and ephemera, including newspapers, programs, invitations, maps, brochures, viewbooks, advertisements, stationery, contracts, bonds, trade cards, and a scrapbook; photographs and prints; and realia souvenirs.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 630
Title: World fairs and expositions collection
Title: 1851-1967
Bulk Dates: 1893
Extent: 0.6 linear feet 5 oversize boxes (7 boxes)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 630, World's fairs and expositions collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (upright manuscript boxes); Box 2: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (1 inch); Box 3: Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (17 inches); Box 4: Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (18 inches); Box 5: Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (20 inches); Box 6: Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (24 inches); Box 7: Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (28 inches)

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/


Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research.

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Historical Note

Beginning with the Great Exhibition of 1851, world fairs have promoted and stimulated industry, progress, commerce, education, and amusement. International in scope, yet an opportunity for national and local pride, each fair attempted to outdo its predecessor in size, grandeur, and novelty. World's Fairs have made lasting contributions to technology and architecture, as well as to the development of a new commodity culture born from the emphasis on industry and progress. It was at these exhibitions that many advancements in science and technology made their debut, including Alexander Graham Bell's telephone (at the Centennial Exhibition in 1876) and the Ferris wheel (at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition.) The impermanent structures that housed the exhibitions and transformed a space into a different world have also made a lasting impact on architecture and urban planning. Buildings and centerpieces in an array of architectural styles, many designed by leading architects of the time, such as Norman Bel Geddes (the Futurama exhibit of the 1939 New York World's Fair), from the traditional to the ultra-modern, embody progress and reflect the theme of peaceful cultural exchange.

Sources:


Scope and Content Note

This artificial collection comprises a variety of material documenting world fairs and expositions, spanning the dates between 1851 and 1967, with the bulk of the collection dating from the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Material consists of printed matter and ephemera, including newspapers, programs, invitations, maps, brochures, viewbooks, advertisements, stationery, contracts, bonds, trade cards, and a scrapbook; photographs and prints; and realia souvenirs.


As the world fairs were venues for commercial enterprise, a variety of advertisement and trade cards are present in the collection, including Pears Soap, a company which made significant use of pictorial advertising in the nineteenth century.

Further materials related to the world fairs and expositions are cataloged with imprints in Special Collections and can be found by searching DELCAT.
Selected Search Terms

Corporate Names

Great Exhibition (1851 : London, England)
Centennial Exposition (1876 : Philadelphia, Pa.)
World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition (1884-1885 : New Orleans, La.)
World's Columbian Exposition (1893 : Chicago, Ill.)
Pan-American Exposition (1901 : Buffalo, N.Y.)
Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904 : Saint Louis, Mo.)
Panama-Pacific International Exposition (1915 : San Francisco, Calif.)
New York World's Fair (1939-1940)
New York World's Fair (1964-1965)
Expo 67 (Montreal, Quebec)

Topical Terms

Exhibitions--United States--History--19th century.
Exhibitions--United States--History--20th century.

Geographic Names

London (England)--History--19th century.
Philadelphia (Pa.)--History--19th century.
New Orleans (La.)--History--19th century.
Chicago (Ill.)--History--19th century.
Buffalo (N.Y.)--History.
Saint Louis (Mo.)--History--20th century.
San Francisco (Calif.)--History--20th century.
New York (N.Y.)--History--20th century.
Montre al (Que bec)--History--20th century.

**Form/Genre Terms**

- Scrapbooks.
- Stereographs.
- Souvenirs.
- Programs.
- Stationery.
- Contracts.
- Bonds (negotiable instruments)
- Advertisements.
- Trade cards (advertising)
- Albumen prints.
- Invitations.
- Newspapers.
- Pennants.
- Stereoscopes.
- Fans (costume accessories)
- Photographs.
- Scarves (costume accessories)
- Postcards.
- Viewbooks.
- Maps.

**Corporate Contributors**

- Punch (London, England)
- Pears (A. & F.) Limited.
Related Materials in this Repository

MSS 93, Item 015 Centennial Exposition scrapbook
MSS 93, Item 017 World's Columbian Exposition scrapbook
Arrangement

I. The Great Exhibition, London
II. Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia
III. World Cotton Centennial, New Orleans, Louisiana
IV. World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago
V. Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, New York
VI. Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, Missouri
VII. Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco
VIII. 1939 New York World's Fair, New York
IX. 1964 New York World's Fair, New York
X. 1967 International and Universal Exposition (Expo 67), Montreal
Detailed Description of the Collection


The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations (commonly referred to as The Great Exhibition) was the first World's Fair, held in London’s Hyde Park from May 1 to October 15, 1851. Organized by Prince Albert and other members of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), the Great Exhibition celebrated Great Britain's industrial and technological achievements, epitomized by the Crystal Palace, a 990,000-square foot edifice of cast-iron and glass in which the exhibition was held. This series consists of a single item, a special issue of the newspaper Punch, titled "Records of the Great Exhibition, Extracted from Punch."

"Records of The Great Exhibition, extracted from Punch" , 1851 [Box 6 F1] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (24 inches))

Special large issue of Punch, issued XXXX

Series II. Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1876-1877

The Centennial International Exposition was the first World’s Fair held in the United States. Commemorating the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, hosted the Centennial Exposition from May 10 to October 10, 1876. Boasting 250 separate pavilions, the Exposition showcased the United States' scientific and technological innovations, achievements in art and culture, and advancements in trade and industry accomplished during its short history. This series comprises ephemera, albumen prints, and realia souvenirs, including a trade card and five wooden Centennial Medals depicting various Exposition buildings.

Trade card , 1876 [Box 1 F2]

Albumen prints , 1876 [Box 5 F3] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (20 inches))

Four prints of botanical exhibits, possibly in the Horticulture Building and a German artillery exhibit, possibly in the German government building. Mounted on board.

Centennial medals , 1876 [Box 3 F4] (Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (17 inches))

Five black walnut centennial medals depicting buildings from the Exposition: Memorial Hall, Machinery Hall, Horticultural Hall, Main Building, Agricultural Hall. Includes original box.

International Exposition program , 1877 [Box 1 F5]

Series III. World Cotton Centennial, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1884-1885

The World Cotton Centennial commemorated the centennial of the earliest record of a shipment of cotton exported from the United States in 1784. New Orleans, Louisiana, served as a major hub of the cotton industry in the United States, including the Cotton Exchange (1871-1964). This series comprises one weaving of an unidentified building.
Weaving, circa 1884-1885 [Box 1 F6]

Weaving of an unidentified building, possibly from the World Cotton Centennial, as the matte bears a faded date of 1884-1885.

Series IV. World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois, 1892-1893, 1896, undated

The World's Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair, was held in Chicago, Illinois, from May 1 to October 30, 1893, to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in North America in 1492. Several leading architects were responsible for the design of exhibition buildings, including George B. Post, Sophia Hayden, Charles McKim, and Richard Morris Hunt. The Columbian Exposition was the first World's Fair to include a separate amusement area, called the Midway Plaisance, which featured the world's first Ferris wheel, which had been an attempt to outdo the Eiffel Tower, the centerpiece of the Paris World’s Fair of 1889. The Exposition also showcased the city's progress since its devastation by the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. The bulk of collection comprises material from the Columbian Exposition and contains advertisements, trade cards, invitations, programs, contracts, a scrapbook, photographic prints, and realia souvenirs, including a silk scarf, weavings, and a stereoscope.

Printed matter and ephemera

Exhibit advertisements and souvenirs, 1893 [Box 1 F7]

Product/company advertisements and souvenirs, 1893 [Box 1 F8]

Miscellaneous advertisements, circa 1893 [Box 1 F9]

Includes advertisements likely circulated after the Exposition. Consists of an advertisement for a lecture about the Exposition and a small brochure supporting the restoration of the Fine Arts Building.

Dedicatory exercises programs, 1892 [Box 1 F10]

Event programs, 1893 [Box 1 F11]

Program of buildings, circa 1893 [Box 1 F12]

Includes information on Exposition buildings. Missing pages.

Invitations, 1892-1893 [Box 1 F13]

Includes invitations to dedicatory exercises and private viewings of exhibits.

Contract, circa 1892 [Box 4 F14] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (18 inches))

Stationery, 1893 [Box 1 F15]

Bonds, 1892 and possibly 1896 [Box 1 F16]

Two bond certificates. Also included is a small pamphlet about the issuance of the bonds, including the estimated financial resources of the Exposition.

Scrapbook, circa 1893, 1897, undated [Box 1 F17]

Personal scrapbook kept by unknown. Included are handwritten accounts of Decoration Day (precursor to Memorial Day) ceremony held in Chicago, circa 1897. Officiating were John A. Logan and N.P. Chipman. Another handwritten entry (incomplete) mentions specific Civil War battles and the monument dedicated to Taylor's Battery, Company B, First Regiment, Illinois Light Artillery. Scrapbook includes programs and photographs from the World's Columbian Exposition.

Scrapbook casing, circa 1893, 1897, undated [Box 1 F18]

Viewbooks, 1893 [Box 1 F19]

Trade cards, 1893 [Box 1 F20]

Four trade cards for various products available from Enterprise Manufacturing Company of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Maps

Remington Typewriter map of World's Columbian Exposition, 1893 [Box 6 F21] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (24 inches))

Bird's-eye-view of the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893 [Box 7 F21] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (28 inches))

"Plan of World's Columbian Exposition and Handy Map of Chicago", 1893 [Box 6 F21] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (24 inches))

Pop-up book, 1893 [Box 4 F22] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (18 inches))

Depicts the Naval exhibit, the Pier, and the Fisheries Building.

Photographic prints

Albumen prints, 1893 [Box 1 F23]

6 prints of exhibition areas, including the Peristyle and the Statue of the Republic; views of the Colonnade; the Manufactures Building; the Art Building; views from the Grand Basin; and the Agricultural Building. World's Columbian Exposition Department of Photography, Chief: C.D. Arnold.
Stereographs, 1893 [Box 1 F24]

26 stereographs depicting construction of various exhibit areas. For use with stereoscope [see FX].

Miscellaneous photographs, undated [Box 1 F25]

Cabinet card of unidentified woman. Inscription on back: "To Lady Ruth / … / In Memory of Eleanor Carey."

Prints of buildings

Administration building, undated [Box 1 F26]

Aerial view of grounds, undated [Box 1 F26]

Includes Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, Agriculture Building, and Electricity Building, among others.

"Isometric view of an interior column", undated [Box 1 F26]

Unspecified building.

Realia souvenirs

Silk scarf, 1893 [Box 5 F27] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (20 inches))

Silk scarf woven at the exhibition. Embroidered with the name "David C. Cook, Jr."

Stereoscope, 1893 [Box 3 F28] (Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (17 inches))

Souvenir stereoscope. See FX for stereographs.

Felt calendar, 1893 [Box 2 F29]

Thimble-shaped felt and cardboard calendar commemorating the exposition.

Costume fan, 1893 [Box 3 F30] (Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (17 inches))

Depicts aerial view of the fairgrounds.

Weaving, 1893 [Box 2 F31]

Silk weaving depicting Columbus departing Spain in 1492.

**Series V. Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, New York, circa 1901**

The Pan-American Exposition was held in Buffalo, New York, from May 1 to November 2, 1901. The Exposition showcased Buffalo's role as a center of industry, due mainly to its hydroelectric power and proximity to Niagara
Falls. On September 6, 1901, President William McKinley was assassinated outside of the Temple of Music, an event that invariably cast a pall over the remaining month of the Fair. This series consists of two postcards, one a publicity postcard detailing achievements and costs of the Fair, and another showing a map of several exhibition buildings.

Postcards, circa 1901 [Box 2 F32]

**Series VI. Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, Missouri, 1904**

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition, held in St. Louis, Missouri, commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase (one year late). From April 30 to December 1, 1904, the Exposition attracted approximately 20 million visitors. This series consists of a costume fan that depicts an illustration of the land acquired through the Louisiana Purchase and a map of the fairgrounds.

"The Complete Map and Guide of the World's Fair, St. Louis", 1904 [Box 6 F33] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (24 inches))

Map of the fairgrounds advertising the Boer War and National South African exhibit.

Costume fan, circa 1904 [Box 3 F34] (Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (17 inches))

**Series VII. Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, California, circa 1915**

Held in San Francisco, California, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition celebrated the completion of the Panama Canal and the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the Pacific Ocean by the explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa. This series comprises two souvenir felt pennants.

Souvenir pennants, circa 1915 [Box 7 F35] (Removed to SPEC MSS oversize boxes (28 inches))

Two souvenir felt pennants depicting the official seal of the Exposition and an illustration of Festival Hall.

**Series VIII. 1939 New York World's Fair, New York, New York, 1939-1940**

The 1939 New York World’s Fair has been touted as the last of the great American World’s Fairs. One of the most popular American fairs, the Fair attracted nearly 45 million visitors between its two season with themes of unlimited progress through technology and an idealized American family. This series contains ten black-and-white photographs depicting various Fair buildings and structures, including the Trylon and Perisphere, the Lagoon of Nations (Italian Pavilion, French Pavilion, Soviet Pavilion), the Court of Peace, the Ford Building and the General Motors Building.

Photographs, circa 1939-1940 [Box 2 F36]


Held on the same site as the 1939 New York World’s Fair, the 1964 Fair was not recognized by the Bureau International des Exposition, leading to a lack of participation from major World’s Fair players such as Canada,
the Soviet Union, Australia, and various European countries. The Fair showcased a variety of mid-twentieth-century technologies, including space exploration, then in its infancy, and animatronics designed by The Walt Disney Company. This series comprises one souvenir metal dish that depicts an illustration of the Unisphere.

Souvenir metal dish, circa 1964-1965 [Box 3 F37] (Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (17 inches))

Metal dish depicting the Unisphere. Manufactured by United States Steel.

**Series X. 1967 International and Universal Exposition (Expo 67), Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 1967**

Canada’s first World’s Fair, Expo 67 celebrated the centennial of the confederation of Canada in 1867. Hosting 62 participating countries, the Expo attracted approximately 50 million visitors. This series consists of a ticket order form contained in an issue of *Playbill*.

Ticket order form, 1967 February [Box 2 F38]

Ticket order form and list of events; in issue of *Playbill*, February 1967.